كلية : الاداب

القسم او الفرع : اللغة الانكليزية

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اسم المادة باللغة العربية : الشعر الانكليزي في العصر الفيكتوري

اسم المادة باللغة الإنكليزية : English Poetry in the Victorian Age

اسم المحاضرة العاشرة باللغة العربية: تحليل قصيدة الفرد لورد تنسون سيدة شالوت (الجزء الثاني)

اسم المحاضرة العاشرة باللغة الإنكليزية : Analysis of Alfred Lord, Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott (Part Two)*

The most famous Victorian lyrical ballad is “The Lady of Shalott”, first published in 1832. The narrative of the lady's isolation, magical weaving, mysterious curse, and fatal glimpse of Lancelot in her mirror is also balladic in strategy. The ballad allows Tennyson to note only, “She has heard a whisper say,/ A Curse is on her if she stay/ To look down to Camelot” (39-41) , just as ballad conventions dictates that she accept her condition as a given: “She knows not what the curse may be,/ And so she weaveth steadily (42-43). The legend of “The Lady of Shalott”, as inherited by Tennyson from the medieval romances, projects a potent image of woman destroyed by misplaced love- love which brings to the surface the dilemmas of the man who is the object of that love, and of the society that surrounds them both. Tennyson responds this story in a complex way which inspired a succession of painters to use his re-creation of a medieval tale to explore their own responses to a powerful poetic image of a woman.

An atmosphere of mystery pervades the poem, one of the reasons it so intrigued Pre-Raphaelite artists, who were eager to express the images of their imaginations (Nelson 4). Tennyson opens the poem with descriptions of the beautiful island on which the Lady is imprisoned, rather than explaining anything about the Lady herself. He finally mentions her in the last line of the second stanza,

and even then, only briefly. The vibrancy of the outside world contrasts with the Lady's prison of "gray" walls and towers, asserting her isolation from the activity of life. Yet although Tennyson introduces the Lady in this stanza, the poem's sense of mystery continues. Throughout the poem, Tennyson thoroughly details the outside world, while the Lady remains a woman of mystery. Tennyson does not explain what the Lady looks like, why the Lady is cursed, or her inner state of mind. One of the only times the Lady speaks during the poem, and one of the only times Tennyson alludes to her thoughts or emotions, occurs in the eighth stanza.

> But in her web she still delights
> To weave the mirror's magic sights,
> For often through the silent nights
> A funeral, with plumes and lights
> And music, went to Camelot (line: Part II, 28-32)

The poem, with its larger last part, leaves the reader on the crest of a wave. Each stanza is nine lines long, and contains four lines in either iambic or trochaic tetrameter followed by one line in iambic hexameter, followed by three lines again in either iambic or trochaic tetrameter, followed by one line in iambic hexameter. The poem's meter thus flows, wave-like, between longer and shorter lines. Tennyson considered this declaration the poem's most crucial moment. Although at first the

Lady seemed content to remain isolated from the darkness and sadness of the world outside, another aspect of that life appealed to her: seeing the "two young lovers lately wed" made her yearn for a lover of her own. Tennyson's use of contrasts within the poem highlights this conflict. As mentioned before, Tennyson juxtaposes descriptions of the lively outside world with the Lady's stark, static existence in her room. Although the Lady might be satisfied with safely weaving her tapestry from a distance, removed from the pain the world outside could offer, her admission in this stanza proves that she is not content.

The Lady of Shalott did not have this luxury, as she was cursed with eternal seclusion from society. Therefore, even the slightest step towards entering the real world is enough to destroy her and her art. Her fatal ending is fitting, for in Tennyson's era, it seemed that societal conventions were, in fact, more prized than creativity or intellect. In particular, Tennyson complained about Hunt's interpretation in his *The Lady of Shalott*, which detailed the scene in which the Lady looks out her window and realizes her fate . Hunt's painting, very similar to his Moxon Tennyson version of the scene, depicts the Lady in elaborate surroundings, unlike the stark room described in the poem. Hunt also takes the liberty of representing the Lady tangled in her tapestry's threads, a detail not included in the poem and of which Tennyson did not approve. However, Hunt had a purpose in straying from certain elements of the poem. For example, the ornate decoration of

the Lady's room served to communicate concepts such as the conflict between pure love and romantic, passionate love, a tension represented by the image of the Virgin and Child on the left side of the painting and the image of Hercules taking the golden apples of Hesperides on the right side of the painting. Other elaborations of the poem, such as the details of the Lady's hair blowing violently about her and the threads of the Lady's tapestry entangling her, reinforce Hunt's rendition of a wild emotional state. These deviations do not detract from viewers' recognition of the subject matter. For example, Hunt includes the Lady's loom and the cracked mirror with Lancelot's reflection, which identify the painting as the climactic scene from Tennyson's poem. The poem's demonstration of the melancholy aspects of love, and the spiritual state of suffering for love, fascinated the Pre-Raphaelites. The poem dealt with the popular topic of unrequited love, and the Lady of Shalott exemplified the unattainable woman, the cursed woman, and the woman sacrificing everything for a doomed love (Nelson 6). Artists such as Hunt, Waterhouse, and Shaw emphasized these themes by illustrating the most tragic scenes of the poem.