



Article Info/Makale Bilgisi

✓Received/Geliş:01.02.2023 ✓Accepted/Kabul:21.06.2023

DOI:10.30794/pausbed.1245883

Research Article/Araştırma Makalesi

Çameli, M. M. (2023). "The Home As Emblem of Women Ensnarement in Alfred Lord Tennyson's *Mariana* and *The Lady of Shalott*", *Pamukkale University Journal of Social Sciences Institute*, Issue 58, Denizli, pp. 245-254.

THE HOME AS EMBLEM OF WOMEN ENSNAREMENT IN ALFRED LORD TENNYSON'S *MARIANA AND THE LADY OF SHALOTT**

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Abstract

The representation of home has remained in the forefront of studies from different periods in Western literature. When Victorian literature is considered, the poetry of Alfred Lord Tennyson stands out as it provides a fertile ground for the exploration of meanings home takes on to a serious extent. Two of his well-known poems, *Mariana* and *The Lady of Shalott*, can be regarded as illustrative of Victorian attitude toward women ensnarement through the symbol of home. More specifically, what makes the study of these poems somewhat special is that they enable contemporary readers to think critically about the ways in which home bears witness to traumatization of women by patriarchal restrictions. Therefore, this article will mainly show that home symbol in the selected poems is an essential component of a realistic representation of the status of women of the poet's time thereby positing patriarchy as an unfair configuration of Victorian society

Keywords: *Alfred Lord Tennyson, Mariana, The Lady of Shalott, Home, Victorian Poetry.*

ALFRED LORD TENNYSON'IN *MARIANA* VE *SHALOTT LEYDİSİ* ŞİİRLERİNDE EV SEMBOLÜNÜN KAPANA KISILMIŞ KADINI TEMSİLİ

Öz

Ev sembolünün temsili, Batı edebiyatının farklı dönemlerinde çalışmaların merkezinde yer almıştır. Viktorya çağı edebiyatı düşünüldüğünde, bu konuya ilişkin olarak Alfred Lord Tennyson şiirleri dikkat çekmektedir çünkü ev sembolünün üstlendiği anlamların keşfi açısından şiirleri önemli ölçüde üretken bir zemin hazırlamaktadır. Tennyson'ın *Mariana* ve *Shalott Leydisi* başlıklı iki iyi bilinen şiiri ev sembolü üzerinden kapana kısılmış kadın konusuna Viktoryen dönem insanının yaklaşımını tasvir edici nitelik taşımaktadır. Daha belirli bir biçimde ifade etmek gerekirse, bu şiirlerin çalışılmasını özel kılan nokta çağdaş okuyuculara, ataerkil kısıtlamalar nedeniyle travmaya uğramış kadınların durumuna şahitlik eden yaşadıkları evler hakkında eleştirel düşünme imkânı sağlamasıdır. Dolayısıyla bu çalışma, temel olarak, seçilen şiirlerdeki ev sembolünün şairin yaşadığı dönemdeki kadınların toplumdaki yerinin gerçekçi bir biçimde sunulması durumunun önemli bir parçası olduğunu ataerkillik kavramının aynı zamanda Viktorya çağının adil olmayan bir düzenlemesi şeklinde ön plana çıktığını da vurgulayarak göstermeyi amaçlamaktadır.

Anahtar kelimeler: *Alfred Lord Tennyson, Mariana, Shalott Leydisi, Ev, Viktorya Dönemi Şiiri.*

*This article is a revised version of the online presentation of the 7th BAKEA International Western Cultural and Literary Studies Online Symposium: "HOME", 15-17 September 2021, Pamukkale University.

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Introduction

The idea of home in literature is known to have been associated with a set of crucial metaphors and concepts over the course of hundreds of years. Viewed not only as a physical environment but also as a territory fostering a sense of identity, survival and belonging, the home represents values connected to the Western culture and morality. As Croft and Smyth maintain that *"From Exodus to Evergreen Terrace, from Pemberley to Poe, the slightest glance reveals both the ubiquity and the centrality of the house as an image within human culture"* (2006:16). It is important to note that this feature of the notion of home furnishes an understanding which goes beyond traditional way of thinking as well. Namely, literary interpretations of home are geared towards conceptualizing it as a mode of living turned into a symbol of societal, political, and economic concerns as a whole. As George argues, *"[t]he word '-home-' immediately connotes the private sphere of patriarchal hierarchy, gendered self-identity, shelter, comfort, nurture and protection"* (1999:1). It can also be stated that the values represented by the home in literary texts, depending on the era in question, give remarkable clues pertaining to an array of dichotomies most characteristic of what is perceived as domestic ideology.

When the era in question is the Victorian Era during which numerous developments in standards of living had their effects upon Victorian character, the role attributed to the notion of home primarily brings a matter like "the Woman Question" up for consideration. With industrialization and urbanization, the nineteenth century people became prosperous, however, such improvements led to the emergence of beliefs defining women as submissive wives. Sexual inequality in politics held sway and fierce arguments as regards the position of women in society came to the fore. As Cadwallader states, *"[w]hile a spirit of reform animated Parliamentary debate, women saw fewer legislative acts passed in their favour, and in fact their position within Victorian society was a much-vexed issue- so much so that the subject was dubbed the Woman Question"* (2014:4). This turbulent atmosphere of the period created a new emphasis upon home thereby labelling women as the Angel of the House. Due to the fact that ownership of land was replaced by manufacturing, Victorian men stopped regarding the home as a site of economic power and started working at factories, shops or offices whereas women stayed at home as the sole protectors of conventions. As Brodey and Margaretti note, *"[i]t is surprising to think that the position of women in the nineteenth century was probably worse than it had ever been in England. Wives were regarded as just part of their husbands' property"* (2000:172). Therefore, the roles of two sexes were, indeed, assigned in line with what Victorians identified as the ideology of Separate Spheres. According to this ideology, women were expected to find fulfilment in the patriarchal home unlike men who were expected to progress with professional accomplishments. Shoemaker brings an explanation to what lies behind these sharply defined roles between men and women:

It is not difficult to see how this view of the different spheres of activity of men and women derived from commonly held beliefs concerning men's greater physical and natural strength and the superiority of husbands over their wives. At the same time, childcare and domestic responsibilities were believed to be more suited to the sex which was perceived to be less intelligent, but more tender and compassionate. (2013:30)

The ideology of Separate Spheres invoked a range of effects upon Victorian literature which abounded in themes regarding domesticity, gender subordination, and the idealized middle-class woman. Amongst them, domesticity stands out as a fully developed concept equating women with the home and depicting this private sphere as a kind of identity marker on the part of them. In other words, domesticity in Victorian literature signifies home as an arena where women merely dedicate themselves to family concerns while shouldering the strains of man-oriented urban society. Purchase similarly contends that:

Based as it is largely around the figure of the woman, the emphasis on domesticity had the effect of at once performing and reinforcing patriarchal ideas about the role and status of women throughout society. It effectively restricted women's political, social and economic rights in the public sphere, restrictions which are still being dismantled in the twenty-first century. (2006:44)

The status of woman in Victorian novels, for example, invariably points to a home-centred existence foregrounded by the angel in the house. Jane Austen, Charles Dickens, George Eliot, and Elizabeth Gaskell are known to have presented this Victorian domestic home from which their female characters derived part of their identity. Archibald claims that “[t]his domestic ‘angel’ is so pervasive an ideal that even when no female character fitting her description appears in a novel, the ‘angel’s presence is felt. Female characters are held to her standard” (2002: 5). Yet, it must be stated that the idea of home and the angel figure provide a narrative form for addressing the precariousness of the middle-class woman’s position in Victorian England. These novelists with many of their contemporaries shared the preoccupation of exposing the sufferings of the Victorian women who were devoid of the opportunities to cultivate themselves. Schor underlines that “[n]o single question mattered more to the Victorian novel than what the nineteenth century considered ‘The Woman Question-,’ and no other interrogation had more effect on the forms of the novel we still read today than the question Freud was to raise at the century’s end” (2002: 173).

When the Victorian poetry is considered, the criticism of the female poets like Elizabeth Browning and Christina Rossetti remarkably pertains to insufficiencies of the domestic ideal. Writing about industrialisation, political controversies and the rights of women, these poets give accounts of the Victorian state of mind governed by binary logic of separate spheres. Other well-known poets of the period include male poets such as Alfred Lord Tennyson, Robert Browning and Matthew Arnold who used their narrative voice so as to interrogate gender roles and write about suppression of women as well. It is right to maintain that they all pivot on a poetic convention that facilitates readers’ understanding of Victorian attitude toward women’s relationship with the home. The imagery and symbolism at work within their poems serve the purpose of having a better insight into the tension between the interior and exterior that reduces women to beings with constrained authority outside the home. Hence, the home in Victorian poetry takes on a fixed meaning as the interior part where women have no room for themselves to merge family responsibilities with business exercises in the public domain. Governing the private domain, women are trapped inside and perform household duties as expected of them. However, for men, the home is believed to have symbolized the sphere where they took shelter from demanding work life. Martens sheds light on the Victorian perspective concerning the home as follows:

The house, more precisely, the home is central to the Victorian public/private dichotomy. As a result of the development towards companionate marriage and the growing importance of the nuclear family in the nineteenth century, the home acquired a precious status as a metonymy for the intimate, protected realm in which the individual lived his/her private, emotional life, free from the obligations of social interaction and the “contamination” of economic activity in the public sphere. Within this perspective, the physical entity of the home acted as a protective shell behind which the Victorian middle-class male in particular could live an identity that was strikingly different from his public self in the workplace. (2011: 224)

In line with the argument of Martens, it can be added that the private sphere, then, turns into a site where middle-class Victorian female could live an identity moulded by the figure of domestic woman. At this point, it must be reemphasized that Victorian poetry exposes this plight of women through the symbol of home which also recurs as a tool to signify a remarkable pattern of women being depicted as the angels in the house. More specifically, from among all Victorian poets, Alfred Lord Tennyson could be regarded as a strong male voice accentuating the idea of home in relation to the issue of women’s imprisonment by means of his poems. In *Mariana* published in 1830 and *The Lady of Shalott* published in 1833, the poet presents his viewpoints concerning the separate spheres and domestic ideology confining women to home by appealing to the Victorian public while indirectly finding fault with what went on in the nineteenth century. More clearly indicated, this article aims to present a study of the ways in which the two selected poems tackle the issue of representation of the concept of home as regards women imprisonment thereby enabling contemporary readers to compare the status of women today with that of Victorian women.

1. Mariana's Imprisonment in the Farmhouse

Mariana published in 1830 is one of the most well-known poems of Tennyson which reflects the Victorian approach to the position of women in society through imagery and symbolism. The poem starts with a description of the farmhouse where Mariana is trapped and from the outset, it is understood that a sense of nothingness surrounds her. Peltason argues that "*Mariana announces the dilemma of an isolate and morbid selfhood*" (1983: 342). She seems to be leading an uneventful life in the farmhouse whose garden is in a bad condition like Mariana's mental state as implied by the poet from the first stanza as follows:

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 looked sad and strange:
Unlifted was the clinking latch;
Weeded and worn the ancient thatch
Upon the lonely moated grange.
She only said, "My life is dreary,
He cometh not," she said;
She said, "I am aweary, aweary;
I would that I were dead!" (Tennyson, 1830: 1057)

The adjectives used by the poet such as the rusted, the broken, and the lonely in the stanza above to depict Mariana's surroundings help to visualize a desolate place far away from the hectic atmosphere of the life outside. Mariana pictures an image of a despondent woman who laments her seclusion. Peltason adds that "*Mariana suffers from the peculiar perceptual disability that allows her only a severely qualified access to the world*" (1983: 345). Yet, it is striking that there is a reference to a man within the stanza which indicates that Mariana waits for her lover. However, her lover is not coming back to her and she is captive to this situation. That is to say, she spends all her time inside the farmhouse as a deserted lover. Boyd and Williams allude to Mariana's yearning for a lover and state that:

The sense of her missing lover is so pervasive that his absence is felt as a tangible presence: she refers over and over again to his non-arrival- the latch of the gate before her house is not merely silent but "unlifted", and Mariana's subliminally felt frustration- emotional and sexual- is delicately registered in several of her perceptions. (1983: 586-87)

Her confinement to this farmhouse serves as an indicative of her acting in accordance with the theory of separate spheres that functions in favour of men. Whilst her lover is somewhere outside, she stays inside and feels dependent upon him although he is not coming home. As Gunter contends, "[s]he drags out her life in loneliness and frustration. Abandoned by her lover, she weeps in hopelessness and grows increasingly weary as the days pass" (1971: 64). The state of her soul is rendered gloomily and it shows the hardships of leading a life in the patriarchal system. In other words, Mariana's disconnection from the society stems from her endeavour to sustain a living in the male-oriented system of the Victorian period. The above-given stanza from the poem can also be considered as supporting this argument as Armstrong underlines that:

The poignant expression of exclusion to which Mariana's state gives rise, and which is reiterated in the marking of barriers- the moat itself, the gate with clinking latch, the curtained casement, the hinged doors- is simultaneously an analysis of the hypersensitive hysteria induced by the coercion of sexual taboo. These are hymenal taboos, which Mariana is induced, by a cultural consensus which is hidden from her, to experience as her own condition. Hidden from her, but not from the poem, the barriers are man-made, cunningly constructed through the material fabric of the house she inhabits, the enclosed spaces in which she is confined. (1993:12)

The enclosed spaces in which Mariana is confined as stated by Armstrong can be, indeed, regarded as a representative of the Victorian attitude toward the home. In the Victorian mindset, as emphasized before, the home as the private sphere creates a kind of passivity and safety on the part of women thereby precluding them from actively participating in the public sphere. In the early nineteenth century, women are still seen as observers that are not allowed to speak for themselves under the pressure of the patriarchal system. Likewise, the farmhouse in which Mariana laments the stagnation of her life symbolizes her entrapment along with her psychological trauma resulting from this isolation. It could also be stated that “[t]he poem evokes the dilemma of any self isolated in its moated grange, reachable by other selves only through words and actions that cannot achieve a true inwardness or guarantee a true communion” (Peltason, 1983: 346). She is encrusted with the dullness and an overwhelming sense of negativity within the farmhouse, basically within this idealized home. It seems to result in a paradoxical situation marked by the feeling of loneliness on the part of Mariana. For instance, Tennyson expresses the gloominess of the home as a marker of the imprisonment of this embowered woman with the stanza as follows:

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blackened waters slept,
And o’er it many, round and small,
The clustered marish-mosses crept (1830: 1057-58)

It is evident that the stillness and lack of movement dominate the environment where Mariana passes her days as a captive woman. Gunter argues that “[i]n this dismal setting Mariana herself decays” (1971:64). To add, it must be noted that this dull life led by Mariana and depicted by Tennyson in the poem gives hints with respect to her mood to a large extent. Her mood is down because of her seclusion and Christ addresses this issue by pointing out that:

In “Mariana”, for example, Tennyson conveys Mariana’s desolation through the landscape that surrounds her- the moss-encrusted flower plots, the falling rusty nails, the broken sheds. This is a poetry whose focus is subjectivity, not as a universal category- the “I” of the Romantic poet- but as a particular mood or character. It uses a language of sense impressions, predominantly visual impressions of landscape, to convey these moods. (2002: 3)

Based upon Christ’s premise, the farmhouse may be deemed as a symbol of not only physical but also mental imprisonment of Mariana. Her retreat into the home with the predicament of being isolated can be interpreted in terms of the Woman Question as well. The way the poet details Mariana’s enclosure with visual imagery and the farmhouse is serviceable in creating images of all embowered women during the Victorian period. Hence, it mirrors the position of secluded women who are victimized by the rules set by the patriarchal world. It demonstrates that women are given almost no opportunity to participate in the world and to socialize with the others. The following lines from the poem can be thought as highly suggestive of Mariana’s being entrenched in a world characterized by the above- referred imprisonment as Tennyson writes:

All day within the dreamy house,
The doors upon their hinges creaked;
The blue fly sung in the pane; the mouse
Behind the moldering wainscot shrieked,
Or from the crevice peered about.
Old faces glimmered through the doors,
Old footsteps trod the upper floors,
Old voices called her from without. (1830: 1058)

The argument of the home's becoming a potent symbol of Mariana's enclosure in the poem is supported by auditory imagery serving to draw attention to the dejected female figure portrayed by Tennyson as well. It is right to contend that the symbols used by the poet, then, make it easier to look at the world outside through Mariana's lenses.

To demonstrate, Mariana appears to be highly sensitive to the sounds around her since the only connection she does have with the exterior are those sounds that lead her to question her existence. As Tennyson expresses in the poem with the lines "The sparrow's chirrup on the roof, the slow clock ticking, and the sound, which to the wooing wind aloof, the poplar made, did all confound her sense" (1830:1058). When she hears the sounds and looks out of the window, she can be considered as attempting to save herself from the home that solely causes her existence to fade into obscurity. Andres asserts that "*Mariana concentrates on auditory images that underscore and intensify her inconsolable loneliness*" (2005:62). That is to say, the tension between the exterior and interior gets intensified, and Mariana comes to notice that her retreat into the safety of the home culminates in the entanglement of her life.

Despite the fact that Mariana hears beautiful sounds from outside and the sunlight enters the home, she remains trapped by her surroundings and finds this part of the day loathsome. As long as she keeps waiting for a lover whose arrival is totally vague in the farmhouse that represents her enslavement, the sunlight merely reveals the dust covering the home rather than the beauty inside. Tennyson draws attention to this situation with the lines below:

But most she loathed the hour
When the thick-moated sunbeam lay
Atwart the chambers, and the day
Was sloping toward his western bower.
Then, said she, "I am very dreary,
He will not come," she said. (1830: 1058)

Looked from this angle, it must be stated that the poet appeals to the Victorian public holding the view that the home is the enclosed space for the safety of women rather than their imprisonment. However, Tennyson as a male voice provides readers with implicit clues about his reaction to Mariana's situation. To illustrate, Mariana does not seem to be married and does not obviously feel seriously concerned about the household chores especially when the dust surrounding the house is considered. From this point of view, the poet's portrayal of Mariana as disregarding the maintenance of the home signifies an attack upon Victorian values. Dağoğlu claims that "*Mariana and her long waiting reflect a larger reality representing the psychological situation of other women trapped by the demarcations in social contexts*" (2022: 78). By endowing the female protagonist of the poem with the qualities that promote interests of patriarchal domination while exposing the injustice inherent in the system, Tennyson invites his readers to come to a critical judgment about women's entrapment.

2. The Lady of Shalott as an Entrapped Woman

Tennyson's *The Lady of Shalott* first published in 1833 and later revised in 1842 concentrates upon the lady's seclusion in a castle on the island of Shalott and her eventual attempt to free herself from the restraints by escaping with her lover as indicative of the poem's preoccupation with tackling the issue of women's position in the patriarchal world. Psomiades underlines that "[o]ne of the best known and most widely anthologized Victorian poems, it is frequently taken as representative of its age" (2000: 27). Throughout the entire poem, Tennyson's visual imagery unpacks the ways in which the lady suffers from her confinement in the castle and leading a life characterized by stagnation. Distanced from the active world, the lady observes what goes on outside only through the reflections in a mirror placed on her wall. The first stanza that is rich in symbolic elements with a reference to the lady's solitude begins as follows:

On either side the river lie
Long fields of barley and of rye,
That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
And through the field the road runs by
To many-towered Camelot;
And up and down the people go,
Gazing where the lilies blow
Round an island there below,
The island of Shalott. (Tennyson, 1830: 1059)

Containing clues pertaining to the active world like the running road, these initial lines help picture the passive world in which the lady lives to a serious extent from the outset. It is implied in these lines that the lady is incapable of taking an active part in the rush of the world outside which poses a contrast to her imprisonment in the castle. Furthermore, in the rest of the stanzas in part I, particularly in the second stanza, what becomes apparent is that the castle can be viewed as an emblem of the lady getting stuck there since the poet says:

Willows whiten, aspens quiver,
Little breezes dusk and shiver
Through the wave that runs for ever
By the island in the river
Flowing down to Camelot.
Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
Overlook a space of flowers,
And the silent isle imbowers
The Lady of Shalott. (Tennyson, 1830: 1059)

Deprived of the right to take advantage of the scenery depicted by Tennyson, the lady is stuck in the castle within four gray walls which functions as a symbol of her entrapment. Dağoğlu points out that “[h]er *physical surrounding mirrors the Lady’s isolation by contrasting Camelot’s dynamic world outside to the “four gray walls and four gray towers” (15) trapping her*” (2022:91). It can be noted that whereas the flowers might represent the life the lady dreams of, the gray walls represent the dull, the inactive life she feels obliged to endure. She can only look at those flowers from her window without seizing the chance of smelling them close-up. Edgar F. and Shannon Jr. address the topic of the castle’s becoming the lady’s prison with a direct allusion to the second stanza and maintain that:

Stone walls and towers are protective and may be a sanctuary. Their greyness here is foreboding, however, and they can signify a prison- just what they turn out to be. And whereas “magic web” (l. 38) denotes the Lady’s gaily coloured tapestry, “web” has a sinister connotation, as of a spider’s web or a web of intrigue. In a sense, the Lady is entrapped by her web, and to the extent that she is apprehensive over curse, she is self-imprisoned. Although “a space of flowers” (l. 16) softens the setting and suggests both the Lady’s cultivation of nature and her sensitivity to beauty, the indeterminate space seems confined, and the bit of garden actually serves to emphasize the starkness of walls and towers. (1981: 209)

The authors’ mentioning of the web in their commentary above entails weighing upon the significance of stanzas from five to eight in Part II in that they incorporate more key words regarding the lady’s isolation and the position of women in Victorian society. To illustrate, the first line of stanza five begins with the sentence “*There she weaves by night and day*” (Tennyson, 1830: 1060) by evoking the idealized Victorian woman preoccupying herself with household tasks and shouldering responsibilities associated with womanhood. To add, the mirror image is another crucial item in the referred stanzas inasmuch as it serves to reflect the reality in the world outside thereby pushing the lady to question her mental and physical entrapment. Hence, it can also be underlined that she finds herself in the grip of a curse to live in desolation. Seeing her own image in the mirror, Mariana begins to contemplate upon the exterior world deeply as Tennyson says:

And moving through a mirror clear
That hangs before her all the year,
Shadows of the world appear.
There she sees the highway near
Winding down to Camelot;
There the river eddy whirls,
And there the surly village churls,
And the red cloaks of market girls,
Pass onward from Shalott. (Tennyson, 1830: 1060)

In part III of the poem, arrival of Sir Lancelot fosters a sense of dependence upon a man on the part of the lady which bears a resemblance to that of Mariana. In other words, both the Lady of Shalott and Mariana are depicted as anticipating their salvation from the places they reside with the help of a lover holding a power in the public sphere. However, unlike Mariana whose lover never comes, the Lady of Shalott seizes the chance of escaping with her beloved one which indicates that she gets the urge to transcend the borders set by the patriarchal system. As Peltason maintains likewise, “[l]ike the Lady of Shalott, Mariana is reached only by shadows, but unlike that Lady, Mariana is never tempted to the folly of emergence from her enclosure” (1983: 345). In line with this perspective, Tennyson makes an implicit criticism of the system with social obligations rendering women powerless. Accordingly, the poet conveys the message that the barriers placed in the paths of women that block self-determination should be eliminated by putting an end to the imprisonment of the lady in pursuit of love. Therefore, the arrival of Sir Lancelot is glorified with an underlying figurative meaning as Gribble also similarly remarks that:

Nothing can match the energy with which, “A bow-shot from her bower-eaves”, Sir Lancelot is launched into the poem, as if in answer to the aim of her own wistful yearning for something more than “shadows”. And so, the lady looks out; the web breaks and the mirror cracks. But there is no place for her in the world inhabited by Sir Lancelot. In fulfilment of the curse, she drifts down the river into her “inevitable” decline. (1983: 2)

Although Tennyson alters the gender roles of the Victorian era by making it possible for the lady to save herself from captivity, the castle still remains as an indelible mark of female entrapment. What lies behind this is that, as Gribble explicitly states in her argument above, turning a woman’s head away from her idealized status in the society without considering the consequences of this defiance brings about her catastrophic end like that of the Lady of Shalott. Dağoğlu notes that “[t]hat the patriarchal norms and values confined women to marriage, prostitution, or spinsterhood steers us to construe the text as a portrayal of a female protagonist whose depiction conveys a didactic message, cautioning Victorian women to remain within their sphere” (2022:102-103). Relevantly, the breaking of the web and the cracking of the mirror, indicated in the poem as, “Out flew the web and floated wide; The mirror cracked from side to side, the curse is come upon me- cried The Lady of Shalott” (Tennyson, 1830:1062), both signify the wrath being cast upon the lady. It is true that the poet proves his belief in the likelihood of living in a world where women overcome the problems encountered in the public sphere, nonetheless, he still underlines the potential result of daring to leave the enclosed sphere to which women are believed to be stuck in Victorian mindset.

3. Conclusion

Considering all the points made, it can be restated that any critical evaluation of the topic of home in literature is inextricably intertwined with wider social, cultural, and political concerns. The tumultuous atmosphere of the Victorian era with a proliferation of literary works specifying home as the only location where major events take place corroborates this assumption. More precisely stated, the position of female protagonists within influential poems composed by Alfred Lord Tennyson addresses issues of great importance of the time such as patriarchal ideology, the woman question or power dynamics. It must be emphasized that the way Tennyson studies the condition of women who are conceptualized as the angel of the house makes women’s mental and

physical imprisonment explicit to a serious extent. Therefore, the poet stands out with his capacity to accentuate problems of women suffering from a sense of being suppressed at home. Two of his well-known poems *Mariana* and *The Lady of Shalott* can be deemed as a characteristic reflection of Victorian attitude toward women's subordination to men. Related to this perspective, this paper elaborates upon Tennyson's awareness of and reaction to women's secondary roles in reference to his aforementioned poems in which entrapping expectations of patriarchal world are symbolized through women's confinement to home. In other words, these lady poems can be said to embed Tennyson's grave concerns about the position of women of the time and the analysis of the poems within this article can also be regarded as an investigation of the extent to which they can be compared with contemporary women studies through poetry. Therefore, reading an examination of these poems published more than a century ago may help have a mental exercise over the ways in which women struggled for freedom in Victorian age and they struggle today as well with a comparative approach on the part of readers.

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Beyan ve Açıklamalar (Disclosure Statements)

1. Bu çalışmanın yazarları, araştırma ve yayın etiği ilkelerine uyduklarını kabul etmektedirler (The authors of this article confirm that their work complies with the principles of research and publication ethics).

2. Yazarlar tarafından herhangi bir çıkar çatışması beyan edilmemiştir (No potential conflict of interest was reported by the authors).

3. Bu çalışma, intihal tarama programı kullanılarak intihal taramasından geçirilmiştir (This article was screened for potential plagiarism using a plagiarism screening program).