Más que un viaje / More than a trip

—Rosie Lammey

When I arrived in Vigo, Spain about a year ago, I was unaware of all the opportunities that I would have or how many interesting people from all over the world I would meet, or the new places to which I would travel. Least of all, did I imagine that I would be given the opportunity to teach English to children in a local school.

For about five months I had the opportunity to live in Vigo. It is the largest city in the autonomous community of Galicia, located in northern Spain above Portugal. There are many incredible things in this region that many people never hear about. It is an interesting culture that combines Celtic and Spanish traditions. They have their own dialect, Gallego, which nearly all speak in addition to Castilian Spanish. Galicia is also on the coast and has beautiful beaches, as well as hills and mountains. There are even a set of islands called the Islas Cies off the coast, which have been termed La mejor playa del mundo or in Galician mellor praia do mundo— the best beach in the world.

Believe it or not, these beautiful islands were not my favorite part of the trip. My favorite experience was a type of grant program set up through the university and local schools to let native speakers come and help teach English to students. I heard about the program and decided to apply. I was placed in an elementary school, Ceip Seis do Nadal, and helped teach English for 40 hours in May. During my time there, I worked with students from second to sixth grade. I taught when it suited the teachers, all of whom were very accommodating. I appreciated that they were willing to change their agendas to accommodate my class schedule. We worked on vocabulary with most of the grades and I was so surprised to see how much English the students knew. I read The Very Hungry Caterpillar with the second grade students and they were able to answer some basic questions about the book. The sixth (Continued on page 4)
The Day I Came to America

—Zhen Cai

August 26 2008, the day I came to America, seems like yesterday.

Yes, time always wants us to know how fast he flies. Many times, I just cannot believe I have been here for so long. However, recalling all the pieces from the time I have spent here, I then believe it has been that long.

My first class in America was Dr. Murphy’s Survey of British Literature I, and frustration was the best word to describe my feeling after the class. I had been learning English up to that point, for about ten years in China, and my English was very good compared to my peers. Before I came to America, I also got a 7.5 band score for IELTS. All in all, I was quite confident in my English speaking abilities. So although I knew I would meet quite a few challenges during my study in America, I still chose to be an English major. However, this first class made me realize how much more effort I needed to make in order to be confident in English. I sometimes hardly understood American students’ conversation in class. Meter? Sonnet? Iambic? I was not sure what Dr. Murphy was really saying. Beowulf? Is that a vocabulary word? I don’t know. Or, is that a name? Is that a person’s name or a place name?

Because of the lack of vocabulary, especially those of a college-level English conversation course, I got confused a lot. Professors would say “portray” rather than “describe,” “culminate” rather than “reach a climax,” etc. Because I was short of some basic knowledge about English literature (like the word Beowulf, or Chaucer), some very common words were a mystery to me. Because of the language that I learned before I experienced real American

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Wait, What?
Things You Thought You Knew

process alive. First, recruit allies willing to follow you into the fray. Perfecting your graduate file is brutal, and I was fortunate to muster enough troops to help hold my ground against total application annihilation—at least, for the first few months. Unfortunately, as time wore on, even Dr. Jimmy began to look a bit shell shocked whenever I ambushed him with personal statement drafts. By the time we’d gotten to revision #9, the walk to his office began to feel like a trip up the beach.

The second most important thing you can do is to ruthlessly organize and strategize your plan of attack. Be aware of application deadlines as the graduate school and the academic department may stagger due dates. While exceptions can be made for incomplete applications, they could end up costing you financially—without the reward of having it considered by the application review board. And, after months of sacrificing what’s left of your hair and sanity to this cause, its best to “get things right” the first time—especially when it comes to applying for the really competitive stuff like scholarships, grants, and assistantships. Thus, keep yourself focused and aware of what’s going on by stalking the school’s website. Don’t let your application be a causality simply because you forgot that one really important form.

So, still thinking about grad school? You should. Though the process is long and the journey a complete pain in the neck, the rewards can be pretty cool. I know, having been accepted to Colorado State University’s Peace Corps’ Masters International Composition and Rhetoric program, and awarded a Teaching Assistantship. Yeah, so the process was tough—and long, but it’s a worthwhile learning experience, and who knows, that experience may just reward you in ways you didn’t even see coming.
Mansfield Students Participate in Susquehanna Conference

—Dr. John Ulrich

Twelve MU English majors presented papers at Susquehanna University's Sixth Annual Undergraduate Literature and Creative Writing Conference on Monday, February 15, 2010. Students from twenty different colleges and universities were selected to participate in the conference; the Mansfield contingent was the largest group of students from any institution other than Susquehanna University itself. This year's theme was "Literature, Education, and the Creative Mind," and the conference featured keynote speaker Gerald Graff, professor of English and Education at the University of Illinois-Chicago and immediate past president of the Modern Language Association. Dr. Jimmy Guignard and Dr. John Ulrich accompanied the students to the conference. The student participants included . . .

Michael Babbish, "Ilyda's Creation"

Zhen Cai, "Control Lost Over the Creature: Frankenstein and the Critique of Science"

Andrew O. Clark, "A Deadly Ignorance"

Emily R. Cole, "Learning by Self-Teaching in Jane Austen's Emma"*

Wesley Cromley, "Titus Andronicus and the Fall of Rome"

Angie Farrer, "The Frankenstein Mystique: Women and Femininity in Mary Shelley's Frankenstein"

Rebecca Gibbon, "Preventing the Threat: A Rhetorical Analysis of Anti-Communist Propaganda"

Savanna Jennings, "Education in Austen's Persuasion and Emma"

Tiffany Kirk, "The Essential Nature of the Creative Spirit: Examining the Role of Art in Woolf's To the Lighthouse"

Danielle Muller, "Grand Delusions: Espionage, Intrigue, and Double-Identities in Chuck Barris's Confessions of a Dangerous Mind: An Unauthorized Autobiography"

Christina Puschert, "The Enlarged Mind"

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*Candidates who wrote about Austen's Emma were: Michael Babbish, Zhen Cai, and Emily R. Cole. Michael Babbish wrote about Ilyda's Creation.

When your sorrow has the sweetness of the stamens

1 I will be with you when the wood

of the alders

1 I will be with you when the wood

of the alders

turn

into guitars

when your sorrow has the bass string of the cascade

tenga tu tristeza

e l dulzor de los estambres

1 Estaré contigo cuando en guitarras

conviertan su madero los alisos

y tu pena tenga el bordón de las cascadas,

cuando tenga tu congoja el color de los celajes y tejan tus sueños

en sus ojos las palomas, cuando

tenga tu tristeza el dulzor de los estambres

y cautiva la pasión de los zorzales

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y cautiva la pasión de los zorzales

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Quechuan woman with child by Quechuan photographer Martin Chambi taken in Canchis, Cusco in 1934
la quena
en sus
Tañidos

2
Estaré contigo
cuando
tenga tu amargura

el contento
de la fiesta
que pregongan

en su vuelo
las campanas,
cuando tenga

tu quebranto
el albor
que anuncian

en sus nidos
los gorriones,
cuando abriguen

tus ansias
en su delirio
las libélulas,
cuando tenga
tus desgarro
el aroma
que mecen
en su orgullo
las orquídeas.

3
Estaré contigo
cuando
en trinos rompan

sus flores
las retamas
y rimen

tus cuitas
en harawis
las crisálidas,
cuando
el solozzo encuentre
cerradas

las estancias
que abrieron
los galopes
y encuentre
la congoja
destruido

el muro
que alzaron
los cernicalos.

la quena
passion
with its pensive
rhythms

2
I will be with you
when
your bitterness contains

el contento
the happiness
of the festival,
proclaimed

en su vuelo
by the bells
when

escolar

tu quebranto
your suffering
sees the daybreak

el albor
sees the daybreak

que anuncian
that the sparrows

en sus nidos
announce
in their nests,
when

tus ansias
your longing
takes shelter

en su delirio
in the dragonflies

sus flores
break
their blossoms

y rimen
and the chrysalises

tus cuitas
rhyme
your troubles

en harawis
in their harawis,
cuando

el solozzo encuentra
sobbing
finds closed

derradas

las estancias
the distance
opened

que abrieron
by the galloping horses.

los galopes
and the wailing self
finds

destruido

destroyed

el muro
the wall
raised

by the kestrels.

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The Day I Came to America

life, it was not clear what people were saying in a basic conversation. I knew “trousers,” (British English), but had no idea what were “pants.” I didn’t know what was going on when an instructor said, “Please turn in your paper through Turn it in,” or someone told me “it’s on Blackboard.” What? I think it was a white board in the classroom, and I didn’t remember there was anything there.

Since the British Survey course was my first English course here, I really wanted to succeed in it, and gave much effort. I occupied a lot of Dr. Murphy’s office hours, and he helped me almost step-by-step to go over reading and essay assignments. I also went to the tutor center, asking for the explanation of Chaucer’s Canterbury Tales and whatever texts I could not grasp the basic meaning of. Fortunately, I reap what I sow. I got better scores on exams, and even received an award from the English department for good performance in British literature.

If my two-year learning experience in Mansfield is successful, it cannot be without all the helpful professors. They are not only helpful in a pure academic sense, but also in all the encouragement and affirmation they give me.

Now, although I still have some “awkward” expressions in my papers, and I still speak with an accent, I have transformed from the listener and observer into a participant in class activities, and I can understand most conversations whether in daily life or in class. The two-year experience here changed me a lot, not only in the improvement of the language, but also the way of thinking, and how I look at things happening around the world. The change is the most valuable thing I received during my experience in Mansfield.

Sigma Tau Delta News

Members of Mansfield’s chapter of Sigma Tau Delta, Mu Xi, have been busy this semester. On February 2nd they celebrated James Joyce’s birthday with a party that included pizza, popcorn and the screening of the film Bloom. Two members, Emily Cole and Danielle Muller, traveled to St. Louis in March to present their creative and scholarly work at the prestigious Sigma Tau Delta National Convention. In April the group hopes to attend a play at Cornell University. Early in the same month the chapter will hold its annual induction ceremony for new members and will also install new officers. Members probably won’t wear their new STD t-shirts to the semi-formal affair, but you might see someone wearing one in class. Do you want to get in on the fun? Contact Dr. Sanner at ksanner@mansfield.edu for eligibility requirements and details.
Pacha Yachachiq

May the wisdom of he who knows the world and its peoples show you your path in this earth! May Pacha Yachachiq accompany you in your struggles and turn your sorrow in hope!

This is the powerful message of the inspiring harawi “When your sorrow has the sweetness of the stamens”, from the book Pacha Yachachiq by contemporary Quechuan poet William Hurtado de Mendoza. Born in Cusco, Peru, in 1950, the poet Hurtado de Mendoza is also a linguist. He has extensively studied the literary production of the Incas. As a poet, he principally writes harawis, which are lyrical compositions that verse about life, love, sadness, hope. In Hurtado de Mendoza’s harawi, each stanza has three verses that are highly symbolic and form an allegory of the unconditional friendship between Pacha Yachachiq—the wise spirit—and the runa simi—the Quechuan people—through times of oppression and social disparity and injustice. Hurtado de Mendoza writes his poetry in Quechua and then translates it into Spanish.

My translation is a pale rendition in English of this soothing hymn of hope.

Just Do It!

panel, I had the opportunity to sit in on any of the numerous panels that took place over the course of the day. During any of the hour and a half long time slots, there were seven different panels running simultaneously. I heard creative work and analytical work by students from numerous schools. All were interesting and informative to watch, including the speech by the keynote speaker, Dr. Gerald Graff, who spoke about how creative and analytical writing should not be placed in separate spheres.

Of all the things I learned from this experience, the top of the list would be to just do it. If I hadn’t sent in that abstract I never would have known if my paper would have gotten accepted, and if it hadn’t been accepted there would have been no negative effects. The Susquehanna Conference was fun and informative and I would encourage anyone to at least apply, if not to this conference then to another.