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A LITERARY STUDY OF
PARANORMAL EXPERIENCE
IN TENNYSON'S POETRY

DISSERTATION

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DENISE ELIZABETH LAURENCE LOUW
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ABSTRACT

My thesis is that many of Tennyson's apparently paranormal experiences are explicable in terms of temporal lobe epilepsy; and that a study of the occurrence, in the work of art, of phenomena associated with these experiences, may be useful in elucidating the workings of the aesthetic imagination.

A body of knowledge relevant to paranormal experience in Tennyson's life and work, assembled from both literary and biographical sources, is applied to a Subjective Paranormal Experience Questionnaire, compiled by Professor V.M. Neppe, in order to establish the range of the poet's apparently "psychic" experiences. The information is then analysed in terms of the symptomatology of temporal lobe epilepsy (TLE), and the problems of differential diagnosis are considered.

It is shown, by means of close and comparative analyses of a number of poems, that recurring clusters of images in Tennyson's poetry may have their genesis in TLE. These images are investigated in terms of modern research into altered states of consciousness. They are found to be consistent with a "model" of the three stages of ^{trance} experience constructed by Professor A.D. Lewis-Williams to account for shamanistic rock art in the San, Coso and Upper Paleolithic contexts. My study of the relevant phenomena in the work of a nineteenth-century English poet would seem to offer cross-cultural verification of the applicability of the model to a range of

altered-state contexts.

This study goes on to investigate some of the psychological processes which may influence the way in which pathology is manifested in the poetry of Alfred Tennyson. But, throughout the investigation, the possible effects of literary precursors and of other art forms are acknowledged.

The subjective paranormal phenomena in Tennyson's poems are compared not only with some modern neuropsychiatric cases, but also with those of several nineteenth-century writers who seem to have had similar experiences. These include Dostoevsky and Edward Lear, who are known to have been epileptics, and Edgar Allan Poe. Similarity between some aspects of Tennyson's work and that of various Romantic poets, notably Shelley, is stressed; and it is tentatively suggested that it might be possible to extrapolate from my findings in this study to a more general theory of the "Romantic" imagination.

CONTENTS

ABSTRACT	ii
LIST OF APPENDICES	v
ABBREVIATIONS	vi
PREFACE	vii
ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS	xiii
CHAPTER I:	
SUBJECTIVE PARANORMAL EXPERIENCE	1
CHAPTER II:	
THE "DARK COUNTERPOINT"	63
CHAPTER III:	
EPILEPSY AND IMAGERY	136
CHAPTER IV:	
FROM PATHOLOGY TO POETRY	230
CHAPTER V:	
INSPIRATION	326
APPENDICES	429
NOTES	444
SELECT BIBLIOGRAPHY	469

LIST OF APPENDICES

A	Subjective Paranormal Experience Questionnaire ..	429
B	Varieties of Epilepsy	440
C	Lobar Divisions of the Brain	441
D	A Model of Six Categories of Entoptic Phenomena .	442
E	"White Wings"	443

ABBREVIATIONS

<u>Eversley</u>	<u>The Works of Tennyson</u> . 1907-08. Ed. Hallam, Lord Tennyson. Eversley edition. 9 vols. London: Macmillan. (The volume containing <u>The Idylls of the King</u> is abbreviated <u>Eversley: Idylls</u> .)
Heath MS.	The Commonplace Book of J.M. Heath, which is now in the Fitzwilliam Museum. (Heath was one of Tennyson's Cambridge friends.)
LAO	Lincolnshire Archives Office.
<u>Mats.</u>	<u>Materials for a Life of A.T. Collected for My Children</u> . 1894-95. 4 vols.
<u>MS. Mats.</u>	Handwritten manuscript of <u>Materials for a Life of A.T. Collected for My Children</u> . 1894. 10 vols. (The earliest surviving version of the material from which Hallam, Lord Tennyson's <u>Alfred Tennyson: A Memoir</u> was eventually compiled.)
SPE(s)	Subjective paranormal experience(s).
"Talks and Walks"	The notebook in which Audrey Tennyson recorded her father-in-law's conversations.
TLE	Temporal lobe epilepsy.
T.MS.	Trinity manuscript.
T.Nbk.	Trinity notebook.

PREFACE

This is not a study of the occult. While I believe, with Hamlet, that "There are more things in heaven and earth... / Than are dreamt of in...philosophy" (1.5.166-67), I think the pursuit of the paranormal, or "dabbling in the occult", is both wrong and dangerous. If "The Holy Grail" is any criterion by which to judge, Tennyson held similar views.

In my approach to the topic of paranormal experience I have taken my cue from Tennyson, who said that the strange happenings in "The Holy Grail" could all be explained in naturalistic terms, "if only people cared" (Memoir II, 63). I believe it is important to go as far as possible to explain apparently psychic phenomena in terms of the knowledge presently at our disposal. And that is what I have tried to do in this study.

In an earlier study - of "The Numinous Presence in Tennyson's Poetry" - I examined that apparently preternatural presence "from a number of points of view" in order to determine "to what extent the results could be said to converge on some sort of central 'truth'" (Louw 1985, viii). One of the theories I put forward was that the mysterious "presence" might be a phenomenon associated with Tennyson's suspected epilepsy. I postulated that the particular form of epilepsy concerned was probably temporal lobe epilepsy. One of the examiners of my M.A. thesis was particularly interested in this theory and suggested that it was worthy of further

investigation. It had already occurred to me that the "epileptic" phenomena evident in Tennyson's poetry might afford a point of approach for an exploration of the poet's creative processes, and so this project was born.

This is essentially a literary thesis, in which I strive to elucidate the workings of the Tennysonian imagination - and perhaps, by extrapolation, some aspects of the "Romantic" imagination. But in my research I have been obliged to journey through the deep waters of distant disciplines. In the course of that journey I have become increasingly aware of the complexities of the task I have undertaken. Even the use of the word "image", which is so routine a matter in talking of literature, may be fraught with hidden hazards when used in the neuropsychological context (Heinze 1984, 154). But, though "the study of the nervous system and, in particular, of the brain" is "so vast and difficult a project that it is likely to occupy all the generations to come", working on it "is a much more rewarding occupation than playing the old obscurantist game of writing about the mysteries of the mind" (Bunge and Ardila 1987, 165).

In pursuing my stated objective of exploring the Tennysonian imagination, my approach has been eclectic. I have not confined myself to any one school or discipline, but have felt free to draw material from any source which seemed able to illuminate some aspect of the complex poetic process. While some might deem this method philosophically

indefensible, I like to recall "Husserl's dictum that a true science follows the nature of what has to be investigated and not its methodological preconceptions" (Bolton 1987, 49). Certainly my eclecticism would seem to have the sanction of Tennyson, who wrote:

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance...

(IM 49:1-2).

My thesis is that many of the apparently paranormal experiences in Tennyson's poetry are explicable in terms of temporal lobe epilepsy; and that a study of the occurrence, in the work of art, of phenomena associated with these experiences, may be useful in elucidating the workings of the aesthetic imagination. I have gathered material from a number of manuscripts at the Tennyson Research Centre, Lincoln, at Trinity College, Cambridge, and at the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge. And Hallam, Lord Tennyson's Memoir, Robert Bernard Martin's biography of the poet, and Christopher Ricks's edition of The Poems of Tennyson have, of course, been invaluable. I have quoted from Ricks's second edition (1987), but my references will be meaningful to anyone using either the first (1969) or the second edition of The Poems of Tennyson. For, instead of giving page references for quotations, I have used Ricks's numbering of the poems, together with the prefix R. This method has had the added advantage of obviating the need for cumbersome references to volume numbers. Where there are several quotations from the

same poem, the "R number" only appears after the first quotation, unless references to other poems intervene.

I have chosen to cite, or to quote from, the Shatto and Shaw edition of In Memoriam, since their Arabic numbering makes for easier reading, and since I have found their sections on the dating of the "elegies", and on some classical influences, particularly useful.

I have elected to use the author-date or editor-date system in this dissertation, citing the relevant references parenthetically. The end-notes generally supply additional, non-essential information, which readers with a rooted antipathy to textual notes may choose to ignore.

Where appropriate, I provide bibliographic entries for a particular work under the names of both author and editor. Generally the name of the author appears in the text, and the name of the editor in the parenthetical reference that follows. Except where otherwise stated, all Shakespeare references are to the Peter Alexander edition, and all Biblical references are to the Authorised Version. So far as Dostoevsky's The Idiot is concerned, I have worked from David Magarshack's translation for Penguin, but sometimes prefer to quote the translations offered by James Rice in Dostoevsky and the Healing Art.

In the medical literature to which I refer, there is a certain lack of accord over matters of terminology and of style. For instance, some writers use the term "complex partial seizures" in preference to "temporal lobe epilepsy".

In the case of Tennyson, I prefer the latter term, and note that it is still used in Index Medicus. Some apparent inconsistencies in my text are due to the fact that, for example, some medical writers refer to "neurones", while others refer to "neurons". And some italicize words such as déjà vu, petit mal and grand mal, while others do not. I retain the stylistic method of whichever writer I am quoting at the time. In my own text I treat déjà vu as a foreign word; but since petit mal and grand mal are now well-established medical terms, I do not italicize them.

Throughout this thesis my principal task has been to explore the influence of epileptic phenomena on Tennyson's creative imagination. I have not been able to deal with the vast subject which one might call the temper of the age. But I have tried to show an awareness of other influences, such as art, architecture and music, as well as English literature, the classics and the Bible. When I have despaired of being able to do justice to all these aspects while still maintaining the clarity of my own argument, I have had to comfort myself with the thought that one thesis cannot be all things to all people.

In concluding this preface, I wish to stress my great admiration for Tennyson, both as a poet and as a man. Although this dissertation relates the poet's imagination to temporal lobe epilepsy, it is certainly not intended to be in any way reductive. I have noted that in his poetry Tennyson several times anticipates the discoveries of seminal workers

in the fields of neurology and psychology. I do not think that the extent of his genius has yet been fully appreciated. Moreover, I think of Tennyson whenever I read the beautiful fifth epode of Pindar's "Pythian Ode VIII" (Conway 1972, 144):

Creatures of a day! What is a man?
What is he not? A dream of a shadow
Is our mortal being. But when there comes to men
A gleam of splendour given of Heaven,
Then rests on them a light of glory
And blessed are their days.

I believe Tennyson received many such gleams of splendour. And, in and through his poetry, he makes them available to us.

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CHAPTER I

SUBJECTIVE PARANORMAL EXPERIENCE

"Of all the powers of the human mind the imagination has been least explored, probably because it is the most difficult to explore... - it seems to be not only the basic and connecting link of all the finer mental powers, but in truth the knot that ties body and mind together." Thus wrote Johann Gottfried Herder in the late 1780s. But, as Thomas McFarland acknowledges in citing the passage, Herder's observation "still pertains to the real situation" today. McFarland writes that his own work, Originality and Imagination, "takes licence from Herder's declaration of work still to do, although it makes no attempt to roam in fields better left to the hopes of the physiologist, the psychologist of perception, and the theorist of computer possibilities", but "attempts rather a survey of cultural topography" (McFarland 1985, xiii).

I, too, am conscious of "work still to do"; and I feel that the literary frontier now awaiting exploration is that relatively uncharted area where the influences of "body and mind" coalesce in the poetic imagination - the area which McFarland consigns to the "physiologist", inter alia. For I, like Ernst Kris and others, believe that "a wide field of research waits for those interested in interdisciplinary integration" (Kris 1952, 18).

I plan to use an integrative approach in my efforts to elucidate the workings of the poetic imagination of the man who was to exert so profound an influence on the Victorian

era, Alfred Tennyson.

Alfred Tennyson was born at Somersby, Lincolnshire on 6 August 1809 - the third of eleven children (Martin 1980, 16; Louw 1985, 8). His father, Dr George Clayton Tennyson, was a Church of England clergyman from necessity rather than choice (Martin 1980, 11; Louw 1985, 8), having been disinherited in favour of a younger brother, Charles (later Charles Tennyson d'Eyncourt) (Martin 1980, 6-7; Louw 1985, 8). Alfred Tennyson's mother was a good and pious woman of Evangelical leanings (Rader 1963, 89). But even her beneficent influence was insufficient to counteract the famous "black blooded" temperament of the Tennyson family, and most of her offspring suffered to a greater or lesser degree from the emotional instability to which their father was so prone (Colley 1983, 37).¹

In spite of the increasing moroseness of Dr Tennyson's personality - a condition aggravated by his drinking (Martin 1980, 35) - he tirelessly expended his considerable scholastic talents in the education of his three eldest sons, preparing them for entry into Trinity College, Cambridge (Martin 1980, 36, 39-40; Colley 1983, 37-38). Alfred went to Cambridge in November 1827 (Martin 1980, 52). But he left the university on the death of his father, in March 1831, without taking a degree (Martin 1980, 130).

However, the Cambridge years were of paramount importance in Tennyson's life for three reasons. Firstly, the young poet was absorbed into a group of brilliant young men, known as the

"Cambridge Apostles", who were members of an exclusive undergraduate debating society (the Cambridge Conversazione Society) (Wheatcroft 1980, 37). The friendships made there were long-lasting, as well as intellectually stimulating. The Cambridge Apostles were a source of encouragement and support throughout the poet's long life.

Secondly, at Cambridge Tennyson won the Chancellor's Gold Medal for Poetry with "Timbuctoo" (R67), a poem he had re-worked for the purpose from an earlier poem, "Armageddon" (R3, headnote). His winning of the prize seemed to confirm the high esteem in which his work was held by the Apostles, and foreshadowed to some extent the public recognition symbolized by his appointment to the position of Poet Laureate in 1850 (Memoir I, 334), and his elevation to the peerage in 1883 (Memoir II, 300-01).

Thirdly, and most importantly, it was at Cambridge that the poet met and befriended a younger undergraduate, Arthur Henry Hallam, who was to inspire or influence many of Tennyson's best poems (Allen 1978, 142). Hallam was also a Cambridge Apostle, and a great lover of poetry. Although his luminous and charismatic personality, and his brilliant but kindly mind, made him universally popular, he also experienced "fits of gloom", and fears of insanity, that forged a special empathetic link between him and the melancholy and "black blooded" Alfred Tennyson (Allen 1978, 138-41). Indeed, on his first visit to Somersby, in 1829, Hallam seems to have taken the whole Tennyson family to his heart, and was soon pressing for parental permission to become officially engaged to the

poet's sister Emilia (Martin 1980, 99-101).² Arthur's father was reluctant to sanction the match, and placed many obstacles (mainly financial) in the path of his son's progress towards betrothal (Martin 1980, 130, 146). Before the difficulties could be resolved, the young man died of a stroke ("Schlagfluss") at Vienna on 15 September 1833 (Kolb 1981, 4).

Hallam's death "was without doubt the most severe shock" of Alfred Tennyson's life (Rader 1963, 20). And the poet's grief was to echo and re-echo through his poetry for the rest of his days. It inspired, inter alia, the "elegies" which Tennyson wrote over a period of seventeen years and eventually published in 1850 as In Memoriam AHH (Martin 1980, 332-33; Ebbatson 1988, 74).

1850 was also the year in which Tennyson finally married Emily Sellwood, thirteen years after first becoming engaged to her (Martin 1980, 279). Furthermore, it was the year in which he succeeded Wordsworth as Poet Laureate - an honour offered to him largely as a result of the Prince Consort's great admiration for In Memoriam (Wheatcroft 1980, 60).

The stability and tranquillity of the home-life provided for Tennyson by his devoted Emily was marred in the early days by the still-birth of the couple's first child (Martin 1980, 359), and in later years by the death at sea of their son Lionel, who was returning from a visit to India (Martin 1980, 556-57). But Hallam Tennyson, the poet's only surviving child, was a devoted son who acted as secretary and amanuensis to his father when Emily's semi-invalidism prevented her from fulfilling those functions (Martin 1980, 504-06). Tennyson

died on 6 October 1892, leaving behind him a considerable body of poetry (Martin 1980, 582).

I noticed several years ago that many of Alfred Tennyson's poems dealt with, or touched on, experiences which were consistent with a form of epilepsy. When Robert Bernard Martin's biography of the poet appeared, it confirmed my suspicions: the Tennyson family had suffered from hereditary epilepsy (Martin 1980, 10). Martin uses the term "petit mal" erroneously - but possibly loosely, to distinguish Tennyson's relatively mild form of epilepsy from the more dramatic and convulsive attacks now known as grand mal. I believe that it is possible to be more accurate and specific in classifying Tennyson's epilepsy; and I suggested in an earlier study that the "numinous presence" which is to be detected in so many of the poems may be explicable in terms of the symptomatology of temporal lobe epilepsy (Louw 1985, 94, 193).

In the present study I shall broaden the base of my research to cover a much wider spectrum of the so-called paranormal experiences reflected in Tennyson's life and work. I shall endeavour to show that many of these experiences are consonant with well-documented studies of patients with epileptic dysfunction of the temporal lobe of the brain; that certain personality traits observed in Tennyson are frequently found in temporal lobe epileptics; and that throughout his entire poetic oeuvre, Tennyson's diction and imagery bear the indelible stamp of his early epileptic experiences.

Naturally, however, my consideration of the neurophysiological or "bodily" influence exerted on the poet's

imagination by his epilepsy will be tempered by an awareness of the influences exerted on his mind by cultural precursors. In this area I shall refer mainly to literary antecedents, especially the Romantic poets, but it must be remembered that the visual arts may also have been directly or indirectly influential in shaping the Tennysonian imagination. Writing to Edmund Lushington from Cheltenham on 29 July 1844, Tennyson laments the fact that he had "seen no Art...for a year" - "and my soul thirsts for it", he says (Lang and Shannon 1982, 226).

To summarize, then, I shall contend in this study that many of the paranormal experiences that are at the very heart of Tennyson's poetry are explicable in terms of temporal lobe epilepsy, and that this dreaded affliction played such an important part in his life, especially in the early, formative years, that it was to have a considerable effect on his poetic imagination for the rest of his days.

However, before proceeding any further, it will be necessary to define precisely what is meant here by paranormal experience, and to decide whether, and to what extent, the term may legitimately be used in connection with Tennyson the man and the poet.

The Oxford English Dictionary states that the word "paranormal" is "applied to observed phenomena or powers which are presumed to operate according to natural laws beyond or outside those considered normal or known". The Longman's Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry defines the term as "pertaining to any phenomenon that cannot be explained by existing knowledge". From this definition it immediately

becomes apparent that, given my hypothesis, my use of the term "paranormal" in this context is somewhat paradoxical. For I intend to show that many of the apparently paranormal phenomena described in Tennyson's poetry can in fact be "explained by existing knowledge" - by knowledge, in this case, of temporal lobe epilepsy (TLE).

However, since the phenomena I shall be dealing with certainly cannot be classified as "normal", the word "paranormal" must be allowed to stand. But it must also be stressed that the veridicality of Tennyson's experiences cannot be attested to - and it will therefore be prudent to refer to the episodes in which these phenomena occur as subjective paranormal experiences (SPEs). The term "subjective paranormal experience" was developed by Vernon M. Neppe to fill a "void in research into an area in which information is often extremely subjective and unable to be rigidly scientifically broken down at a causal level" (Neppe 1979, 2). The SPE concept "does not attempt to deny or confirm whether any specific paranormal experiences did happen", since subjective paranormal experience "involves a belief system of the experient, not a reality system" (Neppe 1979, 61). It would perhaps be more correct for me to use the term "actuality", rather than "reality", in view of Tennyson's often-reiterated comment that the spirit world was more real to him than the actual physical world (Memoir II, 90).

Neppe, using questionnaires developed for parapsychological research purposes at the University of Virginia, compiled a series of questions to elicit information

from subjects concerning their apparently psychic experiences (see Appendix A - Subjective Paranormal Experience Questionnaire). I have correlated these questions loosely with the body of information, literary and biographical, available on Tennyson; and I present the results below. First, however, I must point out that Neppe specifies that all the questions "refer to periods" during which the subject was "not under the influence of alcohol, any non-prescription drugs or an anaesthetic", and that they do not apply to times when the subject was "very ill, physically or mentally" (Neppe 1979, 149). Where I feel these criteria are not met in Tennyson's case, I have said so; but it must be understood that sometimes there is insufficient information available concerning the contextual fabric surrounding the various episodes under review.

A further difficulty arises in so far as it might be argued that the strange experiences described by Tennyson in his poetry may be fictional, or observed in others. Certainly much has been made in recent years of the fact that Tennyson is thought to have studied the patients at Dr Matthew Allen's asylum for the insane in order to depict madness in his poetry (C. Tennyson 1949, 286; R316, headnote). It must be noted, though, that observation of the poet's own tormented family would have yielded a great deal of useful material. Indeed, it probably did: there can be little doubt that Tennyson's interest in, and knowledge of, psychology owed much to personal observation within the family. In fact, Tennyson says as much in a letter of 15 January 1834 to his Uncle

Charles. He writes: "I have studied the minds of my own family - I know how delicately they are organized...." And he goes on to discuss his brother Septimus' mental condition in a most percipient way (Lang and Shannon 1982, 106; qtd. in C. Tennyson 1949, 150; Colley 1983, 69).

Given the hereditary nature of epilepsy, it is more than likely that different members of Tennyson's immediate family suffered from similar symptoms, and they may well have compared notes within the privacy of the family circle, while maintaining towards the outside world a united front of secrecy.³

Tennyson, of course, abhorred anything that smacked of prying into the private life of a poet (Louw 1985, 4-5).⁴ As Norman Page has noted, "The stern injunction 'no trespassing' applied alike to his personality, his home life, his friendships and his workshop" (1983, viii). But even the poet's refutations of autobiographical links sound strangely like veiled confirmations:

In a certain way, no doubt, poets and novelists, however dramatic they are, give themselves in their works. The mistake that people make is that they think the poet's poems are a kind of 'catalogue raisonné' of his very own self, and of all the facts of his life, not seeing that they often only express a poetic instinct, or judgement on a character real or imagined....Of course some poems, like my "Ode to Memory" are evidently based on the poet's own nature, and on hints from his own life.

(Memoir I, 402; qtd. by Louw 1985, 4)

Certainly Hallam Tennyson contended that it is in Tennyson's poetry that "we must look for the innermost sanctuary of his being" and that "no biographer could so truly give him as he

gives himself in his own works...." Hallam emphasizes that he sees his father "in every word that he has written" (Memoir I, xi). But he also speaks of "the impossibility of fathoming a great man's mind", for "his deeper thoughts are hardly ever revealed" (Memoir I, xii).⁵

I disagree with Hallam Tennyson: I believe it may be possible to fathom or analyse the deeper thoughts and emotions of a poet, if one can find a significant point of entry to that mysterious region of the mind called the imagination. And I believe that Tennyson's so-called "mystical", or "paranormal", experiences represent that point.

Since the references to, and images reminiscent of, these paranormal experiences occur again and again in the poetry, they must surely reveal Tennyson's deepest concerns - almost in the way recurring dreams reveal the unrecognized or unacknowledged preoccupations of the unconscious. This relationship between dream and reality was recognised by the ancients - as Ludwig Binswanger points out. He writes:

Just as Lucretius (De Rerum Natura IV, 962-1029) before him presented a highly realistic account of the relation between dream experiences and daily activities, fears, wishes and sexual desires, so Petronius put his finger on the most important aspect of modern dream theory: "sed sibi quisque facit!" ["each man creates his own!"]

(1963, 240)

Binswanger, an eminent psychiatrist, holds that language, the imagination of the poet, and dream all "draw from" the same "essential ontological structure"; and he argues persuasively for the admissibility of dreams which are "poetic

creations" to the status of actual dreams. He writes:

...[W]ith the insight we have gained from psychoanalysis, we can follow the famous example of Cicero who, in writing of the prophecies of his brother Quintus (which are constantly exemplified by poetic dreams), put these words into his mouth: "Haec, etiam si ficta sunt a poeta, non absunt tamen a consuetudine somniarum." ["These things, even if they have been made by the poet, are nevertheless not uncharacteristic of the usual form of dreams."]

(Binswanger 1963, 236)

Marie Bonaparte says:

Works of art or literature profoundly reveal their creator's psychology and, as Freud has shown, their construction resembles that of our dreams. The same mechanisms which, in dreams and nightmares, govern the manner in which our strongest, though most carefully concealed desires are elaborated, desires which often are the most repugnant to consciousness, also govern the elaboration of a work of art.

(qtd. by Wright 1984, 40)

George Mora also links dreams and "artistic creativity". He notes that "dreams are seen today from the threefold perspective of their neurobiological substratum, of their psychotherapeutic value, and of their relation to the preconscious level of artistic creativity" (1974, 49). Kris, by implication, links "dreams" and "artistic creations" when he writes: "It no longer seems doubtful that what a man has experienced during infancy or childhood (particularly if experience is not restricted to external events but includes patterns of conflicts and their solution) may influence as a recurrent theme (or as a defense [sic] against it) his thought processes, his dreams, and his artistic creations" (1964, 18-19).

Tennyson's dreams and "waking dreams"⁶ or "dreamy states"⁷ are among the experiences to which I shall refer in this study. And since the cluster of images which he uses to describe his paranormal experiences in early poems like "Armageddon" (R3) becomes virtually paradigmatic for much of the poetry which was to follow over a period of almost seventy years, the importance of these experiences cannot be over-estimated.

My plea is, therefore, that the strange phenomena which recur with such significant frequency in his poetry should be accepted as having personal relevance for Tennyson. And on that note I shall return to the subject of paranormal experience in general and Tennyson's experiences in particular.

The South African Society for Psychical Research indicates, in a questionnaire disseminated to all members in the Witwatersrand area, that it uses the terms "paranormal", "psychic" and "psi" more or less interchangeably, and that the terms are "used in a very broad sense" to include "such things as extra sensory perception (ESP) and psychokinesis (PK)". It is pointed out that "terms like telepathy, precognition, psychometry and clairvoyance are parts of ESP", and are therefore included in the general term "'psychic'". Similarly, mediumistic trances are also included. And the rubric to the questionnaire concludes by saying that it "does not matter" if all a subject's reported experiences are "of one kind" or include "many of the above categories" (Neppe

1979, 142).

Neppe's Subjective Paranormal Experience Questionnaire is appended at the end of this volume (Appendix A), and the questions posed therein are here considered in relation to Tennyson's poetry and biography, in an effort to establish the range of his apparently psychic experiences. The second-person form of the questions is maintained, although the "answering" observations are of necessity presented in the third person.

1. *"Have you ever dreamt about something and later learnt that what you dreamt really happened?"*

One inevitably recalls Tennyson's dream, shortly before the laureate offer arrived, of the Prince Consort kissing him. Martin obviously believes that the dream reveals the poet's preoccupations, for he describes the incident thus:

Proof that [Tennyson's] thoughts were actually very much with the Laureateship is given by the dream he had the night before the letter arrived. In the dream the Queen and the Prince came to call on him at his mother's house (perhaps as they had done at Esher) and were very gracious to him, the Prince going so far as to kiss him, to which his response was 'Very kind but very German'. When he woke in the morning he told Emily about the dream before the mail was brought to them in the bedroom.

(1980, 351-52)^a

Although this appears to be a precognitive dream, Jung probably would have said, "There is no magic in this." He himself describes apparently prophetic dreams experienced by patients, which can be explained as the revelation of

suppressed wishes which are later fulfilled (Jung 1964, 50-51).

2. *Have you ever had a rather clear and specific dream which matched in detail an event which occurred before, during or after your dream, and which you did not know about and did not expect at the time of the dream?*

In Memoriam 69 records such an apparently precognitive dream.

Binswanger writes in "Dream and Existence" that when "we are in a state of deeply felt hope or expectation and what we have hoped for proves illusory, then the world - in one stroke - becomes radically 'different'" (1963, 222). This is the kind of world which Tennyson describes in the opening lines of section 69 of the elegy written after the hopes and expectations vested in his great friendship with Arthur Hallam had been felled, "in one stroke", by Hallam's death. The poet writes:

I dream'd there would be Spring no more,
That Nature's ancient power was lost:
The streets were black with smoke and frost....

(IM 69:1-3)

The dashing of youthful hopes and dreams, and the seeming impossibility of ever again enjoying the kind of golden days once shared with Hallam are symbolically reflected in a world where "there would be spring no more". And it is not only "Nature's ancient power" that is lost. The dream seems to

reveal an underlying fear on the part of the poet that his own poetic powers, which had blossomed so luxuriantly under Hallam's influence, might also be "lost" or diminished in the absence of his friend's warm admiration and enthusiastic encouragement. Perhaps I should stress that I do not make this substitution gratuitously. Tennyson establishes the precedent for such a transference through his own interpretation of another dream, which he recalls in In Memoriam 68. He writes (apostrophising Hallam):

I find a trouble in thine eye,
Which makes me sad I know not why,
Nor can my dream resolve the doubt....

(IM 68:10-12)

But on waking he "discern[s] the truth", and this leads him to write: "It is the trouble of my youth / That foolish sleep transfers to thee" (lines 15-16).

The dream landscape in In Memoriam 69 is appropriately unpleasant (line 3), and contrasting images of heat and cold are used to suggest barrenness. The phrase "black with smoke" suggests perhaps that the milieu has been devastated - as Tennyson's life seems to have been devastated by his grief at the loss of Hallam. And the icy-cold image of "frost" - which can also be a destructive force - is striking in contrast to the heat associated, by implication, with "smoke". But, though "smoke" and "frost" are contrasting images, they work synergistically to suggest the poet's inner state. The chilling effect of death and grief is inherent in the word "frost", while the dreamer's inability to see the way ahead in

a life without Hallam is reflected in the image of obscurity ("streets...black with smoke").

In line 4 the pronoun "they" has a vague and impersonal quality which contrasts with the warm, intimate relationship once shared with Hallam. Similarly, the "trifles" which they "chatter'd at the door" (line 4) contrast strikingly with the meaningful philosophic and poetic discourse of the brilliant Hallam, to which Tennyson alludes in In Memoriam 71, for instance. There, recalling yet another dream, the poet writes:

...now we talk as once we talk'd
Of men and minds, the dust of change,
The days that grow to something strange...

(IM 71:9-11)⁹

It is not surprising, then, that in the dream described in section 69 of In Memoriam, the poet, in a symbolic move reflecting his isolation through grief, "wander'd from the noisy town" (line 5) into a "wood with thorny boughs" (line 6). The thorns which symbolize the suffering occasioned by his loss recall an earlier poem, "Pierced through with knotted thorns of barren pain..." (R190). But in In Memoriam 69 the poet writes: "I took the thorns to bind my brows, / I wore them like a civic crown" (lines 7-8). Susan Shatto and Marion Shaw quote Tennyson's comment to Knowles: "'I tried to make my grief into a crown of these poems - but it is not to be taken too closely - to write verses about sorrow[,] grief and death is to wear a crown of thorns, which ought to be put by - as people say'" (1982, 228).

The "scoffs" and "scorns" of those who regard a poet who abandons himself to grief as a "fool" are described in lines 9-13. But lines 14-16 reflect a turning-point in the dream, for the poet writes:

I found an angel of the night;
The voice was low, the look was bright;
He look'd upon my crown and smiled....

In the context of In Memoriam, one of the great love poems of the nineteenth century (Zuckerman 1971, 202),¹⁰ this encounter with an "angel of the night" serves to underline a point made by John Arthos in another connection - that "love is a particular factor in bringing the human into touch with the divine" (1977, 27). I have shown elsewhere that the "angel of the night", which Tennyson glossed as "the Divine Thing in the gloom" (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 229) was probably "the spiritual presence of the dead friend" whom the poet referred to in In Memoriam 14 (line 10) as "half-divine" (Louw 1985, 57). Certainly the synecdoche of "voice" and "hand" is frequently used throughout In Memoriam, in association with Hallam. Here the poet writes that the "angel of the night"

...reach'd the glory of a hand,
That seem'd to touch it into leaf:
The voice was not the voice of grief,
The words were hard to understand.

(IM 69:17-20)

The crown of thorns seems to have become a laurel wreath: the suffering Christ-figure has, symbolically, become the Poet Laureate in an apparently prophetic dream. And even in the dream this transformation has been foreshadowed - for in line

8 the poet, recording the early part of his dream, said he wore the circlet of thorns "like a civic crown" (my italics).

Shatto and Shaw indicate that section 69 of In Memoriam was included in the Lincoln manuscript on which Tennyson worked between 1842 and 1848.¹¹ And Eleanor Mattes is of the opinion that section 69 was written before 1845 (1951, 123). Since Tennyson was offered the Laureateship only in 1850, this symbolic dream certainly appears to have been prophetic; and the idea of prophetic dreams has fascinated men and poets since earliest times.¹² Of course, Jung has written that "dreams may sometimes announce certain situations long before they actually happen", but that this "is not necessarily a miracle or a form of precognition." For many events in our lives "have a long unconscious history. We move towards them step by step....But what we consciously fail to see is frequently perceived by our unconscious, which can pass the information on through dreams" (Jung 1964, 51). And Freudians would be quick to point out that "the central tenet of Freud's theory of dream-formation was that dreams are wish-fulfilments" (Wright 1984, 41).

In the particular dream described in In Memoriam 69, a number of concerns or emotional disturbances reveal themselves, but are as it were symbolically resolved: the nature of the poet's feelings for his dead friend, his ability or inability to cope with the loss of that friend, and his anxiety over his future as a poet. A passage from Michael Eigen on Freud's theory of dreaming seems pertinent. Eigen writes:

The disturbances the dream tries to mute involve day residues and deeper unconscious drives. One might call day residues unthought (latent) thoughts, things that happen to us during the day that are not dwelled on or worked through. Our deeper (repressed) wishes seize on such liminal events as entrances to dream work. The dream work fobs off potential disturbance by representing our repressed longings as fulfilled, at least partially, or, better, by trying to balance competing interests. It does this, in part, by substituting things ("thing presentations") for thoughts. Another way of saying this is that in dreams thought regresses to perception. By perception here Freud meant mental presentation of objects, "things" before they have verbal meaning. Since we see things in dreams that are not actually present, such "perceptions" are called hallucinations. Again, in Freud's formula, "wishing ends in hallucinating".

(Eigen 1986, 41)

In assessing the dream recounted in In Memoriam 69, one must also not lose sight of the fact that it may have been influenced by literary as well as psychological factors. Indeed, it is often difficult in In Memoriam to unravel the two strands - literary and psychological. For, as Peter Sacks has observed,

...the elegy, as a poem of mourning and consolation, has its roots in a dense matrix of rites and ceremonies, in the light of which many elegiac conventions should be recognized as being not only aesthetically interesting forms but also the literary versions of specific social and psychological practices.

(1985, 2)

The reference to a coronal of sprouting leaves in lines 16-18 of In Memoriam 69 may reflect the influence of a story from Ovid's Metamorphoses, which Sacks summarises - though he does not, apparently, perceive the connection with In Memoriam 69:

Having insulted Cupid, Apollo is smitten with an unrequited passion for Daphne. He pursues her to the riverbanks of her father, Peneus, whom she begs for deliverance. As Apollo grasps her, Daphne becomes the laurel tree - only her gleaming beauty (nitor) remaining unchanged. But this apparently organic metamorphosis, by which the tree substitutes for the nymph, is only part of the story. Apollo's embrace of the actual tree will not in itself give comfort....

Only when Apollo turns to the projected founding of the sign, the laurel wreath, does he appear to accept his loss, by having invented some consoling substitute for Daphne....

(1985, 4)

Sacks goes on to quote Frank Justus Miller's translation (in the Loeb Classical Library Series) of the passage that follows - in which Apollo says: "Since thou canst not be my bride, thou shalt at least be my tree. My hair, my lyre, my quiver shall always be entwined with thee, O laurel" (Metamorphoses I.557-59; qtd. by Sacks 1985, 4).

In Memoriam 69 does not, of course, offer an exact parallel to Ovid's tale in the Metamorphoses. But the essential elements are the same: the loss of the beloved, and the finding of consolation through a leafy crown or laurel wreath associated in some way with the beloved. It is, as Sacks points out, such a "substitutive turn or act of troping that any mourner must perform" (1985, 5).

In support of my assertion concerning the influence of the Ovid passage on section 69 - and, indeed, on In Memoriam as a whole - I shall quote Miller's translation at greater length than Sacks has done. The passage in question follows immediately on the transformation of Daphne into a tree:

But even now in this new form Apollo loved her; and placing his hand upon the trunk, he felt the heart still fluttering beneath the bark. He embraced the branches as if human limbs, and pressed his lips upon the wood. But even the wood shrank from his kisses. And the god cried out to this: "Since thou canst not be my bride, thou shalt at least be my tree. My hair, my lyre, my quiver shall always be entwined with thee, O laurel. With thee shall Roman generals wreath their heads, when shouts of joy shall acclaim their triumph, and long processions climb the Capitol. Thou at Augustus' portals shalt stand a trusty guardian, and keep watch over the civic crown of oak which hangs between. And as my head is ever young and my locks unshorn, so shalt thou keep the beauty of thy leaves perpetual". Paeon was done. The laurel waved her new-made branches, and seemed to move her head-like top in full consent.

(I.553-67; Miller 1916, 40, 43)

I would emphasize the phrase "civic crown" which occurs also in line 8 of In Memoriam 69, thereby suggesting that Tennyson may have been subconsciously remembering this particular story from Ovid's Metamorphoses.

The phrase "new form" in Ovid is also of interest; for concern with the "new form" of the beloved is central to In Memoriam as a whole. The references to "hand" and "lip" in the Ovid passage also recall frequent references to those parts in In Memoriam; and the line, "...so shalt thou keep the beauty of thy leaves perpetual" may adumbrate the allusion in In Memoriam 95, to Hallam's letters as the "fall'n leaves that kept their green" (line 23).

Furthermore, the passage which follows in the Metamorphoses is clearly a precursor of the opening verse paragraph of "Oenone" (R164), which begins "There lies a vale in Ida" (my italics), and which goes on to describe a "swimming vapour" (i.e., cloud or mist) that slopes "athwart

the glen" and "creeps" from tree to tree (lines 3-4) while the "long brook" roars as it falls to the sea (lines 7-9).

The corresponding passage in Ovid reads (in translation):

There is a vale in Thessaly which steep-wood slopes surround on every side.... Through this the River Peneus flows from the foot of Pindus with foam flecked waters, and by its heavy fall forms clouds which drive along fine, smoke-like mist, sprinkles the top of the trees with spray, and deafens even remoter regions by its roar.

(Metamorphoses I.568-73; Miller 1916, 42-43; my italics)

Arthur High Clough asserted that the landscape described in "Oenone" was inspired by the Pyrenees (Martin 1980, 439). It probably was, but I believe that Tennyson, in writing the poem, was also, consciously or unconsciously, recalling Ovid's description of similar scenery in the Metamorphoses.

I may appear to have wandered from the subject of precognitive dreams. But I felt that In Memoriam 69 and "Oenone" both offered an excellent opportunity to illustrate the almost synergistic way in which personal and literary influences interact in Tennyson's poetry. At the same time, my exploration of In Memoriam 69 has indicated that a dream which appears to foreshadow the personal future may actually recall the literary past.

3. Have you ever had a dream involving someone, and later learnt that that person had the same dream as you did at the same time?

This precise experience does not appear to have been

documented in connection with Tennyson, though lines like "...Fancy light from Fancy caught, / And Thought leapt out to wed with Thought" (IM 23:14-15) suggest an intuitive and empathetic mental interaction that may be of a similar order. And the Sonnet, "To - [As when with downcast eyes]" (R179), which is "presumably to Arthur Hallam" (R179, headnote), may also have borderline relevance. But this sonnet is dealt with elsewhere, in connection with the phenomenon of déjà vu.¹³

4. *Have you ever had while awake, a strong feeling, impression, vision or knowledge that a previously unexpected event had happened, was happening or was going to happen, and later learnt that you were right?*

Tennyson's poetry offers many examples of foreboding or apparent precognition - for instance, in Maud (R316):

...I looked, and round, all round the house I beheld
The death-white curtain drawn;
Felt a horror over me creep,
Prickle my skin and catch my breath,
Knew that the death-white curtain meant but sleep,
Yet I shuddered and thought like a fool of the sleep
of death.

(Part I:521-26)

An early draft of "The Two Voices" (R209) has the following passage, which was subsequently deleted:

When thy best friend draws sobbing breath,
Plight thou a compact ere his death
And comprehend the words he saith.

Urge him to swear, distinct and plain,
That out of bliss or out of pain
He will draw nigh thee once again.

Is that his footstep on the floor?
 Is this his whisper at the door?
 Surely he comes. He comes no more.

(R209:n.264.5)

Ricks points out that "The Two Voices" "was in existence by June 1833, and this is an early draft. The strong probability is therefore that this passage preceded Hallam's death; it would subsequently have struck T[ennyson] as a hideous premonition" (R209:n.264.5).

A similar premonition is recorded by Tennyson in a letter to his friend Charles Merivale, the Apostle who read the poet's prize poem at Commencement (Martin 1980, 77).¹⁴ Part of the letter reads:

I hope you have somewhat recovered from the shock of your grandmother's sudden death. I consider it rather remarkable that on the morning when we were at Hampstead I seemed to myself to have some presentiment of it, and could not shake the idea from my mind, though I could not give utterance to it; you remember my asking whether either of your grandmothers was dead, and telling you that both mine were.

(MS. Mats. I, 69)¹⁵

Tennyson often spoke of the sense of depression he experienced on one of his first visits to London. "When I was about twenty," he said, "I used to feel moods of misery unutterable! I remember once in London the realization coming over me, of the whole of its inhabitants lying horizontal a hundred years hence" ("Talks and Walks", 8-9).¹⁶ Naturally, the population of any place at any time would all be lying dead within a hundred years. So why should Tennyson have experienced this feeling only in London, one wonders. During

my last visit to that city, on reading - in various public places - the seemingly endless lists of names of those killed in the blitz, I was suddenly struck by the thought that Tennyson's strange feeling may have been a kind of premonition of the death and devastation which London was to experience in approximately a hundred years' time.

5. *Have you ever had while awake a vivid impression of seeing, hearing, smelling, being touched by, or just strongly being aware of (sensing) another being, which impression, as far as you could discover or knew, was not due to any external physical or 'natural' cause?...Please indicate what senses were involved in each of these 'awarenesses.'*

In the "vision" recorded in In Memoriam 70, two senses are involved - sight and hearing. But the visual element is dominant.

The poem begins:

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint
The face I know...

Clearly the poet-speaker is awake, for a conscious effort is being made to evoke the image of the beloved friend.¹⁷ This conscious effort is unsuccessful; and images of horror present themselves instead to the mind of the poet (lines 3-12). But, as the poet says, addressing the dead Hallam:

...all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul

Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

(lines 13-16)

The visual image which seems to imprint itself on the very "soul" of the poet, restoring it to tranquility, is "fair" - as Hallam was "fair" in life. There is no distortion, though the face looks through a "lattice". I shall have more to say in a later chapter about this "lattice", and also about the "roll" of wizard music which heralds the apparent "vision".¹⁸

The auditory sense is the dominant one in "In the Valley of Caunteretz" (R326), in which the voice of the stream seems to become the voice of ~~the~~ dead friend who had visited that spot with the poet more than three decades earlier. Of course, it might be argued that this example should be discounted, since the illusion is dependent upon an "external physical or 'natural' cause" (page 25 above). Similarly the hearing of a voice in the wind by the young Tennyson could be viewed simply as an imaginative response to an external stimulus (C. Tennyson 1949, 25; Martin 1980, 21; Louw 1985, 94). But, with time, Tennyson's early perception of "a voice in the wind" (my italics) modulates into the ultimate apperception of In Memoriam 130, expressed as a direct address to his dead friend: "Thy voice is on the rolling air..." (my italics).

The hearing of voices seems to have been as much a feature of Tennyson's old age as it was of his youth. The poet's son records the fact that his father heard "perpetual ghostly voices" for some time after the death of his brother

Charles. But Hallam claims that his father was "very unwell" at the time, "suffering from a liver attack" (Memoir II, 244).¹⁹

Although the olfactory sense will find a place in my argument at a later stage, I detect no evidence of Tennyson's ever "smelling" the presence of "another being". But the sense of "being touched by" another being is certainly attested to in In Memoriam 95, where the poet writes: "The dead man touch'd me from the past..." (line 34). Of course, it might be argued that this line may simply represent a metaphorical use of language. However, the very choice of metaphor suggests the impression created - which is all Neppe's question seeks to establish. Veridicality is not required.²⁰

So far as "strongly being aware of (sensing) another being" is concerned, it will suffice here to refer to Tennyson's sense of Hallam's guiding presence ("The footsteps of his life in mine" - IM 85:44), and to note that towards the end of the poet's life "his walks were confined to what he called his 'demon-haunted hill'" (MS. Mats. IX, 79). The epithet "demon-haunted" would certainly seem to suggest an awareness of some sort of non-physical presence.

6. *Has any other person ever told you they had a dream, vision or definite feeling in which they seemed to get information about an event involving you which they could not have obtained in any 'normal' or conventional way?...Were you in crisis at the time?*

I have no information on Tennyson to offer under this section.

7. *Have you ever seen a light or lights around a person's head, shoulders, hands or body which, as far as you could tell, were not due to 'normal' or 'natural causes' (i.e. a halo or aura?)*

There are references to such a phenomenon in Tennyson's poetry. For instance, in an early poem ("And ask ye why these sad tears stream?") which J. Pettigrew postulates was "Probably written on [Tennyson's] grandmother's death in 1825" (R25, headnote), the poet writes of a lovely dream of the dead woman.

I saw her as 'twas yesterday,
 The bloom upon her cheek still glowing;
 And round her played a golden ray,
 And on her brows were gay flowers blowing.

(R25:5-8; my italics)

Of course, the halo effect in the "vision" (line 20) may have been purely symbolic, as is generally the case with dreams. And a later stanza reinforces the impression of a rather conventional symbolism:

I saw her mid the realms of light,
 In everlasting radiance gleaming;
 Co-equal with the seraphs bright,
 Mid thousand thousand angels beaming.

(lines 13-16)

In The Lover's Tale (R153), the narrator, Julian, telling

of his early and intense love for his cousin Camilla, recalls an occasion when he made a flower garland for her hair. He continues:

Methought a light
 Burst from the garland I had woven, and stood
 A solid glory on her bright black hair;
 A light methought broke from her dark, dark eyes,
 And shot itself into the singing winds;
 A mystic light flashed even from her white robe
 As from a glass in the sun, and fell about
 My footsteps on the mountains.

(I.357-64)

Despite the poem's supposed literary antecedents,²¹ I believe that many of the passages in The Lover's Tale had personal significance for Tennyson. But this does not appear to be one of them. In my opinion what we see at work in the above passage is pure fancy.

Two lines from In Memoriam present themselves for consideration in relation to Neppe's question concerning "a halo or aura". They are line 36 of section 87: "...we saw / The God within him [Hallam] light his face". But the plural pronoun ("we") seems to operate against the interpretation of the lines in terms of paranormal experience.

However, Tennyson apparently told Joseph Joachim about "visions" he had had of heaven and of his dead parents. His comments seem to suggest that the halo effect described in "And ask ye why these sad tears stream?" (quoted above) may have been subjectively perceived, and not merely an example of traditional religious symbolism. Tennyson said:

There have been rare moments, in my most exalted
 moods, while writing poetry when I seemed to have

had fleeting glimpses of that realm; it appeared to me like a glorified earth. I saw gorgeous landscapes, with forests and lakes, much more beautiful than anything in our world, and I recognized my parents, who looked as I knew them on earth, only their faces were much more beautiful and radiant. They seemed to emit rays of vivacity and happiness. I do not believe that those brief visions were mere subconscious hallucinations. They were too distinct and vivid; they were so real that it suddenly occurred to me that what Paul called the spiritual body, in 1 Corinthians 15:44, is in reality a material body - that is, it is composed of matter, not in the gross manifestation of it, that we know here on earth, but a rarefied form of it, and yet consisting of ether, light, atoms, and molecules....

(Elliott 1979, 92-93; my italics)

The conversation between Tennyson and Joachim is reported in Arthur M. Abell's Talks with Great Composers (1956. London: Spiritualist Press, 37). Philip Elliott notes that Sir Charles Tennyson "accepts the report as genuine" (Elliott 1979, 100), and Sir Charles, in his essay on "Tennyson's Philosophy", certainly does seem to accord it some importance (C. Tennyson 1975, 152).

8. *Have you ever communicated with the dead as a medium in a séance or believed yourself to be controlled or 'possessed' by a spirit?*

Some members of the Tennyson family showed a marked interest in séances (Elliot 1979, 89). It is well known that the poet's brother Frederick was an enthusiastic spiritualist (Martin 1980, 563). What is perhaps not quite so well known is the fact that his sister, Emily, who had been betrothed to Arthur Hallam, "took up" spiritualism after her marriage to

Captain Richard Jesse, and frequently held séances. Her granddaughter, Fryn Tennyson Jesse, points this out in a letter of 1940 to Vail Motter. She writes, rather amusingly:

My grandmother, I have always heard, took up spiritualism ardently when at Margate and used to hold séances, but my great-uncle Alfred soon refused to have anything to do with them on the rather sensible grounds that he did not believe the Almighty communicated with you by means of table legs! Also I have heard that the messages rapped out by the spirits were so obscene and filthy that the séances had to be abandoned. They knew nothing of the sub-conscious in those days and whether this threw a light on what went on in the depths of my grandmother's mind or not I cannot tell you.

(Kolb 1981, 802)²²

Martin, too, emphasizes that although Tennyson attended séances after his son Lionel's death (1980, 557-58), and at one time showed some enthusiasm for a visiting medium (1980, 482), he could not ultimately accept the trappings of spiritualism (1980, 563). Nevertheless, the poem "De Profundis", which was begun at Hallam Tennyson's birth and completed many years later, at one time bore the title, "A Spiritualist to his newborn son" (R383, headnote). Of course, the word "Spiritualist" is left undefined. Tennyson probably uses it in one sense of "One who regards things from a spiritual point of view or interprets them in a spiritual sense; one whose ideas or doctrines have a purely spiritual basis or tendency" (OED 1.a.). He is less likely to be using the term "spiritualist" in the sense of a "believer in modern spiritualism or spiritism; a spiritist" (OED 4) - a meaning exemplified in the Oxford English Dictionary by Elizabeth Barrett Browning's epistolary comment of 1852: "Lady Elgin is

a great spiritualist with a...belief in every sort of incredible thing".

Philip Elliott, in his essay on "Tennyson and Spiritualism" writes:

ONE of the more interesting phenomena of the second half of the nineteenth century is spiritualism, sometimes called modern spiritualism or spiritism to distinguish it from the earlier sense of the term: the adoption of a spiritual view of things. After 1852, spiritualism in both England and America meant the belief that spirits of the dead could communicate with the living, particularly through a medium, a human who is receptive to vibrations from the spirit world, receiving and conveying messages from spirits, and who can produce other spiritualistic phenomena such as raps, moving objects (particularly tables), apports (the production of objects without physical means or the passing of objects through walls), clairvoyance, spirit drawing and painting, and spirit materialization. Spiritualism was very popular, claiming to number its adherents in the millions and drawing them from all levels of society, from Queen Victoria and Prince Albert to labourers. It would have been most unusual if Alfred Tennyson with his active interest in all new social, political, scientific, and religion [sic] developments had failed to be interested in the phenomenon....

Elliott marvels that, given Tennyson's obvious interest in the subject, there "is no more clear evidence of spiritualism in his poems" (1979, 89). There are indeed few overt references in his poetry to what has been called "the practice of spiritualism" - which "began in the United States in 1848" (Pinion 1969, 217). Of course, belief "in a world of spirits has been a constant feature of all human societies." But, "systematic communication with that world through spirit mediumship and possession is a central feature only of certain peripheral cults in primitive societies, and of spiritualism in the western world since the middle of the nineteenth

century" (Skultans 1987, 739).

Elizabeth Barrett Browning was "fascinated by spiritualism", although - as Pinion succinctly observes - her husband's "revulsion was great" (Pinion 1969, 217-18). Some of Robert Browning's views on the subject of spiritualism find expression in his monologue, "Mr Sludge, the Medium" (Pinion 1969, 113-17), which opens with Mr Sludge, having been caught out in an act of trickery, swearing that it's "the only time" he "ever cheated" (lines 3-4).

In the annals of spiritualism there are many tales of charlatans with a wide "repertoire of tricks" (Pinion 1969, 217), and Tennyson may well have been wary of some of the more dramatic claims made by mediums. Nevertheless, throughout his life he had what Arthos has called "the sense of realms of being across the threshold [sic] of the waking sight" (1977, 9). As Martin indicates, the poet "felt constantly aware of an unseen world of spirit that he once described as 'a great ocean pressing round us on every side, and only leaking in by a few chinks'" (1980, 557).

I have found no evidence of Tennyson's ever having acted as the "medium in a séance" (question 8, SPE Questionnaire), but there are references, both in In Memoriam 95 and in biographical material, to the trance in which he believed he had "communicated with the dead" - or "the Deity" (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 255). The trance experiences will be dealt with at some length in later chapters. Here I can only point out once more the references in In Memoriam to the guiding hand of Hallam²³ and to "the footsteps of his life" in that of the poet

(IM 85:44). These references, like line 48 of section 85 ("His being working in mine own"), could be construed as suggesting a form of control by Hallam's spirit. Similarly, the famous lines from In Memoriam 95, "The living soul was flash'd on mine, // And mine in this was wound..." (lines 36-37), could be interpreted as a form of "possession". In this connection it may be relevant to notice the similarities between Tennyson's experience and that of St Augustine in one of his most mystical moments. "Augustine...felt the holy presence of God 'in the flash of a trembling glance'. It is vision of the most intense and exalted sort, but possession, too - a possessing and a being possessed" (Hazelton 1955, 409).

8a. How often do you lose consciousness?

Loss of consciousness or syncope is a feature of many of Tennyson's poems. For instance, in "Timbuctoo" the speaker is overcome by the magnitude of a vision granted him by a Seraph. He says, in narration:

...my human brain
Staggered beneath the vision, and thick night
Came down upon my eyelids, and I fell.

(R67:181-83)

Similarly, in The Lover's Tale (R153) Julian, the narrator, tells of his response to the news that his cousin Camilla loves another:

...then it seemed as though a link

Of some tight chain within my inmost frame
 Was riven in twain: that life I heeded not
 Flowed from me, and the darkness of the grave,
 The darkness of the grave and utter night,
 Did swallow up my vision; at her feet,
 Even the feet of her I loved, I fell,
 Smit with exceeding sorrow unto Death.

(R153:I.583-90).

Later in the Tale Julian tells of a terrible nightmare,
 and ends his account thus:

...all the sway and whirl
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm, and I
 Down weltered through the dark ever and ever.

(II.203-05)²⁴

In The Princess (R286), loss of consciousness is not usually a feature of the "weird seizures" which Tennyson added to the poem in 1851 (R286, headnote), and which are ascribed in the poem to "catalepsy" (I.20). But in the "jousting" scene which ends section V, the Prince falls from his horse while engaged in combat. It is not altogether clear from the text whether he falls as a result of the fighting, or as a result of loss of consciousness due to the "weird seizure" which is described elsewhere as a kind of "waking dream" (I.12). The latter certainly seems to play a significant part in the narrated events. The poet, speaking in the persona of the Prince, says:

...I felt my veins
 Stretch with fierce heat; a moment hand to hand,
 And sword to sword, and horse to horse we hung,
 Till I struck out and shouted; the blade glanced,
 I did but shear a feather, and dream and truth
 Flowed from me; darkness closed me; and I fell.

(V.526-31)

So far as Tennyson's known personal experience is concerned, there is little conclusive evidence that he suffered to a significant extent from "loss of consciousness". H.D. Rawnsley recalls that, in 1890, Tennyson "had had a bad attack of influenza, but was recovered sufficiently to take short walks, though, as a precaution against any sudden attack of faintness, he never went unaccompanied either by his devoted son or his nurse" (Page 1983, 67). But such sudden attacks of "faintness" might well be expected in an octogenarian recovering from influenza.

However, there are occasional biographical items which are less easy to explain away. For instance, a brief and cryptic entry in the unpublished manuscript version of Materials for a Life of AT Collected for My Children reads:

[July] 3rd [1848]:²⁵

Went with candles into great cave round the rock through surf. Mr S (STOKES) bore me on his back thro' surf.

(MS. Mats. III, 15)

Tennyson has been described as "'a magnificent creature to look at. He had everything; height, figure, carriage, feature and expression'" (Page 1983, ix).²⁶ Since he was "Unusually tall and powerfully built (he once picked up a donkey and carried it across the lawn)" (Page 1983, ix), one cannot help wondering why it should have been necessary for "Mr Stokes" to carry the poet, who was not yet thirty-nine years of age at the time, through the surf. I would postulate that Tennyson lost consciousness in the cave which was lit by

flickering candle light, and had to be carried out. But the basis of my argument must be reserved for a later chapter.²⁷

Certainly, reports of Tennyson in his old age suggest that he may have suffered from "absences" or momentary lapses of consciousness at that time. For instance, Martin, reviewing Tennyson's last year, writes:

When he was talking to friends, he would sometimes seem to absent himself from the conversation, and without the stimulation of direct response to others, his watery old eyes would recede beneath the heavy bony brow, and his face, framed by straggly hair and unkempt beard, would settle into the elongated wrinkles of old age.

(1980, 579)

Wilfrid Ward remembers Tennyson's having had rather similar lapses of attention more than a decade earlier - as the following reminiscence shows:

I have known him stand for several minutes, after a half-absent 'How d'ye do?' in this dreamy state, with his curious look of high-strung sensitiveness, before he began to talk.

(Page 1983, 98)²⁸

Tennyson's "absences" may simply have been due to "the still serene abstraction" of a man frequently lost in thought ("The Mystic", R96:5). But they may also have been epileptic in character. The Penguin Dictionary of Psychology defines the term "absence" as "Momentary mental inattention, a short period during which consciousness is missing", and adds that this is a "common aspect of epilepsy".

8b, c, d and e. These questions on the SPE Questionnaire

would all warrant a negative answer, so far as I am aware. I shall not, therefore, consider them here.

9. Have you ever had the experience while 'healthy' in which you were located outside or away from your physical body: that is, the feeling that your consciousness, mind or centre of awareness was at a different place than [sic] your physical body?...[D]id you 'travel' to distant places and 'see' or 'hear' what was going on there?...[D]id you see your physical body while outside it?

There are several examples of "out-of-body" experiences in Tennyson's poetry. For instance, the poet writes thus of "The Mystic" (R96):

He often lying broad awake, and yet
 Remaining from the body, and apart
 In intellect and power and will, hath heard
 Time flowing in the middle of the night,
 And all things creeping to a day of doom.

(lines 36-40)²⁹

In another poem, considered to be the "germ" of In Memoriam, the poet writes:

Hark! the dogs howl! the sleetwinds blow,
 The church-clocks knoll: the hours haste,
 I leave the dreaming world below.
 Blown o'er frore heads of hills I go,
 Long narrowing friths and stripes of snow -
 Time bears my soul into the waste.
 I seek the voice I loved - ah where
 Is that dear hand that I should press,
 Those honoured brows that I would kiss?

(R214:1-9)

This "out-of-body" experience modulates into a vision:

Now riseth up a little cloud -
 Divideth like a broken wave -
 Shows Death a drooping youth pale-browed
 And crowned with daisies of the grave.
 The vapour labours up the sky,
 Uncertain forms are darkly moved,
 Larger than human passes by
 The shadow of the man I loved.

(lines 14-21)³⁰

Probably the most fully presented "out-of-body" experience in Tennyson's work is described in In Memoriam 12. The poem begins:

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
 To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
 Some dolorous message knit below
 The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go; I cannot stay;
 I leave this mortal ark behind....

(lines 1-6)

One might postulate that line 6 simply heralds a flight of fancy. But Tennyson specifically glosses the line thus: "'my spirit flies from out my material self'" (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 176). He goes on in the poem to stress this point by describing his body as "A weight of nerves without a mind" (line 7).

The lines which follow clearly demand a positive answer to Neppe's question, "...did you 'travel' to distant places and 'see' or 'hear' what was going on there?" For the poet's disembodied spirit "leave[s] the cliffs, and haste[s] away // O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large" (lines 8-9). The speaker continues:

[I] reach the glow of southern skies,
 And see the sails at distance rise,
 And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying; 'Comes he thus, my friend?
 Is this the end of all my care?'
 And circle moaning in the air:
 'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

(lines 10-16)

The graphic visual description powerfully suggests that the disembodied spirit sees not only the landscape or "setting", but also the action that is being played out there. He "see[s] the sails at distance rise". Furthermore, the poet-speaker's use of precise detail suggests that the spirit sees himself becoming part of the action, as he "linger[s] weeping on the marge" and "circle[s] moaning in the air" (lines 12, 15 - my italics). And he seems to hear himself speaking (lines 13-14, 16).

In the final stanza the kinaesthetic imagery associated with the spirit ("And forward dart again, and play / About the prow, and back return" - lines 17-18) contrasts sharply with the stasis of the body which merely "sits" (line 19). And again that small detail - the fact that the body is perceived to be in a sitting position - suggests that the disembodied spirit does indeed see its own physical form.

The closing line indicates the duration of the "out-of-body" experience. On returning to his "normal" state the poet-speaker discovers that he has been "an hour away" (line 20).

Neppe's original question pertains specifically to the experience of being "located outside of or away from" the

physical body (my italics). Therefore it may seem strange that he should close the section with the following questions: "Where was your consciousness (mind) (centre of awareness)? (Were you inside or outside your body, or can you not say?)" Presumably he uses these questions as an additional built-in safeguard against "false-positive" answers. So far as the experience recorded in In Memoriam 12 is concerned, the above analysis seems to indicate that the "consciousness" or "mind" or "centre of awareness" of the poet-speaker was with the disembodied spirit, outside the body.

Of course, one is forced to consider whether the out-of-body episodes described in the poetry reflect actual experiences or mere poetic licence. Shatto and Shaw apparently tend to the latter interpretation; for they write that In Memoriam 12 is based on "an extended metaphor of the poet's impatience to be with the body on board ship. The metaphor conflates the ancient notion (usually associated with the moment of death) that the soul can escape and fly away from the body", and the Biblical incident - related in Genesis 8.8-9 - in which Noah dispatched a dove from the ark to see if the waters were subsiding after the great flood (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 175). However, Tennyson's remark to James Knowles, on another occasion, seems to lend credence to the idea that In Memoriam 12 reflects an actual out-of-body experience. He said, "'Sometimes as I sit here alone in this great room I get carried away out of sense and body, and rapt into mere existence, till the accidental touch or movement of one of my own fingers is like a great shock and blow and brings the body

back with a terrible start'" (Knowles 1893; qtd. in Page 1983, 87).³¹

10. *Have you ever had what seems to be a memory of a previous lifetime? (i.e. 'reincarnation' memories).*

Tennyson's poem "The Mystic" (R96) has lines which appear to refer to reincarnation. The poet writes of the "mystic":

...he hath felt
The vanities of after and before;
Albeit, his spirit and his secret heart
The stern experiences of converse lives,
The linkèd woes of many a fiery change
Had purified, and chastened, and made free.

(R96:5-10)

Lines 41-46 suggest that successive reincarnations may correspond with a series of astral planes - that is, levels of existence through which the soul of man must pass before reaching eternity and "Remerging in the general Soul" (IM 47:4). These astral planes are conceived as concentric circles.

How could ye know him? Ye were yet within
The narrower circle; he had wellnigh reached
The last, which with a region of white flame,
Pure without heat, into a larger air
Upburning, and an ether of black blue,
Investeth and ingirds all other lives.

(R96:41-46)

Although, as Daniel Albright notes, the "protagonist of 'The Mystic' is...anonymous" (1986, 8), the poem may well be based on ideas of reincarnation which Tennyson himself held.

Such ideas are also alluded to in an early sonnet which is "Presumably to Arthur Hallam" (R179, headnote):

As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood,
 And ebb into a former life, or seem
 To lapse far back in some confused dream
 To states of mystical similitude;
 If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,
 Ever the wonder waxeth more and more,
 So that we say, 'All this hath been before,
 All this hath been, I know not when or where.'

(lines 1-8)

The theme of reincarnation inherent in the reference to "a former life" (line 2) modulates into an expression of déjà vu ("All this hath been before..."), and is finally restated in the closing lines of the poem:

...though I knew not in what time or place,
 Methought that I had often met with you,
 And either lived in either's heart and speech.

(lines 12-14)

The "reincarnation" section of the SPE Questionnaire carries a number of subsidiary questions: "How many previous lifetimes can you remember? In how many of these lifetimes were you a well-known or important person? Have you ever been able to record details such as names, places, historical events, etc. which you had not known before your 'memories'? How old were you at the time of each memory?" In answer, one can only quote Tennyson's words: "I know not when or where" and "I know not in what time or place" (lines 8, 12).

Tennyson's famous "passion of the past" may have been associated with ideas of reincarnation and feelings of déjà vu. And I shall take up the subject of the "passion of the

past" again in a later chapter.³² But at this point I want to draw attention to Vernon M. Neppe's study, The Psychology of Déjà Vu: Have I Been Here Before? (1983). This fascinating book is based on Neppe's doctoral dissertation, "A Study of Déjà Vu Experience" (1981c), which I have also perused. I have, however, chosen to refer to the first published version, since this will obviously be more accessible to most readers. According to the "operational definition" used in Neppe's research project, déjà vu is "Any subjectively inappropriate impression of familiarity of a present experience with an undefined past" (1983, 3). Reincarnation would offer one possible explanation for déjà vu - as has been suggested in Hindu literature, and by Pythagoras, Aristotle and the Russian mystic Ouspensky, inter alia. "But, in general, these opinions are now regarded as highly unlikely...." And Neppe stresses the desirability, "in analysing all subjective paranormal experiences", of excluding "the obvious and the physical" before considering the "non-physical" (1983, 39).

According to Neppe, "the déjà vu phenomenon is generally categorized into one of...seven phenomenological levels." It may be regarded as a paramnesia, as an ego-state disorder, as a temporal perceptual disturbance, as an ego defence, as an epileptic manifestation, as a disorder of recognition, or as a subjective paranormal experience. Within these broad parameters a number of interesting theories are advanced - too many indeed, for me to cover in this study. I shall have to be content to say that, given Tennyson's powerful feelings for Arthur Hallam, it is within the realms of possibility that the

experience described in "To - ['As when with downcast eyes']" may be explicable in terms of day-dream fantasy, fantasy gratification or wish-fulfilment (Neppe 1983, 21-22). On the other hand, attempts have also been made (by Lalande and by Chari) to explain déjà vu in terms of telepathic communication (Neppe 1983, 23). There is certainly a suggestion of telepathy in Tennyson's sonnet (R179:10).

The postulation most relevant to my own theories is that of Penfield (1955), who believed that déjà vu "involves a minor seizure due to firing in the temporal lobe" (Neppe 1983, 20). Neppe's own research led him to conclude that déjà vu "may be a phenomenon of relevance in the temporal lobe epilepsy aura, but it is too common to be regarded as an important non-aura TLE symptom. As such its presence alone is of no diagnostic value". Neppe concedes, however, that there may be "certain qualitative differences between déjà vu experience in TLE and those in the general population" (Neppe 1981a, 908).

I shall return to the subject of déjà vu in the next chapter.

11.1 and 11.2 These questions on the SPE Questionnaire pertain to psychokinesis - that is, "a hypothesized parapsychological phenomenon whereby an individual supposedly influences a physical event without direct intervention." This phenomenon is also sometimes "called parakinesis and abbreviated PK" (Penguin Dictionary of Psychology). It does not appear to be documented in connection with Tennyson

personally, nor have I found evidence of it in his poetry.

12. *Have you ever attempted to 'heal' someone who is ill by other than 'normal' means (e.g. by laying on of hands)?*

Tennyson is reported to have helped Emily³³ and others by means of "mesmerism". The term dates back to its "discoverer", the German physician, Franz Anton Mesmer (1733-1815),³⁴ who tended to regard the process of "mesmerism" (a term now often used synonymously with "hypnotism") as "one which transports the subject into a separate 'state of mind'" (Penguin Dictionary of Psychology). The Longman's Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry defines "hypnosis" as "a superficial or deep trance state resembling sleep, induced by suggestions of relaxation and concentrated attention to a single object. The subject becomes highly suggestible and responsive to the hypnotist's influence, and can be induced to recall forgotten events, become insensitive to pain, control vasomotor changes, and, in the hands of an experienced hypnotherapist, gain relief from tensions, anxieties, and other psychological symptoms."

The idea that a subject can be "placed" in a state that differs from his normal state of awareness, and in which he becomes highly suggestible, is thought to date back to the cult of Aesculapius in the fourth century BC (Hunt 1983, 289). But hypnotism became popular in Europe as a result of Mesmer's flamboyant showmanship and his claims of being able to cure a wide spectrum of illnesses. Having written a doctoral

dissertation on the magnetic effects of the planets on the human body, Mesmer had subsequently "sought to capture 'celestial forces' with iron rods and magnetized water, and to focus them on ailing patients." An official investigation eventually led to his being branded a fraud (Longman's Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry). However, Ellenberger points out that

The litigious point was not whether Mesmer cured his patients but rather his contention to have discovered a new physical fluid. The commission's conclusion was that no evidence could be found of the physical existence of a "magnetic fluid". Possible therapeutic effects were not denied, but were ascribed to "imagination."

(1970, 65)

Although Mesmer came to be branded a charlatan, his ideas had already created a tremendous interest in the power of suggestion, and his work influenced later, well-respected scientists like Braide (1795-1860) and Esdaile (1808-1859), who used hypnosis in surgery, as well as Charcot (1825-1893) and Freud (1856-1939) who used it in the treatment of mental disorders (Hunt 1983, 289). The nature and extent of Mesmer's influence is still debated:

It is an open question as to [sic] whether Mesmer was a precursor of dynamic psychiatry or its actual founder. Any pioneer is always the successor of previous ones and the precursor of others. There is no doubt, however, that the development of modern dynamic psychiatry can be traced to Mesmer's animal magnetism, and that posterity has been remarkably ungrateful to him.

(Ellenberger 1970, 69)

Mesmer's influence has certainly been perceived in the

literature of the period. Shelley is said to have "dabbled in Mesmerism" while in Europe, and he wrote a poem called "The Magnetic Lady to Her Patient", which begins:

"Sleep, Sleep on! forget thy pain;
 My hand is on thy brow,
 My spirit on thy brain;
 My pity on thy heart, poor friend;
 And from my fingers flow
 The powers of life, and like a sign,
 Seal thee from thine hour of woe;
 And brood on thee, but may not blend
 With thine.

(lines 1-9; Hutchinson 1970, 667)

Ekbert Faas writes that "mesmeromania...had haunted Central Europe since the 1780s." He notes "the enthusiasm of men like Schelling" and Schopenhauer, but points out that such enthusiasm was "not evident in England before 1837". However, after 1837 Mesmerism became a prime topic for conversation and debate, largely as a result of "a series of public mesmeric demonstrations at University College hospital [London] conducted by the reputable Dr Elliotson under the guidance of French mesmeriser Dupotet de Sennevoy." Before long, the experiments ended in public scandal, but the excitement lived on for years" (Faas 1988, 38).

As a result of watching Dr Elliotson's experiments, Charles Dickens became an ardent believer in mesmerism. The interest of Tennyson's Cambridge friend, Richard Monckton Milnes (later Lord Houghton) is probably reflected in the fact that he wrote a poem called "Mesmerism in London". And many other eminent Victorians, including Arnold, Clough, Carlyle and Thackeray, "were interested in mesmerism to varying

degrees" (Faas 1988, 39).

The diversity of opinion on the subject of mesmerism is reflected in the different views of Elizabeth Barrett and Robert Browning. Miss Barrett "believed in mesmerism, which was practised by her friend, Harriet Martineau"; but the attitude of Browning, who wrote a poem called "Mesmerism" (Turner 1981, 70-75), was a more sceptical one - though tactfully expressed. "'I do not disbelieve in mesmerism - I only object to insufficient evidence being put forward as quite irrefragable - I keep an open sense on the subject - ready to be instructed'", he said (Turner 1981, 314-15).

On 29 March 1854, Tennyson wrote to a friend, John Forster: "My wife's kind regards to you: she has been in a great state of suffering and sleeplessness for nine days, but at last I set her right by mesmerizing, - the effect was really wonderful" (Memoir I, 374).

In Benjamin Jowett's "Personal Recollections" of Tennyson, the "Late Master of Balliol" had this to say about the poet and mesmerism:

He [Tennyson] was one of those who, though not an upholder of miracle-mongers, thought that the wonders of Heaven and Earth were never far absent from us. He had many stories to tell about Mesmerism, which had some effect upon his mind, though he can hardly be said to have seriously considered the subject. There is no trace of such stories anywhere in his writings.

(Memoir II, 465)

Jowett refers, of course, to the poet's literary writings. There are certainly references to mesmerism in Tennyson's letters. For instance, in a letter to his aunt

Elizabeth (Mrs Matthew Russell of Brancepeth), he enquires: "Have you read Miss [Harriet] Martineau on Mesmerism in the Athenaeum [?]" He goes on to comment that the articles in question are "very wonderful" (MS. Mats II, 167^x).³⁵

Probably the best explanation of how Tennyson came to use mesmerism himself is that printed by Hoge in Lady Tennyson's Journal. The entry is in the third person; and Hoge, citing the source (Mats. III, 10-11), points out that "Obviously Hallam Tennyson has recast this portion of his mother's Journal, setting down her entry in the third person and narrating from his own perspective" (Hoge 1981, 222 n.11). The entry, which pertains to March 1865, reads:

About Mrs. Marsden, who was staying here, A.T. recalled the story of how through his mesmerism before her marriage she had recovered her health. He and my mother were staying at Malvern, Dr. Marsden was attending my mother and said to my father, "Instead of paying me my fee, I wish you would grant me a favour. Come and mesmerize a young lady who is very ill." My father said, "I can't mesmerize, I never mesmerized any one in my life." But the doctor would take no refusal and said, "Pooh! look at your powerful frame!" So he mesmerized her according to the doctor's instructions. The first day it took him about an hour to send her to sleep; afterwards only a few seconds. Once she had a pain over her eye and the doctor said, "Breath upon her eye!" My father did so, then begged her pardon, saying that he had forgotten he had been smoking. Dr. Marsden said, "She cannot hear you, that one breath has sent her off into the deepest of slumbers." In a little while the lady grew better and my father and mother moved to Cheltenham. A week or two afterwards he returned to Malvern for a few hours, but had not thought of telling anyone that he was coming. He met Marsden in the street, who then went and told the lady. Before the doctor had said more to her than "I have good news for you;" the lady said, "I know what you have come to tell me. I have felt Mr. Tennyson here for half an hour." This lady eventually married Dr. Marsden.

(Hoge 1981, 222)³⁶

One cannot rely absolutely on Hallam Tennyson's accuracy and objectivity, of course; but if the tale has been correctly re-told, it would appear that Dr Marsden perceived in Alfred Tennyson some special "power" or aptitude for the task of mesmerism. I do not know why his "powerful frame" should be of any consequence unless, given Mesmer's theories of magnetism, it was thought that a large-bodied man might exert a greater potential field of force. At any rate, the results obtained by Tennyson appear to have been good. However, as Slater and Roth point out, suggestion "plays some part in many forms of medical treatment and the 'placebo responses' of which so much has been written in recent years are attributed to its potency" (Slater and Roth 1969, 189). And, of course, in a post-Freudian era no-one would consider hypnosis a parapsychological phenomenon. Nevertheless, the subject's fore-knowledge of Tennyson's arrival in the area does suggest the possibility of some form of telepathy between subject and hypnotist. However, it must be remembered that the "evidence" here is purely anecdotal.

13.1. Do you have difficulty wearing a watch in that it stops going for no apparent reason and nothing is found wrong with it when taken for repair?

In Jane Brookfield's "Early Recollections of Tennyson", she recalls an occasion on which Tennyson, while visiting Lord and Lady Ashburton at the Grange in Hampshire, came down to breakfast "rather late one morning, with a perturbed

expression of face, and his watch in his hand...." He said very gravely, "'My watch has stopped, what am I to do?'" One of the guests, "who was a practical man...rose from his chair, took the watch from Alfred's hand, asked for the key, wound it up, and silently returned it to its owner" (Page 1983, 11).

This story needs to be registered - though it appears to be about Tennyson's absentmindedness rather than about psi phenomena. Also, so far as I am aware, there is no recorded evidence to suggest that Tennyson was ever "able to restart a broken watch" (SPE Question 13.2).

14.1. To what degree do you regard yourself as being "psychic"? (i.e. having paranormal (psi) abilities).

Tennyson had a special interest in "ghosts" (Martin 1980, 482; Page 1983, 54). The poet, in what Martin calls "a strikingly Hamlet-like gesture", "slept the night in his father's own bed soon after his death, hoping that his ghost would appear and confirm the continuity of life after death." But this did not happen, and years later Tennyson said: "A poet never sees a Ghost" (Martin 1980, 132).³⁷

In In Memoriam, too, he comes to acknowledge that he will not "see" Hallam's "visual shade" (In Memoriam 93:1,5). The poet poses the rhetorical question:

Dare I say
No spirit ever brake the band
That stays him from the native land
Where first he walk'd when claspt in clay?

(lines 1-4)

Tennyson's scepticism about the visual materialization of spirits is recorded by Hallam Tennyson, who compares his father's ideas with those of his uncle Frederick:

Frederick has grown more of a spiritualist than ever, and he believes in visions of visions [sic] of his dead friends and of interwoven angels in backgrounds of celestial azure. My father respected these visions of a poet, whose temperament was highly strung and overwrought, but though he took much interest in spiritualism he could not abide the thought of the souls of dead men manifesting themselves by table-rappings. He would speak after this fashion: 'God and the ghosts of men would speak to the heart of men through the medium of the Spirit not table legs'.

(Shatto and Shaw 1982, 251)³⁸

Nevertheless, Tennyson's belief in a spirit world was strong. In 1869, after reading aloud "The Holy Grail" (R471), he is reported to have said, "Yes, it is true, there are moments when the flesh is nothing to me, when I feel and know the flesh to be the vision, God and the Spiritual the only real and true. Depend on it, the spiritual is the real: it belongs to one more than the hand and the foot" (Memoir II, 90).³⁹ Indeed, the "far off world" seemed to him "nearer than the present" (MS. Mats. II, 42). And, though he abandoned the idea of ever seeing a ghost, he thought that contact between two souls at a purely spiritual level might be possible (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 252).⁴⁰ Accordingly, in In Memoriam 93 he cries out to the spirit of Hallam:

Descend, and touch, and enter; hear
 The wish too strong for words to name;
 That in this blindness of the frame
 My Ghost may feel that thine is near.

(lines 13-16)

On several occasions recorded in In Memoriam and other poems, the poet does indeed "feel" the presence of Hallam's spirit. These occasions include the experiences recorded in In Memoriam 86 and 95, of which I have written in an earlier study,⁴¹ and to which I shall refer again in later chapters of this study. Here I shall merely cite these incidences of apparently paranormal experience in order to state that Tennyson would probably have regarded himself as having psychic propensities. I use the term "propensities" in preference to Neppe's word, "abilities", because the latter may seem to imply that the psychic experiences can be "turned on" at will. For, although Tennyson could voluntarily induce his "trance" state, we know from In Memoriam that his apperception of the "living soul" (be it that of Arthur Hallam or of "the Deity"⁴²) was an involuntary experience which occurred only when the poet was at rest and not striving for spiritual communication.⁴³

Had Tennyson been obliged to rate his psychic powers, according to Neppe's scale, in comparison with those of the average man or woman, I suspect he would have classified them as "marked". Certainly, the apparently psychic or paranormal experiences noted above cover a wide range.

14.2. *How would you regard your knowledge of para-psychology? (psychical research) (compared to the average adult).... How many non-fiction books have you read on the subject?*

As far as his knowledge of "parapsychology" is concerned, it should be pointed out that the term was not extant in Tennyson's lifetime. The first use of the word recorded in the OED is dated 1924. But Tennyson's familiarity with the subject was almost certainly well above average. The poet's library, now housed at the Tennyson Research Centre, Lincoln, and catalogued by Nancie Campbell,⁴⁴ has "about fifty titles on aspects of the Christian faith and on such subjects as pantheism, the immortality of the soul and spiritualism.... [M]ost of the books (particularly those on spiritualism) were acquired after 1870. One exception is George Cruikshank's amusing spoof on the current enthusiasm for investigating the spirit world: A Discovery Concerning Ghosts; with a rap at the 'spirit-rappers'" This work, published in 1863, was a gift to Tennyson from the author (Shatto 1978, 502).

Tennyson was, of course, a founder member of the Metaphysical Society, which was established in 1869 (Memoir II, 166-70; Martin 1980, 482-84). Among the original members was Henry Sidgwick, who later became the first president of the Society for Psychical Research (Skultans 1987, 740).

However keen his interest in metaphysical matters was, and however great his awareness of an invisible spirit world around him, may have been, Tennyson was far from gullible. Hallam Tennyson's comment on his father's opinion of Frederick Tennyson's "visions" is telling: "My father respected these visions of a poet, whose temperament was highly strung and overwrought" (my italics).⁴⁵ It would appear that Tennyson was well aware that the visions may have been hallucinations - the

result of psychological or physiological disturbance.

This sceptical attitude has, of course, been immortalized in In Memoriam 92:

If any vision should reveal
 Thy likeness, I might count it vain
 As but the canker of the brain;
 Yea, tho' it spake and made appeal

To chances where our lots were cast
 Together in the days behind,
 I might but say, I hear a wind
 Of memory murmuring the past.

Yea, tho' it spake and bared to view
 A fact within the coming year;
 And tho' the months, revolving near,
 Should prove the phantom-warning true,

They might not seem thy prophecies,
 But spiritual presentiments,
 And such refraction of events
 As often rises ere they rise.

However, at other times - as, for example, in In Memoriam 86 and 95 - Tennyson describes his major psychic episodes with such conviction that even a transitory "doubt" (IM 95:44) cannot entirely abnegate the powerful overall effect of the experience.

It would appear from the above survey that Tennyson was subject to a number of phenomena which might possibly be termed "paranormal" - though, as I have already said, I prefer to refer to these episodes as subjective paranormal experiences. A.P. Sinnett asserts that Tennyson is undoubtedly an "occultist". Sinnett believes that the "super-physical knowledge" acquired by him and his fellow-initiates has enabled them "to make the deeply interesting discovery"

that "that knowledge must have been to a considerable extent already in Tennyson's possession when he wrote certain poems...." Sinnett suggests that, because the world "was not ripe for the higher occultism when he wrote", Tennyson could not impart "definite teaching, as truth derived from exalted wisdom", but had to be content merely to "hint at...or disguise it as 'a random arrow from the brain'" (Sinnett 1920, 47).

Perhaps it should be stressed that, in linking Tennyson with "occultism"; Sinnett specifically excludes the "more or less undignified pursuits" which are often associated with the term, such as "fortune-telling in all varieties, ceremonial 'magic' of an unhealthy order, the investigation of ghostly hauntings and so forth." He defines occultism in "its loftier significance" as "the study of Divine Wisdom; of the supreme truths underlying all the great religions of the world; of the laws governing human evolution; of the early history of this planet aeons before events were recorded by any method of writing" (1920, 47) - and he views "The Ancient Sage" (R415) as Tennyson's most important work in this connection (Sinnett 1920, 45).

Within the range of subjective paranormal experiences recorded in Tennyson's poetry, it is - perhaps inevitably - the "trances" which have attracted most critical attention. I refer, of course, to the "kind of 'waking trance' (this for lack of a better word)" which the poet frequently experienced from boyhood on, during periods of solitude. "This [the trance-like state]", he says,

...has often come upon me through repeating my own name to myself silently, till all at once as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being - & [sic] this not a confused state but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, utterly beyond words - where Death was an almost laughable impossibility - the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life.

(Martin 1980, 28-29)

Daniel Albright associates the poet's trances with "the sublime" - of which, in the Tennysonian context, he has this to say:

To Tennyson, the sublime is an ecstasy and a danger; an ecstasy because the sublime is a state of overstimulated consciousness designed to heighten thought and feeling beyond every ordinary bound, as if the acuity of presentation of every external object were keenly felt as an attribute of the mind; and a danger because the sublime, in another mode, is a state of overtranquilized consciousness designed to entertain the poet with his own brain rhythms, exclusive of any outer world, as if the dead lumpishness of external nature infected the mind with its own ponderous inanition. These extremes converge, in that the delirium of heightening cannot be long sustained and tends to recoil into numbness and obtuseness.

(1986, 9)

At first glance Albright's paradoxical drift may seem unenlightening; but perhaps it is appropriate to the description of a state of such ineffability that Tennyson himself was obliged to resort to paradox in an effort to define it (Louw 1985, 71).

Critical opinion as to the nature and status of Tennyson's trances has been divergent. Ashton Nichols offers a useful summary of the many critics who have regarded

Tennyson as something of a "mystic". These include Sir Charles Tennyson, [Sir] Harold Nicholson, Basil Willey and Carlisle Moore (Nichols 1986, 131). Nichols also lists many who have doubted that Tennyson was a true mystic, including Robert Preyer, A. Dwight Culler, Robert Bernard Martin and R.C. Zaehner (1986, 133). Nichols covers himself by saying that he does not wish "to argue that Tennyson never had an experience that could be described as mystical"; yet he subtitles his essay, "Why Tennyson is not a Mystic". The basis of his argument is that the "trance" experiences are "more closely allied with the form of meaning found in Wordsworth's 'spots of time' and Browning's 'infinite moment'", and that Tennyson's trance poems can therefore be more meaningfully "discussed critically by reference to the term 'epiphany'" (Nichols 1986, 134).

My own study of In Memoriam 95, presented more than a year before Nichols' article appeared, also interpreted the climactic elegy in terms of "epiphany" (Louw 1985, 72). But I believe it is a tribute to Tennyson's anagogical vision that the poem operates at multiple levels, so that it is at once a mystical experience, a personal "epiphany" and a revelation of aesthetic inspiration.⁴⁶

Nichols writes that mysticism

...in all of its traditional definitions demands a certainty about the nature of the experience that is always lacking in Tennyson. Eliot's comment about the power of Tennyson's doubt suggests how unwilling the poet was to place a final interpretation on even his most powerfully felt experiences.

(1986, 134)

Nichols accordingly offers Tennyson's "doubt" about the experience as evidence that the poet "is not a mystic".

However, William James has written, in Varieties of Religious Experience, that there

...are moments of sentimental and mystical experience that carry an enormous sense of inner authority and illumination with them when they come. But they come seldom, and they do not come to everyone; and the rest of life makes either no connection with them, or tends to contradict them more than it confirms them.

(James 1929, 17; qtd. by Louw 1985, 72)

The testimony of acknowledged Christian mystics appears to bear this out. St Augustine records how after the mystical experience he "'fall[s] back again weighed down by... miseries'" (C. Butler 1960, 109). And St Gregory notes how the mind, after mystical contemplation, "falls back in broken state to the darkness of its frailty" (C. Butler 1960, 141). The "darkness" of Tennyson's particular "frailty" was doubt - as T.S. Eliot has so cogently observed.

Nichols also feels that Tennyson's trance experience in In Memoriam 95 is "described in terms not ordinarily associated with the mystical." He finds the "empyrean heights of thought" (line 38) to be "strangely intellectual for an experience supposedly of pure spirit (Nichols 1986, 143). However, "intellectual illumination" is a "frequent...element of the mystics' claim" (C. Butler 1960, 201). This seems to be borne out by the findings of Père Joseph Maréchal, S.J., a former professor of psychology at Louvain who approaches mysticism not from the point of view of theology but "from the

side of phenomenal psychology". He notes that the "negative characteristics" of the ecstatic state include "the cessation of conceptual thought". But he also points out that this "suspension of conceptual thought is not complete unconsciousness, but rather an enlargement, an intensification, or even a higher form, of intellectual activity" (C. Butler 1960, 49-50).⁴⁷ Tennyson's phrase, "empyrean heights of thought", seems to me to encapsulate precisely this "enlargement" and "intensification" of intellectual activity. So I cannot concur with Nichols' opinion that such an intellectual phrase is inconsistent with a spiritual experience.

However, I endorse Nichols' viewpoint entirely when he writes

Not only the most well-known of Tennyson's so-called "mystical" poems - section XCV of In Memoriam - but also a number of his lyrics describe a revelatory experience grounded in this world, a revelation that originates not in an external source, but in the mind of the poet.

(1986, 135; my italics)

Indeed, though it is not my intention to enter the monist-dualist debate at this stage, I shall go further than Nichols and assert that the so-called mystical experiences originate in the brain of the poet. I believe they have their genesis in temporal lobe epilepsy. But even this neurophysiological approach to the phenomena need not absolutely rule out the possibility of mystical propensities in Tennyson. For it has been suggested that there was a physical aspect to the mysticism of even that great Christian mystic, St Theresa.

Dom Cuthbert Butler writes:

No one can question that St Theresa's own experiences in contemplation and mystical union were of the highest....But it cannot be denied that there was something in her physical and psychological make-up which rendered her temperamentally peculiarly responsive to onrushes of spiritual influence, and liable to ecstasy, rapture, flights of spirit.

(1960, 20)

The italics are mine and serve to emphasize the relevance of the passage not only to the argument as to whether or not Tennyson was a mystic, but also to other aspects of a study which seeks to explore "the knot that knits body and mind together."⁴⁸

CHAPTER II

THE "DARK COUNTERPOINT"

The intimate correspondence of most families seems to outsiders to be concerned unduly with sickness....Allowing for all this, however, the correspondence of George and Mary Tennyson [the poet's grandparents] and their children and grandchildren sometimes seems to exist primarily for the exchange of news of symptoms. Fevers, tonics, purges, medicines, doctors, and diet were part of their ordinary vocabulary, and few families can have been in more detailed communication about the state of their bowels. But beside this fairly normal preoccupation with health was a dark counterpoint of constant, brooding concern about one disease: epilepsy.

(Martin 1980, 9-10)

Martin thus introduces the psychophysiological problem which played so prominent a part in the lives of the Tennyson family and - if my postulations are correct - in the creative processes of the poet himself.

Since they did not fall under the jurisdiction of Hallam Tennyson, the Tennyson d'Eyncourt papers at the Lincoln Archives Office have been less thoroughly expurgated than those of the poet himself. Consequently they are often more revealing on the sensitive subject of familial epilepsy. Some of the family letters show that Alfred Tennyson's father, his uncle (Charles Tennyson d'Eyncourt) and his cousin (George Hildeyard Tennyson d'Eyncourt) all suffered from a form of epilepsy. Martin speculates that "perhaps old George himself [the poet's grandfather] had attacks of less severity than those of his descendants" (1980, 10). One wonders whether the grandfather's attacks were in fact "of less severity"; for a

letter from Alfred to his Aunt Elizabeth [Russell], written on 10 March [1833], records the fact that the old man had had so severe a "fit of the gout" that it had been necessary for the doctor to remain in his patient's home for two nights (MS. Mats. I, 146; Lang and Shannon 1982, 88).¹ Gout - however painful it may be - is not a life-threatening illness, and would certainly not have necessitated the constant attention of a medical man for two nights in a row. However, recurrent epileptic attacks tending to status epilepticus may well have done so. Status epilepticus "consists of recurrent or continuous seizures" in which there is no "recovery between the seizures" (Westmoreland 1980, 1475). It "is a grave medical emergency in which speed of control is of the utmost importance. Cerebral anoxia may lead to permanent physical or mental handicaps, and there is a significant mortality with long-continued attacks" (Lishman 1978, 379).

Martin, too, queries the precise meaning of the term "gout" within the context of the Tennyson family usage. Writing of "the mysterious trances" into which Alfred "had fallen ever since he was a boy", Martin says: "Gout was a respectable name by which to recall them, but when he was a young man he had every reason to think they were connected with the epileptic fits into which he had seen his own father fall, and which had afflicted his uncle and cousin, and perhaps his brothers" (1980, 84).²

Edmund Lushington, who married the poet's sister Cecilia, also seems to have perceived hidden implications in the family's use of the word "gout". He writes: "'Many complaints

that formerly had different names are now often classed under the head of gout, supprest or otherwise; Cissy is apt to consider that her ailments mainly come from gout.'" Cecilia's "ailments" have been collectively described as "mental disturbance and depression" (Martin 1980, 84). That is, they clearly had something in common with the melancholia and so-called "hypochondria" from which Alfred Tennyson and other members of his family sought relief at various hydropathic establishments.³ The "black blood" of the Tennyson family was extremely pervasive, and may well have been associated with epilepsy. For depression is a frequent concomitant of the epileptic condition (Fenton 1983, 167-68). For instance, Dostoevsky, a well-known literary epileptic, used to suffer horrible "black moods for three to six days as the inevitable consequence of his seizures" (Rice 1985, 290).

Martin confesses that he has been unable to discover any "detailed records extant of what precisely ailed" Alfred Tennyson and his siblings. This is not surprising, in view of Hallam Tennyson's over-assiduous editing. I found much evidence of such filial censorship when I was working on the manuscripts at the Tennyson Research Centre, Lincoln, and at Trinity College, Cambridge. Often words or phrases had been heavily inked out - or scratched out with a blade or something similar. And not infrequently pages had been ruthlessly cut to remove material.

Philip Elliott, in The Making of the Memoir, notes that, from the beginning, Hallam "had little difficulty in omitting material which did not clearly fit the preconceived portrait

of his father" (1978, 11). The "suppression" of information relevant to the poet and his family has made my task more difficult than it might otherwise have been (Elliott 1978, 33 n.29). Nevertheless, I believe it is possible to piece together fragments of evidence, the significance of which eluded Hallam, in support of my hypothesis that Tennyson suffered from temporal lobe epilepsy (TLE) and that this was indeed the "dark counterpoint" to the apparently mystical experiences that are at the heart of his poetry. But if I am to collect the fragmentary evidence into a coherent whole, it will be necessary for me to undertake a far more detailed study of epilepsy than has heretofore been attempted - so far as I am aware - by a Tennyson researcher.

The term "epilepsy" has an ancient history. "Originally, the Greek word epilèpsié meant a seizure" (Temkin 1983, 53). That is, the term was "a purely clinical designation" which referred to the "main symptom of the convulsive attack" (Ellenberger 1974, 9). This word epilèpsié "replaced the popular name 'sacred disease' for epilepsy as a nosological entity" (Temkin 1983, 53). Although, as the name "sacred disease" suggests, the Greeks ascribed epilepsy to "divine intervention", Hill notes that later this view "alternated with the view that demons rather than Gods were responsible and this gained ascendancy by the time of the Christian gospel writers, and is alluded to in the miracles of Jesus" - for instance, that related in the gospel according to St Mark (9.17-27). (Hill 1981, 1)

The history of epilepsy as a clinical entity may be regarded as dating back to the time of Hippocrates (460 - 357 B.C.) (Penfield and Jasper 1954, 4).⁴ Discarding "magical implications" inherent in the term "sacred disease" in favour of a rational approach, "Hippocratic physicians presented epilepsy...as a natural disease with hereditary predisposition, and with its seat in the brain" (Temkin 1983, 53). Mora quotes the following passage from The Medical Works of Hippocrates:

I do not believe that the "sacred disease" is any more divine or sacred than any other disease but, on the contrary has specific characteristics and a definite cause. Nevertheless, because it is completely different from other diseases, it has been regarded as a divine visitation by those who, being only human, view it with ignorance and astonishment.

(Mora 1980, 23)

Since the most readily recognized form of epilepsy in ancient times was what we would today designate as grand mal, the disease was often referred to as "the falling sickness",⁵ and was sometimes confused with other disorders. But from the time of the Renaissance onwards, a better understanding grew up of both the "clinical forms" and the "pathological physiology" of epilepsy. By the middle of the nineteenth century terms such as grand mal, petit mal, absence, epileptic vertigo, partial epilepsy and status epilepticus were in general use, and a "genetic factor" was postulated (Temkin 1983, 54). It was no wonder that Tennyson felt a considerable degree of anxiety over the likelihood of developing his father's problems. For "'epileptic' seizures plagued and

frightened" Dr Tennyson (Colley 1983, 35), and contributed in no small measure to his early demise (Martin 1980, 131).

In modern usage the term "epilepsy" refers essentially to a temporary but recurrent dysfunction of the brain; but even the definition of the condition is not a simple matter (Walsh 1987, 98). According to Hughlings Jackson (1835-1911), one of the great pioneer workers in the field (Daly 1982, 144), epilepsy is "'the name for occasional, sudden, excessive, rapid, and local discharges of grey matter'". Quoting this definition, Owsei Temkin explains that modern concepts of epilepsy have largely followed Jackson, but that the term "neurons" (that is, nerve cells) has replaced "grey matter", and the term "discharge" is now understood to refer to electrical depolarization of the nerve cells within the brain (Temkin 1983, 54).

In 1951 Russel Brain defined epilepsy as "'a paroxysmal and transitory disturbance of the function of the brain which develops suddenly, ceases spontaneously, and exhibits a conspicuous tendency to recur'" (qtd. by Slater and Roth 1969, 445). William Alwyn Lishman feels, however, that it is desirable to introduce "electrophysiological events" into the definition in an effort to distinguish epilepsy from other conditions such as migraine or syncope. Consequently he puts forward the definition of Alter et al (1972), who describe an epileptic patient as "'one who has a paroxysmal alteration of intellectual, sensory, motor, autonomic, or affective activity, which is time limited (usually under one hour) and presumably associated with neuronal hypersynchronous"

overactivity'" (Lishman 1978, 295).

The clinical manifestation of epileptic attacks or seizures depends on the site and number of discharging neurons (Fenton 1983, 147). The disturbance may be generalized (in which case, the condition is called "generalized" epilepsy), or it may be localized (Fenton 1983, 148-49; Lishman 1978, 296),⁷ and "be shown, for instance, in the twitching of a single muscle group or in a single sensory experience". In such cases of "local epilepsy", "focal epilepsy" or "partial epilepsy" there is "often no general alteration of consciousness" (Slater and Roth 1969, 445).

The potential number of variations in epileptic symptoms is manifold, as Fenton explains:

When relatively few motor cortex neurones discharge, there may be only jerking of a contralateral limb, without loss of consciousness (a simple partial seizure). When millions of neurones throughout the cerebral cortex discharge, loss of consciousness is accompanied by a tonic-clonic convulsion often followed by post-ictal confusion as consciousness gradually returns (major or grand mal attack). Between these two extremes are many different types of generalized or partial (focal) epileptic seizure....

(1983, 147)

A simple classification table is included at the back of this volume - see Appendix B. The table, headed "Varieties of Epilepsy", is taken from Lishman's Organic Psychiatry (1978, 296). This table, based on the proposals of Gastaut (1970) and Merlis (1970), provides a classification that is easily accessible to the non-medical reader. More detailed classifications, based on Gastaut (1970) are offered by Neppe

(1979, 137-41) and by Westmoreland (1980, 1469). It must be stressed that the classification of epilepsies continues to engage the attention of consultants internationally (Parsonage 1982, xiii, xvii). I have taken cognizance of the recent "Proposal for Revised Classification of Epilepsies and Epileptic Syndromes" (Commission on Classification and Terminology of the International League Against Epilepsy 1989, 389-99).

A glance at the classification table (Appendix B) will show that in addition to "generalized epilepsies" and "focal", "partial" or "local" epilepsies, there are also "unclassifiable and mixed forms" of epilepsy. These may be due to diffuse or scattered lesions, or they may arise because of the phenomenon of secondary firing. In other words, an epileptogenic discharge arising in one part of the brain may spread to an adjacent area or areas (Westmoreland 1980, 1477), or become secondarily generalized (Neppe 1979, 141). As a result, the symptomatology becomes "mixed", sometimes to the point of being "unclassifiable".

Epilepsy, which was originally regarded as a disease per se, is increasingly coming to be regarded as a symptom of many diseases ("symptomatic epilepsy"). However, there still remains today a large number of cases of "idiopathic epilepsy"* - that is, a large number of patients suffering "from epileptic symptoms for which no cause is yet known, other than a presumed constitution, genetic or acquired" (Slater and Roth 1969, 445; also Fenton 1983, 151). We know from Martin's admirable biography of Alfred Tennyson that such

a genetic predisposition existed in the Tennyson family (1980, 10-11).

An epileptic predisposition may not become manifest until the occurrence of some minor injury or stress. Similarly, the epileptic condition may be exacerbated by trauma, conflict or stress (Lishman 1978, 310; Betts 1982, 257); and it is highly probable that Dr George Clayton Tennyson's inherited epilepsy was aggravated both by the anguish of being disinherited and by the emotional tensions inherent in the necessity for pursuing a clerical career without benefit of any sense of vocation (Martin 1980, 7, 11-12). Similarly, of course, Alfred Tennyson's epilepsy may have been exacerbated by the interpersonal "stresses and tensions" operative at Somersby (Lishman 1978, 310); by the shock of Arthur Hallam's untimely death; and by the poet's anxiety over his disastrous financial commitment to Dr Matthew Allen's woodcarving venture (Martin 1980, 254-56). Waller writes: "By the final week of 1843, Tennyson's health had become so deranged by nearly 'two years' of 'perpetual panic and horror' [associated with the woodcarving scheme] that he was nearing total nervous exhaustion. Having to 'write a letter on that accursed business threw me [he states] into a kind of convulsion'" (1986, 127). Although Waller refers to "the final week of 1843", the words he quotes are from a letter written by Tennyson to Edward Fitzgerald on 2 February 1844 (Lang and Shannon 1982, 222-23). The word "convulsion" is worth noting.

Epileptic seizures may also be precipitated by chemical and metabolic changes - for example, by the reduction of

carbon dioxide in the blood as a result of hyperventilation; by the lowering of the glucose level in the blood; or by the hydraemia which results from the imbibition of large volumes of fluid (Slater and Roth 1969, 448). Alcohol has a markedly deleterious effect on epilepsy, as the sad case of Dr Tennyson shows. It has been suggested, however, that epileptics may resort to alcohol in an effort to obtain symptomatic relief (Betts 1982, 238). Alcoholism seems to be something of a double-bind situation. For Sidney Levin notes that, in his study of epileptic clouded states, he found "a rather high incidence of alcoholism", and that "in several instances withdrawal of alcohol, too, appeared to precipitate the seizures and subsequent clouded states" (Levin 1952, 221). In other words, the consumption of alcohol has a detrimental effect; but so, too, does the sudden withdrawal of alcohol (Betts 1982, 238), which would, of course, prove stressful.

A point of special interest in relation to the case of Alfred Tennyson is the fact that in epilepsy an inverse relationship to the level of attention of the subject has been noted. As Slater and Roth point out, many epileptics "suffer attacks only during sleep and many diurnal attacks occur only in moments of boredom or relaxation" (Slater and Roth 1969, 448). This scenario is consistent with Tennyson's description of the onset of his trances, which usually occurred when he was sitting quietly by himself, repeating his own name or the phrase "far-far-away" (MS. Mats. III, 64; Martin 1980, 28; Culler 1977, 3-5). And it is interesting to note a somewhat similar case reported by Penfield in the Journal of Mental

Science of July 1955. Penfield writes that the patient's seizures were habitually "ushered in" by the experience of "hearing his own name Sylvère repeated several times" (1955, 455).

Slater and Roth point out that interesting activity reduces the likelihood of an epileptic fit (1969, 448, 674). I postulated in 1985 that the long walks which Tennyson habitually took in later life may have been instrumental in reducing or controlling his tendency to epileptic attacks (Louw 1985, 32). And Susan Chitty has subsequently noted that another epileptic of the Victorian era, Edward Lear, "needed constant exercise to control his epilepsy" (Chitty 1988, 45). Certainly, long walks were part of the treatment prescribed for Tennyson at High Beech, Prestbury and Umberslade Hall,⁹ some of the hydropathic establishments where he went to seek a cure for the malady he termed "hypochondria", but which Martin associates with epilepsy (1980, 279). In later life, at Farringford, the poet continued to take "his long walks[,] generally along the Downs from Watcombe bay by the beacon towards the Needles" (MS. Mats. VIII, 153^v).¹⁰ Volume IX of the manuscript Materials, which covers the period from 1890 to the end of Tennyson's life, has the entry: "He took his regular two hours' morning walk with one of our friends" (MS. Mats. IX, 66).

However, there was a period in Tennyson's life when he appears not to have been quite so physically energetic - or so one might deduce from a letter to Edmund Lushington, written on September 19, 1841 from Bolton Abbey. It reads: "...you

may conjecture that no ordinary charms of nature could get nine miles of walk out of legs more familiar with armchair and settle than rock and greensward" (MS. Mats. II, 51-52).¹¹

Lushington is known to have lamented the fact that Tennyson, who seemed in the 1840s to be so desperately in need of "healing", "paid so little attention" to the traditional Christian and Apostolic words of healing, "Arise and walk". Lushington asks despairingly: "How can a man with such great natural strength of body live so indolently, and be well?" (Martin 1980, 281). I would conjecture that during the especially turbulent years between Arthur Hallam's death in 1833 and Tennyson's marriage in 1850, the poet was habitually less inclined to take regular "constitutionals". Perhaps significantly, this is also the period during which he evinced the most concern about his so-called "gout" and "hypochondria" - the period during which he repeatedly repaired to hydropathic establishments to take "the cure". I believe that, having finally learnt at those establishments the importance of exercise in controlling his condition, Tennyson after his marriage established a regular routine of taking long walks each day.¹² And it would seem that this did indeed have a beneficial effect on his epilepsy.

I have mentioned the hidden meanings which seem to inhere in the Tennyson family's use of the word "gout". Also ambiguous is the poet's use of the term "hypochondria" - the condition he claimed was responsible for his numerous sojourns at hydropathic institutions. The usual meaning of the word "hypochondria" - that is, as the equivalent of

"hypochondriasis", "a condition characterized by a morbid preoccupation with...and exaggerated anxieties about real or imaginal ailments" (OED) - might seem appropriate in the light of Tennyson's confession that as a young man he used to read his father's medical books, and imagine, "like a medical student", that he had "all the diseases in the world" (MS. Mats. III, 9^v). And an epistolary remark by Arthur Hallam concerning Tennyson's "ailments, real or imagined", might support such an interpretation (Allen 1978, 148). But the terms "hypochondria" or "hypochondriasis" were also used as the male equivalent of the psychiatric condition known in women as "hysteria" (Trimble 1981, 79). Indeed Trimble claims that it was "not until the nineteenth century that the disorder [hypochondria] came to be associated more specifically with a morbid preoccupation with health" (Trimble 1981, 87).

Hysteria is one of the earliest of the "various categories of abnormal illness behaviour" referred to in ancient times. It is mentioned in the Kahun papyrus of ancient Egypt, "in which various ailments were attributed to the displacement of the uterus. The Greeks continued the trend [the attribution of ailments to uterine displacement], and the word 'hystera' meaning uterus was applied to the disorder" (Trimble 1981, 79). Ellenberger points out that a "variety of organic paroxysmal conditions" in women were related to the uterus, and that the adjective "hysterical", meaning "uterine", did not then "have the connotations of a neurosis" (1974, 8-9).

In the Middle Ages it was suggested that the male equivalent of hysteria was hypochondria or "hypochondriacal passion", an ailment which was thought to arise not from the uterus but from the hypochondrium (Trimble 1981, 79). This association may have considerable relevance to Tennyson's use of the term "hypochondria" to designate his condition. For the word "hypochondria" is - and was during Tennyson's lifetime - the "plural of HYPOCHONDRIUM. Those parts of the human abdomen which lie immediately under the ribs and on each side of the epigastric region" (OED 1a). Among the most common sensations experienced in the initial stage of an epileptic attack are simple epigastric sensations, or an ill-defined "'rising sensation' beginning in the epigastrium" (Slater and Roth 1969, 458; Lishman 1978, 313). Thus the term "hypochondria", when used in one sense, is applicable to a common symptom of epilepsy; but when used in another sense it merely suggests the kind of nervous disposition to which the Tennyson family admitted being prone. The term is thus sufficiently vague to satisfy Tennyson's requirements for a code word for his epileptic condition: it is not inaccurate or grossly misleading, but it allows of a more palatable - and less revealing - interpretation. It should perhaps be noted that Dostoevsky, too, frequently refers to his "hypochondria", often in association with melancholia. And sometimes these maladies are introduced in conjunction with a reference to "falling sickness", suggesting that all these conditions were interlinked in the novelist's mind (Rice 1985, 68).

Given Tennyson's interest in mesmerism, it is perhaps of

some import to note that the hypochondria - in the sense of "those parts of the human abdomen which lie immediately under the ribs and on each side of the epigastric region" - featured in the treatment methods employed by Mesmer.

Mesmer used no medication other than magnetic water. He would sit in front of his patient with his knees touching the patient's knees, then touching his hypochondria and making passes over his limbs. Many patients felt peculiar sensations or fell into crises. This was supposed to bring forth the cure.

(Ellenberger 1970, 63)

It has been pointed out that "hypochondria" was at one time regarded as the male equivalent of hysteria. Hysteria and epilepsy have some features in common (Slater and Roth 1969, 455), and researchers have noted that most diseases of the nervous system, including epilepsy, cause hysterical symptoms at some time or another (Trimble 1981, 80). Accordingly, "the distinction between epileptic and hysterical episodes" may not be absolute. "Physiogenic and psychogenic influences will be seen to operate exclusively in a large proportion of cases, but in some the two will be inextricably combined", so that a differential diagnosis may become problematical (Lishman 1978, 367). Lishman notes, however, that hysterical attacks "almost invariably take place where they can be witnessed" (1978, 368). And Trimble asserts that careful "documentation of the events" surrounding hysterical episodes often reveals that "they occur in a setting of interpersonal stress, rarely occur when the patient is alone, and usually do not occur at night" (1981, 171). Since night-time attacks seem to feature prominently in the Tennyson

family history (Lang and Shannon 1982, 6, 24, 42, 88), and since Tennyson's own "trances" generally came on him when he was sitting quietly by himself, his attacks are unlikely to have been primarily associated with hysteria (or its equivalent, "hypochondria"). They are far more likely to have been epileptic in origin.

Colley uses the term "hypochondriac" in the modern sense in connection with Tennyson. She writes:

Throughout his life Tennyson was a hypochondriac. He never ceased to worry about his physical and mental health, even after he assumed the stable guise of England's laureate. Moreover, ...his hypochondria was complicated by moments of desperate depression. During those periods Tennyson lived in fear of going mad, of drawing too close to the edge and falling. That fear was always to be a haunting shadow that caused him to live life most cautiously.

(Colley 1983, 51)

Tennyson's fear of madness is indeed frequently revealed in the poetry - in recurring phrases such as a "juggle of the brain" ("Oh! that 'twere possible" - R227:84), "the blot upon the brain" ("Oh! that 'twere possible" - R227:69; Maud - R316: Part II.200) and "the canker of the brain: (IM 92:3), as well as thematically in poems like "The Holy Grail" (R471) and Maud (R316), where insanity is a central concern. Significantly, in Maud the protagonist is the "heir of madness", having inherited his mental instability from his father.¹³ It would appear that this was Tennyson's chief anxiety - that his paternal portion might be epilepsy, and that epilepsy could end in madness (Martin 1980, 140).

While not all researchers agree (Walsh 1987, 184), Slater

and Roth hold that the association between epilepsy and mental defect is a close one (1969, 454) - and the fate of several members of the Tennyson family would seem to bear this out (Shatto 1986, 209). "One of Alfred Tennyson's brothers [Edward] was totally insane most of his life, another [Septimus] suffered from some form of mental illness nearly as incapacitating, a third [Charles] was an opium addict" and "a fourth was severely alcoholic" (Martin 1980, 10). In fact, two of the Tennyson brothers (Frederick and Arthur) drank too much, as did their father before them (Martin 1980, 140). A letter of 29 September 1842 records how Arthur arrived home one night "in a state of deep intoxication" and caused a tremendous uproar "till near one o'clock by his epileptic howlings" (H127/2, LAO; qtd. by Martin 1980, 273).¹⁴

In 1843 Arthur entered a Scottish asylum as a voluntary patient, intending to stay for at least a year to cure his alcoholism; but he left prematurely to live with Frederick in Italy (C. Tennyson 1963, 21-22; Martin 1980, 274).¹⁵ As Martin has pointed out, if one includes the time spent by Alfred Tennyson as "an intermittent patient" at Matthew Allen's mental hospital,

Arthur's confinement made a total of four of the brothers who are known to have been in asylums....It was beginning to look as if there were a compulsion among Dr Tennyson's sons to re-enact the grim ritual of his last days.

(Martin 1980, 274)

Furthermore, the Tennyson girls did not fare much better, for "of the rest of the large family each had at least one bad

mental breakdown in a long life" (Martin 1980, 10).

An article in Notes and Queries serves to highlight the sad case of the poet's brother, Edward Tennyson, who "was buried on 13 May 1890 aged seventy-seven years, so ending fifty-eight years of living in various asylums." During his incarceration he was variously described in census returns as "Gentleman" (1841), "Insane Patient" (1851), "Lunatic" (1871) and "Imbecile" (1881). The terms used presumably reflect the pathetic "progress" of his mental illness (Daniell 1980, 315-17).¹⁶

Septimus Tennyson, three years younger than his brother Edward, also suffered from "nervous depression" (Martin 1980, 138), and showed signs of mental breakdown after Dr Tennyson's death (Martin 1980, 140). His symptoms were "like those with which Edward's derangement had begun. He would sit for whole days weeping, complaining that all his relatives were neglecting him, and at last Alfred had to write to his Uncle Charles, begging that Septimus be taken away from the 'morbid influence'" of Somersby Rectory (Martin 1980, 191). The letter, which was apparently written in January 1834, reads:

My dear Uncle

I think it my duty to inform you of Septimus's state of mind. My Grandfather talks of letting him stop at home two or three months longer - if this be acted upon I have very little doubt but that his mind will prove as deranged as Edward's, although I trust that his intellect may yet be preserved by getting him out into some bustling active line of life remote from the scene of his early connexions. I have studied the minds of my own family - I know how delicately they are organized - and how much might be done in this instance by suddenly removing Septimus from all those objects and subjects with which he has been familiar and upon which he has been accustomed to brood, into some situation where

he might be enabled to form his own friendships with those of his own age and to feel that there is something to live and to care for - but this, if done should be done immediately, because every hour which he wastes at home tends to increase his malady. At present his symptoms are not unlike those with which poor Edward's unhappy derangement began - he is subject to fits of the most gloomy despondency accompanied with tears - or rather, he spends whole days in this manner, complaining that he is neglected by all his relations, and blindly resigning himself to every morbid influence.

For God's sake do not consider these as idle words but use whatever influence you may have with my Grandfather to prevent so miserable a termination. I am sure you will feel with us in this matter. No half measures will do nor ought the saving of a few pounds to be an object here. I repeat it, he should be removed as far as possible from home and into some place where new objects and the example of others might rouse him to energy. Believe me, my dear Uncle,

Yours very affectionately
A. Tennyson

(Lang and Shannon 1982, 106).

Alfred's letters on Septimus' mental condition reveal a considerable depth of understanding of his brother's psychiatric problems. The young poet had earlier written to his grandfather that he believed that the "constant variation of scene and ideas wh[ich] occur [sic] in travelling" would be beneficial to Dr Tennyson's "unhinged state of mind" (5/12/[1827]; Lang and Shannon 1982, 20).¹⁷ The same ideas concerning the importance of keeping occupied are to be found in the poetry. For instance, Tennyson writes in "Locksley Hall": "I must mix myself with action, lest I wither by despair" (R271:98).

Ann Colley has rightly pointed out that many critics (past and present) have alluded to "Tennyson's profound interest in science", but that they "tend to dwell" on the

poet's knowledge of astronomy, biology, chemistry, electricity, geology and physiology. These critics overlook his interest in psychology or "the secrets of the brain" (Colley 1983, 156 n.9). But poems ranging from "Mariana" (R73) to Maud (R316) attest to his ability to understand, and to depict, a variety of psychological states. Even in his oft-reiterated lament to friends that he would lose his grip on life completely if he could not marry (Wheatcroft 1980, 53; Martin 1980, 286), Tennyson exhibits a degree of psychological insight; for modern research has shown that in certain psychiatric conditions the prognosis is better for a married than for an unmarried patient (Trimble 1981, 68).

In lines 1-2 of In Memoriam 71, Tennyson overtly links trance and madness ("Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance / And madness"); and I have postulated that Tennyson's trances are a manifestation of temporal lobe epilepsy. Bearing this in mind, I wish to quote at some length from a passage in which Fenton puts epilepsy and concomitant psychiatric disorders in historical perspective. He writes: "For centuries people with epilepsy have been said to be abnormal in personality." Towards the "middle of this century", it "became recognized that many epileptics were well-adjusted people and that structural brain disease, chronic drug overdosage, uncontrolled seizures, and the psychological problems associated with being an epileptic made a contribution to the genesis of psychiatric disorder in those who were mentally disturbed" (Fenton 1983, 156). It appears, then, that iatrogenic and psychosocial factors, as well as

secondary degeneration, may be as important as cerebral dysfunction per se in determining the psychiatric outcome of epilepsy.¹⁸

Fenton goes on to say that later on, in the late nineteen-forties and early fifties,

...the intensive application of clinical electroencephalography to the study of the epilepsies, especially the work of Penfield and his colleagues in Montreal, led to the identification of the syndrome of temporal lobe epilepsy. Surveys of large numbers of patients with epilepsy...reported an unduly high prevalence of functional psychiatric disorder in patients with temporal lobe epilepsy.... The view that temporal lobe dysfunction predisposes the epileptic patient to a high risk of psychiatric breakdown and personality change is currently the most popular one, though it is by no means universally accepted.

(Fenton 1983, 156-57)

The psychological and psychiatric accompaniments to TLE include, inter alia, depression (Fenton 1983, 167-78; Lishman 1978, 360-61), often associated with feelings of guilt (M. Hamilton 1974, 47); "religiosity" (Trimble 1981, 177; Slater and Roth 1969, 470), or at least a strong bias towards religion and philosophy (Walsh 1987, 184); schizophrenia-like psychoses (Fenton 1983, 168; Flor-Henry 1972, 780; Lishman 1978, 361); and "sexual dysfunction" (Fenton 1983, 165-66; Gelder et al 1989, 397). Hyposexuality has been reported (Trimble 1981, 177; Fenton 1983, 166; Lishman 1978, 340-41), as has homosexuality (Lishman 1978, 341). I shall refer to the psychiatric aspects of epilepsy again later. At this point it will be necessary to essay a brief and simplified description of the brain, in preparation for a more detailed

study of TLE.

The brain is the mass of nerve tissue within the skull. It has three major divisions: the cerebral hemispheres, the brain stem and the cerebellum. The cerebellum is concerned principally with motor co-ordination, muscle control and balance, rather than with the higher functions of man, and will not concern us greatly in this study.

The paired cerebral hemispheres are "covered by a convoluted layer of grey matter" called "the cerebral cortex". This overlies the "internal white matter and deeply placed collections of grey matter or neuronal masses collectively known as the basal ganglia". The grey matter represents nerve cell collections while the white matter represents cell fibres which unite the various regions of the brain with each other" (Walsh 1987, 39).

Each cerebral hemisphere is divided into four lobes: the frontal lobe at the front, the occipital lobe at the rear, the parietal lobe toward the top of the head, and the temporal lobe on the side (Walsh 1987, 42).¹⁹

Temporal lobe epilepsy is a focal or partial epilepsy where the discharge originates in the temporal lobe of the brain. Slater and Roth note that a total loss of consciousness need not occur in all forms of epilepsy: "...the effect of an epileptic attack on the stream of consciousness may vary from complete interruption of its flow to a mere ruffling of the surface." But "partial or complete preservation of consciousness is a feature of the focal

attack, especially the temporal lobe attack, rather than of any seizure associated with centrencephalic epilepsy" (Slater and Roth 1969, 456). Of course, as Slater and Roth point out, most cases of idiopathic epilepsy have occasional "absences" - that is, brief periods of loss of consciousness without motor or sensory involvement (1969, 458). And Tennyson does seem to have had these from time to time, especially towards the end of his life.²⁰ But these "absences" were certainly not the same as the trances he experienced "from boyhood" (MS. Mats. III, 64).

The fact that the poet's "trances" did not generally involve a loss of consciousness is one of my main reasons for questioning Martin's use of the term "petit mal" in connection with Tennyson's epilepsy (1980, 279). I believe that Martin uses the term loosely, but erroneously - as I asserted on page 5 above - in an effort to distinguish Alfred Tennyson's relatively mild form of epilepsy from the more dramatic and convulsive seizures of his father. Chitty falls victim to this kind of over-simplification (not to say inaccuracy) when she writes in her biography of Edward Lear:

There are two kinds of epileptic fit, grand mal and petit mal. In a petit mal attack, now known as a "subtle seizure", the burst of electrical activity in the brain is so brief that bystanders are often unaware that the subject has had a fit. In grand mal, the victim may drop to the floor and will certainly suffer muscular spasms.

(1988, 12)

But, as the classification table shows (Appendix B), grand mal and petit mal are both "generalized" epilepsies, whereas

temporal lobe epilepsy, from which I believe both Alfred Tennyson and Edward Lear suffered, is a "partial" or "focal" or "local" epilepsy.

Another feature of TLE which is lacking in petit mal is epileptic "aura" (Solomon and Masdeu 1989, 221). The aura is comprised of transient psychological, sensory, visceral or motor symptoms which are usually of short duration (Slater and Roth 1969, 458; Lishman 1978, 313). When the aura occurs by itself it may be regarded as a minor focal seizure (Slater and Roth 1969, 458). And when the aura is a sensory one, rather than visceral or motor, one may speak of a "sensory fit" (Henderson and Gillespie 1956, 550).

Patients often learn to interpret the aura as a warning of an imminent epileptic attack, and this may enable them to take adequate measures to prevent injury or discovery. This seems to have been the case with Edward Lear. "'It is wonderful,' he wrote [in his (unpublished) diary on 14 February 1880], 'that these fits have never been discovered, except partly apprehending them beforehand, I go to my room'" (Chitty 1988, 12-13).

However, although the aura may act as a warning, it is in fact the initial event of the seizure itself (Fenton 1983, 149). Lishman, discussing the nature and significance of epileptic aura, writes:

The auras which precede focal epileptic attacks are of great clinical importance. They represent the initial focal onset of the attack, and...can give essential information about the site of origin of the epileptic disturbance within the brain. Moreover, auras may sometimes arise without further progression to the fully developed seizure....They

will then produce irregularly recurrent symptoms whose significance may easily be overlooked or misinterpreted.

(1978, 310-11)

I believe this is precisely what has happened in the case of Alfred Tennyson. Some clusters of recurring images in his poems have not been recognized for what they are: poetic reflections of the symptoms of temporal lobe aura.

In medical practice the symptoms of the aura have considerable localizing value, aiding diagnosis by indicating which part or parts of the brain are affected by the epileptic event (Slater and Roth 1969, 458). For instance, Penfield suggests that recollections of special situations from the past point to the lateral and superior surfaces of the temporal lobe (Penfield and Jasper 1954, 140). It is thus possible that Tennyson's famous "Passion of the Past" (R415:219) may in part derive from epileptic excitation of this area of the brain.

Slater and Roth note a "relative fixity and stability of what is experienced by the individual patient in his [TLE] attack" (1969, 459). Fenton basically concurs in this (1983, 311), but he also recognizes that in certain patients "a combination of different seizure types" may be observed (1983, 152). And Denis Williams acknowledges that complex focal epilepsies (such as TLE) may be "less stereotyped and much less easily studied" than other types of epilepsy (1956, 30). It would appear that although the "basic" epileptic experience may be characteristic for a given individual, some degree of variation in symptoms may arise because of secondary firing or

epileptic spread. As I have noted elsewhere, such secondary firing may or may not occur, depending on the severity of the attack. Furthermore, the individual case may be complicated by the occurrence of a combination of prodromal, ictal, post-ictal and inter-ictal symptoms - prodromata being the symptoms experienced in the period (of hours or days) leading up to an attack, ictal symptoms being those of the attack itself (including the aura), post-ictal and inter-ictal symptoms being those which are "epileptoid", but occur after and between seizures respectively (Fenton 1983, 157-58).²¹ Consequently, it is possible to describe, in relation to Tennyson's poetry, a rich variety of phenomena which are probably indicative of temporal lobe symptomatology.

In addition to sensory phenomena, the epileptoid symptomatology may include disturbance of, or changes in, affect or emotion.²² It is essential to bear in mind the fact that the "very complex disturbances of feeling" experienced by temporal lobe epileptics - disturbances of feeling related either to the body or to the environment -

...may mimic most of the sensations and movements which occur naturally, and in any one patient the mimicry may be so close that it becomes a matter of speculation whether the disturbance is physiogenic - epileptic, or psychogenic - neurotic....Indeed there are instances in which cerebral function has been disturbed at such a high level of integration...that the distinction physiogenic-psychogenic becomes not only impossible but undesirable. During the occurrence of an epileptic state...conceptual distortions and emotional disturbances may arise which will alter the subject's attitude to his total environment and his physical response to it. The physical and the psychological causalities of feeling and behaviour have become indistinguishable.

(Williams 1956, 29)

We are, indeed, working in the area of "the knot that ties body and mind together" (page 1 above).

The temporal lobe of the brain is concerned with "the integration of all sensations - exteroceptive and interoceptive, special sensations, common sensations, emotions and moods - into the sensation that 'I am'" (Williams 1968, 355). Tennyson set great store by his individuality - by what he called "the Temple-cave" of the self (R415:32), and what psychiatrists now call "the 'I am' awareness" (Williams 1968, 355). The poet's habitual and vigorous insistence on the indestructibility of individuality is frequently reflected in biography and letters. For instance, Tennyson said: "...I am ready to fight for mein liebes Ich, and hold that it will last for aeons and aeons" (Memoir I, 320). And he wrote to Lord Houghton in March 1874: "...the nobler nature does not pass from its individuality when it passes out of this one life" (Lang and Shannon 1982, xxxv). Tennyson's "I am" awareness is also emphatically stated in an "unadopted passage" from "The Two Voices":

'That individual unity
Which each calls I, may never flee
To many parts and cease to be.'

(R209:n.347-9 [7-9])

Only in his trance-state did Tennyson ever seem willing to lose that highly prized individuality. In the Memoir the trance is described thus - as I indicated in chapter I:

A kind of waking trance I have frequently had, quite up from boyhood, when I have been all alone. This has generally come upon me thro' repeating my own

name two or three times to myself silently, till all at once, as it were out of the intensity of the consciousness of individuality, the individuality itself seemed to dissolve and fade away into boundless being, & [sic] this not a confused state, but the clearest of the clearest, the surest of the surest, the weirdest of the weirdest, utterly beyond words, where death was an almost laughable impossibility, the loss of personality (if so it were) seeming no extinction but the only true life.

(Memoir I, 320)

In the earliest surviving draft of this passage (MS. Mats. III, 64) the parenthetical qualification ("if so it were") does not appear. Nor does it appear in the first printed draft (MS. draft ed.1, Vol.II, 29). One suspects that the interpolation was added by Hallam Tennyson. Philip Elliott's interesting study, The Making of the Memoir, highlights Hallam's dubious editorial practices - "his omissions, additions and improvements" - which were all geared toward building up a certain image of his father (Elliott 1978, 11).

At any rate, the uncertainty implied by the interpolated qualification - "(if so it were)" - is not reflected in the poetic explication of the trance state as it is rendered in "The Ancient Sage":

...more than once when I
 Sat all alone, revolving in myself
 The word that is the symbol of myself,
 The mortal limit of the Self was loosed,
 And past into the Nameless, as a cloud
 Melts into Heaven. I touched my limbs, the limbs
 Were strange not mine - and yet no shade of doubt,
 But utter clearness, as through loss of Self
 The gain of such large life as matched with ours
 Were Sun to spark....

(R415:229-38)

Since it is the temporal lobe of the brain which is "the

great 'integrator' into awareness of self" (Neppe 1979, 24), it seems logical to argue that the so-called "trance" experience in which that awareness breaks down is probably related to temporal lobe discharge or dysfunction. Williams points out that the "disintegration of the 'I am'" awareness associated with an "epileptic event traversing the [temporal] lobe" of the brain may be "reflected in feelings of unreality in the subject himself (depersonalization) or in the world around him (derealization)" (Williams 1968, 6).

The experience of depersonalization is, of course, encapsulated in the lines from "The Ancient Sage" quoted above: "I touched my limbs, the limbs / Were strange not mine" (R415:35).²³ But elements of depersonalization and derealization are also to be detected in other poems. For instance, in "The Holy Grail" (R471) King Arthur describes experiences which clearly owe much to the poet's own "trances". The King, referring to himself in the third person, says of his "visions of the night and of the day" (line 906):²⁴

...many a time they come,
 Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
 This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
 This air that smites his forehead is not air
 But vision - yea, his very hand and foot....

(R471:907-11)

In The Princess (R286), the young Prince tells of the sorcerer's prophecy that none of his family "should know / The shadow from the substance" (I.8-9). The lines tend to suggest a form of derealization; and certain elements of both

derealization and depersonalization are to be found in the famous "weird seizures" of the prince.²⁵ These "weird seizures" are described as "waking dreams", and the condition from which they stem appears to be hereditary. The Prince says:

...truly, waking dreams were, more or less,
 An old and strange affection of the house.
 Myself too had weird seizures, Heaven knows what:
 On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
 And while I walked and talked as heretofore,
 I seemed to move among a world of ghosts,
 And feel myself the shadow of a dream.

(I.12-18)

Later, at the mountain retreat of his recalcitrant betrothed, the Prince has such a seizure. He recalls:

On a sudden my strange seizure came
 Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
 The Princess Ida seemed a hollow show,
 Her gay-furred cats a painted fantasy,
 Her college and her maidens, empty masks,
 And I myself the shadow of a dream,
 For all things were and were not.

(III.167-73)

This last line recurs, almost like a refrain, in a later description of yet another of the "weird seizures". This one occurs shortly after the discovery and expulsion of the Prince and his friends from the all-female bastion of Princess Ida and her followers. The Prince describes it thus:

I seemed to move among a world of ghosts;
 The Princess with her monstrous woman guard,
 The jest and earnest working side by side,
 The cataract and the tumult and the kings
 Were shadows; and the long fantastic night
 With all its doings had and had not been,
 And all things were and were not.

(IV.539-45)

Clyde Ryals points out that the weird seizures occur at "critical moments within the action of the poem" (Ryals 1962-63, 269). The next seizure occurs as the Prince is about to enter the tournament which will decide whether or not he gains his bride:

...like a flash the weird affection came:
 King, camp and college turned to hollow shows;
 I seemed to move in old memorial tilts,
 And doing battle with forgotten ghosts,
 To dream myself the shadow of a dream....

(V.466-70)

Severely injured in the contest, the Prince hovers between life and death - and between consciousness and unconsciousness - in a twilight zone which seems almost an extension of the "weird seizures" or "waking dreams". He explains:

My dream had never died or lived again.
 As in some mystic middle state I lay;
 Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard....

(VI.1-3)

Happily, the Prince recovers from his wounds and, having won the heart of Princess Ida, is also healed of his "weird seizures". This may seem a fairy-tale ending, but Tennyson clearly believed in it.

The fact that the Prince seems, during the "weird seizures", to inhabit a "world of ghosts" (IV.539) is highly suggestive of derealization. Similarly, his reiterated use of the phrase, "the shadow of a dream", in connection with himself, reflects his sense of depersonalization, although he may, of course, also be mis-remembering the phrase "A dream of

a shadow" from the fifth epode of Pindar's "Pythian Ode VIII" (Conway 1972, 144). Be that as it may, both derealization and depersonalization are suggested by the use of paradox (for example, "all things were and were not" - IV.545; "Seeing I saw not, hearing not I heard" - VI.3). The ancillary paradoxes contribute to the ultimate paradox of the "waking dreams" (I.12).

In The Princess it is suggested that the "weird seizures" may be due to "'catalepsy'" (I.20). In modern usage the term "catalepsy" is applied to a condition "in which a person maintains the body position into which he is placed. It is a symptom observed in severe cases of catatonic schizophrenia" (Gelfand 1980, 3314-15). Trimble, in surveying research into "the abnormal movements of schizophrenia" describes how "catalepsy patients would hold strange postures for weeks or months at a time. The limbs became rigid or were waxy and flexible, and would remain in positions in which they were placed for long periods" (Trimble 1981, 199). These descriptions do not seem to fit the "weird seizures" in The Princess.²⁶ However, a recent article in Notes and Queries shows that in Middle English the term Catalempsi "denoted one of three types of 'falling evil', that is, epilepsy (Norri 1989, 26). Tennyson may have been using the word in this sense - loosely, as a synonym for epilepsy. Certainly, I believe it would be much more accurate to ascribe the "weird seizures" to a phenomenon associated with temporal lobe epilepsy - a condition which Hughlings Jackson called "dreamy state". Neppe writes:

The major feature of the 'dreamy state' of Jackson (1888) is 'whole or partial withdrawal from the present'. This involves a defect of consciousness of the environment, but not of consciousness of self. The 'dreamy state' emphasizes the subjective mental phenomena.

(1979, 47; also 1981d, 905)

It might, of course, be argued that the feelings of depersonalization and derealization depicted in the "weird seizures" of the Prince were no more than a literary device inserted in the poem to enrich the theme. For where the original version propounded the conciliating power of love, the later version reflects the healing power of love - a theme which Tennyson was to explore again some years later in Maud (R316). But I believe that Tennyson's insertion of the "weird seizures" in The Princess was a typical example of a poetic attempt to impose order on the chaos of a distressing personal problem by incorporating it in a work of art - in a work of art, moreover, which moves to a psychologically satisfactory conclusion.

Among the subjective paranormal experiences discussed in chapter I in relation to Tennyson's life and work was the so-called "out-of-body" experience described in, for example, "The Mystic" (R96) and In Memoriam 12. Since a "feeling of depersonalization may be regarded as a disordered awareness of the relationship between the body and the self" (Fenton 1983, 158), an out-of-body experience is, of course, a form of depersonalization - and, as such, may be due to temporal lobe epilepsy. Williams describes the out-of-body experience, with autoscopy, of a patient whose electroencephalogram showed

high-voltage activity "of an epileptic kind in the anterior temporal regions on both sides" of the brain. Williams writes: "Suddenly she would feel outside her body, looking at what she was doing. At that time her environment seems unreal, and although she knows what is happening [she says] 'I feel I'm not there'" (Williams 1956, 45). Penfield records the case of a thirty-three year old man who "during minor seizures" induced by electrical stimulation of the temporal lobe experienced, inter alia, "an altered relationship to his own person as though he were outside of his body" (Penfield 1955, 460). The comparison of such cases with poems like In Memoriam 12, which I discussed in chapter I, would appear to lend credence to my hypothesis that many of Tennyson's subjective paranormal experiences, including his out-of-body experiences, may be attributable to TLE.

However, it must be acknowledged that depersonalization and derealization are non-specific symptoms of temporal lobe epilepsy. Slater and Roth believe that depersonalization and derealization may be associated with anxiety states and phobic disorders as well as with temporal lobe epilepsy (1969, 94). And Max Hamilton holds that depersonalization is found in schizophrenia and depression as well as in organic states, including epilepsy (1974, 78). Tennyson's anxiety over the symptoms which he felt might be indicative of a "canker of the brain" (IM 92:3) has been alluded to several times, and I have also pointed out that depression and schizophrenia-like psychoses are frequently part of the psychiatric scenario associated with TLE.

Tennyson's depression (Martin 1980, 280) - or "melancholia", as it is more commonly called in the poetic context - has been well documented (Colley 1983, 13, 34, 66, 67; Louw 1985, 7-8, 77). I indicated in an earlier study that "melancholy has been associated with poetry in many ages", as poems like Milton's "Il Penseroso", Gray's "Elegy Written in a Country Church-Yard" and Keats's "Ode to Melancholy" show (Louw 1985, 77-78). The Renaissance interest in melancholia is perhaps epitomized in the rôle of Hamlet, and almost satirized in that of "the melancholy Jacques" in As You Like It (2.1.26). John Carey, citing L. Babb, refers to the distinction between

...two opposing Renaissance attitudes to melancholy; the first, originating in Galenic medicine, viewed it as a source of stupidity, fearfulness and illusions; the second, originating in Aristotle's Problemata xxx I, and adopted by Ficino in De Studiosorum Sanitate Tuenda, stressed that all who have become eminent in philosophy, poetry or the arts have been of melancholy temperament. At the beginning of L'Allegro M[ilton] exorcises the Galenic melancholy: in Il Penseroso he celebrates the Aristotelian.

(Carey 1971, 131)

Melancholy was highly prized in the Age of Sensibility, as the famous passage from James Thomson's The Seasons shows:

He comes! he comes! in every breeze the Power
Of Philosophic Melancholy comes!
His near approach the sudden-starting tear,
The glowing cheek, the mild dejected air,
The softened feature, and the beating heart,
Pierced deep with many a virtuous pang, declare.
O'er all the soul his sacred influence breathes;
Inflames imagination; through the breast
Infuses every tenderness; and far
Beyond dim earth exalts the swelling thought.

Ten thousand thousand fleet ideas, such
 As never mingled with the vulgar dream,
 Crowd fast into the mind's creative eye.

(lines 1004-16; Sambrook 1972, 116)

As James Sambrook observes in his editorial note to the passage,

The various nervous disorders known as melancholy were thought to be found generally among men and women of high intelligence and sensitivity, so melancholy was sometimes called "the wise disease", or even regarded as the source of wisdom....Here [in The Seasons] the melancholy mood is prompted by the autumnal 'desolated prospect' (1003), but the lines following indicate that this 'melancholy' is compounded of moral and aesthetic sensitivity and imagination.

(1972, 231 n.1004-5)

Melancholia, then, is generally accepted as a sign of sensitivity, or "sensibility" (James 1929, 140; Louw 1985, 77), and critics have also found it to be a quintessential aspect of, and source of inspiration for, Romantic poetry, including that of Tennyson (Carr 1950, 365; Kermode 1957, 8; Louw 1985, 78). But the dark side of inspiration is close to pathology. Trimble, quoting D.H. Tuke, defines depression or melancholia as "'a feeling of misery which is in excess of what is justified by the circumstances in which the individual is placed'", and holds that such a depression "represents an illness rather than an understandable aspect of the patient's personality." Depression is usually classified as being either "reactive" or "endogenous", though other terms are sometimes used: neurotic or psychotic; primary or secondary; unipolar or bipolar (Trimble 1981, 57-58). Trimble notes that

depressive illness "is probably the most frequent psychiatric problem encountered" in epilepsy clinics (Trimble 1987, 297).

Tennyson's early depression is manifest in autobiographical anecdotes. For instance, he used to tell how he was so miserable as a child that he would rush out into the church-yard and throw himself down on a grave, wishing that he, too, were dead (Martin 1980, 25). This sort of behaviour might conceivably be construed as resulting from a reactive depression triggered by the stresses and conflicts of life at Somersby rectory. But Alfred Tennyson's depression was probably endogenous, for it seldom abated for long, even when he had left the turbulent Somersby environment. His lifelong melancholia or depression is revealed in poems ranging from "Mariana" (R73) and "The Two Voices" (R209) to "Tithonus" (R324) and In Memoriam (R296). Even in a poem like "The Silent Voices" (R459), with its ostensibly forward thrust ("Call me.../Forward to the starry track"), the poet cannot quite transcend his natural melancholic tendency to brood upon "the sunlight that is gone".²⁷

As I indicated above, depersonalization and derealization, which are often evident in Tennyson's poetry, may be associated with schizophrenia, as well as with depression. It will emerge later that Tennyson also exhibited other symptoms that could be attributable to schizophrenia; but a differential diagnosis will show in favour of a schizophreniform psychosis rather than schizophrenia per se. For Tennyson showed a "preservation of warm affect, and lack of personality deterioration" that is more consistent with a

psychosis arising out of "temporal lobe disturbance" than with schizophrenia itself (Trimble 1987, 288). However, at this stage I must move on to consider two other possible aspects of temporal lobe epilepsy, namely disturbed spatial discrimination and disturbed temporal discrimination.

The matter of disturbed temporal discrimination is of particular interest in relation to Tennyson's poetry. In an early poem we find the poet asking, "...what is the meaning of then and now?" ("The How and the Why", R72:22). Many years later, in "The Ancient Sage", he decries the "thin minds" that "Break into 'Thens' and 'Whens' the Eternal Now" (R415:103-04). This idea had, of course, been more fully explored years earlier, in The Princess (R286), where Tennyson wrote:

Let there be light and there was light: 'tis so:
For was, and is, and will be, are but is;
And all creation is one act at once.
The birth of light: but we that are not all,
As parts, can see but parts, now this, now that,
And live, perforce, from thought to thought, and
 make
One act a phantom of succession: thus
Our weakness somehow shapes the shadow, Time....

(III.306-13)

A sense of the dissolving boundaries of time infuses those of Tennyson's poems which seem to have their genesis in temporal lobe epilepsy. For instance, in the famous "Passion of the Past" passage which precedes the description of the trance experience in "The Ancient Sage" (R415), the poet (in the persona of the sage) uses metonyms of time as objective correlatives to evoke the feeling or mood associated with his "Passion of the Past". The relevant passage reads:

Today? but what of yesterday? for oft
 On me, when boy, there came what then I called,
 Who knew no books and no philosophies,
 In my boy-phrase 'The Passion of the Past.'
 The first gray streak of earliest summer-dawn,
 The last long stripe of waning crimson gloom,
 As if the late and early were but one -
 A height, a broken grange, a grove, a flower
 Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and lost and gone!'
 A breath, a whisper - some divine farewell -
 Desolate sweetness - far and far away -
 What had he loved, what had he lost, the boy?
 I know not and I speak of what has been.

(R415:216-28)

The passage begins with references to present and past
 ("today"; "yesterday"), but the speaker's perception of a
 temporal "reality" becomes blurred and indistinct. He
 perceives

*The first gray streak of earliest summer-dawn
 The last long stripe of waning crimson gloom,
 As if the late and early were but one....*

(lines 220-22; my italics)

The "twilight" images inevitably recall those of In Memoriam
 95, where the epiphany of the trance experience seems to be
 endorsed by the blending of dawn and dusk that is a feature of
 a midsummer's night in the far northern hemisphere.

In "The Ancient Sage" the description of the "Passion of
 the Past" leads in to a description of the trance state.
 Similarly, in In Memoriam 95, the climactic "elegy" in which
 the poet-speaker finally seems to establish contact with a
 presence beyond the grave, the recollection of past
 associations seem to usher in the actual trance experience:

So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touch'd me from the past,

And all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flashed on mine....

(IM 95:33-36)

These lines may result from a "flash back" of the kind described by Penfield in connection with his work in the field of temporal lobe epilepsy. Neppe says, "Penfield called these 'flash-backs' ('play-backs'), 'psychical hallucinations' or 'experiential seizures'. These involve hallucinations of past experience, and involve reactivation of a strip of the stream of consciousness" (Neppe 1979, 36).

Penfield and his colleagues at the Montreal Neurological Institute quite literally "mapped out" the areas of the brain by noting the response of conscious epileptic patients under local anaesthetic for brain surgery to an electrical current applied to different areas of the exposed brain. Penfield explains:

Since a gentle electric current interferes with the patient's use of a convolution of the brain and sometimes produces involuntary expression of its function, a stimulating electrode could be used to map out the cortex and to identify the convolutions as the patient described his sensations and thoughts. Also, the electrode, if used with discretion, would sometimes reproduce the beginnings of the patient's epileptic seizure and, thus, disclose the site of brain irritation. By talking to the patient and by listening to what came into his mind each time the electrode was applied to the cortex, we stumbled upon new knowledge.

(1975, 13)²⁸

Penfield's electrical stimulation experiments were of vital importance to the study of epilepsy because epileptic discharge, "if localized and circumscribed, often produces a

result which is similar to a stimulation response in the same area" of the brain (Penfield 1955, 456). It was in the course of these neurosurgical experiments that the phenomenon of the reactivation of a strip of the stream of consciousness was discovered.

I believe such a reactivation of a strip of the stream of consciousness is responsible for the experience Tennyson records in the lyric, "In the Valley of Caunteretz" (R326). The poet, revisiting a scene of deep emotional significance to him - a scene he had visited three decades earlier with Arthur Hallam (line 4)²⁹ - walks beside the "stream that flashest white" (line 1), and listens to the sound of the water (the "voice" of the stream - line 8). Under the influence of the sound and the sparkle of the water, the boundaries of time seem to dissolve. The "two and thirty years"³⁰ become as "a mist that rolls away" (line 6). The poet, apostrophizing the stream, writes:

...all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

(R326:7-10)

As I have said, Tennyson's occasional apperceptions of Arthur Hallam as a living presence may be the result of a reactivation of a strip of the stream of consciousness. The remarkable work of Penfield and his colleagues in Montreal linked the brain mechanism for the reactivation of the record of past events - that is, the reactivation of a strip of the stream of consciousness - to the temporal lobe. Penfield

writes that the mechanism of the record of past experience "can be activated by an electrode on the temporal cortex, not elsewhere". Furthermore, he adds, in his experience "it can only be activated in a temporal cortex that has been somehow conditioned by years of electrical discharges from a neighbouring epileptogenic focus" (Penfield 1955, 453).³¹

This neurosurgical discovery seems to have considerable relevance to a passage from The Lover's Tale which reads:

O Love, O Hope!
 They come, they crowd upon me all at once -
 Moved from the cloud of unforgotten things,
 That sometimes on the horizon of the mind
 Lies folded, often sweeps athwart in storm -
 Flash upon flash they lighten through me - days
 Of dewy dawning....

(R153:I.44-50)

The "cloud of unforgotten things" that sometimes lies "folded" on the "horizon of the mind" sounds remarkably like the manifold past experiences which are recorded on the convolutions or folds of the brain's surface (or "horizon"). The "storm" in which these events are reactivated may be the storm of epileptic seizure, and the terminology of electrical discharge ("Flash upon flash they lighten through me") is of course entirely apposite to the epileptic condition. Here - and in other places, which will be discussed later - Tennyson's poetic insights seem to anticipate the neurological discoveries of Wilder Penfield.

"Flash-backs" are classified by Penfield as (temporal lobe) "psychical seizures" (or "dreamy states") of the experiential type. Temporal lobe psychical seizures of the interpretive type include déjà vu phenomena (Penfield 1955,

457). Fenton defines the déjà vu phenomenon as "a false sense of familiarity applied to current experience", and notes that it is "a common symptom" of TLE (1983, 158).

In chapter I, I highlighted poems which seem to reflect the poet's experiences of déjà vu ("a feeling of having already seen an object or person not seen before") and déjà vécu ("a feeling of having already lived through an experience, not actually experienced before") (Fenton 1981, 20). These included "To - [As when with downcast eyes]", in which the poet writes, presumably to Arthur Hallam (R179, headnote):

If one but speaks or hems or stirs his chair,
Even the wonder waxeth more and more,
So that we say, 'All this hath been before,
All this hath been, I know not when or where'.

(R179:5-8)

In the first chapter, I considered this experience as a possible parapsychological phenomenon, and the opening lines of the poem do suggest that Tennyson viewed the experience as evidence of reincarnation ("As when with downcast eyes we muse and brood, / And ebb with a former life..."). But the alternative explanation offered by the poet ("...or seem / To lapse far back in some confused dream" - my italics) shows a lack of certainty on his part. Certainly the second explanation (lines 2-3) strikes a chord which resonates in harmony with the "dreamy state" passages from The Princess, which I suggested were compatible with a diagnosis of temporal lobe epilepsy. And it may be appropriate here to invoke Lishman's definition of the "dreamy state" associated with TLE

as "a peculiar alteration of consciousness composed of depersonalization, déjà vu and dream-like reminiscence" (Lishman 1978, 313).

As I have noted, Fenton holds that feelings of déjà vu - such as those reflected in the sonnet "As when with downcast eyes..." - are "a common symptom" of epilepsy. Lishman, however, strikes a warning note when he writes:

A story of vague perceptual disturbances, such as déjà vu sensations or feelings of depersonalization, should not be accepted as indicating temporal lobe epilepsy in the absence of other distinctive features, since these are frequently experienced by neurotic patients and can sometimes be elicited on enquiry from perfectly healthy people.

(1978, 346)

The entry on "déjà vu and déjà vécu" in Fish's Clinical Psychopathology also states that these experiences "occur occasionally in normals [sic]", but adds that "they may become excessive in temporal lobe lesions. Déjà vu usually ushers in the typical temporal lobe attack" (M. Hamilton 1974, 63).

Slater and Roth see déjà vu and déjà vécu experiences as "very distinctive" of temporal lobe attacks, and note that these experiences are "often coupled with other falsifications of memory or imposed recollections". The relevant passage continues:

Other experiences closely linked with these [déjà vu and déjà vécu] are the uncanny feelings of change in the outer world or in the self, derealization, depersonalization and disturbances of the body image. If these mental disturbances are very vivid they may take on the character of an illusion.

(1969, 459)

Indeed, both illusions and hallucinations are relatively common in temporal lobe dysfunction (Slater and Roth 1969, 459; Trimble 1981, 162, 165).

According to the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology, the term "illusion" is applicable to "Basically any stimulus situation where that which is perceived cannot be predicted, prima facie, by a simple analysis of the physical stimulus." An "hallucination," on the other hand, is defined as a "perceptual experience with all the compelling subjective properties of a real sensory impression but without the normal physical stimulus for that sensory modality." Trimble offers the following relatively simple distinction: "An illusion is a misinterpretation of perceptions, as opposed to hallucinations which are perceptions in the absence of adequate peripheral stimuli" (1981, 30). Thus the term auditory illusion is applicable when Tennyson, in "In the Valley of Caunteretz" (R326), hears the sound of the stream as the "living voice" of the dead Hallam - or when, as so often, he hears a voice in the wind (C. Tennyson 1949, 25). But one must use the term visual hallucination to describe the experience of the poet-speaker in In Memoriam 70 when, lying in the dark, he suddenly "sees" the face of his dead friend (IM 70:15-16). Indeed, a closer look at the final stanza of In Memoriam 70 shows that it records both a visual and an auditory hallucination, for it reads:

...all at once beyond the will
 I hear a wizard music roll,
 And thro' a lattice on the soul

Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

(lines 13-16)

It might, of course, be argued that the experience is simply an imaginative - as opposed to an imaginary - one. I should have to reply that my aim in this thesis is to illuminate the processes of the imagination. And, as will emerge in later chapters, other elements in this quotation - "a wizard music", "a lattice on the soul" - may lend credence to my statement that this stanza of In Memoriam 70 "records both a visual and an auditory hallucination...."

It might also be argued, of course, that I err in citing this example as an hallucination. For in certain quarters it is held as incorrect to apply the term to "false perceptions" that may "occur normally", such as hypnogogic images (Penguin Dictionary of Psychology ["hallucinations"]). It must be remembered that perceptual disorders "occur in all forms of psychotic disturbance, in disturbed states of consciousness and in normal individuals. During that phase which intervenes between the waking state and sleep many people are particularly vulnerable to experiencing illusions and hallucinations. The hallucinations on falling asleep are termed hypnogogic, and those on awakening hypnopompic" (Hill et al. 1979, 35). The image of Hallam "seen" while the poet lies in the dark, presumably before dropping off to sleep, may fall into this category. But the pages that follow will, I trust, show that there are in Tennyson's poetry many other examples of both visual and auditory hallucinations that might be quoted with impunity. I have deliberately chosen to cite,

at this point, the possibly controversial example of In Memoriam 70 (lines 15-16) in order to indicate my recognition of the complexities of the subject. And in that connection, there is a further point that needs to be made - namely, that in "the grief which follows a bereavement, hallucinations and pseudohallucinations of the lost one" may be considered "a common and normal phenomena [sic]" (Hill et al. 1979, 35; see also Yager 1989, 570). However, as I indicated above, other aspects of the experience recorded in In Memoriam 70 lead me to consider it a subjective paranormal experience associated with TLE.³²

The visual hallucinations of temporal lobe epilepsy may be unformed ("simple") or may present "as figures or scenes complete to the last detail" (Slater and Roth 1969, 459). The "simple elements" of TLE visual hallucinations are similar to those found in occipital lobe epilepsy: for example, "flashes of light, colours, zig-zags, or radiating spectra" (Lishman 1978, 312-13), triangles or stars (M. Hamilton 1974, 29). But in occipital seizures, complex formed hallucinations with meaningful content are not encountered (Lishman 1978, 213). So, since evidence of both simple and complex formed hallucinations is seen to be reflected in Tennyson's poetry, it is likely that the temporal lobe rather than the occipital lobe is involved in the genesis of the images. Of course, as has been noted, the brain operates as an integrated whole, and too-rigid demarcation is to some extent artificial. It is for this reason that some experts choose to use the term "complex partial seizures" in preference to "temporal lobe epilepsy"

(Trimble 1981, 164).

There are many images in Tennyson's poetry that may reflect the simple elements of epileptic hallucination. These include coloured spots, flashing lights, arcs, rainbows and radiating spectra. One of the most concentrated passages in which these elements are exemplified is the visionary one from "Timbuctoo" (R67).³³ The speaker, describing the appearance of the "young Seraph" (line 64), writes:

...with hasty motion I did veil
 My vision with both hands, and saw before me
 Such coloured spots as dance athwart the eyes
 Of those, that gaze upon the noonday Sun.
 Girt with a Zone of flashing gold beneath
 His breast, and compassed round about his brow
 With triple arch of everchanging bows,
 And circled with the glory of living light
 And alternation of all hues, he stood.

(R67:67-75)

According to the medical literature quoted above (Lishman 1978, 312-13), "coloured spots" such as those mentioned in line 69 of "Timbuctoo" are a well-documented symptom of epileptic aura - though they also occur in other conditions such as migraine or certain eye disorders, of course. Max Hamilton points out, however, that although eye disorders "can cause visual hallucinations...there is usually also a central [that is, cerebral] disturbance as well" (1974, 29).

It will be recalled that "radiating spectra" were cited among the "simple" visual hallucinations associated with both occipital and temporal lobe epilepsy. Lines 73-75 of "Timbuctoo" - which describe the seraph as en-haloed by a "triple arch of everchanging bows", "circled with the glory of

living light / And alternation of all hues" - would seem to fit the case. And it will also be remembered that halo effects were among the subjective paranormal phenomena discussed in chapter I - many of which phenomena I claimed were explicable in terms of TLE.

Of course, when considering the description of the seraph in "Timbuctoo", one must bear in mind an important literary precursor. I quote Milton's description of the angel Raphael in Paradise Lost:

At once on the eastern cliff of Paradise
He lights, and to his proper shape returns
A seraph winged; six wings he wore, to shade
His lineaments divine; the pair that clad
Each shoulder broad, came mantling o'er his breast
With regal ornament; the middle pair
Girt like a starry zone his waist, and round
Skirted his loins and thighs with downy gold
And colours dipped in heaven; the third his feet
Shadowed from either heel with feathered mail
Sky-tinctured grain. Like Maia's son he stood,
And shook his plumes, that heavenly fragrance filled
The circuit wide.

(V.275-87; Carey 1971, 273-74)

Tennyson uses the words "Girt" and "Zone" (line 71), as does Milton (V.281). So the later poet was probably remembering Milton's description, as one might expect. Yet the Tennyson passage is very different, the emphasis being on moving light and colour ("coloured spots dance athwart the eyes" - R67:68; "flashing gold" - R67:71; "triple arch of everchanging bows" - R67:73; "alteration of all hues" - R67:75).

The kaleidoscopic effect of colour and light described in lines 67-75 of "Timbuctoo" finds many counterparts throughout Tennyson's poetry. The rainbow is a recurring motif (R39:6,

Ricks points out (R226:n.140-2) that the Tennyson passage has some features in common with lines from Scott's Lay of the Last Minstrel (II viii), of which there was a copy at Somersby:

And red and bright the streamers light
 Were dancing in the glowing north.
 So had he seen, in fair Castile,
 The youth in glittering squadrons start,
 Sudden the flying jennet wheel,
 And hurl the unexpected dart.
 He knew, by the streamers that shot so bright,
 That spirits were riding the northern light.

It is well-known that Tennyson admired Sir Walter Scott. He said, "Scott is the most chivalrous literary figure of this century, and the author with the widest range since Shakespeare" (Memoir II, 372). However, I believe Scott's appeal also lay partly in the fact that Tennyson found in the writings of the "Wizard of the North" images which struck a chord in his own mind. Tennyson's characteristic light imagery is far too pervasive to be merely derivative.

I mentioned "geometrical shapes" above because of the implicit reference to circles ("round and round") and the explicit reference to an "arch" in line 138 of the "Morte d'Arthur". Siegel and Jarvik point out that "geometrical forms of all kinds" have been reported in drug-induced hallucinations (1975, 108), and note that similar "hallucinatory imagery" has been shown to be associated with schizophrenia and epilepsy" (1975, 110). Many of these geometrical images are, of course, "archetypal", as Roland Fischer observes (1975, 197).

I believe a study of recurring "geometrical forms" in

Tennyson's poetry is warranted. Circles, arcs and arches figure very prominently. So, too, do orbs and domes - which are in a sense three-dimensional variations on the theme. Images of orbs are to be found, for example, in "Arangeddon" (R3:35), "The Poet" (R91:29), "Eleänore" (R161:91), "The Palace of Art" (R167:255), "A Dream of Fair Women" (R173:171), "The Vision of Sin" (R277:25), and In Memoriam (Introductory stanzas:5, IM 30:28 and IM 34:5). The image of the dome occurs, for example, in "Armageddon" (R3:n.i 96-100), The Lover's Tale (R153:I.63), "The Progress of Spring" (R193:49), The Princess (R286: n.v 132.3), and "In Deep and Solemn Dreams" (R132:6).

While I believe that the geometrical forms I have referred to were of significance to Tennyson primarily because of their postulated occurrence in his epileptic aura, it must be stated that he would also have encountered such shapes in art and architecture,³⁵ as well as in literature. Leonée Ormond, in her recent monograph on "Tennyson and the Old Masters" writes:

Few people associate Tennyson's name with a love of the fine arts. His contemptuous attitude to the Pre-Raphaelite illustrations to the 1857 Moxon edition of his work has been mistaken for a more general aesthetic indifference. In fact, Tennyson was an assiduous gallery-goer, and his poetry reflects the powerful visual images of painting with which he stored his mind.

(1989, 3)

However, as far as I know, the possible influence of architecture on Tennyson's poetry has not been studied. The Victorian laureate is not mentioned by Kenneth Clark in The

Gothic Revival (1962) or by Terence Davis in The Gothick Taste (1974), though each of these authors devotes a chapter to the influence of architecture on literature. But several of the poetic examples they quote employ images of arches and of domes. I shall cite only one of these examples - some lines from Pope's "Eloisa to Abelard" which describe "moss-grown domes with spiry turrets crown'd, / Where awful arches make a noon-day night" (lines 142-43; Butt 1983, 256; qtd. by Clark 1962, 18).

The dome is, of course, an established literary image which seems to occur especially frequently in the writings of the Romantic poets. In the sonnet "Composed upon Westminster Bridge", Wordsworth writes, predictably, of "Ships, towers, domes, theatres and temples" (line 6, Hayden 1977, I, 574). And the frequency with which Shelley uses the image of the dome rivals that of Tennyson's usage. For example, in "The Cloud" Shelley refers to "the blue dome of air" (line 80; Hutchinson 1970, 602) and in the "Ode to the West Wind" he writes of "the dying year, to which this closing night / Will be the dome of a vast sepulchre" (lines 24-25; 1970, 578). Shelley's description in Adonais, of life as a "dome of many-coloured glass" is well-known (line 462; 1970, 443). And in Alastor the dome image occurs several times, sometimes in association with images of arches or rainbows:

...serenely now
And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre
Suspended in the solitary dome
Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
I wait thy breath....

(lines 41-45; Hutchinson 1970, 16)

...starry domes
Of diamond and of gold expand above
Numberless and unmeasurable halls....

(lines 90-92; Hutchinson 1970, 17)

The beams of sunset hung their rainbow hues
High 'mid the shifting domes of sheeted spray....

(lines 334-35; Hutchinson 1970, 22)

The pyramids
Of the tall cedar overarching, frame
Most solemn domes within....

(lines 433-35; Hutchinson 1970, 24)

Most interestingly, Coleridge uses the image of a dome in "Kubla Khan", a poem that we know reflects a state of altered consciousness - not the altered consciousness of epileptic trance, but the altered consciousness associated with opium imbibition (Abrams 1971, 59-60). For Coleridge had himself "drunk the milk of Paradise" ("Kubla Khan", line 36).

In Xanadu did Kubla Khan
A stately pleasure-dome decree
.....
The shadow of the dome of pleasure
Floated midway on the waves;
Where was heard the mingled measure
From the fountain and the caves.
It was a miracle of rare device,
A sunny pleasure-dome with caves of ice!

(lines 1-2, 31-36; Coleridge 1969, 297-98)

However, I have temporarily digressed, and must now return to my study of the geometrical shapes in Tennyson's poetry. Since I have elsewhere discussed the recurring image of the circle in his poetry (Louw 1985, 64-65, 69-70) - though I did not at that stage perceive the prevalence of the shape in altered states of consciousness - I will confine my

discussion here to the imagery of arcs and arches, selecting a few random examples for quotation. In these examples the emphasis is mine:

...the hollow-vaulted caverns
Bore out his heavy sobs to the waste night,
And some the low-browed arch returned unto
His ear....

("Sense and Conscience", R130:122-25)

...in and out the woodbine's flowery arches
The summer midges wove their wanton gambol....

("Sonnet [Check every outflash...]", R150:11-12)

...through the arch
Down those loud waters, like a setting star,
Mixt with the gorgeous west the lighthouse shone,
And silver-smiling Venus ere she fell
Would often loiter....

(The Lover's Tale, R153:56-60)

Run out your measured arcs, and lead
The closing cycle rich in good.

(IM 105:27-28)

...tost on thoughts that changed from hue to hue,
Now poring on the glowworm, now the star,
I paced the terrace, till the Bear had wheeled
Through a great arc his seven slow suns.

(The Princess, R286:IV.192-94)

...the deep-set windows, stained and traced,
Would seem slow-flaming crimson fires
From shadowed grot of arches interlaced,
And tipt with frost-like spires.

("The Palace of Art", R167:49-52)

...all experience is an arch wherethrough
Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
For ever and for ever when I move.

("Ulysses", R217:19-21)

...a slow broad stream,
...stirred with languid pulses of the oar,
Waves all its lazy lilies, and creeps on,
Barge-laden, to three arches of a bridge

Crowned with the minster-towers.

("The Gardener's Daughter", R208:40-44)

Sometimes the arc-like imagery is implicit, as in references to "a gleaming river's crescent-curve" (R286:I.169), or "the silver sickle" that is the moon (R286:I.100), or

...the semicircle
Of dark-blue waters and the narrow fringe
Of curving beach....

(The Lover's Tale, R153:I.36-38)

The images of arcs and arches are often "interpenetrated" by images of light and colour (R67:129). For instance, in "'Pierced through with knotted thorns of barren pain'" Tennyson writes:

...toward the sloping roof on equal wing
Mystic Iönah wandered and the gleam
Of Heaven's first arch was on her amber plumes.

(R190:33-35)

And in "The Progress of Spring" he writes:

Her mantle, slowly greening in the Sun,
Now wraps her close, now arching leaves her bare
To breaths of balmier air....

(R193:11-13)

In "The Coach of Death" he describes "livid bowers of branching blue [which] / O'er-arched their upward way" (R4: 163-64). In the sonnet beginning "Though night hath climed her peak of highest noon", the poet gives us this lovely gem of haiku-like description: "All night through archways of the

bridged pearl, / And portals of pure silver walks the moon"
 (R108:3-4). And in a characteristic passage from "Youth"
 Tennyson writes:

Out burst a rainbow in the sky -
 Away with shadows! on they move!
 Beneath those double arches lie
 Fair with green fields the realms of Love.

(R223:89-92)

Having highlighted a few of the very many references to lights, arcs, arches and rainbows in Tennyson's poetry, I should like to quote two very early descriptions of epileptic auras cited by Penfield and Jasper. Soranus writes: "'The [epileptic] patients...perceive tiny sparks, so to speak, or fiery circles borne before their eyes.'" And Aretaeus writes: "'When the term of the attack comes nearer, red or black lights, or both together appear in arcs before the eyes, similar to the rainbow'" (Penfield and Jasper 1954, 5).

I do not, of course, wish to imply that the myriad poems which carry images of lights, arcs, arches and rainbows - and the rainbow is in a sense the archetypal arch - are all poems of epileptic experience. Such an idea would be patently ridiculous. What I do want to suggest is that, because of their prevalence in his epileptic aura, these shapes and colours become somehow significant for Tennyson, and hence they tend to occur with remarkable frequency in his work.

Whilst on the subject of colour, I should like to quote Martin on Tennyson's illness of 1888:

In his illness he [Tennyson] again had the flashes of illumination, half-way between trance and dream,

of the kind that had once troubled him as the probable onset of epilepsy. As always, his visions were full of brilliant colour, once of a succession of beautiful pagodas piled up to heaven, again of evergreen forests, cliffs, and temples, like the wonderful amalgam of Caunteretz and Ida in which he had once imagined Oenone living. But now he could speak of what he dreamed, as he had been unable to do when a young man, for the latent terror behind the visions was gone.

(Martin 1980, 567)

Writing of the "dreamy states" or "twilight states" of temporal lobe epilepsy, Slater and Roth note that hallucinations are

...a characteristic feature [of TLE] and are often extremely florid. Visual hallucinations predominate, and are often coloured (there is said to be some preference for the colour red), highly complex, and endowed with movement. Whole scenes...may be enacted before the patient's eyes. They may call forth the liveliest emotional responses, e.g. of terror, and yet there may be little sign of it in outward behaviour.

(1969, 465)

The close correspondence between this passage from Clinical Psychiatry and Martin's description of Tennyson's colourful visions (quoted above) is worth noting. Clearly, the elaborate "visions" to which Martin refers (be they hallucinations or pseudo-hallucinations) are not of the simple type encountered in both occipital and temporal lobe epilepsy, but of the much more complex variety associated with temporal lobe discharge (Lishman 1978, 312-13).

I shall have more to say in a later chapter about Tennyson's complex visual hallucinations, including the "scenic" visions to which much of his best landscape poetry is

probably indebted. At the moment it will suffice to quote John D. Rosenberg who has pointed out that "heightened precision" is, paradoxically, a feature of Tennyson's "dreamlike topographies". So far as landscape is concerned, "Tennyson's 'dreams' are more vivid than our 'realities'" (Rosenberg 1974, 303-04).

As is the case with visual hallucinations, the auditory hallucinations which are sometimes associated with temporal lobe epilepsy may be simple ("primitive") or more complex. The simple or primitive hallucinations include, *inter alia*, buzzing, drumming, throbbing, hissing, roaring and whistling "sounds", and the "sound" of bells (Slater and Roth 1969, 459; Lishman 1978, 313). The more complex auditory hallucinations include voices, snatches of song, or fragments of music (Slater and Roth 1969, 459; Lishman 1978, 313). These formed, organized or complex auditory hallucinations "may be associated with a special meaning, relevance or significance" and "are common concomitants in dreamy states" (Neppe 1979, 30-31).

It has been pointed out that whistling, buzzing, drumming "and even bells" can also be heard "by patients with middle or internal ear disease, and also in the very rare cases of midbrain deafness" (M. Hamilton 1974, 30). However, since Tennyson also experienced more complex auditory hallucinations, such as voices and music, a diagnosis of temporal lobe epilepsy seems more plausible.

Of course, both "elementary" (or simple) and "organized"

(or complex) auditory hallucinations can occur in schizophrenia as well as in organic states such as temporal lobe epilepsy (M. Hamilton 1974, 22). I believe that the auditory hallucinations Tennyson appears to have experienced were not due to schizophrenia per se, but may have been associated with a schizophrenia-like psychosis resulting from TLE. I base this assumption on the fact that Tennyson appears to have experienced hallucinations with both visual and auditory components - and visual hallucinations "are less frequent in schizophrenia" (Grebb and Cancro 1989, 761). Indeed, Max Hamilton asserts that visual hallucinations "are extremely rare in schizophrenia, so much so that they should raise doubt as to the diagnosis" (1974, 25). But "in temporal lobe epilepsy patients may have combined auditory and visual hallucinations" (M. Hamilton 1974, 24). Furthermore, the fact that Tennyson showed little evidence of deterioration of personality, or loss of affective warmth, would seem to indicate TLE rather than schizophrenia (Trimble 1987, 288).

So far as the simple or primitive sounds reported in connection with TLE are concerned, I have a particular interest in roaring and throbbing sounds and the ringing of bells, for these are dominant auditory images in Tennyson's poetry. The words "roar", "roaring" and "roared" occur frequently in a number of different contexts: the roar of an animal ("Oenone" R164:210; "A Dream of Fair Women", R173:222); the roar of the sea (Maud, R316:Part I.98; "Sea Dreams", R319:56, 80, 242; "A Welcome to Alexandra", R331:24; "The Palace of Art", R167:71; "The Ballad of Oriana", R114:97;

"Boadicea", R326:76; "Locksley Hall", R271:6); the roar of traffic ("Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington", R309:9; IM 123:3; Maud R316:Part II.162); the roar of wind ("Aylmer's Field", R337:431; "The Sisters", R165:15; "Locksley Hall" R271:194); and the roar of a storm (IM 127:3). Particularly important is the roaring sound made by a rushing torrent of water - as for example in "Oenone":

...far below them roars
The long brook falling through the cloven ravine
In cataract after cataract to the sea.

(R164:7-9)

The sound associated with a rushing torrent of water is very similar to the sound of thunder - as Tennyson would seem to suggest when he writes of "the torrent's echoing thunder" (R15:24), and of the river which

...sloped
To plunge in cataract, shattering on black blocks
A breadth of thunder.

(The Princess, R286:III.273-5).

Similarly, in "The Fall of Jerusalem", Tennyson compares the "thunders of the parting Deity" to "the rush of countless waters" (R34:92-93).

Tennyson is, of course, by no means the first poet to use the word "roar" in the above collocations. Nor is he the first poet to employ the metaphor of thunder to depict the sound of water. Shelley, for instance, does so in Alastor when he writes of "the thunder and the hiss of homeless streams" (line 10). But Tennyson's use of the images which

suggest the roar of thunder or of water - or of one described in terms of the other - is so pervasive as to indicate a special significance. I believe that special significance developed as a result of the recurrence of this particular sound in the poet's epileptic aura. We often find him using the images of thunder and torrents together with images of flashing or glimmering lights which, as I pointed out earlier, are a common feature of epileptic aura. For instance, Tennyson writes:

Of old sat Freedom on the heights,
 The thunders breaking at her feet:
 Above her shook the starry lights:
 She heard the torrents meet.

(R236:1-4)

The roaring sound of water or of thunder often appears in the poetry in combination with images which may reflect the more complex auditory hallucinations of temporal lobe epilepsy - such as voices, music or snatches of song. An excellent example of this particular amalgam of images is to be found in Part II of "Youth" (R223).

Part I of the poem looks back, first on the idyllic days of youth (lines 1-20), and then on the poet-speaker's increasing tendency to dwell in the past (lines 21-32). It presents the typical conflict between two voices in Tennyson's poetry - in this case, the conflict between the "low sweet voices" of the past (line 43) and a voice from the future which cries, "'Come along'" (line 40). The poet-speaker, unable to resolve this conflict, loiters "in the middle way" (line 46), but knows that sooner or later he will again be

challenged by the voice from the future. That challenge, and the speaker's response to it, are presented in Part II, which begins:

A rumour of a mystery,
A noise of winds that meet and blend,
An energy, an agony,
A labour working to an end.

(R223:57-60)

A "mystical" feeling, so common in TLE (Fenton 1983, 163) is accompanied by the roaring sound which I have postulated was part of Tennyson's aura ("A noise of winds that meet and blend" - line 58). One of the aural symptoms reported by a TLE patient who was himself a medical doctor was "a rushing noise" accompanied by or followed by "giddiness" (Williams 1956, 58). Evidence of such epileptic vertigo is perhaps to be detected in line 99 of "Youth": "Yet am I dizzy...." But in looking ahead I stray from the subject of the "winds that meet and blend". To the poet-speaker the power of these winds is at once an "energy" and an "agony" (line 59), seeming purposive in its driving force (line 60). These lines ("An energy, an agony, / A labour working to an end") are, of course, also applicable in a metaphorical sense to the epileptic condition - a condition in which the sufferer may be very much aware of what Dostoevsky called the "dialectic" aspect of epileptic attack - that is, the "torpor, psychic darkness" and possible eventual "idiocy" that are the dark converse of the "loftiest moments" of the seizure (Dostoevsky, The Idiot, Part II, Ch.5; qtd. by Rice 1985, 43). The emotional ambivalence inherent in Dostoevsky's words may

reflect an aspect of the seizure itself as much as a response to it. For in the medical literature Williams makes mention of a case "where fear and pleasure were intimately mixed". He feels that this admixture "points to the emotional anatomy of some complex feelings - the 'sweet agonies'...." He associates these "'sweet agonies'" with thrilling experiences which are "compounded of fear and pleasure" (Williams 1956, 63).

Part II of "Youth" deals with a "thrilling experience" of a similar order.. In the second stanza the scene is set for the internal drama which is about to unfold: it is "early morning" (line 62) and as the speaker tries to decide whether to "rest or...rise" (line 61), he hears an imaginary or hallucinatory voice: "A voice like many voices cries, / Comes hither throbbing through the dark..." (lines 63-64). In stanza 3, images of light are introduced ("Now one faint line of light doth glow, / I follow to the morning sun" - lines 65-66). Thereafter auditory and visual images are interwoven to create the thrilling effect I have referred to:

Behind yon hill the trumpets blow,
And there is something greatly done:

The voice cries 'Come'. Upon the brink
A solitary fortress burns,
And shadows strike and shadows sink,
And Heaven is dark and bright by turns.

'Come' and I come, the wind is strong:
Hush! there floats upward from the gulf
A murmur of heroic song,
A howling of the mountain wolf;

A tempest strikes the craggy walls,
Faint shouts are heard across the glen,
A moan of many waterfalls,
And in the pauses groans of men.

'Come' and I come, no more I sleep:
 The thunder cannot make thee dumb;
 'Come' and I come, the vale is deep,
 My heart is dark, but yet I come.

(lines 67-84).

Both the simple and the more complex auditory images which I have highlighted as possibly associated with TLE are present: voices (lines 63, 69, 78); music (line 67); fragments of song (line 75); and the roar of storm (line 77), of falling water (line 79) and of thunder (line 82).

One auditory image does not conform to the usual Tennysonian pattern: the "howling of the mountain wolf" (line 76). But this is of some interest in the context of epilepsy; for Dostoevsky, who is known to have experienced hallucinations (Rice 1985, 111), writes of an apparently autobiographical childhood incident "that began with a voice shouting: 'A wolf's on the run!'" The child was terrified at the time, but Dostoevsky, in telling the story in later years, observes:

"I understood at last that there was no wolf and that I had imagined...the shout "A wolf's on the run!" It was, by the way such a clear and distinct shout. However, such shouts (and not just about wolves) I had already imagined once or twice, and I was aware of this."

(qtd. by Rice 1985, 47)³⁶

The fact that the poet and the novelist both introduce the image of the wolf is probably coincidental, and unimportant. What I do wish to stress, however, is that Dostoevsky experienced auditory hallucinations and other symptoms, to which I shall refer shortly, that were not unlike

those of Tennyson. And medical commentators "who are highly regarded in their special fields have found that Dostoevsky's medical data conform to established symptom patterns of temporal lobe epilepsy" (Rice 1985, 231).

In Part II of "Youth", after the "latest thunder-peal hath pealed" (line 86), daylight sweeps across the landscape (lines 87-88), and the scene is described in terms of the imagery of rainbows, arches and glimmering lights which I suggested earlier formed part of Tennyson's epileptic aura.

Out bursts a rainbow in the sky -
 Away with shadows! on they move!
 Beneath those double arches lie
 Fair with green fields the realms of Love.

The whole land glitters after rain,
 Through wooded isles the river shines,
 The casements sparkle on the plain,
 The towers gleam among the vines....

(lines 89-96; my italics)

The poem proceeds with a line which by now has almost the force of a refrain:

'Come' and I come, and all comes back
 Which in that early voice was sweet....

(lines 97-98)

These lines seem to evoke an awareness of "special situations of the past" - the kind of feeling Penfield found was associated with excitation of the lateral and superior surfaces of the temporal lobe of the brain (Penfield and Jasper 1954, 140), and which seems applicable to Tennyson's "Passion of the Past". I must stress, of course, that I deliberately use the term "excitation" in this context in

preference to "epileptic discharge" because it is not really possible to distinguish between normal memory "mechanisms" and the recollection of the "special situations from the past" that are often a feature of TLE.

In lines 99-100 of "Youth", the poet-speaker says he feels "dizzy" and is wafted - or feels as if he is wafted - from his feet by a "light wind". As Ricks notes, the manuscript "has a lacuna for the first line" of the next stanza (R223:n.101-3); but thereafter the vertigo first mentioned in line 99 becomes more marked - and the poet's continuing use of the present tense heightens the dramatic immediacy:

Now quicker and quicker giddily
Till all the plain confused and dim
Streams backward like a moving sea.

Warm beats my blood....

(lines 101-03)

In these lines, which act in anticipation of the poem's final vision, a tremendous sense of expectation is built up; and the passage (lines 99-104) finds an almost exact parallel in Williams' record of the psychic seizure experienced by one of his TLE patients (Case 2434): "There is a sudden feeling of being lifted up, of elation, with satisfaction, a most pleasant sense. With it there is the feeling, 'I am just about to find out knowledge no one else shares - something to do with the line between life and death.' Her heart pounds..." (1956, 57).

Dostoevsky's hallucinations were linked, in his opinion,

with "spells of vertigo or fainting" which he called Kondrashka (Rice 1985, 5). Here, in Tennyson's poem, we find that an auditory hallucination (the voice that cries "Come") is interwoven with other auditory images which may also be hallucinatory (thunder - line 82; music or song - line 75) and with images of light which are of a kind well-documented in connection with TLE. This complex auditory hallucination, with visual concomitants, terminates in vertigo; and Slater and Roth have pointed out that auditory hallucinations due to temporal lobe epilepsy "are often accompanied by vertigo" (1969, 459).

It has been observed that complex auditory hallucinations are generally associated with the "dreamy states" of temporal lobe epilepsy. Lines 102-03 of "Youth" ("...all the plain confused and dim / Streams backward like a moving sea") certainly lend themselves to interpretation in terms of the "dreamy state" phenomenon, for not only is the plain "confused and dim", but the kind of disorder of spatial configuration mentioned on page 100 in connection with TLE is inherent in the image of the solid plain streaming "backward like a moving sea."

The poet-speaker says: "Warm beats my blood..." (line 104). This line may reflect a perfectly normal sense of anticipation. But it does tend to remind one of the rush of blood to the head that is described by Dostoevsky in his "seizure" diary (Rice 1985, 297). The same symptom is referred to by members of the Tennyson family, including Alfred Tennyson, in connection with their so-called "gout"

(12/7/1829; Lang and Shannon 1982, 41).

The speaker in "Youth" continues: "...my spirit thirsts" (line 104). The religious resonances thus set up prepare the way for the poem's closing vision:

Fast by me flash the cloudy streaks,
And from the golden vapour bursts
A mountain bright with triple peaks:

With all his groves he bows, he nods,
The clouds unswathe them from the height,
And there sit figures as of Gods
Rayed round with beams of living light.

(R223:105-11)

This "vision" may in fact represent one of the complex formed hallucinations with meaningful content that are a feature of temporal lobe, as opposed to occipital lobe, discharge. Possibly the three mountain peaks symbolize the Holy Trinity of the Christian religion. But Paden points out that according to G.S. Faber's "mythologizing", three peaks are "characteristic of all holy mountains and hence of all legendary Lands of the Blest" (Paden 1942, 157; qtd. by Ricks R223:n.107). Therefore the triple-peaked mountain with its God-like figures is a vision which seems to promise immortality.

The optimistic connotations set up by the image of the rainbow in line 89 - for the rainbow is a Biblical symbol of promise (Genesis 9.11-17) - seem to be fulfilled or reinforced by the final vision. And it should be noted that the vision is presented in terms of halo-effects not unlike those described earlier in connection with question 7 on Neppe's Subjective Paranormal Experience questionnaire. For the God-

like figures in "Youth" are "Rayed round with beams of living light". It should also be remembered that visual hallucinations of "radiating spectra", which frequently feature in epileptic aura, are capable of creating such halo effects.

"Youth" was first printed in the Memoir (I, 112-15), and was dated 1833. Ricks feels that "the probability is therefore very strong that Youth was affected by the death of Arthur Hallam" on 15 September 1833 (R223, headnote). The closing vision in the poem may well offer consolation for that loss in so far as it hints at a life after death - and hence at the possibility of reunion with the loved one in the hereafter. Although there is no overt reference to God himself, the figures perceived on the mountain are God-like (line 110), and by extrapolation seem to suggest the existence of a Deity. In a poet as habitually beset by doubts about eternity and immortality as Tennyson was, such a perception - albeit even momentary - may be hailed in Romantic terms as a triumph of the visionary imagination. To point out that the salient features of that visionary experience can be explained in terms of temporal lobe epilepsy is not to undermine the importance or relevance of the poetic imagination, but to attempt to move a little closer to an understanding of the workings, in a particular poet, of what is probably man's highest faculty. My purpose is to try to unravel some of the complexities of the "knot that ties body and mind together" (page 1 above).

In considering the complexities of the poetic imagination, it is impossible - and undesirable - to ignore the influence of literary precursors. I shall have more to say on this subject in a later chapter, but here I must point out the similarity in feeling and tone between Part II of "Youth" and the closing stanza of Adonais, Shelley's beautiful elegy on the death of Keats. Each seems to represent a process that is both "agony" and "energy" (R223:59), like breaking out of a chrysalis - so that one suspects both poems are ultimately exploring the moment of artistic inspiration.

In Adonais, Shelley writes:

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
 Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven
 Far from shore, far from the trembling throng
 Whose sails were never to the tempest given....

(lines 488-90; Hutchinson 1970, 444)

In Shelley's poem the spiritual "breath" invoked becomes a wind of tempestuous strength and velocity which carries the poet-speaker inexorably forward and "far from the shore" (Adonais, lines 489-90). In Tennyson's poem "Youth", too, "wind" (line 73) and "tempest" (line 77) are important features, contributing to the sense of urgency created as the poet responds to the stirring challenge of the unknown voice that cries, "Come". For each of the two poets the metaphysical and aesthetic journey undertaken is an heroic one. Shelley writes, "I am borne darkly, fearfully afar" (line 492). Tennyson says: "My heart is dark, but yet I come" (line 84). For Shelley the climactic vision is of the apotheosized "soul of Adonais" which burns "through the inmost

veil of Heaven", "like a star", and "Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are" (line 493-95). In Tennyson's poem, "the abode where the Eternal are" is a "mountain bright with triple peaks" (R223:107) where "figures as of Gods / Rayed round with beams of living light" are visible (lines 110-11). The "clouds" which "unswathe them from the height" to reveal this vision symbolic of eternity and immortality (in Tennyson's poem) remind us that, in Shelley's words, "death is a low mist which cannot blot / The brightness it may veil" (Adonais, lines 391-92). We recall, too, that the vision in "Youth" comes almost in response to the poet's cry, "...my spirit thirsts" (R223:104). This spiritual thirst seems to parallel that described in Adonais, where Shelley writes of "the fire for which all thirst" (line 485): "All baser things pant with life's sacred thirst" (line 169).

Not only are the ideas in Part II of "Youth" similar to those in the closing stanza of Adonais, but the two poems also have certain strands of imagery in common - for instance, Adonais also has imagery of light (e.g., lines 9, 36, 107, 223, 260, 387, 418, 441, 461, 463, 478), including flickering light (line 114); and music (line 371) and thunder (line 372). Furthermore, one could offer Shelley's images of the many-coloured "dome" (line 462) and the "crescent sphere" (line 242) as approximate parallels to Tennyson's imagery of "rainbows" and "arches". Consequently one might perhaps wonder whether the Tennysonian images I have cited as having their genesis in temporal lobe epilepsy do not actually spring from memories of a literary antecedent. While not denying the

influence of poetic precursors, I believe that those precursors exerted their special appeal for Tennyson precisely because they were so rich in the kind of images which struck a resonating chord in his own imagination - the kind of images which I have indicated are likely to result from discharge in a particularly excitable area of the temporal cortex of the brain. Sceptical critics may ask whether this means that Shelley was also a temporal lobe epileptic. The answer is no, not necessarily. But by analyzing the poetic imagination of Alfred Tennyson in terms of temporal lobe epileptic phenomena, it may be possible to extrapolate and so to arrive at a better understanding of the imaginative faculty of other Romantic poets, like Shelley and Wordsworth. For Dr James le Fanu has written that in medicine "the pathological illuminates the normal" (le Fanu 1989, 4). I believe the same may be said of the artistic imagination.

CHAPTER III

EPILEPSY AND IMAGERY

"Youth" is not one of Tennyson's best poems, though it may be better than most critics deem it - at least if the amount of critical attention vouchsafed it is any criterion by which to judge. I chose to discuss this particular poem because it offers a relatively simple example of a nexus of images I wished to highlight. I refer, of course, principally to the images of thunder and rushing water which reflect, I believe, the occurrence of a sound of that kind as an auditory hallucination in the poet's epileptic aura. But, as my analysis showed, the images suggestive of simple "roaring" sounds are interwoven in the poetry with images of music and voices, as well as with references to "arches" (line 91), a "rainbow" (line 89) and light ("shines" - line 94; "sparkle" - line 95; "gleam" - line 96). All of these images, both auditory and visual, have been documented in connection with TLE.

One aspect of a particular auditory image which I did not originally stress, I now wish to emphasize:

A voice like many voices cries,
Comes hither throbbing through the dark....

(R223:63-64; my italics)

It will be remembered that a "throbbing" sound was listed as one of the simple or primitive auditory hallucinations reported in cases of temporal lobe epilepsy (page 121 above).

In Tennyson's poetry, however, this throbbing does not appear to be an auditory phenomenon only - as a study of its many hybrid forms will show. For these variations include throbbing; pulsating; expanding or dilating and contracting; and ebbing and flowing.

In Maud, a mental image of the lovely girl haunts the speaker. He writes of it "Growing and fading and growing" upon him silently ("Luminous, gemlike, ghostlike, deathlike, half the night long / Growing and fading and growing...") until he can bear it no more, and walks out into the garden, where he hears "the tide in its broad-flung shipwrecking roar..." (R316:Part I.94-98). The expansion and contraction of the internal image finds an implicit external parallel in the ebb and flow of the sea ("the tide" - line 97) which, incidentally, is associated with the roaring sound that I have postulated was also a feature of Tennyson's sensory aura.

In Tennyson's poetry, the imagery of throbbing or pulsation is often linked to apparently mystical experience or religious contemplation. In "Perdidi Diem", for instance, Tennyson writes of the throne of God,

Where each intense pulsation
And going-on o' the heart of God's great life,
Out of the sphere of Time,
As from an actual centre is heard to beat....

(R128:44-47)

This "sovrän subtil impulse" (line 57) spreads outward and downward until it seems that everything "Brightens and darkens" with "every infinite pulsation" (lines 63-64):

...downward, downward still
 The mighty pulses thrill
 With wreathed light and sound....

(lines 64-66)

In the poem's closing lines the imagery of pulsation is again linked to the imagery of thunder that I have associated with Tennyson's aura; for the poet writes:

The latest fiat of Divine Art,
 Our Planets, slumbering in their swiftness, hear
 The last beat of the thunder of God's heart.

(lines 79-81)

In "The Invasion of Russia", the speaker says:

All the trophied Past,
 The days of glowing Conquest thick and fast
 And brilliantly on the expanded brain
 Came flashing through the Night of thought again.

(R58A:51-54; my italics)

Here the emphasis is on the expansion of the brain (line 53), rather than on expansion and contraction; but the word "flashing", coupled with the phrase "thick and fast", suggests pulsating light, or pulsating images. It will be noted that this passage has a vividness and vitality that are suggestive of the "reactivation of a strip of the stream of consciousness" referred to in the previous chapter (page 103 above). My italics serve to stress that the experience referred to in the quotation above - like the diction in which it is described - has much in common with the climactic lines of In Memoriam 95, where the poet is as it were touched by his friend from the Past whose living soul is flashed on his, so

that he seems to reach the empyreal heights of thought. "The Invasion of Russia" is a very early poem. I suspect that in writing it Tennyson was drawing, as he was to do years later in the case of In Memoriam 95, on the material of his trance experiences. And, interestingly enough, the preceding stanzas of "The Invasion" contain many examples of the imagery which, while acknowledging aesthetic precursors, I nevertheless earlier associated with epileptic aura: images of domes (line 30), arches ("crescent" - line 40) and orbs ("golden Ball" - line 40), as well as images of flashing (line 41) and coloured (line 42) lights.

Of the many references to throbbing and pulsation in Tennyson's poetry, possibly the best known example is the one found in the poet's description of his trance experience, in In Memoriam 95 - the passage which seems to be adumbrated by the lines from "The Invasion of Russia", quoted above. The relevant lines from In Memoriam read:

...word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touch'd me from the past,
 And all at once it seem'd at last
 The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
 About empyreal heights of thought,
 And came on that which is, and caught
 The deep pulsations of the world,

Aeonian music measuring out
 The steps of Time - the shocks of Chance -
 The blows of Death.

(IM 95:33-43; my italics)

This passage constitutes a particularly interesting example, partly because we know the poem reflects an actual experience,

and partly because the word "pulsations" is further elucidated in terms of "Aeonian music" (my italics). For it has been pointed out that the more complex auditory hallucinations of TLE may take the form of music (page 121 above).

The "deep pulsations of the world" measure out, rhythmically,

x ' /x ' / x ' /x '
 The steps of Time - the shocks of Chance -
 x ' /x '
 The blows of Death.

(lines 42-43)

The iambic tetrameter is absolutely regular. Moreover, the strong midline caesura in line 42 divides that line into two exact halves, so that an even greater sense of tempo is created - thus:

x ' /x '
 The steps of Time -
 x ' /x '
 The shocks of Chance -
 x ' /x '
 The blows of Death.

Albright writes that, at the climax of In Memoriam 95,

...Hallam and Tennyson and the landscape all whirl out into a condition of imagelessness. In this extreme confusion the content of the poetry refines itself almost to nothing; and what replaces the content, after this delirium of deletion, is pure rhythm, rhythm naked and heavy, inorganic, extenuated by no variance in beat or syncopation. It is as if Tennyson had stopped writing words and simply transcribed a pattern of macrons and breves onto the page, plain marks of emphasis, steps, shocks, blows.

(1986, 9).

The poet's life-long sense of a cosmic tempo, perceived in moments of altered consciousness, is still reflected in a late, laureate poem, where he writes of

...the roll
 And march of the Eternal Harmony
 Whereto the worlds beat time, though faintly heard
 Until the great Hereafter.

("The Death of the Duke of Clarence and
 Avondale"; R453:14-17)

Penfield found that "illusions of tempo" were evoked by electrical stimulation of the first convolution of the temporal lobe of the brain (Neppe 1979, 45). Presumably the word "tempo", a musical term, is used in this sense of "rhythm" rather than "speed" (Chambers English Dictionary). Several of Tennyson's early poems - based, I believe, on epileptic experience - describe time in terms of music and, by implication, rhythm or tempo. For instance, the poet writes in both "Timbuctoo" and "Ode to Memory" of listening to "the lordly music flowing from / The illimitable years" (R84:41-42; R67:214-15). And, also in "Timbuctoo", he hears "notes of busy life in distant worlds / Beat like a far wave on [his] anxious ear" (R67:111-12; my italics).

The rhythmical pulsations or "throbbings" depicted in these poems seem to have an auditory element which cannot be explained in terms of any obvious external stimulus, so one may be justified in classifying them as hallucinations. However, I think the term "illusion" may be more appropriate; for the throbbing or pulsating which is perceived as "sound" may in fact reflect a sensation of a different modality.

brain during a seizure (1986, 943).

However, according to Penfield & Jasper, there is no vasoconstriction during the period of neuronal discharge and hence no pulsation. It would seem that cerebro-vascular pulsation is a post-ictal, rather than an ictal phenomenon. Penfield and Jasper record, for instance, the case of "R.B." in which "visible pulsation was gone" during a seizure which "lasted 10 seconds" [sic]. But at "the close of the attack", the patient's cerebral arteries "were pumping violently. Systolic blood pressure was 150mm mercury before the seizure and 210 shortly afterwards" (Penfield and Jasper 1954, 254).

Penfield and Jasper were, of course, able to observe the visible cerebrovascular flow to the exposed brain while monitoring the epileptic patient. They were thus able to determine that pulsation occurred "at the close of the attack" rather than during the attack. But since the time-spans involved may be extremely short - a matter of seconds in the case cited - the pulsation may seem to the patient to be part of the seizure itself. The frequent occurrence of throbbing or pulsation in passages redolent of epileptic experience in Tennyson's poetry generally suggests this association.

However, some lines from "The Gardener's Daughter" seem to indicate that at times Tennyson was in fact aware of a cessation of pulsation at the height of the epileptic attack - or "trance", as he would have called it. He writes of "kisses, where the heart on one wild leap / Hung tranced from all pulsation..." (R208:254-55; my italics). It is relevant to note that, in the lines that follow, one encounters,

predictably, the characteristic images of flashing or gleaming lights, and arc or crescent shapes which I suggested may have been associated with the poet's epileptic aura. I therefore quote the passage more extensively:

...kisses, where the heart on one wild leap
 Hung tranced from all pulsation, as above
 The heavens between their fairy fleeces pale
 Sowed all their mystic gulfs with fleeting stars;
 Or while the balmy glooming, crescent-lit,
 Spread the light haze along the river-shores....

(R208:254-58; my italics)

Tennyson, in describing one of love's blissful moments, chooses to use terminology associated in his own mind with a transcendental experience - the heightened consciousness of "trance". And while the moon ("crescent") and the "balmy" dusk (line 257) may be traditional romantic accoutrements of setting, he gives the passage a particularly Tennysonian patina by scattering the "mystic gulfs" of the heavens with the glimmer of "fleeting stars" which appear and disappear between the pale "fairy fleeces" of the clouds.

It must be noted that Shelley, too, links love and trance: he writes of "passion's trance" ("To - ", Hutchinson 1970, 645). The fact that one can identify a literary precursor does not, of course, invalidate the personal nature of Tennyson's lines. It is well-known that he did experience trance-like states. As I have said before, I believe Shelley's appeal for Tennyson lay partly in the fact that he found in the antecedent elements germane to his own experience.

The imagery of throbbing or pulsation in Tennyson's poems

may also reflect the cardiac palpitations which, like epigastric sensations, flushing and sweating, may sometimes be associated with epileptic attacks (Neppe 1969, 42). For instance, "heart-pounding" was a feature of Dostoevsky's "feeling before seizure" (Rice 1985, 291). According to Penfield,

A frequent initial phenomenon in seizures is an alteration in amplitude and rate of the heart beat. This may be called a cardiac aura. But it is actually a visceromotor phenomenon similar to the pounding in the chest which one may experience in a moment of fright.

(Penfield and Jasper 1954, 436-37)

Dr Tennyson suffered from such "spasms of the chest" (23/9/1828; Lang and Shannon 1982, 23), and it was apparently a severe case of "heart palpitations" which, in 1861, prevented Alfred Tennyson from reaching Cambridge to accept an honorary doctorate. Martin writes: "Rather mysteriously [since Tennyson was supposedly unwell], he converted the return journey to Farringford into a fortnight of visits in London and the country around Winchester, which suggests that his decision not to take the degree must have sprung from something besides his health" (Martin 1980, 435-36).

It will be recalled that many years earlier Tennyson had persuaded Charles Merivale to read his prize poem, "Timbuctoo", in the Senate House because the poet himself was "detained...by indisposition...." As Alfred Tennyson explains in a letter of 12 July 1829 to his grandfather, his indisposition was caused "by a determination of blood to the Head..." (Lang and Shannon 1982, 41). Martin - quite rightly,

I think - attributes both the cardiac palpitations suffered en route to Cambridge in 1861 and the "determination of blood to the Head" which prevented Tennyson from reading the prize poem there in 1829 to the same cause (1980, 436). But I believe Martin errs in naming "shyness" as that cause. He says the medical jargon in the poet's letter to his grandfather was probably "calculated to appeal to old George, who could understand physical affliction but not shyness" (Martin 1980, 77). There is one physical affliction which "old George" could be counted on to understand: epilepsy. I consider it extremely likely that, while he would not commit such an admission to paper, Tennyson wished his grandfather to know that he was prevented from reading his poem at Cambridge by the fear of an imminent epileptic attack. The sentence which follows the statement concerning the "determination of blood to the Head" reads: "Your complaint of the Gout has I hope kept at a proper distance from you lately..." (12/7/1829; Lang and Shannon 1982, 41). And, as has been noted elsewhere (page 64 above), in the Tennyson vocabulary "gout" was at the time a code-name for epilepsy. The subtext of Tennyson's letter seems to reveal a hidden plea for understanding from a fellow-sufferer.

Paden, writing of lines 88-130 of "Timbuctoo" (R67), says: "The passage is apparently the first of Tennyson's references to that mystical experience which, occurring throughout his life, formed the basis of his faith" (Paden 1942, 71; R67:n.88-130). Lines 88-112 are drawn from "Armageddon" (R3), and will be discussed later in relation to

that poem. But I wish to draw attention here to lines 113-30, in which pulsation or "palpitation" is presented as an important aspect of what Paden calls Tennyson's "mystical experience" - and what I regard as epileptic experience.

The passage begins by describing

A maze of piercing, trackless, thrilling thoughts,
Involving and embracing each with each,
Rapid as fire, inextricably linked....

(R67:113-15)

These thoughts are obviously an early example of those described in In Memoriam 95 as the "empyrean heights of thought" (line 38). The complex and intimate interweaving of these thoughts in "Timbuctoo" is suggested in line 114: "Involving and embracing each with each...." This sense of interpenetration is evident in In Memoriam 95, too ("wound and whirl'd" - line 37), though in that poem it is not only thoughts which are commingled, but also souls:

The living soul was flash'd on mine,
And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world....

(IM 95:36-40)

It is through a sharing of his friend's thoughts as he re-reads old letters (lines 21-32) that the poet comes to experience the sense of union with Hallam in In Memoriam 95. (At this point, it will be noticed, I am accepting Tennyson's initial interpretation of his experience. I shall consider his amendment and its gloss - "perchance the Deity" - in a

later chapter.)¹

Lines 116-30 of "Timbuctoo" describe the poet's sensory perception of those "deep pulsations" that were so regular a feature of his trances. The thrilling thoughts are perceived as

Expanding momentarily with every sight
And sound which struck the palpitating sense,
The issue of strong impulse, hurried through
The riven rapt brain....

(R67:116-19)

Tennyson's choice of words in the phrase, "The riven rapt brain", reflects an ambivalent attitude to his epilepsy, or "trance". On the one hand the condition leads to a state close to rapture ("rapt" - line 119); but on the other hand he is conscious that it stems from an imperfection: the brain is "riven". In later poems he was to write anxiously about "the blot upon the brain" (R227:69), the "canker of the brain" (IM 92:3) and a "juggle of the brain" (R227:84).

The word "riven" strikes a jarring note in a passage about a condition close to ecstasy, and the poet's deep-seated anxiety about that condition is tacitly revealed by the lines which follow. For there we find him invoking an analogy with nature in an effort to impose order on, or perceive order in, his epileptic experience. He finds the analogy for the pulsations of his "riven rapt brain" in the image of rippling water:

...as when in some large lake
From pressure of descendent crags, which lapse
Disjointed, crumbling from their parent slope
At slender interval, the level calm

Is ridged with restless and increasing spheres
 Which break upon each other, each the effect
 Of separate impulse, but more fleet and strong
 Than its precursor, till the eye in vain
 Amid the wild unrest of swimming shade
 Dappled with hollow and alternate rise
 Of interpenetrated arc, would scan
 Definite round.

(R67:119-130)

Tennyson's use here of a natural phenomenon almost as a form of reassurance finds a parallel in In Memoriam 95. There the poet, whose trance has been "cancell'd, stricken thro' with doubt" (line 44), finds reassurance and endorsement of his sense of union with Hallam during the trance in the natural midsummer blending of dusk and dawn:

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

(IM 95:62-64)

The third and final sound in the triad of simple auditory hallucinations I wish to highlight in relation to Tennyson's poetry and temporal lobe epilepsy is a ringing noise or the sound of bells. This sound is a recurring motif in Tennyson's poetry, and it generally appears in concert with some or all of the other auditory images I have been discussing (roaring and throbbing sounds, voices and music). And, as I have indicated, this nexus of auditory images is frequently inwoven with the visual images which are also found in epileptic aura: flashing or glimmering lights; colours; rainbows; and geometrical shapes, including circles, arcs, arches or

crescents, orbs or spheres, and domes.

The sound of bells was probably very common in Victorian England, where door bells, servants' bells, hand bells, school bells, bridle bells and church bells were very much a part of everyday life. And, of course, the sound of bells has a long history in English literature. In Chaucer's General Prologue to The Canterbury Tales the monk's bridle bells are said to sound "as loude as...the chapel belle" (line 171; Robinson 1974, 18). There are many references to bells in Shakespeare. For instance, in Macbeth the sound of a bell is "a knell / That summons [Duncan] to heaven or to hell" (2.1.62-64). And in King Henry IV, Part II, the "sullen bell" is "Remember'd knolling a departed friend" (1.1.102-03). Milton, in "Il Penseroso", describes the sound of the curfew bell:

Oft on a plat of rising ground,
I hear the far-off curfew sound,
Over some wide-watered shore,
Swinging slow with sullen roar.

(lines 73-76; Carey 1971, 143)

Gray, too, refers to the curfew bell in his "Elegy Written in a Country Churchyard" ("The curfew tolls the knell of parting day" - line 1), and Keats uses the image of a bell both in the "Ode to a Nightingale" (line 71; Allott 1972, 531) and in "The Eve of St Mark", where the poet writes of "the Sabbath bell / That called the folk to evening prayer" (lines 2-3; Allott 1972, 481).

Sometimes in Tennyson's poetry the sound of a bell seems the obvious and inevitable accompaniment to the subject being treated. For instance, in In Memoriam 57 the poet writes, in

a passage vaguely reminiscent of that from King Henry IV, Part II, quoted above, that for the rest of his life he will hear an imaginary funeral bell tolling a reminder of the loss of Hallam:

...in these ears, till hearing dies,
 One set slow bell will seem to toll
 The passing of the sweetest soul
 That ever look'd with human eyes.

(IM 57:9-12)

In contrast, it is in terms of the sound of bells that an antithetical and uncharacteristic mood of jubilation is depicted:

Ring out, wild bells, to the wild sky,
 The flying cloud, the frosty light:
 The year is dying in the night;
 Ring out, wild bells, and let him die.

Ring out the old, ring in the new,
 Ring, happy bells, across the snow:
 The year is going, let him go;
 Ring out the false, ring in the true.

Ring out the grief that saps the mind....

(IM 106:1-9)

As Edgar Allan Poe has shown, the sound of bells is adaptable to a variety of occasions. In his poem "The Bells", he evokes the sound of sleigh bells, wedding bells, a fire alarm bell and funeral bells (Mabbott 1969, I,429-41).² In In Memoriam 106, the sound of bells ringing in the New Year is an image entirely appropriate to the mood and situation of the poet in that particular elegy. And it has a poetic precursor in the Hymn from Milton's Ode "On the Morning of Christ's Nativity". Stanza XIII reads:

Ring out, ye crystal spheres,
 Once bless our human ears,

 And let your silver chime
 Move in melodious time....

(lines 125-29; Carey 1971, 106-07)

In this passage from Milton, the ringing and chiming sounds (lines 125, 128), together with the references to "spheres" (line 125), music and tempo (line 129) and to the colour silver (line 128) - which occurs frequently in Tennyson's own poetry - are precisely the images one might expect to have a special appeal for the later poet, and to impress themselves on his memory. For, if my postulations are correct, these images were already part of the furniture of Tennyson's unconscious - to use Kenneth Clark's expression (Clark 1949, 109).³

I have already mentioned a poem called "The Bells" by Edgar Allan Poe. It tends to spring to mind when one reads Tennyson's "Wild Bells" (IM 106), particularly as the bells in Poe's poem are associated with music (line 11), "palpitating air" (line 56 - my italics), melancholy (line 75), "throbbing" (line 101) and "Keeping time" (line 104)⁴ - very Tennysonian motifs. It is known that Tennyson and Poe admired each other greatly, and that each was in the habit of watching for the publication of the other's poems. Tennyson thought Poe the most remarkable poet the United States had produced (Memoir II, 292-93) and one "not unworthy to stand beside Catullus the most melodious of the Latins and Heine the most tuneful of the Germans'" (Pope-Hennessy 1934, 120).⁵ Poe in his turn had said: "I am profoundly excited by music, and by some poems -

those of Tennyson especially, - whom with Keats, Shelley, Coleridge, (occasionally) and a few others of like thought and expression, I regard as the sole poets'" (Pope-Hennessy 1934, 120-22; qtg. Woodberry I, 60).

It is small wonder that Tennyson and Poe should have admired each other so greatly, for they reveal some remarkable similarities. Certain passages from Poe's letters remind one forcibly of the Tennyson family with their "nervous" dispositions. For instance, the American writes:

I am constitutionally sensitive - nervous in a very unusual degree. I become insane, with long intervals of horrible sanity. During these fits of absolute unconsciousness I drank, God only knows how often or how much. As a matter of course, my enemies referred the insanity to the drink, rather than the drink to the insanity.

(Rans 1965, 13)⁶

Elizabeth Wright notes that Freud, in his Preface to Marie Bonaparte's The Life and Works of Edgar Allan Poe: A Psycho-Analytic Interpretation, refers to the American as "a great writer of a pathological type" (Wright 1987, 39).

It may be relevant to note that Poe's poetry has references to "dreams" and "visions of the dark night" ("A Dream", line 1, Mabbott 1969, I, 79), as well as to a "dreamlike unworldly, almost hallucinatory vision" of an idealized friend, Mrs Marie Louise Shew (Rans 1965, 13). I need not belabour the parallels with Tennyson, but I must point out that Mrs Shew, a close friend of Poe who "had some medical knowledge", suggested "that Poe may have been a victim of a brain lesion" (Rans 1965, 13). If that very credible

idea is correct, I would speculate on the extreme likelihood of the site of the lesion being the temporal lobe.⁷ However, I digress in discussing Edgar Allan Poe, and must return to a consideration of the imagery of bells in Tennyson's poetry.

Tennyson uses the sound of bells most skilfully to suggest mood or to reflect emotion or situation. In "Enoch Arden" he tells of the love and marriage of Enoch and Annie:

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven happy years....

(R330:80-81)

The near-repetition ("merrily rang the bells / And merrily ran the years") tends to create a bell-like, "chiming" effect consistent with the jubilation appropriate to the sound of wedding bells. And the word "merrily" seems to have an intrinsic lilting quality that adds to the overall impression of happiness. However, after seven years Enoch Arden is forced by circumstances to leave his wife and family and to sail across the sea. Annie, left behind, feels bereft (lines 245-46).

The poet, who had used the sound of bells to symbolize the joy attendant on Annie's marriage, now uses the chime of bells to indicate her desire for a continuing harmony with Enoch, even in his absence:

Even to the last dip of the vanishing sail
She watched it, and departed weeping for him;
Then, though she mourned his absence as his grave,
Set her sad will no less to chime with his....

(lines 244-47; my italics)

Enoch is shipwrecked, and cast away on a tropical island. When he fails to return, Philip, an early rival for Annie's love, tries to ease her lot and that of her children. And at last Annie agrees to marry him, for the sake of the children, since she believes Enoch must have perished at sea. Again the wedding bells ring out, this time for Annie and Philip:

So these were wed and merrily rang the bells,
Merrily rang the bells and they were wed.

(lines 507-08)

This time the lines make an almost perfect chiasmus - but the repetition with inversion seems to underline the fact that for Annie this is a second marriage, and very different from her first. Though the wedding bells ring out "merrily" for Philip and Annie, "never merrily beat Annie's heart" (line 509). For she is worried by a continuing sense of a presence near her:

A footstep seemed to fall beside her path,
She knew not whence; a whisper on her ear,
She knew not what....

(lines 510-12)

But eventually, after the birth of their child, she settles into a comfortable routine with Philip, and "that mysterious instinct wholly died" (line 522).

The focus of the poem changes: our attention is now directed to Enoch, "A shipwrecked sailor, waiting for a sail" (line 586), alone on an idyllic island, but longing for "a kindly voice" (line 578) a "kindly human face" (line 577). The island is described in terms again reminiscent of the son

et lumière effects of Tennyson's epileptic aura:

The lightning flash of insect and of bird,
 The lustre of the long convolvuluses

 ...the glows
 And glories of the broad belt of the world,

 The league-long roller thundering on the reef,
 The moving whisper of huge trees...

 The sunrise broken into scarlet shafts

 The blaze upon the waters to the east;
 The blaze upon the island overhead;
 The blaze upon the waters to the west;
 Then the great stars that globed themselves in
 Heaven,
 The hollower-bellowing ocean, and again
 The scarlet-shafts of sunrise....

(lines 571-95)

Enoch Arden's life takes on a dream-like quality not unlike that evoked in the "weird seizures" in The Princess, a quality Tennyson may have been able to depict so well because he had had first hand experience of it in the twilight states associated with TLE. The poet says of Enoch Arden:

...often as he watched or seemed to watch,
 So still, the golden lizard on him paused,
 A phantom made of many phantoms moved
 Before him haunting him, or he himself
 Moved haunting people, things and places, known
 Far in a darker isle beyond the line....

(lines 596-601)

Lines 599-601 ("...he himself / Moved haunting people, things and places") remind us of the mysterious presence of which Annie had been aware shortly after her marriage to Philip (lines 510-15). The overtones of paranormal experience are strong. Furthermore, the psychic suggestions are

intensified by the poet's next use of the sound of bells, for he writes of the castaway sailor:

Once...in the ringing of his ears,
 Though faintly, merrily - far and far away -
 He heard the pealing of his parish bells;
 Then, though he knew not wherefore, started up
 Shuddering....

(lines 609-13)

The "ringing in his ears" (tinnitus) modulates into a kind of extrasensory perception of the "pealing of...parish bells" for the marriage of Annie and Philip - or so one might deduce from the castaway sailor's shuddering response. An experience of the same nature is predicted in "Locksley Hall", where the poet-speaker warns: "Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whispered by the phantom years, / And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears" (R271:83-84).

Tennyson frequently used the sound of bells to suggest supernatural phenomena or what one might more Gothically call "ghostly hauntings" (The Princess, R286:II.389). For instance, in "The Ring" he is concerned to show that

The Ghost in Man, the Ghost that once was Man,
 But cannot wholly free itself from Man,
 Are calling to each other through a dawn
 Stronger than earth has ever seen....

(R422:32-34)

One of the ways he suggests this is through a catalogue of "eerie sounds" (line 374):

A footstep, a low throbbing in the walls,
 A noise of falling weights that never fell,
 Word whispers, bells that rang without a hand....

(lines 375-77)

In an earlier study (Louw 1985, 118) I quoted Marilyn Butler who believes that in Gothic literature the images "project an evil or disturbing environment", and that "the subliminal frame of reference is felt to be a breakdown of control, both in the psyche and in the state" (M. Butler 1981, 157). Such a breakdown in the psyche is recounted in Tennyson's poem, The Lover's Tale (R153), and there, too, the sound of bells is presented as a paranormal phenomenon. The preamble to this early poem reads:

Julian, whose cousin and foster-sister, Camilla, has been wedded to his friend and rival, Lionel, endeavours to narrate the story of his own love for her, and the strange sequel. He speaks (in Parts II and III) of having been haunted by visions and the sound of bells, tolling for a funeral, and at last ringing for a marriage; but he breaks away, overcome, as he approaches the Event, and a witness to it completes the tale.

Julian, shattered by the loss of Camilla, tells thus of one of his paranormal experiences:

Sometimes I thought Camilla was no more,
 Some one had told me she was dead, and asked
 If I would see her burial: then I seemed
 To rise, and through the forest-shadow borne
 With more than mortal swiftness, I ran down
 The steepy sea-bank, till I came upon
 The rear of a procession, curving round
 The silver-sheeted bay: in front of which
 Six stately virgins, all in white, upbare
 A broad earth-sweeping pall of whitest lawn
 Wreathed round the bier with garlands: in the
 distance,
 From out the yellow woods upon the hill
 Looked forth the summit and the pinnacles
 Of a gray steeple - thence at intervals
 A low bell tolling.

(R153:II.68-82)

The "vision" is at first ambiguously presented. The narrative

pluperfect ("Someone had told me" - line 69) almost lends an air of authenticity, as does the detailed description of the procession "curving round / The silver-sheeted bay" (lines 74-75). But the narrator says he "seemed / To rise" (lines 70-71; my italics), and to pass through the forest "borne / With more than mortal swiftness" (lines 71-72; my italics). One perceives that he is in the world of dream or vision - or hallucination. And the symbolic and ritualistic imagery which follows endorses this impression: the "Six stately virgins, all in white" (line 76); the garlanded bier, covered by a white pall (line 77-78) and the church steeple, whence is heard a "low bell tolling" (line 82).

The vision takes on a nightmare quality as the narrator recalls an encounter with one of the black-clad mourners:

All the pageantry,
 Save those six virgins which upheld the bier,
 Were stoled from head to foot in flowing black;
 One walked abreast with me, and veiled his brow,
 And he was loud in weeping and in praise
 Of her, we followed: a strong sympathy
 Shook all my soul: I flung myself upon him
 In tears and cries: I told him all my love,
 How I had loved her from the first; whereat
 He shrank and howled, and from his brow drew back
 His hand to push me from him; and the face,
 The very face and form of Lionel
 Flashed through my eyes into my innermost brain,
 And at his feet I seemed to faint and fall,
 To fall and die away. I could not rise
 Albeit I strove to follow. They past on,
 The lordly Phantasms! in their floating folds
 They past and were no more: but I had fallen
 Prone by the dashing runnel on the grass.

(II.82-100)

Dream-vision or hallucination blends into reality as the narrator loses consciousness and falls to the ground.

This vision recurs in Part III of the poem, but with some variation. It is perhaps significant that the section begins: "I came one day and sat among the stones / Strewn in the entry of the moaning cave" (III.1-2). It will be remembered that in chapter I, I referred to an occasion when Tennyson apparently lost consciousness in a sea cavern and had to be carried out. I postulated that the poet had had an epileptic attack.

Here, in Part III of The Lover's Tale, the poet certainly undergoes a strange experience, whether delirious or epileptic in character. The experience begins pleasantly enough - indeed it has much in common with that euphoric "elegy", section 86 of In Memoriam, which reads:

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,

 ...fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek....

(IM 86:1, 8-9)

The analogous passage in The Lover's Tale reads:

A morning air, sweet after rain, ran over
 The rippling levels of the lake, and blew
 Coolness and moisture and all smells of bud
 And foliage from the dark and dripping woods
 Upon my fevered brows that shook and throbbed
 From temple unto temple.

(R153:III.3-8)

The idyllic nature of the scene is overshadowed by the reference to "fevered brows" and throbbing temples. I have elsewhere highlighted the throbbing sensation that is a frequent concomitant in the subjective paranormal experiences described in Tennyson's poetry. Here it is once again

encountered, and swiftly followed by both an auditory and a visual hallucination.

To what height
 The day had grown I know not. Then came on me
 The hollow tolling of the bell, and all
 The vision of the bier. As heretofore
 I walked behind with one who veiled his brow.
 Methought by slow degrees the sullen bell
 Tolloed quicker, and the breakers on the shore
 Sloped into louder surf: those that went with me,
 And those that held the bier before my face,
 Moved with one spirit round about the bay,
 Trod swifter steps; and while I walked with these
 In marvel at that gradual change, I thought
 Four bells instead of one began to ring....

(III.8-20)

One is reminded of the four bells which Tennyson was later to refer to in In Memoriam 28 (lines 3-5). In that elegy they were Christmas bells. In the Lover's Tale they are wedding bells,

Four merry bells, four merry marriage-bells,
 In clanging cadence jangling peal on peal -
 A long loud clash of rapid marriage-bells.

(III.21-23).

But suddenly

...the bells
 Lapsed into frightful stillness; the surge fell
 From thunder into whispers....

(III.29-31)

The bier is thrown down; the pall is blown off; and Camilla emerges "from out her death-like chrysalis" (III.41), not a corpse but a bride - a bride who is immediately claimed, in the vision, by the spectre of Lionel (III.49-52).

...again the bells
 Jangled and clanged: again the stormy surf
 Crashed in the shingle: and the whirling rout
 Led by those two rushed into dance, and fled
 Wind-footed to the steeple in the woods,
 Till they were swallowed in the leafy bowers,
 And I stood sole beside the vacant bier.

(III.52-58)

The narrator ends his tale, "There, there, my latest vision - then the event!" (III.59). Ricks notes that H.F. Tucker "discusses the relation of this line to a cluster of echoes from Keats, including Ode to Psyche 24: 'O latest born and loveliest vision far', and La Belle Dame Sans Merci 35: 'The latest dream I ever dreamed' (VN No.62, 1982, 29)" (R153:n.iii 59). I wish to draw attention to a different cluster of images: the sound of water inherent in "the moaning cave" (III.2) and the "louder surf" (III.15); the reference to "thunder" and to "whispers"; and the sound of bells (III.10, 20-23, 29, 52). Furthermore, I would emphasize the throbbing sensation that ushers in the vision (III.7), for it is my intention to stress that the subjective paranormal experiences at the heart of The Lover's Tale - the experiences in which the speaker is "haunted by visions and the sound of bells" - are explicable in terms of TLE. Albright comes close to the truth when he states that "Julian is little but a pretext to investigate disembodiment and dementia" (1986, 25).

In The Princess, a much later poem, Tennyson is obviously still obsessed with sounds of ringing and throbbing. In an unadopted passage in a Harvard notebook version of the poem, the prince tells of his arrival in King Gama's country:

...everywhere
 We heard the clank of chains, the creak of cranes,
Ringing of blocks and throb of hammers mixt
 With water split and spilt on groaning wheels....

(R286:n.i 111-2)

My italics serve to highlight the fact that the ringing and throbbing noises are - as so often - accompanied by the sound of falling (or rushing) water.

In a later passage from The Princess, a reference to bells is immediately followed by images of light, music and thunder; and the colour silver is introduced:

...the chapel bells
 Called us: we left the walks; we mixt with those
 Six hundred maidens clad in purest white,
 Before two streams of light from wall to wall,
 While the great organ almost burst his pipes,
 Groaning for power, and rolling through the court
 A long melodious thunder to the sound
 Of solemn psalms, and silver litanies....

(R286:II.446-53; my italics)

The conjunction of music and thunder in the phrase "melodious thunder" is, of course, common in Tennyson, occurring for instance in "The Poet's Mind" (R92:27) and "Semele" (R220:10) - as Ricks has noted (R220:n.ii 452).⁸ And silver is a colour which frequently occurs, often in conjunction with the sound of bells - for instance, in another passage from The Princess. The prince tells how, at one point on their travels, he and his friends

...scarce could hear each other speak for noise
 Of clocks and chimes, like silver hammers falling
 On silver anvils, and the splash and stir
 Of fountains spouted up and showering down
 In meshes of the jasmine and the rose:
 And all about us pealed the nightingale....

(R286:I.212-17; my italics)

The first reference to bells is inherent in the word "chimes", which is - not unusually - associated here with "clocks".

Tennyson seems to have had some strange experiences with clocks. He used to tell the story of how "he once lived near a stable clock which he never heard but which he felt most ghostlywise through the boards" (MS. Mats. VI, 24). This may well have been the kind of real-life experience that inspired the lines from The Princess which read: "...clocks / Throbbled thunder through the palace floors" (R286:VII.88-89). Another strange experience with clocks is related in the manuscript of Materials for a Life. An entry for 7th December 1889, referring to Tennyson's illness, reads: "Bark medicine makes him better. He has visions at night now. The face of the clock seemed to him to expand and fill up the whole end of the room" (MS. Mats. VIII, 113). Penfield discusses the phenomenon of macropsia, "in which objects may appear large", in relation to epilepsy. Macropsia apparently constitutes an alteration in perception: "This alteration is not a disturbance of vision itself but a disturbance of the interpretation or perception of a visual experience." Penfield believes that such illusional or perceptual seizures should be considered as psychical rather than sensory (Penfield and Jasper 1954, 402). He also points out that the patient, who "sees things coming closer to him" and growing larger, is aware that his perception is faulty. He understands that he is "having another one of his recurrent attacks" and "he waits anxiously lest a big attack should follow" (Penfield and Jasper, 1954, 440). Describing an

actual case of macropsia investigated neurosurgically, Penfield concludes that the "visual illusion was doubtless due to discharge somewhere in the temporal cortex" (Penfield and Jasper 1954, 442). However, I must point out that macropsia does not appear to have been a "recurrent" feature in Tennyson's symptomatology. Furthermore, the incident recorded - in which the clock face swelled up to fill the room - occurred while the poet was ill, possibly bordering on delirium; so one must not attach too much significance to it. Nevertheless, the incident may suggest a certain excitability of the poet's temporal lobe cortex.

However, I have strayed from my consideration of the references to bells in the passage from The Princess quoted on pages 163-64 - namely, lines 212-17 of Part I. The second reference to bells in the passage is implicit in the verb "pealed" ("...all about us pealed the nightingale" - line 217); and this is indeed an unexpected and unusual word to describe the delicate song of the nightingale. Coleridge recognizes this delicacy when he writes of the bird's "soft diversities of tone" ("To the Nightingale", line 18; Coleridge 1967, 94), and there is of course a very rich tradition of poems written to or about the nightingale. But I have been unable to find any other instances in which the nightingale's song is described in terms of a pealing or bell-like sound. The closest parallel I know is the reference to the voice of the nightingale in Chaucer's Troilus and Criseyde (III.1237) "...after siker doth hire vois out rynge" (Robinson 1974, 434). While the word "pealed" seems inappropriate, the

throbbing quality of the nightingale's song is well-known. This throbbing or vibrating quality apparently made quite an impression on Tennyson. Anne (Thackeray) Ritchie writes:

Once when Alfred Tennyson was in Yorkshire, so he told me, as he was walking at night in a friend's garden, he heard a nightingale singing with such a frenzy of passion that it was unconscious of everything else...he could see its eye flashing, and feel the air bubble in his ear through the vibration.

(1893, 60)

I have quoted several passages which show how intimately throbbing sounds and the sounds of bells were associated in Tennyson's mind. I believe, in fact, they were so closely associated in his mind that a kind of imaginative transposition occurred in the writing of the above line, "...all about us pealed the nightingale...." The vivid recollection of the throbbing quality of the bird's song finds expression in terms of an allied image - allied within the poet's brain, that is - the image of pealing bells.

When one thinks of Tennyson and poems about bells, the two which spring most immediately to mind are probably two sections of In Memoriam which deal with the Christmas bells and the New Year bells respectively - that is, sections 28 and 106. I have already discussed the jubilant mood of "Ring out, wild bells..." (IM 106). Section 28, though also built around the sound of bells, is a much quieter poem:

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

Four voices of four hamlets round,
 From far and near, on mead and moor,
 Swell out and fail, as if a door
 Were shut between me and the sound:

Each voice four changes on the wind,
 That now dilate, and now decrease,
 Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace,
 Peace and goodwill, to all mankind.

(IM 28:1-12)

The repetition with variation ("Peace and goodwill, goodwill and peace, / Peace and good will...") seems to suggest the crescendo and diminuendo effect of bells ringing. The phrases "swell out and fail" (line 7) and "dilate and..decrease" (line 10) are accurately descriptive of the sound of church bells. But they are also suggestive of the kind of pulsation which I suggested earlier may have been a feature of Tennyson's epileptic attacks. There may indeed be some truth in the "revised note in Gatty's edition of 1900", quoted by Shatto and Shaw. Gatty writes: "'The churches [referred to in section 28] are not to be identified. Those in the neighbourhood of Somersby have too small belfries to allow of change ringing. The sounds may have been only in the Poet's mind'" (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 190). If the bells in Section 28 of In Memoriam are indeed imaginary bells, and owe something to epileptic aura, one might well understand why the poet writes that these bells "controll'd" him "when a boy" (line 18). Furthermore, lines 19-20 ("They bring me sorrow touch'd with joy, / The merry merry bells of Yule"), whose primary function is to suggest that the Christmas bells, because of their hopeful religious connotations, superimpose a feeling of "joy" on the grief of loss, also hint at what

Dostoevsky called the "dialectic" of epileptic experience (Rice 1985, 10).

Culler has written of the "auditory" quality of Tennyson's imagination (Culler 1977, 6; cited by Louw 1985, 94). In writing of the poetic images which I believe have their genesis in so-called "primitive" or simple auditory hallucinations (roaring and throbbing sounds, and the sound of bells), I have repeatedly been obliged to introduce other associated sounds - those of voices and music - which may be due to the more complex auditory hallucinations associated with TLE, though Penfield prefers to call such attacks "psychical seizures" (Penfield and Jasper 1954, 408).

The poem "Youth", discussed in the previous chapter, offers a good example of the occurrence of hallucinatory voices in the poetry. As I have noted elsewhere (Louw 1985, 94), these voices "recur frequently", not only in Tennyson's poetry "but in his life - from his early childhood experience of hearing a voice in the wind [Martin 1980, 21] to the 'ghostly voices' [Memoir II, 244] whispering in his ear that caused him so much distress after the death of his brother Charles in 1879" (Louw 1985, 94). It is as well to bear this personal factor in mind, for critics sometimes tend to emphasize literary precursors at the expense of personal experience. For instance, the poem beginning "Oh! Ye wild winds, that roar and rave..." (R45) has an epigraph from the "Song of the Five Bards in Ossian": "It is the great army of the dead returning on the northern blast." Tennyson is thought to have been influenced by a passage which reads:

"Ghosts ride on the storm tonight. Sweet is their voice between the squalls of wind. Their songs are of other worlds'" (R45, headnote). But the critics fail to note that Tennyson probably responds to this particular passage because it describes a phenomenon with which he is personally familiar: the hearing of voices in the wind. This ghostly experience is most atmospherically evoked in "Oh! Ye wild winds...."

Oh! ye wild winds, that roar and rave

Methinks, upon your moaning course
 I hear the army of the dead;

...at times their wailings rise,
 The shrilly wailings of the grave!
 And mingle with the maddened skies,
 The rush of wind, and roar of wave.

Now each dim ghost, with awful yells,
 Uprears on high his cloudy form;
 And with his feeble accent swells
 The hundred voices of the storm.

(R45:1, 9-10, 21-24, 33-36)

Writers have been alluding to, or appending epigraphs from, other writers for hundreds of years. For one or more of an infinite variety of reasons, a quotation from the earlier writer either inspires, or somehow sets the seal upon, the later work. It may be that in the case of "Oh! ye wild winds..." the appeal of the literary precursor lay in its ability to render legitimate, as it were, or lend the stamp of approval to, an experience which caused Tennyson some underlying anxiety. For though the hearing of voices may have

seemed to him at times to be an integral and essential part of his poetic sensibility and bardic function, there can be little doubt that at other times he was afraid it might be associated with a "juggle of the brain" (R227:84). Although the hearing of disembodied voices has many biblical, classical and poetic prototypes, the phenomenon may also be regarded with some suspicion. As William F. Kraft has observed, "Certain sects and societies may revere persons who hear voices, but in many parts of the world they would be hospitalized" (1979, 8).

I have already noted how apparently "epileptic" episodes in Tennyson's poetry frequently end in a reference to nature that purportedly endorses or authenticates the supposedly "paranormal" experience. Tennyson's invocation of, or allusion to, an earlier writer may represent a similar attempt, whether conscious or unconscious, to find validation and reassurance.

I want to draw attention now to a passage from "Sea Dreams" (R319) in which occur many of the phenomena I have been discussing, and in which music is an essential element. It is the passage in which the "good wife" (line 165) recounts a dream, a dream "That altogether went to music" (line 198). She explains that the setting of the dream is the coast:

- But round the North, a light,
A belt, it seemed, of luminous vapour, lay,
And ever in it a low musical note
Swelled up and died; and, as it swelled, a ridge
Of breaker issued from the belt, and still
Grew with the growing note, and when the note
Had reached a thunderous fulness, on those cliffs
Broke, mixt with awful light (the same as that
Living within the belt) whereby she saw

That all those lines of cliffs were cliffs no more,
 But huge cathedral fronts of every age,
 Grave, florid, stern, as far as eye could see,
 One after one: and then the great ridge drew,
 Lessening to the lessening music, back
 And past into the belt and swelled again
 Slowly to music....

(R319:201-16)

Ricks postulates that the "link between the cliffs and the cathedral is a section in Charles Lyell's Principles of Geology (1835 edn, ii 33, 37, 48), a book which T[ennyson] read in 1837 (Mem. i 162). Lyell speaks of a formation called 'the "Church Cliffs"', and he has a picture of Reculver Church, which by 1834 stood on the edge of the cliffs" (R319:n.207-17). Ricks, citing the (privately) printed Materials for a Life (Mats. II, 191) also points out that this literary dream "was in fact a dream of T[ennyson's]" own (R319:n.200-1). In the earlier hand-written manuscript of Materials for a Life I found this entry for January 12th [1889]: "...He is pleased that Myers sees the meaning of his Dream in Sea Dreams [sic] which was made on a real Dream of his own" (MS. Mats. VIII, 122). An entry on the previous page, for January 10th, reads: "His [Tennyson's] gout vision on another night was that he built a succession of gorgeous pagodas" (MS. Mats. VIII, 121). One wonders whether the "dream" on which "Sea Dreams" was based was in fact a dream, or whether it was what Hallam Tennyson called a "gout vision" - one of the visual hallucinations, "complete to the last detail", that I have tried to show may be associated with epilepsy of the temporal lobe. An interesting conversation recorded in William Allingham's Diary lends credence to the

latter possibility. Part of the Diary entry for August 7, 1884 reads:

"As to visualising," he [Tennyson] said, "I often see the most magnificent landscapes."

"In dreams?"

"Yes, and on closing my eyes. To-day when I lay down I saw a line of huge wonderful cliffs rising out of a great sweep of forest - finer than anything in nature."

(Allingham 1985, 330)

Certainly the passage from "Sea Dreams", quoted on pages 170-71, has many of the features I have associated with TLE in this study: light ("light" - line 201; "luminous" - line 202; "awful light" - line 208) and colour ("florid" - line 12); thunder ("thunderous fulness" - line 207), and music. In the dream a "low musical note" seemed to issue from the belt of luminous vapour to the north (lines 201-03). This note "swelled up and died" (line 204). The repeated swelling and dying away of the musical note represents a kind of pulsation, and the sea's tidal effects mimic that pulsation of the music (lines 204-08, 213-16), so that an intense sensation is created of the "throbbing" kind sometimes associated with TLE.⁹

Towards the end of his life Tennyson wrote what is perhaps one of his loveliest lyrics, a poem called "Far-Far-Away" (R426), to which he added the rider: "For Music".¹⁰ Some seven decades earlier, in 1817, Shelley had written three "fragments", one of which was subtitled "To One Singing", and the other two "To Music" (Hutchinson 1970, 541). In Mrs (Mary) Shelley's "Note on Poems of 1817", she observes that these fragments date back to a period of severe illness

suffered by the poet, when "many a stray idea and transitory emotion found imperfect and abrupt expression, and then again lost themselves in silence." She believes that these fragments, "broken and vague as they are, will appear valuable to those who love Shelley's mind, and desire to trace its workings" (Hutchinson 1970, 551). My attempts to trace the workings of Tennyson's mind may possibly also cast some light on the Shelleyan imagination; for, as I have indicated (page 135 above), the pathological may sometimes be used to elucidate the "normal", and I believe that the many striking similarities between the poems of Shelley and the poems of Tennyson go beyond mere allusion. Shelley's fragments "To Music" and "To One Singing" have as key elements a number of features which were later to become dominant motifs in Tennyson's poems; for example, music, tears ("A Fragment: To Music"; Hutchinson 1970, 541), and a "Far far away" realm of "rapture" that seems to have much in common with Tennyson's "Passion of the Past". Shelley writes:

My spirit like a charmed bark doth swim
 Upon the liquid waves of thy sweet singing,
 Far far away unto the regions dim
 Of rapture...

("Fragment: To One Singing",
 Hutchinson 1970, 451)¹¹

Tennyson's poem, "Far-Far-Away" reads:

What sight so lured him through the fields he knew
 As where earth's green stole into heaven's own hue,
 Far-far-away?

What sound was dearest in his native dells?
 The mellow lin-lan-lone of evening bells
 Far-far-away.

What vague world-whisper, mystic pain or joy,
 Through those three words would haunt him
 when a boy,
 Far-far-away?

A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath
 From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death
 Far-far-away?

Far, far, how far? from o'er the gates of Birth,
 The faint horizons, all the bounds of earth,
 Far-far-away?

What charm in words, a charm no words could give?
 O dying words, can Music make you live
 Far-far-away?

(R426)

It is known that the refrain words, "Far-far-away" had a "strange charm" for Tennyson (R426, headnote), and that he said he could induce his "trance" by repeating those words to himself (Culler 1977, 3-5).

Illusions "of remoteness" or distance may feature in the sub-genus of epileptic seizures which Penfield calls "psychical seizures". He attributes such "psychical seizures" to "epileptogenic discharge in those parts of the temporal and parietal cortex that seem to contain a part of the memory recording mechanism". The patient may feel "far away, remote, removed from his body and its environment. He may call it a 'far away' feeling, 'out of this world'" (Penfield and Jasper 1954, 438-39). This description would seem appropriate to Tennyson's case, and may recall some of the phenomena discussed earlier in the context of the "dreamy states" associated with TLE. Indeed, as Penfield notes, "Psychical hallucinations and illusions are different forms of what Hughlings Jackson called dreamy states" (Penfield and Jasper

1954, 438).

The poem "Far-Far-Away" consists of a series of couplets separated by a shorter refrain line which is adopted as the title of the poem. The refrain tends to heighten the musical effect. Most of the stanzas comprise questions, so that a musing, almost dreamy, quality is achieved that is entirely appropriate to the subject matter.

The first stanza focuses on spatial elements: the distant horizon, which separates "earth's green" from "heaven's own blue" exerts an almost hypnotic effect, luring the poet-speaker towards some distant place, "Far-far-away". One is reminded of the ever-fading horizon in "Ulysses", where the speaker says:

...all experience is an arch wherethrough
 Gleams that untravelled world, whose margin fades
 For ever and for ever when I move.

(R217:19-21)

Perhaps I may highlight, in passing, the image of the arch (line 19), and the sense of dissolving boundaries (lines 20-21) that I have previously pointed out are frequent features in Tennyson's poetry, and may be associated with TLE.

Stanza 2 of "Far-Far-Away" introduces the first auditory element, the sound of bells. The "chiming" effect created by the different vowels in "lin-lan-lone" is beautifully onomatopoeic, especially in conjunction with the word "mellow", for the alliterative "l" contributes to the harmonious blending of the syllables while at the same time creating a repetitive effect entirely appropriate to the sound

of bells. The bells, like those hallucinated by Enoch Arden on his tropical isle (R330:609-11), seem "far-far-away", and I am reminded of an entry in the manuscript of Materials for a Life: "Distant bells always charmed him with their lin lan lone & [sic] to bells from over the sea or a lake he was never tired of listening (MS. Mats. VIII, 147-48).

Since it is well-known that Tennyson associated the words "far-far-away" with his trance experience, it may be pertinent to note that the imagery in the poem "Far-Far-Away" is certainly suggestive of some of the phenomena I have highlighted in connection with TLE: colours in stanza 1, the sound of bells in stanza 2 and the sound of a voice (a "whisper") in stanzas 3 and 4. In stanza 3 this whisper is associated with an indefinable emotion ("mystic pain or joy"). The word "mystic", together with the word "haunt" in line 8, would seem to suggest a subjective paranormal experience. If one analyzes the experience one finds it appears to be composed of an auditory illusion or hallucination (a "vague world whisper" - line 7) and an accompanying emotion ("mystic pain or joy" - line 7). Neppe points out that studies of the temporal lobe of the brain have shown a close anatomical relationship of auditory illusions to illusional emotions" (Neppe 1979, 45). So, once again, the apparently paranormal experience is explicable in terms of temporal lobe discharge.

Perhaps the "mystic pain or joy" associated with the words "far-far-away" is akin to the emotions described in In Memoriam 28. For there the sound of bells gave rise to feelings of "sorrow touch'd with joy" (line 19). Although the

emotion most commonly documented in cases of TLE is fear (Neppe 1979, 45; Williams 1956, 34), occurrences of illusional "loneliness", "disgust", "sorrow" (Neppe 1979, 45) and "sadness" (Williams 1956, 61) have also been reported. So, too, have feelings such as "elation", "pleasure", "gladness" and "exhilaration" (Williams 1956, 56) - which one might collectively classify as "joy". The "sorrow touch'd with joy" which was so frequently a feature of one of Tennyson's states of altered consciousness therefore falls within the register of emotions which may be associated with temporal lobe epilepsy. But, of course, these emotions may also occur "naturally", especially in one of a melancholic disposition. For instance Arthur Hallam, in his essay "On Sympathy", speaks of "melancholy pleasure" (Motter 1943, 138). It must be noted, though, that in using the epithet "mystic" to describe his "pain or joy", Tennyson himself seems to set that emotion outside the bounds of what may be regarded as normal or natural.

In stanza 4 of "Far-Far-Away" the dimension of time is introduced as the poet tries to understand the meaning of the "vague world-whisper" with its concomitant "mystic pain or joy". Does it have its genesis in some experience from his very early life: "A whisper from the dawn of life?" Or is it, as in the poem "Youth" (R223), a voice calling from the future - in this case from the distant future that lies beyond the grave: "a breath / From some fair dawn beyond the doors of death / Far-far-away?" (R426:10-12). Tennyson once said that In Memoriam was perhaps more optimistic than he was himself

(Ebbatson 1988, 77). One wonders whether the same holds true of these lines from "Far-Far-Away". For, though he speaks here of "a fair dawn beyond the doors of death" (my italics), in an undated letter of consolation to his brother Frederick on the death of his wife in 1884, Tennyson wrote: "I myself feel every day as tho' I stood at the Gates of Death & [sic] the light of the morning is not always upon them, but you have a strong faith to light you thro' the dark hour" (Collins 1963, 56-57). However, if Tennyson did still feel these doubts at the time of writing "Far-Far-Away", which postdates the letter referred to by about four years, he does not express them in the poem.

I have linked the phrase "Far-far-away" to illusions of distance. In stanza 1 the distance is clearly spatial, but by stanza 4 it seems to be temporal - the metaphorical distance stretching back to a time before the poet's birth, or forward to a new life beyond death. The "doors of death" is a traditional image, but an interesting one. It does not only describe the abstract ("death") in terms of the concrete ("doors"). It also conflates the spatial and the temporal; for death is here not so much a state or condition as a time - the time when life shall have come to an end. Yet that definition may create too negative an impression, since there is a strong suggestion that "the doors of death" may open onto another life.

In stanza 5 - in the phrase, "the gates of Birth" - there is the same conflation of the spatial ("gates") and the temporal, "Birth" being the time when life begins. Indeed,

there is an increasing lack of distinction between spatial and temporal elements in this stanza, as the poet seems to give syntactical equivalence to "the gates of Birth, / The faint horizons, [and] all the bounds of earth" (R426:13-14). And, as James Richardson says, "the confusion, even the equation, of space and time is quintessentially Tennysonian" (1988, 18).

I wrote earlier of how the boundaries of time seem to dissolve in the moment of altered consciousness experienced by Tennyson. Here, in "Far-Far-Away", the boundaries of both time and space seem to have dissolved for the poet. One recalls a letter written to Emily many years before their marriage (probably about 1 October 1839), in which he uses images of time and space almost chiastically. He writes:

Annihilate within yourself these two dreams of
Space and Time. To me often the far-off world seems
nearer than the present, for in the present is
always something unreal and indistinct, but the
other seems a good solid planet, rolling round its
green hills and paradises to the harmony of more
steadfast laws.

(Lang and Shannon 1982, 174;
Memoir I, 171-72)

Tennyson does not specify whether the "far-off world" that "seems nearer than the present" is of the past or the future. His great "Passion of the Past" is well-known; but he also said, in 1840: "The far future has been my world always" (MS. Mats. II, 39). This association of the "far and far" away with the future as well as with the past emerges, too, in lines from "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After":

Poor old voice of eighty crying after voices that
have fled!

All I loved are vanished voices, all my steps are on
the dead.

All the world is ghost to me, and as the phantom
disappears,
Forward far and far from here is all the hope of
eighty years.

(R417:251-54)

What one might call "the passion of the future" seems to be very much the hope of regaining the past. But, of course, if - as Tennyson suggests - Time is a mere dream, the distinction becomes irrelevant. What is not irrelevant, however, is the sense of derealization Tennyson experiences again and again. His letter to Emily shows that this was indeed a very personal experience, not one invented for poetic purposes.

In stanza 6 of "Far-Far-Away" (R426), the poet, picking up the reference to "words" in stanza 3, wonders what the "charm" is in those three magical words: "Far-far-away". But it is a "charm no words could give" - an indescribable experience. It has been noted that "hallucinations of indescribable quality" may occur in temporal lobe epilepsy (Neppe 1981d, 905), and experiences of this nature are frequently reflected in Tennyson's poetry. For instance, in one of the "earliest surviving examples of a complete stanza of his verse, written when he was about eight", we find the poet already referring to this ineffable quality of a complex emotional experience linked to the apperception of "whispers" that "rise and fall away":

Whateer I see, whereer I move,
These whispers rise & [sic] fall away,

Something of pain, of loss, of love,
But what, twere hard to say.

(Martin 1980, 22, qtg. MS. Mats. I, 2)

Many years later, in In Memoriam 95, the poet writes thus of his trance experience:

...ah, how hard to frame
In matter-moulded forms of speech,
Or ev'n for intellect to reach
Thro' memory that which I became....

(IM 95:45-48)

It may be that the poet appended the rider, "For Music", to the title of "Far-Far-Away" precisely because of the ineffable quality of the experience he wished to convey. For Tennyson said, "It seems to me that music must take up expression at the point where poetry leaves off - and expresses what cannot be expressed in words" (MS. Mats. IX, 49). Edgar Allan Poe appears to concur. In "The Poetic Principle", he writes: "It is in Music, perhaps, that the soul most nearly attains the great end for which, when inspired by the Poetic Sentiment, it struggles - the creation of supernal Beauty. It may be, indeed, that here this sublime end is, now and then, attained in fact" (Poe [n.d.], 647).

In "Far-Far-Away", the closing lines are a cry from the heart: "O dying words, can music make you live / Far-far-away?" At one level, the "dying words" are those of the "whisper" to which the poet refers in stanzas 3 and 4 - the whisper that seems to induce the bitter-sweet feeling which eludes description, the feeling that may be "mystic pain or joy" (my italics), but which probably has elements of both, as

does the emotion described as "sorrow touch'd with joy" in In Memoriam 28 (line 19). So at one level the poet is asking whether music can extend the "dreamy state" - or reverie, if a non-epileptic term is preferred - in which he experiences the auditory and emotional illusions that give the phrase "Far-far-away" its intensely personal, and poignant, significance. At another level, of course, the poet is wondering about the process of poetic creation: can music - and the poem is subtitled "For Music" - imbue his words with permanence? Can his poetry find, through music, not only life, but a kind of immortality? This idea of the magical¹² creative and preservative qualities of music is, of course, beautifully encapsulated in Tennyson's paradoxical lines on Camelot:

'...the city is built
To music, therefore never built at all,
And therefore built for ever.'

("Gareth and Lynette", R465:272-74)

This apparently almost mystical belief in the magical power of music probably underlies a late entry in the manuscript of Materials for a Life: "The part he [Tennyson] likes best of [Keats's] 'Lamia' is the end where music prevents the palace from vanishing" (MS. Mats. VIII, 119).

The phrase "far and far away" also occurs in the famous "Passion of the Past" passage in "The Ancient Sage". The passage is so central to my topic that I make no apology for quoting it again:

On me, when boy, there came what then I called,

Who knew no books and no philosophies,
 In my boy-phrase 'The Passion of the Past.'
 The first gray streak of earliest summer-dawn,
 The last long stripe of waning crimson gloom,
 As if the late and early were but one -
 A height, a broken grange, a grove, a flower
 Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and lost and gone!'
 A breath, a whisper - some divine farewell -
 Desolate sweetness - far and far away -
 What had he loved, what had he lost, the boy?
 I know not and I speak of what has been.

(R415:217-28)

The constituent elements here are very similar to those in the lyric, "Far-Far-Away" (R426). The sense of dissolving boundaries is conveyed, as I suggested earlier, by the correlatives in lines 220-22:

The first gray streak of earliest summer-dawn,
 The last long stripe of waning crimson gloom,
 As if the late and early were but one....

In lines 223-24, the poet makes use of disparate details - as he had done years earlier in "Mariana" (R73) - to suggest isolation and loneliness: "A height, a broken grange, a grove, a flower / Had murmurs 'Lost and gone...'" (lines 223-24). The sense of loss reverberates in the repetition: "'Lost and gone and lost and gone!'" (line 224). And the indescribable quality of the emotion evoked is reflected in the breakdown of the syntax in lines 225-26 ("A breath, a whisper - some divine farewell - / Desolate sweetness - far and far away -"). The "breath" and the "whisper" in line 225 of "The Ancient Sage" adumbrate those in "Far-Far-Away" ("A whisper from his dawn of life? a breath..." - R427:10). The phrase "mystic pain or joy" in that poem has its approximate equivalent here in "some divine farewell" and "desolate sweetness" (lines 225-26). And

both poems resonate with the haunting long vowels of the key phrases, "Far-far-away" (R426), "far and far away" (R415: 226).

In an earlier study I suggested that the phrase, "no more", was also associated with Tennyson's "Passion of the Past" (Low 1985, 93 n.47). The words "no more" also occur in the deleted lines from a Trinity manuscript (A) of "The Two Voices":

Is that his footstep on the floor?
Is this his whisper at the door?
Surely he comes. He comes no more.

(R209:n.264.5; my italics)

In "'Love's latest hour is this'", stanza 4 reads:

How sweet to stand embraced
Till I grow stiff and cold
In folding thy dear waist
Which I no more shall fold;
Dear lips! Dear eyes! Dear waist!
Which I no more shall fold.

(R224:19-24; my italics)

In both these passages the poet's sense of loss and deprivation is focused through the phrase "no more". In a very early poem bearing that title ("No More", R57), the sense of loss or deprivation is equally strong - indeed, overpowering. And the titular phrase is used in a strange way that borders on personification, as if "no more" were an entity per se, not simply the state of being deprived of some other entity. "No more" seems almost to be a temporal equivalent of "Far-far-away".

Oh sad No More! Oh sweet No More!
 Oh strange No More!
 By a mossed brookbank on a stone
 I smelt a wildweed-flower alone;
 There was a ringing in my ears,
 And both my eyes gushed out with tears.
 Surely all pleasant things had gone before,
 Lowburied fathomdeep beneath with thee, NO MORE!

(R57; poet's italics)

Perhaps I should point out, in passing, that the type of experience recorded here is prototypical of that prognosticated in the lines from "Locksley Hall" which read: "Thou shalt hear the 'Never, never,' whispered by the phantom years, / And a song from out the distance in the ringing of thine ears" (R271:83-84).

The ineffable quality of the experience in "No More" is at once apparent: it is "strange", paradoxically both "sad" and "sweet". This particular combination of epithets, taken in conjunction with the phrase "No more", has the effect of calling to mind the haunting blank-verse lyric associated with Tennyson's "Passion of the Past", the song from The Princess that begins "Tears idle tears..." (R286;IV.21-40). For in that lyric the poet describes "the days that are no more" (lines 25, 30, 35, 40) as both "sad" (lines 30, 31) and "sweet" (line 37), as well as "strange" (line 31). Clearly the experience in both poems involves an emotion of a similar order to that described in In Memoriam 28 as "sorrow touch'd with joy" (line 19), and in "The Ancient Sage" as "desolate sweetness" (R415:226). In "No More" (R57) the poet, apparently sitting alone beside a brook, smells a "wildweed flower". Immediately there is a "ringing" in his ears, and he

begins to weep, presumably overcome by the feeling that "all pleasant things had gone before", so that one is reminded of the "Passion of the Past" passage in "The Ancient Sage": "A height, a broken grange, a grove, a flower / Had murmurs 'Lost and gone and lost and gone!'" (R415:223-24).

The "ringing" in the ears is, as I have tried to show, a common "symptom" in Tennyson's poetry - one which may be attributable to TLE, although other explanations are certainly possible. Shedding tears (crying or weeping) can also be symptomatic of temporal lobe epilepsy, and it does occur in some significant passages in Tennyson - for instance in "Ode: O Bosky Brook" (R127:14), in "Armageddon" (R3:II.47), and in "Tears, idle tears" (R286:IV.21-40). Temporal lobe epilepsy involving "crying episodes" is sometimes known as quiritarian (or dacrocystic) epilepsy (Neppe 1979, 55).

It is clear from an anecdote recounted by Anne (Thackeray) Ritchie that Tennyson experienced a similar fit of weeping beside the river Doon:

"...when he found himself beside the 'bonnie Doon,' whether it were from recollection of poor Burns, or of 'the days that are no more' which haunt us all, I know not - I think he did not know - [he] 'broke into a passion of tears' (as he told me)."

This anecdote was told to Lady Ritchie by the "author of Euphranor" (Ritchie 1893, 62-63) - Tennyson's friend, Edward Fitzgerald (Memoir II, 96). The incident recounted must have taken place some time after the experience described in "No More"; for that poem was apparently written when Tennyson was only seventeen years of age (Memoir I, 80), and he had not yet

visited Scotland then.

It might, of course, be argued that the "tears" in "No More" are merely a sign of an acute sensibility - or, to use the more modern expression, sensitivity. And indeed I should not object to such an opinion. For, as Williams has stressed, "Theoretically the results of local epileptic changes may include an example or a distortion of every feeling or movement of which the patient is capable, in an infinite number of variations and combinations" (1956, 31). Consequently, I believe, an understanding of the pathological response may help to elucidate the processes involved in the normal "sensitive" response. The difference may be only one of degree.

Ricks notes that Shelley's poem entitled "A Lament", which was written in 1818 and published in 1824, "has the refrain 'No more - Oh, never more!'" (R75, headnote). The Shelley poem reads:

O WORLD! O life! O time!
 On whose last steps I climb,
 Trembling at that where I had stood before;
 When will return the glory of your prime?
 No more - Oh, never more!

Out of the day and night
 A joy has taken flight;
 Fresh spring, and summer, and winter hoar,
 Move my faint heart with grief, but with delight
 No more - Oh, never more!

(Hutchinson 1970, 643)

One might conceivably argue, too, that in his poem "No More", Tennyson was remembering Shelley's lines "On a Faded Violet": "I weep, - my tears revive it not! / I sigh, - it breathes no

more on me..." (lines 9-10; Hutchinson 1970, 554; my italics). One should certainly not underestimate the influence of Shelley in this context, especially since the phrase "Far, far away" occurs in several of his poems; for instance, in "Fragment: To One Singing" (line 4; Hutchinson 1970, 541), and in "Lines" (line 1; Hutchinson 1970, 637). But, as I have said elsewhere, I believe Shelley's appeal for Tennyson lay in the fact that he often seemed to articulate feelings and experiences with which Tennyson was personally familiar.

I use the phrase "Shelley's appeal" diffidently, for that appeal may have operated on Tennyson at a subconscious level. In his youth Tennyson seems to have admired Shelley. "Before going to Cambridge he [Alfred Tennyson] and Frederick and Charles had learned to love Shelley's poems, and he had talked a great deal to Hallam of his enthusiasm" (Martin 1980, 97). We are also told that, finding himself at a dinner party with Joseph Severn, who had nursed Keats so devotedly on his deathbed, Tennyson's questions were not about Keats, but about Shelley (Martin 1980, 301). And yet, strangely, Audrey Tennyson's little notebook of recollections of the poet has this entry: "[Tennyson said,] Shelley's poetry is too much in the clouds for me[.] I never cared for him much" ("Talks and Walks", 14). However, I have already highlighted some of the many similarities in the poetry of Shelley and of Tennyson. And a delightful anecdote recounted by Martin further attests to these similarities. Writing of the debate between representatives of the Cambridge Union and their "Oxford counterparts" on "whether Byron or Shelley was the greater

poet" (Martin 1980, 97), the biographer points out that "among the Shelley poems...quoted were a few by Tennyson that had been slipped in by William Brookfield before the Cambridge party set out. The Oxford team noticed no difference!" (Martin 1980, 99).

Another poet whom I have mentioned as having a great deal in common with Tennyson is Edgar Allan Poe, who - in "The Poetic Principle" - has written with deep and sincere admiration of "Tears idle tears" (Poe [n.d], 658) and other poems whose principal "impression" is "one of a pleasurable sadness"; for Poe believes that "this certain taint of sadness is inseparably connected with all the higher manifestations of true Beauty" (Poe [n.d], 651). Poe's poem, "The Raven", has as a refrain the words, "Never more" (Mabbott 1969, I, 364-69). However, it is clear that as late as 1851 or 1852 Tennyson did not know "The Raven" (Martin 1980, 364). So Poe's poem could not have influenced him in writing "No More" or "Tears Idle Tears". But, as Mabbott notes, the word "nevermore" is "commonplace in English poetry". He adds that Shelley and Tennyson appear to use it most frequently (Mabbott 1969, I, 372).

I have pointed out a certain similarity in the feelings and ideas reflected in the writings of Tennyson, Shelley and Poe. Perhaps even more pertinent to my argument is Susan Chitty's description of "The Morbids" suffered by Edward Lear, a known epileptic. "'The Morbids'", Chitty explains, was

Lear's expression

...for a state of nostalgic despair, based on the certainty that everything which was good and beautiful was lost beyond recall. These attacks began at the age of seven. The more beautiful a sight or an experience, the deeper was likely to be the resulting blackness. It was in the last year of his life that he recorded the memory of his first attack of the Morbids. It occurred on a rare occasion, when his father took him, as a boy of six or seven, to a fair near Highgate. There was a "performance of gymnastic clowns...and a band. The music was good, - at least it attracted me [Lear]: - and the sunset and twilight I remember as if yesterday. And I can recollect crying half the night after all the small gaiety had broke up - and also suffering for days at the memory of the past scene." The "Never, no more" gong, so familiar in the Nonsense Ballads, had sounded for the first time. For the rest of his life Lear was in love with yesterday.

(Chitty 1988, 13-14)¹³

So, too, was Tennyson. Arthur Hallam, in a letter of 26 July 1831, said of Tennyson's "passion of the past"¹⁴ that it was "all-powerful", absorbing the poet's "whole existence" and "communicating" to him "that [poetic] energy which is so glorious" (Kolb 1981, 466). Another friend, Spedding, said that Tennyson "was a man always discontented with the Present till it has become the Past, and then he yearns towards it, and worships it, and not only worships it, but is discontented because it is past" (Lang and Shannon 1982, 132 n.2).

However, neither Hallam's letter nor Spedding's brings out what I regard as the salient feature of Tennyson's "passion of the past" - that it "was not for the historical past so much as for the past that eludes history" (Louw 1985, 86). An entry in the manuscript of Materials for a Life (on a loose page inserted between folios 245 and 245* of Volume VI)

reads: "The soul retains a memory of a previous existence - the Passion of the Past...." That "previous existence" may be the one from which - in Wordsworth's words - we come "trailing clouds of glory" ("Ode: Intimations of Immortality", line 64; Hayden 1977, I, 525). Undertones of reincarnation inherent in the "passion of the past" are reinforced in Tennyson's work by poems like "To - [As when with downcast eyes]" (R179), in which the *déjà vu* element is strong. The perception of "intimations" of reincarnation might be classified as a subjective paranormal experience. But, as I have indicated, the illusions of remoteness, both spatial and temporal, that seem to be at the core of Tennyson's "passion of the past", may be symptomatic of the temporal lobe attacks that Hughlings Jackson called "dreamy states" and that Wilder Penfield calls "psychical seizures".

In discussing "No More" (R57), I highlighted the feeling of loss which gives this poem, like so many other Tennyson poems, its characteristically elegiac tone; and I emphasized the "ringing" sound perceived by the poet immediately prior to the episode of crying or weeping which the poem records. Also noteworthy is the olfactory image: "I smelt a wildweed-flower alone".

If "No More" is indeed a poem about an epileptic experience, the question arises: is the smell of the wildweed-flower an olfactory hallucination? For, according to a review article in the South African Medical Journal of 5 December

1981, it can be concluded from research findings that olfactory hallucinations of the paroxysmal kind suggest temporal lobe origin, and this becomes much more certain if they are part of a compound complex temporal lobe experience. On their own they are classified as an elementary partial seizure". However, olfactory hallucinations "are classically and also statistically" - but not invariably - of an "unpleasant and disagreeable nature", a "burning" or "rotting quality" being commonly reported (Neppe 1981d, 903). This does not appear to fit the case of "No More". However, I do not interpret the floral odour in "No More" as an olfactory aura. Rather, I believe that the perfume of an actual flower triggers an epileptogenic discharge which manifests itself in a ringing in the ears and a strange feeling of sweet sadness. I am now speaking of the phenomenon known as "reflex epilepsy".

"Reflex epilepsy' is the term used for attacks which are liable to occur in response to some specific precipitating stimulus" (Lishman 1978, 301). Fenton lists olfactory stimuli among the less common sensory precipitants of reflex epilepsy. He writes:

The reflex epilepsies occur in some 1-6 per cent of people with epilepsy. The most common modality of sensory precipitation is visual: 20-40 per cent of epileptics show abnormal EEG responses to flickering light, and in 2-4 per cent seizures can be induced by the laboratory stroboscope or - more importantly - in daily living by sunlight on water, [by] television, discotheques, escalators, and so on. Occasionally children with photosensitive fits learn to induce minor attacks by self-stimulation: by staring into the light and moving their fingers rhythmically in front of their eyes at the appropriate flicker rate....Rarer sensory

precipitants include sound, touch, proprioception, and possible visceral, olfactory, or vestibular stimuli. Less commonly seizures are triggered by a particular mental activity; hearing or performing music, reading, writing, specific visual or auditory imagery, mathematical calculation, and sequential decision-making under stress.

(Fenton 1983, 152)

A wide variety of sensory stimuli may thus precipitate an epileptic attack, though obviously there will be a fair degree of patient specificity. Not all the precipitants listed will affect a particular individual. However, I believe Tennyson exhibited a particularly sensitive response - as one might expect of a Romantic poet - to certain olfactory, auditory and visual stimuli. Possibly at times a tactile stimulus may also have triggered an "abnormal" response; for during the last days of the poet's life, when the nurse "put the thermometer under his arm she touched some nerve - & [sic] he said that a most beautiful vision of blue and other colours had passed across his eyes" (MS. Mats. IX, 95).

I have postulated that, in the experience recorded in "No More" (R57), the perfume of a "wildweed flower" precipitated an attack of reflex epilepsy in which the poet was overcome by emotions associated with memories of the past. A somewhat similar situation is suggested in lines from "A Dream of Fair Women":

The smell of violets, hidden in the green,
 Poured back into my empty soul and frame
 The times when I remember to have been
 Joyful and free from blame.

(R173:77-80)

These lines in turn have much in common with a little rhyme, of the same period, called "Song [Who can say]" (R174):

Who can say
 Why Today
 Tomorrow will be yesterday?
 Who can tell
 Why to smell
 The violet, recalls the dewy prime
 Of youth and buried time?
 The cause is nowhere found in rhyme.

It may well be argued that these examples represent simple reflections on the ability of a particular odour to evoke associated memories of the past, but I believe the lines are in fact a little meditation on the phenomenon known today as reflex epilepsy - though, as I have said before, the mechanisms in both cases may be the same, the epileptic response representing an exaggerated form of the "normal" response.

The poet's meditation on his response to certain sensory stimuli is expanded on folios 1^v and 2 of Trinity Notebook 20 (Wren Library Reference 0.15.20):¹⁵

Who can tell &c.
 [Who can tell
 Why to smell
 The violet, recalls the dewy prime
 Of youth and buried time?
 The cause is nowhere found in rhyme]
 No, no, nor why the scents of certain flowers
 Mind me of music....

It would seem from the fragment quoted above that an olfactory stimulus may provoke an auditory hallucination ("music") together with an illusion of temporal "distance" ("the dewy prime of youth and buried time"), and we know that

music is sometimes linked with Tennyson's "far-far-away" feeling (R426:17-18). In turn it is known that the "far-away" feeling was associated with the poet's trance, and that the trance could in fact be induced by the repetition of that phrase ("far-far-away") or the poet's own name. This self-induction may again represent a form of reflex epilepsy, but in this case the sensory stimulus is auditory, not olfactory.

The complex interlinking of sensory modalities as stimulus and response is very credibly explained by Tennyson himself in some lines which follow the quotation above in Trinity Notebook 20. These lines are printed by Ricks in his "Appendix B" (1987, III, 619-20).

As to the point in question I pronounce
 'Tis not alone the fine dust of the flower
 Which striking through the passage of the nerves
 Begets a different motion in the brain,
 But that within the brain or soul itself
 There is a common ground or marriage bond
 Of all the senses, whence they sometimes are
 Consonant chords that shiver to one note,
 As who excels in any kind of art
 Hath in himself the elements of all.

(lines 19-28)

That "common ground" may be the temporal lobe.

An entry in Audrey Tennyson's "Talks and Walks" records some of Tennyson's comments after hearing Beethoven's "Aurora Sonata"¹⁶ played in August 1880. According to Audrey, the poet said: "I can feel the glory tho' I can't follow the music. I know that I miss a great deal by not understanding it" ("Talks and Walks", 12). But a corresponding entry in William Allingham's Diary is much more revealing. Allingham reports that Tennyson said, "'I wish I could understand it - I could

perceive a rushing as of a torrent - and flashes of light'" (Allingham 1985, 292). I believe the music induced a mild attack of reflex epilepsy: the sensory attack was comprised of an auditory component ("a rushing as of a torrent") as well as a visual component ("flashes of light"). Had the poet only mentioned "flashes of light" one might have been tempted to suggest that these merely represented an imaginative envisioning of the light phenomena suggested by the title of the piece. But I endeavoured to show earlier on (page 124 above) that this particular combination of visual and auditory images - that is, flashing lights and the sound of rushing water - was probably epileptic. Since the reflex epileptic discharge is here induced by an auditory stimulus, one might use the term acousticogenic epilepsy (Slater and Roth 1969, 451) or, to be even more specific, musicogenic epilepsy (Lishman 1978, 301; Penfield and Jasper 1954, 39), although Raffaello Vizioli has recently argued that it is "impossible to reduce musicogenic epilepsy to a pure reflex entity" because several "levels of integration are involved in music; the reflex, the emotional and the integrative" (1989, 163). He argues that, because of the strong emotional component in so-called musicogenic seizures, it would be more correct to refer to them as attacks of "affective epilepsy". The terminology is not important for my argument, but what I do want to stress is that Vizioli found it "significant" that of the few relevant cases "where EEG was performed", "the majority...had temporal lobe foci and temporal lobe seizures" (1989, 164).

Martin gives this account of Tennyson's response to the music of Joseph Joachim, who was "probably the greatest violinist then playing":

Tennyson had little sense of music, and when Joachim would perform for him the best he could manage was to say that he liked the poetry of the bowing, and that it produced within his head the sensation as of a rushing torrent and flashes of light.

(Martin 1980, 522)

Martin does not give the source of this information, but an entry in the manuscript version of Materials for a Life relates how "after hearing Joachim play the 'Trillo del Diavolo'", Tennyson said, "I can feel the magic and poetry of the bowing...." Here the quotation ends abruptly, for the inserted page on which these notes were written in Lady Tennyson's hand is cut, leaving only an illegible few letters before Hallam Tennyson continues on a different tack (MS. Mats. IX, 49). As is so often the case, Hallam's expurgatory editing arouses suspicion instead of allaying or averting it. One cannot help wondering whether he feared that his father's perception of flashing lights and the sound of rushing water when he heard music might reveal epileptic tendencies to the initiated. This fear might similarly account for Audrey Tennyson's reticent report, in "Talks and Walks", of the musical event which Allingham chronicles so much more fully and revealingly (pages 195-96 above).

It must be observed that there have been many attempts in the history of music to formulate a relationship between sound and colour or light (Oxford Companion to Music 1974, 202-10).

Indeed some hold that

Sound is color, made audible, and color is sound made visible....

By correlating sensations that come to the ear with those that come to the eye, it is possible to think the tone "C", as it is possible to think the tone "red" or any other notes, or colors, in the scale.

(Oxford Companion to Music 1974, 206; also Burge 1983, 20).

In similar vein, Hugo Riemann, the German musicologist, teacher and composer, writing of Bach's third prelude and fugue, claims that the "C sharp prelude...affords convincing proof that his powers of feeling and of invention were definitely influenced by the key; this ardent midsummer mood, this flashing, glimmering and glistening ('Blitzen, Flirren und Flummerin') were evolved from the spirit of the C sharp major key; the veiled, soft key of D flat would have suggested treatment of a totally different kind.'" "How entirely subjective the whole association is", has been noted (Oxford Companion to Music, 205). And among those who subscribe to the concept of "key colour" there seems to be some disagreement over the matter of correlation. For instance, Rimsky-Korsakof "saw" the key of C major as white, while Scriabin "saw" it as red, although both interpreted E major in terms of blue (Oxford Companion to Music, 204).

It has been pointed out that one approach to the study of the correlation of colour and music is through the occult. In The Oxford Companion to Music the following passage from Cyril Scott's Philosophy of Modernism (1917) is quoted:

'Every musical composition produces a thought-and-colour form in the astral space, and according to that form and colour is to be gauged the spiritual value of the composition under review. If the preponderating colours be lilac, violet, blue, pink, yellow, and apple-green, combined with a form of lofty structure and vastness, then the work is one of intrinsic spiritual value; if, however, the preponderating colours be muddy browns, greys, cloudy-reds, etc., then the work may be recognized at once to be one of a lower spiritual order. This method of gauging the spiritual value of art, however, is only possible to him who has awakened the latent faculties of the pineal gland and pituitary body.'

Scott apparently thought the pineal gland and the pituitary body to be "the two physical organs of psychic perception", and believed it was possible for a "trained psychic" to develop and utilize their latent potential (Oxford Companion to Music 209-10).

The editor of the Oxford Companion stresses that the above quotation from Scott's Philosophy of Modernism is "quoted with all reserve" for "some of the terms used "convey no meaning whatever" to him.

Indeed one must concur. So arbitrary and subjective an assessment of the "spiritual value" of a composition is insupportable. Nevertheless, Scott's ideas are interesting in so far as he associates the abilities or perceptions of the "trained psychic" with the pineal gland and the pituitary body. The "pituitary gland" (or "body") is attached to the base of the brain and secretes various hormones including growth-regulating hormones and sex hormones (Penguin Dictionary of Psychology). The "pineal gland" (or "body") is located

...sufficiently close to the geographical center of the brain for Galen to have believed that it regulated the very flow of thoughts and for Descartes to have hypothesized that it functioned as the locus of interaction between the body and the rational soul. Its actual functions are not completely known but are currently believed to be somewhat less cosmic. It does play an important role in the hormonal changes that occur during adolescence.

There is also some evidence that the pineal gland plays a part in the regulation of sleep in humans (Penguin Dictionary of Psychology). Though Scott was postulating that the apparently psychic perceptions of mediums depended on the pineal and pituitary glands, more recent research seems to implicate the temporal lobe of the brain. G. Nelson reports that "a preliminary study of the EEGs of a small sample of mediums reveals a high incidence of unilateral temporal lobe anomalies and occasional interhemispheric asynchronies and asymmetries" (Nelson 1982, 288).

An early entry in the manuscript of Materials for a Life recalls Tennyson's "speaking of Haydyn's [sic] Chaos which he had heard at some oratorio. He said 'the violins spoke of light'" (MS. Mats. I, 110).¹⁷ The poet's perception of light was probably illusional rather than interpretative, but at any rate the words underlined in the manuscript ("spoke of light") serve, perhaps unintentionally, to emphasize the synaesthesia inherent in the poet's response. And synaesthesia is a noteworthy trope in Tennyson's poetry. It is possible that neurological mechanisms associated with reflex epilepsy may have predisposed the poet to the use of this trope, so well-beloved of the Romantic poets, especially Shelley and Keats.

Certainly Tennyson's own thoughts on the subject of synaesthesia are worth quoting again:

...within the brain or soul itself
 There is a common ground or marriage bond
 Of all the senses, whence they sometimes are
 Consonant chords that shiver to one note....

(See page 195 above)

I have suggested that temporal lobe epileptic aura exerted a profound effect on - indeed, may have been the "source" of - Tennyson's poetic imagination. If the sensory aura could be triggered by music, as the incidents recorded by Audrey Tennyson, William Allingham and others would seem to suggest, then one begins to perceive why Tennyson expressed the hope, in "Far-Far-Away" that music might have the power to stimulate the imagination - to make his "dying words...live" (R426:17).

Notwithstanding Martin's rather pejorative remark on the apparent banality of Tennyson's response to Joachim's playing ("...the best he could manage was to say that he liked the poetry of the bowing"),¹⁸ many of Tennyson's lines on music have - quite rightly, I think - been greatly admired. Hallam Tennyson writes:

Some one said to my Father 'no one has written
 finer things about music than you have done[;] for
 instance[:]

'The tides of music's golden sea
 Setting towards Eternity.'

'The glory of the sum of Things
 Will flash along the chords and go.'

'Love took up the chords [sic] of life & [sic]
 smote on all the chords with might

Smote the chord of self that trembling past
in music out of sight.'

He himself thought that these were some of his
finest lines & [sic] that the last was one of his
finest if not quite his finest simile.

(MS. Mats. IX, 48)

Certainly the last passage of poetry quoted - or rather,
misquoted - is interesting in so far as it refers to the kind
of loss of self that is at the heart of the trance experience.
Here, in "Locksley Hall" (R271:33-34), the experience is
associated with music, as it is in In Memoriam 95, where,
during his trance-like state, the poet seems to perceive

Aeonian music measuring out
The steps of Time - the shocks of Chance -
The blows of Death....

(IM 95:41-3)

Of course, in the quotation from "Locksley Hall" ("Love took
up the harp of Life, and smote on all the chords with might; /
Smote the chord of Self, that, trembling, passed in music out
of sight" - R271:33-4), the apparent loss of individuality
referred to is not self-induced by the repetition of a
particular phrase, but by another "entrancing" experience -
that of loving. And I do not use the word "entrancing"
gratuitously. Shelley wrote of "passion's trance" ("To - ",
Hutchinson 1970, 645), and Tennyson himself wrote in "Oh! that
'twere possible":

We stood tranced in long embraces,
Mixt with kisses sweeter, sweeter,
Than any thing on earth.

(R227:8-10; my italics)

If music was an important stimulus for Tennyson's imagination, possibly because of its ability to induce a sensory attack, water was an equally important precipitant. "'Somehow' he would say 'water is the element I love best of all the four'" (MS. Mats. I, 66). Tennyson told Allingham that he would rather see a brook than a hundred ruined castles (Allingham 1985, 131). It has also been noted that the "charm and beauty" of the brook at Somersby "haunted him through life" (MS. Mats. I, 17-18). The "charm" of the brook may have lain in its ability to bring on the trance-like state that Tennyson otherwise sought to induce by repeating to himself his own name or the phrase, "far-far-away". Certainly a description, in the manuscript Materials for a Life, of Tennyson wandering beside a brook is worth noting:

As he wandered over the world or by the brook he often seemed to be in dream land so that one who saw him called him "a mysterious being seemingly lifted high above other mortals and having a power of intercourse with the spirit world not granted to others".

(MS. Mats. I, 109)

The terminology employed certainly suggests that Tennyson was prone to paranormal experiences. Indeed, he is depicted as a kind of demi-god: "'a mysterious being...above other mortals'" who has the power "'of intercourse with the spirit world.'" Although the description is purportedly that of someone else, Hallam Tennyson's worship of his father shines through the passage.¹⁹

The Tennyson depicted here may simply have been a poet lost in his own thoughts. On the other hand, "the essential

feature of a twilight state" or dreamy state associated with TLE is "dream-like absent-minded behaviour" (Slater and Roth 1969, 465; Lishman 1978, 321). The description of the poet who "seemed to be in dream land" as he wandered by the brook does tend to call to mind the young prince whose "waking dreams were, more or less, / An old and strange affection of the house" (R286:I.12-13). I refer, of course, to the young scion in The Princess, who described his "weird seizures" thus:

On a sudden in the midst of men and day,
 And while I walked and talked as heretofore,
 I seemed to move among a world of ghosts,
 And feel myself the shadow of a dream.

(R286:I.15-18)

I believe the secret of the "charm" of the brook lay in the fact that the sparkle of sunlight or moonlight on water created the flicker-effect that is the most common precipitant of temporal lobe epilepsy (Fenton 1983, 152). Furthermore, the visual stimulation may have been reinforced by an auditory stimulus - the sound of water "babbling" over stones or falling in a cataract. A similar, though not identical, combination of visual and auditory stimuli is perhaps detectable in the glimmer of the "white kine" and the sound of the "fluttering urn" in In Memoriam 95 (lines 15, 8). The potent mixture of sound and light was described, and assessed, by Tennyson years earlier, in "The Walk at Midnight":

The whispering leaves, the gushing stream,
Where trembles the uncertain moon,
 Suit more the poet's pensive dream,
 Than all the jarring notes of noon.

(R30:21-22; my italics)

Similarly, in "Ode to Memory" Tennyson describes

...the waterfall
Which ever sounds and shines
A pillar of white light....

(R84:51-53)

And in "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" he tells of
"diamond rillets musical", whose descent

Through little crystal arches low
Down from the central fountain's flow
Fallen silver-chiming, seemed to shake
The sparkling flints beneath the prow.

(R83:49-52)

It may be noted that the sound and sparkle of the water (lines 50-51) is associated with imagery of arches (line 49), colour and the sound of bells ("silver-chiming") - all of which, as I pointed out earlier, have been known to feature in temporal lobe epileptic aura. Obviously, I do not mean to imply that "Recollections of the Arabian Nights" is about epileptic experience: I merely wish to emphasize the persistence of the imagery associated with that experience in Tennyson's poetry. The "epileptic" images - because they are so significant for the poet - are translated, as it were, into a wide variety of poems which in themselves have nothing to do with trance or aura.

The flicker effect which may precipitate an attack of reflex epilepsy frequently results from causes other than light on water. These causes include, for instance, dappled effects of light and shadow caused by sunlight filtering through the leafy branches of trees. This kind of effect is

beautifully exemplified in lines from The Princess:

...on their curls
From the high tree the blossom wavering fell,
And over them the tremulous isles of light
Slided, they moving under shade....

(R286:VI.63-66; my italics)

Light reflected from leaves that tremble in the breeze may be implicated. In "A Farewell", Tennyson's valediction to the brook at Somersby, the flicker effect is implicitly evident in the words "aspen shiver" (line 10), as well as explicitly evident in the lines which deal with light on water:

A thousand suns will stream on thee,
A thousand moons will quiver;
But not by thee my steps shall be,
For ever and for ever.

(R265:13-16)

It is perhaps pertinent to note that the haunting phrase "no more" (line 3) echoes through the earlier stanza of this regretful little poem. It is a phrase associated with the feeling evoked by the poet's "passion" of the very distant past; but it is here relevant to the present which is about to become the recent past.

I referred earlier to a fragment in Trinity Notebook 20 (folios 1^v and 2) in which Tennyson seems to be exploring the phenomenon of reflex epilepsy (page 195 above). Opening the notebook at the same page, one encounters another fragment which explores, I believe, the same phenomenon. Tennyson writes of

This nature full of hints and mysteries,

Untrackt conclusions, broken lights and shapes,
 This world-reflecting mind, this complex life
 Of checks and impulses and counterchecks,
 Glimpses and aspiration, warnings, failings....

Here Tennyson writes of nature as unfathomable ("full of hints and mysteries, / Untrackt conclusions, broken lights and shapes..."). In the next line he writes of his "world-reflecting mind" which is presumably also unfathomable. The concept of the mind of man reflecting the outside world, and vice versa, is a Wordsworthian idea, of course. But it is interesting that the only visual images mentioned in the Tennyson passage are "broken lights and shapes". The usage may be purely metaphorical, as in the Introductory Stanzas of In Memoriam:

Our little systems have their day;
 They have their day and cease to be:
 They are but broken lights of thee,
 And thou, O Lord, art more than they.

(lines 17-20)

But I suspect that the "broken lights" which create a flicker effect in the outside world may have been reflected inside the poet's mind as a result of reflex epilepsy. Conversely, as I have suggested elsewhere,

...the moon, the stars and the "northern lights" may have seemed especially significant to [Tennyson] simply because they appeared to be an external reflection of his strange "inner" lights. There may, indeed, have been times when the poet wondered which was "the real light" and which "The wisp that flickers where no foot can tread" [The Princess, R286:IV.338-39].

(Louw 1985, 99)

This would indeed have made for a "complex life", and the two lines which follow this phrase in the fragment under review certainly reflect the kind of ambiguous response that characterized what Dostoevsky called the "dialectic" of epilepsy (Rice 1985, 10). For here Tennyson sets positive "impulses" against negative "checks and...counterchecks", and positive "glimpses and aspirations" against negative "warnings" and "failings".

Imagery of "broken lights", "gleams" and glimmerings is a feature of Tennyson's poetry (Louw 1985, 96-97). And in "Merlin and the Gleam" (R431), the poem he regarded as his "literary autobiography and personal manifesto" (Louw 1985, 198), he chooses an image of light - the "Gleam" - to signify the "higher poetic imagination" (R431, headnote). But he also associates light with "trances" and "visions", as the following lines from The Lover's Tale show:

Careless of all things else, led on with light
In trances and in visions....

(R153:I.74-75; my italics)

It would seem likely, then, that the "higher poetic imagination" may, in Tennyson's case, be linked to the "trances" and "visions" that I have attributed to TLE. And I wish to offer a reading of an early poem, "Ode: O Bosky Brook" (R127) in support of this hypothesis.

Ricks notes that the "Ode" was first printed by Sir Charles Tennyson in 1931. It appeared first in Nineteenth Century (CIX: 374-6), then in Unpublished Early Poems of Alfred Tennyson, edited by Sir Charles (1931, 23-27). The

following note was appended:

'This fragment is evidently of early origin. A preliminary and less complete version exists in a notebook [H.Nbk2] which contains some very early verses, apparently of about the date of The Devil and the Lady (written aetat. fourteen). The fragment is in three somewhat disconnected parts. The first is addressed to a brook, not the famous Holywell brook, though no doubt the description is, in parts, reminiscent of it, but to an imaginary mountain stream. The second is addressed to the moon, the last to darkness.'

(R127, headnote)

Sir Charles's slightly apologetic assessment, "The fragment is in three somewhat disconnected parts", does less than justice to the poem. I believe the tripartite construction represents a nod in the direction of what is referred to in the Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics as "the triadic structure" of the Pindaric Ode - the three sections approximate to the strophe, the antistrophe and the epode of that great classical genre. It is a feature of Pindaric odes that they "frequently appear incoherent through the brilliance of imagery, [and] abrupt shifts in subject matter" (Fogle 1975, 585). However, I must stress my phraseology: I said "O Bosky Brook" seems to offer "a nod in the direction of" Pindaric Ode. For it is certainly not a Pindaric Ode per se. It seems to have the "reflective...character of the Horatian ode" rather than "the occasional character of the Pindaric ode" (Fogle 1975, 585). It has only one "triad", and the Pindaric correspondence between "strophe" and "antistrophe" is lacking. The form would seem rather to follow the English irregular ode. And

the choice of subject matter, or ostensible subject matter, seems to have an English Romantic bias: brook, moon, darkness. But I do not believe that these are the real subjects of the poem. Tennyson's "Ode: O Bosky Brook" represents, I believe, a series of meditations on, and in praise of, the poetic imagination - a subject truly worthy of the exalted treatment and elevated tone associated with the odal genre. It is also a poem redolent of the "landscapes and night-scenes" that were such "central elements" in eighteenth-century nature-poems like John Dyer's "Grongar Hill" and Lady Winchilsea's "Nocturnal Reverie". Charles Peake has written of the extent to which such poems were influenced by Horace and Virgil, as well as by Milton's "L'Allegro" and "Il Penseroso" (Peake 1967, 9-11). Though I shall emphasize what I believe were the personal or subjective elements that acted as stimuli to Tennyson's poetic imagination, the influence of literary precursors, both English and classical, must be borne in mind.

Section I of "Ode: O Bosky Brook" begins:

O bosky brook, which I have loved to trace
 Through all thy green and winding ways,
 Wandering in the pure light of youthful days
 Along yon dusky windy hills....

(R127:1-4)

I find it interesting to compare these lines with the passage from the manuscript Materials quoted on page 203:

As he wandered...by the brook he often seemed to be in dream land so that one who saw him called him 'a mysterious being seemingly lifted high above other mortals and having a power of intercourse with the spirit world not granted to others.'

(MS. Mats. I, 109)

The situation in both excerpts is the same. In the manuscript (of Materials for a Life) we learn the impression created by the poet on an observer as he [Tennyson] wandered along by the brook. In the poem ("Ode: O Bosky Brook") we learn what was passing through the poet's mind - at least on one such occasion. For the opening lines of the poem suggest that these wanderings beside the brook were a regular occurrence in the poet's youth (lines 1-3). Clearly the "green and winding ways" (line 2) and the

...dusky windy hills,
Whose dark indent and wild variety
Curtails the Southern sky...

(lines 4-6)

have imprinted themselves upon his receptive mind in truly Wordsworthian fashion. He was to confirm this many years later in the In Memoriam lyric addressed to his brother Charles:

...thou and I [Tennyson writes] are one in kind,
As moulded like in Nature's mint;
And hill and wood and field did print
The same sweet forms in either mind.

For us the same cold streamlet curl'd
Thro' all his eddying coves....

(IM 79:5-9; my italics)

In "Ode: O Bosky Brook" the poet records how he followed the stream through windswept pine groves with "White undergrowth of hemlocks and hoar lines / Of sallows, whitening to the fitful breeze..." (R127:8-9). The "hoar lines / Of sallows, whitening to the fitful breeze" might well create a

ribbed or barred "flicker" effect similar to that created by a moving escalator (Fenton 1983, 152) or Venetian blind (Lishman 1978, 301). Slater and Roth note that some epileptics, sensitive to this type of stimulus, may experience epileptic phenomena whilst driving along a tree-lined avenue in the setting sun, for instance (Slater and Roth 1969, 451). I believe a similar response may have been elicited in Tennyson's case by "hoar lines / Of sallows" of the kind referred to in the "Ode". For the very next line refers to the "voiceful influx" of the "tangled rills" (line 10). It is difficult to determine where metaphor ends and illusion begins: the use of the epithet "voiceful" may be merely figurative or it may suggest an illusion.

In a much later poem, "In the Valley of Caunteretz" (R326), written three decades after Arthur Hallam's death, Tennyson describes a very similar situation to that in the opening "strophe" of "Ode: O Bosky Brook":

All along the valley, stream that flashest white,
 Deepening thy voice with the deepening of the
 night....

(R326:1-2)

Here the voice is clearly metaphorical - the stream is personified. But the metaphorical voice of the stream becomes, I believe, the illusory voice of the poet's dead friend. "For", as the poet says, apostrophizing the stream,

...all along the valley, down thy rocky bed,
 Thy living voice to me was as the voice of the dead,
 And all along the valley, by rock and cave and tree,
 The voice of the dead was a living voice to me.

(R326:7-10)

It seems to me that the subjective paranormal experience described in "In the Valley of Caunteretz" is explicable in terms of reflex epilepsy. The poet, under the sensory stimulation of light flickering on rushing water - what Shelley, using a marvellous amalgam of kinaesthesia and synaesthesia, called the stream's "motion of sweet sound and radiance" ("The Sensitive Plant", line 47; Hutchinson 1970, 590) - experiences an auditory illusion or "psychical seizure", apparently perceiving his dead friend's voice in the sound of the stream. I speculated earlier that the seizure was of the "flash-back" type described by Penfield.

The experience recorded in "Ode: O Bosky Brook" is very similar: the poet, wandering beside a brook, is subjected to the flicker-type stimulus (R127:8-9), and as a result he seems to hear a voice, or voices, in the sound of the stream (line 10). The hearing of voices may, as I indicated earlier, be associated with the condition which Hughlings Jackson called a "dreamy state" and Penfield classified as a "psychical seizure" (see page 168 above). In the lines that follow, the reference to the past, and the fact that the poet-speaker is moved to weep "sweet tears", seem to support this interpretation. For the phrase "sweet tears" suggests a feeling that resembles the "desolate sweetness" of the emotion associated with the "Passion of the Past" in "The Ancient Sage" (R415:219, 226).

In "Ode: O Bosky Brook", the poet, expanding on his earlier allusion to the "pure light of youthful days" (R127:3), addresses the stream thus:

How happy were the fresh and dewy years
 When by thy damp and rushy side,
 In the deep yellow Eventide,
 I wept sweet tears,
 Watching the red hour of the dying Sun....

(R127:11-15).

Elegiac overtones are created in these lines by the references to the "fresh and dewy years" of the past, to "the deep yellow eventide" and to the "red hour of the dying Sun". It has been pointed out that in temporal lobe epilepsy visual hallucinations are often coloured, and "there is said to be some preference for the colour red" (Slater and Roth 1969, 465). The occurrence of red and rosy tints in his epileptic aura may have given Tennyson a special predilection for these colours. They certainly feature prominently in his poetry, and not always appropriately. For instance, in a passage from The Lover's Tale, the poet writes of

...the all-enduring camel, driven
 Far from the diamond fountain by the palms,
 Who toils across the middle moonlit nights....

(R153:I.132-34)

Originally the "middle moonlit night" had been described as "Shadowed and crimsoned with the driving sand" (R153:n.i 134-6). Many years later, in January 1868, Tennyson told Mrs Marian Bradley that this was "'a mistake'". "'In the middle moonlit nights there could have been no crimson colouring'", he explained (Memoir II, 50; R153, headnote, qtg. Mrs Bradley's Diary, British Library). I shall have more to say in Chapter V about this and similar "mistakes" that highlight Tennyson's predilection for red and rosy colours in his

poetry. At this point I merely wish to reiterate the fact that a reddish tinging is a well-documented feature in some cases of epileptic aura, and to suggest that Tennyson's frequent use of this colour, even when it is inappropriate to the subject or description, may be of neurological significance.

Here in "Ode: O Bosky Brook" the image of the "red hour of the dying sun" (R127:15) is entirely appropriate, and it adumbrates the ancient Sage's evocation of the "Passion of the Past" in terms of the "last long stripe of waning crimson gloom" (R415:221).

In the "Ode" the poet feels his "mind dilate / With solemn uncontrollable pleasure" as he watches the moon rise (lines 18-22) and create its potent effects on the landscape.

The sad curve of the hueless Moon,
Sole in her state,
Varied with steadfast shades the glimmering plain,
And full of lovely light
Appeared the mountain-tarn's unbroken sleep....

(R127:18-22)

The "curve of the hueless Moon" (line 18) tends to remind one of the arcs or crescents and circles which frequently occur in Tennyson's poetry, and which I suggested may have their genesis in epileptic aura. Obviously the word "sad" must be a transposed epithet, reflecting the poet's state of mind, and it is paradoxical that this "sad" mood makes the speaker's mind "dilate with...pleasure" (lines 16-17). It would seem that the emotional experience is of the same order as that related to the "Passion of the Past", where sorrow and joy,

desolation and sweetness are so inextricably linked. Moreover, the dilation of the poet's mind with "solemn uncontrollable pleasure" recalls the expansion of the speaker's "rapt brain" in "Timbuctoo" (R67:113-19).

While on the subject of emotional experiences, I should perhaps point out that a "reflex" attack of epilepsy may be triggered not only by sensory stimuli such as flickering light, music or the sound of water, but also by a "purely emotional or psychological experience". Penfield explains:

A purely emotional or psychological experience may...precipitate an epileptic seizure. The experience has in some way a facilitating influence upon the epileptic focus. In some patients certain types of thinking, or concentration, may seem to precipitate their seizures, and the seizures themselves begin with what might be called an intellectual aura. In other patients an experience which is similar to the [emotional content of the] psychical hallucination that ushers in the habitual attack may set off such an attack.

(Penfield and Jasper 1954, 39)

In other words, just as flickering light effects in the "outer" world may precipitate an epileptic attack in which the patient perceives the flashing or glimmering "inner" lights of epileptic aura, and as music or the sound of water may provoke an attack which features auditory elements of a similar nature, so a "real" emotion similar to the kind normally experienced by an epileptic during a psychical seizure may in fact precipitate such a seizure. Consequently distinguishing between an emotional stimulus and an ictal emotion may be difficult or even, in some cases, impossible.

However, in exploring the nature of the emotion inherent

in line 14 ("I wept sweet tears"), I have wandered from the text of "Ode: O Bosky Brook". The tranquillity of the tarn, which is presumably the source of, or the destination of, the brook, is described in lines 22-24: it is undisturbed by the "dewy sweep / Of oars...." It lies darkly "Beneath the sunny living noon" (R127:25), equally fair by day and night (line 27). At midday ("when day's manhood wears his crown / Of hottest rays in Heaven's windy Hall") the tarn appears so deep that anyone looking into it (line 30) may see the "abiding eyes of Space" (presumably the sun and moon) reflected

...like wonderful gleams
Of thrilling and mysterious beauty, sent
From gay shapes sparkling through the gloom of
dreams.

(lines 35-7)

I submit that the "dreams" to which the poet alludes may be the dream-visions later associated with his so-called "gout", and the "gay shapes sparkling through" them are suggestive of the simple visual hallucinations reported in both temporal and occipital lobe epilepsy.

Section II of "Ode: O Bosky Brook" is, as Sir Charles Tennyson has noted, addressed to the moon. But this section is not as "disconnected" from the first as Sir Charles implies; for the image of the moon was introduced in section I (line 17). The personification of, and invocation to, that astral body, in Part II, may therefore be seen as a development from the preceding section.

It has been suggested that before 1854 it was thought in some quarters that the moon might be "a causal factor in epilepsy" (Rice 1985, 71). One "ancient belief" was that "the moon inflicted epilepsy upon criminals as a punishment for their crimes". Rice points out that some epileptics, including Dostoevsky, "suffered chronically from a recurrent sense" of guilt, and that this "sense of guilt all too readily accommodated the ancient legend of lunar punishment" (Rice 1985, 154). I have written elsewhere of Tennyson's "strange sense of guilt" (Louw 1985, 118-47), but I believe the poet was far too intelligent to subscribe to any theory of epilepsy as a "lunar punishment". In any case, although he worried about the "juggle of the brain" that he sometimes feared might be responsible for the medical problem he variously described as "gout" or "hypochondria", he also perceived that it was in many ways a gift, a source of poetic inspiration. And it is in this context that the moon is invoked in section II of "Ode: O Bosky Brook".

There is, of course, a long literary tradition of poems on, or invocations to, the moon. One thinks, for instance, of Spenser's lines on Cynthia, the moon goddess, in the Epithalamion:

Who is the same, which at my window peepes,
Or whose is that faire face that shines so bright,
Is it not Cinthia, she that never sleepes,
But walkes about high heaven al the night?

(lines 372-75; Smith and de
Selincourt 1932, 584).

Ben Jonson's lovely "Hymne" to the goddess of the moon and the

hunt, in Cynthia's Revels, also springs readily to mind:

Queene and Huntresse, chaste, and faire,
 Now the Sunne is laid to sleepe,
 Seated, in thy silver chaire,
 State in wonted manner keepe:
 Hesperus intreats thy light,
 Goddesse, excellently bright.

Earth, let not thy envious shade
 Dare it, selfe to interpose;
 Cynthia's shining orbe was made
 Heaven to cleere, when day did close:
 Blesse us then with wished sight,
 Goddesse, excellently bright.

Lay thy bow of pearle apart,
 And thy cristall-shining quiver;
 Give unto the flying hart
 Space to breathe, how short soever:
 Thou, that mak'st a day of night,
 Goddesse, excellently bright.

(Hunter 1968, 332-33)

The moon goddess is also alluded to in Milton's "Il Penseroso" (line 59; Carey 1971, 142); Lady Winchelsea's poem entitled "To the Echo: In a Clear Night upon Astrop Walks" (line 12; I'Anson Fausset 1930, 113), and several times in James Thomson's The Seasons (e.g., lines 1088-102; Sambrook 1972, 118-19).

In A Midsummer Night's Dream Shakespeare reveals the dominant position occupied by the moon in the imagination of "the lunatic" and "the lover" as well as "the poet" (5.1.7). The "moonlight revels" chronicled in that play are, of course, to a large extent associated with the supernatural world of fairies (2.1.141). And the recurring image of the moon in Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner also frequently carries overtones of the supernatural (e.g., lines 78, 210, 321, 323, 437; Coleridge 1967, 186-209).

Given this long line of literary precursors, it is certainly unnecessary to press any particular epileptic theories to "explain" Tennyson's invocation to the moon in Section II of "Ode: O Bosky Brook". Nevertheless, the imagery in this section is once again rich in the sparkle and glitter of the flicker effects which seem to have wrought so potently upon the poet's imagination:

The section begins:

Well have I known thee, whatsoe'er thy phase,
In every time and place,
Pale priestess of grey Night....

(lines 38-40)

Here the moon is not depicted as Cynthia, Artemis, Diana or Phoebus - goddesses in their own right - but as a "Pale Priestess", a votary in the service of "grey Night". The verbal pictures that follow, exemplifying some of the times and places the speaker has "known" the moon, are extremely vivid and evocative. The moon's rays are described as "mournful" (line 41), recalling perhaps Sir Philip Sidney's line, "With how sad steps, O Moone, thou climbs't the skies!" (Astrophel and Stella 31:1; Ringler 1962, 180). The "dewless point of [a] conic hill" (lines 42) is silhouetted against the "flood of mournful rays" which emanate from the moon and seem to fall down the illuminated side ("richer side" - line 43) of the hill into the "varied valley underneath" (line 45).

A second vista is described "where, within the eddying tide / Of some tumultuous mountain-rill," the moon's reflection ("Thy mimic form, / Full opposite to thy reality" -

lines 49-50) casts its spell (line 48) upon the viewer (line 53). The apparently magical quality of the moonlight - suggested by the word "charm" (line 48) - is, I believe, a product of the sound of the "tumultuous mountain rill" and the flicker effect created by the moonlight reflected in the water. For the "eddying" of the water (line 46) causes the light to be broken up into "flashing" and "tremulous darts of slender light" (lines 51-52) that presage the "tremulous isles of light" referred to in The Princess (R286:VI.65). How beautifully the "l" sound in the relevant lines from the "Ode" mimics the flicker described: the "l" occurs frequently enough to awaken the ear to an alliterative effect, but only in the word "light" is it at the beginning of a word. Consequently the alliteration is subtle, almost elusive, like flickering light.

The third verbal picture is a rather Gothic one of a "screaming waste of desolate heath / In midnight full of sound" (lines 54-55). Mysterious undercurrents become operative, since one cannot help wondering what makes the "sound" on that desolate heath. Perhaps it is hallucinatory.

There is a change of mood as the poet recalls yet other times and places where he has known the moon: in the tranquillity of

...close pastures soft as dewy sleep,
 Or in the hollow deep
 Of woods, whose counterchange embroidery
 Of light and darkness chequered the old moss
 On the damp ground....

(Lines 56-60)²⁰

This passage looks forward to In Memoriam 89: "Witch-elms... counterchange the floor / Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright" (lines 1-2). But the word "chequered" also looks back - to Milton ("L'Allegro", line 96; Carey 1971, 137), Dyer ("Grongar Hill", line 27; Peake 1967, 89), and Lady Winchelsea ("A Nocturnal Reverie", line 16; Peake 1967, 39). So literary experience may be reflected in these lines. But personal experience, and therefore personal significance, must not be underestimated. For "light and darkness chequered" - an effect created by the moonlight filtering through the trees - might be expected to produce, in an individual sensitive to a flicker stimulus, an attack of reflex epilepsy.

Syntactically, the lines which follow are presented as alternatives to the scenes described earlier:

Or whether thou becamest the bright boss
 Of thine own Halo's dusky shield,
Or when thou burnest beaconlike upon
 The margin of the dun and dappled field
 Of vagrant waves....

(lines 61-65; my italics)

But the light images used ("bright boss of thine own Halo's dusky shield"; "burnest beaconlike") are reminiscent of the simple visual hallucinations of stationary or moving lights that are associated with both occipital and temporal lobe epileptic aura (Lishman 1978, 312-13), and may in fact show the source of Tennyson's "inspiration". Certainly the next few lines, which verbally present another spectacular optical display, culminate in the imagery of vibration or palpitation that seems sometimes to be associated with epileptic seizure -

as I endeavoured to show on pages 136-48. The lines read:

...higher risen, [thou] dost link
 Thy reflex to the steadfast brink,
 With such a lustrous chord of solemn sheen,
 That the heart vibrates with desire to pace
 The palpitating track of buoyant rays....

(lines 65-69; my italics)

In old age Tennyson was to express the desire to recapture this particular feeling when he wrote:

'Call me..., silent voices,
 Forward to the starry track
 Glimmering up the heights beyond me
 On, and always on!

("The Silent Voices", R459:7-10)

In "The Silent Voices" the glimmering stellar track seemingly leads to eternity. In "Ode" O Bosky Brook" the "track" which is "palpitating" with light - though lunar, not stellar - seems to be associated with poetic inspiration. But in terms of Tennyson's anagogical vision, the two "tracks" may be one and the same.

The word "chord" in line 67 of "Ode: O Bosky Brook" is of some interest. At first glance it appears to be a misspelling of "cord" - and, as Ricks indicates, a similar confusion is evident in "A Dream of Fair Women" (R173:n.211). On the other hand, Tennyson may be using synaesthesia, either deliberately or inadvertently. That is, the confusion of the auditory and visual senses may arise because of the "common ground or marriage bond of all the senses" to which the poet refers in the fragment quoted on page 195 of this study.

The passage which runs from line 70 to the end of section

II of "Ode: O Bosky Brook" is a description of a

...giant cape,
 Whose massed and wonder-stirring shape
 And jutting head,
 Citadel-crowned and tempest-buffeted,
 Runs far away,
 (What time the white West glares with sickening ray)
 And in the middle ocean meets the surging shock...

of the current, churning up the water so that each wave is tipped with white foam. That is, "each gathered crest" is plumed "with snowy sheen" (line 80).

The landscape of the "giant cape" which is "citadel-crowned" is rather similar to the landscape of cliffs and temples Tennyson saw in his so-called "gout visions" - the landscapes I have ascribed to the complex visual hallucinations of temporal lobe epilepsy. And it should perhaps be noted that the description is found to follow closely on the reference to the "loud sea" - the sound of which would approximate to the roaring or thunderous sound that I postulated earlier was a feature of Tennyson's epileptic aura (page 136 above). Also suggestive is the occurrence in line 76 of the phrase Tennyson associated with his trance experiences, "far away". Each of these pieces of evidence may in itself seem unimportant or coincidental; but cumulatively they begin to assume significance.

The section ends quietly with two evocative images, one visual and one auditory: "The lighthouse glowing from the secret rock" (line 81), and "The seabird piping on the wild salt waste" (line 82). The former suggests the arcane, the latter celebrates the natural in a typically Tennysonian

combination.

Section III begins:

I savour of the Egyptian and adore
Thee, venerable dark! august obscure!
 Sublimest Athor!

(R127:83-85)

At first glance it may seem that the poet is pursuing a "disconnected" idea, to use Sir Charles's word. However, on closer examination it becomes clear that there is some sense of development from section II to section III. For in section II the moon is apostrophized as "Pale Priestess of grey Night", and in section III the poet's concern is with the Egyptian deity Athor, "which, in the Coptic, signifies Night" (Savary, Letters on Egypt; qtd. by Paden 1942, 34 - R127, headnote).

Savary, in his Letters on Egypt, to which Tennyson was probably indebted, explains that in referring to "night", the ancient Egyptian priests "did not mean that privation of light which succeeds sun-set; but the darkness of Chaos, before creation; of which, animating it by his breath, God made all creatures" (R127, headnote). Tennyson emphasizes his concern with the positive rather than the negative aspects of darkness when he writes:

It is not that I doat upon
 Thy glooms, because the weary mind is fraught
 With fond comparison
Of thy deep shadow to its inward strife,
 But rather,
 That as thou wert the parent of all life,
Even so thou art the mother of all thought....

(lines 86-92)

The darkness celebrated is not the darkness symbolic of melancholy, but the darkness out of which metaphorical light is created. For as the Deity wrought earthly life out of Chaos ("the parent of all life" - line 91), so inspiration will be found in the fecund darkness that is "the mother of all thought" (line 92). In Tennyson's case the distinction between the darkness symbolic of melancholy and the darkness that is the seedbed of creativity is a fine one, since his greatest poetry sprang out of deep melancholy - as In Memoriam proves.

The poet expresses the belief that preoccupation with the delight of the senses is an impediment to the attainment of a more mystical state. In his case this mystical state is that of poetic inspiration. As Tennyson puts it,

...thought
 ...wells not freely from the mind's recess
 When the sharp sunlight occupies the sense
 With this fair world's exceeding comeliness....

(lines 92-95)

The poet goes on to list some of the sensuous delights that may act as a distraction from the pursuit of a higher goal:

The goodly show and varied excellence
 Of lithe tall trees, the languor of sweet flowers
 Into the universal herbage woven,
 High hills and broad fair vallies river-cloven,
 Part strown with lordly cities and with towers,
 Part spotted with the gliding white of pregnant
 sails....

(lines 96-101)

However, this catalogue is so lovingly recited that one feels

that the beauties of nature offer their own form of inspiration. And in mentally reviewing Tennyson's poetic oeuvre, one recalls not only many charming descriptions of nature, but also many lovely passages, in In Memoriam for instance, which attest to the poet's apparently mystical perception of a numinous presence in nature: "...I seem in star and flower / To feel thee some diffusive power" (IM 130: 6-7).²¹

To the miscellany of mainly visual delights listed in "Ode: O Bosky Brook", the poet adds sound:

Add murmur, which the buxom gales
 (As my glowing brows they fan)
 Bear upward through the happy heights of air,
 Chirp, bellow, bark and distant shout of man....

(lines 102-05)

In a slightly later poem, "The Palace of Art", the speaker is unable to make a complete and final renunciation of the aesthetic pleasures of the senses:

'Yet pull not down my palace towers, that are
 So lightly, beautifully built:
 Perchance I may return with others there
 When I have purged my guilt.'

(R167:293-96)

So, too, in "Ode: O Bosky Brook", there is a last-minute refusal to eschew all sense perceptions in favour of the deepest darkness that now seems redolent of "the stillness of the tomb / And grossest gloom" (R127:108-09). The poet acknowledges that, for him, "Rare sound, spare light will best address / The soul for awful muse and solemn watchfulness"

(lines 111-12). No-one who has read In Memoriam 95 could doubt it. For in that elegy the "rare sound" of the "fluttering urn" (line 8), and the "spare light" in which the "white kine glimmer'd" (line 15) provide a significant setting for Tennyson's apparently mystical apperception of "that which is" (line 39) - be it Hallam or the Deity. And it is certainly not my intention to call in question either the profundity or the subjective "reality" of Tennyson's experience when I point out that flickering light and the sound of water habitually exerted a potent effect on the poet (as the many passages I have quoted must show), and that these particular sensory stimuli are well documented precipitators of epileptic seizures.

It must also be noted, however, that Rudolf Otto endorses Tennyson's idea that "spare light will best address / The soul..." (R127:111). For Otto, in The Idea of the Holy, that seminal work on the numinous, maintains that "the 'mystical' effect begins with semidarkness" (Otto 1946, 71).

Tennyson's "Ode: O Bosky Brook" may "appear incoherent through the brilliance of the imagery [and] abrupt shifts in subject matter" (Fogle 1975, 585). But there is a kind of unity in the apparent diversity of the images in so far as they all contrive to elucidate the nature of Tennyson's poetic imagination - a theme which is finally stated in the poem's closing lines:

Rare sound, spare light will best address
The soul for awful muse and solemn watchfulness.

The series of meditations which comprise the three

sections of the "Ode" deal with three natural phenomena that were all-powerful in inducing the subjective paranormal experiences that are at the heart of Tennyson's poetry: the brook's "motion of sweet sound and radiance" (Shelley, "The Sensitive Plant", I.47); the moon's "tremulous darts of slender light" (R127:52); and the "spare light" which is not the blackness of "grossest gloom" (line 109), but has the properties of the "venerable dark" (line 84) in which the spark of creativity may be ignited.

In "Merlin and the Gleam" (R431), Tennyson's acknowledged poem about the "higher poetic imagination", the "Gleam" is associated, as in "Ode: O Bosky Brook", with sounds of water (the "warble of water" and the "cataract music / Of falling torrents" - R431:45-47) - sounds which, as I have indicated, may induce a reflex epileptic attack. The "Gleam" is also depicted as "streaming and shining" (R431:51) on water and on the "silvery willow" (R431:53) whose prototype is to be found in the "hoar lines / Of sallows" in "O Bosky Brook" (R127:8-9). The "Gleam" itself is an ineffable numinous flickering light which emerges, in times of deepest melancholy, "out of darkness" (R431:81). This "Gleam" is

Not of the sunlight,
Not of the moonlight,
Not of the starlight!

(R431:120-22)

No, indeed. It is rather, I believe, representative of the mysterious inner lights of epileptic aura.

CHAPTER IV

FROM PATHOLOGY TO POETRY

It may at this point be felt that in discussing "Ode: O Bosky Brook" I have taken its rich amalgam of images and rather arbitrarily associated them with the symptoms or syndromes of temporal lobe epilepsy without showing how or why the epileptic phenomena are, or should be, transposed into the work of art. I must therefore attempt to group or classify the images in such a way as to elucidate the process by which they move from pathology to poetry.

In terms of my theory the imagery falls into two main categories: those images related to precipitating factors such as flickering light effects and the sound of water, and those images which have their genesis in epileptic experience per se. The latter include simple visual phenomena such as geometric shapes, and lights; and more complex visual hallucinations such as the "giant cape" described in lines 74-77 of the "Ode" (R127). There are also images suggestive of auditory hallucination ("the screaming waste of desolate heath" - R127:54), and images of affect or emotion ("I wept sweet tears" - line 14). There will, of course, be some overlap between precipitatory and perceived images, for as I have indicated, epileptic attacks may be triggered by external stimuli which resemble the sensory manifestations of aura.

Bearing in mind the above data, especially the visual data, I must turn now to the work of J.D. Lewis-Williams, Professor of Cognitive Archaeology at the University of the Witwatersrand. Studying the art of "ancient peoples", he

comes to the conclusion that many San (or Bushman) paintings do not depict "'real'" events but "the trance experience[s] or hallucinations of San shamans". Lewis-Williams writes that the ideas that moved the Bushman mind most profoundly and imbued it with religious feeling "originated in trance experience. Furthermore", he adds, "that experience moulds the San's concept of the world and all that is in it. These ideas and beliefs are expressed in San rock art." This rock art comprises "symbols of supernatural potency", "metaphors of trance experience" and "the hallucinations of San shamans" (Lewis-Williams 1989, 50).

Lewis-Williams takes the human nervous system to be the "one shared feature" common to all people - including the San of Southern Africa, the Upper Paleolithic people of Western Europe and "modern Western subjects who participate in laboratory experiments on altered states of consciousness." Using the results of these modern experiments he constructs "a model of how the human nervous system behaves in altered states" of consciousness, and uses the model to support his hypothesis that Upper Paleolithic rock art, like San and Coso rock art, is "shamanistic" (Lewis-Williams 1989, 50).

Lewis-Williams' model is reproduced in Appendix D, for it is this model which interests me: it appears to be as applicable to the poetry of Alfred Tennyson as it is to the visual art of stone age man. And I must stress, at this point, that I only became aware of Lewis-Williams' work after I had completed my own research.¹ I therefore feel that my study satisfies to some extent Alison Wylie's call for "cross-

context comparisons" as a means of testing Lewis-Williams' hypotheses. Such "cross-context comparisons" should be "designed to determine whether distinctive entoptic forms and entoptic-iconic mixes of forms routinely (or always) occur in art associated with trance- or altered-state-induced practices" (Wylie, in Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 232). As I have indicated, I believe that my study goes some way towards fulfilling this aim.

Citing Siegel (1977, 132-40) and others, Lewis-Williams describes the three stages through which a person passes in the course of a "trance" experience. In the first stage a subject "sees", "form constants" or "phosphenes" (Siegel 1977, 136, 139) or what Lewis-Williams terms "entoptic phenomena". These are

...luminous visual percepts that take the form of dots, zigzags, grids, nested catenary curves, boat-shapes and so on. They expand and contract, fragment and combine in the visual field. They can be seen with the eyes open or closed and can be projected onto plane surfaces like a wall or a ceiling.

(Lewis-Williams 1989, 50)

Clearly, the flickering lights, arcs and circles I have highlighted in Tennyson's poetry and have linked to epileptic trance, would not be out of place on Lewis-Williams' list of entoptic phenomena. Indeed, Siegel specifically says: "Phosphenes can include spots, disks, concentric arcs or circles and checkerboard patterns" (1977, 139). Furthermore, I have discussed at some length the references to pulsation which are a recurring feature in the passages of Tennyson's

poetry that I associate with epileptic trance. This pulsation may well be related to the expansion and contraction of the entoptic phenomena mentioned by Lewis-Williams. Siegel's hallucinating subjects certainly reported that "the images tended to pulsate" (1977, 134).

In the second stage of trance, "people try to make sense" of the entoptic phenomena or "mental images", perceived in stage 1, "by elaborating them into things from their own culture" (Lewis-Williams 1989, 50-51). This kind of attempt at imposition of order on experience is at the very heart of the poetic impulse, and never more so than when the experience itself is somehow mysterious, disturbing or awe-inspiring. And Tennyson's anxiety about phenomena associated with a "juggle of the brain" (R227:84) needs no reiteration. As Lillian Feder has noted, mythical and symbolic "representations...indicate man's attempt to do something about the mysteries which continually remind him of his helplessness and at the same time challenge him with endless possibilities of control through his own imagination and action" (Feder 1971, 11).

I must quote Lewis-Williams and Dowson at some length here in order to clarify the second stage in the trance-related creative process:

In Stage 2 [of the trance experience] subjects try to make sense of entoptics by elaborating them into iconic forms (Horowitz 1964:514; 1975:177, 178, 181). In a normal state of consciousness the brain receives a constant stream of sense impressions. A visual image reaching the brain is decoded (as, of course, are other sense impressions) by being matched against a store of experience. If a "fit" [in the sense of a "correspondence"] can be

effected, the image is "recognised". In altered states the nervous system itself becomes a "sixth sense" (Heinze 1986) that produces a variety of images including entoptic phenomena. The brain attempts to recognize, or decode, these forms as it does impressions supplied by the nervous system in a normal state of consciousness. Horowitz (1975:177) links this process of making sense to the disposition of the subject: "Thus the same ambiguous round shape or initial perceptual representation can be 'illusioned' into an orange (if the subject is hungry), a breast (if he is in a state of heightened sexual drive), a cup of water (if he is thirsty), or an anarchist's bomb (if he is hostile or fearful)".

(Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 203-04)

In terms of the Tennysonian imagination, this stage may be represented, for instance, by the elaboration of entoptic arcs or inverted catenary curves into bridges (R84:102), arches or rainbows (pages 117-19 above). One might cite, as a more elaborate example, Tennyson's supposed "vision" of his dead grandmother, replete with halo ("And ask ye why these sad tears stream", R25; quoted p. 28 above). For Lewis-Williams and Dowson point out that in attempting "to make sense of...mental images", a subject tends to be "constrained by...tradition and by what he is expected or desires to see" (1988, 210). In the poem thought to be about his deceased grandmother, Tennyson possibly develops the luminous entoptic phenomena associated with epileptic aura into a rather traditional picture of the dead woman irradiated by a halo and surrounded by a "thousand angels beaming" (R25:7, 13-16).

The third stage of trance is said to be the most "dramatic" (Siegel 1977, 132) and "intense" (Lewis-Williams 1989, 51). For in this stage subjects see formed hallucinations (true "iconic" hallucinations). These third-

stage "iconic elements are spontaneous rather than construals" (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 211). In Tennyson's case this stage would correspond to his apperception of - for instance - the face of Hallam (IM 70:13-16), or of beautiful landscapes (pages 120-21, 171-72 above). Subjects may be "drawn into their own visions, so that they participate in their own imagery" (Lewis-Williams 1989, 51). The autoscopic out-of-body experiences described by Tennyson in In Memoriam 12, for example, might constitute a parallel case in point. I refer, of course, to passages quoted in Chapter I (pp. 39-40):

I cannot stay;
 I leave this mortal ark behind,
 A weight of nerves without a mind,
 And leave the cliffs, and haste away

O'er ocean-mirrors rounded large,
 And reach the glow of southern skies,
 And see the sails at distance rise,
 And linger weeping on the marge,

And saying; 'Comes he thus, my friend?
 Is this the end of all my care?'
 And circle moaning in the air:
 'Is this the end? Is this the end?'

And forward dart again, and play
 About the prow, and back return
 To where the body sits, and learn
 That I have been an hour away.

(IM 12:5-20)

This poem certainly describes "extra-corporeal travel", a concept which Lewis-Williams invokes to explain San rock-paintings in which lines emanate from the heads of certain "trance figures" (Lewis-Williams 1986, 173).

It may, of course, be argued that, in the passages of Tennyson's poetry which I have highlighted, there is no

evidence of three discrete stages in the development of the different types of images that I have associated with trance experience: they tend to be intermingled in a seemingly random fashion. However, Lewis-Williams and Dowson are at pains to point out that the three stages of trance are not necessarily all present on any one occasion. Nor are they always sequential: they may be cumulative. For instance, the entoptic imagery characteristic of stage 1 may persist into stages 2 and 3. And the "construed entoptics" normally associated with stage 2 may be found accompanying the "true iconic hallucinations" of stage 3. But although entoptics may still occur during stage 3, they tend to be secondary, usually framing the main iconic elements (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 204).

In Tennyson's poetry the different classes of imagery associated with the three stages of trance experience are frequently found together - in "Ode: O Bosky Brook", for instance. In that poem the "gay shapes sparkling through the gloom of dreams" (R127:37) might be said to correspond to the entoptic phenomena of the first stage of trance experience. The "sad curve of the hueless Moon" (line 18) may possibly exemplify the "construed" iconic imagery of the second stage of trance, one of the first-stage arc- or crescent-shapes being elaborated into a picture of the moon. Another example one might cite is the elaboration of first-stage light phenomena into the "bright boss" of the "Halo's dusky shield" (lines 61-62). Siegel's experiments showed that the imagery of hallucination was frequently "characterized by a bright

light in the center of the field of vision that obscured details but allowed images on the periphery to be observed" (Siegel 1977, 134).

In "Ode: O Bosky Brook" the image of the "Citadel-crowned" "giant cape" (lines 72-76) is very like the imagery of cliffs and temples which Tennyson told Allingham he often saw in waking dreams (page 172 above). These images would correspond to the true hallucinations of the third stage of trance experience. Siegel actually mentions that the "more complex" induced hallucinations "include landscapes, faces and familiar objects and places" (1977, 132; my italics).

The specific examples from "Ode: O Bosky Brook" that I have foregrounded are woven into a rich matrix of imagery of flashing, shimmering and glimmering lights that are probably also trance-related. Furthermore, the image of the "conic hill" (R127:42) may also represent an elaborated entoptic, for cone-shapes are among the form constants reported during the first stage of altered-state experiments (Siegel 1977, 132). However, although there are other references to conical shapes in Tennyson's poetry (R3:29; R101:6; R128:58), they are not so pervasive that I should care to base my argument on them. Similarly, the eye-motif which has been described in connection with the initial stage of trance is to be detected in "Ode: O Bosky Brook" (R127:33) and other Tennyson poems, but I shall allude to it only in passing.

I have been referring principally to the visual imagery in Tennyson's poetry. But the same mechanisms are probably applicable to the other "sensory impressions" associated with

trance (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 203). Indeed, we have already seen, for example, how Tennyson represents the "ringing" in Enoch Arden's ears as being elaborated into the sound of wedding bells (page 157 above), and how a roaring sound may become "melodious thunder" (page 163 above).

It has been postulated that aspirant shamans "learn to increase the vividness of their imagery, and they learn to control the content of their visions by 'actively engaging and manipulating the visionary phenomena'" (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 213). I find that Tennyson, too, utilizes and manipulates a particular cluster of images in a variety of ways in his poetry - and that cluster of images is made up of various phenomena that I have associated with temporal lobe epilepsy, or "trance", to use Tennyson's own term. Moreover, it is known that Tennyson sought to induce his own trances, possibly in pursuit of poetic inspiration. And when he writes that "Rare sound, spare light will best address / The soul for awful muse and solemn watchfulness" (R127:111-12), he seems to have been unwittingly endorsing the ideas held by Upper Paleolithic "artists"; for much Upper Paleolithic art is located in deep caverns (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 214) which are "dark and silent, apart, perhaps, from the monotonous dripping of water...." The experiences of modern speleologists have confirmed that such conditions are conducive to altered states of consciousness (Lewis-Williams 1989, 51). "The sensory deprivation experienced...induces entoptic phenomena...and also hallucinations" (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 214).

It is incumbent on me to point out that the experiments cited by Lewis-Williams and Dowson in their explanation of the "three-stage progression" of trance were conducted on subjects in whom the altered states of consciousness had been induced by means of mescaline and lysergic acid diethylamide (L.S.D.). The authors say: "We do not know if the trajectory of mental imagery is identical for all drugs and for non-drug-induced states, but we believe that a broad similarity can be accepted" (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 204). I have certainly found a remarkable similarity between the results they report and the phenomena in Tennyson's poetry that I ascribe to the trance states associated with temporal lobe epilepsy. And, indeed, in "attempting to explain the origin of the simple hallucinatory constants" or form constants - or what Lewis-Williams and Dowson call entoptics - Siegel points out that "the work of Wilder Penfield and his colleagues at McGill University has shown that the direct electrical stimulation of the visual cortex or the temporal lobe [of the brain] gives rise to moving colored lights, geometric forms, stars and lines" (Siegel 1977, 139). Temporal lobe stimulation would thus afford a plausible explanation for the kind of images encountered in Tennyson's poetry, and this explanation is highly compatible with modern experiments on states of altered consciousness.

The common complex images reported in trance-state experiments include "memories" of youth and "scenes associated with strong emotional experiences that the subject has undergone." Siegel observes that environmental stimuli may

also influence the content of complex hallucinations, but he found that in isolated conditions - that is, in the absence of sensory stimuli - most of the subject's complex (formed or "iconic") images came from their memory (1977, 136). It is perhaps significant that one of Tennyson's early poems, entitled "Ode to Memory" (R84) seems in many ways to be an invocation to the muse, or the poetic imagination, as well as to Memory, though it must be remembered, of course, that in mythology Mnemosyne (signifying Memory) was the mother of the Muses (Watts 1985, 170). Keats "identifies her with the priestess Moneta in The Fall of Hyperion" (Allott 1972, 418 n.29).

It is also, of course, interesting that the "Ode to Memory" carries the rider: "Addressed to - ". The penultimate "stanza", addressed, as we are told, to Arthur Hallam (R84, headnote and n.119), reads:

My friend, with you to live alone,
Were how much better than to own
A crown, a sceptre, and a throne!

(R84:119-21)

These lines were apparently added to this "very early poem" at a later date (R84, headnote) - and, quite frankly, they seem alien. Why, one wonders, did Tennyson find it necessary to add lines which sound banal, and seem to detract from the cohesiveness of the work as a whole? Possibly he was unaware of the seeming incongruity; for the sonnet "To - [As when with downcast eyes]" (R179) hints at the possibility that Tennyson and Hallam had known each other in some previous existence.

For Tennyson, then, Hallam may have been very much a part of his "passion of the past", and therefore inseparably associated with "memory", be it historical or subliminal.

The "Ode" opens with an invocation to Memory (personified):

Thou who stealest fire,
From the fountains of the past,
To glorify the present; oh, haste,
Visit my low desire!
Strengthen me, enlighten me!

(R84:1-5)

These lines exhibit a stylistic device which I refer to as elemental transference - a characteristic Tennysonian variation on the concept of synaesthesia. That is, one of the four elements (earth, air, fire, water) is associated with, or described in terms of, another. Here, in "Ode to Memory", the element of fire (line 1) is supposedly - and paradoxically, or magically - extracted from the element of water ("fountains" - line 2). This example recalls quotations from Shelley's Adonais: "the fire for which all thirst" (line 48), and the "burning fountain" (line 339). Donald Reiman and Sharon B. Powers point out that the "concept of spirit as a fiery emanation flowing from the divine fire appears in the writings of the neo-platonic philosopher Plotinus (Enneads, IV.iii.9-10) and had been widely disseminated in the Platonic tradition" (1977, 401 n.6).²

Renaissance poets also entertain the idea of fusion of elements. Marlowe perhaps implies a metaphorical fusion of fire and water when he writes, in Doctor Faustus, of the

"monarch of the sky / In wanton Arethusa's arms" (xviii.116-17), referring to the reflection of the sun in the waters of the spring Arethusa (Jump 1962, 93 n.116-17). In Sonnets 44 and 45 Shakespeare contrasts the heavy elements, "earth and water" (44:11), with the two lighter elements ("slight air, and purging fire" - 45:1) that represent his "thought" and his "desire" respectively (45:3). These two elements, he tells his beloved, "Are both with thee, wherever I abide" (45:2) (Alexander 1951, 1314-15). Perhaps the most beautiful Shakespearean association of the lighter elements with spirit is to be found in Cleopatra's dying words: "I am fire, and air; my other elements / I give to baser life" (Antony and Cleopatra 5.2.287; Alexander 1951, 1195). This line sums up the belief that men and women were composed of the four elements, the "relative proportions" of which determined character (Ridley 1965, 214). But the line also suggests the transcendent quality of the elements of fire and air.

Examples of elemental association or transfer abound in Tennyson - for instance, "fire fountain" ("Love and Friendship", Ricks, Appendix B, III, 615), "Fountains of flowering fire" (Ricks, Appendix B, III, 620) and "ashy rains" ("The Voyage", R257:43). Perhaps the most beautiful example of implied elemental transposition is to be found in lines from "Tithon", addressed to Aurora, the Goddess of the Dawn:

...thy wild team,
Spreading a rapid glow with loosened manes,
Fly, trampling twilight into flakes of fire.

(R218:35-37; my italics)

Oenone's prophetic statement at the end of the poem that bears her name is also memorable. She says:

...wheresoe'er I am by night and day,
All earth and air seem only burning fire.

(R164:263-64)

Although other elements are sometimes used (e.g., R208:207), the most powerful elemental combination is that of fire and water.

Kenneth Clark points out, in connection with the visual arts, that the image of "fire in the flood" is a most potent one: "Throughout the landscape of fantasy it remains the painter's most powerful weapon, culminating in its glorious but extravagant use by Turner" - for instance, in his dramatic painting, "Fire at Sea" (Clark 1949, 41; plate 86).³ Clark traces the image of fire in the flood back to a literary source, Beowulf, where it occurs in the passage describing Grendel's mere:

'Tis not far from hence
As miles are marked that the mere standeth,
Above which hang rimy bowers;
A wood fast-rooted the water o'er-shadows.
There will, every night, a wonder be seen,
Fire in the flood.

(Beowulf, 1361-1366; qtd. by Clark
1949, 37; my italics).⁴

Clark observes that Turner's artistic vision is "penetrated by a sense of nature's unsubduable, destructive force", and that the painter portrayed "those elements of nature which supported this conviction" - such as "fire in the flood" (1949, 108). The idea of fire in the flood as an

"unsubduable, destructive force" is used by Tennyson metaphorically in the lyric beginning "Life of the Life within my blood" (R206). In this poem Sir Lancelot sings to Queen Guinevere:

Draw nigh me; stay not to be wooed,
It is not glorious to be wise.
Come feed my lip with costly food,
My ear with low replies;

Bathe with me in the fiery flood,
And mingle kisses, tears, and sighs....

(R206:5-10; my italics)

Often the image of fire in the flood is used in ways which seem to suggest the inflaming not of passion but of the poetic imagination. For instance, in "The Voyage", a poem about "the search after the ideal" (R257, headnote), Tennyson writes:

At times the whole sea burned, at times
With wakes of fire we tore the dark....

(R257:51-52; my italics)

There is an obsessive, compulsive - and somewhat magical - ring to the lines, which tend to remind one of Coleridge's The Rime of the Ancient Mariner. The obsessive quality is intensified in the stanzas which follow:

For one fair Vision ever fled
Down the waste waters day and night,
And still we followed where she led,
In hope to gain upon her flight.
Her face was evermore unseen,
And fixt upon the far sea-line;
But each man murmured, 'O my Queen,
I follow till I make thee mine.'

And now we lost her, now she gleamed
Like Fancy....

(R257:57-66)

The italics are mine and serve to highlight the analogy which suggests that this "Vision" has much in common with the "Gleam" which signifies the higher poetic imagination (R431, headnote). And, significantly, the reference to the Vision is preceded, in earlier stanzas, by references to orb or globe forms (lines 7, 22) and a variety of light images - for instance, "sun" (line 17), "pillared light" (line 20), "stars" (line 25) and "moon" (line 29). In other words, in terms of Lewis-Williams' model, the ultimate "fair vision" which would correspond to the complex hallucinations of the third stage of trance is preceded, as in the model, by simple entoptic images - geometric forms and lights which are elaborated or construed into images of the round world (line 7) and various astral bodies (sun, moon and stars). The pattern begins to appear paradigmatic in the poetry, being very closely allied to that discussed earlier in relation to "Ode: O Bosky Brook" (R127). Indeed, a line from that poem is repeated here, in "The Voyage", for the moon is described as "the silver boss / Of her own halo's dusky shield" (R257:31-32).

I said above that the "'fair Vision' would correspond to the complex hallucinations of the third stage of trance experience". My italics serve to emphasize the fact that in this poem the "Vision" remains ultimately mysterious and unattainable. It - or rather, she - is described as "fair" (line 57), yet "Her face was ever more unseen" (line 61), so that one is reminded of Keats's dictum on the imagination: "Heard melodies are sweet, but those unheard / Are sweeter" ("Ode on a Grecian Urn", line 11; Allott 1972, 534). Third-stage

hallucinations are not invariably realized in trance (Lewis-Williams & Dowson 1988, 204), and Tennyson himself acknowledges this when he writes in In Memoriam 93: "I shall not see thee" (line 1).

Although "The Voyage" is not overtly a poem about trance experience, I have suggested that it is built around elements germane to such experience. And possibly line 3 ("...*madly* danced our hearts with joy" - my italics) offers a tenuous link with trance. For in In Memoriam the poet links trance and madness: "Sleep, kinsman thou to death and trance / And madness..." (IM 71:1).

It should also be noted that "The Voyage" has an earlier parallel in Part II of "Youth" (R223), which I analyzed in chapter II (pages 124-36 above). There are in fact several parallels between the two poems, but it will suffice here to compare only one or two passages. Lines 85-88 of "The Voyage" (R257) read:

For blasts would rise and rave and cease,
But whence were those that drove the sail
Across the whirlwind's heart of peace,
And to and through the counter gale?

Concordant lines in "Youth" read:

'Come' and I come, the wind is strong:
.....

A tempest strikes the craggy walls,
.....

Yet am I dizzy in the track,
A light wind wafts me from my feet.

(R223:73, 77, 99-100)

I wish to emphasize the passages in both poems ("Youth" and "The Voyage") which deal with wind and whirlwind, for I shall take up this theme in the final chapter. But at this point I must return to the poem from which I have - purposively - digressed, the "Ode to Memory" (R84).

I have indicated how Tennyson uses the striking device of elemental transposition in the opening lines of the ode to introduce the past - the store-house of riches on which memory draws. The poet implores Memory to strengthen and enlighten him, thereby raising his "low desire" to more sublime heights, for he "faint[s]" in "obscurity" (lines 4-6).

The word "obscurity" operates at a number of levels. It is known from "Ode: O Bosky Brook" that Tennyson regarded "spare light" as the most fertile medium for "awful muse and solemn watchfulness" (R127:111-12). Therefore the word "obscurity" is likely to be partly literal: the poet seeks out a dark or dim situation in which to await the inspiration of memory. But "obscurity" may mean "dullness" as well as "dimness" (OED 1). It may pertain to the "quality or condition of being unknown, inconspicuous, or insignificant" (OED 2). It may suggest a lack of "perspicuity in language" or "uncertainty of meaning" (OED 4). So, at a metaphorical level, the word "obscurity" is highly appropriate in an appeal to Memory personified to inspire a relatively unknown poet to reach new heights of perception, and clarity of expression. For though "memory labours...from the deep / Gold-mines of thought to lift the hidden ore" ("A Dream of Fair Women", R173:273-74) of poetic inspiration, Tennyson was a poet

supremely aware of the limitations of language:

...all words, though culled with choicest art,
 Failing to give the bitter of the sweet,
 Wither beneath the palate, and the heart
 Faints, faded by its heat.

("A Dream of Fair Women", R173:285-88)

In the closing line of the opening section of the "Ode to Memory", memory is associated with the dawn ("Thou dewy dawn of memory" - line 7). This association of dawn and memory was to be a richly productive one for Tennyson in later poems, perhaps most notably in "Tithonus" (R324:50-63).

Section II of the "Ode to Memory" begins:

Come not as thou camest of late,
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight
 On the white day; but robed in softened light
 Of orient state.

(R84:8-11)

Tennyson seems to have used the phrase, "white day", to suggest a day of particular - and metaphorical - clarity. In a letter of March 1835 to James Spedding, he expresses the hope that fortune may perhaps bring him "whiter days" (Lang and Shannon 1982, 130). Seven years later, in July 1842, the poet writes in a letter to Edward Fitzgerald that he has not had "a good day, a perfect white day, for years" (Lang and Shannon 1982, 204). And in Maud he describes such a perfect day as "twelve sweet hours that past in bridal white" (R316:I. 663). In "Ode to Memory" the poet beseeches Memory personified not to cast a pall of "gloom" over the "white day" (R84:9-10), but to visit him clad in the "softened light / Of

orient state" (lines 10-11). The passage is reminiscent of lines 59-61 of "L'Allegro", which read:

Right against the eastern gate,
Where the great sun begins his state,
Robed in flames, and amber light....

(Carey 1971, 135)

In Tennyson's "Ode to Memory", the word "orient" pertains to that "region of the heavens in which the sun and other heavenly bodies rise" (OED A1). But it also carries all the connotations of "precious, excellent, brilliant, lustrous, sparkling" (OED B2). It is an image of ascent, associated with the rising of the sun or other heavenly bodies, as opposed to the image of descent implicit in line 9, where the poet fervently hopes that the "gloom of yesternight" will not again descend on him.

In In Memoriam Tennyson uses imagery of rising in connection with the poetic imagination ("Take wings of fancy, and ascend" - IM 76:1). Of course, as Binswanger has pointed out, in dealing with images of rising and falling, or ascent and descent, "we strike bottom ontologically". For the "same rising and falling is to be found in all religious, mythical, and poetic images of the ascension of the spirit and the earthly weight or pull of the body" (Binswanger 1963, 225). Nevertheless, in the "Ode to Memory" the poet's need to rise above his "low desire" to something more sublime is tacitly underlined (my italics).

My assertion that the poet wishes "to rise above his 'low desire' to something more sublime" is perhaps supported by a

line from "The Poet", which Tennyson published in the same volume as "Ode to Memory" - that is, in Poems, Chiefly Lyrical (1830). For in "The Poet", Tennyson tells how "Heaven flowed upon the soul in many dreams / Of high desire" (R91:31-32; my italics). Tennyson's ideas about the poetic sublime seem to chime with those of Edgar Allan Poe, who - frequently echoing Shelley - writes thus in "The Poetic Principle":

He who shall simply sing with however glowing enthusiasm, or with however vivid a truth of description, of the sights, and sounds, and odours, and colours; and sentiments, which greet him in common with all mankind - he, I say, has yet failed to prove his divine title. There is still a something in the distance which he has been unable to attain. We have still a thirst unquenchable, to allay which he has not shown us the crystal springs. The thirst belongs to the immortality of Man. It is at once a consequence and an indication of his perennial existence. It is the desire of the moth for the star. It is no mere appreciation of the Beauty before us - but a wild effort to reach the Beauty above. Inspired by an ecstatic prescience of the glories beyond the grave, we struggle, by multiform combinations among the things and thoughts of Time, to attain a portion of that Loveliness whose very elements, perhaps, appertain to eternity above.

(Poe [n.d.], 646).

This quest reveals itself in the "Ode to Memory" by time-shifts within the poem. The references move from "past" (R84: 2) to "present" (line 3) to "futuraity" (line 33), and then to "infinity" (line 103). But, of course, Tennyson's habitual tendency to regress to the past is inherent in the title of the poem.

In line 11 of the "Ode to Memory", the phrase "orient state" (my italics) looks back to line 7 ("Thou dewy dawn of memory"). For the word "orient" may also mean "shining like

the dawn" or "bright red" (OED B2b). Here, of course, the light is "softened", so the colour Tennyson probably had in mind was a rosy hue - a shade he frequently uses to describe moments of heightened consciousness.⁵

The description of Memory which follows is rich in the visual images that Lewis-Williams associates with trance states, and which I have postulated have their genesis in Tennyson's epileptic experience: geometric forms ("spheres" - line 40); lights construed as stars (lines 19, 35); and landscapes (lines 50-71, 96-106). The auditory images are primarily of "the waterfall / Which ever sounds and shines" (lines 51-52) and of music (lines 41-42, 77). In lines 41-42 the music is associated with time and, implicitly, with the sound of water ("flowing"): "...the lordly music flowing from / The illimitable years." As I have pointed out, this particular nexus of images is characteristic of Tennyson, and suggestive of TLE.

One wonders whether the "sweet dreams" referred to in line 29 are the "waking dreams" of the trance experience, or not. Ricks's gloss calls them "Day dreams", but the context of the phrase undermines that explication. For the sentence reads, "In sweet dreams softer than unbroken rest / Thou leddest by the hand thine infant Hope", and we know from another poem that "Hope is born of Memory / Nightly in the house of dreams" ("Memory [Ay me!]", R126:22-23; my italics). I would postulate that the gloss, "Day dreams", could be more accurately rendered as "waking dreams".

In sections I and III the invocation is to the "dewy dawn

of memory" (R84:7, 45). But in section IV it is to "Divinest Memory" (line 50) - and the word "Divinest" also supports my earlier statement concerning the poet's "need to rise above his 'low desire' to something more sublime" (p. 249 above; my italics). Furthermore, my earlier assertion that the "Ode to Memory" seems to be an invocation to the Muse or the poetic imagination, as well as to memory per se, finds endorsement in line 80: "Well hast thou done, great artist Memory" (my italics). What follows is a discursive passage on the importance and pervasiveness of early influences on the poetic imagination:

Well hast thou done, great artist Memory,
 In setting round thy first experiment
 With royal frame-work of wrought gold;
 Needs must thou dearly love thy first essay,
 And foremost in thy various gallery
 Place it, where sweetest sunlight falls
 Upon the storied walls;
 For the discovery
 And newness of thine art so pleasèd thee,
 That all which thou hast drawn of fairest
 Or boldest since, but lightly weighs
 With thee unto the love thou bearest
 The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,
 Ever retiring thou dost gaze
 On the prime labour of thine early days....

(lines 80-94).

This passage refers to the kind of relationship between the artist and his work that Ernst Kris writes of in Psychoanalytic Explorations in Art. He says,

The relationship of the artist to his work is complex and subject to many variations. In the typical case the work becomes part of[,] and even more important than[,] the self. Narcissistic cathexis has been shifted from the person of the artist to his work.... If this shift outlasts the process of creation, the work gains a permanent

place in the artist's life; in extreme cases he may find it difficult to part from what he created.

(Kris 1952, 60)

There can be no doubt that in the passage from the "Ode to Memory" quoted above (R84:80-94) Tennyson is expressing his own personal ideas about art. For although he was a poet who deliberately attempted to deny or underplay the autobiographical aspects of his poetry (Louw 1985, 4), he specifically stated that the "Ode to Memory" was based on his personal experience (Memoir I, 402). His poetic assertion that the artist continually reverts to his earlier work - that in later life he is "With youthful fancy reinspired" - is no less than the truth. For as I have argued, and will continue to argue, the clusters of images that are so significant in the early poems become paradigmatic for the poetry as a whole.

Of course, this does not mean that there is no development in Tennyson's use of imagery: there is. But what develops is the poet's technique - his method of using the basic images that constitute the raw materials of his art. In the early poems he is often apt to crowd the canvas, using almost indiscriminately the rich kaleidoscope of images I have attributed to temporal lobe epilepsy. But as the poet grows and matures, he learns to be less prodigal with his imagistic inheritance - and, given Dr Tennyson's epileptic condition, the word "inheritance" has literal as well as metaphorical implications.

The poet learns to use less profligately the images that haunt the entranced mind, so that each individual image comes

to carry a greater weight of meaning. But by and large the critical nexus of images is constant throughout the poetic oeuvre. Benjamin Jowett writes that future generations will read Tennyson "as they read Shakespeare, with an ever-increasing wonder at the depth of his thought, and the fertility of his fancy" (Memoir II, 460). This is indeed the overall impression created by Tennyson's collected works. But analysis of his personal "Palace of Art" reveals that almost every artifact is wrought from the same raw materials. Each of the diverse collection of treasures incorporates the same imagistic jewels. These are already present in "Armageddon", which was probably written when Tennyson was only fifteen (McKay 1988, 25).

"Armageddon" (R3) is a poem long neglected by critics except in so far as they cite it as the source from which the Cambridge prize-poem, "Timbuctoo" was culled (McKay 1988, 25). But Tennyson scholars are increasingly coming to recognize the seminal nature of "Armageddon". Alastair W. Thomson, for instance, devotes a few pages of his opening chapter ("Early Experiments") to "Armageddon", before proceeding to "Timbuctoo" (1986, 4-9). And Herbert F. Tucker, whose study entitled Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism has been hailed by Clyde Ryals as "arguably the best book on Tennyson ever written" (dust-jacket), affords "Armageddon" even more attention. Tucker sees "Armageddon" as a means of resolving Tennyson's "crisis of poetic power...." He sums it up thus:

...the poem plots a movement from discrete, variously impeded experiences of sight and sound, through a successful blending of eye and ear, to a

threshold state in which the poet sees and hears feelingly; finally he crosses this threshold into a condition of deep sensation that is at once private and universal.

(Tucker 1988, 41-42).

Daniel Albright, who recognizes that "Tennyson found himself tantalized by psychic experiences that were nearly inexpressible" - experiences "that resisted mythology and mimesis alike" (1986, 11) - cites "Armageddon" as "Tennyson's first major poem", and notes that it was never published in his lifetime (1986, 15).

"Armageddon" opens with an invocation to the "Spirit of Prophecy",

...whose mighty grasp
 Enfoldeth all things, whose capacious soul
 Can people the illimitable abyss
 Of vast and fathomless futurity
 With all the Giant Figures that shall pace
 The dimness of its stage....

(R3:I.1-6)

Clearly the Spirit of Prophecy is an analogue for the artistic imagination, which can also "people the illimitable abyss...with...Figures...." One is reminded, perhaps, of "[Jacob] Boehme's idea that God creates the world by imagining it" (McFarland 1985, 142 n.). And one recalls that poets

...were properly called divine in the sense of diviners, from divinare, to divine or predict. Their science was called Muse, defined by Homer as the knowledge of good and evil, that is, divination....The Muse must thus have been properly at first the science of divining by auspices....Urania...and the other Muses were held to be the daughters of Jove (for religion gave birth to all the arts of humanity, of which Apollo, held to be principally the god of divination, is the presiding deity), and

they "sing" in the sense in which the Latin verbs camere and cantare mean "foretell".

(Bloom 1973, 60; citing [Giambattista]
Vico [no details given])

Thus in "Armageddon" one is tacitly reminded of the bardic or prophetic function of the poet. As Thomson observes, "The subject of 'Armageddon', in fact, is not the last battle", but the poet's "own visionary power" (1986, 5).

The Spirit of Prophecy is hailed as one

 ...whose subtle ken
Can throng the doubly-darkened firmament
Of Time to come with all its burning stars
At awful intervals.

(R3:I.6-9)

The poet-speaker gives thanks for the "power" of the prophetic spirit which has illuminated the darkness of temporal ignorance and dispersed the cloud that "Barred out the knowledge of the Latter Times" from his "mortal faculties" (I. 12-13). Thus the opening verse paragraph makes it clear that the speaker claims to have undergone some sort of supernatural or paranormal experience. But, as so often in Tennyson, the nature of the experience is ineffable - or so the speaker declares:

 ...to give
Utterance to things inutterable, to paint
In dignity of language suitable
The majesty of what I then beheld,
Were past the power of man. No fabled Muse
Could breathe into my soul such influence
Of her seraphic nature, as to express
Deeds inexpressible by loftiest rhyme.

(I.16-23)

The speaker stands on a vantage point overlooking the valley of Megiddo at sunset:

Eve came down
 Upon the valleys and the sun was setting;
 Never set sun with such portentous glare
 Since he arose on that gay morn, when Earth
 First drunk the light of his prolific ray.

(I.30-34)

The artistic possibilities adhering in the temporal images of sunrise and sunset need little elucidation. Kenneth Clark has noted how Bellini, for instance, "used sunset and sunrise to heighten the mood of his pictures" (Clark 1949, 41); and in the literary sphere one need look no further than Coleridge's masterful manipulation of the image of the sun (lines 25-30; 97-98; 111-14; 199) in The Rime of the Ancient Mariner, a poem which may well have influenced "Armageddon". In Tennyson's poem, man's descent into sin seems to be reflected in the changing image of the sun, which, in the "gay morn" of the world, once nourished the young Earth with "the light of his prolific ray" (I.33-34), but which now sets with "portentous glare" (I.32).

The speaker, still personifying the sun, continues:

Strange figures thickly thronged his burning orb,
 Spirits of discord seemed to weave across
 His fiery disk a web of bloody haze,
 Through whose reticulations struggled forth
 His ineffectual, intercepted beams,
 Curtaining in one dark terrific pall
 Of dun-red light heaven's azure and earth's green.

(I.35-41)

Perhaps it is not too fanciful to feel that the battle between

the forces of good and evil is foreshadowed in the allegorical way in which the sun's rays ("beams" - I.39) are almost extinguished by a "dark...pall" (I.40).

Albright detects, in the opening verse paragraphs of "Armageddon", "a pastiche of many favorite sublimities - Milton's seraphs, Shelley's apocalyptic volcanoes, perhaps Coleridge's iridescent fleeting horrors...." But lines 36-41, quoted above, are, according to Albright, quintessentially Tennysonian. "Where", Albright asks, "could Tennyson have got this image?" The critic continues:

I cannot think of any effect of cloud or atmosphere that seems to cast a web over the disk of the sinking sun; nor can I remember any similar passage in literature. But I have noticed that, when an ophthalmologist shines his intolerable light into my eye, my visual field suffuses with bloodred; and I seem to see a network of veins projected over the walls of his office. What Tennyson seems to be describing in this passage is a complicated intraoptical response; the poet claims to be talking about the sun, but he is really talking about his own eye. [Edmund] Burke said that one physiological cause of sublime feeling was the mounting vibration of nerves in the eye when a huge object was beheld, a vibration that approaches the level of pain (Philosophical Enquiry [into the Sublime and the Beautiful], 4 - 9); and it seems as if Tennyson wished to explore sublimity in its quickest state. We are near the ultimate in narcissism: an eye staring into an eye.

(Albright 1986, 15).

Pursuing his theory Albright postulates: "In 'Armageddon' the adolescent Tennyson holds a mirror a half-inch from his eyes and describes what he sees; his eyeball is dazzled, pummeled, knuckled, coerced into an interesting simulation of a landscape" (1986, 16). The Tennyson family were undoubtedly a strange brood, but Alfred Tennyson was not quite as strange,

I think, as Albright implies. As is known from William Allingham's diary, Tennyson frequently "saw" awe-inspiring landscapes during "waking dreams" (page 172 above). It would not have been necessary to have his eyeball "dazzled, pummeled, knuckled, coerced into an interesting simulation of a landscape." However, Albright comes close to understanding the processes involved. For he realizes that optic phenomena are at the centre of the "visionary" experiences related. But perhaps I should say "entoptic phenomena", rather than "optic phenomena", since I refer to the form constants which Siegel and Lewis-Williams and Dowson assert are characteristic of the first stage of trance experience (Siegel 1977, 132; Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1989, 60).

It will be remembered that the entoptic phenomena associated with the first stage of "trance" states include "visual percepts that take the form of dots, zigzags, grids, nested catenary curves, boat-shapes and so on" (Lewis-Williams 1989, 50). It must be noted that the "burning orb" (R3:35) and the "fiery disk" (line 37) in "Armageddon" are variations on the imagery of circles or orbs which I have associated with epileptic aura. These images also find a place in Lewis-Williams and Dowson's model depicting the entoptic phenomena associated with altered states of consciousness (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 206-07, fig. 1, A III - see Appendix D). Furthermore, the reticulated "web of bloody haze" (lines 37-38; my italics) which appears to be woven across the "fiery disk" of the sun is compatible with the "net" or "grid" or "lattice" which is also listed as one of the "commonest" of

entoptic forms (Lewis-Williams 1986, 175; Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 203). Through a principle of "integration", images may be blended and built up into complex patterns (Siegel 1977, 134; Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 203). One subject in an altered-state experiment, "looking at a small branch, said, 'The leaves...suddenly appeared in an ornamental pattern as if joined in a circular design having the form of approximately a cobweb" (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 211; my italics). I believe the strange "web" over the sun in "Armageddon" is explicable in the same way.

However, it will obviously be necessary to test my hypothesis. If the "web" (or net, or grid, or lattice) in "Armageddon" does indeed represent one of the simple visual hallucinations of epileptic experience (or "trance experience", to use a more neutral term), one would expect to find this image recurring in significant poems - as does the imagery of orbs, circles and arcs. And related images are indeed encountered in some significant poems. In "The Mystic" we are told that

...he in the centre fixt,
Saw far on each side through the grated gates
Most pale and clear and lovely distances.

(R96:33-35; my italics)

The "grated gates" may well be analogous to the lattice pattern that is perceived in the opening stage of trance experience. Siegel and Jarvik list "Lattices" and "gratings" as form constants in hallucinations (1975, 113).

Similarly, in "The Ring", a poem very much concerned with

paranormal experience, the following lines occur:

...while her lips
Were warm upon my cheek, an icy breath,
As from the grating of a sepulchre,
Past over both.

(R422:364-67; my italics)

Here the image is primarily a thermal one, but the integration of the visual image of a grating may be significant.

However, the most interesting example of all is to be found in In Memoriam 70 - the elegy which begins:

I cannot see the features right,
When on the gloom I strive to paint
The face I know; the hues are faint
And mix with hollow masks of night....

(lines 1 - 4).

The poet goes on to record what may be a subjective paranormal experience:

...all at once beyond the will
I hear a wizard music roll,
And thro' a lattice on the soul
Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

(lines 13 - 16)

I said this may be a subjective paranormal experience, because other possibilities certainly exist:

Perceptual disorders occur in all forms of psychotic disturbance, in disturbed states of consciousness and in normal individuals. During that phase which intervenes between the waking state and sleep many people are particularly vulnerable to experiencing illusions and hallucinations. The hallucinations on falling asleep are termed hypnogogic, and those on awakening hypnopompic. In the grief which follows bereavement, hallucinations and pseudohallucinations of the lost one are a common and normal phenomena [sic].

(Hill et al 1979, 35)

Nevertheless lines 13-16 of In Memoriam 70 are puzzling. Why, one wonders, should the poet have introduced such a strange detail: why should the vision, or apparition, look "thro' a lattice" (line 15; my italics)? I have come to believe that the poet was recording an actual experience - an experience in which he "sees" the hallucinated face of Hallam with a grid or lattice superimposed on the main image. Such superimpositioning or "superpositioning" is one of the ways in which the visual images of trance may appear together. It has been observed that "One entoptic form may be projected against another" (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 203). In the case of In Memoriam 70, the entoptic lattice of the first stage of the trance experience is as it were superimposed on the formed, "iconic" hallucination of the third stage - that is, on the hallucinated "fair face" of the dead Hallam.

This kind of third-stage trance experience is lucidly and articulately described by Lewis-Williams and Dowson. They write:

The iconic images appear to derive from memory and are often associated with powerful emotional experiences (Siegel and Jarvik 1975:111; Siegel 1977:136). This shift to iconic imagery is also accompanied by an increase in vividness. Subjects stop using similes to describe their experiences and assert that the images are indeed what they appear to be. They "lose insight into the differences between literal and analogous meanings" (Siegel and Jarvik 1975:128). Nevertheless, even in this essentially iconic stage, entoptic phenomena [such as the grid or lattice] may persist....

(Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 204)

My theory, then, is that the possibly subjective paranormal experience in which Tennyson "sees" the face of his

dead friend looking at him through a "lattice on the soul" is explicable in terms of "altered state" phenomena such as might be experienced in, inter alia, temporal lobe epilepsy. And I have advanced some evidence from scientific studies of altered states of consciousness to support my hypothesis. Having said this, however, I must point out that McKay has suggested that Tennyson may have been remembering a passage from The Song of Solomon (2.9): "My beloved...looketh forth at the windows shewing himself through the lattice" (McKay 1988, 217). And the suggestion is not without merit. But that merit does not invalidate my theory. Poetic composition is a complex process - a process in which both personal experience and the influence of literary precursors have a part to play, as Charles Peake seems to acknowledge when, in writing of Collins' "Ode to Evening", he says that "for Collins the direct experience and the literary experience...seem to have been almost inseparable" (Peake 1967, 122). More recently, McFarland has written that Harold Bloom

...often speaks as though poems were generated solely from other poems, rather than from personal, monadic experience. On the contrary, though it may have been the reading of earlier poems that made Wordsworth write verses, it was his personal experience of the orange sky of evening that made him a great poet....Monadic experience, even more than the influence of strong precursors, generates the content of great poetry.

(McFarland 1985, 58).

Certainly my hypothesis that the "vision" of Arthur Hallam described in In Memoriam 70 has its genesis in temporal lobe epileptic trance is endorsed by the fact that the visual

hallucination is accompanied by an auditory hallucination - a "roll" of "wizard music" (line 14). I have indicated elsewhere that the complex auditory hallucinations of TLE may take the form of music (page 121 above). I have also indicated that the simple auditory hallucinations which seem to be a part of Tennyson's epileptic aura include a roaring sound like thunder (pages 122-24 above). The word "roll" is a strange word to describe music - though Tennyson does use it in connection with organ music ("Ode On the Death of the Duke of Wellington", R309:60) - but it is commonly used in descriptions of thunder. It may be that the poet has conflated the simple and the complex auditory components of his experience in the same way that he has conflated the first- and third-stage visual phenomena of the trance experience - that is, the images of the lattice and the face. The "wizard music" that "roll[s]" in In Memoriam 70 seems, then, to be of the same order as the "melodious thunder" in The Princess (R286:II.452), in "The Poet's Mind" (R92:27), and in "Semele" (R220:10).

It must be pointed out, of course, that an intimate knowledge of trance phenomena is not necessary for an appreciation of In Memoriam 70. Albright, for instance, shows psychological insight when he writes of "the alternation of obsessiveness and evasiveness with which the image of the dead exasperates us; when we would forget, it will not let us go, when we would remember, it slips away from us, as Tennyson dramatizes in In Memoriam 70".⁶ Albright goes on to say that section 70 represents "a remarkable depiction of the dejected

imagination, hunting through a repertory of possible vaguenesses that refuse to focus themselves properly, until the desired face simply, effortlessly, involuntarily, appears" (1985, 109). My explication has the advantage of explaining not only how and why the image of the face finally appears, but also why Tennyson uses, in concert, such apparently unrelated images as the "wizard music" and the "lattice".

The image of the web, which, as I have indicated, is related to the imagery of grids, gratings and lattices, is also encountered, in In Memoriam 3:

A web is wov'n across the sky;
From out waste places comes a cry,
And murmurs from the dying sun....

(lines 6 - 8)

Once again, auditory hallucinations seem to be a concomitant of the image of the web. But here the auditory and visual images combine to create an atmosphere of desolation.

In "Armageddon" the web also contributes to the atmospheric build-up within the poem. For the web acts as a curtain or pall of "dun-red light" which threatens to overwhelm all that is pure and wholesome ("heaven's azure and earth's green" - R3:I.40-41). The thick and unwholesome atmosphere is further developed in the description of how the birds and the beasts flee in terror (I.42-43) while "fitful gusts / Of violent tempest" shake the "scanty palm" (I.43-44). The poem continues:

...in the red and murky Even light,
Black, formless, unclean things came flitting by;
Some seemed of bestial similitude

And some half human, yet so horrible,
 So shadowy, indistinct and undefined,
 It were a mockery to call them aught
 Save unrealities, which took the form
 And fashioning of such ill-omened things
 That it were sin almost to look on them.

(I.46-54)

Ricks sees the reference to "one dark...pall / Of dun-red light" (I.40-41) as an allusion to Macbeth I.5.49-50: "Come, thick night, / And pall thee in the dunnest smoke of hell" (R3:n.i 40-1). Inevitably the word "murky" (R3:I.46) also recalls Macbeth ("Hell is murky" - V.1.34; Alexander 1951, 1022). The two allusions tend to reinforce each other, so that a sense of evil almost as palpable as that in Macbeth develops. The "Black, formless, unclean things", some of which seem "bestial" and some "half human" (I.47-49), may well be the product of Gothic fantasy; but it should also be noted that it has been found in the course of trance experiments that "two iconic images, human and animal", may be integrated into "a single therianthrope figure. Hallucinations integrating human beings with animals are fairly common" (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 212).

The visual description of the strange horrors is followed by its auditory equivalent:

There was a mingling too of such strange sounds
 (Which came at times upon my startled hearing)
 Half wailing and half laughter; such a dissonance
 Of jarring confused voices, part of which
 Seemed hellish and part heavenly, whisperings,
 Low chauntings, strangled screams, and other notes
 Which I may liken unto nothing which
 I ever heard on Earth, but seemed most like
 A mixture of the voice of man and beast...

(I.55-63).

The "dissonance" in line 57 looks back to the word "discord" in line 36, and is emphasized by metric irregularity; for the hexameter (I.57) strikes a jarring note in the blank verse.

The sounds which seemed "most like / A mixture of the voice of man and beast" (I.62-63) parallel the visual image of the "Black, formless, unclean things" (I.47) that seemed "bestial" or "half human" (I.48-49). The ghoulish cacophony ("Low chauntings, strangled screams" and other unearthly "notes" - I.60) may represent a Gothic embellishment of the "strange sounds" (I.55) and "voices" (I.58) that I have elsewhere postulated were part of Tennyson's epileptic attack (pages 121-22 above) - the kind of "ghostly voices" he heard after the death of his brother Charles, for instance (Memoir II, 244; Martin, 1980, 527; Louw 1985, 104 n.83).

An unadopted passage in the Trinity Manuscript certainly reveals a cluster of the images I have explored in connection with TLE. This passage, quoted by Ricks (R3:n.i 63), was to have followed line 63 of the first section of "Armageddon". It reads:

A mixture of the tones of man and beast
 And bird and reptile blended to one voice;
 Then these would cease and all at once would rise
 One deep, loud hiss as from the thirsty throats
 Of many dragons in the stainless Noon,
 Or such a thrilling roar as might awake
 If one great stream of molten flame and one
 Equal of the opposèd Element
 Prone gushing down the adverse battlements
 Of two walled cliffs which o'er a narrow vale
 Blot out each other's sun should clash mid-way
 With horrible confliktion and the spume
 Of yeasty conflux and the cloudy steam
 Of throbbing waves along the hollow pass.
 Then high and holy harpings sounded through
 The firmament and voices like the voice
Of many torrents singing praise to God.

The emphasis is mine. It highlights not only the auditory images of voices, roaring water or "torrents", and music ("harpings"), but also the visual image of "cliffs" - which seem to have been a feature of the hallucinated landscapes that, according to Allingham's diary, Tennyson "saw" in "waking dreams". And the image of "throbbing waves" is another example of the images of pulsation, or expansion and contraction, which I have explored in terms of temporal lobe discharge. However, I must point out, once again, that the influence of literary precursors must be borne in mind. For instance, the reference to "the voice / Of many torrents", above, may echo Wordsworth's reference to "the voice of mountain torrents" in The Prelude (V.383-84).

I believe Tennyson did well, in writing "Armageddon", to omit the lines quoted above: the poem is more effective without them. For "Armageddon" is one of the poems in which Tennyson is in danger of overcrowding his canvas - a predictable and understandable error in so very young a poet.

In the poem as printed by Ricks, the speaker notes that the silence which follows the unearthly noises is even more "appalling" (I.66) than the noises themselves. He continues:

Nor did the glittering of white wings escape
My notice far within the East, which caught
Ruddy reflection from the ensanguined West....

(I.71-73)

The "glittering of white wings" looks forward to the "rustling of white wings" which heralds the appearance of the "young seraph" in Section II. The "white wings" are an important

recurring image in Tennyson's poetry - one to which I shall shortly return.

However, at this point I must draw attention to the description of the ascending moon which

...rose...first like a beacon-flame
 Seen on the far horizon's utmost verge,
 Or red eruption from the fissured cone
 Of Cotopaxi's cloud-capt altitude;
 Then with dilated orb and marked with lines
 Of mazy red athwart her shadowy face,
 Sickly, as though her secret eyes beheld
 Witchcraft's abominations, and the spells
 Of sorcerers, what time they summon up
 From out the stilly chambers of the earth
 Obscene, inutterable phantasies.

(I.97-107)

The "almost palpable" sense of evil depends on a combination of natural cataclysm ("the red eruption" of Cotopaxi - I.99-100) and apparently preternatural "phantasies" associated with witchcraft and the "spells of sorcerers" (I.104-05). Here is the dark side of the "magic" that may act as a metaphor for artistic creation (Louw 1985, 195-99).

Paden alleges that the poet's source for the description of Cotopaxi's eruption was Ulloa's Voyage to South America, a copy of which is in the collection housed at the Tennyson Research Centre, Lincoln. Paden appends the following description to a plate from the 1772 edition:

'In the foreground rises Cotopaxi,' in eruption. While the sun rises, a man looks west to see his own image, reflected from invisible Andean vapors; the apparition is surrounded by three concentric rainbows and a white outer arch. Behind the man stand a temporary shelter made from three tree-trunks and some leafy boughs, and a field tent.... There can be little doubt that [Tennyson] remembered the collocation of Cotopaxi, the lurid sun, the

enhaloed vision and the tents when he came to write Armageddon. In that poem the eery and oppressive atmosphere of the days preceding a volcanic eruption has become a symbol of the Day of Doom.'

(Paden 1942, 58; qtd. by Ricks - R3,
headnote)

The atmosphere created by Tennyson in "Armageddon" is indeed very similar to that evoked by the picture of volcanic eruption in Ulloa's Voyage to South America (as described by Paden). So Paden's argument is convincing. It ought also to be noted, however, that a very similar "scene" has been described by an hallucinating subject in altered states of consciousness experiements. A partial transcript of the subject's remarks reads:

There are lines going from top to bottom, kind of a grid, but the lines squiggle around. There's odd shapes, but still lots of right angles in them. Seems really bright.... There's like an explosion, yellow in the middle, like a volcano gushing out lava, yellow, glowing. There's a black square with yellow light coming behind it. There's a regular pattern superimposed on everything, lots of curlicues, with dots in the middle....

(Siegel 1977, 139)⁸

In attempting to trace the workings of the Tennysonian imagination, one is repeatedly made aware of the link between body and mind, of the conflation of neurological and literary or pictorial influences. It may be that the impression made on Tennyson by the picture of volcanic eruption in The Voyage to South America was at least partially due to the fact that it seemed to have so much in common with the phenomena he "knew" from his trance experiences - the phenomena I ascribe to temporal lobe epilepsy. For the heavy and oppressive

atmosphere that prevails in the opening section of "Armageddon" may parallel that of the ("prodromal") period preceding an epileptic attack (Rice 1985, 289), as well as that preceding a volcanic eruption. A prodromal period, which may last for hours or even days, and is "probably commoner in temporal lobe epilepsy than [in] other forms", may be characterized by such psychological manifestations as growing irritability, sullenness, apathy, apprehension or mental dullness (Lishman 1978, 311). In The Idiot, Dostoevsky "outlines a succinct model of epilepsy which conforms generally to the medicine of his day and ours, and to his own case as we know he then perceived it". And he depicts "premonitory [or prodromal] moods" as "depressive and foreboding" (Rice 1985, 44). Those two epithets are certainly applicable to the first section of "Armageddon".

The above transcript of the experiences of an hallucinating subject also records "Lots of little paisley things that fill up the spaces between the patterns of triangles, squares or crown-shaped things. And there's a little white star that floats around the picture and sometimes goes behind what's on the screen and illuminates from behind" (Siegel 1977, 132). This passage has much in common with lines 115-18 (of Part I) of "Armageddon", lines which deal with "crosses, fiery streaks, and wandering lines" which appear on the moon's surface, and with "a star or two" which "Peered through the thick and smoky atmosphere."

The scene gives rise to a feeling of "Deep fear / And trembling" (I.125-26) in the poet-speaker as he becomes aware

of the "silver tents" (I.127), and the "dark pavilions" (I.136) of the forces of good and evil respectively. Fear, as I have noted elsewhere, is the most common emotion associated with epileptic attacks (Williams 1956, 39-46).

Suddenly, however, the mood changes. Section II begins:

A rustling of white wings! The bright descent
 Of a young seraph! and he stood beside me
 In the wide foldings of his argent robes
 There on the ridge, and looked into my face
 With his inutterable shining eyes,
 So that with hasty motion I did veil
 My vision with both hands, and saw before me
 Such coloured spots as dance athwart the eyes
 Of those that gaze upon the noonday sun.

(R3:II.1-9)

It is unnecessary to comment further on the entoptic phenomena of "coloured spots" that "dance athwart the eyes" (II.8). But the image of "white wings", first introduced in section I (line 71), and now used to herald the appearance of the seraph, deserves closer attention.

Angels are traditionally thought of as winged (e.g., Ezekiel 10.5), and are often so depicted, both in the visual arts and in literature. In Paradise Lost, for instance, Raphael is a "seraph winged" (V.277; Fowler 1971, 273), and Milton's angel has, of course, become something of a literary paradigm.

In the Bible, the Holy Spirit sometimes takes the form of a dove (St Mark 1.10; St. John 1.32); and in art and literature the soul of man is also often depicted as winged. One encounters this metaphor even in modern writing. For example, Patrick Leigh Fermor, in Mani: Travels in the

Southern Peloponnese, tells of how, in "the remote mountains of Greece", invalids seem to "waste away", waiting for death. "The bright day is done and they are for the dark, and when the soul flutters away at last no one knows whither it is flying and a shrill and heartrending wail of bereavement goes up" (1984, 55; my italics). Tennyson says specifically, in "The Dead Prophet", "souls have wings" (R400:12); And many years earlier he had used the same metaphor to suggest man's spiritual aspirations:

'Here sits he shaping wings to fly:
His heart forebodes a mystery:
He names the name Eternity.[']

(R209:289-91)

Indeed, birds on the wing have become symbolic of spiritual aspiration and transcendence, and have also become associated with the poetic imagination. One thinks for instance of Shelley's lovely poem, "To a Skylark", in which the lark is addressed as "Sprite or Bird" (line 61):

Hail to thee, blithe Spirit!
Bird thou never wert,
That from Heaven, or near it,
Pourest thy full heart,
In profuse strains of unpremeditated art.

Higher still and higher
From the earth thou springest
Like a cloud of fire;
The blue deep thou wingest,
And singing still dost soar, and soaring ever
singingest.

(lines 1-10; Hutchinson 1970, 602)

Various forms of the image of wings, especially white wings, are to be found in Tennyson's poetry. There are, for

instance, references in "On Sublimity" (R26) to the "solemn rustling of cherubic wings" (line 25) and to "flashing pinions" (line 46). In the laureate poem, "Ode Sung at the Opening of the International Exhibition", Tennyson writes:

O ye, the wise who think, the wise who reign,
From growing commerce loose her latest chain,
And let the fair white-winged peacemaker fly
To happy havens under all the sky....

(R329:32-35)

In Part I of "Youth" a reference to white wings is implicit in the reference to "the first white butterflies" (R223:11). And in a charming short poem called "The Baby Boy" which was apparently "one of the (unadopted) songs to be added to The Princess" (R293, headnote), we find the collocation of "silver bells", "stars", the colour "white", and a "moth" with "silver wings" (R293:10, 13, 9, 7, 11). In In Memoriam 12 the image of "wings" is associated with one of pulsation:

Lo, as a dove when up she springs
To bear thro' Heaven a tale of woe,
Some dolorous message knit below
The wild pulsation of her wings;

Like her I go....

(lines 1-5)

In the next section of the elegy the imagination is depicted, not unusually, as having wings: "My fancies...rise on wing" (IM 13:17).

Often - as in "Armageddon" (R3) - the image of "white wings" is found in passages redolent of paranormal experience. One example which might be cited with impunity is "Sir

Galahad", a poem about the pure knight's quest for the Holy Grail. Stanzas 3, 4 and 7 read:

When down the stormy crescent goes,
 A light before me swims,
 Between dark stems the forest glows,
 I hear a noise of hymns:
 Then by some secret shrine I ride;
 I hear a voice but none are there;
 The stalls are void, the doors are wide,
 The tapers burning fair.
 Fair gleams the snowy altar-cloth,
 The silver vessels sparkle clean,
 The shrill bell rings, the censer swings,
 And solemn chaunts resound between.

Sometimes on lonely mountain-meres
 I find a magic bark;
 I leap on board: no helmsman steers:
 I float till all is dark.
 A gentle sound, an awful light!
 Three angels bear the holy Grail:
 With folded feet, in stoles of white,
 On sleeping wings they sail.
 Ah, blessed vision! blood of God!
 My spirit beats her mortal bars,
 As down dark tides the glory slides,
 And star-like mingles with the stars.

.....

The clouds are broken in the sky,
 And through the mountain-walls
 A rolling organ-harmony
 Swells up, and shakes and falls.
 Then move the trees, the copses nod,
Wings flutter, voices hover clear:
 'O just and faithful knight of God!
 Ride on! the prize is near.'
 So pass I hostel, hall, and grange;
 By bridge and ford, by park and pale,
 All-armed I ride, whate'er betide,
 Until I find the holy Grail.

(R234:25-48, 73-84).

My italics emphasize the references to wings and the colour white. But I have quoted extensively from the poem to highlight the mystical or paranormal context of the experience in which the image of the wings occurs. The stormy "crescent"

moon (line 25) is an example of the construed arc imagery I have stressed elsewhere; and the numinous effect created in the passage depends heavily on images of light (lines 26, 32, 41), mysterious music (lines 28, 75-76), and disembodied voices (lines 30, 78). The ribbed or barred flicker-effect which may act as a precipitator of epileptic attacks is inherent in line 27 ("Between dark stems the forest glows"). The colour silver and the sound of a bell - both associated, as I have endeavoured to show, with Tennyson's epileptic aura - are to be found in lines 34 and 35. And the effect created by line 46 ("My spirit beats her mortal bars" - my italics) has much in common with the image of pulsation which is a frequent feature in poems that appear to be of epileptic origin - or that use images retained in the memory from epileptic experience. In "Sir Galahad" (R234), as in "Armageddon" (R3), the image of "white wings" seems to be associated with the subjective paranormal experiences which I feel derive from Tennyson's epileptic "trances".

The image of white wings is also subsumed or embedded in "A Fragment of the Lover's Tale" (Heath MS. folios 66-67) - in a beautiful line on the "waving snows of seagull plumes". Again, the image forms part of a nexus which I have associated with epileptic experience. I shall quote fairly extensively from the "fragment" in order to foreground some of the relevant images. Accordingly, in the lines that follow, the emphasis is mine:

O Love, O Hope,
My soul, that holds the light of other times,
Begins to brighten at the skirts. They come,

Moved from the cloud of unforgotten things
 That sometimes on the horizon of the mind
 Lie folded, often sweeps athwart in storm
Flash upon flash they lighten thro' my brain,
 The days, the pleasant days, - the moonlit nights,
 Those revelations of the eventide,
 When air and ocean filled one hollow globe
 With wild red light, that touched on amber streams,
 The waving snaws of seagull plumes - what times
 O'er long-loved waters, like a sinking star,
 Mixed with the gorgeous West the lighthouse shone.

.....
 When thou and I, Cadrilla, thou & I
 Were moored by some low cavern, while without
 Through the long dark, with various voices poured
 From the horizon gathering half the deep,
The roaring ridges into cataracts
Clashed, calling to each other

.....
 Here too my love
 Wavered[?] at anchor with me when day hung
 From his mid-dome in Heaven's windy halls.
Gleams of the water circles as they broke
Flickered like doubtful smiles about her lips.⁹

I am arguing that the image of white wings which is sometimes embedded in passages rich in what I have termed "epileptic" images may itself have its genesis in epileptic experience. An entry in the manuscript of Materials for a Life of A.T. records the fact that during Tennyson's last illness it became necessary for the doctor to reduce the quinine with which the poet was being dosed because the patient was seeing "white wings" (MS. Mats. VIII, 112). This entry would seem to suggest that the "white wings" were caused by high doses of quinine, which is an anti-malarial drug. Tennyson obviously did not suffer from malaria. The quinine was presumably being used for its "anti-pyretic and analgesic properties" (Martindale 1958, 1144). The "repeated administration of quinine in full therapeutic doses may give rise to a train of symptoms known as cinchonism, characterised

by tinnitus, headache, nausea, abdominal pain, skin rashes, disturbed vision and amaurosis" (Martindale 1958, 1143). Presumably Tennyson's doctors thought that the "white wings" he was seeing might have been a phenomenon associated with the "disturbed vision" which can result from quinine toxicity. But "white wings" were a recurring feature in Tennyson's poetry through the years; and in his last illness they may have been of pathological rather than toxicological significance. Lewis-Williams reproduces rock drawings of animal-like figures which have "'wings' or arms with pendant attachments which have been thought to represent feathers" (Appendix E), and he notes that "flight is a San metaphor for trance experience" (1986, 176).¹⁰ A later paper by Lewis-Williams is also worth noting. In "Reality and Non-reality in San Rock Art", he points out that the nested catenary curves that are a "common entoptic form" were sometimes "construed by the San painters...as beehives", possibly because in the wild "honey-combs naturally assume the form of nested catenary curves." Some of these drawings "also have bees individually and minutely drawn, each with a pair of white wings" (1988, 11; my italics).

More recently, "birds" and "airplanes" featured in the "drug-induced imagery" reported by some of Siegel's subjects "at the peak of the hallucinatory experience" (1977, 136). While this data does not, of course, "prove" my suggestion that the apperception of white wings may have been a feature of Tennyson's altered-state experience, it may lend that theory some credence. So, too, may Tennyson's linking of

"trance" and "wings" in an alternative draft of The Lover's Tale. The following lines are printed by Ricks in his Appendix A:

O dolorous trance,
Thick mist wherein the fiery soul of Hope
After her death with flagging wings forlorn,
.....
Wandered ever....

(Ricks 1987, III, 582)

Further reinforcement for my theory may be deemed to come from a line which, according to Ricks, precedes the exclamation, "a rustling of white wings!" in the Trinity Manuscript of "Armageddon". It reads: "A curve of brightening, flashing, ebbing light!" (R3:n.ii 1). A variant of this line is adopted in "Timbuctoo" (R67). Lines 62-64 of that poem read:

A curve of whitening, flashing, ebbing light!
A rustling of white wings! the bright descent
Of a young Seraph!

The passage thus encapsulates examples of the entoptic "curve", "flashing light", "ebbing" or throbbing, and "white wings", which I have postulated are epileptic phenomena. The "young Seraph" may represent a true iconic hallucination. For Slater and Roth's observation on temporal lobe hallucinations may well be applicable in the case of "Armageddon": "Whole scenes, e.g. [sic] of an apocalyptic nature, may be enacted before the patient's eyes" (1969, 465). And the fact that Tennyson's "winged seraph" may partially represent a literary memory (of Milton's Raphael) need not militate against my

theory, for it has been pointed out that "iconic images" frequently "derive from memory" (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 204). "Sometimes very little manipulation of an image is required to give it an iconic referent, but in more complex construals the entoptic raw material may be swamped by iconic elaborations" (Lewis-Williams and Dowson 1988, 210).¹¹

Just as Moses, after communing with God on the mountain was obliged to veil his face because the Israelites could not look upon its intolerable brightness (Exodus 34.35), so in "Armageddon" the poet-speaker must "veil" his "vision" when God's argent-robed emissary looks upon him with "inutterable shining eyes" (R3:II.5-7). For, as we later learn, the Seraph's face

...was wonderful
With its exceeding brightness, and the light
Of the great Angel Mind which looked from out
The starry glowing of his restless eyes.

(II.17-20)

The angel addresses the poet as "Son of Man" (II.10), and tells him:

"Thy sense is clogged with dull Mortality,
Thy spirit fettered with the bond of clay -
Open thine eyes and see!"

(II.14-16)

What follows is a mystical or "visionary" experience (Albright 1986, 18). The poet-speaker describes it thus:

I felt my soul grow godlike, and my spirit
With supernatural excitation bound
Within me, and my mental eye grew large
With such a vast circumference of thought,

That, in my vanity, I seemed to stand
 Upon the outward verge and bound alone
 Of God's omniscience. Each failing sense,
 As with a momentary flash of light,
 Grew thrillingly distinct and keen.

(II.21-29)

This experience is clearly of the same kind as that related in lines 35-43 of In Memoriam 95, which deals with an apparent heightening of intellectual power. In section 95 of the elegy the poet seems to reach the "empyrean heights of thought" (line 38). In "Armageddon" the speaker seems metaphorically to encompass "such a vast circumference of thought" (R3:II.24) that he feels he approaches "God's omniscience" (II.27). This ecstatic expansion of the spirit was first described by Tennyson in "The Devil and the Lady", a poem in which it is suggested that heaven is not a place but a condition. It is not "local" but rather

The omnipresence of the glorified
 And liberated Spirit - the expansion
 Of man's depressed and fettered faculties
 Into omniscience....

(R2:I.v.21-24)

The circle imagery in "Armageddon", inherent in the phrase "circumference of thought" (II. 24), is multiplied many times in In Memoriam 95, where the poet's spirit is "wound, and whirl'd / About empyreal heights of thought" (lines 37-38, my italics). And the spiritual apperception of In Memoriam 95 ("The living soul was flash'd on mine" - line 36; my italics) has a sensory prototype in "Armageddon":

Each failing sense,
As with a momentary flash of light,
Grew thrillingly distinct and keen.

(R3:II.27-29; my italics)

The speaker continues:

I saw
The smallest grain that dappled the dark Earth,
The indistinctest atom in deep air,
The Moon's white cities, and the opal width
Of her small, glowing lakes, her silver heights
Unvisited with dew of vagrant cloud,
And the unsounded, undescended depth
Of her black hollows. Nay - the hum of men
Or other things talking in unknown tongues,
And notes of busy Life in distant worlds,
Beat, like a far wave, on my anxious ear.

(II:29-39)

This passage on the perception of minute details with an almost superhuman clarity finds a parallel in lines from "The Coming of Arthur" in The Idylls of the King. We are told that Arthur

...saw
The smallest rock far on the faintest hill,
And even in high day the morning star.

(R464:97-99)

In "Armageddon" the all-encompassing nature of the experience which was first described in terms of a "vast circumference" (R3:II.24) is now reflected in the reference to "width" (II.32), "heights" (II.33) and "depth" (II.34). One is reminded of In Memoriam 95, where the poet reaches the "empyrean heights of thought" and feels the "deep pulsation of the world (lines 38, 40; my italics). Similar pulsations are also a part of the visionary experience in "Armageddon", for

angel had addressed the poet-speaker as "Son of Man" (II.10). This term is encountered in both the Old Testament and the New Testament. It is found in The Book of Psalms (8.4), and also in refrain-like fashion in The Book of the Prophet Ezekiel. There God repeatedly addresses Ezekiel as "son of man" when he is about to bestow upon him prophetic revelations (e.g., Ezekiel 2.1,6; 3.1,3,4; 4.1,16; 5.1; 6.1; 7.2; 8.17; 12.2; 13.2; 14.3).

In the New Testament, the title "Son of Man" is generally reserved for Christ, the Son of God (Matthew 8.20; Acts 7.56). It now appears that that title ("Son of Man") adumbrated the climactic lines, quoted above, in which the speaker is filled with the desire to fall down and worship his "own strong soul" (II.50), which has become part of the "parent fire" (II.48).

It should perhaps be noted that the passage on "self-idolatry" (Albright 1986, 18) in "Armageddon" is closely resembled by lines from the 1832 version of The Lover's Tale, which Tennyson decided not to publish (R153, headnote). The speaker in that poem recalls how,

...ceasing from
All contemplation of all forms, [he] did pause
To worship [his] own image, laved in light....

(R153:n.i 54-70, lines [8]-[10])

Remnants of this near-deification of the self are to be found in In Memoriam 55, but in a more generalized form that underlines Tennyson's assertion that in In Memoriam he is speaking not for himself but for the human race:

The wish, that of the living whole
 No life may fail beyond the grave,
 Derives it not from what we have
The likest God within the soul?

(IM 55.1-4; my italics)

However, it is the correspondences between In Memoriam 95 and "Armageddon" that are of most interest. In that climactic "elegy" the intimate commingling of the poet's soul with the "living soul" (lines 35-39) has, once again, much in common with the experience, recorded in "Armageddon", in which the speaker's mind seems to be "Remixed and burning with its parent fire", "a part of the Unchangeable, / A scintillation of Eternal Mind" (R3:II.48, 46-47).

In In Memoriam 95 Tennyson originally wrote, "His [that is, Hallam's] living soul was flash'd on mine" (line 36). But he was later beset by doubts, and changed the phrase to "The living soul" - perchance "The Deity" (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 253). In the context of In Memoriam it seems quite clear that the "living soul" is that of Hallam, yet Tennyson came to doubt that interpretation of his experience. I believe his doubt was founded on the fact that he had had the same kind of experience long before he even knew Hallam: he records it in "Armageddon".

I have postulated that the trance experience at the heart of In Memoriam 95 is a manifestation of temporal lobe epilepsy, and I believe the same interpretation holds good for "Armageddon". As I have said, Slater and Roth point out that, in the "twilight state" hallucinations associated with epilepsy, especially temporal lobe epilepsy, "Whole scenes" -

for example, of an "apocalyptic nature" - "may be enacted before the patient's eyes" (1969, 464-65). They also note a tendency for chronic epileptic patients to turn to religion. In some cases this results in a rather unctuous "religiosity", but the authors acknowledge that "Profounder and more genuine mood states may at times be seen, such as moods of solemn elation or of profound despair. Although these moods may be unaccompanied by any sign of altered consciousness, they are reminiscent of those seen in twilight states" (Slater and Roth 1969, 470). It may be relevant to note a late entry in the manuscript of Materials for a Life. It is one of the entries which Hallam Tennyson says "was written by desire of [his] father's doctors who said that it was important to know not only the state of his physical health, but also something of what was occupying his mind" (MS. Mats. VIII, 99^x). The relevant entry reads:

As he lay on his sofa near the south window he [Tennyson] told us that looking out on the great landscape, he had sometimes wonderful thoughts about God and the Universe and felt as if looking into the other world....

(MS. Mats. VIII, 104)

It must, of course, be stressed that the poet was unwell at the time. However, poems like "Armageddon" and In Memoriam 95 suggest that he had similar thoughts and experiences when well.

The "religious" experience recorded, or elaborated upon, in "Armageddon" is certainly described in terms of images compatible with epileptic experience. Flashing (R3:II.28) and

"glowing" (II:33) lights, the colour "silver" (II.33), noises and strange voices (II.36-37), and a characteristic pulsation or beating are all present (II.39). So, too, are references to things "far-far-away": "distant worlds" (II.38) and "a far wave" (II.39). Furthermore, there is evidence of disturbed spatial and temporal discrimination ("All sense of Time / ...and Place was swallowed up" - II.43-44). Indeed, it is important to notice that it is not only the boundaries of time and place that dissolve: all sense of "Being...was swallowed up and lost / Within a victory of boundless thought" (II.44-45; my italics). This poetic expression closely parallels Tennyson's prose description of the trance state in which "individuality itself seemed to dissolve & [sic] fade away into boundless being" (MS. Mats. III, 64).

In "Armageddon" the emotion aroused in the speaker by the sublime appearance of the angel is the mixture of joy and sorrow ("sweet tears") which I have studied elsewhere in relation to TLE:

Highly and holily the Angel looked.
 Immeasurable Solitude and Awe,
 And solemn Adoration and high Faith,
 Were traced on his imperishable front -
 Then with a mournful and ineffable smile,
 Which but to look on for a moment filled
 My eyes with irresistible sweet tears,
 In accents of majestic melody,
 Like a swollen river's gushings in still night
 Mingled with floating music, thus he spoke.

(II.51-60)

The evocation of the voice of the Angel in terms of music and the roar of water ("a swollen river's gushings") is fully compatible with my hypothesis that "Armageddon" is based on

epileptic experience.

The angel's words which follow seem to testify to the immortality of the soul (III.1-9), which was an ever present concern in Tennyson's mind throughout a long life (C. Tennyson 1954, 80, 92, 108, 124). But what the Seraph foretells is less promising:

[']...a day
 Of darkness riseth... a thick day,
 Palled with dun wreaths of dusky fight, a day
 Of many thunders and confused noise,
 Of bloody grapplings in the interval
 Of the opposed Battle, a great day
 Of wonderful revealings and vast sights
 And inconceivable visions, such as yet
 Have never shone into the heart of Man -
 THE DAY of the Lord God!'

(III.13-22)

The final description of the angel is rich in the kind of imagery associated by Lewis-Williams and Dowson with the three stages of trance experience. For the detailed visual picture of the angel would fall into the category of formed iconic hallucinations which are characteristic of the third stage of trance. But certain elements suggest the construed entoptics of the second stage of trance - for instance, the "beautifully curved" lip (III.26-27), and the "parted locks / Of spiral¹² light" that "fell raylike... / On each white shoulder" (III.24-26; my italics). The second-stage construed entoptics persist into the third stage, and so, too, do certain simple (first stage) entoptics. For, as the angel's "mighty arm / outstretched described half-circles", "small thin flashes / Of intense lustre followed it" (III.33-35; my italics).

In section IV the "vision of the night" is "changed"

(IV.2). The forces of evil - those "Strange shapings, and anomalies of Hell" (IV.12)¹³ - seem, temporarily at least, to be withdrawn. Simultaneously,

All the crimson streaks
And bloody dapplings faded from the disk
Of the immaculate Moon.

(IV.19-21)

However, what is left is not a haven of wholesomeness, but a "grim and ghastly sameness" (IV.24) cast over a "dark and windy waste of Earth" (IV.27). The silence is broken only by "a beating in the atmosphere" (IV.28) that inevitably calls to mind the wings of the seraph. This "beating" is a prime example of the throbbing or pulsation which I have elsewhere explored in connection with Tennyson's trance-like experiences. It is

An indefinable pulsation
Inaudible to outward sense, but felt
Through the deep heart of every living thing,
As if the great soul of the Universe
Heaved with the tumultuous throbbings on the vast
Suspense of some grand issue.

(IV.29-34)

The speaker's experience of this pulsation of "the great soul of the Universe" looks forward to the later "mystical" experience of the "deep pulsations of the world" that measure out "The steps of Time - the shocks of Chance - / The blows of Death" (IM 95:42-43).

I have examined a number of Tennyson's very early poems - principally "Armageddon", "Ode: O Bosky Brook" and the "Ode to

Memory" - in order to show how the same phenomena, described in the same cluster of images, lie at the heart of these poems, though they purport to deal with very different subjects. Thomas Pfau has written, in another context of the romantic "quest for a subject" (Pfau 1987, 488). Tennyson was certainly no stranger to the quest for a subject: he seems perpetually to have been in search of new subjects in which to "body forth" the constant elements of his poetic imagination (A Midsummer Night's Dream 5.1.14; Alexander 1951, 217).

Recently McKay, commenting on "the manner in which lyrical reflection is introduced by Tennyson", has recognized that "the image" is the "key to the process...." He quotes Arthur Hallam, who, in his essay "On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry, and on the Lyrical Poems of Alfred Tennyson", places Tennyson among the Romantic poets:

Other poets seek for images to illustrate their conceptions; these men [the Romantics] had no need to seek; they lived in a world of images, for the most important and extensive portion of their life consisted in those emotions which are immediately conversant with sensation.

(Mottet 1943, 186; qtd. by McKay 1988, 63).

McKay seems to recognize the kind of primacy of the image that I have endeavoured to illustrate, when he writes: "In the best of Tennyson's poetry one finds, not an absence of reflection, but an absence of ideas or thoughts abstractable from the images of which they are an element" (1988, 64).

Tennyson admitted that the "Ode to Memory" (R84) was based on personal experience (Memoir I, 402). We can therefore assume, I think, that the other poems which utilize

the same significantly-recurring materials are also of a much more personal nature than the poet was willing to concede.

I have endeavoured to show that the so-called "mystical" experience that is regarded as the turning point in In Memoriam had a much earlier counterpart in "Armageddon", a poem written long before Tennyson even knew Arthur Hallam. I have also endeavoured to show that the images which carry the weight of mystical and aesthetic meaning in so many of Tennyson's poems are coessential with the "entoptic" and "iconic" hallucinatory images documented in connection with altered states of consciousness - whether narcotically, shamanistically or epileptically induced. And I have asserted that the nexus of images which I have foregrounded - including imagery of arcs, circles, lights, music, voices, the sound of water or bells, and the images of "far-far-away" - recur throughout the poet's work, more concentratedly perhaps in the earlier than in the later poems. Kenneth Clark has observed that "All art involves selection and control" (1949, 124). These two qualities become increasingly apparent as one studies Tennyson's poetry from a chronological point of view. For, as I have said, in youth the poet tended to "load every rift with ore"; but in maturity he showed a greater degree of selectivity, often moving towards symbolism. Consider, for example, the poem written towards the close of Tennyson's life, the poem he wished to stand at the end of every volume of his published poetry, as his final message to his fellow man: "Crossing the Bar" (R462):

Sunset and evening star,
 And one clear call for me!
 And may there be no moaning of the bar,
 When I put out to sea,

But such a tide as moving seems asleep,
 Too full for sound and foam,
 When that which drew from out the boundless deep
 Turns again home.

Twilight and evening bell,
 And after that the dark!
 And may there be no sadness of farewell,
 When I embark;

For though from out our bourne of Time and Place
 The flood may bear me far,
 I hope to see my Pilot face to face
 When I have crost the bar.

Fittingly, for a poem so metaphorically redolent of the death-bed, the lyric is pared down to the essentials of what the poet wishes to communicate in the short time left to him. There are very few epithets. And the syntax is often truncated: the opening "sentences" in stanzas 1 and 3 lack that prime-essential, a verb.

The simple a b a b rhyme-scheme is complemented by an A B A B stanzaic scheme. That is, the first and third stanzas, and the second and fourth stanzas correspond in form. In stanzas 1 and 3 there is a preponderance of three-stressed lines. In stanzas 2 and 4, five-stressed lines alternate with three-stressed lines. There is a resultant suggestion of ebb-and-flow that seems to suggest the idea of pulsation which is so frequent an element in Tennyson's poetry. But the ebb-and-flow is a muted one: stanza 1 seems to swell out gently into stanza 2, which ebbs back into stanza 3, which in turn swells out again into stanza 4. The tide that is imitated here is indeed "such a tide as moving seems asleep, / Too full for

sound and foam" (lines 5 - 6).

Tennyson's final thoughts about death - about that metaphorical journey from this life into the next - are expressed in an abbreviated version of the critical nexus of images I have been exploring in this study: light ("star" - line 1), a disembodied voice ("clear call" - line 2), sounds associated with the movement of water ("moaning of the bar" - line 3), and the sound of a bell (line 9). The imagery of pulsation is, as I have indicated, latent in the reference to a "tide" that is so "full" it scarcely makes a sound: it seems "asleep" (lines 5 - 6). Its apparent sleep - which is not a sleep at all - is analogous to the sleep of death which is not a true sleep but an awakening to a fuller life. I speak, of course, in terms of the essentially spiritual beliefs, or hopes (line 15), held by Tennyson, beliefs such as Shelley utters at a climactic moment in Adonais:

Peace, peace! he is not dead, he doth not sleep -
He hath awakened from the dream of life....

(lines 343-44; Hutchinson 1970, 440)

Tennyson wrote in several poems of the journey of the soul from "out of the deep" back to "that last deep" where all is "still" ("De Profundis", R383:1, 25). In "Crossing the Bar", as elsewhere, the "boundless deep" (R462:7) is symbolic of eternity - which is "home" (line 8). It is also "far" (line 14), so that one thinks almost inevitably of the charm that the words "far-far-away" held for Tennyson throughout his life. It would appear that finally the distant "planet" which had seemed more real to him than his hand or foot (Lang and

Shannon 1982, 174) is about to become a reality as the poet leaves this "bourne of Time and Place" (line 13).

The well-known Shakespearean context of the word "bourne" cannot but give rise to a momentary fear - the fear of the unknown:

Who would these fardels bear,
To grunt and sweat under a weary life,
But that the dread of something after death -
The undiscover'd country, from whose bourn
No traveller returns - puzzles the will,
And makes us rather bear those ills we have
Than fly to others that we know not of?

(Hamlet 3.1.76-82; Alexander
1951, 1047)

But the momentary fear does not negate the greater hope, the hope of seeing "the Pilot" - the guiding spirit - face to face once the final barrier, the metaphorical sand-bar across the harbour, has been crossed.

According to Hallam Tennyson, his father explained that the Pilot was "that Divine and Unseen Who is always guiding us" (R462:n.15). It would appear that the poet is referring to "the Nameless" ("The Ancient Sage", R415:31), for the gloss is very vague. Edna Moore Robinson, while accepting that the description would be applicable to Christ, feels that it is really "too large to have any necessary historical connection", and that it belongs rather to "the dialect of Universal Religion" (1968, 106). This observation would probably have pleased Tennyson, who held that every reader "must find his own interpretation, according to his ability, and according to his sympathy with the poet"; for poetry is "like shot-silk with many glancing colours" (Memoir II, 127).

It may be undesirable to attempt to reduce an image or symbol so rich in connotation to mere equation. Nevertheless, it behoves us to be aware of the possible implications adhering within the image of the Pilot.

Philip Elliott points out that in the preparation of the Memoir Hallam Tennyson deleted a sentence which reads: "'They [Tennyson and Herbert Warren in 1892] spoke together of "Crossing the Bar" and of the absurdity of the "Pilot" being Arthur Hallam or my brother Lionel' (Tennyson and his Friends 1896, II, 508-509)" (Elliott 1978, 27). I think one can certainly rule out Lionel, but Arthur Hallam seems to be a very strong contender for the title. The "Pilot" is, of course, in terms of the extended metaphor on which the poem is built, simply the guide who temporarily takes charge of the ship in order to navigate it safely across the dangerous sand bar at the mouth of the harbour. But although the Pilot is not a Biblical character, religious resonances are set up by the recollection of Milton's reference, in "Lycidas", to St Peter as "the pilot of the Galilean Lake" (line 109; Carey 1971, 247). The phrase "face to face" initially also operates in favour of an overtly religious interpretation; for the phrase is a quotation from St. Paul: "...now we see through a glass darkly; but then face to face" (1 Corinthians 13.12; qtd. by Ricks [R462:n.13-16] and by Louw [1985, 213]). However, when he wrote this poem - and it is important to remember that "it came in a moment" (Memoir II, 367) - Tennyson may, consciously or unconsciously, have been remembering some lines from a poem by Arthur Hallam himself:

...how frail must be my speech,
 Weighted with the thought that in my spirit burns,
 To find no rest until 'tis known by thee,
 Till our souls see each other face to face.

("To Two Sisters" [1], Motter 1943, 90).

The poet may also have been recalling some lines of his own which clearly refer to both Arthur Hallam and the Deity. For in a version of lines 11-12 of In Memoriam 131 in the Harvard Manuscript, the poet looks forward to seeing "those we loved / And that which made us, face to face" (R462:n.13-16). This quotation seems to incorporate most satisfactorily the "duality of meaning" that is operative in the image of the Pilot (Louw 1985, 214).

Perhaps the phrase "duality of meaning" is misleading; for there is no real sense of polarity in the symbol of the Pilot. It exhibits the kind of "unity in diversity" that enriches aesthetic experience (Kris 1952, 262).

The image of Christ and the image of Arthur Hallam were gradually amalgamated in In Memoriam (Ryals 1962, 383-402; Louw 1985, 153-81). But here, in "Crossing the Bar", that fusion is instantaneous. It is perceived not as a psychological process but in the penumbral quality of the symbol itself.

It has been said that a symbol

...is a common thing that bears a huge electrical charge; an object distended with meaning beyond its capacity to hold. Therefore it is possible that a symbol might reconcile the high and the low imaginations, might provide a model for the ideal poetic act in which the celestial and the earthly muses join hands and dance.

(Albright 1986, 54)

Albright feels that often in Tennyson "the symbolic mode fractures into a headache of double vision" (Albright 1986, 54). But I disagree. In a poetry consistently characterized by "two voices", one is indeed aware of a tendency to "double vision". But in Tennyson's central symbols what strikes one is not double vision but anagogical vision. One is aware of levels of meaning which do not negate one another: rather, they reinforce each other. This is especially so in the case of the "Pilot" in "Crossing the Bar". In terms of the poem's underlying metaphor, the Pilot is a nautical guide. But he is also symbolic of the dead friend of whom Tennyson wrote:

I felt and feel, tho' left alone,
His being working in mine own,
The footsteps of his life in mine....

(IM 85:42-44)

To say that "the Pilot" is also the Deity is not a contradiction, but an expansion; for Tennyson believed that "our highest view of God must be more or less anthropomorphic" and that it is on "God and God-like men we build our trust" (Memoir I, 311; qtd. by Louw 1985, 214).¹⁴ "The point is", as Kris has stated in another connection, "that a number of meanings are operative, and not merely conjointly but in interaction with one another" (Kris 1952, 249). In terms of the tripartite framework (psychological, religious and aesthetic) set up within Tennyson's poetic oeuvre, the image of "the Pilot" exhibits the kind of ambiguity which Kris terms "integrative". He writes:

We call an ambiguity integrative when its manifold meanings evoke and support one another.... They interact to produce a complex and shifting pattern; though multiple, the meaning is unified. To speak the language of Gestalt, in disjunctive ambiguity there are several distinct and unconnected fields; additive ambiguity consists in a restructuring of a single field to reveal more or fewer details; in conjunctive ambiguity several fields are connected though remaining distinct; with integrative ambiguity, they are fully reconstituted - integrated, in short, into one complex meaning.

(Kris 1952, 248)

Albright errs when he says "a symbol can be symbolic of only one thing at once" (1986, 58).

I spoke above of the "tripartite framework set up within Tennyson's poetic oeuvre", the three structures within the framework having reference to psychological, religious and aesthetic elements respectively. The psychological element pertinent to the image of the Pilot is the poet's relationship with Arthur Hallam. The religious element is inherent in the apperception of the Pilot as the Deity. And the aesthetic response to the image arises out of the conviction that Tennyson wrote with his "sword bathed in Heaven" (Memoir II, 129). The image of the Pilot encapsulates a sense not only of a guiding force in life, but also of the paradigmatic or parabolic Creator who oversees the work of aesthetic creation.

I have noted how, in so many of the poems dealing with Tennyson's trance experiences, the boundaries of Time and Place seem to dissolve. That dissolution, once intermittent, seems, in "Crossing the Bar", about to become permanent, as the poet anticipates being transported "from out our bourne of Time and Place" (R462:13) into the realm of infinity, eternity

and immortality.

"Crossing the Bar" is one of Tennyson's most moving lyrics, and I have written a fuller account of it elsewhere (Louw 1985, 209-16). The purpose of the brief account offered here has been to highlight the fact that the essential imagistic elements in this late poem (star, bell, voices and visions) are the same as those used in much earlier poems like "Armageddon", "Ode: O Bosky Brook" and the "Ode to Memory". Tennyson's address to the "great artist Memory" on the subject of "first experiment[s]" seems even more appropriate in his old age than it was when he wrote it six decades earlier:

...the discovery
 And newness of thine art so pleased thee,
 That all which thou hast drawn of fairest
 Or boldest since, but lightly weighs
 With thee unto the love thou bearest
 The first-born of thy genius. Artist-like,
 Ever retiring thou dost gaze
 On the prime labour of thine early days....

("Ode to Memory", R84:87-94)

The persistence, in Tennyson's later works, of the cluster of images used so prolifically in early poems certainly attests to his fascination with the "prime labour" of his "early days". John Birtchnell of the Institute of Psychiatry, London, writes:

Each time an artist looks at his creation it permits a release of emotion because of the connection he makes with the idea which prompted him to paint the picture. There is then a degree of circularity operating: the idea causes him to make some external representation of it and in turn the representation of it evokes the original idea.

(1984, 31)

This kind of aesthetic "circularity" was, I believe, reinforced in Tennyson's work by the fact that the original stimuli - the sensory and affective phenomena of TLE - were themselves recurrent.

Tennyson's obsession with "certain images" is recognized by Albright, who sees them as central to the genesis of many of the poet's dramatic monologues. Albright writes:

Introspection yields a bewildering series of related but discontinuous images; out of this welter one improvises on identity. This is how I construct the genesis of many of Tennyson's dramatic monologues: Tennyson was haunted by certain images, consisting of detailed depictions or colored visual fields, images which seemed to him so significant that they were affiliated with his deepest feeling of self; he then tried to construct a narrative and psychological context for these images, a character who might plausibly behold them - that is, Tennyson took his image and imagined an imager.

(1986, 83)

Once again Albright fails to identify the "source" of the images around which Tennyson builds his poems. But he perspicaciously describes the process of invention that forms part of the operation of the poetic imagination. This process of invention approximates to what Freud called "'secondary elaboration'". "Freud (1951) used the term 'secondary elaboration' to describe (predominantly in the dream, but it applies equally to the work of art) the moulding together of the components of the composition, to create a semblance of logic and coherence" (Birtchnell 1984, 35). The process is also in some ways analogous to what is known, in Jungian terms, as "active imagination". And Elie Humbert notes that active imagination can be useful to those "who feel out of

step with life, by giving them the means of putting words to - and thus organizing - their interior world" (Humbert 1984, 28).

The desire to impose some form of order on a chaotic world - be it exterior or interior - is central to the artistic impulse in all ages, and never more obviously so than in the case of "Romantic" poets. Tennyson's need to organize the mental images which "haunted" him (Albright 1986, 83) was all the more urgent because he suspected they might stem from a "blot upon the brain" (R227:69). And when Tennyson's anxieties concerning the "canker of the brain" (IM 92:3) were suddenly and traumatically exacerbated by the death of Arthur Hallam, which brought into sharp focus the tendency to pathological depression (or melancholia) that is so frequent a concomitant of temporal lobe epilepsy, the need to impose some form of order on experience became paramount, if the poet were to avoid falling into the quicksands of insanity that had already sucked in certain members of his family. Fenton has pointed out that the "potentially precarious adjustment of the person with epilepsy may be undermined" by various difficulties and anxieties. Complex auras whose causes are incompletely understood by the patient "might be expected to arouse anxiety" (Fenton 1983, 165), and the already-precarious mental balance might well be upset by the shock of a sudden bereavement such as the death of Arthur Hallam.

Tennyson, only too well aware of the dangers inherent in his situation, took refuge in poetry. For him, poetic composition had always been a therapeutic process, a way of

finding meaning in, or imposing meaning on, his turbulent inner and outer worlds. In writing In Memoriam he became much more analytical in his approach, exploring not only his psychological problems, but also the ways in which poetry might be used to solve or ameliorate them. Therefore the subject of poetry as therapeutic process is perhaps best studied with reference to the In Memoriam "elegies" that deal with poetic "song". I adopt this term because Tennyson himself referred to the In Memoriam lyrics as "songs" (IM 38:12) or "lays". (IM 48:1).

Song is a traditional metaphor for poetry. If one thinks of elegiac "song", one is tacitly reminded of the tradition in classical pastoral elegy in which one shepherd sings or pipes his lament for his dead companion. And one is also, by extension, reminded of Milton's great pastoral elegy, "Lycidas", where such imagery of singing and song is used:

Who would not sing for Lycidas? he knew
Himself to sing, and build the lofty rhyme.

(lines 10-11; Carey 1971, 240)

In In Memoriam the poet's "songs" form the subject of several of the lyrics that comprise the different sections of the poem. That is, the subject of this particular strand of lyrics is the poet's art, and its relevance to his life and grief. Most of the Romantic poets wrote a poetic manifesto of one kind or another: Wordsworth wrote his Preface to the Lyrical Ballads, Coleridge wrote the Biographia Literaria, Shelley wrote his "Defence of Poetry", and Keats's letters reveal his philosophy of literature and life. The sections of

In Memoriam that deal with poetic "song" come closer, perhaps, than anything else Tennyson wrote to being a poetic manifesto. These "songs" point backwards and forwards to one another, showing the "change which passes over [the poet-speaker's] mind as time goes on" (Bradley 1902, 26).

In Memoriam is not, of course, a pastoral elegy, though elements "of the elegiac conventions are certainly evident" in the poem (Sacks 1985, 168). Peter Sacks, in The English Elegy, discusses some of the conventions governing the genre (1985, 2, 18-37), and goes on to consider what "inherited symbols and elements of ritual do survive" in In Memoriam, and how they "enable the elegist to perform his idiosyncratic version of the mourner's task" (1985, 169).

The poems about poems, or "songs", are often concerned with the difficulty, or even the inadvisability, of expressing one's grief in words. In section 5, Tennyson says:

I sometimes hold it half a sin
 To put in words the grief I feel;
 For words, like Nature, half reveal
 And half conceal the Soul within.

(lines 1-4)

When he asserts that "words...half reveal / And half conceal the Soul within", Tennyson is anticipating later writers on the psychology of art. For example, art therapist John Henzell writes:

The creative use of metaphorical processes are [sic] so striking, so demanding of our attention, that we may overlook, indeed be quite intended to overlook, an implicit consequence of their power. That metaphor is as capable of masking a state of affairs, of dissembling, as it is of bringing it to

our attention, a metaphor may turn our attention to or away from a perception.

(1987, 24).

The literary critic, like the psychologist or psychiatrist, must therefore consider how the "ways in which we conceal our feelings" serve in fact "to reveal them", and how the ways in which we reveal our feelings may "serve also to conceal them" (Henzell 1984, 20). For, as Elizabeth Wright says, "Writing at once represses and reveals desire" (1987, 133).

The reference to "sin" in In Memoriam 5 ("I sometimes hold it half a sin" - line 1) is interesting in so far as it is one of the many passages in the elegy that suggest a sense of guilt. The poet's underlying feelings of guilt reveal themselves perhaps most cogently in the anxious questions of section 51:

Do we indeed desire the dead
Should still be near us at our side?
Is there no baseness we would hide?
No inner vileness that we dread?

Shall he for whose applause I strove,
I had such reverence for his blame,
See with clear eye some hidden shame
And I be lessen'd in his love?

(lines 1-8)

He consoles himself that the dead, seeing "With larger other eyes than ours", will "make allowance for us all" (lines 15-16). A sense of guilt is probably an inevitable accompaniment to man's post-lapsarian condition. As Tennyson says, it is possibly only "the beast that takes / His license in the field of time" (IM 27:5-6), that is "Unfetter'd by the sense of

crime" and "To whom a conscience never wakes" (IM 27:7-8). But exaggerated or unwarranted feelings of guilt may be associated with a number of psychiatric and neurological conditions, including depression (M. Hamilton 1974, 17, 47; 1989, 896-97; Trimble 1981, 58), and temporal lobe epilepsy (Lishman 1978, 314, Rice 1985, 61, 89).

It has also been suggested that TLE may predispose some patients to forms of sexual dysfunction (Gelder et al 1989, 397) or deviation, including hyposexuality (Trimble 1987, 292; Lishman 1983, 34), transvestism and homosexuality (Lishman 1978, 340-41; Gelder et al 1985, 340). Edward Lear was apparently homosexual (Chitty 1988, 6-8). And there have been hints that Tennyson's sense of guilt, as revealed in the poetry (Louw 1985, 118-51), may have arisen from a latent homosexual facet to his feeling for Arthur Hallam (Mattes 1951, 32; Zuckerman 1971, 270; Martin 1980, 94). This viewpoint has most recently and most stridently been advanced by Alan Sinfield, who in his "re-reading" of Tennyson, has this to say of In Memoriam:

The whole closure which the poem seeks to enact depends upon 'love' and the transfigured Arthur, and this, as everyone from Tennyson onwards remarks, is reminiscent of Dante's Divine Comedy. What is almost never acknowledged is that Dante's great contribution to western culture was an authoritative translation of the ideal construction of homosexual love, as it was received from the Greeks, into a more amenable heterosexual form, and that In Memoriam threatens to reverse this convenient move.

(1986, 127)

Sinfield goes on to discuss the "cleaning up of In Memoriam" by the poet's son (1986, 128), and to point out that "In

Memoriam is a poem of its time not just in the anxieties about science and revolution, but in its whole construction of sexuality and self." He feels that the "blurring of gender divisions" in In Memoriam is a "challenge" to modern readers (1986, 153), and maintains that the fact that the relationship between Tennyson and Arthur Hallam

...perhaps was not directly sexual, or perhaps was just momentarily so (at Caunteretz?) does not mean that we can heave a sigh of relief and relax because they were just good friends.

(Sinfield 1986, 131-32)

As I stated in an earlier study, my personal opinion is that "the relationship in which In Memoriam had its genesis could not have been less than 'noble'", and that any subterranean element in Tennyson's feelings for Hallam was "vigorously repressed" (Louw 1985, 126). Some of the subjective paranormal phenomena in Tennyson's poetry may have been the result of that repression - for instance, the "ghastly wraith" in "Oh! that 'twere possible" (R227 - see Louw 1985, 128-51).

However, it is important to remember that there may be other, very plausible, explanations for the sense of guilt which Tennyson evinces in In Memoriam. Firstly, as I have indicated, feelings of guilt are a frequent accompaniment to depression. Trimble writes: "In severe depressions the sense of worthlessness and guilt becomes apparent and delusions may develop" (1981, 58). Indeed, Max Hamilton believes that such delusions of guilt serve "to distinguish a true depressive illness from a reactive depression. In severe depressive

illnesses self-reproach takes the form of delusions of guilt, when the patient believes he is a wicked sinner" (1974, 47).

Secondly, some of the references to guilt and shame in In Memoriam may be explicable in terms of certain observations made by Victor Frankl, existential psychiatrist and founder of the so-called Third Viennese School of Psychotherapy. Frankl writes of the paradoxical sense of shame that is sometimes attached to talking about sacred things, especially God (1975, 46-47). Tennyson implies the necessity for silence on sacred matters when, in "The Holy Grail", Sir Bors says in reply to King Arthur's query as to whether he had seen the holy vessel: "'Ask me not, for I may not speak of it...'" (R471:755-56). I think this is the idea that manifests itself in In Memoriam 5: "I sometimes hold it half a sin / To put in words the grief I feel" (line 1). For in the course of In Memoriam it becomes increasingly clear that Tennyson regards his friendship with Hallam as something sacred; and it is therefore "half a sin" to expose it to the general gaze. But, Tennyson continues,

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

(IM 5:5-8)

The discipline imposed by metre ("measured language") and by stanza form seems to constitute an ordering principle. And that is what the poet needs: he is desperately trying to find some sense of order in a universe and in a life where disorder, pain and trauma seem to reign. He is trying to impose form and order on experience. The process of trying to

do so ("the sad mechanic exercise") acts as an anodyne.

Therefore, the poet says, he will wrap himself in "words, like weeds" (line 9). This metaphor beautifully exemplifies the fact that words "half reveal / And half conceal...." For black garments (widows' "weeds"), in so far as they are symbolic of bereavement and mourning, reveal something about the wearer. But they also serve as a concealment: they conceal the wearer's nakedness, conceal the "bare forked animal" beneath (King Lear 3.4.107).

In In Memoriam 5, still using the metaphor of clothes, the poet declares: "...that large grief which these enfold / Is given in outline and no more" (lines 11-12). The idea of restraint comes across very powerfully. Tennyson never allows himself to indulge in his grief, deep and full though it may be. And In Memoriam is not merely a form of personal psychotherapy. The poet regards his "poor flower poesy" (IM 8:19) primarily as an offering on the altar of love. He writes that, since his poetry once delighted Hallam, he will offer it to his friend in death:

...since it pleased a vanish'd eye,
 I go to plant it on his tomb,
 That if it can it there may bloom,
 Or dying, there at least may die.

(IM 8:21-24)

The offering of the "poor flower of poesy" at the "tomb" of the departed is an example of the way in which Tennyson uses aspects of the pastoral elegiac tradition. For the "poor flower of poesy" takes the place of the "catalogued offering of flowers" that is conventional in the genre (Sacks 1985,

19).¹⁵

Sometimes the poet's anguish is so great that words fail him: "I brim with sorrow[,] drowning song" (IM 19:12). At other times a "doubtful gleam of solace" (IM 38:8) is to be found in the thought that his poetic offering may find favour with Hallam in the afterlife:

If any care for what is here
 Survive in spirits render'd free,
 Then are these songs I sing of thee
 Not all ungrateful to thine ear.

(IM 38:9-12)

Section 21 of In Memoriam reads:

I sing to him that rests below,
 And, since the grasses round me wave,
 I take the grasses of the grave,
 And make them pipes whereon to blow.

The traveller hears me now and then,
 And sometimes harshly will he speak:
 'This fellow would make weakness weak,
 And melt the waxen hearts of men.'

Another answers, 'Let him be,
 He loves to make parade of pain,
 That with his piping he may gain
 The praise that comes to constancy.'

A third is wroth: 'Is this an hour
 For private sorrow's barren song,
 When more and more the people throng
 The chairs and thrones of civil power?

'A time to sicken and to swoon,
 When Science reaches forth her arms
 To feel from world to world, and charms
 Her secret from the latest moon?'

Behold, ye speak an idle thing:
 Ye never knew the sacred dust:
 I do but sing because I must,
 And pipe but as the linnets sing:

And one is glad; her note is gay,
 For now her little ones have ranged;
 And one is sad: her note is changed,
 Because her brood is stol'n away.

In stanza 1 Tennyson makes use of the classical pastoral tradition, already mentioned, in which a shepherd pipes and sings a lament for his dead friend. One might call it a ritual performance. Ritual seems to offer a means of exerting control or imposing order, as Feder explains:

Through practical behavior, by cultivating the land, planting, and harvesting, man exerts a measure of control over a small section of the vast universe he can hardly hope to comprehend, and through this control he manages to survive physically. In somewhat the same way, through a ritual act he attempts to put in order an inner universe equally mysterious, his physiological and psychological nature. Through repeated and prescribed acts he manages to achieve equanimity in the face of inevitable ignorance, sickness, and death.

(Feder 1971, 15-16)

This explication admirably clarifies Tennyson's use of poetic ritual to control, or impose order on, the disturbing aspects of "his physiological and psychological nature". Moreover, working within a particular tradition offers its own form of solace; for a poet must surely find special comfort in the knowledge that he is not the first to suffer for love, and will not be the last. Similarly, encountering in some other poets, like Shelley and Poe, images rather like those in his own poems that originated in the strange experiences I have attributed to TLE, must have been to some extent reassuring to Tennyson.

Stanzas 2-5 of In Memoriam 21 reveal, perhaps, Tennyson's

underlying anxiety as to how the In Memoriam lyrics may be received by a critical public. "There exists in all of us a conflict between the way we would like to feel or behave and the way we believe that others would like us to" (Birtchnell 1984, 33). In stanzas 2 and 3 the poet anticipates accusations of weakness and self-aggrandisement. In stanzas 4 and 5 he expects that he will be thought to be out of step with the times, for regression into a private world of sorrow may seem inappropriate in an age when great progress is being made in politics and science.

The fourth and fifth stanzas are far more complex than they appear on the surface. Ostensibly stanza 4 refers to a triumph for civil rights - and should be regarded in a positive light. But there is something uncontrolled and uncontrollable in the image of people thronging the "chairs and thrones of civil power"; and this tends to undermine the positive response. Similarly, the laudability of the scientific progress alluded to in stanza 5 is insidiously eroded by the fact that it is presented in terms of what is almost a little seduction scene,

When Science reaches forth her arms
To feel from world to world, and charms
Her secret from the latest moon....

(IM: 18-20)

The sense of conflicting ideas and emotions is heightened by the fact that the stanzas seem on the surface to represent an inversion of the classical pastoral convention of adverting to the evils of one's own time (Abrams 1971, 45) by referring,

instead, to subjects that purport to be for the common good. There is a very modern sense of confusion evident beneath the surface of this lyric that ostensibly has its roots in the classical pastoral tradition. And the confusion reflects not only an ambivalent response to aspects of progress in the Victorian era, but also an inner conflict over the nature of the poet's feelings for his dead friend. For embedded in this traditional and ritualistic performance are two psychologically revealing metaphors - what Henzell, following Lacan, calls "symptomatic metaphors" (Henzell 1984, 24). I refer firstly to the allusion in line 20 to a "secret", and secondly to the physical metaphor in which "Science reaches forth her arms / To feel from world to world..." (lines 18-19). Tennyson's yearning for physical contact with Hallam, which is overt in many sections of In Memoriam (e.g., IM 7:4-5; 70:2-3; 84:22; 85:111; 91:5-6), seems to be covert (Henzell 1984, 25) or "secret" (line 20) in In Memoriam 21. But it reveals itself, as I have said, through "symptomatic metaphor". Henzell writes:

Symptomatic metaphor may come into being to remove unbearably stressful psychological conflict. So persistent may be a thought, together with the emotion and accompanying behaviour it insists upon, but so acutely felt the need for their suppression, that the inner agitation such conflicting perceptions give rise to can only be calmed by repressing their apprehension complete with thoughts, perceptions, and emotions associated with them in the mind. Such an act of repression consists in the complex of apprehensions being shifted elsewhere in the mind. The central ideas and perceptions animating the conflict can be seen as being propelled via a series of metaphorical transformations to a position in awareness where they can be unnoticed. A switch of attention is effected, the trajectory along which thought is

directed swerves or turns by means of 'tropes' such as metaphor and exemplification. The syntactical structures operating here may be thought of as identical to those governing genuinely exploratory metaphor; schemata are transferred from one realm to another and one mode may be exchanged with or resonate with others. The essential distinction between the two processes is one of ends rather than means, the goals of open exploration and fruitful comparison are exchanged for those of duplicity - a reversal of purpose is involved.

(1984, 24-25)

Psychoanalysts might feel that the frequent occurrence of the word "touch" or "touch'd" in a variety of contexts in In Memoriam exemplifies the way in which a "persistent...thought" associated with the "need for...suppression" may surface in positions where it "can be unnoticed". It may be that the poet's obsessive yearning for Hallam's touch manifests itself in disguised form in a number of metaphors employing the words "touch" and "touch'd". For instance the poet refers, inter alia, to a ship touching land (IM 14:2), to the "touch of change" (IM 14:17; 16:6), a "touch of shame" (IM 37:10), the "touch of earthly things" (IM 44:11), the touch of "God's finger" (IM 85:20) and "a dreamy touch" (IM 44:13). But, as ever, the possible influence of literary precursors must be borne in mind. In writing the "touch of earthly things", Tennyson may have been recalling Wordsworth's lines in "A slumber did my spirit seal...": "She seemed a thing that could not feel / The touch of earthly years" (Hayden 1977, I, 364).

Henzell examines the relationship between what he terms the "creative...functions of metaphor" (that is, those which seek to "clarify") and the "symptomatic functions of metaphor", which "seek to obscure". He explains:

In order to understand how the creative and the symptomatic functions of metaphor are accommodated to each other we might imagine the metaphor as a vehicle of meaning which focuses attention on unexpectedly alarming dimensions in a situation and as a consequence moves perception to a safer position in relation to the hazards it has uncovered by transposition of less threatening schemata.

(Henzell 1984, 25)

This may hold true, in In Memoriam 21, of the poet's "secret" desire to reach forth his arms and to "feel" the warmth of Hallam's embrace. This desire is also revealed in other sections. For instance, the poet's imagined incorporation into the "Old Yew" barely disguises his true desire to "grow incorporate" into the body of Hallam (IM 2:3-4, 16).

Henzell's observations, quoted at some length above, are of additional interest in so far as they also clarify the parallel process by which Tennyson seeks, in his poetry, to impose order on the entoptic phenomena perceived during altered states of consciousness. For, given Tennyson's anxieties concerning a "canker of the brain" (IM 92:3), the hallucinated entoptic phenomena would indeed have been alarming.

In construing, for instance, the entoptic arcs into arches, bridges or rainbows, the poet in fact "moves perception to a safer position in relation to the hazard...uncovered...." This is achieved by forming the fundamentally meaningless, seemingly unaccountable, and therefore disturbing, entoptics into meaningful "schemata" - that is, "construed entoptics". In poetic composition the conscious creation of a context for the construed forms is the

next step in the poet's attempts to satisfy his "yearning for order and meaning" (Feder 1971, 4).

Something Feder has to say about myth is also true of Tennyson's poetry, which - like myth - reflects "man's attempt to express and thus control his own anxiety about those features of his physiological and psychological make-up and his external environment which he cannot comprehend, accept or master" (1971, 11). This attempt is partly conscious and ritualistic, but there is also an instinctual element which will not be denied. Tennyson recognizes this instinctual element in In Memoriam 21: "I do but sing because I must, / And pipe but as the linnets sing" (lines 23-4). As Jung has written, art is "a kind of innate drive that seizes a human being and makes him its instrument" (1966, 101).

In section 37 of In Memoriam, Tennyson writes:

Urania speaks with darken'd brow:
 'Thou pratest here where thou art least;
 This faith has many a purer priest,
 And many an abler voice than thou.

'Go down beside thy native rill,
 On thy Parnassus set thy feet,
 And hear thy laurel whisper sweet
 About the ledges of the hill.'

And my Melpomene replies,
 A touch of shame upon her cheek:
 'I am not worthy ev'n to speak
 Of thy prevailing mysteries;

'For I am but an earthly Muse,
 And owning but a little art
 To lull with song an aching heart,
 And render human love his dues;

'But brooding on the dear one dead,
 And all he said of things divine,
 (And dear to me as sacred wine
 To dying lips is all he said),

'I murmur'd, as I came along,
 Of comfort clasp'd in truth reveal'd;
 And loiter'd in the master's field,
 And darken'd sanctities with song.'

This section is modelled on an elegy of Propertius (III.3) in which the poet, having been reprimanded by Apollo for daring to deal with a subject beyond his capabilities, is adopted by the muse Calliope, who encourages him to sing of human love (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 201). But Tennyson uses Urania and Melpomene in place of Apollo and Calliope. Melpomene is the Muse of tragedy invoked by Horace in Odes I.24 and IV.3. Urania is the Muse of astronomy and of heavenly poetry, invoked by Milton in Paradise Lost: "Descend from Heaven, Urania...." (VIII.1). She is also the "high Muse" of In Memoriam 58 (line 9) (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 201).

In In Memoriam 37 Urania dismisses the poet as unsuited to, and unworthy of, his task. His earthly muse, Melpomene, acknowledges with a "touch of shame upon her cheek" (line 10) that she is indeed unworthy to speak of heavenly matters ("thy prevailing mysteries" - line 12), and says she has "darken'd sanctities with song" (line 24). Again the sense of the holiness of the subject (Hallam) comes across strongly. But so, too, does a certain ambivalence of viewpoint: on the one hand the poet, through Urania, expresses the sense of his unworthiness to deal with his subject. On the other hand, through Melpomene, he expresses his desire to use what "little art" he has to "lull with song an aching heart, / And render human love his dues" (lines 14-16). Here we have a statement of the bifurcate function of the work: it is both threnodic

and psychotherapeutic. And here we find, once again, the recurring phenomenon of "two voices" articulating an inner conflict - a conflict which often seems to result in a "contradiction on the tongue" (IM 125:4).

However, the poet does not profess to have ready answers.

In Memoriam 48 reads:

If these brief lays, of Sorrow born,
 Were taken to be such as closed
 Grave doubts and answers here proposed,
 Then these were such as men might scorn:

Her care is not to part and prove;
 She takes, when harsher moods remit,
 What slender shade of doubt may flit,
 And makes it vassal unto love:

And hence, indeed, she sports with words,
 But better serves a wholesome law,
 And holds it sin and shame to draw
 The deepest measure from the chords:

Nor dare she trust a larger lay,
 But rather loosens from the lip
 Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
 Their wings in tears, and skim away.

This lyric shows Tennyson's aversion to didacticism - to which he had been urged by his contemporaries (Louw 1985, 10). He is not, he asserts, overcoming doubts or providing answers. Such a facile approach might be scorned by men, anyway. It is not the intention of Sorrow to analyze and rationalize its own existence. And, indeed, she - that is, Sorrow personified - "holds it sin and shame to draw / The deepest measure from the chords" (lines 11-12). These lines look back to In Memoriam 5, where Tennyson wrote: "I sometimes hold it half a sin / To put in words the grief I feel" (lines 1-2). His "strangely intense sense of guilt" (Louw 1985, 118) seems to necessitate

restraint, and brief expressions of grief are all the poet, in the persona of Sorrow, will permit himself, lest in a "larger lay" he should not be able to maintain that restraint.

Therefore Sorrow

...loosens from the lip
Short swallow-flights of song, that dip
Their wings in tears, and skim away.

(lines 14-16)

These lovely lines are among Tennyson's most poignant. They also show one of the ways in which the composition of In Memoriam was psychotherapeutic. For it has been recognized that an important aspect of "art activity" is "the opportunity it provides for releasing controls and letting go, but within a limited framework" (Birtchnell 1984, 33). The "Short swallow-flights of song" impose their own limited framework.

In the next section of In Memoriam Tennyson speaks of the diversity of subjects touched upon in the "Short swallow-flights of song":

From art, from nature, from the schools,
Let random influences glance,
Like light in many a shiver'd lance
That breaks about the dappled pools:

The lightest wave of thought shall lisp,
The fancy's tenderest eddy wreath,
The slightest air of song shall breathe
To make the sullen surface crisp.

(IM 49:1-8)

Significantly - given my theory of epileptic imagery - the poet chooses images of "broken" light (IM Introductory stanzas, line 19), "dappled pools" and eddying water, as

metaphors for his poetic imagination. Indeed, in view of my postulations concerning reflex epilepsy, the degree of contiguity between sensory stimuli, sensory auras and the corresponding sensuous images which find their way into the poetry, one is tempted to call these images metonyms, rather than metaphors.

Tennyson's concern with the inadequacies of language manifests itself in In Memoriam 52:

I cannot love thee as I ought,
 For love reflects the thing beloved;
 My words are only words, and moved
 Upon the topmost froth of thought.

(lines 1-4)

However, as Henzell has noted, from the very outset "psychoanalysis and most of its derivatives have made use of the spoken word as their principal medium of expression." Freud is known to have used a form of therapy which he called the "'talking cure'", and he stressed that in psychoanalytic treatment nothing takes place "'except an interchange of words between the patient and the analyst'" (Henzell 1984, 16-17). In In Memoriam Tennyson is both patient and analyst, using the written word to work through a complex mesh of feelings, ideas and aspirations - yet recognizing that language is not entirely adequate to the task:

...what am I?
 An infant crying in the night:
 An infant crying for the light:
 And with no language but a cry.

(IM 54:17-20)

The poet is only too well aware of the problems involved in self-expression, especially in the expression of those emotions which are so complex and so deep that they seem to defy language. But he persists in his efforts, and they bring their own reward. For, as he observes in section 77, "To utter love [is] more sweet than praise" (line 16). Articulating his feelings results in a kind of gratification, and the ritualized expression of those feelings in elegiac form fulfils man's deep-seated psychological need to grieve, and to express grief, in the face of loss. The psychological need for ritual as part of the mourning process is alluded to by Tennyson in In Memoriam 18 - the lyric which reflects the speaker's relief that the ship bearing Hallam's body has landed safely and that the dead man can now be laid to rest in his "native land", among "familiar names". The poet intones:

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

(IM 18:9-12)

As has been noted, in much of In Memoriam Tennyson yearns for the physical presence of Hallam. This yearning is reflected in the corporeal imagery that one finds in the elegies - references to the hand, the lips, the eyes (e.g., IM 1:6; 7:4; 9:21; 10:19; 14:11; 40:29; 57:12; 69:18; 75:19; 80:16; 119:9-12). Synecdoche is, of course, a common trope, frequently used in speech as well as in poetry. Nevertheless, Tennyson's use of synecdoche may be indicative of repression: the poet at times seems to hide the full extent of his longing

for Hallam's physical presence. Later in the poem, as repression yields to sublimation (Louw 1985, 153), the emphasis changes, and the poet becomes more amenable to the idea of a spiritual communion, as opposed to a physical presence.

The disembodied voice which Tennyson hears (IM 130:1), or imagines he hears (IM 81:7-8; IM 85:89-92), is symptomatic of his longing for Hallam.¹⁶ But he is forced to admit, in section 85, that "in dear words of human speech / We two communicate no more" (lines 83-84). Almost as if in reply to that opinion, the poet, in section 86, does seem to experience a form of communion with the dead.¹⁷ That particular subjective paranormal experience will be examined in the next chapter. What I want to point out here is the way in which, in section 88 - after the experience of some sort of communion with Hallam in section 86 - the nature of the poet's song has changed:

And I - my harp would prelude woe -
 I cannot all command the strings;
 The glory of the sum of things
 Will flash along the chords and go.

(IM 88:9-12)

The "dull mechanic exercise" has been infused with "glory" - perhaps a fleeting "glory", but a "glory" nevertheless. And eventually the poet, in the euphoric "New Year" section beginning "Ring out, wild bells", is able to cry, "Ring out, ring out my mournful rhymes, / But ring the fuller minstrel in" (IM 106:19-20).

In the prologue, which was really an epilogue, Tennyson

compares the In Memoriam lyrics to "wild and wandering cries, / Confusions of a wasted youth" (Introductory stanzas, lines 41-42). But the time expended on the elegies has certainly not been "wasted". The composition of the songs, which have sometimes been "full of care" (IM 125:9) and sometimes "sweet and strong" (IM 125:11) has enabled the poet not only to celebrate love (IM 126:1,5), but also to explore his own feelings, polysemous as they are. And polysemous they are indeed, for in confronting the problems of loss and grief, the speaker is led into other, related considerations. These include, inter alia, man's need for human companionship (e.g., IM 85:58-59, 79-90, 113-16), the apparently contradictory "messages" received from Nature (e.g., IM 55, 56), religious doubt and - ultimately - religious conviction (e.g., Introductory stanzas). The diversity of subjects evokes a variety of emotional responses, from "calm despair" (IM 11:16; 16:2) and "wild unrest" (IM 15:15; 16:2) to the euphoric jubilation of section 106 and the apparently mystical ecstasy of section 95.

The final act of sorting the diverse "lays", composed over a period of seventeen years (Ebbatson 1988, 74), into a coherent order and a cohesive structure, for publication, set the seal on In Memoriam as a work of art and as a therapeutic exercise. Margaret Naumberg has "described art as a way of stating mixed, poorly understood feelings in an attempt to bring them into clarity and order" (cited by Dalley 1984, xiii). This psychologically-orientated definition seems highly applicable not only to In Memoriam but to Tennyson's

poetry as a whole. For the poet uses the same processes of imposing order on the physiological phenomena which I have associated with temporal lobe epilepsy as he does on the psychological disturbances arising out of the death of Arthur Hallam.

Naumberg's psychologically-orientated definition of art, quoted above, helps one to appreciate the ways in which composition was, for Tennyson, psychotherapeutic. Firstly, the act of composition required the verbalization of complex thoughts and feelings. Finding the right words may itself constitute an exploratory exercise - an exercise in definition and clarification of the speaker's emotions as well as his linguistic requirements.

Secondly, in composition inner conflicts may be revealed and, possibly, resolved. The tension, often inherent in such conflicts, between the "pressing forward of suppressed emotion" and the "pushing back" by psychological censoring mechanisms may be richly productive aesthetically (Birtchnell 1984, 33).

Thirdly, the use of metaphor and persona may free the poet to express or examine images, ideas, reactions or issues which might otherwise be taboo. The poet can pretend, consciously or unconsciously, that he is not baring his own psyche or soul, while nevertheless obtaining the relief or gratification of expressing his secret concerns or unacknowledged desires. In Tennyson's case this would apply to the various phenomena associated with the "waking trances" that "obviously had a deeply traumatic effect on him" (Martin

1980, 238), as well as to the aspect of his feeling for Hallam that seems to have caused him some anxiety (Martin 1980, 94; Louw 1985, 43). In other words, the poet experiences the release of self-revelation while being able to maintain the pretence that he is writing of something, or someone, else - even, in In Memoriam, for all mankind (Memoir I, 305).

Finally, a balance is struck between release and control, since the nature of the poetic work imposes its own form of discipline. Nowhere is this more evident than in In Memoriam, where all the lyrics employ the same rhythm, rhyme scheme and stanza form. In imposing these limits on himself, the poet exercises a form of self-control. In "Oenone" Tennyson had, in the persona of Pallas, praised the triple virtues of "Self-reverence, self-knowledge, self-control" (R164:142). In In Memoriam, self-control is evinced from the start by the poet's adherence to a strict poetic form; self-knowledge grows through emotional exploration in the course of the poem; and self-reverence must result from the god-like experience of (poetic) creation.

In "Oenone" Tennyson wrote:

...I will...build up all
My sorrow with my song...
.....
That, while I speak of it, a little while
My heart may wander from its deeper woe.

(R164:38-43)

That is what the poet sets out to do in In Memoriam, but the work takes on a life of its own and becomes much more than a "dull mechanic exercise". It becomes a testimony to

transcendence.

In concluding this chapter, I would draw attention to some observations of Kerry McSweeney on the "unity" of the Idylls of the King. His remarks are equally pertinent to In Memoriam, and to the whole body of Tennyson's poetry. McSweeney writes of the "danger" inherent in the fact that

...unifying patterns perceived in extended works of literary art often tend to be structures of meaning, patterns of paraphrastic ideas, or moral dicta which are primarily if not exclusively cognitive. Such emphasis can lead one to ignore the affective, confessional, and therapeutic aspects of a work, and the psychological pressures and contradictory impulses which energize it.

(1981, 98-99)

CHAPTER V

INSPIRATION

In my discussion of the Tennysonian images which I associate with epileptic experience, I have repeatedly pointed out parallels with In Memoriam 95, the lyric which records what is generally regarded as the most profound, and aesthetically most important, of Tennyson's mystical or paranormal experiences (Sinfield 1971, 23; Hughes 1987, 149; Collins 1981, 133-34). In Memoriam as a whole affords many examples of the set of images I have highlighted, including orbs (Introductory stanzas:5; IM 30:28; 34:5); circles (IM 12:15; 17:6; 30:11; 45:3; 61:3; 63:11; 85:23; 87:27; 89:21,47; 98:30; 101:24; 130:15); crescents (IM 84:4) and arcs (IM 105:27). Much of the light imagery exemplifies various flicker effects:

Witch-elms...counterchange the floor
Of this flat lawn with dusk and bright....

(IM 89:1-2)

[The brook will] into silver arrows break
The sailing moon in creek and cove....

(IM 101:15-16)

Now dance the lights on lawn and lea....

(IM 115:9)

...let the splendour fall
To spangle all the happy shores....

(IM Epilogue, lines 119-20)

The light imagery also frequently includes images of astral bodies, which may represent "construed" entoptics - images of the sun (IM 13:3, Epilogue:78), the moon (IM

Epilogue:27, 109), and the stars (IM 9:10,13; 17:16; 46:15; 72:22; 76:3; 89:47; 97:22; 101:12; 103:36; 127:18; 130:6; Epilogue:127). Of course, the sun, the moon and the stars are so much a part of life on this planet that they have inevitably found their way into a body of poetry far too vast to be adequately reviewed here. One can only recall, in passing, the more obvious examples, such as Sir Philip Sidney's sonnet sequence, Astrophel and Stella, Shakespeare's famous "star to every wand'ring bark" ("Sonnet 116") and Keats's "Bright Star" (Allott 1972, 736). Sacks points out that "sun and star" are "traditional elegiac images" (1985, 177), and obviously, the most pertinent exempla for my purpose are the astral bodies in "Lycidas" and Adonais respectively. For in both of those great English threnodies, the elegiac consolation hinges on such an image. In "Lycidas" Milton writes:

Weep no more, woeful shepherds, weep no more,
 For Lycidas your sorrow is not dead,
 Sunk though he be beneath the watery floor,
 So sinks the day-star [i.e., the sun] in the ocean
bed,
 And yet anon repairs his drooping head,
 And tricks his beams, and with new spangled ore,
 Flames in the forehead of the morning sky:
 So Lycidas sunk low, but mounted high,
 Through the dear might of him that walked the
waves....

(lines 165-73; Carey 1971, 253)

In Shelley's elegy for Keats, the spirit of the dead youth is apotheosized (lines 410-14), and the closing lines of the poem read:

...burning through the inmost veil of Heaven,

The soul of Adonais, like a star,
Beacons from the abode where the Eternal are.

(lines 493-95)

Shelley translated the epigram which he used for Adonais thus:

"Thou wert the morning star among the living,
Ere thy fair light had fled; -
Now, having died, thou art as Hesperus, giving
New splendour to the dead."

("To Stella: From the Greek of Plato";
Hutchinson 1970, 720)

Like Shelley, Tennyson uses the image of the evening star which is also the morning star as a symbol of continuity and immortality:

Sweet Hesper-Phosphor, double name
For what is one, the first, the last,
Thou, like my present and my past,
Thy place is changed; thou art the same.

(IM 121:16-20)

In selecting his principal stellar image, Tennyson is following in the footsteps of his precursor in elegy. But the many ancillary stellar images may, as I have suggested, owe something to so-called "construed" entoptic phenomena.

The auditory phenomena that may form part of epileptic aura are also detectable in the imagery of In Memoriam: the sound of bells (IM 10:2; 28; 57:10; 104:3-8; 106), and roaring or thundering sounds which are often associated with water or with music (IM 10:17; 15:2; 35:9-10; 36:16; 87:7; 107:13; 72:25). For instance, the poet recalls how, on re-visiting Cambridge some time after Hallam's death, he

...heard once more in college fanes
 The storm their high-built organs make,
 And thunder-music, rolling, shake
 The prophet blazon'd on the panes....

(IM 87:5-8)

There is nothing mysterious about this music, of course, and the metaphor in terms of which it is evoked is a fairly obvious one. Sometimes, however, as in In Memoriam 70, the music has no obvious source - it appears to be part of a subjective paranormal experience.

...all at once beyond the will
 I hear a wizard music roll,
 And thro' a lattice on the soul
 Looks thy fair face and makes it still.

(IM 70:13-16)

Ghostly music is also a feature of the "vision" (IM 103:3) in which the poet "dreamed" he was re-united with Hallam on a "great ship" with "shining sides" (line 40). Tennyson writes:

...while the wind began to sweep
 A music out of sheet and shroud,
 We steer'd her toward a crimson cloud
 That landlike slept along the deep.

(IM 103:53-56)

The "haunting" whispers (IM 81:7) perceived by the speaker in In Memoriam (IM 85:89; 126:9-12) are ostensibly paranormal phenomena experienced by one who has urgently wished for (IM 56:26), and vividly imagined (IM 35:1-4, 13-16), the voice of his dead friend. But, as I have tried to show in previous chapters, such disembodied voices are explicable in terms of the auditory hallucinations associated

with, inter alia, schizophrenia and epilepsy. This knowledge does not in any way detract from one's emotional response to the poet's moving apostrophe to the dead Hallam, in In Memoriam 130:

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

(IM 130:1-4)

For the reader, as for the poet, the voice of Hallam has a subjective, if not an objective, reality.

Line 2 ("I hear thee where the waters run") anticipates a much later poem which I have already discussed, "In the Valley of Caunteretz" (R326). I have also mentioned elsewhere the importance of dawn and sunset as a source of poetic inspiration to Tennyson and as an objective correlative for the poet's "passion of the past". But my principal interest at this point is the opening line of In Memoriam 130: "Thy voice is on the rolling air...." For "air in motion, be it wind, breeze or breath, is an important motif in In Memoriam - as it is, indeed, throughout Tennyson's poetry. There is, of course, strong literary precedent for this usage. M.H. Abrams explores the Romantic metaphor of "air-in-motion", which "occurs as breeze or breath, wind or respiration". He points out

...how often, in the major [Romantic] poems, the wind is not only a literal attribute of the landscape, but also a metaphor for a change in the poet's mind. The rising wind [Abrams continues] ...serves as the vehicle for a complex subjective event: the return to a sense of community after

isolation, the renewal of life and emotional vigor after apathy and spiritual torpor, and an outburst of creative inspiration following a period of sterility.

(Abrams 1957, 113-14; qtd. by Louw 1985, 60)

One might cite a number of examples, including Coleridge's "Eolian Harp" and Shelley's "Ode to the West Wind", but the passage I wish to quote is from Shelley's Alastor. The speaker says:

...serenely now
And moveless, as a long-forgotten lyre,
Suspended in the solitary dome
Of some mysterious and deserted fane,
I wait thy breath, Great Parent, that my strain
May modulate with murmurs of the air,
And motions of the forest and the sea,
And voice of living beings, and woven hymns
Of night and day, and the deep heart of man.

(lines 41-49; Hutchinson 1970, 16)

In a later passage, Shelley writes of the "Poet wandering on":

A vision on his sleep
There came, a dream of hopes that never yet
Had flushed his cheek. He dreamed a veiled maid
Sate near him, talking in low solemn tones.
Her voice was like the voice of his own soul
Heard in the calm of thought; its music long,
Like woven sounds of streams and breezes....

(lines 149-55; Hutchinson 1970, 18;
my italics)

These lines have much in common with a passage from Tennyson's "Sense and Conscience" which reads:

Always in his sight
Delicious dreams floated unto the music
Of winds (whose fragrance and whose melodies
Made sweet contention which should sweeter be,

And through contention grew to perfectness
Of most inviolate communion)....

(R130:60-65; my italics)

It is not so much that the one passage parallels the other as that they reflect a striking similarity in sensory "texture".

It is also important to note that both Tennyson's "dreams" (R130:61) and Shelley's "visions" (Alastor, line 49) are associated with "winds" or "breezes". I pointed out earlier (page 133 above) that the wind in "Youth" (R223) seems akin to that in Adonais, of which Shelley writes:

The breath whose might I have invoked in song
Descends on me; my spirit's bark is driven,
Far from the shore....

(lines 487-89; Hutchinson 1970, 444)

I suggested that the wind in "Youth", as in Adonais, was a metaphor for poetic inspiration:

A rumour of a mystery,
A noise of winds that meet and blend,
And energy, an agony,
A labour working to an end.

(R223:57-60)

It is pertinent to note Tennyson's apperception of this wind, which is associated with voices (lines 63, 69, 73, 81, 97), throbbing (line 64), snatches of song (line 75), the sound of waterfalls (line 79) and thunder (lines 82, 86), rainbows (line 89) and arches (line 91), and strange lights (line 72), culminates in what I believe is a description of an attack of epileptic vertigo such as has been documented by Neppe (1979, 32), Williams (1956, 41, 44, 58) and Dostoevsky (Rice 1985, 5,

10).

'Come' and I come, and all comes back
 Which in that early voice was sweet,
 Yet am I dizzy in the track,
 A light wind wafts me from my feet.

Now quicker and quicker giddily
 Till all the plain confused and dim
 Streams backward like a moving sea.

(R223:97-103; my italics)

The attack also features a feeling of pulsation ("Warm beats my blood") and of thirst ("my spirit thirsts" - line 104). Thirst has been reported as "a rare phenomenon in epileptic seizures". In the two cases documented by Penfield and Jasper, the temporal lobe was involved (1954, 423-24, 457).

Of course, the thirst of which Tennyson writes is a spiritual thirst. Shelley also writes, in Adonais, of "life's sacred thirst" (line 485). One is forced to consider whether Tennyson was deliberately echoing Shelley, or whether he was describing personal experiences that happened to coincide with those described by Shelley in Adonais. I believe, in fact, that each of these possibilities played a part in the genesis of "Youth". I think Tennyson responded to certain passages in Shelley precisely because he was able to identify strongly with them. He recognized, as it were, the experiences related by his poetic precursor. And in the case of Adonais, Shelley's experiences had a particularly poignant relevance because the poem was strongly associated in Tennyson's mind with Arthur Hallam, who had been responsible for the first English edition of that poem (Hutchinson 1970, 430; Kolb 1981, 293). Furthermore, the elegy on the loss of a talented and

revered youth offered clear parallels with the major psychological event in Tennyson's own life.

Few would doubt the influence of a strong precursor like Shelley; for, as Karl Jaspers has written, "...receptivity is...indispensable to all creative work'" (qtd. by McFarland 1985, 16). On the other hand, however,

...the poet, in the lyric instant, is addressing neither us nor other poets; he is speaking to himself alone, in an utterance that participates in the structure of rumination. And what is lastingly valuable in that utterance arises from the depths of his own life and his awareness of the real world in which he lives, moves, and has his being.

(McFarland 1985, 88-89)

This dichotomous nature of the poetic utterance would explain why Tennyson, who shows such clear affinity with Shelley, could say in old age, "Shelley's poetry is too much in the clouds for me[.] I never cared for him much" ("Talks and Walks", 14). I believe the experiences chronicled by the later poet were very personal indeed, and that the poems he wrote about those experiences were therefore, as far as he was concerned, original. The fact that he came across similar descriptions in Shelley did not negate the originality of his own work or experience.

Harold Bloom has postulated that a young poet, an "ephebe" (1973, 66), who feels the influence of a strong precursor, may in fact seem to "re-write" a passage from that precursor, correcting it, as it were, in the light of his own experience (1973, 30). In Memoriam 86 may be used to exemplify this process. But before proceeding to that lyric,

an examination is warranted of some of the earlier sections of In Memoriam which employ the image of air-in-motion, often as a metaphor for subjective paranormal experience.

Section 3 opens with a reference to "breath" in the first stanza, and this "breath" of sorrow is both "sweet and bitter" (line 3). This paradoxical description tends to recall the "sweet tears" (R127:14) and "sorrow touch'd with joy" (IM 28:19) that I have postulated may have arisen as a result of the affective component of the poet's epileptic aura. Certainly the images which follow are among those I have highlighted in connection with epileptic experience.

O Sorrow, cruel fellowship,
 O Priestess in the vaults of Death,
 O sweet and bitter in a breath,
 What whispers from thy lying lip?

'The stars,' she whispers, 'blindly run;
 A web is wov'n across the sky;
 From out waste places comes a cry,
 And murmurs from the dying sun:

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

And shall I take a thing so blind,
 Embrace her as my natural good;
 Or crush her, like a vice of blood,
 Upon the threshold of the mind?

(IM 3; my italics)

In section 9 the wind is presented as a beneficent influence presiding over the ship carrying Hallam's body to England for burial:

Fair ship, that from the Italian shore
 Sailest the placid ocean-plains
 With my lost Arthur's loved remains,

Spread thy full wings, and waft him o'er.

So draw him home to those that mourn
 In vain; a favourable speed
 Ruffle thy mirror'd mast, and lead
 Thro' prosperous floods his holy urn.

All night no ruder air perplex
 Thy sliding keel, till Phosphor, bright
 As our pure love, thro' early light
 Shall glimmer on the dewy decks.

Sphere all your lights around, above;
 Sleep, gentle heavens, before the prow;
 Sleep, gentle winds, as he sleeps now,
 My friend, the brother of my love;

My Arthur, whom I shall not see
 Till all my widow'd race be run;
 Dear as the mother to the son,
 More than my brothers are to me.

Again, several of the images are reminiscent of the "epileptic" constellation I have emphasized throughout this study - for instance, the verb "sphere" (line 13); the ship's sails which are described as "wings" (line 4); and the glimmering light (line 12) of the morning star ("Phosphor" - line 10). Almost predictably, in the next lyric the speaker refers to the sound of water ("the noise about thy keel" - line 1; "roaring wells" - line 17), and the sound of a bell ("I hear the bell struck in the night" - line 2). The poem also incorporates the image of a bright circular light ("the cabin-window bright" - line 3).

In section 13 the poet speaks of Hallam as a "Spirit, not a breathing voice" (line 12), as if these two concepts were in opposition. However, the word "psyche", which is ordinarily taken to mean spirit, mind or soul (OED 1) is derived from the Greek word psychein, meaning "to breathe" (Shipley 1945, 287). And a correspondence between breath and "psyche" or "spirit"

begins to emerge in section 17, where the poet-speaker, again addressing the ship, writes:

Thou comest, much wept for: such a breeze
 Compell'd thy canvas, and my prayer
 Was as the whisper of an air
 To breathe thee over lonely seas.

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

(IM 17:1-8; my italics)

The circle imagery (line 6) is followed by a linear image in line 10 - but the line is a "line of light" (my italics) that acts as a beacon:

Henceforth, wherever thou may'st roam,
 My blessing, like a line of light,
 Is on the waters day and night,
 And like a beacon guards thee home.

(lines 9-12)

The image of a beacon is, of course, entirely apposite in the context of a ship's voyage, but it also serves to recall the reference to the moon that "burnest beaconlike" in "Ode: O Bosky Brook" (R127:63), a poem which I have argued is ultimately about the nature of the Tennysonian imagination. And the stanza which follows in In Memoriam also bears a typically Tennysonian imprint. For, having expressed the wish that the "sacred bark" might be spared from "whatever tempest mars / Mid-ocean", the speaker goes on to envisage, wishfully, "balmy drops in summer dark" sliding "from the bosom of the stars" in proliferating benediction (IM 17:13-16).

There are many modulations of the air-in-motion metaphor

in In Memoriam. In section 21 it is the breath that "pipes" the traditional shepherd's lament for his dead friend. The function is here expressive. In section 28 the wind is the vehicle which carries the "Four voices of four hamlets round" - that is, the "voices" of the four sets of church bells which bear the Christmas message of "goodwill and peace" (line 11). The function is now inspirational.

The inspirational aspect of air-in-motion grows stronger in In Memoriam 30, which records how, on the first Christmas after Hallam's death, his grief-stricken Somersby friends, hearing the "winds...in the beech" (line 9), are suddenly moved to song. Tennyson recalls:

...echo-like our voices rang;
 We sung, tho' every eye was dim,
 A merry song we sang with him
 Last year: impetuously we sang:

 We ceased: a gentler feeling crept
 Upon us: surely rest is meet:
 'They rest,' we said, 'their sleep is sweet,'
 And silence follow'd, and we wept.

(IM 30:13-20)

The wind is inspirational in at least two senses. The first is almost literal, for the wind seems to breathe into the company a certain insight which they in turn breathe (that is, utter) in song: "'They rest...their sleep is sweet'" (line 19). But the wind is also inspirational in so far as it ultimately leads to a more sublime view of life after death.

'They do not die
 Nor lose their mortal sympathy,
 Nor change to us, although they change;

 'Rapt from the fickle and the frail

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

(IM 30:22-28)

That is, the wind is inspirational in the sense that it imbues the mourning friends with thoughts that take "a higher range" (IM 30:21) - thoughts which enable them to subsume the "awful sense / Of one mute Shadow watching all" (line 8) in the rich symbolism of Christmas:

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

(IM 30:29-32)

Retrospectively one begins to sense that the wind may be a manifestation of Hallam's spirit. Apparently natural phenomena assume supernatural significance. Indeed, the air-in-motion metaphor begins to assume an overtly religious significance, for soon it is associated with the Logos ("And so the Word had breath" - IM 36:9).

However, the wind is not an infallible means of entry into spiritual experience. There are times of "spiritual torpor" (Abrams 1957, 114): "No joy the blowing season gives" (IM 38:5). And sometimes the air-in-motion metaphor operates negatively, as in the case of In Memoriam 40, where the poet alludes to the popular belief that the spirit leaves the body with the dying man's last breath:

Could we forget the widow'd hour
And look on Spirits breathed away,
As on a maiden in the day

When first she wears her orange-flower!

(IM 40:1-4)

Notwithstanding the bridal context, the metaphor operates negatively, as I have said; for the emphasis here is not on inspiration but on expiration - in the sense of death.

The poet's moods fluctuate, and the revivifying power of poetry - however muted it may be at times - is acknowledged in In Memoriam 49: "The slightest air of song shall breathe / To make the sullen surface [of the "dappled pools" of life] crisp" (lines 7-8). But the poet adds an injunction not to rail against stronger forces - the stronger "winds" of sorrow - that seem to undermine these lighter moments. For he recognizes that the very foundations of his life are still flooded with grief:

...look thy look, and go thy way,
 But blame not thou the winds that make
 The seeming-wanton ripple break,
 The tender-pencil'd shadow play.

Beneath all fancied hopes and fears
 Ay me, the sorrow deepens down,
 Whose muffled motions blindly drown
 The bases of my life in tears.

(IM 49:9-16)

As he will say in a later section, "His night of loss is always there" (IM 66:16). He has not yet reached the transcendent awareness that "His inner day can never die" (IM 66:15).

In section 40 the poet referred to "Spirits breathed away" in death (line 2). In the nadir of his grief, speaking through Nature personified, he denies the possibility of any

kind of spiritual existence: "The spirit does but mean the breath: / I know no more" (IM 56:7-8). The paranormal experiences tacitly associated with air-in-motion in earlier sections are consciously abnegated. Yet somehow the unconscious will have it otherwise, and in a dream of Hallam "all the bugle breezes blew / Reveillée to the breaking morn" (IM 68:7-8).

The opening lines of section 15 read:

To-night the winds begin to rise
 And roar from yonder dropping day:
 The last red leaf is whirl'd away,
 The rooks are blown about the skies....

The high wind seems to be an external reflection of the "wild unrest that lives in woe" (line 15). In the section on the first anniversary of Hallam's death, the wind also exemplifies the pathetic fallacy. For it

...howlest, issuing out of night,
 With blasts that blow the poplar white,
 And lash with storm the streaming pane...

(IM 72:2-4),

reflecting thus the emotional upheaval experienced by the poet-speaker as he recalls how the "dark hand [of fate] struck down thro' time, / And cancell'd nature's best..." (IM 72:19-20).

However, the poet does not care to expand too copiously on the traits which marked Hallam as "nature's best":

I care not in these fading days
 To raise a cry that lasts not long,
 And round thee with the breeze of song
 To stir a little dust of praise,

.....
 So here shall silence guard thy fame....

(IM 75:9-12, 17)

Turning from thoughts of Hallam's "fame" to his own, the poet expresses the belief that his "mortal lullabies of pain" (IM 77:5) are unlikely to win acclaim in a "modern" age (IM 77:1). Nevertheless, he will not abandon his task:

My darken'd ways
 Shall ring with music all the same;
 To breathe my loss is more than fame,
 To utter love more sweet than praise.

(IM 77:13-16)

On the second Christmas after Hallam's death, the "quiet sense of something lost" (IM 78:8) is underlined by the absence of wind ("No wing of wind the region swept" - line 6). For sometimes in In Memoriam a hint of personification of the wind seems to suggest a preternatural presence, as for example in section 79: "All winds that roam the twilight came / In whispers of the beauteous world" (lines 11-12). And, conversely, the absence of wind suggests a spiritual absence.

In section 85 the poet states very explicitly:

...every pulse of wind and wave
 Recalls in change of light or gloom,
 My old affection of the tomb,
 And my prime passion in the grave....

(IM 85:73-76)

Thus the scene is set for the subjective paranormal experience of section 86, which is often regarded as the first climax of In Memoriam:

Sweet after showers, ambrosial air,
 That rollest from the gorgeous gloom
 Of evening over brake and bloom
 And meadow, slowly breathing bare

The round of space, and rapt below
 Thro' all the dewy-tassell'd wood,
 And shadowing down the horned flood
 In ripples, fan my brows and blow

The fever from my cheek, and sigh
 The full new life that feeds thy breath
 Throughout my frame, till Doubt and Death,
 Ill brethren, let the fancy fly

From belt to belt of crimson seas
 On leagues of odour streaming far,
 To where in yonder orient star
 A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

The numinous - or the uncanny, to use Freud's term - is often impossible to describe or define, and those who attempt to do so often lapse into paradox. I, too, seem to resort to paradox when I say that In Memoriam 86 is both breathless and breath-full. It is breathless in so far as the words seem to tumble forth without pause, the four quatrains of the lyric comprising only one sentence. As Tennyson told Allingham, on 27 July 1884, "It all goes together" (Allingham 1985, 328). But the section is "breath-full" in so far as the whole poem is based on the air-in-motion metaphor so beloved of the Romantics.

The metaphor appears in several different guises in the poem. In stanza 1 the poet invokes the "ambrosial air, / That rollest from the gorgeous gloom" of the evening (IM 86:1-3; my italics). And the air is described as "slowly breathing bare // The round of space" (lines 4-5; my italics). In stanza 2 the poet implores the wind: "...fan my brows and blow // The fever from my cheek..." (lines 8-9; my italics). In stanza 3

he continues:

...sigh
 The full new life that feeds thy breath
 Throughout my frame....

(lines 9-11; my italics)

One perceives that sighing is a further permutation of the air-in-motion metaphor.

The revivifying and transcendent effect of the "breath" (line 10) of "air" (line 1) with which the poet is imbued is marked; for this "breath" seems to liberate the imagination (line 2), and induce serenity:

...let the fancy fly
 From belt to belt of crimson seas
 On leagues of odour streaming far,
 To where in yonder orient star
 A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace.'

(lines 12-16)

Of course, strictly speaking, these lines express a wish, not a fulfilment; but I am by no means the first reader to sense that the realization of the wish seems to be contemporaneous with its expression (Louw 1985, 61; Benziger 1962, 146).

I now want to unravel some of the complex strands of influence detectable in the operation of the imagination in this poem, remembering, of course, that the whole is so much greater than the sum of the parts. I shall argue that the various influences reflect what one might call a blending of nature and nurture. For physiological, psychological and literary factors are perceived to coalesce in the moment of inspiration.

Michael Eigen has written that poetry, religion and science are equally "hard pressed to express and explore the depths of human experience...."

It is [Eigen explains] becoming more common today to think that brain and experience are not simply two terms split off from or reducible to one another, but rather that they may be viewed as entering into a mutually constitutive relationship. Each sets requirements that dictate the structural possibilities of the other. Our understanding of the mutual influence of brain and experience is in its infancy.

However, the "current tendency is to conclude discussions of nature versus nurture by noting that both are probably involved, with more or less emphasis on one or the other factor in a given case" (Eigen 1986, 22-23).

As so often in Tennyson's poetry, Arthur Hallam's influence is all-pervasive, though elusive, in In Memoriam 86. Consider, for instance, as Shatto and Shaw do, the similarity of the first two stanzas to some lines from Dante's Purgatorio (XXVIII.6-9);

Delicious odour breathed. A pleasant air,
That intermitted never, never veer'd,
Smote on my temples, gently, as a wind
Of softest influence.

(Shatto and Shaw 1982, 243)

In allusiveness, the Tennyson passage (IM 86:1-8) therefore appears to point towards Dante; but one must also remember Hallam's great love of the Italian poets. It is known that on his visits to Somersby Hallam "read Dante, Tasso and Petrarch with Alfred and his sister Emily" (MS. Mats. I, 2 [insert]). So when Tennyson appears to be recalling Dante - whether

consciously or unconsciously - he may actually be remembering Hallam reading Dante.

Similarly, when Tennyson wrote of the "orient star", "where... / A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace'" (*IM* 86:15-16), he may have been remembering the letter (of 4 September 1832) in which Hallam told him of the death of their mutual friend, Edward Spedding. Hallam writes, "He looked to a future life, I should think, as calmly as to a future day. His epitaph is "Peace" (Kolb 1981, 638).¹

Hallam, so steeped in the Italian poets, may have been thinking of the closing lines of a Petrarchan Canzone (366), which read:

raccomandami al tuo Figliuol, verace
omo e verace Dio,
ch'accolga 'l mio Spirto ultimo in pace.

The passage may be translated thus: "...commend me to your Son, true man and true God, that He may receive my last breath in peace" (Minta 1980, 99; my italics). The juxtaposition of "breath" and "peace" in the Petrarchan passage suggests a possible relevance to *In Memoriam* 86, but the poetic stimulus is complex. Tennyson may have been recalling Petrarch's canzone directly, or he may have been recalling Hallam reading the Petrarchan canzone. For

...heart and ear were fed
To hear him [Hallam], as he lay and read
The Tuscan poets on the lawn...

at Somersby in the halcyon years of the friendship (*IM* 89:22-24). Alternatively, Tennyson may have been remembering the

letter in which Hallam appears to be alluding to Petrarch's canzone.

Probably all these memories coalesced in the moment of poetic inspiration. Culler has pointed out that "for a number of years Tennyson thought of Memory as the faculty principally ministering to the poetic imagination" (Culler 1977, 37; qtd. by Louw 1985, 79). William Buckler notes memory's "rôle" of "'Mother of the Muses' and chief igniter of the imagination" (Buckler 1980, 66; qtd. by Louw 1985, 78-79). Jerome Buckley, too, sees memory as a "creative force, selecting and sanctifying impressions" (Buckley 1960, 19; qtd. by Louw 1985, 79).

Of course, the amalgam of impressions may go beyond Dante, Petrarch and Hallam. Milton wrote of wind-borne scents in Comus (lines 988-90) and in Paradise Lost (IV.156-59, 264-68). The correspondence of these passages with In Memoriam 86 is not close, but Milton's lines may have been directly or indirectly influential. More relevant, I think, are the Romantic parallels. I pointed out in an earlier study (Louw 1985, 62) that the breeze which issues from the "gorgeous gloom" (IM 86:1-2) tends to recall the "breezes blown / Through verdurous glooms" in Keats's "Ode to a Nightingale" (lines 39-40, Allott 1972, 528). And Shatto and Shaw note a parallel with lines 384-86 of Coleridge's "Destiny of Nations, A Vision":

...sweet,
As after showers the perfumed gale of eve,
That flings the cool drops on a feverous cheek....

(Shatto and Shaw 1982, 243)

But to my mind the most interesting of possible allusions is one which critics, as far as I am aware, have failed to notice. I refer to lines 17-18 of Shelley's poem, "Music":

...the odour flew
On the wings of the wind o'er the waters blue....

(Hutchinson 1970, 658)

In Tennyson's poem, however, the waters are not blue, but crimson. The "fancy" is associated with wind, and it flies "From belt to belt of crimson seas / On leagues of odour streaming far" (IM 86:12-14). The essential elements in the two passages are the same: air-in-motion, perfume ("odour") and water. But - as I have indicated - while in Shelley's lyric the water is blue, in Tennyson's the seas are "crimson".

Crimson is assuredly a strange colour to associate with "seas", even if the seas are metaphorical, representing "the evening sky", as Kerry McSweeney suggests (1981, 86). But I personally think the phrase "crimson seas" is not only a metaphor for crimson skies. For in "A Fragment of the Lover's Tale" Tennyson describes experiences apparently similar to that referred to in In Memoriam 86. He writes of

Those revelations of the eventide,
When air and ocean filled one hollow globe
With wild red light....

(Heath MS., folio 66)

I can think of no appropriate literary parallel for "crimson seas": for instance, neither Homer's references to the "wine-dark sea" (e.g., The Odyssey I; Shewring 1980, 5) nor Macbeth's assertion that his bloody hand will "incarnadine"

the "seas" (2.2.61) seems relevant or appropriate. What we have here is a well-nigh perfect exemplification of part of Harold Bloom's theory of revisionism. Bloom outlines the "central principle" of his argument thus:

Poetic Influence - when it involves two strong, authentic poets, - always proceeds by a misreading of the prior poet, an act of creative correction that is actually and necessarily a misinterpretation. The history of fruitful poetic influence, which is to say the main tradition of Western poetry since the Renaissance, is a history of anxiety and self-saving caricature, of distortion, of perverse, wilful revisionism without which modern poetry as such could not exist.

(Bloom 1973, 30)

Bloom applies the term Clinamen to such "poetic misreading or misprision". He borrows the word clinamen

...from Lucretius, where it means a "swerve" of the atoms so as to make change possible in the universe. A poet swerves away from his precursor, by so reading his precursor's poem as to execute a clinamen in relation to it. This appears as a corrective movement in his own poem, which implies that the precursor poem went accurately up to a certain point, but then should have swerved, precisely in the direction that the new poem moves.

(Bloom 1973, 14)

While I do not subscribe to this idea as a valid generalization, I think there are cases where it is applicable, and In Memoriam 86 seems to be one of them.

Tennyson, in striving to express the particular subjective paranormal experience that he records in In Memoriam 86, is influenced, as I have indicated, by a number of antecedents, including Arthur Hallam, Dante, Petrarch, Keats, Coleridge and Shelley. Possibly consciously, but more

probably unconsciously, he takes something from each of them. But when it comes to Shelley's lines he executes a clinamen. He rewrites, as it were, the Shelley passage ("the odour flew / On the wings of the wind o'er the waters blue"), changing the colour from blue to red ("crimson seas") to fit in with his own personal experience. The experience may have been no more than a normal sensory response to the perfumed evening breeze and the ruddy sunset sky. On the other hand, the experience - whether envisaged, recollected, or both - may have owed something to temporal lobe epileptic syndrome.

As I have indicated elsewhere, the colour red is frequently dominant in temporal lobe epileptic aura or in the post-epileptic period (Rice 1985, 293). It would certainly appear that Tennyson found red and rosy tints particularly inspirational - or so one would deduce from the fact that he chose them as the most likely means of stirring Wordsworth's poetic imagination. In the Memoir Aubrey de Vere recalls how Tennyson once "endeavoured to stimulate some latent ardour" in Wordsworth, when they met,

...by telling him of a tropical island where the trees, when they first came into leaf, were a vivid scarlet; - "Every one of them, I told him [Tennyson said], one flush all over the island, the colour of blood! It would not do. I could not inflame his imagination in the least!"

(Memoir I, 209)

I have already referred to Tennyson's inappropriate use of the colour red in The Lover's Tale (R153n.i 134-6), and ascribed this "mistake" (R153, headnote) to the fact that he tended to show a predilection for red and rosy tints because of their

occurrence in, or as an aftermath of, his epileptic aura. The linking of "crimson" with "seas" - albeit the seas may be metaphorical - represents another seemingly inappropriate use of the colour, but one which is also comprehensible if one accepts that the subjective paranormal experience described is actually a particularly intense "sensory seizure" in which the sensation of a cooling breeze (IM 86:8-9), sweetly perfumed (lines 1-2) and apparently richly coloured ("crimson" - line 13), ushers in a feeling of euphoria and "peace" (line 16).

Edward Lear seems to have undergone a rather similar experience. In his case, a breeze, associated with certain colours - though not, in this instance, red - ushered in a particular feeling of happiness. Chitty, referring to an entry for 10 May 1862 in Lear's unpublished Diary, describes an idyllic moment at San Salvatore: "'A breeze of blue and gold and green' blew in his face. He had a sudden memory of 'that kind of happiness'" (Chitty 1988, 193). That kind of happiness was apparently the sense of intimate communion he had felt at various times with a particular, close male companion in a particular place. It is not too difficult to imagine that such a feeling of happy communion might be construed, in the case of a companion who has died, as a sense of his preternatural presence. And this seems, indeed, to be the way in which Tennyson interpreted the experience he describes in In Memoriam 86 - at least if section 122 refers to section 86, as it is sometimes thought to do (see Bradley 220-26; Shatto and Shaw 1982, 280), and as I believe it does:

Oh, wast thou with me, dearest, then,

While I rose up against my doom,
 And yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,
 To bare the eternal heavens again,

To feel once more, in placid awe,
 The strong imagination roll
 A sphere of stars about my soul,
 In all her motion one with law;

If thou wert with me, and the grave
 Divide us not, be with me now,
 And enter in at breast and brow,
 Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
 And like an inconsiderate boy,
 As in the former flash of joy,
 I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
 And every dew-drop paints a bow,
 The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
 And every thought breaks out a rose.

(IM 122)

Similarities in thought and imagery signify a relationship between In Memoriam 86 and In Memoriam 122, though less strikingly than in other "paired poems", such as sections 7 and 119. In section 86 the inspirational breeze which liberates the imagination issues from the "gorgeous gloom / Of evening" (IM 86:2-3). In section 122 the poet recalls a time ("then") when he rebelled against his doom and "yearn'd to burst the folded gloom" - to experience again the kind of spiritual and imaginative liberation which he evokes in section 86. In that lyric he wrote, "...let the fancy fly" (line 12), and the vehicle on which, or through which, it is enabled to fly is "air / That rollest" (IM 86:1-2). In section 122 a mental conflation of air and fancy occurs, and now it is the "strong imagination" itself that is referred to in terms of rolling. The verb "to roll" is used

intransitively in section 86, but transitively in section 122. The "strong imagination roll[s] / A sphere of stars" about the poet's soul. The diction ("sphere", "stars") suggests the "epileptic" images I have highlighted - and, indeed, there is a great deal more in the poem that seems to support my argument that this is yet another poem that has its origin in epileptic experience.

The poet is essentially speaking of two states: that which is redolent of "folded gloom" (line 3) and that in which Heaven seems to be revealed (line 4), as the "imagination" becomes operative. To Knowles Tennyson glossed the "folded gloom" as that of grief (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 280). But the two states described would seem to correspond with those to which the poet referred in "Ode to Memory", when he wrote:

Come not as thou camest of late,
 Flinging the gloom of yesternight
 On the white day; but robed in softened light
 Of orient state.

(R84:8-11)

These two states may relate to the depressive prodromal period and the aural period (or the sensory seizure) respectively. Or they may represent two different types of aura or seizure; for many patients describe more than one kind of aura (King and Marsan 1977, 139).

It was noted in connection with section 86 that, although the poem merely purports to express a wish, the feeling of euphoria it evokes tends to suggest that the wish has been fulfilled. In section 122 the syntactical construction expresses desire (the poet "yearn'd to burst the folded gloom,

/ To bare the eternal Heavens again" and "To feel once more, in placid awe, / The strong imagination" - lines 3-6). But the phrase "once more" suggests that the expression of desire is almost concomitant with a reliving of past experience. There seems to be a blurring of the boundaries of time that borders on a disturbance of temporal discrimination. Peltason writes that in section 122, "the present and the past are not the same, but they might be at any moment (1985, 146). And Sinfield uses the final stanza of In Memoriam 122 to illustrate his point that the poet apparently "relates the impressions in the order in which he *feels* them" (my italics). "Confronting the reader with a series of immediate sensations in this way", Sinfield writes, "is faithful to the mode of thinking and feeling of a poet whose reliance is on subjective perceptions" (1971, 105-06). Thus Sinfield, too, implies the immediacy of the remembered experience - and hence its present "reality".

The affect or emotion described in In Memoriam 122 ("placid awe" - line 5) has much in common with that suggested in In Memoriam 86, where the poet seems to rise above thoughts of Doubt and Death (line 2) to an experience of awesome tranquillity when he imaginatively perceives that "in yonder orient star / A hundred spirits whisper 'Peace'" (IM 86:15-16). But the experience also has much in common with In Memoriam 95; for a great feeling of unity or harmony is evoked in stanza 2 of section 122 when the poet speaks of feeling

...once more, in placid awe,
 The strong imagination roll
 A sphere of stars about my soul,

In all her motion one with law....

(lines 5-8)

The syntax reinforces this sense of unity, for it is impossible to say with any degree of certainty whether the pronoun "her" in line 8 refers to the imagination (line 6) or to the poet's "soul" (line 7). The imagination may be regarded as a factor or function of the psyche or soul; but in the moment of apparently mystical apprehension, the part is indistinguishable from the whole, and the whole is "one with law" (line 8). As I have said, this sense of unity or harmony parallels that in In Memoriam 95:

The living soul was flash'd on mine,
 And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
 About empyreal heights of thought,
 And came on that which is, and caught
 The deep pulsations of the world....

(lines 36-40)

Juxtaposing these lines with the corresponding passage (that is, stanza 2) in In Memoriam 122, one becomes aware of another ambiguity. For in section 122 the poet does not write "my strong imagination" but "The strong imagination" (my italics). Given the fact that the essential "meaning" in both passages resolves into a sense of universal harmony, and looking for the apparent precipitator of this sense of harmony, one arrives in section 95 at an intense awareness of the "living soul", and in section 122 at the "strong imagination". Inevitably one must consider whether the "living soul" and the "strong imagination" might represent the same noumenon.

Tennyson's first impression of the "living soul" was that it was the soul of Arthur Hallam. But he was later beset by doubts and changed the phrase from "his living soul" to "the living soul", and glossed the latter phrase as "The Deity, maybe" (R296:n.xcv 36). If the "living soul" is equated with "the strong imagination" and the "living soul" is taken to be that of Hallam, then the "strong imagination" is not that of the poet, but that of Hallam. It would follow, then, that Hallam is the primum mobile of the inspirational process. However, such a conclusion would be limiting, since it would not account for poems written before Tennyson knew Arthur Hallam.

Alternatively, if the "living soul" is that of the Deity, then the "strong imagination" must also be associated with the Deity - and, in Tennyson's oeuvre, the imagination is indeed a God-like, as well as a God-given, function. A crucial passage in "Armageddon" attests to this assertion - and, because it is crucial, I shall quote it again:

I felt my soul grow godlike, and my spirit
 With supernatural excitation bound
 Within me, and my mental eye grew large
 With such a vast circumference of thought,
 That, in my vanity, I seemed to stand
 Upon the outward verge and bound alone
 Of God's omniscience.

.....

I wondered with deep wonder at myself:
 My mind seemed winged with knowledge and the
 strength
 Of holy musings and immense Ideas,
 Even to Infinitude. All sense of Time
 And Being and Place was swallowed up and lost
 Within a victory of boundless thought.
 I was part of the Unchangeable,
 A scintillation of Eternal Mind,
 Remixed and burning with its parent fire.

Yea! in that hour I could have fallen down
 Before my own strong soul and worshipped it.

(R3:II.21-27, 40-50)

The association of the "strong imagination", that "roll[s] / A sphere of stars" about the poet's soul, with a Deity is enhanced by the recollection of a lovely and rather similar line from one of the songs in The Princess: "Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars" (R286:vii.167). The reference is, of course, to the young maiden Danaë who, while imprisoned, was impregnated by Zeus, who came to her in the form of a shower of gold (E. Hamilton 1969, 142). Although Tennyson's line has no overt reference to a god, the allusion to Danaë certainly points to one. But the Danaë myth was strongly associated in Tennyson's mind with Arthur Hallam, whose last letter to Tennyson, written on 6 September 1833, refers enthusiastically to Titian's Danaë, seen by the young man on his travels in Europe. Hallam ends the account: "Do you just write as perfect a Danaë" (Kolb 1981, 785).

The overt association of Hallam with Christ in In Memoriam has been rehearsed by several critics (e.g., Moore 1963, 165-66; Ryals 1962, 383-402; Louw 1985, 152-87). But, as I hope I have shown in my commentary on lines 5-8 of In Memoriam 122, the commingling of images suggestive of God and of Hallam respectively is an even deeper and more pervasive process than is generally realized.

However, in the third stanza of In Memoriam 122, the poet does not appear to be beset by the kind of doubts that made him, in In Memoriam 95, change "his living soul" to "the

living soul". He addresses Hallam, or Hallam's spirit, directly:

If thou wert with me [then], and the grave
Divide us not, be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow....

(IM 122:9-11)

According to Knowles, Tennyson indicated that he wished the clause, "If thou wert with me", to be interpreted as "at all helping me - then" (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 280). But the imagery of penetration ("enter in at breast and brow" - line 91) recalls a striking textual revision in In Memoriam 93. For in that lyric, line 13 ("Descend, and touch, and enter" - my italics) originally read "Stoop soul & [sic] touch me: wed me..." (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 110 - my italics). One begins to detect possible sexual resonances. Clearly the metaphor of Danaë's being impregnated by Zeus in the guise of a shower of gold has erotic connotations, and these tend to be carried over to the allusive lines of In Memoriam 122 in which the poet recalls feeling "The strong imagination roll / A sphere of stars" about his soul (line 6-7).

"Now sleeps the crimson petal..." is one of Tennyson's most erotic poems (R286:vii.161²-74). Lang and Shannon speak of its "marvellous eroticism" (Lang and Shannon 1982, xxvi), and Ricks writes, most aptly, that in this lyric "Tennyson succeeds in the hardest task of all: distinguishing love from lust in erotic poetry" (1972, 202).

I wish to stress the relevance of the closing lines of "Now sleeps the crimson petal" ("So fold thyself, my dearest,

thou, and slip / Into my bosom and be lost in me" - my italics) to lines 10-11 of In Memoriam 122 ("be with me now, / And enter in at breast and brow" - my italics). But I shall quote the whole of the lyric from The Princess because I also wish to point out a tenuous link between erotic experience and paranormal experience:

'Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white;
Nor waves the cypress in the palace walk;
Nor winks the gold fin in the porphyry font:
The fire-fly wakens: waken thou with me.

Now droops the milkwhite peacock like a ghost,
And like a ghost she glimmers on to me.

Now lies the Earth all Danaë to the stars,
And all thy heart lies open unto me.

Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves
A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me.

Now folds the lily all her sweetness up,
And slips into the bosom of the lake:
So fold thyself, my dearest, thou, and slip
Into my bosom and be lost in me.'

(R286:VII.161-74)

The image of the meteor ("Now slides the silent meteor on" - line 169) recalls a similar image, used to suggest Lancelot's vigorous masculinity in "The Lady of Shalott":

As often through the purple night,
Below the starry clusters bright,
Some bearded meteor, trailing light,
Moves over still Shalott.

(R159:96-99)

Of course, so far as the song from The Princess is concerned, lines 169-70 are metaphorical ("Now slides the silent meteor on, and leaves / A shining furrow, as thy thoughts in me").

These lines beautifully encapsulate the idea of the loved one's thoughts being indelibly engraved on the mind and heart of the speaker. Although there are no similarities of diction, this is essentially the same idea as that which Tennyson was to express at greater length in In Memoriam 95:

I read
 Of that glad year which once had been,
 In those fall'n leaves which kept their green,
 The noble letters of the dead:

And strangely on the silence broke
 The silent-speaking words, and strange
 Was love's dumb cry defying change
 To test his worth; and strangely spoke

The faith, the vigour, bold to dwell
 On doubts that drive the coward back,
 And keen thro' wordy snares to track
 Suggestion to her inmost cell.

So word by word, and line by line,
 The dead man touch'd me from the past,
 And all at once it seem'd at last
 The living soul was flash'd on mine....

(lines 21-36)

What the poet is talking about is a kind of consummation, albeit spiritual. One is tempted to use the term "ghostly consummation", rather than "spiritual", because a rather similar idea is detectable, though muted or repressed, in "Now sleeps the crimson petal...." I refer to the line which reads: "And like a ghost she glimmers on to me" (R286:VII.166). This line anticipates one of the sections of In Memoriam which carries a hint of subjective paranormal experience - that is, section 67, which begins, "When on my bed the moonlight falls...." The lyric ends thus:

...in the dark church like a ghost
 Thy tablet glimmers to the dawn.

(IM 67:15-16)

The idea of spiritual or ghostly conjunction is most clearly expressed in In Memoriam 93, which anticipates the experience of section 95. Lines 5-8 of section 93 read:

No visual shade of some one lost,
 But he, the Spirit himself, may come
 Where all the nerve of sense is numb;
 Spirit to Spirit, Ghost to Ghost.

As I have said, Tennyson - in section 122 - implores
 Hallam to

...enter in at breast and brow,
 Till all my blood, a fuller wave,
 Be quicken'd with a livelier breath....

(IM 122:11-13)

The image of the poet's "blood" being "quicken'd" to a "fuller wave" suggests the pulsation or throbbing which I have postulated may be linked with Tennyson's epilepsy. Once again air-in-motion is the metaphor employed to suggest the quickening power ("a livelier breath") through which the poet will "slip the thoughts of life and death" (line 16). Since this quickening is anticipated as the result of Hallam's spirit's entering in "at breast and brow", the "livelier breath" must, at least in the poet's mind, be attributable to, or associated with, the spirit of Hallam.

The "livelier breath" that causes the poet to "slip the thoughts of life and death" during a period of altered

consciousness (IM 122:12-16) is well-nigh identical with the "ambrosial air" that - in In Memoriam 86 - "sigh[s] / The full new life" into the poet's body ("frame" - line 11) until the fancy is liberated from thoughts of "Doubt and Death" in a similar state of consciousness (IM 86:9-12). The parallel passage in section 122 reads:

...all the breeze of Fancy blows,
 And every dew-drop paints a bow,
 The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
 And every thought breaks out a rose.

(IM 122:17-20)

The terms in which the experience is related include references to a rainbow (line 18), strange flashes of light (line 19) and a kind of rosy effusion ("every thought breaks out a rose" - line 20). The rose-coloured tint of the subjective paranormal experience described in section 122 is apparently a slightly less intense form of the "crimson" tint that seems to suffuse the poet's perceptions in In Memoriam 86 - a tint I have associated with epileptic experience, as did Dostoevsky in his own case (Rice 1985, 29).

In a study which attempted to correlate temporal lobe symptomatology and "psychic" experience, one subject reported that she had "twice come across the unexplained smell of a 'breeze of roses'. With it she felt a presence. No-one has smelt this with her. The 'breeze of roses' is a 'perfume', a 'sweetness', 'beautiful'" (Neppe 1979, 112). The experience thus recounted would appear to have much in common with those described by Tennyson in In Memoriam 86 and In Memoriam 122 respectively.

Another experience described by the same research subject in Neppe's study has elements in common with In Memoriam 95; for the experience seems to have been characterized by a sense of dissolving boundaries and a perception of universal harmony. The subject reported: "'...my body felt like the whole room, I then was the room and the room was me, and then I was the universe and then I was looking down on earth and I knew everything and love was intense'". This cognitive experience apparently occurred, without precipitation, in a state of clear consciousness. The same subject also experienced, at various times, musical hallucinations, depersonalization, derealization, déjà vu and forced thinking - that is, "compulsive thoughts". And there were times when she felt "unbelievably sad" for several days - and for no apparent reason. Very similar symptoms were experienced, as I have pointed out, by Tennyson. In summing up his patient's symptomatology, Neppe classifies depersonalization, derealization and déjà vu as "relatively non-specific features".² He regards the compulsive thoughts, as well as the olfactory hallucinations as "SPEs." He postulates that the feeling of sadness described by the subject is "a possible ictal depression". He views the ictal depression and musical hallucinations as "symptoms of possible temporal lobe origin". Neppe concludes his summing up by pointing out that the subject's cognitive experience, "if organic, would have had origins in the temporal lobe" (1979, 112-13). However, in showing how many symptoms Neppe's subject ("No.11") had in common with Tennyson, I have

digressed from the main topic of the particular subjective paranormal experience in which Tennyson sensed a sweet breeze associated with a red or rosy colour.

I claimed earlier that the lyric beginning "Now sleeps the crimson petal..." is one of Tennyson's most erotic poems. I also highlighted certain lines ("...like a ghost she glimmers on to me" and "Now lies the earth all Danaë to the stars" - R286:VII.166, 167), and suggested a tenuous link between erotic experience and paranormal experience. In In Memoriam 95 the commingling of souls is so intimate as to be almost congruent with a description of sexual union: "The living soul was flash'd on mine, // And mine in this was wound..." (line 36-37). Similarly, in In Memoriam 122 the ecstatic experience is presented in almost orgasmic terms:

...be with me now,
And enter in at breast and brow,
Till all my blood, a fuller wave,

Be quicken'd with a livelier breath,
And like an inconsiderate boy,
As in the former flash of joy,
I slip the thoughts of life and death;

And all the breeze of Fancy blows,
And every dew-drop paints a bow,
The wizard lightnings deeply glow,
And every thought breaks out a rose.

(IM 122:10-20)

Such a metaphorically "sexual" interpretation would offer the advantage of accounting for a simile ("like an inconsiderate boy" - line 14) which has never, so far as I am aware, been adequately explained.³ In terms of the sexual metaphor, the phrase "inconsiderate boy" might be glossed as a young,

inexperienced and over-hasty lover.

However, in suggesting that this lyric may have sexual overtones, I am not implying that a homosexual relationship existed between Tennyson and Arthur Hallam: I do not believe it did. What I am suggesting is that in some cases epileptic experience may seem to include an erotic or pseudo-erotic component. Thus Dostoevsky, who in the period from 1860-1865 described his aura as "direct experience of God; blessedness / bliss; joy", had earlier described it in terms of erotic sensation (Rice 1985, 85). He wrote of "voluptuousness seizing the entire body". Rice accounts for the anomaly in the following way:

Apparently there was in fact a component of elevated mood in Dostoevsky's aura, perhaps a sensation that combined sexual and religious responses (well attested in some modern cases of temporal lobe epilepsy)....

(1985, 20)

It must also be pointed out, however, that the religious experiences of Christian mystics are sometimes couched in erotic language. Gordon S. Wakefield notes that the Puritans, for instance

...were prolific in their commentaries on the Song of Songs. Erotic language came naturally to them to describe the intensity of union with Christ, for...the Song was there in the canon of Scripture, with a long tradition of allegorical exegesis...

(1986, 444)

C.P.M. Jones, in "Mysticism, Human and Divine", says that "there seem to be four constants in mystical experience", and

lists them:

1. the mystic is in touch with an 'object' which is invisible, intangible and inaccessible, beyond sensual contact;
2. this 'object' is inexhaustible, infinite, and incomprehensible (in the purest sense, cannot be captured or surrounded), and therefore is also inexpressible, beyond full description;
3. the contact is intuitive and 'immediate' (unmediated) and direct, even if after introduction by a third party or book;
4. even so there is an inward affinity between the 'object' and the person, an attraction or fascination, even leading to mutual interpenetration or communion.

(1986, 19-20)

All four of these diagnostic criteria would be satisfied in the case of the experience described in In Memoriam 95. Jones's reference to the sense of "mutual interpenetration or communion" which may form part of mystical experience is especially worth noting in the light of my statement on page 364 that "the commingling of souls in In Memoriam 95 (lines 36-37) is so intimate as to be almost congruent with a description of sexual union". And Ellenberger points out that modern psychiatry is "inclined to admit the existence of an interior connection between religion and the sexual instinct" (1970, 688). Nevertheless, a possibly erotic component in his epileptic aura may have caused Tennyson some anxiety, and may have been responsible for the sexual repression and suppression which are sometimes evident in his poetry (Louw 1985, 128).

In The Princess the poet's description of one of the

Prince's "weird seizures" certainly suggests a blending of the erotic and the sublime. The Prince recalls:

...On a sudden my strange seizure came
 Upon me, the weird vision of our house:
 The Princess Ida seemed a hollow show,
 Her gay-furred cats a painted fantasy,
 Her college and her maidens, empty masks,
 And I myself the shadow of a dream,
 For all things were and were not. Yet I felt
 My heart beat thick with passion and with awe....

(R286:III.167-74; my italics)

My reading of In Memoriam 122 arose out of my discussion of the air-in-motion metaphor in Tennyson's poetry in general, and in In Memoriam in particular. It is to that theme that I must now return; for it is necessary to point out that the breeze in sections 86 and 122 respectively also appears in section 95, where Tennyson seems to interpret it as an endorsement of the trance experience. I believe that it may actually arise out of the trance experience: the breeze may represent a subjective perception related to temporal lobe dysfunction:

...suck'd from out the distant gloom
 A breeze began to tremble o'er
 The large leaves of the sycamore,
 And fluctuate all the still perfume....

(IM 95:53-56)

This stanza has a great deal in common with sections 86 and 122. Each of them in its own way implicitly or explicitly links air-in-motion ("the stirring air" - IM 116:5) with the "life re-orient out of dust" (IM 116:6), so that in the antepenultimate lyric of In Memoriam the poet is able to

assert with conviction, "Thy voice is on the rolling air..." (IM 130:1).

Rice has commented on Dostoevsky's "sense of parapsychological phenomena surrounding his seizures" (1985, 10). I believe that the subjective paranormal experiences recorded in Tennyson's poetry - including the In Memoriam lyrics I have examined in connection with the air-in-motion metaphor - are also epileptic in origin. That is, they are aspects of the poet's temporal lobe epileptic aura, or an associated "dreamy state". A "specific 'breeze' sensation (passing from the extremities to the head before a seizure)" has been reported in cases of epilepsy (Rice 1985, 9).

It is particularly interesting to note that the word "aura" actually means "breath" or "breeze" in several languages, including Russian (Rice 1985, 290), Greek (OED) and Hebrew. Stevie Davies and William B. Hunter have noted that the

...Hebrew word for God's spirit used in the Old Testament is Ruah, connoting God's breath, or the motion of breathing. It is associated with creativity, enlightenment, God's manifesting himself within the Creation, and the gift of prophetic inspiration.

(1988, 103)

It becomes increasingly clear that the air-in-motion metaphor is applicable not only in many cases of epileptic aura and Romantic "inspiration" but also in religious ecstasy.

My principal concern in this study has been to elucidate the link between poetry and pathology. Writing in more general terms about that link, Ernst Kris has this to say:

From what is known at present we may deduce that the artist whose creative capacities are close to potential pathology will find his place more easily in "romantic" than in "classical" periods of art....⁴ However, the very contrast we mention is a narrow one; we may come close to relevant dichotomies when we think of cultural conditions in which skill alone predominates and is seen as value in art and others where skill without inspiration is held in low esteem - and others again where inspiration with even less skill becomes acceptable and admired.

(1952, 30)

Kris envisages the process of artistic creation as being composed of two phases. He stresses that in designating these two phases "inspiration" and "elaboration" he is referring to two extremes, for the degree of demarcation between the two phases is a variable factor, and they may merge into each other to a greater or lesser extent, and in various ways. Nevertheless, Kris essays that "inspiration" is "characterized by the feeling of being driven, the experience of rapture and the conviction that an outside agent acts through the [artistic] creator", while in "elaboration" the "experience of purposeful organization and the intent to solve a problem predominate" (1952, 54).

The "feeling of being driven" often manifests itself in the poetry as a sensation of being driven before the wind. In exemplification one might cite Tennyson's poem "Youth" (R223: 73, 100-01) or Shelley's Adonais, poems which I have already examined in some detail (pages 124-36, 332-34 above). Frequently imagery of wind or whirlwind conveys the impression that an "outside agent" is at work. This is the impression created by a line ("A whirlwind caught and bore us") in Julian's dramatic account of a striking subjective paranormal

experience in The Lover's Tale:

...all at once

That painted vessel, as with inner life,
 Began to heave upon that painted sea;
 An earthquake, my loud heart-beats, made the ground
 Reel under us, and all at once, soul, life
 And breath and motion, past and flowed away
 To those unreal billows: round and round
A whirlwind caught and bore us; mighty gyres
Rapid and vast, of hissing spray wind-driven
Far through the dizzy dark. Aloud she shrieked;
 My heart was cloven with pain; I wound my arms
 About her: we whirled giddily; the wind
 Sung; but I clasped her without fear: her weight
 Shrank in my grasp, and over my dim eyes,
 And parted lips which drank her breath, down-hung
 The jaws of Death: I, groaning, from me flung
 Her empty phantom: all the sway and whirl
 Of the storm dropt to windless calm, and I
 Down weltered through the dark ever and ever.

(R153:II.187-205; my italics)

Sometimes the sensation of being driven, which Kris sees as part of the inspirational experience, is manifested without overt reference to wind. This is the case in Tennyson's "Semele" (R220), where a whirlwind effect is created by means of a description of the "giddily" rushing Bacchanalian rout. I quote the poem in its entirety, for I believe it is a parable of poetic inspiration, and it also brings together most illustratively the various images I have associated with temporal lobe epilepsy.

As Ricks explains, "Semele insisted on Zeus's appearing [to her] in his majesty as god of lightning, and [she] was burnt to death; but her child Bacchus (Dionysus) was saved from the flames and later born from Zeus" (R220, headnote). The poem reads:

I wished to see him: who may feel
 His light and live? He comes.
 The blast of Godhead bursts the doors.
 This mortal house is all too narrow
 To enclose the wonder.
 His mighty hands entwine
 The triple forks and when he speaks
 The crown of starlight shudders round
 Ambrosial temples. Over me,
 Fluttering in Elysian airs
 His green and azure mantles float in wavy
 Foldings, and melodious thunder
 Wheels in circles.
 But thou, my son, who shalt be born
 When I am ashes, to delight the world -
 Now with measured cymbal-clash
 Moving on to victory;
 Now on music-rolling golden orbs,
 A sliding throne, voluptuously
 Panther-drawn,
 To throbbings of the thundrous gong,
 And melody o' the merrily-blowing flute;
 Now with troops of clamorous revellers,
 Noisily, merrily,
 Rapidly, giddily,
 Rioting, triumphing,
 Bacchanalians,
 Rushing in cadence,
 All in order,
 Plunging down the viney valleys[.]

More commonly, however, the sense of being driven or controlled by an outside agency is linked, in Tennyson's poetry, to images of wind or whirlwind. For example, in "On Sublimity" (R26) the poet writes:

All hail, Sublimity! thou lofty one,
 For thou dost walk upon the blast, and gird
 Thy majesty with terrors, and thy throne
 Is on the whirlwind, and thy voice is heard
 In thunders and in shakings....

(R26:51-55; my italics)

The poem's closing stanza indicates that poetry is linked to what Kris calls "the experience of rapture". Tennyson writes:

Then they started from their places,
 Moved with violence, changed in hue,
 Caught each other with wild grimaces,
 Half-invisible to the view,
 Wheeling with precipitate paces
 To the melody, till they flew,
 Hair, and eyes, and limbs, and faces,
 Twisted hard in fierce embraces,
 Like to Furies, like to Graces,
 Dashed together in blinding dew:
 Till, killed with some luxurious agony,
 The nerve-dissolving melody
 Fluttered headlong from the sky.

(R277:14-45)

It is pertinent to stress that the images "driving towards expression" in this passage belong to that constellation which I have investigated in terms of temporal lobe symptomatology: images of arches (lines 18, 30), orbs (line 25) and rainbows (line 32); of star-like light-effects ("Sleet of diamond-drift and pearly hail" - line 22); of music (lines 17, 23, 38) and song (lines 25, 27); of "torrent" (line 32) and "gale" (line 25) or wind; of whirling (line 29) and wheeling (line 37); and throbbing and palpitating (line 28).

Though "inspiration" is characterized by a flow of thoughts and images "driving toward expression", the phase which Kris terms "elaboration" "has many features in common with what characterizes 'work' - dedication and concentration" (1952, 59). Tennyson, in the closing paragraph of "The Holy Grail" (R471), that most enigmatic of the Idylls of the King, advocates a balance between inspiration or "vision" on the one hand, and dedication and concentration on the other. In the persona of King Arthur, he alludes to the dangers inherent in undisciplined pursuit of the vision, and goes on to state his position:

...some among you held, that if the King
 Had seen the sight he would have sworn the vow:
 Not easily, seeing that the King must guard
 That which he rules, and is but as the hind
 To whom a space of land is given to plow.
 Who may not wander from the allotted field
 Before his work be done; but, being done,
 Let visions of the night or of the day
 Come, as they will; and many a time they come,
 Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
 This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
 This air that smites his forehead is not air
 But vision - yea, his very hand and foot -
 In moments when he feels he cannot die,
 And knows himself no vision to himself,
 Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
 Who rose again...

(R471:899-915).

In "The Holy Grail" the narrator (Sir Percivale) closes his narrative with the words "'So spake the King: I knew not all he meant'" (line 916). And "The Holy Grail" is indeed an enigmatic piece of work. Furthermore, Tennyson's supposedly elucidatory comments are scarcely helpful. On the one hand, he had for a considerable time doubted whether the subject of the Grail "could be handled...without incurring a charge of irreverence." For, he added, it "would be too much like playing with sacred things. The old writers believed in the Sangraal" (3/10/1859; Lang and Shannon 1987, 244; qtd. R471, headnote). On the other hand, however, Tennyson said, "The Holy Grail is one of the most imaginative of my poems. I have expressed there my strong feeling as to the Reality of the Unseen" (R471, headnote). But as Clyde Ryals has recently pointed out,

...in his notes...the poet undermines this 'Reality' by saying of the Grail Quest, 'It was a time of storms when men could imagine miracles, and so storm is emphasized' [R471:n.491], and by saying of Bors's

'vision of the Grail, 'It might have been a meteor'
[R471:n.691-2].

(1989, 101)

Tennyson seemed to be bent on accounting naturally for the apparently supernatural phenomena described by the knights in "The Holy Grail" (Ryals 1989, 101-02).

"The Holy Grail" was published in 1869 (R471, headnote). According to Martin, in 1868 Tennyson believed that the Grail "was the product of man's imagination" (1980, 478). Certainly King Arthur's closing words, "Ye have seen what ye have seen", appear to emphasize the essential subjectivity reflected in the various phenomena interpreted as visions of the Grail. These "visions" may be regarded, then, as subjective paranormal experiences, and my task at this point is to show that these experiences are related in terms of the cluster of images I have deemed to be of epileptic origin in Tennyson. Of course, in depicting the Grail visions, Tennyson would probably have remembered details of Biblical visions. For example, he may have been recalling a phenomenon associated with one of Isaiah's visions when he wrote that King Arthur, returning to Camelot after the supposed appearance there of the Holy Grail, cries:

"Lo, there! the roofs
Of our great hall are rolled in thunder-smoke!["]

(lines 219-20)

For Isaiah, telling of a vision of seraphim worshipping at the throne of God, goes on to say "...the posts of the door moved...and the house was filled with smoke" (Isaiah 6.4).

Moreover, some of the essential features of the Grail vision were taken over from Malory: for example, the "red samite" (Malory XVII.15; Vinaver 1973, II; 1015) or "crimson samite" (R471:844) that covers the vessel, and the "many angels" (Malory XVII.15; Vinaver 1973, II; 1015) or "Great angels" (R471:845) that surround it. The Grail is also associated, in Malory, with "thunder", a "blast" of wind, a "sonnebeame" and "good odoures" (Malory XIII.7; Vinaver 1973, II, 865) - all images which would have reminded Tennyson of his own epileptic, or "trance" experience. So I do not deny the obvious influence of Malory; but I must point out that the "visionary" images under consideration in Tennyson's version of "The Holy Grail" occur and recur in his poetry from the very outset of his artistic career, and frequently in absolutely non-visionary contexts. In "constructing", as it were, the visions of the various characters in "The Holy Grail" narrative, Tennyson drew, I believe, on his own experiences. But the immediacy and emotive force of his lyric renditions of those experiences is lacking here, possibly because of the poet's ambivalent attitude to his subject.

This ambivalence, of which I shall have more to say in due course, goes hand in hand with ambiguity, and is reflected in the Idylls as a whole:

Much of Idylls of the King is ambiguous, indeed indeterminate. We can never know the truth of Arthur's birth, whether he is illegitimate or a son of Gorlois or of Uther, or of supernatural origin. As Merlin asks rhetorically, "where is he who knows?" It is a matter of individual perception: "And truth is this to me, and that to thee" ("The Coming of Arthur", lines 409, 406)...[Also], we cannot tell whether Arthur goes to paradise or

merely disappears into nothingness; that is, we cannot know whether the ending of the poem is pessimistic or optimistic. Arthur's mind is "clouded with a doubt" as he wonders "if indeed I go" ("The Passing of Arthur", lines 425-26), and Bedivere's account of what happens is reported in qualified language in terms of "seemed", "as", "as if", and "like". As Kerry McSweeney observes [1981, 117], the ending of the Idylls "is neither optimistic nor pessimistic, it is indeterminate, offering alternative possibilities."

(Ryals 1989, 104-05)

I shall argue that Tennyson's treatment of the Grail legend is even more ambivalent than critics have perceived, especially his treatment of Galahad. Of course, the very use of the term Idyll for these poems raises problems, if one considers the definition of Idyll offered in the Princeton Encyclopaedia of Poetry and Poetics: "A short poem or prose composition which deals charmingly with rustic life; ordinarily it describes a picturesque rural scene of gentle beauty and innocent tranquillity and narrates a story of some simple sort of happiness" (Congleton 1975, 362). Though Camelot in the time of its greatest glory may have provided such an "idyllic" setting and subject, there is little of "innocent tranquillity" and "simple...happiness" in Tennyson's epic. It definitely does not present "'a picture of life as the human spirit wishes it to be, a presentation of the chosen moments of earthly content'" (Congleton 1975, 362; qtg. Martha Hale Shackford). Indeed, while acknowledging that among the works of the major writers in English literature "there is scarcely a poem to meet these specifications", the Princeton Encyclopaedia refers to Tennyson's "use, or abuse" of the term idyll in the Idylls of the King (Congleton 1975, 363; my

italics).

However, a consideration of both the generic nomenclature and the general ambiguities inherent in the Idylls of the King is outside the province of this study.⁵ I must confine my explorations to subjective paranormal experiences in "The Holy Grail". But I cannot escape the problem of the poet's ambivalent attitude.

McSweeney has written of "the relativity of truth to point of view" and of the "epistemological, religious, and political dilemmas" consequent on this relativity (1981, 99). Such dilemmas result from the fact that, though Tennyson had, in the Idylls of the King, set out to write a very "public" poem - a poem of national relevance (Morris 1974, 88; Turner 1989, 36) - he was at the same time unable to prevent "The Holy Grail" developing into a very private poem, a poem in which he explored once more both the euphoria and the doubts and fears associated with his own subjective paranormal experiences. The conflict between the public and the private aspects of the poem results in an unresolved ambivalence of viewpoint that probably weakens the poem.

Ambivalence of viewpoint ("Two Voices") was a regular feature of Tennyson's poetry, of course. But he was generally able to accommodate both "voices", often through sublimation. This is the case, for example, in In Memoriam, where his repressed anxieties over the nature of his feelings for Hallam are overcome by the virtual sublimation of Hallam in Christ.

However, I believe that in "The Holy Grail" Tennyson was attempting to work through an aspect of his subjective

paranormal experience which he found potentially so subversive - religiously speaking - that sublimation was not possible. The anxiety-provoking material remains repressed, but undermines his poetic intentions at critical points, thereby clouding the poem's "parabolic drift" (R463-476, headnote) and providing an exemplifying parallel to Merlin's riddling reference to "'Confusion, and illusion, and relation, / Elusion, and occasion, and evasion'" ("Gareth & Lynette", lines 281-82). A close reading of some relevant passages will, I hope, help to clarify my "drift".

In "The Holy Grail" the first person to see the "holy thing" - the cup - is Sir Percivale's sister, a nun (R471:67). It appears that her religious vocation is the result of a thwarted, and subsequently sublimated, love affair:

...never maiden glowed,
 But that was in her earlier maidenhood,
 With such a fervent flame of human love,
 Which being rudely blunted, glanced and shot
 Only to holy things; to prayer and praise
 She gave herself, to fast and alms.

(R471:72-77)

This "holy maid" (line 72) relays her experience of the Grail to her brother:

..."O my brother Percivale," she said,
 "Sweet brother, I have seen the Holy Grail:
 For, waked at dead of night, I heard a sound
 As of a silver horn from o'er the hills
 Blown, and I thought, 'It is not Arthur's use
 To hunt by moonlight;' and the slender sound
 As from a distance beyond distance grew
 Coming upon me - O never harp nor horn,
 Nor aught we blow with breath, or touch with hand,
 Was like that music as it came; and then

Streamed through my cell a cold and silver beam,
 And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail,
 Rose-red with beatings in it, as if alive,
 Till all the white walls of my cell were dyed
 With rosy colours leaping on the wall;
 And then the music faded, and the Grail
 Past, and the beam decayed, and from the walls
 The rosy quiverings died into the night.["]

(lines 106-23).

While not denying that in many respects "the Grail appearances are faithful to Malory" (Gray 1980, 348), I must once again stress that many of the images used here to evoke the apparently mystical moment will be readily recognized as having been pointed out in earlier poems that I have associated with epileptic experience: complex "hallucinations" involving "music" (line 115); "beatings" (line 118) or "quiverings" (line 123) which are forms of throbbing or pulsation; a silver beam of light (line 116); "Rose-red" or "rosy colours" (lines 118, 120); and a sense of "distance" (line 112).

It could be said that the nun's account of religious ecstasy inflames the imagination of Sir Galahad (lines 139-65). But such a bald statement would fail to take account of the way in which the poet treats this scene. For it is presented almost as a seduction of the pure knight by the "holy nun" (line 859):

...she, the wan sweet maiden, shore away
 Clean from her forehead all that wealth of hair
 Which made a silken mat-work for her feet;
 And out of this she plaited broad and long
 A strong sword-belt, and wove with silver thread
 And crimson in the belt a strange device,
 A crimson grail within a silver beam;
 And saw the bright boy-knight, and bound it on him,
 Saying, "My knight, my love, my knight of heaven,

O thou, my love, whose love is one with mine,
 I, maiden, round thee, maiden, bind my belt.
 Go forth, for thou shalt see what I have seen,
 And break through all, till one will crown thee king
 Far in the spiritual city"....

(lines 149-62)

That is, calling him "my love, whose love is one with mine", she encircles him or "bind[s]" him with her belt in a ritual that is almost a parallel - not to say a parody - of the wedding service, in which the "marriage" finger is symbolically encircled with a ring. And what follows is related in metaphors of repressed sexuality:

...as she spake
 She sent the deathless passion in her eyes
 Through him, and made him hers, and laid her mind
 On him....

(lines 162-65)

Consequently, Galahad "believed in her belief" (line 165). At a later stage in the poem, Galahad will exercise a similar hypnotic effect on Percivale, as the latter recalls:

...his eye, dwelling on mine,
 Drew me, with power upon me, till I grew
 One with him, to believe as he believed.

(lines 485-87)

I have pointed out that the nun's "hypnosis" of Galahad is described "in metaphors of repressed sexuality". It has been suggested that religious ecstasy and erotic emotions may sometimes go hand in hand (see pages 365-66 of this study). And Tennyson's account of the way in which the "holy nun" inspires the "pure knight" might seem to bear this out. Of

course, the blending or overlap of religious and secular love is not new. It goes back at least as far as the Bible, in which the Church is described as the bride of Christ. But the perceptive literary reader does not, I think, feel comfortable with the blending of the religious and the erotic in the passages from "The Holy Grail" quoted above. The reader's discomfort may arise partly as a result of the terms in which the "holy maid" (line 72) has been presented. For the poet pointedly refers to her long hair (lines 150-51). And earlier we were told that the nun had

...prayed and fasted, till the sun
 Shone, and the wind blew, through her, and
 [Percivale] thought
She might have risen and floated when [he] saw her.

(lines 98-100; my italics)

These details of a lady with long hair (lines 150-51) an almost supernatural lightness (lines 100), and passionate eyes (line 163) tend to recall "La Belle Dame Sans Merci" ("Her hair was long, her foot was light, / And her eyes were wild" - lines 15-16; Allott 1972, 503). In Keats's poem the speaker - who, like Sir Galahad is a "knight-at-arms (line 1) - has a vision:

I saw pale kings, and princes too,
 Pale warriors, death-pale were they all;
 They cried - 'La Belle Dame Sans Merci
 Hath thee in thrall!'

(lines 37-40; Allott 1972, 505)

I scarcely need to point out that these sentiments correspond rather closely with those expressed by Sir Gawain at the end

of Tennyson's Grail Idyll. Gawain says: "...my good friend Percivale, / Thy holy nun and thou have driven men mad" (lines 858-59). A modern critic has said the nun "is holy, but perhaps not wholesomely so" (Hellstrom 1972, 124).

Hallam Tennyson, in the Memoir (II, 63) records an entry from his mother's journal for January 1869: "A. read 'The Holy Grail' to the Bradleys, explaining the realism and symbolism, and how the natural, if people cared, could always be made to account for the supernatural."⁶ Exactly how the natural could be made to account for the supernatural Emily does not say. And Hallam Tennyson's elaboration is scarcely elucidatory. He writes that the poet

...pointed out the difference between the five visions of the Grail, as seen by the Holy Nun, Sir Galahad, Sir Percivale, Sir Lancelot, Sir Bors, according to their different, their own peculiar natures and circumstances, and the perfection or imperfection of their Christianity. He dwelt on the mystical treatment of every part of his subject, and said the key is to be found in a careful reading of Sir Percivale's vision and subsequent fall and nineteenth century temptations.

(Memoir II, 63)

But Celia Morris points out that, while in Malory Percivale is tempted by a demon in disguise, in Tennyson's version of the story the woman in question is a princess, and known to Percivale. Morris writes:

Rather than offering illicit sexual delights, she [the Princess] represents the promise of domestic affection and social usefulness. The combination is essentially the one Tennyson exalts throughout the Idylls, and we cannot be sure how he wants us to judge Percivale's rejection of the lady.

(1974, 92-93).

\...all at once [Percivale recalls]...we heard
 A cracking and a riving of roofs,
 A rending, and a blast, and overhead
 Thunder, and in the thunder was a cry.
 And in the blast there smote along the hall
 A beam of light seven times more clear
 than day:
 And down the long beam stole the Holy Grail
 All over covered with a luminous cloud,
 And none might see who bare it, and it past.[']

(lines 182-90)

The supposedly mystical experience is related in images redolent of auditory hallucination: strange noises (line 182-84), thunder, (line 185) the sound of wind (line 186) and a "cry" (line 185). The auditory hallucination (if such it be) is accompanied by a visual hallucination ("A beam of light" - line 187). The Grail itself, however, is not visible: it is covered with "a luminous cloud" (line 189). Only later does Galahad claim to have seen the vessel on this occasion (lines 288-92). However,

...every knight beheld his fellow's face
 As in a glory, and all the knights arose,
 And staring each at other like dumb men
 Stood....

(lines 191-94)

It would appear that the knights are subject to a kind of mutual suggestion. Ellenberger, in The Discovery of the Unconscious, points out that the

...role of mutual suggestion was...perceived by the early magnetists, who, following Mesmer's example, treated patients in groups.... It had been noted that a person could be made more receptive by the mere fact of seeing others hypnotized.

(1970, 114)

One of the ironies of the situation in Tennyson's version of the story lies in the fact that the Quest of the Holy Grail, which should have been a spiritual quest in the religious sense, actually pertains to a different spirit. It seems to arise out of a spirit of competitiveness that is simply another version of that which spurs the knights on to fight for victory in the lists. Sir Percivale's account is revealing. He says:

'I sware a vow before them all, that I,
 Because I had not seen the Grail, would ride
 A twelvemonth and a day in quest of it,
 Until I found and saw it, as the nun
 My sister saw it; and Galahad sware the vow,
 And good Sir Bors, our Lancelot's cousin, sware,
 And Lancelot sware, and many among the knights,
 And Gawain sware, and louder than the rest.'

(lines 195-202)

The King, discovering what has transpired in his absence, penetrates to the heart of the situation:

...one hath seen, and all the blind will see.

(line 313)

King Arthur laments that opportunities for performing good deeds and noble feats will be lost while his knights "follow wandering fires / Lost in the quagmire" (lines 319-20).

Leaving Camelot after the farewell tournament which had been proposed by the King, Percivale is at first "lifted up in heart", as he thinks of his "late-shown prowess in the lists", and of how his "Strong lance had beaten down the knights, / So many and famous names" (lines 362-64). It may be relevant to note that in the nineteenth century it was discovered that

under hypnosis the subject is often "able to display greater physical strength than he believes himself capable of in his normal state" (Ellenberger 1970, 115).

However, Percivale's elation, and his optimism that he would "light upon the Holy Grail" (line 367) are short-lived. The King's warning that most of the knights "would follow wandering fires" overcomes him, and he is beset by a sense of his own sinfulness (line 368), and by an overwhelming awareness that the Quest is not for him (lines 374, 378).

With the realization of his own sinfulness, Percivale appears to be translated to a lonely spiritual wasteland. He says:

...I found myself
Alone, and in a land of sand and thorns,
And I was thirsty even unto death....

(lines 375-77)

Despite his intuitive realization that the Quest is not for him, Percivale continues

...on I rode, and when I thought my thirst
Would slay me, saw deep lawns, and then a brook,
With one sharp rapid, where the crisping white
Played ever back upon the sloping wave,
And took both ear and eye....

(lines 379-83)

The description is idyllic, and incorporates some of Tennyson's favourite poetic elements - a "brook" with a "sharp rapid" which breaks up the stream into "crisping white" foam. It is another version of the "stream that flashest white" in "In the Valley of Caunteretz" (R326), creating the flicker

effect which has been implicated in reflex epileptic experience. In "The Holy Grail" the sound of the stream falling over rapids acts as a further stimulus. Indeed, Tennyson gives the auditory and the visual elements equal weight. He tells us that the lovely picture "took both ear and eye" (line 383). One is reminded of the influence of "the mighty world of eye and ear" on Wordsworth ("Lines Composed a Few Miles above Tintern Abbey" - line 105-06; Hayden 1977, I, 360).

The idyllic scene described by Sir Percivale in "The Holy Grail" is, of course, an hallucination; and when the knight attempts to slake his thirst at the brook, or to eat the apples which have fallen from the nearby trees, both brook and apples crumble to dust. Percivale is "left alone, / And thirsting, in a land of sand and thorns" (lines 389-90). As I have said, I believe that in composing the Grail Idyll, Tennyson drew on aspects of his subjective paranormal experiences; so it may be pertinent to remember that a feeling of thirst has sometimes been reported in connection with epileptic aura (Penfield and Jasper 1954, 423-24, 457). However, Tennyson explains that the passage on Percivale's hallucinations operates symbolically: "'The gratification of sensual appetite brings Percivale no content'....'Nor does wifely love and the love of the family; nor does wealth, which is worshipt by labour; nor does glory; nor does Fame'" (R471:n.387-90). The knight begins to fear that if he were to "find the Holy Grail itself / And touch it", it, too, would "crumble into dust" (lines 438-39).

Coming across a "holy hermit" on his travels, Percivale tells him of his "phantoms", and the hermit blames the knight's condition on his lack of "true humility" (line 444-45). He tells the knight: "Thou hast not lost thyself to save thyself / As Galahad" (lines 456-57).

At that moment, almost on cue, Galahad appears, and the two knights pray together in the chapel. Percivale continues:

...there the hermit slaked my burning thirst,
 And at the sacring of the mass I saw
 The holy elements alone; but he,
 "Saw ye no more? I, Galahad, saw the Grail,
 The Holy Grail, descend upon the shrine:
 I saw the fiery face as of a child
 That smote itself into the bread, and went;
 And hither am I come; and never yet
 Hath what thy sister taught me first to see,
 This Holy Thing, failed from my side, nor come
 Covered, but moving with me night and day,
 Fainter by day, but always in the night
 Blood-red, and sliding down the blackened marsh
 Blood-red, and on the naked mountain top
 Blood-red, and in the sleeping mere below
 Blood-red.

(lines 461-76)

Galahad's vision faintly recalls the pillar of fire which went before the Israelites at night in their escape from Egypt (Exodus 13.21). But it also has several of the features I have highlighted in connection with epilepsy, especially temporal lobe epilepsy. As one would expect, both from the poetic context and from TLE studies, the "vision" or visual hallucination has powerful religious connotations. The experience is more intense at night (lines 472-76); and that intensity is reflected in the deeper red colour that infuses the nocturnal "vision".

Having described his mystical experience, Galahad goes on

to relate how the vision of the Grail has strengthened him in his fight against the "Pagan hordes" (line 479) and brought him to victory.

["]But [he concludes] my time is hard at hand,
And hence I go; and one will crown me king
Far in the spiritual city; and come thou, too,
For thou shalt see the vision when I go."

(lines 481-84)

One of the ironic features of this Idyll is the fact that Galahad, the pure knight, whom Arthur tells, "for such / As thou art is the vision" (lines 293-94), seems to be motivated by considerations that are not purely spiritual. He seems most interested in "victory" (line 481) and in being crowned "king / Far in a spiritual city" (lines 482-83). Although the context of these two goals is ostensibly religious, the way in which they are phrased shows an underlying concern with status rather than with true spirituality. Galahad the "victor" (line 481) looks forward to being Galahad the "king" (line 482), albeit in the "spiritual city" (line 483). Of course, this possible interpretation does not immediately suggest itself to most readers, for the simple reason that they readily accept the passage at face value and in allegorical mode. In traditional Christian terms, life is a battle against sin; Galahad is victorious against sin; and he reaps his reward in the celestial city. This is probably the impression which Tennyson consciously meant to convey. But I suspect the ambiguities and ambivalences in the poem arise because the poet, while consciously trying to write one poem, was perhaps unconsciously writing another. It is known that

he battled for years to bring himself to write, and to find a suitable way of writing, "The Holy Grail" (Martin 1980, 477-78). But suddenly the poem "came like a breath of inspiration", large sections of it being completed in "about a week" (Pfordresher 1973, 36; qtg. Emily Tennyson, Mats. III, 90). I believe the passages about Galahad were probably composed during this period of inspired creation - when thoughts and images seem to drive towards expression. And I believe that, in the process, repressed anxieties manifested themselves in the work in ways which were not concordant with the poet's conscious intentions. And I do not think that one can ignore these discordant details, excusing them on the grounds that the poem was meant to be interpreted not realistically but allegorically - or parabolically. For Tennyson himself said that "there is no single fact or incident in the 'Idylls', however seemingly mystical, which cannot be explained as without any mystery or allegory whatever" (Eversley: Idylls, 442). He thus invites us - perhaps he even challenges us - to find the realistic meaning.

Arthur's final summing up of the situation set out in "The Holy Grail" ought to affect one's perception of what Buckler has called "Galahad's incomprehensible success" (1980, 61). For, notwithstanding his earlier words to Galahad ("for such / As thou art is the vision" - lines 293-94), Arthur's final reference to the young knight is rather dismissive:

...one hath had the vision face to face,
 And now his chair desires him here in vain,
However they may crown him elsewhere.

(lines 896-98; my italics)

King Arthur, whom Tennyson presents as "the highest of men" and Christ's deputy on earth (R464:499-500) does not appear to be either impressed by, or approving of, the one knight whose Grail Quest has apparently been crowned with success.

One begins to wonder why Galahad went on the Grail Quest in the first place. Percivale implied early on that the Quest began because the knights did not see the Holy Grail through the luminous cloud that apparently covered it (lines 196, 285). But Galahad later claimed that he had in fact seen the vision and heard a cry "...Galahad, follow me" (line 292). Since - later still - he tells Percivale that the "Holy Thing" never left his side (line 470), it would scarcely seem necessary, or indeed possible, to "follow" it. Galahad could well have continued to carry out his duties as a knight of the Round Table. In the Idylls of the King Tennyson stresses the importance of fulfilling hierarchical responsibilities. It is necessary that each man should play his particular part to maintain the ultimate order. Priestley points out that the very structure of "The Holy Grail" emphasises the disintegration of that order:

We are no longer aware [he writes] of a cohesive and coherent court, a Round Table. We are instead hearing a succession of individual adventures of individual knights, each pursuing his own quest of the Grail, a quest in which Arthur does not join, and of which he has not approved. The knights no longer ask the King to assign them a task; all coherence is gone. Each quest and its result has its own meaning, but the meaning of the whole idyll is clearly centred on the collapse of Arthur's authority and the destruction of the Round Table....

(1973, 134)

Galahad contributes to that destruction, as Arthur seems to be at pains to point out (lines 896-98).

Tennyson used to explain that the great resolve (to ennoble and spiritualize mankind) is kept so long as all work in obedience to the highest and holiest law within them (Eversley: Idylls, 446):

'The King will follow Christ, and we the King
In whom high God hath breathed a secret thing.[']

("The Coming of Arthur", R464:499-500)

Galahad may be the "pure knight", but in joining the Grail quest instead of fulfilling his obligations to Arthur, he fails in the important test of obedience within the hierarchical order.

Galahad appears to have abdicated his responsibility to King Arthur in order to pursue a course which he believes will ultimately lead to his being crowned a King himself, "Far in the spiritual city" (line 483). In Malory, Galahad does become king of "the cité of Sarras" when, on the death of its "tirraunte" king - who had imprisoned Galahad and his companions for their belief in the Holy Grail - a disembodied voice instructs that "the yongyst knyght" of the three is to be chosen as king. But shortly after being crowned king, Galahad is translated to heaven (XVII.21-22; Vinaver 1973, II, 1032-35).

In Tennyson's version of the story, however, Galahad is not made a king before his translation to another realm, and it therefore appears that the far city in which he aspires to be king is the celestial city. But presumably God himself -

or Christ - is king of the celestial city. So when Galahad seeks to become king of the spiritual city one is reminded of Lucifer, who sought to achieve equal status with God. The pure knight is rather ironically presented, if one looks below the surface symbolism.

Although critics have increasingly tended to perceive ambiguities both in the Idylls of the King (Ryals 1989, 104-05) and in "The Holy Grail" (Morris 1974, 89, 93-95, 97), so far as I am aware none has perceived the ironies inherent in Tennyson's treatment of Galahad in "The Holy Grail". But the poet's ambivalent attitude is palely foreshadowed in the rather unpleasant, shrill quality of voice ascribed to the knight when he claims to have seen the Grail:

'Then Galahad on the sudden, and in a voice
Shrilling along the hall to Arthur, called,
"But I, Sir Arthur, saw the Holy Grail....["']

(lines 288-90)

One notes, too, that Galahad, the youngest of the knights, addresses the King as "Sir Arthur" (my italics). According to Ricks, "Sir Charles Tennyson suggests that Galahad is here Arthur's equal, since this is the only time he calls him 'Sir Arthur'" (R471:n.290). And J.M. Gray says: "Galahad's addressing Arthur as knight shows him elevated by the Grail vision to spiritual equality with the King" (1980, 351 n.290). I tend to interpret Galahad's "slip" differently. I believe the knight who wishes to be a king himself, albeit "otherwhere" (line 898), tellingly demotes the real king (Arthur) by his form of address. This seemingly small point

is emphasized by the more subservient forms of address used by the other, older knights: "O King, my liege" (Gawain - line 855); "My King" (Percivale - line 278); "O King" (Lancelot - line 764). Critics tend to assume that, because Galahad is apparently miraculously translated to another realm, he has Tennyson's unqualified stamp of approval. That, as I have suggested, is not the case. Galahad, the pure knight, may be free of the sin of lust; but I believe he shows a Lucifer-like pride. And the terms in which Tennyson describes Galahad's apparent translation to a "spiritual city" supports my theory, notwithstanding the fact that critics like Elaine Jordan view "Galahad's journey out of time" as a "transcendence" (Jordan 1988, 175), Albright going so far as to call Galahad "a second Elijah" (Albright 1986, 119).

In order to be translated to the realm where he will be crowned king, Galahad apparently needs to cross a "great black swamp and of an evil smell, / Part black, part whitened with the bones of men" (lines 499-500). The swamp seems to be symbolic of sin and death. It is a swamp

Not to be crost, save that some ancient king
 Had built a way, where, linked with many a bridge,
 A thousand piers ran into the great Sea.
 And Galahad fled along them bridge by bridge,
 And every bridge as quickly as he crost
 Sprang into fire and vanished....

(lines 501-06)

Tennyson does not name the "ancient king" who "built a way", but one might be tempted to assume he is referring to Christ, who long ago - that is in very "ancient" times - showed the path from sin to salvation, saying "I am the way, the truth

and the life" (John 14.6; my italics). However, such an assumption, that the ancient king is Christ, is subtly undermined in the course of the poem as a whole. For instance, King Arthur complains that Galahad's seat at the Round Table is vacant, "However they may crown him elsewhere" (line 898). The word "elsewhere" tends to recall a reference to the "other place" in Hamlet (4.3.34) - the "other place" being hell, as opposed to heaven. The "ancient King" who built "the way...linked with many a bridge" may have been not Christ, but the king of the "other place", Lucifer, the fallen angel whose "offspring", Sin and Death, build, in Paradise Lost, a bridge to hell.

Sin and Death amain
 Following his track, such was the will of Heaven
 Paved after him a broad and beaten way
 Over the dark abyss, whose boiling gulf
 Tamely endured a bridge of wondrous length
 From hell continued reaching the utmost orb
 Of this frail world; by which the spirits perverse
 With easy intercourse pass to and fro
 To tempt or punish mortals, except whom
 God and good angels guard by special grace.

(Paradise Lost II.1024-33; Fowler
 1971, 138; my italics)⁷

In "The Holy Grail", as Galahad runs from bridge to bridge (line 504),

...every bridge as quickly as he crost
 Sprang into fire and vanished....

(lines 505-06)

Fire is, of course, the element traditionally associated with hell, although it is sometimes used with positive connotations in the Bible (e.g., Exodus 13.21, Exodus 3.2, Daniel 7.10,

Isaiah 6.4, Hebrews 12.29).

Percivale relates how, as Galahad crossed over the bridges,

...thrice above him all the heavens
Opened and blazed with thunder such as seemed
Shoutings of all the sons of God....

(lines 507-09)

Ricks detects the influence of Job 38.7: "...the morning stars sang together, and all the sons of God shouted for joy" (R471:n.509). But I must stress that Percivale only says the "thunder...seemed" like the "Shoutings of all the sons of God" (my italics). And, as I indicate later in this chapter, Percivale's perceptions are not entirely reliable.

In the next few lines of "The Holy Grail" Galahad boards a "boat" (lines 514, 518) with a "set...sail" (line 518) - or, Percivale asks uncertainly,

...had the boat
Become a living creature clad with wings?

(lines 518-19; my italics)

The Paradise Lost passage which I quoted above is also followed by a reference to a boat ("vessel" - II.1043) and to the fallen Lucifer with "his spread wings" (II.1046; my italics). Earlier on, his wings had been described as "sail-broad vans" (II.927; my italics). The visual image evoked in "The Holy Grail" is rather similar to that in Paradise Lost.

There are thus several echoes of Paradise Lost in the passage about Galahad's removal to another realm, and these tend to undermine Percivale's description of the "Spiritual

visions reveal is the uncertainty and unreliability of Sir Percivale's visions. Sir Galahad is seen by Percivale in "silver-shining armour starry-clear" (line 511; my italics), but the "Holy vessel" which "hung" over his head is "Clothed in white samite or a luminous cloud" (line 513; my italics). Next Percivale sees a boat - "If boat it were" (line 515; my italics). Galahad is thought to be aboard the boat;

And had he set the sail, or had the boat
Become a living creature clad with wings?

(lines 518-19)

Percivale's vision does not allow him to distinguish a boat from a winged "creature", yet he confidently asserts he saw the Holy Grail hung over the head of the man on the boat - if boat it were! The Grail, he says, was redder "than any rose" and a "joy" to him; for now he "knew the veil had been withdrawn" (line 522; my italics). The confidence with which he makes this assertion is undermined by the lack of definition associated with other aspects of the vision.

After another flash of lightning, when the heavens "blazed again / Opening" (lines 523-24), Percivale sees "the least of little stars / Down on the waste" (lines 524-25), so that the reader momentarily recalls the subjective paranormal experience related in "Armageddon", where the speaker records how

Each failing sense,
As with a momentary flash of light,
Grew thrillingly distinct and keen. [He] saw
The smallest grain that dappled the dark Earth....

(R3:II.27-30).

In "Armageddon" this visual magnification is followed by a "vision" - or hallucination - of the "Moon's white cities" (R3:II.32-36), which parallels the vision of the "spiritual city" in "The Holy Grail" (R471:526).

Percivale tells the monk Ambrosius that, after watching the "rose-red sparkle" which "shot" to the spiritual city, "and there / Dwelt", never to be seen again on earth (lines 529-32), he found himself back at the chapel at dawn (lines 535-36). Thence he returned to Camelot, glad that "no phantom vext" him anymore (line 538). It is not clear whether he is referring to the Holy Grail, which has returned to the spiritual city, or whether he is remembering the many phantoms which had troubled him earlier in the quest (lines 375-439). The juxtapositioning of the remark with the description of the supposed last appearance of the cup would seem to indicate that Percivale is in fact referring to the Sangraal as a "phantom". But, of course, he had vigorously protested against that term when Ambrosius spoke of the Grail as the "phantom of a cup that comes and goes" (line 44).

'Nay, monk! what phantom?' answered Percivale.
'The cup, the cup itself, from which our Lord
Drank at the last sad supper with his own.[']

(lines 45-47).

Next, Tennyson's readers learn, with Ambrosius, how Lancelot fared on the quest; and the vignette is a pathetic one. Once, the good Sir Bors told Percivale,

..."he [i.e. Lancelot] dashed across me - mad,
And maddening what he rode: and when I cried,
'Ridest thou then so hotly on a quest

So holy,' Lancelot shouted, 'Stay me not!
I have been the sluggard, and I ride apace,
For now there is a lion in the way.'["]

(lines 638-43).

The irony of Queen Guinevere's earlier lament becomes apparent: "'This madness has come on us for our sins'" (line 357).

Sir Bors, Lancelot's cousin, shows the kind of generosity of spirit that is called to mind by the Biblical dictum, "Love thy neighbour" (Matthew 19.19). For we are told that Bors, anxious that his cousin should be cured, would have been

...content
Not to have seen, so Lancelot might have seen,
The Holy Cup of healing....

(lines 650-52).

Indeed, Bors is "so clouded with his grief and love" (line 653) for Lancelot, that he no longer has any enthusiasm for the Quest: "If God would send the vision, well: if not, / The Quest and he were in the hands of Heaven" (lines 655-56).

In his new-found readiness to accept the will of God, Bors shows the kind of religious humility which the "holy hermit" had earlier advocated (lines 445-57). And Bors appears to be rewarded with a vision of the Holy Grail. Having been thrown into "a cell / Of great piled stones" (lines 672-73) for his professed belief in the Grail, he lies in the darkness "through innumerable hours" (line 674).

He heard the hollow-ringing heavens sweep
Over him till by miracle - what else? -
Heavy as it was, a great stone slipt and fell,
Such as no wind could move: and through the gap

Glimmered the streaming scud: then came a night
 Still as the day was loud; and through the gap
 The seven clear stars of Arthur's Table Round -

 In on him shone: "And then to me, to me,"
 Said good Sir Bors, "beyond all hopes of mine,
 Who scarce had prayed or asked it for myself -
 Across the seven clear stars - O grace to me -
 In colour like the fingers of a hand
 Before a burning taper, the sweet Grail
 Glided and past, and close upon it pealed
 A sharp quick thunder."

(lines 675-93)

As my italics indicate, the vision is evoked in terms of the cluster of images I have associated with temporal lobe symptomatology: a "ringing" sound (line 675), "stars" (line 679), a rosy "colour" ("like the fingers of a hand / Before a burning taper" - lines 690-91), and a peal of thunder (line 692-93). The overt reference to wind is negative ("no wind" - line 678). But a suggestion of wind or breeze inheres in the image of "the hollow-ringing heavens" which "sweep / Over him" (lines 675-76; my italics).

Unlike the other visions, Bors's vision seems to bear some stamp of authenticity. For it had been said that "if a man / Could touch or see" the Grail, "he was healed at once, / By faith, of all his ills" (lines 54-56). And this seems to happen in the case of Sir Bors, for he is unexpectedly liberated from his prison:

[`]Afterwards, a maid,
 Who kept our holy faith among her kin
 In secret, entering, loosed and let him go.'

(lines 693-95).

In general, however, the supposed reappearance of the

Holy Grail on earth has not had a salubrious or regenerative effect, either on Camelot or on the knights who undertook the Quest. Percivale recalls his return to the "city...built / To music" ("Gareth and Lynette", R465:272-73):

O, when we reached
The city, our horses stumbling as they trode
On heaps of ruin, hornless unicorns,
Cracked basilisks, and splintered cockatrices,
And shattered talbots, which had left the stones
Raw, that they fell from, brought us to the hall.

'And there sat Arthur on the daïs-throne,
And those that had gone out upon the Quest,
Wasted and worn, and but a tithe of them....[']

(R471:712-20).

In reply to the King's enquiry, Percivale tells Arthur that, as a result of his experiences on the Quest, he has decided to "pass away into the quiet life" (line 735). But Gawain's report shows that neither his character nor his attitude has been changed in any way by his participation in the Grail Quest. For he apparently decided early on that the Quest was not for him, and therefore spent most of the "twelvemonth and a day" in "pleasant" dalliance with "merry maidens" in a "silk pavilion", disturbed only by a "gale" that lashed the pavilion and caused the "merry maidens" some discomfort (lines 740-47).

Sir Bors, showing a tendency to the kind of sacred silence that Rudolf Otto has associated with the numinous (Otto 1946, 216), replies with all reticence to the King's question:

"Ask me not, for I may not speak of it:
I saw it;" and the tears were in his eyes.

(lines 755-56)

Sir Lancelot's report reflects an inner conflict between the powerful desire associated with his love for Queen Guinevere, and the equally potent sense of the sinfulness of that adulterous relationship. This conflict has been largely responsible, we guess, for the madness which overcame him on the Quest. As Lancelot speaks, Percivale fancies he still detects a "dying fire of madness in his eyes" (line 765).

"O King, my friend, if friend of thine I be,
 Happier are those that welter in their sin,
 Swine in the mud, that cannot see for slime,
 Slime of the ditch: but in me lived a sin
 So strange, of such a kind, that all of pure,
 Noble, and knightly in me twined and clung
 Round that one sin, until the wholesome flower
 And poisonous grew together, each as each,
 Not to be plucked asunder; and when thy knights
 Swore, I swore with them only in the hope
 That could I touch or see the Holy Grail
 They might be plucked asunder. Then I spake
 To one most holy saint, who wept and said,
 That save they could be plucked asunder, all
 My quest were but in vain; to whom I vowed
 That I would work according as he willed.
 And forth I went, and while I yearned and strove
 To tear the twain asunder in my heart,
 My madness came upon me as of old,
 And whipt me into waste fields far away....["]

(lines 766-85)

Lancelot found that whereas as a chivalrous knight he had been a nonpareil, as a "celestial knight" (Benson 1976, 221), he is impotent. Furthermore, as he reports to King Arthur, Lancelot then found himself in a spiritual wasteland. He continues:

But such a blast, my King, began to blow,
 So loud a blast along the shore and sea,
 Ye could not hear the waters for the blast,
 Though heapt in mounds and ridges all the sea
 Drove like a cataract, and all the sand
 Swept like a river, and the clouded heavens
 Were shaken with the motion and the sound.

(lines 792-98)

The thunderous roar of wind and wave are elements that have, in earlier chapters, been associated with poetic inspiration and with the subjective paranormal experiences attributed to TLE. Tennyson uses them here to characterize Lancelot's madness.

The unstable knight (Benson 1976, 220), finding a boat, decides: "'I will embark and I will lose myself, / And in the great sea wash away my sin'" (lines 802-03). For seven days, he "drove along the dreary deep", and with him "drove the moon and all the stars" (lines 805-06). The moon and star images may allude to earlier poems such as The Rime of the Ancient Mariner (e.g., lines 263-66). But they also remind one of the construed entoptics of altered states of consciousness.⁸ Similarly, the description of "the enchanted towers" of the castle at Carbonek (line 810) which is "like a rock upon a rock", bears a definite resemblance to other landscapes in the poetry - landscapes which often seem to derive from Tennyson's "waking dreams", or hallucinations. But, of course, in this particular case Tennyson is expanding on Malory's description of "a castle, on the back side, which was rich and fair", and which had "a postern that opened toward the sea" (R471:n.810-14).

As Lancelot draws his sword to ward off the two lions which keep the gate of the castle, he hears a voice:

'Doubt not, go forward; if thou doubt, the beasts
Will tear thee piecemeal.' Then with violence
The sword was dashed from out [his] hand, and fell.

(lines 821-23)

Within the house, too, Lancelot hears a voice,

A sweet voice singing in the topmost tower
To the eastward....

(lines 831-32)

He follows the voice which seems to come from behind a door.
The words he hears are "'Glory and joy and honour to our Lord
/ And to the Holy Vessel of the Grail'" (lines 836-7).

Malory's version of what happens when Lancelot attempts
to pass through the door of the chamber reads as follows:

'So came he to the chamber-door, and would have entered, and anon a voice said unto him, "Flee, sir Lancelot, and enter not, for thou oughtest not to do it; and, if thou enter, thou shalt forethink it". And he withdrew him back, and was right heavy in his mind. Then he looked up in the midst of the chamber, and saw a table of silver, and the holy vessel covered with red samite, and many angels about it, whereof one of them held a candle of wax burning, and the other held a cross, and the ornaments of the altar...Right so he entered into the chamber, and came toward the table of silver. And when he came nigh he felt a breath, that him thought was intermeddled with fire, which smote him so sore in the visage, that him thought it all to break his visage; and therewith he fell to the ground, and had no power to arise.'

(Malory XVII.15; qtd. R471:n.838-48).

The parallel passage in Tennyson is briefer, and introduces noteworthy images not in Malory:

...through a stormy glare [Lancelot recalls], a heat
As from a seventimes-heated furnace, I,
Blasted and burnt, and blinded as I was,
With such a fierceness that I swooned away -
O, yet methought I saw the Holy Grail,
All palled in crimson samite, and around
Great angels, awful shapes, and wings and eyes.

(lines 839-45; my italics)

These images are, of course, to be found in the "visions" of prophets in the Old Testament (e.g., Ezekiel 10.12; Daniel 7.4,6; Isaiah 6.2) and in St John's Book of Revelation (e.g., 4.6,8; 5.2,6). But similar images are also common in the altered forms of consciousness described by Siegel (1977, 133) and by Lewis-Williams (1986, 174-77). As Siegel has pointed out, epilepsy, especially temporal lobe epilepsy, is one of the conditions in which such altered states of consciousness occur (1977, 132, 139). It may be that what some poets and religious visionaries - whom Tennyson links in lines 872-75 of "The Holy Grail" - have in common is a particular excitability of the temporal cortex.

The sensory perception of breath, wind, or other manifestations of air-in-motion is another feature common to religious mystics (cf. Ezekiel 37.5-10; Acts 2.1-4), Romantic poets, and epileptics. As far as the Arthurian legend is concerned, the "breath" referred to in Malory becomes a "blast" in Tennyson's version of Lancelot's story. This "blast" of wind tends to remind one of the "gale" that lashed Gawain's "pavilion" of luxury (lines 743-44): both are destructive forms of air-in-motion. It would appear that as a questing knight Lancelot is as unacceptable as was Gawain. Lust proves an insurmountable obstacle to what Larry D. Benson calls "celestial chivalry", as opposed to "earthly" chivalry (1976, 219). For the Grail Quest is concerned with "spiritual trials rather than ordinary deeds of arms" (Benson 1976, 212).

Nevertheless, Lancelot thinks he saw the Grail:

...methought I saw the Holy Grail,

 And but for all my madness and my sin,
 And then my swoonings, I had sworn I saw
 That which I saw....

(lines 843-48)

What is apparent in this passage is Lancelot's earnest desire to see the Holy Grail. For he had hoped the vision might have enabled him to separate the "poisonous" flower of lustful desire from the "wholesome flower" of his purer love for Guinevere. He almost persuades himself that he does see the celestial cup - but not quite:

["]...what I saw [he admits] was veiled
 And covered; and this Quest was not for me."

(lines 848-49)

Arthur, the "blameless king" (line 865) does not entirely discount the various tales of paranormal phenomena related by his knights. He advocates, and himself shows, a reverent attitude to the possibility of mystical experience. When Gawain swears that in the future he will make himself blind and deaf to "holy virgins in their ecstasies" (line 864), since he believes that Percivale and his sister, the "holy nun", have "driven men mad" (line 859), Arthur cautions him.

"Deafer", said the blameless King,
 "Gawain, and blinder unto holy things
 Hope not to make thyself by idle vows,
 Being too blind to have desire to see.["']

(lines 865-68).

However, a degree of scepticism concerning the particular psychic manifestations recounted by his knights is revealed by

the King's phraseology when he says:

...if indeed there came a sign from heaven,
Blessèd are Bors, Lancelot and Percivale,
For these have seen according to their sight.

(lines 869-71; my italics)

Tennyson, speaking through Arthur, recognizes the subjective nature of paranormal experience. The King continues:

...every fiery prophet in old times,
And all the sacred madness of the bard,
When God made music through them, could but speak
His music by the framework and the chord....

(lines 872-75)

God may reveal himself through chosen individuals, but each of these will be a different instrument in his hands, and consequently each will sound a different note. Therefore Arthur tells Bors, Lancelot and Percivale, "...as ye saw it, ye have spoken truth" (line 876; my italics). The implication is that each of the three knights has perceived something - but none has perceived the essence of the ding an sicht - the true spiritual insight of which Arthur speaks in the closing lines of the poem (lines 905-15).

Arthur replies thus to Lancelot's veiled confessions of his "sin" (lines 766-77):

`"Nay - but thou errest, Lancelot: never yet
Could all of true and noble in knight and man
Twine round one sin, whatever it might be,
With such a closeness, but apart there grew,
Save that he were the swine thou spakest of,
Some root of knighthood and pure nobleness;
Whereto see thou, that it may bear its flower.["']

(lines 877-83)

This passage, in juxtaposition with the King's previous statement that the knights spoke the truth as they saw it, would seem to suggest that the knights' spiritual vision is imperfect because of unexpiated sin. One is reminded of St Paul's first letter to the Corinthians: "...now we see through a glass, darkly, but then face to face" (1 Corinthians 13.12). When the sins of this "mortal coil" (Hamlet 3.1.67) are finally cast off, the spiritual vision will be clarified. "For [now] we know in part, and we prophesy in part. But when that which is perfect is come, then that which is in part shall be done away" (1 Corinthians 13.9-10). One would expect, then, that Tennyson's "blameless king" (line 865) might be vouchsafed the true vision - and it seems he is: "Let visions of the night or of the day / Come, as they will; and many a time they come..." (lines 906-07).

The important point to note is that the visions come "as they will". It will be remembered that Sir Bors, who of all the knights seems to me to have come closest to a true spiritual experience, only had that experience after deciding that "If God would send the vision, well: if not, / The Quest and he were in the hands of Heaven" (lines 655-56). Apparently Tennyson believed that psychic experience must be involuntary and unsolicited. That seems to be the view he advances in "The Holy Grail", and it was certainly the view he expressed in In Memoriam:

In vain shalt thou, or any, call
 The spirits from their golden day,
 Except, like them, thou too canst say,
 My spirit is at peace with all.

They haunt the silence of the breast,
 Imaginations calm and fair,
 The memory like a cloudless air,
 The conscience as a sea at rest:

But when the heart is full of din,
 And doubt beside the portal waits,
 They can but listen at the gates,
 And hear the household jar within.

(IM 94:5-16)

Furthermore, Tennyson, using the "voice" of King Arthur, advocates a wise, rather than an enthusiastic response to paranormal phenomena. For the suggestion is repudiated that, if Arthur had "seen the sight" of the Holy Grail, he would himself have "sworn the vow", and joined the Quest. "Not easily" would he have done so, Arthur retorts,

...seeing that the king must guard
 That which he rules, and is but as the hind
 To whom a space of land is given to plow.
 Who may not wander from the allotted field
 Before his work be done; but, being done,
 Let visions...
 Come....

(lines 901-07)

One cannot help recalling the words of Pallas when, in "Oenone", she advocates "Self reverence, self-knowledge, self-control" (R164:142). These are the triple virtues possessed by Arthur. And these are the triple virtues which Tennyson held up as exempla to his fellow men - virtues which he believed would exert a positive and salubrious effect on a nation tossed upon the troubled seas of what he regarded as a "transition age" (Louw 1985, 1). But these are also the triple virtues which, I believe, Tennyson himself strove to embrace. He did so because he knew they were vital for the

preservation of sanity and stability in an existence that seemed perpetually threatened by a "juggle of the brain" which manifested itself in a variety of strange phenomena.

Such subjective paranormal experiences might drive men to the brink of insanity, and beyond, as indeed proved to be the case with many of the knights who went on the Grail Quest. Since, unlike the King, they are not "blameless", their psychic experiences are sensory and peripheral, while those of the King are central and cognitive:

Let visions of the night or of the day
Come, as they will; and many a time they come,
Until this earth he walks on seems not earth,
This light that strikes his eyeball is not light,
This air that smites his forehead is not air
But vision - yea, his very hand and foot -
In moments when he feels he cannot die,
And knows himself no vision to himself,
Nor the high God a vision, nor that One
Who rose again.

(lines 906-15)

On analysis, this experience appears to consist of two basic components. There is an initial feeling of derealization and depersonalization (lines 908-11), followed by an intense and heightened feeling of self-awareness ("he feels he cannot die, / And knows himself no vision to himself" - lines 912-13). Depersonalization may be characterized as "losing oneself", while a heightened feeling of self-awareness - and awareness of oneself as an immortal entity - may be regarded as finding oneself. The nature of Arthur's paranormal experience is such that, psychologically speaking, he first loses himself, then finds himself. This is, of course, in keeping with a central tenet of the poem: "If I

lose myself, I save myself" (line 178) - or, as the relevant passage in St. Matthew's gospel has it, I "find" myself (Matthew 10.39). One is reminded of Tennyson's description of his own trance experience, on which I think Arthur's exposition is based. Tennyson said that in the trance "the loss of personality" seemed "no extinction but the only true life" (Memoir I, 320). This is the spiritual - or psychological - life to which Arthur has access through his "visions of the night and of the day" (line 906). In these visions, which have so much in common with Tennyson's own "trance" states, Arthur perceives himself to be immortal, like "the high God" and "that One / Who rose again" (lines 914-15). Thus he seems to become "godlike", as the poet-speaker in "Armageddon" becomes "godlike" in his moment of heightened perception (R3.II.21). And the perception of oneself as "godlike" must inevitably lead to a feeling of "self-reverence" - as indeed it does in "Armageddon", where the speaker says: "I could have fallen down / Before my own strong soul and worshipped it" (R3:II.49-50).

One might say that from full self-knowledge, as experienced in the heightened state of consciousness associated with trance, comes self-reverence. But "self-control" must accompany "self-knowledge" and "self-reverence". Arthur recognizes and asserts the importance of self-control (lines 901-05) in the face of religious enthusiasm. The knights, on the other hand, in abdicating their Round Table responsibilities in order to seek the Grail, are guilty of self-indulgence. Consequently their experiences are

phenomenal rather than noumenal.

One of the most comprehensive explications of "The Holy Grail" I have read is that of Albright, who sums up the Idyll thus:

Each knight granted a vision sees a different Grail; it is as if individuality arose from the defeats in our apprehension of the sublime, as if each knight's aperture of personality were too narrow to take in the whole - but from the sum of partial responses one might devise a composite and integral Grail.... Percivale's sister, an ascetic nun, sees the Grail in a shaft of cold moonlight, rose-red, beating like a living heart (l. 118); the assembled knights of the Round Table cannot see the Grail at all, but can see the luminous cloud that hides it (l. 189); Galahad sees the Grail during the Eucharist, in the shape of a "fiery face, as of a child / That smote itself into a bread, and went" (ll. 466-67) - and the apparition follows him wherever he goes, like the indelible image of Athena in back of Tiresias' eyes; Percivale sees the Grail from a great distance, a meteor adding a red shimmer to the Spiritual City into which Galahad has been translated, a second Elijah (l. 530); Bors, through one miraculous chink in his prison of great stones, also sees the Grail as a kind of meteor, "In colour like the fingers of a hand / Before a burning taper" (ll. 690-91). Each witness betrays his inmost self in his account of what he beholds.

The most virtuous are granted the most sustained and vibrant, lucid visions: Percivale's sister sees a heart, Galahad a child's face, and we suspect that an unobstructed eye would discover that the Grail was fully human in its lineaments, an imago dei, abiding night and day. To the less sanctified the Grail is only a brief glimmer, a gleam pursued and glimpsed afar, only a little more than the will-o'-the-wisp the quest for which is denounced by Arthur (l. 319). But even to Bors, a rough, practical, unassuming knight, the Grail is somewhat corporeal, colored like the translucent webs between our fingers - Tennyson may have remembered that Guenevere in William Morris's "The Defence of Guenevere" (1858), mad with her own beauty and the beauty of a spring day, holds her hand up to the sun and wonders that her hand is not wholly transparent (l. 123), for images of sublimity are often accompanied with hints of narcissism, self-dissolution. Heart, face, and hand, a living body assembles itself member by member into the Grail. The Grail burns Lancelot because his sin is

inextricably rooted in his heart (l. 774); because he cannot overcome his viciousness the Grail scalds him as a devil is scalded by holy water. Thus the determinant of identity lies in one's imaginations of the supernatural - the Grail is a kind of Rorschach test in that its configurations reflect a man's deepest image of himself.

(1986: 119-20)

I offer no apology for quoting Albright's interpretation at such length, for I believe it deserves to be read in toto. The exposition makes sense - more sense, possibly, than the poem itself. Albright's summary tells us the kind of poem Tennyson probably intended to write. But between the conception and the creation falls the shadow⁹ - in this case the shadow of the unconscious; that is, the shadow of the poet's unresolved ambivalence to his subject. This unresolved ambivalence clouds the poem's "parabolic drift" (Eversley: Idylls, 442). John Reed has called the Idylls of the King "the most elaborate of parables" (1969, 6); and it is probably too elaborate to be truly effective as allegory. One feels a certain pressure towards moralism, yet this is often undercut by the kind of ironic or enigmatic presentation I have highlighted in the case of Galahad and the nun.

Albright is probably right when he suggests that each of the questing knights represents a particular side or aspect of the poet himself. The parable of the pursuit of the paranormal is also a parable of poetic inspiration. In Legend, Myth and Magic in the Image of the Artist, Kris and Kurz write:

The new image of the artist which evolved in the sixteenth century found its clearest expression

in the opinion that "wonderful and divine thoughts" come into being only when ecstasy complements the operation of the intellect....This is at the same time a reminder which leaves no doubt that artistic creation rests upon inner vision, upon inspiration. Thus, inevitably, there emerges an image of the artist who creates his work driven by an irrepressible urge, in a "mixture of fury and madness" akin to intoxication.

(1979, 48-49)

This image is strongly evocative of the kind of obsessive pursuit demonstrated to a greater or lesser extent by all the knights on the Grail Quest, and most notably by Lancelot (lines 638-44).

Kris and Kurz point out that although the idea of the driven artist creating in a frenzy close to madness had its roots in Plato's theory of art, it was not until the Renaissance that artists

...were credited with possessing genuine ecstasy. Thus transformed into "the stylus of god," the artist himself was honoured as a divine being. The "religion" among whose saints he is counted is the modern-day worship of genius.

Creating as God did, the artist becomes an "alter deus" (Kris and Kurz 1979, 49). Thus the artistic impulse is not incompatible with the Lucifer myth, and one begins to understand Tennyson's ambivalent treatment of Galahad in "The Holy Grail". For at the height of his trance Tennyson seemed to become "godlike" (R3:II.21). Therefore, in seeking to induce the trance, as we know he did (Martin 1980, 28-29), Tennyson may have felt he was deliberately seeking, as it were, to become "godlike". Similarly Galahad seeks to become godlike - since to be king of the "spiritual city" is surely

to be godlike. Tennyson apparently allows Galahad to reach a spiritual realm, but that realm is never named in the text of the poem, and the literary allusions embedded in the relevant passage are, as I have shown, reminiscent of the fallen angel who wished to be equal in status with God. One recalls that Galahad's alleged first vision of the Grail "came to pass" (line 179) when he sat in Merlin's chair, "The Siege perilous" - which represented the "spiritual imagination" (n.172) and was "Perilous for good and ill" (lines 172-73; my italics).

Tennyson recognised that it was not always easy to distinguish between "good" and "ill". As he said in an apparently unrelated remark, while discussing "The Holy Grail", "...some [people] mistake the devil for God" (Memoir I, 90).

Rivka R. Eifermann has written of the psychoanalytic importance of parenthetical remarks or "asides":

I have come to regard comments put in parenthesis in the same way as we tend to view asides, or statements considered by their pronouncer to be of secondary importance. Precisely because they are attributed minor importance in consciousness, they are particularly promising in terms of the unconscious content that may be revealed through them.

(1989, 121)

I believe Tennyson's comment, "some mistake the devil for God", may reveal the way his thoughts were tending when he wrote "The Holy Grail". Certainly the remark was made in the course of a conversation about that poem; and I believe it lends credence to the theories I have advanced as to why there should be allusions to Satan in Paradise Lost embedded in the

climactic Grail vision. No wonder Tennyson feared "incurring a charge of irreverence." He was certainly not irreverent himself, but he obviously felt he could not rely on others to understand the complexity of his ideas about spiritual experience, its use and abuse. And, of course, we cannot say with any degree of certainty to what extent those complex, and often conflicting, ideas were conscious, and to what extent they were repressed. Certainly, it would appear from a letter written by Arthur Hallam on 26 July 1831 that Tennyson was anxious about his "artistic pride". The phrase is that of Hallam, who wrote to Tennyson in consolation:

You say pathetically, "Alas for me! I have more of the Beautiful than the Good!" Remember to your comfort that God has given you to see the difference. Many a poet has gone on blindly in his artist pride, but you have been brought to see."

(Kolb 1981, 446)

The crux of the matter, as revealed both in "The Holy Grail" and in Tennyson's life, is that subjective paranormal experience and poetic inspiration may both be associated with ecstasy, but they may also lead to madness. William A. Madden, writing in a different context, has this to say of Tennyson:

As a poet he had been aware of and at times given voice to a "demonic" impulse, yielding himself up to a

Fantastic beauty, such as lurks
In some wild poet, when he works
Without a conscience or an aim.

But more often than not, particularly after 1850, the "oracular" Tennyson was overshadowed by the moralist who was very much conscious of his audience and of his quasi-official relationship to it and who played down the "demonic", asserting instead the need for ethical mastery over it.

(Madden 1963, 82)

This passage might well serve as an explanation for the ambivalences that are detectable in "The Holy Grail".

In writing of Tennyson's rendering of Galahad, the "pure knight", in terms of the Lucifer-myth, it is not my intention to imply that the poet was in any way evil. I firmly believe that he did indeed write with his "sword bathed in heaven" (Memoir II, 129). But I also believe that he feared, whether consciously or unconsciously, a parallel between the Lucifer legend and his own pursuit of "godlike" feelings in trance. These fears, though never stated, reveal themselves in his treatment of Sir Galahad in much the same way as unconscious fears and anxieties sometimes are revealed in dreams. One remembers Kris's observation that in the process of inspiration, "Impulses and drives, otherwise hidden, emerge. The subjective experience is that of a flow of thoughts and images driving towards expression" (1964, 54; qtd. p.372 of this study). I believe Philip Collins, writing in a different context, comes close to intuiting Tennyson's secret "thoughts" and anxieties. Collins says that "a quick chemical trip into the extrasensory world" was "not for Tennyson"; but the critic goes on to ask: "...was 'repeating my own name two or three times' - 'revolving in myself / The word that is the symbol of myself' - spiritually much more respectable?" For the use of

"hypnotic mantras" is, perhaps, only a different form of self-stimulation or auto-induction (Collins 1981, 154). And the whole thrust of Tennyson's argument in "The Holy Grail" is that paranormal experience must not be actively pursued, but passively accepted.

To sum up, then, I believe Tennyson conceived of Galahad as the type of the poet or artist. The "pure knight" is chosen for this rôle because Tennyson, like Milton, believed that a poet must be "pure" if he is to fulfil a vatic function before the altar of divinely-inspired poetry ("The Poet's Mind" - R92). For to Tennyson, with his sublime view of his own calling, the pursuit of poetry is a spiritual experience analogous to the Quest of the Holy Grail.

As the type of the artist, Galahad has access to the "godlike" experience of creation, and he achieves what none of the other knights can. He achieves the Holy Grail, and is translated to a spiritual realm which is, in terms of Tennyson's "parabolic drift" and anagogical vision, also an aesthetic realm. But balancing this positive (and conscious) portrayal of Galahad is the negative (and probably unconscious) depiction of his translation in terms of images associated with the Lucifer myth. These arise, as I have said, because of Tennyson's underlying fear that, in actively inducing the inspirational trance-experience in which he seems to become "godlike" (R3:21), he may be guilty of the sin of Lucifer - that is, of aspiring to be like God. He may have wondered whether, if he were Lucifer-like in his aspirations, he could be truly God-like in his achievements. Such

thoughts, whether formulated or repressed, would have been a source of acute anxiety to a poet who believed that

...the gift of poetry was bestowed on him by his Heavenly Father as 'a great trust', that it might be a vehicle in which he was permitted to convey to his fellow men the message he had received from the Master.

(Agnes Weld; qtd. in Page 1983, 34)

This unresolved conflict accounts for Tennyson's strangely ambivalent presentation of Galahad, "the pure knight". It is at the very heart of "The Holy Grail".

I have asserted that in writing "The Holy Grail" Tennyson drew on his personal paranormal experiences. Perhaps I should have said "personal and familial experiences". For Sir Charles Tennyson's article, "The Somersby Tennysons", which refers to the various "religious conversions" undergone by Tennyson's siblings, reads rather like a Victorian version of the Grail Quest. For instance, Sir Charles writes of Frederick:

Sometime in the 1840's he seems to have experienced some kind of religious conversion. Hearing that his sister Mary had become a member of Swedenborg's Church of the New Jerusalem, he began to study Swedenborg's writings and became deeply impressed with them. "After this," he wrote many years later, "I never ceased to feel, yea to know, that I am ever in the presence of God" and "to realize the warning of St. Paul - Pray without ceasing." At about the same time he became a fervent British Israelite and a believer in Spiritualism.

(1963, 11)

Similarly, "some kind of religious conversion" was undergone

by "most of the other members of the family at some time in their lives" (C. Tennyson 1963, 22). The religious impulse common to them all often became obsessive (C. Tennyson 1963, 52) - as it does in "The Holy Grail".

In the Idyll of the Holy Grail, King Arthur asks rhetorically:

Was I too dark a prophet when I said
 To those who went upon the Holy Quest,
 That most of them would follow wandering fires,
 Lost in the quagmire? - lost to me and gone,
 And left me gazing at a barren board,
 And a lean Order - scarce returned a tithe -
 And out of those to whom the vision came
 My greatest hardly will believe he saw;
 Another hath beheld it afar off,
 And leaving human wrongs to right themselves,
 Cares but to pass into the silent life.
 And one hath had the vision face to face,
 And now his chair desires him here in vain,
 However they may crown him elsewhere.

(lines 885-98)

Gawain put the matter much more emphatically when he asserted that the apparent perception of mystical phenomena had "driven men mad" (line 859).

The Tennyson family scarcely fared better. "All the brothers and sisters seem to have suffered to a greater or lesser degree from neuroses, resulting in varying degrees of hypochondria and occasional religious obsession", writes Sir Charles (1963, 8). As I indicated in an earlier chapter, "religiosity" is a frequent feature of temporal lobe epilepsy. So, too, as I have indicated, is the hearing of voices - a phenomenon reported not only by Alfred Tennyson (Memoir II, 244), but also by several of his siblings. On 4 February 1884, Arthur Tennyson wrote to his brother Frederick to tell

him that in the "keen distress" he felt after the death of Harriet, his wife, he heard "a voice soft and soothing and firm and decided" which said to him, "'I am not the less with thee in this great suffering of thine, the greatest suffering thou hast known in thy life, but more than I ever was'...." One might assume the voice to be that of the dead Harriet, but the next sentence casts doubt on such a suggestion. For Arthur continues:

One morning when in a state of all but maddening distress I cried..."O God I am going mad, save me" when the same soft kind firm voice spoke to me and said, "Be still and know that I am God"....

(C. Tennyson 1963, 35)

Some years earlier, in February 1878, Arthur had written to Frederick:

...a most unmistakeable and comforting voice and similar to the voice which I think speaks to you, pours into my ears these welcoming sounds, Thou shalt go up, Thou shalt go up, and to make it all the more sweetly and affectingly welcome...that voice seems to [be] made up of mother's and the Almighty's together.

(C. Tennyson 1963, 36-37)

Members of Alfred Tennyson's immediate family also apparently saw ghosts (C. Tennyson 1963, 42), "had strange psychic dreams", and showed a keen interest in spiritualism (C. Tennyson 1963, 45). Like the knights who undertook the Quest of the Holy Grail, some members of the family were overcome by mental instability (C. Tennyson 1963, 16, 18, 21). Such mental instability is sometimes - as has been indicated elsewhere - associated with epilepsy, especially temporal lobe

epilepsy (Slater and Roth 1969, 454). It is, indeed, the dark aspect of what Dostoevsky called the "dialectic" of the disease.

However, in some epileptics that dark aspect has an obverse, positive side: the ecstatic seizure. Cirignotta, Todesco and Lugaresi describe one such case - that of a thirty-year-old man:

Seizures generally come on when he is relaxed or drowsy. The subjective symptoms are defined by the patient himself as "indescribable", words seeming to him inadequate to express what he perceives in those instants. However, he says that the pleasure he feels is so intense that he cannot find its match in reality. Qualitatively, these sensations can only be compared with those evoked by music. All disagreeable feelings, emotions, and thoughts are absent during the attacks. His mind, his whole being is pervaded by a sense of total bliss.

(Cirignotta et al 1980, 709)

This type of seizure is clearly of the same order as the subjective paranormal experience Tennyson describes in In Memoriam 95, for example:

...all at once it seem'd at last
The living soul was flash'd on mine,

And mine in this was wound, and whirl'd
About empyreal heights of thought,
And came on that which is, and caught
The deep pulsations of the world,

Aeonian music....

(IM 95:35-41)

It will be remembered that Tennyson's "trances" usually occurred when he was sitting quietly by himself (Martin 1980, 28). That is, as in the case of Cirignotta's subject, they

occurred when the poet was "relaxed or drowsy" (Cirignotta 1980, 709). And Tennyson's trance was of the same "indescribable" quality mentioned in Cirignotta's report. Tennyson writes:

Vague words! but ah, how hard to frame
 In matter-moulded forms of speech,
 Or, ev'n for intellect to reach
 Thro' memory that which I became....

(IM 95:45-48)

The poet continues:

...now the doubtful dusk reveal'd
 The knolls once more where, couch'd at ease,
 The white kine glimmer'd, and the trees
 Laid their dark arms about the field....

(IM 95: 49-52)

The fact that "now" the landscape is "revealed / ...once more" shows that during the trance experience the poet's awareness of his surroundings was suspended. Similarly, speaking of the patient who was subject to so-called ecstatic seizures, Cirignotta et al note that during the attack "All attention to his surroundings is suspended". In summing up their findings in the case, Cirignotta and colleagues write: "This case clearly shows that temporal lobe epilepsy can cause seizures that are subjectively experienced as 'ecstatic' states" (1980, 709). Such temporal lobe epilepsy with ecstatic seizures has also been called "Dostoevsky Epilepsy" (Cirignotta et al 1980, 705), after the Russian novelist who, in the guise of Prince Myshkin in The Idiot, described his own seizures so movingly. Indeed, perhaps Dostoevsky should be allowed the last word.

For what he, in the persona of Prince Myshkin, has to say about his epilepsy and his art is equally applicable to Tennyson, who feared the "blot upon the brain", yet utilized the subjective paranormal experiences associated with it to create some of the most beautiful poetry in the English language.

...there was a moment or two in his epileptic condition...when suddenly amid the sadness, spiritual darkness and depression, his brain seemed to catch fire at brief moments, and with an extraordinary momentum his vital forces were strained to the utmost all at once. His sensation of being alive and his awareness increased tenfold at those moments which flashed by like lightning. His mind and heart were flooded by a dazzling light. All his agitation, all his doubts and worries, seemed composed in a twinkling, culminating in a great calm, full of serene and harmonious joy and hope, full of understanding and the knowledge of the final cause....Reflecting about the moment afterwards...he often said to himself that all those gleams and flashes of the highest awareness and, hence, also of 'the highest mode of existence', were nothing but a disease, a departure from the normal condition, and, if so, it was not at all the highest mode of existence, but, on the contrary, must be considered to be the lowest.

(Dostoevsky 1986, 243)

I do not think it is necessary to take so pessimistic a view. When Prince Myshkin asks, "What if it is disease?", the question is rhetorical: the fact that epilepsy has its roots in pathology is not really questioned. As long ago as the fifth century B.C. Hippocrates explained that "epilepsy comes from the brain 'when it is not normal'" (Penfield 1975, 8). And Penfield, a latter-day specialist in the field, observes that the Greek physician who has come to be known as the "Father of Scientific Medicine" spoke "simply and accurately"

(1975, 7-8). It has, however, been argued that it is "simpler to think of all people as epileptics and regard the matter as one of threshold" (Slater and Roth 1969, 452). And this view is appealing to one striving to show a possible relationship between temporal lobe epileptic phenomena and the creative sensitivity of a late Romantic poet. For if it were indeed acceptable to "think of all people as epileptics and regard the matter as one of threshold", then it might be possible to extrapolate from my findings concerning the Tennysonian imagination to a more generalized theory of the Romantic imagination. I do not claim it is: I merely suggest that the idea might be worth considering, and possibly testing.

However, I have strayed from my present objective, which is to stress that it is not necessary to take a negative view of the hypothesized link between Tennyson's poetic imagination and TLE. Neppe, pointing out that "Henri Bergson conceptualized the brain as a filter of information" by which "sensory overload is prevented", goes on to mention the possibility "that temporal lobe dysfunction of a certain kind may allow certain patterns of exogenous...information to be received which the normal person cannot experience" (Neppe 1979, 71). That is, the epileptic lesion, or what might perhaps more accurately be termed the focus of epileptic excitability, might possibly act as a break or chink in the brain "filter" through which perceptions may leak in from an unseen world around us. Tennyson seems to have held precisely this view, for we know he "felt constantly aware of an unseen world of spirit that he once described as 'a great ocean

pressing around us on every side, and only leaking in by a few chinks'" (Martin 1980, 557; my italics).

If one accepts the epileptic focus as the "chink" through which extra-sensory perceptions may have reached Tennyson, then one might perhaps regard his epilepsy in a positive rather than a negative light. The "blot upon the brain" may, indeed, have been a gift. At any rate, as Prince Myshkin says,

'What if it is a disease?'....'What does it matter that it is an abnormal tension, if the result, if the moment of sensation, remembered and analysed in a state of health, turns out to be harmony and beauty brought to their highest point of perfection, and gives a feeling, undivined and undreamt of till then, of completeness, proportion, reconciliation, and an ecstatic and prayerful fusion in the highest synthesis of life?'

(Dostoevsky 1986, 243)

APPENDIX A

SUBJECTIVE PARANORMAL EXPERIENCE QUESTIONNAIRE

Please answer the questions below as truthfully as you can. You need not fear talking about any experience you may have had as these are being used for research alone.

All refer to periods during which you were not under the influence of alcohol, any non-prescription drugs or an anaesthetic. It also does not refer to times when you were very ill, physically or mentally. The term "reasonably healthy" excludes the above periods.

The answer "yes" should be reserved for those questions in which you feel there is no reasonable or "normal" or conventional explanation for the experience, and that it is unlikely to have been a chance coincidence.

If you are uncertain how many times you have had a certain type of experience, indicate approximately.

Please remember that the only correct answer is what is in your opinion the true answer. You are not expected to prove your answer.

You may ask the interviewer to help you to decide on an answer that you are uncertain of, but to help you again these are the

questions that must be asked:

1. Was I reasonably healthy when the occurrence happened?
2. Is there no ordinary way I can explain the occurrence?
3. Was this occurrence in my opinion of the kind referred to in the question?

If your answer is "yes" to all 3 questions then you should answer "yes" to the question put to you. You should then try to estimate how many times this kind of occurrence has happened to you..

Let us now take an example:

1. Have you ever dreamt about something and later learnt that what you dreamt really happened?

YES NO

If you feel the answer is "yes" you can check as follows:

- 1.1 Was I "reasonably healthy" (no alcohol, drugs or anaesthetic, and not very ill) when this happening and dream occurred?
- 1.2 Is there no ordinary way I can explain the dream?
- 1.3 Was this a dream about something that later really happened?

If your answer is "yes" to the 3 questions above, you should answer "yes" to the question put to you.

If yes, how many times have you had such a dream?

Here, you should try to estimate how many times this has happened to you. It is often useful to think of each

occurrence briefly and total it up. It is better to underestimate than overestimate.

Now that we have discussed what is required of you, let us continue. Remember that the interviewer will help you apply the 3 check questions to answers you are uncertain of.

2. Have you ever had a rather clear and specific dream which matched in detail an event which occurred before, during or after your dream, and which you did not know about and did not expect at the time of the dream?

YES NO

If yes, how many times have you had this type of dream? Please describe separate instances (up to five of this kind).

Please indicate if the event occurred as in the dream, or if the dream was symbolic or intuitive. Please indicate what interval of time existed between the dream and the event. Was the dream recorded or mentioned before you knew of the event?

3. Have you ever had a dream involving someone, and later learnt that that person had the same dream as you did at the same time?

YES NO

If yes, how many times?

Please describe separate instances (up to five of this kind).

Please indicate in what way the dreams were the same, and whether the resemblance was direct or just symbolic, and whether the dreams may have had a common context in events that had happened within the past few days prior to the dream.

Please indicate what common features were confirmed by the other person concerned.

4. Have you ever had while awake, a strong feeling, impression, vision or knowledge, that a previously unexpected event had happened, was happening or was going to happen, and later learnt that you were right?

YES NO

If yes, how many times have you had this 'awareness'?

Please describe separate instances (up to five of this kind).

Please indicate if the event occurred as in this 'awareness', or if this 'awareness' was symbolic or intuitive. Please indicate what interval of time existed between the 'awareness' and the event. Was the 'awareness' recorded or mentioned before you knew of the event?

5. Have you ever had while awake, a vivid impression of seeing, hearing, smelling, being touched by, or just strongly being aware of (sensing) another being, which impression, as far as you could discover or knew, was not due to any external physical or 'natural' cause? (please do NOT include here experiences of the Christ or other religious figures).

YES NO

If yes, how many times have you had this type of experience?

Please indicate what senses were involved in each of these 'awarenesses'.

Please describe the 'being'.

6. Has any other person ever told you that they had a dream, vision or definite feeling in which they seemed to get information about an event involving you, which they could not have obtained in any 'normal' or conventional way?

YES NO

If yes, how many times has this happened?

Please describe fully.

Were you in crisis at the time?

Were you actively thinking of the other person?

Did you confirm this occurrence with the other person?

7. Have you ever seen a light or lights around a person's head, shoulders, hands or body which, as far as you could tell, were not [due] to "normal" or "natural causes"? (i.e. a halo or aura).

YES NO

If yes, how many times has this happened?

Please describe in detail separate instances (up to five of this kind).

Please indicate if the occurrence was spontaneous or induced, and what senses (including vision) were involved.

8. Have you ever communicated with the dead as a medium in a seance or believed yourself to have been controlled or 'possessed' by a 'spirit'?

YES NO

If yes, how often have you done so?

8a How often do you lose consciousness?

8b How often have you obtained information which the sitters regarded as factual? Please give examples.

8c Has a 'spirit' ever communicated a message through you by 'controlling' your handwriting? (automatic writing)

YES NO

If yes, how often?

Was the material legible?

With which hand was it written?

Were you ever doing anything else at the same time?

Discuss up to five instances in detail.

8d Has a 'spirit' ever communicated through you in a foreign language you did not know?

YES NO

If yes, how often?

Was anyone able to interpret this foreign language?

How rapid was the speech?

Give up to five examples with corroboration.

8e Have you ever materialized ectoplasm?

YES NO

If yes, how many times?

Were they recognizable as people?

Who could authenticate this?

9. Have you ever had the experience while 'healthy' in which you were located outside of or away from your physical body: that is, the feeling that your consciousness, mind or centre of awareness was at a different place than your physical body?

(If in doubt, please answer 'no')

YES NO

If yes, how many times have you had this experience?

Please describe in detail separate instances (up to five of this kind).

In how many of these cases did you see your physical body while outside it?

In how many of these cases did you 'travel' to distant places and 'see' or 'hear' what was going on there?

In how many of these cases did you get information about previously unknown places or events that later proved to be accurate?

In how many of these cases did another person 'see' or otherwise become aware of your 'presence' at a distant place to which you 'travelled' while outside of your physical body?

Where was your consciousness (mind) (centre of awareness)?

(Were you inside or outside your body, or can you not say?)

10. Have you ever had what seems to be a memory of a previous lifetime? (i.e. 'reincarnation' memories)

YES NO

If yes, how many of these experiences have you had?

Please describe separate instances (up to five of this kind).

How many previous lifetimes can you remember?

In how many of these lifetimes were you a well-known or important person?

Have you ever been able to record details such as names, places, historical events etc., which you had not known before your 'memories'?

YES NO

If yes, how often?

How old were you at the time of each memory?

11.1 Have you ever felt responsible for an object moving or bending with no natural or physical means of motions that you could discover?

YES NO

11.2 While you were alone has an object ever moved or bent with no natural or physical means of motions that you could discover?

YES NO

If yes, to either question 11.1 or 11.2, how many times have you had this type of experience?

Please describe in detail each instance (up to five of each kind).

Please explain if the change was visualized.

Did these experiences occur only in the company of ONE particular person?

YES NO

If yes, what sex?

MALE FEMALE

What age?

VARIED FIXED

10 11-15 16-20 21 or over

12. Have you ever attempted to 'heal' someone who is ill by other than 'normal' means? (e.g. by laying on of hands)

YES NO

If yes, how many times have you tried?

How many times do you feel you have [been] successful

[in] healing someone?

What would you regard as the average result of your attempts?

COMPLETELY UNSUCCESSFUL PARTLY UNSUCCESSFUL

MILD SUCCESS GREAT SUCCESS

Do you feel that you have any special healing powers?

YES NO

If yes, to what extent?

MILD - SLIGHT SUBSTANTIAL MARKED

Please describe fully your definite success.

13.1 Do you have difficulty wearing a watch in that it stops going for no apparent reason and nothing is found wrong with it when taken for repair?

YES NO

If yes, with how many watches has this occurred?

13.2 Are you able to restart a broken watch so that it goes for a long period e.g. for more than a week?

YES NO

If yes, how many watches have done so?

14.1 To what degree do you regard yourself as being 'psychic'?
(i.e. having paranormal (psi) abilities).

NIL MILD MODERATE MARKED

14.2 How many psychic experiences have you had?

How many would you regard as major experiences and how many as minor?

15. How would you regard your knowledge of parapsychology?
(psychical research) (the experiences we have discussed above) (compared to the average adult)

BELOW AVERAGE AVERAGE ABOVE AVERAGE

WELL-ABOVE AVERAGE

How many non-fiction books have you read on the subject?

How many journal articles have you read?

How many lectures have you attended?

How much practical experience have you had?

NONE LITTLE SEVERAL TIMES A YEAR

MONTHLY OR MORE

(From V.M. Neppe, 1979, "An Investigation of the Relationship between Subjective Paranormal Experience and Temporal Lobe Symptomatology", pages 149-57.)

APPENDIX B

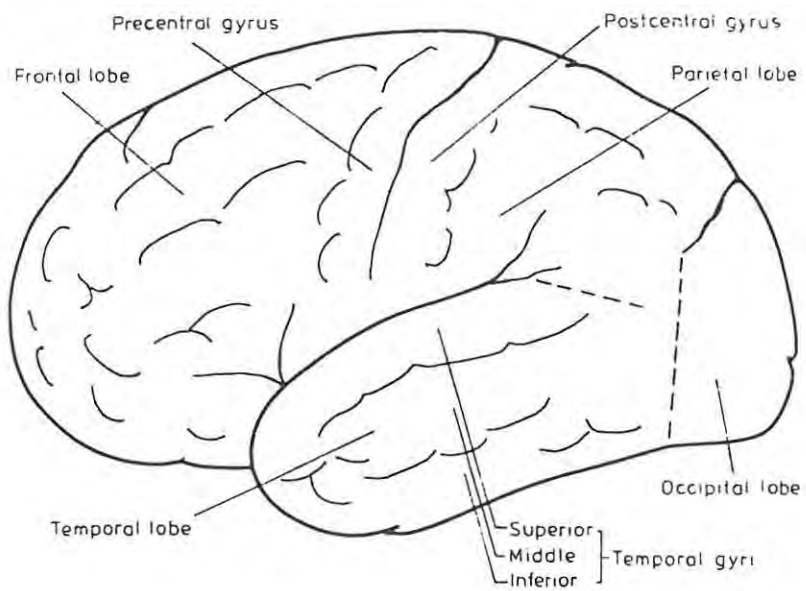
Varieties of Epilepsy

1. Generalised epilepsies
 - (a) Primary generalised epilepsy
(petit mal, grand mal)
 - (b) Secondary generalised epilepsy
 2. Focal epilepsies ('partial' or 'local' epilepsies)
 - (a) With elementary symptomatology
(e.g. motor Jacksonian epilepsy)
 - (b) With complex symptomatology
(mostly temporal lobe in origin, e.g. with cognitive or affective symptomatology, psychomotor attacks, psychosensory attacks)
 3. Unclassifiable and mixed forms
-

(From William Alwyn Lishman, 1978, Organic Psychiatry: The Psychological Consequences of Cerebral Disorder, page 296).

APPENDIX C

Lobar Divisions of the Brain (Left Hemisphere).



(From Kevin Walsh 1987, Neuropsychology: A Clinical Approach, 2nd ed., page 43)

APPENDIX D

A Model of Six Categories of Entoptic Phenomena, and their Depictions in San (Southern African), Shoshonean Coso (North American) and (European) Upper Paleolithic Rock Art.

	ENTOPTIC PHENOMENA		SAN ROCK ART		COSO
	A	B	ENGRAVINGS C	PAINTINGS D	E
	I				
II					
III					
IV					
V					
VI					

FIG. 1. Six categories of entoptic phenomena compared with San and Coso rock-art depictions. Redrawn from the following: IA, Siegel (1977:138a); B, Richards (1971:93); C, Thackeray et al. (1981:fig. 3); D, Manhire, Parkington, and Yates (1985:fig. 4); E, Grant (1968:82); IIA and B, Siegel (1977:138d and c); C, Fock and Fock (1984:fig. 258); D, Pager (1971:fig. 307); E, Grant (1968:102); IIIA and B, Siegel (1977:138b and k); C, Fock (1979:pl. 100); D, Lewis-Williams (1981a:fig. 20); E, Wellmann (1979a:pl. 164); IVA, Siegel (1977:138e); B, Horowitz (1975:fig. 2); C, Fock and Fock (1984:fig. 259); D, Pager (1971:fig. 338); E, Grant (1968:66); VA, Siegel (1977:138j); B, Richards (1971:91b); C, Wilman (1968:pl. 59); D, Lewis-Williams (n.d. b); E, Grant (1968:28); VIA, Horowitz (1975:fig. 2); C, Fock and Fock (1984:fig. 251); D, Lewis-Williams (1981b:fig. 2); E, Grant (1968:101).

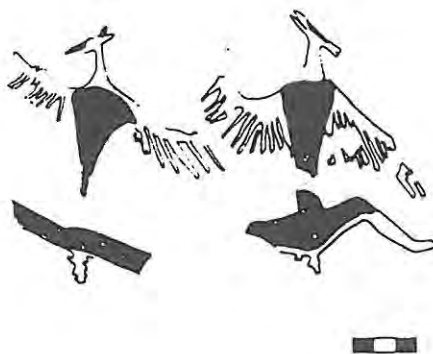
PALAEOLITHIC ART			
MOBILE ART		PARIETAL ART	
F	G	H	I

FIG. 2. Six categories of entoptic phenomena compared with Upper Palaeolithic mobile and parietal art depictions. Redrawn from the following: (I)F, Marshack (1972:fig. 34); G, Marshack (1979:fig. 34); H, Marshack (1985:fig. 17); I, Leroi-Gourhan (1968a:fig. 73); (II)F and G, Marshack (1972:figs. 4 and 36); H and I, Leroi-Gourhan (1968a:figs. 157 and 126); (III)F, Marshack (1972:fig. 12); G, Marshack (1972:fig. 36); H and I, Leroi-Gourhan (1968a:figs. 64 and 165); (IV)F, Marshack (1972:fig. 43); G, Marshack (1972:fig. 200); H and I, Leroi-Gourhan (1968a:figs. 152 and 710); (V)F, Marshack (1979:fig. 29); G, Marshack (1972:fig. 84); H, Leroi-Gourhan (1968a:277); I, Marshack (1977:pl. 45); (VI)F and H, Marshack (1977:pl. 10 and 32).

(From J.D. Lewis-Williams and T.A. Dowson, 1988, "The Sign of All Times: Entoptic Phenomena in Upper Paleolithic Art", *Current Anthropology* 29, pages 206-07.)

APPENDIX E

"White Wings"



A depiction of "trance buck", enlarged and reproduced from:
J.D. Lewis-Williams, 1986, "Cognitive and Optical Illusions in
San Rock Art", Current Anthropology 27, page 177.

NOTES

CHAPTER I. SUBJECTIVE PARANORMAL EXPERIENCE

¹ See pp. 79-81.

² Although she was "christened Emilia", "her family and friends called her Emily" (Martin 1980, 100). Arthur Hallam often calls her "Nem" in his letters. See, for example, the letter of 20 November 1832 (Kolb 1981, 687-88).

³ This is shown, for instance, by the correspondence between Charles Tennyson d'Eyncourt and his son, George Hildeyard Tennyson d'Eyncourt, while the latter was at Cambridge. For example, in a letter of 25 January 1829 from the son to his father, young George's anxieties regarding his health and his reputation are abundantly apparent: "The medical man has, I believe, a very high character, and certainly is a gentleman, and I cannot for a moment suppose that he would injure me in reputation....I have had a very good character in the University hitherto and of course do not wish it to be tarnished...." (2TD H86/2, LAO). See also Colley 1983, 70.

⁴ See "To -, After Reading a Life and Letters" (R289).

⁵ Hallam originally wrote of "the impossibility of analysing a great man's mind" (MS. Mats. I, 4; my italics), but changed the word "analysing" to "fathoming" in the Memoir.

⁶ The Princess (R286:I.12).

⁷ I shall use the phrase "dreamy state" as a psychiatric term later in this study. It is also used, less technically, of Tennyson by Wilfred Ward (see p.37 below).

⁸ The dream to which Martin alludes is given in MS. Mats. IV, 6.

⁹ For a review of his contemporaries' opinion of Hallam's nature and intellect, see Louw 1985, 35-36. See also In Memoriam sections 109, 110, 111.

¹⁰ "It is, in fact, one of the greatest series of love poems in the English language", writes Zuckerman. She also notes that, while "inevitably admitting Tennyson's ultimate subjectivism, critics have concerned themselves little with the nature of the subjective experiences underlying the poem or the literary conventions governing their presentation" (1971, 202). Zuckerman's study is principally concerned with Tennyson as a Victorian poet "reaching back to older traditions of love poetry" (1971, 203). My study seeks to elucidate "the nature of [some of] the subjective experiences underlying" not only In Memoriam but Tennyson's poetry as a whole.

¹¹ "The section was omitted from Trial [the trial issue of March 1850] but was reinstated in the sequence in 1850A" (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 228). As Shatto and Shaw point out, 1850A was the "first edition (actually the second issue)" of In Memoriam, since "the first three so-called 'editions' are, strictly, reissues of Trial" (1982, 23).

¹² "It is well-known that dreams, like the unconscious, have a centuries-old tradition that can be traced back to ancient Middle East cultures, the Greeks, and the Middle Ages" (Mora 1974, 49). As far as prophetic dreams in literature are concerned, those depicted by Dante (e.g., La Vita Nuova III, XXIII - Reynolds 1969, 31-33, 64-70) and Shakespeare (e.g., Richard III, 1.4.1-63; 3.2.10-18; 5.3.117-206) spring immediately to mind. But, of course, the tradition is even older, going back to the classics (e.g., Penelope's dream in Homer's Odyssey XIX - Shewring 1980, 240-41) and the Bible (e.g., Matthew 2.12).

¹³ See pp. 43-45, 104-06.

¹⁴ Charles Merivale (1808-93), of St John's College, Cambridge, eventually became Dean of Ely (1869-93) (Lang and Shannon 1982, 39).

¹⁵ MS. Mats. I, 69, where I first noticed this letter, gives the date as 29 July 1829. This date is carried over to the Memoir (I, 47-48). But the editors of Tennyson's letters contend that the date should read 29 June 1829 (Lang and Shannon 1982, 39).

¹⁶ This passage modulates into a description of Tennyson's trance state. Martin quotes the passage (1980, 84).

¹⁷ Robert H. Ross takes a different view, holding that Tennyson is half-awake (1973, 42 n.2).

¹⁸ See pp. 261-65.

¹⁹ For an analysis of "The Silent Voices" (R459), a poem written at this time, see Louw 1985, 103-14.

²⁰ Part of the rubric to the SPE Questionnaire (Appendix A) reads: "Please remember that the only correct answer is what is in your opinion the true answer. You are not required to prove your answer."

²¹ Ricks notes that "the trial edition of 1869...mentioned Boccaccio, and Part IV had the note...: 'This poem is founded upon a story in Boccaccio'" - the story being one from the "Decameron (10th Day, 4th Tale)". "In his choice of source [Ricks adds], Tennyson may have been influenced by the adaptations of 'Barry Cornwall' (B.W. Procter), which are similar in style and tone. The influence of Keats combines with the adaptation of Boccaccio in Keats's Isabella" (R153, headnote).

²² The letter is printed, without further details, by Kolb in an Appendix to The Letters of Arthur Henry Hallam.

²³ Clyde Ryals points out that the image of the hand is occasionally "the super-human hand of Hallam", but more often it is the "higher hand that seems to suggest the Deity" (1962, 395; qtd. by Louw 1985, 173).

²⁴ Ricks notes that the phrase "windless calm" occurs also in "Armageddon" (R3:I.111), and in Shelley's Scenes from Calderon II.97 (R153:n.ii 203-4).

²⁵ The incident occurred during a tour of Cornwall

undertaken for the purpose of "saturating himself in the atmosphere of the Arthurian country" (Martin 1980, 320).

²⁶ Page is quoting from The Autobiography of Margot Asquith (1936. London: Penguin, 166).

²⁷ See p. 160.

²⁸ The passage quoted is from Wilfrid Ward, "Tennyson: A Reminiscence", which was first published in Problems and Persons (1903. London: Longman Green, 196-217).

²⁹ Ian Kennedy, while conceding that it is not known when Tennyson read Goethe's Wilhelm Meister, feels that lines 36-40 of "The Mystic" may have been influenced by Wilhelm Meister's Apprenticeship V:

In my many sleepless nights, especially, I have at times felt something which I cannot undertake to describe. It was as if my soul were thinking separately from the body: she looked upon the body as a foreign substance, as we look upon a garment.

(Kennedy, 1978. PQ 57, 89-90 - qtd. R96, headnote).

³⁰ The large form of the "ghost" of Hallam also features in In Memoriam 103:41-43. This larger-than-life size of the "ghosts" is rooted in tradition (R214:n.20). Tennyson alludes to the tradition in his projected discourse on "Ghosts" for the Cambridge Apostles (Memoir I, 43). He writes there of "the colossal Presences of the Past majores humano..." (Memoir I, 498).

³¹ The excerpt is taken from "Aspects of Tennyson II: A Personal Reminiscence", Nineteenth Century XXXIII (1893):164-

74, 181-87.

³² See pp. 182-91.

³³ Ann Colley argues that Emily Tennyson's problems "were emotional as well as physical." The poet's wife "was aware that when her feelings were positive, she could get up and run with her children, but that when feeling depressed, she could not get herself to move" (1983, 42).

³⁴ The Longman's Dictionary of Psychology and Psychiatry and the Penguin Dictionary of Psychology concur in these dates. But the Encyclopaedic Dictionary of Psychology gives the year of Mesmer's birth as 1734. So, too, does Henri Ellenberger in The Discovery of the Unconscious: The History and Evolution of Dynamic Psychiatry (1970, 57).

³⁵ The pagination in these manuscripts is often unorthodox. In such cases I maintain Hallam Tennyson's notation rather than the traditional "recto" and "verso" designations. 167* would correspond to 166^v.

³⁶ In the Memoir (I, 21-22), this anecdote is given in direct speech, as the utterance of Alfred Tennyson himself.

³⁷ Martin's source for this statement is an entry in William Allingham's Diary for Thursday, August 7 [1884]. Allingham adds: "Still, he [Tennyson] is most anxious to believe in ghosts" (Allingham 1985, 330).

³⁸ The passage quoted by Shatto and Shaw is a marginal note by Hallam Tennyson in a copy of Materials for a Life (IV,

171) in the Tennyson Research Centre. Cf. Fryn Tennyson Jesse's letter to Motter (Kolb 1981, 802), quoted on p.31 above.

³⁹ Hallam Tennyson appends a note: "I have taken the words of this paragraph from Mrs [Marion] Bradley's diary, written at the time: I remember the scene well" (Memoir II, 90). Mrs Bradley's diary is in the British Library. The entry is for 2 January 1869.

⁴⁰ Shatto and Shaw quote Mats II, 29: "In certain states of high strung consciousness he thought it possible that soul might touch soul".

⁴¹ For In Memoriam 86, see Louw 1985, 60-62, 73, 174. For In Memoriam 95, see Louw 1985, 64-75, 80-84, 163-64, 183-84.

⁴² Shatto and Shaw 1982, 255 n.36-7.

⁴³ See IM 94:5-10.

⁴⁴ Campbell, Nancie. 1971. Tennyson in Lincoln: A Study of the Collections in the Research Centre. Lincoln.

⁴⁵ See p.53 above.

⁴⁶ C.P.M. Jones, in "Mysticism, Human and Divine", notes the variety of definitions of "mysticism" that have resulted from the fact that different authors approach the subject from different angles (1986, 18). He goes on "to suggest that mystical experience in some form can penetrate into a wide range of human activities", including "the contemplation of

Nature", the act of aesthetic creation, and "love", as well as certain religious practices (1986, 21-23).

⁴⁷ Butler quotes from Maréchal's Etudes sur la Psychologie de Mystiques (p.245).

⁴⁸ See p.1 above.

CHAPTER II. THE "DARK COUNTERPOINT"

¹ Tennyson's use of the word "fit [of gout]" (my italics) may be significant, since, especially in lay parlance, epileptic attacks are frequently referred to as "fits". It is also interesting to note that Mr Barstow's services were particularly required at night, for epilepsy does often tend in many cases to be worse at night (Slater and Roth 1969, 448).

² Martin does point out, however, that in his old age Tennyson suffered from a condition much closer to what is today termed "gout". It caused him great pain, and he was forbidden to drink port (1980, 84). It seems that the word "gout" was used loosely, and in a number of different contexts. For instance, in 1863 he blamed a severe reaction to vaccination on the fact "that the vaccine came 'from a gouty baby'" (Martin 1980, 445).

³ For instance, Alfred Tennyson was treated on various occasions at High Beech, Prestbury, Umberslade and Malvern

(Martin 1980, 279). His brother Horatio was at Prestbury in 1844 (Martin 1980, 277), and his Aunt Elizabeth [Russell] was treated at Malvern in December 1847 (Martin 1980, 315).

⁴ There appears to be some considerable disagreement over Hippocrates' dates. Ellenberger gives them as "about 460 to 377 B.C." (1974, 8).

⁵ Julius Caesar is said to have suffered from "the falling sickness" (Dorsch 1965, 14 n.118), and Dostoevsky uses the term (Rice 1985, 68).

⁶ That is, exhibiting greatly increased voltage (Slater and Roth 1969, 447).

⁷ See Appendix B, "Varieties of Epilepsy".

⁸ Fenton points out that "the validity of the concept of idiopathic epilepsy is increasingly questioned as each advance in knowledge explains more and more epilepsies, hitherto classified as idiopathic, in terms of known causes" (1983, 151). The Commission on Classification and Terminology of the International League against Epilepsy distinguishes "symptomatic or 'secondary' epilepsies" from "those that are idiopathic (primary) and those that are cryptogenic". Cryptogenic epilepsies are those which are "presumed to be symptomatic", but of unknown etiology (Commission of Classification 1989, 389-90). I retain the use of the term "idiopathic", since it is widely encountered in the literature, and since it is a convenient term to use in connection with Tennyson, where a known cause cannot be

finally determined.

⁹ At Fair Mead, High Beech (where John Clare was one of the patients in the care of Matthew Allen), the "inmates were encouraged to do manual labour, to take unsupervised walks, and to tire themselves with exercise but to shun books" (Martin 1980, 236). At Prestbury, "the patients were made to walk long distances whatever the weather", and "social activity was encouraged" (Martin 1980, 277). At Umberlade Hall, "it was pleasant to take his constitutional walks, for he could stay within the fine old park surrounding the mansion where he was quartered, rather than going through the streets followed by jeering urchins as he had been forced to do in Prestbury" (Martin 1980, 309). For further information concerning Tennyson and the hydropathic cure, see Colley 1983, 21-22, 47, 55-56, 64-65, and Colley 1978, 64-68.

¹⁰ Martin writes that in 1887, in spite of failing eyesight and "shambling gait", Tennyson "still rose at 7.30 each morning to walk before breakfast....When the day was fine and he felt unusually well he could still walk several miles without a stick" (1980, 563).

¹¹ Lang and Shannon, who take the text of this letter from the Memoir (I, 179), print an italicized interpolation, "(at present)", after the word "legs" (1982, 193). This interpolation is not in MS. Mats. I suspect the addition is Hallam Tennyson's.

¹² An entry, for 5 December 1884, in William Allingham's

Diary would seem to confirm this. For Allingham quotes Tennyson as saying, "I'm an old fellow and must exercise. One may do without it in youth, but not in age" (Allingham 1985, 339).

¹³ The autobiographical parallels in this poem have been explored by several critics, most notably by Ralph Rader in Tennyson's "Maud": The Biographical Genesis (1963). See also Low 1985, 16-18. For a critical analysis of Maud, see Low 1985, 15-25.

¹⁴ It is perhaps worth noting that this reference to epilepsy occurs in the Tennyson d'Eyncourt papers in the Lincoln Archives. Such a slip would not have escaped the expurgatory eye of Hallam Tennyson.

¹⁵ The arrangement does not appear to have been a happy one, though Arthur remained with Frederick for thirteen years. See C. Tennyson 1963, 22.

¹⁶ Edward Tennyson appears to have been a most pathetic youth. One's sympathies for him are aroused, for instance, by a letter concerning him written by his father to his grandfather on 27 February 1829. Part of Dr Tennyson's letter reads:

My dearest Father,
I will be with you on Monday next....I shall bring Edward with me as you have been so good as to interest yourself in his behalf. At home he will be quite ruined, and he is beginning to be what you call chippy and unmanageable. I shall however at all events bring him to you; he will never be well at home, and would fancy that he has a hundred complaints. He must be governed and know what it is to have a Master. He is already running restive and

what am I to expect from a boy who has been already at home nearly a year upon the plea of ill health, and encouraged as he is....I will most willingly and confidentially trust to you, as to what is to be done with Edward, a very awkward and unlikable[?] fellow who fancies himself to be a superior Genius and who scarcely knows that two and two makes four. In short he is ruined here and must go from home.

(Lang and Shannon 1982, 29)

¹⁷ A letter written by Dr Tennyson, on 31 July 1829 at Geneva, to his father and brother sounds less sanguine. He writes:

I have been up occasionally four nights without intermission. Frequently two. When the body is very much fatigued the mind cannot act. But I have endeavoured to dissipate the mental feeling by violent exertion and the inspection of foreign manners and scenery. It will not do.

(Lang and Shannon 1982, 42)

¹⁸ Lishman holds that "in so far as there is any increased risk of violent or antisocial conduct among epileptics, it is unlikely to arise from the attacks themselves but rather from the psychiatric complications of the epilepsy" (1978, 346).

¹⁹ See Appendix C.

²⁰ See chapter I (p. 37 above).

²¹ For instance, Williams reports a case in which a boy of fifteen routinely experienced "three sorts of attack" (1956, 55).

²² The word "affect" is employed in the sense of a "general term used more-or-less interchangeably with various others such as emotion, emotionality, feeling [or] mood"

(Penguin Dictionary of Psychology). While words such as "emotion", "mood" or "feeling" may be more appropriate in the literary context, I retain the word "affect", where applicable, because of its occurrence in the relevant psychiatric literature.

²³ A Trinity College manuscript (Wren Library Ref. 0.15.32) shows that the poet amended the lines from "I touched my knee, the knee / Was strange, not mine..." to the present reading, which is so much better. (Ricks does not print this variant.)

²⁴ The allusion, which is not noted by Ricks, is to Daniel 7.2 ("In my visions of the night..."). Here Tennyson might thus seem to place himself among the great religious mystics. For though the visions are ascribed to Arthur, they are clearly based on the poet's personal experience.

²⁵ The "weird seizures" were first included in the 1851 edition, approximately four years after the original publication of The Princess. As I have noted elsewhere, one may speculate "that from within the new-found security of his marriage Tennyson felt able to include passages on what had hitherto been a 'hidden' concern" of a very personal nature (Louw 1985, 26 n.76).

²⁶ Since completing this dissertation I have encountered an article by Barbara Herb Wright entitled "Tennyson, The Princess and Epilepsy" (1987). Wright gives a definition of "catalepsis" from "Tennyson's personal medical dictionary"

(John Quincy 1802, A New Medical Dictionary): "'A sudden suppression of motion and sensation, the body remaining in the same posture as when seized.'" Wright continues:

The dictionary goes on to note that catalepsy "'is said to come on suddenly, being only preceded by some languor of body and mind, and to return by paroxysms. The patients are said to be for some minutes, sometimes (though rarely) for some hours, deprived of their senses, and all power of voluntary motion...When they recover from the paroxysm they remember nothing of what passed during the time of it, but are like persons awakened out of sleep.'" "

Wright is of the opinion that this "addendum defines catalepsy in virtually the same terms as one would describe the complex partial seizure", and she says that the description "sounds remarkably like the description of the sort of fit that Tennyson's father suffered..." (1987, 70). While Wright believes it "is impossible to formulate any final proof that Tennyson himself had epilepsy" (1987, 75), she speculates that

...if the poet himself had psychomotor seizures, or if he had discussed his father's or uncle's seizures with either, and if he wanted to give his insertion of the "strange affection" in The Princess an accurate name, his medical dictionary's term catalepsy - which really describes the psychomotor seizure before it was ever designated with its name - would have been an apt choice.

(1987, 70)

I have found no evidence of a motor component in Alfred Tennyson's seizures, nor in those of the Prince.

²⁷ For a critical analysis of "The Silent Voices", see Low 1985, 103-14. This analysis tries to show, inter alia, how the surface meaning of the poem is to some extent metrically eroded. "I sometimes think the power of Tennyson's poetry resides not so much in what he says as in what he

leaves unsaid; and often the metrics of the poem carry part of this unarticulated meaning" (Louw 1985, 108).

²⁸ Penfield adds:

If we [surgically] removed the convolutions as treatment for the fits, we learned about brain function in another way as soon as the nature of the patient's loss was determined after the operation.

(1975, 13)

²⁹ Tennyson's first visit, with Hallam, to the Pyrenees was "for the purpose of delivering to Spanish insurgents funds secured by the Cambridge Apostles" to aid the cause of General Torrijos (Hixson 1975, 145).

³⁰ Actually one and thirty, but Tennyson retained "two and thirty", possibly because it sounds more melodious (Martin 1980, 440).

³¹ See also Penfield and Jasper 1954, 127.

³² See pp. 26, 261-65.

³³ The passage is adapted from "Armageddon", and expanded. Since I shall be dealing more comprehensively with "Armageddon" later in this study, I have chosen to quote here from "Timbuctoo", the poem with which Tennyson won the Chancellor's Gold Medal for Poetry, at Cambridge, in 1829 (Martin 1980, 66).

³⁴ For a fuller exploration of Tennyson's light imagery, see Louw 1985, 96-100, 105, 111-12.

³⁵ For an exploration of the occurrence of circles, arcs,

arches and domes in classical architecture, see Arthur Stratton, Elements of Form and Design in Classic Architecture (1925, 9-34). Many of the photographs in Victorian Architecture, by Robert Furneaux Jordan, also show these forms (1966, 28, 30, 31, 37, 38, 41, 103, 117, 133, 139, 145, 162, 163, 231, 253, 254).

³⁶ Rice quotes from F.M. Dostoevskii, Polnoe sobranie sochinenii v tridtsati tomakh, Leningrad: Nauka, vols.1-26 (1972-1983) (Rice 1985, 287). The passage is from XXII, 48.

CHAPTER III. EPILEPSY AND IMAGERY

¹ See p. 285 of this study.

² It is unlikely that Tennyson's "elegy", "Ring out, wild bells..." could have been influenced by, or had any influence on, Poe's poem, "The Bells", because In Memoriam was published in England in 1850, and Poe wrote "The Bells" in America in 1849 (Rans 1965, 14). Possibly both poets may have been influenced by Philip Bailey's Festus (1839), though Tennyson's poem shows a greater affinity with that work than does Poe's. Shatto and Shaw refer to Hoxie N. Fairchild's article, "'Wild Bells' in Bailey's Festus" in Modern Language Notes, LXIV (1949):256-8, and quote extensively from Festus (Shatto and Shaw 1982, 264-65).

³ Clark notes that Graham Sutherland uses "particular images" that are also seen in van Gogh and Grünewald, of whose

work Sutherland "is certainly aware". Clark holds that Sutherland "would not have used" these images "in such an intense and personal manner were they not already part of his deepest experience" - part of the "furniture" of his unconscious (Clark 1949, 109).

⁴ The quotations are from the July 1849 version of the poem, printed by Mabbott (1969, I, 435-38). Mabbott's introduction to the poem provides fascinating insights into its genesis (1969, 429-33). He notes, too, that the subject of bells "was popular with Poe's contemporaries in America", but that, in his opinion, "Poe owed little or nothing to them" (1969, 432). Some of the examples Mabbott cites link bells with "phantoms", with weddings, and with burials; but the examples all post-date Tennyson's The Lover's Tale, in which these associations are found. The general influence of Gothic may be apparent.

⁵ Pope-Hennessy gives the source of the quotation as G.E. Woodbury, ed., 1910, The Works of Edgar Allan Poe (10 vols): I, xvii, x.

⁶ Rans quotes from page 57 of The Letters of Edgar Allen Poe (ed. John Ward Ostram).

⁷ On the other hand, M.H. Abrams apparently suspects that Poe may have taken opium. Abrams admits, however, that there "is no definite proof of [Poe's] addiction to opium" (1971, xvi-xvii). In fact, the phenomena associated with altered states of consciousness due to intoxication with opium are

"not unique to the hashish experience....Surprisingly similar imagery has been noted for alcohol delirium tremens" (Siegel and Jarvik 1975, 108). Poe was, of his own admission, at times a very heavy drinker (Rans 165, 13; qtd. p.153 above). It would appear that the "hallucinatory imagery" associated with schizophrenia and epilepsy is also "somewhat similar to the form-constants of drug-induced states" (Siegel and Jarvik 1975, 110). It grieved Tennyson to learn that he was occasionally suspected of taking opium (Martin 1980, 340, 420-21). He insisted that these accusations were false (Martin 1980, 421), and I believe him. In the first place, I think he knew, from the experiences of his father and his brother Charles (Martin 1980, 340), that drugs lead only to desolation and death. He was far too intelligent to fall into the same trap. Martin speculates that the rumours may have arisen because the poet was confused with his brother, Charles, who was an opium addict (1980, 340). As far as I know, no critic before me has noticed that the imagery in his poems has much in common with opium "visions". As I have said, I am convinced these hallucinations derive, in Tennyson's case, from epilepsy, not from opium. But the free availability of laudanum in the nineteenth century may well have affected the zeitgeist (See Siskin 1988, 179-94).

* The phrase "melodious thunder" recalls, perhaps A Midsummer Night's Dream: "I never heard / So musical a discord, such sweet thunder" (4.1.114-15).

° David Shaw and Carl Gartlein interpret lines 201-13 of

"Sea Dreams" (R319) as a description of an Aurora Borealis (1965, 218-19). As I have said before (see p.207 above):

I would not take my argument in favour of epileptic aura so far as to deny that Tennyson ever saw or described the Aurora Borealis. Indeed, the moon, the stars and the "northern lights" may have seemed especially significant to him simply because they appeared to be an external reflection of his strange "inner" lights. There may, indeed, have been times when the poet wondered which was "the real light" and which "the wisp that flickers where no foot can tread" [The Princess, R286:IV.338-30].

(Louw 1985, 99)

¹⁰ The phrase "far away" is, of course, a common one, to be found in ballad, popular song and nursery rhyme, for instance.

¹¹ This fragment is dated 1817 by Mrs Shelley. It has much in common with a passage from Prometheus Unbound which was composed in March-April 1819. Asia says:

My soul is an enchanted boat,
Which, like a sleeping swan, doth float
Upon the silver waves of thy sweet singing;
.....
And we sail on, away, afar....

(II.v.72-74, 88; Hutchinson 1970, 241-42)

¹² Magic is often metaphorically or symbolically associated both with the arts and with the numinous (Otto 1946, 33; Louw 1985, 198-99).

¹³ The words quoted by Chitty are taken from Lear's diary entry for 24 March 1877. These unpublished diaries are at the Houghton Library, Harvard University.

¹⁴ Hallam actually writes "passion for the past" (my

italics).

¹⁵ Yearwood, in his Ph.D. dissertation, "A Catalogue of the Tennyson Manuscripts at Trinity College, Cambridge", notes that "Tennyson used this thin, brown duodecimo notebook circa 1833 and returned to it fifty years later (c.1883) to finish the draft of 'Tiresias'". Yearwood also notes the presence of random "geometrical figures" on the inside top cover (1977, 158-59). I found these to be mainly cylindrical.

The fragment "Who can say &c" is printed by Ricks in his "Appendix B" (1987, III, 619-20).

¹⁶ I had considerable difficulty in identifying this sonata. I am indebted to Miss Lisa Louw, and Mr Michael Tuffin of the University of Cape Town College of Music for the information that the Aurora Sonata is Beethoven's Sonata in C, Op.53. It is "Dedicated to the Count von Waldstein", and hence also sometimes referred to as the "Waldstein" sonata. Miss Louw has suggested to me that the last movement is particularly rich in trills which would be the "musical equivalent of flickering light" (Lisa Louw, letter to the author, 10 October 1990). This is a most interesting observation since it would appear that the "Trillo del Diavolo" had the same effect on Tennyson (p.197 above).

¹⁷ I presume the oratorio referred to is Haydn's Creation.

¹⁸ See p.197 above.

¹⁹ Some of Freud's observations on biographers seem relevant to Hallam Tennyson's methods in compiling the Memoir.

Freud writes that in many cases biographers

...have chosen their hero as the subject of their studies because - for reasons of their personal emotional life - they have felt a special affection for him from the very first. They then devote their energies to a task of idealization, aimed at enrolling the great man among the class of their infantile models - at reviving in him, perhaps, the child's idea of the father. To gratify this wish they obliterate the individual features of their subject's physiognomy; they smooth over the traces of his life's struggle with internal and external resistances; and they tolerate in him no vestige of human weakness or imperfection. They thus present us with what is in fact a cold, strange, ideal figure, instead of a human being to whom we might feel ourselves distantly related.

(qtd. by Edel 1974, 1028-29)

Nevertheless, all Tennyson scholars are indebted to Hallam, Lord Tennyson for his compilation of the Memoir, which remains a most valuable research tool, as well as a testament to the poet's genius.

²⁰ It should be noted that the "checkerboard" is considered by Siegel and Jarvik to be a variant of the "Lattices, gratings, grids...etc" whose importance is considered in chapter IV (1975, 113).

²¹ For a discussion of Tennyson's perception of a numinous presence in nature, see Louw 1985, 43-44, 59-62, 73, 174-81.

CHAPTER IV. FROM PATHOLOGY TO POETRY

¹ I am grateful to Professor R. Harnett for sending me a magazine clipping about Lewis-Williams' interest in shamanistic rock art. It opened up what was for me a most

interesting avenue of exploration.

² There can be little doubt that the Platonic writings influenced Tennyson, as they did Shelley. The Platonic influence would certainly have been fostered at Cambridge, where the Apostles were described by one of their number as a "gallant band of Platonico-Wordsworthian-Coleridgian-anti-Utilitarians" (Allen 1978, 76).

³ The powerful elemental combination of fire and water is also used by Allingham in referring to the "fiery deluge" of the "Last Day" - the end of the world (18/8/1849; Allingham 1985, 54).

⁴ Clark does not state which translation he is quoting, nor does he give line references. (I have added these).

⁵ See, for example, IM 122:20, IM 46:16, and "The Ring" (R422:157-61). Sometimes a rosy colour is associated with the intensified emotion of love - as in "Locksley Hall Sixty Years After" (R417:178) and "Go Not Happy Day" (R316:Part I.572-98).

⁶ The same might be said of the spectre in "Oh! that 'twere possible" (R227). For a Jungian interpretation of that phenomenon, see Louw 1985, 128-48.

⁷ The Heath Manuscript (in the Fitzwilliam Museum, Cambridge) has Chimborazo, not Cotopaxi.

⁸ This hallucination had been induced by the administration of 20 milligrams of psilocybin. The section of the transcript quoted pertains to a period beginning

approximately 25 minutes after administration of the drug.

⁹ Parts of this quotation from the Heath Manuscript are printed by Ricks (R153:n.i 49-50 and n.i 50 ^ 51).

¹⁰ Incidentally, the metaphor of flight - and, by extrapolation, of wings - is also implicit in St Augustine's description of his mystical experiences:

St Augustine says: "And higher still we soared, thinking in our minds and speaking and marvelling at your works: and so we came to our own souls; and went beyond that to reach at last that region of richness unending, where you fed Israel forever with the food of truth...."

(Jung 1966, 95; qtg. St Augustine, Confessions; trans. Francis Joseph Sheed 1951, 158)

¹¹ The description of Raphael (Paradise Lost V.275-87; Carey 1971, 273-74) is quoted on p. 111 above.

¹² "Spirals" are among the form constants reported in altered states of consciousness (Siegel and Jarvik 1975, 113).

¹³ These lines may have been influenced by Virgil's description of Aeneas' visit to the underworld: "Shapes terrible of aspect have their dwelling there..." (Aeneid VI.255-87; W.F. Jackson Knight, trans., 1958, 155).

¹⁴ The statement, "On God and Godlike men we build our trust", is a quotation from the "Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington" (R309:266).

¹⁵ Sacks points out that the "original function of a funeral hearse was...to serve as...a structure on which

such...offerings could be affixed. 'Bouquets' of elegies were pinned or thrown on the hearse of Sir Philip Sidney, for example; and numerous succeeding elegies have found ways to 'strew the laureate hearse,' if only figuratively, with flowers or rather fictions, designed 'to interpose a little ease'" (1985, 19-20).

¹⁶ For a discussion of disembodied voices in Tennyson's poetry, see Louw 1985, 90-95, 100-14.

¹⁷ Although In Memoriam 86 ostensibly expresses a wish, the richly descriptive language in the lyric suggests that an actual experience is being recounted. It is as if the desire is fulfilled in the moment of articulation.

CHAPTER V. INSPIRATION

¹ Tennyson's poem "To J.S." (R183) is addressed to James Spedding, Edward's brother. It is an epistolary poem of consolation. The poem has the lines:

...myself could almost take
The place of him that sleeps in peace.
Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace....

(lines 67-69)

² David Kaufman, too, is of the opinion that "experiential phenomena" such as "déjà vu, jamais vu, dreamlike states, mind-body dissociations, and floating feelings" are "nonspecific" symptoms (1990, 205).

³ Bradley refers to "the strange phrase, 'like an inconsiderate boy'" (1902, 222).

⁴ For a discussion of Tennyson's "classical" and "romantic" affiliations, see Louw 1985, 5-8.

⁵ Other writers have discussed the applicability of terms such as "idyl", "epic" and "epyllion" to various poems by Tennyson, including the Idylls of the King. See, for example, Marshall McLuhan (1956, xvi-xxiv) and Robert Pattison (Tennyson and Tradition, 1979).

⁶ Hoge (1981) does not print this entry.

⁷ See also Paradise Lost X.282-324; Fowler 1971, 521-24.

⁸ M.H. Abrams argues - convincingly, I think - that The Rime of the Ancient Mariner shows "the effects of opium" (1971b). Quite possibly, then, in Coleridge's poem, like Tennyson's, the sun, moon and star images may be representative of the construed entoptics of altered states of consciousness.

⁹

Between the conception
And the creation
.....
Falls the shadow

("The Hollow Men", lines 77-81;
T.S. Eliot 1974, 92).

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the ordering of my ideas.)

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