

Student Student

Writing 1 ACE

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Pleasure in Reading

Reading. I have never been a fan of picking up a book and looking at words that came together to craft a dream world that was intended for me to escape reality. I was not fond of the occasional book, popular magazine, boring encyclopedia and anything noticeably related to reading. Book reports and critical essays were also not on my friends list. Reading was never a pleasure for me until I read an autobiography in my eleventh year of high school. I was terribly interested in reading at the moment of my life because I was scanning through words that created a story that held relevance to my life. I could write a good essay about this subject because this book opened my eyes to a bigger picture than to my simple life before. After this, I would not be interested in reading or writing until that same topic that made like reading appeared in college.

Reading and writing can be a blissful when you read about something you have a passion for or is relevant to your life and well being.

My Mom from a young age forced me to pick up books and read them. I was forced by my Mother to march to the local library and choose a book that fitted my preference. I never cared to read so what in a library would capture my taste except for the video. Every minute I read a dreadful book, I think, "When will it end?" But ending a book only brought the worse to come. I had to write a two page summary of what I

read and how it made me feel. Now that I think about it, I wish I had known about double spacing. She did not do this often, but it was enough to let me know I had no love for either reading or writing.

Reading dramatically got harder from my innocent elementary school years to my hostile, violent, and “Am I Cool?” high school years. Reading in elementary school was annoying because we always had to read aloud and I really hated to do this because I often got shy and stuttered aloud. Then we had to write one page essays, if only it stayed that way. The transition from “scribble scrabble” to introduction, body and conclusion only made writing more of a nuisance. Writing to some may be a hobby, but for me, it was chore, more so slavery. And to make things worse, books with pictures turned into novels with pages full of intimidating words. Poems were never my specialty in neither middle school nor high school because they never meant what you wanted them to mean. I don’t understand why teachers ask what these poems meant to me because the meaning of poems always meant something else. I could never explain myself well and you could tell when I wrote on paper.

I always had problems writing good essays in high school. I went to ghetto Crenshaw High School where they did not really prepare us for college level writing. I eventually learned how to right a good paper in the summer of 2005 at a writing program at the University of Southern California. But before this program to me from amateur to professional in the writing department, I was writing identical to an eighth grader. My writing was horrendous because it was full of repetitions, no topic sentence at the beginning of any paragraph, no conclusion that left a reader thinking, and worst of all, I never had a fabulous focus sentence, the infamous Thesis. Writing book reports and essays with those writing impairments made it hard to get my point across which made writing feel like the torture room for me and reader. Reading and writing did become enjoyable once in my high school years, but that did not last for long. I read the Autobiography of Malcolm X by Alex Haley in the eleventh grade. Each page gave me more insight to one of the many peoples lives that made black males like myself earn the little bit of freedom that we take for

granted. His story held relevance to my life because he is a black man that has been oppressed by the white man in America. Plus it had everything to pimps, hustlers, gambling, women, but it also had a moral, and it does not matter what race you are, the book can change your life. He had been racially categorized and not given a chance to be who he wanted to be because of his skin color. I can relate to a certain extent, and that is what made me want to continue reading this book, even though we had to read it for class like all the other books I grew bored and tired of. Learning truth about America and what it did to its residence was enough to keep my eyes wide open. Things changed in senior year because I had to read four books in my senior which had no relevance to me which followed with essays. I knew I was not going to read any of these books. The only book I tried to read was Lord of the Flies. I read the first chapter and just decided to make my life easier with cliff notes. I saw the movie and it was pretty good, but the book just did keep my focus. This same process also guided me in rest of my following reading expeditions. I never actually read a book, but I wrote some fine essays, but that was usually because my teachers outlined for us what to write. This made my classmates and my job easier. Even though this may have worked in high school, it would not be the best strategy in my upcoming inevitable educational life in college. College is a reading dormitory where you are forced to be best friends with author, books, paper and pen. You are always around books in your college years like a husband is always around pain in marriage. I repeatedly heard that all you do is read, write and study in college. My only response to these accusations was, "College ain't for me." Once I submitted applications to college I knew my life had come to an end. I knew was going to my fiery grave once I knew I was going to University of California, Santa Barbara. I was not just going to college, I was going to a University, a research University at that.

I came to UCSB in the summer of 2005, at the end of my writing program at University of Southern California, to attend Freshman Summer Start Program (FSSP). I had gone from "Punks of America" school to "Future of America" school.

The first thing on my mind was the big textbooks I would have to buy after Freshman Welcome Weekend. I had Black Studies 50 and Concepts to Biology (ECMB 30). Black Studies required a whopping four books and Biology required a reader and a huge textbook. I went to the bookstore confused where to go to find my textbooks. I was a freshman, so of course I would be lost, but I was lost and scared. The only running through this young freshman's mind is "College ain't for me". I finally found the text book room and got all six books I need. I could not believe I have to read all these books in a six week period; that was usually what we got for one book in high school. Reading biology on a daily basis was never enjoyable. Getting prepared to read my biology textbook made me want to ride my bike off a cliff. Black Studies on the other hand was not as painful. I expected to read material that held relevance to my life, and my expectations were met. I read everything but the Burden by Greg Tate, Black Manhood on the Silent Screen by Gerald R. Butters Jr., and Tom, Coons, Mulattoes, Mammies, and Bucks by Donald Bogle. These books were different to a certain extent but their themes were identical. They all described how America was racially divided by creating inferior images of minorities through the media (magazines, television shows, and cinema). I found this incredibly interesting to me and this class helped me realize I wanted to stay in college because there is so much I am uneducated about in this world. These books spoke to me, not because they were about black people, just because it was something you could learn in high school. History books in high school usually left this part out. We also read The Creation of the Media by Paul Starr which had no relevance to me or the class, so this is not part of the many books I found enjoyable in this class. This class reminded me of the first book I read that made me interested in reading, the Autobiography of Malcolm X. The following fall quarter, I took Chicano Studies 1A, Dance 45, and Chemistry 1A. I did not find Dance 45 reading interesting because it held no relevance to me. I did find Chicano Studies reading interesting. I believe I found it interesting because Chicanos, Latinos, Hispanics, and Mexicans were oppressed just like the black man and that is what made reading six books about this subject not so fatiguing.

From a life time of thinking reading was painful; I have finally come to my senses, reading is not as bad as I have made it out to be. I feel like a reformed racist, because now I do not hate what I once despised. Reading is a part of my daily life in college, so I take reading courses with material I want to learn about. Unlike high school, I can choose what I want to learn. With my sudden change of mind, I do outside reading on things I find interesting. I read a lot of articles and magazines about cars because that is something at heart I love. So next time you go to the library, book store or book section in the supermarket, unearth a book or magazine you find interesting