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Autoethnography

“Coming to terms” with your writing is a challenging task. J. Harris describes “coming to terms” as a way to incorporate the work of another while being able to translate the author’s ideas into your own. If this concept is done incorrectly, then many could take your work as unoriginal or boring for that matter. Anytime a writer reads the work of others, and gains inspiration to write about a similar topic, they must “come to terms” with whatever they are writing about. The writer must have enough confidence in whatever they are writing to put their thoughts onto paper and firmly believe in what they said. Many struggle to do so, and it is reflected in their writing. This concept is also mentioned by authors Penrose and Geisler in *Reading and Writing Without Authority*. They write about two people, Roger and Janet, in which only one is able to “come to terms” with their writing. Roger is able to write however he would please while being able to incorporate the thoughts of others in his writing. This is reflected by the quality of his work; it simply feels like the Roger confident in what he wrote, since his ideas are clearly visible. Janet unfortunately could not do what Roger did. Although her writing sounds and flows well, it is lacking her own individual ideas. She constantly used the words of others while never using her own.

Throughout my “writing career”, I was never one to genuinely enjoy writing, but I quickly became accustomed to writing research papers and argumentative pieces. I have always written in a concise manner, as I enjoy content that gets straight to the point. This has constantly

been represented by my preference in the sciences rather than the arts. Most science gets straight to the point, while using evidence to back up whatever claim the author would make. Whereas the arts happen to “fluff” everything up, for some form of aesthetic that I do not fully understand. I am not one to enjoy writing this “fluff”, hence my “fluffing” skills are quite low in comparison to the rest. Rosenblatt mentions this in his *Transactional Theory*. He mentions that everyone has their own “share in the language”. In my case, my “share in the language” is a concise one.

A large portion of my writing originated from having to write book reports in the 3rd and 4th grade. For these, we had to read a book, generally given to us by a teacher, then write about it. It sounds very easy, but to a 10-year-old, it felt like the curse of Sisyphus; an eternal uphill battle to write a page of content about a book. In hindsight it wasn’t even that bad. Fast forwarding a few years to the 9th grade, I was faced with the argumentative essay. Again, at the time it felt completely horrendous, knowing that I had to write multiple pages, supporting or fighting against a claim. Most of the writing at that time sounded completely childish in hindsight. “In this paper you will learn about ...” and “In this paper you will see ...” were both used an alarming amount and writing with authority was not even in my mind. It was only through practice and many low marks that I started to learn my various mistakes. Later in high school, I had to write a rhetorical analysis paper, a completely strange concept in writing. Again, it wasn’t the best of times to write since being concise wasn’t a priority for these papers. Throughout high school, these were the hardest types of papers to write, even worse than research papers, which I began to write in the 11th and 12th grades. These papers mostly felt like writing a long and sophisticated opinion backed up by many resources and facts. In comparison to the others, it was hard at first, but getting the ball rolling was the most difficult part. Once the first two paragraphs were written, everything went significantly smoother. Once everything

started to go smoother, even writing felt to come more naturally; coming to terms and writing with authority felt easier.

As I read the texts from the various authors, I have learned the difference in the power of writing authority. Writing authority simply makes the writing sound better overall, as anything with confidence can do. As I continue to learn to come to terms with whatever I write, I can firmly say that my writing will be overall better. Yet as a Computer Science major, most of my writing will likely be research papers or a prompt for an idea.