

## **Tennyson and the English Romantics**

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### **Abstract**

The research aims at examining how the English poet Alfred Tennyson was influenced by the English Romantics in his early poetic career through a comprehensive reading of both the poetical works of the English Romantics and Tennyson. Tennyson had his beginning in Romanticism; his poetry was replete with the Romantic norms: melancholy, nature, and dreams. It is clear that Byron and Coleridge and Keats suggested heavily in Tennyson's early volumes, Shelley and Wordsworth also contributed to Tennyson's formation of style. In the 1833 volume, they are rarer than in the earlier one, and after this, the reminiscences of all English Romantic poetry become far more remote and infrequent. But Tennyson possessed himself of his own style, and as he began to feel some fair assurance of a position among the masters of his own speech, he became correspondingly sensitive to debt and rigidly excluded anything which might be imputed as an obligation to his peers. Tennyson's flight from the realm of Romanticism to the realm of Victorianism is a fantastic, safe and decisive one; for he had reached a significant and characterized rank among the Victorians. From his imitation and admiration of the Romantics we can say that Tennyson learned and experienced a good deal from the Romantics and, later, created his own position. Indeed he was the most Victorian poet who typed all mankind, the poet who deserved to be admired and loved for his originality, creativity and his Victorianism.

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## SOMETHING OF THE ROMANTICS

Tennyson's Victorianism was questioned among critics; some of them believed him to be an imitator of the Romantics; others believed that he is a Victorian by heart. Indeed, we cannot question his Victorianism for several reasons that are perfectly clear: his Victorian rank is derived from his position as the most public and nationalist figure, from his being the prophetic interpreter of the ideals, the fears, the tastes and prejudices of his age. It is known that Tennyson's beginning was in Romanticism; his early poetry was derived from the emotional norms evolved by the Romantics, particularly the second wave of them. The romantic characteristics can be found in Tennyson's poetry which was written in the 1930s; the melancholy, the nostalgic for the past, the subjectivity, the dreams and the imagery of the Romantics. All these characteristics were evident in every single line of his verse.

In Alfred Tennyson ran a vein of almost morbid hypersensitiveness and melancholy to which we may trace the rare delicacy and intensity of his sensuous and emotional renderings of nature and mood and dream, as well as the hysterical extravagances of some of the poems in which he touched on subjects, political and religious, that moved him deeply. Tennyson's genius struck its roots deep into that soil of family affection and love of country the alienation from which, in varying degree, of most of the earlier romantic poets-Wordsworth, Coleridge, Byron, Shelley-contributed to the independent, revolutionary tone of their poetry, and the slowness with which some of them gained the ear of English readers.

Tennyson was always to be-not entirely for the benefit of his poetry-in closer sympathy with the sentiments of the English middle-classes, domestic, distrustful of passion or, at least, of the frank expression and portrayal of passion, patriotic, and utilitarian. And the influence of these classes, politically and morally, was becoming dominant. Tennyson is one of the Victorians who were torn by doubt, spiritually bewildered, lost in a troubled universe. They, we are told, were crass materialists, wholly absorbed in the present, quite unconcerned with abstract verities and eternal values; but they were also excessively religious, lamentably idealistic, nostalgic for the past (Routh 1937,45). The Victorians believed in progress, denied original sin, and affirmed the death of the Devil, they also yielded to feminine standards. Indeed the Victorian literature remains too purposeful, propagandistic, didactic, with too palpable a design upon the reader; yet it is clearly so romantic, aesthetic, "escapist", that it carries to posterity but a tale of little meaning (Buckley 1981,3). The Victorians, I think, did not achieve their mastery directly as Victorians for the reason that most of them had

their beginnings in Romanticism. For example, Tennyson had his beginning in Romanticism and then became the most important poet of the Victorian Age.

Tennyson did not achieve his position as the most eminent Victorian poet easily; during his literary career there were many critics who questioned his Victorianism in his early works. Their criticism against Tennyson depended most acutely on his abandonment of an art keyed to the interests of nineteenth-century society on behalf of a personal art for art's sake. Tennyson's gifts, in his early work, were primarily emotional, elegiac, the source of his melancholic meditation occasionally exquisite in its sensibility, but seldom conducive to a meaningful grasp of broader social problems. The major incentive factor behind this tendency in Tennyson's early poems was his extensive reading in the classics. Tennyson published his first volume in 1827, so it is obvious that his beginning was in Romanticism. Arthur Hallam, the poet's intimate friend and his most immediate early critic, had recognized the extent to which Tennyson's early work was derived from the emotional norms evolved by the Romantics, particularly the second wave of them. The Romantic characteristics can be found in Tennyson's poetry which was written in the 1830s; the melancholy, the nostalgia for the past, the subjectivity, the dreams and the imagery of the Romantics. All these characteristics were evident in every single line of verse. Indeed, Tennyson was influenced by the Romantic melancholy; he, as we know, had his early education in the classics under the fierce supervision of his father. This education brought him concepts concerning a primordial happiness which confirmed and gave literary authority to his childhood experience of happiness lost or never consciously possessed. "We live in the world's ninth age", wrote Juvenal, lamenting a lost Golden Age "When the world was young, and the sky bright-new still [and] men lived differently". Through his reading of the English Romantic Poets, Tennyson saw this blessed "ancient state" recovered from the legendary and mythical to become a stage in human life, childhood: "Heaven lies about us in our infancy" (Shaw 1988, 17). But, through a critical study in the realm of the Romantics, we find that the first generation of the Romantic poets presented the child as solitary. Wordsworth's boy who was listening to the owls or rowing across the lake, or Blake's laughing child on a cloud, are alone. Indeed their unstained receptivity to nature's teaching is the sole thing that constitutes their blessedness:

When couched in boyhood's passionless tranquility,  
The natural mind of man is warm and yielding,

Fit to receive the best impressions...  
( The Devil and the Lady, III.II.176-8 )

In "The Devil and the Lady" Tennyson, prudigiously and half-jokingly echoed the Romantic sentiments. For Tennyson, as for the later Romantic poets, happiness is not merely innocence, it is also love, and love of a particular Kind.

The devotion to Romantic verse that prompted the youth of fourteen to carve on the sandstone "Byron is dead", has a significant role in mapping Tennyson's poetical career. Tennyson's relation to the Romantics can be considered as beneficial one. He explored the Romantic musing on death and the passing of joy as it is evident in his unpublished poem "In Deep and Solemn Dreams". He responded to the temptations of the Romantic nature where he used images from nature to evoke a generalized mood of loss and regret, and he echoed the Romantics when he used details of natural observation employed to suggest sad emotion as in "Claribel" and "Mariana":

About a stone-cast from the wall  
A sluice with blacken'd waters slept,  
And o'er it many, round and small,  
The cluster'd marish-mosses crept.  
Hard by a poplar shook alway,  
All silver-green with gnarled bark:  
For leagues no other tree did mark  
The level waste, the rounding gray. ( Mariana 37-44)

Tennyson imitated the Romantic subjectivity in his "*Supposed Confessions of a Second-Rate Sensitive Mind*". In this poem Tennyson tried to echo Byron's confessionalism . In general, we find that Tennyson reworked the problems posed by the Romantic idealism: desire for unity with the world imaged in nature or in a woman, focused on a speaking self which was no sooner represented than betrayed as divided. William Wordsworth wrote of past days:

Which yet have such self-presence in my mind  
That sometimes, when I think of them, I seem  
Two consciousness, conscious of myself  
And conscious of some other Being. (The Prelude II.30-3 )

Tennyson's poetry, like that of the Romantics, is dominated by reverie, nostalgia, longing, and melancholy. He used to talk about the past days; he "was always discontented with the present till it has become the

past, and then yearns toward it, and worships it, and not only worships it, but is discontented because it is past" (Martin 1983, 203).

Tennyson pursued the Romantics in their questioning the Real and the Ideal. He showed an interest in the isolated or imprisoned life; he wrote some poems that stress this interest and exhibit the Romantic influence in them. "The Lady of Shalott" is a good example with its dense, eloquently organized and highly coloured imagery, its Shelleyan enchantress, Coleridgean curse, and enigmatically Keatsian conclusion. This poem is indeed in the dreamy, escapist tradition of Keats's "La Belle Dame Sans Merci". "Oenone" is a work of a self-admonishment, the nymph suggests the banished world of Romantic contemplation. Also "Ulysses" and "Tithonus" share the same 'deep-chested music', a Wordsworthian orotundity that is used by Tennyson to present unresolved situations rather than absolute conclusions pondered over many years (Stonyk 1983,82). Tennyson was influenced by the Romantic domestic poetry, especially that of Wordsworth and Coleridge. He was also attracted to the Romantic nature; when in "Maud" he speaks of the 'million emeralds' which 'break from the ruby-budded lime' (I. iv. 102) he is giving an entirely accurate account of the red flecks on the buds of lime trees. We feel he has looked at the tree with the kind of care the temporarily lame Coleridge of necessity devoted to his lime-tree bower when he watched 'Some broad and sunny leaf, and loved to see/ The shadow of the leaf and stem above/ Dappling its sunshine' ('Lime-Tree Bower', II.49-51).

Tennyson was inspired by the Apostles whose ideas and concerns affected his way of thinking at Cambridge. Indeed, there was much in the concerns of the Apostles which harked back to Romanticism, a movement in which the problematic question of the relation of consciousness to nature is fundamental. Among the characteristics of this movement were Wordsworth's account of the organic links of sympathy between nature and mind, Coleridge's insistence upon the seminal role of the imagination, and Keats's sense of intensity and negativity of poetic identity. The young band of "Apostles" who debated

On mind and art,  
And labour, and the changing mart,  
And all the framework of the land

were imbued with the serious, practical temper of the great merchant class which was to reshape England during the next fifty years. They were strangers alike to the revolutionary hopes that intoxicated the youthful

Wordsworth, and the reactionary spirit of “blood and iron” against which Byron fought and over which Shelley lamented in strains of ineffable music:

Oh, cease! Must hate and death return?  
Cease! Must men kill and die?

The era of conservative reform, of Canning and Peel, of attachment to English institutions combined with a philanthropic ardour for social betterment, had begun. The repeal of the Test act, Catholic emancipation, the first great Reform bill were all carried between the date at which Gladstone and Tennyson went up to college and a year after they had gone down. Of this movement, Tennyson was to make conscientious efforts to approve himself the poet; but, as experience was to show, the conservative instincts of the would-be liberal poet were deeper and more indestructible than those of the young statesman who, in these years, was still “the rising hope of stern and unbending Tories.

Tennyson followed the Romantics in their emphasis on self-realization, but there is a greater feeling of passivity in his poems, in which states of feeling are luxuriantly indulged for their own sake. Through Tennyson's early work, there is a tendency towards morbidity of feeling, that sense of the mind's alientation from the outer world which had already marked Coleridge's "Dejection Ode".The loss of personality which coloured Tennyson's early poems harked back to some of the central visionary moments of Romantic poetry in Wordsworth's *The Prelude* or *Tintern Abbey*. In *Poems, by Two Brothers* (1827), he threw off, as in a kind of mental measles, the infection of the more popular poets of the day—Byron, Moore and Scott. At Cambridge, Wordsworth and Coleridge and Shelley and Keats displaced their more popular rivals, and Tennyson's genius entered upon a period of experiment, of growing clearness and sureness of judgment, of increasing richness and felicity of diction and rhythm; the record of which has been preserved with unusual fulness in the successive years. Arthur Hallam also has played a major role in driving Tennyson to the use of the Romantic norms. Hallam expressed his ideas and concerns in his critical essays; he thought that the chief end of poetry is aesthetic. Hallam argued that ideas have a place in poetry only as sensations, and it is the priority given to image and sensation which leads him to value the second wave of the Romantics. According to Hallam's opinion, this poet of sensation is moving towards a kind of synaesthesia which was in many of Tennyson's early work. Indeed, Tennyson adopted Hallam's ideas in composing his poetry up to the middle of his career, when overt philosophical questions began to be more fully convassed. We notice that

Tennyson's early subjects were the common topics of his romantic predecessors, nature, English pastorals, ballad themes, medieval romance, classical legend, love and death. But Tennyson was burdened with no message, no new interpretation of nature or the peasant, no fresh insight into the significance of things medieval or things Hellenic. Each and all were subjects that quickened his poetic imagination, and his concern was to attain to the perfect rendering in melody and picturesque suggestion of the mood which each begot in his brooding temperament. Much has been said of Tennyson's relation to Keats and Wordsworth; but a closer tie unites him more to Coleridge, the poet. Like Coleridge, Tennyson is a poet not so much of passion and passionate thinking as of moods—moods subtle and luxurious and sombre, moods in which it is not always easy to discern the line that separates waking from dreaming. And, like Coleridge, Tennyson, from the outset, was a metrist, bold in experiment and felicitous in achievement. Almost every poem in the early volumes was a distinct, conscious experiment in the metrical expression of a single, definite mood. There were some failures, not from inadequate control of the poet's medium of verse (as Coleridge was inclined to think), but because Tennyson occasionally mistook for a poetic mood what was merely a fleeting fancy and recorded it in lines that were, at times, even silly. Of the poems which survived the purgation to which Tennyson subjected his work, some are less happy than others, again not because the poet has failed to make the verse the echo of the mood, but because the mood itself was not one that was altogether congenial to his mind.

Indeed, Tennyson is never quite spontaneous. But, when the mood was one of the poet's very soul, luxurious or somber or a complex blend of both, the metrical expression was, from the first, a triumphant success. Claribel, Mariana, "A spirit haunts the year's last hours," Recollections of the Arabian Nights, The Dying Swan, The Lady of Shalott, the blank verse of Ònone, A Dream of Fair Women, The Palace of Art, The Vision of Sin, The Lotos Eaters—all reveal a poet with a command of new and surprising and delightful metrical effects as unmistakably as did the early poems of Milton, the masterpieces of Coleridge, Shelley's songs or Swinburne's *Poems and Ballads*. The true character of the English verse foot which the romantic poets had rediscovered without all of them quite knowing what they had done, the possibilities of what Saintsbury calls "substitution," the fact that, in verse whose indicator is a recurring stress, the foot may be iambic, trochaic, spondaic or monosyllabic without altering the time-lengths of the rhythmical interval, Tennyson understood perfectly and he experimented on it with a conscious and felicitous art, combining with this subtle

management of the foot a careful attention to the musical value of vowel and consonant combinations in which his precursors are Gray and Pope and Milton. And, for Tennyson, the guiding principle in every experiment, from *Claribel* to *The Vision of Sin*, is the dramatic appropriateness of verse to mood.

Tennyson's use of the Romantic norms appeared in his early work till 1842, then Tennyson seemed as being disinterested in the Romantics, but he returned to them in the middle of his career. We find that "The Princess" is a Romantic valuing of instinct over theory, of simple, shared human experience over the refining of the intellect and imagination. "In Memoriam" combined the emotional truth of Romanticism with the egalitarian intellectual spirit of the time. So, the fact that Tennyson was influenced by the Romantics does not need an evidence for the reason that Tennyson sometimes admitted his indebtedness to his predecessors; particularly the Romantics. The following pages examine the influence of each Romantic poet in Tennyson's poetry, and to what extent his poetry was influenced by the Romantics, and how Tennyson imitated the Romantics in their ideas and verses in his own poetry.

### **Tennyson and Wordsworth:**

Wordsworth's sincerity of melancholy and language had a considerable impact on Tennyson's poetry. Tennyson admired the way in which Wordsworth expressed the human condition, particularly the weepers who had lost their happiness. Through my deep reading in Gerhard Joseph's book named *Tennyson and the Text* (1992), I admired the way he examined the motivation of Tennyson's weepers. He said that if we examine the motivation of Tennyson's weepers, we are going to find that Freud's distinction between free-floating melancholy and hard-edged mourning collapses. Indeed, many poems in "In Memoriam" are replete with tears that have little to do with their initiatory local occasion, with the specific loss of his intimate friend Hallam. Joseph says that in this convergence, if Tennysonian melancholy feels intensely indeterminate, his mourning can seem overdetermined: there are long late Cantos of "In Memoriam" in which Hallam is a pretext, seems arbitrarily introduced in closing quatrain or couplet. It was argued that if melancholy constantly aspires toward the higher register of mourning, mourning seeks release from unbearable suffering in the lower key of melancholy. But the poet's dissatisfaction with language provides us with intimations of something more deeply interfused, of something prior to the linguistic moments of speech and vision. For verbal displays of either melancholy or mourning can only be called



"sincere", yet there is the ineffable quality of the doom for which Tennyson, nevertheless, seeks a "measured language":

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,  
A use in measured language lies;  
The sad mechanic exercise,  
Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.

This has been beautifully captured in Trilling's description of what happens at the end of Wordsworth's "*Michael*". Trilling said, "The poem", comes to its climax in a single line which no one who has read it ever forgets: when Michael, after having lost his son Luke to the corruptions of the city, continues to build his sheepfold which he and the boy had ceremonially begun together, his neighbors report of him that sometimes he sat the whole day "And never lifted up a single stone". It would go beyond absurdity, it would be a kind of indecency, to raise the question of sincerity of this grief even in order to affirm it. Indeed, the impossibility of our raising such a question is of the essence of our experience of the poem. Michael says nothing; he expresses nothing. It is not the case with him as it is with Hamlet that he has "that within which passeth show". There is no within and without; he and his grief are one. We may not speak here of sincerity (Joseph 1992, 20).

This crisis of sincerity is acute in Romantic expressions of loss. The poet is faced with the impossible task of giving us in words some intimations of the feelings that lie deep not merely for words but even for tears as in Wordsworth's "*Michael*". In his "*Break, break, break*" Tennyson mimics that sense of Wordsworthian sense of linguistic inadequacy, the poet would that his tongue could utter the thoughts that arise in him in response to loss:

And I would that my tongue could utter  
The thoughts that arise in me. (3-4)

Tennyson imitated the language of Wordsworth's "*Intimations*"; but the verbal reminiscences of Wordsworth are not plentiful:

Across the whirlwind's heart of peace, ( *The Voyage* 87 )  
And central peace, subsisting at the heart  
Of endless agitation. ( *The Excursion* iv 1146-7)

And here and there a foamy flake  
Upon me, as I travel  
With many a silvery waterbreak. ( *The Brook*, 59-61)  
Gurgling in foamy water-break. ( *To May*, 75)





(Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington , 202)

The paths of glory lead but to the grave. (The Elegy, 36)

Tennyson's early poetry showed his early mastery and adventurousness. Tennyson showed an early interest in metre, he supplied traditional metres with controlled subtlety of rhythm and created metres strikingly beautiful, so he deserved his position as the supreme metrist in English poetry.

Tennyson's "Maud" exhibited his inventiveness, it included a dozen distinct metrical shapes; some of them are slender, some portly, some buoyant, some explosive. Tennyson wrote "Maud" by flexibility that he sometimes changed the metre within the poem. Tennyson's flexibility in metre indebted to Gray who had invented metres in which what in other poet would be random irregularities were part of the fixed pattern. "The Daisy" is a good example to discuss, this poem contained bold metrical irregularities which recurred at the pointed intervals. The first two lines of each four-line stanza are as regular as either half of the "In Memoriam" stanza

What slender campanili grew  
By Bays, the peacock's neck in hue;  
Where, here and there, on sandy beaches  
A milky-bell'd amaryllis blew. ( The Daisy, 13-6)

In this stanza the third line does not rime with the others, there is another syllable added at the end of it, and in the fourth line, which rimes with line one and two, there is a syllable added in the third foot. Also Tennyson was affected by the way in which Gray spoke of man; he admired Gray whose 'divine truisms'- such as 'the paths of glory lead but to the grave'- he said 'make me weep' (Tillotson 1978,315). Tennyson's speech about man resembles that of Gray's; Tennyson followed Gray's thought of man as an intimate part of the earth and its seasons as in the following lines:

Old yew, which graspest at the stones  
That name the under-ling dead,  
Thy fibres net the dream head,  
Thy roots are wrapt about the bones.

The seasons bring the flowers again,  
And bring the firstling to the flock;  
And in the dusk of thee, the clock  
Beats out the little lives of men.

O not for thee the glow, the boom,  
Who changest not in any gale,  
Nor branding summer can avail  
To touch thy thousand years of gloom:

And gazing thee, sullen tree,  
sick for thy stubborn hardihood,  
I seem to afail from out my blood  
And grow incorporate into tree.

Tennyson remarked that he would rather have written Gray's "Elegy" than the whole of Wordsworth's, and he also said that he would not hear of the books unless it had Gray's elegy, and he would prefer it to all his own poetry. But Tennyson's admiration and imitation of Gray have stopped when Tennyson distinguished himself as the most Victorian poet, particularly in the second half of his career.

### **Tennyson and Coleridge:**

The influence of Coleridge on Tennyson's poetry is considered as a religious one. Coleridge was one of the most powerful religious influences in the mid-nineteenth-century. Although Tennyson is alleged not to have cared much for Coleridge's prose, his early career was passed in an environment steeped in Coleridgean influence. Coleridge was considered the great religious philosopher to whom the mind of the nineteenth-century generation owes more than other man. His Victorian admirers were interested chiefly in the Coleridge of the Highgate days- the inspired table-talker, the speculative thinker, the religious and political philosopher.

Coleridge's religious fame depended most acutely on his setting up the philosophy of religious experience against the demonstration of God from nature. Tennyson's most influenced poem by Coleridge's religious thought is "In Memoriam". But before any discussion of Coleridge's influence on Tennyson's poetry, it is necessary to know that the work in which Coleridge made his most powerful effect on the generation that followed him was *Aids to Reflection* where the general tendency of this work was to take religious apologetic out of the Paley realm of reasoning from natural phenomena. Besides, it is good to know what was the core of Coleridge's religious thought; Coleridge thought that the function of the church is not only to teach religion but secular wisdom as well, for the two are ultimately one. The aim of Coleridge's religious writing is to show that the central doctrines of Christianity, all the sacraments and traditional devotional observances,

are deducible, with the aid of revelation, from the constitution of the human mind itself.

The knowledgeable reviewer of Tennyson's poetry could find that Tennyson followed Coleridge's line of thought but in a very few passages. For example, in his most famous passage on Knowledge in "In Memoriam":

Of Demon? fiery-hot to burst  
All barriers in her onward race  
For power. Let her know her place;  
She is the second, not the first.

A higher hand must make her mild,  
If all be not in vain; and guide  
Her footsteps, moving side by side  
With wisdom, like the younger child:

For she is earthly of the wind,  
But wisdom heavenly of the soul.  
O, friend, who camest to thy goal  
So early, leaving me behind, ( CXIII)

Tennyson follows Coleridge's thought, especially when he says: "I should say that the full and life-like conviction of a gracious Creator is the proof of the wisdom and benevolence in the construction of the creature". He also says: "we must remove the cause from the Faculty that judges according to sense, in order to non-suit the infidel Plaintiff, therefore this judgement avail only on objects of sense, to the superior courts of conscious and Intuitive Reason" (Hough 1978, 123).

The general direction of "In Memoriam" is to abandon the hope of basing religious apologetic on Paleyan natural theology-

I found Him not in star or sun,  
Or eagle's wing or insect's eye-

and to fall back on a philosophy of religious experience. It was neither in Tennyson's nature, nor appropriate to his poem, to deploy an elaborate Coleridgean metaphysic; and, no doubt, his solution-

the heart

Stood up and answered 'I have felt '

-is a far less reasoned thing than what is to be found in Aids to Reflection. But it moves in the same direction, and it is certain that Coleridge is its ultimate source.

It is known that Coleridge was both sceptical and desperately assertive of an ideal unity, seeking to realize it through the traditional narrative form of the ballad, through exotic visions, through fragments implying a last whole. Tennyson shared Coleridge's uncertainty about access to truth, freely using 'ready made' of the classics and landscape. Coleridge had certain concepts about future life, he said that he has become convinced that the consensus gentium applies even more strongly to the 'continuance of a personal being after death' than to the existence of God:

Throughout animated Nature, of each characteristic Organ and Faculty there exists as a pre-assurance, an instinctive and practical Anticipation: and no pre-assurance common to a whole species does in any instance prove delusive. All other prophecies of Nature have their exact fulfilment-in every other 'ingrafted word' of promise Nature is found true to her word, and is it in her noblest Creature that she tells her first Lie? (Hough 1978, 123)

Tennyson echoed this argument in conversations and poetry several times, one day he said: "If you allow a God, and God allows this strong instinct and universal yearning for another life, surely that is in a measure a presumption of its truth". The same idea is repeated in several forms in Tennyson's poetry as in:

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

Tennyson's early poetry was characterized by both grace and melodiousness, it showed an interest in sounds and their verbal melody, so he may have been influenced by Coleridge's passage in *Biographia Literaria* in which Coleridge places first among the specific symptoms of poetic power in a young writer, a delight in verbal melody and a command of the means by which it is produced.

Through Tennyson's poetry, there are some verbal reminiscences of Coleridge as in the following lines :

By some have hearts that in them burn  
With power and promise high,  
To show strange comfort from the earth  
Strange beauties from the sky. (The Couch of Death 29-31)  
This heart within me burns..  
I have strange power of speech. ( The Ancient Mariner 585-7)

I blest them, and wandered on ( The Two Voices 424)

blessed them unaware  
The self-same moment I could pray. ( The Ancient Mariner II, 287-8)

The last red leaf is whirled away ( In Memoriam xv, 3)  
There is not wind enough to twirl  
The one red leaf, the last of its clan. ( Christabel 48-9)

Work without hope, there was no life in it. (Enoch Arden 816)  
Work without Hope draws nectar in a sieve,  
And Hope without an object cannot live. ( Work without Hope 13-4)

A snowy penthouse for his hollow eyes, ( Merlin and Vivien 806)  
His brow, like a pent-house, hung over his eyes. ( The Raven 25)

There are some poems by Tennyson indebted in a way or another to Coleridge; "Remorse" owes considerable in mood and theme to Coleridge's "The Pains of Sleep"; "Recollections of the Arabian Nights", in theme and in tone, recalls "Kubla Khan"; and even more suggestive of specific passages in Coleridge's dream poem are some of the lines in an unpublished sonnet of about 1831, this sonnet has these lines: 'Thro yonder poplar alley. Below, the blue green river windeth slowly,/ But in the middle of the sombre valley / The crisped waters whisper musically./ And all the haunted place is dark and holy', have a link with a remarkable passage in "Kubla Khan":

But on the deep romantic chasm which slanted  
Down the green hill athwart a cedarn cover!  
A savage place! as holy and enchanted  
As o'er beneath a waning moon was haunted.

As we have seen, Coleridge's influence in Tennyson's poetry is not pervasive; we noticed that Coleridge's main influence in Tennyson's poetry was in "In Memoriam".

### **Tennyson and Shelley:**

It is known that the most famous Romantic poet among the Cambridge students in Tennyson's time was Lord Byron whose popularity sharpened the Apostles distaste. At Cambridge it was not only fashionable, but almost indispensable for every youth to be Byronic. The Apostles saw in Shelley something that satisfied what they knew to be their better and higher aspirations. In 1829 three leading Apostles went to Oxford to take the pro-Shelley side of a debate over whether Byron or Shelley was greater. The



winning speaker, a pro-Byron man from Oxford, argued that Byron was, because 'we have all of us read Byron; but if Shelley had been a great poet, we should have read him; but we, none of us, have done so'. For him, Byron's popularity demonstrated his greatness; Shelley's obscurity and his lack of worth. From this debate we understand that Shelley was the poetic hero for the Apostles. Shelley paralleled, the Apostles thought, Carlyle's Goethe as a model alternative to Byron. He was praised in the *Atheaneum* for his constant inculcation of man's capacity for a higher condition than the present. Arthur Hallam thought that Tennyson's 'Timbucto' would justify itself if its imitation of *Alastor* drew attention to Shelley.

In fact, Tennyson experienced some tension with the Apostles over their admiration for Shelley. For them, Shelley was important as much because 'a great poet ought to consider contemporary problems rather than being content with a rapt, self-searching lyricism'. Yet Tennyson knew better than they how dated the Shelleyan connection between poetry and politics had become.

The influence of Shelley is evident in many of Tennyson's poems; Tennyson used Shelley's ideas and opinions in several poetic passages. For example, "The Lady of Shalott", which modern critics have interpreted in psychoanalytic terms, as imprisoned libido unable to find expression in a utilitarian age, as the poet's Jungian anima, his feminine self turning from inner creativity to be crushed by confrontation with the real world, can be related to Shelley's *Witch of Atlas*. Tennyson used Shelley's *Queen Mab* in his "The Palace of Art" which shares Shelley's:

pointed to the gorgeous dome,  
 "This is a wondrous sight  
 And mocks all human grandeur;  
 But, were it virtue's only meed, to dwell  
 In a celestial palace, all resigned  
 To pleasurable impulses, immured  
 Within the prison of itself, the will  
 Of changeless Nature would be unfulfilled.  
 Learn to make others happy".

Tennyson's "Tithonus" undoes Shelley's notion of an ideal, quasi-divine, endorsement for poetic language. It was said that Shelley's spirit of poetry, his *Witch of Atlas*, was to be able to take a human being and mingle it with her own ideality:

Alas! Aurora, what wouldst thou have given  
 For such a charm when Tithon became gray? (*The Witch of Atlas*, 57-8)

In the myth the goddess of the dawn, Aurora or Eos, had granted immortality to her human lover Tithon without thinking to grant him also eternal youth; nor had he thought to ask for it, and spell once made cannot be changed. In Tennyson's "Tithonus", terribly old but unable to die, he cries:

How can my nature longer mix with thine? ( Tithonus, 65)

He has attained the condition which both Tiresias and Lucretius desire of looking back down on the world from an immense distance in space and time, separated from pleasure and pain. He exists in an impass, a perpetual broader state of which his desire, Aurora, is the encircling limit (Jordan 1988, 74).

The image of androgyne is found in English Literature in the works of many poets including Shelley. Shelley used this image in his Witch of Atlas which was a compendium of hints for Tennyson's poetry. The witch of Shelley makes for herself a companion with whom she opposes all limits: monarchies, religions, and institutions such as marriage, playing out the powers of fantasy to liberate love and pleasure. Mystical and occult traditions of thought accepted the divine as androgynous, while the symbol of Christ as mother and husband, producing his bride the Church through the wound in his side, was orthodox theology, typed by Adam giving birth to Eve. Tennyson took care of the cultural values built on such images which inspired his poetry, and he praised the 'man-woman' in Christ, the union of tenderness and strength, and made this attribute of Hallam in the following lines of "In Memoriam":

And manhood fused with female grace  
In such a sort, the child would twine  
A trustful hand, unasked, in thine,

And find his comfort in thy face ( In Memoriam CIX, 17-20)

At the end of "In Memoriam", Hallam is the type of a 'crowning race' like that prophetically imaged in the marriage that concludes "The Princess":

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

Shelley's radicalism, in a way or another, I can say, has inspired Tennyson. For example, the presence of scientific experiment, observation and theory in both frame and story of "The Princess" reflects the age in its looking backwards and forwards, and also says that wild dreams can become truth: science is an encouraging model for social and political change.

If we examine the matter of Tennyson's indebtedness to Shelley in both phrase and versification, we shall find it a complicated one for the fact of their common debt to Milton. There are many phrases such as 'translucent wave', 'odorous winds', 'the clear hyline', which may have descended to each in a direct line from Milton, or they have come to Tennyson through Shelley, Milton's fine use of 'winnow', especially in the passage,

with quick fan

Winnows the buxom air.

seems to have haunted both of them. Tennyson borrowed few definite borrowings from Shelley and he reproduced quite closely Shelley's manner in the personification of Loves, Hopes, and Desires; and he had Shelley's predilection for enchanted boats and shallops. There are several resemblances to Shelley in Tennyson's poetry; as in the following lines:

A gloomy shore the others reach, ( The Couch of Death 137)

'Till he pass the gloomy shore, (Lines among the Eugenean Hills 137)

The heavy thunder's griding might (Chorus 13)

The thunder of the fiery wheels

Gridding the winds (Prometheus Unbound III, 47-8)

Breathe on thy winged throne, and it shall move

In music and in light o'er land and sea. ( Love ii 13-4)

Assume thy winged throne. ( Adonias 414)

Have Faith in thy dream:

For all things are as they seem to all

And all things flow like a stream. (All thought, all creeds 6-8)

Where nothing is, but all things seem,

And we the shadows of the dream. ( The Sensitive Plant iii , 24-5)

The wave of life hath no propelling tide.

(Conrad! why call thy life monotonous? 8)

The wave of life's dark stream. ( Revolt of Islam IIxxiii, 9)



**Tennyson and Lord Byron:**

It was known that Byronic excess was rejected fiercely by Tennyson, but if Victorian writers and poets were supposed to put Byron behind them at the beginnings of their careers, it was odd that Tennyson returned to Byron in the middle of his career. Tennyson, the child, always admired and imitated Byron's ideas and style. This imitation gave Tennyson the opportunity to participate in seemingly distant cultural events. Tennyson's first poetical work, "Poems by Two Brothers" (1827), was replete with imitations of Byron, but despite the importance of Byron in this volume, Tennyson avoided Byron's characteristic genre of the verse romance.

Indeed, Tennyson's relation to Byron seemed to occur outside of overt cultural meditation. Tennyson depended far more closely on Byron's texts as they were available to him, as if he was responding directly to Byron's words themselves. For Tennyson, Byron's poetry was not simply a body of stereotypes, but texts that he knew in detail. Tennyson, the supreme metrist in English, was indebted to Byron in his use of the anapaestic of four measure, rhymed in couplets which was considered one of the noticeable and characteristic metres of Byron. Indeed, Byron was evident in Poems by Two Brothers volume; there are some poems which are directly reminiscent in subject, rhetoric, imagery and movement of Byron's *The Destruction of Sennacherib*. Tennyson was not inspired only by Byron's metre but also by the character of his diction, his choice of vast, tenebrous, warlike, historical, oriental, scriptural, and ossianic subjects; Tennyson was influenced by Byron's habit of appending classical mottoes and semi-learned annotations to his poems, and finally, most clearly of all, in the gloomy, misanthropic and remorseful sentiments of a large proportion of the poems.

Tennyson's poetry altered when he went to Cambridge University because he found new models. It was there that he claimed that his interest in Byron has stopped. Like most Victorian poets, Tennyson abandoned Byron as a way of marking a perceived transition from artistic adolescence to maturity. The Apostles society was the incentive factor behind this transition. It is known that the members of the Apostles fashioned themselves as intellectual elite, their self-appointed position at the cutting edge of culture led them to scorn those whom they regarded as merely popular artists, such as Byron. It was written in the *Athenaeum* by F.D. Maurice, the founder of the Apostles, that Byron was the favourite of pious reviewers, the drawing-room of the autocrat and the boudoir deity. The Apostles thought that Byron's cardinal sin was his historic self-dramatization, which seemed designed solely to titillate the popular

audience. The Apostles's message for Tennyson was that a great poet should avoid the confessionalism that, supposedly, marred Byron's art.

Tennyson's fear of having a Byronic relationship with his audience was described by him in an unpublished poem which he wrote in 1839:

I today  
 Lord of myself and of my ways, the next  
 A popular property, nauseate, when my name  
 Shot like a racketball from mouth to mouth  
 And bandied in the barren lips of fools  
 May yield my feeling organism pain  
 Thrice keener that delight from duest praise.

( Wherefore in these dark ages of the press, 9-15)

Byron's influence can be found in some of Tennyson's most distinguished poems; "The Lady of Shalott", "Ulysses" and "Tithon" are among these poems which have parallels with Byron's poems. The most relevant poem of Byron's to "The Lady of Shalott" is "The Prisoner of Chillon". In spite of all the differences, "The Lady of Shalott" and "The Prisoner of Chillon" have many things in common. Byron was like Tennyson when he described a prisoner who became a figure of the enclosed mind. The analogues to Byron's scene in "The Prisoner of Chillon" are striking, even more telling than linguistic echoes are prosodic ones; Tennyson imitates Byron's metre and stanza closely, although he chooses a more difficult rhyme scheme. No doubt, these similarities reveal how much Tennyson's poem is the mirror image of Byron's. When Tennyson's lady appeared, she was imprisoned in a version of the indifferent 'other' world that Bonnivard saw outside his prison. Tennyson has transformed Bonnivard's 'outside' into the lady's 'inside', he has reversed the movement of Byron's plot by leading the lady not from sympathy to apathy, like Bonnivard, but from apathy to sympathy. Indeed, "The Lady of Shalott" moves through Byron's genre, the narrative romance, to reach Tennyson's preferred genre, the lyric. When the lady writes, "this is I/The Lady of Shalott", she becomes more Byronic than Byron himself. Byron betrays himself in his poems; she becomes her poem.

When Tennyson wrote "Ulysses" and "Tithon", he echoed Byron's language ultimately to present Ulysses and Tithon as alternatives to his representations of subjectivity.

Modern critics have taken seriously that Tennyson's "Ulysses" involved Byron's influence. Tennyson jokingly said that Byron was a presence in it when he complained that critics would not admit his originality. Tennyson's "Ulysses" was influenced by Byron's "Childe

Harold's Pilgrimage III". In "Ulysses", Tennyson seemed as turning to the work in which Byron was supposed to have revealed himself most directly, the later cantos of "Childe Harold". Their interest lay in the emergence of Byron the 'real' man as a poetic character whose reactions to the scenes around him could be admired and imitated. When Tennyson used "Childe Harold" in "Ulysses" he implicitly contrasted Byron's self-revelation with the imagined confession of a character who was not himself. The language of "Ulysses", particularly when he cries out against stasis, recalls Byron's description of the aspirers to whom quiet is a hell, but who eventually collapse:

How dull it is to pause, to make an end,  
To rust unburnished, not to shine in use!  
As though to breathe were life. Life piled on life  
Were all too little, and of one to me  
Little remains ( "Ulysses" ,22-6)

Their breath is agitation, and their life  
A storm whereon they ride, to sink at last,  
And yet so nurs'd and bigotted to strife,  
That should their days, surviving perils past'  
Melt to calm twilight, they feel overcast  
With sorrow and supineness, and so die;  
Even as a flame unfed, which runs to waste  
With its own flickering, or a sword laid by  
Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously.

(Childe Harold III 44)

I agree with Legget who said that Byron furnished the Tennysonian context, the adventurer whose days have melted to 'calm twilight', who feels 'over- cast with sorrow and supineness' like 'a sword laid by/ Which eats into itself, and rusts ingloriously'.

Tennyson's "Tithon" was influenced by Byron's "Childe Harold IV". The Apostles thought that Byron in his "Childe Harold IV" had misinterpreted European art by finding passion where it did not belong. The Apostles rejected Byron's authority as a cultural interpreter, they demonstrated their supposedly superior discrimination by creating Byron's raptures with more composed reactions.

There are many echoes of Byron in "Tithon"; the echoes of Byron's "circumfused in speechless love"( Childe Harold IV. 52) in Tennyson's " by thine divine embraces circumfused"(42); Byron's "eyelids, brow, and

mouth" (Childe Harold IV.51) in Tennyson's "lips, forehead, eyelids" (48); and the image of glowing and melting in love suggest that Tennyson has adopted Byron's language to a context recalling the dream vision in Shelley's *Alastor*.

Indeed, Tennyson's distinctive version of the Victorian transition away from Byron was developed by his "Ulysses" and "Tithon". His revisions of "The Lady of Shalott" and "Tithon" familiar today do not have most of the material that indicates Tennyson's revision of Byron. As his career continued and he gained more of an identity in the literary world, the pressure to transform Byronic self-representation grew less immediate, just as the importance of foregrounding his knowledge of earlier authors faded after he published his first volume.

Before 1842, Tennyson's poetry was characterized by Tennyson's use of Byronic language, for example-

I kissed his eyelids into rest.  
His ruddy cheek upon my breast. (The Sisters 19-20)  
Come, lay thy head upon my breast,  
And I will kiss thee into rest. (The Bride of Abydos 301-2)

I am a part of all that I have met; (Ulysses 18)  
I live not in my self, but I become  
Portion of that around me. (Childe Harold III lxxii 1-2)

She sent a note, the seal an *Elle vous suit*, (Edwin Morris 105)  
The seal a sunflower: " *Elle vous suit partout*". (Don Juan ICXCviii )

In 1842 Tennyson developed other forms of self-representation through his dramatic monologues that made the lady's 'this is I' a less momentous confession than it had been in 1833. Similarly, when "Tithon" became "Tithonus" in 1860, Tennyson cut almost all its Byronic language for the reason that in 1860 Byron no longer mattered to Tennyson as he had in the early 1830s. After the publication of the 1842 volumes, Tennyson secured his status as an elite poet who had moved poetry away from Byron. When he wrote "In Memoriam", he avoided the Byronic rhetoric of the inner self.

After the publication of "In Memoriam" in 1850, Tennyson's popularity brought him nearer to Byron than ever before. In terms of the topics that his audience wanted him to explore, he was being pushed toward poetry that reflected the concerns of modern England which the spasmodics had given a history of associations with Byron's archetypes, particularly the



rebellious Byronic hero. Alexander Smith's *A Life-Drama*, the most famous among the spasmodic works, embodied all that threatened Tennyson as poetic standard; it revealed that tormented subjectivity was no longer the exclusive possession of aristocrats like Byron, but had descended to working-class imitators of Byron, like Smith.

Tennyson's response to the Spasmodics was unexpected. In "Maud", Tennyson seemed to give his audience what it wanted: the plot was melodramatic and novelistic, the hero a stereotypically Byronic rantor, and the content packed with observations about mid-Victorian England. Surely, the first readers of "Maud" knew why it seemed peculiar: it was Byronic. George Eliot labelled the hero a 'modern Conrad', and one reviewer in the *Blackwood Magazine* maintained that the poem recalled "a certain Childe Harold who once set the world a flame".

Although the Spasmodics forced Tennyson's relation to Byron to be far more mediated than in his earlier poetry, his language retains its characteristically close engagement with Byron's language. In "Maud", Tennyson's language was nearer to Byron's:

That the smooth-faced, snubnosed rogue would leap from his counter  
and tills (Maud. 1.51)

God-blooded, smooth-faced, placid miscreant. (Don Juan Dedication.12)

Seeing his gewgaw castle shine (Maud 1.347)

Of Glory's gewgaw shining in the van (Childe Harold IV.109)

I have not made the world, and he that made it will guide. (Maud I.124)

I have not loved the world, nor the world me. (Childe Harold III.113)

So dark a mind within me dwells (Maud I.527)

The wandering outlaw of his own dark mind (Childe Harold III.3)

Queen rose of the rosebud garden of girls (Maud I.902)

His queen, the garden queen, his rose. (The Giaour 26)

"The fault was mine, the fault was mine" (Maud II.I)

"The fault, if fault there be, was mine" (The Bride of Abydos 155)

The Romantic novel also influenced Tennyson's poetry; we find most of the sources from which "Maud" was derived are novels such as Scott's *Bride of Lammermoor* (1819) or Bulwer Lytton's *Falkland* (1826).

Turkish Tales, the most famous of Byron's novels, are considered the closest poetic source for "Maud".

Tennyson's "Maud" and Byron's *The Bride of Abydos* have many things in common; they contained lovers raised in a brother-sister relationship, a hero's father destroyed by the heroine's father, a heroine nearly forced to wed an unworthy man, a violent confrontation between the lover and the heroine's relatives, and the death of the heroine from grief. Although Byron's orientalism is far from the insistent Englishness of "Maud", Tennyson relocates the violence of Byron's *Turkish Tales* on English soil. When Maud and her lover nickname her brother "the Sultan", they figure their experience in terms like those of Byron's fictions: Maud's brother resembles the repressive Giaffir of *The Bride of Abydos* or Seyd of *The Corsair*. In "Maud", Byron's orientalism becomes what it may always have been an elaborate metaphor through which to describe the violence of English domestic life (Elfenbein 1995,196). Tennyson returned to Byron when he noted that many critics viewed the plot as " a melodramatic story of suicide, murder, and madness, dished up for popular applause". Yet Tennyson's turn to the popular is more apparent than real . Maud's plot matters little to its overall effect. In the poem, as it was first published, the plot is presented so elliptically that it is impossible to follow. Few narrative poems owe so little to the suspense of what happens next. Byron had written a poem of fragments as well in "The Giaour" offered vivid glimpses of the present tense action, "Maud" reserves action for the spaces between its divisions. Such gaps allow Tennyson to have a Byronic plot without really having it.

The obsessive concentration on the hero's voice in "Maud" more closely resembles *Manfred*. *Manfred* transformed Byron's relation to his audience because his separation provided an extrapoetic event that grounded the play's obsession with incest. The presence of incest as the poem's 'secret' encouraged readers to take it as Byron's direct confession.

Tennyson was attracted to the theme of nursery love; his "The Lover's Tale" can be compared with Byron's "The Dream". In this poem the story of a 'maiden and a youth' is given a dream which changes, with cinematic effect, from one scene to another recounting how the boy loves his adopted sister-

'he had ceased  
To live within himself; she was his life,  
The ocean to the river of his thoughts,  
Which terminated all'

but to the girl 'he was/ Even as a brother-but not more'. We find the couple separate, the girl to marry, to become unhappy and finally to go mad, the boy to become an outcast. The poem concludes with an admission of the inexplicable yet 'real' import of this dream:

It was of a strange order, that the doom  
Of these two creatures should be thus traced out  
Almost like a reality - the one  
To end in madness - both in misery. (203-6)

This echoes the poem's opening description of the 'wide realm of wild reality' that belongs to the world of sleep in which dreams both recall the lost impulses of the past and also, by becoming 'a portion of ourselves', act as 'Sibyls of the future'. The poem thus strikingly locates its story of lost childhood love in the unconscious mind which governs sleeping:

[ Dreams ] shake us with the vision that's gone by,  
The dread of vanished shadows-- Are they so?  
Is not the past all shadow?--What are they?  
Creations of the mind?--The mind can make  
Substance, and people planets of its own  
With beings brighter than have been, and give  
A breath to forms which can outlive all flesh. (16-22)

Tennyson replaces this dream opening with an invocation to memory, 'Goddess of the Past... great Mistress of the ear and eye', delivered by Julian, the lover, who tells his tale to companions--'See, sirs,/ Even now...'-as a retrospect on his childhood and youth. By this means, the poem authenticates its own fantasy; this is memory, not dream, it is history, autobiography told to witnesses, not the strange order of Byron's poem. Tennyson has interestingly reversed the process; in "The Lover's Tale" the story of unconscious desire is located in the world of childhood experience, unlike Byron's poem where childhood rapture is more safely explained as an aspect of dreaming.

Byron, as we have seen, has a significant influence in Tennyson's poetry. We noticed how Tennyson imitated Byron's themes and ideas, but we also noticed how Tennyson seemed to be in the second half of his career disregarding Byron when he had established his own position and rank.

### **Tennyson and Keats:**

Keats has a good influence on Tennyson's poetry; his questioning of the Real and the Ideal was pursued by Tennyson who acknowledged the inauthenticity of poetry. Tennyson was affected by Keats the dreamer, by

his use of rich colour in poetry, by his imagery, and by his use of stanza form. Keats was Tennyson's great predecessor in derivativeness, he presented the ideal of pure lyricism and of literary language. Therefore, Tennyson admired Keats's lyrics, and he pushed Keatsian lyricism to the point of writing poems that were almost pure sound; the subtitle to "Claribel", one of the 1830 volume's best poems, was "A Melody". Yet Tennyson's lyrics were not just imitations of Keats. Tennyson gentrified Keatsian derivativeness from the position of an elite university poet. Whereas Keats's "Cockney" style marked him as a lower middle class writer striving for refinement, Tennyson had the education for which Keats longed; it gave him the confidence to be even more otherworldly than Keats himself. At Tennyson's hands, Keats's aggressive sensuality vanished into the eroticism of language so refined as to challenge signification ( Elfenbein 1995, 173).

Tennyson's early poetry resembles Keats's poetry by analogy rather than through imitation. Both of Tennyson and Keats are somewhat similar products of the forces of the Elizabethanism, of mediaevalism, of classicism, and of the return to nature; which are at work about them both. If we are going to regard Keats as more than an immediate forerunner of Tennyson in the midst of a swarm of poets of similar breed, but inferior vitality, we need to falsify historical perspective. So far as Tennyson's poems previous to 1833 are concerned, they have not even as much in common with Keats as they have with more nearly contemporary but less conspicuous writers.

Tennyson's language of the early poems are indebted to Keats's language; resemblances to Keats are more analogous than literal, a hazardous kind of likeness from which to argue an indebtedness. In reviewing some of Tennyson's poems, we find the influence of Keats's language, especially that of "The Eve of St. Agnes". The heroine of "The Eve of St. Agnes" may have suggested the name of Madeline, they have nothing in common except "eye divine". Tennyson used the 'glowing hand' of "The Eve of St. Agnes" three times through his poetry and in each time he used it with personification as in:

"The glowing hands of Honour" (Mithridates 10)

"Love took up the glass of Time, and turned it in his glowing hands".

(Locksley Hall 31)

"Bright Fame, with glowing hand, unbears" (Time: an Ode 59)

also Tennyson's "triple arch" of "Timbuctoo": 'With triple arch of over-changing bows', is much like Keats's 'triple arch'd' of "The Eve of

St. Agnes". Another influence of Keats is "Mariana" which was influenced by "Isabella", especially when she waits in vain:

' She weeps alone for pleasures not to be;  
Sorely she wept until the night came on.  
And so she pined, and so she died forlorn'.

The resemblances to Keats are much in Tennyson's "Poems ,Chiefly Lyrical" (1830), I mention the following lines:

Upon the middle of the night. (Mariana 25)  
Upon the honey'd middle of the night. (Eve of St. Agnes 49)

Falsehood shall bare her plaited brow:  
Fair-fronted Truth shall droop not now. ( To-[clear-headed Friend 11-2)  
"Why pierce high-fronted honour to the quick  
For nothing but a dream?" Hereat the youth  
Look'd up: a conflicting of shame and ruth  
Was in her plaited brow. (Endymion i 756-762)

The viewless arrows of his thoughts were headed  
And winged with flame (The Poet 11-2)  
But on the viewless wings of poesy (Ode to a Nightingale 33)

And all about him rolled his lustrous eyes; (Love and Death 3)  
Where Beauty cannot keep her lustrous eyes (Ode to a Nightingale 29)

The physical sensations of Tennyson's poems may have owed something to Keats's tender appeal of the same kind. There is a predilection for such words as 'lush', 'flavorous', 'pulp'; and what Spedding deprecatingly called the 'creature comforts' of the early volumes can be paralleled in Keats.

In Tennyson's volume of 1833, there are a few touches which seem due to Keats as Tennyson's 'yellow-banded bees' of "Eleanore" which is sufficiently like the 'yellow-girted' ones of Keats's "Endymion". Also, we have:

To an unheard melody, (Eleanore 64)  
Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard  
Are sweeter. (Grecian Urn II, 12)

'Large Hesper glittered on her tears' of "Mariana in the South" seems a belated reminiscence of Keats': 'Where no insulting light / Could glimmer on their tears'. In Tennyson's "On a Mourner" (1865), Tennyson says: ' And when the zoning eve has died'; this line suggests the elegiac and speculative

contexts of Keats's "The Fall of Hyperion": 'No stir of life/ Was in this shrouded vale, not so much air/ As in the zoning of a summer's day'(i 310-12). It is known that "The Fall of Hyperion" was published posthumously in 1856, and so may have influenced Tennyson's revision of 'finding' into 'zoning'.

Tennyson was adventurous in stanza forms; he liked to use fairly elaborate stanzas in which he could swing his lines with the mood, like Keats. The four shorter lines, operating as an almost incantatory refrain in the "Mariana" stanza, serve to gather up the implications of the imagery in the preceding lines and repeat the suggestion of loss, regret and weariness:

She only said, ' My life is dreary,  
He cometh not,' she said;  
She said, ' I am aweary, aweary,  
I would that I were dead!'

The imagery which Tennyson used in his early poems was Keatsian, but it is the Keats of magic casements and moonlight through stained glass throwing warm gules on Madeline's fair breast rather than the Keats of "To Autumn" or of "Hyperion".

Tennyson sometimes copied Keats's heraldic use of color, but generally his use of color images is simply for the mood or atmosphere. A good example is the opening of part IV of "The Lady of Shalott":

In the stormy east-wind straining  
The pale yellow woods were waning,  
The broad-stream in his banks complaining,  
Over tower'd Camelot; ...

The use of the two-syllable rhymes here exist in order to provide a certain kind of dying fall; the meaning is incidental, and perhaps not always what the poet really wants- he stretches a point of meaning for the sake of the sound and for the generalized suggestion implicit in a particular combination of sound and evocation (Daches 1972, 997). Tennyson showed himself as establishing both his style and reputation in 1842 when he published his two volumes. The dominant tone of the volumes was elegiac; Tennyson showed his ability in manipulating epic into elegy, all this was evident in "The Lotos Eaters" and "Morte d' Arthur" among other poems. Keats appears to be the Romantic poet most concerned with dreams and visionary excursions, Tennyson was influenced by Keats's dreams; in "The Lotos Eaters", the heroic adventures coming on the languid island and succumbing to a mood of sad-sweet dream represent the fate of heroic themes when they enter Tennyson's poetic world:

All around the coast the languid air did swoon,  
 Brathing like one that hath a weary dream.  
 Full-faced above the valley stood the moon;  
 And like a downward smoke, the slender stream  
 Along the cliff to fall and pause and fall did seem

Tennyson's use of natural images to achieve a dream landscape is again characteristic. There are many Keatsian echoes in Tennyson's poetry such as:

Give us long rest or death, dark death, or dreamful ease

But Tennyson's use of adjectives is more abandoned. He leans on the adjective to a greater degree than Keats does, using it to deflect attention from the central core of a noun's meaning and resolve all into a mood, a sense of elegy.

In "The Princess", Tennyson was influenced by Keats's language; he has many resemblances to Keats:

And sweet girl-graduates in their golden hair (The Princess Prologue 142)

As though in Cupid's college she had spent

Sweet days a lovely graduate ( Lamia i 197-8)

Half-lapt in glowing gauze and golden brede,

Lay like a new-fatten meteor on the grass, (The Princess vi 118-9)

And, as the lava ravishes the mead,

Spoilt all her silver mail, and golden brede..

Eclips'd her crescents, and lick'd up her stars. (Lamia i 157-160)

### **Tennyson and Turner:**

Joseph Mallord William Turner (1775-1851) was a famous painter whose pictures were characterized by the Romantic touch . Tennyson was influenced by the works of Turner; he always had in mind the form of modern landscape painting. Late twentieth-century analysis of the work of Turner offers analogies to Tennyson's Idyls. We find the subtitle of "The Gardener's Daughter" is "The Picture"; its protagonists are painters.

Although their social backgrounds were quite different, the family experience of both Tennyson and Turner was coloured by violent moods of a parent; Turner's mother was finally committed to Bedlam, the hospital for the insane. They have many connections between them, but Lawrence Gowing noticed the influence from Turner on Tennyson's work and had called it the " unconscious response to the cultural matrix". Turner and Tennyson were concerned with the Romantic problem of translation between nature, poetry and painting: with working immediate sensual experience into a more intellectual and collective symbolism. In terms of the

result, the circling quality of Tennyson's verse, its reluctance to reach a final end, can be compared with the way in which Turner's work in contrast to Constable's leaves something to be guessed- the sublimity of the aspire of Salisbury Cathedral is suggested by not showing the whole of it. For example, both Tennyson and Turner were guests at the breakfast and dinner parties of the old poet Samuel Rogers, which brought new and leading figures in artistic and intellectual work together. Turner's engravings for Rogers' Italy (1830) were responsible for the immense success of that volume. During the 1830s he illustrated Rogers' poems, Byron, Scott, Milton, Tom Moore and Campbell's poetical works, brought out by Tennyson's publisher Moxon in 1837. Turner's two versions of Sinai's Thunder in that edition may have influenced the conclusion of "In Memoriam" XCVI, a poem which shares Turner's concern with the relation of light and dark:

To find a stronger faith his own;  
And power was with him in the night,  
Which makes the darkness and the light,  
And dwells not in the light alone,

But in the darkness and the cloud,  
As over Sinai's peaks of old,  
While Israel made their gods of gold,  
Although the trumpet below so loud. (17-24)

Indeed Tennyson alluded to paintings as he alluded to poems; the end of "In Memoriam" CIII:

And while the wind began to sweep  
A music out of sheet and shroud,  
We streered her toward a crimson cloud  
That landlike slept a long the deep (53-6)

has Turner's effects in mind, also the figure on the shore and the symbolism of the evening star, in other "In Memoriam" lyrics and in "Break, break, break" and "Crossing the Bar", may be associated with paintings by Turner such as The Evening Star exhibited in 1830.

Tennyson saw Turner's paintings as well as his illustrations, for example at an exhibition he went to see Manchester in 1857, and in 1880s William Allingham records him seeing the world in the light of Turner:

Tennyson spoke of the 'sea of silver mist' seen at  
early morning from his windows at this season-  
also of the effect of mist spread over the wide



green woodland and the sun shining on it- '  
incredible! Turner would have tied it'.

( Norman 1983, 138)

Turner's Goddess of Discord Choosing the Apple of Contention in the Garden of the Hesperides (1806) has influenced Tennyson's "Oenone" and "The Hesperides" in their subject matter. "The Vision of Sin" was inspired by Turner's Fountains of Fallacy (1839)- a painting now lost- but The Fountains of Indolence (1834) seems equally suggestive of the poem's images of languid voluptuaries a waiting a fountain, 'sleet of diamond- drift and pearly hail', which ejaculates to 'low voluptuous music' and 'woven in circles':

Ran into its giddiest whirl of sound  
Caught the sparkles, and in circles,  
Purple gauzes, golden hazes, liquid mazes,  
Flung the torrent rainbow round.( The Vision of Sin , 29-32)

One day Tennyson said that "The Vision of Sin" represented the soul of youth given up to pleasures and becoming cynical , but the words and rhythms, recalling those of the Hesperides and trying to catch the excitement of Turner's votrices of haze and light, can hardly escape the contradiction between the viewer's pleasure and the critical judgement which is exposed by Manet's nudes, when he reworks Bathsheba illicitly seem naked by King David, or Susanna ogled by the Elders, into the modern courtesan olympe, unwrapped for observation like the bunch of flowers her admirer has sent, or into the Dejeuner sur L'herbe, where the replacement of generalized flowers by a hat and a muslin dress let the viewer know that this is not a safe classicizing nude, but a picture of a woman who has taken her clothes off.

Thus the imaginative models for Tennyson and Turner are Romantic as well as classical: they share a fascination with the sea, its extent, its 'perpetual motion and irresistible force'. They laid claim to authenticity, attempting to present natural images on their own right, for their own sakes, but both were curious about fusion and influence, things at their most fluid- the sea, the sky with its light and clouds, solid rocks seen through mist, swirling votrices with the sun for centre. Turner's last words were said to have been 'The sun is God'. In his study of Tennyson's early poems, W.D.Paden claimed that Tennyson was fascinated by the idea of sun worship; it has been said of both the poet and the painter that they were influenced by theories of the origin of religion, in the work of Boehme, the theosophist, and of the mythological scholar Jacob Bryant, who argued that

the belief in many gods derived from misunderstandings of stories about the one original father-god, the sun.

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