

INSIDE THIS ISSUE:

Honors Duo Dis- 2
cusses Projects

Bakhtin and his 2
Word: Complet-
ing an English Lit
Honors Project

Internship De- 3
brief: The Loft

Poet's Corner 7

Mac Senior Tackles English, Spanish

English major Kelsey Shanesy puts her Hispanic Studies minor to work as an afterschool Spanish teacher at Horace Mann Elementary

By Kelsey Shanesy '10

"Okay, so if the answer is, 'Soy de Wisconsin, I am from Wisconsin,' what is the question?"

Julian scratches his head of curly blonde hair while his blue eyes search the ceiling for an answer.

"Um...are you in the woods?"

Julian is one of my twenty-one students in "Fun with Spanish!" at Horace Mann Elementary School in St. Paul. Every Tuesday and Thursday for one hour in the afternoon, I, with the help of my good friend and fellow Macalesterite Amanda Richardson, teach this afterschool class. In preparation, every Monday and Wednes-



Kelsey Shanesy with her afterschool Spanish class at Horace Mann Elementary School.

day night Amanda and I brainstorm lesson plans for anywhere from ten minutes to two hours. It is the lesson planning that has proved to be the hardest part. How do you plan a lesson for a class of students that range in age

from five to ten, some readers and some non-readers, with different cultural backgrounds and learning styles? Well... Amanda and I are still working on that one.

Don't get me wrong, I love the job. Working with kids and working with Spanish brings together two of my passions, and I never cease to feel thrilled when a child surprises me with a vocabulary word that I was sure had been buried beneath the information overload world that these students live in, or when an eight-year-old presses an acorn into my hand and tells me it's

(con't on p. 5)

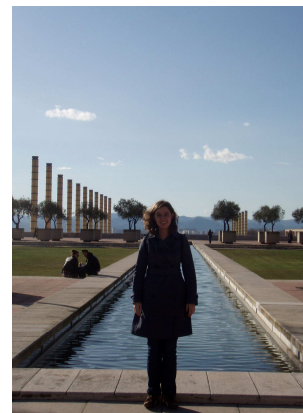
Discovering Don Quixote in Barcelona

By Meg LaFarge '11

Before I ever got to Spain, I'd heard of Don Quixote and Sancho Panza. I knew that they were characters in a very long, very famous Spanish book, but other than the occasional reference, I'd never given either one much thought. Once I decided to study abroad in Barcelona, though, these characters began to make frequent appearances in conversations. A surprising majority of people who found out I was going to study abroad in Spain (especially adults) responded to my news with, "So

you must have read *Don Quixote* then." Apparently there was some required reading list for studying abroad in Spain that everyone but me knew about. I decided not to worry about it. No book could possibly be that important, right? I had no idea.

I was in the kitchen of my home stay one night recently making tea and my host mother was watching some sort of game show while she did the dishes. It was loud and colorful, so of course I stopped to see what it was. In this particular game show, the contestants were



trying to win something (money, maybe?) by telling the best jokes. Each contestant got a minute to

(con't on p. 4)

READ ALL
ABOUT IT:
HONORS
PROJECTS

Current juniors:
Thinking about doing
an honors project
next year?

Honors Proposals are due April 20th (or September 5 for juniors on study away)!

Come chat with student honors project writers at a special treat day, Wednesday April 14th from 5 to 7 pm in the Department Lounge.

See
www.macalester.edu/english/honors for more details on honors projects and proposals.

Honors Duo Discusses Projects

Kelsey Shanesy and Celeste Prince ('10) are fellow English majors and have been friends since meeting in Spanish class during their first semester at Macalester. Though they pursue different tracks – literature for Kelsey, creative writing for Celeste – both decided to complete honors projects. Kelsey's project focuses on the work of Junot Diaz and its relation to "Spanglish" and the anxiety of history. Celeste is completing a collection of short stories, *The Things I Wish I Could Tell You When You Cry The Most*, concentrating on black characters living in predominantly white settings. In honor of their four-year friendship, Celeste even named one of her characters after Kelsey. Exclusively for *The Waverley*, the dynamic duo sat down to chat and interview each other about their work.

KS: What was the basis of

your stories? Is there a theme that connects them?

CP: I wanted to write about my experiences of often being the only brown person in the room. Then I came across a Facebook group called "Black People in White Situations" and I knew that would be my topic. Growing up in Lakewood, Colorado, this was often my experience, and it continued here at Mac in countless creative writing workshops. I enjoyed other people's stories, but they weren't *my* story, my experience. I wanted to write a collection of stories about myself, for myself, and for other people of color who have been in similar situations.

KS: I remember in a certain creative writing class we had together, you responded to our professor's comment that

he didn't like any of your white characters by saying that you were writing protest literature. Do you consider your honors project protest literature?

CP: Ha! Did I say that? Wow. Well, the first drafts of many of my stories are often a form of protest literature. But I feel like sometimes protest literature leaves you with really flat characters, easy to forget characters that bang you over the head with the message they want to get across. Tyler Perry creates protest art, and his movies are a good example of that. But I wanted my characters in this collection to be more fully developed, and not just glossed over.

KS: Tell me about your process. Did you conduct interviews with other students of color or was it mostly reading?

(con't on p. 6)

Bakhtin and his Word: Completing an English Lit Honors Project

By Mark Verdin '10

My English lit honors project (working title: 'Bakhtin and his Word') focuses on Mikhail Bakhtin's concept of the grotesque body, studied in dialogue with some major works (literary and critical) of the twentieth century. The grotesque is considered

in relation to Maurice Merleau-Ponty's phenomenology of the body, Georges Bataille's *Theory of Religion*, and the philosophy of Gilles Deleuze & Felix Guattari. James Joyce's *Ulysses*, Alan Moore's *Swamp Thing*, and Paul Auster's *City of Glass* are analyzed, with a focus on the

way each text represents the individual body in its relationship to the city.

I don't know exactly why I decided to do an honors project. It happened to emerge out of the things I was doing at the time. The

(con't on p. 5)

Internship Debrief: The Loft

By Benjamin Voigt '10

The Loft is architectural, the building beautiful: old brick, new wood, an entry-way—stairs—girded of paper-thin glass. The Loft is nervous; the interview is nervous. Big man in a holiday sweater. My black coat, my brown tie. I ramble about the building. The Loft is perfunctory. When can I come in? The internship is already mine.

January. The Loft is quiet. The outdoors are cold and the Loft is recovering. The Loft is a building tour with Lucas. The Loft is letters in the floor. Downstairs book arts, upstairs book publishers. The Loft is the nation's largest independent literary center. The Loft is a library, a performance hall, a break room with crackers. The Loft is an intern's old computer with an ergonomic keyboard. The Loft is a sheet of pictures so I know who everyone is.

The Loft is meetings. The Loft is donuts at big meetings. The Loft is laughter at all meetings. The Loft is bringing in donations, even in this bad year. The Loft is aghast and amused by the poor naming of other's events. McKnighty Nights. The Loft teaches, the Loft programs. The Loft is Harry Potter, the Loft is memoir, the Loft is the novel.

The Loft is looking for mentors, the Loft wants author research. I am author research. Jerod tells me how. Long list of names. I add a few. Writer-shepherds. Lists and lists of awards. All these programs. So many paths to writing. All these grants. I find interviews, bios, compile them. How does one become a writer? Look at these people, these small giants. Follow their footsteps. On the computer, I dream.

The Loft is an archive. The Loft is magazines and grants and awards all the way back. Today I am a bottom-feeder. I troll the old folders, looking for runners-up.

More research. This time I am historical research. Memory-maker. I find Robert Pinsky's social security number, John Ashbery's receipt, a glamour shot of Tim O'Brien.

The recent years have so many honorable mentions. How does one become a writer? Everyone wants to be one. So many clamor. So many imagine themselves to be. Maybe it's all that. Think of yourself and you are. But what makes me different? Do I clamor? What makes me matter? Does it matter? Maybe it doesn't work like that. The glimmering thought: we're all in this together, gardening each other, at places like this.

The Loft is a library project with another Mac intern. Filing, sorting. So many old journals, a collection of old Chanters.

The Loft is a pizza party. The Loft wants to know where we all live. The Loft gives me a tote bag, gift certificates, and other ideas.

The Loft is events I go to. The Loft is spoken word. So many beautiful voices. The Loft is Bao Phi's Star Wars Haiku. The Loft is an Asian American in Alaska. The Loft is Tony Hoagland and reserved

seats.

I offer and the Loft keeps me around for the spring. More author research and this time, grant applications.

February. The Loft is hiatus. The Loft is new website trouble. Then the Loft is in-depth author research. The Loft picks one of the names I put down. Mentor-maker? Somewhat. Conflict of interest? Hope not, probably not, why not? I scrape together more things, more background for the mentees to know their mentors.

March. The Loft is Career Grant Initiative. The Loft is stacks and stacks of paper. The Loft is stapling, numbering, reading, too. The Loft is so many proposals. Some of them famous. The Loft is typeface and font choices. The Loft is journal publications. The Loft is the un-experienced and the experienced. So many writers. How to help them all? No money. Talent enough? Single parents writing, older poets, doctor wannabes, and some guy who gets letters of recommendation from his neighbors. The Loft is a process that is strange but helpful. Advice to grant-seekers: be orderly, cut the bullshit and use Georgia or Palatino Linotype; it will make me like you more.

The Loft is wafting conversation from the break room—radical politics. The Loft is distractions on the Internet. The Loft becomes a place. The Loft is friendly faces.

The Loft is three boxes full. The Loft is summaries of each. The Loft is the business of writing. The Loft is becoming part of the business. The Loft is learning the game. The Loft is helping.



Discovering Don Quixote in Barcelona (cont.)

“If you asked people in the United States to tell you who the greatest American author of all time is, I bet you’d get several different answers. In Spain, there is only one.”

stand up and tell the joke, and then they were judged on delivery, quality, etc. I asked my host mother what was going on and, after trying to explain the rules, she decided to give me an example of the sorts of jokes by attempting to recount the funniest one so far.

I won’t bother trying to retell it because my host mother is not someone who should tell jokes, ever. She managed to get the gist out though, which starts with a teacher asking a student if he knows *Don Quixote*. The boy, thinking he’s in trouble, denies knowing this “Don Quixote,” protesting that he didn’t do anything. This goes on for a while and it ends with everyone else mocking the child for being so ignorant that he did not know that *Don Quixote* is a book by Miguel de Cervantes. My host mother thought this was hilarious. “He was so stupid he didn’t know *Don Quixote*,” she laughed. I just felt bad for the imaginary little kid.

Don Quixote and his maker are everywhere in Barcelona. There are markers on buildings where Cervantes stayed; the book is taught to every student in every school. The Spanish call Cervantes the “Shakespeare of Spain,” and I think they truly believe that *Don Quixote* alone is equal to all of Shakespeare’s plays. *Don Quixote* and Sancho Panza are also referenced in every book I’ve read for my Spanish literature class so far. If you asked people in the United States to tell you who the greatest American author of all time is, I bet you’d get several different answers. In Spain, there is only one.

While I find this *Don Quixote*-obsessed culture entertaining, I’m starting to learn that this undying devotion is emblematic of the Spanish culture I’m experiencing in quite a few ways. To say that the Spanish are proud of Miguel de Cervantes and what his book represents in Spanish culture would be an understatement, and I think that the fervor with which each Spaniard believes in the greatness of *Don Quixote* is just one more way that the Spanish, and particularly the people of Barcelona, demonstrate an intense passion and pride for their culture and heritage.

Whether it’s a book, an artist, or a particularly talented futbol (soccer) team, Spaniards value and support each aspect of their culture, and they are genuinely proud to be Spanish, despite any negative parts of the country. Even though each region in Spain has a very distinct culture and two regions (including Barcelona) even have their own languages, there is a deep national pride as well. Though at times this pride can turn into snobbery (at least, it can in Barcelona), it is

also a sort of continual celebration for the great strides Barcelona has made technologically, politically, and culturally in the last fifty or so years. There is still progress to be made, but the Spanish are a people who have recently persevered through a dictatorship and intense civil unrest, and they have emerged with a unique and vibrant culture intact.

Like many people I know, my personal study abroad experience has been somewhat of a cliché roller coaster ride, but one thing the Spanish continue to reinforce for me is the need to find and celebrate the silver lining in every situation. The jaded attitude I so often encounter in the United States is not quite so present here. What’s more, the Spanish continue to value family above all else and preserve those bonds far better than we seem to in the States. Of course, I’m speaking in generalizations, but even so, the Spanish have reminded me to value and be proud of what I’ve got. In coming to understand and appreciate Spanish culture, I’ve learned to value my own. I think *Don Quixote* may be the most educational book I’ve never read.



Mac senior tackles English, Spanish (cont.)

“for friendship.” Still, teaching the class isn’t always a walk in the park on a spring day. The class starts just fifteen minutes after Horace Mann’s school day ends, so the kids are antsy after seven hours of school and ready to get some energy out. The age range of the class is the other hard part. I remember the end of one class when a kindergarten seemingly proudly announced to me, “I didn’t do *anything* today!” “Why didn’t you do anything today?” I asked. “Because I can’t read!” Well, fair enough.

Because of the students’ varying ages and ability levels, Amanda and I try to mix up the activities. We do everything from coloring worksheets to playing huge games of tic-tac-toe with Spanish vocabulary words. Even when we find an activity that excites the students (ask me about the flyswatter game sometime) it doesn’t usually last long, and inevitably there will be a few students who ask to sit out. Amanda and I have also tried splitting them up into two groups so that we can work more closely with their different ability levels, but that also means that I lose Amanda in her usual role—head disciplinarian. I don’t expect the kids to all sit com-

pletely still for an hour after school, but I do expect them to be sitting in their seats rather than crawling around under the desks hoping I won’t notice, or hoping that I will so they’ll get a laugh from the class. That’s where Amanda comes in. I know that most teachers work with classes bigger than mine, but I can’t imagine teaching this class without Amanda’s help. Without her, class would undoubtedly be interrupted fifteen to twenty times per hour as I tried to discipline an individual student at the expense of the rest of the group.

But back to why I love this job. It has been absolutely fascinating watching the ways the kids approach a different language. It wasn’t until the end of the first session that I realized that half the kids probably didn’t even understand what speaking a different language *meant*: that it was more than just a different word for the same noun, that there are places and people in the world that use this form of communication exclusively. For many of these kids, you either speak English or English and Spanish, but never just Spanish alone (needless to say, Horace Mann does not have a particularly large Latino population). In an attempt to remedy this misconception, I recruited an-

other friend and Macalester student, Robert Zamora, to be our very own “monolingual” Spanish speaker. The kids prepared posters for “Roberto’s” arrival and practiced songs to help them remember Spanish introduction words.

When Robert came to visit, the kids looked at him like he was from another planet. I had instructed Robert to pretend he didn’t understand any English and to only respond to Spanish. Of course, the kids used the classic American tourist trick of maybe-if-I-speak-slowly-and-loudly-enough-you’ll-understand-me. But mostly they just couldn’t believe that he didn’t speak English. When he pronounced “Bugs Bunny” with a Spanish accent, the kids called him out on it, convinced they had just uncovered his secret knowledge of English.

The kids never actually caught Robert speaking English, and I’m not sure you could call what they speak Spanish just yet. But I heard more than a few creative variations of Spanglish that day.

Bakhtin and his Word (cont.)

name Bakhtin kept coming up some place or other, so I started reading his books. They were good. I wanted to think more about them. Then this summer I borrowed a collection of *Swamp Thing* comics from my brother. Everything seemed grotesque. I wanted to understand what that word meant. No one was teaching *Swamp Thing*. But I was curious about it, and I thought an honors project would give me a reason to spend more time with these texts. And that’s what’s happened, and it’s been great.

Of course the project hasn’t remained as casual as the initial interest. It’s pretty hard to write so many pages. And it’s hard

to connect the separate parts. They’re all in fragments. I think of it this way: Bakhtin smoked one of his manuscripts because of a paper shortage during the Second World War. He tore up the pages to roll cigarettes. Only a fraction remains of what was once a book-length study of the *Bildungsroman*. My project, on the other hand, is in fragments because I play Tetris between paragraphs. A lot of pages are expected. It’s hard to write them all. I wish I’d stuck to my deadlines.

Besides the Tetris problem, the project has been difficult because its scope keeps expanding. I read a sentence here and there, and I think: I should write about

that. I think: there’s some connection. It’s exciting. But first I have to find it. Then I’m off the path for a while, and I think I’ve lost my way in some French jerk’s obscure prose. That’s when I talk to my advisor, Professor Casey Jarrin. She’s always very helpful and supportive. Eventually I figure out what I was trying to think in the first place, and it all comes back together. That’s pleasant. So I return to the computer lab and write what I can.

All in all I reckon I’ll consider it a fulfilling experience when it’s over.

Honors Duo Discusses Projects (Cont.)

“I definitely want to be a writer, but I’m also scared to be a writer. It’s a lot of macaroni-and-cheese dinners.”
Celeste Prince ‘10

CP: For my Mellon Mays Undergraduate Fellowship project proposal, I had said that I was going to conduct interviews. Then I realized that would have been way too much work (this is the story of writing an honors thesis, by the way). Ultimately, I drew mostly from my own experiences and casual conversations I had had with others.

KS: What was the hardest part of this process?

CP: The time limit and page requirement. Like a lot of honors students, I thought I would solve that problem by getting a huge chunk of work done over J-term at home. But then, my mom got Comcast cable and, well...that didn’t happen. And 75 to 125 pages is tough to do in one year.

KS: I know that you’re interested in teaching, but that you also consider yourself a writer. How do you see writing being a part of your life in years to come?

CP: I definitely want to be a writer, but I’m also scared to be a writer. It’s a lot of macaroni-and-cheese dinners. It doesn’t matter how many different things you add to that mac and cheese, at the end of the day, it’s still noodles and cheese powder. But I am interested in teaching, and would like to be a creative writing teacher to help stay on the writing path.

KS: Would you ever come back and work at Macalester?

CP: YES! I’m in love with Old Main offices. It’s those bookshelves. OK, my turn!

KS: Ready!

CP: What made you decide to pursue your specific topic?



Kelsey Shanesy and Celeste Prince, class of 2010

KS: I was really interested in the idea of Spanglish. It’s everywhere. Statistics predict that in 2042 a majority of people will be speaking Spanish. So I was going to do that and read *everything!* But then I eventually settled on Junot Diaz. It’s interesting that in some spaces the Spanish language and people who speak Spanish are devalued, yet we hold Junot Diaz up as the pinnacle of literary success since he won the Pulitzer Prize for *The Brief Wondrous Life of Oscar Wao*. Plus, I got to meet Junot and can provide pictures and a signature if necessary.

CP: Can you explain more about your project?

KS: Harold Bloom wrote this book called *The Anxiety of Influence* about how everything has already been written, so now authors are afraid of not doing anything original. I’m exploring the anxiety of history, in that the largest minority population – Latinos – is a population of willing immigrants. There’s this urgency and need to maintain culture and yet assimilate. With Junot Diaz’s *Oscar Wao*, you leave knowing Dominican history. He demands that it not be ignored.

CP: What were some of the problems you’ve run into?

KS: I first thought, “Oh, eight credits of independent study, I can do that!” My original proposal said I would complete a translation of poems from Spanish or English into Spanglish. But that, unfortunately, couldn’t sustain itself. I’ve also had trouble, like you, with managing time. I spent the first semester writing and writing but I didn’t have a thesis. So then I had 30 pages that I couldn’t use. But it worked out because having a background in Spanglish viewed in an academic setting has been really helpful with studying Junot Diaz.

CP: What’s your favorite part about your project?

KS: Besides meeting Junot Diaz, it’s been a really interesting experience sustaining a thesis for longer than ten pages. This is the longest paper I’ve ever written. I love delving in one topic for a year and becoming an “expert” on it. This is a test run to see if I want to pursue graduate school.

CP: What are your plans after you turn it in?

KS: I’m not going to grad school right away. I want to work for a while, preferably in publishing. After a few years I think I’ll miss school and go back. I think I’ll end up teaching English if I don’t become a star publisher.

Poet's corner

Untitled, by Anna Waggener

I loved you
 for catching hope on fly paper
 and saving it in jars,
 like strawberries or candy,
 to look at, and sample,
 with a single straight finger,
 while I smeared honey over kitchen
 counters
 with the palms of sleep-soft hands.
 I loved you
 for pinning photographs to clothes lines
 so my memories smelled of summer,
 all lemonade and lye
 and sweating, sun-split roses;
 a breath to be sucked deep and
 savored
 for a stolen August day.
 I loved you
 for keeping silence
 like atonement,
 in a room made damp with mourning;
 for finding all the life in losing,
 when losing is the only guarantee,
 and for knowing,
 without asking,
 that I loved you.



April Babes

April 2, 1805- Hans Christian Andersen

April 3, 1738- Washington Irving

April 4, 1928- Maya Angelou

April 5, 1856- Booker T. Washington

April 7, 1770- William Wordsworth

April 12, 1916- Beverly Cleary

April 15, 1843- Henry James

April 21, 1816- Charlotte Bronte

April 23, 1564- William Shakespeare

April 28, 1926- Harper Lee

ENGLISH

Newsletter Staff

Managing Editor
Anna Brailovsky

Cruise Directors

Anna Joranger
Madiha Bataineh
Marissa Bianco
Meghan Wilson

Contributing Writers

Meg LaFarge
Celeste Prince
Kelsey Shaneshy
Mark Verdin
Ben Voigt
Anna Waggener

Happenings:

MacSlams Sendoff Slam before national CUPSI competition! Saturday, April 3 at 7:30 pm in 10K.

Italian poet Tiziano Fratus reads from his work—April 7th at noon, 4th Floor Old Main. Pizza will be served!

Special Treat Day! April 14th 5-7 pm in the Department Lounge, featuring Honors Project Writers Q&A.

Alpha Rho Theta presents "An Evening of Creative Writing"! A chance to hear your friends and peers read work from this year's Projects in Creative Writing classes. With Peter Bognanni reading as a special guest! Food and drink will also be served! April 15th 5-7 pm, 4th Floor Old Main.

Visit www.macalester.edu/english/news for the latest announcements and back issues.

We're on Facebook! Fan us!

Spring? Oh, it's here.

Hi, we're your Cruise Directors. If you have any questions, please feel free to email us at: ajoranger@macalester.edu; mbataine@macalester.edu; mbbianco@macalester.edu; mwilson4@macalester.edu

We will send back prompt responses. Until then, we'll be enjoying/prancing around in the warm weather. YEAH!

