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Professor Perry

First Year Writing, section #6

9/28/18

### The Importance of Credibility and Identity

In “Pay attention to the man behind the curtain: The importance of identity in academic writing,” Bronwyn T. Williams writes to academic writing instructors so that they understand that credibility and identity is key for writing an academic piece. In order to achieve this aim, he uses two moves: revealing his identity and quotes from experts.

Williams reveals his identity in various ways with the purpose of establishing credibility and experience regarding the subject for his audience. He reveals his identity by telling his audience about his personal experience reading academic writing. This is shown when he sets up his main argument for the paper. “I heard again all the arguments about how objective, rationalistic, academic literacy leaves no room for issues of identity” (710). Williams gives his readers this bit of insight to help setup his main purpose regarding identity. In doing so, he reveals a part of his identity, which allows his audience to relate to subject, in turn relating to Williams. Additionally, his identity is revealed by moving from common sense to his claim, changing how his audience views him and his credibility. Williams uses this method when he is talking about the presumed identity of an author. “When we pick up a piece of academic writing, without explicit descriptions about the identity of the author, we often move to our cultural default setting of whom we assume the author to be. In the West, there is a cultural image of the scientist as a white man in a labcoat (or in the humanities, as a white man in a tweed jacket)” (712). Williams disrupts the readers view of himself regarding his identity. This allows him to change the mindset of his readers of what is the actual identity of the author. His

**Commented [AP1]:** Good working title.

**Commented [AP2]:** All of them or a specific subset of them? This statement of **audience** is very general and includes an awful lot of people!

**Commented [AP3]:** This **purpose** statement is also pretty vague. WHY do they need to do this? Why does Williams care? Why should his audience care?

(The more general you are about a writer's **purpose/audience**, the more general your rhetorical reading of their moves will be.)

**Commented [AP4]:** I agree with this, but isn't he also providing the audience with a stand-in for themselves, since he's trying to reach the people who also happen to agree with the person he bumped into? (A double-sided move?)

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audience view that Williams's credibility is greater, since he throws his identity into question. With both of these ways of revealing his identity, Williams establishes his authority about the subject matter.

Williams uses quotes and paraphrases with the purpose of establishing his credibility and purpose (with his skeptical/resistant audience?). He uses a variety of sources to help support his claims, especially when using quotes from experts. When talking about readers presuming the identity of an author, Williams paraphrases an argument made by Spack. "But we make assumptions about the identity of the author that rest on dominant culture ideas and images, which for scientists and scholars are white, male, and professional class" (712). Here he paraphrases this quote to allow him to further his argument. With this he allowed the reader to understand that he has credibility and is able to find evidence to support his claims. He also commentates on pieces of academic writing from other people. He shows this when referencing Watson's book *The Double Helix*. "What is compelling in *The Double Helix* is the combination of Watson's distinctive personality with a breathtaking passion for his work" (712-713). Here he furthers his claim by describing briefly what the book is about, but then ties it in with his claim. With using external sources, Williams was able to show the readers his credibility with his claims.

After reading this essay, I agreed with Williams regarding every piece of writing has an identity. Back in high school, I had to write a research paper regarding a topic of my choosing. When I was grabbing sources, so that I can understand the subject and be able to reference them, I was taught that even though there was not apparent bias in a non-fiction book, there was one since information can be omitted. This is the same with identity, even if the author did not intend to have one, it is still present. My feelings after reading this essay have not changed, but my previous knowledge is confirmed.

**Commented [AP5]:** Excellent close reading of this move and it relation to Williams's **purpose AND audience**. Well done! 😊

**Commented [AP6]:** Something like this makes your **topic sentence** more focused on the **audience** he's trying to reach with this move.

**Commented [AP7]:** How can you give a brief sense of who this person is?

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**Commented [AP8]:** Maybe another sentence or two here at the end to more closely focus on his **audience**. Why should these issues matter to them? Why does Williams feel they need to care about this? What is their **stake** in this issue?

(And in **your response** in the next draft, you could ask yourself, what is **MY stake** in this issue, if any?) 😊

**Commented [AP9]:** Really strong conclusion! There are several really promising ideas that you could potentially develop into a really interesting and personally meaningful response in the next draft of this assignment!

Where is your Works Cited page?

**Commented [AP10]:** Required for this assignment.

Nicholas,

This is a really thoughtful and close analysis of the moves you see Williams making in this article, based on what you see as his specific purpose and audience. You make a number of really insightful observations of what you see him trying to get at, but as you can see from a number of my marginal comments (have a close look), I feel like you aren't taking your points about his audience far enough. You could definitely go a bit deeper in those places. Again, look at my marginal comments to specifically see why so you can aim to avoid the same issues in the next draft of this assignment. Your conclusion is excellent and very promising! ☺

Grade: 88/100