



Bruce Wayne and his Parents' Portrait

This image appears about halfway through the film, and it comes at a time when Bruce has become uncertain about his future. He must decide whether Batman takes precedence over Bruce Wayne, or whether the time has come to desert his quest for justice and break through the isolation and solitude that it has created in him.

The room he stands in, and its features, symbolise where he stands in life. This huge empty room, devoid of any homely touches or comfortable furniture, despite being in his very own house, represents how, even within himself, he cannot seem to unearth the part of Bruce Wayne that will let him conquer the loneliness and isolation that Batman has breathed into him.

In this shot Bruce is indeed just a sad, lonely and vulnerable human being, but the fact that he cannot communicate it to anyone means that he cannot lead a normal life, because he would have to maintain the secret of his second existence whether from his lover or from a friend.

He stands in this room, a reflection of his life, faced with two options. The portrait of his parents that he is gazing at, represents a route to the past, and the open window lying behind him is the path to his future: Batman. At this point, the past seems a brighter option and this is shown to us by the colour in his mum's dress - it is red while everything else is blue. A dark blue, nearly engulfing him, shrouds much of the room, but it is just being held off by the light from the window. This may perhaps represent how, although he longs to be back in happier times, the Batman side of Bruce is the only thing keeping him from being swallowed up by the turmoil within. And yet, as the picture shows, it is also the only thing that makes him long for the past (as the window sheds light on the portrait, letting him see it). The fireplace below the portrait is empty and this adds buckets to the cold, inhospitable atmosphere of the room. Bruce's life. It also represents for me what will happen to him if he tries to grasp out for the past. The way Bruce must crane his neck to look up at his parents and the way that they look down on him, implies that they are just out of his reach. If he tries to haul himself up to them, he will slip and be swallowed by the huge gaping mouth of the fireplace.

Another thing that makes the past a predominant feature in our minds as well as Bruce's, is that it is on the left of the picture so we come across it first and only later do we realise the presence of the open window. This again implies the current importance of the past to Bruce, and the desperation to turn away from the remaining possibilities.

If the image is flipped it reads as 'The open window sheds light on Bruce looking at the portrait' rather than 'The portrait is being looked at by Bruce as the open window sheds light upon them'. Indeed, because the light is now coming from the left and we see it first, the picture seems brighter. The light has been placed so that it comes from the right because subconsciously, our mind treats it as a secondary feature, and this reflects Bruce's mood. However, I believe that the light coming from the open window is the most important part of the picture: it shows strongly the influence of Batman on Bruce Wayne, and that for me, is the main thing about this character.