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Tennyson's Bipolar Speakers: From Melancholy in "Mariana" To Madness in *Maud*

Jenita Nave Smith

A dissertation presented to the
Graduate Faculty of Middle Tennessee State University
in partial fulfillment of the requirements
for the degree of
Doctor of Arts

December 2001

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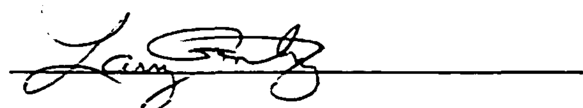

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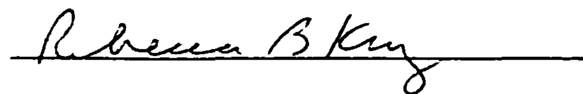

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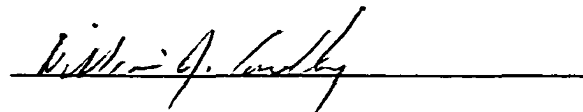

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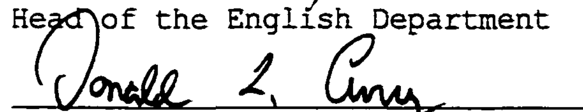

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Abstract

Tennyson's Bipolar Speakers: From Melancholy in "Mariana" to Madness in Maud

Jenita Nave Smith

This dissertation discusses Alfred, Lord Tennyson's early poetry and his last great poem, Maud, as psychological and autobiographical works. Living in a chaotic and tumultuous age, Tennyson, like Matthew Arnold and many other Victorian poets, was filled with dissention against science, progress, and materialism. In an age when Victorian scientists treated madness as a social and legal problem, poets of the day were both fascinated and sympathetic because they sensed that madness was a symptom of the times. Thus, Tennyson's poetry is peopled with depressed and mad speakers who serve as metaphors for the mental chaos of an entire period, maddened because of new scientific information and a disregarding of love in the rush toward material wealth.

Chapter One establishes the effects of the "black blood" of Tennyson's ancestry and the devastation of living with a bipolar and alcoholic father, a weak mother, and brothers who were mentally unstable, alcoholics, and drug addicts.

Chapter Two traces melancholia, madness, and bipolar

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disorders, beginning with the ancient Greeks and Romans and continuing up to the present day, with special emphasis on the Victorian Age.

Chapter Three discusses bipolar speakers in Tennyson's early poems, "The Outcast," "My life is full of weary days," "Mariana," and "Tithonus," who, because of deep depression and despair, isolate themselves from society and long for death. "Locksley Hall," the last poem in this chapter, shows the reverse of depression, and readers see a bipolar speaker who rants and rages about materialism and class differences.

Chapter Four deals with Tennyson's most controversial poem, Maud. Here, Tennyson's bipolar protagonist vividly expresses anxiety and madness about a materialistic and doubt-torn society.

Chapter Five discusses Maud as a major psychic catharsis for Tennyson. With the publication of In Memoriam, his marriage to Emily Sellwood, and his laureateship, Tennyson, by 1850, for the first time, had stability in his life. Because of this stability, in 1855 with the writing of Maud, he worked through the angst he had lived with and carried with him all his life.

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I should like to express sincere thanks to Tommy Phillips for his help and concern. Whenever I got too serious and too stressed about trivial things, he made me laugh and helped me put things in the proper perspective. I shall be forever grateful.

I should like to dedicate this dissertation to the memories of my late husband and my mother, Frankie Noel Smith and Pauline Wales Nave. Their love, unselfishness, and support gave me confidence and helped me realize I could succeed at anything if I worked hard enough. Somehow, I believe they know I have achieved my academic dream, and they are proud.

Last, but most importantly, I dedicate this dissertation with much love to my son, William Noel Smith, who allowed me time to pursue my academic goals when he could have complained about time taken away from him. From a young age, he has shown maturity beyond his years, and he will never know how very proud I am of the man he has become.

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Introduction

Few people in the present age would quarrel with the notion that Alfred, Lord Tennyson is an important poet, and most would agree that he is a great poet. Yet, as with any poet, no matter how great or important, the greatness or deficiencies of his individual work remains a matter of controversy among scholars and critics. It is difficult to find scholars who agree on the meaning of individual poems, and it is this lack of unanimity of opinion that signals the vitality of Tennyson's work and the importance of future Tennysonian studies.

The Victorian Age experienced unprecedented flux, as science and technology shook the foundations of traditional society. Scholars have long described the Victorians as a people who were torn by spiritual doubts as many began to question the existence of God. Also, Victorians were typically crass materialists who embraced the industrial age and became concerned only with bettering "self." The Victorians were also a people obsessed with mental health, yet they were inept in knowing how to deal with the various types of neuroses and nervous disorders. Considering all these factors, it is no wonder that certain members of

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society began to feel isolated and fragmented.

The Victorian Age of change was especially detrimental to the health of sensitive minds like Alfred, Lord Tennyson's. Not only did Tennyson have to worry about the age in which he lived, he also had personal problems that plunged him into deep depressions. Tennyson's father, George, was a first son who was disinherited because his father found signs of mental instability early in his life. Scholars speculate that George Tennyson also suffered from epilepsy, a condition believed by the Victorians to be a form of madness. Tennyson's father was also an alcoholic who became violent toward his wife and his children. Therefore, in an age when madness and epilepsy were thought to be inherited diseases, Tennyson feared what his ancestors termed "the black-blooded madness" of the Tennysons. His fears were soundly based, as he contended with family members who suffered from epilepsy, depression, mania, hypochondria, hysteria, alcoholism, and drugs. At one time or another, all his family, father, mother, brothers, sisters, and Alfred himself, were afflicted with these illnesses.

These psychological factors played an important role in Tennyson's poetry. In his early poetry, one clearly

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sees speakers who are isolated, depressed beings who long for death or who exist in a life-in-death existence. These isolated, despairing, almost paralyzed characters are found in many of his early poems, particularly in "The Outcast," "My life is full of weary days," "Mariana," and "Tithonus." These poems and speakers express no hope for the human condition, and the speakers are as static, depressed, and isolated at the end of the poems as they are at the beginning. Daniel Albright writes of Tennyson's early poetry and speakers that "the loss of self" is evident (4). In "Locksley Hall" and later in Maud, one finds the manic side of a bi-polar speaker. Both speakers rave about the ills of society and how they feel cut off from the world in which they live.

In the above-mentioned poems, Alfred Tennyson is clearly creating fictional personae, but there is a strong autobiographical current in these bipolar speakers. The embarrassing and humiliating circumstances of lacking wealth and social status are the direct results of his father's disinheritance and mental state of mind. These humiliating circumstances, combined with the death of his best friend, Arthur Henry Hallam, and the souring of his relationship with the wealthy and beautiful Rosa Baring

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are transmuted into the fabric of his poetry. This dissertation, therefore, addresses both the psychological and the autobiographical elements of isolation, depression, madness, and despair in Tennyson's poetry.

Roger Platizky notes that there has been little discussion, aside from the critical reception of Maud, that deals with the theme of depression and mania and the social implications that these nervous disorders caused in the Victorian Age (11). There has been even less research on linking the speaker of Tennyson's early poems and Maud to the author. Perhaps critics have been deterred from exploring the autobiographical significance to these works because Tennyson vehemently denied its existence (Martin 382). Further, it appears that scholars have slighted Tennyson's early works and Maud in recent years, with more scholarly attention paid to the The Idylls of the King and In Memoriam. This dissertation concentrates on the effects of the Victorian Age and Tennyson's ancestry as it examines the autobiographical and psychological elements in Tennyson's early poetry and Maud.

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Chapter I

Tennyson's Heritage: "The Black-blooded Madness"

Alfred, Lord Tennyson's career reflects a long series of triumphs, among them a laureateship, a peerage, two estates, Farringford and Aldworth, and a burial place in Westminster Abbey. No English poet before or since has achieved as much acclaim. However, his life was not without hardship and sorrow, even if his biographers sometimes ignore these facts. H. A. Taine, in his *Histoire de la Litterature Anglaise* (1863-4), views Tennyson's life through rose-colored glasses, as he depicts the great bard as a man "surrounded by rolling greenness of the English countryside, comfortable manors and villas, cultivated gentry, balanced womenfolk, living among roses and honeysuckles on his beautiful isle of Wight" (qtd. in Lucas 5). However, this view of Tennyson is incomplete. Tennyson may have come into the world "with a silver tongue in his mouth," but he was by no means born with a silver spoon in it (Lucas 11). Tennyson had more than his share of troubles and sorrows in his life, and his early poetry stemmed not from the beauty of nature as Wordsworth's did but from a snarled web of family feuding, bitterness, genteel poverty, drunkenness, and violence, all related in

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no small way to the disinheritance of his manic-depressive father.

Indeed, Tennyson's poetry suggests that the poet suffered from depression, just as his father did. With today's medical advances, society is much more aware that many famous people suffered from manic-depressive disease, now labeled bipolar affective disorders. Tennyson was one of these who suffered. Today, it is also common knowledge that bipolar affective disorder can be passed from one generation to another. Tennyson's Memoirs, collected and written by his son, Hallam, and the many biographies written about Tennyson and his family reveal that Tennyson inherited his father's "black blood."

In fact, Tennyson's ancestry indicates that not only did his father suffer severely from a bipolar affective disorder, but that the disease affected family members all the way back to his great-grandfather. Furthermore, both Tennyson's paternal grandmother and grandfather suffered from bipolar disorders suggesting that the poet's father, George Clayton Tennyson II, inherited dominant genes for depression from both parents (O'Neill 55). This double inheritance condemned ten of the eleven surviving children born to George Clayton and Elizabeth Fytche Tennyson, to

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lives of varying degrees of mental illness. Because of this inheritance, Alfred Tennyson struggled throughout his life to overcome fierce and recurring episodes of depression. Indeed, a struggling bipolar speaker appears in many of his early works, and it is not until around 1855, when he wrote and published Maud, surely a cathartic experience for the poet, that the depression seems to have resolved, and his protagonists become less depressed and more normal.

In reviewing the Tennyson's family bloodline, it is clear to see how relevant his fears of madness actually were. Biographers have traced melancholy, violence, and insanity as far back as the seventeenth-century branches of the Clayton and Tennyson families (Ricks 25). Kay Redfield Jamison, a physician who has studied Tennyson's family history, writes, "Alfred's father, grandfather, and two great-grandfathers, as well as all six of his brothers, suffered from insanity, severe melancholia, incendiary tempers, or manic-depressive illness" (197). Not only did Tennyson's father and grandfather suffer recurrent attacks of uncontrollable rage and depression, but at least one of his paternal aunts, and probably both, also suffered from depressive illness. His aunt Elizabeth, for instance,

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often suffered recurrent illnesses that were accompanied by depression (Martin 4). Peter Levi describes Tennyson's Aunt Mary, his father's other sister, as "morose, a hypochondriac, a wanderer between the health resorts, and an addict of dramatic quarrels with landladies and intimates" (16). Charles, Tennyson's paternal uncle and his father's only brother, who inherited the Tennyson estate, is described by the poet's grandson, Sir Charles, as having inherited his father's melancholic "fretfulness and irritability" (Tennyson and Dyson 184). However, Tennyson's father, George Clayton Tennyson II, suffered the most from depression and, in turn, caused the most suffering. Harold Nicholson claims, "The black blood which flowed in the veins of all the Tennysons had in this case turned to bile" (5).

A review of Tennyson's ancestry reveals the extensiveness of his family's affliction, as well as the sources of his own morbid temperament. Since Tennyson family names are handed down and appear so often, a genealogical chart is included on page 6. Tennyson's biographers, among them John Jump, Christopher Ricks, Robert Bernard Martin, and Sir Charles Tennyson, the poet's grandson, attribute severe mental disturbances to the

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Tennyson family as far back as 1750, the birth year of Tennyson's paternal grandfather, George Clayton Tennyson, only son of Michael and Elizabeth Clayton Tennyson. Peter Levi notes that Tennyson's great-grandfather, Michael Tennyson, married above his class status. Elizabeth Clayton, a Hildeyard on her mother's side, brought to this marriage money and a claim to a grander lineage than the Tennysons had hitherto possessed. However, her blue-blooded heritage was not all Elizabeth Clayton brought to her marriage. Michael Tennyson probably had not counted on the aberrant mentality that seemed to be the legacy of the Claytons. Kay Redfield Jamison describes Elizabeth Clayton Tennyson's brother, Christopher Clayton, as "a mind on the verge of insanity" (198), while Robert Bernard Martin describes the Clayton family as "quarrelsome, litigious, recriminatory, and distrustful, even of each other"(2). Peter Levi writes, "This mixture proved indigestible to them, and the resulting explosions happened in Alfred's father's time" (15). Whatever else the marriage might have brought, it also produced a son and a daughter. The son, George Clayton Tennyson, the poet's grandfather, born in 1750, apparently inherited the "black blood," and his actions profoundly affected the poet's life.

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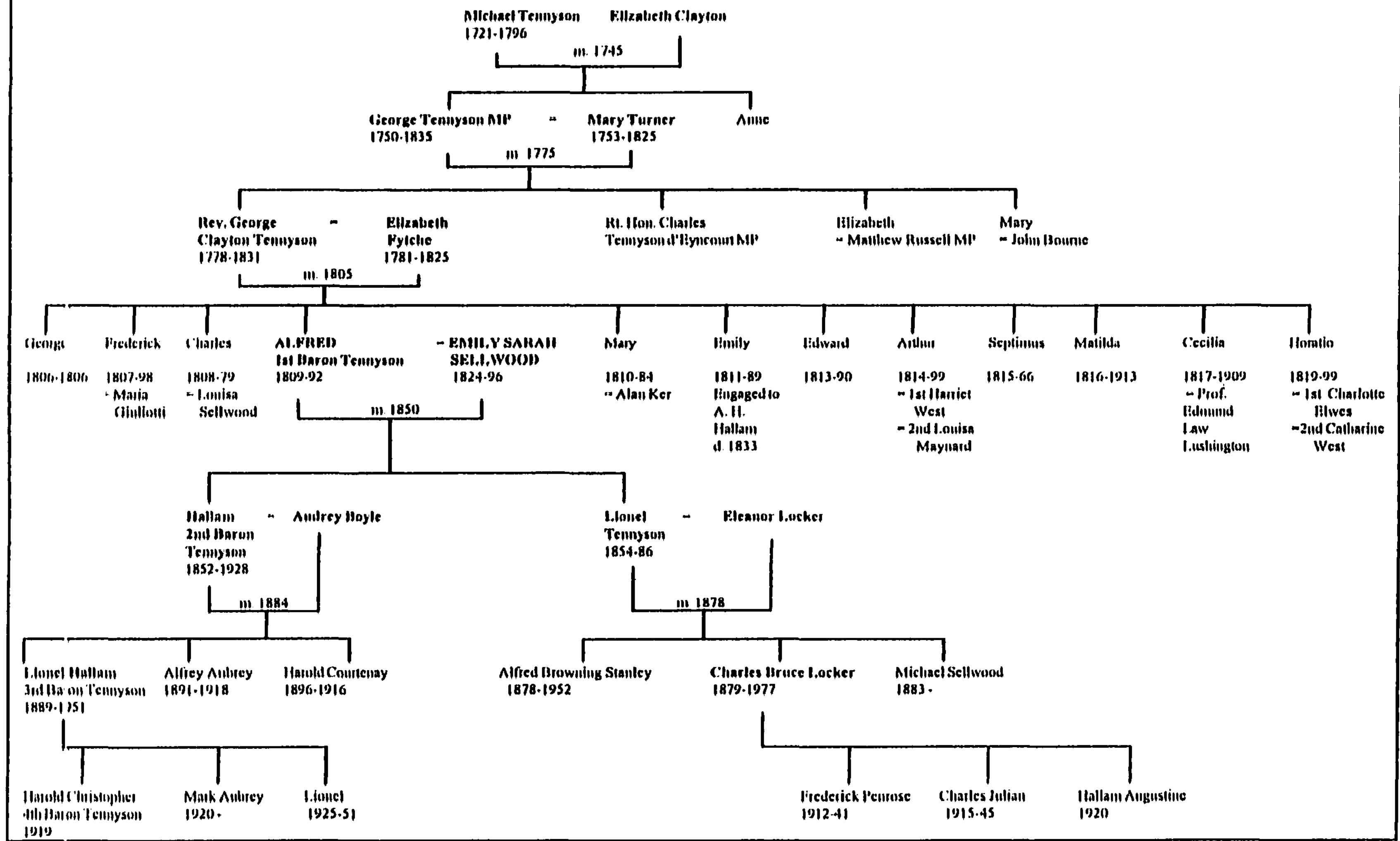

George Clayton Tennyson was only five years old when his mother died, and her early death may have accounted in part for his bullying attitude and his susceptibility to choleric rages. Since Elizabeth died so soon after George's birth, one may only speculate as to whether she had shown any of the Clayton mental instability, but it is likely that her removal from his life affected his attitude towards women. Throughout his life, George Clayton seemed to dislike women, and he tolerated their presence only to attend to his needs and to make him comfortable. It is tempting to attribute his personality to the lack of a mother's love and training, but that may be a simplistic assumption since his children and his grandchildren also suffered from depression, melancholia, and mental breakdowns of all degrees of seriousness, including outright insanity.

George Clayton Tennyson started his career as a solicitor in Lincolnshire and built up a large practice. By 1800, Tennyson's grandfather had acquired wealth and land, and he made it his job to establish the family as a "county family," with social prestige (Sir Charles 3). He was extremely proud of the fact that his mother was a Clayton and, therefore, a descendant of the d'Enycourts and

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ultimately of King Edward III. Peter Levi describes Tennyson's grandfather as "sharp, ambitious, mean, suspicious, and fierce, with many of the characteristics of a peasant," and he notes that his grandchildren called him "the Old Man of the Wolds" (16). Levi continues, "He was all but crooked: that is, he was a schemer and a groveller until the victim fell into his clutches, but then he was ruthlessly avaricious" (16). Sir Charles Tennyson adds to that description:

> He loved power and surrendered it, even in small matters, with great reluctance. Yet he was easily depressed and was liable to moods of indecision and fretfulness when inclination was at odds with prudence, or when he seemed to be threatened with some misfortune with which he could not see his way to cope. In these moods, or when his wishes were thwarted, he could work himself into an extreme pitch of irritation and morbid sensibility and would sometimes speak with a violence and sarcasm which were excessively wounding. (4)

Tennyson's grandfather, then, was a power-hungry man, prone to moods of severe depression and sometimes violence when

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things did not turn out as he planned or if he was crossed in any way.

In 1775, George married Mary Turner, whose brother Sam was known as a heavy drinker who often became violent and had explosive fits of rage (Levi 16). Four children were born to George and Mary: Elizabeth and Mary, born in 1776 and 1777, and Tennyson's father, George Clayton II, who was born in 1778. His brother Charles, the son who inherited the estate and added the name d'Eyncourt to that of Tennyson, was born six years later in 1784. It seems that each child was treated differently, with Elizabeth always being described as the "most charming, and beautiful" (Levi 16). Charles was the apple of his father's eye, seeming always to know what to do and say to please the old man. George and Mary, on the other hand, were both described as "difficult" children and were boarded with their grandparents in Holderness and Caistor until George was ten, on the grounds that it would "save trouble and expense" (Levi 16).

That the children were sent away to save money seems to have been an excuse to be rid of them. At the time the children were sent to live with their grandparents, George, their father, was financially secure, both in money and

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land. The truth of the matter was simply that George and Mary were both ill-tempered children who were constantly at odds with their parents, especially their father. George was unruly, noisy, and ungovernable, and he was even worse after he came back from living with his grandfather, Michael Tennyson. Upon George's return home, his own mother wrote, "I think I never saw a child so rude and ungovernable" (qtd. in Levi 16). His father's feelings were no less agreeable, as Robert Bernard Martin notes: "If the elder George worked at liking his first son, his efforts were singularly unsuccessful" (5). With his seeming inability to like or get along with his eldest son, it became the elder George's chief aim in life to ensure that the Tennyson name and estate should pass into the hands not of his first son George, but his second son, Charles. This decision greatly affected the lives of Tennyson's father's descendants in a negative way (Sir Charles Tennyson 6).

In an age of primogeniture, George Tennyson the elder decided early on that his eldest son would not inherit his estate. His Lincolnshire neighbors were aghast that he would disinherit his eldest son; a neighbor, who owned 10,000 acres in the community, warned George that he "would

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be damned to hell if he did such a wicked thing" (Levi 17). George the elder remained undaunted. He likely decided to pass his eldest son's inheritance to his younger brother, Charles, as early as 1796, when George the younger was only twelve (Ricks 25), and entering St. John's College, Cambridge. It appears that George realized what was happening, and perhaps that is why he became even more rebellious. His earlier problems, such as difficulty with relationships, may well have been a result of his feeling like an outcast in his own home.

There can be no doubt that George knew he was not as well liked as the other children. Sir Charles Tennyson describes the young George as "a tall, swarthy, rather awkward boy, handsome and strongly built, but with tricks of voice and gesture indicating a highly nervous temperament, and an expression which, though promised considerable intellectual power, promised also excessive sensibility and intolerance of discipline" (6). Peter Levi suggests that even sister Mary, with her ill temper, was better liked than George, and this no doubt made for a very lonely existence. Robert Bernard Martin describes George the younger as a man:

> George Clayton Tennyson was capable of both his

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> mother's sweetness and his father's rage, but he had inherited neither the placidity of the one nor the surface self-confidence of the other, and his life was a turmoil of emotions, each forgotten as it was succeeded by another. He was several inches over six feet tall, physically awkward, with long legs and enormous feet that gave him a lurching gait. His rough, handsome curiously unformed face was incapable of hiding the turbulent emotions within, and his body was a quivering, twitching instrument upon which they played. (5)

George, then, was unusual looking and emotionally volatile, and these qualities alienated him from this family and from society.

Charles, on the other hand, was graceful and handsome, and whereas George tended to do and say everything to offend his father, Charles knew instinctively how to flatter his father and retain his favor. However, in spite of his looks and grace, Charles did not possess his father's "quick-witted shrewdness nor his mother's charm and sense of humour about herself. With all his abilities, the fact seems patent that Charles was a bore" (Sir Charles

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6). Also, Charles contracted the most unsatisfactory marriage of the four children's, and his own children often laughed at his pretentiousness and turned against him. Oddly enough, even though Charles had what his brother George and others considered George's "rightful inheritance," the two brothers remained friends all their lives. Although there were arguments and disagreements, their anger was usually short-lived. However, George's sons despised their Uncle Charles, and Robert Bernard Martin suggests that "his grandfather's decision to disinherit his father was the major governing factor in Alfred Tennyson's first part of his life, even though the decision had taken place long before his birth in 1809" (7).

Scholars have suggested many reasons for the elder son's disinheritance. Many critics believe George Tennyson disinherited young George because he suffered from epilepsy. Peter Levi disagrees, suggesting that George was not epileptic:

> The poet tells us that later in life that he [Alfred] used to go into a kind of trance, and recent scholars have sought to diagnose epilepsy, or the fear of epilepsy, which he is supposed to

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> have caught from his father. But his father was not epileptic, nor is epilepsy inherited, and there is not the slightest evidence that Alfred had epilepsy. His brothers and sisters were all eccentric, one mad, but none of them was epileptic. Scholars have been seduced by connecting "epilepsy" with sexual guilt, and insinuating its presence because it used to be imagined that masturbation was a cause of epilepsy. But this does not hold water. The only epilepsy which could possibly have affected the Rector is temporal lobe epilepsy, which is extremely rare. A doctor told the Rector's mother his fits were 'catelepsy, not epilepsy,' and drink is a much likelier cause of his ailments. (25-6)

If Levi is correct, then one must look at alternative reasons for the disinheritance. Perhaps George Clayton Tennyson saw in his son signs of mental instability, or manic-depression as we know the disease today. However, other critics believe in the epilepsy theory, stating futhermore that Charles, the younger son, suffered from the disease, too. Robert Bernard Martin, along with

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Christopher Ricks and others, claims that not only did both George and Charles suffer from time to time with epilepsy, but that one of Charles' sons was also a victim, and that perhaps even George the elder had suffered attacks, albeit less severely than his descendants (10).

Scholars, then, point to epilepsy and mental instability as likely factors in George Tennyson's disinheritance. Most critics, in fact, agree that George the younger had epilepsy. The Victorian belief that epilepsy could be inherited has proven to be factual, in many cases. While most cases of epilepsy are not inherited, today's advanced medicine has proven that in some cases, it is indeed genetic, as the Epilepsy Foundation states: "Epilepsy of an unknown origin is called *idiopathic epilepsy*, and in many cases it is presumed to be inherited. Some forms of epilepsy have been linked to specific genes" (Epilepsy Foundation, par. 1)

Throughout his life, George the younger exhibited symptoms that fit descriptions both of severe manic-depressive disorder and seizure disorder. Kay Redfield Jamison describes some symptoms of depressive illness:

> People who are severely depressed exhibit symptoms of persistent sadness or anxious or

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> empty mood; feelings of hopelessness, pessimism, guilt, worthlessness or helplessness; loss of interest in pleasure or ordinary activities including sex; decreased energy to the point of being unable even to get out of bed; feelings of fatigue; difficulty in concentrating, remembering or making even the smallest decisions; changes in appetite or weight; and thoughts of suicide or death. Nothing pierces the gloom--one becomes interiorised--eyes staring and lifeless--inwardly focused. (62-63)

George the younger suffered, at one time or another, from all these symptoms.

In validating whether or not George suffered from epilepsy, Robert Bernard Martin examines, among other information, letters that Mary wrote about her son's illness (which she and her husband believed to be epilepsy), and in this examination, Martin concludes that George suffered more severely than Charles. George also probably began having attacks at an earlier age than Charles. In a letter to Charles dated 1816, Mary tells him that his brother George was having fits about once a week. She also mentioned in this same letter that Charles himself

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had been suffering from a similar complaint, and that she was afraid of bringing on a recurrance if she told him of George's troubles. However, the "fits" she describes could just as easily be caused by depression as by epilepsy:

> Poor George left us on Friday in much better spirits and appetite---but his complaint which does not exactly put on the appearance yours did- still returns upon him about once a week—on Thursday Eveng, he sat with his Head on his Hand as though he were musing---when his wife observed 'he is not well' we spoke—he did not answer—we repeated, he made no Effort to speak & was insensible---when he opened his Eyes they roll'd without meaning and then he spoke incoherently for a minute, this wandering of the intellect is alarming. (26-7)

Several of the symptoms noted by Mary are now known to be characteristics of both depression and epilepsy. Decrease in appetite is symptomatic of both depression and epilepsy. Furthermore, current studies indicate that people who suffer from bipolar illness often experience speech dysfunction, such as the inability to express oneself, or slow or delayed speech patterns (Stassen and Bomben 88-

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105). These symptoms may well account for the observations Mary makes in her letter about George's behavior. Absent-mindedness or forgetfulness can also be a symptom of both epilepsy and depression. Sir Charles relates an anecdote that illustrates Tennyson's father's memory loss. Alfred's father visited one of his parishioners, and when the door was opened, he could not remember his name. He gave an excuse for having to leave, and on his way home, he was greeted by one of the locals, who said, "Hullo, Tennyson! how are you?" At this, the Doctor cried with delight: 'Why, 'Tennyson'—of course, that's it!' He then returned to the house and made his call" (47-48).

Since alcohol is actually a depressant, George the younger's excessive intake of alcohol inevitably devastated him. There is, in fact, a close connection between epilepsy and alcohol. Recent studies by Brust and Susser found that daily alcoholic intake of 200g (the equivalent of four drinks), or more, increases the risk of seizures in people with epilepsy. This same study revealed that people who regularly consume large amounts of alcohol experience an increased risk of withdrawal seizures caused by abrupt discontinuation of alcohol consumption, and they also experience a three-fold increase in the risk for epilepsy

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(666-73). Today, scientists believe that everyone inherits a seizure threshold that determines individual susceptibility to seizures, although whether or not one develops epilepsy is another story (Epilepsy, Alcohol, par. 1-3). Brust and Susser's studies also dictate that between ten and twenty-five percent of newly diagnosed cases of epilepsy in adults may involve chronic alcohol abuse as a risk factor (666-73). Therefore, the poet's father's severe alcohol problem, severe depression, and possible epilepsy, may explain the "fits" described by both George the younger's mother and later his son, Alfred. In August, 1825, Alfred wrote to his Uncle Charles describing his father's "fits" in terms that suggest the epileptic nature of the attacks:

> It is with great sorrow that I inform you that my poor father is not any better than before. He had another violent attack of the same nature yesterday. Indeed no one but those who are continually with him can conceive of what he suffers, as he is never entirely free from this alarming illness. He is reduced to such a degree of weakness from these repeated attacks, that the slightest shock is sufficient to bring them on

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> again. Perhaps if he could summon resolution enough to get out more, he would be relieved, but the lassitude which the fits leave incapacitates him from undergoing any exertion. He has already had two of them since my grandfather was here which is not much more than a week ago and sometimes previous to that had three each night successively. (qtd. in Ricks 7-8)

However, it is ultimately difficult to divine the source of these attacks since the description of Tennyson's father's illness fits epileptic symptoms as well as manic-depressive illness and alcohol withdrawal symptoms.

Regardless of the cause, Tennyson's father was obviously afflicted severely with fits of some kind, which may suggest why his father disinherited him. If George the elder really believed both sons suffered from epilepsy and that his eldest suffered a more severe form of the disease, he may have decided to disinherit his older son in favor of the younger son for this reason. If Charles suffered less than his elder brother from the disease, then the younger son represented the lesser of two evils. However, the fact that Charles was his father's favorite surely influenced his being named heir to the Tennyson estate. Thus, why he

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disinherited his elder son is unclear, but it may have been due to the stigma attached to epilepsy. With his pride in the Tennyson family heritage and high hopes for the family's fortunes, the elder George would have been reluctant to tell anyone of his fears of epilepsy. His pride may also explain why he remained so adamant in the face of the criticisms of his neighbors when they heard of his plan to disinherit his eldest son. The shame and stigma attached to epilepsy kept the family from discussing the disease with anyone. In his book, Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart, Robert Bernard Martin notes that during this time period, certificates of death were increasingly vague about the cause of death in genteel people for this very reason (10). No one wanted the stigma of epilepsy attached to his family because it was considered shameful. The stigma is to a certain extent attached to epilepsy today, so that a century or more after Tennyson lived, one still hears little about famous people who have the disease.

Therefore, Tennyson's grandfather's prejudices toward his elder son profoundly determined Tennyson's father's life. Not only did George Tennyson the elder disinherit his eldest son, he also chose his profession. The church provided a socially acceptable vocation for young men of

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his class, but George was totally unsuited for it, and he became Rector of Somersby against his will. Although the post provided a good living, he resented being forced into what he felt was a limiting and humiliating career, particularly since he scarcely believed the Creed. George Clayton Tennyson went about his duties as Rector without any fervent belief (Levi 18), and as the years passed, his position as clergyman and his resentment of what he considered his father's ill treatment rankled in him.

Along with being unsuited to his position as clergyman, George Tennyson also acquired a wife with whom he was incompatible. In 1805, the poet's father married Elizabeth Fytche, daughter of the vicar of Louth, a neighboring town. Elizabeth was likely an exceptionally beautiful woman, and she claimed to have received twenty-five different proposals of marriage (Lucas 15). Henry Van Dyke describes Alfred's mother as "gentle, loving, by no means lacking in strength, but excelling in tenderness, ardent in feeling, vivid in imagination, and fervent in faith" (xx -xxi). Sir Charles Tennyson further describes Tennyson's mother as simplistic, charming, and extremely religious, and he concludes his description by showing how different she was from her husband:

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> Elizabeth Tennyson was a woman of exceptional simplicity and charm and of a profound, instinctive and unquestioning Evangelical pietism, which contrasted strongly with the more matter-of-fact attitude of her husband, to whom any excess of emotion or pietism in religion was very distasteful . . . He would never read the Athanasian Creed and was stoutly opposed to the doctrine of eternal punishment. More over, he took a great deal of snuff in the pulpit. (14)

Tennyson scholars tend to agree that he adored his mother and always spoke of her as having an "angelic nature." Throughout his life, Tennyson was totally devoted to his mother, and scholars note that the woman he later married, Emily Sellwood, had the same gentle nature and characteristics of his mother.

The marriage appears to have created a turbulent home life. Dr. George Clayton Tennyson and his wife likely had very little in common, and both contributed to their incompatability. Where he was loud, disruptive, and often violent, she was quiet, with an unassuming nature. Of course, this quiet, unassuming role is what society expected from Victorian women. They had no rights and were

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expected to be subservient to their husbands. However, Elizabeth may have been too easy-going and cared too little about household affairs, of which she would have been in charge, to some extent. Because of Elizabeth's easy-going nature the household suffered. Elizabeth's lackadaisical housekeeping skills are reflected in stories told by biographers, and this nonchalant attitude created constant friction between husband and wife (Martin 19). George often became irritable and sometimes even brutal with Elizabeth. If Elizabeth protested at all, she did so very feebly, completely unable to understand his alternations between rage and lethargy.

A volatile home life, difficulties in managing and maintaining an increasing household, and resentment of his younger brother's fortune all resulted in George Tennyson's darkening temperament. It is understandable how George's proud, sensitive and keenly resentful moods led to a "morbid introspection and irritability, dangerous to himself and very distressing to others" (Sir Charles 14). The couple had twelve children in fourteen years, and eleven of the twelve survived. This put even more financial strain on the Rector, as he tried to maintain a Household with servants, in addition to his large family.

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In 1819, George the younger wrote to his father:

> I have eight children simultaneously down with the measles, one desperately ill, and the worst of all is that Elizabeth has exerted herself so much in going up and down our abominable steep staircase in attending upon them, that I fear she is confined to the sofa and I much fear a miscarriage. (qtd. in Henderson 5)

George's hopelessness and helplessness worsened with each passing day. Furthermore, George saw his brother, Charles, with his rich wife, happy and prosperous, a house in Park Street, Westminster, and an affectionate welcome whenever he chose to visit his father at Bayons Manor, and he became embittered. Phillip Henderson notes, "Indeed the glaring discrepancy between his father's treatment of Charles and himself, when, after all, he was the rightful heir and should have had first consideration, but had only unkindness and brutal rebuffs, weighed increasingly on the doctor's mind as his health declined" (5). Therefore, with all the unhappiness in his life, George's mental and physical condition worsened with each passing day.

In spite of all these difficulties, the Rector took a great interest in educating his children. It was almost as

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if he was determined that they would have the education and privileges that had been denied him, and he constantly worked at teaching them the classics. He recognized genius in his son, Alfred, and as soon as he realized that Alfred was unhappy at the school in Louth, he brought him home to Somersby and began tutoring him personally.

The poet's father was an adept teacher with a solid intellectual background. Jerome Buckley describes George as "exceptionally intellectual, a scholar who had mastered Greek and Latin, Syriac and Hebrew, familiar with several modern languages, an amateur of painting and architecture, a bibliophile, an adept maker of verses, and a witty and wide-ranging conversationalist" (3). To the uneducated locals, George must have seemed strange indeed, and the beautiful works of art which he collected and hung in his study at Somersby Rectory were known simply to them as "'eathen gods and goddesses wi'out cloas" (qtd. in Martin 16).

Although George the younger was intelligent, gifted, and learned, he grew bitter because he felt he had to beg his father for money to keep himself and his family. Actually, his earnings, plus the money given to him by his father, should have been more than enough for him and his

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family to live comfortably. Yet he claimed never to have sufficient funds, reflecting perhaps another trait of bipolar disorder, the inability to handle finances and live within one's means (Jamison 25).

In 1820, when Alfred was ten years old, his father reached a breaking point. George writes to his father on August 14, 1820, listing his complaints. George refers to incidents twenty years in the past as he chides his father for his lack of fatherly love:

> With the sentiments you yet entertain and have entertained for more than twenty years, I cannot wonder you told Mr. Bourne you had not a spark of affection for me. The rude and unprecedented manner in which you first addressed me at Haintaon, after a long absence on your return from York (I quote your own words, '*Now, you great awkward booby, are you here*') holding me up in utter derision before Mr. Heneage, his sons and Sir Robert Ainslie, and your language and conduct in innumerable other instances, many of which have made a deep impression on my mind, sufficiently prove the truth of your own assertion. (qtd. in Henderson 6)

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George continues his diatribe as he accuses his father of always being suspicious of him for no apparent reason: "You make and have always made a false estimate of me in every respect. You look and have always looked upon me with a jaundiced eye" (qtd. in Henderson 6). He next rails at the injustice of his disinheritance and of his father's acquiring for him a position that he hates and for which he is unsuited, "conscious also that I am thrown into a situation unworthy of my abilities and unbecoming either your fortune or my just pretensions, and resisted in every wish to promote my own interests or that of my family by moving to a more eligible situation" (qtd. in Henderson 6). George ends the letter by reprimanding his father for his lack of love and understanding:

> There is a tribunal before which you and I must speedily appear. . . . There it will be seen whether you through life have treated me with that consideration and kindness which a son has a right to expect from his father, and whether (as you have been accustomed to represent me to myself and others) I have been deficient in filial affection and obedience. (qtd. in Henderson 6)

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While many would have been touched with this heart-rending cry from his child, George Tennyson the elder simply replied in a letter dated October 1820 that George the younger's letter of August 1820 was "unkind and unjustifiable. I have ever been your affectionate father" (qtd in Henderson 7). In the same letter, to justify his claims of affection and propriety, George the elder added that his new will left 20,000 pounds to the doctor's younger children. However, this was not enough to satisfy his son. The damage had been done, and George the younger succumbed to drink and uncontrollable outbursts of fury and violence. The two Georges were unable to reconcile their differences, and for the rest of their lives, this situation remained a source of pain.

If Tennyson's father were alive today, he might have access to effective diagnosis and treatment for epilepsy, depression, and mania. Treatments allow varying degrees of functionality, but the Victorians did not have effective treatments for mania and depression. If medications were given, they usually made the patient lifeless. Besides medication, two of the most common treatments included water treatments and a change of scenery, and the poet's father took both. He took water cures at Cheltenham at

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least twice, and with the help of his father, brother, and a family friend, Dr. Rawnsley, leave of absence was given to young George to travel. Peter Levi mentions three separate trips to France and Switzerland (59). However, he could not make up his mind to any course of action, and as he prepared for his last trip, he could not even collect his wits enough to perform the necessary task of obtaining a passport and license to travel.

Indecision, lack of initiative, and paranoia are all traits of bipolar disease, and they are reflected in George's life. Phillip Henderson recounts that, in May 1829, he finally set off for Paris to stay with the Marthions, old family friends. However, the cure did not help and his friends could not tolerate him after one month, so he left for Switzerland. From Switzerland, he wrote to his father that he felt "like an isolated being, and outcast from England and my family" (10-11). In a post script to the letter, he complained that his wife's family, the Fytches, "have encouraged my family to act in open rebellion against me" (11), suggesting that the Doctor had transferred his resentment from his father and brother to his wife's family. His paranoia, evidenced by outbursts that everyone was against him, reflects yet another trait

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of bipolar disease.

Despite taking water treatments and traveling to change scenery, his depression continued. George Clayton Tennyson II finally succumbed at age 53, and his family eventually bore the scars of his instability. His eleven surviving children were all adversely affected by their genetics and their dysfunctional home life. Because of their heritage and their unhappy childhood experiences, Tennyson and his brothers and sisters suffered from eccentric personalities, violent mood swings, drug addiction, and an obsession with spiritualism and religious mania (O'Neill 55).

While George and Elizabeth's four daughters were beautiful, they inherited their father's nervous disposition. However, they also inherited something of their mother's restraint and quiet endurance. George's sons, however, inherited destructive tendencies. Frederick had great trouble controlling his passionate and sometimes violent temper throughout his life; Charles became addicted to opium; Septimus became exceedingly melancholy and morbid; Arthur and Horatio entered adulthood with no direction or purpose, and Edward became completely mad and had to be confined in an asylum from the age of nineteen

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until he died at age seventy-seven (Buckley 3-6).

Alfred, the most sensitive of the Tennyson children, fared better than the other boys. The poet suffered bouts of depression most of his life but never to the extent that his father and brothers did. The poet even alludes to his early childhood days at Somersby as relatively happy, and despite their hardships, Alfred and his family experienced some happy times.

For the first ten years, Alfred's life at the rectory with his brothers and sisters was fairly stable and happy, or perhaps they were too young to notice the pervasive moodiness of the father. Jerome Buckley writes that they played games like other children, noting that most of their games had a touch of the literary in them. Buckley writes:

> Alfred explored Somersby, and often his brothers and sisters joined in his exploration and adventure. They held Arthurian tournaments with wooden swords. They wrote tales of daring and disaster to be hidden under the vegetable dishes and read aloud after dinner. They acted out Elizabethan dramas, and Tennyson in his time played many parts . . . without fear of being misunderstood as an artist; he had before him an

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> audience predisposed to admire and to accept without question his dramatic renditions and inventions. (7)

However, at the age of eleven, because of his father's debilitating health, Tennyson found himself acting as head of the family. When he returned from school at Louth, he found that the younger children looked to him as their caregiver. Both of Alfred's older brothers were at school, and although his mother was a loving woman, she was ineffectual as a caregiver. His father drank constantly, aggravating his many illnesses. Being forced into adulthood at such an early age was a heavy responsibility for Alfred, but from that time on, his brothers and sisters always came to him for help and comfort (Martin 31-5).

After 1820 life changed drastically at the Rectory. Conditions had never been idyllic, but after 1820, life became almost unbearable for Alfred and his mother, brothers, and sisters. He and the other children were terrified of their father, whose alcoholic rages and fits began to escalate. Alfred sought refuge in graveyards, where he would throw himself on graves and look at the headstones, longing to see his own name written there (Sir

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Charles 48). During this time Alfred's father became exceedingly violent, threatening to kill Frederick by stabbing him in the jugular vein and in the heart. His extreme acts of violence, or threats of violence to self and/or others, reflects yet another trait of manic-depressiive illness (Jamison 23-32). Writing to George the elder, Elizabeth stated that she could no longer live with her husband, with whom, she said, she had lived a miserable life for twenty years (qtd. in Henderson 10).

Yet, despite such events, Alfred loved his father, even as he feared him. On the whole, the immediate family, excluding their father, were deeply affectionate with each other. Considered "strange" by the local folk, the Tennyson children banded together and actively participated in local dances and parties. They were indeed different from the locals, as Sir Charles relates:

> To the country people, [the Tennyson brothers] must have seemed strange beings wandering about wold and marsh at all hours of the day or night, long-haired, down at heel, hatless and often coatless, their noses in books or absorbed in argument or declamation. (35)

The cook at the Rectory, remarking the strange ways of the

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family, said, "If you raaked out Hell with a smaal tooth-coamb you wean't find their-likes!" (qtd. in Sir Charles Tennyson 10). Regardless of the locals' opinion, Hallam Tennyson, the poet's son, writes that his father "always spoke with affectionate remembrance of Somersby" (qtd. in Sir Charles 35).

The bond between the Tennyson children may have been a matter of necessity, as well as opportunity. There were so many of them that they did not have to seek out other children as playmates. After their father's health declined, Alfred became even more involved in taking care of his family, further solidifying sibling bonds. Alfred, in fact, saved his brother Septimus from the same fate as their brother Edward—that of being committed to an asylum. Septimus once described himself to a guest as "the most morbid of the Tennyson brood" (qtd. in Lucas 12), and although his depression was nearly as debilitating as Edward's, Alfred's astute observations and understanding of madness and melancholy helped him recognize that Septimus was not as mentally deranged as Edward. Thus, Alfred's intervention kept Septimus from being institutionalized (Martin 10). In June, 1834, Alfred wrote to his Uncle Charles describing Septimus' condition:

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> I have very little doubt but that his mind will prove as deranged as Edward's . . . and I have studied the minds of my own family--I know how delicately they are organized . . . . At present his symptoms are not unlike those with which poor Edward's unhappy derangement began--he is subject to fits of the most gloomy despondency accompanied with tears--or rather, he spends whole days in this manner, complaining that he is neglected by all his relations, and blindly resigning himself to every morbid influence. (qtd. in Ricks 64)

While Alfred recognized the symptoms of depression in Septimus, he realized that he needed to be treated and not sent away to an asylum.

Alfred himself, in fact, suffered the same symptoms. Yet, whereas he held out hope for Septimus, Alfred was unable to hope that his own condition would meliorate, nor was he able to manage his own depression. Tennyson wrote about his melancholy, and all his family and friends were aware of his depressive states. Arthur Henry Hallam, Tennyson's dearest friend and his sister Emily's fiance, expresses his concern about Tennyson's state of mind in a

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letter to Emily dated January 22, 1832:

> I am very, very much grieved at the account, given by Fred, of Alfred's condition of mind and body. What can be done? I do not suppose he has any real ailment beyond that of extreme nervous irritation; but there is none more productive of incessant misery, and unfortunately none which leaves the sufferer so helpless . . . . It is most melancholy that he should have cut himself off from those light mental pleasures, which may seem insignificant in themselves, but in their general operation serve to make a man less unhappy, by making him more sociable, and more disposed therefore to receive satisfaction from the numberless springs of enjoyment which the mechanism of society affords. Unfortunately the more morbidly intense our inward contemplation of ourselves is, the more hollow and delusive we consider any temporary and apparently irrelevant diversion: I hope you will do all you can to assist me in endeavoring to restore Alfred to better hopes and more steady purposes. (qtd. in Shannon 68)

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Therefore, Tennyson's friends recognized that much of his ill health stemmed directly from his nerves and not from any physical ailment.

Tennyson's melancholy worsened after Hallam's death in 1833. In September 1842, Alfred described his family to Edmund Lushington, who was to become his brother-in-law in just a few weeks: "What with ruin in the distance and hypochondriacs in the foreground, God help all" (qtd. in Buckley 88). The hypochondriacs were his brothers Arthur, Edward, Charles, Septimus, and Horatio, in their several states of debility. The ruin to which he refers was a project for the machine production of ornamental woodcarvings, a failed business venture that the poet had entered into with Dr. Matthew Allen, investing his entire inheritance and the legacy he had received from Arthur Hallam's aunt, a total of over 3500 pounds (Henderson 51). By the time the venture failed, Tennyson was close to a nervous breakdown, and he entered a hydropathic hospital at Chelttenham during the winter of 1843-44. He recovered by spring, but he still suffered periodic attacks of neurasthenia, and, three years later, took another water cure at an establishment in Malvern operated by a Dr. Gully (Schonfield 81).

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Despite his parent's unhappy marriage and his unstable emotional condition, Tennyson nevertheless married and produced his own family. Tennyson married Emily Sellwood in 1850, and their two sons Hallam and Lionel, were not exempt from the mania that plagued the extended family. Robert Bernard Martin describes Tennyson's sons as bright and accomplished:

> Hallam was to become a highly conventional man, obedient, careful, devoted to his parents almost beyond credibility. Lionel was far more interesting, with some poetic ability, a mercurial personality, a talent for getting into scrapes, and a charm that his elder brother never had. The headmaster of their first school Correctly described them: 'Lionel the more brilliant, Hallam by far the more accurate.' (378)

Lionel, however, inherited the "black blood" of the Tennyson's. Furthermore, one of Lionel's three sons "inherited the mental instability of Somersby and Tealby" (Martin 523). Lionel's son thus represents the sixth generation of Tennyson men to be affected with some form of melancholy (Jamison 200).

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It is clear that Tennyson suffered from some form of bipolar disorder just as his father did, although he suffered to a lesser degree (Jamison 200). Indeed, Tennyson, of all the sons, most resembled his father. He had features like his father, walked like his father, had a deep, booming voice like his father, and he had recurrent bouts of depression like his father. Tennyson recognized his likenesses and hated the thought that he would become like his father (25). Indeed, Tennyson's life paralleled his father's in several ways. He suffered bouts of melancholy, he took the same water cures as his father did, and he traveled to alleviate his dark depression when his best friend, Hallam, died, just as his father had traveled to Europe for a change of scenery and to rid himself of his deep depression. Also, like his father, Tennyson drank excessively and smoked enormous amounts of strong tobacco. However, he controlled his moods and never became violent like his father, probably because his disease was not as extensive as his father's.

Also, unlike his father, Tennyson experienced successes in his life. He became poet laureate and the darling of England, he married a woman who made him extremely happy, and finally, he had everything a man could

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want: fame, fortune, love, and respect.

Even though Alfred feared the "black-blooded madness" of the Tennysons all his life, then, his fears were largely ungrounded. Nonetheless, the elements of despair, isolation, and severe depression present in his writings through 1855 surely reflect his own experiences with depression as well as his close observations of others in his family who suffered from the bleak Tennyson heritage of bipolar disorders.

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Chapter II

It's a Mad World

Knowledge of Tennyson's heritage and ancestry make it easier to understand Tennyson's temperament and how it affected his poetry. Tennyson's unhappy childhood, his father's disinheritance, his feelings of inferiority, and his shyness all contributed to the despair and severe depression he experienced for most of his life. Also, the Victorian Age, with all its chaos and change, certainly contributed to his condition. These combined personal and social factors instilled in the poet a sense of insecurity and desolation so strong that he experienced an isolation from the self and from the world, an isolation characteristic of bipolar personalities. Tennyson's mental characteristics are mirrored in his poetry, where depressed speakers become fragmented beings disillusioned with self and society.

While most Victorians adapted and even exulted in the new scientific discoveries, rapid industrialization, and political change, Tennyson found little to celebrate with these new discoveries and changes. Instead of writing poetry that exuded vibrant confidence, Tennyson produced poetry with a morbid tone. In Tennyson's poetry, the

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relationship between madness and melancholy is viewed variously as similar, cumulative, or absolutely distinct, with madness and melancholy both participating in a slightly skewed dialogue between body and soul. Melancholy may signal the beginning of or potential for madness. However, the melancholic individual does not suffer from irreversible symptoms and when depression lifts may function normally in society. Madness, on the other hand, represents a radical break with sanity and sends the mind and the body into a chaos from which they might never return. Dr. Matthew Allen, a friend and contemporary of the poet who owned and operated an insane asylum, described mania and melancholy as closely related:

> What is called mania and melancholy, are for the most part effects of the same power being overactive, but overactive in different directions. If the distressing passions are overactive, we have melancholia,---if the animal propensities, we have furious mania,---and if the exhilarating passions, we have an exuberance of joyous activity. The excitement of the depressing and exhilarating passions alternatively, is the most striking

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> characteristic of the insane. (qtd. in Culler 151)

Thus, the Victorian definitions of mania and melancholy are ambiguous. Melancholy is both a normal disposition and a sign of mental disturbance; it is both a way of feeling and a way of behaving, a view that has changed through the centuries as different cultures have viewed mania and melancholy in different ways.

Western civilization's fascination with mental abberation dates back to the ancient Greeks, and over the past two and a half millenia, concepts have changed as people viewed mental illness in different ways. Hippocrates (460-377 B.C.) is the father of modern medicine because he applied reason and logic to his treatments of the human body and mind. In his work <u>On the Sacred Disease</u>, he debunked the idea of the divine origin of epilepsy (Meinsma 8). He also elaborated the concept that physical and mental illness result from an imbalance of four "humours" that rule the body: black bile, yellow bile, phlegm, and blood. If one humor dominates another, illness occurrs. The four humors paralleled the four elements—earth, air, fire, and water and were thus often referred to as "dry," "cold," "hot," and "wet." When these humors are

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properly proportioned, man experiences good health, but if one or more of these elements become excessive or defective, one becomes ill. Hippocrates also taught that variations in these humors explain normal variations in temperament from one person to another, often causing people to "experience fear, hatred, and a longing for death, as well as states of disorder in a given person" (qtd. in Jones 7).

Therefore, melancholy, derived from the Greek *melanie chole*, was thought by the ancient Greeks to be caused by an accumulation or improper functioning of the cold and dry humor of black bile. This improper functioning resulted in an overly passionate nature, sometimes with excessive joy being exhibited and sometimes with excessive sadness and depression. Aristotle agreed with Hippocrates' humoral theory and mentioned that black bile "which is naturally cold, if it abounds in the body, produces apoplexy or torpor or despondency or fear, but when it is overheated, it produces cheerfulness accompanied by song, and frenzy" (1498-99). Thus, Aristotle clearly describes symptoms of a bipolar personality.

Since Greek humoral theories considered variations in the black bile to determine the order and arrangement of

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dispositions and behaviors, mania and melancholy began to be viewed as closely related. This view persisted with Galen, a Roman who lived between 130-200 C.E. Galen, often called the father of experimental physiolcgy, agreed with Hippocrates and Aristotle. Galen wrote of the melancholic: "Melancholics act differently; they show fear and depression, discontent with life and hatred of all people. The desire to die is not uncommon, although the fear of death is the principal concern of some. . . . This depression is caused by the color of the black humor" (qtd. in Siegel 195).

Not only did the ancient Greeks and Romans believe in the humoral theory, but they also felt that mania and melancholy resulted from "immoderate consumption of wine, perturbations of the soul due to the passions [for example, love], and disturbed sleep cycles" (qtd. in Akiskal 45). Indeed, worship of Dionysus was associated with the irrational and with madness. Furthermore, Dionysian rituals of ecstatic worship, frenzied dance, and violent death were cyclic in nature and tied to the seasons, with autumn the most closely associated with melancholy (Akiskal 45). Thus, to the ancients, a combination of the humors, alcohol consumption, passionate excess, and autumn

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presented themselves as causes for mental disorders.

Just as the ancients believed that mania and melancholy resulted from an imbalance in bodily humors, among other things, thinkers of the Middle Ages and the Renaissance also believed in the humoral theory, but, in addition, they linked astrology and religion to mania and melancholy. Later Middle Age scholars and Renaissance writers accepted that melancholy in both of its forms, mania and depression, stood in some special relationship to Saturn, and that astrological movements played a causal role (Radden 9). Also, toward the end of the Middle Ages, two Dominican Monks, Johann Sprenger and Heinrich Kraemer, professed that the devil caused mental illness (Meinsma 11). Historian Jennifer Radden notes the concept of melancholy being the devil's work in the work of the Spanish Abbess, Teresa of Avila, who "carefully separates melancholy from the other, divinely caused experience of mental distress. The pain caused by 'God's setting the soul on fire' is quite unlike the suffering of melancholy, which is the devil's work" (8).

Whereas Middle Age thinkers considered melancholy and mania in terms of superstition and religion, the Renaissance writers considered melancholy in much the same

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way as the ancients. For example, in 1586, Timothie Bright stated that the perturbations of melancholy "are sadde and fearfulle, and such as rise of them as distrust, doubt, diffidence, or dispaire" (qtd. in Radden 99). In 1621, The Anatomy of Melancholy, by Robert Burton, also lists sadness and fear as "true causes and companions of melancholy" (66), and suggests that certain people, especially those born under the sign of the planet Saturn, were more likely to be melancholy, men more often than women, and that of all the seasons, autumn was most melancholy to those affected. Burton also mentions "six non-natural things—diet, alcohol, biological rhythms and perturbations of the passions such as intense love" (qtd. in Akiskal 6), as environmental factors that influence melancholy. Burton further explains that melancholia can arise from faulty upbringing, as he suggests that "bad parents, step mothers, Tutors, Masters, Teachers, too rigorous and too severe, or too remisse or indulgent on the other side are often fountains and furthers of this disease" (92).

Social historian Roy Porter agrees with Burton as he stresses that the sermons, homilies, plays, and proverbs of early modern times, especially at the end of the Middle Ages and during the Renaissance, "undeniably harped on the

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fates that might befall families—think of Hamlet or King Lear; so it will come as no-surprise that those we may somewhat anachronistically call psychiatric writers warned that bad families bred troubled minds" (161). Thus, Renaissance society linked melancholy with "supernatural, particularly demonic forces, and astrological theories that provided a causal explanation"(Radden 9).

During the seventeenth century, discussions of melancholy and mania remained fixed within the tradition of the four humors and their essential qualities, and at the end of the eighteenth century, "all forms of madness without delirium, but characterized with inertia, by despair, by a sort of dull stupor, would be readily classified as melancholia" (Foucault 124). In 1743, Robert James further established characteristics of melancholia as he observed in affected people "only bitterness, languor, and a preference for isolation; their very agitation must not deceive the observer nor authorize a hasty diagnosis of mania; for these patients avoid company, prefer solitary places, and wander without knowing where they are going" (qtd. in Foucault 125). James' statement reinforces an earlier diagnosis by Thomas Willis, who wrote in 1681 that "melancholia, finally, is always accompanied by sadness and

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fear; on the contrary, in the manic we find audacity and fury" (qtd. in Foucault 125).

Just as James and Willis found differences in the melancholic and manic person, the French physician Philippe Pinel, noted in 1806 that mania and melancholy were distinct "species of mental derangement" (qtd. in Radden 15). When asked if melancholia of several years standing might not degenerate into mania, he responded, "Through revolution of character, those who were melancholic may eventually become maniacs" (Radden 16).

With Pinel's account of melancholia, all reference to bile and humors is gone, and by the middle of the nineteenth century physicians were deeply involved in trying to fathom the scientific causes of madness, nervous diseases, and the nervous system (Colley 11). Rejecting ancient accounts of moral philosophers, they began to make first-hand observations of the mentally ill. Physicians also began to urge medical students to train in lunatic asylums, so they could become "as familiar with disorders of the mind as other disorders" (Colley 11). Sir Benjamin Brodie, one of Tennyson's doctors, encouraged his students to recognize the importance of "nervous diseases," for "in one shape or another you will meet them at every turn of

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your future practice" (3).

As a result of this more scientific approach, nineteenth-century physicians concluded that mania and melancholy were not mutually exclusive states. Rather, they were states that fluctuated and combined in a variety of ways. With this new knowledge, physicians classified madness into four basic types: (1) melancholia or monomania, (2) mania or delirium, (3) partial insanity, and (4) moral insanity (Colley 13).

The first type, melancholia or monomania, was associated with severe depression and often with an exclusive preoccupation with a single idea or object. The second type, mania or delirium, was characterized by violence, tempestuous passion, and fury, in essence, corresponding to contemporary definitions of manic states of bipolar disorders. The third type of madness, partial insanity, was "a catchall phrase for the multiple subspecies of insanity, including hypochondria and hysteria" (Colley 13-14). Partial insanity described people who retained some of their mental faculties, or people who suffered from periodic aberrations. Ann Colley notes that of all forms of partial insanity, hypochondria and hysteria were the most common and the most

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controversial (14). The symptoms for both were actually the same, but because hysteria had long been a disease associated with women's infected uteruses, many physicians had trouble applying the term to men. Thus, hypochondria became the term used to describe male hysteria (Colley 14). The fourth and last type of madness, which Victorians referred to as "moral insanity" referred to any form of excess or lack of control over feelings or habits. Victorians considered this form of madness to result from self-abuse, or masturbation (Colley 15).

According to Victorian psychiatry, Tennyson suffered from the first form, melancholia or monomania, a term which today's medical professionals simply term bi-polar disease. For better clarification in describing Tennyson and the speakers in his poetry, this paper will refer to his symptoms of "depression" or "mania," as a bipolar disorder, a disease with which today's physicians claim Tennyson was afflicted (Jamison, Touched 199). Jamison notes that for most of his life "Tennyson experienced recurrent depression that required treatment and possibly transient hypomanic episodes 'dwelling in an element of gloom'" (200).

As a result of the observations and experiments that led to new classifications, the Victorians came to view

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madness as a result of physiological causes. The physical causes they described were similar to those recognized hundreds of years before: accidents, shocks, changing seasons, the moon, lack of sleep, alcoholism, hereditary traits, and the determination of how much blood flowed to the brain (too much blood gushing into the brain caused mental chaos, and too little blood flowing into the brain caused depression) (Colley 17). Therefore, until the last decades of the nineteenth century and the beginning of the twentieth century, the term "melancholy" appears to cover several quite different things: fleeting moods, mental disorders ranging from severe to very mild, normal reactions, and long-term character traits. Information written about melancholy before the end of the nineteenth century seems to indicate that, for most of its history, what today seem to be distinct and incompatible senses of melancholy coexisted.

Just as Victorians became fascinated with mental health and sought to make scientific advances in the field of psychology, medical science is still researching characteristics of what were once termed mania and melancholy. Today, however, psychologists and psychiatrists distinguish three major forms of bipolar

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disorders: bipolar I, bipolar II, and cyclothymia. The following characterize the manic stage of all three disorders: a hyperactive state during which one becomes very talkative, sometimes making no sense as ideas race through the mind in quick succession; a state of sleeplessness, or sleep deprivation accompanied by bragging about needing little or no sleep; a tendency to think one is more intelligent than others; and a tendency to engage in tremendous amounts of work or creative activity during manic stages. However, as the mania escalates, the person becomes totally ineffective, irritable, and even angry with family and friends, and tends to resent anyone in a position of authority whom he sees as interfering with his goals (Jamison, Touched 12-48).

Although the three bi-polar disorders have some common factors, there are differences between them. Individuals diagnosed with bipolar I disorder suffer the most severe form of affective illness. Bipolar I sufferers are prone to commit illegal acts, ranging from spending excessive amounts of money to writing bad checks, not paying bills, trying to outrun the police, getting into fights, exhibiting extreme impatience, as well as becoming involved in intense and impulsive romantic or sexual liaisons. In

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its extreme form, bipolar I disorder is characterized by violent agitation, bizarre behavior, delusional thinking, and visual and auditory hallucinations. Bipolar I sufferers are just as extreme in their depressed state, characterized by suicidal thinking, self-blame, inappropriate guilt, recurrent thoughts of death, thoughts of hopelessness, slowed thinking, loss of enjoyment in normally pleasurable events, and impaired memory and concentration (Jamison 12-48).

People with bipolar II disorders suffer to a lesser degree than bipolar I sufferers because they experience less severe manic episodes, with less impairment of personal or professional functioning; these episodes are not psychotic in nature, so that sufferers are able to function more effectively in society, both in personal relationships and in their jobs. These people still have a hold on reality, but they tend to make poor decisions, and they are financially promiscuous. However, unlike bi-polar I sufferers, they do not get into debt so deeply that they may be charged with a felony (Jamison 14).

Cyclothymia is the least severe of the three bi-polar disorders. These people suffer intermittently from severe depression, but usually theirs is called "situational

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maladjustment," which means that there is a reason for their depression and they get over it, although it usually returns. People who suffer from cyclothymia usually are first affected in their teens or early adulthood, and they may or may not attain full syndromes of depression or mania. These people suffer from low self-esteem, which sometimes alternates between lack of self-confidence and grandiose overconfidence, and often, but not always, they resort to alcohol or drug abuse (Jamison, Touched 264). Kay R. Jamison, a physician and also a sufferer of bi-polar I affective disorder, notes that even with today's advances in psychiatry and medicine, it is still difficult to diagnose these three disorders to any specific degree of accuracy (Touched 50-99).

Considering Jamison's admission of the difficulty of accurately assessing mental disorders, even with today's technology, the ancients were exceptionally astute in their pronouncements on melancholia. Although Galen and Aristotle describe melancholics differently, in a sense both were correct. Historian Vieda Skultans notes that Galen's melancholic man was "morose, taciturn, waspish, misanthropic, solitary, and fond of darkness, while Aristotle's melancholic man is associated with wit and

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poetic inspiration and is considered 'judicious, wise, and witty'" (18).

For centuries, various writers have acknowledged Aristotle's link between the melancholic man and the creative one as " creative genius," and his theories associating mental illness and creativity are still credible today. Aristotle once asked, "Why is it that all men who are outstanding in philosophy, poetry, or the arts are melancholic" (qtd. in Radden 56), noting that, "Maracus, the Syracusan, was actually a better poet when he was out of his mind" (Aristotle 1502). Jamison acknowledges the link between madness and genius as one of the oldest and most persistent cultural notions, and she lists great writers, artists, and composers who suffered from various forms of mental illness who fit Aristotle's description. She includes Tennyson in the list as well as names of sufferers who physicians now believe to have suffered from some form of bipolar disorder, including Chatterton, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley, Keats, FitzGerald, and Rossetti (267-70). Referring to the those mentioned above, Jamison summarizes, "Clearly many highly creative and accomplished writers, composers, and artists function essentially within the rational world, while others must

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contend with the unusually tumultuous and unpredictable emotions" (Touched 104).

Just as views on the causes of mental illness changed, so did treatments. Since the ancient Greeks and Romans linked mental illness with creative genius, they tended to care for their mentally ill at home. However, in the Middle Ages great changes began to occur in beliefs about mental illness, and with these changes, mental illness was treated differently as well.

In the first part of the Middle Ages, monastic lay people usually cared for the mentally ill, and historian Robert Meinsma notes that the care given to the mentally ill was often humane, as these laypersons "tended not to use intrusive treatment" (11). However, around 1200, things began to change. For centuries, leprosariums had multiplied all over Europe. Michel Foucault writes, "By 1226, when Louis VIII established the lazar-house law for France, more than 2,000 appeared on the official registers" (3). However, by the end of the Crusades, leprosy was no longer a major medical threat. Foucault suggests that this strange decrease probably occurred not because of any medical treatment, but because the lepers were segregated, thus preventing the disease from spreading (6). Whatever

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the cause, the establishments used for lepers became vacant, and rather than having these establishments remain empty, leprosariums became places to keep poor vagabonds, criminals, and people with "deranged minds" (Foucault 7). Also, toward the end of the Middle Ages, treatments worsened as a result of associating the disease with the devil, causing the insane to be persecuted and treated in exceedingly harsh ways (Meinsma 11). It became customary to chain those afflicted with melancholy to the walls of these establishments and display them through barred windows installed specifically to permit outsiders to see the unfortunate souls chained within (Foucault 68).

These superstitions associating the devil with mental illness persisted in the beliefs and treatments of the mentally ill during the Renaissance. The connection of mental illness to the devil and to astrological relationships often caused townspeople to drive their "madmen" outside the city limits, where they wandered in the open countryside. Sometimes townspeople handed them over to boatsmen. Michel Foucault writes that each city usually cared for its own mentally ill citizens, but some were simply thrown into prison or handed over to sailors "to prevent them prowling beneath the city walls" (11).

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The term "Ship of Fools" came into being as madmen were put aboard ships and set out to sea, assuring cities that they were rid of them forever.

However harsh the treatments of the late Middle Ages and Renaissance may seem, treatments became even more extreme in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. As early as 1700, Hermann Boerhaave of Holland "used ice water, purgatives, bloodletting and leeches" (Meinsma 15), and in 1731-1802 Erasmus Darwin, grandfather of Charles Darwin, invented the "Darwin chair," a rotating chair in which the person was spun "often until blood oozed from the mouth, nose, and ears" (Meinsma 15). Other treatments used from 1747 to the early 1800's included electricity applied to various parts of the body, chaining or confining patients (a case is noted in 1815 of William Norris, who was encased in an iron halter about the torso and chained to his bed for ten years), irritants to cause blistering and infection, and the use of stinging nettles. Other treatments included starvation, hypnotism, and rotating a person in a chair or bed 40 to 60 times a minute (Meinsma 16-21).

By the early nineteenth century more and more people viewed these treatments as inhumane and because of

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scientific advancements, treatment of the mentally ill began to change. People who worked with mentally unstable persons began to use "moral therapy," a form of treatment based on the philosophy that "the insane are essentially normal people who can benefit from a favorable environment" (Coleman 45). Tennyson's friend, Dr. Matthew Allen, used this treatment. Allen's theory of treatment was "to encourage by kindness, the patient's positive moods, (light, cheerful, full of kindness), rather than by harshness, to encourage the negative ones (dark, gloomy, and vindictive)" (qtd. in Turner 147). Allen writes, "The disagreeable excitement, caused by frustrating ardent desires for the joys of moral and intellectual friendship, may amount to pain, aversion, hatred, contempt, and fury" (qtd. in Turner 147). Thus, moral therapy represented a movement away from the harsh treatment of mental illness in the previous era to the more humane treatments of the nineteenth century.

While Dr. Allen used moral therapy as treatment for mental disorders, many other treatments included water cures, baths, long walks in the country air, enforced relaxation, strict diets, and traveling (Sir Charles Tennyson 198). Antoine le Camus reflects a Victorian

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belief that melancholics must shun mental preoccupation: "Relaxing the brain, walking, taking journeys, exercising in the fresh air, dancing, and diverting reading, caused the obsessive idea to be forgotten" (qtd. in Foucault 174). Thus, people taking water cures were not allowed to have visitors, not allowed to read, and not allowed to write, because "melancholics were won away from their single obsession by taking them away from the things that might revive the memory of their sufferings" (Foucault 174).

Peter Levi discusses how water cure treatments worked, mentioning that often these treatments consisted of "steam baths, hot and cold baths, sweatings and compresses, fomentations and poultices, wrapping in wet sheets and swathing in many blankets" (174). Levi also notes, "Often severe cold water treatments were used, along with no alcohol or rich food, which provoked vomiting or diarrhea, causing mucus and other nastiness to be expelled from the body" (173).

This more humane approach, administered by hydropaths, was favored by physicians of Tennyson's age. Yet even though the Victorians believed they were more humane in their treatment of the mentally ill than preceding ages, in some ways they were just as cruel. Social historian,

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Judith Neaman writes that Victorians often wrongfully institutionalized people with the mentally retarded, epileptics, beggars, criminals, and with anyone else who had no place to go (139). Historian Peter McCandless reiterates Neaman's claims that in the nineteenth century, "Hardly a year went by without some frightful revelation about sane persons rotting in mental hospitals" (339). McCandless suggests that since Victorian doctors knew so little about what really constituted mental illness, they "often relied on subjectively determined symptoms, and sometimes the reasons they advanced as proof of mental derangement were patently absurd" (340). Furthermore, doctors often differed over the mental state of individuals. For many doctors, the extent to which an individual deviated from Victorian social and moral codes often became the measure of mental state. Thus, these physicians equated sanity with behavorial acceptability (McCandless 341).

The Victorian tendency to equate insanity and antisocial behavior was applied as well to immorality, particularly regarding social mores. This form of madness, or "moral insanity," reflected beliefs that all forms of sexual excess led to insanity. Many physicians placed

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particular emphasis on "solitary vice," or masturbation: "The indulgence of this habit, they claimed, led to a loss of mental power, then to idiocy mixed perhaps with epilepsy, and if persisted in, to death" (McCandless 355). Nineteenth century author James C. Prichard clarifies that "a person suffering from moral insanity, acted in a perverted fashion, and was incapable of conducting himself with decency and propriety in the business of life" (4).

Today we recognize the moral bias in such views. Prichard's cases of moral insanity actually represent heterogeneous cases that modern psychiatry identifies as "manic depressives, obsessionals, schizophrenics, and alcoholics" (Leigh 169-89). Based on today's current understanding that bipolar affective disorders are physiological in origin, but with pervasive behavioral effects, treatment involves medication as well as talk and other behavioral modalities.

For Alfred Tennyson, however, medication was a thing of the future. Thus, depression in all its frightening yet fascinating magnitude was his constant companion. He once remarked to Edward Fitzgerald that he had "not had a good day, a perfect white day, for years" (qtd. in Martin 274). To another friend, he stated that "his waking hours in the

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morning were very miserable ones and he used to ask himself 'how am I to get through the day'" (qtd. in Martin 274).

Tennyson, troubled like his father before him with depression and fear of madness, took many of the popular cures of the day, among them water cures, long walks, and traveling, with hydrotherapy being one of his favorites. Hydropaths, those who administered the water cures, were "part physician, part psychiatrist, and part quack, but their treatment, even if it did not cure their patients, did no harm" (Haley 33). Tennyson entered a hydropathic institution in the suburb of Prestbury in November 1843. He writes of the treatments he took during his stay in Prestbury to his friend, Edward Fitzgerald, on February 2, 1844:

> The perpetual panic and horror of the last two years has steeped my nerves in poison . . .I have had four crises . . .Much poison has come out of me, which no physic would have brought to light. I have been here upwards of two months. Of all the uncomfortable ways of living, such an hydropathical is the worst: no reading by candlelight, no going near a fire, no tea, no coffee, perpetual wet sheet & cold bath &

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> alternation from hot to cold: however, I have much faith in it.-(qtd. in Levi 172-3)

In this same letter to Fitzgerald, Tennyson claims, "I am at present in such a deranged state of health that my medical man forbids the excitement of composition, forbids me even to read, even to think" (174).

In his early poems, Tennyson's mental state translated to depressed and despairing bipolar speakers who feel hopelessly isolated from their fellow man. These speakers are cut off from God, nature, their fellow human beings, and their true selves. Tennyson depicts his depressed speakers as isolated people who stand alone against the world. Their sanity hinges on the sanity of the world in which they must function, while their depressive personality is a by-product of that world.

In Tennyson's life and his poetry, society is necessary, but perilous. Being alone and isolated from society is desirable, yet it is destructive. In a sense, his characters rebel against society, but at the same time, they are victims of society, just as Tennyson himself was a victim of his genetics, his personal life, and of society.

Depression is characterized by feelings of hopelessness, helplessness, and powerlessness to overcome

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obstacles. One response is to avoid feeling. Tennyson's bipolar speakers suffer from depression, and they defend themselves against the pain caused by their engagement in the world by isolating themselves from society. Because of Tennyson's personal pain, many of his early poems are peopled with isolated speakers. Because of self-isolation, Tennyson's bipolar speakers tend to inhabit a wasteland of despair, stagnation, self-division, and frustration. They journey inward only to find themselves trapped. Therefore, these speakers, just as Tennyson himself surely did, see nothing ahead but a painful and useless struggle.

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Chapter III

The Effects of Ancestry and a Chaotic Age: Depression and Mania in Tennyson's Poetry

Alfred Tennyson's heredity left him ill prepared for the environment in which he grew up, and later, as an adult, the vast changes of the Victorian Age reinforced his chaotic upbringing. Peter Levi reinforces this fact as he acknowledges, "Even though inheritance had a lot to do with Alfred's depression, the dead Rector cannot be entirely to blame for all that is wrong" (153). Tennyson, always the astute observer of his age, was aware of the potential for destruction inherent in the worship of Reason and Science that gripped his imagination and that of his contemporaries. He had seen firsthand the early demise of his father, brought on by alcohol and manic-depressive episodes, and he had watched his mother martyr herself to his father's violent and erratic mood swings. Tennyson had also seen one brother become completely insane, one with an addiction to alcohol, and one with a drug problem. He feared marriage because he felt he might pass on the "black blood" of the Tennysons, as well as the disease of epilepsy, which the Victorians considered a form of madness. When he finally dared to love a woman, he

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suffered great humiliation when her relatives broke off the relationship because they did not consider Tennyson financially secure enough to be considered a fit suitor. These circumstances, coupled with the age in which he lived, caused a fragmentation of self and caused Tennyson's depression to worsen. These detrimental effects may be seen clearly in the speakers in Tennyson's early poems, "The Outcast," "My life is full of weary days," "Mariana," "Tithonus," and "Locksley Hall," poems in which Tennyson's speakers exhibit both depressive and manic states, as he reflects his own mental state and his family experiences with bipolar affective disorders.

These poems also reflect Tennyson's anxiety about his era. The Victorian Age was one of chaos, tumult, doubts and fears. As theories of progress gave way in nineteenth-century thought to theories of random process, Tennyson feared the direction society might take. Already the doubts and fears caused by science and the anguish over the existence of God made Tennyson's depression and anxiety more prevalent, and this depression and anxiety is especially noticeable in the poems mentioned above. For Tennyson, the winds of change were blowing with all the new discoveries about science, religion, and industrialization.

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Richard Altick writes that many Victorians felt just as Tennyson did about these changes: "The faster the rate of change and the more bewildering their orientation became both physically and intellectually, the more some Victorians longed for a fixed order" (105). Many Victorians did not celebrate the idea of progress, and Tennyson was only one of many. The resistance to change is clear in much of his poetry, but the sentiment screams in the line from "Locksely Hall Sixty Years After" (1886) as an aged Tennyson echoes the spirit of disillusionment, "Let us hush this cry of 'Forward' till ten thousand years have gone" (Poems 1362).

Daniel Albright suggests that people who suffer from depression often retreat from themselves and society. Indeed, Tennyson's early poems, "The Outcast," "My life is full of weary days," "Mariana," and "Tithonus," are filled with neurotic speakers who are isolated from the world in which they live either by choice, abandonment, old age, or death. Critic E. D. H. Johnson describes the dynamics of psychic alienation:

> The self broods on its own isolation, recognizing at once the impossibility of its situation and the futility of striving against it; the mind is

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> so bemused by self-consciousness that the process of introspection results in a double awareness, accentuating the self's alienation to the point where it cannot act at all (38).

According to physician and bipolar sufferer Kay Jamison, this paralysis, or feeling of helplessness/hopelessness is typical of people who suffer from depression. The inner world into which they retreat often turns into a battleground of sorts, and in the fight against self, living becomes a "life of death" (Touched 35). Tennyson writes of "a living death" in his Memoirs (Memoir I.158). Just as many depressed people long for death, one sees this same longing in the speakers in Tennyson's early poems. His speakers are so depressed that death is much more attractive than life. In "The Lotos Eaters," for example, Tennyson's mariners observe, "There is confusion worse than death" (Poems 434).

Tennyson's poetry also reflects the depressive elements of the Romantic poets he read and loved. Tennyson grew up loving the Romantic writers and what they stood for. His poetry suggests that he was familiar with Keats' longing "for easeful death," and with Wordsworth's idyllic pantheistic view of life mingling with nature. There is

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also much of Byron in Tennyson, although Keats is the poet with whom Alfred Tennyson is usually compared. However, Byron had the same manic-depressive nature that Tennyson and many of Tennyson's family possessed, and there are similar elements in Byron's and Tennyson's poetry. One sees the same despairing, yet railing hero, and one sees the same placement of self as both Byron's and Tennyson's speakers are often easily identified with the poets themselves. One also sees the same inability to withstand criticism, as both Byron and Tennyson obsessed over negative criticism regarding their writings.

The Victorian world was not a Wordsworthian world of beauty and tranquility; instead, it was a huge and impersonal world characterized by materialism and scientific and religious doubts and fears. It was an age when dissention and mania thrived. Tennyson and others of his age intuited with horror that this mad, chaotic world was, as Carl Jung stated, "a substratum of their own natures, a reflection of their own dark selves" (158). Thus, the age in which he lived coincided with several significant events to make young Tennyson's personal life miserable. Tennyson's sensitive spirit was shattered by the failure of his relationship with Rosa Baring, whom he

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met in 1825, about two years before he went away to Cambridge (Radar 24). Rosa's family felt Tennyson was not good enough to pay suit to her and forbade the relationship. Then, in the spring of 1830, he met Emily Sellwood and a long, tumultuous courtship began. However, in 1833, Tennyson suffered the most traumatic event in his life. On September 15, Arthur Henry Hallam, his best friend, mentor, and brother-in-law-to-be, died in Vienna at the age of 22. To say that Tennyson was devastated would be an understatement. To say that he felt his world had collapsed would still not describe adequately the devastation he felt at hearing this news. To escape his deep depression, he began to travel, trying to find some direction in a world where he no longer wanted to live, in a life that he felt was no longer worth living.

Matters worsened in 1838 when Tennyson became engaged to Emily Sellwood (Sir Charles 177). Emily's father, Mr. Sellwood, a strict Churchman, disapproved of Tennyson's bohemian lifestyle, his use of tobacco, his love for strong port, his inability to earn a living, and the latitude of his religious views. One can hardly blame the old man for his fears, since another daughter, Louisa, was married to Tennyson's brother Charles. Charles' addiction to opium

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had caused Louisa to risk her own health as she tried to care for him and help him with his addiction. However, Charles could not shake the habit, and Louisa eventually left the marriage in despair (Henderson 50). To make sure Tennyson was stable enough to provide a secure life for his daughter, in September 1840, Emily's father's exacted a promise from Emily and Alfred not to see or write to each other for at least ten years. The agony of their parting was intense, and as a result of this separation, both Emily and Alfred became ill. Not long after Mr. Sellwood forbade the couple to see each other, Edward Fitzgerald described Tennyson's response:

> Alfred is really ill in a nervous sort of way, what with hereditary tenderness of nerve and having spoiled what strength he had by excessive smoking . . . poor fellow, he is quite magnanimous and noble natured, with no meanness or vanity or affectation whatever, but very perverse according to the nature of his illness. (qtd. in Henderson 50)

It may thus be an effect of these events that the speakers in Tennyson's early poems often rage against the world, congratulating themselves, or congratulate the world and

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rage against themselves (Albright 121). These mental gyrations also reflect symptoms of depression and mania, which are also the traits of bi-polar disorder II or cyclothymia, both lesser degrees of bi-polar disorder. With the frustrations and disappointments Tennyson suffered as a boy and later as a young man, it is no wonder that Tennyson's early poetry is peopled with despairing, depressed, world-weary, and sometimes manic speakers.

The critical response to his published works also contributed to Tennyson's depression. Tennyson wrote poetry from the time he was six years old, and he published his first book of verse Poems by Two Brothers in 1827. He published Poems, Chiefly Lyrical in 1830. However, in 1832, when he published Poems, the critics savagely attacked his work, and these criticisms shattered Tennyson's already fragile faith in himself. He was so devastated that he did not publish again until 1842, when he published revisions of many of the poems from his earlier editions. Tennyson's 1842 edition, Poems, met with great critical success and established his fame (Lawall 658). In the volumes of 1830 and 1832-3, Tennyson introduces a series of depressed speakers in poems such as "The Outcast," "My life is full of weary days," "Mariana,"

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and "Tithonus."

Because of their chronic depression, the speakers in these early poems brood on their isolation, seeing their situations as hopeless and feeling that it is futile to fight against their situation. When depression deepens, the self becomes so despondent that it cannot act at all, and by becoming paralyzed, the self literally exists in a "living death." Many bipolar people experience this helpless feeling, and they begin to isolate themselves from society. They fantasize about images of death and dying, and because of their depression, they often yearn for death. Tennyson's speakers in "The Outcast," "My life is full of weary days," "Mariana," and "Tithonus" display this pattern. They feel their despair is hopeless, and they isolate themselves and long for death.

Often in Tennyson's poems, death is longed for but never granted or achieved. Even though his speakers long for death, they go on living, dying a little at a time, caught in a "life-in-death" situation. They are left behind to suffer indefinitely. These speakers isolate themselves from the world and become trapped in time. They cannot escape their past, and they have no hope for the future. For example, "The Outcast," a poem which critic

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Ann Colley speculates is based on Tennyson's "sensitivity toward his father's sense of injustice at being an exile" (36), features a despairing tone in the opening lines as the speaker alludes to the horror of a past he must avoid, and of the "could-have-beens" in his life:

> I will not seek my father's groves,
> They murmur deeply o'er my head
> Of sunless days and broken loves:
> Their shade is dim and dark and dead.
> There through the length of cool arcades
> Where noonday leaves the midnight dews,
> Unreal shapes of twilight shades
> Along the somber avenues,
> To Memory's widowed eyes would spring
> In dreamy, drowsy wandering. (1-10)

The dark and brooding imagery evoked in the poem is sensed immediately through the "sunless days and broken leaves," the "twilight shades," and "somber avenues." The past is too painful to bear.

Images of weariness and death abound as the speaker claims, "Their shade is dim and dark and dead," leading to the conclusion that any hope for happiness has been abandoned. Returning to memories causes the speaker so

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much pain that he is driven to despair as he recalls: "knotted reeds, bring back / Lone images of varied pain / To this worn mind and fevered brain" (18-20). The speaker's desolation, despair, and sense of loneliness and isolation are complete in the last stanza:

> I will not seek my Father's Hall:
> There peers the day's unhallowed glare,
> The wet moss crusts the parting wall,
> The wassail wind is reveler there.
> Along the weedy, chinky floors
> Wild knots of flowering rushes blow
> And through the sounding corridors
> The sere leaf rustles to and fro:
> And O! what Memory might recall,
> If once I paced that voiceless Hall! (21-30)

Wasteland imagery is present in the dry, rustling leaves over a barren landscape, while the wet moss crusting the wall are further evidence of the speaker's isolation. Critic E. D. H. Johnson alludes to the speaker's rootless existence and how his "worn mind and fevered brain" can find no rest anywhere (38). Instead of rest and peace, the speaker is obsessed with death, decay, and the very images from which he wishes to escape. He cannot bear his present

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world, and he has no hope for the future; he isolates himself in a "life-in-death" existence (38). Christopher Ricks notes that the same desolate imagery of "the wet moss crusting the wall," later appears in "Mariana," where "With blackest moss the flowerplots / Were thickly crusted, one and all" (1-2). The imagery in both poems denotes decay, loneliness, isolation, and despair.

Another of Tennyson's early poems filled with images of death, isolation, and despair is "My life is full of weary days." This poem was first published in 1832 and entitled "To," and every line screams the despair and isolation of a world-weary speaker. Tennyson may have written the poem for Arthur Hallam to express his own despair and isolation because of his worries about Emily's (Tennyson's sister) and Arthur's separation. Arthur's love for Emily and the separation imposed on the couple by Henry Hallam, Arthur's father, deeply hurt Tennyson (Martin 159). Hallam had encouraged Tennyson to write to relieve his depression, and when Hallam received a package of poems from Tennyson in September 1832, "My life is full of weary days" was his favorite because he recognized it was addressed to him (Martin 159).

Tennyson voices his despair, but he also notes the

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good things in life:

> My life is full of weary days,
>
> But good things have not kept aloof,
>
> Nor wandered into other ways,
>
> I have not lacked thy mild reproof,
>
> Nor golden largess of thy praise. (1-5)

The first line emphasizes Tennyson's weariness and depression, which Hallam witnessed while the two were on a trip to the Rhine. Hallam recognized Tennyson's poetic talents and scolded him for not spending more time writing, because he felt writing would help lessen Tennyson's depression. In the poem, Tennyson acknowledges this scolding, and the fact that the advice has had good effects: "But good things have not kept aloof, / Nor wandered into other ways / I have not lacked thy mild reproof" (2-5). Even though Hallam reproached Tennyson for his despondent state of mind, he also praised his greatness, and the speaker appreciates the: "Nor largess of thy praise" (5).

However, death imagery pervades the rest of the poem as Tennyson expresses how isolated he feels from society. Critic Clyde Ryals suggests that the poem's "sentimental melancholy expresses the world-weariness as the speaker

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imagines himself in the grave" (95). Tennyson writes:

And now shake hands across the brink
  Of that deep grave to which I go:
Shake hands once more: I cannot sink
  So far-far down, but I shall know
  Thy voice, and answer from below.
When in the darkness over me
  The four-handed mole shall scrape,
Plant thou no dusky cypress tree,
  Nor wreathe thy cap with doleful crape,
  But pledge me in the flowing grape.
And when the sappy field and wood
  Grow green beneath the showery gray,
And rugged barks begin to bud,
  And through damp holts new-flushed with May,
  Ring sudden scratches of the jay,
Then let wise Nature work her will,
  And on my clay her darnel grow;
Come only, when the days are still,
  And at my headstone whisper low,
  And tell me if the woodbines blow. (6-25)

The themes of isolation and world-weariness are expressed in this last stanza just as they are in the first.

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Tennyson projects the image of a person dead, buried, and unmourned in an overgrown grave. Only the jays are there to sing and to lament his passing.

In "Mariana," Tennyson writes of a forsaken woman who is isolated and caught in a living death, as she waits for a lover who never comes. Critic W. David Shaw asserts, using psychological language, that Tennyson "introjects" or assimilates the characters of Mariana to himself. Shaw explains how Tennyson assumes the role of his female characters:

> Through a process of projective identification, the character who has first been transformed into a region of Tennyson's own mind is projected back upon the world as an externalized persona. This dramatized persona can never be alien to Tennyson, because as a projection of the inmost recesses of the poet's mind it is privy to his darkest secrets and imaginings. (101)

In "Mariana," Tennyson projects himself as the depressed, isolated, and forsaken speaker in the poem. Tennyson takes character, narrative, and setting of "the moated grange" from Shakespeare's play <u>Measure for Measure</u>: "She should this Angelo have married: was affianced to her by oath, and

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the nuptial appointed. . . . Left her in her tears, and dried not one of them with comfort. . . . There, at the moated grange resides this rejected Mariana (III.i.212). Cleanth Brooks describes the "moated grange," noting its characteristic geographic features:

> A moated grange would be a large farmhouse fortified against attack by being enclosed within a moat. Many castles in the Middle Ages had moats, but few granges were moated unless they were in a hard-to-defend flat country. The moated grange in the poem is surrounded by such a level waste marked only by a single tree, with dark fens all about it and with marsh vegetation filling up the disused moat. (312)

Tennyson's surreal landscape thus becomes the physical counterpart to the woman's state of mind. Brooks states that the poem "had to do with the depiction of the interior, not an exterior, state of affairs" (312). The "rusted nails" and the "broken sheds," along with the weeds and dust, point out the decay. Critic Andrew Crowcraft further explains how the attitude of the fragmented self of the speaker reflects the bleak landscape:

> In 'Mariana,' the landscape does not reflect the

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> inner life of the speaker - it **is** the inner life, thus creating a consciousness that cuts the speaker off from an outer world that no longer exists for her, and just as effectively fragments consciousness itself, for rather than perceiving herself as a whole the speaker can focus only on the collection of details that makes up her life: a clinking latch, a shrieking mouse, a lengthening shadow. (119)

Thus, the self broods on its own isolation, as Mariana, the depressed speaker, recognizes the impossibility of her situation and the futility of striving against it. The self regards the self, her alienation is highly accentuated, and she becomes so lethargic that she cannot act at all.

The dreariness and dread that Mariana feels reflect her longing for connection with another, whom she fears will never come. She laments repeatedly, "My life is dreary, / He cometh not . . . / I am aweary, aweary, / I would that I were dead" (9-12). Her loneliness encourages her to wish her own death. The deep depression in which Mariana is immersed reflects the concern with mental health that was so prevalent in the nineteenth century, while the

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deep depression of the speaker and her feelings of isolation mirror Tennyson's obsessions and his era's preoccupations. The speaker's isolation also reflects the splintering of Victorian society through increasing forces that tended to diminish communities and foster selfish forms of individualism. When connection is denied the speaker, she becomes obsessed with death and loses the will to live.

Critic Ann Colley notes Tennyson's facility in reproducing symptoms of mental illness in his speakers:

> Tennyson's need to observe the emotions also encouraged him to approach his subject matter in ways that are reminiscent of the case studies written by nineteenth-century doctors. Tennyson identifies significant physical characteristics and distinguishing qualities of the mind which determine how each of his subjects perceives the world around her. (67)

Throughout "Mariana," Tennyson charts a frustrated woman's loneliness and despair. Tennyson follows the progress of her mind while she waits for a lover who never comes. In her depression, she begins to see "old faces," hear voices and exaggerated sounds, as the peeping of a mouse becomes a

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"shriek." Distortion of the senses is a typical bi-polar symptom: thus the sparrow's chirp, the clock's ticking, and the wind in the poplar "did all confound" (76) Mariana's senses. In her depressed, confused state, Mariana longs for darkness and death. Critic Elaine Jordan notes the heightened, yet confused senses of the speaker:

> Her sense is confounded, so that some other observer is needed to say what her state of mind is. Indications of time confuse her, the slow clock ticking and so on, and she loathes the afternoon sun most: time for her is something moldering and rotten. (61)

Time is a punishment to Mariana because living is a torturous ordeal.

Noting the bleak imagery and Mariana's longing for darkness, critic A. Dwight Culler considers Mariana a potential suicide (42). In a sense, Mariana is dead, because hers is a life-in-death existence, as Tennyson scholar Christopher Ricks notes, describing Mariana's life as "a life which is no life, and which waits for death" (45). She waits for a lover who never comes, for immediate death that will not come, and for an end to her isolation and loneliness that never comes. The creeping moss is a

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perfect indication of her isolation, for the moss only grows if left "undisturbed." One senses a quiet desperation at the end of the poem in the intensity of Mariana's despair and helplessness, as she weeps, "Oh God, that I were dead!" (81).

Thus, the speaker in Mariana is never relieved of her depression; instead, she sinks deeper and deeper into a world of despair. Like most sufferers of depression, she cannot lift herself out of this sad state. Scholar Alastair W. Thomson writes of Mariana's depression, "The woman, with her single cry, is a state of mind and soul, a sickness unto death which is reflected by and further objectified in the grange and level waste" (31). Thus, the undisturbed growing moss, and night birds, like the "flitting bats" and the "night fowl," reveal the ever-growing despair of a speaker who longs for a release from a living hell from which she cannot escape.

"Tithonus," like "Mariana," features yet another speaker who is isolated and trapped in time. Critic David Daiches describes "Tithonus" as a "dramatic monologue in an elegiac vein, the type of poem that was typical of Tennyson, especially during the period following Hallam's death" (999). The speaker of the poem is the mythical

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Tithonus, but Jerome Buckley notes that, while "Tennyson accepted the integrity of the myth, and with his usual sympathetic insight into classical materials," he nevertheless "revitalized it as the embodiment of his own sense of life's intolerable burden" (62).

The inspiration for "Tithonus" may have come from Tennyson's grief over Arthur Hallam's death, as well as the grief expressed by his sister, Emily, Hallam's fiancé. Following Arthur Hallam's death, Tennyson felt life was not worth living. For Tennyson, Hallam would be forever young, like Aurora, and in Tithonus he finds the perfect parallel to his own deep despair and death-in-life existence. In his Memoirs, Tennyson writes, "I was so utterly miserable, a burden to myself and to my family, that I said 'Is life worth anything?'" (qtd. in Buckley 58). After Hallam's death, Emily expresses her grief to Tennyson in a letter: "What is life to me! If I die (which the Tennysons never do). . . ." (qtd. in Ricks 128). A friend from Cambridge also wrote to Tennyson expressing his grief upon hearing of Hallam's death: "Since Hallam's death I almost feel like an old man looking back on many friendships as something bygone" (qtd. in Ward 142).

Tennyson based his poem on the Greek myth of Tithonus,

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the beautiful youth who falls in love with Aurora, goddess of the Dawn. At Aurora's request, Zeus grants Tithonus immortality, but both Aurora and Tithonus forget to ask for eternal youth. Therefore, Tithonus has to watch Aurora remain beautiful and unchanged while he becomes old, wrinkled, and helpless. The poem carries Tennyson's feelings of isolation, loneliness, despair, and vulnerability, as well as images of a man who lives a life-in-death existence. However much he longs for death, death does not come to either Tithonus or Tennyson.

The poem opens with the use of anaphora, "The woods decay, the woods decay and fall." The use of anaphora is especially effective because it stresses the isolation Tithonus feels as the world around him changes while he remains the same. The speaker's isolation is made even more devastatingly real through his description of continual loss: "Man comes and tills the field and lies beneath, / And after many a summer dies the swan. / Me only cruel immortality consumes" (3-5). Tithonus feels isolated from the world because he cannot die. His isolation is made more devastating because although he has a god-like quality of immortality, he does not have eternal youth. Arthur D. Ward suggests that Tennyson's feelings of

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melancholy and isolation derive from the subject's not being able to interact with society. Tithonus pleads, "Release me, and restore me to the ground" (72). This longing for death may signal survivor's guilt, and it surely reflects Tennyson's wish to die after losing his soul mate. Tithonus knows that without death, life is incomplete. He watches nature and the life cycle complete themselves, and he realizes they are what make life unique and important. Yet watching and knowing only make Tithonus feel incomplete, more depressed, and more isolated.

Critic Arthur Simpson, Jr. notes that "Tithonus" is a poem about the isolation of the artist, suggesting that his plea for Aurora to release him symbolizes Tennyson's desire for release from the "socially isolated artist's life" after Hallam's death (907). For Simpson, Aurora's world represents the artistically fulfilling life that Tennyson could never maintain. Tithonus secedes from the mortal world and secludes himself in the static, immortal world of Aurora's, a world that represents the artistic world into which Tennyson retreats (907). In his poetry, especially poetry written immediately after Hallam's death, Tennyson often mentions these elements of isolation, silence, and tranquility as artistic symbols. Isolation for artists is

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often the ideal state for artistic creation, but for Tithonus, it is a negative experience because it lasts forever. Simpson explains that Tithonus represents two worlds, a world of dreams and a world of memories (908). He now lives in a world that is half-awake, half-asleep, and he relies on memory to recall his magnificent youth compared to his present life in Aurora's world.

Tithonus accepts that his life has changed and that Aurora has moved beyond his reach: "How can my nature longer mix with thine? / Coldly thy rosy shadows bathe me, cold / Are all thy lights, and cold my wrinkled feet / Upon thy glimmering thresholds" (65-68). The nostalgic tone of these lines follows from the insurmountable barrier between Tithonus' past and present, and makes the dynamic conflict between longevity, isolation, and helplessness all the more painful. Tithonus is alienated both from mortals and the gods. Perhaps the poem reflects Tennyson's same isolation and helplessness, after Hallam, his friend and mentor who always encouraged him in his writing, died.

Death imagery pervades the poem as Tithonus longs for death, but it is especially poignant as Tithonus emphasizes Aurora's renewed vitality and beauty: "Thou wilt renew thy beauty morn by morn, / I earth in earth forget these empty

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courts" (74-75). Interestingly, the repeated word "morn" sounds like "mourn," surely symbolic of Tithonus' mourning for a release from his immortal life, which is really no life at all. As in earlier poems, Tennyson's life-in-death imagery prevails as Tithonus begs Aurora to take back her gift of eternal life and release him to the happy state of mortal men. Christopher Ricks even suggests that the "poem is Tennyson's subtlest and most beautiful exploration of the impulse to suicide" (Tennyson 129). Indeed, "Tithonus" is the work of a tormented man who is dealing with the helplessness characteristic of a life-in-death existence.

However, depression is only part of the bipolar personality. If depressed speakers people the early poems, Tennyson's speaker in "Locksley Hall" exhibits the manic state. In this poem, Tennyson's manic speaker rails against the injustices in Victorian society, such as the class system, materialism, and unrequited love.

"Locksley Hall" exudes Tennyson's disgust with arranged marriages. Because of society's obsession with materialism, money-minded marriages were fast becoming the norm in Victorian England. Tennyson contemporary G. R. Drysdale observes how a materialistic society marries for wealth and not for love:

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> A great proportion of the marriages we see around us did not take place from love at all; but from some interested motive, such as wealth, social position, or other advantage; and in fact it is rare to see a marriage in which true love has been the predominating feeling on both sides. (qtd. in Houghton 381).

"Locksley Hall" is a dramatic monologue whose Byronic protagonist has an aloof contempt for society. The poem begins with a trochaic stress, reproducing the ranting speaker's emphasis as he exhibits both his fascination and his frustration with Victorian scientific, technological changes and the materialistic views of society. Tennyson, like the speaker in the poem, was fascinated by the technological changes introduced by Victorian scientists and inventors, and, at the same time, he was repulsed by the horrors resulting from technological advances. The repugnance of slums, created by the dislocations caused by the industrial revolution, brought country people flooding into the city looking for work and housing, the greed of the newly rich, and the uncaring attitude of a materialistic society destroyed any hope Tennyson or the speaker might have that society was changing for the

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better. Yet "Locksley Hall" may be Tennyson's attempt to relate to contemporary problems, as his friends encouraged him to do. By the end of the poem, the speaker comes to terms with the ills of society as he affirms the goodness of science and progress.

Tennyson begins the poem with a ranting speaker who has just been jilted by his cousin, Amy, for a wealthier suitor. M. H. Abrams speculates that the speaker may be modeled on Frederick, one of Tennyson's older brothers, who was exceptionally hot-tempered and who had fallen in love with a cousin, Julia Tennyson, but was unsuccessful in his suit (1073-74). However, the ranting speaker may be Tennyson himself, since the situation also parallels his life. He was in love with Rosa Baring, but Rosa, at the insistence of her family, rejected him in favor of a wealthy suitor, Robert Shafto (Ricks, Tennyson 147).

Stopford A. Brooke describes the protagonist as "the lover, the betrayed lover, the curser of his time, the man who reacts with anger from his disillusion and his cursing, and the one who is looking back on all the phases through which he has passed" (437). In addition to his anger over his rejection, the protagonist also lashes out at social injustice and cruelty. Tennyson represents him both as a

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victim of society and a rebel whose pathological personality protects himself against conditions he is unable to endure. The speaker is cut off from love by lack of money, creating a source of anger, personal rejection, and feelings of futility, just as Tennyson often felt unable to right social injustices in his own personal life. When these pressures from within and without build and collide, frustration erupts into the neurotic ranting exemplified by the speaker in "Locksley Hall." Jerome Buckley finds the speaker possessed of a "morbid poetic soul" (141), which experiences many disorganized fits of emotion throughout the poem. The speaker vacillates between wild rage, morbid introspection, unbridled optimism, and confidence in the future of Victorian society.

At first, the speaker asks his friends to leave him alone with his misery and anger: "leave me here a little, while as yet 'tis early morn" (1). Alone, he reminisces about years past, the present, and the future. After the speaker mentions contemporary times of great unrest, he begins to think of the past, which he sees as beneficent. He recalls, "Many a night from yonder ivied casement, ere [he] went to rest," (7) he wandered "Here about the beach"

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"nourishing a youth sublime" (9). He recalls a time in his life when he was younger and life was good: "In the spring a livelier iris changes on the burnished dove; / In the spring a young man's fancy lightly turns to thoughts of love" (19-20). Reference to springtime invokes the images of joy, love, rebirth, and beauty of his youth. He recalls posing the question of love to his cousin Amy, who replied in affirmation. Life was idyllic, and the speaker's mood is jubilant as he remembers the wonderful times the two spent together: "Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in his glowing hands; / Every moment, lightly shaken, ran itself in golden sands" (31-2). He speaks of the mornings, afternoons, and evenings he and Amy spent together and how wonderful life became with her as part of his life. The speaker describes their closeness: "Many an evening by the waters did we watch the stately ships, / And our spirits rushed together at the touching of the lips" (37-8). Time seemed to stand still as the two experienced the world, and love was complete.

Suddenly, though, his calm disintegrates, and the speaker's mood blackens. He begins to rant and rave that Amy turned traitor to their love, and he chastises himself for being naïve enough to believe Amy ever really loved

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him, since she obeyed her father's wish and married for money:

> O my cousin, shallow hearted, O my Amy, mine no more!
> O the dreary, dreary moorland! O the barren, barren shore!
> Falser than all fancy fanthoms, falser than all songs have sung,
> Puppet to a father's threat, and servile to a shrewish tongue! (39-42)

Instead of the light-hearted spring-like imagery in the earlier lines, wasteland imagery pervades these lines as the bipolar speaker's mood changes from light to dark. Jerome Buckley astutely notes that the above lines may also represent Tennyson's personal expression of his discontent with parental interference, and that "it certainly expresses his dissatisfaction with his own economic status" (76).

Nonetheless, as soon as the speaker rages at Amy for capitulating to her parent's demand that she marry someone wealthy, with Byronic egotism, he sings his own praises: Is it well to wish thee happy?---having known me---to decline / On a range of lower feelings and a narrower heart

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than mine?" (43-4). The speaker cannot understand how Amy could choose someone else. -The bipolar speaker is soothed as he praises himself because, in one sense, praise is a source of consolation.

Another mood swing occurs as the speaker vacillates from self-praise to hurling insults at Amy. He fantasizes what her life will be like in her loveless marriage: "He will hold thee, when his passion shall have spent its novel force, / Something better than his dog, a little dearer than his horse" (49-50). The speaker rails that he would rather see the both himself and Amy dead because they would both be better off "Rolled in one another's arms, and silent in a last embrace" (57), than living a life of materialism with a man she does not love. The manic speaker rages against a materialistic society, as he laments that materialism has taken over where true love should be heralded: "Cursed be the social wants that sin against the strength of youth! / Cursed by the social lies that warp us from the living truth" (59-60). The "social wants" refer to materialism, and the "social lies" refer to marriage for prestige and position rather than love. The following lines explicitly state the reason for the speaker's anger, and the more he rants, the more bitter he

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becomes: "Cursed be the sickly forms that err from honest Nature's rule! / Cursed be the gold that gilds the straitened forehead of the fool" (61-2). Amy has chosen to marry his rival because he has more money than the speaker; thus, he curses the "gold" that determined his fate.

The speaker justifies his anger as he states that he has a right to rage since she has proven false and is unworthy of his love. The speaker asserts that he would have treated Amy far better than her husband could because they were alike in their sentiments and could have had a wonderful life as husband and wife: "Well—'tis well that I should bluster!—Hadst thou less unworthy proved--- / Would to God---for I had loved thee more than ever wife was loved" (62-3). She can only be another possession to her husband; to the speaker, she would have been loved and treated respectfully. The speaker's sarcasm heightens the bitterness as he curses Amy and says she will grow up to be just like her mother: "O, I see thee old and formal, fitted to thy petty part / With a little hoard of maxims preaching down a daughter's heart" (93-4). The speaker may be suggesting that if Amy had only followed her heart and married him, she would have continued to think for herself because he would have respected her opinion. Her husband,

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however, can only treat her as an object, and she will have to conform to Victorian mores and social standards, just as her mother and other Victorian women were expected to do, neither expressing nor having any views of her own.

In his anger and his frustration at thwarted love and a shallow, materialistic society, the speaker is tempted to withdraw from life and give up on humankind, but he realizes that he must not. The poet adheres to the Victorian adage of self help: "I myself must mix with action, lest I wither by despair" (1076). Just as Hallam and friends told Tennyson that he could not retreat into a palace of art and live there, the speaker realizes that he must not withdraw from life.

Therefore, for the moment, his anger is spent, and he shifts abruptly to an optimistic theme. But it should be noted that his manic tone does not change with this shift. He notes the changes that are coming. England is on the move and the speaker is imbued with the spirit of the times:

> Men, my brothers, men the workers, ever reaping something new;
> That which they have done but earnest of the things that they shall do.

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> For I dipped into the future, far as human eye could see,
> Saw the vision of the world, and all the wonder that would be. (117-20)

The speaker recognizes that the good side of this productivity means commerce will come; however, with the good comes the bad, and Tennyson writes of the coming aerial war alluding to commercial flight and warfare in an apocalyptic vision: "Heard the heavens fill with shouting, and there rained a ghastly dew / From the nations' airy navies grappling in the central blue" (123-4). Even though the speaker hates the thoughts of war, he alludes to the ringing affirmation of goodness that will come from progress and science: "Yet I doubt not through the ages one increasing purpose runs, / And the thoughts of men are widened with the process of the suns" (137-8). These lines reflect the grandiosity typical of the manic state as the speaker shifts violently from positive to negative to positive points as he speculates on these coming changes. These lines also contain a touch of the German transcendental philosophy that every day humanity is growing smarter and better. In other words, humanity is just beginning to evolve into a greater sense of what it

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may be capable.

Finally the speaker hears the blowing of the bugle, a signal that his comrades are calling him. He is ashamed for having loved so passionately, and he bolsters his lagging self-worth by commenting on women's inferiority to men:

> Shall it not be scorn to me to harp on such a moldered string?
> I am shamed through all my nature to have loved so slight a thing.
> Weakness to be wroth with weakness! Woman's pleasure, woman's pain---
> Nature made them blinder motions bounded in a shallower brain.
> Woman is the lesser man, and all thy passions, matched with mine,
> Are as moonlight unto sunlight, and as water unto wine. (147-52)

After acknowledging women's inherent inferiority, both physically and mentally, the speaker decides that Amy was not worth his pain and suffering, and he decides to get on with life.

Thus, whereas the speaker begins the poem with

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negation and self-absorption, toward the end of the poem, he moves to the "Everlasting Yea of activity in a self-confident and energetic 'Mother Age'" (Buckley 77). In a mighty call to action, he asserts, "I myself must mix with action lest I wither by despair"(98). However, the speaker cannot merely immerse himself in physical adventure and forget his troubles, even though that is what he longs to do. He thinks of running away to the South Seas and living a primitive life as he cries, "I will take some savage woman, she shall rear my dusky race" (168). Yet even as the words are out of his mouth, the speaker knows that his speech and thoughts are crazed: "Fool, again the dream, the fancy! but I *know* my words are wild" (173). Jerome Buckley asserts that the speaker must forget about passionate love by putting aside his passionate nature, and he must concentrate more on technology and the advancement of Victorian society (77).

This manic call to action may be seen more clearly in the closing lines of the poem with the allusion to the sea journey, a recurring motif in Tennyson's works. The last two lines of the poem reflect the speaker's realization that the past is dead, and that he must look to the future and get on with his life. He ends with a curse: "Let it

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fall on Locksley Hall, with rain or hail, or fire or snow; / For the mighty wind arises, roaring seaward, and I go" (193-4). In this closing line is the same call to action that the speaker expresses in "Ulysses," a command to himself and his fellow mariners "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" (70).

The speaker in "Locksley Hall" is a forerunner of one of Tennyson's most famous speakers—the speaker in Maud, Tennyson's most debated poem. However, in Maud, the speaker's mania accelerates into total madness. The speaker's madness is the result of the same issues the speaker in "Locksley Hall" takes cause against. Just as the speaker in "Locksley Hall" raves about the injustices of a society that bases everything on material wealth, including love, the speaker in Maud also raves about unrequited love, materialism, and pride based on money. However, in "Locksley Hall" the speaker never achieves catharsis. Several years later, with the writing of Maud, Tennyson's bi-polar speaker addresses the same issues and finally finds the release for which he searches but does not find in "Locksley Hall."

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Chapter IV

Maud: Method and Madness

The speakers in Maud and "Locksley Hall" wrestle with the complex problems of Tennysonian love, characterized by the obstacles society places in the lovers' ways, and the horror that results when the speaker's depressed personality is at odds with itself. Psychologist Rollo May observes that the social and the psychological problems of the twentieth century can no longer be isolated one from the other (Power 45). This was also true of the nineteenth century in general and in particular of Tennyson's speakers. Their health hinges on how successfully they cope with internal and external pressures and achieve a balance among the contradictions that inform their existence. The same attacks on wealth, materialism, and unrequited love that pervades "Locksley Hall" is also in Maud, which critics have described both as Tennyson's best and his worst poem.

The extremes reflected in the poem confused and dismayed many of Tennyson's contemporary critics, although twentieth century scholar Elaine Jordan calls Maud Tennyson's most adventurous poem in its exploration of masculinity and aggression. She describes Maud as "a

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psychic monodrama in which different phases of passion in one person take the place of different characters" (139). Robert Bernard Martin agrees that the poem is both psychic and passionate and further states that "Maud is probably the most original and highly experimental poem Tennyson ever wrote, but it was not what his 1855 readers were expecting" (383). Indeed, many of the early reviewers of Maud were puzzled and hostile. Peter Levi summarizes the responses of prominent contemporaries of Tennyson: "Patmore hated Maud, the Liberal Party hated it, Gladstone and George Eliot disapproved, people could not understand it, and Browning, to whose work of course it has similarities, thought it a great poem" (222). Robert James Mann catalogs some of the more negative Victorian reviews of the poem:

> The poem has been called everything from 'dismally dull and dolefully dawdlin' to a 'splendid and exquisite poem.' One critic calls the poem a 'spasm'; another calls it a 'careless, visionary, an unreal allegory of the Russian war'; a journalist could not quite make up his mind whether the adjective 'mud' or 'mad' would best apply to the work but suggests that because

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> there was only one small vowel redundant in the title in either case, both might do. A fourth critic says the 'mud' conceals irony, and a fifth critic leans rather to the 'mad' hypothesis. Yet others refer to the work as 'a political fever'; 'the dead level of prose run mad'; rampant and rabid bloodthirstiness of soul'; and last, but not least, as 'an epidemic caught from the prevalent carelessness of thought and rambling contemplativeness of the time.' (6-7)

In 1923, Harold Nicholson praised Tennyson's lyrical poetry, calling it "brilliant," but at the same time, he found the narrative poet, especially in Maud, to be "dull, hypocritically moralistic, and prone to filling his works with Victorian clichés" (8). The poet's grandson, Sir Charles Tennyson, refutes Nicholson's harsh portrayal of his grandfather. Whereas Nicholson found Tennyson to be "stupid and ignorant," Sir Charles represents him as a deeply troubled man whose didactic poetical works such as Maud express his concern for and understanding of the great social and political issues of his day (128). On the whole, in fact, favorable reviews were numerous, and within just a few months of Maud's publication, over eight

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thousand copies had been sold (Shannon 398).

Tennyson finished his much debated and criticized dramatic monologue, which he originally entitled Maud or the Madness, at Farringford on the Isle of Wight in July, 1855, but evidence indicates that the idea for the poem came to Tennyson as early as 1833 (Hill 309). Sir John Simeon, a friend and mentor of Tennyson's, read lines that Tennyson wrote as early as 1833 and later published in a volume of works entitled The Tribute. These particular 110 lines formed a poem published in 1837, and they now form Part II, Section IV of today's completed version of Maud. Of these lines, Simeon is said to have liked best the line "O that 'twere possible" (141) and told Tennyson that he should take the line and do more with it. Thus, Simeon is sometimes given credit for inspiring Tennyson to take this one line and create his poem Maud.

However Aubrey de Vere's account in Memoirs I. 379 differs slightly. De Vere suggests that Tennyson accidently found this older poem and built upon it:

> Its origin and composition were, as he described them, singular. He had accidentally lighted upon a poem of his own which begins, 'O that 'twere possible,' and which had long before been

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> published in a selected volume got up by Lord Northampton for the aid of a sick clergyman. It had struck him, in consequence, I think, of a suggestion made by Sir John Simeon, that to render the poem fully intelligible, a preceding one was necessary. He wrote it; the second poem too required a predecessor; and thus the whole poem was written, as it were, backwards. (qtd. in Ricks 1037)

Tennyson scholar Ralph Wilson Radar speculates further that though Sir John Simeon's remark may have inspired Tennyson, that it "would be wrong to give it too much weight, since T. must have long thought of doing something more with 'Oh! That 'twere possible'" (10). Regardless of who inspired Tennyson to write Maud, the line itself, "Oh! That 'twere possible," probably came from a lyric written in response to Tennyson's grief for Arthur Henry Hallam, providing the nucleus around which Maud was written (Jordan 155).

Hallam's death, Tennyson's rejection by Rosa Baring, and his dysfunctional home life caused Tennyson to retreat into himself and a world of his own. Thus, images of isolation in Tennyson's poems are almost always a result of a combination of pressures, both those emanating from his

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speakers and those coming from the world in which they live. The typical Tennyson speaker tends to be sensitive, insecure, and distrustful of both self and others. Interestingly, these are the same characteristics that have been used to describe the personality of Tennyson himself by many of his closest friends. H. S. Pancoast describes Tennyson's isolation: "Shy, morbidly sensitive, silent, except among an inner circle of chosen friends, the poet locked himself from his kind with books and Nature, a remote and keen observer of the conflicts in which he did not share" (594).

The world against which Tennyson pits his typical speaker is indifferent or hostile to the speaker's needs. The result of this contact between the protagonist and the world in which he lives leads to, more often than not, a withdrawal into isolation and despair as he tries to disengage his emotions. This withdrawal, in turn, results in the splitting of self, which produces a variety of neurotic and even psychotic reactions that often result in madness. In _Maud_, isolation gives birth to a speaker much like Tennyson himself, one who vacillates between mania and deepest depression and despair.

The parallels between Tennyson's speaker in _Maud_ and

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events in the poet's own life are evident. Although Tennyson vehemently denied the autobiographical significance of Maud, many of its details parallel aspects of his own life. He also stated when asked about why he wrote his poetry as he did, "I have written what I have felt and known; and I will never write anything else" (qtd. in Culler 151). Tennyson's biographers, among them Christopher Ricks and Robert Bernard Martin, note that, like Maud's speaker, he suffered from mood swings and paranoia, especially after the death of Arthur Hallam.

In exploring the autobiographical elements of the poem, Robert Bernard Martin points out that the emotions that Tennyson expresses in Maud "are far from unfamiliar to him" (385). Ralph Wilson Radar, in fact, identifies three prominent events in Tennyson's life that are portrayed in Maud: the disinheritance of Tennyson's father, Arthur Henry Hallam's death, and Tennyson's unrequited love affair with Rosa Baring, which, Radar suggests, "promising Tennyson joy, brought him, I believe, disappointment and emotional confusion" (18-21). In Maud, the speaker isolates himself from the world while he sternly protests the social injustices of what he calls the "wretched race" of men (Maud I.X.ii.364), just as Tennyson isolated himself

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from the world and society after Hallam's death and his unrequited love affair with Rosa Baring.

With his views on the corrupt state of England and society's obsession with wealth, it is not surprising that Tennyson nicknamed Maud "his little Hamlet." Tennyson writes:

> This poem of 'Maud or the Madness' is a little Hamlet, the history of a morbid, poetic soul, under the blighting influence of a recklessly speculative age. He is the heir of madness, an egoist with the makings of a cynic, raised to a pure and holy love which elevates his whole nature, passing from the height of triumph to the lowest depth of misery, driven into madness by the loss of her whom he has loved, and when he has at length passed through the fiery furnace, and has recovered his reason, giving himself up to work for the good of mankind through the selfishness born of a great passion. The peculiarity of this poem is that different phases of passion in one person take the place of different characters. (Poems 1039)

Tennyson could not have chosen a more apt nickname, since

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both Maud and Hamlet depict speakers who vacillate between sanity and madness. Both Hamlet and the speaker in Maud represent a self caught up in a world in which it does not wish to exist, and both refer throughout to the corrupt society in which they must live.

Tennyson's helplessness in advancing his social situation resulted in severe depression, just as the speaker in Maud feels helpless. Thus, even though Tennyson's speakers protest societal injustices, their rebellion is powerless; societal pressures and personal weaknesses combine to leave them no alternative but to slip more and more deeply into a manic or bipolar state until they are no longer in control. Rollo May reinforces this idea of helplessness in Man's Search for Himself as he writes, "When a person continually faces dangers he is powerless to overcome, his final line of defense is to avoid even feeling the dangers" (24).

Tennyson's speaker in Maud makes an effort to assert his independence as he pretends not to care about the world in which he lives. For congenitally depressed, sensitive souls like Tennyson, living in an age filled with doubt and conflict made it almost normal to be neurotic, to experience a splitting of self. Christopher Ricks insists

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that the issue in Maud "is precisely the independence, the free-standing health, of self" (247). Psychiatrist Dr. Anthony Storr believes that many writers and artists have used their writing to save not only their souls but their minds as well (5). Christoper Ricks embraces this concept as he writes:

> The pity and terror Tennyson had felt for his father's plight (a persecuted man who had persecution mania, a hypochondriac who had ill health) enter the poem as a commiseration which is aware that it must risk the accusation of self-pity: 'What! am I raging alone as my father raged in his mood? / Must I too creep to the hollow and dash myself down and die?' So large and so total, then, was Tennyson's attempt to make his past come to terms with him, that it is not surprising he gave Maud a special place in his heart (and in his readings). (247)

Leon Edel suggests Tennyson wrote from a "search for some exit from the labyrinth of the imprisoned and despairing self—the verbal structure, the philter, the anodyne, that will somehow provide escape and surcease" (1010). This isolation, or retreat from self and society, is found in

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many of Tennyson's speakers, especially his speaker in Maud, yet most of the time, because of their mental states, the selves are damned no matter what they do.

In Maud, Tennyson wrote to resolve internal conflicts. Maud also reflects Tennyson's preoccupation with science, religion, the class system, and materialism, concerns that plagued Tennyson most of his life. Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology and later Darwin's Origin of the Species caused fundamental doubt as to how the world and humankind came to be. Many Victorians were deeply troubled by these issues, and some became mentally unbalanced. As already noted, Victorian Age scientists treated madness as both a social and a legal problem. Poets of the day, including Tennyson, were both fascinated and sympathetic because they sensed that "madness" was a symptom of the times. Because of his family history, Tennyson was fascinated with madness and its effect on society. Indeed, Sir Charles Tennyson draws a direct connection between Maud and Tennyson's experiences observing his friend, Dr. Matthew Allen's patients: "The mad scenes in Maud are based on Tennyson's recollections of Dr. Matthew Allen's asylum at High Beech" (286). Tennyson mentioned that he wrote the mad scene in Maud in twenty minutes (qtd. in Ricks, Poetry

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1037). No doubt the poet's familiarity with the disease occasioned the speed in the writing of this scene. Thus, Tennyson, and other Victorian writers, peopled their works with mad speakers who served as metaphors for the lunacy of an entire period gone mad with new scientific information and technological changes, as well as a trampling of love in the rush toward material wealth. Tennyson deals with these issues in Maud as he struggles against a personal life that was sometimes filled with madness, poverty, and unrequited love.

Maud reflects Tennyson's preoccupation with his era's obsession with wealth, materialism, progress, and the fast-paced changes brought by industrialization. Materialism became an all-consuming aspect of life. Peter Levi notes "the fierce social criticism of [Tennyson's] society was present in many of his poems, 'Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington,' 'The Charge of the Light Brigade,' and 'To the Rev. F. D. Maurice'" (225). Sir Charles Tennyson suggests that Tennyson's disenchantment with Victorian society sprang from his dysfunctional home life and the age in which he lived. However, he notes that discussions with friends often reinforced his fears:

> These [disenchantments] sprang from his long

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> talks with Charles Kingsley and F. D. Maurice about the terrible conditions in the rapidly growing industrial cities with their vile housing, sweated labour, dirt, disease and misery, and from the war fever which was sweeping through England during those summer and autumn months of 1854. (281)

Society ceased to care about anything but progress and making money, as industrialization produced more and more hardships for the poor. Herbert L. Sussman writes of the Victorians: "Machines were not just a symbol for them but a tangible fact that made itself felt in the technology beginning to regulate their daily lives" (5). The great thinkers and poets of Tennyson's age, then, experienced deep existential terror, fruitless searches for God, feelings of alienation from God, from nature, from other people, and, most of all, from themselves.

Therefore, Maud reflects Tennyson's personal conflicts, but also the preoccupations of his era, through a speaker whose bipolar mental state represents both the Victorian era's dislocations, and a psychological defensive response to intolerable social cruelty and injustice. Social criticisms came fast and harsh from other poets and

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thinkers as well. Tennyson certainly was not the only poet who was critical of his age. In his poem, "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse," Matthew Arnold writes that the self seems destined to wander "between two worlds, one dead, / The other powerless to be born" (85-6).

Maud Part I

In Maud Part I, Tennyson's nameless speaker clearly possesses a bipolar personality. His mental gyrations between depression and mania are prevalent throughout Part I, as the speaker alludes to his father's death, which was probably a suicide. The anger, hostility, and lost hope expressed by the speaker characterize bipolar personalities immersed in depression. In the severely depressed state, bipolar personalities find no joy in their personal lives or in their surroundings. Similarly, the bipolar protagonist in Maud is a morbid, introspective, paralyzed individual who hates the world in which he lives and everyone in it. His depression will not allow him any hope for himself or the world in which he lives. His depression stems not only from the death of his father, but it also comes from the crass materialism that obsesses society. The protagonist sees people grasping for wealth with no

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concern for others. He becomes both despondent and angry, seething and raving over issues of the day, exhibiting what critic A. C. Bradley notes are the characteristics of the melancholic person, or bipolar personality: "One who is inclined to nervous instability, to rapid and perhaps extreme changes of mood, absorbed in the feeling or the mood that possessed him, whether it were joyous or depressed" (qtd. in Gottschalk 40).

The bipolar protagonist enters a manic state as he works himself into a fever pitch when he realizes Maud has returned home from abroad. He fears her beauty, of which he has heard much, and he tries to allay his fears with thoughts that she, too, will be so materialistic in her desires that he will be safe from any desire to meet or be with her. He is poor and has nothing to offer her, and he concedes, "she will let me alone" (I.i.74). The speaker, in his rantings, reveals his bipolar personality by his hatred, depression, isolation, and his lack of hope. The speaker whips himself into a fever pitch of both joy and anger as he simultaneously experiences love and jealously. He exposes the depressed side of his personality before he meets Maud. The manic side is seen when he falls in love with her and she with him. Then, in turn, he becomes

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depressed as Maud's brother enters the picture, and he turns manic again when the brother leaves the estate and the speaker has Maud all to himself. However, at the brother's return, so does the speaker's depression, and then, finally, when he is assured of Maud's affection, the love scene in the garden reveals a view of the manic personality as he joyously awaits the appearance of his beloved. The garden scene, which begins as a love scene with the speaker's mood seemingly that of a normal lover, forms the climax of Part I, as the scene turns bloody. It is here that the speaker's mania escalates to an uncontrollable pitch, and in a confused state of love for Maud and hatred for her brother, the speaker kills Maud's brother in a duel.

The heavy, ponderous, spondaic meter with which the poem begins provides a formal expression of the ominous depression and isolation that the speaker feels. Uncontrollable circumstances have caused the speaker to isolate himself from all forces of humanity, and he sinks further into a well of depression, self-pity, hatred, and loneliness. The speaker's isolation provides a refuge from the horrible reality of the "lonely hell" of his life (Johnson 13).

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Indeed, the "lonely hell" appears in the imagery of the first four lines:

> I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood;
>
> Its lips in the field are dabbled with blood-red heath,
>
> The red-ribb'd ledges drip with a silent horror of blood,
>
> And Echo there, whatever is ask'd her, answers "Death." (I.i.1-4)

The nightmare, life-in-death existence seen here is almost a Dantean view of the world as a hell in which the speaker must live. His is a world that continually threatens to swallow him alive, and in his depression, he cannot escape this horror. He longs to be free from this place of terror, but he is inexplicably drawn here, almost as if he were using the location as a form of self-torture. He sees a distorted and violent world as he views the heath as "blood red" and as he speaks of the "red-ribb'd ledges" that drip with the horror of blood. The last line, which ends with the word "Death," foreshadows the deaths that are to come, as well as alluding to the deaths that have already been.

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The depressed speaker takes the image of hell even further:

> For there in the ghastly pit long since a body was found,
> His who had given me life—O father! O God! Was it well?----
> Mangled, and flatten'd, and crush'd and dinted into the ground;
> There yet lies the rock that fell with him when he fell. (I.ii.5-8)

The references are allusions to the place where the speaker's father jumped to his death many years ago. In his isolated and depressed condition, the protagonist comes here and relives the scene over and over in his mind, envisioning the body as it lay "mangled, flattened, crushed and dinted into the ground," the body pressed into a symbolic hell by suicide.

The father's suicide is the result of his losing money. The speaker muses:

> Did he fling himself down? who knows? For a vast speculation had fail'd?
> And ever he mutter'd and madden'd and ever wann'd with despair,

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> And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken
> worldling wail'd,
> And the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove
> thro' the air. (I.i.8-12)

The "vast speculation" suggests several meanings. It may refer to a business venture that collapsed and ruined the speaker's father, who, unable to cope with the financial ruin, committed suicide. Paul Turner suggests that the "vast speculation" may also refer to Tennyson's own failed "pyroglyph" project with Dr. Allen, which prompted Tennyson's nervous breakdown (134). Then again, "the vast speculation" may be a general reference to the effects of Tennyson's father's lost birthright. Since Tennyson grew up watching his father beg for money from his grandfather, he knew well the effects of genteel poverty.

However one views the origins of the failed business venture, the speaker's depressed personality causes him to think and act irrationally. As he fumes and muses over the "vast speculation," the speaker must convince himself of his father's honesty and goodness, because he will not allow himself to think that the venture may have occurred as a result of his father's inadequacy. The speaker affirms, "His honest fame should at least by me be

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maintained" (I.v.17), insinuating that even if the world does not believe in his father's abilities and honesty, he must. If the speaker, in his obsessive and depressed state, can make himself believe in his father's goodness and honesty, then the father becomes a victim of the world, and that makes life easier to bear. Also, blaming another gives the speaker a scapegoat, Maud's father: "But that old man, now lord of the broad estate and the Hall, / Dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us flaccid and drain'd" (I.i.18-19). The metaphor, "Dropt off gorged," with its suggestions of a flea, a tick, or even a vampire, incites a powerful endictment of blame. This image depicts Maud's father as having sucked the life blood of the speaker's family. Indeed, he suggests that his father's death was perhaps a form of murder: "Villany somewhere! Whose? One says, we are villains all" (I.i.17).

Tennyson's own father, of course, died a natural death and was not literally a suicide. Yet Tennyson may have felt that by his alcoholism, George Tennyson did, in a very real sense, destroy himself. One critic notes that in both Maud and in Tennyson's life, "the memory of the father's erratic life, ending in a death tinged by scandal" (Radar 90), profoundly affected Tennyson's life and work. One may

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even imply from the words "Villany somewhere" that Tennyson felt, on some level, that both his grandfather and his Uncle Charles had essentially murdered his father-- his grandfather metaphorically by passing his inheritance to Charles, and Charles himself aiding and abetting by flaunting his wealth and inheritance.

Connections between the speaker's and Tennyson's attitudes towards their fathers' deaths occur as well in the parallels between lines in Maud and in Hamlet. The line "we are villains all" directly parallels Hamlet's quote "we are arrant knaves all" (3.1.130). The speaker in Maud, like Hamlet, is obsessed with avenging his father's death. Also, like Hamlet, he is disgusted with his country, himself, and the whole human race. Whether or not the speaker's father committed suicide, he obsessively revisits the event:

> I remember the time, for the roots of my hair were stirr'd
> By a shuffled step, by a dead weight trail'd, by a whisper'd fright.
> And my pulses closed their gates with a shock on my heart as I heard
> The shrill-edged shriek of a mother divide the

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shuddering night. (I.i.13-16)

In his emotional state, the-brutality of his father's death mingles with the love his mother felt for his father, and the "shrill-edged shriek" lives with him forever.

The speaker's feelings are fiercely divided. As he earlier speaks of a father who "mutter'd and madden'd," the speaker may be subconsciously blaming his father for his and his mother's fate. Thus, the father may be both the reason the speaker seeks vengeance and the burden of the "dead weight trail'd." Furthermore, as soon as the speaker's resentment for his father surfaces, so does his guilt for feeling this resentment. His feelings thus remain complex and conflicting.

Guilt or no, the tortured speaker cannot help but lament the anguish of his widowed mother as he discloses all the trials and hardships she had to endure as a consequence of her husband's life and his death. The speaker expresses his despair, depression, and helplessness as he laments his mother's sorrowful condition and his inability to help her:

> Darken'd watching a mother decline
>
> And that dead man at her heart and mine:
>
> For who was left to watch her but I?

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Yet so did I let my freshness die.

. . . .

I am sure I did but speak

Of my mother's faded cheek

When it slowly grew so thin,

That I felt she was slowly dying

Vext with lawyers and harass'd with debt:

For how often I caught her with her eyes all wet,

Shaking her head at her son and sighing

A world of trouble within! (I.xix.691-706)

This scene of the anguished widow also parallels circumstances from Tennyson's life. Because of the family's financial state after his father's death, Tennyson had to leave Cambridge without completing his degree to come home and care for his mother, brothers, and sisters. Bernard Martin notes that Tennyson always spoke of his mother as "saintly, and the most perfect creature" (35). With the vast love he harbored for her, one may be sure Tennyson felt both guilt and a sense of helplessness that he could do nothing to ease his mother's pain and grief and lessen her financial woes.

The speaker in Maud, after his father's and his mother's death, thus imprisons and isolates himself, not

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wanting to make himself vulnerable to the world. Essentially, he lives a life-in-death existence:

> Living alone in an empty house,
> Here half-hid in the gleaming wood,
> Where I hear the dead at midday moan,
> And the shrieking rush of the wainscot mouse,
> And my own sad name in corners cried,
> When the shiver of dancing leaves is thrown
> About its echoing chambers wide,
> Till a morbid-hate and horror have grown
> Of a world in which I have hardly mixt,
> And a morbid eating lichen fixt
> On a heart half-turned to stone. (I.viii.256-267)

The speaker's obsession with his isolation and loneliness is very prominent here, and the same intensification of sounds noted in "Mariana," such as the shrieking of the mouse, is magnified by the speaker's obsession and paranoia. He wishes to remain alone and aloof from the world, yet he also laments his fate of being alone. In his isolation, he muses on the distinctions he has drawn between good and evil, guilt and innocence, and in order to survive, he has locked himself away and hardened his heart against himself and the world. The speaker is extremely

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bitter about the materialistic world in which he lives. He is convinced that money killed his father, and by implication, his mother. Just as he raved earlier about his father's "vast speculation" and about Maud's father's wealth and estate, he now raves about an entire age and its obsession with wealth.

Victorian society was obsessed with the importance of wealth and materialism, so the ravings of the protagonist in Maud are not based on imagined circumstances. He speaks truth as he observes how materialistic society has become. With his father's death and his family's lack of wealth, greed becomes for him the root of all evil because it undermines human relationships and cheapens human life:

> Why do they prate of the blessings of peace? we have made them a curse,
> Pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own;
> And lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain, is it better or worse
> Than the heart of the citizen hissing war on his own hearthstone? (I.i.21-24)

These lines may reflect Tennyson's views on society's hypocrisy as well as the speaker's views. The allusion to

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people lusting after the money and property of others is evident, but the "spirit of Cain" may well allude to his Uncle Charles and the fact that he, at least in Tennyson's family's view, literally took his own brother's inheritance by playing up to his father.

The speaker also refers to a well-publicized contemporary incident that illustrates the destructive effects of greed on the family, the foundation of society:

> When a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee,
> And Timour-Mammon grins on a pile of children's bones,
> Is it peace or war? better, war! loud war by land and by sea,
> War with a thousand battles, and shaking a hundred thrones! (I.xii.45-48)

Ricks glosses this passage by citing an event in 1841 when a mother and father were found guilty of poisoning their three children to "defraud a burial society of some three pounds, eight shillings due on the death of each child; and official authorities whisper that perhaps this case is not solitary and it is best not to probe further into that department of things" (Poems 1043). War imagery

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foreshadows the Crimean War, with which Tennyson ends the poem. Here, however, the speaker asserts his belief that war is indeed better because death in war is honorable. Yet, what members of society are doing to each other is nothing short of war.

Because the speaker sees society in such a negative way, he views the world as one in which he must constantly be on guard against his neighbors and even his own servants:

> I keep but a man and a maid, ever ready to slander and steal;
> I know it, and smile a hard-set smile, like a stoic, or like
> A wiser epicurean, and let the world have its way. (I.iv.120-23)

The speaker, with his paranoia, perceives everyone as conspirators who threaten to rob him of his possessions. He is confident that the world and society will fulfill his worst expectations. He continually builds barriers between himself and the society in which he lives. The speaker, in ceasing to feel, no longer cares either about the immediate problem of his servants stealing him blind or more global problems:

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> Shall I weep if a Poland fall? shall I shriek if a Hungary fail?
> Or an infant civilization be ruled with rod or with knout?
> I have not made the world, and he that made it will guide. (I.iv.146-48)

The speaker washes his hands entirely of the affairs of the world and retreats even further into his isolation. Without hope, he is at last free from the shock of disappointment, and with his announcement, "I have not made the world," he is responsible for nothing that happens in it. Paul Turner explains his isolation by stating that "love and anger are forms of madness, according to Epicurean and Stoic doctrine, and Tennyson's speaker is trying to escape madness by living a philosopher's life" (148). Just as the speaker refuses to be angered by the Czar's crimes, viewing himself as "good" and the rest of the world as "evil," so, too, does he view the world as mad and himself as sane.

His paranoid view of his own goodness and sanity and the evil and insanity of everyone else becomes the speaker's reality. Furthermore, as the poem progresses, so does the speaker's instability. S. Roland Weiner

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attributes the speaker's instability to a different form of mental illness than bipolar disease:

> All of the hero's judgments seem based on little more than his excessive emotional responsibilities. His bitter denunciations of society reflect his almost schizoid emotional responses, a pattern which has preceded from his father's death. (177)

What Roland labels as schizoid, however, is more accurately labeled bipolar, for the speaker does not exhibit any manifestations of schizophrenia.

When preparation begins for Maud's arrival, the speaker's mood improves, if only briefly. Although the protagonist has retreated into indifference to the world and his surroundings, he notices that there are workers at Maud's father's estate, and he realizes the family is about to return from their trip abroad. He reminisces about his and Maud's youth, of a happier time in his life:

> I play'd with the girl when a child; she promised then to be fair.
>
> Maud, with her venturous climbings and tumblings and childish escapes,
>
> Maud, the delight of the village, the ringing joy

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of the Hall,

Maud, the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all. (I.xviii.68-71)

Here, the speaker is less depressed, if only for a fleeting moment. Before he even sees Maud, he associates her with a happier past, and, more importantly, with his mother. He speaks of a time past when life was more carefree and the two of them were happy.

However, no sooner is this attitude expressed than the speaker's mental state gyrates into open hostility, and he rants about his paranoid supposition:

> What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse.
> No, there is fatter game on the moor; she will let me alone.
> Thanks; for the fiend best knows whether woman or man be the worse.
> I will bury myself in myself, and the Devil may pipe to his own. (I.xix.72-75)

As the protagonist vacillates between positive and negative visions of the past, because of his depression, the negative wins out. Robert Mann, a psychiatrist friend of Tennyson, astutely writes of the speaker in Maud that

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"memory, when mixed with delusion, yields insanity" (qtd. in Colley 77). Therefore, because of his paranoia and his fear of life, the speaker withdraws again from society as he isolates himself, ending his reminiscence with the promise, "I will bury myself in myself, and the devil may pipe to his own." The protagonist makes it clear that he wants nothing to do with the world or with the people in it.

Despite his wish to remain aloof from the world, however, and especially from Maud, he finds it extremely hard to do so. As the protagonist prays for a calm in his life, he recalls his first sight of Maud with a level of detail that reveals the strength of his past feelings and belies his supposed indifference:

> Long have I sigh'd for a calm; God grant I may find it at last!
> It will never be broken by Maud; she has neither savor nor salt,
> But a cold and clear-cut face, as I found when her carriage past,
> Perfectly beautiful; let it be granted her; where is the fault?
> All that I saw—for her eyes were downcast, not to

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be seen----

Faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null,

Dead perfection, no more; nothing more, if it had not been

For a chance of travel, a paleness, an hour's defect of the rose,

Or an underlip, you may call it a little too ripe, too full,

Or the least little delicate aquiline curve in the sensitive nose,

From which I escaped heart-free, with the least little touch of spleen. (I.II.77-87)

He recalls seeing Maud in amazing detail for one who has "escaped heart-free." The speaker does not achieve the calm for which he prays. Instead, his worst fears are soon realized. The protagonist has feared that Maud "may bring [him] a curse," and Maud does, but not because she has plotted against him. Rather, Maud curses him with her kindness, attention, and love, and probably worse, with her self, her father's daughter. The speaker's obsession irresistibly draws him to places where he knows he can see Maud. Even when she is not physically present, her memory

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haunts his mind:

> Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long
> Growing and fading and growing till I could bear it no more,
> But arose, and all by myself in my own dark garden ground,
> Listening now to the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar,
> Now to the scream of a madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave,
> Walk'd in a wintry wind by a ghastly glimmer, and found
> The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low is his grave. (I.iii.95-101)

The speaker cannot sleep for thinking of Maud because he is becoming manic, and her presence haunts him and causes him to pace restlessly in his own garden and on the beach. His obsession with Maud is so great that he sees her in every wave of the ocean and every flower in his garden.

In addition to his obsession with Maud, the lines also foreshadow events to come. The speaker's language is full of ghostlike images of death and isolation—all of which

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come to fruition later in the poem. Maud eventually dies, and in his madness, the protagonist sees her ghostlike specter visit him. Furthermore, he kills Maud's brother in a fit of passion, possibly fulfilling the allusion to "Orion low in his grave." Since he kills Maud's brother, he must flee; thus his vision of the "madden'd beach dragg'd down by the wave" foreshadows his fate when later, completely mad, he addresses a seashell while standing on the beach.

The speaker's paranoia is also accompanied by denial. When Maud first arrives, the speaker tries to convince himself that he is in no danger with Maud because he is not her social equal: "Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor" (I.iii.119). The speaker tries to convince himself that he wants nothing to do with Maud, and that he does not want her love, when in reality, that is exactly the thing for which he longs. W. David Shaw suggests that the speaker tries to conceal this truth because, by deceiving himself, "he can maintain the preservative fiction that he hates her" (83).

The speaker also attempts to protect himself by isolating himself from Maud and her femininity. As his obsession grows, he attempts to get Maud out of his mind by

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defining her in ambivalent terms as one unsuitable for wedding:

> And most of all would I flee from this cruel madness of love
> The honey of poison-flowers and all the measureless ill.
> Ah, Maud, you milk-white fawn, you are all unmeet for a wife.
> Your mother is mute in her grave as her image in marble above;
> Your father is ever in London, you wander about at your will;
> You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life. (I.x.156-61)

In seeking to "flee from this cruel madness of love," the protagonist prophesies his fate. He becomes so deranged in his passion for Maud that he kills her brother in a duel and has to flee the country.

The speaker tries to convince himself that, even if he were able to obtain her love, Maud is not the woman for him. On one hand, the protagonist suggests that Maud is all innocence and purity, his exact opposite, as he alludes to her as a "milk-white fawn." It is almost as if Maud is too

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good for the world in which she must live, just as the speaker sees himself as unfit for his world. The protagonist sees Maud as an innocent with no cares or worries but also suggests that she has led a life of luxury and self-indulgence, as he attests that she has "but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life." The roses symbolize passion, while the lilies symbolize both innocence and death.

The protagonist's frustration and depression and the need "to flee from the cruel madness of love" parallel Tennyson's own life and his involvement with Rosa Baring, whose family considered her both socially and financially superior to him. Scholars are divided in opinion as to whether or not the affection between Tennyson and Rosa Baring was a serious love or a brother/sister type of love. However, Ralph Wilson suggests that the poem "To Rosa, 1836" expresses a sincere and fervent affection, since the poem is written not by a love-sick boy, "but by a man of twenty-six years of age who only two years before had been shattered by the death of Arthur Hallam" (29).

After Hallam's death, it is almost as if Tennyson tried to transfer his love to Rosa, whose family would not allow him to see her because of the difference in their

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economic and social status. Elaine Jordan writes:

> Tennyson equates the wealth of the Baring family and the lack of wealth possessed by the Tennysons with the line 'my own dark garden ground' (I.III.97), where the speaker in the poem broods on the wealth of Maud's family which he believes to be the ruin of his own father. (143)

In Tennyson's life, then, as in his poem, there is a distinct contrast between those who have property and economic power like Maud's family and those who do not. Maud's innocence is a function of her station in life. She is wealthy and therefore shielded from the evils and horror that the poorer classes must experience on a day-to-day basis.

In spite of his caution, the protagonist falls in love with Maud, even before he meets her. Just as the protagonist of "The Lady of Shalott" falls in love with Lancelot's appearance and his song "tira lira by the river / sang Sir Lancelot" (107-8), so is the protagonist captivated by Maud's voice. Hearing her sing, he pleads:

> Silence, beautiful voice!
> Be still, for you only trouble the mind
> With a joy in which I cannot rejoice

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A glory I cannot find.

Still, I will hear you no more,

For your sweetness hardly leaves me a choice

But to move to the meadow and fall before

Her feet on the meadow grass, and adore,

Not her, who is neither courtly nor kind,

Not her, not her, but a voice. (I.V.180-89)

The above lines exhibit another instance of fragmentation, as the speaker professes that he does not love Maud, but that he loves the ideal represented by her voice and her song. After hearing her song, the protagonist, like the Lady of Shalott, is lost. Just as the Lady leaves her tower and gives herself up to love, the speaker gives in, slowly, but surely, to love.

The speaker hears Maud sing a song of "Death, and of Honor that cannot die" (I.ii.177). It is a song of heroism and self-surrender and represents an ideal the speaker cannot achieve or understand. Maud's song is about life and all the contraries that exist alongside living, and since the protagonist's is a life-in-death existence, these concepts are alien to him. Furthermore, he realizes that his inability to take action marks his distance from the ideal, as he lamtents, "I could weep for a time so sordid

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and mean, / And myself so languid and base" (I.ii.178-79). The speaker has retreated into a world of isolation and despair, refusing to engage with life, and as he hears Maud's song, he is ashamed of his inability and unwillingness to participate in life.

After hearing Maud's voice, he finally meets her. He is already falling in love with her, and when she touches him, he is lost:

> Whom but Maud should I meet
> Last night, when the sunset burn'd
> On the blossom'd gable ends
> At the head of the village street,
> Whom but Maud should I meet?
> And she touch'd my hand with a smile so sweet,
> She made me divine amends
> For a courtesy not returned. (I.VI.196-203).

The excitement of Maud's touch gives him such joy that he finds it hard to describe his feelings. The protagonist's joy is evident, almost to the point of mania, as he becomes overly excited at the mere touch of her hand:

> And thus the delicate spark
> Of glowing and growing light
> Thro' the livelong hours of the dark

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Kept itself warm in the heart of my dreams,

Ready to burst in a color'd flame. (I.VI.203-207)

Light and warmth are unfamiliar to the protagonist, and Maud's touch marks the first time he writes of any image except those of death, darkness, isolation, and despair. Previous imagery has pointed to a bleak and barren existence, totally devoid of color. With Maud's touch, warmth, and "color'd flame" flash into the speaker's life.

However, these words and thoughts of light and warmth are no more out of the speaker's mouth than his bipolar mentality and paranoia reveal themselves in his inability to refuse to see any good in his life. The protagonist immediately begins to suspect Maud of ulterior motives for her friendliness:

What if her sunny hair,

And smile as sunny as cold,

She meant to weave me a snare

Of some coquettish deceit,

Cleopatra-like as of old

To entangle me when we met,

To have her lion roll in a silken net

And fawn at a victor's feet. (I.VI.211-218)

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Equating Maud with Cleopatra, he insinuates that she is only trying to ensnare him by using trickery. The fact that he has nothing that either Maud or her family could possibly want never occurs to him as his paranoia protects him from any possible deception:

> For a raven ever croaks, at my side,
> Keep watch and ward, keep watch and ward,
> Or thou wilt prove their tool.
> Yea, too, myself from myself I guard,
> For often a man's own angry pride
> Is cap and bells for a fool. (I.VI.246-51)

He thus refuses to allow himself to believe that Maud might like him for himself.

When the protagonist meets Maud in church, however, he is finally convinced that she loves him as much as he loves her. The speaker rejoices in this scene:

> She came to the village church,
> And sat by a pillar alone;
> An angel watching over an urn
> Wept over her, carved in stone;
> And once, but once, she lifted her eyes,
> And suddenly, sweetly, strangely blush'd
> To find they were met by my own;

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And suddenly, sweetly, my heart beat stronger

And thicker, until I heard no longer

The snowy-banded, dilettante,

Delicate-handed priest intone;

And thought, is it pride? and mused and sigh'd,

"No surely, now it cannot be pride." (I.VIII.301-313)

The speaker finally succumbs to love, and he is no longer aware of the singing, the preacher, or anything except Maud and the knowledge that she returns his love. His life is now filled with the joy and happiness of knowing he is loved.

However, with this newly acknowledged love, comes jealously and dread. Jealousy may be a normal element of most newly found love, but the jealously exhibited by the bipolar protagonist is excessive. While he is out walking one day, he happens to see Maud riding with her brother. Noticing that "There were two at her side" (I.IX.322), immediately his joy ceases, and he crashes back into a deep, dark depression. The speaker's response foreshadows the duel between Maud's brother and himself:

Something flash'd in the sun,

Down by the hill I saw them ride,

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In a moment they were gone;
Like a sudden spark
Struck vainly in the night,
Then returns the dark
With no more hope of light. (I.IX.323-29)

The "flash in the sun" foreshadows the sword with which he will eventually take the life of Maud's brother, while his sudden crash back into depression signals the fate of his love.

The protagonist agonizes over his jealousy because he senses his helplessness. He knows he is not allowed in Maud's home, and he also knows that he has no wealth or social status with which to press his suit. The speaker associates Maud's riding partner with the social evils that form a focus of his anger. He justifies his response by associating the "new-made lord" with social evil and by so doing, he elevates himself morally in defense of his feelings of social inferiority:

Sick, am I sick of a jealous dread?
Was not one of the two at her side
This new-made lord, whose splendor plucks
The slavish hat from the villager's head?
. . . .

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Master of half a servile shire,

And left his coal all turn'd into gold

To a grandson, first of his noble line,

Rich in the grace all women desire,

. . . .

Awe-stricken breaths at a work divine,

Seeing his gee-gaw castle shine,

New as his title, built last year. (I.X.330-48)

The protagonist's jealousy and agony also reflect his realization that the choice of a husband may not be Maud's, since upper-class women in the Victorian Age often had little say as to whom they married. Wealth was often the determining factor in choosing a mate, and families often arranged marriages to increase their wealth as well as their lands. The protagonist is of course well aware of this fact.

Immediately, he begins to obsess on the fact that this "new-made lord" will be given Maud as his bride. The speaker, in his anger, lashes out at the suitor:

What, has he found my jewel out?

For one of the two that rode at her side

Bound for the Hall, I am sure was he;

Bound for the Hall, and I think for a bride.

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> Blithe would her brother's acceptance be.
> Maud could be gracious too, no doubt,
> To a lord, a captain, a padded shape,
> A bought commission, a waxen face,
> A rabbit-mouth that is ever agape—
> Bought? what is it he cannot buy?
> And therefore splenetic, personal, base,
> A wounded thing with a rancorous cry,
> At war with myself and a wretched race,
> Sick, sick to the heart of life, am I. (I.ii.352-365)

The speaker's observation that money can buy anything reflects his bitterness about his society's values, and his reference to the "rabbit mouth that is ever agape" alludes to the animalistic nature of humanity, ever hungry with greed. This is merely another instance where the speaker describes society as so obsessed with wealth that love is forgotten. Even his beloved Maud, of whom he has earlier spoken so sweetly, is not, at least in his mind, above flirting and ensuring a rich husband. That Maud can be gracious to a "rabbit mouth agape" characterizes the new lord as timid and stupid—a false front for a soldier's bought commission. He is sure Maud's brother will approve,

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and he is so sick with dread and jealousy that he aches. His bipolar personality is clearly evidenced in his observation that he is "At war with myself and a wretched race." His constant mental gyrations allow him no peace, and his hatred of the materialistic society in which he lives makes him "Sick, sick to the heart of life."

Frustrated over his thwarted love, the bipolar protagonist becomes increasingly paranoid. Ann Colley notes of the speaker's bipolar personality: "As the poem progresses, so does the narrator's instability. His obsession causes his moods to waver between anger and despair, exaltation and lyrical anticipation, until finally they get the better of him" (74).

Once again the poem mirrors Tennyson's own life and his relationship with Rosa Baring. Rosa's brother, like Maud's, insisted that Tennyson was not worthy and denied him the right to see Rosa. When the shy, young Tennyson, barely twenty years old, fearing love and marriage because of the "black blood" in his family, finally dared to love, he suffered the humiliation of having the affair broken off by Rosa's relatives because he was too poor to be considered an eligible suitor. Ralph Wilson Radar suggests that the "new-made lord" alludes to the husband of

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Tennyson's paternal aunt, Elizabeth Russell, who had inherited a vast fortune in Durham coal. The Russell family also had a social and political alliance with the young man who was intended as Rosa Baring's husband. Maud's family supports the wealthy suitor for economic reasons, and Radar notes, "Tennyson's probable lack of respect for both men makes the identification more likely" (91).

The ups and downs of love accompany the speaker's bipolar jumps from depression to mania. In his depression, the protagonist fears he will lose Maud to another man, but just as suddenly, he quickly reverts to a manic state as he hears her name in the call of the birds, and he remembers the kiss she has allowed him to bestow upon her hand. Just as love causes people to do foolish things, perhaps it causes the protagonist, in his joy for a love won, to resort to some foolish lines of poetry: "I kiss'd her slender hand, / She took the kiss sedately; / Maud is not seventeen, / But she is tall and stately" (I.iv.424-27). In his happy state, the protagonist does not care that the lines are not beautiful and poetic. The speaker shouts his joy to the world as he proclaims his wonderment on winning the love of Maud. He exhalts as he announces, "I too cry

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out on pride / Who have won her favor! / O, Maud were sure of heaven / If lowliness could save her" (I.iv.428-31). He is, for a moment, assured of her love, and he apostrophizes the new-made lord: "Go back, my lord, across the moor, / You are not her darling" (I.viii.442-43).

However, the more the speaker dwells on his new-found love for Maud, the more unbalanced he becomes as he contemplates losing her to another. In his obsession, mania, and depression, he recalls Victorian descriptions of monomaniacs. Ann Colley notes, "Tennyson's lovers and their single-minded preoccupation with the objects of their affections conformed to the numerous descriptions of monomaniacs, or chronically depressed people, that crowded the treatises on insanity" (74). Indeed, Victorian physicians Dr. Matthew Allen and George Man Burrows suggest that "mania comes only when interruption, or opposition be given to his cherished and fixed delusion" (qtd. in Colley 76). Another Victorian physician, Dr. John Johnson, writes, "The disposition to madness is called into action by different circumstances, during the progress of life—by passion inordinate, by love, by ambition, by jealousy, and by intemperance of every kind" (qtd. in Colley 77). The speaker in Maud exhibits these characteristics as his

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obsession causes him to fixate on his love for Maud and to his hatred for her brother as a obstacle to his dreams.

The speaker hates Maud's brother as much as he loves Maud. Meeting him on a pathway while crossing his lands, the speaker declares, "Scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn, / Is that a matter to make me fret?" (I.xiii.444). However, while he expresses his hatred, he also expresses a desire for friendship with one who is, after all, his beloved's brother. The speaker describes their encounter and his willingness to overcome his hatred:

> Who shall call me ungentle, unfair,
> I longed so heartily then and there
> To give him the grasp of fellowship;
> But while I past he was humming an air,
> Stopt, and then with a riding-whip
> Leisurely tapping his glossy boot,
> And curving a contumelious lip,
> Gorgonised me from head to foot
> With a stony British stare. (I.ii.457-465)

The protagonist is devastated because Maud's brother has snubbed him with a cold, paralyzing stare, and he justifies his hatred on the basis of her brother's snub. The speaker's already fragile mental stability is destroyed by

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this incident, which plunges him into total despair. Paranoia, hatred, contempt, and fury return to be vented on Maud's brother and the society that he comes to represent.

Once again the protagonist's mood lifts as he finds that Maud's brother has left the estate. As soon as he learns of the brother's departure, the speaker is manic with joy, equating his own heightening mood with that of Maud's home. The speaker declares, "This lump of earth has left his estate / The lighter by the loss of his weight" (I.xvi.537-38). The speaker's joy is complete as he is finally able to spend time with Maud while her brother is out of the way. If he was sunk in deep depression because of her brother's snub, he now enters an emotional high. The protagonist reveals his ecstatic state:

> I have led her home, my love, my only friend.
> There is none like her, none.
> And never yet so warmly ran my blood
> And sweetly, on and on
> Calming itself to the long-wish'd for end,
> Full to the banks, close on the promised good.
> (I.xviii.599-604)

Their love grows as they spend time together, and Maud assures him that she loves him as much as he does her. The

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speaker talks of warm and tender kisses that bind them in love, "Maud my bliss / Maud made my Maud by that long loving kiss" (I.xviii.655-56). This love poem, as close to perfection as Tennyson ever writes, takes the form of an epithalamion, or marriage poem. The speaker's mood is almost manic even when he must part from Maud, as he suggests that her love, which has uplifted him, will sustain him in her absence:

> My bride to be, my evermore delight,
> My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell;
> It is but for a little space I go.
> Has our whole earth gone nearer to the glow
> Of your soft splendors that you look so bright?
> I have climb'd nearer out of lonely hell.
> Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,
> Beat with my heart more blest than heart can
> tell,
> Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe
> That seems to draw—but it shall not be so;
> Let all be well, be well. (I.viii.671-683)

Yet even in his manic state, the speaker knows that his joy is doomed to be short-lived. As he rejoices that Maud has brought him out of the depths of hell and made his life

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worthwhile, he feels a foreboding of disaster. He realizes on some level that the relationship is doomed and that every minute he has with Maud is a stolen minute. Paul Turner equates this speech with that of Claudius in Shakespeare's Hamlet and declares it to be a foreshadowing of the murder of Maud's brother. As Claudius in Hamlet tries to pray for forgiveness for murdering his brother, he asks that "All may be well" (3.3.72). These lines reflect each speakers' knowledge that things will not be well.

Immediately, the mood of the poem shifts again, the speaker's joy destroyed by Maud's brother's return home. The speaker reveals that "Her brother is coming back tonight, / Breaking up my dream of delight" (I.xix.685-86). The protagonist remembers the past and that he and Maud were bethrothed as children:

> That Maud's dark father and mine
> Had bound us to one to the other,
> Bethrothed us over their wine,
> On the day when Maud was born;
> Seal'd her mine from her first sweet breath!
> Mine, mine by a right, from birth till death!
> Mine, mine—our fathers have sworn! (I.xix.720-726)

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The protagonist knows that this early pledge will not be honored, noting that when her brother returned to the hall years after the pledge had been made, he "Chid her, and forbid her to speak / To me, her friend of the years before; / And this was what had redden'd her cheek / When I bow'd to her on the moor" (I.xix.745-49). However, Maud wants the speaker to love her brother as she does. She tells him of her brother's kindness to her and what a good person he is. The two nickname him "the Sultan," and for Maud's sake, the speaker pledges to "Bury all this dead body of hate" (I.xix.780-81). Yet, as soon as he returns home, the speaker is plunged into depression and paranoia because "her brother comes, like a blight / On my fresh hope, to the Hall tonight" (I.xix.785-86).

Upon his return, Maud's brother plans a "grand political dinner" to which the wealthy "men of many acres" are invited. The protagonist envisions the party:

> A dinner and then a dance
> For the maids and marriage-makers,
> And every eye but mine will glance
> At Maud in all her glory.
> For I am not invited. (I.xx.820-825)

The protagonist fears this grand dinner will be the

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occasion when Maud's brother's announces her engagement to the wealthy "new-made lord." Therefore, he arranges with Maud to meet out in the rose garden as soon as she can slip away from the other guests, so he can see her "in all her glory" and they can dance and be together in the garden. It is the speaker's way of attending the ball with his beloved and keeping fresh the promises of love and marriage that the couple have made to each other.

In some of the most beautiful lines of the poem, the speaker urges his beloved:

> Come into the garden, Maud,
>
> For the black bat, night, has flown,
>
> Come into the garden, Maud,
>
> I am here at the gate alone;
>
> And the woodbine spices are wafted abroad,
>
> And the musk of the rose is blown. (I.xxii. 850-855)

It takes a lot of courage for the speaker to enter Maud's garden. As he waits for Maud's appearance, he becomes apprehensive as he hears the flowers whisper to him:

> There has fallen a splendid tear
>
> From the passion-flower at the gate.
>
> She is coming, my dove, my dear;

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> She is coming, my life, my fate.
> The red rose cries, "She is near, she is near;"
> And the white rose weeps, "She is late";
> The larkspur listens, "I hear, I hear;"
> And the lily whispers, "I wait." (I.xxii.915-922)

The whispering flowers are a foreshadowing, and the passion flower and the tear anticipate the protagonist's coming fate. Because of his passion, tears will be shed by his peaceful "dove," Maud, the red rose, the flower of true love, who is finally coming. The white rose means truth and purity, and the lily is the symbol of death. The speaker ends Part One in anticipation, with the image of trampled flowers which, "Would start and tremble beneath her feet, / And blossom in purple and red" (I.xi.922-23).

Maud Part 2

Between the events that end Part One and the beginning of Part Two, a great deal of action occurs, and the speaker reveals what has happened through his monologue. Part Two begins with the protagonist's revelation that he has killed Maud's brother in a duel and gone to Brittany because he fears for his life. However, the act of murder pushes him over the brink of sanity, and the speaker is clearly insane

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in Part Two. The protagonist also learns of Maud's death while he is in Brittany. He has entered a madhouse where he hallucinates about Maud, her brother, and his past life. The speaker thinks himself dead and buried in a shallow grave, and he begs to be buried deeper. Part Two verges on incoherence, but considering the mental state of the speaker, this incoherence is justified.

The protagonist begins Part Two by acknowledging his guilt in killing Maud's brother in a duel. He declares:

> 'The fault was mine, the fault was mine'—
> Why am I sitting here so stunn'd and still,
> Plucking the harmless wild-flower on the hill?—
> It is this guilty hand!—
> And there rises ever a passionate cry
> From underneath in the darkening land---
> What is it, that has been done? (II.i.1-7)

As the speaker recalls the duel, he recalls the words of Maud's brother, "The fault was mine," and that dying brother had forgiven the speaker. The "guilty hand" is the hand of the speaker, and he cannot comprehend what he has done as he tries to remember the order of events:

> For she, sweet soul, had hardly spoken a word,
> When her brother ran in his rage to the gate,

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He came with the babe-faced lord,

Heap'd on her terms of disgrace;

. . . .

And he struck me, madman, over the face,

Struck me before the languid fool,

Who was gaping and grinning by. (II.i.12-20)

Responding to her brother's blow, the protagonist accepts the challenge to duel. The protagonist's anger and hatred overwhelmed him, not only because of the brother's treatment of Maud, but because of the presence of the "babe-faced lord" who witnesses the speaker's humiliation. He then recalls the duel, and Maud's response:

Struck for himself an evil stroke,

. . . .

Front to front in an hour we stood,

. . . .

And there rang on a sudden passionate cry,

A cry for a brother's blood;

It will ring in my ears till I die, till I die.

(II.i.21-35)

Some critics equate this scene with the Biblical story of Cain and Abel, for the speaker says, "A cry for a brother's Blood; / It will ring in my ears till I die, till I die"

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(II.i.34-35). Alan Fischler alludes to Maud's garden as the Garden of Eden, and he compares the protagonist to Cain (375). Just as Cain killed Abel and is cast into exile, so is the speaker exiled from the world he knows when he flees after killing Maud's brother.

However, another Biblical analogy is also relevant, that of the Old Testament practice of "an eye for an eye." By murdering Maud's brother, the speaker both reenacts and gains retribution for his father's death. The same wording used in Part Two after the murder of Maud's brother is also used in Part One in describing the speaker's memory of his father's death: "The red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood" represents the same bloody imagery, and while the corpse that "lay there with a fading eye," is literally, that of Maud's brother, the protagonist's may also think he sees his own father.

As the speaker flees to Brittany, his isolation is reflected in the image of a seashell that the speaker finds on the beach. The protagonist relates:

> See what a lovely shell,
> Small and pure as a pearl,
> Lying close to my foot,
> Frail, but a work divine,

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Made so fairly well
With delicate spire and whorl,
How exquisitely minute,
A miracle of design! (II.ii.49-56)

Like the shell he seizes on the beach, the speaker, too, has endured the turbulence of life, just as the shell has endured the turbulence of the sea. However, he has not come out unscathed as the shell has. The speaker tries to keep his sanity by minutely examining this small, unimportant object. Noting that this lyric was originally written in the 1830's, critic Elaine Jordan comments on the psychological plausibility of the speaker's focusing on the shell, explaining that under emotional shock, "perception may focus on some apparently irrelevant thing" (145). The speaker continues to peruse the shell, projecting his own feelings onto the tiny, fragile object:

The tiny cell is forlorn,
Void of the little living will
That made it stir on the shore.
Did he stand at the diamond door
Of his house in a rainbow frill?
Did he push, when he was uncurl'd,
A golden foot or a fairy horn

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Thro' his dim water-world? (II.ii.61-69)

The very fact that the "tiny shell is forlorn" evokes images of a house whose occupant has gone. The hollowness of the speaker's life comes rushing in as, once again, he is isolated, depressed, world-weary, and living a life-in-death existence. His life is as devoid of feeling as the shell is devoid of an occupant. He is empty inside, and he is doing all he can to hang on to his sanity, which he knows is slipping away.

James Kissane states that "the shell also suggests remarkable beauty, now wasted and lifeless, an image of lovely desolation that mocks the picturesque views of life" (129). Despite the shell's beauty, at this point the speaker's mind is as fragile as the shell he holds in his hand. The protagonist knows the fragility of his mind and remarks upon the fact:

Strange, that the mind, when fraught
With a passion so intense
One would think that it well
Might drown all life in the eye,--
That it should, by being so overwrought,
Suddenly strike on a sharper sense
For a shell, or a flower, little things

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Which else would have been past by! (II.ii.106-113)

When the protagonist recalls Maud's death, he resorts to self-punishment and wishes for death. With his father, his mother, Maud's brother, and Maud all dead, there is no one but himself left to blame for his actions and his life, and he acknowledges this:

Courage, poor heart of stone!
I will not ask thee why
Thou canst not understand
That thou art left for ever alone;
Courage, poor stupid heart of stone!—
Or if I ask thee why,
Care not thou to reply:
She is but dead, and the time is at hand
When thou shalt more than die. (II.iii.131-140)

The protagonist now refers to himself in the third person. When he hears of Maud's death, the protagonist finally has nothing to live for. He thinks of himself as already dead.

Realizing Maud's death, he falls into total madness, imagining himself dead and buried. Although the speaker is confined to a madhouse, he describes himself as dead:

Dead, long dead,

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Long dead!

And my heart is a handful of dust,

And the wheels go over my head,

And my bones are shaken with pain,

For into a shallow grave they are thrust,

Only a yard beneath the street,

And the hoofs of the horses beat, beat,

And the hoofs of the horses beat.

. . . .

For I thought the dead had peace, but it is not so.

To have no peace in the grave, is that not sad?

But up and down and to and fro,

Ever about me the dead men go;

And then to hear a dead man chatter

Is enough to drive one mad. (II.v.240-255)

Thinking that he is dead and simply not buried deeply enough to stop the noise in his mind produces unimaginable terror. Christopher Ricks writes, "It is Tennyson's most horrifying vision of a life which is no life, a sadness which believes that it is dead, yet longs for death, a suicidal impulse thwarted relentlessly" (Tennyson 259). Indeed the death the speaker has been

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longing for turns out to be not death, which is the cessation of pain, but the most intense form of suffering. Ironically, his monologue reflects fulfillment of the protagonist's earlier wish to "bury myself in myself," yet he now discovers that there is no peace in death, just as there is no peace in life, and that he is just as vulnerable as ever.

The lines evoking images of madness have multiple references. In the poem, the loss of the speaker's love, Maud, causes his madness. However, the loss of Tennyson's friend and mentor, Arthur Henry Hallam, and the love of Rosa Baring that was denied him, caused Tennyson to lapse into despair. Tennyson may have also recollected the pain he experienced during the ten-year separation that Emily Sellwood's father imposed on the couple before their marriage. The speaker's intense isolation and depression suggest that Tennyson may have called on any, or all, of these people and events to produce this profound description of torment.

Furthermore, the speaker thinks, in his madness, that the world of the dead is in every way like the world of the living, inhabited by the same kind of people who have hounded him and haunted him his entire life. The once-

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secretive protagonist who isolated himself from the world, worrying about his position in life and blaming others for his circumstances, now believes his innermost secrets are being "shouted from the top of the house" (II.v.288). However, now the protagonist is even more defenseless against them, and he can only beg to be buried "Deeper, ever so little deeper" (II.v.342).

Maud Part Three

Although Part Three opens with the speaker claiming to be mentally well, he remains insane. After having undergone a cycle of symbolic suicides and resurrections, the protagonist announces that "It is time that old hysterical mock disease die" (I.iii.33), and that he has awakened with a saner mind, ready to go fight for his country. However, the protagonist has not emerged as intact from these "cells of madness" (III.i.2) as he claims. The language and imagery suggest that his bipolar condition has not improved, but indeed has worsened. There is no "instant cure" for the protagonist, and he is still totally insane at the end of the poem. His assertion that his urge to go to war is an honorable one simply disguises a suicide mission as an honorable death.

Taking the speaker at his word, some critics see the

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speaker as a hero who regains his sanity and goes to war to make his world a better place (Ricks, Tennyson 261). Robert Langbaum, for example, claims that the ending breaks the form of the monodrama and imposes "a 'right' conclusion of a hero who, if left to his own devices, would have ended in madness and suicide" (157-58). Yet, there is no reason to believe that this protagonist, who has been mentally unreliable from the start, is sane at the end of the poem. Indeed, the speaker is more disturbed at the end of the poem than he is at the beginning. Far from providing a definitive conclusion to Maud, Tennyson allows his protagonist to gravitate toward his own bizarre, self-destructive destiny, one that is logically "consistent with the psychological pattern Tennyson has developed" (Weiner 180). He masks his personal madness by assuming a "mask" of sanity worn by a manic age. In a world of such twisted values, what could be more reasonable than the hero claiming sanity by joining in the general insanity of his age?

At the beginning of Part III, the protagonist claims that his mind is improved and that he is ready to face the world. However, his explanations are consistent with the manic characteristics of bi-polar disease. Although he may

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no longer believe himself dead, he is still far too eager to "embrace the doom assigned" (III.v.59). Furthermore, his self-affirmation develops death imagery that recalls his earlier state.

When he speaks in Part III, it is spring, which normally symbolizes new beginnings and rebirth. He recalls his former madness, which began when spring ended:

> My life has crept on so long on a broken wing
> Thro' cells of madness, haunts of horror and fear,
> That I come to be grateful at last for a little thing,
> My mood is changed, for it fell at that time of year,
> When the face of night is fair on the dewy downs,
> And the shining daffodil dies. (III.i.1-6)

However, this view of spring and rebirth gives way to images of war and death as he describes a dream in which Maud prophesies a war that will heal all his ills:

> She seem'd to divide in a dream from a band of the blest,
> And spoke of a hope for the world in the coming wars---

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'And in that hope, dear soul, let trouble have rest,
Knowing I tarry for thee,' and pointed to Mars
As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast. (III.i.10-14)

The image of Maud in these lines is totally different from the image in Part Two. No longer is Maud the cold, silent phantom who haunts his living hell, his life-in-death existence. In Part Three, she has been transformed, magnificently, into a shining symbol of patriotic duty. Maud, the woman for whom his passion and obsession led to murder, the phantom who later visited guilt and madness upon him for his crime, now dictates that he should murder again. However, this time it is legitimate murder—as a soldier in the Crimean War. Maud urges him on to his destiny as she tells him, "I tarry for thee," pointing to Mars, the mythological god of War. The "rest" to which she alludes is the sleep of death.

The protagonist eagerly embraces Maud's vision of war as he remarks:

And as months ran on and rumor of battle grew,
'It is time, it is time, O passionate heart,' said I,---

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> For I cleaved to a cause that I felt to be pure and true,---
> 'It is time, O passionate heart and morbid eye,
> That old hysterical mock-disease should die.'
> (III.iii.29-33)

After his dream of Maud urging him to join in the Crimean War, the speaker reaches a manic high as he becomes obsessed and can think of nothing but war.

The poem's ending provides an ironic comment on love and war. Early in the poem Maud is the gentle singer of war songs. Hearing her song of battle, honor, and glory first made the speaker fall in love with her. Symbolized by the roses in her garden, she also comes to represent the patriotic fervor for "the blood-red blossom of war" (III.iv.53). The ultimate irony lies in the speaker's search for sanity through his patriotic duty. At war with himself and his society for his entire life, he aligns himself with a world he once considered corrupt, thereby affirming his own insanity. Ironically, the war proves he was right all along: humanity is so corrupt, inhumane, and hopeless it can only envision its salvation through the devastation of war.

Even though the ending of Maud is controversial and

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critics disagree on the protagonist's fate, one thing is clear: He never fully recovers from his madness, and Maud's memory will not leave him. Throughout the poem, the speaker has suffered at the hands of an unyielding, materialistic, and competitive society. One may rest assured that the speaker is not going to war to perpetuate this corrupt society that has exploited him and his entire family. Instead, he is going to war as a suicide mission, and he justifies "the doom assigned" by couching it in religious terms: It is God's purpose and plan for the speaker to die and be united with Maud in heaven. This jingoistic religious justification is the final sign of madness in the poem.

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Chapter V

Conclusion

Tennyson's Catharsis

The speaker's planned suicide at the end of Maud represents a symbolic suicide of the Tennysonian self that existed until 1855. Tennyson's catharsis began with the publication of In Memoriam in 1850. This elegy was a huge success, and immediately Tennyson gained social prominence, wealth, fame, and the laureate crown. Additionally, his marriage to Emily Sellwood that same year gave him a sense of peace and security that he had never known. Thus, one may date the beginning of Tennyson's psychic healing from 1850. The poet's life, both personal and professional, was finally on an even keel.

The importance of In Memoriam in this healing process cannot be overstated. Writing the poem was an essential step in ameliorating his grief and ordering his views. The elegy, occasioned by the death of Arthur Henry Hallam, begins in mourning and ends on a positive note. Tennyson rearranged the lyrics after spending almost seventeen years writing them, and in so doing, reveals how he came to terms with his grief, and with the new issues concerning science and religion.

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The beginning of the poem is filled with despair, and in the middle of the poem with Sections 54, 55, and 56, the speaker is at his nadir. These sections show the speaker's religious doubts, as he tries to come to terms with evolutionary teachings and the truth they evoke that, according to geology and history, only the strongest survive. Tennyson's angst is evident as he despairingly acknowledges that he, too, will die and leave behind nothing of value. However, in section 95, when Tennyson has a mystical union with Hallam's spirit, Tennyson finally realizes that ultimate truth is that which one comes to terms with, and that he has faith enough to allow belief. From this point onward, his recovery was rapid. The elegy ends on a positive note, with a ringing affirmation of the speaker's belief in God and immortality, and a proper perspective on science and religion.

Just as the publication of In Memoriam gave Tennyson financial security, his marriage in June 1850 to Emily Sellwood gave him emotional security. From the moment they said "I do," Emily became a stabilizing influence in Tennyson's life. He admitted, as noted earlier, "The peace of God came into my life before the altar when I wedded her" (qtd. in Martin 334). Bernard Martin writes that

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Tennyson's marriage to Emily "ended his lonely wanderings, his frequent feelings of being an outsider at the hearths of his friends, and it finished the worst of his depressions and melancholia" (334). Tennyson's old friend Aubrey De Vere noticed after his marriage, "He is far happier than I ever saw him before; his wrath against the world is proportionately mitigated" (qtd. in Martin 339). Thus, with Emily's love and encouragement, and with her efficient handling of his affairs, Tennyson no longer felt isolated from society, becoming happier and more stable, both emotionally and financially, than he had ever been in his life.

Finally, the writing of Maud completed Tennyson's mental healing. Ralph Wilson Radar writes:

> Biographically, Maud is a crucial document. It is Tennyson's purgative recapitulation of the inner and outer circumstances of his tortured early life, a deeply rooted act of spiritual self-definition and affirmation by which, after the commitment initiated by marriage and the laureateship, he moved from his earlier to his later career; it is the swan song of the bitter and troubled young poet, the inaugural hymn of

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the Laureate. (115)

In Maud, Tennyson investigates his own experiences of great pain and realizes that much of his unhappiness is of his own making (Martin 387). By 1855, Tennyson had become secure enough to write the poem that would finish the healing process. Tennyson had finally convinced himself that he no longer needed to fear the "black blood" of the Tennysons. This realization would never have been possible without the acquisition of the laureateship, fame, and marriage, all of which did so much to start the healing process.

Although Tennyson was a happier, better-adjusted man after 1855, he was not a better poet. Many critics feel that Maud is Tennyson's last truly great work. Some people blame Emily for the lack of passion in Tennyson's poetry after 1855. Robert Bernard Martin suggests that her influence "tamed his poetic genius and turned him into a conforming Victorian. Certainly his poetry did change considerably after his marriage, not always for the better" (334-5).

Thus, Tennyson's own contentment may have led to his lack of creativity, for indeed one does not see in his later works the troubled speakers that populated his

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earlier poetry. Perhaps the catharsis he felt from writing Maud cooled his passions, and he no longer wrote in the guise of depressed, world-weary souls, or ranting, raving speakers who protested against society and the world in which they lived. Brian Southam accurately sums up Tennyson's creativity after Maud: "Some of Tennyson's later poetry is beautiful and moving, but the anguish and the poignance have gone" (6). Whatever the personal and societal pressures that drove him, with the writing of Maud, Tennyson's catharsis was complete. His bipolar speakers no longer rave because, with Tennyson's newfound sense of happiness and security, they cease to exist.

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