
Writer's Statement for "Learning to Loosen the Ties"

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When I was asked to write a paper analyzing my own writing process, it would be lying to say I wasn't a little bit excited. While I normally despise writing essays, I admittedly enjoyed the self-reflective nature of this assignment. I have a natural tendency to overanalyze things and for once this was an opportunity to feed into that habit. It was this initial excitement that motivated me to put the extra work into the assignment.

Before we were even given the prompt, Professor Ethridge had given us multiple studies, articles, and examples in preparation, and in all honesty I found them to be incredibly helpful in getting my brain on a roll. Two of the works that really inspired my writing were Anne Lamott's "Shitty First Drafts" and "Late Nights, Last Rites, and the Rain-slick Road to Self-Destruction" by Thomas Osbourne, a UCF alumnus who happens to also be published in *Stylus* as well as in our *Writing about Writing* textbook. Not only was I able to relate to the context of these two essays but I truly found myself enjoying the read. I was especially inspired by Osbourne's work, seeing as he had managed to write this phenomenal paper from his UCF dorm room and share in the same struggles that I did. I felt that since he had succeeded in making his paper interesting, I would be able to as well.

When I first sat down to write my essay I thought to myself, "What is it about these two articles that make them so intriguing?" Well, if you've ever read either of them, you would likely notice the strong writer's voice within their work. They are sarcastic, they are witty, and they are overly dramatic. A perfect example would be Osbourne's description of how he felt about his original essay: "It's the kind of writing that you want to tear out and burn so that no other human being on the planet is able to bear witness to the catastrophic failure that has sprung forth from your mind" (648). Now tell me that isn't ludicrously dramatic. Their strong personalities and engaging presence within their work paves the way for an enjoyable read and I wanted my paper to leave audiences with a similar feel.

To begin, I took note of their use of the literary devices I found most flavorful. I figured, hey, I could probably answer this prompt straightforwardly and come out with a decent grade, or I could add a little spice to the soup. I took note of the analogies, extended metaphors, alliteration, and personification that I found that both of these writers and virtually all great authors tend to utilize. It was this foundation that launched my work. I began writing my essay from the middle out, as I always do, and fleshing it out with each round of revision. With every thought or idea, I asked myself, how is this related to the last? Additionally, what analogy can I abstract from the two to make it further relateable to the audience? Then, finally, what adjectives can I throw in here to bring this paper to life? For once I found myself with too much to say and was minimizing to stay within the maximum page limit.

However, it wasn't as easy as I make it sound. I put a lot of time into the making of this paper and traversed through many roadblocks to get to the final version. One place where I got particularly stuck, as is always the case for me, was with my introduction paragraph. There is so much emphasis placed on this that it has always caused me much stress. For this assignment I went

to the original sources that sparked my interest, in search for motivation. I found that in Osbourne's paper he literally began by describing his immediate surroundings—a pretty easy task right? So that's what I did. While reflecting on this, I found that whenever I begin writing essays it is done after an outstanding amount of procrastination. So I began describing all the ways in which I tended to procrastinate and from there was able to fuse it in to the rest of my work. In the end I managed to pull together all of my scattered thoughts into one cohesive paper. I give a lot of credit to the many authors who have influenced my writing style and to the power of literary devices. May you never doubt their potential.

Works Cited

Osborne, Thomas. "Late Nights, Last Rites, and the Rain-Slick Road to Self-Destruction." *Writing about Writing: A College Reader*, 2nd ed., edited by Elizabeth Wardle and Doug Downs, Bedford/St. Martin's, 2014, pp. 647-52. Originally published in *Stylus: A Journal of First-Year Writing*, vol. 2, no. 2, 2011, pp. 1-4. http://writingandrhetoric.cah.ucf.edu/stylus/files/2_2/stylus2_2_Osborne.pdf.