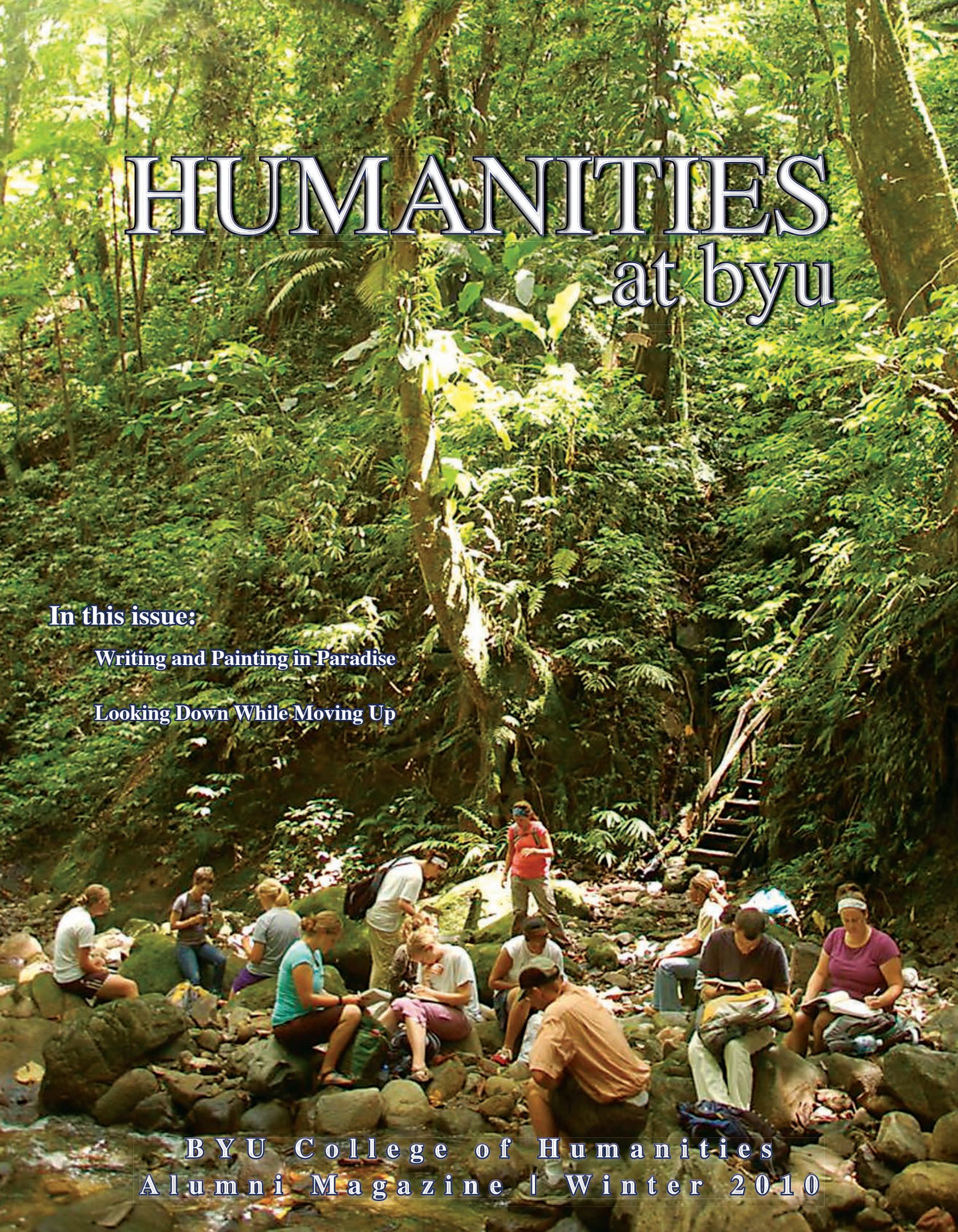

HUMANITIES at byu

In this issue:

Writing and Painting in Paradise

Looking Down While Moving Up

BYU College of Humanities
Alumni Magazine | Winter 2010

from the Dean

Humanities +

Dean John R. Rosenberg

In his 1852 essay *The Idea of a University,* John Henry Cardinal Newman writes of a hypothetical student:

"He profits by an intellectual tradition, which is independent of particular teachers, which guides him in his choice of subjects, and duly interprets for him those which he chooses. He apprehends the great outlines of knowledge, the principles on which it rests, the scale of its parts, its lights and its shades, its great points and its little, as he otherwise cannot apprehend them. Hence it is that his education is called 'Liberal.' A habit of mind is formed which lasts through life, of which the attributes are freedom, equitableness, calmness, moderation, and wisdom."

This is, I might add, an apt description of the humanistic tradition's aspiration to induct learners into the human conversation. And it is an ideal as precarious as all ideals.

The *New York Times* reported recently on a survey of 400,000 incoming college freshman. In 1971, 37 percent responded that it was "essential or very important to be 'very well-off financially,'" while 73 percent said the same about "developing a meaningful philosophy of life." In 2009, 78 percent of students who responded said it was important to be "very well-off" while less than half saw college as a place to nurture a "meaningful philosophy of life." Michigan recently closed its Philosophy and Classics programs. USC dropped German. In *The American Scholar* we read that in a single generation "the numbers of those majoring in the humanities dropped from a total of 30 percent to a total of less than 16 percent." A cynic recently noted that power and prestige at American universities derive from programs that promise money (high salaries for graduates), teach knowledge of money (business and economics) or are a source of money (research dollars). Newspapers and web sites are full of calls to make college "relevant." For-profit universities advertise "real degrees for the real world." In the last half century, the hierarchy of valued skills seems to have flipped. Vocational skills used to be the niche of trade schools, while universities inculcated trans-vocational skills (superior writing, sophisticated numeracy, critical thinking, etc.) and celebrated supra-vocational skills (critical judgment that enables leadership and world citizenship).

In a gloomy book published last year, a despondent English professor declared the Humanities all but dead and claimed that its professors had lost the ability to save themselves. Abandon ship? Not yet and not hardly. *The Chronicle of Higher Education* reported a couple of years ago on the survey "How Should Colleges and Universities Prepare Students to Succeed in Today's Global Economy" in which 305 executives were asked what skills they valued in employees. The top three choices were "teamwork skills," "critical thinking and analytic reasoning skills," and "oral/written communication." Another study determined that 77 to more than 90 percent of American parents "believe that it is important for their children to learn other languages, study abroad, attend a college where they can interact with international students, learn about other countries and cultures, and generally be prepared for a global age."

In a recent meeting, one of BYU's science deans made the startling comment that the technical skills taught in his college serve students well for the first few years of their careers, but as these alumni advance, they spend less and less time on the tasks for which they were trained. In an aside after the meeting, he told me that it's the Humanities that teach skills that endure throughout the career cycle. The supposed irrelevance of the Humanities is "so last century"—a century "trapped in an outdated 'cold war curriculum,'" according to one observer.

JOINING THE HUMANITIES CONVERSATION

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features

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departments

Front cover: Caribbean Study Abroad students (summer 2009) stop to write in their journals.
Back cover: The island of St. Lucia.

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DEAN CONTINUED

In this more optimistic climate, we have launched our Humanities+ initiative. Humanities+ suggests a deep investment in one of our traditional Humanities majors: English, Linguistics, Philosophy, Classics, Comparative Literature, Interdisciplinary Humanities, or one of ten major languages. It involves an unapologetic pursuit of *Humanitas* through the study of literature, philosophy, art, and language. The "Plus" dimension aims to supplement (not dilute or contaminate) the traditional Humanities curriculum with experiences that will prepare our students to leverage their enduring trans-vocational and supra-vocational skills as they transition to the marketplace. These experiences include intellectually rigorous and professionally relevant internships, second majors and minors, University Honors, collaborative research with faculty, and (still in development) an international business minor crafted with Humanities students in mind.

Working with colleagues across the university, we have also implemented a +Humanities program, in which students in more vocational or technical fields can supplement their education with the enduring trans-vocational and supra-vocational experiences offered in our college. First out of the +Humanities gate is the recently approved language certificate that will permit non-language majors to certify their level of foreign language competence through a combination of courses and nationally normed proficiency tests. We believe it will be the most discriminating credential of its kind and that it will help BYU build and brand its language expertise.

Brigham Young taught, "Education is the power to think clearly, the power to act well in the world's work, and the power to appreciate life." The three elements of this statement are interrelated and hierarchical. Thinking clearly enables effective stewardship. The well-lived life devolves from life's labors. Humanities+ and +Humanities reveal a growing understanding of the interdependence of thinking clearly, working well, and appreciating life.

of Note

Wolfgang Drautz, Los Angeles Consul General for the Federal Republic of Germany, presents award to former Dean Randall L. Jones.

Randall L. Jones, professor emeritus of German and former dean of the College of Humanities, has received the prestigious Bundesverdienstkreuz (Federal Cross of Merit) Award. The award is the German government's top honor presented to a non-German citizen. Horst Köhler, president of Germany, signed the citation, and it was presented by Wolfgang Drautz, Los Angeles consul general for the Federal Republic of Germany. Reading from the nomination letters written by Dean Jones's students and colleagues, Drautz praised Jones's respect for his students and his passion for the German language.

Dean Jones was honored for his distinguished career in teaching, publishing, and promoting the modern German language, a career that began with his experiences as an LDS missionary in Southern Germany in the 1960s and spanned more than four decades as a teacher and researcher in German.

Over the past several months, College of Humanities faculty have hosted or participated in several national and international academic conferences, some of which are listed here:

In March 2008, the American Association for Corpus Linguistics conference was held at BYU, organized by Professor Mark Davies of the Linguistics and English Language Department. Approximately 180 linguists attended, representing 30 different countries.

In June 2009, Philosophy Professor James E. Faulconer hosted the Sacred Space Symposium, which involved religious scholars from the around the country, including Christians, Muslim, and Jews. "In recognition of the Oquirrh Mountain Temple Open House, we decided to host an academic conference on sacred space," said Professor Faulconer, the BYU Richard L. Evans Professor of Religious Understanding. "Sacred space is very important to Latter-day Saints, and it was enlightening to compare how others think about sacred space differently than we do."

In October 2009, Professors of French Corry Cropper and Daryl Lee hosted the 35th Annual Nineteenth-Century French Studies Colloquium. Over 200 specialists from North America and Europe attended. The conference theme, "Fossilization and Evolution," encouraged presenters to consider how these two competing impulses shaped intellectual life in nineteenth-century France. Graham Robb, author of *The Discovery of France*, gave the keynote address, and curators from BYU's Museum of Art organized an exhibit to feature works by French artist Honoré Daumier. The entire conference program can be viewed online at NCFS.byu.edu.

Also in October, a group of faculty from the Department of Linguistics and English Language made presentations at a colloquium on the LDS missionary language experience at the Second Language Research Forum, which took place at Michigan State University. Presentations made by Professors Ray Graham, Dan Dewey, Ray Clifford, and William Eggington of BYU, as well as by Professors Lynne Hansen and Ronald Miller of BYU-Hawaii, made use of research conducted on the second-language abilities of hundreds of returned missionaries. Besides standard language testing, factors such as time abroad, motivation, and belief in divine help were factored into the research.

Writing and Painting in Paradise

Study Abroad in the Caribbean

George Handley
Department of Humanities, Classics, and Comparative Literature

In the 1940s, Derek Walcott was a young teenager on the small and remote island of St. Lucia in the Caribbean Sea, aspiring to be a poet and a painter of the highest caliber. His father, a government employee and an amateur playwright, painter, and poet, had died when he was only a year old, leaving behind unfinished poems and plays, sketches, and a coffee-table book of the great masters of Western art. Haunted by these remains of his father's artistic ambition and inspired by his mother's devout Methodism and commitment to the arts, he began an artist's journey that would culminate in winning the Nobel Prize for Literature in 1992. Still writing poetry and plays today, and still painting his native island of St. Lucia at the age of 80, he is widely regarded as one of the greatest living poets in the English language.

Students gather around to listen to a speaker.

Visiting BYU in 2000, Walcott gave a reading to an audience of over 600 students. He liked his visit to BYU enough to come again in 2004. This time, an audience of 1,000 of us sat spellbound, listening to his deep, sonorous voice with the Caribbean accent. He read poems about the plight of Caribbean fishermen, the often-vulnerable conditions of the Caribbean environment, his love of painting, and his deep devotion to his native island, despite his world travels. If poets are generally good lovers of nature's beauty, Walcott is the Don Juan. Prone to shake with emotion in the face of the world's surprising bounty, he opens a listener's senses to the Carribean world—the heat of an unforgiving sun, the sight of passing clouds, the sound of beating wings, the rush of wind rattling palm fronds, and the rhythm of the sea.

The dream of sharing with students my love for his poetry and for the culture of the islands of the lower Antilles became a reality this past summer. Professor of art Gary Barton and I proposed a Study Abroad program in St. Lucia and Trinidad and Tobago that would allow students not only to explore the land and seascapes of the Caribbean through Walcott's poetry and painting, but also to explore and develop their own efforts at watercolor painting. For five graduate students and eleven undergraduates, the program became an unusual combination of literary studies and hands-on creative art that took full advantage of direct experience with the environment and history that have shaped Caribbean culture. We wanted our students to come home more sensitive to the beauty of the world, more vigilant about the threats to that beauty posed by many forces in the modern world, and more aware of the cultures and peoples of the Caribbean. We think our hopes were realized in this program.

After two weeks of intense reading and watercolor training on campus, the trip began with two weeks on the island of St. Lucia, where we stayed about a mile from Walcott's house. We toured botanical gardens and visited ruins. We held class and we listened to and took tours with local guest lecturers on topics from botany to folklore. We read the works of Walcott and others, discussed them, kept journals, wrote papers. We visited local painters and writers and learned of their work. We took several excursions on the island's windy and rough roads. These were experiences of euphoria and sadness, including many staggering views and challenging hikes, visits to several ruins of old slave plantations, encounters with garbage-infested beaches, and snorkeling at a protected bay with one of the largest and most diverse populations of fish any of us had ever seen. And nearly every day, we headed out in the heat with painting equipment under our arms and sunblock applied. All the while, we did our best to understand the Caribbean environment and its relationship to Caribbean culture—to understand the relationship between the changed environment (the Caribbean has one of the most transformed environments anywhere in the world) and the uprooted peoples of the islands, a major theme in Walcott's writings.

To read intimate portraits of the landscape, history, and culture of a place so dear to the heart of a great poet and to walk the streets and beaches of these poems with canvasses of our own was an unmatched opportunity to step inside the heart and mind of a great writer and to experience directly the full range of feeling an environment can inspire. But to cap it off, we were able to meet with Derek Walcott several times. We first met him on the beach, and we were greeted with coconut juice, mangos, and fried fish supplied by Walcott himself. We invited him and family members on a boat ride a few days later, where he tested the students' knowledge of poetry and painting, told jokes, and relaxed to the motion of the waves as we moved south along the coast on our way to see St. Lucia's famous Piton peaks. And he invited us to his house for a reading. He read poems from his new collection, two of them about President Obama. They weren't political poems, but instead deeply moving reflections on the distance traversed by a country that once enslaved men like Walcott and Obama. A question and answer session followed, and then we made a visit to his patio in the backyard facing the ocean. There, he surprised us with a traditional St. Lucian band that played while Walcott occasionally

sang along with them or played the drums. He critiqued students' art and poems in his light and teasing way. He insisted that we stay until sunset, and once it arrived, we understood why. The immense sky burned a yellowish orange and deepened into crimson while the surf relentlessly rolled in, lapping the black stones on the coast before us.

Our trip to St. Lucia was followed by three weeks in Trinidad and Tobago where Walcott had lived for 30 years and which was the setting of one of his books that we studied. Trinidad and Tobago is a country of unusual diversity—about 40 percent of the country's people are from India and another 40 percent are of African descent, the remaining portion being largely of mixed race. It is a deeply religious country of Christians, Muslims, and Hindus. It is also the heartland of the Caribbean carnival and the birthplace of steel drumming. We took the graduate students to the archives of Walcott's papers. We traveled to the Caroni swamp where at night thousands of enormous birds—scarlet ibises, blue herons, and white egrets—fly over the waters and settle in the mangrove trees. And we took a midnight excursion to the northeast coast of Trinidad to watch massive sea turtles dig their nests and to witness dozens of tiny hatchlings emerge miraculously from the sand after about two months of gestation, desperately trying to find their way to the ocean.

Students kept journals to record their insights and experiences, and together with a final exam and a portfolio of art they produced by the end of the term, these

Derek Walcott with a St. Lucian band.

materials allowed us to assess how much the experience had enhanced their own powers of perception. We were not disappointed with what we saw. One student's comment summarizes the feelings of many others: "With our study of Derek Walcott, our efforts in painting, and our exploration of the island, I was able to see the integration of the different disciplines so clearly. It was an exciting way to learn. . . . Spiritual impressions and thoughts came fluidly as I spent hours in quiet contemplation. I now know that I want to move a little slower, meditate a little longer, go to bed a little earlier, experience nature a little deeper, and pray a little harder."

Another student wrote: "The entire experience of being in the very environment described by Walcott's poetry, and trying to paint the same landscape he paints has been, dare I say, life-changing."

Students and faculty families with Derek Walcott.

Looking Down While Moving Up

Lynn Williams
Department of Spanish and Portuguese

I address my remarks mainly to the graduates amongst us. Please accept my congratulations for having qualified to receive a Brigham Young University degree. Over the past few years, you have devoted yourselves to study of the humanities. Depending on your chosen discipline, you will have been exposed to great art and magnificent architecture, read extraordinary books, examined the intricate workings of language, and explored distant cultures. In concert with this, you will have expanded your ability to analyze, synthesize, and express yourselves orally and by means of the written word, perhaps even in one or more foreign tongues. Briefly, you have gained knowledge, your intellect has been refined, and you have equipped yourselves with priceless skills. You are now ready to go out into the world and place your imprint upon it. It is our hope that the impression you make will redound to your honor, to that of your family, and to that of this university and the Church.

The ultimate root of the word *graduate* is the Latin *gradus.* For the Roman, *gradus* referred to a movement propelling the body forward and also to the support on which one places one's foot in order to propel the body upward, meanings that coincide with those of the English word *step*. Properly arranged, steps can move us forward and upward at one and the same time. You are fortunate to have attended an academic institution that exists to promote just such a double movement.

Properly arranged, steps can move us forward and upward at one and the same time. You are fortunate to have attended an academic institution that exists to promote just such a double movement.

The world in which we live, our society, is hierarchically structured. The education you have received will allow you to move through its various levels and, in all likelihood, occupy its upper echelons. Those of you who have studied French will recognize in the word *echelons* a close lexical associate of the French *échelle*, the equivalent of the English word *ladder.* As you begin your ascent, you will perhaps fix your gaze on the top rung of the ladder and become mesmerized by those who occupy this exclusive piece of social space. If this proves to be so, you may well forget to look backward and downward. The things that come to occupy your mind and your time are likely to be those that enjoy prestige in society: money, knowledge, power, recognition, even, perhaps, physical beauty. Permit me to issue a gentle warning. The word *prestige* derives from the Latin *praestigium*, which signifies both delusion and illusion. It passed into English from French, probably in the seventeenth century, and retained, in English, its original sense well into the nineteenth century. Even today, the Oxford English Dictionary gives, as its primary meaning: illusion, conjuring trick, deception, imposture; and as its secondary

pres•tige, n.
1. Illusion; conjuring trick; deception; imposture;
2. Blinding or dazzling influence; "magic," glamour, influence, or reputation derived from previous character, achievement, or success

nice, adj. and adv.
1. a. Of a person: foolish, silly, simple, ignorant;
4. f. Respectable, virtuous, decent.

meaning: blinding or dazzling influence, 'magic', glamor, influence or reputation derived from previous character, achievements or success.[1] The last of these suggests that, in popular parlance, the word has shed most of its pejorative overtones, much as has occurred with *nice*, the original meaning of which was, of course, ignorant. A process of semantic narrowing and change, then, has brought us to believe that prestige is something very desirable. All the more reason, I submit, to recall its origin.

In general, things deemed prestigious continue to lack substance and to involve some kind of deception, just as they did for the Romans. Because prestige is usually devoid of substance, it tends to be ephemeral so that what is esteemed today is often not so highly thought of tomorrow. We see this, for instance, in Britain, where the significance of noble ancestry is gradually being replaced by that of wealth. Without much exaggeration, we might say that, in the United Kingdom, aristocracy is giving way to plutocracy. Similar changes occur in language, where what is once thought prestigious is later often stigmatized and vice versa. For example, the linguistic variety designated as Vulgar Latin because it was so different from, and thought inferior to, the Classical Latin of Virgil and Tacitus gradually transformed itself: in the Spanish-speaking world, into the language of Cervantes and García Márquez; in the Portuguese-speaking world, into that of Camões and Machado de Assis; in France, into that of Voltaire and Flaubert; and, in Italy, into that of Dante and Primo Levi. And to take an obvious, though very limited example from English, we may note that pronunciation of postvocalic <r>, in words like *car, far,* and *star,* which, in relatively recent history, has become prestigious in the United States, is not similarly valued in the United Kingdom, where the preferred pronunciation is [ka:], [fa:], [sta:].

As a final illustration of how social values may change dramatically over time, I turn to seventeenth-century Spain. There we find that those who had at any time used their hands to put bread on the table, had been involved in commerce on a small scale, or had


Lynn Williams

Jewish or Moorish blood on either side of their family over the preceding four generations were severely limited in terms of social advancement. For these reasons, it proved difficult indeed for the painter Diego de Velázquez to gain admission to the "prestigious" military order of Saint James. In fact, it required the intervention of the Spanish monarch himself. In response to the king's prodding, the commission charged with inquiring into the purity of Velázquez's lineage seemingly overlooked Jewish ancestry on his father's side. Similarly, his occupation as an artisan was explained away by ignoring the fact that he had started out as a relatively humble painter who sold his wares as best he could and by arguing that as painter to the king, he was clearly not in the business of selling pictures. Great effort and influence, as well as some massaging of the truth, were thus needed in order for a man of immense natural talent, but the wrong social credentials, to be granted a knighthood and thus secure his place amongst the élite of his time. Ironically, today it is Velázquez who looms large, towering over the faceless palace officials in Madrid to whom, for most of his adult life, he was forced to submit, towering too even over the Planet king, Philip IV himself. Now, these examples merely underscore the simple, inescapable fact that what is considered prestigious shifts over time and, if we think of postvocalic <r>, may even vary markedly between otherwise fairly closely connected contemporary societies like those of Britain and the United States. In other words, prestige is, by nature, protean.

You may be wondering why I have chosen to make these rather obvious points. It is certainly not to discourage you from soaring upwards and reaching your full potential in whatever field you choose. It is rather to invite you to see things as they really are and to encourage you, occasionally at least, to cast a glance backward and downward, just as Philip of Spain did as he endeavored, against all the social mores of his time, to promote his

favorite painter. It is to urge you never to overlook the intrinsic worth of those whose chances of rising to the top of society are, for whatever reason, limited or even blocked.

The Family: A Proclamation to the World contains the following glorious declaration: "All human beings—male and female—are created in the image of God. Each is a spirit son or daughter of heavenly parents, and, as such, each has a divine nature and destiny." This affirmation has serious import not just for how we ought to see ourselves but also for how we ought to see others. And yet, for some reason, we—especially those of us who occupy privileged positions in society—are apt to forget this most basic truth. As Vice President John Tanner reminded colleagues recently, C. S. Lewis taught that our "neighbour is the holiest object presented to [our] senses," and also that "it is a serious thing to live in a society of possible gods and goddesses, to remember that the dullest and most uninteresting person you can talk to may one day be a creature which, if you saw it now, you would be strongly tempted to worship. . . . There are no *ordinary* people. You have never talked to a mere mortal. . . . it is immortals whom we joke with, work with, marry, snub, and exploit.[2]

Jesus was indisputably a man of unrivalled intelligence and perfect righteousness. He was literaly the Son of God. But none of this was apparent from him background, his physical appearance, his accent when he spoke, his name, or the manner of his death.

The most conclusive evidence that our divine nature is not on public display is surely to be found in the life of the Savior. Permit me to make eight brief observations, which are all too often forgotten or overlooked: first, Jesus was born in a stable and laid in a manger. However romantic that may now sound as a result of Luke's beautifully crafted narrative, the unadorned truth is that the circumstances of the Lord's birth could hardly have been more humble.

Second, his mother was a young woman of no particular social importance and his foster father a mere carpenter (assuming *carpenter* to be the most accurate rendering of the Greek *teknon*). Although there can be little doubt that Joseph was a descendant of King David, at the time of Christ's birth, his station in life was anything but high.

Third, Matthew (1:1–17) includes in his genealogy of Jesus (which is really the genealogy of Joseph) four women. Two are gentiles (Ruth & Rahab); two are usually assumed to be harlots (Rahab & Tamar). The fourth is Bathsheba, the mother of Solomon. Matthew, of course, had sound reasons for including these women in the genealogy. Now is not the occasion to explore them. Suffice it to say that this was probably not the kind of pedigree that most orthodox Jews of the time would have prized.

Fourth, the Savior was not especially handsome. According to the words of Isaiah 53:2, "when we shall see him, there is no beauty that we should desire him." We must ask ourselves whether we really believe Isaiah's words. Most artists in centuries past appear to have embraced them and depicted the Savior accordingly.

Fifth, compared with Jerusalem, Nazareth—the place where Jesus was brought up and lived most of his life—was something of a backwater with a very poor reputation. This is why, when he is told of the Savior, Nathaniel's response to Andrew is: "Can there any good thing come out of Nazareth?" (John 1:46)

Sixth, Jesus spoke with a regional, perhaps even with a lower social class accent. When Peter finds himself outside Caiaphas's palace, he is recognized as a Galilean because of the way he speaks. Matthew 26:73 reads: "And after a while came unto him they that stood by, and said to Peter, Surely thou also art one of them; for thy speech bewrayeth thee." I take this to mean "your accent gives you away." Now, the chances are that the Galilean accent was not attractive to the inhabitants of the great city of Jerusalem. It may well have sounded to them as a broad Brooklyn or hillbilly accent might to you or a thick Glaswegian accent does to me; not altogether pleasant, certainly not prestigious, and possibly even difficult to understand. Jesus spoke in some such way.

Seventh, the name Joshua or Jeshua by which Jesus was known is clearly appropriate, even symbolic given the Savior's redemptive role. But it was nothing out of the ordinary for the Jews of the time. In fact, it was probably quite commonplace.

And eighth, Jesus died the death, not of a hero, but of a convicted criminal.

If we put these things together, it seems clear that the Jesus who walked the roads of Palestine in the meridian of time had little in common with the idealized portraits that today we so often see of him and

with all that these suggest. Jesus was indisputably a man of unrivaled intelligence and perfect righteousness. He was literally the Son of God. But none of this was apparent from his background, his physical appearance, his accent when he spoke, his name, or the manner of his death. In most of these things, he was the very epitome of ordinariness; in a few, he was even less than that. Briefly, Jesus was in no sense part of his society's élite. And I say this not in an attempt to diminish his stature, but rather to exalt it. In my view, it speaks to his true greatness, which was and is unparalleled. Jesus saw prestige for what it is: an illusion, a sophisticated conjuring trick. Not only was he not taken in by it, he also refused to join the conjurors who create the illusion or perpetuate it. He fixed his gaze not on the apex of the Jewish social world, but on that of celestial society and on those things that have real substance and everlasting value.

My challenge to you and to me is to resist the temptation of seeing God in our own image or in that of the world. It is to remember that the reverse is true, namely that we were created in the image of the Father. For this is what the scriptures and *The Family: A Proclamation to the World* declare. Let us not forget that our neighbor—regardless of intelligence, physical form, social background, or likeability—is in the image of God, is the cherished son or daughter of heavenly parents and, for this reason, possesses a divine nature and divine destiny.

In his recent communication to faculty, Vice President John Tanner also recalled Kierkegaard's declaration that Jesus came to Earth "incognito."[3] In a sense, we are all here incognito. Our divine nature and our divine destiny are obvious to no one. As you continue to move forward and upward, may you occasionally take the time to look backward and downward and see the image of God in those around you. After all, you have been trained to look beneath the surface, to search for hidden meaning. What better discovery could you possibly make than to discern the divine even, as C. S. Lewis wrote, "in the dullest and most uninteresting"? In doing so, we align ourselves with those who saw it in Jesus some two thousand years ago.

Address delivered at the College of Humanities Convocation, 14 August 2009.

1. The Shorter Oxford English Dictionary on Historical Principles. Revised & edited by C. T. Onions. 3rd ed. Vol 2. (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1980). s.v. prestige.
2. John Tanner, "Discerning Divinity," http://avp.byu.edu/academic-vice-president/notes-from-an-amateur/.
3. Ibid.

Rembrandt, *Christ Washing the Feet of His Disciples*, Rijks Museum, Amsterdam

Free BYU Workshop for *Utah Teachers of Spanish*

In June 2009, the Pedagogy Section of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese hosted a three-day Summer Workshop for elementary- and secondary-school Spanish teachers from throughout the state of Utah. Professor Nieves Knapp was the principal organizer, and workshops were taught by department faculty, as well as by Fernando Martín of the Spanish Resource Center, Ray Graham of the School of Education, and two public school teachers.

The purpose of the summer workshops, which were started in 2007, was to help teachers refresh and revamp their Spanish language skills while simultaneously learning current trends in methodology and acquiring new ideas. In both of the preceding years, workshops placed emphasis on the National Standards for Foreign Language Teaching, with particular emphasis on oral and written communication in 2007 and teaching culture in 2008. The 2009 workshop was designed to focus on communication in the classroom and was also grounded in the National Standards.

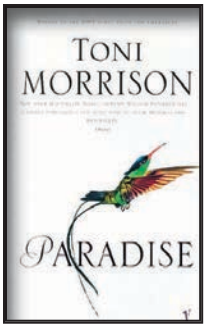
Participants in the workshop benefitted from training in and exposure to strategies for contextualizing grammar and vocabulary, integrating culture and communication, and utilizing new technologies to facilitate language learning. Presentations included information on current research regarding different methodologies, examples of the methodologies, and hands-on practice with activities for communication. Because of the hands-on nature of the activities, the whole workshop, including the sessions, lunches, breaks, and discussion periods, became a de facto language immersion program for Spanish teachers, inasmuch as everything was conducted in Spanish. Participants experienced paired work, small group work, games, mixers, and simulations that were designed to show teachers how to help students with a wide range of ability levels. Following the activities, participants asked questions and shared their ideas for adapting and extending the activities in their own classrooms.

The workshop was presented at no cost to participants. Complimentary lunches, handouts, and other materials were provided through the support of the College of Humanities, the Kennedy Center Outreach Program, CITES, the Spanish Resource Center, and the Department of Spanish and Portuguese.

Secondary-school participants were eligible to receive two USOE semester credits. Participating in the workshop were 15 elementary-school teachers and 33 secondary-school teachers from 14 school districts and from several charter schools.

Teachers participate in an interactive activity as part of the workshop.

books that make *a difference*

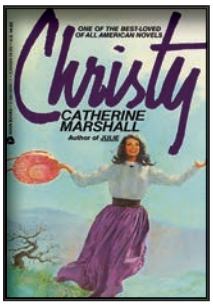


Paradise

by Toni Morrison

In one of my last semesters at BYU, I took a postmodern American literature class, and the books that I read completely changed my perspective regarding how I view and treat others. The book that had the most profound effect on me was Paradise by Toni Morrison. In *Paradise*, the self-righteous citizens of the utopian town of Ruby are pitted against the "amoral" women of the ironically named Convent. However, in the course of the book, Morrison reveals that Ruby is filled with the vices pride, adultery, and authoritarian oppression, while the Convent fosters love, charity, and a complete sense of self. My memory of this paradox of *Paradise* continually causes me to check myself before I am tempted to congratulate myself on my spiritual superiority upon witnessing another's perceived sins. As a result of this book, I now try to remember the "mote" in myself before judging the "beams" in others.

❖ ***Rachel Steed*** ❖ ***Salt Lake City, Utah***
❖ ***Humanities, 2009***



Christy

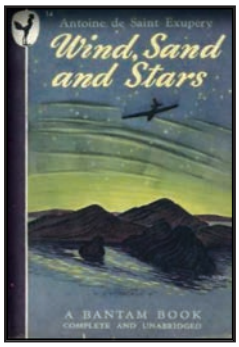
by Catherine Marshall

While scouring the shelves for something to read during Christmas break one year, I came across an old copy of *Christy* that belonged to my mother. I wasn't sure about it at first, but I decided to give it a try and quickly found myself wrapped up in the story of young Christy going to teach school in a small, backward Appalachian town. I soon fell in love with Christy, David, Little Burl and Fairlight, and I participated with delight, and sometimes horror and heartache, in the happenings of the community. I loved the book so much that the next year during Christmas break, I picked it up to read it again, and I continued to reread it every Christmas break during high school. The best books teach and inspire. *Christy* taught me that everyone has something to offer and inspired me to a lifetime of teaching and learning from others.

❖ ***Emily Scoresby Franzen*** ❖ ***Mendota Heights, Minnesota*** ❖ ***English Teaching, 2006***

Wind, Sand and Stars

by Antoine de Saint-Exupéry, translated by Lewis Galantière



In my high school senior French class we read several well-known French novels, one of them being *Le Petit Prince* by Antoine De Saint-Exupéry. That is an amazing book, but my teacher recommended another book by the same author that I think is even better. I was only 17 when I read *Wind, Sand and Stars*, Saint-Exupéry's memoir of his experience in the early days of flight, but it opened my eyes to a vast world of love, forgiveness, and humanity, and it changed my life forever. This book helped me deal with a particularly devastating incident in my life in a miraculous way. Saint-Exupéry reminds us that each person has depths of potential—little Mozarts sleeping within us—and that we can cultivate one another's potential only with love and respect. You won't be the same after reading *Wind, Sand and Stars*.

❖ ***Kristen Smith*** ❖ ***Salt Lake City, Utah***
❖ ***English, 2005***

Wind, Sand and Stars

a second testimonial

Saint-Exupéry's poetic observations of his thrilling early flights, including hair-raising crashes and stories of survival, this book is about his love of the world and the transcendent nature of friendship, love, and perfection.

❖ ***Annette M. Udall*** ❖ ***Newcastle, California***
❖ ***English, 1992***

We want to hear from you! Tell us about a book—or several—that made a difference for you at some point in your life. Include your name, major, year of graduation, and current place of residence, with a description about the book's influence on you. Email Ron Woods: ron_woods@byu.edu.

Alumni News

Phoenix Area

In January, alumni in the Phoenix area enjoyed two presentations by Dr. Todd Britsch, emeritus professor of Humanities. Dr. Britsch presented a program on the Gospel of John and another on the Book of Revelation as depicted in art, music, and literature. He discussed aspects of works such as Minerva Teichert's "Rescue of the Lost Lamb" and Albrecht Dürer's woodcut, "The Four Horsemen of the Apocalypse." Both presentations were held at the ASU Institute building in Tempe.

Dallas Area

In November, Dr. Daniel Peterson from the department of Ancient and Near Eastern Languages treated Dallas area alumni and friends to two lectures. In the Saturday presentation, Dr. Peterson examined "Mormonism as a Restoration of Ancient Ideas" and showed ways in which some of Joseph Smith's revelations demonstrated knowledge of the ancient world that would be difficult to explain by natural means. On Sunday, Dr. Petersen spoke about "Translation and Bridge Building: The Dialogue of Civilizations." He highlighted the Islamic Translation Series and Middle Eastern Texts Initiative projects sponsored by BYU's Maxwell Institute for Religious Scholarship as a way of building bridges between the world of Islam and the West. Many members of the Muslim community and members of other faiths attended the presentation.

Alumni Book Group Online!

We have created "BYU Humanities Alumni Book Group" on Facebook so you cn discuss your favorite books, authors, or genres with other alumni and friends. Right now this is a closed group so you will need to submit a request via Facebook to join. After we've had some experience with this trial version, we will open the membership and invite all Humanities alumni via email. While our focus will be on BYU Humanities alumni, others with similar values and interests are

welcome to join, so tell your friends and fellow book enthusiasts.

Have you been to Shakespeare's birthplace? Becky Thatcher's grave? There is a tab where you can submit photos of book-related sites. There is a video section with short clips of people providing insights on books or subjects that they know well. This is a work-in-progress, so your comments (use the "Book Club Freedback" topic) on how to improve it are most welcome.

Upcoming Events

Chicagoland Alumni

Mark your calendars now for our next presentation on September 19, 2010. Dr. Daniel Peterson, professor of Arabic in the Department of Asian and Near Eastern Languages in the College of Humanities, will be the guest speaker. Professor Peterson is an authority on Islam and the editor-in-chief of BYU's Middle Eastern Texts Initiative.

Education Week Participants:

Join Humanities faculty for a "Humanities Home Evening" in Provo on Monday, August 16, 2010, in the Joseph F. Smith building. For more information, contact Carol Kounanis at cek@byu.edu or 801-422-8294.

Alumni Careers Part 4: Don't Make a Federal Case out of it!

Many of our graduates put their Humanities skills to good use in interesting careers in the government sector. This is your chance to tell us your story. What classes benefitted you most? How has a major in Humanities helped you in your profession? What advice would you give to current students who may be considering a career in government service? What would you say to students who should consider it? Send your responses to Carol Kounanis, cek@byu.edu.

Why I Choose to *give*

I was a professor of early French literature in the College of Humanities at BYU for over thirty years. I decided to remember BYU in my estate because it was such an important part of my life. I have many fond memories of close friends and associates. I liked my students, and they liked me. There is a good feeling at BYU and nearly all of my students made good progress. A good education is so important, helping each of us to become better people and to make a better contribution to mankind. So I'm happy that I am able to give back to BYU for generations to come.

Josette Ashford

How I will be *blessed*

By choosing to support the College of Humanities through a deferred gift, Josette will give generations of future students opportunities to complete their educations and expand their career options through internships. Though the recipients may never meet Josette, her legacy will remain in the hearts and minds of grateful students blessed generosity.

Those who invest in the future of Brigham Young University become members of the Jesse and Amanda Knight Society. Members of the society regularly receive information on happenings at BYU and are invited to an annual society event. If you are considering, or have already put in place, a deferred gift arrangement (bequest, trust, gift annuity, or life insurance) naming Brigham Young University as a beneficiary, or if you would like more information on the Knight Society, please contact Carol Kounanis, LDS Philanthropies, at cek@byu.edu or 801-422-8294.

Thank You!

Kelsi, Class of 2018

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feedback?

We'd like to hear your views, memories of campus experiences, or an update on your life since leaving BYU. Please e-mail ron_woods@byu.edu.

Humanities at BYU is the alumni magazine of the College of Humanities. Visit us at humanities.byu.edu

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