



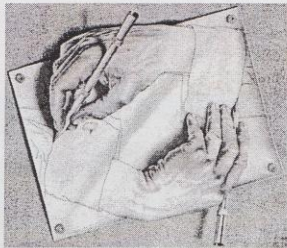
Opening
Writing
Doors

Newsletter 5th Issue – October 2006

University of Pamplona

EDITORIAL

This is the 5th edition of *OPENING WRITING DOORS* with contributions from Professors and students along with the editor moved by their inspirations of those moments which have impacted their lives.



Pamplona, up in the Andes Mountains, a place that facilitates people to express themselves on a piece of paper spilling out their deepest feelings stemming from those foggy, rainy afternoons over a hot cup of chocolate.

The 'City of Knowledge' a name inspired by our Head Dean, Dr. Alvaro Gonzalez Joves, gives people the opportunity for learning and culturalization to the point of the very frontier of wisdom. This magazine hopes to do some of that in a global aspect and open the hearts and minds of those who read us. We invite all of you to join into this enterprise of expression and communication uniting this city with the world.

The Head of the Department of Foreign Languages and Communication, Yolanda Villamizar de Camperos, has given us, perhaps, an intimate view of the true heart's life force. Professor Herrera has called up memories of his childhood and family members. Jimmi Gomez has more of his tongue-in-cheek *remarks* and love poems by Lizet Luna. The foreign assistants from Jamaica and Barbados have also dedicated time to share impressions of their new ambience. One of our Chinese exchange students has also sent her summary of six months of Colombian experiences.

Contact us to be considered for the next issue at:
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Opening Writing doors

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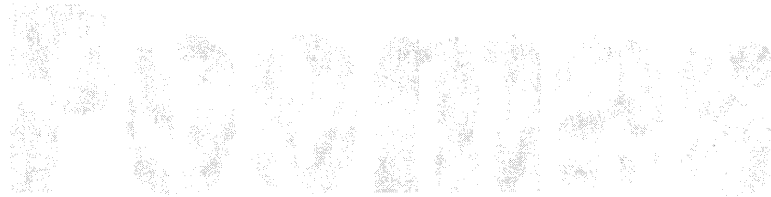
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AWAKENING TO SONGS OF BIRDS

I'm awakened by the song of the nightingales
 Melody bursting from tiny throats
 In the calm of the morning lightening rays,
 those humming birds fly from heaven,
 Filling the green-branched garden trees
 Seen from my window,
 This ineffable happening announcing the day
 Is that hidden, other-wordly tendernes.

BETWEEN SLEEP AND 'WAKENING

Day breaks with aromas of tonalities
 And affable perception of speckled energy
 Suspected in that mirror prior to the Sun's light
 Exchanging that fragrance of other-worldly sounds
 Marking and breaking that silence
 Bringing that farthest, closer,
 Moving'd break the breath of that coolness
 On my skin,
 Where my body's prison deserts me at the fire's edge,
 Staying in that immensity with no return.
 REMAINS
 Only remains building and re-edifying
 Like the night coyote stirring around the center
 Of the camp.
 Dearest Love. . . .
 A huge mysterious hand intents it all!

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REFLECTION

All is destruction,
 A following assuring that word
 That carries you along.
 Staying and slowly dissolving,
 It's all a poem, a song, a play.

"UN PANZUELO".

yolivdeca

Professor *Yolanda Villamizar de Camperos*

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SECRET VOICES

I tremble again and again
It is not the weather.
In fact, it is not cold at all,
It is my body, my soul
They are both very cold.
Do you know why?

It is because of you.
It is because of him.
It is fear.
Oh yes, I am afraid!
I am afraid of a monster.
The monster of reality within me.

I would like to live two lives.
To have two men
Two experiences
Two joys
Two smiles
One is not enough!

Not only one smile
Not only one joy
Not only one man
Not only one life.
A life in which I have to choose
Choose between you and him
Leave you or leave him.

I'd prefer to die,
I'd rather be dead.
So that I do not have to make any choice.
No one has to know how
I have loved you.
That one soul could love two souls,
That these two souls loved me.
That yours belonged to mine.
And that mine will always belong to both of you.

And when in my coffin,
It will rain because of you
Because of your tears,
Because my two souls will be crying
For me
For my soul
And each one of you will think,
Ahh, how she has loved me and only me!

Death is my way out!
This way my secret will save your souls.
...my little secret

And in my tomb,
although cold will invade my bones
the rain will wash all my tears and fears away,
I won't tremble any more,
When in my darkness this body lies,
And I close my eyes... forever.

Lizet Luna

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POEM

I am red, red like my heart! Like my blushed face,
I am blue like the sky, that sky that is mine.
I am yellow like the Sun that rises everyday in my life.
I am white like my soul and I am sure, yours also.
I am green like the trees and like the hope of a future with peace.
I am brown like my hair and like my daily chocolate bars.
I am black like the night; like the eyes of Snow White.
I am gray like the rock, like the color of my clock.
I am orange like the dusk, like the juice in my lunch.

We are the colors. Which do you prefer?

Remember, I am red; I am blue; I am yellow,
I am green; don't forget me; I am brown,
I am black. Hey! I am gray and finally,
Orange is my name.

Alba Milena Florez Gonzalez
Student Foreign Language Dept.

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PROFESSIONAL EDUCATION, COLLECTIVE DEATH...

When any kind of education forgets to form people without taking into account all those things characterizing the human being (feelings, thoughts, sensitivity. . .), there is no need to consult the crystal ball to understand and explain the reason for the de-humanization of people today.

For example, engineers construct buildings and bridges without considering the negative impact of the pollution they cause (contamination of the water, the air, etc.).

Doctors do nothing but prescribe medication without even looking at the patients. Lawyers manipulate laws to benefit themselves and teachers are not concerned about the quality of their classes seeing that the youngsters do not learn those lessons imparted because they have contracts or are named in their position 'until death do them part.'

Consequently, no human aspect can be found in this kind of behavior. Instead, there is an irrational fight between esthetics and ethics (since these two words no longer exist in the human vocabulary); the words 'theory' and 'practice' are two extremes that never meet in synthesis in our educational system.

So then, what can we say about those men who love freedom and at the same time enslave others? What kind of outcome can we expect from these selfish men seeking their own satisfaction and ambition in a reproachable act where Darwin's Theory is proven? **ONLY THE STRONGEST WILL SURVIVE!**

The above view could be 'food for thought' and reflection of what YOU are doing with your professional formation. It is your decision!

Leonel Martínez Navarro

9th Semester Student Foreign Language Dept.



A SERIOUS KIND OF SOMETHING NEW

I would like to stop and take a moment to realize that we are just a simple part of what certainly exists in this world. Talking about living beings we are some of those human ones.

Some miles away from Northern Santander there are people with traits extremely different from ours. There are some who have extraordinary features, hair, skin colors and bodies. Most of them play on sports' teams and are highly prepared and trained; for instance, I had a chance to talk to people from places which. . . honestly, . . . I have never heard about before: St. Kitts, Grenada, St. Vincent's and Bermuda. Besides, most of them have different accents in English and in French (like those from Haiti, St. Lucia, among others). These are accents that I found were almost indistinguishable since they spoke fast and used contractions.

Fortunately, I had no trouble communicating with them which was my role as a translator even though I am still a student of Foreign Languages here at the University of Pamplona.

All things considered this experience can be summarized into 30 days in the magic city of Cartagena, tasting its flavor and listening to its rhythm, talking to pretty new people and listening to different voices; also, looking at different faces and above all, thinking in a different way.

Now, back again in this very small town of Pamplona after the Caribbean and Central American Games, I still wish to be a part of another place on this gigantic planet. This experience opened up hidden secrets this Planet Earth has for me and I have a burning desire to know more and more about who lives here and what they think.

Paola Pabon Vila

9th Semester Student



SHARING MY WRITING EXPERIENCES

Writing is inherently a private, personal activity. The initial inspiration can come from many source; the birth of a child, the death of a loved one, the discovery of letters, photos, or other diggings into old and forgotten boxes, or the simple desire to set down the details of your life for future generations. Even though you may be intimately familiar with the events and "characters" themselves, you may never have given thought to the actual process of turning these personal experiences and memories into "stories" that can be read and enjoyed by others.

When you are writing, specifically to be read or to get published, that joy and excitement of actually writing, that is the key to your pouring out, gets lost when you lose that emotion. Don't write for others but purely for yourself and your own enjoyment and leave the editing and muck- ups for when you think that the story you wrote with a full heart is really destined for success. Believe me, if you write for others to enjoy, you will get sick and tired of writing very quickly.

When you come up with an idea, don't be stressed. You must expand and use your imagination to create the ideal story that fits your interest. Many get ideas from their own experiences, but if you don't have many, write about something that you comprehend or something that you would like to read about.

It is extremely important to make sure you use the word meant to describe your work so as not to confuse others. Make sure your thoughts are strong in details to describe what you mean. Many adjectives are not necessary. You should be satisfied with what you are writing.

When you have finished writing, you usually have all the time you want to review and go through what may not be clear to the reader. Don't use too many adjectives, but still make it clear so that the reader can feel, see, hear, smell, and taste what the main idea is. Deepen your internal search and find things that can help you. Don't just sit there and think you are finished when more exacting details can be jotted down.

When you write, read it over as if you were another person, a complete stranger who has just picked up your article in a bookstore. Ask yourself "does this really make sense" or "do I really need this?" Take my word... it works!

Carlos Alberto Jaimes G.
Professor Foreign Language Dept.

MY EXPERIENCES IN COLOMBIA

I can't even begin to think that I have been here in Colombia for 6 months. During this half year I have learned and known a great deal.

Sin darme cuenta, ya llevo casi 6 meses en Colombia. Durante este medio año, aprendimos mucho, y conocemos mucho.

I remember the first day I arrived in Colombia and the first lunch we ate with 'my family' in Cucuta. Those first days were difficult for me to become accustomed to the food, communication, studies, and many words I didn't know.

Recuerdo el primer día que llegué a Colombia, y el primer almuerzo que comimos con la familia en Cúcuta. En los primeros días, nos encontramos con muchas dificultades de la comida, las comunicaciones, el estudio, y un montón de palabras desconocidas.

I am living in Pamplona, a small, tranquil, safe and lovely little city. The people are very kind. We are five here from China. In order to better our Spanish, we live with different families from the University. I stay with Don Januario and his wife, Rosalba. They have taken me to the supermarket, Vivero, to the market-place here in Pamplona to teach me the names of fruit and vegetables.

Vivo en Pamplona, una ciudad pequeña, tranquila, segura, y linda. La gente acá es muy amable. Somos cinco acá. Para mejorar nuestro español, vivimos separados con las familias de profesores. Me alojo con Don Januario y su esposa, Rosalba. Ellos me llevaron al Vivero, al mercado, para enseñarme los nombres de frutas y verduras. When we have lunch, they always teach me about those typical dishes of this area of the country, 'mute', 'sancocho', 'patacón', etc.

Cuando almorzamos, siempre me presentaron los platos típicos del país, o del Norte de Santander: el mute, el sancocho, el patacón, etc.

We study in the Department of Languages at the University of Pamplona with our professors Don Salomon, Alba, Doris, Jairo and Sonia.

Estudiamos en el Departamento de Lenguas de la Universidad de Pamplona con los profesores Don Salomón, Alba, Doris, Jairo y Sonia.

We not only learn but we also teach mandarin classes, the official language of China. Here they are very interested in our culture, history and language.

En la Universidad, no sólo aprendimos, sino también dictamos clases de mandarín, la lengua oficial de la China. A ellos, les interesa mucho el idioma, la cultura y la historia.

Since Colombia is such a beautiful country, we took advantage of vacation and went to several cities to visit and see like Bucaramanga, the Caribbean Coast and Medellin.

Como Colombia es un país bello, aprovechamos las vacaciones; fuimos a varias ciudades a dar un paseo, y conocerlas; Bucaramanga, a la Costa y Medellín.

It is difficult for us to say good-bye to the family, to our professors, to our companions and all those friends since they treat us so well and from them we have learned so much of this language in just a half year's time.

Para nosotros es durísimo despedimos de la familia, a los profesores, a los compañeros y a los amigos, que todos nos tratan muy bien y todos nos son muy amables. Durante este medio año, aprendimos bastante la lengua española.

I would like to express my sincere gratitude to the family I stayed with, the University and all of our friends. Colombia is a 'bacano' country; the people are very nice.

Quiero dar mis agradecimientos sinceros a la familia, a la universidad, a los amigos, a todos. Colombia es un país bacano, la gente allá es muy amable.

Xu yan (Sandra)

Spokesperson for the Chinese Exchange Students

COMMENTARIES

WOULD YOU DARE TO?

What you are about to read is just a simple proposal. Well, more than a proposal. We would call this a challenge. A challenge for all those people who do not like reading and even for those who do like it. We hope that you dare to read it, but mostly that you enjoy reading for the first time. Since most of the articles are about things you would like to say out loud at least once in your life. . . This is the deal! You start reading and if you do not find anything you like, you are allowed by us, 'The Editors' to tear the whole document up, even put it into the flames or both. BUT! and pay attention to this. . . if you do enjoy reading anything in these pages, you have to promise to share it, at least, with one person that you know who does not like reading (this last part is optional). You've got nothing to lose but a lot to win if you decide to take up our challenge. GOOD LUCK to you!

LIFE ISN'T ALWAYS A FAIRY TALE

'Once upon a time...'

Tell me something; didn't you get tired of listening to stories with the same beginning all the time when you were a child? By that time I remember I already knew and distinguished the days of the week, the months of the year and I even knew how to tell time. That is why I used to ask myself, "can't these guys (the writers) be more specific?" Or why don't they just begin by saying:

'The following story has been taken from real life: all the names of the characters have been changed to protect their identities.'

This phrase was really confusing to me. But this is not the only one. There is another one that used to confused me a lot. Just check it out:

'They got married and they lived happily ever after'.

This was the time when I told myself this guy (the writer) must live in Dreamland or he has never heard about the word 'Divorce'. The confusion appeared when I saw parents yelling at each other, fathers leaving mothers and vice-versa, and other particular situations I saw and which I was involved in at that time.

What I'm not sure about is whether the Good Man always wins or not. But what I'm really sure about is that the Rich One always does. I can't tell you if the Good and the Rich man are the same but I will tell you that it is really impossible they are, since a person who cares about always winning, no matter what he has to do, usually does not have a clear meaning of the words 'Good' and 'Evil'.

A Confused Child

THE MOST COMMON STUDENTS' NIGHTMARE

How many times have you heard your teacher say: This is very interesting material to read. Perhaps, you can't remember, but I'm sure it has been plenty of times. 'Material to be read', has to be joined to a large coffee pot or the reminder of the embarrassing situation you could experience in front of your classmates if your teacher asks you something about it and you have nothing to say because you never read it. I know this is a very tough situation. I've experienced it a couple of times myself. This is the reason why I am using this article as a desperate call to all those teachers who give their students this kind of reading material. Could you guys try to inspire students' interests at least once? Trust me! it is not so hard to get your students to feel satisfied. Just try it! and you'll be able to see the results which might surprise you. It'd probably mean working harder but it's worth it. You'll see!

A Sleepy Student

Jimmi Gomez

Graduated from Dept. of Foreign Languages

OWD

FOREIGN ASSISTANTS

OPENED DOORS

What a contrast it was!!! As a soldier courageously sets out to war, so did I for my first opportunity to work in a foreign country.

Reluctancy reared its head as the opportunity to travel to Colombia as a teacher's assistant was presented. However, as time passed, these inhibitions were gently swept away with many encouragements I received with open arms.

Being overwhelmed with fear, being tardy and edgy were actions of the past. So I became punctual as I made my final preparations for this new venture. After anxiously sliding through the Norman Manley International Airport in Kingston, Jamaica, I was ready to share my knowledge of Jamaican culture and to impart my English competence with the staff and students at the University of Pamplona. So with great anticipation and excitement I set out on this adventurous task.

With little information about Pamplona I was unsure of what to expect. But in my mind I envisioned a big sunny city. It was just after arriving here that all of my excitement and visions were put to naught. Disappointment surfaced as everything I hoped Pamplona would be, was not.

Days and nights of suffering from this small, too cold city, were what I was faced with. Having no sun and nowhere to go, frustrated me further. But then, I remembered a familiar voice saying, "meet every challenge head on." This is what I did. With that, I vowed to be strong and courageous and meet every one of those challenges which sought to 'bring me down'.

After those agonizing and homesick moments, my inhibitions came knocking again but I was determined and this became my 'best friend'. I embraced it and have never let it go since.

Now, being here, has made every barrier obscure. The students returned to the University; some came to begin a new journey, others to continue on the path they had already trodden. . .this small, too cold city, proved to be interesting. I have met 'costeños' (people from the coastal areas of Colombia) and 'cachacos' (those from this area of Northern Santander) who have told me about the diversity of each experience and have introduced me to the different ways of life.

Pamplona functions only with the presence of students (something I have been able to observe) and seems to have been built for this reason alone. Doors that were closed are now opened and this city has proven to be more than just a historical city; it is also a tourist city since the majority of students come from other parts of Colombia.

I am indeed grateful for the dull moments that Pamplona once gave me because now, I have a greater appreciation and admiration for this small, too cold city. I am glad I did not give into all my fears and met those challenges that sailed across with me on that ocean breeze that brought me here.

Lottoya Scott
Assistant from Jamaica

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BEYOND ALL MY EXPECTATIONS

When presented with the opportunity to come to Pamplona as an English Language Assistant, I was most thrilled. As a Diplomatic Relations major, going abroad is indeed a personal passion. I felt this would be a grand opportunity to explore a culture very different from mine in Jamaica.

I must admit that with no prior teaching experience, I felt some anxiety over my ability to deliver a good class. Additionally, I had conflicting expectations due to the fact that I found very limited information about Pamplona.

Upon arrival, I found it rather challenging to adjust to the unpredictable climate changes. In fact, I became somewhat homesick after the first two weeks since my country has great warm weather.

However, my experience so far with these wonderful people and friends I have already made, has permitted every challenge to work out well. Though I must admit that one of my main reasons for coming here was to improve my Spanish knowledge so that when I leave here after a year's time, I will speak this language perfectly.

Not only have I learned to dance SALSA and VALLENATO but I have also found it fulfilling to assist those students who are empasioned about my native language, English. Also, the cultural exchange is interesting and exciting and my culturalization is something I am embracing wholeheartedly.

But all in all, Pamplona is more than I imagined and I look forward to a productive and fulfilling year at the University of Pamplona.

Sashae Leon

Assistant from Jamaica



THANK YOU

I have always been an open-minded person; well, as long as I have known myself and thanks to my Mother and God I am here. I thank God for giving me this mind and the power to choose and I thank Mummy for allowing me to be myself and not sheltering me so much so that my mind and body could become their own greatest enemies. So Thank You both.

I thought it was necessary to say that first in order to say this...

I must admit that all I knew about Colombia was what I had heard on the news or saw in the movies and sadly, that was nothing good but being the person I am, I said to myself, "There is no place on God's Green Earth where there is bad and good does not exist beside it. In fact, something I had quickly observed about the world

or rather about people, is the ability to elevate the bad over the good; this occurs since the good always outweighs its counterpart.

When the opportunity came up for me to come to Colombia, there was no hesitation. I jumped in head first and that is no exaggeration. For this program of "Language Assistents", I know of fourteen English native speakers including me and one French native speaker and all of them speak Spanish but me! Just a sample of those adventurous bones in my body plus my great faith in the goodness of people. This small town in the Andes of Colombia, Pamplona, has not disappointed me.

Now, I can tell you about my Pamplonese experience.

I arrived in Pamplona on August 6th. One of the French

Teachers, Magda, met me at the airport with a kiss on the cheek and right then and there I felt the warmth of 'freezing' Pamplona. I come from the tropics and it is warm on Barbados but up here in the Andes, it is 'cool'!

I know some wonderful people like Bony and Lisbeth who have given me a place to 'crash'. Where I eat, the people have varied their fixed menu to cater to my tastes. Wonderful friends like Jonathan and Mari who have tried rattling off in Spanish with great laughter and pulling my chin repeating 'no entiendes'. These and others have made my stay here one of the richest experiences in my life. So that again I say 'thank you God and thank you Mom' because without you, I wouldn't be able to say... Thank you Pamplona!

Chantal Graham

Assistant from Barbados

EPIGRAPH

In two very coarse areas of Colombia FourFevers and Map-anares, where all sorts of misdeeds... more than 600... survive what have been caused by 16 other capital sins not registered in the code of Law like: bribery, hatred, attacks, rage with anger, poisonings, murder, idleness, miserliness, violence and plunder, swindles of all kinds...

All of these along with pandering and with the stain of cynicism, envy and every tinge of hypocrisy, takes us with this tale to those who have suffered all of these characters and have endured these injustices and their consequences just to let the reader know a little about my lovely hometown:

Three Lonely Relatives

They are living in a little house near town sewing and making cheap clothes.

We hadn't seen each other for more than 25 years but yesterday in Santa Rosa in the marketplace I saw my cousins Berthelis and Herminda. During a couple of cups of coffee Berthelis began commenting about the extreme life and death situation and torture of that humiliating past she had suffered.

I believe that Divine Providence helped me and showed me the Path out of that little town at the right time when all those little details of good treatment and a peaceful life ended. It is really essential to thank the Almighty God because we are here to tell the tale.

Herminda started a small story of our ancestors telling us about my grandfather who cursed the invaders and their descendants. When we were teenagers, we began to suffer the outcome of those 16 capital sins. Departure was our only salvation.

Bullies with their savage acts going totally unpunished changed the names of places and even people to throw the authorities off the track. This meant that the two towns, Map-anares and FourFevers were not even on the map with the excuse that these are nicknames of the places (apparently, the population is also a foolish myth and old-wives tale).

At the time of this history women in the neighborhood were the property of the owners of the villages and after deciding to put an end to the young men who might have become our husbands (this was advertised by the killers before-hand)... Berthelis was rambling on about all this when Herminda broke into the story with that little walk out into the moonlit night...

"When did it happen?" I asked. But she answered that they had run away on the early morn of August 5th. The killers needed a lot of 'cold meat' for their FRESH FLESH CABINET but we were out of reach by the time they could get their hands on us.

Sorrowfully and taking out a mirror to look at her dried up wrinkled face since now it was really too late to even think of all the love she had lost running away to 'save her skin' from the murderers and rapers lamenting now being an 'old maid' with no opportunities and with only three good teeth in her mouth.

"I became an old bachelor!" I said with the same sorrow and empty existence as my old maid cousins who shared the coffee in the cups with their tears remembering all that lost time living in fear.

Professor Salomon Herrera
Foreign Language and Communication Dept.





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