

An analysis of the clod and the pebble



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Speaker/Tone: “ The Clod and the Pebble” by Sir Francis Blake In the poem “ The Clod and the Pebble” Sire Francis Blake compares selfish and unselfish love through interesting and thought provoking interpretations. These viewpoints are obvious through Blake’s indication of their states of innocence and experience. His first entity, which is a clod, says, “ love seeketh not itself to please”(Blake 3). The second interpretation, which is given in the form of a pebble, reasons, “ Love seeketh only Self to please”(Blake 11). The clod is depicted as a selfless, passionate emotion whereas the pebble is a vain, arrogant and selfish sentiment.

We can assume that the author has a lot of experiences when it comes to love, possibly writing this poem in a period of romanticism, but cannot assume he is the speaker. The different perspectives of love in the poem lead the reader to believe that there are two speakers. The Clod may perhaps be of a feminine viewpoint, which is understandable after reading “ Nor for itself have any care” and “ Trodden with cattle’s feet”, where love is unselfish and sacrificial (Blake 2). The pebble gives off a sense of authority gained from experiences while it mocks the innocence of the clod.

The abrupt use of “ But” provides a change to the sweet and harmonious tones of the first stanza, while the phrase “ a pebble of the brook” represents it is a hard and unmovable object, learned from its experiences. Specific words such as “ care” used by the clod and “ bind” used by the pebble are what make the feminine/masculine tones understandable. The beautiful and artful personifications of the content clod and pompous pebble create a clear understanding in contrasting the representation of the selfishness and selflessness of human nature in love.