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Colloquy

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Identifying Links Between Social Class And Identity Through Introspection

A class is those who share common economic interests, are conscious of those interests, and engage in collective action which advances those interests. (Edward 577) In contemporary China, citizens are divided into the dominant class, middle class, and subordinate class. Wide-ranging research shows that social class is a meaningful differentiator of social, cognitive, and affective differences in individuals. (Benedetti 3) Social class is one major factor which influences conceptions of self and how individuals relate to others. This essay will be the demonstration of the following, that I belong to the middle-class, my social status constitutes my confidence, and I have formed unique ways of perceiving others.

Li and Zhang identified China's middle class by measures of middle-level urban household income, white-collar occupations, and higher-education qualifications. (Lee and Tsang 168) Since we don't have income or work positions, the social class for teenagers like me is determined by my financial status, including healthcare services, transport, living environments and academic resources.

“Members of the young generation are therefore encouraged to proceed with their first- and higher-degree studies, and are generally proficient in English, or have highly marketable job skills comparable to native English speakers. They consider themselves to be more independent, individualistic, strong-willed, friendly, and easy-going in everyday life.” (Lee and Tsang 172) This conclusion from Lee and Tsang's research emphasizes on two major characteristics of middle-class

child: being fluent in English and self-reliant. Both factors are highly corresponding to my traits. Since a young age in kindergarten, I started learning English like a native speaker and get educated only in international schools. As I can remember, I was encouraged to have conversations with foreigners independently. I took the school bus for five years in primary school and managed my study without the supervision of others. Moreover, I was always optimistic, meaning I gain self-value and fulfillment through myself. Thus, referring to the study of Lee and Tsang, my experience of growing up indicates that I belong to the middle class. This paragraph demonstrated I am a middle-class person in China.

“Compared to people from a relatively low social class, those of a higher social class tend to have a more favorable view of themselves, for instance, showing higher self-esteem and a greater degree of narcissism. And, crucially, a 2019 study suggests that this comes down to overconfidence.” (Matthew 7) Personally, being in the middle class contributes to my high self-esteem and ambition. However, meanwhile it builds up a tiny part of temporary inferiority. As a part of the younger generation in the middle class, I am an explorer and risk-taker who thrive for a bright future. This paragraph illustrated being in the middle-class generated my confidence.

Perception is subjective and different people detect, process, organize, and interpret external information or stimuli differently. Interestingly, individuals may pay selective attention to different aspects or details of a given stimulus while ignoring others. (Gordon 1) This suggests that the way an individual perceive others is determined by their values, past experiences, and beliefs. Moreover, one’s upbringing is crucial to constitute these abstract concepts. Growing up as a middle-class child, I’ve seen people establishing their dreams and staggering away from remote towns. Stories of success and endurance enriched my upbringing. As a result, the idea of perseverance is prioritized in the few traits I value. I was holding a bias that successful people

must have tried hard and for those who are poor must have been lazy. Deep inside I formed discriminations for others who suffer in poverty. I simply thought women who was restrained by their family were just not being determined enough. Such classism occurs frequently when people in a higher social class group prefer a higher social class group's resources, values, or worldviews over the resources, values, or worldviews over those of a lower social class group. (Cook 5) This explains the common classism occurring in the society.

In addition, being in the middle class means you are fully exposed in this complicated society. Middle-class contexts enable people to act in ways that reflect and further reinforce the independent cultural ideal – expressing their personal preferences, influencing their social contexts, standing out from others, and developing and exploring their own interests'. (Manstead 5) While maintaining a friendship, I won't let others influence me significantly. I never doubt my decisions or thoughts, however, respect the choice of others.

Furthermore, I am sensitive of my surroundings, meaning I can easily look through actions and understand the motivations behind. Likewise, I am able to comprehend others' behaviors while realizing what causes them. However, those may not be included in first impressions. According to Cherry, people often form impressions of others very quickly, with only minimal information. (Cherry 5) When I meet someone, the first few things I noticed will be his manner, including posture and eye contacts. I was told to straighten my back all the time with my grandma around me. As a middle-class child, I believe having a good posture will make you stand out in public and leave good impressions even if you are not outstandingly intelligent. These paragraphs illustrated a link between my social class and the way I perceive others.

This essay demonstrated that I am a middle-class child, being in the middle-class generated my confidence, and I formed exclusive values while perceiving others. While social class plays an

enormous role in developing an individual's personality traits and values, human beings are ever changing. Individuals transfer from one believe to another all the time. Our behavior and perceptions are not consistent throughout our lives. Therefore, we should not form hubris or self-loathe, but continuously looking forward optimistically to face new challenges and embrace the uncertainties.

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