BACKGROUND:

We have been reading and listening to texts that discuss our relationship with nature. The essays by McKibben and Diamond point to a problem: humans exploit the environment and risk destroying it. President Tong states in his interview that Kiribati exemplifies this human-made destruction wrought by global climate change. Ridley’s essay argues that both humans and nature can survive; he questions the extent of this problem and apocalyptic interpretations of it. Lastly, the podcast “Inside out Cage” shows new ways for humans to relate to nature that will both allow animals to live in a more natural environment and educate people. This latter example offers a solution to the crisis of humans destroying nature; it provides a model designed to increase people’s awareness of natural resources and animals through ecoliteracy, habitat preservation, and humane zoos. All these readings show that there are no “right answers” or “right arguments.” Instead, these essays show that there are strong/weak assertions, credible/unconvincing proof, sound/self-contradictory logic, balanced/unfair appeals, and well written/poorly written arguments.

THE ASSIGNMENT: IDENTIFY ONE PROBLEM/EVALUATE A SOLUTION

In paper #2 you can choose to research and write on any substantial, contemporary issue. Choose a topic that truly interests you and identify a problem or crisis within it: e.g. if you’re interested in U.S. health care, you could focus on one disease and its impact on one group such as the elderly; or the role of media in a health
issue; or the proposal of laws to protect consumer health such as second-hand smoke and tobacco laws. Likewise, you could choose one problem in the U.S. economy; an issue in education; a relationship between the U.S. and another country; the troubles of the euro and the EU; the homeless in America; the list goes on. Feel free to review newspapers and magazines for ideas.

Next review proposed solutions and choose ONE solution to this narrowed problem. Please analyze and evaluate this solution, just as we’ve done in our class discussions, on both the idea and rhetorical level. Ask yourself: where does this solution succeed or fall short? Does this solution adequately address the problem? Does this solution rely on a sound interpretation of the problem, or like Ridley’s essay shows, is there another perspective here? On the rhetorical level, where do the texts presenting this solution succeed and persuade its readers? Where do these writings omit important points/evidence or otherwise fail to convince you? Do the texts describing this solution present it in a fair and balanced way? While you critique this one solution, I encourage you to maintain an open mind and delay any final decision until you’ve wrestled with the ideas and their presentation. I’ve had students in the past reverse their thinking about an issue after doing research; to me that’s the heart of research, to make you think more deeply so that you question and critique ideas.

While this assignment is a classic problem/solution paper, the emphasis is on your analysis of the problem and one proposed solution. The key is finding a topic you’re passionate about and one that has sufficient resources for support. In the paper summarize the crisis and your evaluation of the solution clearly with examples, citations, and explanations. Try to be as persuasive in your paper as you are in discussion. The goals of this paper are: 1) to explain clearly a crisis and ONE solution for it; 2) to develop your analysis in depth; 3) to support this critique well with your own analysis and research; and 4) to document your sources clearly in MLA style. NOTE: The amount of
space in your paper divided between your analysis of this problem and one solution may be 50/50, or 40/60, or even 30/70; it all depends how much you feel you need to explain the problem and/or how you approach evaluating the solution.

Revision Reflections
Analyze and Evaluate Your Revision Process After Peer Editing

Consider your process of revision:

Consider the steps that you took from the moment that you finished drafting this paper to the moment you’ll turn it in for a grade. Describe what would constitute a good revision strategy.

To what did you dedicate the most time when revising:

- paragraph structure,
- developing ideas/logic,
- grammar/proofreading,
- word choice/wordiness,
- supporting your claims,
- double-checking documentation,
- or something else?

To what did you give the least time?

What was the hardest part of revision for you with this paper (perhaps confusing, tedious, or awkward)? How did you approach revising this hardest part? Is there anything that still remains unclear on how to improve your paper?

What was the easiest (perhaps requiring the least work, taking the least time, or giving the best sense of improvement)? How did you approach revising this part?

Which comments from your peer editors did you incorporate? Which did you choose not to integrate into the final draft?

How did you use the instructor’s feedback from paper #1? Which comments did you use? Which comments did you chose not to incorporate in paper #2 or that were hard to interpret?

How effective was your strategy, and would you change anything next time?

You do NOT need to write about all of these prompts: focus on those that give you the most to think and write about for 2 paragraphs.