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grading

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grading

i, too, dislike it: there are things that are enjoyable beyond all this shuffling.
doing it, however, with a perfect contempt for it, one discovers in
it after all, a place for the splendid
paragraphs that can cohere, theses
that can control, conclusions that can persuade
if they must, these things are important not because a

letter grade can be assigned to them but because they are
useful. when they become so unintelligible as to become unreadable,
the same thing may be said by all of us, that we
cannot admire what
we cannot understand: the phrase
dangling at the beginning of a sentence or in search of something to
modify, fragments languishing, a naked quote dropped in, a clichéd introduction
to start off, the misreading student twitching with glee like an eager cross-
examiner, the passive-
voice fan, the late turn-in—
nor should we exclude
the “throughout histories” and
“debated topic today’s”; all these phenomena we mark.
one must make a distinction
however: when dragged into an essay by half effort, the result is not an a
nor till the students we teach can be
ciceronians of
the current day---beyond
five paragraphs and can present
for inspection, convincing essays with real thought in them, shall we enjoy
it. in the meantime, if you look for on the one hand
the raw thinking of freshmen in
all its rawness and
that which on the other hand is
genuine, you are interested in grading.

—Naomi Gades