

Title	The Metamorphosis of La Belle Dame sans Merci
Author(s)	Murai, Miyoko
Citation	Osaka Literary Review. 29 P.129-P.145
Issue Date	1990-12-20
Text Version	publisher
URL	<a href="https://doi.org/10.18910/25490">https://doi.org/10.18910/25490</a>
DOI	10.18910/25490
rights	
Note	

*Osaka University Knowledge Archive : OUKA*

<https://ir.library.osaka-u.ac.jp/>

Osaka University

## The Metamorphosis of La Belle Dame sans Merci

Miyoko Murai

About 170 years have passed since Keats wrote “La Belle Dame sans Merci” in 1819. Most of the critics have referred to the woman in the poem, La Belle Dame sans Merci, and sought her clear-cut image. Consequently she has undergone the long and manifold metamorphosis from the middle of the 19th century to the present time. But this metamorphosis goes back to its starting point after all. La Belle Dame, unidentified at first, becomes Keats’s sweetheart, Fanny Brawne. Then she goes through some generalizations to various femme fatale images in myths, legends, other literary works. And after tracing back the Celtic world to be the Great Goddess of remote antiquity, suddenly she disappears. From this disappearance, however, she comes back as a woman entirely deprived of her former dominant position over men. But it is not the end of her metamorphosis. She is pushed back again into an enigma. And it is what she was when the poem was published.

Is there anything in this small poem of 48 lines which urges diverse interpretations? What makes La Belle Dame accept manifold faces? And at the same time, what makes her reject them all? To answer these, attention should be given not only to her but also to the characteristics of this poem. Then what can be made out are anonymity, impersonality or non-commitment it essentially involves, which are what traditional ballads of unknown authors hold in common. With various balladic elements, “La Belle Dame sans Merci” follows the traditional ballad both in its form and in its contents as conscientiously as possible. In this thesis the focus will be placed at first on the Belle Dame image to

trace her metamorphosis which emerges out of about 50 criticisms over a century to her final return to an enigma. Then the characteristics of this poem will be examined to see that what permits and rejects various images to make La Belle Dame an enigma exists within the poem's balladic nature.

## I

At first La Belle Dame was unidentified. Keats wrote this poem in his letter of 1819, which was published in 1848 when an early review appeared. It only praised his "true metrical power"<sup>1)</sup> without any minute comments on her. The same tendency can be seen in William Michael Rossetti:

I give it ["La Belle Dame sans Merci"] here as making the highest point of romantic imagination to which Keats attained in dealing with human or quasi-human personages . . . . This is a poem of impression. The impression is immediate, final, and permanent.<sup>2)</sup>

As Sidney Colvin says, "Keats's Ballad can hardly be said to tell a story,"<sup>3)</sup> La Belle Dame and the knight are not referred to particularly. For a few decades or so from her first appearance, she had got no identification. As an anonymous being she composed the poem's magical tone.

From this unnamed being she is transfigured into Fanny Brawne. Keats met her in 1818 and engaged himself to her in 1819. She loved dances and other merriments, which tortured him and excited his jealousy. John Middleton Murry sees "the anguish of an impossible love" behind this poem:

La Belle Dame is Fanny Brawne; she is also the beauty of life itself which is claiming through Fanny, Keats for its sacrifice and victim. Life, with its beauty and its pain, has taken hold of him; Love and Death have twined their arms about him.<sup>4)</sup>

His early death was caused by the cruel Belle Dame, Fanny who turned him round her finger without mercy. This image is typical

not only in early critics of this century but also in rather later ones and appears over half a century.

If one approaches La Belle Dame by tracing back his biography, she may be his mother. While he loved Fanny from 1818 to his death in 1821, his love for his mother began with his birth. Barbara Schapiro regards the image of women in the Romantic poets as two-sided mother: good benevolent mother and bad cruel mother.<sup>5)</sup> La Belle Dame overlaps this image because of his relationship with his mother. Keats was the first born and her favorite. His father died when he was eight. Only two months later she remarried and left him behind. She returned to die when he was fourteen. Two contradictory images can be derived. While mother shows tenderness by feeding her child, she is cruel by deserting or starving him, which is appropriate for La Belle Dame. She sings "a fairy's song"<sup>6)</sup> and feeds the knight with "roots of relish sweet," "honey wild," "manna dew" and lulls him to sleep. Her behaviour is quite maternal. But when he awakes, she is gone. She is an affectionate yet cruel mother.

After these biographical images she turns into *femme fatale*. The definition is always the same: *femme fatale* is a fascinating woman who leads a man into temptation that ends in his destruction. According to such a broad definition, she exists with infinite variety and La Belle Dame rapidly changes her face from the 30's. Mario Praz regards the poem's theme as identical with Tannhäuser legend.<sup>7)</sup> If so, she is Venus. Tannhäuser is a fabled knight or minnesinger of the 13th century. He was captivated by the charm of Venus whose famous palace was in a grot of the Venusberg. After the pleasant life he went to seek forgiveness in Rome. But the Pope, appalled to learn his sojourn in the Venusberg, would not give him absolution from carnal sin. Hopeless he returned to Venus. This is popular and often used in literature. So Keats may have created his version. The victim is a "knight-at-arms" like Tannhäuser and the temptress is a nonhuman, "fairy"

s child" like Venus. The scene of seduction is in a "grot" on a "hillside" like the pleasure dome of Venus in the Venusberg. Their intercourse is also interrupted and he cannot return to his former life. An epitome of an opposition between Hebraism and Hellenism may be found in the legend. Tannhäuser is torn between the worship of Virgin Mother and pagan Venus. But Keats's knight experiences no such religious conflict. "La Belle Dame sans Merci" means "the beautiful lady without mercy." He is afflicted by her mercilessness. But if "mercy" is "God's favour," she is "the beautiful lady without any divine grace." Venus belongs to the pagan world before the dethronement of pagan gods by Christianity and gets no divine favour. La Belle Dame overlaps Venus because of her beauty, fatality, and the pagan aura of ancient world behind her.

Praz points out the poem's influence upon "the Pre-Raphaelites and the Symbolists, from Swinburne's *Laus Veneris* to certain pictures by Moreau."<sup>8)</sup> At least there are three pictures entitled *La Belle Dame sans Merci* by Walter Crane, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, John William Waterhouse. Rossetti's picture of 1855 shows a man on horseback with a woman seated in front of him and twisting her body toward him just as the poem describes. What attracts attention is that she is winding her long hair around his neck as he is kissing her hand, though in the poem he only says, "Her hair was long." In 1893 Waterhouse gave her a similar pose. Here she is sitting down in a meadow and a knight is now kissing her. Again she is lugging him with her long hair around his neck. The artists's imagination metamorphosed La Belle Dame into the femme fatale image of their own mind. To express her fatal charm, they made her really capture the knight alive by her hair.

If La Belle Dame lures men with her long hair as a weapon, she is a water spirit with charming voice and various names like mermaid, undine, naiad, Siren, Lorelei. Here mermaid image is adequate because of two contemporary works Keats knew well, a

picture, *The Mermaid* by William Hilton and a Scottish ballad, "The Mermaid of Galloway" recast by Allan Cunningham. They depict a man destroyed by a long-haired mermaid. As Samson lost strength when Delilah cut his hair, long loose hair is often endowed with magical power. She lures the knight by singing sweetly and draws or destroys him with her long hair.

As she is a water spirit, the knight loiters near a lake. But why are there no birds and withered sedge? Because it is Lake Avernus. The ancients regarded it as the entrance to hell for its water had so poisonous a smell that no living creatures were seen around it. He is now close by hell where La Belle Dame lives and lures him into bottomless hell of lust. A few days before this poem Keats wrote a sonnet, "A Dream, after reading Dante's Episode of Paolo and Francesca." He read and loved *The Inferno* of Dante. If their influence is considered, La Belle Dame becomes Francesca. She was a wife of Giovanni Malatesta but committed adultery with beautiful Paolo. It was revealed and they were killed in 1289. Dante makes her confess her sin in the inferno. But La Belle Dame does not repent and lures kings, princes, warriors and the knight even after having fallen into hell for her lust.

If La Belle Dame is connected with hell, more vicious image may be adequate: the vampire. Before the 19th century vampires existed mainly in folklore. What with the popularity of Gothic literature and the ballad revival, English vampire attained its highest stage just before this poem. Perhaps Keats felt some interest in vampirism. Why is the knight palely loitering? Why are kings, princes, warriors death-pale? Why are their lips parched and wide open? Why does he shut her eyes with four kisses? It is because she is a female vampire. Victims of vampires turn pale and feel thirsty because of the loss of blood. The pallor and the parched lips of kings, princes, warriors tell the knight what he is going to be. Generally vampires sleep with their eyes open, so he shuts her eyes. And in folklore numerology the number four is not

used because it is an evil number. Keats used it deliberately to evoke an evil atmosphere of vampirism. As James B. Twitchell remarks,<sup>9</sup> vampire tales, especially of female vampires, are connected with a story of seduction and its process is determined in the long history of vampire tales. The oldest figure may be Lamia or Lilith. They really take men's life away by sapping their energy. Then, why is the blood-sucked knight loitering? He is seeking the next victim. He is now a vampire as is usual in vampire tales.

From these femme fatale images La Belle Dame traces back to remote antiquity to be the Great Goddess finally. Ancient people, seeing nature's infinite reproductions, thought that some female deity was exercising her power. She was the fertility-Goddess connected with the earth but she was also the netherworld-Goddess for the earth swallows up the dead. Robert Graves says, "Keats saw the White Goddess [Great Goddess] as the Belle Dame sans Merci."<sup>10</sup> While she feeds the knight as a tender Terra Mater, she holds his life and death. Her long hair, like that of Isis or Demeter, shows her power of fertility. Yet the wildness of her eyes reveals the terrible character of the underworld where death-pale kings, princes, warriors exist.

But she does not become a goddess at a single bound. From the middle of this century the poem comes to be treated as a ballad and she goes back into the Celtic world where existed fertile mythology and people believed in fairies. Many ballads were produced there with various mythology and legends. Some of Keats's poems treat fairies. La Belle Dame is connected with this Celtic world because unlike his other poems of fairies, only this poem is written as a ballad. It is useless to seek her image. For the knight reveals her identity: she is a fairy who lives in an "elfin grot" on a hillside and sings "a fairy's song." Interiors of hills are dwelling places of the supernatural in many folk tales. Naturally she cannot speak human language and makes a "moan" in

“language strange.” In folk tales kissing and sexual intercourse with unearthly being is a taboo. Eating in fairyland is also a taboo. The knight violates them and inevitably cannot stay in fairyland nor live in this world peacefully as before. These fairies dislike to be too much interfered with. If the knight gets a cruel treatment from a fairy for chasing her too far, La Belle Dame turns from a pretty fairy into an evil or capricious one. In Thompson’s motif-index there is “La Belle Dame sans Merci” classified as an ogre who is believed to lure men and desert or destroy them. It is one of the “evil deeds of witches” common to the folklores of all over the world.<sup>11)</sup> La Belle Dame may be such an evil witch in archetypal folk tales.

By tracing back to more ancient world, she becomes a neither good nor evil creature, a daemon. Charles I. Patterson distinguishes the pre-Christian conception of daemon as neither good nor evil from the Christian conception of demon as evil and he regards her as a daemon.<sup>12)</sup> In the ancient Greek mythology the daemon was a supernatural neutral being. There was the similar conception in the Celtic world. La Belle Dame is this Celtic daemon. Though she is called “the beautiful lady without mercy,” it does not mean that she has cruelty instead of mercy. For she has neither of them. She is a misty Celtic creature older than a fairy and a witch.

Most of the mortals who meet a fairy or a witch in folk tales are ordinary people. But here a knight meets her. When the motif of a knight’s encounter with a fairy is considered, she becomes an enchantress in a romance. As she now belongs to the Celtic world, the most suitable background is mediaeval romances that treat the court of King Arthur where many enchantresses exist. They do not have a definite character but overlap each other with every version. Vivien who shuts up Merlin in a castle of air is also called the Lady of the Lake, affectionate foster-mother of Lancelot. Morgan le Fay is Arthur’s evil sister but she is also a kind fay of



Avalon who nurses wounded Arthur. John Barnard points out Morgan as a prototype :

Keats's ambiguously attractive fay belongs not with the femmes fatales . . . but with a more ancient tradition, that of Morgan le Fay, which lies behind Malory's *Morte D'Arthur* and Spenser's *Faerie Queene*. In this Celtic tradition the fairy goddess is paradoxically both an evil figure and a protector and nurturer of heroes.<sup>13)</sup>

While a fairy is generally a tiny gauzy-winged sprite, a fay in romances is tall and fascinating. La Belle Dame, sometimes benevolent and sometimes ruthless, is such a fay. Richard Cavendish connects this mediaeval fay, Morgan with the goddesses of Celtic paganism and thinks that Morgan "was descended from a trio of Irish goddesses of love and war, known as the Morrigan."<sup>14)</sup> She may be related to more universal being, the Great Goddess of ancient Europe as R. S. Loomis says, "fays of Mediaeval romances and of modern European folklore are descended from the goddesses of the pre-Christian era."<sup>15)</sup> La Belle Dame is connected with these ancient goddesses and becomes really fatal being who controls the fate of not only men but also all mortals.

La Belle Dame has thus accomplished her metamorphosis. Ad de Vries says that in the western world "nearly all mystical women represent some aspect of the [Great] Goddess"<sup>16)</sup> and takes La Belle Dame as its example with Delilah, Vivien, Godiva, Snow White. Her images flow in and proliferate from such an archetypal image. Dorothy Van Ghent considers her an archetype :

Scholars have pointed out various specific literary "sources" for the poem, but . . . each of them is itself a reworking of earlier and yet earlier sources—anonymous traditional tales of ritual origin. The images to which Keats was consistently attracted in his reading were of the kind Jung calls "primordial."<sup>17)</sup>

She vividly exists and changes her face upon a strong ground of tradition.

However, this image entirely changes in these years. Her image has been pursued over a century with a tacit consent that she is present in this poem. But when the narrative form is considered, it is clear that it is a reminiscence and her behaviour is revealed only through the knight's speech. The real Belle Dame is already gone and always absent. The same can be seen in another aspect. The title, "La Belle Dame sans Merci" is not Keats's original. Alain Chartier, a French poet of the 14th century wrote a poem by this title which he read in Chaucer's translation. And he read many Scottish ballads in English.<sup>18)</sup> In short, Keats's poem has preceding "Original"<sup>19)</sup> works read in translations. Yet they do not settle her image but make it absent. However hard Keats may try, he cannot present his wished-for world of "Original" romance and ballad. The more earnestly he writes, the more differences are produced between the "Original" and his poem. She is always absent who must have been present in the "Original." The preceding literary works make her disappear. She loses her strong supporters.

Is it impossible to revive the vanished Belle Dame? As the literary tradition has been denied, she now cannot become a beautiful yet cruel woman. How about reversing the relationship between her and the knight? Karen Swann thinks that La Belle Dame has been forced to play the role of a woman in romance and positively makes former images disappear.<sup>20)</sup> Then the knight's tale changes entirely. The "garland," "bracelets," "fragrant zone" which he gives her are tokens not of love but of impulse to control her. His self-satisfaction is revealed in "sure in language strange she said,/ 'I love thee true.'" Her moans, sighs, tears are signs of resistance. Yet she prepares for his meal and lulls him to sleep. Swann says :

She [a feminist critic] might conclude that "romance" is at

least as fatal to the lady as the knight . . . romance blinds most readers to the woman's point of view—a point of view from which the exchange between lady and knight looks less like a domestic idyll or a fatal encounter and more like a scene of harassment.<sup>21)</sup>

The last scene also changes. The knight is admitted into an androcentric society. The woman harassed by him begins to seduce him, when men's warning voices interfere to receive him into the male society of kings, princes, warriors. She is only exploited and gets nothing. Created by the convention of romance that lacks a woman's point of view, her image should be much distorted. When the convention is cut off to rectify the image, she turns from an awful goddess into a woman harassed by a man who has been her victim for a long time. As in the case of the absent *Belle Dame*, the literary tradition is positively denied. By the very denial, however, she reappears.

And again she turns into an enigma. Karl Kroeber regards this poem and "The Ancient Mariner" as a "Romantic fantasy" of the post-Enlightenment age and considers what Keats tried to produce in his age :

The art of "La Belle Dame" . . . must evoke what in the ordinary terms of modern converse as well as those highly sophisticated psychological analysis will not make good sense.<sup>22)</sup>

Keats and Coleridge did not give a flat refusal to their rationalized society. They recognized well that true mystery could not exist, but still tried to create the irrational on the same level with the rational. It was a practice of "willing suspension of disbelief."<sup>23)</sup> To create a true fantasy, it is irrelevant to reveal her identity. Early reviewers did not refer to her. She existed as an anonymous being. And now she returns to such an enigma.

The manifold faces of *La Belle Dame* have been revealed. Apart from the question of validity, each image seems to be persuasive in its own way. What makes it possible? The following will seek

the cause from within the poem.

## II

Francis Utley regards La Belle Dame as femme fatale, but she also points out the variety of the image :

Commentary on the sources of Keats's "La Belle Dame sans Merci" has been almost as extensive as though, instead of being one of the few successful literary ballad in English, it had been a Child Ballad.<sup>24)</sup>

"Child Ballad" is a ballad of *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* edited by Francis James Child. All the ballads in this collection have no specified authors. The ballad was a product of illiterate mediaeval society. Orally transmitted, these traditional ballads hold many versions for one basic tale. Child collected 305 traditional ballads with such different versions. Keats's poem belongs to literary ballads of later period but it resembles traditional ballads because of the various Belle Dame images, that is, its potentialities of producing numerous versions. Utley's words well reveal its character.

This poem is written in an iambic quatrain, the ballad stanza where the second and the fourth lines are rhymed. The first two stanzas equally begin with "Oh, what can ail thee, knight-at arms." This is a traditional technique, the refrain that indicates the original character of a ballad as a song. The last two lines of these stanzas use another technique, the parallelism by setting withered sedge against full granary, or vanished birds against rich harvest. Like the refrain, it makes a ballad monotonous and easy to learn and sing. Thus balladic tone is produced from the beginning. But this opening is really abrupt. Suddenly someone asks, "what can ail thee?" and the state of the case is revealed later. It begins in medias res, as is usual with traditional ballads.<sup>25)</sup> And the scene changes rapidly from the lake to the meads, to the grot, again to the lake. It develops toward the end

without any minute description of each scene, which is the leap-ing, a traditional art produced by the necessity of singing or narrating within a limited frame.

Because of a small frame of 48 lines, direct words and simple syntax are used. The basic construction of almost all the stanzas is "someone did something." And stock adjectives, "beautiful," "long," "sweet," "wild" are used. With such an economy of words, an encounter of a mortal with a fairy is narrated. Like an encounter with a ghost or a witch, it is one of the motifs that often appear in folk tales. The most popular one is the Scottish ballad of Thomas who was spirited away by the queen of elfland. This motif exists all over the world. By the simplicity of words and syntax, and by such archetypal contents, stark anonymity is produced. As for the setting, there is no specified place. Only the "cold hill side" and the "lake" exist. The characters are also indeterminable. Both the "lady" and the "knight" are familiar in folklores and not described minutely. What can be seen with a few epithets is that the lady is beautiful with long hair, light foot, wild eyes and that the knight is pale, haggard, sad. The setting and characters show thorough anonymity, an essential characteristic of traditional ballads.

Besides anonymity, the poem has impersonality or non-commitment to the object. Patterson says, "the knight nowhere charges her with inconstancy or deception."<sup>26</sup> He only tells the whole affair and ends it by repeating the questioner's words. As Child remarks that "the fundamental characteristic of popular ballads is ... the absence of subjectivity and of self-consciousness,"<sup>27</sup> he reveals no judgement of his own, though he himself is involved in the affair. Similarly the questioner shows stark impersonality. He is nothing but an incentive to draw out the knight's tale. After the third stanza he disappears and gives no judgement on what he heard. Harold Bloom says that this poem "would have found a place in *The Lyrical Ballads*" because of the

resemblance of their diction, but if so, it “might have been moralized a bit.”<sup>28)</sup> In fact no moralizing tone exists here which often appears in broadside ballads and sometimes in Wordsworth. As Henry B. Wheatley remarks that true ballad is “without any moralizing padding,”<sup>29)</sup> its absence is a traditional art caused by the indifferent narration. In traditional ballads told thus indifferently, whatever experiences a character may have, there lies peculiar passivity or a kind of fatalism at the bottom. With this fatalism they make it the only object to tell a tale. Both the knight and the questioner keep a subtle distance from their several objects, that is, the knight from *La Belle Dame* and the questioner from the knight. The final judgement on this encounter is left in suspense. The knight’s words return to the opening to make this ballad a circle that cannot be broken forever.

By these elements such as anonymity, simplicity, indifference, various images are applied to *La Belle Dame*. For, given few informations, the context can be taken as one pleases. Whereas it is impossible to choose one image by denying all the other flatly because the propriety of one image cannot be determined by few clues. She seems tractable yet hard to deal with.

The foregoing are the characteristics of this poem as a traditional ballad. But it is not a folk ballad people sang, nor a broadside ballad sung to well-known tunes and hawked in the streets. It is a literary ballad. Literary ballads use a frame of a ballad, yet they do not aim at only telling a tale but expressing something that cannot be found in traditional ballads, some feeling, sentiment, moral and the like of the poet. Then, what is the difference between this poem and traditional ballads? First, the knight becomes an agent several times in his intercourse with *La Belle Dame*, as in “I made,” “I set,” “I shut.” As in “*Thomas Rhymer*” a fairy carries off Thomas on her steed, a mortal is often at the mercy of a fairy in traditional ballads. But here the knight sets her on his steed. The supernatural cannot be treated

with matter-of-factness and the mortal's passivity is lost. Secondly, the knight would not reveal his passion almost all the time, but he betrays it in "Ah! woe betide!" His non-attachment is broken for a moment. In the third place, the "withered" sedge and "no birds," not only set the scene of late autumn but also sympathize with the knight's "woe-begone" heart, which is what W. M. Hart calls the "sympathetic Nature."<sup>30</sup> In traditional ballads nature is scarcely described for the setting of the scene, still less with any trace of pathetic fallacy. These differences create a literary ballad.

However, they are restrained as much as possible. Certainly the knight takes the initiative several times, but he cannot completely wrest away the leadership from the fairy. She is always a doer. And though he reveals his passion, it is only once. Excepting this momentary revelation, he narrates indifferently all the time by using such a regulated syntax as "someone did something." In the first two stanzas and the last one, some empathy may be found in nature. But the first two set it in parallelism. And the last one imitates the opening words like the poll-parroting of traditional ballads. Thus nature is described with some techniques to create the illusion of a traditional ballad rather than to respond to the knight's feeling directly.

The subtle balance between literary ballads and traditional ballads appears in its narrative form. At first sight it looks like a dialogue used frequently in traditional ballads. Someone puts question in the beginning, then the knight answers. But it also seems to be a monologue. That is, the afflicted knight answers his own question of the opening to reveal his aching heart. Most of the traditional ballads use a dialogue even if they begin as a monologue. Because they are narrated without being written down, it is necessary to enhance the dramatic effect and attract the audience. But literary ballads often use a monologue from the beginning to the end.<sup>31</sup> In the last stanza the knight repeats his own

words of the opening to be imprisoned forever in an inescapable circularity of affliction. The poem itself becomes a revelation of his suffering heart. Such a revelation of some feeling is peculiar to literary ballads. As any quotation marks are not used, it is hard to say whether this is a dialogue or a monologue. Traditional ballads often omit quotation marks, but in literary ballads they are used if necessary. Here Keats may have avoided them on purpose. As a result, though a literary ballad, this poem gives the feeling of a traditional ballad whose context is protean. And this ambiguity produces the mysterious tone of the poem. If it narrates some passion or something symbolic too expressly, *La Belle Dame* would not have undergone so various transfigurations.

As Kroeber says that this poem “will have a somewhat different meaning for each reader,”<sup>32</sup> at a first reading one can easily get *déjà vu* by its archetypal nature as a ballad. Yet it is an illusion. The question “Who is the woman?” remains forever. As the transition of criticism should be reflected naturally upon the *déjà vu* of every reader, each image appears not at random but with some affinity and only for a limited time. By exploiting balladic elements and the trend of literary criticism, *La Belle Dame* pretends to be quite tractable yet ever refuses to accept any final image.

#### NOTES

- 1) Coventry Patmore, “The sensual school of poetry,” *North British Review*, X(Nov. 1848), *Keats : The Critical Heritage*, ed. G. M. Matthews (London : Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 338.
- 2) William Michael Rossetti, *Life of John Keats* (London : Walter Scott, 1887), pp. 192-194.
- 3) Sidney Colvin, *Keats* (1889 ; rpt. N. Y. : AMS, 1968), p. 166.
- 4) John Middleton Murry, *Keats and Shakespeare* (1925 ; rpt. London : Oxford U. P., 1957), pp. 124-125.
- 5) Barbara Schapiro, introduction, *The Romantic Mother* (Baltimore : Johns Hopkins U. P., 1983), p. ix.



- 6) Keats's poems are all extracted from Miriam Allott, ed. *The Poems of John Keats* (London : Longman, 1980).
- 7) Mario Praz, *The Romantic Agony* (1933 ; rpt. London : Oxford U. P., 1970), p. 212.
- 8) *Ibid.*, pp. 212-213.
- 9) James B. Twitchell, *The Living Dead : A Study of the Vampire in Romantic Literature* (Durham, N.C. : Duke U. P., 1981), pp. 39-40.
- 10) Robert Graves, *The White Goddess* (1948 ; rpt. N.Y. : Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1966), p. 427.
- 11) Stith Thompson, ed. *Motif-Index of Folk-Literature* (Indiana : Indiana U. P., 1955), III, p. 300.
- 12) C. I. Patterson, Jr., *The Daemonic in the Poetry of John Keats* (Illinois : U. of Illinois P., 1970), p. 138.
- 13) John Barnard, *John Keats* (Cambridge : Cambridge U. P., 1987), p. 92.
- 14) Richard Cavendish, *King Arthur and the Grail* (1978 ; rpt. London Paladin, 1985), P. 119.
- 15) Roger S. Loomis, "Morgan La Fee and the Celtic Goddess," *Speculum*, 20 (1945), 200.
- 16) Ad de Vries, *Dictionary of Symbols and Imagery* (London : North-Holland, 1974), p. 225.
- 17) Dorothy Van Ghent, *Keats : The Myth of the Hero* (Princeton: Princeton U. P., 1983), pp. 88-89.
- 18) For example, "Thomas the Rymer" appeared in Walter Scott's *Minstrelsy of the Scottish Border* (1812), and "True Thomas and the Queen of Elfland" appeared in Robert Jamieson's *Popular Ballads and Songs* (1806).
- 19) Cf. Marjorie Levinson, *Keats's Life of Allegory* (Oxford : Basil Blackwell, 1988), pp. 53-54, pp. 61-62.
- 20) Karen Swann, "Harassing the Muse," *Romanticism and Feminism*, ed. A. K. Mellor (Indiana : Indiana U. P., 1988), pp. 83-84.
- 21) *Ibid.*, p. 89.
- 22) Karl Kroeber, *Romantic Fantasy and Science Fiction* (New Haven : Yale U. P., 1988), pp. 70-71.
- 23) Samuel Taylor Colerige, *Biographia Literaria*, ed. George Watson (1906 ; rpt. London : Dent, 1967), p. 169.
- 24) Francis Utley, "The Infernos of Lucretius and of Keats's 'La Belle Dame sans Merci,'" *ELH : A Journal of English Literary History*, 25(1958), 105.

- 25) For example, "Edward"(Child 13B), which treats the patricide, begins with the mother's question, "Why dois your brand sae drap wi bluid, / Edward, Edward," to her son who has already killed his father. And "Lord Randal"(Child 12A), a tale about a man killed by his sweetheart, opens with the mother's question to Lord Randal who has been already poisoned, "O where ha you been, Lord Randal, my son?"
- 26) C.I. Patterson Jr., *op.cit.*, pp. 141-142.
- 27) Francis James Child, ed. *The English and Scottish Popular Ballads* (N. Y. : Dover, 1965),V,p. 756.
- 28) Harold Bloom, *The Visionary Company* (1961; 2 nd ed., Ithaca: Cornell U. P.,1971), p. 386.
- 29) Henry B. Wheatley, general introduction, *Reliques of Ancient English Poetry*, ed. Thomas Percy (N. Y. : Dover, 1966), pp. xxxii-xxxiii.
- 30) W. M. Hart, *Ballad and Epic : A Study in the Development of the Narrative Art* (1907; rpt. N. Y. : Russell & Russell, 1967), p. 28.
- 31) For example, Tennyson's "The Sisters" and Yeats's "Crazy Jane and the Bishop."
- 32) Karl Kroeber, *Romantic Narrative Art* (Madison : U. of Wisconsin P., 1960), p. 38.