

Comparison of Ozymandias and Song Essay Sample

[Literature](#), [Russian Literature](#)



In the Victorian era society's view on death was very different than it is today in this essay I will compare two poems from the 19th century " Song" By Christina Rossetti and " Ozymandias" by P. B Shelly which have two completely opposite views on death and how you are remembered after it. " Song" by Christina Rossetti, 1830-1894, is about her expressing her humble view on death to someone close, such as a lover, and her simplicity about wanting to be remembered.

On the other hand " Ozymandias" by P. B Shelley, 1792 - 1822, is about an Egyptian king who has opposing views to Rossetti on death and therefore wants to beat time in order to be remembered. In the poem Ozymandias, the poet is telling us about a meeting with a " Traveller from an antique land. " Shelly uses the idea of time and distance in the first line to make the poem seem timeless. The poem then is told from the traveller's perspective. The traveller tells the poet about a statue in the desert of an ancient king and how the statue has simply corroded away over time and left merely rubble.

This idea is conveyed from lines " Two vast and trunk less legs of stone" and " near them, on the sand half sunk a shattered visage lies. " These lines also illustrate how old the poem is by the use of " Visage. " In Ozymandias you automatically have a feeling of dislike for Ozymandias this is because the poet illustrates him to be an arrogant foolish leader. " A wrinkled lip, and a sneer of cold command. " This could be portrayed in two different lights. That Ozymandias asked to be portrayed as a strong fierce ruler who was feared by all.

Or it could also mean that the sculptor captured him in his true colours as a cold, cruel and unpleasant man. Which again makes you against the character and have little sympathy for him. Similar emotions are highlighted when ' My name is Ozymandias, king of kings: Look on my works, ye Mighty, and despair! ' this shows that he was arrogant enough to think that he could beat time when all that was left was nothing and how he thought possessions would equal immortality. But the situational irony in this poem being Ozymandias has been remembered for long after death through P. B Shelley's poem but not as a feared, powerful ruler as he would have hoped but instead for his arrogance and foolishness.

The inscription upon the statue is also ironic for the words are egotistical but are on a ruined statue which will no longer make other rulers afraid but just laugh. In Song however, there is a complete contrasting view on death. It seems to me that Christina Rossetti is talking to a lover after death. She is telling them not to mourn and to not hold on to the memory of her. As she herself accepts her fate and how we all die.

That once we die you do not need to be remembered as it will not affect her once she has gone. She knows that she cannot change and accepts the natural end to life and the simplicity of nature. She does not want to be remembered and cause pain for those she cares for and for them to forget and move on, to not dwell because she is happy and understands there is no point to being remembered once you are gone. Whilst this is a complete opposite to Ozymandias who made a monument of himself so he would be remembered for years to come.

Rossetti's poem is instantly more likeable than Ozymandias for her humble view on death and treating herself as insignificant as she does not need to be remembered while Ozymandias thought he was overly significant and had an inflated idea of his importance. While Rossetti keeps a modest view on her importance and what should happen to her memory after death, these feelings emerge from the use of "and thou wilt remember, and if thou wilt forget" highlighting her acceptance of being forgotten. She also says "I shall not see the shadows."

"I shall not feel the rain; I shall not hear then nightingale Sing on, as if in pain;" this suggests that she feels what happens after death will not affect her as she is not there anymore it will not mean anything if they mourn or suffer from her absence so it is best to forget. The language used in both poems is chosen specifically to demonstrate each poet's views on death. In song Rossetti uses natural language such as "Cypress tree" "Dewdrops" and "nightingale" which reflect her views that death is natural. The poet uses the natural language to show to the reader the simplicity of life and death.

This is also a very humble choice of words much like Rossetti's outlook on death and how simplistic and modest she is and hopes everyone she leaves behind moves on, forgets about her and moves on with their lives. In "Ozymandias" Shelley uses old, dramatic language from the first line "I met a traveler from an antique land" which creates an impression of and time and space. The writer also specifically chooses the word "Visage" instead of

face, as it is an old word “ Visage” so Shelley highlights to the reader how old the statue is.

Shelley also uses the word “ Colossal” for specific effect, as a historical reference to the Colossus of Rhodes, which illustrates an effective image of a giant and old building to the reader. Shelley’s use of alliteration in the phrases “ boundless and bare the lone and level sands stretch” shows the deep desolation of the area and another reference to how much time have passed since Ozymandias lived. It forces the reader think about the amount of time it must have taken for the sands to level out and destroy the village.

Ozymandias preservation to live on after death thought remembrance goes against life’s natural progression and that maybe we should all be forgotten about in the end. The poem “ Ozymandias” in addition to the power of its theme and imagery it is noted for its virtuosic diction. The poem is a classic sonnet with a strict rhyme scheme but yet unusual rhyme scheme, which creates an intertwined affect of (ABABACDCEDEFEF). And also the poems syllable count and is written in an iambic pentameter. This classical structure is used by Shelley to highlight the classical idea of death and mans philosophical struggle against time

The structure of “ Song” is set in two highly structured verses. Like Ozymandias “ Song” has a rigid structure and strict rhyme scheme. The poem also has a strong fluid rhythm that allows Rossetti to present the idea of accepting fate. Victorians were known to enjoy the event of death instead of the basic funerals nowadays filled with close family and friends. The Victorians would hire professional mourners. People they did not know just to

mourn the death of their family or friend even though they'd never met them. Mourners would dress in black hats and the coffin would be carried in a coach with black horses.

It seemed as though funerals were used as an excuse to have a social gathering. The Victorians rarely had cremations, Believing there would be nothing left to "admire." This was later opposed by Catholics in 1963. They also believed the man you were was reflected in what you left behind when you die which is like what Ozymandias thought thinking it would make people think of him as a stronger man if he left behind that monument. This was why Victorians loved to leave behind huge mausoleums in memory of themselves. Because of everyone leaving huge memorials to represent their lives the churchyards soon full up.

So they opened public cemeteries and this is why we have them today. Sadly cemeteries are disrespected by vandalism and litter. So thus they became eventually forgotten beneath overgrown plants. This could explain why Ozymandias and the Victorians wanted to build large memorials to be remembered by. I feel the sonnet 'Ozymandias' by Percy Shelley sends an important message to its readers that while art is timeless power is transient and fleeting and never lasts. Shelley uses techniques through the poem such as symbolism, contrast and rhyme to convey the volatile power of the ruler, and the temporality of power itself, throughout all time.

The poem also has some historic value because it confronts an issue that is relevant in every age and also has value from cultural heritage perspective as it emphasizes of power struggles, the want to be remembered, and nature

itself. It also describes how the power of nature and time itself far suppresses any human efforts or powers to “ beat it. ” With “ Song” the poem is merely about the death of the writer herself and is just expressing how she wants her loved ones to forget about her, as she is six feet underground and the “ green grasses” with “ dewdrops” symbolize nature and how she wants a natural death.

She does not want her lover to put roses on her grave or sing songs for her as she will never hear or see those things for she will already be dead. And she is fine with that she has accepted her fate and feels that she could welcome death with open arms and without fear of being forgotten. After reading them both you have more respect and like Rossetti better as a person as she is more modest and humble contrary to Ozymandias who feels he is so important he has to make a monument to himself to be remembered after death.

But I feel more sympathy towards Ozymandias as he could never accept his fate or ever overcome his fear for death. I feel sympathy towards him for how naive he was and how narrow minded for thinking that he could defeat time but now he is just laughed upon for thinking somebody as insignificant as himself could ever be remembered forever against time, and how he never came to terms with death or graced it but was foolish enough to think that being remembered means anything and that death comes to us all and one day we will all be forgotten.