



MORALITIES IN 'OZYMANDIAS' BY PERCY BYSSHE SHELLEY

VIDHYA K R

Assistant Professor, Department of English, VISTAS.



VIDHYA K R

Article Received: 27/06/2020

Article Accepted: 02/08/2020

Published online: 09/08/2020

DOI: [10.33329/rjelal.8.3.149](https://doi.org/10.33329/rjelal.8.3.149)

Abstract

Percy Bysshe Shelley exemplifies the moralities of life in his poetry by using imageries. Shelley was quite a rebellion in his works, he never settled with lesser facts. His brave nature made him to impart his unique narration of 'Ozymandias' into an appreciation of art's durability and eternity. His unique technique to portray the ethics of life and fate has made the poem into a predominant work. This article will analyse the writing techniques of Shelley into a way of beauty and art's eternity.

Introduction

The central thematic concerns of Shelley's poetry are largely the same themes that defined romanticism, especially among the younger English poets of Shelley's era that is; beauty, passions, nature, political liberty, creativity and the sanctity of the imagination. What makes Shelley's treatment of these themes unique is his philosophical relationship to his subject matter.

He strongly believed in the possibility of realizing an ideal of human happiness as based on beauty, and his moments of darkness and despair almost always stem from his disappointment at seeing that ideal sacrificed to human weakness.

He never failed to document his intense feelings on beauty and expression through poems as *Ode to the West wind* and *To a Skylark*, in which he invokes metaphors from nature to characterize his relationship to his art. He emphasizes on the fact that poetry brings about moral good. Shelley always sticks to his style as one must imagine intensely and comprehensively also one must put himself in the place of another and of many others.

The pain and pleasures of his species must become his own. It is the art of poetry, no other English poet of the early nineteenth century so emphasized the connection between beauty and goodness, or even believed so avidly in the power of art's sensual pleasures to improve society.

Shelley firmly believed that poetry makes people and society better, his poetry is filled with the kind of moral optimism, which he hoped would affect his readers sensuously, spiritually and morally all at the same time. One among his much-acclaimed poem *Ozymandias*, which periodically recalls the pharaoh Ramesses glorious days and the uncertainties. By critically analysing this poem this research paper reprises Shelley's art of poetry, and how it literally appreciates the beauty and improves the perception of the readers.

Ozymandias is a sonnet, a fourteen-line poem metered in iambic pentameter. This sonnet from 1817 is most famous and most anthologised poem which is somewhat strange, considering that it is in many ways an atypical poem for Shelley.

Although it touches little upon the most important themes from his creation hugely. *Ozymandias*, devoted to a single metaphor that is

the shattered, ruined statue in the desert wasteland, with its arrogant passionate face and monomaniacal inscription

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!

The once great king's proud boast has been ironically disapproved, Ozymandias works have crumbled and disappeared, his civilization is gone, all has been turned into dust by the impersonal, indiscriminate, destructive power of history. This ruined statue is now merely a monument to one man's conceit and a powerful statement about the insignificance of human beings to the passage of time.

Ozymandias is first and foremost metaphor for the ephemeral nature of political power, and in the sense the poem is Shelley's most outstanding political sonnet. Trading the specific rage of a poem like "England in 1819" for the crushing impersonal metaphor of the statue.

Ozymandias symbolizes not only political power, the statue can be a metaphor for the pride and conceit of all of humanity, in any of its manifestations. It is significant that all the remains of Ozymandias are a work of art and a group of words, Shelley just demonstrates that art and language long outlast the other legacies of power.

Mostly it is Shelley's brilliant poetic rendering of the story, and not the subject of the story itself, which makes the poem so unique and memorable. Framing the sonnet as a story told to the speaker by a traveller from an antique land enables Shelley to add another level of obscurity to Ozymandias position with regard to the reader.

Rather than seeing the statue with our own eyes, we hear about it from someone who heard about it from someone who has seen it. Thus, the ancient king is rendered even less commanding the distancing of the narrative serves to undermine his power over us just as completely as has the passage of time.

Shelley's description of the statue works to reconstruct, gradually the figure of the *King of Kings*; first we merely see the scattered and *shattered visage* then the face itself with its

frown

And wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command

Then we introduced to the figure of the sculptor, and are able to imagine the living man sculpting the living king, whose face wore the expression of the passions now inferable. Then we introduced to the king's people in the line,

The hand that mocked them and the heart that fed.

The kingdom is now imaginatively complete, and finally we are introduced the magnificent, conceited of the king

Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair!

With that the poet demolishes our imagery picture of the king, and interposes centuries of ruin between it and us that those line remarkably conveys nothing beside remains in life.

Round and decay

Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare

The lone and level sands stretch far away.

With these lines Shelley illustrates the reality of life, man and the natural world. Power and pride are the two most important factors in human life. Ozymandias was too prideful about his country's wealth and his virtuousness in leading it. Ultimately, in the end time consumes all and no earthly power will surpass the fate. Reality is human are mortal and the efforts he made to withstand time is by creating these lifeless statues with a question mark of longevity.

Percy Bysshe Shelley illustrates the influence of romanticism on literature through the poem's imagery and choice of words. In this poem he specifies themes of pride, power, transience, nature, art and culture. He uses poetry to embark the importance moral and beauty in life.

The imageries provided in the poem ensembles the morals of life, art's durability and eternity. The scattered statue despite of its unfortunate it reflects the powerful ruler of Egyptian age. Though the historic figure consumed by the

time, it still enlightens the readers of present and future.

Thus, Art and Culture influences the future with morals to survive the world is the ultimate goal provided by Shelley through this poem

References

Shelley, Percy Bysshe.

"Ozymandias." *Gleeditions*, 17 Apr.

2011, www.gleeditions.com/ozymandias/students/pages.asp?lid=308&pg=4. Originally published in *The Complete Poetical Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley*, vol. 2, edited by Thomas Hutchinson, Oxford UP, 1914, pp. 546-49.

<https://www.poetryfoundation.org/poems/46565/ozymandias>

Shelley, Percy B, John E. Jordan, and Thomas L. Peacock. *A Defence of Poetry*. Indianapolis: Bobbs-Merrill, 1965. Print.
