William Wordsworth’s Solitary Reaper Essay, Research Paper

William Wordsworth’s “The Solitary Reaper”

Not only did Wordsworth do a superior job portraying an experience when he wrote “The Solitary Reaper”, but he also invites the readers broaden their own experiences by opening their eyes to parts of life that they might not have noticed, or did notice but could not describe. His poem, describing a unique experience he encountered one day while he was walking by a field, clearly demonstrates the effective use of poetic devices. Rhyme, tone, personification, imagery, and setting are all present to effectively communicate not only his story, but also his message to the reader.

Throughout the poem, one line easily flows to the next as a result of Wordsworth’s outstanding use of rhyme. The rhyme formation used in the first and last stanzas is identical. Similarly, the second and third stanzas have corresponding schemes. The poem’s beginning was inviting, and quickly grasped the readers’ attention. Then, the rhyme used throughout the body of the poem seemingly pulled the reader through the rest of it, until the skillful ending.

Wordsworth’s tone throughout the entire poem is one filled with extreme joy and fulfillment, but one of mystery. He paints a delightful picture of this memorable event from the moment he spots the woman working in the field. Then, her beautiful voice grabs his full attention as he stops to admire her singing. Personification is used to describe her voice, when he writes, “No nightingale did ever chant” (9), and “A voice so thrilling ne’er was heard / In springtime from the cuckoo-bird” (13-14). His tone then changes in the third stanza, as he wonders what she is singing of. If it is of unhappy things, or whether her singing originates from some loss or pain? Wordsworth is obviously overtaken by this woman’s singing, which is easily empathized the fitting of his emotions into this poem.

The reader can easily interpret that the poem was about a real experience that Wordsworth had by the imagery he uses in the poem. From the beginning he describes a beautiful woman alone in a field. The setting for the entire poem is of the woman cutting and binding grain in the field, as he stops by for a glimpse. From then on he stands alone up on a hill, admiring this beautiful woman as she sings a song, like he has never heard anyone sing before. He could not make out what the song was quite about, and there was nobody else around whom he could ask. Her voice made an everlasting impact on his heart, as he wrote in his last lines “The music in my heart I bore / Long after it was heard no more” (31-32).

Wordsworth’s central purpose was easily recognized. I feel that he is trying to open the readers’ eyes to experiences that they might not have seen, or witnessed but could not explain. Situations as simple as this one happen thousands of times a day, with many of them going unnoticed. This poem is even more applicable in today’s society. In our busy lives many of us do not have feel like we have the time to sit by “motionless” (29) as we interpret a situation.

Poetry that grabs my attention is of an experience that I can relate a similar situation to. Wordsworth’s “The Solitary Reaper” is one of those poems I could relate with. Whether I am sitting in a boat admiring an animal on the shore, or sitting on the shores of South Carolina in the summer watching a wave roll in with the tide, I too feel like I can relate with his experience. He effectively demonstrated his experience of sitting by watching a woman singing at work, and this events effect on him.

Determining whether this poem was of bad, good, or great quality is a tough task. I believe that Wordsworth’s central purpose was achieved. Also, in my interpretation of the poem, I feel he has fully accomplished this purpose. He fit so much emotion and imagery into this poem, while also intertwining his rhyme scheme. “How important is this purpose?” is a tough question to answer. It would depend on the person who was reading the poem, and how it affected their life. Although in my case, this poem’s purpose was not too important because I tend to stand back and admire some of life’s moments that other people might just take for granted, I still feel that “The Solitary Reaper”, by William Wordsworth was a good overall poem.

In conclusion, Wordsworth did an exemplary job using rhyme, tone, personification, imagery, and setting to demonstrate the significance of his experience. He was overtaken by this insignificant event, and was able to put it into a poem that many people could understand. I am sure that this poem broadened the experiences of other people after they had read his poem.