Dear Olek, November 3, 2016

The writing in this paper is strong from a grammatical and structural perspective. Your ideas are clear to the reader, the overall organization is good, and I appreciate that your argument builds – as opposed to being a list of different evidence for a claim. That sort of building argument is more compelling than the alternative. In addition, you have good structure within your paragraphs, like your overall paper they cohere sensible and the connections between ideas are clear. In your first paper I recall being concerned about not understanding how you saw connections between different portions of your paper, I have no such concerns with this one. So from my perspective this is a significantly stronger paper than the first one. I am interested to talk with you about your process for writing this paper. In what ways did it differ from your first paper?

I’d also note that you do a good job of drawing on quotations from Watterson’s writing, interview, and speech to communicate his experiences.

The constructive part of my feedback has to do with the claims you make. Your assertion that the monsters under Calvin’s bed represent Watterson’s struggles with cartooning is interesting and maybe plausible, but in the end I don’t see you presenting evidence to support it. You make the assertion, almost as if it is self-evident and move on.

Another, smaller, example of this that may help make clear what I’m pointing to is your assertion that the mom character “…succumbed to her own monsters of purpose…” at the bottom of page 2. I suppose that’s plausible but what evidence is there to support this assertion of dissatisfaction with the purpose of her life? Again, that possibility is plausible, but the goal of a strong paper is to use textual evidence to support a claim. Aim to convince the reader that you’re doing more than mapping what seems intuitively reasonable to you onto selected aspects of the text.

A possibility is situations like this is to hedge your assertions/claims. Instead of claiming that Watterson’s struggle with life-purpose “…is represented in his comic by the monsters under Calvin’s bed…” you could say something like “..we can see the monsters as a metaphor for Watterson’s struggle.” The key there, I think, is a shift from the author’s intention in your claim to a reader’s interpretation in my version of it. A claim about author intention has only one correct answer. A claim about how a reader *can* interpret a text is open to multiple possible interpretations and changes the way one has to support the claim.

Even if you make such a shift there is work to be done here to better use textual evidence to support the claim. But if you were to take a reader interpretation I can see a way to making a compelling case. I just don’t think you have the evidence to support the author intention claim.

I am somewhat ambivalent about the value of you spending some time working on a revision of this paper. Let’s talk about the possibility of that.

Best,