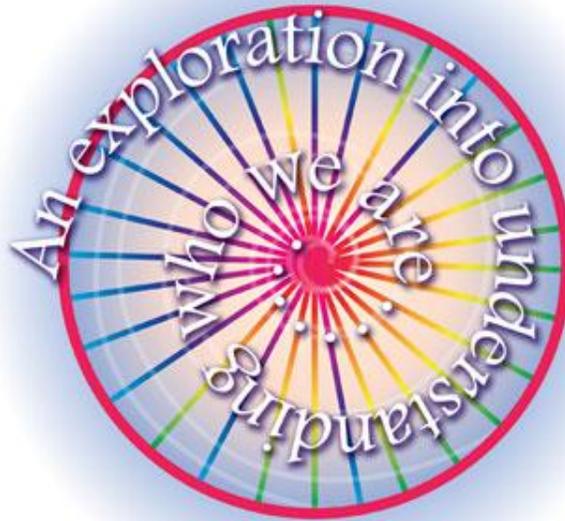


## *Turning of the Wheel: the Interplay of the Unique and the Universal*

A Humanities Exploration into the University of Idaho Community and Beyond

Rodney Frey – Distinguished Humanities Professor 2011-12



Tremendous thanks go to John Mihelich, Chair, Sociology and Anthropology, for nominating me, and to Katherine Aiken, Dean of the College of Letters, Arts and Social Sciences, for awarding me this great honor. Thanks also to the funding sources – the University of Idaho Humanities Endowment, the National Endowment for the Humanities, and by gifts from Friends of the College of Letters, Arts & Social Sciences, for making this entire program possible.

The theme for the project was selected based upon a dilemma I've been wrestling with for years – how to address and resolve the seemingly “mutually exclusive” in our professional and personal lives (e.g., class vs. class, religion vs. religion, science vs. humanities vs. Indigenous, political party vs. political party, etc.)? To help address this theme I turned to an insight offered by one of my dear teachers and mentors, Tom Yellowtail (a Crow elder), and his “wagon wheel” story and life example. Tom’s metaphor of the distinct spokes and shared hub offered a way to approach the interplay between our collective diversity and uniqueness, and what is shared in common, our universality, the ubiquitous. I am convinced that the interplay between the spokes and hub goes directly to how we effectively communicate, collaborate, and build community. So I asked selected faculty, administrators, students and community members the question, does the “wagon wheel,” with its spokes of diversity in relation to a hub of universality, have meaning for you?

Wanting to take full advantage of the rich talent of faculty and students in our University community, I elected to focus the responses to this theme on our community. As I approached each possible presenter, I asked if the theme resonated with him or her in some way. I wanted all participants to consider addressing the theme from their own academic perspective and have some “fun” with it – “let’s see some of what gets you impassioned about your discipline,” “not making it too academic.” While emphasizing the humanities, as I’ve defined it in my keynote address and on the web site, I did want to branch out and see how other disciplines, in sciences, social sciences and the arts and architecture, also dealt with the theme. So we had a varied format of presentations and content, from artistic performances and exhibits, to science, social science and humanities lectures, talks and readings. The mix really allowed the theme to be extended into and throughout our entire University community.

Spring Semester 2011 was set aside for planning and development, while during Fall and Spring semesters 2011-12 we held the presentations, performances, readings, and exhibits. I facilitated most of the fall events and all the spring events in coordination with the Malcolm Renfrew Interdisciplinary Colloquium, along with some evening events scheduled in the Commons and at the Pritchard Art Gallery.

There were a total of 34 sponsored events, with 51 presenters, including Moscow’s mayor, 25 faculty, 25 graduate and undergraduate students and the Jazz Choir I. There was a total attendance of 3,271 (with some degree of duplication, though I witnessed significant numbers of new faces with each specific event), for an average of 85 people attending each of the 34 sponsored events. It was truly an invigorating exploration of thought, sounds and visuals, into the rich diversity of who we are, as well as what we share in common.

I set up and developed the following web pages in support of the program:

Home page: <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/humanities/index.htm>

Origin of theme: <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/humanities/origin.htm>

Key definitions: <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/humanities/definitions.htm>

Implications: <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/humanities/implications.htm>

Guiding questions: <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/humanities/questions.htm>

Resources: <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/humanities/resources.htm>

Course: <http://www.webpages.uidaho.edu/humanities/PDF/Syllabus404.pdf>

Word Press blog: <http://humanities-exploration.uidaho.edu/> (not used; just never caught on)

Facebook page: <http://www.facebook.com/HumanitiesExploration>

I developed Turning of the Wheel Seminars (in coordination with the Malcolm Renfrew Interdisciplinary Colloquium) and a course on my own. Along with a one-credit seminar offered in the Fall and Spring semesters, a three-credit course, built around the theme of this series, was held during the Spring Semester 2012.

All events, presentations, performances, readings, exhibits were video recorded by the Video Production Center and rendered accessible for viewing as "video-on-demand" from this web site, via YouTube or WaterShed. Thanks to **David Clay** and his team for their support. These videos will also be permanently housed in the University of Idaho Library's Digital Collection, under the direction **Devin Becker** (Digital Initiative Librarian).

All events, presentations, performances and exhibits were photographed by **Kristin Carlson**. A few of her images are posted on the web site and made part of the University of Idaho Library Digital Collection.

**Denise Bennett** (Senior Instructor of Journalism and Mass Media) assisted the project as a video documentarian. Denise interviewed many of the Humanities Exploration participants for consideration for an Idaho Public Television documentary on the program.

I also thank **Ilya Pinchuk**, a student intern, for helping with event set-up and helping script the introductions for each presenter. **Suzanne Aaron** and **Jean McIntire** helped guide my budgetary considerations and associated paperwork processes.

**Marketing.** Among the means to get the word out, were a running ad on Northwest Public Radio; press releases done for local newspapers; a generic poster on display in the SUB, Commons and Administration buildings (with changing reminders of upcoming presentations); e-mail invitations and then reminders to all ISEM instructors and other likely faculty; development of a Facebook page of all events and continual updating of it. You can never do enough marketing. Thanks to **Barbara Hamm** for the wonderful Turning Wheel design.

**Budget.** The funding support was most appreciated. While we did not ultimately pursue the possibility of publishing a sampling of papers (from the presentations) as a monograph, I did appreciate the support from Dean Aiken for supplemental funding for this possibility.

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**Schedule of Events**, in order of presentation, for Fall semester 2011 and Spring semester 2012 (Numbers in parenthesis refers to attendance at the event).

**"Turning of the Wheel: Meeting the Challenges and Charting - Creating the World with Spokes and a Hub."** Rodney Frey (Professor of Ethnography and Distinguished Humanities Professor). Inaugural event, a "key" unlocking the year-long Humanities Exploration series of interactive experiences, lectures, exhibits and performances. Keynote Address given on September 1 at Legacy Pointe Boise Center (30), then on September 8 at the Coeur d'Alene Center (45), and on September 12 in the Administration Auditorium, Moscow Campus (350). [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Invisible Spokes: The Ubiquity of Magic in the West."** Garth Reese (Associate Professor and Head, Library's Special Collections and Archives, with a research focus in Religious Studies). A colloquium talk given September 13 (37). [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"The Village Sings and Drums and Dances."** **Dan Bukvich** (Professor of Music) with **Navin Chettri** and the **Jazz Choir I**. An evening of engaged voices and rhythms preformed on September 21 at the Pritchard Art Gallery (103). [Synopsis, and Bukvich and Chettri Bios](#)

**"Better Living through Philosophy: Ways of Knowing and the Search for Common Ground."** - **Michael O'Rourke** (Professor of Philosophy, and team member of Toolbox). A colloquium talk given September 27 (76) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Adoration of Dora: a Play with Text and Images."** - written by Lauren "Lojo" Simon, a MFA student, and directed by Robert Caisley. "Adoration of Dora" has won the prestigious 2011 David Mark Cohen National Playwriting Award (supported by the Kennedy Center American College Theatre Festival, the Association for Theatre in Higher Education, and Dramatic Publishing Company). This play was co-sponsored by the Humanities Exploration and performed on September 29, 30, October 1, 6 - 9 (1,276 for all showings) [Synopsis](#) View "Adoration of Dora" via Watershed stream.

**"Art about Art: Collaboration and Expression of Self and Other in Creating New Work for Theatre."** (on the play, *Adoration of Dora*) - **Marco Deyasi** (Assistant Professor of Art and Design), **Lauren "Lojo" Simon** (MFA student and playwright) and **Robert Caisley** (Associate Professor of Theatre Arts and Head of Dramatic Writing). A colloquium panel discussion given October 4. (32) [Abstract and Bios](#)

**"Reflections on Serving under Seven University of Idaho Presidents - Representing the University in all its Diversity and Universality."** - **Marty Peterson** (Special Assistant to the President, Governmental Relations). A colloquium talk given October 18 (32). [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Removing the Mask: The Personal Essay as an Epistemological Instrument in the Unique and the Universal"** - **Brandon Schrand** (Assistant Professor of English). A colloquium talk given November 1 (40). [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Akwaaba and the Organization of Traditional Music and Dance in Ghanaian Culture."** - **Barry Bilderback** (Assistant Professor of Music), partnering with Navin Chettri and World Beat. An evening workshop and performance held November 8 at the Pritchard Art Gallery (45) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Governing in an Era of Crisis: The Rule of Law and Emergency Powers."** - **David Adler** (James A. McClure Professor and Director, McClure Center for Public Policy Research). A colloquium talk given November 15 (50) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"The Unique and Universal in the Personal Essay: Graduate Student Readings."** - Ann Stebner Steele, Cara Stoddard, Jamaica Ritcher and Aaron Poor, MFA students of **Brandon Schrand**. An evening of essay readings held November 29 at the Pritchard Art Gallery (45)

**"Un Testimonio: ¿Quién Soy Yo? Who Am I? - A Chicago-born Latina's Path to Ethnic Identity and Activism."** - **Carmen Suarez** (Director, Office of Human Rights, Access and Inclusion). A colloquium talk given December 7 (100) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Communicating Communication through Black and White Photography: Connecting the Diverse with the Shared in Common."** - **Bill Voxman** (Photographer and Professor Emeritus of Mathematics). A colloquium talk given January 17 (45) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Communicating Communication through Black and White Photography: Connecting the Diverse with the Shared in Common."** - **Bill Voxman** (Photographer and Professor Emeritus of Mathematics). An exhibit of Voxman's photography held in the Reflections Gallery in the Commons between January 9 and 27.

**"Notes from a Basically Applied Scientist."** - **Sanford Eigenbrode** (Professor of Chemical Ecology, Chair of Entomology, team member of the National Science Foundation Integrated Graduate Education and Research Traineeship - NSR-IGERT, and team member of Toolbox). A colloquium talk given on January 24 (45) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Why the classics matter: ancient Greece and the modern university."** - **James A. Foster** (Professor of Biology and Computer Science). A colloquium talk given on January 31 (75) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Community Without Borders: Symbolism, Theosophy, and Anti-Colonialism in France, 1880-1910."** - **Marco Deyasi** (Assistant Professor of Art and Design). A colloquium talk held on February 7 (45) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"A Historian Looks at Valentine's Day: ~~the Interplay of Dollars and Cupids.~~"** - **Katherine Aiken** (Dean, College of Letters, Arts & Social Sciences, and Professor of History). A colloquium talk given on February 14 (125) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Social Justice and Feminist Leadership: Sharing the Unique Perspectives and Universal Concepts."** - **Heather Gasser** (Director, Women's Center). A colloquium talk given on February 21 (53) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Road Stories"** - **Sally Graves Machlis** (Chair and Professor of Art and Design) and **Delphine Keim-Campbell** (Associate Professor Art and Design). A colloquium talk on February 28 (117) [Abstract and Bios](#)

**"Road Stories"** - **Sally Graves Machlis** (Chair and Professor of Art and Design) and **Delphine Campbell** (Associate Professor Art and Design). An art exhibit in Reflections Gallery in the Commons from February 20 - March 3

**"The International Community Looks for . . . Community?"** - **Bill Smith** (Director, Martin Institute and International Studies). A colloquium talk given on March 6 (60) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"The University of Idaho Olmsted Brothers' Master Plan: Historical Process and the Creation of Place."** - **Stephen Drown** (Chair and Professor of Landscape Architecture). A colloquium talk given on March 27 (65) [Abstract](#) and Bio

**"This Is the Sound of Survivance: Nez Perce Indians Playing Jazz."** - **Janis Johnson** (Assistant Professor English). A colloquium talk held on April 3 (50) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"An evening of discussion with Nez Perce Jazz musicians."** - **Janis Johnson** (Assistant Professor English) moderator with Nez Perce descendants of musicians, including **Loretta Halfmoon**, **Shirley McCormack** and **Silas Whitman**. Held on the evening of April 3 (35) [Abstract](#)

**"Adventures of time and space travel aboard an amazing machine: The wheel as political metaphor."** - **Nancy Chaney** (alumnus and Mayor of Moscow). A colloquium talk on April 10 (30) [Abstract and Bio](#)

**"Turning of the Wheel: an Indigenous Woman's Perspective."** Graduate students from **Georgia Johnson's** 'Indigenous Knowledge and Research Models in Education' course, including **Lynn M. Becerra**, **Maria Isabel Morales**, **Renée Holt**, **D'Lisa Pinkham** and **Angel Sobotta**, will share their experiences in a panel presentation held the evening of April 10 (20) [Abstract and Bios](#)

**"Is Good Enough, Good Enough? Cultural Imagination and Human Capacities for Self, Other and Community."** - **John Mihelich** (Chair and Associate Professor of Anthropology and Sociology). A colloquium talk delivered April 17 (60)

**"The full spectrum in a wheel: Less, more and the opposite spoke."** - **Mark Trahant** ("Editor in Residence" for the School of Journalism and Mass Media; National award winning journalist, Trahant is a member of Idaho's Shoshone-Bannock Tribe ). A talk given the evening of April 17 (30) [Abstract](#)

**"The Unique vs. The Universal: the Final Round."** - **Dan Edwards** (Associate Professor of Physical Chemistry). A colloquium talk given on April 24 (70) [Abstract](#)

**"Re-telling Our Own Stories: An evening of wrap-up discussion and reflection on the year of the Turning of the Wheel, a Humanities Exploration Series."** Facilitated by Rodney Frey, a host of others, and You. Your opportunity to share your reflections on the Turning of the Wheel. Held May 1 (20)

**"One Foot"** a one-act play written by Lojo Simon, directed by Travis Gray, and performed by Sean Parker and Lindsey Teter, winner of the **One Act Play Festival**. The Festival was coordinated by **Robert Caisley** (Associate Professor of Theatre Arts and Head of Dramatic Writing) and **David Lee-Painter** (Professor of Performance and Theatre Arts). An evening of original plays by MFA student playwrights on the theme of the interplay between the unique and universal. Performed May 9-11. (65) View "One Foot" via Watershed stream.

**POSTPONED until Fall Semester 2012 - Don Burnett** (Dean, College of Law and Professor of Law). A colloquium talk: "From Ethics to Economics: A Jurisprudential Search for Enduring Principles" [Abstract and Bio](#) (to be included in the Malcolm Renfrew Interdisciplinary Colloquium Fall 2012).

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**Recommendations for the next Distinguished Humanities Professor.** Do it your own way and have some fun. I certainly did on all counts. And from faculty, student and attendee responses, we all learned a little more about the nature of the humanities, along with what distinguishes each of us from our neighbors and what we share in common. And we had some fun doing so.

I had some organizational skills, and in association with Jean McIntire and Ilya Pinchuk, was able to do all the behind the scenes scheduling and work associated with making the project come to fruition. But I would recommend hiring an assistant if the next Humanities program entails extensive organizational work and the Distinguished Humanities Professor is not so inclined to do the organizational work (which can be considerable).