

Ozymandias

Percy
Shelley



- Shelly (1792-1822) was a romantic poet and well known for his radical and anti- establishment ideas. He came from a wealthy Sussex family, attended Eton and was disinherited after being expelled from Oxford University for writing about atheism. Ozymandias can be seen as a political statement against any one person or group gaining power and wealth and shows that such power and wealth can easily be lost.

About

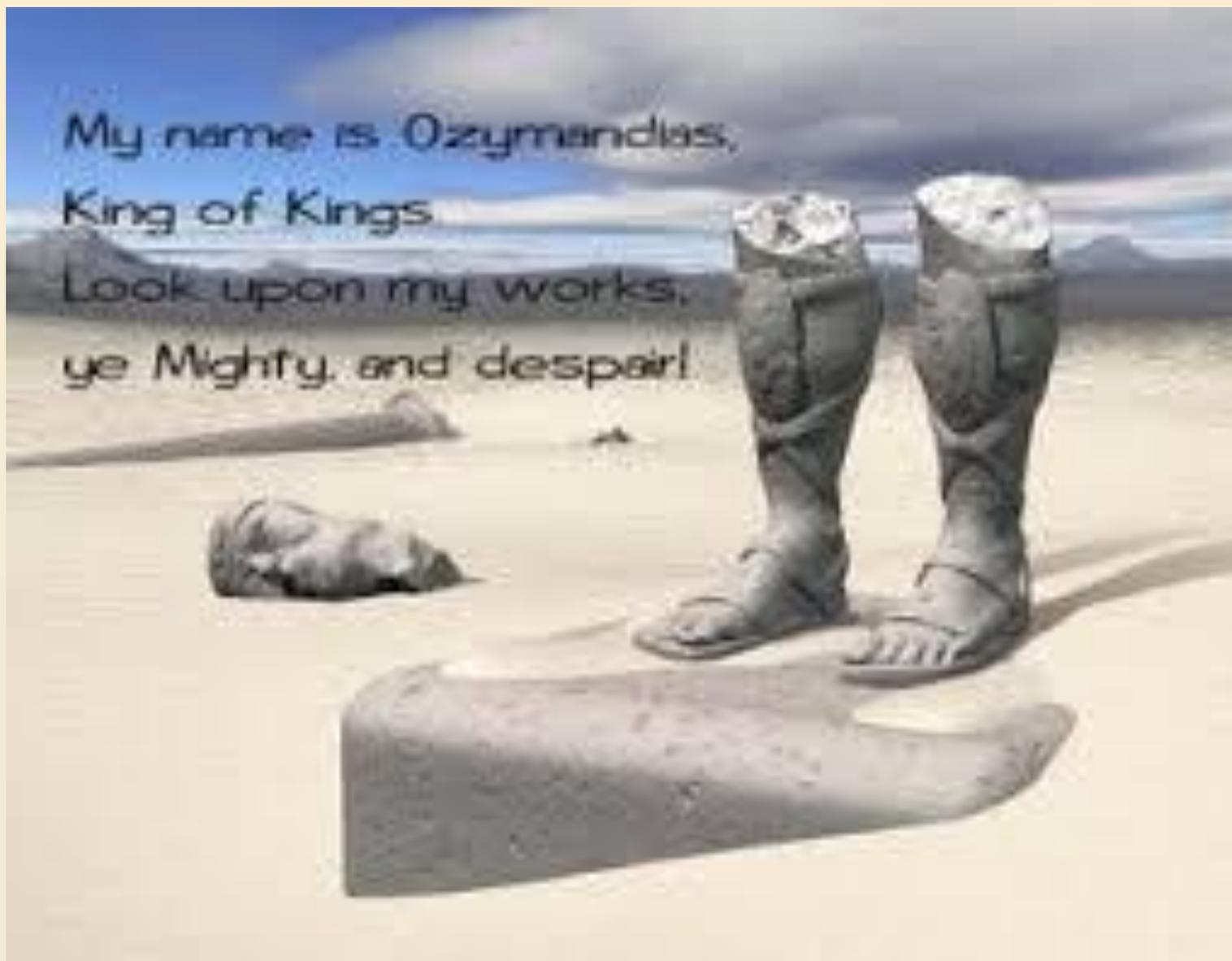
- The speaker describes a meeting with someone who has travelled to a place where ancient civilizations once existed. We know from the title that he's talking about Egypt. The traveller told the speaker a story about an old, fragmented statue in the middle of the desert. The statue is broken apart, but you can still make out the face of a person. The face looks stern and powerful, like a ruler. The sculptor did a good job at expressing the ruler's personality. The ruler was a wicked man, but he took care of his people.



About

- On the pedestal near the face, the traveller reads an inscription in which the ruler Ozymandias tells anyone who might happen to pass by, basically, "Look around and see how awesome I am!" But there is no other evidence of his awesomeness in the vicinity of his giant, broken statue. There is just a lot of sand, as far as the eye can see. The traveller ends his story. The sculpture is of Ozymandias, the Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II.

My name is Ozymandias,
King of Kings
Look upon my works,
ye Mighty, and despair!



'Vast' suggests a huge statue and therefore maybe of importance but trunkless tells us that there is no body so the statue has been damaged. Could this be a metaphor for someone who was once important falling from grace?

Personification of the legs 'stand' make the statue sound comical like the traveller is making fun of it.

I met a traveller from an antique land
Who said: **Two vast and trunkless legs
of stone stand in the desert.** Near
them on the sand, **half sunk, a shatter'd
visage lies whose frown and wrinkled lip
and sneer of cold command tell that it's
sculptor well those passions read**

The noun phrases and the adjectives suggest that the subject of the statue is a cold and self important man.

Ozymandias was the ancient name for The Egyptian Pharaoh Ramses II there was immense power associated with the Egyptian culture but this poem suggests power never lasts and is cruel.

The verbs suggests a sorrowful sight of something which was once powerful but is now nothing. The poem was inspired by the removal of the parts of the statue from a temple in Greece to a British Museum.

'stamp'd verb to describe a violent action and 'lifeless' this adjective tells us that worldly power crumbles and fades and nothing can stop time.

Which yet survive, **stamp'd** on these **lifeless things**,
The hand that **mock'd** them and the heart **that fed**.
And on the pedestal these words appear:

Personification here suggests that great power and wealth never lasts and it is a fool who puts so much emphasis on them.

The statue's pedestal says it is of 'Ozymandias king of kings' and encourages the onlooker to admire his works especially other kings, Shelley suggests to kings that this will be their fortune in the future.

Shelley depicts the desert as a barren wasteland and could symbolically represent the pointlessness of great empires. This makes the King's boast (king of kings) ironic as nothing is left of him or his empire.

"My name is Ozymandias, king of kings:

Look on my works, ye **Mighty, and despair!**"

Nothing beside remains: round the decay

Of that colossal wreck, **boundless and bare,**

The **lone and level** sands stretch far away.

Hyperbole to make fun of Ozymandias' own self importance. Also to suggest that the great empire of Ozymandias has been reduced to just a story to be passed around.

Imperative - a warning to other kings that this will be their future and they should not become too consumed with their own self importance.

The emptiness of the desert is emphasised through 2 pairs of adjectives and linked by alliteration, this signifies just how worthless the power and the perceived idea of greatness is.

Structure.

- Ozymandias is a sonnet (a poem of 14 lines), although it doesn't have the same, simple rhyme scheme or punctuation that most sonnets have. Some lines are split by full stops and the rhyme is irregular at times.
- It is written in iambic pentameter, which Shakespeare used widely in his plays and sonnets.
- The first line and a half up to the colon are the narrator's words, the rest are those of the traveller he meets. There are no clear *stanzas* as such. Instead, it is one, 14-line block of text that is split up with lots of punctuation throughout.

Statements - True or false

- The poem explores power and status.
- The poet admires Ozymandias.
- Ozymandias was once a proud, tyrannical ruler.
- The poem suggests we have all the time in the world.
- The poem is about legacies and what we leave behind after we die.
- The poet suggests that pride comes before a fall.
- The poem is about time and nature and how man cannot conquer either.
- Shelley suggests that art and language will outlast humans and other legacies of power.
- The reader is left to imagine the sculptor as well as Ozymandias' character.
- It is ironic that it is the sculptor's legacy that will last and not Ozymandias' power.

wrinkled lip and sneer of cold command

Two vast and trunkless legs of stone

Stand in the desert

stamped on these lifeless things

the decay

The lone and level sands stretch far away

Of that colossal wreck, boundless and bare