

SIGNIFICANT IMAGES IN TENNYSON'S MAUD

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**IN**

**TENNYSON'S MAUD**

**By**

**JANICE AKEMI OKURA, B.A.(Hons), B.Ed.**

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AUTHOR: Janice Akemi Okura, B.A.(Hons) (McMaster University)

B.Ed. (University of Toronto)

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## ABSTRACT

Tennyson's *Maud* has inspired critical controversy since its initial publication in 1855. Objections to the poem have centered on its political sentiments and on the obscure quality of some of its lyrics. *Maud's* ending, in particular, has been problematic for readers confused when the supposedly morally uplifted speaker sails off to participate in the Crimean War. Other readers have recognized the speaker's inherent psychological defects conveyed through the poem's highly emotional nature. This imagistic study examines how image patterns appearing in the poem symbolically reinforce the different phases of passion in one person, which Tennyson had said replaced "characters" in the dramatic action. Significant patterns include images of light and dark, and images of head, hand and heart. The patterns indicate that the speaker has not recovered fully at the poem's end. *Maud's* organic life, its self-contained unity, emerges through the simultaneous movement of images within the speaker's psyche. By systematically identifying imagistic parallels with the speaker's psychological development, some light is shed on *Maud's* complexity and on Tennyson's artistry.

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CHAPTER 1  
INTRODUCTION

The Victorian reading public had eagerly anticipated Alfred Tennyson's 1855 volume *Maud, and Other Poems*. It was his first collection of work since his appointment as Poet Laureate and the publication of his highly successful *In Memoriam*. *In Memoriam* had established Tennyson's reputation as a popular poet: "From the moment of its publication, it was greeted with an almost unanimous chorus of approval by the critical press."<sup>1</sup> The poem had sold at a phenomenal rate<sup>2</sup>, necessitating three editions in less than a year following its publication.

*In Memoriam's* elevated inward concerns, its humanity and its treatment of current problems appealed to an age steeped in religious doubt. Scientific progress and extensive industrialization had disturbed deep-rooted spiritual beliefs. *In Memoriam* had provided spiritual solace similar to that of the great epics of Dante and Milton. George Henry Lewes, in *The Leader*, judged *In Memoriam* superior to Milton's *Lycidas* and called Tennyson the "greatest living poet". His enthusiastic praise reflected the spiritual impact made by the poem:

We shall be surprised if it does not become the solace and delight of every house where poetry is loved. A true and hopeful spirit breathes from its pages. . . . All who have sorrowed will listen with delight to the chastened strains here poured forth in *In Memoriam*.<sup>3</sup>

Coventry Patmore, writing in *The Palladium*, also lauded *In Memoriam*, calling it "the best religious poetry that has ever been written in our language." He praised *In Memoriam's* "splendour of language and imagination, depth and classification of thought and feeling, perfection of form, and completeness in every way."<sup>4</sup> *The Examiner*, *The Athenaeum*, *The Spectator* and other weeklies printed favourable reviews of the poem. The critical disapproval of a handful of readers<sup>5</sup> did little to change the reputation Tennyson had secured by 1850.

*Maud* was a distinct departure from *In Memoriam*, stylistically and aesthetically. Lacking the tempered tone and form of *In Memoriam*, *Maud* displayed an unusual poetics foreign to Tennyson's readers. The emotionally charged, loosely connected lyrics and the highly subjective nature of the poem obscured the plot. Tennyson had called *In Memoriam* "The Way of the Soul" and *Maud* a "Drama of the Soul" which prompted Lowell to suggest that the latter poem was, in fact, "the antiphonal voice to *In Memoriam*".<sup>6</sup>

It is interesting to note the thematic parallels between the two poems, despite the different methods of treatment. Tennyson deals with death (of a loved one) and spiritual recovery through love in an intensely personal



manner. In both poems, there is an emotional progression from doubt and despair to hope and affirmation. *Maud*, though, follows the hero's inward condition whereas *In Memoriam*, while maintaining a strong first person focus, appeals to a sense of spiritual universality. The speaker of *Maud* oscillates between self-absorbed introspection and unrestrained ranting. *In Memoriam's* narrative is restrained -- emotionally and structurally. *Maud's* speaker undergoes unpredictable mood swings, shifting between a morbid, suicidal paranoia, a passionately awakening love for Maud, and a deep-seated neurotic madness.

*Maud* is clearly a different type of poem than *In Memoriam*. Tennyson had held high hopes for its reception, so he was understandably disappointed by the public bewilderment and the critical disapproval the poem engendered.<sup>7</sup> The obscurity of the lyrics and the poem's strong political overtones contributed to the "almost universal reprobation"<sup>8</sup> with which *Maud* was received. One of *Maud's* earliest defenders, Robert J. Mann, succinctly summarized the contemporary hostile criticism:

One member of the fraternity of critics immediately pronounced the poem to be a 'spasm', another acutely discovered that it was a 'careless, visionary, and unreal allegory of the Russian War.' A third could not quite make up his mind whether the adjective 'mud' or 'mad' would best apply to the work, but thought as there was only one small vowel redundant in the case of either, both might do. A fourth found that the 'mud' concealed 'irony'; and the fifth, leaning rather to the mad hypothesis, nevertheless held that the madness was only assumed as an excuse for pitching the tone of the poem in 'a key

of extravagant sensibility'. Others of the multi-fold judgements were of the opinion that it was 'a political fever', an 'epidemic caught from the prevalent carelessness of thought and rambling contemplativeness of the time', 'obscurity mistaken for profundity', 'the dead level of prose run mad', 'absurdity such as even partial friendship must blush to tolerate', 'rampant and rabid blood thirstiness of soul.'

Dr. Mann wrote his pamphlet *Maud Vindicated* in objection to the critical reaction which began immediately after *Maud's* publication in July 1855. It appears that the Victorian critical climate was unready and averse to accept Tennyson's experimental poem. Isobel Armstrong identifies a nineteenth-century unwillingness to view a work as an "autonomous dramatic entity". She writes:

There is an imperial refusal in Victorian literature to regard the poem as a self-contained, sealed-off entity in which moral and social questions external to it do not impinge. . . . Exclusively 'literary' criticism did not exist.<sup>10</sup>

The Victorian reader expected a message of social / moral significance from the artist. The nineteenth-century poet functioned as an objective conveyer of larger truths; his was a public, not a private conscience. Tennyson was caught in a dilemma between a didactic moral aesthetic and his psychological, artistic vision. Harold Nicolson was one of the first modern critics to identify such a polarity in the poet's work: a conflict between the emotional poet and the didactic laureate.<sup>11</sup>

The excessive emotionalism of *Maud* recalled the Romantic emphasis on sensation and pure emotion which Victo-

rians had largely rejected.<sup>12</sup> *Maud's* intensely inward focus and exorbitant self-dramatization also reflected the poetic aims of a school of poetry from the early 1850's -- the "Spasmodics". They attempted to achieve psychological realism through, for example, the portrayal of social discontents. The Tennysons were friends with Sydney Dobell, a prominent Spasmodic, whose work may have influenced the writing of *Maud*.<sup>13</sup> That the Spasmodics were a passing literary convention, though, emphasizes where Victorian literary taste lay and why *Maud*, even though it tempered Spasmodic excess, may have caused such critical reaction.

Critics such as Matthew Arnold cautioned against the "evils of jingoism" unrestrained by the practice of Christian virtues. Such carelessness, he said, would lead to the "moral rot" of Liberal England.<sup>14</sup> Tennyson's treatment of love and war in *Maud* appears to condone what thinkers such as Arnold warned against. Goldwin Smith, for one, condemned what he perceived as Tennyson's war-mongering in *Maud*. He ridiculed the poet's ideal of self-sacrifice for a good and necessary cause: "A passionate cry for a just war . . . -- in Mr. Tennyson it seems a little like the foam without the wave."<sup>15</sup> Perhaps the strongest anti-*Maud* statement came in the form of a parody written by W.C. Bennett in 1855, attacking Tennyson as an "armchair warmonger".<sup>16</sup> Edgar Shannon, though, reasonably suggests that the majority of *Maud's*

critics approved of Tennyson's endorsement of the Crimean War but objected to the "false logic" of his case for war.<sup>17</sup>

Tennyson, as mentioned earlier, suffered on account of the negative reviews of *Maud*. He was disappointed that the public and the press "misunderstood" the poem:

The mistake people make is that they think the poet's poems are a kind of 'catalogue raisonné' of his own very self, and of all the facts of his life, not seeing that they often only express a poetic instinct, or judgement on character, real or imagined.<sup>18</sup>

Tennyson began to revise *Maud* within a month of its publication.<sup>19</sup> He wished to overcome difficulties with the poem's obscurity and to clarify the ambivalent nature of its highly subjective narration. Susan Shatto suggests that Tennyson was aware of the poem's defects during composition:

Two of the principle objects of the reviewer's censure, the obscurity of the plot and the occasional strident tones of the narrator, were what Tennyson himself had identified as weaknesses during the course of composition and had, accordingly, revised. Clearly, he did not revise them enough before the poem was published to please the reviewers. But in responding to their criticisms he was merely reduplicating his own responses to his self-criticism.<sup>20</sup>

The second edition of *Maud, and Other Poems*, published in 1856, contained two new lyrics and various additional stanzas. The "Courage, poor heart of stone" canto (II,iii) which was written in August 1855 to replace the "vitriolic section", explains Maud's death. Details of Maud's betrothal to the speaker upon her mother's deathbed is provided in I,xix (the "Her brother is coming back

tonight" section). By the autumn of 1855, Tennyson had written six stanzas explicating the plot and the speaker's mental condition. In stanzas 14-16 in I,i, the speaker acknowledges the distortions of his exaggerated views.<sup>21</sup> The satirical attack on the peace party was softened by the addition of I,x,4,6. The final stanza added at the end of the poem attempts to clarify the poem's war sentiments. These revisions, while addressing some of the key objections made by *Maud's* critics, more importantly enhance the dramatic development of the poem. Other changes made by Tennyson improved *Maud's* organization by providing a clearer "structure" for the different phases of psychological progress. Tennyson divided *Maud* into two parts for the 1859 edition. By 1865, the "mad phase" was clearly delineated through the poem's division into three parts. In 1875, the term "a monodrama" was added to the title.

The contradictory criticism may have increased interest in *Maud*, since sales of the *Maud, and Other Poems* volume went well even before the revisions were published. By October 1855, more than 8,000 copies had been sold.<sup>22</sup> *Maud's* popularity grew steadily and it appeared to have recovered from the hostile criticism.<sup>23</sup> Dr. Mann's essay remained one of Tennyson's favourite interpretations of *Maud*. Its ideas came from Mann's conversations with Tennyson and from listening to Tennyson's comments while reading

it aloud.<sup>24</sup> The essay reads in part as an illuminating analysis of the poem:

*Maud* is a drama; -- that is an action; . . . The *dramatis persona* of the action, . . . -- 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 particularity of 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. . . . Every utterance, whether it be of sentiment, passion, or reflection, is an impulsive outburst; but it is an outburst that involuntarily clothes itself in language of the most appropriate character and power. . . . The power of language to symbolize in sound mental states and perceptions, has never before been so magically proved . . . in its general form of severe dramatic uni-personality, the poem itself is absolutely unique.<sup>25</sup>

After reading *Maud Vindicated*, Tennyson wrote a letter of thanks to Mann, stating that "no one with this essay before him can in future pretend to misunderstand . . . *Maud*." He calls the commentary "as true as it is full".<sup>26</sup>

Mann's essay on *Maud* attempted to explain the poem's action in terms of the *dramatis persona's* mental condition. He praised Tennyson's artistry in marrying language with the emotions of the speaker. George Brimley, in an 1855 volume of Cambridge essays, also discussed *Maud* from the speaker's viewpoint. Like Mann, Brimley praised the inward focus of the poem, suggesting that its events determine the

speakers's capacity for madness -- the emotive potential which is the central focus of *Maud*:

There lies in such a character, from the beginning, the capacity for weakness and misery, for crime and madness. That capacity is inseparable from keen sensibility, powerful emotions, and active imagination.<sup>27</sup>

Another useful reading is provided by Henry Van Dyke, who reconsidered *Maud* in 1892, after hearing Tennyson read it aloud:

You must remember always in reading it, what it is meant to be, -- a lyrical drama. It shows the unfolding of a lonely, morbid soul, touched with inherited madness, under the influence of a pure and passionate love. Each lyric is meant to express a new moment in this process. The things which seem like faults belong not so much to the poem as to the character of the hero. . . .<sup>28</sup>

It is a fact established by Tennyson scholarship that *Maud* was one of his favourite poems, the one that he most loved to read aloud.<sup>29</sup> Numerous friends and acquaintances recalled the powerful impact and evocative emotional effect Tennyson's reading produced.<sup>30</sup> *Maud* had been born from a lyric written in 1833, possibly inspired by the traumatic death of Tennyson's beloved friend Arthur Hallam.<sup>31</sup> The lyric had appeared in *The Tribute* (1837) but had not been included in the 1842 edition of Tennyson's *Poems*. Tennyson's writing of *Maud* was a passionate undertaking in an experimental vein. His concern was that the readers understand the poem's complexity and inherent meaning. Hallam Tennyson recorded his father's explication of the poem:

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 egoist 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 unselfishness born of his great passion.<sup>32</sup>

Tennyson's comments establish *Maud's* central concern as the emotional progression of the speaker. The explication, though, does not clarify the ambivalence of the speaker's views after he is exposed to Maud's ennobling love.

Tennyson's comments in the *Memoir* suggest that the speaker's passion is pure and heroic at the conclusion of *Maud*. But the nature of the passion and the speaker's perception of reality confuse the moral issue of his volunteering for the Crimean War. The key to approaching *Maud's* emotional complexity is provided by Tennyson: "The peculiarity of this poem . . . is that different phases of passion take the place of different characters."<sup>33</sup>

Some readers of *Maud* have speculated about the poet's personal involvement in the poem -- particularly about the dualistic nature of the speaker's passion for love and war. Tennyson's choice of the Crimean War as the "noble cause" to which the speaker dedicates his life obviously derived from the Tennysons' keen interest in following the war.<sup>34</sup> Sir Charles Tennyson reports that his grandfather was



concerned with the 'war fever' sweeping England in 1854 which culminated in the enthusiasm for the battles of Alma, Balaklava, and Inkerman."<sup>35</sup> England's entry into the Crimean War in March 1854 had intensified national feeling. Optimism surrounding England's war effort crumbled within a year as reports of the soldiers' poor living conditions, the unnecessarily high loss of life, and poor organization of the forces, indicated that England had fared poorly in the Crimea. The war activated jingoistic sentiments and refocused the frequent utilitarianism of mid-Victorian thought upon the "generous humanitarian impulses" encouraged by a strongly religious moral conscience.<sup>36</sup> Tennyson's concerns with England's social and moral conscience were inspired by his friendship with F.D. Maurice and Charles Kingsley, leaders of the 'Christian Socialism' movement and authors of the series begun in 1854 called *Tracts for Priests and People*. The tracts directed religious fervour towards social and material improvement with the intent of stirring the public conscience.<sup>37</sup> J.B. Steane attributes both Tennyson's "hatred of commercialism" and his belief that the "peace of civilization" was a fraud to his friendship with Kingsley. Steane observed that *Maud* resembles Kingsley's *Alton Locke*, an 1850 publication addressing social problems through the narration of an embittered lover.<sup>38</sup> To apply Tennyson's social and political beliefs to an interpretation of *Maud* detracts from the unity achieved through the speaker's emotional progress.

While elements of Tennyson's conscience appear to surface in the poem, the primary intent of the poem, as mentioned earlier, is to show phases of the speaker's passion.

Ralph W. Rader, in his fascinating study *Tennyson's Maud: The Biographical Genesis*, convincingly demonstrates the poem's autobiographical elements. He sees the figure of Maud, for instance, as embodying Tennyson's three love interests: Rosa Baring, Sophy Rawnsley, and Emily Sellwood.<sup>38</sup> The emotional oscillation the speaker undergoes between "the two poles of passional and ethical attachment" he explains as an imitation of Tennyson's own relationships finally coming to rest at the ethical in his marriage to Emily Sellwood.<sup>40</sup> Rader views Part III's problematic war issue as a sublimation of the poet's own "unresolved inner conflicts". He notes that the beginning of the Crimean War, coupled with Tennyson's son Lionel's birth, put the poet in an "extraordinary emotional situation".<sup>41</sup> Rader's analysis of *Maud*, however interesting, is a narrowing approach to the poem's dramatic nature. The inherent organic life of the poem -- the speaker's psyche interacting with Maud and reworking reality -- works on a more complex level than a merely biographical interpretation allows.

A more profitable approach might be to view the poem as a study of a *dramatis persona* as R.J. Mann called the speaker. Independent of the "real" world of social and political issues, *Maud* becomes a diary-like account of one

man's experience with his own extreme emotions, paranoia, passion, and madness. The experimental nature of *Maud*, with its irregular stanzas and rhyme, complements the speaker's irrational mood swings. These and other literary devices mirror the speaker's psychological progress, bringing unity to the poem and linking sections of thought together.

Many readers have noticed how clusters of poetic images unify the poem by symbolically representing aspects of the speaker's psychological development. John Killham has effectively shown that imagery deepens and assists *Maud's* dramatic movement. Tennyson reveals the speaker's obsessive state of mind through the clusters of images so that the "historical and psychological aspects of the action have to be related to the work considered both drama and a series of lyrics."<sup>42</sup>

A.S. Byatt perceives *Maud* as a portrayal of "a search for identity below individuality"<sup>43</sup> and shows how groups of images are completely woven into the poem to add continuity to the narration. She observes that with each phase of passion, images recur in a more elaborate form.

Floral and stone imagery are perhaps the most obvious groups of images in *Maud*. E.D.H. Johnson, in his well-known essay on Tennyson's symbolic use of flowers, shows how the lily and the rose emerge as consistent images which reflect the speaker's changing feelings.<sup>44</sup> The lily represents purity, innocence, and spiritual love. The red rose

represents sensual, sexual love and the speaker's excessive passion. Gradually, the lily sinks and the rose dominates. Johnson concludes his discussion by justifying his attention to the imagery of *Maud*:

The 'question' may now be proposed whether, indeed, *Maud* does not become fully meaningful only when examined in terms of its symbolic content. Certainly it would seem that the symbols . . . have an implicit vitality, springing, to be sure, from the narrative, but transcending their origin and attaining a validly dramatic life of their own.<sup>45</sup>

J.L. Kendall explicates *Maud* in terms of its use of gem imagery.<sup>46</sup> He cites this image cluster as providing a clue to understanding the speaker's ambivalent nature. The speaker's ruin arises from the depth of his shifting perspective on his surroundings. Gem imagery, according to Kendall, best reflects the speaker's conscious remaking of his view of love and the world. Together with the floral imagery, the gem imagery mirrors the speaker's oscillations between a love of life and his death wish, his self-inflicted alienation and his desire to reach out to others. Gems are associated with both Maud and her brother -- a paradoxical yoking of meaning; the former is the object of the speaker's love, the latter, an object of his hatred.

Although the floral and gem images are arguably the principle image patterns in *Maud*, other groups of images function in a similar dramatic fashion. This study examines how light and dark imagery symbolically illuminates the speaker's changing mental condition. Positive, negative and

ambivalent aspects of the images parallel emotional states of the poem's speaker. Another strand of imagery -- the cluster comprised of the hand, heart and head, reinforces the speaker's internal development by clarifying his psychological response to external conditions -- particularly to Maud, to her father and brother, and to society. The symbolic transformation each element in the cluster undergoes reflects the speaker's continuously reworked perspective on reality. The image patterns give unity to *Maud* by enhancing the development of the speaker's psychological unravelling. Meaning is ascertained through what the speaker says in the context of his essentially unbalanced nature. Physical reality in *Maud* is, at most, a fragmented picture seen through the speaker's distorted vision. The continuum provided by the image patterns also leads to a reasonable resolution of *Maud's* problematic ending, as will be discussed in the final chapter of this study.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 1

1. T.R. Lounsbury, The Life and Times of Alfred Tennyson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1915), p. 620.
2. E.F. Shannon, Tennyson and the Reviewers (Harvard: Archon Books, 1967), p. 146. 5000 copies of the first edition were quickly sold.
3. Ibid., p. 142.
4. Ibid., p. 149.
5. Ibid., p. 156. A critique of In Memoriam appeared in the Nov. 28, 1851 issue of The Times, the reviewer possibly being Manley Hopkins. He found 3 major defects in the poem: "the enormous exaggeration of the grief", the tone of "amatory tenderness", and "obscurity". See p. 148 for other negative reviews.
6. H. Tennyson, Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Memoir (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897), p. 331.
7. I. Armstrong, Victorian Scrutinies: Reviews of Poetry 1830-1870 (London: Athlone Press, 1972), p. 6.
8. C. Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson (London: Macmillan Company, 1950), p. 286. He points out that this is an extreme view since there were also favourable responses, notably among Tennyson's friends.
9. H. Tennyson, op. cit., p. 400. See E.F. Shannon, "The Critical Reception of Tennyson's Maud", PMLA LXVIII (1953), 397-417. The Appendix to this article provides a list of reviews and articles on Maud, and Other Poems printed in the British Isles, 1855-1859.
10. Armstrong, op. cit., p. 4.
11. H. Nicolson, Tennyson: Aspects of his Life, Character and Poetry (London: Constable and Co., 1923). He distinguishes between two Tennysons: the poet and the bard. He concludes that the "essential Tennyson" is a "morbid and unhappy mystic" (p. 27). E.D.H. Johnson in The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry (Hamden: Archon Books, 1963) also detected the dual nature of Tennyson.

12. J.H. Buckley, The Victorian Temper (New York: Vintage Books, 1964), p. 20. The Victorian public upheld a belief that "pure emotion" should not be exalted "at the expense of practical reason".

13. J.O. Hoge, ed., Lady Tennyson's Journal (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1981), p. 27. Emily Tennyson wrote "We see Mr. Dobell from time to time." Maud is said to resemble Dobell's Balder (1853), which Tennyson often praised (P.F. Baum, Tennyson: Sixty Years After [Hamden: Archon Books, 1963], pp. 309-310). He discusses Balder as a possible literary source for Maud.

14. D. Thomson, England in the Nineteenth Century: 1815-1914 (Harmondsworth: Penguin Books, 1951), p. 229.

15. G. Smith in J.D. Jump, ed. Tennyson: The Critical Heritage (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 190.

16. C. Tennyson, op. cit., p. 286.

17. E.F. Shannon, "The Critical Reception of Tennyson's Maud", PMLA LXVIII (1953), pp. 402-403.

18. H. Tennyson, op. cit., p. 339.

19. S. Shatto, ed., Tennyson's "Maud": A Definitive Edition (London: Athlone Press, 1986), p. 27.

20. Ibid., p. 28.

21. Shannon, op. cit., p. 409. He suggests that this is evidence for Tennyson trying to clear himself of responsibility for the speaker's views on such issues as the evils of Mammonism and the exaltation of war.

22. Ibid., p. 406 n. 45.

23. C. Tennyson, op. cit., p.293.

24. Both A.D. Culler, The Poetry of Tennyson (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1977), and Shatto, op. cit., suggest the source of Mann's essay as being Tennyson himself.

25. R.J. Mann in A.D. Culler, Ibid., pp. 201-202.

26. H. Tennyson, op. cit., p. 342.

27. G. Brimley in J.D. Jump, ed. op. cit., p. 193.

28. H. Van Dyke, The Poetry of Tennyson (New York: Charles Scribner's Sons, 1904), p. 123. W.E. Gladstone also reconsidered Maud following his unfavourable 1859 article in The Quarterly Review. See Memoir, pp. 336-337.

29. H. Tennyson, op. cit., p. 344 and R. Rader's Tennyson's "Maud": The Biographical Genesis (Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1963), pp. 1-2.

30. For example, see N. Page, ed. Tennyson: Interviews and Recollections (London: The Macmillan Press, Ltd., 1983).

31. G.O. Marshall has written an article connecting In Memoriam and Maud through the "Oh! that 'twere possible" lyric. PMLA, LXXVIII (1963), 225-229.

32. H. Tennyson, op. cit., p. 334.

33. Ibid.

34. See Lady Tennyson's Journal, Hoge ed., p. 38 n. 10.

35. C. Tennyson, op. cit., p. 281.

36. Thomson, op. cit., p. 107.

37. Ibid., p. 109.

38. J.B. Steane, Tennyson (New York: Arco, 1969),  
p. 93.

39. Rader, op. cit., p. 102.

40. Ibid., p. 109.

41. Ibid., p. 118.

42. J. Killham, Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960), p. 226.

43. A.S. Byatt, "The Lyric Structure of Tennyson's Maud," in I. Armstrong's The Major Victorian Poets: Reconsiderations (Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 1969), p. 75.

44. E.D.H. Johnson, "The Lily and the Rose: Symbolic Meaning in Tennyson's Maud," PMLA, LXIV (1949), 1222-1227.

45. Ibid., p. 1227.

46. J.L. Kendall, "Gem Imagery in Tennyson's Maud", VP, XVII (1979), 389-394.



47. N. Steffler, "Stone, Flower and Jewel Imagery in Tennyson's Maud," M.A. Thesis, McMaster University, 1980. Stone imagery, since it is related to the hero's perception of himself and his surroundings, as well as with Maud's father and brother and initially Maud, is associated with madness. Floral imagery is first used in connection with Maud and for the most part, represents a redemptive force. Jewel imagery mediates between the fixed stone and floral imagery as a softening agent between love and hate.

CHAPTER 2  
IMAGES OF LIGHT AND DARK

Light and dark imagery has a definite poetic function in *Maud* similar to that of the image clusters examined by Johnson, Killham and Kendall. The physical manifestations of the images have a psychological significance. Light is a redemptive, life-embracing force associated with Maud, who represents an alternative to the speaker's emotionally dark world. She is symbolically linked to the light-emitting heavenly bodies -- the sun, the stars and the moon -- to reinforce the happiness, hope and new perspective she brings to the speaker. The sun reflects the human aspects of the relationship -- the warmth which symbolically imparts life to the abundant floral imagery and which takes on increasingly sexual connotations. The stars and the moon represent Maud's celestial, non-human influence which gradually dominates the poem.

Darkness in *Maud* is linked to the speaker's distorted, pathological nature, his alienation and neurotic anger. Dark places (the burial pit, graves and the madhouse cell) mirror the speaker's morbidity and subconscious longing for death.<sup>1</sup> Dark imagery consistently overrides images

of light to suggest the speaker's failure to fully accept Maud's human love and to overcome his neurotic tendencies.

A pattern is established in *Maud* in which light images reflect the speaker's essential optimism and happiness, dark images, his descent into neurotic thought, and a combination of light and dark images his moments of doubt. Ambivalent, sometimes paradoxical elements suggest the speaker's uncertainty and subsequent efforts to reshape reality. For instance, starlight and "whiteness" take on an increasingly ominous symbolic meaning. Fire images, as well, intensify as the speaker's potential for hatred and violence asserts itself.

In the speaker's psychological development, images of light generally denote positive emotions, and images of dark, negative emotions. Fluctuating aspects reflect the speaker's ambivalence and fire images suggest the extreme, dangerous passions.

David Shaw offers an interesting analogy between *Maud* and the "colliding shots" of a movie to show how visual metaphor reinforces the contrary states of the speaker's inner life:

. . . the impressionistic syntax of *Maud* juxtaposes pictures, not just of the garden and the red-ribbed hollow, but of love and hate, light and dark, heaven and earth, so that each may be viewed in terms of all the others.<sup>2</sup>

The symbolic interplay between Maud's light and the speaker's darkness effectively reveals the polarity of his

situation; his attraction to love and his inclination to death.

At the beginning of *Maud*, the speaker is in a morbid, contemplative condition. He channels the passions repressed by his father's suicide into his hatred of Maud's father and of society. Dark images reflect the speaker's alienation and neurotic anger. He recalls the "ghastly pit" where his father's body lay during the "shuddering night"<sup>3</sup> of the death. The darkness evoked by the pit and the night symbolically represent the point from which the speaker consciously and unconsciously struggles to move. He must overcome the ambivalence towards his masculinity provoked by the suicide and the maternal adoration compelled by his sympathetic emotional bond with his mother.

In Tennyson's early poems, one finds similar aesthetic uses of "dark places" such as the burial pit. In "Mariana", for example, the dreary night and the dark desolation of the moated grange mirror the heroine's emotional and spiritual despair. The evocation of a dark wasteland landscape symbolizes alienation and a desertion by love.<sup>4</sup> In *Maud*, the darkness becomes central to the speaker's sensibility. His imagination continuously runs down into isolated, death-centred expectancy.

The speaker's troubled childhood prevented the development of a balanced adult identity. This becomes obvious through his cynical contempt for society which he

does nothing to alleviate, and later through his confused responses to Maud. Perverted images of whiteness and light reinforce his neurotic perspective prior to the healing effects of Maud's symbolic light. He denounces widespread food-poisoning, imaged by the bread lightened with chalk, alum and plaster (I,39) sold to the poor and envisions Timour-Mammon grinning on a pile of children's bones (I,46) as he rants about the evils of Mammonism. He criticizes the crimes taking place on "moonless nights" (I,42) symptomatic of his own destructive emotional darkness and hypersensitivity to the "red" connected with destructive passion and death in the first stanza of the poem.

The anticipated reunion with his childhood friend, Maud, introduces a contrary state of brightness into the speaker's emotionally dark world. Her coming coincides with the speaker's first conscious indication that he wishes to flee from his past and its emotional manifestations: "Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?" (I,64) The artificiality of Maud's family home, "the dark old place", being gilt by the touch of a "millionaire" (I,66), however, reinforces the speaker's conflicting feelings about Maud. It is significant that the brightening up of the dark home is associated with Maud's father and not Maud. Although the speaker has fond memories of Maud, who is immediately associated with light (he calls her "the moonfaced darling" [I,72]), he quickly retreats to the

comfort of his morbid isolation. The speaker's excessive fears cause him to view Maud as the bearer of a curse (I,73), and as a huntress (I,74) seeking more attractive prey. The darkness of the burial pit is evoked as the speaker rejects his rekindled feelings for Maud: "I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own." (I,75)

The speaker continues to struggle with his attraction to Maud. His cynical rigidity is reflected in his perception of Maud's coldness and stoniness. Hard, icy imagery (I,82) and fluctuating light / dark imagery leading to darkness in I,ii and iii suggests the speaker's doubts and his return to dark introspection. The paleness of Maud's face is emphasized and the inconsistency of the light imagery represents the instability of the speaker's awakening feelings:

Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a gloom  
 profound; . . .  
 Growing and fading and growing upon me without a  
 sound,  
 Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the  
 night long  
 Growing and fading and growing, till I could bear it  
 no more,  
 But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden  
 ground,  
 Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung ship-  
 wrecking roar,  
 Now to the scream of a maddened beach dragged down  
 by the wave,  
 Walked in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and  
 found  
 The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in his  
 grave. (I,91-101)

The speaker appears to subconsciously sort out his alternatives. He perceives Maud as cold yet recognizes the positive effect she has on his situation, imaged by the luminous, gemlike quality of starlight. The brightness and whiteness associated with Maud act as foils for the speaker's isolated, morbid mind, symbolically represented as his "dark garden". Maud's bright, life-filled garden later contrasts with the dark places frequented by the speaker -- the woods and groves -- to reinforce the emotional possibilities she represents. Gerhard Joseph has pointed out that Maud's garden is "pitted throughout the poem against the 'dark wood' of prolix, wild imaginings in which the speaker lives."<sup>5</sup>

When the speaker escapes into the solitude of a grove to contemplate society's ills, there is evidence of emotional softening. Jewel imagery is enhanced by the symbolic brightness Maud brings. His perception of her beauty is imaged as "a million emeralds" breaking from a lime tree (I,102). But because he views her within the context of his neurotic enjoyment of village gossip and scandal, her emotional effect is minimal. He maintains his desire to escape from the human world, and although attracted to Maud, doesn't want to love her: "And up in the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light; / But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading star!" (I,112-113)

The speaker's first meeting with Maud's brother establishes his irrational need to dissociate Maud from her male relatives so he can love her. He mistakenly sees "the fire of a foolish pride" (I,117) flash over Maud's face as she rides beside her brother on the moor. At this point in the poem, the linking of Maud with fire imagery reflects the speaker's confusion about his feelings. The brother threatens his masculinity and incapacitates his reason. Fire images almost always represent negative extremes of the speaker's passion, and when associated with the brother, reflect the speaker's hatred and violence.

After the paradoxical linking of the object of his love with his hatred of the brother, the speaker remains paranoid and pessimistic, obsessed with conflict in the external world. He despairs about scientific progress and fears for man's spiritual direction. He seeks the solitude of the woods in reaction to the bitterness he feels towards the human world. The neurotic ranting distorts his desire to meet Maud: "And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love" (I,156).

In I,v, the speaker's attraction to Maud awakens when he hears her singing her military ballad. Sunniness appears for the first time, to reinforce the growing love the speaker feels for Maud and the inspiration she provides. The sky of the May morning is sunny, Maud's feet he describes as "sunny gems" (I,175) and he perceives Maud's



beauty as "the light of her youth" (I,176). The abundant light imagery, suggesting the speaker's optimism, appears but briefly. A fluctuating light / dark sequence reinforces the return of his doubts and pessimistic vision and possibly foreshadows the destructiveness of the implied attraction to death in love suggested by the ballad. The ballad episode clarifies the speaker's dualistic perception of Maud. He eventually loses the gentle Maud, exaggerating and embracing the Maud of war. His sexuality, threatened by Maud's brother, is temporarily restored through his fantasy of becoming a soldier and dying a heroic death for love.

The sun imagery disappears the morning after the speaker has met Maud and they have established physical contact: "Morning arises stormy and pale, / No sun, but a wannish glare." (I,190-191) He loves her song, but it seems that his growing physical love brings back the doubt and depression he tries to escape. A fluctuating light / dark sequence ending in greyness which immediately follows his recollection of the meeting, indicates his ambivalent feelings:

And thus a delicate spark  
Of glowing and growing light  
Through the livelong hours of the dark  
Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,  
Ready to burst in a coloured flame;  
Till at last when the morning came  
In a cloud, it faded, and seems  
But an ashen-gray delight. (I,204-211)

The speaker begins to doubt Maud's sincerity. He views her "sunniness" (an allusion to her sexuality) as a deceptive

device with which she will manipulate and ensnare him. The image of the "coloured flame" ready to burst in the speaker's heart imagistically foreshadows the destructive course his sexual passion assumes after Maud's death.

Despite his essential distrust of everyone, the speaker continues to be physically attracted to Maud. Her "brightness" is again associated with sexual love when he envisions the sight of her ungloved hand and sunlight breaking from her lip (I,274-275). He fears the "new strong wine of love" (I,271), as he calls the physical attraction, and attempts to justify the love by reverting back to his childhood memories.

After exchanging glances with Maud in the church, the speaker's doubts about Maud lighten. There is a movement in his feelings as he perceives Maud as human. His walk in the sunshine reflects the emotional warmth of his love ("The sun looked out with a smile" [I,316]). But the darkness of the moor symbolically reflects his dawning love snuffed out. Doubt and despair return with the reappearance of Maud with her brother and the rival suitor: "Then returns the dark / With no more hope of light". (I,328-329) Because his masculinity is once again threatened, the speaker rants about the rival lord and viciously attacks the peace party to compensate for his feelings of inadequacy. He desires to hear Maud's battle-song as a means of restoring his self-confidence. Although he also longs for human

love, he doubts that he is worthy of her love. He fears rejection by Maud. This is symbolised as a loss of her "heavenly light" and by his return to emotional darkness: "Let the sweet heavens endure, / Not close and darken above me" (I,405-406). On a subconscious level, the song suggests an attainable ideal (death in a noble cause) as an alternative to physical acceptance by Maud.

In I,xii, the speaker perceives all of nature celebrating Maud's beauty. The fantastical merriment of his mood imparts a frenetic tone to his happiness. His exaltation of love disorders his senses so that he hears the rooks calling Maud's name and thinks her feet bring the rosy colour to the undersides of the daisies. Aspects of idolatry suggest his inability to deal with the growing love in a healthy manner. By placing himself in a subservient position to Maud, he compensates for his insecure masculinity, and does not have to deal with her humanness. He had imaged himself bowing down in reverence to Maud's battle-song:

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,185-189)

He perceives that nature visibly acknowledges Maud's presence: "Whenever a March-wind sighs / He sets the jewel-print of your feet" (I,889-890) and morbidly imagines that Maud can rescue him from death: "My dust would hear her and beat, / Had I lain for a century dead; / Would start and

tremble under her feet" (I,920-923). When Maud attains a celestial influence through her association with stars, the speaker views himself as a sacrifice to her beneficence: "Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate, / And made my life a perfumed altar-flame" (I,621-622).

With the reappearance of Maud's brother, the speaker's self-identity is again threatened. His excessive hatred and jealousy interfere with his feelings of love for Maud. He concocts a bizarre version of Maud's maternal familial lineage which dissociates her from her brother (I,482-486). Distorted images of sunlight and whiteness reflect the neurotic way in which the speaker perceives the brother. The comeliness of his red and white face (I,452), contrasts with Maud's gemlike luminosity. The sunlight and brightness associated with her redemptive love, when linked with the brother, symbolically represent the emotional excesses he inspires in the speaker: "Barbarous opulence jewel-thick / Sunned itself on his breast and his hands." (I,455-456)

The speaker's first visit to Maud's garden symbolically represents a conscious attempt to climb out of his despair. He seeks Maud's love but is governed by his pathological fears. The figure of the lion entwined by the passion flower (I,495-496) recalls his earlier uncertainty of Maud and fear of ensnarement. The statue also symbolically conveys his implicit sexual motivation for being

there. He delights in peering into Maud's room which she "lights with herself" (I,500). The pleasure he takes in his physical attraction to her, imaginatively suggested by the bright but hard jewel imagery, is dissipated by a vision anticipating death. Maud's light in the garden scene becomes associated with the moon, and her metaphoric whiteness, with ghostliness. The fancy created by the speaker's distraught mind, of a cold, inhuman Maud, anticipates his return to morbid introspection:

I heard no sound where I stood  
 But the rivulet on from the lawn  
 Running down to my own dark wood;  
 Or the voice of the long sea-wave as it swelled  
 Now and then in the dim-gray dawn;  
 But I looked, and round, all round the house I beheld  
 The death-white curtain drawn. (I,516-522)

The "dark wood", as mentioned earlier, serves as a contrast to Maud's garden. The grey morning following this unsuccessful attempt to be with Maud recalls the morning following the speaker's first confused attraction to Maud's voice and the touch of her hand. In both instances, the speaker's neurotic fear of involvement destroys his growing feelings. In the garden scene, his hypersensitive imagination confuses sleep with death and Maud's metaphoric light with ghostliness.

The speaker struggles with his morbidity, doubting his suitability for Maud. He recognizes that Maud is the only one who can save him from destruction, possibly suicide, yet he remains incapable of sharing a complete love

with her. He selfishly dwells on his own needs -- his inherited madness and fears:

So dark a mind within me dwells,  
And I make myself such evil cheer,  
That if *I* be dear to some one else,  
Then some one else may have much to fear;  
But if *I* be dear to some one else  
Then I should be to myself more dear. (I,527-532)

Thoughts of Maud's beauty, imagined as a shining peacock, redirects his suicidal tendencies (I,552-553). Perhaps by associating Maud's brightness with birds, the speaker subconsciously gets inspiration from the love / war sentiments she had sung about.

The essential happiness Maud brings he exalts in the "Go not, happy day" passage. But the cyclical, excessiveness of the rosy blush reflects the type of obsessiveness detected in the daisy passage but is less pure and innocent.\* The endless continuity of the blush reflects the effect Maud's love has on disordering the speaker's elation. She has become the centre of his existence, from which her positive influence permeates his essentially closed world of self-delusion. Despite the obsessiveness suggested by the blush, the speaker celebrates their love in the following canto, the "I have led her home, my love" section. Darkness emerges from the brooding, elegaic tone to express the speaker's fear and despair. His former appeal to receive light from heaven is answered in I,610: "The gates of Heaven are closed, and she is gone." He counteracts the world's imperfections, imaged as the "dark cedar" (I,616) and the

tyrannical stars, by altering his view of Maud. He finds solace in Maud's symbolic "starry" influence. She assumes the sensuousness of the Lebanese breeze (I,614) and the spirituality of "snow-limbed Eve" (I,626) but lacks human dimensions.

It is somewhat ironic that the speaker comes closest to achieving union with Maud in this capacity. In stanzas v and vi, light returns to beautify the jewel imagery more prominently than in the lime tree grove passage as the speaker experiences emotional softening:

It seems that I am happy, that to me  
A livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,  
A purer sapphire melts into the sea. (I,648-650)

The dream sequence which follows imagistically reinforces the speaker's fantasy of Death interwoven with love (I,658). The fluctuating light / dark sequence also reflects the speaker's doubts as his old preoccupation with death emerges. As he associates love's fulfillment with dying, Maud's bridal whiteness assumes a ghostliness. He again confuses sleep with death, as he had done during his first garden visit. With the imagined physical death of Maud, he seeks inspiration from the starlight linked with the celestially-inspiring Maud. He appears to be genuinely happy -- he says he has "climbed nearer out of lonely Hell" (I,678). But his "dark undercurrent woe" (I,681), his latent death wish, which he tries to deny, suggests that there is something wrong with his love. The return of

Maud's brother reminds the speaker of the family feud. A series of dark images reinforces his destructive potential and neurotic hatred. He speaks of his "dark-dawning youth" (I,690), Maud's "dark father" (I,720) and the brother's darkened frown (I,745). He struggles against the masculine figures with whom he has an unconscious conflict, stemming from the emotional shock of his father's death.' His sympathy with his mother creates a type of female adoration which extends to Maud and to Maud's mother. Imagistically, his violent, neurotic tendencies are suppressed by the uplifting light of Maud, and of Maud's mother, the "Bright English lily" (I,738) who fulfilled their childhood betrothal. By swearing the oath to not harm the brother, the speaker represses the masculine conflict:

So now I have sworn to bury  
 All this dead body of hate,  
 I feel so free and so clear  
 By the loss of that dead weight. (I,779-782)

The attempt to forget his father's suicide imaged by the "dead body of hate" puts the speaker in a fantastically merry mood. Although he is not invited to the rival lord's political dinner, he deludes himself into believing that Maud will seek him out in her garden afterwards, because she is rightly his.

During the speaker's second visit to the garden, images of light interact with the floral imagery to reflect the speaker's obsessive love of Maud and to demonstrate the victory of passionate love over spiritual love.<sup>10</sup> The



images clash, creating an atmosphere of sexual tension. By observing that the "black bat, night, has flown" (I,851), the speaker indicates symbolically that he has repressed the emotional restraints of his pathological nature. Abundant light imagery transforms the more spiritual quality of the celestial light which he has come to associate with Maud into an intensely sexual sun metaphor:

For a breeze of morning moves,  
And the planet of Love is on high,  
Beginning to faint in the light that she loves  
On a bed of daffodil sky,  
To faint in the light of the sun she loves,  
To faint in his light, and to die. (I,856-861)

The implicit sexuality of the "bed of daffodil sky" reverses the passive, darkly neurotic image of the "shining daffodil dead" (I,101). The masculine personification of the sun suggests that the speaker now feels emotionally worthy of Maud's love. In this passage, she is envisioned as succumbing to his light, where before, she provided the light. The assertion of the speaker's passion, symbolized by the passing of the "soul of the rose" (I,882) into his blood, suggests excessiveness and repressed violence.<sup>11</sup> By struggling with his passions in the garden, the speaker struggles with his own fate. Another sexually implicit sun image coupled with the sexual overtones of the red rose imagery, reinforces the frenetic nature of the passion:

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls,  
Come hither, the dances are done,  
In gloss of satin and glimmer of pearls,  
Queen lily and rose in one;  
Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls,

To the flowers, and be their sun. (I,902-907)

As the "Queen lily and the rose in one", with the rose taking the lead and the lily coming in almost as an afterthought,<sup>12</sup> Maud's influence changes. Her celestial, spiritually-uplifting effect on the speaker, associated with Eve and with the bridal and star images, disappears in the garden. Redness, symptomatic of the speaker's repressed madness and passionate excesses, dominates whiteness. Death is intuited in the image of the white lake-blossom falling into the lake (I,896). From this point in the poem, whiteness takes on an increasingly sinister meaning, recalling the ghostlike quality the speaker first detected in Maud's face and the whiteness of Maud's curtains suggesting death.

The speaker thinks he has climbed out of the morbid isolation of his 'pre-Maud' condition, by seeking physical union with Maud. He appeals for Maud's light ("Shine out, little head, sunning over with curls"), but paradoxically, his passion determines his fate. He appears happy; he refers to his "dark wood" as "our wood" (I,887) but the place ironically becomes the scene of the brother's death. The images of the weeping passion-flower and the weeping white rose (I,909,913) signify the speaker's lost potential to find a purified passion through Maud's love. The burial image which concludes Part I foreshadows the speaker's madness in Part II, when he psychologically returns, in an exaggerated state, to his condition at the beginning of the

poem. The stark contrast between the lavish flower garden and the lonely hillside where the speaker contemplates his despair and remorse following Maud's brother's death, emphasizes the severe psychological effect of losing Maud. An absence of sensuous floral and sun images (he describes it as a "darkening land" [II,6]), suggests a repression of his sexual desires. Images of hell fire suggest an ascendancy of the speaker's destructive, violent passions which had led to the murder:

O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,  
The fires of Hell brake out of thy rising sun,  
The fires of Hell and of Hate. (II,8-10)

Through anguishing about Maud's sorrow, the speaker subconsciously links his sexual passion for Maud with the irresponsible action of murder. He attempts to consciously justify his position but not the deed itself. In II,i, pathetic fallacy effectively conveys the speaker's longing for death arising from his feelings of unworthiness of Maud. He appeals not for heavenly light but for rain:

When they should burst and drown with deluging storms  
The feeble vassals of wine and anger and lust,  
The little hearts that know not how to forgive:  
· · · · ·  
We are not worthy to live. (II,42-48)

His contempt here for the entire human race reiterates his death wish. On the shore of Brittany, the speaker, filled with guilt and self-hatred, contemplates a shell which he associates with the departed Maud. Hard jewel images ("diamond" [II,64]) and darkness (it lies in a "dim water-

world" [II,68]), symbolize the speaker's existence without Maud, the softening, light-bearing agent. The shell suggests endurance beyond death, without a capacity for warmth and feeling. Maud's departure from the speaker's life reactivates his death wish. Images of darkness reinforce his morbid depression. His heart is once again a "dark heart" (II,103) and he has returned from Brittany to a dark place, "the dark sea-line" (II,93). The stresses of his repressed sexuality and his guilt cause his fancy to perceive Maud as a phantom. In this posture, she lacks the beneficent light-bearing qualities of Part I. She is not a bearer of life and love but is a vision of death. She appears as a "phantom cold" (II,195), a "hard mechanic ghost" (II,82), a "thing silent" (II,306) and a "spectral bride" (II,318). In her ghostly form, she is devoid of the sensory pleasures (light, song, touch) which the speaker had delighted in in Part I.

In Part II, distorted images of light suggest the speaker's descent into madness. He is tormented by the "leagues of lights" (II,161) and the "broad light" which "glares and beats" (II,229). This follows a memory fantasy where he remembers the bright, shining Maud (II,185) bathed in "light and shadow" (II,176,182). The scene reiterates his former happiness coupled with hesitation and the attraction to the war song. He appeals to the celestial Maud: "Would the happy spirit descend, / From the realms of

light and song" (II,221-222) but realizes that he has lost her. His longing for a dark place, "Always I long to creep / Into some still cavern deep" (II,235-236), indicates the ascent of his morbidity prior to the madhouse scene. The speaker's descent to madness evokes the psychological conflicts from his childhood memories. The "shallow grave" (II,244) and the "snare in a pit" (II,322) allude to the father's suicide. He expresses his paranoia and cynical hatred of the world in his mad ranting and entertains thoughts of revenge against Maud's father. The speaker thinks that lawful fighting will cleanse his inadequate sense of self. His madness culminates in a pathetic appeal to be buried deeper in the grave. He sees death as an act of love.

Part II of *Maud* can be viewed as a psychological reprocessing through madness. The speaker's inability to cope with his repressed sexuality, his guilt and the damage done by the traumatic experience of his father's suicide results in a realigned version of reality. Maud's death serves as a catalyst for the transformation. The manifestations are clearly seen by Part III, where the speaker has convinced himself that joining a nationalistic war cause will cure his pathological sickness. His condition will be evaluated in Chapter 4 of this study.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 2

1. See R.F. Fleisner, "New Light on Tennyson's Blackness," CLAJ, XXVI (1983), pp. 337-338. He suggests that the greyness of the morning reflects the speaker's brooding spirit as he strides up and down the beach before the Hall and that "blackness" in Maud is connected with the unconscious and death.
2. W.D. Shaw, Tennyson's Style (Ithaca: Cornell University Press, 1976), p.170.
3. A. Tennyson, The Poems of Tennyson, Christopher Ricks ed. (London: Longman Group UK Limited, 1987), vol 2, p. 520. All subsequent quotations from Tennyson's Maud are from this edition and have been listed in the text.
4. See E.H. Waterston, "Symbolism in Tennyson's Minor Poems" in J. Killham, Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson (New York: Barnes and Noble, 1960).
5. G. Joseph, Tennysonian Love (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1969), p. 113.
6. See J.R. Bennett, "Maud, Part III: Maud's Battle Song," VP, XVIII (1980), 35-49. Various readers have noticed Maud's dual function in the poem. D. Albright, Tennyson: The Muses' Tug of War (Charlottesville: University Press of Virginia, 1986), p. 161. Maud comes to embody two "irreconcilable archetypes" -- the "goddess" and the "coquette". Joseph, op. cit., pp. 111-112. Maud encompasses alternate possibilities -- destructive and creative and is also imaged as a temptress.
7. E.D.H. Johnson, "The Lily and the Rose: Symbolic Meaning in Tennyson's Maud", PMLA, LXIV (1949), p. 1223. The first garden visit is seen as a "prologue to the ensuing conflict between modesty and passion which characterizes the early stages of the courtship."
8. I. Armstrong, Language as Living Form in Nineteenth-Century Poetry (New Jersey: Barnes and Noble Books, 1982), pp. 46-47. She detects the "febrile, autonomous energy" of the blush as excessive and obsessive.

9. R.P. Basler, Sex, Symbolism, and Psychology in Literature (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1948), p. 76.

10. As suggested by Johnson, op. cit.

11. Ibid.

CHAPTER 3  
IMAGES OF HEAD, HAND AND HEART

Since Maud is the focal point of the speaker's view of the external world, she becomes a gauge against which the meaning of the poetic imagery (and therefore the speaker's psychological state) can be measured. She is a mediator between his internal sensibilities and his physical environment. A cluster of images associated with the head, the hand and the heart reflect the speaker's essentially ambivalent attraction to Maud. The imagery shifts and is transformed according to the speaker's mood swings. Interpreting the image cluster of head, hand, and heart eventually helps us to see the hero's inability to deal with the complexities of a human relationship. The symbolic manifestation of his love for Maud also shows how his frustrations and doubts related to himself and to Maud are externalized. When associated with the threatening male figures in the poem (Maud's father, brother and the rival lord) and with society, the head, hand, heart images reinforce our sense of the hero's deeply-rooted pathological nature.

Head imagery is initially associated with the speaker's paranoid fear of inadequacy. He calls Maud a "moon-faced darling" (I,72) early in the poem just prior to



doubting his sexual attractiveness. After meditating upon Maud's "cold and clear-cut face" (I,88), he returns to his "own dark garden ground" (I,97). As his love for Maud grows, the image of Maud's sunny head reflects the hero's pleasurable physical attraction. It later suggests the sublimation of his destructive tendencies when connected with Maud's battle-song. In her martial capacity, Maud's attractiveness is envisioned in bright bird images: "The grace that, bright and light as the crest / Of a peacock, sits on her shining head" (I,552-553). The speaker's neurotic hatred is suggested through his attempts at dehumanizing the rival males who threaten his masculinity. He specifically associates Maud's father, brother and the suitor with unflattering images of animal heads. Distorted head, hand and heart images also reveal the hero's cynical attitude to society.

Maud's presence in the poem diminishes as the speaker reinvents his self-delusions about himself and her. His doubts and fears compel him to perceive the attractiveness of death through phantasmal images of Maud. By Part III, he sees her in a dream vision as a pair of eyes (III,16). Her presence is one-dimensional, lacking human warmth.

Images of the hand reinforce the speaker's exaggerated views and reflect the growth and failure of his physical relationship with Maud. He despairs about the hopelessness of his condition: "Do we move ourselves, or are

moved by an unseen hand at a game / That pushes us off from the board, and others ever succeed?" (I,127-128) Hand images reveal, as do the head images, the speaker's widely shifting psychological states. The images alternately express fear and despair, positive attraction to Maud, and his self-destructive potentiality. In the course of the poem, the hand images change like the head images to indicate the speaker's mental progress. His initial feelings of hopelessness about the human condition contrast with his physical attraction to Maud, symbolized by references to her hand: "The treasured splendour, her hand" (I,273). The light that occurs when he makes contact with her ("glowing and growing light" [I,205] follows "she touched my hand" [I,201]) reinforces the moods of elation also associated with her "sunny head". His fears and subconscious longing for death are detected through the diminishing presence of Maud. The ghostly hand he envisions during his first visit to Maud's garden foreshadows the influence of the phantasmal Maud. In their final transformation, hand images reflect the speaker's impulsive, violent nature. It is his "guilty hand" (II,4) that symbolizes his remorse for killing Maud's brother and losing her love. He attempts to eradicate the deed by symbolically taking up the shield of combat in Part III.

Heart images dominate the head, hand, heart image cluster in *Maud* not just because they occur with the greatest

frequency, but also since they do not drop away in Part III, as the head and hand images do, but gain their strongest expression at the poem's conclusion. Some readers have noticed how aspects of *Maud's* heart imagery assume a type of spiritual significance.<sup>1</sup> The imagery also shows how external events effect the hero's emotive, undercurrent nature, especially in the assertion of his extreme passions. In Part I, the speaker's hardened heart ("my heart as a millstone" [I,31]) softens through his interaction with Maud: "O heart of stone, are you flesh" (I,268). After Maud's brother's murder, the hero undergoes a complete breakdown suggested imagistically through references to his "dark heart" (II,103), his "heart of stone" (II,132) and his heart as a "handful of dust" (II,241). Heart images coupled with fire images in Part III reinforce the ascendancy of destructive passion.

Although Maud is unreliably characterized by the speaker, the images associated with her physicality -- head and hand imagery -- usefully illuminate his psychological progress. The external manifestations of his growing love reflect the distortion of reality which incapacitates him. He seeks to redefine the external world to suit his emotional needs. Maud functions as a continuously transforming figure who catalyzes the speaker's actions.

It becomes apparent as early as in Part I, despite his genuine elation, that the speaker's emotional crippling

contributes to his obsessive fears about the relationship. He is the victim of an inherited bent towards madness, the "dark undercurrent woe" (I,681) and has suffered acute trauma because of his father's suicide. The speaker's emotional paralysis, his inability to love, he imagines as a symbolic shutting off of his capacity for positive feeling: "And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard / The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the shuddering night." (I,15-16) That the father's suicide and his mother's suffering and death lie at the base of his morbid isolation is again intuited in I,xix, a section added for clarification in the 1856 edition of *Maud*:

For my dark-dawning youth,  
Darkened watching a mother decline  
And that dead man at her heart and mine:  
For who was left to watch her but I?  
Yet so did I let my freshness die. (I,690-694)

The speaker deals with the suicide by irrationally blaming Maud's father and society's ills for his family's ruin. A maternal idolization grows out of the suicide through his perception of his emotional link with his mother through suffering and then death. Ironically, a "dead man", the murdered brother, causes a comparable bonding with Maud imaged by her scream which he nurses in his "dark heart" (II,103):

And there rang on a sudden a passionate cry,  
A cry for a brother's blood:  
It will ring in my heart and my ears, till I die,  
till I die. (II,33-35)

The murder unleashes an emotional reaction encompassing hatred and destruction, despite the guilt and remorse. He venerates Maud through memory and his violent tendencies become a means of achieving a feeling of adequacy. Cynical, morbid ranting sufficed to compensate for his father's death, but with the brother's murder, the speaker must actively seek death to compensate for his guilt. As he does throughout the poem, he perceives Maud's effect on him according to his internal needs.

Maud in Part I restores some of the speaker's self-confidence and inspires new feelings of peace with his environment. One of her most significant influences, though, is to inspire the speaker, largely on a subconscious level, to become a new person, a better man. She provides a defined direction to his desire to "flee the pit" at the beginning of *Maud*. The subconscious ideal is first articulated in connection with Maud's battle-song. In the same thought process, he links his desire to hear her "chivalrous battle-song" (I,383) with his wish for the ideal leader, politician or hero that he feels could restore England. He recognizes his own potential to be the perfect man, at least for Maud:

A voice by the cedar tree

. . . . .  
 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,162-172)

The readiness of the soldier in "heart" and "hand" anticipates the imagistic progression of the speaker's "heart of stone" to a flaming heart with its overtones of violence and death and of the physical attraction symbolized by Maud's hand into the "guilty hand" which is a symbol of destruction and death.

A close reading of *Maud* Parts I and II, reveals how the head, hand, heart images oscillate and are transformed according to the speaker's changing internal condition. Maud's initially loving influence alters substantially as the hero reacts to external events and aspires to fulfill his fantasy of becoming a better man for her. Although he finds some success, he fails to attain a completely fulfilled love with Maud. His failure and how he deals with it will be discussed in the final chapter of this study. The resolution of the two strands of imagery examined, images of light and dark and the head, hand, and heart images, will provide a key to understanding *Maud's* conclusion in the context of the speaker's psychological condition.

In the discussion of light and dark imagery, perverted images indicated the speaker's obsessive hatred and exaggerated perspective. The head, hand and heart images function in a similar way to reinforce his neurotic sensibility. The external world, in the speaker's view, assumes a "sickness" reminiscent of his own. The image of

his damaged heart from childhood is echoed in his deranged attitude toward peace: "And lust of gain, the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse / Than the heart of the citizen hissing in war on his own hearthstone?" (I,23-24) He deplores the uncertainty instilled by science and the shallowness of literature: "The passionate heart of the poet is whirled into folly and vice." (I,140) He associates the key components of his own condition with the rest of mankind: "At war with myself and a wretched race, / Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I." (I,364-365) The human world he sees as infested with cheaters and liars. He envisions man's sickness as a "head in a cloud of poisonous flies" (I,155) and his greed as a lusting hand (I,22).

When Maud appears, he gradually changes his perspective. But, initially, Maud's "cerebral" effect inspires cynical doubt and fear. He identifies her with the evils of society and with her bad family connection. On two occasions, an image of her face leads to an image of death. The "moon-faced darling" makes him resolve to "bury myself in myself" (I,75). Likewise, the "cold and clear-cut face" (I,88) leads to his perception of death in nature (I,101). A third reference to Maud's face substantiates the connection he makes between her and her male relatives, whom he hates.

When have I bowed to her father, the wrinkled head  
of the race?  
I met her today with her brother, but not to her  
brother I bowed:

I bowed to his lady-sister as she rode by on the  
 moor;  
 But the fire of a foolish pride flashed over her  
 beautiful face.  
 (I,114-117)

The head image connected here with the aggressive, destructive fire imagery associated with her brother reinforces his initial distorted perception of Maud. He begins a gradual process of dissociating Maud from her male relatives to neutralize their threat.

He deals with his obsessive fears about his masculinity by perceiving the males as animals. For example, he describes Maud's father: "I caught a glimpse of his face, / A gray old wolf and a lean." (I,470-471) He deals with the sexual threat of the rival suitor in a similar way. He calls him, "a lord, a captain, a padded shape, / A bought commission, a waxen face, / A rabbit mouth that is ever agape" (I,358-360).

The first optimistic use of the head image occurs immediately after the speaker hears Maud's military ballad: "Maud with her exquisite face, / And wild voice pealing up to the sunny sky." (I,173-174) His un-cynical perception of Maud's beauty and his genuine elation suggested by the first occurrence of abundant sunshine, subconsciously connects happiness with fulfillment of his soldier fantasy. A pattern appears in which the speaker's longing to hear her song is followed first by an image of light, then by an image of doubt or death. It is significant that the head



image occurring with Maud as a bright songbird consistently leads to confusion and then symbolic darkness. Imagistically, this foreshadows the self-destructiveness of his actions in Part III. Death remains as an underlying threat to his perceived self-confidence. Two of the fluctuating passages concerning Maud's songbird influence come from stanzas added in 1856.<sup>2</sup> In I,xii, the speaker's desire to hear the song is followed by his appeal to the heavens to "not close and darken." He ends up doubting his potential to be loved and intuits his own death (I,410). In Part II, the implicit destruction inspired by her song is expressed in his fear of his passion drowning "all life in the eye" (II,109). The nucleus of *Maud*, section II,iv, originally published as a separate poem in 1837, shows how his attraction to her call for military aggression leads to a vision of death.<sup>3</sup> The speaker imagines Maud as a singing dove followed by a cry of death and a vision of the phantom Maud. The unhealthy solace he finds in her voice connected with the symbolic darkness of his death wish reinforces the neurotic aspects of his love.

The speaker's growing physical attraction to Maud inspires an emotional reawakening with dangerous overtones. Images of flame are associated with an early meeting (I,vi,2). An image of the sun not shining, but burning (I,197) and the potential for his heart "to burst in a

coloured flame" (I,208) reinforces the obsessive nature of his passion and its underlying excesses.

It is interesting to note that the physical contact and not the "cerebral" appeal of the military ballad introduces the softening heart image that indicates emotional progress. Immediately following the ranting in I,vi, where he summarizes his condition as "a heart half-turned to stone" (I,267), Maud's physical attractiveness brings a happy response:

O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught  
 By that you swore to withstand?  
 For what was it else within me wrought  
 But, I fear, the new strong wine of love,  
 That made my tongue so stammer and trip  
 When I saw the treasured splendour, her hand,  
 Come sliding out of her sacred glove,  
 And the sunlight broke from her lip? (I,268-275)

Compared with the first physical contact, when the sunlight burned, the speaker has clearly progressed. The heart of flesh suggests a humanizing of his love for Maud. During the village church scene, an image of a beating heart (I,308) symbolically renews his emotional life-pulse shut off in his 'pre-Maud' state.

Unfortunately, the physical relationship intensifies his jealousy and hatred of the brother and rival lord. He deals with the excessive emotions by mad ranting, coming out of the hysteria through the memory of Maud's song. As mentioned earlier, the song inspires him to become a new man in order to be worthy of her love. But he fears his inadequacy and reverts back to suicidal introspection when he

goes to Maud's garden. By envisioning Maud's ghost's hand opening the window, he appears to abandon the physical progress he has made. He, in fact, makes no more direct references to their uplifting physical contact, evidenced by the lack of positive hand images associated with Maud. She is viewed as a spectral bride, a spiritual descendant of Eve, and as Queen of the rose garden. In this latter capacity, as will be discussed later, the physical relationship takes on the unhealthy connotations of the red rose imagery.

Following the first garden visit, the head image returns as the speaker begins to dehumanize his perception of Maud. Her influence becomes less direct and uplifting. The speaker solidifies his linking of love with death and fails to achieve complete union with Maud. A transformation to a more celestial, non-human position occurs in the intense "I have led her home, my love, my only friend" passage (I,xviii). His sensual and spiritual awareness of Maud outweighs her reality. Initially he anticipates her approach, but the imagistic shutting off of her light suggests his perceived fear of physical rejection. She becomes envisioned as a "starry head" (I,620), shedding the beneficent effects of light on him, but not touching him with any perceptible warmth. This type of influence, bright but lacking human depth, becomes central to the speaker's development. The image of the speaker's heart in I,viii, beating symbolically to Maud's human warmth is transformed

to an image of his heart beat synchronized with the starry

Maud:

I have climbed nearer out of lonely Hell.  
 Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,  
 Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell,  
 Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe.  
 (I,678-681)

The elegaic passage (I,xviii) establishes the speaker's feelings of oneness with Maud. Her celestial influence brings comfort yet draws on his latent death wish. The undercurrent attraction to death surfaces in another dream where he confuses sleep with death. Maud assumes her ghostly bride appearance. She gives her hand, not to the speaker to reaffirm their physical love, but to "false death" (I,666). The dissolution of the physical union, his fears of sexual acceptance, and his emotional identification with the starry-headed Maud threaten to reactivate the darkness of his 'pre-Maud' condition.

Prior to the garden scene that ends Part I, the speaker attempts to convince himself that he is justly entitled to Maud. The section added in 1856 reiterates the emotional damage from his father's death. We are reminded of the "dead man" at his "heart" (I,692). He extends the maternal worship of his own mother to Maud's mother, as a means of asserting his masculine right to Maud. He sees Maud's mother as the agent who enacted the betrothal the speaker imagines the two fathers had arranged. They were reconciled on her deathbed: "A desire that awoke in the

heart of the child, / As it were a duty done to the tomb."  
 (I,731-732) The speaker's selfish ranting "Mine, mine by a  
 right . . . Mine, mine" (I,725-726), anticipates the fren-  
 etic passion in the garden, and is symptomatic of his obses-  
 sive need to establish his masculine identity through Maud.  
 He fears his own self-confidence but continues to fantasize  
 about Maud. His excessive sexual anticipation, imagistical-  
 ly suggested by his need to perceive his own moods in  
 nature, is apparent by the way he misconstrues the signif-  
 icance of the rose carried by the rivulet in I,xxi.

In the garden, the speaker continues to superimpose  
 his mood onto the natural world. On the brink of madness,  
 the garden becomes occupied by flower faces. There is a  
 curious absence of references to Maud's human qualities --  
 her hand, her face, her smile. Oblique allusions to her  
 beauty reflect the speaker's disordered senses. He appeals  
 to Maud's head just once: "Shine out, little head, sunning  
 over with curls, / To the flowers and be their sun."  
 (I,906-907) The sunlight suggests sexuality rather than a  
 redemptive influence when associated with the excessive  
 passion symbolized by the red roses.

The obsessive passion in the garden culminates in  
 the image of the speaker's heart which ends Part I. The  
 beating heart has symbolized his emotional transformations  
 in response to Maud's effect. It had indicated his awaken-  
 ing love in the church, and was later associated with his

identification with Maud's bright but non-human aspects. The image now reinforces the attraction of death in love's fulfillment. He envisions his own destruction as an expression of love. He views the heart's blossoming, a life-embracing image, in the context of his own death. This final passage in Part I anticipates his madness, when he imagines he's buried and his heart is dust, then his decision to fight in the Crimean War, when his heart blossoms into flames.

The speaker's madness in Part II echoes his neurotic sensibility at the poem's opening. The circumstances are similar -- there has been the sudden tragic death of a loved one -- his father, and now Maud, and a symbolic shutting off of his emotional capacities, arousing a heightened sensibility to the external world. The despair expressed in the "Courage, poor heart of stone" passage (II,iii), establishes the grief caused by Maud's departure and indicates his longing for death: "She is but dead, and the time is at hand / When thou shalt more than die." (I,139-140) His guilt and grief reach a fever pitch in the madhouse cell. The image of the beating heart is distorted to illustrate the intensity of his despair and the severity of his hallucinations. The vision of his heart as a "handful of dust" (I,241) signifies his neurotic feelings of insignificance. He perceives that society torments him even into death, imagined in the beating of horses' hooves above his shallow grave. He rants out

his hatred of civilization and from his morbid isolation, he pleads with God to destroy the human race: "Little hearts that know not how to forgive" (II,44). He feels no love for or from the rest of mankind: "Hearts with no love for me" (II,234). Death and destruction are perceived as an act of love when he pleads for "some kind heart" (II,340) to bury him deeper in the grave.

During his imagined descent into death, memories of Maud surface in his fevered frenzy. But Maud of Part II bears little resemblance to her former self. She resembles the phantom Maud which had exemplified his doubts, fears and latent death wish in Part I but is more sinister because of his twisted perceptions of his lost love and his guilt. The speaker's nightmare visions of her wreak havoc on his sensibilities:

Is it gone? my pulses beat --  
 What was it? a lying trick of the brain?  
 Yet I thought I saw her stand,  
 A shadow there at my feet. (II,36-39)

This memory of Maud in section II,iv, conveys her influence which has survived the madness. The section begins as an outpouring of grief, a desire to be with Maud again. He longs for Maud's physicality, "the hand, the lips, the eyes" (II,167), but the visions of the shadowy Maud confuse the memory. The "phantom cold" (II,195) establishes his guilt and the finality of her death. The one substantial memory of Maud is her song:

Do I hear her sing as of old,

My bird with the shining head,  
My own dove with the tender eye? (II,184-186)

The image of Maud as the songbird with a shining head brings him comfort, yet is appropriately juxtaposed to the sounds of death, as the speaker awakes from his dream. An appeal to the light-bearing celestial Maud occurs for the last time in the second last stanza of the passage to reinforce the solace he finds in her non-human celestial influence: "Would the happy spirit descend, / From the realms of light and song" (II,221-222). The next time he associates her with celestial light is in Part III, when her influence, as lightning, takes on a martial, violent quality. On a subconscious level, he is likely reminded of his desire to pursue his fantasy of becoming the ideal man. He has failed sexually -- the neurotic quality of his physical love for Maud resulted in the impulsive murder of her brother. He rechannels the passion into a longing for death which is answered by his mad hallucinations. Hatred and a desire to fight emerge from the insanity as a means to restore his self-confidence.

The head, hand and heart images reinforce the repression of sexual desires and the ascendancy of violence in Part II. The "guilty hand" associated with the images of hell fire (II,9-10), supports the transformation of physical desire to destructive impulses. Heart imagery reflects the morbid isolation and cynical self-effacing mood. The speaker refers to his heart as "dark", "stone", "stupid", and



"dust". The only redemptive image from the cluster, as mentioned earlier, is the shining bird head image of Maud. The memory of Maud's battle-song is the only significant memory he maintains in his madness from happier times with Maud. It offers a means of renewing his self-identity.

With the death of the human Maud, the speaker confuses her garden, the scene of his anticipated sexual consummation with her with the "dreadful hollow", the scene of two deaths. He envisions himself as a "dead man" and Maud as his "spectral bride" (II,318). He morbidly perceives death as the ultimate means of reuniting with Maud. The means to achieve this fantasy are revealed at the close of Part II, through hatred and violence leading to death.

Images of the head mirror the more "cerebral" aspects of his attraction to Maud. She first appears to him as a cold, icy face -- foreboding and potentially threatening when associated with her father and brother. He dissociates their threat through negative images. As their love unfolds, the head images become sunny, to suggest the speaker's new positive moods and sexual awakening, and then starry, to reflect the non-human but positive influence of Maud. The appearance of Maud's shining bird-like head during his madness in Part II reinforces the lasting influence of her military ballad. By Part II, head images are non-human and foreboding, reflecting the speaker's fears and longing for

death. The spectral Maud lacks features -- only her eyes appear in a haunting vision to guide the speaker.

Images of the hand initially reflect the speaker's physical attraction to Maud. The image changes through his perception of the ghostly Maud, symptomatic of his fears and subconscious death wish. The ghostly hand fulfills a beneficent guiding purpose, not warm in a human sense but still redemptive. It becomes in Part II, the "guilty hand" associated with the brother, representative of madness, violence, destructive passion and of the failed relationship.

Images of the heart convey the speaker's emotional oscillations. His self-imposed alienation, envisioned by the heart of stone, gradually changes to a heart of flesh, then a beating heart to indicate the positive effects of Maud's love. In Part II, the destructive effect of both the murder and Maud's absence is revealed by the return of the heart of stone and heart of darkness imagery. The heart of dust envisioned during his descent into madness and his death fantasy represent his disintegrated feelings of adequacy and his longing for death.

Through conscious and subconscious philosophizing, fancies and dream visions of Maud, the speaker emerges from his insanity convinced that he can regain her love through noble action in war. Images of the head, the hand and the heart change in Parts I and II and are resolved in Part III.

The progress he appears to make in Part III develops from influences and inspirations detected in Parts I and II. The hero recovers to the point of rationalizing his actions to himself. Maud's effect succeeds in the speaker taking charge of his life and in genuinely believing that he achieves oneness with mankind.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 3

1. C.S. Vogel, "Heart of Stone: An Emblem for Conversion," VN, LI (1977), 21-25. He discusses how images of stone and hardness are symbols of universal despiritualization with softness indicating regeneration. Tennyson uses hard-heartedness in Maud in a systematic and conventional way, but the poem does not follow a pattern of conversion. See Biblical sources, Ezekiel 32:26 and II Corinthians 3:3. Also see Thomas Assad, "Tennyson's 'Courage, Poor Heart of Stone'," TSE, XVII (1970), 73-80.

2. The obvious poetic intent is to foreshadow the speaker's regeneration through military action. It can be determined that the decision is self-destructive, leading to death.

3. R.P. Basler, Sex, Symbolism, and Psychology in Literature (New Brunswick: Rutgers University Press, 1948), p. 74. Since the original germ is a lyric of frustrated love, alluding to or implying every phase of the plot development except the conclusion in Part III, Maud as a whole was conceived as a study of psychic frustration.

CHAPTER 4  
CONCLUSION

The study of the light and dark imagery and of hand, heart and head images in Parts I and II of *Maud* establishes the speaker's shifting mental condition. He starts off morbidly obsessed by his family's financial ruin -- his father's suicide and his mother's death. Maud gradually brings him out of his emotional isolation. She inspires in him fluctuating moods of happiness and begins to ease his cynical contempt for society. But her redemptive influence is not a cure for his mental instability. The speaker's preoccupation with death and his self-destructive tendencies surface periodically to confuse his new positive feelings. Negative and ambivalent aspects of the images reflect his pathological nature.

By the end of Part I, his passions take on an obsessive quality as his threatening sexuality disorders his notions of romantic love. He proves himself incapable of maintaining a healthy relationship. Excessively heightened jealousy and hatred culminate in the killing of Maud's brother. This act destroys any potential for further emotional healing. By losing Maud, he loses his one point of meaningful physical contact with external reality. He

increasingly finds comfort in seeking a love linked with death, not a love celebrating human warmth and life.

Part II begins with the speaker expressing remorse for Maud's brother's death: he has failed Maud by breaking the oath he had made not to harm him. The realization that he has lost Maud forces a repression of the passions exemplified in the implied sexual union in the garden. The pain of his lost honour and of his lost love leads the speaker into mad ranting. He fulfills his death wish through hallucination -- he morbidly perceives himself in a shallow grave, tormented by the sounds of the society he hates. The absent Maud haunts him as a continual reminder of his loss and guilt.

By Part III, the speaker appears to have recovered from his madness. He expresses gratitude for his release from the madhouse cell and seems to undertake with an increased vigour his quest to escape his old self. He does this by clutching onto familiar memories of Maud. The ones which have remained intact through his descent to and semblance of recovery from madness are visionary ones of a celestial, martial Maud. A symbolic reference to his longing for the shining songbird Maud and her song of war is suggested by his reference to his asylum period as a time when he "crept so long on a broken wing" (III,1).

Images of light coupled with images of dark reflect the speaker's new optimism made ambivalent by overtones of

death. The spring night crowned by the constellations "the Charioteer" (III,6) and "starry Gemini" (III,7) imagistically recalls the emotional softening suggested by the bright and melting jewels of Part I. The light / dark interplay and the allusion to Maud's bright head also symbolically portray the speaker's perception of death ("Orion's grave" [III,8]), made glorious by seeking Maud's celestial ("starry") and martial ("Charioteer") influence. The image of the dead daffodil contrasts with the shining daffodil of the garden scene as a reminder of the speaker's repressed sexuality.

The speaker's inspiration for action in Part III comes via the same means as did his hysteria in Part II, through visions of Maud. Although he can now recognize that his dream is "but a dream" (III,15), the reassurance provided by his fancy provides a comfortable, familiar means of dealing with external reality:

That like a silent lightning under the stars  
 She seemed to divide in a dream from a band of the  
     blest,  
 And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars.  
(III,9-11)

Maud's call to war inspires the speaker's taking up of the shield of combat. This imparts an active element to the passive hand symbolism (the image of the hand controlling human fate in Part I) and to the destructive hand images associated with his obsessive physical attraction to Maud. Maud's song takes on a pseudo-spiritual significance<sup>1</sup> to further repress the sexual passion the speaker blames for

the murder of Maud's brother. His attraction to warfare is not due to the "ennobling power of love" but is symptomatic of the self-delusion he uses to cope with reality. The speaker's reality by Part III is a complex psychological tangle dominated by his guilt over the ill-fated duel, his obsessive hatred of society's ills, and his desire to reunite with Maud as a noble hero. He deals with the complexity by perceiving the external world in excessively simplified terms. He had done this before, during his encroaching madness in Part II, when he reduced the natural world to a fractured vision of isolated shells and flowers. A reductive process in Part III trivializes the horrors of war and distorts his moral vision. A just war, in the speaker's view, is the sole means of destroying the earthly tyranny which Maud's love had begun to make bearable.

As the time for war approaches, the return of the heart image coincides with the speaker's awakened passions. The reactivated militaristic passion conveys a frenzied quality similar to the sexual passion in Part I, suggesting its essentially unbalanced nature. When the speaker addresses his heart in III,vi, one can compare the neurotic obsessiveness with his conversation with the flowers at the end of Part I. In the garden, he had convinced himself that Maud was rightly his, that the sexual conquest was the natural and desired outcome of their love. The reality of the situation, of course, had been distorted to suit his



fancy. In Part III, the speaker is again in a position of excessively heightened passionate involvement focused externally. This time, he thinks his selfless involvement in the Crimean cause will cure his instability. He says, "It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye, / That old hysterical mock-disease should die" (III,32-33). But the feeling here is that the passion for war is symptomatic of a repressed destructiveness waiting to arise through violence. The similarity between the end of Part I and Part III (heightened passion) suggests the essential distortion in the speaker's views of war. The heart imagery associated with sexual passion (now transformed to aggression) had, in fact, foreshadowed death.

The final unglorious image of Maud flying into the "seas of death" (III,37) serves as an omen for his fate. He does not need visionary inspiration nor is he plagued by ghosts born of his guilt now that he is actively involved in a social cause. The absence of head and hand images in Part III specifically connected with Maud reinforces his changed perspective. He has repressed the sexual attraction symbolized by Maud's hand and has sublimated the optimism and sense of purpose inspired by Maud's sunny head and allusions to her bright bird crest. Maud's non-human but celestially redemptive influence, imaged as a "starry" head and ghostly hand which had illuminated the speaker's lucid moments of insanity, solidified the attractiveness of death in love.

In Part III, the speaker's love for Maud transformed to the battle-call allows him to purge his guilt over Maud's brother's death (lawless killing) and to anticipate reunion with Maud through a noble cause. His distorted moral vision perceives murder in warfare as lawful killing. Subconsciously, he seeks his own heroic death as a final release from the earthly tyranny and as a means to regain happiness with Maud.

The speaker acknowledges the sorrow and suffering of warfare, but perceives it as divinely appointed. He believes that God will justly destroy Nicholas I and restore a Britain corrupted by peace. Images of light and dark and images of the heart reinforce the repressed madness in the speaker's enthusiasm for war. The reference to "many a light shall darken" (III,43) anticipates his self-destructive potential, his morbid nature which had consistently distorted his optimism while Maud was alive. His repressed madness waiting to arise through war is further suggested symbolically as "many a darkness into the light shall leap" (III,46). Despite his distorted vision, though, it is important that the speaker achieves, through the war cause, an albeit deluded sense of personal fulfillment. Beating heart images suggest that his restored sense of purpose is an important point of emotional awakening. The imagery had occurred in Part I coinciding with his feelings of human love for Maud in the church, then with the starry, non-human

influence of Maud. Its final association is with his love linked with death. The disappearance of the image in Part II and the reappearance in Part III reinforces the transformation of passion from sexual to militaristic, taking on strong overtones of death. The symbolic destruction of his old self (to a heart of dust in Part II) anticipates the emergence of the new self in Part III. He proclaims that "the heart of a people beat with one desire" (II,49) and "We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we are noble still." (III,55) But if one recalls the awakening to human love with Maud in the church and its eventual decline to death, and if one takes into account the fluctuating cyclical quality of the speaker's moods, then it would be reasonable to assume that the new passion and feeling of oneness with humanity is a temporary phase at best, logically leading to destruction and death.

The original concluding line of *Maud* reinforces the repressed madness detected in the image of the darkness leaping into light. The "blood-red blossom of war with a heart of fire" (III,53) ties together the image strands representing violence and self-destruction. The coupling of blood with the red rose effectively joins allusions to death with the speaker's excessive passion. Images of blood occur throughout *Maud* as symptomatic of the speaker's distorted, morbid nature. In Part I, blood is associated with the violent death of the speaker's father and becomes a means of

conveying his overly sensitized perception of the world. The "blood-red heath"<sup>2</sup> remembered in the second line of the poem is reiterated in his deranged recollection of the duel in Maud's garden. He fears that the flowers are not roses, but blood (II,316). References to blood also serve as metaphors for hatred leading to death. In I,715, the speaker remembers the feud between the two families as being "sprinkled with blood" and the murder of Maud's brother causing his guilt "of blood" (II,121). The "blood-red blossom of war" brings together the excessive quality of the poem's red rose imagery<sup>3</sup> with the morbid destructive associations of blood to suggest that war is no cure for the speaker's madness. It is a means of dealing with the destructive passion detected imagistically as early as in Part I when the speaker says, "the soul of the rose went into my blood" (I,882).

The "blood-red blossom of war" connected with the "heart of fire" assumes the destructive, violent connotations of *Maud's* fire imagery. The imagery has reflected the ambivalent and negative aspects of the speaker's passions -- intensifying according to the extremity of the passion. His early doubt of Maud, envisioned as a fire of foolish pride in Part I, intuited the destructive association of fire with his hatred of the brother. The image of the fires of hell at Part II's opening, symbolically represented the speaker's descent to madness. The "heart of fire" in Part III,

reflects the speaker's passion at an intense and potentially dangerous level.

Since the focus is so strongly inward and consistent with the development of the imagery, it appears to negate the image of the speaker's heart beating as one with the people unified in a just cause. The final stanza of the poem, which Tennyson added to ease the tone of war-mongering, is a weak denouement to the original conclusion. The speaker's hollow rhetoric does little to justify his actions. The perceived nobility of the war cause only seems to awaken him to a "better mind" (III,56). At most, the final stanza shows the speaker actively participating in society. The vocabulary is active: "I have felt", "I am one" (III,58) and "I embrace the purpose of God" (III,59).

The resolution of the image patterns conclusively shows that the speaker is mentally unstable and living in self-delusion at the end of *Maud*.

## NOTES FOR CHAPTER 4

1. See W.D. Shaw and C.W. Gartlein, "The Aurora: A Spiritual Metaphor in Tennyson," VP, III (1965 suppl.), 213-222. The secular analogue of the aurora is used by Tennyson to enact communication with the divine.

2. H. Tennyson, Alfred, Lord Tennyson: A Memoir (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1897), p. 334. Tennyson pointed out the speaker's abnormal perception of the heath.

3. As discussed by E.D.H. Johnson, "The Lily and the Rose: Symbolic Meaning in Tennyson's Maud," PMLA, LXIV (1949).

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