

1 What is true love? I have considered attitudes to romantic love and how they alter over time. Two of my texts: *Sonnet 130* by Shakespeare, *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen consider the power of true love and how it overcomes obstacles. The other two texts deal with attitudes to love in today's world. *Psyche's Dark Night* by Francesca Block and *The Facebook Sonnet* both deal with attitudes to love in a world with a different obstacle where public/private spaces are blurred.

2 *Sonnet 130* by William Shakespeare and *Pride and Prejudice* by Jane Austen both discuss the power of love and how, despite obstacles and objections, when love is true these things don't matter. During Mr Darcy's declaration of love to Elizabeth "his sense of her inferiority-of its being degradation-of the family obstacles....were dwelt on". However he continues to then talk about the "strength of that attachment which, in spite of all his endeavours he found it impossible to conquer." In this one speech Austen shows that despite the many objections Mr Darcy has to loving Elizabeth, such as her "inferior" social status and his many "endeavours" to try "conquer" his love for her, in the end he has given in to the fact that he loves her and is now willing to overlook his objections. Here Austen is making a point that love is more powerful than any other feeling, whether that feeling be pride, fear or judgements you have made it doesn't matter because the power of love will overcome it all. This is best shown when Mr Darcy says "in vain I have struggled. It will not do. My feelings will not be repressed. You must allow me to tell you how ardently I admire and love you."

3 This connects with what Shakespeare says in *Sonnet 130*. Throughout the whole sonnet he expresses how the women with whom he is in love with is not the best or the prettiest, "her eyes are nothing like the sun" and "coral is far more red than her lips' red". He compares her features to that in which he feels are their superlative and in doing so immediately gives the impression that because her lips aren't the brightest red and her eyes don't sparkle as bright as the sun that he see's these as flaws and reasons for him not to love her. However at the end of the sonnet he then expresses "by heaven, I think my love as rare as any she belied with false compare." So as with Mr Darcy in *Pride and Prejudice*, Shakespeare overcomes his objections towards the women he loves and again this shows the power of love. In *Sonnet 130* Shakespeare's love evolves to the point where he loves her not in spite of these flaws but because of them. His love for her overpowers the fact that she is not the prettiest or the best, she is merely who he loves and he loves her because of this.

4 This is the same in *Pride and Prejudice*. Elizabeth is lower class, inferior and she refuses to follow the rules of society at the time, but by the end of the book Mr Darcy cannot help but love her for this. It is in fact his pride that is "conquered" by the power of his love Elizabeth. Both men realise and accept how "ardently" they "admire and love" their respective women. This is the true power of love and is something that needs to be recognised in society today.

5 *The Facebook Sonnet* by Alexie Sherman and *Psyche's Dark Night* by Francesca Block both discuss how Facebook is changing society and love is one of the major things subject to this change. By saying 'Welcome to past friends / And lovers, however kind or cruel. / Let's undervalue and unmend / The present..' Sherman is stating that the lessons we learn privately about life and love are changed and depersonalised by putting it on the internet as a public statement. It's also an unreal presentation of ourselves where 'we pretend / Every stage of life is the same.' So with social media we are moving away from the awareness that the true power of love goes beyond physical appearance or societal acceptance. It is a superficial extension of 'the games / That preoccupy the young'. In the story *Psyche's Dark Night* it is love that changes and becomes impersonal. By saying 'they were both very attracted to each other's profiles' Block is commenting on how attraction has now moved even further away from being based on personality. Now attraction is based on how they appear as a person on a social networking page. Now people no longer have the same problems that Mr Darcy and Shakespeare had with having to love people in spite of their flaws, because now people no longer have any flaws. In the case of Psyche and Cupid their initial attractions and opinions towards each other were based on 'the facts-the things they had learned from reading each other's profiles and talking on the phone.' And while it is only these things that they know about each other their relationship is perfect. It's not until they both stop hiding behind their profiles Block shows that their relationship begins to break down. "Psyche wanted more" and "Cupid was afraid of commitment.' By showing that their relationship only worked when both of them were hiding themselves and their true feelings behind technology and a profile page, Block is commenting on how people in society today are too afraid to properly commit to love.

6 I think that the idea of hiding oneself, be it concealing part of yourself behind a public profile or hiding from love because you're scared is becoming extremely common in society today. However I also think the point that even in Jane Austen's or William Shakespeare's times people were still hiding from their true feelings, is very interesting. This shows that despite society changing since, the basic nature of individual humans hasn't followed this change.