

By the end of studying the poem Extract from The Prelude I need to know;

Meaning: The Prelude is quasi-autobiographical, in that Wordsworth is reminiscing on his childhood in the Lake District; however, it isn't clear the extent to which all events are entirely true to his experiences. The extract itself recounts Wordsworth stealing a boat, rowing it out across a lake only to become scared when he notices the peak of a mountain appearing to rear up behind a promontory. This causes him to turn back and return the boat.

Ideas: The mountain could be symbolic of his guilt, which grows the further out he rows. However, it could also be symbolic of God- who is warning him against stealing the boat, thus, upon returning the boat and returning home, Wordsworth reflects upon his reinvigorated belief in God. An alternative interpretation is that the persona has sex with an unknown female and feels guilt for his abandonment of her.

<p>Vocabulary</p>	<p>Cove [noun]- A small type of bay or inlet of water. Stealth [noun]- the act of move without detection. (<i>stealthy [adjective]; stealthily [adverb]</i>) Idly [adverb]-with a lack of motion or energy. (<i>idle [adjective]</i>) Unswerving [adjective]- without deviation Craggy [adjective]-rough and uneven rocky surface (<i>crag [noun]</i>) Ridge [noun]- a long, narrow hilltop Elfin [adjective]- small Pinnace [noun]-a small boat, operated with either a sail or oars. Stature [noun]-height Stole [verb]-to depart Covert [adjective]-Hidden. Mooring [verb]-a place where a ship or boat is left. (<i>moored, moor [verbs]</i>) Meadows [noun]-a piece of grassland.</p>
<p>Context</p>	<p>Romanticism- This is a Romantic poem. Romantic poems were written as a reaction to the Enlightenment and the Industrial Revolution- a time where belief in God was beginning to be questioned and the advancements in technology led to the expansion of factories and the destruction of vast swathes of countryside. The Romantics, reacting against this, emphasised the beauty and Sublime of nature- as well as the power of God. These ideas are clearly embedded within the poem. It could be argued that the persona reflects those people who either question or don't fully believe in God's power- and therefore begin to commit sins.</p> <p>Wordsworth- The poem is quasi-autobiographical. It is also an extract from a larger poem 'The Prelude', initially intended to be the prelude to a poetry book. It contains Wordsworth's recollections of his youth wandering around the Lake District where he grew up.</p> <p>Sex outside of wedlock- One interpretation of the poem is that the persona has sex outside of wedlock- something that was unacceptable within the society at the time. It's more significant for the woman, who is left abandoned, as she would be spurned by society.</p> <p>The willow tree- In literature, the willow tree is symbolic for an abandoned or spurned woman [such is the imagery in 'Othello']. The location of the boat by a 'willow tree' feeds into the interpretation that the persona abandons the lover once he has had sex with her, something which also reflects patriarchal dominance over women during this time period.</p>
<p>Themes</p>	<p>Guilt</p>

Comparisons to other poems:

A Poison Tree-
 The persona in 'Extract from the Prelude' feels guilt, unlike the persona in 'A Poison Tree'. Equally, the fear and incoherency in 'Extract from the Prelude' is not evident in 'A Poison Tree', where the persona is far more controlled and measured- evident through the regular stanzas, rhythm and rhyme scheme- as well as repetition of 'I'. The rhythm and meter's of both poem are interesting. 'A Poison Tree' is deliberately manipulative (shown through the trochaic trimeter rhythm being associated with nursery rhymes) whereas the persona here speaks in iambic pentameter- which is representative of natural speech and honesty.

Destruction of Sennacherib-
 Both are Romantic poems that reinforce the power of God- by the end of both, non-believers are believing in the reality of God after having witnessed his power.

Cousin Kate- Similar exploration of society's views around women. However, 'Cousin Kate' is far more critical of the unjust and hypocritical patriarchal society she lives in, whereas Wordsworth doesn't seem to criticise society's opinions/ The gender perspective of these poems most likely leads to this difference.

<p>Deeper understanding</p>	<p>Changes in the persona's guilt- The extent to which the persona is willing to accept responsibility for his actions is arguably up for debate. He opens by stating how he was 'led by her'- meaning nature (or the woman). This could suggest the Sublime power of nature in that it has control of man, however it could also be the persona attempting to transfer his guilt onto something else- if he blames nature [or the woman] he partially excuses his sin as it isn't his fault. Wordsworth establishes the arrogance of the persona- similar to the arrogance that the Romantic afforded to Enlightenment thought [such as Victor/ Walton in 'Frankenstein']. He does this by the poets' description of how it was an 'act of stealth and troubled pleasure'- the oxymoron highlighting the fact that he is committing a sin, yet enjoyed doing so and the description of it being 'stealth' almost seems like he is bragging at how he was able to do it without anyone watching. This is equally shown through the vivid description of how his boat went 'heaving through the water like a swan', the fact that the water on the lake was 'still' on either side of the boat and how he 'dipped [his] oars into the silent lake'. He believes that he is a skill rower. However, if his arrogance faults when he sees the 'peak... black and huge' which causes him to '[strike] and [strike] again'- instead thrashing through the water in panic. This could reflect how he has become aware of his hubris and regrets his actions.</p> <p>It's worth exploring the level of detailed description throughout the poem. When the persona is going out he describes, in vivid detail everything that he can see. This captures the Romantic ideals of the beauty of nature but also reflects the slow, gradual row across the lake- one that the persona is enjoying. However, once he 'with trembling oars' turned and returns to the 'covert of the willow tree' we can see how quickly he returns. The lack of description here either showing his fear (he is no longer paying attention to his surroundings therefore there is nothing to describe) or the incredible speed with which he returns the boat. Either way, it reinforces the power of nature/ God to have such a transformation on the persona.</p>
<p>Quotes</p>	<p>'led by her'- The persona relinquishes power to either nature or the woman through the passive voice. However, it could be that he refuses to accept responsibility for his actions. Through personifying nature, he is highlighting the power that nature has.</p> <p>'my boat when heaving through the water like a swan'- The arrogance of the persona becomes clear through the simile, he believes he is exceptionally skilled at rowing- reinforced through the declarative 'proud of his skill'. The verb 'heaving' conveys the power and control he has, again reinforcing his skill at rowing. It's also worth juxtaposing this with his panic as he 'struck and struck again' following the continual growth of the mountain peak- this repetition reinforces his level of panic.</p>
<p>Terminology</p>	<p>Language Metaphor Symbolism Oxymoron Simile</p> <p>Structure Juxtaposition Enjambment End-stop Caesura</p> <p>Form Active voice- 'I struck and struck again' Passive voice- 'led by her' places blame upon nature/ the woman and suggests the persona was not necessarily in control. Iambic pentameter- is reflective of natural speech, therefore conveys the honesty of the persona [in contrast to 'A Poison Tree'] Dramatic monologue- Past tense- Present tense-</p>

Comparisons:

Exposure- Both poems explore the power of nature over mankind, equally the power of God. The difference here is that Owen's soldiers are rejecting God, whereas the persona appears accepting of the reality of God in this poem.

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