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Ismael M. Fahmi
English Department, College of Languages, Salahaddin University- Hawler

Lanja A. Dabbagh
English Department, College of Languages, Salahaddin University-

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Asst. Prof. Dr. Ismael M. Fahmi and Dr. Lanja A. Dabbagh
English Department, College of Languages, Salahaddin University-Hawler
superboy1961@yahoo.comismael.saeed@su.edu.krdlanja_dabbagh@yahoo.com
lanja.dabbagh@su.edu.krd

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Abstract:

Dora (Composed in 1835. Published in 1842) is one of Tennyson's least anthologized poems, even though it incorporates a number of distinctive utterances scarcely found elsewhere in his oeuvre. Apart from the original collection of 1842, and the poet's Complete Works, the poem is absent from the anthologies. This poem has received minimum attention from the critics. There are expressions in this dramatic poem unique to it only. It is intriguing that this work has attracted only a few passing remarks from the specialists, even though it was found good enough to put on the stage in the United States of America during the 1870s, according to Peter Hall's Theatrical Anecdotes (P.32). It is different from the rest of the poet's creative works because it is his only poem that treats filicide. The research questions focus on the following: Why did Tennyson write such a poem in the first place? Why did he borrow the plot from a prose narrative? What are the consequences of a Tennysonian character willing to venture outdoors? Are some of Tennyson's characters in the poem simply corpses, like the walking dead in Gothic narratives? The utterances selected for the analysis are few and short but are key statements that highlight what Tennyson needed to articulate.

Key Words: Filicide, Family Disintegration, the Victorian Age, Live Corpses.

"لقد قتلت ولدي": التعمق في تعبيرات مفتاحية جاءت في سياق قصيدة "دورا" ١٨٤٢ لناظمها الشاعر تنيسون

أ.م.د. إسماعيل محمد فهمي د. لانجة عبد الله الدباغ
جامعة صلاح الدين / كلية اللغات - قسم اللغة الإنجليزية

الملخص:

قصيدة نظمها الفريد تنيسون عام ١٨٣٥ و نشرها اهمية التعبيرات المتميزة التي جاءت فيها و التي تخلو منها قصائده الاخرى. جاءت هذه القصيدة في أعماله الكاملة و تفتقر اليها المختارات الشعرية لقصائده باستثناء مجموعته المنشورة عام ١٨٤٢. و قد نالت هذه القصيدة الحد الأدنى من الاهتمام النقدي. و يوجد فيها عدد من التعبيرات التي يندر وجودها في قصائده اللاحقة من الامور الداعية للحيرة قلة اكتراث المتخصصين بهذا الأثر الإبداعي، مع انه كان مثيراً للأعجاب في أميركا الى درجة تحويله الى عمل مسرحي ناجح في ١٨٧٠ في الولايات المتحدة الاميركية، بحسب قول الناقد بيتر هال في كتابه حكايات مأثورة عن المسرح وتختلف هذه القصيدة عن سائر أعمال تنيسون لأنها الوحيدة التي تتناول موضوع قتل الأب لابنه. والسؤال الذي يطرحه البحث هو كالاتي: لماذا كتب تنيسون هذه القصيدة أصلاً؟ ما هو مصير الشخصية التنيسونية التي تغامر بالخروج الى ما وراء الأبواب؟ هل هذه الشخصيات عبارة عن جثث متنقلة؟ مثلما نراه في القصص ذات النمط القوطي؟ ان المحتارات من التعبيرات التي يركز عليها هذا البحث للتحليل مختارات قصيرة و قليلة الا أنها تعبيرات أساسية مفتاحية و تضيء جوانب مما أراد تنيسون أن يقوله.

Introduction:

Victorian England was experiencing numerous transformations which gave rise to hard choices. It was a time, when fathers turned against their sons and vice versa for different reasons. There was a lot of human suffering that saw its way to literary works. Tennyson's dramatic poem *Dora* (1842) is a case in view. This work seems to be inspired by the concerns and controversies of the Victorian, as well as universal affliction. The text of the poem shows that Tennyson was trying to defamiliarize *King Oedipus* by Sophocles, to make the father kill the rebellious son, rather than the son committing patricide and regicide. The father kills the son socially and financially to prolong the outdated social system. The son is the new generation, sacrificed for the survival of the older ones.

Tennyson, thus, is far from targeting a privet individual or an abstract idea. He rather targets a combination of misconceptions, old-fashioned traditions, unfair practices, including parental abuse of authority, degraded and lowly outlook to women, disrespectfulness towards the working classes, and misuse of religious commands to serve one's ends. He seems to have dealt with the unfamiliar and the undesirable within the framework of the acceptable and permissible. He works it out within general acceptance whether by tradition's unwritten rules or the divine laws found in the scriptures. In *Dora,* the most accepted code of marriage in England, the marriage blessed by the Church of England and by parents, symbolizes the social order that was undergoing transformations despite the old generation's objections. The new generation rejects this kind of marriage.

Although Tennyson wrote *Dora* as a poem, he managed to include elements identified by *The Poetics* as the ingredients of plays:

> Every tragedy, therefore, must have six parts, which parts determine its quality- namely, plot, character, diction, thought, spectacle, song. Two of the parts constitute the medium of imitation, one the manner, and three the objects of imitation. (The Poetics, section VI, 6-7)

It is highly unlikely that Tennyson ever had the intention of writing a tragedy in *Dora,* which is an extended dramatic lyric. She, as a character, is qualified for a sentimental, rather than a tragic, role. Yet, the presence of dramatic elements is unavoidable because the poem's premise is founded on conflict between the father and the son, ostensibly to address the filial disobedience regarding marriage: hence, the poem becomes dramatic. Thus, this work possesses the elements of drama. Incidentally, these elements are also found outside Aristotelian drama. In *Dora,* diction, or

more specifically, dialogue and the utterances containing it, play an integral part in both clarifying and mystifying the intention of the poet, in accordance with the aesthetic requirement of the dramatic moment.

Antecedents of Filicide in Literature

In the ancient Iraqi Epic of *Gilgamesh*, there was an abortive attempt to get this hero killed by a scheme of the Sumerian gods, including the Goddess *Aruru* his own mother. The people of *Uruk* had complained to Heaven of the Sumerian King's tyranny. The Divine Council were sorry that their son caused so much grief to the people. So, *Aruru* created *Enkidu* to kill *Gilgamesh*. However, the plan failed and both heroes became fast friends. Eventually, each one of them died of natural causes, more or less, as N. K. Sanders says in her Introduction to this Epic (See the pages 62 onwards). Likewise, *Oedipus Rex* (C.430 BC) makes a powerful start with the oracle of *Delphi* that King *Laios* has to slay his own expected son at birth. Otherwise, the son would grow up to slay his own father. If the play had taken the original course, it would have been a filicide tragedy rather than a patricide play.

In Ancient Arabia, some parents committed filicide, as THE QURAN states in *Surat Al-An'am, Aya 151*: "Do not kill your children out of poverty; we will provide for you and for them." Moreover, *Surat Al-Isra', Aya 31*, restates that some parents commit filicide for economic reasons: "And do not kill your children for fear of poverty. We provide for them and for you. Indeed, their killing is a great sin." Again, *Surat At-Takweer, Ayas 8 and 9*, repeats the parental murder of children, this time the guiltless females: "…the girl who was buried alive is asked for what sin she was killed." (The Quranic source is based on the translation of Aminah Assami Um Muhammed, further details in the Books Consulted). In the Iranian *Epic Of The Kings-Shah Nnamah* (1010) by Abol Qasim Firdausi (935-1020), Sohrab the son of the Kurdish Princess is killed by *Rustam* his own Persian father, even though Sohrab killed his son because of fate rather than any other factors. Matthew Arnold (1822-1888) wrote his *Sohrab and Rustam* (1853) based on secondary source linked to Firdansis' epic, according to Dwight Culler (p. 554) Firdausi's Epic. It is hard to say that Tennyson was consciously reconstructing an old myth. But, what Altenbernd and Lewis say regarding Tennyson's *Ulysses* may well apply to his *Dora*:

> Poets may retell portions of ancient myths as a basis for a vivid narrative, or they may interpret the myth, not so much to reconstruct what it meant to the society from which it arose … as to embody a meaning for his own

> readers. Tennyson's Ulysses is a dramatic monologue which develops a character portrait of the Homeric hero based not so much on Homer's version of the character as on Tennyson's version of Victorian ideals. (p.81)

The above has been a review of the literary antecedents of filicide examples. Even though *Dora* seems to be about *Farmer Allan's* niece, it is actually more focused on *Allan's* filicide.

Tennyson's Literary Reputation

The reason to include this section is that it has its own raison d'etre, as it will be shown in due course. In this respect Tennyson's reputation counts. As a man of stature, his opinions mattered much. Kingsley Amis (1922- 1995) writing in 1973, said the following:

> It is not much longer than ten years ago that Tennyson's poetry began to regain the serious attention and acclaim it had begun to lose a century later, when the poet still had thirty years to live (Amis, P.8).

Indeed, William Henry Hudson in 1918 thought that Tennyson was "sadly deficient in intellectual foundation." (P.116) He carries on to say that "Tennyson was a typical English gentleman…unable to divest himself of the prejudices or to transcend the limitations of his class" (P.120). Hudson makes this significant remark: "He was always the poet of law and order even more than progress" (P.121). He fails to see anything special about *Dora*, calling it "something factitious". But, the fact that it was "written at all is highly significant." (P.121). The key expression used by Hudson here is "the poet of law and order", which means Tennyson's support of the strict Victorian system. George Steiner has something interesting to say about men of letters who apply their literary product for the benefit of the government:

> In political societies in which the arts of government and public management were very largely those of persuasive formulation, the poet was the supreme exemplar of efficient speech. (Steiner, p. 138)

In 1855, Tennyson wrote *The Charge of Light Brigade*, in which he played the role of the prompler putting words in the mouths of the soldiers of the British Infantry,

Their's not to reason why,
Their's not to make reply,
Their's but to do and die.

Likewise, Hugh Walker, Tennyson's contemporary, was hostile to Tennyson's poetry. He thought that many of the poems were "delicious, but not food" (Walker P.40). He goes on like this: "They [the poems] are elegant, not strong. They are deficient in two things essential to great poetry: depth of thought and fervor of passion." (P.40). He quotes Edward FitzGerald's evaluation that "Tennyson never rose above, or even equaled, the poems of 1842" (P.42).

Another unfriendly remark from Pelham Edgar, a Canadian contemporary of Tennyson:

> His finely wrought character studies are then very few in number, and even the range of his types is disappointingly narrow. His hide-bound peasants, stiff and intractable as a stubborn soil, are drawn to the life. In a slightly higher sphere, Farmer Allan of 'Dora' displays the same ox-like tenacity, with a dictatorial spirit superadded, born of his wider acres and nourished by his increased self-esteem, yet with a hidden spring of humanity beneath the rough surface crust (Edgar P. xlviii).

In the statement above, the reactions of Tennyson's contemporaries to his poetry are clear. Moreover, it is evident that despite their hostile evaluation of this poet, they tended to single out the 1842 works. This obviously indicates that *Dora* is in a way free from blame. There is truth in the above as an outspoken judgment. As to how the poet was viewed by a number of his contemporaries: Fitzgerald, Walker, Hudson, and Edgar in the last decades of his very long poetic career. It is significant how they regarded *Dora*. F. B. Bateson, in his *English Poetry: An Introduction* says:

> By its own utilitarian criterion the Early Victorian Age must be accounted a failure. Never before in English history had so great a number of people been so acutely conscious of their own unhappiness (P. 156).

He believes that Tennyson suffered from schizophrenia. But, Tennyson was hardly the only schizophrenic Victorian: "Tennyson was not the only Victorian poet who suffered from schizophrenia" (P.162). This denotes that Tennyson's poetic characters have traces of that disease which mortifies the individual's attributes. In a related context, Linda M. Shires discusses death and the human body in the Victorian Age. She expresses this opinion: "…dead or weakened male bodies often provide the raison d'etre of a Tennyson text" (Schad, 126). She argues that: "…dead men surface …as part of a psychological deconstruction of identity which prompts and structures the poem…" (Schad, 127). This leads her to conclude that "Male bonding …and the fascination with the dead or dying male continue to be the major sources of his [Tennyson's] creativity."

From the above, it is notable that Tennyson's reputation suffered because of the morbidity of his choices. His fame is restored now because morbidity is recently back in fashion. This will be highlighted in the next sections. Death and fascination with walking corpses is a sign for the lack of intellect. Still, in *Dora* this sickly pursuit seems fit because the context figuratively involves the demise of the son in the hands of the father.

A Brief Account of Victorianism

According to Amrollah Abjadian, the Victorian Age was a difficult time:

> Victorian England was an age of anxiety and flux. Social, political, and religious institutions were challenged. Man's relationships to his church, class, and government came under a new security. … the Industrial Revolution made new and emotional demands upon the Victorians. (p. 308)

The quotation above applies to *Dora.* The same source adds that the Industrial Revolution "led to unbelievable social problems" (p. 309). Thus, *Dora*, as a Victorian piece of work, is a narrative discourse in the form of a dramatic poem of 168 lines, with utterances targeting instinct, culture, religion, the system, and the conflict of the old generation vs. the inner forces within man. Perhaps this will encourage further investigation in future researchers to highlight addition points.

As Judith Butler states in her *Gender Trouble*, "… the paternal law structures all linguistic signification … and so becomes a universal organizing principle of culture itself" (p. 79). Old farmer *Allan* wants to see his son *William* wed Dora, who is *William's* cousin on the father's side.

From this limited perspective, the poem will gradually discuss additional problems of graver nature.

What *Dora* Discusses

The initial point of controversy in the poem is marriage. The poem opens with the subject of marriage in the main speaker's mind. The aesthetic standard of the poem is the expected Tennysonian achievement of his active years in the earlier part of the Victorian Age. The poet unequivocally opens the poem:

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora. William was his son,
And she his niece. He often look'd at them,
And often thought "I'll make them man and wife".
(1- 4)

In the lines above, *farmer Allan* is the center of the family and is the focus of the utterance. The sentence should normally be: "William and Dora abode with farmer Allen" even though the verb 'abode' above is rather alien to the taste. Some constructions like 'lived with' or 'dwelt with' would have sounded more natural. However, the line as it stands in the original, is supposed to pay attention to *Farmer Allan,* even though the title of the poem is *Dora:*

With farmer Allan at the farm abode
William and Dora.

The function of the preposition "with" here is to imply that *William* and *Dora* are addenda, only extras, only an appendix to the enormous *Allan*, rather than beloved members of his household. If they were living like a normal, loving family, the poet would have used an expression like 'They lived together'. 'Togetherness' suggests love and affection but, "with" implies a load, an uncomfortable heavy burden. Dora is Allen's orphaned niece.

Tennyson goes to the heart of the matter in a manner similar to the ancient epics. He avoids unnecessary circumlocution. He portrays a family led by an elderly farmer who acts as the sole authority on the farm. The poem, as a whole, recalls the atmospheres in the Garden of Eden, or some similar image of the Golden Past. The conversation between *Allan* and his son *William* is reminiscent of Jehovah's warning to *Adam* in the *Book of Genesis*:

The Lord God took the man and put him in the Garden of Eden to work it and take care of it. And the Lord

> God commanded the man, "You are free to eat from any tree in the garden; but must not eat from the tree of knowledge of good and evil, for when you eat of it you will surely die" (Holy Bible, Book of Genesis 2: 16-17).

Thus, the atmospheres of the poem take the readers back to the first kind of pure and innocent felicity: the joy of farming, the joy of being a farmer, the joy of being the maker of good fruit. By invoking the Old Testament contexts, Tennyson prepares the reader for *William's* disobedience to his father, old *Allan. Farmer Allan,* as an old- fashioned man, likes to join his son and his niece in holy matrimony. He needs to see *William* and *Dora* married. *William* fires back:

I cannot marry Dora: by my life,
I will not marry Dora (lines 21-22)

A conflict in this dramatic poem is caused by *William's* unwillingness to obey his father's command, hence, his father retaliates as follows:

"You will, boy! You dare to answer thus!
But in my time a father's word was law
And so it shall be now for me. Look to it;
(Lines 24- 27)

Farmer Allan, calls *William "*boy*".* He sees him man enough, at first, to marry *Dora*, but now he calls him a "Boy*".* He, then, refers to the Golden past, his youthful days, when the word matched with the illocutionary act, the illocutionary force. The utterance above is close to being an illocutionary performative. Geoffrey Leech writes in his *Principles of Pragmatics* (1996):

> The performative, far from being something which underlines every single utterance, is something highly unusual in itself: it occurs, understandably enough, when a speaker needs to define his speech act as belonging to a particular category. In this way, the officer who says to a soldier: 'I order you to stand up' is making clear the official definition of his illocution as an

> order, just as he would retrospectively if he had said: 'Stand up!- and that's an order'. The fact that the utterance is so defined may have clear consequences in itself: for instance, disciplinary action. (p.181)

The above is much in line with *Farmer Allan's* utterance directed at his son *William.* At first, the father felt that his powers and authority were indisputable. Accordingly, the listener to his command is supposed to obey. However, just as *Adam* in *Genesis* failed to listen to *God, William* would also fail to listen to his father's command, leading to illocutionary failure, which is clarified in the following words by *Leech*, as "cases in which the illocution was performed, but … the intended perlocution failed to come off" (p. 205). Perlocution itself, according to R. L. Trask is "the effect of what we say" (P. 267). The son refuses to comply with his father's command. He goes a bit farther: he defies his father by marrying a woman from the very class which threatens the existence of the countryside. He decides to marry a laborer's daughter called *Marry Morrison*:

… he left his father's house,
And hired himself to work within the fields;
And half in love, half spite, he woo'd and wed
The labourer's daughter, Mary Morrison (Lines 35- 38)

William is too proud to repent, too inhibited, too hesitant to ask for his father's forgiveness. *William* voluntarily gives up his class affiliation. He is no longer a country gentleman, or a landed aristocrat. He is now just a laboring hand. He is dead to his old class. Long after *William* is dead, his widow visits her father- in- law to disclose the unsent and unsaid messages, the failed communication, and the stifled words of the abortive, unattempted father- son contact. In the scene of the unplanned family reunion, *William's widow* starts her direct, unambiguous, and undigressive discourse. Plainly, she says:

"O Father.. if you let me call you so ..
I never came a- begging for myself, (Lines 135-136)

The utterance above clearly implies the usual questions of hard times. It implies all these points packed together: who cares for me? To whom shall I look for security? Who is in charge of my future? Whom can I trust? I am destitute, aren't I? Even though *Mary Morrison* is poor and ruined, she is polite enough to know her status. Her father- in- law always rejected to see her as his own daughter- in- law, because he had refused to bless the marriage at the very start. She told him about *William's* last moments:

O Sir, when William died, he died in peace
With all men; for I ask'd him, and he said,
He could not ever rue his marrying me ..
I have been a patient wife: but, Sir, he said
That he was wrong to cross his father thus:
'God bless him! He said, 'and may he never know
The troubles I have gone thro '!' Then he turn'd
His face and pass'd- unhappy that I am! (Lines 140-147)

The disinterested and objective inquiry reveals that the utterances above, denote the following:

1. *William* made a good choice to marry *Mary Morrison*.
2. The *Old Farmer Allan* was too harsh upon his son. He had underestimated his son and disregarded his right to choose his helpmate and companion.
3. *Farmer Allan* scarcely knew his son well enough. He may have spent money on him but he can hardly be said to have raised a son. *Farmer Allan* was alienated from his son.
4. *William*, in his father's house, was simply an animated corpse, a live body, like the walking dead with no real will of his own. Only when he broke away from his father could he have a will of his own. *William* gives the impression that by getting away from his father, he is coming closer to death. He fulfills Freud's assumption that by standing against the death instinct, the "living substance … diverge [s] ever more widely from its original course life and … makes [s] ever more complicated detours before reaching its aim of death" (Freud, 38-39).

Mary Morrison's words achieved the necessary reversal of intention, causing *Farmer Allan* to face the moment of truth. He was a tyrant, but far from wicked or evil. In response to her words, he admits he was wrong:

And all at once the old man burst in sobs:
"I have been to blame.. to blame. ***I have kill'd my son****.*
I have kill'd him*.. but I loved him.. my dear son.*
May God forgive me!.. I have been to blame
Kiss me children." … (Lines 154- 159)

The lines above are more serious than they sound like. In a moment, *Farmer Allan* recognizes his share of the guilt. There is a shift of burden here. He always thought that he was blameless. Now, he sobs and asks God's forgiveness because he caused the death of his son. He practically

and figuratively killed his own son. In the verses above, the utterance that stands out is this line:

I have kill'd him.. but I loved him.. my dear son.

The above exhibit, the inner contradictions of human nature. How can a father love his son and kill him? But, Tennyson demonstrates good powers of observation in the above. As a matter of fact, Abel and Cain, King Laius and his son Oedipus, King Hamlet and King Claudius, Rustum and Sohrab, all these are examples of crimes committed within the same family. Farmer Allan's utterance above proves that *he now understands he committed* Filicide, *or* the murder of his own son. The important thing is that Mary Morrison, her son, and Dora dare no longer oppose the head of the family. They do as he pleases. At his command to kiss him, they respond this way:

... Then they clung about
The old man's neck, and kiss'd him many times.
And all the man was broken with remorse;
And all his love came back a hundredfold;
And for three hours he sobb'd o'er William's child,
Thinking of William. ... *(Lines 161- 165)*

The last line (line 168) says loud and clear:

... Dora lived unmarried till her death

The denouement is neither tragic nor exactly a happy end. It is not a tragedy because the end may be called a realistic end. This means that Tennyson was able to create a realistic dramatic conflict, based on his understanding of juvenile mentality seeking opposition to the old generation, with the downfall from the privileged social status as the price for rebellion against the head of the family.

The Probable Reason for Tennyson to write this Poem

Dora is different because of its discourse and because unlike the rest of Tennyson's works, its source is a contemporary prose work. All editions of the poet's complete works state that the tale was taken from "The Tale of Dora Creswell" in *Our Village* by Mary Russell Milford (1787- 1855). The only thing Tennyson changed was the names. Tennyson's poems, with a few exceptions, are based on Greek myths, Arthurian heritage, and Germanic epics like in *The Kraken* and *The Battle. Dora* is one of the exceptions

Milford's *Dora Cresswell* may very probably have touched Tennyson's personal life, not only his aesthetic side. According to the *McGraw- Hill Guide to English Literature* (1985), Tennyson's father

experienced a physical and mental breakdown, which caused the entire family to suffer emotionally and financially. He was an alcoholic who often abused his power to inflict pain and punishment on Tennyson. Tennyson may well have suffered domestic violence in the hands of his drunkard father (See p.141, Volume 2). It is very likely that the poet identified with *Walter Cresswell*, whom he transformed into *William Allan.* Tennyson's father was already dead when the poet wrote this poem as a psychological outlet for his grief and suffering.

Conclusions:

Dramatic works, including Tennysonian mono- dramas, usually include a conflict between the universal and the particular. The universal may be the Divine Laws, the traditions, or the time- honored rules and regulations which gained unquestionable and illogical acceptance. The particular Knot in *Dora* may be described as the new generations' attempt to change or remove and replace the old system. *Allan* says:

You knew my word was law, and yet you dared to slight it (Line 96)

Nevertheless, this statement, which is a powerful key utterance ceased to carry any message to William. It ceased to be an exchange or a two- way communication. To William, this is meaningless. Thus, this utterance fails to have function on William. However, the same utterance is respected by Dora, who never marries anyone even after William is gone. She is as old as her cousin William but Allan's words continue to have the effect of law her. William has his own law. Dora still depends on the old one. She continues to accept the outdated code, perhaps because of her gender. In *Dora*, the poet discourses a drastic change in the family as a unit. The father would hurt his son to death, because the father's dignity and authority are more worthwhile than the son's love and affection. Thus, the family and the nation will sustain social and psychological injuries like exile, isolation, and even alienation. By using a few but effective utterances, Tennyson exhibits the tyranny of the elders towards the youngsters.

Tennyson implies that the old generations must eventually feed on the youthful generations. The parents are unable to realize that they have to hand over the responsibility to the offsprings. Parents are selfish and can find justifications for their prolonged stay on the social and political scene. This will, eventually, lead to disaster. Finally, the utterance that stands apart and exposes the parent's mentality is the dichotomy of filicide and parental love. The man loves his son so much as to cause his son's death. Thus, by way of a very few numbers of utterances. The poet sympathizes with the victims as individuals and as a widespread social phenomenon.

Tennyson fulfills the moral as well as the aesthetic function of poetry. He has the poetic energy to make his verse a good means to articulate serious themes in a work of reasonable length. Even though *Dora* is a poem, it shares with drama the same elements. The poetic utterances are noteworthy because they succeed in disclosing more than the utterer wants to say. Tennyson makes his speaking characters articulate the kind of expressions which go beyond private suffering, to reach the universal, to explore the depth of human agony without turning the poem into a sentimental melodrama. This trace may be found more frequently in Tennyson's early work, before he became poet laureate in 1850.

In this poem, Tennyson reveals to the public that the father- son relationship in the Victorian Age was morbid. In his unique way, the poet proves that the Victorian son is a live corpse, a walking dead man, till he breaks free from his cruel father. The father, too, is a filicide because he ruins the lives of his children. The Victorian father is responsible for the family disintegration because of his insensivity and lack of sympathy. Truly, the Victorian Age as Tennyson depicted it was technologically advanced but emotionally impoverished and spiritually weak.

The conventional plot of forced marriage was effectively used by Tennyson to extract the bizarre and the unconventional (Father kills his son). The male, paternal Utopia, like all Utopias, is unreal and unworkable. Anger leads to William's hunger and death like a castaway from his social class.

Tennyson was ahead of Matthew Arnold in using the theme of filicide. The real filicide is the death of individual consciousness in the hands of outdated community standards, the disappearance of intellectuality, and the rise of tyranny and dogmatism. In the end, Tennyson himself went through this phase by becoming part of the conservative system.

In comparison with the tyrannical father, the other characters are like walking dead people, except for *William,* who is mortified by his own father. This is practically the root of family disintegration in the Victorian society.

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