

Allison Skaggs

Naomi Silver

Writing 220

14 December 2015

Dr. Seuss, London, and Me

I write because writing has always challenged me. Pushed my limits and tested my abilities. When I was little, I would never turn anything in without having my mom reading it first. I was insecure and constantly felt inadequate to my peers. It was a long journey for me to become comfortable with my writing and one I could never face without the influence of one of my favorite authors, Theodor Seuss Geisel. I know it is cliché to identify Dr. Seuss as my literally idol, but it is true. One the first books my mother introduced to me was “Oh The Places You’ll Go.” Being the temperamental child I was, I would refuse to go to sleep at night without hearing the sing song cadence of Seuss’ rhymes and looking at the colorful illustrations. They were not only a part of my nightly routine, but a solace to my being.

I have always been an anxious individual. I feared the future and what it would bring. What will I be when I grow up and am I smart enough to get there? These thoughts continue to torment me on a daily basis. Dr. Seuss books always brought me comfort and lifted my spirits when I showed signs of worry. They were my coping mechanism and reassurance that things would always work out in the end. I still find myself flipping through the pages to extinguish my current taxing battles. Although delivered very simply, Dr. Seuss illustrated “some of the very impediments that children would meet in their adult years...Seuss brought coping themes to life with rich, imaginary characters and machines that could handle whatever impediments they

encountered” (Snyder, 2001). Precisely why I was so fond of Dr. Seuss was because his stories told me I could do and be anything I wanted to be.

I spent many years wondering what else was out there through reading and writing. I credit Dr. Seuss to be a great influence for my love of traveling. He wrote about exploring new places and trying new things, which is something I have always hoped to experience in my life. As a kid, such topics of traveling were what I chose to write about. If I ever was given an inch of freedom to explore a new topic it usually revolved around traveling. I learned how to research in order to write of foreign places and cultures. The topic of traveling and the idea that one day I would be able to go to places I read about was my inspiration to continue writing. I was finally able to accomplish my goals of seeing a new part of the world this past summer when I studied abroad in London. My whole life I have been dreaming about the “places I will go” and I was finally able to experience something on my own that I knew would change my life.

Living in London for 3 months changed me. I looked at the world differently and began to appreciate more. The experience opened my eyes to how important writing was in journey abroad. I observed different types of writing all around me and was encouraged to continue practicing writing to document my adventures. At first, I was annoyed that I was being forced to write blogs. I felt like I was forced to tell others what I was experiencing before I could even piece it together myself. As each week passed I realized it did not matter that I was telling others, but the important aspect of the blogging was that I was reminding myself of the wonderful experiences I had, and if someone wanted to look at it, so be it. One of my favorite Dr. Seuss quotes is “*Sometimes you will never know the value of a moment, until it becomes a memory*” (Seuss). It took me a long time to truly understand the meaning of such a simple expression, and further reinforced how important writing is in my life. I decided to revolve my

projects in the Gateway writing course around this topic because that is what had inspired me to write for so long.

I wish I could say that I write because it is my passion and I am gifted in the field. However, I do not believe that to be true. I wish I could tell you that I have always written “for fun” and aspire to be a writer or journalist. I used to write for a grade. A grade on an assignment, an exam, or an essay. I wrote for what I felt I was obligated to do. It was not until the beginning of my college education that I started to view writing in a different light. Yes, I wrote as a child, but that was before my mind was polluted with strict guidelines and deadlines. As, I entered my freshmen writing course, the restraints holding me back began to loosen and I felt free to choose what I wanted to discuss. Now I write because I have the freedom to choose what I want to write.

Upon high school graduation, my mother gave me a gift that I still hold dear to my heart. The copy of “Oh The Place You’ll Go” she read to me as a child signed by every teacher I ever had from Kindergarten to my senior year in high school. The book not only reinforced where I came from, but what I have accomplished along the way. My teachers reminded me how proud of me they were, as a student, a writer, and a person. Those letters provided me with praise, but also justified the reason I write. It sounds ridiculous to amount my drive and dedication to a Dr. Seuss line. I always trusted him when he told me “you have brains in your head. You have feet in your shoes. You can steer yourself any direction you choose” (Seuss, 1990). The words from my teachers, my parents, and Dr. Seuss found in my copy of “Oh The Place You’ll Go” is why I write.

I write because it is a way for me to observe how far I have come. I write to inform and I write to remember. I write to continue to learn and explore more about the world and myself. I

write because I have to, but also because I want to. I write to communicate with others and share my knowledge and experiences. I write because I was told I could “move mountains” and “join the high flyers who soar to high high heights” (Seuss, 1990.) I write because it is a form of therapy that allows me to rid my mind of pressing thoughts and feelings. I write for the little girl that read Dr. Seuss to give her confidence. I write because I love to write, and that is enough reason for me.

References

Seuss. (1990). *Oh, the places you'll go!*. New York: Random House.

Snyder, C R. *Coping with Stress: Effective People and Processes*. illustrated ed. N.p.: Oxford University Press, 2001. N. pag. Web. 11 Nov. 2015.