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Why is nature used to describe the idea of love in poetry?



Task:

Adopt the belief that everything in life is connected and nothing stands alone without a relationship/connection to something else – Compile a list of all these relationships.

There are some examples below to get you thinking:

Mother + Child



Flower + Bee



Sky + Clouds



Bee + Hive



LO:

- ✓ Understand and interpret Love's Philosophy
- ✓ Explore and analyse Shelley's use of language, form and structure
- ✓ Consider different interpretations for Love's Philosophy
- ✓ Explore Shelley's ideas within the poem

Percy Shelley Fact Sheet:

Known as a talented, lyrical poet

Born August 4th 1792, Sussex,
England

Eldest son, so could inherit a considerable estate, and a seat in Parliament but chose to live as a pauper.

Attended Eton College for 6 years from 1804 (same school that David Cameron went to)

Also attended Oxford University but was expelled for promoting the rejection of religion – deeply controversial in the 19th Century

Critical of the royal family and monarchical government in England

Literary career controversial due to his views on religion, atheism, socialism and free love

One of the major figures of English Romanticism

28th August 1811, eloped with 16 year old Harriet Westbrook

1814 met, fell in love with Mary Godwin & they ran away to Europe (Mary Shelley – Frankenstein)

Married Mary 30th December 1816

Shelley died July 8th 1822, less than a month before his 30th birthday. Cause: death by drowning following a sudden storm

What aspects of Shelley's life do you think influenced his poetry? Justify your ideas.



Title:

What does Philosophy mean?



Let's listen to a reading of Love's Philosophy:

Love's Philosophy

The fountains mingle with the river
And the rivers with the Ocean,
The winds of Heaven mix for ever
With a sweet emotion;
Nothing in the world is single;
All things by a law divine
in one another's being mingle –
Why not I with thine?

See the mountains kiss high Heaven
And the waves clasp one another;
No sister-flower would be forgiven
If it disdain'd its brother:
And the sunlight clasps the earth,
And the moonbeams kiss the sea –
what are all these kissings worth,
If thou kiss not me?

Make a note of key themes you identify in the poem.

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What is the Speaker's 'Philosophy' regarding love? How do we know?

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Now summarise what you think this poem is about. You must try and include the words listed below:

Unrequited

Rejection

Poignant

Feedback :

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Love's Philosophy is a poem about a love that is **unrequited**. The writer conveys a **poignant** tone as he makes a coy plea to the beloved who has **rejected** him. Throughout the poem, Shelley expresses the fact that nature finds a way to be in perfect union so 'why not I with thine?'

Structure of Love's

Philosophy:

Discuss:

There are two stanzas, both of which end with a question. Why do you think this is and what is the effect?

The rhyme scheme for both stanzas in the poem is ababcdcd and the poem has a regular structure with clear patterns – what is the effect of this? How may it link to the meaning behind the poem?

What different punctuation marks are used? What does the punctuation signify?

How does the structure of the poem link with the message of the poem?

Language :

Highlight any words or phrases Shelley uses to create natural imagery in the poem (look for the use of personification). What are the connotations and effect of these words?

Some modern readers find the use of language in the poem too clichéd and sickening. Find examples of where this may be the case. How do you feel about the word choices?

What are the connotations of the term: 'mingle'? What kind of image is created through this word choice?

Why might the speaker need to persuade his beloved to kiss him or 'mingle'? (This poem was written in 1820, think about the way unmarried men and women were expected to behave to remain socially acceptable.)

The speaker and his beloved have conflicting interests. He wants a physical relationship. What might be her priority?

Different Interpretations:

Which interpretation below do you think is most application to Love's Philosophy? Justify your response.

At the highest level the poem is talking about the togetherness of all things in nature. Nothing is solitary. A mountain may look alone, but it is really reaching up to meet the sky. Rivers mingle with oceans.

In nature, all things come together, hence there is no reason for humans to be isolated and we should come together in love as well.

Being cynical, the poem was written by Shelley in an attempt to get a lady to sleep with him despite the fact he was married. Shelley believed in free love and was a bit of a radical. He ran away with one sixteen year old girl and then abandoned her later to run away with another sixteen year old. He uses the poem to explore the way that elements in nature come together spiritually and physically as a chat up line, basically.

The speaker may have been parted from his beloved. Therefore the concept of nature emphasises how elements of nature manage to find and be with their counter-parts and therefore so will the speaker and his beloved.