

# The world created by tennnyson in the lady of shalott

Literature



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Tennyson displays use of the method of imagery and poetry to enhance the effectiveness of the poem and to add to Lady of Shalott's story.

The beginning of the text establishes the setting and empathises the peaceful nature of the area. The imagery within the poem is made to perfection, creating an idealistic atmosphere, which portrays a fairy tale for the reader,

" Gazing where the lilies blow".

The colours used also bring life to the imagery, the following quote highlights the sense that she is trapped and her life is like a prison,

" Four gray walls, and four gray towers",

The colours used here, introduce a sense of gloom and captivity.

The lady of Shalott's situation does seem difficult, however her environment shields this and makes it seem more bearable,

" By the margain, willow-veil'd".

The imagery of her weaving brings magic into the poetry and suggests that she is happy and content how she is,

" A magic web with colours gay"

This quote brings even more bright and splendid colours into the poem and helps to highlight that every thing is to perfection.

In Part II, the word shadows is used, which is a contrast to the bright colours previously used and makes the reader wonder if The Lady of Shalott is satisfied with her life,

" Shadows of the world appear".

Imagery of light and dark is also a significant part of the poem; the descriptions of the Lady and Lancelot differ significantly. Her life is a world of shadows: dim, dismal, silent and gray. All colours that appear in her world are basic primary hues-i. e. the 'red cloaks of the market girls', the 'blue mirror', or the 'yellow woods'.

Lancelot on the other hand is constantly surrounded by images of dazzling light and a clear aural imagery of ringing,

" The bridle-bells rang merrily"

He is described using many bright, fiery connotations such as a meteor and there are many jewels surrounding him, portraying the sense of richness,

" Thick-jewell'd shone the saddle-leather"

It is this sharp contrast between the two that so strongly attracts The Lady of Shalott as an escape from her world of shadows.

The fairy tale imagery is finally shattered we see a contrast to the previous weather and surroundings.

The negative imagery used here informs the reader of her inevitable death and creates tension for what is to come,

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" Heavily the low sky raining".

The Lady of Shalott is a 180 line narrative poem divided into four sections of nine-line stanzas. It is almost entirely composed in iambic tetrameter, except the last line of each stanza, which is written in iambic trimeter. The rhyme scheme of poem is aaaabcccb. The fifth and ninth lines of almost every stanza end with " Camelot" and " Shalott" respectively. This constant and insistent repetition helps establish the monotony and weariness of the Lady's perpetual task. This repetition is only interrupted by the word " Lancelot". It is symbolic of how the Lady's newborn love for Lancelot brings an end to her servitude and allows her to escape from her tower of shadows.

Tennyson uses sibilant sounds, in the following quote the effect is enhancement of the mood and emphasis of the soft wind by repeating the 's' sound,

" Little breezes dusk and shiver".

To regain the reader's attention and excitement the writer uses slow heavy language to slow down the pace and then speeds it up suddenly with light and swift language,

" The shallop flitteth silken-sail'd".

Part III displays repetition of the word 'she', which moulds the idea of frantic movement and fastens the pace,

" She left the web, she left the loom".

I personally feel that The Lady of Shalott's story is truly tragic when it is explored deeply, however I feel the idealistic imagery conceals this and makes it seem like a typical fairy tale. As a reader, I received the impression that Tennyson is urging us to look deeper than the perfect outer shell and discover the true story of The Lady of Shalott.