



The UWI *Quality* Education Forum

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February 2019



The Humanities and Education in Focus



NOTE TO THE READER

This special volume of the *The UWI Quality Education Forum* entitled, “The Humanities and Education in Focus”, was initially intended to be published as part of the commemoration of the UWI’s 70th Anniversary. We were unable to do so within the stipulated period, but the editors and the OBUS Leadership agreed that it was still a worthwhile endeavour. We are pleased that we have been able to produce this volume to coincide with the UWI Research Days, 2019 and still to recognise, in retrospect, seventy (70) years of dedication to education at the UWI.

The Editors



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Quality
Education Forum

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*The Humanities and
Education in Focus*

Published by
The Office of the Board for
Undergraduate Studies (OBUS)
The University of the West Indies, Mona

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Milk to the World

PAULETTE A. RAMSAY

From the anthology of poems Under Basil Leaves (2010)

Yesterday
I discovered a word
 or shall I say
 stumbled
 upon a word
 lying there
between the blades of crab grass.

I picked it up with caution
held firmly in my grasp
this word
I did not know
this word
I could not know
it never crossed my path.

I examined it
touched it
smelt it
felt it
no feature of a word
was absent
I could tell
no ordinary word

in my palm
and ignorance no balm
its meaning I tried to tell
its letter I tried to spell
all in vain
its synonyms I knew not
its antonyms I guessed not
I spoke to the word
with my finger
I traced its face
its shape,
I listened to its sound
it spoke quietly
but with the force of tropical breeze
with ease
said
it was not really a word
it was the word
word of words
word to the world
sustenance for grass
distraction for me
attraction for you
a word
that was every word
a code
the centre
of every word
light
a guide
a tool
a map
a cure
food

milk for babes
milk for old men
milk for pregnant mothers
milk for dry breasts
milk for old women with withered breasts.

I kept the word
to the grass
it could not return
I needed this word
to whisper sounds
I understand not
I placed the word
close to my breast.

Today,
I touch the word
I think
I remember
that only yesterday at dawn
I did not know this word
did not expect
that it would now rest
upon my breast
this word
my word
word of words
word to the world
word for the world
word
word
word
words
milk to the world.

I own this word
my word
my language
the word that makes me
human
woman
alive
present
in the world
with a word
milk to the world.

Message from the Dean, Faculty of Humanities and Education, Mona Campus

WAIBINTE E. WARIBOKO

THE DISCIPLINES IN THE HUMANITIES, which comprise humanistic content and employ humanistic methods of investigation and analyses, is under global crisis in a very palpable way. Scholars and students of these disciplines are now being invited to change the image or perception of these disciplines, and also to adapt them to the needs of a global society dominated by science and technology in order to survive. These invitations arise as subtle and overt forms at conferences on higher education, at official and semi-official meetings of administrators of tertiary educational institutions, as well as from national governments across the globe.

Because students have tended to make decisions about degree programmes offered by universities and other tertiary institutions of learning based on their notions of career relevance and available employment opportunities after graduation, the proportion of undergraduates enrolling in the Faculty of Humanities and Education at the Mona campus has declined over the years. Without stating the unique factors that might have accounted for the fortunes of the various disciplines within the humanities, it bears noting that the steady rise of enrollment in the Caribbean School of Media and Communication (CARIMAC) came as a direct result of the introduction of new undergraduate programmes – Digital Media Production, Integrated Marketing Communication, Journalism, Animation, and Film Production – that were responsive to job-market needs in a society dominated by reverence for information

communication technologies and science, including business managements studies.

The problem of low enrollment is solvable in the Faculty. The longer-term aim of the Faculty is to modify its image by transforming its academic offerings. The Faculty is also engaged in a process of rethinking and reaffirming the relevance of the humanities in the context of globalization largely driven by changes in information communication technologies. Part of that reaffirmation has led the Faculty to engage in a media campaign aimed at highlighting and reinforcing the marketplace relevance of academic degrees in the humanities, as well as their overall relevance for society as a body of scholarship devoted to reflecting on the human existential conditions.

In the 2016/17 academic year, the Faculty, in partnership with the *Sunday Gleaner*, inaugurated “The Humanities in Action” series. The selected texts in this special 70th anniversary volume of *The UWI Quality Education Forum*, were initially published as part of the series; and we have, thus far, published about twenty-five (25) such pieces. This endeavour has been, admittedly, a form of intellectual activism; and it is aimed at also advancing the goals of the University’s *Triple-A Strategic Plan (2017–2022)* which call for, among other things, an activist University and academic staff committed to the promotion of humanistic values through scholarship.

“The Humanities and Education in Focus”

INGRID McLAREN AND PAULETTE A. RAMSAY

THE THEME OF THIS VOLUME OF THE *QUALITY EDUCATION FORUM* (QEF) brings the many disciplines in the humanities at the UWI to centre stage. The intention is to underline the indispensable role that the humanities have played since the time of the ancient Greeks and Romans, in helping individuals to understand human existence, experiences and situations. Indeed, all the disciplines in the humanities – those regarded as classics such as literature, philosophy, history, languages, religion, architecture, linguistics, drama, film, music, art – and disciplines that may also be classified as social sciences – anthropology, psychology, law, communication studies, cultural studies, library studies, gender studies, museum studies – are all central to equipping student with a well-balanced education.

In our local context in at the UWI, the humanities matter as we aim to help our students to grapple with and understand various ethical issues, the value of understanding our Caribbean cultures, and the importance of studying other languages and cultures, so as to be able to tolerate other cultures, and communicate with other people.

Scholars in the humanities at the UWI are committed to the agenda of producing students who are up to date, and proficient in the use of digital tools, who have developed strong research skills and sharp critical and analytical skills that are important for understanding, assessing and articulating human experiences, encounters, ideas, conflicts and agreements and broad philosophies of life. Scholars in the humanities at the UWI, as well as in international situations, have had reason to be concerned about declining numbers in the

humanities in the last ten years. Many explanations have been offered for this decline, but in our local context we are inclined to believe that we should address two concerns. The first, is that we have not made a strong enough argument in highlighting for our students who are less naturally inclined to choose to study in our fields, the importance of the humanities in preparing them for life. The second, is that we probably have not helped to dispel their fears that they are less likely to secure good jobs after graduation.

We highlight here the position taken by Benjamin Schmidt from Northwestern University in an article entitled “The Humanities Are in Crisis” (2018). Schmidt admits that the declining numbers in the humanities are not new, but have been witnessed among men and women, in small and large institutions, especially in liberal arts colleges and elite colleges for a number of decades. He maintains, however, that the main reason for the decline in the United States is the belief that job prospects with a humanities degree are less likely to be obtained. He claims, “They’re fleeing the Humanities and related fields specifically because they believe they have poor job prospects. If the whole story were a market response to student debt and the Credit Recession, students would have read the 2011 Census Report numbering psychology and communications studies [located in the humanities at the UWI] among the fields with the lowest median earnings and fled from them. Or they would have noticed that biology majors make less than the average college graduate, and favored the physical sciences” (Schmidt 2018).

Our discussions with some of our own students have confirmed that many of them hold a similar perception and are misguided in their assessments that other fields are more glamorous and lucrative than all disciplines in the humanities. Perhaps our students need to be provided with statistics about who is more readily employed on the job market. Our students do need to be encouraged to be pragmatic about fields that are in need of dedicated people such as teaching, research, librarianship, conservation archaeology and to embrace the need to serve their countries in these areas.

It was in recognition of the need to meet both these two agendas that the faculty at Mona decided to publish a series of articles in the *Gleaner*, titled “The Humanities in Action”, to draw attention to the various ways in which the humanities can help students to find answers to many questions about life and

human existence. We, the editors, made a selection of articles from among those written in the first two years of the project which is now in its third year. Some of the articles have been written by faculty members and articulate the value of their respective disciplines. Some were written by past students who are happy with the decision to study various disciplines in the humanities which have allowed them to find employment in areas that have brought great satisfaction to them.

This collection of articles provides deep insight into the power and transformative attributes of the humanities. They offer the reader the unique opportunity to view from different perspectives and contexts, the interplay of related sub-disciplines and their role in influencing social outcomes while contributing significantly to producing the ideal graduate: “a critical and creative thinker; an effective communicator with good interpersonal skills; IT-skilled and information literate; innovative and entrepreneurial; globally aware and well-grounded in his/her regional identity; socially, culturally and environmentally responsible; and guided by strong ethical values” (*UWI Strategic Plan: 2012–2017*).

Faculty Speak: The Word, History, Logic

It is hoped that through these articles readers will gain a deeper appreciation of the breadth and depth of a humanities education and continue to support its longevity within the academy. The role of the humanities in the holistic development of the individual is attested to in the first four articles and strongly support the aforementioned desired attributes of the ideal graduate. The articles appear in the following order: “The Humanities in a Local Context: Developing Critical Thinkers for a Diverse World”; “The Relevance of History in a Digitalised World”; “Potent Words, Unique Voices”; and “The Relevance of Philosophy”.

In the first article, Paulette A. Ramsay draws attention to the important role of the UWI humanities programmes in enhancing writing skills and inculcating critical thinking and analytical skills in students, while fostering empathy and equipping them to become “excellent employees, leaders, and citizens who can

investigate and debate issues, analyse language, and organise writing in a coherent manner”. In a similar vein, Anthea Morrison discusses, in the second article, critical thinking skills as one of the benefits of literary studies as it hones students’ ability “to use language creatively and effectively”, while offering a “compelling example of the breadth and inclusiveness which should be characteristic of a humanities degree”. She also invites us to view the classroom as possessing “productive intimacy” and as a space that both nurtures and empowers students.

Matthew J. Smith, in discussing “The Relevance of History”, generates excitement and wonder at the concept of discoveries and the “charging sparks of history” that entice students to encounter “new findings” that “fuel fresh and multiple interpretations”. He counters the pervasive view that “discoveries of the past are finite and exhaustible”. Failure to do so, he opines, will lead to outmoded ways of viewing our experiences and inability to make the necessary connections between past, present and future events. He strongly suggests focus on history as well as implementation of “a systematic approach to learning in which the humanistic disciplines are called upon as crucial, not optional” as one way of counteracting “superficiality, myths, distortions, and, even worse, factual inaccuracies”. Lawrence Bamikole presents a compelling argument for the inclusion within the academy of “The ethical dimension of reflective thinking”, via the medium of philosophy as it “enables us to weigh and consider the probable consequences of our intended actions”. He considers this reflective/ethical approach to be the *sine qua non* of a civilised society as it spans cultural, social, political and personal dimensions. This approach is entirely consistent with one of the desired attributes of the UWI’s ‘ideal graduate’ as someone who “is guided by strong ethical values”.

Former Students Reflect

The following articles, “A Lifelong Career in Library Science”; “Beyond Bookish Knowledge”; “How Foreign Languages Paved My Career Path”; and “How the Humanities Opened the Window to the World”, attest to transformative role of the humanities in the personal and professional life of students.

For instance, Cheryl Peltier-Davis is of the firm belief that success in her career is closely linked to her academic choices as an undergraduate and postgraduate student in the Faculty of Humanities and Education at the UWI, as these laid the professional foundation for gaining entry into the real world of work and engaging in a lifelong career in librarianship that has spanned over twenty-two years.

Cornel Bogle attests to being unphased by friends and family who questioned the feasibility of a degree in Literatures in English, especially given the greater promise of professional degrees. Rather, he was emboldened by the knowledge that the “humanities have always had, and will continue to have, an impact on how we think about the major problems that face the world”, by providing students with “the necessary skills to have meaningful lives within and outside of the world of work”.

Camille Isaacs-Morrell, who pursued a BA in Language and Linguistic Studies, within the then Faculty of Arts and Education, asserts that not only did she master the skills of critical, innovative thinking, and effective communication, but her experiences as a student in this Faculty led to her “immersion in a sea of intercultural experiences”, through which her mind and those of her colleagues “were opened to diverse political thought and philosophies”. Although she eventually gained an MBA, she truly believes that “her foundation in the arts, more specifically the degree programme at the UWI, contributed to her success in being able to operate in a variety of areas that include “the creation of multilingual marketing communication programmes, international trade finance and credit-risk assessment”.

Similarly, Dave Rodney who also pursued a degree in Modern Languages, and currently works in the area of marketing, claims that his study of foreign languages has brought him “untold opportunities” as he has utilised these skills to “create a reggae programme in French for a radio station in Montreal, Canada” and other radio stations. He firmly believes that there are no limits to opportunity and entrepreneurship, and that the multifaceted education that he received from pursuing areas within the humanities at UWI was for him “an excellent springboard for taking on all sorts of exciting challenges in the outside world”.

Faculty Speak: Innovation, Creativity, Entrepreneurship, Technologies

The articles “Humanities Education for Freedom and Socioeconomic Development in Postcolonial Societies”; “Literature Education in the Service of Popular Culture”, “Jamaican Archaeology and High-Tech Human Stories”; “Digital Technology Media in the Humanities”; “Mastering the Arts and the Sciences of Animation”; “Critical Thinking and Career Choices in the Creative Industries”; and “Using Films to Study the Past, to Contemplate the Future”, feature both the interface of students with various technology types as well as the impact of critical thinking on growth and transformation, academic performance and career potential.

In his article, “Humanities Education for Freedom and Socioeconomic Development in Postcolonial Societies”, Waibinte E. Wariboko cautions developing postcolonial societies against relegating the humanities and social sciences to the background in their educational system, in favour of STEM education. He further contends that disciplines within the humanities and social sciences must inform “the national discourse for true education that is capable of promoting the practice of freedom and socioeconomic development”. Aisha Spencer, in “Literature Education in the Service of Popular Culture”, draws attention to the transformative nature of literature in offering students ample opportunity to question and critique events and emotional states of being in any given text. Such opportunities, she believes, enable students to become empowered and productive participants in the growth and development of society.

Zachary J.M. Beier highlights the nexus of archaeology and technology as one that is particularly relevant in the Jamaican context because of its potential to provide information on “populations that have been ‘silenced’ in popular histories through European colonialism”. The impact of technology is also the focus of Yvette Rowe’s article which highlights the effect of digital technologies on our lives, while sharing ways in which she encourages her students to interface with these technologies by engaging in careful, critical and comprehensive thinking on the effect, benefits, challenges that they have with

Caribbean ways of life. She stresses that the importance of understanding how to manipulate digital tools.

David Soutar provides vital information on the potential for the growth of yet another type of technology – that of the animation industry. He looks at ways in which this industry may be expanded in Jamaica, and points to the need for a “diverse and highly skilled workforce” in order to create a sustainable animation sector. Ray Hitchins, in his discussion on the connection between critical thinking and the creative industries, indicates that far from being a ‘hands-on’ vocational programme, the ECEM degree, focuses on a “specific range of creative industries and through academic engagement, provides understanding of the complex ways in which they operate and function”.

In her article entitled “Using Films to Study the Past, to Contemplate the Future”, Rachel Moseley-Wood addresses the manner in which the local film industry is linked to the history of the UWI. She cites a film about the UCWI as being one of the first films to be produced by the early Film Training School that was established by the British Colonial Office in 1950. The article points to the fact that the University has always been at the forefront of innovation and national creativity.

The Open Campus Speaks

The last article, written by Glenford D. Howe and Halima-Saadia Kassim, was not part of the newspaper series, but was done as a standard research paper. We, the editors, included it for its very valuable insights.

The Humanities in a Local Context: Developing Critical Thinkers for a Diverse World

PAULETTE A. RAMSAY

THE UNIVERSITY OF THE WEST INDIES (UWI), MONA, THROUGH the Faculty of Humanities and Education, invests highly in the teaching of writing. In this local context, the programmes in the faculty are designed to do what all academic institutions should do for their students: equip them with the writing and critical-reading skills required for meeting the demands of the world of work.

The UWI Humanities programmes aim to guide students to think critically, pose questions, and communicate with peers and leaders within and beyond the academy. Once students in the humanities embrace the opportunities being provided through various courses to enable them to draw on critical-thinking principles, including evidence-based analyses, they are likely to be excellent employees, leaders, and citizens who can investigate and debate issues, analyse language, and organise writing in a coherent manner. They will emerge as citizens who are capable of writing and communicating well at all levels of society, both locally and globally.

Within the Caribbean, the graduate of an institution such as the UWI will be better prepared for world citizenship through, for example, our solid foundation writing programmes, which aim to equip them to exhibit high levels of competence in the English language. The fact that English continues to be in a second-language position for many Caribbean students makes this even more indispensable.

The study of poetry, prose, and drama in the Faculty of Humanities and Education is designed to help students think analytically and uncover levels of meaning in different literary styles. For some citizens and employees, the idea of reading from sources besides the newspaper or materials directly related to one's interest or career is met with scepticism.

In contrast, students in the literatures programmes at Mona are guided into understanding the advantages that reading more widely can bring, including immersion from time to time in poetry, prose, drama, and important essays. The broad aim of our local UWI Mona programmes in literatures, whether in English, French, or Spanish, is to help our students expand their understanding and knowledge of the world beyond Jamaica and the Caribbean. In the process, they also come to develop deeper insights into Caribbean life with its complexities through the various texts that they must read.

Literature is without question about life, and students who study the discipline are led into a deeper understanding of humanity. For this reason, we encourage students to move literature out of the narrow sphere of studying for exams to value reading and literary analyses as training in interpreting details, probing for hidden meanings, exercising judgement, and evaluating opposing views and ideas. All of these are important for functioning in any career. We expose students to a broad range of significant trends in literary writing and, in this way, provide them with the opportunities to learn about other societies, regions, histories, and cultures and to write about them as well as they engage with complex ideas related to issues of identity, ethnicity, media, gender, and class, among others.

Finding Balance

Despite the tendency to undervalue one of the most important attributes of literature, it must be said that it helps our students to nurture their emotional selves and find a better balance in life. It is of note that many employers in the region and globally are increasingly inclined to employ persons who have studied literatures and languages because they recognise that these and other humanities disciplines prepare them to think with greater clarity, coherence,

and sensitivity, as well as exhibit the analytical skills necessary for making good judgement and becoming better employees and leaders in whatever sectors they work.

Graduates of The University of the West Indies are expected to play central roles in the social, economic, and political development of their respective Caribbean countries. Indeed, the humanities help students to be even more teachable and to develop knowledge, as well as core values of integrity, civic responsibility, respect, and an understanding of human freedom. I, for one, advocate the study of the humanities and education, as they are offered in our local UWI context as being critical to the development of a broad range of skills for interacting, working, and living in diverse communities within local and global contexts.

The Relevance of History in a Digitalised World

MATTHEW J. SMITH

THE LANDMARK PUBLICATION OF CLAUDE MCKAY'S *Amiable with Big Teeth*, appearing for the first time in print in February this year, generated much celebration and reflection in literary circles. Most observers have used it as an opportunity to contemplate the gifts that Clarendonian McKay gave to the world, made clear once again in the pages of this his previously unknown final novel. The manuscript had been lost to the ages until an intrepid graduate student, Jean-Christopher Cloutier from Columbia University, discovered it, untouched and languishing in an unexpected place in his university's library.

It is not only the impressiveness of the book's theme – a window unto what McKay calls “Afamerican” solidarity for Ethiopia in the inter-war years – that should force us to reflect, but the very existence of the book. Penguin, the book's publisher, has called its discovery “monumental” as it changes how we view McKay and the world he moved in. The find also points to something more fundamental: the power of discoveries to alter our understanding of the past.

Discoveries are the charging sparks of history. They illuminate aspects of a time we thought we knew and compel us to reconsider that knowledge. That is what excites students of history most: when we realise that there is always so much more to understand about our past. Think of the long-gone generations of McKay's faithful readers who believed that they had read all his works and now denied the opportunity to experience this newly public one. Readers coming to McKay for the first time, and those more familiar with him, can approach his body of work in a new light thanks to this discovery.

But discovery in history comes in different forms. Any knowledge of the past that is previously unknown to us is a discovery. It is the power of that knowledge to emancipate us on personal and collective levels and to reshape our understanding of the world we live in that is the real benefit of history.

Made in Each Moment

History is made in each moment. The accumulated registers of past actions form a human story of how we arrived at this point. It is never a complete story. Even with the shaky reliance on memory and the familiarity of its outlines and progress, the textures and colours of the story are filled in with enlightened perceptions and findings that expand our view of the world. Each new discovery is fitted and merged to the narrative of human experience to produce an enhanced sense of ourselves and our connections to a time before us. Without this, our awareness of our society and our place in it is depthless.

In 1964, historian Douglas Hall lectured undergraduates at Mona on the “Relevance of History” to Caribbean self-identity. That importance is under threat these days as fewer students at the UWI and in our secondary schools appear to be interested in the study of history. It is a global dilemma. Much evidence, both empirical and anecdotal, reveals that the numbers of history and traditional humanities majors has, over the past decade, dropped markedly in the United States, the United Kingdom, and Canadian public schools as well as at the UWI, prompting some higher-education critics to call it a “crisis in the humanities” from which there may be no return. This has led observers, even here in Jamaica, to call for radical reforms in humanities curricula or the joining of departments long viewed as separate disciplines.

These are possibilities that pioneering colleagues at Mona never had to fathom. In their time, the importance of history as a discipline was self-evident and unquestioned. As former colonies, Caribbean states measured our gains by our past. Our achievements were all the more spectacular because they had come out of a conscious awareness of everything that was rallied against us: a centuries-long belief that we had no history; metropolitan insistence that we were nothing more than appendages of empire; a denial of personhood; a

disregard for our cultural contributions; and an overarching assumption of inferiority.

Bedrock

When Hall, Elsa Goveia, Roy Augier, and others insisted six decades ago on the teaching of Caribbean history it was very much with the need for this self-awareness in mind; that whatever decisions we made about our future after independence it was with a deeply informed appreciation of where we had come from. Through public and private venues, scholastic and otherwise, history was embraced as the bedrock on which we stood as Caribbean people. Ziggy Marley's admonition on 1988's "Tomorrow People" that if "you don't know your past, you won't know your future" echoed a wider social acceptance of history's centrality.

Our artistes appreciated as much as our academics that without a grounded knowledge of the past, its importance is passed over and disconnected from a larger story. Their efforts are part of the legacy that we now take for granted.

Today, the drift of students from history is said to be the result of a variety of factors. Repeated arguments of irrelevance, inconsequentiality, unemployment, have been stated for decades. Just as often the troubling refrain that Jamaicans are too caught up with history, leaning on the past to explain away the shortcomings of the present, is being stated by younger people. There is also a louder declaration that we need to move on from the study of the past to meet the pressing demands of the twenty-first century, a criticism uttered by many who should know better.

The problem with these views is that they betray a sense of complacency, as if the discoveries of the past are finite and exhaustible. They also render inactive the need to reckon with the problems of the past, which continue to have remarkable endurance in our time. There is a grave danger in this. If history is treated as a fixed outcome and not as a live process of learning – an innovative, ever-growing discipline – where new findings fuel fresh and multiple interpretations, then we cease control of the search through our past, relying instead on outmoded ways of seeing ourselves and where we come from. We

further obscure the essential links between past and present that historical education facilitates and which makes our examination of the present more profound.

A pressing argument is that history education is now more diffuse with easily available online sources doing the job of history classes. It is incorrect to assume that history is not adaptable to these transformations in ways that, say, the hard sciences are. The study of history is always in constant evolution, building its reconstruction of the past on information from a variety of sources and using the technology and tools of the present to do so.

History degree programmes at Mona – History, Heritage Studies, Archaeology – now incorporate new technologies into their learning methods, including original digital history projects currently being developed with students and faculty.

Still, we should remember that digital information is meant to be supplementary. Uncritical use of them can muddle one's comprehension rather than improve it if not guided with the attention to production that comes from learning history. Even more, the preponderance of readily available information, unfiltered and often decontextualised, can lead to the quick assumptions of veracity that history training warns against.

Information is not knowledge. History is not simply facts and dates. To make sense of all that is now easily accessible only increases, not reduces, the need for the expertise that history offers.

If the lessons of the Caribbean experience have taught us anything it is that we should always question what we know and what has been written about us. In the absence of historical consciousness, rapid absorption of information can lead to superficiality, myths, distortions, and, even worse, factual inaccuracies. The age we live in makes this risk higher than any other moment and increases the urgency to act. Guarding against this involves a systematic approach to learning in which the humanistic disciplines are called upon as crucial, not optional. In this effort, history, and its eternal promise of discovery, is more relevant than ever.

Potent Words, Unique Voices

ANTHEA MORRISON

IN SEVERAL LITERATURE CLASSES AT MONA OVER THE YEARS, I have thought it useful to cite an early text by Lorna Goodison, Jamaica's new poet laureate, which memorably highlights the power of the word. The poem begins: "Some of my worst wounds / have healed into poems. / A few well-placed / stabs in the back / have released a singing / trapped between my shoulders." These brief lines have frequently triggered interesting and even intense responses from my students, who have heard in Goodison's words an echo of their own ability – or desire – to find in scribal expression both a remedy and an outlet. Some of our students will become creative writers. (The Department of Literatures in English currently offers undergraduate courses in writing poetry and prose. Among the celebrated writers who have brought their talents to bear on shaping our students are Mervyn Morris, Edward Baugh, Erna Brodber, Vladimir Lucien, Lorna Goodison, Kei Miller, Olive Senior, and Tanya Shirley.) But the many students of literature who have areas of interest other than creative writing are also confronted, in their years with us, with the power – whether therapeutic, subversive or persuasive – of the word.

The celebrated poet of Négritude Aimé Césaire affirmed, in the 1939 epic poem *Notebook of a Return to My Native Land*, his intention to articulate to the world the colonial alienation and dismal poverty of his people. The Martinican's declaration that, "Ma bouche sera la bouche des malheurs qui n'ont point de bouche" (My mouth shall be the mouth of those calamities which have no mouth.) A contemporary reader might view Césaire's youthful confidence as inflated. However, his emphasis on an aspect of the writer's craft embraced by many Caribbean wordsmiths – the ability to use one's voice to speak for the voiceless, to be advocate and spokesperson – remains compelling. It is also

germane to what I see as an integral part of the mandate of a humanities faculty. Whether their focus has been on literature, history, philosophy, modern languages, journalism, linguistics, education, information studies or popular culture, we believe our students have learnt, through the discussion which is an integral part of the classroom experience, that language is a singular tool, one to be deployed carefully and creatively. We believe that they appreciate that words matter, that their words are potent.

More specifically, courses in literature inevitably valorise both oral and scribal expression, in addition to developing and sharpening critical skills, using the literary text as fertile, raw material. Our graduates harness this acquired and rewarding sensitivity to the resources of language in a variety of career options including professions in the media, law, human relations, editing, teaching, diplomacy, administration, the creative industries – and the list goes on! I would argue that literary studies not only allow and prepare a student to use language creatively and effectively, but also offer a compelling example of the breadth and inclusiveness which should be characteristic of a humanities degree. Recently, for example, in addition to the traditional genres, innovative courses in the areas of film studies and popular culture have been added to the Department of Literatures in English curriculum.

Certainly, the love of language and literature has marked out rewarding pathways in my own life. Before joining the staff of the UWI, I had worked as a translator, after a UWI first degree in French and postgraduate work in francophone literature. The transition from translation to teaching was not a difficult one. I had always known that I wanted to teach and in both professions I found myself obliged to pay attention to linguistic detail and nuance, to value form as well as content. In 2004, I made another shift – this time from one campus to another, and from francophone literature to comparative literature. Once again, I was able to identify a certain reassuring coherence in these diverse activities: a concern with the power and the potential of language, a lasting fascination with the dense and fruitful terrain of literature.

Our students are similarly rewarded by their close scrutiny of (and hopefully their delight in) the literary text. Yet some may be initially intimidated by the requirement to produce multiple analyses reflecting close reading as a part of their coursework. The challenge of moving from the safe periphery of passive

learning to exposing their ideas in the discussion groups facilitated by tutorial sessions may also appear formidable to new students. From a pedagogical, and simply from a human point of view, how satisfying it is to hear those same students, nearer the end of the semester, offer interesting insights, sometimes preceded by a modest though not necessarily tentative disclaimer such as “This might seem like going too far”. For one of the pleasures of teaching literature is surely the latitude afforded thoughtful readers to “go far”, to go deep, to discover and to trust their own originality, to analyse and to tell compelling stories, to dare to offer what may seem to be unorthodox interpretations. Fluency and accuracy in oral and written expression, attention to detail, and a thoughtful though passionate engagement with ideas are ultimately, I believe, empowering for students.

In May this year, I had a wonderful opportunity to witness all those qualities demonstrated by three UWI students/former students who spoke at the Two Seasons Talking Trees Literary Fiesta, in Treasure Beach, St. Elizabeth. At the start of a programme which celebrated literature and performance, a programme featuring internationally known Jamaican writers, I was gratified to hear two of our graduates and one final year student hold their own as they addressed the large crowd with confidence and clarity. This stage was a far cry from the intimacy of the tutorial room, but these budding scholars demonstrated, I would like to believe, abilities nurtured in our humanities classrooms. (One of those students, Cornel Bogle, now a first class honours graduate, wrote one of the articles published earlier in this series, in which he eloquently illustrated the value and variety of a humanities education.)

The several departments in the Faculty of Humanities and Education all embrace as part of their mandate the need to extend activities beyond the campus. Events involving the wider community are regularly organised, including public lectures, book launches, discussions, readings and film festivals. As I look back over the years, many such events compete for attention in my memory, marking moments when I have been reminded that the appeal of the humanities (and specifically of my own discipline) is much wider than – though it does not exclude – the pragmatic pursuit of tertiary studies leading to a career. In the context of this brief article I will mention just one such moment, powerful in its impact. The year was 2007: I will never forget the excitement of

being in the presence of hundreds of Jamaicans, many not related to the UWI, who had come to the Mona campus to hear the remarkable Chinua Achebe. I discovered, as I chatted with a few members of the audience, that some had studied his iconic first novel, *Things Fall Apart*, at school and still remembered it vividly. Others were drawn to the novel's socio-historical dimension, interested in its incisive portrayal of the repercussions of colonisation in West Africa. I thought it significant that the lecture/celebration was in several respects an interdisciplinary undertaking. Professor Achebe had been invited to Jamaica to speak on the occasion of the bicentenary of the abolition of the transatlantic slave trade in Africans, and a colleague from the Department of History and Archaeology who chaired the committee responsible for the national commemorative activities offered the Department of Literatures in English the chance to collaborate in hosting him on campus.

And yet despite the exhilaration and the value of such opportunities for interaction with the wider community, I must come back finally to the most significant enterprise in which the Faculty of Humanities and Education is engaged, to the productive intimacy of classrooms which are, ideally, permeable, nurturing and empowering spaces. It is in these spaces that those pursuing tertiary education may learn, irrespective of the different curricula corresponding to a range of programmes, to analyse, to argue, to critique and to justify. And I come back to the rich resource which is the literary text, to the possibilities it offers students – and lecturers – of extending knowledge far beyond the familiar, of revelling in the seduction of language, of wielding the authority of the word.

The Practical Relevance of Philosophy

LAWRENCE BAMIKOLE

IF YOU THINK THAT PHILOSOPHY BEARS LITTLE RELEVANCE to societies that are struggling to develop economically and technologically, think again. To those who argue that countries struggling to develop cannot afford to use their meagre resources to support such programmes should consider that development is not only about economic and technological advancement. Development in a broad sense, involves progress in all forms which encompass the physical, mental, ethical and spiritual aspects of the human being. It is only when these various aspects are harnessed that a country's human capacities will be unleashed to experience growth in all facets of society. It is inadequate to relate development to the physical and mental advancement of the person alone while neglecting his or her ethical and spiritual aspects. Embedded in any sensible notions of development, should be the idea that subjects like philosophy are indispensable to the project of moving a nation forward along the path of multidimensional development.

As a discipline that is concerned with rational thinking, philosophy engages the human mind to think logically and rationally. The branches of philosophy that help in this kind of thinking are logic and epistemology. Simply put, logic is the act of correct reasoning while epistemology means a theory of knowledge. Logical thinking is based on evidence, a type of thinking in which conclusions are derived from clearly articulated foundations and premises. Rational thinking is thinking that is unprejudiced and de-tribalised. All societies require this kind of thinking in science and technology as well as in social and human affairs, to promote order and to engender growth and development. A synonym for rational thinking is reflective thinking. Reflective thinking is the kind of

thinking that asks metaphysical, ethical and spiritual questions. Metaphysics and ethics are also branches of philosophy.

While metaphysics is concerned with existence, ethics relates to the theory of human conduct and by extension how human beings arrange themselves into collectives. In practical terms, metaphysics asks questions about human existence along spiritual, spatial and social dimensions: Who created me? For which purpose was I created? How can I fulfil the purpose of my creation? Who am I? Where am I coming from? Where am I going? These questions are important if we wish to discover who we really are as persons and as peoples. Questions about human identity are such that they instil in us a sense of pride that is derived from the past and also a motivating factor in driving progress towards the future. It enables recognition of the necessity to cooperate and collaborate in order to achieve a common goal.

Reflective Thinking

However, apart from critical and rational thinking, societies also require ethical thinking about natural events and human organisation. The ethical dimension of reflective thinking enables us to weigh and consider the probable consequences of our intended actions. Ethical thinking is an act of putting ourselves in the position of others and asking ourselves if we will be willing for others to treat us as we want to treat them.

Thus, a criminal is expected to think and ask himself the question: if these acts were directed against me or my loved ones, how would I feel? Given the fact that human beings have feelings and are deemed moral beings, they should be able to undertake a thinking process that involves a role reversal of the aforementioned acts. If this is so, then it would dawn on rational persons who engage in harmful acts against other people, that such acts are intolerable and horrendous. This may eventually lead to such evil-minded but rational persons refraining from their nefarious activities. There are many instances in which convicted persons, upon reflection, become campaigners against the atrocity they committed.

Even in the sphere of the family, where dangerous emotional feelings and

attitudes can abound, there is need for some modicum of rational thinking to navigate any breakdown of relationships. The lack of logical and rational thinking in human relationships has resulted in the kind of crime-ridden society in which we have found ourselves as a people. Rational thinking helps in tolerating and accepting one another in the face of differences in opinion, gender, class, race and sexual orientations.

Love affairs among couples require some amount of rational thinking. Couples should reflect on the situations and conditions that brought them together. They should reflect on the purpose of their union and on that day when they were joined together with pomp and pageantry. Even if they were not joined together in such ceremonial circumstances, they should cast their minds back on those good times when they shared positive sentiments with one another. The benefit of such reflection is the ability to tolerate one another in the face of misunderstanding and the willingness to settle differences amicably rather than resorting to violence and abuse.

The public space also requires reflective and ethical thinking. The business and political spheres are the arenas in which different interests coalesce. Business and politics are similar because they are concerned with the provision of services. However, while business orients towards tangible service; politics is directed to the production of services that cater to all aspects of human and community needs. What is important for both business and politics is that they be guided by wholesome human relationships that are anchored on acceptable ethical behaviour.

Ethics as theory and practise is able to provide the tool for human beings to navigate the arena of public relationships. Such ethical theories revolve around our duties to ourselves (self-duty), our duties to one another (deontology), the cultivation of good qualities (virtue ethics) and awareness of the effects of our actions on ourselves and others (consequentialism). These are well-known ethical theories provided by the discipline of philosophy, which also provides the connecting link by which these theories are put into action through arguments.

The spiritual aspect of human beings is serviced by reflection about the source of existence and the relationship which that source shares with living creatures. Consequently, human beings are bound to reflect on the source of their

existence. This reflection is necessary in order for a greater understanding of the Being that is identified as the source of existence. Our society should not neglect the spiritual aspects of the human person. If we want to develop as an ethical and morally-centred country, then we should use all spiritual and rational means at our disposal to achieve this goal. Such means should themselves be seen to be ethical, just and equitable. Philosophy provides a set of guiding concepts that can reawaken, renew and empower a society to more ethically take advantage of the changing economic and technological aspect of society.

A Lifelong Career in Library Science

CHERYL PELTIER-DAVIS

AT THE AGE OF TWELVE (12), WHEN PROMPTED BY my primary school teacher to write about what I wanted to do when I left school, I wrote a two-page essay on what was my dream job: that of a flight attendant. Fast forward thirty-nine (39) years later and that essay would read quite differently if I were to write it today, as it would describe my lifelong career as a librarian. A far cry from what looked then like the glamorous world of a flight attendant, librarianship has been every bit as exciting and far more rewarding than what seemed then to be a fabulous career crisscrossing the globe.

My path toward librarianship started in the 1980s when I enrolled for the undergraduate degree in the Faculty of Humanities and Education at The University of the West Indies (UWI), St. Augustine Campus in my native country, Trinidad and Tobago. It became more focused when I commenced my postgraduate degree in Library and Information Studies in 1993, again in the Faculty of Humanities and Education (FHE), this time at the UWI Mona Campus in Jamaica. This training blossomed into a passion for my profession that led to appointments in the United States and the Caribbean; leadership roles in local, regional, and international library associations; scholarship and research that has contributed to documenting the history of Caribbean libraries; and led to the publication of a two-volume guide on social media tools and mobile apps for libraries across the globe. In brief, my career as a librarian has been fulfilling and exciting and has allowed me to make a valuable contribution to the development of the region in a sector that is key to its growth. In today's modern, technologically-driven societies, libraries no longer function as brick and mortar storehouses of information but are perceived as innovative, dynamic

organisations that facilitate discovery of print and electronic resources, preserve and provide access to our rich Caribbean heritage collections and support a plethora of technology-driven services to all segments of our society. In short, in an age where it is understood that knowledge is power, libraries stand at the very centre of Caribbean societies' continued quest to improve the lives of their citizens.

Like many careers defined by passion and commitment, this path has not been an easy one. At the UWI, St. Augustine Campus, I registered as a part-time student and also held a full-time job as a library assistant in a public library. My day would begin at the library; at the appointed time, I would leave to 'catch' a taxi or bus, travel to the UWI campus, attend classes and then return to work to complete the rest of my shift. A gruelling schedule to undertake for four successive years, but achievable due to the infrastructure put in place by the UWI administration and supported by faculty to facilitate part-time students. Of course, the cooperation of my employer at the time was also key.

I embarked on this demanding journey in pursuit of an undergraduate degree in history to fulfil an inner craving to traverse the world as viewed through the lenses of knowledgeable lecturers, study the mysteries of early civilizations, review the history of indigenous populations in dispersed geographic regions and explore the intricacies of Caribbean political, economic and social structures. As occurs at Mona, programmes at the FHE, St. Augustine offer students the flexibility to undertake a minor in another faculty. I chose to take a minor in social sciences, and explored subject areas – politics, sociology and anthropology – which would further enhance my educational experience. It was in one of my courses taken in the humanities, however, that I was presented with a unique, once in a lifetime opportunity, when award winning Trinidadian novelist, Earl Lovelace, read and critiqued my first fledgling attempts at creative writing. Under his tutelage, my poorly crafted short stories were honed to perfection, perfection which resulted in my receiving the faculty award for creative writing.

The writing skills I acquired in that creative writing class and the confidence afforded by the winning of the faculty prize, jumpstarted an award-winning career as an author and supported the mandated scholarly activities as academic librarian. To date, I have maintained a successful track record of original research

and publishing, presenting my research in books, book chapters, journal articles, conference presentations and blogs. Two noteworthy publications in this regard are an edited work on Caribbean libraries in the twenty-first century and a two-volume guide on social media tools and mobile apps in libraries.

After attaining my undergraduate degree with upper second class honours, I could have easily taken a job as a teacher in a secondary school of choice, but I had other ideas, built on a dream and on-the-job experience as a library assistant. I decided to travel to the Mona campus in Jamaica to read for a Masters degree in Library and Information Studies. This seminal degree, required for a professional career in librarianship, had at its core, courses designed to help students move seamlessly and with alacrity as generalists or specialists into their chosen library type, whether public, academic or specialist library.

As diligent as I was in my studies, university life was not only about academic work. At St. Augustine, there were ample opportunities to engage in activities outside the classroom, including my favourites, debating club and cataloguing the library collection of a history professor. On Thursday afternoons, there was 'liming', Trini style, in the undercroft and on Friday nights, eating areas were magically transformed into live discotheques, blasting music of all genres with added entertainment in the form of karaoke and dance competitions. At Mona, as a residential student I was able to partake fully and enjoy all that campus life offered. I attended special literary lectures, campus concerts – I even saw Beenie Man perform early in his career – and watched as an enthralled bystander when the Prince of Wales visited the campus in 1993. Added to this were daily morning treks around the campus Ring Road, carnival Jamaican style, and impromptu visits to the north coast arranged by an active Trini students' association.

Today there are no regrets. At the culmination of my postgraduate studies, the Department of Library and Information Studies at Mona awarded me the prestigious Dorothy Collings award for outstanding postgraduate work; in 2012 the department presented me with the Librarian of the Decades award. These signal honours from my alma mater were further proof that I had chosen the career path that was right for me. Pursuing an undergraduate degree in the humanities and a Masters degree in Library and Information Studies provided the foundation that has allowed me to function as a productive citizen of the

Caribbean and as a well-rounded librarian, capable of working effectively in different types of libraries and archives anywhere in the world. I have worked in university libraries in Bellingham, Washington, in Fort Lauderdale, Florida and at The University of the West Indies in Jamaica and in Trinidad and Tobago.

In an ever-changing world where modes of education are constantly evolving and present new opportunities and challenges, I am of the firm opinion that my career successes are closely aligned with my academic choices as an undergraduate and postgraduate student in the Faculty of Humanities and Education at the UWI. These academic choices laid the professional foundation required to gain entry into the real world of work and engage in a lifelong career spanning over twenty-two years in librarianship. The UWI has moulded me into the ideal graduate: a leader, a critical and creative thinker, innovative and entrepreneurial in outlook, dedicated to becoming a lifelong, self-motivated learner.

Beyond Bookish Knowledge

CORNEL BOGLE

Too much time has passed for me to recall the context of this scene, but it stands out before me nonetheless. In my first year at The University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, I found myself in the presence of the indomitable Carolyn Cooper, giving an animated reading of Buju Banton's "Untold Stories". The reasoning behind her impromptu analysis of this song escapes me at this moment, but I recall lingering on the lyricist's line, "full up of education yet no own a payroll", and immediately becoming defensive, as though it were an accusation or, worse, a prediction.

It reminded me of questions asked by well-meaning friends and family about how feasible it was to pursue a degree in Literatures in English, especially in times like these when professional degrees seemed to hold more promise. These questions usually did not irritate me. In fact, they emboldened me, for I knew the success and employability of graduates far outweighed the stigma assigned to students in the humanities. But, on that day, after reading the lines of a song I had heard on many occasions before, I briefly had doubts. What wonders reading can do to what we think we know, and how serendipitously it gives us room to reflect on choices we have made, and the language in which we defend them.

It is quite easy and understandable to approach defences of the humanities with scepticism, and label claims to the transformative and transcendent potentials of a degree in literatures in English, philosophy, or history as nothing more than out of touch, lofty and idealistic statements that have no ground on which to stand in today's increasingly mechanised and monetised world. However, the humanities have always had, and continue to have, an impact on how we think about the major problems that face the world, and provides its

students with the necessary skills to have meaningful lives within, and outside of the world of work.

In the age of anthropogenic climate change, which has continued to pose a major threat to the livelihood of Caribbean people, as seen in the heartbreaking scenes in the wake of recent hurricanes, critical study in the various disciplines of the humanities has a role to play in shaping our response. The emergence of the environmental humanities as an area of research signals an interest in an approach to the study of the natural world that goes beyond the materialism of the natural sciences. Moreover, this particular discipline challenges many of the misconceptions of the humanities as limited in its scope. Embracing an interdisciplinary approach that takes into account non-Western cultural conceptualisations of human relationship with land and ecology, the discipline expands our understanding of the challenges facing the world, and offers tangible solutions to these ongoing environmental crises. Understanding the challenges faced by a world becoming increasingly modern, necessitates an awareness of cultural politics that shape human relations; a kind of understanding that is central to training in the humanities.

Further bridging the perceived gap between the humanities and products of modernisation emerging from advancements in science and technology is the 'digital turn' that has taken place in the field, leading to the rise of digital humanities as a site of scholarly interest. In the Faculty of Humanities and Education, at the UWI, these shifts on a global scale aimed at taking into account the changing contexts of our daily lives, have not been ignored.

The movement towards interdisciplinary methods of approaching various texts, whether they be visual, literary, digital, or aural has resulted in exciting additions to course offerings within the faculty, as well as the establishment of a film studies minor, and the expansion of the Bachelors of Liberal Studies degree in the Department of Literatures in English. The latter allows students to take courses in a variety of disciplines across the humanities and social sciences. It is this willingness to consider new texts, and new forms of reading practices that is central to the ethos of the disciplines that make up the humanities, and one that our region and wider global community could benefit from today. Indeed, as the cultural critic Daniel Coleman argues in his book, *In Bed with the Word: Reading, Spirituality, and Cultural Politics*, a sustained

practice of reading and critical thinking is necessary, “if we are to see beyond the cynicism of commodity culture, if we are to engage in the hard work of ... producing citizens instead of consumers”.

The openness and interdisciplinary nature of the studies in the humanities may come as a surprise to some whose conception of the humanities conjures images of students with their head buried in books, detached from the world around them. The humanities was never simply about studying seemingly ancient books (though encountering these texts can be incredibly fulfilling and important in understanding one’s place in the world at this particular moment in history). Rather, the discipline was always more interested in what happens when we think critically, indeed ‘read’ the world around us as it emerges in the form of books, films, languages, philosophies, artefacts, music, dance, orature, and other forms of cultural production. As Coleman notes towards the end of his book, “It does matter what we read but, it matters even more who we become by reading.”

When we take time to consider the world we inhabit, and what has been and continues to be produced by individuals within, and outside of our culture, we are able to go beyond ourselves and our often limited experiences no longer become the only lens through which we encounter the world. It is only when we dare to consider reading as more than holding a book and deciphering symbols on a page, that we will ultimately recognise this practice as having the potential to transform us as individuals, and the communities from which we emerge.

How Foreign Languages Paved My Career Path

CAMILLE ISAACS-MORRELL

IT CAME AS NO SURPRISE WHEN I TOLD MY PARENTS that I wanted to study foreign languages at The University of the West Indies (UWI). My father, an educator specialising in physics and mathematics, and my mother, a career civil servant in the financial stream, always encouraged my sister and me to excel academically and develop our talents in a wide range of extra-curricular activities. They believed that this was how we would find out what we really wanted to do in life.

During my years at Immaculate Conception High School, I learnt foreign languages easily and excelled in history and English language and literature, where essays and term papers were frequently assigned. I was at ease meeting and speaking with foreigners in Jamaica, Europe, North America, and the wider Caribbean, and these experiences piqued my curiosity about foreign cultures, later complementing my love of languages in a way that would benefit my career.

The sweeping social and political changes in the 1970s during my teenage years gave me the burning desire to ‘do something’ to change Jamaica and the world. By far, the best years of my life were spent at UWI, where I pursued a Bachelors in Language and Linguistic Studies. Like my batchmates, I was ‘in my element’ learning from an interesting mix of professors from Germany, France, Spain, El Salvador, Haiti, Colombia, and Guyana. In the course of study, we were required to research foreign and local issues and to express our opinions in all of the foreign languages we were studying. We were graded for accuracy in grammar and vocabulary as well as for depth of analysis and critical thinking. I remember my father telling me that although it was important to

master the foreign languages, it was even more important for me to master the skills of critical, innovative thinking, effective communication, and the ability to quickly adapt to new business situations in order to be a successful applicant for a job. I gained all this and more during my time in the BA programme at UWI.

Beyond the academic training, there were other experiences at the UWI that were to shape my view of the world and my career. Along with my classmates, I was deeply involved in organising student exchange programmes with the Universidad Autónoma de Santo Domingo, French Students' weekend retreats, German Days, Foreign Language Students' concerts, lectures, and language club activities with visitors from various embassies in Kingston. Immersed in a sea of intercultural experiences, our minds were opened to diverse political thought and philosophies. As much as we learnt about other cultures, we also taught others about our own.

Sought Opportunities

Along the way, I met many people who questioned the value of studying foreign languages and an arts degree. Instead of trying to provide them with the 'right' answers, I actively and eagerly sought opportunities to put my training to work. I was a liaison aide at the United Nations Law of the Sea Conference and the Organization of American States General Assembly, which were hosted in Jamaica. I spent my summers as an intern at the Jamaica Tourist Board. Many people I met had studied the arts and humanities and told me how they had forged successful career paths in business, government, and international relations. I realised then that the options were many and that my proficiency in foreign languages gave me an advantage.

After university, I joined the Ministry of Foreign Affairs and Foreign Trade in the Protocol and Consular Division. There, I had the opportunity to translate official documents and serve as the interpreter in meetings with very senior officials. This is where I learnt about the main issues of the day in international politics, trade, travel, tourism, and law. I observed first-hand how language and communication in all its forms played into business deal making and

international relations. With this experience, I gladly accepted new challenges to serve in the Economic and Foreign Trade Divisions in the ministry and represent Jamaica at international conferences in the Caribbean and the Americas. I witnessed the emerging trends in globalisation and the increasing role of the private sector in international trade. I decided to do an MBA in International Business and Marketing at the University of Miami, where at that time, the focus was on preparing a new generation of global business leaders. This degree opened doors to a career in the private sector in Jamaica and then in Montreal, Canada, where I currently reside.

My academic training in languages at the UWI continues to be of great value. I communicate daily in French, which is the language of business in Montreal, the largest city in the French Canadian province of Quebec. My desire as a teenager 'to do something' for Jamaica and the world has morphed into a career in marketing in global institutions. In the various roles I have played, I have been involved in the creation of multilingual marketing communication programmes, international trade finance and credit-risk assessment, and the development of global brands, while managing teams of persons with diverse backgrounds.

Over the years, I have been, and still am, a committed volunteer, where my training in business and in the arts have been considered to be of added value. I currently serve on the board of directors of the YWCA-Montreal, an organisation whose clientele consists of a large number of immigrants who are being equipped to become fully integrated into the society. I have been invited to write articles and speak in English and French at churches to youth groups and professional associations, mainly on topics related to personal and professional development in a multicultural society. In a world where technological innovation is held as the gold standard for progress, and where students are encouraged to pursue purely technical degree programmes, it should never be forgotten that technology is only valuable if it meets people's needs. Often, my colleagues and business associates who do not have any formal training in the arts and humanities express appreciation for the broader perspectives and recommendations that I have brought to technical projects, particularly with regard to clients' needs.

I truly believe that my foundation in the arts, more specifically the degree

programme at the UWI, has led me take an analytic approach that presents diverse opinions and perspectives of various stakeholders, which is critical to understanding and successfully meeting clients' needs.

With a career spanning more than thirty (30) years in Jamaica, the USA, and Canada, I know that I will never retire. There is so much more work to be done to make the world a better place. I am truly grateful for the education in the arts, which has shaped my view of the world and has served to support all my professional pursuits. The knowledge gained and the skills that were honed in those early years are still relevant and of value in a changing world and will continue to equip me to contribute to building a truly integrated global village.

How the Humanities Opened the Window to the World

DAVE RODNEY

LIKE MOST SIXTH FORMERS, I JUMPED STRAIGHT from high school to college – in my case, to the Mona campus of The University of the West Indies (UWI) to read for a degree in the humanities.

I could hardly wait to begin my journey at the UWI. My passion was foreign languages, so I registered for French, Spanish, and German courses. For the last few years at high school, I lived in Mona Heights – a stone’s throw from the campus – and since some of my friends were already students there, I knew the campus well. I had also met some of the lecturers during Saturday seminars for sixth formers in the last year of high school.

Few students nowadays would have the courage to take on a French course called F212, “The History of the French Language”, which examined the transition from Latin to modern French, with a consideration for French-based creoles in the Caribbean. Notwithstanding, we voluntarily immersed ourselves in courses like those, not because of the ability of the course to generate employment, but because of sheer academic curiosity and a genuine passion for the studies. And happily, the Faculty of Arts and General Studies (now Humanities and Education) had a level of flexibility to accommodate students who wanted to do courses outside their programmes. With my Modern Languages option, I was also able to do courses in educational psychology, an opportunity I greatly welcomed.

The time that I spent at the UWI was rewarding. While the academics brought intellectual growth, there was still an entrepreneurial and a co-curricular restlessness in me that had to be satisfied. I could never sit still. From the first

semester on campus, I became the unofficial house sitter for lecturers who were travelling overseas. I protected the houses, fed dogs, and watered plants. I was voted president of the Modern Languages Society, and apart from setting up seminars at Gibraltar Camp Road and at Bellevue (the one in the hills), language weekends, and promoting French plays on campus, I took forty-five (45) students one Christmas to visit Haiti.

My hunger for multiple activities while at the UWI led to other ventures as well. I taught Spanish at the UWI Extra Mural Department two evenings per week; history at Ardenne Extension School two evenings per week; and I started a Saturday Spanish class for students at the Ardenne Preparatory School. I was a DJ for on-and-off campus parties, an obsession that followed me to France, where I played for campus parties at the University of Nice. And at Mona, my natural curiosity always led me to see what was happening at the Students' Union, at the Sir Phillip Sherlock Centre for the Performing Arts for lunch hour concerts, and at the University Chapel, especially at Christmastime where I thoroughly enjoyed the annual carol service by candlelight.

In fact, while I was at UWI, lecturers often used to invite groups of students for wine and cheese and dinner parties at their homes. As students, we loved these gatherings, and they were my first introduction to dishes like coq-au-vin (chicken cooked in red wine) prepared by the wife of our French lecturer Dominique Onimus, and the legendary curry goat and roti cooked by Lal Narinesingh, senior lecturer in Golden Age Spanish literature, who was from Trinidad and Tobago. These outings may have appeared to be just for eating a meal, but the underlying interaction accomplished so much more, including the development of social agility among students, an essential skill for the working world. I was riveted by the daily dose of engaging conversations among students under the *lignum vitae* trees in the faculty courtyard while students were awaiting their 'top of the hour' classes. The range of topics discussed were as diverse as the dazzling array of students who attended UWI. We all learnt from each other's collective multicultural experiences, and we took it all in stride, as the revelations of each new day made us stronger, bolder, brighter and better citizens of the world.

I am now the co-owner of a marketing company based in New York. The journey from the Faculty of Arts and General Studies to sitting atop New York

City skyscrapers has been a fascinating one with valleys and peaks. Looking back, I now realise that every single experience at UWI, both the academic and the co-curricular, prepared and enabled me, and indeed all of us, to take on global challenges in our professional lives. While the core of my work remains in marketing, my study of foreign languages has brought me untold opportunities. I have utilised those skills to create a reggae programme in French (with my former UWI lecturer Jean Small) for a radio station in Montreal, Canada that was syndicated to ten stations across the French Canadian province of Quebec, promoting Jamaica's music and culture.

I feel that there are no limits to opportunity and entrepreneurship, and the full-bodied education that I was able to secure from pursuing areas within the humanities at UWI was, for me, an excellent springboard to take on all sorts of exciting challenges in the outside world. I create opportunities by identifying and synergising the possibilities, and the humanities equipped me superbly with many of the tools I would later need to turn dreams into reality in an ever-changing world.

Humanities Education for Freedom and Socioeconomic Development in Postcolonial Societies

WAIBINTE E. WARIBOKO

IN VARYING DEGREES, MANY OF THE CONTEMPORARY socioeconomic and political problems of postcolonial societies in the twenty-first century are still traceable directly to their colonial past and their current disadvantageous locations within the postcolonial global capitalist system. This system has over the centuries, with very little modifications, promoted and sustained the exploitative forms of economic relationships between the erstwhile colonial societies and the industrialised (or post-industrialised) societies within the global capitalist system. Postcolonial studies in humanities education and the social sciences have shed useful light on the contradictions inherent in the existing international division of labour and their implications for the practice of freedom, cultural and socioeconomic development in postcolonial societies. We need more critical and relevant humanities education and the social sciences, not less, to also more fully understand the gapping technological divide between the rich and poor countries of the world that has worked to widen and nourish the existing international division of labour in the twenty-first century.

As the effects of globalisation and information communication technologies rapidly reshape our international horizons and perceptions, there is now a tendency among some people to see the impoverished erstwhile colonial societies as merely the underdeveloped (or, better yet, developing) segments or regions of the international economy. The reasoning is that, if we are all now members of one globalised community, the problems of impoverished erstwhile

colonial societies cannot be much different from any of the backward areas, or regions, of the industrialised (or post-industrialised) societies. An idea has emerged on the basis of this reasoning, which is flawed, that ‘foreign investors’ are as good a means for achieving the much needed and desired technological breakthrough as ‘indigenous investors’, especially when the latter are perceptibly inadequate. There are two related flawed ideas that are directly traceable to the idea above. Although this view is increasingly losing its potency, there are those who still see ‘foreign investors’ as innocent and willing agents for the transfer of technology. Secondly, these erstwhile colonial countries have also been told that, because of the existence of more competitive technologies, they need not go through the same difficult and tortuous paths which the industrialised societies have been through to achieve their own technological breakthroughs. They are, simply put, being told not to reinvent the wheel, but to utilise the accumulated experiences and technologies of industrialised societies via the ‘foreign investor’ for their own socioeconomic development.

This type of thinking and the type of education that promotes this type of thinking are counterproductive to the practice of freedom and socioeconomic development in postcolonial societies. In some of the worst instances this view about development has led to a passive state whereby the peoples and governments of developing countries had assumed that as long as ‘foreign investors’ remained engaged technology would develop through a transfer process.

Many text books describe this process as “industrialisation by invitation”. Yet, after more than fifty years since decolonisation in the latter part of the twentieth century, underdevelopment has persisted and gotten worse in many of these developing countries. Externally driven developments are barren of internal energies that only the indigenous people can supply.

The technological divide between the erstwhile colonial societies and their former metropolitan colonisers, as earlier observed, has reached a new height never seen or known before.

Developing countries, among other things, now seem wedded to the idea that STEM education can provide the urgently needed solutions to underdevelopment. In pursuit of that idea, since the beginning of the twenty-first century (or even earlier in some instances), many developing countries have

started building more universities and colleges of science and technology. This is with a view to increasing the local supply of graduates in the subjects of science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM). STEM education, A.B. Lantz indicates, is an attempt at eliminating “the traditional barriers erected between the four disciplines by integrating them into one cohesive teaching and learning paradigm”. Implicit in the debate in favour of STEM education is the assumption that the preexisting education models and curricula have failed to create the “takeoff” conditions necessary for bridging the technological gap for industrialisation in postcolonial societies.

Assuming that this is the way to go, there are still certain questions begging for answers. Given the contemporary political economy of global capitalism, to what extent can STEM education alone facilitate a transfer of technology in the erstwhile colonial societies? Without an understanding of the socio-historical situations of these erstwhile colonial societies what forms of technology will STEM education seek to introduce (or transfer)? To what extent can the new curricula of STEM education (if there is one in place) facilitate true education for the practice of freedom and development without humanities education and the social sciences? All of these overlapping questions, particularly the last one, have been posed for reflection in part because the idea of STEM education, as a socially constructed body of knowledge, cannot be fully appraised and understood without being squarely placed and interrogated within the political and sociological framework of knowledge production in the twenty-first century.

It is difficult to contemplate socioeconomic development in erstwhile colonial societies without the right technologies, including the right educational systems to sustain the emergent technological base. These technologies and educational systems to be put in place have to reflect domestic realities that are more favourable to the utilisation of existing local factor proportions. In a developing economy that is overly characterised by surplus unskilled labour, for example, how do entrepreneurs and the state manage the relationship between labour and technology as factors of production to achieve social stability and sustainable socioeconomic development? For the right indigenous technology to emerge it has to be rooted in the domestic soil and allowed to grow its own branches by deriving its own nutrition from the fertility of the domestic soil in

which it is being grown. The advantages of promoting indigenous technology over foreign technology, among other things, are as follows: to encourage the emergence of technology based on the right domestic factor proportions; to stimulate and encourage the social mobilisation and psychological involvement of the local community; and cheapen the overall financial and ideological cost of development associated with some of the well-known nefarious political activities of 'foreign investors'. These points are ideologically very critical to the pursuit of sustainable development, however defined, for postcolonial societies.

The answers to these overlapping and complex questions cannot be answered fully and satisfactorily by the technologist, the mathematician, the engineer, and the scientist alone, without contributions from humanities education and the social sciences. This is because these disciplines are more equipped to provide the ideological, socio-historical, political and cultural contexts for explaining knowledge production and socioeconomic development. All ideas and concepts, including those collectively reflected in STEM education, have emanated from thoughts and actions that were significantly determined by the concrete social situations in which the proposers of these ideas and concepts lived and operated. For this reason, any society, especially developing postcolonial societies, cannot afford to relegate humanities education and the social sciences to the background in their educational system. These disciplines have to inform, among other things, the national discourse for true education that is capable of promoting the practice of freedom and socioeconomic development.

Literature Education in the Service of Popular Culture

AISHA SPENCER

THE PERCEPTION MANY HAVE OF THE ARTS IS THAT OF A SPACE which harnesses things of symbolic significance deemed aesthetically pleasing but not seen as economically viable. It is important that as a society, we begin to appreciate that the arts are not simply valuable because of what they produce, but also because of the skills individuals gain through particular processes of learning and experience provided through engagement with these areas. Wealth is not created simply by possessing qualifications but, more importantly, by having the necessary skill set to ensure social and economic success. Processes of teaching and learning in the arts consistently immerse students in creative thought and activity; transformative action; political action (which brings visibility to marginalised realities and groups); and futuristic strategies designed to provide avenues of growth for the country.

As an example, we can take a quick glance at the area of literature. This subject ought to be valued as a vital part of any democratic process, and yet between the twentieth and twenty-first century, the number of schools that now place this subject as a compulsory part of the school curriculum has decreased significantly. This occurs even while research continues to demonstrate that an encounter with literature in the classroom provides students with solid opportunities to develop self-awareness, build creative power, and become active citizens of their country.

Many schools are now only selecting particular students to sit English B in the CXC examination process based on the questionable judgement that those selected are 'intelligent' enough to perform well in the area. The purpose of

schooling, however, is not to privilege the gifted, but to enable open access to education for all students, from all backgrounds. What empowers a student to perform well is the quality of the educational process through which the student discovers knowledge and gains experience in that area. While natural predisposition matters, exposure to new educational content can help determine choices, especially where this exposure engages real-life experiences.

Represent Life

Literary texts represent life. They showcase the world and the responses of individuals to the various social, political, economic, and environmental contexts. They provide students with a safe space for critical reflection, negotiation of feelings, attitudes, ideas, and possible actions. More than anything else, the world of the literary text offers alternatives. Students learn that there is never one perspective, one road, or one solution.

In her thought-provoking keynote speech at the Inaugural Gabriel Coulthard-William Mailer Distinguished Lecture on April 12, 2017, at the UWI, Mona Campus, Dr. Elizabeth Wilson powerfully articulated the fact that the study of literature promotes understanding and dialogue. She observed that in helping to develop the imagination, literature becomes a strong vehicle to enable social change. This occurs not simply through the act of reading, but through the methodologies teachers utilise in helping students to navigate their way through a text.

Pedagogically, response-oriented frames surrounding the teaching and learning of literature support the notion that classroom moments ought to utilise students' experiences and help them to discover ways of 'reading' the outside world based on their reading of a text. When teachers apply a response-oriented approach to the teaching of literature, the focus shifts from feeding the student numerous pieces of literary knowledge to providing students with opportunities to use this knowledge to interrogate what Paulo Friere would refer to as "the world and the word". This develops critical literacy skills in students and offers them a tool through which to learn how to function emotionally and socially.

The processes of interpreting and responding to the various aspects of the world in a literary text offers countless opportunities for the youth of our country to question, evaluate, and critique characters, situations, and emotional states of being in any given text. Such experiences with literature help to transform students' thinking patterns, and subsequently, positively influence the way they act. Students gradually make choices based on the skills of negotiation, interrogation, and creativity learnt through their encounters with literature. These skills contribute greatly to building and sustaining a culture that is not based on a system of privilege and power. Literary exposure stimulates most students to construct sustainable avenues of progression and advancement for themselves and their society.

Literature and the arts encourage innovation, active participation, and transformation in our society. This is why the arts matter: not just as symbolic aspects of our culture, but also as a platform for change. Literary and other creative engagements offer individuals a sense of empowerment to become productive, prosperous, and successful citizens who can contribute to growth and development in our society.

Jamaican Archaeology and High-Tech Human Stories

ZACHARY J.M. BEIER

LIKE OTHER DISCIPLINES IN THE HUMANITIES, ARCHAEOLOGY is dedicated to uncovering human stories. Archaeologists study the things made and left behind by past peoples. We have come a long way from using simply a shovel and sieve to expose our human past. Today, the availability of innovative technologies for high-tech archaeological analyses produces high-resolution human stories that allows us to engage with a more dynamic and lifelike past. Examples of this technology include x-ray guns that identify an artefact's chemical composition, as well as ground penetrating radar that detects buried sites and ancient DNA from humans that says more about origin and biological makeup than ever before. The application of technology in Jamaican archaeology is particularly significant because of the potential to enhance our understandings about populations that have been “silenced” in popular histories through European colonialism. Archaeological research allows the silenced peoples of the island, such as indigenous Taíno and displaced and enslaved African groups, to “speak” to us today.

Archaeology and Tech at the UWI Mona

The Department of History and Archaeology at The University of the West Indies (UWI) Mona is currently involved in two major research projects that bring together state-of-the-art methods in the investigation of these significant but “silenced” Jamaican people. Archaeology at the White Marl Taíno

settlement and at sites from former sugar plantations on the UWI Mona campus brings to light Jamaica's dynamic human past and provides university students with meaningful professional practice and experience in this tech-forward field. Both projects are on sites that are not only significant to global human history but also to the progress of Jamaican society through infrastructure development. As a result, these investigations have relied on local/international and public/private partnerships, which, along with technology, bring archaeology into HD-quality focus in the twenty-first century. These projects have involved key contributions from Mr. Dorrick Gray and the Jamaica National Heritage Trust (JNHT), Dr. Hayley Mickleburgh and Leiden University (Netherlands), Dr. Angus Mol and the VALUE Foundation, and Dr. Jillian Galle and the Digital Archaeological Archive of Comparative Slavery (DAACS) at Monticello (Virginia, USA).

White Marl and Indigenous Jamaica

White Marl is one of the most important archaeological sites on the island of Jamaica. The size and rich archaeological record of this settlement is a testament to the lifeways and deathways of some of the first Jamaicans – going back over 1,000 years. Unfortunately, its present-day location along the busy and expanding Nelson Mandela highway threatens the existence of this significant cultural resource. Ongoing archaeological investigations by the Jamaica National Heritage Trust, the UWI Mona, and Leiden University seek to preserve and interpret this site for the benefit of Jamaica and world history. This study utilises advanced technologies, including site mapping of this extensive settlement with surveying equipment, satellite imagery, and Geographic Information Systems (GIS). We have paired these tech methods with scientific dating and 3D and geochemical analysis of the White Marl landscape, human burials, and artefacts.

Our work has already offered fresh insights. For instance, bone samples recovered from intact human burials identified during excavations have provided radiocarbon dates ranging between AD 1220 and AD 1654, which overlap with the Spanish occupation of Jamaica – when Amerindians were forced to work as labourers in Villa de la Vega (Spanish Town). This timeline

suggests Taíno continuity rather than immediate and total extinction. Additionally, specialists from Leiden University analysed teeth sampled from these burials. Different levels of carbon and nitrogen from these samples suggest the Taíno population of White Marl included “locals” to this area and “foreigners” from other parts of Jamaica or wider region based on the contribution of marine foods to individual diet. Furthermore, starches identified on teeth indicate that White Marl people were consuming maize (corn), wild beans, and cocoa – giving us added insight into their diets and daily life as well as potent links with other regions in the Americas. Continued archaeology at White Marl will provide even more detailed information on Jamaica’s first peoples, but these early results are very interesting indeed, as they are the first of their kind for Jamaica.

The Mona Campus and Colonial Jamaica

Like White Marl, archaeology on the UWI Mona campus has relied on various types of technology to provide voices to those who, in the past, have often been silenced. Our investigations have focused on identifying and presenting to the public evidence associated with the everyday lives of individuals and communities impacted by the realities of African slavery. The UWI Mona campus includes above-ground and below-ground evidence associated with two eighteenth century sugar plantations: the Mona and Papine estates. In the past decade, historical and archaeological investigations carried out by the Department of History and Archaeology in collaboration with DAACS at better clarified the location of these campus resources and aided in their interpretation.

This work has used standard technologies in archaeology like, for example, site mapping methods along with systematic excavation. In the last two years, the UWI Mona Archaeological Field School has focused on the Mona works yards, which includes residences for the bookkeeper and overseer. The recovered artefacts suggest an area of high activity for both work and other types of social life including foodways, personal adornment, and recreation. In conjunction with DAACS, a growing catalogue of plantation-period material culture from the UWI Mona campus is being incorporated into an online database. This

digital archive features an abundance of information concerning sites impacted by African slavery in North America and the Caribbean (see www.daacs.org). This application of computer science to the humanities – Digital Humanities – encourages comparative archaeological research on slavery that is global in scale and uses innovative technologies to expand access and sharpen the images, resulting in a captivating means of presenting ‘big data’ to the public.

High-tech Archaeology and Jamaican Stories

The human stories in Jamaica’s prehistory and history rely on the use of technology to bridge the temporal and cultural distance between the vastly different societies of today and those from over 1,000 years ago. Technology solutions make up for the absence of written records and revise misrepresentations resulting from unequal voices in the colonial past. Archaeology is particularly relevant in the twenty-first century as development practices in some areas of the globe threaten to further silence important segments of our human past. The Department of History and Archaeology at the UWI Mona is poised to carry out this work as well as train the future Jamaican archaeologists, heritage specialists, and historians in the craft of producing high-tech human stories.

Digital Technology Media in the Humanities

YVETTE ROWE

THE SOCIAL MEDIA PLATFORMS FACEBOOK, INSTAGRAM, Twitter and YouTube, now part of our everyday lives, are also a manifestation of how digital technology has changed the way we live, work, study and play. These innovations allow us to create and share content – videos, photos, text and audio – in ways that, decades ago, were only available to professionals and media organisations. At the Caribbean School of Media and Communication (CARIMAC) at The University of the West Indies, Mona, the new digital technologies have had a significant impact: they present new possibilities for teaching and learning, they have driven changes in course content and they have spawned vital questions and issues that the institution, of necessity, must address.

Innovation is commonplace in the fields of information, entertainment and audio visual applications in media, but whilst there has always been a constant upgrading of equipment, digital technology, the computer's hardware and software, and the internet, have had a tremendous impact on our lives. Just think back ten years ago to what you were doing online, on the computer, or how you were watching television. Then think about how that has changed. Ten years ago, Twitter was just emerging and Facebook was just a toddler at three years old.

When I started working at the UWI in 1999, digital technology was just emerging for use by media professionals and consumers. This was something of a hybrid period when both analogue and digital technology existed side by side. Analogue technology, such as cassette recorders and players, VHS video players and recorders, and reel to reel tapes, work to create a copy or an analogy.

Digital technology converts information to binary code or bits and allows for the transmission and storage of large amounts of information or material that can be compressed so that it takes up less space and can be moved around at greater speeds. I entered the digital age when I swapped my professional cassette player/recorder for a small mini disc digital recorder that was a cross between a CD and a floppy disk. Audio material on this device could be easily transferred to a computer for editing, and that editing was nondestructive as it did not affect the original material. It could be done, undone and redone with keyboard and mouse. All this was a far cry from the analogue editing of magnetic tape that involved cutting the tape, removing what was not needed, and sticking it back together with a special adhesive tape.

In the digital environment, change is constant for the student and teacher. The new tools allow teachers to do more with content and to operate at higher standards, closer to those of the professional. Students can now work with media content, not only in the laboratories at the university, but also on their own personal devices at the location of their choice. The cellphone, once banned from classrooms because it was regarded as a distraction, has now become an essential tool. Students use it to practice techniques in the composition of images, to record audio and video, to collaborate with each other and to create and access content such as podcasts, training videos and news feedback. Students working on video and audio interviews transcribe and log the material in their own time on their own devices, and use their phones to keep visual and audio notes of conversations, presentations, and documents. The journalist's contact book of old is now a device, and the personal device used at home or on the move, is now a link to worldwide information and media; it is also an audiovisual recorder, a camera, a games console, a sound, vision and text communication device and much more with the addition of any of the many apps available. The tools we use professionally and for leisure have now become integrated.

Who could have predicted that Facebook, Instagram and other social media platforms would become more than just a way to make contact with others and share information? Some 300 million people use Twitter every month and it is now not only a major source of news and commentary, but also a marketing tool for companies. These new tools not only bring a world of media and news

to the consumer, they also enhance the ability to incorporate feedback into the conversation – an important aspect of the communication process that the traditional media could not so easily accommodate. Audiences now have a chance to give feedback, become part of the conversation, direct it and even create it.

These new opportunities raise new dilemmas with which the digital humanities are vitally engaged. We can do things at greater speed, but that also means we have less time to think before we act. We are now more connected than ever to information and to the rest of the world, but this can also make it more difficult to switch off, disconnect and relax. We can now record our experiences and share but we also run the risk of spending more time documenting our experiences than enjoying them. The advances also bring new concerns like cyber stalking and bullying, abuse and threatening tweets, hacking, fake news, and privacy issues.

In our media courses at CARIMAC students are not only taught how to use and apply the new and exciting digital tools, they are also encouraged to take a holistic look at them: to consider the benefits they offer as well as the challenges they present and the impact they have on our way of life in the Caribbean. In effect, we seek to produce critically thinking citizens of this brave new digital world who know how to manipulate its tools, and who have the insight, awareness and knowledge to successfully negotiate its pitfalls. New tools, new rules. Some of the old rules still apply but some change with the tools. How we maximise engagement and extend what we do in service of learning and opening up communication possibilities involves not merely having the tools and using them, it must also include thinking about the change that technology brings and understanding what these changes mean for us as Caribbean people.

Mastering the Arts and the Sciences of Animation

DAVID SOUTAR

AS A CHILD OF THE '80S I BELONG TO A GENERATION raised by television and video games. Like many children today, I sat on my living room floor, legs crossed, glued to the television, watching cartoons, mainly produced in Japan and Korea but dubbed in English for foreign audiences. With the advent of cable and channels such as Nickelodeon and Cartoon Network, my afternoons and Saturday mornings were spent watching cartoons such as Dragon Ball Z, Cowboy Bebop and Batman: The Animated Series. Like many of my peers and students, this is where my passion for art and drawing began: pencil and paper in hand, pausing the VCR to trace the characters on the television.

My requests for art supplies and extra drawing classes were met with encouragement, but they were also paired, compliments of my parents, with extra classes in math and computer science. Upon beginning my undergraduate degree in Design and Animation, I quickly found that the worlds of animation art and of science were intertwined. My understanding of computer science, physics, and biology made me more versatile within the animation-production environment. While the core principles of animation can be explored by drawing in the corner of a textbook, professionally, the process is far more complex. Animation has evolved from the days of Walt Disney with a team of fine artists working over drafting tables and light boxes, drawing hundreds of images of Mickey Mouse.

Artistic Skill Set

Today, teams of people using powerful computers and cutting-edge technology

create lifelike animation using skills ranging from three-dimensional modelling and digital painting to even computer programming and physics-based simulations. While the skill set of an animator is firmly rooted in drawing and artistic expression, modern animation requires the blending of fine art and science. Animation as we now know it today has some of its roots in the sciences, with many of the early examples of computer-based animation being created by mathematicians, computer scientists, and even nuclear physicists.

Animation is, essentially, an exercise of the creative imagination and a professional skill that is being sought by a large number of young people in Jamaica and globally. Until recently, the only avenue to study and work in animation was overseas. Like many of my peers of over a decade ago, I pursued my education in animation in the United States, and I imagined that it would be unlikely to return to Jamaica and find employment in my field. However, today, I am very much based in Jamaica teaching and working in the field of animation and motion graphics at the Caribbean School of Media and Communication (CARIMAC), in the Faculty of Humanities and Education, UWI. For many others like me, the local animation landscape is rapidly changing for the better.

The list of local animation firms is growing steadily, with studios such as Real Rock GSW, Alcyone Animation, Liquid Light Digital, and Pixel 3D – all based in Kingston. They are creating animated content not just in the form of cartoons, but also architectural visualisation, video games and motion graphics for broadcast and advertising. CARIMAC, the first local institution to offer certificates and now pioneering a Bachelors degree in Animation, is among several other tertiary educational institutions in Jamaica offering varied training programmes in the field, including the Edna Manley College, the HEART Trust/NTA and University of Technology.

To the surprise of many, a leading proponent of animation training is none other than the World Bank, a global institution more readily associated with major infrastructure projects, agricultural enterprise, and urban development. Some of the Bank's more imaginative leaders quickly recognised that national economic development also involves developing the creative competences of young people who can combine art with the science of design and computing. In this process, the World Bank has joined local institutions in twice hosting

the regional animation festival called “Kingstoon” in Jamaica. The Kingstoon Animation Festival not only brought representatives from the regional and international animation industry to Jamaica, it also showcased the work of local animation firms and independent animators. The educational institutions now work closely with the Ministry of Science, Energy and Technology to help grow the nation’s capacity in animation education and employment.

Major Players

This relatively recent increase in animation activity locally is fuelled by the success stories of countries such as India, South Korea, and the Philippines, which have become major players in a global animation and gaming market valued at over US\$243 billion in 2016. Animation is being seen as an avenue towards increased local job creation, especially among young people. The success of the leading countries is largely due to their low-cost yet highly-skilled labour force trained in both the arts and the sciences. Locally, call centres are currently at the forefront of the outsourcing debate, but much more is possible given the talent and creativity of our people. Animation may well prove to be the next frontier for digital services export from Jamaica and the Caribbean.

This is especially the case as the role of the animator is expanding beyond just the creation of two-dimensional animated cartoons and now becoming an integral part of the special effects and often outsourced post-production pipeline in the creation of blockbuster movies. One simply has to look at the credits of any recent Avengers or Transformers movie to see the list of hundreds of animators, writers, and digital artists from close to a dozen studios spread across the world who contributed to the creation of the final film. This collaborative approach is also possible in Jamaica and in humanities faculties such as UWI’s and Edna Manley’s, drawing on the writing, storytelling, and creative abilities of students and staff.

While Jamaica’s animation industry is still in its early stage, with only a few small firms currently operating, the country’s shared language and proximity to production markets in the United States and Canada are valuable assets in becoming a destination for animation outsourcing. As India and Korea and

other animation markets worldwide grow, outsourcing firms have begun to look towards subcontracting their animation contracts to smaller, newer, and more affordable markets. This is in line with one of the current visions for the development of Jamaica's future animation industry.

The development of a diverse and highly-skilled creative workforce is essential to creating a sustainable animation sector. The foundation for this has to be laid in the primary, prep and all-age schools throughout the country, including the introduction to visual art at an early age. Putting high school students into boxes called arts on the one hand, and sciences, on the other, can frustrate those who want a career in both arts and sciences, through pursuits such as animation and game design. The future of Jamaica's animation industry is being advanced by educational institutions and small firms led by visionaries and staffed by creative people passionate about animation and storytelling. The future of Jamaica's fledgling animation sector rests in the hands, literally, of the current generation of young animation enthusiasts sitting in front of their televisions and computers knowing that they can become not just consumers of foreign animation, but also creators of local animated content through multifaceted training and a broad-based education.

Critical Thinking and Career Choices in the Creative Industries

RAY HITCHINS

AS WE APPROACH THE THIRD DECADE OF THE NEW CENTURY, the subject of careers represents a minefield of uncertainty, particularly for parents and their school-leavers who find themselves balancing the pros and cons of tertiary education. At times this feels like being trapped between the proverbial 'rock and a hard place' as few professions still offer a lifelong guarantee of employment and many are often oversubscribed and high in cost. Technology has also dramatically changed the career landscape, and while the internet provides unlimited access to new markets, it also encourages competition from every corner of the globe. A common challenge for many school-leavers is an inability to identify a preferred career, exacerbated by a failure to recognise his or her natural strengths and attributes.

As the coordinator for the Entertainment and Cultural Enterprise Management (ECEM) degree offered by the Institute of Caribbean Studies at The University of the West Indies (UWI), Mona, I interact with many young people who enter the UWI grappling with the above uncertainties and concerned with aligning their developing career interests with the need to earn a good and reliable salary. For many students, their perspective can be summed up by a common desire to avoid the dreaded 'nine-to-five job' or, as they see it, spending their lives trapped by four walls and a desk. While some might interpret this as a sign of immaturity, many of these students display a strong work ethic, an entrepreneurial instinct, and are often creative and self-motivated.

The ECEM degree is unique in the Caribbean: in addition to offering courses that focus on the creative industries, it also culminates in an internship which

places the student with a Kingston-based company for six weeks to obtain a sense of the work place and have an opportunity to observe how theory is applied to local practice. Some students enter this programme attracted by the term 'entertainment' but quickly learn that this refers to a group of global industries which are diverse, and like any complex subject, can be broken down into component parts and formalised into a programme of study.

The ECEM degree is therefore not a vocational programme based on practical, hands-on courses, but rather focuses on a specific range of creative industries and through academic engagement, provides understanding of the complex ways in which they operate and function. Although some courses require theory to be translated into practice, the focus of the course content is consistently academic and theoretical, and requires a significant amount of reading, writing and study. Although the degree covers a range of subjects including event planning, artist management, sports management, accounting for small businesses, the film, publishing and music industries, these fields are interrogated through theoretical concepts that are intended to position the student with a foundational understanding of these fields at the international level. In addition, comprehension of these themes is anchored within a cultural and societal frame, explaining how human experience in the context of regional history has shaped the world in which we live.

The wider academic umbrella of cultural studies therefore represents the foundation on which the ECEM degree is based, and for many students the resulting discussions not only explain the power structures that direct and shape society, its institutions, and industries, but also examine how the individual fits into this complex array of value systems and structures. The creative arts often represent the vehicles through which many of these value systems and structures are expressed, reinforced or challenged, and so music, dance, and the visual arts are analysed as aesthetic but also commercial systems that can represent diverse ideas related to concepts of identity, power, freedom, sexuality, religion, and politics.

Most of my working life has been spent in the entertainment industry as a music practitioner, but I am also an academic with a PhD in Ethnomusicology, so I have a healthy respect for the spaces where practice and theory meet. Many students who desire a career in the field of entertainment, are often anxious to

engage with the practices associated with the industry, not initially understanding that it is the theory and critical thinking skills that represent the true value and potential that the ECEM degree, and every other degree in the humanities, offers. The content of the courses is certainly important, but it is the development of critical thinking skills that elevates the potential of the student and which will ultimately allow them to decipher, assess, analyse, and comprehend a complex array of information and a wide variety of topics, as well as traverse and negotiate diverse career paths. Understanding the importance of developing these skills is important, especially for students who have excelled during their school life using a system of rote learning, but find that this is not an adequate method for studying at tertiary level. The ability to think critically will not only serve the student well in the selection of a career but also in developing their career in response to changes in the work market. The true value of undergraduate study is therefore located in understanding the process of study as much as in mastering the content of the courses that make up a particular degree programme.

As we look back at recent developments in the creative industries, it is not just the speed of change but the seismic movements that have had a massive impact on those working in the industries. For example, the music, animation, and video gaming industries have been revolutionised by new technologies, while social media and mobile communications have transformed the way in which many forms of entertainment are delivered to the consumer. In this dynamic environment, the only thing that is definite is the uncertainty of the future. For young people selecting these areas of employment, it is their ability to adopt and adapt to this constantly changing environment that will dictate their ultimate success. However, we should not be daunted by the dynamics now found in many industries because change also provides new commercial opportunities. Those best positioned to take advantage will likely be equipped with the tools to understand not only the function of the related products, but also how they fit into a complex range of social and cultural practices. Anyone looking at career choices should give some thought to the idea of not only acquiring information but ensuring that its transmission includes the development of critical thinking skills. This provides the real key to career success.

Using Films to Study the Past, to Contemplate the Future

RACHEL MOSELEY-WOOD

THERE IS AN OLD DOCUMENTARY THAT PLAYS IN A CORNER of the room at The University of the West Indies Museum. The subject of this film is the University College of the West Indies (UCWI), as the University was known in the first 14 years of its existence. Both the content of the UCWI film and its mode of production are evidence of the University's long association with filmmaking in Jamaica and its recognition of the importance of the visual image. I usually discuss with my students the fascinating story of how the UCWI film arrived at the museum. According to Dr. Suzanne Francis-Brown, curator of the UWI Museum, the film was rescued from a garbage heap at the Mona campus and many years later a digital copy was presented to the museum, where it is now safely preserved for posterity.

The UCWI film then, is important as an early representation of the University and is also significant to the history of filmmaking in Jamaica. Indeed, the emergence of local filmmaking is intertwined with the history of the University. In 1950 when the Colonial Film Unit (CFU) in London explored setting up a temporary film training school in Jamaica to facilitate local production, then principal of the UCWI, Sir Thomas Taylor, provided a building on the campus to house the programme. Three Jamaicans are credited in the *Gleaner* article with making the UCWI film: M.A. Rennalls, director and script writer; M.S. Wheeler, editor; and F.A. Walsh, cinematographer. This might be an error, however. Martin Rennalls, Milton Weller and Trevor Welch were the Jamaicans who attended the West Indies Film Training School and who would have worked on the film. On completion of the programme, they, along with the other participants (one man each from Trinidad and Tobago,

Barbados and British Guiana), went on to help establish film units in their respective territories. Rennalls became the first director of the JFU and was assisted by Weller and Welch in carrying out the mandate of the unit to make films for Jamaicans, by Jamaicans, with Jamaicans. The UCWI film was a product of this intention. Started as a student project at the training school, it was later completed by the JFU.

The Colonial Film Unit played an important role in the colonial project. Responsible for making films that circulated around the globe and which were used throughout the British empire in visual education programmes, the CFU promoted and disseminated British attitudes, values and perspectives. Despite the Jamaican unit's nationalistic motto, the JFU films were not made entirely by Jamaicans; throughout the first decade of the unit's existence, films were sent to London to complete the production process. Nevertheless, these films represent the first sustained effort to create films which explicitly drew on Jamaican culture and in which Jamaicans (and in the case of the UCWI film, Caribbean people) could readily see reflected, aspects of their lived experience. Thus, the UCWI film and the JFU, can be understood as important pieces of the story of Jamaica's journey to nationhood.

The UCWI film provides a window to the past, but it also facilitates contemplation of contemporary society and the future. After we watch the film, I often ask my students what story they would tell if they had to make a film about the University: what would they focus on and how would their film differ from the UCWI film? The responses are as varied as the students themselves, but these questions often prompt a discussion about the legacy of the University and students' role in its unfolding history. We also reflect on a central paradox of documentary filmmaking, that is, the attempt to creatively represent reality. This is not merely an esoteric intellectual exercise; it has, I believe, deep relevance to my students' lives. More than ever, information about the world we live in is conveyed visually: from You Tube, Instagram and Facebook, to documentaries, narrative films and television programmes, we draw on visual texts to help us make sense of the social world and the structures of power that support it. As a teacher of film studies, therefore, I see my overarching task as that of using the audio visual text to help students develop critical thinking and analytical skills which they can apply to future careers and also to their daily

lives, in order to become more thoughtful, more aware and thus, more informed citizens – of the country in which they reside – and of the world.

As the University celebrates its 70th anniversary, its contribution to filmmaking in Jamaica continues to grow and evolve. In September, the Department of Literatures in English will introduce a Bachelor of Arts in Film Studies, a new interdisciplinary programme that has at its core, the critical analysis of the visual image and the development of advanced visual literacy skills that will help students to compete in an increasingly visual world. Cinema and film represent one of the largest creative economies globally, and the new BA in Film Studies will offer students a deeper understanding of cinema as a cultural industry as well as help prepare them to become key players in the local and regional film industry, film culture, and supporting industries. As ever, the Faculty of Humanities and Education continues to demonstrate the usefulness of its offerings and the relevance of its programmes to the development and growth of the region.

Reinvigorating the Humanities at the UWI to Create Exciting Futures and Vibrant Societies

GLENFORD D. HOWE AND HALIMA-SAADIA KASSIM

OVER THE PAST FEW DECADES THE TEACHING AND IMAGE of various subject areas in the humanities have been experiencing serious challenges at many colleges and universities across the globe. This problem has been compounded by government policies in some countries which may be overtly or more subtly antithetical to the existence of the humanities. In other instances governments have undercut the humanities by shifting funding away to the sciences and other areas considered to be of greater utilitarian value. In many departments and faculties enrolments have been declining, in the face of an increasingly inimical discourse about the relevance of the humanities compared to the sciences, technology and business related subjects, to graduate employability, and national socio-economic development. Underscoring these developments is a privileging of narrow pathways for students leading to professional and vocational qualifications, as opposed to the graduating of students who are well-rounded and possess the range of competencies, skills, knowledge and attitudes critical to their personal development, ambitions, and productive participation in society. While many of these issues and challenges have become more pronounced in the Caribbean over the last few decades, higher education institutions have tended to adopt uncoordinated piecemeal solutions rather than fundamental transformations needed to breathe new life into the humanities. This article offers some insights into reviving the humanities at The University of the West Indies (UWI), on the basis that

vibrancy in the humanities is critical to the overall health and well-being of regional societies and economies.

A review of the literature on the humanities reveals continuing strong support in some quarters for the view that the humanities constitute a vital asset to individual, social and economic development, and for nurturing character development and democratic values. The humanities provide alternative ways of assessing value in a world which is increasingly defining importance and worth in terms of financial or economic value. The humanities are widely regarded as being vital to building the range of soft skills which many employers deem to be lacking in today's graduates. These include the ability to write and communicate clearly, organise and evaluate ideas, critical thinking skills including the ability to think logically, creatively and understand and evaluate complex concepts and problems. Increasingly, studies have confirmed the value of humanities graduates to the society and economy.

At a more fundamental level the humanities deal with what makes us human, our uniqueness as individuals but also our collective identities, and how these change over time. The humanities cause us to reflect on, and seek to answer important questions such as: what is our purpose on earth, what is the meaning of life, what is right and what is wrong, and how do we decide such questions? They represent and span the totality of our humanity, and engage with the sciences, technology and other disciplines, to help us make sense of our existence. Yet, in many countries, humanities programmes in colleges and universities are under severe pressure and there is a growing perception that a qualification in the humanities will not do much good for graduates' job prospects. This is a matter of utmost importance given that students almost everywhere are increasingly having to absorb the cost of education at the tertiary level. Studies in the United States, United Kingdom and elsewhere show that humanities graduates often have good job prospects and competitive salaries but these realities seem not to have impacted hostile perceptions and narratives to the contrary.¹

1. See, for example, Philip Kreager, *Humanities Graduates and the British Economy: The Hidden Impact*, <https://tinyurl.com/zyn7tmv>; and, George Anders, *You Can Do Anything: The Surprising Power of a "Useless" Liberal Arts Education* <http://www.humanities.uci.edu/SOH/magazine/strategic17/story1.php>.

Within the UWI, as indeed at many other universities, the term “crisis” is being used to describe the state of the humanities, and it seems that the imperatives for change have arguably never been stronger and numerous. At the UWI the emphasis within the Faculties of Humanities seems in some ways, to be more on surviving and less on stimulating new futures and engagement, underscored by vibrancy and strong sustainability and resilience frameworks. Some effort has been made at undertaking curricula and programme reforms but scarcity of resources is often cited by faculty as a major constraint. However, while it can be argued that the lack of resources can be a powerful deterrent to innovation, reform and progress, there are other critical factors that may explain the current plight of faculties and departments of humanities. These factors may include a broader range of issues linked to not adequately understanding the nature of the problem, and a lack of effective strategic planning to rectify and get to the heart of the challenges faced by the humanities.

Globally, more universities and even countries, have perceived the threat to their humanities programmes and have moved with speed, determination and clarity of purpose and vision, to the extent that this is possible in difficult financial and resource-scarce environments, to respond to the situation. Some humanities faculties, departments and researchers have adopted innovative thinking and approaches to enhance their relevance by making meaningful and appealing connections between the different subject areas and the major social, economic and other challenges of the twenty-first century. However, within the faculties of humanities at the UWI there remains an urgent need for more stimulating and relevant courses rooted in interdisciplinary fusions, and underscored by research of the same interdisciplinary nature, in order to more effectively engage regional development issues and challenges.

Constructing a Brighter Future

The following suggestions and recommendations seek to chart a fresh start, or a major re-boot for the humanities departments at the UWI, rooted in an enhanced image of their public value; a reformed curriculum; more interdisciplinary teaching, research and partnerships; greater student choice;

better alignment of graduates' skills sets with labour market requirements; as well as closer and more innovative engagements with the major socio-economic and other challenges faced by the region:

1. *Faculty owning the challenge and imagining a bright and exciting future:* The current challenges faced by the humanities at the UWI can only be solved in the context of a multi-stakeholder partnership involving UWI leaders, faculty, students, governments, private sector and civil society, with additional aid and support of various international partners. However, it is of vital importance that faculty from the humanities departments take greater ownership and responsibility for addressing the many challenges.
2. *Greater emphasis on interdisciplinary and comparative approaches:* If the faculties of humanities at the UWI want to be more vibrant, innovative and impactful they must seek to eliminate artificial silos and build collaborative curricula bridges and fusions between the humanities and the other disciplines.
3. *Maximising the benefits of multi-modal learning:* The Faculties of Humanities should move aggressively to utilise the multi-modal (online and blended) learning modalities of the Open Campus (and other campuses) to help address the problem of small departments and small student registration numbers. This will require training for all humanities faculty so as to ensure their competence in delivering high quality online courses.
4. *Humanities and external stakeholders' communities:* Greater emphasis needs to be placed on significantly strengthening and harmonising, through a strategic framework and mutually beneficial interactive engagement at the levels of curriculum development and reform, policy formulation and practice, and research, faculties' relationship with their various stakeholders, including the private sector, communities, government and development partners.
5. *Strengthening the humanities research infrastructure and ecosystem:* It is necessary for the faculties of humanities to take the lead in articulating and energising a more well-integrated and developed humanities research infrastructure or ecosystem which networks in a more active and

participatory relationship with libraries, archives, museums, special collections holdings (in the private and public sector), and those of other disciplines such as medicine, architecture, etc.

6. *Reimagining and reforming the humanities curricula for labour market success:* Consideration should be given to revising, in a prioritised and staged manner, the curricula for humanities students need to ensure that they are more adequately prepared to be competitive in the labour market. This should involve some emphasis on the acquisition of additional quantitative skills and training in the use of relevant analytical programmes, exposure to broader social sciences research methods, as well as acquisition of foreign languages (such as, for instance, French, Spanish, Chinese and Arabic, among others) and business development, entrepreneurial, management, networking and public relations skills.
7. *Strengthening graduate student mentorship, academic advising and career guidance:* As the UWI aims to shorten the time span for the completion of doctoral degrees, it becomes imperative that graduate students be provided with the help and support they need to make the transition from a first or Masters to a doctoral degree, particularly in the first six months to a year.
8. *Valuing effective public relations and branding:* There is a need to distinguish the humanities identity as a core part of the UWI brand and family of faculties. One of the most powerful factors that can build up a unique brand and enhanced image of the UWI faculties of humanities will be the quality and uniqueness of the graduates they produce. It is also important that the faculties work cohesively and closely with the University's marketing departments to develop an effective multipronged public relations campaign which extols the practical and intrinsic value of the humanities, and their importance to individual and national success and identity.
9. *Laying solid foundations – building up humanities in the school system:* There is an urgent need for new thinking, reflection, and strategising with respect to redefining and significantly strengthening the relationship between the humanities in the UWI and other teacher-learning institutions, and

humanities teaching and learning in secondary schools, focusing on such areas as the curriculum, teacher training, and career advising for students.

10. *In-depth analysis of challenges and opportunities:* There is a urgent need for the UWI, led by a joint team from the Faculties of Humanities and comprising international experts from leading universities worldwide with strong humanities programmes to conduct an in-depth review and evaluation of the state of the humanities at the UWI, focusing on such issues as teaching and learning, research, and innovation in the humanities, as well as assessing the role and impact of the humanities on Caribbean socio-economic development.
11. *Funding the humanities into the future:* There is a need for the Faculties of Humanities at the UWI to develop an integrated funding strategy and model as the basis for their increased sustainability, vibrancy and support for departments, including offering more student bursaries and scholarships to needy students.

As with the university as a whole, respective faculties need more than ever to be vigilant and attuned to the needs and ambitions of their students and other stakeholders, as well as global trends which may either create new opportunities and possibilities or cause their demise. Given the struggles of many faculties of humanities worldwide, not least in the Caribbean, it is imperative that they do not succumb to malaise but instead take proactive measures based on their peculiar circumstances and international experience and best practice, to ensure their survival and growth even in the most difficult circumstances. Arguably, the need to be resilient and to birth new innovative ideas has perhaps never been greater for faculties of humanities at the UWI. Change is never easy and the road to successful recovery and growth may be fraught with pitfalls and obstacles but with a concerted collective effort these faculties can once again become the human face of the University and the soul of cultural vibrancy in the Caribbean.

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