

The Fisherman
Explication Worksheet

Rhetorical/Stylistic Analysis: Find and record examples of the following in your journal (number and date the entry):

- Rhyme scheme:
- Alliteration:
- Sensory detail:
- Repeated words/phrases:
- Place names:

Critical Reflection:

1. Explicate the meaning of “*grey Connamara clothes*. ”
2. What might the *fisherman* symbolize? Explicate the symbolic meaning of this figure.
3. Compare/contrast the meaning of “*grey*” in this poem with its connotations in *Innisfree* and *Stolen Child*.
4. Explicate the *visionary aspects* of this poem, with reference to specific lines.
5. How/where does this poem fulfill the *desire for the two-in-one*? What two things are being merged in this poem?
6. Explicate the meaning of the *trout*, comparing its appearance here with similar images in other poems?
7. Can you think of films, books that celebrate fly fishing? Fishing in general?
8. Explicate the symbolic meaning of “*dawn*. ”
9. Record passages where Yeats is writing about poetry? Why does he feel such a strong sense of identity with the fisherman?
10. Explicate: “the living men that I hate.”
11. What does Yeats *contrast* in this poem? What is the central *tension* in the poem?
12. How might the central theme of this poem be about Yeats’ vision for a new man, a new human child: what qualities define this new human? What flaws define his civilized counterpart?
13. How does this poem sustain Yeats’ *attack* on the false values and problematic effects of civilization? Cite specific lines.
14. Explicate: “Before I am old/ I shall have written him one/ poem maybe as cold/and as passionate as the dawn.”