Draft Workshop Assignment (Berg)

Letters to authors due to ME at berg@middlebury.edu by e-mail at 9 am Thursday, November 13, HARD COPY TO BE BROUGHT TO CLASS.

On Thursday, we will have a paper workshop session with two papers. Please complete the assignment below to prepare for it. Both the written and classroom parts of this exercise should be helpful not only to the writers of the papers we workshop but also to you. Putting yourself in the position of a critical reader of someone else's draft should help you immensely with your own revisions.

Above are two links to the papers to be workshopped. Print the papers as soon as possible. If you have trouble, let me know, and I will try to e-mail the paper to you. Carefully read the papers. Then reread them. On your second reading, highlight or underline sentences or phrases that could be improved in clarity and style. Write marginal notes to the writer regarding problematic or troubling spots in the paper.

Next, draft a letter to each writer in which you articulate, in your own words:

1. what the papers are about—their main ideas;

2. the strengths of the drafts;

3. two elements, from the "Twelve Elements of the Scholarly Essay" on which the writer should focus in revisions, along with specific examples-specific spots in the draft-that help to explain why these elements need attention.

4. Any other comments or suggestions you think might assist the writers.

Be honest with your criticisms. Remember, the recipient of the letter can only benefit from honest criticism. But at the same time, try to be encouraging. NEVER be sarcastic or rude in discussing a draft. Your purpose is to HELP the writer of the paper, who may, at some point in the semester, also be in a position to help you!

If the paper is yours, do not do the tasks listed above for your own paper. Instead (if you have not already attached a note to your draft, or if you have something to add to that note), type out a brief, one-paragraph letter to me specifying (1) what you are trying to accomplish in the paper and (2) the aspects of it with which you would most like assistance. E-mail this paragraph to me by the due date and time above.

E-mail a copy of your letters to me by 9 am Thursday. Do not e-mail them to the writers of the papers. Rather, remember to bring hard copy of your letters to class, so that you can discuss the paper in our workshop, and so that you can give your letters to the writers of the papers after the workshop.