

The Rise and Decline of a Love of Writing

To be honest, I don't remember much about my beginnings as a writer or a reader. I have seen some of my first writing assignments, they consist of one sentence sprawled out on a large sheet of paper with two solid lines and one dashed line to help me get my letters straight. They often have the majority of the words spelled wrong but they are still legible and they often contain "Great Job!" or "Awesome Work!" stickers. It was these stickers, or actually, the praise that I used to receive, that kept me always wanting to write more and more. I remember very little of my preschool and kindergarten days but I most definitely remember getting praise from Mr. Frischia, my kindergarten teacher, and from my second grade teacher Ms. Wright. I would definitely credit these two teachers with my love for reading and writing, a love that sadly has since diminished over the years. Mr. Frischia and Ms. Wright pushed me to write longer sentences with bigger words. They encouraged me to read the "advanced" books for that year. I loved every second of it. To be completely honest, I thought I was special, I thought I was smarter than the rest of my classmates, and I loved it. My competitive spirit definitely drove me to want more and Mr. Frischia and Ms. Wright delivered.

My love for writing and reading flowed into my middle school years. I learned how to write formal essays and I learned how to answer reading comprehension questions for the state mandated standardized tests. It was here that my love for writing began to slowly diminish. I suddenly felt constrained. I couldn't write a short story or a creative writing piece, everything was suddenly essay after essay after essay. I didn't mind essays at first, I felt intelligent writing them. I felt they served a purpose. And so, I continued to enjoy writing. My love had slightly

diminished since the days of constant personal narratives and poems and short stories, but I still felt like a strong writer and most definitely still enjoyed to write.

That all changed when I entered high school. My freshman year of high school I had an English teacher named Ms. Koffler. I distinctly remember my first day of class, my first class of high school. Ms. Koffler fluttered into the room and immediately started on a short rant about how her name was “Ms.” Koffler. Not “Mrs.” or “Miss” but “Ms.” She then went on to explain how this was not an “English” class, the class was entitled “World Literature” and we were to call it as such. I was immediately turned off, I could tell I wasn’t going to like Ms. Koffler but I kept my chin up and smiled at her and nodded my head as she spoke. After her somewhat rude introduction, she asked us to take out our summer writing assignment. The assignment was to write a letter from one character in *Of Mice and Men* to another character. I took my letter out of my backpack and immediately she clucked her tongue. Startled, I looked to see what her problem was. She went on to explain how she was disappointed none of us had handwritten the assignment, how none of us had purposefully spelled words wrong so as to really sound like the characters in the book. I was baffled. This went against everything I had ever been taught as a writer. I had been writing formal essays for so long the idea of simply using a contraction in a Word document made me cringe. I just simply could not fathom the idea of purposefully misspelling words for my first assignment of high school. The thought had not even entered my mind. I enjoyed my writing style, I admit now it is slightly stiff, but it is formal and appropriate for most scholarly pieces. I therefore chose to stick to my writing style throughout this “World Literature” course and I paid the price. My grades suffered because Ms. Koffler disliked my writing style and she soon began to dislike me. She told me I was unoriginal and uncreative.

Ever since that class I have had a distaste for writing. I haven't truly loved to write since I was in elementary school.

As far as the writing process is considered, I often find it easy to sit down and write. For formal essays I will generally draft out an outline to ensure I organize all of my ideas in an appropriate manner. After writing the outline I will write out a thesis and begin to build my essay around that thesis. When I start to write I find it difficult to stop, I don't like to be interrupted or distracted so I often sit quietly in my room with headphones in to cancel out the noise around me. Once I get the words flowing I find it easy to string sentences along. After I complete the essay I go back and read it to ensure it makes sense. After that I leave, clear my mind, do something else, and come back to the essay later on and read it aloud to myself. This allows me to approach the paper with a new frame of mind so I find spots that don't make sense or don't flow properly.

The counterpart to writing, reading, I have always enjoyed. I started with picture books at a young age and I have continued to read ever since. In elementary school I loved Roald Dahl, particularly *The BFG*. Fantasy and realistic fiction have always been my favorite types of genres, I loved to connect to the characters and follow them throughout their journey. I would so much rather sit down and read a great book than watch a movie or a television show. Even when I am busiest to read in my spare time. I enjoy reading a chapter or two from my book of the moment for half an hour before I go to sleep. I love books with a strong character development, a good storyline, or a witty author. Even though I really enjoy fiction books, I often read journal articles or scientific books about the human body, diseases, and biology. I am simply fascinated by these topics and I am always hungry for more information. The only time I ever have to force myself to read is when someone else is forcing me to read. I do not enjoy books that I am told to read

chapter by chapter. I don't enjoy having to be quizzed on each chapter after reading it. I much prefer to read books at my own pace and on my own time.

As for my future as a writer, I hope to be able to be more creative and loose in my writing style. I hope to be able to be more straightforward in the way I write. I hope I can get some helpful critiques from the other students in the class so that I can write more concisely and with better style.

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21W.021 Writing and Experience: MIT: Inside, Live
Fall 2013

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