

Final Individual Chapbook

BCULST 587

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Writing is one of the most important forms of expression in a person's life.

Writing needs "freedom" and "meaning", and what can support us to continue writing is "the meaning of free writing". For me, this is a very meaningful essay, and my thoughts on writing, especially freelance writing, have changed a lot compared to last year, after I experienced more about my own cultural background after returning to China. Although one year is not a long time, a lot has changed, and I have experienced a lot in this year. So, with this course Incomplete, my mindset has changed when I write assignments through this time.

When I look back at my writing after a year, I realize that a lot of things and my thoughts were too idealistic. But it's not about denying my past self, it's about looking back and understanding how I've changed and learning to improve myself. That's one of the things I think writing is all about. To be able to write in the moment about what I think and what I want to express, because there are so many things we experience every day, so if we don't record them through writing, then many of them will be forgotten afterwards. As time goes by, in a year, five years, ten years or even more time after looking back at what I have written, I can reflect, moreover, I can know how my thoughts have changed, and actually understand the reasons for the changes by creating again. Sometimes it may be that I have changed, but changes in the environment will make the personal changes more obvious. In the process of my own constant change and the constant change of my environment, I also learn and feel how to awaken my inner

strength and create a new self through writing through this class.

At the beginning of the quarter, especially when I was completing In-class writing, I would always freeze up and didn't know how to write. At that time, writing was painful for me, and I would always have too many worries no matter what form it was in, plus English was not my native language, so sometimes it was even more difficult for me. But then I thought that since I like writing in a journal, why not treat the writing in class as a journal as well, so that my nervousness and many worries would be dispelled. In my daily life, I often hear calls for "freedom", such as financial freedom, spiritual freedom, and freedom of speech, but free writing is rarely found in ordinary writing. This was the first time I felt the concept of free writing and its wonderfulness in this class, and what I need is to respond to this freedom with actions, otherwise it is meaningless freedom.

I would like to start by explaining my understanding of the concepts of "freedom" and "writing", which I think are the main ideas of creative writing. Freedom can be the freedom to do whatever you want, to be unrestrained, but I believe that freedom under certain rules, freedom that does not affect others, is to be praised. The freedom I aspire to is not laziness and inaction, but a broader life and a broader world through diligence and hard work, which is precious and valuable. I believe in the "Ten thousand hours theory", which is a theory pointed out by Gladwell in his book "The Alien". 10,000 hours of refinement is what it takes for anyone to go from ordinary to world-class master. I don't believe in pie in the sky and achievements that will come if you sit down and wait. Instead, I want to be a free and self-disciplined person who lives by the determination to achieve. The value of freedom requires action to prove it and practice it.

The same goes for writing. Writing is, first of all, to put pen to paper, and

secondly, to record our thoughts through the process of writing. In modern society, writing is not just limited to literary works, or stuck to a specific genre. No matter how highly impressive a literary work is to us, it cannot be separated from the process of writing. Nowadays, society is becoming more and more tolerant, and because of the popularity of social media networks, everyone has the right to say what they want to say, and to be heard by others. We can all write our own chapters in life if we are willing to put pen to paper. Some writing requires skills and methods that allow people to understand the author's central idea at a glance, and writing that is full of emotion and not just empty words usually comes from the accumulation of personal experiences, books read, courses taken, conversations with others, etc. With free writing, there may not be too many rules and restrictions, and I can write wherever I think of, recording inspiration and my thoughts at any time. Without recording, nothing happens, and writing is the same. Only when we record with our heart, when we look back, we will be surprised to find that "my life is full of meaning because of the record". Every stage of life needs to be managed with heart and soul to bring out the value of meaning. Then, the meaning of our writing will exist.

I think the biggest advantage of free-writing is that it allows me to write without any pressure, so free-writing can also help me gradually build up the habit of writing and gradually strengthen my instinct of writing. In this way, when I go to write other genres, or articles, I have more confidence and more ideas and thoughts. In this class, I wrote on different topics to help me develop the habit of writing. I think the constant process of writing in this class helped me to hook the relationship between life and writing, to record the specific things I observed in the context of different topics, to talk to the scenes, and

to trigger thinking. Writing in community-based learning has helped me understand the power of creative writing. When writing with our group, we always consider how to optimize our expressions that can resonate strongly with the readers and make the writing produce a two-way dialogue.

I think it is also very interesting to write in such a way that each of us has to create a character and let the character appear to interact within the larger framework of a story to trigger a new one. When people detach themselves from real life and feel a fictional character in a fictional world with their heart, they may generate more thoughts and may also be more willing to express some ideas through characters and virtual worlds at such times. Such writing is a product of the human spirit, a creation intended by the creator, always with some purpose and meaning, with some value, and this value is the functional form of fiction. The author is dissatisfied with the real society, so they put their ideals in the characters and social environment depicted in the novel. Of course, there are also authors who use novels to criticize and satirize society. A novel does not require the stage and props needed for a play; a book is sufficient. Novels can portray characters, describe the environment, and reflect the social reality in which people live, etc. Because of this, novels have more readers than poetry, drama, and essays, i.e., because they have a great advantage in terms of the volume of content they carry and the affinity they have for the breadth of society they reflect. Unlike poetry and prose, fiction focuses on narrative, so it is able to express life with concern for the survival of all social classes, especially the disadvantaged, criticize the dark forces of society, and promote the value of humanism and justice. It also has a discursive function that allows the reader to reflect, making the work transcend the level of reality and can serve as a guide for critical

thinking.

In this class, I also wrote some words in the genre of poetry. Poetry is also extremely beautiful. Not only is it easier to pass on, but the words of poetry also always feel particularly powerful and can make people fall into endless thoughts in short sentences. And the white space and the point of poetry always leave people with infinite space for reverie and reflection. Different people reading the same poem may have different feelings and perceptions. I think that poetry largely reflects the beauty of a language and words. Many ancient Chinese poems, when translated into English, make me feel that something is always missing, and I have the same experience when I read English poems and then look for the Chinese translation. Poetry is not good to translate because it contains much more behind it than just the words we see, but the rhythm of the culture.

This course also has many tasks for reviewing our own writing. For example, Teatime or the minimum of four pieces of writing in the final Chapbook that needed to be revised. I think the important thing is not to recreate something completely new, but to build on the ideas of the original writing to send out new insights and reflections. I think the meaning of retrospection is to use the past experiences described in the text as a treasure to be mined, and to constantly process the past experiences with new perceptions, thus valorizing the past experiences. And when looking back at my own writing last year, I was able to discover the pattern of my own growth and progress, leaving a mark on my own life trajectory. Because of the process of writing, I have been able to deeply appreciate the impact of environmental changes on myself and my own changes. At the same time, all these writings have also formed my own library of

materials and experiences, providing material for my own writing in the future. In the process of retrospection, it is more important to know why I thought and why I did what I did than what I did. Looking back is also a link between the past and the future, a process that helps me transcend the limitations of my own thinking at the time, expand my own horizons, and then complete the dialogue with myself.

The exposure to different forms of writing in this class has made me think and understand more about writing, and that different genres have different beauty. For me, writing now means more than just recording my life, it allows me to focus on more issues and details, and it also allows me to tell others what I think in my mind. Not speaking out is equal to not happening. Without writing and sharing, many voices would be covered up, and for many things, speaking out for myself and speaking out for others is what opens up more possibilities. I hope to keep the habit of writing in the future, because writing is the carrier to realize our connection with the world, with the community, and with strangers, the blooming of our minds and souls, and the core competitiveness of everyone in this era, and a weapon that can be picked up at any time at hand.

While most opinions are personal, I would also like to talk about the significance of the generation for the rise of creative writing, because I am not only an individual, I am also part of the society, part of the times. Creative writing has experienced nearly a century of development in the United States and some other countries, but the real rise of creative writing as a discipline is only in the last few decades. With the advancement of modern audiovisual technology, the development of new media technology and network information technology, creative writing has been given a more contemporary connotation because of its deep involvement in the production of cultural products. The

purpose of telling a good Chinese story is not simply to introduce Chinese customs and people, but to present a real, comprehensive and three-dimensional picture of China's ethnic groups and communities through fiction and non-fiction, through the media of film and literature, and through folk interactions and cultural exchanges, which is closely related to image communication and the enhancement of cultural confidence. Many Western mainstream media reports about China are biased, and many of the previous impressions of China have left many people without a good perspective of China and its various groups. Some of the Chinese writings that have won international literary prizes have also reflected otherness in Chinese literary, and another topic that I studied in a course I took in MACS was related to othering. Creative writing can play an active role in the process of telling Chinese stories. An important function of creative writing is to tell stories that are interesting and engaging, and that transcend national and cultural boundaries to reach the hearts of people. I also hope that in the future, with the increasing popularity of creative writing and the participation of more cultural scholars, the mutual understanding and trust between China and other countries will be enhanced through writing, and I hope I can be a part of it. (2213 words)

Revised writings

Creative Experiment 1

What's your class background?

When I was 12 years old, my father had a master's degree, but I forgot what major. My mother has a bachelor's degree in medical school. My dad is an engineer, and my mom is a Cardiologist. My mom told me that she was planning to get a master's degree, but she found out she was pregnant. Preparing for tests and other things is also hard, so she decides to keep working instead of returning to school. I think doctors and other careers related to public service have good salaries in the United States. However, such careers in China have good social welfare. Still, the income is not high compared to other jobs in society. I grew up without worrying about food and other basic needs of my life, and my parents also took me to travel to many places. When I was 12 years old, I believed that I would do whatever things that I loved as my career and didn't really care about money. However, our family's expenses skyrocketed when I came to the U.S. in 2016. International students are not allowed to work outside of campus, and there is a maximum of 15 hours per week for on-campus jobs. Therefore, my family has to help me pay my tuition, rent, food, the electric bill, water, and every living expense. The currency

exchange rate is around 7:1 for the Chinese Yuan and the U.S. dollar, and international students' tuition is around 4 times more than students living in Washington state.

Therefore, my mom worked very hard to make money to support me to finish my study in the U.S. My study abroad experience has changed my value. Now, I want to find a job that can pay me well, not just the thing I love. My mom once told me that if I stayed in China, they could save lots of money for themselves and me and would be good enough to support me to do things that I loved even though I didn't make much money. But, she also told me that the money spent on studying abroad is worth it because I will have a broader perspective, a more dialectical mindset, and a lot of experience and things I will learn that money can't buy. (Words:384)

What about your class as an adult?

I have a bachelor's degree in media and Communication Studies and am currently in the master's Cultural Studies program. I didn't do very well in school as a child because the test-based education in China put a lot of pressure on me, and I wasn't an excellent test taker. I was severely biased from middle school onwards, always getting into the top 30 in my entire grade in arts but always at the bottom in science. Many Chinese people have the ingrained idea that if you get into a good university, you will be able to find a good job, which will lead to a good life. I don't think education means everything. A degree is just a brick in the door to getting a job. When you start working, it's all about skills, knowledge, power, and connections, but education doesn't seem so important. Studying abroad has allowed me to unleash my creativity, and I have enjoyed my studies, allowing me to get good grades. The experience of studying abroad has also changed my

perspective on learning. I used to think I was looking for a degree and a good job. But now I think the degree is just a result, a proof, but what is really important is the process and content of learning. My time may be much better, but before that, in China, many people were in careers that did not have much to do with their profession. Now I am also starting to look for a job in China. With my degree, if I can get into a good company, my monthly salary will be about 10k-15k RMB. Still, my professionalism and skills determine whether I can get a higher salary. (Words:298)

Comments and more thoughts from myself: I looked back on my writing a year later, not two weeks later, and realized things had changed a lot, and I am no longer holding the same values even though only a year had passed. I am still trying to get a job that I am passionate about, but my feeling is so different now. After experiencing the hardness and struggles of working, I understand more about labor and its issues. I read a book named *To Kill a Mockingbird* by Harper Lee a month ago. There is one sentence in there that I will never forget, "You never really understand a person until you consider things from his point of view... Until you climb inside of his skin and walk around in it." (Harper, *To Kill a Mockingbird*) In the Chinese version, there is another sentence after, but when you really walk in his way, you even feel sad to pass by. I had no way to appreciate life and the real hard work behind labor issues when I hadn't experienced it, no matter how many books I read about it. But now I did, and it's just a start.

This year I attended one of the toughest fall recruiting sessions ever in China, and the largest recruiting quarter in China. The reason for the difficulty was attributed to the impact of the epidemic, where many companies would not open as many positions as in previous years. Then the number of fresh graduates kept increasing, including many

international students returning from overseas because of the epidemic and many other reasons, so more people were competing for fewer positions. I realized in this moment that not a good school will lead to a good job. I am now even facing a situation where I can't find a job. I can't do what I'm good at or love, and I need to learn a lot of things from scratch. During my internship, the organization I was working for wanted to rehire me, but the salary they offered was really low, and it's not an exaggeration to say that the salary I could get each month was not as high as the allowance my mother gave me. That's when I realized that it's not easy to do a job that I love and can support myself. Even though I believed I was a good learner, the reality was formality and the epidemic-influenced format of online interviews put me ahead of the pack of better alternatives. Many things are idealized in school, but when one really experiences the difficulties and heartaches to know the compromise and helplessness of many people to reality.

In-Class Writing 2

1)What surprised you the most about the Introduction to Community-Based Learning and Research and Community Partners session? What were your takeaways?

I am surprised by the wide range of topics/problems community-based learning could cover. I am glad we have such chances to work with community partners to contribute to communities. Our understanding is not just about theories and methods; community-based learning provides us opportunities to practice. Focusing and seeing problems in the community would also allow students to make efforts as part of society. I am also happy to see as an International student that I would have the skills to help with

some issues in the community.

Rewriting from 2022

When I came back to China to prepare a project more related to my background, I realized more of the importance and relevance of Community-Based Learning. MACS always emphasizes the integration of theory and practice, not only to learn the theoretical knowledge without knowing how to apply it, but also to apply it in what direction and how it can be useful in reality. I think Community-Based Learning can help us, as a member of the community, to provide solutions or help to some current problems through academic means. I think this kind of thinking is more valuable. When you experience a problem yourself, you will understand the twists and turns of it, and you will be able to see the essence of the problem and the real feasible solution, and you will have more enthusiasm to study a problem than an observer.

2) Thinking about some of the assigned work asking you to think about your own class background, what (if anything) surprised you?

Something that surprised me is there are actually some parts of the assigned reading that showed that there are similarities in some characteristics of class in both China and America. When reading about the standard middle-class time, I found many things in common that could relate to Chinese society. I am also curious about the different definitions of different classes in countries. I still think the Chinese middle class may be other than the American middle class.

This question in 2021 I really do not have any real sense to answer, I think now I have only slightly experienced it, but in a few years, I believe I will be able to answer this

question better. I believe I will be able to answer this question better in a few years. As my experience increases, my knowledge base and my view on the question will definitely become more mature. I picked another class-related piece of writing because the first piece of writing, whether it was What's your class background? or What about your class as an adult? are two questions that I am not sure I can answer right now. First, I said I probably belong to the middle class because of the conditions my mom and dad created for me, they are, so as their daughter, I am too. The second question I can't even answer right now is that although I'm an adult, I don't have my own job or source of income yet, so if I were to classify myself by income, I would be in the proletariat.

Regarding my own question, "I am also curious about the different definitions of different classes in countries," the definitions of the middle class in the US and China are indeed different, and the middle class in both countries is actually much more different than common.

The so-called middle class in American history refers to the majority of small farmers, small businesses, and freelancers. The formation of the American middle class came about during the historic changes in the production of the liberal economy in the United States in the 19th century. The height of economic and social development in the United States led to a change in the structure of social classes, a great social status. The U.S. definition of the middle class is a little clearer, that a family income between two-thirds and twice the local median family income is the middle class. The median household income is the number in the middle of the scale, in order of high and low household income. Households with incomes more than twice the local median household income are the upper middle class and the wealthy class.

How do people distinguish the upper middle class from the rich class? Before retirement, for example, if you stop working immediately and all your assets and income cannot sustain your life now, you are upper middle class. If one can still afford to spend exactly the same amount as now without working, then one is rich. This definition of the middle class in the United States is olive-shaped, and the middle part is the majority of people against the seat, and most of the Chinese in the United States also belong to the middle and upper middle class.

"Chinese middle class" does not mean the class in the old Marxist ownership relationship, but a group or a social class with similar self-evaluation, life style, value orientation and psychological characteristics. Therefore, a more appropriate description of "middle class" in China should be the middle class.

Income level is an important indicator to classify the middle class, and domestic scholars especially tend to adopt the income indicator to classify the middle class, however, so far, there is no recognized numerical standard to determine how much income or more is considered as the middle class, but from the technical operation of classification, there is a need to have a classification standard. The only criterion of economic income is not the middle class, divided in addition, there are factors of occupation, literacy, reputation and social status. The middle class is not excellent, nor is it the bottom of the social scale, but the middle state of society. There are some articles about how a family with an annual income of 500,000 RMB or more can be defined as middle class, but there are many other articles that say this is only a minimum threshold, and other requirements include having to have a house without a mortgage and a car at home with enough class. Some even say that a house in China's second or third tier does

not count, but must be a house in a first-tier city.

Regardless of how the Chinese middle class is defined, the middle class in the minds of Chinese people is a minority, not a majority, this definition basically excludes the vast peasant class and the urban blue-collar class, like a pyramid, the bottom of these people are workers, farmers, urban blue-collar, including restaurants, stores, these service workers, and then up is the office of white-collar, that income is low can not be Is considered to be the middle class. Still need to struggle on a few years, white collar promotion, a pay rise, to be considered middle class. If you mix well, mixed to the management it, income further increase, can be considered on the middle class.

April 1, 2021, In Class Writing

What are the words we need for this time?

I don't know anything about this class yet, but I know there will be lots of writing. I kind of like to write in Chinese, and also, I write diary in Chinese. I am not too confident writing in English, but I think as long as I can pass my audiences what I am thinking and they understand what I want to say, I am fine. I am nervous about this class but also excited about it. I am not sure if I understand this question, but I think this time means during the pandemic? So, the pandemic sucks, and I hate it. It totally changed my life, and mainly in a frustrating way. One thing good may be online classes have kind a flexible schedule. The pandemic has made many issues in society come up. I believe that the pandemic created lots of problems. Still, many issues existed, but the pandemic made it worse. The words we need for this time would be support, resistance, stay strong, stay healthy, and masks. I don't know what I am writing because I haven't done much free

writing before, but that's it. Hope to get better in the future.

Rewriting from 2022:

Speech right. Self-Protection. The darkest hour. Hang in there. Spring has come and flowers are in bloom. It's all going to be okay.

These are the words as well as the phrases that I think we need now. Here, "we" have also changed from the classmates who were in class before, to me and my family and the masses of China. This is the third year of the epidemic, and China's ever-strict epidemic prevention policies seem out of place in the world's entire approach to the epidemic. I returned to China in July 2021, and by the end of the year the U.S. had begun to gradually release the control and everyone's lives were gradually returning to normal. But China is different, because of its large population base and high population density, it has opted for a very strict epidemic prevention and control in consideration of the safety of the elderly and children. Such prevention and control have its advantages and disadvantages, but three years have cost many businesses as well as ordinary people their jobs and forced many people to struggle to survive. Every speck of dust of the times falls on an individual as a huge mountain. We are all grains of dust wrapped up in the times.

Many times, it is not the epidemic prevention and control in China itself that causes the problem, but the local government and the community that adds layers and layers of codes, resulting in unreasonable policies and many unreasonable and impersonal things that happen, and there are too many cases of death caused by delayed treatment due to the epidemic prevention and control during the three years. So the first word is speech right, and only when people can speak out about their concerns and the difficulties they are actually experiencing can policies be improved. Recently many people have been trying

to speak out and defend their rights through the law. Now that China has taken the step of liberalization, and is fully liberalized, people's voices are having some effect, and more studies are backing up the fact that Omicron is more contagious, but the death rate is already very low. In this case, after full liberalization, each person is the first person in charge of his or her own health and has to learn to protect himself or herself and strengthen the resistance. There will also be a time of darkness after full openness when many people will become infected, and the health care system may be under a lot of stress. During this time, people need to continue to hang in there, it's been three years, get through the last of it and you'll be fine. Spring is coming soon, and the darkest time is just this winter. In the new year, when spring comes, I hope that people's lives will gradually return to normal, and that everything will be fine.

May 6, 2021, In Class Writing

1) No one knows me like my diary notebooks. I talk to myself while I am writing in the notebook. I always record my dream in a notebook. When I am happy, I write in there; when I am sad, I will cry and find a way out while I am writing in there. I had a tough time in my first year of high school. I was very depressed and not having hope in my heart. I write daily, and I always keep my notebooks with me. They are with me all the time, no matter how I feel. All my secrets and the real me are in the notebooks. No one knows me like them.

Rewriting from 2022

I am glad that I have kept this habit until now. Now my notebook is not only for recording the major and minor events in my daily life, but also for organizing my

thoughts while writing down the process when I have no thoughts. I also use my notebook to sort through my thoughts when I don't know how to express them to others. If I suddenly have an opinion about something, then I will also quickly pick up my phone, open my memo, and start writing down key words and then add to it later. I think that's the fun, and the benefit, of writing. I'm always quick to catch my inspiration and think about what's going on around me, rather than being stagnant or going with the flow. I've written love poems to my favorite people, and even created my own novels and a little world in my journal. Maybe for me, now that I can't express a lot of my opinions in my work environment and probably don't have a lot of people around me to share my little world with, free writing is a kind of salvation for me, a kind of self-communication and a piece of inner sanctuary. That's why I wanted to include this writing in the final Chapbook.