The Black Blood of the Tennysons: Rhetoric of Melancholy and the Imagination in Tennyson's Poetry

Vanessa Jakse, Cleveland State University

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Carnell, Rachel

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Abstract
Critics of Tennyson view his melancholy poetics as a self-evident manifestation. However, not until recently have scholars examined melancholy as a rhetorical structure in Tennyson's poetry. To address this particular gap in scholarly research, this thesis examines the use of black, similar images, and descriptive language in Tennyson's "Mariana and the Moated Grange," "Mariana in the South," and "The Lady of Shalott." From a close reading of the text and a comparative analysis of Tennyson's poetry, common connections between the four poems become clear. These connections emerge through the contextual evidence for melancholy existing in the imagery, diction, and syntax of Tennyson's writings. Tennyson's use of colors and images creates not only an atmosphere reflective of melancholia, but also manifests the melancholy effect of the restrictive Victorian gaze on the freer imaginary elements of the Romantics. This research provides a framework for identifying the traits of Tennyson's melancholic rhetoric found throughout his poetry. Therefore, this framework offers a starting point for further study of the rhetorical and stylistic development of melancholy in Tennyson's poetry. Additionally, by juxtaposing the obvious melancholic themes in the two Mariana poems with "The Lady of Shalott," one can interpret this poem as more than a representation of the isolated poet. Thus "The Lady of Shalott," when examined in tandem with The "Mariana" poems, affords the necessary link between the imagination and melancholy. Hence, a close examination of "The Lady of Shalott" illuminates the melancholy which overshadows the unbridled imagination.

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Lord Alfred Tennyson Poetry Collection from Famous Poets and Poems. See also: Poets by Nationality African American Poets Women Poets Thematic Poems Thematic Quotes Contemporary Poets Nobel Prize Poets American Poets English Poets. Lord Alfred Tennyson Poems. Back to Poet Page. Sort by: Views | Alphabetically. Alfred Tennyson, 1st Baron Tennyson FRS (6 August 1809 – 6 October 1892) was a British poet. He was the Poet Laureate of Great Britain and Ireland during much of Queen Victoria's reign and remains one of the most popular British poets. In 1829, Tennyson was awarded the Chancellor's Gold Medal at Cambridge for one of his first pieces, "Timbuktu." He published his first solo collection of poems, Poems Chiefly Lyrical in 1830. "Claribel" and "Mariana," which remain some of Tennyson's most celebrated poems, are widely regarded as fine examples of his mature poetic voice. In 1850, he published Poems in Two Volumes, which included his famous poem, "The Lady of Shalott," a work that has become one of the best-known examples of Victorian poetry.
qualities of words to emphasize his rhythms and meanings is sensitive. The language of "I come from haunts of coot and hern" lilts and ripples like the brook in the poem and the last two lines of "Come down O maid from yonder mountain height" illustrate his telling combination of onomatopoeia, alliteration and assonance: The moan of doves in immemorial elms.