

Final Portfolio

---

English 1010

**Michael Smith**

**3 August 2012**

Table of Contents

Introduction.....2

Reflective Paper “The Flight”.....5

Evaluation “The Asian Isle Experience” .....8

Analysis “The Role of Cooperation in Life” .....11

Michael Smith

Professor Dursema

English 1010

3 August 2012

### Introduction

This past semester of English 1010 has been a period of regrowth for me. As an environmental consultant, technical writing had become the only style that I was comfortable with. The majority of my writing revolved around reports relating to property transactions and environmental risks. When I learned about the different writing styles that would be necessary for this class, I was quite worried. All I could think about was the 13 years that had passed, since I had last attempted this kind of writing. My prior career had given me distaste for writing. I can honestly say that I did not have a very good attitude regarding the writing assignments that would be required for this course. However, as soon as I started writing my first paper, my attitude completely changed. The creative process became fun for me. It felt good to access my creative side again. I learned that this skill had been lacking in my life for quite a while. My writing abilities felt stronger with each completed assignment. For this semester we have written three major papers: a Reflection, an Evaluation, and an Analysis. Each paper was different and presented unique challenges.

The Reflection was a good paper for me to start on. I was allowed to share a personal experience from my life. I have never been what I would call a good story teller. I originally was worried that I lacked the “show don’t tell” creative thinking that would be necessary for the project. I came up with a topic for the paper quite easily. I had always wanted to discuss this particular event in my life. As I started recounting the experience on paper, I found that I had too

much information to relay. My major obstacle was narrowing the entire experience down to just one conflict. Additionally, I did not feel like I was being descriptive enough about the events. These points were stressed to me by the review comments presented by my instructor and classmates. My revision included more description and I was able to better refine my conflict. I very much enjoyed the experience of writing this paper and felt like it was one of my best efforts.

The Evaluation paper was also a challenging experience. We were asked to evaluate a topic such as a restaurant or movie. As far as I can remember, I had never taken on this type of a writing project. I decided that evaluating a restaurant would give me the best chance of success for the paper. This paper was given more restrictive guidelines than the reflective essay. We were told to focus on the three criteria aspects of Aesthetic, Practical, and Moral. I felt like I did a good job incorporating these aspects into my paper. It was hard to find moral issues to discuss regarding the restaurant, but I was able to find at least one topic to mention. I again struggled with my descriptions in the paper, which were restated in the review comments. I began to understand that this was an aspect of my writing that needed improvement. Slowly I began to adjust my approach to the little details. My revisions consisted mostly of smoothing out my descriptions.

The Analysis paper was my most challenging assignment. We were asked to analyze the writing style of a mainstream publication. Additionally, we were told to show proper in-text citations, quotations, and paraphrasing, along with attaching a proper Works Cited Page. We had recently learned about Aristotle's three appeals (Logos, Ethos, and Pathos) and were instructed to show how the author utilized these aspects in the writing. As I have a science background, I choose to analyze a text from a scientific magazine. I immediately began struggling with

becoming too personal in my analysis of the article. I kept making the mistake of writing what I was feeling, instead of sticking to just analyzing the writing style. Once I trained myself to be more technical and stopped reading with my emotions, the assignment became much easier. The strongest part of the paper was my in-text citations and Works Cited criteria's. Although this was the most intimidating assignment of the course so far, I felt in the end that I was successful at writing a technical paper.

After a lot of late nights out of my comfort zone, I am happy at the way I have grown as a writer. Every aspect of the class was challenging for me. I was amazed at how far away I had drifted from good writing. I was challenged the most by the Analysis paper. I felt that my best paper was the Reflection. The topic was a very personal experience in my life and it was nice to put it to paper. This class revived my enjoyment for writing. Where my past job seemed to completely take the fun out of writing, the creative aspect of this semester's assignments has brought it back for me. Each assignment was a challenge for me, but the reward has been completely gratifying.

Michael Smith

Professor Dursema

English 1010

3 August 2012

### The Flight

As they pushed me out on the hospital gurney for my trip Salt Lake City, a feeling of both excitement and concern came over me. I had never traveled by helicopter before and I would have never guessed that my first experience would be under these circumstances. The EMTs loaded me into the Life Flight helicopter for transport to Primary Children's Medical Center. The wind from the snow storm that had begun earlier that day, howled like a pack of wolves. The helipad was covered with fresh snow making it look like a white blanket. As the helicopter lifted off, an unusual fear came over me. Would this be my first and only ride in a helicopter?

I was a typical 13-year-old kid. I was mischievous, fearless, and always looking for a new adventure. I had learned to snow ski a few years back and was really looking forward to showing off my newly polished abilities. In my mind I was an Olympic champion. I would fly down the runs like an F-14 Fighter Jet. It was during the middle of the afternoon that my dad drove us to the resort. The sky was as clear and blue as Bear Lake, which I had visited so many times before. Then it happened. We slammed into a SUV traveling in the opposite direction. I felt nothing but blinding pain from the seatbelt ripping into my stomach like a rope.

I was back in my bed at Logan Regional Hospital, having just returned from some tests ordered by my doctor. I was beginning to feel sicker than I had a few hours ago. Every time I tried to eat something, it was as if broken glass bottles were spinning around in my stomach. It

was then that Dr. Jolly (who did not look or act as jolly as Santa Clause) came to tell me I would be transferred by helicopter to a Salt Lake City hospital. From that second on, I did not think about my pain or injuries. I had never been in a helicopter before. A feeling of both excitement and fear engulfed me. I would get an opportunity to conquer the air just like an action hero in a movie.

As I was being wheeled out to the helicopter, it was impossible to miss that fact that I was right in the middle of a snow storm. The lack of visual concrete and asphalt gave me the feeling that we were flying out of snow covered mountains. My excitement level began to decrease significantly. As we lifted off, the helicopter engines roared in my ears like wild animals. The flight felt much different than I expected it to be. My only past experience with flight had been by airplane, yet the increased noise and physical movement made this experience much more sensory stimulating. As we proceeded over the canyon that separated Logan from Brigham, the wind made the flight feel like I was in a bumper car at an amusement park. I had assumed that the flight would be heading in a straight line. Instead, we kept shifting from side to side. The wind was howling and kept shifting the position of the helicopter. It was as if it was alive and angry with the machine for invading its territory. My fear and the jarring motion from the wind kept me from sleeping. I was strapped down to a gurney, but I could still move my head to observe the surroundings. I looked out of the window of the helicopter, hoping for some pleasant relief. All I saw were snowflakes the size of quarters crashing against the glass. There was no more excitement. Fear had taken hold completely.

Miraculously, I began to dose off. The feeling was short lived, as the attending EMT put his hand on my shoulder, jarring me out of my much needed release. He woke me up to tell me that the weather was bad in Salt Lake City and we may have to layover in Ogden. A feeling of

frustration came over me worse than any I had ever experienced. Things that I hated, like schoolwork and household chores, would be a vacation at this moment. I just wanted to be done with the flight. As we neared Ogden, good news finally came. The weather was clearing up in Salt Lake City and the flight was cleared to proceed.

We landed at Primary Children's Medical Center and I was taken into a waiting room. I was told by a doctor that I would be taken to the operating room shortly. I had completely forgotten that this was the purpose of coming here. After the doctor left me in the waiting room, I couldn't help but reflect on everything that had happened over the last few days. I had actually thought the flight would be an exciting experience, but in truth it was the scariest night of my life. All I could feel was relief. I beat the flight and I was safe. As nurses began transporting me to the operating room for my surgery, my relief disappeared. For all I had already been through, the overall experience was just beginning.



Michael Smith

Professor Dursema

English 1010

3 August 2012

### The Asian Isle Experience

As an avid Chinese food fan, I am constantly looking for new restaurants to try in my area. About a year ago I purchased a condo in the downtown Salt Lake City area. I have found that the majority of the Chinese food restaurants in the area fall into the categories of fast food or extravagant dining. As I was driving home one day, I came across a restaurant called The Asian Isle. I was excited to see that the location was only a few blocks from my house, and the exterior décor suggested that the restaurant might offer more than your basic quick lunch situation. I made the decision to dine at the restaurant.

The following Friday I set out with a friend to evaluate the restaurant. As I pulled into the parking lot, I was surprised to see how empty the lot was for a Friday night. I took the lack of customers as a reflection on the popularity of the City Creek Mall that had recently opened. As we entered the restaurant, the first thing I noticed was a large fish tank full of goldfish that was near the entrance. The interior of the restaurant had been recently renovated and had the feel of an authentic Samurai studio. The condition of the restaurant made me feel confident that the dining experience would be pleasant. Again however, I was surprised to find that there were very few patrons in the establishment for the time of week.

We were greeted by a smiling server who led us to our table. We were given menus, offered drinks, and allowed time to look over the dining options. As I scanned over the menu, I noted that the restaurant offered a more standardized menu that did not include such items as

stomach lining or feet. I expected this as most Americans may find these items offensive. I have tried dishes like these in the past and have never acquired a taste. The items on the menu were on average about two to three dollars higher than comparable restaurants. The prices however, were still lower than you would spend at the more touristy downtown places. There were not a lot of combination meals offered and the menu was more keyed to family dining. All and all the average price of each dish, including the chef specials, was around ten dollars.

When the server came back to take our order, the dining experience began. Our food started to arrive within five minutes of ordering. The meal began with appetizers consisting of spring rolls and lettuce wraps. The lettuce wraps were made from very and fresh ingredients. I was quickly disappointed with the quality of the spring rolls. They were small in size and did not appear to have been made at the restaurant. I remember thinking that bagged spring rolls from Costco would taste better. For the main course we ordered General Tsao's Chicken (\$8.95), Beef Flat Noodle (\$9.95), and Mu Shu Pork (\$10.95).

I found the quality of the dinner dishes to be average at best. My first observation was the small quantity of food per dish. I got the feeling that the restaurant was trying to hide the fact that they served small portions by presenting them on nice square serving dishes. The presentation of the food was much better than the quality and quantity. As I bit into the chicken, I immediately noticed an overwhelming amount of breading in proportion to the chicken. The item was not spicy as the menu identified. The sauce was a little heavy on the corn syrup. The Mu Shu Pork filling was better than the chicken. The ingredients were flavorful and fresh. In my past experiences Mu Shu had always been served with very thin Chinese pancakes. Asian Isle took a different approach and utilized a thicker Spanish style tortilla. It took away from the flavor of the filling, but not enough to ruin the dish. The final flat noodle dish was slightly overcooked and

did not have a very identifiable sauce taste. As we finished our dinner, the friendly server promptly delivered our check. We paid the bill and left for the evening.

The food at Asian Isle is average at best. At a minimum, I would not recommend eating here for dinner. The establishment is much more suited for lunch or takeout. The food quality and portions do not match up with the higher costs. For the experience, you would be better off dining at a lively downtown restaurant.

Michael Smith

Professor Dursema

English 1010

3 August 2012

### The Role of Cooperation in Life

In “Why We Help,” Martin A. Nowak breaks down the role of cooperation within species, in the evolution of life on earth. Nowak further defines the evolution of cooperation into different mechanisms that can be applied to various aspects of nature. Cooperation is the idea of selfless behavior, for the purpose of obtaining a common goal within the community.

Cooperation is widespread in nature, from worker ants sacrificing themselves for the good of the colony, to female lions suckling one another’s young within a pride, and even in humans providing food for the less fortunate members of society (Nowak 36). The role of cooperation versus competition is additionally discussed by Nowak in the article. As stated by Nowak, “My work indicates that instead of opposing competition, cooperation has operated alongside it from the get-go to shape the evolution of life on earth” (36). Through the use of logos, Nowak successfully presents the role of cooperation to his target audience, which relays his purpose by discussing multiple scientific studies and mechanisms relating to the idea.

As a professor of biology and mathematics at Harvard University and director of the Program for Evolutionary Dynamics, Nowak’s general audience of readers most likely includes the scientific community of college students and professional academics. However, by publishing his article in a widely distributed scientific magazine, Nowak is reaching further than just the academic community to a larger audience of educated scientific enthusiasts, interested in the processes that make up evolution. As a typical reader of this article would be an educated

individual, Nowak focuses his writing on scientific logic and studies, which provide credibility to his purpose.

Before Nowak jumps into more detailed ideas of cooperation and the mechanisms that surround it, he discusses a general example through the use of a recent media story. The story revolves around a worker who volunteered to go back inside the Fukushima Daiichi Nuclear Power Plant, during the earthquake and tsunami that occurred last April in Japan. Even though the worker knew the air would be poisonous, he felt it was his duty to try to get things under control and protect other people from the potential danger (Nowak 36). By discussing this scientific and documented story at the beginning of the article, Nowak successfully introduces the idea of cooperation through a documented event that most people would have a basic knowledge of.

Nowak's main argument in the article to promote cooperation, utilizes logos to identify different mechanisms of cooperation from documented case studies in nature. Nowak discusses a system he refers to as "Direct Reciprocity" (37), which has been documented in bat species. The premise of this technical study focused on bats in the roost, which would regurgitate food to help other bats that were unable to acquire food during the nightly hunt. The bat that was assisted, remembers which bat provided the food and was likely to return the favor in the future (Nowak 37). This helps the roost as a whole and increases the likelihood of survival.

Nowak further discusses the evolution of cooperation by discussing selflessness between family members. As stated by the 20<sup>th</sup>-century biologist J.B.S. Haldane, "I will jump into the river to save two brothers or eight cousins" (Nowak 38). This refers to the closeness between family members and the need to protect each other. By discussing this system Nowak shows the benefit of cooperation between family members to pass on the genetic line.

Nowak continues to focus logos (utilizing both historic and current) in the article, towards the aspects of cooperation specific to humans. As stated by Nowak, “Humans are the most cooperative species-supercooperators, if you will” (38). Nowak focuses on two primary principles on which humans cooperate. The first deals with individuals helping other individuals of higher social status, for the purpose of increasing their status in the community and is referred to as “Indirect Reciprocity” (Nowak 38). Nowak provides an example of this concept in a study surrounding a business environment. Individuals continually work to achieve a higher status within the company, by impressing the higher level members of the company (i.e. bosses, supervisors). This increased work effort was shown to be beneficial to the successfulness of the company as a whole (Nowak 38). The remaining primary aspect of cooperation in humans was stated by Nowak as, “Group Selection” (38). Nowak used historical logos by describing the nature of ancient tribes of humans to relay this concept. As Charles Darwin stated in his 1871 book, *The Descent of Man*, “A tribe including many members who...were always ready to aid one another, and to sacrifice themselves for the common good, would be victorious over most tribes” (Nowak 38). This statement is a good example of how Nowak relates to his readers by providing an example of the success of a community through cooperation by individual sacrifices.

Nowak concludes his article by discussing the importance of continued cooperation in society. Specifically, the depletion of natural resources was stated as the basis for the future need of cooperation. A computerized experiment was conducted by the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Biology. Subjects were given community money and told that they had to donate a portion of the money every cycle of the experiment, to save the environment. However, the participants were not told how much total money was needed for the success of the environment.

The experiment proved to be promising, as the total money that was generated during each cycle of the experiment, was close to or over what was needed to save the environment (Nowak 39). By discussing this experiment, Nowak showed that people can still be statistically cooperative with each other as has been the historical trends.

Through the use of logos in his writing, Nowak effectively presents his arguments in the article. By using quotes and studies from prominent members of the scientific community, along with his personal research, he effectively relays the importance of cooperation to the future of society. Nowak has shown that even if cooperation is unstable from time to time, it has historically been a successful part of our well-being and will continue to be an important element of our future.