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A Close Reading of Tennyson's Maud

by Lucy Marks

English Honors Essay

26 April 1973

"We now turn with diminished pleasure from In Memoriam to Mr. Tennyson's recently published volume of Maud and Other Poems: for the qualities we appreciate most highly in the former are precisely those which are most wanting in the latter."¹ Thus the writer for the Edinburgh Review summed up the reaction of dismay and distaste reflected in the many notoriously adverse reviews that Maud received when it was published in the fall of 1855. Following five years after the almost universally-praised elegy for Arthur Henry Hallam, it put forth as protagonist a madman positing unacceptable solutions to social evils, and displayed a wholly different technical skill. About In Memoriam George Eliot had written that "the deepest significance of the poem is the sanctification of human love as a religion."² Elsewhere it had been praised as "the best specimen of poetical style which Mr. Tennyson has produced. It has nothing of metre but the charm; we are never jolted by those unworthy concessions to the difficulties of verse. Harshness, verbal inexactness, ungraceful inversions and the other ordinary signs of incomplete workmanship, will not be tolerated now that such a standard, not of poetic possibilities, but of regular and undeviating practice has been established."³ Now in 1855 the poet laureate appeared to be not only changing his standards, but

losing his senses, and the public was not a little shocked.

The most common grounds for the feeling of outrage that Maud created were its famous "war passages," in which Tennyson appeared to condemn the era of peace and commerce, when men were "pickpockets, each hand lusting for all that is not its own,"⁴ as a vile and "underhand" kind of civil war, and to defend and recommend wholeheartedly the Crimean War as a remedy for "the peace, that I deem'd no peace" (III. 50). England, he says, "has lost for a little her lust of gold" (III. 39): "the blood-red blossom war with a heart of fire" (III.53), thankfully, has united her once more. Appalled by this seeming lack of sensitivity and compassion, the critics occasionally tried to assert that these passages should be interpreted only as the further rantings of Tennyson's mad protagonist. "How war is to effect even an individual reformation of this kind, for a longer period than each particular rogue should be called upon to use his energies in other work than cheating, we are at a loss to determine, nor can this non-sequitur have been intended otherwise than as the sickly outgoing of a diseased brain."⁵ The reviewer for the *Athenaeum* was less sure about whose point of view was being expressed. After declaring that Maud was an allegory of the War, the speaker being the voice of the present age and Maud

symbolizing whatever of Hope, Goodness, and Beauty was remaining, he goes on to state that Tennyson "not merely vindicates war as an arbitration...but he appeals to it as an instrument of good, as a divine means to the accomplishment of a divine purpose. Flashing cannon, marshalled legions, ships of war, appear to Mr. Tennyson-- or at least to the poetic voice which utters his thought-- like hosts of angels sent to save the world. To him the declaration of War was the sound of a new gospel."⁶

In addition to the war passages, the speaker's morbid and violent rantings evoked the aversion and repugnance that George Eliot voiced in the Westminster Review: "We wish to forget it as we should wish to forget a bad opera. And this not only because it wants the charms of mind and music which belong to his other poetry, but because its tone is throughout morbid; it opens to us the self-revelations of a morbid mind, and what it presents as the cure for this mental disease is itself only a morbid conception of human relations."⁷ Another critic took the view that Tennyson was indulging his poetic sensibilities at the price of good taste and self-control: "The element of a morbid mind is introduced, less in order that it should illustrate or be illustrated, than as a means of pitching the tone of the work in a key of extraordinarily high poetic sensibility, and at once

providing for the expression of thoughts and feelings with the strongest emphasis, and with almost total irresponsibility on the part of the writer."⁸ Finally, distress and bewilderment were expressed at the poem's metrical experiments, use of language, and seemingly disjointed structure. The occasional passage of "extraordinary rhythmical music" was overshadowed by "others of hideous cacophony."⁹ "Less of finish is observable in the structure and emendation of the verse."¹⁰ In a rather back-handed compliment, George Eliot gives Tennyson more credit for knowledge of, and skill in, his art: "It is impossible to suppose that, with so great a master of rhythm as Tennyson, this harshness and ruggedness are otherwise than intentional; so we must conclude that it is a device of his art thus to set our teeth on edge with his verses when he means to rouse our disgust by his descriptions; and that, writing of disagreeable things, he has made it a rule to write disagreeably. These hexameters, weak in logic and grating in sound, are undeniably strong in expression, and eat themselves with phosphoric eagerness into our memory, in spite of our will."¹¹

The more vehement castigations today provide humorous reading, but in 1855 the particular point of view of these attacks, on what was significant and

innovative about the poem, for the most part unfortunately precluded consideration from any different angle.

However, in its particular conception of love and duty, Maud is not less typically representative of the Victorian Age than In Memoriam itself. And ironically, that very work, to which it was unfavorably compared, offers parallels in structure and theme--parallels which, if observed, might have led many critics to a different interpretation of the poem.

Common to both Maud and In Memoriam is the pattern of death and regeneration which carries the speaker through despair to hope or faith. In In Memoriam Tennyson's regeneration is a spiritual one: his faith in God and an ordered universe is slowly rebuilt after Arthur Hallam's death. The moral regeneration of the speaker in Maud comes through a new awareness of himself and a realization of his responsibility to others. Similar, too, is the agent of this inner growth: in both poems the elevation of the soul is affected by the power of love, in human or divine form. Tennyson's own notes for Maud referred to its "central idea" as "the holy power of Love."¹² If slightly reworded, the poet's same statement is applicable to In Memoriam as well: its "central idea" might be termed "the power of holy Love," Tennyson's ultimate trust

in a benevolent God who carries the promise of order, of the triumph of good, and of an afterlife. This is affirmed in such sections as "Love is and was my lord and king" (CXXVI), "That which we dare invoke to bless" (CXXIV), and in the famous last stanza which rejoices in the "one far-off divine event,/ To which the whole creation moves" (CXXXI). A further link between the two works is found in Tennyson's explanation of In Memoriam as "the way of the soul"¹³ and Maud as "the drama of the soul,"¹⁴ and in his further remarking on the elegy's composition that "the different moods of sorrow as in a drama are dramatically given."¹⁵ Clearly, the history of a soul traveling an arduous route to a high moral or spiritual end would have appealed to the Victorians, many of whom were following the same road in 1855. Both poems deal with the fact of the soul's passage from despair to hope, and the interactions, conflicts, and resolutions it experiences in this passage before it reaches the end, hope or faith. Thus in its theme and its peculiar form of dramatic structure, Maud resembles one of the most important, and in a sense cherished, works of the age; yet it was deplored as vigorously as the other was exalted.

For an explanation, one must go back to the poem's

contemporary criticism. After the stately rhythm of the elegy, its innovations in verse baffled many of the Victorians, who also found "different moods of sorrow" to be vastly preferable to the infinite variety of moods of a madman. But it was the "war passages," sections of which, ironically, are themselves characteristically Victorian, which called forth the most vehement objections, and these in turn have led to Maud's history of misinterpretation. For to fail to place these stanzas in their proper perspective to the narrative as a whole, it to miss both Tennyson's message and the true significance of the poem's structure and movement. The desire of the critics in their outrage to attribute these passages to the lunacy of the speaker is clear evidence of this. The purpose of this paper, then, is to establish what the structure or design in Maud is, to examine the significance of Tennyson's theme in relation to this structure (and thereby to reconsider the war passages), to illustrate, through a close reading, the connection between theme and structure and imagery and versification, and thus to show that all of these poetical elements move towards and culminate in a message which the Victorians would have found highly laudatory, and affecting, had they realized what it was.

I. Theme and Structure

"The peculiarity of this poem is that different phases of passion in one person take the place of different characters,"¹⁶ and after a single reading of Maud one is inclined to reply that this is by no means the only peculiarity of the poem. Tennyson's statement may be understood less as an elucidation of the text than as a pinpointing of the major source of one's confusion. The speaker's mad ravings and sudden changes of mood and situation contribute to a general impression of little or no organization in the poem beyond the minimum requirements for a feasible development of its plot, which in itself is rather nebulous. This impression is quite deceptive, however, and a more careful reading will show that Tennyson's construction of the monodrama is both tight and skillful. Built on the archetypal pattern of death and regeneration, the poem is full of obvious--though not heavy-handed--foreshadowings and parallelisms, with more subtle connectives between stanzas.

Tennyson divided Maud into three physical parts, but for several reasons it would be logical and reasonable to think of the poem in two. On the surface, if Parts II and III are grouped together, the balance between sections in terms of number of lines is more

pleasing, Part I containing roughly two-thirds (923) and Parts II and III together, roughly one-third (401). More importantly, however, when Parts II and III are combined, the narrative clearly falls into two sections--before and after the duel--with Part II largely paralleling Part I, and both reflecting the overall structure of the poem. This is most significant, for it is a clue to Tennyson's theme. As will be demonstrated, not only is the state of regeneration achieved at the end of the poem similar to that near the end of Part I, but it is also contingent on it, and would have been impossible without it. The narrative thus falls into separate but dependent sections, and the "central idea" that Tennyson puts forth in Part I is applied and confirmed in Part II.

Considering Maud with this division in mind, the first of its parallel constructions--that within the narrative of the speaker's history--becomes apparent. The poem begins some unknown length of time after the speaker's father has assumedly committed suicide. The speaker, on the verge of madness, wishes to withdraw from all contact with a society he believes to be corrupt and unscrupulous. He fights against and vacillates in his feelings for Maud, but finally acknowledges both his love and his wish to be loved, and declares

himself. The feeling is returned, and through it the speaker discovers not only great joy, but also a selfless sense of moral duty and responsibility to others--a radical reversal in attitude. The highest expression of his love is immediately followed, in Part II, by another death. Maud's father had implicitly been responsible for the suicide of the speaker's father, and now the speaker kills Maud's brother in a duel. In the ensuing stanzas he actually does go mad, and the memories of his love affair are jumbled with and scattered through his ravings. At the end we see only the state of, and not process to, the regeneration. Sanity brings the recollection of dedication to justness and truth, and his sense of duty impels him to join in the Crimean War. In each part an actual death has led to a moral or mental "death," exhibited by madness or near-madness, through which the speaker passes to attain a noble, elevated state of mind. The emphasis on these particular phases differs in each part, but the movement from a literal and figurative death to a regeneration or new life within the soul remains the same.

Taken separately, Parts I and II (i.e., II and III grouped together) illustrate two parallel cycles within the speaker's history. Viewed as a whole, they

constitute the larger structure which they reflect; the overall pattern of death and regeneration. That Tennyson intended the poem to be apprehended on this larger scale is evident both from the nature of the speaker's regeneration, which requires a particular situation in which to be tested and proven, and from a further parallel which he draws--that between the condition of the speaker and the condition of the country. At the outset both are bordering on a state of insanity, the speaker obsessed with the violence and deceit involved in his father's death, the country involved with making money by violent and deceitful means. By the end of the poem a total and parallel reverse has taken place. In his new sensibility the speaker resolves that the "old hysterical mock-disease should die" (III. 33), and uniting "with a loyal people shouting a battle-cry" (III. 35), he dedicates himself to a "pure and true" (III. 31) cause. It is by virtue of this cause, the speaker perceives, that the country is reborn, and he justifies it on two counts. Firstly, and most important to him, the war is being fought "in defense of right" (III. 19) and for "the glory of manhood" (III.21), and therefore is in harmony with his new moral conscience. Secondly, and the point of greatest contention in 1855, it unites under a single

noble aim a people who had been long divided by personal ambition. One can't deny that Tennyson here is defending war as being preferable to peace, but the quality of each state as he viewed them is critical to our understanding of his meaning. As becomes evident in the course of the poem, the choice he made was, to him, not only justifiable, but logical and necessary.

Part I of Maud begins with the near-hysterical ragings of one whose grief and despair have led to extreme bitterness. The speaker's obsession with his father's death and with suspicions of foul play colors his attitude towards all parts of the world around him--nature and society--and through this state of mind he perceives himself to be a victim of both a private "vast speculation" (I. 11) which had failed, and of an unprincipled social system. Throughout this introduction to his past history and his present condition, and throughout the poem, social protest is interwoven with personal complaint, as a logical outgrowth of the speaker's thought. The particular angle of the speaker's attack on society is always related to the particular incident or memory he is currently dwelling on. Thus, after implicating in his father's death the "lord of the broad estate" (I.19) who "dropt off gorged from a scheme that had left us

flaccid and drain'd" (I. 20), he naturally swings around to attack the "lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain" (I. 23), which has grasped hold of the country, for his case is but one example of the misery resulting from the present moral conditions and spirit of the age. He realizes, too, that this spirit of immorality is a threat to his own sense of inner truth: "Sooner or later I too may passively take the print/ Of the golden age--why not? I have neither hope nor trust" (I. 30-31). This argument will of course be answered and reversed in the course of the poem, which is hinted at in the joyful outburst of his recollections of Maud in stanza XVIII. She is an image of life, youth, and affection. But recoiling immediately from his memories, he resolves to "bury myself in myself" (I. 76), to reject all society and nurture his bitter despair.

Sections II and III reveal the germ of the speaker's love and of the conflict within himself. Though he professes scorn at his first glimpse of her, the assurance that his calm "will never be broken by Maud" (I. 78) appears defensive rather than confident. "Where is the fault?" (I. 80) he asks, and elaborates for six lines "Dead perfection, no more" (I. 83) is followed by numerous details of what is lacking:

...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
a sensitive nose. (I. 83-86)

He acknowledges and is annoyed by her effect on him--
escaping momentarily, "with the least little touch of
spleen" (I. 87). But when she breaks into his sleep in
a dream, this now "spleenful folly" (I. 89) has
disappeared. The "cold and clear-cut face" (I. 88)
which previously had "neither savor nor salt" (I. 78)
is now "star-sweet on a gloom profound" (I. 91), and
spite yields to remorse. At this point, however, he
is unable even to face the possibility of a conflict
between his desire for isolation from human contact
and his wish, in spite of himself, to establish some
kind of relationship with Maud. Symbolically burying
himself in himself, he goes out to walk in his "own
dark garden ground" (I. 97), the natural counterpart
of his morbid and obsessed mind.

Thus far hate and bitterness have been succeeded
by first scorn and then remorse. Section IV marks a
change in tone to wistfulness--"ah, wherefore cannot
I be/ Like things of the season gay, like the bountiful

season bland" (I. 103-104)--the most tranquil, if transitory, emotion the speaker has yet exhibited. In the course of this section he reveals his love to the reader, though he himself will not yet accept it. Social protest again grows out of and mingles with personal complaints, this time prompted by a chance meeting on the moor with Maud and her brother. When the speaker bowed to Maud, "the fire of a foolish pride flash'd over her beautiful face" (I. 117), for which he half-sorrowfully admonishes her, "O child, you wrong your beauty, believe it, in being so proud;/ Your father has wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor" (I. 118-119). His constant awareness of the injustice his family has suffered calls forth a bitter observation on the deceit and dishonesty of the age-- "a world of plunder and prey" (I. 125)--and this in turn gives rise to the larger question of man's degree of control over his fate: "Do we move ourselves, or are we moved by an unseen hand at a game/ That pushes us off from the board, and other ever succeed?" (I. 127-128). The conclusion he reaches is that there is no way we can know "the drift of the Maker" (I. 144), and therefore the most advisable course is to abdicate any sense of responsibility for what does happen: "Shall I weep if a Poland fall?" (I. 147). "I have not made the world,

and he that made it will guide" (I. 149). In stanza IX he again expresses his desire for seclusion from society "in the quiet woodland ways,/ Where if I cannot be gay let a passionless peace be my lot" (I. 150-151), which echoes his previous avowal of disassociation from "the ways of the world" (I. 145). His following outburst, however, both reveals what he most fears as an obstacle to this peace--"the cruel madness of love" (I. 156)--and asserts what he most desires. Stanza XI marks for reader the climax and resolution of the speaker's conflict, which he does not resolve for himself until the next section: we can recognize, in his desperate, half-resigned protestation that Maud is "all unmeet for a wife" (I. 158), that he is voicing his love and his wish to marry her.

With the first admission of this love--though only for her voice--comes the first instance of Maud's revitalizing effect on the speaker, and the initial step toward his moral regeneration. Tennyson's theme of the enobling power of love is introduced in Section V, where the speaker, entranced by "a voice by the cedar tree/ In the meadow under the hall" (I. 162-163), is first moved to express not only shame and sorrow at his condition, but, implicitly, a desire to be better. Instead of "raging alone as my father raged"

(I. 53), or smiling "a hard-set smile" (I. 121) and letting "the world have its way" (I. 122), he now "well could weep for a time so sordid and mean,/ And myself so languid and base" (I. 178-179). This is the first instance, too, in which he self-consciously draws a parallel between his situation and his country's. The foreshadowing in stanza III, therefore, also follows this parallel: both he and his country will attain the joy and glory which he is at once despairing of and desiring.

Fear and trust come together in Section VI, and mark the beginnings of the speaker's hopes that his love will be returned. The strength of his emotion for Maud herself, which has gone beyond enchantment with a face and a voice, finds expression partly in the self-knowledge that he has become nearly incapable of believing in or accepting goodness:

Ah, what shall I be at fifty
Should nature keep me alive,
If I find the world so bitter
When I am but twenty-five? (I. 220-23)

That trust and hope are now outweighing his paranoia is clear in the warning to himself, "Yea, too, myself from myself I guard" (I. 249), which echoes and

refutes his previous resolve to "bury myself in myself" (I. 76). Thus the confidence that builds in the next two sections, first from recalling that he and Maud were once betrothed and then from meeting her eyes at church, all the more intensifies his despair at seeing the "new-made lord" (I. 332) who has come to court her. Withdrawing into his old self, "a wounded thing with a rancorous cry" (I. 363), he once again feels "at war with myself and a wretched race" (I. 364). This prompts the attack on "peace-at-all-price men"¹⁷ in stanza III, and sets up the dichotomy between "lawful and lawless war" (II. 332) which he later struggles with in his madness. "This huckster put down war!" (I. 373) he exclaims scornfully, but is war a cause of evils, or the consequence of evils already existing? What should be condemned are "the passions that make earth hell" (I. 375), for these create a situation akin to war within society, of which the speaker himself is a victim--and not only because these passions in other people have brought ruin on him, but also because he himself has acquired them--"the bitter springs of anger and fear" (I. 378). Recalling his desire to be better--this time for Maud's sake (and a further step toward his regeneration)--he wishes to hear again "the chivalrous battle-song"

(I. 383), which would perhaps inspire "a man to arise in me,/ That the man I am may cease to be!" (I. 396-97). His action in the Crimean War is here foreshadowed, and his condemnation of the "lawless" state of war existing in society is balanced by the belief (also a foreshadowing of the end) that a war which is "chivalrous," and by implication noble, just, and "lawful," would restore to the country honesty, unity, and moral strength.

O, let the solid ground
Not fail beneath my feet
Before my life has found
What some have found so sweet! (I. 397-401)

The climax leading ultimately to the speaker's highest expression of moral regeneration begins with this fervent desire for love, and the resolve that it is worth everything in life:

Then let come what come may,
What matter if I go mad,
I shall have had my day. (I. 402-404)

He will now even go so far for love as to forgive his worst enemy, and encountering by chance Maud's brother, he "long'd so heartily then and there/ To give him the grasp of fellowship" (I. 458-59). Love also

brings the recognition of one's responsibility to the beloved, and therefore to oneself: his well-being constitutes her happiness: "But if I be dear to some one else,/ Then I should be to myself more dear" (I. 531-32). This recognition will soon be perceived on a higher level, and will lead to a nobler resolution. A sudden fear seizes him that she may be "fasten'd to this fool lord" (I. 560), but stronger is his resolve that love means all things--it is life itself: "I must tell her or die" (I. 570).

From the lush, glowing imagery of Section XVII, we understand that the speaker's love has been returned. "There is none like her, none" (I. 600), and after he has led Maud home his rapture turns to meditation on the change in his fate that she has brought about. Now "no more so all forlorn" (I. 630), he no longer despairs of a universe which seemed indifferent to and removed from man's fate, for love itself in his universe, "the countercharm of space and hollow sky" (I. 641). Responding actively to this force, he declares he

would die

To save from some slight shame one simple girl.

Would die, for sullen-seeming Death may give

More life to Love than is or ever was

In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live. (I. 642-46)

But abruptly he reverses this resolution, through the sudden insight and self-awareness that cause him to exclaim:

Not die, but live a life of truest breath,

And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs. (I. 651-52)

Occurring almost exactly in the center of the poem, these lines contain its first and most important message--what Tennyson called "the central idea--the holy power of love"¹⁸--and the true nature and meaning of the speaker's regeneration. A most important progression has taken place in the shift from "would die...would die" to "not die." In the first instance, the speaker vows he would sacrifice his life for Maud. He then turns from being willing, to be eager, to die, for Love might be even sweeter and stronger after death (the hope expressed by Elizabeth Barret Browning in the words "I shall but love thee better after death"). His self-sacrificing wish for death has to this point been solely for love's sake--to benefit either Maud or both of them: personal and therefore selfish. Paradoxically, now, his desire not to die "but live a life of truest breath" is the exact opposite--an expression of selflessness and self-renunciation. Sacred and pure love has enobled his soul and elevated his sense of duty

from devotion to Maud, to dedication to truth and justness. He wishes to live, not for his own benefit, but in order to benefit others--to fulfill his moral responsibility by teaching "true life to fight with mortal wrongs." Tennyson is drawing on two related Victorian ideals: 'the rehabilitating power of love, "a great ethical force which can protect men from lust and even strengthen and purify the moral will, "19 and nobility, or the transcending of selfish concerns in "the service of 'an object dearer than self.'"20 It is also important to note that although the speaker's vow is here meant as a general, abstract statement of recognition and resolve, it does foreshadow both his participation in the Crimean War and Tennyson's means of justifying that war.

When the speaker kills Maud's brother in a duel, he violates his resolution by resorting to "the Christless code/ That must have life for a blow" (II. 26-27). Again we see emerging the dichotomy--the poem's moral framework--between lawful and lawless war: the contrast, in this case, between retribution on a private enemy and battle waged against public injustices. Ironically, he does not come to a full realization of the co-existence of these opposites within himself until he goes mad. But that he does retain, after the duel, a measure

of the nobility he has perceived within himself is illustrated in the well-known shell passage in Part II. Of this section Tennyson wrote, "The shell undestroyed amid the storm perhaps symbolizes to him his own first and highest nature preserved amid the storms of passion."²¹ A vital element in this "highest nature" as the poet conceived of it was man's free-will, which, he said, was the "main-miracle, apparently an act of self-limitation by the Infinite, and yet a revelation by Himself of Himself." "Take away the sense of individual responsibility and men sink into pessimism and madness."²² In the speaker's case, free-will has been conferred not by divine, but by human, love; if he is able to retain the latter, he will still find strength enough to grasp the former:

And as long, O God, as she
Have a grain of love for me,
So long, no doubt, no doubt,
Shall I nurse in my dark heart,
However weary, a spark of will
Not to be trampled out. (II. 100-105)

That Tennyson is here referring to man's free-will, and not simply the will to live (though this is also meant) can be asserted by comparing the section with

a similar passage in In Memoriam. The shell is

Frail, but of force to withstand,
 Year upon year, the shock
 Of cataract seas that snap
 The three-decker's spine... (II. 72-75)

The final section of In Memoriam begins:

O living will that shalt endure
 When all that seems shall suffer shock,
 Rise in the spiritual rock,
 Flow thro' our deeds and make them pure. (CXXXI)

This power he explained as "that which we know as Free-will, the higher and enduring part of man."²³ Love enobles the soul; nobility is free-will in man's most exalted perception of it. What now remains is the manner in which the speaker's as yet only professed moral regeneration will be tested and proven.

"If a man is merely to be a bundle of sensations, he had better not exist at all. He should embark on his career in the spirit of selfless and adventurous heroism; should develop his true self by not shirking responsibility, by casting aside all maudlin and introspective morbidities, and by using his powers cheerfully in accordance with the obvious dictates of his moral consciousness, and so, as far as possible, in harmony

with what he feels to be the Absolute Right."²⁴

Tennyson appears to have sent the speaker in Maud off to the Crimean War with exactly the same advice he gave in sending a young man off to the University.

The nature of the speaker's regeneration both demands and justifies the active combination of "selfless and adventurous heroism" and "moral consciousness."

What troubled many contemporary critics of Maud was the seeming paradox that participation in war could bring to the speaker an elevated moral spirit. Since his morbid, violent condition was brought on by what he felt to be the "underhand" state of civil war within society, it would indeed to a paradox were his regeneration to be affected through further war, and this is by no means the case. His action in the Crimean War is not an end in itself, but a means to an end.

it is the manifestation of--the means of proving--his regeneration, for it is an opportunity to demonstrate his sense of duty and moral responsibility both to mankind and to a cause that is in his eyes "pure and true." The cause and not the war is what prompts his decision to participate:

...it lightened my despair

When I thought that a war would arise in defense
of the right,

That an iron tyranny now should bend or
cease,

The glory of manhood stand on his ancient
height,

Nor Britain's one sole God be the millionaire. (III. 18-22)

Again, love is the force which elevates and enobles, for
it is Maud, coming to him in a dream, who speaks "of
a hope for the world in the coming wars" (III. 11),
and thus induces him to action.

Yet, one certainly cannot disregard the fact that
when Tennyson proclaims that England "has lost for a
little her lust of gold" (III. 39), and refers to the
period of peace as "horrible, shameful, monstrous,
not to be told" (III. 41), he is by way of the speaker's
enthusiasm justifying war as a state preferable to
peace. But his justification is based on his judgement
of the quality of each condition. The speaker in his
madness reaches a conclusion which is later broadened
on a national and social level:

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin;
But the red life spilt for a private blow--
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely ever akin. (II. 327-333)

In this stanza (also a foreshadowing of the end), he comes to terms with his own guilty participation in the country's "lawless war" in a way which suggests that his later participation in the "lawful" Crimean War is the necessary and valid means of demonstrating moral growth: "Myself have awaked, as it seems, to the better mind" (III. 56), and dedication to a just war will perhaps expiate his share in an unjust one. Tennyson doesn't go quite this far with the effect of war on the country as a whole. The reviewer for Blackwood's Magazine complained that the speaker "finally comes to the conclusion that war upon a large scale is the only proper remedy for adulteration of comestibles, house-breaking, and child-murder."²⁵ But actually what the poet seems to be saying is that no good at all can come out of the present state of society, the "peace that was full of wrongs and shames" (III. 40), whereas some benefit to society may possibly result from the state of this particular war:

Yet God's just wrath shall be wreak'd on a
giant liar;

And many a darkness into the light shall
leap,

And shine in the sudden making of splendid
names,

And noble thought be freer under the sun,
 And the heart of a people beat with one
 desire. (III. 45-49)

The moral regeneration of speaker and country has thus been simultaneous and in one sense interdependent, the latter supplying a moral cause, and the former a loyal adherer to that cause. In regard to the other parallel within the poem's overall structure--the parallel events within the speaker's history--we see that love's rehabilitating power has again been his guide to a renewal of high moral spirit. Enthusiasm for a moral cause and the idealization of love are the messages and standards with which we are left. The irony of Maud's critical reception is that in damning Tennyson's poem, the critics were damning these popular and cherished conceptions belonging to their own Victorian age.

II. Imagery

And now by the side of the Black and the Baltic
 deep,
 And deathful-grinning mouths of the fortress,
 flames.

The blood-red blossom war with a heart of fire. (III. 51-53)

The reader of Maud will doubtless be struck here by Tennyson's vivid image for war, being forcefully

reminded of the important and pervasive image for love, the rose, in Part I. In the "blood-red blossom," death and life and love and war coincide. This should come not as a surprise, however, but as the inevitable resolution which has been implicit throughout. By examining the imagery of Maud in the light of the poem's theme and structure; one can find many concrete symbols for the abstractions of love, death, and regeneration. Furthermore, if the foreshadowing and multiple meanings contained within the imagery itself are considered, it becomes quite evident that this poetic element has a structure of its own, which is so defined that it seems to organize and unify the whole, reinforcing and illuminating the narrative and thematic structure. Predominant are the images of death and war, and love (and implicitly life), which co-exist in a logical, though at times seemingly paradoxical manner, occurring alternately or concomitantly until they coincide in the image which encompasses and unites both conditions.

Maud is permeated with images of death, war, and violence, which stem from the speaker's obsession with his father's death, and grow or decrease in intensity depending on his present mood and degree of madness. In Section I he is at the height of his despair and bitterness, and the poem begins with his breathless,

furious mutterings: "I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood" (I. 1). Nature, preceived through such a mental state, becomes a mirror of his mind. The hollow is

...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. 2-4)

Similarly, the speaker recalls his father's desperation and hopelessness by describing the day of his suicide:

"And out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd,/ And flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air" (I. 11-12). In society, too, death is omnipresent, in both a moral and physical sense. The irony in stanzas VII and VIII becomes gradually thinner as it dissolves into outrage: for the speaker these obviously are neither "the days of advance, the works of the men of mind" (I. 25), nor "the golden age" (I. 30). "Is it peace or war? Civil war, as I think, and that of a kind/ The viler, as underhand, not openly bearing the sword" (I. 47).

This civil war is waged not only on man's spiritual and moral being, but on his physical self as well: "And chalk and alum and plaster are sold to the poor for

bread,/ And the spirit of murder works in the very means of life" (I. 39-40). Its moral and physical effects are dramatically juxtaposed when "a Mammonite mother kills her babe for a burial fee" (I. 45). In Section IV, where nature is again depicted in accordance with his point of view, she now reflects these societal evils:

For nature is one with rapine, a harm no preacher can heal;

The Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike,

And the whole little world where I sit is a world of plunder and prey. (I. 123-25)

Allusions to international conflicts--"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. 147-48)--while revealing the world-wide scale of "plunder and prey," also, ironically, foreshadow his own participation in the war.

The appearance of Maud, or first the mere mention of her name, suddenly gives rise to terms of endearment which contrast sharply with his morbid rantings:

"Maud, the delight of the village, the ringing joy of the Hall,/...Maud, the beloved of my mother, the moon-faced darling of all" (I. 7-, 72). She is his image of

life, affection, and happiness, and in the conflict that ensues--in which his desire "to bury myself in myself" struggles with his desire for contact with Maud--he is forced to choose, metaphorically speaking, between death and life. This struggle and indecision are clearly manifested in the tension between juxtaposed images and in oxymorons relating to them in Sections II and III. Maud's beauty is described as "dead perfection" (I. 83), "faultily faultless," and "splendidly null" (I. 82). Later, in his dream, her face seems "cruelly meek" (I. 88). She is "luminous, gemlike," but also "ghostlike, deathlike" (I. 95); her "passionless, pale, cold face" is yet "star-sweet on a gloom profound" (I. 91). (She is often pictured as a bright light in his dark world.) Momentarily, the speaker chooses death. The image of the garden in "my own dark garden ground" (I. 97) is both literal and figurative, representing an actual garden and the depths of his mind. The external world of nature again mirrors the speaker's internal morbidity and violence:

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 ghostly glimmer,
and found

The shining daffodil dead, and Orion low in
his grave. (I. 98-101)

In Section V, the juxtaposition of life and death which previously illustrated the speaker's indecision, now foreshadows his ultimate call to action (though here only as a source of despair), and the poem's final outcome. Maud, who is "singing alone.../ In the happy morning of life and of May" (I. 167-68), is singing a ballad of soldiers, who "ready in heart and ready in hand,/ March with banner and bugle and fife/ To the death for their native land" (I. 170-72). She who is "in the light of her youth and her grace" (I. 176), is "singing of Death, and of Honor that cannot die" (I. 177). What only troubles his mind at this point will, however, yield "a dear delight" (III. 15) when he does at last attain the joy and glory of which she is singing. In Part III Maud's martial song becomes a personal rallying cry to the speaker, as she descends from the angels to point "to Mars/ As he glow'd like a ruddy shield on the Lion's breast" (III. 13-14). The cause she is upholding again proffers life and death equally: "Many a light shall darken, and many shall weep/...And many a darkness into the light shall leap" (III. 43, 46).

The unconscious hope, which love brings, for joy and glory is offset by the speaker's subsequent vacillations and suspicions in Section VI. At first

the flashback of his dream in stanza III reveals a contrast in attitude to his first dream in Section III: instead of "growing and fading and growing," Maud has inspired in him a "glowing and growing light" (I. 205); her then "passionless, pale, cold face" is far-removed from this light which "kept itself warm.../ Ready to burst in a color'd flame" (I. 207-208). But the morning brings doubts, and his "delicate spark" (I. 204) now seems but "an ashen-gray delight" (I. 211). Throughout this section the speaker is pulled back and forth, wishing to love, suspecting Maud, lamenting his bitterness, and again suspecting. In stanzas VIII and IX his opposing emotions or states of mind are sharply juxtaposed as the intensity of his feelings increases and the extremities widen--from being morbidly obsessed with death to being enraptured with love. In stanza VIII the starkness and solitude of his past and future confront him:

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 chamber 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-turn'd to stone. (I. 257-67)

But even while hammering home his bitterness and despair, he suddenly remembers his chance encounter with Maud and the touch of her hand, and his thoughts abruptly shift, with no less intensity, to the antithesis of "hate and horror," as if his obsession has been reversed: "O heart of stone, are you flesh, and caught/ By that you swore to withstand?" (I. 268-69). Love is a "new strong wine" (I. 271); her hand is a "treasured splendor" (I. 273), and her glove "sacred" (I. 274). Though the section closes on a note of compromise, the force and position of the "love" stanza has somewhat counterbalanced his preoccupation with death.

Until Section XI, the imagery of war and death, though alternating with images of love and life, has far overshadowed them, as the speaker first recognizes, resists, and then only slowly yields to his new feelings. Likewise, the imagery for love has been descriptive and suggestive, rather than concrete, in a sense corresponding to his reticence and his wish to remain uninvolved. However, his ardent desire at this point to love and to be loved--that it is worth all things, regardless

of the outcome--now gives rise to several specific, recurring images of love, symbolizing either Maud herself or certain aspects and consequences of their relationship. Most notable among these are flowers (particularly the lily and the rose, representing chastity and modesty and love and passion), jewels, and stars.

"You have but fed on the roses and lain in the lilies of life" (I. 161). At their first occurrence in Section IV, the rose and the lily stand for nothing more than the fact that Maud has been petted and spoiled all her life. Not until Section XII, immediately following the speaker's avowal of his wish for love, does either flower reappear, and then, proceeding logically from the sentiment in Section XI, it is the lily which comes first. Here imagery goes far beyond narrative in the meaning it conveys, for in this "lily" section the speaker is not merely walking through the woods with Maud and gathering flowers, but is declaring the purity and modesty of his love for her, and also praising these qualities in Maud herself. The innocence and guilelessness of his emotion at this point has already been expressed in the simplicity of "before my life has found/ What some have found so sweet" (I. 400-401), and it is now reiterated metaphorically:

Where was Maud? in our wood;
 And I--who else?--was with her,
 Gathering woodland lilies,
 Myriads blow together. (I. 416-19)

"Maud is here, here, here/ In among the lilies" (I. 422-23).

"I know the way she went/ Home with her maiden posy"
 (I. 332-33). The appearance of the rose in Section XIV
 adds^a further dimension to their relationship, for it
 reveals his growing passion for Maud, and perhaps her
 response as well: "Maud has a garden of roses/ And
 lilies fair on the lawn" (I. 489-90). As in Section III,
 this garden is literal and figurative--both her actual
 garden, and symbol of the purity and passion of her
 feeling. When in Section XVII the two finally declare
 their love, the symbolic rose has come to the fore. With
 no trace of the lily now these lines fairly glow, as
 the whole world seems to be suffused with the glowing,
 blushing rose:

Blush from West to East,
 Blush from East to West,
 Till the West is East,
 Blush it thro' the West. (I. 591-94)

Maud's own response may be equal to his, or, what is
 more likely, it is the release of his passion that

evokes the words "roses are her cheeks,/ and a rose her mouth" (I. 577-578). Again, imagery gives depth to the declaration of love stated in the narrative, by illustrating the nature of that love.

The images of jewels and stars function in a similarly enlightening manner. Maud herself is often compared to a jewel. Her feet are "like sunny gems on and English green" (I. 175), and the March-wind "sets the jewel-print of your feet/ In violets blue as your eyes" (I. 890-91). She is "like a precious stone/ Set in the heart of a carven gloom" (I. 498-99); in his jealousy the speaker exclaims, "What, has he found my jewel out?" (I. 352). The jewel is also used as a symbol for their love, which is "a pearl/ The countercharm of space and hollow sky" (I. 640-41). Thus his following lyrical description of nature and, by extension, of his mood or state of mind, "a livelier emerald twinkles in the grass,/ A purer sapphire melts into the sea" (649-50), is immediately united, through imagery, to the direct cause of his happiness. Employing the same imagery for cause and effect serves to emphasize the connection between the two of them--Maud or love's power, and his new sensibility--thus reinforcing the poem's theme of love as a restoring or revitalizing force, as it reveals the intensity of his feeling. In

a more obvious manner, the star imagery serves this same purpose: the speaker often compares Maud to a star in a way which, explicitly or implicitly links her with the change in his fate--i.e., the change in the stars, or rather, his attitude towards them. This connection is perhaps foreshadowed in his first dream, where she appears "star-sweet on a gloom profound" (I. 41). In Section XVIII, the cedar trees and he himself have been "haunted by the starry head/ Of her whose gentle will has changed my fate" (I. 620-21). His contemplations after leading her home reveal his radical change in attitude, which is a measure of the effect that love has had on him. The universe no longer seems unsympathetic or indifferent to man's fate. Whereas before the stars appeared to be part of

the boundless plan

That makes you tyrants in your iron skies,
Innumerable, pitiless, passionless eyes,
Cold fires, (I. 634-37)

that are now "fair stars that crown a happy day" (I. 628), and "soft splendors" (I. 677) which "beat...timing with things below" (I. 679). This last is rather a suggestive phrase, however, for the stars encompass a fate larger than simply his life with Maud. His premonition of this

fate--"Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe"
 (I. 681)--was first voiced in Section IV, there too
 suggested by the image of Maud as a star: "And up in
 the high Hall-garden I see her pass like a light;/
 But sorrow seize me if ever that light be my leading
 star!" (I. 112-12).

The famous "Come into the garden, Maud" (I. 850)
 stanzas, Section XXII, the celebration and joyful
 expression of the speaker's love, gather together all
 of the preceding images in a sensuous bombardment of
 color, odor, and sound. Through the "woody hollows"
 and "valleys of Paradise" (I. 892-93) are scattered
 the violet "jewel-prints" from Maud's walk, and signifi-
 cantly, the single star that is named is Venus, the
 morning star, "the planet of love" (I. 857). Both
 the lily and the rose play an important part in this
 section, for as symbolic flowers in a symbolic Garden
 of Love, they represent the two extremes, or "emotional
 poles,"²⁶ of love--chastity and sexual passion. The
 speaker's patient address to the lily,

"there is but one,
 With whom she has heart to be gay.
 When will the dancers leave her alone?
 She is weary of dance and play," (I. 868-71)

is immediately counterbalanced by jealousy and possessiveness as he turns to the rose:²⁷

"O young lord-lover, what sighs are those,
For one that will never be thine?
But mine, but mine," so I sware to the rose,
"For ever and ever, mine." (I. 878-81)

It is notable that this is already the second occasion in which the rose has elicited a response of possessiveness mixed with passion: his words here recall his silent bidding of good-night to Maud after their joyous day, "My own heart's heart, my ownest own, farewell" (I. 672), but are now charged with suspicion and impatience. In stanza VI the effect of the rose begins to predominate-- "and the soul of the rose went into my blood,/ As the music clash'd in the hall" (I. 882-83)--and by stanza VIII the lily seems to be included only as an afterthought:

But the rose was awake all night for your sake,
Knowing your promise to me;
The lilies and roses were all awake,
They sigh'd for the dawn and thee. (I. 898-901)

When the flowers themselves speak in stanza X, they naturally exhibit the qualities which they symbolize. The rose, impatient, speaks first: "The red rose cries,

'She is near, she is near;'/ And the white rose weeps
 'She is late'" (I. 912-13); while uncomplaining, "the
 lily whispers, 'I wait'" (I. 915). The intensity of
 his passion now reaches its peak, and at its culmination
 the rose "becomes equated with the very life principle;"²⁸

My dust would hear her and beat,
 Had I lain for a century dead,
 Would start and tremble under her feet,
 And blossom in purple and red. (I. 920-23)

Previously, the speaker had reached the conclusion
 that the true evidence of Love's greatest and highest
 power lies not in sexual passion, but in selfless and
 noble dedication to one's moral ideals, which are
 dearer than life. For the moment, however, Love's
 revitalizing force itself, its power to bring about the
 moral regeneration in Section XVIII and the physical
 rebirth in XXII, allows both conditions to exist.
 Paradoxically, as love is gradually portrayed as giving
 or bringing life, death begins to lose its violent
 and morbid aspects, and become less an evil than a
 potential good. This is first implied in Section XI,
 which may be paraphrased as "Let me not die before
 I have found love. After that, death and madness
 would be of little consequence, for I shall have truly

lived." In Section XVI, the speaker recognizes Maud's love to be

the one bright thing to save

My yet young life in the wilds of Time,

Perhaps from madness, perhaps from crime,

Perhaps from a selfish grave, (I. 556-59)

and declares, after her answer has been given, "I have climb'd nearer out of lonely hell" (I. 678). Love is the ultimate savior, or saver from death, when it becomes the very means of rebirth, as in Section XXII the speaker envisions his dead heart and his dust beating and blossoming beneath Maud's feet. This new affirmation of life is implicit in the nature imagery, which again mirrors the speaker's state of mind. In Section XIV as he stands outside the Hall at dawn, a situation similar to that in Section III, instead of "the tide in its broad-flung ship-wrecking roar" (I. 98) he now hears "the voice of the long sea-wave as it swell'd/ Now and then in the dim-gray dawn" (I. 519-20). Likewise, after the "rose" section in which Maud returns his love, a further change, amounting to a complete reversal in attitude, takes place: "Is that enchanted moan only the swell/ Of the long waves that roll in yonder bay?" (I. 660-61). Paralleling (or rather resulting from)

the shift in the speaker's state of mind has been the shift in the character of nature from a hostile to a sympathetic force.²⁹ Also reflecting this progression is the change from the death imagery in Section XIV to its reversal and denial in Section XVIII. At first, the mist around the Hall reminds the speaker of a shroud, a "death-white curtain" (I. 522), which though he know means sleep, yet calls to his mind "the sleep of death" (I. 526). But later in XVIII, his fears now gone, sleep is no longer morbidly suggestive, but merely "false death" (I. 666), and he remembers their day as being enfolded in the purity of a bridal veil, "twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white" (I. 663), symbolic of life.

Inverse to the idea of love as the saver from death is the role that death has gradually been assuming--not as a terrible, ruinous force, but as the enhancer of love. Should the speaker "die/ To save from some slight shame one simple girl" (I. 642-43), her love and regard for him would surely increase. If, on the other hand, they were both to die, then perhaps death, at this point only "sullen-seeming," will "give/ More life to Love than is or ever was/ In our low world, where yet 'tis sweet to live" (I. 644-46). Love is also made stronger by the threat of the possibility of death, as Maud herself

answers, "'The dusky strand of Death unwoven here/
With dear Love's tie, makes Love himself more dear'"
(I. 658-59).

The opposing attractions of life and death are juxtaposed, and in fact commingled, at the precise moment of the speaker's recognition of a new moral spirit and a higher call within himself: "Not die, but live a life of truest breath,/ And teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs" (I. 651-52). It is important to remember that his wish for life was expressed in connection with his desire to serve and fulfil some purpose. Accordingly, what is actually implied here is, "I wish to live so that I may find and defend a cause worth dying for, " or, "I wish to live nobly so that I may die nobly." If the cause is "lawful" and honorable, then the fight is justifiable, and death glorious. This realization on the part of the speaker throws into sharp relief the consequences he suffers for his involvement in an unjust or "lawless" cause, which in the blindness of passion he implicitly sanctions by resorting to "the Christless code/ That must have life for a blow" (II. 26-27), and killing Maud's brother. His descent back into the hell from which he had escaped is immediate, and the violence and morbidity again depicted in nature recalls the

speaker's bitter ravings after the death of his father:

O dawn of Eden bright over earth and sky,
 The fires of hell brake out of thy rising sun,
 The fires of hell and of hate. (II. 8-10)
 And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke
 From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood. (II. 24-25)

This last image is especially forceful, both because it underlines the parallel series of events within the speaker's history by dramatically recalling the beginning of the poem (the "blood-red heath" and "red-ribb'd ledges"), and because the "red-ribb'd hollow" is now implicitly juxtaposed and compared with the image of the rose [the last reference to the rose was simply in the word "red" (I. 923)], as the fearful consequence of allowing that image, the symbol of his increasingly violent emotions, to become dominant. In Section XXI, the rose itself had warningly foreshadowed the impending disaster of Part II, when the speaker found this flower

lost in trouble and moving around
 Here at the head of a tinkling fall,
 And trying to pass to the sea. (I. 841-43)

Anguish, guilt, and shame, driving him to madness,
 color his perceptions no less vividly than the first

passion of love did. Whereas previously the world had been suffused in a warm, glowing light--"Rosy is the West,/ Rosy is the south" (I. 575-76)--the day now rises "a dull red ball/ Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke" (II. 205-206).

The imagery of the fearful and violent aspects of death comes to the fore with the advent of the speaker's madness, and death and madness become one when the speaker, now confined to an asylum, imagines that he is dead and has been thrown into a shallow grave. This condition has been foreshadowed by his own awareness of his approaching madness, "the time is at hand/ When thou shalt more than die" (II. 139-40), and by his address to the spirit which is haunting him, "thou deathlike type of pain" (II. 198). It is partly the spectre of Maud--a constant vision of his guilt and of reproach--which is driving him mad, and this ironically recalls his initial fears about becoming involved with her: "And most of all would I flee from the cruel madness of love" (I. 156). In Part II the city environment, substituted for the natural environment, similarly forms the external counterpart of the speaker's state of mind:

Then I rise, the eave-drops fall,
And the yellow vapors choke
The great city sounding wide;
The day comes, a dull red ball
Wrapt in drifts of lurid smoke
On the misty river-tide. (II. 202-207)

"The shouts, the league of lights,/ And the roaring
of the wheels" (II. 161-62), and "that crowd confused
and loud" (II. 211), reflect his own confusion, turmoil,
and insanity.

Section V, which illustrates the speaker's madness
in its extreme degree, directly corresponds to I. XXII,
the most exuberant expression of his love, each section
representing a culmination which is immediately followed
by a reversal of situation and emotion. The speaker's
avowal that "my dust would hear her and beat" (I. 920)
now, however, appears to ironically foreshadow his
perception of his present state: his "heart is a
handful of dust" (II. 241), which does not beat with
new life, but is shaken and disturbed as "the hoofs of
the horses beat, beat" (II. 246). This irony is
reinforced several lines later by the juxtaposition of
"driving, hurrying, marrying, burying" (II. 250).
When in stanza VIII the garden is recalled, the speaker

now, even in his ravings, begins to perceive the true cause and implications of the disaster which has occurred:

But I know where a garden grows,
 Fairer than aught in the world beside,
 All made up of the lily and rose
 That blow by night, when the season is good,
 To the sound of dancing music and flutes:
 It is only flowers, they had no fruits,
 And I almost fear they are not roses, but blood.
 (II. 310-16)

His garden of love was indeed fairest when it contained both the lily and rose, but the passion which he allowed to dominate has led not to life and happiness, which seemed apparent in the image of his dust beating and blossoming, but to the violence and death which the image foreshadows. "Not roses, but blood" explicitly recalls and reinforces what was previously only implied by the proximity of the images of the rose and the "red-ribb'd hollow." The moral accompanying Tennyson's central idea of the holy power of love is graphically illustrated by the violent consequences of the perversion of that love. Sexual passion has caused him to lose sight of his selfless resolutions, and thus he is as much to blame as Maud's brother. The "death" he is

now experiencing is, accordingly, not glorious, but pathetic, empty, and insignificant.

Friend, to be struck by the public foe,
Then to strike him and lay him low,
That were a public merit, far,
Whatever the Quaker holds, from sin;
But the redlife spilt for a private blow--
I swear to you, lawful and lawless war
Are scarcely ever akin. (II. 327-33)

The speaker's ultimate realization of the difference between "lawful and lawless" war foreshadows the working out, or manifestation, of his moral regeneration, as it prepares the way for an imagistic rebuttal to the many sordid descriptions of what he has termed the "civil war" within society. Once again leading him out of madness, Maud descends from a band of angels to sanction the war that would be a "hope for the world" (III. 11), and thus to induce the speaker to action by guiding him to a moral cause. Now "the heart of a people beat with one desire" (III. 44), instead of "each hand lusting for all that is not its own" (I. 22). Men are no longer "a little breed" (I. 131), for now does "the glory of manhood stand on his ancient height" (III. 21). "no more shall Peace/ Pipe on her pastoral

hillock a languid note" (III. 24), complacent and hypocritical. "The blood-red blossom war" (III. 53) thus refutes the implications in "not roses, but blood," and symbolizes the redirection of his passion to an honorable, lawful cause. By juxtaposing these two phrases, which share the same image but with opposite intimations, one can see clearly "the fiery furnace,"³⁰ as Tennyson called it, through which the speaker passed before he "awaked, as it seems, to the better mind" (III. 56). His inner violence and hate, revealed at the outset in his perception of the "blood-red heath" and "red-ribb'd hedges," gradually yielded to a love (symbolized by the rose) which in time became no less violent and obsessive, but which he mistakenly perceived as the instrument and manifestation of his rebirth. True regeneration is achieved only when he comprehends the misguided nature of his passion (in "not roses, but blood" and "lawful and lawless war/ Are scarcely akin"), and recalls his previous noble resolution to "teach true life to fight with mortal wrongs," to which he was inspired by the power of his early pure love. The "drama" of his soul is thus illustrated in the struggle of his passage between the two points of the "blood-red heath" and the "blood-red blossom war," symbolic of two antithetical moral

states. By underlining this struggle, Maud's imagistic structure--the alternation of the images of life and death, and the levels of meaning and allusion within them--reinforces through symbol the poem's movement and theme.

III. Versification

"Nothing perhaps more justified what has been said of my father, that had he not been a poet, he might have been remarkable as an actor, than his reading of Maud, with all its complex contrasts of motive and action...His voice, low and calm in everyday life, capable of delicate and manifold inflection, but with 'organ-tones' of great power and range, thoroughly brought out the drama of the poem...It is notable that two such appreciative critics as Mr. Gladstone and Dr. Van Dyke wholly misapprehended the meaning of Maud until they heard my father read it, and that they both then publicly recanted their first criticisms."³¹

That the verses of Maud can benefit so greatly from the human speaking voice warrants a study of their technique and composition, for it is evident from Hallam Tennyson's remark, that the poem's audial effects, just as its imagery, bring to bear on Tennyson's message and theme.

Although on the printed page the poem's physical structure or form appears to be irregular and haphazard, with little stanzaic conformity between sections and occasionally not even within sections, an oral rendering would reveal patterns and consistencies which work as logically as its double, entwined parallelisms.

Maud derives much of its structural, narrative, and thematic coherence from the variety and repetition of certain meters and the repetition of phrases. This was a natural and suiting device for Tennyson to use, for his focus is on the speaker's thoughts rather than his actions, and the mind is constantly recalling words, moods, and situations of the past. "Different phases of passion in one person take the place of different characters,"³² and different meters, in turn, indicate different passions and characters, while repeated phrases serve to intensify or foreshadow these passions. George Eliot, it will be recalled, perceived and rather grudgingly granted Tennyson this method to his madness: "It is impossible to suppose that, with so great a master as Tennyson, this harshness and ruggedness are otherwise than intentional; so we must conclude that it is a device of his art thus to set our teeth on edge with his verses when he means to rouse our disgust by his descriptions; and that, writing of disagreeable

things, he has made it a rule to write disagreeably. These hexameters, weak in logic and grating in sound, are undeniably strong in expression, and eat themselves with phosphoric eagerness into our memory, in spite of our will."³³

The hexameters to which she is referring comprise the first four sections of Part I, with sections I and IV written in four- and six-line stanzas, and II and III as longer units without breaks. A combination primarily of iambs and anapaests make up the six feet in each line, and it is notable that, as a result of the speaker's nervous and overwrought condition, there are few lines within any one section that exactly repeat their particular combination. The hexameters thus are constructed on the principle of number of accents rather than number of syllables. Part I begins with the speaker's slow, breathless mutterings:

I hate the dreadful hollow behind the little wood;
 Its lips in the field above 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. 1-4)

The long vowel sounds, the alliterated "h" in line 1, and the many accented monosyllabic words (particularly

the ones in the first and last feet of each line) combine to draw out and weigh down this opening stanza, while a breathless, suspenseful quality--like the voicing of "silent horror"--is achieved by the shift of the caesura in the fourth line, from occurring after the third, to after the second and fourth feet. The plight of his father is recalled, in stanzas II and III, with similar audial effects: the slow, beating onomatopoeic "mangl'd, and flatten'd, and crush'd, and dinted into the ground" (I. 7), and the alliterated onomatopoeia of "out he walk'd when the wind like a broken worldling wail'd" (I. 11). Omission of the caesura in "the flying gold of the ruin'd woodlands drove thro' the air" (I. 12) (which is also in keeping with the sense of the line) causes greater emphasis and attention to be placed on the halting lines of stanza IV, which gradually build to a climax before the change in subject:

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

Again, the shift in caesura in line 14 accords an audial counterpart to the stanza's breathless suspense and terror, while through alliteration and onomatopoeia the speaker himself climactically echoes his mother's "shrill-edged shriek."

"The passion in the first Canto was given by my father in a sort of rushing recitative through the long sweeping lines of satire and invective against the greed for money, and of horror at the consequences of the war of the hearth."³⁴ As the bent of the speaker's preoccupation shifts from the personal wrongs he has suffered to general and, it appears, omnipresent social evils, his frenzied, bitter rantings are displayed metrically by an increase in anapaestic feet³⁵ which seem to drive the lines forward. Stanza XVI, for example, near the end of his tirade, is almost wholly anapaestic and dactylic. But this is also significant and revealing in view of its proximity to XVIII, the "Maud" stanza, which metrically is quite similar, for it will be noted that the presence of Maud brings forth, or is characterized by, anapaests or dactyls, as in the flowing "Maud, with her venturous climbings and tumbles and childish escapes" (I. 69). (One may construe this line either as being entirely dactylic or as containing one single heavy beat followed by anapaests.) In stanza XIX the speaker's

recoil from his memories is evident as much from the staccato, halting meter as from his words: "What is she now? My dreams are bad. She may bring me a curse" (I. 73).

The change in mood and thought in Sections II and III is accompanied by a change in stanza form to longer, single units without breaks. Though the hexameter is still preserved, it is now used to achieve several remarkably different effects. The breathless, hammering rhythm which in Part I appropriately reflected the speaker's mad rantings, is now succeeded by a more fluent line, without such heavy accents or a regular, emphatic caesura, as he reflects on his glimpse and his dream of Maud. Whereas the string of accented monosyllables gave a driving, insistent quality to "Were it not wise if I fled from the place and the pit and the fear?" (I. 69), the increased use of trisyllables in "perfectly beautiful; let it be granted her; where is the fault?" (I. 80) and more particularly in "faultily faultless, icily regular, splendidly null" (I. 82), produces somewhat of a singsong effect, which is intentionally mocking. In the following section, alliteration and long vowel sounds combine to smooth and soften the lines, so that the words are hushed, and spoken almost as in prose, with the beat unobtrusive:

"Pale with the golden beam of an eyelash dead on the
 cheek, / Passionless, pale, cold face, star-sweet on a
 gloom profound" (I. 90-91). (Likewise, this third
 reference to Maud's "cold face" is spoken in a tone
 of longing and wistfulness, rather than scorn.) The
 return in Section IV to short stanzas and a strong,
 regular caesura marks a return to the bitter ravings
 and social protest of Section I: "Your father has
 wealth well-gotten, and I am nameless and poor" (I. 119).

The freer shifting meters of Section V reveal the
 speaker's growing infatuation with Maud. Her "martial
 song like a trumpet's call" (I. 166) can be heard in
 the 4/4 tetrameter march rhythm of the first stanza,
 but in stanza II the number of beats in each line
 shifts continuously, from three to five to five to
 four to five to five and back to three, following the
 rise and fall of his rapturous outburst. "A voice,"
 to which he is first attracted, both opens and closes
 the section, and occurs twice in between, while the
 repeated phrase "morning of life" (I. 167-68) is a
 balance to the parallelism and the implicit meaning in
 "ready in heart and ready in hand" (I. 170).

In Section VI we understand from the repetition
 of "whom but Maud should I meet?" (I. 196, 200) the
 speaker's delight and wonder at their chance encounter,

just as it is later revealed metrically, with dactyls:
the "spark" of love "kept itself warm in the heart of
my dreams, / Ready to burst in a color'd flame (I. 207-208).

A series of connecting similar and repeated phrases marks the transition of his thoughts from suspicion to despair to hope, beginning with his drawing back, "what if with her sunny hair" (I. 212, my italics). The self-reproach and half-hopes in stanza V are evident from his tone of hesitancy and uncertainty in nearly every line:

Ah, what shall I be...

If I find the world so bitter...

Yet, if she were not...

If Maud were all...

And her smile were all...

Then the world were not so bitter

But a smile could make it sweet. (I. 220-28)

Recoiling again in the next stanza, he repeats, "What if, though her eye seemed full..." (I. 229). Repetition in stanza VIII builds up the morbid intensity which is later heightened by alliteration, onomatopoeia and anapaestic feet. As the speaker gradually becomes more and more wound up in himself and his fate, almost chanting "am I not, am I not, here alone...living alone..."

here half hid" (I. 254-58), the anapaests which begin most of the lines serve to drive them forward insistently, while the alliteration and onomatopoeia in "midday moan" (I. 259), "shrieking rush" (I. 260), "corners cried" (I. 261), and "heart half-turn'd" (I. 267) act as a kind of counterpoint to slow down and draw out the words. It is also interesting to note that the abba rhyme scheme of lines 264-267 sets apart and focuses attention on this last image by gripping the lines in its pattern, as the lichen is fixed on the stone. The similar movement and intensity of the following "love" stanza, with its several initial anapaests, have the power to offset his morbid fears and suspicions. "Ah, well, well, well, I may be beguiled" (I. 278), but he can hardly believe this to be the case. The lines which were previously hesitant, doubtful, and weighed--"if Maud were all that she seem'd" (I. 225)--are repeated in full with an air that is now hopeful and even expectant.

ital ✓

Following are three sections (VII, VIII, IX) which elaborate on his hopes, written almost entirely in the meter which is identified with Maud herself: dactylic or anapaestic trimeter, a characterization stemming from the hexameters, or double trimeters, of the first four sections. When, however, the speaker

lashes out in his jealousy, "Sick, am I sick of a
jealous dread?" (I. 330), the lines lengthen to tetrameters
which, appropriately, had also been used to characterize
Maud's brother in Section VI: "That jewell'd mass of
millinery, / That oil'd and curl'd Assyrian bull (I. 232-33).

The same metrical intensity and morbid detail which
vivified the descriptions of Maud's brother and the
speaker's environment again combine to illustrate his
overwrought, obsessed state of mind. Responsible in
part for the nature and effectiveness of these passages
is the nature of the tetrameter itself. Because of its
logical caesura after the second foot, and its 4/4
march-like rhythm, tetrameters which are continuously
repeated soon tend to become almost chanted, with
increasing speed, and weight on the accents. In
Section X Tennyson's use of fifty-one tetrameter lines
without a break produces this hammering effect, the
appropriate metrical counterpart to the speaker's
gnawing obsession:

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. (I. 353-55)
This broad-brimm'd hawker of holy things,
Whose ear is cramm'd with his cotton and rings
Even in dreams to the chink of his pence. (I. 370-72)

62

But when his denunciation of the war within society reminds him of the "chivalrous" war in Maud's battle-song and of his yearning for an honorable existence (X. IV-VI), the meter shifts back to the freer combination of trimeters and tetrameters which comprised much of Section V, the "voice" section, in which he had first acknowledged his adoration.

The vague uncertainty of hope which lies at the basis of the speaker's fervent desire for love in Section XI is revealed in iambic trimeter which runs on for four lines without pause. "A deep fear, a wary walking, underlies the rhythm and syntax,"³⁷ with Tennyson's choice of end-words creating "such precariousness at the line brink (as of feeling for a step in the dark)."³⁸ By Section XII, however, his assurance has grown to the extent that these iambs now become the metrical figure for himself in his role as lover:³⁹ "And I--who else?-- was with her" (I. 417), and "I kiss'd her slender hand" (I. 424).

Throughout the next several sections one can realize as much from the particular meter used as from the actual narrative that the speaker has again confronted Maud's brother and given vent to his bitter anger, but that his thoughts finally turn back to the object of his love. His injured pride festers in the repetition

of "scorn'd, to be scorn'd by one that I scorn" (I. 444),

and the long passages dealing with Maud's brother and father are, naturally, in unbroken tetrameters.

For the description of Maud's garden and, implicitly, Maud herself, the meter changes back to dactylic and anapaestic trimeter, "Maud has a garden of roses/ And lilies fair on the lawn" (I. 489-90), and later also displays the unrestrained movement of Section V, at first almost defying scansion:

and my delight

Had a sudden desire, like a glorious ghost,
to glide,

Like a beam of the seventh heaven, down to
my side,

There were but a step to be made. (I. 507-510)

"Accepted"⁴⁰ was Tennyson's single explanatory note for Section XVII, a purely sensuous flow of rapture and love, and written entirely (with the exception of line 588) in trochaic trimeter, truncated, as if the imagery and effects of repetition were rich enough without necessitating metrical ornament (or, indeed, extensive commentary):

Gó nót, háppy dáy,
 Fróm the shining fields,
 Gó nót, háppy dáy,
 Till the maiden yields. (I. 571-74)

Humbert Wolfe condemned this section as "the worst poem in Maud," because "here neither the poet nor the cadence have given themselves time to think, and scarcely time to breathe. Only long afterwards can that movement be recaptured and reduced to song. This is but the babble of a soul when it has passed beyond words, and the metrical movement is nothing but the deep-drawn breath of the swimmer slowly emerging from the deep."⁴¹ (Ironically, Tennyson himself owned that "some of the passages are hard to read because they have to be taken in one breath and require good lungs,"⁴² though to which passages he is referring is not known.) Written between the lines of Wolfe's criticism, as well as George Eliot's, who felt that the following calmer section "atones for rather a silly outburst,"⁴³ is the teaching of emotion recollected in tranquility. Yet they ignore the fact that this "silly outburst" is written in a strict and consistent, yet flowing, meter, and that the "babble of the soul" contains a unifying image and extreme simplicity and, in fact, restraint

of expression: "Roses are her cheeks/ And a rose her mouth" (I. 577-78). Indeed, by contrast, his repeated exclamation in Section XVIII, "there is none like her, none" (I. 600, 605, 611), at first may seem rather effusive at this more solemn moment, although with each successive utterance his tone changes, from a passionate exclamation, to an expectant whisper when he thinks she is returning, to a quiet, meditative yearning, "There is none like her, none,/ Nor will be when our summers have deceased" (I. 611-12), which is onomatopoetically portrayed in his address to the cedar:

O, art thou sighing for Lebanon

In the long breeze that streams to thy delicious East,

Sighing for Lebanon. (I. 613-15)

Continuous iambic feet, the motif for the speaker as lover, appropriately dominate in this section which reveals the highest power and nature of his love, with almost every line in iambic pentameter. The four swift-moving tetrameter lines (617-620), with their abab rhyme scheme, serve to draw attention, by contrast, to the slower, regular rhythm of the blank verse, which gradually spreads over the lines like the cedar branches.

"And over whom thy darkness must have spread/ with such delight as theirs of old" (I. 623-24). Added to this rhythm in stanza VIII is a patterned rhyme scheme, abacbcabcbacacacdcadadda, which further increases the feeling of tranquility and quietness, so that the disruption of both meter and rhyme pattern (by shortening line 683 to iambic trimeter and switching from dad to dda), as well as the foreboding repetition of "be well, be well" (I. 683), mirrors the uneasiness and fearful anticipation in his mind, which is "blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe" (I. 681).

What follows as Section XIX was not part of the original poem, but was added in the 1856 edition⁴⁵ in order to make the narrative more explicit,⁴⁶ a concession to a public confused by the speaker's stream of consciousness. Unfortunately, this addition results in a hiatus between Section XVIII and XXII (previously separated only by several very short stanzas) which tends to obscure the interesting and significant contrasts between these two: the former, a declaration of his chaste and pure love, with the realization of the moral rebirth which that love entails, and the latter, a celebration of his passion for Maud, and vision of a physical rebirth brought about by that passion.

- Just as the formal cadences of blank verse were chosen

for their appropriateness to the central idea of XVIII--
 "not die, but live a life of truest breath"--so the
 rhythm of "Come into the garden, Maud" (I. 850) is
 exactly suited to the speaker's subject and situation.
 He is waiting in the garden for Maud, who is inside
 the Hall at a dance given by her brother, and the
 verses he recites are actually written in a 3/4 waltz
 rhythm:

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. 850-55)

The first word, "come," is the upbeat on which the
 waltz commences, and many of the lines begin similarly,
 with one or two short beats as pick-ups to the first
 beat of the trimeter: "For the breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of love is on high" (I. 856-57). As
 if cluing us in on this metrical trick, Tennyson repeats
 the word "dance," or some variation thereof, five
 times in the course of the section, four of these
 occurring in two consecutive stanzas: "All night has the
 casement jessamine stirr'd/ To the dancers dancing in

tune" (I. 864-65), and "When will the dancers leave her alone?/ She is weary of dance and play?" (I. 870-81); addressing Maud in stanza IX, he says, "Come hither, the dances are done" (I. 903). There are, too, several references to the music being played in the Hall. But repetition within these stanzas is employed to a far more ingenious end, for the combination of reiterated phrases and abab rhyme scheme seems to imitate the natural repetitions of a musical phrase or a dance step:

For the breeze of morning moves,
 And the planet of Love is on high,
 Beginning to faint in the light that she loves
 On a bed of daffodil sky,
 To faint in the light of the sun she loves,
 To faint in his light and to die. (I. 856-61)

"The movement circles and returns upon itself with the joyous intricacy and command of a dance."⁴⁷ Similarly, "come into the garden, Maud" (I. 850, 852) is twice spoken, as is the opening phrase "all night" (I. 862, 864) in stanza III, "she is coming" (I. 910, 916) in stanzas X and XI, and "would hear her and beat" (I. 918, 920) in stanza XI. Hallam Tennyson wrote about this final verse that "My father's eyes, which were through the other love-passages veiled by his drooping lids,

would suddenly flash as he looked up and spoke these words, the passion in his voice deepening in the last words of the stanza."⁴⁸ It is marked by an increase of the dactylic waltz figure, commensurate with the increase in his passion and appropriate to the grand finale of a festive ball. One is hard-put to comprehend Sir Harold Nicholson's reaction of real dismay and distaste on discovery that "the haunting music of 'Come into the garden, Maud,' is based on the rhythm of a mid-Victorian polka"⁴⁹ (and especially in view of the fact that the otherwise critical Blackwood's Magazine felt this passage to be one of "extraordinary rhythmical music"⁵⁰). Nicholson discarded it as one of Tennyson's "sudden relapses into the conventional,"⁵¹ but such rhythmic mastery and originality can hardly be brushed aside as conventional.

The halting, irregular meters which begin Part II grate (intentionally) on the ear after Section XXII's even, graceful, flowing rhythm. Here, too, meter helps to describe situation, and at this point both are forceful and chaotic:

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

The onomatopoetic effects of Part I.I now recur in the situation parallel to it--the violent death of Maud's brother: "And a million horrible bellowing echoes broke/ From the red-ribb'd hollow behind the wood" (II. 24-25), in which the slow, dragged-out lines emit a bellowing of their own. Intensity and suspense build with each repetition of "struck," which is also onomatopoetic:

And he struck me, madman, over the face,
Struck me before the languid fool,
Who was gaping and grinning by;
Struck for himself an evil stroke. (II. 18-21)

In both meter and subject, Section II forms the very antithesis to this violence and confusion, as the speaker contemplates the seashell which "perhaps symbolizes to him his own just and highest nature preserved amid the stores of passion."⁵² Edward Stokes observes that "the first stanza is as intricate and delicately made, metrically, as its subject. Each of the first five lines consists of one monosyllable, one disyllable, and one trisyllable, but no two successive lines are identical;"⁵³

/ / / / /
 See what a lovely shell,
 / / / / /
 Small and pure as a pearl,
 / / / / /
 Lying close to my foot,
 / / / / /
 Frail, but a work divine,
 / / / / /
 Made so fairily well... (II. 49-53)

Its rhyme scheme evinces similar care and control:
 abcdabcd.

This trimeter line persists through most of Section II, as if the speaker is struggling both mentally and metrically to maintain his hold, as frail and delicate as the shell itself, on sanity.⁵⁴ The drawn out, repeated "Back from the Breton Coast/ ...Back to the dark sea-line" (II. 90-92) is foreboding, however. In Sections III and IV trimeters and tetrameters are irregularly combined, before the meter dissolves into complete chaos in Section V, when he speaks from an asylum, the emotional and, accordingly, metrical antithesis to I.XXII. His descent into madness is marked partly by the degree of repetition in these sections, as his mind dwells on the past and confuses it with the present.⁵⁵ "Courage, poor heart of stone!" (II. 132, 136) recalls the morbid image in I.VI, and he is presently in a similar situation, for whereas he was alone then before winning Maud's love, he is now again alone after losing it. His yearning for her is

voiced in the exclamation "O that 'twere possible" (II. 141, 153), and in the repetition of "sorrow... delight...sorrow...delight...delight" (II. 164-76). The "passionate cry" (II. 187) which haunts him hearkens back to Maud's "passionate cry" (II. 33) for her dead brother, and also to his mother's "passionate shriek" (I. 57) at the death of his father. Perhaps the most striking and effective use of repetition, however, occurs in Section V, when the speaker, imagining himself to be dead and thrown into a shallow grave, complains that "the hoofs of the horses beat, beat" (II. 246). This passage recalls with extreme irony two previous passages in which his mood and fortune were reversed, but which at the same time preshadowed his present state. In I.XVIII he had addressed the stars: "Beat, happy stars, timing with things below,/ Beat with my heart more blest than heart can tell" (I. 679-80), but his uneasiness had caused him to add, "Blest, but for some dark undercurrent woe/ That seems to draw--" (I. 681), and which does eventually come to pass, through the beating of the stars. Similarly, and more ironically, he imagines in XXII that were he dead, his heart and dust "would hear her and beat" (I. 918, 920). Now, however, his heart does not "blossom in purple and red" (I. 923), but is only "a handful of dust"

(II. 241), and the only beat signifying life comes from the tread of the horses on his grave. His plea to "bury me, bury me/ Deeper, ever so little deeper" (II. 341-42), is spoken in muffled tones, "reproducing the sound of falling clods of earth."⁵⁶

The return of the speaker's sanity and his recall to a noble purpose are indicated in pentameter lines, which marked his first recognition of moral regeneration. These, however, are not iambic pentameter, but primarily anapaestic (with occasional iambic feet), appropriate, since it is the spirit of Maud who has inspired or reawakened his moral sensibilities and induced him to action in a noble cause:

We have proved we have hearts in a cause, we
are noble still,

And myself have awaked, as it seems, to the
better mind.

It is better to fight for the good than to rail
at the ill. (III. 55-57)

John Ruskin wrote to Tennyson in 1855: "I do not like its versification so well as much of your other work, not because I do not think it good of its kind, but because I do not think that wild kind quite so good,"⁵⁸ rather a vague, guarded statement, but

certainly gentler than the popular opinion expressed by reviewers for many of the leading periodicals. The critic who write "less of finish is observable in the structure and emendation of the verse"⁵⁹ clearly failed to perceive one of the most striking and successful aspects of the poem--that its verse actually does have a structure which is no less discernable or coherent than that of the narrative and the imagery, and that, in conjunction with these two, it works toward and culminates in Tennyson's theme of the enobling power of love, as it underscores the poem's basic movement from death to regeneration.

"It is possible, no doubt, to allegorize all this into a variety of edifying meanings; but it remains true, that the ground-notes of the poem are nothing more than hatred of peace and the Peace Society, hatred of commerce and coal-mines, hatred of young gentlemen with flourishing whiskers and padded coats, adoration of a clear-cut face, and faith in War as the unique social regenerator."⁶⁰ George Eliot's succinct explication of Maud, though hardly shedding light (or intending to) on the "ground-notes" of the poem, nevertheless is a valuable and significant commentary from the standpoint of what it criticizes, for she touches on the particular aspect of the war passages

which evoked the loudest protestations of bewilderment and outrage. In general, it was less Tennyson's support and defense of the Crimean War which was objectionable, than the apparent false logic in his case for war.⁶¹ Indeed, one reviewer felt that as regards "the fact that the poem indicates the Laureate's full adhesion to the war policy of Britain--what can be said but that, at a time when our Gladstones and Lord John Russels and Sir James Grahams are shilly-shallying and sheering off, this hearty adhesion of a man as massive intellectually as any of them, and altogether of a higher order of spirit than that to which they belong, must be most effective and welcome?"⁶² But that war itself could be an effective means of curing the social evils decried in Part I seemed to the critics an outrageous non sequitur: "We say...if any man comes forward to say or sing that the slaughter of 30,000 Englishmen in the Crimea tends to prevent women poisoning their babies, for the sake of the burial fees, in Birmingham, he is bound to show cause, and not bewilder our nations of morals."⁶³

Despite the parallels which he drew between the moral death and regeneration of speaker and country, Tennyson could hardly have expected or wished to be taken so literally on this point. Rather, he is voicing his

belief in patriotism as a unifying and morally uplifting force in society, of which the speaker is a representative:

And I stood on a giant deck and mixt my breath
With a loyal people shouting a battle-cry,
Till I saw the dreary phantom rise and fly
Far into the North, and battle, and seas of death, (III. 34-37)

the "dreary phantom" being his "old hysterical mock-disease," from which his new high moral purpose and sensibilities have at last freed him. The freedom, unity, and heroism which will, Tennyson believes, be born from this war--and which never existed during the "peace that was full of wrongs and shames" (III. 40)--are the very means by which to justify fighting, and this is the cause which the speaker feels to be "pure and true" (III. 31). As these war passages relate to the theme, within the speaker's history, of the enobling power of (Maud's) love, they are logical and even necessary statements, for the speaker must give proof of his moral regeneration, and his participation in a lawful war is the most direct and effective negation of his share in a lawless one. Just as clear and realistic a relationship between theme and conclusion exists within the social aspects of the poem, for love again--patriotism, or love of one's country--was no

less an inspiration to nobility. These conceptions of love and duty, uniting and culminating in the image of the "blood-red blossom," are the impetus and guide for the progression in the poem from death to regeneration on both the personal and social levels. The fact that they were also popular and cherished Victorian ideals remains the paradox of Maud's critical reception.

Footnotes

1. Review of Maud by Tennyson, Edinburgh Review, 162 (October 1955), p. 506.
2. George Eliot, rev. of Maud by Tennyson, Westminster Review, 64 (October 1855), p. 597.
3. Edinburgh Review, p. 505.
4. Walter E. Houghton and G. Robert Stange, ed., Victorian Poetry and Poetics, 2nd ed. (Boston: Houghton Mifflin Company, 1968), p. 88. All citations in my text from Maud and In Memoriam are to this edition, with corrections made from The Poems of Tennyson, Christopher Ricks, ed., London and Harlow: Longmans, Green and Company, 1969.
5. Edinburgh Review, p. 507.
6. Review of Maud by Tennyson, Athenaeum, 2 (4 August 1855), p. 893.
7. Eliot, p. 598.
8. Edinburgh Review, pp. 509-10.
9. Review of Maud by Tennyson, Blackwood's Magazine, 78 (September 1855), p. 314.
10. Athenaeum, p. 895.

11. Eliot, p. 598.

12. Hallam Tennyson, ed., The Works of Tennyson
(London: Macmillan and Company, 1908), IV, p. 277.

13. Tennyson, IV, p. 270.

14. Tennyson, IV, p. 270.

15. Tennyson, III, p. 204.

16. Tennyson, IV, p. 271.

17. Tennyson, IV, p. 275.

18. Tennyson, IV, p. 277.

19. Walter E. Houghton, The Victorian Frame of Mind
(New Haven: Yale University Press, 1952), p. 375.

20. Houghton, p. 282.

21. Tennyson, p. 277.

22. Hallam Tennyson, Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir,
2nd ed., (London: Macmillan Company, 1905), I, pp. 316-17.

23. Tennyson, Memoir, I, p. 319.

24. Tennyson, Memoir, I, p. 317.

25. Blackwood's, p. 315.
26. E.D.H. Johnson, "The Lily and the Rose," PMLA, 64 (1949), p. 1223.
27. Johnson, p. 1224.
28. Johnson, p. 1225.
29. This applies equally to the other parts of nature mentioned in Maud, e.g., birds and flowers. Compare "the Mayfly is torn by the swallow, the sparrow spear'd by the shrike" (I. 124) and "a raven ever croaks, at my side" (I. 246), with "birds in our wood sang" (I. 420) and "my bird with the shining head,/ My own dove with the tender eye" (II. 185-86). Similarly, compare "an hour's defect of the rose" (I. 84) and "the honey of poison-flowers" (I. 157), with the sympathy of all nature, and particularly the rose and the lily, in Section XXII.
30. Tennyson, Works, IV, p. 271.
31. Tennyson, Memoir, I, pp. 296-98.
32. Tennyson, Works, III, p. 271.
33. Eliot, p. 598.

34. Tennyson, Memoir, I, p. 396.

35. Edward Stokes, "The Metrics of Maud," Victorian Poetry, 2, No. 2 (Spring 1964), p. 99.

36. It is interesting to note that there is also a kind of caesura within many of the sestets, breaking the stanza after the third line (just as the hexameter is broken after the third beat) for the purpose of contrast or comparison. In stanza II, for example, the first three lines comment on the state of society, the last three on the speaker's personal condition. In stanza IV this order is reversed--first a personal and then a social description. His wish to remain emotionally and socially uninvolved is compared in stanza VIII with the mystery and enormity of the universe, and in stanza VII with the scientific and poetic extremes of emotion.

37. Christopher Ricks, Tennyson (New York: Collier Books, 1972), p. 256.

38. Ricks, p. 256.

39. Stokes, p. 103.

40. Tennyson, Memoir, I, p. 404.

41. Humbert Wolfe, Tennyson (London: Faber and Faber, 1930), p. 39.

42. Tennyson, Memoir, I, p. 395.

43. Eliot, p. 600.

44. Wolfe, p. 41.

45. Christopher Ricks, ed., The Poems of Tennyson
(London and Harlow: Longmans, Green and Company, 1969),
p. 1070.

46. Houghton and Stange, p. 98, no. 8.

47. Ricks, Tennyson, p. 258.

48. Tennyson, Memoir, I, p. 397.

49. Harold Nicolson, Tennyson (Boston and New York:
Houghton Mifflin Company, 1923), pp. 232-233.

50. Blackwood's, p. 314.

51. Nicolson, p. 232.

52. Tennyson, Works, IV, p. 277.

53. Stokes, p. 108.

54. Stokes, p. 108.

55. At this point should be noted the most obvious and significant example of repetition in the poem: Maud's name itself occurs no less than 54 times in the course of 1324 lines, indicating the speaker's adoration to the point of obsession.

56. Wolfe, p. 47.

57. Stokes, p. 110.

58. Tennyson, Memoir, I, p. 411.

59. Athenaeum, p. 895.

60. Eliot, p. 607.

61. Edgar Shannon, "The Critical Reception of Tennyson's Maud," PMLA, 68 (1953), p. 403.

62. Review of Maud by Tennyson, British Quarterly, 22 (October 1955), pp. 497-98.

63. Quoted by Shannon, p. 403, from Tait's Edinburgh Magazine, 22 (september 1955).

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