“Once More to the Lake” by E.B. White

As you read, annotate the text. After you read, go back and look for the answers to the following questions to help you understand what is going on in the essay. Questions 1-4 you can write in your note book as these are to help with the discussion on White’s work.

1. White says that he seemed to be living "a dual existence" as a father in the present and as a son in the remembered life of the past. Point to some moments when that dual existence seems most natural and to some when it seems more difficult to maintain. What seems to explain the differences to him and to you?

2. What do you make of the final sentence of the essay? How is the earlier extended theme of annihilated time related to and resolved in the ending of the essay?

3. In what ways do White's physical descriptions of the lake and its surroundings suggest why he loves the place? Analyze an example or two in which emotion is created by style.

4. What makes the thunderstorm a good episode with which to end the essay? What earlier themes does the moment collect and connect?

Essay

In the preface to his Collected Essays, Aldous Huxley says that “essays belong to a literary species whose extreme variability can be studied most effectively within a three-poled frame of reference. There is the pole of the personal and the autobiographical; there is the pole of the objective, the factual, the concrete-particular; and there is the pole of the abstract-universal. Most essayists are at home and at their best in the neighborhood of only one of the essay’s three poles, or at the most only in the neighborhood of two of them. . . . Later he adds: “The most richly satisfying essays are those which make the best not of one, not of two, but of all the three worlds in which it is possible for the essay to exist. Freely, effortlessly, thought and feeling move in these consummate works of art, hither and thither between the essay’s three poles – from the personal to the universal, from the abstract back to the concrete, from the objective datum to the inner experience” (v and vii “Preface”).

Apply Huxley’s three-poled analysis to E. B. White’s essay “Once More to the Lake” in a typed essay of 200-250 words. Please follow MLA format.