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“A MAGIC WEB WITH COLOURS GAY”: A QUEER READING OF ALFRED TENNYSON’S AND ELIZABETH BISHOP’S SHALOTT POEMS

Mediaeval romances in general, and Arthuriana in particular, have canonically been read as stories of chivalry that depict knights and ladies as the era’s epitome of masculinity and femininity. Queer readings, however, question these assumptions and expose such canonical analyses as heteronormative, gender-binaristic and heterocentric. Queer medievalism subverts the norm, showing how certain thematic and formal elements of mediaeval romances destabilize the heteronormativity of the Arthurian world. Later adaptations of Arthurian legends continue this tendency, revealing the historical constructedness of gender and sexuality. This paper focuses on two adaptations of the Lady of Shalott story – Arthur Lord Tennyson’s influential Victorian poem and Elizabeth Bishop’s 20th-century gender-bent version of it – and shows that, read through the lens of queer theory, the Shalott legend shows the inherent instability of heterocentrism of these mediated mediaeval texts, thus also raising questions about the wider notions of gender, queerness and normativity in connection to history and literary analysis.

Key words: Arthuriana, The Lady of Shalott, Alfred Tennyson, Elizabeth Bishop, poetry, queer theory

INTRODUCTION: QUEERING SHALOTT

Mediaeval romance, particularly the Arthurian cycle, with its emphasis on chivalric code, gallant knights and fair maidens, lends itself to many subversive strategies of reading which question the heteronormative assumptions of canonical literary analyses. Since the society they depict and idolise is not only mired in reductive, gender-binaristic concepts like courtly love, but is also highly homosocial, romances can easily be read as textual “queer spaces”, that is, “heterocentric texts that contain queer elements” (Doty, 1997: 3), which, by their very heterocentrism, invite queer readings. Queerness is thus mostly (though not always and/or only) subtextual, “produced in and through the ever-changing

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relations between texts, readers, and the world” (Sullivan, 2003: 191). In a broader sense, queer theory, building upon post-structuralist thought, sees history itself as a queer space, since what is usually deemed “historical” is revealed to be merely a construct – thus, queer medievalism is a historicizing project that “provides a different theoretical perspective from which to take up and disturb the question of history and anachronism in the study of the premodern” (Burger–Kruger, 2001: xiii). One way of destabilizing the heteronormative assumption of historicity is to shed light on the hegemonic, heterocentric understandings of “canonical literary figures such as Chaucer and mainstream genres such as mediaeval romance” (Burger–Kruger, 2001: xvi).

While straightforward queer readings of Malory or mediaeval romances like *Sir Gawain and the Green Knight* are the most invaluable contribution to this historicizing project¹, there is also much worth in queer re-examinations of other canonical adaptations of mediaeval texts², as they allow for a multi-layered historical insight into the interplay between different eras and social/literary contexts they reflect and/or undermine. To this end, I will analyse two poetic re-writings of the Shalott legend – Alfred Lord Tennyson’s “The Lady of Shalott” and Elizabeth Bishop’s “The Gentleman of Shalott”. These two texts are separated not only by time (Bishop’s version was published roughly a century after Tennyson’s), but also by the degree of adaptation, as one is clearly the originator of the other. Tennyson’s poem is arguably the most well-known version of the legend, spawning numerous literary, artistic and musical adaptations and serving as a starting point for many a re-write, including Bishop’s “The Gentleman of Shalott”.

Though Tennyson cannot be credited with single-handedly causing the Arthurian revival in the Victorian era, his Arthurian works, from early poems like “The Lady of Shalott” and “Morte d’Arthur” to mature compositions gathered in the *Idylls of the King*, spurred both in himself and in his contemporaries an interest in these “functional myths” that was “potentially subversive to a degree that, and in a way that, Tennyson himself was the last to perceive” (Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1985: 119). Later authors, like Bishop, who used Tennyson, and not Malory, as the immediate intertext for their works, engaged mostly with his Victorian construct of

¹ For more on this, see Ashton, 2005 or Peggy McCracken’s chapter on the sexually anomalous chaste knights in the stories focusing on the Grail quest in Burger–Kruger, 2001 (pp. 123–142).

² One such example is Barry Weller’s analysis of T. H. White’s Arthurian tales in Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1997 (pp. 227–248).

the Middle Ages; thus, “Tennyson’s Arthurian poems illustrate the way that medievalism creates a past that never was” (Howey, 2020: 13), and show that “[b]y engaging with Tennyson’s medievalism, post-Victorian Lady/Elaine texts enable a fresh perspective on Victorian medievalizing and on the present’s relationship to both its medieval and Victorian ancestors” (Howey, 2020: 14). In this way, Tennyson’s exploration of the legend of the Lady of Shalott/Elaine of Astolat³ sheds light on both the Victorian world and the Victorian construction of the Middle Ages, while Bishop’s version shows the relationship between the Modernist period and Victoriana, i.e. the Modernist view of both the Victorian era proper, and of the Victorian medievalist fantasy. These contextual intersections of fact and fiction demonstrate that historical constructions of gender and sexuality, as well as history itself, can only ever be viewed in a state of flux.

Finally, both of the poets discussed here can be construed as queer. While Elizabeth Bishop’s queerness is indisputable, given that all of her important romantic relationships were with women, Tennyson’s is not that easily established. When it comes to historical figures, it is both anachronistic and useless to try and assign them today’s sexualities. It is true that Tennyson was, insofar as his marriage to a woman that resulted in children suggests, a heterosexual man (though, by that criterion, Oscar Wilde would not be considered queer either), but it is also true that his close friendship with Arthur Hallam, as well as his inconsolability after Hallam’s death, can be seen as a sign of queerness. Many of Tennyson’s works, most notably *In Memoriam*, certainly seem to suggest this⁴, with lines such as “My Arthur, whom I shall not see / Till all my widow’d race be run” (IX, 17–18), but, as is always the case with people from the past, they are considered “straight until proven queer”, in another illustration of our society’s heteronormative bias. At any rate, it is not my intention to analyse the poems through a biographical lens, although it bears pointing that they both seem to acquire an additional layer of queer meaning if seen as indicative of conflict between sexual expression and repression. Whether, in Tennyson’s case, that repression is a result of Victorian sensibilities or queerness is of secondary importance to the fact that such repression exists in the first place.

³ These two figures, though originally separate, are often merged. For reasons of space, I will not be delving into the origins of the legend(s), but the reader is welcome to consult Howey, 2020 for a thorough analysis of these characters, their literary/mythological conflation, and their treatment in subsequent works of art and literature.

⁴ For more on this, see Nunokawa, 1991.

“‘TIS THE FAIRY’”: TENNYSON’S “THE LADY OF SHALOTT”

Tennyson’s fascination with the legends of King Arthur started in his early years and never waned. As a child, he read Malory; later in life, he read anything that he could get his hands on; he said that the Arthurian legend is “the greatest of all poetical subjects” (Tennyson, 2014: 669) and spent a large portion of his career writing poems in which he re-created these mediaeval legends.⁵ According to his son Hallam (named after Arthur Hallam, of course), these poems were based “on Malory, on Layamon’s *Brut*, on Lady Charlotte Guest’s translation of the *Mabinogion*, on the old Chronicles, on old French Romance, on Celtic folklore, and largely on his own imagination” (Tennyson, 2014: 667). His first published Arthurian work, “The Lady of Shalott”, “is based, not on Malory, but on a mediaeval Italian novelette entitled ‘Donna di Scalotta’” (Staines, 1982: 9). Tennyson started writing the poem in 1831, and its first version was published in 1832; he considerably revised it until its final version was published in 1842.

The poem’s narrative is simple, if fantastical – a mysterious Lady lives in a tower on a remote island, spending her days weaving and looking out at the world only through her loom’s mirror, threatened by an unknown curse. The world passes her by, while she watches its shadows, and she steadily grows unhappy, until one day she sees Lancelot riding by and decides to leave her tower. The curse is enacted, her mirror breaks and her weaving flies out of the window. She finds a boat, signs her name on the prow, lies in it, starts singing and dies. The boat floats to Camelot, where a crowd is gathered. Everyone there is afraid of the lady, apart from Lancelot, who observes her beauty, and his offhand comment about her face closes the poem. The story Tennyson constructs is quite different from the original novelette – the most interesting divergence is his addition of the fantastical elements: the mirror, the weaving, the curse, the song, the river and the island. As Christopher Ricks says, “[a]part from the lady’s death, the main links [between Tennyson’s poem and the Italian story] are that Camelot is the end of her funeral voyage [...] and that there is an astonished crowd about the body” (Tennyson, 2014: 19).

The poem has traditionally been interpreted as a parable of the artist, caught between the desire to participate in the world and the necessity of isolating themselves from it. David Staines (1982: 18) points this out, stating that “*The Lady of Shalott* employs the Arthurian world as a remote objective correlative for the

⁵ For a thorough exploration of Tennyson’s Arthuriana, see Staines, 1982.

problem of the artist's desire for personal isolation". These canonical readings already have queer undertones, as they customarily interpret the lady as a *male* poet, sometimes even Tennyson himself. Both the male poet, metaphorically trapped in the domestic realm through the isolation in the home, and the female character, who desires to be part of the public space, traditionally the masculine sphere, can be considered in terms of gender transgression. Carol Christ (qtd. in Howey, 2020: 6–7) argues that “nineteenth-century artists [...] frequently use a portrait of a lady to reflect not only on feminine sexuality but on a feminized literary culture”, expressing the male poets' anxieties about “the increasing marginalization of the poet from the masculine ethos and power of his society.” Tennyson himself has often been unkindly deemed to be “fireside poetry” and thus relegated to the domestic sphere, kept in the masculine, academic canon only owing to his historical influence. When it comes to the poem, even though the “lady as artist” interpretation has potential to be subversive, this element of gender transgression is ultimately halted. The queer is eventually straightened out, as The Lady's masculine artistry works only to return her to the ideal of passive femininity: in the end, she is once again forcibly feminized, and becomes the object of art to be admired, dead and exposed to the scopophilic enjoyment of the Camelot onlookers. Her entire being is mediated through Lancelot's masculine gaze and she is ultimately reduced to “a lovely face” (line 169).

Another potentially transgressive element of the poem is, paradoxically, the Lady's weaving. Her “magic web with colours gay” (38) has great symbolic value, as it works to fix her as the isolated, unknowable Other – once she decides to leave her tower, it flies out of the window, severing her connection with the domestic realm. Through her weaving, traditionally considered a woman's work, The Lady fuses masculine (i.e. male poet's) artistry with feminine creativity, thus creating a hybrid, queer gender identity. In addition to this, as Ann Howey (2020: 74) notes, during Victorian industrialization, weaving was “one of the first cottage industries to be displaced by the industrial revolution” and thus became “associated with ‘the masculine realm of trade and industry’”. Linda Gill points out that “weaving may connote domesticity and therefore the feminine space, but it also connotes the triumph of industry and productivity and therefore the masculine space” (qtd. in Howey, 2020: 74). With that in mind, it is interesting to note that The Lady's weaving still operates in terms of domestic manufacture, though it lacks the traditionally feminine community, embracing instead the masculine-coded solitude. This metaphor, as well as countless others in the poem, seems to be two-fold – it can be interpreted both in queer terms and in traditional, gender-binaristic terms,

indicating the poem's ultimate hybridity. Whatever the case, The Lady's increasing dissatisfaction with her prescribed domestic role, as well as her realization that she seems to be trapped inside Plato's Cave, and consequent declaration that she is "half sick of shadows" (71), lead to her ceasing her weaving and exiting her tower. By abandoning her "woman's work" and stepping into the public space, she seems to be on the verge of transcending the gender binary, but can ultimately not survive inside the traditionally masculine sphere, and succumbs once again to the societally prescribed ideal of feminine passivity, achieving its apotheosis: a sublime death that is at the same time beautiful, poetic and haunting.

A much more interesting source of queerness in the poem is the Lady's fantastic Otherness. The poem begins with the description of the landscape, the "long fields of barley and of rye" (2), the road that leads "to many-towered Camelot" (5), and the people that mill about, which all forms a stark contrast to the "four gray walls, and four gray towers" (15) and "the silent isle" that "imbowers / The Lady of Shalott" (17–18). Not much is known about the Lady – only her singing is heard by the workers in the field, and one reaper, who works, rather atmospherically, "by the moon" (33), "listening, whispers, 'Tis the fairy / Lady of Shalott'" (35–36). The Lady is thus presented as a "fairy", a magical Other, and it can be argued that both Tennyson and his reaper characters see her as an enchantress trapped in a tower, calling to mind the most famous Arthurian wielder of magic, Merlin, and his ultimate fate of confinement (variations of his prison include, among other things, a cave, a tree, an enchanted forest, and a tower). The Lady is placed under a vague curse that forbids her from looking down at Camelot, and is forced to weave "by night and day / A magic web with colours gay" (37–38), relying only on "a mirror clear / That hangs before her all the year" (46–47) to see anything at all. In her Gothic queerness, the Lady is frightening – she is ageless, haunting, otherworldly; the only time she is physically described while alive is when her "glassy countenance" (130) is mentioned, and when the denizens of Camelot see her, they "[cross] themselves for fear" (166). The magical mirror through which she communicates with the outside world serves as another symbol of her queer Otherness, linking her to other transgressive, monstrous women of folklore, like the Evil Queen from "Snow White". The connection between the Gothic and the Queer is well-known, and they are both concerned with transgressive subjectivity, manifested through a deconstruction of a stable Self and the hybridity of identity.⁶ Eve Kosofsky Sedgwick (1985: 94) draws a connection

⁶ For more on this, see Fincher, 2007.

between “the unspeakable” and queer, and points out that the Gothic “genre as a whole, conflicted as it was, came in the nineteenth century to seem a crystallization of the aristocratic homosexual role”. Thus, the Lady’s social class, her namelessness (she is only ever known in this poem as “the Lady of Shalott”), her isolation in a dreary tower, her connection with the world of enchantment, as well as her impact upon the other characters in the poem, all point to her Gothic queerness. Ultimately, as is the case with other Gothic characters, the Lady’s queer existence threatens to destabilise the heteronormative society, and so she must die, fully embracing the era’s ideal of passive femininity.

Finally, the character of Lancelot, though two-dimensional to the point of blandness, can also be interpreted in queer terms. If the Lady transgresses the gender binary by being active, desirous of the public space, and connected to the Queer Gothic, then Lancelot, through his curious lack of an active role, his textual position as an object, as well as his physical description, can be understood as being feminine-coded. Unlike the Lancelot from the idyll *Lancelot and Elaine*, this Lancelot has little to no agency in the narrative, and his only role seems to be a passive one, since he is the Lady’s temptation personified. Though Tennyson calls him “bold Sir Lancelot” (77), the only time he displays any boldness is at the end of the poem, when he is the only one unafraid to approach the lady’s dead body. Peggy McCracken (in Burger–Kruger, 2001: 123–142) states that Arthurian literature links chivalric and sexual prowess, meaning that great knights are usually also great lovers (both Gawain and Lancelot from Malory fit into this category), and concludes that the lack of sexual conquest can therefore be seen as a sign of queerness. Sir Lancelot in Tennyson’s poem remains unaware of the Lady’s sexual interest in him, and is ultimately unable to indulge it, given that the only time he sees the Lady, she is already dead. Thus, he remains – at least on the textual level, since Tennyson leaves out any allusion to either King Arthur or Queen Guinevere – a chaste knight who denounces desire and can be understood as sexually anomalous and therefore queer.

Lancelot’s description in the text is also indicative of sexual transgression. Unlike the Lady, who is, in the final version of the poem, stripped of any physical description other than her “glassy countenance” (130) and loose, “snowy white” (136) robes, Lancelot’s appearance is depicted in painstaking detail, from his glittering armour and helmet that make him look like “some bearded meteor, trailing light” (98), to his “broad clear brow” (100) and “coal-black curls” (103). Both the poet-speaker and the Lady seem to relish in his physicality, and the reader is invited to join in their scopophilia, making his description similar to the one

allotted the Green Knight in the story of Sir Gawain. Lancelot is thus coded feminine, treated as the object of desire, described entirely through female gaze, which results in both his and the Lady's queering. As Carl Plasa notes, by "[a]ppropriating the gaze, the Lady enters the position of the desiring subject and so enacts – at the scopic level – the crossing from 'feminine' to 'masculine' gender positions" (qtd. in Howey, 2020: 67). In this way, Tennyson reverses the gender roles of chivalric code – the Lady is the one who pursues the Knight, while the Knight is the one depicted in terms of physical beauty.

Ultimately, however, sexual repression wins over sexual expression, and "the potential transgressiveness of female desire is contained; the Lady's innocence remains intact because she dies" (Howey, 2020: 67). The gaze is once again turned upon the woman, and it is Lancelot who has the final word – he now appropriates his masculine role, while the Lady is rendered passive and wholly feminine. Tennyson's queer treatment of the legend thus remains subtextual, in keeping with Victorian propriety and his mediaeval sources. The potential for queering, however, remains multi-layered and strong, and eventually gives rise to numerous other adaptations.

"THAT SENSE OF CONSTANT RE-ADJUSTMENT": BISHOP'S "THE GENTLEMAN OF SHALOTT"

One of these adaptations is Elizabeth Bishop's gender-bent poem, "The Gentleman of Shalott". Published in her 1946 debut collection *North and South*, though written at least ten years earlier⁷, the poem is centred (both literally and figuratively) upon a mirror that serves as an instrument of completion for the titular Gentleman. He is half-there, half-reflection, with the looking-glass that "must stretch / down his middle" (lines 21–22), situated "somewhere along the line / of what we call the spine" (14–15). Constructed entirely out of half-lines that the reader longs to place in front of a mirror and "complete", this playful poem examines poetic form and poetic subject in connection to the ideas of reality and reflection. The Gentleman is curious about his person, wondering which half is real and which one is reflected: "Which eye's his eye? / Which limb lies / next the mirror? / For neither is clearer / nor a different color / than the other" (1–6). The poem contains no narrative and there is no tangible link to Tennyson's work; yet, the title is carefully chosen to allude to "The Lady of Shalott", while the idea of the

⁷ The poem was first published in *New Democracy* in 1936.

world reflected in a mirror is definitely borrowed from Tennyson. Another interesting fact is that Bishop does not make her character a “Knight” of Shalott – her poem is thus clearly not based on any mediaeval sources, but mediated through Tennyson’s interpretation of them instead. Bishop was a notoriously pedantic poet, often working on her poems for years, in order to achieve her desired precision of expression, which indicates that the Tennysonian allusion functions on multiple levels. Thematically, both poems deal with the notions of artistry and identity. They also share the central motif of the mirror, and can both be read through queering.

If Tennyson’s mellifluous verses can be seen as structurally queer because, on the phonemic level, the homophonic becomes the homoerotic (cf. Kosofsky Sedgwick, 1994: 54), then Bishop’s precise, stripped-down half-lines can be interpreted as intentionally masculinised and therefore formally queer. Without delving deeper into such linguistic explorations of queerness, it bears pointing out that Bishop, like many fellow Modernists, is preoccupied with the restraints of language and visual imagery, particularly two-dimensional surfaces, so much so that “[m]irror reflections, landscape inventories, paintings of people and places function less as subjects and more as central devices of [her] language strategies” (Doreski, 1993: 17). Geometry is one of Bishop’s important themes, and she explores it through the idea of reflection in “The Gentleman”. As he “questions the likeliness of his apparent symmetry, he becomes half-fiction” (Doreski, 1993: 19). By invoking the image of the looking-glass, Bishop alludes not only to Tennyson, but also to Lewis Carroll, adding to her poem another layer of Victorian fantasy, with its hybrid, and therefore arguably queer, notion of identity. Furthermore, by adopting a nominally male persona, Bishop subverts her female voice and transgresses the gender binary.

Just like Tennyson’s Lady, Bishop’s Gentleman can be interpreted as the monstrous Other. The lady’s lack of mirror reflection (she could see the shadows of the world in it, but her own image was curiously lacking) is paralleled – or mirrored – in the Gentleman’s incompleteness without the mirror. He is thus a nightmarish creature that, like Bloody Mary, rises out of a mirror, invoking the idea of the Gothic Double. For all his playfulness, he is an abjection, another queer and unknowable Other that challenges the normative ideas about the body and the self. By using the mirror, which is typically linked with the feminine, the Gentleman achieves Selfhood. Thus, the metaphor of the mirror reflects the instability of gender alluded to in the poem’s title: not only

does the Lady become the Gentleman, but the Gentleman himself becomes complete only after transgressing his original “economical design” (32). Traditionally interpreted as a poem about “the impossibility of knowing reality” (Howey, 2020: 198), “The Gentleman of Shalott” can also be seen as a poem about choosing one’s own reality and one’s own notion of Self, whatever that might entail when it comes to gender and sexuality.

The gentleman’s doubling offers another layer of queerness – he is not only his own and the Lady’s Gothic Double, but, as Victoria Harrison (1993: 48) points out, any possibility of love for him is “not love of difference” as “there is no Lady Lancelot beyond the mirror”; instead, Bishop gives him “the option of sexuality constructed as doubling”, since “duplication, not opposition, gives him pleasure”. In this way, his queerness is constructed through the acceptance of sameness. This, too, is present at the subtextual level; just like Tennyson, Bishop represses any explicit notions of sexual expression, choosing to employ metaphor instead.

Finally, even though the Gentleman never actually knows which part of him is real and which is the reflection, he does not despair over it: “The uncertainty / he says he / finds exhilarating. He loves / that sense of constant re-adjustment.” (39–42) This fluidity of self is arguably the most telling “queer moment” in the poem – since “queer is less an identity than a *critique* of identity” and is “always an identity under construction, a site of permanent becoming” (Jagose, 1996: 131). The Gentleman of Shalott is thus an exemplary character created through queering: seemingly odd, constantly questioning (hetero)normativity of the society, and always in motion, incessantly constructing his multifaceted identity by embracing fluidity.

CONCLUSION: THROUGH A GLASS, QUEERLY

Both Alfred Tennyson and Elizabeth Bishop use Arthurian legend to explore how the notions of selfhood and artistry are constructed. While Tennyson arguably romanticises and idealises the pre-industrial past when creating his own, Victorian version of mediaeval chivalric romance, Bishop relies on her readers’ familiarity with this world as mediated through Tennyson’s medievalism. Both poets enter into a dialogue with their literary predecessors – Tennyson with his many mediaeval sources, and Bishop with Tennyson. Through this intertextual interplay, both poets make their readers question the factual and fictional constructions of the Arthurian world.

As a highly stylised, heterocentric ideal, chivalric romance is fertile ground for the destabilisation of the presumed norms of gender and sexuality, and is thus ripe for queer readings. The same can be said for later adaptations of Arthuriana, including Tennyson's and Bishop's Shalott poems. It is unclear how many (if any) “queer moments” were intentional on the part of the poets; nevertheless, both poems are subtextually full of queer ideas and imagery. Tennyson's work, in particular, has many layers of meaning that can be interpreted as queer, from the Lady's and Lancelot's roles in the text, to the Lady's queer coding as the Gothic Other. Bishop's poem is less narratively rich and possesses fewer lyrical meanderings than Tennyson's melodic late Romanticist work; this, paradoxically, creates additional elements of queerness, as her masculine Modernist expression pares down any superfluous, feminine-coded lyricism. Bishop's Gentleman follows Tennyson's Lady as a queer-coded Gothic entity, and his insistence on “constant re-adjustment” calls to mind the idea of queer as a state of flux. Both poems ultimately relegate the queer to the level of subtext, with sexual repression winning over sexual expression.

As is always the case with literary interpretation, the borders between the text, the reader and the context of reading are not fixed, but shifting and porous. This article is not meant to be a definitive queer analysis of either poem, but merely one view, at one moment in time. As befits the subject, this serves to show the ultimate constructedness of any meaning, any position, and any interpretation.

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„ČAROBNO TKANJE RASKOŠNIH BOJA“: PESME O ŠALOTU ALFREDA
TENISONA I ELIZABET BIŠOP KROZ VIZURU KVIR TEORIJE

Rezime

Srednjovekovni viteški spevovi, naročito ciklus legendi o kralju Arturu, tradicionalno se tumače kao priče o junaštvu, a njihovi likovi, vitezovi i gospe, posmatraju se kao ideal ondašnjeg muškog i ženskog identiteta. Čitanje ovih dela kroz kvir teoriju, s druge strane, dovodi u pitanje takvo tumačenje i otkriva da tradicionalna, kanonska analiza daje prednost binarnoj opoziciji roda, heteronormativnosti i heterocentričnosti. Kvir medievalistika podriiva taj normativ i pokazuje kako određeni tematski i formalni elementi srednjovekovnih viteških spevova destabilišu heteronormativnost arturijanskog sveta. Kasnije adaptacije arturijanskih legendi nastavljaju taj trend, i pokazuju da su nepromenljive kategorije roda i seksualnosti samo istorijska konstrukcija. Ovaj članak se bavi dvema adaptacijama legende

o Šalotu – uticajnom pesmom „Gospa od Šalota“ Alfreda Tenisona iz viktorijanskog doba i njenom duhovitom obradom pod nazivom „Gospodin od Šalota“ koju je u periodu modernizma napisala Elizabet Bišop. Tumačena kroz prizmu kvir teorije, legenda o Šalotu otkriva nestabilnost heterocentričnosti posredovanog srednjovekovnog teksta, što dovodi u pitanje šire ideje roda, seksualnosti, kvir identiteta i normativnosti, kao i njihovu vezu sa istorijom i književnom analizom.

Ključne reči: arturijanske legende, Gospa od Šalota, Alfred Tenison, Elizabet Bišop, poezija, kvir teorija

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