The 21st Century Call of Humanities in Asia and the Pacific:

Educating the Human Heart

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We are delighted to welcome each of you to our 2019 Humanities International Conference here on our University of Hawai'i – Hilo campus, celebrating the theme "*Humanities in Asia and the Pacific: Exploring and Advancing Possibilities.*" I am honored to present your keynote message.

Introduction

I have to confess from the outset that I am not a pure "humanities" person. Though my doctoral program was housed within a humanities division and I have always taught within humanities divisions, the dissertation was a quantitative experimental study (as was the master's thesis project), culminating in a Ph.D. from the University of Kansas in "communication and human relations; cognate area -- psychology." That early quantitative background has steered my lifetime academic reading and writing toward the behavioral sciences, and not so much toward the humanities proper. I therefore feel in a weak position to directly comment on "the state of the humanities" as we prepare to enter the third decade of the 21st century. From firmer ground I can speak about some of my longstanding concerns within my home discipline of communication studies, and can then wonder aloud if these concerns are pertinent to future directions for the humanities more broadly, especially within the Asia and Pacific region. After that I will then offer a vision of where the humanities would do well to increasingly head, if this not already be the case.

We begin, then, with brief reference to three papers published within my own communication discipline that might also have relevance to the humanities within the Asia and Pacific region.

"Beyond the Failures of Western Communication Theory" (Gordon, 2007) was an admittedly audacious title, but I defined "failures" not in Oxford dictionary's first sense, as a lack of success in meeting one's intended goals, but in Oxford's second sense, a "failure" as *a neglecting to do or be aware of something, a leaving out*. What has been *left out* of Western communication theory as I and some others have viewed it? Typically, the human body, the human heart, a relational conception of personhood, the spiritual, and all of nature. In short, too often in Western communication theory and research humans are conceptualized as disembodied centers of cognition, human emotion is marginalized, the ideology of the skin-encapsulated ego prevails over the fact of human inter-connectedness, nature does not exist, and Spirit has been driven underground by foregrounding power, strategy, influence, and control (Miike, 2017, 2015, 2007; Asante, Miike, & Yin, 2014; Ishii, 2007, 2006; Bochner & Ellis, 2006; Marvin, 2006; Gordon, 2006; Ng, 2004; Gyuchan, 2004; ; Kim, 2002; Goodall, 2000; Gordon, 1998/99; Kincaid, 1987).

Communication, a disembodied discipline, excessively of the head and not the heart, strutting as the Tin Man, agentic rather than communal, machinery clanging, strategy and influence as the topics of neo-positivistic discourses and methods. Mechanomorphic models too often shutting down organic

possibilities, resulting in an important yet under-addressed question: “What more is ‘communication’ than what we have *said* it to be?”

In a paper published both in Chinese and English titled “The Asian Communication Scholar for the 21st Century” (Gordon, 2007), the case was made that “human” communication theory has largely been built upon the responses of American mid-western university sophomores and vastly underrepresents cultural and indigenous perspectives from around the planet. Proudly “Made in the U.S.A,” one-size-fits-all, an exported and conflated “human” communication theory prematurely universalized. Scholars in China, Japan, Korea, and elsewhere around the world were encouraged to resist the pressures and temptations to simply import U.S. topics, theories, and methods, to go beyond scholarly subservience to received views in order to generate more original contributions from within their own cultural, historical, philosophical, religious, and social contexts. It is in this way that a truly “human” communication discipline will emerge: “Communication humanists, communication observers, communication artists, communication poets and philosophers from China, the rest of Asia, and elsewhere, are urged to rise to the occasion and search for invigorated insights into humans communicating that exceed what the ‘scientific’ American paradigm has enabled us to see and know.”

In that paper it was also argued that we scholars and researchers need to not only be concerned with the ethics of our research methods but, in these times especially, with the *ethics of our responsibility to society*. The words Skolimowski (1973) uttered long ago are strong on the matter, and increasingly pertinent: “All knowledge must serve the human species and is only justified insofar as it aids the species in significant ways. Knowledge which does not aid the species in the process of overall survival and which does not contribute to the betterment of man {humanity} is defective knowledge.” Of special importance today is scholarship, research, and practice that has implications for the survival and harmonization of the peoples of the planet Earth. While our research and scholarship advances individual careers, it too often fails to contribute to the betterment of the planet and its inhabitants, and this we can no longer routinely afford. Judging a scholar by their number of publications without concern for the societal relevance of those publications is rather like judging a parent by the number of children they have produced.

In a more recent paper, “Global Empathic Consciousness Development: Mass Communication Hope?” (Gordon, 2016), it was asked whether along with the vast technological progress that humankind has made in the past two hundred years, will we also be able to more rapidly evolve our empathic capacities for caring about the diverse peoples of our planet and our biosphere, in order for the human race to survive long into the future? Can our empathic consciousness development catch-up with our materialistic progress? Can we enlarge our sense of *Us*, and reduce our fear of *Them*? The final words of Rifkin’s (2009) book *The Empathic Civilization* provide suitable cliffhanger closing: “...our rush to universal empathic connectivity is running up against a rapidly accelerating entropic juggernaut in the form of climate change and the proliferation of weapons of mass destruction. Can we reach biosphere consciousness and global empathy in time to avert planetary collapse?” Many of us would agree that learning how to increasingly tolerate and care about an ever-widening range of diverse others is among humanity’s most urgent needs (Wright, 2017; Iacobani, 2008; Goleman, 2006; Sorokin, 1971, 1970, 1954). We would do well in this new millennium to learn to further extend our circle of understanding and caring beyond our in-group of self, family, and friends. The times require a wider expansion of our

empathic sensitivities and compassionate actions toward all living systems, including our planetary biosphere (Rich, 2018).

Humanities in Asia and the Pacific: Exploring and Advancing Possibilities

Now let us draw upon some of the above concerns, and ask whether any also relate to other fields within the humanities, and the humanities entire:

1. Remember the question from above, “What more is ‘communication’ than what we have said it to be?” Related questions might also be raised of the humanities: “What *more* are the ‘humanities’ than what we have treated them to be? What *more* is the role of the ‘humanities scholar’ than what we have thought it to be? What *more* is the role of the ‘humanities’ educator than what we have said it to be?” Have all potentially useful framings and re-framings been exhausted, or do we in Asia and the Pacific have further contributions to make here?
2. How much respect for the human body, for human emotions, for the human spirit, for the spiritual, and for nature and our human inter-connectedness with all living systems, has permeated our humanities scholarship and teaching? Can we in Asia and the Pacific do even more to affect mainstream understandings of what it would mean to be a mature, whole, fully functioning, interconnected human being?
3. To what extent do our humanities programs in Asia and the Pacific region primarily foreground Western topics, methods, content, and issues in our scholarship and teaching? How actively are we encouraging scholars from our Asian and Pacific region, and indigenous scholars from around the world, to creatively enlarge our conceptions of the humanities?
4. How are we faring in our ethical responsibility to humanity and the planet in pursuing humanities scholarship that not only advances individual careers, but that contributes to peoples’ empathic caring for humanity, the harmonization of humankind, and planetary survival?

How engaged are we in asking questions that might allow us to catalyze evolving visions of the role of the humanities on university campuses in our troubled 21st century world?

What is the Province of the “Humanities”?

Never in the thirty-five years that I have been a member of our humanities division here at UH-Hilo have we been asked to explore questions such as the above. Nor have we ever met to participate in dialogue as to our perceptions of what the humanities are, or our conceptions as to what they should be about. I imagine we have done what most other humanities programs have also done amid the flurry of daily routine: we have operationally defined the “humanities” as consisting of those departments placed under that umbrella term (here at UHH consisting of the departments of art, communication, English, languages & cultural studies, linguistics, performing arts, and philosophy), and left the rest to chance, without an articulated guiding vision. It is at this present 2019 conference, in his first year as chair of our humanities division, that associate professor Dr. Rodney Jubilado has decided to open the door to inquiry into “humanities.” I wonder if it has been much different on your campus?

Looking in the Oxford dictionary we find, surprisingly, that the “humanities” lack an entry of their own, but are included briefly under “humanity” as branches of “polite scholarship” such as grammar, rhetoric,

poetry, Latin and Greek classics. We peruse “humane” and find it is especially “Marked by sympathy with and consideration for the needs and distresses of others; feeling or showing compassion and tenderness towards human beings and the lower animals.” To be “humane” further entails being “friendly,” “kind,” “gentle,” and “benevolent.” We survey “to humanize” and learn that it has to do with fostering human character, civilizing, softening, imbuing with gentleness and tenderness, helping to make “humane.” We also discover such terms as “humanness,” “humanhood,” “to humanify,” “humanization,” and “humanizer.”

Fostering human character, helping to make human beings more benevolent, gentle, tender, and compassionate, caring about the needs and distresses of living entities -- these sound at least as vital to 21st century planet Earth as “polite scholarship,” no?

If Ralph Waldo Emerson was right when he said that “Character is higher than intellect,” then energies spent in the development of humane character sounds eminently worthwhile. Or even if “character” is not “higher” than intellect, can we at least acknowledge, especially in our current period, that cultivating emotional and social intelligence (including self-awareness, emotional self-management, empathic capacity, and respectful relationship practices) are every bit as important as developing intellectual intelligence (Goleman, 2017; 2006; 2002). Many have been schooled, but few have been brought to a more mature humanness (Moore, 1996). Can this function be left to the drone program on our campuses, or to the big data program, or to the accounting program, or should fostering humane character more properly situate itself directly at the heart of the humanities?

World Challenges of the 21st Century

Across our 2019 world, forces of ego, narcissism, greed, tribalism, and hate are strong. Signs in the daily news abound non-stop: for every government that has become more democratic in recent years, the data reveal that twice as many have become increasingly authoritarian; at the time of the Berlin Wall there were only fifteen major walls of separation in the world, while today there over seventy; the President of the United States recently authorized a U.S. “Space Force” and formally designated outer space as “a warfighting domain”; on a “0-100” scale of “warm regard” we place our politically likeminded at about “80” but political opponents at “10” (historically the average assigned to the opposition has been at about “60”); climate disruption escalates at an alarming pace; migration is rampant; religious wars persist; genocide exists; racism, sexism, homophobia abound; division, polarization, prejudice, negativism, fear, denial, and hate are legion.

Countervailing forces must also be strong. But as Kornfield (2018) has observed, “No amount of technology, computers, Internet, biotech, nanotechnology, or space technology is going to stop continuing racism, warfare, environmental destruction, tribalism. These all have their sources in the human heart. The outer developments that are so remarkable in our human world need to be matched by the inner developments of humanity ... This is the great task of modern times. To bring the inner level of human consciousness up to the level of our outer development. Nothing else will really make a difference.”

Decades ago, Kenneth Clark, recipient of the lifetime award for distinguished contribution to the field of psychology, spoke of two prominent forces in human dynamics: power and empathy. When human beings have power, but little empathy, then social tensions, conflicts, violence, terrorism, and war thrive. But when humans are able, and choose, to empathically put themselves in the situations of

others, and deeply understand and feel along with those others, compassionate actions can result. Clark (1980) urged his academic colleagues to develop ways to heighten the number of human beings who are functionally empathic.: “If this is done, there will be a future for humanity. The survival of the human species now appears to depend upon a universal increase in functional empathy. Trained human intelligence must now dedicate itself to the attainment of this goal.”

Human empathic extensions can be severely impaired by lack of education, self-preoccupation, authoritarianism, narcissism, sociopathy, stress, trauma, fear, tribal division, misguided leadership, rhetorical manipulation, a steady diet of media violence, and other inhibiting factors. In spite of these constraining forces, in this pivotal and still new century and millennium we need more than ever before an enlargement of our empathic capacities, an extension of our range of care and concern, an increasing attunement with humankind and with other life species. Reduction of egocentrism, scapegoating, and dehumanization of “Them” is imperative to the well-being and future of our human family and our planet. As Rushkoff (2019) has said, “There’s nothing wrong with opposing someone. But our encounters with our adversaries must be grounded in the context of our shared humanity.” We need greater recognition and embrace of Team Human and Team Planet; we must “find the others.”

We need to make progress in transcending the illusion of separateness, increasingly coming to recognize our inter-being with others, and harmonize our relations by seeking productive interdependence as we collaborate with others to face the challenges of modern times. As Einstein famously expressed it, “The true value of a human being is determined primarily by the measure and the sense in which he has attained liberation from the self” (Sullivan, 1972). Yet Einstein (2011) went further: “A human being is part of the whole, called by us ‘Universe,’ a part limited in time and space. He experiences himself, his thoughts and feelings, as something separate from the rest – a kind of optical delusion of his consciousness. This delusion is a kind of prison for us, restricting us to our personal desires and to our affection for a few persons nearest to us. Our task must be to free ourselves from this prison by widening our circle of compassion and embracing all living creatures and the whole of nature in its beauty.”

Is Einstein’s perspective relevant to our roles as humanities scholars and educators in Asia and the Pacific? Is part of our responsibility to increasingly assist in freeing students from their prisons of optical delusion, their skin-encapsulated egos, their separation and boundedness, or are we perhaps unwittingly at times serving as the guards (or even wardens) of their prisons, or at least the cop on the beat?

Student Challenges of the 21st Century

But that’s not all, for along with our contemporary world issues and crises (and in part due to them) we also have the fragile state of today’s university student body. The American College Health Association, for example, documents a national mental health crisis on American college campuses (of which we are witnessing our fair share even here in paradise). In a 2017 survey of 26,000 undergraduates, over 60% had at times experienced “overwhelming anxiety,” and 40% indicated they felt “so depressed” at some point in the previous twelve months that “it was difficult to function,” while 13% of college students seriously contemplated suicide in that year (Gooblar, 2018). We regularly see evidence of these problems, along with signs of trauma, sexual abuse, physical abuse, substance abuse, internet addiction,

attention-deficit disorders, and an array of other personal student challenges only slightly beneath the surface in our classrooms each and every week.

Problems pressing-in upon us from our world, our institutions, our classrooms. The times are not easy for any frontline educator. How to cope? What to do? Where to begin?

Educating the Human Heart

The cultivation of the human heart, meaning the cultivation of greater caring, empathy, and compassion; meaning greater respect and love for ourselves and one another, for our Earth and its vast array of persons and life forms, is this at all pertinent to the charge of the humanities in the 21st century in Asia and the Pacific?

I believe it could and should be. This is my personal and professional position, and I would like to share it with you here.

We ultimately choose the place inside ourselves from where our teaching comes, and the place to where it is directed within our students. Parker Palmer (2014; 2004; 1998) has long counseled that our teaching would best come less from our fearfulness of our students and our fears of subjectivity, along with our other backstage insecurities that often get masked behind outer arrogance, and learn to flow more amply and freely from our loving hearts. Palmer (2000) writes that “Authentic leaders in every setting, from families to nation-states, aim at liberating the heart, their own and others’, so that its power can liberate the world.”

For behind the blank student facades that we so often see in our classes, and into which we can easily project attitudes of non-caring for our subject matter and us, student fears and sufferings quite often reside. Young people in pain populate our classrooms, and they can best be reached not through their left brains but through their hearts. Palmer sees classroom educators as “the true ‘first responders’” to the world’s problems, which manifest clearly and early among the vulnerable young people sitting in our classes. The most recent World Happiness Report from the United Nations (2019) shows that worry, sadness, and anger have risen 27% among the world’s general population between 2010 and 2018, and the students in our classes reflect this.

The stunned and anesthetized hearts of today’s students cry out for a more heartfelt teaching practice, for less neutrality and distancing, for a pedagogy of safety, support, love, and wisdom. Without necessarily knowing how to articulate it, they yearn to move from the impersonal classroom of power-pointed *I-It* relation to the vastly more personal and secure connection of *I-Thou* (Buber, 1970). Is the time not yet upon us to be teaching with more heart than in the past, with more love, from the heart and to the heart? Does our world not need this? Do our students not need precisely this?

We educators, anthropologist Ashley Montagu (1967) advised, need to realize our real significance in the world, being “engaged in the most important of all tasks: the making of human beings .... it is the purpose of the educator to assist each person to reach his evolutionary destiny: which is, to live as if to live and love were one.” Swiss educator Heinrich Pestalozzi (1951) nearly three hundred years ago also urged us to this task, and saw a heart-centered teaching practice as crucial in carrying it out: “Love is the sole and everlasting foundation on which our nature can be trained to humaneness.” Leadership researchers Kouzes and Posner (2012; 2010; 2003) conclude that exemplary leaders in education and elsewhere raise people to a higher plane, heightening positive emotions and uplifting ethical and

virtuous behaviors, and that in the doing of this, such “Leadership is not an affair of the head. Leadership is an affair of the heart.”

Restoring and enlarging our humanity? Serving human beings, leading them aspire to their evolutionary destiny, which is learning to love? Lifting students to a higher ethical and values plane? Teaching from our hearts, with love, to the stressed and slumbering hearts of our students? Sounds daunting.

The work of the humanities: valuing, honoring, and facilitating the dignity, worth, and virtuous unfoldment of the truly “human” being. Emotional literacy, especially vital in the current period: the ability to find our humanity in one another, and further evolve it. Human evolution can no longer be left to the slow glacial passage of temporal eras; healthy human evolution needs wise and loving cultivation now, for time is very much upon us (Goleman & Davidson, 2017).

It may well be that in the humanities we need a grand awakening for the 21st century, an awakening into our and others’ hearts, and into our wisdom, empathy, and compassion for our planet and her peoples. An awakening from division, fragmentation, extremism, and barbarism into a consciousness intent upon communication, connection, cooperation, collaboration. A crucial time for a call to arms: arms to embrace our students’ often fragile minds and hearts, and gently awaken their best natures.

Greater balance between mind and heart within the college classroom is overdue, especially within humanities classrooms where, due to our subject matters, the human heart does have a discernible beat. We in the humanities are already lovers, from the inside out: our philosophers love and pursue wisdom; our dancers love expressing life-felt energies through their bodies; our musicians love creating vibrations of musical sound; our writers reach inside themselves and lovingly linger, and then bestow their words upon us; our language faculty and linguists love intertwining language and culture and bringing diverse humans closer together; our visual artists love surrendering to the creative process, and stirring their beholders to feeling.

Let us celebrate that we in humanities are lovers one and all, workers of heartfelt expressive energies that speak from and to the inmost recesses of the human spirit. These expressions emerge from within us and find their way into the world. We are midwives to organic forces of constructive creation of, by, and for the uplifted human heart. We touch upon the mythic through the suspended moment.

Still, I am less than certain that we have fully grasped and honored the special role we have to play within the academy as the province, conscience, and awakers of the human heart. Part of this is no doubt personal: under stresses from our daily lives and world, our own hearts regularly constrict. And part is professional: within the academy, rules of logical argument and rigorous judgment are supposed to prevail, and we dutifully learn to close-off. We armor, we harden, we self-protect, we play by the rules and norms, and at times even the best-intentioned of us lose tender touch with ourselves and other humans.

To recurrently return to opening our own heart is one of the great challenges confronting the humanities educator. At moments, however, wake-up calls can occur that do enable our hearts to soften and then open more widely, and we can then reach out to others from that alive and glowing heart. I would like to tell you a story of one of my own most memorable heart-opening renewals. It was long ago, and occurred (of all places) at a convention attended by thousands of academics at an annual meeting of the National Communication Association, held at the Chicago Hilton Hotel. I had gone there to chair a session, and to also present a recently published paper on a pedagogical classroom format

called “The Wisdom Circle Process” (Gordon, 2004). My aim was to invite other communication educators to consider welcoming self-disclosure and empathic listening into their classrooms through the use of this group process. I had four years of personal experience with this group process, and some preliminary outcome data.

While at the convention I attended several sessions organized by young academics, mostly assistant profs, who were sharing their personal writings and reflections on the theme of “teaching from the heart.” I was curious to know what this meant to folks who saw themselves as making the effort to “teach from the heart.” In my own teaching I saw myself as attempting to include cognitive, affective, and behavioral objectives within my courses, but had never put it so semantically boldly as “teaching from, and to, the human heart” (Denton & Ashton, 2004).

Usually my feelings are not much affected by impersonal academic program presentations, but this was different. These were captivating personal acts of self-revelation by professionals willing to make themselves vulnerable as they spoke publicly about their inadequacies, and adequacies, in trying to meaningfully and feelingfully nudge the lives of their students. They spoke of their fears, their anxieties, their failures at deeply reaching their students. They also spoke of their breakthroughs. These sessions were themselves directed not so much to the head as to the heart, less to the cognitive domains of the academic audience members and more to our emotional centers.

Conference rooms packed with tender feelings; for me, and others, this was extraordinary. Having gotten accustomed over the years to convention sessions replete with egoism, skepticism, and at times verbal pugilism, how refreshing to hear educators stretching out to one another with their sensitively chosen words and making heartfelt human impact on matters of common concern, namely, getting through to, and affectively connecting with, our students. These sessions were profoundly moving because of their uniqueness, their violation of norms of professional objectivity and distancing. Professors were disclosing themselves as persons, seeking to make nurturing personal contact through intimate voicing. Stories were told, including stories about the importance of classroom storytelling. Examples of student and teacher poetry were shared, as were journal entries. I left these sessions feeling as if our humanity had not only been addressed, but enhanced and elevated.

I then went to an event in the grand ballroom, this time a celebration of the life of a recently departed member of the communication discipline, a scholar of repute whose text (Rushing & Frenztz, 1995) I had adopted and used a few times in a course, and whom I had heard speak at a convention a couple of years prior. She had recently died of cancer, and her husband (who was also her colleague and co-author) spoke, as did several of her other peers and former and current graduate students, several of whom chose to read their final emails from her.

Although I had never met or messaged with our departed colleague, from the sweet and beautiful words of others I felt as if I knew her. As I sat alone in one of the back rows in the ballroom, I let the tears flow. The tears came in what seemed like endless streaming, my body and heart overtaken by sadness and loss and release. Instead of blocking these tears as I had so often done in my life in other emotional contexts, I allowed the quiet sobbing and profuse tears to pour as I continued to be moved by the love that Janice Hocker Rushing had abundantly given to others, and was now herself receiving. My heart was alive and filled with feeling for her loss, for friendship, for marriage, for life and death, for previous loss in my own life, and for so much more that I could not even begin to identify.

Leaving the ballroom, I walked through the hotel lobby and back to the elevators, tears on my cheeks still fresh, but with no sense of inappropriateness or shame or need to hide my lingering emotional state. Having feelings felt healthy and right. The feelings were bittersweet, sadness combined with profound appreciation for the expressions of love that I had not only just witnessed, but emotionally experienced. I felt brought to life, brought back to myself.

On that day my heart once again opened, in of all places the Chicago Hilton at an academic convention! Strange, but true. I had flown all the way from Hawai'i to Chicago to share my own paper on enhancing affective contact with students in our classrooms, and there I was having my own heart further coming to life, participating in the powers of love. It later became clear to me that even when we think our heart is open, it can open more. I realized that most of us will never arrive at permanent heart openness; the heart expands, it contracts, it widens, it withdraws. In order to experience open-heartedness, we benefit from making the return journey to feeling again and again, allowing ourselves each time to more richly experience our humanity. Openings and closings, the human condition; yet each time, the openings a little wider, and residual effects accruing. Permitting ourselves vulnerability is the portal, the way in.

I would like to share with you another personal story of a more recent, and still-occurring, heart-opening experience. For decades I have for the most part kept the word "love" out of my university vocabulary. In all of my communication classes I regularly teach Carl Rogers' (1995) model of the three core components of a constructive communication climate: "Unconditional Positive Regard," "Empathy," and "Genuineness." When talking about "Unconditional Positive Regard" I will often use Rogers' colloquial term "Warmth," but I have almost never used the term "Love" (nor did Rogers), even though "Love" most definitely shares territory with "Unconditional Positive Regard." Within academic discourse, however, "Unconditional Positive Regard" feels safer, more intellectually rigorous and (dare I say it?) less "touchy-feely" than "Love." As bell hooks (2001) has noted, "Taught to believe that the mind, not the heart, is the seat of learning, many of us believe that to speak of love with any emotional intensity means we will be perceived as weak and irrational." Diane Ackerman (1994) goes further: "As a society we are embarrassed by love. We treat it as if it were an obscenity. We reluctantly admit to it. Even saying the word makes us stumble and blush ... "

Pulling out the stops in the fall semester of 2018, for the first time ever, I chose to offer a senior-level experimental course titled "Communication and Love" (a course now approved for permanent addition to our curriculum, and newly in my teaching rotation). I cannot adequately convey what a breakthrough this has been for me. To bust down my own fifty-year self-imposed resistance to using the word "Love" in the college classroom, and then to openly read and talk together with students about "Love" in its manifest forms has been utterly freeing. At long last, to publicly acknowledge and celebrate the importance of human "Love," and not shy away from that term out of reflex habit. To boldly go forth at the semantic level, to come right out and explicitly talk about "Love" had the effect of relaxing the hearts of many of us in that course. To unashamedly read and share stories of our experiences with "Love," whether in the context of family, friendship, romance, or spirituality, was tremendously disinhibiting and liberating, and brought us close together.

Since well over 95% of courses on most university campuses will not directly be about "Love," it certainly does feel as if a taboo has been broken when "Love" is openly a topic of reflection within the classroom. Minds, mouths, vocabularies, and hearts open when we cease viewing this as just another

off-center four-letter word, and academically legitimize “Love.” The irony of course, is that, as Kouzes & Posner (2003) point out in their book *Encouraging the Heart*, “... it’s as if we’re all trying to hide something that we all want. We have a secret we’re afraid to reveal because it might make us look soft or wimpy or who knows what. *The secret is this: we all really do want to be loved*” (italics in original). I might add that on the first day of registration for the coming fall 2019 semester, the second time this course will be offered, it is already filled to capacity while my “Seminar in Human Dialogue” course so far has only three registrants! Students are eager to be nearer to “Love.”

I encourage other academics who might have locked themselves in the closet of suppressed semantics and repressed feelings to consider unlocking the door and taking steps out into the light of day. To have an effect upon dormant student hearts we first need to repeatedly re-open our own hearts, and again feel. This would become an ongoing intention and practice of the resilient heartfelt educator.

To again bring our focus back around to the humanities proper, being emotionally moved is what powerful literature allows, as does poetry to which we resound, or a concert that has us soaring on sound, or painting or sculpture that magnetically attracts us, or a line from Nietzsche that works its enchantment upon us. The humanities can for moments take our breath away, and return us to ourselves enlivened. The humanities can warm our hearts and bring us to our feet with applause and cheers from our emotional core. The humanities reverberate in the heart, and we in the humanities can be dynamic spokespersons for greater unfoldment of the human heart. This, if we so choose, can be our *kuleana*, our territory, part of our role and responsibility as educators of the humanities.

Miller (2017) has used this metaphor: “We have, then, three gears in the transmission of our lives: forward, neutral, and reverse. Forward moves us ahead toward the horizon of our humanity, that which we are meant to be. Reverse moves us further away from our humane nature. Neutrality leaves us immobile, drifting with the tides around us.” To the extent that we in the humanities are in neutral, it’s time to get it in gear, for as W. H. Auden bluntly put it, “We must love one another or die.”

Prominent primatologist Frans de Waal (2006, 2005) concludes that humans are the most dualistic of the primates, highly social and cooperative beings but also distrustful of “outsiders” whom we surmise could conceivably pose a threat. Here is de Waal’s (2009) summary of the human animal: “... we see one of the most internally conflicted animals ever to walk the earth. It is capable of unbelievable destruction of both its environment and its own kind, yet at the same time it possesses wells of empathy and love deeper than ever seen before. Since this animal has gained dominance over all others, it’s all the more important that it takes an honest look in the mirror, so that it knows both the archenemy it faces and the ally that stands ready to help it build a better world.”

Arousing more of our students from their stupor, rallying them out of their sleepwalking slumber and inspiring their senses, minds, and hearts, getting them to care, this is a beginning. And we can perhaps even more directly call upon our ourselves and our disciplines to shape and develop themes of human dignity, respect, compassion, courage, justice, wisdom, self-restraint, self-transcendence, love for humanity, human harmonization, spirituality, and humankind’s other most refined values (Peterson & Seligman, 2004).

Among potential allies are colleagues within the area of psychology formerly known as “humanistic psychology” and today referred to as “positive psychology,” a term coined by humanistic psychologist Abraham Maslow (1974, 1971). Psychological research is actively being conducted in such realms as

“awe,” “love,” “empathy,” “compassion,” “kindness,” “altruism,” “resilience,” “forgiveness,” “gratitude,” “transcendence,” “flow,” and other positive behaviors. We in the humanities can draw upon these fascinating literatures for yet further guidance and resource, if and when we so choose (Lopez, Pedrotti, & Snyder, 2019). Yet the primary aim of the positive psychologist is the doing of research to build a science, not necessarily to reflect upon and apply the wisdom of its findings on the frontlines. Again, to awaken human hearts and uplift humanity, helping humankind progress in a constructive direction, who better-suited than those of us in the humanities? Noble and challenging service for courageous humanities educators of the 21st century who choose to take it on. Many are those in the academy who have lost heart, and are counting the days: we need not be among them.

Conclusion

It’s time to shake the table. Dr. Martin Luther King, Jr. once put it starkly: “The choice today is no longer between violence and nonviolence. It is either nonviolence, or nonexistence.” The passage of time has only intensified and broadened the truth of these words: we need increasing nonviolence toward all living life forms and our biosphere, the delicate skin of the apple that surrounds our planet Earth.

One final brief story. Paracelsus more than five hundred years ago said that from time to time we need to walk from our “high colleges” and talk with others outside our silos, for they too have important knowledge and wisdom to share with us. So I ask my haircutter, “Wendy, do you mind if I ask you a question?” “Sure,” she replies. “Wendy, when you hear the word the ‘humanities,’ what do you think of, what comes to your mind?” She is silent for several seconds, and then says, “*People...*” followed by a five-second pause, and then, “*caring.*”

Maybe we can do no better than this; perhaps the humanities are about “People, caring.” Professors caring about students, students caring about one another, and all of us caring about wisdom from the past, caring about our common humanity, and caring about our common plights. Caring to discover, honor, and further develop our humane capacities for the betterment of humankind and our continued existence (Mayeroff, 1971). Perhaps our role could be to hasten *human caring* in ways that have been suppressed within much of the academy in our increasingly contemporary service as a workforce training center.

In the third millennium it might be that anything less than humanities scholars and educators awakening and facilitating deep *human caring* is no longer enough. Psychologist Bill Miller (2017) concludes that “The collective life of the human race is shaped by choices to love or not. Inhumanity tends to breed more inhumanity across time until someone decides that *it stops here, with me*. Lovingkindness is similarly contagious.”

Indeed, love is the most powerful binding force that our biological evolution has produced (Sorokin, 1974, 1971, 1954). Perhaps it is time for those of us in humanities to more explicitly align with this binding force, and catalyze its potentials for humanity. Tillich (1952) went further and suggested that “Love is basically not an emotional but an ontological power, it is the essence of life itself, namely, the dynamic reunion of that which is separated.”

Humanity, at the end of the second decade of the 21st century, is separated from itself, and from its natural surroundings. May we in the humanities assist in the re-membling.

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