

# Newsletter

Department of Foreign Languages & Applied Linguistics  
National Taipei University

Advisors: Wei-fung Tso 左偉芳

David Hong 洪秀鈞

Layout Designers: Clair 林采萱

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## Feature Story: Summer Abroad

Some of our students visited the U.S. this summer. Though they were motivated by different reasons—studying, working, or traveling, they all came back loaded with experiences to share and tales to tell. Here are some of the highlights of their “adventure” in that foreign land.

### Working and Traveling in the U.S.

呂姿瑩

This summer vacation, I stepped on the land of America. Although I chose a different way to spend my vacation, I would never be regretful about this trip. Working in America is really a special experience. The amusement park I worked for is a paradise for spending one’s holidays, and everywhere in the city I stayed—Orlando, was pleasant and exciting. When I worked, I chatted with my customers sometimes. It was not really difficult to understand what they said, because I learned to be used to this kind of conversations—no preparation and no script. Although I also had to adjust to the different accents that my colleagues and customers had, it was the most interesting part. I not only trained my English abilities but also learned how to get along with people from other countries. Besides, it was really nice to earn my own money and lived independently. There was no Internet, no cell phone, no annoying political news in Taiwan. That was what I wanted—a simple and care free life.

After working in Orlando, I traveled with my friends. We first went to New York, the amazing “Big Apple”. We walked through the busy streets with traveling booklets and subway maps. We stared at the glorious church which only appeared on textbooks. We were too touched to talk after we appreciated the opera—Chicago. We visited the remains of 9/11 and the Wall Street, which was so flourishing that we couldn’t believe a recession took place one month after we visited there. New York is really a whole new world for me. Another place we went is San Francisco, also a very unique city in America. It is not big at all, but it contains lots of parks so that people can enjoy the warm sunshine in a really cold afternoon. The pace there was slow and leisurely, but we still visited every place that we could find on the map. We walked through rugged street and climbed to a hill top to appreciate the beautiful sunset.

This summer’s work and travel experience in the U.S. not only broadened my horizon but also left me with a beautiful memory that I will cherish for the rest of my life.



### How to Enjoy New York City More

呂偉萱

I spent two months sight-seeing and studying in New York this last summer vacation. Unlike working part-time abroad, I had much free time to explore this appealing and various international metropolis. To make good use of time, a novice traveler like me should do some preparation before landing on the amazing city. First, you should have a tour guidebook. Then, you could choose some must-go destinations. Once the spots are decided, plan your the travel route and means of transportation. I strongly recommend you to research the Manhattan subway map before hitting the road. A good knowledge of the subway

route can make your travel efficient and pleasant. Second, you should be open-minded to embrace different cultures and be observant to absorb a variety of exotic things. Don’t assume how things should happen and how foreigners think. There are always culture shocks waiting for you to experience when touring around the Big Apple. However, culture shocks help you to acquire an international perspective, a flexible mindset and a more understanding attitude towards things that are unfamiliar to you. Know your destination and know yourself, then you can enjoy a trip full of delights and surprises in New York!



### My Realization

江佳蓀

I never have the American dream; English major as I am, I am not an enthusiast about American culture, either. When I worked in the United States this summer vacation, my patriotism had been aroused many times by contacting with English-speaking co-workers. “Why do you Taiwanese dare to work in the U.S.?” One of my Jamaican co-workers once wondered and questioned me. Actually, some Taiwanese working with me often made mistakes due to the poor competence of English. I was a little frustrated and mad. I have to admit that we Taiwanese students on the average don’t have good English abilities, but why can the English-speaking foreigners take it for granted that we should perform English well? English is not our native tongue! I was deeply troubled by this thought at that time. However, one day I awaked from my anger when I met a Japanese girl in the youth hostel I stayed. I suddenly discovered that we communicated in English! Then I realized English is the language that the Americans use; America is one of the strongest power of the world, which is why people around the world learn English. Consequently, English has become a bridge connecting me with the world. This is the reason why I am studying English! As an English major, I did sometime forget about my motivation of learning English, but thanks to this trip, I am back on track and my goal is clear to me once again.

### What I Learn From Shopping in Orlando

裴佩蓉

Do you feel extremely excited when buying something? Do you regret terribly after buying something unnecessary? Do you often buy something out of impulse or because of the salesperson’s pitch? If your answer is “Yes”, I believe you are similar to me to some degree. I am a shopping addict, who always buys something unnecessary or too expensive. Based on my shopping experiences in Orlando, I would like to talk about where and how to buy things appropriately, and what to do if you buy things unsuitable or undesirable.

There are many outlets and malls in Orlando; in general, things in outlets are cheaper than the ones in the malls. Everyone will get out of

control when seeing so many cheap and various products, and this is also the reason why you will buy something unnecessary. You should write a shopping list in advance and buy things in need. What is more, knowing when to shop is important as well. Stores usually have discounts on the first week of July, especially July 4th, the America's Independence Day, and the other chance you can't miss is on September 1st, the Labor Day. For the petite ladies from Taiwan, you can choose kids' clothes instead adults', because they are a lot cheaper. Or free size products are good alternatives for bargains.

No matter what kind of products you buy, and what price it is, you can exchange or even refund it. From Wal-Mart's food to Coach's purse, as long as you keep the receipt and the label or wrap of the product, you are entitled the right to do so. Even when you made the purchase with credit cards, there won't be any problem with it. The stores would cancel and readjust the transaction for you. To sum up, choose the correct time and things to buy can leave you with a joyful shopping experience in the U.S.!

## One Day at Berkeley

陶欣念

This summer I visited San Francisco. Through the eyes of my friend, Jean, I got a look into the life of a college student in America. More specifically, I got a look into the life of a Berkeley college student. It was an eye-opening experience because it was so different from what I was used to in Taiwan.

First, about Jean: what struck me the most when I met her was her confidence. It was in the way she walked and talked. She walked with quick steps, like she was always sure where

she was headed. When she talked, it was with such assurance that you "bought" everything she said. She was cool and a little distant at first and I didn't quite know what to say to her. But when I asked her questions about her school, she would have "tons" to tell me. She told me about all the craziness that goes on at America's most liberal college, the beautiful campus, and their rivalry against Stanford. When she offered to show me around Berkeley, I said yes.

We arranged to meet up at her school. She had class so I wandered around campus for a while by myself waiting for her. Just the campus was so different from Taipei University. It was bustling with people! And not because classes had ended. Berkeley has an open campus, there are no walls surrounding its school premises so everyone could come in. Not all of the people I saw were students; there were also quite a few tourists like me.

Jean told me about her school's liberalness before I came: about all the nude protests that occur so often, she doesn't even give those nude people a second glance, people selling "weed" on campus and promoting marijuana, a classmate that comes to class naked and such. I didn't see any nude people that day though.

A tree protest was going on around the time I visited Berkeley. The school was planning to cut down trees to build a new stadium. Some students disagreed and were putting up a real good fight. These tree protectors climbed up onto those ancient trees that had grown quite tall over time and lived there to keep the trees from being chopped down. Students took turns living up on those trees. When police were sent in to stop anyone that climbed down to go back up again, these tree-sitters were stuck up there and had to rely on others to pass food and water up to them. Students would probably get suspended or expelled for doing this in Taiwan. This protest was coming to a close when I went to Berkeley; it went on for about one year. "What about class?" I asked Jean when she told me. She shrugged and said that Berkeley students stood up for what they believed in and took action. Besides, most of the time, these protesters aren't all students. All this liberalness was shocking and exciting at the same time. I was in awe.

When I finally met up with Jean, she said she just came from a wild class discussion. They were discussing an article and the students

were getting so riled up that they were jumping on tables and pointing to other students saying "No, you're wrong!" The professor had to end the class early. "Only in Berkeley would that happen," Jean said. So began my tour of Berkeley.

The campus is just plain humongous. As far as the eye could see was all Berkeley's. We couldn't possibly cover the whole school in one afternoon so Jean only pointed out some of the more famous buildings and sites. She took me to see Berkeley's huge library that's two stories above ground and five stories underground. There was a certain area in the library that only allowed students to read for leisure. If you opened a textbook in there, you would get kicked out. The room was carpeted with dark wooden bookshelves and comfortable looking sofas everywhere. There were a lot of students there reading or sleeping. I also peeked in the huge study hall. That room was magnificent. The ceilings were really high up and the floors were white marble. The walls were lined with engraved pillars. There were also wide desks for studying. Everyone sitting in that room was looking at their book. The no-nonsense atmosphere was kind of overwhelming. I've only seen scenes like this in movies. It was so quiet in there and everyone was working hard it would be hard not to concentrate in there.

While I was there, I also got to look in a lecture class. It was an enormous lecture room (the biggest on campus) but there still weren't enough seats for everyone. I saw students sitting on the floor against the wall, all with laptop computers, taking notes.

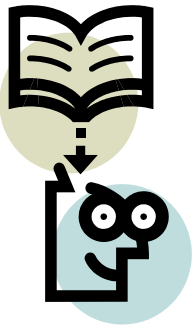
Berkeley's students also have a very strong sense of school spirit. Their number one rival is Stanford. It was like they had a bad taste in their mouth whenever Stanford was mentioned. Whenever a big football game against Stanford came up, Berkeley students had to patrol their own school grounds to keep Stanford students from vandalizing it before the game. Of course, Berkeley students also sneaked to Stanford to vandalize their property. It sounded like fun competition though.

Jean is on the rally committee and since there was a meeting that day, I went to see how those things worked. The rally committee is a student organization that basically promotes school spirit. They organize scavenger hunts for freshmen and all kinds of activities. On days before a big game, they also organize groups of people to go into the "city" (San Francisco) and parade around on the trolleys to get people in the city excited about the game. The students were all very enthusiastic at the meeting. They all sat starting from the front of the classroom and responded passionately to whoever was speaking. The meeting was pretty laid-back but organized at the same time, those that had something to say went to the front, said what they had to say and that was that. We all sang a song at the end of the meeting. It was noticed that even the guys sang out loudly. These students really took pride in their school.

Making friends is a totally different experience in American colleges. Her friends were all from different majors and didn't have any classes together: film major, integrated biology, neurobiology and such. She herself is a history major. She was surprised that we usually hung out with people in the same major in Taiwan. American students were pretty much on their own because everyone took different classes. They didn't have class with the same group of people. American college students were also more independent that way.

After an afternoon with Jean, it seemed like she didn't spend much time studying or doing homework. I asked her where she fit that in her schedule. She said she usually finished that between classes or at night. There were usually long periods between each class. She'd go to the library and do her homework there. The rest of the time she spends hanging out with her friends. Berkeley students work hard but they also play hard. They know how to balance their time and I think they all truly enjoy their college life.

Berkeley is already very different from other colleges in America, let alone Taiwan colleges. After seeing Berkeley, I began to think how secluded my college life is. Go to class, go back to my dorm, eat, study, and sleep with occasionally an activity in our department. It was not bad until I saw what college life was like elsewhere. I want to see more. Therefore, I am seriously considering going abroad for a year before I



graduate college. I think it will be a very valuable experience and even more eye-opening than one day at Berkeley.

### **Hooked Crazyness**

洪禎謙

Have you ever felt down all day long? Have you noticed that smiles seldom be land on your face? Have you ever thought that you can't escape from melancholy inferno? I used to be trapped in such miserable condition all the time; however, two activities saved me from sorrows and sadness. They are cross-stitch and Spanish songs.

I learned and knew cross-stitch when I was a freshman. It is a popular form of counted-thread embroidery in which X-shaped stitches are used to form a picture. When I am in a really bad mood or exhausted after a tiring day, I stitch. When a blank fabric turns into a beautiful pattern in my hands, I felt my scattered heart been reorganized. I am a painter, and needles are my brush. I use them to add colors to void fabric, just as adding hopes and merries into my depressed heart. Stitching has a mysterious magic, like river flows into the ocean, all the sorrows can be washed out through needles. I sit, I stitch, and I surmount all the difficulties in life.

Besides stitching, I love to listen to Spanish songs. They are passionate and full of energy. Those songs praise love, hope and life. I can be in an energetic mood, swaying and dancing with the melody, and eventually learn to embrace life with passion when listening to those Spanish songs. And the most important thing is that as a beginner in learning Spanish, I find that I can understand some words of the lyrics. It gives me great sense of achievements. Music can cure sorrows. When I listen to those songs, I feel that everything would be better the next second. It's a wonderful method for me to learn a language and a practical way to soothe my anguished heart.

Although cross-stitch and Spanish songs are so different in nature, both of them offer the same function to me. They're my best friends and great healers of my bad mood. I love to do these things in my free time. Those interests offer a way to happiness. For me, a stitching or song a day keeps the sorrows away.

### **Two Activities That Help Me Relax**

易容羽

As the saying goes, "Having a rest is for walking longer distance." To me, I think it is true. When I am stressed out, I will feel annoyed. What's more, I might not do anything well or lack motivation. Fortunately, I find there are two activities that can help me relieve stress. One is going to scenic resorts, and the other is watching television.

I think going to scenic resorts is a good way to refresh myself. When my families have free time, we will go out for a ride. For example, a few weeks ago, we didn't plan go out originally. Nonetheless, when we found the weather was nice and we didn't have any work or homework to do, we went to Ilan. Although it was rainy in Ilan, I still considered it an interesting experience. I think going out can make me happy. Because when I am outside, I will not feel a sense of pressure. Hence, I will be in a light-hearted mood and temporarily forget all my worries. In addition, when I go out, I usually eat some delicious specialties or snacks. This is another reason why I think going to scenic resorts can refresh myself. It is like a way to energize myself, and I find it is useful. However, driving out to places can be time-consuming. If I don't have the time, I'll try another way to relax myself.

The other way for me to relieve stress is watching television. Television is a miraculous thing and it can lead me to an imaginary world. When I watch television, I feel my tight nerves are relaxed. I usually choose some interesting variety shows or cartoons to watch. Because the programs are very funny, I will burst into laughter. After that, I will be in a better mood. Besides, watching television motivates me to do

things. For instance, when I have no idea to write compositions, watching television helps me to get some inspiration from the interesting programs.

To sum up, maybe everyone has his or her own best way to relax. To me, I think going to scenic resorts and watching television are good ways to help me to relieve stress. To me, only when I have proper rest will I have enough energy and confidence to face the difficulties and finish all the work. Therefore, I think the relaxing activities are necessary to me.

### **One Day of my Short-term Job**

黎美禎

I saw a person almost die in front of me. This summer vacation I went to the U.S. to do a short-term job in a famous amusement park, "Silver Dollar City," in Missouri. The ride I worked on was a water ride, "American Plunge," a ride that climbed more than five stories and splashed down. There were usually four ride attendants, who needed to load or unload people and one ride operator, who took charge of the ride. My job was a ride attendant. That day I stayed in front of the dock, grouping people, giving them instruction and helping them load onto the boat. I saw something that made me understand it's important to seize the day.

That noon was boiling hot. The temperature was over 30 degrees C. The customers were all sweating, the ice creams were melting on their hands and even the black road was steaming. As a result, most of the customers rushed to our ride, wanting to cool down. Unfortunately, only two ride attendants stayed at the dock at noontime: one was me and the other was Candace who was also from Taiwan. Because so many people wanted to ride American Plunge, there were two lines. Candace and I had to deal with one line respectively. The line was so long and the noise from the crowd was so loud that I had no idea what happened behind me until I heard a shriek: "Somebody help!" I turned to see what was going on. An old and fat woman, bleeding badly from her nose, leaned backward unconsciously on a middle-aged woman, who kept crying out: "Mom! Mom!" Candace was awe-struck with her face pale and her mouth open. This scene also paralyzed me. I couldn't think but stand stiff. After a moment, I thought I should do something. I called the First Aid and our ride operator separately. The First Aid said they would come as soon as possible; our ride operator instructed me to shut down the ride and evacuate the folks. After I hung up the phone, Candace and I evacuated all the folks except the old woman's family: her daughter-in-law and grandson. I asked them to help me put the old woman on the floor. After doing this, Candace and I couldn't do anything but wait.

We thought we had waited for thousands of years. I was afraid that the old woman lost too much blood because the front of her shirt was soaked in blood. Finally, there came our ride operator and the First Aid personnel. They tried to save the old woman by using CPR. The boy, aged about 12, started to wail: "I don't want her to die! Please...no!" His mother held him tight and muttered: "She won't. . . . She won't." The boy cried so loudly that later he choked with sobs. This scene made me choke up but I could do nothing. Afterwards, our ride operator assigned us as greeters, who had to stay at the entrance to tell folks that we had to shut down for a while. When we stayed at the entrance, we didn't know what happened inside. We could only see the First Aid personnel kept coming and going. After a while, the old woman wearing an oxygen mask was carried away on a stretcher. Thank God! I did not want anyone to die in front of me.

That night, I reflected the boy and his mom's emotional expression—they were so sad and tortured. Later, I asked myself: "if I were one of them, can I bear it if someone I love dies in front of me?" I can't! In my short life, I should treasure my loved ones. You never know what happens next moment, so we should seize the day.

### **THE DAY OF GETTING MY MOTORCYCLIST LICENSE**

林岱瑩

Riding my bicycle with aching legs, and looking around motorcyclists passing me at an incredible speed, I was soaking in sweat on a burning hot summer day. However, on that day it didn't seem so torturous; I knew that after this afternoon I could be the one who I had used to envy. That is a motorcyclist.



On that morning preparing all my paperwork and wearing casual clothes, I rode my bicycle with a joyfully excited heart to my friend's house. Her cousin, living with my friend, was very generous to lend me her new motorcycle to practice riding before going to take the real exam at the Motor Vehicle Supervision Office. I practiced riding in the outer area of a nearby funeral house where roads were wide and even; enjoying the breeze blow over my long hair on a sunshiny summer day. However, due to my fear of falling off the motorcycle, I couldn't control my steering. Many times when I turned right and left, every nerve of my hand muscles became so tight and palms so sweaty. As a result my route was not straight but winding. After hearing cheers and advice again and again from my friend and her cousin, I became confident to test my riding skills.

At noon we arrived at the Motor Vehicle Supervision Office, many people had already lined up to wait for the motorcycle license test. First I needed to pass a traffic rules test. If I failed this test, I would go home without any chance to test my riding skills, let alone a motorcycle license. When it was my turn, I had butterflies in my stomach. At the same time I could hear never ending squeaks produced by a person sitting next to me; it put so much pressure on me. Moreover, watching the time count down on the upper left of the computer screen, I almost could hear the ticking from seconds fly away. When time was over, my scores suddenly popped on the computer screen. Fortunately my score was ninety five. At that moment, a heavy burden on my shoulders temporarily vanished.

After taking a thirty minute break, I went outside to wait for my riding skills test. Because I was the last one waiting, I had a little time to practice my skills in the space near the motorcycle riding test area. When I saw and heard those failing before me moan and sigh "I wasted my money.", it did increase my anxiety about the riding test. Finally in the huge area there were only four people-- my friends, me, and a judge. Every examinee can have a second chance to pass the test if he fails on the first try. At first, I was asked to ride the motorcycle and follow a white line on the ground for seven seconds; but I couldn't concentrate on my riding because my heart was beating so fast that I almost could hear beating sounds from my heart. Therefore, the route I rode was like the letter "S" not the "I"; I failed on the first try in a ridiculous way. At that moment I caught a glimpse of the judge shaking his head and carrying a bitter smile. The second time I tried to calm down and only focused on my riding. For seven seconds the air seemed to freeze and there was nothing more important than riding the motorcycle. Fortunately I followed a white line perfectly, passing through other barriers smoothly, finally riding back to the starting point. Suddenly a loud cheer burst from my friends because I finished it without any failure.

In the afternoon I finally passed the motorcycle license test, and went back to the office in ecstasy, sitting on the chair with other successful examinees. It was important for me to have a motorcycle license. It not only meant that I didn't need to sweat anymore on summer days, but also that my father believed I could be responsible for my safety and other people. In my family it was like an invisible ceremony to indicate that I was a mature adult and respected my life when turning eighteen. It was a meaningful turning point in my life.

### **My Aunt's Divorce Day**

劉靖緹

How could a person with whom you're fully in love suddenly turn out to be a fraud and you want to make his or her life miserable? After experiencing my aunt's divorce, I started to think about the true meaning

### **Evolution of Soul—**

of what I used to believe. As a girl who was raised in Chinese culture, I was taught to respect the elders, and be faithful to marriage. From the day my aunt divorced, all these rules and beliefs collapsed.

Like many other families in Taiwan, my aunt's husband, Mr. Tsao, left his family to work in mainland China. He brought a lot of money from his savings to open a new company. In the first year, he came back every two months, then he visited Taiwan every half year, and then he never came back. Apparently, he had an affair. My aunt was so upset that she started to date a rich guy. In the end, they just couldn't stand each other anymore. They both knew it was time to break up.

I remember it was a day in March this year. It was a cloudy morning when I saw my aunt move her stuff from her house to her boyfriend's car. My mom asked me to help her move everything from the fourth floor of the condominium my aunt shared with her mother-in-law and Mr. Tsao. At first, everything was just fine. I carried a lot of clothes and ran up and down bringing my aunt's bags and shoes. It was all clothes and shoes, nothing important. But her mother-in-law kept her eyes on my aunt, fearing that my aunt would take some valuables away. Then I saw my aunt take out a jewelry box and her check book. She returned the golden rings, the wedding gifts, and the babies' golden bracelets received from the two babies' first year birthdays, and the checks. By then I thought everything was done.

We walked back to the car and proceeded to the Household Registration Office, following my aunt's car to sign the divorce papers. Suddenly, I heard Mr. Tsao scold my aunt across the street, using a lot of dirty words. During the moment, my mom got a call from my aunt. She cried and said, "He doesn't want to divorce me because I just refuse to give him money."

Getting out of the car, my mom, who originally wanted to cool Mr. Tsao down chased after him into the building. I turned off the engine and followed them entering the apartment. At that time, I heard Mr. Tsao's loud shouting and my mom's high pitch voice asking him to clam down. The last thing I saw was that Mr. Tsao punching my mom, and the elevator doors closing. I was so shocked and scared that I ran up the stairs to the fourth floor. The elevator had already arrived but no one could come out. To be precise, the elevator was broken because of my mom and Mr. Tsao's violent fight and the doors couldn't open properly. There was barely a seam left and the elevator imprisoned my mom and Mr. Tsao in the little box. I saw my mother turn her body aside and squeeze herself through the door. She came out, and then Mr. Tsao. Their face were flushed, trembling and still shouting at each other. I was startled and speechless and next my aunt's mother-in-law stormed out from the house. She accused my mom of using bad language toward her son. I blurted out, "You shut up. It's your son's fault. It's none of your business!" As soon as I said that, I felt a hard smack on the back of my head. "Do not talk to my mom like that," Mr. Tsao shouted at me. I was too angry to control myself. I slapped his mother and pushed her onto the ground. I told him that is how he treated my mom, and that's how I would treat his mom. He came closer towards me menacingly but he was held back by the neighbors.

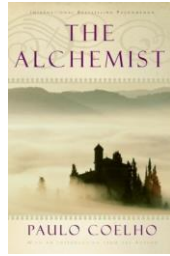
Actually, I could barely remember how the fight ended. After this severe conflict, I haven't seen Mr. Tsao again. Although everyone in our family praised my mom's and my courage to confront Mr. Tsao face to face, I still felt depressed. I know it was not my bravery that made me do it, but my wrath that pushed me to. In the end, nothing was solved. My aunt still divorced him by giving him two million NT dollars and by giving up the rights of raising her children.

Now I look back on this incident, I believe that no one was the winner, and no one was right. The bruise on my mother's face and the pain on my head don't scare me, but the disappearance of my belief terrifies me. I used to believe that Mr. Tsao was my sweet and gentle uncle. Now I know that he isn't. And I discovered that the respect for elders depends on the situation and not every elder is respectable. This experience made me understand that what people and the society tell you to obey is just a symbol of the way all people want to live, not necessarily reality.

### **an Analysis of The Alchemist by Paulo Coelho**



Paulo Coelho's *The Alchemist* is a great novel about how a boy lives up to his dream. The main characters, settings and events are of the author's imagination but they seem to be familiar and heart-moving to the readers, because they all implicate what we will encounter in experiences of growing and learning. The protagonist, Santiago takes a journey consisted of the most important life lessons—courage, honesty and love. At the end, when he actually learns the lessons, there comes the evolution of human soul, which is the main theme of this story. The book title, "The Alchemist" refers to a person who transforms the ordinary stone into beautiful gold. In the novel, Santiago is the one who performs the magic. He transforms his ordinary life into a meaningful one by realizing his dream.



At the beginning of the story, besides being trapped in his hometown, Santiago chooses to be a shepherd because traveling means a lot to him. At the early stage of life, Santiago is as young and passion as every one of us. There may be much to dream of and plan about, but we never work anything out because we are merely satisfied with our imagination. The freedom we own is meaningless for we do not put it to use. However, thanks to the old king who inspires Santiago. The boy learns that a dream is to be realized when it comes the right time. At this point, the author indicates that a shepherd can enjoy his trip but he does not forget his sheep; in other words, a young man can chase his dream but he does not forget his obligation. To be more specific, we have the right to spend time on things we are fond of, but we should put the same efforts in playing our role as young learners.

Following the old king's guidance, Santiago travels to Tangiers and works for a crystal merchant for a long time. This crystal merchant symbolizes the allure of material world. The protagonist does an excellent job, making such a good living that he almost forgets his dream of finding the great treasure. Here Coelho describes an energetic young man who realizes how hard it is to resist steady life and keeps on searching faraway glory. People will have dreams, but only a few will achieve dreams after being stricken by the reality. As soon as Santiago decides to give up traveling, the old king shows up to tell him to listen to his heart. Again, the author uses the old king to teach the readers a lesson—the importance of being honest to oneself. It does not matter how long we have been lost in the material world, because it is never too late to face the utter innocence. The true courage is perseverance, and the real shame is running away.

As a result, Santiago retakes his journey across the Egyptian desert. The harsh desert is the final trial on his way to the great treasure, which gives him the most difficult lesson—love. He has a crush on Fatima and almost decides to stay with her forever, but he then takes Fatima's advice to pursue his dream. Fatima serves as a symbol of true love. True love means to let go, tolerate and wait; it does not distract people from their top priority. Finally, Santiago finds his treasure, and he still remembers that he has promised to repay those who help him. The author points out that we should always hold gratitude to what life offers us. Even barriers are to help us grow stronger. At the end of the story, Santiago smiles for he can eventually go back to Fatima. He has fulfilled his destiny of chasing the dream, and he is ready to receive another one—raising a family with Fatima. This indicates that life is made of countless destinies, and each of them is a cycle of search and discovery. As long as we live, we have to fulfill a variety of destinies again and again.

Paulo Coelho uses Santiago's journey to present how human soul evolves from childishness into maturity. Before the protagonist steps into his destiny, he is inexperienced and ignorant. But in the end of the novel, he transforms from a boy into a man who fully understands the true meaning of courage, honesty and love. There is one sentence that is repeatedly mentioned throughout the whole story: "when you want something with all your heart, all the universe conspires in helping you to achieve it." That is, when you keep trying your best in doing everything, all the universe conspires in helping your soul evolve into maturity.

## Intimacy Decoded in Raymond Carver's "Intimacy"

許宛伶

The short story "Intimacy" does not probe into the essence of what intimacy is like, nor does it depict an intimate relationship. Instead, when intimacy is mentioned, it is rather a denial of its existence: "We were so intimate once upon a time I can't believe it now. I think that's the strangest thing of all now. . . . We were so intimate I could puke. I can't imagine ever being that intimate with somebody else" (446). The relationship between the characters sharply contradicts the title "Intimacy." We can hardly find traces of intimacy in their conversation. Nevertheless, there is intimacy, the first time ever closeness between the divorced couple.

First, the brevity of narration gives undivided attention to the content of the dialogue, which takes up a large proportion of the story, thereby inviting the narrator, the ex-husband, and readers to identify with the thoughts of the ex-wife's. As a reader reads on, it is evident that the conversation is one-sided, mostly dominated by the ex-wife. The narrator gives little account of his own opinions. The arrangement echoes to what the narrator says—"I'm all ears" (445). This full attention draws two characters close. Even though the ex-wife provocatively demands the narrator to voice his thoughts, the narrator remains in reticence most of the time. When the one-sided dialogue unfolds, the couple's past story reveals itself, from which it is easy to infer that the ex-husband used to take on the dominant and willful role in the household. But this time their positions change, with each one in the shoes of their ex-spouse's. Therefore "I" realize the ex-wife feelings and together "we" sort out what have happened between "us." The transition from self-center to empathy is the evidence of intimacy at the moment.

In addition, the intended deprivation of subjective observations on objects and surrounding provides more room for the development of the characters' tension and emotion to develop, which spawns a sense of directness and frankness. Carver composes this story without making much effort to detailed descriptions of the setting or objects. Usually these are elements some writers capitalize on to build up an atmosphere that reflects characters' mood and interaction. But in this story these embellishments are nowhere to be found. Carver, rather than making a detour with adverbs to build up the characters' personalities, he lets them speak for themselves:

She says, Think of me as dead. I want to be left in peace now. That's all I want anymore is to be left in peace and forgotten about. Hey, I'm forty-five years old, she says. Forty-five going on fifty-five, or sixty-five. Lay off, will you.

She says, Why don't you wipe the blackboard clean and see what you have left after that? Why don't you start with a clean slate? See how far that gets you, she says.

She has to laugh at this. I laugh too, but it's nerves.

She says, You know something? I had my chance once, but I let it go. I just let it go. I don't guess I ever told you. But now look at me. Look! Take a good look while you're at it. You threw me away, you son of a bitch. (445-46)

For one thing, the absence of adverbs, when the ex-wife ventilates her annoyance, yields a sense of directness. Readers will pay close attention to the content of the dialogue by which we visualize the characters. Mark Twain has once stated, "I am dead to adverbs; they cannot excite me," while in Steven King's *On Writing*, he is also against the abuse of adverbs, especially in dialogue. The short story "Intimacy" lives up to their criteria. The brevity and the repetition of "she says" has strong impact on readers. In other perspectives, adverbs are few in this story.

On the other hand, Carver omits the quotation marks in the dialogue, which generates a sense of immediacy. This omission displays the fact that there is no deterrent between two characters' ongoing conversation. If there is any pause, we can immediately tell that it is the narrator's silence of retrospect and of repentance. Hence, the exclusion of adverbs and quotation marks initiates a feeling of rawness which in turn inspires an image of two characters being naked in front of each other. So we feel their honesty and spiritual intimacy.

At first glance, "Intimacy" is far from being intimate to the both characters and readers. The mood and tone are rather a fierce argument. However, when readers end his or her reading, the happening in the story, the dialogue and the impact still resonate. The feeling that grasps us is intimacy itself. The fact is that in the story we do not see intimacy as something like a balanced bilateral interaction, nor a trimmed and sophisticated conversation. Intimacy is in fact a feeling that moves the narrator and touches the readers. And Carver succeeds in creating an

overall simple atmosphere by frankly portraying what an encounter is like for a couple ever since they miserably divorce each other.

Carver, Raymond. *Where I'm Calling From*. New York: Vintage, 1988.

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## Interview with Professor Posen Liao

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**Professor Posen Liao has been with our department since August 2008 and has always been popular among students. He has published, among other academic publications, several books which turned into best-sellers on translation and writing in English. In a recent interview conducted by Valan Hsieh, a junior student, Prof. Liao talked about his styles of teaching, his achievements, his plans for the future, and his much cherished role as a teacher at school and a father at home.**

**Q: We always wonder how theories can be used for practical purposes. How do you apply the theories you've been teaching into practice?**

A: I assume you are referring to English teaching theories. Sometimes it's not easy to put theories into practice in the classroom, partly because there are administrative constraints or limitations. Theories about teaching, though, are usually supported by empirical research and they, therefore, serve as a guidance that can showcase the right way or better way to teach in the classroom.

**Q: Can you give us an example?**

A: Well, some English teachers are against the idea of teaching English through translation. Cognitive learning theories, however, tell us that we need our mother tongue as a schema to acquire a new language. We can use our prior knowledge in Chinese to do contrastive analysis between Chinese and English, which will help with acquiring English more efficiently.

**Q: You have been one of the most popular teachers in our department, in the way you construct your courses and the way you interact with students. What makes you so enthusiastic toward teaching?**

A: I always love my job as a teacher. I enjoy reading and sharing what I have learned with my students, and I get paid for doing what I love to do (laugh). I don't think there is another job in the world that can give me such a great sense of achievement and contentment. So my enthusiasm really comes from the fact that I like teaching so much.

**Q: You have been a great professor in our university, and you have in recent years published so many best-sellers at the same time. People will think that you are very successful now. How do you feel about this?**

A: I am happy with what I have achieved so far, but that doesn't mean I am already successful. There are still a lot of goals I have set for myself.

**Q: Could you tell us about your plans for the future?**

A: I want to publish more books and research papers on translation studies and TESOL. Also, I want to get promotion as a full professor in the near

future. I really want to make more contributions to our school and society as a whole.

**Q: How would you characterize yourself as a person? What adjectives would you use to describe your own personality?**

A: I would like to describe myself as an easygoing person (laugh), someone very easy to get along with.

**Q: How would you like to be perceived as teacher in the eyes of your students?**

A: I hope my students can see me as a kind person, someone they can be a friend with and learn something from (laugh). I always like to learn new things with my students.

**Q: You always have a way of facing dilemma in your life and are willing to adapt to changes rather than maintaining the status quo. What is behind your philosophy of life?**

A: My motto in life is "being strong so that nothing can disturb my inner peace of mind." Being happy is not an easy task all the time. It takes courage and strong will. You have to determine for yourself that you want to be a happy person. I have high expectations for myself; I also know that if I put enough efforts into something, I can accomplish it even if it is difficult.

**Q: What makes you so confident and positive in your position as a teacher?**

A: Well, I have learned a lot of valuable lessons from my failures and frustrations in life. Failures are sometimes inevitable in the process, but they also make grow and develop in a very positive way. The most important thing is never give up. Always keep trying.

**Q: You mention Randy Pausch in your personal blog, in which you said he followed the passion in his heart and fulfilled his dreams before he died.**

A: Yeah. Randy Pausch's speech has a great impact on me. I really admire his courage in confronting death with such a positive attitude. Perhaps he already has realized most of his dreams in his short span of life.

**Q: What have been the most important dreams you had put on your wish list?**

A: I actually have already made some of my dreams come true at this stage of life. For example, I am now a university professor and have published several books. Those were my dreams on my wish list and, of course, I still have many dreams for the future. The fact is, there are so many things I want to do yet there is so little time. I guess I just have to pursue those dreams with the best efforts I can put into until the day I die.

**Q: Can you also talk about how you interact with your son as a father?**

A: It is very, very different from teaching at school. In the classroom, we spend most of our time talking about the teaching materials. We rarely have the opportunity for close interactions on a personal level. We share knowledge more than we share our feelings. But when I talk to my son, we usually share our feelings, our emotions. So we can form a close relationship.

**Q: Are there anything in common being a teacher and a father?**

A: Um...of course! As a teacher and a father, there are something in common because I want to protect my son and my students. And I always want to see them grow in a positive way. I want "you" to become a full person to learn something from your teacher.

But at the same time, there are also differences. I have more than thirty or forty students in a class, so I cannot pay attention to each one of you. It depends on how you interact with me as your teacher. It's very difficult to give individual attention in the classroom.

**Q: So the attitudes of the students are very important?**

A: Yes. If you would like to share you life experiences with your teacher, I think your teacher would be very happy to see that. It's actually what I have been trying so hard to achieve, you know, to treat my students the way I treat my child. Teachers would be very happy to see that kind of things

happen.

**Q: Do you teach your child English or other subjects at home?**

A: It's a very interesting question. I don't teach my son English any more. In fact, his English is better than mine. He was born and educated in the United States, and you know how fast a child can acquire a new language. I just hope he can do better in his math. But my math is not good either, so it's embarrassing to say that I can't teach my child anything. (Laugh)