

CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

A. Background of the Study

Literature describes as the human creation which has its aesthetic values. As a response of being attached to literature, someone may feel happy, sad, excited, cry or sometimes a feeling of *de javu*. This feeling, the feeling of *de javu*, rises because literature can never be born by itself. It is always born under such influences, whether it is realized, unrealized, direct, or indirect. Such influences show that there is a relation between literature and the extrinsic elements of literature, e.g. social, historical, and political aspect. Not only that, in creating a work of literature an author is almost always affected by the conditions of his surroundings (the society, cultural, language, etc)

Discussing literature, here in this paper the writer will choose poetry as topic of discussion. The poem is The Lady of Shalott which was written by Alfred Lord Tennyson. In an article "All I Know about 'The Lady of Shalott'", it is stated that 'The Lady of Shalott was first published in 1832 and was virtually rewritten in 1842 with many modifications and improvements" (allfreessays.com 2001). It is one of Tennyson's works besides his popular poems Idylls of the King and In Memoriam:AHH. According to Elaine Jordan, The Lady of Shalott was Tennyson's first published on Arthurian subject (16).

The source of the poem was based on some previous works of literature; they are an Italian romance Donna di Scalotta, Thomas Malory's Morte d'Arthur (1469-70), and Sidney Fowler Wright's The Ballad of Elaine. Though he took the basic story from those works, Tennyson made up the curse, the mirror, the song and the weaving. Not only related to previous works, the poet also made the supporting work which is closely related to The Lady of Shalott, it is Lancelot and Elaine, taken from Idylls of the King (1859-1888)(pathguy.com 2002).

Alfred Lord Tennyson, the author of The Lady of Shalott, was one of the great poets from the Victorian Era. He has been called the voice of Victorian England because he reflects the Victorian concern with moral codes in his retelling of the King Arthur Legends, based on The New Book of Knowledge (18: 262). Besides poetry, he wrote songs, idylls, ballads, dramatic monologues and epics. In all of his works that represents the Victorian Era, Tennyson's poetry is "characterized by wide interests, by intense sympathy with the deepest feelings and aspirations of humanity, the awareness of the problem of life, a very good sense of beauty, a power of imagination, and a perfect match of the sound and sense" (Tennyson 60). Ralph Philip Boas in An Introduction to the Study of Literature states that "many of Tennyson's poems are splendid illustrations of pattern of sound and color and feeling perfectly blended." Through his poems, Tennyson had the ability to build the readers imagination. This had made his poems comes to alive, as nearest as the reality. The diction of the words is so beautiful and clear that the reader can read his works as clear as seeing a painting. Tennyson, notes M.H Abrams, "Excels in some painting, in the higher sense of

the term that not the mere power of producing that rather vapid species of composition usually termed descriptive poetry. . .but the power of creating scenery, in keeping with some state of human feeling; so fitted to it as to be embodied symbol of it, and to summon up the state of feeling itself, with a force that not to be surpassed by anything but reality” (25). His greatness in creating poetry is shown by his successfulness in accepting Poet Laureateship in 1850, replacing William Wordsworth who died in the same year.

The Lady of Shalott, a 171-line narrative poem, was divided into four sections of nine-line stanzas. The four sections separate the important developments of the narrative, making it easier to understand because it is set out more like chapters of a book. In this paper, the writer will analyze The Lady of Shalott of 1842 version rather than the 1832 one. Known as Elaine, the fair maid of Astolat, the Lady of Shalott is portrayed as a mysterious maiden who lives in a tower, alone and unseen, on an island in the river that flows down to Camelot. Bound by a curse which causes her not to look at the world outside directly, she passes her days weaving into a fantastic tapestry the sights of the world that she glimpses in a mirror that hangs before her. She grows weary of seeing things through the mirror. Until one day, she sees a reflection of a gallant knight riding alone. Though she knows that it is forbidden, she leaves the tapestry and looks out the window to see Sir Lancelot, one of King Arthur’s knights. The mirror cracks as the Lady walks away from the tapestry. On an autumn night, the Lady leaves her castle, finds a moored boat and writes “The Lady of Shalott” on its prow, then laying herself in the boat; she sets it adrift and sings a sad song as she drifts down

the river to Camelot. Unfortunately, she dies before reaching the shore. The people of Camelot are shocked by the appearance of a dead beautiful maiden on their shore, but Lancelot who is moved by her beauty prays that God will have mercy on her soul.

The mentioning of the works beside The Lady of Shalott in this paper is the writer's intention to trace back the correlation of the major topic of The Lady of Shalott and other works that the writer have mentioned in previous pages. The writer realizes that The Lady of Shalott cannot stand by itself for it is always links to the works stated above, considering the other works give so much contribution to the better understanding of The Lady of Shalott. The article "Tennyson's poetic Project" responds that the Lady's looking at the world in a mirror and depicting it in a work of art is some kind of allegory for the life of the artist-writer. It also mentions that The Lady of Shalott is one of Tennyson's poems written by his so much learning and reading works of literature (victorianweb.com 2001). Though the basic story which is about Shalott's unrequited love towards Lancelot was adapted from many sources, The Lady of Shalott still has Tennyson's touch in its unique rhythm and plot. To quote Tennyson's explanation, "The new born love for something, for someone in the wide world from which she has been so long excluded, takes her out of the region of shadows into that of realities" (Williams and Vallins 93). Most of all, it is always interesting to analyze great poetry of great poet, whose poems, by their sweetness and grace had made him the most popular and most honored poet of the 19th century.

B. Statement of the Problem

Considering the background of the study above, the problem discussed in this paper is formulated as follow:

1. How is the theme of The Lady of Shalott described?
2. How is The Lady of Shalott related to other work of literature?

C. Objective of the Study

Concerning with the problems stated above, the objective of the study is formulated as follow:

1. To explain the theme of The Lady of Shalott
2. To explain The Lady of Shalott's relation to other work of literature.

D. Significance of the Study

Through the analysis of the poem, the writer hopes that this paper will give contribution to the world of knowledge and to the horizon of thinking, especially to the students of English Department who are interested in Tennyson's works and to know more about The Lady of Shalott. The writer also hopes that this paper will broaden up the perspective in viewing a literary work. It is also aimed to give new point of view about The Lady of Shalott that might not been revealed before.

E. Scope and Limitation

In order to keep the discussion of the paper, the writer will focus the topic of discussion to the theme in The Lady of Shalott. This paper will also discuss

about the other previous works of literature that is closely related to the poem. This limitation is aimed to avoid a misleading discussion and to focus the topic of the paper only to the theme of the poem and works of literature's correlation.

F. Theoretical Background

In order to give a deeper analysis to The Lady of Shalott, the writer uses thematic approach as the basic step. Through this approach, the writer tries to find the certain conclusion about the most significant part of the poem. It is stated by Christopher Russel Reaske in How to Analyze Poetry, "In short, in thematic analysis we are thinking in terms of themes which recur throughout all poetry in all language" (62).

While in order to relate The Lady of Shalott to other works, the writer uses intertextual theory. An intertext is one or more text which the reader must know in order to understand a work of literature in terms of its overall significance (Worton and Still 56). Michael Riffaterre, as it is quoted via Jabrohim, states that in creating a work of literature, there is always a certain text that became the background of creative-writing process; that certain text is called hypogram. The new text, which absorbs and transforms the hypogram is called transformation (82). Furthermore, A. Teeuw adds Riffaterre's opinion that a work of literature is a response of the previous ones (65).

G. Method of the Study

To analyze the problem in this paper, it is needed to do the research in the library in order to find some information which is important to help the writer in directing the analysis. The data of this paper is collected from various books, references, encyclopedia, dictionary and some other printed materials related to the topic of this paper. The writer has also collected related information about the poem from several Internet sites to support the analysis.

To complete the analysis, the writer uses descriptive-interpretative method to accomplish this paper. Descriptive method is a method which describes the content of the poem, while interpretative method is a method which explains the significant of the poem that is not explicitly written. After interpreting the poem and finding its theme, this paper takes intertextual analysis. It is a method to compare, equalize and contrast a transformation text and its hypogram in order to reach its highest point of the meaning.

H. Definition of Key Term

To avoid misunderstanding in studying the analysis of this paper, there are several terms which need to be further explained. They are:

1. Theme : the central and dominating idea in a literary work. It can be the message or moral implicit in any work of art (Shaw 387).
2. Love : a strong, usually passionate, affection for a person of the opposite sex (McKechnie 1070).

3. **Unrequited** : not reciprocated; not return in kind (Gove 1128).
4. **Intertextual** : theory which requires the reading of a text with the background of other text.
5. **Intertext** : one or more texts which the reader must know in order to understand the work of literature in terms of its overall significance (Worton and Still 56)

CHAPTER 2

THEORETICAL FRAMEWORK