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## TENNYSON'S IN MEMORIAM AS LOVE POETRY

MOST OF THE FEW modern explanations of *In Memoriam* have, like E. B. Mattes' *In Memoriam: The Way of a Soul*<sup>1</sup> and Graham Hough's "Natural Theology in *In Memoriam*";<sup>2</sup> concerned themselves principally with the source and precise meaning of the poem's intellectual speculations. While inevitably admitting Tennyson's ultimate subjectivism, critics have concerned themselves little with the nature of the subjective experiences underlying the poem or the literary conventions governing their presentation.

*In Memoriam* is indeed in one sense a philosophical poem: it must have been amongst the works which prompted Jowett to say to Tennyson, just before the latter's death: "Your poetry has an element of philosophy more to be considered than any regular philosophy in England".<sup>3</sup> But its philosophy is based not on the premiss *Cogito, ergo sum*, but on the premiss *Amo, ergo sumus*, and its relationship to a tradition of speculative or philosophical love poetry is clear. It is, in fact, one of the greatest series of love poems in the English language, and it seems to me that it can be most fruitfully approached by considering it as such, and by examining the literary conventions, the diction and the imagery through which the experiences of love and loss are presented and directed in the poem. This article is intended as the beginning of such an approach.

*In Memoriam* is both a traditional love poem and an evidently Victorian love poem. Interwoven with the depiction of the love of Tennyson and Hallam, which is sometimes presented in terms of an older and more obviously timeless tradition, are dozens of references to and vignettes of domestic love—of marriage, of parents and children, of brothers and sisters, of the widowed, and of the simple, rural love-tragedies which play such an important part in Victorian literature and popular writing. My aim in this article is to explore the way in which these conventions are blended, and to show how Tennyson builds up his philosophy not on the external intellectual supports which pro-

vide its flourishes and decorations and sometimes its tools, but on the simple, self-validating experience of human love. I wish, that is, to examine the poem on the kind of basis which Tennyson himself suggests in lyric XLIX, in which he indicates that it utilizes 'random influences', 'From art, from nature and the schools', but makes it clear that these are only the masks and tools of a personal emotional experience.

The poem in its final form is, of course, both personal and universal in its interest, and Tennyson said firmly that it was to be viewed as "a poem, *not* an actual biography", and that the "I" of the poem was sometimes to be regarded not as the poet, but as "the voice of the human race speaking through him".<sup>4</sup> He conceived of it as a "kind of *Divina Comedia*, leading from despair to happiness".<sup>5</sup> This latter description clearly refers not only to the structural outline of the poem and the fact that it is a carefully shaped whole rather than a mere diary of experience, but also to the role of a dead human beloved in leading the poet to a perception of universal truth and love; as Beatrice is to Dante, so Hallam is to Tennyson.

A sense of what one might almost call the poem's archaism, of its contact with older traditions of love poetry, was early noted by Sara Coleridge. In contrasting the essential modernism of *The Prelude* (which she recognised even in the 1850 version, published in the same year as *In Memoriam*) with the less fundamentally original quality of *In Memoriam*, she commented on the "Petrarchanism" of the latter work.<sup>6</sup> This is indeed one of many examples of a Victorian poet's reaching back to older traditions of love poetry. The Rossettis, of course, were under a special family influence: but one thinks too of the influence of Donne upon Browning, the greatest of the Victorian love-poets, and the allusions to Dante in "One Word More"; or one recalls Coventry Patmore, writing the best lyrics of *The Angel in the House* under the influence of the Metaphysicals. But the love poem which most pervasively influenced *In Memoriam*, which we know that Tennyson read with special attention during the period of its composition, and which may even have helped to suggest its form, are undoubtedly Shakespeare's Sonnets.

Both the Sonnets and *In Memoriam* are series of lyric poems in a continuously used metrical form, in which a story is discerned through the lyric utterances rather than related in narrative form. In creating such a series, Tennyson has, as it were, accidentally stumbled upon an ideal solution to the problem of devising an appropriate form for a long poem, in an age which, if anything, rather overvalued the spontaneity of the brief lyric outburst. It has been frequently recognized that this was one of the problems confronting

Victorian poets, and that the characteristic solution was to build up a longer poem out of shorter units. One sees this type of poetic form in such poems as *Maud*, *The Idylls of the King* and *The Ring and the Book*, and it is in some sense perpetuated in Yeats's rather Wordsworthian insistence that his total poetic output should be placed in a certain order and regarded as a single major work. Tennyson, however, has achieved perhaps the most perfect compromise between lyric spontaneity and major constructive art in *In Memoriam*, by taking a large group of highly personal poems, commenced without any view to publication, and arranging them in a series which must be read as a carefully structured whole. One of the few models which could really have helped to suggest such a solution is that of the sonnet sequence.

The resemblances between *In Memoriam* and Shakespeare's Sonnets are evident—the many meditative poems, the occasional poems referring to or commemorating an external event or an anniversary, the groups of lyrics on related themes which form smaller units within the larger work—but of course Tennyson has gone much further towards ordering his series than Shakespeare. His obvious model for the poem's larger structure is the major elegy, as represented by *Lycidas* (to which there are many resemblances and allusions) and *Adonais* (which Hallam has been the first to bring back to England in printed form). The models afforded by the sonnet sequence and the elegy fuse easily, since Shakespeare's sequence is so pervaded by the sense of time, transience and loss as to be almost anticipatorily elegiac. Sonnets like "Not marble nor the gilded monuments" (55), "Since brass nor stone, nor earth, nor boundless sea", (65) and "To me fair friend you never can be old" (104) seem almost predestined models for elegiac poetry. One wonders too, in an idle and tentative way, if Shakespeare's reference to a three years' friendship in the last-mentioned sonnet might have suggested Tennyson's time-scheme of a three years' mourning, which does not, of course, correspond to the actual span of time covered by the poem. At all events, the completed *In Memoriam* combines much of the generalising bent of the classical, public elegy, which was usually written for a person not well known to the poet, with a much greater degree of the poignantly personal quality of the Sonnets.

Not that Shakespeare's Sonnets lack generalisation and universal validity: few works seem to speak so personally for every reader, or so convincingly of general truth. But their universality springs, paradoxically, from their very intimacy. By addressing them directly to the Friend and the Dark Lady, like letters, Shakespeare has reduced to a minimum the need for description and narrative, aimed at the unknowing and potentially unsympathetic world, which

would particularise and restrict them: of the beauty which he promises so often to immortalise, he actually describes not so much as the colour of eyes and hair. What we hear is the voice of the basic emotion itself, expressing itself through universally recognised patterns of imagery. In the same way Tennyson, whilst giving poignancy by the occasional reference to hand or eye, offers no description of Hallam, and withholds even the most generalised account of his character and activities until late in the sequence. His lyrics are addressed to various friends, to God, to himself, to a number of personifications, and in some of the most crucial instances, to Hallam himself. Both sequences, Shakespeare's and Tennyson's are "overheard" poetry, and derive many of their most distinctive features from this fact.

The resemblance of *In Memoriam* to the Sonnets is particularly apparent in lyrics LX-LXV, and an examination of this group throws much light on the way in which the techniques of love poetry are made to serve Tennyson's special ends. In LX Tennyson compares himself, deserted by the dead Hallam, to:

. . . some poor girl whose heart is set  
On one whose rank exceeds her own.

The beloved moves on to his proper sphere, and she is left to find "the baseness of her lot", and "envying all who meet him there". In LXII Hallam is again likened to one who has outgrown a childhood sweetheart, although this time a girl below him in moral stature rather than mere social position. In LXIII Hallam's possible pitying memories of Tennyson are compared to the poet's love for his dog or horse, whilst in LXIV Hallam is seen as a great public figure, whose boyhood friend, left behind in their simple home, still wistfully broods on him and wonders if he remembers their relationship. The spirit throughout the group is one of the utmost humility and self-abnegation. The highborn lover, the public man, and the poet bestowing a little spare affection on his dog or horse, are all images of a higher being, moving in his "proper sphere" and wholly right in his attitude to those so far below him. The deserted girl in LX cries "How should he love a thing so low?" and Tennyson begins LXII by a direct renunciatory address to Hallam:

Though if an eye that's downward cast  
Could make thee somewhat blench or fail,  
Then be my love an idle tale  
And fading legend of the past.

Yet throughout the section one feels, as one always does feel with this type



With 'Love's too precious to be lost,  
A little grain shall not be spilt.'

And in that solace can I sing,  
Till out of painful phrases wrought  
There flutters up a happy thought,  
Self-balance on a lightsome wing;

Since we deserved the name of friends,  
And thine effect so lives in me,  
A part of mine may live in thee  
And move thee on to nobler ends.

By treating love cut off by death in terms and images appropriate to love slighted or rejected, Tennyson has eventually come, in this lyric, to a sense of a continuing and mutual relationship, in which both he and Hallam can still give and receive. What reassures him, here and throughout the poem, is his sense that Hallam has survived in such a way that he can still make human claims upon him and humanly generous concessions to him. And this sense is expressed through, makes its impression upon the reader by means of, and is to some extent actually generated in Tennyson by, the diction and techniques of love poetry. Hallam is constantly addressed throughout the poem as though he were the living recipient of conventional love poetry, and this perhaps does more than anything else to establish the conviction of his survival. He is both addressed and spoken of in the third person in the language of such love poetry: "My Arthur", "Dearest", "My Love", "The man I held as half divine", "A little while from his embrace", "Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine",—such epithets and phrases ring throughout the poem. Even the more neutral "friend" in such lines as "Since we deserved the name of friends", and "Unto me no second friend", takes on the power of love-language once the Shakespearean context is established. In the lyric just quoted in full, the nature of Tennyson's conviction is made particularly clear. It is self-validating and self-sustaining—"Self-balanced on a lightsome wing"; and it is not merely recorded in poetry, it is generated in part by the act of writing poetry; the poet creates it by singing, and it is wrought out of "phrases".

The group of lyrics we have been examining follows closely upon one of the poem's most serious and best-known outbreaks of doubt and questioning. In lyric LV the prodigal bounty of Nature has led Tennyson to reflect that "So careful of the type she seems, so careless of the single life", whilst in

LVI geological evidence has pressed upon him the thought that not only is the individual doomed to die fruitlessly, but the race itself is heading for extinction. No speculative reply is attempted, no external counter-evidences are adduced: after a brief interlude, Tennyson produces, by way of answer to his doubts, the group of Shakespearean love-lyrics. Not that he wishes to suggest too great a certainty: he deliberately belittles his own achievement by the use of such words as "sing", "flutters", "fancy", "lightsome", in the concluding lyric of the section. But ultimately, of course, he did believe that the testimony of the imagination and the emotions was more valid than that of the reason, and in those lyrics in which he distinguishes between knowledge and wisdom, or shows us the heart leaping up "like a man in wrath" to answer the claims of the "freezing reason", he makes explicit his views. If *In Memoriam* were to be given a Shakespearean epigraph, it would come after all not from the Sonnets but from "The Phoenix and the Turtle": "Love hath reason, reason none". In later life his only anxiety about *In Memoriam* was that it suggested too much *speculative* certainty: he would almost have liked to add another section, which, by reopening the poem's intellectual doubt, would "throw man back to the more primitive impulses and feelings".<sup>7</sup>

T. S. Eliot felt that Tennyson had gone further than he thus acknowledged, not merely suggesting too much purely speculative certainty, but essentially falsifying the record of his feelings. He called it a poem of religious despair, and commented that "Its faith is a poor thing".<sup>8</sup> But the real key to Eliot's dislike of Tennyson's faith comes, I believe, earlier in his essay, and involves less a judgment of the strength or reality of that faith, or the effectiveness of its artistic expression, than a criticism of its nature and foundations. He writes: "Yet the renewal craved for seems at best but a continuance, or a substitute for the joys of friendship upon earth. His desire for immortality is never quite the desire for Eternal Life: his concern is for the loss of man rather than for the gain of God".<sup>9</sup> This is a fair and perceptive comment on the poem, but not necessarily, as Eliot clearly intends it to be, a serious indictment of it. We are being offered not a literary assessment of the poem's value, but the statement of a conflict of opinion between an ascetic poet of renunciation, and a very different poet, who approaches a variety of religious experience not by renouncing, but by clinging to human love. It is, indeed, difficult to see what is, in Eliot's terms, "religious" about the poem's despair: in its despair and faith alike, it is a poem of human love before it is anything else.

Certainly the tendency which Eliot disapproves of is not peculiar to Tennyson: it is characteristic of the Victorian era. Writers as diverse as

Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Robert Browning, Coventry Patmore, Christina Rossetti, Dante Gabriel Rossetti, Charles Kingsley and Charles Reade image the resumption in Heaven of human relationships severed by death, or treat romantic love as a guarantee of personal immortality.<sup>10</sup> Even George Gissing bears negative testimony to the strength of the tradition, when he makes one of the characters in *New Grub Street* remark: "The days of romantic love are gone by. The scientific spirit has put an end to that kind of self-deception. Romantic love was inextricably blended with all sorts of superstitions—belief in personal immortality, in superior beings, in—in all the rest of it."<sup>11</sup>

Walter Houghton, in *The Victorian Frame of Mind*, deals very briefly, at the end of his section on "Love", with the profound significance of idealized romantic love in Victorian literature.<sup>12</sup> He points out that it could serve as a kind of substitute religion for some of the agnostics of the period, whilst men clinging to faith but troubled by doubts could use human love as a prop to their religion, treating it as a foretaste and guarantee of Heaven. But in such a general and wide-ranging survey of the period, Houghton is not able to investigate and develop the topic as fully as its importance merits. One might almost say that what the solitary, in his various guises of wanderer, seeker, outcast and hermit, was to the Romantic imagination, the pair, involved in a profound human relationship, was to the Victorian mind.

"Romantic love" implies an extreme idealization of human love, and an extreme insistence on fidelity and permanence, which is essentially "monogamous" even where the love is, as often in the medieval tradition, extra-marital. Thus defined it is not a prominent theme in Romantic poetry. It seems a gross oversimplification, but not a total distortion, to suggest that the Romantic quest for permanence was carried on mainly in relation to nature, and that as science cut the ground from under the nature worshipper's feet, attention was transferred to romantic fidelity in love. It may be too facile to compare Wordsworth in "A slumber did my spirit steal" consigning the beloved to the custody of "rocks and stones and trees", with Tennyson in *In Memoriam* perceiving that "The hills are shadows and they flow/From form to form and nothing stands", and clinging to the individual human personality: but it indicates something of what was taking place.

Houghton, in discussing the interaction of religious impulses and romantic love, does not mention *In Memoriam*. In a sense this is scarcely surprising, since love-poetry is generally thought of as dealing with a romantic and physical attachment between a man and a woman. One perhaps invites



misapprehension by linking *In Memoriam* with Shakespeare's Sonnets and discussing it as love poetry. After all, Tennyson does use a sexual relationship as a metaphor for his own relationship with Hallam on many occasions. Occasionally he takes on the male identity, but he casts himself as the female, the wife or the deserted girl, often enough to explain the delicious absurdity of one of the earliest reviews which commented: "These touching lines evidently come from the full heart of the widow of a military man".<sup>13</sup> To suggest that there was anything consciously or overtly homosexual about the relationship is obviously absurd, and to speculate about its latent or suppressed tendencies is largely irrelevant to a consideration of *In Memoriam* as poetry: but nevertheless the fact that it celebrates a supreme love between men is of some importance in considering its scope and techniques.

Here, as in the matter of the poem's form, Tennyson seems to have had ready made for him a situation which other Victorian writers went out of their way to construct. He is celebrating a love relationship which both is and is not an ordinary romantic one. One might compare Browning's use of the relationship between Pompilia and Caponsacchi in *The Ring and the Book*, which borrows and transforms many motifs and conventions of romantic and chivalric poetry to present a special type of non-physical relationship. Or one might cite the minor example of *The Cloister and The Hearth*, in which a married man, believing his wife to be dead, takes the vows of a celibate priesthood, and must establish a special type of relationship with her when he rediscovers her. Both Browning and Reade show their lovers passing beyond death, looking to other than an earthly fruition of their love.

Most of the best love literature deals with unhappy or frustrated love, of course, because in such situations love becomes its own reward, and the writer is impelled to deal with the nature of the emotion and its profounder implications, rather than the mundane details of the relationship's consummation and continuation. But in relationships in which consummation and the daily trivia of shared existence are not merely denied but in some way out of the question, this effect is heightened. Browning and Reade deal with situations in which the straightforward living out of the relationship in commonplace domesticity is tabooed in a special way, and by taking priests as their heroes force us to place the romantic relationships in an explicitly religious context. But Tennyson had experienced a relationship with a similar value for poetry, and such a one as no Victorian writer would ever have created as a fiction: and he had the Shakespearean precedent for presenting this relationship through the conventions of romantic love poetry. *In Memoriam* is what

it is, an exploration of human love in a religious context and against a background of loss and deprivation, not only because Hallam died, but because of the intrinsic nature of the relationship between the two, and the literary conventions available for its presentation.

Yet Tennyson does use, in abundance, the realistic and mundane domestic imagery which his theme removes from the central position in the poem. Perhaps its most prevalent images are the domestic ones of various kinds. The poem thus looks in two directions: towards the romantic, the ideal and unknowable through its theme of sublime love and premature death, and towards the practical business of living, the duties and domesticities of daily life, through its dominant imagery and many of its incidents. This is the familiar Tennysonian dichotomy—Ulysses and Telemachus raising their critic-branded heads—but the two strains are unusually well fused in this poem, since the domestic imagery accommodates both an exceedingly romantic view of marital love and fidelity, and an exceedingly practical view of marital and domestic duty.

A really full exploration of the domestic imagery of *In Memoriam* is certainly needed, but I wish to conclude this article with a brief examination of two examples of this aspect of the poem, the section in which personal immortality is first mentioned, and a few of the lyrics which deal directly with marriage.

It is very noticeable that the first intimations of faith and hope in *In Memoriam* arise in a domestic context. In lyric XVIII, when Hallam's body is finally brought home and buried, the stress is entirely on a purely pagan sense of homecoming:

'Tis well; 'tis something; we may stand  
Where he in English earth is laid,  
And from his ashes may be made  
The violet of his native land.

Tennyson was admittedly not present at Hallam's funeral, and so is unlikely to write about it in any detail, but the total absence of all religious reference, at a point where the lost beloved is being buried in a churchyard with Christian rites, is still striking. It is indeed necessary to the poem, which derives faith from love and loss, that the purely human experience of total grief should be established first.

The earliest explicitly religious references occur in the section dealing with the poem's first Christmas, beginning with lyric XXVIII. But the bells

of this lyric, although they ring out the traditional message of "Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace", call the poet's attention less to these words than to the fact that they are the bells of "four hamlets round". Their associations are local and biographical, and they bring Tennyson a measure of stability not because of their religious message, but because "they controlled me when a boy". In the last line he refers to them as "The merry, merry bells of Yule", giving the festival its pagan name.

In the next lyric the only mention of the church is a passing reference to "the cold baptismal font", from which the poet shrinks away to make a wreath for the home. The next lyric begins with a domestic celebration of Christmas, its centre not the altar but the hearth. The family try in vain to pretend merriment, and eventually, sitting hand in hand in a circle, they are moved to tears by a song which they sang the year before with Hallam. Then "a gentler feeling" comes upon them, and they are able to see death as peace and rest. Finally, after silence and tears:

Our voices took a higher range;  
Once more we sang, 'They do not die  
Nor lose their mortal sympathy.  
Nor change to us, although they change.

Rapt from the fickle and the frail  
With gather'd power, yet the same,  
Pierces the keen seraphic flame  
From orb to orb, from veil to veil.'

And then, and then only is Tennyson ready to conclude the lyric with a prayerful and explicit Christian welcome to Christmas morning. Two things are noticeable here. Firstly, the family, like Tennyson in lyric XVI, *sing* their way to faith and solace, and at the climax of their experience, Tennyson invents the words of their song. Through the fusion of the family's song with the poet's lyric utterance, the singing of a domestic Christmas becomes a metaphor for what the poet himself is experiencing—the attainment of faith not through speculative reasoning but through surrender to artistic and emotional impulse. Secondly, the poet has selected an occasion ideally suited to his purpose, a major religious festival which was becoming, in Victorian England, very much the festival of the secular home and family, and has worked toward its religious meaning through its domestic celebration, in explicit isolation from the Church.

In the next two lyrics, XXXI and XXXII, the particularly rationally

incredible miracle of the raising of Lazarus is simply accepted without comment and used as a basis for reflection, the domestic context being maintained by a focussing of attention on the relationship between Lazarus and his sister. After the interestingly ambiguous XXXIII, Tennyson attains a note of personal affirmation in lyric XXXIV:

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

This confident note will not be consistently maintained: even here the affirmation has the passion of despair, and soon the new-found faith will be probed and tested. But from this point onwards the notion of Hallam's personal survival is never long absent from the poem, and soon belief in it will begin to be strengthened by poems directly addressed to him.

Throughout the poem religious experience arises from, or is carefully related to a domestic context: one of the most striking examples is lyric XCV, in which the poet's visionary experience is carefully prepared for by an account of the preceding family scene on the lawn, with such concrete realistic details as "the fluttering urn". Domestic imagery is also frequently used metaphorically, most interestingly in those lyrics in which Hallam and Tennyson are compared to a married couple, in which it would, I think, be possible to show a steady and consistent development in the use of the image. In lyric XCVII the "marriage" of Hallam and Tennyson persists, unbroken by death, at once binding the poet to the remote but ever near ideal, and enabling him to carry on contentedly in his own lower sphere:

Two partners of a married life—  
I look'd on these and thought of thee  
In vastness and in mystery,  
And of my spirit as of a wife.

The husband of this marriage is no longer the young man of their early days: he is rapt in deep thought, and despite their continuing union seems to have moved away from his wife—"He seems so near and yet so far", whilst "the faithless people" even say that he no longer loves her. But she treasures the withered violet he gave her years ago, and maintains a blind but unshakeable faith in his love. This is, of course, a purely human faith in the emotional constancy of a human being, but it is described in terms which inevitably suggest religious faith. Indeed, when the wife is contrasted with "the faithless

people", one almost sees her as the Church as the Bride of Christ. In the strength of her faith, she is able to carry on a life of simple grace and usefulness, which is still somehow linked to and animated by her husband's larger sphere:

For him she plays, to him she sings,  
Of early faith and plighted vows;  
She knows but matters of the house,  
And he, he knows a thousand things.

Again a domestic song becomes a metaphor for Tennyson's activity as poet, and reminds us of the crucial role this plays in sustaining his faith.

This lyric is full of the same humility and restrained self-abnegation as the Shakespearean group which we examined earlier. Tennyson is not, after all, in ordinary human terms, as confined, meek and ignorant as the wife of the poem, whatever he may be in relation to a beautiful spirit, and his placing himself on her level shows the willed humility of romantic love. And the wife in the lyric partially wills her belief: she sings "of plighted vows" rather than of purely spontaneous emotions, and she resolutely refuses to listen to "faithless people".

Indeed, *In Memoriam* as a whole does not simply depict spontaneous and irresistible emotion triumphing over the "freezing reason"; it is also, to some extent, a triumph of the will. The spontaneous instinct, the love which can sometimes leap intuitively across the barrier of death, is there; but it is confirmed and strengthened into a creed by the exercise of the will—at once the religious will to believe, the romantic will to remain faithful in love, and the artistic will to create. Certainly one can hardly help sensing, in reading the poem, that Tennyson believed in part because he wanted to believe, and it is this aspect of the poem which has disturbed most modern readers and critics, leading them to feel it valueless for them as a religious and philosophical document, and falsified as an emotional record.

But the view that faith is not merely a supernatural gift but a virtue, and loss of faith not merely a deprivation but a wilful sin, that faith depends in part on the will, is perfectly orthodox and traditional. This view became particularly important in the nineteenth century: we might recall the Pope's reflections in *The Ring and the Book*, or Bishop Blougram's willed choice between "a life of doubt diversified by faith" and "a life of faith diversified/by doubt". Or we may remember Coleridge arguing, in the *Biographia Literaria*, that religion, as the source of morality, must have a moral origin, and that

"the evidence of its doctrines could not, like the truths of abstract science, be wholly independent of the will".<sup>14</sup>

The same considerations apply to human "faith" or fidelity in love: one "falls in love", but the maintenance of the bond depends in part upon the will, and the "faithless one" has been traditionally regarded as reprehensible, as much under the code which governed "false Cressida" and "true Troilus" as under religiously and socially sanctioned attitudes toward marriage like those prevailing in Victorian England. The exercise of the will in *In Memoriam* seems to me fundamentally of this kind: not the self-blinding of a stupid, cowardly or philosophically anti-rational man trampling on his own legitimate doubts, but the will of a romantic or chivalric lover, often imaged as a married lover, spurning temptations to infidelity. For this reason it seems not a means of falsification, but an essential part of the poem, of the emotions involved, and of the tradition to which the poem belongs.

The elegy ends with an epithalamium for Cecilia Tennyson and Edmund Lushington. Earlier in the poem Tennyson has avoided mention of orthodox religion in his treatment of Hallam's funeral, has not entered the church for the celebration of a festival so mysterious as Christmas, and has found the baptismal font, the source of a purely supernatural life, "cold". But now, when human love and domesticity move into the church in triumphal procession, for the celebration of a natural sacrament, ratified but not conferred by the Church, Tennyson can join the crowd and take part in the ceremonies. Cecilia, "Her feet, my darling, on the dead" and her ear to "the most living word of life", forms an almost physical link between past and future, death and life, human sorrow and divine consolation. But the words of the marriage ceremony actually quoted are lacking in all reference to the supernatural:

The 'Wilt thou?' answer'd, and again  
The 'Wilt thou?' asked, till out of twain  
Her sweet 'I will' has made you one.

What has created the mysterious and indissoluble union, which the whole poem is now seen as leading up to, is not the supernatural activity of the Church, but the assent and resolve of the human will, ratifying and rendering permanent the romantic passion which was an essential accompaniment to this act of the will, but which could not have stood alone. Insofar as Cecilia and Edmund are symbolic equivalents of Hallam and Tennyson, Cecilia evidently stands for Tennyson, since she is his blood relative, and since he has

most often depicted himself as the wife: and it should be noticed that it is Cecilia's "I will", in one sense dependent and responsive, but in another final and conclusive, which actually rivets the unbreakable link. And by then the poem has become Tennyson's "I will".

The writing of it had been an exercise both of art and of autotherapy, and in hitting upon its form, an elegy composed of a series of love-lyrics, Tennyson took a major step towards the solution of both his artistic and his personal problems. The faith and solace which he found, he found in part through singing of them: he learned to feel Hallam's presence by addressing him; and by addressing him in both the language of traditional love-poetry and the imagery of Victorian domestic fiction, he was able to give the fullest possible expression to his feelings, and to take in the widest possible range of interest. One of the major principles of the poem's unity is its inter-weaving of different modes and images of human love.

A fuller examination of *In Memoriam* as love poetry is obviously necessary. More attention needs to be given to the development of particular strands of imagery, to the distribution of archaic diction, to the shifts between "I" as the poet and "I" as "the voice of the human race speaking through him", and to the shifts between poems nominally addressed to different listeners, in particular the distribution and immediate context of the poems addressed directly to Hallam. But I hope that I have succeeded in indicating some of the lines of enquiry for such an approach to the poem.

#### NOTES

1. E. B. Mattes, *In Memoriam: The Way of a Soul* (New York, 1951).
2. *R. E. S.* XXIII (1947).
3. Charles Tennyson, *Alfred Tennyson* (London, 1949), p. 531.
4. Hallam Lord Tennyson, *Tennyson: A Memoir* (London, 1897), I, 305.
5. *Ibid.*, p. 304.
6. *Memoir and Letters of Sara Coleridge. Edited by her daughter Edith Coleridge*, 2nd edn. (London, 1873), II, 345.
7. *Tennyson: Student's Cambridge Edition* (New York, Houghton Mifflin Co., N. D.), p. 832.
8. *Essays Ancient and Modern* (London, 1936), p. 187.

9. *Ibid.*, p. 185.
10. See, for example, EBB's "A Child's Grave in Florence": Patmore's *The Angel in the House*, especially Canto XI, Prelude 2, and his "Tristitia": the discussion Kingsley's *Yeast (The Life and Works of Charles Kingsley)*, XV (London, of the text: 'In Heaven they neither marry nor are given in marriage' in Macmillan and Co., 1902), 94-6: Christina Rossetti's 'House and Home': and Dante Gabriel Rossetti's 'The Blessed Damozel'.
11. *World's Classics* edn. (London, 1958), p. 323.
12. *The Victorian Frame of Mind, 1830-1870* (New Haven, 1957), pp. 389-393.
13. Hallam Lord Tennyson, *Tennyson: A Memoir* (London, 1897).
14. 2nd edn. (London, 1847), Vol. I, pt. II, pp. 206-7.