

PERCY SHELLEY

1792- 1822

A Defense of Poetry

Ozymandias

Love's Philosophy

SHELLEY

- Radical and Idealistic
- Dreamed of changing the world for the better
- Work was ignored in his lifetime
- Was bullied as a young man

SHELLEY

- Went to Oxford
- Wrote "The Necessity of Atheism" and was expelled
- Part of the Pisan Circle (group of literary friends)
- Drowned in a sailboat

A DEFENSE OF POETRY

- Getting at Meaning # 1 – 5

POETRY GROUPS

- Find one person that you would like to work with — write your names down on a piece of paper.

A DEFENSE OF POETRY

- Poem - expression of eternal truth
- Story - limited to the truth of a particular time and set of events

A DEFENSE OF POETRY

- Someone who is truly good must be able to sympathize imaginatively with others (their pains become his own)
- Imagination is a means for moral good
- Poetry exercises the imagination so that humans have more moral capacity

A DEFENSE OF POETRY

- Divine = an ideal by which all things can be measured
- Poetry = a means by which all human beings exercise their own divinity
- "redeems from decay the visitations of the divinity in man"

A DEFENSE OF POETRY

WHERE DO WE FIND POETIC INSPIRATION?

- “This power arises from within” —inspiration comes from within the poet
- “interpenetration of a diviner nature through our own” - external inspiration plays a part in poetic creation

OZYMANDIAS

- Getting at Meaning Questions

OZYMANDIAS

- The original statue was a huge standing figure of a great ruler
 - Two “vast” legs of stone on a pedestal
 - Sunken, Shattered Head

OZYMANDIAS

- The frown and “sneer of cold command” - the sculptor perceived the “passions” or emotions, of disdain and arrogance in the person depicted by the statue.

OZYMANDIAS

Speaker

- The speaker of line 1 reports the remarks of lines 2-14 ("traveler from an antique land")
- Technique creates an effect of distancing and impersonality that reinforced the theme that the boastful ruler's accomplishments have receded to obscurity.
- Distancing was not typical of Romantic poems, which are more likely to use an immediate, passionate voice

OZYMANDIAS

Irony

- The opening image of the poem implies a contrast between the present ruins and the original state of the ancient monument.
- The king's original boast, meant to be a loud ringing challenge but in fact now only carved on a ruin so that the implied speaking voice contrast sharply with the utter silence of the desert

OZYMANDIAS

Theme

- The might of the world should contemplate with despair how their efforts shrink to insignificance before the works of time and nature, represented by the eternal sands.

OZYMANDIAS

Mood

- Abrupt shift from the elaborate boast in lines 10 and 11 emphasized by the brief sentence "Nothing beside remains."
- Last three lines – images of the featureless, lifeless, and unending desert.
- Bleak mood created by the language and imagery of the last lines is reinforced by the use of alliteration and consonance, which slow the pace

TO A SKYLARK

- A skylark is a European songbird known for its soaring flight and undistinguished appearance
- look for figures of speech--a word or expression that is not meant to be taken literally (simile, metaphor, personification, metonymy)
- Shelley uses the image of the lark's invisible but inspiring voice to develop another statement about poetry and its relationship to the ideal world

TO A SKYLARK

- Getting at Meaning # 2, 3, 4
- Developing Skills # 2 & 3

TO A SKYLARK

- “Unbodied joy” and “Shrill delight” of the skylark's song affect the listener
 - Sympathetic thoughts of poetry (stanzas 4 & 8)
 - Sweetness of love (stanza 9)
 - Delights of the sights, smells, and sounds of nature (stanzas 10-13)

TO A SKYLARK

- Mortals suffer from languor, annoyance, love's sad satiety, death and sorrow (lines 76-95)
- Lark - master of an "unpremeditated art"
 - The purity of its intense song, untouched as it is by reflection or human experiences
- makes it superior to the expressions of human beings, who never live fully in the present moment (the eternal present)
 - instead always "look before and after, / And pine for what is not"

TO A SKYLARK

- If the speaker could fulfill the wish to learn even half of the unrestricted joy that the skylark's song communicates, he would burst into such eloquent poetry that "The world should listen then — as I am listening now."

TO A SKYLARK

Theme

- "Harmonious Madness" – Last stanza – suggests that Shelley is a poet of prophecy
- Lines 76-95 – a sense of the mixed state of the human condition

TO A SKYLARK

Imagery

- Stanzas 4 – 11 – Hidden objects or feels that contribute to the intangibility of the imagery
- Stanzas 13 – 14 Ethereal quality pronounced in his reference to songs more moving than he can imagine
- Stanza 15 – natural locations that he has not yet seen
- Lines 83-84 – knowledge of death “more true and deep/than we mortals dream”

TO A SKYLARK

Imagery

- Physical references to the skylark
 - Direction of Flight
 - Sound of song
- No indication of its size, coloring, or any other aspect of its physical appearance.
 - Appropriate to Shelly's thematic concern with the importance of the pure, eternal world of the ideal
 - Lack of judgment (think Shelley's childhood – bullies)

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

- Look for personification
- pathetic fallacy -- exaggerated personification such as it's raining cats and dogs
- note: lighter more lyrical verse

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

- Developing Skills # 2, 3, 4

—For # 4 — “Ode to the West

Wind” identifies creative energy and the ideal of unity of all things with the forces of nature.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

Feminine and Masculine Rhyme

- Feminine = river/forever,
ocean/emotion, heaven/forgiven,
another/brother
- Masculine = divine/thine,
earth/worth, sea/me

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

Feminine and Masculine Rhyme

- Masculine rhyme tends to emphasize the rhythm of each line while feminine rhymes make the meter less pronounced.
- Stereotype — women as the “gentle sex” could be responsible for designating the gentler, less obtrusive rhyme “feminine”

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

Pathetic Fallacy

- Through personification, poets credit nature with human quality.
- The portrayal of inanimate nature having human feelings of characteristics.

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

Pathetic Fallacy

- The winds mix in "sweet emotion" (line 4)
- The mountains kiss the sky and waves embrace (lines 9 and 10)
- Flowers are capable of disdain as well as brother hood (lines 11 and 12)
- Sunlight embraces and moonbeams kiss (lines 13 and 14)

LOVE'S PHILOSOPHY

Theme

- Similar to the "Ode to the West Wind"
 - Sets up as a model for humans the world of nature in which "All things by a law divine/In one spirit meet and mingle."
- Sets a high value on passion and on expression of emotion