Anaylisis Of The Lake Essay, Research Paper

An Analysis of Once More to the Lake

The smell of an old wood cabin or the feel of a cool lake breeze against one s face can bring back many fond memories for many people. The senses, in their own way, can physically bring back memories that seem so real you can get lost in your own imagination. E. B. White tells in the essay Once More to the Lake about how his trip back to a childhood vacation spot not only took him to the lake, but also sent his imagination back in time.

As a boy, White and his family would vacation at a lake in Maine. For the entire month of August they would leave the complexity of everyday behind and enjoy the simple life along the shore. They returned summer after summer because, despite getting ringworms and rolling over canoes, none of [them] ever thought there was any place in the world like that lake in Maine (142).

Years later, longing for the placidity of his lake, White returned with his son(142). During the journey there, his thoughts wondered about how time might have changed things. He thought about the clear early mornings, when the lake was cool and motionless, and how he would sneak out before anyone else awoke. The sweet smell of the outdoors also filled his memory as he pictured himself canoeing along the shore.

On arrival he could tell things were pretty much as he had left them; though the excitement of arriving was not as intense. As a child White and his family would make the ten-mile trip from the train station to the lake in a farm wagon. As they pulled up the shouts and cries of other campers coming to help you unload your trunks was a joyous sound. Nowadays you sneaked up in your car and parked it under a tree near the camp and took out the bags in five minuets, complains White(145).

Lying in bed the first morning he knew for sure things were going to be the same as before. The sound of his boy sneaking out early in the morning, just as he had done, sent his imagination wandering. He felt a new sensation, that if his son was him, than he must be his father. This creepy sensation kept sneaking up on him throughout the week(143).

While fishing he found that everything was as it always had been, that the years were a mirage and there had been no years (143). The ducking of a dragonfly led him to this conclusion. As he lowered the tip of his rod into the water he realized there had been no years between the dunking of this dragon fly and the other one- the one that was part of his memory (143). Watching his son holding his rod he felt dizzy and didn t know which rod [he] was at the end of (144).

As the days went by more memories of the past flooded his mind. The sound of inboard motors, the three-track road, the waitresses, all reminded him of those wonderful times he had there as a boy. But watching his son get ready to go swimming, and having no thoughts of going in himself, he soon came to realize the years were not a mirage. The chill of death filled his groin as reality pulled his imagination out of the past and into the future(147).

When I was younger, my family often took vacations. We would stay for weeks at a time at the lake and the beach. Now that my siblings and I are older we don t go as much. After reading the essay Once More to the Lake it made me wonder, did my parents have the same thoughts as White when they took us? Did they come to the realization that they are not immortal? I also thought of the future. When I have kids and take them to the beach will my thoughts become confused with the past? I may never know the answers to these questions. But I have realized, along with White, that memories are precious and it is good to look back at the past, as long as you also look toward the future.

Work Cited

White, E. B. Once More to the Lake. Patterns For College Writing. 7th Edition. Ed.

Laurie G. Kirszner & Stephen R. Mandell. New York: St. Martins, 1998. 142-147.

332