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القسم او الفرع : اللغة الانكليزية

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اسم المحاضرة الثانية عشرة باللغة الإنكليزية : Analysis of Alfred Lord, Tennyson's *The Lady*

*of Shalott (Part Four)*

The Lady of Shalott is considered an emblem of the women who suffered from marginalization in a gender ideological society from the Middle Ages to the Victorian period. Akin to the Lady of Shalott, women's contributions in society were not considered essential because the working opportunities for them were limited and they were not as robust as men were. This kind of upheaval made women gradually seek change. The Lady is also introduced to traits of females through her observation. The poem's speaker notes that she sees “the red cloaks of market girls” (53); “a troop of damsels glad” (55); and the “two lovers lately wed” (70), one of which would be a female. The Lady does not see the market girls but rather their cloaks, defining them through their clothing. Stevenson states that seeing “real emotion” was the cause of the Lady's declaration of half-sickness. In this view, emotion was the driving force that influenced her to eventually leave the tower. However, nothing in the poem implies that these young lovers were the first the Lady had ever seen, and influenced her in this moment to see real emotion for the first time; she had previously been observing people on the road for an unspecified amount of time. The Lady of Shalott finds refuge in her confinement within the tower by monotonously weaving a colourful web. Hence, Sharyn Urdall mentions that the mirror symbolizes purity, truth, and fidelity (34), but the Lady has not yet

discovered her identity at all. This prohibition is brought about by her marginalization from the “public sphere”, where patriarchy dominates society. As a result, the Lady is only entitled to stay in the “private sphere” through her submissiveness. The woman's role she had observed was one in which women were defined by those around them—in other words, their audience. The Lady saw not one market girl with others around her, but a group of market girls. Her acknowledgement of half-sickness suggests awareness of her lack and the odd state of her individuality. In 1848, six years after his revision of “The Lady of Shalott” and one year before the completion of *In Memoriam*, his elegy to Hallam, Tennyson arrived at the sea in the West Country of England.

The suppressed feelings and thoughts that she keeps gradually surface in her consciousness. She feels the burden of being incomplete and becoming subjected to “social castration”, an idea of Sandra Gilbert and Susan Gubar, which characterizes women's inadequacy in terms of social power. Lancelot's voice has an intrinsic significance to the Lady since she also sings at times, in which “Only reapers, reaping early,/ In among the bearded barley,/ Hear a song that echoes cheerly”(ll. 28- 30); thus, it suggests that singing is the only communication of the lady with the outer world, and hearing Lancelot makes her feel that someone is responding and understanding her. Edgar Shannon Jr. notes that Lancelot's singing strengthens her will to disregard the curse. The Lady deduces that the curse comes upon her by what

happens next; the mirror cracks and the web “floated wide”. Flavia Alaya views the curse as that which causes the Lady to leave her life as isolated artist and to feel emotion: “The Lady of Shalott” might well have said for the first time, „I have felt.“ At this point in the poem, the curse is indeed come upon the Lady of Shalott, and all such ladies who are surrogates for the artist”. James Kincaid suggests that, “The broadest, most general irony of the poem is that the Lady simply exchanges one kind of imprisonment for another; her presumed freedom is her death.” It seems that the Lady cannot escape tragedy. Carl Plasa claims that the Lady's journey towards Camelot through death conveys its own resistance to the transgression of gender divisions. It illustrates how difficult it is for women to define their identity, and when they do, there are constant obstructions in their way. The Lady, after crying out that the curse has come upon her, leaves the tower and approaches the water: In the stormy east-wind straining, The pale yellow woods were waning, The broad stream in his banks complaining, Heavily the low sky raining Over tower'd Camelot (118-122). “The Lady of Shalott” is not a name but an identity informing her of gender and location, forever tying her to Shalott here. The Lady performs her death for males and for God. The song itself seems to contain power; a new unspecified audience, “they,” hears “a carol, mournful, holy, / Chanted loudly, chanted lowly, / Till her blood was frozen slowly” (145-147). “They” cannot know her blood is frozen

slowly; to me, it is almost like the song brings about the freezing of the blood, as if the Lady uses the song as a spell that casts death. Whatever the song's power, she still sings for an audience of the divine.

He compares the boat's movement with that of sailors "rising and dropping" on the water, and also with the "wild warblings" of the dying swans. The end stopping of the first four lines imply a ceasing of smooth motion which completely halts with the caesura in the fifth line; this line and the next, however, have no end stopping, allowing the boat to drift in peace for an instant until the audience ("they") is introduced. She sings, she performs, and she is heard despite the energetic water. Nevertheless, this version of the poem goes on to detail the death of the Lady; her "smooth face sharpened slowly"; she is "a pale, pale corpse" and "deadcold." The Lady undergoes a definite change from smoothness to sharpness. The water does not kill the Lady; she dies on the water, but the curse kills her. In the end, though, the water is still an energetic medium for death. According to Joyce Green, this poem was one of the five "predominately unpopular" poems in the original 1832 collection that Tennyson decided to revise (678), implying the poem held significance to him, at least causing him to re-approach the poem. Her very performance changes; the song, while still containing finality, is not tinted with death. She is no longer a corpse, but a standard of safe loveliness. Water becomes a limitless grave, something that cannot provide certainty or stability even in death.

The sailor “drops” into the water, implying an unceremonious burial; no audience for the death exists, no one can see the body in the hammock-shroud. The sailor is simply lost after death. Furthermore, the sea has taken this life even as the 26 mother invokes God, establishing tension between religious power and nature. The use of water as a medium through which to describe his loss shows Tennyson's enduring fascination with the sea and with water, which had the power to destroy life.