

Grace Kim

Professor Maureen Farrell Garcia

College Writing

27 September 2022

My Relationship with Reading

Reading with the purpose of enjoyment is a nostalgic and naive time to me. I remember growing up loving to be lost in the fantastical worlds of the Magic Tree House to the catchy world of alliterations of the A to Z mysteries. It would be difficult to even contain my excitement for the scholastic book fair and the after school trips to the public library. Curled up in the corner of the library, I was catching up on the latest adventures of different book series. My most fond memory from elementary school was even winning the team reading competition with my friends, *The Thunder Readers*. These fantasies didn't stop at reading, I loved writing stories and expressing it through drawing as well. Creativity in reading, writing, and drawing unlocked such new bounds to my endless childlike imagination, and my mindset was untouched by the "real world".

Perhaps it was the little cultural remarks that built up over time that I unknowingly began to resent creativity and everything associated with it. "Those are not books kids your age are supposed to read anymore", "This is impractical, you need to focus on your stability and career" – were just a sliver of phrases imbedded in shame and fear that my family members carried. For a few years I fought back and tried to prove them wrong, only to fall back into the same immigrant generational fears that they projected when I was younger. Reading for enjoyment slowly shifted into reading purely out of obligation. Writing creative stories morphed into writing analytical research papers. Fearless, loud, and daily drawings minimized into quiet

doodles on the side of my worksheets. The transition was definitely not abrupt – rather it was a slow cultural erosion of my creativity.

Through it all however, I believe that my love of reading isn't completely dead. Although not full blown novels, I've taken a particular liking to Korean graphic novels over the past few years. Through the mobile app called "Webtoon", I look forward to weekly chapter updates on the range of genres and art styles. Genres range from your typical romantic comedies, high suspense mysteries, and even little memoirs. In a way, reading Korean graphic novels has transformed my perspective on reading by breaking cultural barriers. The bias that people can't make a living out of creative writing and reading was essentially melting in front of my eyes. There was a lot of happiness and healing in this process of loving to read again, but also jealousy of the creators who were able to overcome something I wasn't able to.

Today, I am working on rebuilding and healing my relationship with reading, writing, and drawing. You can even say that this assignment is a step in healing my relationship with creative expression. I believe it is no coincidence that despite a semester of nursing classes, God has provided the perfect timing for me to take this class to find creative restoration. Through the small details, God has been providing opportunities where I can rediscover my innocent love for reading and writing. My relationship with reading is still out of obligation, but even in its obligation, God has given me passion and purpose through it. In addition, I know that God has created me for a different cultural breakthrough in another aspect of my life – just at His timing and work, not mine.