

## **How is power presented in *Storm on the Island* and one other poem you've studied?**

In this essay I shall be comparing the poems 'Storm on the Island' by Heaney and 'Ozymandias' by Shelley. Both poems express how the power of nature affects humans to the extent where it can overcome them. The effects are different in the poems because in 'Ozymandias' nature is represented by the desert and how it wears away and destroys the statue of the once mighty pharaoh over time, whereas nature is symbolised through the sea and storm in 'Storm on the Island' and how its power can cause fear in the islanders.

'Ozymandias' is written in the first person and includes an anecdote of someone that the poet once 'met'. The poem is written in the form of a sonnet, using iambic pentameter. Although many sonnets were written about the power of love, in this sonnet the power lies with nature and also the enduring qualities of art against the decline of the pharaoh's power. However, in 'Storm on the Island' Heaney structures his poem in one stanza of 19 lines using iambic pentameter, perhaps to signify the rhythm of the waves and wind. He writes collaboratively as 'We' and also involves the reader using 'you know what I mean'. Both poets use enjambment to keep the reader enthralled at the sequence of remembered events. The events are also linked together with a series of conjunctions (and, but, or, for, since, when) in both poems to recall the story/event seamlessly.

Both poems use the sound of words to create a sense of emotion. In 'Ozymandias' the long-dead pharaoh is described giving 'cold commands'; this plosive sound suggests that the ruler was mean towards his subjects and cold-hearted, the hard 'c' sounds create a sense of cruel authority. Similarly, Heaney describes the sound of the 'spray' as a 'tame cat turned savage'. This simile expresses the juxtaposition of a familiar aspect of nature that has turned against humans. While Shelley was a romantic poet, believing that art and nature were more powerful and lasting than the power that humans thought they had in their lifetime, Heaney sees nature as something that humans can live alongside providing that they can respect their differences and he acknowledges that 'fear' of the storm is 'a huge nothing'. This oxymoron exemplifies how humans and nature have always been in conflict and always will be.

In the centre of each poem the subject is brought to life using personification. Heaney suggests that the wind 'pummels' at their houses and nature itself offers no comfort. Similarly, Shelley refers to the statue as if it were still alive and how the sculptor has 'read' the 'passions' of the once 'Mighty' Pharaoh. The 'wrinkled lip' and 'sneer' convey the visage of a cruel despot.

Both poets end their poems focusing on the threat to humans but also at their enigmatic beauty. While Shelley uses alliteration to create a sense of a barren desert that has eaten

away at the statue, Heaney uses a lexical field of battle to bring the poem to the climax of the storm. Shelley uses adjectives to suggest that the desert remains 'boundless and bare', the sands are 'lone and level' creating an image of desolation but also one that can be very dangerous. Contrastingly, Heaney uses active verbs such as 'exploding' and 'bombarde'd', giving the impression of a WWII battle. The metaphor: 'space is a salvo' implies that the air around them has come alive and is attacking the islanders.