

## The Impact of Romanticism on Tennyson's Early Poetry

Prof. M. K. Harmoush,

Foreign Languages and Literature Department,

Faculty of Arts & Humanities,

King Abdul Aziz University.

### ملخص البحث:

يهدف هذا البحث لتقفي الاثر الرومنسي في قصائد الشاعر تينيسون . وكما هو معروف، ان الورد الفرد تينيسون علما مشهورا من شعراء العصر الفيكتوري، لكنه ومن خلال دراسة شاملة لقصائده في المرحلة الاولى تبين لنا انه شاعرا فاكتمسب لنفسه لقب الشاعر الرومنسي، لتناوله مواضيع وافكار شائعة في العصر الرومنسي مثل حب للطبيعة والميول للعزلة والهروب للخيال والعيش في ذكريات الماضي.

### Abstract:

This paper tends to examine Tennyson's poetry as having strong traits of Romanticism. Generally speaking, Lord Alfred Tennyson is one of the best representatives of the Victorian poetry. However, comprehensive reading of his early poems may surprise the reader with a fact that Tennyson gained himself the title of a Romantic poet. Many and the most important Romantic features such as celebration of nature, isolation, individuality, imagination

**and escape into the past, which are found in the great poets of the Romantic movement, appear clearly in Tennyson's early poetry.**

Lord Alfred Tennyson, (1809-1892), chiefly remembered as the most representative poet of the Victorian age', wrote many great poems such as 'In Memoriam' 1849, for the enjoyment of his Victorian audience, and became the Laureate poet during Queen Victoria reign. However, in many instances he is a Romantic poet as his early poems are described as having Romantic elements. Thus, can we say that Tennyson is Romantic in addition to his Victorianism? If so, how he is Romantic in his poetry?

In order to answer these questions, we have to learn first what Romanticism is and what its main characteristics in poetry are. Romanticism is a literary and artistic movement that appeared in the late eighteenth century and lasted nearly to the middle of the nineteenth century, with its main characteristics being:-

- Glorification of Nature.
- Awareness and Acceptance of Emotions.
- Celebration of Artistic Creativity and Imagination.
- Emphasis on Aesthetic Beauty.
- Themes of Solitude.

- Focus on Exoticism and History.
- Spiritual and Supernatural Elements.
- Vivid Sensory Descriptions. (Miller-Wilson)

Now how is Tennyson Romantic? Does Tennyson show any of the above-mentioned general Romantic characteristics in his poetry? Comprehensive reading of Tennyson's poetry may reflect his being Romantic. His early poems are filled with Romantic touches. The Romantic characteristics, which can be found in Tennyson's poetry written in the 1830s, include melancholy, nostalgia for the past, subjectivity, dreams and the imagery, adoration of nature and the supernatural.

Tennyson was influenced deeply by the Romantics, especially Shelley, Wordsworth, Byron, Coleridge and Keats, whose stamps remained clearly in his early volumes (El Shawa 20).

Lord Alfred Tennyson, a consummate poetic artist, consolidated and refined the tradition bequeathed to him by his predecessors in the Romantic Movement (especially Wordsworth, Byron, Keats, Shelley). Beginning in the aftermath of Romantic Movement, Tennyson's development as a poet is a romantic progression from introverted and inert states of mind towards emancipated consciousness. The growth of consciousness and the relationship between the

self and the world beyond are fundamental concerns of romantic poetry and poetic theory.

The aesthetic implications of this self-realization are seen in the characteristically hemolytic modes of Romantic poetry: In the sensuous Imagery, which embodies states of feeling rather than being purely descriptive, in the subjective use of mythological fable, and in the adoption of dramatic persona. Tennyson employs each of these self-expression. Most of the poems in 1830 volume are mood-paintings, and word pictures of highly sensitizes, delicately attuned, febrile sensibility.(To what extent Tennyson is a romantic poet?)

In *Timbuctoo*, Tennyson celebrates nature:

I stood upon the Mountain which o'erlooks

The narrow seas, whose rapid interval

Parts Africa from green Europe, when the Sun

Had fall'n below th' Atlantick, and above

The silent Heavens were blench'd with faery light,

Uncertain whether faery light or cloud,

Flowing Southward, and the chasms of deep, deep blue

Slumber'd unfathomable, and the stars

Were flooded over with clear glory and pale. (1-9)

At Cambridge, Tennyson penned the strange and accomplished *Timbuctoo*. A fully Romantic poem, it concerns the legendary African intellectual city and suggests that the magic it held was derived from the mind of man. The poem attracted the notice of the university, which awarded Tennyson the chancellor's prize in 1829.

In *Nothing Will Die*, Tennyson, in his figurative language, refers to the beauty of nature, Lisa Spurgin, says:-

One of the most noticeable and lively signs of Spring has to be that symbolic flower, the Daffodil. The cheery yellow bursts of sunshine can brighten up an unseasonably grey day and fill you with positivity as you start out on another morning's commute. It's with this in mind that I am enlivened by the strong sentiment conveyed in this poem by Alfred, Lord Tennyson. ( 28th April 2014)

Again, in *All Things Will Die*, Tennyson expresses his pessimism, a great element of Romanticism. The poem says: Everyone would be busy in merry-making only. But then, there is a sudden shift from joyfulness to sorrow, carefree to seriousness, and cheerfulness to sadness. The poet starts feeling depressed because he knows that all this joy will come to an end sooner or later. He feels that the flowing of rivers will stop. ( Summary and Analysis, 2017 )

Depression, resentfulness and pessimism which constitute a considerable part of the elements of Romanticism are present in Tennyson's *The Dying Swan*, where the poet uses the gray colour to insert the sense of depression in the poem. The plain, where the swan struggles to escape death, is surrounded and made limited. The plain 'had been built up everywhere' and no one can escape from it. The poet uses 'Doleful' adjective with 'gray' to convey the depressed sense (Ramos) .

'*The Kraken*', where Tennyson talks about a sea animal, is used metaphorically perhaps to suggest man in his continuous search for simple, safe and happy life. The Kraken keeps living in deep water of the ocean enjoying happiness and pleasure with natural creatures of the ocean, but when he comes to the surface of the water, unfortunately, he dies. The story of this poem perhaps reflects the Romantic escape from reality into the world of imagination; living in the deep ocean water may stand as a symbol of man living in his imagination, happy and comfortable with his natural surroundings, but when he decides to go to the surface to contact with outside world, the corrupt society, he suffers and immediately dies. (Baldwin, 14 December 2021)

*Marian* is another poem with Romantic qualities; the speaker in *Marian* is a 'victim of Romanticism'. She

describes her emotional journey and the subsequent pain of rejection. The embellished expressions have been used to alert the reader to the extent of her suffering. Tennyson may have used these techniques in order to commutate the magnitude of her sorrow. The first stanza focuses on nature and its deterioration. The decay of landscape is used to show Marian's gradual psychological deterioration. 'With blackest moss the flower-pots were thickly crashed, one and all'; this may suggest that despair resides in nature. (Ashenden)

*Mariana* is a fully Romantic poem for it describes nature. This poem begins with the description of an abandoned farmhouse, or grange, in which the flower-pots are covered in overgrown moss and an ornamental pear tree hangs from rusty nails on the wall. The sheds stand abandoned and broken, and the straw ("thatch") covering the roof of the farmhouse is worn and full of weeds. (3)

We notice in the following lines the yearning for the past and the old, and also the melancholy and the mystery which constitute the heart of Romanticism:

The broken sheds look'd sad and strange:

Unlifted was the clinking latch;

Weeded and worn the ancient thatch

Upon the lonely moated grange. (Mariana, 6-9)

One critic says that Tennyson, in *Mariana*, addresses ‘only this tragic romantic aspect of the character’.

(Britannica, *Mariana*, [19 December 2021](#))

Mariana’s emotion is compared to her physical state and surroundings in the first stanza. The poem begins with a description of the setting which takes place in an abandoned grange. The grange that had “broken sheds” and appeared to be “sad and strange,” is described as broken, worn, and full of weeds. The grange is described as having “rusted nails” falling out of the wood and in the wall, and having flower pots covered in “black moss”. “With blackest moss the flower-plots/ Were thickly crusted, one and all:/ The rusted nails fell from the knots/ That held the pear to the gable-wall./ The broken sheds look’d sad and strange:/ Unlifted was the clinking latch;”(l. 1-6). The grange is described as being dusty with old doors that have old, creaking hinges. The imagery that is used to describe the setting, conveys a picture of despair, loneliness. (The Function of Setting in “Mariana”)

Commenting on *Mariana*, Obaidullah says that “the romantic fusion of feeling with perception makes the silent-decaying house and its desolate landscape an embodiment of Mariana's consciousness” and contuse “in

a series of stanzas without any progression or resolution, this itself adding to the effect of

monotony and stagnation.” He also says that “The Romantics were overtly tragic in their attitude to life”; they regard life 'as false nature', man is chained down to life by 'a heavy weight of hours.' The Romantic poet contemplates life only to be crushed under 'the heavy and weary weight of this unintelligible world', and instead of rising to the height of his argument and 'justify the ways of God to man' all his soul is aflame with 'a devotion to something afar.” (171-72. )

Tennyson explores the Romantic musing on death and the passing of joy as it is evident in his unpublished poem *In Deep and Solemn Dreams*. He responds to the temptations of the Romantic nature where he uses images from nature to evoke a generalized mood of loss and regret, and he echoes the Romantics when he uses details of natural observation employed to suggest sad emotion as in *Claribel* and *Mariana*:

About a stone-cast from the wall

A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,

And o'er it many, round and small,

The cluster'd marsh-mosses crept.

Hard by a poplar shook always,

All silver-green with gnarled bark:

For leagues no other tree did mark

The level waste, the rounding gray. (37-44)

Tennyson's poetry, like that of the Romantics, is dominated by reverie, nostalgia, longing, and melancholy. He feels nostalgic about the past days; he is always discontented with the present' and happy with the past, yearning towards it, and worships it. Tennyson, unlike the Classic poets, sees life in this world as a burdensome and wearisome existence. The mariners of his *The Lotos Eaters* contemplate life as being crushed under heavy and weary toil:

"Death is the end of life; ah, why Should life all labour be?"  
And thus being weary with life full of toil and 'war with evil'  
they urge: "Give us long rest or death, dark death or  
dreadful ease. "In this line we get a touch of Keatsian echo.  
The above quoted line, from Tennyson's *The Lotos Eaters*,  
seems to have a direct connection with the following line  
occurring in Keats's *Ode to a nightingale*:

"..... for many a time/I have been half in love with easeful  
Death."

Dhirendranath Ghosh writes, "A sense of dissatisfaction, then, with the real world, often leading to a desire to escape from that world, constitutes the very essence of Romanticism. Hence, it has two distinct but correlated aspects. There is in the first place, a vehement protest against the actualities of existence; and in the second place, a yearning for some completer synthesis, where the actualities of life

will lose their edges and will not grate upon the senses and the feelings. It is thus both an emphatic denial and a bold affirmation that constitutes the peculiar fascination, which Romanticism exerts over

the susceptible mind." (1933)

Escape from the present into the past is another important trend in Romanticism that appears clearly in Tennyson's poetry. *Lotos Eaters* may stand as a good example for Tennyson's preference of the past to the present.

Obaidullah says that "Romanticism has been found in the continuous search for avenues of escape from the world of facts. It is, on the one hand, reactionary against the grim and harsh realities of life; and on the other, imaginative and creative. Tennyson shows his romantic sensibility through his romantic rebellion against the harsh facts of life and creation of visionary worlds in his poems. The poem

*The Lotos Eaters* is not only about Lotos island, it is a product of the Lotos. Land of Tennyson's mythological imagination, which is essentially creative too. The most notable feature of this land of the lotos-eaters" is being ... "A land where all things always seemed the same". Time stands still and change and transience are unknown, The landscape of the Lotos land offers a seductive and tempting vision of life free from toils and hardship. The landscape delineated expresses a sensuous weariness and longing for respite from all activity and hardship:

"There is sweet music here that softer falls  
 Than petals from blown roses on the grass,  
 Or night dews on still waters between walls  
 Of shadowy granite, in a gleaming pass;  
 Music that gentler on the spirit lies,  
 Than an tir'd eyelids upon tir' eyes;  
 Music that brings sweet sleep down from the blissful skies.  
 Here are cool mosses deep,  
 And thro' the moss the ivies creep,  
 And in the stream the long-leaved Rowers weep,  
 And from the craggy ledge the poppy hangs in sleep."

The Lotos Land bears much resemblance with the ideal world or

Keats as described in "Ode on a Grecian Urn" or 'Ode to a Nightingale".

This static existence is carefully set in sharp contrast to the ceaseless motion of the sea-"the wandering fields of barren foam" on which Ulysses along with his mariners is on a ceaseless and wearing journey. The sea then represents a temporal existence and also the

harsh facts of the world that assail and overthrow the equilibriums of

life, from which the lotos fruits offer escape into "dreamful ease". As

a realm beyond the reach of time, the land of the lotos eaters depicts

an imaginative ideal. (171-72)

Tennyson once wrote to Emily Seldom, "the far-off world seems nearer than the present, for in the present is always something unreal and indistinct, but the other seems a good solid planet, rolling round its green hills and paradises to the harmony of more steadfast laws. Whereas the present seemed to Tennyson empty and unreal, the past

“that good solid planet” was a world of plenitude of stability. (Welch. Distance and Progress in *Mariana*)

Tennyson rivals the Romantic poet John Keats in his love and passion to nature. *The Lotos-Eaters* represents one of Alfred Lord Tennyson’s most extended experiments in, and demonstrations of, the sensual nature of poetry.

Tennyson—heavily influenced by John Keats—was interested in testing the limits of poetic expression, and thus, more than most poets, he wrote poems about the nature not so much of poetry but of poems themselves. How richly can a poem elaborate its own particular and specific means of producing pleasure? The kind of poetry at which Keats and Tennyson excelled was loved because of its gorgeous and sensual descriptive powers, not because of the exciting story it had to tell, nor even because of the insight into the struggles of the human soul that it afforded. Both Tennyson and Keats did afford such insight, but both were interested in the means of dwelling on human experience, of lingering, with a sustained intensity, on the mind’s experience of the world.” (Mambrol Februar 17, 2021 ).

The poem well illustrates Tennyson’s attitude toward Nature. Tennyson treats nature always as a background for reflecting human moods and feelings. In the poem the dreamy ease and lethargic activities of the objects of

nature all around the lotos-island exactly reflect the languorous and indolent mood of the companions of Ulysses who have tasted of the lotos fruits. The following lines may be cited as an illustration:

“In the afternoon they came unto a land

In which it seemed always afternoon.

All round the coast the languid air did swoon,

Breathing like one that hath a weary dream,

Full-faced above the valley stood the moon.”

Tennyson is noted for the accurate and minute description of nature. In the poem Tennyson describes accurately and minutely the silent operations of Nature, the growth and decay of a leaf, an apple and a flower. In the lines, “.....like yonder amber light,/Which will not leave the myrrh-bush on the height”, We have a very good instance of Tennyson’s accurate observation of Nature. The rays of the setting sun remain longest on the hilltop and when they fall on the green myrrh-bush on the top of the hill, it takes on an amber tint. The poem amply illustrates Tennyson’s pictorial art. In his description of the natural objects, he seizes upon appropriate details, dress them in expressive language and thus throw a glistening image before our eyes. (Sarkar, 2021)

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*The Lady of Shalott* is about the mysterious lady of Shalott who has been cursed in a castle, forbidden to look outside. So instead, she watches the world go by in a magic mirror and spends her days weaving a magic web. (Romanticism: The Lady of Shalott, January 4, 2017)

‘The Lady of Shalott’ reminds me of Coleridge’s *Kubla Khan*; the two poems describe great towers surrounded by green trees and flowers. Tennyson in *The Lady of Shalott* draws a romantic scene with a fantastic old tower with flowers and trees and rivers going through:

On either side the river lie  
Long fields of barley and of rye,  
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;  
And thro’ the field the road runs by  
To many-tower’d Camelot;  
And up and down the people go,  
Gazing where the lilies blow  
Round an island there below,  
The island of Shalott. ( Stanza 1 )

The romantic elements are apparent in *Lady of Shalott*.  
“The poem illustrates the isolation of a woman in a tower

far from what she wants to live and experience. She lives a life imprisoned by a curse she knows no consequence for and so hesitates to live her life the way she would have liked.” (Rehman, "The Lady of Shalott by Alfred Lord Tennyson" 14 December 2021).

*Lady of Shalott* delineates the dreams, the mysteries, isolations and melancholies of the individualism found in the Romantic poetry. Tennyson uses the opening stanza of his poem to really set the tone for the rest of the poem. We are introduced to two high contrasting places: Camelot and Shalott. Camelot can effortlessly represent the dream of any and every person: a world full of life and opportunities, even the roads to which look attractive and inviting. There are roads that lead to a life of opportunity for every person. Each individual has their own Camelot and every tower within symbolizes the desires and hopes that they would love to reach one day. Shalott, however, can just as easily represent the bubble that we as individuals create for ourselves. It is a place that people merely notice in passing. So the comfort zones and rules that we create for ourselves that no one else really pays attention to, are without much difficulty represented by Shalott in this poem. (Rehman, "The Lady of Shalott by Alfred Lord Tennyson" 14 December 2021).

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Another critic claims that in *The Lady of Shalott* "Tennyson addresses the isolation of women which was present due to the increasing gender divisions at the time. Tennyson may be responding to the anxieties surrounding isolation since the Victorian era; rigid class systems were put in place and women were most at risk as they had to abide by traditional British values which were to remain behind closed doors and be subservient to men. Tennyson portrays the isolation of women through the recurring theme of Romanticism; this is shown through the poet's constant associations with nature being the centre of the poem."

(The Lady Of Shalott Analysis

<https://www.bartleby.com/essay/The-Lady-Of-Shalott-Analysis-PJUARVYFWR>)

According to El Shawa, "Tennyson pursued the Romantics in their questioning the Real and the

Ideal. He showed an interest in the isolated or imprisoned life; he wrote some poems that stress this interest and exhibit the Romantic influence in them. "The Lady of Shalott" is a good example with its dense, eloquently organized and highly coloured imagery," (76)

Shelley, the well-known Romantic figure, was a great source of influence to Tennyson's poetry. "The influence of Shelley is evident in many of Tennyson's poems; Tennyson used Shelley's ideas and opinions in several poetic

passages. For example, *The Lady of Shalott*, which modern critics have interpreted in

psychoanalytic terms, as imprisoned libido unable to find expression in a utilitarian age, as the poet's Jungian anima, his feminine self-turning from inner creativity to be crushed by confrontation with the real world, can be related to Shelley's *Witch of Atlas*.(El Shawa 88)

El Shawa explores Tennyson's individuality in his Romantic poems:

Tennyson followed the Romantics in their emphasis on self-realization, but there is a greater feeling of passivity in his poems, in which states of feeling are luxuriantly indulged for their own sake. Through Tennyson's early work, there is a tendency towards morbidity of feeling, that sense of the mind's alienation from the outer world which had already marked Coleridge's "Dejection Ode". The loss of personality which coloured Tennyson's early poems harked back to some of the central visionary moments of the Romantic poetry." (77)

Tennyson nearly followed the footsteps of his Romantic teachers but with some few personal changes:

Tennyson's early subjects were the common topics of his romantic predecessors, nature, English pastorals,

ballad themes, medieval romance, classical legend , love and death. But Tennyson was burdened with no message, no new interpretation of nature or the peasant, no fresh insight into the significance of things medieval or things Hellenic. Each and all were subjects that quickened his poetic imagination, and his concern was to attain to the perfect rendering in melody and picturesque suggestion of the mood which each begot in his brooding temperament.”(El Shawa78)

Indeed, Tennyson is never quite spontaneous. But when the mood was one of the poet’s very soul, luxurious or somber or a complex blend of both, the metrical expression was, from the first, a triumphant success. Mariana, “A spirit haunts the year’s last hours,” Recollections of the Arabian Nights, The Dying Swan, The Lady of Shalott, The Lotos Eaters-all reveal a poet with a command of new and surprising and delightful metrical effects as unmistakably as did the early poems of Milton, the masterpieces of Coleridge, Shelley’s songs.(El Shawa 78)

Tennyson copied not only the Romantic themes of his predecessors but also their poetic techniques.

Again, El Shawa says:

“Thomas Gray, the metrist, had influenced Tennyson's use of metre, rhythm and words. One day Tennyson

said that he knew the quality of every English word except that of 'scissors', and where others might disagree with him he let them know where he stood: "Knowledge, shone, knoll -let him who reads me always read the vowels in these words long". Words, according to Tennyson always had sonorous lightness, heaviness, colour, mellifluousness and sharpness. Tennyson's use of music, which was too triumphant in his poetry, was similar to that of Gray. There are many of the devices in Tennyson's poetry built on Gray's. He followed the way in which Gray used alliteration where he sometimes showed it and sometimes avoided it. " (El Shawa 82)

Melodies and sounds are also part of Tennyson's borrowings from the Romantics. "Tennyson's early poetry was characterized by both grace and melodiousness, it showed an interest in sounds and their verbal melody, so he may have been influenced by Coleridge's passage in *Biographia Literaria* in which Coleridge places first among the specific symptoms of poetic power in a young writer, a delight in verbal melody and a command of the means by which it is produced. There are some poems showing Tennyson's indebtedness one way or another to Coleridge; "Remorse" owes considerably in mood and theme to Coleridge's "The Pains of Sleep"; "Recollections of the Arabian Nights", in theme and in tone, recalls "Kubla Khan"; and even more suggestive of specific passages in

Coleridge's dream poem are some of the lines in an unpublished sonnet of about 1831, this sonnet has these lines: 'Thro yonder poplar alley.

Below, the blue green river windeth slowly,/ But in the middle of the

Somber valley / The crisped waters whisper musically./ And all the haunted

place is dark and holy', have a link with a remarkable passage in "Kubla

Khan":

But on the deep romantic chasm which slanted

Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!

A savage place! as holy and enchanted

As o'er beneath a waning moon was haunted. (El Shawa 86-87)

Tennyson is also indebted to Shelley in use of Vocabulary. El Shawa remarks:

If we examine the matter of Tennyson's indebtedness to Shelley in both phrase and versification, we shall find it a complicated one for the fact of their common debt to Milton. There are many phrases such as

'translucent wave', 'odorous winds', 'the clear hyline', which may have descended to each in a direct line from Milton, or they have come to Tennyson through Shelley. Milton's fine use of 'winnow', especially in the passage, 'with quick fan Winnows the buxom air', seems to have haunted both of them. Tennyson borrowed few definite borrowings from Shelley and he reproduced quite closely Shelley's manner in the personification of Loves, Hopes, and Desires; and he had Shelley's predilection for enchanted boats and shallops. There are several resemblances to Shelley in Tennyson's poetry; as in the following lines: A gloomy shore the others reach ( The Couch of Death 137). 'Till he pass the gloomy shore', (Lines among the Eugenean Hills 137). (90)

Tennyson is indebted deeply to Byron in form and content. Tennyson, the child, always admired and

imitated Byron's ideas and style. This imitation gave Tennyson the opportunity to participate in seemingly distant cultural events. Tennyson's first poetical work, "Poems by Two Brothers" (1827), was replete with

imitations of Byron, but despite the importance of Byron in this volume, Tennyson avoided Byron's characteristic genre of the verse romance. Indeed, Tennyson's relation to Byron seemed to occur outside of

overt cultural meditation. Tennyson depended far more closely on Byron's texts as they were available to him, as if he was responding directly to Byron's words themselves. For Tennyson, Byron's poetry was not simply a body of stereotypes, but texts that he knew in detail. Tennyson, the supreme metrist in English, was indebted to Byron in his use of the anapaestic of four measure, rhymed in couplets which was considered one of the noticeable and characteristic metres of Byron. Indeed, Byron was evident in

Poems by Two Brothers volume; there are some poems which are directly reminiscent in subject, rhetoric, imagery and movement of Byron's *The Destruction of Sennacherib*. Tennyson was not inspired only by Byron's metre but also by the character of his diction, his choice of vast, tenebrous, warlike, historical, oriental, scriptural, and ossianic subjects; Tennyson was influenced by Byron's habit of appending classical mottoes and semi-learned annotations to his poems, and finally, most clearly of all, in the gloomy, misanthropic and remorseful sentiments of a large proportion of the poems. (El Shawa 92)

El Shawa, demonstrating Tennyson's imitation of Byron, makes a comparison between two poems: one from Tennyson's poetry and the other from Byron's. Byron's influence is apparent in some of Tennyson's most

distinguished poems; "The Lady of Shalott", "Ulysses" and "Tithon" are among these

poems which have parallels with Byron's poems. The most relevant poem of Byron's to "The Lady of Shalott" is "The Prisoner of Chillon". In spite of all the differences, "The Lady of Shalott" and "The Prisoner of Chillon" have many things in common. Byron was like Tennyson when he described a

prisoner who became a figure of the enclosed mind. The analogues to Byron's scene in "The Prisoner of Chillon" are striking, even more telling than linguistic echoes are prosodic ones; Tennyson imitates Byron's metre and stanza closely, although he chooses a more difficult rhyme scheme. No doubt, these similarities reveal how much Tennyson's poem is the mirror image of Byron's. When Tennyson's lady appeared, she was imprisoned in a version of the indifferent 'other' world that Bonnivard saw outside his prison. Tennyson has transformed Bonnivard's 'outside' into the lady's 'inside', he has reversed the movement of Byron's plot by leading the lady not from sympathy to apathy, like Bonnivard, but from apathy to sympathy. Indeed, "The Lady of Shalott" moves through Byron's genre, the narrative romance, to reach Tennyson's preferred genre, the lyric. When the lady writes, "this is I,/The Lady of Shalott", she becomes more Byronic than

Byron himself. Byron betrays himself in his poems; she becomes her poem (El Shawa 93)

Tennyson received a lot of influence from Keats especially in the common theme of nature and language. Tennyson's early poetry resembles Keats's poetry by analogy rather than through imitation. Both of Tennyson and Keats are somewhat similar products of the forces of the Elizabethanism, of mediaevalism, of classicism, and of the return to nature; which are at work about them both. If we are going to regard Keats as more than an immediate forerunner of Tennyson in the midst of a swarm of poets of similar breed, but inferior vitality, we need to falsify historical perspective. So far as Tennyson's poems previous to 1833 are concerned, they have not even as much in common with Keats as they have with more nearly contemporary but less conspicuous writers. Tennyson's language of the early poems are indebted to Keats's language; resemblances to Keats are more analogous than literal, a hazardous kind of likeness from which to argue an indebtedness. In reviewing some of Tennyson's poems, we find the influence of Keats's language, especially that of "The Eve of St. Agnes". The heroine of "The Eve of St. Agnes" may have suggested the name of Madeline, they have nothing in common except "eye divine". Tennyson used the 'glowing hand' of "The Eve of St. Agnes" three

times through his poetry and in each time he used it with personification as in:

"The glowing hands of Honour" (Mithridates, 10), "Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in his glowing hands"(Locksley Hall 31), "Bright Fame, with glowing hand, unbears" (Time: an Ode 59)

Tennyson's "triple arch" of "Timbuctoo": 'With triple arch of over-changing bows', is much like Keats's 'triple arch'd' of "The Eve of 100 Tennyson and the English ...St.Agnes". Another influence of Keats is "Mariana" which was influenced by "Isabella", especially when she waits in vain:

' She weeps alone for pleasures not to be;

Sorely she wept until the night came on.

And so she pined, and so she died forlorn'.

The resemblances to Keats are much in Tennyson's "Poems ,Chiefly Lyrical" (1830), I mention the following lines:

Upon the middle of the night. (Mariana 25)

Upon the honey'd middle of the night. (Eve of St. Agnes 49)

Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow:

Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now. ( To-[clear-headed Friend 11-2)

"Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick  
 For nothing but a dream?" Hereat the youth  
 Look'd up: a conflicting of shame and ruth  
 Was in her plaited brow. (Endymion i 756-762)

The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed  
 And winged with flame (The Poet 11-2)

But on the viewless wings of poesy (Ode to a Nightingale  
 33)

And all about him rolled his lustrous eyes; (Love and Death  
 3)

Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes (Ode to a  
 Nightingale 29)

The physical sensations of Tennyson's poems may have  
 owed something to Keats's tender appeal of the same kind.  
 There is a predilection for such words as 'lush', 'flavorous',  
 'pulp'; and what Spedding  
 deprecatingly called the 'creature comforts' of the early  
 volumes can be paralleled in Keats. Tennyson was  
 adventurous in stanza forms; he liked to use fairly  
 elaborate stanzas in which he could swing his lines with the  
 mood, like Keats. The four shorter lines, operating as an

almost incantatory refrain in the "Mariana" stanza, serve to gather up the implications of the imagery in the preceding lines and repeat the suggestion of loss, regret and weariness: She only said, ' My life is dreary, He cometh not,' she said;

She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,I would that I were dead!' The imagery which Tennyson used in his early poems was Keatsian, but it is the Keats of magic casements and moonlight through stained glass

throwing warm gules on Madeline's fair breast rather than the Keats of "To Autumn" or of "Hyperion".

Tennyson sometimes copied Keats's heraldic use of color, but generally his use of color images is simply for the mood or atmosphere. A good example is the opening of part IV of "The Lady of Shalott":

In the stormy east-wind straining The end pale yellow woods were waning,

The broad-stream in his banks complaining, Over tower'd Camelot . (El Shawa 99-101)

Laurie, in her study, ranked Keats higher than Shelley in his indebtedness to Tennyson; she says Keats influenced Tennyson more than Shelley, especially in matters of

poetical heritage, and Tennyson, in turn, influenced the rest that came after him. (Margaret 3–27)

### **Conclusion**

In a nutshell, the cult of Tennyson would perhaps not have been possible without the Romantics, who paved the way both for Tennyson's fame and for his poetry, which frequently draws upon his predecessor's in style, tone and its preoccupation with its natural environment which drives much of his poetic description (Tennyson and the Romantics, 2021 Farringford).

Tennyson, especially in his early poetry, brought to the Victorians a massive literary knowledge of the romantic age. He enriched their minds with everything necessary for the Victorian poetry, ranging from great and common themes to elaborate and skillful techniques that helped to refresh the Victorian literature and consequently create famous and successful poets and other literary men of the time. Tennyson reintroduced Romanticism to the Victorians as a basis to rebuild and consolidate the so-called Victorian literature.

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