

Short Paper 2.3: Response Letter

engl 131 / sec. A7 / fall quarter 2005 / chang



The irony and tragedy of Guaman Poma's letter to the King of Spain is that his autoethnographic text never made it to its intended audience. Now that you have created your own text, your own autoethnographic artifact, it is time to make sure that it does not end up in the dead letter bin. You will share your text with another person, and you will get a chance to see, read, respond to someone else's text.

Find a classmate to which to "send" your text. Consider your goal, your argument, your main idea of your text and your intended audience. You might want to find someone for whom you think or perceive would enjoy, be interested in, or be challenged by your text. You need not simply exchange artifacts with another person; their text may be better sent to someone else in the class. Make sure you are the recipient of a text.

Take the text home. Treat it with care and respect. Engage the text.

Close read the text. Interrogate how the text uses and relates prose, verse, and image. What do you think is the main argument of the text? What identity or identification is being constructed, expressed, complicated? What meanings do you read, see, feel in the text? What are the rhetorical and autoethnographic strategies are employed?

Your assignment is to write a 1-page letter to the creator of the autoethnographic text. Respond to the text's argument, persuasiveness, meanings, creativity, and format. Since you are the recipient of the text, respond to what you think the text is trying to say to you and what you think the text is trying to say about its sender.

Your response should be in letter format, single spaced, and address the autoethnographic text's creator in an appropriate, respectful manner. Your letter should be more than just a close reading of the artifact. Feel free to agree and support the text's message or to disagree and counter the text's claims. Keep in mind Pratt's definition of an autoethnographic text and how such a text can be a contact zone.

Once you finish your response letter, please return the autoethnographic text to its creator.

Targeted outcomes:

Turn in: 1 page only, letter format

Due: Tuesday, November 8