

Compare the ways in which conflict and power are shown in 'Ozymandias' and one other poem you have studied.

The writers of both 'Ozymandias' and 'London' use setting to convey conflict and power. In 'Ozymandias', Shelley writes that 'the lone and level sands stretch far away' while describing Ozymandias' statue as a 'colossal wreck'. This creates contrast to the powerful statement on the statue's pedestal, which uses an imperative to 'Look on my work...and despair.' The contrast demonstrates that Ozymandias' power has not lasted, but instead has been over-run by the power of Nature. This suggests that humans should not be too arrogant in the face of Nature and Time, both of which will outlast us. In the conflict between humanity and Nature, there is a clear winner.

Whereas Shelley uses setting to show how powerful Nature is, Blake uses locations to convey his beliefs that people in London are being poisoned by organised religion and society's class discrimination. Blake's use of 'every black'ning Church appals' cleverly uses polysemy to reflect not only the pollution in London during the Industrial Revolution and Blake's personal belief that religion corrupted people. Blake's beliefs could be seen to be purely subjective, and a matter of opinion reflecting his feelings about London life at the time, whereas Shelley's views seem more objective with a moral warning; Nature and time will outlast us, and we should be wary of arrogance.

Both writers present conflict through their descriptions of people. In 'Ozymandias', it is clear that Ozymandias was a powerful leader. Shelley describes the legs of the statue as 'vast' which suggests the whole statue must have been huge, implying his importance. Ozymandias' power was clearly created through his personality, with the use of 'wrinkled lip' and 'sneer of cold command' reflecting an angry and demanding leader. This detailed description allows the traveller (and therefore the reader) to get a sense of the man even though his visage is now 'shattered' – like his empire. Where Shelley uses one man to demonstrate arrogance and hubris, Blake employs repetition of the determiner 'every' to show that London has polluted many people, from 'infant' to 'man'. The only women mentioned in the poem are 'harlots' suggesting that the women of London have resorted to prostitution, because the situation in the city is so unpleasant and bleak. This again shows that Shelley is warning against individual arrogance, whereas Blake is bemoaning the state of all people who live in London.

Both poets show conflict through their description of people's thoughts. Ozymandias' pedestal orders others to 'look on my work...and despair.' This imperative shows his arrogance and shows that he wanted to use his achievements to instil fear in others, thus increasing his power through conflict. The verb 'despair' has connotations of complete loss of hope, and desperation. The two simple verbs here convey a clear set of instructions. Look, and despair. This suggests that Ozymandias thinks there is no other option; once someone has seen what he has achieved, there is no option for them but to feel lost and worthless. However, Blake describes the people of London as living in 'mind-forg'd manacles'. This

suggests that the people who are suffering have created their own prison in their minds. 'Manacles' has connotations of slavery, oppression and victimisation, suggesting that Blake feels that London is oppressing its residents, but the use of 'mind-forg'd' suggests that the people have the choice to escape, and yet do not. This could be Blake suggesting that London residents could leave if they wanted, but at the time the poem was written, London was seen as a place where dreams were made, and the streets were paved with gold. Despite this not being the case for the majority, many stayed with the faint hope of one day enjoying success. Shelley could be suggesting that arrogance will turn to hubris if we expect others to react a certain way to our achievements, whereas Blake seems to be implying that we should not stay in a bad situation if we do not have to. Perhaps Blake is turning some of his anger at the state of London on those who live there and do not take responsibility for leaving.