

Prologue: A First-Year Writing Journal

Volume 4

Article 9

2012

Commentary on "An Insider's Look Into Self Identity"

Amy Yoder
Denison University

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Recommended Citation

Yoder, Amy (2012) "Commentary on "An Insider's Look Into Self Identity"," *Prologue: A First-Year Writing Journal*: Vol. 4 , Article 9.
Available at: <http://digitalcommons.denison.edu/prologue/vol4/iss1/9>

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Writing a deep analysis using theory drawn from secondary sources can be one of the most difficult types of writing First-Years encounter at Denison. Juggling maintaining a strong thesis, providing enough descriptive detail to make the subject manageable, and smoothly incorporating the words and ideas of others can make even experienced writers tremble. And yet Carolyn Donaldson tackles her paper head-on, choosing to use headings to break down a complicated topic into manageable sections. Using headings can be tricky, but Carolyn did a great job with making them work for her paper. With any paper of this type, balancing analysis and description is always a challenge; this is perhaps the one area I think Carolyn could continue to work on. The current balance is quite good, especially since Carolyn must deal with the fact that most in her audience are not actually familiar with the show, but it would be an area to push herself further. One approach is to try to focus on specific episodes or details, instead of relying on generalized descriptions of a chosen piece in order to address broad issues. Pick a particular scene or interaction that best exemplifies the general point and provide enough description for the reader to fully understand the basis for a claim. By keeping focused, one can avoid over-summarizing, while still providing necessary support.

-Amy Yoder, Writing Center Consultant