Plot in Narrative Poetry:A Study of the internal Structure of the Plot and its Development
in Tennyson's <u>The Lady of Shalott</u>

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Linguistic and discourse models have concentrated on the study and analysis of prose narrative. The present study investigates the presence of a plot schema in narrative poetry in an attempt to delineate its structure and the stages of development. Longacre's narrative system is applied to a narrative poetic sample, namely Tennyson's **The Lady of Shalott**, in order to arrive at the plot in and then spell out its internal structure represented by its major as well as minor components. Longacre's delineation of the plot construction and its divisions are adopted to uncover the development of the poetic plot structure. Results crop out to affirm the applicability and validity of Longacre's narrative system so far applied with success to prose narrative discourse. The plot in the poem, **The Lady of Shalott**, is extracted; and its development is traced and analyzed in relation to the clues and markers relevant to the plot building in narrative discourse.

<u>Introduction :</u>

Narratologists and analysts of narrative discourse study narrativity and its facets in an attempt to propose an account or description, tentative though, of the conventions according to which all narrative manifestations are constructed. One normally expects narrative poetry to be embraced by the same descriptive formulas. In pursuit of a sort of narrative grammar that underlines the rules and norms germane to narrative discourse, Longacre (1976, 1983 and1996) postulates a sort of many-fold narrative system that suggests an overall, exhaustive

account of the construction of narratives and the evolution of the plot. He proposes that every narrative must have evolved from an abstract, i.e., every narrative subsumes a sort of core, which is some kind of a skeleton or a macrostructure that can be eventually macrosegmented. Further the plot, which censures the development of the events, incidents, and episodes in narratives, can be bisected and the phases through which the story advances and progresses from exposition to dénouement can be traced and described on rather a notional–deep level. Thus, the classical delineation of the plot inherited from the plots of Greek tragic theatre and explicated by Aristotle may be elaborated on more fully from a notional perspective.

In relation to the notional building of the plot, Longacre (1996: 34) proposes that the plot, in the deep structure, can be analyzed into stages or phases, which are distinctively marked on the surface structure. There can be detected certain linguistic signals on the linguistic level which distinguish the various stages the plot need go through to assure its development and complication and to prepare the narrative line to the final resolution. The correlation of the surface development and the notional markers of the deep structure is the concern of the present study. The narrators set off the phases of their plots by certain linguistic features that assure their sequential development and guarantee the narratees' recognition of almost every phase. The story can by no means advance linearly, but it must twist and maneuver in a way that contributes to the suspense and the ebb-flow framework of the narrative.

In a similar fashion to the application of Longacre's narrative system to narrative prose, the same system may be applied to narrative poetry, which is what the current study proposes to do. After all, it is presumed that the narrative construction can not be that different. Originally, every narrative must subsume some narrative kernel or germ, which serves as its starting point. The narrator in narrative poetry can not dispense with the classical plot and its components necessary to advance the narrative and relate its events. Thus, it is possible to track the development of the plot in narrative poetry and shed the light on the linguistic markers exploited to set off its components.

So the study relies heavily on the form – content compatibility since, Fowler (1971: 222) argues, reading poetry involves the discovery of contextual meaning and that *" we can not feel secure in our response until we think we know what the poem is about."* If the narrators follow the same or related strategies in the communication of their stories no matter the medium whether prose or verse, then a story in verse can not deviate from the agreed upon formulas no more than prose narratives. In case of narrative poetry, the reader feels that s/he must follow the narrative events and incidents, which once seized and grasped, s/he can soon piece together the rest (ibid.).

The study pivots on the observation that narrative poetry, in a fashion similar to prose narrative discourse, invests the same plot delineation, phases, and stages, which are narrative-specific. It is also proposed that the narrators in the narrative poetry adopt the same techniques to highlight and mark the plot divisions.

The Plot in narrative Discourse

Narratively speaking, the story is commonly built around events, incidents, and episodes within the general, overall framework of the plot, which Prince (1987: 71) defines as *" the main incidents of a narrative; the outline of the situations and events.*" The organization of these events, incidents, and episodes is determined by the movement of the plot depending on temporal and causal relations. Forster (1927: 93) explains that the plot concerns itself with *"the narrative of events, the emphasis falls on causality*", i.e., the cause–effect formula that governs the relation between the narrative situations (Prince, 1987: 11). However, Longacre (1997: 1) affirms that the text has a narrative movement as it is "built *on a narrative template, a conceptual scheme which in broad outline is as old as Aristotle.*" This narrative template is *"just the topological starting point"* that will be liable to "*many skillful twistings and deformations in the hands of a competent storyteller or novelist."* On the surface level, the plot is constructed so that it assures and guarantees the narrative movement in a way that advances the narrative and complicates its events in preparation to the occurrence of the climax. Then, it should incline to loosening the events and unraveling the mystery towards the resolution and the end of the whole story.

From a deep–structure perspective, Longacre (1996: 33-4) explains that the plot is broadly conceived as the notional structure of narrative discourse. It is basically "***an etic*** [deep] ***and heuristic device"*** that uncovers the emic (surface) structure in given languages. Plot construction traditionally involves a perceptible climax though episodic narratives can dispense with it, a matter that makes the climax, to some extent, the monopoly of climatic narratives. Episodic narratives can do without the factor of tension so that the plot would be in the state of ***"low relief*** " due to the absence of an explicit climax. To arrive at the notional structure of the plot in accordance with the rhetorician's anatomy of plot in climatic narrative discourse, a scheme is spelt out on which the narrative is built. The correspondence between the notional and surface features is not necessarily that of one-to-one correlation. It is expected that the surface structure features may have notional counterparts but they may not consistently coincide. Diagram (1), below provides a suggested correlation between notional and surface structures in climatic narratives. The notional structures occupy the top of the chart; the surface structure features, borrowed from a traditional rhetorician's schema, are given at the bottom. Arrows mark the encoding of the notional features into surface structure features. It is noteworthy that some of the primary surface features such as title and aperture are absent from the notional scheme since they are reserved to the surface structure (ibid.).

The Notional structure of the Plot

Longacre (1996: 44-5) maintains that the story as notionally regarded comprises the following features:

A.   Exposition, "Lay it out"

Here, bits of information on time, place, local colour, props, and participants are provided. Usually, exposition is placed in the beginning of the story. It introduces the participants and their surrounding and paves the way before the coming events (ibid.).

B. Inciting Moment, "Getting something going"

The smooth course of the story as set by the exposition is ruffled and broken up in some manner. Longacre (1996:35) puts the development that takes place as a result of the inciting moment in that "***a certain man has plodded faithfully to work for twenty five years,***

passing certain points at hours so exact that people could have set their watches by him, but today he is late – and thereby – hangs a tale." In short, the inciting moment inaugurates a change, no matter how trivial, that would eventually lead to some events of serious nature that break the routine and make the story worth telling.

C.   Developing Conflict, "Keep the heat on"

The situation that has been created by the inciting event intensifies as it develops/deteriorates depending on one's point of view. On the surface structure, this stage is marked by the change in tone and rhythm indicated by a paragraph/discourse of narrative or dialogue articulated by means of time horizons in succession, back references, conjunctions, and juxtapositions (ibid.).

D.   Climax, "Knot it all up Proper"

Here, it is time that every thing comes to a head. The author/narrator " *gets untidy"* as s/he tends to bring contradictions and adds all sorts of "*tangles*" until confrontation and consequently collision are inevitable (ibid.: 35).

E.   Denouement, "Loosen it"

The denouement is encoded when a crucial event happens that makes resolution possible. Things begin to loosen up and a way out is descried even if not leading to a happy ending (ibid.).

F.   Final Suspense, "keep it up"

The events work out details to the resolution. The events, so far invincibly tangled, come to a sort of a head the must finally pave the way before the resolution coming shortly after.

G.   Conclusion, "Wrap it up"

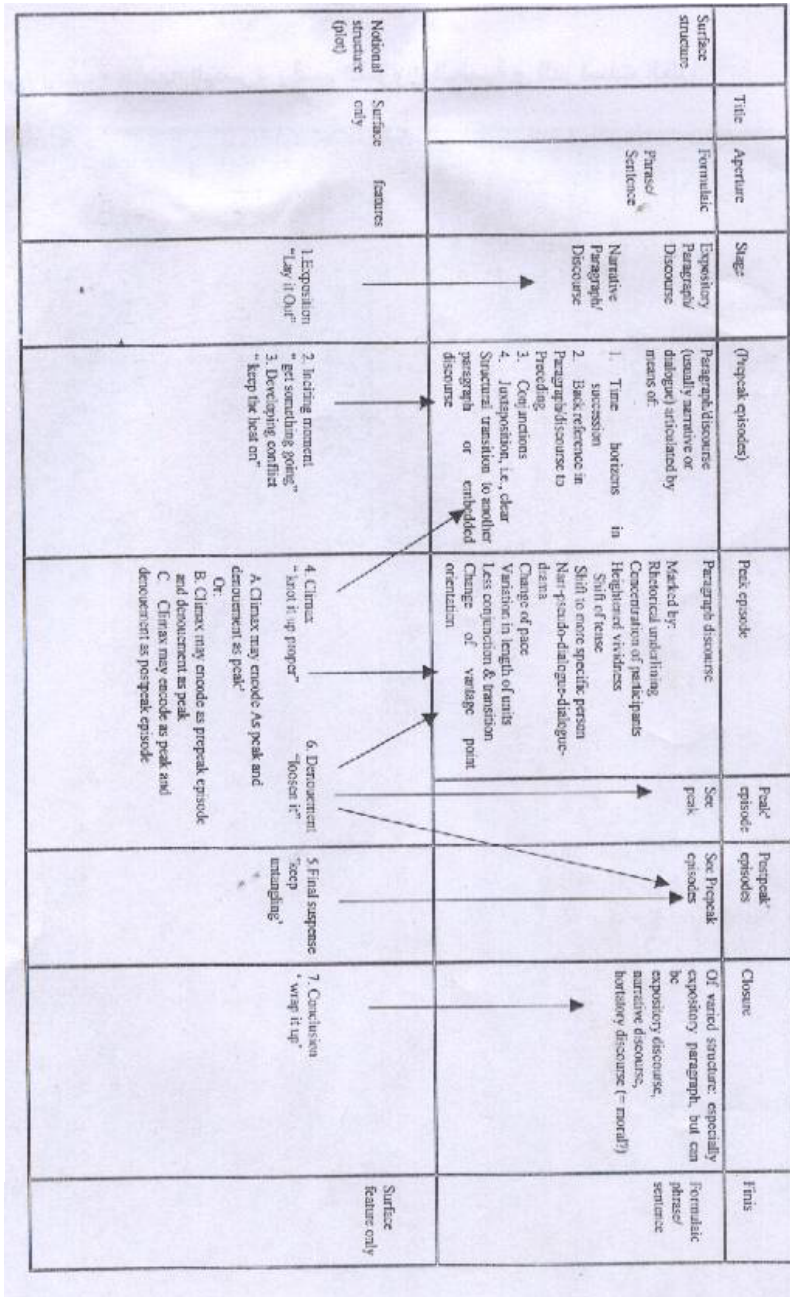This stage brings the story to some sort of a decent or indecent end.

Diagram (1) Narrative Discourse with Surface peaks after Longacre (1996)

Surface structure:	Title	Aperture	Stage	(Prepeak episodes)	Peak episode	Peak' episode: peak	Postpeak' episodes	Closure	Finis
		Formulaic Phrase/ Sentence	Expository Paragraph/ Discourse	Narrative Paragraph/ Discourse	Paragraph/discourse (usually narrative or dialogue) articulated by means of:	Paragraph/ discourse	Sec peak	Sec Prepeak episodes	Of varied structure, especially expository paragraph, but can be expository discourse, narrative discourse, hortatory discourse (= moral?)	Formulaic phrase/ sentence
Notional structure (plot)	Surface only			1. Exposition "Lay it Out"	2. Inciting moment "get something going" 3. Developing conflict "keep the heat on"	4. Climax "knot it up proper" Or: A. Climax may encode as prepeak episode and denouement as peak B. Climax may encode as peak and denouement as peak C. Climax may encode as peak and denouement as postpeak episode	6. Denouement "loosen it"	5. Final suspense "keep untangling" 7. Conclusion "wrap it up"		Surface feature only

(Table content as transcribed from the rotated diagram; cells include:)
- 1. Time horizons in succession
- 2. Back reference in Paragraph/discourse to Preceding.
- 3. Conjunctions
- 4. Juxtaposition, i.e. clear Structural transition to another paragraph or embedded discourse

Peak episode markers:
- Marked by: Rhetorical underlining, Concentration of participants, Heightened vividness, Shift to more specific person, Shift of tense, Narr-pseudo-dialogue-dialogue-drama, Change of pace, Variation in length of units, Less conjunction & transition, Change of vantage point orientation

Surface Structure Plot: Correlation

   Though the correlation between the notional/etic and surface/emic features is neither straightforward nor consistent, still most surface structure features have notional counterparts. Longacre (1996: 35) sketches the surface structure features in relation to their notional equivalents though there are some surface structure features, exactly title and aperture that are not realized notionally. Exposition, to start with, often coincides with the surface structure slot termed **stage**. An expository paragraph or even a short embedded expository discourse almost always expounds the stage. It may also take the form of subsidiary narrative of some length, a condition that is necessary to get the main narrative going.

   The inciting moment and developing conflict in the notional structure of the plot often correlate with the surface structure episodes; each is expounded by a paragraph or embedded discourse. Though stage may run into and overlap with the inciting moment in very brief narratives, yet the inciting moment is set off from exposition by virtue of the onset of the event line with its characteristic narrative tense. In addition, the inciting moment basically involves "***a break in a customary expected script***", which the author may build upon the stage or may simply reflect "***a normal expectancy chain***" of daily life (ibid.). The inciting moment is also characterized by peak-like features where the term **peak** is used to indicate any episode-like unit singled out by special surface structure features and corresponding to the climax or the denouement on the notional level.

   Longacre (1996: 37) distinguishes between two types of peak structure that correlate with **peak** (climax) versus **peak'** (denouement). Climax or denouement may not be set apart by any special way in terms of surface structure markers. They may be simply couched in the form of further surface structure episodes as in the case of episodic narrative. However, the climax and the denouement are not necessarily absent in the notional template. Some stories may have a didactic or thematic peak, as well as, the essential action peak. A didactic peak is a special elaboration of some episode, which precedes or follows the action peak. Essentially, action ceases at the didactic peak and participant(s) may speak out in a monologue or dialogue, which develops the theme of the story. On the other hand, the action

peak refers to the surface structure episode that correlates with either the climax or the denouement on the notional plane (ibid.: 37-8). The final suspense appears in the form of one or more postpeak episodes while the conclusion is more likely to have special marking in the surface structure often by the use of some non-narrative paragraph or discourse (ibid.: 38). Moreover, a special moral slot appears in some types of narrative discourse and is devoted to stating explicitly or implicitly the **moral** of the story. As for the formulaic **finis** (end), it is a feature of the surface structure solely just like the title and aperture and may be encoded in a formulaic sentence like " *that is all*", " *we're through*", or even the printed word *finis* (ibid.).

The Marking of Peaks

Longacre (1996: 38) defines peak (and peak') as the area of " *turbulence*" in respect to the flow of discourse in its preceding and following parts where routine features of the storyline may be distorted or phased out at the peak. Consequently, the standard characteristic tense/aspect features of the storyline may be dispensed with in favour of other tense/aspect features. In addition, there is the possible absence of other particles that mark faithfully the main line of the narrative events. Routine participants' reference may be disturbed. Further more, there are special markers that are peak-specific though it is possible for the narrator to encode the peaks with none of the special surface markers. However, peaks are usually set apart by one or more of the following surface devices:

a. Rhetorical Underlining
The narrator does not want the narratee to miss the important point in the story so s/he employs extra words at that point. S/he may resort to parallelism, paraphrase, and tautologies of various sorts to be sure that the narratee does not miss it.

b. Concentration of Participants
It is often argued that a crowded stage is one of the most obvious hallmarks of peak that corresponds specifically to notional structure climax. Almost every important character appears at this point of the story. The author moves from few or even a single participant to more participants so that the concentration of participants at the peak approximates the universal set.

c. <u>Heightened Vividness</u>

   Heightened vividness can be obtained in a story by a shift in the nominal - verbal balance, by a tense shift, by a shift to a more specific person, or by a shift along the narrative – drama parameters (ibid.: 40).

   As for the first, the proportion of the verbs to nouns signifies a sort of intensification of events constituting the storyline that accumulates in the occurrence of the peak. Tense shift may occur towards the peak when the routine tense of the narrative is broken so that other tenses appear. If the narrative is conducted in the simple past, the occurrence of the peak may be signaled by a shift from the past to the present, future or both. Heightened vividness may be achieved by a shift to a more specific person, i.e., the shift is from third person to the second person then to the first person, or from plural to singular within a given person (ibid.: 41). The use of the first and second persons pronouns definitely marks such a shift in person. The fourth device for marking vividness involves a shift along a parameter with four ordered values:

Narr → Pseudo – Dial → Dialogue → Drama

   Pseudodialogue subsumes such devices as apostrophe and rhetorical questions which partake of certain features of dialogue without being dialogue itself, just as dialogue itself is intermediate between pseudodialogue and drama. Rhetorical questions may be used with effect at the peak of a story. The shift may be not to pseudodialogue, but to dialogue specially when the story goes on without any dialogue until the peak is reached. In such a story, the onset of the dialogue itself signals the surface structure peak (ibid.:42-3). A story, however, which has had previous dialogue, can shift to drama at its peak. Drama is considered a very vivid style of discourse in which quotation formulas drop out and people speak out in "*a multiple I–thou relations*"(ibid.). The shift to drama, which dispenses with any intermediate quotation or reporting marker makes the dialogue rank high in vividness and thus set off the peak.

d. <u>Change of Pace</u>

The chief devices that effect a change of pace are the variation in size of constructions and the variation in the amount of connective materials. Units (clauses, sentences, paragraphs, and embedded discourses) vary in their sheer length, a condition that redounds to their importance. At the peak of the story, there may occur a shift to terse, fragmentary, crisp sentences, which emphasize the change of pace (ibid.: 43).

Another device for changing the pace within a story and thus marking the transition to peak is a stylistic change from the use of more conjunction and the transition to less conjunctions and transition – asyndeton (ibid.: 45).

e.   <u>Change of Vantage Point and/or Orientation</u>

Longacre (1996: 46) uses the term **view point** to delineates not merely the sympathy with a character in the story, rather ***"by whom do we stand, through whose eyes do we view the story?***" If the story is told from a certain character's point of view or even a neutral point of view, any change to another character's point of view or from the character to a neutral one marks the peak. The change of focalization from one character to another or from neutrality to a specific character(s) sets off the peak.

As for orientation, it belongs to what is encoded as surface structure subject. In narrative discourse, the agent is commonly encoded as subject and the patient as object. The shift in orientation involves switching the particular dramatis personae that normally occur as subject/agent and object/patient. The shift in orientation frequently involves, however, not just the shifting–about of participants between subject and object slots in the surface structure, but also when some thing other than animate participant is encoded as subject (ibid.:47).

f.   <u>Incidence of Particles and Onomatopoeia</u>

The peak of narrative discourse may also be marked by the loss of the characteristic particles, which normally go with the storyline, and/or introduction of new particles or an increase in the incidence of particles found earlier in the discourse. Additionally, onomatopoetic

expressions may occur with special frequency at the peak and thus contribute to its prominence (ibid.).

It is noteworthy to draw the attention that the presence of one of these markers is sufficient to set off the peak structure in narrative discourse. However, the occurrence of more than one marker at the peak is often deemed far more efficient. Usually in narratives, the narrator/author tends to effect prominence by marking it differently and variously.

The Plot Schema in *The Lady of Shalott*

Upon the analysis and deconstruction – desegmentation of the plot, it is found that the narrative construction of the poem answers to all the plot divisions whether on the notional level or that of the surface structure. Notionally speaking, the poem starts with a traditional expository *chunk* that corresponds to surface structure division of **stage**:

- *On either side the river **lie***
  ***Long fields of barley and of rye**,*
  That clothe the wold and meet the sky;
  *And thro' the field **the road runs** by*
  To many-towered Camelot;   (1-5)

Exposition in **The Lady of Shalott** consumes almost all Part I where the setting elements of explanatory, descriptive nature hold dominance since only two clauses of the storyline are picked along the entire Part I:

- *And up and down **people go**,*
  Gazing where the lilies blow.   (6-7)

- *And by the moon **the reaper** weary,*
  Piling sheaves in upland airy,
  *Listening, **whispers** ''Tis the fairy*
  Lady of Shalott.   (33-36)

The two main clauses encode a motion and a speech act respectively triggered by the main verbs **go** and **whisper** and the animate agent-subjects **people** and **reaper**. They are in effect located

at the beginning and in the very end of Part I so as to initiate and conclude the exposition or the stage. The second sentence, which makes the closing statement of Part I, has the advantage of setting the storyline to work as it paves the way before the punctiliar actions and events with which Part II opens.

The exposition, generally, draws the descriptive borders of the plot as it supplies bits of information on geography, time, and landscape– whose importance is paramount, as well as people and props– things around. The island itself, Shalott, after whose name the lady is named, is painted vividly in a series of detailed landscapes all located in the exposition. The lady living on the island herself is introduced as a half–hidden, fairy–like figure whose presence is felt or surmised by the islanders, but never really encountered. The stage or exposition prevails with (10) clauses out of the total (14) clauses that constitute Part I altogether. One can also notice the significance of the historic present in which Part I is wholly communicated. The present tense utilized in place of the simple past specific to narrative discourse adds freshness, vigour, immediacy, and factuality to the exposition. The stage or exposition is originally an example of expository discourse that embeds within narrative discourse, hence the present tense, which is, in turn, specific to expository discourse:

- *Four grey walls, and four grey towers,*
  Overlook a space of flowers,
  And the silent isle imbowers
      The lady of Shalott.   (14-17)

  - *By the margin, willow – veiled,*
  Slide the heavy barges trailed
  By slow horses; and unhailed
  The shallop flittieth silken sailed
  Skimming down to Camelot: (18-23)

Part I invests also a series of questions that shed the light on the nature and status of the recluse of the island. The questions echo the thoughts and doubts the islanders entertain about the lady. Two of these questions are answered shortly after. The questions work as a pseudo or pre-inciting moment to raise expectation and add to suspense:

- 　　*But **who hath seen** her wave her hand?*
  *Or at the casement **seen her stand**?*
  *Or **is she known** in all the land,*
  　　　　The Lady of Shalott?　(24-27)

None of the questions belongs structurally speaking with the story line. The first two are explicitly flashbacks due to their present perfect construction. The last is a passive construction that foregrounds the lady and dims off the islanders who are foregrounded in the previous two. These questions are backgrounded as they occur as complementary to the expository side that focuses on the environment around the lady whether people, landscape, or props.

In Part II, the story proper precedes where actions and events occur so that the yarn is launched. The lady's dynamic actions/ motions/experiences are encoded; the heroine is foregrounded:

- 　　*There **she weaves** by night and day*
  A magic web with colours gay.
  ***She has heard** a whisper say,*
  A curse is on her if she stay
  　　　　To look down to Camelot.　(37-41)

The inciting moment takes place and it assumes the form of a series of episodes–in the form of action/motion/event –that prepare the storyline to the moment that sets the narrative going. The inciting moment, a sort of a turning point that breaks the routine if any, occurs in the end of Part II and is signalled by the change of tense from the historic present to simple past. The tense shift heightens the vividness of the narrative information and redounds to its prominence, i.e., pushes it up the salience scale. In addition, a one – sentence monologue is reported as the lonesome lady expresses her boredom with her isolated existence and hence the inciting moment is marked. Her allergy to people makes inevitable the lack of direct first–hand knowledge of and contact with people outside her four– towered prison as the curse warns her severely against any encounter face to face with others which will, however, endanger the life of none other than the lady's:

> ▪ *Or when the moon overhead,*
> *Came two lovers lately wed:*
> *' I am half sick of shadows,' said*
> *The Lady of Shalott.*   (69-72)

In view of the stanza preceding the one in which the inciting moment is reported, the inciting moment is also marked by parallelism where the second half of that preceding stanza correlates with and is accomplished by the first half of the following stanza. It is obvious that the lady adjusted herself or got accustomed to being a recluse. She got sufficed with watching people and things around as shadows reflected on the surface of her mirror as she is deprived of the ability to look directly at the things of the real world. However, the passing of a very celebrated funeral on the way to Camelot and the sight of the two lately wed lovers introduce restlessness in the lady and impatience about her passivity and isolation, but not enough to make her break with her seclusion, though. So far, the lady has demonstrated no symptoms of protest whatsoever. She has never doubted her complaisance before she lays eyes on the scenes germane to Camelot, the ideal city of splendour, romance, and majesty, and the prospects of love and glamour awaiting her if she dare tear her web out and launch into real, vigorous existence. Thus, the inciting moment is inaugurated by at least a couple of narrative events; both are motions. Then it occurs taking the form of a speech act marked by heightened vividness –tense shift, and the shift to pseudo-dialogue.

Moving on along the plot schema to the next feature: **peak**, one can affirm that *The Lady of Shalott* marks both a **Peak** that correlates with the climax and **Peak'** that corresponds with the denouement. In relation to the peak proper – climax, the narrative reaches its most significant moment when the lady beholds for the first time the image of Sir Lancelot, the most reputed celebrity among the Knights of King Arthur's Round Table, reflected on the mirror. Then follow very important events and actions of definitely climatic nature. Eventually, the peak –climax takes the form of a series of two episodes, i.e., the peak ranges over two groups of narrative events that invest the cause–effect formula. They encode the cause that accelerates the progress of storyline and the corollary that ensues respectively:

- *From the bank and from the river*
  He flashed *into the crystal mirror,*
  'Tirra lirra', by the river
  Sang Sir Lancelot.   (105-108)

The outcome of beholding the image of the Round Table most glorious Knight, Sir Lancelot, is the invincible stimulus that would lead eventually to the climatic events to follow:

- ***She left*** *the web,* ***she left*** *the loom,*
  She made three paces *thro' the room;*
  She saw the helmet and the plume,
  She looked down to Camelot.
  Out flew the web *and floated wide;*
  The mirror cracked *from side to side;*
  'The curse is come upon me', ***cried***
  The Lady of Shalott.   (109-117)

The lady, who has been so far submissive to her fate and has never before questioned the verity of the curse or dared to challenge it, all of a sudden rebels and revolts against it. Now, she lifts her voice in protest whereas she used to be hesitant and reluctant to bring about change. But today, she is all zeal and determination to turn things up side down and initiate change no matter the consequences.

Notionally speaking, the peak is marked by rhetorical underlining through the use of repetition and parallelism as well as change of pace, change of vantage and heightened vividness. The volitional motion-activity clause '**she left**' is repeated twice and so is '**she saw**' achieving a very significant effect of emphasis and adding vitality and ardency to the lady's motions and perception as if she woke up from the long torpor of passivity and concession. Moreover, many devices have marked prominent the same incidents. On top is the relatively large linguistic input devoted to furnishing the climax, which is usually referred to as **change of pace**. One more line is added to the climax stanza since the two bordering stanzas consist of four lines each. The concluding line of the climax '**She looked down to Camelot**' is couched in a finite, full–fledged, free clause which ranks

as high as to advance the narrative main line rather than a phrase as happened in the neighbouring stanzas. The lines included in the climax stanza are relatively longer and more complex; the first line '**she left the web, she left the loom**' is made up of two motion/activity clauses. The following line '**she made three paces thro' the room**' is relatively complex taking into consideration the simpler structures, for instance **walk**. Further, the pronoun '**she**' which designates the lady is made head of all the noun phrases in the stanza, i.e., in five clauses, a matter that redounds to the emphasis achieved by rhetorical underlining.

A similar effect is achieved by the punctiliar events related to the **web** and **mirror**. Though the flight of the web and the cracking of the mirror are undoubtedly instrumental in nature as they originate from inanimate entities, still these events are punctiliar and consequently promoted to be subsumed within the storyline rather than of setting. It is hard and illogical to assign these events to setting for both the web and mirror are not merely props located around the lady; they are instruments by which the lady is imprisoned and accessed to the world respectively. So the tearing of the web and the shattering of the mirror belong definitely with the storyline as contingencies. Moreover, the use of inanimate entities (mirror & web) as subjects is a novelty in itself. It effects a change of viewpoint or vantage from animate agents to inanimate patients. As for vividness, it is heightened by reporting the lady's cry of rebellion, which takes on the form of a monologue though rather loudly articulated. The shift along the narrative – drama parameter from pure narration to monologue– not to pseudo-dialogue, which is out of the question in case of the lonely lady of Shalott– pushes her into the spotlight and so she is now focalized. Again Part III is concluded with the lady's speech act as happened in Part II.

Soon after the climax, the plot proceeds fast and tight with as many main line materials as possible in preparation to the occurrence of the **Peak'** or denouement. Part IV runs into (19) clauses, of which (16) clauses are motions and actions and (2) clauses only are specified to descriptive setting. Elsewhere, setting is rich, detailed, and fully elaborated on. The remaining clause designates a background activity and is devoted to Lancelot's reflection. The Peak' or denouement again ranges over many episodes starting with the death of the lady on

the shores of Camelot and including all the following episodes down to the end of the narrative:

- *Fore ere she reaches upon the tide*
  The first house by the water – side,
  ***Singing in her song she died**,*
  The Lady of Shalott.   (149-153)

However, the final suspense or post peak occurs when the lady's dead body is discovered by the citizens of Camelot who all went out to the wharves where they could behold the dead lady. The vividness is heightened by the shift to drama as the narrator records the people's speeches with neither a reporting clause to intervene nor any quotation formula:

- ***Who is this? And what is here?***   (136)

The shift from narration to drama pushes the events up the scale of prominence and increases the pace with which the narrative advances. It is obvious that the two questions are not rhetorical in thrust and thus they differ from the rhetorical questions in Part I where the narrator rather than a fictional character voiced them. The people of Camelot all together '**Knights and burghers, lord and dame'** all came to have a valedictory glimpse of the fair dead lady. Their crowded emergence in the narrative designates the denouement since the concentration of participants or the crowded stage, a peak-specific feature, applies to the assembly of people that surround the boat where the dead lady lies. Though the people are all witness characters and thus are not identified in persons except for Lancelot, still they are the only people the narrative invests whether in Shalott, the island that embowers the lady or the people of Camelot. Shortly after, the Knights of the Round Table and the royal courtiers are cursorily identified to help procure the final suspense that is prior to conclusion:

- ***Who is this? And what is here?***
  And in the lighted Palace near
  ***Died the sound** of royal cheer*
  *And **they crossed** themselves for fear,*
  ***All the Knights** at Camelot;*   (136-40)

The end of the narrative, i.e., surface closure/notional conclusion is obliquely indicated since the encounter between the lady and Lancelot concludes the narrative. The lady had aspired to reach Camelot, her destination, and meet with Sir Lancelot. Ironically, only her dead figure could get to Camelot and meet with him:

- *But Lancelot mused a little space,*
  He said, *'she has a lovely face;*
  God in his mercy lend her grace,
  The Lady of Shalott.'   (141-44)

Narratively speaking, Lancelot's final prayer for the peace of her soul seals the poem and works as good an ending as any concluding remark. Notionally viewed, the episodes manifest a clear shift in vantage or point of view from the lady who has been so far focalized to the Knights of Camelot, among whom is certainly Lancelot. Then a further shift occurs as the vantage of the poem is narrowed even further to focalize Lancelot who towers over all others and consequently his speech is reported. In short, the death of the lady, which leads the narrative down to the resolution, is portrayed against a crowded background of minor or even witness characters. In the very end of the poem, a reference to Lancelot who fits relatively into the category of the hero is made to conclude the whole narrative in an ending scene where only the lady and Lancelot are confronted. Thus, it performs the job of the end or finis.

Conclusion

The application of Longacre's narrative system of the plot schema to a narrative poem provides insightful observations as to both the model and the narrative itself. As for the plot structure and its development in **The Lady of Shalott**,, the study traces the evolution of the plot in **The Lady of Shalott** from its primary stage of exposition down to the resolution or finis. All the notional parts of the plot are detected in the narrative poem analyzed starting with the exposition, then inciting moment and developing conflict, peak (climax), peak' (denouement), final suspense, and conclusion. Exposition, which rules over Part I in the poem, pivots on setting descriptions. It consumes the whole except for two motion and action clauses, and a single

background clause. The stage portrays the spatio – temporal dimension of the narrative and triggers the first appearance of the major character Lady of Shalott, the heroine of tragedy. The inciting moment occurs in the end of Part II and it is singled out by a change of tense from historic present with which the narrative opens to the simple past, standard narrative tense proper in English. Further a significant shift along the narrative parameter from narration to monologue marks the inciting moment when the lady's voice is heard for the first time in the narrative in a monologue, though. The conflict starts to develop and complicate along a series of episodes that culminate in the peak or climax. The climax appears in Part III and it is encoded in a series of episodes where parallelism and repetition are the major markers. The promotion of setting materials to the storyline is another significant marker since the instrumental agent '**mirror and web'** emit punctiliar actions which, because of their peculiar nature, secure a change in viewpoint. As for peak' (denouement), again it ranges over a series of episodes, not a single one. Among its distinctive features is the crowded stage, change of vantage, and shift to drama along the narrative parameter. Final suspense and conclusion intermingle in the last two episodes of the narrative and are procured by the concentration of participants though speechless and tongue–tied and by the remark voiced by Lancelot consecutively.

To sum up, the plot elements in *The Lady of Shalott* are both delineated and made prominent. The narrator kept loyal to the narrative canons conventionally adopted in narrative discourse whether prose or poetry. The plot is his main concern that is why it is fully detailed, trimmed, and accomplished. The plot is thus handled with utmost care that none of its elements and phases is left unidentified or unmarked. Among the main markers implemented, heightened vividness comes on top where tense shift and the shift along the narrative parameter from narration to dialogue – monologue to drama are its most efficient vehicles.

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Appendix: The Notional/Deep Structure Plot in
The Lady of Shalott

Exposition	1.On either side the river lie
	 Long fields of barley and of rye,
	And thro' the field the road runs by
	 To many-towered Camelot;
	 Willows whiten,
	 Aspens quiver….
	 Little breezes dusk and shiver
	 Four grey walls, and four grey towers,
	erlook a space of flowers,
	 And the silent isle imbowers
	  The lady of Shalott.
	   By the margine, willow-veiled
	   Slide the heavy barges….
	    The shallop flittish silken sailed
	    Skimming down to Camelot:
	    Or is she known in all the land,
	        The Lady of Shallot?

Inciting Moment	Or when the moon was overhead, Came two young lovers lately wed: 'I am half sick of shadows', said The Lady of Shallot.

Climax	From the bank and from the river He flashed into the crystal mirror, 'Tirra lirra', by the river Sang Sir Lancelot. She left the web, she left the loom, She made three paces thro' the room; She saw the helmet and the plume, She looked down to Camelot. Out flew the web and floated wide; The mirror cracked from side to side; 'The curse is come upon me', cried The Lady of Shalott. Down she came and found a boat…. And down the river….. Did she look to Camelot.
Dénouement	For ere she reached upon the tide The first house by the water side, Singing she died, The Lady of Shallot
Final Suspense	Out upon the wharfs they came, Knight and burgher, lord and dame, 2. Who is she? and what is here? And they crossed themselves for fear, All the nights at Camelot:
Conclusion	But Lancelot mused a little space, He said, 'she has a lovely face; God in his mercy lend her grace, The Lady of Shalott.'