

Jerry Yan
 Writing 2; MTWR 5pm
 Project #2 Feedback Draft
 1494 words

Metacognitive Reflection (1055 words)

This project is a kind of new challenge for me. I've never read or tried to write autoethnography before, and I'm not even familiar with ethnography. So I have to learn this type of genre from scratch. Rush's book *Rising* gives me a lot of inspiration on how autoethnography works and what to do to make it appealing to the readers. The resources provided in class also help me understand autoethnography. I really like the idea of "thick description" in autoethnography as it's able to not only give a comprehensive depiction of the focus but also provide a compelling argument for the readers to reflect on further. I might not be super confident in writing an autoethnography on my own, but I like this genre in the sense of its detailed narration and appealing argument.

To construct my own "thick description," I viewed a number of photos in my photo library to ensure the accuracy and resolution of my memory. As my project is about land reclamation in my city Shenzhen, and I was born after the land reclamation project had already started in my city, I have to consult my parents on how the city looks like before the land reclamation. I interviewed them on this issue, and they told me a lot of stories that I didn't know before. I think those elements, in particular, help to implement the historical details in my "thick description."

This project is really different from my previous writing experiences in the sense that I have to sit down and give a detailed and exhaustive narration on my personal story. To ensure the situational details and relational details are implemented correctly in my "thick description,"

Commented [MOU1]: Use of artifacts is a key component to autoethnographic research/writing, since it relies on memory, which can be spotty at times. The artifacts can "jog" memory and/or confirm/challenge it in interesting ways. And all of this can be brought into the story that you relate, since you're part of the story, and are narrating it from your point of view.

Commented [MOU2]: Here other points of view—and other voices—can also function to present a fuller and/or more balanced perspective.

I have to carefully recall as much detail as possible from my childhood memory. It has been a challenge for me as it took a lot of time for me to recall those details. Before I started, I was a little bit worried about reaching the word limit. But it turned out that, as I did my utmost to implement details in the narration of my personal story, the word limit was easily exceeded, and I even had to remove some parts to make sure it would be under the minimum. I think that's a part of the charm of the "thick description" in autoethnography.

At this point, I've done the implementation of the "thick description" on my own experience (also my parents') regarding the land reclamation in my city. I've also found a few secondary resources (mainly news articles and academic journals) to illustrate the social and environmental impact of the land reclamation project in my city. If I would continue working on this project, I think the next step might be including more voices (like from my friends or other people in the society such as environmental scientists or workers of the land reclamation project) to make the scope more diverse. I might need to read more news articles or existing inquiry projects to include those voices.

I received several pieces of feedback from my classmates, and they really help with the clarity of my article. There are some abbreviations and technical words that are common in the language environment that I've grown up with, but putting them in this article can cause confusion to the more general readers as they may not know what does the "CBD" (central business district) mean. So I revised the language to make it more clear and understandable to the general readers.

There are some challenges that I've encountered in this project. Besides the ones I've mentioned above on the unfamiliarity of autoethnography and implementing the details of my memory, another major challenge is to properly use the secondary resources to illustrate the

Commented [MOU3]: Too much (even being over the max word count) can be a good thing in this kind of research/writing, especially at the feedback draft stage. Sometimes it's easier to take things out than to add things in, once the draft has been written and seems to be complete.

Commented [MOU4]: A good idea here. And you could also bring in some of the artifacts (photographs) mentioned above.

Commented [MOU5]: Check the two paragraphs near the end for some comments about emphasis through ordering of primary/secondary research.

social and environmental impact of the land reclamation project. Although I have expressed a lot of my subjective expression on those impact throughout my narration, **more scientific and rigorous arguments are needed** to make sure those impacts are properly addressed. Luckily, there are several completed pieces of research on the land reclamation project in my city. So I cited several academic journals to illustrate how land reclamation has affected the coastal environment. Also, I used news articles to elaborate on the social impact of land reclamation (to solve the problem of land shortage, etc.)

Commented [MOU6]: I think you're balancing the use of primary and secondary research well here. The impacts can be addressed via the voices of those who typically aren't heard/listened to.

I'm feeling confident about my "thick description," and in particular, the narration on my own experience in this project. It's not only due to the enormous amount of time I've spent recalling the details from my childhood memory, but also the positive feedback I've received from my peers. I would also take that as the strength of my draft. On the other hand, I might need further work on **strengthening my focus and polishing the structure** of my article. Currently, the focus might not be super clear after a quick skim of the article. Also, the structure is kind of loosely organized, and I might need to put more work on the connections between paragraphs.

Commented [MOU7]: I've made a few comments about coherences (through the use of repetition of key terms) and about paragraphing (in just a few spots). Overall focus and structure looks solid. Polish is the right word. It's already good. Editing can make it even better.

For the global concerns, besides the issues of focus and organization that I've just mentioned, I'm also a little bit worried about **the title**. I've only mentioned the title "disappearing coastlines" in the last paragraph, and that might bring some confusion to the readers when they read the previous parts. I might need to implement more clues throughout the article to make it match closer to the title. For the local concerns, as the time for this project is kind of tight, there might still be some clarity issues or grammar mistakes in the article. I'll take my time to eliminate those in the next draft, if possible.

Commented [MOU8]: I think it appears elsewhere (and the idea of disappearance is implied throughout).

To sum up, this is my first time trying to compose an autoethnography on my own, and I really enjoy the process. In particular, I love the idea of "thick description" in autoethnography.

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Although it took some time for me to recall the details from my memory, interview my parents, and research on secondary sources, I feel gratified to see the final product of this feedback draft looks comprehensive and completed. I appreciate all the feedback I've received from my peers, as they pointed out some clarity issues I would never know by my own. I'll try to put more work to polish the article if I have a chance in the next two weeks.

Disappearing Coastlines

Shenzhen, a city rested on the southern coast of China, has been one of the most remarkable **miracles of China** since the 1980s. Its GDP per capita grew over 24 times from 1978 to 2014, and it's currently still one of the fastest-growing cities in the country (Kenton, 2020).

The city holds more than 10 million people on a land of about 2000 square kilometers, making it one of the most crowded cities in the country as well. Of those areas, more than 69 square kilometers were created from the sea through land reclamation, and the city plans to reclaim 50 square kilometers more in the next ten years (Wang, 2016). Most of those newly created lands are distributed to a district called Nanshan, where is the home of many famous tech companies such as Tencent and Huawei. It can be said that the city's development has relied on land reclamation in the past 30 years. **Hundreds** of skyscrapers and residential buildings are built on the reclaimed land, and they have provided offices and homes for hundreds of thousands of white-collars in the district.

My parents are among them. As a result, I've been living in the district of Nanshan for more than twenty years. If you take a look at Google Maps, my home is pretty much at the center of the district. But believe it or not, thirty years ago, it was located on the coastline of the city - basically just minutes of walk away from the ocean.

"The most comfortable apartments with the best seascape," written on the advertisement of the apartment building when my parents decided to buy our home there thirty years ago. That description from the developer was actually quite accurate: when my parents moved in, the ocean could be directly viewed from the windows. My mom once showed me the photo on that spectacular view she took on the move-in day. "I really loved it," she said, pointing to the photo, "when Hong Kong hadn't returned to China yet, there were even sentries on the street downstairs

Commented [MOU9]: Here do you mean in the development of modern China?

Commented [MOU10]: Clarify attribution for this sentence? Is it from Kenton (above) or Wang (below)? Or another source altogether?

Commented [MOU11]: I think that the shift to the first subpoint may happen here (as you move from describing the general topic to the specifics of development (homes/offices) ...

Commented [MOU12]: No paragraph break here?

- Our home was so close to the border. It was like a three-minute walk from the coastline, and across the bay, it was Hong Kong.”

I didn't have a chance to see that with my own eyes. I was born five years after my parents moved there, and since I started to remember things at about five years old, that spectacular view of the ocean has disappeared. The coastline was pushed forward, and our home was surrounded by cranes and construction sites. The sea view was obstructed by the newly constructed buildings. Though I could still see the sea through the gap between those buildings, that view could not deserve the title of “the best seascape” anymore. The coast was cordoned off as a reserved area for the land reclamation project, but I still liked to go there to take a walk with my parents or play the toys with my friends. I loved the delightful smell of the ocean, and I enjoyed the feeling of the sea breeze. When the weather was good, I could fly a kite with my friends - that was really one of the best memories of my childhood.

However, those good times didn't stay long. More and more bulldozers and excavators occupied the coast, and trucks full of soil came in to reclaim the land. Things drastically changed in the following years. The view of the ocean completely disappeared from the windows of my home - it was replaced by the view of skyscrapers, office buildings, overpasses, and shopping malls. In less than five years, the coastline was pushed forward by more than three kilometers (about two miles). The delightful sea breezes disappeared, and they were replaced by the smell of automobile exhaust and the noise of impatient vehicles. Because of the construction sites and the new buildings, I could no longer take a brief walk to see the ocean. I would need a 40-minute walk instead of a five-minute one several years before. Roads were widened around my home, and my parents would always remind me to be careful when crossing the streets because the traffic got much heavier in the area I resided. By the year that I finished primary school, a fully

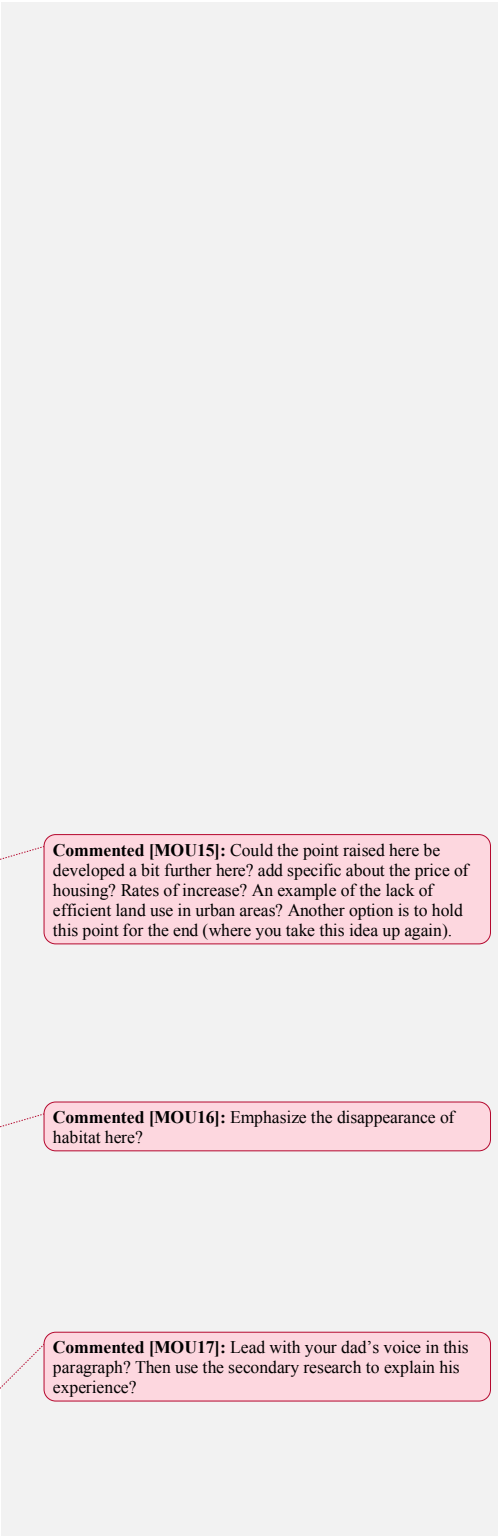
Commented [MOU13]: This is a very effective transition that shifts from your mother's pov to your own.

Commented [MOU14]: The repetition of this term helps with coherence (by pointing to the title).

Commented [MOU15]: Could the point raised here be developed a bit further here? add specific about the price of housing? Rates of increase? An example of the lack of efficient land use in urban areas? Another option is to hold this point for the end (where you take this idea up again).

Commented [MOU16]: Emphasize the disappearance of habitat here?

Commented [MOU17]: Lead with your dad's voice in this paragraph? Then use the secondary research to explain his experience?



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photographer of seagulls, he loves to come to the seaside to take the photographs for seagulls whenever he has spare time. This habit started when I was very young, and he was always able to take many fantastic photos of seagulls and show those to us with joy. But year by year, as the reclamation project went on, he found it became harder and harder to take good photographs of seagulls. The seaside became hard for him to access, and even he came near the coast, it would take more than several hours for him to find a good shooting angle because most of the seagulls were gone. Even with the most advanced telephoto lens, the photo he took couldn't match the quality with the ones that he took years before. Since then, he often came home with sigh and disappointment. He would rather drive an hour to visit the coast on the other side of the city to take the photographs for seagulls.

Besides, water pollution is also a by-product of the land reclamation project. The water on the coast, as well as the groundwater of the peninsula, was seriously affected by land reclamation (Hu & Jiao, 2010). In particular, a study showed that the flow of groundwater was distorted, and its level of heavy metal elements had increased after the land reclamation. Although the groundwater was not used for either drinking or industrial purposes, the study found that most of those heavy metal elements would eventually go to the sea and affect the coastal environment (Chen & Jiao, 2008). When I was in middle school, I liked to go cycling with my friends. The government had built a recreational park near the coast, so it was convenient for us to ride our bikes there. But still, when we ride near the sea, we usually had to cover our noses because the smell of the sea was really uncomfortable. The color of the water could even change every time we came there: sometimes it was yellow, sometimes green, and other times it could be red. Those water pollutions not only made the visitors to the seacoast

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uncomfortable but more importantly, they seriously damaged the habitat for the fishes and birds that had lived on the seacoast before (Wang et al., 2014).

Fortunately, more and more people started to realize the seriousness of those environmental impacts and appeal for more environmentally responsible planning of land reclamation. As responses, the government built a mangrove nature reserve along the seaside and put strict regulations for visitors to access (Tam, 2010). Nowadays, visitors are not allowed to enter the reserve to ensure the last and the only habitat for migratory birds is protected. Some experts have suggested the government to imitate Hong Kong, the city across the river that faces the same problem of land shortage, to completely ban any further land reclamation (He, 2019). But undeniably, land reclamation can solve many societal problems like the rise of house price and land shortage for development. The city must come up with an equilibrium between its rapid development and environmental protection. The disappearing coastlines and all subsequent environmental impacts are the prices that the city has paid for its endless land reclamation. The authorities, along with the citizens, have to work creatively to address this challenge.

Commented [MOU20]: Here there's a shift to the secondary research that could be filtered through your own perspective or the perspective of others who have noticed the increased attention to the environmental issues described above.

Commented [MOU21]: Attribution? This sentence only?

Commented [MOU22]: Here you're pointing back to the title and this helps to reinforce the topic you're addressing. Repeating the idea of disappearance throughout might help reinforce the central point throughout.

Bibliography

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