

Opening Writing Doors

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A University for Intelligent and an Interconnected Society

OWD



EDITORIAL

WE ARE VERY PLEASED TO PRESENT THIS NEW ISSUE OF OPENING WRITING DOORS, CONTINUING WITH A NEW COLLECTION OF ARTICLES FOR YOUR READING AND ENJOYMENT.

SELF-EXPRESSION AND WRITING HAVE THEIR OWN BENEFITS. THEY GIVE THE WRITER HIS LOOK INWARD AND HE CAN SEE WHAT DREAMS HE WOULD LIKE TO FULFILL OR WHAT ILLUSIONS HE MIGHT HAVE HIDDEN WITHIN. HE PUTS PEN TO PAPER BUT HE DOESN'T KNOW WHAT WILL COME NEXT.

OPENING WRITING DOORS HAS COME OUT EVERY SEMESTER FOR THOSE STUDENTS AND TEACHERS TO REACH INTO THE MYSTERIES WITHIN THEIR MINDS, HEARTS AND SOULS GIVING THESE YOUNG THINKERS A WAY TO SENSITIZE THEMSELVES IN THEIR SELF-REALIZATION AND ABOVE ALL, THAT SELF-RESPECT EVERY ONE IN THE WORLD SHOULD FEEL.

NEW TALES OF SUFFERING FROM OUR PROFESSOR SALOMON HERRERA AS HE DELVES INTO HIS CHILDHOOD MEMORIES AS A BOY. MAÑUEL ALBERTO JAIMES INSPIRED BY HIS OWN HUMAN NATURE AND THE LOVELINESS OF LIFE AS WELL AS MOTHER NATURE, WRITES A SHORT BUT POINTEDLY SERIOUS REMARK ON THE GLORIOUS, MYSTERIOUS WORLD AROUND HIM AND ONE OF OUR TEACHERS, PROFESSOR GABRIEL COTE ON THE DOCTORATE PLAN, HAS ALSO GIVEN HIS TESTIMONY OF LIVING AND STUDYING ABROAD.

OUR STUDENT IN-PUT IS ALSO VARIED. THE AU PAIR PLAN HAS GIVEN THESE YOUNG PEOPLE A NEW LOOK AT LIFE AND HOW DREAMS CAN COME TRUE. THEIR CONTRIBUTIONS ARE MOST IMPORTANT FOR THIS MAGAZINE SINCE THEY CAN ACTUALLY SEE WHAT THEY HAVE DONE AND THE RESULTS OF THEIR STUDIES OF THIS FOREIGN LANGUAGE PRINTED OUT AND PLACED ON THE INTERNET. MANY THANKS FOR ALL YOUR INTEREST IN CONTINUING TO MAKE THIS NEWSLETTER ONE OF THOSE CONSTANT AMAZEMENTS IN THE RENEWAL FOR EVERYONE'S LITERARY DEVELOPMENT.

THE EDITORS



Opening Writing doors

President:
ALVARO GONZALEZ JONES

Dean:
JOSE DEL CARMEN ROJAS C.
Faculty of Education

Director
FACULTY OF EDUCATION.
Language Department Teacher

Editor & Proof Reader:
NADINE KIEFF.
Language Department Advisor

Front Page Design:
CARLOS ALBERTO JAIMES G.
Language Department Teacher

Graphic Design:
NELSON J. FLÓREZ G.

Printing
LitoFLÓREZ
SAMPLONA

POEMAS

THOUGHTS

UNCERTAINTY

An unknown way when a child,
Some years later, convinced to be right.
But making mistakes with each step.

At those moments living with insecurity and
Sadness became the mode.

Today is the future and everything's
changed.
Tears to smiles. Happiness comes now to
this child of woe.

But... isn't today the 'morrow's past?
What will later bring?

THE LOST

Sometimes life is finished even when there is
too much to live for, too many steps to take.
When the heart continues beating,
And everything dies around me,--I die.
But... I am alive.

Now, nothing matters; love becomes hate.
Feelings oscillate between bitterness and
despair.
I want to be born again. I stop walking to see
where I place my feet on this rocky road not
wanting to hurt others nor again my own
heart.
Not wanting to disappoint my love, nor fail
my Soul.
Ignominiously, I look for another option
instead of spilling my tears, my own blood.

I throw my hands to heaven's mercy and
kneel to the forces above since my own have
gone out of me.

I have lost my own dignity.



SEARCHING FOR REASONS

Suddenly, you appear in my thoughts
and within My own Soul I feel that great
force everytime the breeze hits my face.
I search for you even tho' I don't want to.
I am a slave within the eternity of love.
Why am I reasoning with this force I
have since,
LOVE is never justified with reasons.
LOVE is LOVE and only the just
understand this.

Gerson Madrid
Student-Foreign Languages
6th Semester



ALIVE...

I stare wondering at the wandering
blue heaven
The clouds flying through the air
without any destiny.
Thousands of drops of rain take
possession of my body and refresh it..

But...
My soul continues vain, futile.
I look around; I feel lost
Shut up behind opened doors.
I don't know where I am.
If in high hell or in deep Heaven...
I was born to die perhaps...
I am really dead in life.
It's like my world has finished but
there is something tying it to reality,
This keeps me alive!
Today, I am deceased... writing this
poem.

Leidy J. Solano R.
6th Semester





Opening

Writing

Stories

OWD

CHILDREN'S TALES ARE NOT INTERESTING TO ADULTS BUT BEAR WITH ME FOR THIS MIGHT EVEN INTEREST YOU

This tragically comic story about times past within families but now, nobody talks about them.

My mother, trying to avoid violence to our family, house, belongings, etc. said, surprisingly, one day, after 30 some years of living in the same place, "Let's leave Four-Fevers."

Walking along the highways with only a cup, a spoon, and a dish with my school-bag full of books one Thursday morning, we came to the river leading to the next town, Querilochas. Outside of the town we came to Mr. Sanchez's lodgings where he gave us the kitchen floor for our bed that night using a harsh cowskin as our blanket, close to a heap of splintered wood right next to the fire where the family cooked their meals over three large stones. Mr. Sanchez gifted us with his generosity and dinner. We asked his daughters, first, of course if there was any chance of staying there for the night. We had met them on the road and since they were friendly and selling candy, we dared to start speaking to them. We didn't have enough money to buy any candy but they told us their father wouldn't mind if we stayed the night. Mr. Sanchez warned us about the dangers on the road to Urubanzá. But my mother knew that getting there would mean peace.

Next morning bright and early we walked and walked and climbed a cliff without seeing a soul for five hours. We did notice there were several houses with burnt rooves and so we became apprehensive. We only heard the eagles screaming and listening to the awful thunder, watching the pitfalls into the abyss of the jungle on both sides of the path while the rain beat down on our heads. So we quickened our step to get out of the jungle before nightfall.

My mother kept on saying over and over, "Divine Providence has saved us again." That's when we saw the first cultivation on a plateau and our hearts gladdened; then, 4 dwellings came into sight on the bank of a clear stream. We neared the clearing and wanted to ask if there could possibly be lodging at this little farm house for the two of us.

There I saw Isangela for the first time running towards us hand-in-hand with her little brother. My little heart jumped out of my chest to see such a lovely little girl. Her mother, Pastora, sold us our dinner consisting of bread and cheese with water. That was breakfast, lunch and dinner. Apparently, the fear of falling or being stuck in the jungle at night saved our bellies from the feeling of emptiness but out in the clearing, that relief of finding shelter, really opened my appetite even though falling in love at first sight is usually what does it.

All of a sudden Doña Modesta appeared offering her little hut for our night's shelter and comfort. That meant 'good-bye' to Isangela. We slept on what is meant for the drying of the cornseed which are thin woven sticks up in the air but under the roof; of course, there was no corn at that time.

We walked on for five hours the next morning coming to a river where boys and girls were swimming and washing clothes. The girls washed the neighbors' clothes letting them dry on huge white rocks in the sun and we stopped to rest washing our feet in the little bay where the girls were stooped.

My mother started a conversation with Rebecca and she told her our story and why we decided to take to the road on our way to Urubanzá. Rebecca offered us lodging for the night and we waited until she had finished washing to walk the other hour getting to her house.

Rebecca lived on the other side of Urubanzá so we stayed there for three days and nights only to move to Rebecca's aunts' house who gave my mother work to be able to put me into school. My mother only had to wash clothes for the five children and two adults in the family. We lived there for one year and 7 months. This family took us under their wing and put me into school; they gave my mother a pair of new shoes. I was also to receive a new pair of shoes when I began school. "I was only 7 years old at the time but 'suffering builds character". That's what my mother always said.

Professor Salomon Herrera
Faculty of Language and Communication



TRAVELING WITH MARIA JOSE THROUGH THE USA

Experiences in the USA were the most important part of my growing up, maturing, plus all the trips I made in and around the USA spending the money I had earned. They were not done with money out of mommy and daddy's pocketbook. This gave me a sense of responsibility of how and on what to spend these dollars.

I met people from every level of American life since the USA is a great 'melting pot'. For example, an interesting woman who took me into her home since I didn't have a family assigned to me yet. She opened her doors and her heart to my way of life. This woman is an M.D. and had adopted a little Russian girl but she didn't have anyone in the Au Pair Program either to take care of Anya. So we were two people on the waiting list. We became fast friends and we are still in touch. I couldn't believe her hospitality. She felt comfortable with me and vice-versa. I wasn't afraid to live in her house and she wasn't afraid to open up her house to an unknown 'Colombian' girl.

One of the places I visited was Wichita, Kansas. It was so flat. You could see the entire horizon from any point around the area and it seemed like looking at the end of the world. I went for a ride in a classic Mustang convertible and that was exciting for me.

We went to Maryland and went to an indoor ice-skating rink in the middle of the summer. We had hot-chocolate and it was very hot outside – around 90° F. But it was so cool inside!

I visited the Zoo and the Aquarium in Baltimore and Washington, D.C. I drove to New York City with a friend– to the 'Big Apple' to visit another friend from my home-town here in Cucuta, Colombia. We went to Philadelphia, Boston, going up to Niagra Falls and even

crossed the country to San Diego, California. We went to the beach in San Diego and we ate cooked shrimp-mmmmm, delicious!!! I rode a bicycle all the time and had great fun doing exercise on the streets of Coronado, an island off the coast of California. From Coronado you can see the border town of Tijuana, Mexico.

The best person I met was the man I hope to marry. He's from Washington, D.C. and is a pharmacist. Coincidentally, I met him at the Pharmacy. I was feeling sick and I needed some medicine. It was love at first sight. A week later we went out on our first date. I showed him where I was born in Cucuta on the map since he took one on our date to see where I come from; it seems we were made for each other. Obviously, this travelogue has a happy ending.

Maria Jose Guerrero Diaz
9th Semester
Foreign Language Student





THE EMPTY BOTTLE

"If I gain the whole world and lose my own soul, what would be said of me? My vanity is chasing the wind and I am feeling empty again, Please! Jesus come and fill me up again." Michael Tait

Still, I ask, "Is it true that we need a higher being to lift up our spirits?" We spend so much time trying to be accepted and liked by all those around us but everyone else is doing the same thing. What sense is there to one's life on an individual basis?

Is there anyone out there who cares about me as a human being? Is there anyone out there who would say, "Hey, watch out! Danger lurks!" This is a big question for me as a lover of the superior right of man to have that 'religare' (the ever-present union with the superior being, known as GOD).

We always want the easiest way out; the simplest path to take and it is really only that which makes us suffer and makes us work hard that shows us the intrinsic worth of all we have done. Whatever makes us spill tears and say to ourselves, "Why is this happening to me? What have I done to deserve this?" All of this intrigues me and the conundrum of life is making me sad. All of this has me very weary and hope has been diminishing in me. Is there a future for the young people of today with any bright horizon in view?

It seems that life has become so monotonous. What to do to rid myself of the ennui, the boredom.

If we want to get past those situations, those obstacles, we need to hold on to the perfection of our inner being, of what we know to be true and proven throughout the centuries to be the reality of life and know that even we can tap on the rock and the water will come flowing out – not that water to quench our physical thirst but our spiritual clamor. This, then, is the be all and the end all. This is the answer to Shakespeare's question of 'to be or not to be!'

TENACIOUS CONSTANCY

Wolfgang Bochmann Sr. – Proprietor of 'Salsamentaria Alemana' as told to Maria Helena Moreno Cubides in her interview

To be an organized person and be able to mount your own business from scratch, means being a person with great innate organizational resources. This also means combining and coordinating all of those factors needed to begin whatever kind of business in mind, such as: human, technical, material and financial resources.

Such a person is Wolfgang Bochmann Sr. who came to Pamplona, Northern Santander without speaking the Spanish language from Sajonia, Germany 51 years ago. A great leader in this micro-enterprise field since when he arrived here, the community did not have that idea of the sausage, bologna, salami, smoked ham, etc. for their daily diet. His impetus and social sense of justice and activity made this an enormous business here in this small city. All the barriers that confronted him in the beginning were torn down by his energy and foresight permitting him to overcome all fears of failure with that dogged constancy and tenacious ability.

With that industrial spirit Wolfgang Bochmann showed this small community what that design and inspiration of having one's own business means. Reading, investigating and that quality of life he sought for his family's future, gave him that rounded and necessary aspect to begin that constant plodding into the secrets of the competitive advantage. His sacrifice in the face of every adversity permitted him to overcome any factor that might detain him in his search for quality and he could 'jump over that hill' in the amplification of his new business with that exceptional gift of certainty.

From all the reading and inquiry done through books and other areas, he could do his own bookkeeping and with that God-given gift of being very personable, he could manage his personnel with justice and fairness. His personal secretary has been with him for 30 years and his supervisor 50 years.

Surely Wolfgang Bochmann is a man who very early on in life felt that necessity and that great spirit of free enterprise who with that assurity of success, opened his own door to his destiny, to his family's future and to this community.

LEARNING & TEACHING

During the College of Education & Human Sciences Student Research Conference 2006, at the University of Nebraska, Lincoln (UNL), one of the presenters posed a question that made me think of the reasons why I became a doctoral student. I did not answer that question publicly but I knew that when I embarked upon this experience, I wanted to become a better teacher. So, the real question is: what makes a teacher a better teacher? Although I have been teaching English for more than 15 years, I realized that there was something missing. Maybe, understanding the way I teach and the way I learn might help shed some light on the search for an answer.

It is not an easy task though. I should retrace the entire path I have gone through as a learner and teacher. More importantly, this transformative process will help me realize and shape the sort of teacher I want to become. In other words, I have to reflect on my past experiences; look seriously at what I am doing now, in order to try and project what sort of teacher I would like to become. As Dewey (p.75,1938) puts it: "The educator's role might be 'to select those things within the range of existing experience that have the promise and potentiality of representing new problems which by stimulating new ways of observation and judgment will expand the area of further experience'".

In other words, becoming a doctoral student at the University of Nebraska has helped me articulate the old and the new. The former, represented by my prior knowledge and experiences as a FL teacher; the latter, represented by the learning, research and cultural opportunities, technological resources, and meaningful instruction I have encountered through my studies.

I am committed to a personal and professional growth as the first step to becoming a better professor.

I would describe myself as an inquisitive learner. I always have a question. For example, when writing, I pose questions to help me shape and develop ideas. It is a way of structuring my thinking. Hillicock points out the need to stop and reflect on what goes on in the classroom. Perhaps teachers who embark upon research may find answers, confirm hypothesis or look for ways to improve both teaching and learning processes.

The process of teaching-learning is continuous; it needs continuity of purpose because it is an everlastingly renewed process acting upon the environment and the people involved in it. The teacher is constantly evolving and growing due to the changeability of the learning and teaching 'scenarios'. In the near future, that environment will be shaped by the learner with his/her particular interests.

I try to keep in mind the sort of students I will be educating and the context in which I will be teaching. For instance, I cannot design a syllabus in advance but I can anticipate how the educational system in Colombia, South America might be changed in the next decades. Therefore, my training process must not be just planning a bunch of lessons, but as a time for growth. Above all these cause reflection on what quality education might mean.

Now I am in a role of a graduate student but in the near future I will be directing others' learning future.

This means becoming thoughtful and watchful towards future generations. The classroom is the center of constant inquiry. This present I am experiencing will become the basis for the actions I will take tomorrow.

Comments on this article might be sent to: gabrielcote@yahoo.com

Gabriel Cote Parra
Professor-Dept. of Foreign Languages





I AM A PERSON: A DREAMER

By: Manuel Alberto Jaimes Gomez, M.A.

To be human is not always a natural gift. To be a real human you have to fight for it. To be human is a risk that everyone has to take. It is not just any risk but a complex and wonderful one. It is not easy to assume to be a full human being. To be really human is a hard task you have to achieve from moment to moment.

In many ways you are free to become a human being. If you don't want to develop all the possibilities of being a person, it is your decision and you have the right to do this. You can live just to eat and sleep and reproduce; it is your selection. However, you are missing a lot of beautiful things around; maybe, that way, you can be a happy humanoide but never a human being at all.

Human beings are more than simply common mammals. Humans are people and to be really human, means to believe that there is always somebody around you that wants a friendly smile.

To be a human, to be a true person, is an unknown journey throughout an enormous mystery. It is almost a miracle too because there are a lot of dangers along the way that you have to deal with. As a human, you wake up to reality and stop daydreaming all day long.

To be a person is an encounter with the magic certainty of everyday life. It is to fly deeply through the universe. Also, as a person, someone comes from out of the unknown world of thought and penetrates through the inner part of your nightmare elevating essence to comprehension and reality.

I personally accept the beautiful challenge to be human. I decided to be a person and to listen sometimes to nature's melody of the running water and the music of the fog stepping into the silent night. I accept that you also exist. I am just a dreamer.



MY LIFE HAS CHANGED

Being an AuPair in the USA was a great experience for me since the first day. I spent 18 months living with an American family in South Orange, New Jersey, a little town in the northern part of the state quite near 'the big apple', New York City.

I really felt like a member of the Sullivan family since they included me on all their holiday invite lists and we shared Christmas, Halloween, Thanksgiving and other religious celebrations. This change in religious atmosphere gave me the opportunity to break down a lot of dogmas and patterns of thinking I had grown up with.

I found my attitudes changing as a human being, speaking another language and expressing my own ideas and thoughts in that language. I became more confident of my own abilities to operate and function as a total entity without mom and dad telling me what to do cooperating at the same time with the host family and giving of myself during those times with them, helping the kids, playing with them and taking care of them. I learned the benefits of punctuality and responsibility. I could drive their car and take the kids out to the park, to the pool, to the gym and the library without any fear of getting lost or feeling scared.

During the meetings with other AuPairs I heard them say that they never went out of the house area of the host family; just frightened of that big, big, unknown country, the USA. After taking my backpack and some things, I started trekking across country to meet up with a 'Trek America' group to go on a tour along the Pacific coast of California, I really got to know how people from many other countries feel about extending themselves and leaving the security of home

to find out that people in other lands are really just like us. So I lost all fear of the world and could face just about anything that might pop up.

I found myself face to face accepting people as they are without forming any prejudice or criticism in my mind or behaving strangely with them because they were different from me. This would never have happened to me here. When the hard moments come, the nostalgia, missing my mom and dad was difficult for me so I called them and made 'sancocho' for everyone and cried in the soup while I made it. It really tasted great!

After learning to move around and travelling by myself to other states, getting around New York City was really easy. Going to 'Hell's Kitchen' and tasting the world of food from different countries was a real taste treat like, Japanese, Thai food, Greek, Indian, Polish Kebasi and Arabian cous cous.

After all of this newness, it was so hard for me to come back to my country and I decided to stay 6 more months but those 6 months meant living intensely every moment of every day. I went everywhere I could and at the end of that summer, I said, "It's time to go home." So here I am hopefully living the new aspects of my widening experience giving of myself with more love and affection to those who need me. This has been the best time of my life so far and gave me a new perspective on life.

Yendy Granados
8th Semester



EPIGRAPH

To be Famous or die?

Is it worth it to risk it all for only one moment of FAME?

I think it is! Just the thought of spending the rest of my life being a nobody scares the wits out of me. That's why I have decided to be an opportunist at the least. That is why I must do what philosophers call, 'seizing the moment'.

To get ahead and be known. . . I must do something or anything that has not been done before. I can't sing or act and I can't be a male model because I lack that muscular body. I can't create new things or discover the cure of a fatal disease. I think I am not smart enough for those things. Then I ask myself, what could I do for that moment of fame.

Everyone I know disapproves of what I am about to do. Desperation is greater than my reasoning power or that of others. I will die or live again through this experience.

People pity me since what I have told them I will do seems to be incorrect to them but afterwards, they might smile feeling that relief at having given me some good advice. Obviously, what they have said, means little to me. I really don't know why I mentioned it in the first place.

I wanted to call attention to myself and so the idea was to jump from a high bridge onto a busy thoroughfare.

I picked my bridge of fame. I put on my best tuxedo and a high hat. I started to cry out on that particular point of the bridge. "I am worthless. No one cares about me. No one gives a hoot about what I do." My voice was louder than I thought and everyone started to look up at me. I felt absolutely thrilled.

I couldn't show it but my insides were aflutter.

I announced that I was going to jump and everyone on the street below and on the bridge gathered around me but did not try to deter me from jumping. The police also came and started questioning me but 'I need reporters', I told them. "I need to tell my story before I jump."

The reporters were my saviors since they asked me all sorts of questions but at the same time, they were making me famous. That's exactly what I wanted. They took lots of pictures and came closer to me so I dared to tell them my secret.

I wanted to be noticed. I wanted someone to say, "Hey, there goes that guy who was in the news."

So does the end justify the means?

Alejairo Torres Angulo
8th Semester – Foreign Language Dept.





Faculty of Education
Language Department

Contact us to be considered for the next issue at:
e-mail: owdfl@unipamplona.edu.co

www.unipamplona.edu.co