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Literacy – connection to the world

Everyone has their own story in their development of literacy. Some develop it when they are young and exploring, while some can only actually develop it in the later half of their lives. Some develop it as an interest, while many other people write because they want to tell other people their experiences, and a few write to express themselves. My father used to say that I was one of the kind of person who has the greatest energy inside that it seemed like I was going to explode anytime. In my childhood, I had a lot of ways to express myself, and to release the energy within myself. One of them, of course, is writing. I love writing, because I love the world I am living in.

I still remember when I was young I had a great imagination. I watched a lot of movies, from Chinese series, to Disney cartoons and short movies. Every time after watching those, I always imagined myself to be the main character of the stories I made up, almost, every night. Sometimes, I assumed the stories that I made up and lived in my own world at nighttime. I always tried to create different plots and different colors for my stories, some were blue, others were pink. For example, these may sound strange, but a lot of my stories were quite tragic with dilemmas and dramas, some few others had happier scenes and happy endings. Eventually I started to desire a need to write them down to save it, as a part of my childhood. I started with writing simple stories using the grammar and the vocabulary I had learned at school to describe the plot as fully as I could. The first writings were quite short, mostly to talk about my days at school. Writing at that time for me was to learn how to communicate with the world in a written way.

Getting older, I started the habits of observing things around me. I started to feel the emotions that nature brought to me subtly - such as to see the subtly different emotions the two sunsets had - and to be able to recognize the inner person of everyone – not the person that they chose to perform or act in front of their society. Those did not come as naturally as I thought, though at some points they did. Those required practices. Sometimes, I had to try really hard times over times to truly understand a person, thought other times I just feel sympathetic right away. I guess it was because I had practiced so much before that it became one of my ability. Just like reading a book, when you assess or observe something, you have to raise your own questions and keep them in your mind. Unlike reading a book, you do not have to answer your own questions by finding clues within the reading, you can always talk to people, and you can empathize with them. That was what I did. I started talking to people more, not only just to chat, but also to find their inner persons. I have to say that I hate obtaining things with only superficial knowledge, because that seems so shallow and not thoughtful to me. Gradually, those from what I have gained from talking to people and observing become the most precious materials for my writing. I found out that whatever books I might read, whatever knowledge I might know later in my life, there would be nothing as special, unique, and worthwhile as what I found out myself. I guess it is the way that our society is: direct interaction helps connect people, and it is also the shortest way from hearts to hearts. Anything from our hearts is always the most sincere thing, I believe. And our hearts are where the love from people to people begins.

When I was in middle school, I started reading more books, mostly fictions. I read Guillaume Musso, Marc Levy, etc. I loved fiction, because of its creativity expressed within the stories, and its different solutions for everything. I loved fiction, because I wrote fictions for a quite long time. Fiction to me was a way to express my deep emotions. It was the kind of emotion that I did not dare to tell anyone, that I could only say to myself, or that no one would understand. As I got older, my vocabulary improved through what I learned in school and what I read in books. Therefore, I was able to use a lot of words to describe more profound feelings and expressions. I tended to use short sentence structure with only adjectives or verbs, because those were so concise and direct that no one could resist. I loved using words that touched my readers’ hearts without trying too hard. Fiction, especially romantic, were always my biggest inspiration to develop my literacy further, and because I trained myself to look for deeper meanings in everything when I was younger, any inspiring pieces of music, articles, stories could always make me start writing. Even a sound that reminded me of old memories could make me put down my words. I still remember the time when I was sitting in my room and suddenly heard Santa Claus’s bell ringing: it was Christmas time. Just that little moment brought me back to my childhood years ago, and right away I wrote a short blog about my memories, emotions, feelings and thoughts about Christmas time nowadays. I put down words as naturally as I was talking to my friend, words just flowed down the paper just like my emotions flowed in my mind. My literacy developed naturally along with my maturity. Writing, to me, is more like talking to a secret friend who will be willing to listen to my stories all the time, while reading is listening to and understanding a friend. I do not know since when has literacy become a close friend of mine, but it has always been a way for me to connect with my secret world. Although my writing is not professional, it is my habit. And because I write with my emotions flowing, writing gives my readers the way to my heart.

I used to write a lot of fictions, because I could freely be imaginative and creative. However, I eventually changed to writing memoirs and blogs. As I get older, I observe the world around me more, and not everything that I can share with someone else, which means I decide to keep my thoughts for myself only. There are a lot of times you will see me being suddenly silent, and looking no where then that will mostly when I perceive something special that is meaningful to me. Most of the time, it is life philosophy. I am, at the same time, a forgetful person, so I choose to write. Everything in my daily life has an impact on me, though some may be minute, some may be more significant. One of the changes in my life that has the most significant impact on my writing style was that I went to the United States. Languages overall have another big influence on my literacy. I spent my whole life living in Vietnam, I was used to the culture, the everyday life, and the people, and now I am in another country with a whole new world. I started writing in English more and more often, enough that now it is my habit to write in English. Vietnamese and English are different in the way to convey emotions and meanings: that English is more concise and straightforward, while Vietnamese has a more deeper meaning and contains more profound emotions. For example, there is only one way to say you love someone. That is “I love you”, no matter what kind of love it is. However, in Vietnamese culture, we have at least five different words for different kinds of love: the love between family members, the love between two lovers, the love between close friends, the love between you and someone you feel empathetic with, and the love between acquaintances. In particular circumstances, if you use the word that you are supposed to use with your family members to your friends, the whole meaning changes. That may mean that you love your friends as members of your family. Therefore, it depends on my purpose of writing that I decide to choose Vietnamese or English. The difference in languages is also the difference in cultures, and different cultures lead to a different style of writing. Therefore, at times I have the feeling that Vietnamese songs are more earnest while English songs are more energetic. The more I know about the cultures, the better I write, and once again writing connects me with the world as it gives me better understanding.

I love writing because I love people around me, the nature activities that happen everyday, and generally the world I am living in. My literacy grows together with my love for the world around me without any forces. Literacy grows to connect myself with everyone. And my literacy grows as a kind of ruler to measure my maturity through out time, as a diary to keep track the development of the level of my profound thoughts, and as well as a friend who walks next to me my whole life. Not only in the past, or right now, but I know that in the future, writing will always be a part of my life that no one can ever take away. It is like you can never abandon your memory, because it is already in your blood, that it is everywhere in your body and nurtures your existence.