

TENNYSON'S PAIRED POEMS

The Victorian mind was rigid and dogmatic, but it was criticised, we see, by Matthew Arnold and Mill, by Morley and Hughes and J.B. Mozley; and the list could be extended to a score of names. It looks as if the open and flexible mind was also Victorian. Indeed, one might even argue that in one sense it was more Victorian because, unlike the rigid-dogmatic mind with its long history, it was largely indigenous to the nineteenth century.

(Walter Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind, p. 176)

#### DUALISMS

Two bees within a chrystal flowerbell rockèd  
Hum a lovelay to the westwind at noontide.  
Both alike, they buzz together,  
Both alike, they hum together  
Through and through the flowered heather.  
Where in a creeping cove the wave unshockèd  
Lays itself calm and wide,  
Over a stream two birds of glancing feather  
Do woo each other, carolling together.  
Both alike, they glide together,  
Side by side;  
Both alike, they sing together,  
Arching blueglossèd necks beneath the purple weather.

Two children lovelier than Love adown the lea are singing,  
As they gambol, lilygarlands ever stringing:  
Both in blosmwhite silk are frockèd:  
Like, unlike, they roam together  
Under a summervault of golden weather;  
Like, unlike, they sing together  
Side by side,  
MidMay's darling goldenlockèd,  
Summer's tanling diamondeyed.

(Tennyson, "Dualisms")

TENNYSON'S PAIRED POEMS

BY

JOHN ARTHUR MILLER, B.A., M.A.

A Thesis

Submitted to the School of Graduate Studies

in Partial Fulfilment of the Requirements

for the Degree

Doctor of Philosophy

McMaster University

May 1974

DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY (1974)  
(English)

McMASTER UNIVERSITY  
Hamilton, Ontario

TITLE: Tennyson's Paired Poems

AUTHOR: John Arthur Miller, B.A. (University of Toronto)  
M.A. (McMaster University)

SUPERVISOR: Dr. H.J. Ferns

NUMBER OF PAGES: xi, 344.



## ABSTRACT

Throughout his poetic career, Tennyson wrote several poems in pairs, and others in small groups and longer sequences. These poems form such a significant part of his canon, and include some of his most famous and impressive work, that they should play an important part in the current revaluation of the poet. Tennyson's early experiments in writing paired poems began while he was at Cambridge, and reflect his formal studies and the discussions of the Apostles, as well as certain aspects of his temperament.

The early pairs, such as "The Merman" and "The Mermaid", "Nothing Will Die" and "All Things Will Die", and "The Poet" and "The Poet's Mind", all reveal a characteristic mode of expression which Christopher North, in an early review of Tennyson, analysed in another context as an "aversion from the straightforward and strong simplicity of nature and truth." But what North condemns is, for Tennyson, an attempt to convey different attitudes and frames of mind, to transcend the straight-forward and obvious, in search of the complexity of a broader truth. This first, exploratory phase culminates in The Lover's Tale which,

although not a paired poem, in its complete form deals with varying perspectives on a particular incident. It is in the context of these earlier poems that we should read Tennyson's pendant poems, "Ulysses" and "Tithonus". The death of Arthur Hallam in 1833 must not obscure the fact that in these poems, Tennyson depicts two mythological figures who voice contradictory views on the value of human striving and the attainment of divine knowledge. The dilemma of how to reconcile two opposing points of view is dealt with most extensively and resolved more successfully in The Princess where all the philosophical, thematic, generic, technical, and structural contraries are subordinated to the ideas of a "medley" and marriage, both of which effect a reconciliation without denying individuality as a prior condition. In his later career Tennyson completed three important pairs of sequel poems, two of them rounding off poems published by 1842, the "Oenone" and the "Locksley Hall" poems; the "Northern Farmer" poems are entirely a product of his later years, as are the others written in dialect. In these sequels, Tennyson emphasises differences in time more than differences in speaker. Time, change, and the prospect of death become, not surprisingly, prominent themes, not in their own right, but to recall the old themes of open-mindedness and skepticism concerning the

limitations of human knowledge, and Tennyson's unshaken faith in the ultimate value and reality of the spiritual world.

Tennyson's paired poems are important for an understanding of not only The Lover's Tale and The Princess, but also of his other major poems -- In Memoriam, Maud, the Idylls of the King -- and of his major historical plays. All of these can be shown to draw considerable technical and thematic strength from the paired poems. On a more sophisticated level, they reflect the two essential characteristics of Tennyson's poetry discussed here -- complete fidelity to the details of experience, and a flexible and tolerant attitude to this world balanced by an awareness of the transcendent value of divine insight attained in death or at the end of history, and in rare moments of mystical revelation.

## PREFACE

This study began as an examination of all of Tennyson's paired poems, and has become a detailed commentary on some of these poems and certain aspects of others. The paired poems to which I have referred only in passing are treated thus, not because they contradict or jeopardise my argument, but because they contribute little to what I have to say about the other poems, and because they seem to me less interesting in their own right than the poems on which I have focussed my attention. To have discussed them in greater detail would have meant the risk of engaging in analysis for its own sake. What I have tried to do is, by careful reading of the various poems, to show how Tennyson used the technique of pairing poems to reflect a skeptical and temperamental open-mindedness, to explore certain themes in this frame of mind, and to develop new modes of expression which express satisfactorily his central insights about the richness of life and the ultimate value of the spiritual world.

Similarly, I have excluded detailed comparison with other nineteenth-century poets, except in referring to a specific passage or idea. Such is the diversity, especially among Victorian poets, that even to attempt

to generalise is to be an idiot. Some obvious and potentially-illuminating comparisons I have had to reject as digressions in the most literal sense. Nevertheless, I hope that some of these have not been so totally obscured by my concentration on Tennyson that his relationship with other writers does not suggest itself occasionally.

The same reason explains why I have not attempted to make great claims for Tennyson as a Victorian sage; as much as possible, I have considered him as a poet, for whom thought is an essential ingredient, but not the final objective. His wide circle of friendships (especially his friendship with Carlyle) and his extensive reading make possible many connections, but they are relationships which, however interesting, would force the scope of the thesis beyond its already reduced limits. If Tennyson is not a great religious and philosophical teacher of his age, as some of his contemporaries believed, he was a better thinker than he is usually thought to be. Very often, this sort of claim is highly subjective and means little more than that one reader, at least, finds Tennyson's ideas interesting and satisfying, and thus, is more a measure of the reader's mind than of Tennyson's. My claims for Tennyson as a thinker, however, are that his

poems reflect intellectual and emotional maturity, and not neurosis; this is not to deny the powerful and often painful emotions in his poems, but rather to give him full credit for the great artistry with which he composed his poems. If we are to dispose of the Tennysonian cult once and for all, we must concern ourselves less with why he wrote the way he did and more with studying the poems and plays themselves.

For the sake of convenience, I have used the following abbreviations throughout: "Memoir" refers to Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by Hallam Tennyson, 2 vols., (London: Macmillan, 1897); "Jump" refers to Tennyson: The Critical Heritage, ed. John D. Jump, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967); "Ricks" refers to the edition used throughout, The Poems of Tennyson, ed. Christopher Ricks, (London: Longmans, 1969); and "Ricks, Tennyson" applies to the same author's critical biography of the poet, (New York: Macmillan, 1972). Wherever a contemporary reference to Tennyson is reprinted in Jump, I have cited his collection as the more readily available version of the reference.

Finally, I must express my thanks to those who have helped me so generously in preparing this thesis, insofar as this acknowledgement will repay

their kindness. I am grateful to the English Department and the School of Graduate Studies at McMaster University for allowing me to spend two years in England, and to the Canada Council for its financial support during that time. In an unofficial capacity, Peter Dale, Frances Denington, Liz Duthie, Dr. Jay Macpherson, and Dr. J. Sigman have, by their encouragement, their skepticism, and their suggestions, provided considerable help during enjoyable conversations. Next, the staff of the Tennyson Research Centre, Lincoln, and of the Trinity College Library, and Elaine Roscow of the Cambridge University Library have all been most co-operative in furnishing the manuscripts and books I needed when I needed them. Margaret Miller earns my thanks for freeing me from the drudgery of having to type the manuscript yet one more time, and Martin Howley, for doing far more than his share of the proof-reading. I owe thanks, too, to Dr. Brian John and Dean G.D. West who have provided substantial help in the final drafts and finally, to Dr. Tony Tanner, my supervisor at Cambridge, and above all, to Dr. John Ferns, my supervisor at McMaster, whose advice and encouragement have been as ever-ready as they have been welcome. I can only hope that none of these feels betrayed by what follows.

## CONTENTS

	DESCRIPTIVE NOTE	iii
	ABSTRACT	iv
	PREFACE	vii
I	INTRODUCTION: THE CRITICAL BACKGROUND	1
II	TENNYSON'S EARLY PAIRED POEMS	39
III	"ULYSSES" AND "TITHONUS", TENNYSON'S PENDANT POEMS	93
IV	"ELOQUENT STRUCTURE": <u>THE PRINCESS</u>	145
V	TENNYSON'S SEQUEL POEMS: THE TIDE OF TIME	199
VI	CONCLUSION: TENNYSON AND PAIRED POEMS	265
	NOTES TO CHAPTER I	310
	NOTES TO CHAPTER II	313
	NOTES TO CHAPTER III	317
	NOTES TO CHAPTER IV	322
	NOTES TO CHAPTER V	326
	NOTES TO CHAPTER VI	331
	SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY	335



## I. INTRODUCTION: THE CRITICAL BACKGROUND

'I hate the blare and blaze of so-called fame. What business has the public to want to know all about Byron's wildnesses? He has given them fine work, and they ought to be satisfied. It is all for the sake of babble. As for the excuse, "Tôt ou tard tout se sait," nothing can be falser as far as this world is concerned. The surface of the tout may be, but the tout never is, correctly known. "If one knew all, one would pardon all," is much more likely to be the truth.'

(Tennyson, quoted in Memoir, II, p.165)

Alfred Tennyson is the representative poet of the Victorian era, and therefore his reputation is closely allied to that of his contemporaries. Because of his stature, he helped to mould the character of his age and yet, at the same time, he is stamped with its mark. As a result of such an intimate connection with the Victorian age, many of the problems we face in interpreting and appreciating his poetry are buried in our difficulties in coming to terms with the period as a whole. Most of his contemporaries admired him because he overcame his youthful poetic weaknesses in order to become the Laureate and spokesman of his people, while subsequently we have rejected much of the Laureate verse and accuse him of having betrayed his great natural gifts so as to become the "surface flatterer of his own time".<sup>1</sup> The seriousness with which Tennyson fulfilled his responsibilities becomes too easily confused with that of

Victorian missionaries who devoted their lives to hardship and the conversion of the heathen, and we fail to realise that his acceptance of the Laureateship reflects more accurately his development as a poet than a sacrifice of his talent for the good of the nation.

We are not by any means the first readers of Tennyson to object to his later poetry: two of his closest friends, Thomas Carlyle and Edward Fitzgerald, were among the severest critics of his work from an early stage. Fitzgerald, indeed, seems often to be a model for modern Tennysonians in his dissatisfaction with anything which Tennyson wrote after 1842. On several occasions, he complained that recent poems were not as exciting as the old ones written while or shortly after they were both at Cambridge, on one occasion lamenting that Tennyson's poetry had lost the "old champagne flavour".<sup>2</sup> Much of his criticism seems close to an orthodox twentieth-century position, but Fitzgerald nevertheless did not suggest that Tennyson should retreat to old ideas or techniques; the poet still has a mission, a responsibility to write a great work for his age, as Fitzgerald wrote to John Allen in 1835, "I think that you will see Tennyson acquire all that at present you miss: when he has felt life, he will not die fruitless of instruction to man as he is."<sup>3</sup> Carlyle was even more explicit than Fitzgerald on the subject of Tennyson's responsibilities: since Tennyson had a greater function to perform as a moralist than as a poet, he should give up writing poetry

and turn to prose. Beyond demonstrating Tennyson's capacity for not allowing such criticisms of his work to interfere with his friendships, Carlyle's and Fitzgerald's views effectively point out the essential difference between what the twentieth century wants of Tennyson and what his contemporaries required. We value the richness and the perfection of technique in such poems as "Mariana" and "The Lotos-Eaters", but the Victorians required qualities in his verse other than sensuousness undisturbed by morality. A major reason for such a change in opinion lies in the intellectual reaction against what was considered the excessive earnestness and confidence of the Victorians. Most of the important books on Tennyson written at various times since his death in 1892 attempt to justify themselves partly on the basis that at last the tide is turning towards a greater appreciation of Victorian England. For example, this is one of the reasons given for Harold Nicolson's book in 1923, a little over thirty years after Tennyson's death:

We smile today at our Victorians, not confidently, as of old, but with a shade of hesitation: a note of perplexity, a note of anger sometimes, a note often of wistfulness has come to mingle with our laughter. For the tide is turning and the reaction is drawing to its close.<sup>4</sup>

Twenty-five years later W.H. Auden presented an anthology of Tennyson -- a stupid, melancholic poet with a sensitive ear for sound effects -- which he thought would satisfy the readers of the late 1940's.<sup>5</sup> And in 1962, Joanna Richardson

remarked that the revival had begun in earnest,<sup>6</sup> though John Jump in his collection of contemporary reviews of Tennyson published in 1967, doubted that any such change had taken place.<sup>7</sup> And as long as interest in the Victorians was limited to their accomplishments as purveyors of vulgarity, kitsch, and sentimentality, there seemed to be little reason to revise Jump's statement in subsequent years.

Since it has been fashionable for the last fifty years at least to suggest that the Victorians are at last about to recover the critical favour they deserve, and all to so little effect, it is obviously unwise to predict now that the present interest in the period will necessarily yield more satisfactory results. But adverse criticism and controversy indicated that Tennyson was at least being read, while now we turn to his lesser contemporaries in the mistaken assumption that he has less to offer the reader than some members of the Victorian "counter-culture". Certainly, the attitudes to Tennyson which we have inherited from the beginning of this century are no longer of much use to us. They have produced as grotesque a caricature of the poet (though a different one) as the Victorians themselves nourished, a man burdened with unhappiness and frustration, and obsessed with a limited number of problems, about which he became more boring and more pretentious until, in his second childhood, he rediscovered the lost secrets of his poetic youth and began to write well once again until his death.

Although it would be unwise to reject this tradition of Tennysonian criticism, it must be carefully sifted so as not to lose a sense of perspective. Much of what has been written has relied heavily on biographical material, both conjectural and factual, and if it is not largely irrelevant to the poems, at its worst it distracts our attention from, and distorts our understanding of, the poetry. For my purposes in a study of Tennyson's paired poems, there is one persistent and particularly vexing critical theory which has, in various forms, conditioned responses to Tennyson's poetry for over fifty years, and which is only now being seriously challenged by such critics as Alan Sinfield and F.E.L. Priestley.<sup>8</sup> This is the prevalent notion of a split in Tennyson's personality, and manifested in his poetry -- the view that Tennyson contained within himself a retiring, morbidly sensitive poet and a conventional Victorian moralist who shouldered responsibility as easily as he did currently received ideas. It might be assumed that Tennyson's paired poems provide excellent evidence for such a theory, but, in fact, it seems to me that they do not. But before discussing this problem in detail, it is necessary to consider this theme in Tennysonian criticism with its major biographical and poetic implications. I can trace this point of view most conveniently by referring to three important books on Tennyson: Sir Harold Nicolson's Tennyson: Aspects of his Life, Character, and Poetry (1923), E.D.H. Johnson's The Alien

Vision of Victorian Poetry (1952), and Valerie Pitt's  
Tennyson Laureate (1962).

Sir Harold Nicolson's book was published in an attempt to revive a serious interest in Tennyson, and to defend the poet against some of his detractors. In it, Nicolson makes a considerable effort to stress that he means to be constructive, even if his method is iconoclastic; he does not intend to attack what is left of the Tennyson cult in order to shock the admiring few, but to set Tennyson's reputation, once and for all, on a surer footing:

The Tennysonian laurels have grown by now into vast thickets, dusty, cumbersome and unvisited. It is necessary to let in the sun, and in the process much dead wood will have to be rejected and much destroyed. The task of destruction will, I fear, be wearisome: there will be moments when it will seem not only ruthless, but impertinent. But in the end, I think, a clearing will have been made such as will justify a labour seemingly so negative, and will give to the completed task the excuse of having disengaged the essential Tennyson from some, at least, of the undergrowth which now obstructs our vision. For the purpose of this book, if not the method, is very far from being destructive, and if, at the end, its constructive intention is not apprehended, I shall most signally have failed.

In many respects, Nicolson has failed. Far from spearheading the renewal of Tennyson's reputation, he has become the basis of the twentieth-century reaction against Tennyson. In this book, we discover a poet who has become very familiar to us, surrounded by adoring friends prostrating themselves at every poetic pronouncement, the poet who suffers from the internal struggle between his inherent poetic gifts and the wider responsibilities forced on him by his friends. In

addition, Nicolson presents a highly sensitive and emotional poet, but a mindless one, a man who never should have become Poet Laureate or had anything to do with the Apostles. Indeed, Nicolson is so disappointed by the poems in which he believes Tennyson overreaches his grasp as a lyric poet that he ignores them, except insofar as they are of historical interest in the poet's development. Basically, Nicolson sets forth the rationale behind his selection to be included in a hypothetical anthology of Tennyson, selecting good poems from bad, and devising a theory to explain his choice and to establish what he considers to be Tennyson's rightful position among the poets. His is a very personal book and often infuriatingly inconsistent as a result; he simply justifies his own taste without showing any interest in analysing his choices. Accordingly, he complains that In Memoriam is spoiled by the artificial links, especially the Epilogue with its bathetic marriage scene, without questioning his assumption, fashionable at that time, that In Memoriam represents a diary of raw personal experience.<sup>10</sup> Similarly, he admires parts of the Idylls of the King and Enoch Arden, but fears that they are "liable to offend the susceptibilities of today"<sup>11</sup> and so dismisses them. Thus, as Valerie Pitt points out, he is prevented from seeing the centrality of the Epilogue in In Memoriam as an image of redemptive human love<sup>12</sup> (however ambiguous its relevance to the poet's personal life may be) and from seeing the

significance of Tennyson's reference to the poem as a divine comedy.<sup>13</sup> Such arguments would hardly persuade Sir Harold to change his mind, but they illuminate areas which he is unwilling to consider.

Nicolson is aware of many of the limitations of his attitudes; at times he expresses his consciousness of the change in tastes and ideals since Tennyson's day in a tone which betrays a certain amount of bitterness. He observes that "all that is worst in [Tennyson's] poetry can be ascribed directly to the taste and influence of his age",<sup>14</sup> thereby transferring the blame to the anonymous mass of "the Victorians", who have, he suggests elsewhere, grievously betrayed their descendants:

The most that can be said in favour of his attitude [to politics, love, and religion], is that it was shared by a great number of people who, while no less high-minded than Tennyson, were better educated and informed than he was himself. For the extent to which the Victorians misinterpreted and mishandled the phenomena of their age is an historical disaster.<sup>15</sup>

Nicolson's concern, as he stresses, is to deal with the Tennyson who appeals to the readers of 1923, precisely those people who inherited much of the consequences of Victorian mismanagement; he is prepared to concede that his is not a definitive Tennyson, but expresses no real interest in why it is not, apart from referring vaguely to the change in taste as a change from applied to pure poetry.<sup>16</sup>



Nicolson's response to the most striking aspect of Tennyson's character discussed in the book -- his passivity, his susceptibility to all external influence -- seems to be accounted for by changes in taste. Tennyson's nature, according to this view, was so tractable that he fell victim to all his well-wishers who told him not only how, but what, to write. Nicolson's preference, then, tends towards what he calls Tennyson's "essential lyric inspiration" as represented by those poems written while a young man before he came under the influence of his high-minded contemporaries, as well as a very small group of personal lyrics written in extreme old age when the poet was again able to reassert his real self. They are the poems in which Tennyson is least Victorian; when he is most Victorian, his poems are subject to the fortunes of the period as a whole.

Once Nicolson has distinguished between the poems which are of lasting value, and those which are of merely historical significance, he proceeds to identify four periods within Tennyson's career: (1) Juvenilia to the Poems of 1842, marked by the influence of Keats and Coleridge; (2) From Hallam's death (1833) to the publication of Maud in 1855; (3) From 1857 to 1879 (the plays, the Idylls of the King, Enoch Arden, the so-called "Farringford" period); and (4) From 1880 to 1892, the "splendid" Aldworth period.

It is important, I think, clearly to mark the difference between these four periods. For whereas the early period has given us things

like 'Mariana' and 'The Lady of Shalott'; whereas the second period has revealed to us the essential lyrical inspiration of Tennyson, and convinced us of his greatness and permanence as a poet; whereas the last period is a magnificent monument to his vitality and his mastery of language; the third period, the mid-Victorian period, can make no appeal whatever to the modern mind. And, unfortunately, it is by this third period, the Farringford period, by the Idylls and Enoch Arden, that he is now condemned. And that this should be so is both unfair and unintelligent.<sup>17</sup>

And on the same page he describes Tennyson's work between 1857 and 1879 as "intellectually insincere". For Nicolson, Tennyson's greatest virtue is a stubborn fidelity to his personal lyric impulse. As long as he was lonely and unhappy in Lincolnshire, his poetry was authentic and pure; Cambridge, and specifically the Apostles, proved to be his ruin:

By the time he left Cambridge the harm had been done. The great lyric poet who had been born up there among the Lincolnshire wolds had been already tamed, controlled, labelled, and given a function unnatural to his genius; the wild, unhappy animal that lurked within him had been caged and shackled, and the real intention and meaning of the man had been for ever veiled -- even from himself.<sup>18</sup>

It would appear that Hallam's guilt in urging Tennyson to think is mitigated only by his deep friendship and encouragement when the poet was overwhelmed with self-doubts.<sup>19</sup> And Lady Tennyson is to be blamed for diverting Tennyson from his true course, perhaps more subtly perverting her husband's special gifts than anyone else. In view of his qualified admiration of the Idylls of the King and Enoch Arden, it is

safe to assume that Nicolson did not see these periods as rigid divisions; he certainly does not commit himself to approval of everything else Tennyson wrote, nor to rejecting everything written at Farringford. These categories remain rough tools, although he could reasonably argue that Tennyson shows a tendency to write the kind of poetry which he so dislikes between 1857 and 1879, since this is roughly the time when Tennyson did not write unhappy, doubting, personal lyrics, and it is just before this that Tennyson damaged In Memoriam by writing the "insincere" poems in preparation for publication.

From all of this unhappiness, weakness, and surrender emerges the key to Tennyson: there are two Tennysons.

The secret of Tennyson is to be sought not in the apparent harmony between his work and character, but in the essential conflict between the two: in the conflict, that is, between the remarkable depth and originality of his poetic temperament and the shallowness and timidity of his practical intelligence.<sup>20</sup>

and again:

I have emerged [from reading the poems] with a very deep admiration for the great muscular mass of it all, for the sheer efficiency of style; and with a conviction that if one could separate the two Tennysons -- the prosperous Isle-of-Wight Victorian from the black, unhappy mystic of the Lincolnshire wolds -- one would find in the former the secret of his weakness, and in the latter the secret of his preponderating and triumphant strength.<sup>21</sup>

In other words, Tennyson was born a good, even a great, poet, but was spoilt and corrupted by his age. As long as he wrote personally, emotionally and unhappily, he wrote well. But since he did not understand his own weaknesses and

limitations, he allowed himself to be seduced into writing a type of poetry for which he was unsuited and which appears insincere and pompous. As a man, Tennyson lacked the strength of purpose to keep himself true to his art; he only too gladly accepted fame, domestic happiness, and the chance to become a respectable Victorian country squire. His later poetry then is marred by the readiness with which he adopted a public role, and it is only his private inspiration swelling up and overcoming his sense of national duty which occasionally rescues his later poems from tedium and badness.

The weakness and passivity which Nicolson finds central to Tennyson's character clearly adds to the antagonism which he feels towards the poet. There are other aspects of his character which he finds equally annoying:

It is not, I fear, a very satisfactory or inspiring picture. It shows a lack of temperamental grip, a lack of impulse. One can appreciate either of these two conflicting manifestations. One likes people, and poets especially, to have an ample, extravagant gesture between the ages of twenty-four and forty: it is their last chance. One can accept, with respect if not with sympathy, the alternative course of conduct -- the capable, industrious, everyday alternative. But one is forced to conclude that Alfred Tennyson during those important seventeen years was neither adventurous nor capable: he fell between two stools. He became, on the one hand, cautious, pernickety and prim he became, on the other hand, neurotic, inefficient and selfish....

And thus one looks back to Somersby, or forward to Aldworth, with a pang of irritated regret that one of the least defensible periods in Tennyson's life should have synchronised with the vital years of his early manhood....It is with Tennyson himself that we become impatient; and indeed genius should be made of sterner stuff.<sup>22</sup>

Perhaps those elements in the poems which Nicolson finds offensive can best be traced to his dislike of the Victorians, and consequently, to his dislike of Tennyson as a Victorian. The weaknesses of both the man and the age combine to flaw the poetry, but there is no indication of what value the strengths of Victorianism (if there are any) contribute. Yet, by ignoring this question and concentrating on the figure of Tennyson himself, if only to strip him of his sacerdotal vestments in an act of rebellion against the Tennysonian cult, Nicolson leaves a highly idiosyncratic picture of the poet. The earnestness with which he elaborates his dissatisfaction is worthy of the Victorians themselves, though his ideal is one they would not appreciate. He is led to speculate about Tennyson's family background, particularly the source of its black-bloodedness, which he attempts to identify. He considers several possibilities, among them, the possibility that there is gipsy blood in the Tennysons:

And gipsy possibly: even then not Triana gipsy, not Andalusian; but derived preferably from some nomadic denizen of the central European wastes: Hungarian, Czech or Polish. One is tempted by the fantasy of such an idea: one would like to connect it with some substantial evidence. It would explain many things. It would explain not only the Tennyson physique, but also the rancour and the self-pity; the lonely walks at night-time; the wistfulness and the gloom; the obsession of wide, wet, twilight spaces; the indifference to cold. It would explain much of what is best and most permanent in Tennyson's lyrical genius.<sup>23</sup>

The image of the widow of Windsor and her Polish gipsy poet engaging in a discussion of immortality at Osborne House

seems more appropriate to a Lawrencian novella (in which, however, it is unlikely that they would be discussing the after-life of the soul) than it is to nineteenth-century history. Nicolson here clearly demonstrates his inability to bring all the facts together and see them in any sort of unity. He recognises that other facets of Tennyson do exist, but they are not of immediate interest:

The day may come, perhaps, when the conventions of that century will once again inspire the thoughtful or animate the weak. But, for the moment, it is not through these that any interest can be evoked. And thus, if we consider it reasonable and right that Tennyson should also stand among the poets, let us, for the present, forget the delicate Laureate of a cautious age; the shallow thought, the vacant compromise; the honeyed idyll, the complacent ode; let us forget the dulled monochrome of his middle years, forget the magnolia and the roses, the indolent Augusts of his island-home; forget the laurels and the rhododendrons.

Let us recall only the low booming of the North Sea upon the dunes; the grey clouds lowering above the wold; the moan of the night wind on the fen; the far glimmer of marsh-pools through the<sup>24</sup> reeds; the cold, the half-light, and the gloom.

We may admire the way in which the landscape in "Oenone" or "Mariana" reflects the central figure's state of mind, but nowhere in Tennyson are we asked to accept this technique so badly abused as in Nicolson's book, where the landscape of Lincolnshire is no longer a passive symbol, but an active power forming the young poet's character. Paradoxically, it seems that even Tennyson's greatest poetic strength comes from his personal weakness, his susceptibility to the scenery and emotions of his youth.

Unfortunately, it is Nicolson's argument, not his engaging and lively style, which has influenced subsequent attempts to deal with Tennyson's poetry. E.D.H. Johnson's The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry, published thirty years later and ostensibly in reply to Nicolson's book, appears to accept as much of Nicolson's thesis as it refutes. According to Johnson, Nicolson's position "gravely misrepresents" the true relationship between Tennyson and his poetry:

For each of [the Victorian poets] was ultimately seeking to define the sphere within which the modern poet may exercise his faculty, while holding in legitimate balance the rival claims of his private, aristocratic insights and of the tendencies existing in a society progressively vulgarized by the materialism of the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. Thus it came about that the double awareness, which so generally characterised the Victorian literary mind, grew almost into a perpetual state of consciousness in these poets through their efforts to work out a new aesthetic position for the artist.<sup>25</sup>

Instead, he proposes that in place of the two Tennysons, we should substitute a "double awareness" which, on the surface, appears to stress the common source of the public and the private voices within Tennyson, but all too soon becomes merely synonymous with the old idea. Johnson still sees a split between the public and the private in Tennyson, though the greatest contribution resulting from his use of the phrase "double awareness" is that one is encouraged to think in terms of irony or ambiguity and not schizophrenia, and thus is hindered from gratuitous psychoanalysis. In Johnson's view, the besetting problem of the major Victorian poets --

Tennyson, Browning, or Eliot -- was to come to terms with their audience and to discover how to achieve the purity and aloofness of a Wordsworth in the un-Wordsworthian environment of the Victorian city. They were trying, as it were, to write poems like Michael, but from the point of view of the city. They saw the common social and economic abuses too clearly to be able to treat them as incidentally as Wordsworth does, yet their ultimate objective differed little from his. Grasmere and Rydal Mount were no longer legitimate vantage-points from which the Victorian poets could observe their society. Their perspective was closer to Luke's than to his parents' and yet they felt a need to distance themselves from the corruption immediately surrounding them. It then follows that they cherished the innocence and purity of their inner souls, and dreaded the degradation without and yet could not surrender to a life of solipsism.

The problem raised by Johnson is an interesting one, but the dilemma faced by the Victorian poets was not altogether a new one. They apparently felt obliged to find a new solution to it, since satire, employed so successfully in the eighteenth century, no longer attracted them. For although almost all of the major Victorian poets and novelists wrote satire, they seem to have harboured reservations about the great satirists of the previous century. Arnold's statement in "The Study of Poetry" is only the most famous:



Do you ask me whether the application of ideas to life in the verse of these men [Dryden and Pope], often a powerful application, no doubt, is a powerful poetic application? Do you ask me whether the poetry of these men has either the matter or the inseparable manner of such an adequate criticism....I answer: It has not and cannot have them; it is the poetry of the builders of an age of prose and reason. Though they may write in verse, though they may in a certain sense be masters of the art of versification, Dryden and Pope are not classics<sup>26</sup> of our poetry, they are classics of our prose.

It would be an immensely complicated task to account for, and analyse this attitude more fully. Francis Jeffrey in a review of Scott's edition of Swift published in the Edinburgh Review in 1816 provides evidence that the prejudice is not just a Victorian one:

Speaking generally of that generation of authors, it may be said that, as poets, they had no force or greatness of fancy -- no pathos, and no enthusiasm; -- and, as philosophers, no comprehensiveness, depth or originality. They are sagacious, no doubt, neat, clear and reasonable; but for the most part cold, timid, and superficial. They never meddle with the great scenes of nature, or the great passions of man; but content themselves with just and sarcastic representations of city life, and of the paltry passions and meaner vices that are bred in that lower element....They never pass beyond 'the visible diurnal sphere', or deal in any thing that can either lift us above our vulgar nature, or ennoble its reality.<sup>27</sup>

Tennyson's opinions of the eighteenth-century verse satirists were more favourable than Jeffrey's and Arnold's, although he obviously shared their concern about the moral stance of the satirist. Dr Johnson he praised for "grave earnestness" and a high moral tone unsurpassed in English satire.<sup>28</sup> While

he professed respect for Pope's rhetorical skill, he nevertheless contrasted "Pope's little poisonous barbs" unfavourably with Dryden's "strong invective".<sup>29</sup> And, Locker-Lampson tells us, he was "greatly impressed by the deadly-earnest and savagery,....[the] sadness, of Swift's "Legion Club":<sup>30</sup>

Could I from the Building's Top  
Hear the rattling Thunder drop,  
While the Devil upon the Roof,  
If the Devil be Thunder Proof,  
Should with Poker fiery-red  
Crack the Stones, and melt the Lead;  
Drive them down on every Scull,  
While the Den of Thieves is full,  
Quite destroy that Harpies Nest,  
How might then our Isle be blest?  
For Divines allow, that God  
Sometimes makes the Devil his Rod:  
And the Gospel will inform us,  
He can punish sins enormous.

. . . . .

Let them, when they once get in  
Sell the Nation for a Pin;  
While they sit a picking Straws  
Let them rave of making Laws;  
While they never hold their Tongue,  
Let them dabble in their Dung;  
Let them form a grand Committee,  
How to plague and starve the City;  
Let them stare and storm and frown,  
When they see a Clergy-Gown.  
Let them, 'ere they crack a Louse,  
Call for th' Orders of the House;  
Let them with their gosling Quills,  
Scribble senseless Heads of Bills;  
We may, while they strain their Throats,  
Wipe our Arses with their Votes.<sup>31</sup>

The vehemence here betrays a moral outrage only different in degree from that which Tennyson displays in "St Simeon Stylites", his most significant attempt at satire. Although the techniques are so different as not to be worth comparison, the harshness of the tone is similar as is the poet's stance in

relation to the world around him in denouncing the madness of retreating from life whether on a pillar or in a parliament. Although it may be unfortunate that Tennyson did not develop much further his skills as a satirist, considering the success of "St Simeon Stylites", I hope to show that his interest in the many facets of truth and experience led him away from the clearly-defined position of the satirist and towards the development of the paired poem.

In attempting to define the poet's relationship to his society, Professor Johnson offers a useful caveat when he warns critics not to assume too great a degree of dissociation between a poet and his contemporaries (which produces satire), or on the other hand, too great a degree of conformity (which leads to propaganda).<sup>32</sup> The case for involvement is made by Arthur Hallam in his review of Tennyson published in the Englishman's Magazine, which otherwise is a vigorous defence of the idea of beauty as the sole end of art,<sup>33</sup> but which says of poets whose minds are as quick and perceptive as Tennyson's:

It is incumbent to remember that their mission as men, which they share with all their fellow-beings, is of infinitely higher interest than their mission as artists, which they possess by rare and exclusive privilege.<sup>34</sup>

Where we might understand the designation, "poet", in modern terms as a licence for a man to neglect his social responsibilities, even to act in an anti-social manner on the basis of his rare and exclusive privilege, Hallam is arguing

exactly the reverse: that being a poet does not free Tennyson or anyone else from his basic responsibilities as a human being. Thus the poet's pursuit of beauty as an end in itself must finally be answerable to his other responsibilities, though this is not necessarily to say that Art and Beauty must always be the train-bearers of Truth.

While Nicolson and Johnson do not disagree on the major dilemma which Tennyson faced, they do differ in their assessment of the significance of the resulting compromise. For Nicolson, it means disaster for Tennyson's verse, but for Johnson, it represents Tennyson's triumph, a masterly solution arising from the poet's ingenuity in satisfying both himself and his audience; it is not a sign of passivity and weakness, but of strength and courage which allowed Tennyson, and Browning and Arnold as well, to come to terms with their inner and outer selves in a shared four-step process, which Johnson outlines as follows:

- (1) In their youthful poems Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold revealed the habits of mind, the emotional and intellectual leanings, the kinds of imaginative vision -- in other words, the native resources at the disposal of each.
- (2) Subsequently, from a desire to gain a wide audience for their work and hence to play an influential part in the life of the times, all three poets showed a willingness to make concessions to literary fashions with which they were temperamentally out of sympathy.
- (3) Resolved, nevertheless, that conformity should involve as little artistic loss as possible, Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold perfected remarkable techniques for sublimating their private insights without materially falsifying the original perceptions at the heart of their creative impulse.
- (4) The identification of these insights, along with

the recognition of their concealed but vivifying action within poems ostensibly concerned with subjects of different and sometimes contradictory import, draws attention to the true centres of poetic intent in Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold, and thus provides a basis for reassessing their total achievement.<sup>35</sup>

Johnson's main advance over Nicolson's position is that he allows the tension to be seen within the poetry itself, and not between the poetry and the poet, or between poems written at different parts of the poet's career. Instead, the tension of meanings, the ambiguity, exists within each poem, although it is most clearly revealed in the context of other poems:

The thoughtful reader, who approaches the poetry of the 1850's and the 1860's by way of what came before, can hardly fail to observe in this later work the recurrence of certain themes and an habitual reliance on certain formal devices which are at variance with the expressed content of the material. It is as though there brooded in the background a mind constantly alert to strange and disturbing implications in the most commonplace circumstances. Thus, many of the poems which seem to be indisputably the products of Victorian literary convention have an extra dimension which, once recognised, relates them to the deeper sources of the author's poetic vision.<sup>36</sup>

If Johnson is correct, a poem may seem complacently Victorian on the surface, but underneath there lurks a world of personal psychological meaning which is the prime source of the poet's inspiration. Thus, he observes, that "The Two Voices" has a double effect on its readers -- we are almost convinced by the voice of despair, but just as we are ready to give in, we are jerked back to traditional social values and structures.<sup>37</sup> In Tennyson, he argues, the private meaning is always of prime importance and the public meaning, always secondary.

Tennyson remains a lyric poet, but one who has learned the "subterfuges"<sup>38</sup> necessary to win his audience.

Johnson may have disposed of the two Tennysons, each struggling to gain ascendancy over the other, but he offers little to replace this theory. His conception may be more precise and useful as a critical tool, but it leaves us with a Tennyson torn between two worlds. Whereas Nicolson regards the two Tennysons as engaged in a conflict throughout the poet's life, Johnson believes that there was a final compromise achieved at some point in the poet's career, from which time all of Tennyson's poems represent a sort of concordia discors in which the conventional Victorian surface barely conceals the evidence of the poet's double awareness. This assumption then leads to the dangerous (though not necessarily always invalid) technique which he applies to "The Two Voices", prompting him, in effect, to say that its inner meaning argues against its outer, literal conclusion.<sup>39</sup> Tennyson, then, becomes one of the subtlest of ironists and a master of ambiguity, fooling not only virtually all of his contemporaries, but even his family, including his wife and son. Johnson's argument also makes Tennyson's attitude to his readers an unusually confusing one, since as Poet Laureate he is ostensibly a public figure, addressing his contemporaries from a certain privileged position, and yet he is at the same time holding back the truest and most significant part of his meaning from public gaze. Such a Tennyson not only has a double awareness, but is apparently two-faced.

As Valerie Pitt remarks:

It is regarded as a deviation from the line of his special genius, forced on him, first by the insistence of his Cambridge friends that a poet must have a mission, and afterwards as a means of retaining public favour. He can be allowed to be a good poet in his youth only by being both a fool and a hypocrite in his middle years.<sup>40</sup>

In her book, published ten years after Johnson's, Miss Pitt sets out to deal with that part of Tennyson's career which offers so many difficulties to the poet's admirers, the forty-two years of his Laureateship, during which time he had all the opportunity he could have wished in which to carry out the mission imposed upon him. It is obvious from the representative quotation above that she derives little conviction from the conflict between two Tennysons or the two facets of a double awareness. Unfortunately, her point of view tends to lapse into the old notions, in spite of the radical alternatives which her approach allows. Her notion of Tennyson provides an opportunity to escape from the personality cult and the problems which frustrate Nicolson and Johnson, and yet her criticism of individual poems seems to indicate that she has not followed the way she outlines. Although she accepts the framework of conflict outlined by Nicolson, by which the soul cannot survive if it is totally self-absorbed and yet cannot bear to live in the world, she argues that this is a problem of Tennyson's early youth, and even then, not a moral one.<sup>41</sup> As she suggests, the traditional formulation of the problem in the later Tennyson begs too many questions:

The really interesting problem in the study of Tennyson becomes, then, not 'Why did his poetic power flag and fail after he became Laureate?' but 'How did the poet of a purely private emotion become the poet of a public order?' In a sense it is not a question of his 'becoming' anything: the formal, impersonal elements of the Laureate verse were always to be found in Tennyson, and are recognised by that class of criticism which speaks of him as 'classical'. The recognition of this 'classicism' should lead us to the real dialectic of Tennyson's mind. There is in it certainly the morbidity, the melancholia, the extraordinary sensitivity of the neurotic, but there is also, if only in the form of the verse, an awareness of order and formality, the imposition, if only in a pattern of words, of an objective shape on a subjective feeling. The balance both of metric and melancholia implies a tension and a balance in his work.<sup>42</sup>

Although we have here the usual references to a split within Tennyson (the "real dialectic of Tennyson's mind" and "tension"), yet there is a much more significant point being made: there is no cataclysmic struggle or pragmatic compromise involved in Tennyson's career, but rather any doubts he may have had about the poet's role are answered before he won a large audience. From this we can conclude that he was never as naïvely self-indulgent in his poems as he has been made out to be; after all, he wrote his "Spasmodic" poem when he was Poet Laureate, not when he was a disturbed adolescent. In addition to belittling the biographical implications of the problem, Miss Pitt denies some of the most popular distinctions maintained by successive generations of Tennysonians, among them, the distinction between the world of fantasy, retreat and art and the world of concrete reality and daily life:



The world of trance, the world of sleep and dream, in which the identities of things are lost, shares his vision with a world which is sharply defined, clear, and even minute in detail. His imagination is always slipping from the real to the fantastical, but his careful observation of real things imparts solidity to the very fantasy. In entering Tennyson's mind we are entering a world in which reality does not repel, as it so often does, the fantastic; on the contrary it is often the fantasy which interprets or symbolises something discerned in the real.<sup>43</sup>

The implications of this statement for our understanding of Tennyson are enormous. By suggesting that the private world of fantasy is not the complete antithesis of the world of everyday reality for the poet, Miss Pitt is implying, to take one example, that the Soul errs in "The Palace of Art", not by choosing the palace instead of the outside world in the first place, but by seeing the two as antithetical; this is the reason that the Soul does not order the palace to be destroyed:

So when four years were wholly finishèd,  
 She threw her royal robes away.  
 'Make me a cottage in the vale', she said,  
 'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are  
 So lightly, beautifully built:  
 Perchance I may return with others there  
 When I have purged my guilt.' (ll. 289-96)

In this view it makes no sense to criticise "The Lotos-Eaters" because the island is modelled on Torquay or "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" because its landscape is barely disguised Lincolnshire, or to dismiss the Idylls of the King as a "gothick" charade without any relevance to

contemporary life. For Tennyson these worlds are not mutually exclusive, but rather complementary, and the relationship between them is necessary and constructive, not unfortunate and detrimental to him as a poet. Although the two realms are intimately connected, Tennyson is not such a fool as to confuse them, a mistake which, in equating years of physical discomfort with the salvation of his soul, damns St Simeon Stylites. Rather, Tennyson accepts the reality of both worlds and their inseparability, though he always asserts the primacy of the spiritual world both in an orthodox Christian and in a psychological sense.

The relationship between the world of the senses and the world of the spirit provides the basis for Miss Pitt's defence of Tennyson against the charge that he was blind, either wilfully or unwittingly, to the social abuses abounding in Victorian England and that his isolation on the Isle of Wight disqualifies him as a serious social critic. It is true that there is little direct social comment in Tennyson's verse, the major exception being The Princess. The heroes of the two "Locksley Hall" poems and of Maud certainly comment on society bluntly enough, but one can never be sure of their objectivity and stability so that one hesitates to identify their views as Tennyson's. In his public poems such as the "Exhibition Ode" or the "Jubilee Ode" too, Tennyson provides little concrete evidence of social concern. But, as Miss Pitt suggests, this is not the result of an unsatisfactory compromise in which Tennyson plays the flatterer nor is it a

sign of Tennyson's own failure to perceive what was happening around him. In fact, Tennyson looks beyond the inadequate sanitation, educational system, and housing, which are for him only the superficial manifestations of a more serious problem which he identifies as materialism:

The mystical reflections bear, and are meant to bear, directly on the state of the common weal. In writing poems about his mystical intuitions Tennyson set out to combat the materialism which he saw as the root of social evil, and these poems are not less but more didactic than Enoch Arden and the Idylls of the King....

His apprehension of the relations between the intellectual, the moral, and the social is very vivid indeed. "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" rages not so much against the political behaviour of the age as against the thoughts and attitudes which produced it.<sup>44</sup>

To attack specific abuses, then, would be merely painting the measles-spots white, merely treating the symptoms and not curing the disease. One may well want to disparage this as a naïvely mystical view of the world, but it is not that of a recluse who is entirely wrapped up in securing his own salvation without concern for others. The Idylls of the King, Tennyson's central treatment of the relationship between private moral standards and a system of government, provides a useful example of this in Vivien's successful temptation of Merlin. Merlin has been Arthur's guiding spirit, his advisor in all things, but he is finally overcome by Vivien, whom he knows to be the agent of Arthur's arch-enemy, King Mark:

Thus he grew  
 Tolerant of what he half disdained, and she,  
 Perceiving that she was but half disdained,  
 Began to break her sports with graver fits,  
 Turn red or pale, would often when they met  
 Sigh fully, or all-silent gaze upon him  
 With such a fixt devotion, that the old man,  
 Though doubtful, felt the flattery, and at times  
 Would flatter his own wish in age for love,  
 And half believe her true: for thus at times  
 He wavered; but that other clung to him,  
 Fixt in her will, and so the seasons went.

Then fell on Merlin a great melancholy;  
 He walked with dreams and darkness, and he found  
 A doom that ever poised itself to fall,  
 An ever-moaning battle in the mist,  
 World-war of dying flesh against the life,  
 Death in all life and lying in all love,  
 The meanest having power upon the highest,  
 And the high purpose broken by the worm.  
 ("Merlin and Vivien", ll. 175-94)

It is a combination of extreme intellectualism, moral carelessness, and his increasing sense of gloom and despair which encourages Merlin to yield to Vivien. Once he does, he is imprisoned and Arthur is deprived of his wisdom and advice, thereby losing the last chance of averting disaster. And any of the specific crimes or sins in the poem, whether adultery, treachery, murder, fratricide, even jealousy, lust, envy, and despair are not independent phenomena, but symptoms of the much more pervasive disillusionment with and neglect of Arthur's ideal.

Obviously, disillusionment and materialism cannot be cured or even checked by new sewers, better education, or the establishment of any number of charitable foundations. They can be treated by the moralist, not the political revolutionary or reformer, and their cure necessitates a

solution which at once applies to society as individuals and as a community. Society cannot reform itself without individual effort on the part of all its members, and yet its evils cannot be redressed simply by a few saints. Again, the Idylls of the King offers the most convenient illustration. Guinevere and Lancelot's guilt is rumoured early in the poem, but actual proof is withheld until much later. Nevertheless, this "secret" affair is used by various members of Arthur's court as sanction for unnatural and cruel behaviour, beginning with Geraint whose suspicions are responsible for the humiliations which Enid suffers:

And Enid loved the Queen, and with true heart  
Adored her, as the stateliest and the best  
And loveliest of all women upon earth.  
And seeing them so tender and so close,  
Long in their common love rejoiced Geraint.  
But when a rumour rose about the Queen,  
Touching her guilty love for Lancelot,  
Though yet there lived no proof, nor yet was heard  
The world's loud whisper breaking into storm,  
Not less Geraint believed it; and there fell  
A horror on him, lest his gentle wife,  
Through that great tenderness for Guinevere,  
Had suffered, or should suffer any taint  
In nature. ("The Marriage of Geraint", 11.19-32)

Later in the Idylls when the "world's loud whisper" has convinced virtually all of Arthur's subjects and the reader as well, that Guinevere and Lancelot are guilty, Sir Pelleas is betrayed by Gawain and Ettarre:

Then fared it with Sir Pelleas as with one  
Who gets a wound in battle, and the sword  
That made it plunges through the wound again,  
And pricks it deeper: and he shrank and wailed,  
'Is the Queen false?' and Percivale was mute.  
'Have any of our Round Table held their vows?'  
And Percivale made answer not a word.  
'Is the King true?' 'The King!' said Percivale.  
'Why then let men couple at once with wolves.  
What! art thou mad?' ("Pelleas and Ettarre", 11.518-27)

Both the realisation that the Queen is guilty and the widespread corruption which develops as a result drive Pelleas mad and, in his complete disillusionment, impel him to found the Round Table of the North where there is no inconsistency between the ideal and the real simply because there is no ideal:<sup>45</sup>

'Tell thou the King and all his liars, that I  
Have founded my Round Table in the North,  
And whatsoever his own knights have sworn  
My knights have sworn the counter to it -- and say  
My tower is full of harlots, like his court,  
But mine are worthier, seeing they profess  
To be none other than themselves -- and say  
My knights are all adulterers like his own,  
But mine are truer, seeing they profess  
To be none other; and say his hour is come,  
The heathen are upon him, his long lance  
Broken, and his Excalibur a straw.'

("The Last Tournament", ll.77-88)

This one example of the serious and direct consequences of the Queen's infidelity stresses the impossibility of dissociating the personal domestic problems Arthur faces and their public, political counterparts. Political chaos is thus shown to be symptomatic of more fundamental moral evils in individual members of society. Such a relationship is of the greatest importance to Tennyson, since on it is based his claim as a public poet. As Valerie Pitt states, however, it is not an intellectual, but an emotional bond in its appeal to universal feelings:

[Auden's] emphasis on the emotional state, the 'vertigo of anxiety', rather than the rational difficulty, makes Tennyson's poetry about doubt at once more personal and more universal.... The personal opens on the universal, for Tennyson's apprehensions of his own state clothe and express themselves in common symbols.<sup>46</sup>

What is true of the bond between Tennyson and the modern reader appears to be as valid for his contemporary readers. On the surface it would make little sense to be offered the Laureateship for an elegy written on the death of the poet's bosom friend, a man who had died almost twenty years earlier, before he had had a chance to prove his abilities to any one beyond a circle of highly partisan admirers. And indeed, it is not the figure of Hallam which makes the poem great but rather the mourning poet himself, whose grief is so personal and yet so universal that Queen Victoria, among hundreds of others, had only to change the gender of a few pronouns for the poem to become an expression of her grief after Albert's death.<sup>47</sup>

In Memoriam begins as an intensely personal poem in which the poet, like the child, of section XLV, feels "His isolation grow defined". But as the poem progresses its central concern with the poet's exclusively personal loss becomes less particular, aided by the mourner's fondness for metaphysical speculation and his increasing use of historical, geological, and evolutionary metaphors towards the end of the poem. When the poet recognises the pattern of Hallam's life and death and his own growth from sorrow and doubt to confidence and faith, his personal isolation is lost in a world of change and development, though his individuality remains intact. This is what Tennyson means when he said that the "I" of In Memoriam was often not the poet, but

the voice of humanity speaking through him.<sup>48</sup> And when he said that "Ulysses" was a more direct expression of his feelings after Hallam's death than In Memoriam,<sup>49</sup> he is merely underlining his understanding of how poems, because they deal with what is common to all men in an individual figure, can be simultaneously personal and universal without incurring allegations of weakness or empty compromise. Because Prince Albert recognised that Tennyson was not simply articulating a private woe, but was speaking in a public voice on a common event in the lives of all men, he suggested that Tennyson be given the Laureateship.<sup>50</sup> Although one might expect it to be awarded for more political considerations, whether as a plum for a party hack or in recognition of previous political poems, Prince Albert seems to have sensed on the basis of In Memoriam that Tennyson could successfully fill the public role of Laureate. Certainly Wordsworth, whom Tennyson succeeded in the position, and whose Prelude was published in the same year as In Memoriam, in this respect offers a useful contrast to Tennyson. Wordsworth was Laureate for only seven years and wrote nothing in his official capacity, except his "Lines Inscribed in a Copy of his Poems Sent to the Queen for the Royal Library at Windsor" (1846). But The Prelude, which like In Memoriam, is a largely autobiographical poem, stresses the poet's individuality, his uniqueness, whereas In Memoriam, which also concerns the growth of a poet's mind, deals with the common sorrows of men.



That, in brief, is an important difference between the two poets, for although Wordsworth's political poetry is on the whole much more successful than Tennyson's, its revolutionary ideal lacks the bond between the individual and the public which made Tennyson's so popular in its day.

The resolution of this paradox is most apparent in Tennyson's use of marriage as the image of reconciliation of the individual and society. Thus, the Epilogue at the end of In Memoriam is necessary not only to make the poem a divine comedy, but to help to draw the poet back into the world from his isolation. Similarly, he is won back at the end of "The Two Voices" by the sight of the family going happily to church. And as Valerie Pitt remarks, love is the strongest force in In Memoriam, not science or religion, as we have already seen.

Thus, Tennyson's ideal of the man well-integrated into his society implies that, in terms of his own life as Poet Laureate, he is not the bard of Gray's ode, setting himself up to denounce the world below him, but rather a man of the people, sometimes speaking on their behalf on occasions like the funeral of the Duke of Wellington or the Queen's Jubilee, and sometimes speaking to them, bringing to their attention matters which he wishes them to reflect on, as in "The Charge of the Light Brigade". Nor does he resemble Professor Johnson's bard writing to express himself and to please his readers, saying one thing and meaning exactly two.

As I said earlier, Valerie Pitt's book makes a significant departure from the tradition of Tennysonian criticism which we find in Nicolson and Johnson. She accepts that the basic problem of the public versus the private did exist in some form or other, but insists that it was resolved early in Tennyson's career. As a result, her Tennyson is not a hopelessly weak, ineffectual neurotic nor is he a clever rhetorician writing empty public poetry which gains its vitality only in its personal significance, but rather a poet, who writes private poetry which, as he knows, has a public resonance -- a poet, in short, who is well-adapted to society and is confident of his role among his fellow men. So great is his confidence, in fact, that he does not adopt the obvious course of becoming a political polemicist, but attacks the underlying and indirect, but more important, causes of social problems. And, finally, her Tennyson is a poet who continues to develop both intellectually and poetically throughout his life in a way which challenges the appreciation far more than one might have thought possible.

Such conclusions are of considerable assistance in clearing away some of the thickets around Tennyson, and yet Miss Pitt is still haunted by the ghosts of her predecessors. As I have argued, her ideas are capable of a much wider application than she suggests. As a result, her book leaves several inconsistencies unresolved and creates an impression of uncertainty on her part. One example arises from her

description of In Memoriam as a poem which is both public and private at the same time; yet she does not appear to realise that exactly this is true of such late lyrics as "Flower in the Crannied Wall" and "Crossing the Bar".<sup>51</sup> Furthermore, even though she says that Tennyson draws no clear distinction between the private and the public, the fantastic and the everyday, she dismisses the Idylls of the King because it is too personal in its concern with Arthur as Hallam and therefore has no value apart from some of its purple passages.<sup>52</sup> Tennyson leaves one with the sense, she states, of being unfulfilled,<sup>53</sup> echoing Nicolson's complaint that Tennyson's life lacked a suitably extravagant gesture. And after showing how Tennyson had managed to transcend the problem of retreat and commitment to the world, she feels that he provides only private answers to public problems,<sup>54</sup> and proceeds to deny that a common ground always existed between Tennyson and his readers.<sup>55</sup> Secondly, although she praises the development of Tennyson's symbolism by which certain images gradually acquire a greater and richer significance as they recur throughout Tennyson's career, she is reluctant to apply a similar principle to his use of words. She successfully points out the carelessness in Johnson's associations of the East with moral laxity,<sup>56</sup> and the ocean voyage with strenuous activity<sup>57</sup> by asking us to consider the use of the East as the place of Christ's birth in the Idylls of the King and

the sea in "Crossing the Bar":

The significance of these symbols is modified by the varying contexts of emotions and sense associations in which they are found. There is a constant play between Tennyson's apprehensions of the shifting world of sense, and the symbols in which he has defined and crystallised his meditations on that world. It is... a play which continues through the best part of his poetic life.<sup>58</sup>

Yet, she attacks "De Profundis" on the grounds that the word "deep" is made to carry too much weighty significance by a similar process of accumulated meaning.<sup>59</sup> No one would argue that the poem in question is an attractive poem, but Miss Pitt does not explain why she approves of Tennyson's allowing symbols to take on new meanings as they recur and yet disapproves of his using words in a similar way.

In her practical criticism, Miss Pitt defends several poems generally considered "Laureate" verse, mainly on the fineness of the metrical experiments and the delicate balance between the emotion and the form. Yet her final conclusions are disappointingly negative. She concludes that Tennyson's later poems are of limited interest and value, since there is no evidence in them of any tragic guilt, as she calls it.<sup>60</sup> This verdict is particularly surprising since her view of the relationship between the inner and the outer world should have warned her against such a broad statement. Perhaps the very idea of tragic guilt is irrelevant to a poet who sees the world in the terms which she suggests are appropriate to Tennyson. Finally, it is her excessive caution in applying

her most stimulating insights a little more carefully and extensively to Tennyson's entire career which proves most disappointing. Once this has been done, perhaps we will be free of some of the old bogeys of Tennysonian criticism, and will be able to turn our attention more closely to the poems themselves.

In concluding this summary of the recent history of the idea of Tennyson as a split figure, it is only fair to mention that recent critics have rejected the theory to the point where it (and most other biographical considerations) have been ignored in a book as significant and valuable as F.E.L. Priestley's Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry. In this book, published fifty years after Sir Harold Nicolson's, Professor Priestley has explored the entire range of Tennyson's career as the product of a single, if complex, but securely united poetic sensibility, and perhaps what is more important, as a craftsman and deliberate experimenter in language, metre, and genre. In referring to the theory about Tennyson's split character, Professor Priestley writes that, although there is some truth in the idea, "even granting his sensitivity, Tennyson was by no means a fragile character", and quotes J.S. Pettigrew's Tennyson: The Early Poems in this regard:

'Perennially fascinating is the extent to which "Tennysonian" poetry and Tennyson's personality seem to be at odds, essentially to complement rather than to reflect each other -- often almost as though the gruff, very strong and masculine poet were extending and even completing himself in the creation of the delicate, the fragile, and the feminine.'

By careful close reading it is possible for us to discover in Tennyson's paired poems, not the evidence of weakness, division, and disintegration, but a mature expression of the poet's awareness of the multiplicity and impermanence of the phenomenal world -- contradictions, paradoxes, changes, and inconsistencies which are reconciled in the noumenal world, about which we mortals can know so little. It is in the confidence of this insight and of the expectation that death and immortality will yield the knowledge for which he so yearns, that Tennyson's poetic career flourishes from his earliest poems until his death.

## II. TENNYSON'S EARLY PAIRED POEMS

### I

All thoughts, all creeds, all dreams are true,  
All visions wild and strange;  
Man is the measure of all truth  
Unto himself. All truth is change:  
All men do walk in sleep, and all  
Have faith in that they dream:  
For all things are as they seem to all,  
And all things flow like a stream.

### II

There is no rest, no calm, no pause,  
Nor good nor ill, nor light nor shade,  
Nor essence nor eternal laws:  
For nothing is, but all is made.  
But if I dream that all these are,  
They are to me for that I dream;  
For all things are as they seem to all,  
And all things flow like a stream.

Argal -- this very opinion is only true  
relatively to the flowing philosophers.  
(Tennyson, "Οἱ ῥέοντες")

Tennyson's first extant efforts at writing paired poems significantly date from his residence at Trinity College, Cambridge, between October 1827 and February 1831, and it is likely that at least two of these pairs, "The Poet" and "The Poet's Mind" and "All Things Will Die" and "Nothing Will Die", were influenced directly or indirectly by the young poet's association with the Apostles. It is difficult to imagine what influence the Apostles can have had on "The Merman" and "The Mermaid", though these poems

were written during the same period. If there is a link between these paired poems and Tennyson's time at Cambridge, it is obvious that we must look elsewhere than simply to the discussions of the Apostles. Although Tennyson occasionally professed a Wordsworthian contempt for the University,<sup>1</sup> his studies had an immense and long-lasting effect on his mind not only because of his tutor, Whewell's, stimulation of his interests in geology and evolution, but also in the way in which his mind worked. The Apostolic debates played a significant, though by no means a paramount, part in the development of Tennyson's use of paired poems. Since Tennyson's association with the Apostles is relatively well known, it will do well to consider briefly the more formal aspects of his education at Cambridge.

The Cambridge which Tennyson attended was largely untouched by educational reform (even the Classical Tripos was not introduced until a few years later), and his course of study consisted largely of the traditional disciplines of mathematics and moral philosophy. Another of the remnants of the medieval university at this time was the practice of oral examinations for the degree. This examination took the form of a debate on one of several topics submitted in advance by the student himself. Preparation for this examination, perhaps even more than the meetings of the Apostles, lies, I believe, at the root of Tennyson's paired poems. In the examination the question to be discussed generally con-



cerned moral philosophy and it was debated in the presence of a Moderator (Examiner) with three Opponents, or fellow students who were required to reply to the student in turn. To complete the examination, each student had to adopt all roles except that of Moderator. At the beginning of the examination, the student read a short essay which the first Opponent was required to refute in eight arguments. After their debate the second Opponent advanced five arguments in refutation, and finally the third spoke, offering only three.<sup>2</sup> Since each candidate for a degree had both to propose and oppose the question, and had to attempt to produce a new refutation after as many as fifteen others had been tried (in the case of the third Opponent), it is obvious that the examination tested not only his ability in logic and moral philosophy, and careful preparation of an argument, but also the quick-wittedness and polemical skill necessary for the devil's advocacy in considering all possible aspects of the question. Although Tennyson did not actually undergo this examination nor take his degree, he had been preparing for it when called home during his father's last illness, and he was anxious to return to take the examination after his father died.<sup>3</sup> Since he was so close to taking his degree, it is most probable that his actual preparation for the examination would have involved exercising the faculty which he used in writing the paired poems.

Perhaps the most famous example of this sort of

polemical writing to emerge from the English universities is the collection of seven Latin Prolusions composed by Milton for delivery while still a student at Christ's College, Cambridge. Although they are not the direct result of the old system of examinations, and indeed both may be derived from a common practice in medieval universities, nevertheless their subjects show the same far-ranging analysis of a set question such as we find in Tennyson's early paired poems. In the Prolusions Milton discusses "Whether day or night is the more excellent", "Learning brings more blessings to men than ignorance", "Sportive exercises on occasion are not inconsistent with philosophical studies", and indeed, two Prolusions form a pair -- "In the destruction of any substance there can be no resolution into First Matter" and "There are no partial forms in an animal in addition to the whole". In a book on the influence of education on seventeenth-century literary tastes, John Mulder argues that such a polemical background leads naturally to the technique employed by Milton in "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso", in which two opposing ideas are juxtaposed, so that the theme of each is sharpened and defined in contrast to the other,<sup>4</sup> very much as in these early paired poems of Tennyson. As Mulder observes, however, Milton's was an age which did not take kindly to poetic self-expression as did the nineteenth century, nor is the technique limited to Milton or even to Cambridge men.<sup>5</sup> But Tennyson's background in this respect

would have differed little from Milton's and furthermore, one must remember that Tennyson again and again denied that his poems were simple self-expression, at the same time acknowledging some obvious rudimentary basis in the poet's experience:

In a certain way, no doubt, poets and novelists, however dramatic they are, give themselves in their works. The mistake that people make is that they think the poet's poems are a kind of 'catalogue raisonné' of his very own self, and of all the facts of his life, not seeing that they often only express a poetic instinct, or judgment on character real or imagined, and on the facts of lives real or imagined. Of course some poems, like my 'Ode to Memory', are evidently based on the poet's own nature, and on hints from his own life.<sup>6</sup>

Considering Tennyson's and Milton's shared Cambridge background, and the rather surprising fact that Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are, apart from Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience, the only well-known precedents for Tennyson's paired poems, it is doubly important to consider Milton's pair before beginning to study Tennyson's early paired poems.

"L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are among Milton's earliest poems, probably written before he was twenty-three and while still a student at Cambridge. Although each poem in isolation is reasonably straightforward, they become particularly difficult when one attempts to describe and define their inter-relationship. Obviously on the most superficial level they deal with two different temperaments, represented

by two different figures, L'Allegro (defined by Florio as "joyfull, merie, jocond, pleasant, frolike"<sup>7</sup>), and Il Penseroso, or "the pensive". If we examine the opening lines of each of the two poems the finer details of the connections between the two come into sharper focus. Here is the opening of "L'Allegro":

Hence loathed Melancholy  
 Of Cerberus, and blackest Midnight born,  
 In Stygian cave forlorn  
 'Mongst horrid shapes, and shrieks, and sights unholy,  
 Find out some uncouth cell,  
 Where brooding Darkness spreads his jealous wings,  
 And the night-raven sings;  
 There under ebon shades, and low-browed rocks,  
 As ragged as thy locks,  
 In dark Cimmerian desert ever dwell. (ll. 1-10)

and of "Il Penseroso":

Hence vain deluding Joys,  
 The brood of Folly without father bred,  
 How little you bestead,  
 Or fill the fixed mind with all your toys;  
 Dwell in some idle brain,  
 And fancies fond with gaudy shapes possess,  
 As thick and numberless  
 As the gay motes that people the sunbeams,  
 Or likest hovering dreams  
 The fickle pensioners of Morpheus' train. (ll. 1-10)

After rejecting the undesired frame of mind, the poems each invoke a patron goddess, the goddess Mirth "fair and free" or the goddess Melancholy "sage and holy", according to the preference of each. This much, at least, is clear and the matter of common agreement, but it is all on which there is no dispute.

On the basis of the openings which I have quoted, it is possible to generalise a little about the relationship

between the two poems. "L'Allegro" seems altogether more vividly realised than "Il Penseroso" and more forceful in its detail. Not only is the passion greater in the opening lines, but the adjectives are particularly harsh -- "loathed", "blackest", "horrid", "brooding", "jealous", and the reference to Cerberus, midnight, the Stygian cave, shapes, shrieks and sights unholy, the uncouth cell, Darkness, the night-raven, and the dark Cimmerian desert confirm the initial impression. "Il Penseroso" seems much cooler in emotion, since it rejects "vain deluding Joys", a phrase which somehow excites a less violent response than "loathed Melancholy". And Il Penseroso, as a character, is content merely to hint (with suitably elegant restraint) that these Joys are bastards. And in place of the harshness of "L'Allegro", "Il Penseroso" offers a fixed mind, toys, fancies fond, gaudy shapes (compare "L'Allegro"'s horrid shapes), all of which are vague and unmenacing. Even the most concrete image in the first ten lines of "Il Penseroso", "the gay motes that people the sunbeams", is strikingly insubstantial by comparison with "L'Allegro". This is not to suggest that "L'Allegro" has more emotional impetus behind it, however, but merely that there are two entirely different temperaments involved. While "L'Allegro" fulminates against Melancholy in an accumulation of sensuous detail and subjective responses ("loathed" and "horrid" both of which are, in the eighteenth-century

distinction, secondary qualities and are not inherent in the perceived object but in the perceiver), "Il Penseroso", it might be argued, attacks more subtly and more devastatingly, not only by denying any parentage to those rejected Joys, but also by referring to their primary qualities; these Joys are vain and deluding intrinsically and thus the speaker's distaste for them is self-evident.

No detailed analysis of the two poems is necessary or desirable here. The debate among Milton's critics concerning the connections between the two poems seems to be one over which Chaos umpire sits. John Carey, in a recent introductory study of Milton, concludes, "When all the links have been unearthed, though, the poems remain opposed. The most that can be said is that they offer not two different personalities, but two ways of life open to the same reticent, rather sad figure."<sup>8</sup> But William Riley Parker, in his biography of Milton, disagrees:

In all his career Milton never wrote any other verses more catholic or less ambiguous than "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso", and the conflicting interpretations which have been offered are triumphs of misplaced ingenuity. "L'Allegro" is in praise of mirth, as it plainly announces. L'Allegro himself is, of course, a cheerful person, who finds joy in living. He has no 'philosophy'; he is not a hedonist, seeking mere pleasure, nor is he 'the careless man who goes through life... avoiding its dark places, and never stopping to ask what it all means.' To say this is to do what Milton nowhere does, even by implication: it is to make a moral judgment on L'Allegro's activities....

"Il Penseroso" is in praise of 'melancholy', as it plainly announces. Il Penseroso himself is, therefore, a pensive person, who enjoys study and solitude. He, too, has no 'philosophy'; he is not at all a puritanical kill-joy... He is simply and solely what the poem says he is.

And the poem does not say (or anywhere imply) that he is Milton.<sup>9</sup>

This represents one of the more restrained parts of Parker's attacks on the critics who draw close links between the two poems; the novel spectacle of a literary biographer so bluntly refusing to relate his subject's life and art must make us reconsider Carey's conclusion that there is that "reticent, rather sad figure" shared by the poems, though it need not necessarily be Milton. And Parker is correct in saying that there is no intervention by Milton in either poem, whether directly by the assertion of a norm, or indirectly through an identification of the author or an authorial persona in the poems. Of course, each poem passes an implicit judgment on the other, but there is no evidence of Milton's interference in order to make his own preference clear. If Dr Carey finds traces of melancholy in "L'Allegro", it is equally easy to find signs of joy and happiness in "Il Penseroso", though in each case, the subordinate emotion is entirely consistent with the character-type of the individual concerned. These two poems, it would seem, are an important exception to Coleridge's famous dictum, "Shakespeare became all things well into which he infused himself, while all

forms, all things became Milton."<sup>10</sup> Here, if nowhere else, Milton's personality, the facts of his life, his political views, his theology, are all submerged in these poems, and even the critics most clearly opposed to Parker's view would agree that "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" require careful study before they yield signs of their author and his views.

If "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are not identical twins, they are twins nevertheless, and the elaborate patterns of echoes and parallels existing between the two, exist not so much to stress the similarity between them, but to emphasise their differences. In the same way, human twins dressed differently can be distinguished from each other even by total strangers and treated as individuals quite distinct from each other. The fact that both L'Allegro and Il Penseroso go for walks is merely trivial, but when it serves to illustrate where they walk, it stresses the difference in temperament between them. Similarly, their differing tastes in drama are more revealing than the simple observation that both like the theatre. And the parallelism of the last two lines in each poem -- "These delights, if thou canst give, / Mirth with thee, I mean to live " ("L'Allegro", ll. 151-2) and "These pleasures Melancholy give, / And I with thee will choose to live " ("Il Penseroso", ll. 175-6) -- only throws the contrast between "delights" and "pleasures", and "mean" and "choose" into greater relief. Neither poem refutes the case presented by the other, or even attempts to do so. Both are, in effect, mutually exclusive and completely independent



of each other in their meaning; each is perfectly intelligible without the other, but when linked, they react on each other in a complex way by which each enriches its companion without actually interfering with its autonomy.

Although in discussing Tennyson's distrust of self-expression in connection with Milton, I have perhaps placed a disproportionate emphasis on his academic training while at Cambridge, it is, as Sir Harold Nicolson acknowledged, a crucial period in Tennyson's development. At the same time, his membership in the Apostles provided a stimulus of equal or even greater importance to the young poet. In their midst was complete freedom of speech and debate, except apparently in the case of unfavourable criticisms of Tennyson's poems,<sup>11</sup> as an anonymous article written early in this century indicates:

In fact, the time now given up to reading and the distractions of society was then passed in keen intellectual debate, in free and outspoken discussion, in arguing and re-arguing a subject from every point of view....It was to this practice of Dialectic, the keystone of Plato's higher education, that the Apostles owed much of their intellectual force and vitality, as well as their strong independence and individuality of character.<sup>12</sup>

The fact that Tennyson was largely a silent member seems to indicate no lack of interest on his part, since he often settled arguments with a word or definition which had eluded the more active participants, as Sir Charles Tennyson records.<sup>13</sup> He further illustrates how Tennyson and Hallam shared a

similar view of the duality of good and evil relevant to the pairing of poems, though it is clear that this does not represent a general coincidence of theological opinions between the two friends. Hallam read his Theodicaea Novissima to the Apostles in 1831, and Tennyson specially requested Henry Hallam to include it among the published collection of his son's literary remains:

In this he [A.H. Hallam] endeavoured to show that the existence of moral evil may be absolutely necessary to the fulfilment of God's essential love for Christ, and that the eternal punishment of the wicked may not be incompatible with the doctrine of God's sovereign love.

Alfred could not follow his friend in such abstract arguments. To him the existence of sin and suffering was a terrible enigma and the idea of eternal punishment horrible and unthinkable, and he found his hold on religious dogma growing gradually weaker under the influence of the liberal ideas current among the more intellectual young men at Cambridge and of his own wide reading.<sup>14</sup>

As Sir Charles points out, Tennyson could never have accepted the idea of eternal punishment, but it is interesting that, as I hope to show, Tennyson's disagreement with Hallam's position is purely on the one point of theology.

In attempting to deal with the problem of why Tennyson should have written pairs of poems, I have tried to show that the technique was developed from his experience at Cambridge, and that, far from revealing a basic personal weakness, they spring from his engagement in polemic and open discussion. Tennyson's admission of doubt, skepticism, and investigation is emblematic of weakness only in the strictest Victorian Calvinist's terms, in which anything other than total confi-

dence in the Bible and Christian dogma was a sign of contemporary weakness. In the light of the critical tradition outlined in the previous chapter, it is interesting to find a writer like George McCrie who believed that Tennyson's weakness was doctrinal, not temperamental:

Now there cannot be a more erroneous or a more dangerous doctrine than this, that all true religion in the soul begins with skepticism and speculative perplexity, and that the distresses connected with these are of the nature of a wholesome humiliation, ending in salvation.... What is begotten of pride can never produce true humility. Nothing but what is evil can come out of skepticism. Its distresses are the just punishment for the rejection of evidence. The only good that can come out of them is that the party who suffers under them be led thereby to see the error of his having ever yielded to skepticism, and to reverse his exercise and retrace his steps. 15

It is inconceivable that "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" should ever have attracted such criticism. Tennyson is attacked only because he used the paired poems as a deliberate and serious means of expressing uncertainty and open-mindedness which some of his contemporaries obviously found unpalatable. In order to find a model for such a denial of the poet's ego in the nineteenth century, one must turn to Blake, who at the beginning of the age of self-expression, mastered the paradox of expressing himself through impersonal poems. Although Tennyson's knowledge of Blake's work was too limited to suggest that he was influenced by him,<sup>16</sup> and what he knew of Blake was gained much later than his first experiments with paired poems, both poets use the technique in a more sophisticated manner than did Milton. Blake's Songs of Innocence

and of Experience reveal his mind only in the most oblique manner, since he comments in the entire sequence of poems only most generally, if at all. The major prophetic books are oblique, oddly enough, because they are so personal; since they represent Blake's visions, they are remarkably personal, and yet they tell us virtually nothing about Blake himself. Because he is the medium between his visions and his poems and not a sublime ego to be scrutinised and written about, he remains both part of and yet aloof from the Romantic confessional tradition. Blake indeed described himself as a "Secretary": he once wrote to Thomas Butts about one of his poems, saying, "I may praise it, since I dare not pretend to be any other than the Secretary; the Authors are in Eternity."<sup>17</sup>

Blake's Songs, however, offer the clearest parallel in their treatment without comment of two contrasting points of view on the same subject. The relationship of the two sequences of poems is complicated, however, by the appearance of pairs within each collection of poems, such as "The Little Boy Lost" and "The Little Boy Found", and "The Little Girl Lost" and "The Little Girl Found" in Songs of Innocence, and "A Little Boy Lost" and "A Little Girl Lost" in Songs of Experience. Any satisfactory account of the relationships existing between the poems in the two sequences is too complicated to be dealt with here, although the two "Holy Thursday" poems will illustrate roughly the basic effect of the contrasting poems. The one version of "Holy Thursday" stresses



makes no clear statement on how the two groups of poems fit together in his own mind; and the same would appear to be true, though to a lesser extent, with Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso". Exactly what should not have happened to Milton's poems, however, occurred at the hands of Charles Jennens, the eighteenth-century poetaster and librettist for Handel. In 1740 when Handel was composing a setting of "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso", fashionable notions of decorum and hatred of extremes persuaded Jennens to write a via media between the two poems, inevitably called "Il Moderato":

Hence, boast not, ye profane,  
Of vainly-fancied, little-tasted pleasure,  
Pursued beyond all measure,  
And by its own excess transform'd to pain.  
Come with native lustre shine,  
Moderation, grace divine,  
Whom the wise God of nature gave  
Mad mortals from themselves to save.  
Keep, as of old, the middle way  
Nor deeply sad, nor idly gay  
But still the same in look and gait,  
Easy, cheerful, and sedate.<sup>19</sup>

This is an absurd example of the sort of synthesis which is impossible for Tennyson, and for Milton and Blake as well. Nowhere do their poems imply that moderation is even relevant to the contrary states they describe. Tennyson's paired poems, in particular, do not show weakness or indecision, as I hope to show, nor in this case, do they reveal a search for compromise. For Tennyson, the Truth is reached by a process of aggregation, not of exclusion, and hence all the details of experience are important for a proper understanding of the Truth. Society, events, and even ideas and emotions were

too complex to be dealt with in the simple techniques of the past. As Tennyson matured as a thinker and as a poet, the paired poems written while at Cambridge led to more subtle pairings, and eventually, to the technique and thought of The Princess, In Memoriam, Maud, the Idylls of the King, and even the plays written during the 1870's and the 1880's.

It was W.J. Fox in the Westminster Review who, among what Sir Harold Nicolson dismissed as "a great many other foolish opinions",<sup>20</sup> suggested a comparison between Tennyson's paired poems, "Nothing Will Die" and "All Things Will Die", both published in 1830, and Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso". Although one need not agree that the particular comparison is apt, the reason behind the analogy holds considerable interest for modern readers:

Every mood of the mind has its own outward world, or rather makes its own outward world. But it is not always, perhaps with sensitive and imaginative minds it is seldom, that the external objects, and their qualities will be seen through the medium of congeniality. It is thus in "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso"; but Milton was a happy man; the visions of both those poems were seen with the eyes of happiness, the only difference being that the one depicts a state of light-hearted, and the other of sober-minded enjoyment. There is not less truth, perhaps a more refined observation, in the opposite course which our author has taken in the two poems "Nothing Will Die", and "All Things Will Die".<sup>21</sup>

While one would reject Fox's rather simple-minded notion that "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" are basically happy poems and that the reason for this is that Milton was a happy man (whereas Tennyson was a sad man), it is clearly a comparison the significance of which goes far beyond the temperament of

the two poets. But he goes on to discuss the Tennyson poems alone:

The outward objects, at the commencement of each, are precisely the same; the states of mind, are in contrast; and each seizes with avidity on some appearance which is uncongenial with itself. He who thinks that nothing will die, yet looks with wondering, and almost wearied eye on the ever-flowing stream, &c.; and he, who feels that all things must die, gazes mournfully on those same objects in the 'gayest, happiest attitude', which his own fancy has unconsciously compelled them to assume. There is this difference, however, that the felicitous conviction, in the first poem, enables the mind to recover itself with a sort of elastic bound; while in the second the external beauty and enjoyment, being at permanent variance with the tone of feeling, the mind after a melancholy recognition of their loveliness sinks into unmitigated gloom, and surrounds itself with objects of deeper and darker shade....

Both poems conclude nearly in the same terms, with the exception of a discriminative epithet or two; but expressing in the one case an exulting joyousness, 'So let the wind range'; and in the other a reckless and desperate gaiety, just as religion and infidelity sometimes approximate, in terms, to the inculcation of the same moral; and while the preacher of immortality cries 'rejoice evermore', the expectant of annihilation shouts, 'Let us eat and drink, for tomorrow we die.'<sup>22</sup>

As Fox observes, the contrast in these two poems lies between the states of mind; the difference between the arguments of the two poems, however important it may appear from the titles, is only a consequence of the different states of mind. In both poems, the evidence cited at the beginning is identical, and the rest of the poem in each case merely illustrates and amplifies the validity of the title. Neither poem is, in any sense, a closely-argued defence of either view, only an elaboration of the assumptions. Again, the opening lines



from both poems will illustrate what occurs:

When will the stream be weary of flowing  
     Under my eye?  
 When will the wind be weary of blowing  
     Over the sky?  
 When will the clouds be weary of fleeting?  
 When will the heart be weary of beating?  
     And nature die?  
 Never, oh! never, nothing will die.  
                     ("Nothing Will Die", ll. 1-8)

and

Clearly the blue river chimes in its flowing  
     Under my eye;  
 Warmly and broadly the south winds are blowing  
     Over the sky.  
 One after another the white clouds are fleeting;  
 Every heart this May morning in joyance is beating  
     Full merrily;  
 Yet all things must die.  
                     ("All Things Must Die", ll. 1-8)

It is difficult to say whether the similarities or the differences so far are more striking. Even allowing for the metrical substitution of "river" for "stream", the first two lines of each poem are in striking contrast. In "All Things Will Die" all the interrogatives and the characteristic syntactical patterns of "Nothing Will Die" are replaced by clearly defined sense impressions; thus, the river is blue, and it chimes as it flows. And the change of mood in the verbs from the interrogative to the assertive is reinforced by the double meaning of "Clearly", encompassing not only the beautiful clarity of the river, but also the certainty with which the beauty is perceived. These observations are valid for both poems generally, and are characteristic of the speakers in that the poems represent two different ways of

viewing the world in addition to two philosophical attitudes toward the world of phenomena.

"All Things Will Die" depends not only for its argument, but also for its distinctiveness on sense perceptions of the physical world, whereas "Nothing Will Die" represents a more internal, abstract point of view. "All Things Will Die" argues from what we can perceive of the world, as the profusion of adjectives and descriptive verbs makes clear; it is the voice of human experience (though to what extent it represents Tennyson's real experience is irrelevant). The poem does not specifically deny the thesis that "Nothing Will Die" since it does not accept those premises, but instead argues that since man dies, everything else will die, in Bishop Berkeley's formulation that esse est percipi:

The voice of the bird  
Shall no more be heard,  
Nor the wind on the hill.

("All Things Will Die", ll. 24-6)

"Nothing Will Die" assumes that knowledge is possible otherwise than through the senses:

Nothing will die;  
All things will change  
Through eternity.  
'Tis the world's winter;  
Autumn and summer  
Are gone long ago.

("Nothing Will Die", ll. 14-9)

The conflicting epistemologies are irreconcilable, and, accordingly, there is nothing to be gained by trying to fit both poems inside Tennyson's head as evidence of a divided sensi-

bility; if it is a division, it is and always has been a very common one. Nor is there any substantial difference in the mood which, in both cases, is one of submission to inevitability, the "will" of the first poem and the "must" of the second. Of course, there is a strong feeling of regret in "All Things Will Die" since the beauties of the world, and the companionship of "merry souls" must pass, while in "Nothing Will Die", the echo of The Tempest promising a "spring rich and strange" (l. 22) holds out some hope for the future. But neither the regret for things soon to be lost, nor hope for things to come seriously influences the resignation expressed in both poems.

One further implication of these paired poems has been touched on briefly by Fox, but, since it is of particular interest to the Romantic poets and their successors, it should be discussed a little more fully. "Nothing Will Die" and "All Things Will Die", as Fox emphasises, start from the same details, though, as we have seen, in one instance they are clearly observed phenomena, and in the other more like images chosen to reflect a particular state of mind. Nevertheless, these poems show that flowing streams, blowing winds, fleeting clouds, and beating hearts are subject to at least two differing interpretations. If "Nothing Will Die" represents a more subjective view of the world, depending on certain non-rational convictions, and "All Things Will Die" represents an objective view of the world verifiable through

sense perceptions, then we have two of the choices confronting the poet in dealing with reality. It is a problem which Coleridge considers in a poem addressed to that most symbolic of birds, the nightingale:

'Most musical, most melancholy' bird!  
 A melancholy bird? Oh! idle thought!  
 In Nature there is nothing melancholy.  
 But some night-wandering man whose heart was pierced  
 With the remembrance of a grievous wrong,  
 Or slow distemper, or neglected love,  
 (And so, poor wretch! filled all things with himself,  
 And made all gentle sounds tell back the tale  
 Of his own sorrow) he, and such as he,  
 First named these notes a melancholy strain.  
 And many a poet echoes the conceit.<sup>23</sup>

Coleridge here states a fundamental question for the poet: the allegiance which he owes to what may be called the poetic tradition and his predecessors apart from his own observation and poetic insights, or to what extent the nightingale is a melancholy bird simply because Milton, and others before him, have been melancholy poets. Tennyson in these poems is setting forth two possible ways in which the Poet can impose a pattern and meaning on nature. That this was a matter of real interest to Tennyson is shown in the devotion he showed to the great poets of the past on the one hand, and his great concern for the careful observation of the details of experience on the other. Significantly, he uses Coleridge's word from "The Nightingale" in expressing his doubts about the appropriateness of his own "Morte d'Arthur" to its nineteenth-century readers, because of its "faint Homeric echoes" ("The Epic", l. 39).<sup>24</sup>

A similar, if less significant, pair of poems showing

the development of two different points of view is "The Merman" and "The Mermaid", both of which are, according to one critic, "carefree vignettes of lust and laughter under the sea".<sup>25</sup> Although they are neither profound nor great, it is nevertheless unfair to dismiss them as trivial without considering their attractive exuberance and the oversimplification of describing their activities as lust and laughter. Obviously one's first impression is of an uninhibited carefree existence of fun and childhood games. Yet, sooner or later, one is confronted by the question of why there are two poems, since either one alone is sufficient to provide enough lust and laughter to satisfy most readers. Is the second poem merely redundant?

In these poems the differences are perhaps more apparent than the similarities, the essential point being one of sex: "The Merman" presents life under the sea from a male point of view, accompanied by associated details such as playful activity, high spirits, courting and wooing, doing errands for and sending presents to the mermaids, while "The Mermaid" is essentially passive, being admired by all who see her, beautifying herself even further, coyly playing erotic games with the mermen, all the while waiting until the king of them all carries her off to be his wife. In words common to both poems, the difference lies between the "bold" and the "fair". Whereas the merman stresses playing with the mermaids, the mermaid in turn barely mentions this; and while the merman makes the games seem innocent,

And holding them back by their flowing locks  
 I would kiss them often under the sea,  
 And kiss them again till they kissed me  
     Laughingly, laughingly.

("The Merman", ll. 14-7)

the mermaid is more worldly-wise in her interpretation of  
 their games:

But if any came near I would call, and shriek,  
 And adown the steep like a wave I would leap  
     From the diamond-ledges that jut from the dells;  
 For I would not be kissed by all who would list,  
 Of the bold merry mermen under the sea.

("The Mermaid", ll. 38-42)

The mermaid is not the only beautiful object in her poem, however; the golden curls, the pearl comb, the golden fountain evoked in describing herself, the diamond ledges, branching jaspers, and her silver feet, together with the "Turkis and agate and almondine" which she receives while returning only "starry spangles and shells" ("The Merman", ll. 32, 28) and enforced by the profusion of internal rhyme and the rich "me... sea" rhymes -- all these details combine to make the mermaid's world as decorative a setting as possible to enhance her own great beauty. She is engagingly conscious of the effect she has on men (she could hardly be otherwise) as she watches sea-creatures adore her like an idol sitting on her throne in her hall. Her reaction to this unbounded admiration is all the more refreshing in that it is self-conscious without being vain. She is not the seductress of the traditional mermaid ballads, a siren luring men to death or enslavement under the sea, and her calm self-confidence as she waits for her lover is in marked contrast to the frustrated and jilted

women of Tennyson's early poems, Mariana, the Lady of Shalott, and Fatima, among others. Furthermore, she gains real pleasure from her own passivity and the quietness which her beauty instils in others:

Till that great sea-snake under the sea  
 From his coiled sleeps in the central deeps  
 Would slowly trail himself sevenfold  
 Round the hall where I sate, and look in at the gate  
 With his large calm eyes for the love of me.  
 And all the mermen under the sea  
 Would feel their immortality  
 Die in their hearts for the love of me.  
 ("The Mermaid", ll. 23-30)

So far I have discussed only the last two sections of each poem, and now must turn to the puzzling first sections which provide the main link between the two poems. Both begin with a question, "Who would be... ?", which is answered in the second section, and the answer is elaborated in the third; the development is shown in the ambiguity of the auxiliary verb "would" which expresses desire and intention as well as consequence. So, once the initial wish has been expressed, then certain things will follow: or more simply, given the choice, I would be a merman bold, and it follows that under the sea, there would be neither moon nor star. In the context of the opening section, it is clear that "The Merman" and "The Mermaid" represent wish-fulfilments, perhaps, though not necessarily, of the same person. The difference in sex is not an end in itself, but really an aid to identifying the two states of mind; the poet is not saying that he wants to become a woman, but only that he imagines himself

experiencing the passivity and egocentricity represented here by the mermaid, just as he imagines the energy and playfulness of the merman. As such, the poems reflect two opposing but not contradictory moods; both poems embrace both attitudes, though they naturally stress one at the expense of the other, and significantly, the merman and the mermaid do not live in isolation from each other. Leonardo's famous portrait of St John the Baptist in the Louvre provides an interesting analogy here, since it portrays an ideal man possessing characteristics of both male and female; and the twentieth century knows that Jungian psychology suggests such a combination of characteristics is a prerequisite of a balanced human being. In the same way, according to "The Merman" and "The Mermaid", the well-rounded character implies elements of both the fair and the bold.

Although Tennyson returned to discuss the combination of masculine and feminine traits in an individual later, most notably in The Princess, a similar relationship seems to be implied between the characteristics described in "The Poet" and "The Poet's Mind". Although these two poems have always been printed together since first being published in 1830, critics seem to have been unable to agree as to exactly why they have been set side by side. Sir Harold Nicolson who, as we have seen earlier, is unable to forgive the Apostles for their unfortunate influence on Tennyson, regards "The Poet" as the product of Apostolic views on the high



calling of the poet, of poetry as a mission, and "The Poet's Mind" as an expression of Tennyson's extreme sensitivity to criticism.<sup>26</sup> But he does not explain the connection between the two poems, if he sees one. J.H. Buckley, too, is vague about the relationship between the two poems: "'The Poet' and 'The Poet's Mind'... present diverse views of the artist's proper function and attitude",<sup>27</sup> although he does not proceed to define the diversity. The reason for pairing them is simply that, although they are both concerned with poetry in a loose sense, they are about quite different subjects. "The Poet" is about the poet in his public role as prophet, while "The Poet's Mind" deals with the private domain of the poet's personal thoughts, the place where the interpreters and other trespassers are not welcome. The distinction between "The Poet" and "The Poet's Mind" is similar to that drawn by Browning much later in his two poems published in 1876, "House" and "Shop". In the latter, the poet appears as a shop-keeper whose wares are displayed for all those who wish to buy:

Which lies within your power of purse?  
 This ruby that would tip aright  
 Solomon's sceptre? Oh, your nurse  
 Wants simply coral, the delight  
 Of teething baby, -- stuff to bite!

Howe'er your choice fell, straight you took  
 Your purchase, prompt your money rang  
 On counter, -- scarce the man forsook  
 His study of the "Times", just swang  
 Till-ward his hand that stopped the clang, --

Then off made buyer with a prize,  
 Then seller to his "Times" returned;  
 And so did day wear, wear, till eyes  
 Brightened apace, for rest was earned:  
 He locked door long ere candle burn'd.  
 (ll. 76-90)

The poet as shop-keeper, when at home, welcomes no disturbance of his privacy. As Browning says in "House":

Shall I sonnet-sing you about myself?  
 Do I live in a house you would like to see?  
 Is it scant of gear, has it store of pelf?  
 'Unlock my heart with a sonnet-key?'

Invite the world, as my betters have done?  
 'Take notice: this building remains on view,  
 Its suites of reception every one,  
 Its private apartment and bedroom too;

'For a ticket, apply to the Publisher.'  
 No: thanking the public, I must decline.  
 A peep through my window, if folk prefer;  
 But, please you, no foot over threshold of mine!  
 (ll. 1-12)

Tennyson's poems obviously are sterner, much less compromising; his Poet has no time to waste reading the "Times" and the guardian of the poet's mind will not tolerate people trying to peep through the hedges. Apart from the difference in degree of earnestness, both Tennyson and Browning are pleading for the separation of the poet's public role and his private life, though for Tennyson as Poet Laureate, this distinction was by no means absolute. There is an element of humour in both of the Tennyson poems which is all too easily missed; in particular, "The Poet's Mind" is marked by an extravagance that is almost certainly comic, and which must be taken into account in reading the poem in conjunction with "The Poet".

Of the two, "The Poet" is the more serious, as befitting the high ideals of the Apostles and the Romantic conception of the poet as prophet exemplified in Shelley's Defence of Poetry. Even so, the poem shows a remarkable awareness of the extent of the claims being made, culminating in the final portrait of Liberty:

No sword  
Of wrath her right arm whirled,  
But one poor poet's scroll, and with his word  
She shook the world. (ll. 53-6)

The "poor poet", whether impecunious or pitiable, is evidently an absurdity as the instrument of Liberty, rather like the trembling Chaucer unable to understand why he should be dangling from the claws of an eagle. Yet, this little joke does not detract from the importance of the poet's role but enhances it, since by revealing him as such an obviously human and vulnerable figure, it shows his suitability as the agent of Liberty in writing for his fellow man. "The Poet's Mind" is more uniformly comic, though its humour is very sophisticated for an undergraduate poet. It was apparently written in reply to J.W. Blakesley, and has been traditionally assumed to be a joke, though Christopher Ricks in the head-note to the poem in his edition, and George O. Marshall, Jr., query this interpretation.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, Dr Buckley seems closest to the poem's true tone when he says that it is "half in earnest, half in jest".<sup>29</sup> The poem presents sensitivity to the point of paranoia concerning

the elaborate, mysterious, and esoteric rites of poetry from which the sophist must be excluded. The sophist is depicted as a plague-carrying Midas who infects and kills everything he touches, or even breathes upon:

The flowers would faint at your cruel cheer.  
 In your eye there is death,  
 There is frost in your breath  
 Which would blight the plants. (ll. 15-8)

It is not accidental that the poem is addressed to a "dark-browed sophist" (l. 3) who threatens to enter the garden, whether or not Tennyson had a particular individual in mind when he wrote the poem. The sophist poses a particular threat because, although he ostensibly shows the poet's interest in words and the imagination his wit is too shallow to comprehend the poet's mind, and furthermore, he will pollute it. The speaker's tone, thus, is very much that of a king dismissing a rival claimant to his throne, at once expressing contempt for the outsider and an unsettled awareness of the threat posed by a Pretender. A political image seems not inappropriate, too, as an analogy for the delicacy of the garden and its vulnerability to foreign corruption. Thus, although the central concern of "The Poet's Mind", the protection of the poet's inspiration, is serious enough, the tone of hysteria and contempt suggests that the garden is perhaps being over-zealously guarded. "In the heart of the garden the merry bird chants. / It would fall to the ground if you came in" (ll. 22-3) suggests

the image of a well-bred Victorian lady swooning at a lascivious suggestion. The garden, for all its beauty, appears to be far more delicate than that in any hot-house; and the tone adopted in attacking the sophist's insensitivity recalls The Dunciad's attack on dulness. The sophist is told that there is a fountain in the garden,

And yet, though its voice be so clear and full,  
You never would hear it; your ears are so dull;  
So keep where you are: you are foul with sin;  
It would shrink to the earth if you came in.  
(ll. 34-7)

If this were testiness on Tennyson's part, it would be entirely out of keeping with the knowledge we have of him at Cambridge, particularly among his Apostolic friends. Although he might have been prone to melancholy moods early in his stay at Cambridge, the Memoir reminds us that Tennyson enjoyed a reputation as a comic actor, one of his most successful roles being Malvolio;<sup>30</sup> Sir Charles' biography adds that his impersonation of George IV, Satan as a toad whispering in Eve's ear, and the sun emerging from a cloud reveals an aspect of Tennyson's sense of humour which is too often neglected.<sup>31</sup> In this light it is easier to see "The Poet's Mind" as a piece of caricatured overstatement of the kind which Tennyson uses elsewhere (as in "St Simeon Stylites") so successfully.

But although "The Poet" and "The Poet's Mind" deal with different aspects of the poet and employ different comic techniques, their serious themes are not, as might be supposed, contradictory, but complementary. Both "The Poet"

and "The Poet's Mind" express a lofty ideal of the poet; even though he may not be conscious of his public role, nevertheless he is a spokesman whose poetic integrity must be protected. It is important to notice that the poet does not establish himself as the spokesman of Liberty, and that his "light / And vagrant melodies" ("The Poet", ll. 16-7) are written only for himself; Liberty chooses him and employs his songs in her cause. "The Poet", then, emphasises the consequences of his poems, strongly implying the dangers of the "intentional fallacy". "The Poet" and "The Poet's Mind" reflect attitudes which seem to have been derived from the Apostles. In a passage from Hallam's review in the Englishman's Magazine which I have quoted already, Hallam argues that a poet's responsibilities as a poet must always be subject to his duties to his fellow men. At the same time and in the same review, he argues against heavy didacticism in poetry:

It is not true, as [Wordsworth's] exclusive admirers would have it, that the highest species of poetry is the reflective: it is a gross fallacy, that, because certain opinions are acute or profound, the expression of them by the imagination must be eminently beautiful. Whenever the mind of the artist suffers itself to be occupied, during its periods of creation, by any other predominant motive than the desire of beauty, the result is false in art.<sup>32</sup>

Although the poet's mind is private ground, obsessive and libellous concern with keeping out intruders, such as we find in "The Poet's Mind", tends to make the poet too introverted, and allows him to forget his overriding responsibility

to the world outside, whenever the two obligations come into conflict. "The Poet" posits a similar privacy, but in its proper perspective:

With echoing feet he threaded  
The secretest walks of fame:  
The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed  
And winged with flame,

Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue,  
And of so fierce a flight,  
From Calpè unto Caucasus they sung,  
Filling with light

And vagrant melodies the winds which bore  
Them earthward till they lit.  
("The Poet", ll. 9-18)

The "secretest walks of fame" and the "light and vagrant melodies" are an integral part of the privacy of the poet's mind, but represent only part of the poet's true role. Since it is all too often assumed by many people that belief in a poetic mission implies the writing of didactic or philosophical poems, endless inferior essays on Man, it must be stressed that the poet even in this idealised form is not writing directly for his society; he shoots his arrow and it lands where it will; what the people make of his melodies is their concern, not his. So too, the people who enter Browning's shop are not obliged to buy anything in particular, and if the purchaser is not interested in rubies, then he can buy coral for his baby to chew on, if he so pleases; the shop-keeper is not interested in his customers, only in his "Times". As Shelley says in his Defence of Poetry, "A poet participates in the eternal, the infinite, and the

one; as far as relates to his conceptions, time and place and number are not."<sup>33</sup>

Tennyson brings both aspects of the poet together in the final poem of the 1842 volumes, "The Poet's Song". In this poem, the poet's "melody loud and sweet" charms all who hear it, as if he were a second Orpheus:

The swallow stopt as he hunted the fly,  
 The snake slipt under a spray,  
 The wild hawk stood with the down on his beak,  
 And stared, with his foot on the prey,  
 And the nightingale thought, 'I have sung many songs,  
 But never a one so gay,  
 For he sings of what the world will be  
 When the years have died away.'  
 ("The Poet's Song", ll. 9-16)

Even though the poet chooses a "lonely place" (l. 5) in which to sing, he is soon surrounded by an attentive audience, the members of which respond in various ways to the same song, even though the song itself demands neither an audience nor any specific response. In "The Poet" and "The Poet's Mind" we can see that difference in subject and difference in tone present superficial difficulties through which the complementary themes -- those of the poet's exclusive devotion to his art and his art's importance in the world -- are developed in close conjunction with one another. This represents a conviction of the young Tennyson which he never forsook in spite of his later public responsibilities which tempted him to turn his eyes from the Shelleyan ideal and to look on the time, place, and number of the world about him.

Much of what I have discussed so far can be summed up by examining a poem which, although not strictly speaking



a paired poem, is significant both for its relevance to other paired poems and the insight which it offers into Tennyson's methods of composition. The Lover's Tale as we know it is in four sections and was first published in 1879, although sections I and II were originally to be included among the Poems of 1832, and were apparently written four or five years earlier. And Professor Paden assumes that section III in its present form replaces an earlier version, now lost;<sup>34</sup> its first appearance in print is in 1869 as "The Golden Supper".<sup>35</sup> The Lover's Tale, then, was written in at least two, and probably three, stages. The different dates in composition might suggest that it should be considered with the sequel poems in a later chapter, but for various reasons it seems preferable to discuss it here, largely because it is one poem, not two, and it does not exactly share the sequel poems' central concern with the passage of time. More positively, The Lover's Tale illustrates how Tennyson completes an early poem while at the summit of his popularity, and it raises interesting questions about why he should have wanted to complete it and why he adopted the unconventional solution he did. This in turn leads to an extremely important statement about Tennyson's preoccupation with the limitations of poetic subjectivity and individual points of view, a major concern of the paired poems. But first of all, we must extricate the poem from the interpretations imposed on it by two critical attitudes:

that it is a heavily biographical treatment of Tennyson's early amours, and further, that it is ruined as an aesthetic structure by the conclusion which, it is argued, bears no necessary relation to the rest of the poem. Both of these points of view have been advanced by Clarice Short in the most extended critical discussion of the poem so far, and her article serves as a convenient starting-place for studying the poem.

In analysing the failure of the poem's structure Clarice Short properly stresses the discontinuity between sections I to III on the one hand and section IV on the other, arguing that the first three are based on Tennyson's own experience and that the fourth section is a versified rendering of the tenth story of the fourth day in The Decameron. We will never know when Tennyson decided to make his debt to Boccaccio explicit, but Professor Short is safe in saying that section IV surprises us not only with its change in speaker and in technique, but also in its change in setting and perspective. However, she finds section IV not only surprising but disappointing:

This is the account which Tennyson awkwardly modified and attached as a conclusion to The Lover's Tale. It requires such a warping of the setting, such alteration of the social position of the characters that it seems like an excrescence upon the body of the rest of the poem. There is little evidence to refute Baum's irreverent conclusion 'that in his usual search for subjects Tennyson found the Boccaccio story, made a poem of it, and then saw that it would do as a

conclusion to The Lover's Tale'.

It is my contention that if Boccaccio's story actually provided Tennyson with his original conception of The Lover's Tale, the literary source was but a shadow to the substance which lay in the youthful Tennyson's experiences, real and imaginary. The lover whose passionate monologue constitutes the first three sections of the poem is no medieval Italian gentleman but an English boy, excessively sensitive and shy, intensely aware of beauty and equally conscious of his own capacity to feel despair.<sup>36</sup>

This last sentence pays ample homage to Nicolson's theories; not only is Julian not a medieval man, or just any modern youth, but he is Tennyson. On this assumption, Professor Short's article indulges in "speculation regarding the relationship of the writer and the written,"<sup>37</sup> and proceeds to draw links between the poem and the young Tennyson's emotional, psychological, intellectual, and sexual experience until the time that the poem was begun. But such an approach leads to three considerable difficulties which it makes no attempt to overcome: because the final section was written much later than the rest, and is written in a different style, it is to be dismissed as an "excrescence"; the relationship between Tennyson and the poem involves an unresolved contradiction; and the interpretation of certain details of the poem in terms of biographical information or surmises seems strained, particularly when layers of meaning and simpler explanations lie elsewhere.

Clarice Short's first difficulty results from her reluctance to consider section IV as integral to the structure of The Lover's Tale. Barbara Herrnstein Smith explains

the shortcomings of not suspending judgment on the structure of a poem until the end:

Poetic structure is, in a sense, an inference which we draw from the evidence of a series of events. As we read the poem, it is a hypothesis whose probability is tested as we move from line to line and adjusted in response to what we find there. And... the conclusion of a poem has special status in the process, for it is only at that point that the total pattern -- the structural principles which we have been testing -- is revealed.<sup>38</sup>

It follows that to call anything in a poem an excrescence is to risk having misunderstood the structure of the poem as a whole. Certainly, section IV may seem out of place on the basis of hypotheses about the structure and style of the poem gained from sections I to III, but to call it an excrescence or an ending which "would do" imposes unreasonable limitations on the poem. Far from being irrelevant to the rest of the poem, part IV forces us to change our ideas of the poetic structure which we are experiencing and to consider some important questions, not only about our assumptions in reading the poem, but about the poem itself. Why, for example, does Tennyson change speakers? What is the significance of Julian's inability to continue? What is the effect gained by such a disruption of our expectations? Is there any link between the two apparently disparate parts? Has Tennyson prepared for this in the earlier sections of the poem? And does it enrich the poem as a whole, or does it merely detract from the emotional intensity of the first three sections? These are surely not

trivial questions in terms of understanding the poem, and our attempt to answer them will assist in assessing the significance of the last section. Nor must we assume that because part IV was written later and is more obviously based on Boccaccio than the earlier parts, that it is less sincere, or that it has no dramatic validity. And if it is not an act of carelessness on Tennyson's part, Professor Short does not explain why he should write another section III in the old style and section IV in a radically new one;<sup>39</sup> and again, why Tennyson should have appended a largely irrelevant sequel to a poem which he was reluctantly about to publish.

This leads us to the contradictions inherent in the argument that Tennyson suppressed the poem because it was too personal: "One may surmise that Tennyson withheld the poem from publication in 1833 [sic], not so much because it was 'deficient in point of art' [which is the reason Tennyson himself gave] but because it was so intimately related to his inner life."<sup>40</sup> Yet Professor Short argues that Tennyson completely changed his mind about the poem when he published it in 1879: "Perhaps the seventy-year-old Poet Laureate was unwilling to consign to oblivion a work which commemorated so fervently his own youthful anguish."<sup>41</sup> All the manuscript drafts, revisions, trial editions, and annotations in those trial editions indicate that Tennyson's reasons were not personal and psychological,

but stylistic, as he himself says. And the biographical evidence works equally strongly against such an idea. In his old age, when he revised this poem for publication, Tennyson dismissed his youthful outbursts of melancholic raving as gout, and it is unclear, given this attitude, why he should change his mind about a poem which had remained virtually unknown for personal reasons. There is no evidence that the speaker is Tennyson and not a fictional character, or that Tennyson was embarrassed by the emotional outbursts and revelations rather than by the technique. The fact that Tennyson attempted several careful revisions of the poem and the nature of the revisions themselves indicate that Tennyson wanted to publish the poem but felt it needed improvement before he could do so. Shepherd's pirated edition may have forced him to publish, but it was the addition of section IV which allowed him to.

Finally, reliance on biographical details betrays Professor Short into committing errors of interpretation which misrepresent the poem. For example, she explains the line, "My sister, and my cousin, and my love" (III, 43) on the following grounds:

Tennyson and his brothers and sisters were to an unusual degree dependent upon each other for companionship. Occasionally they saw their cousins who 'were always good friends' in spite of the strained relationship between the fathers (Memoir, I, 14). And there were several families in the neighbourhood with whom the young Tennysons associated. Rawnsley

speaks of Sophy Rawnsley and Rosa Baring as being 'on terms of almost sisterly affection' with Alfred when all were young. Tennyson's association with his sisters, his cousins and the girls of the neighbourhood no doubt affected the dramatis personae of his love poems.<sup>42</sup>

Her image of Tennyson as a youthful Sir Joseph Porter, surrounded by his sisters, and his cousins, and his aunts, is a palpable confusion of life and art and reveals an inability to distinguish between fact and literary convention. Spenser may well have known someone who was both a shepherd and a poet in real life, but that fact does not "explain" Colin Clout, or Cuddy, or Diggon Davie, or Hobbinoll; to understand them we must turn to literature, not to parish registers.

The love between cousins, often orphaned and brought up as brother and sister, which develops into sexual love, is a common motif in the late eighteenth century and throughout the nineteenth. It can be found in Bernardin de St Pierre (Paul and Virginie), Dickens (Ham and Little Em'ly, Richard Carstone and Ada Clare), Emily Brontë (Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw, Linton Heathcliff and Cathy Linton, and Cathy Linton Heathcliff and Hareton Earnshaw), George Eliot (Fred Vincoy and Mary Garth), Wilkie Collins (Franklin Blake, Rachel Verinder, and Godfrey Ablewhite), and Charlotte Yonge (Philip and Laura Edmonstone, and Guy Morville and Amy Edmonstone in The Heir of Redclyffe), to name only a few examples. The readiness with which such patterns recur suggests that literary convention plays a much more impor-

tant role in interpreting this motif in The Lover's Tale than Professor Short allows.

In each instance the children are near relatives, usually cousins, who grow up together and come to think of each other as brother and sister. Often, as in the case of Paul and Virginie, or Heathcliff and Catherine Earnshaw, at least one of the children is an orphan; in other cases, the child is alienated from his parents, so that like Fred Vincey among the Garths, he is considered to be almost an adopted son. The innocent brother-sisterly love, however, is shattered by the emergence of sexual passion which, in a significant number of the examples cited above, is frustrated or destroyed by a misunderstanding of the assumed relationship between brother and sister, as we see with Ham and Little Em'ly. This pattern varies in details, but the core seems to have fascinated the novelists and narrative poets of the time; even the grotesque caricature of the relationship in Heathcliff's attempt to get his weakling son, Linton, to court his cousin, Cathy Linton, is ample evidence of the motif's vitality in the nineteenth century.<sup>43</sup>

While this is not the proper occasion to explore these relationships more fully, it is at least now possible to see a more plausible, and certainly a more useful, framework within which to view the love between Julian and Camilla in The Lover's Tale. Julian describes the bond between



himself and his cousin perceptively, if a little melodramatically, when Camilla tells him that she loves another man:

It was so happy an hour, so sweet a place,  
And I was as the brother of her blood,  
And by that name I moved upon her breath;  
Dear name, which had too much of nearness in it  
And heralded the distance of this time!  
(I, 547-51)

And in passing one might observe that even the parallels which Professor Short cites elsewhere in Tennyson, in "Dora", "Locksley Hall", "Enoch Arden", "Aylmer's Field", seem to provide a more convincing argument for the wide-spread popularity of the motif than for Tennyson's concern with his immediate family.

Tennyson's early poems refer again and again to women with dark eyes and once more Miss Short attributes this to the fact that the Tennyson women were dark:

Tennyson's ideal of feminine beauty in this early poem probably reflects his close association in childhood and youth with dark-haired, dark-eyed women....In describing Camilla, the lover exclaims:  
She was dark-haired, dark-eyed:  
Oh, such dark eyes! a single glance of them  
Will govern a whole life from birth to death,  
Careless of all things else, led on with light  
In trances and in visions: look at them,  
You lose yourself in utter ignorance;  
You cannot find their depth.<sup>44</sup> (I, 71-7)

Now, if we accept that these lines are spoken by a jilted lover who is still very much in love, we are in a position perhaps to suspect a little infatuated idealisation in this portrait. Once the point of view has been taken into account, there is little difference between Camilla and her effect

on Julian on the one hand, and the notorious Belle Dame Sans Merci, who looks on her knight "as she did love" with her "wild, wild eyes". While it is unnecessary to argue that Julian is literally under the spell of a femme fatale or enchanted by a witch, it seems evident that Camilla is expressly being compared to such a figure by the poet who stresses her bewitching glance, thereby setting up an irony which tells against Julian's objectivity in recounting his love for her. Camilla has the dark eyes, dark hair, together with a dark, unpredictable nature which she shares with such characters as La Belle Dame, Christabel's Geraldine, Catherine Earnshaw, Eustacia Vye, and Tennyson's own Lillian. It is exactly the image to which Nicolson appeals in discussing Tennyson's black blood, his wild, melancholy gipsy nature, with perhaps a hint of supernatural poetic power. Here, it seems that literary convention does approach biographical fact, and it is impossible to say which was uppermost in Tennyson's mind when he wrote the poem, though it is clear from the reader's point of view which is the more useful approach to understanding the poem.

Except for section IV, The Lover's Tale satisfies the highest expectations of those seeking evidence of youthful misery and suffering. But the effects of adding the conclusion, both thematic and stylistic, suggest that one should not disregard the discontinuity of the poem, to gloss over the very real break in the poem. And yet, the fact that Tennyson in 1879 deliberately destroyed the smooth continuity

of the poem, as he had done earlier with the addition of the songs in The Princess, means that we cannot safely consider section IV as an accidental mistake. The approach which seems most useful in considering The Lover's Tale, thus, treats it as a pair of poems containing two balanced, but not obviously related, poems whose interdependence enhances the richness of meaning and the skill of technique in each. The only difference is that The Lover's Tale must finally be seen as a single poem whose structure resembles that of In Memoriam and Maud. Hence one must consider section IV as integral to the poem, at the same time remaining fully aware of the break in the poem between sections I and II and sections II and IV. Perhaps it will be most convenient to deal with some of the central differences between the two speakers first.

As soon as the reader begins section IV, he is immediately aware that there has been a change of speaker; the style would tell him so even if the second speaker did not. These are Julian's opening words in section I:

Here far away, seen from the topmost cliff,  
 Filling with purple gloom the vacancies  
 Between the tufted hills, the sloping seas  
 Hung in mid-heaven, and half-way down rare sails,  
 White as white clouds, floated from sky to sky.  
 (I, 1-5)

One's first impressions are of the atmosphere and the setting, and unhurried visual detail culminating in the double repetition in line 5; the peculiar tension between the immediate and the intangible in the way that the arresting effect of the opening word, "Here", is immediately dissipated by the

phrase, "far away"; the loose, periodic structure of the sentence smoothly blending a wide range of sense impressions. Contrast with this the opening lines of the second speaker, who for the sake of convenience I shall call Vincent, in accordance with the trial edition of 1869, although he is nameless in the final published version:

He flies the event: he leaves the event to me:  
 Poor Julian -- how he rushed away; the bells,  
 Those marriage-bells, echoing in ear and heart --  
 But cast a parting glance at me, you saw,  
 As who should say 'Continue'. Well he had  
 One golden hour -- of triumph shall I say?  
 Solace at least -- before he left his home.

(IV, 1-7)

In a stroke, the effect of Julian's long smooth sentences in the previous three sections is broken by the short, staccato, fragmentary sentences of his friend. The change is from verse that is "pure Tennyson" to what might well be confused with Browning. But other changes are just as important: there is a humorous consciousness of the listeners' reactions when Vincent deftly hints that the wedding-bells which Julian hears may, in fact, have been the proverbial bells ringing in his ears, at the same time glancing briefly at the question of Julian's sanity, emotional stability, and the objective reality of the experiences which he reports. By this means, the second speaker leads the reader from the tangled undergrowth of Julian's self-scrutiny and melancholy brooding on the past, to a plateau where there is no direct emotional involvement, and to a concern, not for the niceties

of mood and emotional response, but for actual events. Because he is able to complete the part of the story which Julian apparently finds too painful to tell, Vincent immediately displays his lack of involvement by the off-handedness of the "Well" with which he begins his account, and by his casual groping for the proper words to describe what Julian can only darkly refer to as "the event". One senses a real debasement of the word "event" between the last line of Julian's monologue in section II, "There, there, my latest vision -- then the event!" (III, 59) and the next line, spoken by Vincent: "He flies the event: he leaves the event to me:" (IV, 1), with its immediate loss of emotional significance. No longer is it the great crisis of his life, but is now confused with the event -- the present act of telling the story -- and Vincent, perhaps a little unkindly, allows this confusion to stand.

Julian is remarkable for his inability to articulate his deepest emotions. This spoils the perfect development of his love for Camilla, though at the same time it is proof of the depth of his love:

I did not speak: I could not speak my love.  
 Love lieth deep: Love dwells not in lip-depths.  
 Love wraps his wings on either side the heart,  
 Constraining it with kisses close and warm,  
 Absorbing all the incense of sweet thoughts  
 So that they pass not to the shrine of sound.  
 Else had the life of that delighted hour  
 Drunk in the largeness of the utterance  
 Of Love.

. . . . .

Sooner Earth  
 Might go round Heaven, and the strait girth of Time  
 Inswathe the fulness of Eternity,  
 Than language grasp the infinite of Love.  
 (I, 455-63, 471-4)

Similarly, in response to the news that Camilla loves another man without being sure that she is loved in return, he is silent -- he faints and can speak to the lovers only after considerable effort. And, after he has broken off before telling about the event, the significance emerges of his request that, as a sign of her obedience to him, Camilla should remain silent even when questioned by her husband, until released to his care once again. On the other hand, Lionel and Vincent are ready to fill in the gaps of silence whenever words fail Julian; in section IV, Lionel, who has not yet offered an opinion on the fate of Julian's "slave", is the one appointed to speak on behalf of the other guests; and Vincent is the one to complete Julian's story of the event in a coherent way, since significantly Julian has been unable to tell him about it straight through, but only "piece by piece" (IV, 145). And this motif is completed by the ambiguity of the word, "event". Not only is the memory too overpowering, but it is entirely consistent that such great emotion should result in silence.

The fact that Lionel and Vincent are never at a loss for words provides an effective contrast to Julian's emotional entanglement. As Julian reports the climactic meeting of the three lovers, Lionel's reply to his shock on learning

Camilla's true feelings seems condescending and, although undoubtedly sincere, inappropriate to the situation:

The blissful lover, too,  
 From his great hoard of happiness distilled  
 Some drops of solace; like a vain rich man,  
 That, having always prospered in the world,  
 Folding his hands, deals comfortable words  
 To hearts wounded for ever; yet, in truth,  
 Fair speech was his and delicate of phrase,  
 Falling in whispers on the sense, addressed  
 More to the inward than the outward ear,  
 As rain of the midsummer midnight soft,  
 Scarce-heard, recalling fragrance and the green  
 Of the dead spring: but mine was wholly dead,  
 No bud, no leaf, no flower, no fruit for me.  
 (I, 701-13)

All of this emphasises not only the magnitude of Julian's suffering but also the subjectivity of Julian's world, in which all the sound and fury which he experiences within himself signify virtually nothing to Vincent who hears his sick ravings while in exile. And yet, the change in narrators reflects not only Julian's impotence and his emotional subjection to the past. If Vincent is the only one able to articulate the event for Julian, he can also show Julian in the context of society beyond the lovers and his mother; through him we see Julian from the point of view of a sympathetic participant in the story, a man uninvolved in the emotional struggles, and so Julian becomes more of a conventional hero, in terms of the plot and the moral values of the poem, than in the earlier sections. In effect, we see Julian's "hour of triumph" as exactly that, though at the same time we are aware from Julian's words and odd

behaviour and from Vincent's suggestions how ambiguous and painful a triumph it is.

The two cousin-lovers, having been brought up together, have loved each other from a very early age in an entirely innocent way which, however, is not without its erotic overtones stressing, because they are still babies and not curious adolescents, the purity of their love for each other:

We slept  
In the same cradle always, face to face.  
Heart beating time to heart, lip pressing lip,  
Folding each other, breathing on each other,  
Dreaming together (dreaming of each other  
... ), till the morning light  
Sloped through the pines, upon the dewy pane  
Falling, unsealed our eyelids, and we woke  
To gaze upon each other. (I, 252-60)

The imagery shows Julian's view of their early relationship clearly, since he depicts their sleeping together as brother and sister in terms more appropriate to husband and wife. Once he has been jilted, he is aware of a transformation in his love for Camilla, by which expectation and hope for the consummation of marriage are replaced by nostalgia for past moments of happiness:

It was ill-done to part you, Sisters fair;  
Love's arms were wreathed about the neck of Hope,  
And Hope kissed Love, and Love drew in her breath  
In that close kiss, and drank her whispered tales.  
They said that Love would die when Hope was gone,  
And Love mourned long, and sorrowed after Hope;  
At last she sought out Memory, and they trod  
The same old paths where Love had walked with Hope,  
And Memory fed the soul of Love with tears.  
(I, 802-10)



But it is important to add that the change from Hope to Memory does not imply unalleviated self-indulgent misery on Julian's part as we might perhaps have expected from a Tennysonian lover. There is an accompanying, and in the light of section IV, a more significant, development from his love for Camilla to his Love for Camilla and Lionel; the capital "L" (not to be confused with the Love in the quotation above which is simply a personification of the psychological processes going on within himself) marks an important step in his recovery from emotional shock:

Starting up at once,  
 As from a dismal dream of my own death,  
 I, for I loved her, lost my love in Love;  
 I, for I loved her, graspt the hand she loved,  
 And laid it in her own, and sent my cry  
 Through the blank night to Him who loving made  
 The happy and the unhappy love, that He  
 Would hold the hand of blessing over them,  
 Lionel, the happy, and her, and her, his bride!  
 (I, 735-43)

This is the central paradox of the poem: how Julian's madly possessive love for Camilla can change into an equally unpossessive love when, even though everyone agrees that he is under no obligation to do so, he restores the "dead" wife to her husband. His later action is anticipated here by his self-sacrificing generosity in blessing their union, and by the courage with which he forces himself to acknowledge Camilla as another man's wife, while being fully aware of the implications of this decision for himself when he repeats, "and her, and her, his bride".

Although his initial response to the loss of Camilla marks the important advance in his emotional development, the relationship between love and Love becomes steadily more convincing to Julian:

For sure my love should ne'er indue the front  
And mask of Hate, who lives on others' moans.  
Shall Love pledge Hatred in her bitter draughts,  
And batten on her poisons? Love forbid!  
Love passeth not the threshold of cold Hate,  
And Hate is strange beneath the roof of Love.  
O Love, if thou be'st Love, dry up these tears  
Shed for the love of Love. (I, 762-9)

In the sublimation of eros to philia Julian is redeemed from a fate of meaningless misery, although this is not to deny the reality of his suffering. But hatred of Camilla and Lionel has no part in his emotional struggle, and in spite of his own feelings, he is able to act generously, even heroically, in restoring her to her husband. We see the triumph of Love in terms of concrete action in section IV in that, as a cousin, and not as a brother or a former lover ("Take my free gift, my cousin, for your wife." IV, 360) he reunites them in marriage, transcending simultaneously his own frustrations in love, his doubts about Lionel's worthiness to be Camilla's husband (especially when there is no shortage of evidence that his own love is still far greater than Lionel's), and the rights which he enjoys over the disposal of the discarded slave.

By introducing another speaker in section IV Tennyson is able to show the changes in Julian; as a sympathetic outsider, Vincent has no real involvement in the

events of the first three sections. Even Julian is sufficiently detached from them to be able to discuss them, though not entirely objectively. But Vincent is a figure from Julian's redemption, befriending him when he lies suffering in a hostel while dying of fever; and yet Vincent is not so entirely concerned with Julian that the badness of his dinner can be forgotten. As he is "sitting down to such a base repast, / It makes me angry yet to speak of it" (IV, 133-4), the speaker hears Julian groaning upstairs:

A dismal hostel in a dismal land,  
A flat malarian world of reed and rush!  
But there from fever and my care of him  
Sprang up a friendship that may help us yet.  
(IV, 140-3)

The conclusion of The Lover's Tale is altered from Boccaccio's version in which the three central figures live happily together. As a result of the alteration in plot and of the change in speakers, Julian's exile seems a little more surprising than if he had been able to tell the event. We can only guess at his motives, though sections I-III help us considerably, but Vincent's account records only his interest in Julian's rather strange behaviour. The only consolation, we infer, which Julian has gained is that of Vincent's friendship after his suffering for Camilla's love; the chief result of this friendship, as far as the poem is concerned, is that it enhances our understanding of the action, the characters, and the development within Julian

himself by making another perspective possible. In all the poems which I have discussed so far, Tennyson demonstrates that there are more things in heaven and earth than the old philosophies of poetry allow, and we have seen that he makes it his business to develop this insight in paired poems. Having found the vehicle for this theme, Tennyson turns to more sophisticated treatments both of the technique and the theme.

III. "ULYSSES" AND "TITHONUS", TENNYSON'S  
PENDANT POEMS

'How summer-bright are yonder skies,  
And earth as fair in hue!  
And yet what sign of aught that lies  
Behind the green and blue?  
But man today is fancy's fool  
As man hath ever been.  
The nameless Power, or Powers, that rule  
Were never heard or seen.'

(Tennyson, "The Ancient Sage", 11.23-30)

Tennyson's poems written between 1833 and 1842, once decently draped in the elaborate crêpe trappings of Victorian pietas and reverence for the dead, are now rightly seen as central to a proper understanding of the poet's career. Somehow, one feels sure, Hallam's death is the crucial event in Tennyson's poetic and personal life. The old myth that Tennyson was stunned into silence by the news was first refuted by Joyce Green,<sup>1</sup> and we now know that his response was a burst of intense activity. And any doubts as to the exact nature of the reaction to Hallam's death are dispelled by Christopher Ricks who, in his edition of the poems, cites evidence that "The Two Voices" was begun more than three months before Tennyson received the news,<sup>2</sup> and subsequently shows that Hallam's death drove the poet to find hope and a stronger desire to survive.<sup>3</sup> The American critic, Morse Peckham, expresses a

similar view of Tennyson's poetic liberation after October 1, though rather more provocatively:

Psychologically, the problem of Hallam's death was solved -- one might more correctly say, successfully exploited -- almost without delay, certainly in a few months. The understanding of how that solution was arrived at and what was involved in the problem and its solution was to occupy Tennyson for nearly twenty years; it is the subject of In Memoriam, which is not so much the record of his love for Hallam as the examination of how he freed himself from him. Hallam alive was dangerous; Hallam dead threatened to become an incubus.<sup>4</sup>

"Ulysses", written early in this important period, has always held a prominent position in Tennyson's work, and it has aroused even more investigation and praises as we have learned more about the poet's life in the last months of 1833. Alone, it has tested the ingenuity and patience of readers perhaps more than any of Tennyson's short poems, with the main arguments centring upon Tennyson's supposed opinions of Ulysses' heroism and of Telemachus' careful attention to duty, and whether or not Tennyson's attitudes are successfully reflected in the poem,<sup>5</sup> but it is perhaps too much to expect such a debate to be silenced abruptly. The warrant for, and the assumption behind, the critical discussion is that "Ulysses" is a complex and difficult poem in terms of its emotional impact and its philosophical stance. Among those who have written about it, Gilbert Highet is almost alone in emphasising its unqualified optimism which he calls a

"bold statement of the ideals of energy, indomitable will, and exploratory adventure, without any thought of such powerful Victorian motives as profit or self-sacrifice".<sup>6</sup> But even he would not go so far as to call it simply a "tone poem", as Buckley describes its companion, "Tithonus".<sup>7</sup> Most writers have agreed that there is a fundamental dilemma within "Ulysses", though they differ as to how it should be defined. E.H. Duncan believes that the conflict exists between Ulysses and Telemachus, each representing aspects of Tennyson himself, and pointing to a confusion within the poet.<sup>8</sup> Most, however, stress the conflict within the figure of Ulysses; and they view Telemachus variously as an ignoble plodder, an irrelevance to the theme of the poem, or even as the ethical centre, although ironically not recognised as such by his deluded father. A brief list of the various formulations will indicate the difficulty: Douglas Bush's order and courage versus chaos and defeat,<sup>9</sup> Charles Mitchell's Will in opposition to Death,<sup>10</sup> Clyde Ryal's (following Robert Langbaum) Appetite against Potency,<sup>11</sup> and Derek Colville's Rationality struggling against Faith.<sup>12</sup> Such frameworks, and there are undoubtedly others, prove to be unnecessarily rigid and limited, however, when we consider "Ulysses" in connection with "Tithonus", as Tennyson apparently intended.

"Tithonus" is immune only to the more extreme forms of ingenuity practised on "Ulysses". Again, the basic

problem seems to be one of an unresolved tension in the poem which Mary Joan Donohue describes in terms of a revulsion from life and a desire for death, though, as she points out, both of these should lead to the same conclusion.<sup>13</sup> Derek Colville, echoing Langbaum's analysis of Ulysses' dilemma, describes Tithonus' difficulty as that of longing in the face of the limitations of his mortal existence.<sup>14</sup> What Tithonus desires is clear enough; the difficulty lies in achieving his wish. He is clearly one step beyond the doubts of Tennysonian despair with its equal dread of living or dying, and it is therefore unclear whether the dilemma-theory is even as plausible as it is when applied to "Ulysses". But W.B. Stanford deftly challenges such a view of "Ulysses" by identifying and describing, not the traditional two voices, but five: the Homeric Odysseus and his literary descendents, including Dante's Ulisse, Shakespeare's Ulysses, Byron's Childe Harold, and Tennyson's own sea-dog, Sir Richard Grenville, in his later poem "The Revenge".<sup>15</sup> And, of course, this list does not include the distinctive voice of Tennyson's own conception of Ulysses. It is obvious, then, that counting the different voices, either within the poem, or particularly within Ulysses himself, leads not to a neat dilemma, but to considerable complexity:



One comes to see [Ulysses] as a highly complex individual, drawn with such superb poetic and dramatic skill that he partakes of the web of this life, good and ill together, a figure whose strengths and weaknesses are as finely fused as Shakespeare's Henry V.<sup>16</sup>

The problem is how to assimilate these differing voices and contexts into a reasonably satisfactory picture of Tennyson's Ulysses and the dramatic situation in which he speaks. The most profitable means by which to approach both "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" is not by studying them singly as so many have been content to do, but to read them in conjunction with other poems written either just before or after Hallam's death, and with each other.

There is no shortage of contenders for such comparisons. Until fifteen years ago, it seems to have been popular to invoke "The Lotos-Eaters" in comparison with "Ulysses".<sup>17</sup> Tennyson himself invited comparison between "Ulysses" and In Memoriam in the often-quoted remark made to James Knowles that "There is more about myself in 'Ulysses', which was written under the sense of loss and that all had gone by, but that still life must be fought out to the end. It was more written with the feeling of his loss upon me than many poems in In Memoriam."<sup>18</sup> Again there is the comment, quoted in the Memoir, that "Ulysses" gives his "feeling about the need of going forward, and braving the struggle of life perhaps more simply than anything in In Memoriam".<sup>19</sup> More

significantly, however, Tennyson and recent critics<sup>20</sup> have stressed the comparison with "Tithonus",<sup>21</sup> which for various reasons is the most exact parallel to "Ulysses". While Tennyson's remarks quoted above refer to the paradoxical subjectivity of "Ulysses" in relation to In Memoriam, thereby creating substantial problems of interpretation with respect to both poems, his recorded references to "Ulysses" in relation to "Tithonus" seem relatively straightforward since they both refer solely to the fact that they are to be read together as a pair. Hence, they have been used only as corroboration of a critical theory, and not as the basis of a study of the poems. The precise meaning of Tennyson's remarks, one of which is a report of a conversation which took place thirty-five years after he had written the poem, is clear enough insofar as it refers to the close relationship between the poems, but it is vague in defining exactly how they are related. But before we become involved in this problem, it is best to muster the facts concerning these two poems.

Although Arthur Hallam died on September 15 in Vienna, Tennyson first learned of his death more than a fortnight later in a letter written by Hallam's uncle, Henry Elton, apparently immediately after Henry Hallam's return to England with the news.<sup>22</sup> As Professor Ricks

shows, there is evidence to indicate that Tennyson had been working on "The Two Voices" since the spring of 1833, for we have a reference to the poem's existence in some form towards the end of June of that year. But the poem is incomplete in its original manuscript versions and was almost certainly completed after news of Hallam's death had reached Somersby. In the burst of composition which followed, Tennyson wrote some of his finest poems including "Ulysses", "Tithonus", "Morte d'Arthur", and several sections of In Memoriam. "Ulysses" was the first to be published, though it had to wait more than the Horatian nine years, and there is surprisingly little revision to show for the interval.<sup>23</sup> In Memoriam required seventeen years to complete for publication, but "Tithon" appeared as "Tithonus" only in 1860 in Thackeray's Cornhill Magazine, and later in the Enoch Arden volume of 1864.<sup>24</sup>

After the appearance of "Tithonus" in the Cornhill, Tennyson wrote to his friend, the Duke of Argyll:

You will see a little poem of mine in the Cornhill Magazine. My friend Thackeray and his publishers had been so urgent with me to send them something, that I ferreted among my old books and found this "Tithonus", written upwards of a quarter of a century ago, and now queerly enough at the tail of a flashy modern novel. It was originally a pendent to the "Ulysses" in my former volumes, and I wanted Smith to insert a letter, not of mine, to the editor stating this, and how long ago it had been written, but he thought it would lower the value of the contribution in the public eye.<sup>25</sup>

Nine years later, Frederick Locker-Lampson recorded a conversation which took place between the poet and himself at Murren on June 19, 1869 while on holiday in Switzerland:

I spoke with admiration of his 'Ulysses'; he said, 'Yes, there is an echo of Dante in it.' He gave 'Tithonus' the same position as 'Ulysses'. He said that if Arthur Hallam had lived he would have been 'one of the foremost men of his time, but not as a poet.'<sup>26</sup>

While Locker-Lampson's report is marred by its non-sequiturs, its brevity, and the virtual meaninglessness of the word "position", yet it provides useful evidence that Tennyson's request to the editors of the Cornhill was not just a passing whim, although we cannot at this stage be much more specific about the relationship between the two poems which Tennyson had in mind.

So, in spite of its careless syntax, Tennyson's letter is obviously the more valuable statement, since it is more detailed, less ambiguously worded, and is firsthand. But his word "pendent" raises further problems. Although the OED distinguishes between "pendent" and "pendant" both in etymology and meaning, the only relevant distinction which need concern us here is that "pendant" seems generally to be applied to equals, companion-pieces, whereas "pendent" tends to refer to unequals, a poem and a tail-piece. "Pendant" in its extended sense seems to have more to do with interior decorating than with writing poetry; Littré defines the word (the English is derived from French) as follows: "Il se dit de deux

objets d'art à peu près pareils, et destinés à figurer ensemble en se correspondant." In its English senses, it can refer to a companion in terms of people, paintings, or even events and poems, in which the two members of the pair are seen as balancing each other in some way. But there seems to be no indication of whether a contrasting or a similar pair is implied, since both are possible. "Pendent", on the other hand, implies a clearly subordinate role for "Tithonus", a status which one is reluctant to bestow on it for both aesthetic and thematic reasons. Professor Ricks's solution to the problem is simple: in both his biography and his edition of the poems, he neglects the "pendent" spelling of the Memoir (which is consistently Tennyson's preferred spelling), and uses only "pendant" without justifying or explaining his usage.

Although this much linguistic history is of little help in establishing the relationship between "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", it does suggest a useful framework for our understanding of the two poems if we keep in mind the term's visual connotations. For one is close to a fair approach if one compares the two poems to a pair of pictures in matching frames, with some obvious similarities in technique, colouring, and theme, though differing in their exact subject matter. In this way, one is less inclined to prejudge the critical issues by declaring either one or the other, or even both, to be portraits of the artist, or at least to have some special connection

with Tennyson's personal life. Instead, one can appreciate them as fully separate works of art which, however, gain substantially in significance when considered as a pair. It is, therefore, not without interest that, although Tennyson did not get his way on the prefatory letter to "Tithonus", the poem left its place among the poems of the Enoch Arden volume when that collection joined the collected works, and "Tithonus" appears in Eversley, and in earlier collected editions, immediately after "Ulysses". This seems to be the point of Tennyson's letter to the Duke of Argyll -- that the poem belongs with "Ulysses" and not with that "flashy modern novel" (which, incidentally, is one of the least profound assessments which the novel in question, Framley Parsonage, has received).

The main objection to setting these two poems together is that they were not published together, but were linked only in 1860, quite possibly as an afterthought. There seem to be convincing answers to this difficulty, however. First, while it is true that the two poems form a pair, each makes perfect sense independently of the other, but this need not imply that Tennyson invented the relationship in 1860. Secondly, although "Ulysses" was written very quickly (the draft in the Heath MS is dated October 20, 1833, less than three weeks after Tennyson learned of Mallam's death), and although it exists in only three manuscripts showing

only a few trivial variants, yet "Tithon" exists in two drafts in T.Nbk.20, one in T.Nbk.21, one in the Heath MS, apart from the later revisions under the title "Tithonus", and all of these drafts show substantial variants and copious revision. Thus, it seems clear that "Tithon" was not considered ready for publication by 1842, and in the pressure of writing The Princess, In Memoriam, and Maud (all of which amplify and refine the technique of "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", as we shall see), the poem lay neglected until 1859-60. In stressing the connection between the two poems, however, one must not ignore the fact that "Ulysses" appealed more strongly to the Victorian sense of duty, and that alone it advanced Tennyson's cause and gained him more recognition than perhaps any other poem at this crucial stage in his life. It convinced Carlyle of Tennyson's stature as a poet,<sup>27</sup> and Sir Robert Peel, when contemplating whether to allow Tennyson a pension as requested by Monckton Milnes, Carlyle, and Henry Hallam in 1845, read "Ulysses" and had no further doubts about Tennyson's merit.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, it is clear from Tennyson's letter that he had not changed his mind about the relationship of "Tithonus" to "Ulysses" even though he yielded to pressure not to force the point in print, and that at the first opportunity moved the poem to its place beside "Ulysses".

Although the right of "Ulysses" to an independent existence is more thoroughly established than that of "Tithonus", it is true to say that neither poem totally relies on the other. Individually, they are monologues of considerable emotional power and technical accomplishment, and their significance as paired poems in no way detracts from this. Yet, in conjunction, one must be prepared to see them in a rather different way, with the emphasis somewhat shifted from the psychological states which they portray (however complex they may be) to a more general level which embraces both Ulysses and Tithonus. It is the exact nature of the relationship between the characters and the poems which we must examine in order to discover the common problem shared by the two poems.

Even the most cursory reading of the two poems will reveal several points of comparison: both are monologues (setting aside the difficulty of whether they are interior or dramatic monologues) in which interest is focussed on an old man; both old men are reflecting on their memories of the happy past, the miseries of the present, and their hopes for the future; both are seen in a half-light, though Tithonus is seen at dawn and Ulysses at twilight; and both poems place emphasis on a single star in the half-light, though again there are differences of detail, since in "Tithonus" the "silver star" (l.25) is Eos' guide, whereas the "sinking star"



in "Ulysses" is the hero's guide "Beyond the utmost bound of human thought" (ll. 31-2); and both men are, in some degree, anticipating death, though again in Ulysses' case it is clear that he merely acknowledges the possibility of death on this final voyage since he is old and aware that he is not immortal. Tithonus, however, is both old and immortal, and passionately yearns for death as a release from this cruelly paradoxical state. It is because death is for Tithonus a consummation devoutly to be wished that Tennyson underplays the tradition that he was turned into a grasshopper, a detail to which he refers in "The Grasshopper", although he is consistent in both poems in denying the relevance of the metamorphosis both to the grasshopper and to Tithonus.

Even these few basic similarities between the poems necessarily lead to a discussion of the points of contrast existing between them. And like the two pendant paintings hanging on a wall, "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" are ultimately more interesting for their differences than for their similarities which, as I suggested earlier in connection with "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso", exist to make the differences more apparent. The reverse practice of copying or imitation, carried out by so many unskilled amateurs in so many art galleries, by the same logic, only serves to stress the differences between a Rembrandt and

a copier, even though similitude is the goal. Thus, while both Ulysses and Tithonus are old men, Ulysses emerges clearly as a figure who expresses determination and will, though not unqualified by age and weariness as he himself is aware:

You and I are old;  
Old age hath yet his honour and his toil;  
Death closes all: but something ere the end,  
Some work of noble note, may yet be done,  
Not unbecoming men that strove with Gods.  
(ll. 49-53)

and again, "We are not now that strength which in old days / Moved earth and heaven; that which we are, we are" (ll. 66-7). There is no explicit indication that Ulysses plans to strive once again with the Gods as he did in the past, or that he is a fool unaware of the limitations of his nature, but there is throughout an awareness that he cannot settle in Ithaca to "mete and dole / Unequal laws unto a savage race" (ll. 3-4); he is still too restless and adventurous to become a mere administrator. Thus, without being committed to approving of his objective, we can sympathise with his desires and admire his resolution as a restless old warrior.

Whereas Ulysses' impatience with his present state leads to the desire for action, Tithonus' leads to world-weariness, passivity, and impotence. This point is perhaps best illustrated by the diction of the two poems. In keeping with Ulysses' energy, there is relatively little description of the speaker's environment, and what

there is, exists as the object of Ulysses' verbs. Thus, he is determined to leave the still hearth and the barren crags, and to return to the sea; all the details about the shore scene seem to beckon him back to action:

There lies the port; the vessel puffs her sail:  
 There gloom the dark broad seas.  
 . . . . .  
 The lights begin to twinkle from the rocks:  
 The long day wanes: the slow moon climbs: the deep  
 Moans round with many voices. Come, my friends,  
 'Tis not too late to seek a newer world.  
 (ll. 44-5, 54-7)

The setting exists in "Ulysses" for the protagonist to act upon -- he rejects Ithaca and embarks on a new voyage; and the moon and the lights stress the passing of time, lending a sense of urgency, and finally, the sea with its voices summons him to "Push off, and sitting well in order smite / The sounding furrows" (ll. 58-9). But whereas Ulysses seeks to master his environment, the abundance of descriptive detail in "Tithonus", together with the protagonist's utter passivity and lack of will, makes it clear that Tithonus is dominated by his situation to the extent that he only watches the natural world and extracts sympathy from it as much as he can, though he finds it by and large antagonistic. In essence, the two poems express the distinction between a "gray spirit" ("Ulysses", l. 30) and a "gray shadow" ("Tithonus", l. 11), since one can still yearn in desire, still very much alive, while the other is all that remains of what was once a man. At the same time that he is overwhelmed by his

environment, Tithonus is totally alienated from it, since all the natural world dies, but he cannot:

The woods decay, the woods decay and fall,  
 The vapours weep their burthen to the ground,  
 Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath,  
 And after many a summer dies the swan.  
 Me only cruel immortality  
 Consumes. ("Tithonus", ll. 1-6)

The strategic placing of "only" in line 5 stresses the doubly unique and alien position Tithonus holds: he is alone in his immortality among his fellow men, and only immortality makes him suffer. Thus, the natural processes which he observes only mock him, since they constantly remind him that he is apart from them. While he is cut off from terrestrial cycles of growth and decay, particularly the latter, he is separated too from the celestial renewal of his lover, and he expresses bitterness at the loss of love and youth of which the sunrise reminds him:

Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold  
 Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet  
 Upon thy glimmering thresholds, when the steam  
 Floats up from those dim fields about the homes  
 Of happy men that have the power to die,  
 And grassy barrows of the happier dead.  
 Release me, and restore me to the ground.  
 (ll. 66-72)

Tithonus thus overcomes his passivity and misery only in the strength of his desire for death, for an even greater passivity without torment. His attraction to death is much greater than Ulysses', who sees it as inevitable, but not necessarily imminent, and thus while Tithonus stresses death as desirable in itself, Ulysses is more

concerned with the actual manner of dying. Ulysses is unconcerned about what will happen at his destination, indeed he has no clear idea of what that destination is:

My purpose holds  
To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths  
Of all the western stars, until I die.  
It may be that the gulfs will wash us down:  
It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles,  
And see the great Achilles, whom we knew.  
("Ulysses", ll. 59-64)

Although this shows a general sense of direction, the central point of contrast between the two characters is Ulysses' emphasis on the voyage and the struggle unto death, as opposed to Tithonus' desire for immediate release from his predicament, leading to death.

A corollary of this distinction points to the theme at issue in the two poems. Whereas Ulysses speaks with hope and ambition of what remains to be accomplished, Tithonus speaks in bitter disillusionment of what has happened, since he can go no further. Where Ulysses talks eagerly about sailing beyond the sunset, Tithonus argues that such superhuman effort is vain:

Why should a man desire in any way  
To vary from the kindly race of men,  
Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance  
Where all should pause, as is most meet for all?  
("Tithonus", ll. 28-31)

Tithonus' argument is based only partially on inertia, since it is also based on the experience of having been made immortal without achieving eternal youth. He manifests the disastrous consequences of the confrontation between

the human and the divine, consequences which are equally applicable whether one makes war against, or love to, the gods. One must be careful to avoid identifying Tithonus' state of mind as despair, a term which, for Tennyson, is a damned vacillating state in which life and death are hated equally ("Supposed Confessions", l. 190, and "The Palace of Art", l. 265). The truly terrifying and debilitating aspect of Tennysonian despair is not that it is an extreme case of unhappiness and a desire for death, but that it represents a state in which one cannot find either the courage to live or the courage to die. As Mary Joan Donahue points out,<sup>29</sup> any trial between the forces of life and death is rigged overwhelmingly in favour of death, and thus, while physical death is not possible for him, emotionally and intellectually, Tithonus has already surpassed mere despair.

As J.S. Pettigrew remarks, we should feel more certain of our attitude to Ulysses' character and his ideals if he were pursuing wisdom rather than knowledge beyond the baths of all the western stars.<sup>30</sup> But Ulysses' pursuit of knowledge rather than wisdom is symptomatic of the complexity of his motives. I have suggested that he is less interested in death itself than in dying heroically; and it is clear that the chance to struggle with the gods is at least as important to him as the quest for knowledge. It is not impossible that Ulysses wishes

to escape from Ithaca and all the responsibilities to which he has returned, and yet his resolve to re-embark is far from being totally negative. Everything about the character and his motives suggests richness, depth, and complexity, so that perhaps the neatest way of summing them up may be by contrasting the song which "Moens round with many voices" (l. 56) in "Ulysses" with the opening lines of "Crossing the Bar": "Sunset and evening star, / And one clear call for me" (ll. 1-2). Re-embarkation thus means many things to Ulysses, but only one thing to the poet in "Crossing the Bar" -- Death. Although Tithonus is more than simply reconciled to his death, and actually prays for it, both these poems in contrast to "Ulysses" desire nothing more.

Beyond the complexity of his motives, Ulysses' ambition and sense of the fulness of life are not unqualified, and clearly do not represent the utterances of a monomaniac, since he has a keen sense of his own failing strength and his inevitable death. Yet to argue that there is a conflict between his desire and his strength is to falsify his argument, which never implies that these two are equal and opposing forces struggling within him. On the contrary, his awareness of the limits imposed on him conditions all his utterances, except that of his final goal, as he says, "Though much is taken, much abides" (l. 65). The awareness of death and the double

negative, "Not unbecoming", qualify what would otherwise seem the boasting of a crazed old man:

That which we are, we are;  
One equal temper of heroic hearts,  
Made weak by time and fate, but strong in will  
To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield.  
(11. 67-70)

It is important to observe that the last item in this famous list emphasises, not the accomplishment, but the refusal to give in, the reassertion of the effort of struggle. One may be tempted to say that "not to yield" in this context is anti-climactic, breaking as it does the logical and chronological sequence of the striving, seeking, and finding. But, precisely because it comes in the most prominent position, we must conclude that it is not anti-climactic, and that the refusal to yield is, for Ulysses, the most important aspect of the voyage. He is deliberately embarking on a journey to death, by sailing into the West (as in "Crossing the Bar") where he may meet the dead Achilles in the Happy Isles. Nor is the alleged contempt for Telemachus any more than a recognition on Ulysses' part of the need for individual fulfilment, both for himself and for Telemachus. It is almost impossible to judge the tone of the words with which Ulysses may be expressing condescension or even contempt for his son: "discerning", "slow prudence", "blameless", "common duties", "decent", "offices of tenderness", "meet adoration". But if there is bitterness



in these words, it is paralleled by Arthur's words at the threat caused by the appearance of the Holy Grail to the unity of the Round Table:

'What are ye? Galahads? -- no, nor Percivales'  
 . . . . .  
 'nay,' said he, 'but men  
 With strength and will to right the wronged, of power  
 To lay the sudden heads of violence flat,  
 Knights that in twelve great battles splashed and dyed  
 The strong White Horse in his own heathen blood --  
 But one hath seen, and all the blind will see.  
 Go, since your vows are sacred, being made:  
 Yet -- for ye know the cries of all my realm  
 Pass through this hall -- how often, O my Knights,  
 Your places being vacant at my side,  
 This chance of noble deeds will come and go  
 Unchallenged, while ye follow wandering fires  
 Lost in the quagmire! Many of you, yea most,  
 Return no more.' ("The Holy Grail", ll. 306,308-21)

If one wishes to press the analogy, these words could easily be Telemachus' defence of his slow prudence against his father's innuendoes of dulness. Thus, the world of "Ulysses" is not one which can be split neatly into several conflicts, but a world in which complexity, difficulties, and limitations are integral to human action. Through much of the poem, Ulysses does not invite a moral or personal judgment from the reader, or if he does, he elicits sympathy and respect as a brave old warrior who is so determined not to yield. But his final goal is a different matter, and Tithonus is the figure who possesses the answer to that.

Tithonus is in the totally unnatural and paradoxical position of being an immortal mortal, a dying immortal. Trapped between his deathlessness and his

advancing age, he is the epitome of what happens when the divine and the human meet to produce a mess of contradictions and confusion. Tithonus is the victim of a contract with loopholes, the latter being that he has not received eternal youth in addition to immortality, in order to become a suitable lover for a goddess. Now he suffers through time, all time, from which he cannot by his nature, escape. It is interesting to observe that whereas Ulysses plans to seek death by sailing into the West where the sun sets and the stars bathe in the great western sea, Tithonus is imprisoned in an intolerable life in the "ever-silent spaces of the East" ("Tithonus", l. 9), the region of birth and revelation, and renewal, though not of death,<sup>31</sup> where he is forced to watch the dawn, his lover, constantly renewing herself each morning:

A soft air fans the cloud apart; there comes  
 A glimpse of that dark world where I was born.  
 Once more the old mysterious glimmer steals  
 From thy pure brows, and from thy shoulders pure,  
 And bosom beating with a heart renewed.  
 Thy cheek begins to redden through the gloom,  
 Thy sweet eyes brighten slowly close to mine,  
 Ere yet they blind the stars, and the wild team  
 Which love thee, yearning for thy yoke, arise,  
 And shake the darkness from their loosened manes,  
 And beat the twilight into flakes of fire.

Lo! ever thus thou growest beautiful  
 In silence, then before thine answer given  
 Departest, and thy tears are on my cheek.  
 (ll. 32-45)

Tithonus' place in the East, then, is significant in several ways. It symbolises his immortality, and yet by contrast with the rising sun, it stresses Tithonus'

impotence and his inability to renew himself, but only to grow old without ever dying. The East, which formerly meant proximity to his lover, Eos, now means susceptibility to the reproaches which she now represents for him. And finally, the East stands for that part of the divine in which he can never fully participate: "Yet hold me not for ever in thine East: / How can my nature longer mix with thine?" (ll. 64-5). Tithonus, it is clear, has been unable to achieve the kind of goal in the East which Ulysses sets for himself in the West, regardless of the fact that he has gone farther than ordinary men can in gaining divinity. Thus, as a victim, Tithonus is concerned only with being allowed to die; Ulysses, as a hero, is concerned with the heroic manner of his death.

It is perhaps not unreasonable to see "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", then, in a kind of Innocence-and-Experience relationship, exploring the potentially heroic and the potentially destructive aspects of the wish to mingle with the gods. This brings us back to the pendant/pendent relationship which should warn us against a careless reading of both poems in which, depending on one's mood, one sympathises with the courageous old warrior embarking on yet another exploit, or with the "gray shadow, once a man" yearning for death. The mere invoking of the conceptions of Innocence and Experience draws Blake into the discussion, although Tennyson almost certainly had not

read him by 1833. I am not suggesting any influence by Blake on any aspect of Tennyson's career, and especially not on "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", nor am I insisting on any of the implications of Blake's two contrary states of the soul, beyond their being simply that, and implying a contrast between a view expressing optimism and inexperience and a view expressing disillusionment and bitter experience. The similarity in technique between Blake's Songs of Innocence and of Experience and Tennyson's "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" (it is no more than a similarity) can perhaps be shown by observing how little of Northrop Frye's summary of the relationship between Songs of Innocence and Songs of Experience needs to be altered in order to apply to the two Tennyson poems:

The Songs of Experience are satires, but one of the things they satirise is the state of innocence. They show us the butcher's knife which is waiting for the unconscious lamb. Conversely, the Songs of Innocence satirise the state of experience, as the contrast which they present to it makes its hypocrisies more obviously shameful. Hence the two sets of lyrics show contrary states of the soul, and in their opposition there is a double-edged irony, cutting into both the tragedy and the reality of fallen existence.<sup>32</sup>

While it is true that "satire" in its most limited sense seems too harsh a word to apply to both "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", yet it is clear that it has considerable significance in Frye's more general terms. In the determination to fight on in spite of all difficulties (this

is where the neat antitheses of will and power look particularly foolish) "Ulysses" is directed against Tithonus' inertia and despair, and in Tithonus' greater experience of the world and of the sort of goals which Ulysses has, we find the weak link in Ulysses' argument.

In presenting the contrary desires to die quickly and peacefully and to struggle in the face of death, Tennyson obviously intends a close relationship between these two poems. These are the only two poems to which he applied the term "pendent", and so one must assume that the connection was an important one to him. And it seems to me that "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" do in fact sustain, and indeed require, study of their paired relationship. The question remains of whether they are "pendents" or "pendants". As I noted earlier, Tennyson uses the "pendent" form, although this denigrates "Tithonus" to a subordinate position. If Tennyson intended the distinction, his usage would seem to reflect his view of the completed poem, "Tithonus", appended to the well-known "Ulysses" in his volumes of poems. And by telling Locker-Lampson that he gave the same position to "Tithonus" as to "Ulysses" he may well have meant that he intended the poems to be read as pendants (it is unlikely that "position" means "point of view"). So it appears that the poems are pendants from the perspective of date of publication, and pendants from a

comparison of their themes, and it is this latter sense which is of greater significance to critics and modern readers of these two poems. Obviously Ulysses' attitude is the more praiseworthy in the terms of muscular Christianity, but it represents a dangerously oversimplified viewpoint, nonetheless.

"Ulysses" and "Tithonus" together analyse an important issue for Tennyson, and it is one which he explores in later poems as we shall see. The reason that Tennyson returns to the matter of reconciling the divine with the human is that what compromise is possible on the basis of "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" seems somehow unsatisfactory. While it is not a glorification of working with little imagination or thought as Telemachus seems to do, the only solution available seems to be to temper one's eagerness to work and struggle not only with a sense of one's limitations, as Ulysses himself does, but also with Tithonus' awareness that ultimately the gods are beyond man's reach, and that the chasm between the human and the divine can be traversed only in death, or by exceptional flashes of mystical vision which are, however, of little lasting significance to mortal men.

The speaker in In Memoriam combines the main characteristics of both Ulysses and Tithonus. Although he is trying to struggle on with life, he is still haunted by his dead friend, fearing that they have become

eternally separated through the friend's premature death:

Thy spirit ere our fatal loss  
 Did ever rise from high to higher;  
 As mounts the heavenward altar-fire,  
 As flies the lighter through the gross.

But thou art turned to something strange,  
 And I have lost the links that bound  
 Thy changes; here upon the ground,  
 No more partaker of thy change.

Deep folly! yet that this could be --  
 That I could wing my will with might  
 To leap the grades of life and light,  
 And flash at once, my friend, to thee.  
 (XLI, 1-12)

Admittedly, Tithonus' is the dominant voice in these lines, but he never drowns out Ulysses for very long, and for every soliloquy by Tithonus in In Memoriam expressing a desire to die, it is safe to say that there is one by Ulysses urging the need to live a fuller life. In Memoriam takes the contrast between "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" as well as the complexities within the individual poems much further than is possible within the scope of two moderately short dramatic monologues. And in this respect, In Memoriam, The Princess, Maud, the Idylls of the King, and the best of his plays represent the culmination of Tennyson's attempts to develop techniques for expressing intellectual and emotional complexity of the sort which he portrays to a lesser extent in "Ulysses" and "Tithonus"

In Memoriam also reflects the ethical dilemma implied in "Ulysses" and "Tithonus". The contradiction

between the ambition of Ulysses and the disillusionment of Tithonus is such that they cannot be synthesised or reconciled neatly any more than it is possible to reconcile the Lamb and the Tiger in Blake. The answer to the problem is a pragmatic compromise, not a tidy theoretical synthesis, but an action or a frame of mind elsewhere often provoked by something irrelevant and alien to the struggle which has gone before. The process is similar to that by which Faith becomes the guarantee of human knowledge. In In Memoriam the result is reintegration into society, but with a renewed sense of the fragility of the dogmatic foundations on which one's actions are based, and with a painful awareness of the obstacles, difficulties and objections which are implied:

O happy hour, behold the bride  
 With him to whom her hand I gave.  
 They leave the porch, they pass the grave  
 That has today its sunny side.

Today the grave is bright for me,  
 For them the light of life increased,  
 Who stay to share the morning feast,  
 Who rest tonight beside the sea.

. . . . .

Nor count me all to blame if I  
 Conjecture of a stiller guest,  
 Perchance, perchance, among the rest,  
 And, though in silence, wishing joy.  
 (In Memoriam, Epilogue, 69-76,  
 85-8)

Man's ultimate reliance on compromise is responsible for one of the difficulties in some of the poems



written at the same time as "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" -- the bathetic endings. When the conclusion emerges from a completely external source, the ending of the poem can hardly avoid being anti-climactic, and the poet is likely to be accused of cheating by resorting to an idea mechanically lowered into the poem at the last minute from the flies above the stage. This is the essential situation at the conclusion of "The Two Voices" in which the poet, after a night of debate, sees a family on its way to Church:

These three made unity so sweet,  
My frozen heart began to beat,  
Remembering its ancient heat.

I blest them, and they wandered on:  
I spoke, but answer came there none:  
The dull and bitter voice was gone. (ll. 421-6)

The abruptness of the ending is indicated by the appearance of a third voice in a poem which is entitled "The Two Voices", an anomaly cruelly exploited by Lewis Carroll in his parody of the poem, "The Three Voices". But the appearance of the harmonious family who, in the ambiguity of the first line quoted above, provide such a moving symbol of unity, and thereby make the idea of unity sweet to the poet, represents the benefits of reintegration into society and the rejection of the barren voice. Perhaps the poem ends on an uncomfortably confident note but even so, there is still the wonder and perplexity about the reasons for the problem which remain with the poet. Although the ending of "The Palace of

Art" is equally abrupt, Tennyson is making use of a traditional antithesis throughout this poem. Unlike Spenser in the Bower of Bliss and Lucretius in A Rebour, however, he refuses to reject the palace even at the end, and the Soul's instructions that the palace should be left standing are taken as evidence of Tennyson's own ambivalence about the respective claims of aestheticism and life. The Soul, having reached the extent of despair, cries out for help, but receives no reply:

So when four years were wholly finished,  
 She threw her royal robes away.  
 'Make me a cottage in the vale,' she said,  
 'Where I may mourn and pray.

'Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are  
 So lightly, beautifully built:  
 Perchance I may return with others there  
 When I have purged my guilt.'  
 (ll. 289-96)

This solution shows particularly clearly the impossibility of the middle way: the Soul will return to the palace after living in the cottage, and she will go back with others. She does not build a substantial country house halfway between the cottage in the vale and the palace on the hill-top. Instead, the task is the more difficult one of maintaining an awareness of both the palace and the cottage and what each stands for, wherever she lives. Tennyson's palace does not have to be destroyed like the Bower of Bliss, nor does the soul have to undergo a dramatic religious conversion as in A Rebour; such abrupt

reversals are, in fact, contrary to Tennyson's intent by which one must come to terms with both extremes.

As "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" demonstrate, the relationship between the human and the divine is a complex one, at the same time remote and close, and like the connection between the personal and the universal, a subject of considerable importance for Tennyson. The human confronting the divine establishes for Tennyson the limits of man's intellectual and physical accomplishments, and it also accounts for his profound interest in mysticism, theology, metaphysics, and psychical phenomena, and further establishes the positive value of death as the means whereby the individual can attain divine insight. There are many poems in which Tennyson grapples with these ideas, and if we consider them in the light of "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", not only the individual poems, but some important Tennysonian themes will become clearer.

Apart from the requirements of linguistic decorum, there are a few words which a poet should not use, or at least which should surprise the reader when they are used by a poet; some of the unlikeliest are: ineffable, unspeakable, unutterable, indescribable (which is unpoetic for other reasons), and their synonyms. The reason for the undesirability of these words is simply that they have no real place in the vocabulary of a poet

since his craft presupposes the ability to speak, to write, and to describe. To say that something is ineffable is, for the poet, to admit defeat.<sup>32</sup> One winces at the prospect of St. John the Divine, Dante, or Milton announcing that he has had a wonderful, but unfortunately ineffable, vision, and going no further than that. Although these writers can be accused of inconsistency and the inability to sustain the "ineffable" vision, such faults arise not because the poet is inadvertently clumsy, but because he has chosen quite deliberately to justify the ways of God to man, an effort which implies an attempt at the absurd task of explaining God in human terms. Since the Christian God is eternal, omniscient, omnipotent, omnipresent and not anthropomorphic, the poetic difficulties are immense, and necessarily lead to limitation and the trivialisation of the divine. The poetic success of the metaphysical religious poets such as Herbert, Vaughan, and Traherne, and to a lesser extent, Hopkins in the nineteenth century, lies in their ability to hit upon an image which is exactly appropriate to its limited function; as a result, one is seldom aware of the strain between the image and the thing to which it refers. Crashaw, on the other hand, tends to extend the image beyond the limits of reason or common sense, and the image soon becomes exhausted and the audience bored and impatient as the poet continues to

exercise his ingenuity.

At the opposite extreme to such vivid religious poetry lies Tennyson's religious and philosophic verse, where no concession is granted to the abstractness, the ineffability, of the divine; thus it is revealing that in one of the Tennysonian "hymns", "Strong Son of God, immortal Love", the first line alone shows the poet recoiling from the concrete figure of Christ into the abstractions of immortality and love. Consistently Tennyson makes the divine abstract instead of employing some figure associated by Victorian Sunday Schools with divine omnipotence, even though such vagueness is almost bound to produce unsatisfactory religious verse. Tennyson once summed up his own religious convictions as follows: "There's a Something that watches over us; and our individuality endures: That's my Faith, and that's all my Faith."<sup>34</sup> That statement seems a useful illustration of the unusual combination of religious certainty combined with a sense of the inadequacy of language, a combination often confused in Tennyson's work for religious doubt.

It may be somewhat surprising then to realise that Tennyson, whom one would have thought was seldom at a loss as a descriptive poet, uses such forbidden words throughout his career, though not as a result of carelessness. In The Lover's Tale when the hero speaks of

his "sacred, secret, unapproachèd woe / Unspeakable" (I, 668-9), he combines youthful inarticulateness, exaggeration of his grief, and a sense of the languor and numbness which prevent him from seeking the word he needs to describe his grief accurately. Again, much later, in "To the Marquis of Dufferin and Ava", Tennyson quotes his dead son's last letter, with almost ironic effect:

But ere he left your fatal shore,  
 And lay on that funereal boat,  
 Dying, 'Unspeakable' he wrote  
 'Their kindness,' and he wrote no more.  
(ll. 33-6)

Not only does the colloquial superlative yield, ironically, to the deep gratitude of father and son, but also the son's immediate death emphasises the literal accuracy of the word. But usually Tennyson employs such words more precisely, if less suggestively. In these instances, words such as "ineffable", "unutterable", and the like refer to the failure of comprehension, of the lack of interaction between the human and the divine. Poetic incompetence here has no meaning, since Tennyson uses these rather unsatisfactory words to describe, without hyperbole, what cannot be described more accurately. For example, his Lucretius, tormented by visions, describes them in vague and abstract terms somewhat surprising in the light of the terrible effect they have on him:

These prodigies of myriad nakednesses,  
 And twisted shapes of lust, unspeakable,  
 Abominable, strangers at my hearth  
 Not welcome, harpies miring every dish,  
 The phantom husks of something foully done,  
 And fleeting through the boundless universe,  
 And blasting through the long quiet of my breast  
 With animal heat and dire insanity?

("Lucretius", ll. 156-63)

The vagueness of this passage is not owing to the Victorian prudery which led Macmillan's Magazine to ask for the bowdlerisation of the image of the sunlight playing on the naked Oread. Lucretius' dreams are not just vividly erotic, but obscene and disgusting to him, so that although he is otherwise distinguished for his "power to shape" both philosophical systems and poems (l. 23), yet he is unable to describe these phantoms because he cannot come to terms with them or understand why they haunt him. His visions are at the same time so horrible and yet so unreal that he can refer to them only in vague terms, and this fact shows the extent of his weakness, since as a philosopher and a poet "half buried in some weightier argument, / Or fancy-borne perhaps upon the rise / And long roll of the Hexameter" (ll. 9-11), he should be doubly articulate. And similarly, when Tiresias recollects his forbidden view of Pallas Athene, he speaks and reacts not as a besotted lover, but as one who is aware that her beauty is divine and hence almost impossible to describe:

I behold her still,  
 Beyond all work of those who carve the stone,  
 Beyond all dreams of Godlike womanhood,  
 Ineffable beauty, out of whom, at a glance,  
 And as it were, perforce, upon me flashed  
 The power of prophesying. ("Tiresias", ll.51-6)

Tiresias' situation is more complex than Lucretius'. In addition to the dreams and the awareness of divinity and human limitations which result from his forbidden vision of the naked goddess, Tiresias gains the power of prophesying, of expressing what others can neither see nor understand, and in this respect, shares the isolation of Tithonus' incomplete divinity.

A more interesting poem in its treatment of this theme is "Timbuctoo"<sup>35</sup> in which an angel appears to explain the poet's vision. Angels have always encountered difficulty in being understood and then being believed by mortals, and although the job which Tennyson's angel faces is to provide the transcendental interpretation to the poet's lurid vision, exactly the reverse of Raphael's task in Paradise Lost, yet the problem of reconciling divine meaning to human understanding is the same:

How shall I relate  
 To human sense the invisible exploits  
 Of warring spirits; how without remorse  
 The ruin of so many glorious once  
 And perfect while they stood; how last unfold  
 The secrets of another world, perhaps  
 Not lawful to reveal? Yet for thy good  
 This is dispensed, and what surmounts the reach  
 Of Human sense, I shall delineate so,  
 By likening spiritual to corporeal forms,  
 As may express them best. (Paradise Lost, V, 564-74)



Although the poet in "Timbuctoo" expresses some uncertainty as to what he has seen ("it may be I entwine / The indecision of my present mind / With its past clearness", ll. 135-7), yet it is not what he sees in his vision which transcends description, but the angel as the agent whereby the divine significance of the vision is conveyed to the poet. Thus, the angel's eyes are "unutterable, shining orbs" (l. 66), indicating the superhuman extent of his knowledge as well as his embarrassingly keen insight into the poet:

With hasty motion I did veil  
My vision with both hands, and saw before me  
Such coloured spots as dance athwart the eyes  
Of those, that gaze upon the noonday Sun.  
(ll. 67-70)

The poet expresses his ecstatic elevation in a way which emphasises that his moment of insight is inexplicable in merely human terms:

My thoughts which long had grovelled in the slime  
Of this dull world, like dusky worms which house  
Beneath unshaken waters, but at once  
Upon some Earth-awakening day of Spring  
Do pass from gloom to glory, and aloft  
Winnow the purple, bearing on both sides  
Double display of starlit wings which burn,  
Fanlike and fibred, with intensest bloom;  
Even so my thoughts, erewhile so low, now felt  
Unutterable buoyancy and strength  
To bear them upward through the trackless fields  
Of undefined existence far and free. (ll. 146-57)

The image of the emerging butterfly, which appears again in "The Two Voices", is sufficient to illustrate how one leaves the slime of this dull world, but not sufficient

to account for the poet's attaining the heights of undefined existence, and so the divine, unutterable aspect of the buoyancy is invoked. When the vision finally comes, it is a masterpiece of microcosmic visionary writing, and the poet is suitably overwhelmed:

But the glory of the place  
 Stood out a pillared front of burnished gold,  
 Interminably high, if gold it were  
 Or metal more etherial, and beneath  
 Two doors of blinding brilliance, where no gaze  
 Might rest, stood open, and the eye could scan,  
 Through length of porch and valve and boundless hall,  
 Part of a throne of fiery flame, wherefrom  
 The snowy skirting of a garment hung,  
 And glimpse of multitudes of multitudes  
 That ministered around it -- if I saw  
 These things distinctly, for my human brain  
 Staggered beneath the vision, and thick night  
 Came down upon my eyelids, and I fell.

With ministering hand he raised me up:  
 Then with a mournful and ineffable smile,  
 Which but to look on for a moment filled  
 My eyes with irresistible sweet tears,  
 . . . . .  
 he spake. (ll. 170-87, 190)

The vision is incomprehensible and finally overpowering so that the poet collapses, and yet the smile with which the angel revives the poet is doubly confusing, since the vision and the comfort after the vision both have the same source.

The images of incomprehension are important in "Timbuctoo" in two respects. This poem shares with "Armageddon" and many other earlier poems a love of apocalyptic situations and imagery, although its central theme, unlike that of "Armageddon" is discovery. Many

of Tennyson's early poems revel in quasi-apocalyptic occurrences or scenes such as wastelands ("The Vale of Bones"), the collapse of empires ("Persia", "The Druid's Prophecies", "The Fall of Jerusalem", and many others, including the unpublished fragment on Napoleon in Russia<sup>36</sup>), the moment of death ("The Kraken", "The Dying Swan"), and so on. The moment of cosmic insight is in "Timbuctoo" coupled with the theme of discovery, the idea that eventually Timbuctoo will no longer be a mysterious city of the imagination, but subjected to exact measurement, like the little muddy pond in Wordsworth's "The Thorn", so many feet long and so many feet wide:

'Oh City! oh latest Throne! where I was raised  
 To be a mystery of loveliness  
 Unto all eyes, the time is well-nigh come  
 When I must render up this glorious home  
 To keen Discovery: soon yon brilliant towers  
 Shall darken with the waving of her wand;  
 Darken, and shrink and shiver into huts,  
 Black specks amid a waste of dreary sand,  
 Low-built, mud-walled, Barbarian settlements.  
 How changed from this fair City!' (ll. 236-45)

Ricks shows in his headnote to the poem that the attitude expressed here was a nineteenth-century commonplace, but this does nothing to diminish the obviously great importance that the theme had for Tennyson. The Timbuctoo of the angels, undiscovered and only imagined by man, is clearly to be preferred, in terms of its general association with the New Jerusalem, to the squalid settlement inhabited only by the lesser breeds without the law. While Tennyson is tapping strong anti-scientific

prejudices in the early nineteenth century in which science was seen as the greatest enemy of poetry,<sup>37</sup> he is also broaching a subject which has much greater significance for himself -- the possibility of achieving divine or forbidden knowledge. The angel in "Timbuctoo" as "The permeating life which courseth through / All the intricate and labyrinthine veins / Of the great vine of Fable" (ll. 216-8), is understandably biassed in his regrets that he will have to surrender his ancestral home to prying mortals, who will succeed in corrupting the place. Yet, from human and scientific perspectives, this represents a scientific advance, since it replaces some woolly "mystery of loveliness" with hard fact. The angel knows that the truth cannot absolutely be forbidden, but in striving for it, man cannot achieve it intact, and in fact destroys the city's greatest value and beauty, qualities which it can retain only while remaining the subject of the imagination and fabulous knowledge.

The idea of esoteric knowledge which, once gained, is destructive recalls "The Poet's Mind" and other poems in which it is not the fragility of the secret which is at fault, but the clumsiness of the seeker. In "The Hesperides" the sisters protect a secret as well as the golden apple as they sing "honour comes with mystery" (l. 47) and guard the precious fruit from possible plunderers:

Keen-eyed Sisters, singing airily,  
 Looking warily  
 Every way,  
 Guard the apple night and day,  
 Lest one from the East come and take it away.  
 (ll. 38-42)

They make it clear that the loss of the apple also means the loss of mystery, and the revelation of the ancient secret, forbidden for the simple reason that "All things are not told to all" (l. 79). They are always aware that the apple can be snatched from them, though they concur with "Timbuctoo"'s angel in predicting disastrous consequences of such foolhardiness. In an inversion of this pattern of the invasion of the sacred place, the Lady of Shalott dies because she follows Sir Lancelot beyond the scope of her mirror and outside her tower, thereby achieving a momentary glimpse of reality instead of her usual Platonic shadows, culminating in her view of Camelot:

She left the web, she left the loom,  
 She made three paces through the room,  
 She saw the water-lily bloom,  
 She saw the helmet and the plume,  
     She looked down to Camelot.  
 Out flew the web and floated wide;  
 The mirror cracked from side to side;  
 'The curse is come upon me,' cried  
     The Lady of Shalott. (ll. 109-17)

Much later, Tennyson took up the theme again in "The Holy Grail" in which we see the physical disintegration of Arthur's Round Table, providing an experience of the divine available only to a few, Percivale, Galahad, and Lancelot, although only the first two achieve the vision

with complete integrity; Lancelot's experience still leaves him a holy sinner. And "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" evokes the lost vision of youth, a vision the perversity of which the poet recognises in his maturity:

When the breeze of a joyful dawn blew free  
In the silken sail of infancy,  
The tide of time flowed back with me,  
The forward-flowing tide of time.  
(ll. 1-4)

The vision breaks off, however, before any knowledge is gained, significantly focussing the poem on the figure of Haroun Alraschid, though no clue is given as to his role in the poem apart from being the proprietor of the place.

It is apparent, then, that to embark in quest of divine knowledge or insight is a risky undertaking, not only because of the dangers of the quest itself, but also because of the uncertainty of one's degree of success -- complete frustration, death, complete fulfilment, partial knowledge, and even madness are all possible. Partial success is the most common result in Tennyson's poems, since few of his characters are Galahads and Percivales, but most are Lancelots:

'Then in my madness I essayed the door;  
It gave; and through a stormy glare, a heat  
As from a seventimes-heated furnace, I,  
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,  
With such a fierceness that I swooned away --  
O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,  
All palled in crimson samite, and around

Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes.  
 And but for all my madness and my sin,  
 And then my swooning, I had sworn I saw  
 That which I saw; but what I saw was veiled  
 And covered; and this Quest was not for me.'  
 ("The Holy Grail", ll.838-49)

Lancelot's doubts, his maddening sense of his sinfulness, lead him to deny the reality of what he has actually seen, and to him the Grail is veiled and covered, even though the brilliance of his vision is almost blindingly bright. In the Christian terms of the Grail legend (which Tennyson, even if he did not subscribe to them, would have understood), it is not the fault of the vision, but of man's fallen nature and sinfulness<sup>38</sup> that man is unable to understand fully the divine insight offered to him. God, or whatever power lies behind such visions, cannot be accused of playing cruel Hardy-esque jokes on innocent human victims. The corruption and the confusion lie completely on the human side of the encounter. Ambiguity is a human, not a divine, invention.

One of the most famous examples of the process of revelation and human misinterpretation in Tennyson comes from "The Vision of Sin". The final vision shows

men and horses pierced with worms,  
 And slowly quickening into lower forms;  
 By shards and scurf of salt, and scum of dross,  
 Old plash of rains, and refuse patched with moss.  
 (ll. 209-12)

The theologians and the ethical philosophers immediately set about explaining and accounting for this dreadful sight, though they are unable to agree among themselves:

Then some one spoke: 'Behold! it was a crime  
 Of sense avenged by sense that bore with time.'  
 Another said: 'The crime of sense became  
 The crime of malice, and is equal blame.'  
 And one: 'He had not wholly quenched his power;  
 A little grain of conscience made him sour.'

(ll. 213-18)

Then, after these feeble attempts to explain the vision,  
 God himself intervenes, though the light which he casts  
 has nothing to do with clarifying the solution:

At last I heard a voice upon the slope  
 Cry to the summit, 'Is there any hope?'  
 To which an answer pealed from that high land;  
 But in a tongue no man could understand;  
 And on the glimmering limit far withdrawn  
 God made Himself an awful rose of dawn.

(ll. 219-24)

Not only is the answer itself incomprehensible, but there  
 are ambiguities about the source of the answer, whether  
 God or the landscape itself, which are brought out fur-  
 ther in the ambiguous syntax of the last line, in which  
 "Himself" can be both a direct and an indirect object  
 of the verb, and God, therefore, may either undergo a  
 metamorphosis into the rising sun, or may make the sun  
 rise as a sign of his great power. In both cases it is  
 unclear whether God is to be found in the natural pheno-  
 mena. As in the quibbling response, "I am that I am",  
 God is giving the only adequate answer; the element of  
 riddling lies in man's own ignorance.

And there are other interesting examples later  
 in Tennyson's career to show that this was not just a  
 passing concern. On a more poignant and mundane level,



Enoch Arden's wife, Annie, finds Philip's attentions so persistent and oppressive that she prays for a sign concerning her husband's fate. She

Started from bed, and struck herself a light,  
 Then desperately seized the holy Book,  
 Suddenly set it wide to find a sign,  
 Suddenly put her finger on the text,  
 'Under the palm-tree.' That was nothing to her:  
 No meaning there: she closed the Book and slept:  
 When lo! her Enoch sitting on a height,  
 Under a palm-tree, over him the Sun:  
 'He is gone,' she thought, 'he is happy, he is singing  
 Hosanna in the highest: yonder shines  
 The Sun of Righteousness, and these be palms  
 Whereof the happy people strowing cried  
 "Hosanna in the highest!"' Here she woke,  
 Resolved, sent for him [Philip] and said wildly to him  
 'There is no reason why we should not wed.'  
 (ll. 490-504)

Although Annie's method of divination is founded in superstition, nevertheless it yields the truth, though not enough of it to prevent her from making a wrong decision on the basis of her misinterpretation. The difficulty lies in her inability to conceive of Enoch sitting under a palm tree in the South Seas, perhaps because she subconsciously already believes him to be dead.<sup>39</sup> Her limited understanding of the supernatural vision of Enoch which she is offered thus leads to a bigamous marriage and the pathetic outcome for all the characters.

Tennyson by no means confines this limitation of human understanding to religious or spiritual matters. History is midway between the human and the divine, since it is the working out of God's will in time through the agency of ignorant men. Thus, as a late epigram probably

written in 1889, entitled "The Play", argues, one must not expect to comprehend the significance of history until the end of time, if even then:

Act first, this Earth, a stage so gloomed with woe  
 You all but sicken at the shifting scenes.  
 And yet be patient. Our Playwright may show  
 In some fifth Act what this wild Drama means.

And until that denouement, politics plays a major part in the wild drama, since it is an element of the workings of the democratic government necessary to preserve the state. The theme of politics and political structures is a treacherous one in Tennyson, since it is easy to confuse his public utterances, as a young man, as Poet Laureate, and as an interested observer, with his private view on various issues and politicians. The important fact is that Tennyson drew more distinctions in these matters than would appeal to most voters of his, or our, day, his comment that he loved Gladstone, but hated his policy being perhaps the most striking example.<sup>40</sup>

Tennyson's hatred throughout his life was directed against tyranny of any kind, whether of a single despotic ruler such as Louis XVI, or the unruly mob which triumphed after his death, only to throw up another despot in the person of Napoleon. At all costs, Tennyson believed, Britain must be preserved from chaos like that which prevailed in France. Hence the well-known Tennysonian jubilation at the passage of the Reform Bill in 1832<sup>41</sup>

indicates his response to the triumph of change and progress within the structures of the British Parliamentary system. Such a system presupposed, he knew, the existence of political parties, though he seems never to have been able to affiliate himself enthusiastically with any party, and in fact, actively distrusted much of their public posturing. In a poem written to Gladstone in 1889, he addresses his friend as Prime Minister and statesman rather than as leader of a political faction:

Nor lend an ear to random cries,  
 Or you may drive in vain,  
 For some cry 'Quick' and some cry 'Slow,'  
 But, while the hills remain,  
 Up hill 'Too-slow' will need the whip,  
 Down hill 'Too-quick,' the chain.  
 ("Politics", ll. 7-12)

Gladstone, according to Tennyson, must ignore the cries when they are random, though when he judges appropriate, he must be prepared to adopt the advice of the "Quick" party and then of the "Slow" party in order to govern properly. Neither party has a monopoly on the truth and unquestioning adherence to either side can be disastrous. Tennyson's reluctant tolerance of political parties, then, is perhaps a little naive, though it was the basis of an admirable political eclecticism:

The fact was that he found himself unable to fit in with party loyalties. He loathed much of the foreign and Imperial policy of the Liberals, while sympathising with their economic and social ideas.... He had a great horror of doctrinaire Socialism, with its opposition to the Christian revelation and the old traditions of feudal chivalry....

He saw clearly enough that a new social condition was coming on the world, but he longed for it to come by evolution and under the guidance of those who had the benefit of political tradition and transmitted culture.<sup>42</sup>

Thus, he took his seat in the House of Lords on the Cross-Benches, partly because he lacked political experience (he was the first poet to have been elevated to the peerage), and partly because of his public position as Poet Laureate, but almost certainly as a matter of personal conviction as well. The vicissitudes of politics were suitable for some, but too restrictive for Tennyson's comfort. Will Waterproof makes exactly Tennyson's point, as well as the more general one, more entertainingly than further discussion ever could:

Ah yet, though all the world forsake,  
 Though fortune clip my wings,  
 I will not cramp my heart, nor take  
 Half-views of men and things.  
 Let Whig and Tory stir their blood;  
 There must be stormy weather;  
 But for some true result of good  
 All parties work together.

Let there be thistles, there are grapes;  
 If old things, there are new;  
 Ten thousand broken lights and shapes,  
 Yet glimpses of the true.  
 Let raffs be rife in prose and rhyme,  
 We lack not rhymes and reasons,  
 As on this whirligig of Time  
 We circle with the seasons.

This earth is rich in man and maid;  
 With fair horizons bound:  
 This whole wide earth of light and shade  
 Comes out a perfect round.  
 High over roaring Temple-bar, .  
 And set in Heaven's third story,  
 I look at all things as they are,  
 But through a kind of glory. (ll. 49-72)

The glory is obviously vinous, but Will offers a kind of aggressively cheerful parody of the sort of vision which, for most of Tennyson's characters, is so difficult to achieve -- the transcendence of the minute particulars of human experience.

Once again, however, the process of history and the bitter lessons which it teaches are of great concern to Tennyson and we find him turning to the subject throughout his career. This theme is fundamental to the Idylls of the King as perhaps none other is, and so we can turn to "The Passing of Arthur" for perhaps the clearest statement of the lessons of history and the divine plan. "The Passing of Arthur" was written in its original form at about the same time as "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", and it appears among the poems of 1842 as an exquisite idyll, full of allusive significance, though with none of the weight which it gains within the context of all of the Idylls of the King. Thus, while Arthur's last speech to Bedivere from the barge exists in both versions and since its excessive familiarity to readers has made it a set-piece almost devoid of meaning and divorced from its dramatic context, its true importance can be established only in the cycle of the Idylls. As might be expected of Arthur's farewell, it is the most important statement of his ideals in the poem, though not particularly in its advocacy of persistent and pious prayer. It represents Arthur's statement of what he has learned

from his experience, and begins with a quotation from his address at the foundation of the Round Table and the celebration of his marriage to Guinevere. In the earlier context, it is the bold, self-confident boast of a newly-crowned king: "The old order changeth, yielding place to new" ("The Coming of Arthur", l. 508). But, as he dies, he speaks as one who knows he does not possess any final answers:

'The old order changeth, yielding place to new,  
And God fulfils himself in many ways,  
Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.'  
("The Passing of Arthur", ll.408-10)

Arthur's lesson has been cruelly taught: his good custom has corrupted the world and has collapsed, in spite of the fact that it preached moral excellence, and was better in fact than anything before or since, simply because it was too limited, and made excessive demands on the rest of his society. To put it more harshly, he realises at last the extent to which he has been deluded throughout his reign in seeing the ideals of the Round Table as having unique value in the evolution of history.

It is necessary to place "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" in this context of transcending particularities and individual points of view not only in order to understand the proper balance between them, but beyond this, to appreciate the centrality of human limitations in Tennyson's poetry. From the fallibility of the individual human being, it follows that a consensus or a political

party has only a crude, statistical superiority over the individual, since both are rough-hewn institutions assembled for political convenience. But, paradoxically, it also follows that, if the human understanding is limited, then one opinion is of no greater intrinsic value than any other, or at least that no individual possesses a monopoly of the truth, and thus that each individual, no matter how apparently eccentric, is to be valued in himself.

It should be apparent that Tennyson's open-mindedness has been confused with empty-headedness, though they are by no means the same thing. Tennyson's practice is a restrained endorsement of Blake's dictum that to generalise is to be an idiot. Any final judgment, any general conclusion, precisely because it can never be based on knowledge of the ultimate spiritual reality, is bound to be susceptible of error, distortion, and misjudgment. The balance between the pendant poems, "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", represents something of an impasse. They show us that the desire to move forward must be tempered by an awareness of one's limitations, but it is not possible to be much more specific than that in two paired poems like "Ulysses" and "Tithonus". Although Tennyson wrote similar paired poems later, such as "Forlorn" and "Happy: The Leper's Bride", and "Despair" and "Faith", these poems represent no significant advance

over the poems I have discussed so far. As I have attempted to show in the latter part of this chapter, Tennyson turned from the relatively schematic and arbitrary pairings which he had written, and treated the same themes in other forms, including the plays and individual poems.

The fact that Tennyson had begun to write paired poems before Hallam's death shows that they were not created out of any panic of faith which may have resulted from the loss of his closest friend. And that he continued to develop their techniques suggests that it was as much an intellectual and a poetical interest as an emotional one. The ambition to express as many glimpses of the truth as possible, without restricting himself to two pendant points of view leads, then, to the formal and generic innovations of his later career. But before examining the sequel poems and looking briefly at In Memoriam, Maud, the Idylls, and the plays, I believe that it is important to devote careful attention to The Princess in which many of his later skills and ideas are worked out.



#### IV. "ELOQUENT STRUCTURE": THE PRINCESS

Mine be the strength of spirit, full and free,  
Like some broad river rushing down alone,  
With the selfsame impulse wherewith he was thrown  
From his loud fount upon the echoing lea: --  
Which with increasing might doth forward flee  
By town, and tower, and hill, and cape, and isle,  
And in the middle of the green salt sea  
Keeps his blue waters fresh for many a mile.  
Mine be the power which ever to its sway  
Will win the wise at once, and by degrees  
May into uncongenial spirits flow;  
Even as the warm gulf-stream of Florida  
Floats far away into the Northern seas  
The lavish growths of southern Mexico.  
(Tennyson, "Sonnet")

Men should be androgynous and women gynandrous,  
but men should not be gynandrous nor women  
androgynous.

(Tennyson, quoted in Ricks, 1424)

As long as Tennyson's goal of portraying glimpses of the truth is attained in paired poems, one must consider the two poems together in as many ways as possible. But when this theme reappears in a single poem, like The Princess or The Lover's Tale, a structure assumes first significance. If there are other problems in such poems, they tend to be less immediate than that of the unity of the poem, as we saw in The Lover's Tale. All of Tennyson's long poems have a peculiarly loose structure, and his concern to be faithful to the details of experience in the quest for a larger truth is the most important reason for this. It is not a case of Tennyson

being unable to write long smooth poems, but, apparently, of his being unwilling to do so.

The Princess, I believe, is at the very heart of this problem which, however, affects In Memoriam, Maud, and the Idylls of the King as well. I shall concentrate my attention on The Princess for several reasons, among which is the unfortunate historical fact that it has received little appreciation or satisfactory exposition in the past. Certainly, even though it is one of Tennyson's most delightful poems, it is one of the least enjoyed. The Princess deserves careful study, too, in the light of paired poems, in that it tries to bring together opposing ideas, forces, and images, and attempts to do so more rigorously than any of the other long poems Tennyson wrote. Thus, in The Princess we see Tennyson taxing his emotional, intellectual, and poetic range as he does nowhere else, and The Princess is in this sense a better sample of his work than In Memoriam or Maud.

The diversity of The Princess seems to represent its great strength as a poem in that it displays a number of points of view and a variation of tone towards a serious theme, and that such variety closely parallels the theme itself. The comedy in the poem is not an irrelevant distraction from the real philosophical substance, nor from the tone, and it certainly is not pure sugar coating, but an integral part of the poem.

Tennyson himself summed up the nature of the poem when he remarked, "though truly original, it is, after all, only a medley."<sup>1</sup> We are thus warned not to demand too much of the poem's structure, not to seek a powerful reconciliation of opposites. Rather than suggesting the Romantic notion of the powerful synthesising abilities of the imagination, The Princess recalls the Victorian love of collections of bric-à-brac, with disparate and unrelated objects brought together in an incongruous and somewhat bewildering juxtaposition. / Or, to use another of Tennyson's images, it shows many of the characteristics of unity and uniqueness of the gulf stream.

In reading The Princess it is unfair to discuss only those elements which interest us or please us, because the essence of its collections of moods, styles, and themes is disparity. The plenitude in the poem is not merely Victorian bad taste, but is Tennyson's main concern in the poem: that stability and harmony are achieved only by a full view of contrasting and even contradictory values and forces, even if the old reconciliation of opposites is no longer possible or appropriate. It is remarkable how The Princess staunchly resists any attempt at oversimplification, both in the style of the poem and in its theme. One category is never enough to account satisfactorily for what happens. Thus, the poem cannot be described accurately as

a narrative since there are disjunctions, the changes of narrator, and the interpolated lyrics, to frustrate such a classification. The Princess is neither lyric nor narrative, nor is it a hybrid produced by crossing the two. Lyric and narrative co-exist within the poem, interacting but not cancelling each other's special flavour. Nor are the characters themselves flat caricatures; to take one example from the poem, it is unfair to the Princess to say that she opposes marriage, since in her welcoming speech, she says:

'You likewise will do well,  
Ladies, in entering here, to cast and fling  
The tricks, which make us toys of men, that so,  
Some future time, if so indeed you will,  
You may with those self-styled our lords ally  
Your fortunes, justlier balanced, scale with scale.'  
(II, 47-52)

The Princess is never completely convinced by the Lady Blanche's theories about the baseness of all men. Nor is the academy founded on ingratitude or lack of duty to one's family, since the Lady Psyche possesses both these virtues, on the basis of which she promises not to expose the identity of her brother and his friends. And, unlike Lady Blanche, she seems to have no ideological motives for supporting the ladies' university's prejudice against men, since she willingly falls in love with the first eligible man she meets, even to the extent of eloping with him. And, it must be remembered, Princess Ida favours Lady Psyche, not Lady Blanche. Now it is true that on this level, the attitudes represent a basic

confusion of objectives, but it is also true that, until the arrival of the "barbarians" from the North precipitates a crisis, the Princess is able to hold each view in check, and although Lady Blanche and Lady Psyche disagree on this matter, the University does not suffer as a result.

The Princess, indeed, is an attempt to balance opposites without necessarily reconciling them: the poet does not feel an obligation to explain away all the contradictions in the poem, nor does he resolve all of them at the end, though he does attempt to explain why they exist. But the balancing can be seen in many aspects of the poem, both thematic and technical. | Among the most significant of the thematic contraries are the balance between the past and the present, between the specific and the general (in terms of both setting and character), between love and duty (whether to one's family or to the pre-arranged contract), between illusion and reality, between the associations of the North and those of the South, and between failure and success. | In terms of technique, the balance exists between the fictional and the "real", narrative and lyric, epic and burlesque, the encomiastic and the satirical, the ambiguous alternatives in the many puns, and ultimately, in the relationship of the theme to the technique. These will bear examination in turn.

One of the more surprising aspects of Tennyson's styles in The Princess is his frequent use of puns. It is all the more unexpected in that puns, depending on a sound's conveying at least two possible senses, have not been considered in Tennyson's verse until recently, perhaps because he was the poet whom everyone reads aloud, but whose wit was not quick enough to see any possible ambiguities in his words. Yet Professor Pinks observes that "The Princess is full of covert puns, suggestions glimpsed between the interstices,"<sup>2</sup> while he praises the "liberated"<sup>3</sup> diction of the poem, together with Tennyson's newly-acquired linguistic confidence.<sup>4</sup> One does not expect an Elizabethan indulgence in puns among the Victorian poets, since the device seems to have languished in disrepute as a serious literary technique during most of the nineteenth century.<sup>5</sup> Most of Tennyson's puns, indeed, are laboured and rather learned, like his references to the "orient sun" in an early poem like "Ode to Memory" and his lines in "Merlin and Vivien", "what say ye to Sir Valence, him / Whose kinsman left him watcher o'er his wife" (ll. 703-4). But if Tennyson, like the King of Hearts in Alice in Wonderland, has to tell his subjects that he is punning and to explain his point, he is saddled with readers as obtuse and as earnest as the inhabitants of Wonderland. In The Princess some are just jeux d'esprit, plays on words which occur

spontaneously to the knights (they have, after all, recently come from university) and which are apt in the exact situation, without having any more general significance. They represent the sort of sophisticated student's wit, by no means limited to puns, of which the Princess's gift to the Prince on their coming-of-age represents another type:

But when the days drew nigh that I should wed,  
My father sent ambassadors with furs  
And jewels, gifts, to fetch her: these brought back  
A present, a great labour of the loom. (I, 46-5)

As much as the Lady of Shalott's web,<sup>6</sup> the gift is a comic version of Penelope's web, at last complete, and sent off to a would-be lover whom she is nevertheless determined to reject. The periphrasis has added point, too, when one realises that the Princess's name, Ida, means "labour", and gives rise to a similar play on words elsewhere in the poem.<sup>7</sup> A similar joking pun<sup>8</sup> occurs when the Prince describes the view to the North as seen by himself and his two friends: "champaign" in juxtaposition with the verb "drank", suggests the intoxicating beauty of the scenery as well as their own mixture of fear of being discovered and elation at being in love (III, 104).

Often, as these examples demonstrate, ambiguity arises from an evocation of the Latinate root of the word as well as the more common English meaning. Thus, Ida demands a more serious and interesting song from the Prince with "love / Or smiling expectation" (IV, 231-2).

where "expectation" conveys not only her eagerness, but also the penetration of her gaze in the allusion to the Latin verb. On a more complex level, Lady Psyche's closeness to Ida is stressed by a pun: "they were still together, grew / (For so they said themselves) inosculated" (III, 72-3). Here, perhaps the Latin root is more obvious than either of the two English meanings: the word's etymological association with kissing has more immediate significance than its strictly English associations with medicine (where it refers to the joining of veins in the body) and to the looser sense of intimate contact and association between the two young women. A third example provides an interesting echo of The Lover's Tale in which the triumphant Lionel comforts his rival, Julian, like a "vain, rich man" (The Lover's Tale, I, 703) for whom sorrow and solace are both cheap. In Part IV of The Princess, Blanche defends herself against charges of betraying Princess Ida's trust; she speaks like an "affluent orator" (IV, 272), again with the suggestions of the confidence and ease that come from never having suffered poverty, and with the exaggerated fluency which is the sign of insincerity.

There are, however, puns whose significance is rather greater than the others discussed so far. One of the most carefully sustained of these is the play on "liberties" (I, 170; I, 202; II, 57; III, 271) in which



several senses of the word are evoked, with an overriding ironic effect. When the three young men arrive at the town where Ida's university is situated, they disguise themselves with the help of the local hosteller:

Him we gave a costly bribe,  
To guerdon silence, mounted our good steeds,  
And boldly ventured on the liberties.  
(I, 200-2)

Here the word refers mainly to the precincts of the university, the part of the town over which Princess Ida's authority extends, but there are several other subordinate but no less relevant meanings involved in the use of this word. The word also refers to a district in a county which is outside the jurisdiction of the county sheriff,<sup>9</sup> an apt enough description of Ida's rejection of her father's authority and the influence of all men. The final concrete sense of the word here also leads into the more obvious abstract meaning: the areas open to prisoners outside the prison walls are called the prison's liberties, and the image of Princess Ida's university as a sort of prison is an important and revealing one. The "statutes" of the university, for example, read very much like a prison sentence:

Not for three years to correspond with home;  
Not for three years to cross the liberties;  
Not for three years to speak with any men;  
And many more.... (II, 56-9)

And the university is a prison in that it severely restricts the freedom of choice of its inmates, since they

have such hard rules imposed by a task-mistress who is,  
it seems, prepared to act decisively, if ambiguously,  
should the need arise:

'We were as prompt to spring against the pikes,  
Or down the fiery gulf as talk of it,  
To compass our dear sisters' liberties.'  
(III, 269-71)

Which means, of course, both that Ida will take advantage of any situation to extend her dear sisters' liberties, but also that she will encompass them, restrict them, in so doing (there is also a play on "compass"). Tennyson's skilful use of this one word shows clearly the ambivalent attitude one adopts towards Princess Ida and her scheme: in one sense they are liberated from the rigidities of society, but perhaps they are still held in the liberties of the prison of militant feminism.

As in any situation involving transvestism, there are plenty of jokes at the expense of the sexes, particularly in this case, against men who are compelled to deny their masculinity in order to avoid arousing Princess Ida's suspicions. The result is the sort of sexual comedy -- both of situation and innuendo -- familiar to us from Twelfth Night, Der Rosenkavalier, Charley's Aunt, and Some Like It Hot. But whereas sexual reversal lends itself to broad comedy in The Princess, the Princess's masculinity is laughed at in a series of telling puns, in accordance with the more subtle change

in her role. The Prince's father is less than kind to Ida, though he does not seriously misrepresent her views when he tells her: "'You hold the woman is the better man'" (IV, 391). Even her own father joins the sport: King Gama explains that the ideal of the university is "'that with equal husbandry / The woman were an equal to the man'" (I, 129-30). All these ideas are combined in what the Prince calls her assault on "'this gray preëminence of man'" (III, 218), together with an unflattering reminder about the relative stature of men and women.

The examples of word-play which I have discussed are only examples of some of the kinds of puns which Tennyson employs in The Princess to achieve various effects: among them, the spontaneity and vitality of undergraduate wit, and a masterly shorthand for outlining the moral and thematic ambiguities which underlie the poem. Here we see in concentrated form what we have seen only in isolated flashes before The Princess: Tennyson's use of puns and ambiguities, and, as Professor Ricks illustrates,<sup>10</sup> less obvious sound relationships to expand the meaning of individual words and of their contexts. While it is perhaps unwise to compare Tennyson's use of language with that of Joyce in Ulysses and particularly Finnegans Wake, nevertheless the sort of analysis of individual words in relation to their context which

is necessary in Joyce, as indeed it is in some sixteenth- and early seventeenth-century writers to a lesser extent, can be profitable in reading The Princess. But Tennyson's technique is obviously far less innovative, and he remains always within the strict limits of grammar, syntax, and dictionary meanings. With a few exceptions, the subtlety of his word-play and the euphony of his lines have prevented too many readers from acknowledging this particular achievement in The Princess.

Rather more contentious problems arise in considering the tone and structure and thematic unity of the poem. These are the chestnuts of criticism of The Princess and perhaps Professor Ricks has best summed up the objections to the poem (although he sees the source of the poem's weakness as also its strength):

The Princess manifests great skill -- directed, though, not to poetic achievement but to a therapy of evasion. Tennyson wrote it after the worst five years of his life, and he created a complicated series of evasions such as could temporarily stave off his dilemmas and disasters. The Princess does not ignore all these, both artistic and human; it ingeniously (the ingenuity is ultimately barren) evades them.<sup>11</sup>

Thus, Tennyson, while being fully aware of the questions he is raising and the artistic difficulties he is creating, uses his skill, not to solve the problems, but conjures them up his sleeve or under the table. This, as Ricks suggests, is particularly true of the tone of the poem, which is "in its odd way a triumph of bringing the

fearful within its purlieus and then tranquilising everything".<sup>12</sup> Not only is the transformation of near-tragedy to comedy suspect, but the way in which it is done is all the more dubious, according to this view:

Then rose a little feud betwixt the two,  
Betwixt the mockers and the realists:  
And I, betwixt them both, to please them both,  
And yet to give the story as it rose,  
I moved as in a strange diagonal,  
And maybe neither pleased myself nor them.  
(Conclusion, 23-8)

On this passage, Ricks comments, "Something, despite the candour, is false there. 'To please them both,' or rather to pain neither one of them? The Princess, for all its manly talk, would like to pretend that nobody feels any pain."<sup>13</sup> To support his point, he adduces what he considers to be an uneasiness in the syntax to provide a hint "that all is far from well".<sup>14</sup>

This explanation, however, is plausible without being satisfactory. It depends perhaps too heavily on the assumption that Tennyson is trying to solve personal problems by transforming them into art by the most indirect method imaginable (by creating imaginary characters who create imaginary characters who act out the problems in a disguised form), but even so, finds himself unable to come to any conclusion or solution of both the fictional and the personal problem. This, as we shall see, is a doubtful assumption, since the problem of the romance-plot clearly mirrors issues raised and

discussed on the primary fictional level, even down to small details; therefore, such evasion seems unlikely, and furthermore, Tennyson in his extensive and prolonged revision of the poem after its initial publication, made no attempt to unify either the structure or the tone of the poem. Indeed, the inclusion of the songs reduces the narrative structure of the poem to confusion, thereby compounding the difficulties of genre and tone and structure, not evading them. For these reasons, then, one must be careful not to condemn the poem for the reasons for which it might as easily be praised. Professor Ricks' criticism of the poem is by no means new: Marston's review, which he quotes, comments on the poem's "incoherency of its characteristics".<sup>15</sup> Perhaps before we accept this criticism, we would do well to look at the nature of the incoherency of characteristics and of Tennyson's evasions insofar as the tone of the poem is concerned.

Polonius' classification of The Princess would be most probably, "tragical-comical-historical-pastoral... poem unlimited", and this seems as useful as any other. The tale which is the centre of the poem is modelled on the "kind of tales ...men tell men" (Prologue, 193) while at university:

'Kind? what kind?  
Chimeras, crotchets, Christmas solecisms,  
Seven-headed monsters only made to kill  
Time by the fixe in winter.'  
(Prologue, 198-201)

Lilia is not prepared to pass the hours in idle nonsense, and so the Aunt suggests an heroic story which will kill Time as well as just pass time, a story which will erase the time gap separating the picnickers from their illustrious ancestor, Sir Ralph:

'And something it should be to suit the place,  
 Heroic, for a hero lies beneath,  
 Grave, solemn!'

Walter warped his mouth at this  
 To something so mock-solemn, that I laughed  
 And Lilia woke with sudden-thrilling mirth;  
 . . . . .  
 till the maiden Aunt  
 (A little sense of wrong had touched her face  
 With colour) turned to me with 'As you will;  
 Heroic if you will, or what you will,  
 Or be yourself your hero if you will.'

'Take Lilia, then, for heroine' clamoured he,  
 'And make her some great Princess, six feet high,  
 Grand, epic, homicidal; and be you  
 The Prince to win her!' (Prologue, 206-10, 212-20)

Walter's prescription for Ida's character admirably sums up the tone of the romance. Princess Ida is an epic heroine, but she and her project have comic aspects as well, depending on whether one adopts Ida's or the Prince's point of view.

It is important to recognise that, throughout the central narrative and in the frame as well, there are always at least two ways of looking at things, two interpretations of what happens. One of the Prince's weird seizures makes exactly this point. Princess Ida first appears in her heroic, almost heraldic, role:

There at a board by tome and paper sat,  
 With two tame leopards couched beside her throne,  
 All beauty compassed in a female form,  
 The Princess; liker to the inhabitant  
 Of some clear planet close upon the Sun,  
 Than our man's earth. (II, 18-23)

But during the seizure she appears much less imposing:

On a sudden my strange seizure came  
 Upon me, the weird vision of our house:  
 The Princess Ida seemed a hollow show,  
 Her gay-furred cats a painted fantasy,  
 Her college and her maidens, empty masks,  
 And I myself the shadow of a dream,  
 For all things were and were not.<sup>16</sup> (III, 167-73)

Apart from the problem of how real the Princess is remains the question of what exactly her feline companions are. Even if they are not harmless kittens, they are at their fiercest, tamed leopards. And they are significantly not the regal lions one might expect, but leopards whose spotted coats symbolise the incoherency of the poem. Certainly there is strength and grandeur in the initial impression she makes on the Prince, but it is strangely qualified; the Princess is not as formidable as she might like him to believe. Even the leopard playing with her sandal will not obligingly remain still for the heroic pose and the grand impression to be perfect, and it is never clear that the Princess is able to rest her foot on the leopard because she has subdued it, or because it is by nature "tame" and "kittenlike" (III, 165). Nor can the Princess maintain her grandeur when she plummets from the sublimity of the royal "we" and the subject of



everlasting fame to the ridiculousness of her amazement at their stature:

'We give you welcome: not without redound  
Of use and glory to yourselves ye come,  
The first-fruits of the stranger: aftertime,  
And that full voice which circles round the grave,  
Will rank you nobly, mingled up with me.  
What! are the ladies of your land so tall?'  
(II, 28-33)

It is a mark of the skill with which the poem is constructed, however, that the Princess is never totally discredited or seriously mocked. After Cyril and Florian have succumbed to the charms of Psyche and Melissa and become ecstatic in their praise, the Prince redresses the balance in Ida's favour:

'The crane,' I said, 'may chatter of the crane,  
The dove may murmur of the dove, but I  
An eagle clang an eagle to the sphere.  
My princess, O my princess! true she errs,  
But in her own grand way: being herself  
Three times more noble than three score of men,  
She sees herself in every woman else,  
And so she wears her error like a crown  
To blind the truth and me.' (III, 88-96)

And then he digresses into infatuated bombast. But before he is transported by her merits, he points to the Princess's real greatness; she may be wrong or silly, but "in her own grand way". There is a greatness and nobility about her which Psyche and Melissa (and Blanche, for that matter) lack completely. The Prince's speech is of vital importance, since otherwise, the Princess becomes a grotesque figure and the butt of most of the jokes in the poem. She is distinguished by the element

of struggle and heroism which, in another context, makes it better to have loved and lost than never to have loved at all. Precisely because he has failed to appreciate the significance of the Prince's insight, the reviewer of The Princess in the Gentleman's Magazine says:

We do not mean to undervalue the character or conduct of the gentlemen in the Medley, but we have tied Psyche's glove to our helmet, and we pronounce her the peerless and incomparable lady of the poem, challenging any one to refute our assertion, or deny her claims....The Prince is delightful when he is urging his love in pathos, and delicate sighs, and sparkling tears; but he ought to have fought better.<sup>17</sup>

The point of the poem is that, even considering her faults, there is no one better among the characters than Ida herself.

And so the story continues until Lilia "feigning pique at what she called / The raillery, or grotesque, or false sublime" (IV<sup>^</sup>V, 11-2), instructs the next narrator:

'Fight' she said,  
'And make us all we would be, great and good.'  
He knightlike in his cap instead of casque,  
A cap of Tyrol borrowed from the hall,  
Arranged the favour, and assumed the Prince.  
(IV<sup>^</sup>V, 22-6)

It might be argued that this initiates a marked change in the tone of the poem, though to subscribe to this view assumes that the pique is real and forgets about the absurd Tyrolean knight. It is true that much of the foolery of the first four sections is changed to

serious end, but it is not till after that the more serious tone of the final sections only develops the implications of the Telemachus earlier speech about Iphigeneia's overriding need. That appears as silliness and error on her part in the first sections of the poem is now involved in the central paradox of the final sections: her victory over her enemy-suitor implies his ultimate victory over her. It is obvious that she and her ladies must care for the wounded among their champions:

[She] knelt on one knee, -- the child on one, --  
and prest
 Their hands, and called them dear deliverers,  
 And happy warriors, and immortal names,  
 And said, 'You shall not lie in the tents but here,  
 And nursed by those for whom you fought, and served  
 With female hands and hospitality.'  
(VI, 75-80)

And on seeing the King's grief over his son, she applies the same logic to tending her suitor's wounds:

A twitch of pain  
 Tortured her mouth, and o'er her forehead past  
 A shadow, and her hue changed, and she said:  
 'He saved my life: my brother slew him for it.'  
 . . . . .  
 And then once more she looked at my pale face:  
 Till understanding all the foolish work  
 Of Fancy, and the bitter close of all,  
 Her iron will was broken in her mind;  
 Her noble heart was molten in her breast;  
 She bowed, she set the child on the earth; she laid  
 A feeling finger on my brows, and presently  
 'O Sire,' she said, 'he lives: he is not dead:  
 O let me have him with my brethren here  
 In our own palace: we will tend on him  
 Like one of these; if so, by any means  
 To lighten this great clog of thanks, that make  
 Our progress falter to the woman's goal.'  
(VI, 89-92, 95-111)

Tennyson's brilliant phrase "feeling finger" suggests at once the new sensitivity and awareness in Princess Ida and hints that, in a sense, she is responsible (or at least her emotions of pity and shame are) for restoring the Prince to life. But although this may represent a change in policy it does not mark the extent of her humiliation; she is soon forced to recognise that her schemes have been so compromised that she has been beaten in every respect. Yielding to the chorus of pleas for mercy and hospital-care, she accepts them all:

But Ida with a voice, that like a bell  
Tolled by an earthquake in a trembling tower,  
Rang ruin, answered full of grief and scorn.

'Fling our doors wide! all, all, not one, but all,  
Not only he, but by my mother's soul,  
Whatever man lies wounded, friend or foe,  
Shall enter, if he will.' (VI, 311-7)

The angry despair of this passage, however, is ironically both the nadir of her career and the beginning of her rehabilitation, her acquisition of the true virtues of womanhood. In a situation which recalls Julian's dilemma in "The Golden Supper", her lowest point is her moment of glory, just before the tournament begins as the Prince sees her in triumph watching the proceedings:

I glanced aside, and saw the palace-front  
Alive with fluttering scarfs and ladies' eyes,  
And highest, among the statues, statuelike,  
Between a cymballed Miriam and a Jael,  
With Psyche's babe, was Ida watching us,  
A single band of gold about her hair,  
Like a saint's glory up in heaven: but she  
No saint -- inexorable -- no tenderness --  
Too hard, too cruel. (V, 497-505)

The end of the tale is now clear that inside the hard, cruel Ida the real life, whose portrait the Prince had admired from his earliest youth, is crying to get out. The Prince's delirious uncertainty as to which is the real, benign Ida remains until the Princess, as the result of an impressive catalogue of reasons (suggesting to the last not only her reluctance, but her cerebral approach to such matters), finally lowers her reserve and allows herself to be influenced by

Love, like an Alpine harobell hung with tears  
By some cold morning glacier; frail at first  
And feeble, all unconscious of itself,  
But such as gathered colour day by day.  
Last I woke sane. (VII, 100-4)

With love comes sanity and health and a taste for what Ida would earlier have called weak, sentimental poetry (her newly-acquired taste is generally agreed to be exquisite). Ida, too, has gained a sense of the aptness, almost the irony, of the poems she reads, since both are singularly apposite to the situation: "Now sleeps the crimson petal" in its calm expectancy as the lover waits for his mate to awaken to a consummation of their love, "Slip / Into my bosom and be lost in me" (VII, 173-4) and "Come down O maid" in which the shepherd wooes his love down from the "splendour of the hills" (VII, 179) to the delights of the valley, "for Love is of the valley" (VII, 183), thereby encompassing the Prince's earlier pleas to Ida and also Ida's reversed sexual role by inviting her lover to share her love:

So she low-toned: "While with shut eyes I lay  
 Listening; then look! -- Pale was the perfect face;  
 The bosom with long sighs laboured; and rock  
 Seemed the full lips, and mild the luminous eyes,  
 And the voice trembled and the hand.

(VII, 208-12)

This is the Prince's reward for his confidence in Ida when Florian and Cyril sang the praises of Melissa and Psyche. And yet, interestingly enough, Ida has no opportunity to return the outburst of affection and idealism with which the tale ends. Her last words are, "I seem / A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince; / You cannot love me" (VII, 316-8), which are scarcely justification for Walter's remark, "'I wish she had not yielded!'" (Conclusion, 5). His attitude recalls the king's hunting image based on the belief that once you have caught her, the best thing to do is to wed her. The Prince may be ready to marry Ida, but it is not clear that she is prepared to marry him yet. And we are left with another example (in Professor Ricks's phrase) of Tennyson's art of the penultimate.

The developments in Princess Ida's character and attitudes are, I think, sufficient to indicate not only the differences in tone, but also the use to which they are put. Merely to say that this is only a medley takes into account the seven different speakers, but it does not consider adequately the fact that it has been dressed up poetically by one man. The variety of tones in The

Princess exists because each represents an element of the truth of the situation. In spite of the different versions of the truth, the Princess is a less realistic character than she might easily have been. The explanation for this is that the complexity achieved by the shifts in tone does not cease with the characters of the Prince and the Princess: their characters may not seem particularly credible to us, but their dilemma does. Their complexity is ultimately that of their relationship and their decisions. Because Princess Ida is so beautiful and perfect, the Prince cannot give her up, but because she is so strong and cold, she cannot be warred into submission; in terms of the traditional romance, there is an intrinsic absurdity about a situation in which a knight courts his lady who will never yield until she has to do the courting herself. This is the sort of complexity, unlike that in most genuine romances, for which there is no obvious and decisive answer; this Gordian knot must be unravelled painstakingly.

In view of the criticism of early reviewers, it is interesting to watch Tennyson at work revising The Princess. The second edition, published less than three months after the first has, as might be expected, only some half-dozen alterations and, as Professor Ricks points out in his edition of the poem, those revisions aim to iron the wrinkles out of the blank verse by

eliminating extra, unmetrical syllables, substituting "woods" for "thicket" in "Across the thicket, and less from Indian craft ..." (IV, 180). In the third edition in 1850, Tennyson made his most extensive revision, smoothing out the verse even more, and offering some clarifications on the one hand, but chiefly adding the songs as they now appear between each of the sections of narrative:

And let the ladies sing us, if they will,  
From time to time, some ballad or a song  
To give us breathing-space. (Prologue, 233-5)

And, although the revisions of 1850 undoubtedly represent the major stylistic alteration in the poem, in 1851's fourth edition Tennyson put what are virtually his finishing touches to the poem by incorporating the Prince's weird seizures.

The Prince's inherited affliction may be more significant in terms of the poem's theme, but the intercalation of the songs is remarkable for its daring, almost one might say, for its perversity. The Princess of 1847-8 is a continuous narrative with only the numerical headings to interrupt it. In this connection, it is interesting to observe that, although Tennyson had written a series of introductory sketches for each of the speakers in turn, these were discarded and never published with the poem.<sup>18</sup> Why should Tennyson reject these sketches and yet incorporate the songs?



Why should he want to disrupt the flow of the tale at all in the face of charges of incoherency? The explanation given in the Prologue is unconvincing in literal terms, since there is no reason to give the former speaker a chance to catch his breath once he has finished, and Tennyson's explanation of his own reasons is just as perplexing: "Before the first edition came out, I deliberated with myself whether I should put songs between the separate divisions of the poem; again I thought that the poem would explain itself, but the public did not see the drift."<sup>19</sup> And he explains the role of the songs: "The child is the link through the parts as shown in the songs which are the best interpreters of the poem."<sup>20</sup> From these comments we can gather that the addition of the songs was a decision taken after publication, but a plan conceived and considered beforehand. Apparently, according to the plan, they were to act as glosses on the narrative, but were discarded as unnecessary. The fact that "The Doctor's Daughter" was to be one of these songs indicates that they were not to be taken very seriously.<sup>21</sup> The songs which were eventually used are less frivolous and, as Tennyson says, are meant to assist an interpretation of the poem.

It is all too easy to over-emphasise Tennyson's uncertainty before 1850, and to draw one's breath between each section of the narrative and the lyrics. Superficially

the connection between the songs and the narrative is tenuous in the extreme, but part of the reason for their semi-independence springs from the dramatic situation in which the ladies at each stage are able to respond to the preceding sections and to anticipate, in a general way, the sequel. There are six lyrics in all, each in a different metre and stanza form, so that it is evident that there is not clear consistency of technique between them. In this case, Tennyson's remarks about the unity provided by the child and the lyrics as the best interpreters of the poem are the only clues that we have. As it happens, the child, while not the central unifying image in the lyrics (children are only indirectly alluded to in "The splendour falls"), is an essential part of the recurrent images of love and reunion in the family, a theme with more obvious applications to the story of the Prince and Ida.

The first lyric, "As through the land at eve we went", occurs just after the Prince has sent his letter to the Princess upon arriving at the University but before retiring for the night:

And then to bed, where half in doze I seemed  
To float about a glimmering night, and watch  
A full sea glazed with muffled moonlight, swell  
On some dark shore just seen that it was rich.  
(I, 242-5)

The lyric itself then provides a glimpse of that dark, rich shore beyond the full sea in the image of the

countryside at evening with the husband and wife walking among the ripe crops. Everything evokes fulfilment and completion apart from their quarrel which, although its cause is forgotten, blemishes their harmony until they are finally reconciled over the grave of their dead child. And, like the felix culpa, their quarrel is enriched by the consequences:

And blessings on the falling out  
That all the more endears,  
When we fall out with those we love  
And kiss again with tears. (I<sup>^</sup>II, 6-9)

Thus, at the peak of the Prince's expectations, the lyric speaks of completion and satisfaction between husband and wife, not without its difficulties, but brought to a greater harmony, because it arises from adversity, on the reunification of the mother and father, accepting at once both the child's presence as a member of the family and his absence through death. This is by no means an ideal world, since death's sting is suggested both in plucking the ripe ears of corn, but also in its greater harshness of the child's premature death. Unlike some of the other songs, "As through the land" does not serve as an ideal contrast to the less-than-ideal events of the story -- everything is too uncertain, too heavily qualified for that -- but it does establish a notion of what the Prince and the Princess can achieve. The dark shore is mysterious, but the darkness also suggests the presence of sorrow;

its richness indicates that the sorrow is accompanied by real joy. It is the voice of experience addressing innocence.

"Sweet and low", the second and most popular of all the songs in The Princess, is a lullaby and neatly sustains the idea of singing "solemn psalms and silver litanies" (II , 453) with which section II breaks off. It appears in the context of Ida's college and, more specifically, of two pairs of mothers and daughters: Blanche and her daughter, Melissa, and Psyche and her baby, Aglaïa.<sup>22</sup> The third pair develops when Ida adopts Aglaïa after Blanche has been ostracised. Hence, it is fitting that "Sweet and low" should deal with a mother and a child, the father being far away at sea, and with the mother's love for the child coupled with their shared longing for the father's return. The first stanza tends to emphasise the wife's desire with references to the winds, the rolling sea and the dying moon, whereas the second reassures the child that its father will indeed return in imagery calculated to appeal to a child:

Father will come to thee soon;  
 Father will come to his babe in the nest,  
 Silver sails all out of the west  
 Under the silver moon: (II, III, 12-5)

The maternal affection and the love for the missing man in "Sweet and low" operate as a quiet irony on the situation of the university in which Psyche's husband

is dead, and Blanche's has earned her lasting contempt. Their maternal affection may be real enough, but they refuse to acknowledge that a man is necessary to complete the family.

The reference to the children in "The splendour falls" is so vague that any strict understanding of Tennyson's comment on the role of the child is likely to come to grief. If it is indeed a reference to children, "Our echoes" (III<sup>^</sup>IV, 15) seems reminiscent of the Victorian novels in which women give birth to children apparently without having been pregnant, but merely in a delicate condition. To read this as the statutory reference to a child is to be far more coy than Tennyson and most of his Victorian contemporaries. The central image of the poem, the echo, is one in which the original sound is reflected, gradually absorbed, and finally dissipated by the surroundings. Thus, the first stanza has images both of sound echoes and of "light echoes":

The splendour falls on castle walls  
And snowy summits old in story:  
The long light shakes across the lakes,  
And the wild cataract leaps in glory.  
Blow, bugle, blow, set the wild echoes flying,  
Blow, bugle; answer, echoes, dying, dying, dying,  
(III<sup>^</sup>IV, 1-6)

Contact with the world beyond is possible, too, since the "horns of Elfland" (III<sup>^</sup>IV, 10) can be heard, and

the "purple glens" (III, 336), and do not admit of a finality. At last, in the third stanza, we find a pair of lovers whose love, however, does not subscribe to this general pattern of dissipation and death:

O love, they die in yon rich sky,  
 Their faint on hill or field or river;  
 Our echoes roll from soul to soul,  
 And grow for ever and for ever. (III, 341, 1-4)

The confidence with which the lover predicts the immortality and the steady increase of their love may hint at a child, but only incidentally, and the vision seems too general and glorious to identify so narrowly. It is a vision of love triumphing over all the natural models and analogies cited in the rest of the poem and incidentally is a slap at Princess Ida's pedantry, which is also mocked in the juxtaposition of the light feet shining like jewels and the dull catalogue of rock and mineral specimens the explorers have just seen (III, 336-45), even though the lovers' sensitivity to natural beauty in the song is far greater than Ida's. And the vague hints of the military, the castle walls, the old stories, and the blasts of the bugle begin to prepare for the battle to come.

Unlike the previous three lyrics, "Thy voice is heard through rolling drums" deals with the day and with actions, not with the evening and with thoughts and emotions. The earlier lyrics are placed in the narrative as the Prince and his friends sleep peacefully.

the night, but now the tale rushes toward the impending battle. Here, in preparation for the fight is Lilia's song about battle, more explicitly martial than "The splendour falls". Again, the lyric deals with a family, specifically, the influence of the absent wife and children on the warrior as he readies himself for the fight:

A moment, while the trumpets blow,  
 He sees his brood about thy knee;  
 The next, like fire he meets the foe,  
 And strikes him dead for thine and thee.  
 (IV<sup>A</sup>V, 5-8)

Once again, the family is separated, but the point of view has changed from the absent husband of "Sweet and low" to the absent family. Significantly, this is Lilia's own song, and it stresses the wife's power to inspire her husband to great deeds: "Thy face across his fancy comes, / And gives the battle to his hands" (IV<sup>A</sup>V, 3-4). "Thy voice is heard" stresses the family's value for the individual in the world of action more emphatically than in "As through the land at eve we went" where the dead child influences the parents emotionally. But, in spite of Lilia's description of the ideal relationship in which the wife encourages her husband to fight, the next narrator tells of a situation in which the woman's influence brings out the timid diplomatist in the Prince, who urges his father and friends to sue for peace:

'More soluble is this knot,  
 By gentleness than war. I want her love.  
 What were I nigher this although we dashed  
 Your cities into shards with catapults  
 She would not love.' (V, 129-33)

The difference is that the Prince is fighting to win her, not to defend her and he therefore realises that brute force will accomplish nothing unless Ida promises to accept the outcome of the tournament.

"Home they brought her warrior dead" is, with "Thy voice is heard", technically the simplest of the songs, and it too deals with war; the fifth section of the narrative ends as the Prince collapses, and "dream and truth / Flowed from me; darkness closed me; and I fell" (V, 530-1). As in "As through the land at eve we went", the child assumes a major part in the poem: here, the child upsets the destructive impassivity of the mother's reaction to her husband's death, a response which is effectively described in negatives: "She nor swooned, nor uttered cry", "Yet she neither spoke nor moved", and "Yet she neither moved nor wept" (V<sup>VI</sup>, 2, 8, 12). Another similarity with the first song is the ambiguous role of the dead member of the family: it is never clear whether the sense of loss or the presence of the dead is responsible for the reconciliation, and here it is unclear whether the child reminds the mother more of her husband's death or of his presence in some spiritual form. Nevertheless it is clear



that the child re-establishes life: "She must weep or she will die" (V<sup>VI</sup>, 4). The song in a sense anticipates Ida's later adoption of the child, Aglaïa, but in another sense, Ida surpasses the woman here, since her mercy extends far beyond her own family, even to the Prince, who is her champion in that he fights for her ideals, while Arac, her nominal champion, fights for the ideals of chivalry espoused by the Prince's father. The child not only unites the widow's memories of her husband in order to help her to raise her child in the future, but forces her to come to terms with her loneliness. Fortunately for Ida, both the Prince and Arac survive so that it is an adjustment which she does not have to make; her baby is unceremoniously set aside and neglected when she discovers that her warrior is still alive, as we have seen in the passage quoted above.

Ida finally learns the value of indirection and suggestion, especially in courtship, when she reads two poems of her own land to the slowly-recovering Prince: "Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white", with its delicately erotic allusions, and the more direct "Come down, O maid", a poem summing up the Prince's arguments to her, and now turned on him with a modest sense of the irony involved. Similarly, the last connecting song, "Ask me no more", could well have been

spoken by Ida, since it perceptively represents her state of mind, her willingness to yield, accompanied by an awareness which makes her somewhat afraid of the consequences. Even the form of the poem perfectly reflects her simultaneous feelings of longing and of reticence through the subtle shifts in meaning of "Ask me no more" from petulance and impatience to the last show of amused and ironic alarm. The poem hinges on the central couplet of the second stanza, exactly half of the poem tending to say no, and the second half tending to say yes:

Ask me no more: what answer should I give?  
 I love not hollow cheek or faded eye:  
 Yet, O my friend, I will not have thee die!  
 Ask me no more, lest I should bid thee live;  
 Ask me no more.

(VI<sup>^</sup>VII, 6-10)

Any lover who asks no more after this invitation is a fool, and a dead one. Besides reproducing Ida's motives and emotions, the song refers quite specifically to her misadventure in the stream: "I strove against the stream and all in vain" (VI<sup>^</sup>VII, 12) and hence, to her rescue by the Prince who may be able to rescue her from the present dilemma as well. It also refers, more generally, to Ida's remark in which she refers to the difficulties which her enterprise faces and from which there is no apparent escape:

'I stagger in the stream: I cannot keep  
 My heart an eddy from the brawling hour:  
 We break our laws with ease, but let it be.'

(VI, 301-3)

In the light of this song, then, the irony of the opening lines of section VII is all the more evident:

So was their sanctuary violated,  
 So their fair college turned to hospital;  
 At first with all confusion: by and by  
 Sweet order lived again with other laws:  
 A kindlier influence reigned; and everywhere  
 Low voices with the ministering hand  
 Hung round the sick: the maidens came, they talked,  
 They sang, they read: till she not fair began  
 To gather light, and she that was, became  
 Her former beauty treble; and to and fro  
 With books, with flowers, with Angel offices,  
 Like creatures native unto gracious act,  
 And in their own clear element, they moved.  
 (VII, 1-13)

Thus is their victory-turned-defeat restored to a victory for the new ideal woman, and the way is at last open for love to flourish.

Love and the general relationship between men and women, not the education of women, are the central themes taken up in the final section. What is said about women's education and rights is clearly subordinate to the reconciliation and growth of love between Ida and the Prince, Psyche and Cyril, and Melissa and Florian. In a complete reversal of roles, Ida voices her love through erotic verse, while the Prince becomes an advocate of Ida's former dreams; and as soon as Ida begins to feel that the Prince's strange doubts are justified, believing herself to be a mockery of herself (VII, 316-7), the Prince combines the intellectual and social ideals of the Princess with his own ardent passion:

'My bride,  
 My wife, my life. O we will walk this world,  
 Yoked in all exercise of noble end,  
 And so through those dark gates across the wild  
 That no man knows. Indeed I love thee: come,  
 Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one.'  
 (VII, 338-43)

The new Adam and Eve are newly made one, unlike the old Adam and Eve who had just been made two, and take to their task with idealism and a sense of mission, not a sense of shame. The union of the Prince and Princess Ida is complete on sexual, emotional, and intellectual levels and is further reinforced by the balancing of other opposites for which they both stand in the poem: North and South, will and duty, and most important, male and female. In fact, so common is this pattern both within the tale and in the frame taken separately, in the relationship between the two, and in the connecting songs, that reconciliation can be considered the central theme of the poem, a particularly revealing theme for a poem which is a medley. For this reason, we should consider these pairings further, subordinate though they are to the central confrontation between Princess Ida and the Prince.

The most important feature of these dichotomies is that they are not rigidly identified with either of the two lovers, and in a superficial sense are reconciled from the very beginning. To have clearly-defined opposites is too simple a solution which Tennyson rejects even on its most obvious level, the directional

antitheses of the poem. The Prince is from the North and is immediately recognizable as a Nordic type, with his blue eyes, and blond hair. Not surprisingly, the Princess is from the South and is dark. Yet the significance of the North-South symbolism is rather less schematic than this suggests, for the Prince must travel to the South in his attempt to win her as his bride:

A wind arose and rushed upon the South,  
And shook the songs, the whispers, and the shrieks  
Of the wild woods together; and a voice  
Went with it, 'Follow, follow, thou shalt win.'  
(I, 96-9)

But the Princess, not content to stay in her father's court, begs him to allow her to set up her university and when he relents, she asserts her independence and masculinity by establishing it in the Northern part of her father's kingdom, in "A certain summer palace... / Hard by your father's frontier" (I, 146-7); thus the Prince is forced to ride back the way he came, "many a long league back to the North" (I, 166). And so the relationship between the two is nicely muddled, each of them having associations with the compass point generally attached to the other, but neither embracing both satisfactorily.

The other contraries are dealt with in a similar way, including the struggle between will and duty. The Princess's name, "Ida", emphasises her association with work and effort, but she is capable, as we have seen, of the Prince's tenderness in love and his doubts

about the reality of the world around him and of the value of that world. For his part, the Prince becomes the idealist who eventually encourages the Princess not to forsake her ideal at the same time as she abandons her methods. Furthermore, the sense of duty which she feels she owes to womankind is balanced by her love and pity for her wounded brothers, and finally, by all those wounded in the tournament. Psyche's dilemma is similar: "O hard, when love and duty clash!" (II, 273), and yet she surrenders to love as Ida does later. The Prince's love and his duty are directed towards Ida, so that he alone suffers no internal conflict between his duty to his father and to the contract negotiated when both he and Ida were very young, and his very real love for her.

More complex is the contrast in the view of reality associated with the two central figures. Princess Ida's is a ruthlessly reductive selection of what suits her purposes. Her university contains only what she wishes and, as we can see in Lady Psyche's lecture, this may well necessitate a little sophistry. Her attitude is perfectly exemplified in her reaction to "Tears, idle tears":

But with some disdain  
 Answered the Princess, 'If indeed there haunt  
 About the mouldered lodges of the Past  
 So sweet a voice and vague, fatal to men,  
 Well needs it we should cram our ears with wool  
 And so pace by.' (IV, 43-8)

The Princess's limited vision is complemented by the Prince's inherited weird seizures. Added to the poem in the fourth edition, these passages are in many respects additions as perplexing as the songs. Tennyson himself offers remarkably little help when it comes to explaining why they were added. He says that "the words 'dream, shadow', 'were and were not' doubtless refer to the anachronisms and improbabilities of the story."<sup>23</sup> The remark shows a considerable distancing of Tennyson the critic from his own poem, a characteristic which is evident also in his annotations of some of Princess Ida's worst excesses,<sup>24</sup> and suggests that he is less than serious.

The weird seizures seem to be both a weakness and a strength in the Prince, though their real value emerges only slowly. At first they are just the symptoms of an inherited ailment (in which his father characteristically refuses to believe) attached to a prophecy sometime in the past:

There lived an ancient legend in our house.  
Some sorcerer, whom a far-off grandsire burnt  
Because he cast no shadow, had foretold,  
Dying, that none of all our blood should know  
The shadow from the substance, and that one  
Should come to fight with shadows and to fall.  
(I, 5-10)

The prophecy applies not only to the Prince, but in a different way, to his father who obstinately rejects the Prince's adoration of the true Princess, and so advocates the age-old tactics:

'Tut, you know them not, the girls.  
 Boy, when I hear you prate I almost think  
 That idiot legend credible. Look you, Sir!  
 Man is the hunter; woman is his game:  
 The sleek and shining creatures of the chase,  
 We hunt them for the beauty of their skins;  
 They love us for it, and we ride them down.'  
 (V, 144-50)

The Prince's affliction is more severe, however, and his difficulty is that, while he believes his father to be confusing the shadow of Ida's eccentric ideas and behaviour for the substance of her true worth, he cannot prove it, and indeed, becomes confused himself:

We crossed the street and gained a petty mound  
 Beyond it, whence we saw the lights and heard  
 The voices murmuring. While I listened, came  
 On a sudden the weird seizure and the doubt:  
 I seemed to move among a world of ghosts;  
 The Princess with her monstrous woman-guard,  
 The jest and earnest working side by side,  
 The cataract and the tumult and the kings  
 Were shadows; and the long fantastic night  
 With all its doings had and had not been,  
 And all things were and were not. (IV, 535-45)

What in the father is the result of blind ignorance is in the son caused by real perplexity: Princess Ida both is and is not what he had expected her to be. Thus, the Prince, in accordance with the prophecy, fights against what turns out to be a shadow ("Yet it seemed a dream, I dreamed / Of fighting", V, 481-2); and since Arac defends Ida's right to the university and beats the Prince, he falls as "Dream and truth" flow from him (V, 530-1), reducing him to his "mystic middle state... / Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard" (VI, 2-3).



Finally, "deeper than those weird doubts could reach  
me, [I] lay / Quite sundered from the moving Universe"  
(VII, 36-7), and the Prince struggles to distinguish  
the real Ida from the false:

Sometimes I would catch  
Her hand in wild delirium, gripe it hard,  
And fling it like a viper off, and shriek  
'You are not Ida;' clasp it once again,  
And call her Ida, though I knew her not,  
And call her sweet, as if in irony,  
And call her hard and cold which seemed a truth:  
And still she feared that I should lose my mind.  
(VII, 77-84)

Gradually from the emotional stalemate of his delirium,  
an image of the true Ida begins to emerge in his sick-  
ness, though still he doubts his good fortune:

'If you be, what I think you, some sweet dream,  
I would but ask you to fulfil yourself:  
But if you be that Ida whom I knew,  
I ask you nothing: only, if a dream,  
Sweet dream, be perfect.' (VII, 129-34)

Here the dream takes on increased reality as a trans-  
formation goes on within Ida herself. Eventually, the  
Prince responds to her nursing and finds his love re-  
newed and his doubts as to the reality of the idealised  
Ida he loved from his youth dispelled:

'From yearlong poring on thy pictured eyes,  
Ere seen I loved, and loved thee seen, and saw  
Thee woman through the crust of iron moods  
That masked thee from men's reverence up, and forced  
Sweet love on pranks of saucy boyhood: now,  
Given back to life, to life indeed, through thee,  
Indeed I love: the new day comes, the light  
Dearer for night, as dearer thou for faults  
Lived over: lift thine eyes; my doubts are dead,  
My haunting sense of hollow shows: the change,  
This truthful change in thee has killed it.'  
(VII, 319-29)

The Prince's triumph over his weird seizures and the family curse is thus linked with that of the true Ida (who is the idealised, artificial Ida of the portrait miniature) over the false Ida of the university; not only the Prince's idea of Ida is vindicated, but the Princess attains her real self. The Prince's father, although he pooh-poohs the family affliction, is nevertheless seen to be a victim of it because he refuses to acknowledge that what he sees may well be the shadow of Ida, whereas the Prince is at once the victim and the conqueror of the seizures because he can see a richer and fuller truth about Ida from the very first.

It may well be asked what this has to do with Victorian men and women, with love, and with women's equality with men; the answer lies in the general theme of the poem, the bringing together and interaction of opposites, or more simply, the centrality of paradox in an understanding of the world. This is most explicit in the distribution of sexual characteristics among the main characters, especially Princess Ida and the Prince. The syntax is sufficiently flexible in the Prince's first few lines to allow the girlishness described there to apply to more than his blond hair:

A prince I was, blue-eyed, and fair in face,  
Of temper amorous, as the first of May,  
With lengths of yellow ringlet, like a girl,  
For on my cradle shone the Northern star.

(I, 1-4)

And his father's temper martial, even bellicose, points  
to another of his son's weaknesses:

He started on his feet,  
Tore the king's letter, snowed it down, and rent  
The wonder of the loom through warp and woof  
From skirt to skirt; and at the last he sware  
That he would send a hundred thousand men,  
And bring her in a whirlwind: then he chewed  
The thrice-turned cud of wrath, and cooked his spleen,  
Communing with his captains of the war.

(I, 59-66)

When the issue must be settled finally, the Prince is  
confronted by Ida's brother Arac who, though not re-  
sorting to Homeric precedents, is equally, if somewhat  
less cunningly, belligerent. Obviously a perennial  
victim of his clever sister's strategies, he is obliged  
to defend her cause after taking his oath by "St  
Something" (V, 283). He may not command the rhetoric,  
but he possesses the spirit in abundance:

'Come, this is all; she will not: waive your claim:  
If not, the foughten field, what else, at once  
Decides it, 'sdeath! against my father's will.'

(V, 286-8)

The Prince's reaction is predictably weak and he is  
pushed to accept the challenge, not in order to win Ida,  
but to defend himself against sneers about his virility  
and his lack of beard:

I lagged in answer loth to render up  
My precontract, and loth by brainless war  
To cleave the rift of difference deeper yet;  
Till one of those two brothers, half aside  
And fingering at the hair about his lip,  
To prick us on to combat 'Like' to like!  
The woman's garment hid the woman's heart.'  
A taunt that clenched his purpose like a blow!

For fiery-short was Cyril's counter-scoff,  
 And sharp I answered, touched upon the point  
 Where idle boys are cowards to their shame,  
 'Decide it here: why not? we are three to three.'  
 (V, 289-300)

Ida, of course, belongs to the tradition of Amazons, women who declare their independence of and contempt for men, but unlike Hippolyta, she is won by a Theseus weaker than herself. But in spite of her own strength, she acknowledges the general historical pattern in which women have been inferior to men. It is her goal to achieve equality between the sexes. Thus, her heroines are women who have excelled in traditionally male endeavours:

She  
 That taught the Sabine how to rule, and she  
 The foundress of the Babylonian wall,  
 The Carian Artemisia strong in war,  
 The Rhodope, that built the pyramid,  
 Clelia, Cornelia, with the Palmyrene  
 That fought Aurelian, and the Roman brows  
 Of Agrippina.<sup>25</sup> (II, 64-71)

In spite of all the "thundrous epic lilted out" (II, 353), there is much to commend in Ida's instructions to her students, and much that is worthy in her ideal of woman's nobility, her exaggeration notwithstanding:

'O lift your natures up:  
 Embrace our aims: work out your freedom. Girls,  
 Knowledge is now no more a fountain sealed:  
 Drink deep, until the habits of the slave,  
 The sins of emptiness, gossip and spite  
 And slander, die. Better not be at all  
 Than not be noble.' (II, 74-80)

Princess Ida, in one of her more perceptive moments, sums up her own sexual ambiguities and the Prince's as well, when told that if she refuses to marry him "you will shock him even to death, / Or baser courses, children of despair" (III, 196-7). Ida is impatient with this sort of gloomy prediction:

'Poor boy,' she said, 'can he not read -- no books?  
Quoit, tennis, ball -- no games? nor deals in that  
Which men delight in, martial exercise?  
To nurse a blind ideal like a girl,  
Methinks he seems no better than a girl;  
As girls were once, as we ourself have been:  
We had our dreams; perhaps he mixt with them:  
We touch on our dead self, nor shun to do it,  
Being other -- since we learnt our meaning here,  
To lift the woman's fallen divinity  
Upon an even pedestal with man.' (III, 198-208)

According to some theories of psychology, the Prince and Princess might be said to have complete personalities, since they both have male and female characteristics. However, they are not satisfactory or even desirable personalities, since the female overwhelms the Prince and the male, the Princess. The Princess, taken as a whole, attempts to right this and the other imbalances present in the poem. It is obvious that the reconciliation of Ida and the Prince is more than the conventional formula by which the hero and the heroine conveniently fall in love with each other. There are still too many points at issue which must be settled between the Prince and Ida before they can rush ecstatically into each other's arms. And the fact that these issues must

be settled after the first, tentative confessions of love, and before the final reconciliation, indicates the importance of these related issues to the Prince and Ida, and to Tennyson himself. After the declarations of love, the Prince must refute the Princess's theories on two grounds: that women are lapsed men and that either sex can do without the other. The arguments used against both are similar, but first the matter of women as weak men:

'For woman is not undeveloped man,  
But diverse: could we make her as the man,  
Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,  
Not like to like, but like in difference.  
Yet in the long years liker must they grow;  
The man be more of woman, she of man;  
He gain in sweetness and in moral height,  
Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;  
She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,  
Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;  
Till at last she set herself to man,  
Like perfect music unto noble words.<sup>26</sup>

(VII, 259-70)

And yet, if there are differences between the sexes, the solution is not segregation and ladies' academies, but marriage:

'Either sex alone  
Is half itself, and in true marriage lies  
Nor equal, nor unequal: each fulfils  
Defect in each, and always thought in thought,  
Purpose in purpose, will in will, they grow,  
The single pure and perfect animal,  
The two-celled heart beating, with one full stroke,  
Life.' (VII, 283-90)

This of course does not mean that the husband and wife, the male and the female, cancel each other out, but on the contrary, that it is only in marriage that the

partners achieve their true fulfilment, both as individuals and as a couple:

'Indeed I love thee: come,  
Yield thyself up: my hopes and thine are one:  
Accomplish thou my manhood and thyself;  
Lay thy sweet hands in mine and trust to me.'  
(VII, 342-5)

With the final reconciliation of the Prince and Princess Ida, all the other contraries, whether directly associated with them or not, are finally brought together. But, as Tennyson says, "There is scarcely anything in the story which is not prophetically glanced at in the Prologue."<sup>27</sup> Thus, we have a story in part based on the family chronicle, its hero ostensibly being the poet, and the heroine, Lilia, whose ideals prompt the theory behind the university:

'I wish I were  
Some mighty poetess, I would shame you then,  
That love to keep us children! O I wish  
That I were some great princess, I would build  
Far off from men a college like a man's,  
And I would teach them all that men are taught;  
We are twice as quick!' And here she shook aside  
The hand that played the patron with her curls.  
(Prologue, 131-8)

Even tiny details from the Prologue are echoed in the story: the gilded ball dancing like a wisp on the fountain of Sir Walter Vivian's park (Prologue, 63-4) reappears in the garden where Ida's students are relaxing though this time the fountain is the obstacle over which the ball is to be thrown (II, 436-7). The association of the fictional world with the real world

of Sir Walter Vivian's park reinforces the bond drawn between the "real" and the "unreal" in the story itself, and it also, together with the anachronistic interest in geology and the existence of a university for women, suggests a dislocation of time, which, however, is only superficial. Thus, the modern circumstances can be fitted to a "gothick" story with a minimum of difficulty, and in turn the story has a direct relevance to the present. To quote Princess Ida, "For was, and is, and will be, are but is" (III, 307). And in Sir Walter's house, bric-à-brac from all places and all times is displayed in a jumble, epitomising the bad Victorian habit of over-decorating houses:

And me that morning Walter showed the house,  
Greek, set with busts: from vases in the hall  
Flowers of all heavens, and lovelier than their names,  
Grew side by side; and on the pavement lay  
Carved stones of the Abbey-ruin in the park,  
Huge Ammonites, and the first bones of Time;  
And on the tables every clime and age  
Jumbled together; celts and calumets,  
Claymore and snowshoe, toys in lava, fans  
Of sandal, amber, ancient rosaries,  
Laborious orient ivory sphere in sphere,  
The cursed Malayan crease, and battle-clubs  
From the isles of palm: and higher on the walls,  
Betwixt the monstrous horns of elk and deer,  
His own forefathers' arms and armour hung.  
(Prologue, 10-24)

Since the house appears to combine the worst qualities of a museum and a time machine, the poet's comment seems particularly apt: "Strange was the sight and smacking of the time" (Prologue, 89). Yet the house also smacks of all times and all places, and Tennyson manages in this way to yoke not only the past represented by these



specimens and the future as symbolised by the scientific demonstrations in progress outdoors to the present, and all places to the Vivian estate, but, on a wider scale, the general to the specific. All are shown here in an intimate and revealing juxtaposition. And, technically, the house's collections serve admirably as an emblem of those generic and linguistic aspects of the poem which have been discussed so far. Because so many different techniques and ideas coexist in the poem, we should be suspicious of any one interpretation of the poem as a whole, but particularly of any of the theories about the meaning of the story of Princess Ida and her university which are advanced in the Conclusion. The Tory member's eldest son, even though he shares Tennyson's hatred of French politics, is merely developing his own (or his father's) prejudices in describing recent French history as

'Revolts, republics, revolutions, most  
 No graver than a schoolboys' barring out;  
 Too comic for the solemn things they are,  
 Too solemn for the comic touches in them,  
 Like our wild Princess with as wise a dream  
 As some of theirs -- God bless the narrow seas!  
 I wish they were a whole Atlantic broad.'  
 (Conclusion, 65-71)

Although he speaks a grain of truth, the Tory member's elder son is not to have the last word; the poet, speaking more moderately than the earlier Tennyson of the political lyrics ever did, urges patience and tolerance of which the fête stands as a good omen:

'Ourselves are full  
 Of social wrong; and maybe wildest dreams  
 Are but the needful preludes of the truth:  
 For me, the genial day, the happy crowd,  
 The sport half-science, fill me with a faith.  
 This fine old world of ours is but a child  
 Yet in the go-cart. Patience! Give it time  
 To learn its limbs: there is a hand that guides.'  
 (Conclusion, 72-9)

This is perhaps the fullest statement of all the things which are brought together in the poem, and yet the friends find themselves thinking, perhaps, about the "future man" (Conclusion, 109). All the contraries, ideas, techniques, emotions, personalities, go into the making of the future man. Woman's education, the state of marriage, attitudes towards honour, and one's perception of the truth are all part of this process as well. While it is apparent that the future man will mark an advance over man's present state, it will not be a vertical ascent on some historical elevator. Hence, there is a great need for tolerance towards France and her political crises, and, indeed, towards all contraries. Just as the future man is not a sexual, but a generic, notion and implies both sexes working toward their common welfare rejecting the idea of a separate development, so all human ideals must be based on the totality of experience, not on a single fragment of it. It is particularly appropriate, and not just sentimental eye-dabbing, that at the end the focus of the poem shifts from the specific and local to the cosmic and divine, only to return to the immediate once

again -- in fact, only over the long road.

We saw  
 But surely not, not in nameless reverie,  
 Perchance upon the furthest bank the hills  
 Discreetly about us, late revealed, and still revealed,  
 And gathered the corners of the night,  
 That long above the region of the vine,  
 Deepening the course of a light white track,  
 Through all the silent silence of the world,  
 Beyond all thought into the vision of heavens.

Last little Lilia, rising quietly,  
 Disrobed the glimmering statue of Sir Ralph  
 From those rich silks, and here well-released we went.  
 (Conclusion, 107-18)

It is impossible to discuss The Princess without at least some attention to the problem of the poem's merit. Professor Ricks says that the poem, though flawed, is weak in interesting ways which go to the heart of much that is deep in Tennyson as a whole.<sup>28</sup> Nevertheless, his diagnosis of the "evasion" is not substantial enough to prove convincing. For one thing, he neglects to consider, in spite of the many allusions which he cites to Theocritus in his edition, the extent to which the poem is written as a pastoral; under pastoral conventions, of course, tragedy and violence are not evaded or sublimated by some sort of tricky alchemy, but are introduced to act as a foil to the basic and predominant happiness in the pastoral world. And as we have seen, Tennyson's business is not to provide easy answers to the problems of the poem; complexity and contradiction are at the very heart of the paradoxical relationships which he describes. Nor does Tennyson expect a simple

reaction from the reader, even if one were possible. It is the poet's aim to be as comprehensive as possible, again relying on his technique of juxtaposition which was to be perfected in In Memoriam and Maud, but conceived in early poems such as "The Poet" and "The Poet's Mind", among others. Since the truth is arrived at by considering nothing less than everything, no neat systems on the human scale are possible. A medley, in its associations with eighteenth-century newspapers, is an omnium gatherum and cannot be easily analysed or described. If the close relationship between content and form, setting perfect music to noble words, is an important criterion, then The Princess is a success, since any more polished version of what Tennyson has here attempted on a small scale would be, on principle, unfaithful to the major themes of the poem.

As I have stated, Tennyson applied what he had learned to the composition of the great poems which were to follow. Detailed treatment of In Memoriam, Maud, and the Idylls of the King, however, is obviously out of place in a study of paired poems. Although I have had to bend the rules to include The Princess in my discussion, its presence can be justified on two grounds. First, it marks the transition between the simpler paired poems discussed in previous chapters and the more sophisticated poems which followed, and while it

anticipates several important features of In Memoriam, Maud, and the Idylls of the King, it is far richer than the poems which had preceded it. Secondly, The Princess is largely concerned with pairs, and with reconciling contradictions, and solving dilemmas, whereas the longer poems are concerned with multiplicity and complexity rather than with duality and paradox. The Princess and The Lover's Tale illustrate how paired poems are not reconciled but rather fitted together, so that harmony emerges while each part maintains its separate identity, like the warm gulf-stream in the cold north Atlantic.

The subjects treated in In Memoriam, Maud, and the Idylls are, by their nature, far too complex to be treated in the old forms which Tennyson had developed up to The Princess. To deal with any of these themes in a pair of poems would result in arbitrary structures, often capriciously so, which would totally violate the grandiose conceptions of the complexity of truth established in the earlier poems. And yet, while pairing is inappropriate as a structure for these poems, they are nevertheless filled with echoes, allusions, and even situations or sections of verse which balance and recall others. Obviously, Tennyson did not reject the technique altogether, although it is equally clear that he was interested in larger, more complicated, more flexible, and yet far richer, patterns. Tennyson

went on to write a few pairs in the old way, but they show no advance in either technique or theme. The poems which do possess considerable importance, and do hold a great deal of interest for the modern reader are those in which Tennyson completed poems which he had written earlier, particularly "Oenone" and "Locksley Hall".

V. TENNYSON'S SEQUEL POEMS: THE  
TIDE OF TIME

Of love that never found his earthly close,  
What sequel? Streaming eyes and breaking hearts?  
Or all the same as if he had not been?

. . . . .  
Wait, and Love himself will bring  
The drooping flower of knowledge changed to fruit  
Of wisdom. Wait: my faith is large in Time,  
And that which shapes it to some perfect end.  
(Tennyson, "Love and Duty", ll. 1-3,  
23-6)

The four poems to be considered most fully here,  
"Locksley Hall", "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After",  
"Oenone" and "The Death of Oenone", as well as the less  
important pair, "Northern Farmer: Old Style", and  
"Northern Farmer: New Style", must be distinguished  
from the poems which are intended to be read as com-  
panion-pieces -- "The Merman", "The Mermaid", "Mariana"  
and "Mariana in the South", "The Poet" and "The Poet's  
Mind", "All Things Will Die" and "Nothing Will Die",  
and "Ulysses" and "Tithonus". If these latter poems  
are true pendants in the manner of "L'Allegro" and "Il  
Penseroso", the two "Locksley Hall" poems and the  
"Oenone" poems are, at the risk of overstraining the  
analogy, Tennyson's Paradise Lost and Paradise Regained  
in the sense that Milton and Tennyson in these poems  
deal with a situation (whether the fall of man or the

rejection of a lover) and its consequences, and hence, time performs an important function which it does not have in the poems discussed so far. Poems like "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" describe and analyse two aspects of the same thing or two contrasting things which are to be seen in conjunction with each other, as representative of a larger unity. Thus we have poems about mermen and mermaids, men and women (culminating in The Princess), two Marianas in different settings although suffering from the same loss, the contrast between the poet's social function and the jealously-guarded privacy of his mind, the contradictions implicit in a purely materialistic view of the world as opposed to the belief in a sort of spiritual reality leading to an acceptance of immortality, and finally, in "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", an analysis of the difficulties inherent in the simple resolution to go forward, in the struggle for personal and human advancement. The companion poems are mythological, psychological, fantastic, and the course of external events has no influence whatever on them; they take place out of historical time and the relationship existing between them suggests nothing about the chronological connections they may share, and indeed, suggests a certain degree of simultaneity. Thus, in the light of The Princess we understand that the merman



and the mermaid are not contradictory, but complementary, like the two polemical opponents in Borges's story, "The Theologians", who, after a lifetime of attacking each other, die, and in heaven learn that they are both parts of the same person.

But in the poems which form small sequences, the "Oenone", "Locksley Hall", and (with some qualification) "Northern Farmer" poems, the pairing stresses the passage of time rather than a change in speaker. Although "The Northern Farmer: New Style" might appear to be an exception to this observation, on further reflection it is clear that the new farmer, like the old, is merely typical of his age, and as an individual holds little interest for the poet.<sup>1</sup> Nor is myth excluded from domination by time, for Oenone is, unlike Tithonus, a mortal and is doomed eventually to die, and hence time to her means much more than perpetual, pointless suffering. As a nymph, she is mortal, but does not possess the power to remedy her misfortune, except through death. Tennyson seems to stress Oenone's mortality deliberately, unlike William Morris whose Oenone in "The Death of Paris" in The Earthly Paradise expresses uncertainty about whether she is mortal or not as she watches Paris die:

'O love, O Paris, know'st thou this of me  
That in these hills e'en such a name I have  
As being akin to a divinity;  
And lightly may I slay and lightly save;

Nor know I surely if the peaceful grave  
 Shall ever hide my body dead -- behold,  
 Have ten long years of misery made me old?'<sup>2</sup>

To show that these three pairs of poems are concerned, at least in part, with time and change is, however, to say very little, since it has become platitudinous to argue that the nineteenth century was preoccupied with time, progress, history, and growing old. From Wordsworth's "spots of time" (which are actually moments when time is transcended and denied) to the Darwinian account of the evolution of species by the process of natural selection over millions of years; from Miss Havisham's perverse attempt to stop time in order to avenge her desertion to the White Rabbit's repeatedly expressed worries about being late; and from the political theories of progress to Oscar Wilde's story of Dorian Gray, the entire century provides ample evidence of preoccupation with the subject. Even the Pre-Raphaelites, disgusted by the vulgarity of Victorian England, rather self-consciously chose to admire a period of history just before the rot set in, so that in even their most "medieval" work there is a sense of the pressures of historical change working against them. And it is equally significant that William Morris's *Nowhere* is not a timeless Utopia like Sir Thomas More's, but a rather bizarre conflation of an idealised medieval past and a secularised New

Jerusalem. Time and historical change are favourite themes, of course, of Tennyson, particularly in the Idylls of the King, where emphasis is placed on the rise, corruption, decay, and collapse of political systems, and more generally, the cycles of history. The contemporary reviewers complained as much about the history in the Idylls as about the poetry, mainly because the poem was set in the remote past. Ruskin found the poem too finished and remote,<sup>3</sup> and another writer attacked it because it was based on material which was far too alien and unsympathetic for the Victorian readers to appreciate or understand.<sup>4</sup>

What is often most distinctive and striking about Victorian treatments of time is its blind remorselessness, analogous in some respects to the inexorability of natural selection. In Memoriam, even though it was published almost a decade before Darwin's Origin of Species, is steeped in the geological evidences for evolution which also lie behind Darwin's account, and the poet's horror at the immense wastage caused by Nature is particularly moving in the context of the death of Hallam:

Are God and Nature then at strife,  
That Nature lends such evil dreams?  
So careful of the type she seems,  
So careless of the single life;

. . . . .



published in 1886 as a sequel to "Locksley Hall" which had been written in 1837-8 and published in Poems of 1842. "Oenone", written in 1830-2 and published in 1832 and "The Death of Oenone" written in 1889-90 and published posthumously in 1892, cover a much longer span of time -- virtually all of Tennyson's publishing career. Of the three pairs, the "Northern Farmers" show the shortest interval between the two poems, the first being written in 1861 and published in 1864, and the second one in 1865 (prompted, no doubt, in part by the recent success of the first) and published in 1869. But one is tempted to ask why Tennyson should have written "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" and "The Death of Oenone", even if the popularity of the first "Northern Farmer" is enough to justify the second and the succeeding Lincolnshire-dialect poems, such as "The Northern Cobbler" (published in 1880) and "The Spinster's Sweet-Arts" (published in 1885). It was a problem which T.H.S. Escott tried to answer with specific reference to the second "Locksley Hall" in the review, "Tennyson's Last Volume", in 1886:

Nature seems to have decreed that a man whose intellectual strength shows no signs of abatement should in his later years return, not to the dull monotony of middle age, but to the earlier visions of his prime. In Lord Tennyson's case, at any rate, his most recent volume recalls the style of many of his earlier productions....In his ... last period comes the happy relapse into the

earlier style, the return to ballads, to classical poems, to romantic idyls, and musical lyrics.<sup>5</sup>

We need not endorse Escott's judgments to see the usefulness of his general remarks. Particularly in the 1889 and 1892 volumes one is aware of the poet's sense of impending death, no doubt precipitated by his almost-fatal attack of rheumatic gout in the autumn and winter of 1888-9.<sup>6</sup> Many of the poems from this period are in fact meditations on death: "Crossing the Bar", "Vastness", "Far - Far - Away", "Doubt and Prayer", "The Silent Voices", and "God and the Universe". And if we remember that "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" was written in 1886, one of the last poems in the 1886 volume to be written, then it perhaps is possible to see Tennyson beginning at about that time, when he was seventy-seven, to reconsider his earlier work as he prepared for his death. One's impression in the last three volumes is that of an aged poet becoming increasingly preoccupied with his own death at some unknown date in the future, and less with Hallam's a long time ago in the past -- an impression of turning from his past to the future, commenting on and "completing" two of his most famous early poems, "Oenone" and "Locksley Hall".

In so doing, the aged Tennyson was inviting comparison with two of the most accomplished and popular of his poems. "Locksley Hall", in particular, enjoyed

among the poet's contemporaries a reputation far greater than it has today. It was quoted everywhere and by everybody, not solely for its poetic merit which, indeed, was often ignored, but for its political views, its alleged endorsement of optimism, work, progress, Liberalism, and even aeroplanes.<sup>7</sup> The review of Locksley Hall Sixty Years After and Other Poems in the Athenaeum of January 1, 1887, provides an interesting insight into the impact of the new "Locksley Hall", suggesting the surprise felt by Tennyson's readers:

Are we not right...in saying that to attempt a sequel to 'Locksley Hall' -- to attempt it now when the fifth Victorian decade seems, according to the poet, to be mainly occupied in giving a decent funeral to the dreams of the first, when 'the Parliament of man' has somehow developed into a kind of European Witenagemot with soldiers and 'Iron Chancellors' at the head, and anarchists on the opposition benches -- would, even in a young man, have been proof of a daring soul?<sup>8</sup>

The political controversy stirred up by the new poem was considerable, prodding even Gladstone into a pained and detailed defence of the social and economic accomplishments of the Victorian age, lest the old Queen and her subjects should be led astray by the pessimism of the old man in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" (though he was careful to dissociate Tennyson from the speaker's opinions, partly because of Tennyson's official position, and partly because of Gladstone's own warm admiration for and friendship with the poet).<sup>9</sup> On the other hand, as a result of Tennyson's death a month-and-a-half before,

the publication of The Death of Oenone, Akbar's Dream, and Other Poems received little criticism, and contemporary reviewers seem to have felt obliged to recant any heretical views held in reaction against Tennyson, and to pay their pious respects to the dead.<sup>10</sup> Thus, there is relatively little evidence, either biographical or critical, on which to judge the motives behind the writing of the poem and its impact on the public, overshadowed as it was by the news of Tennyson's saintly demise. The Memoir, too, lapses into respectful silence about the last volume although it informs us that Tennyson himself viewed the poem as the attainment of a greater and more mature classicism in form and language than in the first "Oenone".<sup>11</sup>

If we are to follow Tennyson's completed sequences chronologically, we must begin with the "Northern Farmer" poems, the last of the three pairs to be begun, and the first to be completed. In a sense, as I have suggested earlier, it is quite wrong to say that it is a completed sequence, since the two poems are clearly not "complete" as are the "Oenone" poems, for example. If the "New Style" farmer is a conclusion to the first, it is one in which nothing is concluded. But since the two poems are obviously meant to be considered as a pair, and since they do show in a rough form the poetic uses which Tennyson makes of the nineteenth-century interest in time, they will serve well as a



basis for the discussion of the "Oenone" and the "Locksley Hall" poems.

Both "Northern Farmer: Old Style" and "Northern Farmer: New Style" were suggested by anecdotes which Tennyson had heard and, in both cases, by phrases which established the main theme for each poem. The Memoir provides Tennyson's own account of their genesis:

'The first is founded on the dying words of a farm-bailiff, as reported to me by a great uncle of mine when verging upon 80, -- "God A'mighty little knows what He's about, a-taking me. An' Squire will be so mad an' all." I conjectured the man from that one saying.

'The "Farmer, new style" (in "The Holy Grail" volume), is likewise founded on a single sentence, "When I canters my 'erse along the ramper (highway) I 'ears proputtty, proputtty, proputtty." I had been told that a rich farmer in our neighbourhood was in the habit of saying this. I never saw the man and know no more of him. It was also reported of the wife of this worthy that, when she entered the salle à manger of a sea bathing-place, she slapt her pockets and said, "When I married I brought him £5000 on each shoulder."<sup>12</sup>

It is perhaps difficult for us to respond enthusiastically to these poems, partly because of the difficulties of the dialect and the disrepute into which dialect verse has fallen. The "Northern Farmer: Old Style" poses another difficulty in the dying man's display of the "grand old heathen" virtues, which J.M. Ludlow praises so lavishly,<sup>13</sup> and his protestations of loyalty to the squirearchy appear to border on the maudlin. The rather grotesque comedy helps to make some of the more pathetic moments in the poem palatable to the modern

reader, although the comedy is more successful in the second poem where there is less to cover up. In neither poem, however, does Tennyson strain to win the reader's sympathy for his characters or what they say, but is content simply to draw two portraits which speak for themselves.<sup>14</sup> So vital are both characters that, even in the earlier poem with its inherent dangers of a tearful death-bed scene, one's final impression is of the character and not of the poignancy of the occasion. The first Northern Farmer is a man who has no regrets or confessions as he lies dying, but only the complacent satisfaction which he derives from having done his duty by the Squire, by the land, and by his illegitimate son, whom he accepts cheerfully while disclaiming any moral responsibility for the boy, "for she wur a bad un, sheä" ("Northern Farmer: Old Style", l. 22). The dying man is a representative of the rural folk threatened and actually destroyed in the nineteenth century by urbanisation and the development of industry, a group whose extinction greatly moved Tennyson.

In the first poem there is obvious respect for the old man's hard work in clearing the land, and for his casual, rather cheerful, acceptance of superstitions:

D'ya moind the waäste, my lass? naw, naw,  
tha was not born then;  
Theer wur a boggle in it, I often 'eärd 'um mysen;

Moäst loike a butter-bump, fur I 'eärd 'um  
 about an' about,  
 But I stubbed 'um oop wi' the lot, an' räaved  
 an' rembled 'um out.  
 ("Northern Farmer: Old Style", ll. 29-32)

The self-confidence with which he clears a game-keeper's ghost out of waste land as easily as he rids it of weeds is shown also in his defiance of the doctor's instructions not to drink his daily pint of ale, and the skepticism which he expresses about the effect of Parson's sermons, "An' I niver knawed whot a meäned but I thowt a 'ad summat to säy, / An' I thowt a said whot a owt to 'a said an' I coomed awaäy" ("Northern Farmer: Old Style", ll. 19-20), and most clearly of all, perhaps, in the wish, "If godamoighty an' parson 'ud nobbut let ma aloän" ("Northern Farmer: Old Style", l. 43). Crude, unreasonable, and stubborn he may be, but he possesses the virtues of generosity, diligence, integrity, and a refreshing skepticism about what is alien to his own limited experience. The passing of such a farmer, and his old style, is clearly to be regretted in the light of his successor.

The new style of the second Northern Farmer possesses all the earthiness and stubbornness of his predecessor, but none of the redeeming qualities to raise him beyond selfishness and a certain low-minded cunning. Whereas for the first farmer Bessie Marris is a "bad un" as a result of her loose morals, for the

new style farmer, "good" and "bad" describe only the wealth or poverty of his son's prospective brides. Such terms of moral worth are used by the farmer to conceal the sort of blatant and vulgar materialism of which Tennyson accuses the farmer's wife in the anecdote quoted earlier. These are the criteria which form the basis of Shylock's assessment of Antonio's character in The Merchant of Venice: "My meaning in saying that he is a good man is to have you understand me he is sufficient" (I.ii.14-6). The farmer repeatedly stresses his conviction that "them as 'as it's the best" ("The Northern Farmer: New Style", l. 44); his father "tued an' moiled 'issén deäd, an 'e died a good un, 'e did" (l. 52); and then the farmer confronts his son with the final threat of disinheritance: "And if thou marries a good un I'll leäve the land to thee..../ But if thou marries a bad un, I'll leäve the land to Dick" (ll. 56, 58). In the father's mind "munny" and "proputty" have become idées fixes in which confusion between wealth and virtue have prejudiced him, presumably unjustifiably, against the parson's daughter, who will have to earn her living as a governess. The farmer's weakness assumes added significance when one compares his confusion of money and virtue with the similar, but much less harmful, confusion in "The Spinster's Sweet-Arts" where the association of each of the spinster's

former suitors with one of her cats, becomes a confusion of men and pets in the reader's mind as well as in the speaker's. According to Northrop Frye's description of comic structures, we can see that the farmer represents the archetypal obstructing character whose function it is to prevent the marriage of the younger couple. While it is immediately obvious that, unlike most comedies, the farmer himself is the focus of attention, it is nevertheless useful to bear Frye's idea in mind to enable us to grasp more fully the precariousness of the farmer's position, in that while he is trying to thwart the more general "comic" conclusion in Frye's sense of the word, at the same time he serves as a butt for the poem's satire.

Thus, the poem's humour and its more serious criticism of the farmer's views emerge from the same aspect of his character. While the farmer is blind to all else but wealth, yet within this limited area he is capable of remarkably subtle (and cynical) moral distinctions. Thus, he is contemptuous of his son's wish to marry for love and argues that he came to love his own wife all the more for her money, but yet concedes that it is best to marry for both, without ever yielding to passion: "Luvv? what's luvv? thou can luvv thy lass an' 'er munny too, / Maakin' 'em goã together as they've good right to do" (ll. 33-4). And

his attitude to gentle birth is equally indiscriminating: "what's gentleman burn? is it shillins an' pence?" (1. 43). Yet his niceness of moral justification is evident in accepting the advice offered to him by his Quaker friend, "Doän't thou marry for munny, but goä wheer munny is!" (1. 20), presumably advocating the more refined policy of consorting with wealth and then inevitably marrying an heiress, rather than undertaking the risk of catching her eye while still an obvious fortune-hunter, thereby opening oneself to slanders on one's motives. So great indeed is his avarice that he slips from such acumen to quite considerable obtuseness without concern, trapping himself in inconsistencies, such as that about the relationship between work and wealth -- he praises his father for working hard and yet rejects the parson's daughter because she will have to.

But the farmer exposes his real vulnerability when he admits his own fondness for girls in his youth, though he now sees love as a sort of disease against which it is possible to immunise everyone, including his son: "I knaws what maäkes tha sa mad. / Warn't I craäzed fur the lasses mysén when I wur a lad?" (11.17-8). Here, in contrast to the other northern farmer, Sammy's father in his old age, utterly denies the strength and value of his youthful passions -- he would be incapable

of acknowledging and raising an illegitimate son. This is essentially the contrast between the two men, and Tennyson's point about the growing meanness, and not just in a financial sense, in such a class is clearly established. The comedy in the second poem is more bitter, more abrasive than in the earlier, and this fact tends to lead to the inconclusiveness one feels at the end of this pair of poems; the observation of the two characters is undoubtedly accurate and perceptive, but there is no attempt on the part of the poet to explain why this change of heart has come about, nor to say what it will mean or eventually lead to. And for anyone reading more widely in Tennyson, it is puzzling that here the poet laughs, albeit somewhat bitterly, at a situation which in "Aylmer's Field", "Lady Clara Vere de Vere", the "Locksley Hall" poems, and above all, in Maud, provokes nothing less than outrage.

"Northern Farmer: New Style" offers an interesting comparison with "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" in the counsel which two old men offer to their young male relatives about money and marriage, based on memories of their own experience. But the speaker in both "Locksley Hall" poems is the same man, allowing for the passing of sixty years between the two, and at the end of these poems we see a growth in tolerance, a less strident and vindictive assertion of the ego,

without any real alteration in the speaker's most personal convictions. "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" owes much of its power to the fact that it incorporates the central situation of the original poem in the person of the speaker's grandson, a frustrated lover in similar circumstances to his jilted grandfather sixty years earlier. So great is the similarity between the two men, indeed, that one almost expects to learn that the grandfather's name is Leonard as well.

On the speaker's second return to Locksley Hall, he does not make a solitary detour from the hunting expedition which he is sharing with his friends, but instead comes to meet his grandson in preparation for the funeral of Amy's husband, the man whom he had earlier abused as a clown. This trip to Locksley Hall, then, represents for the old man a return to the home where he was raised by his mercenary and callous uncle, where he fell in love with his cousin Amy, and to the estate which he lost when she married another man. But it is not just in the form of vague memories that he revisits his past. Leonard's own misfortune in love inevitably compels the old man to reassess his own experience, through facing a youth still at the height of his passion and rage, and subject to the same temptations to babble as the grandfather was and still is.



Because, however, sixty years separate the frustration of the two lovers, the old man is free to comment not just on the past, whether his own or that of the society which blighted his hopes, but on the present state of affairs and the changes which he observes, although he is noticeably reticent about the future in his old age.

The speaker in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" is easily recognisable as the hero of the earlier poem, and it is an indication of Tennyson's skill as a craftsman that he could recreate the speech-patterns and the rhetorical habits of the young man, with only sufficient changes to suggest the decline in energy between the two poems. Otherwise, the old tricks are still present, among them, the heavy repetition and parallelism, as the following examples illustrate:<sup>15</sup>

Cursèd be the social wants that sin against  
the strength of youth!  
Cursèd be the social lies that warp us from  
the living truth!

Cursèd be the sickly forms that err from  
honest Nature's rule!  
Cursèd be the gold that gilds the straitened  
forehead of the fool!  
("Locksley Hall", ll. 59-62)

and

Not in vain the distance beacons. Forward,  
forward let us range,  
Let the great world spin for ever down the  
ringing grooves of change.

Through the shadow of the globe we sweep  
 into the younger day:  
 Better fifty years of Europe than a cycle of  
 Cathay.

Mother-Age (for mine I knew not) help me as  
 when life begun:  
 Rift the hills, and roll the waters, flash  
 the lightnings, weigh the Sun.  
 ("Locksley Hall", ll. 181-6)

The parallelism of the first excerpt stresses the persistent state of corruption on all sides, and in the second, illustrates a linear view of progress which is postulated here but denied in the sequel. The contrast becomes clearer with examples from "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After":

Gone the cry of "Forward, Forward," lost  
 within a growing gloom;  
 Lost, or only heard in silence from the  
 silence of a tomb.  
 ("Locksley Hall Sixty Years After", ll. 73-4)

This couplet echoes the enthusiastic statement of youth, but does so with an unrhythmical lurch instead of tidy parallelisms, and with the words repeated at irregular intervals; the effect of uncertainty, particularly in the second line, is of course, well prepared in the conviction of the "Forward, Forward" which, however, soon becomes lost and confused.

Even more characteristic of the old man's rhetoric, however, is his use of chiasmus, a device which is of considerable thematic significance:

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! who can  
 tell how all will end?  
 Read the wide world's annals, you, and  
 take their wisdom for your friend.

. . . . .

Chaos, Cosmos! Cosmos, Chaos! once again  
 the sickening game;  
 Freedom, free to slay herself, and dying  
 while they shout her name.  
 ("Locksley Hall Sixty Years After",  
 ll. 103-4, 127-8)

The first chiasmus brilliantly captures the turbulent ebb-and-flow pattern of history which is the basis of the second poem, while making allowance for contemporary despair by the ease with which the one can replace the other. In the second couplet it is reinforced by the much less rigid pattern of Freedom and Death ("Freedom ...slay...dying...her name"), again showing the uncertainty of the age, epitomised in line 193, "Forward, backward, backward, forward". The device is also used in connection with the ideal world, whether in the future when man is guided by a principle of unity with all other men, "all for each and each for all" (l. 160) or in the stars where the final harmony between activity and passivity is to be found:

Hesper, whom the poet called the Bringer  
 home of all good things.  
 All good things may move in Hesper, perfect  
 peoples, perfect kings.  
 ("Locksley Hall Sixty Years After", ll. 185-6)

That the same device should be put to two contradictory uses is perfectly consistent with the rest of "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" in which the old model of linear development and confidence in easy answers is no longer acceptable, and in which a desperate desire for steady progress and simplicity is countered by a

recognition of setbacks and complexity. This is not to say that the old man is crippled by doubts, since at the end of his monologue, the old words and parallelism re-emerge:

Follow you the Star that lights a desert  
pathway, yours or mine.  
Forward, till you see the highest Human  
Nature is divine.

Follow Light, and do the Right -- for man  
can half-control his doom --  
Till you find the deathless Angel seated  
in the vacant tomb.

Forward, let the stormy moment fly and  
mingle with the Past.  
I that loathed, have come to love him.  
Love will conquer at the last.  
("Locksley Hall Sixty Years After", ll.275-80)

Apart from the manner of speech, the old man retains the anger he felt as a young man at the links between his own marital frustrations and the corruption of the age. He cannot resist this theme when he compares his Amy with his grandson's Judith:

Amy loved me, Amy failed me, Amy was a timid  
child;  
But your Judith -- but your worldling --  
she had never driven me wild.

She that holds the diamond necklace dearer  
than the golden ring,  
She that finds a winter sunset fairer than  
a morn of Spring.

She that in her heart is brooding on his  
briefer lease of life,  
While she vows 'till death shall part us',  
she the would-be-widow wife.

She the worldling born of worldlings --  
father, mother -- be content,

Even the homely farm can teach us there is  
something in descent.

("Locksley Hall Sixty Years After", ll.19-26)

In fact, in drawing such a connection, the Locksley Hall hero can be linked with a much earlier Tennysonian mourner who, in "The Walk at Midnight" (1827), turns from the peacefulness of his visit to the churchyard where his mother is buried to the vulgarity and decadence of the commercial world of daylight:

Unto my ravished senses, brought  
From yon thick-woven odorous bowers,  
The still rich breeze, with incense fraught  
Of glowing fruits and spangled flowers.

The whispering leaves, the gushing stream,  
Where trembles the uncertain moon,  
Suit more the poet's pensive dream,  
Than all the jarring notes of noon.

Then, to the thickly-crowded mart  
The eager sons of interest press;  
Then, shine the tinsel works of art --  
Now, all is Nature's loneliness! (ll. 17-28)

In all three situations, the speaker's train of thought moves quite naturally from the sense of private loss to the cause of public gain in commerce. But sixty years of experience have made the hero of "Locksley Hall" much more tolerant of other men and their follies and much less willing to condemn. As a result, there is less of the absurd posturing found in the original poem, as, for example, when the young man decides to flee to a tropical paradise in order to escape from the society which he hates so much:

To burst all links of habit -- there to  
 wander far away,  
 On from island unto island at the gateways  
 of the day.

Larger constellations burning, mellow moons  
 and happy skies,  
 Breadths of tropic shade and palms in cluster,  
 knots of Paradise.

Never comes the trader, never floats an  
 European flag,  
 Slides the bird o'er lustrous woodland,  
 swings the trailer from the crag;

Droops the heavy-blossomed bower, hangs the  
 heavy-fruited tree --  
 Summer isles of Eden lying in dark-purple  
 spheres of sea.

There methinks would be enjoyment more  
 than in this march of mind,  
 In the steamship, in the railway, in the  
 thoughts that shake mankind.

There the passions cramped no longer shall  
 have scope and breathing space;  
 I will take some savage woman, she shall  
 rear my dusky race.

("Locksley Hall", ll. 157-68)

Apart from the extravagance implicit in such a project, the idea is undercut to a large extent by the speaker's youthful vision in which the "heavens fill with commerce, argosies of magic sails, / Pilots of the purple twilight, dropping down with costly bales" ("Locksley Hall", ll. 121-2), in which commerce plays its part in a fantastic, romanticised future. Nor can he accept his savage woman as the mother of his children for very long, since within a few lines he refers, not to a primitive paradise, but to herding with narrow-foreheaded beasts, and being "mated with a squalid

savage" (l. 177). When he recovers his balance after his outburst, it is important to recognise that he overcompensates for it by proposing a cultural pride which is as extreme in its limitations as the pursuit of an island in the sun.

These extreme views have left the old man, or have been considerably diminished after sixty years, so that, while he still rages against the injustices of the day, there is ample evidence that he has gained in emotional and intellectual maturity. Age has not brought tolerance alone; and in fact, what appears to be a virtue in him has been won only with difficulty, since he has had to struggle with a profound disillusionment which expresses itself in terms of skeptical tolerance rather than misanthropy. Although the old man has lost all confidence in the steady progress of mankind, he has not forsaken his ultimate objectives and hopes, but he now realises more clearly than before that his hopes alone are unable to control the course of the future. But, in order to understand his development fully, we must look more closely at the original "Locksley Hall".

"Locksley Hall" is concerned with the two interrelated themes of marital frustration and the corruption of the society preventing the speaker's marriage. He is not the victim of sexual frustration

per se, but only in its social sense of marriage, since the speaker's love is returned by Amy, though she is controlled by the greedy ambitions of her father who forces her to marry a wealthy hunting clown. Since Amy is weak and easily manageable in her father's hands, the young lover sees her timid acceptance of his unreasonable demands as a betrayal from motives of selfishness imposed by or inherited from her father. The young man's outrage is so great that he too easily forgets the strength of Amy's love for him, in spite of the fact that his account of their mutual confession of love is as fair to Amy as it is penetrating in its psychological insight:

And I said, 'My cousin Amy, speak, and  
speak the truth to me,  
Trust me, cousin, all the current of my  
being sets to thee.'

On her pallid cheek and forehead came a  
colour and a light,  
As I have seen the rosy red flushing in  
the northern night.

And she turned -- her bosom shaken with a  
sudden storm of sighs --  
All the spirit deeply dawning in the dark  
of hazel eyes --

Saying, 'I have hid my feelings, fearing  
they should do me wrong;'  
Saying, 'Dost thou love me, cousin?'  
weeping, 'I have loved thee long.'  
("Locksley Hall", ll. 23-30)

The lover's inflated rhetoric and his hyperbolic expression of devotion to her form a revealing foil to her quiet, rather timid, response, although the



lover's use of the storm of sighs image, which became so hackneyed in Elizabethan love poetry that it expressed little more than mild interest or concern, is apparently more than a silly exaggeration since Amy's distress is obviously profound. Once they have shared their feelings, however, the verse achieves one of its rare moments of happiness:

Love took up the glass of Time, and turned  
it in his glowing hands;  
Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself  
in golden sands.

Love took up the harp of Life, and smote  
on all the chords with might;  
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling,  
passed in music out of sight.  
("Locksley Hall", ll. 31-4)

But such a transcendence of time and the self soon yields to the pressures exerted by Amy's father, and their plans for marriage are thwarted.

The frustrated lover is clearly incapable of a logical explanation of the connections between the causes of his own unhappiness and the social abuses he observes around him. Nevertheless, it is possible to deduce the links in his own mind. Unlike the speaker in "The Walk at Midnight", he does not regard the world of commerce as an antithesis of his own state of solitary grief, but rather as the major cause of it. The point is that he considers himself an outsider being excluded from a closed economic system, since "Every

door is barred with gold, and opens but to golden keys" (l. 100) which he does not happen to possess. And he emphasises the ambiguity inherent in the word "suitor" to suggest the connections, when he comments bitterly, "Every gate is thronged with suitors, all the markets overflow" (l. 101).

Tennyson is careful to provide the reader with a clue about the extent to which the speaker's marital obsessions colour what he says. It is important that we should recognise this before sympathising too fully with the young man, or before associating him too closely with the poet, for Tennyson was too keen and knowledgeable as an amateur astronomer to have been unsure of the facts when he wrote:

Many a night from yonder ivied casement,  
ere I went to rest,  
Did I look on great Orion sloping slowly  
to the West.

Many a night I saw the Pleiads, rising  
through the mellow shade,  
Glitter like a swarm of fire-flies tangled  
in a silver braid. (ll. 7-10)

These four lines contain a rich and complex allusion to the themes of time and love in the poem. The extended passage of time is underlined simply by reversing the order in which Orion and the Pleiads appear in the summer sky; in fact, the Pleiads precede Orion, and in making this change, Tennyson suggests a period of nearly a year, rather than a couple of months of summer.<sup>16</sup>

The theme of love is to be traced in a mythological explanation of the astronomical fact that Orion appears to pursue the Pleiads through the sky, though one must add that it is only one of several myths referring to the two constellations either singly or together. The order of the Pleiads and Orion, according to the myth, is an eternal and cosmic symbol of Orion's frustrated love for the daughters of Pleione:

When Pleione once was travelling through Boeotia with her daughters, Orion, who was accompanying her, tried to attack her. She escaped, but Orion sought her for seven years and couldn't find her. Jove, pitying the girls, appointed a way to the stars.... And so up to this time Orion seems to be following them as they flee toward the West. Our writers call these stars Vergiliae, because they rise after spring. They have still greater honour than the others, too, because their rising is a sign of summer, their setting of winter -- a thing which is not true of other constellations.<sup>17</sup>

Obviously, there is no question of rape in "Locksley Hall", but the image of perpetual frustration, so much more poignant here than in Keats, is nevertheless particularly apt, even to such details as the correspondence between Orion the hunter and the fact that the speaker is engaged on a hunt with his merry comrades. The image above combines the two ideas to even greater effect, for when the young man observes the pursued chasing the pursuer through the sky, Orion's cause obviously becomes hopeless. That the speaker now can extract such a pattern from the stars which he saw in his youth, before he fell in love, shows the

traumatic effect which losing Amy has had on him, and suggests that what he says about anyone or anything outside himself should be viewed with some skepticism, a detachment which prepares for the revised opinions expressed in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After".

As the young man's success in love fares, so fares the optimism with which he views change and time. Only after Amy confesses her love for him is he apparently freed from time, since the image of the up-turned hour-glass seems to suggest some sort of momentary stoppage of time for the two lovers, before the sands run backwards. As a boy, he was content to believe in progress, though words like "fairy tales" indicate that he now views his youthful optimism cynically;

Here about the beach I wandered, nourishing  
a youth sublime  
With the fairy tales of science, and the  
long result of Time;

When the centuries behind me like a fruitful  
land reposed;  
When I clung to all the present for the  
promise that it closed:

When I dipt into the future far as human  
eye could see;  
Saw the Vision of the world, and all the  
wonder that would be.  
("Locksley Hall", ll. 11-6)

These lines represent his naïve view of smooth, uninterrupted development to which he adhered before being thwarted in love. For the young boy, the present is neatly developed from the past, and with the help of

Science, will lead to the fulfilment of his dream of an ideal future, without disruption of the process. It is somewhat surprising, however, that the young speaker still believes improvement is possible on the basis of a present which is so pernicious:

So I triumphed ere my passion sweeping  
 through me left me dry,  
 Left me with the palsied heart, and  
 left me with the jaundiced eye;

Eye, to which all order festers, all things  
 here are out of joint:  
 Science moves, but slowly slowly, creeping  
 on from point to point:

Slowly comes a hungry people, as a lion  
 creeping nigher,  
 Glares at one that nods and winks behind  
 a slowly-dying fire.

Yet I doubt not through the ages one  
 increasing purpose runs,  
 And the thoughts of men are widened with the  
 process of the suns.  
 ("Locksley Hall", ll. 131-8)

His conclusion seems to be that history is an evolutionary process with at least some continuity: whereas sixty years later, he will conclude that the meaning of history is guaranteed, not by its development or by some threat running through it, but by its end, by the insight that, in the words of "The Dreamer":

Moaning your losses, O Earth,  
 Heart-weary and overdone!  
 But all's well that ends well,  
 Whirl, and follow the Sun! (ll. 17-20)

The Shakespearean proverb, although it sounds glib, is

not the result of woolly thinking easily falling into a cliché, but of firm conviction and optimism on Tennyson's part. And when one considers the age of the speaker in "Locksley Hall", it is not surprising that his interests lie more with evolution than with theology.

The only exception to the general progress which the young man foresees, however, concerns Amy herself. While married to such a husband as the one imposed on her by her father, she can be moulded as easily by her husband's coarseness as by her father's greed, and in time, will become a hypocritical old woman proffering to her children pointless and unwelcome advice based on her own unhappy experience:

Thou shalt lower to his level day by day,  
What is fine within thee growing coarse to  
sympathise with clay.

As the husband is, the wife is: thou are  
mated with a clown,  
And the grossness of his nature will have  
weight to drag thee down.

. . . . .

O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy  
petty part,  
With a little hoard of maxims preaching down  
a daughter's heart.

'They were dangerous guides the feelings --  
she herself was not exempt --  
Truly, she herself had suffered' -- Perish  
in thy self-contempt!  
("Locksley Hall", ll. 45-8, 93-6)

And the result of Amy's decline will be that she, like her father, will be guilty of denigrating the value of

the emotions of the young, and of repeating the situation of which they are the recent victims.

Given the young man's grief and his revulsion at the age in which he lives, it is only natural that he should consider some means of escape, whether by suicide (ll. 56-8), or by means of his own particular South Sea Bubble. This is one of the most famous passages in the poem, and therefore need not be discussed in detail, but perhaps it would be well to consider his motives for contemplating such an existence, anticipating that actually adopted by Gauguin, and what he hoped to achieve by it. At first, he seems to want to return ("retreat" is his word) to "yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat" (l. 154), as if to complete the cycle of his life. He speaks as if he were the hero in a Conrad novel with his plans "to wander far away, / On from island unto island at the gateways of the day" (ll. 157-8). Finally, however, the dream assumes the full flavour of primitivism, and the speaker denounces anything European and corrupt: there will be no trade, no patriotism, no steamships, no railways, no "thoughts that shake mankind" (l. 166), no inhibitions for the passions and above all, no angel in the house, but only a "savage woman" (l. 168). This vision proves impossible to sustain, and the bubble bursts, leaving no trace of the savage paradise apart from revulsion at its bestiality and the speaker goes on to

reject any kind of escape, even if it is a divine gift,  
 "I that rather held it better men should perish one  
 by one, / Than that ear should stand at gaze like  
 Joshua's moon in Ajalon. (ll. 179-80). He manages to  
 retrieve as much of his youthful enthusiasm as possible  
 (and hence the past tense of "held" above), and presses  
 on; now that he has no more family ties, he yields him-  
 self to his "Mother-Age"<sup>18</sup> and whatever advances are  
 possible for man: "O, I see the crescent promise of  
 my spirit hath not set. / Ancient founts of inspiration  
 well through all my fancy yet." (ll. 187-8).

But as the poem ends, the reader becomes  
 increasingly conscious of something unsettled, some-  
 thing a little slapdash. There is no resolution of  
 the problems raised in the poem concerning the fulfil-  
 ment of love, or the possibility of reconciliation to,  
 and constructive action in, the speaker's society, but  
 only a rather petulant curse on the house and the  
 family, and a return to his hunting, a pastime which  
 acquires some thematic significance at the end of the  
 poem.

Howsoever these things be, a long farewell  
 to Locksley Hall!  
 Now for me the woods may wither, now for  
 me the roof-tree fall.

Comes a vapour from the margin, blackening  
 over heath and holt,  
 Cramming all the blast before it, in its  
 breast a thunderbolt.

Let it fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or



hail, or fire or snow;  
 For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward,  
 and I go.  
 ("Locksley Hall", ll. 189-94)

If particular importance is given to the word "go" in the last line of "Locksley Hall", one of the most significant words of "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" is "gone". In the sequel, the speaker is not alone in a literal sense from having wandered from a group of friends, but metaphorically, because all his friends are dead: Amy has been dead for almost all of those sixty years, having died with her baby in childbirth; Amy's father is also dead, as are "the comrades of my bivouac" (l. 45); the speaker's wife of forty years, Edith; their son, Leonard, and his wife, and most recently, Amy's husband. It is on the occasion of the latter's funeral that the old man and his sole surviving relative, his grandson, who is now about to inherit Locksley Hall, meet outside the house, prompting the old man to reflect on all that has happened. The speaker's past is recalled to him in the various ways outlined earlier, but perhaps it is his grandson's recent rejection by Judith which focusses his thoughts most clearly.

The central image in, as well as the germ of, the poem is the picture of the two children which hangs in the house:

In the hall there hangs a painting --  
 Amy's arms about my neck --  
 Happy children in a sunbeam sitting on  
 the ribs of wreck.

In my life there was a picture, she that  
 clasped my neck had flown;  
 I was left within the shadow sitting on  
 the wreck alone. (ll. 13-6) 19

The distinction drawn here is not so much the usual one between life and art, illusion and reality, as a contrasting of stasis and change. Associated with the hall, which the speaker failed to inherit when he lost Amy, is the portrait itself and a stable system of inheritance and steady, peaceful change (perhaps gentle decay), incompatible with the world of abrupt reversals and upheavals outside the estate. The outside world can imitate Locksley Hall's changelessness only in the exact and unexpected repetition of events such as we observe in the parallels between the two forsaken lovers, their experience being as painful as Locksley Hall's. But because the old man has gained experience from his loss of Amy, he can moderate the young man's sense of anger and frustration (and it is clear that the old man is reassessing his own performance in "Locksley Hall" as much as he is comforting his grandson):

'Curse him!' curse your fellow-victim?  
 call him dotard in your rage?  
 Eyes that lured a doting boyhood well might  
 fool a dotard's age.

Jilted for a wealthier! wealthier?  
 yet perhaps she was not wise;  
 I remember how you kissed the miniature  
 with those sweet eyes. (ll. 9-12)

Such a judgment is in remarkable contrast to the seeing views of "Locksley Hall". Here, the speaker makes no exceptions on behalf of his grandson. While he recognises that the one lover is as weak-headed as the other, he acknowledges the strength of the young man's passion and the allure of Judith's beauty without either mocking them as the new style Northern Farmer would, or giving in to indulgent sympathy. Whereas, in the earlier poem he depicted himself and his generation as being repressed by their elders, now he draws no distinction between youth and age, even going so far as to observe that "Youth and age are scholars yet but in the lower school" (l. 243), a line which assumes considerable significance in a poem pervaded with death.

At the same time as he breaks down the barriers between the generations, his attention turns on a more personal level, as it did not in the earlier poem, to the virtues to be found in individual actions and individual lives. Sixty years earlier, he had entrusted himself to what remained of his belief in progress and to the Mother-Age from which the future was to develop. The cry of "Forward, forward let us range" in "Locksley Hall" seems to be intimately connected with leaving

Locksley Hall itself; the great world will advance while the ancestral estate decays, or is destroyed by the approaching storm, just as its mistress will be corrupted by her husband. Now, however, the old man realises that such a view is too simple-minded; however much he may have desired it, Locksley Hall has not been singled out for ruin and devastation, nor has the world outside convincingly spun down the ringing grooves of change. Thus each of the rival suitors in "Locksley Hall" has had to weather the same sort of problem; the speaker lost Amy, but has found more than consolation in forty years of marriage to his beloved Edith, who in death and in life has come to overshadow Amy:

Gone with whom for forty years my life in  
golden sequence ran,  
She with all the charm of woman, she with all  
the breadth of man,

Strong in will and rich in wisdom, Edith, yet  
so lovely-sweet,  
Woman to her inmost heart, and woman to her  
tender feet,

Very woman of very woman, nurse of ailing  
body and mind,  
She that linked again the broken chain that  
bound me to my kind.

Here today was Amy with me, while I wandered  
down the coast,  
Near us Edith's holy shadow, smiling at the  
slighter ghost. (ll. 47-54) <sup>20</sup>.

The speaker derives further comfort from his son who, though now dead, died heroically, and represents a model of conduct for Leonard, his orphaned son:

Gone our sailor son thy father, Leonard  
 early lost at sea;  
 Thou alone, my boy, of Amy's kin and mine  
 art left to me.

Gone thy tender-natured mother, wearying to  
 be left alone,  
 Pining for the stronger heart that once had  
 beat beside her own.

Truth, for Truth is Truth, he worshipt,  
 being true as he was brave;  
 Good, for Good is Good, he followed, yet  
 he looked beyond the grave,

Wiser there than you, that crowning barren  
 Death as lord of all,  
 Deem this over-tragic drama's closing  
 curtain is the pall!

Beautiful was death in him, who saw the  
 death, but kept the deck,  
 Saving women and their babes, and sinking  
 with the sinking wreck. (ll. 55-64)

It is apparent that the old man's triumph over Amy is nearly complete, since she and her husband die childless, and the husband has had to live without her for sixty years. He has spent his years as a widower in performing charitable deeds, an exemplary transformation of misfortune which earns the speaker's high respect:

Follow him who led the way,

Strove for sixty widowed years to help his  
 homelier brother men,  
 Served the poor, and built the cottage, raised  
 the school, and drained the fen.

Hears he now the Voice that wronged him? who  
 shall swear it cannot be?  
 Earth would never touch her worst, were one  
 in fifty such as he. (ll. 266-70)

Perhaps because he so completely misjudged his rival, the grandfather feels no triumph, however, where we might earlier have expected him to be exultant at his vindication by the decline of Locksley Hall. The fact that he does not gloat over his grandson's inheritance of the estate and over having outlived both Amy and her husband (and indeed he now calls himself a clown for refusing to be reconciled so long ago, l.256) seems to have two causes: the passage of time in the world away from Locksley Hall, and a heightened understanding of the importance of immortality for life on earth.<sup>21</sup>

The opinions expressed on history and progress and on contemporary affairs are far harsher, and based on a greater pessimism than in the earlier poem. That there have been advances is undeniable, but they have become trivial and vulgarised: "Half the marvels of my morning, triumphs over time and space, / Staled by frequency, shrunk by usage into commonest commonplace!" (ll. 75-6). What has been achieved through intellectual development, however, has been inundated by the appalling backsliding in history as men slip away from their models to a perversion of the values they should learn from them, the process whereby Demos becomes a Demon (l. 90) and the Rome of Peter is no improvement over the Rome of Caesar (l. 88). The old man lays particular blame on his contemporaries' abuse of speech and

words, from his own and his grandson's babbling, to the "tonguesters" (l. 130) and the "practised hustings-liar" (l. 123) and to those who are guilty of sins against literature:

Authors -- essayist, atheist, novelist,  
 realist, rhymester, play your part,  
 Paint the mortal shame of nature with  
 the living hues of Art.

Rip your brothers' vices open, strip your  
 own foul passions bare;  
 Down with Reticence, down with Reverence --  
 forward -- naked -- let them stare.

Feed the budding rose of boyhood with the  
 drainage of your sewer;  
 Send the drain into the fountain, lest  
 the stream should issue pure.

Set the maiden fancies wallowing in the  
 troughs of Zolaism, --  
 Forward, forward, ay and backward, downward  
 too into the abysm.

Do your best to charm the worst, to lower  
 the rising race of men;  
 Have we risen from out the beast, then  
 back into the beast again? (ll. 139-48)

The most shocking aspect of the scientific conquest of time and space for the old man is that it co-exists, and apparently will continue to do so, with extreme misery and suffering:

Is it well that while we range with Science,  
 glorying in the Time,  
 City children soak and blacken soul and  
 sense in city slime?

There among the glooming alleys Progress  
 halts on palsied feet,  
 Crime and hunger cast our maidens by the  
 thousand on the street.

There the Master scrimps his haggard  
 sempstress of her daily bread,  
 There a single sordid attic holds the  
 living and the dead.

There the smouldering fire of fever  
 creeps across the rotted floor,  
 And the crowded couch of incest in the  
 warrens of the poor. (ll. 217-24)

Nor will the future be the idealised world of his  
 exuberant, youthful dreams, but a world perpetually  
 at war resulting from over-population and shortages  
 of food. The speaker's despair concerning the future  
 is made to appear all the more likely by the repre-  
 sentative of that future in the poem, the "vicious  
 boy" (l. 215) who almost manages to wreck Leonard's  
 train, an incident in significant contrast to the  
 confidence expressed in the famous railway image of  
 "Locksley Hall". The old man can only conclude, on  
 the basis of these observations, that history is not  
 a steady process of improvement, however slow, but a  
 chaos of ebbing and flowing, of steps forward and  
 backward. His hopes are not based as they once were,  
 on the ascent of man, but on the divine revelation  
 which comes with the death of the individual, or at  
 the end of history:

Far away beyond her myriad coming changes  
 earth will be  
 Something other than the wildest modern  
 guess of you and me.

Earth may reach her earthly-worst, or if  
 she gain her earthly-best,



Would she find her human offspring this  
ideal man at rest?

Forward then, but still remember how the  
course of Time will swerve,  
Crook and turn upon itself in many a  
backward streaming curve. (ll. 231-6)

Earth and human beings, on their own, have no power to save the world from destruction, if that is the divine plan. This yields the same dilemma as that dealt with in "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", the confrontation of the human with the divine, and the impossibility of man's ever attaining divine knowledge. The speaker shows that he is aware that this is a crucial issue, and his advice attempts to solve the dilemma. His solution would be the despair of an advice columnist, whose interest is less in mystical principles and more in practical instructions: "Hope the best, but hold the Present fatal daughter of the Past, / Shape your heart to front the hour, but dream not that the hour will last" (ll. 105-6). Once again, Tennyson's use of ambiguity is rewarding since the triple significance of "fatal" (controlled by the Fates, fixed, and leading to death), emphasises the difficulty of hoping in the midst of an inexorable decline and the importance of being in the world though not of it, of looking beyond death to the divine. In this perspective, the "earthly-best" is seen as limited and subordinated to the "heavenly-best", a state which can only be

achieved by God in man. Considering the corruption which has destroyed established Christianity, the old man must be referring to a series of incarnations and not just the Incarnation when he explains his idea:

Ere [Earth] gain her Heavenly-best, a God  
must mingle with the game:  
Nay, there may be those about us whom we  
neither see nor name,

Felt within us as ourselves, the Powers of  
Good, the Powers of Ill,  
Strowing balm, or shedding poison in the  
fountains of the Will. (ll. 271-4)<sup>22</sup>

To attack the poem, as Gladstone does, by celebrating the decline in swearing and duelling in Victoria's reign,<sup>23</sup> is to miss the point of the poem entirely.

The return to the family home in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" provides a chance to reassess the past and attack the present, but it also shows that the old man is not primarily concerned with the past as he was before, but that his gaze has become fixed on his own imminent death, and on the spiritual world. It is obvious from his walk on the beach that the spirits of Amy and Edith are very real for him already, and that at his age there is nothing to be gained from lamenting the dead, but rather that it is better to anticipate reunion with them in the future:

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices  
that have fled!  
All I loved are vanished voices, all my  
steps are on the dead.

All the world is set on to me, and as the  
phantom disappears,  
Forward far and far from here for all the  
hope of eighty years. (ll. 251-5)

By returning, the old man is able to focus on the fruits of wisdom and experience as he considers his grandson's future and his own death. In this respect, one gains from the two "Locksley Hall" poems some notion of what Eliot means in the lines from "Little Gidding", "to arrive where we started / And know the place for the first time".

The cyclical structure of a man returning to the home where he spent his youth runs through both "Oenone" poems as well as the two "Locksley Halls", in that the dying Paris returns to Mount Ida, and to his wife, the nymph Oenone, in order to ask her forgiveness for abandoning her in favour of Helen, and further, to ask her to cure his otherwise-mortal wounds inflicted by Philoctetes. "The Death of Oenone" is concerned with Paris's return as it affects not just Oenone, but also the shepherds among whom he grew up after being exposed as a baby by his parents who feared the prophecies concerning his responsibility for the destruction of Troy. And, in the differing attitudes shown by the shepherds and Oenone herself, Tennyson is able to demonstrate two different aspects of the past in terms of human relationships.

"Oenone" has always been one of the most highly

praised of Tennyson's poems for its metrical accomplishment, its wonderful evocation of setting (based on the Pyrenees, since Tennyson never saw Greece or Troy), and its sustained mood of stillness and despair. Nevertheless, its beauties tend to conceal the fact that it is a difficult and perplexing poem when one looks at it more closely. The most obvious characteristic of Tennyson's poem is that the central figure is the historically-neglected Oenone whose point of view dominates the poem. Because the actions of the poem are presented according to her interpretation, the reader must be prepared for some distortion of the objective accounts of the judgment of Paris, perhaps most obvious when she shuts her eyes as Paris awards the apple to Aphrodite. The judgment itself, traditionally the central event, is less prominent than one might otherwise expect, since it is subordinated to her expressions of grief. But these are only the most apparent of the problems which the reader of "Oenone" faces.

The judgment of Paris, that incident so beloved of moralists and allegorists, is apparently a late addition to the account of the Trojan War, since it seems to be unknown to Homer, at least in detail, for he records only an offence given to the goddesses, which may or may not preclude the episode as we know it.<sup>24</sup> The myth's susceptibility to allegorical inter-

pretation seems to have been an early discovery, as Carl Kerényi suggests:

He [Paris] was to say which was the most beautiful -- so it is expressed by the old poets and other narrators, who by no means meant mere erotic charm, but the highest of all good things that the world contains. For it needed neither a king's son nor a herd-boy to decide that Aphrodité possessed the most erotic attractiveness of all in Heaven, on Earth and in the Sea. That philosopher was right who stated that Paris had to choose between warlike discipline, a life devoted to love, and sovereignty; the first was Athenè's gift, the last Herè's. He was confronted by three forms of beauty all of which were divine; the representatives of its forms wore beauty's splendour.<sup>25</sup>

Although the myth reverses the traditional hierarchy and has a man judging Gods instead of God judging man, Tennyson's rendering of the myth is interesting in its own right. His first substantial variation is an interpolation into the traditional material. Quite apart from the choice between the three goddesses, the fact that Paris is asked to judge the goddesses at all implies in Tennyson's poem a rejection of Oenone. Paris makes this clear when he praises her, after receiving the apple but before viewing the three contestants, when he says that the prize probably belongs to Oenone, even though he knows that she is not an official competitor:

'My own Oenone,  
Beautiful-browed Oenone, my own soul,  
Behold this fruit, whose gleaming rind ingraven  
'For the most fair,' would seem to award it thine,  
As lovelier than whatever Oread haunt

The knolls of Ida, loveliest in all grace  
 Of movement, and the charm of married brows.'  
 (ll. 68-74)

Of course, this not an acceptable way of settling the dispute, but in making this pretty speech to Oenone, Paris commits himself to a promise which he cannot possibly keep. So, it might be argued, as a result of this scene, for which there appears to be no classical precedent, that Paris has already sown the seeds of separation from Oenone.

In view of the sequel, "The Death of Oenone", which is concerned with the reunion of the two lovers, the separation is already implicit, if not yet actual, by the time the goddesses appear. Paris is forsaking Oenone, who earlier had satisfied him as long as he was a shepherd, for his three goddesses, having forgotten his first impulse to award the apple to Oenone. It is unclear how much Paris is to be blamed in this matter, since he has been instructed to judge the goddesses by Zeus himself, and so cannot disobey. Once he has volunteered his praise of Oenone, he must turn to deciding among the goddesses, in a confrontation of the human and the divine which recalls that experienced by Tithonus and Tiresias. As Gerhard Joseph points out, such encounters almost inevitably are disastrous, quite apart from which goddess Paris chooses.<sup>26</sup> Considering the traditional jealousy between the goddesses which

made the contest necessary in the first place, Joseph seems fully justified when he remarks, "There is little guarantee that Paris's choice would have had a happier outcome had he preferred the gifts of Herè or Pallas to that of Aphrodite."<sup>27</sup>

It has become almost impossible to read an account of the judgment of Paris without the moral barnacles which have clung to it over the centuries, since it has long been accepted as one of the set-pieces of moralised Greek myth. But "Oenone" seems to demand that we shake our preconceptions, since the actual details of the poem, as I hope to show, scarcely support the conclusion that the poem is about the choice between power, wisdom, and rather debased sex. Indeed, from Tennyson's poem, I would argue, as Joseph does in another context, that whatever goddess Paris chooses makes little difference; there is no right answer to Paris's problems, but three wrong ones. As Professor Joseph says: "The fates tempt us by putting the gifts of the gods (though in Tennyson it is usually the goddesses) in our path, and then destroy us for making a choice which can only be wrong."<sup>28</sup>

But to return to the judgment itself. When the three goddesses come to be inspected by Paris, Herè, as befitting the Queen of the gods, speaks first and makes a grandiloquent offer to Paris (who, she reminds him, is living below his true station) of royal power

such as will make him like the gods:

Still she spake on and still she spake of power,  
 'Which in all action is the end of all;  
 Power fitted to the season; wisdom-bred  
 And throned of wisdom -- from all neighbour crowns  
 Alliance and allegiance, till thy hand  
 Fail from the sceptre-staff. Such boon from me,  
 From me, Heaven's Queen, Paris, to thee king-born,  
 A shepherd all thy life but yet king-born,  
 Should come most welcome, seeing men, in power  
 Only, are likest gods, who have attained  
 Rest in a happy place and quiet seats  
 Above the thunder, with undying bliss  
 In knowledge of their own supremacy.'  
 (ll. 119-31)

So far, the episode goes according to tradition with Herè's unabashed offer of power. But the pattern begins to break down as Pallas speaks. In opposition to Herè's emphasis on the Epicurean detachment after the struggle of this world, Pallas replies to the eulogy of power in lines which have been mistaken for an offer of the wisdom which she traditionally represents. In "Oenone" however, she merely praises it, but on principle offers Paris no bribes yet:

'Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control,  
 These three alone lead life to sovereign power.  
 Yet nor for power (power of herself  
 Would come uncalled for) but to live by law,  
 Acting the law we live by without fear;  
 And, because right is right, to follow right  
 Were wisdom in the scorn of consequence.  
 (ll. 142-8)

Pallas's argument is very much more difficult than Herè's since she seems to entertain some notion that once one has mastered one's self, the power which one will have acquired will lead, not to an abuse of power



and a disregard of law, but an obedience to law based from fear, and based on the pursuit of the right. In short she points out that power over the self is more important than despotic power over others. though Herè's sense of power appears not to be excluded as the final result.

Pallas continues with the eminently sensible statement that there is no need to bribe Paris with gifts, since nothing she says or offers him will affect her beauty:

'I woo thee not with gifts.  
Sequel of guerdon could not alter me  
To fairer. Judge thou me by what I am,  
So shalt thou find me fairest.' (ll. 150-3)

This represents an interesting and important addition to the myth by Tennyson. In her reply to Herè, Pallas offers Paris nothing to offset the gift of power, but merely attempts to discredit its worth. But when she adds that she will offer him nothing, the implication is clear that she at least considers the judgment to be a beauty contest and not a moral test for Paris. This attitude might appear to be consistent with her appearance -- a cold, aloof beauty, without any clouds or flowers to enhance her nakedness -- but for some reason she utterly forsakes her resolve, and offers him neither the military prowess nor wisdom which one might reasonably expect, but merely her favour:

'Yet, indeed,  
 If gazing on divinity disrobed  
 Thy mortal eyes are frail to judge of fair,  
 Unbiased by self-profit, oh! rest thee sure  
 That I shall love thee well and cleave to thee,  
 So that my vigour, wedded to thy blood,  
 Shall strike within thy pulses, like a God's,  
 To push thee forward through a life of shocks,  
 Dangers, and deeds, until endurance grow  
 Sinewed with action, and the full-grown will,  
 Circled through all experiences, pure law,  
 Commeasure perfect freedom.' (ll. 153-64)

This passage is usually agreed to demonstrate very fine sentiments about the life of heroic virtue. Out of context, this may well be true, but the speech raises several difficulties. One of the most important is the sour note struck by the phrase "Unbiased by self-profit"; if Pallas is not guilty of contempt of court here in suggesting that the judge is unfit to try her divine attributes, at the very least she trivialises the episode by suggesting that what is taking place is neither a moral trial (with each of the goddesses representing a specific attribute) nor a straightforward beauty contest, but a rather disreputable tendering of bribes to flatter each goddess's vanity, by appealing to Paris's interest in self-profit. Paris again is promised a sort of divinity, though this time it will be as a result of a life of struggle and Stoic perseverance under the protection of Pallas. Again, it must be stressed that in another context this might represent the correct ideal for Paris. Certainly,

Pallas wins Oenone's premature support, although Paris is determined at least to give Aphroditè a hearing. Aphroditè, in fact, says almost nothing, but merely turns on all her charms and offers Paris "The fairest and most loving wife in Greece" (l. 183), all the while smiling in confident anticipation of her triumph.

If Tennyson does not actually provide a justification for Paris's choice, it is made to seem almost inevitable. Since he is about to award the apple to Herè before Pallas interrupts, it is clear that Paris himself is torn between Herè and Aphroditè, and that Pallas receives only polite attention. Oenone's interjection apart, the reader can easily see why Paris should reject Pallas in favour of the other two, since they represent real, if somewhat overwhelming, beauty and voluptuousness, whereas Pallas's beauty is more intimidating. And the choice of Aphroditè over Herè is obvious enough when one considers that she offers a beautiful, loving, and thoroughly human, wife instead of abstract notions of divinity (though Paris is already in possession of divine beauty). Given the choice of the human or the divine, Paris understandably though not necessarily creditably, chooses the former, quite forgetting that in securing a Greek wife, he is forsaking his Trojan wife.

It is possible, as Professor Ricks suggests,

that "Oenone" is largely unsuccessful, with the failure of the judgment scene more than compensating for the minor successes achieved in the evocation of emotion and the manipulation of what he calls the "love landscapes".<sup>29</sup> But what Ricks considers "thrasonical grandiloquence" in Pallas's speeches is surely dramatically consistent with her rather pompous beauty. Tennyson's treatment of the episode, however, seems to err on the side of complexity rather than simple-mindedness or confusion. Each goddess seems to invent her own rules: Herè provides the chance for Paris to achieve power, Pallas bribes him with an appeal to his self-interest, and Aphrodité seduces him with the prospect of a wife. Herè, in making "Proffer of royal power" (l. 109) fulfils our expectations of the episode as a moral allegory, though Pallas thwarts this altogether. She does not offer Paris wisdom, and indeed mentions it only once, when emphasising that to live the sort of life she suggests would be the wise thing to do. Since she does not offer wisdom as Herè proffers power, the continuity of the moral allegory is broken completely.

There remains the problem of why Oenone should intercede on behalf of Pallas. The fact that she speaks before Aphrodité suggests that she senses what Aphrodité will offer, and fears her power as much as she is attracted to Pallas's. In terms of the episode

alone, it is interesting that both Paris and Oenone see the choice as between two, although they cannot agree on which two are the most important. The discrepancy between Oenone's and Paris's views can perhaps be explained on the grounds that what is intended by Zeus as a judgment soon becomes a temptation. That is, while Paris is supposed to judge impartially the attractions of each goddess and make an objective decision, it turns into a temptation in which the judge's impartiality is undermined. A judgment would indicate which goddess Paris deems most preferable; as it is, he chooses the one against whom he is most vulnerable, whose charms he can least resist. The only conclusions to be drawn from Paris's decision, then, do not concern the goddesses themselves, as much as Paris's own weakness. Insofar as Oenone is hidden at a distance from the goddesses, perhaps she is able to judge rather than be tempted, though even so the timing of her intervention remains suspect. She may understand the respective merits and defects of the goddesses more clearly than Paris, but it was not ordained that the choice should be hers. As Dr Joseph suggests, it is not altogether clear that her advice would have saved Paris from the jealousy of Herè and Aphroditè. Paris has been trapped and must make a decision, and his decision necessarily entails the abandonment of Oenone.

Because Oenone has been rejected and because of the particularly cruel way in which this has come about through the judgment of Paris, "Oenone" provides the necessary background for understanding the full significance of "The Death of Oenone". Oenone clearly interprets the choice of Aphrodité as a rejection of herself, rather than of the other goddesses:

'Fairest -- why fairest wife? am I not fair? ,  
 My love hath told me so a thousand times.  
 Methinks I must be fair, for yesterday,  
 When I past by, a wild and wanton pard,  
 Eyed like the evening star, with playful tail  
 Crouched fawning in the weed. Most loving is she?  
 Ah me, my mountain shepherd, that my arms  
 Were wound about thee, and my hot lips prest  
 Close, close to thine in that quick-falling dew  
 Of fruitful kisses, thick as Autumn rains  
 Flash in the pools of whirling Simois.  
 (ll. 192-202)

Thus it is the rejection of Oenone, the central figure in both poems, which is the main issue, not Paris's failure to choose the right goddess or the most worthy gift. Implicit in his abandonment of Oenone, too, is the forsaking of Troy, but other issues, such as the disasters of the war itself are secondary to Oenone's personal loss. In attempting to judge of gods, Paris is subjected to the same fate as Tithonus; it can be argued, however, that Oenone represents a way out of the dilemma for Paris in that she stands for a middle-choice between the philosophical and rather remote appeal of Herè and Pallas on the one hand, and the purely carnal attractions offered by Aphrodité, since

Oenone, as a nymph, is a minor divinity, though not immortal, and obviously subject to human passions. But both she and Paris are unable to consider a choice between more than two. The culmination of her grief then, and of Paris's betrayal is a vision of fire which embraces not only the flames of her love and the destruction of Troy but also Paris's funeral pyre and even her own death, all seen vividly in terms of her own frustrated love and childlessness:

O mother, hear me yet before I die.  
 I will not die alone, for fiery thoughts  
 Do shape themselves within me, more and more,  
 Whereof I catch the issue, as I hear  
 Dead sounds at night come from the inmost hills,  
 Like footsteps upon wool. I dimly see  
 My far-off doubtful purpose, as a mother  
 Conjectures of the features of her child  
 Ere it is born: her child! -- a shudder comes  
 Across me: never child be born of me,  
 Unblest, to vex me with his father's eyes!  
 (ll. 241-51)

Throughout the poem, Oenone's one preoccupation is with her death, though it remains unclear from the refrain whether she actively desires it (as does Mariana), whether she fears it and pleads to be allowed to finish her lament, or whether she speaks in more general terms of anticipation. The only clue we have to her state of mind in this respect is her interest in the "wild Cassandra" (l. 259), who sees a fire dancing before her, significant because Oenone too has a vision of fire: "Wheresoe'er I am by night and day, / All earth and air seem only burning fire" (ll. 263-4).

For sixty years, Oenone was left to brood alone for her Victorian readers, while she waited for death. But after such a long delay, Tennyson returned to her to describe her final reunion with Paris, and once again, his focus is on Oenone rather than Paris after whom, in fact, both episodes had been traditionally known. In the case of "The Death of Oenone", however, Tennyson was doing more than inviting comparison with himself, since in the meantime William Morris had published his "Death of Paris" as part of the long poem, The Earthly Paradise (1868-70). In the sequel, Tennyson made a significant change in his technique for while he kept Oenone as the central figure, the point of view is changed from a monologue in the first person to a third-person narrative, thus denying to the reader access to the intricacies of Oenone's state of mind, and leaving the motives for her actions -- for refusing to cure Paris, for her repeated question as to who is lying on the pyre, and as to her own death -- and her inner turmoil, somewhat uncertain.

The main classical source for "The Death of Oenone" is Book X of Quintus Smyrnaeus' (whom Tennyson calls Calaber) epic on the fall of Troy, describing events omitted from the Iliad, but without the energy and skill of Homer. Indeed, Tennyson refers to "The Death of Oenone" as



a Grecian tale re-told  
Which, cast in later Grecian mould,  
Quintus Calaber  
Somewhat lazily handled of old.  
("To the Master of Balliol", ll. 5-8)

Traditional versions of the story say that Oenone was fated to be the only one who could cure Paris of his otherwise-fatal wounds, but there is a tradition going back at least as far as Ovid's Heroides, V, that Oenone was given her medical skill by Apollo as a compensation for having raped her.<sup>30</sup> Hence, Tennyson may well have been thinking of this account when he excised the following lines which appeared in the 1832 version, but not that of 1842, on the grounds that so obvious an allusion to Apollo might call Oenone's virtue irrelevantly into question:

I sate alone: the goldensandalled morn  
Rosehued the scornful hills: I sate alone  
With downdropt eyes: whitebreasted like a star  
Fronting the dawn he came: a leopard skin  
From his white shoulder drooped: his sunny hair  
Clustered about his temples like a God's:  
And his cheek brightened as the foam-bow brightens  
When the wind blows the foam, and I called out,  
'Welcome Apollo, welcome home Apollo,  
Apollo, my Apollo, loved Apollo.'

In the revised version of 1842, Oenone compromises herself much less by sitting in silence, though her feelings are no less intense: "and all my heart / Went forth to embrace him coming ere he came" (ll. 61-2). Whereas Ovid is explicit in making Oenone a high-principled victim of Apollo's lust, Tennyson banishes almost all traces of the Apollo legend, though there are just

enough vestiges of it in the reference to the building of Troy ("Oenone", ll. 39-40), in her comparison of Paris with a sun-god even in the 1842 version, and in her medical skills, to add an extra facet to her character in both poems.

"The Death of Oenone" is not a strict sequel to "Oenone" in the sense that it merely tells what happened next, because it subsumes the earlier poem in its cyclical pattern. Now, ten years later, Oenone's past and the present coincide:

Her Past became her Present, and she saw  
Him, climbing toward her with the golden fruit,  
Him, happy to be chosen Judge of Gods,  
Her husband in the flush of youth and dawn,  
Paris, himself as beauteous as a God. (ll.14-8)

But the coincidence is shattered by the dying Paris's cry for help. In his plea he confesses that he no longer loves her, though he bases his claim for her aid on the idyllic days before the gods interfered in their happy life together among the shepherds, and on a discreet hint concerning the source of her medical knowledge:

'Oenone, my Oenone, while we dwelt  
Together in this valley -- happy then --  
Too happy had I died within thine arms,  
Before the feud of Gods had marred our peace,  
And sundered each from each. I am dying now  
Pierced by a poisoned dart. Save me. Thou knowest,  
Taught by some God, whatever herb or balm  
May clear the blood from poison, and thy fame  
Is blown through all the Troad, and to thee  
The shepherd brings his adder-bitten lamb,  
The wounded warrior climbs from Troy to thee.  
My life and death are in thy hand. The Gods  
Avenge on stony hearts a fruitless prayer

For pity. Let me owe my life to thee.  
 I wrought thee bitter wrong, but thou forgive,  
 Forget it. Man is but the slave of Fate.  
 Oenone, by thy love which once was mine,  
 Help, heal me. I am poisoned to the heart.'  
 'And I to mine' she said. 'Adulterer,  
 Go back to thine adulteress and die!'  
 (ll. 29-48)

Like Arthur before the penitent Guinevere, Oenone's inflexibility seems to triumph over her mercy and love, but the fact remains that while forgiveness may be possible for Oenone and Arthur, they cannot forgive easily the sins against them, and they certainly can never forget anything which has caused them so much sorrow. On the other hand, Oenone's attitude seems more credible when compared with the rather careless forgiveness of the shepherds, "forgetful of the man / Whose crime had half-unpeopled Ilion" (ll. 60-1), and they immediately and willingly set about preparing for his funeral rites, as readily as they had adopted him as an orphan left to die. The shepherds' relationship with Paris, partly because it is cyclical and partly because it has suffered no traumatic disruption, is not of the same order as Oenone's, and thus has a more comfortable and less ambiguous result.

Oenone must undergo further suffering before she can respond in any way to Paris's request. Forgiveness and her pursuit of Paris are delayed almost a day as she sits in the mouth of her cave, haunted by the image of Paris's face as he last appeared to her,

"deformed by lurid blotch and blain" (l. 72), and when she sleeps, she hears him calling her:

A ghostly murmur floated, 'Come to me,  
Oenone! I can wrong thee now no more,  
Oenone, my Oenone,' and the dream  
Wailed in her, when she woke beneath the stars.  
(ll. 79-82)

The description of her search for Paris is a remarkably satisfying climax to the poem, not for the insight into what she is about, but rather the opposite. There is an unrealistic quality about the scene, almost as if Oenone were sleep-walking; as she walks through a nature red in tooth and claw, a world of predators and their prey, she shows none of her usual fear. Then too, her apparent uncertainty about who is lying on the funeral pyre is puzzling unless it suggests a state of semi-consciousness which becomes full awareness only as she cries out and jumps on the flaming pile:

She rose and slowly down,  
By the long torrent's ever-deepened roar,  
Paced, following, as in trance, the silent cry.  
She waked a bird of prey that screamed and past;  
She roused a snake that hissing writhed away;  
A panther sprang across her path, she heard  
The shriek of some lost life among the pines,  
But when she gained the broader vale, and saw  
The ring of faces reddened by the flames  
Enfolding that dark body which had lain  
Of old in her embrace, paused -- and then asked  
Falteringly, 'Who lives on yonder pyre?'  
But every man was mute for reverence.  
Then moving quickly forward till the heat  
Smote on her brow, she lifted up a voice  
Of shrill command, 'Who burns upon the pyre?'  
Whereon their oldest and their boldest said,  
'He, whom thou wouldst not heal!' and all at once  
The morning light of happy marriage broke

Through all the clouded years of widowhood,  
 And muffling up her comely head, and crying  
 'Husband!' she leapt upon the funeral pile,  
 And mixt herself with him and past in fire.  
 (ll. 84-106)

The uncertainties concerning Oenone's state of mind implicit in the third-person narrative lead appropriately to this conclusion. Oenone's final action is, we assume, the result of mixed motives, since it may as easily be an act of despair as of love, it could as easily mark her final triumph over his infidelity as her remorse at having refused to cure him. Or, in the terms of "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After", it could be a sign of her confidence in the afterlife: "Those that in barbarian burials killed the slave, and slew the wife, / Felt within themselves the sacred passion of the second life" (ll. 67-8). The only clue we have, the reference to the memories of "the morning light of marriage" in contrast to her solitary suffering, and the cry of "Husband!", would support any of these interpretations, and perhaps all of them; perhaps in looking for a motive for Oenone's suicide, one is led into drawing false distinctions in what is Tennyson's supreme portrayal of tragic human love.

Unlike "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", or perhaps in a different way from them, the two "Locksley Hall" poems, the two "Oenones" and, to a lesser extent, the two "Northern Farmers" are complete as pairs. These poems attempt an account of the effect of the passage

of time on an individual, the process to which Tennyson refers in "Doubt and Prayer", "Steel me with patience! soften me with grief!" (l. 9). Neither suffering nor time makes it possible to forget the past -- Amy is still a significant memory to the speaker in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" while Oenone cannot see Paris's action as anything other than adultery -- and both sequels make it clear that the Present is indeed the Fatal Daughter of the Past. And, as even the young man in "Locksley Hall" was aware, memory of the Past brings no consolation, but only greater sorrow. The effect of time is not, as it is in the "Northern Farmers", to produce a considerably altered, far less a completely antithetical, state of affairs. In the others there is greater charity and sensitivity to others with the passing of time, and it is in this spirit that the other important poem of the 1892 volume, "Akbar's Dream", was written.

Coinciding with this new spirit of selflessness, and closely akin to it in these poems is a tendency to deprecate the human in favour of the divine, to see the heavenly-best above the earthly-best. The lesson which, above all others, the old man in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" and Oenone have learned from their period of suffering is the ultimate value and importance of death. This does not mean death as they

imagined it in the first poems of the pairs, as an escape from their troubles:

Better thou wert dead before me, though I  
slew thee with my hand!

Better thou and I were lying, hidden from  
the heart's disgrace,  
Rolled in one another's arms, and silent  
in a last embrace.

("Locksley Hall", ll. 56-8)

Time and suffering have taught them to see death as the threshold to a world of spiritual values and truths beyond human comprehension. It is a lesson which is difficult to accept, as even King Arthur realises. In the poems about old age, death, and the business of dying, which are to be found in the 1886, 1889, and 1892 volumes, we can see a remarkable change in Tennyson's attitude to death. Again and again we catch glimpses of an old poet coming to terms with this world as he prepares to leave it:

I can but lift the torch  
Of reason in the dusky cave of Life  
And gaze on this great miracle, the World,  
Adoring That who made, and makes, and is,  
And is not, what I gaze on -- all else Form,  
Ritual, varying with the tribes of men.

("Akbar's Dream", ll. 113-8)

And yet his attention and hope are focussed on the future since in that direction, and not in the past, will he find reunion with his lost friends:

When the dumb Hour, clothed in black,  
Brings the Dreams about my bed,  
Call me not so often back,  
Silent Voices of the dead,

Toward the lowland ways behind me,  
 And the sunlight that is gone!  
 Call me rather, silent voices,  
 Forward to the starry track  
 Glimmering up the heights beyond me,  
 On, and always on! ("The Silent Voices")

These late poems show a maturity which corresponds to the greater classicism which Tennyson believed he had achieved in "The Death of Oenone", and which differs strikingly from the early romantic, artificial, but pleasantly nostalgic poems about old age and death, such as "The Miller's Daughter". The Memoir makes clear that in the poet's old age these reflections became very important for him. We are told about a projected poem which makes the motif of attempting to gain divine insight prematurely more explicit than ever before: "My father would have liked to make a poem of one of those great Egyptian legends, which describe how despair and death came upon him who was mad enough to try and probe the secret of the Universe."<sup>31</sup> For Tennyson, death was not the result of this kind of knowledge, but the precondition of it, and he saw in his own death not only a reunion with the dead, but divine enlightenment: "My father often now [1892] longed for the quiet Hereafter where all would be made clear."<sup>32</sup>



VI. CONCLUSION: TENNYSON AND  
PAIRED POEMS

I stood on a tower in the wet,  
And New Year and Old Year met,  
And winds were roaring and blowing;  
And I said, "O years, that meet in tears,  
Have ye aught that is worth the knowing?  
Science enough and exploring,  
Wanderers coming and going,  
Matter enough for deploring,  
But aught that is worth the knowing?"  
Seas at my feet were flowing,  
Waves on the shingle pouring,  
Old Year roaring and blowing,  
And New Year blowing and roaring.  
(Tennyson, "1865-1866")

John Sterling, in his review of Tennyson's Poems of 1842, illustrates admirably some of the characteristics of the age in which Tennyson began to publish, and points to these aspects with which, Sterling believed, a new poet must come to terms if the age were to produce great poetry:

It was only in the autumn of 1830, following close on the French three memorable days of July, that the Duke of Wellington opened the Manchester and Liverpool Railroad. The population of the busiest region on this earth were assembled round him, whom all acknowledged as the greatest man in England, at the inauguration of a new physical power, then felt to double the strength and swiftness of human beings. While, among myriads of gravely joyful faces, the new machines travelled at a speed matching that of Eagles, the life of a great statesman shot off on a darker and more distant journey, and the thrill of fear and pain at his destruction gave the last human

tragic touch to an event which would at any rate have retained for ever an historic importance. The death of Mr. Huskisson startled the fixed bosom of the veteran soldier, and those who were near perceived a quiver of the lip, a movement of the eye, such as had hardly been caused by the most unlooked-for and dreadful chances of his mighty wars. To a calm observer, the emotion of the whole multitude, great and small, might strangely have recalled far-distant ages and the feelings with which ancient peoples held every great event as incomplete, wanting the blood of a victim -- too often human -- solemnly shed. In the most prosperous and peaceful of national triumphs the dark powers again claimed a share, and would not be forgotten.<sup>1</sup>

The scene itself could easily have come from a Victorian novel: the opening of the railway by the Duke of Wellington at the very height of his prestige and popularity, and the death of William Huskisson, a man of undoubted ability which never received adequate recognition, the meeting of these two men who were political enemies since the days of the Corn Laws, as Huskisson, the local member of Parliament, went to pay his respects to the Duke and was struck down by another train. Here, too, are the elements of the theme of man being overcome and destroyed by machines he has created, a matter commonly treated in the nineteenth century from Mary Shelley's Frankenstein to the soulless, automatic people living in a dehumanising industrial society as depicted by Dickens. Historically too, one can easily visualise the spectators watching the opening with "gravely joyful" faces as exemplifying the Victorian

age and Victorian attitudes, though strictly speaking, they were pre-Victorians. The mixture of gravity and joy even before the accident shows a ready awareness that the railways would not bring unlimited and unqualified benefits, a fact emphasised even more by the brutality of Huskisson's death. Surely what seems to us rather silly hyperbole about the gods requiring human sacrifices would not have seemed so to those who had such high hopes of the advantages to be gained from modern, industrialised society.

It is significant that Sterling should make this point in a review of Tennyson's 1842 volumes. As I have attempted to show in the previous chapters, this is exactly how Tennyson had begun to respond to his age in his poetry, and how he was to continue throughout his life. Tennyson's task was to capture the complexity and richness of emotional states and of ideas, to detect and analyse the element of gravity in the crowd's joy. Thus, even in his early poems, if there is one mood there is another to balance it, or to qualify it. In The Princess, Tennyson seems almost to go out of his way to complicate the poem; he is not satisfied with simply epic or farce, mock-epic or burlesque, the past or the present, the reality of a nineteenth-century advocate of woman's rights or a fairy-tale princess who refuses to marry the man intended for her. In terms of technique

Tennyson is unwilling to settle for either narrative or lyric verse, but uses both obviously in order to be comprehensive and faithful to the individual details of the situation rather than to be neat and produce a poem of perfect finish. In all of his major poems, The Princess, In Memoriam, Maud, and the Idylls of the King, Tennyson resists a rigidly generic reading -- his material finds its own form, whether or not that form is a traditional one. Some preliminary and tentative classification may be of some interest, but in Tennyson's case it will never be helpful especially if employed by a literary Procrustes.

It should be apparent that Tennyson's interest in pairing poems springs from a skepticism in his own mind, and a tolerance concerning many possible attitudes and answers to problems. It reflects a response to the opinion represented here by Sterling that Victorian poets must deal with the complexities of the age, a view holding particular importance for Tennyson in the light of Sterling's standing among the Apostles. Nevertheless, I have so far avoided raising or answering questions about the context in which these paired poems should be read. I have suggested thematic parallels elsewhere in Tennyson, but it is now time to study briefly the place of these poems in Tennyson's canon, and their relationship to some other Victorian poems. As will be obvious, this is a complicated matter, and it is necessary to

tread warily, since several basic assumptions about Tennyson and his relationship to his work will be found lying across the path. We must ask ourselves if it is possible to discover why Tennyson wrote in this way. This question immediately invokes the vexed problems about the relations between a poet's psychological state and his poems; commonly Tennyson's poems are seen as the expressions of a weak and divided sensibility, although I hope that I have shown some evidence in the analysis of the poems discussed so far, to suggest that this view presents a rather slipshod oversimplification of Tennyson's work. I have attempted to describe those aspects of Tennyson's background which are significant in the writing of his paired poems, particularly his experiences while at Cambridge. Now we must consider the more fundamental question: what aspects of the way in which Tennyson saw the world, and what he saw there, yielded such poetic results? Then, we must devote some attention to the place of the paired poems in relation to the rest of Tennyson's development as a poet, including poems which superficially have little to do with either the structures or the themes dealt with so far. And, finally, on a more general plane, we must consider to what extent Tennyson's interest in the paired poem was shared by his contemporaries.

When considering the biographical background to Tennyson's work it is important to remember two things:

much of what has been written on this subject hitherto has been heavily psychological in its approach, and much of it reads like a bad, melodramatic Victorian novel, complete with lurid details of a disinherited father resorting to moodiness and drink; a saintly mother and an Evangelical aunt; a self-made and intolerant grandfather who disinherited the poet's father in favour of his ambitious, but conventional, second son; and Dr. Tennyson's family of poetic, and highly unstable, children. The chief of these, in spite of a melancholy and Byronic youth and the premature death of his truest soul-mate, by hard application and melodious versifying became Poet Laureate, the Queen's pet, and a peer of the realm. If truth sounds as exciting as fiction here, we should perhaps consider whether there is not too much fiction mixed with the fact.

As outlined in the Introduction the common expressions of such an attitude led to the views that Tennyson was unable to escape from the melancholy experiences of youth, except by a betrayal of his first and truest inspiration. Having done this, he became a comfortable public poet, except insofar as he was able, according to E.D.H. Johnson's theory, to accommodate by some subterfuge private meanings in public poems. This theory implies a Tennyson who was weak and indecisive, unable to determine whether to be a Keats reincarnate or a Victorian sage as Carlyle was urging; he was both

unable to write personally so that the public could accept his work and incapable of suppressing his ego to write on a universal plane. In succeeding chapters, it has seemed to me necessary to risk a profusion of detail in order to show that the poems, far from revealing the timidity of a sort of Arnold-manqué, show a poet whose work at its best opens up questions which cannot easily be answered, all the while challenging our unthinking assumptions about human life and human knowledge in relation to history, and ultimately, to the divine.

Tennyson's poetic strengths are not limited to impeccable control of metre, diction, and sound, all of which in his time were supposed to be the stock-in-trade of all poets, but according to F.E.L. Priestley, they also include accomplished experimentation in all of these areas, and beyond them, in genre and theme.<sup>2</sup> It is perhaps fair to say that Tennyson's basic skill lay in small forms; he was a miniaturist in a far truer sense than was Jane Austen, in that he reduced the epic to a series of idylls, and often subdues passion to understatement, even in a poem like Maud, which unlike its spasmodic relatives, reveals in its incidental details a far greater passion than is superficially expressed by the young man's rages. Tennyson himself spoke to James Knowles about why he preferred small forms to large ones, though his words unfortunately tend

to confirm the notion of the poet as a master of perfectly-constructed lyrics only:

'It is necessary to respect the limits...; an artist is one who recognises bounds to his work as a necessity, and does not overflow illimitably to all extent about a matter. I soon found that if I meant to make any mark at all it must be by shortness, for all the men before me had been so diffuse, and all the big things had been done. To get the workmanship as nearly perfect as possible is the best chance for going down the stream of time. A small vessel on fine lines is likely to float further than a great raft.'<sup>3</sup>

Tennyson, once he had mastered the smaller forms, began to experiment seriously with these forms in larger groups probably on the model of the sonnet sequence in which a larger structure, often with a relatively free form, is built up of smaller, more tightly-constructed, parts; in this, his masters are Petrarch, Shakespeare, and the Elizabethan sonneteers. Furthermore, he reworked existing forms to give them new uses, adapting them and extending the realm of the traditional idyll, until it could deal with student picnics or epic battles. There is perhaps sufficient evidence to argue that the idyll is the quintessentially Tennysonian form, when one considers the frequent incursions of the pastoral world into his poems, and their fragmentary character, derived from the Vergilian Eclogues, and their Greek predecessors written by Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus. Tennyson's abilities were not hampered, but in fact freed, by his interest in small forms, since verse of limited scope can have



a wide range of implied significance, a realm of meaning which, without being made explicit, can be controlled by the poet as carefully as surface meaning. Thus, although the Idylls of the King is not an epic, its epic qualities, its echoes of Homer, Vergil, and Milton, suggest the more serious implications of the poem which are more in keeping with one's expectations of the Matter of Britain, while the idyll allows the poet to retain a warmth and immediacy -- almost a modernity -- of tone which is quite alien to the traditional epic.

Valerie Pitt, in her book Tennyson Laureate, suggests that in considering Tennyson's poetry, one must take account of his bad eyesight which, she believes, explains the fact that in his descriptions, the details of visual close-range are minute and exact, while all else is remote, vague, and ill-defined, without any middle-distance vision:

The sharpness of detail belongs only to the foreground of Tennyson's descriptions, more distant objects appear with a kind of mysterious generality: landscape takes on a haziness like a landscape in the half light, and seems like the country of a dream or a fantasy....His world... is a world without middle distance where the near is detailed, intimate and striking, and the distant unreal, ungraspable, and vague.<sup>4</sup>

Tennyson's emphasis on the immediate and on the remote, as suggested by his bad sight, is a useful analogy, even if it is an overstressed medical fact. And, while Miss Pitt diagnoses a sort of psychological myopia in terms

of the poet's personal relationships, too, it is important to realise that the absence of a connecting middle-distance is more than just a product of the poet's physical disabilities and the failings of his childhood. This is so characteristic that it seems to be a more significant aspect of Tennyson's work than any sight defect which can be cured by a pair of spectacles or a telescope.

The poet's concern with minutiae, far from indicating merely bad sight, reveals a thorough fidelity to the details of observed experience at the expense of the larger patterns into which such experience had traditionally been fitted. His close observation of detail is analogous to the method whereby the biologists of the nineteenth century, of whom Darwin was one, concentrating on individual specimens rather than the accepted classification of species, demonstrated the failings and gaps of Linnaean biology. Similarly, Tennyson, by attending to minute physical and intellectual details, was forced to re-examine traditional structures of poetry in order to reflect accurately his observations. His weak eyesight, thus, is a convenient critical metaphor for the limitations of human knowledge. He does not deny that the microcosm and the macrocosm are intimately related, and in this, he takes his place in a long tradition, the most famous statement of which in post-Augustan literature is perhaps

the quatrain from Blake's "Auguries of Innocence":

To see a world in a grain of sand  
And a heaven in a wild flower,  
Hold infinity in the palm of your hand  
And eternity in an hour. (ll. 1-4)

The unjustly-reviled "Flower in the Crannied Wall", even if it is not a conscious reply to Blake, sets out Tennyson's position explicitly:

Flower in the crannied wall,  
I pluck you out of the crannies,  
I hold you here, root and all, in my hand,  
Little flower -- but if I could understand  
What you are, root and all, and all in all,  
I should know what God and Man is.<sup>5</sup>

Blake's "Heaven in a wild flower" is not as strong a statement of the relationship between the microcosm and the macrocosm as it is possible to find in some earlier writers, since it is closely tied to Blake's idea of Innocence and Experience, in which latter state such insight is difficult and perhaps impossible for many. But Tennyson's speaker exists in the world where it is impossible to explain or understand the connection between the two worlds -- "if I could understand" -- and never implies that the understanding is available to an Innocent. Tennyson's speaker never considers that the analogy may be false or that the flower, root and all, may have nothing whatever to do with the relationship between God and man; the immediate and the remote exist in a relationship which is not in doubt, but the middle-distance vision is lacking necessary to define that relationship exactly.

King Arthur in the Idylls of the King uses a slightly different image to express a similar idea; God is discernible in the remote stars and even in the flowers, but not in man, who stands between them in the great chain of being:

'I found Him in the shining of the stars,  
I marked Him in the flowering of His fields,  
But in His ways with men I find Him not.  
I waged His wars, and now I pass and die.  
O me! for why is all around us here  
As if some lesser god had made the world,  
But had not force to shape it as he would,  
Till the High God behold it from beyond,  
And enter it, and make it beautiful?'

("The Passing of Arthur", ll. 9-17)

Man is obviously the missing middle term here, but extrapolating God from man produces only a well-intentioned but weak divine bungler. As a consequence of our inability to bridge the gulf between God and man, Tennyson turns to the immediate and particular in the search for whatever clues they can provide about the fundamental divine mystery. Thus, it is clear that his precise knowledge of wild flowers and birds was more than just a pastime typical of an age given to stuffing pet nightingales and to preserving wildflowers between the leaves of books. It is for this reason that Tennyson's insects and plants are particularly abstract. It is significant that his favourite prayer of intercession consisted of the all-but-meaningless words, "O Thou Infinite, Amen".<sup>6</sup>

The poems we have been studying are notable not just for the fact that they are written on a small scale,

but that they are paired or grouped in a particular way as we have seen. Beginning with the earliest poems there is a fascination in periods of crisis, in moments when opposing forces are matched, just before one or the other is compelled to yield. This can take the form, in any of Tennyson's poems, of a deathbed scene, or a sunset, and on a more sophisticated level, the northern English mid-summer sunset-dawns which we find in section XCV of In Memoriam and in "The Passing of Arthur". It may be argued that there must have been a psychological cause to account for such a preoccupation, and there may indeed be one, but it seems more important to enquire into the literary effects of the situation on the assumption that, whatever its cause, it became for the poet, a central image of the ambiguity and uncertainty of the world around him.

The early paired poems are closer to the academic exercises one might expect of an undergraduate at Cambridge, as I have attempted to show, in which two poems help to define each other's position. The two opposing points of view expressed in them do not invite the development of a third point of view; "All Things Will Die" and "Nothing Will Die" cannot be supplemented by "Some Things Will Die and Some Things Won't", nor do "The Mermaid" and "The Merman" allow for some sort of aquatic third sex, without picking and choosing between them. The common bond in these poems is simply

the fact that they represent different points of view on a given subject, each with its own justification.

In the other pairs it appears that the component poems are written on a more arbitrary basis, in the sense that more than two poems are conceivable; there is no logical reason, for example, to explain why Tennyson did not write a "Mariana in the West", nor is there a reason for not writing a poem entitled "Locksley Hall Thirty Years After" in addition to the other two, or for writing about Oenone's death rather than, or in addition to, another event in her life. In the case of the sequels to "Locksley Hall" and "Oenone", however, Tennyson's reasons are fairly obvious, since he clearly wished to catch a moment of crisis, just as the young Leonard is jilted by Judith and as Paris dies, in order to force the protagonists of both poems to reassess their past experiences. But, although Tennyson's reasons for choosing these two episodes are clear enough, it is entirely conceivable that he could have constructed a poem like In Memoriam or Maud on the framework of these pairs, tracing the emotional development of the speaker in "Locksley Hall" and Oenone herself in far greater detail. It is a possibility which Coventry Patmore raises with reference to In Memoriam:

Its only unity is unity of metre and the unity of feeling which results from a continual reference, sometimes very remote, of all its parts, to the incident of a real personal

loss. It makes no pretensions to that totality which is necessary in a 'work of art', though the sections of which it is composed have usually that quality in a high degree. The reflections and emotions which it records and describes might have filled five or ten volumes just as well as one. The only reason for this poem's stopping where it does, is, like Petrarch's sonnets, not the exhaustion of the subject, but the exhaustion of the desire of expressing thoughts and feeling in connection with it.<sup>7</sup>

The selection of events in In Memoriam, Maud, and the Idylls of the King is just as arbitrary as it is in the two "Locksley Hall" poems and the two "Oenones", though it seems less so because the others are more substantial poems. Patmore, however, is wrong in suggesting that the poem ends because the poet is exhausted, though he is right in implying a psychological criterion for determining the structure of the poem. In Memoriam has 131 sections, not because the poet could not write any more (we know he did), but because they represent over a period of time a full and accurate description of the changes of mood and belief which the poet wishes to convey. The poem's length is determined, therefore, not by psychological exhaustion, but by psychological completeness. It follows, then, that these poems, dealing as they do with constantly changing moods and frames of mind, can (and perhaps should) be said to have no conventional Aristotelian structure at all. If this is so, we are perhaps in a better position

to understand Tennyson's cryptic comment on novels, with particular reference to the length of Clarissa Harlowe: "I like those great still books....I wish there were a great novel in hundreds of volumes that I might go on and on; I hate some of your modern novels with numberless characters thrust into the first chapter."<sup>8</sup>

In Memoriam is an interesting test case in this regard. There is an obvious sense in which it presents a story through describing the poet's changing moods of despair to a qualified optimism and hope, and yet there is no one crucial emotion or occurrence on which the narrative hinges. Section XCV ("By night we lingered on the lawn") is often considered to contain the central experience of the poet's renewal of hope:<sup>9</sup>

A hunger seized my heart; I read  
 Of that glad year which once had been,  
 In those fallen leaves which kept their green,  
 The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke  
 The silent-speaking words, and strange  
 Was love's dumb cry defying change  
 To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell  
 On doubts that drive the coward back,  
 And keen through wordy snares to track  
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

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



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

Aeonian music measuring out  
 The steps of Time -- the shocks of Chance --  
 The blows of Death. At length my trance  
 Was cancelled, stricken through with doubt.  
 (ll. 21-44)

Although this experience is obviously a major development in the poem, one is aware that it does not generate immediate and lasting confidence, but rather doubt of the trance itself which must be fought as other doubts before. Nor is this the first note of hope in the poem. While the first appearance of hope may be a subject of disagreement, it is clear that by section LV ("The wish, that of the living whole"), the last stanza shows some progress, however slight, towards confidence:

I stretch lame hands of faith, and grope,  
 And gather dust and chaff, and call  
 To what I feel is Lord of all,  
 And faintly trust the larger hope. (ll. 16-20)

"Faintly" has a double meaning: one referring to the weakness of the trust, the other to that of the speaker and suggesting the urgency of the need to believe in something. And section XCVI, which begins,

You say, but with no touch of scorn,  
 Sweet-hearted, you, whose light-blue eyes  
 Are tender over drowning flies,  
 You tell me, doubt is Devil-born.

I know not.... (ll. 1-5)

shows that, while the speaker can respond to the blue-eyed comforter's charitable motives, he cannot overcome

his doubt in this way. Furthermore, Tennyson's own opinion of section XCV seems to have been fairly low, since in the selection from In Memoriam published in 1885 (and, as F.T. Palgrave himself assures us, chosen by Tennyson),<sup>10</sup> section XCV is missing altogether. This version of In Memoriam is of particular significance too, because Tennyson, in pruning the poem to about one-third of its original length, not only omitted the framing Prologue and Epilogue, but completely re-ordered the remaining sections so that they provide, in terms of the old numbering, two consecutive sweeps through the poem.<sup>11</sup> These are only a few of the considerations which must be borne in mind when considering the structure of In Memoriam, but they are enough to indicate that Patmore's observation has much truth in it, and that the poem is not unrelated in its structural organization to the paired poems.

Similarly, it is difficult to try to establish an Aristotelian beginning, middle and end in Maud. And, as I hope to show, although such a structure is superficially obvious in the Idylls of the King, a closer study of the poem reveals that it is an unsatisfactory one. Beyond a minimal linear development of the decline of the Round Table, and the young lover's change from self-pity to altruistic enthusiasm for war, Tennyson's technique is one of amplification of individual emotions and ideas, and the poems have several

cores rather than one middle. Perhaps the most useful analogy comes from medieval music and the practice of embellishing a basic melodic line by incorporating tropes. For the purposes of the comparison, "Locksley Hall" and "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" and "Oenone" and "The Death of Oenone" represent simple plainsong melodies completely unornamented, whereas In Memoriam, Maud, and the Idylls of the King represent similar melodies, but decorated in a full melismatic style.

Perhaps the pairs which attempt to consider the passage of time are more satisfying than those which do not because, while the former contain two arbitrary situations, in the latter the pairing itself is arbitrary. There is no necessary connection between Ulysses and Tithonus in mythology or literature up to the time of Tennyson. They are simply two figures amplified from myth to represent different attitudes, but in such a way that a careless reader could easily fail to recognise the existence of a link between them. Although "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" gain considerable power from their mythological and heroic predecessors, they remain fixed in a static debate in which no reconciliation is possible, though in moral terms a compromise of some sort is necessary. Both Ulysses and Tithonus, in spite of the richness of characterisation which Tennyson expends on them, remain essentially stock

characters, neither of whom is in a position to consider the other's point of view seriously. But, by concentrating on a single figure on several occasions, Tennyson is able to assume the reader's awareness of the similarities between the two poems, and thus to concentrate on the subtle changes which have emerged through the passing of time.

The thematic significance of placing his characters in time, and thus in the context of their past, is evident in the history of some of Tennyson's most famous lyrics. There are relatively few of these lyrics which remain exactly in the form in which they first were published, the two most notable being "Break, break, break" and "Crossing the Bar". Otherwise, poems which were first composed as pure lyrics have been modified in some way, rewritten, added to, or shuffled into a new context. Thus, the early poems written after Hallam's death, among them, "Fair Ship, that from the Italian shore", "The time draws near the birth of Christ", and "With trembling fingers did we weave", lost their status as independent lyrics and became incorporated into the larger structure of In Memoriam.<sup>12</sup> And Maud, in spite of the controversy as to Sir John Simeon's importance in the conception,<sup>13</sup> began as an expansion of the lyric written over twenty years earlier, "Oh! that 'twere possible". The songs which were added to The Princess have never had an independent

existence of their own, except in the hands of anthologists who dislike the rest of the poem. Thus, with the two exceptions noted earlier, Tennyson's instinct seems to have been to place lyric poems in a context where they are developed, qualified, and given a newer and greater significance quite different from the simple "pure" emotion which they originally expressed. As Oliver Elton observes, Tennyson's forte is not in the expression of simple emotion in lyrics, but in fact the reverse: "Saving for a few lyrics, I think that Tennyson must lose his hold as a poet of the simple emotions; for his true skill is to elaborate emotions not simple at all."<sup>14</sup>

In Tennyson's move from purely lyrical to new poetic forms, the earliest and most important of his experimental forms was the dramatic monologue. Browning's term, derived from the title of his 1842 poems, is "Dramatic Lyrics", and it allows us to see more easily the two elements of drama and lyric combined in the form. "Dramatic lyric" emphasises that the lyric expression is supplemented by a setting (time, place, and audience) which enhances or qualifies what the speaker says, often ironically. This much is obvious enough (what would Bishop Blougram have said had Gigadibs been a Calvinist, or the Bishop had been speaking to his confessor?), and the technique was

widely adopted among the Victorians. But even if Tennyson did not actually invent the dramatic monologue, he was the first to see the increased range in theme and mood to be achieved by dramatic monologues in groups, even relatively simple pairs like "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", in which the speakers comment on their own situation, and the poems comment indirectly on the other points of view, thereby adding a further dimension of irony to the original situation. We may think we can detect ironies in Ulysses' position as an enfeebled man, setting out on a journey in the evening, but Tithonus, in commenting on his weariness and desire to die, also adds to our appreciation of Ulysses' statement.

In the nineteenth century the use of groups of dramatic monologues attains its highest point of development in The Ring and the Book. In allowing the same events to be told by nine contemporaries, Browning presents the cases of all those involved in the scandal and murder in order to ascertain the truth:

Let this old woe step on the stage again!  
 Act itself o'er anew for men to judge,  
 Not by the very sense and sight indeed --  
 (Which take at best imperfect cognizance,  
 Since, how heart moves brain, and how both move hand,  
 What mortal ever in entirety saw?)  
 -- No dose of purer truth than man digests,  
 But truth with falsehood, milk that feeds him now,  
 Not strong meat he may get to bear some day --  
 To-wit, by voices we call evidence,  
 Uproar in the echo, live fact, deadened down,  
 Talked over, bruited abroad, whispered away,  
 Yet helping us to all we seem to hear:  
 For how else know we save by worth of word?

(The Ring and the Book, I, 824-37)

Among the speakers only Guido, the accused murderer and betrayed husband, is allowed a second chance to speak, and the Pope, to whom the case is referred for a final judgment, is allowed by Browning to give "the ultimate / Judgment save yours" (The Ring and the Book, I, 1220-1). But Browning's desire to learn the truth is quite different from Tennyson's desire to create emotional complexity and richness by means of the same technique; whereas Browning's speakers may contradict, cancel, or discredit each other's evidence, Tennyson's use of the technique leads to much more tentative qualification, ambiguities and uncertainties. And it is worth noticing that in The Princess, the poem which most closely resembles The Ring and the Book in having several narrators, the discontinuities and inconsistencies arise, not from the changes in speaker, but in the shifts of tone from farce to epic and from narrative to lyric. The difference between the two poems, simply, is that, while The Ring and the Book aims to get at the truth by a judicious sifting of the conflicting evidence, Tennyson tries to produce a "medley" by the process of accretion; Tennyson gives us the whole truth, and Browning encourages us to move beyond the alloy of fiction to reach nothing but the truth.

The Ring and the Book, however, is subject to the same limitation (though Browning would not consider it as such) as "Ulysses" and "Tithonus", so that In

Memoriam marks a break from the pendant poems on Tennyson's part and indicates an attempt to discover a richer means of expression. Although the nucleus of In Memoriam was a scattered group of lyrics, when collected they represent a sort of narrative context tracing "The Way of the Soul", to use Tennyson's phrase. Instead of writing a Justa Edouardo King with various fictional contributors, Tennyson considers the development of grief within one individual over a period of time, which in In Memoriam appears to be about three years. The technique of the poem is pursued in Maud which is more obviously dramatic. In both, Tennyson shows the speaker's state of mind developing in such a way that the poems transcend the sense of setting which is so important for the dramatic monologue. In In Memoriam and Maud the external world, which acts as a major ironic device in a Browningsque dramatic monologue, becomes less and less important. until in Maud, as F.E.L. Priestley suggests, one need not necessarily believe the speaker about what happens but only that he believes those things to have taken place.<sup>15</sup> As a result, the action of In Memoriam and Maud is largely internal, relying on the juxtaposition and interplay of emotions and ideas.

Although the effect of the juxtaposition in In Memoriam seems too obvious to justify extended analysis,



it is perhaps as well to consider a small group of poems; sections IX - XII will do as well as any, though other groups could equally well illustrate my point. These four poems are impossible to sum up simply, either as a whole or individually, since Tennyson is attempting to break through conventional poetic expressions of grief and to analyse and describe what he finds.

Section XI demonstrates this process superbly:

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

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

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

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

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

The extent of Tennyson's penetration is clear when this poem is compared with the following section from "Lycidas", in which the idea of calmness is treated in a far less daring way:

But now my oat proceeds,  
 And listens to the herald of the sea  
 That came in Neptune's plea,  
 He asked the waves, and asked the felon winds,  
 What hard mishap hath doomed this gentle swain?

And questioned every gust of rugged wings  
 That blows from off each beaked promontory;  
 They knew not of his story,  
 And sage Hippotades their answer brings,  
 That not a blast was from his dungeon strayed,  
 The air was calm, and on the level brine,  
 Sleek Panope with all her sisters played.  
 It was that fatal and perfidious bark  
 Built in the eclipse, and rigged with curses dark,  
 That sunk so low that sacred head of thine.  
 ("Lycidas", ll. 88-102)

Tennyson is not concerned with attributing blame or determining who killed Cock Robin, but analyses the calmness, not only of nature, of the dead man, and of the sea bearing him back to England, but even of the speaker himself; each is described as calm, but Tennyson presses further than that. The steady repetition of the word, "calm", suggests not so much description as an incantatory appeal for calm within the speaker, meant in part to help him attain a desired serenity. The last two stanzas, however, offer no such hope since their calm is that of death and despair, and produces the doubtful cry, "if calm at all, / If any calm". The repetition and parallelism in section XI obviously lull the reader into a sense of security which, he is forced to recognise, is false. Far from being reassuring in its insistence, the poem reveals a highly complex state of mind involving the poet's doubts about how to describe this state of stillness, about his relationship to the autumnal world, and above all, to his dead friend, and how little he shares in their calmness.

The mood of section XII is in almost complete

contrast to that of XI, although the unsettled ending does provide some small clue of what is to come, at least in retrospect. Section XII begins

Lo, as a dove when up she springs  
 To bear through Heaven a tale of woe,  
 Some dolorous message knit below  
 The wild pulsation of her wings;  
  
 Like her I go; I cannot stay;  
 I leave this mortal ark behind,  
 A weight of nerves without a mind,  
 And leave the cliffs, and haste away. (ll. 1-8)

So great is the change in mood that the question raised in XVI seems inevitable:

Can calm despair and wild unrest  
 Be tenants of a single breast,  
 Or sorrow such a changeling be? (ll. 2-4)

And XII's restless, agitated journey over the sea contrasts with the stately voyage of the ship in sections IX and X:

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore  
 Sailest the placid ocean-plains  
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,  
 Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.  
  
 So draw him home to those that mourn  
 In vain; a favourable speed  
 Ruffle thy mirrored mast, and lead  
 Through prosperous floods his holy urn.  
 (IX, 1-8)

The prayer for the protection of the holy urn turns easily to those that mourn, and their intense feeling of personal loss:

My Arthur, whom I shall not see  
 Till all my widowed race be run;  
 Dear as the mother to the son,  
 More than my brothers are to me. (IX, 17-20)

And section X turns the expression of personal loss into a more general understanding of the ship's voyage:

I hear the noise about thy keel;  
 I hear the bell struck in the night;  
 I see the cabin-window bright;  
 I see the sailor at the wheel.  
  
 Thou bring'st the sailor to his wife,  
 And travelled men from foreign lands;  
 And letters unto trembling hands;  
 And, thy dark freight, a vanished life.  
 (11. 1-8)

In this section, the poet retreats from the personal forms of the first stanza, "I hear...I hear...I see...I see...", through the impersonal details of the second stanza to a section in which the speaker's association with others is understood, thus establishing a fragile harmony which is to be destroyed by the end of section X:

O to us,  
 The fools of habit, sweeter seems  
  
 To rest beneath the clover sod,  
 That takes the sunshine and the rains,  
 Or where the kneeling hamlet drains  
 The chalice of the grapes of God;  
  
 Than if with thee the roaring wells  
 Should gulf him fathom-deep in brine;  
 And hands so often clasped in mine,  
 Should toss with tangle and with shells.  
 (X , 11-20)

The final note of destruction and chaos here, at first contrasts with the quiet fall of chestnut leaves, but eventually enhances the doubt in the poet's mind as expressed in section XI.

The juxtapositions which I have discussed represent a special case of the technique of allusion in

the poem as a whole. Sometimes by means of direct quotation, sometimes by recalling an earlier image (the yew tree, the family, Christmas celebrations), and sometimes in larger groups (the Lazarus poems), the juxtapositions and allusions spread through the poem and create a ripple-like effect. Thus everywhere in the poem images, beliefs, and moods reappear with new emphases, threatened by new doubts, evolving towards a remarkably full description of the poet's grief. But the poem is more than just an anatomy of grief, describing symptoms and suggesting generalised cures; it is, as Tennyson called it, the way of the Soul, a description which stresses the dynamic processes involved in the growth to intellectual and emotional maturity. This suggests that the significance of the Prologue, obviously one of the last sections in the sequence to be written, in which the poet expresses his position of strength at the end of his period of suffering, is that the poet is able to direct his readers, to give them a sense of where they will be travelling, and so enable them to keep the larger pattern in mind as they read.

Maud, as the Memoir informs us, was called by James Russell Lowell, "the antiphonal voice" to In Memoriam, since it portrays the drama of the Soul as opposed to the way of the Soul.<sup>16</sup> It is easy to

understand, even now, why Maud's first readers, having conveniently forgotten The Princess and having been reassured by In Memoriam, were shocked not simply by the subject matter but by the extravagance with which it was depicted.<sup>17</sup> The emotional gamut is far greater in Maud than ever in In Memoriam, surely evidence, if any were needed, that the speaker in Maud is an imaginary character. For, with an apparently less serious cause for grief, the young lover in Maud shows states of mind which are out of place in In Memoriam, among them anger, ecstatic happiness, and madness; even the bitterness, despair, and grief which we can find in In Memoriam are present in much more extreme forms in Maud. Yet in spite of the hysterical intensity of the young man's emotions, they are never simple emotional reactions to one stimulus. The lyric expressing love and happiness at the speaker's first meeting with Maud, "Birds in the high Hall-garden", contains a pang of self-consciousness as the young man says, "I to cry out on pride/ Who have won her favour!" (I, 428-9) as the memories of his previous anguish rush in, only to be disregarded in the smugness of the last stanza:

Look, a horse at the door,  
And little King Charley snarling,  
Go back, my lord, across the moor,  
You are not her darling. (I, 440-3)

His love as expressed in "Maud has a garden of roses"

is shot through with doubts about his own worthiness as her lover and even as a human being, as we learn in the following section:

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.  
 Shall I not take care of all that I think,  
     Yea even of wretched meat and drink,  
 If I be dear,  
 If I be dear to some one else. (I, 527-36)

If such tension between despair and hope is seldom expressed so bluntly in Maud, yet it is true that even "Go not, happy day" implies an awareness of the consequences of the happy day's departure.

Although one must not confuse In Memoriam with a diary, nevertheless, each section has the immediacy of a diary entry in referring to either the present or the immediate past. This much exists in common between In Memoriam and Maud, although Maud does not have the framing poems to distance the immediate experiences and to put them in perspective. The fact that Maud presents basically raw emotion, often without any reflection or analysis, has led to the confusion over Tennyson's attitude to the Crimean War, as if Tennyson had made a half-hearted attempt to disguise himself before speaking his mind. In cutting away the Prologue and Epilogue framework, and freeing Maud from

authorial comment, Tennyson took a considerable risk of being misunderstood. In Maud, the meaning emerges from the dramatic context alone, from the interplay of emotions and from the reader's interpretation of the young man's reactions to the events he describes. Although Professor Priestley is correct in saying that the reader need not be concerned about what actual events took place, yet the reader must always assess the young man on the basis of his responses, and consider to what extent his rashness is justified. One is not merely exercising a defensive mechanism in judging the young lover and in deciding that in some ways he is abnormal, since his intemperateness throughout the poem is repellent at times. Nevertheless, we have only his outbursts with which to reckon our relationship to the poem; as Hallam Tennyson implies in the Memoir, the key to understanding the poem lies not so much in the printed word, but in the moods which the words suggest.<sup>18</sup>

Perhaps because Maud caused its readers so much difficulty in understanding it, Tennyson adopted a less arduous path, while pursuing the same destination in his next major poetic projects, the Idylls of the King and the three important historical plays. Whereas Maud had been almost totally severed from external reality, the Idylls and the history plays depend on the



readers' common experience of myth and history for their significance. But as the medium becomes more and more dramatic, there is less place for authorial intervention and interpretation. The Idylls of the King is not a sustained epic as one might have expected from the material, but a series of episodes which, when read as a group, merely outlines the history of the Round Table. The central political and spiritual values of the poem emerge largely by implication, through the relationship between the separate idylls; thus, although each idyll deals with specific people and incidents, we can detect on a general plane the youthful enthusiasm of the Round Table in "Gareth and Lynette", we can see the beginning of doubt and betrayal in the two "Geraint" idylls, the destruction of family ties in "Balin and Balan", the symbolic defeat of the intellectual and magical power behind Arthur in the fall of Merlin. "Lancelot and Elaine" shows us how Lancelot's sinfulness has prevented Lancelot from marrying Elaine, and thereby how it begins to destroy innocent outsiders. "The Holy Grail" tells of another chance to escape from the corruption of the court by representing an ideal different from Arthur's chivalric code, but although many pursue the Grail, few actually complete the Grail quest. While the Grail becomes a central image of the Round Table's declining strength, the quest is irrelevant to the ideals of Arthur's

system, since it tends to alienate the successful knights from Arthur's court. This is the significance of the fact that this episode is narrated by Percivale as a dramatic monologue, as he recalls his quest far in the past, secluded in a monastery remote from Camelot (this is the only dramatic monologue in all the Idylls.) "Pelleas and Ettarre", obviously a companion-idyll to "Gareth and Lynette" stresses the corruption of ideals, the breaking of faith between brother-knights leading to death, madness, and the establishment of the Round Table in the North devoted to destroying the hypocrisy of Arthur's knights. "The Last Tournament" shows the split between the moral ideal and the corrupt reality in its strongest form, as Lancelot publicly compromises his position just before the final separation of Arthur and Guinevere, and the battle in the West.

Tennyson's purpose in the Idylls was not to write an encyclopedic history of the sort composed by Malory, nor to try to explain the failure of the Round Table, but rather to provide, by a process of selection, some indication of Arthur's significance beyond the merely historical concerns of bedroom political machinations and civil wars. Tennyson's image of poetry as shot-silk<sup>19</sup> applies not only to his distrust of rigid allegory of the kind which the Victorians

believed Spenser wrote, but it also suggests the extraordinary richness of a few vivid scenes which convey the reality of a situation, in all the psychological, historical, political, moral, and religious implications, which were important for the nineteenth century.

As the ending of Maud opens out from a private world of guilt and frustration to a world of public action in the Crimean War, Tennyson turned his attention to the great poem for which his admirers had been clamouring, the Idylls of the King. In the sense that it is his most serious and sustained criticism of life, it fulfils the requirements of the great modern poem which, his readers believed, he owed them.<sup>20</sup> While the technique and scope of the Idylls might have seemed to a lesser poet the final development of this style, Tennyson then began to treat history on an even more ambitious scale in the writing of Queen Mary, Harold, and Becket. He started work on the plays when the Idylls of the King was virtually complete, except for "Balin and Balan" (1885), and in doing so he turned from legendary heroes to real historical figures.<sup>21</sup> Technically, the transition to dialogue in drama came easily enough since we find Tennyson complaining in a letter to James Knowles written as early as 1872 about the difficulties of writing "Gareth and Lynette": "If

I were at liberty, which I think I am not, to print the names of the speakers 'Gareth' 'Linette' [sic] over the short snip-snap of their talk, and so avoid the perpetual 'said' and its varieties, the work would be much easier."<sup>22</sup>

In turning to drama, Tennyson was yielding to the fascination which drama held for nineteenth-century writers, though in almost every case it proved to be the attraction of a Siren-song. Keats's theory of negative capability is only one manifestation of the wide-spread interest in the poet and his dramatic sympathies; Coleridge, for example, as I have shown earlier (pp. 47-8) distinguishes between two types of poets, the one represented by Milton, the other by Shakespeare, "the one Proteus of the fire and the flood".<sup>23</sup> In the Shakespearean criticism he seems to suggest that this Protean sympathy is an essential quality of the true poet: "There are men who can write most eloquently and passages of deepest pathos and even sublimity on circumstances personal and deeply exciting their own passions, but (they are) not therefore poets....But to become by power of imagination another thing, (this is to be a poet). Proteus, a river, a lion, yet still the god (is) felt to be there."<sup>24</sup> In spite of the fact that Tennyson's poetic skill and interests are very similar to those Coleridge describes, his plays are individually failures, as was so often

the case in the minor late dramas.

While I do not propose to engage in a detailed analysis of the shortcomings of Tennyson's historical tragedies, a few general observations will perhaps show their relationship to the paired poems and help to explain why Tennyson's talents should have foundered on poetic drama. Apart from the difficulties common to the nineteenth-century poetic dramatists, perhaps the main reason for Tennyson's failure is attributable to an excess of the Protean sympathy described by Coleridge. In the history plays there are too many characters developed for their own sake (Sir Thomas Wyatt in Queen Mary is developed to a large extent, not only for his own sake, but for his father's sake in II.i), and the settings are too completely realised with the result that the plays seem formless and uncontrolled in their great length and detail. Although J.R. Green, the historian, praised Becket as a piece of historical research,<sup>25</sup> one cannot help feeling that his praise really should be taken as criticism. Tennyson appears to have realised that the plays he had written were incapable of being produced, and accordingly he made the unusual and (for him) drastic concession that they could be edited in order to provide a more convenient acting edition.<sup>26</sup> This seems to have been a time when Tennyson's sense of form, of a "small vessel on fine lines", eluded him completely,

and indeed, it is difficult to avoid the judgment that he abdicated his responsibilities as a dramatist in not making a more serious attempt to impose a stronger structure on his material so as to make it dramatically more effective. As a result, his inability to control the Protean excesses of the history plays is combined with his ambitions as a social commentator and historian, to the detriment of the plays: "All his life he enjoyed discovering the causes of historical and social movements; and had a strong desire to reverse unfair judgments, and an eager delight in the analysis of human motive and character."<sup>27</sup> This implies the Protean poet writing without restraint, with no apparent awareness of dramatic structure or of the demands of writing for actors, and it is obvious that Tennyson's interest was engaged more in the cause of refurbishing the reputation of Bloody Mary and Harold than of writing a satisfying play. While in the plays there is ample evidence of Tennyson's mastery of detail, there is equal evidence of his inability to accept the discipline of major poetic forms. The Princess, In Memoriam, Maud, and the Idylls of the King are not subject to this criticism because Tennyson successfully devised a form which would not impose rigid structures on him, although he was unable to do so for the theatre as Wagner, Shaw, and Eugene O'Neill have succeeded in doing.

The four later plays are tidier and easier to stage. Their relative success in terms of dramatic structure is the result of three factors: Tennyson's growing experience coupled with an awareness of the structural difficulties of the history plays, their reliance on amplifying literary rather than historical sources (The Promise of May which has no single literary source, is very obviously conceived in terms of an intellectualised melodrama), and the natural reluctance of a poet in his seventies to embark on any more large works.

Yet, if the history plays, taken individually, are less than satisfying in structure, it is clear that Tennyson thought of them as a group, in what appears to be yet another development of the idyll-technique of the Idylls of the King. The subjects were chosen, not only to fill the gaps among Shakespeare's history plays, but also to develop a view of English history by the same means which he had used to describe the fall of Arthur's Round Table:

'This trilogy of plays', he [Tennyson] notes, 'portrays the making of England.' In Harold we have the great conflict between Danes, Saxons and Normans for supremacy, the awakening of the English people and clergy from the slumber into which they had for the most part fallen, and the forecast of the greatness of our composite race.

In Becket the struggle is between the Crown and the Church for predominance, a struggle which continued for many centuries.

In Mary are described the final downfall of Roman Catholicism in England, and the dawning of a new age: for after the era of priestly domination comes the era of the freedom of the individual.

'In The Foresters', [Tennyson] wrote, 'I have sketched the state of the people in another great transition period of the making of England, when the barons sided with the people and eventually won for them the Magna Charta.'<sup>28</sup>

Although The Foresters is a less significant play than the other three, one can easily understand from Tennyson's remarks something of his grand plan in writing these history plays. Taken together they depict crucial events in the building of the English race and in the attainment of its pre-eminent position in the nineteenth-century. This is clearly a peculiarly English and Protestant view of history, though it was by no means a view unique to Tennyson and to England.<sup>29</sup> It is, nevertheless, a typically Tennysonian scheme: the transitional periods, the moments of crisis, the minute attention to particular events carefully selected from the total cycle -- these are all clearly derived from the Idylls and thence from some of Tennyson's earliest poems.

As I suggested earlier, it is not unreasonable for an elderly poet to concentrate on shorter poems from diminished energy and from a fear of leaving a long poem unfinished at his death. Thus, the last play to be written, The Promise of May, was published in the



same volume as "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After", and with this volume we reach the final development of the Tennysonian paired poems. "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" and "The Death of Oenone" mark both the fulfilment and a simplification of the technique of pairing poems. In these poems Tennyson gives full expression to the changes brought about in an individual by the passing of time, and creates in miniature something of the effect of the central poems of the 1850's. In his other late poems, too, Tennyson treats the themes of death, lack of dogmatism, and the distinction between heavenly-best and earthly-best more explicitly and objectively than ever before. Poems like "The Ancient Sage" and "Akbar's Dream" develop these themes in the form of a dialogue between an acknowledged prophetic figure and an interlocutor. In these poems, the values of wide experience and tolerance are stressed above all else. Earlier in "The Voyage of Maeldune" written in 1879-80, we find that the ultimate objective of the questing voyage may be very different from the reason it was undertaken, and indeed may entail the total denial of the first motives. And in his poem inspired by W.G. Palgrave's collection of travel essays, Ulysses or Scenes and Studies in Many Lands, Tennyson addresses Ulysses not as the old undaunted warrior but as the "much-experienced man / Whose eyes have known

this globe of ours" ("To Ulysses", ll. 1-2). Ulysses is praised now, not for his strength of will but for his breadth of experience, his wide travels and knowledge from which it is possible to learn, and thence, to broaden one's own experience. In other words, it is significant that Tennyson's hero at this point is Ulysses, the hero who wandered, gaining experience, rather than a Vergilian Aeneas, whose sense of duty and mission might otherwise have been more pleasing to the Victorians.

It is certainly not true that Tennyson escaped criticism from his contemporaries. Not only was Tennyson's teaching objected to on moral grounds by writers like McCrie, but some of the technical aspects I have been discussing drew adverse criticism from the beginning of his career. It is interesting that Christopher North detected, with disapproval, one element of Tennyson's technique in his notorious review of the 1832 volume: "They [the poems] betray a painful and impotent straining after originality -- an aversion from the straight-forward and strong simplicity of nature and truth."<sup>30</sup> The characteristics of mind which Hallam Tennyson says his father brought to the writing of plays, are, according to North's view, apparent already.

But another central characteristic which is observed by James Spedding, and is touched on by others

many times subsequently, is the fragmentary aspect of Tennyson's poems. Spedding objects to the poems of the 1842 volume because they are a "collection of studies for a picture" in which Tennyson's abilities are "displayed in fragments and snatches, having no connection, and therefore deriving no light or fresh interest the one from the other."<sup>31</sup> Once begun, the critical tradition was maintained until Tennyson's death, with each volume eliciting some comment on the poet's original and minute observation and the fragmentary nature of his poems. The former characteristic soon won universal praise for Tennyson, though the critical history of his fragmentary technique is more interesting, though too involved to be dealt with fully here.<sup>32</sup> Coventry Patmore seems to have been one of the first of Tennyson's reviewers to recognise that the fragmentariness of the poems is not only remarkable, but deliberate:

The Princess; A Medley, upon the first reading, has a very curious effect. It is so thoroughly 'a Medley', its heterogeneousness is so complete, that we wonder how any mind should have been able to escape the apparently inevitable continuity with which feelings and ideas suggest themselves. Tragedy, comedy, love, satire, the old, and the new, modern conventionalisms, and outrageous fancies, all contrarieties come together, and, at first, appear to clash.<sup>33</sup>

But this is only a superficial impression:

Even the perfect correspondence of the 'conclusion' with the 'prologue', and the unaccountable apparent irrelevance of both, will be insufficient to startle readers of poetry, in general, into a notion that the 'failure' may possibly be their own, and not the poet's.<sup>34</sup>

Patmore's remarks form in effect a perfect picture of Coleridge's Protean poet. The implication for Tennyson's readers is that they must come to terms with such a poet as a shape-shifter and with their own expectations of poetry. This task is much easier for us than it was in the nineteenth century, mainly because it is a poetic technique which we have come to accept without question. And yet it is important that we recognise the role played by Tennyson and some of his Victorian contemporaries in helping to win acceptance for the different voices and the shored fragments in a poem like The Wasteland.

Christopher North reproves Tennyson for deviating from the straight-forward and, is inclined to add, the obvious; and this can indeed, when carried to excess, be a legitimate criticism of some poets. In Tennyson's poems, however, this characteristic is converted to a virtue. As Spedding suggests, an accumulation of studies does not make a painting. But Tennyson's poems make a picture in which certain, apparently unrelated, details are drawn with extreme care and skill, while the rest is treated more sketchily, though to no less effect. In reading Tennyson's paired

poems, we must never lose sight of the larger unity in admiring the fine details. Tennyson's skepticism prevents him from imposing a relationship on the observed facts of life; it does not stop him from believing that such a relationship exists, but only from asserting it dogmatically in his poetry. The interpretive demands which Tennyson's poetry makes on the reader in the paired poems, The Princess, and his later poems are great, but they enable him to join the poet in his quest for the richness and totality of truth.

NOTES: CHAPTER I

- <sup>1</sup> T.S. Eliot, "In Memoriam", reprinted in J. Killham, ed., Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson, p. 215.
- <sup>2</sup> Sir Charles Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson, p. 223.
- <sup>3</sup> Edward Fitzgerald, Letters, I, 254.
- <sup>4</sup> Sir Harold Nicolson, Tennyson: Aspects of his Life, Character, and Poetry, p. 1.
- <sup>5</sup> W.H. Auden, Tennyson: An Introduction and a Selection, p. x.
- <sup>6</sup> Joanna Richardson, The Pre-Eminent Victorian, p. 13.
- <sup>7</sup> Jump, p. 17.
- <sup>8</sup> Sinfield, The Language of Tennyson's "In Memoriam" (1971), and Priestley, Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry (1973).
- <sup>9</sup> Nicolson, op. cit., p. 6.
- <sup>10</sup> Ibid., p. 127, Cf. also pp. 296-7.
- <sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 231.
- <sup>12</sup> Pitt, op. cit., p. 110.
- <sup>13</sup> Memoir, I., 304.
- <sup>14</sup> Nicolson, op. cit., p. 232.
- <sup>15</sup> Ibid., p. 258.
- <sup>16</sup> Ibid., p. 273.
- <sup>17</sup> Ibid., pp. 230-1.
- <sup>18</sup> Ibid., p. 25.
- <sup>19</sup> Ibid., p. 67.
- <sup>20</sup> Ibid., p. 9.
- <sup>21</sup> Ibid., p. 15.

- 22 Ibid., pp. 151-2.
- 23 Ibid., p. 35.
- 24 Ibid., p. 303.
- 25 E.D.H. Johnson, The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry, pp. xii-xiii.
- 26 Matthew Arnold, "The Study of Poetry", Essays in Criticism: Second Series, pp. 24-5.
- 27 [Francis Jeffrey], Edinburgh Review, XXVII (1816), 3.
- 28 Memoir, II, 73.
- 29 Ibid., II, 286-7. Cf. Sir Charles Tennyson, op. cit., p. 452 for Tennyson's views on Pope.
- 30 Ibid., II, 73.
- 31 Swift, Poetical Works, ed. Herbert Davis, pp. 602-3.
- 32 Johnson, op. cit., p. xv.
- 33 Reprinted in Jump, p. 35.
- 34 Ibid., p. 37.
- 35 Johnson, op. cit., pp. xv-xvi.
- 36 Ibid., p. 22.
- 37 Ibid., p. 7.
- 38 Ibid., p. 66.
- 39 Ibid., p. 7.
- 40 Valerie Pitt, Tennyson Laureate, p. 7.
- 41 Ibid., p. 62.
- 42 Ibid., p. 15.
- 43 Ibid., p. 33.
- 44 Ibid., p. 224.
- 45 Tennyson, in a note to "The Last Tournament", l.70, identifies the Red Knight as Pelleas.
- 46 Valerie Pitt, op. cit., p. 6.

- 47 Sir Charles Tennyson, op. cit., p. 336.
- 48 Memoir, I, 305.
- 49 Ibid., I, 196.
- 50 Ibid., I, 334. .
- 51 Valerie Pitt, op. cit., p. 149.
- 52 Ibid., p. 208.
- 53 Ibid., p. 246.
- 54 Ibid., p. 251.
- 55 Ibid., p. 257.
- 56 Johnson, op. cit., p. 13.
- 57 Ibid., p. 42.
- 58 Valerie Pitt, op. cit., p. 46.
- 59 Ibid., p. 263.
- 60 Ibid., p. 246.
- 61 F.E.L. Priestley, Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry, pp. 38-9.



NOTES: CHAPTER II

<sup>1</sup> See, for example, "Milton's Mulberry", and "Lines on Cambridge of 1830", both of which accuse Cambridge of stultifying originality. Sir Charles Tennyson's biography quotes a letter to William Whewell, Master of Trinity, in which Tennyson declined to write an ode for the Installation of Prince Albert as Chancellor of the University: "Household affection to my old College and filial regard to the University I have -- more so perhaps than when I made one among you." (p. 218).

<sup>2</sup> Cf. D.A. Winstanley, Early Victorian Cambridge, p. 149.

<sup>3</sup> Sir Charles Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson, p. 108.

<sup>4</sup> John Mulder, The Temple of the Mind, p. 51.

<sup>5</sup> Ibid., p. 80.

<sup>6</sup> Memoir, I, 402, with specific reference to Maud. Memoir, II, 329-30 gives a similar comment on "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" and again on p. 331 quotes a vigorous letter in which Tennyson asserts, "There is not one touch of biography in it from beginning to end." What details in the poem can be correlated with Tennyson's own life, such as the premature death at sea of the sons Leonard and Lionel, are neither closely related nor important within the poem.

<sup>7</sup> Fowler and Carey, eds., The Poems of John Milton, p. 130.

<sup>8</sup> John Carey, Milton, p. 37.

<sup>9</sup> William Riley Parker, Milton: A Biography, I, 99.

<sup>10</sup> Coleridge, Shakespearean Criticism, T.M. Raysor, ed., II, 66.

<sup>11</sup> Sir Charles Tennyson, op. cit., p. 85.

<sup>12</sup> [C.W. Collins], "The Cambridge Apostles", Blackwood's Magazine, CLXXXI (1907), 329. Cf. Ricks, Alfred Tennyson, p. 31, for the opinion that it is "easy to exaggerate the intellectual and spiritual influence which the Apostles had upon Tennyson", though he does not specify what he considers an exaggeration.

- 13 Sir Charles Tennison, op. cit., pp. 73 and 82.
- 14 ibid., p. 82.
- 15 George McCrie, The Religion of our Literature, p. 164.
- 16 According to the catalogue of Tennison's library, he owned a copy of Blake's illustrated job (1928), an 1810 reprint of Poetical Sketches. And of Gilchrist's Life of William Blake, with selections from his poems and other writings (1863). This suggests that Tennison's records of Blake came many years after beginning to write paired poems.
- 17 Geoffrey Keynes ed., The Letters of William Blake, p. 88.
- 18 W.R. Stevenson, ed., The Poems of William Blake, pp. 60-1. This text of Blake is the one quoted throughout.
- 19 Charles Jennens "Il Moderato", The Works of Handel: Chrysander and the German Handel Society's Complete Edition, vol. 6, (Leipzig: Breitkopf and Hartel, [n.d.], pp. 11-2). In the Oratorio the first two of the three parts consist of alternate sections from "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" sung by tenor and soprano. The third part, "Il Moderato", is begun by a bass and ends with a duet for tenor and soprano. Handel flattered Jennens in a letter reporting on a performance in Dublin in 1741:
- I opened with the Allegro, Penseroso, & Moderato and I assure you that the Words of the Moderato are vastly admired. The audience being composed (besides the Flower of Ladyes of Distinction and other People of the greatest Quality) of so many Bishops, Deans, Heads of the College, the most eminent people in the Law as the Chancellor, Auditor-General, &c., all of which were much taken with the poetry.
- (Quoted in Charles Cudworth, Handel: A Biography, with a Survey of Books, Editions and Recordings, London: Clive Bingley, [1972], p. 33.) In spite of this, Handel soon dropped "Il Moderato" from the Oratorio, restoring it to its original balance.
- 20 Sir Harold Nicolson, op. cit., p. 100.
- 21 Westminster Review, XIV (1831), pp. 210-24, (Jump, pp. 27-3).

22 Ibid., p. 28. Fox's assertion that each state of mind seizes on something which it finds uncongenial is not satisfactory. Rather, it seems that they treat the same evidence in the aspect and manner which is most in sympathy with their respective positions.

23 "The Nightingale: A Conversation Poem, April, 1798", ll. 13-23. A similar, though more general point is made in the famous section of "Dejection: An Ode":

O Lady! we receive but what we give,  
And in our life alone does Nature live:  
Ours is her wedding garment, ours her shroud!  
And would we aught behold, of higher worth,  
Than that inanimate cold world allowed  
To the poor loveless ever-anxious crowd,  
Ah! from the soul itself must issue forth  
A light, a glory, a fair luminous cloud  
Enveloping the earth --  
And from the soul itself must there be sent  
A sweet and potent voice, of its own birth,  
Of all sweet sounds the life and element!  
(ll. 47-58)

24 Tennyson's further interest in this matter is to be seen in a poem published in 1830, but subsequently suppressed, "The Grasshopper", where we find the lines, "No Tithon thou as poets feign / (Shame on 'em they are deaf and blind)", (ll. 5-6). And yet, "Tithon" written in 1833 has a few hints of Tithonus' metamorphosis towards the end as he prays for release from his immortality.

25 Elizabeth Hillman Waterston, "Symbolism in Tennyson's Minor Poems", reprinted in Killham, ed., Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson, p. 116.

26 Sir Harold Nicolson, op. cit., p. 95.

27 J.H. Buckley, Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet,  
p. 38.

28 Ricks, p. 224, and Marshall, A Tennyson Handbook,  
p. 39.

29 Buckley, op. cit., p. 35.

30 Memoir, I, 48.

31 Sir Charles Tennyson, op. cit., pp. 75-6.

32 A.H. Hallam, op. cit., (Jump p. 35).

33 Roger Ingpen and Walter E. Peck, eds., The Complete Works of Percy Bysshe Shelley (London: Ernest Benn, 1965), vii, 112.

34 Cited in Ricks, p. 300.

35 Ibid., p. 299.

36 Clarice Short, "Tennyson and The Lover's Tale", PMLA, LXXXII (1967), 80.

37 Ibid., p. 78.

38 Barbara Herrnstein Smith, Poetic Closure, p. 13.

39 See the headnote in Ricks, p. 300. Paden's suggestion indicates that the original part III may have been a more conventional ending which Tennyson deliberately altered to accommodate section IV, in which case the final section was considered of vital importance to the poem's structure. While engaging in some of Miss Short's speculation, one might argue that the faithful servant who is introduced into the version contained in Trinity Notebook 18 is an anticipation of Julian's argument in "The Golden Supper", and, therefore, that Tennyson had the Boccaccio story in mind from the very beginning.

40 Clarice Short, op. cit., p. 83. Tennyson's reason is quoted in Ricks, p. 299.

41 Ibid., p. 84.

42 Ibid., p. 82.

43 A distinction should be drawn between the Romantic interest in incest (as in Byron and Chateaubriand) and the pattern to which I am referring here. Traditionally incest in literature is committed unwittingly, as in Oedipus, and Romantic incest is a deliberate flouting of conventional morality which finds incest so shocking. Here, however, there is no sense of wickedness, and I suspect that these situations did not seem at all savoury to Victorian readers. There are no tragic implications for the consummation of such a love; in fact the reverse seems to be true and what tragedy or pathos arises, comes from frustration, not fulfillment. I am not offering an interpretation of all of the parallels which I have indicated, only that in The Lover's Tale. It is enough to say that the conclusions concerning the relationship between Julian and Camilla do not appear to be inconsistent with the others, and to stress the much wider implications of this aspect of the poem than those outlined in Professor Short's article.

44 Clarice Short, op. cit., p. 83.

NOTES: CHAPTER III

- 1 "Tennyson's Development During the 'Ten Years' Silence' (1832-1842)", PMLA, LXVI (1951), 672-4.
- 2 Ricks, p. 522, headnote to "The Two Voices".
- 3 Ricks, Alfred Tennyson, p. 104.
- 4 Morse Peckham, Victorian Revolutionaries, p.30. Because he views Tennyson's heavy reliance on Hallam for friendship and guidance as dangerous, Peckham considers Hallam's death as "a piece of Tennyson's extraordinary luck" (p. 38).
- 5 J.S. Pettigrew, "Tennyson's 'Ulysses': A Reconciliation of Opposites", Victorian Poetry, I (1963), 27-45.
- 6 Gilbert Highet, The Classical Tradition, p. 449.
- 7 J.H. Buckley, Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet, p. 61.
- 8 Edgar Hill Duncan, "Tennyson: A Modern Appraisal", Tennessee Studies in Literature, IV (1959), 28. Although David Shaw in his article, "The Transcendentalist Problem in Tennyson's Poetry of Debate", PQ, XLVI (1967), 79-94, does not discuss "Ulysses" directly, a comment which he makes on In Memoriam has interesting implications for the tension between Ulysses and Telemachus: "The dilemma is that of 'The Two Voices': how are we to choose between the materialists who have a sense of the 'real' but no ideals and the visionaries who have a sense for ideals but are egocentric dreamers?" (89).
- 9 Douglas Bush, Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry, p. 209.
- 10 Charles Mitchell, "The Undying Will of Tennyson's Ulysses", Victorian Poetry, II (1964), 87.
- 11 Clyde de L. Ryals, "Point of View in Tennyson's 'Ulysses'", Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, CXCI (1961), 234.

- 12 Derek Colville, Victorian Poetry and the Romantic Religion, p. 173.
- 13 Mary Joan Donahue, "Tennyson's 'Hail Briton!' and 'Tithon' in the Heath Manuscript", PMLA, LXIV (1949), 403.
- 14 Colville, loc. cit.
- 15 W.B. Stanford, The Ulysses Theme, p. 202.
- 16 Pettigrew, op. cit., pp. 30-1.
- 17 See Baum, Tennyson Sixty Years After, p. 95; Bush, op. cit., p. 208; Kristian Smidt, "The Intellectual Quest of the Victorian Poets", English Studies: A Journal of English Letters and Philology, XL (1959), admits the comparison but observes the contrast in mood (90) and J.S. Pettigrew, op. cit., p. 34, calls "The Lotos-Eaters" an "interesting gloss" on "Ulysses", since both poems have the same theme.
- 18 James Knowles, "Aspects of Tennyson, II: A Personal Reminiscence", Nineteenth Century, XXXIII (1893), 182.
- 19 Memoir, I, 196.
- 20 Most notably in Buckley, op. cit., p. 62, and in Pettigrew, op. cit., p. 35.
- 21 Although first published eighteen years after "Ulysses", "Tithonus" exists in an early form from about the same date as "Ulysses". While there are considerable differences between the two versions of the poem, discussed admirably by Mary Joan Donahue, op. cit., they do not affect the present argument, and so I refer to the later, complete version.
- 22 Ricks, Alfred Tennyson, p. 324, in a note to page 114, corrects the error made in the Memoir, Sir Charles' biography, and Ricks's own edition in asserting that the letter reached Tennyson on October 1, whereas it was actually written and posted on that date.
- 23 The most significant revisions are as follows (referring to the Trinity MS which postdates both the Heath MS and the Harvard Nbk. 16): T.Nbk. 22 lacks line 12; T. Nbk. 22 has "old heart" instead of "gray spirit" in line 30; the first draft of T.Nbk.22 for line 48 has "we are old" which is changed to "and opposed". The MS is cut off at the end of line 58. In his edition, page 564,

Ricks notes that the Trinity MS contains an "approving comment on Telemachus" at line 43. This is doubtful, since the first version of the second part of the line reads, "That work is his", and a later revision of the entire line reads, "He works his work, I mine. All this is past." Perhaps the tone is less ambiguous, but the evidence is no more substantial than that.

24 "Tithonus" was not the last to appear. Disregarding those poems which remained unpublished until after Tennyson's death, "On a Mourner" remained unpublished until 1865, and "Tiresias" until 1885.

25 Memoir, I, 459. The reference is to George Smith, the founder of the Cornhill.

26 Ibid., II, 70.

27 Ibid., I, 505.

28 Ibid., I, 225.

29 Mary Joan Donahue, op. cit., p. 403.

30 Pettigrew, op. cit., p. 39. G. Joseph, "Tennyson's Concepts of Knowledge, Wisdom, and Pallas Athene", Modern Philology, LXIX (1972), 316, points out that this couplet about the pursuit of knowledge comes originally from "Tiresias" which like "Tithonus" shows the dangers involved.

31 The apparent difficulty caused by the fact that Bedivere sees Arthur sail to Avilion into the East, is resolved by the promise that the king does not die in the normal sense, but is to return.

32 Northrop Frye, Fearful Symmetry, p. 237.

33 Of course, highly accomplished poets almost never resort to such words. Elizabethan poetry, with its tireless descriptions of mistresses and lovers is particularly susceptible. In Romeo and Juliet the Nurse describes Romeo: "Though his face be better than any man's, yet his leg excels all men's; and for a hand and a foot, and a body, though they be not to be talked on, yet they are past compare" (II.v.39-42), to which Juliet refers later: "or to dispraise my lord with that same tongue / Which she hath praised him with above compare / So many thousand times?" (III.v.239-41). Yet the fact that Spenser three times in the Faerie Queene (III.i.26.5, III.v.8.4, and III.v.54.4) refers to Britomart as being beyond compare seems rather lame praise for Britomart

since, as a character, he is a full-blooded man with unalike senses. In the "A. B. C. of the Soldier" it is perhaps more evident. "The brain will cannot devise to what / It is to come" (viii. 7. 5).

34 James Knowles, op. cit., p. 169.

35 Although two of the references, the "mournful and indelible scars", and the "inutterable, shining orbs" of the aerial boat appear in "Armageddon" at lines 17, 55, and 5 respectively, I have chosen to discuss "Tributes" where these references have a greater thematic significance than in the earlier poem.

36 In T.Nbk.19, a MS note indicates that it was written at the age of 16, but since the topic for the Chancellor's Medal Poem in 1826 was "The Invasion of Russia by Napoleon Buonaparte", it seems likely that the fragment was composed for this competition, and the plan abandoned. This would mean that Tennyson was 16 or 17 when it was written. Ricks dates T.Nbk.19 between 1824 and 1827. The fact that Tennyson's draft is in heroic couplets admits the explanation that this was the traditional metre for the competition, a metre which Tennyson rejected the following year with "Tributes" (Sir Charles Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson, p. 75). Thus, the pressure which Dr. Tennyson had to apply to Alfred in order to persuade him to submit a poem in 1829 was necessary, not because Tennyson was preternaturally shy or modest, but because he had already had the unsuccessful experience of trying to compose for the competition in the previous year, and had learned that he could not write successfully to order. The Medal was won in 1828 by Christopher Wordsworth.

37 See Roy Park, Hazlitt and the Spirit of the Age: Abstraction and Critical Theory, (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971), especially pp. 13-26.

38 Since Galahad and Percivale both are sinless, it is obvious that Tennyson is not interested in a general theory of the fall of man here, especially since Galahad is presumably Lancelot's son in the Idylls ("The Holy Grail", ll. 143-4).

39 In effect, she is denying the significance of her husband's name, Troch, the man who walked with God. The name is a clue for the reader, if not for Annie.

40 Quoted in Sir Charles Tennyson, op. cit., p. 479; although the comment has fairly general relevance, it was directed primarily against Gladstone's policy of reducing the size of the army in 1835.



41 Ibid., p. 123.

42 Ibid., pp. 479-80.

NOTES: CHAPTER IV

<sup>1</sup> Memoir, II, 71.

<sup>2</sup> Christopher Ricks, Tennyson, p. 197.

<sup>3</sup> Ibid.

<sup>4</sup> Ibid., p. 198.

<sup>5</sup> Perhaps the most prominent nineteenth-century defender of the pun as a serious literary device is Coleridge in his notes on John of Gaunt's famous death-bed pun in Richard II. His defence is of some interest in the light of Tennyson's much less restrained use of the device:

No doubt, something of Shakespeare's punning must be attributed to his age, in which direct and formal combats of wit were a favourite pastime of the courtly and accomplished. It was an age more favourable, upon the whole, to vigour of intellect than the present, in which a dread of being thought pedantic dispirits and flattens the energies of original minds. But independently of this, I have no hesitation in saying that a pun, if it be congruous with the feeling of the scene, is not only allowable in the dramatic dialogue, but oftentimes one of the most effectual intensives of passion.

(Shakespeare Criticism, ed. Thomas Raysor, I, 150)

The mechanical regularity of the puns in some of Tom Hood's poems, though, indicates that the puns had to be planted strategically to be appreciated. Yet another tie between Wonderland (see Alice in Wonderland, chap. XI) and Victorian England.

<sup>6</sup> J.H. Buckley, Tennyson: Growth of a Poet, p. 101.

<sup>7</sup> II, 450-5:

The great organ almost burst his pipes,  
Groaning for power, and rolling through the court  
A long melodious thunder to the sound

Of solemn music, the silver litanies,  
The world of life, to call upon her Harp  
A blessing on her labours for the world.

A similar play occurs on Melissa's name, "sweet Melissa" (III, 50).

<sup>8</sup> Analysed in Ricks, Tennyson, pp. 197-8.

<sup>9</sup> According to the OED this usage, Liberty 7(c), ceased to be current by 1850, three years after the publication of The Princess.

<sup>10</sup> Ricks, Tennyson, pp. 197-8.

<sup>11</sup> Ibid., p. 190.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., p. 191.

<sup>13</sup> Ibid., p. 189.

<sup>14</sup> Ibid.

<sup>15</sup> J.W. Marston, in Athenaeum, XXI (1848), 6-8, also in June, p. 167.

<sup>16</sup> The discrepancy is made more specific in II, 337-9.

<sup>17</sup> The Gentleman's Magazine, XXI (1848), 115 and 131. The reviewer's image has been successfully anticipated and mocked by Tennyson in the Tyrolean cap in the interlude between sections IV and V. In fairness, it should be added that this review is virtually a plot summary of the poem with a minimum of critical comment, and that none too profound. That the journal's interests lie elsewhere than in criticism is suggested by the fact that its review of The Princess is over fifteen times longer than its review of In Memoriam.

<sup>18</sup> They are in Harvard Nbk. 23 and were published first in the 1920's by Sir Charles Tennyson and are reprinted in Ricks, pp. 1768-9.

<sup>19</sup> Memoir, I, 254.

<sup>20</sup> Ibid.

<sup>21</sup> Ricks, headnote to "The Doctor's Daughter", p. 283.

<sup>22</sup> Aglaia, as Professor Ricks points out in his edition, p. 762 n., means "brightness" and is the name of one of the Graces. She is identified by Hesiod

as the wife of Hephaestus, and thus with the Homeric Aphrodite. Homer identifies an Aglaia as mother of Nereus, a warrior who, according to the *Iliad*, led an attack against Troy. And Apollodorus states in *The Library* that one of Hercules' wives was named Aglaia. It is intriguing to speculate whether any of these amusing ironies is deliberate on Tennyson's part.

23 Quoted in Ricks, p. 742.

24 One of the most amusing is the annotation to Lady Psyche's touching "on Mohamet / With much contempt" (II, 118-9): "Had she heard that, according to Mohammedan doctrine, hell was chiefly occupied by women?", a question which shows Tennyson, not as so often merely explaining what he meant or identifying the occasion of a reference, but actually jokingly asking the questions which only he can answer. Cf. also the note to III, 331. Tennyson's revision of P.M. Wallace's remark that the Prince's "too emotional temperament and susceptibility to cataleptic seizures...was no doubt intended partly to emphasise this point [that he did not win the Princess by physical or moral brilliance]" (quoted in Ricks, p. 742) seems more of an attempt to check Wallace's self-confidence than to correct his statement; Tennyson substituted "probably" for "no doubt" and deleted "partly".

25 They do, however, neglect one field of activity in their struggle to learn whatever men know, and the reasons for this are delightfully confused, part aesthetic and part moral:

'And yet' I said  
'Methinks I have not found among them all  
One anatomic.' 'Nay, we thought of that,'  
She answered, 'but it pleased us not: in truth  
We shudder but to dream our maids should ape  
Those monstrous males that carve the living hound,  
And cram him with the fragments of the grave,  
Or in the dark dissolving human heart,  
And holy secrets of this microcosm,  
Dabbling a shameless hand with shameful jest,  
Encarnalise their spirits: yet we know  
Knowledge is knowledge, and this matter hangs:  
Howbeit ourself, foreseeing casualty,  
Nor willing men should come among us, learnt,  
For many weary moons before we came,  
This craft of healing. Were you sick, ourself  
Would tend upon you.' (III, 288-304)

26 Thus refuting Ida's notions about the development of true women:

They had but been, she thought,  
As children; they must lose the child, assume  
The woman: then, Sir, awful odes she wrote,  
Too awful, sure, for what they treated of,  
But all she is and does is awful; odes  
About this losing of the child; and rhymes  
And dismal lyrics, prophesying change  
Beyond all reason. (I, 135-42)

27 Quoted in Ricks, p. 743.

28 Ricks, Tennyson, p. 188.

NOTES: CHAPTER V

<sup>1</sup> Since "Northern Farmer: Old Style" and "Northern Farmer: New Style" are essentially humorous pieces, they exemplify the themes and techniques which I shall be discussing on a more superficial level than the other two pairs. This is not to say that they are devoid of serious intention, but simply that we must not force Tennyson to be serious and significant when he is being basically funny. Such examples as these are infrequent, though not uncharacteristic, in his published work. As for their forming a sequence, Ricks is wrong when he says in his edition, p. 1123, that the "Northern Farmer: Old Style" was first published without the subtitle, "Old Style", as an inspection of the first edition of Enoch Arden and Other Poems will readily prove. Similarly, the "Northern Farmer: New Style" was first published in The Holy Grail and Other Poems with its subtitle. The fact that the subtitle appears in the first publication of the first poem can be accounted for in either of two ways: the (unlikely, it seems to me) possibility that, by 1864, Tennyson had already completed, or at least projected a contrasting poem; or the rather more satisfactory possibility that in using the subtitle in 1864, Tennyson was referring in a consciously nostalgic poem, to a figure of the past, and that the subtitle took on its present implications with the publication of the second poem in which he created the modern, less sympathetic figure.

<sup>2</sup> William Morris, Collected Works, V, 17. Morris's poem in The Earthly Paradise represents the other major treatment of the story of Oenone and Paris in nineteenth-century English poetry, apart from Landor's poem, "Corythos". Morris's poem overlaps both of Tennyson's poems, though it omits any detailed reference to the judgment of Paris and to Oenone's death. Morris's dissatisfaction with his poem (Collected Works, V, xxii) is interesting. The poem was written in 1868.

<sup>3</sup> Memoir, I, 453.

<sup>4</sup> S. Cheetham, "The Arthurian Legends in Tennyson", Contemporary Review, VII (1868), 513-4 .

The use of the past is an important theme in an anonymous notice in the Westminster Review, n.s., XVI (1859), 503-26. Mrs. Oliphant in Edinburgh Review, CXXXI (1870), 502-39, observes, "he has founded upon the early tales of Arthur a great modern drama, modern because it is pervaded by a conscious moral air which belongs neither to the heroes nor to the poetry of primitive life" (506).

<sup>5</sup> T.H.S. Escott, "Tennyson's Last Volume", Fortnightly Review, n.s., XXXIX (1886), 270.

<sup>6</sup> Sir Charles Tennyson in Alfred Tennyson notes a curious dream which Tennyson had about King Priam during his illness and shortly before writing "The Death of Oenone", p. 509.

<sup>7</sup> Clark Emery, "The Background of Tennyson's 'Airy Navies'", Isis, XXXV (1944), 146, argues that Tennyson's lines are not prophetic, in the sense that the ideas expressed are not original to Tennyson, but represent a long tradition of aeronautical speculation.

<sup>8</sup> The Athenaeum, (January 1, 1887), p. 32.

<sup>9</sup> W.E. Gladstone, "'Locksley Hall' and the Jubilee", Nineteenth Century, XXI (1887), 1-18.

<sup>10</sup> See, for example, the article in the Athenaeum (November 19, 1892): "To criticise in cold blood this book, the proof sheets of which the great poet we have just lost was correcting for the press within a fortnight of his death, is difficult -- it is almost impossible" (p. 695).

<sup>11</sup> Memoir, II, 386.

<sup>12</sup> Ibid., II, 9. The same process occurred with the composition of "The Charge of the Light Brigade", where the (incorrectly-remembered) phrase from the Times suggested the metre and theme of the poem to Tennyson. The Lincolnshire anecdotes are not directly responsible for the metre of the poems; it is a metre frequently used by Tennyson in his later monologues, e.g., "The First Quarrel", "In the Children's Hospital", and "The Voyage of Maeldune".

<sup>13</sup> J.M. Ludlow, "Mr. Tennyson's 'Northern Farmer'", Macmillan's Magazine, X (1864), 488.

<sup>14</sup> Tennyson rejected Roden Noel's description of the two poems as "photographs" with the comment, "They are imaginative" (Memoir, II, 9).

15 It is obvious that a certain amount of repetition and parallelism is of considerable use in unifying such long, eight-stress lines internally and also into stanzas, but beyond this, it seems to be true that Tennyson used this style to evoke the habit of intense and extravagantly expressed emotion. Tennyson also commented on the changes in the speaker: he "said that the old man in the second 'Locksley Hall' had a stronger faith in God and in human goodness than he had had in his youth; but he had also endeavoured to give the moods of despondency which are caused by the decreased energy of life" (*Annals*, II, 329).

16 Hesiod is as informative an authority as any. The fact that both constellations are associated with harvest may have some connection with the other allusions to harvest in the poem, e.g., ll. 13, 65, 117, 139, as opposed to the more obvious references to Spring in his youth, and the final allusions to decay and destruction, l. 190 ff. The relevant passages about the Pleiads and Orion in Hesiod's Works and Days are as follows:

When the Pleiads, Atlas' daughters, start  
to rise  
Begin your harvest; plough when they go down.  
(ll. 383-4)

When great Orion rises, set your slaves  
To winnowing Demeter's holy grain  
Upon the windy, well-worn threshing floor.  
(ll. 597-9)

But if your heart is captured by desire  
For stormy seamanship, this time is worst;  
Gales of all winds rage when the Pleiades,  
Pursued by violent Orion, plunge  
Into the clouded sea. (ll. 618-22)

(Trans. Dorothea Wender, Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973.)

17 Hyginus, Poetica Astronomica, II, 21, trans. Mary Grant in The Myths of Hyginus, p. 211.

18 A. Giuliano amusingly applies too much Freud to this resolution and has the young man return to his "Mother". Essai Sur Locksley Hall et Locksley Hall Sixty Years After d'Alfred Tennyson: Commentaire et Comparisons, p. 17.

19 The HnMS has an interesting variant of line 13, which is more tightly punctuated: "In the



hall there hangs a painting, Amy's arms are round my neck --". This suggests the possibility that the picture in the final version is not a portrait of the two cousins, but a picture with which the speaker identifies himself and Amy. In line 16, the revision of "I am left within the shadow" (HnMS) to "I was left" stresses the effect of sixty years and the transference from one poem to another. These four lines were deleted from a proof copy of "Locksley Hall" now in Lincoln.

20 The masculine characteristics here indicate for Tennyson that Edith's is a fully rounded personality. However, as we have seen, the female traits must predominate in a woman, just as in a man, the male characteristics must be more prominent than the female. Cf. "On One Who Affected an Effeminate Manner", Ricks, p. 1424.

21 For illustrations of this point, see "A Voice Spake out of the Skies", Ricks, p. 1193, and "Wages", Ricks, p. 1205.

22 Contrast the use of a star here with the line "Not in vain the distance beacons" in "Locksley Hall"; at last there is a concrete light to follow, not just an open path.

23 Gladstone, op. cit., p. 16.

24 H.J. Rose appears to overstate the case against Homer's possible knowledge of the judgment in his Handbook of Greek Mythology, p. 107.

25 Carl Kerényi, The Heroes of the Greeks, p. 316.

26 Gerhard Joseph, "Tennyson's Concepts of Knowledge, Wisdom, and Pallas Athene", Modern Philology, LXIX (1972), 318.

27 Ibid.

28 Ibid.

29 Ricks, Tennyson, p. 85.

30 The relevant section from Ovid is as follows. The passage in square brackets is generally considered inauthentic:

The builder of Troy, remarkable for his faithfulness, has made love to me, and entrusted his gifts to my hands. [He has the spoils of my chastity, although he had to fight for them. However, I tore his hair with my nails, and scratched his face with my fingers; nor did I demand jewels and gold as the price of my dishonour; such gifts are a disgusting means of procuring a woman's body; and he, considering me worthy, gave me skills in medicine and whatever herb is powerful as a remedy and whatever root is used in healing, wherever in the world they grow, are at my disposal.] (Ovid, Heroides, V, 146 ff. My translation.)

Heroides, V, "Oenone Paridi", is included in Electa ex Ovidio et Tibullo in usum Regiae Scholae Etonensis used by Tennyson as a child and in his library (Tennyson in Lincoln, ed. N. Campbell, I, no. 246); in this edition the doubtful lines are omitted. There is no indication of whether this liaison took place before or after the judgment, though the latter seems more likely.

31 Memoir, II, 372.

32 Ibid., II, 425.

NOTES: CHAPTER VI

<sup>1</sup> John Sterling, Review of Poems (1842), Quarterly Review, LXX (1842), 385-416, (Jump, 104).

<sup>2</sup> F.E.L. Priestley, Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry, pp. 106-36.

<sup>3</sup> James Knowles, "Recollections of Tennyson", Nineteenth Century, XXXIII (1893), 173.

<sup>4</sup> Valerie Pitt, Tennyson Laureate, p. 22. On Tennyson's sight, it is interesting to consult the Memoir for further facts: "He [Tennyson] records that one night he 'saw the moonlight reflected in a night-ingale's eye, as she was singing in the hedgerow'" (I, 79). Sir Charles' biography contains a similar story, pp. 278-9. Hallam Tennyson adds the following as a footnote: "Owing to his extreme short-sight he could see objects at a short distance better than anyone: and at a long distance with his eye-glass or spectacles he could see as far as any long-sighted person" (I, 79-80). This last remark tends to cast some doubt on the validity of Miss Pitt's point.

<sup>5</sup> The last line represents the most famous example of Tennyson's grammatical lapses, the usual justification being that the singular "is" is necessary to rhyme with "crannies". A craftsman as meticulous as Tennyson, however, would be unlikely to condone such a mistake. In fact, the sense is not that the poet would know what God is and what man is, but what the relationship between God and man is, or to mimic the German metaphysicians, what God-and-man is.

<sup>6</sup> Memoir, I, 325. Hallam's account of his father's views are recorded in Memoir, I, 325-6. Cf. also Sir Oliver Lodge's "The Attitude of Tennyson towards Science", in Tennyson and His Friends, ed. Hallam Tennyson, p. 282.

<sup>7</sup> Coventry Patmore, Review of Maud and other Poems, Edinburgh Review, CII (1855), 502.

<sup>8</sup> Memoir, II, 372.

9 Cf. Alan Sinfield, The Language of Tennyson's "In Memoriam", pp. 23-4. Sinfield refers to others who support this view.

10 F.T. Palgrave, The Lyrical Poems of Tennyson (1885), does not provide the information, though it is quoted in Memoir, II, 503: "The selections from his own Lyrical poetry...were submitted for his approval, and...those from In Memoriam...follow a list which he gave me."

11 Since the 1885 version of In Memoriam is so little known in spite of the fact that it was compiled by Tennyson himself, it may be useful to outline the order in which the sections appear, according to the 1850 numbering: LXXXV, X, XI, XIII, ...CXIX, CXXIII, II, VI, XX, ...C, CI, LXXVIII, CVI, CXXXI.

12 Cf. Memoir, I, 304, which quotes Tennyson: "The sections were written at many different places, and as the phases of our intercourse came to my memory and suggested them. I did not write them with any view of weaving them into a whole, or for publication, until I found that I had written so many."

13 Cf. the headnote in Ricks, 1037.

14 Oliver Elton, Tennyson: An Inaugural Lecture, p. 11.

15 F.E.L. Priestley, op. cit., p. 108.

16 Memoir, I, 393.

17 Cf. Goldwin Smith, in Saturday Review, I (1855), 14-5, (Jump, 189); Eclectic Review, X (1855), 568, professed initial "extreme disappointment", and W.E. Aytoun in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, LXXVIII (1855), wrote: "Can Mr Tennyson possibly be labouring under the delusion that he is using his talents well and wisely, and giving a valuable contribution to the poetic literature of England, by composing and publishing such gibberish?" (319).

18 Memoir, I, 398: "It is notable that two such appreciative critics as Mr Gladstone and Dr Van Dyke wholly misapprehended the meaning of Maud until they heard my father read it, and that they both then publicly recanted their first criticisms."

19 Memoir, II, 127.

20 Cf., for example, Coventry Patmore's Churchillian appeal in his review of Maud, cited above:

The author is at present in the enjoyment of his most peculiar poetical gifts in their perfection; and...we once more call upon him to do the duty which England has long expected of him, and to give us a great poem on a great subject. On such a subject it is no secret that he has long had his consideration engaged; it is one with which he has amply shown his power to grapple, and if he, 'through thinking much of the end, cannot begin', and so allows the prime of his life to slip away without further actual result, he will not have acted up to the responsibilities imposed upon him by the possession of his extraordinary gifts. (515)

Henry Alford, in his review of the Idylls of the King, Contemporary Review, XIII (1859), observes: "It is on this greater work that, after all, the Laureate's reputation will mainly rest. It is in this alone that he has made any approach to casting off the single-grouped form of his many exquisite lesser poems, and has ranged a number of connected groups round a common theme" (104). Although, as we have seen, this was not actually the first time Tennyson had done this, it is nevertheless an interesting basis for praising the poet in the light of my argument. A similar point is made by Samuel Cheetham, in Contemporary Review, VII (1868), 508.

21 Tennyson wrote seven plays in the period 1874-84: Queen Mary (published 1875), Harold (published 1876), Becket, The Falcon, and The Cup (all published 1884), The Foresters and The Promise of May (both published in 1892). Apart from the interest the last four have in their own right, it is clear that they did not tax his abilities to any great extent. They represent departures in setting and tone more than anything else. The Falcon is a short verse play based on Boccaccio's story of Frederigo Alberigo and Madam Giana, the ninth novel from Day 5 ("concerning such persons as have been successful in their love, after many hard and perilous misfortunes") of The Decameron. The Cup is a two-act tragedy of extreme marital fidelity set in Galatia and derived from Plutarch's Mulierum Virtutes. The Foresters is a pastoral fairy-play about Robin Hood and Maid Marian, and The Promise of May, a modern tragedy, strongly influenced, it appears, by George Eliot and early Hardy.

22 Quoted in Memoir, II, 113.

23 Coleridge, Biographia Literaria,  
J. Shawcross ed., II, 20.

24 Coleridge, Shakespearean Criticism,  
T.M. Raysor ed., I, 193.

25 Quoted in Memoir, II, 193.

26 Ibid., II, 175.

27 Ibid., II, 174.

28 Ibid., II, 173.

29 For example, cf. Hegel's Philosophy of History: "This is the essence of the Reformation: Man is in his very nature destined to be free" (trans. J. Sibree, New York: Dover, [1956], p.417).

30 Christopher North, in Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, XXXI (1832), 721-41, (Jump, 52).

31 James Spedding, Review of Poems (1842),  
Edinburgh Review, LXXVII (1843), 373-91, (Jump, 151-2).

32 Cf. for example: "Tennyson's In Memoriam",  
Eclectic Review, n.s. XXVIII (1850), 335; "Tennyson's Maud", Eclectic Review, 3rd ser. X (1855), 575; "Tennyson's Idylls", National Review, IX (1859), 368-94, (Jump, 230); "The Idylls of the King", Contemporary Review, XIII (1870), 105; "Enoch Arden", British Quarterly Review, XL (1864), 486; "Ballads and other poems by Alfred Tennyson", Edinburgh Review, CLIV (1881), 507.

33 Coventry Patmore, Review of Poems (1842)  
and The Princess, North British Review, IX (1848), 64.

34 Ibid., pp. 65-6.

## SELECTIVE BIBLIOGRAPHY

### Primary Sources

Campbell, Nancie. Tennyson in Lincoln: A Catalogue of the Collections in the Research Centre. Vol. I. Tennyson Research Centre, City Library, Lincoln, England: Tennyson Society, 1971.

Knowles, James S. "Aspects of Tennyson, II: A Personal Reminiscence", Nineteenth Century, XXXIII (1893), 164-88.

Rawnsley, H.D. Memories of the Tennysons. Glasgow: James Maclehose and Sons, 1900.

Tennyson, Alfred, Lord. The Lyrical Poems of Tennyson. Edited by F.T. Palgrave. London: Macmillan, 1885.

----- . Poems. The Eversley Edition. Edited by Hallam, Lord Tennyson. 9 vols. London: Macmillan, 1907.

----- . The Poems of Tennyson. Edited by Christopher Ricks. [London]: Longmans, [1969].

Tennyson, Sir Charles. Alfred Tennyson. London: Macmillan, 1949.

[Tennyson, Hallam, Lord]. Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1897.

-----, ed. Tennyson and His Friends. London: Macmillan, 1911.

Weld, Agnes Grace. Glimpses of Tennyson and Some of His Relatives and Friends. London: Williams and Norgate, 1902.

### Contemporary Reviews

Alford, Henry. "The Idylls of the King", Contemporary Review, XIII (1870), 104-25.

Aytoun, W.E. "Maud by Alfred Tennyson", Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, LXXVIII (1855), 311-21.

[Bagehot, Walter]. "Idylls of the King", National Review, IX (1859), 368-94.

"Ballads and Other Poems by Alfred Tennyson", Edinburgh Review, CLIV (1881), 486-515.

"Christopher North". "Tennyson's Poems", Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, XXXI (1832), 721-41.

Coleridge, Sara. "The Princess", Quarterly Review, LXXXII (1848), 427-53.

Dyneley, Mortimer. "Locksley Hall and Liberalism", National Review, VIII (1887), 641-7.

Escott, T.H.S. "Tennyson's Last Volume", Fortnightly Review, n.s., XXXIX (1886), 270-2.

Fox, William Johnson. Review in Westminster Review, XIV (1831), 210-14.

[Gladstone, W.E.]. "Idylls of the King", Quarterly Review, CVI (1859), 454-85.

-----". "'Locksley Hall' and the Jubilee", Nineteenth Century, XXI (1887), 1-18.

Hallam, A.H. Review in Englishman's Magazine, I (1831), 616-28.

Hasell, Elizabeth. "Tennyson's Idylls of the King", Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine, LXXXVI (1859), 608-27.

Hutton, Richard Holt. "'Locksley Hall' in Youth and Age", Spectator, LIX (1886), 1706-7.

"Idylls of the King", Fraser's Magazine, LX (1859), 301-14.

Jump, John D., ed. Tennyson: The Critical Heritage. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967.

"Locksley Hall Sixty Years After, &c.", Athenaeum, January 1, 1887, 31-3.

Lounsbury, T.R. "The Two Locksley Halls", Scribner's Magazine, VI (1889), 250-6.



- Ludlow, J.M. "Mr. Tennyson's Northern Farmer",  
Macmillan's Magazine, X (1864), 486-9.
- Marston, J.W. Review of The Princess, Athenaeum,  
January 1, 1848, 6-8.
- Mozley, Ann. "Tennyson: Idylls of the King",  
Bentley's Quarterly Review, II (1859-60), 159-94.
- Mozley, J.R. "The Holy Grail and Other Poems",  
Quarterly Review, CXXVIII (1870), 1-17.
- "Mr. Tennyson and the Round Table", Quarterly Review,  
LI (1870), 200-14.
- Noel, Roden. "The Poetry of Tennyson", Contemporary  
Review, XLVII (1885), 202-24.
- Oliphant, Margaret O. "The Epic of Arthur", Edinburgh  
Review, CXXXI (1870), 502-39.
- Patmore, Coventry. "Tennyson's Poems [1842] - The  
Princess", North British Review, IX (1848), 43-72.
- "Tennyson's Maud", Edinburgh Review, CII  
(1855), 498-519.
- "Idylls of the King", Edinburgh Review,  
CX (1859), 247-63.
- "Idylls of the King", North British Review,  
XXXI (1859), 148-74.
- "The Princess: by Alfred Tennyson", Gentleman's  
Magazine, XXIX (1848), 115-31.
- [Simpson, Richard]. "Mr. Tennyson's Poetry", North  
British Review, LIII (1871), 373-425.
- Spedding, James. "Tennyson's Poems", Edinburgh Review,  
LXXVII (1843), 373-91.
- Sterling, John. "Poems by Alfred Tennyson", Quarterly  
Review, LXX (1842), 385-416.
- "Tennyson's Idylls", National Review, IX (1859), 368-94.
- "Tennyson's Idylls of the King", Westminster Review,  
n.s., XVI (1859), 503-26.
- "Tennyson's In Memoriam", Eclectic Review, n.s.,  
XXVIII (1850), 330-41.

"Tennyson's Last Volume", Athenaeum, November 19, 1892, 695-7.

"Tennyson's Maud", Eclectic Review, 3rd ser., X (1855), 568-75.

"Tennyson's Poetry", British Quarterly Review, XL (1864), 463-90.

Tregarthen, H.P. "'Locksley Hall'", National Review, IX (1887), 147-9.

#### Other Secondary Material

Auden, W.H. Tennyson: An Introduction and a Selection. London: Phoenix House, 1946.

Baum, Paull F. Tennyson Sixty Years After. Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1948.

Bergonzi, Bernard. "Feminism and Feminity in The Princess", in his The Turn of the Century: Essays on Victorian and Modern English Literature. [London]: Macmillan, [1973].

Brashear, William R. The Living Will: A Study of Tennyson and Nineteenth-Century Subjectivism. The Hague: Mouton, 1969.

Brimley, George. "Tennyson's Poems", in his Essays. Edited by William G. Clarke. Cambridge: Macmillan, 1858.

Buckley, Jerome Hamilton. Tennyson: The Growth of a Poet. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1960.

Eufkin, E.C. "Imagery in 'Locksley Hall'", Victorian Poetry, II (1964), 21-8.

Bush, Douglas. Mythology and the Romantic Tradition in English Poetry. Cambridge, Mass.: Harvard University Press, 1937.

Carey, John. Milton. London: Evans Brothers, [1969].

Chapman, Raymond. The Victorian Debate: English Literature and Society, 1832-1901. London: Weidenfeld and Nicolson, [1968].

- Cheetham, Samuel. "The Arthurian Legends in Tennyson", Contemporary Review, VII (1868), 497-514.
- Coleridge, Samuel Taylor. Biographia Literaria. Edited by J. Shawcross. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1907.
- . Coleridge's Shakespearean Criticism. Edited by Thomas Middleton Raysor. 2 vols. London: J.M. Dent, [1961].
- [Collins, C.W.] "The Cambridge 'Apostles'", Blackwood's Magazine, CLXXXI (1907), 326-45.
- Colville, Derek. Victorian Poetry and the Romantic Religion. Albany: State University of New York Press, [1970].
- Dallas, Eneas Sweetland. Poetics: An Essay on Poetry. London: Smith, Elder, 1852.
- de la Mare, Walter. "Tennyson", in his Pleasures and Speculations. London: Faber and Faber, 1940.
- Dixon, William Macneile. A Primer of Tennyson with a Critical Essay. London: Methuen, 1896.
- Donahue, Mary Joan. "Tennyson's 'Hail Briton!' and 'Tithon' in the Heath Manuscript", PMLA, LXIV (1949), 385-416.
- Drinkwater, John. Victorian Poetry. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1923.
- Duncan, Edgar Hill. "Tennyson: A Modern Appraisal", Tennessee Studies in Literature, IV (1959), 13-30.
- Eliot, T.S. "In Memoriam", in his Essays Ancient and Modern. London: Faber and Faber, 1936.
- Elton, Oliver. Tennyson: An Inaugural Lecture. Liverpool: Liverpool University Press, 1901.
- Emery, Clark. "The Background of Tennyson's 'Airy Navies'", Isis, XXXV (1944), 139-47.
- Fitzgerald, Edward. The Letters of Edward Fitzgerald. Edited by W.A. Wright. 2 vols. London: Macmillan, 1901.
- Frye, Northrop. Fearful Symmetry: A Study of William Blake. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1947.

- Giuliano, A. Essai Sur Locksley Hall et Locksley Hall Sixty Years After d'Alfred Tennyson: Commentaire et Comparisons. Turin: Vincent Bona, 1907.
- Gray, J.M. Tennyson's Doppelgänger: Balin and Balan. Tennyson Research Centre, Lincoln: The Tennyson Society, 1971.
- Green, Joyce. "Tennyson's Development During the 'Ten Years' Silence' (1832-1842)", PMLA, LXVI (1951), 622-97.
- Highet, Gilbert. The Classical Tradition: Greek and Roman Influences on Western Literature. Oxford: Clarendon Press, [1949].
- Houghton, Walter. The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1832-1870. New Haven: Yale University Press for Wellesley College, [1957].
- Hutton, Richard Holt. "Tennyson", Macmillan's Magazine, XXVII (1872), 143-67.
- Hyginus. The Myths of Hyginus. Translated and edited by Mary Grant. Lawrence, Kansas: University of Kansas Publications, 1960.
- Johnson, E.D.H. The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry: Sources of the Poetic Imagination in Tennyson, Browning, and Arnold. Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1952.
- Joseph, Gerhard. Tennysonian Love: The Strange Diagonal. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, [1969].
- , "Tennyson's Concepts of Knowledge, Wisdom, and Pallas Athene", Modern Philology, LXIX (1972), 314-22.
- Kerényi, Carl. The Heroes of the Greeks. London: Thames and Hudson, [1959].
- Killham, John. Tennyson and "The Princess": Reflections of an Age. London: Athlone Press, 1958.
- , ed. Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, [1960].
- Lauvrière, Émile. Repetition and Parallelism in Tennyson. London: Oxford University Press, 1910.

"Lord Tennyson", Westminster Review, CXXXVIII (1892), 589-96.

Marshall, George O., Jr. A Tennyson Handbook.  
New York: Twayne, [1963].

McCrie, George. The Religion of Our Literature: Essays upon Thomas Carlyle, Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson, etc. London: Hodder and Stoughton, 1875.

G.R. McKean. "Faith, in Locksley Hall", Dalhousie Review, XIX (1940), 472-8.

Melchiori, Giorgio. "Locksley Hall Revisited", Review of English Literature, VI (1965), 9-25.

Miller, J. Hillis. The Disappearance of God: Five Nineteenth-Century Writers. Cambridge, Mass. Harvard University Press, 1963.

Milton, John. The Poems of John Milton. Edited by John Carey and Alistair Fowler. [London]: Longmans, [1968].

Mitchell, Charles. "The Undying Will of Tennyson's Ulysses", Victorian Poetry, II (1964), 87-95.

Morris, William. The Earthly Paradise. Vol. V of The Collected Works of William Morris. London: Longmans Green and Company, 1911.

Mulder, John R. The Temple of the Mind: Education and Literary Taste in Seventeenth-Century England. New York: Pegasus, [1969].

Nicolson, Harold. Tennyson: Aspects of His Life, Character and Poetry. London: Constable, 1923.

Ovid, Publius Naso. Heroides. Edited by Grant Showerman. The Loeb Classical Library. London: Heinemann, 1963.

Parker, William Riley. Milton: A Biography. 2 vols. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1968.

Peckham, Morse. Victorian Revolutionaries: Speculations on Some Heroes of a Culture Crisis. New York: George Braziller, [1970].

Pettigrew, J.S. "Tennyson's 'Ulysses': A Reconciliation of Opposites", Victorian Poetry, I (1963), 27-45.

----- . Tennyson: The Early Poems. [London]: Edward Arnold, [1970].

Pitt, Valerie. Tennyson Laureate. London: Barrie and Rockliff, [1962].

Priestley, F.E.L. Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry. London: André Deutsch, 1973.

[Prothero, Rowland]. "Modern Poetry", Edinburgh Review, CLXVIII (1886), 466-98.

"Recent Criticism of Tennyson", Temple Bar, XIII (1865), 354-62.

[Reeve, H.]. "Tennyson and Browning", Edinburgh Review, CLXXII (1890), 301-16.

Richardson, Joanna. The Pre-Eminent Victorian: A Study of Tennyson. London: Jonathan Cape, [1962].

Richardson, Robert K. "The Idea of Progress in 'Locksley Hall'", Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts, and Letters, XXVIII (1933), 341-61.

Ricks, Christopher. "Tennyson's Methods of Composition", Proceedings of the British Academy, LII (1966), 209-30.

----- . Tennyson. [New York]: Macmillan, [1972].

Robson, W.W. "The Dilemma of Tennyson", in his Critical Essays. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, [1966].

Roppen, Georg. Evolution and Poetic Belief: A Study in Some Victorian and Modern Writers. Oslo: Oslo University Press, 1956.

Rose, H.J. Handbook of Greek Mythology. London: Methuen, 1964.

Ryals, Clyde de L. "Point of View in Tennyson's 'Ulysses'", Archiv für das Studium der Neueren Sprachen und Literaturen, CXCI (1963), 232-4.

Scaife, C.H.O. The Poetry of Tennyson: An Essay in Appreciation. London: Cobden-Sanderson, 1930.

- Shaw, W. David. "The Transcendentalist Problem in Tennyson's Poetry of Debate", Philological Quarterly, XLVI (1967), 79-94.
- Short, Clarice. "Tennyson and 'The Lover's Tale'", PMLA, LXXXII (1967), 78-84.
- Sinfield, Alan. The Language of Tennyson's "In Memoriam". Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1971.
- Sinnett, A.P. Tennyson an Occultist. London: Theosophical Publishing Society, 1920.
- Smidt, Kristian. "The Intellectual Quest of the Victorian Poets", English Studies: A Journal of English Letters and Philology, XL (1959), 90-102.
- Stanford, W.B. The Ulysses Theme: A Study in the Adaptability of a Traditional Hero. Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1963.
- Steane, J.B. Tennyson. London: Evans Brothers, [1966].
- Stoddard, R.H. "A Study of Tennyson", North American Review, CXXXIII (1881), 82-107.
- Templeman, W.D. "A Consideration of the Fame of 'Locksley Hall'", Victorian Poetry, I (1963), 81-103.
- ". "Tennyson's 'Locksley Hall' and Thomas Carlyle", in Hill Shine, ed., Booker Memorial Studies: Eight Essays on Victorian Literature in Memory of John Manning Booker 1881-1948. New York: Russell and Russell, reprinted 1969.
- Turner, Paul. "Some Ancient Light on Tennyson's 'Oenone'", JEGP, LXI (1962), 57-72.
- Van Dyke, Henry. The Poetry of Tennyson. London: Elkin Matthews, 1892.
- Walters, J. Cuming. Tennyson: Poet, Philosopher, Idealist. London: Kegan Paul, Trench, Trübner, 1893.
- Waterston, Elizabeth Hillman. "Symbolism in Tennyson's Minor Poems", University of Toronto Quarterly, XX (1951), 369-80.

Waugh, Arthur. Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Study of His  
Life and Work. London: Heinemann, 1892.

Winstanley, D.A. Early Victorian Cambridge. Cambridge:  
Cambridge University Press, 1940.

Wolfe, Humbert. Tennyson. London: Faber and Faber,  
1930.