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biographical details to indicate the varied influences upon his emotional and intellectual development. In Chapter Three, I argue that *In Memoriam* shows the persona moving from despair and sorrow to hope and happiness through his love and his developing consciousness—in short, his "living will." Chapter Four examines Tennyson's favorite poem *Maud.* Although it is not generally taken to be a poem about an expression of grief, thematically central in the poem is the theme of sorrow and how one recovers from it. The concluding chapter deals with the three representative of Tennysonian lyrics, "Break, Break, Break," "Tears, Idle Tears," and "Crossing the Bar," in which Tennyson's worship of sorrow leads to the worship of beauty.
Tennyson's Lyricism: The Aesthetic of Sorrow

Dissertation

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For the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

By

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# TABLE OF CONTENTS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chapter</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Page</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>I.</td>
<td>TENNYSON'S LYRICISM: THE AESTHETIC OF SORROW</td>
<td>1</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>II.</td>
<td>TENNYSON: &quot;A LORD OF THE HUMAN SOUL&quot;</td>
<td>18</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>III.</td>
<td>IN MEMORIAM: THE WAY OF THE &quot;LIVING WILL&quot;</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>IV.</td>
<td>MAUD: THE &quot;DRAMA OF THE SOUL&quot;</td>
<td>60</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>V.</td>
<td>&quot;THE DAYS THAT ARE NO MORE&quot;: THREE LYRICS</td>
<td>83</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

**BIBLIOGRAPHY** | 108
CHAPTER I

TENNYSON'S LYRICISM: THE AESTHETIC OF SORROW

One can admire Tennyson's poetry without reservation as one of the greatest lyric gifts in English literature, although it is unlikely that Tennyson will ever seem quite the equal of Shakespeare or Keats. By nature Tennyson was a gifted poet endowed with lyrical talents. It is this ability upon which his present reputation is largely based. As Nicolson notes, Tennyson's lyric temperament "should have rendered him one of the greatest and most original of our lyric poets" (9). His poetic strength lies in his lyricism, the characteristic subjects of which are melancholy and sadness.

To consider him as a lyricist is to consider him as an emotional, not as a philosophic or moral poet, and does not mean to exclude the potentialities he has for other genres. Certainly he has special gifts as a writer of ballad and song, of dramatic poetry, narrative poetry, idyll, and monologue. And it is the modern taste to take Tennyson's highest achievements to be in the dramatic monologue--to take Maud as his finest poem and to judge all others by it. To do so is to agree with Robert Langbaum that the dramatic monologue is the most appropriate vehicle for the presentation of the post-Enlightenment sensibility.
(Introduction and chapter II). But I am concerned in this thesis with Tennyson’s lyricism in his poetry, a distinct poetic achievement throughout his career. I think it is important in his poetry because it is essential to understand Tennyson’s concept of the art and the artist.

The primary purpose of this study is to show that anticipations of the “art for art’s sake” theory can be found in Tennyson’s poetry which is in line with the tenets of symbolism and aestheticism, and to show that Tennyson’s lyricism is a "Palace of Art" in which his tragic emotions—sadness, sorrow, despair, and melancholic sensibility—were built into beauty. Both symbolism and aestheticism are late nineteenth-century literary movements which stressed the sensuous immediacy of "pure poetry" and the primacy of beauty over truth. It is quite possible for him to write pure poetry "that expressed [his] agonized feelings" (Killham, 7) because his "heart is pure" ("Sir Galahad," 1. 4). That Tennyson wrote pure poetry is evident in many of his lyrics among which "The Hesperides" is a notable example. It is, according to Jerome Buckley, Tennyson’s "most eloquent defense of a pure poetry isolated from the rude touch of men" (Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet, 47). But Smith goes one step further in saying that if the poem is pure, "it is not only separated from the world of men but also from any possible audience" (123). Robert Penn Warren cites Tennyson’s "Now sleeps the crimson petal" as an
example of the doctrines of pure poetry (230).

Aestheticism in England was the product of native and French influence as well. Its roots reached back to the poetry of John Keats. The aesthetic values of Keats and Ruskin's enthusiastic worship of beauty were appropriated by the Pre-Raphaelites and made for a decorative art and literature instead of an ethically inspired one. And later the influence of Walter Pater was great. In the conclusion of The Renaissance Pater urged the sensitive individual "to burn always with this hard, gemlike flame" (236) and to find the most precious moments of his life in the pursuit of his sensations raised to the pitch of "poetic passion, the desire of beauty, the love of art for art's sake" (239).

For Pater, "beauty means nothing but the sensational experiences because it is something that appeals through art or nature to human experiences in various ways (Choi, 21, my translation). Pater dominated the poets of the 1890's--Oscar Wilde, Ernest Dowson, Lionel Johnson, and W. B. Yeats. Along the line, Tennyson must be incorporated into the tradition. His influence, I think, has been neglected or ignored. It is my intention to give him a new significance in the history of literature by putting him in the line of aesthetes and symbolists.

In its main tenets, French symbolism is similar to English aestheticism. It is "a mystical form of Aestheticism" (Bowra, 3). Symbolism is, according to Arthur
Symons, a form of literary expression in which "art returns to the one pathway, leading through beautiful things to the eternal beauty" (9). The most important doctrine of symbolism is the pursuit of "Ideal Beauty" to be sought beyond the visible world. Tennyson's emotions have a power to capture in verse this ideal beauty which is realized through the tragic emotions. Tennyson must be considered a precursor of symbolism in his ability to write purely subjective and personal poetry, in his devotion to ideal beauty, and in his appeal to the musical element in poetry.

Tennyson may be described "as the delineator and representor of tragic emotions" (Horne, 249). He is "intensely tragic, in pure emotion and deep passion of expression" (Ibid, 253). This tragic quality in Tennyson is one of the most important features of his poetry. His intense aesthetic interests come from his melancholic sensibility. He was, indeed, a poet who transformed and elevated his personal sorrow into art because his role as an artist was "simply to take the gift of sorrow and clothe it in beauty" (Smith, 36). This is what I call the aesthetic of sorrow. His early poems demonstrate his tendency to retreat into beauty and aesthetic--the aesthetic of sorrow. In other words, Tennyson transformed sorrow, sadness, melancholy, death into "acceptable retreats for aesthetic withdrawal" (Ibid, 37). As Smith points out, "aestheticism provides the withdrawn artist with a temple of beauty in
which he may exult in the treasures of the past, the glories of the natural universe in the present, and the plan of continued self-cultivation in the arts for the future" (57).

The lyrics of Tennyson thrill us; sometimes they lack force and passion; sometimes they are sweet, even to softness. He has written "O that 'twere possible" and "Now sleeps the crimson petal," but Shelley has written "Ode to the West Wind" and "To a Skylark" in which all the best elements of lyrical poetry seem to be represented. In Tennyson's lyrics those elements are abundant; there is the personal and subjective element strongly pronounced—a wonderful charm in a lyric—in "Tears, Idle Tears"; there is beautiful and fine, mighty and prophetic emotion and thought; there is fiery passion and deepest pathos; there is imagery abundant and lovely and wonderful; and as to the manifold music one can listen to the free movement and the long cadences of melancholy. Tennyson's "controlled emotion can sometimes be a weakness, but it contributes greatly to his style," and in his poetry can be found a kind of "stability, harmony, and calmness" (H. K. Lee, 394, my translation). As Lee cites, the lines from "Oenone" depicting Ida's valley

The swimming vapour slopes athwart the glen,
Puts forth an arm, and creeps from pine to pine
And loiters, slowly drawn.

(11. 3-5)
can illustrate this aspects of Tennyson’s poetry.

Lyricism frequently distinguishes Tennyson’s verse. His preoccupation with the sounds and rhythms of language and his often uncanny skill in their manipulation are sufficiently evident throughout his poetry to prove the commonly taken view that Tennyson’s gifts were essentially lyrical. A concentration upon sound effects is surely among Tennyson’s most striking qualities. Rhyme, being the most formalized of such effects, is no doubt the most obvious. We have T. S. Eliot’s word for it that Tennyson’s versification is masterly and his ear the finest since John Milton. As T. S. Eliot, in Essays Ancient and Modern, calling Tennyson "a great poet" because of his "abundance, variety, and complete competence," (186) says, "Tennyson is the great master of metric as well as of melancholia. . . . the saddest of all English poets" (201-03).

On the point of melacholia, Eliot seems to agree with Nicolson. Nicolson, in his influential book, Tennyson: Aspects of His Life, Character and Poetry, tries to show that Tennyson was a lyric poet. Nicolson argues that, by making Tennyson Poet Laureate, the Victorians converted a naturally subjective and lyrical poet into an objective and instructional writer with a message. The key to any understanding of Tennyson’s poetic achievement depends upon the recognition of the tension between the prosperous Isle of Wight Victorian and the black-mooded, melancholy mystic
of Lincolnshire. It was Tennyson's tragedy that "he was unable, except in isolated moments, to dissociate his lyrical energies from his other energies--dramatic, narrative, ethical, theological, and didactic" (Nicolson, 292).

W. H. Auden, who has labelled Tennyson "undoubtedly the stupidest" English poet, goes even further than Eliot in saying that, whatever his intellectual limitations, perhaps Tennyson "had the finest ear of any English poet. . . there was little about melancholia that he didn't know; there was little else that he did" (x). Auden's contention is based on the assumption that his poetic genius lies in his mastery of mood, especially of morbid mood which is labelled as the Tennysonian talent. Auden has very perceptively noted that Tennyson's poems "deal with human emotions in their most primitive states" (xvi). This statement is particularly true in the sense that his best poems--poems that seem, as it were, to engage the whole poet--reiterate only a few fundamental, intellectually unsophisticated attitudes. Indeed, one of these, a longing for the "lost and gone" ("The Ancient Sage," l. 224), virtually subsumes the others and gives the dominant key to Tennyson's lyric strain.

Tennyson has often been characterized as a poet of private "sensation" (Jump, 42) and of "picturesque poetry" (McLuhan, 262). As a personality he wrote poems centered around private emotion. Indeed, he wrote poems out of pure
spite. It would also appear that during his Cambridge years and immediately following he consciously attempted to write in the aesthetic mode of private sensation conforming strikingly to the principles laid down by his friend Arthur Hallam ("Poems, Chiefly Lyrical (1830)," originally published in Englishman's Magazine, 1831 (i), 616-28, and now reprinted in Tennyson: The Critical Heritage, 34-49). This type of "picturesque" poetry, as it has been labelled by McLuhan and T. S. Eliot (191), predominates in the 1830 and 1832 volumes. This particular side of Tennyson's genius appears most successfully in such mood pieces as "Mariana," and "Recollections of the Arabian Nights." According to McLuhan, "Mariana" proves that "the most sophisticated symbolist poetry could be written fifty years before the symbolists" (265). He suggests that Tennyson's modernity lies in his foreshadowing, in his highly "picturesque" poetry such as those poems, of modern private sensation schools such as the "imagists" and "symbolists."

Tennyson's preoccupation with beauty can be seen in his early poetry as in the poetry of Keats and Shelley. He "withdrew into a protected paradise of 'lyrical beauty,' and, in consequence, his verse lacks the almost tangible quality of experience which we find in Hopkins or the later Yeats" (Pitt, 2). As Baum points out, his poems are not "openly didactic" (253), although they have some sort of moral implication. For him, poetry is non-utilitarian; it
serves no moral or didactic purpose but only an aesthetic one. Like the symbolists, Tennyson avoided moral, social, and political implications in poetry. He accomplished this private purpose of poetry through the medium of a lyricism which is characterized by sorrow and melancholy.

It was Arthur Hallam who motivated him to be a second Keats. Hallam disagrees with the followers of Wordsworth that the highest form of poetry is the "reflective" (Jump, 35). He considers the greatest poets to be "poets of sensation" (36), the born poets who are "picturesque" rather than descriptive, and who, during the period of creation, do not allow their minds to be occupied by any motive ulterior to the desire for beauty. And it can be argued with the authority of Arthur Hallam, the imagists, symbolists and other aesthetic schools of private sensation, that for the subjective poets it is not the province of the poet to present the truth of external nature at all but simply to convey the intensity of his private emotion and feeling or sensations and images. If he has any truth to convey, it is not the truth of fact, which is the province of prose according to Wordsworth, but rather the truth of emotion. This dichotomy of the world of fact and the world of emotion may be said to constitute the strongest line of continuity in English criticism from Wordsworth to I. A. Richards (Principles of Literary Criticism, 261-71).

Tennyson's early poetry, as I have said, is that of
aesthetic rather than moral imagination. I will support my argument by examining two poems—"Mariana" in the 1830 volume and "The Palace of Art" in the 1832 volume. His poetry expresses subjective states of feeling, and little else. The most perfectly realized, perhaps because it is also the most "intimate with his depths" (Eliot, 202), is "Mariana." The subject of the poem, the girl deserted by her lover to pine alone in "the moated grange," is taken from the line in Act III, Scene i of Shakespeare's Measure for Measure: "... there, at the moated grange, resides this dejected Mariana." Like Wordsworth's Lyrical Ballads, "Mariana" is a poem in which "the feeling therein developed gives importance to the action and situation, and not the action and situation to the feeling" (R. L. Brett and A. R. Jones, 248). The poetic frame of the stanza form and its repeated refrain serve to enclose Mariana and shut her in upon herself:

```
All day within the dreamy house,

The doors upon their hinges creaked;

. . . .

She only said, 'My life is dreary,

He cometh not,' she said;

She said, 'I am aweary, aweary,

I would that I were dead!'

(11. 61-72)
```

Mariana is the first of many Tennysonian maidens who
languish in lonely seclusion: the Lady of Shalott, Oenone, and the Soul in "The Palace of Art" were to follow in the volume of 1832. They express a sense of disengagement from life, the turning of the mind upon itself.

"Mariana" is perhaps the first poem of Tennyson's which deliberately recreates a particular and personal emotional state, and yet it is something more than a poem of mood. What is important is the evocation of Mariana's psychological state. In the poem Tennyson uses all the evocative devices. He deliberately associates physical environment with sadness and grief.

About a stone-cast from the wall
A sluice with blackened waters slept,
And o'er it many, round and small,
The clustered marish-mosses crept.

Hard by a poplar shook alway,
All silver-green with gnarled bark:
For leagues no other tree did mark
The level waste, the rounding gray.

(11. 37-44)

In no other poem of Tennyson's is the physical detail which evokes the mood so closely integrated with the mental state it evokes. One of the characteristics of Tennyson's poetic technique is his use of evocative images for symbolic purposes. In symbolist poetry objects tend to be used primarily for an evocation of mood. The "moated grange" in
"Mariana," for example, is used to evoke Mariana's state of mind and comes to "stand for the imprisoning power of her mood" (Pitt, 40).

It is in the dedication to "The Palace of Art" that we find Tennyson as an artist who rests on the credo of "art for art's sake." The dedication expounds Tennyson's aesthetic doctrine in its insistence that all art must seek for beauty.

I send you here a sort of allegory,
(For you will understand it) of a soul,
A sinful soul possessed of many gifts,
A spacious garden full of flowering-weeds,
A glorious Devil, large in heart and brain,
That did love Beauty only, (Beauty seen
In all varieties of mould and mind)
And Knowledge for its beauty; or if Good,
Good only for its beauty, seeing not
That Beauty, Good, and Knowledge are three sisters
That doat upon each other, friends to man,
Living together under the same roof,
And never can be sundered without tears.
And he that shuts Love out, in turn shall be
Shut out from Love.

Whatever may be its philosophical value, the passage is remarkable because we have a threefold division of Tennyson's mental life: the emotional, the moral, and the
intellectual life. Although the boundaries between these divisions are always debatable, they are sufficiently distinct as a graspsable contrast. It can be seen that they correspond with "Beauty, Good, and Knowledge" respectively; for knowledge is the substance of the intellectual life, beauty of the emotional, and goodness of the moral. Further, for Tennyson science may be regarded as the minister and the expression of knowledge, art as the minister and the expression of beauty, and religion as the minister and the expression of a morality.

In the Introduction we notice next that the Soul loved Knowledge for its beauty" and "if Good, Good only for its beauty." By this we are reminded that Tennyson is an advocate of art for art's sake. The first and the highest aim of art, therefore, is beauty; and it was this aspect that was most clearly perceived by Tennyson. He had an eye and a soul for beauty, but he was not an artist "that did love Beauty only"; yet, in fact, Tennyson is an aesthetic artist who places beauty over other ethical values. No artist in verse with the exception of Keats and Rossetti has labored harder than Tennyson to attain perfection of beauty. How essential to poetry is this element of beauty may be learned from the line of Keats:

Beauty is truth, truth beauty.

If art aims to achieve truth, it is, for Tennyson, not intellectual nor moral truth, but emotional truth, more
commonly known as beauty. Thus, beauty is in the region of
feeling what intellectual truth is in the region of
cognition, and moral truth in the region of volition.

"The Palace of Art" begins in Tennyson's best
decorative manner to portray art for art's sake. For all
its decoration, the poem is constructed upon a simple and
quite sturdy fable—or as the poet called it, "a sort of
allegory." In the poem the Soul decides to build for
herself from the materials of imagination a palace of art,
into which she can withdraw to enjoy changeless solitude.
Thus she limits her knowledge to what the palace is made to
contain. That Soul then knows nothing more than she is
allowed to know. But while Soul and palace are one in their
relations to others, they are also one in their natures, for
the palace in which the art works appear is, by metonymy,
the Soul which lives there—we learn the characteristics of
the Soul through the characteristics of the palace which was
built for it. She raises a luxurious and intricately
designed edifice and furnishes it sumptuously with pictorial
artifacts portraying a wide variety of human endeavor and
experience—literature, art, religion, myth, and philosophy.

Parasitic as well as isolated, the Soul does indeed
live in art, for the palace, which is she, allows no other
living. The palace, exempt from changes of the day as from
larger changes, presents its beauties "while day sank or
mounted higher" (46) without distinction; the walker on the
sand "paced for ever" (67); and the herds (to change the figure from time to space) live "upon an endless plain" (74). The "palace towers" are "lightly, beautifully built" (293-94), and there is nothing wrong with them or with the scenes of crystallized emotion which they contain, except as they are misused. After she has "purged [her] guilt" (296) the Soul can "return with others there" (295) because there is nothing better than art for doing what art can do, for presenting values purified and intensified but always necessarily seen from the vantage of time. By fully realizing each stage of advancing thought in "The Palace of Art," Tennyson allows us first to see the works of the palace in the perfection he intended; then to find their insufficiency and its causes in the Soul whose error distorts her response; and finally to feel the adequacy of the suggested retreat, the "cottage in the vale" (291) in which she will be made whole.

The theme is more complex, more applicable to all souls than the simple theme of art and artist. J. Hillis Miller says that the poem shows "guilty self-inclosure in aesthetic beauty" (222). And according to Buckley, it proves that "selfish absorption in the beautiful was 'sinful'" (Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet, 51). While these judgments are true enough, they seem to leave too much out. The poem does more than simply embody Trench's remark, "Tennyson, we cannot live in art," (Memoir, I, 118) in an allegory which
proves what can happen to the artist who forsakes his social responsibilities.

Tennyson himself claimed that the poem "is the embodiment of my own belief that the Godlike life is with man and for man" (Memoir, I, 118-19). But love can hardly be said to be the Soul's solution in the poem, for in the short last part she moves from her palace not to love and human contact, but to prayer in the country, the "cottage in the vale" which is scarcely the fitting symbol for the artist who takes his place in the life of his times.

Since "The Palace of Art" is like Tennyson's other major poems in theme, it is not surprising that it is also like them in its sequence of imitated emotional states. Despite the obvious differences in form and strategy, most of the major poems follow a similar sequence, which we may observe in "The Palace of Art," In Memoriam, and Maud. Each begins with a withdrawal from life into the security of a world without change, a world dominated by frozen emotion. In "The Palace of Art" the palace is created and the Soul placed in it, away from others. Tennyson in In Memoriam clings to his sorrow while his heart is a "deep vase of chilling tears,/ That grief hath shaken into frost," fearing that time will make him the "fool of loss" (IV, 11-12, 16). The narrator of Maud retreats to his cottage as protection against the feelings aroused by the death of his father.

Each poem next shows its central character making an
identification with an object of value, something which seems adequate to the hero’s needs. But the objects are always in reality inadequate, since they are mistaken for the process which informs them and in which they participate. Thus love of beauty, in "The Palace of Art"; or the appeal of a consoling philosophical position, the assurance of personal immortality of section LXX of In Memoriam; or dependence on a woman in Maud--each is for a while seen as the key to life’s complexities, a simple object of emotional attachment around which the chaotic world may be arranged.
CHAPTER II

TENNYSON: "A LORD OF THE HUMAN SOUL"

Alfred Tennyson was born at Somersby, Lincolnshire, on the sixth of August 1809, the fourth son of the twelve children of the rector of Somersby, George Clayton Tennyson, a cultivated but embittered clergyman. The rector had been pushed, by his father, also named George, a rich and ambitious country solicitor, into the church for which he "felt himself very ill-suited and which... he found most uncongenial" (Charles Tennyson, 8). The history of Tennyson's family is interesting in itself, but some knowledge of it is also essential for understanding the recurrence in his poetry of themes of madness, melancholy, sadness, morbidity, neuroticism and trances. In searching for aesthetic symbols for these states of mind, Tennyson anticipates techniques associated with the French symbolists decades later. Tennyson derives much of his inspirations from dream-like states, and there was a good deal in his psychological make-up that for normal purposes would have to be regarded as disordered, neurotic, and even paranoiac. But poetically he was able to use these traits to advantage.

Part of the family heritage was a strain of epilepsy, a disease then thought to be brought on by sexual excess and therefore shameful. Robert Bernard Martin reveals the
anxious and hypochondriac Tennyson. He discusses Tennyson's fear of madness and epilepsy, pointing out that epileptic trances were associated, at the time, with masturbation (27-28). One of Tennyson's brothers was confined to an insane asylum most of his life, another had recurrent bouts of addiction to drugs, a third had to be put into a mental home because of his alcoholism. Of the rest of the eleven children who reached maturity, all had at least one severe mental breakdown. It is clear that Tennyson's recurrent breakdowns were connected with the inherent melancholia and neuroticism of his family, the Tennysonian "black blood."

During the first half of his life Alfred thought that he had inherited epilepsy from which many of his family members suffered and that it was responsible for the trances into which he occasionally fell. He became subject to those moods of melancholy and depression which had a deeply traumatic effect upon him. His mental and emotional development, therefore, was greatly influenced by the sadness that swept over him during the years of adolescence. This sadness is reflected in his attempt to depict the personified sorrow in "Song" ("I' the glooming light"):  

\[
\begin{align*}
I' \\
I' \text{ The glooming light} \\
of \text{middle night} \\
so \text{cold and white,} \\
worn \text{sorrow sits by the moaning wave;}
\end{align*}
\]
Beside her are laid
Her mattock and spade,
For she hath half delved her own deep grave.
Alone she is there:
The white clouds drizzle: her hair falls loose:
Her shoulders are bare;
Her tears are mixed with the beaded dews.

It was in part to escape from the unhappy environment of Somersby rectory that Alfred began writing poetry long before he was sent to school. All his life he used writing as a way of taking his mind from his troubles. One peculiar aspect of his method of composition was set while he was still a boy: "Before I could read I was in the habit on a stormy day of spreading my arms to the wind, and crying out ‘I hear a voice that’s speaking in the wind,’ and the words ‘far, far away’ had always a strange charm for me" (Memoir, I, 11). As this practice suggests, his primary concern was more often rhythm and language than discursive meaning.

Most of Tennyson's early education was under the direction of his father, although he spent nearly four unhappy years at a nearby grammar school. In 1827 he entered Trinity College, Cambridge with his brother Charles. At Trinity he was living for the first time among some of the most intelligent young men of his age. At first he felt shy and isolated because of his extreme sensibility. Alfred, however, met Arthur Hallam soon after his arrival at
Trinity in 1828 and began to establish a close friendship with him.

In 1827 Poems by Two Brothers was published anonymously before Alfred went to Cambridge. Charles and Frederick Tennyson contributed poems to the volume as well as Alfred. The publication of Poems by Two Brothers, Tennyson's first venture in literature, committed him to the role of being a poet. The most striking feature of Alfred's contributions to the volume was the predominance of a mood of morbid and guilty pessimism. As for the sadness of the poems, no doubt life at Somersby was often depressing.

On the sixth of June, 1829, Tennyson won the award of the Chancellor's Gold Medal for his blank verse poem Timbuctoo. It is very often regarded as nothing more than a specimen of the prize poem species, and it does not prognosticate a genius of first rate poetic power. It is not so original in expression and imagery as the poems in the 1827 volume. Arthur Hallam said of the poem in a letter to Gladstone: "The splendid imaginative power that pervades it will be seen through all hindrances. I consider Tennyson as promising fair to be the greatest poet of our generation, perhaps of our century" (Memoir I, 46).

It is in such fragment as this that we may get a first glimpse of Tennyson—an early indication of the mystic side of Tennyson's being.

Even so my thoughts, erewhile so low, now felt
Unutterable buoyancy and strength
To bear them upward through the trackless fields
Of undefined existence far and free.

(ll. 154-57)

As Bowra has pointed out, the symbolists were ultimately concerned with mysticism (2). Like the symbolists, Tennyson here, as in In Memoriam, has invoked the mystic vision. Tennyson describes the phenomenon to Knowles in these words: "Sometimes, as I sit here alone in this great room, I get carried away out of sense and body, and rapt into mere existence" (Knowles, 169). It is important, moreover, to notice in the lines that we have the first experience of Tennyson's tendency to a kind of trance involving a loss of personality. A reference to this subject is present in nearly all the longer poems to follow, its fullest expression being found in poems cxxii and xcv of In Memoriam.

Poems, Chiefly Lyrical appeared in June 1830. The standard of the poems in the volume is uneven, and it has the self-centered, introspective quality that one might expect of the work of a twenty year old; but scattered among the other poems that would be forgotten if they had been written by someone else are several fine ones such as "The Kraken," "Ode to Memory," "Supposed Confessions," and above all "Mariana," which is the first of Tennyson's works to demonstrate fully his brilliant use of objects and symbols.
to convey a state of strong emotion. That poem alone would be enough to justify the entire volume whose criticism was mostly favorable. Poems in the first volume (1830) are saturated with the emotions and thoughts which lead directly to tragic results. The same may be said of the poems in the second volume (1832) such as "The Lady of Shalott," "Oenone," and "The Sisters." My point is that Tennyson's poetry is an expression of the highest sublimation of these tragic emotions.

The 1832 Poems was a great step forward poetically and included the first versions of some of Tennyson's greatest works, such as "The Palace of Art," "A Dream of Fair Women," "The Hesperides," and three wonderful poems conceived in the Pyrenees, "Oenone," "The Lotos-Eaters," and "Mariana in the South." The reviews of the volume were almost universally critical. The most vicious review was written for the Quarterly Review by John Wilson Croker who charged Tennyson "with obscurity, wilful archaism and affectation" (Charles Tennyson, 135). Harold Nicholson exaggerates the influence of this review upon Tennyson in saying that the reception given the 1832 volume made Tennyson into a different kind of poet who is anxious to base his poetry upon "common interests of the time and of universal humanity" (120). Tennyson was abnormally sensitive to criticism, and "The Poet's Mind" shows the "first signs" (Nicolson, 95) of this sensitivity. He was much distressed by Croker's review and
found some comfort in the steady affection and support of Hallam and the other Apostles, a group of young intellectuals at Cambridge.

The shock which Arthur Hallam's death in 1833 brought to Tennyson was terrible. Hallam was Tennyson's spiritual buttress, and his death was a shattering experience to Tennyson. The disaster, in fact, came at a time when a series of family misfortunes, and the critical reviews of the 1830 and 1832 volumes, were already worsening Tennyson's temperamental proneness to "black-blooded" despondency, and it seemed to crystallize his profoundest inner conflicts. We may judge Tennyson's mood from his reaction to Arthur Hallam's death expressed in a letter to his grandfather: "at that time my heart seemed too crushed and all my energies too paralysed to permit me any compliance with his request, otherwise I had not been found wanting in the dearest office I could discharge to the memory of one whom I can never forget" (Charles Tennyson, 151). Hallam Tennyson records in Memoir that his father later told him of "the cloud of this overwhelming sorrow" after the death of Arthur Hallam, which "for a while blotted out all joy from his life, and made him long for death" (I, 109). These descriptions of his grief indicate "that he kept his feelings in these early months pretty much to himself" (Rader, PMLA, 422). Yet, as In Memoriam shows, Tennyson literally wrote himself out of this despair.
Although he was resolute not to have it published, Tennyson continued to write poetry. In the interval, the so-called "ten years' silence," Tennyson had carefully revised his poems and added new ones. Hallam's death nearly crushed him, but it also provided the stimulus for a great outburst of some of the finest poems he ever wrote, many of them connected overtly or implicitly with the loss of his friend. "Ulysses," "Morte d'Arthur," "Tithonus," "Break, Break, Break," and "Oh! that 't were possible" all owe their inception to the passion of grief he felt. Most important was the group of random individual poems he began writing about Hallam's death and his own feeling of loneliness as a result of it; the first of these elegies, written in four-line stanza of iambic tetrameter, was begun within two or three days of his hearing the news of Hallam's death. He continued to write them for seventeen years before collecting them to form what is perhaps the greatest of Victorian poems, *In Memoriam*. Probably no other poem in English has made so prodigious an impression on contemporary readers.

*The Princess*, which was published on Christmas 1847, was Tennyson's first attempt at a long narrative poem, a form that tempted him most of his life although it was less congenial to him temperamentally than the lyric. Considerably more successful than the main narrative are the thematic lyrics that Tennyson inserted into the action to
show the growth of passion. The interpolated lyrics include some of his most splendid short poems, such as "Come down, O maid," "Now sleeps the crimson petal," "Sweet and low," and "Tears, idle tears." The emotion of these lyrics does more than the straight narrative to convey the forward movement of the entire poem, and their brief perfection indicates well enough that his genius lay there rather than in the descriptions of persons and their actions.

The middle year of the century was a great year which was to end the long-lasting miseries, grief, and sorrow which Tennyson had painfully undergone since his adolescence. The year 1850 was a great success which brought him prosperity, stability, and happiness; on June 1st In Memoriam was published; less than two weeks later he and Emily were married; and he was appointed Poet Laureate of England in succession to Wordsworth. Improbable as it might seem for a man to whom little but bad fortune had come, those events were total successes.

On October 6, 1892, Tennyson died at Aldworth with the moon streaming in at the window overlooking the Sussex Weald, his finger holding open a volume of Shakespeare, his family surrounding the bed. A week later he was buried in the Poet's Corner of Westminster Abbey, near the graves of Browning and Chaucer. Tennyson's life, though not his work, can be divided distinctly into two parts. The first period contrasts with the forty-two years from 1850 during which
the three happy events mentioned above occurred. Tennyson’s early life was not happy at all. This unhappiness is clearly reflected in "Supposed Confessions." The grief expressed in this poem is "a forecast of the emotion of In Memoriam" (Marshall, 32). And it most strikingly reveals the lost child theme—the poet’s yearning to return to his childhood for the warm security essential to the childhood (32). The turmoil of his childhood in Lincolnshire, his loneliness in Cambridge, his grief at the death of his closest friend, Hallam, and his loss of fortune—all contributed directly and indirectly to the formation and development of Tennyson’s personality. Like most things Victorian, Tennyson’s reputation suffered an eclipse in the early years of this century. In his case the decline was more severe than that of other Victorians because he had seemed so much the embodiment of the Victorian era.
CHAPTER III

IN MEMORIAM: THE WAY OF THE "LIVING WILL"

In Memoriam, generally regarded as Tennyson’s most successful work, is probably the work upon which his claims as the major poet of the Victorian age must permanently rest. Certainly it is the capstone of his lyric art; his aesthetic of sorrow with which I am dealing finds a kind of culmination in In Memoriam. And it is his most elaborate descant, in elegiac mood, upon his courtship of sorrow. I propose to argue that the poem shows the persona moving from despair and sorrow to hope and happiness through his love and his developing consciousness—in short, his "living will" (CXXXI).

The poem was occasioned by the death of Arthur Hallam, his beloved friend. Suddenly, and from a strange place, a letter informed Tennyson that his friend was no more. This loss was the climactic event of his emotional life. By it, the melancholy intimations that haunt his early poetry were confirmed in experience. He found consolation in writing this poem, which tells us the story of his great sorrow during the years that followed his friend’s death.

The poem grew out of Tennyson’s personal grief. It is intensely personal, but one must also believe Tennyson in his reiterated assertions that it was a poem, not the record
of his own grief, about Hallam:

It must be remembered that this is a poem, not an actual biography. . . . The different moods of sorrow as in a drama are dramatically given, and my conviction that fear, doubts, and suffering will find answers and relief only through Faith in a God of Love. 'I' is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking thro’ him.

(Memoir, I, 304-05)

From this statement it appears that his own feelings had prompted the poem but were not necessarily accurately recorded in it, and the poem attempts to speak for all men rather than for one.

Published in 1850, the year Wordsworth died, In Memoriam consists of 131 separate poems, with prologue and epilogue. Each poem is composed of stanzas formed by placing two rhyming iambic tetrameter lines between two others that rhyme. That is, each stanza has a rhyme scheme of abba. This form of verse, already used by Lord Herbert of Cherbury, is well adapted to the subject, mostly that of subdued but prolonged grief. There is an affinity between the movement of the In Memoriam stanza and the characteristic movements of feeling and thought in the poem.

The structure of the poem often seems wayward, for in T. S. Eliot’s famous phrase, it has “only the unity and
continuity of a diary" (196), instead of the clear direction of a philosophical statement. It was bound to be somewhat irregular since it was composed with no regard for either chronology or continuity and was for years not intended to be published (Memoir, I, 304). Whatever may be made of its overall structure, In Memoriam is at first glance a collection of individual lyrics. And the poems were at first called "elegies" (Memoir, I, 297)--poems of mourning.

Not many long elegies have been written in English. From the Anglo-Saxon period to 1850 there were a few, including Chaucer's The Book of the Duchess, Milton's "Lycidas," Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard," and Shelley's "Adonais." In these works, an initial state of bitter grief at a loss occasioned by death is eventually tempered or even transformed into a state of consolation, with more or less acquiescence or hope. One of the literary traditions upon which In Memoriam draws is that of pastoral elegy.

More important, the general structure of In Memoriam closely follows that of pastoral elegy. There is the initial expression of sorrow and grief, recollection of the happy days now past, troubled reflection on the meaning and purpose of human existence, the gradual tempering of grief into resignation, the sudden turn or change, through which the poet realizes that his dead friend has not totally perished but survives in some other form, and the
apotheosis, which describes the form of this survival and joyfully celebrates it.

There are in *In Memoriam* echoes of earlier elegies, especially in the works of Milton's "Lycidas" and Shelley's "Adonais." In Shelley's lament for Keats occur these words of deepest pathos:

Alas! that all we loved of him should be,  
But for our grief, as if it had not been.  
And grief itself be mortal!

(11, 181-83)

In *In Memoriam* (LXXVIII), this echoes.

O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?  
O grief, can grief be changed to less?

O last regret, regret can die!

And in the Epilogue Tennyson writes

Regret is dead, but love is more  
Than in the summers that are flown. . . .

The pastoral elegy which most closely resembles *In Memoriam* is "Lycidas." Joseph Sendry has examined Tennyson's indebtedness to Milton's elegy, pointing up several close "thematic echoes" and arguing that Milton's "intrusions of metaphysical and theological statements into a song of personal lament" served as a valuable precedent for Tennyson's poem (438). But Sendry is not concerned to do more than intimate some of the significant differences
between the two poems, which are surely as striking as their resemblances. This is particularly true of the poems’ closing sections. At the end of Milton’s poem, Lycidas is said to have become metamorphosed into "the Genius of the shore," a kind of classical nature deity (l. 183). But the source of Milton’s consolation in the poem, and the cause of Lycidas’ apotheosis in the poem’s magnificent conclusion, is Milton’s Christian belief in the resurrection of the dead, the immortality of the soul, and the soul’s entrance into the everlasting bliss of heaven.

The case is quite different with Tennyson’s poem. It is not unusual to say that Tennyson, like other Victorian writers, lacked a secure religious faith and could no longer find support for his need to believe in the traditional sanctions of such faith. The closing sections of *In Memoriam* in consequence offer a variety of consolations and apotheosis, but ones which are not necessarily compatible with each other. There is the domestic epiphany of the epilogue, with its detailed description of a marriage celebration and its confident anticipation of the new life which will result from this union. This epiphany functions as a positive resolution of the various incidents of tragedy and sadness scattered through the poem.

*In Memoriam*, Tennyson’s longest work dealing with the problem of faith, might be regarded as an expansion of the ideas in "The Two Voices." One of the Two Voices is that of
skepticism, bidding him renounce life; the other that of Faith, bidding him pursue "a hidden hope" (l. 441). In Memoriam arose from the same cause, his sorrow for the death of Hallam; it involves the same interweaving of personal sadness with the mystery of all human experience and the threats of contemporary doubt.

In Jerome Buckley's phrase, the poem is a "Victorian Essay on Man" (Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet, 108), a confession of the mourner's metaphysical despair and doubts, which also epitomize the doubts of his age. These doubts appear sporadically in the first half of the poem. As Ryals observes, "Tennyson makes of In Memoriam an autobiography, which traces, like The Prelude, the growth of a poet’s mind and, like the Essay on Man, the spiritual character of an age" (Theme and Symbol in Tennyson's Poems to 1850, 196). But I believe In Memoriam is in no fundamental sense a poem of ideas and only incidently reflects the notions of the age. As H. K. Lee says, Tennyson's "faith and soul expressed in the poem are not original nor profound, and his scientific thoughts are at best superficial" (396, my translation). The poem gradually rises from the depths of sorrow and doubt to a new hope and faith. T. S. Eliot says "Tennyson’s surface, his technical accomplishment, is intimate with his depths. . . . By looking innocently at the surface we are most likely to come to the depths, to the abyss of sorrow" (202). The apposition of "depths" and "the
abyss of sorrow" leads one to the heart of Tennyson.

T. S. Eliot has seen the poem as "a poem of despair, but despair of a religious kind" (201), the doubt more intense than the faith. Eliot is correct in that it describes the struggle of the will against a despairing vision of man's infinite nature rather than an apocalyptic revelation of some divine external order. This dynamic nature of the poem has been suggested by others. A. C. Bradley (39-42), for instance, noted that there are three ways in which a man may face the fact of death and personal bereavement. He can be overcome by grief and submit to the omnipotence of death; he can put death out of his mind and involve himself in external life again; or he can face the fact of death and struggle with it. *In Memoriam* is the record of just such a confrontation and struggle.

The poem has been studied as "The Way of a Soul" (Mattes) and as "The Way of the Poet" (E. D. H. Johnson). It has also been considered as a work of art in which "Hallam serves his artistic function" (Hellstrom, 43). E. H. Lee argues that "Tennyson's friendship in real sense makes it possible to produce art that cannot be found in 'Lycidas' or 'Adonais,' and this is where we must find the zenith of the poem" (12, my translation). In speaking of the poem as an artifact, Valerie Pitt addresses the issue in the most explicitly aesthetic terms. She says that Tennyson was assembling his elegy according to an artistic plan. The
same issues are treated by Priestley in *Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry* in which he says the poem is "an expression of grief and love" (120). It is Kenneth M. McKay who sees the function of art in the poem in terms of "the proper human beauty of Sorrow" (192). His recent study *Many Glancing Colours* addresses the relationship between sorrow and love. Finding the poet's earlier, negative attitude toward sorrow, McKay explores the roots and ramifications of the positive outlook that the poet assumes after the turning point at section LVI, when he takes to sorrow "like a Bride," that is, accepts suffering and knows "Love as the reconciliation of God and Nature within the union, in marriage, of man and woman" (211).

The main series of lyrics is divided, in some sense, into four parts, the three points of division, sections XXVIII, LXXVIII, CIV (*Memoir I*, 305), being associated with three Christmas days--the holiday seasons of the three years following Arthur Hallam's death. It is possible to see some progress of thought and feeling, as one passes from one of these sections to another, though different readers interpret this progress variously, and it is impossible to follow the whole course of its development. In general, the movement is from despair to increasing faith; and Tennyson himself spoke of the poem as a kind of Divine Comedy, beginning with a funeral and ending with a marriage.

In the early sections the theme is the union of love
and sorrow which begets poetry, a union so complete that the poet feels that he must not let go of grief lest love go with it. In poem I, he reminds us how near are love and grief, and that if a man could not grieve, neither could he love:

Let Love clasp Grief lest both be drowned,
Let darkness keep her raven gloss:
Ah, sweeter to be drunk with loss,
To dance with death, to beat the ground,

Then the poet turns to nature for consolation by identifying himself with the "sullen" yew tree in poem II.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
That name the under-lying dead,
Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flower again,
And bring the firstling to the flock;
And in the dusk of thee, the clock
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the bloom,
Who changest not in any gale,
Nor branding summer suns avail
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:
And gazing on thee, sullen tree,
Sick for thy stubborn hardihood,
I seem to fail from out my blood
And grow incorporate into thee.

For Tennyson no prospect of future fulfillment can compensate for present sorrow or substitute for past joy. Hence we have the paradox of sorrow's "cruel fellowship" (III); it is an irony that to attain consolation would be to confront a still deeper anguish. While the poet can "weep a loss for ever new" (XIII), while the memory of his friend remains fresh enough to be painful, love must be real and must indeed transcend the material dimensions of time and space.

In the early part of In Memoriam, references to nature serve mainly to underline Tennyson's isolating grief. Indeed, objective nature is but a "phantom":

And all the phantom, Nature, stands--

With all the music in her tone,

A hollow echo of my own,--

A hollow form with empty hands.

(III)

Nature can afford the poet no consolation here. The emptiness and meaninglessness of Nature and self are persuasive toward despair and death-longing. The poet acknowledges his loss of will in the face of grief.

To Sleep I give my powers away;
My will is bondsman to the dark;
I sit within a helmless bark,
And with my heart I muse and say:

(IV)

There is thus no tendency to evade grief in the opening sections of the poem, but there is the strong impulse to submit completely to grief and to be absorbed in the dark nature. The "will" sleeps, but never for long:

With morning wakes the will, and cries,
'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.'

(IV)

His personal grief widens to something more universal, from his reflection on the trite condolences of those who remind him that "loss is common to the race." So Tennyson says,

That loss is common would not make
My own less bitter, rather more.

(VI)

But his thoughts linger about the ship and the voyage by which the body of his dead friend is being brought back to England. The most beautiful of these lyrics to the vessel is set in the calm beauty of an autumn morning:

XI

Calm is the morn without a sound,
Calm as to suit a calmer grief,
And only through the faded leaf
The chestnut pattering to the ground:

Calm and deep peace on this high wold,
    And on these dews that drench the furze,
    And all the silvery gossamers
That twinkle into green and gold:

Calm and still light on yon great plain
    That sweeps with all its autumn bowers,
    And crowded farms and lessening towers,
To mingle with the bounding main:

Calm and deep peace in this wide air,
    These leaves that redden to the fall;
    And in my heart, if calm at all,
If any calm, a calm despair:

Calm on the seas, and silver sleep,
    And waves that sway themselves in rest,
    And dead calm in that noble breast
Which heaves but with the heaving deep.

Here Tennyson tries to sympathize with his varying moods in nature. He finds in her an echo of his own secret feeling, and her sights and sounds minister to his heart. The shifting emotions that the poem records are contained by Tennyson's fine ear, by his ability to modulate rhythms and
to catch the mood of the occasion. He is a symbolist in that he has evolved his own technique of combining images with verbal music.

After the burial the poet wanders, in imagination, near the grave in the little church at Clevedon, by the River Severn. He compares his alternating expressions of sorrow with the ebbing tides of the Severn. What he speaks is only a kind of verbal fragment of his deeper thoughts:

XIX

The Danube to the Severn gave
The darkened heart that beat no more;
They laid him by the pleasant shore,
And in the hearing of the wave.

There twice a day the Severn fills;
The salt sea-water passes by,
And hushes half the babbling Wye,
And makes a silence in the hills.

The Wye is hushed nor moved along,
And hushed my deepest grief of all,
When filled with tears that cannot fall,
I brim with sorrow drowning song.

The tide flows down, the wave again
Is vocal in its wooded walls;
My deeper anguish also falls,
And I can speak a little then.
This is the first statement of a notion that recurs in the poem, first as a recognition that the deeper thoughts and emotions remain unexpressed, and later as a more general conclusion, in poem XCV, that language itself is an inadequate vehicle for communicating such thoughts:

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or even for intellect to reach
Through memory that which I became:

The poet enshrines both the sad scene and his own anguish that sometimes ebbs a little, but often fills his heart too full for tears. How often the poet's heart was too full for utterance we may gather from another beautiful lyric "Break, Break, Break" which was probably written about this time: "I would that my tongue could utter." This poem will be treated fully in a separate chapter.

In lyric XXI, the poet defends himself from the charges of filling his song with a "private sorrow," in days when great things are abroad. From this point until section LVI is reached, the poet passes through many phases of sorrow. We see him weeping by the grave (XXI), or we hear him murmuring of the happy past (XXII-XXV).

The first division of the poem closes with the theme with which it began: love, even with grief, is too precious
to lose. The poet now dreads but one thing, that the lapse of time may make him more indifferent; if so, he asks only that death may come to shroud him from his own scorn. For those who do not know sorrow because they do not know love are not truly blessed.

XXVII

I envy not in any moods
The captive void of noble rage,
The linnet born within the cage,
That never knew the summer woods:

I envy not the beast that takes
His license in the field of time,
Unfettered by the sense of crime,
To whom a conscience never wakes;

Nor, what may count itself as blest,
The heart that never plighted troth
But stagnates in the weeds of sloth;
Nor any want-begotten rest.

I hold it true, whate’er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
’Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

Here we pause, and enter the second division with the
coming of the Christmas season. The scene is the old Tennyson home at Somersby, surrounded by hamlets whose churches chime out the coming of the sacred night with a four-fold peal that echoes the angels' song in its four syllables, "Peace and Goodwill." But how shall the memory of the dead affect the family festival? The answer is found in two songs which the poet describes: the first is one only of sad resignation, but the second is of hope, of confidence that the dead do not die. It is here, then, that we seem to pass into the higher mood of the new section.

XXVIII

The time draws near the birth of Christ:

The moon is hid; the night is still;

The Christmas bells from hill to hill

Answer each other in the mist.

Four voices of four hamlets round,

From far and near, on mead and moor,

Swell out and fail, as if a door

Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,

That now dilate, and now decrease,

Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,

Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.
This year I slept and woke with pain,
I almost wished no more to wake,
And that my hold on life would break
Before I heard those bells again:

But they my troubled spirit rule,
For they controlled me when a boy;
They bring me sorrow touched with joy,
The merry merry bells of Yule.

The poet’s thought now passes from the evil in himself
to the problem of evil in the large, as it had formerly
passed from personal sorrow to universal sorrow. The result
is a group of three lyrics, LIV, LV, LVI, which may be
viewed as the heart of this section of the poem, wherein we
come once more upon the struggle of faith as affected by
contemporary thought. Tremblingly the poet seeks for
"answer, or redress" (LVI) in nature, in science, and in the
philosophies (XLIX). But they can neither solve for him the
mystery of pain nor show him the passage from death into
life; "we know not anything" (LIV). Such is the sad burden
of their reply. But again the very awfulness, the
incredibility, of the vanishing into nothingness of human
hopes, brings a kind of confirmation of "the larger hope"
(LV).

LIV

Oh yet we trust that somehow good
Will be the final goal of ill,
To pangs of nature, sins of will,
Defects of doubt, and taints of blood;

That nothing walks with aimless feet;
That not one life shall be destroyed,
Or cast as rubbish to the void,
When God hath made the pile complete;

That not a worm is cloven in vain;
That not a moth with vain desire
Is shrivelled in a fruitless fire,
Or but subserves another's gain.

Behold, we know not anything;
I can but trust that good shall fall
At last--far off--at last, to all,
And every winter change to spring.

So runs my dream: but what am I?
An infant crying in the night:
An infant crying for the light:
And with no language but a cry.

A number of other meditations appear during the cycle of this year, but they can not be said to mark any real progress. The section ends with a new iteration of the
poet's intention to go on singing the story of his love and
grief, no matter if both he and his friend miss the reward
of earthly fame.

To breathe my loss is more than fame,
To utter love more sweet than praise.

(LXXVII)

Then comes the second Christmas. The second Christmas poem,
LXXVIII, is the "turning point in the general feeling of In
Memoriam" (Bradley, 29). There is now no visible token of
sorrow; hence the haunting fear recurs that love is waning.
"O last regret, regret can die!" But the answer is, regret
is not really dead, it is only that "with long use her tears
are dry."

The force of life and the will to live gradually grow
stronger until the poet can again contemplate with some
pleasure the ordinary values and hopes of men, and willingly
take for reality the necessary illusion of an external world
filled with possibilities and goals. This movement is
prompted by the coming of spring.

My pulses therefore beat again

For other friends that once I met;

Nor can it suit me to forget

The mighty hopes that make us men.

(LXXXV)

But this strengthening has been achieved not through
argument or conviction but through the indulgence of Sorrow,
the expansion of self through struggle and exertion, or to use Tennyson's phrase, a growth of "mind and will" (XLII).

The new section of the poem is marked by a greater calmness and resignation than had been attained hitherto; although the poet's mind lingers on what might have been had his friend remained with him, it is not with bitterness. Memories of their days at college and at Hallam's house can now be enjoyed without too much pain. A certain spring morning seems to gather into itself this aspect of the period, as the autumn morning had done for an earlier period.

LXXXVI

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
Of evening over brake and bloom
And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
Through all the dewy-tasselled wood,
And shadowing down the horned flood
In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
The full new life that feeds thy breath
Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
Ill brethren, let the fancy fly
From belt to belt of crimson seas
On leagues of odour streaming far,
To where in yonder orient star
A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

Despite this peace, however, there is a desire, rather
growing than diminishing, to hold some communication with
the lost friend. At one moment the poet cries that his only
undying complaint against death is that
He put our lives so far apart
We cannot hear each other speak.

(LXXXII)

At another he ponders on the possibility of a vision of the
friend, but rejects it, knowing that if it came he might
count it "but the canker of the brain" (XCII); yet the
thought changes to a desire, not for the visible form, but
for the very spirit of the dead.

No visual shade of some one lost,
But he, the Spirit himself, may come
Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
Spirit to spirit, Ghost to Ghost...

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
The wish too strong for words to name;
That in this blindness of the frame
My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

(XCIII)
In the following lyric he considers the conditions of such a meeting, and in the next the desire is, in a sense, fulfilled. Section XCV is a symbolist poem charged with mystical intensity. The scene is a summer night when there comes no complete loss of the power of sunlight from the sky, but the "dim lights" of West and East are mingled. Left alone at length in the garden, Tennyson reads again the letters of his lost friend and meditates on them until he is caught into a kind of trance where there is no vision of forms, but a sense of "the living soul" flashed on his. When the trance breaks, doubt as usual comes in to question it; words fail to express it, or even memory to recall it with accuracy; and the familiar dawn breaks.

XCV

So word by word, and line by line,
The dead man touched me from the past,
And all at once it seemed at last
The living soul was flashed on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirled
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Eonian music measuring out
The steps of Time--the shocks of Chance--
The blows of Death. At length my trance
Was cancelled, stricken through with doubt.

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
   In matter-moulded forms of speech,
   Or even for intellect to reach
Through memory that which I became:

Till now the doubtful dusk revealed
   The knolls once more where, couched at ease,
   The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field:

And sucked from out the distant gloom
   A breeze began to tremble o'er
   The large leaves of the sycamore,
And fluctuate all the still perfume,

And gathering freshlier overhead,
   Rocked the full-foliaged elms, and swung
   The heavy-folded rose, and flung
The lilies to and fro, and said

'The dawn, the dawn,' and died away;
   And East and West, without a breath,
   Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
To broaden into boundless day.

A number of critics have chosen to differentiate among parts of the poem by identifying climaxes or turning points. Most of them who focus on the mystical experience would name as the pivotal section XCV. Alan Sinfield, for instance, says, "In Memoriam turns upon the poet's mystical experience in section XCV" (Armstrong, 51). Jerome Buckley notes that "concern with the mode of perception and the reality of the perceiving self turns the essential 'action' of In Memoriam toward the inner experience," bringing "renewed purpose and composure"; "the 'I' of the poem finds in his mystical insight the surest warrant for spiritual recovery" (Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet, 122, 123). According to Carlisle Moore, the "trance-like experience of section XCV marks the climax of the poet's efforts to commune with the spirit of Hallam; it provides a nexus between the disparate elements of doubt and faith" (158). Robert Langbaum's formulation is probably the most representative: "In a mystical trance the poet has the epiphany that transforms and transcends all the problems of the poem" (The Modern Spirit, 65).

Critics also have shown that this section, like the larger poem, may be at once mainline Romantic and symbolist, full both of transcendence and immanence. Harry Puckett cites In Memoriam as a model for romantics or moderns who recognize aesthetic experience "as a way of transcending our
inability to know" (124). In the Memoir Tennyson himself offers a way of reading the section. In a "kind of waking trance... individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being" (320). John Dixon Hunt argues that the poem is a symbolist work because its movement is toward "noumenal, rather than phenomenal, vision" (187). John D. Rosenberg also acknowledges a symbolist structure in his "The Two Kingdoms of In Memoriam" (228-40).

The succeeding poem is a separate meditation on the old theme of doubt and faith. But now the subject is connected in a new way with Arthur Hallam himself; he too had known doubt, not running away from it, but conquering. There is a fine imaginative figure here: at first the friend’s lyre was out of tune, but he neither rejected nor became content with the imperfection; patiently he sounded the strings, tuning them as occasion offered, until "at last he beat his music out" (XCVI).

The conclusion to this section of the poem is almost purely personal, having to do with the removal of the Tennysons from the old home at Somersby and the emotions associated with it. On the last night in the house of many memories, the poet dreams of a voyage in which he comes upon his dead friend, and they move on together "toward a crimson cloud" (CIII). Then comes the end of the year, the third Christmas finding the family in the new home, "in lands where not a memory strays" (CIV). The poet’s mind seems now
turned from personal matters toward those universal: looking
out on the stars of Christmas night, he bids them

Run out your measured arcs, and lead

The closing cycle rich in good.

(CV)

And when the bells of New Year chime, there is not a thought
of his own petty sorrows, but the song is all for the great
cycle that is to bring in a new age of fulfillment of human
hopes. This is the poem to be remembered as the New Year
song for the bright future of all.

CVI

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,

The flying cloud, the frosty light:

The year is dying in the night;

Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,

Ring, happy bells, across the snow:

The year is going, let him go;

Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind,

For those that here we see no more;

Ring out the feud of rich and poor,

Ring in redress to all mankind.
Ring out a slowly dying cause,
And ancient forms of party strife;
Ring in the nobler modes of life,
With sweeter manners, purer laws...

Ring out false pride in place and blood,
The civic slander and the spite;
Ring in the love of truth and right,
Ring in the common love of good.

The triumph of love over both despair and grief, and the expansion of that love until it embraces all mankind, is best proclaimed by the clash of the bells as they ring in the New Year. From these poems of place and time which conduct us almost to the end of *In Memoriam*, we learn how the poet gradually turned the discipline of sorrow to best and fullest account:

'Tis held that sorrow makes us wise.

(CVIII and CXIII)

Tennyson is at pains to distinguish wisdom from a lower value—knowledge. Wisdom to him emanates from a higher source than the intellect, that of intuition and will, and it is inseparably joined to sorrow, being achieved through sorrow or suffering. Wisdom then is an achievement rather than an acquisition.

As the poet emerges from grief, his sensitivity to beauty and life, in both nature and human society,
correspondingly increases. A consequence of this expanded sensitivity is the poet's perception of positive values in imagery formerly used to express his sorrow. For instance, the rebirth symbolism of the violet, ignored by the poet in poem XVIII, directly controls the flower's role in poem CXV.

From land to land; and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest.

Similarly, Phosphor in poem CXXI, surrounded by images of awakening life, finally actualizes its potential as a symbol of rebirth.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world's great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light:
No longer bound to the past, as in poem IX, the poet can now find in Phosphor, the precursor of dawn, a powerful image of his renewed spirit. Moreover, the value of Phosphor as a symbol of love is fully realized in the final stanza.

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

By uniting Hesper and Phosphor (the dual phases of Venus, planet of love), the poet sees in his enduring affection for
his dead friend an affirmation of Hallam's continued existence. Love here becomes a basis for spiritual faith rather than a stimulant for grief. Thus the poet objectifies his emotional rejuvenation through these traditional symbols of renewal.

We come now to the final address, in three lyrics, to Arthur Hallam and to the living will or soul of man of which his great soul was a type. Here the poet rises by a mystical flight to a conception to which many poets have attained, according to which the object of their love is made one with all that is most desired in the whole world of thought and nature. Plato taught the doctrine, long ago, that love for an individual was but a step toward love of the eternal idea of beauty. Shelley, meditating on the dead Keats, who for him was a symbol of youth and beauty, cried:

He is made one with Nature: there is heard
His voice in all her music, from the moan
Of thunder, to the song of night's sweet bird;
He is a presence to be felt and known
In darkness and in light, from herb and stone,
Spreading itself where'er that Power may move
Which has withdrawn his being to its own;
Which wields the world with neverwearied love,
Sustains it from beneath, and kindles it above.

("Adonais," ll. 370-78)

And Tennyson, in like manner, is led to "mingle all the
world" (CXXIX) with the soul of his friend, and to feel him like "some diffusive power" (CXXX) in all the loveliness of nature. Hence, by a kind of Neo-Platonism, he identifies his aspiration toward reunion with Hallam and that toward reunion with the eternal source of humanity. The final section, CXXXI, begins with an invocation not to an external God, nor even to love. It is addressed to the "living will." The individual man finds for himself a relation to a personal God, who works with him toward great ends.

CXXXI

O living will that shalt endure
When all that seems shall suffer shock,
Rise in the spiritual rock,
Flow through our deeds and make them pure,

That we may lift from out of dust
A voice as unto him that hears,
A cry above the conquered years
To one that with us works, and trust,

With faith that comes of self-control,
The truths that never can be proved
Until we close with all we loved,
And all we flow from, soul in soul.

In the analysis of the poem, In Memoriam doubtless has an appearance of greater unity than one would discover in
reading it from beginning to end. It clearly possesses unity of a certain sort. As a bird may circle about a central object, never out of sight of it, yet never progressing along a straight line, so Tennyson may be said to have circled about his great sorrow and the problem of sorrow, not seeking or claiming to reach a real destination by the processes of consecutive thinking, but more and more advanced toward the elevation of sorrow into beauty and love. Hence "the principle of spiritual advancement in In Memoriam is love" (Hellstrom, 41). This argument is reinforced by McKay who concludes that Tennyson's "attachment of Sorrow is an attachment of love" (198) which must be "realized in Nature through Sorrow" (200).

Some readers may censure, not the philosophy of the poem, but the wearisome plaintiveness—the almost whining tone—of the earlier sections as being merely "private sorrow's barren song" (XXI). Here at any rate the author shows some sympathy with such readers, for in the epilogue, commenting on the growth of his mind and spirit during the years since the work was begun, he speaks of his songs as now appearing like "echoes out of weaker times." And in the prologue he calls the lyrics "confusions," "wild and wandering cries." Yet to many readers this weaker, plaintive element seems only the true record of one side of sorrow, characteristic even of virile minds. Tennyson has allowed us to watch the conflict within his soul between the
power of doubt, darkness, weakness, and selfishness, on the one hand, and faith, light, strength, and love on the other. He should have gained the victory--victory of sorrow in the form of surpassing beauty, which stands moreover as the monument of a love so perfect that as long as that monument remains with us, love itself can never die.
MAUD: THE "DRAMA OF THE SOUL"

Maud, like In Memoriam is a series of lyrical poems. Its subtitle, "a monodrama," suggests that the separate poems in Maud are a series of monologues (there are twenty-eight in all), spoken in loneliness by the same person, and passing from one scene to another somewhat in the dramatic manner, the other characters and the action appearing largely through the memory of the speaker. It is possible to distinguish the poems definitely as lyrical monologues. Sometimes the utterances rise to what could be fully expressed only in song, while at other times it is in colloquial speech, purely narrative or reflective. The whole series of these utterances runs through the "different phases of passion" (Memoir I, 396), in response to the power of love, from darkness to light, from light to deeper darkness, and finally to a kind of tragic reconciliation.

Although Maud is not generally taken to be a poem about an expression of grief, thematically central in the poem, as in In Memoriam, is the theme of grief and how one recovers from it. Lowell called Maud "the antiphonal voice to In Memoriam" (Memoir I, 396). As In Memoriam expressed all the disturbance, emotional and intellectual, which Hallam's death brought with it, so in Maud Tennyson expressed the
joys and sorrows he had known through love. The theme of
the poem is the power of love to rescue the protagonist from
selfish despair and sorrow. Tennyson's pursuit of beauty in
his poetry gave force and goal to his tortured and
disordered soul as well as to the portrait of the
protagonist's warped soul in *Maud*.

*Maud* was Tennyson's favorite poem, and the one he most
enjoyed reading aloud (Charles Tennyson, 275). It developed
from "Oh! that 'twere possible," a lyrical monologue begun
as a dramatization of his feelings about Arthur Hallam's
death and published in *The Tribute*, in 1837. *Maud* is a
lyrical monodrama, and into the lyrics which compose it
Tennyson poured much of his strongest feelings and thoughts.
It is highly dramatic; the essential drama takes place
within the mind of the protagonist. After a detailed survey
of the origin, development, and meaning of the terms,
monodrama and dramatic monologue, Dwight Culler concludes
that the poem "is neither a pure monodrama nor a proper
dramatic monologue." (*PMLA*, 379).

The hero of *Maud* is a character who reminds one rather
strikingly of the young man of "Locksley Hall." And the two
poems are often compared with each other. "Locksley Hall"
is closest in theme and form to *Maud*. It arises out of the
same biographical situations as *Maud*--Tennyson's
disappointed love for Rosa Baring; and it presents
essentially the same protagonist--a moody young man who has
lost his love as a result of Amy's falseness and the
venality of the age, and whose problem now is whether he
should remain a gloomy and embittered hero or regain his
faith in progress. The poem does not have the metrical
variety of *Maud*. But the variety of mood, as arising out of
this inner conflict, is nearly as great.

*Maud* is a story of hereditary madness and melancholia.
The hero of the poem, who is "constitutionally prone" to
them (*Memoir*, I, 395), is of an irritable and morbid
temperament; he is haunted by hereditary gloom and the fear
of insanity, which at length come upon him. The account of
the poem by Tennyson is suggestive of this characteristic.

This poem is a little *Hamlet*, the history of a
morbid poetic soul, under the blighting influence
of a recklessly speculative age. He is the heir
of madness, an egotist with the makings of a
cynic, raised to sanity by a pure and holy love
which elevates his whole nature, passing from the
height of triumph to the lowest depth of misery,
driven into madness by the loss of her whom he has
loved, and, when he has at length passed through
the fiery furnace, and has recovered his reason,
giving himself up to work for the good of mankind
through the unselfishness born of his great
passion. . . . The peculiarity of this poem. . .
is that different phases of passion in one person
take the place of different characters.

(Memoir, I, 396)

Since Tennyson himself explicitly compared the poem with *Hamlet*, its Freudian significance is important in the interpretation of the poem and its hero. The hero of the poem is, as Tennyson himself acknowledged, "the heir of madness" (Memoir, I, 396) and melancholia. According to Freud, "melancholia is in some way related to an unconscious loss of love-object, in contradistinction to mourning, in which there is nothing unconscious about the loss" (Collected Papers, IV, 155). It is evident that this definition fits exactly the case of the hero of *Maud*. He suffers from this melancholia and madness after he has lost his love.

A number of critics see the speaker's actions and attitudes throughout the poem as dominated by a childhood Oedipal trauma. Roy P. Basler, Ronald Weiner, Jonathan Wordsworth, Platizky, among others, discuss the poem in terms of Freudian psychology, Basler being the first and Platizky the most recent. According to them, the hero transforms his love for his mother into a hatred directed at his father for destroying her through his suicide and then at those two father surrogates, Maud's father and brother. They, after all, had caused his family's ruin and were conveniently available to taunt him with it. Since Maud, according to Basler (77-78), represents the objects both of
his love and his hatred, his response to her can only repeat his compulsive response to the original trauma. Platizky claims that the hero’s sense of self is "neurotically dislocated" (52) by his childhood trauma. Platizky, unlike other psychoanalytic critics who focus on the hero’s mother as the main source of his Oedipal anxiety, emphasizes the father’s role in the hero’s ambivalence toward Maud and himself. The hero’s "dislocation of self," says Christopher Ricks, "can be turned to something that is lamentably like the company of successive persons" (Tennyson, 236). There is a hint of determinism in his observation that the hero belongs to a uniquely Tennysonian world where any attempt at union leads to conflict, to separation, and ultimately to death (238).

The original title was Maud or the Madness. It was Robert James Mann, a contemporary popular scientific writer, who called the poem a monodrama. His analysis of the poem is so excellent that it is worth quoting at length.

Maud is a drama;--that is, an action;--in which an exquisite tale of love and sorrow is revealed in a form that bears upon itself the impress at once of consummate art, and of simple nature. The dramatis persona of the action,--for there is but one individual who is ever brought forward in it in person,--exhibits his story through the mental influences its several incidents work in himself,
and this exhibition is made, not directly and connectedly, but, as it were, inferentially and interruptedly, through a series of distinct scenes, which are as varied as the circumstances involved. It is in this peculiarity of the poem,—the one person revealing to the reader his own sad and momentous history, by fits and starts, which are themselves but so many impulsive utterances naturally called forth from a mind strung to the pitch of keen poetic sensibility,—that its absolute originality and the surpassing skill of the Laureate are displayed (8).

When *Maud* was published, it puzzled many readers. It was charged with ambiguity. Tennyson's response to this interpretation indicates that he was much satisfied and encouraged by Mann's defense against the charge: "No one with this essay before him can in future pretend to misunderstand my dramatic poem, "Maud": your commentary is as true as it is full. . . . Without the prestige of Shakespeare, *Hamlet* would be treated in just the same way" (*Memoir*, I, 405-06).

*Maud* has been read as a poem expressing obliquely the frustrations of Tennyson's earlier love life and of his familial and social positions, but we might also approach it allegorically as a work of autobiographical significance. "Biographically," says Rader, "*Maud* is a crucial document,"
and he calls it

Tennyson's purgative recapitulation of the inner and outer circumstances of his tortured early life, a deeply rooted act of spiritual self definition and affirmation by which, after the commitment initiated by marriage and the Laureateship, he moved from his earlier to his later career; it is the swan song of the bitter and troubled young poet, the inaugural hymn of the Laureate (Tennyson's "Maud," 115).

Rader shows convincingly that there are many connections between the poem and events in Tennyson's life. The narrator's father, for instance, would "rage in his mood"--"Ah God, as he used to rave" (I, i, 53, 60), much as did Tennyson's own father. Maud, Rader believes, is "an image in which were blended Tennyson's memories of all three of the women whom he had successively loved" (Ibid, 98).

The two women, Rosa Baring and Sophy Rawnsley, Rader suggests, stood in Tennyson's mind for two distinct types of human being, and the rose and the lily were their respective symbols in his late poem, "The Ancient Sage."

'The years that when my Youth began

Had set the lily and rose

By all my ways where'er they ran,

Have ended mortal foes;

My rose of love for ever gone,
My lily of truth and trust--
They made her lily and rose in one,
And changed her into dust.
O rosetree planted in my grief,
And growing, on her tomb,
Her dust is greening in your leaf,
Her blood is in your bloom.
O slender lily waving there,
And laughing back the light,
In vain you tell me "Earth is fair"
When all is dark as night.'

(11. 155-70)

Similarly in Maud, there is an autobiographical reference when Maud is described as "Queen lily and rose in one" (I, xxii, 905). She is in fact virtually true womanhood as Tennyson found it in Emily Sellwood.

The flower imagery and its symbolism in the poem is evident and has been commented upon in some detail by E. D. H. Johnson and Hellstrom. As they make explicit, the rose in Maud becomes a symbol not just of passion, but of the life principle itself: "And the soul of rose went into my blood" (I, xxii, 882). And the lily becomes a symbol of purity, innocence, and later fidelity and resignation.
Therefore, Maud represents a combination of both qualities--innocence and passion--associated with the rose and the lily which, in Idylls of the King, represent the flesh and the
spirit respectively (Hellstrom, 77). Johnson presents a clear picture of the imagery and its symbolic value as it moves throughout the poem (PMLA, 1222-7). However, he offers little explanation for the change in imagery of the red rose to white:

The red rose cries, 'She is near, she is near;'

And the white rose weeps, 'She is late;'

(I, xxii, 912-13)

Johnson's footnoted interpretation is that the shift provides a skillful emotional transition between the red rose of the preceding line and the lily. In my opinion, this comment provides no clear meaning, especially when one considers that both symbolic flowers are placed together earlier without a transition: "You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life" (I, iv, 161).

Maud is Tennyson's attempt to treat his favorite themes of morbid withdrawal from the world. The poem identifies the hero's personal madness with social disorder. His madness, too, traces an expiatory course for the grieving lover, before it is burned out: "'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye, / That old hysterical mock-disease should die'" (III, iii, 32-33).

At the beginning of the poem, the narrator is undergoing the sense of loneliness and alienation. The mood of despairing search, which is also found in In Memoriam, dominates the opening sections of the poem. The narrator,
looking about him, finds only a harsh, cold, meaningless world.

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood,
Its lips in the field above are dabbled with blood-red heath,
The red-ribbed ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
And Echo there, whatever is asked her, answers 'death'

Earth is lost in a vast universe; nature is in a constant state of war; men are grasping, selfish, and false; and the speaker himself is despairing and unloved—"Our planet is one, the suns are many, the world is wide" (I, iv, 146).

After the hero of the poem first sees the forbidden heroine, she makes a "luminous... ghostlike, deathlike" (I, iii, 95) appearance in his dreams, indicating that she is associated in his mind with the image of his dead mother (The ambiguity of her appearance after the duel scene—"The ghastly Wraith of one that I know" (II, i, 32)—reinforces this suggestion). The dream vision is succeeded by a waking reminder of the death of his father in which the sexual implications of that scene seem to be obscurely but precisely allegorized: "the scream of a maddened beach dragged down by the wave" (I, iii, 99).

The counter-theme to the voice of despair is soon followed in section v, when the narrator first hears Maud
singing. In contrast to the narrator’s disordered and hysterical rantings, hers is the clear, sure, and passionate voice. What we learn of her, as the poem continues, proves her goodness. She has always sought for kindness between the hero’s family and her own, and she tries, as the poem goes on, to make amends for past ill treatment. On a less literal level she is even more clearly a soul or anima. The first major entrance of the Maud theme presents her as a voice, a disembodied lyric principle.

A voice by the cedar tree
In the meadow under the Hall!
She is singing an air that is known to me,
A passionate ballad gallant and gay,
A martial song like a trumpet’s call!
Singing alone in the morning of life,
In the happy morning of life and of May,
Singing of men that in battle array,
Ready in heart and ready in hand,
March with banner and bugle and fife
To the death, for their native land.

(I, v, 162-72)

Maud is the pure soul, the active principle of love and nature. She may remind us of a Highland girl, in Wordsworth’s poem "The Solitary Reaper," who sings of "battles long ago" (1. 20):

Behold her, single in the field,
Yon solitary Highland Lass!
Reaping and singing by herself;
Stop her, or gently pass!
Alone she cuts and binds the grain,
And sings a melancholy strain;
O listen! for the Vale profound
Is overflowing with the sound.

And the narrator’s reaction to Maud’s song, in fact, contains much of the Wordworthian-Romantic vocabulary for describing the freedom and exultation of the soul:

Silence, beautiful voice!
Be still, for you only trouble the mind
With a joy in which I cannot rejoice,
A glory I shall not find.
Still! I will hear you no more,
For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice
But to move to the meadow and fall before
Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,
Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,
Not her, not her, but a voice.

(I, v, 180-89)

The poetic language Tennyson uses here clearly echoes in the opening stanzas of Wordsworth’s "Ode: Intimations of Immortality" where he celebrates the beauty of nature. Words like "beautiful," "joy," "glory," "sweetness," "meadow" repeatedly appear in Wordsworth’s poem to indicate
his exultant mood in nature.

The hero's solitary life in his own house is haunted by emanations of his own loneliness, much like those of Mariana or the Soul in "The Palace of Art":

Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,
And my own sad name in corners cried,

(I, vi, 258-61)

Here for the first time the hero tries to make his vision of Maud as valid and as important as he chooses. He knows he can shape his universe around her:

If Maud were all that she seemed,
And her smile had all that I dreamed,
Then the world were not so bitter
But a smile could make it sweet.

(I, vi, 281-84)

Maud begins with a literal reference to the pit in which the hero's father died: "I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood." But the "ghastly pit," whose "red-ribbed ledges drip with a silent horror of blood," has a figurative meaning. It is the pit of hell itself, into which the hero's father has already thrown himself and from whose brink the narrator can scarcely keep himself. He fears he will also have to "creep to the hollow and dash [himself] down and die" (I, i, 54). The narrator speaks of
the black pits in which
    Grimy nakedness dragging his trucks
    And laying his trams in a poisoned gloom
    Wrought, till he crept from a gutted mine

    (I, x, 336-38)

Finally, toward the end of the poem, the pit and its related image of the grave become a symbol of the hero's own deep, abiding guilt.

    In the world of the pit, the only redemptive force is the spirit of love--Maud, seen as a star. Maud is "star-sweet" (I, iii, 91) and "moon-faced" (I, i, 72). Although the hero at first denies that her light will ever be his "leading star" (I, iv, 113), he is soon wholly guided by her, believing that she can save him from madness and crime. As exemplified in the imagery of the stars, Maud's function is to bring warmth and joy into the universe. At the beginning of the poem, the hero can see around him only hatred, rapine, and cruelty:

        For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;
        The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow speared by the shrike,
        And the whole little wood where I sit is a world of plunder and prey.

    (I, iv, 123-25)

Man has no significance in the universe and no understanding
of its meaning, "for the drift of the Maker is dark, an Isis hid by the veil" (I, iv, 144). Gradually, though, under the redemptive force of Maud, the hero learns to accept the universe. Originally the stars were

... tyrants in your iron skies,

Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,

Cold fires, yet with power to burn and brand
His nothingness into man.

(I, xviii, 635-38)

Inspired by Maud’s love, however, the hero comes to feel at home in the universe. The stars "go in and out as if at merry play" and the whole earth becomes suffused with their "soft splendours" (I, xviii, 629, 677). Released from spiritual paralysis, the hero can now, as Tennyson did in XCV of In Memoriam, find harmony in the pulsations of the universe.

The temporary transcendence of the star over the pit reaches its climax in section xviii of Part I, which marks the zenith of the hero’s sense of joy and communion. Describing Maud as a "pearl," he claims that she has triumphed over all contrary forces, both the voids of the earth and the terrifying hollows of the sky:

But now shine on, and what care I,
Who in this stormy gulf have found a pearl
The countercharm of space and hollow sky,
And do accept my madness, and would die
To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

Would die; for sullen-seeming Death may give
More life to Love than is or ever was
In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live.
Let no one ask me how it came to pass;
It seems that I am happy, that to me
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,
A purer sapphire melts into the sea.

(I, xviii, 639-50)

This sense of triumph carries us on to the end of Part I.
The dance movement of section xxii is the lyrical climax of
the first part, which has moved from despair to this
sensuous ecstasy among the flowers of Maud's garden. In its
beautiful concluding section, "Come into the garden, Maud,"
the reigning star is Venus, the hollows are blooming with
violets, and the hero waits in the rose garden for the bride
to come. In mood and meaning this reminds us of the Hesper-
Phosphor stanzas of In Memoriam. It is not difficult to see
that many of situations and images in Maud have parallels in
those of In Memoriam. Like Hallam, Maud is a spiritual
principle; and she is associated, as he is, with images of
stars, hands, doorways, and flowers.

    The hero's love for Maud, like Tennyson's moment of
    mystical communion with Hallam, reintroduces order and
    harmony into the universe. Just as Tennyson uses the image
of fusion between the morning and evening stars in the Hesper-Phosphor stanzas of *In Memoriam* to represent the sense of wholeness he has found in the universe, the narrator of *Maud* expresses the same idea by the image of the rosy blush that unites the West and East. The rebirth of the violets from their "ashen roots" recurs as the "violets blue as [Maud’s] eyes," which bloom in "the woody hollows" (I, xxii, 891-92).

If *Maud* were to end at the close of Part I, it would parallel the development of *In Memoriam* almost completely, since in both works, the common factor would then be the progress from absence to presence or from alienation to communion. The two works describe the way by which what has been lost is found again. However, the conclusion of *Maud*, unlike that of *In Memoriam*, is far from epithalamic. The hero finds Maud only to lose her again—through his own fault. This different conclusion marks, I think, the shift from Tennyson’s earlier thinking in *In Memoriam* toward the later ideas of *Idylls of the King*.

The happiness with which the first part ends is in contrast to the despair with which the second part begins. Part II opens with a reminiscent meditation, showing us that Maud’s brother came upon the lovers in the garden with angry and insulting words, and that a duel followed, in which he fell. In the following scene the hero has fled to Brittany, and on its desolate seashore lets his weary mind wander back
and forth from immediate surroundings to haunting memories. After the communion of Part I, the narrator in Part II is back, even more dreadfully, in the alienated world without his loved one. In the unreal city of his madness, he can remember Maud and "the garden by the turrets/ Of the old manorial hall" (II, iv, 219-20), but whenever he reaches out for her she vanishes. He sees himself as an eternal wanderer in an urban hell:

Through the hubbub of the market
I steal, a wasted frame,
It crosses here, it crosses there,
Through all that crowd confused and loud,
The shadow still the same;
And on my heavy eyelids
My anguish hangs like shame.

(II, iv, 208-14)

Not surprisingly, the images of the pit dominate in Part II. The duel scene takes place in the same "red-ribbed hollow" (II, i, 25) in which the hero's father killed himself after "a vast speculation had failed" (I, i, 9). And in his ensuing madness the hero imagines himself buried in another pit, "a shallow grave. . . only a yard beneath the street" (II, v, 244-45). In the nightmare city, all are guilty with him: statesmen, physicians, even clergymen: "the churchmen fain would kill their church,/ As the churches killed their Christ" (II, vi, 266-67). If the
pearl symbolized the triumph over the pit in Part I, the "lovely shell,/ Small and pure as a pearl" (II, ii, 49-50) symbolizes the transiency of that triumph in Part II. The pearl was a "countercharm" (I, xviii, 641) to space and sky; but the shell is "forlorn,/ Void of the... living will" (II, i, 61-62) and, however divine or enduring, still frail enough to be crushed by a human hand.

The notion of human culpability, "the guilty hand" (II, i, 4), is, indeed, the dominant theme of Part II. Significantly, it begins with the statement, "'The fault was mine, the fault was mine.'" Although these words are actually spoken by the brother, they express what the hero himself has learned: that guilt resides, not in external forces, but in oneself. His were guilty hands; and the "passionate cry" (II, i, 5) of Maud, in contrast to her earlier singing, is the anguish caused by his destructiveness. More mature than he was at the very beginning of the poem, he is compassionate towards Maud's grief. But his main sense is one of sinfulness--of himself and all mankind as a "race of venomous worms" (II, i, 46). Thus he is seen as an archetypal figure of all human beings.

Although Part I, like a symbolist work, presents the vision of mystic communion, love, and grace, the dark note of "undercurrent woe" (I, xviii, 681) is dominant in Part II. The hero's symbolic ascent from the pit to the stars is similar both in meaning and imagery to Tennyson's climb from
doubt to faith in *In Memoriam*. But his redescent into the pit after he kills Maud's brother shows the need for a solution that is earned, not given. After blaming the stars, nature, and other men for the faults of the universe in Part I, the narrator comes to realize in Part II that the fault was his—that each man shares in mankind's guilt. Maud has come to save him, but he can only be saved by himself. In Part I, the hero maintains the belief that it is other people that are at fault, just as it is an outside force, the redemptive Maud, that can save him:

> And she knows it not: O, if she knew it,  
> To know her beauty might half undo it.  
> I know it the one bright thing to save  
> My yet young life in the wilds of Time,  
> Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,  
> Perhaps from a selfish grave.

*(I, xvi, 554-59)*

Part II, however, brings him to the recognition of self. After inflaming the "dawn of Eden" with the "fires of Hell" (II, i, 8-9) by reenacting the primal scene of murder, the hero is brought to the intolerably painful realization that the spirit of violence exists not only in others but in himself. He alone has brought death into the garden, and no external force of love or mysticism can save him. While he interprets the world by the key of his own life and fate--making the world but a second self--he is unhappy and
bitter, contemptuous and despairing. When the center of the world is Maud—when she is the first being in the world, and the world is seen in the light of her—he is happy and genial, earnest and full of hope. With his final despairing cry at the end of Part II to bury him deeper, he reaches a position of hopelessness unprecedented even in *In Memoriam*:

> O me, why have they not buried me deep enough?  
> Is it kind to have made me a grave so rough,  
> Me, that was never a quiet sleeper?  
> Maybe still I am but half-dead;  
> Then I cannot be wholly dumb;  
> I will cry to the steps above my head  
> And somebody, surely, some kind heart will come  
> To bury me, bury me  
> Deeper, ever so little deeper.

Although Part III of *Maud* is greatly weakened by being aesthetically unintegrated with the rest of the poem, its thematic development follows logically from all that has gone before. While aesthetically unsuccessful, the war metaphor is logical, a continuation of ideas implicit throughout the poem. Purified love of the dead Maud finally cures the hero of his madness and leads him to a more generalized love of mankind, which is manifested in his going to the Crimea to fight. *Maud* creates for us the sense of a great battle between good and evil. How to reconcile man’s innate violence with his equally instinctive struggle
toward the good becomes the major theme of the five brief sections that comprise Part III.

Tennyson's attitude in *Maud* toward the Crimean War and toward war in general is, as are the social, economic, and political aspects of the poem, outside the scope of my study. Some reviewers, however, focus on the poem's so-called "war philosophy." Jerome Buckley, for instance, points out that war supplies the framework of *Maud*, the point of departure and the source of resolution (*Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet*, 141). James Kincaid views the war "as an extreme but effective unifying force" (*Tennyson's Major Poems*, 118). I would like to denounce Tennyson's endorsement of the war when his speaker expresses his enthusiasms at the end of the poem, "And I stood on a giant deck and mixed my breath/ With a loyal people shouting a battle cry." One critic concludes that since little was known about Tennyson's response to the Crimean War, his knowledge of the war "must be purely conjectural" (Bennett, 37). Allan Danzig, in his interpretation of the ending of *Maud*, says, "Tennyson... is rarely, and certainly not here, concerned with war at all" (584).

It is interesting to look at the role of Maud in the final portions of the poem. She does reappear, but only as a vision; and, in keeping with the hero's altered attitude, her whole tonality has changed. The roses and lilies of her Eden-like garden have turned to "the blood-red blossom of
war" (III, 53), and her chivalrous song has changed to the shouts of battle and the thunder of cannon.

Some readers may think the poem incoherent, or find in it no sense of movement, or believe that the drama is subordinated to lyrics, and that meaning lies in the development of some of the symbols rather than in the action. If anything is clear about *Maud*, it is that it is, unlike *In Memoriam*, not a way or progress of the soul, but "a Drama of the Soul" (*Memoir*, I, 393). Whatever phases the hero has passed through, and in spite of his firmness about Maud's appearance being only a dream, and his rejection of "that old hysterical mock-disease" (III, vi, 33), perhaps we are to understand that he is at the end substantially what he was at the beginning, except that his implied death will now have a purpose.
CHAPTER V

THREE LYRICS: "THE DAYS THAT ARE NO MORE"

The main aspect of Tennyson’s lyrical work, as I have already said, is its imaginative presentation of personal emotion. In a sense every lyric is a personal expression and arises from a personal fact. The important thing is to note that for the lyrical poet, as for what we may call the subjective type of artist in general, there is a genuine joy and relief in giving his deepest feelings formal expression. Many of the greatest lyrics, of whatever age or language, are due to this. A lyric, then, may be one means of attaining this end; and we can perceive how Tennyson, learning in his sorrow some of the laws of love, found relief in expressing them in lines, from In Memoriam, which are of universal significance for those undergoing similar experience:

I hold it true, whate’er befall;
I feel it, when I sorrow most;
’Tis better to have loved and lost
Than never to have loved at all.

(XXVII)

We have already seen how the experiences of his own life gave rise to such composition as In Memoriam and Maud. The same thing is true of the three representative of
Tennysonian lyrics, "Break, Break, Break," "Tears, Idle Tears," and "Crossing the Bar"—the first two of these centering in the poet's sorrow for the death of his friend Arthur Hallam. Those are what I consider the great lyrics of Tennyson and probably of English poetry. Moreover, they are also among "seven of his own best songs (of the deeper kind)" (Memoir, II, 377), and are perfect illustrations of what Matthew Arnold viewed as Tennyson's "distilled thoughts in distilled words" (205).

In lyric mood and subject matter, the three poems touch on the highly emotional and personal feelings which have a power to capture an ideal beauty. For Tennyson, beauty is the highest sublimation of tragic emotions such as sorrow, grief, death, and melancholy which are the most poetical effect. Tennyson's poetry, then, is an expression of the aesthetic of sorrow. In the analysis of the poems I will try to show how Tennyson's worship of sorrow leads to the worship of beauty.

It follows from the nature of the lyric that the powers of the lyric, especially a short lyric, may be said to be chiefly two: one which appears in the rhythmic and melodic form of the verse, making its kinship with musical expression, and the other which is concerned, more inwardly, with the imaginative development of personal feeling. I have considered, in dealing with the two long poems, *In Memoriam* and *Maud*, especially the latter aspect of the
lyric. Now I would like to look, from these two standpoints, at three short lyrics—"Break, Break, Break," "Tears, Idle Tears," and "Crossing the Bar." Indeed, beside the similarity of theme, there are resemblances in imagery and structure between these poems and some of the lyrics from In Memoriam. I do not exclude the consideration of the prosodic structure of the poems because, in dealing with the lyric, I think, the poetic technique should be carefully examined and explication may well begin with the prosody of the poems.

Break, break, break,

On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

For the most part, Tennyson's "Break, Break, Break" has been given rather shabby treatment by modern critics, most of whom comment on the poem as if it were a safe model for demonstrating poetic faults. Earl Daniels, for example, points out that Tennyson should have "let his images stand alone" in the poem without being ruined by the "prose commentary" (272) consisting of about half of the poem. Similarly, William Van O'Connor uses the poem as an example of "prose structure vitiating the poetic structure" (151).

Another kind of criticism is found in Cleanth Brooks (The Well Wrought Urn, 160-62), and in John Holloway (The Charted Mirror, 175-80). Both Brooks and Holloway are more concerned with a critical method than with "Break, Break, Break": Brooks with the method of analyzing paradox and irony, finding the poem deficient in both; Holloway with the limitations of that method because it limits literature to one kind and because it fails to tell the critic "where to stop" (178). There are, of course, favorable criticisms of the poem. A good, though brief, comment is made by Jerome Buckley (Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet, 83-84), and a good explication is given by Ryals (Theme and Symbol in Tennyson's Poems to 1850, 104-08).

In "Break, Break, Break," the prosody is extremely
interesting. Its most obvious feature is the pattern of the first line, which is repeated in the first line of the last stanza: "Break, break, break." One of its immediate effects is to establish the rhythm of the poem. This line forms a unit consisting of a three accented syllables with no unaccented syllables. Since no such feet as this exists because of the nature of the English language, we must find the unaccented syllables in the line. These may coincide with the pauses emphasized by punctuation marks so that the line forms iambic trimeter unit which obviously represents the movement of the waves.

Next we now notice that the subtle linking of pairs of stanzas is evident throughout the poem. The second and fourth lines of stanza two and the fourth line of stanza three are the only pure anapestic trimeters in the poem, and they serve to link these two stanzas together. Stanzas one and two are also linked together by the identical metrical pattern in lines four and seven. The strongest prosodic similarity exists between the first and last stanzas and because there are two intervening stanzas, this is where unifying devices are most needed. Not only is the first line identical with the first line of the last stanza, but the metrical pattern of the fourth line is identical in each stanza and the stanzas make use of the same rhyming words, "Sea"/ "me," the poem's only repetition of rhyme.

The mere sound of the poem, and the poignancy of its
anguish have such power to take our ear and heart captive, that we sometimes miss the beauty half concealed within it (In Memoriam, V). Few of Tennyson's poems are so spontaneous as this. It is more than a mere cry of despair; for in none does nature so eloquently express what words and even melody can only conceal. The poet describes his sorrow in a vivid picture. Before us lies the sea, powerless to tell its sobbing trouble to the shore, as wave after wave of utterance dies broken on the stones. On the shore the children are playing; out on the bay the sailor boy is singing in the happy activity of life; and the ships are sailing on to a "haven under the hill." In these pictures the poet expresses more eloquently than in any words the sense of desolation made even more desolate by contrast with joys it cannot share.

This pictorial representation of grief occurs frequently in In Memoriam. Indeed the emotion of "Break, Break, Break" may be discovered in many of the poems in In Memoriam, in one of which occurs the expression "a vanished eye" (VIII) and in another "a vanished life" (X), expressions that correspond to "a vanished hand" in "Break, Break, Break."

As the poet describes these scenes, he implies that there is a contrast between him and them. The point of the contrast in the first stanza is that the sea is able to do what the speaker feels he himself cannot do. The illusion
of similarity upon which this contrast depends for its effectiveness is achieved in several ways. First is the homonymic effect of "break" as it applies literally to the waves breaking on the stones and as it applies figuratively to the grieving heart. Here Tennyson brought us a renewed sense of the magical power of words. For the symbolists the power of the word goes far beyond ordinary function through what may be termed "phonetic symbol" of musicality and connotative sound relationships. Second, the poet animates the sea through the device of personification, thereby enhancing and making more concrete its symbolism of life itself. Third, the stones over which the sea breaks are described in words that have connotations of death: "cold gray stones."

This connotative meaning becomes fully effective when the relationship between the sea and the stones is seen as analogous to the relationship between the speaker and someone who is dead. The point of contrast in the first image is that the sea can utter its woe while the speaker can not. Otherwise the sea and the speaker are more alike than different. The waves "break" on the "cold gray stones" and the speaker "breaks" on the death of a loved one. The speaker envies the sea because he wants to indulge his grief in sound as he imagines the sea to be doing. The mood is one of bitter grief and desperation. Some early lines (IV) from In Memoriam reflect a similar mood.
Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
That grief hath shaken into frost!
The relationship between the sea and the speaker is reinforced by the word "arise," which is figuratively associated with the speaker’s thoughts, and is literally associated with the sound of the sea.

The association of the no longer beating heart of the dead man with the pulsating tide betrays the bitter grief at the beginning of the poem when, associating himself with the ocean, the speaker sees the waves as so many tongues uttering woe. The same association of the beating heart with the tide echoes in "The Danube," poem XIX of In Memoriam, where the images of motion and sound are imbedded in the phrase "heart that beat no more" and "hearing of the wave." In "Break, Break, Break," the speaker’s association of himself with the ocean leads to a softening of the grief through the inevitable contact with ongoing life; the circular structure of the poem supports that effect.

Through a similar identification of himself with the ocean, the speaker in this In Memoriam lyric comes to no progressive change of mood, but only to the awareness of a "deeper anguish" and an unfathomable sorrow. As in this lyric the speaker in "Break, Break, Break" can not utter those deep thoughts that arise in him.

Although images in the first stanza appeal to sight and touch, the emphasis is on the sound. In the second stanza,
however, the imagery of sound becomes slightly stronger, suggested by the shouting of the fisherman’s boy and his sister and by the singing of the sailor lad on the bay. This emphasis on sound helps to unify the first two stanzas:

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman’s boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

The second and third stanzas are closely related in imagery, just as are the first and second stanzas. The shouting of the fisherman’s boy and the singing of the sailor lad are used, when considered in the context of the first two stanzas as a unit, as contrasts with the condition of the speaker. This time they are also used, when considered in the context of the two middle stanzas, as contrasts with the dead man. This shift is emphasized by the fact that the shouting, singing, and "the sound of a voice that is still" each occurs in a line of anapestic trimeter, the only such lines in the poem:

O well for the fisherman’s boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

But the third stanza moves away from the second because the emphasis is now more delicately balanced between the speaker and the dead man, and between images involving sound, motion, and the sense of touch. The introduction of the dead man is now emphasized by its occurrence in the poem’s first use of the tetrameter; and the impression of motion, which was only hinted in the first stanza and only slightly more pronounced in the second, is now strongly emphasized in the first line of the third: "And the stately ships go on."

The ships are like the dead man who has gone on to vanish and find a haven under a hill; they are unlike him in that they are stately and moving. The ships are like the speaker in that they both "go on" and in that they both seek a needed contact; but while the ships will touch the shore, the speaker will never touch the "vanished hand" and will never hear "the sound of a voice that is still."

The fourth stanza, besides echoing all the connotations and images of the previous stanzas, fuses them together in the very same image with which the poem begins, coming full
circle. The transition to the "Break, break, break" of the last stanza is immediately suggested by the image of sound in the preceding line and by the emphasis on sound in the first use of "Break, break, break" at the beginning of the poem. Even more emphatic is the impression of motion in this last stanza:

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

The imagery of contact and motion has been progressively emphasized in each succeeding stanza, and now it incorporates images of sight and sound to provide the basis for the final contrast: the waves are relentlessly pursuing a never-ending contact with the stones, while the speaker's past contact with the dead man will never be experienced again. The poem ends where it began in order to emphasize a difference in the speaker's mood, a change from bitter grief to melancholy nostalgia.

This change in the speaker's attitude can best be explained in terms of the poem's gradual shift from emphasis on death to emphasis on the past--"a day that is dead," a phrase that is reminiscent of "the days that are no more" in "Tears, Idle Tears." At the end of the poem it is obvious that the speaker is assuming that it is natural for everything but the sea itself to come to an end, and it is
not so much the death of a dear friend as the loss of a relationship that is being deplored. The speaker himself is left with the "tender" remembrance of, not a dead man, but "a day that is dead." And more particularly, he is melancholy and nostalgic about a "tender grace" that is lost forever. The poem, then, beautifully objectifies the inevitable movement of grief into past, and is a profound observation on human nature and its relationship to life itself. As Jerome Buckley puts it, the poem is a clear indication of "how [Tennyson's] grief... could achieve beauty through the discipline of art" (Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet, 84). It is indeed a miniature In Memoriam and a poem of "the days that are no more" ("Tears, Idle Tears").

'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean,
Tears from the depth of some divine despair
Rise in the heart, and gather to the eyes,
In looking on the happy Autumn-fields,
And thinking of the days that are no more.

'Fresh as the first beam glittering on a sail,
That brings our friends up from the underworld,
Sad as the last which reddens over one
That sinks with all we love below the verge;
So sad, so fresh, the days that are no more.

'Ah, sad and strange as in dark summer dawns
The earliest pipe of half-awakened birds
To dying ears, when unto dying eyes
The casement slowly grows a glimmering square;
So sad, so strange, the days that are no more.

'Dear as remembered kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feigned
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more.'

Tennyson's "Tears, Idle Tears" is one of the five blank verse poems that appeared in the original edition of The Princess. Tennyson said, "few know that it is a blank-verse lyric" (Memoir, I, 253). It has been explained that the poet has achieved the effects of rhymes through the open quality of sounds at the end of the lines, the refrain at the end of the stanzas, the use of end-stopped lines, and the arrangement of sound patterns (Killham, 187-88). If this poem has sometimes not been recognized as blank verse, perhaps it is because the real movement of the verse is an interplay of rhythms or time schemes, which form a pattern that almost obliterates the basic iambic pentameter line of blank verse.

The subject of the poem is suggested by Tennyson's remark that "the passion of the past, the abiding in the transient, was expressed in 'Tears,' which was written in
the yellowing autumn-tide at Tintern Abbey, full for me of its bygone memories" (Memoir, I, 253). If the author's view of his poem is worth considering in ordinary circumstances, Tennyson's remark regarding "Tears, Idle Tears" is all the more important because of the considerable disagreement in modern interpretations of the poem. Recent criticism of the poem may be said to begin with Cleanth Brooks. He interprets the poem according to its use of irony and paradox. Nelson Hilton develops a rich amalgam of Brooksian ambiguity, echoes, and abnormal psychology wherein to argue that the death of Hallam occasioned the Tennysonian "despair that is the source of the poem" (229). Fred H. Stocking (The Explicator 5 (1947), item 54), however, argues that irony and paradox are not essential features of the poem. Graham Hough seeks to "put the poem together again" after "it has been skillfully dissected" (Killham, 186) by Cleanth Brooks. Leo Spitzer disagrees with Graham Hough and interprets "divine despair" as "the despair of some God," "the God of 'Death-in-Life'" (Ibid, 192). Jerome Buckley feels that the poem "communicates... a deep sense of... the ultimate oxymoron of the universal 'Death in Life'" (Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet, 106).

Critics have pointed out that Tintern Abbey, with its "bygone memories," had its influence on the poet and on the poem. Jerome Buckley thinks "'Tears, Idle Tears' may have been inspired in part by Wordsworth's great meditation on
the role of memory" (Ibid, 105). However, only little consideration has been given to the words "passion of the past, the abiding in the transient," Tennyson's description of what the poem expresses. Because of the obvious ambiguity of "of," which may indicate agency or possession, it seems difficult to determine just what Tennyson meant by "the passion of the past, the abiding in the transient." It seems to me that whatever the possible meanings are, they are ultimately reducible to one statement. My interpretation is that past feelings remain or abide permanently while the events associated with them are past or passing; in other words, passion concerning the past events is always present in the sense that it can be recalled and so relived, while the events themselves are always past or passing, and can never happen again.

This analysis of Tennyson's statement suggests at least that "idle" of the first line of the poem characterizes what kind of tears they are and why the speaker is weeping. The word "idle" indicates his desperate situation: he is much too indulged in bitter grief to know why he is crying. In this sense I take "idle" to mean "desperate" or "hopeless." In fact, the speaker in the poem does not say whether the tears are meaningless or meaningful. He just says that he does not know "what they mean." This statement suggests by implication that they mean something. Therefore, the speaker seems to be saying that these "idle tears" are a
different kind of tears which "rise in the heart," not such practical tears as are shed in ordinary circumstances.

This meaning of "idle tears" is reinforced by the second line as it turns to the cause of the tears. They come "from the depth of some divine despair"; that is, they are the result of a certain kind of "despair" or absence of hope. The tears are ostensibly meaningful and significant because they are motivated by despair that is "divine" and beyond human control and that is somehow associated with "the days that are no more." In short, the poem may be said to begin with the observation that is expressed in a kind of proverb like "what is past is past." Indeed, Ida herself expresses some such sentiment when the song is ended: "let old bygones be," she says, and "let the past be past" (The Princess, IV, 51, 58).

The rest of the poem explains through analogies the speaker's feelings about "the days that are no more." His remembrance of "the days that are no more" is "fresh" as the first sight of a ship that is bringing our friends to us and as "sad" as the last sight of one that is bearing those we love away from us. The feeling, then, is a combination of freshness and sadness; but it is also a combination of sadness and strangeness, as might be the feeling of a dying man as he sees the growing light and hears the first singing of birds in the morning while his sight and hearing are failing.
Finally, the memories are "Dear" as the remembered kisses after the beloved has died, and "sweet" as imagined kisses when the loved one belongs to someone else, and "deep" and "wild with all regret" as is the inimitable first love that has been lost forever. The poem ends with a paradoxical statement that these past memories are a kind of "Death in Life," a being dead and alive at the same time.

Dear as remember'd kisses after death,
And sweet as those by hopeless fancy feign'd
On lips that are for others; deep as love,
Deep as first love, and wild with all regret;
O Death in Life, the days that are no more!

Since the past is equated with death and the present with life, to think about the past, then, is to die and to live at one and the same time; that is, it is to have an experience both in the past and in the present.

Douglas Bush says that Tennyson was like Virgil, as Eliot had pointed out (189), and thus prone to "a cry of profound sadness and bewilderment" over the "workings of Universal Mind" (227). It is this bewilderment, says Bush, that is played out in "Tears, Idle Tears" as "a series of inspired variations" (228) on four lines from Virgil's Aeneid, which thus supply the title to Tennyson's poem. It came "from the center of Tennyson's own soul" (Ibid). "As a lord of human soul" ("The Dead Prophet") Tennyson will be remembered, not for his plain style, but for his celebrated
refinement and artifice, for the grandeurs of requiem in his greatest poems.

"Crossing the Bar" dramatizes Tennyson's life-long preoccupation with death. The poem is something more than a statement, however metaphorical, concerning life, death, and immortality. It is an objectification of a psychological experience, an attitude towards death. It should be considered not only in its literal and figurative meanings, but also in its connotations and its imagery. But the imagery is clearly understood in relation to the logical structure of the poem, perhaps the poem's most striking feature. And the principle underlying the structure is repetition. The poem is divided into two parts: the ideas of the first half of the poem are repeated in the corresponding lines of the second half.

This structure is reinforced by the metrical pattern. This two-fold division is made more emphatic by the position of the only inverted feet in the poem, one at the beginning of each half, and one at the beginning of the last line of the second stanza. Alternating lines in each stanza are confirmed by their exclusive rhymes, except that the first rhyme in the first stanza is the same as the second in the last ("star," "bar," and "far," "bar"). This exception is important because it emphasizes the repetition of the bar image which gives its name to the poem.

The prosodic arrangement, then, combines with the
logical structure to produce a well-rounded whole that balances the first half of the poem with its second. The general effect of this structure is that the second half of the poem is superimposed on the first half, or that the last eight lines grow out of the corresponding first eight lines. For example, it seems clear that the poet has used rhythm, logic, and grammar to force the reader to hear the first line of the third stanza against the background of the first line of the poem. And when the repetition of the imagery at this point is considered, the sense of beginning is so powerful that its momentum alone would seem to be enough to sustain the impression of repetition throughout the rest of the poem. The imagery then should be considered in the light of this general structure, and more particularly, each image should be considered in its relationship with its corresponding image in the other half of the poem.

The imagery of the first two stanzas is clear: the traveler hopes that his crossing of the bar will be quiet and peaceful, that the tide will be high enough so that the water will make no noise as it passes over the bar. The image of the traveler and that of the tide are fused in that the last two lines of the second stanza may apply equally to each:

When that which drew from out the boundless deep

   Turns again home.

The antecedent of the relative pronoun "that" is ambiguous,
allowing Tennyson to make a double implied comparison of the soul with the traveler and with the tide. The metaphorical meaning in each case is the same: through death the soul returns whence it came.

The reader, then, comes to the third stanza with the impressions that death is imminent. "Sunset" in the first stanza becomes "Twilight" in the third, and "evening star" (Hesper) becomes "evening bell." In general, each of these terms is a symbol for death. "Sunset and evening star" recalls the lines of poem CXXI of In Memoriam.

Sad Hesper o’er the buried sun
And ready, thou, to die with him,
Thou watchest all things ever dim
And dimmer, and a glory done:

The team is loosened from the wain,
The boat is drawn upon the shore;
Thou listenest to the closing door,
And life is darkened in the brain.

Bright Phosphor, fresher for the night,
By thee the world’s great work is heard
Beginning, and the wakeful bird;
Behind thee comes the greater light:

The market boat is on the stream,
And voices hail it from the brink;
Thou hear'st the village hammer clink,
And see'st the moving of the team.

In their opening lines "Crossing the Bar" and poem CXXI refer to "evening star" and "Hesper" respectively. A reading of these two poems together deepens an appreciation of their themes. The theme of "The Crossing the Bar" is the hope for and the faith in immortal life in the face of the seeming annihilation of death; in "Sad Hesper" the theme is summed up in the final stanza--the idea of personal immutability and integrity in the face of the obvious change from the past to the present:

Sweet Hesper--Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

In both poems the basic pattern of symmetry is the same: in each poem the first two stanzas are parallel in their logical development with the next two. "Crossing the Bar" has nearly perfect parallelism of metaphorical meaning reflected line by line. Thus, line one is parallel with line nine; line two with line ten, and so throughout the poem. The second half of the poem deliberately retraces and deepens the metaphorical implications of the first half.

There are universal symbols for death in the first and third stanzas. Here the reader should be more impressed
with the repetition of the sense of impending death rather
than with some logical progression of time from the first
line to the ninth. So the sense of imminent death,
established by the illusion of movement from "Sunset" to
"evening star," is repeated and emphasized by the seeming
movement from "Twilight" to "evening bell." And the
emphasis is achieved through modification as well as through
repetition:

   Sunset and evening star,
   And one clear call for me!

   Twilight and evening bell,
   And after that the dark!

"Twilight and evening bell" is even more suggestive of death
than "Sunset and evening star." There is the illusion of a
closer approach of the time of death corresponding to the
movement from sunset to twilight. As in the previous
repetition, the next image "the dark" makes use of a more
obviously universal symbol for death than does its
 correponding image in the first stanza "one clear call."

The next pair of images again emphasizes the figurative
meaning of death, but this time death as the transition from
mortality to immortality:

   When that which drew from out the boundless deep
   Turns again home.

   . . . . . . . . . .
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.

Tennyson’s use of the pilot image has perplexed the thoughtful readers. Nicolson, for example, after explaining that the poem was instrumental in convincing him that Tennyson was a great poet (15), cites the pilot image as an example of the "failure of Tennyson’s visual imagination, which leads to some startling incongruity" (239). The interpretation of the "Pilot" depends on whether we take it literally or figuratively. If we take it literally, the pilot would mean a person who is responsible as a guide for the safety of the passenger until the bar is crossed. But I take it figuratively to mean God. This is also what Tennyson meant when he "explained the ‘Pilot’ as ‘That Divine and Unseen Who is always guiding us’" (Memoir, II, 367). And a close look at the last two lines of the poem shows that Tennyson does not say that he hopes to see his "Pilot" when he has crossed the bar, but rather that he hopes to see more intently or in some new relationship ("face to face") the power of God as divine guidance. And what "Pilot face to face" does for the corresponding image is to make more emphatic the figurative meaning of "home" and "boundless deep," Tennyson’s symbol for eternity. Death is merely "that which drew from out the boundless deep," turning home again. Hence Tennyson’s faith in immortality. The tone of "Crossing the Bar" is, as Kincaid observes, not
one of "frustration-doubt" or "depression and gloom" (Victorian Poetry, 57, 61), but of calm, peaceful faith.

Tennyson's hallucinatory description of sea, his employment of symbols to communicate concentrated feeling, and the ultimate evocation of impressive form and meaning combine to make the poem a masterpiece of symbolism. As we have seen, Tennyson was obsessed with an ideal beauty in his poetry. He symbolizes it in many forms— In Memoriam; in the spirit of pure love in Maud; in the aesthetic of sorrow in "Break, Break, Break" and "Tears, Idle Tears." Tennyson's memorable depiction of the struggle in man between faith and doubt, his mysticism, his indulgence in the cult of beauty, a taint of sadness in his poetry, and his extensive use of symbols, and his theory on the art and artist all combine to make him the most significant influence upon the symbolist movement.

Tennyson has fought his own doubts and the doubts of his age for more than half a century. He has gained the victory over personal doubt and has done tremendous job in defence of the faith. This is manifest in In Memoriam and in this beautiful lyric, "Crossing the Bar," embodying a more beautiful faith. Tennyson's request that the poem be placed at the end of all collected editions of his poetry is a clear indication of the significance he gave to the poem, and has allowed readers to regard it as an ultimate poetic statement. As Pee says, "Crossing the Bar" is a "terse, but
powerful poem. It is the greatest swan song of Tennyson" (265, my translation). In any event it is a splendid and characteristic Tennysonian lyric.

Sunset and evening star,
And one clear call for me!
And may there be no moaning of the bar,
When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
Too full for sound and foam,
When that which drew from out the boundless deep
Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
And after that the dark!
And may there be no sadness of farewell,
When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
The flood may bear me far,
I hope to see my Pilot face to face
When I have crost the bar.
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