

THE STRUCTURE OF IN MEMORIAM

THE STRUCTURE OF IN MEMORIAM:
THE CLOSING CYCLE RICH IN GOOD

By

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CHAPTER I

IN MEMORIAM AND THE CRITICS

The death of Arthur Henry Hallam on September 15, 1833 and Tennyson's discovery of it in early October became the most important event in Tennyson's life as a poet in the years to follow. As his only close friend at Cambridge, Hallam was a strong influence on Tennyson and his part in aiding Tennyson's development during the years of their friendship cannot be measured.

The death of Hallam, who of all the Cambridge Apostles showed the most promise, was a blow which shook the foundations of all that Tennyson had been brought up to believe.

During the first months of his sorrow waves of depression swept over him, so dark that he often longed for death. The sudden extinction of his friend, with all his infinite capacity for affection and his brilliant promise, struck at the very roots of his will to live. Could it really be that all this great spiritual treasure was annihilated: that all human love and all man's spiritual effort are but a momentary ripple on the ocean of eternity? Was the world wholly without purpose and man an irresponsible toy for the gigantic forces of Nature? If so, what value could there be in life? What was left but to curse God and die.¹

It was in response to these doubts that began to overwhelm him, that Tennyson first began to write the lyrics that over the next fifteen years were to become the basis of his most important poem, In Memoriam. The lyrics were not written

in any particular order, as Tennyson himself acknowledged:

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. The different moods of sorrow as in a drama are dramatically given, and my conviction that fear, doubts, and suffering will find answer and relief only through faith in a God of Love. "I" is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking through him. After the Death of A.H.H., the divisions of the poem are made by First Xmas Eve (Section XXVIII), Second Xmas (LXXVIII), Third Xmas Eve (CIV and CV, etc).²

When Tennyson decided to put these assorted lyrics together in one long elegy for Arthur Hallam he placed each lyric in its particular place. The care which he took suggests strongly that Tennyson himself could see some overall pattern or structure to the assorted lyrics.

From the moment of the poem's publication in 1850 this problem of the structure of In Memoriam has been the problem most often considered by Tennyson's critics. There have been generally two schools of opinion about the problem of the poem's structure: those who see no pattern whatsoever to the poem and those who can discern a certain pattern in it.

The majority of critics who reviewed In Memoriam in the days soon after its publication were unequivocal in approving of the poem's style and content. A typical early review was by Charles Kingsley who wrote, in Fraser's Magazine (Sept., 1850), of In Memoriam as "... a collection of poems on a vast variety of subjects, but all united, as

their name implies, to the memory of a departed friend."³ Kingsley saw the structure of the poem, as many other of his contemporaries did, as related to Tennyson's presentation of the memory of Hallam. As the poem was an elegy to Tennyson's friend, its structure must be determined by Tennyson's considerations of his friend.

.... the soul of his dead friend broods--at first a memory shrouded in blank despair, then a living presence, a ministering spirit, answering doubts, calming fears, stirring up noble aspirations, utter humility, leading the poet upward step by step to faith, and peace, and hope.⁴

This view of the structure of the poem as related to a consideration of Hallam was a popular one. W. E. Gladstone, in a review in the Quarterly Review (Oct., 1859), in considering In Memoriam concluded that the lyrics were "all of them connected by one central point, the recollection of the dead".⁵

Not all of the early criticism was enthusiastic, however. Some critics considered In Memoriam an example of totally wasted effort. They could see no unity in the whole and thus could see no reason for such a poem. In Galleries of Literary Portraits (1854), George Gilfillan wrote about In Memoriam and its reception by the public. He mentions the poem's lack of unity:

Nor do we admire so much as the public his "In Memoriam". It is a succession of fine quaint moralisings, with many timid gleams of thought, but with no adequate subject, no consecutive power, no new insight, no free, strong motion, no real unity, and discovering rather an elaborate and imitative ingenuity than original genius.⁶

Even as late as 1870, when In Memoriam had gone through numerous editions and was still very popular, some critics were reluctant to admit its power. A. Austin in The Poetry of the Period (1870) was convinced that its success was only temporary.

In Memoriam will assuredly be handed over to the dust as soon as a generation arises which has come to its senses, or even to a tolerable notion of what it is aiming at, in religious and spiritual thought.⁷

It was in the 1880s that critics began to examine the poem more carefully in order to determine the exact way in which In Memoriam was organized. One of the first of the more carefully thought out schemes to account for the poem's structure was advanced by John F. Genung in his book Tennyson's In Memoriam. Its Purpose and Its Structure. (1883). It is Genung's view that any poem so carefully written and put together must have a methodology behind it to give it unity. He supports this statement by quoting from Arthur Henry Hallam's Remains on Hallam's opinion of Tennyson's poetic method.

No poet can be fairly judged of by fragments, least of all, a poet like Mr. Tennyson, whose mind conceives nothing isolated, nothing abrupt, but every part with reference to some other part, and in subservience to the idea of the whole.⁸

Genung sees the poem as organized into three cycles of thought "to each of which Christmas, standing at the head, gives significance".⁹ The poem, when broken down into the units which Genung sees as representing Tennyson's advancing

thought is divided into six parts: Prologue, Introductory Stage (I-XXVII), First Cycle (XXVIII-LXXVII), Second Cycle (LXXVIII-CIII), Third Cycle (CIV-CXXXI), Epilogue.¹⁰ Each of these units is further divided into specific points of development usually represented by physical facts, such as events from the poet's life during the time in which the poem was written.

Genung sees the poem develop as a whole from the beginning. This analytical method of breaking it down into units facilitates his study of the development but is in no way intended to detract from an appreciation of In Memoriam as a whole. He argues that everything is connected to everything else and that this is proved by the fact that the "Prologue begins where the poem ends."¹¹ Throughout the poem, therefore, according to Genung, the reader always knows where he is going.

The debate about whether or not the poem has unity has continued throughout the history of critical discussion of In Memoriam. Frederick W. Robertson in Analysis of Mr. Tennyson's "In Memoriam" (1884) was another critic who saw a unifying pattern in the poem.

It is divided into a number of cabinet-like compartments, which, with fine and delicate shades of difference, exhibit the various phases through which the bereaved spirit passes from the first shock of despair, dull, hopeless misery and rebellion, up to the dawn of hope, acquiescent trust, and even calm happiness again.¹²

His contemporary J. M. Robertson in his article "The Art of Tennyson" in Essays Towards a Critical Method

(1889), on the other hand, could see no unity of thought in the poem whatever.

Any careful reader who will take the trouble to analyse these productions for their didactic significance will find that they only group loosely a number of quasi-philosophical relections of a sufficiently familiar order, and that the poet has really no connected system of thought of his own.¹³

As the end of the century arrived the critical approach to In Memoriam changed, and tended more and more towards a search for some salient factor that could be clearly seen to unify the entire poem. Critics began devising their new methods of interpreting the poem based on various divisions in the thought and development of the ideas expressed in the poem. Those who did not attempt to remark any particular divisions were those convinced that the poem was not unified and was only a loose grouping of single lyrics which could be studied and appreciated for their individual beauty alone.

Also, at this time, there arose a method of interpretation by paraphrase, a rather weak method which became quite popular in late nineteenth-century criticism of the poem. Several critics used this method and did not make any attempt at all to tie the whole together. They merely provided the number of each lyric and paraphrased the thought contained in it and in this manner worked their way through the entire poem. The two most often quoted of these critics are E. R. Chapman who wrote A Companion to In Memoriam (1901), and Alfred Gatty whose A Key to Tennyson's "In Memoriam" appeared in 1911. These two books give a short synopsis of

each individual lyric. Chapman's book is acknowledged by the Memoir as the best analysis of In Memoriam up to the publication of the Memoir in 1905.¹⁴ There is, in fact, very little analysis in this kind of study and still less criticism. The authors merely took each individual lyric and turned the thoughts contained in it into prose, attempting thereby to recapture the original intent of the author. The paraphrasing is often superficial and, although the intent is to be helpful, often the result of such interpretation is to obscure the poem's meaning.

Other critics of the early part of the twentieth century continued either to attempt to divide the poem into particular groups of lyrics or denied that it could be divided since it was not really united. William Macneile Dixon, in A Primer of Tennyson with A Critical Essay (1901), saw the poem as divided into five groups: Death, Burial, the Past, Christmas Hopes, and the Future. He did not distinguish as much between trains of thought and spiritual development as between phases of the poet's life. His groups were, therefore, biographically based; "... the whole is therefore a mental history of the years of the poet's life immediately following 1833."¹⁵ Rev. Stopford A. Brooke, in Tennyson: His Art and Relation to Modern Life (1908), also saw the poem as primarily biographical, as a continuous story of two years and a half of the poet's life.¹⁶

Still other critics of the time maintained that the poem was not united at all. Arthur Christopher Benson, in

Alfred Tennyson (1907), denied that any overall scheme was discernible in In Memoriam.

Some of his great poems were written without any particular scheme. Thus In Memoriam is not in the least a coherent and articulate whole. A large number of the poems were written quite independently, and it was not until he began to review them and consider them in mass that the idea of a great connected whole entered his mind.¹⁷

The fact that he considered the poem to be disunited was what made In Memoriam a failure in Benson's view. "In Memoriam is a poor poem. It is not finished from within."¹⁸ Edward Mortimer Chapman, in English Literature in Account with Religion 1800-1900 (1910), also saw no continuous pattern or unity between the lyrics but, unlike Benson, he did not consider the poem a failure for this reason.

The fact that it is really a mass of related fragments may possibly have enhanced rather than diminished its power to reflect the broken lights which fell upon it.¹⁹

It was with A. C. Bradley's book, A Commentary on Tennyson's In Memoriam (1901), that the best and most complete of these early critiques appeared. Bradley was extremely meticulous in his approach and scrupulously examined the text of the poem for signs that would unite it. The most obvious sign of the unity that he found was in the "internal chronology" of the poem, the passage of years and the indications of the seasons that are part of the poem's development. The formal chronology that he found he saw marked particularly by the three Christmas sections. They

served to emphasize what Bradley saw as the intrinsically Christian character of the poem.

Bradley carefully mapped out all the indications of the passage of time during the less than three years that the poem appears to cover.

Against all these indications there seems nothing to be set except the few passages already noted, where a phrase or the tone of a section appears to be not quite in harmony with this internal chronology. That these passages are so few is a proof of the care taken by the author to preserve the clearness and consistency of the scheme. And it is undoubtedly of use in giving the outlines of a structure to the poem, and of still greater use in providing beautiful contrasts between the sections which deal with the recurring seasons and anniversaries; though it is somewhat unfortunate that the contents of some of the final sections imply a greater distance of time from the opening of the series than is suggested by the chronological scheme.²⁰

The basic problem with Bradley's scheme is evident in this excerpt. His scheme is too rigid to allow the variation that he regards as "unfortunate" and which he dismisses as an oversight on the part of the poet. His scheme is at times Procrustean in its refusal to allow deviations from his pattern. Any parts that do not fit in are either ignored or made to fit in by some arbitrary method. Although the seasons can be firmly defined by his method it is less easy to fit the poet's varying moods into this pattern. The intellectual and emotional variations of the poem do not fit into such a rigid form and therefore Bradley does not examine them as closely as is necessary. He describes the progression of thought in the poem very generally as moving from grief to triumph as is traditional in any elegy.

His divisions of the poem by relying primarily on the Christmas poems as dividing points, tend to over-emphasize the Christian aspects of the poem. Certainly the poem is concerned with faith, specifically with Christian faith, but it is also concerned, to an almost equally important extent, with doubt. Bradley's precision permits no deviation from his Christian pattern, yet the poem, in fact, is too broad in its scope to permit such a rigid interpretation. While Bradley's book opens many new areas of consideration and is an important landmark in the critical discussion of In Memoriam it fails, ultimately, to consider the broader implications of the poem's structure and, therefore, fails in an attempt to provide a definitive account of the poem.

Critics over the next twenty years tended to follow Bradley's lead in assigning to the poem a four part structure marked by the Christmas sections. Raymond MacDonald Alden in Alfred Tennyson: How to Know Him (1917) represented the structure as involving a gradual climb upwards to faith, while J. F. A. Pyre in The Formation of Tennyson's Style. A Study Primarily of the Versification of the Early Poems (1921) agreed with many of the earlier critics that In Memoriam was marked, and marred, by a lack of any unity whatsoever. Oliver Elton, in Tennyson and Matthew Arnold (1924), could find no unity in the poem. "In Memoriam was too dispersedly written for complete unity, though it

expressed Tennyson's inmost mind and experience."²¹ In Memoriam was a failure because of its inability to define itself.

There is really nothing in it; In Memoriam does not profess to be either a brief lyric or a tragical soliloquy... Composed at intervals over long years, it was no preconceived whole, nor can it be called an artistic whole.²²

Elton does concede a "semblance of unity ... enhanced by metre"²³ but this is only superficial.

Other critics took Bradley's argument and used the chronology that he laid down as one of the reasons for the poem's failure to achieve the status of a great poem.

Godfrey Fry Bradby, in his essay "Tennyson's 'In Memoriam'" in The Brontes and other essays (1932) suggested that

... Tennyson conceived the idea--not altogether a happy one--of giving a certain unity to his "wild and wandering cries" by representing them as an ordered progress from overwhelming sorrow to a cheerful resignation, from the chaos of doubt and despair to the security of a fixed faith. He condensed into three years the spiritual experience of fifteen, marked out a rough chronology by the repetition of three Christmases, three springs, and two anniversaries of his friend's death, composed variations, so to speak, on some of his original themes, amplified ideas, filled up gaps in the logical sequence of thought, prefixed a noble introduction, and added an epilogue which would have been better consigned to the waste paper basket.²⁴

Bradby succeeded, in this interpretation, in reducing poetic inspiration to a formula in which various lyric snippets were added, subtracted and shuffled around in order to create the semblance of a complete poem. Such a formula interpretation totally misrepresented the ideas presented in

the poem. Bradby did, however, take a look at the prologue and epilogue which, up until this time, were rarely mentioned in any discussion of the poem's structure. He accepted the prologue as a "noble introduction" and consigned the epilogue, unjustly, to the "waste paper basket."

In any comprehensive discussion of the structure of In Memoriam it is necessary to regard both the Prologue and the Epilogue as essential parts of the whole. Bradby did not do this and therefore his, and many other critics' interpretations are incomplete.

A famous interpretation of In Memoriam is that provided by T. S. Eliot in 1936. He states that

In Memoriam is the whole poem. It is unique: it is a long poem made by putting together lyrics, which have only the unity and continuity of a diary, the concentrated diary of a man confessing himself. It is a diary of which we have to read every word.²⁵

This interpretation of the structure of the poem is very misleading. It stresses the chronological nature of the poem as following a strict form, like that of a diary, in which thoughts are put down one after the other in a haphazard way. The chronology of In Memoriam is not rigid enough to support such an account of its structure.

After the second World War interest in Tennyson and in In Memoriam revived from the decline that Tennyson's reputation had fallen into in the years between the two world wars. Ideas about the structure of In Memoriam were not new but were rather reconsiderations of the older

propositions, particularly those of Bradley. The major attempt still appeared to be either to perceive some sort of framework in the poem that would help to explain how it was unified or to deny that In Memoriam was a unified whole at all.

Eleanor Bustin Mattes in In Memoriam The Way of a Soul: a Study of some Influences that Shaped Tennyson's Poem (1951) saw no internal unity that could have been derived from Tennyson's own experience. Rather she saw that

.... he disguised whatever natural sequence the way of his own soul afforded, and arranged the sections in an artificial chronological order supposedly representing the three year period after Arthur Hallam's death in which Tennyson, also supposedly, advanced from sorrow and doubt to serenity and faith.²⁶

Charles Tennyson in Six Tennyson Essays (1954) saw the progress in the poem as more "intuitive and emotional" and therefore often contradictory. Tennyson's intuitions were "not carefully considered axioms"²⁷ and therefore the unity of the poem was often in doubt. Basil Willey in More Nineteenth Century Studies: A Group of Honest Doubters (1956) also commented on the lack of any sense of unity or formal structure in In Memoriam but unlike many others he considered this one of the strongest points in the successful appeal of the poem. In Memoriam "succeeds largely because it lacks a more formal structure."²⁸

E. D. H. Johnson, in his article "The Way of the Poet" (1958), follows Bradley's ideas about the poem's structure in

which the divisions detail the specific stages both of the poet's state of mind and of his aesthetic development. Part One represents Despair (ungoverned sense) and Poetry as release from emotion. Part Two represents Doubt (mind governing sense) and Poetry as escape from thought. Part Three represents Hope (spirit governing mind) and Poetry as self-realization. Part Four represents Faith (spirit harmonizing sense and mind) and Poetry as mission. There are some interesting adaptations of Bradley's basic premises here but the main idea of In Memoriam's structure is that an external pattern must be fitted onto the poem which will cause it to conform to the critic's views.

Jerome Hamilton Buckley in Tennyson The Growth of A Poet (1961) suggests that

Since the way of the soul is neither direct nor entirely consistent but beset by waverings and alternatives, the unity of the poem as a whole derives less from its large loose argument than from the intensity and often the confusion of its single subject.²⁹

Buckley sees a primary structural device in the imagery which he sees as revolving around four basic images: dark (night), day (light), rain (water) and hand. The poem thus "depends above all on the recurrence of an imagery to which Tennyson's sensibility both consciously and unconsciously attaches particular meaning."³⁰ These images are important in creating a "tension of opposites"³¹ that is finally resolved in lyric XCV when the "polarities may be reconciled in a mystic half-light."³¹ Thus, Buckley sees the tensions and

uncertainties which other critics took to signify the poem's lack of cohesion as an essential part of the poem's structure. "In Memoriam runs through a complete cycle of despair and recovery, meaningful in itself as a way of the soul."³²

Valerie Pitt, in re-examining Bradley's ideas in her Tennyson Laureate (1962) disagrees with his emphasis on a literal chronology within the poem. She does not see the major divisions as occurring on the occasion of the Christmas poems but rather on the occasion of the Anniversary poems. She also disagrees with Eliot's theory that In Memoriam is a type of diary by pointing out that "There is a chronological order in In Memoriam but it certainly does not represent the order in which the poems were composed, and is conventional rather than real."³³ The poem is not to be seen in either Bradley's way or Eliot's way, both of which are too literal. The poem is constructed, according to Valerie Pitt, in a kind of double movement. It is "biographical in the sense that it records events" and it is "philosophical in the sense that it tries to discover and record the perspective of those events."³⁴

The idea of the poem's thematic unity began to be examined more closely in the 1960s. Jonathan Bishop in "The Unity of In Memoriam" (1962) saw in the poem "an omnipresent theme ... the theme of change ... natural, moral, psychological, and artistic."³⁵ He concludes that "In Memoriam grows into a whole, ..., by virtue of the organic

elaboration of this simple principle"³⁶ and that "... the point of contact is exactly that point of view from which the elaborate whole the language builds lives, in all its rich cycles, before the eye. It is the reader, then, who achieves the unity of the poem."³⁷

K. W. Gransden in Tennyson: In Memoriam (1964) sees a form of unity in the natural descriptions throughout the poem which "provide a series of metaphors on the changing state of the poet's mind."³⁸

J. C. C. Mays finds both Bradley's and Pitt's arguments faulty because, although each contains good ideas, each is valid only if the other one is denied. Contradictory structural designs are obviously inadequate as both cannot exist as a definitive explanation while the other exists. He sees little to relate the various lyrics together but shared themes and images. The major theme is one of contradiction as each image is in turn opposed by a contradictory image.

All that the lyrics themselves, or small groups of lyrics, have in common is their foundation in emotional tension or intellectual contradiction. It is natural, in other words, that they should all approach a central concern; but it is incidental to the way in which the majority appear to have been written that they should reflect a consistently developing interpretation of it.³⁹

Several critics still deny that any unity exists in the poem other than the superficial unity provided by the passage of time in its various formations. Christopher Ricks and Paul F. Baum are chief among the recent critics

who deny the presence of any real unity in the poem. Baum, for example, argues:

In truth, it is greatly to be regretted that, whenever it was that he decided to publish, he ever made the effort to superinduce an appearance of arrangement upon the various sections; for the two anniversary and the three Christmas poems produce only an illusion of order and have led incautious readers to assume (and somehow find) more method than actually exists.⁴⁰

Christopher Ricks, in examining the arguments for and against unity, states

Tennyson himself did not make large claims for In Memoriam as a unity; his sense that the Christmases provided an apt and serviceable division of the poem should not be taken as warrant for believing that a poem on the scale of In Memoriam, and with such large concerns, could be adequately unified by such links and cross-connections as modern criticism rightly delights in and wrongly pretends can be structurally critical. The Christmases, or the imagery of dark and light, of water and of the human hand: these do much in the way of "weaving them into a whole," but it remains weaving, not growing or building. Unifying principles which would be adequate to a short poem, and which might be adequate in a poem on the scale of Four Quartets ..., cannot take the strain they are asked to bear if we press them to take responsibility for the unity of a poem as long, various, ranging, and uneven as In Memoriam.⁴¹

Both methods used by the majority of the poem's critics, denial of unity and the discovery of an internal chronology, provide insufficient accounts of the poem's structure. It is not enough simply to deny unity or structure to the poem. Tennyson took too much care in his arrangement of the lyrics for us to simply disregard the way in which he organized the poem. To try to impose a structure

based upon our own preconceived ideas is just as mistaken. To read our opinions into Tennyson's work is to deny Tennyson's own purpose in writing the poem. The critic who, in recent years, has, I believe, looked at the poem and its unity with the most clarity and understanding is F. E. L. Priestley in Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry (1973). He does not attempt to relate events in Tennyson's life to lyrics in the poem but sees the chronology as merely a part of the poem's overall structure. Tennyson

... sacrifices the simple clarity of traditional form necessitating an auxiliary principle of structure. This Tennyson provides through a system of internal chronology, counter pointing a rhythm marked by recurring seasons and anniversaries against the basic rhythm of the elegy. The recurrences invite echoes and cross-references, creating movements within the larger movements, and binding parts together in patterns of related themes. The linear pattern of the formal elegy is thus replaced by a highly complex one, in which the clear succession of movements is blurred by overlappings, inter-fusions, anticipations, reflections and retrospects, by movements set against movements, and so on. Further complications of texture are provided by the extensive use of symbols, many of them recurring, gathering meaning or modulations of meaning as they reappear in varied contexts, and further binding parts tightly together into a structure of amazing intricacy.⁴²

The structure of the poem as Priestley describes it is, therefore, not imposed from without but observable within the body of the poem. The major unifying devices are symbols and, most importantly, the recurring images that tie all the varying parts of the poem into a cohesive whole. The poem's patterns of imagery, which I propose to discuss, provide, therefore, the basic structural devices that unite the poem.

Notes

- 1 Charles Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson, p.145.
- 2 Christopher Ricks, Tennyson, p.212.
- 3 John D. Jump, Tennyson The Critical Heritage,
p.182.
- 4 Ibid., p.183.
- 5 Ibid., p.245.
- 6 Ibid., p.172.
- 7 Ibid., p.299.
- 8 John F. Genung, Tennyson's In Memoriam Its Purpose
and Its Structure, p.80.
- 9 Ibid., p.89.
- 10 Ibid., p.90.
- 11 Ibid., p.97.
- 12 Rev. F. W. Robertson, Analysis of Mr. Tennyson's
"In Memoriam", Preface, unpaginated.
- 13 Jump, p.436.
- 14 Hallam Lord Tennyson, Alfred Tennyson A Memoir,
p.250.
- 15 William Macneile Dixon, A Primer of Tennyson with
A Critical Essay, p.83.
- 16 Stopford A. Brooke, Tennyson His Art and Relation
to Modern Life, p.212.
- 17 Arthur Christopher Benson, Alfred Tennyson, p.137.
- 18 Ibid., p.151.

19 Edward Mortimer Chapman, English Literature in Account with Religion 1800-1900, p.374.

20 A. C. Bradley, A Commentary on Tennyson's In Memoriam, pp.22-23.

21 Oliver Elton, Tennyson and Matthew Arnold, p.12.

22 Ibid., p.27.

23 Ibid., p.28.

24 Godfrey Fox Bradby, The Brontës and other essays, p.96.

25 John Dixon Hunt, Tennyson In Memoriam A Casebook, p.132.

26 Eleanor Bustin Mattes, In Memoriam The Way of a Soul: a Study of some Influences that Shaped Tennyson's Poem, p.xii.

27 Charles Tennyson, Six Tennyson Essays, p.78.

28 Basil Willey, More Nineteenth Century Studies A Group of Honest Doubters, p.80. /Only Edward Mortimer Chapman had previously commented on this aspect. It would seem that they both were attempting to view Tennyson's poem as a creation with a completely open structure./

29 Jerome Hamilton Buckley, Tennyson The Growth of A Poet, p.112.

30 Ibid., p.112.

31 Ibid., p.113.

32 Ibid., p.254.

33 Valerie Pitt, Tennyson Laureate, p.88.

34 Ibid., p.98.

35 Hunt, p.226.

- 36 Ibid., p.227.
- 37 Ibid., p.239.
- 38 K. W. Gransden, Tennyson: In Memoriam, p.30.
- 39 Hunt, p.263.
- 40 Paul F. Baum, Tennyson Sixty Years After, p.115.
- 41 Christopher Ricks, Alfred Tennyson, p.213.
- 42 F. E. L. Priestley, Language and Structure in Tennyson's Poetry, p.122.

CHAPTER II

IMAGERY AND THE CYCLICAL DEVELOPMENT IN IN MEMORIAM

In any discussion of the structure of In Memoriam the importance of theme and imagery cannot be overemphasized. It is by a study of the recurring themes and images that one can begin to grasp the overall pattern with which the poet was concerned. The form that the poem takes is determined by the interrelationships of the various images created and expanded upon in the body of the poem. By studying these interrelationships, and the way in which they are constructed so as to form a pattern, an overall structural framework can be determined. This framework can be seen to consist both of an overall view of the whole poem and of a close view of the various separate portions of the poem that mesh to form that whole. Any view of how the poem holds together is therefore contingent upon a close view of how the images and themes are developed into a continuous pattern. Once this pattern of themes and images is established and the various stages of the progression of the poet's state of mind are defined the poem can easily be seen to have a very definite form determined by the development of these aspects of the poem. I propose to show how these themes and images create a cyclical pattern of thought by repeating the various basic motifs as

the poem gradually progresses from doubt to faith. The poem can be seen to advance in a linear way but as this development progresses the poem can also be seen to repeat earlier experiences. These experiences have changed when we see them repeated. This changing perspective occurs because of the simultaneously linear and cyclical development in the poem.

All of the critics who have attempted to divide In Memoriam into varying numbers of parts have failed primarily because of the fact that their systems are based on pre-conceived ideas concerning Tennyson's philosophy. It is impossible to attempt to find any divisions, using external criteria, that do not seriously impair an understanding of the poem. The rigidity of some of the systems denies the force of the poem with its varying moods and the constantly shifting pattern of imagery that it contains. Even Tennyson's own "nine natural divisions" (I-VIII, IX-XX, XXI-XXVII, XXVIII-XLIX, L-LVIII, LIX-LXXI, LXXII-XCVIII, XCIX-CIII, CIV-CXXXI) appear somewhat arbitrary without some explanation of the reasoning behind them and because of the fact that he did not consider the Prologue and Epilogue a part of the whole.¹ The attempts to impose ideas, such as Bradley's over-emphasis of the Christian character of the poem, denies the fluidity of the poem. The interrelationships are too complex to survive any such attempts to categorize their development. Bradley's divisions are, however, an important starting point for any serious discussion of the structure of In Memoriam.

The varying moods and the evolution of emotion creates a structural design that, while it may be marked by changes of emphasis, is essentially moving towards the unity of the whole. Everything in the poem is involved with everything else in a constantly evolving cycle of change. Not only emotional and intellectual development but also the physical reality of the world and the imagery used to complement it is involved in this cycle. Christopher Ricks sees this rotation although he defines it as a flaw rather than as a primary unifying principle.

In Memoriam does not impose words for ideas; it does not much claim--in argument, as distinct from mood and feelings--to be going forward but rather is turning round. Indeed, the In Memoriam stanza (abba) is especially suited to turning round rather than going forward.²

The entire poem is involved in this gradual cycle of change and as emotions mature and develop so nature mirrors this change. As in the natural imagery throughout the poem the other images are involved in a repetitive cycle. The seasons change and repeat themselves, day repeats itself just as night does and emotions repeat themselves as Tennyson reconsiders the past. Even life can be seen repeating itself following Tennyson's re-affirmation of belief in an after life. This reaffirmation is particularly evident in the wedding in the Epilogue.

When one looks to the imagery for proof of unity it is much easier to begin to see the poem as a whole rather than as a series of disparate parts. The idea of cyclical change

which is repeated in all aspects of the imagery creates a pattern of development that ties the various aspects of the poem together. Through one of the cycles, for example, that of the seasons, one can trace their progress through a period of years. These years are especially marked by the particular emphasis placed upon the Christmas lyrics. This is not to emphasize particularly the Christian aspect of the poem, although that is a vital part, but rather to underline and mark the changes of attitude that the poet goes through. They serve to reinforce these changes and make them more apparent to the reader. The way in which the poet approaches the most important celebration of the year that he had earlier shared with Hallam is a vital clue to his changing perspective. The first Christmas after his death fell "sadly," overshadowed as it was by death, "one mute Shadow watching all." (XXX)³ The second Christmas fell "calmly" as the first paroxysms of grief have passed and the poet finds "The quiet sense of something lost" (LXXVIII). The third Christmas that he writes of takes place away from the family home and falls "strangely" and instead of seeking out the past he begins to look to the future.

Even the past seems to repeat itself as Tennyson revisits the places where he and Hallam were together in happier times. As he passes the halls of the university he can hear the sounds of life in them just as they were when he was there. Just as he enjoyed his years there and looked

forward to what the future would hold the students there always look to the future too.

The cyclical nature of the poem is evident from the beginning since the Prologue serves to show us what the poet has discovered in the long process of change. He has found a faith that can sustain him through the trouble he faces. This faith that he acknowledges was re-discovered in the "wild and wandering cries" he speaks of in the Prologue and he hopes to show how he gained the knowledge he sets before us. He has learned to believe.

Strong Son of God, immortal Love,
Whom we, that have not seen thy face,
By faith, and faith alone, embrace,
Believing where we cannot prove. (Prologue)

The end of his evolution is thus implicit in the beginning of his quest.

The images which are constantly repeated throughout this process also concern change. While the imagery may remain constant throughout, the poet's attitude towards the various aspects of life which the imagery depicts undergoes a vast change. At the beginning the poet is longing for a resumption of physical contact with his dead friend when he knows quite well that this is impossible. The physical imagery of hands and his longing to touch Hallam once more are of utmost importance to Tennyson. While he strives for contact with that which no longer physically exists the real physical world seems unreal to him. He is unable to appreciate any of the realities about him because of his absorption

with the attempt to rejoin Hallam. The emergence of Spring which should signify fresh growth and rebirth has no impact upon him other than to re-emphasize his loss and increase his sorrow.

With weary steps I loiter on,
 Though always under altered skies
 The purple from the distance dies,
 My prospect and horizon gone.

No joy the blowing season gives,
 The herald melodies of spring,
 But in the songs I love to sing
 A doubtful gleam of solace lives.

If any care for what is here
 Survive in spirits rendered free,
 Then are these songs I sing of thee
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear. (XXXVIII)

The changing of the seasons holds no attractions for him as he is unable to reconcile the death of Hallam with the fact that the real world still continues. Spring is present only in the outside world. Spiritually Tennyson still inhabits a world of winter.

Gradually, however, his frozen hopes begin to thaw as he begins once more to relate to the world around him. He does not reawaken immediately but gradually. There are instances of regression toward doubt throughout the poem but the poet always returns to his quest for faith. The regressions become fewer as his faith becomes stronger through the course of the poem. In the earlier section of the poem one of the most important regressions into doubt is found in lyric LVI when the poet considers the ravages of nature upon the world. Man "Who loved, who suffered

countless ills, / Who battled for the True, the Just" seems to have no future beyond witnessing its own extinction in the changing universe. This attitude can be seen to change later in the poem when the idea of the survival of the fittest comes to mean the creation of a better man rather than just the end of man as he is now. Faint hope is born in him as he considers another spring.

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

His doubt is still so strong, however, that spring remains only an abstract ideal rather than the vital re-awakening it should be. It is not until the end of the poem that Tennyson's final recognition of a spring that is both physical and spiritual arrives.

Now fades the last long streak of snow,
 Now burgeons every maze of quick
 About the flowering squares, and thick
 By ashen roots the violets blow.

Now rings the woodland loud and long,
 The distance takes a lovelier hue,
 And drowned in yonder living blue
 The lark becomes a sightless song.

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea;
 The flocks are whiter down the vale,
 And milkier every milky sail
 On winding stream or distant sea;

Where now the seamew pipes, or dives
 In yonder greening gleam, and fly
 The happy birds, that change their sky
 To build and brood; that live their lives

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

With his acceptance of reality he is finally able to relinquish his desire for physical contact with the dead. His understanding of Spring and the rebirth of the seasons has given him an assurance that, although physical contact has been irrevocably lost to him in this world, spiritual contact can be resumed in the rebirth of the soul in the next world. Without his ability to see the cycles of nature constantly replenishing themselves he would be unable to accept both his own loss as a part of the cycle of change and the future reconciliation implicit in the concept of rebirth.

The images of light and darkness are also a part both of the physical world and of his own emotional re-awakening. Throughout the beginning of the poem darkness predominates both physically and spiritually.

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

O heart, how fares it with thee now,
 That thou should'st fail from thy desire,
 Who scarcely darest to inquire,
 'What is it makes me beat so low?'

Something it is which thou hast lost,
 Some pleasure from thine early years.
 Break, thou deep vase of chilling tears,
 That grief hath shaken into frost!

Such clouds of nameless trouble cross
 All night below the darkened eyes;
 With morning wakes the will, and cries,
 'Thou shalt not be the fool of loss.' (IV)

Even in daylight the poet is unable to leave his spiritual night behind. The cycle of day and night is

constantly going on around him but he is virtually unaffected by the change.

And was the day of my delight
 As pure and perfect as I say?
 The very source and fount of Day
 Is dashed with wandering isles of night. (XXIV)

Gradually, as the cycles continue, the poet moves out of the night of grief into his dawn of Faith. The process is inevitable considering the cycles of change the poem contains, but despite this inevitability it is a long journey for the poet out of night until,

... East and West, without a breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
 To broaden into boundless day (XCV)

When his doubts are resolved he no longer finds darkness in everything about him. On the contrary light is now an integral part of everything, even of night.

Every part of In Memoriam is involved in cyclical change. Seasons change, days change and the poet changes. The types of change vary from that seen day to day to that seen year to year to the greatest change, seen in the poet himself that only occurs through all the other changes and as a result of them. His change from darkness and doubt to light and faith influences his view of all the other seasonal changes.

A circle is an ideal image for the development of thought as it is complete in itself. Cycles constantly change yet always return to their beginning. It is the inevitability of this repetition that gives a unity to the

whole poem. The various cycles continually revolve and are constantly intermingling one with the other. The change from day to night mingles with the changes of the season and all of these cycles reflect the change in the poet's state of mind.

Even those aspects of life which seem so permanent are seen in terms of evolution or on-going development. Death, usually seen as the absolute ending to all life, eventually comes to represent not an end but rather a beginning.

At the beginning of the poem death is a threat that exists in the midst of life and puts an end to everything.

... There sat the Shadow feared of man;
 Who broke our fair companionship,
 And spread his mantle dark and cold;
 And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
 And dulled the murmur on thy lip,

 And bore thee where I could not see
 Nor follow, though I walk in haste,
 And think, that somewhere in the waste
 The Shadow sits and waits for me. (XXII)

The contemplation of death and all its implications is, at first, more important to the poet than life. With the loss of Hallam, Tennyson exists in a sort of living death where nothing means anything to him and all he can hope for is to die himself. With his gradual involvement with the aspects of change and with his gradual gropings after faith the importance of death itself recedes in his consciousness. Death is still important to him but as the beginning of a new life rather than as a complete end to the old. With his

rediscovery of faith he finds a force to sustain him in his fear of death as an ending.

Be near me when I fade away,
 To point the term of human strife,
 And on the low dark verge of life
 The twilight of eternal day. (L)

Tennyson begins to realize that death can mean something quite different than it meant to him at the opening of the poem. He can again be at one with those he loved when he himself begins his new life. Finally, his sorrow dims. He is no longer so concerned with past sorrows that he cannot see the possibility of future joys.

Is it, then, regret for buried time
 That keenlier in sweet April wakes,
 And meets the year, and gives and takes
 The colours of the crescent prime?

Not all: the songs, the stirring air,
 The life re-orient out of dust,
 Cry through the sense to hearten trust
 In that which made the world so fair.

Not all regret: the face will shine
 Upon me, while I muse alone;
 And that dear voice, I once have known,
 Still speak to me of me and mine:

Yet less of sorrow lives in me
 For days of happy commune dead;
 Less yearning for the friendship fled,
 Than some strong bond which is to be. (CXVI)

The various images that were so distinct at the beginning of the poem gradually coalesce until each is intermingled with the other. Darkness is mingled with light, day with night, death with life. The physical imagery that was so important to the poet in the beginning has been transmuted to an all-encompassing spiritual imagery which sees Hallam in

every natural creation that the poet perceives.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
 I hear thee where the waters run;
 Thou standest in the rising sun,
 And in the setting thou art fair. (CXXX)

It is this mingling of Hallam with the world around that enables the poet finally to accept the loss he has been fighting against.

The time of greatest trial and triumph during this process has always been when the world is dark. Hope always seems irrevocably lost as he stumbles, both metaphorically and physically, through the night. His only salvation during these nights of loss lies in dreams and these dreams serve only to make awakening doubly painful. The poet, like the widower he likens himself to, dreams of his lost one and awakens to a reaffirmation of his loss.

Tears of the widower, when he sees
 A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
 And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
 Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
 A void where heart on heart reposed;
 And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
 Silence, till I be silent too. (XIII)⁴

Sleep, as the closest man can come to the sleep of death, becomes vital to the poet in his quest to discover a means of finding Hallam again. Hallam is seen as only sleeping,

Come then, pure hands, and bear the head
 That sleeps or wears the mask of sleep,
 And come, whatever loves to weep,
 And hear the ritual of the dead. (XVIII),

and thus the poet hopes that he can join him. However, the fact that he cannot join Hallam makes his re-awakening into physical reality so painful that he sometimes wishes that he himself were dead.

This year I slept and woke with pain,
 I almost wished no more to wake,
 And that my hold on life would break
 Before I heard those bells again. (XXVIII)

The gradual change in Tennyson's attitude towards both sleep and death evolves slowly through the course of the poem. Sleep can give him respite from sorrow and can recall the dead to life for a brief time.

When in the down I sink my head,
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, times my breath;
 Sleep, Death's twin-brother, knows not death,
 Nor can I dream of thee as dead:

I walk as ere I walked forlorn,
 When all our path was fresh with dew,
 And all the bugle breezes blew
 Reveillee to the breaking morn. (LXVIII)

Dreams present his problem to him, but he is unable to understand them at first. The understanding comes slowly until after his waking dream of Hallam (XCV) and his decision to leave his old home.

On that last night before we went
 From out the doors where I was bred,
 I dreamed a vision of the dead,
 Which left my after-morn content. (CIII)

He realizes that Sleep is more intimately connected to Death than even he had previously imagined. Sleep reflects the fact of Death and this also leads him to the conclusion that he has been seeking. Sleep inevitably ends in

re-awakening and, therefore, Death must also end in some form of re-awakening.

... And East and West, without a breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and
 death,

To broaden into boundless day. (XCV)

Just as one revives from sleep to life so must one also awaken from death to a greater life. Death, as the "twilight of eternal day" (L), must be followed, as all nights are, by a dawning.

It is when the images of cyclical change are more closely examined that a pattern in them can be discerned. It is not Tennyson's philosophy that gives unity to the whole, or any of the other systems proposed, but the internal imagery. The interrelationships of the various images give a cohesion and pattern to the whole poem that can be seen quite clearly. Stages of development are marked more by the development of the imagery than by any chronological system. As the images become less distinct and begin to merge more with each other the poet approaches an understanding of Hallam's death that he was unable to find before. By the end of the poem the images are inextricably bound, one to the other, just as the poet finds Hallam, and all he represents, to be inextricably bound in spirit to all the good in the world.

These interrelationships and the cyclical pattern of development that they present give us an overall structural framework for In Memoriam. The renewal of the various images as they revolve in a cycle of natural change is reflected in

the renewal of the poet's faith and belief in a greater life lying ahead of him. The changing and renewing of the days and seasons of the world around him gives him the strength he needs to complete his long night's journey into day.

The circle as a structural device in In Memoriam is immediately apparent in the Prologue. By beginning the poem at the end of his quest he connects the cycle of despair and faith that began with Hallam's death. We can see the end which he must reach and will reach through his gradual awakening, throughout the poem, to the inevitable rebirth of all things as reflected in nature. The cycles of change which he sees and begins to understand gradually pull him into the completion of a cycle in his own soul. He begins to move, as he must, from his night of despair to his dawn of hope and his final day of faith.

When the developments of the imagery contained in In Memoriam are traced the possible divisions of development become clear and comprehensible.

Notes

¹ John Dixon Hunt (ed.), Tennyson In Memoriam
A Casebook, p.33.

Tennyson told Knowles that he regarded the nine natural divisions the best divisions he could find. Martin J. Svaglic also used Tennyson's nine natural divisions in his article "A Framework for In Memoriam," in Journal of English and Germanic Philology LXI (1962).

² Christopher Ricks, Tennyson, p.222.

³ Christopher Ricks (ed.), The Poems of Tennyson, In Memoriam pp.853-988. /all further quotations from the poem will be from the same source./

⁴ cf. Milton's "Methought I saw my late espoused Saint," Merritt Y. Hughes, John Milton Complete Poems and Major Prose, p.170.

Methought I saw my late espoused Saint
 Brought to me like Alcestis from the grave,
 Whom Jove's great Son to her glad Husband gave,
 Rescu'd from death by force though pale and faint.
 Mine as whom washt from spot of child-bed taint,
 Purification in the old Law did save,
 And such as yet once more I trust to have
 Full sight of her in Heaven without restraint,
 Came vested all in white; pure as her mind:
 Her face was veil'd, yet to my fancied sight,
 Love, sweetness, goodness, in her person shin'd
 So clear, as in no face with more delight:
 But O, as to embrace me she inclin'd,
 I wak'd, she fled, and day brought back my night.

CHAPTER III

IMAGERY AND THE DIVISIONS IN IN MEMORIAM

In my view there are ten sections into which In Memoriam can be divided and these include the Prologue and Epilogue as necessary parts of the whole. Each part is distinct in itself and yet is an essential portion of the whole with its own particular contribution to make to the integrity of the poem. Each section becomes a link in the whole that serves to advance both an understanding of the poet's developing state of mind and of the way in which this development is linked to the processes of nature.

The first section is the Prologue which, as suggested earlier, anticipates the end that the poet will reach during the course of the poem. In the Prologue we see that he has learned that acceptance of faith does not and, indeed, cannot rest upon concrete facts alone. Faith must be achieved through intuition rather than direct revelation, sensed rather than known, and accepted without being wholly understood by the intellect. It is the acceptance of all that exists around him that particularly marks this part of the poem. The poet feels no need to question what God has done, because he now realizes that the very fact that God's will

has been done justifies divine action and denies the need to question it further. The poet does not even find it necessary to question death any more since he knows that it is not an absolute end and that it, in fact, signifies a new and better beginning.

Thine are these orbs of light and shade;
 Thou madest Life in man and brute;
 Thou madest Death; and lo, thy foot
 Is on the skull which thou hast made.

Thou wilt not leave us in the dust:
 Thou madest man, he knows not why,
 He thinks he was not made to die;
 And thou hast made him: thou art just. (Prologue)

Faith is as integral a part of man's life as light is a part of nature and the two are inextricably bound together here. The darkness of the loss of faith or ignorance is now not a hopeless darkness but a pause before the light which shall grow in it.

We have but faith: we cannot know;
 For knowledge is of things we see;
 And yet we trust it comes from thee,
 A beam in darkness: let it grow. (Prologue)

We can see in this beginning the end of the poet's quest and, therefore, we know where he will be when his quest has finished. He continues to mourn the loss of his friend Hallam but he no longer experiences the wild grief and anger that he first felt. He accepts his loss in the promise of his friend's continued life with God.

Forgive my grief for one removed,
 Thy creature, whom I found so fair.
 I trust he lives in thee, and there
 I find him worthier to be loved. (Prologue)

The second section (I-XXVII) takes us back to the very beginning of the poet's quest and introduces us to the central images by which the whole of the poem is held together. These introductory images are primarily concerned with the physical senses of touch, sight and hearing. The need to feel his loss in a physical sense is important in the opening lyrics of this section.

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

The spring that is touched upon in lyric II is of little importance to the poet save as a contrast to the dark Yew with which he feels such an affinity. The poet seeks to hold onto the dead and the Yew is doing just that.

Old Yew, which graspest at the stones
 That name the underlying dead,
 Thy fibres net the dreamless head,
 Thy roots are wrapt about the bones. (II)

All that the poet seems to see about him is images of darkness and physical manifestations of the emptiness he feels.

And all the phantom, Nature, stands--
 With all the music in her tone,
 A hollow echo of my own,--
 A hollow form with empty hands. (III)

The poet seeks reassurance by visiting the house where Hallam used to live and thinks of his loss of physical contact with him.

Dark house, by which once more I stand
 Here in the long unlovely street,
 Doors; where my heart was used to beat
 So quickly, waiting for a hand,

A hand that can be clasped no more--
 Behold me, for I cannot sleep,
 And like a guilty thing I creep
 At earliest morning to the door. (VII)

His loss affects his perception of the world around him and dawn only reveals "drizzling rain / On the bald street." He can find no pleasure in the physical world because of his loss.

So find I every pleasant spot
 In which we two were wont to meet,
 The field, the chamber and the street,
 For all is dark where thou art not. (VIII)

The thought of physical loss dominates all the poet's thoughts in this first part as he compares his own loss to the loss experienced by others:

Tears of a widower, when he sees
 A late-lost form that sleep reveals,
 And moves his doubtful arms, and feels
 Her place is empty, fall like these;

Which weep a loss for ever new,
 A void where heart on heart reposed;
 And, where warm hands have prest and closed,
 Silence, till I be silent too. (XIII)

In the second half of section one the emphasis shifts from physical nature and the reality of day and night to the abstract idea of a spiritual day and night. The poet, despite what the natural world shows, experiences a dark night of his spirit. He is unable to see any light and the arrival of the dawn at the end of this night seems inconceivable. In this depression Hallam's spirit, rather than his corporeal body, becomes the poet's beacon or perpetual light which must release him from his night of grief.

For I in spirit saw thee move
 Through circles of the bounding sky,
 Week after week: the days go by:
 Come quick, thou bringest all I love. (XVII)

Darkness gradually comes to be personified as "the Shadow feared of man." (XXII)

Who broke our fair companionship,
 And spread his mantle dark and cold;
 And wrapt thee formless in the fold,
 And dulled the murmur on thy lip,

 And bore thee where I could not see
 Nor follow, though I walk in haste,
 And think, that somewhere in the waste
 The Shadow sits and waits for me.

Darkness is therefore not only associated with night but appears to be present in everything. Life ends in the darkness of Death and "The very source and fount of Day / Is dashed with wandering isles of night." (XXIV)

Despite the pessimism expressed in this section it nevertheless ends on a note, if not of confidence, at least of acceptance. The loss of Hallam does not become less painful, but the poet perceives that it was better that he had had him to lose than that he had never known him at all.

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

The third section of In Memoriam begins, in my view, with the first of the Christmas lyrics. This section acts as a means of marking the passage of time and as a gauge of the progress that the poet is making towards his acceptance of

Hallam's death and his emergent belief in an afterlife of the soul. The section begins in night when everything is dark and the actual world is muffled in mist.

The time draws near the birth of Christ:
 The moon is hid; the night is still;
 The Christmas bells from hill to hill
 Answer each other in the mist. (XXVIII)

The poet is still possessed by grief and grief is still a part of all he is and does. Even the traditional pastimes of Christmas are clouded by the sense of "one mute Shadow watching all." (XXX). The section ends with the dawn that provides a promise of hope for the future.

Rise, happy morn, rise, holy morn,
 Draw forth the cheerful day from night:
 O Father, touch the east, and light
 The light that shone when Hope was born. (XXX)

Section four of the poem contains lyrics XXXI-L and is concerned to a major extent with a debate regarding the possibility of an afterlife. The poet discovers that there is no way of knowing absolutely what exists beyond death. The example of Lazarus would be ideal except for the fact that no one knows what he saw when he was dead.

Behold a man raised up by Christ!
 The rest remaineth unrevealed;
 He told it not; or something sealed
 The lips of that Evangelist. (XXXI)

The hope that there may be some existence after death is becoming vitally important to Tennyson. Despite his desperate need to know of an afterlife as a certainty, he is unable to find any concrete proof and, therefore, finds that he must believe without proof.

My own dim life should teach me this,
 That life shall live for evermore,
 Else earth is darkness at the core,
 And dust and ashes all that is;

This round of green, this orb of flame,
 Fantastic beauty, such as lurks
 In some wild Poet, when he works
 Without a conscience or an aim.

What then were God to such as I?
 'Twere hardly worth my while to choose
 Of things all mortal, or to use
 A little patience ere I die;

'Twere best at once to sink to peace,
 Like birds the charming serpent draws,
 To drop head-foremost in the jaws
 Of vacant darkness and to cease. (XXXIV)

The poet begins to consider the physical light and darkness, that he depicted initially on a merely physical level, in spiritual terms. He realizes that he is in the midst of a spiritual darkness which, unlike the physical nights that he experiences, is not alleviated by dawn. This spiritual darkness continues despite the physical re-awakening in Nature that heralds the coming of Spring.

This comparison between his own state of mind and the processes of Nature begins to lead his mind to an investigation of just how closely they really can be related. Lyric XL presents the wedding day of a bride and the human dawning that occurs as she enters a new way of life. The orange flowers that she wears signify the dawn of her new life. They are also associated with spring, with all its promise implicit in the "hopes and light regrets" that "Make April of her tender eyes" (XL). She is to be, as Tennyson's sister in the

Epilogue shall also be seen to be, a link between the past and the future and, in fact, carries the future within her.

Her office there to rear, to teach
 Becoming as is meet and fit
 A link among the days, to knit
The generations each with each;

And doubtless, unto thee is given
 A life that bears immortal fruit
 In those great offices that suit
The full-grown energies of heaven.

This mortal dawning is immediately contrasted with a spiritual, and therefore immortal, dawning in lyric XLI. There are no longer any links that can connect the poet to Hallam. Hallam has been transmuted through his death to something that the poet cannot comprehend.

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. (XLI)

The poet is still unable to reconcile night and darkness with the perpetual dawn which is faith. He can discuss the possibilities of such a state, but they are still conditional as far as he is concerned.

It is with lyric XLVI that the poet, finally, begins to reconcile the inevitable darkness he sees with an equally inevitable dawn. An afterlife is now referred to as "that deep dawn behind the tomb." (XLVI) If death is the darkness he so fears, his fear is alleviated by the thought of a subsequent dawn "A rosy warmth from marge to marge." (XLVI) The possibility of life after death becomes a probability that he can begin to accept unconditionally.

... And I shall know him when we meet:

And we shall sit at endless feast,
 Enjoying each the other's good (XLVII)

The sorrow that occasioned the poem has, by reason of the doubts it raised in the poet's mind, paradoxically served to strengthen the faith that he has slowly regained.

She takes, when harsher moods remit,
 What slender shade of doubt may flit,
 And makes it vassal unto love. (XLVIII)

This faith can now sustain the poet in a contemplation of the Death he previously feared, since he can begin to accept the fact that Death is only a second birth into a better life that will continue eternally.

Be near me when I fade away,
 To point the term of human strife,
 And on the low dark verge of life
 The twilight of eternal day. (L)

Section five includes lyrics LI-LXXVII and deals with the poet's final repudiation of doubt and his acceptance of faith. In this section we see the poet beginning to move out of the spiritual night which was so all-encompassing in section two. His doubts are changing to a form of trust that God will inevitably insure the continuity of the greater good.

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

The poet's doubts have not wholly disappeared since he is still puzzled by Nature's dual face of creation and destruction. He cannot comprehend the necessary evil that seems a part of Nature and, as Nature is a facet of God, this

evil detracts from the faith he is striving to hold.

I falter where I firmly trod,
 And falling with my weight of cares
 Upon the great world's altar stairs
 That slope through darkness up to God.

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. (LV)

His faith begins to strengthen once he accepts the fact that Hallam is gone and that he will not see him again in this life. The darkness that was so constant has become less of a burden as daylight breaks in upon him. "His inner day can never die, / His night of loss is always there."

(LXVI) Physical daylight and night become more important as they continue in a never-ending cycle that parallels the poet's progress towards faith. Daylight is no longer "dashed with wandering isles of night." (XXIV) Instead night, which was so fearful earlier, is less terrifying as it contains the dawn light that is reflected from Hallam's tablet.

And then I know the mist is drawn
 A lucid veil from coast to coast,
 And in the dark church like a ghost
 Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn. (LXVII)

Doubt is now associated with night ("How dimly characterized and slight, / How dwarfed a growth of cold and night." LXI) and can thus be alleviated by the knowledge of the "mystic glory" (LXVII) of Hallam's tomb. The perpetual light in darkness which the poet thus acknowledges to be continuously present keeps the final darkness from bearing down too heavily upon his soul.

His fears are also lessened by his comparison of Death and Sleep. While he sleeps he can dream and thus relive the past and see the happy times that he shared with Hallam. As he always awakens from sleep so, he realizes, must he awaken from Death. As there is life in sleep so also must there be life in death, "sleep's twin brother." (LXVIII)

With the physical dawn of lyric LXXII a spiritual dawning is also achieved. However reluctant the poet may be to accept the pain and wildness of life, he is beginning to face it, and his loss, in the light of day and the light of emergent faith. The poet is not quite ready to return completely to the full daylight of reality but he has finally left his spiritual night behind him.

The sixth section consists of only one lyric, lyric LXXVIII, the second of the Christmas lyrics. This lyric shows us what the previous section of lyrics has been moving towards, the beginnings of an acceptance of all that has happened in the past. The tradition of the season sustains the poet and his family and the season itself calms their sorrow as "The silent snow possessed the earth, / And calmly fell our Christmas eve." (LXXVIII) The poet has not forgotten his sorrow but he has found that it is less acute.

Who showed a token of distress?
 No single tear, no mark of pain:
 O sorrow, then can sorrow wane?
 O grief, can grief be changed to less? (LXXVIII)

Section seven (LXXIX-CIII) is one of the most important sections in the poem. In it the poet finally comes to

understand his loss and to accept what has passed. He accepts Hallam's death and begins to see the good in it for others, but he still cannot clearly see the good in it for himself. All good for him seemed to end when he could no longer speak to Hallam.

Nor blame I Death, because he bare
 The use of virtue out of earth:
 I know transplanted human worth
 Will bloom to profit, elsewhere.

For this alone on Death I wreak
 The wrath that garners in my heart;
 He put our lives so far apart
 We cannot hear each other speak. (LXXXII)

The poet is again looking to the actual world for inspiration. He no longer abjures the reality of the world around him and he can begin to look forward to the manifestations of spring.

Bring orchis, bring the foxglove spire,
 The little speedwell's darling blue,
 Deep tulips dashed with fiery dew,
 Laburnums, droppings-wells of fire. (LXXXIII)

However, he cannot help but look to the past and what might have been,

I see myself an honoured guest,
 Thy partner in the flowery walk
 Of letters, genial table talk,
 Or deep dispute, and graceful jest. (LXXXIV)

but he also looks at what is.

But I remained, whose hopes were dim,
 Whose life, whose thoughts were little worth,
 To wander on a darkened earth,
 Where all things round me breathed of him. (LXXXV)

He seeks out places where he and Hallam were happy together and remembers what passed between them there. His reverie of

the past, however, is disturbed over and over again by noise from the present. The noise of life continuing punctuates his thoughts of the past as he hears

... the distant shout
The measured pulse of racing oars
Among the willows ... (LXXXVII)

and in passing Hallam's room he hears that

... all within was noise
Of songs, and clapping hands, and boys
That crashed the glass and beat the floor. (LXXXVII)

The past echoes in the world of the present.

In lyric XCV the poet begins to draw closer to an acceptance of Hallam's death than he had at any time earlier. The world around him dims as dusk falls and all that can be seen is

..., where, couched at ease,
The white kine glimmered, and the trees
Laid their dark arms about the field. (XCV)

In the darkness the poet is alone and draws closer to Hallam than ever before as he communes with the dead.

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. (XCV)

The poet has reached a spiritual consummation of the physical unity he had felt with Hallam. This spiritual contact banishes the night around him and brings the dawn.

And East and West, without a breath,
 Mixt their dim lights, like life and death,
 To broaden into boundless day. (XCV)

The dawn as an image is the most important image in the rest of this section. Everything in nature seems a part of it and a reflection of the sun. Autumn lays "A fiery finger on the leaves" (XCIX) and turns them to flame and the sunflower "shining fair, / Ray round with flames her disk of seed" (CI) becomes a miniature sun to remind the poet of the dawn.

The poet dreams of Hallam (CIII) but, unlike his other, earlier dreams, these dreams leave him content. He dreams again of physical contact with Hallam, not with regret at losing it but with content that one day he will find a new form of contact with Hallam's spirit.

Section eight (CIV-CVI) is the last of the Christmas sections. The poet is changing and accepting the way of Nature and of God which is the way of life and death. That "mute Shadow watching all" (XXX) that so terrified him has lost its terror.

Let cares that petty shadows cast,
 By which our lives are chiefly proved,
 A little spare the night I loved,
 And hold it solemn to the past. (CV)

Death is no longer fearful to the poet because he can see the prospects that lie beyond it in the eternal life of the soul. Just as winter contains within its desolation the promise of spring, so does death contain within it the promise of

re-birth. The cycle of Nature is always revolving and bringing everything back to life.

Long sleeps the summer in the seed;
Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good. (CV)

The cathartic explosion of the bells in lyric CVI rings out all the "cares that petty shadows cast," the evils and the doubts that earlier preyed on the poet, and rings in the faith that will sustain him.

Ring in the valiant man and free,
The larger heart, the kindlier hand;
Ring out the darkness of the land,
Ring in the Christ that is to be. (CVI)

The ninth section of In Memoriam (CVII-CXXXI) is concerned primarily with the poet's final return to reality and his acceptance of the world of men. He will not hide from his duties as a member of society lest he lose the qualities of a man.

I will not shut me from my kind,
And, lest I stiffen into stone,
I will not eat my heart alone,
Nor feed with sighs a passing wind. (CVIII)

He sees his love of Hallam now for what it is, a great light in his life that can make daylight out of the darkest night.

When Spring comes once more Tennyson can enjoy it as he has not been able to since Hallam died. He sees the Spring finally for what it is, a physical emblem of the re-awakening of the soul.

... and in my breast
Spring wakens too; and my regret
Becomes an April violet,
And buds and blossoms like the rest. (CXV)

The Spring strengthens his faith in God, his faith in himself and, most importantly to his peace of mind, his faith in a life after death.

Yet loss of sorrow lives in me
 For days of happy commune dead;
 Less yearning for the friendship fled,
 Than some strong bond which is to be. (CXVI)

The poet revisits the "dark house" of lyric VII, but he is no longer hunting for the reunion of two friends in this world. The darkness that surrounded the doors before is gone and the poet finds that he can "smell the meadow in the street."

(CXIX) He accepts his physical loss but reaffirms the spiritual contact he found in lyric XCV. "And in my thoughts with scarce a sigh / I take the pressure of thine hand."

(CXIX).

Night falls again in lyric CXXI but it contains none of the fear that night previously occasioned. His spiritual contact with Hallam gives him the hope to banish the fear of night and his faith keeps the darkness bright. Everything in existence is at one with everything else and therefore, to the poet, the ultimate contact he has achieved is with God, who brings all things together.

And what I am beheld again
 What is, and no man understands;
 And out of darkness came the hands
 That reach through nature, moulding men. (CXXIV)

The last images of Hallam that the poet gives us show the poet mingling his friend with all around him.

Strange friend, past, present, and to be;
 Loved deeper, darker understood;
 Behold, I dream a dream of good,
 And mingle all the world with thee. (CXXIX)

Hallam is a part of all Nature now and thus the poet, although he has lost him in this world, can see the essence of the good that he represented in all natural things around him.

Thy voice is on the rolling air;
I hear thee where the waters run;
Thou standest in the rising sun,
And in the setting thou art fair. (CXXX)

The last section, section ten, consists of the poem's Epilogue. This account of the wedding of the poet's sister gives him the joy of adding a friend to the family circle that had earlier been broken by Hallam's death. The poet had not felt that he could ever be happy on such an occasion again. He has found through the experiences presented in the poem that the world must continue to evolve and joys, as well as sorrows, are to be repeated in the cycle of man's existence. The Epilogue points out, to the reader and to the poet, that life goes on and grief cannot still the life that each man is a part of. The changes in life and the continuation of the cycle of life brings man close to Nature and, therefore, closer to God and prepares him for the life which he shall find after death.

CONCLUSION

With the Epilogue the cycle of reconciliation is complete. The spiritual fulfilment seen at the beginning of In Memoriam in the Prologue is mirrored in the Epilogue by a physical fulfilment. These two sections are complementary halves of the poet's final state of mind and as such serve to unite the poem and give it a symmetry that it might otherwise lack. With the beginning of the poem so closely bound thematically to the end of the poem the circular structure becomes increasingly apparent. The themes and images dwelling upon the circle and the revolution of cycles are reflected by the circular form of the poem itself. The fact that one can trace these cycles of day and night and of the seasons consistently through all the sections of the poem binds the sections together and gives them an integrity of purpose. Throughout all the sections one can also trace the spiritual cycles through which the poet's soul is travelling and compare them to the physical cycles around him. The earlier sections emphasize the physical daylight and night and thus prepare us for the gradual shift in emphasis, contained in the later sections, to the concepts of spiritual daylight and night.

The Christmas sections help to maintain this structural shape as they repeat the same essential experience, the

coming of Christmas, in changing ways that reflect and emphasize the poet's changing perspective. They also serve to underline the passage of time that it is necessary for the poet to live through before he can begin to understand the nature of his own existence.

As the poet gradually becomes attuned to the cycles of Nature he can begin to see the cycles that exist in his own life. By accepting the fact that everything is fore-ordained to repeat itself in one way or another he can believe that some day he will again find some form of communion with Hallam's soul. Just as day repeats itself so the joy that he knew in Hallam's company will repeat itself. It will be a different joy just as each new day is different from the last but it will also be the same in all the essential aspects.

The poet can see his own life as part of a "closing cycle" composed of "measured arcs" (CV) of development that will eventually lead him back to a form of beginning again in a life after death. This circular pattern which he has discerned forms the basic structural concept for In Memoriam which is connected by cycles of nature, cycles of thought and emotion, cycles of experience and cycles of time.

Once we reach the end of the poem the Epilogue is connected to the beginning once more in a "closing cycle rich in good." (CV)

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