

THE PEOPLE'S VOICE:
THE ROLE OF AUDIENCE IN
THE POPULAR POEMS OF LONGFELLOW AND TENNYSON

By

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ABSTRACT

At the height of their popularity in the mid-nineteenth century, a vast transatlantic readership conferred on Longfellow and Tennyson the title "The People's Poet." This examination of Anglo-American Victorian poetry attempts to account for that phenomenon.

A poetic work is first defined as an aesthetic experience that occurs within a triangular matrix of text, author, and reader. As reception theorist Hans Robert Jauss contends, both the creator's and the receptor's aesthetic experiences are filtered through a historically determined "horizon of expectations" that governs popular appeal.

A historical account of the publication and promotion of Longfellow's and Tennyson's poetry provides empirical evidence for how and why their poetic texts appealed to a widespread readership. This account is followed by an analysis of the class and gender of Victorian readers of poetry that considers the role of "consumers" in the production of both poetry and poetic personae as commodities for public consumption.

The development of each poet's voice is then examined in a context of a gendered "separate-sphere" ideology to explain how both Longfellow's and Tennyson's adoption of "feminine" cadences in their respective voices influenced the nineteenth-century reception of their work.

The final two chapters analyze select texts--lyric and narrative--to determine reasons for their popular appeal in relation to the level of active reader engagement in the poetic experience. Through affective lyricism, as in Longfellow's "Psalm of Life" and Tennyson's "Break, break, break," these poets demanded that their readers listen; through sentiment transformed into domestic allegory, as in Miles Standish and Enoch Arden, these poets demanded further that they feel.

While both Victorian poets were later decanonized by their modern successors, contemporary critics, mainly academic, have restored Tennyson to the literary canon while relegating Longfellow to a second-rate schoolroom status. The conclusion speculates on the possible reasons underlying the disparate reputations assigned to the two poets, both of whom, during their lifetimes, shared equally the fame and fortune that attended their role as "The People's Voice."

CONTENTS

Abstract	ii
Acknowledgements	v
Introduction	1
One: "Footprints on the Sands of Time": The Emergence of Popular Poetry in the Victorian Period	42
1. Poetry and Popular Culture	42
2. Poets and Their Bibliographies: Longfellow	49
3. Poets and Their Bibliographies: Tennyson ...	78
4. Caveat Lector: The Reader and the Poet	135
Two: The Birth and Adolescence of the Poetic Voice: Longfellow's "New" England in America	184
Three: Tennyson and the Birth of a Legend	247
Four: Tennyson and the Adolescence of a Voice	307
Five: The Nineteenth-Century Popular Lyric	405
Six: The Nineteenth-Century Popular Narrative Poem .	468
Conclusion	543
Works Cited	563
Appendices	589

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INTRODUCTION

Critics "cannot stop with studying poetry, [they] must also study poetics Theory, which is expectation, always determines criticism, and never more than when it is unconscious. The reputed condition of no-theory in the critic's mind is illusory, and a dangerous thing in this occupation, which demands the utmost general intelligence, including perfect self-consciousness." -- John Crowe Ransom (The World's Body 173-4)

The theoretical assumptions of this study, however imperfectly self-conscious in Ransom's terms, are grounded in the conviction that a literary work is an activity, a "doing" involving a triangular matrix consisting of the text, the author, and the reader rather than an autonomous "being" unto itself, divorced from authorial intention or the reception of its readers. Any study of Longfellow's and Tennyson's popular verse must take into account both the production and reception of their poetry if their "popularity" is to be properly understood.

While a poem may create a type of meaning solely through reference to itself--its imagery, structure, rhyme, and rhythm --as an autonomous presentation as "poem" on a page, significance of this kind issues, at best, from only the first leg, the text, of the triangular matrix. More importantly, self-referential textual readings assume a universality of interpretation based on the presumption that the words in Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life" mean today exactly what they did in 1839, and for any class, gender, or nationality of

readers. The arrogance of such an assumption need not be addressed here; what should be mentioned is the way in which a poem's presumed autonomy and universality of reception have led to the formation of literary canons which have, in many cases, seriously distorted the literary historical record. By rejecting for serious consideration poetry which seems not to conform to prescribed notions of autonomous significance, critics often establish literary histories at odds with the lived social and political realities of the periods these histories are designed to "reflect." The problem lies not so much with the canonized texts themselves, nor even in the methods used to study them, but rather in the subsequent claim that canonized texts with autonomous meaning represent literary history.

Similarly, W.K. Wimsatt's hypostatizing of the poem as verbal icon, in his work of the same name, has led to a hasty disregard for authorial intention as a recognizable feature in the literary work. Since professional, social, and political forces affect an author's choices of material and technique and necessarily determine, to some extent, the literary result, readings that ignore the author reinforce the idea of literature as ahistorical. In the case of Longfellow and Tennyson, both the "affective fallacy" and the "intentional fallacy" have had deleterious consequences for a full understanding of their most popular poems, which are regarded

as little more than outright panderings to the supposedly puerile literary tastes of the Victorian middle classes.

The type of criticism that continues to distort students' understanding of Tennyson and especially of Longfellow as nineteenth-century poets stems largely from I.A. Richards's Practical Criticism.¹ While literary judgment itself is not always and absolutely an invalid enterprise, imposing twentieth-century aesthetics on nineteenth-century poetry so as to validate its inclusion or exclusion from serious consideration severely limits students' abilities to understand literary history as evolving out of and along with social and cultural forces. Moreover, in his attempt to establish a pseudo-scientific rationale for the experience of literature, Richards places undue emphasis on the text as an isolated technical artifact, and too readily disregards the variety of readers' responses operating in the establishment of meaning. For Richards, poetry must not be violated by idiosyncratic personal "intrusions"; responses "must be genuine and relevant, and must respect the liberty and autonomy of the poem" (277). Again, this emphasis on poetic autonomy does little to explain a popularity so profound that readers were willing to exchange Longfellow's or Tennyson's

¹ Richards's experiment with student responses to Longfellow's "In the Churchyard at Cambridge" produced a 92% rejection vote; Longfellow's poem was by far the most disliked of the works they criticized (163).

work for the Bible with no loss of hermeneutic value. Serious consideration of popular poems must, of necessity, entail explication of the manifold features influencing the contexts out of which and into which literary texts move and operate.

A further objection to Richards's Practical Criticism is its unstated assumption that only criticism of the kind he demonstrates is "practical," that is, in the sense of the term apparently not intended by Richards but nevertheless implicit, "useful or available in practice" to readers (OED). The implication is that readings which stray from the text to try to account historically for readers and authors are "impractical" and, more seriously, not "useful" to a critical understanding of literature. Although Richards does not overtly express the above meaning in his use of the term, subsequent applications of "practical criticism" have rendered it inevitable. As applied by Richards's followers, historical discussions of professional, social, and political circumstances affecting a poem's production by its author or of the impact various audiences have had upon its original inception and subsequent reception over time are irrelevant.

Admittedly, the availability of factual evidence to support readings which try to account equally for inception and reception as co-producers of the literary work will often dictate the "practicality" of such enterprises. Moreover, critics' own biases will, to some degree, determine the factual materials deemed relevant and will, to a greater

degree, affect the uses to which that information is put. Nevertheless, these shortcomings should not dissuade critics from attempting to present the fullest possible readings available to them. On the contrary, if critics thought of "practical" criticism in a different sense as readings which are wholly practical or available, then a socio-historical reading of the production and the reception of Longfellow's and Tennyson's popular poetry would be entirely consistent with the utilitarian nature of practical criticism as it is more generally understood.

At the same time, the theoretical foundation for this study of Longfellow's and Tennyson's popular poetry is not exactly stable or fixed because it is a site of confluence and conflict involving divergent cultural theories more than it is formed by one specific literary theory per se. These include phenomenological approaches to literature, various forms of reception theory, and diverse strains of popular culture theory from both the United States and Britain. Together, these theories alone might have constituted a sufficient basis for speculation about poetic popularity in general were it not that, for the most part, theorists in each of these three areas tend to disregard the gender-specific role of women within the triangular matrix of the text, the author, and its readers. To study the popularity of Longfellow and Tennyson, ignoring the inherent differences between women and men, both as members of a historically situated reading audience, and as

participants in popular culture inhibits any accurate understanding of how poetry that is "critically" disdained in this century was nonetheless fundamental to nineteenth-century cultural fulfillment. For this reason, feminist theories that situate literature within the social and cultural milieu informing Anglo-American, nineteenth-century women's experiences as writers and readers are included in this study to avoid what might otherwise have produced too narrow a theoretical understanding of poetic popularity in the Victorian period. Although seemingly disparate, all of these theories--including those of feminists--do converge at points where the activity of receptors becomes the focus of discourses involving the creation of meaning and, for popular cultural theorists, involving the degree to which the populace participates in, rather than merely accepts, the construction of its cultural products by an elite culture.

Phenomenology plays a lesser role than other theories in this case because of its tendency to dehistoricize the reading subject and privilege the text as objective phenomenon. Works such as George Poulet's "Phenomenology of Reading" and Wolfgang Iser's "The Reading Process: A Phenomenological Approach," or his full-length study, The Act of Reading: a Theory of Aesthetic Response, while they obviously concern readers, concentrate on processes of reading which require the suspension of individual subjectivity and submission to the convolutions of the text. Hence any potential "role" for the

audience to play in the creation of meaning is minimized. Janice Radway's "Phenomenology, Linguistics, and Popular Literature," on the other hand, does make some concessions to the phenomenon of different levels of reading activity in an attempt to explain why certain texts are popular and others are not. But Radway also grants objective authority to texts, to what Merleau-Ponty in the Phenomenology of Perception defines as two separate uses of language: creative and empirical (Radway 30). She speculates that elite (creative) literature "deforms" reader expectation while popular (empirical) literature, because it is conventional, can be penetrated and is therefore transparent or referential.² Such a dichotomy not only fails to account for texts that, seemingly deformative, achieve enormous popularity (or vice versa), but also disregards readers whose levels of literary expectation differ according to historical determinations of class, gender, and literary awareness, but who nonetheless assist or hinder the possibility of a text becoming popular. Thus, when Radway later applies her theory of creative versus empirical texts in one of the only theoretical articles on nineteenth-century American popular poetry, entitled "Verse

² Merleau-Ponty's concept of "deforming" language in order to achieve creativity parallels the Russian formalist Victor Shklovsky's notion of "defamiliarization" in "Art as Technique." That creativity inheres in disrupted rather than rewarded expectation is familiar as well to New Critics who ascribe value to negative aesthetics, that is literature alien to the social and political communities from which it derives.

and Popular Poetry," she conflates poets as distinct as Lydia Sigourney and William Cullen Bryant as suppliers of readers' demands, with little or no consideration for the unique roles that each poet played in the creation of various reader expectations. The possibility that, structurally, ideationally, or technically, these post-revolutionary poets were, albeit in different ways, "creatively" introducing poetic forms and concepts new to their fledgling American audiences does not usually enter into discussions, even of popular forms, that privilege the text over the interactive process of text and reader.

Reception theory, to some extent, counters the dichotomy that phenomenologists such as Radway pose through a historical reevaluation of readers. In this area, the theoretical work of Hans Robert Jauss has been most influential.³ Available to

³ Wolfgang Iser, besides being a phenomenologist, is also felt to be one of North America's leading reception theorists. As stated previously, a thorough explication of Iser's theory of reading is found in his The Act of Reading: A Theory of Aesthetic Response. However, there are at least two reasons why, when applied to Iser, "reception theorist" seems to be a misnomer: his paradigm of the "implied reader" in the text effectively removes the reader from the historical context of her or his literary experience; and his focus on a negative aesthetics, the "negation" of elements which the reader must then search for to supply meaning, essentially eliminates the possibility of reader satisfaction having a positive value. Hence, what Iser would call "light" reading--the popular--is cast off as passive consumption, or worse, unenjoyable. Reception, for Iser, is a very limited, elitist phenomenon. Robert Holub has levelled similar criticisms against Iser in his Reception Theory: A Critical Introduction (94-9). Additionally, one of the problems with Iser's work for a study such as this of popular poetry is that he deals almost exclusively with fiction, drawing conclusions about readers based on levels of participation with narratives. His work

North American readers in 1974 in a seminal essay, "Literary History as a Challenge to Literary Theory," Jauss's work takes up the "unresolved dispute between the Marxist and formalist schools" (11); it posits reader activity over time, a historical view of a work's "horizon of expectations" (16),⁴ as a potential bridge between these opposing schools. Jauss views readers not as solitary, passive receptors of texts, but rather as participants in an ever-changing, socio-politically and aesthetically determined audience that, through

is, therefore, less useful than that of Jauss, who ranges widely among various genres and cultural forms in theorizing about sites of aesthetic pleasure.

⁴ A key phrase in Jauss's early work, "horizon of expectations" is never actually defined. It derives from a variety of sources familiar to German philosophical schools, in particular Hans Gadamer (himself influenced primarily by Heidegger), Jauss's teacher and early mentor. Gadamer had defined "horizon" as "the range of vision that includes everything that can be seen from a particular vantage point." For Jauss, "horizon of expectations" "would appear to refer to an intersubjective system or structure of expectations, a 'system of references' or a mind-set that a hypothetical individual might bring to any text" (Holub 59). At the same time, however, such an horizon is supposedly capable of being objectively determined on several fronts. The literary horizon is self-defined by the text's own adaptation to conventions of genre, style and form; the contemporary horizon is determined by implicit relationships between the text and familiar works in the literary-historical context; and the audience's ideological horizon is measured in the distance between the poetic and practical function of the language as it is made available to the reader in the reading process (Jauss "Literary History" 15). The original text participates in its future significance by later becoming a primary feature in the initial literary horizon of expectations future audiences employ when they determine the meaning of the text within their own present horizon of expectations.

interaction with literary texts, assists in the creation of successive meanings: "History of literature is a process of aesthetic reception and production which takes place in realization of literary texts on the part of the receptive reader, the reflective critic and the author in his continued creativity" (14). In a subsequent work, Aesthetic Experience and Literary Hermeneutics (1982), Jauss maintains that "popular literature cannot be defined in its aesthetic and social function unless it is seen with reference to the highest levels of literary art" (xxxii). This "seeing" is an activity belonging to readers; hence, Longfellow's and Tennyson's most popular poems need to be read within a context that establishes audience participation as integral to these poems' significance, within the poets' lives as well as in those of late-twentieth-century readers.

Jauss's challenge to literary theory to integrate readers within a historical determination of literary significance is particularly relevant to recent critical discussions of the limiting effects of aestheticism upon the American literary canon.⁵ Russell Reising, in The Unusable Past: Theories and

⁵ Of the many scholars trying to understand the history of American literary canon formation, two seem to be most influential: Sacvan Berkovitch and Gerald Graff. Berkovitch's recent editorship of two collections of essays has spawned much critical debate about the "American ideology" that informs the canon: Reconstructing American Literary History (1986) and Ideology and Classic American Literature (1986). His own essay in Critical Inquiry, "The Problem of Ideology in American Literary History" (1986), provides an overview of competing ideologies of American literature, and outlines the pluralist approach that, as editor, he has followed in the

Studies of American Literature (1986), is one among many literary historians who express concern for the narrowness of the American canon and the ways in which American literary theorists have discouraged readers from "viewing literature as a form of social knowledge or behaviour" despite a recent trend which suggests that social and ideological criticism is on the rise in the United States (6). If it is, then this reconsideration of Longfellow's and Tennyson's poems within a socio-historical context of readers and writers might be seen, to some extent, to participate in this trend.

Yet Reising's criticism of the ahistoricism of American literary theory raises other difficulties because, even while Reising endorses "plurality" as a solution to a restricted American canon, he does so by underscoring once again the binary opposition between "aesthetic" and "social" texts. That is, he still sees American theory as, on the one hand,

forthcoming five volume New Cambridge History of American Literature. As Berkovitch confesses, when it comes to analyzing nineteenth-century literary history it "will be a major problem of the new literary history to explain the paradox of an antagonistic literature that is somehow also culturally representative" (642). Graff has also considered the "problem" of American literary studies, but from the perspective of its institutionalization as part of American university curricula. His chapter, "The Promise of American Literature Studies," in Professing Literature (1987) examines the conflict between interdisciplinary approaches to American literature and the New Criticism, with the field eventually won by the latter. He ends with a request transmitted via James Kincaid that American literature instructors "'reexamine how [they] situate [them]selves' in reference to literary texts" to avoid the attenuation and the patterned isolation of competing theories that Graff argues have weakened the study of literature in American universities (262).

aesthetic preoccupation with language, style and form (Formalism--New Criticism--Structuralism--Deconstruction) pitted against, on the other, considerations of texts as expressions of social reality, often mimetic, for the purposes of ideological critique (Marxism). Suited to neither the aesthetic nor the social view, the schoolroom poets in America--of which Longfellow was the most revered, with Tennyson as his British counterpart--supposedly had their say in the nineteenth century and, according to Reising, have ample voice now but only as bases for opposition:

Many authors and texts have either been expelled or never granted admission into the American canon, though they have played significant roles in the development of American writing [T]his is especially true of the social realist tradition in American literature. The so-called school-room poets, to cite an example of a different nature, at least provided an enemy for advocates of literary realism, naturalism, and modernism and are thus present, if only as antitheses to the tradition, in subsequent writers. (237)

Dismissing schoolroom poetry as consistently "other" to twentieth-century traditional forms of literature in America, Reising unwittingly participates in the very practice of exclusivity he accuses American theorists of defending.

Since the genteel tradition--to use Santayana's term--conforms neither to the social-realist tradition that Reising wants instituted in the canon, nor to the established tradition in which aestheticism has come to dominate, genteel poets can only occupy the margins of literary respectability. Their texts exist in American literary history only in so far

as serious, respectable literature can be made to seem everything that they are not. For a Marxist critic like Granville Hicks, the "great tradition," the literature of politics, business, and labour in its progressive impulse, rejected the

genteel litterateurs, with their correct sonnets and their polite essays, . . . [who] preserved their readers from sordid contacts with the facts of the fierce industrial struggle; [and who] somehow made those facts vanish and the real world yield to a world of respectable, sentimental, lily-white ladies and gentlemen. (The Great Tradition (1933) 30, qtd. in Reising 15).

For significantly different readers of the 1930s, those influenced by the aesthetic principles of New Critical methods, historical and sociological considerations such as "the facts of the fierce industrial struggle" were extrinsic to literary study. Nonetheless, the genteel tradition, and Longfellow in particular, were once again rejected, only this time through the rigours of a technical scrutiny under which the poetry simply could not hold up. Doubly dismissed, genteel literature is either conformist when it should be confrontational in its vision of reality, or lacking in the ambiguity and technical play that gives life to all great art.

In the beginning of this century, the poetry of Longfellow and Tennyson--so popular in the nineteenth century--fell from the heights of critical respectability to the depths. Through an initial historical analysis of the popularity of both poets, this study tries to account critically and

theoretically for that phenomenon. The contemporary socio-economic contexts influencing the nineteenth-century production of both poets' texts is far easier to explain than reasons for the popular reception of their work or, for that matter, its subsequent rejection. In this latter instance, various theories of nineteenth-century popular culture, from the United States and Britain, have contributed to the process of defining what might be called, for want of a better term, "Victorian popular poetry." Simply defining "the popular" occupies the energies of a substantial number of theorists on both sides of the Atlantic since it means so many different things to so many people. The following summary of relevant categories of interest and their major explicators is intended only as an outline of the work in nineteenth-century popular culture that has influenced this analysis of the relation between texts and reception that made Longfellow and Tennyson equally "poets of the people" in their lifetimes.

One of the things immediately obvious to anyone studying theories of popular culture is the great distinction between theorists in the United States and those in Britain. Briefly put, American popular culture scholars tend to produce descriptive social histories documenting the growing phenomenon of "mass" culture in their own country, while most British scholars of popular culture write from the left in theoretical analyses of the class structures of three distinct yet overlapping variants of popular culture: "folk culture,"

"working-class (sometimes radical) culture," and "mass culture." Underlying these transatlantic differences in scholarship is an implicit awareness of distinct, socio-political realities of the "people": the United States as a republican democracy dominated by the seemingly homogeneous will of the middle class, and Britain as fractured by class tensions linked to a residual, pre-industrial deference to figures of authority.

The social historian who seems to have had the greatest influence in studies of nineteenth-century American popular culture is Russell Nye, both in his The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America and in his Society and Culture in America (1830-1860). And while Nye's work is an invaluable historical reference for understanding the social, cultural, and technological contexts within which literature was produced and consumed, he seems not to have questioned the value judgements of literary historians of popular culture, like Frank Luther Mott, James Hart, and Carl Bode, in their assumptions that conventionality and sentimentality in literature guaranteed popularity in the nineteenth century. All questions of literary taste aside, for now, these scholars do not recognize essential distinctions among the various genres they document as "popular" since presumably the pap that feeds the masses is as formless and as tasteless as the audiences to which it is served. The passive voice is deliberate here since, in these scholars' views, the masses

are only ever the passive recipients of prepackaged ideological products; they presumably take no active role in the creation of meaning. In a manner far different from twentieth-century critics of "serious" literature, but with similar results, American scholars of nineteenth-century popular culture display the same tendency to view the previous century through attitudes derived in this one. Thus in the case of nineteenth-century popular literature, it is studied as if it were equal to the Harlequin romances of today, or worse still, the serialized melodramas of radio and, later, of television. The popularity of antebellum literature and, more remotely, of its poetry has yet to be considered from a theoretical examination of nineteenth-century aesthetics that recognizes issues of nationality and gender as central to American readers' concerns as they purchased texts that would ultimately become nineteenth-century "best sellers."⁶

Interestingly, it is not popular culture scholars per se who are beginning to reconsider theoretically the value of nineteenth-century popular literature in America, but rather feminist reader-response theorists trying to correct part of

⁶ The periodical produced by America's "Popular Culture Association," Journal of Popular Culture, has occasionally printed articles that call for a far more theoretically based study of the field. David Madden's "The Necessity for an Aesthetics of Popular Culture" and Hayden White's "Structuralism and Popular Culture" are two examples from the early 1970s, but their call seems never to have been seriously answered. The vast majority of scholars of American popular culture today appear to be preoccupied with twentieth-century phenomena.

the imbalance noted earlier in the American canon. Nina Baym's Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America, and Jane Tompkins's "Sentimental Power: Uncle Tom's Cabin and the Politics of Literary History" are studies that see the critical scorn in this century for popular fiction by nineteenth-century women as part of a larger, ideological attempt by a patriarchal culture to diminish politically the moral authority of women by relegating the texts that they read, wrote, and reviewed to the margins of literary history. In reinstating the "sentimental" as a non-pejorative literary term in studies of fiction, and reinvesting it with a potentially subversive political force, Baym's and Tompkins's work suggests interesting new ways to reexamine also the role of poets and, more interestingly still, of male poets such as Longfellow whose popularity has for so long been thought to have been derived from a successful admixture of sentiment and convention.

Substantially different from American analyses of culture for the millions, theories of popular culture in nineteenth-century Britain tend far more to various definitions of "the people" as those individuals allied collectively by forces of resistance against the ruling elite, be it a rising upper middle class or its cultural by-product, the commercialization of aesthetics that apparently followed in its wake. For scholars such as Robert Storch, David Vincent, and Morag

Shiach, who are interested in folk culture, the people's resistance can take the form either of retaining traditional forms such as oral poetry or of modifying them to increasingly urban ways of life. Broadsheet publication of previously oral poems, for example, stemmed their complete erosion.

Two theorists of nineteenth-century leisure in relation to working-class popular culture, Hugh Cunningham and Peter Bailey, focus on various activities in urban centres: they examine a confused cultural terrain where previous folk traditions compete for the working-man's free time with radical political organizations, upper-middle class provisions for public forms of "rational recreation" including athletic activities, and evening entertainment at the pubs and music halls of private entrepreneurs. For the purposes of this study, their reflections on rational recreation in particular suggest points of entry for considering why at least some of Tennyson's poems entered the homes and hearts of the working class; yet, Cunningham and Bailey do little to explain the leisure occupations of people other than working-class men. Indeed, Bailey himself regrets the lack of attention paid to the middle class among historians of nineteenth-century leisure and, more regrettably still, their gender biases: "Another acknowledged shortcoming in the new history of leisure is the concentration on its more public, associational, visible and accessible forms to the exclusion of the private, personal, and informal. This in turn has

reinforced the neglect of women and the question of gender in leisure" (17-18). A popular poetry consumed in the privacy of one's home yet allegedly supportive of public conformity in the face of Victorian society's moral imperatives seems ideally suited as one type of primary source material to encourage the study of leisure activities that could and did cross class and gender boundaries.

Many theorists of nineteenth-century, working-class popular culture take E. P. Thompson's study, The Making of the English Working Class, as a historical point of departure, and reexamine his conclusions in light of the recent Marxist redefinition of "dominant ideology" not as coercive but as "hegemonic." Coined by Antonio Gramsci during his imprisonment in Fascist Italy, "hegemony" is now a common term to describe social dominance since it allegedly avoids the economic materialist restrictions specific to previous Marxist class analyses of dominant ideology. Gramsci's use of "hegemony," loosely defined, designates an establishment of leadership distinct from obviously coercive forms of domination; it thus includes multiple forms of consent to and dissent within structures of economic, intellectual, and moral power.

In general, however, poetry does not enter into Gramscian-based definitions of the popular since the usual "structure" in which it made its mark--the home--is not ordinarily thought of as a site of political negotiation. Chapters like Stuart

Hall's "Popular Culture and the State," and Colin Mercer's "Complicit Pleasures" in the "Themes and Issues" section of Popular Culture and Social Relations, while they go a long way in analyzing the social and cultural interactions of the state and populace, particularly those inscribed in publications of the popular press, provide little room for speculation about how literature not at the centre of daily public scrutiny also contributed to the state's hegemonic control and, more interestingly, how and when it did not. Gramsci's awareness of "popular belief" as constitutive of hegemonic "nationalism" and "patriotism" actually is quite useful in trying to explain the social construction of Longfellow and Tennyson as voices of their respective nations. That these voices might be heard in private arenas rather than public ones does not negate their power to sway popular belief especially as technological improvements in publication methods increased their potential for ever larger reading audiences.⁷

Literature seldom forms a part of Marxist theories of British popular culture since it presumably falls outside of the purviews of the popular because it is usually thought of

⁷ Selections from Gramsci's Prison Notebooks appear in Culture, Ideology and Social Process edited by Tony Bennett et al, followed by Chantal Mouffe's analysis of Gramsci's contribution to Marxist socialist discourse. Robert Gray's "Bourgeois Hegemony in Victorian Britain" in the same volume is especially interesting as an application of Gramscian social theory to the economic and cultural milieu that Tennyson and, by literary association, Longfellow would have inhabited.

as private rather than public, individualist rather than collective. Nonetheless, Leo Lowenthal's social history of the relation between mass production and the consumption of literature, Literature, Popular Culture, and Society, suggests possibilities for a revaluation of Tennyson's poetry as a popular genre in its own right.⁸ One of the most important features of Lowenthal's work is his survey of the dispute between "art" and "entertainment" that he argues began as early as the sixteenth century in Britain and culminated in the eighteenth through philosophical debates about taste and aesthetic value.⁹ Unfortunately, Lowenthal disregards the

⁸ Studies like Amy Cruse's The Victorians and Their Reading, Richard Altick's The English Common Reader, Marjorie Plant's The English Book Trade, and Victor Neuburg's Popular Literature: A History and a Guide from the Beginning of Printing to the Year 1897 are of course invaluable as sources for any discussion of popular literature in the Victorian period. But because these works are more empirical than theoretical, they have been left out in this summary of analyses of British popular culture. Their findings, however, have been most useful elsewhere in the thesis.

⁹ Distinctions between "popular" culture and "high" culture based upon taste do not form part of this study of Longfellow's and Tennyson's popular poetry although certainly taste has, since the early eighteenth century, generally guided critical opinion, either explicitly or implicitly. Basically, however, taste has dominated the critique of popular culture in America which is, as Herbert Gans points out, about two hundred years old (19), and as such is far too vast to summarize here. In his Popular Culture and High Culture: An Analysis and Evaluation of Taste, Gans provides a thorough discussion of the major figures leading the critique against popular culture; their work is contained in two basic anthologies of mass culture theory: Bernard Rosenberg and David M. White, eds., Mass Culture: The Popular Arts in America and Norman Jacobs, ed., Culture for the Millions. As a counter to the pejorative definitions supplied by mass culture critics in the twentieth century, Gans puts forward

nineteenth century altogether, preferring instead to apply the results of his study of eighteenth-century definitions of high and low culture only to popular forms of literature in the eighteenth century itself and to popular biography in the twentieth. This failure to consider forms of nineteenth-century popular literature is most unfortunate for two reasons: 1) many of the observations that he makes about aesthetic taste in the eighteenth century suggest interesting parallels with the nineteenth; and 2) the split between low brow and high brow cultures was defined and redefined during the Victorian period, resulting in the eventual chasm that separates the two cultures today. That distinctions were not clearly demarcated in the previous century is yet another reason to consider poetry as a potentially popular cultural form in Victorian England.

In short, the popular poems of Longfellow and Tennyson have yet to be thought of theoretically in ways that might account equally for the socio-economic conditions of their reception

his "taste culture" theory; that is "popular culture is, like high culture, a taste culture, chosen by people who lack the economic and educational opportunities of the devotees of high culture" (x). Supposedly freed of the value judgements of his predecessors, by restricting his argument to aesthetic standards within various substrata of "taste cultures," Gans nevertheless establishes a hierarchy of taste in which the lower orders would, under ideal circumstances, naturally and necessarily aspire upward. This study of Longfellow and Tennyson, where possible, avoids value judgements altogether, and looks strictly at the literary phenomenon of verse which was both "popular" and thought of as "poetry" in the nineteenth century by educated and non-educated, elite and working classes alike.

in both their own and each other's countries, and for their cultural value as examples of a "serious" literature that was nonetheless read by the masses. Various discourses on nineteenth-century popular culture have here allowed for an examination of how the work of these two poets is intersected by several overlapping debates: sentiment versus intellect, female versus male producers and consumers of culture, consumptive versus productive methods of reading, oral versus written cultures, working-class versus middle-class forms of rational recreation, entertainment versus enlightenment, collective versus individualist responses to culture. Further binaries could be added to this list but the trend is clear. What may not be as clear is how twentieth-century criticism--of both serious and popular culture--that ascribes "value" only to those terms above on the right has effectively silenced a poetry that achieved popularity through its disregard of boundaries and reached a classless multitude of women and men: not because it was an undifferentiated monotone, but because it was not.

In addition to the theoretical reasons for this study of Longfellow's and Tennyson's popular poetry, the practical reasons for a study of Longfellow and Tennyson together as poets of the people, rather than in isolation, are themselves equally interesting. They are essentially three: 1) to demonstrate that, in their lifetimes, Longfellow and Tennyson were read by their American and British audiences with an

awareness of the popularity and national representativeness of both poets; 2) to account for their enormous popularity through a diachronic examination of comparative influence and audience appeal; and, finally, 3) to analyze the constituent factors that determined Longfellow's and Tennyson's simultaneous decline in popularity, along with others that have recently restored Tennyson to the pantheon of poetic fame, an elevation not extended to Longfellow.

Comparative studies of poets who were contemporaries are, of course, not without precedent in English studies, stemming perhaps from Johnson's Lives of the Poets, but certainly gaining in currency through F.R. Leavis's study of the relative merits of Wordsworth and Shelley in Revaluations: Tradition and Development in English Poetry (166-75, 192-99). For the most part, however, such comparisons are seldom transatlantic, governed instead by a proximity of place or nationality in their selection of poets to be viewed legitimately through a single lens. Recently, however, the field of vision for determining literary influence in the nineteenth century has broadened, so that one might expect to find a comparative analysis of Longfellow and Tennyson among those studies attempting to determine how large a role Britain

played in forming a national American literature.¹⁰ Yet these studies adhere to a current practice of identifying the esoteric in nineteenth-century American poetry, and therefore locate strains of British romanticism in the work of poets such as Poe, Emerson, and Whitman. Needless to say, exoteric poets such as Longfellow and Tennyson do not fall within the purviews of these studies. At the same time, of studies of Tennyson's role as a national representative, only Eidson's Tennyson in America (1943) and a 1987 Memorial Address by Barbara R. Clark, "Tennyson Across the Atlantic," actually demonstrate the influence of Tennyson in the New World. And although Eidson discusses Tennyson's pronounced sway over American poetasters and poets such as Lowell and Bayard Taylor, he says surprisingly little about Tennyson's influence on Longfellow.

Eidson's relative neglect of the American bard is curious, especially since many of Longfellow's and Tennyson's contemporaries and immediate descendants consistently read their work in ways that acknowledged them as counterparts. Part of the natural coupling of Longfellow and Tennyson as poets of the people stemmed from the fact that Longfellow (after 1846) and Tennyson shared the same publisher in

¹⁰ Recent examples of this kind include Stephen Spender's Love-Hate Relations: A Study of Anglo-American Sensibilities (1974), Benjamin Lease's Anglo-American Encounters: England and the Rise of American Literature (1981), and Linden Peach's British Influence on the Birth of American Literature (1982).

America--the Boston firm of Ticknor and Fields. And these publishers ensured that "[e]very taste and every pocketbook was reached" for both of their poets (Tryon "Nationalism" 305). The careers of the poets themselves, moreover, exhibit some surprisingly similar trends.

Since Longfellow worked primarily as a professor of Modern Languages, first at Bowdoin College and then at Harvard University, his life obviously seems more vocationally varied than Tennyson's. But, in general, there are many similarities. For Longfellow, as for Tennyson, college associations sparked his desire to pursue poetry as a vocation; and in the 1830s, he experienced a poetic hiatus similar to Tennyson's so-called "ten years' silence." For both poets, this hiatus coincided with death and despair: the deaths of Longfellow's first wife Mary, and Tennyson's beloved friend Arthur Hallam. The next period (slightly earlier for Longfellow than for Tennyson) sees both poets preoccupied by a private-public debate about poetic voice while, at the same time, engaged in prolonged unrequited love affairs which eventually met with success: for Longfellow, in 1843, and for Tennyson, in 1850. While Longfellow was, through journal essays, preparing himself and his audience for the poet's fit place within a context of American nationalism, Tennyson was struggling with a similar problem in the narratively woven lyrics that eventually became In Memoriam (1850).

In brief, apart from extended projects--Longfellow's Christus and Tennyson's Idylls--both poets' work can be classified chronologically by dominant poetic forms: 1) early success through skilful use of various lyrical voices; 2) a middle period that secured each poet's popularity through a consistent interest in the long, essentially narrative poem; and 3) a final period that represents a concerted effort to legitimize poetic drama, in which neither poet had much success. While schematized comparisons are unavoidably general, and both poets continued to write lyric poems of various types throughout their lives, these parallels are nevertheless valid.

Yet despite the contemporary recognition of similarities and differences between the poets, and the parallels noted above, present scholars have yet to consider Longfellow in relation to Tennyson even though an abundance of scholarship exists pointing out the American poet's dependence on European literatures. But English influence is usually not the issue when it comes to Longfellow. While no one would discount the potential in Longfellow for dependence on European models, his "sources" should, almost certainly, include Tennyson's poetry as representative Victorian verse against which the American poet's success was and can still be synchronically measured. Recent publication of Longfellow's Letters (1967-82), along with existing references in Longfellow's Life, fully document

the power Tennyson's work exercised over his American counterpart.¹¹

At the same time, the effects of the American poet's inordinate popularity upon the poetry of the Queen's appointed spokesman for the age that was to bear her name have yet to be fully considered. In his lifetime, Longfellow achieved the demonstrable success that comes with appealing to a massive reading public. As such, he embodied the poet that Tennyson both did and did not want to become, the poet who wrote for "the herd d--m'em."¹² Tennyson's own solicitation of fame and fortune was, at best, ambivalent. Though sometimes charged with an envy of the "best sellers," Tennyson recognized in Longfellow's work a poetic cultivation of the masses that, if he were to achieve anywhere near the same kind of popularity, his own poetry would have to adopt. His most successful

¹¹ Unfortunately, Longfellow's Journals themselves are as yet unavailable though they have been promised for publication by J. Chesley Matthews for some time. At present, they are held at Houghton Library, Harvard. Samuel Longfellow's Life, not unlike Hallam Tennyson's Memoir, is a highly selective, pious representation of the type of poet a close relative would wish to commit to public memory.

¹² This phrase is used in a letter to FitzGerald in 1842 (Letters I 204). Tennyson's response to America and Americans generally is ambiguous and changes throughout his career, though overall he seems to have been most friendly to certain individual Americans, such as Longfellow, grateful for his wide following in the United States, yet sceptical and even critical of Americans' apparent lack of social and cultural refinement (see Martin 565). Tennyson, especially in later life, exhibited a recluse's fixation with public spectacle, and was obsessed (often with good reason) by autograph seekers, many of whom were American tourists (Charles Tennyson 339-40).

single volumes, Idylls of the King (1859) and Enoch Arden (1864), have yet to be assessed in terms which recognize Longfellow as the nineteenth-century barometer of popular poetic success.

Why Longfellow and Tennyson appealed so effortlessly to a mass readership is a question which, if dealt with at all by literary critics, is more often assumed than explicitly examined. General observations are often advanced to explain the phenomenon of Longfellow's popularity as tied to a child-like poetic simplicity that presumably appealed to an America that, in the nineteenth century, was entering its adolescence (see Blankenship 336-38). The ways in which Samuel Longfellow's Life--a portrayal devoted to the simplistic moral purity of a teacher-cum-preacher in the figure of the poet--have helped to produce and to perpetuate the above observation have yet to be challenged in a manner that would do more than merely suggest that Longfellow did not fit his brother's perception of him.¹³

Reader-reception theory, of the kind proposed by Jauss, suggests possibilities for new insights into the historical significance of Longfellow's poetry over time, furthering, in turn, an understanding of the nineteenth-century American audience as more than simply "adolescent." Moreover, analysis

¹³ Hallam Tennyson's Memoir of his father, on the other hand, has been challenged by several critics and biographers in this century. These challenges are discussed in chapter three.

of a similarity in method between Longfellow and Tennyson adds a transatlantic dimension to the nineteenth-century audience, the importance of which is only beginning to be realized. Critics have yet to analyze Tennyson's popularity in relation to Longfellow's; this neglect seems to derive from a sense that such an analysis might undermine the critical reputation that Tennyson has only recently reclaimed. Nevertheless, Tennyson's popularity was acknowledged by his contemporaries in ways similar to Longfellow's as, for example, when the Laureate first won the title "Poet of the People" from critics after the great success in 1864 of Enoch Arden (Charles Tennyson 354).

Though this study devotes much of its attention to Longfellow as a popular poet, with Tennyson as his counterpart, its primary intention is to develop a new understanding of the role of the public poet, which Tennyson also was. Confined to a contrast between private and public motivations, the tensions in Tennyson's poetry have been restricted by most critics to those present in an early, formative period as, for example, in "The Palace of Art." During the 1840s, Tennyson worked at aligning, if not conflating, private and public concerns, with In Memoriam (1850) as the successful result of this effort. Yet no sooner had he achieved public laurels than new and equally formidable tensions arose, stemming from his popularity, that were no

less challenging to his status as a public spokesman than his earlier private self had been.

Tennyson's struggle now between a public voice and a potentially popular one turned on whether he was going to speak to his age or for it. The disparate poems in Tennyson's first full volume after the laureateship, Maud and Other Poems (1855), may be seen as a battleground for just such a struggle: Tennyson as a public poet was countered by the voice, albeit his own, of the popular poet. In a famous letter, an anonymous reader immediately wrote to express his hatred for the Laureate's new poetry:

SIR,--I used to worship you, but now I hate you. I loathe and detest you. You beast! So you've taken to imitating Longfellow.

Yours in aversion * * *.

(Memoir 338)¹⁴

Accounts of Tennyson's response to this indictment vary. His son suggests he took it humorously, while Sir Charles maintains that it was part of his "morbid irritation about the criticisms" that Maud had engendered (289). Whatever his

¹⁴ Two clarifications need to be made here. First, the one-volume Memoir has been used throughout this study for convenience and easy cross-reference. Second, notes often include further remarks in the same vein or point out contradictions in source materials. For instance, Tennyson believed that this letter was written by a clerical poet and acquaintance, Archer Gurney, whom Rossetti described as a "poor moke of a fellow" for being constantly maligned by Tennyson as its author (see Letters II 119, n. 2). However, several months later he wrote to Gurney confessing his belief and apologizing for it; whether he sincerely felt he had been mistaken seems doubtful, though, since the overall tone of his letter to Gurney sounds a nonetheless accusatory note (see Letters II 137-8).

actual response, Tennyson's frequent references to this letter suggest that the linking of his poetry with Longfellow's affected his sense of himself as a poet at a time when his awareness of his reading public seemed to be at odds with his private belief in his poetic success.

In a larger sense, Tennyson's conflict mirrored the primary debate of Victorian England itself: the struggle over the extent to which the ruling classes would empower those below them through extension of political franchise. The public poet, well accustomed to speaking to his audience, could allow their voices to be heard but only through himself as their conduit. The popular poet, on the other hand, speaks for his audience by adapting the form and content of his poetry to the tenor of his audience's needs and desires, thereby enfranchising them as co-producers of his texts. And since the political challenge to Britain's centuries-old tradition of public weal was now coming from the United States, with its newly constituted democracy, it seems only fitting that a similar challenge to Britain's tradition of the public poet should also come from America, through Longfellow, the figure of the popular poet.

Obviously, Longfellow and Tennyson assumed their respective roles as poets of the people uniquely, in keeping with the political ideologies of their respective nations. Yet by and large they both reached outside ostensibly political arenas for their poetry, to a shared preoccupation with women as

theme and, likely, as audience. The middle period of each poet's career is dominated by a female-centred poetry which, if not like Evangeline (1847) or The Princess (1847) expressly devoted to women, sought to interpret life according to domestic patterns of love, familial relations, and the simple pleasures of the hearth, with which women were intimately familiar. Long recognized as a major genre in the Tennyson canon, the domestic idyl has not been given much attention in Longfellow criticism. Miles Standish, for example, is more often analyzed for its bookish influences than for any intrinsic poetic merit or for its reception among its contemporary readers. This failure to recognize the importance of the domestic idyl in Longfellow's canon, especially as it relates to the reception of his poetry by an increasingly female audience, at first glance appears not to have affected Tennyson studies.

As W. E. Fredeman contends, Tennyson "is the domestic poet par excellence in English" (365). And a few critics other than Fredeman, in his "'Sphere of Common Duties'" article, have considered Tennyson's use of the domestic idyl in some depth: Valerie Pitt in Tennyson Laureate, Patrick Scott in his short monograph on Enoch Arden, and Herbert Tucker in his "In England" chapter of Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism. The number of examples is small, however, compared to the centrality of the domestic idyl in Tennyson's canon, and to its enormous popularity in the nineteenth century. Of book-

length studies, Donald Hair's recent Domestic and Heroic in Tennyson's Poetry seems to make up for this relative shortfall in Tennyson scholarship. Yet Hair, although recognizing Tennyson's notion of the home as a guarantor of social stability, nevertheless views the domestic idyl as Victorian domesticization of various romantic and heroic archetypal patterns. Seen in this light, Tennyson's domestic idyl becomes simply a resetting of traditional poetic forms in domestic contexts and not a specific poetic form shaped by the domestic interests of Tennyson's audience of friends, editors, critics, fellow writers (including women), and general public.

Critical understanding of the importance of the domestic idyl within a Victorian context can only be enhanced by a serious consideration of the audience that helped it to achieve such prominence, an audience increasingly made up of women. Pattee's The Feminine Fifties and Douglas's The Feminization of American Culture are just two examples of studies devoted to understanding the enormous power women exerted within the literary and clerical life of antebellum America. In Britain, works such as Sara Delamont and Lorna Duffin's (eds.) The Nineteenth Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World and The Woman Question: Society and Literature in Britain and America, 1837-1883 (Elizabeth Helsinger et al) explore the extent to which Victorian women played recognizable roles in shaping the society in which they lived. These socio-cultural histories point the way toward a

reassessment of the cultural milieu that Longfellow and Tennyson inhabited, both influenced specifically by women.

Twentieth-century recognition of the pejoratively "feminine" cadences in the people's voice of these poets is, if brought forward at all, likely to be derisive rather than especially perspicacious. And in many respects, it is this feminine element in both Longfellow's and Tennyson's poetry, in its close association with the so-called infantilism of Victorian sentiment, that contributed to these poets' eventual decline in popularity beginning in the late nineteenth century and spurred on by the advent of New Criticism in the early twentieth. By 1932, Longfellow had been relegated forever to the classrooms of "wretched schoolchildren" (Lewisohn 65), the periphery of critical respectability. His currency can be determined at a glance by his placement within American Literary Scholarship: An Annual (see Woodress) where works on Longfellow are mentioned in the sub-section "Popular Writers of the Midcentury" along with those on other "Fireside Poets" and female novelists like Stowe, Alcott, and Kirkland. In contradistinction, Poe has a section of his own and Whitman and Dickinson share a section.

Tennyson can be said to have suffered initially a similar decline in reputation under the New Criticism; yet, ironically this same literary perspective has contributed to Tennyson's ultimate restoration to the English canon. Harold Nicolson's separation of Tennyson the bard from Tennyson the poet, with

disdain for the former and valorization of the latter, ostensibly began the bifurcation process by which Tennyson over time regained his critical stature. Because he saw the public bard as having been unduly influenced by women, Nicolson felt compelled to silence Tennyson's "Victorian" feminine voice to reinvigorate the poet's weakened reputation; in so doing he helped to recast him as a modern poet at odds with his age, a recasting that has continued, in various forms, to this day.¹⁵

¹⁵ Actually, A.C. Bradley's earlier lecture The Reaction Against Tennyson (1917) began the process of separating Tennyson as a lyric Romanticist from Tennyson as a Victorian poet interested in the morality of the idyl (domestic and Arthurian). Nicolson's further bifurcation of the poet along similar lines merely linked the morbid, melancholic private poet to Tennyson's so-called "Romantic" lyric voice. What followed was a furthering of the split between Tennyson's public Victorianism on the one hand and his private (to Nicolson) Romantic impulses, on the other. The former was elaborated on in the first scholarly, yet severely critical, full length study of Tennyson by P.F. Baum, Tennyson Sixty Years After (1948). While Baum's argument did much to revive Tennyson's poetry for critical contemplation (albeit negatively), it ultimately strengthened the public (to Baum, 'popular') vs private division in Tennyson studies that has continued to this day. Arguments against Baum, if they were to challenge successfully his interpretation of Tennyson as a poet limited by his public acceptance of Victorian sentimentality, would have to prove Tennyson's currency as a poet by equating his poetry with that of a twentieth-century, ostensibly private sensibility. Implicitly reliant on Nicolson's interpretations, A.J. Carr's essay, "Tennyson as a Modern Poet," transforms what Nicolson had cast in Tennyson as Romantic into a foreshadowing of modernity: private moodiness in conflict with professional responsibility, with conflict itself as the ultimate symbol of a modern consciousness. Chapter three examines the private vs public split in Tennyson biography and criticism in depth.

But it is not enough to restore respectability to Tennyson by attempting to transform him into a modern poet: his major modes, especially the domestic idyl, belong to the sensibilities of another era, and they, rather than any recognition of his modernity, accounted for his universal popularity among Victorian readers. Equally, Longfellow's popular voice needs to be reexamined in relation to the Laureate's if the features of nineteenth-century popular poetry specific to England and America are to be expressly understood.

Obviously, a study of this kind cannot possibly hope to provide close analyses of all of Longfellow's and Tennyson's most popular poems; even if such a list could be compiled conclusively from the sales records of the successful volumes in the United States and England, the list itself would be unmanageably long. Furthermore, though it is fair to say that Longfellow and Tennyson both originally achieved poetic acclaim through their early lyric poems, it is equally true for both poets that the long poem secured their national and international reputations. And the long poem rarely lends itself to close analysis. Tennyson's most popular poems--the English Idyls, Idylls of the King (1859), and Enoch Arden--tend not to be judged on the basis of their appeal to Tennyson's age, but rather on how closely they approximate the close scrutinizing tastes of our own, often with disparaging

results.¹⁶ Finally, because Tennyson continued to experiment with verse forms that achieved widely divergent degrees of public acceptance, both in his day and ours, any full understanding of the Laureate as a public poet must account equally for his successes and relative failures in a period of generally acknowledged popular appeal. Such an account is enhanced by a comparative study of the most popular poet of the day, Longfellow, since poetic comparisons encourage a far greater appreciation for the impact of audience upon popularity than does an examination of the poetry in isolation from its reception.

Consequently, the first four chapters of this study provide a historical framework for chapters five and six focused on select poems from mid-century when, at the height of their careers, Longfellow and Tennyson published their major work, fully cognizant of their publicly sanctioned roles as national representatives. Chapter one defines Victorian popular poetry

¹⁶ Limited to pre-1855 poems, Tucker's most recent attempt in his "In England" chapter of Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism, for all his professed intentions to remain true to the historical relevance of the domestic idyls as a popular Victorian form, cannot help but expose his "modern" (largely New Critical) aesthetic bias against these poems particularly since he himself acknowledges that his critical exegesis is driven by the assumption "that good poetry embodies conflicts and works through resistances" (78). When the poems do not contain conflict or pose resistance--according to Tucker--Tennyson is merely bending his talents to his public in the "articulation of an acceptable world" (274), and the poems are read as "career making" rather than literary. "In Extremis," Tucker's chapter on Tennyson's early dramatic monologues, demonstrates Tucker's decided preference for what he recasts as modern, confrontational verse.

in empirical and theoretical terms. Chapters two, three, and four discuss the underlying biographical and cultural reasons for the evolution, on both sides of the Atlantic, of what might be called Bardic voices that appealed thematically to a popular readership, increasingly female, conditioned to domestic values of home and family--love and duty.¹⁷ Chapter five looks at popular lyrics while chapter six examines popular narrative poems. In these two chapters, the role of the audience is brought to bear upon an understanding, interpretation, and application of selected popular poems of mid-century by Longfellow and Tennyson.¹⁸ Finally, the conclusion describes the decline of Longfellow and Tennyson respectively as poets of the people, and questions some of the

¹⁷ To some extent, such an analysis must acknowledge the poetry of the popular female poets of the day--Mrs. Hemans in England and Mrs. Sigourney, commonly called "the Mrs. Hemans of America"--if only to provide a background of widespread popularity gained through overt sentimentalization against which the use of sentiment by their male contemporaries may be viewed.

¹⁸ Understanding, interpretation and application are the three facets of hermeneutic reading described as successive levels by Jauss in his essay "The Poetic Text within the Change of Horizons of Reading: The Example of Baudelaire's 'Spleen II'" in Toward an Aesthetic of Reception (139-85). Understanding involves an aesthetic reading of poetic structures (a largely subjective enterprise); interpretation requires retranslation (subjective) of the original aesthetic text into the horizon for a subsequent dialectical reading (objective) in which the text poses questions that interpretation attempts to answer, thereby allowing for the reader's part in the genesis of the aesthetic object; application demands a third generally objective reading in which the historical context provides a horizon of expectations through which meaning is created.

reasons for their present literary status. The ultimate aim, however, is not to restore either Longfellow's or Tennyson's popular poetry to their established American or British canons per se. Nor is it, in the conclusion, to question the authority of canon formation itself as a critical endeavour. Rather, the final paragraphs of this study examine the selection processes that excluded Longfellow and Tennyson from university curricula as they existed within a horizon of expectations governing the distinction between "popular" and "respectable" literature in the early part of this century.

There are, of course, inherent difficulties in a study in reader-reception history. As Jauss himself admits of all aesthetic experience, "[w]hether the experience of the past viewer, the contemporary of the text, can be de facto recovered . . . could only be confirmed by (usually lacking) documents detailing the specific sensory perception of past periods" (Aesthetic Experience 64). The paucity of documentation about Longfellow's and Tennyson's contemporary readership, particularly with respect to women, is an obvious difficulty with which this study has had to contend. Extant documentation of interpretations of Longfellow and Tennyson, from the serious to the glib, from the imitative to the parodic, does however shed valuable light on the production and reception of a much maligned body of nineteenth-century poetry. While too easy generalizations about one culture based on another--especially two separated by an ocean--is a

pitfall to be avoided, recent transatlantic comparative scholarship, which is broadening the horizons of literary research, lends a distinct timeliness to an examination of the two most popular poets of the age, whose poetry both reflected and influenced the culture of their own and each other's countries. That they continue to do so, although in ways greatly different from their original impact, attests to the truly historical significance of their most revered poems.

CHAPTER ONE

'FOOTPRINTS ON THE SANDS OF TIME' THE EMERGENCE OF POPULAR POETRY IN THE VICTORIAN PERIOD

Probably no poet who has ever lived enjoyed more fame during his lifetime than did Tennyson.

--John Eidson 1943 (149)

Longfellow . . . attracted during his lifetime a number of readers throughout the world unequalled by any poet in his day.

--Clarence Ghodes 1944
(American Literature 99)

Poetry and Popular Culture

Although fame and widespread readership are not identical, Longfellow and Tennyson appear to have shared equally the Victorian title of the "People's Poet." Sections two and three of this chapter discuss this claim based on empirical evidence concerning the popularity of various texts in relation to the transatlantic production and publication of the two poets' works. But, because an author's popularity also stems from the readers' interactions with texts, whether actually purchased or not, any empirical analysis of popular poetry needs to be supplemented by a theoretical examination of Victorian readers as popularizers. Section four is a two-part study of American and British audiences: as consumers within a socio-historical context that allowed for book consumption, and as consumers and co-producers of national culture, with the poets themselves as commodities for public perusal and purchase. For the first time in Western cultural

history, technological innovations in book production and advances in literacy and education coincided to produce poetic texts that could be, and indeed were, read by an Anglo-American audience that was not restricted by national, class, or gender boundaries or distinctions.

The publication and sales histories of Longfellow and Tennyson have been pains-stakingly researched and documented in this century, but, however suggestively convincing the factual details may seem in establishing the relative popularity of the two poets, they are not by themselves sufficient to validate Longfellow's and Tennyson's true popularity in their own or each other's country. Of course, the facts are neither complete nor wholly accurate. For this reason, statistical evidence relating to production and sales figures is used in this chapter and in the appendices on Longfellow and Tennyson (I & II) with the caveats that the numbers are merely the best available estimates derived by comparing several different sources; and, the interpretation of those numbers tends to be more speculative more than conclusive.¹ They are, however, based on statistical evidence

¹ Where possible, obvious contradictions among different sources are noted in the text or in a footnote. Another difficulty with which this chapter has had to contend is terminology: editions, impressions, reprints, issues, and so forth. Nineteenth-century publishers tended to use "edition" for almost any new print-runs, even if the type-set had not changed. Generally speaking, unless a new edition (in the modern sense) is being referred to, edition is used here in the nineteenth-century sense to indicate a new release of however many copies to the public.

marshalled, for Longfellow, by W. S. Tryon and William Charvat in The Cost Books of Ticknor and Fields and, for Tennyson, by June Hagen in Tennyson and His Publishers, supplemented in each case by peripheral publications--biographies, letters, bibliographies, and publishing histories. The problematic nature of statistical interpretation is well indicated by the seemingly contradictory claims made by Eidson and Ghodes for the greater popularity of Tennyson and Longfellow in the epigraphs to this chapter. On balance, Ghodes's claim, based on surviving documentation, would seem to be more firmly grounded, but Tryon and Charvat's researches, based on the Ticknor and Fields cost books, into the relationship between the production, marketing, and sales of Longfellow and Tennyson in America, offer convincing evidence that both poets sold equally well in the United States. The west to east counterpart to Tryon's "Nationalism and International Copyright," a comparative study of Longfellow and Tennyson in America, and Charvat's two essays on Longfellow in The Profession of Authorship in America, is found in the works of Clarence Ghodes who, in "Longfellow and his Authorized British Publishers" (1940) and an analysis of the impact of unauthorized editions, cheap reprints, and various sorts of pirated extracts of American texts in England, traces the popularity of Longfellow in England.

Comparable British records for Tennyson are far less complete. The lacuna is unfortunate, but even the fullest

sales records would not provide an adequate empirical basis on which to prove or disprove popularity. Sales figures alone--especially those limited to the United States and England--do not reflect accurately enough the numbers of texts that may have been read: not only do they fail to account for sales in translations and in the colonies, pirated editions, publication in newspapers and magazines, anthologies and giftbooks, but they also exclude borrowings from libraries. Literary and social historians alike rely on documented accounts of authors' contemporary acceptance to adduce their popularity within a given social context, which may range from public reviews through semi-public letters and anecdotes of leading public figures contained within journals, diaries, memoirs, and the like, to the somewhat more private responses of the members of the general public who, for their unique or telling quality, make it into print indirectly in a variety of public sources documenting the "life and times" of a given figure. As historical evidence of a more or less "factual" kind, such accounts are here added to existing statistical proofs as equally useful empirical gages of popularity. The use of these accounts, however, necessarily involves a certain degree of caution, since their evidential reliability is conditioned by at least three factors: the availability of these accounts over time; the underlying motives of the speakers or writers of them; and the subjective rationale (or

bias) of scholars in selecting their documentation.² Because evidence of this sort is best employed qualitatively rather than quantitatively, this chapter perhaps risks some inaccuracy in its use of contemporary voices; yet, the intention is to hear them as representative of popular opinion rather than as authoritative.

In short, the limitations of evidence mean that Victorian popular poetry cannot only be defined empirically. "Popular" conceptualizes a relationship among artists, their work, and their contemporary audiences.³ The popularity of a poet's work must therefore be studied theoretically as well as empirically, not simply accepted as an objective measure of the poet's position in a given society. Various features of the poet's work must be analysed so as to determine the likely degree of popularity and reasons for it even when the

² Where possible, attempts have been made to use primary sources for accounts from letters, memoirs, and so on. Excerpts from reviews, however, have been taken from collections of reprints or from secondary sources.

³ At least two aspects of "popular" are not stated directly in the general definition that follows. First, in the twentieth century popular is used primarily to describe dynamic activities--sports for example--rather than static artistic creations. Yet it is also used to describe a variety of entertainments (including sports, films, music, etc.), and as such has links to the ways in which artistic creations also induce differing levels of "activity" on the part of those whom they are designed to engage. Second, artistic creations may achieve their popularity among audiences historically and geographically distant from those for whom they were originally intended. On the problematic nature of the terms "popular" and "the people" see Tony Bennett's "The Politics of 'the Popular' and Popular Culture" in Popular Culture and Social Relations (6-21).

empirical data to verify the work's popularity are unavailable.

In this century, poetry rarely forms a part of theoretical discussions of popular culture. Even if popular culture theorists recognize poetry as a nineteenth-century popular medium, they do so only in a limited fashion. Historians of popular literature in America, for example, usually focus their attentions on the novel, in an almost exclusively empirical accounting of the "best seller" phenomenon. And since sales of poetry could hardly be said to match sales of novels such as Uncle Tom's Cabin--sales that Longfellow himself noted reached a million copies within the first year of its publication--Longfellow and Tennyson account for very little in discussions of nineteenth-century popular literature.⁴ On the other side of the Atlantic, studies of popular culture in Victorian England seldom involve "literate" activities at all, designed as they are to account for the newly-created leisure pastimes of the nineteenth century as a

⁴ Writing in his journal for Feb. 24, 1853, Longfellow also remarked with some envy of Harriet Beecher Stowe that at "one step she has reached the top of the staircase up which the rest of us climb on our knees year after year. Never was there such a literary coup de main as this" (Life II 233). But Longfellow knew full well that poetry was not fiction. Of studies devoted to popular culture, Russell Nye's "Rhymes for Everybody" in The Unembarrassed Muse: The Popular Arts in America (88-137) is an exception to the rule that because of enormous sales only fiction warrants serious consideration as popular literature since Nye attempts more than an empirical study of nineteenth-century popular American poetry. Nye's work is discussed below.

phenomenon of industrial capitalism. If and when popular literature does enter into such discussions, it does so primarily in analyses of the magazine or newspaper trade; sentimental romances even find it difficult to make their mark in studies of Victorian popular culture in Britain.⁵

This overlooking of both the "best sellerism" of poetry and the features that it shares with the leisure activities of Victorian Britain stem predominantly from an elitist twentieth-century definition of poetry as "high culture": poetry intellectually, aesthetically and emotionally stimulating to a select class of readers educated to appreciate its subtle appeal. By the same token, the experience of poetry is thought of as an individual one

⁵ Although published more than twenty years ago, The History of Popular Culture (Cantorn and Werthman eds.) is still an obvious record of the exclusion of poetry from studies of popular culture. This mammoth anthology of brief essays on social issues affecting the rise of various cultural activities over time does not include poetry even among those activities discussed in "Diverting and Improving the Mind" in nineteenth-century Britain and America (480-97). British popular culture scholars who do study literature include Leo Lowenthal, in his Literature, Popular Culture, and Society (1961), Victor E. Neuburg, in his Popular Literature, A History and a Guide (1977), and David Vincent in his recent Literacy and Popular Culture (1989). Lowenthal's sociological study is unfortunately limited to changes in pre-nineteenth century popular taste, while Neuburg's history of various literatures published for the working classes concerns itself with poetry only in the forms of street ballads, cheap reprints of "classics," or as part of an oral tradition. The focus of Vincent's work is also the working classes, in this case, the ways in which literacy, education, and socio-economic conditions affected the popularity of work written by and for the labouring classes. As such, these studies serve as interesting bases for comparison with the popular poetry of Britain's middle classes.

eliciting private (although--paradoxically--supposedly universal) approval rather than collective assent by an entire community of readers. Judged by these twentieth-century standards, Victorian "popular poetry" cancels itself out as a contradiction in terms. Indeed, many literary historians choose to call nineteenth-century poetry read on a mass scale "popular verse" instead, especially when dealing with lyrics by female poets such as Felicia Hemans.⁶ Yet such over-deterministic classifications invariably neglect works which simply do not fit the scheme: Longfellow's and Tennyson's truly popular poems are cases in point.

Poets and Their Bibliographies: Longfellow

Although contemporaries, Longfellow and Tennyson emerged within their own countries as unique "poets of the people" not just because of the differences between America's and Britain's audiences. Rather, the publication methods and marketing of literature specific to America and Britain also assured each poet a different, though no less remarkable,

⁶ Peter Trinder's recent study, Mrs Hemans, is typical. He contends that "the critical question will always be at what points can we distinguish her verse by the name of poetry," that is, in his terms, a "self-contained experience sui generis"; he adds that there "is a dividing line between the convenient terms verse and poetry I take this line to be a distinction in kind." Defining his categories further still, Trinder ultimately contends that Mrs Hemans was not, however, one of the "interminable poetasters" (7-8). Only in this century have such rigid classifications become entrenched in critical discourse; although the terms themselves were used by nineteenth-century critics, they rarely carried such preset determinations of value upon a scale that the reading public would unanimously recognize and support.

success. These transatlantic differences in the presentation of the physical text and its subsequent popularization resulted in Longfellow's managing to achieve a more immediate, and thus potentially more widespread, nineteenth-century popularity than Tennyson despite the fact that the American poet began his poetic career proper almost a decade later than Tennyson: in 1839 with Voices of the Night after Tennyson had already published both Poems, Chiefly Lyrical (1830) and Poems (1833). In contrast to Tennyson's reluctant promotion of himself (especially in the early years of his career), Longfellow was fully prepared to play both businessman and poet to ensure that his "wares" reached their largest possible market.

Longfellow's enterprising nature first reveals itself in self-promotion. From the late 1820s and even into the 1850s, he published in periodicals and annuals many isolated lyrics, ballads, essays and other short pieces designed for widespread audience appeal. In The Profession of Authorship in America, Charvat alleges of Longfellow that in the United States, "it is doubtful whether any other poet of the century was so resourceful in bringing his work before the public in so many forms and on so many price levels." He further points out that Longfellow chose three different media: single publication in a newspaper, magazine or annual; collection in a small volume; reassembly of small volumes in a "collected" edition (157). The first of these brought his name before the

public; the second and third ensured that it would remain there.

As chapter two demonstrates, Longfellow originally began his career as a poet in the 1820s with an intense desire to be famous yet with a discouraging awareness that the "business" of America was anything but literary. However, a variety of periodicals in the 1820s, 30s, and 40s--in particular those targetted at women--were attracting large readerships as were the lavishly produced annuals and giftbooks of the same period. By using such forms of publication as a means of putting himself at the forefront of poetic literature in America, Longfellow received their generally modest payments essentially to advertise himself and his craft.

Throughout his early career, Longfellow chose various means to effect a readership for poetry written by and for Americans. At eighteen, he began a series of contributions to Boston's United States Literary Gazette (1824-26): fourteen poems and five articles (discussed in chapter two). In his New York Review and Athenaeum Magazine (Aug 1825), William Cullen Bryant praised these "beautiful" poems by the as yet unknown H.W.L. (qtd. in Loring Hart 63). They were reproduced in the volume Miscellaneous Poems Selected from the United States Literary Gazette (1825), and again drew high praise, this time from the North American Review (Apr 1826). Although assured of an auspicious poetic beginning, Longfellow nevertheless changed his literary course in 1829. Nearing the

end of his first European tour, he was convinced that he had put forward his poetry too early. Upon his return to America, therefore, Longfellow the professor published translations and grammar texts while Longfellow the poet continued to disseminate in the periodical press his ideas concerning an autochthonous American literature, this time in prose--a review of a new edition of Sidney's Defense of Poesy (North American Review 1832) (discussed in chapter two). Thus, although Longfellow did not contribute any poetry to the periodical press in the early 1830s, he encouraged his readers in prose to seek out American poets for reasons that later in the decade his own poetry would answer.

Longfellow continued to work as a literary critic and essayist in veiled forms in his sketch book, Outre-Mer (published in pamphlets in 1833 and 1834, 2 volumes 1835), and in the novels Hyperion (1839) and Kavanagh (1849). He resumed work as poet in the mid-1830s after his return from a second European tour. Eventually, he allowed Lewis Gaylord Clark to publish "The Reaper and the Flowers" (1837) and then "A Psalm of Life" (1838) in his New York Knickerbocker magazine. In so doing, Longfellow broadened his potential audience since New York was already beginning to surpass Boston as the centre for periodical publication.

Lawrance Thompson contends that, by 1842, because "New York periodicals offered far more opportunities for the author than those in Boston, [Longfellow] sent most of his pieces to the

New World, Colman's Monthly Miscellany, the New York Mirror, the Ladies Companion, and the Knickerbocker" (307). As Longfellow's exposure increased with the success of Voices of the Night (1839), his recorded income documented in Appendix I-B demonstrates that he commanded increasingly higher prices for individual poems for periodical publication. Writing to his father on 29 December 1839, Longfellow remarks on the immediate popularity of Voices, and adds that he now gets "a good deal of praise and constant applications to write for periodicals, at [his] own price" (Life I 338), despite a slump in American magazine industry in the early 1840s.

Buoyed by his first volume's instantaneous success, Longfellow noted in his journal a desire to create a "new sensation" among a "new set of critics" by publishing his "Ballad of the Schooner Hesperus" as a broadside, "printed on a sheet and sold like Verses with a coarse picture on it." Longfellow intended his "national ballad" to work upon "the people's feelings" (Life I 342-3) in a format best suited to the masses' tastes. While this broadside scheme never materialized, "Hesperus" did reach its mass audience in the next best form: Park Benjamin's New World magazine (Jan 1840), which Charvat refers to as a crude "mammoth newspaper" of the time with a potential weekly circulation of 39,000 (Profession 124-5). Although Benjamin's \$25 payment to Longfellow may seem modest today, it was granted at a time when most poets received only about \$5 per poem. Doubtless, Longfellow could

well have continued to supply such poetry to cheap mass-circulation papers but, as Charvat argues, these papers' rapid expansion generated such fierce competition in the 1840s that standards quickly lowered, and Longfellow soon realized that a newspaper audience was not the one to which his work would best be pitched. Instead, he sought and reached "an audience that included all levels except the two extremes--the story paper readers at the very bottom and the intellectuals (the Transcendentalists) at the top" (Profession 127). While recognizing that his was a potentially widespread, middle-class audience, Longfellow never did fully abandon the idea of a broadside ballad for the masses. In 1863, he finally succeeded with the publication of one of his most popular sentimental ballads, "The Ship of State."

Clearly, Longfellow was a poet attuned to diverse American readers, yet he did not respond in quantity to their needs by becoming a prolific writer of poems for the periodical press. While he might strike hard monetary bargains--for example with George Graham of Graham's Magazine, for \$50 a poem in exchange for Graham's monopoly on Longfellow's work for periodicals (1843-48)--he actually contributed on average only three poems a year to periodicals and annuals from 1840-52 inclusive, so that such submissions constituted less than 10% of his total literary income for this period (Charvat Profession 157). By the same token, however, Longfellow did receive some noteworthy payments for later contributions. In June 1857,

for example, he pronounced in his journal that he had "had the offer of one thousand dollars for ten poems of any length from the New York Ledger. Declined. I do not wish to write for any newspaper" (Life II 300). While he would not, at an editor's request, write for the New York Ledger or for any newspaper on a regular basis, in 1874 he could hardly decline the Ledger's offer of \$3,000 for "The Hanging of the Crane," nor decline "Keramos" in 1877 to Harpers magazine when they offered him \$1,000 for the ode. Periodic but steady contributions to Fields's Atlantic Monthly in the late 1850s and 1860s, averaging \$50 and then later \$150 a poem, ensured that Longfellow was also read, at least on an occasional basis, by Boston's literati. New York and Boston, the masses and the cultured elite alike were persistently reminded of Longfellow's continued productivity even though the sales of his new poetic volumes began to decline in the 1860s. In short, Longfellow produced poems for the periodical press not only to exact a livelihood, but equally to establish, enhance, and, ultimately, prolong his reputation among a variety of readers.

Similarly, through occasional submissions to annuals and gift books, Longfellow also ensured that his name was known among a decidedly female audience. In American Literary Annuals and Gift Books, Ralph Thompson argues that the "evolution of the annual into a decorative literary periodical was the result of an increasing regard for feminine taste"

(3), and that "nearly every American writer was pressed into service"; only Melville, Thoreau, and Whitman escaped (23). Of British writers, Felicia Hemans was the most frequently reprinted, while Lydia Sigourney--dubbed "America's Mrs Hemans"--virtually made her living by submissions to periodicals, annuals, and giftbooks.⁷ Unlike in Britain, annuals were taken more seriously in the United States, and their contents were often subject to lengthy reviews in important periodicals (18-19). But the texts Longfellow submitted to these publications were not among his best known works nor likely to win him lasting fame. To these annuals Longfellow contributed both poems and prose: "The Song of the Birds" and "The Burial of the Minnisink" appeared in the Atlantic Souvenir in 1827, as did "The Spirit of Poetry" the following year; and three stories--"The Indian Summer," "The Bald Eagle," and "An Evening in Autumn" were printed in 1832 and 1833 respectively in The Token; Longfellow's Phi Beta Kappa poem, "Truth," was reprinted in The Boston Book (1836). Contributions to The Token and to The Boston Book continued into the 1840s; other popular annuals in the 40s such as The

⁷ Hemans was the most popular English author in American annuals and giftbooks. James D. Hart notes that a "count made by Professor Bradford A. Booth shows that seventy-five of her poems appeared in these anthologies between 1825 and 1865, as against a mere seventeen by Tennyson" (133). Of American poets, Sigourney was by far the most popular in annuals, giftbooks, and magazines combined; Hart maintains that she published as many as 2,000 poems in these publications, later collected in as many as 65 volumes of poetry (133).

Liberty Bell of the Massachusetts Anti-Slavery Society, The Gift, and The Opal also contained occasional texts by Longfellow. Longfellow's works were also solicited in the 1850s for inclusion in special anthologies like Garden Walks with the Poets (1852), Autumn Leaves (1853), and The Harp and the Cross: A Collection of Religious Poetry (1857).

Longfellow's usual payment for such poems was \$50 per submission. From this evidence, it would seem that while Longfellow was not prepared to allow his work to become a staple of the fugitive press--neither periodicals nor gift-annuals--he was more than willing to capitalize on the popularity of these media to enhance his own reputation as a writer by increasing his readership, particularly among middle-class women, who were gift-annuals' principal consumers. To assume, however, that in contributing to these volumes he was merely pandering to the "Sigourney-like" tastes of their audience ignores both Longfellow's promotional reasons for publishing in them and his intention to convert their audience to become readers of his far more lucrative single volumes. In this enterprise, he was aided by an equally enterprising publisher and subsequent friend, James T. Fields.

Although Ticknor and Fields did not become Longfellow's publishers until 1846, Longfellow's early publishing ventures are marked by an enterprise that they would likely have admired. Appendix I contains first an outline of format,

prices, and volume of sales in the United States and, second, a record of Longfellow's income from all publications, 1839-65. During this time, Longfellow reached the peak of his popularity in America with the sale of over 50,000 copies of Hiawatha (1855).⁸ It is obvious that Longfellow and his publishers were prepared to experiment with formats, prices, and numbers to try to reach as diverse a market as possible. What is not obvious, however, is the extent to which Longfellow acted as a partner in the publication of his work, especially from 1845 to 1865 when he owned and controlled the use of the stereotype plates of his books, including those previous to 1845 which he had purchased outright from John Owen.

Charvat discusses the financial advantages that Longfellow enjoyed because of the above arrangement that, in short, yielded on average a net royalty of 18 1/4% instead of the customary 10% of the time through payments that were due when the copies were printed and not at the time they were sold ("Longfellow" 159, 160). Yet Charvat mentions only in passing one of the more hidden advantages of such an arrangement: Longfellow could directly influence the format of his texts in the choice of printer and typographer, and in the numbers to

⁸ The information available concerning the publication and sales of Longfellow volumes in the United States appears primarily in "Longfellow's Income," chapter nine of Charvat's The Profession of Authorship in America, 1800-1870 and Tryon's "Nationalism and International Copyright" article.

be printed. While this entailed soiling his hands in the ink and dirt of printing and publication--an activity most American Victorian writers chose to avoid rather than embrace --Longfellow's industry could allow him to anticipate and respond to the needs of what he felt his audience to be in ways denied to those authors who allowed publishers near absolute control over their texts. Shrewd, industrious, and willing to take risks, Longfellow should be credited not only for his performance at centre stage as the writer of some of the most treasured verses in the English language, but also for his work behind the scenes in the production of his texts.

Indeed, even before Longfellow owned and controlled the use of his stereotype plates, he had tried to work out arrangements with his publishers that yielded greater profit for himself once his books proved successful, and that allowed him to work with other publishers in different formats for different markets. Voices of the Night (1839) and Ballads (1841), for example, published by Owen under standard arrangements of flat payment for copyright and shared profit with the publisher, yielded an average of only 8% royalty on the retail price. But once Longfellow negotiated a new contract in February 1842, these volumes yielded 13 1/2%, as would The Spanish Student (1843).

According to Frank Luther Mott's calculations, Longfellow's Voices of the Night was the first American volume of poetry to

become a best-seller.⁹ Apart from Edgar Allan Poe and Margaret Fuller (both discussed in chapter two), early reviewers praised Longfellow's poetic talent, dubbing him an American poet of the first order. Longfellow's career was so firmly established that even a critically disclaimed text such as Poems on Slavery (1842), although it sold poorly, did little to damage his growing reputation.

With Evangeline (1847), Longfellow enlisted Ticknor and Fields as his publishers; their business acumen added to Longfellow's own shrewdness established him as a poet of no mean account. In selecting formats, Ticknor and Fields self-consciously patterned their volumes on the "style of Moxon's poets"; in fact, Fields was frequently referred to by his contemporaries as "the American Moxon" (Tryon Parnassus 177). Tryon claims that Ticknor "employed the best binders, the best printers, and purchased the best paper, not from aesthetic considerations, but because he believed it was financially unwise to cut corners" (Parnassus 161). Thus was born the

⁹ In Golden Multitudes, Luther Mott defines best seller as a text that, over the history of its sale, was purchased by what would have been 1% of the total population of the continental United States in the decade in which the text was originally published; thus for a text published in the 1830s, like Voices of the Night, this would equal 125,000 or more copies. In 1871, S. Austin Allibone noted in his Critical Dictionary of English Literature and British and American Authors that Voices had sold more than forty-three thousand copies by 1860 (qtd. in Loring Hart 73) presumably in all its various reprints. The figures in appendix one, on the other hand, refer just to sales of editions and reprints of the Owen's first edition of Voices as a single volume.

Ticknor and Fields trade edition: "chocolate-brown covers, stamped in blind with the delicate, lacy, acanthus patterns front and back" (177). This was the format in which Evangeline was published and, as an individual volume, it sold better than any others to date: 14,425 copies by 1864 (Charvat Profession 160). Even Longfellow seemed surprised by its success, noting in November 1847 that "Evangeline goes on bravely. I have received greater and warmer commendations than on any previous volume. The public takes more kindly to hexameters than I could have imagined" (Life II 96); he later remarked on sales of one thousand a month since its publication (Life II 112). The Longfellow--Fields association of nearly twenty five years had begun.¹⁰

But with the exception of Hiawatha, noted below, Longfellow's collected editions rather than his individual volumes actually yielded the greatest financial rewards. Charvat alleges that, even though the sales were somewhat smaller than those of individual volumes, the collected editions to 1850 brought him almost double the returns:

Experience early showed Longfellow that the technique of this form was worth watching. On the one hand, several levels of market could be reached by variations of price; on the other hand, each

¹⁰ After Ticknor died in the spring of 1864, Fields retained Ticknor and Fields as the firm's name. In 1871, Fields sold his interest in Ticknor and Fields to James Osgood; the company became James R. Osgood and Company, owned jointly by James Osgood, John Clark, and Benjamin Ticknor. In 1878, they amalgamated with Riverside Press to become Houghton, Osgood and Company. Longfellow continued with the firm throughout its changes until his death in 1882.

collection could be strategically outmoded through the publication of new separate volumes of verse and the inclusion of these in new collected editions. Longfellow's first venture, the de luxe illustrated edition at \$3.50, was brought out on the initiative of the publishers, Carey and Hart; but the fifty-cent, paper-covered Harper collection of 1846 was Longfellow's idea [as was the twelve and one-half cent Redding edition of Voices of the Night]. . . . Early in 1849 he freshened up the [Harper] collection commercially by adding to it new double-column plates of Evangeline, raising the retail price from fifty to sixty-two cents. The whole operation cost him about \$340 for plates, but his net royalty for total Harper sales of 6,000 averaged 16 per cent. (162-3)

Having laid the foundation himself for his early sales in both the expensive illustrated market and the cheap book market, Longfellow hereafter turned to Ticknor and Fields to supply the range of his readers with the volumes best suited to their tastes and pocketbooks. Initially, this was done through the trade Collected Edition of 1850. But with subsequent reprints and new editions of this text, Ticknor and Fields experimented with various formats and prices for collected editions, ranging from 50 cents to eight dollars.

Of his single volumes, Hiawatha was Longfellow's all-time, most popular text: within a month of its publication in 10 November 1855, 11,000 copies had been printed, and four months later, 30,000 had been sold (James Hart 129-30). In fact, 4,000 of the first edition of 5,000 had been sold even before publication (Life II 263). Already by 6 December, whatever the damage the critical press attempted to inflict, Longfellow could look upon criticism casually, and shrug it off: "The

publishers are going to put to press the ninth and tenth thousand of *Hiawath*. Critics may assail as they please, eppur si muove" (*Life* II 269).¹¹ The remarkable doubling of Longfellow's publication earnings in 1855 also attests to the instant popularity of *Hiawatha* (see Appendix I-B).

By 1856, it was clear that Longfellow's reputation was more than secure, and Ticknor and Fields followed up an experiment with Tennyson's poems (discussed below) by adding Longfellow to their list of authors for their "Blue and Gold" collected editions: each was "a small handy volume, printed in easy to read type on thin but good paper" (Tryon *Parnassus* 229). At a cost of \$1.75 the texts were expensive, yet sold exceedingly well: 40,000 by 1864. For the series overall, the "demand exceeded all expectations": 41 titles in 57 volumes; the "Blue and Gold" soon began to be imitated by firms in New York and Philadelphia (229). Their attractive covers, gilt stamp, and gilt edges, however, were not unique to this edition since *Hiawatha* actually had already appeared in a similar design in red as well as the standard brown, and *The Courtship of Miles Standish* was to appear in purple. But their 32mo size made them very handy and certainly the attractiveness of each

¹¹ Unfortunately, space does not allow for a discussion of the critical responses to *Hiawatha*; suffice to say that there were several negative voices among reviewers and friends. Longfellow was most stung by charges of his having borrowed his trochaic hexameters from the *Kalevala*, even though many people felt that Longfellow's meter and style had captured what was considered at that time to be the "infantile" character of Indian people.

product itself and the desire to collect the complete blue and gold "set" would have enhanced Longfellow's sales.

Longfellow's subsequent separate volumes, Miles Standish (1857) and Tales of a Wayside Inn (1863), furthered his reputation although neither reached the numbers of Hiawatha.¹² Miles Standish, however, had a remarkable initial sale: two 10,000-copy print runs made up the first edition; upon publication, 16 October, 5,000 sold immediately in Boston alone; and by the 23rd Longfellow was noting in his journal, "in all an army of twenty-five thousand in one week. Fields tells me that in London ten thousand were sold the first day" (Life II 326, 327). But such remarkable sales were not to last.

Apparently by 1860, the popularity of new Longfellow texts was beginning to wane. Charvat explains Longfellow's decline in popularity within the larger context of a depressed, Civil War economy, and its subsequent impact on the publishing industry (Profession 164). In addition, Tryon registers the financial effects of the war in Ticknor and Fields's overall

¹² In his own records for 1857, Longfellow notes his sales record in the United States to date: "Voices of the Night 43,550; Ballads etc. 40,470; Spanish Student 38,400; Belfry of Bruges 38,300; Evangeline 35,850; Seaside... 30,000; Golden Legend 17,188; Hiawatha 50,000; Outre-Mer 7,500; Hyperion 14,550; Kavanagh 10,500" (Life II 295). Presumably, these figures embrace sales within collected editions (as the similarity of their numbers suggests); the sales figures for the final three prose works therefore appear significantly lower since in 1857 these had not yet been included in collected editions.

reduction in poetic output: from 59,560 volumes in 1860 to only 19,105 in 1861 (Parnassus 253). Although prosperity would return to the American publishing industry in general by 1863, both poetry and Longfellow became permanent victims of the depressed market sparked by the war. Post-war literary tastes had changed: middle-class American readers had wholeheartedly embraced the novel, and poetry was never to recover its former stature.

Indeed, Fields's decision in 1865 to issue a cheap, selected edition of Longfellow's poetry as Household Poems is itself a telling sign that the market for Longfellow's poetry was changing.¹³ By 1865, Longfellow had negotiated a new contract with Fields to be paid an average yield each year rather than involve himself, as previously, in the publication of his work; and by 1875, his contract had been renegotiated to a flat sum of \$4,000 per annum for all his old books (Charvat Profession 112-13). Even though by 1869 Longfellow had sold over one-third of a million copies of his works, and in the early 1870s his collected works were selling about 15,000 copies a year, the publishers, in a desperate attempt to dispose of a total printing of 6,000 copies of the newly

¹³ Longfellow's own output was also changing, especially because of the tragic death by fire of his second wife in 1861, and his attempt to bury his grief primarily in his translation of Dante. Although he kept working on original texts such as Tales of a Wayside Inn, even these poems have the ring of prose pieces translated into a variety of verse forms rather than creative poetic work.

completed Christus (1871), issued the work in no less than six different formats to suit every pocket book (Charvat Profession 150). The shifts in taste among readers following the Civil War meant that Longfellow's reputation had now to be sustained by two distinct new audiences: young people, because of America's burgeoning need for domestic poetry within its newly-established public schools, and an expansive foreign market.

The above account of sales figures during Longfellow's peak years cannot by itself convey the extent to which, at the height of its popularity, Longfellow's work had touched people from all classes. His status as America's national bard is registered in the innumerable laudatory voices of his educated contemporaries documented throughout this study. Less often heard, however, are the voices of the lower class. In the reminiscences gathered for Samuel Longfellow's Life of his brother, an unnamed woman recounts the following incident in New York: seeing a crowd gathered outside of a jeweller's window, she was struck by a "voice in unmistakable brogue saying, 'Shure, and that's for Hiawatha.' The speaker was a ragged Irish laborer, unshaven and unshorn. She looked, and saw a silver boat with the figure of an Indian standing in the prow. 'That must be,' continued the speaker, 'for a prisintation to the poet Longfellow; thim two lines cut on the side of the boat is from his poethry'" (qtd. in Life III 352).

The woman further remarked, "[t]hat is fame," to her companion.

This anecdote clearly indicates that Longfellow's compositional tactics, coupled with those of his publisher in marketing his poetry, had been successful in reaching the great "unwashed" among American readers. In a bid to enhance sales, Ticknor and Fields used the periodical press to their own and Longfellow's advantage by sending volumes for review to those magazines in which their firm most frequently advertised, thus indirectly ensuring favourable reviews. "Puffing," as it was called, was a common covert practice in nineteenth-century Anglo-American literary circles. Tryon maintains that "Longfellow, Hawthorne, Whittier, and Holmes reviewed each other's volumes--all published by Fields--frequently and with sympathy" (Parnassus 199). But in 1855, Ticknor and Fields made the mistake of making the practice of puffing overt by writing to the Traveller after an unfavourable notice of Hiawatha, and withdrawing their business from the paper. In response, the editors of the Traveller printed the publishers' letter verbatim in their paper. Thus ensued a controversy that raged for months involving several publishing firms, periodicals, and reviewers (Charvat Profession 181-5). While Longfellow remained silent throughout the course of events, and the controversy did little if anything to dampen the sales of Hiawatha, one of the

less honourable means by which publishers marketed their wares was brought to light.

One might think that revealing these means might have lessened publishers' willingness to continue with similar practices, but such was not the case with Fields. After Ticknor's death in 1864, Fields acquired The North American Review. And, according to Tryon, just as his publishing firm was about to issue a new seven volume edition of Longfellow's prose and poetry, Fields told Charles Norton that it was a good time for a feature article in the North American on Longfellow (Parnassus 288). In the end, writers somewhat less popular than Longfellow--Holmes, Bayard Taylor, Whittier, Emerson--all recognized that Fields had "made" them (Parnassus 323). The entrepreneurial spirit that motivated Fields to take publishing risks also prompted him to take such types of marketing risks, to Longfellow's and other writers' ultimate benefit.

More than Fields, Longfellow's publishers in England had the financial opportunity and motivation to take even greater risks. Prior to the passage of the international copyright act in 1891, Longfellow's poetry reached English audiences outside the United States primarily through unpaid reprints in British periodicals and in innumerable pirated editions costing a shilling or less, affordable to even the lowest

levels of the reading classes.¹⁴ Yet despite the advantages that pirating offered publishers in the nineteenth century, several British firms actually made contracts with Longfellow --not always kept however--to obtain advance release of his work in England so as to secure the market on initial sales.¹⁵

The authorized sales noted by the Routledge firm alone (records from 1858-1900 that are themselves incomplete) tell an amazing story of 716,000 copies among 32 different titles including translations, prose works, poetry, and various selected editions. Routledge's collected Poetical Works, for example, sold 390,000 copies while titles such as Hiawatha, 37,000 copies, and Tales of a Wayside Inn, 33,000 copies, sold the best among his individual volumes of poetry, and his text of Dante's Divine Comedy, 39,000 copies, the best among his translations (Ghodes "Longfellow" 1179). Of course, one of the reasons for such popularity in England was the practice by

¹⁴ Among magazine editors, Thackeray was indeed the exception when he wrote to Longfellow in November 1859, to ask "Has Hiawatha ever a spare shaft in his quiver, which he can shoot across the Atlantic? How proud I should be if I could have a contribution or two from you for our Cornhill magazine" (qtd. in Life II 346). Ghodes explains that even in those magazines who announced Longfellow as a contributor, his poems were usually pirated (American Literature 50-55).

¹⁵ Clarence Ghodes's "Longfellow and his Authorized Publishers" examines various firms' strategies to secure and maintain contracts with Longfellow, while his later study, American Literature in Nineteenth-Century England, with its chapter on Longfellow (99-171), adds information about pirated copies to his original work and analyzes various critical responses to Longfellow in British periodicals to determine reasons for the American poet's enormous popularity in England.

British publishers of targetting both upper-middle and lower class readers through differently priced editions, usually both a five shilling edition and a one shilling reprint.

Before Longfellow in 1858 accepted Routledge (well known for his "Railway libraries" series) as his authorized British publisher, the American poet had been represented by several different firms. After a rather unprofitable attempt with Outre Mer, Bentley published Longfellow's early poems in his Miscellany for 1839. In 1843, Tennyson's publisher, Edward Moxon, "arranged for an edition of Longfellow's poems from sheets printed in Philadelphia" (Ghodes American Literature 105-6). Presumably, he printed 250 copies each of Ballads and the Spanish Student in that year (Life II 13). In 1849, receiving initial payments of \$100 per volume, Longfellow began to have his work published by John Walker of Liverpool. Complications inevitably ensued and by 1851, Walker, David Bogue, and George Routledge were all bidding for the rights to publish The Golden Legend, eventually published by Bogue. Bogue also published Hiawatha in 1855, despite Routledge's continued attempts to persuade Longfellow over to his firm through his insistence that he would be better able than his competitors to promote Longfellow's poetry. The success of Hiawatha--2,250 copies of a five-shilling edition and 15,000 of a one-shilling issue in less than a year--could only have further convinced Routledge to continue to press for the rights to Longfellow in England. Yet with Bogue's death in

1856, Longfellow loyally authorized W. Kent, Bogue's purchaser, to publish his upcoming Miles Standish. Having failed to win Longfellow over because of a botched scheme to obtain British copyright on the volume, however, Kent was replaced in 1858 finally by Routledge, who remained Longfellow's authorized British publisher for the rest of his career (Ghodes "Longfellow" 1166-73). The number of authorized copies of Longfellow's poems, that is those published by Routledge, totalled 716,000 by the turn of the century (1179).

The scramble to obtain authorization from Longfellow, and similarly to secure a type of copyright, are themselves measures of Longfellow's popularity since publishers recognized very well the profits to be snatched from their pirate competitors if they could monopolize advance sales. Ghodes cites a Macmillan partner's assurance to a group of American authors and publishers in 1867 that, during the twenty years previous, Longfellow had likely been deprived of more than \$250,000 in royalties ("Longfellow" 1175); indeed, of the pirates, "one publisher alone disposed of 410,919 copies of the poet's work between 1865 and 1900" (1179). "More than seventy different British publishers brought out one or more volumes by the poet in the years prior to 1901"; these editions or issues totalled 94 in the 1850s, 44 in the 1860s, 52 in the 1870s, 55 in the 1880s, and 36 in the 1890s. And as Ghodes further remarks, in "prices the books indicate

the wide range of the people who read them, for they ran from shilling or even sixpenny volumes to elaborately illustrated Christmas books costing a good round sum" (American 107), likely a guinea or more. Of course, costs to the publisher were minimal since there were no payments to the poet, and little or no advertising needed to be done to secure sales since pirated poems and volumes acted as their own advertising.

Yet in spite of lost royalties and payments, Longfellow accepted rather than begrudged unauthorized publication. As he pointed out to Emma Marshall, a British author complaining of unauthorized American reprints: "I have had twenty-two publishers in England and Scotland, and only four of them ever took the slightest notice of my existence, even so far as to send me a copy of the books. Shall we call that 'chivalry,'-- or the other word? Some good comes of it, after all; for it is an advertisement, and surely helps what follows. It gives you thousands of readers instead of hundreds" (Life III 265-66). Certainly, Longfellow was prepared to see the bright side here, but he did not do so by accepting whatever his authorized publishers wanted, or by ignoring lobbies for international copyright legislation. On the contrary, his epistolary debates with British publishers are legion and well documented by Ghodes's studies and by F. A. Mumby in The House of Routledge: 1834-1934. Moreover, Longfellow appealed to his close friend and well known radical Republican Congressman

Charles Sumner in 1867, just after the Civil War, that he "not let the matter of international copyright fade out of sight." He did so on the pretext of assisting none other than Tennyson, who had written to Longfellow urging that now that the war had passed "We English and Americans should be brothers as none other among nations can be; and some of us, come what may, will always be so, I trust" (Letters-Longfellow V 108, Letters-Tennyson II 448). And while international copyright legislation was stalled for more than two decades, in the late 1860s, 70s and 80s, Longfellow's worldwide reputation grew at a faster rate than ever before.

Longfellow's foreign audience, of course, was established early and was greatest in Britain. Fellow Americans travelling or residing temporarily in England, such as Fields and Hawthorne, seldom failed to inform Longfellow of the impressions he made across the Atlantic. After meeting with Bogue (then Longfellow's authorized British publisher) in November 1851, Fields wrote to Longfellow as follows: "I find your writings all over England. At the houses of all sorts of people, high church & no church, your name is revered. At Oxford a few days ago I had the pleasure of meeting many of your warm admirers and as I came direct from your publishing office and could speak of your fame in your own land I was listened to with interest" (qtd. in Ghodes "Longfellow" 1170). In May 1855, Hawthorne wrote from Liverpool: "No other poet has anything like your vogue. Did you hear how the Harrow

school-boys, a few months ago, decided by a formal vote (as I understand) that you are the first poet of the age? I make great play at dinner-tables by means of you. Every lady--especially the younger ones--enters on the topic with enthusiasm" (qtd. in Life II 258). A year later, Hawthorne wrote again in the same vein, stating that Longfellow continued to be spoken of "with the highest interest and admiration" at parties he attended in England (qtd. in Life II 276). High church, no church, Oxford undergraduates, Harrow public school boys, ladies at parties--it seems that Longfellow in the 1850s had a following that crossed religious, class, and gender boundaries.

Longfellow's final crossing of the Atlantic in 1868 brought a further increase in the cross-culturalism of his British audience; and of the multiple reasons for the rapid expansion of Longfellow's popularity was the timing of his celebrated journey to England. Following the end of the American Civil War in 1865, and the passage of the second Reform Bill in Britain in 1867, social boundaries and class-specific allegiances in both countries were weakening to such an extent that a democratization of intellect and laissez-faire capitalist economies worked hand in glove to make Longfellow the most widely read poet in Britain. England's previous class-based hostility toward Republican America--that had reached acute proportions during the Civil War when England aided the South's slave economy by continuing to trade with

the Confederate States--gradually gave way in the late 1860s to acceptance and even admiration for America's political and educational systems that could accommodate the masses. Since previously disenfranchised groups in England--political and religious radicals, women, and the working classes--had been more likely to be American sympathizers in any case, as they became empowered socially and economically their influences were felt in a number of other areas, not the least of which was as purchasers of "cheap" literature.

A writer for The Times heralded Longfellow's journey to England as follows:

A guest is approaching our shores, or has already landed whose name is a household word to the English people. No poet of our own or of any other land is so widely known and appreciated by strangely various classes of society He is not less the poet of the people than a chosen companion of the cultured and refined; and his words are in the mouths of thousands to whom our own Tennyson is only partially familiar, and to whom Browning is an unknown name.

(June 1868 qtd. in Ghodes American 101)

Longfellow's enormous popularity generated a reverence that even the Queen and her Laureate acknowledged and helped to further. For example, during Longfellow's visit with Queen Victoria, she observed a great stir among her domestic servants which she later recorded in her journal:

The American Poet Longfellow has been here. I noticed an unusual interest among the attendants and servants. I could scarcely credit that they so generally understood who he was. When he took leave, they concealed themselves in places from which they could get a good look at him as he passed. I have since inquired among them, and am surprised and pleased to find that many of his poems

are familiar to them. No other distinguished person has come here that has excited so peculiar an interest. Such poets wear a crown that is unperishable.

(qtd. in Williams 20)

While in England, Longfellow was given a unique honour for an American by being royally treated by Tennyson. Contrary to his generally private responses to his neighbours, Tennyson hosted a neighbourhood tea party of some 40 or 50 people for Longfellow on 16 July during his visit to Freshwater, 15 to 19 July 1868 (Memoir 463).¹⁶ The honorary degrees awarded Longfellow from Oxford and Cambridge also confirmed the American Laureate's achievement among the cultured elite.

Yet it is really as a "middle-class" writer that Longfellow is felt to have made his mark, even in England. According to Ghodes, "earlier than any other nation in the world the United States produced a literature which was entirely the product of the great middle class" (American Literature 11). The enormous impact of this American middle-class product in

¹⁶ J. E. Sait's brief note on Tennyson and Longfellow's acquaintance includes an interesting journal entry by one of the neighbours, Tiny Cotton, who describes the emotional stir Longfellow inspired in the women present, and how she herself felt torn in allegiance between Longfellow and Tennyson, the latter referred to as "our bard" for whom it was "our privilege" to pour tea (187-8). The American and the British poets became friends as a result of this meeting, sent one another poems, and maintained an occasional correspondence until their deaths. In addition, Irving T. Richards has published previously unpublished extracts from Longfellow's journal that document his three previous trips to England: 1829, 1835, and 1842. On none of these occasions did he meet Tennyson although he met many other writers, among them Dickens and Carlyle.

England was both feared and welcomed by people of all classes, yet it could never be denied. Near the end of the nineteenth-century, the Illustrated London News reflected:

Perhaps the most entirely popular books in prose and poetry which have been read by the masses of the English people during the last fifty years have come to us from America--the poems of Longfellow and "Uncle Tom's Cabin," both largely tending to make our middle classes strongly sympathetic to the Stars and Stripes. Certain it is that Longfellow's sales in this country have far exceeded those of any one of our own poets. (Jan 1896, qtd. in Ghodes American Literature 101)

How Longfellow specifically came to represent the poetic voice of an amorphous, wide-ranging middle class is dealt with throughout this study. For the moment, it is necessary to continue with evidence of Longfellow's stature worldwide.

Even more astounding than success in England was Longfellow's international reputation that accrued from innumerable translations of the successful Ticknor and Fields trade editions. Although amply recorded by many, no one provides a more comprehensive treatment of the subject than does Fields himself not long before he died in April 1881:

I remember how instantaneously in the year 1839 'The Voices of the Night' sped triumphantly on its way. At present his currency in Europe is almost unparalleled. Twenty-four publishing houses in England have issued the whole or a part of his works. Many of his poems have been translated into Russian and Hebrew. 'Evangeline' has been translated three times into German, and 'Hiawatha' has not only gone into nearly all the modern languages, but can now be read in Latin. I have seen translations of all Longfellow's principal works in prose and poetry, in French, Italian, German, Spanish, Portugese, Dutch, Swedish, and Danish. The Emperor of Brazil has himself translated and published 'Robert of Sicily,' one of

the poems in 'Tales of a Wayside Inn,' into his native tongue, and in China they use a fan which has become immensely popular on account of the 'Psalm of Life' being printed on it in the language of the Celestial Empire. Professor Kneeland, who went to the national millennial celebration in Iceland, told me that when he was leaving that faraway land, on the verge almost of the Arctic Circle, the people said to him: 'Tell Longfellow that we love him; tell him that we read and rejoice in his poems; tell him that Iceland knows him by heart.' To-day there is not disputing the fact that Longfellow is more popular than any other living poet; that his books are more widely circulated, command greater attention, and bring more copyright money than those of any other author, not excepting Tennyson, now writing English Verse.

(qtd. in Annie Fields 17-18, added emphasis)

Translations of Longfellow's work eventually numbered 708 in twenty-four different languages (Charvat Profession 150).

Although by the 1930s Longfellow may have been relegated by Ludwig Lewisohn to classrooms of "wretched school children," at the end of the nineteenth century, his poems were being read worldwide, by all classes and all ages.

Poets and Their Bibliographies: Tennyson

Unfortunately, the sales records of Longfellow's only serious competitor, those of Tennyson--in England, America, or in translation--are not anywhere near so complete as they are for Longfellow. This is particularly regrettable since in "not excepting" Tennyson in the remarks above, Fields alludes to a pervasive coupling of the two poets in the nineteenth century in the hearts and minds of critics, friends, and the public at large in both America and Britain, perhaps even around the world. This easy coupling may surprise many late

twentieth-century readers of both poets if they divorce poetic texts from their means of production and cites of reception. However, Longfellow's and Tennyson's "equal" popularity as poets of the people derived from the periodical press, in particular, where Longfellow's and Tennyson's poems were reprinted and criticized jointly in each other's countries, not only because of a lack of international copyright, but because of each country's need to define itself against the other during the nineteenth century. Equally important is the fact that their publishers often produced very similar looking volumes--especially in America where Longfellow and Tennyson shared the same publisher--and marketed these volumes to similar enough audiences so that substitution of one for the other in readers' minds became common. The intrinsic differences between the two poets' work notwithstanding, they achieved their respective successes within contexts of production that ultimately led to a remarkably similar reception for both poets. Throughout the nineteenth century, Longfellow and Tennyson indeed shared the title "The People's Poet."

Unlike Longfellow's, the history of Tennyson's reputation as a poet in relation to his publication methods does not follow a clear progression upward to increasingly greater heights of popularity before its decline. Moreover, Tennyson's reputation is chequered by the effects of negative reviews to which Longfellow was by and large indifferent.

Tennyson's career thus divides into distinct phases, dramatically bifurcated by the almost overnight success of In Memoriam. From 1827-1850, the progress of Tennyson's poetic career was at best sporadic. His early volumes in the 1830s met with critical scorn at the hands of reviewers such as Wilson and Croker; but the apprentice years of what used to be called the "Ten Years' Silence," during which he published little, culminated in the new and revised Poems of 1842, which established his poetic reputation and won him an increasingly wide audience, both in England and America. With the publication of In Memoriam in 1850, Tennyson was virtually the only contender worthy to assume the mantle of Wordsworth's laureateship. Afterward, his fame continued more or less unchecked until the mid-1870s when, following his shift to drama, his reputation began a gradual decline. 1850, therefore, is a convenient transitional date to launch an analysis of his publication history.

Tennyson's early publishing career could not have been more different from Longfellow's. Most Tennyson scholars agree that when it came to promoting his work Tennyson was at best reluctant and sometimes plainly obstructive of others who would do it for him. For example, had it not been for Arthur Hallam's initiative in sending Tennyson's "Sombre Valley" sonnet in July 1831 to Edward Moxon for his newly established Englishman's Magazine--after Tennyson had failed to comply with Hallam's request that he himself submit poems to that

journal--Moxon, who was about to launch his own career as a book publisher, may never have taken an interest in Tennyson.¹⁷

During the first two decades of his career, Tennyson viewed submission to periodicals and annuals in a manner diametrically opposed to that of his American counterpart, Tennyson's initial failure to comply with Hallam's request to send out poems for periodical publication later became outright refusal. By the early 1840s--after Tennyson had suffered a financial collapse through a misplaced investment--his friends began to suggest that he "write short popular poems for the magazines and newspapers" to ease his economic difficulties. But Tennyson's reply was firm: "I write only what I feel . . . and will never write anything else" (qtd. in

¹⁷ Hallam was even prepared to enlist a type of business agent of his own, Charles Merivale, to work out regular payments for contributions and discover what royalties Moxon would pay for a full volume (see Hagen 18-20).

Charles Tennyson 182). Presumably, the early Tennyson felt that his poetry demanded volume publication or none at all.¹⁸

Tennyson voiced similar negative responses to numerous friends' attempts to get him to submit poems to annuals and giftbooks, perhaps because contributors were unpaid. The list of early poems anthologized in these publications is brief and no poem was extracted from Tennyson without some grumbling: "No More," "Anacreontics," and "Where is the Giant of the Sun" for The Gem (1831); "There are three things" for the Yorkshire Literary Annual (1832); "Me my own Fate" for Friendship's Offering (1832); "Check every outflash, every ruder sally" for Friendship's Offering (1833), reprinted from the Englishman's Magazine (Aug 1831); "St Agnes Eve" for The Keepsake (1837); and "O that twere possible" for The Tribute (1837). Unlike Longfellow, Tennyson did not regard such publications as a convenient means of advance advertising. On the contrary, he regretted having ever allowed himself to be coerced by friends to submit work to publications that he felt were beneath him.

¹⁸ Tennyson was, however, provoked into periodical publication in 1846. The February and March issues of Punch contained "The New Timon, and the New Poets" and "After-Thought," satiric responses to Bulwer Lytton's attack on Tennyson in The New Timon (1845-6) (discussed in chapter four). Apparently, the first poem was never intended for publication; John Forster, annoyed at Bulwer Lytton's refusal to admit his authorship of The New Timon, had sent Tennyson's verses to Punch, and they appeared under the signature "Alcibiades." Regretting this poem's publication, Tennyson published the second under the same signature as a means to end these "pigmy wars," which it did do. This episode further confirms the fact that the early Tennyson only ever published in the periodical press when prompted or provoked by others.

On 3 August 1832, for instance, he replied crankily to Brookfield's request for submissions to The Yorkshire: "Have I not forsworn all annuals provincial and metropolitan--I have been so beGemmed and be-Amuletted and be-forget-me-not-ted that I have given all these things up [S]eriously, Brookfield, I have a very strong objection to appearing in annuals and it is only because you ask me that I have sent you the following sonnet ["There are three things"]. . ." (Letters I 63).¹⁹ A subsequent request from Brookfield--this time for Lady Emmeline Stuart Wortley's Keepsake--resulted in a similar, crotchety reply. Tennyson writes, "had there been any prospect of filthy lucre, or perhaps had the lady herself wooed me with her fair eyes, I might have sent something which would have filled a larger space in her annual," and he reminds Brookfield of his "instinctive hatred toward annuals" (Letters I 144). In this letter, Tennyson's grounds against annuals begin to suggest themselves: annuals are filled with amusing trifles for the leisured, aristocratic class (that is, those who do not deign to touch 'filthy lucre').²⁰

¹⁹ In a note to this letter, Cecil Lang adds that Tennyson apparently did not publish in Samuel Hall's Amulet.

²⁰ Richard Altick explains that in England "the well-to-do class [were] entertained at the Christmas season and for months thereafter, by gift-books--the 'keepsakes' and 'parlor albums' whose annual issue, in their period of greatest vogue during the 1820's and 1830's, had enriched publishers, printers, binders, writers, and illustrators These annuals, important though they are in Regency and early Victorian literary and cultural history, were priced too high to affect the mass audience" (Common Reader 362).

This class-based attitude is expressed directly on 21 December 1836, in Tennyson's sarcastic response to Richard Monckton Milnes's request that he "be a good boy" and supply "something pretty considerable" for the Marquis of Northampton's philanthropic venture, The Tribute (Milnes qtd. in Memoir 131-2); Tennyson replies:

That you had promised the Marquis I would write for him something exceeding the average length of annual compositions--that you had promised him I would write at all--I took this for one of those elegant fictions with which you amuse your Aunts of evenings, before you get into the small hours, when dreams are true. Three summers back, provokt by the incivility of Editors, I swore an oath, that I would never again have to do with their vapid books--and I broke it in the sweet face of Heaven when I wrote for Lady (what's her name?) Wortley: but then her sister wrote to Brookfield and said she (Lady W) was beautiful--so I couldn't help it: but whether the Marquis be beautiful or not I don't mind much. If he be, let him give God thanks and make no boast.

To write for people with prefixes to their names is to milk he-goats: there is neither honour nor profit: up to this moment I have not even seen the Keepsake: not that I care to see it, but the want of civility decided me not break mine oath again for man or woman. And how should such a modest man, as I, see my small name in collocation with the great ones of Southey, Wordsworth, R. M. M. etc. and not feel myself a barndoor fowl among peacocks?

(Letters I 146)

The above letter is quoted at length here to illustrate fully why Tennyson found annuals vapid: they were got up by "he-goats" through contributions by "peacocks," Tennyson's admiration for Wordsworth and company notwithstanding. The "barndoor fowl"--that can serve some utilitarian purpose--sarcastically believes himself unworthy to publish in an annual. Not surprisingly, Milnes accused Tennyson of

"insulting irony," and threatened to publish his own manuscript copy of "Anacaona" should the poet refuse him. Pinned in this way, Tennyson acquiesced since he claimed that he would "not be backward in doing a really charitable deed" (Letters I 148), although not before he chided Milnes at some further length. Out of a sense of philanthropic duty, Tennyson eventually submitted what would become the seed poem for Maud: "Oh! that 'twere possible." Nevertheless, this exchange with Milnes ended Tennyson's contributions to annuals for over a decade.

At first glance, Tennyson's initial reluctance to publish in the "popular" press or to cultivate readers of annuals seems to contradict his later popularity. And, indeed, after 1850 when Tennyson felt his reputation was secure, he did contribute to several annuals including The Manchester Athenaeum Album (1850), Frances Powers's The Keepsake (1851), and Adelaide Procter's The Victoria Regia (1861). He also published more than fifty poems in various newspapers and periodicals.²¹ To explain such a contradiction, many twentieth-century scholars invoke a now familiar paradigm of two Tennysons--the Romantic and Victorian. They

²¹ In Britain, the Anthenaeum, Contemporary Review, Cornhill Magazine, Court Journal, Daily Telegraph, Examiner, Fraser's Magazine, Good Words, Macmillan's Magazine, New Review, Nineteenth Century, Pall Mall Gazette, Punch, and The Times; and in the United States, the Atlantic Monthly, Every Saturday, New York Ledger, St. Nicholas, and Youth's Companion (see Wise I 301-63).

simplistically refer to Tennyson's pre-Laureate career as that of a romantic artist who, alienated from his audience, sought exclusively poetic truth and therefore did not deign to publish in the popular press. Although Raymond Williams does not use him as an example, the early Tennyson is frequently seen by others as a romantic artist who "will not accept the market quotation of popularity" (Culture 34). Of those critics who analyse specifically Tennyson's relation to his audience in the 1830s, Marion Shaw, in "Tennyson and his Public 1827-1859," and Paul Jamieson, in "Tennyson and his Audience in 1832," view Tennyson in this way.²²

Many reasons, some accurate, some fanciful, have been advanced by modern critics to explain Tennyson's reluctance in the 1830s to publish his poems separately. One reason that seems to have been overlooked, however, concerns Tennyson's growing awareness of the relationship between his art and his audience, an explanation that runs directly counter to any attempt on his part to isolate himself from his readers.²³

²² Numerous other twentieth-century critics could be added to those who view the early Tennyson as Romantic superseded by a later, Victorian, Tennyson. The most important of these are discussed in chapters three and four in an analysis of the two Tennysons legend that has come to dominate critical thinking in this century.

²³ The explanation that follows summarizes a lengthy analysis in chapter four of Hallam's key role in defining for Tennyson the interrelation between aesthetic appreciation and moral responsibility. The discussion of Tennyson's volume publications that appears in this chapter is restricted to sales, marketing, and reviews. Reviews, however, are only dealt with briefly here because in chapter four the more important of these are examined in some detail in relation to

Most critics acknowledge that Tennyson was scrupulously careful about what he included in his single volumes and collected editions: the two-volume Poems (1842), containing one volume of new and one volume of revised earlier poems, is the best instance in point. This attention suggests that Tennyson viewed his volumes as complete entities rather than merely collections of isolated poems, and he had a valid reason for doing so. Instead of considering his poetic role as one romantically remote from his readers, Tennyson--even at the beginning of his career--felt that his social responsibility to his public was to convince his readers of a moral imperative underlying aesthetic appreciation. Such a grand purpose could never be contained within the brevity of isolated lyrics since it would demand of his readers opportunities for reflection, contemplation and comparisons among disparate yet connected poems. If such a purpose were to be achieved at all, then it could only be so within a complete volume. Consequently, Tennyson began his publishing career with volumes of poetry instead of individual poems so that he could persuade his readers of his larger claim for poetry as aesthetic moralism rather than risk being misread in poems isolated from one another. That he failed to garner sympathetic readers had far more to do with the nature of the British publishing industry in relation to the critical press

the development of Tennyson's poetic voice.

in the 1830s than it did with Tennyson, his poetics, or his publication methods. Once Tennyson felt that his poetic aims had been secured (evinced in his enlarged readership of the 1850s), he often consented, as has been shown, to the separate publication of individual poems, knowing that they could be read as if through a filter of the literary expectations established by his previous full-length volumes.

As those with Brookfield and Milnes, debates between Tennyson and his friends also ensued in the 1830s over the publication of his first two volumes: Poems, Chiefly Lyrical (1830) and Poems (1833) (see Appendix II). Prior to these two volumes, Tennyson's poetry had appeared anonymously in 1827 with that of his brothers, Charles and Frederick, in Poems by Two Brothers. This "early rot"--as Tennyson later called it--was offered at five shillings and apparently sold badly.²⁴ A second collaborative effort, with Arthur Henry Hallam, eventually resulted in Tennyson's first independent volume once Hallam reluctantly withdrew his contributions under pressure from his father. Published in June 1830, by

²⁴ Hagan speculates that the publishers J. and J. Jackson may have printed as many as 800 although records are not available. That they printed far too many, however, is clear from the "considerable stock of remainders" discovered in 1870 in the printer's warehouse (see Hagen 7). Yet in 1865, in an attempt to capitalize on the Laureate's popularity, Jackson apparently blackmailed Tennyson by threatening to publish at least 10,000 copies of Poems by Two Brothers, which he avowed would bring him £1000 profit. How much Tennyson paid to Jackson is not known, but the book was not republished until the Eversley edition (see Lang Letters II 391 n.1).

Effingham Wilson, Poems, Chiefly Lyrical was likely seen through the press by Hallam; thus began a working relationship with Hallam as business agent and Tennyson as artist that lasted until Hallam's death in September 1833. Although the precise number of copies sold is not known, Tennyson apparently still owed Wilson eleven pounds in 1833 for the publication of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, suggesting that--if an arrangement of half-shares of costs and profits had been struck--the volume had not sold well (see Hagen 15). Again, it was Hallam who was prepared to handle the disputes concerning this debt.

As Christopher Ricks argues, "what Tennyson gratefully loved in Hallam was not limited to the grandly platonic marriage of true minds, but included the shrewd and generous practicalities with which Hallam furthered the publication and promotion of Tennyson's poems" (69). While Longfellow chose to manage both the practical and the poetic aspects of his career, the early Tennyson wisely relinquished the former responsibility to Hallam, limiting himself to the poetry. Following publication of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, Hallam functioned as both agent and reviewer to promote his friend's work: he secured a favourable two-part review from Leigh Hunt, editor of The Tatler (Feb and Mar 1831); he sent the sonnet, "Sombre Valley," without Tennyson's permission to Moxon's Englishman's Magazine (see above p. 80); and he tried to arrange through Merivale for continued Tennyson contributions

(with payment) to the Englishman's Magazine (Aug 1831). Most importantly, however, he wrote his review-essay "On Some of the Characteristics of Modern Poetry, and on the Lyrical Poems of Alfred Tennyson" for the same August issue of the Englishman's Magazine in which Tennyson's sonnet appeared.

Although the Englishman's Magazine failed before the end of the year--so that further contributions were impossible--Hallam's dealings with Moxon established a relationship between Tennyson and Moxon's publishing firm that would last twenty-eight years. Again, unlike Longfellow who engaged in considerable self-promotion through periodicals and annuals, Tennyson had close friends such as Hallam do his promotion for him. Tennyson's preferred method of advance notice was the circulation of various manuscripts (often via Hallam) among his Cambridge friends so as to receive directly, or indirectly through Hallam, immediate responses and criticism of his poetry. Eventually, his circle of friends widened to include Moxon, and by the early fall of 1832 Hallam had completed the arrangements for Moxon's publication of Tennyson's Poems.

In his refusal to include "The Lover's Tale" in Poems, Tennyson overcame his reticence in dealing directly with his publisher. Hallam had been pressuring Tennyson to keep the poem in his new volume, but Tennyson was adamantly against it. On 20 November 1832, Tennyson wrote to Moxon explaining that "The Lover's Tale" was "too full of faults" for inclusion and that, although Tennyson thought it might be popular, it

spoiled what he considered to be the effect of the whole. Cecil Lang and Edgar Shannon include in this letter a telling cancellation of Tennyson's: "popularity is not what I am particularly anxious for" (Letters I 84). In both his actions and words, Tennyson reveals early his artistic integrity: provided his work appeared before the public in a manner acceptable to his poetic sensibility, Tennyson had no desire or need to soil his own hands in the business of publication--for popularity or profit. But when in doubt, Tennyson acted for himself and was not to be swayed by any amount of special pleading on the part of friends or publisher.²⁵

In December, 450 copies of Poems were published at a cost of six shillings. According to Sir Charles Tennyson, after two years, only 300 had been disposed of (137). Most Tennyson scholars agree with Sir Charles that Christopher North's negative review of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, Tennyson's epigram in reply to him in Poems, and John Croker's scathing review of Tennyson in the Quarterly--a periodical guiding "the taste of thousands of readers," and setting "the tone for the majority

²⁵ Tennyson's stubbornness also created what Sir Charles refers to as "one of the worst mistakes the poet made in the whole of his career" (130). Hallam had cautioned against including in Poems an epigram condemning Christopher North who had criticized Poems, Chiefly Lyrical the year before. But Tennyson insisted that it remain; he thus provoked the subsequent and more vitriolic anger of John Croker in his review of Poems.

of critics"--irretrievably injured the sales of Poems (135-7). But the poor sales may also have been due in part to Tennyson's choice of publisher, since it was Moxon's conservative business practices that resulted indirectly in the critical reviews having such a profound effect on Tennyson's sales.

Having only recently launched his career, in 1832, Moxon had yet to cultivate the friendships with important editors and critics (a deficiency he later remedied) that would help guarantee favourable reviews to offset any negative ones. Harold Merriman, moreover, argues that Moxon's marketing strategies actually influenced the negative tone of the reviews, which in turn affected sales. Rather than spend large sums for advertisements in periodicals, Moxon chose instead to include flyleaf pages of book notices in his published volumes. Merriman concludes that this "narrow purse" conservatism, especially when it came to advertising, meant that Moxon was often forced to send his volumes for review to "the very journals he was meagerly patronizing" (79). Moxon's practice may have reduced the suspicion of "puffing" among authors, publishers, editors, and reviewers--a charge that Fields and Longfellow had to endure--but what it meant for the poets whom Moxon published was that the promotion of their work was unduly restricted to the arena of critical reviews and their readers. The early Tennyson had, therefore, to rely almost exclusively upon unsympathetic

reviews to build his audience since he himself was unwilling to self-advertise through poetic submissions to periodicals, and Moxon was unprepared to do much advertising for him.

Nonetheless, Moxon's business reticence need not be construed as niggardly. Moxon's motives must be seen within the larger context of the British publisher's perception of his role in relation to his writers and his market. Hagen alleges that Tennyson likely published with Moxon at first under a conservative, half-shares arrangement that was British standard for the time; that is, the publisher assumed all costs of printing, stereotyping, publishing, and advertising. Once these had been paid back to him from initial sales, the publisher and the poet shared equally any remaining profits (27). At a time when Moxon was just beginning to establish his career, it is not surprising that he sought to minimize his advance costs. Hardly wealthy himself and therefore subject to whatever business methods his publisher could afford, Tennyson exercised far less control over the early publication of his work than did Longfellow who after 1845 owned the stereotype plates to his volumes. Tennyson could not direct Moxon; he had to rely far more on Moxon's assessment of the market than Longfellow did on Ticknor and Fields.

In terms of product, however, Moxon's editions were practical and aesthetically pleasing. At first, they were in drab paper boards. But with the publication of The Princess

(1847), Moxon established his trade-edition: clear-cut, well-spaced type; simple, dignified title pages usually without rulings or ornaments; simple, substantial binding in plain green-cloth blind-stamped boards with gilt lettering on the spine (see Merriman 76-7). Both his promotion and his products resulted from Moxon's perception of himself as a quality publisher.

Merriman summarizes Moxon's character in relation to his business practice as follows:

The general tendencies of Moxon's career in business by this time [1832] . . . have been fairly well set. He is to be a literary-minded publisher, not merely a commercial maker of books. His printing, binding, and general book make-up are to be simple and tasteful. Moxon books are to be carefully selected, so that his imprint shall be a symbol of quality. He prefers to issue volumes of poetry. His place of business is to be a literary center He would like to become a patron-publisher and possess a salon which literary gentlemen should frequent. He is a genial man, who has time for a chat or for serious conversation. His "authors" are to be his friends, and he always their friend. He will spend a good deal of time at breakfasts and luncheons of literary men, and in return will give similar entertainment in his own house. His business methods are to be conservative. There shall be no display, no bold advertising or noisy publicity. Well-bred people are to say "Moxon has just published . . . ," and that will be a recommendation of his books. Yet he has "a Yorkshire head," which doesn't lose itself in the clouds. He will drive good bargains, in a firm, quiet way; whenever advisable, an author will finance his own book.

(43-4)

Various standbys of the publishing trade--fiction, religious books, textbooks, guidebooks, and cookbooks--Moxon refused to take up, preferring to think of himself strictly as a literary

publisher.²⁶ This conception of himself meant that Moxon was generally prepared to take risks only in terms of quality rather than to gamble on his market through risks of quantity followed up by aggressive marketing.

Thus, when considering reasons for Tennyson's failure to gain as widespread an audience in England as did Longfellow, literary scholars must be careful not to confine their studies strictly to the poetry itself or to the impact of negative reviews, separate from the texts' publication and promotion. It goes without saying that, as a product for purchase, a Longfellow one-shilling volume is not a Tennyson five-shilling

²⁶ Moxon's character and business practice were not idiosyncratic. Rather, like many aspiring men of business in Victorian England, he was influenced by an aristocratic hegemony that scorned vulgar enterprise, and sought to bring capitalists into line through promotion of the ideal of the "gentleman." Hence, Moxon's "aspirations" were not so much economic as they were social or cultural. Both the aristocracy's refusal to be made socially subordinate to industrial and commercial capitalism, and its co-opting of the upper middle classes through the strength of institutions like the "Clarendon nine" public schools, form the basis for Martin J. Weimer's English Culture and the Decline of the Industrial Spirit, 1850-1980. Weimer argues that the reasons for England's failure in the twentieth century to achieve economic equality with other industrialized countries like the United States and Germany was not purely economic but ideological, and can be historically demonstrated in the nineteenth century. His study suggests, in a related way, that the obvious contrasts between Ticknor and Fields's publication and promotion of Longfellow and Moxon's of Tennyson--and each poet's subsequent reputation--stem from the socio-economic ethos specific to the United States and to England. Indeed, Tennyson's greater popularity in the United States than in England results as much from Fields's "American" entrepreneurial spirit guiding the publication and promotion of Tennyson's texts as it does from any predilection on the part of American audiences for the poetry itself.

edition, but what is not so obvious are the differences in the personality and business ethos of publishers, between men like Edward Moxon and James Fields, or George Routledge for that matter, that contribute to the success of the poet's work among a select class of readers. Unlike Fields and Routledge, who were far more likely to take publication risks with the number of copies, Moxon in the early 1830s held back, almost with a "let's wait and see" attitude.

A decade later, it was Tennyson who held back. From 1833 to 1842, he entered his so-called "Ten Years' Silence," a period in his publication history that has occasioned explanations too numerous and too detailed to account for here.²⁷ The consensus view is that Tennyson was scorned into silence by critics, and bullied into publication once more by anxious Americans. Neither of these generalizations is wholly true, of course, since the reality of Tennyson's life in relation to his work was far more complicated than any generalizations can possibly explain. However, despite his obvious financial and practical reasons for doing so, Tennyson clearly did not feel under any professional pressure to

²⁷ Some of these explanations are dealt with in both chapters three and four. Joyce Green's "Tennyson's Development During the 'Ten Years' Silence' (1832-1842)," Edgar Shannon Jr.'s Tennyson and the Reviewers, and the relevant poems of the period need to be read against one another to determine the precise correlation between negative criticism by reviewers in the early 1830s and Tennyson's preference for substantial revision of his poems rather than further publication at this time.

publish for almost a decade; Edward Fitzgerald described Tennyson in 1838 as "sturdily indifferent to fame" (qtd. in Martin 245). Hagen, for example, asks her readers to consider the following set of facts: "Tennyson lost manuscripts; entered into publishing reluctantly, almost dragged in by his friends; published two of his first four books anonymously (Poems by Two Brothers and In Memoriam)--yet insisted that he wanted fame and profit only from poetry." She then speculates on the causes for what appears to be a lack of self-confidence and concludes that Tennyson did not doubt his abilities as a poet; what he questioned was "his ability to please a wide audience, a questioning only reasonable after his small sales" (49). This questioning of his work in relation to his audience took place in the 1830s; his substantial revision of old poems and development of new genres were the successful results of this effort. It was an effort that, of necessity, took a great deal of time.²⁸

By 1840, Tennyson was again ready to publish, this time with some measure of success. Edward FitzGerald (Fitz), who after Hallam's death in 1833 had partly taken on his role as Tennyson's literary adviser, had been urging Tennyson to publish throughout the late 1830s. Cajoled and badgered into publication by Fitz at every step, Tennyson eventually

²⁸ Tennyson's developing poetic voice and the revision and formation of new genres that he engaged in at this time, and their results, are discussed at length in chapter four.

succumbed to pressure from the United States and brought his poems before the public once more. Moxon finally published the two-volume Poems on 14 May 1842 at a retail cost of twelve shillings. The financial arrangement at this time was that Moxon would bear the costs of production and take one-third of the profits while Tennyson took two-thirds (Hagen 66). The first volume contained both a revised selection of the previously published poems--twenty three of the fifty six from the 1830 volume and sixteen of the thirty of 1832--and seven new poems. The second volume contained twenty seven new poems (lyrics and the new English Idyls), one reprinted and one revised poem. Although enthusiastic in general about Tennyson's having published, Fitz was certainly less enthusiastic about the product. Writing to Frederick Pollock immediately after publication, he complained: "It is a pity he did not publish the new volume separately. The other will drag it down. And why reprint the Merman, the Mermaid, and those everlasting Eleanors, Isabels, -- which always were, and are, and must be a nuisance Every woman thinks herself the original of one of that stupid Gallery of Beauties" (qtd. in Hagan 62). Several months later, however, Fitz had to admit to Tennyson's brother, Frederick, that the book had "sold well," particularly at Cambridge (qtd. in Hagen 63).

Selling well in mid-Victorian England could hardly be thought of as topping the best-seller list. Perhaps Moxon was

being too conservative when he printed only 800 copies. Yet when one considers Tennyson's previous sales, the poet's absence from the market for many years, and a significant slump in the book trade during the late 1830s, Moxon's venture may even appear extravagant.²⁹ By September, 500 copies had been sold; according to Moxon's brother, William, Tennyson had made a "sensation" (see Letters I 209-10, Hagen 201 n.21). Print runs and sales increased gradually throughout the 1840s (see appendix I) and by the 5th edition, Poems had become one volume at nine shillings.³⁰

Whether Tennyson's modest success could now be attributed to favourable reviews, however, is a subject of continued controversy. Sir Charles implies in the following remarks that perhaps Tennyson just happened to publish at an opportune time:

In fact, the moment could hardly have been more propitious for the making of a new reputation. Wordsworth had published no new book since 1835; Moore had written no verse since 1822; Crabbe had died in 1832 and Coleridge in 1834. Mrs. Hemans and "L.E.L." had also passed away, and Samuel Rogers had long been regarded as the relic of an earlier age. Southey had written no new verse for some years,

²⁹ By the 1840s, Moxon had expanded his trade somewhat from that noted earlier by Merriman. Hagen remarks that in addition to his list of "Poetical Works," Moxon had added a "Dramatic Library" and "Cheap Editions of Popular Works" (fiction, essays, travel narratives, and some more poetry) (64). Perhaps it was these latter works that allowed Moxon some latitude in publishing poetry that he admired.

³⁰ Hagen claims that the fifth edition of 1848 is "illustrated by 30 vignettes on engraved steel" (66), but Wise makes no mention of illustrations in his Bibliography (I 91-2).

Campbell had outlived his vogue, and both were near their deaths. (192)

Elizabeth Barrett's Seraphim (1838) and Robert Browning's Sordello (1840) and Bells and Pomegranates (1841-6) were the only contemporary British volumes of poetry likely to attract the attention of Tennyson's readers, unless one considers the ubiquitous Proverbial Philosophy (1838-42) by Martin Farquhar Tupper. At this time, Tennyson truly had no rivals in his own country; he apparently had only the continued disapproval of reviewers to worry about.

Sir Charles concludes that in the 1840s Tennyson's critical reception continued to be hampered by "the spell of Croker and Christopher North" (196). If Thomas Lounsbury is to be believed, then professional criticism "followed and followed reluctantly, and almost protestingly, popular appreciation. Tennyson's reputation advanced against a sullen opposition which insinuated a depreciatory estimate which at last [in 1842] it did not venture to proclaim openly" (417 qtd. in Shannon 62). Shannon argues against Lounsbury, concluding that "the story of critical neglect and popular acclaim in the face of recalcitrant reviewers is a myth" (79). Yet taken as a whole, the eighteen reviews of Poems that Shannon uses as evidence for his opinion do not enthusiastically endorse Tennyson's latest work (see Shannon 60-96). On the contrary, these reviewers' praise is mild at best, and they devote considerable energy to prescribing to Tennyson the directions

that his poetry should take in the future. In the end, both Shannon and Lounsbury are right: the popular appeal of Tennyson's new volumes meant that vitriolic critics could no longer use their reviews to "silence" Tennyson as a poet, however opposed to his work they might actually be. Yet their ambivalence and muted reproach surface between the lines in their generally cautious approaches to his verse, their undercutting of praise with blame, and their paternalistic tones. If Tennyson had indeed laid "the cornerstone of fame" with the 1842 Poems, as Shannon claims, then reviewers had certainly not helped to build a solid foundation for it to rest upon.

Nor was Tennyson particularly interested in having reviewers do so. He may have allowed friends to assist him to a certain extent, yet ultimately Tennyson would establish his own foundation. In the early 1840s, the enthusiasm of literary friends and acquaintances such as Spedding, Rogers, Carlyle, and Dickens, buoyed Tennyson's spirits in the face of acute financial and personal distress. Richard Hengist Horne's and Elizabeth Barrett Browning's collection of critical essays, A New Spirit of the Age (1844), also buoyed Tennyson's spirits with its description of him as "a true poet of the highest class of genius" (qtd. in Shannon 82). As for his pecuniary troubles, these were somewhat relieved in 1845 when Henry Hallam (Arthur's father) successfully petitioned the government to grant Tennyson a Civil List pension £200 per

annum. Although this pension caused a brief spell of controversy, Tennyson's claim to the pension was eventually endorsed publicly. Once Tennyson's volumes began to sell in the 1840s and his public stature increased, Moxon, in turn, would have to respond to audience demand and take some risks.

Tennyson, meanwhile, could now turn his attentions without further financial worry to completing a project that had occupied his attentions for at least a decade: The Princess (1847). The Princess "had seemingly taken more than two and a half years in continuous composition, and perhaps as long as eight years in the gestation" (Killham Princess 14). Once in proof stage, Tennyson also took what was for Moxon an agonizingly long time over revisions so that the book just missed the Christmas trade. It was published on 25 December 1847, at a cost of five shillings in Moxon's trade-edition. The first printing of 1500 copies sold out almost immediately so that a second edition of 1500 was needed by the spring of 1848; a third edition of 1500 appeared early in 1850; Moxon increased the run to 2000 for the fourth edition in the spring of 1851; and the fifth edition, also 2000 copies, was the first to take more than a year to sell out (Shannon 118, Hagen 79). Hagen alleges that thereafter "sales held steady at about 1000 a year," and that by 1848 Tennyson's annual income

was £500 (79). In relative terms, Tennyson's poem achieved considerable public success.³¹

This success of The Princess again contrasted with the puzzlement and even disappointment of many reviewers. The medley of voices in the poem seemed almost a parodic response to reviewers' demands for a long poem of topical interest. And Tennyson's mock-heroic treatment of the contemporary issue of women's education remains as cryptic today for Tennyson scholars as it was for his mid-Victorian critics (discussed in chapter four). In spite of the poem's incongruities, Shannon curiously maintains of The Princess that "[s]eldom has a poem owed so much to contemporary literary doctrine" (92). Yet Shannon reads in the early reviews of the poem isolated notes of "appreciation" as evidence for the above claim without registering fully enough the chorus against Tennyson for having failed to live up to the critics' expectations. John Forster's remarks might be thought of as typical: The Princess

³¹ Altick gathers together from several sources records of poetry sales that provide useful relative measures of Tennyson's successes. These works' sales were, however, built up over generations while Tennyson's volumes tended to have a far more immediate popularity: Robert Pollock's The Course of Time sold 78,000 between 1827 and 1869; John Keble's The Christian Year sold 379,000 from 1827 to 1873; and Martin Tupper's Proverbial Philosophy passed the 200,000 mark in 1866, twenty eight years after the first series had appeared (Writers, Readers and Occasions 340). Although these figures seem inordinately high when compared with those of Tennyson, it must be remembered that Tennyson had the advantage of combining his individual volumes into collected editions whereas the above authors had only their individual volumes (many revised annually) to market.

"is yet only an omen for the future. Its glorious promise has yet to be fulfilled" (Examiner Jan 1848 qtd. in Shannon 115). As with the 1842 Poems, reviewers unequivocally gave to Tennyson an obvious poetic talent, yet they almost unanimously refused to confirm his maturation as England's poetic voice.

The positive influence of friends and the negative impact of reviewers upon Tennyson's early development and success as Victorian England's foremost poet during the 1830s and 1840s have been extensively documented by Tennyson biographers and scholars. Less frequently accounted for, however, is Tennyson's reception by the public at large, especially by the working class and by women. For despite the critical doubts that reviewers maintained throughout the 1840s, with the 1842 Poems the public had in fact begun wholeheartedly to accept Tennyson as the poetic spokesman of the Victorian age.

The public's interests were often registered in ways other than in the purchase of texts. If mentioned at all by Tennyson scholars, Tennyson's appeal among the working classes is most frequently conveyed in the high praise given to Tennyson's "democratic spirit" by Charles Kingsley's tailor hero of Alton Locke (1850):

Why is it that the latest poet has generally the greatest influence over the minds of the young? Surely not for the mere charm of novelty? The reason is that he, living amid the same hopes, the same temptations, the same sphere of observation as they, gives utterance and outward form to the very questions which, vague and wordless, have been exercising their hearts. And what endeared Tennyson especially to me, the working man, was, as I afterwards discovered, the altogether democratic

tendency of his poems [T]here is in Alfred Tennyson an element especially democratic, truly levelling; not his political opinions, about which I know nothing and care less, but his handling of the trivial everyday sights and sounds of nature.

(107-8)

Of course, Kingsley's Alton Locke is an idealized portrayal of working-class existence, as the statistics on education levels and literacy in Britain (discussed below) reveal. Yet among those members of the working class who could read in the 1840s, Tennyson was beginning to have a significant impact. For example, Shannon mentions that, apart from the many standard periodicals, the Weekly Dispatch also reviewed Tennyson's 1842 volume. Its article "is noteworthy for early bringing Tennyson to the attention of an extensive class of readers far removed from those of the Morning Post. The Weekly Dispatch was a radical paper addressed to 'artisans and operatives' and dedicated to the denunciation of abuses [T]he paper had a circulation of over 66,000--a vast figure for 1842 and triple that of the Sunday Times, its nearest weekly competitor in numbers of readers" (69). Tennyson's poetry also reached a working-class radical audience through lectures. Early in 1845, W.J. Fox lectured on Tennyson in his series "Living Poets; and Their Services to the Cause of Political Freedom and Human Progress" for the Working Men's Association of Holborn (Shannon 83). The above evidence suggests that Tennyson's working-class readership of the 1840s

found in his poetry support for a democratic restructuring of Britain's social and political systems.

An incident in 1849, marking his reputation among the working class, brought Tennyson "the highest honour [he had] yet received" (Letters I 309). Elizabeth Gaskell had written to John Forster about a former Lancashire handloom weaver, writer, and devoted admirer of Tennyson's, Samuel Bamford. Bamford was so dedicated to Tennyson's work that he could recite as many as twelve poems simply from having heard them. He was, however, too poor to afford his own copy of Poems. At Gaskell's request, Forster asked Tennyson to forward a copy of the book to Bamford as a gift, which Tennyson immediately asked Moxon to do, to Bamford's infinite delight (Letters I 307-9). This episode illustrates not only Tennyson's appeal to the working class, but also the poet's own pleasure in being able to attract this class of readers. ³²

³² Bamford's devotion to Tennyson also reveals a love for letters and for poetry too frequently overlooked in analyses of working-class leisure activities. Although rather unsystematic in his presentation, Victor Neuburg does provide some evidence that the Victorian working classes had a far greater penchant for reading and purchased far more texts of various sorts and in greater quantity than Richard Altick allows in either of his studies. Neuburg's history of the many publishers of "cheap" books for this diverse audience, which forms part of his chapter on nineteenth-century popular literature (148-234), provides a comprehensive background of the publishing arena alongside which a one-shilling collection of poetry would have to make its mark: broadsides, street ballads, jestbooks, chapbooks, sensational novels, romances, and penny libraries of the "classics." Alternatively, David Vincent's chapter on "Imagination" in Literacy and Popular Culture discusses the sheer pleasure of serious literary reading apparent in working class autobiographies and memoirs from nineteenth-century Britain. None of these mentions

Gaskell's request is rare among accounts of Tennyson's female readership for, apart from Tennyson's wife, family members and, of course, Queen Victoria, Tennyson's female readers--as readers--are seldom mentioned by his biographers. Such neglect is particularly regrettable in studies of nineteenth-century poets and culture because, with the increasing popularity of the novel, women were being counselled by many female social reformers to turn their better minds away from the realism of fiction toward the idealism of poetry. Maria Grey and Emily Shirreff, in Thoughts on Self-Culture (1851), outline the opposing arguments with an obvious preference for poetry:

The grand conceptions of the poet are true in ideal beauty; the novelist's pictures of real life are false, because necessarily covered with an unreal gloss. The object of the poet and artist is to embody their own lofty view of the truly beautiful; that of the novelist, to present us with an imitation of all we see around us, and therefore to mingle with the beautiful all that generally detracts from it in real life The poet, in short, elevates the thoughts, while the novelist excites the feelings, and this one difference sufficiently expresses how admirable is the one and how pernicious the other kind of reading for women.

(qtd. in Helsinger III 27)

Tennyson was more than able to provide "lofty views of beauty" for this female readership; whether great numbers of women saw them or not is less certain.

Tennyson, however, since cheap literature could only be produced for uncopyrighted authors; as Vincent points out, the standard repertoire of literature available in shilling editions only contained "up to and including the Romantics" (209).

When they are discussed at all by Tennyson's biographers, women are seen more as admirers of Tennyson's person and character than as serious readers and critic-friends. Moreover, these women are frequently recorded only as the wives of men with whom Tennyson was familiar: Helen and William Allingham, Marian and Granville Bradley, Jane and William Brookfield, Mary and William Howitt, and Emily and Coventry Patmore to name a few. Even those women who are heard as individuals by Tennyson's biographers--Jane Carlyle, Annie Thackeray, Fanny Kemble, and Elizabeth Barrett Browning --the two former women also supposedly conflated their impressions of the poet's work with their estimations of his person, making of him either a substitute husband in Jane Carlyle's case or a substitute father in Annie Thackeray's.³³

Even though Elizabeth Barrett Browning is often viewed in a similar way--especially in her early letters to Mary Russell Mitford--because she was a poet and not just an "admirer," her criticism of Tennyson's work deserves examination. Robert Martin, for instance, uses Barrett Browning's voice throughout The Unquiet Heart, to make it appear as if Elizabeth Barrett echoed her contemporary male critics in her disdain for the

³³ Fanny Kemble's friendship with Tennyson, as it was with Longfellow, was lifelong and sincere. Yet Martin, who quotes several of Kemble's recollections of Tennyson, undercuts her praise of the poet and generally portrays her as too effusive in her "worship." As it seems for Martin, Kemble's extraordinary acting ability disqualifies her as an accurate accountant of Tennyson's popularity.

rarefied atmosphere of Tennyson's poems. In actuality, her dislike stems from her own decided preference for the power of "ordinary forms." Martin quotes from Elizabeth Barrett's letter to Mitford, December 1842, in which she claims that Tennyson "has not flesh and blood enough to be sensual--his forms are too obviously on the surface to wear pulses. His representation of beauty . . . is rather the fantasma of beauty, than the thing. You can no more touch or clasp it, than beauty in a dream. It is not the less beautiful for that; but less sensual it is" (Miller Elizabeth Barrett 152, qtd. in Martin 267). Her awareness of Tennyson's lack of sensuality in his poetry is presented as a commonplace critical response. In addition, she later apparently criticized Tennyson's rumoured poem The Princess, before its appearance, in a similar way, by asking Robert if the world were not "too old & fond of steam, for blank verse poems, in ever so many books, to be written on the fairies" (Letters of RB and EBB I 441 qtd. in Martin 301). However, in an earlier letter of May 1842 to Mitford, which Martin does not include in his biography, Barrett comments on the English Idyls of 1842; and in this case, her views are a unique illustration of her awareness of multiple poetic effects. She remarks: "there is less of the quaint peculiarity, more individuality, more power in the sense of nervous utterance, more thought under the obvious ordinary forms, and less of that high ideality which distinguished the old Tennyson lyrics" (Miller 117). She

then expresses her delight that, in his note to "Dora," Tennyson had acknowledged his debt to "a pastoral of Miss Mitford's" (118). Because documents of Victorian women's responses to Tennyson's poetry are scarce, it is difficult to draw any firm conclusions from Barrett's varied remarks. Nevertheless, when put into a context of her own and other nineteenth-century female poets' marked concern for "ordinary" forms and contemporary issues in their work, the sting in Barrett's criticism of the fantastic in Tennyson's verse is ameliorated; instead, her views are read as part of a much more complex overview of Victorian poetics than has hitherto been granted her.

With the publication of In Memoriam in 1850, criticism by either gender virtually stopped. Tennyson had turned his attentions away from the fantastic toward the immediate--his two decade apprenticeship had ended. At the same time, he adopted a far more practical attitude to publishing than previously. With In Memoriam, he renegotiated his business arrangements with Moxon. According to Sir Charles, Tennyson "made a new arrangement with Moxon under which he paid all the expenses and gave the publisher one-third of the profits and 5 per cent on gross sales, keeping the balance of the profits for himself. In this way, he retained firmer control over the printing and publishing arrangements and, of course, stood to benefit more by the success of the book, though he took all the risk of loss" (247-8). As Sir Charles adds, this

renegotiated contract demonstrates Tennyson's "increased confidence" and "sound business instinct" (248). Tennyson also received a £300 advance from Moxon for In Memoriam. All of these new terms likely stemmed from the steady sales of the 1842 Poems and the rapid sales of The Princess that were beginning to make Tennyson's poetry seem like a very sound investment indeed.

The sales of In Memoriam quickly exceeded even those of The Princess. Moxon published 1500 copies in late May, anonymously (at Tennyson's request), in purple-cloth boards, for six shillings. These sold out instantly so that, by July, Moxon printed 1500 more and then 2000 more by August to make a total first-edition run of 5000. Brisk sales required 3000 more copies by Christmas and another 5000 by November 1851. Thereafter, "the poem sold at a steady rate and remained popular as a single volume even after various multi-volume collected editions of Tennyson's poetry became available" (Hagen 85). Moxon's advance and the potential financial security that his new volume promised meant that Tennyson could finally reactivate a long-deferred romance with Emily Sellwood: they were married in June 1850.

Other than in sales figures, evidence for the appeal of In Memoriam abounds in documented accounts of responses to the poem. Prince Albert's particular regard for the elegy is said to have secured the laureateship for Tennyson (Memoir 280). Tennyson became poet Laureate in November 1850. And, at long

last, the reception by the periodical press was, as Shannon observes, "in general extremely laudatory." (142). Although the reception of In Memoriam is discussed in chapter four of this study, Sir Charles, at this point, summarizes well the general Victorian readers' expectations that Tennyson's popular elegy was able to meet:

[Critics] had not forseen . . . the appeal which the warm humanity of the poem would make to the Anglo-Saxon race. It was not only that In Memoriam dealt with a universal experience--the grief of personal loss which comes to all sensitive men and women with greater or lesser intensity at some time or other during their lives. It was not only the humility and sincerity with which the poet recorded his passage from despair to a final conviction of personal immortality and a belief in . . . [God]. The message of love and hope was reinforced with so many touches of exquisite pathos (252)

Queen Victoria's responses to the poem, especially after the the death of Prince Albert in 1861, are perhaps the best known example of the elegy's pathetic effect. The Duke of Argyll had written to Tennyson on her behalf, explaining that In Memoriam comforted her to such a degree that "she had substituted 'widow' for 'widower' and 'her' for 'his' in the lines 'Tears of a widower.'" (Charles Tennyson 336). Tennyson had indeed reached the "pinnacle of success" (Shannon's term).

As Laureate, Tennyson would have to negotiate a balance among his private impulses, professional aims, poetic sensibility, popular success, and newly acquired public responsibilities. Ironically, the very text on which (as a separate volume) his name never appeared brought him such

public success that he could never again hope for anonymity as an author. His "I" would now always be "the voice of the human race speaking thro' him" (see Memoir 255) at least at some level.³⁴ This is especially apparent in the single poems on war and patriotism for the periodical press that Tennyson now comfortably published in the 1850s: "For the Penny-Wise" in Fraser's Magazine (Feb 1852); several in The Examiner: "Britons Guard Your Own" (Jan 1851), "The Third of February, 1852" (Feb 1852), "Hands all Round" (Feb 1852), and "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (Dec 1854); and "The War [Riflemen Form]" in The Times (May 1859). These poems would then be incorporated into his latest volume.

Similarly, Tennyson published "laureate" poems in response to those occasions--births, marriages, and deaths--affecting noble personages. The most popular of these was his famous Ode on the Death of the Duke of Wellington. "The poem appeared in slate-colored paper wrappers, at one shilling per copy, on 15 November, two days before the Duke's funeral" (Hagen 88). According to Hagen, "all 10,000 copies were quickly taken up by the memento-hunting nation. A second edition was issued in early 1853, with the poem first

³⁴ Martha Nord's unpublished dissertation, "A People's Voice: The Rhetorical Art of Tennyson's Poetry" is a rhetorical analysis of Tennyson's poetic strategies evident primarily in his public, post-Laureate poetry. Valerie Pitt's Tennyson Laureate thoroughly discusses the compromises Tennyson allegedly had to make between his private art and his public demands.

appearing in a volume in Maud and Other Poems (1855)" (88-9). For this poem, Tennyson received £200 from Moxon.

Yet Tennyson was also prepared to release public poems without royalty in those instances when he thought that they would be of benefit to their readers. Sir Charles records that a chaplain serving in the Crimea wrote to England to request that he be sent "out copies of "The Charge of the Light Brigade" on printed slips for distribution among the soldiers. It was, said the writer, the greatest favourite of the men. 'Half are singing it and all want to have it in black and white, so as to read what has so taken them.'" (288). The request eventually reached Tennyson and he acted immediately by having John Forster arrange to have 1,000 and then a later 1,000 printed to send to the chaplain, who was convinced that the poem acted as a type of tonic to the sufferers (see Letters II 117-18, 132-3).

Such may have been the impact of "The Charge of the Light Brigade," but the volume in which it later appeared, Maud and Other Poems (1855) generated no such popular acclaim. The title poem, Tennyson's first extended text since In Memoriam and the laureateship, presented Victorian readers with yet another new genre: multiple voices such as The Princess had used, only in this case, contained within a contemporary monodrama of a single "mad" speaker. Few of Tennyson's admiring friends, critics, or readers in general could understand Maud. "[P]oor Maud was received with almost

universal reprobation" according to Sir Charles (286); and Shannon's article on the reviews of Maud certainly supports this view. One cannot say with the same certainty, however, that sales of the volume suffered thereby. As Hagen notes, Moxon's originally high expectations for the volume's success "are reflected in the size of the first edition--10,000 copies selling at five shillings each" (95).³⁵ At first, sales were excellent; Moxon wrote to Emily Tennyson shortly after publication to say that he had already received orders for 3,000 and had printed off 2,000 more (Hagen 95). Although the precise number of copies of each edition is not known, Maud reached nineteen editions by 1884, a remarkable achievement for a supposedly unpopular text.

Moreover, in 1854 Moxon had, against Tennyson's inclination, launched a project for a lavishly illustrated edition of Tennyson's 1842 poems. Had the sales of Maud been drastically hurt by negative reviews, Moxon might have reconsidered going ahead with this new, highly expensive project. Since he did not do this, one can only conclude that, while Tennyson may have been personally stung by intense criticism of his "pet bantling" as he later called the poem,

³⁵ Hagen's use of the nineteenth-century term, "edition," is slightly misleading here because it makes it seem as if 10,000 copies were released at once. More than likely, 10,000 were printed but bound and released gradually. She also follows Wise in thinking that a "second edition was required before the end of the year" (95). This edition has yet to be discovered. The extant second edition appeared in 1856.

he and his publisher suffered no financial sting because of Tennyson's most recent volume. They were, however, to lose a great deal of money on Moxon's Illustrated Edition venture.

Moxon persuaded Tennyson to put aside his aesthetic preference for simplicity and his conviction that poetry was damaged by illustrations.³⁶ He had assured Tennyson that he could make at least £2,000 by an illustrated edition, and that the publishing firm would bear the advance costs; they would then share profits according to a two-thirds one-third arrangement. But there were to be no profits of the kind Moxon envisioned. The text itself was an elaborate, one-volume edition of the 1842 Poems. It contained fifty-four woodcuts drawn by eight different artists, the most famous of whom were the Pre-Raphaelites: Dante Gabriel Rossetti, William Holman Hunt, and John Everett Millais who, together, supplied

³⁶ While the volume was in progress, Tennyson frequently found fault with its various illustrations. He even took the artists themselves to task occasionally, for example, when he inveighed against William Holman Hunt for creating a lady of Shalott whose hair, in Tennyson's view, looked as if were "flying all about the shop" (qtd. in Layard 41). In Tennyson and his Pre-Raphaelite Illustrators (1894), George Somes Layard remarks, in brief, that "Millais has realized, Holman Hunt has idealized, and Rossetti has sublimated or transcendentalized, the subjects which they have respectively illustrated" (9). Layard occasionally assesses the impact of illustrations upon reader reception as, for instance, with Holman Hunt's inclusion of a crucifix beside the lady of Shallot's mirror which, in Layard's view, helped to label Tennyson a Christian poet (42). Illustrations, like musical settings and parodies (discussed below), are also methods of popularizing. A full discussion of their influence has not been attempted here, however, because of Tennyson's professed dislike of illustrated texts and his pronounced appreciation for poetic sound.

thirty of the illustrations. But troubles with artists and engravers plagued publication of the volume so that it missed the intended Christmas trade in 1856, and was not published until May 1857. Moxon was certainly confident of its success: he printed 10,000 at 31s 6d per copy, a price that almost certainly put it out of reach of most of Tennyson's readers.³⁷

Hagen states that sales were very poor: "In 1863, only six years after publication, 5000 unsold copies [sheets?] were remaindered to Routledge [O]f the other 5000, Moxon had actually sold only 2210" (106). By publishing such a large edition, Moxon had clearly misread the upper end of the market for Tennyson's poetry. In wanting to keep his volumes low-priced and simply designed, Tennyson seemed more aware that his poetry primarily appealed to the middle classes.

Edward Moxon died a year later, in June 1858; initially, Tennyson remained loyal to the Moxon firm (handled at first by Bradbury and Evans, then later by J. Bertrand Payne), but when disagreements arose, he went to Alexander Strahan (1869-73). When Strahan's business failed in 1873, he turned to Henry

³⁷ As for the text's format, Hagen alleges that it was "a thick book bound in bright blue silk-like cloth with gilded edges and with a gilt urn on the cover" (102). Wise, however, describes it as "dark green cloth boards, the back and sides ornamented with designs in 'blind' and gold" (I 97). The single copy of the first edition that I have seen is bound in blue-cloth boards, the front and back covers blind-stamped with a gilt urn over-stamped, with plain edges and gilt lettering on the spine. Discounting her bibliographical inaccuracies, in describing the Moxon illustrated Tennyson, Hagen makes it more decorative than it actually was.

King (1874-8) and later to Charles Kegan Paul (1879-83) after troubles ensued with King. After his five-year contract with Paul came to an end, Tennyson secured his final publisher: Alexander Macmillan (1884-92).

Tennyson's first venture with the new management of the Moxon firm was his four female idylls of "the False and the True": Idylls of the King in 1859. Tennyson's self-confident return to Arthurian material, after he had laid aside the "Morte d'Arthur" in 1842, may well have been prompted by the disappointment he experienced in meeting the demands for contemporary topics that he had attempted to do in Maud. Whatever the reason, the Idylls was a "startling success." At a cost of 7 shillings, "no less than 40,000 copies were printed and 10,000 sold in 6 weeks. Indeed, so great was the demand that a second edition had to be issued within six months" (Sir Charles Tennyson typescript qtd. in Hagen 110). In his review of the Idylls (Quarterly Review Oct 1859), William Gladstone's effusive praise for Tennyson's "crowning" achievement indicates the stature Tennyson had reached by the late 1850s:

. . . we do not despair of seeing Mr. Tennyson achieve on the basis he has chosen the structure of a full-formed epic. . . . [I]f he can keep the level he has gained, such a work will be the greatest, and by far the greatest poetical creation, that, whether in our own or in foreign poetry, the nineteenth century has produced. In the face of all critics, the Laureate of England has now reached a position which at once imposes and instils respect.

(Jump 260)

Tennyson's sales would never again have to suffer as a result of the critical press; his reputation was finally secure.

Tennyson's popularity can also be measured in various publication offers made to him at this time. For instance, George Smith (of Smith Elder) offered him 5,000 guineas in 1860 for a volume the same length as the Idylls; and Smith wanted only a three-year contract. According to Sir Charles, no other poet up to that time had ever received such a high offer (322). Magazine editors also began to make overtures. The editor of Once a Week offered Tennyson £100 for "The Grandmother's Apology" (July 1859); Alexander Macmillan gave Tennyson £300 for "Sea Dreams," which appeared in Macmillan's Magazine (Jan 1860); and Thackeray secured Tennyson's "Tithonus" for £50 for his Cornhill Magazine (Feb 1860). Although these amounts do not compare to some of the payments that Tennyson received from the United States for periodical publication, that they were proffered at all and by such high profile journals suggest the strength of Tennyson's growing reputation.

Ultimately, it was the instant success of Enoch Arden and Other Poems in 1864 that determined Tennyson as a "poet of the people" the appellation having been bestowed upon him by reviewers of this text. Tennyson and his publishers felt confident since the first impression in August 1864 apparently was 60,000 copies at a cost of six shillings. According to Hagen, 17,000 sold on the first day and 40,000 by November

(112). Hallam writes that the entire 60,000 were sold "in a very short time" (Memoir 421). As the Times observed, even though the satirists might cry that "the most unsaleable of wares is a volume of poetry, the Laureate issues a little book, which, although this is for publishers the dead season of the year, goes off like a prairie on fire" (qtd. in Scott Enoch Arden 1). The volume appealed to the entire spectrum of Tennyson's readers. Reviewers were lavish in their praise: one felt that "no simple tale was ever so nobly told" (Chambers); another claimed that "No other of his poems can reach above it" (The Quarterly Review); and still another thought Enoch Arden to be "as holy as an angel's dream" (labour paper, the British Conversationalist) (Scott Enoch Arden 2). Even poets as different as Browning and Swinburne expressed their approbation (see Scott Enoch Arden 2). That Enoch Arden touched the masses is confirmed by Hallam's retelling of just one of supposedly many stories concerning the effects of the poem upon the "uneducated": an old, poor woman had earlier heard part of the poem from a woman distributing religious tracts at a large meeting. The poor woman was now thankful for her tract, but added that she would "give anything for that other beautiful tract which you read t'other day (a sentiment which was echoed by the others), it did me a power of good" (Memoir 423). The reasons for the enormous success of the poetry of Enoch Arden are dealt with at length in chapter six. For the moment, it is necessary to

consider the differences between Tennyson's responses to his now wide-ranging audience and those of his British publisher.

As demonstrated throughout Tennyson's publishing history to date, the poet did his best to avoid lavish productions--annuals, gift books, or illustrated editions of his work. His aesthetic tastes were simple and practical, and his volumes had been moderately priced in keeping with his estimation of his audience. Sir Charles notes that once convinced of his effect upon the masses, Tennyson proposed to Payne (now managing the Moxon firm) that they "issue a selection of the more popular of his poems in sixpenny parts, hoping that these would reach the working men of England, to whom he dedicated the selections" (354). But according to Hagen, the scheme was not lucrative enough for Payne, who instead issued a five shilling Selection from the Works of Alfred Tennyson in Moxon's Miniature Poets series in 1865 (114). Despite its financial success, the edition brought Tennyson into dispute with publishers over its "ornamental style." Similarly, Payne had enlisted Gustave Doré to illustrate the 1859 Idylls; the "Vivien" and "Guinevere" volumes appeared for the Christmas trade in 1867, priced at one, three, and five guineas (Hagen 113). Payne also issued Enoch Arden, illustrated by Arthur Hughes, in 1866. Thus while Tennyson's inclinations seemed to be toward a popular, mass audience, Payne conceived of himself

and his poet's work in a grand style.³⁸ Such discord between them eventually caused Tennyson to seek a new publisher.

In 1869, Tennyson found in Alexander Strahan (founder of Good Words established in 1860) a publisher with views similar to his own. Strahan believed that his role was not only to make money, but to develop a taste for the reading of literature by all classes, especially the working class. He predicted that

[i]f then, we would generate a taste for reading, we must, as our only chance of success, . . . [f]urnish the people liberally with literature--not written expressly for them as a class, but for all alike--and the best of its kind We shall find that in the writings of our best authors we possess all we require to strike our grappling-iron into the working people's soul, and chain them, willing followers, to the car of advancing civilization.
(qtd. in Hagen 122)

Although his metaphor seems rather violent, his socialistic cultural intentions concurred with Tennyson's. Thus together they planned a one-volume edition, the first collected

³⁸ Tennyson's consideration of a mass audience at this time is also evinced in his several publications for the popular press: "The Spiteful Letter" (Once a Week Jan 1868), "The Victim" (Good Words Jan 1868), "Wages" (Macmillan's Magazine Feb 1868), and "1865-1866" (Good Words Mar 1868). "Lucretius" appeared in May in Macmillan's. In America Ticknor and Fields secured for their periodicals "The Victim" (Atlantic Monthly (Feb 1868), "1865-1866" (Every Saturday Feb 1868), and "Lucretius" (Every Saturday May 1868). Hagen believes that Tennyson may have published these several poems in periodicals rather than get up a new volume because of annoyances with his publisher (115). Although payment was often lucrative (£700 from Good Words for "The Victim") Emily Tennyson prevailed upon Tennyson to think rather of volume publication than get caught in trying to satisfy the conflicting tastes of periodicals (Hagen 115-6).

edition, at a moderate price. While Strahan's business failed before the scheme could materialize (it was finally published by Kegan Paul in 1878), Strahan's unorthodox views also drew suspicion from a publishing industry that in the 1870s still clearly demarcated its class-based allegiances (see Sutherland 174-5, Hagen 122). In attempting to reach a large public at this time, Strahan and Tennyson were likely reacting to several convergent forces: pirated competition from the United States--especially from Longfellow; Tennyson's own demonstrable appeal to a "classless" American reading public; and an art for art's sake movement that, in Tennyson's view, was threatening to remove poetry from an appreciation of common, everyday life.

If in offering cheap editions, Tennyson could maintain the quality of his poetry and Strahan the quality of the product, then the poet's work could potentially fulfil a literary and cultural purpose far different from that of pure aestheticism. Such a scheme was not to be; aestheticism did, eventually, topple Tennyson from his throne as sacer vates. This is not to suggest that Tennyson immediately declined in popularity in the 1860s and 1870s, especially since he remained Laureate until his death in 1892; his popularity on this score if nothing else was almost assured. Yet sales of new volumes in the 1870s and 1880s had now to be supplemented by reprints of old for newly acquired cheap markets and foreign markets in

order that Tennyson's publishers could continue to profit from his poetry.

The publication history of Tennyson's poetry clearly illustrates the intimate connection between the methods of production, publication, and promotion and resulting popularity: in short, how and by whom Tennyson's poetry came to be read. For a poet like Tennyson, whose work previous to 1850 received predominantly negative reviews, Moxon's minimal promotion could very well have restricted the early Tennyson's readership to an educated elite (for example, readers of reviews). Once Tennyson's poetry began to be read by a far more heterogeneous public in the 1840s (that included the working classes and women), Tennyson's popularity increased. But it did so only gradually since neither Moxon nor Tennyson was prepared to take publishing risks directed at this new market at this time.³⁹ The critical press continued as a strong influence in the 1850s and even 1860s, by endorsing In

³⁹ Poets like Browning who failed to achieve immediate critical acclaim were to suffer the most from Moxon's conservative business practices. In a letter to Elizabeth Barrett in August 1846, Browning complains of Moxon's slowness, lack of advertising, and lack of enterprise and adds, "If one of his books can only contrive to pay its expenses, you may be sure that a more enterprising brother of the craft would have sent it into a second or third edition" (qtd. in Merriman 80). As Merriman points out, however, Moxon's meager advertising may well have been linked to his belief in the poor saleability of work like Browning's, and to the fact that the British tax on advertising was, until 1853, quite heavy. Thus Moxon, although niggardly in general, selectively promoted popular writers like Harriet Martineau (though never noisily) because to do so was a financial undertaking that would pay easily for itself.

Memoriam and thereby enhancing its sales, by castigating Maud, by returning its favour to Idylls and, especially, by lauding Enoch Arden. With the enormous success of In Memoriam, Tennyson seemed to want to leave the reviews behind and establish new ground amid a more popular audience than previously. However, in this he was thwarted by the conservatism of the publishing industry and by publishers' supposedly lucrative schemes to issue lavish, high-priced volumes. By the time Tennyson's poetry began to reach a cheap market in the 1870s, its appeal had lessened among the educated elite. Years earlier, with Enoch Arden, Tennyson had reached the apex of his career as a popular poet by touching the hearts of all classes, men and women alike.

In short, Tennyson's poetry had basically to sell itself in Britain (and often against formidable odds) while Longfellow's in America was marketed and sold for him--by himself and by his enterprising publishers. As a potential challenge to Longfellow's popularity, Tennyson's texts received promotion in the United States similar to that which the American bard enjoyed. Although the first American edition of Tennyson's poetry did not appear until 1842, New England's literati had access to the 1833 Poems through Emerson, through both British and American reviews, and through the voices of influential women. Edward Everett Hale, for example, could not remember "whether it was Longfellow or Emerson who introduced Tennyson

in college" in the 1830s (qtd. in Eidson 6).⁴⁰ Of course, awareness of Tennyson's poetry in the 1830s also derived from its extensive quotation in the British reviews recast for American audiences, with much of their vitriol diluted (Eidson 12). As early as January 1838, one of Tennyson's first American critics, John Sullivan Dwight of The Christian Examiner, recognized traits in Tennyson's early poetry that would come to dominate American critical reviews: his poems "charm by their melodious sound" (qtd. in Eidson 29) and, in the female portraits, Tennyson creates a "gallery of lovely ladies, which all but breathe from the canvas" (qtd. 30). In his review of Longfellow's Voices of the Night (1839) for Burton's Gentleman's Magazine (Feb 1840), Poe further piqued the growing American interest in the English bard. By charging Longfellow with plagiarism, claiming that he had stolen the idea of the "Midnight Mass for the Dying Year" from Tennyson's "The Death of the Old Year" (Poe 675-9)⁴¹, Poe's

⁴⁰ It likely was Emerson since it was he who had travelled to England and had returned with Tennyson's 1833 Poems. Like others in New England, however, Longfellow was aware of Tennyson's poetry in the 1830s. In October 1837 he writes to Fanny Appleton drawing on examples from "The Lotus Eaters" and "Rosalind": "Did you ever read Tennyson's [sic] Poems? He is too quaint, and at times so wonderfully beautiful in his expression, that even the nicest ear can ask no richer melody:--and the most lively imagination no lovelier picture nor more true" (Letters II 48).

⁴¹ Longfellow, of course, denied this charge by claiming that he had never seen Tennyson's poem, which likely is not true given that elsewhere in his letters he quotes from the same 1833 volume containing "Death of the Old Year" (see letter to Samuel Ward Letters II 215). However, Poe's charge is itself not particularly sound since the idea or theme of a

attempts to discredit Longfellow may actually have enhanced both poets' reputations, and now in relation to one another.

In addition, Eidson suggests that reviews of Tennyson's early poetry in the critical press helped to create an appreciation for Tennyson among American women even in advance of publication in 1842: Margaret Fuller praised Tennyson highly in The Dial, July 1841; in social circles, Fanny Kemble did much to make the English poet known in the United States; and Fanny Appleton (later Longfellow's second wife) filled her letters to Kemble with quotations from Tennyson (8). Thus Eidson concludes that Tennyson "gained favour in the eyes of a peculiar class of sentimentalists. Young ladies were known to copy [his poems] entire and learn them by heart" (8). Despite Eidson's pejorative use of "sentimentalists" to describe Tennyson's female readers, it is clear that Tennyson made an early and lasting impression not just among male scholars and critics, but also among diverse American women which added greatly to his popularity in the United States.

The favourable reputation that Tennyson gained in America in the 1830s prompted a scholarly friend of Emerson's, Charles Stearns Wheeler, to appeal to Tennyson on Christmas day, 1840, for the right to edit his poems for publication in what

dying year is not exactly new to either Tennyson or Longfellow, and the styles and tones of their poems are completely different. Poe's antagonism toward Longfellow increased rather than lessened, however, and charges of plagiarism became more frequent; for a complete discussion see chapter two.

Tennyson referred to as "that land of the free men" (Memoir 149). Tennyson's reply to Wheeler is a carefully worded rejection: sensitive to the honour bestowed on him by American favour, Tennyson nonetheless implies that, without an international copyright, he is in no legal position to deny Wheeler. He requests, however, that Wheeler wait for the publication of the new two volume English edition of his poems, whereupon he "can then of course do as [he] choose[s] with them" (Letters I 187). According to Eidson, Wheeler worked assiduously as a type of American agent for Tennyson once the 1842 Poems reached the United States by trying to secure for him the "best possible deal"; Wheeler finally settled on W. D. Ticknor (joined in 1845 by Fields) as publisher.

Wheeler could not have made a more fitting choice for Tennyson at the time. Ticknor's response to Tennyson's potential audience was to pay Tennyson \$150 in lieu of copyright for the 1842 Poems. Ticknor saw the value and prestige that Tennyson could bring to his firm, and was prepared to pay Tennyson in return so as to secure advance sales of his volumes in America. Although Eidson claims that Ticknor issued a first edition of the 1842 Poems, perhaps as many as 1500 to 2000 copies (37-8), Tryon maintains that this was a "small edition made up of only 1,000 copies" ("Nationalism" 305), and since Tryon rather than Eidson had access to the cost books of Ticknor and Fields, his figures

are likely more accurate. Ticknor's willingness to pay Tennyson and to take a moderate risk with the number of copies, at a time when most American publishers were making their fortunes pirating anything British, seems unusually bold and generous. But his strategy was rewarded, for, during the next quarter century, Tennyson remained loyal to Ticknor and Fields who continued as his American publishers under the same or similar agreements until 1870. In fact, from 1864 until 1870, texts published by Ticknor and Fields (later Fields and Osgood) printed the following Tennyson certificate: "It is my wish that with Messrs. Ticknor and Fields alone the right of publishing my books in America should rest."

As Tryon points out in his comparative analysis of Longfellow and Tennyson in America, "Nationalism and International Copyright," sales of the 1842 volume were slow but steady during the 1840s. Then, in the 1850s, Ticknor and Fields

sought, by the creation of new formats, to arouse interest and, by establishing a price range from fifty cents for a pamphlet to ten dollars for a de luxe illustrated one, to stimulate sales. They succeeded. Between 1842 and 1870 no less than 130 separate issues of the collected poems totaling 206,044 copies (in 267,948 volumes) were published. Every taste and pocketbook was reached, and by 1865 the publishers could count on an annual sale of between 25,000 and 30,000 copies of their various Tennysons. (Tryon "Nationalism" 305)

The figures in Appendix I indicate, however, that Longfellow's sales in America were not necessarily injured by competition with Tennyson despite the fact that Tennyson's volumes sold

for seventy-five cents while Longfellow's were priced at one dollar. From approximately 1840 to 1870, "including all the various poetical works of the two authors, whether in collected or separate formats, the sales of Tennyson amounted to 400,770 copies; of Longfellow, 374,786 copies" (Tryon "Nationalism" 308-9). Tennyson's higher figures are also the result of sales of 118,230 in 1865 (309), a register of the enormous success of Enoch Arden in America. Tryon concludes that although other American authors may have suffered from foreign competition, Longfellow clearly did not: "when Americans wrote as well as Englishmen, they sold as well as Englishmen" ("Nationalism" 309).

In fact, Tennyson's popularity in the United States may actually have enhanced Longfellow's sales and vice versa. By being frequently compared to one another in the critical press, Longfellow's and Tennyson's works became familiar to readers whose horizon of expectations included knowledge of both. Ticknor and Fields's "Blue and Gold" editions are a case in point. The firm decided in 1856 to launch this elaborately designed, expensive series with Tennyson's collected poems. The thousand copies were exhausted almost immediately (Tryon Parnassus 229); Ticknor and Fields knew that they had a success. They then issued Longfellow in the same series.

As Eidson points out, American audiences responded to Tennyson's work often in ways opposite to those of British

readers: general acceptance occurred much earlier in America than in England, and it increased substantially in the 1840s with the 1842 Poems and The Princess (1847). Interestingly, however, the American reception of In Memoriam (1850) was mixed, even though in England the poem had received almost instant, unanimous approval. Readers in New England and critics in religious periodicals applauded its sonorous emotionalism. Fanny Appleton Longfellow's letter to Emmeline Wadsworth expresses this view: "Henry is feasting upon it with eyes full of tears, and at Nahant, with the melancholy sea chiming in as music to the dirge-like words, I shall sadden myself with it to a joy purer than joy itself. The pieces were evidently written at different intervals, and there is a higher tone and a deeper feeling in them than in anything he has written, wedded to the most perfect melody" (171). Readers in New York, on the other hand, distrusted Tennyson's subject matter and expression, as seen in Brownson's concern for the "exaggerated degree of sentiment between two grown men" (Brownson's Quarterly qtd. in Eidson 80). Similarly, in a letter to Longfellow, May 1850, Felton transcribes a discussion he had with a Scottish woman concerning the poem; his remarks about the perceived effeminacy of the elegy echo the New York reviews: "Parts of it are very sweet: but it is too long drawn: too effeminate: mushy and womanish for a manly friendship." The woman apparently agreed (qtd. in Eidson 81-2). Once In Memoriam received widespread applause in Britain,

"definite disapproval became almost taboo" according to Eidson (86). Nonetheless, until the nearly complete approbation of Enoch Arden in 1864, Tennyson's American popularity seemed to rest more on individual lyrics and songs from the 1842 Poems and The Princess than his longer poems--In Memoriam, Maud, and the Idylls of the King (1859)--and, not surprisingly, since until Longfellow's Evangeline (1847), and Hiawatha (1855), the lyric had been the contemporary poetic genre most familiar to American audiences.

Not surprisingly too, Longfellow maintained a careful watch on Tennyson's popularity in America, recording his observations in his journal. On 25 February 1848, for example, Longfellow notes the publication of a second edition of The Princess, "the first, one thousand copies, having sold within a few weeks" (Life II 109). At the same time, he registers his success with Evangeline in the same year, something he always did with his own poetry. Likewise, when In Memoriam first appeared in America, Longfellow felt compelled to "meddle" in its publication to ensure Tennyson's anonymity, remarking in a letter to Fields on his fascination with the poem to such an extent that, ironically, he claimed to be "as much interested in it as if [he] had written it" (Letters III 262-3). Fields obeyed and the first edition of In Memoriam appeared without Tennyson's name.

Longfellow's concern for Tennyson's reputation was genuine; he in no way begrudged his British counterpart the stature he

had achieved in America. On the contrary, he did much to ensure that Tennyson knew of the impact that he made in the United States, as the following letter of August 1856 to Thomas Appleton, then travelling in England, indicates:

If you go to the Isle of Wight you must not fail to visit Tennyson. You can tell him many things about his fame in this country, which it will please him to know. He is the only English poet, except Wordsworth, that Emerson mentions with any respect. The rest are nothing--less than nothing. But Wordsworth's Ode on 'Imortality' is the high-water mark, that the intellect has reached in this century.

(Letters III 551)

The admiration that Longfellow expressed for Tennyson, his work, and his reputation increased throughout the American poet's life as each successive volume crossed the Atlantic. It continued unabated even after Tennyson had turned to drama in the mid-1870s, by which time Longfellow had met Tennyson, so that he no longer had to rely on emissaries to speak for him. Writing to Tennyson in December 1876, Longfellow expresses his delight in Harold as "a voice out of the Past, sonorous, strange, semi-barbaric." He then adds, "I wish you knew, I wish you could possibly know, the power of your poetry in this country. It would make your heart go forth towards the thirty or forty million of English on this side of the Atlantic" (Letters VI 211).⁴²

⁴² Longfellow voiced his enthusiasm for Tennyson by writing him a sonnet, "Wapentake to Alfred Tennyson," as a Christmas greeting for 1877:

It would have been strange indeed if by the mid-1870s Tennyson did not know of his popularity in America. In the early 1860s, according to Charles Tennyson, Tennyson had refused an offer of £20,000 for a reading and lecture tour in the United States.⁴³ Furthermore, in November 1871, he had accepted an offer from the New York Ledger of £1,000 for any poem of three stanzas; Tennyson promptly replied with "England and America in 1782" (Charles Tennyson 396-7). More generally, Tennyson's anxiety about American piracy even into the 1880s (Hagen 180), and the constant flood of American visitors to Farringford are two further proofs that Tennyson's fame in the United States equalled that of his most admiring

Poet! I come to touch thy lance with mine,
 Not as a knight who on the listed field
 Of tourney touched his adversary's shield
 In token of defiance, but in sign
 Of homage to the mastery, which is thine
 In English song; nor will I keep concealed,
 And voiceless as a rivulet frost-congealed,
 My admiration for thy verse divine.
 Not of the howling dervishes of song,
 Who craze the brain with their delirious dance,
 Art thou, O sweet historian of the heart!
 Therefore to thee the laurel-leaves belong,
 To thee our love and our allegiance,
 For thy allegiance to the poet's art.

(see Helen Letters VI 317)

Hallam first published this sonnet in the Memoir (603) together with Tennyson's cordial reply (see Lang Letters III 151).

⁴³ Hagen alleges that Tennyson had two offers, the first in 1861 providing £3000 for an all-expenses-paid reading and lecturing tour; and the second in 1863 for £10,000. Tennyson refused both.

counterpart and competitor, Longfellow. Thus, Tennyson and Longfellow shared jointly, in their own and in each other's countries, the title of "people's poet"--with all of its attendant pleasures and anxieties.

Caveat Lector: Readers and Poets

The title and public respect that attended it, however, varied enormously for these two poets, in part owing to differences between their respective views of the role of the poet, and in part stemming from significant distinctions between the American and British reading publics. The attitudes of Longfellow and Tennyson concerning the poet's social responsibility (discussed at length in chapters two and four) betray dissimilarities at the heart of their respective ideologies, dominated as they were either by the future or by the past. That is, even though Longfellow drew upon a historical perspective--largely European--he worked primarily to establish and maintain the American poet's role as an agent of cultural uniformity, integral to the nation's future social stability. Tennyson, on the other hand, took his lead from the past, from the desire of British romantics to preserve all that was best in the social and cultural values of pre-capitalist Britain. For Longfellow, popular poetry tended to be validated as a means of promoting nationalist ideology, whereas in England it came to be scorned as the failed products of an eroding elite culture unable to maintain its hegemony in the face of capitalist production and consumer

demands. Put more simply, Longfellow was optimistic while Tennyson was largely pessimistic about the role of literature in relation to the marketplace.

At the same time, however, both Longfellow and Tennyson would likely have agreed in principle that the artist's mission is to promote a morally and socially responsible citizenry by using whatever aesthetic resources in their power to effect this end. Yet in practice, Tennyson diverges from Longfellow at the precise moment when the poet feels that he is no longer speaking to his audience but is allowing it to dictate to him. Popular poetry, therefore, must be understood not simply by analysing the popular texts and volumes as above. The receptors of the poetry must also be examined since popularity is generated as much from the consuming public as it is from the commodity in question. Through an unwitting consumer metaphor, Shannon reveals very clearly the reader's role in the relation between product and purchase: he describes the critical reaction to The Princess as that "of a dissatisfied shopper--'It's very nice, but not exactly what I had in mind.'" (116). What nineteenth-century shoppers of poetry did have in mind, however, is not easily determined.

In a burgeoning capitalist economy--whether America or Britain--the reading public can be described in consumer terms. Yet, this consumer role should not be limited to a materialistic analysis: in purchasing literary texts, readers do not simply acquire commodities for use or consumption as

they do other commercial products. Volumes of poetry are much more than attractively designed artifacts within one's affordable price range; and, although material considerations of this kind certainly do influence the purchaser, when buying poetry, readers look beyond the physical object to an assumed literary experience. And the extent to which readers are allowed, by chance or by the poet's design, to be more producers than consumers of poetic experiences will help to determine the degree to which the literature may be considered "serious" or "popular," and the point it occupies on a cultural scale ranging from high to low. This scale itself is necessarily a sliding one since a poem or volume that initially demanded "active" readership may, over time, become so familiarized by subsequent audiences that active interpretations are no longer necessary for the majority of these texts' readers.

Obviously, one of the most important materialistic determiners of success on a mass scale is for poets to have at their disposal the means of production to accommodate a potentially mass readership. In The Unembarassed Muse, Russell Nye outlines several improvements in the mechanization of printing and book manufacture in America that, throughout the nineteenth-century, ensured the new possibility for widespread dissemination of literature: improved paper making processes throughout the century, stereotyping in 1811, electrotyping in 1841, cast-plate in 1813, clothbindings in

1812, improved bookbinding machinery in 1823, folding and sewing machines in the 1850s, a backing machine in 1870, and a gathering machine in 1900 (24). Moreover, he notes that the first revolution in cheap publishing came in the 1840s with the use of newspaper presses for the manufacture of books; printed on newsprint, they were initially exempt from taxes, charged lower postal rates, and delivered to readers' homes. Even after the Post Office levied book rates on them in 1843, the low-priced, mass-produced book was an instant success that stuck (24).⁴⁴ In Society and Culture in America, Nye estimates that gross annual sales of books were in 1820--\$2,500,000; in 1850--\$12,500,000, and by 1860--\$20,000,000; and, because of decreased production costs, twenty times more titles were being published annually in 1860 than in 1820 (76). Nye also records similarly remarkable increases in magazines and newspapers, in effect more than six times the number published in 1860 than in 1820. By 1860, America was publishing 575 monthly magazines, 271 weeklies, and 372 daily newspapers (76). This accelerated book, magazine, and newspaper production reciprocally helped to produce and supply American readers' voracious appetites.

In addition to the technological means of producing mass quantities of literature, nineteenth-century America also had

⁴⁴ The most substantial successes of this kind were the dime novels marketed by Beadle and Adams; Nye estimates sales of 4,000,000 between 1861-66 alone.

a rapidly increasing population, low illiteracy rates, and a "relatively classless habit of reading" (Nye Unembarassed Muse 23) to support such production. Between 1790 and 1830, the American public doubled in size, redoubling again by 1860 to approximately 30 million. Just before the Civil War, illiteracy levels among white adults ranged from as low as .03 in the Northeast to as high as .19 in the Southwest with a national average of .07 in 1860 and .09 in 1870.⁴⁵ Since the 1820s, the United States had had almost universal, white male suffrage which Arthur Ekirch argues aided and abetted the creation of a "proper material and intellectual setting for the mass reception of the idea of progress" (36). If America were to prosper, the ideology of progress demanded that its citizens be democratically and uniformly educated. Hence, a country that in 1800 had no public schools, by 1860 had a system of elementary and secondary schools in every state (Society and Culture 377). As the secretary to the Massachusetts State Board of Education remarked, he was "convinced that the dangers of an illiterate but enfranchised democracy outweighed the taxation necessary to support free schools" (qtd. in Branch 304). Beyond just schools, however, various other institutions sprang up in support of the belief

⁴⁵ These figures are from Lee Soltow and Edward Stevens, The Rise of Literacy and the Common School in the United States (155); the rise of 2% between 1860 and 1870 may be due to the different questions asked in 1870 to determine illiteracy.

that a broad dissemination of knowledge would guarantee social stability: the interdenominational American Sunday School Union (1824-60); following the British lead, hundreds of mechanics and workingmen's institutes; the American Lyceum Association (established in 1831); subscription libraries; circulating libraries; and public libraries such as the Boston Public Library (established in 1848) (Nye Society and Culture 358-66). One of the perhaps unforeseen results of the public's diverse means of access to learning and to literature was that women were able to offset some of the potential disadvantages incurred in the early nineteenth century by a "polite" education and by continued barriers against female attendance at all male universities.

The cultural position of women in antebellum America has always been a subject of considerable controversy.⁴⁶ Their

⁴⁶ Twentieth-century studies of the cultural influence of women in nineteenth-century America take their lead from Douglas Branch's The Sentimental Years, 1836-1860 (1934) in which Branch's general disdain for the period becomes outright sarcasm in "Literature: The Scene" (97-124) when he discusses the influence of women, especially Felicia Hemans. Fred Lewis Pattee redresses the balance somewhat in The Feminine Fifties (1940), essentially a descriptive literary history of the popular effects of the supposedly soft, polished tastes of women upon the consumers and producers of mid-nineteenth-century literature and culture. Though not itself especially disparaging of this phenomenon, Pattee's analysis generated several subsequent studies: George Boas's "The Romantic Lady" (63-88) and Elizabeth Winslow's "Books for the Lady Reader, 1820-1860" (89-109) in Romanticism in America (1948); and chapters in books about popular literary taste such as James Hart's "The Spirit of Poetry" (125-39) in The Popular Book (1950) and Carl Bode's "The Sentimental Muse" (188-200) in The Anatomy of American Popular Culture, 1840-1861 (1959). These studies juxtapose the "simple, homely" verses of Felicia Hemans, Lydia Sigourney, and other contributors to Annuals and

particular influence, as writers and as readers, upon the nation's "belles lettres" of the 1840s-60s, generated a range of contemporary responses from scorn to eulogy (depending upon the sympathies of the observer), a range that continues to be heard today. The quantity of reactions and their passion nonetheless suggest that for the first time in American history women were a cogent, widespread force in social and cultural life. Certainly many women themselves felt so, as evinced in the following selections from the proceedings of the 1850 Woman's Rights Convention held in Ohio:

It is the women who read. It is the women who are the tribunal of any question aside from politics or business. It is the women who give or withhold a literary reputation. It is the women who control clergymen and churches, patronize and influence the Arts, and exercise ultimate control over the Press.

Giftbooks with those of popular poets like Longfellow, Tennyson, and Whittier, with regrettable consequences for the enduring value of the latter. Most important in this sequence, however, is Ann Douglas's The Feminization of American Culture (1977) in which she indirectly holds women responsible for their own "feminization" through submission to the social construct of the "feminine," and directly criticizes the sentimentalization of this feminine ideal (domesticity, love, nurture) as calculated not to interfere with masculine goals: economic expansion, urbanization and industrialization (12). Therefore, although women are alleged to have superficially gained power through their feminizing influence upon cultural institutions--literature, religion, and others--male hegemony was thereby allowed to reassert itself in laissez-faire industrial expansion, to Douglas's considerable regret and even outrage. The extent to which female writers and readers in the nineteenth century affected the popular poetry of both Longfellow and Tennyson is considered from a variety of angles throughout this study since the contemporary audience which the "People's Poet" addressed could, for the first time in history, be said to consist of women in numbers large enough to have a significant impact on the cultural products of the age.

. . . . [I]n religion, in taste, in general elevation of sentiment and in consistency of standard of opinion, the women of America are superior to the men. (qtd. in Pattee 93)

How American women came to feel their power so strongly, in the face of their obvious economic and political disenfranchisement, is open to debate.

One reason is that, unlike their British counterparts, throughout the nineteenth century American women were nearly as literate as men. Lee Soltow's and Edward Stevens's research on illiteracy, for instance, indicates only a minor sex differential, more obvious in the South than the North: "The magnitude of the difference varied from an illiteracy rate of .09 for women in 1860 compared with .07 for men. In 1870 the rates for women and men, respectively, were .10 and .09. Differences were accentuated in the South, where the illiteracy rate in 1860 was .15 for women compared with .11 for men. In the North the comparable rates were .06 for women and .04 for men" (156). The relatively low levels generally and the comparative equality of men's and women's literacy in the United States suggest high educational standards for both sexes.⁴⁷ Barbara Solomon points out that, despite continued controversy over the education of girls in the early nineteenth century, "colonial precedents did exist for the

⁴⁷ In her history of higher education for women in the United States, Barbara Solomon notes that the 107 women's schools operating between 1830 and 1870 covered most of the subjects taught in junior and senior years at men's colleges (23).

instruction of girls at the elementary and secondary levels." Once public academies were chartered in the late eighteenth century, a "few admitted girls on an equal basis, whereas others let them use the same facilities at different hours." By mid-century, "more than a quarter of a million students were enrolled in over 6,000 academies" (15). Of these quarter million students, a great many were girls and women since throughout the first half of the century an "informal, unplanned process [had] evolved: girls not only attended district schools but taught in them; then some used the money they earned to attend academies, where they studied and taught. In time some opened schools of their own" (17).

Advances in the education of girls and women were particularly noticeable in New England. Longfellow, for example, had attended a coeducational academy in Portland from 1814 to 1821. As early as December 1829, Longfellow drafted a prospectus for a new female high school in Portland that came into being several months later (see Letters I 328-9). According to Longfellow, by 1849, women were beginning to appeal to Harvard for admission to university along with men (Life II 138). Denied admission at that time, during the winter of 1852-53, "unknown 'damsels'" as Longfellow called them, "illicitly attend[ed] his lectures" at Harvard. Unfortunately, he does not note in his journal what measures, if any, he took against these women (Life II 237). By 1878, when Longfellow was asked by Mrs Phelps to consider the

effects of coeducation, it had already become an accepted standard in both private and public universities (Solomon 47).

As Nye maintains, the "swift growth of the huge market of educated, literate women promised great rewards for writers who could satisfy it" (Society 98). In her study Novels, Readers, and Reviewers: Responses to Fiction in Antebellum America, Nina Baym identifies several nineteenth-century monthlies with large circulations that were targeted especially at women: Godey's Lady's Book, Peterson's Magazine, Graham's Magazine, The Ladies' Repository, and Sartain's Union Magazine. Weeklies such as The Home Journal and The New York Ledger also appealed to women (15-17). As Baym's study indicates, women's influences as readers in antebellum America are best illustrated in the incredible number of novels written by women in the period, and by the serious attention these works received in the critical press.⁴⁸

In short, the composition of the nineteenth-century American reading public changed considerably between the wars. By 1860, America's "classless" habit of reading (Nye's term) had also crossed gender boundaries. As Longfellow in the 1820s looked toward a career as an eminent poet, he would have to consider how best to market his product in relation to consumers who indeed were rapidly becoming "the masses." In

⁴⁸ Helsinger and her co-writers' chapter on "'Poetesses' and 'Lady Novelists'" documents the transatlantic proliferation and appeal of women's writing at mid-century (III 26-78).

contrast, changes to Britain's reading public occurred much more slowly, frustrated as they were by an aristocratic ideology that continued to exert residual cultural force in a world economically determined by the rising power of the middle classes.

Richard Altick's The English Common Reader, Raymond Williams's The Long Revolution, and David Vincent's Literacy and Popular Culture, when read together, provide a comprehensive overview of the changing shape of the British publishing industry and the Victorian reading public. When Tennyson appeared upon the scene, the English book trade had been declining for the first quarter of the nineteenth century because of the extremely high prices charged to cover costs, a shortage of paper (and paper taxes), and an antiquated technology (Altick 260-62). Various schemes for cheap books were tried in the early thirties but technology had yet to improve to meet readers' demands. In the 1830s, several improvements in book manufacture did occur to allow for cheaper costs: machine-produced paper, boards and cloth bindings, and the introduction of what are oxymoronicly known today as "perfect bindings," using glue rather than stitching to bind the gatherings (278). In general, however, Britain lagged far behind the United States in terms of its technology. For example, it was not until the 1860s that the American high-speed Hoe printing press used for newspapers was used in England for the manufacture of paper-bound books; and

typesets for books continued to be composed by hand until the introduction of the Monotype machine in the early twentieth century (306-7). In sum, technology in Britain failed to keep pace with advances in the "three great requisites of a mass reading public--literacy, leisure, and a little pocket money" (Altick 306). This lapse meant that unless a publisher could reduce costs through other means--for example, by pirating American texts or issuing reprints rather than new editions--retail prices would be higher in Britain than in the United States.

The requisites that Altick identifies above were achieved by the masses in Britain only by the 1890s, and again nowhere near as rapidly as in the United States. In 1801 Britain had an approximate total population of 11 million; by 1901 it had more than tripled: to 37 million (excluding Ireland). Yet, as Altick argues, these aggregate figures must be subdivided to identify changes to class structures and the occupational and geographical demographics of British society to achieve an adequate profile of Victorian Britain's reading audience. In broad terms, 75% of the population in the early 1800s belonged to the lower-middle or lower classes: artisans, mechanics, servants. But certain occupational groups increased substantially in the period. According to Altick, the new mass audience was to be recruited from the increasing numbers of skilled workers, small shopkeepers, clerks, and better grade of domestic servants. By 1861, the domestic servant

population had grown to more than a million, and presumably these workers had the education if not the time to read (83). Queen Victoria's observation of her own domestic servants' notice of Longfellow, mentioned above, confirms their place within the audience for popular poetry. The segment of the middle class proper that grew most rapidly was that of physicians, teachers, civil servants, and other professionals: from 1851 to 1881 it increased by 80%, from a population of 357,000 to 647,000. By 1855, the Indian Civil Service exam included "English Literature" as one of its subjects. As one of their examiners explained, candidates were to be not only familiar with historical works, but with contemporary works as well, those of "Sir Walter Scott and Tennyson" for example (Altick 183-4). Presumably, Tennyson's popular audience would be drawn from these professional ranks.

Potential advances in socio-economic mobility, increased numbers of semi-educated workers, and a broadening professional base combined with political unrest in the nineteenth century to produce a sharpening of class consciousness and social tensions. These, in turn, affected the opportunities for literacy and education available to the lower classes. In his study of "Literacy and Education in England," Lawrence Stone claims that in "the early nineteenth century, the standard of literacy in England (and France) was not merely low by comparison with Scotland and New England, but also . . . with Prussia, Switzerland, Holland, and parts

of the Austrian Empire" (129). A confused, mismanaged education system in the first half of the century did little to increase the aggregate numbers of literate adults let alone potential readers of literature. In 1841, in England and Wales, 67.3% of adult males were literate (that is, they could sign their names to a marriage register), while only 51.1% of adult females were. However, by 1871 the figure for males had increased to 80.6% while for women it was 73.2%.; and by 1900, the figures for men and women were nearly equal: 97.2% and 96.8% respectively (Altick 171). Over the fifty-nine year period, men had increased their literacy level by approximately 30 percentage points while the rate for women had risen by nearly 46 percentage points. In his study of Literacy and Popular Culture, Vincent breaks these figures down further by geographical location, occupation, and age. His maps of England reveal that, during the final decades of the nineteenth century, women increasingly exceeded men in the southern districts in terms of levels of literacy (25). What Altick notes above as a growing demand for domestic servants, scholars such as W. B. Stephens and Vincent suggest had a substantial effect on the literacy levels of girls and women in the nineteenth century (see Vincent 104).

In contrast to the United States, increases in the levels of literacy, for men or women, likely had very little to do with any structured education since Britain did not have a state-funded elementary school system until the passage of W.

E. Forster's National Education Act in 1870, and even then it was not fully-operational until the twentieth century. As Altick explains, a debate in the 1790s between Andrew Bell (an Anglican) and Joseph Lancaster (a Quaker) over the proper education of the poor gave rise to two diametrically opposed societies that would control elementary education for almost a hundred years: "The British and Foreign School Society" (dissenters) and "The National Society for Promoting the Education of the Poor in the Principles of the Established Church throughout England" (Anglicans) (144-5). These societies, in their bids for educational supremacy, thwarted any possible conjoining of denominations, even at the local level. Consequently, elementary education in Victorian England consisted of a haphazard system of schools that were either charitably funded, privately owned, or philanthropically endowed. The majority of schools chose to employ a cheap, efficient system of monitors rather than to hire sufficient teachers for the work, and learning was primarily by rote. In Altick's view, it was exactly the kind of education to discourage any enjoyment of reading (149-50).

Although Parliament appointed a Committee of Council to inspect schools in 1839, very little change other than increased government funding to the two Societies occurred in the early 1840s because of their denominational deadlock and a political mistrust over the social value of education for the lower classes. However, by 1843 Parliament had in place

inspectors to examine levels of education at the Societies' schools and to make recommendations to the government for improvements.⁴⁹ At first, the government responded positively to the advice of inspectors such as Matthew Arnold, so that the 1850s witnessed an unparalleled expansion of schools and teachers colleges and a much needed enlargement of the curriculum; by 1859, government spending in education had reached over £800,000 (see Tholfsen 24). However, such progress was not to last. Alarmed by the funding increases for an education that most members of parliament felt the lower classes neither needed nor deserved, the government passed a Revised Code in 1862 that essentially instituted a payment by results policy. School inspectors had now to confine themselves merely to the inspection of buildings and the testing of students in reading, writing, and arithmetic. As Matthew Arnold predicted in his pamphlet "The Twice Revised Code," rote learning increased because it produced the easiest and most financially rewarding results (see Smith and Summerfield 157-97).

⁴⁹ The reports of Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth (1840s) and Matthew Arnold (1850s) are some of the best known documents in the history of British education. Both men argued for adequately funded teacher training colleges and greater remuneration for teachers to encourage systems of education less reliant on rote learning. See Trygve Tholfsen's Sir James Kay-Shuttleworth on Popular Education and Peter Smith and Geoffrey Summerfield's Matthew Arnold and the Education of the New Order.

The originator of the Revised Code, Robert Lowe, expressed an elitist attitude of cultural dominance that had, throughout the nineteenth century, thwarted the introduction of egalitarian education: "The lower classes ought to be educated to discharge the duties cast upon them. They should also be educated that they may appreciate and defer to a higher cultivation when they meet it, and the higher classes ought to be educated in a very different manner, in order that they may exhibit it to the lower classes that higher education to which, if it were shown to them, they would bow down and defer" (qtd. in Altick 156-7). However, political changes in the 1860s, especially the 1867 Reform Bill, required that the education system be restructured on far more democratic principles than previously. Forster's National Education Act of 1870 established school boards throughout Britain to ensure standardization; the process of reform had begun.

While state-funded institutions were locked in an ideological debate, the working-class segment of the Victorian reading public sought diverse alternative methods of learning. Children who worked in factories could receive instruction in reading at Sunday schools or, after the passage of The Factory Act of 1833, for two hours per day by law at the factories (Altick 148). Although minimal and often conducted under deplorable conditions, this early exposure to learning could very well lead to other adult forms of education. Through the classes, lectures, and libraries of Mechanics' Institutes

(established in the 1820s) adult workers had access to scientific knowledge.⁵⁰ However, by mid-century, the original scientific purpose of these institutes had been all but abandoned. Popular lectures on history, travel, biography, music, and literature meant that people came to be entertained more than they did enlightened (Altick 201-2). Finally, adult workers attended evening schools, private or philanthropic, to gain a rudimentary level of reading. Yet, as Altick concludes, the results at these schools were questionable: "Of the 12,400 men and women attending about a hundred schools in 1832, only 3,148 were accounted able to read as a result of their schooling" (149). In the end, it seems that whatever education the working classes did receive, the bulk of it would have to be self-styled. Indeed, Vincent maintains that it was the working class family's own drive for intellectual development that actually was responsible for improvements in literacy rates in the nineteenth century (54).

⁵⁰ Altick and Williams both remark on the failure of the Institutes to reach the working classes for which they were originally designed. By the 1840s, they were attended mostly by artisans and professionals who had less bone-wearying labour to engage in for 12 or 14 hours before coming to a lecture. Also, employers were often patrons so that employees became suspicious of motives. Little or no "entertaining" literatures were allowed, and political topics were generally forbidden. In short, a too obvious didactic purpose to school the working classes in a middle-class ideology of scientific materialism and self-help prevented the Mechanics Institutes from becoming popular with the working classes (Altick 188-212, Williams Long 143-4).

More than even the working classes, girls and women of the middle and upper classes had to rely on unsystematic instruction for their educations. As Sara Delamont points out in her two articles, "The Contradictions in Ladies Education" (134-63) and "The Domestic Ideology and Women's Education" (164-87), education for girls and women was laced with tensions of class and gender concerning the roles of women in society. If they could keep out of the factories, and if they were allowed to attend school, girls from working-class families often received a better basic education than their counterparts of better classes. Delamont reveals that the content of working-class education "was hardly differentiated by sex while the education of the upper, and the emerging middle classes was highly sex specific . . ." (164). Moreover, Stone points out that in rural areas, because boys left school earlier than girls to work as farm labourers (at 10 rather than 14 or 15), "girls were in some country districts more literate than boys" (116-7). British girls of the upper-middle and middle classes, if educated at all, generally had to rely on governesses or boarding schools to instruct them in gender-specific subjects such as fine arts, music, and, in some cases, foreign languages. The purpose, as Delamont describes it, was to create a "genteely got-up marionette," ideally suited for marriage (138). Such abuses were well known by the 1840s, yet reform of female education in Victorian Britain proceeded slowly because it was hampered

by a double conformity: to the "lady" as a social construct and to the classically educated gentleman as her only alternative. Disputes raging over the value of a classics-based education for young men, in turn, spilled over into the dilemma of how best women should be educated. However, "the plight of England's 25,000 governesses" necessitated immediate changes according to Philippa Levine (50). Two women's colleges were founded in the late 1840s in response: F. D. Maurice's Queen's College (1848) and Elizabeth Reid's Bedford College (1849). According to Levine, both provided a thorough, basic education (56). In the curricula of Princess Ida's university of women in The Princess, Tennyson clearly outlines the parameters of the above educational debate. That he could count women among the poem's readers, however, was in no way the result of any guaranteed or systematic education provided for them. Self-instruction, as Maggie Tulliver in Eliot's Mill on the Floss discovers, would have to amend the defects in a merely polite education.

An expensive book trade and an inadequate education system may actually have assisted intellectual aspirants (including women), for it encouraged readers to seek fulfilment and rational recreation through two other means: the popular periodical press and circulating libraries. In this case, the popular includes both the radical "pauper" press developed after increases to the Stamp duties in 1815 and 1819 and the "respectable" press. Williams maintains that because of

political pressures and censorship, the radical press emerged as a political force distinct from the commercial interests of the respectable press (Long 185-6). Vincent also argues that the radical press was instrumental in transforming an essentially oral culture into a written one in the early nineteenth century (242). Although seemingly unconnected to Tennyson's development as a popular poet, both of these two changes in the cultural habits of the literate working class meant that the possibility was there for Tennyson's poetry to appeal either to political radicalism or sympathies for an oral tradition in poetry among working class readers. Evidence throughout this study shows that Tennyson managed to do just that.

The respectable press, on the other hand, dominated the cultural ideology of the middle-classes and, through organizations such as Charles Knight's Society for the Diffusion of Useful Knowledge, also worked to control the cultural education of the working classes. The substantial increases in the number of periodicals and in their circulation figures attest to the rapid development of a middle to lower-middle class reading audience in the first half of the nineteenth century. In the early 1800s, quarterly reviews could expect a circulation of 5,000 to 10,000, monthlies less than 5,000, weeklies less than 10,000, and daily newspapers between 2,000 and 5,000 (Altick 392). By mid-century, while the figures for quarterly reviews had

remained virtually unchanged, and monthlies had increased only marginally, at least a half-dozen weekly newspapers and cheap miscellanies had attained a circulation of more than 100,000. "In 1858 the sale of three fiction papers, the Family Herald, the London Journal, and Cassell's Family Paper was said to total 895,000, and Wilkie Collins estimated that the audience for such periodicals was at least three million" (Altick 357). Moreover, the Times increased its daily circulation from just under 6,000 in 1822 to approximately 60,000 by 1860, sometimes attaining circulations of up to 108,000 (392-4). Clearly the socio-economic profile of Britain's readers of the popular press had changed markedly in the first half of the century.

The respectable press also attempted to reach the working classes in the 1830s through low prices, as in William Chamber's Chamber's Journal (a 3 half-penny weekly), and with educational intentions, as in Charles Knight's Penny Magazine. However, as both Altick and Williams note, these magazines likely were bought by the middle and lower-middle classes who were starved for affordable reading; Williams further adds they more likely appealed to households with £200-300 per annum, households that would have had difficulty affording a 7d. taxed daily paper (Long 190). In short, while Tennyson's potential middle-class audience was rapidly expanding downward to include skilled workers and shop keepers, wages and prices nonetheless restricted their reading material to only the cheapest of periodicals. A five-shilling volume of poetry,

for these families, would have been out of the question as anything other than an exceptional purchase.

The popular press also responded to a new audience of women. Their aggregate increase in numbers and importance as readers during the Victorian age can be measured at a glance in the citations listed in Barbara Kanner's bibliography of "The Women in England in a Century of Social Change, 1815-1914" (Branca Suffer 178-81). Eighty-eight individual listings, from pamphlets and articles to multi-volume works, reflect concern for women's nature and their social roles. The rapidly increasing popularity of middle-class women's magazines and their circulation figures suggest a similar rise in the importance of women as readers and consumers. Cynthia White notes as one example that Samuel Beeton's Englishwoman's Domestic Magazine (est. 1852), a two-penny monthly, had within two years reached a sale of 25,000 copies a month that would increase to 50,000 by 1860 (46). Of course, women exercised the greatest influence as readers and writers of novels. Altick argues that since Pamela in the 1740s "women played an important part in the history of the English reading audience" (45). Elizabeth Helsinger and her co-writers' examination of "'Poetesses' and 'Lady Novelists'" attests to the widespread influence of women writers in the mid-nineteenth century by analysing the reviews their work received in the critical press (III 26-78). In "The Lady Novelists" (Westminster Review 1852) George Lewes heralds the rise of women's

literature for "it promises woman's view of life, woman's experience: in other words, a new element." He asserts that "men and women have different organizations, consequently different experiences. To know life you must have both sides depicted" (qtd. in Helsinger III 56). That Tennyson himself attempted throughout his poetry to depict "both sides" confirms his awareness of women as integral to his reading audience.

Various libraries provided a counter to the prohibitive costs of Tennyson's texts for many readers. Early libraries for the wealthy may have charged from two to five guineas subscription fees, but by 1830, as Altick notes, in London and in provincial towns, libraries charging rental fees of a penny a volume were very numerous (217). Book clubs and informal organizations among neighbouring families or co-workers also bought and exchanged books; a correspondent in the Monthly Magazine in 1821 claimed that there were "not less than 6,500 of these useful institutions of various degrees . . . [serving] above 30,000 families" (qtd. in Altick 218-19). Parish libraries and "itinerating libraries" (that moved from village to village) served the needs of villagers. Readers connected to a union or club might have their needs met by the boxes of books that circulated among groups such as the Union of Mechanics' Institutes, the Sunday School Union, the Working Men's Club and Institute Union, and the National Liberal Club (Altick 222). Charles Edward Mudie, however, managed to turn

the circulating library into an efficient business in the 1850s by charging only one guinea for a year's subscription and setting up branch libraries in various parts of London. His volume of purchases reflects the size of his clientele: 960,000 new volumes between 1853 and 1862 (Altick 296). As evidence of Tennyson's popularity, Amy Cruse notes that in the 1860s Mudie purchased 2,500 copies of Enoch Arden, 2,400 of Macaulay's History of England (Vols 3 & 4), and 2,000 of Eliot's The Mill on the Floss (315-16). The library obviously was one way in which Tennyson's poetry could be read if not purchased.⁵¹

In effect, the lack of a standardized educational system in Britain and the diverse means by which educators and people desirous of knowledge satisfied their desires created a truly heterogeneous reading public in the nineteenth-century. When Tennyson and Moxon chose to issue a new volume, the class, age, or gender of its potential readers clearly could not be determined in advance. What is clear from the available statistics on literacy is that a remarkable increase in women's levels of literacy coincided with the period of Tennyson's greatest popularity. That there was a causal link

⁵¹ Paradoxically, the circulating library may also have contributed to small editions and inordinately high prices for the individual consumer. They were a ready-made market for books that were easily supplied, often at a discount, so that neither the publishers nor the libraries had any need to reduce retail prices (see Altick 295-7).

between these two achievements, however, is impossible to determine.

Ultimately, any profile of American and British readers as consumers of Longfellow's and Tennyson's poetry falls short of representing fully the degree to which readers collectively collaborate in creating the literary experience they anticipate when purchasing a volume of poems. As consumers of physical poetic texts, purchasers of poetry clearly added, at least statistically, to the reputations Longfellow and Tennyson enjoyed as popular poets. At the same time, by the very exercise of their aesthetic taste as readers in purchasing the volumes, they shared in the reflected status the poets themselves had achieved. In other words, the popularity of Longfellow's and Tennyson's poetry cannot be accounted for in isolation from Victorian society's creation and recreation of these poets' work as commodities available for purchase, a collective construction of these men as voices of their respective nations.

Two other activities, both involving the participation of readers or audience within the context of a creative milieu, enhanced the positions of Longfellow and Tennyson as voices of their respective nations. This creative milieu is peopled predominantly by musicians and parodists, the sincere and the suspect borrowers of a voice and of a poetry so recognizably popular that it can be added to, altered, and even mocked without loss to the intrinsic worth of the original. Although

music sometimes aligned itself with parody in the nineteenth century, as in the comic operas of Gilbert and Sullivan, generally speaking musical responses to the poetry of Longfellow and Tennyson indicate a sincere register of both the popularity of these poets at the time and the attempt to further that popularity through setting their best-loved verses to music. The lure of the piano-forte as a private, domestic symbol of middle-class prosperity, and the increasing public respect for solo female voices, such as that of Jenny Lind, together created an ideal cultural environment for the recasting of the Victorians' favourite lyrics into songs for piano accompaniment.⁵²

In his bibliography of Musical Settings of American Poetry, Michael Hovland notes 1,223 different entries for Longfellow, the great majority of which were written in the nineteenth rather than in the twentieth century (177-244). Whitman's poetry ranks second with 640 entries although the majority of these were written after World War II. Of Longfellow's poems put to music, the five most popular were the serenade, "Stars of the summer night," from The Spanish Student (89), various lyrics from Hiawatha (52), "The Warning" from Poems on Slavery (41), the song "Good Night" from The Spanish Student (41), and

⁵² Charrenz Lenhart's Musical Influence on American Poetry provides an introduction to the rising aesthetic popularity of music in nineteenth-century America, while Dave Russell traces this development as a social phenomenon in England in his Popular Music in England, 1840-1914: A Social History.

"A Psalm of Life" from Voices of the Night (40). Samuel Coleridge-Taylor produced three successive choral-orchestral pieces at the end of the century: Hiawatha's Wedding Feast (1898), Death of Minnehaha (1899), and Hiawatha's Departure (1900); and his productions indicate a dissemination of Longfellow's forty-five year old poem into ever broadening circles of American popular entertainment in the early part of this century. However, no sooner had Longfellow been borrowed for mass entertainment purposes than popular taste in music changed through the introduction of first the phonograph and then the radio. Of well over a thousand songs, perhaps only "I Heard the Bells on Christmas Day" today retains something of its original place as a favourite. Despite the fact that even Beethoven wrote settings for three of Longfellow's poems --"The Building of the Ship," "A Day of Sunshine" and "To the River Charles"--the "music" of Longfellow is rarely heard any longer.

Similarly, musical settings of Tennyson's poetry also lost their appeal in this century although somewhat later than Longfellow's.⁵³ Bryan Gooch and David Thatcher, in their catalogue of the Musical Settings of Early and Mid-Victorian Literature, record 437 entries for Tennyson (509-629).

Although Tennyson had far fewer poems set to music than his

⁵³ Apparently, Richard Strauss's piano accompaniment for a recital of Enoch Arden continues to appeal to audiences. Its recent production at the University of British Columbia attests to its lasting popularity.

American counterpart, this does not necessarily mean that, as a poet, Tennyson was proportionally less popular than Longfellow. Tennyson actually had a much smaller corpus of short lyric poems available for potential use as songs than Longfellow. Hence, favourite Tennyson lyrics are set to music more frequently than Longfellow's poems, with many of these settings occurring in the early part of this century rather than in the last: various lyrics from In Memoriam (107), "Crossing the Bar" from Demeter and Other Poems (83), "Break, Break, Break" from the 1842 Poems (72), various lyrics from Maud (59), and an astounding 222 settings of lyrics from The Princess: with "Sweet and Low" (49), "Tears Idle Tears" (38), "The Splendour Falls on Castle Walls" (28), and "Now Sleeps the Crimson Petal" (23) as the most popular. These figures and their later dates of release suggest that while fewer Tennyson lyrics were set to music, individual Tennyson poems generated greater musical interest, and for a longer period of time than those by Longfellow. A collection of Tennyson's poetry entitled Songs by Lord Tennyson was published just after the poet's death in 1892, containing twenty two of Emily Tennyson's own compositions.

Obviously, sheer numbers of musical settings of Victorian poetry are not, in and of themselves, unqualified indicators of popularity. Christina Rossetti had 758 musical settings of her poems, and Robert Browning had 680, most often composed in this century, yet no one would argue that either of these two

Victorian poets approached Longfellow or Tennyson in terms of popularity. In the end, one can only speculate on the extent to which musical settings actually helped promote the poetry of Longfellow and Tennyson, and thereby increase sales and overall popularity.

The addition of music to poetry reinforces the rhythmic and tonal features of their poetry. Musical settings may have prolonged Longfellow's and Tennyson's reputations as lyric poets even though both poets by the 1850s had turned their primary attentions first to narrative and later to dramatic poetry. On a more practical level, the settings likely added to the appeal of the poetry among the many mothers and daughters who provided home entertainment for their families. The popular poet was transformed into a cultural commodity available for widespread public purchase, yet designed for private use within the home by female readers and singers, thereby helping to collapse divisions between the so-called male public and female private spheres of Victorian life.⁵⁴

Longfellow apparently believed that his own meters were not suitable for music (Ghodes American Literature 103); if they were not, they certainly were suitable for parody. Many

⁵⁴ Of course, the work of female lyric poets in the Victorian period was also set to music. Unfortunately, Hovland does not mention in his bibliography the most popular female poet in America, Lydia Sigourney. Gooch's and Thatcher's recent catalogue of the Musical Settings of British Romantic Literature notes 617 entries for Felicia Hemans, and their Victorian catalogue records 339 entries for Elizabeth Barrett Browning.

Longfellow parodies came from British wits, perhaps the best known being the small shilling volume, Drop o' Wather--a London Legend by Harry Wandsworth Shortfellow, published in 1856 by none other than Routledge and Company who likely were hoping to enhance the pirated profits they were already making from the original, Hiawatha (1855). In the 1850s, Bayard Taylor formed and published his Diversions of the Echo Club; talented women such as Phoebe Cary mimicked writers of the day, including Longfellow, in her Poems and Parodies (1866), and Longfellow parody contests were launched by various popular magazines such as the World in 1879 and the Truth in 1880.

It is from what Ghodes refers to as an initially "bad mistake" that so many of these nineteenth-century parodies of Longfellow (and Tennyson too) are extant today. In 1884, Walter Hamilton had called for submissions to his journal, Parodies of the Works of English & American Authors; unfortunately, he began with Tennyson and Longfellow, and thus had ultimately to put his entire plan on hold while old and new parodies flooded in. By the time he was done, he had filled the better part of two volumes. According to Hamilton's collection, the most popular Longfellow poems for parody in the nineteenth-century include "Excelsior" (46), Hiawatha (31), and "A Psalm of Life" (24) although elsewhere Hamilton avows that "'Excelsior' served as a model for hundreds of parodies" (I 80). Since only those poems

sufficiently well-known to their audiences to be immediately recognizable as bases for parody can possibly be mimicked, the quantity of Longfellow parodies is further testimony to his poetry's widespread popularity.

Yet with all of this mocking of America's most famous poet, Hamilton maintains that "it is doubtful whether one unkindly worded, or spiteful burlesque was ever penned about Longfellow or his works" (I 65). Rather, the parodies appear to be almost exclusively concerned with peculiarities of style, language, and idea, and not directed at Longfellow personally or professionally. One might conclude that, since Longfellow's verse contains a wealth of stylistic idiosyncracies for potential ridicule, parodists had no need to turn to the poet for further subject matter. Still, Longfellow's own reaction to parodies of Hiawatha may be counted as a barometer of their bite: either he was very thick-skinned or they were fairly painless. His remark that "Hiawatha parodies come in from all quarters,--even from California" (Life II 272) sounds more fascinated than it does concerned.

Hamilton's claim that "imitation is the sincerest form of flattery" (I 1) may be true of Longfellow's poetry and reputation, but Tennyson parodies likely issued from far different motives. According to Hamilton's records, almost as many nineteenth-century parodies of Tennyson's poems exist as those of Longfellow's; the favourites include "The May Queen"

(38), "The Charge of the Light Brigade" (30), "The Brook" (25), "Break, Break, Break" (19), and "Locksley Hall" (19). Jelle Postma's study of Tennyson as Seen by his Parodists argues convincingly that the only compliment that Tennyson's imitators ever intended to pay him was to show that they supposed Tennyson "to enjoy a sufficient amount of popularity, and to possess some characteristics making him eminently fit to be [their] victim" (13). Unlike Longfellow, Tennyson himself--the poet and the man--was often subject to public, parodic scorn especially on those occasions when he accepted political patronage. Although Tennyson's acceptance of a civil list pension in 1845 did create a critical stir in the magazines, his work was not yet sufficiently well known to generate many parodies as a result. But by 1850, when he became poet Laureate, and certainly later, in 1883, when he finally accepted a Baronecy, Tennyson's supposed willingness to play poetic handmaid to the Queen became the subject of many burlesques recast as stylistic parodies of his poems, not all of them quite so polite as those that mock the American poet. Longfellow (and his poetry) had the luxury of belonging to a country less dominated by class tensions and less inclined to self-ridicule than Britain. The United States, in the nineteenth century, was far too literal-minded and far too charged with its own self-importance to risk seriously undermining itself as a nation by parodying the ideology rather than just the style of its national poet.

Britain, on the other hand, had a long history of political satire that could just as easily be applied to poetry when the need arose, particularly if the poet in question seemed to be hypocritically accepting a station in life contrary to the egalitarian sentiments expressed elsewhere in his poetry. Parodies of Tennyson thus frequently belittled the attitudes and postures assumed by Tennyson's Victorian speakers so as to expose an alleged insincerity at the core of the Laureate's social struggle between doubt and faith.

Yet despite their potentially damaging effects, parodies of Tennyson likely added to rather than detracted from his overall popularity. In "Tennyson in Parody and Jest," George O. Marshall contends that even a parody devastatingly critical of its original is nonetheless "a compliment to it, or to the importance of the author, for one does not parody the unknown" (6), and further adds that he can think of no Tennyson parody that has destroyed serious appreciation of its original (7). However, Marshall later reveals that, at the outset, certain kinds of poems should be excused from serious appreciation in any case and are therefore quite justifiably laughed at: Tennyson's "milk-sop" poetry such as that found in "The May Queen," and all other works dominated by his "predilection for the domestic idyl" (8-9). Yet there is no reason to think that parodies of the domestic idyls any more than those of other Tennyson genres would have damaged the Laureate's poetic prestige. Even "milk-sop" parodies would enhance a writer's

current critical acclaim by drawing attention to the public recognition of the original. And, as the above discussion of sales concludes, Tennyson's domestic narrative poems furthered rather than hindered his growing reputation.

Rather than encourage passive consumption of popular texts, both musical settings and parodies actually demand a widespread yet active audience for their originals in order to be successful themselves. In this sense, these artistic forms creatively recreate the voices of popular poets by echoing in new ways the public sentiments toward them. These creative forms thus work symbiotically as two different modes of reception to popular texts that actively attempt to interpret, transform, and retransmit original works. Contrary to twentieth-century opinions about popular poetry in the Victorian period, such poetry actually encouraged active involvement on the part of its readers. Unfortunately, a twentieth-century theoretical bias that usually defines reader "activity" strictly as intellectual scrutiny renders activities such as musical settings or parodies negligible registers of contemporary interpretation. Instead, critical reviews contained in journals, magazines, and newspapers are alone thought to illustrate contemporary public opinion. This privileging of reviews has led to a distorted picture of the currency of popular poets in particular since one of the primary features of any review is to control future opinion rather than respond fully to the present cultural status of

poets or texts in question. Nowhere is this more evident than in the critical press of the Victorian period.

Nineteenth-century reviewers promoted the proper poetic persona as much as the poetry in order to generate consumer appreciation for the connection between the most recent volume of poetry, and the social status conferred by its purchase. As Charvat outlines in his study of The Origins of American Critical Thought 1810-1825, in the early part of the nineteenth century, religion and law--the most common professions of America's forty most important critics--converged to create a species of professional criticism whose basic principles summarized below, dominated critical practice until the Civil War:

1. The critic was to be "the watchdog of society" (8-9).
2. Literature must not condone rebellion of any kind against the existing social and economic order (9-13).
3. Literature must not create anything derogatory, implicitly or explicitly, to religious ideals and moral standards (13-17).
4. Literature should be optimistic: it should not condone philosophical pessimism or skepticism (17-21).
5. Literature should deal with the intelligible, not the mystical or obscure (21-3).
6. Literature should be social in point of view, not egocentric (23-6).

Stemming as they did from the critics' own educational and occupational training, their judicial, moral, and paternalistic attitudes not only affected the nature of poetry written in the early nineteenth century, but determined

readers' conceptions of themselves--in relation to both criticism and literature--as children or pupils who required moral and social guidance. Although the Young America movement was to challenge the professional elitism of this essentially New England literati, and to encourage a democratization of literature in the 1830s and 40s, the gridlock of moral conservatism that New England's critics maintained over the reception of literature throughout the rest of the country ensured that whatever popular success a poet such as Longfellow might achieve would come only through his careful observance of social values endorsed by America's professional classes.

Because critics used eighteenth-century Scottish rhetoricians to promote, in theory, the aesthetic means by which literature, in practice, should appeal to the masses and, more importantly, to their growing sense of nationalism, antebellum poetry was inevitably drawn into discussions about "taste" and the potential for a universal morality (see Charvat 27-58). Thus Wordsworth came to be favoured as the critics' Romantic poet, despite Byron's early popular appeal, since he allegedly wrote of "common life" in the "real language of men" and could thereby appeal to America's growing democratic sympathies with little or no loss to the didactic potency of verse. According to Charvat, the shift from static, eighteenth-century rules of decorum to Wordsworthian romanticism, also meant "a readjustment between the artist and

his audience, a willingness to see things through the eyes of poets who no longer would see only what they were supposed to see" (92). Nevertheless, the eighteenth-century doctrine of association continued to exert residual pressure to restrict individualism and ensure that, until the Civil War, poetry would attempt to exact only universal sentiments from its readers. Eighteenth-century ideals also influenced styles of poetry since rhetoric and oratory took such a prominent place in the American school system. As the editor for the United States Literary Gazette remarked in 1826, the "art of public address . . . occupies a distinguished place among the departments of our literature, and contributes greatly to form the taste, guide the opinions, and increase the information of our people" (qtd. in Nye Society 136). Of necessity, Longfellow would have to develop his poetic voice within and against the confines of eighteenth-century aesthetics as dictated to him from various educational, periodical, and literary sources.

In a similar way, influential family members and friends had the final say in helping to fashion the poet--through reminiscences, memoirs, biographies, and the like--into a commodity for purchase equal to if not greater than the poetry itself. Longfellow's brother Samuel's Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1886) immortalized Longfellow as a poet of immense piety and openness, one whom all readers could lovingly

embrace as a familiar friend.⁵⁵ Annie Fields's Authors and Friends (1897) did the same. Tryon alleges that Fields relied heavily upon his wife, Annie, to judge the worth of proposed manuscripts for publication by his firm. "It was the woman's point of view, he said, which he found of value. It was not long before writers discovered this power behind the throne and there were frequent appeals to her to secure a favorable opinion on a manuscript . . ." (Parnassus 272). Although Longfellow had never to concern himself with Annie's high opinion of him and his work, as Annie's own Authors and Friends more than confirms, her impressions of Longfellow provide a glimpse of the criteria by which poets came to be worthy to stand beside Longfellow by sharing his publisher. She felt that Longfellow had been charged with "the energy of a soul looking for larger expansion; a spirit true to itself and its own prompting, finding its way by labor and love to the free use and development of the power within him" (4-5). Obviously wanting, in 1897, to counter a growing reaction against Longfellow that defined him as overly scholarly, didactic, and imitative, in her focus upon the poet's soul and spirit, Annie indirectly reveals the value of American Victorian poetry to be that of a secularized religion of domesticity with Longfellow as its chief minister. Hence, the exemplary features of the man include: the "sensitiveness of

⁵⁵ Samuel Longfellow's Life of his brother is analysed in chapter two.

his nature" (7); "the eager activity of his mind" (10); his "singleness of aim and strength of character" (15); an "especial love of home and all domesticities" (19); and the "tenderness, sweetness, and calm" with which he filled his own home (26). Annie strengthens this domestic view of the American bard by quoting from one of Longfellow's many admirers and acquaintances, William Winter: Longfellow "aroused [a] mixed feeling of mingled tenderness and reverence" for several reasons, not the least of which were his "dignity and grace," the "beautiful refinement of his countenance," and his voice which "was soft, sweet, and musical, and like his face, . . . had the innate charm of tranquility" (qtd. 28). To most twentieth-century readers of Longfellow, the above portrait carries few surprises. What it reveals, however, is the profound way in which Longfellow the man became inextricably tied to Longfellow the poet in late-nineteenth century opinion. It is as if by the end of the century the figure of Longfellow himself had surpassed his poetry as the primary commodity for public purchase by American audiences as they became more and more intrigued by the private views and sentiments of this almost exclusively public poet.

Reviewers and influential family members and friends also exerted considerable influence in Victorian Britain. In Victorian Scrutinies: Reviews of Poetry, 1830-1870, Isobel Armstrong outlines the features of criticism shared by the

majority of Victorian England's journalists and reviewers. Her results are similar to those listed by Charvat above. In abbreviated form, her summary is as follows:

1. the refusal to regard poems as self-contained entities, sealed off from moral contexts and social issues;
2. the absence of a specialized or technical critical vocabulary capable of articulating the formal and aesthetic qualities of a poem;
3. a perception of poetry as pragmatic: allusions to human, social, and historical issues, to the reader's identification with and response to the poetic subject-matter, and the characters and emotions in a poem;
4. a requirement that poetry be productive of sympathy: a moral faculty shared among poets and readers enabling people through emotional transference to understand the situations and feelings of other persons.
5. disdain for obvious didacticism: poetry should suggest rather than impose itself on the reader;
6. the terms of discussion included fit subjects for poetry and the function it held for the reader. (4-14)

Clearly, Armstrong's research indicates that the Victorian critical milieu in which Tennyson was to make his mark was diametrically opposed to the principles of poetry later espoused by the New Criticism, and opposed also to the tenets of Romanticism upon which critics such as I.A. Richards derived their modernist theories.⁵⁶ As Armstrong claims of Victorian criticism, "it is almost as if Coleridge had never

⁵⁶ One of the most recent articles that links Richards's practical criticism to Romanticism is Ann E. Berthoff's "Coleridge, I.A. Richards, and the Imagination" in a collection of essays entitled The Educational Legacy of Romanticism.

been" (14). Armstrong echoes Shannon's Tennyson and the Reviewers in which the reviews of Poems (1842) "had brought out five points concerning poetry in general or Tennyson in particular":

1. modern poetry must idealize and mirror contemporary life and thought;
2. the highest type of poetry must be concerned with human existence;
3. the poet's primary duty is to teach;
4. Tennyson's poetry must display more human sympathy;
5. Tennyson, if he is to establish his claim to greatness, must write a long poem--a sustained work on a single theme. (Shannon 92)

Unlike reviewers in the United States, reviewers in Britain were far more socially and politically heterogeneous. As indicated above in Tennyson's reactions to his reviewers (also discussed in chapter four), journals often strengthened class and political allegiances by using a poet's most recent volume as fodder in their internecine wars. As a consequence, recommendations to "teach" or to "display human sympathy" would mean different things to different reviewers. Tennyson could rely far less than Longfellow on any ideological harmony among his audience of critics.

Ironically, however, Tennyson did manage to appeal to some intrinsic, homogeneous, ideological assumptions of his diverse readers. The narrator's response to Everard Hall's reading of the "Morte D'Arthur" might well suffice as a description of how Tennyson's poetry touched the hearts of readers as

socially and culturally distinct as Samuel Bamford was from Queen Victoria, as an old, uneducated village woman was from Robert Browning: "it was the tone with which he read-- / Perhaps some modern touches here and there / Redeemed it from the charge of nothingness-- / Or else we loved the man, and prized his work; / I know not" (276-80). Once reviewers put aside their political strife, and heard clearly the tone of Tennyson's people's voice, they too came under his spell.

Without question, Victorian Britain loved Tennyson the man as much as they loved his work. In his life of Carlyle, James Froude remarked of the period 1842-1850 that people were "determined to have done with insincerity, to find ground under their feet, to let the uncertain remain uncertain, but to learn how much and what we honestly regard as true, and to believe that and live by it. Tennyson became the voice of this feeling in poetry, Carlyle in what was called prose We read [Tennyson's poems], and they became part of our minds, the expression in exquisite language, of the feelings which were working in ourselves" (418-9). As a commodity for public purchase, Tennyson's "market value" increased substantially after he became Laureate. In short, Tennyson became fashionable.

The currency of his poetry decreased among the educated classes almost in direct correlation to the popularizing of Tennyson the man embodied in Tennyson the poet. This process included works such as William Howitt's Homes and Haunts of

the Most Eminent British Poets (1857) and G. C. Napier's Homes and Haunts of Alfred Lord Tennyson (1892). During his life, Tennyson's fame spawned a flood of autograph seekers, visitors with note books, and photographers such as Julia Margaret Cameron all hoping, in some way, to immortalize Tennyson. After death, innumerable "reminiscences" were published in the 1890s and early 1900s in order to make permanent his evanescent genius. His son Hallam's Alfred Tennyson, A Memoir (1897) was the paradigmatic Victorian biography: a pastiche of stories, letters, poems, and reminiscences of others designed to secure its public's sympathies for this supposedly most public of men.⁵⁷ Thus was generated a new commodity for readers' perusal and purchase, one which reflected themselves back to themselves as if held within a mirror.⁵⁸

In many respects, Tennyson as a new commodity--the Victorian poet at one with his poetry--was not singular. For despite their many differences in terms of publishing and

⁵⁷ Hallam's Memoir is considered at length in chapter three.

⁵⁸ However, the mirror was already cracking by the 1860s. Poets such as John Addington Symonds had looked into it and no longer saw themselves. He wrote to Mrs Clough in 1868 as follows: "Have you observed that we are going to have an insurrection against Tennyson I have sympathized with this revolt, having been a slave as a boy, and spoilt my taste and style by absurd reverence for the faults of our great poet" (Schueller I 825). Reasons for the "reaction against Tennyson" are included throughout this study. Also, see P. G. Scott's "John Addington Symonds and the Reaction Against Tennyson."

promotion of their work, by the late 1840s, Longfellow and Tennyson came to be admired in Britain and America in ways that suggest that for many people they existed co-equally upon their readers' horizons of expectation, readers themselves who crossed class, gender, and ideological boundaries.

Walter Cameron's Longfellow Among his Contemporaries, for example, is an exhaustive catalogue of reprints of reviews, reminiscences, and stories of Longfellow. Here, Tennyson is cited thirty three times whereas Goethe, who has always been recognized as an influence upon Longfellow, is mentioned only seventeen times. In Britain, Ebenezer Elliott (the Corn-Law rhymer) remarked in a letter to Samuel Smiles that "Longfellow is indeed a poet, and he has done what [Elliott] deemed an impossibility; he has written English hexameters, giving our mighty lyre a new string! When Tennyson dies, he should read Evangeline to Homer" (qtd. in Ghodes American Literature 118). And in a more scholarly treatment--an article on Longfellow in the Dublin University Magazine (Apr 1850)--the critic brought Longfellow and Tennyson together although he felt Tennyson to possess more "quaintness and varied power" than Longfellow (see Ghodes American Literature 112).

That Tennyson himself recognized how popular opinion equated him with Longfellow is shown in the following story deemed "apocryphal" by Ghodes, but which others like Martin have taken as revealing Tennyson's uncouth, rustic manners (240). Charles H. Brookfield in Random Reminiscences writes:

My father was dining one night at the Oxford and Cambridge Club with George Venables, Frank Lushington, Tennyson, and two or three others. After dinner the poet insisted on putting his feet on the table, tilting back his chair more Americano. There were strangers in the room, and he was expostulated with for his uncouthness, but in vain. "Do put down your feet!" pleaded his host. "Why should I?" retorted Tennyson. "I'm very comfortable as I am." "Everyone's staring at you," said another. "Let 'em stare," replied the poet placidly. "Alfred," said my father, "people will think you're Longfellow." Down went the feet. (qtd. in Ghodes 119)⁵⁹

Whether Tennyson's prompt reaction was due more to his desire not to be thought of as American than his unwillingness to be mistaken for the popular American poet is uncertain. What is certain, however, is that Tennyson's immediate circle perceived that the link between the two poets was familiar enough to use in a way that called for no further explanation. Similarly in America, Longfellow was the "American Tennyson" (Tryon "Nationalism" 304). This was particularly true in the 1850s. In April 1853 while attending a "wretched play" of fashionable life in New York, Longfellow was astonished to hear the female star ask of her milliner which she preferred: "Longfellow or Tennyson" (Life II 243). Eidson notes that particularly in 1855, when Hiawatha and Maud came before American audiences at the same time, in subsequent reviews

⁵⁹ Martin quotes the same story as having been cited in Jane Brookfield's "Early Recollections of Tennyson" (Martin 240).

Tennyson was frequently compared to Longfellow, usually to the Laureate's disadvantage (138-41).

Yet by the late 1850s, reviewers in England in particular had come to make critical distinctions between the two poets. The reviewer of Miles Standish for the Chamber's Journal (Nov 1858) might be thought of as representative of those English readers who had begun to react against the popular conjoining of Longfellow and Tennyson:

No miss at a boarding-school ever yet had the headache in consequence of a too earnest application to the pages of Mr. Longfellow. He is, for a true poet -- and we do not deny him that title -- the most superficial thinker possible. There is a gulf between his mind and Mr. Tennyson's in this respect -- although they are often vulgarly classed together -- far broader than the separating Atlantic. (rptd in Cameron 61)

Echoing these sentiments, several of Tennyson's friends began to question the popular linking of Longfellow and Tennyson. In a letter to Mrs Tennyson in January 1859, Thomas Woolner describes meeting a Miss Waugh (who later married W. Holman Hunt in 1865), and remarks that he "converted her to Browning and almost--of course not quite--but almost made her look with suspicion upon that schoolgirl poet Longfellow; Tennyson was her established poet, but she looked with a gentle eye upon the Yankee and could make neither head nor tail of Robert" (Amy Woolner 159). Growing tensions in the late 1850s between Britain and the United States over abolition, and threats of Britain being drawn into America's Civil War could very easily have generated caustic remarks toward Longfellow

as America's national bard. Moreover, the references to boarding-school misses and schoolgirl poets surely echo Bulwer-Lytton's infamous "School-Miss-Alfred" label that he had pinned on Tennyson in 1845 (see chapter four), and are a means of vindicating Tennyson from this earlier charge as well as a fairly accurate estimate of a large segment of Longfellow's readership in Britain.

Yet disparagement of the poetry need not thereby follow identification of schoolgirls as its readers. Georgina Macdonald, a student of William Fulford's and later wife of Burne-Jones, identifies the "value" that Fulford placed on Longfellow's poetry in her recollection that Fulford "fed" his students "with Longfellow first of all as the food suited to our years and so brought us gradually into a condition more or less fit for the revelation before introducing us to his prime hero, Tennyson" (qtd. in Cruse 240). Indeed, as "English Literature" was becoming established in the 1870s as a subject for study in the school system, Matthew Arnold had recommended that Mrs Hemans's "The Graves of a Household" and "The Homes of England" be used with schoolchildren because they have "real merits of expression and sentiment [that] the children can feel" (qtd. in Altick 161). The educational value of poetry as a humanizing influence, not just for the young but for all ages of readers, was a strong ideological force in the nineteenth century, in both America and Britain. It must be

taken into account if the transatlantic popularity of Longfellow and Tennyson is to be fully understood.

As a cultural commodity, Victorian poetry--if it were to be popular--would have to embrace the spirit of the age, yet neither reflect it nor direct it in a too obvious or didactic way. This entailed on both sides of the Atlantic a level of audience participation commensurate with each individual reader's unique literary horizon of expectations. This participation would nonetheless activate readers to create collective sympathies appropriate to the text and to its age. In this way, popular poetry embraced the paradoxes of the Victorian period itself, and nowhere more than in its ability to elicit private responses within a context of national, public assent. The popular must therefore not be considered as the antithesis of the private, or the debased cousin of the public. Rather, the popular is a site of confluence wherein individuals' private choices arise in relation to the hegemony of socially constructed public sentiments.

CHAPTER TWO

THE BIRTH AND ADOLESCENCE OF THE POETIC VOICE:
LONGFELLOW'S "NEW" ENGLAND IN AMERICA

I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature . . . Surely there was never a better opportunity for the exertion of literary talent in our country, than is now offered [Nature] has at any rate given me a very strong predilection for literary pursuits, and I am almost confident in believing that, if I can ever rise in the world, it must be by the exercise of my talents in the widefield of literature.

--Longfellow to his father
(5 Dec 1824, Letters I 94-5)

Hans Robert Jauss argues that literary history is best understood through close analysis of an author's texts in relation to their various changes within a changing horizon of expectations. Reception theory of this kind is not restricted to readers alone, however, since authors themselves--in the very act of writing and revising--are their own readers, and they assess their work according to their own expectations: of the genre, of their texts' relation to familiar works within the literary-historical context, and of the contrast between the literary language of the text and the practical function of language within the lived reality of the time ("Literary History" 18). Hence, this method of analysis "not only follows the fame, image, and influence of a writer but also examines the historical conditions and changes in his understanding" (23). It places authorial intention within a multi-faceted context of the writer's personal, professional, and socio-political aims before it "follows" the author into

realms determined by the reception of her or his work. A study of the significance of Longfellow's and Tennyson's popular poetry must therefore first be preceded by analyses of the poets themselves in relation to the formation, for each poet, of a poetic voice expressive of the multiple motivations described above. That is, before the impact of the poetry can be clearly understood, the impact of forces governing its inception must first be examined.

Because the focus of this study is on Longfellow and Tennyson as poets of the people, reason dictates that any biographical foundation which is laid should trace the social and professional features of the poets' characters rather than, as in many conventional biographies, the psychological or psycho-familial forces of personal development. This strategy may seem merely a convenient means of side-stepping, on the one hand, the dearth of material describing Longfellow's personal life and, on the other, the perplexity surrounding the degree to which Tennyson was influenced by an ancestral lineage dominated by morbidity, depression, and even insanity--the Tennysonian "black-blood."¹ The search for private causes for a Victorian poetry which, of necessity, encouraged public, exoteric behaviour is ultimately wrong-headed since it often leads to unprofitable derision when the

¹ Robert Bernard Martin's biography Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart and Ann Colley's biocritical Tennyson and Madness are the most recent studies of the psychology of Tennyson.

poetry seems not to ring true to preconceived notions of psychological temperament. For this reason, psychology plays a limited role in the biographical sketches here and in chapters three and four.

The differences of character in the early Longfellow and Tennyson are actually quite surprising when juxtaposed with the many parallels that may be drawn in the poets' later professional careers.² Yet, in general, these disparities are a function of place in its effect upon the creation of the individual through upbringing and family influence. Each poet's sense of personal identity and subsequent vocation developed out of a conscious awareness of his position within a socio-economic class shaped by the larger forces of national identity. Longfellow was, quite simply, an American while Tennyson was an Englishman.

To claim that, since Longfellow and Tennyson were both born into what is pervasively known in twentieth-century as the

² Bliss Carman's conflation of the two poets in the early part of this century betrays a prevailing late nineteenth-century assumption--utterly false one might add--about the essential sameness of Longfellow and Tennyson as poets of the people. Carman alleges that "[b]oth were gentle born; both were college bred; both were happy in their friends, their homes; both were permitted by fortune to be exempt from poverty and distressful cares which have harassed so many poets and dissipated their powers; both were serene and moderate gentlemen, greatly and widely beloved; and both had long unbroken careers of worldly and artistic prosperity, crowned at last with memorials in the great English Abbey" (The Poetry of Life (1905) rpt Walter 313). Only the last phrase, that each is honoured at Westminster Abbey, is true and, remarkably, Carman says nothing about this distinction having been conferred upon an American poet.

"bourgeoisie," they may be said to share the same ideology would be an egregious example of mistermmed and misapplied social history. For not only did the bourgeoisie as such have no commonly shared significance in the nineteenth century but, more importantly, should there exist any similarity between an American and a British family's status it would likely be only monetary and would not necessarily lead to similar ideologies. In his two volume study, The Bourgeois Experience: Victoria to Freud, social historian Peter Gay argues that "bourgeoisie" was viewed as a French loan word in the nineteenth century, and was seldom used by English people, who preferred "middle classes" instead.³ "Middle classes" is thus used here since its obvious English plurality underscores the truly heterogeneous nature of this social group: "the most dramatic social aspect of the bourgeois experience in the nineteenth century was the economic, social, and political inequality that prevailed within the bourgeoisie itself; its hierarchical divisions were more telling than any class solidarity--except when outside pressures were brought to bear by a radicalized rural population or a militant labour movement" (Gay I 24). The diverse composition of middle class culture, especially as it is in this case separated by an ocean of distinct political ties and allegiances, to a large extent determined the

³ Gay notes that "bourgeoisie" was, however, used within socialist discourse, the most obvious example being Engels's Condition of the Working Class in England (1844).

differences between the early Longfellow and Tennyson. Ironically, however, outside pressures from similar though not precisely the same kind of political and sociological forces as those described above by Gay assisted in the forging of a shared vocational identity that in the mid-career of Longfellow and Tennyson might, for all its generality, be described as the poetic voice of the middle classes.

For Longfellow at least, this middle-class voice established itself early as an interactive complex of reflection and rejection of nineteenth-century feminine cultural influences. In part, the "feminized" view of the American bard can be attributed to Longfellow's brother Samuel, who, in his Life of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1886), immortalized a pious, "gentle" poet. Bluntly put, "the total effect is a misleading, emasculated, late Victorian version of the truth, a scissor-silhouette, without colour" (xix) according to Lawrence Thompson, the only serious challenger to Samuel's Life. Yet the absolute sway of the Life over even those critics like Edward Wagenknecht--who claim to be exempt from the Victorian-bashing tendencies of the 1920s to 40s--bespeaks a lingering critical acceptance of an effete Longfellow, especially in his pre-college years.

For most biographers of Longfellow, the gentleness of the poet's nature can be directly attributed to the influences of his mother, Zilpah Wadsworth. And, according to the biographer's critical outlook, these influences were either

maintained and deepened throughout Longfellow's life by his romantic ties to both Mary Storer, his first wife, and Fanny Appleton, his second, or consistently at odds with an inherited "Yankee shrewdness" of his lawyer/congressman father, Stephen Longfellow. The first of these views places the young Longfellow squarely within a female-centred Victorian America such as the one described in Ann Douglas's The Feminization of American Culture. This America, and the young Longfellow within it, is examined first, before considering possible contradictions to, or even within, that world.

Born 27 February 1807 in Portland, Maine, into a financially comfortable Unitarian family, Longfellow experienced early life within the cloistered security of home and hearth. The second of eight children, he was shaped by provincial domesticity: moral virtue embodied in and maintained by a strong matriarch; professional vocation manifested in and determined by an equally strong though often absent patriarch; and early education in parochial schools, experientially broadened in college by the "assistance" of an older brother. In this view of Longfellow's upbringing, the poet's mother as a formative influence reigns supreme. Edward Hirsh focuses on Zilpah's creation for herself and her family of a religiously motivated idealism and a life-long hatred of war (6). For Hirsh, Longfellow's mother assisted in the establishment of a childhood Arcadia to which her son would,

in later life, harken back in his poetry and attempt to recapture. And, despite the fact that Longfellow received a formal education outside the home beginning as early as age three at Ma'am Fellows dame school, Wagenknecht maintains that "though Longfellow was an excellent student from the beginning, one cannot help but feel that the schools he attended were of less importance than the earnest but benevolent influence of his home, where Puritan highmindedness survived, shorn of all its early hardness and fanaticism" (Full Length 2).

Both Hirsh and Wagenknecht apparently accept Samuel's speculation upon his brother's early life as determined by a recollection of his own. Neither man questions the nostalgically induced rose colouring in the lenses of Samuel's glasses when Samuel writes of their mother's influence upon the poet: "From her must have come to her son the imaginative and romantic side of his nature Full of a tender, simple, unquestioning piety, she was a lover of church and sermon and hymn; a devout and constant reader of the Bible, especially of its Psalms [She] was an untiring advocate of peace" (Life I 4). And, at first glance, Andrew Hilens's recent Letters of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow seem to support this pious portrait wherein, once Longfellow is at college, he engages in discussions of poetic sentiment with his mother, interspersed with domestic concerns and religious

moralism of a markedly soft and gentle kind.⁴ The known image of Zilpah Longfellow, from the above biographers, thus appears to fit neatly into the larger view of early America outlined by Douglas, a world in which patriarchal Calvinism had been defeated by the anti-intellectual sentimentalism of women (12), and a multitude of social forces were making it clear that "women were to cultivate domestic piety behind closed doors while their male counterparts were to face, and if possible conquer, the competitive world of commerce" (57).⁵

⁴ In "Learning about Manhood: Gender Ideals and the Middle-class Family in Nineteenth-Century America," E. Anthony Rotundo examines the family correspondence of young men to demonstrate how Victorian mothers primarily influenced the moral character of the "Christian Gentleman," while fathers helped to foster the "Masculine Achiever." However, he goes on to note that "there was nothing exclusive about either one of these teaching roles. Women tended to supplement their husband's [sic] attempts to teach the values of achievement and success and men helped to support their wives' efforts to teach morality and Christian piety" (45).

⁵ The split between the "domestic" world of women and the "capitalistic" world of men is best catalogued in Barbara Welter's "The Cult of True Womanhood," wherein she provides contemporary documentation for public acceptance of this cultural division in America. Glenna Matthews's Just a Housewife argues that the establishment of women as moral authorities within the home initially led to the social acceptance of domestic values within the larger political context of the Moral Reform Society. In contrast, the enervating influence of domesticity in relation to the more overtly political movement--nineteenth-century American feminism--is discussed in Ann Douglas's study as well as in Carroll Smith-Rosenberg's Disorderly Conduct. Equally relevant discussions of gender specific spheres of influence generally form at least part of most nineteenth-century social histories; Volume II of Gay's Bourgeois Experience (291-7) is a neutral example, while an acerbic attitude toward women's roles of whatever kind militates against general acceptance of the views expressed in E. Douglas Branch's The Sentimental Years. Challenge to unqualified acceptance of Victorian America's feminine sentimentalism, and to women's roles as

The most vigorous opposition to the argument that Longfellow was, from an early age, molded by feminine sentiment of the kind described by Douglas is to be found in Thompson's Young Longfellow. His correctives come from two sources: externally, from the busy commercial life of Longfellow's seaport home of Portland and, internally, from Longfellow's lineage on his mother's side. Thompson stresses the mercantile shipping interests of post-Revolutionary Portland as a decisive influence on the young Longfellow's impressionable mind. The vigour of the seaport was also embodied in Zilpah's father, General Peleg Wadsworth--a local revolutionary hero and later congressman (as was Longfellow's father for a term)--who established the family in Portland's public eye as representatives of spirited and courageous endeavour (4-8).

Newton Arvin and Cecil B. Williams both follow Thompson's lead by countering the popular image of Longfellow as unduly influenced by an over-protective, domestic upbringing. Arvin endorses Thompson's view of Portland as a hub of commercial enterprise and of the Wadsworth-Longfellow family as political magnates in the local community. Though primarily concerned

necessarily weak and ineffectual in relation to the development of the nation as a whole has recently come from a trans-atlantic perspective provided in Elizabeth Helsinger's and others' three volume edition of essays that make substantial use of primary sources to discuss The Woman Question: Society and Literature in Britain and America, 1837-1883.

with Longfellow in relation to his poetry rather than with his early life, Williams nonetheless initially focuses on Stephen Longfellow to suggest that he played a significant role in instilling within his young son a "Yankee shrewdness" that would, throughout the poet's life, determine Longfellow's ever-present awareness of his writing within a context of vocational necessities--with world-wide popularity as the reward. In short, for these biographers, the masculine world of commerce, strengthened when necessary by politics and military exploits, plays just as great a role, if not greater, in defining the young Longfellow's character as the generally accepted feminine cloister of hearth and home.

For Thompson and, to a lesser degree, Arvin and Williams, the most noteworthy feature of Longfellow's mother is her firmness of moral character that gives her a strong-mindedness equal to the ebullience of her father (8). What is known of Zilpah's character, however, is decidedly ambiguous and is nowhere more evident than in the following letter she writes to her often absent husband, a letter which Thompson contends illustrates "the patient devotion [with which] Zilpah tended her modest though capable husband toward wider horizons with her shrewd understanding" (12).

I think my dear husband you will be able to pass a month from home very pleasantly, provided we should all continue pretty well. The Theatre will occupy many of your evenings, and attention to your friends and mine will I hope agreeably beguile the remainder. It is good for us all, especially for Gentlemen, occasionally to step beyond our own narrow sphere and enlarge our affections & ideas by

an intercourse with polished society. Now as I am so entirely shut out from the world, you must be my representative, and enjoy the pleasures, and fulfil the duties of life for me as well as for yourself . . . I have written in the midst of the children; writing, chatting, laughing, crying. Amid such confusion of sounds who could write with much connection. (qtd. in Thompson 12)

Clearly, conflicting impulses underlay Zilpah's "shrewd understanding," but these are not emphasized by Thompson. Using excerpts from letters similar to the above, Thompson argues for Longfellow's mother as a woman of "courage and unselfishness" with constant "delight in her children" (12-13). In actual fact, in almost every letter he quotes, Zilpah juxtaposes her husband's stimulating social set with the "narrow [yet harried] sphere" of home and children. Her implicit envy and even criticism of the "gentleman's" life that so frequently leaves her alone, with the full responsibility of several children and an entire household, are obvious throughout. After all, as she points out, the friends her husband will see are also her friends; and although she takes an obvious pleasure in contemplating his "widening sphere," her interest seems as much a self-gratifying vicariousness as it does unselfish promotion of her husband. The extent to which Zilpah herself was aware of conflicting motivations in letters such as the one above cannot not be known. What is known, however, is that in a short time to come a great many middle-class women would consciously seek "legitimately" to widen their proper spheres

for themselves by transferring their private domestic occupations into any number of public causes taken up by the Moral Reform Society (established nationally in 1837). They would no longer have to live exciting lives vicariously through their men. In relation to the "feminine" influences embodied in the mother at work upon the young poet, then, Zilpah should rightfully be described in her true complexity, with a "shrewdness" of character sufficient to allow for her perception of the role society had allotted her and for reflective comment upon its limitations.

Inasmuch as such a complex view of Zilpah has not been attempted, neither has the neatly bifurcated vision of Longfellow's world--female or male-dominated according to the predilections of his biographers--been seriously challenged. Likewise, the poet and his poetry have been subsequently judged, often apparently unconsciously, by similarly genderized perceptions with negative or positive results depending upon the critical biases of the scholar or critic in question. To date, little or no consideration from a literary historical or critical perspective has been given to the ways in which the so-called feminine and masculine spheres may have mutually reinforced one another in Longfellow's world or, for that matter, in Longfellow himself.

Social historians of nineteenth-century America, however, are beginning to trace the ways in which the shift from a family-centred domestic economy to a commercial and industrial

capitalism helped to define the newly established middle-class home, family life, and hence the role of women in the transitional period of the late eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Broadly put, the removal of material productivity from the home necessitated the establishment of commercial market-place values inconsistent with the spiritual and moral values practised previously by the community at large. The latter thus became confined within the context of home and family and fell to the management of the now non-productive female members of the household, while industrial capitalism generated an ever increasing store of products that helped to underscore women's rightful place within the home.

Caroll Smith-Rosenberg, for example, argues that initial economic discrimination against women entering the newly established industrial workforce actually assisted the development of a "confining ideology" that erected "the nonproductive woman into a symbol of bourgeois class hegemony; the new bourgeois men of the 1820s, 1830s and 1840s formulated the Cult of True Womanhood, which prescribed a female role bounded by kitchen and nursery, overlaid with piety and purity, and crowned with subservience" (13). In actuality, the True Womanhood to which Smith-Rosenberg refers was a phenomenon created not just by bourgeois men but, as Welter points out, by women and clergymen in "the women's magazines, gift annuals, and religious literature of the nineteenth-century" (151). For instance, writing in 1841, Mrs. A.J.

Graves uses religious rhetoric to provide a capitalist rationale for a female-governed domestic morality:

. . . . our homes shall be made attractive by the pure and satisfying enjoyments which religion, intellect, and the social affections have gathered around them. Then . . . when our husbands, and our sons go forth into the busy and turbulent world, we may feel secure that they will walk unhurt amid its snares and temptations. Their hearts will be at home, where their treasure is; and they will rejoice to return to its sanctuary of rest, there to refresh their wearied spirits, and renew their strength for the toils and conflicts of life.

(qtd. in Ewen 126).

This interdependence of a burgeoning capitalist economy and the spiritual sanctuary of the home also was, despite its imposed limitations, empowering to women. Citing Sarah Hale, editor of the very early Ladies Magazine (1828), Douglas makes clear the economic means by which middle-class women's moral authority was guaranteed: "Authority over men must . . . never be usurped; but still women may, if they will, exert their talents, and [by] the opportunities nature has furnished, obtain an influence in society that will be paramount to authority. They may enjoy the luxuries of wealth, without enduring the labors to acquire it; and the honors of office, without feeling its cares, and the glory of victory, without suffering the dangers of the battle" (qtd. 73). Douglas herself, however, sees women not as having been empowered by "the luxuries of wealth," the productivity of laissez-faire capitalism, but rather co-opted into the specific roles of saint and consumer, an actual enfeeblement for women which, in

Douglas's view, had a pernicious influence on nineteenth-century American culture as a whole by infusing feminine sentimentality into religion, literature, theology, and historical studies while men were otherwise engaged in the business of making money.

Clearly, whether or not one views domestically-based moral authority as empowering or enfeebling, the roles of women to which such authority was ascribed and the capitalist roles of men in nineteenth-century America were so integrated that any attempt to understand the one without taking into account the other leads to unjust simplification of an amazingly complex society. This society was shaped by a dialectic between, on the one hand, the spiritual yet non-productive and therefore supposedly enervating realm of women and, on the other, the capitalistic, productive, and therefore supposedly invigorating realm of men. In fact, during his late teens, Longfellow was motivated by a similar dialectic when, at Bowdoin College (1822-25), he tried to establish for himself his identity as a poet while nearly all the evidence around him pointed to the popular conception of poetry as an emasculating enterprise.

In his commencement oration at Bowdoin College, "Our Native Writers" (1825), Longfellow criticized "the prevalent modes of thinking which characterize [his] country and [his] times":

We are a plain people, that have had nothing to do with the mere pleasures and luxuries of life: and hence there has sprung up within us a quick sightedness to the failings of literary men, and an

aversion to everything that is not practical, operative, and thoroughgoing. But if we would ever have a national literature, our native writers must be patronized. (qtd. in Higginson 82)

And in the years to come, Longfellow was to denounce directly what he felt to be the public's misconception "that literature begets an effeminate and craven spirit" (Review of Sidney's "Defense of Poesy" (1832) in Works [Davos Press] 365).

The dilemma that Longfellow faced in trying to establish himself as a male poet in a field publicly conceived of as effeminate had as much to do with the fact that the great majority of poets in early nineteenth-century America were women as with the fact that the culture perceived poetry as merely a feminine enterprise. Emily Stipes Watts points out that from 1800 to 1850 over eighty female poets in the United States (not counting eighteenth-century poets still publishing into the nineteenth century) published at least one volume of verse or were being published regularly in the anthologies, and that the "number of women who published only in journals (most with a wide distribution) [was] at least twice that number" (65). She adds that it "was actually easier and more 'respectable' for women to publish poetry than it was for men" since poetry was generally confined to publication within periodicals which, as Watts maintains, "largely appealed to the new middle-class women readers. For this reason, the first American poet who could actually be called a poet by profession, who actually made enough money to support herself

and her family was probably Lydia Hunt Sigourney" (67). If Longfellow were to choose for himself the profession of authorship--to use Charvat's term--as his sole profession, he would have to take into account the themes, subject matter, and techniques of the best-selling female poets of the day, and create for himself a poetic voice within that context. And this is exactly what he did.

Thus it is surprising to read in Hilien's introduction to Volume I of Longfellow's Letters that "they contain few statements of poetical ambition and only occasional allusions to poetic theory, and his comments on the poetry of others are rarely marked by critical perception" (4). Hilien's view of the early Longfellow is misleading in the extreme. For throughout his college letters, Longfellow frequently discoursed upon poetry and literary topics with his mother, sisters, and male and female friends alike; he spent close to a year in an epistolary debate with his father over the value of a "merely literary" career. In fact, during this exchange with his father, Longfellow made manifest his personal commitment to literature despite his father's scepticism about the social and practical value of literature as a profession. According to one of Longfellow's college classmates, J.W. Bradbury, in a class defined by ambition and "struggle for rank in scholarship . . . Longfellow stood justly among the first" (qtd. in Life I 27-8). Given his rank, his questioning of how best to use his education and obvious abilities assumed

paramount importance as Longfellow approached graduation. As befitted his social position and education, Longfellow's obvious career options were professional: the law, clergy, or medicine. But as early as March 1824, at age seventeen, he began to allude to the altogether different profession of writing, fearing that his father would not approve (Letters I 83). Longfellow was right. In the next month, he had gently to admonish his father for choosing law as a career for him: "In thinking to make a lawyer of me, I fear you thought more partially than justly I hardly think Nature designed me for the bar, or the pulpit, or the dissecting room" (Letters I 89). These sentiments are reiterated more strongly in a letter to Longfellow's friend, George Washington Wells: "I cannot make a lawyer of any eminence because I have not a talent for argument, I am not good enough for a minister,--and as to Physic, I utterly and absolutely detest it" (Letters I 93). Yet, as Thompson points out, "filial respect and obedience" prevailed, and Longfellow reluctantly agreed to a career in law (54).

Nevertheless, Longfellow was bent on first testing his mettle as a professional writer. By the end of January 1825, he had succeeded in convincing his father to allow him to study "general literature for one year at Cambridge" (Letters I 103) and to engage in writing poetry and essays for periodicals before assuming his legal training. Although the year at Cambridge never came about, preempted as it was by the

offer of Chair of Modern Languages at Bowdoin College, Longfellow's reasoning with his father betrays the young poet's self-confident assumption of his future preeminence as a writer. After proposing a year of study in History, "the best authors in polite literature," and Italian, he adds the following:

After leaving Cambridge, I would attach myself to some literary periodical publication [T]he fact is . . . I most eagerly aspire after future eminence in literature Surely there was never a better opportunity for the exertion of literary talent in our country, than is now offered. [Nature] has at any rate given me a very strong predilection for literary pursuits, and I am almost confident in believing that, if I can ever rise in the world, it must be by the exercise of my talents in the wide field of literature.

(5 Dec 1824, Letters I 94-5)

Longfellow continued to attempt to persuade his father of his natural literary abilities by citing several expressions of approbation by Theophilus Parsons, editor of the United States Literary Gazette to which Longfellow had, by Parsons's invitation, become a regular contributor.⁶ Parsons was "well-satisfied" that Longfellow's "literary talents [were] of no ordinary character" (Parsons qtd. by Longfellow in Letters I 95). Having failed to receive an immediate answer from his

⁶ From Nov. 15, 1824 to Nov. 15, 1825, Longfellow contributed seventeen poems for the semi-monthly Gazette along with known poets such as Bryant to whom one of Longfellow's poems was falsely attributed (to the great delight of the younger poet). Five of these Longfellow reprinted in Voices of the Night. Longfellow also contributed several short essays, the most important of which are the five that make up his "Lay Monk" series appearing in 1825.

father concerning his Cambridge plan, Longfellow wrote again at the end of December and, once more, used Parsons's high regard for his poetry as evidence of an innate poetical ability. Here, Longfellow posits that, after his year of studying Belles Lettres, it would not "require a spirit of prophecy to predict with some degree of certainty what kind of figure" he would have commenced "to make in the literary world," for, after all, he is convinced that he "will be eminent in something" (Letters I 98-9).

Given that Longfellow was only eighteen, and that he had necessarily to appeal to his father if he wished to further his education, his final deference to his father's decision to grant him only one year at Cambridge does not seem excessively subservient. On the contrary, Longfellow's managing at this time to secure a limited literary education coupled with practical literary experience displays his self-assurance and determination as a writer, particularly since his father had warned him that "there [was] not wealth enough in this country to afford sufficient encouragement and patronage to merely literary men" (qtd. in Life I 55-6). Parsons, independently of Longfellow's father, had echoed a similar view. Longfellow himself was forced to admit that "most of our literary men, thus far, have not been professedly so, until they have studied and entered the practice of Theology, Law, or Medicine" (Letters I 95). These views of the contemporary market for literary talent are corroborated by Charvat in his

study of The Origins of American Critical Thought: 1810-1835, in which he notes that less than half a dozen men (women are not considered in this context) devoted their lives to literature in this period; none made a living at it (5). Longfellow, for all his literary ambitions, was not prepared to starve in order to realize them.

The law was therefore to "support [his] real existence, literature an ideal one" (Letters I 104). In other words, Longfellow would do his utmost to sustain a dual life by following his father into the "real" masculine world of professional (and likely political) activity through his socially respectable role as a lawyer, while providing sanctuary and repose for himself in the socially dubious "ideal" world of poetry, dominated as it was by women. Williams openly commends Longfellow's "yankee shrewdness," inherited no doubt from his father, he adds, in recognizing that the climate was not right for a self-supporting literary career in early nineteenth-century America (41). Yet Longfellow's shrewdness of vision may just as readily be attributed to his mother's influence, conditioned as she was to accept the limitations of her "real" life of home and family while imaginatively projecting herself into an "ideal" masculine world of social activity.

In short, two of Longfellow's most firmly held assumptions about himself--a natural inclination toward a literary future and a capacity for eminence regardless of profession--suggest

that his character was equally shaped by two forces: a female-inherited imagination restricted, as were women, by religious moralism, and a male-inherited drive for professional recognition. As Longfellow looks to a future America of increasing literacy and widespread education, particularly among women, he sees himself as able to attain literary eminence within that context. Longfellow's ambitions in this regard not only surface in the above letters to his father, but specifically appear in his letters to his sisters and later to Caroline Doane, a first cousin once removed. Evident in these letters are the underlying reasons for Longfellow's previously noted conviction that "[s]urely there was never a better opportunity for the exertion of literary talent in our country, than is now offered."

In 1824, at the same time that he is anxiously persuading his father against making a lawyer of him, and petitioning for an opportunity for a year's education at Cambridge, Longfellow disparages the "multitude of weekly and semi-weekly journals," in particular, the proposed "'Wreath,' a literary Museum for the Ladies." He adds that his sister, Elizabeth, has vowed to him that she will not read it "'if it is composed of such trash as usually fills the ladies Magazines. They pay but a poor compliment to the ladies to think that they can be pleased with such nonsense'[sic]" (Letters I 84-5). By the end of that year, Longfellow had become a regular contributor, in both poetry and prose, to the more reputable United States

Literary Gazette. In the meantime, however, Longfellow paid close attention to so-called "women's literature." In fact, he once remarked to his sister, Anne, 24 October 1824: "Do you know who wrote that ridiculous, lifeless, little piece of Poetry in the 'Wreath' signed 'H'? [Longfellow at that time usually signed his work 'HWL'.] I am afraid folks will think that I wrote it, and that I am in the habit of writing for the puny paper!" (Letters I 92). Clearly, as Longfellow was establishing his own place within the existing literary community, he clearly saw himself as competing, on some level, for that place with women.

His letters of 1825 to Caroline Doane also betray a fascination with the poetry of the female poets of the time, and its reception, in particular of the enormously popular British poets, L.E.L. and Mrs Hemans.⁷ According to

⁷ In The Victorians and their Reading, Amy Cruse notes that although Felicia Hemans died in 1835 all "through the early years of Victoria's reign she was read and praised and almost revered. Every young lady [including Florence Nightingale and Mary Ann Evans] had a copy of her poems, and in every schoolroom they were read and learnt by heart Not only the ladies, but older people too, of cultivated tastes praised Mrs. Hemans . . . ; and Wordsworth lamented her death with high eulogy" (178). The twentieth-century editor of Hemans's poetry, Donald H. Reiman, claims that "whatever final judgment awaits her poetry, [she] has the distinction of having achieved wider recognition and popularity among her contemporaries than has any other woman poet in English." He points out the innumerable editions of Hemans's work--from 1808 to 1900--and then adds that although "some have mentioned L.E.L. (Laetitia Elizabeth Landon) as having had a larger readership, such a judgment must be restricted to the period between 1824 and 1835 when literary annuals were in their heyday" (v).

Longfellow, "Miss Letitia [sic] Elisabeth Landon (L.E.L.) has written certainly some very beautiful poetry, but she is rather too careless. She can no more compose with Mrs. Hemans than [sic] Percival can with Bryant" (Letters I 132-3). In subsequent remarks concerning L.E.L., Longfellow admires the "beauty in her ideas" and the "elegance in her language," but he also criticizes her effusiveness which, in his mind, frequently results in artless structures and imitativeness (Letters I 141-2).

As for Mrs Hemans, Longfellow's initially high regard for her began to wane. Admitting that she "possesses great genius and great power over language," he critically adds that "of late, by her own carelessness, she has fallen short of her own excellence. Moreover, she has introduced to modern poetry a hop, skip, and jump kind of measure, which has had, in my humble opinion, a very deleterious influence in our own country" (Letters I 139). Nonetheless, the overall importance of Mrs Hemans in America should not be underestimated: "No other poet was so cherished by American readers, no other spoken with such unanimous respect" (Branch 107). No other, that is, until Longfellow.

Where appropriate, the qualities of verse that secured Mrs Hemans her public recognition are discussed in relation to similar tendencies in Longfellow's work (see chapter five). At this point, however, it is sufficient to note that Longfellow was taking an active interest in women's poetry

precisely at the same time that he was creating his own fledgling poetic identity. Although it can be argued that in these letters Longfellow was merely responding to his female correspondent's enthusiasm for women's poetry of the time, without access to Caroline Doane's letters, it seems equally arguable that much of his concern for these women's work was initiated by Longfellow himself. Longfellow, at this time, is evidently forming an understanding of American poetry, and his place within it, not strictly by what he deems it should become but by what is: a poetry fashioned, to a great extent, by "scribbling women" (Hawthorne's term) and female readers.

Ironically, similar criticisms regarding "effusiveness" and "carelessness" had been levelled against Longfellow's own poetry both by his father and by Parsons at precisely this same time. In the decisive year of 1825, while Longfellow was plagued by the question of what profession he should pursue--and, if literary, what quality of literature was currently being written and read in America--he was also understandably anxious about the quality and reception of his own published poems. And it is the personal (Stephen Longfellow) and professional (Theophilus Parsons) male authority figures, and not his mother, sisters, or cousin, who influenced his views in this regard.

In the same letter to his father in which he outlines in detail the potential expenses of a year's study at Cambridge, and highlights his continued endeavours to exact payment for

writings he had submitted to the American Monthly Magazine⁸, Longfellow begins by graciously acknowledging the validity of the following criticism that his father had made of his poetry: "You should make it a rule never to send an effusion of the moment to the press, till the ardor and the feelings, with which it was written, have subsided" (see Letters I 108 note 2). His son replied: "Your good advice I shall hereafter follow, and have therefore sent no poetry for the next number of the Gazette,--though I have a piece written for that purpose. Your opinion upon my writing coincides in a great measure with that of Mr. Parsons, the editor of the United States Literary Gazette, who says that I must use more care, or rather, that it will be for my own advantage to use more care, than my communications generally exhibit (Letters I 106).⁹ Parsons, for his part, had adopted a paternal tone in his correspondence with the young poet, ever anxious to encourage Longfellow in ways that would advance his reputation and, one might add, the reputation of Parsons's Gazette. Obviously, Longfellow would be most sensitive to those same

⁸ These contributions have been identified as a poem, "To the Novice of the Convent of the Visitation," a dramatic sketch in verse, "The Poor Student," and an essay, "Youth and Old Age." Longfellow never did receive payment for these submissions (Life I 41).

⁹ Criticism of youthful precocity as a detriment to "manly" verse forms part of Longfellow's later view of the impediments to national literature outlined in his review article of the new edition of Sidney's "Defense of Poesy," discussed below.

criticisms that he himself had so adeptly applied to L.E.L and Mrs Hemans; thus it is not surprising to discover that, by and large, Longfellow's "published" poetic productivity dropped off at this time and did not effectively resume until the late 1830s with the almost overnight success of Voices of the Night in 1839.

Admittedly, the period leading up to this achievement in poetry was hardly conducive to creativity, marked as it was by many personal and professional upheavals for the young poet: his first European tour (1825-29) in preparation to become the first Chair of Modern Languages at Bowdoin College (1829); marriage to Mary Storer Potter (1831); a second European tour, during which Mary died (1835-36); and appointment as Smith Professor of Modern Languages, Harvard University (1836). What is consistent throughout this period, however, is Longfellow's preoccupation with the establishment of a personal poetics, the development of which can be traced in his published prose--not poetry--of the time: his Bowdoin College commencement oration, "Our Native Writers" (1825); his "Lay Monk Essays," including "The Literary Spirit of Our Country," (March-Oct 1825); his review of the new edition of Sidney's "Defense of Poesy" (1832); and various passages in his Irvingesque tale--Outre Mer (1835) and prose romance, Hyperion (1839). As no other profession of the time could have, work within the newly established field of Modern Languages must have seemed to Longfellow a fortuitous

opportunity to fuse a necessary, respectable livelihood--a "real" life--with his "ideal" pursuit of literature. That Longfellow's prose works of the 1820s and 1830s adopted an instructional tone is thus not surprising given that he not only was schooling his audience but was also guiding himself in the fit relationship between the poet and his audience, between the life of the mind and practical endeavour. The final result of this prosaic enterprise, Kavanagh (1849), a largely autobiographical novel, contains Longfellow's last published pronouncements in prose concerning the value of literature, and poetry in particular, to its nation. Thus, even while Longfellow at college was preoccupied with his own private conflict of the real versus ideal life, described above in relation to his role as a potential contemporary of female poets, he was also preparing to participate in the ongoing public debate over the establishment of a specifically American literature.

Ironically, many of the terms used in this debate reveal for Longfellow at least, if not for many of the writers who participated, nineteenth-century America's desire to establish a national literature as a masculinist enterprise, the breaking free of a double yoke: from the suffocating influences of the "mother" country, England, and from the equally stultifying public misconception of literature as a worthlessly "feminine" enterprise. As Benjamin Spencer demonstrates in his study of America's Quest for Nationality,

resistance to British culture was "undoubtedly most intense in the early decades of the century during the 'literary war,' but even through the middle of the century major writers throughout the land reiterated Simms's charge that England maintained such a 'pernicious influence . . . over our mental and moral character' that 'we are emasculated and enslaved'" (85). The lack of an international copyright law was one obvious commercial reason for the continued sway of British opinion in the United States. But fearing more than a mere preponderance of British texts, American critics also worried that cisatlantic literature might be wanting in the strength and vigour needed to compete effectively for public recognition with a centuries-old British tradition. Hence the literati of antebellum America set to work to establish an identifiably virile national culture.

In this endeavour, Longfellow's early voice was clearly heard, but it became diffused over time as his travels in Europe militated against what he later felt to be America's chauvinist attitude. At the outset, the young poet's personal and professional circumstances described above shaped his early self-awareness of what his role could be in the creation and maintenance of a distinctly American literature. Yet, Herbert Gorman argues that while Longfellow "undoubtedly believed in his heart that he was an American, and so far as birth and tradition go he was one, . . . he had no conception of the duties--and there were duties--that devolved upon the

American litterateur in those years of scanty culture when the basis of a national literature was being formed" (vii-ix). According to Gorman, who implies rather than states directly these "duties," only Fuller, Poe, and Whitman at that time understood the requisite duties of true Americans interested in fostering national culture.

Gorman's estimation of the above authors as characteristic Americans seems to derive more from their active denunciation of Longfellow than from any discernable features in their own writing that would link them with one another as spokespersons for a national literature.¹⁰ Granted, Fuller, Poe and Whitman at different times and in different ways spoke to America's post War-of-1812 need to create a literature as resolutely at odds with England as the country itself had so recently been. But, in their own ways, almost every antebellum writer argued for a distinctively national voice in literature (see Spencer 77), not the least of whom was Emerson (not mentioned in this context by Gorman) who, in his "American Scholar" (1837), added greatly to his country's understanding of the poet's national commitment. In this regard, Emerson's influence

¹⁰ While both Fuller and Poe published sharply critical reviews of Longfellow, Whitman's public stance toward the bard was, for the most part, highly laudatory. Each of these critics, along with Emerson, is discussed at length below because in their own ways they assisted in the development of an American literature at odds with rather than aligned with the kind of poetry Longfellow was eventually to write. Since other leading poet-critics of the "schoolroom" such as Bryant or Lowell have generally been thought of as similar to Longfellow in sentiment, their work is not discussed.

should not be overlooked, particularly given that Longfellow attended several of Emerson's lectures and maintained friendly relations with him throughout his life.¹¹ Therefore, a brief survey of various voices--including Emerson's--within the ongoing debate between a native and a foreign-dominated literature is necessary to establish a literary historical context that would allow for a better understanding of Longfellow's final adoption of what he felt to be a universalist-American voice in his poetry.

The war of words that followed the War of 1812 was no less politically charged than its military counterpart.¹²

Federalist leaning journals and reviews squared off against upstart Democratic "rags" whose writers were described as heroically as their naval predecessors. The North American

¹¹ From the materials which are available in the various biographies, Samuel's Life, and the Letters, I have found no evidence to indicate that Longfellow either heard Emerson's "American Scholar" as a Phi Beta Kappa Address (Cambridge, Aug. 1837) or read it in subsequent publications. However, Longfellow was Smith Professor at Harvard at the time, and he records in his journal his attendance at nearly all of Emerson's subsequent lectures, with consistent comment and praise for the transcendental philosopher. The likelihood of his having no knowledge of "The American Scholar" is very slim.

¹² From the Revolution until the war of 1812, universalist sentiments, derived from a combination of neoclassical critics and Scottish common-sense philosophers and rhetoricians--especially Lord Kames and Hugh Blair--reigned in America without widespread resistance. American literature between the wars, if seen as distinct from British, was so only to Americans in its ability to become for them "the perfected organ of universal taste" (Spencer 37, added emphasis).

Review of 1815, for example, despite its avowed intention to "foster American genius, and, by independent criticism, instruct and guide the public taste" (N.Am.Rev. qtd. in Spencer 63) was actually prepared, according to John McCloskey, to "wait for decision on [a text's] merits or demerits from the higher authorities of London" (N.Am.Rev. qtd. in McCloskey 262). Meanwhile, Democratic magazines like Niles' Register, the Analectic and, in particular, The Portico used recent naval victories over Britain as analogues to inspire America's casting off of "the intellectual homage she had paid so long to the mother country . . ." (McCloskey 264). In what reads as a largely self-serving enterprise, The Portico (1816-18) tries to dispel the belief that literature is incompatible with wealth, industry, trade, mercantilism, and labor--the cornerstones of nineteenth-century America: "The habit of reading must become incorporated with the wants of the people, and every man must deem a book as necessary to his happiness as a dinner or an estate" (qtd. 266). At the same time that The Portico was encouraging in the general populace a taste for literature, it was soliciting contributions from young native writers through promises of participation in the building of the nation's character and visions of fame as burgeoning and as expansive as America itself (266-7).

Although no recorded evidence exists to prove that Longfellow had any interest in early Democratic magazines, it

is known that the nationalist sentiments expressed in them were not confined to their covers but were heard as well within the colleges and universities of New England. One influential voice in 1819, that of Professor Thomas C. Upham of Bowdoin College, bears a full hearing if only for Upham's importance to Longfellow as a type of poetic mentor from 1823-25. In his American Sketches, Upham maintained that even though Europeans could ridicule the name and prospects of his country, none could deny

that an ample and most interesting field is open for literary speculations and exertions. The character and civil habits, the piety and magnanimity of the first settlers, the sufferings and devotedness of the missionaries, who penetrated into dreary forests and abodes of savages; the societies of Christianized Indians; the character of celebrated chiefs; the adventurers of the first explorers of this country; the seclusion, devotions, and sufferings of frontier villages, are enchanting topics as well for the pencil of the limner as the lyre of the bard

(qtd. in Curti 250)

With the possible exception of frontier villages, the above list reads like a catalogue of topics from which Longfellow was later to select his most nationalistic themes.

A year later, challenged by the oft-quoted statement, "Who reads an American book?" by Rev. Sydney Smith (Edinburgh Review, 1820), Americans were called into yet another "War of Independence" with Britain. Although a pacifist in actual warfare, in this war, Longfellow assumed active duty. Choosing to speak on "Our Native Writers" for his commencement oration in 1825, and echoing several of Upham's claims, the

young poet stated his own optimistic belief that in America "[e]very rock shall become a chronicle of storied allusions; and the tomb of the Indian prophet be as hallowed as the sepulchres of ancient kings" (qtd. in Higgonson 33). He continues in this youthful, prophetic vein by forecasting his hopes for "a literature associated and linked in with the grand and beautiful scenery of our country,--with our institutions, our manners, our customs" (31), the repeated "our" promising that it would be only a matter of time before the overthrow of the parent by the children. That overthrow would have to be delayed however. As Longfellow himself admits, America "cannot yet throw off [its] literary allegiance to Old England" (31) because it has no sympathy for creative genius.

American writers were unable to exercise the necessary devotion that genius requires, according to Longfellow, because "plain people," the reading public, mistakenly perceived literary works as "mere pleasures and luxuries of life" (32). That the American public was to blame for the lack of a truly national literature is clearly outlined in "The Literary Spirit of Our Country," a published essay repeating the themes of his commencement oration. He argues that "the chief cause which has retarded the progress of poetry in America is the want of that exclusive cultivation which so noble a branch of literature would seem to require"; he goes on to claim that this "want" is actually the result of

the more serious "want of a rich and abundant patronage. It is the fear of poverty that deters many gifted and poetic minds from coming forward into the arena, and wiping away all reproach from [American] literature" (Works II [Davos] 372). Presumably, the reproach to which Longfellow refers is that of a present-day literary effetism since he adds that with ample patronage, "minds of the finest mould will be active to invigorate our literature" (372). Before this invigoration could take place, however, readers and writers alike would have to discard "the delicately finished model of English taste" which exercised a pervasive and injurious influence on American letters. In its stead, the magnificent sublimity of the nation's climate and natural scenery should "give strength and vigor to [the American] intellect," and the country's scarcity of traditional, classical allusions be one day overcome by the naturally heroic classicism inherent in the "glory of battles, and . . . the voice of eloquence" belonging to America's "fast perishing" Native Indians (370-72). (Hiawatha, at this point, seems only a few years away.) For the young Longfellow, American writers needed to launch and maintain a vigorous campaign against not only the perceived enfeeblement of literary pursuit itself, but the actual enfeeblement that was affecting American writing because of its emulation of its British parent.

If, in displaying passion for his country's innate poetical energies and rejecting antebellum America's "delicate"

sensibility inherited from England, the early Longfellow sounds--to our twentieth-century ears--more like Whitman than he does himself, the confusion stems from at least two sources: 1) Longfellow did not remain committed to a strictly nationalist view, but rather, over time, incorporated European sensibilities into his own to produce, in the end, a mixed view as seemingly effete as the "delicate" English taste he originally condemned; and 2) so few critics (with Thompson as a notable exception) have been willing to grant the young Longfellow any opportunity to speak out for himself against the insipid, late-Victorian creation of his brother that Longfellow's early essays are not only difficult to obtain, but seldom if ever referred to. The result is that the voice of Longfellow's nationalism rings false to our prejudiced ears.

Longfellow's personal poetics were substantially altered by his first and longest of four journeys to Europe (1825-29). Letters and journal notes during this period reveal Longfellow's deliberate attempts to learn not only the languages of the countries he inhabited--France, Spain, Italy, and Germany--but the literatures as well, especially of the troubadour poets of France and the Sturm und Drang writers of Germany. One key result of his experience of multiple national literatures was Longfellow's realization of the weakness of his own. Nearing the end of his travels, 28 March

1829, he wrote to his sister to explain his loss of poetic voice:

My poetic career is finished. Since I left America I have hardly put two lines together. I may indeed say that my muse has been sent to the House of Correction--and her last offspring were laid at the door of one of those Foundling hospitals for poor poetry--a New Year's 'souvenir'¹³. . . . [N]o soft poetic ray has irradiated my heart since the Goths and Vandals crossed the Rubicon of the front entry, and turned the sanctum sanctorum of the 'Little Room' into a china closet.

(Letters I 305)

The image of a china closet to replace his poetic sanctuary suggests that Longfellow's recent exposure to impassioned Europeans had revealed his poetry to him for what it was: artful, delicate craftwork, nothing more.

A journal entry written shortly after the above letter suggests the channel into which Longfellow would eventually redirect his verse now that he found it wanting: popular culture. Noting the profound influence of Byron upon the taste of the age, Longfellow nevertheless rejects Byron's "upper air" and "thunder of his wheels" for the simplicity of Wordsworth who "drove to Parnassus by the lower road, got sometimes lost in the bushes and lowland fogs, and was much

¹³ According to Hilen, "Souvenir" likely refers to Longfellow's contributions "The Song of the Birds" and the "Burial of the Minnisink" published in The Atlantic Souvenir; a Christmas and New Year's Offering (Philadelphia, 1827) and to "The Spirit of Poetry" published in The Souvenir for the following year (Letters I 308 n.5). The popularity of such Annuals and Giftbooks, and Longfellow's contributions to them, is discussed in chapter one.

molested by mosquito critics." "In our own country," Longfellow adds, "the Wordsworth school has evidently had the upper hand. His simple austerity and republican principle in poetry were in unison with our moral and political creed. Our modes of thought were sober and practical. So, in most instances, were his" (entry of May 1829 qtd. in Life I 169).¹⁴ Longfellow's frequent travels outside of the European universities' intellectually elite circles in order to experience domestic life in the villages supported his growing inclination, implied above, to become a voice for his own nation's simple folk.

Such a project, however, became intimately tied to his role as a Professor of Modern Languages (initially at Bowdoin College and later at Harvard) once he returned to America in 1829 and discovered that America's simple folk, to which he would address himself, represented a linguistic and cultural body as diverse as the European texts he had himself so recently acquired. For European immigration was as rapidly changing the visible ethnic cast of America as European philosophy was altering its intellectual ideology. For Longfellow, an American national literature would therefore

¹⁴ Longfellow's preference for Wordsworth over Byron became a common sentiment in America in the 1830s, and Longfellow himself may well have been an influence in this regard since in his review of Sidney's "Defense of Poesy" (discussed below) he criticizes at some length the multitude of Byronic imitators in America, and points out the simplicity of Wordsworth's diction as more in keeping with American experience, though it too was subject to puerile imitation.

have to take into account a multi-ethnic population, unschooled in the English tradition of literature, often forced by necessity into wholly practical as opposed to intellectual pursuits by sheer want of the English language if not by socio-economic class.

Longfellow's first public response to his newly adopted role as instructor of and as a potential voice for America's middle classes was to merge his various interests into the single attempt to teach the general populace that a love of literature was entirely compatible with the American doctrine of practical utility. In his review article of Sidney's "Defense of Poesy," published in 1832 in the North American Review, Longfellow's earlier concern for the public's misconception of poetry as effeminate nonsense is linked to a desire to instruct his readers in the specific ways in which this conception is faulty. Moreover, Longfellow's role as a professor of Modern Languages reveals itself in the examples chosen from European literatures to demonstrate the effects of climate upon a nation's verse, and to suggest the potential for a national uniqueness in poetry based on associative principles of this kind. These principles themselves Longfellow adopted from Madame de Stael and the Schlegels, Frederick in particular; yet, he put them to a specifically American use as many of his fellow literati would also do.¹⁵

¹⁵ In his review, Longfellow quotes Frederick Schlegel: "If we consider literature in its widest sense, as the voice which gives expression to human intellect,--as the aggregate

Here, Longfellow disparages the masculine "spirit of the age" in its clamouring after "bare, brawny, muscular utility," its various manifestations in "schemes for gain," and the acquisitive push westward of America's "rapidly increasing population" (Works [Davos] I 360). For him, a nation's greatness lies not in its commercial and territorial conquests, but in its "moral and intellectual preeminence" (361), mistakenly thought in America to be at odds with practical endeavour. A more serious misconception is revealed in the public's notion that "poetry and nonsense are convertible terms; that literature begets an effeminate and craven spirit . . . [that] intellect . . . [is to] display a rough and natural energy,--strength, straightforward strength, untutored in the rules of art, and unadorned by elegant and courtly erudition" (365). America needs to learn from Sidney that the so-called "ornamental arts," not the least of which is poetry, actually serve a utilitarian function as instruments "for improving the condition of society, and advancing the great purpose of human happiness" (368). Longfellow goes on to show that he wants both to "soothe" those whose "mind and body are worn down by the severity of

mass of symbols, in which the spirit of an age or the character of a nation is shadowed forth, then indeed a great and various literature is, without a doubt, the most valuable possession of which any nation can boast" (Lec. VII Lectures on the History of Literature Works [Davos] I qtd. 377). For the pervasive influence of Madame de Stael, see Charvat Origins, 63.

daily toil" and "inspire a love of heaven and virtue" (368-9). Throughout the review, poetry itself--be it the pastoral verse of bucolic life or the heroic romance of past ages--is thus portrayed as a sanctuary from the hustle and bustle of laborious activity, a sanctuary not unlike the domestic, spiritual paradise a woman was to provide for her over-worked husband.

Activity provides only the external facts of a nation's history while the "thoughts and feelings of a people" that are the prerogatives of poetry become "the spirit of the age itself,--embodied in the forms of language, and speaking in a voice that is audible to the external as well as the internal sense" (375-6). It follows that Longfellow should therefore express considerable disdain for the numerous American poets who have "imbibed the degenerate spirit of modern English poetry" by becoming "turgid and extravagant" mimics of Byron (388-90) since imitation, and poor imitation at that, frustrates the American people's abilities to express "their own feelings and impressions from what they see around them" (emphasis added 387). Convinced that imitative verse reinforces itself by "the indiscreet and indiscriminate praise of friends," the critical "puffery" common at the time, Longfellow completes his discussion with a comment that sounds strangely like self-criticism: he claims that another "circumstance which tends to give an effeminate and unmanly character to our literature, is the precocity of our writers.

Premature exhibitions of talent are an unstable foundation to build a national literature upon" (391). Guilty himself of a too early, too easy effusion--a criticism he had adroitly levelled at L.E.L.--Longfellow now insists that America's literature cannot afford such unmanly precocity if it is to combat successfully the insidious influences of the mother country.

The significance of Longfellow's review of Sidney's "Defense" cannot be overstressed. Not only does it establish the general principle of moral usefulness upon which Longfellow was to base his poetic voice, but it also betrays his preoccupation with the reception of poetry in America as dominated, if not by women themselves, then certainly by a public attitude that confined poetry to a feminine arena. As such, Longfellow's views were derived from and shared by several well-known and lesser-known authors of the time. James Fenimore Cooper, for example, had used his transatlantic experiences to castigate the educated classes of America in their continued deference to England; according to Spencer, Cooper "maintained that unless a 'manly, independent literature' in harmony with American facts were forthcoming, the very 'safety' of their institutions was in danger" (qtd. in Spencer 78). In contrast, Dr Channing, in his "Remarks on National Literature" (1830), argued that even while America must seek to define its social institutions and spiritual harvests in ways unembarrassed by the outworn guises of the

Old World, she must do so through the cultivation of an intellectual elite who would, in turn, freely share their discoveries with those less gifted than themselves (see Curti 249-50). Although Cooper and Channing would likely have seen themselves as embarking upon a similar course--one which would establish and protect American culture through national literature--they clearly diverge on class lines.

In principle, Longfellow eventually came to share Channing's belief in the value of an intellectual nobility to lead the masses; however, in his poetic practice he deferred to the commonality when necessary to secure a readership large enough to make the moral usefulness of his leadership role a cogent force in America. Thus, a full picture of Longfellow's attitude toward his public at this time demands a balancing of the intellectual and philosophical erudition he displays in his 1832 review with the artless naiveté that he adopts to narrate his Irvingesque tales of Outre-Mer: A Pilgrimage Beyond the Sea published only three years later.

Throughout this text, Longfellow retells as reflections of various cultural identities the stories and poems gathered from his first European tour. And he does so with an excitement designed to induce in his readers a similar optimism for the literature of their own country: "How universal is the love of poetry! Every nation has its popular songs, the offspring of a credulous simplicity and unschooled fancy" (356). Several examples of peasants' poetry follow,

capped by the belief that "peasant--serf--slave--all, all have their ballads and traditional songs. Music is the universal language of mankind--poetry their universal pastime and delight" (357). Filled with vignettes, pastiches, and splashes of local colour, Outre-Mer represents an eclectic "something-for-everyone" reflection of diverse cultures, an ideal blend of European content and an American form made popular by Irving's Sketches.

Yet amid this light-hearted simplicity, the writers of New England had also been preparing the American public in the 1830s to accept an intellectually and spiritually charged national literary identity, as Channing attests and Emerson substantially confirms in his trenchant address on "The American Scholar" in 1837. Spencer maintains that "the creation of a worthy national literature was to the Transcendentalists a prime desideratum [T]he first meeting of the club on October the third [1836] was given over to a discussion of the topic: 'American Genius--the Causes which Hinder its Growth and give us no First-Rate Productions'" (158). Moreover, Emerson's Phi Beta Kappa address not only followed from current transcendental concerns, but echoed as well similar themes in a number of Phi Beta Kappa speeches of previous years. Yet it is not so much in what Emerson had to say as in how he chose to say it that his preeminence as a literary nationalist reveals itself; for Emerson is nothing if not forcefully eloquent, a perfect

example himself of the national voice he was hoping to inspire.

While Emerson applauds America's embryonic literary respect for nature, he also challenges the popular adherence to and misconception of the scholar as a bookish pedant. As a strong proponent of the individual man, he thus disparages the "sluggish and perverted mind of the multitude" that is easily gulled by dogma rather than excited by individual thinking (56). Of equal concern to Emerson, as it was to Longfellow, is the public's misconception of literary men as emasculate: "I have heard it said," notes Emerson, "that the clergy,--who are always more universally than any other class, the scholars of their day,--are addressed as women: that the rough, spontaneous conversation of men they do not hear, but only a mincing and diluted speech" (59). Further, like Longfellow, Emerson goes on to demonstrate that, in fact, true scholarship (as Emerson defines literary activity) is not independent of "action," of life as it is lived by men; rather, it is through engagement with the real world that scholars infuse power into their words (60). Hence with self-trust as his overriding principle, Emerson describes the "duties" scholars must obey if they are to counteract their public image as bookish, effeminate idlers: they must seek "to cheer, to raise, to guide men" and "defer never to the popular cry" (63); they must display personal freedom and bravery even in the face of political controversy, and feel shame if tranquillity breeds a

sense of self as a protected class--"like children and women" (64); they each must become heroic in and of themselves; and, finally, they must work against the lure of money to establish "the gradual domestication of the idea of Culture" (65).

For Emerson, as for many other scholars and critics before and after him, the scholar's duties must conform to America's new spirit, at one with "the near, the low, [and] the common [since] [t]he literature of the poor, the feelings of the child, the philosophy of the street, the meaning of household life are the topics of the time" and sublimity resides therein (67).¹⁶ America has "listened too long to the courtly muses

¹⁶ The most obvious proponents of America's literature as the literature of common humanity were of course the leading literary critics of the Young America movement: Cornelius Mathews, Evert A. Duyckinck, William A. Jones, John O'Sullivan, and Parke Godwin. Members of the liberal and radical wing of the Democratic Party (the Locofocos), they published in many New York periodicals from 1835-50, not the least of which was their chief organ, the Democratic Review. Their work is not dealt with specifically in this survey for although Longfellow privately scorned what he called the "Loco-foco politico-literary system" of Young America, he was content to let Lewis Gaylord Clark, the editor of the Knickerbocker (to which Longfellow contributed), rail the conservative line against Young America. Longfellow endorsed Clark, rather than openly denounce the movement himself. However, each of the critics who are highlighted in this survey--Emerson, Poe, Fuller, and Whitman--did have direct connections with members of the Young America group either as contributors to or recipients of their general aims to democratize American literature although, other than Whitman, they did not overtly share their politics. In this respect, Longfellow too must be seen as a participant in Young America's general cause, though he disagreed strongly with the particular methods and haste by which writers and critics were to endorse the ordinary citizen as the voice of America. John Stafford's "The Literary Criticism of Young America" is a thorough discussion of the politics, people, and theories of Young America in relation to the conservative forces that assisted in the definition of the movement. Perry Miller's

of Europe." Her "freemen are suspected of being timid, imitative, tame, decent, indolent, complaisant" (69). Though less forceful than Emerson's concrete contrast between American vitality and imitative enervation, Longfellow's preference for Wordsworth over Byron, noted above, also denotes the recognition of an inherently poetic energy in the "common" language of America.

Support for common, everyday life as the locus for a national literature was a familiar theme among American literati. The extent to which poets should imbibe the culture of those they supposedly were to teach, however, generated disputes concerning the differences among speaking to, speaking for, speaking with, or speaking as one of the commonality. In his prose romance, Hyperion (1839), written after the death of his first wife in Holland during his second European tour (1835-36), Longfellow tries to resolve any disputes by arguing that all voices come from within. In the German Baron who becomes a mentor to the Werther-like hero, Paul Flemming, Longfellow echoes the inward glance and individualism of Emerson's scholar. Responding to Flemming's need to locate a source for poetic inspiration, the Baron states:

Glorious indeed is the world of God around us, but
 more glorious the world of God within us. There

account of the periodical wars between New York and Boston, in The Raven and the Whale, also provides an historical context for the politics of periodical publication in mid-nineteenth-century America.

lies the Land of Song; there lies the poet's native land . . . the many homes and households, each a little world in itself, revolving round its fireside, as a central sun; all forms of human joy and suffering brought into that narrow compass;--and to be in this, and be a part of this; acting, thinking, rejoicing, sorrowing with his fellow-men; such, such would be the poet's life. (48)

This fusion of the internal vision with the external mundane image of domesticity made sublime by its link to God and to all humanity suggests the influence of Emerson, whose lectures Longfellow was religiously attending while writing Hyperion. Longfellow's recent study of German philosophy and romance is also apparent here. His epigraph for Hyperion, discovered in a chapel at St. Gilgen while he was desultorily wandering in Germany after the death of his wife in November 1835, becomes for Longfellow's Paul Flemming a type of "Everlasting Yea" launching him, like Carlyle's Teufelsdröckh, into a life of action and reality:

Look not mournfully into the Past. It comes not back again. Wisely improve the future. It is thine. Go forth to meet the Shadowy Future without fear, and with a manly heart. (1)

Though obviously not specifically indebted either to Emerson or Carlyle for the above sentiments--belonging as they do to a transatlantic appreciation for Goethe and German romance--Longfellow's creation of a public, poetic identity at this same time (revealed in Voices of the Night) nevertheless is inspired by a national literary atmosphere charged with reverence for the everyday, suspicion of inflated diction that

smacks of British imitation and bookish unreality, and faith in literature's role in the improvement of humanity.¹⁷

Ironically, Longfellow's first published volume of poetry elicited negative criticism in precisely those areas where he had publicly attempted to establish a role for himself. His willingness to echo English sensibility when appropriate to the sentiments he was expressing sparked a heated debate over Longfellow's imitativeness and over his true value as an American bard. This debate was ignited by Edgar Allan Poe who fanned the flames consistently until just prior to his death in 1847¹⁸, and was sustained by Margaret Fuller among others. Obviously, Poe's specific reviews of Longfellow cannot be separated entirely from his certain belief in Longfellow as a

¹⁷ Where appropriate, specific poems from this and several other Longfellow volumes will be discussed in detail. For the moment, it is enough to note that Voices of the Night contained Longfellow's most famous lyric poem, "A Psalm of Life," in which the speaker urges earnest endeavour as a counter to despair (see chapter five).

¹⁸ Poe's original charge of plagiarism (mentioned in chapter one) became a prolonged harangue against Longfellow. Poe's published criticism on Longfellow occupies more than one hundred pages of Thompson's edition of Poe's Essays and Reviews, more than fifty percent of those pages stemming from repercussions and subsequent accusations derived from Poe's initial charge, and covering a period of five years. Poe's final judgment of Longfellow in 1845 as "not only a servile imitator, but a most insolent literary thief" (777) had never been aggravated by any direct public response from Longfellow himself. Ironically, this may have actually provoked Poe all the more since it seemed that here, as elsewhere, Longfellow allowed his friends to speak for him publicly, as he himself had supposedly been content in his poetry to speak the voices of others as if they were his own.

self-serving plagiarist. His low estimation of Longfellow's poetic principles, and therefore his worth as poet of the American people, however, equally derive from Poe's own poetic principles which he was developing at the same time that he was writing his vitriolic reviews of this paradigmatic New England bard.

In "The Philosophy of Composition" (Graham's Magazine Apr 1846), Poe provides an analytic explanation for "The Raven" in which he describes several features of his poem, and hence all true poems: unity of impression, universal sentiment, heightened tone, sonorous lyricism, variation of images and patterns, original verse form, a structure as fitting as a frame is to a picture, effective use of contrast, plausibility of scene and subtle suggestiveness (in Essays and Reviews 13-25). His "Poetic Principle," published posthumously four years later, implies many of the same principles. This article also achieved international notoriety through Poe's dual claims that "a long poem does not exist" (71), and that a poem should be "written solely for the poem's sake" (76). The latter claim, because of its influence on Baudelaire, helped to launch an entire "art-for-art's-sake" movement, a movement that could not be more diametrically opposed to Longfellow's poetry than Poe apparently was himself.

Paradoxically, however, to illustrate the rhythmical creation of beauty at work in all poetry, Poe uses Longfellow's Proem to The Waif, "The Day is Done," in his

"Poetic Principle" essay, remarking favourably upon the poet's careful attention to tone. Indeed, "paradoxical" best describes the work of an entire host of Longfellow critics, not the least of whom were Poe, Fuller and Whitman, since Longfellow's technical skills, the elegance, and the beauty of his verse could seldom if ever be denied even by those who, like Poe, would most like to dismiss him entirely. Thus, while Longfellow is disparaged throughout Poe's reviews for his lack of unity and his overt moral didacticism (not to mention his imitativeness) Poe concedes that Longfellow's "artistical skill is great, and his ideality high" (682). He even commends those poems of Longfellow's which demonstrate Poe's own notions of aesthetic purity. At odds absolutely with Longfellow over the "purpose" of poetry and its relation to its audience, however, Poe could never express anything but qualified praise for Longfellow's work. More importantly, he did not live long enough to witness Longfellow's inordinate popularity achieved in the late 1840s and 1850s through his successful use of the "long poem."

By the time Margaret Fuller published her "American Literature, its Position in the Present Time and Prospects for the Future" (1846), America had already shifted its literary tastes away from a dependence on England and English models toward Europe, more specifically Germany, in a deliberate attempt to cut the apron strings of its mother country. According to Fuller, England had become "uncongenial and

injurious to our constitution [She] does not suit a mixed race continually enriched with new blood from other stocks the most unlike that of our first descent" (359). Though critical of the easy felicity evident in imitators of Europe, with Longfellow as a prototype, Fuller nevertheless accords these writers at least secondary status as "colonists and useful schoolmasters to our people in a transition state" (358). In Fuller's opinion, American authors weaken their primary potentials by relying on European models and pandering to the country's ethnically diverse readers as a means of securing a livelihood. She recognizes, however, that the only way to free writers of "the lures of money or celebrity" is to take literature out of the market-place by instilling a sense of what constitutes "true" literature in educated readers--judicious consumers--a recognition which Longfellow himself had displayed throughout his early essays. Such a project, Fuller adds (in evident support of Emerson), must be taken up by capable editors who are willing to lead their public rather than fear its censure: "the work of diffusion . . . lies in the journals which monthly, weekly, daily send their messages to every corner of this great land and form at present the only efficient instrument for the general education of the people" (370).

Assessing major American poets of the period--among other literati--Fuller politely dismisses Bryant for his lack of reality, Halleck and Willis for their exclusivism within the

society set, Dana for the scarcity of his work, and Lowell for being "absolutely wanting in the true spirit and tone of poesy" (365-6). Ever loyal to her fellow transcendentalist, Fuller maintains that only Emerson deserves "highest rank" of the true poet since only he demonstrates original genius. She reserves her most extensive remarks, positive and negative, for Longfellow. She praises his technical skills (non-mechanical phrasing and elegance) and his love of the beautiful, yet supports Poe in the claim that ultimately Longfellow is "artificial and imitative. He borrows incessantly, and mixes what he borrows so that it does not appear to best advantage" (365). To Fuller, Longfellow is, at best, a secondary poet.

In an appendix to her original article, Fuller provides her reviews of Hawthorne, Brockden Brown, and Longfellow to illustrate specifically the features of her previous argument. While lauding evidence of originality in the two prose writers, Fuller is unduly critical in her opinions of Longfellow largely because, as she herself admits, "the exaggerated praises that have been bestowed upon him" have raised him to a stature above his true abilities as a poet (382). His poetry lacks genuine vision and spontaneous expression, proving in her mind that Longfellow is of the poetic "middle class, composed of men of little original poetic power, but of much poetic taste and sensibility" (382), a hybrid of the inspired poet and the elegant versifier. She

then comments astutely upon Longfellow's inclination to borrow "as derived from an acquaintance with the elegant literature of many nations" (384) which, though common to all educated poets, in Longfellow had been inadequately assimilated into his own life. Fuller concludes her review with an interesting paradox. She suggests that the reason for Longfellow's being over-rated in America is that the nation's readers are insufficiently educated in foreign literatures to recognize Longfellow's lack of originality. Ironically, however, Longfellow will be the writer who will do the duty of "promoting a taste for the literature of these foreign lands before his readers are aware of it" (386).

Fuller's estimation of the value of American literature and of Longfellow within that context clearly outline what were for her the deleterious effects of the poet's concern for the ethnic diversity of his readers, a concern which Longfellow himself hinted at in his early essays and displayed in his early published volumes. Reising notes in his analysis of trends in American literary studies, that the troublesome question of "what is an American author" is necessarily preceded by "what is an American?" In response, Reising quotes Crèvecoeur's Letters from an American Farmer (1782) which argues that Americans have arisen from a "promiscuous breed" of "English, Scotch, Irish, French, Dutch, Germans, and Swedes" (qtd. 18). Fifty-five years later, in a journal entry of 6 January 1847, Longfellow echoes Crèvecoeur's view of the

diverse cultures informing American identity. Longfellow determines that American "national literature" is the expression of a national character that is "a composite one, embracing French, Spanish, Irish, English, Scotch and German peculiarities. Whoever has within himself most of these is truly our national writer. In other words, whoever is the most universal is also the most national" (Life II 74). Concerned about the potential reception of Evangeline, Longfellow here predictably connects literature to its audience; that is, literature's national value is determined by the extent to which it supposedly responds to the heterogeneity of American readers. This is not to say that literature could not instruct an audience in a single moral point of view, as Longfellow most often did, but rather that its subject matter and style must find touchstones among a diversity of readers to be consistent with its nationalistic goals. In short, as the readers are, so the writing must be: of multiple ethnic backgrounds, eager to test the legitimacy of cultural attitudes in the "new" world.

Publicly, Longfellow's support for a multi-ethnic as opposed to a chauvinist national literature appeared in Kavanagh (1849) through the voice of the schoolmaster-poet, Churchill.¹⁹ Here, the aspiring poet is approached by a Mr

¹⁹ The exchange Churchill has with Hathaway in Kavanagh is based upon a similar discourse Longfellow conducted in letters with Alexander H. Smith who was trying to establish an American "Poet's Magazine" (which never did materialize) while imploring Longfellow to contribute. To Smith, Longfellow

Hathaway who requests that Churchill become a contributor to the fledgling Niagara, a new magazine devoted to national American literature. The nationalism versus universalism debate ensues since Hathaway wants a literature "commensurate with our mountains and rivers,--commensurate with Niagara, the Alleghanies, and the Great Lakes" (535). But to Churchill, literature is more "an image of the spiritual world than the physical" (536), so much so that all "that is best in the great poets of all countries is not what is national in them, but what is universal" (537). Hence, when Hathaway inveighs against British tendencies in American literature, Churchill counters with the following universalist sentiments: "our literature can be strictly national only insofar as our character and modes of thought differ from those of other nations. Now, as we are very like the English,--are, in fact, English under a different sky,--I do not see how our literature can be very different from theirs" (537). American literature to Churchill is therefore not an "imitation" of English, but a "continuation" of it; if left to grow naturally, American literature will take on an organic shape of its own that will, ultimately, reflect the multiple nations from which a composite America will have been derived.

replied that a national literature was not a mere replica of nation's physical presence, but rather "the expression of national character and modes of thought; and as our character and modes of thought do not differ substantially from those of England, our literature cannot" (Letters III 40). See Steven Allaback's "Voices of Longfellow: Kavanagh as Autobiography."

According to Churchill, as "the blood of all nations is mingling with our own, so will their thoughts and feelings finally mingle in our literature. We shall draw from the Germans tenderness; from the Spaniards, passion; from the French, vivacity, to mingle more and more with our English solid sense" (538-9). Though far more prescriptive than Longfellow himself, as quoted above, Churchill nonetheless describes a multi-ethnic literate America that Longfellow, the Professor of Modern Languages, aspired to create, both in the classroom and in his writing.

Strictly speaking, Longfellow's intention to root America's national literature in its audience--in all its commonality and ethnic diversity--rather than impose it from above was really no different from those aims of his contemporary critics. The differences lay, however, in the methods by which he intended to instruct his audience in a taste for discovery of the poetic in the common place. According to Poe and to Fuller (and Emerson too although he never publicly stated as much), Longfellow too readily catered to popular taste by providing his readers with British or European imitations in an attempt to secure a readership large enough to allow his moralism to have the pervasive impact he desired. Whitman, however, generally applauded as uniquely American Longfellow's sympathy for common humanity. In his early essays and criticism of the 1840s, Whitman actually echoes some of Longfellow's own early prose. He gratefully

appreciates, for example, England's genius which "America is to add to rather than imitate" ("Independent American Literature" Gathering 240). A year earlier, in his review of Longfellow's The Belfry of Bruges and other Poems (1845), Whitman had agreed with Poe and Fuller by claiming that Longfellow was "gifted by God with a special faculty of dressing beautiful thoughts in beautiful words." He could not differ more from them, however, in his belief that the "country is not half just to this eloquent writer; an honor and a glory as he is to the American name--and deserving to stand on the same platform with Bryant and Wordsworth" ("Longfellow's 'Poems' Gathering 297). Whitman had discovered in Longfellow's work a love for the commonplace compatible with his own--not necessarily expressed in similar terms, but no less American.

As were Poe's and Fuller's before, Whitman's later responses to Longfellow were governed by his own poetics, clearly outlined in his 1855 "Preface" to Leaves of Grass (Prose Works II 434-58). In this work, Whitman's democratic spirit, imbibed partly though not exclusively from association with Young Americans and the Democratic Party, surprisingly is not at odds with Longfellow but is in many ways supportive of some of the older poet's sentiments. Specifically, Whitman's belief in the common people as an unrhymed poem parallels Longfellow's Outre Mer. Furthermore, Whitman's endorsement of cultural diversity would have appealed to the Longfellow of

the forties: "The American poets are to enclose old and new for America is the race of races. Of them a bard is to be commensurate with a people. To him other continents arrive as contributions [H]e gives them reception for their sake and his own sake" (Whitman 437). However, Whitman felt that in order to speak to his readers he had to be equal with them, equally immersed within the poem of every day life to which he gives voice. Consequently, when he castigates moralism in poetry, he draws a dividing line between himself and Longfellow with respect to the poet's relationship to his audience. Whereas Longfellow felt absolutely that it was his duty to instruct his readers morally and aesthetically, Whitman felt just as strongly that it was his duty to reflect and to articulate an undelineated strata of interests that made up Whitman's composite America.

Ultimately, Whitman's comments upon the death of Longfellow suggest the actual effect Longfellow had had upon nineteenth-century American culture: paradoxical. While Whitman condemns the style and form of the age in which Longfellow had lived, an age addicted, "almost to a sickness," to verbal melody, Longfellow must always be applauded for emphasizing what was dearest to the general human heart and taste (in Specimen Days Prose Works I 284). More importantly, Longfellow provided middle-class readers with a sanctuary from commercial capitalism:

He is certainly the sort of bard and counter-actant most needed for our materialistic, self-assertive,

money-worshipping, Anglo-Saxon races, and especially for the present age in America--an age tyrannically regulated with reference to the manufacturer, the merchant, the financier, the politician, and the day workman--for whom and among whom he comes as a poet of melody, courtesy, deference--poet of the mellow twilight of the past in Italy, Germany, Spain, and in Northern Europe--poet of all sympathetic gentleness--and universal poet of women and young people. I should have to think long if I were ask'd to name the man who has done more, and in more valuable directions for America. (285)

Whitman's eulogy resounds with irony on twentieth-century ears, conditioned as they are to believe that Whitman and Longfellow were antithetical to one another's poetic purposes, and to believe that Whitman's present exalted status as the nineteenth-century American bard came about from a deposing of Longfellow in which Whitman himself had a hand. Yet the above words are a sincere expression of appreciation from a younger poet for one who had gone before him, who had helped to foster a cultural awareness in a nation ill-disposed to patronize anything but the accumulation of wealth and property, an awareness without which Whitman's own fame in this century could never have come about.

In the end, the creation of Longfellow's poetic voice as that of a "new" middle-class America must be seen in its varied complexity as an organic process, involving personal and professional inheritances and impulses related to the larger socio-economic and political forces governing the nascent growth of literature as a reputable profession and not as a pastime. Clearly, the erroneous twentieth-century view

of a feminine domestic culture separated from its counterpart, a masculine dominated commercial capitalism, has done much to compromise any serious consideration of Longfellow's contribution to the establishment of a specifically American literature. Longfellow's early conviction that he would be eminent in the field of literature was as much motivated by a so-called male need to assert himself in a public sphere as it was conditioned by his private awareness of the inherent power and beauty of the female sanctuary of the home, and of the ways in which the imaginative sanctuary of his verse could replicate the peace and serenity therein to achieve popular success on a scale with L.E.L. and Felicia Hemans.

At first, Longfellow had participated forcefully in the creation of a literature at odds with feminine delicacy which he, like many others, initially attributed to false romantic sentiments borrowed from England. His subsequent journeys to Europe, however, led him to supplement his earlier belief in an American literature of external nature and heroic endeavour with a professed appreciation for the lives of common humanity as an expression of the spirit of a nation. Europe, in turn, broadened Longfellow's nationalist claims into a universalist commitment to a multi-ethnic readership desirous of finding its own various needs met in verse. In principle, the Transcendental Emerson and Fuller might have endorsed the moral usefulness of Longfellow's poetry, were it not for the fact that, in practice, Longfellow's poetic methods lacked

subtlety. Similarly, Poe scorned Longfellow's supposed borrowing for the purposes of instruction. Of those nineteenth-century critics who remain credible today, only Whitman--perhaps because of the extent of his exposure to Longfellow's verse--came to understand Longfellow fully, in particular his role in the creating an identifiably American literature. And, ironically, Whitman's eulogy harkens back to Longfellow's earlier endeavour to expose the consequences of America's unhealthy preoccupation with "bare, brawny, muscular, utility": imaginative and spiritual enervation.

Paradoxical as it may seem, Longfellow ultimately was to combat what he perceived as an enfeebled America with what the general American public in the early nineteenth century saw as an enfeebled voice: the voice of women in their limited capacities as domestic, moral protectors of the nation's soul. Thus, Longfellow's popularity grew along with the pervasive force of a female-centred domestic morality reaching outward to inhabit ever widening intellectual and religious circles. That nineteenth-century cultural historians are now beginning to reconsider feminine principles as not necessarily negative suggests the possibility that, in turn, the present assumptions governing the current reception of nineteenth-century American poetry may broaden to include feminine voices, including Longfellow's, as integral to the history of the United States' cultural development.

Clearly, Gorman's evaluation of Longfellow's relative weakness as a spokesperson for American literature issues from a modern masculinist misreading of American "Victorianism" as pejoratively feminine, giving little or no credence to the multiple ways in which female and male spheres of influence reinforced and even intersected one another. Critical prejudice against Longfellow's "feminine" brand of Americanism as insipid borrowings for the purposes of moral didacticism disregards completely the poet's prescient awareness of his audience, and of the moral authority women's voices carried in antebellum America. This critically biased view of Longfellow persists today despite the significant impact Longfellow had in the nineteenth-century upon the formation of a national American literature of international repute. Longfellow created an identifiably American consciousness within his readers, and an awareness of American culture throughout the world. Neither perception had such penetrating or pervasive force in Western literature before his time. Gorman and critics (such as Odell Shepherd) who followed him may object to the specific type of American culture that Longfellow represented and projected worldwide, but they seriously distort the literary historical record in suggesting that Longfellow did not see himself as dutifully bound to the establishment of a national literature. Indeed, he devoted his life to it.

CHAPTER THREE

TENNYSON AND THE BIRTH OF A LEGEND

Alfred and I often took long rambles together, and on one particular afternoon, when we were in the home fields talking of our respective futures, he said most emphatically, "Well, Arthur, I mean to be famous." (From his earliest years, he felt that he was a poet, and earnestly trained himself to be worthy of his vocation.)

--Arthur Tennyson (Memoir 14)

One turns now from Longfellow, away from the manly heroics of the United States's national literary debate concerning the share an apparently effete New England was to have in the future poetic voice of virile America. The glance now is backward upon the mother country, on the birth and growth there of a poet who, apart from being an inspiration to Longfellow, was to be the official voice of Victorian England --Queen and country--Alfred Tennyson. This glance appears, at first, directed away from the future toward the past, away from what a young country might become, what youthful patriotism equally youthful poets might inspire, toward the "old" country: steeped in tradition, ultra-conscious of its social and political power as a nation, laden with critics and reviewers anxious to promote those poets who would best capture this august nation's history. Yet Tennyson, for all his alleged conservatism, appeared in 1830 as a truly new poetic voice within this old England.

Moreover, this initial backward glance is at once refracted, for scholars today as it was equally for Tennyson and many of his contemporaries, by a socio-political upheaval in England that would forever transform events in the past into auguries of the future: the birth and rapid growth of industrial capitalism. As Tennyson developed his poetic voice, he--like the nation he came to represent--shaped and reshaped traditional values throughout the mid and late nineteenth century, participating even beyond the grave in "ye' old England's" transformation into a virile "New" England of imperial dimensions by the end of Queen Victoria's reign. The exact nature of Tennyson's participation, however, was, is, and likely will forever be open to debate.

Although his poetic voice ushered in new possibilities for the future of poetry, Tennyson came to express therein an essentially conservative vision. He prophesied the dire moral consequences of an individualism that had, in the past century, fuelled major socio-economic changes, and would continue to drive his nation's future.¹ Just as Longfellow's

¹ The term "individualism" is used guardedly here. "You ask me why though ill at ease," for example, endorses "single thought" and the voice of "individual freedom." In his long lifetime, Tennyson never rescinded these beliefs. However, actions (rather than simply thoughts or voices) which sacrificed the happiness of even one other individual for the benefit of one's self incurred his wrath, particularly if that benefit was monetary. It is this "individualist" behaviour rather than an individualist metaphysics that is referred to here.

New England voice in this century has come to represent publicly an enfeebled past, tied to the feminine sensibilities of a supposedly aged mother country, so Tennyson's new voice of old England has, in part, been shown by twentieth-century scholars to characterize an outmoded way of life even within his own period. This life is linked to the forces of stability inherent in a family-centred domesticity at once and seemingly forever cut off from a world dominated by progressive social change and material prosperity. Tennyson's world view has thus not only been seen in this century as "old" within an England anxious to announce its newly created sources of wealth and power, but seen as essentially feminine as well, determined as it was by the private moral and spiritual authority granted by the female presence within the family rather than by a male-dominated public authority sanctioned by economic status. In this sense, the world that Tennyson inhabited was a world not unlike Longfellow's.

Yet as with Longfellow's America, new social histories of the so-called separate spheres of female and male action in Victorian England reveal them to have been mutually supportive and interlinked. Recent studies of the pre-suffragette feminist movement in England, for example, document the ways in which women, bent on providing alternatives for themselves other than hearth and home, operated--necessarily yet paradoxically--according to the dictates of the accepted ideology of domesticity as a woman's proper sphere of interest

and influence.² In England, however, unlike America, whatever mixing of genderized roles could and did occur was further complicated by often violent actions and reactions according to class-based ideologies. This is not to say that America was without class consciousness, nor even that Longfellow himself was unaware of class differences, but rather that the American nation's official ideology of democratic equality among men made direct reflection upon class a less prominent

² Studies in this vein include Sara Delamont and Lorna Duffin's introduction to The Nineteenth Century Woman: Her Cultural and Physical World, Barbara Taylor's Eve and the New Jerusalem: Socialism and Feminism in the Nineteenth Century, Philippa Levine's Victorian Feminism, 1850-1900, and Mary Maynard's "Privilege and Patriarchy: Feminist Thought in the Nineteenth Century." A related work, dealing with women of less public stature than those in the above studies, is Patricia Branca's Silent Sisterhood: Middleclass Women in the Victorian Home. Rather than disparage the Victorian woman's acceptance of a male view of woman as strictly "the angel in the house," as many previous social histories (feminist and non-feminist) have done, these studies try to explain both the pervasive social force of the domestic ideology and the many reasons why women specifically could see themselves as occasionally empowered by it. They come closer to understanding the complexities of Victorian society than scholars like Katherine Moore, for example, who in Victorian Wives focuses largely upon the legal and moral strictures against female independence in the nineteenth century to the exclusion of the ways in which Victorian women turned these apparent social limitations to their advantage. The restrictions imposed upon Victorian women should be seen by women--and men--as abhorrent today, but that they were not consistently nor even at all pervasively seen that way by women themselves does not automatically lead to the assumption that the majority of Victorian women were dupes of society. Rather, women's complicity in the creation of a Victorian domestic ideology must be seen, in part, as a self-conscious promotion of those moral ideals and beliefs that nineteenth-century women felt to be lacking within their burgeoning capitalist society.

feature of critical and poetic discourse in the United States than in England. The added dimension of class analysis in Tennyson's popular poetry makes his work infinitely more complex than his American counterpart's, hence distinct from and more interesting than Longfellow's for the twentieth-century scholar, irrespective of any technical superiority of the English bard. Thus, even though Tennyson too was a poet preoccupied with "feminine" domestic themes similar to those of Longfellow, he was overtly conscious of the socio-economic roots influencing conceptions of gender in his country in a way that Longfellow appears never to have considered.

In turning to Tennyson's England, and the poet's place in it, one ultimately sees a world which, in 1855, Arnold enigmatically characterized as "two worlds, one dead / The other powerless to be born" ("Stanzas From the Grande Chartreuse"). In effect, Tennyson was born into the former, the dead or dying world of aristocratic privilege, a rural agrarian economy, and a religious morality invested in local church authorities. Coincidentally--yet significantly and perhaps even symbolically--that world died for Tennyson with Arthur Hallam in 1833. Tennyson, near the end of In Memoriam, had finally asked to let it die, "The year is dying in the night; / Ring out, wild bells, and let him die" (CVI 3-4), so that he might give birth to a new voice born out of grief and loss to speak "Beyond the second birth of Death" (XLV 903).

As the people's voice, the laureateship having been bestowed upon him subsequent to the publication of In Memoriam in 1850, Tennyson would have to spend the second half of the century grappling with the second half of Arnold's equation: the "other" world dominated by middle-class wealth, urban industrial manufacturing, and seeming moral dissipation. For Tennyson at least, such a project demanded resurrection of all that he valued in his "old" England reinfused into his present "new" one. This resurrection can be traced in Tennyson's recreation of Arthur Hallam in the figure of the "once and future" King Arthur. Once (re)created, however, King Arthur and all he represented also would have to die in order for England to be born anew once again: as King Arthur himself remarks, "'The old order changeth, yielding place to new, / And God fulfils himself in many ways, / Lest one good custom should corrupt the world.'" ("The Passing of Arthur" 407-10). This fulfilment takes place in the subsequent act of recreation that readers undertake as they experience Tennyson's work and thereby the "New" England the poet proffers yet does not provide. In this sense, Tennyson's attempt to create a "New" England out of the old must be seen as forever embryonic, in Arnold's pessimistic terms "powerless to be born," devoid of true "power" and purpose. Yet in a more optimistic sense, one to which Tennyson himself would likely have subscribed, it was Camelot: "'built / To music, therefore never built at all, / And therefore built for ever'"

("Gareth and Lynette," 272-4). Insofar as such a vision was difficult to sustain, it was that much more difficult to reach.

Tennyson's early life reveals that the personal and professional difficulty of coming to terms with a seemingly fractured life within a fractured England infused in Tennyson's verse a tension that Longfellow's appears never to have held. Although Longfellow and Tennyson were to share many of the same literary preoccupations during their college years, their respective boyhood "educations" at home could not have been more dissimilar. Longfellow's sedate, largely predictable family life and early education in Portland, for all its bustling seaport, provided a financial and domestic security that Tennyson was never to know until he established it for himself for the first time at Chapel House, Twickenham, in 1851. In contrast, Tennyson's life as a boy in Somersby (1809-1821) has been variously described by his several biographers in this century as "overcrowded, huddled and even insanitary" (Nicolson 33); "a little world of their own" with life "rough and the atmosphere often stormy" (Charles Tennyson 26); and overrun with "children hardly trained in any of the normal modes of social behaviour" (Martin 18). Even in these short extracts it is obvious that the "abnormally" private, self-inclusive world of the early poet has come to dominate modern understanding of life at Somersby. To Tennyson's late Victorian biographer, his son Hallam, however, Somersby was a

publicly sanctioned, perfect picture of domestic bliss, the first chapter in Hallam's mythic creation.

Hallam's Alfred Lord Tennyson: A Memoir by his Son exhibits many of the same elisions and partial representations that Samuel Longfellow's Life of his brother does.³ In both cases, the private individual--as boy or man--separate from an initially self-professed and later publicly acclaimed vocation as a poet is suppressed. The very early years of boyhood are therefore hastily dealt with in both biographies so as to focus attention primarily on the poet in the man. In the case of the Memoir, Hallam, assisted by the co-editors of Tennyson's private documents and correspondence, Henry Sidgwick and Francis Turner Palgrave, purposely designed this life of his father according to the eminent poet's "strongly expressed desire that his personality and private life should only be studied through his poems" (Charles Tennyson vii).⁴ Hence, with the additional materials made available to him in 1949, Sir Charles Tennyson felt compelled to fill in the gaps created by Hallam's account of his father's life, but only

³ To Tennyson scholars, the shortcomings of Hallam's Memoir are so well known as not to bear repeating. However, a convenient short list does appear in Lang and Shannon's introduction to the Letters (I xx). It consists primarily of instances of family instability and/or madness. A thorough account of the creation of the Memoir is now available in Philip L. Elliott's The Making of the Memoir.

⁴ Sir Charles Tennyson suggests in addition that Tennyson's injunction was a psychologically motivated "morbid reaction to the peculiar circumstances of his early life" (vii). These circumstances are discussed at length below.

insofar as they could be filled by "facts and obvious inferences" and not by "exercise of the imagination" (viii). That he fulfils this purpose as well as he does has made Alfred Tennyson indispensable as the standard biography of Tennyson's early life although Sir Charles modestly admits that the "Memoir must always remain the standard life of Tennyson" (viii).

Yet what Sir Charles Tennyson overlooks in pointing out Tennyson's desire to have his life demonstrated publicly rather than privately--through his work rather than through his personal experiences--is the genre of Victorian biography itself, which is dominated by the sense that a man's personality actually was at one with how he was viewed in the world. The bifurcation of the private poet and the public bard that began in 1923 with Harold Nicolson's impressionistic account of Tennyson as yet held no significance for the late Victorian, decidedly pre-Freudian, biographer. Exposure and analysis of family influence in the establishment of the poetic psyche held no compelling interest for a public wishing to know the man who had given them inspirational verse to which they could all collectively assent. Without putting too bold a face on it, any idiosyncratic private life simply did not exist or, at the very least, was so effectively suppressed that it was thought not to exist. What is at issue here is Hallam's fabrication of a mythic Tennyson, later to become a substantial feature upon the horizon of expectations early

twentieth-century readers would keep in view when trying to understand the Laureate and his work. All subsequent scholars would have to acknowledge, either overtly or covertly, Hallam as head of the family of Tennyson biography, and choose either to accept or rebel against his authority. Since Nicolson's biography, most have chosen to rebel. Interestingly, they rebel against the matriarchal cast of Hallam's vision of Tennyson in the Memoir and not--as Harold Bloom's Anxiety of Influence might suppose--a dominant patriarch.

Born 6 August 1809, fourth of twelve children, "most of them more or less true poets," Tennyson--as read by his son--appears to have inhaled poetic spirit with his first breath. In the preface to the Memoir, Hallam contends that even in boyhood his father "had felt the magic of Merlin--that spirit of poetry--which bade him know his power and follow throughout his work a pure and high ideal, with a simple and single devotedness and desire to ennoble the life of the world" (viii). From the start, Hallam connects imagination and poetry to public responsibility; the above prefatory statement effectively captures the essence of the Memoir in that the private person (even in boyhood) is portrayed as at one with the public poet.

Readers of the Memoir are invited into the private homes at Somersby, Twickenham, Farringford, and the like only insofar as these homes symbolize publicly the private peace of domesticity that anyone could partake of through fit and

proper reverence for "Him who is invisible" (viii). Since Victorian religious belief and practice readily manifested itself in the special sanctuary of women, Hallam not surprisingly invests even the surrounding countryside of Somersby with an aura of feminine domestic harmony. Hallam describes his own journey there in 1892 as follows: "in a land of quiet villages, large fields, gray hillsides, and noble tall-towered churches, on the lower slope of a Lincolnshire wold, the pastoral hamlet of Somersby nestles, embosomed in trees" (1). The protective embrace of embosoming trees should not be overlooked. Subsequent descriptions of family life arise out of Hallam's and his father's nostalgia that triggers felicitous visual memories of his father's childhood mixed skilfully with Tennyson's own voice and poems that supposedly "reflect" this past. Such is the purported design of the Memoir: a pastiche of voices, with Hallam's heard rarely (xii). Yet the reader's introduction to Somersby is distinctly controlled by Hallam and, as such, is akin to entry into an inner, womb-like sanctuary fashioned jointly by the minds of Hallam and his father in 1892, and the earlier poet's mind at work behind the variously cited poems. The enclosure afforded by these minds operating together in harmony effectively denies any substantive value to the world outside of the private, yet publicly sanctioned, enclave of the Tennyson family.

Encounters with the outside world are thus often threatening, symbolic instances of socially condoned violence: the Rev. J. Waite--"a tempestuous, flogging master" of the school at Louth Tennyson went to when he was seven (5); the horrific--and gratuitous--story told by Tennyson's grandmother about a young woman who was publicly strangled and burnt for poisoning her husband (5-6); and the "rough independence" of servants and Lincolnshire labourers (12). To be sure, there was violence enough in the Tennysons' own private home, violence which Hallam elides by referring only to Tennyson's father's "unkindness and injustice" and "fits of despondency" (12-13). But rather than explain any effect this violence may have had upon the Tennyson children, Hallam chooses instead to focus on the positive, demonstrably masculine power of the Rector: "the dominating force of [his] intellect" (13).

By focusing on the Rector's masculine intellect, Hallam avoids discussion of the potentially damaging impact of Tennyson's father upon his children's characters: character and moral development become the almost exclusive privilege of women in keeping with conventional Victorian notions of women's appropriate sphere of influence.⁵ These women in

⁵ Rotundo's study "Learning about Manhood: Gender Ideals and the Middle-class Family in Nineteenth-century America" suggests that a close study of correspondence between sons and families in Victorian England also might yield interesting results. At present, some of the most provocative studies of the development of the masculine character in Victorian England include Jeffrey Weeks's Sex, Politics and Society: the Regulation of Sexuality Since 1800 and Jeffrey Richards's "'Passing the Love of Women': Manly Love and Victorian

Tennyson's early life can thereby be portrayed merely in brief, abstract ways since their concrete "reality" would supposedly be supplied by Hallam's Victorian audience: "A Dream of Fair Women" young and old serving as a positive counter to actual male anger and aggression that is intimated but never discussed. Also intimated but never discussed are women's encouragement and positive practical endorsements of the young Tennyson's early awareness of himself as a poet. For example, while his mother's mother was occupied in story-telling when Tennyson stayed with her at Louth, his father's mother was convinced that "Alfred's poetry all comes from me [Mary Turner Tennyson]" (10). Tennyson also fulfilled an obligation at twelve to write to his aunt Marianne Fytche (his mother's sister) concerning his reading--thereby producing a long explication of Samson Agonistes (6-8). Hallam adds in a footnote that Tennyson's paternal Aunt and later benefactor, Elizabeth Tennyson Russell, "dabbled in poetry" that brought her great praise from her bother, also a poet (9-10). A courtly billet d'eux of sorts to Tennyson's sisters' governess, his "Dulcinea," is produced to show the literary precocity of an adolescent devoted to books, poetry and,

Society." Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick's Between Men: English Literature and Male Homosocial Desire is also valuable in understanding the effects of the so-called feminization of men as it exists within literary culture. Nonetheless, the "separate sphere ideology" not just as it affected women but as it affected men continues to dominate critical thinking about the genderization of men in the Victorian period.

coincidentally, women. Clearly, these women's influences were not simply moral, nor was "intellect" the exclusive privilege of Tennyson's father.

Of course, of these women in Tennyson's early life, his mother receives the most extensive treatment although, one might add, of a yet surprisingly short and abstract kind. Hallam presents Elizabeth Tennyson literarily, that is, excerpted from the last four lines of "Isabel" (1830), caught within a matrix of language making memory. Through Hallam's selective presentation of the vague images of "great charity" and "finish'd chasten'd purity" from the "Isabel" poem, Tennyson's mother becomes a concept rather than a woman. In its actual entirety, "Isabel" contains several specific concrete images that display her overt purity of character and covert moral superiority over her husband.⁶ Yet because, in her grandson's opinion, Elizabeth "devoted herself entirely to her husband and her children," if she is described concretely then it can only be in those instances in which she is shown

⁶ Most of the visual images in the poem, while nonetheless metaphoric, are decidedly detailed and to the point: "A clear stream flowing with a muddy one, / Till in its onward current absorbs / With swifter movement and in purer light / The vexed eddies of its wayward brother" (30-33) describes Elizabeth's relations with her husband. Moreover, statements of fact such as "The intuitive decision of a bright / And thorough-edged intellect to part / Error from crime" and "A hate of gossip parlance" portray directly Tennyson's mother's strength of character and personal integrity, and perhaps implicitly call into question the lack of such in the "wayward" husband. These lines of the poem are excluded from Elizabeth Tennyson's portrayal in the Memoir.

creating a home for her family: her sense of humour, for example, making "the room a paradise for the children. They inherited her love of animals," which in Tennyson became "the true poet's love" (15). Hallam's portrayal of the women in Tennyson's early life, in particular his mother, is one feature of Tennyson's life that seems never to have been seriously challenged even in this century.

In a sense, the very design of the Memoir to use reminiscences (Tennyson's and others) and published poems produces the vague, unreal quality that Hallam assigns to women in the early part of his father's life. Because he elects not to focus on historically accurate details of personal life, deeds, or events (for example, information contained in either Elizabeth Russell's or Elizabeth Tennyson's letters), Hallam can thereby readily portray the private life of the Tennysons as a model of public respectability. It apparently contained only those features to which any home-loving, middle-class Victorian could subscribe. Women in the Memoir are thus used to demonstrate that life at Somersby was not in any way idiosyncratic in terms of its potential influence upon the development of character in the young poet.

Hallam successfully avoids discussion of private idiosyncrasies--in this case Tennyson's father's world of violent fits--by limiting the Rector's influence to a strictly male-sanctioned intellectual and educational realm. In

Hallam's view, the Rector possessed a manifestly superior intellect to any in his parish which added to his having "no real calling for the ministry" (11). If Tennyson is thought, like Longfellow, to have inherited the spirit of poetry from his mother, unlike Longfellow, he supposedly learned the technical expertise of poetic art from his father who "'was a poet and could write regular metre very skilfully'" (Tennyson qtd. 9). Hallam stresses the self-acquired classical education that George Tennyson imparted to his sons, the "run of their father's excellent library," and the "geniality and brilliant conversation" that made the Rector a much invited guest for social occasions (13). In these instances, one sees clearly the distinction between the British tradition of literature and classical training as necessary to a man's proper education and the youthful America's scorn of literature as irrelevant to the education of future male professionals. These transatlantic differences in the public perception of poetry significantly affected the development of the early poetry of Longfellow and Tennyson since the establishment of a poetic voice takes place within the context of an assumed audience. That these audiences were so vastly different at the beginning of each poet's career makes the similarities of their later poetry all the more interesting from the point of view of the changes in their readership and how they responded to them.

Unlike Longfellow, as a child Tennyson was educated outside the home for only a brief period (1815-20). Apparently lacking a temperament to withstand the regimented punishment and rote learning at Louth school, Tennyson had returned home with his elder brother Charles to be educated by the Rector for seven years. Throughout this period, poetry seems to have completely occupied the Tennyson children.⁷ It was suffused by imitation of and liberal quotation from a variety of precursors, not the least of whom, for Alfred, was Byron, who had also been an inspiration on Longfellow in America. On hearing of Byron's death in April 1824, Tennyson--age fourteen--is said to have carved the words, "Byron is dead," upon a rock, and to have felt the whole world darken (3). His response has served since as a feature illustration of Tennyson's precocious awareness--which he seems to have shared equally with his sisters and brothers--of the role of the poet and the public conception of the bard as a cultural emblem.

⁷ Poems by Two Brothers, published in 1827 before Charles and Alfred left for Cambridge, and containing poems by Charles, Frederick, and Alfred was the successful result of the Tennyson brothers' adolescent facility in verse. Herbert Tucker's discussion of the influence of Romantic precursors upon this volume in Tennyson and the Doom of Romanticism is the most recent analysis of Tennyson's early indebtedness to the themes and stylistic devices of major Romantic poets, though these are, as Tucker admits and as other scholars before him have readily acknowledged, much more artistically handled in the poems of his which Tennyson did not publish at this time: The Devil and the Lady, "Armageddon," and "The Coach of Death." Tennyson himself thought of his contributions as "early rot" and most agree with Christopher Ricks that the poet was "right never to include any of it in his authorized body of work" (Tennyson 20).

No doubt Byron's inordinate popularity, equally evident in America, fuelled Tennyson's despondency over the loss of this precursor poet. For Tennyson himself, like Longfellow, had from "his earliest years . . . felt that he was a poet and earnestly trained himself to be worthy of his vocation'," according to his younger brother, Arthur, who also records Alfred as claiming "'Well, Arthur, I mean to be famous'" (14). Longfellow's "I will be eminent" sounds a similar note. In both of these young men's lives a very early personal commitment to public stature always reigned supreme.

For Tennyson, at least, eminence as a poet was included in his realm of professional possibilities. Indeed, his father formally encouraged him. The Rector felt that if "'Alfred die, one of our greatest poets will have gone'" (10). Thus, Tennyson's rather histrionic reaction to Byron's untimely death is as much a lament for the loss of a poetic voice that he himself was wont to emulate as it was for the loss of a poetic voice for all England, a role which he himself had precociously, yet clearly not discreetly, coveted. In this case, Tennyson's father, unlike Longfellow's, actively assisted his sons, Alfred in particular, in their scholarly and literary pursuits. The Rector gave little or no serious attention to the lack of a potential utilitarian value such pursuits might yield.⁸ In short, everything Tennyson's father

⁸ Sir Charles Tennyson does relate that the Rector used to say of his sons' writings that they "'would never get bread by such stuff'" yet the contrary interest in their texts that

provided, other than financial capital (of which with such a large family he had little to spare) seemed to augur the public success of his fourth child, if not the others, everything that is except what Hallam leaves out of the Memoir: the Tennysons' actual private life.

Hallam provides only two unconnected references to a life within the Tennyson home that would seem in any way extraordinary, anything other than exactly the type to encourage Victorian poetic sentiment in a healthy and positive way. In the first reference, Hallam mentions the fact that Tennyson's grandfather had disinherited his eldest son--for reasons unspecified--in favour of the younger son, and promoted George Tennyson in the clergy instead. To Hallam, such a flouting of the rights of primogeniture produced merely "a feeling of injustice in his [grandfather's] mind which descended to his sons" (11). In the second reference, Hallam alludes to "unkindness and injustice" on the part of the Rector which played upon the sensitive nerves of the young poet to such an extent that he more than once, "scared by his father's fits of despondency, went out through the black night

he did show reveals that he in no way prohibited their choice of pursuits (31). Tennyson's grandfather, the elder George Tennyson, however, was decidedly more materialistic than his son and actively disparaged Alfred's choice of vocation. After the Rector's death in 1831, Tennyson's grandfather strove to have the young poet, along with Frederick and Charles, enter the Church. Tennyson fortunately managed to avoid the fate that befell his father through the publication of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical and its subsequent promotion by his friends (Charles Tennyson 105-18).

and threw himself on a grave in a churchyard, praying to be beneath the sod himself" (12-13).⁹ Hallam never suggests any ostensible reasons for the Rector's black moods, and readers are forced to conclude that his high strung temperament followed as a natural consequence of the Rector's apparently almost exclusively intellectual preoccupations. Hallam refuses to speculate that there may have been any correlation --either as cause, consequence or both--between his great grandfather's decision not to pass on the Tennyson estate to his eldest son and George Tennyson's character defects. Moreover, any lasting effect that either the Rector's disinheritance or black moodiness may have had upon the character development of Alfred Tennyson is quietly dismissed. Clearly, for Hallam to discuss those aspects of the Tennysons' private life that would have dispelled the myth and compromised the Victorian public's positive response to the Laureate, would have been out of the question in 1897. Or so Hallam believed.

In a real sense, the Memoir created, both in and of itself and in the various reactions to it, the Tennyson of today because, whether consciously or not, an audience's understanding of poetic texts is greatly affected by who the poet is believed to have been. In this case, Hallam's evasiveness coupled with allusiveness invited readers of the

⁹ Charles Tennyson claims that such violent fits on the part of the Rector were greatly aggravated by alcohol (48).

Memoir to fill in the gaps and indeterminacies in Tennyson's early life in subjective, impressionistic ways, especially when, according to the prerogatives of the individual Tennyson scholar, the early life could be used to explain seeming conflicts in Tennyson's subsequent poetry and career. Hence, twentieth-century rereadings of Tennyson's life fall into three categories, each of them in some way a response to the Tennyson myth created by the poet's son. As such, they too are among the preset assumptions of the late twentieth-century Tennyson scholar.

The first, basically objective supplementary view, belongs exclusively to Sir Charles Tennyson's Alfred Tennyson.¹⁰ Despite his tendency to psychologize facts and evidence, Sir Charles claims to be interested only in providing a full and just estimate of a variable Tennyson, made possible because of hitherto unknown "hundreds of letters exchanged between the poet's father, grandfather and their immediate family and friends" (vii). The poet's grandson thus provides detailed factual information regarding George Tennyson's temper and

¹⁰ Most biocritical scholars of Tennyson's life and work acknowledge their enormous debt to Sir Charles Alfred Tennyson as the "definitive" biography (Henderson xi). Indeed, Henderson's Tennyson, Poet and Prophet (1978) adds very little to the life that Sir Charles had so carefully filled in. Ricks's prefatory remarks in his study of Tennyson (1972) remain as true today as they did twenty years ago: Alfred Tennyson is "compact, humane, wide-ranging, and un superseded" (x), despite the most recent attempt by Martin in the Unquiet Heart (1980) to inject life into the Tennyson legend. See note 11.

disinheritance which is later used in two ways: 1) as a pretext for some, not all, of the personal difficulties Tennyson had as a young poet in establishing a publicly sanctioned life for himself; and 2) as a pretext for Tennyson's public endorsement of domestic stability as a guarantor of social harmony.

The second view is "privately-focused" in the sense that its adherents--the major biographers, Harold Nicolson and Robert Bernard Martin--direct their attentions to a private, morbidly sensitive poet at odds with and profoundly debilitated by the ideology of public conformity in the Victorian age.¹¹

The third view, while subscribing to the private-public split of those who hold the second view, nevertheless presents the poet as accepting and--to a degree--even benefitting from the values of his Victorian audience rather than fighting them. Held primarily by Valerie Pitt (although Joanna

¹¹ Of the two biographies, Martin's is the more substantial and the more pernicious for two reasons: 1) Martin advances a pseudo-scientific (therefore, seemingly valid) theory of epilepsy to prove that Tennyson's family and the poet within it were "dysfunctional" in the modern sense; and 2) as Jack Kolb concludes in "Portraits of Tennyson," his review article of The Unquiet Heart, the biography in 1983 was already beginning to be accepted by the general audience as "the version of the Laureate for our times" (190). Kolb points out the biography's many flaws that often result from one of two pet theories of Martin that he works in wherever possible: Tennysonian epilepsy and the poet's cupidity. Regrettably, Martin does not seem to like Tennyson very much, as Kolb suggests (181), and this disdain has resulted in a frequently distorted portrait of the poet.

Richardson shares some features with her), this view should be thought of as "publicly-focused" in its essential opposition to the second view.

Neither the privately nor publicly focussed approaches, although ostensibly designed to correct the Victorian myopia present in the Memoir, has yet to analyze fully the complex interaction, even interdependence, of the private and the public in both the man and the poet, a necessary confluence that determined the major work of someone who could so readily assume that in his most agonizingly private moments, the "'I' is not always the author speaking of himself, but the voice of the human race speaking through him" (Tennyson qtd. in Memoir 255). In addition, the public/private dichotomy that is thought to have influenced the development of Tennyson's poetic voice has yet to be considered within its own context of a gender and class-based Victorian ideology of acceptable public life. In short, Tennyson's early life has not been read in relation to his growing awareness of his own Victorian audience rather than in reaction to previous "misreadings."

Of the three views briefly noted above, only Sir Charles Tennyson's comes close to understanding Tennyson as a young man and later as an increasingly respected poet within a socio-historical milieu that held no ready made regard for the private/public division predominant in this century.¹²

¹² Charles Tennyson's views in this regard, while evident in his biography, are emphasized further in his monograph Tennyson and his Times, in which the poet's public and private

However, Alfred Tennyson--as a supplement to the Memoir--falls heir to a division of a related though somewhat different kind: the rigid bifurcation of female and male worlds. Whereas Hallam was content merely to image women abstractly within a domestic context suggestive of public respectability, Sir Charles does add a fuller and private dimension to these women's lives. Yet because of his preoccupation with what he sees as the "masculine" influence of wealth and property governing the Tennysons' lives, he focuses exclusively on men as agents (negative and positive) in Tennyson's developing profession as a poet. He does not seriously consider women's lives within this context and so gives short shrift to Elizabeth Russell's patronage of her nephew. As such, his biography suggests possibilities which he does not explore: the extent to which two women in particular, Elizabeth Russell and Elizabeth Tennyson, affected the professional not just the personal life of the young poet. Consequently, although Alfred Tennyson should be seen as a private supplement to the ostensibly public Memoir, it nevertheless displays some of the same limitations the earlier work does with respect to its treatment of the influences of women in Tennyson's life. As such, these limitations militate against complete acceptance of Sir Charles's understanding of "the human sympathy" which

Victorianism is shown clearly within its specific socio-economic context.

did indeed inspire Tennyson's work "more and more as the years went by" (Alfred Tennyson 541).

The first chapter, "1800-1808," explains in detail the elder George Tennyson's decision to fly in the face of tradition and appoint his second son, Charles, as his heir. As a remote descendant of Baron d'Eyncourt and the recently wealthy Tennyson family, the ever worldly George Tennyson (the elder) seems to have been exclusively concerned with the promotion of his family in society: "it became his chief aim in life to ensure, so far as he could, that the Tennyson name should be worthily upheld by those to whom he intended to hand on the Bayons estate" and other properties (5). When the eldest son George (the poet's father) was only twelve, his father decided that he should accept the role traditionally allotted to the younger son and go into the Church; Sir Charles suggests that his being "difficult to deal with" was the likely cause. George Tennyson, the son, suffered from "a highly nervous temperament" and an "excessive sensitivity and intolerance of discipline," which caused him to be "frequently in trouble for idleness and insubordination" at school despite his "considerable intellectual power" (6). He was, quite simply, ill-suited temperamentally to the socially prominent life the elder Tennyson planned for his heir.

While he never states so explicitly, Sir Charles provides examples of "model" lives--products of industry--to which George Tennyson Senior could and did subscribe: of Alfred's

future uncle, Major Matthew Russell (Elizabeth's husband), and of the younger brother and eventual heir, Charles Tennyson [d'Eyncourt]. Major Matthew Russell was the "son of William Russell a wealthy coal owner" who is described as an "early example of the self-made industrialist. Though to the end of his [William's] life he wrote like an illiterate labourer, he had amassed a sufficient fortune to enable him to purchase Brancepeth Castle, the ancient home of the Nevilles" and manage several pocket boroughs in the Whig interest (6-7). That intellectual acumen is no guarantor of wealth or political prestige is the underlying message here. Nor even any longer is industry as Sir Charles goes on to describe how Matthew Russell was trained in a merely "ornamental career" in the Militia, and to reveal how he lived out his short life at Brancepeth as a type of jovial eighteenth-century squire (7 and 19).¹³

The second of Sir Charles's models, George's brother Charles, "early showed a marked ability and, as he was industrious and ambitious, every year confirmed his father's strong prejudice in his favour" (7). Charles Tennyson apparently had a "brilliant career": Cambridge, law, an

¹³ Ralph Rader suggests that Matthew Russell and Brancepeth Castle may well have served as partial models for the speaker's scorn in Maud when he sneers at Maud's courter: the "new-made lord" whose "old grandfather has lately died" and left a fortune in coal mines, allowing him to obtain a "bought commission" and live in a "gew-gaw" castle, "new as his title," "built last year" (Maud qtd. Rader 91).

eventually fortunate marriage, and political advancement (albeit tinged with anxiety-producing Radicalism). By contrasting George's forced entry into the secluded, country life of a parish Rector (the traditional role of the gentry's younger son) with the paternally advanced prestigious livelihoods of George's brother-in-law and brother, Sir Charles intimates rather than explores a socio-historical cause and consequence of familial and social disunity. Despite the fact that they often exhibited publicly acknowledged inferior intellectual capacities, the rising middle classes were assuming--through sheer "industry" (in all senses of the term)--the landed wealth and status previously held by the aristocracy. In the specific case of George Tennyson and his family, then, they appear in their secluded country parish as if relegated to an outmoded way of life while the busy world of commerce and politics passes them by. As Sir Charles puts it "there was no shopping centre nearer than Spilsby, seven miles to the south east" (10), his somewhat proleptic use of "shopping centre" underscoring the increasingly modern society that the Somersby Tennysons were cut off from through George Tennyson's disinheritance.

Through a garish decking out of home and family, each of these products of industry--Matthew Russell and Charles Tennyson [d'Eyncourt] (to whom the Somersby Tennysons would necessarily compare themselves)--eventually became ridiculous emblems of middle-class, aristocratic mimicry frequently

railed at by critics of Victorian society, not the least of whom was Alfred Tennyson.¹⁴ The social consequences of his grandfather's actions surely contributed to Tennyson's own frequent castigation of the cash nexus and pseudo-aristocratic ostentation of the middle classes in his poetry, a point which Sir Charles again intimates but never really explores.

To his credit, Sir Charles does not dwell on the specific animosities among the Tennyson family members that were generated by the resulting imbalance in deserved fortunes and prospects.¹⁵ Yet in downplaying the relations among the elder Tennysons, he also under values the positive financial and professional encouragement Elizabeth Tennyson Russell gave to her nephew. Sir Charles mentions merely that "[p]oor Mrs Russell," the unjustly criticized sister and recent widow of Major Russell, was "always ready to help with money" when the

¹⁴ Tennyson's relatives are merely two egregious examples of families that succumbed to various mechanisms of social absorption: "the zeal for work, inventiveness, material production, and money making gave way within the capitalist class to the more aristocratic interests of cultivated style, the pursuits of leisure, and political service" (Weiner 13). It became a source of comedy and consternation how well these new aristocrats could outdo the old in terms of aristocratic pretensions.

¹⁵ Martin's biography, however, takes the exposure of the Tennysons' familial strife almost as its mandate; he uses dozens of letters among family members to expose Alfred Tennyson as harbouring a life-long resentment toward the Tennyson [d'Eyncourt] family made manifest in 1883 when the Laureate finally accepted a peerage. According to Martin, Tennyson in his first choice of "Lord d'Eyncourt" showed "how little he had forgotten all the injuries of his youth, for he wanted to take the title that had eluded his uncle" (543).

Somersby Tennysons needed it (30). What he neglects to add is that in the case of Alfred, his Aunt Russell granted him an annuity of £100 in 1827, making possible his education at Cambridge and continuing well into his married life (Martin 4, 48, 60). As Martin would have it, Mrs Russell's sponsorship of her nephew was prompted by her realization that Alfred "could not go on for long in the Rectory with his father" (48), a response solely to the negative emotional atmosphere of Somersby, which disregards the intellectual respect that she had for Alfred.

Neither of the above biographers considers a combination of "facts" such as the following. Elizabeth Russell had a documented talent for poetry herself; in 1823 she had become widow to a large fortune and was now in a position to use her wealth as she saw fit; and in the spring of 1827 Poems by Two Brothers had been privately released, demonstrating an obvious poetic talent in Alfred and Charles that would need to be furthered outside the Somersby Rectory library if it were to mature beyond skilful imitation. In short, beyond her private reasons for supporting Alfred's education, Elizabeth Russell could readily have felt that in order to promote her nephew's abilities he would have to enter public life.¹⁶ The financial

¹⁶ Ricks quotes an exchange of letters between Elizabeth Russell and her father (Tennyson's grandfather) that demonstrate that she was willing to pay additional sums for a mathematics tutor for her nephew so that he might enter college (9).

bar that had confined Alfred's education to Somersby would have to be removed if her nephew and his poetry were to mix within the intellectual and social elite of Oxbridge that dictated the high culture of poetry at that time. This is not, of course, to deny that Alfred himself would not have wanted privately to flee an unbearable situation at home, but rather that the reasons for his removal to Cambridge are more complex than, as Martin would have it, the psychological fear and anxiety that the Rector's "illness" caused in his son.

In spite of Martin's attempts to prove epilepsy as the source of the Rector's fits, his illness has never been conclusively determined. Sir Charles uses various terms throughout his biography ranging from simple "ill health" to "moods of morbid introspection and irritability, dangerous to himself and very distressing to others" (14), moods which Sir Charles later admits were greatly exacerbated by alcohol (46). Only once does he mention that the Rector in 1824 began to experience seizures that "his friends feared might be epileptic" (46); and epilepsy as a potential source of the Tennysonian "black blood" that plagued the entire family is never considered. More to the point, Sir Charles argues that the outward effect of Tennyson's father's illness was to put the young poet in a "position of divided loyalty" with respect to his father and his mother (48).

Elizabeth Tennyson is described by Sir Charles, in terms very similar to those used of Longfellow's mother, as "a woman

of exceptional simplicity and charm and of a profound, instinctive, and unquestioning Evangelical position, which contrasted strongly with the more matter-of-fact attitude of her husband . . ." (14). Similar to Zilpah Longfellow's promotion of poetry within her family, Mrs Tennyson would read aloud to her children from the ever popular Mrs Hemans and Beattie's Calendar (14-15). Sir Charles implies that Elizabeth Tennyson's piety (and no doubt her choice of reading material) had a pernicious influence on the young poet that added to the private suffering Tennyson felt at the hands of his father (48). Like Mrs Russell, she too is described as "[p]oor Elizabeth" only in this case the epithet serves as much against her as it does in sympathy for her. Sir Charles suggests that Elizabeth lacked the shrewdness to realize that in encouraging her sons' poetic talents, "no doubt she spoiled them as well . . . and this, as they grew up, became a source of serious trouble with her moody and erratic husband . . ." (14-15).

Like Hallam Tennyson before him, Sir Charles also confines Tennyson's mother to lines apparently designed to consecrate her (222), in this case those in The Princess that the Prince uses to describe his mother to Princess Ida as part of his persuasion to have her marry him:

Not learned, save in gracious household ways,
 Not perfect, nay, but full of tender wants,
 No angel, but a dearer being, all dipt
 In angel instincts, breathing Paradise,
 Interpreter between the Gods and men, . . .
 Happy he

With such a mother! Faith in womankind
 Beats with his blood, and trust in all things high
 Comes easy to him. (VII 299-303, 308-11)

Again like Hallam, Sir Charles elides exactly those lines in the poem that demonstrate her authority with respect to men: the mother in The Princess is not simply pure in and of herself; rather, she is so in relation to the men who "perforce / Swayed to her from their orbits as they moved" (VII 306-7), a relation that Sir Charles chooses not to include.

More seriously, Sir Charles does not directly quote Tennyson's mother's letters to the elder George Tennyson which demonstrate her strength of character. In one such letter, she asks to have returned to her her own ponies and chaise for herself and her daughters that, in a fit, her husband had sequestered at his father's. Therein, she describes in no uncertain terms the hell that she had endured while married to his son so as to inform him of her intention to leave the Rector.¹⁷ Sir Charles only mentions these incidents, and then somewhat inaccurately since Elizabeth was prepared to, and did, discuss her separation with her father-in-law herself rather than, as Sir Charles claims, through her brother, John Fytche. His failure to quote Elizabeth Tennyson directly

¹⁷ These letters are dated 30 Oct, 1827, 23 Feb, 1829, 27 Feb, 1829, and ? c. 9 March, 1829 (Letters I 14, 26-27, 29-30 and 31).

appears most curious in a biography that purports to be based on straightforward evidence.¹⁸

Elizabeth Tennyson's letters themselves suggest that she did not acquiescently submit either privately to an unquestioning, simplistic Evangelicalism or publicly to her irrational husband or her deliberately blind and obdurate father-in-law. Rather, she actively embraced Evangelicalism as a personally empowering spiritual force, and rationally considered the meagre economic and domestic options available to her should she choose to leave her husband.¹⁹ For example,

¹⁸ Sir Charles does indeed sum up the contents of Elizabeth Tennyson's letters; yet, by not allowing her to speak for herself he denies her a self-authority that he is more than willing to grant to her husband. In addition, she is described in the first instance again as "[p]oor Elizabeth Tennyson," speaking in "moving terms" rather than as her letter itself demonstrates, providing a rational argument for her choice to separate (61). Later, he describes Elizabeth Tennyson's earlier request for the return of ponies and chaise which rightfully belonged to her as having been sparked only by her resentment toward "the measures of economy" forced upon her rather than, as she herself displays, anger at having been treated with such willfull disrespect (81).

¹⁹ As proof of Elizabeth Tennyson's "simple piety," biographers and critics usually quote from her letter to Tennyson concerning the 1859 Idylls. Here, she lauds her son's spirit of Christianity and, to her, new found use of "talents He has given thee, by taking every opportunity of endeavouring to impress the precepts of His Holy Word on the minds of others" (Memoir 380). What should be emphasized, however, is that at age 80, Elizabeth Tennyson had her sights set almost exclusively in the world beyond, even as Tennyson's own declared faith in the immortality of the soul increased in both frequency and vociferousness as he aged. As Tennyson himself had described his mother four years earlier to Gerald Massey: "My mother [is] now between 70 and 80, one who takes far more interest in the next world than in this, and not generally given to the reading of literature . . ." (Letters II 114). That she was exclusively spiritual rather than practical in her earlier years, however, is not borne out in

in her longest letter to George Tennyson, in which she explains the reasons for her desire to separate from her husband, she does not hesitate to point out--and provide evidence for--the severity of her husband's mental state. She adds, possibly with an underlying accusatory intent, that her father-in-law has been consistently misinformed as to the true circumstances of the Somersby Tennysons: "Indeed Sir if the welfare of so many human beings is a matter of the smallest consideration, I am sure it can be only want of information at many points, and mis-information on others that could induce you not to concur most fully in what I am at last determined to carry into effect" (Letters 29-30). She maintains that in her more than twenty years as the victim of violent intimidation and degrading epithets she has provided ample proof that "matrimonial obligations were in [her] eyes of far greater importance than mere personal considerations." The increased severity of the circumstances, however--now that the Rector had taken to keeping a knife and loaded gun in his room, and had threatened to use the former upon his eldest son--have left her no choice but to flee. Whatever purpose Sir Charles may have had for not quoting directly Mrs Tennyson's reasons for leaving her husband, his omission seems to be linked to his overall presentation of women as providers

her correspondence with her father-in-law concerning her husband, nor in that with her brother-in-law concerning her and her children's investment in Dr. Matthew Allen's wood-carving scheme.

of domestic peace and sanctuary for their men. He does not consider women as equal partners (Elizabeth Russell) with men in the professional promotion of the future Laureate, or as defiant dissenters (Elizabeth Tennyson) to those same men when the publicly-sanctioned private world of domestic bliss became a frightening lie. Sir Charles's later allusion to Tennyson's life at Cambridge as a relief from "domestic bickerings" (82) implicitly criticizes the fact that, in her long overdue defiance of her husband, Elizabeth Tennyson was no longer prepared to protect her children from their father in a domestic sanctuary of her own making.

Admittedly, Sir Charles cannot be faulted for the narrow role he assigns the women in Tennyson's early life. Indeed, he alone among Tennyson's biographers seems to accept without reservations the later positive influence that Tennyson's wife, Emily, had upon her husband as a man and as a poet. Rather, Sir Charles's conception of women in Alfred Tennyson is consistent with the promotion in this century of a Victorian separate sphere ideology that has only recently been challenged. That Sir Charles thus fails to acknowledge Victorian women as having had an influence beyond the accepted confines of the home is therefore not surprising. To his credit, he is only implicitly critical of female influence in Tennyson's life rather than, as the male biographers of the "privately-focused" view, explicitly condemnatory.

The division of male and female worlds in the Tennysons' lives by those scholars who endorse a private/public split in the poet becomes paradoxical when related to both George Tennyson's and Alfred Tennyson's vocations. Although in general Victorian women's authority might be confined to the strictly private domestic sphere of the home, in the specific case of the Tennysons, since everyone--female and male alike and sometimes as many as twenty-three people--lived and worked within the home, such a simplistic division is impossible. Paradoxically, the private female world in Nicolson's "privately-focused" Tennyson seems to be associated with public respectability, a respectability supposedly at odds with Tennyson's own, truly private, poetic spirit. In Nicolson's view, the secret, private world of ancestral feuds among men, leading to dissipation and madness, is the more likely seat of poetic inspiration than home and hearth. This "romantic" view of poetry has predominated in Tennyson biography and criticism throughout this century.

The bifurcation of Tennyson's life and poetry ironically began with a bid not to discredit the poet's abilities but rather to restore his tarnished reputation in the 1920s. Harold Nicolson's self-acknowledged impressionistic account of Tennyson: Aspects of his Life, Character, and Poetry intends to differentiate between "Tennyson the poet" and "Tennyson the bard" so as to have him mean something to the "present generation" (6). Forced into this type of subjective-

objective split, according to Nicolson, Tennyson chose the latter, "the easier and more prosperous course: he became the Laureate of his age; he subordinated the [subjective] lyric to the [objective] instructional. And his poetry thereby lost one half of its potential value" (10). Nicolson unabashedly contends that if Tennyson's readers were to be exposed to "the black unhappy mystic of the Lincolnshire wolds" they would thereby learn anew "the secret of his preponderating and triumphant strength" (15). Charged with a modern appreciation for a negative aesthetic--for the Romantic, Byronic alien as poet--Nicolson tries to topple the Tennyson myth of the public bard bequeathed to him and to other modern scholars as a type of Victorian inheritance. Modern writers must, of necessity, discredit the role of the poet as public vates if for no other reason than to make a place for themselves and their poetry within their own subjectivist visions of the world. Yet in the end, what Nicolson managed to do was not to dethrone the king, but to create an alternate kingdom with a private Tennyson as monarch so that the Tennyson myth now legendized two poets, the public and the private. Subsequently, and in particular with the rise of deconstructivism, the most

exciting critical territory to stake a claim would be in the fissures between these two.²⁰

While Nicolson's intention to restore Tennyson as a respected poet was indeed admirable in 1923, considering the very low point to which Tennyson had fallen, ultimately he damaged Tennyson's overall reputation, especially by implicitly and explicitly condemning the domestic world of women and its allegedly pernicious influence upon the poet. Supposedly, Tennyson the poet suffered equally at the hands of "the tender domestic atmosphere of his mother's parlor" and the "moral earnestness" and "ethical purpose" of the Apostles (16). While Nicolson never directly conflates the so-called private female sphere with the Apostles' public responsibility, the underlying correlation remains.

In effect, Nicolson suggests that the softening influence and religious moralism that women emanated outwardly from the home eventually transformed what might have been a vigorous poet into a sentimental bard:

from his very early days Tennyson was influenced by the contemporary demand for calm elevation and for human sentiment. His mother's fondness for Felicia Hemans could not fail to leave a tremulous impression; the society of the young ladies at Horncastle, the type of verses which these young ladies expected and received, increased, and for the moment justified, what was, we must admit, an

²⁰ E.D.H. Johnson's chapter on Tennyson in The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry (1952) marks a beginning in critical attention paid to the "tension" in Tennyson's verse coincident with the institutional predominance of New Criticism in North America.

inherent predilection for the dainty and the elegant. (25)

Elizabeth Tennyson's reading Mrs Hemans and Beattie's Calendar to her children is described by Nicolson as having been spoken "in her gentle, exhausted voice," conspiring to produce "a pleasant element of confederacy" against the Rector (41). Young Alfred returns from Louth school to the "soft presence of his mothers and sisters" because "he was not, except in physique, a very manly boy," and was unable to withstand being bullied (44). The emasculating atmosphere of Somersby could not be made more explicit.

Once Tennyson enters the all male world of Cambridge, however, Nicolson's analysis of the private/public division in the poet of course no longer concerns itself overtly with women. For Nicolson, Arthur Henry Hallam becomes the pinnacle of Tennyson's private world opposed to the public responsibilities the other Apostles imposed upon themselves and Tennyson. Love and emotion are now not of a craven, sentimental kind, as above, but rather "no enervating influence . . . [an] all-absorbing, persistent and intensely emotional stimulus" producing true poetry in "Hallam-inspired occasions" (82-3). Presumably, male-centred passion empowers "poetry" while female-centred emotion enfeebles "verse." The domestic sentiments of women in Tennyson's early life are now allusively replaced by the Apostles' "religious" and poetically enervating "'mission to enlighten the world upon

things intellectual and spiritual'" (Merivale qtd. 73). This "mission" produced in Tennyson an instructional motive that, in Nicolson's opinion, shackled the poet's naturally wild tendencies.

In the end, Nicolson asks that his readers "forget the delicate Laureate of a cautious age; the shallow thought, the vacant compromise; the honeyed idyll; the complacent ode" and remember only the mysterious, haunting cadences of Tennyson's isolated lyric voice (303-4). The implicit pairing of delicate femininity and public responsibility is evident in Nicolson's choice of adjectives. Indeed, many twentieth-century critics took Nicolson's suggestion to heart.²¹

Nicolson inaugurated an infatuation with Tennyson as an essentially private poet that, in biographical terms, could only be expected to increase once Sir Charles's Alfred Tennyson in 1949 revealed hitherto unknown, potentially psychological causes for the wild despair of Tennyson's most impassioned lyrics. In addition, the increasingly scientific spirit of the twentieth century served to heighten public interest in empirically measuring the psychological and physiological workings of the individual human consciousness.

²¹ Those critics who ascribe to Nicholson's dictum of Tennyson as a great lyric poet, while devaluing the importance of the poet's sense of responsibility to his age, essentially followed Baum's disparaging of Tennyson's Victorianism in Tennyson Sixty Years After (1948); they include Jerome H. Buckley (1951), A. Dwight Culler (1973), F.E.L. Priestley (1973), W. David Shaw (1976), and Herbert Tucker Jr. (1988).

The coincidence of these several interests produced a species of Tennyson biography that can only be described as pseudo-scientifically objective in its close observation of its subject: Robert Bernard Martin's Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart.²² Yet his conclusions are highly subjective and therefore specious despite his apparently empirical methodology. In its physiological view of the impositions heredity places upon the individual, Martin's biography of Tennyson attempts to provide a type of scientific rationale for the fits of despondency Tennyson endured. The Tennysons--and Alfred in particular--were under the thrall of an epileptic inheritance so profound that, coupled with other mental and

²² Ann Colley's Tennyson and Madness (1983) extends Martin's treatment of the Tennysons' "black-bloodedness" to place Tennyson himself and his poetry within a historical context of developing psychological theories, not the least of which was that by Dr Matthew Allen, Essay on the Classification of the Insane (1837), whose asylum in the late 1830s and early 1840s Alfred visited and Septimus resided in. Her historical treatment of madness in the nineteenth century is indeed admirable. However, her subsequent psycho-critical argument that Tennyson's preoccupation with insanity in his poetry rested on the poet's hereditary fears of incipient madness--with writing as a type of Freudian displacement--too readily accepts Martin's theory of epilepsy as a physiological cause for such poetic interest. Thus, she superficially equates Tennyson the man with his several mad speakers--the lover in Maud and Lucretius in particular--without due consideration for Tennyson's creation of persona, not as a second self, but as a poetic device. Because Colley essentially adheres to a privately-focused view of Tennyson as a poet, she seems unable to transfer her initial, historical analysis of madness as a public preoccupation in the Victorian period over to her study of Tennyson's mad poems. They remain private, motivated by Tennyson's own morbidity rather than by any interests of the period.

physical disabilities, they were consistently frustrated in their proper entry into Victorian public life. The driving force of Martin's Unquiet Heart is, as its title suggests, the need to prove empirically that Tennyson held no secure place at the public podium since his private life was fraught with difficulties, the most important being his fear of inherited epilepsy.

Nevertheless, Martin himself admits that the evidence to prove epilepsy is entirely lacking. Thus, he employs a method of presentation that uses the number of seemingly similar mental aberrations in the Tennyson family to give qualitative legitimacy to an otherwise unquantifiable argument: that the Tennysons apparently had a "constant, brooding concern about one disease: epilepsy":

The family letters show that both young George [father] and Charles [uncle] suffered from time to time with some form of the illness, that one of Charles's sons [George] was a victim, and that perhaps old George himself had attacks of less severity than those of his descendants. 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, a fourth [Arthur] was severely alcoholic, and the rest of the large family each had at least one bad mental breakdown in a long life. If there are any detailed records extant of what precisely ailed them all, I have been unable to find them, and it is impossible to say whether any of young George's children actually suffered from a form of epilepsy. What is most probable is that among Alfred Tennyson's ten brothers and sisters, some had attacks that resembled epilepsy, and that Alfred either had the disease while young and recovered from it in later life, or, more probably, mistakenly feared as a young man that he had inherited a

tendency to it that he might transmit to any offspring of his own. (10)

Martin continues, then, by assuming epilepsy as the cause of the Tennysons' "black blood" even though he concedes he has no foundation for doing so. He excuses the lack of medical records as owing to a Victorian reluctance to register such a "'shameful' disease like epilepsy . . . on the death certificates of members of the gentle classes . . ." (10) since epilepsy was supposedly thought to have been related to if not caused by heightened sexuality often resulting in excessive masturbation (27-8).

Martin's preoccupation with epilepsy as the private cause of Tennyson's fractured participation in public is made manifest in his discussion of two related aspects of Tennyson's life: his role as a potential husband and his vocation as a poet. In each case, Tennyson's alleged reluctance to participate fully in what Martin perceives to have been the dictates of Victorian society is tied to the poet's neurological difficulties, thereby giving pseudo-scientific credence to the modern theory of the private Tennyson as having been at odds with the public demands of his age.

In discussing Tennyson's long and difficult engagement to Emily Sellwood, Martin disregards the moral and socio-economic demands of Victorian society that surrounded marriage in favour of the purely psychological pressures that Tennyson's

assumed inherited tendency to epilepsy exerted. Tennyson first met Emily Sellwood in 1830 through the friendly associations of their families although he did not develop an emotional attachment to her until she was bridesmaid to her sister, Louisa, in her marriage to Charles Tennyson, 24 May 1836. In 1837, the Sellwoods recognized Alfred and Emily's engagement. Yet since almost all of the correspondence of Alfred and Emily was destroyed by Hallam and his co-editors after Tennyson's death, little can really be known of the problems that kept them from marrying until 1850. Certainly by the summer of 1840, the possibility of future happiness was cast in doubt. In a letter that Lang dates as July or August 1840, Tennyson refers to his "vice of old" as the cause for his flying from her for his own good and perhaps for hers (Letters I 182-3). What this "vice" may have been is debatable. Hallam mentions only "[e]ternal want of pence" (Memoir 147) as the cause for the letters ceasing. Sir Charles adds that Mr Sellwood not only did not approve of Tennyson's apparent inability to earn a decent living, but looked askance on Tennyson's Bohemian way of life, replete with port, tobacco, and questionable religious opinions (179). Because Tennyson would neither compromise his personal integrity by accepting half of his mother's annuity nor damage his professional reputation by writing short, popular poems for magazines and newspapers so as to afford to marry, according to Sir Charles, his engagement was broken off (182).

Martin, however, extends what Sir Charles had earlier intimated: that Alfred's brother Charles's addiction to opium and the disastrous consequences thereby imposed upon his wife Louisa had made Mr Sellwood sceptical of the stability of the entire Tennyson family (Sir Charles 179). Throughout his discussion of the "Break with Emily Sellwood: 1838-1842" (244-60), Martin argues that Tennyson had no real desire to marry because of a fear of hereditary illness that kept him reticent in response to Emily who allegedly had wished their engagement to continue. In limiting his vision to Tennyson's private concerns, however, Martin fails to acknowledge restrictions that Emily herself, or most certainly the Sellwoods, put upon their engagement. According to Sir Charles, even in 1850 when Alfred and Emily did marry, the Sellwoods were sceptical, "largely on religious grounds" (241), a scepticism likely stemming from public pressure for church attendance and religious conformity. In addition, the enormous influence that Mr Sellwood had upon his daughter reads very much like that of Mr Barrett upon his own equally invalid daughter, Elizabeth, or like the control that Justice Wightman tried to exercise over his daughter, Frances Lucy, before her eventual marriage to Matthew Arnold. Although Martin acknowledges that Emily Sellwood "idolized" her father, he refuses to place Alfred's and Emily's broken engagement within a fairly common Victorian scenario of paternal delay of a daughter's full participation in adult life. Furthermore, Martin claims that

Tennyson's financial circumstances were an inadequate reason for separation since in Martin's view Tennyson was never as impoverished as he made out; he had £100 per annum from his aunt and the interest, possibly as much as £500 per annum, from the inheritance he received on the death of his grandfather in 1835 (207 & 247). Again, however, Martin neglects to place Tennyson within a public context of social propriety that--far more than individual desire--determined that marriage should occur late in life only when, as Houghton points out, a man could "provide his wife with a carriage and . . . associate with men of wealth" (384). In 1842, J.S. Wade explained: "The immorality of marrying without the means of supporting a family [was] a doctrine of recent promulgation" (qtd. in Banks 30). While Tennyson was, at 41, above the average male age of marriage (which had risen to 29), and may have conformed too closely to economic, moral strictures, nonetheless, his determination to postpone marriage until he could guarantee his wife a secure future was certainly in keeping with middle-class values. Moreover, postponement was particularly reasonable in Tennyson's case given his family's perception of the relative poverty that the Somersby Tennysons endured throughout their lives compared to their wealthy d'Eyncourt relatives. Indeed, once Tennyson lost most of his inheritance through an unsound investment in Dr Matthew Allen's woodcarving scheme (1841-43), his reluctance to marry could only have increased.

As chapter one explains, the pressures by friends and family upon Tennyson to produce additional volumes for publication, to write poetry for a wider market, and even to supplement writing poetry with some form of "real" employment increased in the 1840s as his financial circumstances worsened. Yet, Tennyson was unprepared to compromise himself as a poet in order to gain the financial security he needed to allow him to marry. Such reluctance, however, need not be misconstrued as it is by Martin as a privately motivated fear of marrying. On the contrary, Tennyson appears more to have been driven by a sense of professional responsibility to what he perceived as his audience, and a personal commitment to give his readers only his best work, as the discussion in chapter four concerning Tennyson's response to criticism in the 1830s clearly indicates. His final agreement to publish the 1842 Poems was prompted by similarly professional concerns because publishers in America were threatening to publish the original 1833 volume, and Tennyson could not abide having poems that he had spent a decade reworking appear in their previous, and to his mind, immature form.

Martin's disregard for Tennyson as a prospective husband within his social and professional context is not surprising since his purpose is to argue for a Tennyson at odds with his age, not a man sensitive to the socio-economic circumstances of the time. A similar line of reasoning in Martin's discussion of Tennyson as a poet, however, is entirely

unacceptable since it misleadingly portrays Tennyson as working solely from within an isolated poetics, divorced from his public. Martin contends that Tennyson, in constant fear of epilepsy, used his poetry as an "anodyne" to numb "the pain that his hypochondria brought on him. It was not a cure, but it was certainly an alleviation" (140). Herein lies Martin's approach: the public exposure of grief and loss in In Memoriam is reconfigured in private terms as Tennyson's personal threnody on his own psychological wholeness:

But, for the unquiet heart and brain,
 A use in measured language lies;
 The sad mechanic exercise,
 Like dull narcotics, numbing pain.
 (V 5-8)

The metaphor of language as a narcotic is not a surprising one for Tennyson; Alfred's brother Charles had chosen opium while others in the family had sought solace in alcohol. The Tennysons' individual reasons for escape from pain, however, cannot reasonably be conflated. Moreover, verse as a drug to numb the pain of existence is not unique to Tennyson. As a lover of Keats--in particular because of Hallam's introduction of his poetry to him--this trope seems entirely natural to Tennyson's elegiac purpose: to substitute measured language for the loss of the absent other.

In assuming that Tennyson's verse supplies the same private narcotic function as various drugs did for the other members of the poet's family, Martin entrenches the modernist view of Tennyson as the tortured Romantic poet advanced earlier by

Nicolson. In so doing, he severely limits Tennyson's poetry to a purely private realm: in the "harmonies and symbolic order of the poems, he was able to perceive momentarily some kind of unity and wholeness that was applicable to his own life One of the difficulties with poetry that serves so private a purpose is that it is not essentially directed to a reading public, and for this reason Tennyson was often reluctant to publish, particularly while a young man." With so private a poetic purpose, publication would supposedly be "supererogatory" (140). But if anything, Tennyson's reluctance to publish resulted from a sensitive awareness of the literary demands of his audience, including his critics, and a desire to ensure consanguinity between his voice and theirs. Martin dismisses Tennyson's active awareness of himself as a professional poet because it does not fit with his overriding theory of the Tennysons, and of Alfred in particular, as biologically ill-suited to their age.

In contrast to the privately-focused views of Tennyson's life and work, publicly-focused views not surprisingly take Tennyson's injunction "to be studied through his poems" to heart. They indeed see the man in terms of his poetry rather than attempting biographical analysis of the man as a pretext for understanding the poetry. Beyond this, publicly focused views also place the poet within his larger social context so that reception becomes intrinsic to an overall understanding of the poetry. Both published in 1962, Joanna Richardson's

The Pre-eminent Victorian: A Study of Tennyson and Valerie Pitt's Tennyson Laureate present a public view of Tennyson from within a historical tradition of Tennyson scholarship best illustrated by Sir Charles's several attempts to provide a nineteenth-century context for Tennyson's twentieth-century readers.²³ Of the two studies, Richardson's is the less satisfying since as a type of biography it adds very little to Sir Charles's Alfred Tennyson. Moreover, as a sociological analysis of a literary figure, it falls far short of Pitt's extensive treatment of the conditions within which Tennyson assumed the voice of the Laureate in response to his Victorian public.

Richardson proceeds almost as if the private Tennyson had never existed. For instance, she states only that at Cambridge Tennyson "conceived for Hallam a sublimated passion that would shape his life and work" (22), but fails to explore the depth of this relationship, even within the public realm of Hallam's promotion of Tennyson in his review of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical. For Richardson, Tennyson's Victorian pre-

²³ Other studies in this historical vein that preceded Richardson's and Pitt's, apart from those published near the turn of the century in the afterglow of Victorianism, include Shannon's Tennyson and the Reviewers (1952), Killham's Tennyson and "The Princess": Reflections of an Age (1958) and, of course, Sir Charles's Six Tennyson Essays (1954). His short monograph Tennyson and his Times, though published later, in 1974, represents some of his best work in placing Tennyson in his Victorian context. Richardson's work is devoted to precedents set by Sir Charles and relies on material left to her by him; The Pre-eminent Victorian is thus dedicated to him.

eminence is entirely public and social, conferred upon him because he socialized and associated with the recognizably canonized. Thus, Richardson's study reads like a Victorian lives of the (moderately) rich and (certainly) famous, in which Tennyson reigned supreme: the Brownings, the Carlyles, Gladstone, Milnes, and, of course, Queen Victoria. Apparently, Tennyson is pre-eminent as a Victorian in his ability to mirror this pastiche. Yet nowhere does Richardson ever examine the heterogeneity of this audience and what it meant to a professional poet to try to satisfy its conflicting demands. Nor does she question Victorian ideology itself. According to Richardson, "Victorian opinion was much more clearly voiced by the constant, overwhelming host of Tennyson's admirers" (290) than by his detractors although the exact nature of these opinions on either side is never an issue for her. Hence, her study lacks in-depth analysis and is limited to a collection of admiring letters, a great many of them from women--Elizabeth Barrett Browning in particular--because ultimately she believes that "Tennyson's muse was feminine, and gazed towards the stars" (243). The conflation of these two concepts is never explained.

Even though Richardson's purpose is to paint a public picture of the Laureate, her unquestioned assumption of Victorian life as essentially feminine and spiritual suggests her paradoxical allegiance to the view of privately-focused scholars like Nicolson who see Victorian culture as

pejoratively dominated by women, and (in Nicolson's case) therefore to be disparaged. That she nonetheless lauds the period and the Laureate within it through illustrations of Victorian hero-worship seems to place her work almost sixty years before its time, as if she never fully accounted for Bradley's Reaction Against Tennyson, which she lists in her bibliography. She asserts Tennyson's pre-eminence as a Victorian completely within the realm of those features of the Victorian period that modernists have rejected: ardent spirituality, female worship, and complacency. She fails to explore Tennyson's Victorianism as a type of compromise, an exploration already begun in 1952 by E.D.H. Johnson in The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry, a text which is listed in her bibliography but seemingly ignored in her analysis.

In contrast, Pitt's Tennyson Laureate is written in open acknowledgement of and direct response to her predecessors. She intends to rescue Tennyson from "the gardens of a private sensibility" (x) sown by Nicolson and later cultivated by many others so that the Laureate's poetry can be enjoyed in this century as it was in the last: in full, and by all classes and varieties of readers--in short, popularly. Underlying Pitt's analysis is a belief that now seems almost absurd to readers in the late twentieth-century: "poetry is, fundamentally, a public not a private art" (250). But unlike many twentieth-century scholars, Pitt glances backward when reading Tennyson, glances to an ostensibly eighteenth-century rhetorical

tradition rather than, as Carr and a host of other twentieth-century readers have done, to Tennyson as a Modern Poet. She analyses Tennyson's duality as inwardly driven, outwardly expressive. Nonetheless, for Pitt this marriage of the personal and the social was "incongruous" and, ultimately, injurious to Tennyson's reputation in this century. While Pitt's overall intention is to reinvest the public office of Laureate with poetic value, her final "Evaluation" chapter reveals that, even for her, Tennyson's lack of poetic vitality--a privately charged emotive energy--militates against its complete acceptance. Thus, she and presumably other twentieth-century readers come away with "a sense of potentiality which remains in much, though not all, of his work, only half fulfilled" (247). The "two Tennysons" legend prevails even here in Tennyson Laureate, only in this case from the perspective of the Victorian audience's public demands rather than, as with privately-focused scholars, derived from the poet's own personal morbidity.

To her credit, Pitt's focus on the heterogeneity of Tennyson's Victorian audience, and the poet's equally various responses to it, reconsider a complex relationship that had previously been too readily dismissed along the modernist reactionary lines established by Lytton Strachey's Eminent Victorians.²⁴ The Victorian audience's "monumental

²⁴ Of the secondary social histories upon which Pitt based her understanding of the Victorian period, only J.H. Buckley's The Victorian Temper (1951) would have dealt with

complacency," "moral stagnation," "self-congratulation," and "self-deception" assumed by Strachey (Pitt 248) Pitt effectively demonstrates as simplistic. In so doing, she recasts Tennyson as a public poet in ways that suggest that the Laureate did far more than merely pander to the supposedly homogenous demands of the self-satisfied middle classes.

Pitt begins with an introductory chapter, "The Status of Tennyson in Criticism," that clearly articulates the private treatment to which Tennyson has been subject in this century: "Tennyson is supposed to be escaping the terrors and conflicts of a sensitive temperament, and the responsibility of his own insight, by running into the shelter of standard Victorian morality. This view of his Laureateship is as much a reaction against the Victorians as against Tennyson" (12). To counter this view, in later chapters she puts forth essentially two related arguments: 1) that Tennyson was never an escapist in either his private life or his public work, but rather married the personal with the impersonal so as to produce a poetry of social duty that vies with the best of Wordsworth's in its ability to communicate "the moral of man's relationship to man in nature and the common social order" (65); and 2) that

Tennyson in a substantial way. Curiously, Pitt does not list Houghton's The Victorian Frame of Mind (1957) in her bibliography even though Houghton's work has assumed almost canonical status among Victorian scholars, and many of the conclusions she makes of Tennyson's Victorian audience, particularly in terms of its several anxieties, agree with Houghton's chapter on "Anxiety" (54-89).

Victorian morality afforded no such shelter to escape to in any case since it was not stable but, in fact, constantly changing to account for a "crumbling world" (a reconsideration of Victorianism which has since become accepted by those scholars who see Tennyson as a Victorian precisely because of his awareness of the fractured world in which he lived).

Pitt sees Tennyson's achievement in the 1830s and 1840s as related to his skilful use of poetic symbols, Eliot's "objective correlatives," to express emotional and sensuous states of awareness to which his audience would then give their assent (47-77). This talent culminates in In Memoriam, where Tennyson universalizes his personal loss through stock symbols, common-place analogies that invite diverse readers into a "knowledge of his experience and his theme" (118). Despite her insight into the expectations Tennyson's Victorian audience may have shared (though not uniformly), Pitt nevertheless seems to expect from Tennyson a gift for social realism like that of Mrs. Gaskell that Pitt herself acknowledges "was not only outside the scope of Tennyson's experience, but alien to his imagination" (129). Because of her expectation, she argues that Tennyson's seclusion (as a child at Somersby and as an adult at Farringford and Aldworth) left him ignorant of the volume of specific social and political legislations and their profound ramifications that affected his increasingly widespread audience (151-2). Consequently, she necessarily views Tennyson's achievement as

"limited" even while she admits that he alone represented the Victorian age because "his response to the mood and colour of the period is fuller and more alive than any other contemporary poet" (152). According to Pitt, Tennyson's limitations as a social realist were as much a factor of audience as they were of authorship.

In the decisive decades of the thirties and forties, Tennyson attempted to convey "the value of the world in all its aspects as contrasted with the solitary mind" (127). Pitt alleges, however, that this "world" itself was limited to "the world of intelligent, cultured Victorians of the upper middle-class and not the struggling energetic communities of an infant industrial society" (127) and, as such, prescribed the boundaries of Tennyson's public awareness. As Vates, he would disregard the apparently surface realities of socio-economic and political struggle in favour of the deeper "realities of spiritual and moral life" (149) that presumably preoccupied the upper-middle class. Later, Pitt suggests that Tennyson derived his sense of public vocation by responding to a select, albeit heterogeneous, inner circle of acquaintances who microcosmically represented his larger public: F.D. Maurice, Fitzgerald, Clough, Jowett, Patmore, Ward, and (on its outer edges) Henry Sidgwick (248-49). Tennyson's Victorian compromise is thus thought to mirror that of his friends: an outward, quiet acceptance of idealism and absolute values (249) even in the face of inner doubt, weariness,

uncertainty and difficulty. For according to Pitt, "the Victorians shared emotions when they did not share ideas" (251).

Hence, because Pitt sees Tennyson as working from within a secluded environment and for a limited audience, she has trouble dealing with Tennyson as a "popular" poet, one who was able--as the people's poet--to touch the heart of the masses. The popularity of In Memoriam she wants to ascribe partly to "luck" (116). Tennyson's achievement as a popular poet is vitiated by her final claim that, in his poetry generally, the "coincidence of his insights with common symbols was accidental, and on the whole the Victorian public misunderstood him" (269). She adds, however, that such misunderstanding was not Tennyson's fault. Because his Victorian audience at large is perceived by her as having lacked commonly held beliefs, no poet could have hoped to aspire consciously to popularity on a mass scale (267-8).

These conclusions, however, seem to belie what Pitt maintains at the outset, that those privately-focused studies, to which Tennyson Laureate is a reaction, cannot "deny to him what he held in common with his contemporaries, reverence for chastity, and its intellectual counterpart, integrity, an affection for the domestic charities, a passionate response to physical or spiritual courage, and an intense, insular, and irritable attachment to the order and values of the society of which he was a member" (12). But it should be remembered

that, for Pitt, this contemporary audience was a narrow elite rather than the Victorian public as a whole. As such, Pitt allows her study of Tennyson's bardic role to be overdetermined by her theory that Tennyson may have been the last in a tradition of great eighteenth-century rhetorical poets. Indeed, this is an effective counter to the highly romantic notions of privately-focused scholars who see Tennyson engaged in a modernist struggle, but it is less effective as a study of Tennyson as a man and as a poet living and working within a broadly-based Victorian culture that did in fact share the beliefs that she accords only to a select class. Ultimately, her twentieth-century predilections reveal themselves when she, too, like those scholars she has tried to combat, laments the tone of "curious innocence" that, despite conflicts and moral challenges, dominates Tennyson's life and work, and regrets that the Victorian poet had never the sense of "tragic guilt" that makes Shakespeare's work truly great (246).

Pitt's insights into the necessary compromises demanded by Victorian life notwithstanding, Tennyson Laureate ironically does little to erase the Tennyson legend from the horizon of expectations that dominates twentieth-century impressions of the poet. In monumentalizing his father as the Victorian poet-priest-prophet in the Memoir, Hallam Tennyson established a foundational myth for the two Tennysons legend, a myth that scholars in this century have really been unable to diminish

or replace despite inordinate efforts to do so. Sir Charles's filling in of the lacunae of his grandfather's life, in an attempt to diminish the overweening piety of Hallam's Victorian biography, nonetheless has allowed its mythologizing of women's roles to stand uncorrected, thereby supporting the matriarchal cast of the Tennyson's life and entrenching the poet's supposed allegiance to "the angel in the house."

Biographers such as Nicolson and Martin have sought to replace the pious, public portrait drawn by the son with Tennyson as the brooding mystic and neurotic. However, in so doing, they have revealed their own subjective impulses more than outlined the specific features of their object of study. Lastly, scholars of the public Tennyson, if they examine the Victorian ideology that Tennyson is said to represent--as does Pitt--have come away dissatisfied with the curious distance that seems to have existed between the passion of Tennyson's inner life and the outward expression of belief that marks his Laureate verse. Hallam's mythic Alfred Lord Tennyson remains untoppled because each scholar, in his or her own way, writes in reaction to Tennyson as Hallam's creation rather than in response to Tennyson as a professional poet working within his own Victorian context of personal, professional, and socio-political aims. An analysis of Tennyson as the people's voice of Victorian England, if it is to do justice to the poet and not to the myth, must examine the variety of forces that produced changes in his understanding as he worked toward

marriage, quite literally his own and the wedding of voices that marks the popular achievement of In Memoriam. This period in Tennyson's development is figuratively labelled "adolescence," not least because of the changing tenor of Tennyson's "school miss Alfred" voice as he approaches manhood.

CHAPTER FOUR

TENNYSON AND THE ADOLESCENCE OF A VOICE

. . . the poet little urged,
 But with some prelude of disparagement,
 Read, mouthing out his hollow oes and aes,
 Deep chested music
 --Tennyson ("The Epic" 48-51)

One of the disadvantages in writing about Victorian culture while living in the late-twentieth century is that the metaphors used to describe experience are irrevocably coloured by the psycho-sexual connotations that arise out of a post-Freudian ideology. Indeed, Tennyson scholarship has been profoundly affected by the dehistoricizing tendencies of psychological and, more recently, psycholinguistic theories, which either conflate Tennyson's development as a poet with his own private ego formation, or posit a self-divided Tennyson as a necessary victim of the dislocating forces of language formation. Neither of these approaches places Tennyson within a historical context that produced changes in his self-conscious development of his poetic voice as an artistic construct. In other words, he is not seen as a professional poet. Yet if Tennyson's youthful, "I mean to be famous," is given any credence whatsoever, clearly the poet's awareness of audience reception as a determining feature in the successful realization of this dream must be taken into account when studying the maturation of Tennyson's poetic

voice prior to what Edgar Shannon refers to as "The Pinnacle of Success," the widespread popularity of In Memoriam.

The notion of a distinctive poetic voice that develops in association with Tennyson's maturation as a psycho-sexual being should not be misconstrued as a type of Freudian displacement of private anxieties. Instead, Tennyson's poetic adolescence should be considered in public terms, adolescence being that period in which the individual gradually works toward full adult acceptance as a member of a social and political community. In this study, adolescence is used metaphorically--not biologically, psychologically or even sociologically per se--to indicate that period in Tennyson's life, roughly 1827-50, in which he struggled to create a voice that would not only echo his distinctive individuality as a new poet within the English literary tradition, but also sound his allegiance to the larger cultural and social polity of Britain. That this struggle was for Tennyson, even as it was for Longfellow, fraught with a feminine-versus-masculine controversy, enlargens the metaphoric scope of Tennyson's poetic adolescence.

On innumerable occasions throughout the 160 years that his poems have stirred audiences, Tennyson, like Longfellow, has been labelled a "feminine" poet. The meaning of such an appellation has been historically determined, referring to different things at different times. To his contemporaries, especially Edward Bulwer-Lytton, it derogatorily signalled a

tendency to lyrical effusion, metrical niceties, and false emotion or sentimentality that assumed even greater prominence with Bulwer-Lytton's satire of Tennyson included in his "The New Timon" (1846). Tennyson had been granted a Civil List Pension of £200 in 1845; this "gift" rankled Bulwer-Lytton to such an extent that he used his "New Timon" to cast doubt upon Tennyson's manliness:

Let School-Miss-Alfred vent her chaste delight
 On 'darling little rooms so warm and bright!'
 Chaunt, 'I'm weary,' in infectious strain,
 And catch her 'blue fly singing i' the pane.'
(pages 51-2)

Although Bulwer-Lytton's infamous "School-Miss-Alfred" jibe, among others, may have triggered a "triumphant vindication of Tennyson" at the time, as Martin contends (298), it labelled Tennyson once and for all as a feminine poet.

Indeed, more generous readers than Bulwer-Lytton, such as W.J. Fox, had very early detected in Tennyson's poetry a preference for female subject matter defined by a Keatsian richness of imagery that could lead to affectation although Fox did not necessarily deride this as "feminine."¹ While the

¹ W. J. Fox's unsigned review of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical appeared in the Westminster Review, January 1831 (see Jump 21-33). His effusive praise of Tennyson's ability to enter character and mood, especially of women, is noteworthy since it clearly derived from Fox's radical politics yet established a precedent in Tennysonian criticism that continued throughout the Victorian period. From Tennyson's focus on women, Fox generalizes: "Upon what love is, depends what woman is, and upon what woman is, depends what the world is, both in the present and in the future. There is not a greater moral necessity than that of a reformation of female education" (30). From his earliest work to his final Death of Oenone, Tennyson worked within this moral, social imperative; and it

"feminine" label would follow Tennyson throughout his career, such labelling did little to damage Tennyson's popular reputation in its early stages. By the 1860s, however, with the moral outcry surrounding the publication of Swinburne's Poems and Ballads (1866), critics began to condemn, in no uncertain terms, any suggestions of sexual ambiguity in the poetic voices of England's male poets. Alfred Austin's reevaluation of Tennyson as a "feminine" poet par excellence in The Temple Bar (1869), reproduced in The Poetry of the Period (1870 in Jump 294-311), crystallized a critical reaction against Tennyson's "feminine" luxuries of language and emotion that had been building for some time, most noticeable perhaps in Walter Bagehot's "Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning; or, Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry" (1864). In a related way, Robert Buchanan's essay "The Fleshly School of Poetry" (1871) though aimed at Rossetti, labelled Swinburne a poetic hermaphrodite, and had clear implications for any male poet "Who Affected an Effeminate Manner." The spreading homophobia of the later decades of the nineteenth century could only serve to heighten criticism of Tennyson's "feminine muse" (Austin's term) so that by the 1920s Tennyson's bardic voice was categorically

is in his focus upon the value of women in society, that Tennyson may be best thought of as preeminently Victorian.

denounced by Nicolson as emasculate and, therefore, to be excised.²

Despite changes in the horizon of gender expectations imposed on male poets, what remains consistent in most critics' views of Tennyson is the feminine label itself, irrespective of the connotations such nomenclature might carry. According to a mid-twentieth-century sympathizer such as Pitt, "feminine" designates something at the heart of Tennyson's creative process, something not to be denigrated but understood and appreciated: "His interpretation of experience was slow in forming itself, moving not by the arrangement of neat conceptual counters, but in a long organic growth. His mental life was, if the distinction be admitted, feminine not masculine, contemplative, not active" (8). Unfortunately, Pitt never explains why an organic, contemplative mind should be deemed "feminine." Moreover, of those twentieth-century readers who do question Tennyson's "feminine" poetic voice few consider it outside of the context

² Jeffrey Weeks's chapter on "The Construction of Homosexuality" (96-121) explains how, prior to the 1870s, the general public had no clear conceptualization of the social type, "homosexual," although various laws and forms of persecutions had existed to control "sodomy." In the latter part of the nineteenth century, however, legal and medical interests accord with a public concern for "social purity," and the regulation of sexuality in general, creating not only outbursts of "moral panic" such as those following the Wilde trials, but "definiteness and self-consciousness to the manifestations of homosexuality" (Havelock Ellis qtd 103); in other words, the homosexual, as a social construct, came into being at this time.

of the poet's own sexual determination. Consequently, present critical discussions of Tennyson's female muse often implicitly or explicitly involve the standard biographical debate concerning the extent to which Tennyson may or may not have engaged in homosexual activities with Hallam, even as it did in the 1830s following the publication of "O Darling Room" (1832) and, more markedly later, following the publication of In Memoriam.³ That is, Tennyson's voice has seldom been

³ Various critics have tried to answer directly the question Ricks posed to himself and his readers in 1972: "Is Tennyson's love for Hallam a homosexual love" (215)? Ricks's answer is "no," and he tries "to say why" (216) by citing biographical evidence of Tennyson's lack of anxiety concerning his sexuality. In his introduction to The Letters of Arthur Henry Hallam, Jack Kolb confidently asserts that the question of Tennyson's and Hallam's friendship as homosexual is put "finally to rest" by Hallam's letters (17). However, Kolb's assertion has been ignored by several scholars in the 1980s. Using Jeffrey Weeks's sociological classifications of homosexual experience in the nineteenth century, Alan Sinfield, for example, defines Tennyson's relation to Hallam as "the highly individualized, the deeply emotional, sometimes even sexual, relation between two individuals who are otherwise not regarded, or do not regard themselves, as 'deviant'" (Weeks qtd. Sinfield 131). Sinfield further explains the sexual site of struggle in Tennyson's life and poetry within its "changing class and power relations" (132). Taking a deconstructivist approach to In Memoriam, Christopher Craft argues that "Ricks' extended 'defense (so to speak) of Tennyson' against imputations of homosexuality remains sympathetic to certain Tennysonian notions of an orderly and conventional androgyny . . ." (87), an androgyny which Craft sees in In Memoriam as fraught with anxieties of gender inversion that create ambivalence at the level of the signifier and ensure "the intractable circulation of male homosexual desire" (94) in the poem. Hallam's death ensured that homosexual "touching" could remain "always already . . . exiled to a realm beyond touch" (98), and therefore beyond realization though not necessarily beyond desire. Most recently, Richard Dellamora looks at Masculine Desire from the perspective of the sexual politics of Victorian aestheticism. In his chapter on Tennyson, he comes closest to appreciating Tennyson's ambiguous sexual voicing not as evidence of the

thought of as a product of design rather than as a biological or psychological accident. What needs to be examined is Tennyson's awareness of so-called effeminacy as an aesthetic construct designed to engage the private sympathies of an increasingly large female readership yet within a context that would appease the public demands of his male critics. In this way, Tennyson's private-public, female-male conflict parallels Longfellow's struggle to meet the demands of his own nation's increasingly masculinist critics while still appealing to the feminine sympathies of his general public. Such a parallel, however, is in Tennyson's case further complicated by socio-economic strictures governing the interaction of men and women, making class an additionally important feature governing the development of Tennyson as the poetic voice of Victorian England.

Initially, the pivotal force in the struggle to create Tennyson's poetic voice was not the poet himself but rather Arthur Henry Hallam. After moving to Cambridge in 1827, Tennyson the poet saw his audience broaden from family and

poet's homosexuality (closet or otherwise), but rather within a context of constructed aesthetics: Tennyson's own as well as those of several Apostles, some of whom were known homosexuals (16-30). Dellamora's further conception of two distinct sets of readers of In Memoriam seems to follow Pitt's realization of the poet's inner and outer circles of readership, while his discussion of Tennyson's gender construction in relation to these audiences is unique although unfortunately brief (35-40). The enticing power of Tennyson's androgynous voice makes it unlikely that the issue of the poet's potential homosexuality will ever truly be put to rest.

intimate friends to Cambridge dons and scholars, directed in this by the leadership role played by the Apostles debating society. Tennyson, the man, also developed the most profound emotional attachment of his life: the love and companionship--short-lived as it was--of fellow Apostle, Arthur Hallam.

Hallam was to be for Tennyson a bridge between the public poet and the private man; the centrality of their friendship in the initial development of Tennyson as the "people's voice" of Victorian England cannot be overstressed. In his interest in immediate Romantic precursors, Hallam showed Tennyson how his own classical erudition gleaned from the private library of the Somersby Rectory could reinscribe itself within a contemporary political and spiritual context. He thus suggested to Tennyson his place within a literary tradition, extending into the present through the inclusion of Keats and Shelley. He also gave Tennyson practical aid in response to Trench's Apostolic injunction: "Tennyson, we cannot live in Art." By taking on an agent's role in the early 1830s, he ensured that Tennyson was published and promoted. He showed the poet how to make private suffering a public virtue. While alive, he channelled Tennyson's poetic voice; once dead, he forced Tennyson to do this for himself.

Hallam's role in Tennyson's career, however, needs to be seen within a larger context: the friendly intellectual and professional support that Tennyson and Hallam both benefitted from when, in 1829, they joined the Cambridge *Conversazione*

Society more commonly known as the Apostles. The importance of this society in the development of Tennyson's creative temperament has rarely gone unnoticed by his several biographers. Since Nicolson's damning portrait of the group, however, its effects have usually been thought of as deleterious, to greater or lesser degrees depending on how tenaciously the scholar in question clings to Tennyson's "genius" as essentially private. Tennyson is thought to have acquired his sense of public or social responsibility at this time almost as if it were forced upon him as an ineluctable destiny. And the Apostles were to blame, or so the story goes.

As Peter Allen in his history of The Cambridge Apostles argues, F.D. Maurice--not just the man but his presence--reigned over the Apostles, particularly in the 1820s and 30s. Leader of a self-styled subgroup of Apostles known as "mystics," Maurice established a spiritual, quasi-philosophical basis for their identity as a group.⁴ Self-

⁴ In the late 1820s, the mystics consisted of Maurice, John Sterling, John Kemble, William Donne, Richard Trench, and Joseph Blakesley. Allen claims that Maurice's beliefs derived from his family's Unitarianism and political liberalism fraught with internecine battles with his sisters over Evangelicalism's promotion of a personal God (56-72). The philosophical idealism which Maurice eventually reached was a type of compromise: "His family's political liberalism, with which he had always been in sympathy, demanded commitment to social reform. His sisters' and mother's religious zeal, which he could not ignore, demanded the pursuit of personal salvation and concern for the souls of others. By identifying the soul or essential self with Coleridge's 'reason', Maurice found in philosophical idealism an ally, perhaps a replacement, for evangelical faith" (79). The Calvinist-

scrutiny became a test of "religious" faith, with liberal acceptance of one another's views seldom violated (71-5). Allen refers to several tenets of "Apostolic Theology": a strong, anti-Benthamite objection to materialism; belief in man's innate experience of God; struggle for self-knowledge; an apparent disregard for social reform since it dealt merely with "material" problems; and the promotion of literature as a vehicle for spiritual and therefore social salvation (see esp. 75-86).⁵ The assurance with which various members held and

inspired faith of Maurice's sisters was a common reactionary response to growing religious tolerance and outright dissent in the early 1800s. Tennyson was made directly aware of this religious reactionarism through the rigid Calvinism of his aunt Mary Bourne, which she repeatedly inflicted upon the "damned" Tennyson children (Memoir 12-13). Tennyson's religious tolerance seems to have developed gradually, like Maurice's, out of family circumstances prior to Cambridge rather than having been taken on thereafter as an Apostolic creed. Both Maurice and Tennyson contrast sharply with Longfellow who, as a Unitarian in a far more liberal America, never had to question the liberalism of his religious faith. Therefore, religious struggles--and the various tensions and ambiguities that compromise-solutions could give rise to--are virtually absent from Longfellow's poetry, often making it less interesting than Tennyson's to modern and post-modern readers.

⁵ These essentially spiritual beliefs of the 1820s had some perhaps unexpected experiential consequences in the 1830s. Dellamora alleges that the intimacy of the group, the members' feelings of shared moral superiority that absented them from the prescriptions and proscriptions of society, and the liberal acceptance of a wide range of views may actually have fostered an intellectual and emotional venturing that included sexual nonconformity for such members as Arthur Buller, Richard Monckton Milnes, James Spedding, Henry Lushington, and George Venables all of whom were friends of Hallam and Tennyson, some more than others (19-28). Hallam's brief friendship with Milnes in 1829 and Hallam's own writings of the period indicate that both "Tennyson and Hallam were well aware that sex occurs between men" (see 24-30).

espoused these beliefs undoubtedly left the Society open to charges of elitism--charges which members usually did little to dispel and may actually have encouraged. Allen, though critical, nonetheless links the Apostles' elitism to their mystical adherence to Coleridge's theories of noumenal as opposed to phenomenal existence (81). In 1828, Maurice had argued that true social reformers were those who "though in the age, are not of it, who partake not of its spirit, worship not its idols, but who have proposed to themselves a more sublime idea of intellectual excellence and moral purity than any it will supply them with" Social reformers were to lift up the minds of those below them to their same exalted standard (qtd. 81). To this end, Maurice used the printed word as a form of spiritual education. The Apostles' "mystical" ideas were promoted in two magazines which he and John Sterling owned and edited in 1828-9: the Literary Chronicle and the Athenaeum (75-6). In the confused years just before the passage of the first Reform Bill, Sterling summed up the reasons for his "mystic" faith in spiritual reform via education over the social or political reform demanded at the time. He argues that a "change of institutions is necessary; and this change cannot take place without an alteration in the mind of the country. To this reform of thought and feeling, it is not likely that England will arrive, until she has been taught by much sorrow, been disciplined into wisdom by suffering, and learnt to listen to

the voices of teachers, of such men as Wordsworth and Coleridge" (qtd. 80). In 1827, Tennyson appears to have had much to learn himself if he were ever to fulfil the mission that the "mystics" determined for the poetic voice.

Despite the Apostles' enthusiastic support for Tennyson in the 1830s and 40s as their poet-prophet (evident throughout their personal correspondence), Tennyson never did actually assume the role of poet as educator, at least not in the way that Sterling describes it. Shannon remarks, with some obvious puzzlement, that except for "The Palace of Art" and "Oenone," "the poems of 1833, the fruit of the Cambridge period, are strangely lacking in traces of the Apostles' creed" (50). This may be because Tennyson never really was as ardent an Apostle as most twentieth-century critics and biographers have tried to make him out to be. Hallam was the true Apostle.

When Tennyson first arrived at Cambridge, he seems to have kept to himself, socializing primarily with only his brothers. As Allen remarks, the "three Tennyson brothers - Frederick, Charles and Alfred - were notable oddities in the undergraduate world, both for their behaviour and their reputation as poets" (133). Acceptance into undergraduate life at Cambridge, for Alfred, was frustrated by an unwillingness, perhaps even an inability to express himself in prose. In this way, he differs markedly from Longfellow who deliberately voiced his poetic credos throughout his college

years in several prose essays and fiction discussed in chapter two. But Tennyson is perhaps unique as a poet in that "[w]riting prose was unpleasant to him, and he spoke for the most part in succinct, isolated rather awkwardly phrased sentences. In refreshing contrast to the smoothly proficient rhetoric and easy wit achieved by so many of the Apostles, Tennyson's conversation was almost childlike in its directness, unpretentiousness, and simple delight in humour" (Allen 133).

In contradistinction, Hallam was widely known at Cambridge for his skilful oratory. The papers that he presented to the Apostles specifically concern reception as a rhetorical principle, examining the affective means by which people develop moral (hence religious) sentiment.⁶ In his valorization of human sympathy--or love--as a basis for morality, Hallam's beliefs echo Shelley's concept of free love. Yet, in his essay "On Cicero" Hallam, unlike Shelley, ultimately endorses the "Christian faith [as] the necessary complement of a sound ethical system" (qtd. in Allen 157), and thus appends a religiously conservative conclusion to a

⁶ The essays in question are 1. a negative response to the question "Is the existence of an intelligent first Cause deducible from the phenomena of the Universe?" (Dec 1829) 2. "On Sympathy" (Dec 1830) 3. "On Cicero" (May 1831). They are discussed by Allen as part of a developing theory that Hallam expressed poetically as "the pure atmosphere of Feeling" to counter intellectual and religious doubt. Tennyson's "'I cannot understand: I love.'" (In Memoriam XCVII 36) seems to derive from a similar belief in feeling as a wellspring of morality.

potentially radical theory. Nonetheless, "feeling" remains the guiding force in Hallam's epistemology. It appears in subsequent work: his pamphlet on Dante, where the "work of intellect" is said to be "posterior to the work of feeling," and a later essay in which love is "at once the base and pyramidal point of the entire universe" (qtd. 157). In this period of personal and public questioning of the relevance of religious doctrine, Hallam anchors his faith in a God of love as the exemplar to whom human beings aspire in their transitory passions for one another.

Through his own search for moral and religious value in the experience of intense emotion, Hallam acted as a model for Tennyson through whom the poet could see seemingly private vice turned to public virtue. According to Ricks, Tennyson's "melancholia (with its relationship to what he had seen of his father's melancholia) found in Hallam the deeper reassurance not of serenity but of similar suffering, doubts, and morbidities which yet were not ignoble" (38-9)--not ignoble because Hallam had managed to turn suffering into a necessary moral imperative. Hence, as Allen argues, the emotional intimacy evident between Tennyson and Hallam should be viewed as having taken place within a context of moral value that each ascribed to the physical sensation of feelings acting upon the person:

while these feelings are all too often subjugated to the sexual passions, properly understood (as Plato understood them) they are not sexual but moral and find their ultimate meaning in religious terms. For

Hallam, then, homosexual feelings would have been merely part of the larger problem of reconciling his experience of human love with the orthodox faith he wished to profess. His 'grapplings with Atheism', the 'spectres of the mind'[which] he faced before he 'came at length / To find a stronger faith his own', had to do with discovering a link between his deepest emotions and the vision of Providential love that he saw as central to his faith. (158)⁷

The development of Hallam's philosophical belief has been briefly mentioned here because it bears directly upon Tennyson's adolescent development of his poetic voice. Tied more to Hallam than to any other Cambridge associate, Tennyson had difficulty as an active member of the Apostles. "He was

⁷ Allen also attributes Tennyson's later faith in emotion to Maurice's "Letters to a Quaker" which began appearing in 1837, the first version of one of his most important books, The Kingdom of Christ (1839, 1842). Allen summarizes Maurice's work by explaining how Maurice had examined the teachings of various groups that make up Christianity and then tried to show how each contains an important element of religious truth; how the religious "systems" derived from these teachings have falsified them by claiming to be in possession of the whole truth; and how the positive aspects of these rival views can be seen to be complementary to one another and to find their natural fulfilment, for English people, in the Church of England. "But by the Church of England he meant the Church as he would have it be, not as it was He argued that the individual's first experience of spiritual relationships, for better or worse, is derived from his experience of the family, and that 'human relationships are not artificial types of something divine, but are actually the means and the only means, through which man ascends to any knowledge of the divine'. The mission of the Church is to assist in the development of the universal society or universal family that Christ has planned for man, and to struggle against the contending forces that have hitherto prevented the family, the nation and humanity from achieving the divine goal of spiritual unity that has been set for them (Allen 173). Tennyson's acceptance of Maurice's faith in love and family is perhaps best expressed in Emily and Alfred's request that, along with Henry Hallam (Arthur's father), Maurice act as godfather to their first son, Hallam, born 11 August 1852 (Martin 366-67).

elected on 31 October 1829 and attended the meeting of that date but failed to attend the next two and was fined five shillings for the offence. The punishment does not seem to have encouraged him to conform to Apostolic expectations. Further absenteeism occurred, and when his turn to deliver a paper came around he had not completed the task and had to resign from the Society" (Allen 133). Thus he was a member for fewer than four months and attended no more than five meetings. If Tennyson is to be regarded as an Apostle at all, then, he can only be seen as a type of member emeritus, not as a bona fide honorary member since he never gave a paper. This requirement was overlooked in 1856, but Tennyson nonetheless never attended meetings or any of the Apostles' annual dinners thereafter (134-5). In short, as Allen remarks, the evidence suggests that "Tennyson cared a great deal less about the Society than its other members did about him Much to the puzzlement of those Apostles [especially Blakesley] who felt that they knew better than he how his talents should be employed, Tennyson was quite persistent in doing things his own way" (135).

Tennyson appears to have had great reluctance in promoting himself as a member of the Apostles in any prescribed or regulatory way although he certainly sought their company socially. To individual Apostles or to small groups of them, Tennyson would often recite poems in progress. It seems as if Tennyson recognized very early in his career that what oratory

he had to offer was not strictly rhetorical; that is, the appeals he could make were not going to be to his audience's intellect, but rather to their emotional capacity for human sympathy. In this way, Tennyson can be seen as the poetic register of Hallam's prosaic theory of the moral power of feelings.

The essay that Tennyson failed to deliver at the Apostles' meeting is a case in point. Dorothy Mermin has examined what remains of the manuscript essay on "Ghosts" that Tennyson intended to read, and argues that it does not really focus on ghosts as such but rather on "the immense power of a storyteller over his listeners" (17). Tennyson describes the storyteller's power as control over "the inmost recesses of the human mind" of each of his auditors, a type of despotism to which they willingly submit. According to Tennyson, this despotism originated in the voice: "his voice alone like a mountain stream on a still night fills up & occupies the silence: he stands as it were on a vantage-ground he becomes the minister & expounder of human sympathies: his words find the heart like the arrows of truth" (qtd. 17-18). Mermin goes on to explain that Tennyson's shift from lyric poetry to a poetry that included auditors (the dramatic monologue) was his primary method of reconciling the private/public tension to which Victorian poets who paid attention to their critics as their primary audience had necessarily to submit. Yet Mermin's analysis of Tennyson's use of the dramatic monologue

as a unique solution to the private/public dilemma, rather than simply as one of several solutions that Tennyson sought to produce a range of public sympathies, minimizes the function of the sound of the poetic voice itself as an elicitor of readers' emotions. Hence, with later poems such as "The Holy Grail," she sees Tennyson's methods of poetic resolution becoming increasingly private, cut off from the social world that is now seen as antagonistic to the world and experience of the individual.

In all fairness, Mermin is--as the title of her study suggests--concerned with The Audience in the Poem and not with the audience outside of it. However, as Tennyson's comments in "Ghosts" imply, the power of the voice is not registered solely upon silent, passive auditors: these figures within act as conduits to the world of active listeners outside the poems themselves in the realm of "human sympathies." In addition, many speakers within poems, rather than a single speaker as in the dramatic monologue, allow for differing responses.

Tennyson's earliest vocation poems suggest this poetic reaching outward (through reference to various sound devices) toward as expansive an external audience as possible. In "To Poesy" (comp. 1828) he asks that the Mind's "trumpet-tongued aerial melody / May blow alarum loud to every wind, / And startle the dull ears of human kind" (3-5). The speaker of "The Idealist" (comp. 1829) invites his audience in, "Come listen all who can" (3), explaining that his single voice is

the voice of multitudinous peoples of all races. By 1830, the idealist has become "The Poet" who, with similar high-minded idealism, expects to sow and cultivate truth and freedom through seeds imagined as auditory devices: "echoing feet," "viewless arrows of his thoughts . . . // Like Indian reeds blown from his silver tongue," and "vagrant melodies" likened to "arrow-seeds" (9, 11-13, 17, 19). In short, the sounds of the poet's words are to "find the heart like arrows of truth," as he had earlier maintained in "Ghosts," and are to sow there the emotive response requisite to shake the world from its moral complacency.

Even while enraptured with the power of language to effect social change, however, Tennyson was equally sceptical: "Supposed Confessions of a Second-Rate Sensitive Mind," and the paired poems "Nothing Will Die," "All Things Will Die" work through a questioning, dialectical voice that asks of its readers far more active contemplation rather than a passive submission as fertile ground for the implantation of ideas. Hence other early vocation poems such as "The Poet's Mind" and "The Mystic" pessimistically contend that the poet is not likely to effect changes upon earth, but rather necessarily works at a heightened remove from humanity, the "vantage-ground" of the "Ghosts" essay. Thus poetry--if it is to have an impact--will do so only, as in "The Dying Swan," through a "music strange and manifold" that harkens to a music known already to its recipients, a music that can reverberate ever

outward in mellifluous streams, eventually to envelop all of nature in "eddy song" (42). For Tennyson's large claims for poetry to be realized, auditors outside his texts would have to lend their own voices to them, a conclusion far different from Shelley's self-promotion as prophet or "unacknowledged legislator."

In Tennyson's early poetry, Hallam, in his role as a conduit to the world outside of the poet's imagination, became for Tennyson a type of auditor extraordinaire since Hallam could relay back to his friend not only the current and flow of early Victorian culture, but also Tennyson's place within past poetic tradition. Both tasks he undertook most assiduously in his review of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical (1830) in Englishman's Magazine (Aug 1831). Yet Hallam's role as a reader of Tennyson's audience is seldom mentioned by twentieth-century critics; instead, Hallam is thought of more as a well-intentioned, but misguided reader of Tennyson's early poetic worth than as an astute observer of the early Victorian reading public.⁸

⁸ Obviously, Shannon pays close attention to Hallam's role as one of Tennyson's earliest reviewers, yet he gives him no special status as such. Isobel Armstrong's Victorian Scrutinies aligns Hallam with Fox to explain the vociferousness of Wilson's condemnation, and in so doing weakens the unique power of Hallam's review. June Hagen explains Hallam's role as an early agent, working to see Tennyson published and promoted, yet because her work concerns Tennyson's publishing practices rather than his poetry as such, she does not develop Hallam's role as Tennyson's ideal reader (15-20). H. M. McLuhan is notable since in his "Tennyson and Picturesque Poetry" he sees Hallam's 1831 review, and its promotion of aesthetic, sensational effect as

Of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, and more specifically of its weaknesses, Ian Jack observes that "Tennyson had not yet escaped from the troubled womb of the rectory" (120). Jack further charges that Tennyson's reliance on sound devices makes his lyrics "too 'poetical'" to be poems, and compares them favourably only in terms of their greater metrical sophistication to "ordinary Album verse of the day," a species of poetry written almost exclusively for and by women (121). Jack's allusions to a "female" world are standard in slights against Tennyson's early poetry.⁹ Although Jack can readily identify Tennyson's female world, he casually dismisses women from the interactive relation of The Poet and His Audience. In addition, Jack may recognize the inherently oral quality of Tennyson's poetry, but he does not discuss Tennyson's musicality as one of the primary means by which the poet had hoped to achieve poetic success. Instead, Jack concludes that at this time "Tennyson had no clear idea of the audience for which he was writing" (121). But by assuming that the audience whom Tennyson had hoped to attract outside of his coterie of family and friends would necessarily be uniform in

paramount in Tennyson's early development as a poet. But McLuhan takes a visual approach to Tennyson's poetry, and so does not hear Hallam's remarks on sound noted below as the key influence in the fostering of aesthetic appreciation and hence moral response.

⁹ Martin, for instance, in writing of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical identifies "the mawkish sentimentality about such matters as motherhood and children's prayers" as "one of the persistent failures of his verse" (107).

either praise or condemnation, Jack relies too heavily on the all-male negative critical press for his perception of whom Tennyson's potential first readers may have been.

Hallam's review, a review which Jack praises as "a skilful piece of rhetoric" designed to boost Tennyson's popularity, clearly links Tennyson to those poets of sensation such as Shelley and Keats who work actively to provoke sensational, emotive responses in their audiences. In so doing, Hallam attempts a metaphysical association between aestheticism and affection, an association derived from the theories he developed in the essays described above. He then wonders how such poets could ever be popular since they had experienced life as a "richer and ampler tale than most men could understand, and [they had] constantly expressed, because they constantly felt, sentiments of exquisite pleasure or pain which most men were not permitted to experience" (38). Later, in comparing Tennyson favourably to Dante and Petrarch, Hallam explains the aesthetic realization of sentiment when he writes that all poets of sensation "produce two-thirds of their effect by sound." He continues:

There are innumerable shades of fine emotion in the human heart, especially when the senses are keen and vigilant, which are too subtle and too rapid to admit of corresponding phrases. The understanding takes no definite note of them; how then can they leave signatures in language? Yet they exist; in plenitude of being and beauty they exist; and in music they find a medium through which they pass from heart to heart. The tone becomes the sign of the feeling; and they reciprocally suggest each other. (Jump 45)

Such is the intention and the effect of poems like "The Ballad of Oriana": the inspiring of sympathy through the sensation of sound.

Elsewhere in his review, Hallam identifies features he had praised in Tennyson's early poetry, features which readily corresponded both with his own essays on the moral value of sympathetic emotion and with Tennyson's incomplete essay on "Ghosts." These include: luxuriant imagination, capturing of characters' moods, vividly picturesque delineations of objects fused with strong emotion, metrical variations to suit moods, and elevated habits of thought (42). At the outset, Hallam claims that such features, although theoretically capable of eliciting universal sympathy, have in reality subjected poets of sensation to critical scorn, and would do likewise to Tennyson.¹⁰

¹⁰ In "The Role and Treatment of Emotion in Victorian Criticism of Poetry," Isobel Armstrong wonders why critics' and poets' endorsement of feeling and emotion as requisite to effective poetry did not lead poets to "develop a notion of the epiphany which seems, for many twentieth-century readers, to be offered by symbol" (4). Armstrong's limited view that reviewers conflated "seeing properly with feeling properly" (4 added emphasis) unavoidably leads her to an understanding of emotion that is tied to the visual and, therefore, cognitive responses of the mind--i.e. symbolism. Her emphasis on the visual is also apparent in Victorian Scrutinies, where she alleges that Victorian critics' "vocabulary is borrowed mainly from painting and drawing" (27). While obviously Tennyson was praised for his picturesque imagery and his attention to visual detail, the power of the "inexpressible" to elicit emotive responses in his readers derived equally from his skilful use of sound devices acting additionally upon the viscera rather than just the mind. Sensitivity toward sound was equally if not more important to Tennyson's contemporary critics: Hallam, Wilson, Sterling, Kingsley and Gladstone. Armstrong's query about the lack of Victorian theories of

Although throughout his review Hallam uses "men" as a synonym for "the public," it is tempting to think that he had an informed impression of Tennyson's most sympathetic audience as people other than the common herd of men. Obviously, he saw himself as Tennyson's ideal reader. Yet in a final, facetiously self-deprecating move, he alleges that in promoting Tennyson he might be thought to have played one of two roles: "the part of a fashionable lady, who deludes her refractory mate into doing what she chooses by pretending to wish the exact contrary, or of a cunning pedagogue, who practises a similar manoeuvre on some self-willed Flibbertigibbet of the school-room" (49). Although Hallam goes on to deny both misperceptions, the "fashionable lady" and "cunning pedagogue" nonetheless remain as two extreme variations, female and male, of the highly moral "feeling hearts and imaginative tempers" that Hallam ascribes to Tennyson's ideal readers. Hallam thus alludes to the most likely venues for Tennyson's early popularity: the female parlour and the male university schoolroom. It was not to be found, as Hallam well knew, in the male-dominated critical press.

symbolism thus seems to result from a twentieth-century privileging of the visual imagination and intellectualism, and does not fully articulate the complexity of Victorian poetry's affective vigour. This focus on the visual is something that Armstrong shares with Carol Christ, whose work is discussed below.

The immediate effect of Hallam's attempt to promote his friend was to increase critical hostility rather than to lessen it. By May 1832, Hallam's review had incited the ire of John Wilson ("Christopher North"), a critic who might have seen his style of criticism as "pedestrian" in contrast to what he describes as the "superhuman--nay, supernatural--pomposity" of Tennyson's reviewer in The Englishman's Magazine. North argues that Hallam had "incapacitated the whole work for living one day longer in this unceremonious world. The solemnity with which the critic approached the object of his adoration, and the sanctity with which he laid his offerings on the shrine, were too much for our irreligious age. The Essay 'on the genius of Alfred Tennyson' awoke a general guffaw, and it expired in convulsions" (unsigned review Blackwood's Edinburgh Magazine qtd. Jump 51). Setting himself up as a fitter guide to Tennyson's "genius" than Hallam, North attempts to "save him from his worst enemies, his friends" (51). Mistakenly, North had included Fox among this group of friends, and charged Fox with writing "super-hyperbolic ultra-extravagance of outrageous Cockney eulogistic foolishness . . ." (54). But both Jump and Shannon note that the vitriolic tenor of North's review comes as much from his Tory distrust of the political radicalism associated with the magazines for which Fox and Hallam had written as it does from any extreme dislike of Tennyson's early poetry (Jump 2, Shannon 8). For, on the contrary, North actually praises

Tennyson's "fine music" and his perception of the "purity of the female character" (59). Moreover, as Shannon further remarks, North's vituperative style was common among critics of the period (8). Style notwithstanding, North's review had a serious effect on Tennyson--an effect which Hallam worked to counter by arguing that such exposure was ultimately beneficial to his friend's reputation (see Charles Tennyson 121, Shannon 8-9).

By castigating the poet as one of the "Cockney School" (of Keats, Shelley and Lamb), North pinned on Tennyson a label that would stick. Following his next volume of Poems (1832 labelled 1833), the Literary Gazette (Dec 1832), immediately cast Tennyson with Lamb (who had recently been pilloried) as one of the "Baa-Lamb School" that could not brook criticism (Martin 166). Two reviews in particular bear further mentioning: Edward Bulwer's in the New Monthly of January 1833 (Shannon 17, Martin 168-9), and John Wilson Croker's infamous review in the Quarterly Review of April 1833 (Jump 66-83, Shannon 19-21, Martin 169-73).

As Martin points out, Bulwer's criticism of Tennyson's muse as one "wasted in affectation" is surely ironic since no one knew more of affectation than Bulwer, the dandified practitioner of Silver Fork novels (168). Yet in his review of Poems, Bulwer seemed determined to further a burgeoning tradition in Tennyson criticism, offering such charges as "effeminacies" of the Cockney school, a "want of all manliness in love . . .

[and] an eunuch strain" (qtd. in Martin 169). And while Martin links Bulwer's censure to his personal ties with the d'Eyncourt Tennysons and their dislike of the Somersby Tennysons, nonetheless, what Bulwer had to say was not unique. North had already condemned Hallam's associating Tennyson with Keats, and Croker was to admit in January that he wanted to "make another Keats of him [Tennyson]" (qtd. in Martin 169). He proceeded to do so in April through satiric, hyperbolic praise and by focusing, like Bulwer before him, upon "O Darling Room," leaving in the minds of his readers questions about the vague sexual connotations of the "two couches" in the poem. He suggests, in the end, that Tennyson regain his "health" through the sound medicinal tonic administered by critics such as Christopher North and himself, and not to resort to the infantile nausea of "To Christopher North" (Jump 82-3). Though he did not manage to silence Tennyson forever, as Shelley thought he had done with Keats, Croker did apparently succeed in generating a decade of Tennysonian silence.

During this decade of seeming silence (1832-42), however, Tennyson was actively voicing his reciprocal hostility toward his critics. Although he was not to repeat the mistake of "To Christopher North" and allow his anger to appear in print, he nonetheless did not--as many Tennyson scholars suggest--succumb to the pressures of his hostilely directive critics. Rather, he sought a variety of voice forms by which to reach

what he sensed to be a far more heterogeneous audience than the critical press had allowed him. In "What Thor Said to the Bard Before Dinner" (comp. 1833), for example, Tennyson posits a decidedly male "hammer of iron rhyme" as one potential solution to counter the charges of effeminacy placed upon his work. This "rhyme-hammer" is heard a few years later in the angry declamations of the speaker in "Locksley Hall" who rails against the inconstancy of women, curses "social wants," and with a roar to match the wind that presages its final storm, exits the poem in a thunderous rage.¹¹ In "Poets and Critics" (comp. 1833-4), on the other hand, Tennyson calmly acknowledges that "Minds on this round earth of ours / Vary like the leaves and flowers" (3-4), and so resolves to hold fast and allow his poetry, through time, to work its will eventually upon an early Victorian audience of diverse composition. This brief poem succinctly explains one reason for Tennyson's apparent silence: he was prepared to wait, even for as long as a decade, for his public to hear his poetry as

¹¹ It should be noted, however, that Tennyson's unpublished poem "The Flight," seemingly a female companion poem to "Locksley Hall," Ricks dates at approximately the same time period, 1836-7. It too is written in open trochaic couplets. Here, the speaker insists upon her undying devotion to her potentially shipwrecked lover "Edwin," and curses the father that "pays his debt" with her by wedding her to a man she loathes; he is a "tyrant vassal of a tyrant vice" (25). Evidently both sexes can curse in Tennyson's poetry though perhaps only the male is allowed to do so in public hearing.

heartfelt emotion before he would put his work forward again.¹²

Chapter three has already identified several biographical reasons for the stall in Tennyson's poetic growth during the 1830s and early 40s: the death of his father, various illnesses and addictions among the members of Tennyson's immediate family, the death of his grandfather, economic hardships and misplaced investments, and the preempted courtship of Emily Sellwood. Two other significant losses, however, need to be accounted for specifically as influencing the maturation of Tennyson's voice since they create a tenor of frustrated desire and disappointment that characterizes so much of the poetry that Tennyson wrote during this period: the

¹² Several years ago, Paul F. Jamieson argued that Tennyson's early conception of his audience was influenced by an Apostolic faith in Wordsworth's credo that poets must initially create the taste by which their work will later be enjoyed (411). Jamieson reads this poetic motivation in "Mine be the strength," Tennyson's prefatory sonnet to his 1832 Poems, suggesting that the support of Tennyson's coterie of Cambridge associates provided Tennyson with the confident belief that he and they would eventually succeed in attracting even Philistine readers. Yet Tennyson's experimentation with a variety of verse forms immediately following the publication of Poems suggests that rather than expect his readers to reach the Olympian heights from which the Apostles looked down upon the world, he would--"Like some broad river rushing down alone"--add his currents even to those of "uncongenial spirits" in the hopes of eventually mixing with them. Tennyson did not, as Jamieson concludes, address only the "young men of Cambridge" in his early poems; rather, they formed an inner circle in which his poems, like pebbles dropped into a pool, generated concentric rings of reverberation.

death of Hallam in 1833, and his failed romance with Rosa Baring in 1834-6.

In seeming to create of Hallam's death a type of felix culpa, readers seldom fail to comment on the intense emotional power this crucial event generated in Tennyson's poetry. Moreover, Hallam's death provided Tennyson with the subjects for both of his most memorable long poems: In Memoriam, in which Hallam is eventually allowed to die, and The Idylls of the King, in which he is allegorically brought back to life. Of the many scholars who write of the impact of Hallam's loss on Tennyson, the man, none has put it in more clearly than Ricks: "the essential fact is simply that Alfred Tennyson and his sister loved and needed Arthur Hallam and were loved and needed by him. It was integral to that love (as to all love) that they had so much to offer Hallam; here was somebody whom the Somersby Tennysons--so incessantly in need of support--could support, whether in his bitterness of frustration or his energy of involvement. The reciprocity of love enabled Hallam to support them too" (115). With this reciprocity of private earthly love suddenly removed, Tennyson, the poet, was forced gradually to transform his own personal affection into a far more public--since far more diffuse--faith in the power of Hallam's spiritual presence to engender in many others the human sympathy that, while living, Hallam had inspired in his friends. Tennyson's final acceptance of such diffusion, as witnessed in In Memoriam, is testimony to the poet's refusal

to be silenced by Hallam's death, but to make of it a creative womb out of which his unique poetic voice would issue forth beyond "the second birth of Death" (XLV 16). That its gestation took seventeen years is therefore not surprising given the enormity of the task of altering, by way of language alone, what was now vacancy into a profound confirmation of presence.

After Hallam's death in 1833, Tennyson, as Ralph Rader posits, attempted to "redirect the emotional energies which, [were] once absorbed in Hallam, [and] were now without a living object" (29), into an infatuation with Rosa Baring. Here again, the living object of Tennyson's love and affection would be lost to him, but not before he was made profoundly aware of actual socio-economic barriers that frustrate the practical realization of a sympathetic reciprocity of human emotion, a reciprocity that Tennyson at Cambridge had idealistically felt would lend cohesion to his fractured world.

Tennyson's affections were, in accordance with Hallam's theories of the moral value of responsive emotion, initially activated by Rosa Baring's aesthetic beauty, the source for the female portrait in "The Gardener's Daughter" (comp. 1833-4), about which Tennyson maintained that the central description of Rose, the girl, had to be "full and rich" since the speaker was a painter whose pencil was guided by Love the

"ideal Artist" (25) (Memoir 164).¹³ But any personal emotion in Tennyson's poem is clearly subordinate to its design, which is to frame the female figure as static object within a garden surrounded by a male world of sound and action. As "News from the humming city comes to it / In sound of funeral or of marriage bells" (35-6), the garden and its pretty inmate receive symbolic indicators of the passage of life and death. Likewise, the gardener's daughter is silenced by the abundance of descriptive details of the ideal Artist, Love. The only sound she makes is recaptured visually by the painter when he describes her "silver fragments of a broken voice" (229) that falteringly utter "'I am thine'" (230).

Tennyson's poem is similar to Browning's far more famous "My Last Duchess" in its use of a veiled portrait whose veil the speaker controls, and whose image the speaker more than fleshes out for "you" (in this case the reader/viewer) through his monologic, visual recasting of the woman. Yet in contrast to Browning's duke, Tennyson's painter refuses to let in the light of day upon the "secret bridal-chambers of the heart" (245). Instead, he gives vague hints of events which likely

¹³ Rader alleges that its "Rose" was patterned after Rosa Baring, and biographical evidence suggests that she may have been. Ricks also notes several passages from the "Gardener's Daughter" in the Trinity Manuscripts that allude more obviously than does the published poem to Tennyson's disappointment in his affair with Rosa Baring. That Tennyson should choose not to include these lines indicates his desire to universalize his private experience by keeping only those attitudes and emotions with which his audience might readily sympathize.

followed their marriage. In so doing, Tennyson brings his readers to that precise moment at which the veil is to be lifted from the painting so that Rose may be seen in all her glory . . . only to stop. For ultimately it is not the veil on this painting of Rose that is to be raised at all: "raise thy soul; make thine heart ready with thine eyes" (267-8 emphasis added) the speaker-painter commands of his viewers (readers). And presumably each of Tennyson's male readers who has ever loved, regardless of his age, is to see in that nonexistent painting "the idol of [his] youth," or "the darling of [his] manhood," or, alas, "the most blessed memory of [his] age" (271-3).

Tennyson's strategy to use his own love for Rosa as the source for the painter's love that, in turn, is ultimately deflected onto his viewers, presages the strategies of In Memoriam. The earlier poem also employs a speaker who is not himself alone but the whole world speaking through him. The design of "The Gardener's Daughter" to engage its recipients becomes more apparent if contrasted with an earlier companion poem, "The Miller's Daughter" (comp. 1832). Like the gardener's daughter, the miller's daughter, Alice, is also remembered by a nostalgic husband, but in the earlier poem the wife is still living, and he addresses his retrospective to her. The speaker, in this case not a painter but something of a poetaster, also claims that "Love" compels him (187-94) to recreate his initial wooing. Not surprisingly, given his

occupation, he relies on songs to express this love, and Alice is asked to sing back to him his love songs. As Rose ultimately becomes the painter's canvas, so Alice becomes the poet-singer's echo. The significant difference between these two daughter poems is that while "The Gardener's Daughter" withholds closure and seeks its completion from its audience, "The Miller's Daughter" is an entirely self-contained meditation of its speaker. He asks of Alice: "Look through mine eyes with thine. True wife / Round my true heart thine arms entwine / My other dearer life in life, / Look through my very soul with thine!" (215-18). The assonance, internal rhyme, and repetition reinforce through sound what the speaker maintains: that she and he are interchangeable: "Two spirits to one equal mind" (236). In such a tightly closed system of felicitous reciprocity only the melodious verse engages the heartfelt sympathy of the audience, and then at an almost entirely emotional rather than intellectual level.

By the time Tennyson had begun to rework "The Gardener's Daughter" in 1834, Hallam--figured as the speaker's painter companion, Eustace, in that poem--had died, and Rosa Baring was on her way to becoming first loved and then despised as the supposed prototype of the "femme fatale" of Tennyson's "marriage-hindering Mammon" poems: "Locksley Hall," "The Flight," "Edwin Morris," Maud, and "Aylmer's Field."¹⁴ In

¹⁴ Ralph Rader's study of the biographical genesis of Maud is the fullest treatment of Rosa Baring's influence upon Tennyson's poetry. Rader makes much of the fact that the germ

September 1834, Tennyson began several conventional lyrics to or about Rosa which, if taken as a series and at face value, seem to record, as Martin suggests, Tennyson's "infatuation with her, then the slow realization that she did not love him, that her attractions were only of the surface, and that her wealth and position stood between them as lovers" (216). Yet the poems above, and Tennyson's sonnets of forsaken love (1836) that owe so much of their fury and their sorrow to the impositions of class and wealth upon the freedom of lovers, derive equally from Tennyson's frequent exposure to this "stock situation" in his own family: Hallam was prevented from marrying Alfred's sister Emily; Alfred's brother Charles was separated from the family governess and later Miss Burton; and Frederick was unable to marry Charlotte Bellingham or his cousin Julia Tennyson d'Eyncourt (Martin 217-18). Of marriages contracted for wealth and title, unhappy examples abound among Tennyson's relatives so that Rosa Baring need not be the sole catalyst for the poet's caustic view of women who were bought and sold as commodities upon the Victorian marriage market. It is clear in a poem like "The Flight" that Tennyson himself (as opposed to his jilted-lover speakers) did

for Maud, the "O that 'twere possible" lyric, derives from the same period in which Tennyson was engaged in an allegedly traumatic, unrequited affair with Rosa. Hence, Rader does not view Tennyson's frustrated marriage poems within their all too common Victorian social context of the commodifying of love; instead, he inclines to the privately-focused view, and sees Tennyson's love poetry as arising out of the poet's own frustrated psycho-sexual desires.

not condemn women specifically for the pride that kept them at a haughty distance from their sincere lovers. Rather he condemned their families who were prepared to use their single women to increase their own property and prestige.¹⁵

Consequently, what begins with "The Miller's Daughter" in the early 1830s as a bucolic series of domestic portrait poems setting forth, in a stilted fashion, the love of a male speaker for a beautiful young woman, ends in 1842 with domestic complications and the anti-family vitriol of the dramatic "Locksley Hall". Similar anti-domestic themes are taken up later in "Edwin Morris" (1851), Maud (1855), and "Aylmer's Field" (1864). As Tennyson gradually became aware of the all-too-real socio-economic barriers that could frustrate his and Hallam's idealistic hope for human sympathy

¹⁵ In "Tennyson on Women's Rights," Catherine B. Stevenson quotes from a notebook kept by Hallam Tennyson as a schoolboy (1866-72) that records his father's later views on various issues, specifically the rights of women. In response to the "Married Women's Property Act" (1870), for example, Tennyson is recorded as being strongly in favour of it: "After marriage, it is scandalous that a woman is not allowed to keep her money Then whatever she earns, she ought to be allowed to keep" (qtd. 23). Tennyson was also in favour of political enfranchisement for single women although not for married women seemingly because of property and common laws that bound married couples together. Supposedly for Tennyson, the combined entitlement to one's own property and the right to vote (if single) "might ma[ke] her more wary about marrying" (24), since economic and political self-determination for single women could prevent ill-contracted marriages being forced upon them by their families. Obviously, Tennyson's views on women, property and marriage did not change much in forty years; what changed was Victorian society's gradual acceptance of legal reform as a means of dealing with these issues, changes of which Tennyson kept well abreast.

as a salvation for humankind, he began to incorporate real life issues into his poetry. Moreover, he acknowledged complications of the day in ways that would allow for participation by his readers in the dilemmas posed.

Despite his enormous personal losses during the 1830s decade of alleged "silence," Tennyson was professionally engaged in two distinct activities: the creation of a new mode of poetry, the domestic idyl, and substantial revision to previously published lyrics, both narrative and dramatic. While seemingly disparate in both form and intent, several of Tennyson's domestic idyls and revised lyric poems, such as "The Lady of Shalott," share a common structural device that would come to dominate Tennyson's poetic practice: the use of peripheral activity either parallel to or in contrast with the central action, serving as a type of window or frame through which the reader's gaze upon the centre is filtered. Of the idyls, the "Morte d'Arthur" is the most obvious example of Tennyson's use of a frame as a poetic device. Here, the poet's conscious engagement with his reading public is evident since his frames often allude to if not actually comment directly upon contemporary events and situations familiar to his Victorian audience, exactly the kind of poetic subject matter that Tennyson's critics had requested of him. Nowhere is this more evident than in the medley of voices that eventually became The Princess.

Yet Tennyson's initial decision to use a periphery to draw sharper attention to the centre does not seem to have arisen solely out of a response to criticism; rather, it stems from the gradual poetic expansion of his early fixed "portraits" of women in 1832 into short narrative poems or idylls (later classed as one 'l' idyls to distinguish them from the Idylls of the King). In the "English Idyls" of 1842, portraits of women as distinct as Claribel, Lilian, Isabel, Madeline, Adeline, Marion (unpublished), Lisette (unpublished), Eleanore, Rosalind, Margaret, and Kate furnish a gallery of male responses to varieties of femaleness. In a sense, they serve as a Victorian contrast to Tennyson's "Dream of Fair Women," women who are allowed to define themselves and tell their own stories. Unlike "The Dream of Fair Women," Tennyson's Victorian portraits are controlled by the speaker's gaze. Concentrated, direct, and unswerving in its desire to fix the woman upon the page, the gaze renders her a static object of male contemplation and often frustrated desire.¹⁶

This is not the case in other female-centred poems of 1832. In contrast to those above, the following group shows Tennyson

¹⁶ While several of Tennyson's male critics praised these "beauties," many others took extreme dislike to Tennyson's gallery. The American critic, F. M. Finch in his "Frolic with Tennyson" in the Yale Literary Magazine (Jan 1849) is atypical in his use of an unusual metaphor, but his intent to criticize Tennyson's "unnatural" preoccupation with women is common. According to Finch, like a skilful "angler" Tennyson had hooked women "to his lines, and drawing them out of their natural elements had displayed them to us floundering uneasily in the basket of Science and Literature" (qtd. in Eidson 63).

tentatively working out methods of understanding female behaviour through the voicing of female mood and character in action rather than static portraiture: the two Mariana poems, "The Lady of Shalott," "Fatima," "Oenone," "The Sisters," and "The May Queen." While markedly different in technique, structure, and setting, these poems share the theme of pent-up emotion stemming from unrequited love often leading to death. Interestingly, Tennyson combined this theme with his use of "The Miller's Daughter" as a model for the 1842 idyls to create poems which seldom achieve its idyllic bliss, but rather intensify the dilemma of frustrated love so central to Tennyson's perception of women in the 1830s and 1840s.

In this development, "Dora" seems a transition poem: a simple narrative that is less technically complicated than the idyls to follow, yet as thematically complex as the best of Tennyson's poems of love and marriage. The reciprocity of love heard in "The Miller's Daughter" results from a language bond so strong that the husband can claim of Alice "Like mine own life to me thou art" (196); thus she sings his words, his language. To further symbolize this bond, theme and technique are also in harmony. For in Tennyson's poetry, domestic problems generally manifest themselves thematically in a discordance of voice and idea. As Hallam had argued in his review of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical, with a poet of sensation "the tone becomes a sign of the feeling They reciprocally suggest each other" (above 328). In Tennyson's

domestic idyls, and indeed throughout his poetry, when the spoken language bonds that symbolize obligations of either love or duty (among lovers, family members or neighbouring families) are broken, then the structure of the narrative fractures, and the sole authority that might otherwise be granted by a strong, narrative voice is diffused. In the domestic idyls, either one or both of two causes leads to such breakages: love is withdrawn in favour of another suitor, or, more seriously, money replaces language as a medium of exchange, resulting in a cash nexus rather than a love contract.

The thematic complications in "Dora," for example, begin even before the poem's narrative proper with the recollection of "hard words" spoken between farmer Allan and his brother. This results in Allan feeling obliged to take in his brother's child, Dora, as his own daughter, and make her life secure through marriage to his son, William, as recompense for his harsh treatment of her father. Throughout the poem, Allan acts as the absolute patriarch, attempting to control the lives and fortunes of others to achieve his own ends: through the marriage of Dora and William, a reforging of the family bond he had earlier broken; and through his son's provision of a grandchild, assurance that his family should remain strong together despite earlier disputes. He tries to effect these ends through dictatorial language: "In my time a father's word was law, / And so it shall be now for me" (25-6). By refusing

to listen, Allan's son William challenges the historical authority of patriarchal law as an abuse of language and sets in place the structures by which it will be overthrown. Thereafter, similar dictums to silence Dora bind her for a time to her uncle's will until a stronger bond--maternal love for William's child both before and after the child is given to Allan--causes her to repudiate her uncle, and work to replace the voice of the dictator with the language of shared human love and sentiment that she expresses with William's wife Mary, a woman who might otherwise have been considered her rival. Thus the final scene of Allan's repentance is prompted by Mary speaking for Dora. Here, as in "The Miller's Daughter," the two women reciprocate each other's emotions. Their reciprocity challenges Allan to echo his son's penitence for filial disobedience by admitting his guilt; Allan, in turn, must ask forgiveness of his own father--God.

In one sense, "Dora" closes with a domestic harmony similar to the one expressed in "The Miller's Daughter." This harmony is symbolized by the four characters living out their lives together under a single roof. In this respect, Tennyson keeps to the cheerful tone of his source, Mary Russell Mitford's story, Dora Cresswell (Ricks Poems II 67). Yet a melancholic, discordant note reverberates in the last line of Tennyson's poem: "Dora lived unmarried till her death" (167). It is precisely this playing out to the death of the trials of

love's martyrs that will come to dominate Tennyson's verse. "Dora" thus ends where Tennyson's later idyls often begin.

Although the idyls share a preoccupation with unrequited love, there are differences--ones which register audibly rather than ideationally. That is, the voices of the unloved are heard upon a tonal spectrum that ranges from the wistful, to the mournful, through to the irate. "Edwin Morris," written in 1839 though not published until 1851, registers different voices in a medley not unlike its more sonorous successor, The Princess, as Tennyson tries multiple poetic responses to the same or similar social restrictions affecting love, marriage, family responsibility, and property. Since simplistic solutions to these complex issues were becoming increasingly impossible, the poem's very structure replicated the diversity of opinion Tennyson knew his audience likely held.

"Edwin Morris" recollects previous events of love gained and lost within a framework of the present for reasons similar to Wordsworth's in his poem "Tintern Abbey": as an oasis of memory amidst the "dust and drouth / Of city life" ("Edwin Morris" 3-4). In Tennyson's case, however, the woman as lover is not recollected for her attachment to rejuvenating nature as is Dorothy Wordsworth. Letty in "Edwin Morris" is recalled by the painter-speaker as part of a memory far more human than divine: "She seems a part of those fresh days to me; / For in the dust and drouth of London life / She moves among my

visions of the lake" (142-4). Tennyson's use of pastoral conventions in his idyls (in this case, the opposition between town and country) are usually not, as Donald Hair suggests, echoes of Theocritus. Rather, they are but faint traces of a traditional poetry whose bucolic vision of the world can no longer capture the tensions at work in Tennyson's society. The form that Tennyson's idyls take thus results not from the poet's reworking of a classical form to suit Victorian needs, but from their being set firmly within the complexities of his time.

The trio of male voices in "Edwin Morris" used to articulate the value of woman to man is a case in point. These men are not pastoral innocents, shepherds, or drovers. In the narrative proper, Edwin Morris and Edward Bull, fully grown men with antithetical views of love, try to shape the opinion of the third, soon to be jilted, young lover. And the lover himself listens to both, critical of each man's excesses. Despite his age, Edwin Morris recites a naive pastoral to love that sweetly oozes sentiment from his "full-celled honeycomb of eloquence" (26). The speaker responds to him "half-sardonically" because he senses in Morris's language a "touch of something false, some self-conceit" (74), a supererogatory emotion. Conversely the curate, Edward Bull, pitches his "pipe too low" (52) for the speaker, clearly depicting women as mere human breeders. Both the artificial and the gross are rejected. In their place, the speaker tells

his own story in which the poetic disposition he shares with Edwin is tempered by the reality of the "rentroll Cupid" that caused him to lose Letty, a force perhaps as gross as the Curate's yet far more widely accepted socially and therefore more insidious. Yet the lover here does not rant as Maud's lover will later do against the "lust of gain, in the spirit of Cain" (Maud I 23) or as Leolin will against "filthy marriage-hindering Mammon" ("Aylmer's Field" 374). Rather, he allows the present moment within the frame to qualify the past by questioning his previous judgement of Letty. Then, by letting his painterly imagination take over, with the azure brush of nostalgia, he recaptures her in a summer landscape of blissful quietude.

Through their use of an imaginative language that can, despite barriers of time and place, reforge in the mind those bonds that have been broken in reality, or can cast women into images of themselves, Tennyson's male speakers in the idyls create a variety of moods appropriate not only to their own characters, but to the differing sensibilities of the heterogeneous Victorian audience. Through such diversity, Tennyson thereby encourages manifold responses among his contemporaries: acceptance, rejection, or contemplation of the array of potential attitudes toward the issues of love, marriage, property, and duty.

In contrast, Tennyson's female jilted-lovers are limited in their responses because of their gender. Their limitations,

in turn, devolved upon Tennyson himself. His use of female subjects was not without considerable controversy in the Victorian critical press. According to Carol Christ, in her analysis of "The Feminine Subject in Victorian Poetry," "concern with the gender of poetic sensibility, like gender concerns of all kinds, becomes increasingly acute in the Victorian period, and Tennyson, [as Austin had asserted in his Temple Bar article of 1869] is the Victorian poet most concerned with the feminization of poetry" (385-86). As in her previous work in Victorian poetry, The Finer Optic, Christ attributes Tennyson's preoccupation with women also to his "gaze." She views this male gaze as unauthorized, a type of "erotic theft through which the male incorporates a power he locates in the female" (386). Commenting on numerous early lyrics that use the feminine subject as a controlling principle, Christ concludes (along lines similar to her earlier article, "Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House" that "the organizing power of the female subject satisfies a drive toward feminine identification, while the effacement of the narrator hides the gaze that is its vehicle" (391). For Christ, problems ensue in later narrative poems, such as Maud or the Idylls, when the gaze is fractured because Tennyson's heroes try to imbue "the power of civilizing self and world to the image they construct of their beloved" woman, a power which the image as a "fragile poeticization" cannot sustain (391). Christ concludes that dangers to his

reputation ultimately beset the male poet who "associates both with the direct gaze at the woman and with the feminine identification to which he frequently resorts to avoid such a gaze. Looking at the woman, the poet can lose name and fame; looking as a woman, he dies" (395). Austin's anxiety about Tennyson's "feminine muse" is, for Christ, typical of the Victorian fears of both sexes "about which gender possesses the power of authorship" (399).

While Christ in hindsight accurately assesses the negative consequences that Tennyson suffered in the early part of this century because of his appropriation of women's "views," her focus on the visual gaze tends to limit the means by which Tennyson transformed his static portraits of women into complex poetic narratives. Consequently, Christ can only conclude that Tennyson's vision is therefore fractured in longer, intricately plotted works since the eye's field is necessarily circumscribed by what it can take in at once. Trying to be both subject and object simultaneously, vision necessarily falters. However, Tennyson's adoption of the "feminine" in subject matter and in form was in no way restricted to the visual. As many nineteenth-century critics had noted, Tennyson's ties to the feminine also developed in terms of sound and language and not just through visual imagery. Had Christ added to her study Tennyson's appropriation of the female voice, she might have more fully explained how Tennyson could simultaneously speak about women,

speak to women, and speak with a woman's voice, and not lose any essential aesthetic power since value would be inscribed interactively between the text and an audience that would include women. In this case, the so-called fracturing of a poem would be a deliberate way of bringing a chorus of voices into play all at once.

Tennyson's transformation of the seemingly visual masterpiece, "The Lady of Shalott," demonstrates well the poet's awareness of far more than just visual reception as a determiner of meaning. Its revised ending illustrates Tennyson's manipulation of the deflected voice and not just the deflected gaze as a poetic method of divesting the lyric speaker of sole authority, thereby enhancing the potential for audience interpretation of the dilemma his lyric evokes.¹⁷ The popularity of the 1842 poem is due, in part, to the range of interpretative possibilities the lyric allowed; this is evident in the number and diversity of illustrations of the lady of Shalott that appeared in the nineteenth century.¹⁸

¹⁷ Of many critical studies of "The Lady of Shalott," Lionel Stevenson's "'The high born maiden' symbol in Tennyson" is likely the best known as Stevenson attempts to place the lady psychologically, as one "anima" amidst many in Tennyson's gallery of unrequited female lovers. Karen Hodder's "The Lady of Shalott in Art and Literature" is particularly interesting as an interdisciplinary view of how and why Tennyson and Victorian artists came to view this medieval lady as a strong symbol of the Victorian woman.

¹⁸ A catalogue of illustrations and essays analyzing the more important of these was recently published subsequent to an exhibition at Brown University entitled Ladies of Shalott: A Victorian Masterpiece and Its Contexts (1985); the essays in the volume focus primarily on work by the Pre-Raphaelites,

And while Tennyson may have objected to such an illustration as William Holman Hunt's, he had nonetheless to accept, as Ruskin reminded him in a letter, 24 July 1857, that good pictures would never be illustrations of his poems: "they are always another poem, subordinate but wholly different from the poet's conception, and serve chiefly to show the reader how variously the same verses may affect various minds" (XXXIV 264-5). The same may have been true of vocalizations of his poems although without actual recordings of diverse readings, one can only speculate on the auditory impact of "The Lady of Shalott."

As a prototype of feminine emotional postponement, the 1832 lady of Shalott unknowingly is subject to a curse: in essence, this is the control of her person by the narrator who limits her solely to a narrative of the perpetual weaver that, in turn, confines her to static self-imaging through art.¹⁹ That

especially William Holman Hunt's famous 1857 Moxon illustration of the lady's entrapment within the skeins of her unwound web once she disobeys the injunctions of the curse upon her.

¹⁹ In Love and the Woman Question in Victorian Literature: The Art of Self-Postponement, Kathleen Blake studies varieties of female self-postponement: "feminine," "feminist," and artistic. In the first chapter, she argues that Christina Rossetti was an exemplar of feminine "hope deferred," and that again and again her poetry concerns female figures who deny earthly fulfilment as if waiting patiently for spiritual wholeness to arrive through death as a form of sexual yet symbolically immaculate unity with God the patriarch (3-25). Her work on Rossetti suggests interesting parallels with several of Tennyson's early lyrics about women who wait, simultaneously, for love and death: "Marianna," "Marianna in the South," "Oriana," (through the voice of the male lover), "Fatima," "Oenone," "The May Queen," "St Agnes'

she was portrayed strictly as an aesthetic object, as part of the elaborate tapestry that she weaves, is evident in phrases that Tennyson deleted from the 1842 edition. The 1832 lady was displayed in regal posture: "A pearl-garland winds her head: / She leaneth on a velvet bed, / Full royally apparelled" (24-6). Moreover, she was once both web and mirror: "Before her hangs a mirror clear, / Reflecting towered Camelot, / And, as the mazy web she whirls" (49-51). Finally, before leaving her tower, "A cloud-white crown of pearl she dight. / All raimented in snowy white / That loosely flew, (her zone in sight, / Clasped with one blinding diamond bright,)" (deleted lines in part IV). The 1832 poem may ostensibly posit that her death results from her assumption of agency, and a refusal to exist any longer as the passive imprint of a world that is passing her by, but the concluding lines nonetheless retain the impression that the lady is still to be visually gazed upon as an artistic construct of the curse's designing:

Eve," "The Day Dream," "Rosamund's Bower," and, most completely, "The Lady of Shalott." Tennyson's use of "feminine postponement" achieves its apotheosis in In Memoriam in which the speaker both images Hallam as an absent lover and identifies him with Christ; their reunification he, at first, desires in a physical, erotic way that becomes increasingly spiritualized as the poem progresses. In Memoriam is discussed at length below.

They crossed themselves, their stars they blest,
 Knight, minstrel, abbot, squire and guest.
 There lay a parchment on her breast,
 That puzzled them more than all the rest,
 The wellfed wits at Camelot.
'The web was woven curiously
The charm is broken utterly,
Draw near and fear not--this is I,
The Lady of Shalott.' (163-71)

In these lines, the recipients of the lady as an aesthetic creation are identified as a mixed group of members of the court, with curious allegiances to Catholicism (crossed themselves), astronomy (stars they blest), and epicureanism (well-fed). They collectively come upon the lady as a crowd, puzzled more by the parchment than "all the rest" (which has no antecedent, but presumably refers to her fantastic pose and raiments), yet are themselves denied any real response. They are directed in how exactly to view her and her situation through her parchment's declaratives and imperatives, cryptic as they are. In this way, she remains an aesthetic object, a static, self-articulating register of the powers of the charm; her parchment text merely replaces the previous textile register of her life. She is denied any true agency or subjectivity to affect her immediate audience in any integral way since the group reacts simply with superstitious gestures as if in the presence of the embodiment of the curse itself rather than a dead woman.

In the 1842 version of the poem, however, several features are altered to fit with a substantially different conclusion that grants agency to both the lady and her Camelot receptors,

ultimately limited to Lancelot himself. The agency granted to the poem's participants thereby liberates Tennyson's audience as well to react to its enigmatic dilemma in a less structured way than previously. The references to the lady's bejewelled appearance are either removed altogether or replaced by questions concerning her corporeality: "But who hath seen her wave her hand? / Or at the casement seen her stand? / Or is she known in all the land [?]" (24-6). These anticipate the questions that open the new final stanza. The lady is also now granted physical being and subjectivity through these questions (albeit inconclusively).

In the 1832 poem, she had been unaware of the charm that imprisoned her within its web; thus her choice to abandon its design for that of Camelot read almost as a type of naive substitution of one glittery text for another, one now filled with the "red cloaks of market girls" (53), the "long-haired page in crimson clad" (58), and, of course, the shining gold and silver of Lancelot himself. Once the lady is shorn of her own finery in 1842, however, her "red-cross knight" and his armour blaze more brightly in contrast, and the significance of Lancelot as her visual aesthetic object in Part III of the poem, which remained unchanged, is thereby enhanced. Consequently, her impulse to break free of the curse--which in this version she actually overhears (39-41)--now results from a clearly self-determined wish to assume an active subjectivity with Lancelot as her desired object. Newly added

images of traffic on the river reinforce the tension between the lady's static cloister and the dynamic human activity that the art of her loom fixes so that, when she does make the choice to flee such stasis, readers share with her a profound sense of the inevitability of her choice and the ineluctable doom that such a decision entails.

Because the lady in 1842 is shown to be more aware than in the earlier version that a "curse is on her if she stay / To look down to Camelot" (40-41), the new ending to the poem perforce questions rather than gives answers for the lady's perplexing desire to abandon herself to her future destruction. Once dead, she no longer directs the gaze of her audience through any type of controlled narrative, but allows for its diffusion through potentially autonomous responses to the questions of who she is and what her death signifies:

Who is this? and what is here?
 And in the lighted palace near
 Died the sound of royal cheer;
 And they crossed themselves for fear,
 All the knights at Camelot:
 But Lancelot mused a little space;
 He said, 'She has a lovely face;
 God in his mercy lend her grace,
 The lady of Shalott.' (163-71)

The interrogatives that begin the stanza are never really answered; rather, they are designed to engage the lady's immediate audience in consideration of her situation. They serve the additional purpose, however, of drawing Tennyson's own readers as a whole into reflection upon her circumstances, and the significance that they may hold for themselves in

their own lives. With the removal of the parchment text that had earlier directed the reading of her situation, the potential for personalized responses is significantly increased. Yet Tennyson does not allow these responses to be completely random. Instead, his readers are given different alternatives as the poem narrows spatially toward Lancelot alone: the palace's seeming indifference gives way to the knights who almost reflexively enact a group reaction by crossing themselves in the presence of death. In contrast, Lancelot's personalized musing narrows the field of vision that much further by dwelling upon the lady's physicality. At first, his "'She has a lovely face'" seems a rather glib response to the self-sacrificial death she has elected for his sake. However, as a substitute voice text for the earlier parchment, Lancelot's comment upon the lady's face allusively contains the new tensions Tennyson added to the 1842 poem. It suggests the lady's own subjective, carnal reality yet transforms her at the same time, because of Lancelot's studied gaze, into a female aesthetic object of his contemplation if not actual desire. And again, unaware of his role in the sacrifice she has made, Lancelot then calls upon God to be her gracious receiver, an ironic displacement of himself as the locus of her desire, as the agent of her redemption from a life of enforced illusion imposed upon her by the charm.

Whereas the 1832 poem had elicited various Christian and pagan reactions only to silence them through the superior

narrative authority of the religiously neutral parchment, this new ending appears at first more specifically Christian. It channels its responses upward toward God who is asked "to lend her grace" since He is the ultimate seat of fulfilment of all life narratives. Yet by having Lancelot--the object of the lady's own aesthetic gaze and human desire--voice this prayer, even while remarking upon the physical beauty of her face, Tennyson denies the possibility for unequivocal channelling upward. The audience, like Lancelot, is drawn back to earth through the sounding of his voice and, in turn, reminded of the inescapable restrictions imposed upon the full enjoyment of earth's pleasures. For Tennyson's female readers, these were themselves Christian, specifically Pauline, injunctions that served to entrench the female as an aesthetic object of male desire through the denial of female agency in love relations.

In Tennyson's poem, as in a great many poems written by Victorian women--most notably Christina Rossetti and Emily Dickinson--God thus becomes a spiritual succedaneum for an earthly male lover.²⁰ But the major distinction between "The

²⁰ In his recent article, "'Descend, and Touch, and Enter': Tennyson's Strange Manner of Address," Christopher Craft uses "succedaneum" to describe the role of Christ in In Memoriam, a substitute lover for which Hallam is the great original: "Tennyson would master his unconventional [homosexual?] desire for Hallam by figuring it as a subspecies of a very conventional desire for 'the Strong Son of God'" (89). While "succedaneum" is itself a useful term for abrupt closures in Tennyson's poetry, such as the use of God in the "The Lady of Shallot" or the Crimean War in Maud, Christ in In Memoriam seems a more integral part of the philosophy of the

Lady of Shalott" and comparable poems written by women involves the shifting roles of subject and object played out between the lady and her lover-God. As Kathleen Blake notes, Rossetti almost always images her women without agency themselves, waiting patiently for earthly fulfilment through spiritual submission to a decidedly male God.²¹ Although Blake seldom refers to the erotic quality of Rossetti's verse, the fetishization of religious fulfilment would likely have carried an erotic potential for individual Victorian readers, in particular the innumerable women, who were--through waiting for potential, absent or even dead lovers and husbands--locked into static postures of continual emotional and sexual

poem as a whole that associates the absent Hallam with Christ as logos, a language of spiritual poetics that the poet woos throughout the poem to enable him to articulate the magnitude of his loss. Succedaneum serves well to describe displaced eroticism, but In Memoriam arises out of a far more complex series of doubts than Craft seems prepared to entertain.

²¹ A visualization of the similarity in mood between Tennyson's poems of feminine self-postponement and those of Christina Rossetti may be found in the striking sameness of posture and design that D. G. Rossetti effects between his 1857 "Marianna in the South" and his cover illustration, "The long hours go and come and go" for his sister's Prince's Progress and Other Poems (1866). (See the catalogue of the exhibition held by the Dept. of Art, Brown University, 148 and 151).

deferral.²² Emily Dickinson's speakers, on the other hand, frequently venture out of their enclosed spaces to become agents rather than mere receivers of a displaced eroticism through spiritual experience. This venturing, however, is usually symbolic, displaced into a type of give and take flirtation with "the Word" (logos, God incarnate) of her own creation, a poetic autoeroticism that substitutes her self-generated texts for the absent Other. In this way, Dickinson's speakers resemble the pre-lapsarian lady of Shalott; before her subjective gaze happened to fall upon Lancelot as the object of her desire, she had been content with displaced fulfilment through her own artistic creation.²³

²² John Sterling, in his review of Poems (1842) comments upon the particular relevance of Tennyson's poems for abandoned women in his discussion of "Fatima": "Many will read it as if it belonged only to some Fatima or Sappho to feel with this entireness of abandonment. But there are hundreds of women in the West end of London--and in the East end too--who would find it only a strain that nature had already taught them" (qtd Armstrong Scrutinies 139).

²³ The intensely private natures of both Rossetti and Dickinson do raise some questions about their use as female counterparts to Tennyson since I have already argued that Tennyson's feminine muse stems from a public awareness of women as potential readers. From the perspective of the articulation of public issues surrounding women, a comparison between Tennyson and a female poet--equally popular and also concerned with dichotomous object-subject, female-male love relations--might have been made with Elizabeth Barrett Browning rather than, as here, either Rossetti or Dickinson. This has, of course, already been done by Marjorie Stone and Bina Freiwald in their analyses of The Princess and Aurora Leigh. But the focus here is on the poetic rendering of feminine submission to God the patriarch as a form of displaced sexuality. Barrett Browning is not considered in this context because, as her Sonnets from the Portuguese imply, God in heaven is willingly sacrificed for the male love object possessed on earth rather than, as in the poetry of

Tennyson's pre-lapsarian lady also harkens back to male speakers such as the husband in "The Miller's Daughter" who completes his narrative with the love songs of his own designing.

Yet unlike either Rossetti, Dickinson, or even the early Tennyson, who wrote in near isolation from their reading publics, the Tennyson of 1842 felt a need to respond on some level to the social imperatives demanded by his male critics. He not only tried to meet his critics' expectations through a new species of pastoral poems termed domestic idyls (as discussed earlier), but also revised previously published poems for similar reasons. The revisions to "The Lady of Shalott" illustrate that even though Tennyson left his narrative threads virtually unchanged--as he also did with "The Lotos Eaters," for example--he altered his texts in such a way as to divest his controlling narrator of authority through the reinvestment of agency in character. These changes, in turn, could open up new possibilities for his heterogeneous readers to invest aspects of themselves and their own contemporary concerns in the dilemmas of those poems

feminine sexual deferral, the other way around. That, once sacrificed by Barrett Browning, God's power to generate female submission is at times reinvested in her earthly lover, and at other times not, is a different dilemma from the object-subject struggle discussed here as "feminine postponement." Although private, Rossetti and Dickinson more closely approximate Tennyson in this particular conjoining of sexuality and spirituality than his popular counterpart, Barrett Browning.

that situate themselves in time and space at an exotic distance from Victorian England. Such an allowance is rarely, if ever, afforded to readers of either Christina Rossetti or Dickinson since the intensely private posturings of their speakers' experiences tend to fold in upon themselves, thereby circumventing any subjective interpretations by their respective readers other than identification of the self with the speaker. Their poems are thus rendered static, self-articulating objects of aesthetic delight to be viewed, by many, from a distance. This is not the case with Tennyson's lyrics of 1842.

The revised "Lady of Shalott," for instance, could still be read even as it had been in 1832 by Tennyson's largely male, academic audience preoccupied with how to counter perceived threats by the public to literary tradition. That is, it could be read as taking part in an aesthetic debate similar to that in "The Palace of Art" concerning the detached role of the artist in an increasingly materialistic society. In addition to this reading, and not in place of it, because the new poem grants human agency to both the lady and Lancelot in 1842, it could also tentatively gesture toward an equally forceful concern of the 1840s, particularly felt by Tennyson's female readers: the socialization of women as sexual beings. Tennyson unites male aesthetic concerns with female social issues. Thereby, he follows in the direction that Hallam's review of Poems, Chiefly Lyrical had indicated: to create a

poetry that would make pure aestheticism the apotheosis of humankind's moral response to the world. In "The Lady of Shalott," readers of both genders are challenged by female-male sexual relations in ways that invite them to participate actively as reading subjects vis à vis Tennyson's poem as their own aesthetic object. What Christ identifies as a purely male gaze upon a female object may have been true of the 1832 poem, may have held true for the majority of Tennyson's male readers in the 1840s, and may even be true of a great many readers today. But as Tennyson himself was aware, his readers were diverse, in both their interests and their aesthetic demands.

Thus, with the subtle shift in 1842 away from the lady as a visual aesthetic object toward her subjective agency as a physical being responding to Lancelot as a male object of desire, Tennyson's audience could now read in her situation the social restrictions that inhibited women's full participation in the business of life. Tennyson's poem could therefore be read in 1842 in at least four different ways depending on the gender assumptions of its readers. Articulating these four is not to suggest that they were the only ways to "make sense" of the poem in 1842, but rather to make conscious the various unconscious readings that Tennyson's new poem could potentially generate.

For those men who saw the text and the lady within it as an aesthetic object, the poem could satisfy an erotic aesthetic

by channelling their male gazes: first, through the villagers; second, through the knights; and, finally, through Lancelot as he gazes down upon the lady's face. This final position ultimately allowed them to serve as God by bestowing their own grace upon the lady. For those men who aligned themselves with the lady (and many did), she could be for them a figure of the displaced alien--often though not always an artist--whose subjectivity holds so long as she remains detached from society, but who becomes the dead object of others' potential misreadings once she releases herself (her own best text) into the world at large. For those women content to live their lives as confined as the lady of Shalott is at the beginning of the poem--as feminine objects awaiting fulfilment through the subjective agency of a man--the male poet's text itself could serve the two purposes that it grants to God: aestheticized eroticism and spiritual displacement of any active fulfilment of carnal desires. And finally, for those women who also lived confined, marginal lives but were beginning to question the Pauline restrictions imposed upon them, the male poet's text could act, as Lancelot does for the lady, as their aesthetic object of desire that seductively beckons them out of their passive lives ("Who is this? and what is here?") to risk death if needs be to achieve agency over their own persons. Regardless of the reading, the lady (and Tennyson's text) ultimately submits to the loss of a private, self-contained existence upon public interpretation.

For women who assumed agency (or for Tennyson as a poet), which was the greater curse: death by artistic confinement or death by public (mis)interpretation? This same question Tennyson attempts to answer in The Princess. Like his heroine Princess Ida, he too was castigated by his critics for his artistic isolation from the world. At the same time, the texts that he gave that world, paralleled by Ida's lectures, were subject to numerous interpretations and misinterpretations.

Ambivalent, sometimes even negative echoes of the reviews of the 1830s continued into the 1840s. Critics such as Francis Garden (Jump 98-102) and Leigh Hunt (Jump 126-36) restate the derogatory argument that Tennyson is an effete imitator of Keats in his detachment from the world even while they remark on the beauties that both poets' verses offer to the human spirit. Hunt, in particular, disparages Tennyson's "literary dandyism," "fine-gentlemanism," and "rhyming fine-ladyism" (127); he reserves praise only for those poems like "The Two Voices" that allegedly contain a "genuine, Christian, manly and poetical philosophy" (136). These gendered literary terms were by now commonplace in reviews of Tennyson's poetry. Secondly, even among those critics (several of whom Tennyson counted as his friends) inclined to compliment him for the luxurious language of his female gallery, many sowed their praise of the poet's lyricism in the hope that it would reap a much larger poetic harvest. Spedding, for example, asks that

Tennyson become a vates sacer (Jump 146) and calls for a "subject large enough to take the entire impress of his mind" (Jump 152).²⁴ And despite generous praise elsewhere in their reviews, Sterling and Milnes ultimately caution against didacticism by pointing out morals that "obtruded" (Sterling Jump 125), and by gently reminding Tennyson that he is "to teach still more than he delights, and to suggest more than he teaches" (Milnes Jump 138). Paradoxically, The Princess managed to conform to these diverse directives.

Even while it encompassed a much larger scope than any of Tennyson's previous poems, it did not sacrifice the poet's highly praised lyrical power. It addressed an important contemporary concern, yet in such a way that the poet's ability to touch the human spirit was in no way lessened. Finally, it obviously did not teach a lesson didactically since whatever moral it may have included was suggested at best only to be undermined elsewhere in the poem. It is hardly surprising that in all this confusion, Tennyson's long poem, whether in reaction or not to his critics' demands, was a self-acclaimed Medley that purportedly contained seven different male voices.

²⁴ Unlike what was to come in the 1860s, however, critics who chastized Tennyson in the 1840s for a still too feminine voice could optimistically predict what would be in their minds a brighter poetic future, ie. a long poem (preferably epic) that, in its manly confrontation with contemporary events, would present its arguments with enough forceful realism to settle the gender debate once and for all.

John Killham's exhaustive study Tennyson and 'The Princess': Reflections of an Age" (1958) contains a full and convincing historical rationale for Tennyson's publicly motivated concern with feminist issues during the writing of the poem in the 1830s and 40s. As Killham argues, Tennyson would have--through the protracted discourse of the Apostles and other associates--been aware of the Socialist debate in the 1830s over the role of women in society,²⁵ and in the 1840s of the more specific controversy over the establishment of a female college, a project begun by F.D. Maurice in 1843 that was eventually realized in the founding of Queen's College in 1848. In addition to setting forth the historical "facts" of which Tennyson would likely have been informed, Killham devotes the last third of his study to the "fairytale" sources that might also have contributed to the poet's mock-

²⁵ Killham's discussion of the distinct early nineteenth-century forms of Socialism, of the Saint Simonians, Fourier, and Owen, and their different associations with feminism appear in his Chapters II and III, while the various responses of the Apostles are shown in Chapter IV. Killham believes that although certainly not St Simonian himself, Tennyson may have derived some of his convictions about the ennobling influence of women from this discourse. Yet Allen, for example, argues that to the Apostles the St Simonians's revolutionary ideas "must have seemed a demonic parody of their own" (125). Later on, he quotes a letter from Hallam to Donne (Jan 1832) in which Hallam denounces those "prophets of a false Future" and derides the French for imbibing their poison (147). While it would be a mistake to conflate Hallam's views with Tennyson's, Apostolic conservatism in general may easily be seen to underlie rejection of revolutionary change of any sort in The Princess. For an analysis of the ambiguity and even conflict between Socialism and its promotion of feminist causes see Barbara Taylor's Eve and the New Jerusalem (1983).

heroic method and the exotic setting of the romance. These include Tennyson's later reading of Persian poetry in the 1840s and earlier reading of Sir Walter Scott, the Arabian Nights, and the Persian Tales, wherein romance, female colleges, and death penalties for male intruders predominate (177-229).

Yet Tennyson's "sources" were not exclusively remote or merely literary. According to Killham, this exotic romance also couples topical discussions of evolutionary theory with issues of female emancipation. Based on his reading of Chambers's Vestiges of Creation (1844), Tennyson wished to suggest, in Killham's view, that "the future of the race turns on allowing women to realize their intellectual aspirations without jeopardizing the marriage relationship, which is viewed as an essential instrument in forwarding human development" (Killham 232). "Future" is the operative word, for Killham sees in The Princess Tennyson's duty as a poet to outline the choices society must make affecting its own destiny, in order to further an evolutionary doctrine "that we should live our lives so as to 'type' in them the qualities we desire to see generally prevail in the far future" (264). In this case, Killham seems to suggest a meaning for "type" as it is used by the Prince to inscribe his conviction of gender equality (VII 239-79) upon his reluctant bride to be: "'Dear, but let us type them now / In our own lives . . .'" (VII 281-2). The typeset of the lines themselves upon the pages is

clearly meant to reinforce the Prince's use of this metaphor. However, as Killham himself is well aware, Tennyson was writing In Memoriam simultaneous with The Princess, and in the elegy "type" does not hold positive connotations for the future (a point which Killham does not mention): "So careful of the type she seems / So careless of the single life" (LV 7-8). This is Nature's plan at first, yet this too is immediately cast in doubt: "'So careful of the type?' but no. / From scarp'd cliff and quarried stone / She cries, 'A thousand types are gone: / I care for nothing, all shall go'" (LVI 1-4). The Prince's dream vision of gender equality, even if typed in the present, must be considered as potentially among the thousands that will be destroyed in the future. Presumably, the Prince is not aware of his delusion when he confidently outlines the parameters of his and Ida's future:

'For woman is not undevelop't man,
 But diverse: could we make her as the man,
 Sweet Love were slain: his dearest bond is this,
 Not like to like, but like in difference.
 Yet in the long years liker must they grow;
 The man be more of woman, she of man;
 He gain in sweetness and in moral height,
 Nor lose the wrestling thews that throw the world;
 She mental breadth, nor fail in childward care,
 Nor lose the childlike in the larger mind;
 Till at last she set herself to man,
 Like perfect music unto noble words;'
 (VII 259-70)

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

Life.'

(VII 283-89)

Ida, however, recognizes the Prince's hopes as chimerical, evident in her initial response to the Prince's vision as "'A dream / That once was mine'" (VII 290-91). Later, in her concluding remarks about his attempt to recast her in the type of his mother, she adds: "'It seems you love to cheat yourself with words: / This mother is your model. I have heard / Of your strange doubts: they well might be: I seem / A mockery to my own self. Never, Prince; / You cannot love me.'" (VII 314-18). Although Ida's hesitance to marry appears to arise from a sense of unworthiness now that her feminist cause has failed, her frank admission that the Prince's maternal sublime is part lexical trickery and part wild imaginings, of which her real self plays no part, demonstrates that, unlike her partner, she is prepared to divide the shadow from the substance. Of her newly divided self, she is aware that her previous, supposedly emancipated self is now mocked by her submission to male will, while her former emancipatory cause to educate women was marred by her own personal desire for power (VII 220-23). Such realistic awareness in the face of defeat suggests not that the Princess will automatically step into the Prince's dream of her as his surrogate mother of a new race, as Killham suggests, but rather that her high flown idealism has been tempered by the reality of human weakness and self-corruption. That Tennyson makes his Princess both a scholar and a poet and, ultimately, ascribes her failure to

pride, suggests a link between Ida and her female precursor artist in "The Palace of Art" and, more importantly, between Ida and Tennyson himself. And, like her poet-creator, Ida does not yield directly to the clamour of male voices that tell her what she should be.

This link between Ida and Tennyson flies in the face of most twentieth-century interpretations that would have Tennyson at one with the Prince. Yet neither the Prince nor Ida should be allied exclusively with the poet. The Prince's idealistic vision is shown to be as evanescent as Ida's, a trumpeting of a power to change the future that clearly neither possesses. Indeed, Tennyson increased his readers' doubts about the Prince's abilities in the 1851 fourth edition when, through revisions that most twentieth-century readers find troublesome, he highlighted the importance of the Prince's "weird seizures" to perplex further the conflation of dream and reality apparent throughout the poem. By increasing the signs of the Prince's powerlessness, Tennyson could also strengthen the force of Ida's reluctance to acquiesce to her Prince, despite the Prince's final assurance that since his "doubts are dead," she should therefore "trust to" him (VII 327, 345). Of wild dreams in general, and Princess Ida's and the Prince's in particular, the controlling narrator in the 1850 edition reassures his companions that these, like the revolutionary dreams of equality in France, "Are but the needful preludes of the truth'" (Conclusion 73-4). Yet dreams

are not the truth--they cannot become reality merely by individual will. To attempt to do so is to usurp the power of the "hand that guides" (79), to lack the patience that natural evolution demands and, foolishly, to desire permanence from a shadow cast as a type upon eternity when all types shall --eventually--go.

The union that the Prince prophesies, its "type" as it were, to end the romance never actually takes place. This wedding is deliberately withheld from the central narrative.²⁶ In 1850, Tennyson further emphasized this inconclusiveness by revising the frame narrative, making the first response from a member of the immediate audience a resounding "'I wish she had not yielded!'" (Conclusion 5). The emphatic nature of this response once more questions if not negates Ida's necessary submission to the Prince's vision. Moreover, the Princess's and the Prince's utopian dreams (and the former's crushing defeat), juxtaposed with one another and read in terms of Ida's responses, work to underscore Tennyson's conscious awareness that even the visionary worlds of his own creation would necessarily achieve realization only within the context of their reception.

²⁶ The fairy tale wedding that should unite Ida with her Prince does take place in In Memoriam where Tennyson--himself now the narrator--does not withhold closure from his readers but gives away the bride in the text and in reality. In this case the shadow, poetic language, is at one with substance, historical truth.

That this reception was, in the case of The Princess, complicated by gender is highlighted by yet another 1850 revision to the frame narrative. The controlling narrator now admits that the romance sparked a feud between the mock-heroic wishes of the men and the true-heroic of the women. His "strange diagonal" solution to please both by moving between them sounds a similar note to Browning's much later "Art may tell a truth / Obliquely" (The Ring and the Book) although mockery aligns itself far less easily with truth than does Browning's doubt about the sincerity of human testimony. In both cases, however, the relativity of meaning based on an audience's perceptual differences is at stake.

Why Tennyson chose to combine mock heroics with an earnest feminist cause continues to plague readers today even as it did in 1847. Critics such as F. E. L. Priestley have sought a simple solution to this question by conflating Tennyson's purpose with that of the controlling narrator in the poem. However, it is questionable whether Tennyson himself ever perceived his audience in such a straightforward fashion as Priestley does when he recasts the spectrum of Tennyson's readers in the gendered roles assigned to them in the frame narrative:

To many men, the struggle for female emancipation was purely and simply comic: to many women, deeply and fiercely tragic. Both extremes, of facetiousness and of earnestness, made for tightly shut minds. As Tennyson knew, a comic treatment would delight the men, infuriate the women, and confirm both sets of prejudice; a solemn one would please the women and disgust the men. His difficult

task is to persuade both sides, to write something which both sides will read and which will moderate both extremes. (80)

Like many twentieth-century responses to The Princess, Priestley's arises out of a common assumption that Tennyson's Victorian readers would have either rigidly demarcated the separate spheres of female and male behaviour, or challenged these "norms" in a direct and obvious fashion. He allows no scope whatever for both genders to doubt or question social boundaries in a simultaneously light-hearted and serious fashion, actions antithetical to those of Priestley's "tightly shut minds." Yet certainly Killham's meticulous recording of diverse contemporary responses to the "woman question" in his historical study of The Princess should, if nothing else, invalidate any possibility for homogeneity--either feminist or male reactionary--among Tennyson's Victorian readers. Moreover, in her assessment of nineteenth-century feminist ideology, Mary Maynard argues that for most Victorian women "marriage and motherhood were still regarded as normal"; however, women questioned female subordination in marriage in favour of egalitarian relationships based on the principle of complementary differences (230). Her close scrutiny of Victorian women's magazines demonstrates many parallels with the Prince's dream of "like in difference" (VII 262). Any rigid gender distinctions would, in any case, be undermined by the Prince's belief that "in the long years liker must they grow" (VII 263). Finally, answers to the poem's dichotomous

purpose need not be found just in the fictional audience described in the prologue and conclusion, but also in one of Tennyson's own actual audiences in the 1840s and 50s comprised largely of Apostles.

Speaking of his experience in the Society, Henry Sidgwick noted that one of its most attractive qualities was a pursuit of truth freed of a consistent gravity of treatment: "The gravest subjects were continually debated, but gravity of treatment, as I have said, was not imposed, though sincerity was. In fact it was rather a point of the apostolic mind to understand how much suggestion and instruction may be derived from what is in form a jest--even in dealing with the gravest matters" (qtd. in Allen 6). In the 1847 conclusion, Tennyson's narrator had actually referred to the romance as having evolved "with less and less of jest" toward a serious end. Maurice's assistance in the successful establishment of Queen's College for women in 1848 might have convinced Tennyson to enhance the serious tone given to female educational reform in the poem, and thereby link it more directly to the "earnest" demands of the women in the frame narrative. Yet the Apostles, in general, seem to have promoted among themselves a light-hearted scepticism with which to temper any tendencies they may have had as a group (and certainly did have on occasion) to display a too earnest, even priggish self-righteousness, a self-righteousness displayed only too well by both the Prince and Ida alike.

This Apostolic dualism, which has nothing whatsoever to do with the sex of its adherents, could have influenced Tennyson in the direction of a "strange diagonal" treatment in The Princess long before he had his controlling narrator attribute it to gender differences in 1850.

Obviously the social role of women in the future is the primary concern of the poem. Yet, more importantly, Tennyson wants to make his readers aware of the dual influence of individual perception and of a language motivated by personal desire in shaping contemporary social events. Hence, the romance in The Princess is a medley of several voices. These are juxtaposed by their degrees of adherence either to private or to public motivations; consequently, no one voice holds absolute authority. The poem is a series of perceptions and misperceptions in which utopian visions are not the exclusive purview of women, nor are scepticism or mockery the privileged male response. For example, the Prince's desire to "'clear away the parasitic forms / That seem to keep her up but drag her down'" (VII 253-4) echoes Ida's earlier lectures about misperception. And his ideal of "'Not like to like, but like in difference'" (VII 262) in his perfect union of man and woman was, as Ida claimed, part of her own dream. Yet, although their words and their dreams appear similar, the Prince's espousing of female equality does not arise out of a public declaration of purpose, as Ida's did at the women's university, but from a deliberate, privately motivated attempt

to achieve his own ends and persuade Ida to marry him. Because the Prince's true motives are held in abeyance, his dream not being realized at the end of the poem, the individual reader is thus challenged to ascribe social or public value where and how she or he privately sees fit. Tennyson's readers in this case are granted individual autonomy and do not, necessarily, split along the gender lines proposed by either the narrator or Priestley.

In fact, the poem's principal auditor, Lilia, remains silent. Since, after hearing the fantasy, she asks her bookish aunt to "'tell us what we are'," the import of the Prince's vision is again weakened, given the implication that alternate narratives of women's lives abound. Indeed in 1847, Lilia's aunt had launched into an interrupted "treatise" satirically described by the narrator as comparable to hieroglyphs--axioms "graven on rock." This metaphor of past ages now swept away (echoing In Memoriam) again raises some doubt as to the possibility of any "story" holding true for very long. In the prologue, her aunt had been capable of taking even "this fair day for text." She creates from the isolated experience of Sir Walter's opening up of his baronial manor to the working classes a socio-economic prophecy analogous to Ida's feminist dream: "An universal culture for the crowd" (108-9). Among such a company of idealists, reality is hard to locate; one dream may just as easily be substituted for the next. Hence, meaning is forced to reside

more in the individual's response to a specific vision, than in any vision itself.

However, dream and vision apparently failed to generate the "drift" of the poem that Tennyson had hoped his public would catch. Consequently, he included six rhymed, intercalary songs in the third edition (1850), sung in the soft linnet voices of the women, supposedly to emphasize that the "child is the link thro' the parts" (Tennyson qtd. in Memoir 212). In actuality, the women's songs provide a still, lyric chorus to the dramatic action of the male narrative, more than they comment directly upon the role of the child.²⁷ As with Maud's voice, they can act as martial songs by interrelating sensuous allure (song three) and domesticity (song four) with male

²⁷ "As through the land at eve" speaks of a falling out between a husband and wife that is resolved in tears upon their lost child's grave. The lullaby "Sweet and low" sings of a familiar Victorian scene of a mother and babe awaiting the arrival of the husband from overseas. But domesticity is soon replaced by a call to arms as The Princess gradually moves to the battlefield. "The splendour falls on castle walls" seems to be all echo, as a bugle sounds and resounds into a "dying" stillness, suggesting the possibility of death to the lover who answers its call. In Lilia's singing of the fourth, "Thy voice is heard," a scene of blissful domesticity now becomes the bugle call that incites heroic action. The arrival of the husband, anticipated in song two, is completed in song five, "Home they brought her warrior dead," in which the husband (now warrior) is brought home dead, and the wife fails to respond until she realizes that she now has only her child to live for. Finally, "Ask me no more" bears directly upon Ida's indeterminate fate as the speaker implores "Ask me no more" to yield. Clearly, if the child and domestic scenes are used in these songs, they are for symbolic purposes to allude to the confusion of domesticity and warfare, the action of the romance, rather than to generate ideological support solely for maternalism or domesticity.

warfare and, in song six, increase the sense of doubt that prevails at the end of the romance. Despite how much Tennyson may have intended to criticize as unnatural women's desires to "lose the child" and, later, to have it restored to them through the activation of their true maternal natures (an interpretation given in The Memoir (208-9) in Hallam's voice rather than his father's), the songs which he added do not reinforce this message. On the contrary, their sombre tones, melancholy refrains, and frequent recourse to images of death imply that a woman's life of family and children is beset with real difficulties, and that the marriage to which the singer of the sixth song must yield may indeed be to "a hollow cheek or faded eye" and not to a heroic Prince of a new golden age. These women's songs provide a decidedly serious counterpoint to a previously light-hearted medley, and suggest that whatever choices are made for the future, they must not be made without an awareness of their potential repercussions. The lyrics' individual popularity as songs set to music in the Victorian period notwithstanding, once again, Tennyson's additions open up rather than invoke closure upon an already complicated array of voices.

Although the many responses to The Princess (both before and after revisions) catalogued by Shannon in Tennyson and the Reviewers (97-140), on the whole, applaud Tennyson's "thought, feeling and expression," their obvious disagreement as to the import of the poem does indeed suggest that it elicited the

autonomous, divergent reactions and, in several cases, out and out confusion that it had provoked (see esp. the reviews in The Athenaeum and the Atlas qtd. 123). Longfellow's reaction to the first edition might be considered typical: of his wife Fanny's reading, his reply was "Strange enough! a university of women! A gentle satire, in the easiest and most flowing blank verse, with two delicious unrhymed songs, and many exquisite passages. I went to bed after it, with delightful music ringing in my ears; yet half disappointed in the poem, though not knowing why. There is a discordant note somewhere" (Life II 106). The American poet's puzzlement was not unique.²⁸ Shannon maintains that "[h]owever much some reviewers liked The Princess, they reiterated a now familiar complaint. Once more, instead of prophesying, Tennyson was merely singing. He had disregarded their advice and betrayed their trust" (114-5). Indeed, through revision, Tennyson had deliberately evaded the responsibility demanded of him to provide his readers with philosophical, and--in Victorian terms--unequivocal truth: at least in this poem.

It therefore seems very odd to discover that, with specific regard to Tennyson's potentially subversive confusion of

²⁸ The response among women, in particular, was mixed and contradictory. In a variety of texts published for and about women in the 1850s and 60s, (excerpts discussed in The Woman Question--Literary Issues), The Princess is widely quoted in support of both feminist causes and non-feminist (feminine) values. The Prince's vision of men becoming more feminine and women more masculine is almost entirely neglected (Helsingier III 94-6).

gender roles, most of Tennyson's twentieth-century readers perceive the poet as unequivocally at one with his hero Prince (despite his poem being told by seven different male voices). They thereby accept without hesitation the Prince's dream of gender equality as Tennyson's own. The earlier male-female gender confusion, and its eruption into warfare, are either linked by privately-focused critics to Tennyson's own personal, sexual conflicts, or are felt by publicly-focused critics to be the poet's remonstrance of "abnormal" gender roles, rectified through a proper sexual alignment in marriage.

In his privately-focused study of Tennysonian Love (1969), Gerhard Joseph sees The Princess as a transitional poem in Tennyson's career that marks his psychical struggle between sense (masculine) and soul (feminine) retranscribed in the North (male aggression)-South (female passion) conflict between the Prince's and Princess's family seats (90-101). According to Johnson, until The Princess, Tennyson had concentrated his energies in female autobiographical protagonists (94), but now in the Prince, "Tennyson for the first time presents his readers with a male lover who convincingly dramatizes his own search for psychic integration and stability" (93-4). The movement toward marriage, in the poem and in Tennyson's life, is thus read as a mediation between opposing and disruptive sexual impulses. Joseph's argument seems to have arisen from the similar view presented

two years earlier by Wendell Stacy Johnson in his Sex and Marriage in Victorian Poetry although no mention is made of this study in Joseph's bibliography. For Johnson, the soul-sense dichotomy is not merely psychological but takes on a social dimension as well in terms of Tennyson's private compromise with public acceptance: "The idea of marriage means for Tennyson an escape from shadows and solipsism to the longed-for reconciliation of impulse and social order through a union of spirit and flesh, of the creative self and the responsive milieu, of woman and man" (183). The gender terms of the Prince's resolve to marry are clearly granted approval by these male critics.

In contrast, publicly-focused critics interested in gender tend to look more closely at the cross gendering of the Prince, rather than grant special status to his final vision of sexual harmony. Carol Christ's "Victorian Masculinity and the Angel in the House" (1977) is the most satisfying of those studies of The Princess that see the poem arising out of Tennyson's own personal response to the social/sexual conflicts of his age.²⁹ Christ asserts that Tennyson, along with Coventry Patmore, expresses in his poetry a "fear and distrust of male action and sexuality" (159) associated as it was with the crassness of the marketplace and Philistine

²⁹ Alan Sinfield, in his discussion of the "Feminine and Masculine" in Alfred Tennyson (127-53) draws several of his arguments from Christ, as well as from Terry Eagleton.

behaviour (146). Hence, Tennyson identifies with and idealizes "women's passivity and asexuality" (147). "Both the fear of action and the pattern of feminine identification and idealization are ways of responding to a world in which action has lost its religious imperative and seems to have gained meaning only from a Malthusian and Darwinian marketplace" (158). Christ thus sees the feminization of the Prince as linked to Tennyson's own psycho-social stability in Victorian society.

But unlike Christ, most publicly-focused critics are not sympathetically inclined to rationalize Tennyson's apparent adoption of a feminine sensibility in The Princess. Terry Eagleton argues for a conclusion similar to Christ's in his "Tennyson: Politics and Sexuality in The Princess and In Memoriam" (1978). That is, the poet's adoption of the feminine was in response to a burgeoning (male) capitalist economy. But while Christ contends that Tennyson was motivated by "fear," Eagleton claims that the poet complied with a capitalist hegemony: a "brutally explicit dominance fails to secure the conditions of ruling-class hegemony." Therefore, the "'civilizing' values of 'sweetness' and 'moral nobility' which are paradigmatically 'feminine'" are enlisted to serve hegemonic control (97, see also Sinfield 135). Diane Long Hoeveler takes a similar view, though liberal-feminist as opposed to Eagleton's Marxist. She finds that the androgynous ideal toward which the poem tends may liberate the sexes from

restrictive notions of social roles, but "it also confirms the image of woman as sexual 'Other,' the eternal Feminine whose sole function is to complement the dominant masculine figure" (1). Hoeveler thus criticizes Tennyson for allowing the potentially destabilizing influence of the male effeminate to be drawn into its proper hegemonic expression in androgynous union accomplished through marriage (8-9).

More fully than the above mentioned critics, Eve Kosofsky-Sedgwick situates the romance narrative within the gender and class implications revealed in the poem's frame narrative of a male homosocial discourse. For Sedgwick, "one important feature of the myth propounded in The Princess's inner narrative is that it traces the origin of nineteenth-century bourgeois gender arrangements directly back to the feudal aristocracy" (121). Because the frame narrative "seems almost to represent a simple projection into the present of the inner narrative's fantasy of a feudal past" (125), Sedgwick criticizes The Princess in at least two ways: it permits a view of middle-class Victorian family that denies any relation between its structure and its economic functions (that is, a wage system for males and domestic servitude for females), and it obscures history by glamourizing and dehistoricizing (124). Sedgwick maintains that the poem reinforces aristocratic patronage by aligning it with social progress, and also endorses ancient privilege and connoisseurship as a preferred method of modern science:

The assertion that science, or technology, is the legitimate offspring of patronage and connoisseurship, that all these pursuits are harmonious, disinterested, and nationally unifying, that the *raison d'être* of the great landowners is to execute most impartially a national consensus in favour of these obvious desiderata--the frame narrative assumes these propositions with a confidence that is almost assaultive. (125)

Sedgwick disparages what she sees as a vision of social change as one "from the top down" (126). Ida therefore falls because she steps outside of her fit role and assumes a feudal-baron's attitude at her school: "A feminism based on this particular nostalgia will be without faith or fortitude, a sisterhood waiting to be subverted" (127).

Ultimately, however, Sedgwick argues that The Princess both endorses "an aristocratic ideology--aimed at an aristocratic and a bourgeois audience, but [is] embodied through a speaker whose relation to patronage is not that of the patron but of the patronized" (133). From the view of those who enjoyed hegemonic privilege, the "poet's work and women's work fell in the same ornamental, angelic, and negligible class" (133). Sedgwick's conclusions are somewhat puzzling. On the one hand, she appears to criticize Tennyson for the poem's support for an aristocratic ideology; on the other, she claims finally that the poet's work, like women's work, is merely ornamental and thus, presumably, of little social consequence. This confusion seems to stem from the previously mentioned tendency of Tennyson scholars to conflate the poet and his poem. In such readings, Tennyson himself seems to become as privately

confused and as publicly troubled as the many speakers who are allowed voice within the medley, in particular the Prince.

Several scholars who focus on the potentially subversive qualities of cross-gendering in The Princess also search the poem for deconstruction of socially constructed, Victorian gender norms. To them, the apparent lack of subversion in the Prince's marriage solution often proves disappointing. Marjorie Stone, for example, discusses the dialectic between genre subversion and gender inversion by comparing The Princess to Aurora Leigh. Tennyson's medley is shown to be decidedly more conservative than Barrett's Browning's "novel-poem." Stone claims that Tennyson makes a "travesty of parody, [that] like the travesty of transvestism, can often be inherently conservative in its effect for all its show of subversiveness" (115). According to Rod Edmond, the marked strain of androgyny expressed as transvestism is forced to yield to a conflictive discourse on the family, gender, and marriage situated within pictorial as well as poetic narratives of the period (126). Bina Freiwald also offers a feminist-deconstructivist perspective in her recent study "Tennyson's Princess: Is There a Text in this Woman." By examining The Princess as "a site of conflicting discourses," she suggests Tennyson's ideological motivations underlying its "resolution of conflictual forces" (460). Aligning Tennyson with his controlling narrator, Freiwald argues that the feminist aspirations in the poem--that pit Ida's will against

that of the Prince--are successfully crushed by "the iron hand of a hegemonic idiom" in Ida's final submission to maternalism as the necessary consequence of a touched feminine heart (473). For Friewald, the final, puzzled response of Lilia, "You--tell us who we are" (Conclusion 34), to the neat closure enforced on the romance effectively silences the earlier opposition Ida had generated to the male narrative, a narrative that Ida, and presumably her female readers, will now have to live as the story of their lives.

However, Friewald's conflation of the narrator's "iron hand" with that of Tennyson himself (475) disregards his active professionalism and, ironically, casts Tennyson in a passive, "feminine" role currently being debated by Victorian scholars: in effect, women as dupes of their society. In Friewald's and other scholars' views, Tennyson is so clearly situated within the Victorian male-dominated ideology that any question of his female sympathies simply does not arise. Yet neither he, nor his female readers, unconditionally saw themselves as victimized by patriarchal hegemony (even as they, necessarily, lived within it). Disregard for the complexity of Victorian life and Tennyson's development as a poet within that context continues to entrap Tennyson and his work in a gendered, private-public dichotomy. Once entrapped, Tennyson's poetry is read as evidence for one's own subjectivist views of a twentieth-century Victorian

inheritance rather than as a complex response to an equally complex society in its own right.

This dilemma concerning Tennyson as a Victorian spokesman for gender roles and social behaviour was and continues to be even more acute in In Memoriam than in The Princess. That the debate concerning Tennyson's gender still rages almost 150 years later among his readers attests to the power of Tennyson's androgynous voice.

The issue of Tennyson's potential homosexuality as an influence in his creation of In Memoriam concerns several twentieth-century readers. Generally, readers question Tennyson's sexuality, using either gender subversion in The Princess, sexual inversion in In Memoriam, or both as the locus classicus of their arguments. At least three critics, however, transform this issue of sexual voicing in In Memoriam into a discussion of poetic motives, the public expression of love, and their relation to audience expectations: Allen Sinfield, Timothy Peltason, and Richard Dellamora. Their work has opened up Tennyson criticism to a new negotiation between the public and the private that allows for questions of readership and gender.

In his "Feminine and Masculine" section of his book on Tennyson (127-53), Sinfield adds to the public-private argument in two ways. First, he complicates the relation between the poet and society's dominant ideology--since "meaning is always negotiated in the conditions of reception"

(136)--by suggesting that Tennyson almost unconsciously cast himself as an "effeminate" writer in the eyes of his contemporary critics, thereby making Tennyson's feminine label a condition of reception rather than authorial intention. Reviews mentioned by Sinfield include those by Croker (Jump 66-83) and Bulwer-Lytton (see Martin 168-73) that put Tennyson in the "affected" Cockney school; Kingsley's laudatory 1850 review, underscored throughout by his Christian manliness (Jump 172-85); the anonymous review in The Times (1851) (possibly by Manley Hopkins) that disparaged Tennyson's "amatory tenderness" in verses likely to be given a "feminine application" (see Shannon 156-8); and Bagehot's final criticism of Tennyson's "ornate" poetry as unduly influenced by women, who "ever prefer a delicate unreality to a true or firm art" (Literary Studies II 380-81). In mentioning these critiques, Sinfield too readily concludes, however, that Tennyson risked marginalization by expressing "the finer feelings and verbal arts, not the masculine concerns of utilitarianism, political economy and machinery." He adds that "this was in part the role allocated to poetry within the developing bourgeois hegemony: even as poetry was pushed to the margins, so it was associated with the (allegedly) feminine" (138). Yet Sinfield proleptically designates the enterprise of poetry as effeminate and therefore marginalized in the 1840s and 50s. Such marginalization did not really occur in full force in England until a decade or two later in

the coincidence of suffragette demands, homophobia, and the establishment of a sexual aestheticism spearheaded by Swinburne in the 1860s.³⁰

Second, Sinfield examines common "modes of love writing" in In Memoriam to imply rather than state outright that Tennyson may have harboured sexual feelings for Hallam filtered through genres acceptable to his Victorian audience (143-53). Again, Sinfield disregards Tennyson's immediate context of working as a professional poet responding to the demands of a heterogeneous readership (even while he claims to be concerned about reception). Here, he provides a psycho-biographical explanation for Tennyson's "disturbance of customary gender categories" in his work. Analyzed in this way, the poet is revealed not to have "'homosexual tendencies'--that would enable us to pigeon-hole him"; however, Sinfield concludes of Tennyson's androgyny that "there is no proper fit to be achieved with received discourses" (145). Ultimately, Sinfield's analysis of Tennyson's sexual ambiguity in relation

³⁰ Richard Monckton Milnes's review of the 1842 Poems, for example, places poetry at the centre of social and cultural life: "Poetry is surely now more respectable than it has ever been before in this country; no man, of whatever gravity of station or character, would be ashamed of having written good verse Among the large and intelligent middle classes of this country there is much poetry read and enjoyed" (Jump 137). In chapter two of this study, however, marginalized effeminacy is shown to be the prevailing attitude toward poetry in nineteenth-century America although, as chapter one demonstrates, sales of Longfellow's and Tennyson's poetry in the United States were not adversely affected by it.

to his audience is confusing since he appears to want it both ways and all ways simultaneously.

Seeing Tennyson far more as a professional poet than does Sinfield, Peltason--in his focus upon the language and structure of In Memoriam rather than its sexual connotations per se--points out one of the primary means by which Tennyson managed to make public his intensely private emotions: self-reflexivity, that is, by having the poem question and interpret itself even as it was being composed and, presumably, read (41-5). Tennyson's words, like "widow's weeds," are thus worn deliberately as a "shared human convention" (43) designating the speaker-poet as a member of a community (44). Peltason, however, does not explore fully the shifting gender positions that the speaker-poet assumes as he puts on these widow's weeds and takes them off for those of the widower.

Although in basic agreement with Peltason's interpretation, Dellamora argues that it falls short in two ways. Peltason fails to explore fully his own metaphor of "widow's weeds" and the language of grief, that is, to consider what private emotions the poet's widow's weeds would "half reveal / And half conceal" (V 3-4, Dellamora 35). He also neglects to specify the nature of the community that Tennyson entered with this poem. According to Dellamora, Tennyson's emotions are not sexual feelings as such but rather an "affective intimacy that so far exceeds normal experience, perhaps especially the

experience in relations between men and women, that the bond becomes something for the elect to conceal from the eyes of the mundane" (35). Thus Tennyson's inner circle of readers are, for Dellamora, an elect group of "loving friends"--the Apostles--while the outer circle are "those who, to understand Tennyson at all, will have to understand him in widow's weeds, i.e. in terms which restrict devotion like Tennyson's to relations between the sexes" (35). Dellamora further notes that, clothed in widow's weeds, Tennyson can speak both to and from women. Wearing, "coarsest clothes against the cold," he can speak both to and from the labouring classes. Because gender differences and class differences are fashioned by human beings and hence susceptible to change--just as clothes are--the "rhetorical character of poetic address also means that--within the limits of communicating with a conventional public--poetry may utter a shifting congeries of voices--of workers, of women, of lovers" (35). Yet Dellamora seems ultimately to favour private "intimacy" ("the specialness of 'manly love'" (36)) and its potential audience more than he does the public expression of heterosexual love relations³¹. Consequently, he reads the shifting congeries of voices, especially those of domesticity, as overdetermined and thereby

³¹ This is evident in the language that Dellamora uses; for example, once he has established the clothes-language metaphor, which *In Memoriam* does indeed play with, he later disparages it through such phrases as "the garb of marriage and family" (35). Dellamora's own subjective preferences are manifest in his choice of words like "garb."

tending to undercut Tennyson's commitment to his public and, indirectly, to reinscribe the poetic power of private emotion.

Despite efforts by the above scholars to include reception as a determining factor in Tennyson's creation of a poetic voice during the 1830s and 40s, the candour of that voice continues to be cast into doubt by various post-modern perspectives. Beleaguered by a public-private dichotomy that now--in post-modern fashion--manifests itself as language against itself, Tennyson's public guise for his allegedly private relationship with Hallam has, in analyses of In Memoriam, become the focal point for revealing Tennyson's sexuality as a social construct and assessing its attendant schismatic effects upon his poetic voice. In the above views, Hallam necessarily belongs to a private, homosocial sphere unaffected by the presence of women in any substantial way. Indeed, Tennyson's many female personae are often read as the poet's surrogate means of expressing male-male desire.

The socio-historical context for Tennyson's development as a professional poet--one that includes Hallam as a substantial figure rather than excludes him as a strictly private factor in Tennyson's life--needs to be considered. Hallam's pragmatic role as Tennyson's promoter, that he assumed while alive, has already been discussed. What has yet to be examined are the resonances of his philosophical beliefs that, after his death, echo throughout In Memoriam. These cause Tennyson to voice a spiritual, disembodied love for his friend

that goes far beyond the fact that he is now dead and therefore out of physical reach.

In the early 1830s, Hallam had made it possible for a very private Tennyson to participate vicariously in society as a public voice, similar to a Victorian husband's providing a vicarious connection with society for his sheltered wife, along the lines suggested by Longfellow's mother's letters to her husband. In In Memoriam, Tennyson later chose various conventional familial roles to symbolize his and Hallam's friendship, both within and against a gendered, separate-sphere ideology that limited Victorian women's lives to private spiritual concerns within the home while men's lives could be experienced fully in a public realm. In doing so, he appealed to the emotions of his heterogeneous audience in a deliberately affective way.³²

In the first very gentle poem Tennyson composed for In Memoriam, Hallam and the speaker-poet share several gendered roles: "My friend, the brother of my love; // My Arthur, whom I shall not see / Till all my widowed race be run; / Dear as the mother to the son, / More than my brothers are to me" (IX 16-20). These lines express a power relation in which Hallam clearly has superior although not exclusively male status as

³² Indeed, Queen Victoria herself had told Tennyson that "'Next to the Bible 'In Memoriam' is my comfort'" as she consoled herself over the death of Prince Albert (Memoir 406); she was also known to have altered the gender pronouns in her edition so as to identify directly with the speaker-poet in the poem (Charles Tennyson 336).

friend, brother, husband, and even mother. Early in the poem, the speaker-poet also assumes a male role in relation to Hallam as a lost female, earthly love: "A happy lover who has come / To look on her that loves him well" (VIII) and "Tears of the widower, when he sees / A late-lost form that sleep reveals" (XIII). The speaker-poet can thus be both widow and widower.

Through the use of familiar domestic imagery, Tennyson personifies Sorrow and connects her to his dual, male-female depiction of Hallam. In the first third of the poem, Sorrow is personified as an eroticized female object of dread and desire (III, XVI, XXXIX, XLVIII, see Marion Shaw Alfred 152-3). By Section LIX, however, she is transformed into an image of the dutiful wife and linked back to Hallam through echoes of those words used to define him elsewhere: "My bosom-friend" and "thou art mine":

O Sorrow, wilt thou live with me
 No casual mistress, but a wife,
 My bosom-friend and half of life;
 As I confess it needs must be;

O Sorrow, wilt thou rule my blood,
 Be sometimes lovely like a bride,
 And put my harsher moods aside,
 If thou wilt have me wise and good.

My centred passion cannot move,
 Nor will it lessen from today;
 But I'll have leave at times to play
 As with the creature of my love;

And set thee forth, for thou art mine,
 With so much hope for years to come,
 That, howso'er I know thee, some
 Could hardly tell what name were thine.

(1-16)

Rather than in earlier sections in which he is a mere lover of Sorrow and therefore subject to her caprices, here the speaker-poet assumes a male mastery over her in marriage. This mastery prefigures his final assumption of a strong voice of religious faith to replace the doubt that Hallam's death had generated: "Dear heavenly friend that canst not die, / Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine" (CXXIX 7-8) sounds a confident note very like that of the speaker-poet/husband who now securely possesses Sorrow as his wife.

Yet other sections of the poem deliberately cast the speaker-poet, not Hallam, in the female role. In the lines below, s/he seems begrudgingly subservient in relation to Hallam:

He past; a soul of nobler tone
 My spirit loved and loves him yet,
 Like some poor girl whose heart is set
 On one whose rank exceeds her own.

He mixing with his proper sphere,
 She finds the baseness of her lot,
 Half jealous of she knows not what,
 And envying all that meet him there.

The little village looks forlorn;
 She sighs amid her narrow days,
 Moving about the household ways,
 In that dark house where she was born.

(LX 1-12)

The "household ways" of female domesticity recur in Section XCVII when Tennyson again uses the woman's role to suggest the inequality of his and Hallam's friendship: "She knows but matters of the house, / And he, he knows a thousand things" (31-2). Sounding a note similar to that in Zilpah

Longfellow's letters to her frequently absent, publicly stimulated husband, the occasionally female voice of the speaker-poet of In Memoriam also bespeaks confused jealousy and a sense of inferiority. In Tennyson's case, the speaker-poet's subordinate position derives as well from an acute awareness of class, and his (her) own social inferiority in relation to Hallam "whose rank exceeds her own," in aristocratic upbringing and education (see also XLII).

However, such feelings could also be mingled, for Tennyson even as they were for Zilpah Longfellow, with vicarious satisfaction in the demonstrable public successes of his (her) partner:

While I, thy nearest, sat apart,
And felt the triumph was as mine;
And loved them more, that they were thine,
The graceful tact, the Christian art;

Nor mine the sweetness or the skill,
But mine the love that will not tire,
And, born of love, the vague desire
That spurs an imitative will.

(CX 13-20)

By adopting both male and female personae in relation to Hallam, Tennyson's speaker-poet frustrates public expectations of the lyric voice as that of a single self. Rather, Tennyson tries in In Memoriam to achieve full voice through marriage with--in this case--an alternately female and male "other".

As a metaphor for shared language, marriage implies a union of voice, of the dead Hallam with his live speaker-poet friend. As Eric Griffiths has recently noted, the speaker-poet

gives voice to Hallam's dead letters (XCV) and his now long silent spoken voice (LXXXIX) by incorporating quotations from Hallam directly into his text. "The printed voice is shared between them, without distinction (though the inverted commas preserve their distinct identities); they are composed as one, become one now in the fact that each equally needs to draw on a reader's breath for continued life" (166-70). But what Griffiths does not explain is just why Tennyson imagined this oneness of voice in terms of marriage.³³

For instance, just prior to the climax, the speaker-poet had asked that Hallam "Descend, and touch, and enter" him, in a line that had originally read "Stoop soul and touch me; wed me" (XCIII 1). Of course, marriage is a central metaphor throughout the poem, as the above analysis of roles indicates.

³³ This is not to say that Griffiths ignores the analogy between marriage and poetic reception as such, but that his interests in this regard concern the Brownings rather than Tennyson. In speaking of both Elizabeth's and Robert's love poetry of the ideal and the real, Griffiths notes the swiftness with which the ideal becomes the real and vice versa. He further compares this transformation to the alteration of speech into writing, the "changes in the life of a poem, as it moves from spoken utterance of the poet to written text and then to printed book [so as to] conduct a courtship in and of the language, from the first impulses of still unformulated desire to the intimate declarations of lovers to each other and then to a restricted circle of family and friends, and finally to the public avowal of an attachment that is to last in the ceremony of marriage" (192). Tennyson's deployment of similar strategies of reader involvement are more complex than those of the Brownings since heterosexual marriage in his poetry is often frustrated through gender or class disruptions, as in The Princess or Maud, or made to seem an earthly substitute for a spiritual, asexual union as in In Memoriam.

And a marriage of minds metaphorically challenges the silence of doubt that is, at the climax of In Memoriam, finally broken when "word by word, and line by line, / The dead man touched [him] from the past" (XCV 33-4). Once the speaker-poet is infused with Hallam's spirit, he is thereby able to give voice to the belief that all of nature participates in one "boundless day" of mixt East and West, life and death (XCV 61-4). Thus, a public declaration of his unbounded faith--the development and completion of the "Epithalamium"--is made possible through a private, trance-induced submission to a spiritual power much greater than and external to the self. Hallam's femaleness has, by this point, become abstracted into that of a spiritual intermediary between the male speaker and the heaven in which Hallam now supposedly resides. Like Christ, he now represents "manhood fused with female grace" (CIX 17). In submitting to this intermediary, the speaker-poet may be thought to assume a typical female stance. But the sexual dualism in the Christ-like Hallam implies that the recipient can adopt either gender. To close the poem, however, the speaker-poet himself reverts to the voice of a male-authority figure in relation to his own audience. This is now possible because of the spiritual empowerment he receives from the intermediary and his public enunciation of his own spiritual faith.

Ultimately, Hallam's death required that Tennyson commingle male and female voices within a unified self. In so doing,

Tennyson's androgynous voice was born. Because this voice refused a definitive gender, it was potentially available for any reader to wed, in effect, to do as Tennyson had done with Hallam: to allow the absent voice--here now Tennyson's--to "descend, and touch, and enter," to speak through her or him, just as Queen Victoria had done when she altered the gender of the voices in the poem.³⁴ Thus, the marriage that never takes place in The Princess is reworked into In Memoriam in two ways. Firstly, the "Epithalamium" celebrates Cecilia Tennyson's and Edmund Lushington's union as a symbolic continuation of life made possible through an acceptance of material death and a resolute faith in spiritual afterlife. The medley of voices in In Memoriam adopted by the speaker-poet ultimately narrows to just that of the actual author himself as he not only confirms his reality by giving away his own sister in marriage within this poem, but also submissively accepts through faith what he cannot realize on earth. This the protagonists of The Princess were unable (in the case of the Prince) or unwilling (in the case of Princess Ida) to do.

³⁴ In one of many brief, unpublished poems, "On one who Affected an Effeminate Manner" Tennyson remarks on exactly the kind of androgyny described here. It does not fuse male and female principles into a type of hybrid, but rather suggests a "meeting" of opposites:

While man and woman still are incomplete,
I prize that soul where man and woman meet,
Which types all Nature's male and female plan,
But, friend, man-woman is not woman-man.

(Ricks Poems III 217-18)

Secondly, the wedding that ends In Memoriam also symbolizes the uniting of the poetic text itself with its readers: personal suffering with a culture's loss of religious faith; a private, female-centred domesticity with male-dominated public enterprise; and a voice that shifts in gender with sympathetic listeners of both sexes. For Tennyson, these readers numbered in the tens of thousands.

The approach taken here toward Tennyson's "man-woman" posture is not the psycho-social questioning most critics adopt when analyzing the poet's alleged sexual confusion. Although much recent work in this vein has contributed to this discussion of Tennyson's final adoption of a sexually ambiguous voice in In Memoriam, Tennyson is viewed here as in a period of poetic adolescence. He worked within and against conventional gender roles known to his Victorian audience so as to establish professionally a varitonal poetic voice to echo his readers' heterogeneity. Attuned to Tennyson's physical voice itself, Francis Berry several years ago described the poet's androgyny in this way:

Tennyson's wonderful organ, for all its 'deep-chestedness', its murmuringness, its sonority . . . included a voice of female timbre and range, capable both of expressing the 'piercing wail' of the three Queens (in The Passing of Arthur) and the more subdued complaints of young women or maidens who have been deserted, such as Claribel, Lilian, Isabel, Mariana, Madeleine, or Adeline. But as the comprehensive voice of the man Tennyson deepened with age, so did the woman's voice it included, and the voices of Oenone, Eleanore and, in the Idylls, of Enid, Elaine, and Guinevere are lower and less girlish than those of the earlier heroines. And we have only to reflect on this included female voice

to understand a little more that strange work, The Princess. Into that 'Medley' of women's voices, of men's while masquerading as women, and of women's aspirations, he smuggled most of the heart-felt lyrics he ever wrote, including "Now sleeps the crimson petal, now the white", 'The splendour falls on castle walls', and 'Tears, idle tears, I know not what they mean'. (And let us take a stand on this at once, and say that Tennyson's incapacity--however he tried, in Locksley Hall and elsewhere--to give his voice the sharp or harsh edge of cruel or vindictive anger of a hard man was to his honour. It is to our own loss when we mistake, as we often mistake, gentleness for softness.) (60)

Perhaps a revaluation of gentleness, free from the disparaging connotations of the sentimental, needs to occur before the power within the androgynous voice of Tennyson's popular poetry can truly be heard. Chapter five, in its discussion of the popular lyric, works toward this end.

CHAPTER FIVE

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY POPULAR LYRIC

His and not his, are the lays
 He sings; and their fame
 Is his, and not his; and the praise
 And the pride of a name.

--Longfellow

("The Poet and His Songs"

"L'envoi" to Ultima Thule 21-4)

Although a definition of nineteenth-century popular poetry based on empirical evidence and theoretical analysis has been attempted in chapter one, the phenomenon of popularity itself as a feature of reception at work in "popular" lyrics has yet to be examined. Selections from the best-loved poems of Mrs Hemans, Longfellow, and Tennyson are obvious choices for comparative analysis since each poet achieved poetic success through appeal to the domestic and religious sentiments of their respective audiences but in greatly different ways. This chapter explores poetic popularity by questioning whether there are features within poems themselves that designate appeal to a widespread readership--popularity as a textual phenomenon--or if appeal is purely a function of reception--readers operating within a socio-historical context that predisposes them to apply familiar thematic content to poems that do not necessarily suggest such content when removed from the context in which they originally appear. In the end, it is only by placing "popular" texts themselves within a context of reception, to supplement analysis of empirical evidence and

theoretical definitions, that the poetic popularity specific to Longfellow and to Tennyson can be understood.

Without question, Longfellow and Tennyson both established their reputations through an early, skilful use of the lyric. Reason dictates, then, that since any definition of popular poetry would have to demonstrate where and how the groundwork was laid for these poets' contemporary fame, analysis of popularity should focus on examples of their earliest widely-read lyrics themselves. As perhaps the single most famous lyrics of both Victorian poets, Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life" (1839) and Tennyson's "Break, Break, Break" (1842) serve this purpose well.¹ Yet such a comparative study must also take into account Longfellow's and Tennyson's most successful precursor: Mrs Hemans. Although written prior to the establishment of Longfellow's and Tennyson's reputations, Hemans's poetry actually gained its largest readership after her death in 1835 in the decades in which Longfellow and Tennyson were both emerging as poets of the people. Hemans's manifest popularity in the Victorian period thus makes her work an obvious barometer of poetic success on a mass scale. Douglas Branch contends that of single poems not even the first "Night" of Edward Young's Night Thoughts sparked more imitative poetry in America than Hemans's "The Graves of a Household" (107). Chapters two and three have demonstrated

¹ See Appendix III for the texts of these poems and Hemans's "Graves of a Household."

the early exposure of both Longfellow and Tennyson to Hemans's work as it was transmitted orally within the ever popular domestic reading circle presided over by their respective mothers. As such, the gentle cadences of Hemans's religious homilies in verse, of the Domestic Affections and Records of Woman in particular, provide an obvious, as yet unstudied, voice by which Longfellow's and Tennyson's initial popularity can and should be measured.²

As a tentative working definition, "popular poetry" could be used to describe poetic texts that satisfy completely their contemporary audience's horizon of expectations and, as a consequence, sell in mass quantities relative to the total literate population.³ The audience's horizon includes, as

² Byron might just as well have been chosen over Hemans in terms of both popularity and early influence on the young Longfellow and Tennyson. But Byron had not the same kind of lasting influence as Hemans. That is, for both Longfellow and Tennyson (as for many others) the Byronic was more of an adopted fashion in the early part of the nineteenth century that poets wrote themselves out of. Byron's widespread appeal was generally confined to the Regency, for by the 1830s the majority of Victorians had followed Carlyle's injunction to "close thy Byron" and had adopted an attitude of moral purposefulness. In this attitude, Hemans truly excelled, and she did so through more than thirty four "Collected" or "Complete" editions from her death in 1835 until 1920 (see Trinder 60).

³ With any definition, additional definitions are generally required. In this case, "mass" as an adjective is used both to describe great quantity and, in class specific terms, to describe "the populace or 'lower orders'" in the nineteenth century acting as "a multitude of persons mentally viewed as forming an aggregate in which their individuality is lost" (OED). These definitions are taken from the noun "masses" since in the nineteenth century the adjective was used simply as an expression of sheer numbers and did not carry the "lower class" connotations common in the use of the

Jauss suggests, three overlapping strata of expectation: 1) the literary conventions of genre, style and form; 2) the implicit relations to familiar works within the literary-historical context; and 3) ideological suppositions based on the audience's preconceived distinctions between their practical world and the world of the poetic text. However, if "popular" is defined as that which wholly satisfies, then the definition's limitations become immediately apparent. For the single-most crucial feature of this definition of popular poetry is left untouched: in effect, whether the audience's satisfaction is insured beforehand through certain features inherent in the poetic text itself or whether it is entirely supplied by its readers. Only an analysis of empirically proven popular poems themselves can establish whether levels of reader activity might assist in the distinctions made between the various categories of "serious" poetry, "popular" poetry, "popular" verse, and so forth, distinctions which are themselves tied to the subjective awareness of "value" specific to the individual reader.

At first glance, Louise Rosenblatt's The Reader, the Text, the Poem (based on a "transactional theory" of reading), seems to offer an appropriate theoretical model for assessing value from a readerly perspective since she works to establish distinctions not in texts themselves but rather in processes

expression today.

of reading. For Rosenblatt, aesthetic readings generate aesthetic texts--poems or other "literary" genres; goal centred, "efferent" readings generate immediately accessible meanings for practical purposes. Her study, while certainly an engaging analysis of the activity of reading itself, does little to explain, however, how Victorian texts could generate differing degrees of aesthetic involvement in heterogeneous audiences that nonetheless shared similar literary and ideological assumptions, and could thereby achieve widespread popularity by satisfying both "aesthetic" and "efferent" expectations simultaneously. The lyric poems of Hemans, Longfellow, and Tennyson managed to do just that.

Hemans's "Graves of a Household" (1828) provides a useful vantage point on the horizon of expectations informing the culture in which Longfellow's and Tennyson's subsequent lyrical successes first appeared. As such, her poem should be "valued" accordingly. Peter Trinder argues that Victorian scholars simply cannot ignore Hemans's "contribution in helping to create the popular literary taste of the next hundred years [i.e. until approximately 1890]" (60). But the exact nature of that contribution is open to debate. What Donald Reiman describes as evidence of a cultural lag--Hemans's eighteenth-century neatness and polish of versification and clarity of syntax and diction (xi)--Trinder describes as a typically nineteenth-century attribute in his eyes: her methodical instinct was a "kind of artistic

extension of the efficient housewife's urge to see everything put in its proper place" (58). This "domestic tidiness" as a metaphor for Hemans's obvious facility with regular metre, polite diction, and unified structure suggests Trinder's implicit content discrimination: domestic affections simply do not today constitute fit material for poetry howsoever they may be presented.⁴ Yet if the form-versus-content division that so readily reduces Hemans's work to mere polished verse can be dispensed with, her texts can be appreciated as they might have been read by her audience, read as comfortable safe havens from which more adventurous poets than herself could venture out.

Obviously recreation of a nineteenth-century reading experience is impossible. What can be measured objectively, however, is the degree to which "Graves of a Household" in and of itself satisfies known expectations among its contemporary readers. Within a literary context, for example, Hemans's poem is absolutely conventional. She employs a common measure hymn stanza with unvarying iambs throughout in careful

⁴ Hemans's Victorian readers, however, clearly regarded her as the best example of female genius. According to the Scottish critic George Gilfillan, Hemans was "ever a 'deep, majestic, and high-souled woman'--the calm mistress of the highest and stormiest of her emotions." He honoured her in 1847 not as the best but as "the most feminine writer of the age" (see Helsingier III 28-30). Her studied control, in this case, is not derided as domestic tidiness, but rather is lauded as a public curtailment of intense, private emotion.

recreation of a widely accepted and highly valued lyric form.⁵ She establishes structural decorum through a balanced symmetry of picturing the household of her title in the first two stanzas. The rhetorical question, "Where are those dreamers now?" provides a necessary transition to the graves of the next four stanzas, and the final two stanzas return to the home. In structure as in form, "Graves of a Household" is entirely regular so as to provide reassurance of pattern and design to counter the perplexities which the graves of the title and the embedded question are contrived to incite.

Thematically, Hemans's poems share a poetic concern with the binary opposition of death and life common to poems of all ages, and to the two selected lyrics of Longfellow and Tennyson in particular. At least two aspects of Victorian life, however, irrevocably tied this poetic preoccupation with death to readers' lived realities: the high incidence of mortality especially among children and women, and religious doubt concerning the existence of God and afterlife that was beginning to colour all aspects of daily existence. Carlyle appropriately combined these two features of death in his

⁵ Hemans uses a ballad quatrain of alternating 4 and 3 stress iambic lines. Hymnals had been very popular throughout the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries particularly among Evangelicals such as John and Charles Wesley. Noted poets such as Milton, Dryden, Cowper, and Blake also wrote hymns, Cowper perhaps having had the largest influence upon Hemans herself. In her article, "Books for the Lady Reader, 1820-1860," Ola Winslow also notes the popularity of Isaac Watts's Divine and Moral Songs as suitable Sunday reading alongside Hemans's works (92).

"Characteristics" essay when he describes those who experienced religious doubt as likely to become "stupefied in that fearful loneliness, as of a silenced battle-field" and to fly back to the church "as a child might to its slain mother's bosom, and cling there" (qtd. in Houghton 97). However, Hemans, along with Longfellow and Tennyson after her, perceived that if mother church had indeed been slain by scepticism, individual living mothers could still symbolize God's persistent vitality on earth. At the very least, the domestic havens over which they lovingly presided could provide an emotional shelter that the established church no longer afforded its public.⁶ To this end, Hemans's poems in turn became substitute sanctuaries into which her readers could enter secure in the understanding that for all of them the "same fond mother" poet would assuage their fears.

⁶ Though Longfellow and Tennyson do not actually dwell specifically upon the domestic setting in the lyrics selected for analysis in this chapter, that they did do so in varying degrees throughout their careers is evident primarily in lyrics of Longfellow such as the famous "Children's Hour" or "The Hanging of the Crane," and in idyls of Tennyson such as the early "May Queen" and his best selling single poem of the century, "Enoch Arden." Moreover, the lyrics selected here allude to the emotional security of domesticity through an intensity of feeling in the "heart" of Longfellow's "Psalm" and through Tennyson's "tender grace of a day now dead" allusively granted an eternal return in the "haven" of the sea as a final resting place. The power of the domestic to evoke an emotional response was surely not lost upon poets who, in poems seemingly placed outside of the spatial context of the home, nonetheless conceived of poetry itself as a refuge from the hardship of life.

A security of understanding among readers of "The Graves of a Household" is thus provided for within the text itself through the cooperation of the poem's structural unity and its imagery. Essentially, the poetic experience takes place through familiar spatial terms wherein readers are initially invited into the unified inner sanctuary of the home in order to view the diverse, scattered graves from within the safety of the mother's consciousness. She, accordingly, envisions these graves within a context of activities familiar to Victorian readers even if the locales are apparently exotic: Western expansion and colonial settlement, merchant shipping, European warfare, and foreign travel. Thus the children's dead bodies "lie," "sleep" and "rest" peacefully in their graves, their mother's imagination protecting them through language and imagery from the likely violence of their actual deaths.

Stanza seven provides the necessary return to the home, "the one home with glee" of stanza one conveniently rhyming with "Beneath the same green tree" of stanza seven so as to reinforce through sound what is apparent in structure. Yet the return here relies on a crucial difference that allows for the poem's closure. In stanzas one and two, domestic life seems an entire entity unto itself, the use of "they" within "one home" suggesting complete unity. Stanza seven, however, introduces a significant absence in the domestic image: the children's voices had "mingled as they pray'd / Around one

parent knee" of the mother, the father figure decidedly absent.⁷ Innocuous in herself perhaps, this "one parent" of stanza seven seems to invite a partner in the reader; absence provokes the need to fill up vacancy and close up this gap.

Yet Hemans does not end her poem at stanza seven. Not content to let her readers complete the poem as they see fit, she also will not allow the controlling consciousness of the fond mother of her poem, her one parent, to mingle recklessly with readers' minds over which Hemans herself has no control. Rather, in the final two lines, the speaking voice of the poem shifts away from the controlling consciousness of the mother. It becomes an objective voice of emotional reflection looking back upon the mother's situation as a concrete instance of an abstract reality well known to Hemans's readers: the condition of absence itself. The mother becomes now the abstract personification "love" referred to as "thou" when the speaker mournfully ponders "if thou wert all / And nought beyond." By opening with "Alas," the possibility of there being nothing beyond a mother's love, and therefore nothing beyond the "earth" that is so piteously lamented as a substitute, Hemans

⁷ Here, the reading of this image may be governed, to too large a degree, by a biographical understanding of Hemans's own domestic circumstances. At nineteen, Felicia Browne married Captain Hemans, bore five sons in six years, only to have her husband leave for Rome "for the sake of his health" shortly before the birth of the fifth in 1818. (Reiman vii). Until her own death in 1835, her husband remained deliberately "absent," though absent husbands were a common feature of Victorian life to which Hemans's readers would have readily testified, and her own husband's absence was not kept secret.

invites her readers to fill the absence of the father with the presence of God and the afterlife "beyond" as the unspoken counter to the negative quantity of the "nought beyond" which is earth. The reader's earlier position from within the sanctuary of the mother's consciousness is thus reinforced here as the mother is now addressed directly in the second person "thou" as a spirit of love on earth with which the reader is asked to identify. In other words, the reader is not allowed to take the role of God in relation to "The Graves of a Household" and supply for herself or himself a fit conclusion or moral "beyond" the confines of the poem itself. The reader must assume the attitude of the controlling consciousness provided for and imbedded within the poem, in this case the female attitude of the mother.

Hemans's final allusion to a spirit of love beyond earth supplied in the hereafter by God encourages her readers to complete the poem in spatial terms. The vacant spaces within the home created by now dead children may be filled on earth by the creative consciousness of a loving mother who envisions restful graves parallel to the once inhabited warm beds; but the harmonious unity of domestic bliss can only be replaced in eternity by religious faith in the hereafter. The heavenly sanctuary on earth exists only in the imaginations of readers who are willing to listen to the address of "thou," and invite God to become a superabundant presence within a household

punctuated by absences. For Hemans, these readers numbered in the tens of thousands.⁸

In "The Graves of a Household," Hemans alludes to but does not answer directly the most difficult question faced by her readers--what happens after death--and in the process assuages their fears through the regularity of the hymnal lyric, the gentleness of her diction and the overall harmony of image and structure. That her poetry appealed to children and was viewed as substitute reading for the Bible on Sundays is therefore not surprising. This poem, for example, engenders an attitude of spiritual peace like that fostered through the Victorian ideal of hearth and home; it becomes itself a similar refuge for her older readers from religious scepticism and doubt. God exists as an absent presence which Hemans carefully manipulates through appropriate allusion to vacancies and the religiously sanctioned means by which they should be filled. As such, her text may be said to meet her readers' expectations almost in and of itself. It requires little or no reader activity in the creation of meaning other than passively to submit to the controlling consciousness of the mother within the poem and then later to register the allusions in stanzas seven and eight in the "beyond" of heaven, a conclusion which the poem points to rather than didactically supplies.

⁸ See note 6 in chapter one and note 7 in chapter two.

At first glance, Longfellow's "heart within and God o'erhead" of "A Psalm of Life" appears to incite an assurance in the reader of God's ultimate presence no different from Hemans's earlier poem. However, the differences are profound. They have to do not only with distinctions in spatial terms of the exact placement of the audience in relation to the poem's controlling consciousness, and to God as the conclusion toward which the poem tends, but also with differences in the sound of Longfellow's verse.

With respect to literary conventions of poetic sound, the classically educated Longfellow was, not surprisingly, far and away more experimental and more successful as a prosodist than Hemans. In his juvenile poems, however, Longfellow had originally employed many of the measures common to his popular female precursor which were in themselves the most widely known and used in the early nineteenth century: four-stress iambic, blank verse, heroic couplet, and ballad measure. Some of Longfellow's most popular later poems, like "Excelsior," were written in iambic tetrameter (Allen 159). Conversely, "A Psalm of Life" would have posed some new and unexpected delights for its first readers.

While it tends toward a ballad rhythm of alternating 4 and (in this case) 3 1/2 stress lines suggesting common measure, its feet are trochaic and not the anticipated iambic of such quatrains, or of poems that readers would immediately identify as psalms. This unusual use of trochees stems from the fact

that the poem is not itself spoken by the psalmist but rather by the heart of the young man. The poem's rhythm is designed to emulate the coursing of its life blood and not the "mournful numbers" readily associated with biblical psalms. Moreover, Longfellow himself never intended that the "psalm" of the title be used exclusively for this poem alone; rather, he originally thought of psalm as a generic title for several lyrics: "The Reaper and the Flowers, A Psalm of Death," "A Second Psalm of Life, The Light of Stars" and "The Fifth Psalm--Midnight Mass for the Dying Year" being the other three reprinted in Voices of the Night without their headings or subtitles. Not only does the meter and measure vary between these poems, but Longfellow, unlike Hemans, also alters his metrics to suit his themes, which are substantially more various than those found in Hemans's many volumes.

None of the above comparisons between Hemans's and Longfellow's poetic techniques should come as much of a surprise to twentieth-century readers of antebellum American poetry willing to grant Hemans her enormous transatlantic popularity. Chapter two has already demonstrated how Longfellow initially shaped his poetry fully cognisant of the popular female poets of the day; he later came to disparage both his own early effusions and the "hop, skip, and jump" measure that Hemans had introduced in America. Yet Hemans's eighteenth-century perfection in a nineteenth-century context, that is, her use of balance and symmetry, precise rhyme and

rhythm, and the thematic effects that such technical regularity of sound and structure could achieve were surely not lost upon her male successor.

Daniel Littlefield, Jr., however, argues that the nineteenth-century popularity of "A Psalm of Life" should be solely attributed to Longfellow's "aphorizing in the tradition of such works as The Proverbs, The New England Primer, and Poor Richard's Almanack" (49). After suggesting sources for the poem's additional borrowings from several lines of Goethe and Schiller, Littlefield goes on to point out many parallel ideas in Benjamin Franklin's "The Way to Wealth" to support the view that Longfellow's success with this poem, as opposed to the lack of success of others in Voices of the Night volume, should be read strictly as a function of its content and not its technical aspects (49).

Yet any ideas that Longfellow allegedly borrowed would have likely been thought of at the time as being simply in the air rather than specifically tied to any particular literary texts. More seriously, in restricting his analysis of the popularity of Longfellow's poem to ideas, Littlefield unwittingly flaws his own argument. He tries to make a special case for the widespread appeal of the themes expressed in "A Psalm of Life" as aphorisms by claiming that this lyric contains the same metrical pattern as and similar language to the less popular "Footsteps of Angels," also in the 1839

volume (49). This simply is not true of "Footsteps" as stanza seven, for example, clearly demonstrates:

With a slow and noiseless footstep
Comes that messenger divine,
Takes the vacant chair beside me,
Lays her gentle hand in mine.

Three of the ten stanzas in this poem do not follow exactly the abab rhyme scheme which alternates between feminine and masculine rhymes, found in its other seven stanzas and in all nine stanzas of "A Psalm of Life." And the lines alternate from trochees to anapests in "Footsteps of Angels," lack the forcefulness of those in the "Psalm," and thereby create a soothing, peaceful auditory language completely in keeping with the "footsteps of angels" and completely unlike the strong exclamations of "A Psalm of Life." The metric feet of "A Psalm of Life" must in and of themselves make their imprint as the "footprints on the sands of time" of this specific poetic text, in effect, to be taken up again and again by Longfellow's potentially shipwrecked readers, who could thereby take "heart" as they listen to the pulsations of the "heart" of the young man speak to them.

Clearly, the success of "A Psalm of Life" depends on Longfellow's use of a poetic language and rhythm verbally expressive of the ideas he needed to convey to his audience. For Longfellow's original audience was actually made up of attentive listeners. The poem was initially recited by him to his Harvard class at the close of a lecture on Goethe, almost

as if to punctuate by way of a final exclamation mark mankind's need to face doubt resolutely in the living present. However familiar the aphorisms in "A Psalm of Life" may have been to his nineteenth-century readers, it is the metrical force of the language itself as it strives boldly after confirmation in a world of uncertainties that would have resounded in its audience's ears, as it does in the aphorisms of Pope.

To be sure, the ideas alone voiced within the poem would have been and were immensely popular since they were entirely familiar themes in nineteenth-century America: moral earnestness, a belief in human progress, and heroic individualism. It is often said by Longfellow's twentieth-century critics, even by those sympathetic to his poetry in general, that the conventionality of the sentiments expressed in "A Psalm of Life" have now debased its poetic value, making it "more a rhymed morality than a poem" (Wagenknecht Poetry and Prose 62). Yet to appreciate fully the original nineteenth-century effect of this poem, its novelty must not be read strictly on the level of ideas, or even of imagery, for even to its first recipients the "message" of the poem was not new, as a class studying Goethe would have only too readily attested. Rather, this popular poem should be read along lines similar to those readers immediately grant to a "serious" poem--a felicity of sound and sense--while bearing in mind that the poem was originally designed for an audience

far less sceptical than those of the twentieth century but no less desirous of aesthetic pleasure for all that.⁹

At first glance, Longfellow's poem seems merely like scores of other Victorian verses that record a struggle between life and death, and posit a triumphant faith in the after life as an anodyne to doubt; therefore, it seems a poem not unlike "The Graves of a Household." Yet whereas the voice of Hemans's poem clearly emanates from within the sanctuary of the home, the speaker of Longfellow's "Psalm" seems, if anywhere, precariously resting within "the bivouac of life," a temporary encampment upon the "world's broad field of battle" that forms the exact centre of the poem. Hemans's poem is structured in its final stanzas so as to prompt a return to its beginning, thereby completing the poem in as safe and encircling a manner as the domestic haven from which the poem issues. The nine stanzas of Longfellow's lyric, however, break into two opposing camps with the "bivouac of life" in stanza five a secure yet impermanent shelter from the battle waged between the passive acceptance of death in the first

⁹ Richard Ruland's "Longfellow and the Modern Reader" is typical. It disregards Longfellow's nineteenth-century audience by applying the New Critical precept of "organic wholeness" to Longfellow's "Psalm." When the poem appears disunified, Ruland concludes that the "Psalm" fails poetically: "This is a bad poem because--among other things--its rhythms are too jingly for the seriousness of its sentiment, its thought and diction are strained into easy rhyme, and its metaphors are either clichés or nonsense" (65). Longfellow's poem suffers from none of these failings if read within the context for which it was originally intended.

four stanzas and the vigorous activity of life in the final four. As such, the bivouac becomes the central spatial and temporal image of the poem representing for its readers just what the "Psalm" itself provides: a brief resting place from struggle. It is not the apparently permanent sanctuary Hemans affords her readers.

Yet, without a doubt, Longfellow's poem inspires a belief in "God o'erhead" as resolute as that of his female precursor. This fostering of religious faith in Longfellow's "Psalm," however, is more a function of tone, and the creation of a fit attitude in his audience than it is a textually devised conclusion as it is in Hemans's strictly conventional hymn. The young man's pulsating heart that controls "what" he said to the psalmist, also controls "how." The martial "drums" of stanza five echo throughout in the consistent opposition between feminine and masculine rhymes.¹⁰ The two syllable "mournful numbers" slow the pace and provide a contrapuntal rhythm of "the muffled drums" of "funeral marches" sounding against the abrupt monosyllables that seem to ring out as a bugle call summoning its listeners to life's battle. Longfellow thus recreates in sound what his listeners anticipate in sense: that even while physical forces may drive

¹⁰ Nearing the end of his life, Longfellow was once asked his opinion on coeducation; he responded "that life, like French poetry, is imperfect without the feminine rhyme" (Life III 273). Feminine rhymes are commonplace in Longfellow's poetry, not only a likely result of his love of French lyrics, but of his early appreciation for Byron as well.

people by consistency and regularity like so many cattle to their deaths, the spirited actions of individual heroes resoundingly prove that life is more than simply mundane.

The tenor of the young man's single heart builds toward ringing imperatives to inspire those of other individuals to wage a pitched struggle against the silence of death.¹¹

Death's allure begins insidiously in the mind, in scepticism, and the belief that "life is but an empty dream," an emptiness which the lyric itself will attempt to fill by proposing a more vital life, and charging it with the energy of life's blood. Yet by voicing both sides of the dialectic, the heart of this young man at first unwittingly joins in with the "mournful numbers" of the multitude of "hearts, though stout and brave, / Still, like muffled drums are beating / Funeral marches to the grave."¹² Almost as a reaction, the young man

¹¹ Of the ten translations which Longfellow also included in Voices of the Night none seems to have had more direct bearing upon his own verses than Johan Gaudenz von Salis-Seewis's "Song of the Silent Land." The silent land is, of course, the region of death, and in Longfellow's translation the voice asks quietly for one with "a gentle hand" to lead us into the "boundless regions / Of all perfection." Longfellow's tender cadences, and mild images of acceptance in "The Reaper and the Flowers, A Psalm of Death" instantly come to mind. However, the life pitted against "The Silent Land" echoes that of "A Psalm of Life," for in it we find "shattered wrecks" upon the strand, awaiting "Who in Life's battle firm doth stand" to lead them to where the "broken-hearted" beckon from the other side of death. Both the powerful Romantic attraction of easeful death and its essentially Victorian adversary--the earnestness of life's struggle--of Longfellow's translation find their way into his own sharply divided poem.

¹² In this way, the articulation of opposing attractions in Longfellow's "Psalm" seems to anticipate Tennyson's "Two Voices" published in 1842 (though written much earlier in

produces the image of the battle so that he might place himself very distinctly in a camp opposed to the populace whose hearts will be muffled, in effect among the heroic individualists and against those driven into silence--the "dumbness" of cattle--by passively acting en masse.

Stanza six thus launches the speaker's concerted attack on passivity. "Trust no Future, how'er pleasant!" and "Act,--act in the living present!" he commands, the temporal imperatives corresponding directly with the spatial indicatives in the same stanza: "Heart within, and God o'erhead!" (the past of course being already dead and buried). Life, action, the living present can only be made vital by the individual who derives sustenance from a heart within made ready "for any fate." For the individual's absolute "destined end or way" is unknowable: overseen by God, the future is in His safe-keeping; the ultimate outcome of the battle is not to be

1833) or to echo the "Supposed Confessions of a Second-Rate Sensitive Mind" (1830). Longfellow had access, however, only to Emerson's copy of the Poems dated 1833, a year before his delivery of the "Psalm" to his class and later publication in The Knickerbocker of Oct 1838. The "Psalm" itself, Longfellow said, had been written much earlier "at a time when [he] was rallying from depression" (qtd. in Works 2) following the death of his first wife, Mary in Nov 1835, and as such enacts a spiritual and emotional crisis not unlike that generated by Tennyson's loss of Hallam. For Longfellow, at least, the decision to "act in the living present" should itself be linked not only to his understanding of Goethe, but to the motto he appended to Hyperion (also published in 1839 and discussed in chapter two). Longfellow acknowledged and published these antecedents for his verse as prosaic echoes of his poetic sentiments. He did not always, as Poe and others charged, borrow from his contemporaries although he often may have sounded like them.

anticipated, however pleasantly imagined by people still within the bivouac of life on earth.

The final message, as it were, of Longfellow's "Psalm of Life" is ultimately unrealizable within the text in spatial and temporal terms and, as a consequence, the metaphor the poet chooses to couch it in is intellectually problematic, for readers today even as it was for those of one hundred and fifty years ago.¹³ "Footprints on the sands of time" blends spatial and temporal images in such a way that, when coupled with the ideas in stanza eight of life as a sea washing upon a shore of time, with footprints upon that shore still visible to potentially shipwrecked brothers, the entire image appears utterly incongruous. However, Longfellow has used "Time" earlier in stanza four where "Time is fleeting" in opposition to "Art" which "is long" to punctuate precisely the conflict between time and space that his "footprints" cryptically

¹³ The difficulty that "footprints on the sands of time, etc." posed for its contemporary readers is evident in the following, largely typical, remarks found in an excerpt from the London Review reprinted in the Eclectic Magazine LV 2 (Feb. 1862) 189-91:

How is it that these footprints can make any permanent impression on the "sands" of time-- how is it that this forlorn brother sailing o'er the solemn main can manage to see these prints on the shore, or what is the particular connection between seeing them and taking heart again, are, we confess, things not easily understood.

(Cameron 72)

Twentieth-century critics have been largely content to echo the contemporary puzzled response rather than seek any valid reasons for why Longfellow chose the images that he did.

convey. Great men's actions take place within the bivouac of life upon the shifting sands of time and, as such, are fleeting, impermanent and not capable of lasting into eternity. The imprints upon their own time that these men leave behind are, at worst, as temporary as the actions which brought them into being and, at best, inspiring beyond their mere temporality to anyone by chance exposed to them and in need of the incentive to similar action that they provide. Art which is long (though not permanent either) can, however, capture the original impress of great action and, as in this poem, fashion the necessary feet (in this case trochaic) to make their mark upon their own time's fleeting shore. The evanescence of sound thereby gains a "long" though still not eternal affective power through spatial representation as poetry upon the page. As James Russell Lowell responded to Longfellow's detractors in "A Fable for Critics" (1848), "You may say that he's smooth and all that till you're hoarse, / But remember that elegance also is force; / After polishing granite as much as you will / The heart keeps its tough old persistency still" (1309-12).

Indeed, Longfellow's own response to the almost instant popularity of this lyric, as well as his later comments upon poetic popularity in general, indicate his acute awareness of the musicality of verse as an affective agent and necessary feature of poetic success. In a journal entry of 24 October 1838, after the lyric's publication in The Knickerbocker,

Longfellow notes: "My 'Psalm of Life' seems to take effect here and there. This is a great pleasure, to see the working of it upon other minds" (Life I 303). By 1846, Longfellow had become even more sensitive than previously to poetry's excitement of readers' emotions. In 1840, for example, he planned to chart the ballad's "virgin soil" in America through the verses in Ballads and other Poems (1841), inspired by "a great notion of working upon the people's feelings" (Life I 342-3). Early in 1846, Longfellow clearly linked this idea of a nation's "feelings" to poetic music; in a letter to William Cullen Bryant he praised his predecessor for just this association: "The exquisite music of your verse dwells more than ever on my ear; and more than ever am I affected by their depth of feeling and spirituality" He continues by announcing that he longed to add his "voice to the many which make up the voice of poetic fame" (Life II 31). Working out for himself in his journals a poetic doctrine that is obviously affective in its definition of the impact of poetry upon its audience, Longfellow thus surmises that R. H. Horne's voice in the recently published Orion (U.S., 1847) will not likely become famous; the poem "can hardly be popular, for it comes more from the brain than the heart; and readers now demand passion,--at least feeling" (Life II 78). Within Longfellow's immediate circle, friends such as George Hillard expressed a similar attitude about how popularity could be determined by appeal to the emotions. Writing to Longfellow,

30 December 1849, Hillard predicts that "'Resignation' will be among the most popular of [Longfellow's] poems, and deservedly so; for it is full of tenderness and feeling, and touches with a delicate hand those spots whose music is tears,--not bitter tears, but the soft dew that fertilizes the heart on which it falls" (qtd.in Life II 155). In estimations of audience appeal, ideas, evidently, are of secondary importance to Longfellow and to many others who knew his work best.

Thus, ultimately, the "message" of Longfellow's "A Psalm of Life" is hardly transmitted on the level of ideas at all. It can only be defined as a poetic purpose: to engender in his audience, through technical contrivances of language, a heartfelt acceptance of stalwart human endeavour even in the face of acknowledged doubt as to the eventual outcome of such activity. In a letter to John Dwight of 10 December 1847, Longfellow firmly remarks that "what a writer asks of his reader is not so much to like as to listen" (Life II 101). Hence, even if twentieth-century readers do not like the ideas expressed in "A Psalm of Life," they can still listen without prejudice to "what the heart of the young man said to the psalmist," and hear a single heart beating resolutely against the herd; hear the shift to the first person plural as that one heart commands others to join in the struggle; and finally, hear a heart registering its beat as marks upon a page in an attempt through art to defy the eternal silence of death.

Unlike Hemans's household punctuated by absences which she intends God to fill (and thereby to fill into eternity) Longfellow's bivouac of life affords only a temporary respite from adversity. Since the bivouac is grounded in the world, the heart can only point reassuringly to God overhead and outside of the poem rather than invite Him to become a spatial presence within it. Instead, Longfellow invites his readers to submit to the sound of the rhythmic pulsations of a heartfelt desire for certainty and immortality while in the throes of doubt, and thereby to become revitalized. Inasmuch as the achievement of Longfellow's poem is due to technical devices of the text and not, for the most part, strictly dependent upon activities of readers over which the poet has little or no control, "A Psalm of Life" may be said to embed its popularity within itself, just as "Graves of a Household" asked little more than the receptivity of its original audience.

However, the crucial difference between these two poems, and between Hemans's and Longfellow's work in general, is that while Hemans meets her audience's expectations on every level, poetically and ideologically, Longfellow plays with his audience's poetic expectations even while reinforcing a largely accepted ideological status quo. In fact, Longfellow often in other poems actually manipulates his verse so as to make attractive to the ear those ideas which he deems may

spark some controversy in the minds of his listeners: his abolitionist Poems on Slavery (1842) are an obvious example.

Thus Longfellow's popularity, as indicated in "A Psalm of Life," depends as much as does Hemans's upon his audience's receptivity, although the technical challenges that he often poses demand, at the outset, a reader activity that Hemans's more conventional lyrics simply do not. Although, like Hemans, Longfellow seldom ventures into unfamiliar ideological terrain without providing domestic reassurances at some point, he does not necessarily replicate spatial security through the structure of his individual poems themselves. Therefore, ideas which were themselves, as Longfellow well knew, already accepted and familiar before he put pen to paper must sometimes achieve public sanction outside of rather than authorially within the imagery of his poems. For if a poem is to remain popular with large numbers of people beyond its initial reading, it must pose some novelties, if not challenges, for its audience in order to provoke in its recipients a desire to contribute a lasting significance to the poem sufficient to revitalize it again and again. In this sense, Longfellow's popularity stemmed from his extraordinary ability to elicit--through technical devices as yet unfamiliar to the majority of nineteenth-century American readers--moods within his audience appropriate to the morals he wished to convey. In the transference of felt emotion not as a given, as in Heman's poetry, but as a vital force working outwardly

from his poems through sound upon the hearts of his listeners, Longfellow secured his success. A small measure of that success was recorded many years later in 1855 by Longfellow himself in his journal. He notes that he had been told of "a dying soldier on the field before Sebastopol [who] was heard repeating the line "Footprints on the sands of Time" (Life II 255), small recompense for the loss of life in a futile foreign war, but reassurance to Longfellow that his lines could provide solace at a time of need. That Longfellow is no longer able to elicit such moods or prompt such emotions today is as much a consequence of the increasingly sophisticated technical demands put upon poetry in this century as it is of any ideological changes that might have made his moral positions unpalatable.

Longfellow achieved his initial popularity through lyrics that, while they supported the ideology of the status quo, did so by inspiring in their readers moods that would allow them to support emotionally those specific ideas threatened by philosophical or religious doubt. This is an achievement that the early Tennyson seldom matched. For while there is no question that, of the two, Tennyson was the more skilled and technically versatile poet, Longfellow's perspicacious awareness of his audience and of the means by which his poetry could best speak to the majority among them was only rarely shared by Tennyson.

As outlined in chapter four, Tennyson's original purposes in addressing his audience were vexed by a personal conflict between the social responsibility of the poet as a public figure, and his more generally private responsibility to his art. Even in his most successful volumes, as for example the two volume Poems (1842), Tennyson seldom resolved this conflict within individual poems. He chose instead to put forward a variety of verses that, singly and in relation to one another, filled an entire spectrum of his own and his audience's expectations: from often cryptic highly personal statements to moral or domestic platitudes, from complex experiments in rhyme and meter to blank verse. Since the audience to whom Tennyson pitched his voice was compositionally various, that he only gradually achieved the widespread popularity of Longfellow, and then to a lesser degree in England than in America, is not surprising. Indeed what is surprising is that any single poem of Tennyson's managed to achieve a widespread popularity. Yet "Break, break, break" was just such a poem.

An interesting measure of its popularity, and the conflation of the popularity of Longfellow and Tennyson on both sides of the Atlantic, is found in William Winters's "Reminiscences" of Longfellow. Winters notes that "once Longfellow drew out of his pocket a queer request for an autograph, saying, 'that the writer loved poetry in 'most any style, and would he please copy his 'Break, break, break!' for

the writer?" (qtd. in Life III 318). Reacting to one of the many musical settings of the poem, Longfellow himself was in 1863 once brought to tears at Dempster's piano through the singing of "Break, break, break" and was forced to leave the room (321). Poetically inspired tears are difficult to imagine today, but what can be attempted is an account of how Tennyson's poem might be able to produce such a visceral response in a fellow poet. For if Longfellow's own verse is affective in its deliberate attempt to elicit specific emotional responses in its readers, then Tennyson's vibrant, synaesthetic poetry can only be described as "impactive." In "Break, break, break," the poet creates and recreates sensory experience at its temporal and spatial point of impact. The Sea's waves, for example, would be silent without the stones upon which they break. So in turn, sound must join with sense to become symbol, for by itself, the speaking voice is inarticulate; it only comes into being in its impact upon recipients.

Like Hemans, Tennyson is concerned with the spatial vacancy of death; the thoughts which the speaker cannot utter are unrealizable in this world of tangible objects because they involve absence: "a vanished hand" and "a voice that is still" together constitute "a day that is dead." However, rather than fill absence as Hemans does through nominal replacements, Tennyson suggests sensory experience as a temporal substitute: the "touch" of a hand and the "sound" of a voice reenact "the

tender grace of a day" now dead in order to grant this day meaning beyond its brevity through the quality of its affective power over the person who remembers the original sensation. Like Longfellow in "A Psalm of Life," Tennyson too wishes to spatialize sound. Yet unlike Longfellow, whose poetic feet in print are visually fixed upon the static page, Tennyson dynamically imagines sound as a coming together of physical objects at a precise point of impact, a sensory creation replicated by the force of waves striking upon the eardrums of the poem's listeners.¹⁴

As a sensory experience--a spoken poem--Tennyson's lyric has an affective quality that is as difficult to articulate as the "thoughts" which the speaker cannot "utter." Here too the problem is one of absence. The English language simply lacks the adjectives necessary to describe the full import of sound as a synaesthetic experience. In trying to find words to give to the combined tactile and audible sensation of the spondees --"Break, break, break"--the limitations of a language dominated by visual metaphors are soon realized. Those words which describe sound, such as "resonant" or "resounding," hardly capture the physical sensation of contact necessary to produce sound although "reverberating" comes close. But these words inadequately convey the simultaneous hearing and feeling

¹⁴ Compare Tennyson's "Dream of Fair Women" where the speaker of the dream recalls "Hearing the holy organ rolling waves / Of sound on roof and floor" (191-2).

of the stresses elsewhere in the poem as they seem to strike the many monosyllabic nouns and their adjectives in such a way as to duplicate the action of the tongue upon the teeth as the reader utters the poem aloud. For this reason, Tennyson's poem is referred to as "impactive" so as to suggest the truly physical quality of sound as an influential feature governing the audience's response to "Break, break, break."

"Impactive" also describes the astounding ideational impact the poem was and is still able to generate. Despite the fact that out of sixteen lines, six speak directly of hopelessness, vacancy, and death (3-4, 11-12, 15-16), and four seemingly of destruction (breaking) (1-2, 13-14), the tone of the poem is thought of paradoxically as uplifting. Its "buoyant impressions at the centre," as W. David Shaw calls them (259), somehow qualitatively outweigh the quantitative pull toward despair. And on the level of ideas, "Break, break, break" today usually prompts affirmative responses such as the following: "a central meaning is created about homecoming, joy in solitude, the affective power of memory, and the fate of the soul" (Shaw 287). Shaw's essentially positive reaction results, as he himself suggests, from "epiphoric implication" that attributes meaning to the images in the poem rather than analyzes meaning in the images themselves taken in isolation (286). What Shaw does not mention, however, is that this activity is performed entirely by its readers; it is not an inherent feature imbedded in the poem. To say as Shaw does,

for example, that "the sailor lad, / [who] sings in his boat on the bay!" defines a state of "liberation" is to replace a concrete experience with emotional significance in response to an unnameable quality in Tennyson's poem that somehow asks that the inexplicable be explained.

The ultimate significance that Shaw attributes to the sounds of this poem, emitted as utterances, cannot really be disputed. It is nevertheless true that the audible, tactile and visual images of "Break, break, break" do not in isolation imply emotional states; rather, they define a series of physical, experiential facets of life. Only through the softening (of all three senses) of the interactions of objects and people initially opposed does what is at first seen by readers as experientially denied to or in conflict with the speaker become gradually transposed through sound into emotional acceptance. Emotional acceptance occurs at the precise juncture where sound becomes sensation and is translated into sense: in the complex interaction of text and reader.

Through repetition, the audience is tricked by sound into replacing an initially forceful image with a subsequent soft--tactile and auditory--one. This, in turn, creates a receptivity that substitutes an emotional response for one which, in the poem, is almost exclusively physical. A visual recasting of the poem through paired sounds clearly illustrates this transference:

1 Break, break, break,
 2 On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
 13 Break, break, break,
 14 At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!

3 And I would that my tongue could utter
 4 The thoughts that arise in me.
 9 And the stately ships go on
 10 To their haven under the hill

5 O well for the fisherman's boy,
 6 That he shouts with his sister at play!
 7 O well for the sailor lad,
 8 That he sings in his boat on the bay!

11 But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
 12 And the sound of a voice that is still!
 15 But the tender grace of a day that is dead
 16 Will never come back to me.

The second two lines in each case echo the first two in softer tones and images. Heard in this way, the poem relies on its listeners to generate its "message."

Yet most twentieth-century interpretations of "Break, break, break" neglect the impactive sound of Tennyson's poem as a producer of emotional rather than ideational significance. Consequently, they tend to differ widely from one another because of readers' conflicting ideologies and theories of poetic meaning and not because of the inherent difficulty or obscurity of the poem. For example, F. E. L. Priestley, with whom Shaw concurs, speaks of the strong impression that the poem's opening lines create as not just a function of tonality and rhythm but of "vague symbolic suggestions" (145). He defines these suggestions as allusions to other images of the sea in Tennyson's poetry, the "great deep" out of which and into which life, like waves, arises and

subsides (145). "Break, break, break" unquestionably evinces Tennyson's fascination with the mysterious eternal vitality of the ocean. That it is also a destructive force in this poem, as Priestley contends, is less certain. In his view, the sea of the poem breaks upon "the 'cold gray stones' of death, . . . obviously 'the destructive element' here" (146). But if they are destructive, then the stones pose an ideational problem since they are referred to as "Thy" stones and "Thy" crags in relation to the "Sea." Priestley solves this dilemma by arguing for the sea as a symbol of a "unified system containing both life and death," and goes on to add that the "lines thus contain an acceptance, along with their sorrow and questioning" (146). In short, Priestley has the Sea contain all flux, all opposition within itself so that, as the controlling symbol, the Sea thereby supposedly holds all questions and answers within the confines of the poem itself: a perfect example of organic wholeness.

In quickening the poem toward its own resolution, Priestley does not differentiate between the wave action and the specific location in the poem of the two distinct "Break, break, break" couplets. The first is the bleak, desolate rockface "on" which the sea's waves break; the second, however, is "At the foot of thy crags." The crucial difference in preposition here lessens the second impact of the tidal force and, along with the fact that in relation to the rocks the sea is later at "the foot" of the crags,

suggests that the tide has receded. The action of the waves is no longer as destructive as it seemed to be at the beginning of the poem. In addition, the use of "thy" to describe the association of sea and stones does not, as Priestley maintains, simply equate the stones with the sea so that, as potentially negative symbols, they can be subsumed by the larger controlling metaphor of the poem. Rather, the stones have a tangible presence of their own within the poem and, when wedded to the otherwise silent sea, designate a point of resonance in physical impact as the waves slap against their hard, impenetrable surfaces. Rather than destructive, the stones are instrumental in the creation of sound as a vibrant symbol of life.

So, too, Tennyson's readers become instrumental in the creation of meaning. In fact, the poem's "message," as it were, points only to experience or human interaction as a substitute for vacancy. As a substitution for inarticulate thought, the lyric perforce registers its impact upon a human audience outside of the strict confines of the verse. The speaker's supposedly silent tongue, for example, is a thought itself connected by "and" that is created out of the original sound image of the action of the waves upon the rocks. Tied by sound and repetition to its mate, the additional "and" in line nine, the original emerging thought is then transposed and returned safely home in the image of the ships submerging silently into the ocean beyond the horizon described as a

"haven under the hill." What arises out of silence and despair returns as silently but with the crucial difference that the initial Sea/me point of origin is now pictured as a safe point of return, a safe "haven" or heaven imbued with all the human domestic connotations that only readers conversant with poetry such as Hemans's Domestic Affections could supply in full.

The paired activities of the "boy" and "lad," apart from providing a youth/IMPLIED age, vocal/silent, outwardly vital/inwardly despairing contrast with the speaker, also work with one another to soften again by substitution the force of the initial image. The auditory image of the fisherman's boy at play with his sister is to the breaking waves at the poem's beginning what the singing of the sailor lad in the bay is to the stately ships that pass quietly out of sight. Closer spatially to the stones than they are to the ocean, the boy and girl "shout" to one another as they interact upon the shore seemingly tied, through a named opposition of gender, to the forces of opposition like the sea and stones that are equally productive of forceful sounds. The sailor lad, on the other hand, seemingly older, is pictured in isolation though no less audible for all that. His "singing," however, suggests a more structured and subdued production of sound than that of the children. His spatial location as a single voice within the confines of a "boat upon the bay" carries a potential for the audience to tie both his singing to the

voice of the isolated speaker himself, and his boat in its safe harbour to the ships in their haven.

In the three external images that the speaker substitutes for the "day" that has been denied to him by death, Tennyson carefully shifts the activity from a purely experiential context of sensory impression to a vicarious imaginary projection of sensation that cannot be physically realized. For what begins in synaesthetic crashing ends, before it returns in the refrain, in a quietly assumed point of visual and tactile impact when the ships reach the haven beyond the confines of the poem itself. The vanishing ships awaken the speaker to the loss he suffers in the absence of a hand once seemingly tucked as safely in his own as the ships in their haven. The now still voice seems to reverberate in the hollow "O's" of the poem as even within the speaker himself who, in recreating the shouting of youthful voices and the singing of the lad in isolation, belies the silence and therefore ultimate death of the thoughts he has tucked safely away within the haven of his memory. In addition, the alliterative and rhythmic sound patterns render in some ways audibly indistinct the following images: "boat on the bay," "haven under the hill," and "day that is dead" that by sound association generate the sensation of a still, safe place of rest within uncertainty, change, and flux. Yet this sensation, if it occurs at all, comes about only within the ears of the poem's listeners who, in hearing similar sound

patterns, make associations in their minds and substitute one for the next. The vacancy of the day now dead is thereby not silent but rather filled synaesthetically by the tactile sounds of the images it echoes. Hence the death in the poem is of a day defined in affective emotional terms as that of "tender grace," since any potential for its recovery will only be in those recipients who allow the auditory returns in the poem to affect them in an emotional way.

As the following discussion illustrates, "tender" emotional responses were much more readily granted by Tennyson's nineteenth-century readers than by those schooled in the New Criticism. Critics such as Cleanth Brooks, for instance, prefer to analyze Tennyson's work in ideational terms. In The Well Wrought Urn, Brooks describes "Break, break, break" as "thinner" than "Tears, Idle Tears" because for him it requires that he "yield comfortably and easily to the strain of gentle melancholy," something which he does not feel poetry should ask of him. Brooks argues that "Break, break, break" lacks dramatic force because it uses conventional prose diction, its descriptive details lack relevance, and the speaker's experience receives superficial treatment (176). It does not for him, as apparently "Tears, Idle Tears" does, represent an organic structure in which intensity of effect comes from the total structure of the poem.

As Phyllis Rackin has pointed out, however, Brooks's reading of "Break, break, break" does not fully adhere to the

New Critical principle of the poem as an organic whole. Rather, Brooks appeals to an "extrapoetic" consideration of poetry as a psychological exploration of experience because he demands an "ironic counterthrust" in the poem, and in so doing he prejudices the fundamental principle of organic unity of the very poetic theory he espouses (Rackin 221-22). Rackin adds that because Brooks's assumptions as a reader of Tennyson were so close to those of Brooks's own readers, most of his contemporaries simply overlooked the fact that his demand for psychologizing and irony as necessary features of poetic success were external to the poem (222). As a New Critic herself, Rackin thus re-reads "Break, break, break" to reinscribe organic unity in Tennyson's poem.

According to Rackin, Tennyson's lyric purpose is not to question fate or ironically examine despair; instead, the poem's imagery, metrics, and clichéd phrases successfully "establish the complete tyranny of physical fact over the world of the poet's desire" (227-8). In 1966, Rackin's critical look at some of the hidden assumptions of New Criticism was perspicacious; regrettably, however, she stopped short of examining the assumptions underlying her own reading of "physical fact" as a tyrannical force in the poem. Rackin's reading, for example, is diametrically opposed to both the paradox of acceptance and doubt that Priestley claims is contained in the Sea's symbolic unity, and to the buoyancy that Shaw later senses in the poem. The potential for such

disparate readings not only identifies the problematic nature of organic unity in general, but also emphasizes the enormous degree to which Tennyson's "Break, break, break," in particular, exacts its affective meaning from its audience more than it embeds meaning within itself.

Indeed, the poem suggests that it alone holds no real final answers since the spondees "Break, break, break" sound again in line 13 as a cyclical indicator of return rather than finality even as the poem is supposedly drawing to its close. Here they presage a less actively hostile ocean, a somewhat more subdued sea "at the foot of the crags." So, too, the rhythm seems to lengthen and soften so that the final melancholic lament in the face of absence draws the poem slowly to its close. Yet the speaker's mournful "will never come back to me" belies its own finality and despair because the cycling back of the sea that began the poem also prompts a new beginning: its waves will again break in crescendos upon stones as new and different readers give physical voice to the waves of sound that "Break, break, break" posits within its narrow compass, causing them to reverberate outwardly into the ultimate silence of death.

Although as popular as any of Hemans's or Longfellow's lyric poems read in the 1830s and 1840s, clearly Tennyson's "Break, break, break" could, within its own confines, afford its readers few of the religious assurances in the afterlife that either of his contemporaries' lyrics promoted. Lyric

popularity in Tennyson's case simply cannot be defined in ideational terms as versifying an ideological status quo. Rather, "Break, break, break" exacted its measure of success in the nineteenth century almost completely from its audience, an audience predisposed to attribute domestic sentiments (and the emotional assurances that went along with the territory) to images of vibrant experiential life essentially lacking in any obvious relation to the speaker's cryptically voiced dilemma. This predisposition on the part of the audience, however, Tennyson teased into activity through the manipulation of sound patterns in the poem to generate a physical sensation of positive emotional acceptance in a poem almost entirely given to images of vacancy and despair. Tennyson's Victorian readers were thus required to create the "message" of his lyric in a way that Hemans's or Longfellow's rarely if ever were expected to do. That Tennyson expected as much from his audience is evident in the fact that the lyric itself is devoted, in part, to describing the way in which sound becomes physical sensation and in turn inspires signification in the minds of its listeners. The popularity of this lyric thus rests in the poet's skilful control of sound to elicit a readerly activity sufficient to fill the vacancy of death with the promise of eternal life.

On an ideational level, one of the most universal themes in Victorian literature of all genres is the multifaceted concept of death, doubt, and the afterlife, universal at least in its

frequency of appearance if not in the similarity of its treatment. Death, of course, has been a constant theme in English poetry from its earliest inception in Beowulf and Anglo-Saxon laments. To find Hemans, Longfellow, and Tennyson sharing death as a poetic theme is therefore neither new nor surprising. Yet, each of these poets generates a distinct voice from within the silence and vacancy of death in unique ways according to private responses to doubt and public acceptance of religious faith in God and the hereafter. Of the three, Hemans is most conventional in her essentially "rest in peace" response to death since she euphemizes physical decay out of existence, and links her attentive mother with an equally attentive force watching over her children's tranquil sleep after death. Longfellow's "God o'erhead," while reliant on his readers' faith in the hereafter as an accepted imperative of life, is nonetheless challenged by the poet's introduction of doubt as humankind's enemy so that life's battle will seem that much more worth the struggle. As Tennyson was to publish later: "There lives more faith in honest doubt, / Believe me, than in half the creeds" (IM xcvi 11-12). Of course, Tennyson's In Memoriam is the Victorian poetic manifesto on death, doubt, and despair without parallel in its depth of treatment of the social and psychological aftershock of the public and private death of certainty in both material and spiritual terms. Surprisingly, although Longfellow was as publicly committed to the struggle

against doubt as his English counterpart, when Longfellow's own private grief and despair reached its depths with the death of his second wife Fanny, it was to Tennyson rather than his own "heart within" that he turned.

On 9 July 1861--at the height of his career as the most popular poet of the Western world--Longfellow witnessed the tragic death of his wife by fire. He destroyed his journal entries of that summer, leaving, as his life itself must have seemed, an empty chapter in this scrupulously recorded catalogue. Yet it did not remain entirely empty. Many days after, he filled this void with the penultimate stanza of Tennyson's "To J. S.":

Sleep sweetly, tender heart, in peace!
 Sleep, holy spirit, blessed soul!
 While the stars burn, the moons increase
 And the great ages onward roll.

(Life II 368)

And, nearing the first Christmas charged with his wife's absence, Longfellow fittingly selected a passage from In Memoriam to help him bear up under the inscrutability of God's will:

Known and unknown; human, divine;
 Sweet human hand and lips and eye;
 Dear heavenly friend, who canst not die,
 Mine, mine, for ever, ever mine;

(IM cxxix 5-8)

(Life II 371)

Himself a popularizer of the belief that to "act in the living Present" would mollify doubt and sorrow, Longfellow reveals himself in his choice to allow Tennyson to act for him in this

period of his greatest misery (even as he had acted for the Laureate earlier by "meddling" in the American publication of In Memoriam). In so doing he reveals a peculiarity of the Victorian preoccupation with death.

While Longfellow was prepared to make public many lyrics that would personify death ("The Reaper and the Flowers," "The Two Angels"), sing dirges and elegies for unknown dead ("Midnight Mass for the Dying Year," "The Jewish Cemetery at Newport"), and incorporate death into long, third-person narratives (Evangeline, Hiawatha), he refused to treat death from a subjective point of view, even when it entered his own life in exceedingly tragic ways through the death of not just one wife but two.¹⁵ Poetic responses to death were for the public to share in, and not intensely felt, private indulgences. The Victorian preoccupation with death, as expressed in Longfellow's life and work, seems to be tied to the poet's sense of social responsibility to provide only those texts which would allow readers to share fully in struggle as affirmation of life, birth as natural renewal, and abstract argument as reassurance in the afterlife. Poetry could thus become a place of refuge, an anodyne to the doubt

¹⁵ These were, of course of Mary Storer Longfellow and of Fanny Appleton Longfellow. Of the latter, it is said that Longfellow's sonnet, "The Cross of Snow," written 18 years after Fanny's death and kept hidden until after Longfellow's own, is the poet's only poem that ever dealt with his loss, and even this poem abstracts Fanny out of any real life, and the poet's grief out of any real pain.

and despair that was beginning to characterize a century suffering from a declining faith in spiritual life and an increasing valorization of materialism.

In contrast, Tennyson's ability to recast his private grief in public terms (as seen most notably in In Memoriam) was an ability that Longfellow either lacked or denied in himself. Paradoxically, Tennyson captured this Victorian spirit of responsibility in ways that would in this century call into question the happy marriage of Tennyson's subjectivist and objectivist impulses. But in questioning Tennyson's supposed conflict or tension at the core of some of his most revered poems, twentieth-century critics often neglect to consider the degree to which Tennyson invited his readers into his poems through technical play in order to engage them actively in the dilemmas to which he gave voice. And it was this technical ability that eventually gave rise to his enormous popularity.

If scholars today treat the popular poems of Longfellow and Tennyson with any depth whatsoever, they do so by comparing the poetry's content to similarly popular ideas expressed in contemporary prose merely as part of the zeitgeist.¹⁶ For the

¹⁶ James Hart's chapter, "The Spirit of Poetry," in The Popular Book (125-39) is perhaps the best example from a popular literature point of view, although Hart makes a preliminary distinction between "attitude" and "theme," claiming that popular poetry agreed with fiction in the former though not always in the latter: in the end, the "belief or idea that called out a prose statement just as surely evoked a poetic phrase" (125). From a "serious" literature point of view, John Killham's "Tennyson and Victorian Social Values" also argues that Tennyson's popularity derived from the poet's fit awareness of the "popular taste for idealized behaviour"

underlying assumption of the majority of critics--of popular or serious literature alike--is that the technical features of "true" poetry such as prosody, rhyme, poetic structure, tropes, schemes and so forth are so standard or conventional in the popular poem as not to bear mentioning. Consequently, scholars who neglect poetry as a popular literary genre in its own technical right (and not as mere versified sentiments more abundantly and successfully produced in fiction) also disregard the musicality or tonal qualities of verse as a primary feature of a poem's positive reception by its audience. They fail to consider fully and without prejudice the importance of the physical voice itself as a key feature of "the people's voice" expressed in its favourite poems.¹⁷

Irrespective of the enormous increase in publications in both the United States and Britain in the early nineteenth century, in mid-century poetry was still very much a part of an oral culture with respect to literature consumed by the

evident in novels by Dickens, Mrs Gaskell, George Eliot and others, as well as in essays by Carlyle and Ruskin.

¹⁷ A notable exception is Charrenz Lenhart who, in studying the Musical Influence on American Poetry, contends that the enormous popularity of German music in particular in nineteenth-century America arose from a "merger of music and philosophy" as part of the Romanticism that governed the inception of poetry of the period. Longfellow, himself a flutist, is acknowledged here as poetically preoccupied with sound imagery and felicitous rhythms: "Certainly some part of Longfellow's appeal is traceable to the easy, swinging line he achieves" (118), Lenhart claims, although he is not concerned to trace why such a line may have been peculiarly appealing for Longfellow's audience.

family in the home.¹⁸ To be sure, technological advances such as railway transport and, later, gas lighting (to name just two) assisted the development of reading as a private, individualized, and silent experience by the end of the century since each of these advances allowed for reading by the individual to take place at almost any place at any time. But these changes in the structure of daily life impinged little upon the popular poets of the 1840s and 50s who were abundantly aware--in their own homes as in those of their readers--of the typical context in which a new poem was likely to make its presence felt: the family reading circle often, though not always, dominated by the female voice of the wife/mother.

Longfellow's lifelong exposure and professed attraction to the multiple sounds of female voices are amply evident throughout the Life. Perhaps the most famous of these belonged to Jenny Lind and to Fanny Kemble. After Jenny Lind's first concert in America in 1850, Longfellow noted in his journal that she sang in "clear, liquid, heavenly sounds" (Life II 178); he later came to hear that heavenly voice in a

¹⁸ In his study of leisure activities in Victorian Britain, Peter Bailey acknowledges that among scholars of popular culture, attention "to literacy, education and the popular press tends to obscure the fact that popular culture in the nineteenth century was still very much an oral culture in its everyday transactions and key areas of its leisure" (13). One reason for such attention paid to the printed word rather than the spoken or sung is obvious: a twentieth-century valorization of empirically verifiable evidence as constitutive truth.

more earthly setting as he and Fanny entertained Jenny Lind at Craigie House. The effect of her conversational voice he recorded in oxymoronic terms as a "soft wildness of manner and sudden pauses in her speaking" (Life II 207-8). Although undoubtedly commanding a different womanly presence than the singer, the actress Fanny Kemble captivated Longfellow again because of the sensual quality of her voice. Her famous public reading of his "The Building of the Ship" (12 Feb 1850) Longfellow described as a congruence of emotion and pitch: "out upon the platform, book in hand, trembling, palpitating, and weeping, and giving every word its true weight and emphasis" (Life II 161). His respectful sonnet to her, written while he was religiously attending all her readings of Shakespeare in Boston in the same winter of 1849/50, he read to her at a supper he gave in her honour. Therein she is described in her "Readings from Shakespeare" as "[i]nterpreting by tones the wonderous pages"; and his apostrophe to the "silent" Shakespeare surely applied equally to himself: "O happy Poet! by no critic vex't! / How must thy listening spirit now rejoice / To be interpreted by such a voice!" (112).

In and of themselves, his references to famous women's voices might prove little other than, as a type of celebrity himself, Longfellow was attentive to the talents that made other celebrities popular. But the list of female voices in the Life includes those of several other less popular or less

known women: his two wives; "Mrs --- daughter" reading a dramatization of Uncle Tom (II 269); Mr Tanner's Indian wife (II 272); "Grace Darling" and Mrs Barrow (both reading from Hiawatha) (II 275); Priscilla Green (II 304); and Mrs Hatch--the "trance medium" (II 310). The most important in this case is that of the Quakeress from England, Priscilla Green, whom the poet had heard in church during the summer he was writing Miles Standish.¹⁹ With each mention of these women in his journal, Longfellow identifies the qualities of voice that most attracted him, his ear well-tuned to rhythm and pitch.

Although Longfellow certainly understood the affective possibilities of voice and sound as a feature of poetic popularity, as demonstrated in "Break, break, break," Tennyson indeed had "the finest ear of any English Poet," W. H. Auden's other criticisms of the poet notwithstanding. Undoubtedly Tennyson's ear for the resonance of verse stemmed from his sensitivity to the incantatory ability of the human voice itself to induce reverie or prompt responses at a purely emotive level. In old age, Tennyson recalled that before he could read he had heard a voice speaking in the wind, and that "the words 'far, far away' had always a strange charm" for him (Memoir 9). Tennyson's several biographies are replete with images of the young poet and others of his family wandering about the Lincolnshire countryside at all hours reading and

¹⁹ Priscilla's voice is heard in chapter six.

talking loudly to themselves. And his practice of reciting his verses aloud out of doors, even to Isle of Wight fishermen at night in the sterns of their boats regardless of weather, continued into Tennyson's old age (Richardson 142).

What emerges from these several portraits of Tennyson is not a visual image but an auditory one of the poet's profound appreciation for the sound of the line and the rhythm of verse that dominated his poetic practice. Unfortunately, very few critics of Tennyson are prepared to give the poet's actual physical voice the full acknowledgement it deserves. Francis Berry's regrettably brief chapter on "The Voice of Tennyson" in his Poetry and The Physical Voice (47-65) begins with the paradoxical claim that "Tennyson was a willing prisoner of his voice, for it was a large and magnificent prison" (48). He goes on to explain both the limitations and the range in timbre and in pitch that Tennyson's envelopment within the sound of his own voice imposed upon his work. Arguing against Berry, Eric Griffiths's recent chapter on "Tennyson's Breath" (97-170) in The Printed Voice of Victorian Poetry, derives from his more general thesis about "the power of writing to generate for itself a second context over and above, and sometimes in the entire absence of the context of utterance" (51). Broadly put, Berry's study is a poet-centred view, while Griffiths's work is more reader-centred in its claims that printed utterances necessarily involve gaps, or breath spaces, between the voicing of idea and its felt impact upon

its audience. Hence, Griffiths appears more concerned with the absences of sound--the pauses for breath--in Tennyson's poetry than with the audible effect of the words. He senses in Tennyson's work a deep, moral imagination that cannot be legitimately voiced, a concern for the "speechless needs to which only reticence answers"; hence for Griffiths, Tennyson's best poetry is felt as an "interplay of sound and silence, with dramatic feeling for the charged needs in utterance" (105). Consequently, when breath is rhythmically reinfused into the printed line so as to transform it into utterance, the poetry approximates Tennyson's oscillation between assurance and doubt in his desire for spiritual immortality (116). What might normally be considered as narrowly aesthetic is, in Griffiths reading of Tennyson's texts, broadened in its identification of "imaginative activity as a form of conduct" (142). Indeed, although Griffiths does not quote Tennyson as his own best witness, remarks such as the following made by the poet himself reinforce the notion that in the activity of reading and uttering the printed voice, readers engage in poetically instigated moral exercises. Nearing the end of his life, Tennyson apparently told Edmund Gosse that "every good poet has the right, has the duty, to steal anything that strikes him in a bad poet and improve it"; presumably he meant improvements to the quality of sound in poems themselves, for he went on to add that it is only the dunces who "fancy it is the thought that makes poetry live; it

isn't, it's the expression, the form, but we mustn't tell them so, they wouldn't know what we meant'" (unpub. mat. qtd. in Martin 562).

Tennyson's heightened awareness of the "charm" of the poetic voice was not lost upon his immediate audience even if at times his larger public failed to hear his poems according to the designs of their author. For Tennyson was noted throughout his life for his private readings to friends and family of work in progress as well as several published poems, the most common of which was Maud, not coincidentally the most maligned and least understood of his major works. Of Tennyson's voice, Anne Thackeray once remarked that it was "not unlike an ocean's sound; it fills the room, it ebbs and flows away; and when we leave it is with a strange music in our ears, feeling that we have, for the first time, perhaps, heard what we may have read a hundred times before" (qtd. in Richardson 142).²⁰ Several of those people treated to Tennyson's reading of a poem in progress, in particular his wife, Emily, preferred that in order to get the meaning straight they have the opportunity to read the poem for

²⁰ Tennyson and His Friends contains many people's responses to hearing Tennyson read; in general, his friends concur in describing Tennyson's voice as deep chested, melodious, incantatory, and (en)chanting with a powerful affective ability to move its listeners. As Emily Ritchie remarks "The roll of his great voice acted sometimes almost like an incantation, so that when it was a new poem he was reading, the power of realizing its actual nature was subordinated to the wonder at the sound of the tones" (qtd. 76).

themselves first. Of "Elaine," Emily wrote in her journal that it "is well to read things to oneself without the glamour of his reading, which may beguile one" (unpub. mat. qtd. in Martin 425). Beguilement is certainly one of the sensations felt by the audience Tennyson includes in "The Epic" of "Morte d'Arthur" who "Sat rapt" because of "the tone" with which Everard Hall had read the poem, and by the speaker who, in his dreams, later merges Arthur with a modern gentleman, and the Middle Ages with his own. Well aware of the incantatory attraction and even beguilement of his own voice's "hollow oes and aes" ("The Epic" 50), Tennyson tried to influence if not actually control the auditory reception of his poems in private circles in a way that he simply would not do by submitting his works to public readings. The various resonances of his own voice were to make themselves felt upon his immediate listeners so as to create moods or sentiments within which the content of his poems were to be felt as an emotive force, and not as ideational argument.

In noting both of these poets' sensitivity to the musicality of the voice (primarily female for Longfellow; his own for Tennyson) additional reference must be made to the fact that both men had extremely poor eyesight and lived much of their adult lives within the realm of sounds and voices. For example, Longfellow's second wife, Fanny, after her marriage to the poet in 1843 was immediately pressed into service as a type of amanuensis as would be Emily Sellwood for Tennyson.

Longfellow's eyesight had deteriorated severely during his honeymoon, only to be regained for full use for one or two daylight hours by March 1844 and thereafter (Life II 16). For Longfellow, as similarly for Tennyson, some of the demand for oral reading by his wife rather than visual reading by himself was owing to serious eye trouble. In his 1934 selected edition of Longfellow's poetry, Odell Shepard links the poet's seemingly simplistic verse to the fact that much of the nearly blind Longfellow's exposure to the literature of his time came to him via the eyes and voice of his wife. In so doing, Shepard tries to lessen Longfellow's culpability for his alleged intellectual effeteness. "Her literary tastes as well as his own may well have been consulted in the selection of books for fireside reading" (xxxiii), Shepard adds, as if now to excuse the poet from the charges of effeminateness which Shepard himself had previously laid throughout his introduction.²¹ Apart from the fact that there is no evidence to support Shepard's claim concerning the selection of texts, his charge that it was only in the selection of material that the influence of Fanny Longfellow's voice should be registered further confines popular poetry and the influences upon it

²¹ Obviously, no editor of Milton's would ever dream of making such a claim against Paradise Lost even though it was read consistently by the voices of his daughters to the blind poet throughout its creation. Female voices are only felt to have a negative influence on poets writing in a century in which women were at last beginning to be heard in great numbers culturally and, later, politically.

within discussions of ideas, without acknowledging the potential physical effect of the female voice itself upon popular nineteenth-century poetry.

Likewise, all his life Tennyson suffered the torment of an eyesight that was, at best, unreliable and, at worst, positively distorting. On as many as seventeen occasions, Martin mentions Tennyson's visual weakness, and generally alludes to what he interprets as the hypochondriacal tendency of the Tennysons to invent physical ailments for personal, psychological, and social abnormalities.²² In any case, it does not matter where Tennyson's impairment may be said to lie, but rather how the poet chose to compensate for the narrowness that restricted vision necessarily imposed upon his life, and the life of the verse he bestowed upon his audience. In large measure, this compensation came through Tennyson's acute awareness of the truly physical quality of sound--the tactile sensations of the music of the voice as it reverberates in the ears of its listeners--and the ensuing visceral response. The poetry's ideas are thereby enveloped in a receptivity so profound that readers could become pliant

²² See pages 25, 77, 83, 93-4, 121, 129, 139, 358, 379, 394, 398, 485, 520, 538, 555, 563, and 574. In the summer of 1831 after the death of his father, Tennyson was so certain that he would lose his sight that he sought out one of the best surgeons in London, Benjamin Brodie, who prescribed a "milk diet," that somehow was thought to have aided Tennyson's recovery (139).

to the poet's every ideational allusion as if it were a demand.

While different from Longfellow's, Tennyson's awareness of the importance of the poetic musicality of the voice as a means of achieving popularity also came to dominate the Laureate's poetic practice. The impact of the voice as a feature of the reception of Tennyson's work is best understood, for example, in relation to Robert Browning's failure to achieve a widespread contemporary readership (a failure which did not, incidentally, befall his wife). Since most twentieth-century scholars of Victorian literature assume that poets achieved popularity through the voicing of conventional attitudes and beliefs, while they overlook the voice itself, James Hart's final concession to sound as a feature of verse--popular or otherwise--comes as a welcome surprise. Of Browning, Hart writes that his "verse was often too gnomic, the language too condensed to yield quotable lines such as the public liked. It was a poetry of ideas requiring more than one reading for sense, and it was lacking in the obvious music that most people equated with poetry" (131-2). Yet even in this final concession to sound rather than sense, Hart nonetheless continues to see nineteenth-century poetry from a twentieth-century intellectual point of view, that is, with its reading public simplistically demanding "quotable lines" and "obvious music." Hart does not register at all the emotive--as opposed to ideational--demands put upon the

musicality of verse designed to be read aloud by a single voice within a group of listeners.

In contradistinction, William Rossetti's comments upon Tennyson and Browning reading their work aloud on the same evening offer a unique, though admittedly singular, opportunity to understand nineteenth-century poetry as it was heard by a member of its own audience. Of Tennyson's reading of Maud, Rossetti noted that his "grand deep voice sways onward with a long-drawn chaunt, which some hearers might deem monotonous, but which gives noble value and emphasis to the metrical structure and pauses" (qtd. in Martin 394). On the other hand, Browning's reading of "Fra Lippo Lippi" was said by Rossetti to take "much less account of the poem as a rhythmical whole; his delivery had more affinity to that of an actor laying stress on all the light and shade of the composition--its touches of character, its conversational points, its dramatic give-and-take. In those qualities of elocution in which Tennyson was strong, and aimed to be strong, Browning was contentedly weak; and vice versa" (qtd. in Martin 394). Fittingly, in registering the impact of Browning's dramatic voice, Rossetti automatically uses the visual image of "light and shade" to describe the poetic tensions of Browning's reading whereas he hears Tennyson's voice as an oscillation of "metrical structure and pauses." Tennyson once remarked to William Allingham that if "the pronunciation of the English language were forgotten, Browning

would be held the greatest of modern poets, having treated the greatest variety of subjects in a powerful manner" (Allingham 290). Later, Tennyson wished he could indicate a fixed way of pronouncing his verses, for "it doesn't matter so much (he said) in poetry written for the intellect--as much of Browning's is, perhaps; but in mine it's necessary to know how to sound it properly" (Allingham 344). Allingham's numerous references throughout his Diary point to Tennyson's preoccupation with clear, correct pronunciation indicating his acute awareness of sound as elemental to the proper use of language. Presumably, only Tennyson himself knew how to sound the language properly, especially when it came to his own poems.

In his brief inclusion in this discussion of the popularity of nineteenth-century poetry, Browning should not be thought of as just another voice in the nineteenth-century choir that included Hemans, Longfellow, and Tennyson as popular soloists. The more familiar Browning, Arnold, Tennyson trio in this century, in studies such as E. D. H. Johnson's The Alien Vision of Victorian Poetry, more than amply provides scope for in-depth comparisons and contrasts among Tennyson and his "literary" counterparts in ideational terms. Here, however, Tennyson is tied to his British predecessor, Hemans, and his American contemporary, Longfellow, because the Laureate's popular poetry had an impact upon Victorian audiences similar to Hemans's and Longfellow's. This impact Tennyson owed to

the emotive quality of the sound of his verse, and not because he was apt to emulate the ready acceptance of familiar ideas and attitudes typical of poets more immediately popular than himself. In relation to the auditory impact of Browning's work as a type of intellectual potency affecting the minds of its readers, Tennyson's poetry as a viscerally felt emotive force upon its listeners was a force which Tennyson alone in Victorian Britain understood and came to perfect.

Ultimately, the popularity of nineteenth-century lyric poems must be seen as a condition granted to a poet's work by manifold readers who draw support from the text in question on an emotive rather than ideational level. Whether there are ideas present within a poem that provide emotional assurance in the status quo, as in Hemans's "Graves of a Household"; or ideas alluded to and indirectly supported through the tonal qualities of the verse, as in "A Psalm of Life"; or ideas supplied by the listeners in a poem such as "Break, break, break" because the lyric's sounds manipulate its readers into ascribing presence where there is only vacancy, is a degree of difference that has little or no real bearing on the empirical popularity of a given poem. The social and historical conditions of Victorian readers will, if prompted into activity by the technical devices of sound within the poetry, determine ideational content according to the audience's own emotional needs when a poet, like Tennyson, either intentionally or unintentionally fails to prescribe modes of

thinking. In the end, the "message," as it were, is little different for readers of Hemans, Longfellow, or Tennyson, or even--at odd moments--for readers of Browning: "'God's in his heaven-- / All's right with the world" ("Pippa Passes").

The importance of the poetic voice over mere message as a determining feature of nineteenth-century popular poetry, therefore, should not be overlooked. Twentieth-century readers' neglect of the affective quality of nineteenth-century verse has led to a too easy dismissal of the most popular Victorian poems as insipid sentimentalism without serious regard for the varying degrees of activity readers must engage in to achieve emotional satisfaction from the poems they read or hear--in the company of others or alone. This degree of activity on the part of listeners was self-consciously anticipated in Longfellow's and Tennyson's poetic practice. It influenced the physical voice that each poet adopted for his poems, lyric and narrative alike.

Longfellow's principal voice should thus be considered as "feminine" in tone though not denigrated for this quality, nor simplistically confused with seeming "feminine" sentiments as it has been by most of his twentieth-century readers. It spoke equally from his sense of mission to create in America cultural cohesion out of ethnic diversity. Tennyson's voice, on the other hand, should be thought of as "androgynous," in effect more variously pitched than his American counterpart's and thereby more resonant of the heterogeneity of his readers

in England than Longfellow's. These poets' voices are described in gender terms not because they always or absolutely spoke in physical ways that suggest a genderized perception of themselves as speakers or of the gender biases of their respective audiences as listeners. Rather, their voices are either "feminine" or "androgynous" depending on the awareness that each held of the extent to which the separate sphere ideology (which granted women moral authority both in and out of the home while men pursued social, economic, and political power) might find expression directly or indirectly within their poetic texts. That is, while both Longfellow and Tennyson ideologically supported attitudes little different from Hemans's in the belief that, in their roles as wives and mothers, women were the publicly sanctioned guardians of spiritual purity, the degree to which each poet spoke directly from within or was prepared to question that ideology differed.

Essentially, Longfellow usurped a "feminine" voice in so far as he strove at the outset of his career to fashion his poetry from within and against a popular female tradition. He later reshaped this tradition to his own ends by working upon his nation's feelings through a poetic music that could contain all of the most powerful features of the physical female voice itself without the "sing song" measures that popular female poets had, in his mind, somehow assumed as their own. Tennyson, on the other hand, (for all his "school

miss Alfred" qualities) initially derived his poetic voice from within a male academic tradition of poetic music (Keats and Shelley transmitted via the Apostles). Once drawn to the domestic sentiments of women, Tennyson embedded those sentiments in romantic luxuries of verse that women, as consumers of poetry, could readily applaud. Unlike Longfellow's, the androgynous voice of Tennyson's lyric poetry remained his own. Yet it was variously modulated to elicit emotive responses from many different listeners--female and male alike--willing to grant the poet the licence to move them to support sentiments that Tennyson's hostile reviewers (and those twentieth-century critics only too ready to excise the feminine from Tennyson's voice) wished the poet never felt compelled to entertain. Nevertheless, Tennyson rarely if ever spoke out directly and without qualification in his own voice in support of conventional attitudes that conveniently restricted women to the home. Rather, and herein lies his essential difference from more immediately and empirically popular poets than himself, Tennyson persuaded his readers through shifts and changes in the poetic music of his texts to work actively themselves, to supply the ideological significance he obliquely intends but seldom gives. Similar differences in voice and motive are also true of Longfellow's and Tennyson's popular narrative poems, discussed in the next chapter.

CHAPTER SIX

THE NINETEENTH-CENTURY POPULAR NARRATIVE POEM

Old and yet ever new, and simple and beautiful always,
Love immortal and young in the endless succession of lovers.

--Longfellow

(Miles Standish IX 91-2)

So these were wed, and merrily rang the bells,
And merrily ran the years, seven happy years,
.....
Then came a change, as all things human change.

--Tennyson

(Enoch Arden 80-81, 101)

Throughout its long history, English poetry has been peopled by an endless succession of lovers. If these lovers proceed to marriage, their union has usually been for the purposes of textual closure, a ready-made comic resolution to thematic and structural dilemmas. Longfellow's The Courtship of Miles Standish (1858) and Tennyson's Enoch Arden (1864)--popular narrative poems of the Victorian period--work within and against this preset paradigm. John Alden's and Priscilla Mullen's marriage in the last book of Miles Standish secures Longfellow's poem within this comic tradition. As such, Miles Standish may be said to meet entirely this feature of its audience's literary horizon of expectations. However, a concurrent force in the poem is martial not marital. The titular hero's brutal warring with the Indians deters readers' comfortable settlement within this text. Analysis of the popularity of Miles Standish has therefore to consider the poem's popular appeal in relation to Longfellow's intricate

balance between the two opposing tendencies toward love and the destruction at its heart. Tennyson's Enoch Arden meets its audience's literary expectations by being also, in part, driven by the forces of love leading to marriage. However, Tennyson's Annie Lee marries within the poem--not at its end--and not once but twice. Also not marital, the countervailing winds of mercantilism blow storms in Enoch Arden. Hence for its titular hero, fisherman and first husband, the poem's resolution in a second marriage is therefore not comic but pathetically tragic. Enoch is forced to live not one "death-in-life" but two before his own actual death. The popularity of Tennyson's poem also has, therefore, to be considered in terms of its opposing tendencies toward resolution and dissolution at its heart. In both these poems, the operative mood surrounding the love triangles at the centre of their plots is pathos, more pejoratively known as sentimentality. This mood and the domestic solutions sought to thematic dilemmas ensured a different though no less remarkable popularity for each poem.

The similarities of plot and method in Miles Standish and Enoch Arden make them ideally suited for analysis of the transatlantic differences inherent in the nineteenth-century popular narrative poem. Both plots involve love triangles in which the domestic hearths of the prized women--Priscilla and Annie--are the thematic centres. The heroes--Miles Standish and Enoch Arden--leave their communities and travel to the

"exotic" margins, only in the end to lose the women to the other men--John Alden and Philip Ray--who are closer structurally to the centre than they are. These heroes return at the conclusions as men brought back "from the dead" with the potential to disrupt domestic peace and stability, although this does not explicitly happen in either poem.

The characterization of the men is similar although the women differ. The titular heroes both conform to a typically masculine ideal of physical strength, activity and stubborn resolve. The "other" men are figured in more feminine terms: weak, physically passive, and long suffering in their abnegation of self. The women, however, differ in relation to the respective social constraints upon them. Because Priscilla is not even betrothed to Miles Standish, she can with a clear conscience actively express her desires. It is John Alden who assumes the battle between love and duty (in this case to his friend). Annie, on the other hand, is bound by her former marriage to Enoch. The conflict between her legal and moral duty to her husband and her love for Philip confines her to stasis for most of the poem.

In setting and mood, Miles Standish and Enoch Arden also reveal some similarities; yet, their differences here suggest divergence on nationalistic grounds. Both poems are set in a preindustrial world of small communities and collective awareness. Through lush description, both settings overtly recall edenic innocence; however, activities within these

communities covertly threaten this innocence at every turn. Longfellow's village of Plymouth Rock is more sociologically simple than Tennyson's fishing village since this is America's earliest white settlement. Social conflicts in this case involve religion and race as the Puritans determine to convert the heathen Indians, by the gospel of cannon fire if needs be. Alternatively, Tennyson's English community is structured on class relations and the socio-economic forces that determine fate and fortune. Although dissimilar in type, the social tensions in both poems conclude with each hero's reconsideration of external forces in favour of an internal, spiritual conversion that is brought about in each case by a sacrifice of self to ensure the domestic happiness of the loved woman. The ultimate mood in Miles Standish and Enoch Arden is sentimental trust in the intrinsic goodness of each individual and her or his role in the collective well-being of the community. Longfellow and Tennyson approached social issues from different perspectives based on the preoccupations of their respective nations. However, the conclusions they derived from these issues and the techniques they used to involve their readers in those conclusions are essentially

similar. Miles Standish and Enoch Arden are both domestic allegories.¹

As chapter one points out, the volumes in which the title poems appeared enjoyed great commercial success. Five thousand of the 20,000 copies printed of the American edition of Miles Standish sold in Boston alone on the first day of publication, 10,000 of the British edition in London. Given the poem's martial subject matter, Longfellow fittingly noted in his journal that in all he had sold "an army of twenty-five thousand in one week" (Life II 327). Enoch Arden was even more successful: 17,000 of the 60,000 British first edition sold the first day, 40,000 within four months, and the whole 60,000 two months later (Hagen 112). In the United States, Enoch Arden was far and away Tennyson's best selling volume: in five years, it sold an amazing 119,028 copies in forty-one printings (Tryon "Nationalism" 397). Moreover, while Miles Standish was criticized for its hexameter meter, and Enoch Arden provoked debate concerning the morality of bigamy, both poems generated considerable applause from the reviewers.²

¹ Domestic allegory is a term used later in this chapter to distinguish the essentially similar purposes underlying Longfellow's and Tennyson's idyls as opposed to those of the multiple poetic genres each drew on. The various features of domestic allegory therefore are discussed as they occur.

² Although not explicitly condemnatory, disapproving voices could be heard in the reviews of both poems. As Ghodes points out, British and American critics generally disliked Longfellow's hexameters (American 110). And Miles Standish did not have the novelty of Evangeline (1847) to assist it on this score. British critics were usually more apt than Americans to condemn even while praising. For instance, the

Indeed, in 1970, Patrick Scott was more than justified in naming Enoch Arden "A Victorian Best-Seller" in his article of the same name.

Yet Scott's in depth-treatment of Enoch Arden as a poem and, further still, as a popular poem is rare. If mentioned at all by twentieth-century Tennyson scholars (often it is neglected altogether), Enoch Arden is usually used to illustrate the alleged mediocrity of Tennyson's "public" verse.³ The problem, in this case, seems to stem from two sources: a twentieth-century distaste for the poetic genre of the "idyl" itself,⁴ and a suspicion of poems that generate

reviewer for Chamber's Journal (Nov 1858) calls Longfellow's hexameters in Miles Standish "baggy, lengthy, uncomfortable," but adds that even though "the metre is faulty . . . the story is narrated with a simplicity almost severe, and not without a moderate sprinkling of poetical thoughts" (Cameron 61). Walter Bagehot's criticisms of the ornate language in Enoch Arden ("Wordsworth, Tennyson, and Browning: or, Pure, Ornate, and Grotesque Art in English Poetry" National Review Nov 1864 in Jump 282-93), were unusual. Unfortunately, the consistent reprinting of and reference to Bagehot's article, and to Gerard Manley Hopkins's identification of the "Parnassian" in Tennyson's poem (as opposed to any "inspiration") have led to a twentieth-century misrepresentation of the critical reception of Enoch Arden.

³ Exceptions other than Scott's include Valerie Pitt's Tennyson Laureate, Thomas J. Assad's "On the Major Poems in Tennyson's 'Enoch Arden' Volume," William E. Fredeman's "'The Sphere of Common Duties': The Domestic Solution in Tennyson's Poetry," Douglas Fricke's "A Study of Myth and Archetype in 'Enoch Arden'," and Donald Hair's The Domestic and Heroic in Tennyson's Poetry.

⁴ Tennyson used either a single or double "ll," idyll, to refer to poems as distinct as his English (domestic) idylls of 1842, the Idylls of the King, and the idylls of the Enoch Arden volume, including the title poem. For the Eversley edition of his father's work, Hallam Tennyson adopted the single "l" spelling for the English idylls to distinguish them

popular acclaim. As a separate text, Longfellow's Miles Standish has not borne the particular brunt of twentieth-century criticism simply because nearly the entire Longfellow canon has been indicted as "merely popular." With the exception of a handful of lyrics and sonnets, Longfellow's work--especially his narrative poetry--seldom receives serious scholarly attention.⁵ Full-length studies such as Newton Arvin's Longfellow: His Life and Work (1962), Cecil B. Williams's Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1964), Edward Hirsch's Henry Wadsworth Longfellow (1964), and Edward Wagenknecht's Henry Wadsworth Longfellow: His Poetry and Prose (1986) perforce mention Miles Standish, but of these largely biocritical studies, none examines the methods of the idyl of America's earliest settlers in relation to its popularity. Tennyson's and Longfellow's idyls apparently focus on such mundane subjects as love and domesticity, and in such a melodramatic fashion, that both poems have been effectively buried as manifestations of a Victorian society allegedly more naive than today's. However, if Longfellow's and Tennyson's popularity in the Victorian period is to be fully understood,

from the Idylls of the King. The single "l" spelling is used here to designate the contemporary as opposed to the Medieval poems.

⁵ Robert Ferguson's "Longfellow's Political Fears: Civic Authority and the Role of the Artist in Hiawatha and Miles Standish" is a notable exception.

the nineteenth-century popular narrative poem, as a genre, needs to be disinterred.

Defining the nineteenth-century popular narrative poem is more difficult than might first appear. Once the precise nature of the product--poetic narrative--is determined, that product must then be analyzed in the context of its consumption--its recipients' activity and passivity in the generation of meaning--in order to gage the locus of the poem's popular appeal. Historical or theoretical studies of narrative poetry written in the nineteenth century are rare. Indeed, the recent English translation of Hermann Fischer's Romantische Verserzählung in England (1964 pub. 1991) is one of a very few studies of this genre. Unfortunately, Fischer confines himself to Romantic texts, the most popular of these being Sir Walter Scott's The Lay of the Last Minstrel. Fischer contends that after Scott's popularity waned, critics such as Christopher North in the early 1830s justly dealt the genre its "final blow: the romantic tale in verse was exposed as light poetry for the masses, and even if, up to the end of the century, it was repeatedly resurrected by poets such as Macaulay, Matthew Arnold, Tennyson, and Browning, its heyday was over--the metrical romance died with the romantic movement" (220). To Fischer's list could be added Philip Bailey (Festus), Elizabeth Barrett Browning, Arthur Hugh Clough, Coventry Patmore, Christina Rossetti, William Morris, and Algernon Charles Swinburne. With almost all Victorian

poets attempting narrative poetry of some description at some point in their careers, it is difficult to accept that whatever poison the critics had administered killed the genre as "serious" poetry. On the contrary, narrative poetry had merely changed form.

The opposition that Fischer outlines in the Romantic period--between the long, epic-like verse tales of Scott, Byron, and Southey and the lyrical forms of Keats and Shelley--collapsed in the Victorian period. Moreover, domestic strains were added to the genre, as befitted the Victorian audiences for whom narrative poems were written. The form now incorporated various poetic types according to the predilections of their creators: ballad, pastoral, lyric, romance, epic, drama, and prose. Perhaps the products that Victorian poets published were less "pure" than those of the Romantics, but their diversity and proliferation attest to the continued interest throughout the century--at all class levels--in poetic narrative as a unique genre.⁶

⁶ Rod Edmonds's Affairs of the Hearth is one of the few studies of what Edmonds terms a "new kind of narrative poem which emerged in the 1840s" (35). Edmonds's discussion of his illustrative examples is as varied and wide-ranging as his choices: Aurora Leigh, the Goblin Market, The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich, The Princess and Modern Love, chosen because of their obvious differences more than their apparent similarities. Edmonds's work is less satisfying, however, as an in-depth study of the development of Victorian narrative poetry since his primary interest is visual; he looks at poetry in relation to Victorian genre painting and the ideological underpinnings of the connections between them. He therefore identifies these poems as significant commentary upon Victorian society and culture to the exclusion of their participation within and against a genre tradition that

The successful admixture of poetic types, readily conforming to protean readers' literary expectations, helped to make both Longfellow's and Tennyson's narrative poems--their "idyls"--truly popular. Strictly speaking, idyls should follow pastoral tradition as song-like, lyrical depictions of wholesome rural life. The several other genres that intrude on both of these poems make "idyl" a convenient, if less than accurate label, but idyl has the advantage of being a term that both Longfellow and Tennyson used to describe Miles Standish and Enoch Arden.

On 2 December 1857, Longfellow noted in his journal that he had originally written Miles Standish as a drama "some time ago." He had in fact written the "first scene of The Courtship of Miles Standish" in December 1856 (Life II 289). But he decided to begin the work again a year later. "Priscilla," as it was now called, was to be "a kind of Puritan Pastoral." Longfellow added: "This, I think, will be a better treatment of the subject than the dramatic one" (Life II 310-11). The next day, Longfellow referred to the poem as it was eventually to appear: "My poem is in hexameters, an idyl of Old Colony times" (311). By March, the original name of "Miles Standish" had been restored. In sum, Longfellow's mix of genres--drama, pastoral, and idyl--and his shifting title--from Miles Standish to Priscilla and back again--reveal

reaches as far back as Theocritus's pastorals.

the poem as two skeins woven together: the dramatic action of Miles Standish's adventures and the idyllic romance of John Alden and the Puritan maid, Priscilla.

Although scholars have less access to Tennyson's methods of composition (as opposed to his purported sources) than Longfellow's, readers of Enoch Arden can also recognize its blend of at least two poetic genres: the heroism of epic poetry and Tennyson's self-styled domestic idyl of the 1840s. Like Longfellow's poem, Tennyson's poetic dualism is also linked to changes in title. Emily Tennyson referred to the poem as "Enoch Arden" in her diary (11 Dec 1861 and 1 Feb 1862), although Tennyson often referred to the poem as simply "The Fisherman," a title suggested by Thomas Woolner who had provided the brief prose narrative that is the principal source of Enoch Arden (Amy Woolner 54). In writing to the Duke of Argyll in February 1862 concerning his overall plan for "Idylls of the King," Tennyson remarks that he is "now about [his] 'Fisherman,' which is heroic too in its way" (Memoir 405). By 1863, Tennyson had apparently fixed on "Enoch Arden" as the title of the poem; but, the resolution of the volume's title proved controversial, as an exchange of letters between Tennyson and Emily indicates. Emily preferred Enoch Arden and Other Poems; Tennyson wanted a title incorporating the word "Idylls," perhaps hoping to dignify the later poem which, as Sir Charles suggests, he feared would be invidiously compared with Idylls of the King (350). Several

possibilities were advanced--"Idylls Chiefly of Seventy Years Ago," "Idylls of the People," and "Home Idylls." The proof title, "Idylls of the Hearth," which both displeased Emily --who had named both In Memoriam and Idylls of the King--and inspired T.J. Wise's title-page forgery, was finally returned to Enoch Arden Etc..⁷

Two features of Tennyson's conception of the poem and the place it was to occupy in his volume are suggested by these shifting titles. By calling the poem "The Fisherman," Tennyson identified his idyl with its protagonist's occupation as he had done with "The Northern Farmer," a monologic idyl of rustic life in the same volume. His MS. notes in Hallam's Memoir reveal Tennyson's high regard for "simple fisher-folk" (425) a life-long love and respect the poet paid them, evident elsewhere in the Memoir. By altering it to "Enoch Arden," however, Tennyson also identified the idyl's overall tragedy with that of its hero, as he did with "Tithonus," also in Enoch Arden volume. Both heroes suffer from "death-in-life," one of Tennyson's most persistent themes throughout his work. The idyllic mixed with the heroic also forms the basis for the debate over the volume's title. Obviously Emily felt strongly

⁷ This exchange of letters appears in Charles Tennyson (350), Martin (451-2), Emily Tennyson's Letters (180-2), Tennyson's Letters (II 377); the forgery is discussed in Fannie E. Ratchford's "'Idylls of the Hearth': Wise's Forgery of Enoch Arden," and noted in W.B. Todd's "Wise, Wrenn, and Tennyson's Enoch Arden," and Nicolas Barker and John Collins's Sequel (249-52).

that the "fisherman" poem should receive greater prominence while Tennyson felt just as strongly that the entire collection should take "Idylls" (decidedly domestic) as its title. The eventual result is less important than the suggestions arising from the debate. Similar to Longfellow's Miles Standish (though not identical), Tennyson's idyl, Enoch Arden, was also to be composed of two skeins woven together: the epic heroism of Enoch, and the idyllic domestic romance of the three major characters: Enoch, Annie, and Philip.

In composing these poems, Longfellow and Tennyson also drew upon their own previously published genres and those of their contemporaries. Longfellow's earliest use of poetic narrative began with Ballads and Other Poems (1841) in his desire to create a national ballad ("The Wreck of the Hesperus") to work "upon the people's feelings" (Life I 242-3). His interest in drama also began early with his three-act play, The Spanish Student (1843), and continued with The Golden Legend (1851).⁸ Nevertheless, it was Longfellow's facility with poetic narrative, which achieved its widest scope in Evangeline (1847), that would eventually lead to the success of Miles Standish.

⁸ The Golden Legend was to become part II of Christus (1872), Longfellow's life-long project: an historical drama tracing the development of Christianity. The other parts were I--The Divine Tragedy (1871), III--The New England Tragedies (1868), and IV--a projected history of the Moravian Nuns which was never completed. Later poetic dramas included "The Abbott Joachim," "The Masque of Pandora," (1872) and the posthumous "Michael Angelo" (pub. 1884).

Declining to treat the tale of *Evangeline* in prose, Nathaniel Hawthorne had given it to Longfellow (*Life* II 70-71). *Evangeline* is a history of the expulsion of the Acadians overlaid by the romantic tale of *Evangeline's* heroic search for her exiled husband. In eventually choosing dactylic hexameters for *Evangeline*, Longfellow may have implied parallels with Greek epic poetry. Certainly *Evangeline's* quest is no less fraught with danger (real and symbolic), her struggle between faith and doubt no less tortuous, and her final role as a "Sister of Mercy" no less demonstrative of her superhuman capacities. However, Longfellow's unusual hexameters--an awkward meter for English poetry--engender a more prosaic rhythm and tone in *Evangeline* than the blank-verse of English epic poetry usually carries. Oliver Wendell Holmes described Longfellow's meter as follows: the hexameter "marks the transition of prose into verse . . .; and the continuousness of the narration is perhaps more perfectly felt in these long reaches of slowly undulating verse than in the shorter measures, such as the octosyllabic, with its *va et vient* movement and the clattering castanets of its frequent rhyme" (qtd. in *Life* II 72).⁹ That Longfellow's audience responded enthusiastically to this unique blend of heroic verse and narrative is demonstrated in the poem's remarkable sales (see Appendix I) and in Longfellow's remarks that, like

⁹ The prose-like rhythm of Longfellow's hexameters is even more marked in *Miles Standish*.

its protagonist, "Evangeline goes on bravely. I have received greater and warmer commendations than on any previous volume. The public takes more kindly to hexameters than I could have imagined" (Life II 96).¹⁰ Ultimately, Longfellow had Hawthorne to thank for his metrical experiment: "This success I owe entirely to you, for being willing to forego the pleasure of writing a prose tale which many people would have taken for poetry, that I might write a poem which many people take for prose" (Life II 99).

Longfellow's own talent as a prose writer had been established in the 1830s through his sketch book, Outre-Mer (1835) and his prose romance, Hyperion (1839). Kavanagh (1849) would also be a prose romance. These give ample proof that, had he so desired, Longfellow could easily have written Evangeline as a prose romance. However, in choosing verse--particularly verse of such a distinctive meter--Longfellow demonstrates that even in poetic narrative the people's voice

¹⁰ Shortly after the publication of Evangeline, Arthur Hugh Clough published his idyllic Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich (1848), also in hexameters. In a journal entry for 7 January, 1849, Longfellow expresses great admiration for this poem and its meter (Life II 130). Tennyson, in contrast, disliked hexameters in general and Longfellow's in particular. When the two poets met in 1868, Tennyson told him so and Longfellow defended them (see Martin 469). (See Tennyson's "On Translations of Homer," where he inveighs against "barbarous hexameters"). Yet Tennyson did occasionally write hexameter poems; the "Northern Farmer" in the Enoch Arden volume is a good example of hexameter couplets, "Jack and the Beanstalk" and "Bluebeard" of quantitative hexameter poems.

that made him popular would win out. The beauty of Evangeline as a poem is due to the affective appeal of his lyricism.

By the 1850s (following a return to drama with the Golden Legend), Longfellow was reading the Finnish Kalevala in preparation to write his own saga of indigenous American life --The Song of Hiawatha (1855). Longfellow again experimented with meter, in this case an almost unvaried trochaic tetrameter. Although ridiculously easy to parody--as Longfellow and his wife knew it would be even before he published--the rhythm of Hiawatha was felt by many Americans to "capture" the essence of Indian life. For example, Bayard Taylor, disregarding the fact that sagas are generally written in prose, claimed that "the whole poem floats in an atmosphere of the American Indian summer It is the measure in which a Saga should be written, and fits itself well to the rhythm of Indian names and words" (qtd. in Life II 264-5). Thomas Parsons felt the measure to be "monotonous,--admitted; but it is truly Indian. It is child-like, and suited to the savage ear" (qtd. in Life II 267). Three years later, Longfellow's significantly different treatment of Indians in Miles Standish, and the straightforward prosaic rhythms of their voices, would underscore the singularly unchild-like, bloody reality of Puritan-native coexistence, a realism that had come from Longfellow's original conception of the poem not as heroic romance or saga, but as drama.

While Longfellow was engaged in writing Miles Standish in its dramatic form (in the winter of 1856-7), he happened upon a poem that may have changed his thinking about continuing Miles Standish as a drama. He and Fanny were "reading eagerly Mrs. Browning's new poem Aurora Leigh. Rather a novel in verse than a poem; but full of glorious poetry, and written in the freest and most dashing style. It is very deep, impassioned, strong and tender; evidently an autobiography,-- not of facts but of feelings" (Life II 290). In light of Longfellow's persistent emphasis on a poem's generation of feelings as a marker of poetic appeal (see chapters one and five), his recognition of this quality in Aurora Leigh may have caused him to reject drama as the most appropriate genre for Miles Standish in favour of a more narrative cast. But it was probably the relatively low sales of Longfellow's most recent work, the dramatic Golden Legend (see Appendix I) --that caused him to recast Miles Standish, which appeared as a nine-part idyl written in unrhymed, dactylic hexameters.

The rousing rhythm of the ballad, dramatic action, the undulating meter of narrative hexameters, and the emotional force of novelistic poetry--each of these in some way contributed to the idyl of Puritan life that was eventually to become Miles Standish. As a skilled craftsman, Longfellow had available to him a variety of genres that could only enhance his poetry's popularity. It could appeal on a number of different levels to an increasingly diverse readership in the

late 1850s whose members' literary education was even less uniform than that of Longfellow's audience in the 1830s.

In 1850, Longfellow published his most famous national ballad, "The Building of the Ship" in The Seaside and the Fireside. Its well known conclusion, "sail on, O Ship of State! / Sail on, O Union, strong and great!", can be seen as a starting point for his national poem at the end of that decade--Miles Standish. For this ship had its origins in the Mayflower that had sailed to Plymouth Rock--"the corner-stone of a nation" (Miles Standish V 70). At first glance, Miles Standish does not seem a national poem, does not seem to evoke the obvious patriotism that his earlier ballad could. Yet in "The Building of the Ship," the ship becomes not only the requisite "staunch and strong," "goodly vessel" of nationalism but a "gentle, loving, trusting wife" too. It is this conflation of seemingly antipodal metaphors that Miles Standish borrows from his national ballad. Both the obvious and the less obvious encouragement of the "Union" of opposites stem from Longfellow's nationalistic impulses.

In 1858, the United States was poised on the brink of a Civil War that had been fomenting for at least a decade. By the spring and summer of 1856, Longfellow's remarks in his journal and his letters to his closest companion, Charles Sumner, refute any claims that America's national bard was politically unaware. Robert Ferguson lists the events of the 1850s that triggered negative reactions from Longfellow: "the

periodic local enforcements of the Fugitive Slave Laws, debate and passage of the Kansas-Nebraska Act of 1854, the caning of Charles Sumner on the floor of the Senate on May 22, 1856, by South Carolinian Congressman Preston S. Brooks, the election of James Buchanan in November 1856, and the execution of John Brown in 1859" (190). Although Ferguson's reading of Miles Standish differs considerably from that offered here, his recognition that Longfellow did not suffer from an "artistic disengagement from current events" is astute. Careful reading of Longfellow's poems of the 1850s indeed proves that the poet's "political unhappiness extended to a perceived need and hope for large change. The union was breaking apart and Longfellow was deeply pessimistic about its chances for survival" (191). How Longfellow managed in Miles Standish to overcome his pessimism--to accommodate poetically for these fears yet still provide hope for change--is linked to his use of interconnected genres to support structurally what his poem encourages thematically: that in unity there is strength.

Ferguson believes that Longfellow did not really resolve anything in his poetry of the 1850s. Rather than consider Longfellow as working publicly to reconcile in his verse the warring tendencies in his nation, Ferguson interprets Longfellow's reactions to events of the 1850s as private self-criticism of his ineffectuality. He therefore perceives in Hiawatha and Miles Standish Longfellow's "masked presentation of personal anxieties" over the role of the artist in society

(195). Ferguson alleges that in the later poem, Longfellow found his voice in John Alden: "the type for the artist in Miles Standish [who] remains utterly paralysed for much of the poem, caught by conflicting loyalties and feelings of irrelevance within a community endangered by war" (204). However, by locating the poem's primary concern within Alden, Ferguson shifts to the centre a figure who is essentially marginal. Alden merely embodies one of two alternative sites of male conflict; the other, of course, is Miles Standish. Alden's battle is with words; Standish's with weapons. One is a "maker of phrases"; the other is a "maker of war." The scribe lives in a static lyric world of elegant language while the Captain lives in a dramatic world of heroic action. In only one figure, Priscilla, do the beauty of lyricism and the vitality of dramatic action unite. The Puritan maid is the poem's centre.

These three figures are typical of the genres they represent--drama, lyric, and versified prose--and in conjunction, they demonstrate how Longfellow's poetic structures work toward reinforcing the theme of unity so critical to the American nation in the 1850s. Since the poem was originally conceived as a drama, the Puritan Captain's role as the representative of this genre should perhaps be examined first. The dynamicism of Standish's role is self-articulated; he is a proclaimed fighter of Indians, a guardian of the pilgrims' bodies, as the Plymouth Elder guards their

souls. Whatever "elegance" Longfellow's hexameters may achieve elsewhere in the poem, when it is time for Standish to fight, the verse becomes as hard-hitting and as forceful as the skirmishes in which he engages.

Enraged by taunting verbal insults from native warriors, Standish strikes back physically:

All the hot blood of his race, of Sir Hugh and of Thurston de
 Standish,
 Boiled and beat in his heart, and swelled in the veins of his
 temples,
 Headlong he leaped on the boaster, and, snatching his knife
 from its scabbard,
 Plunged it into his heart, and, reeling backward, the savage
 Fell with his face to the sky, and a fiendlike fierceness
 upon it.
 Straight there arose from the forest the awful sound of the
 war-whoop,
 And, like a flurry of snow on the whistling wind of December,
 Swift and sudden and keen came a flight of feathery arrows.
 (VII 71-8)

Longfellow's considerable use of "b" alliteration registers in repeated sound the effects of these boasts upon Standish's sorely tried patience. When he snaps, the movement is swift and direct. Then, Pecksuot's reeling backward with its attendant description of his face provides a carefully crafted, minute pause as the audience wonders what will happen next. The force of the dactyl--"Straight there arose"--signals the battle's beginning. The subsequent metaphor of snow could have been inappropriately soft and gentle were it not that it comes upon the "whistling wind of December" to designate the swift reversal of autumn languor into fierce

winter. The asyndeton of line seventy-eight enforces the repeated volleys of arrows. The alliteration of "w", "s", and "f" replicate the action since the presence of the warriors is an off-stage, audible and kinesthetic force rather than a visible one. These sounds and images also heighten the feeling of terror as Standish seems ambushed almost as if by unseen spectres rather than visible enemies.

Standish's individual heroism at centre stage is thus enhanced by the forceful impact of Longfellow's dramatic verse. Yet no sooner is the audience cheering their mythic national hero (VII 79-82) than the death knell to legend is sounded in the ambivalent tones of fictional realism. The summing up of this battle is narrated in slow, deliberate lines that immediately dampen the excited mood and emphasize the reality of death. The tribes' sachem, the "brave Wattawamat," has been killed: "Unswerving and swift had a bullet / Passed through his brain, and he fell with both hands clutching the greensward, / Seeming in death to hold back from his foe the land of his fathers" (VII 83-5). These lines introduce new complications: the possibility of there being self-sacrificing Indian heroes too, and questions about the "foe" who are now white and the ideological purity of their settlement of native land. Thus, the drama of Miles Standish may be exciting adventure, but Longfellow ironically refuses to allow it to pass into myth at this point, even though the poem is derived from legend.

While the drama of Mile Standish leads to questions of a public's collective motives for action, John Alden's lyricism engenders doubts concerning the individual's private uses and misuses of language. As the "elegant scholar, / Having the graces of speech, and skill in the turning of phrases" (II 89-90), John Alden is the master of empty rhetoric, a point made manifest in his exchanges with Priscilla, discussed below. By himself, however, the emptiness of his metaphoric transformation of reality is revealed in the profuse lyricism that surrounds him as if it were his own personal atmosphere.¹¹

The clearest instance of Alden as an elegant versifier occurs immediately after Priscilla asks her famous direct question: "Why don't you speak for yourself, John?" (III 154). When describing Alden's action, the narrator sounds prosaic: Alden "rushed," "wandered," "paced," and "bared his head to the east wind" (IV 2-3). But once inside Alden's thoughts, the narrator's language leading to Alden's own is decidedly luxuriant and overdone:

Slowly as out of the heavens, with apocalyptical splendours,
Sank the city of God, in the vision of John the Apostle,
So, with its cloudy walls of chrysolite, jasper, and sapphire,
Sank the broad red sun, and over its turrets uplifted
Glimmered the Golden reed of the angel who measured the city.

'Welcome, o wind of the East!' he exclaimed in his wild
exultation.

'Welcome, O wind of the East, from the caves of the misty

¹¹ In Miles Standish, each character and voice is so individual that one can almost hear presages of Prokofiev's score for Peter and the Wolf wherein each part is played by a different instrument.

Atlantic!

Blowing o'er the fields of dulse, and measureless meadows of
 sea-grass,
 Blowing o'er rocky wastes, and the grottoes and gardens of
 ocean!

Lay thy cold, moist hand on my burning forehead, and wrap me
 Close in garments of mist, to allay the fever within me!

(IV 5-15)

The narrator's selection of a Biblical metaphor for the sunset mimics Alden's use of the Bible immediately following this passage. In his torment over his love of Priscilla and his duty to his friend, Alden arms himself with ready-made interpretations of what he perceives to be parallel Biblical events so as to avoid the use of a precise language that would signal real decision making (IV 16-50). His misuse of a Puritanical reliance on God's symbolic text as truth is coupled with his similar misreading of nature as signs of divine ordinance. Unlike Holmes's impression of the meter of Evangeline, Alden's undulating hexameters do not advance the narrative; nor are they intended to.

The east wind off the Atlantic is lyrically reconfigured as a ministering angel while Alden struggles in the static throes of a Satanic temptation (IV 28). Consequently, his so-called resolve to return to England comes about from a misreading of the Mayflower riding at anchor--it presumably is the Lord's will for him to return rather than remain in Plymouth and resolve his conflict directly. Throughout the poem, Alden's stultifying inability to speak his own mind with his own voice--to both Miles Standish and Priscilla--stems from a too

passive dependence on the external authority of the words of the gospel. Christianity, however, is not rejected. Rather, through the exposure of Alden's hollow rhetoric, Longfellow suggests that it is only in the sincere translation of the Word into human action that war of any kind is abated and can, perhaps, be prevented altogether.

Dramatic action for its own sake and lyric utterance for its own benefit--these two male genres are rejected in favour of their perfect union, for the community's sake, within the puritan maid, Priscilla. In her voice, Longfellow's readers hear strength and gentleness, equally justifiable anger and compassion. Not just a figure out of history, Priscilla had a contemporary real-life model in Priscilla Green whom the poet had heard in church during the summer he was writing Miles Standish. He records in his journal that "She spoke with a sweet voice and very clear enunciation; very deliberately, and breaking now and then into rhythmic chant, in which the voice seemed floating up and down on wings. I was much interested and could have listened an hour longer. It was a very great pleasure to me to hear such a musical voice" (Life II 304). As noted previously, by December 1857, Longfellow had changed his dramatic Miles Standish to "Priscilla" a "kind of Puritan pastoral" in narrative hexameters which he thinks will be a better treatment of the subject than his earlier dramatic blank verse.

Priscilla is one among other strong-minded women in Longfellow's poetry who achieve the thematic stature of mythic heroism because of the sincerity of their union of voice and action. Evangeline, an obvious example, has already been mentioned. Longfellow's idealized portrayal of the "lady with the lamp," Florence Nightingale, in "Santa Filomela" is also one of this number and an immediate English counterpart to Priscilla since Longfellow was also writing about her in the late 1850s. She is "A noble type of good, / Heroic womanhood" (39-40) whose "speech and song" will be recorded in "English annals" (34-5). Yet both of these women are saintly martyrs to the well-being of others. They do not have the realistic verve of Priscilla who, Alfred Kreyborg (not without a certain amount of obvious wonder) in 1929 called "Ibsenesque" and "the first feminist in American poetry" (107). As a poem, "Priscilla" manages to combine both models: one an idyl of heroic action, the other a lyrical ode to true feminine virtue.

Longfellow is not reluctant to mythologize, nor is he reluctant to spiritualize his nation's earliest beginnings. Yet the reality of compromise and conciliation must not be sacrificed either to the drama of warfare or the hollow lyricism of wordplay. Hence, in his portrayal of Priscilla, Longfellow tries to achieve "the emotional force of a novel," the passion and the prosaic quality that he had admired in Aurora Leigh. Priscilla's strength of voice registers clearly

of women," gives her clichés of womanhood in response (VI 36-40), Priscilla justly rebukes him:

While it may at its periphery overtly portray Standish's safe-guarding of America's first settlers, the poem covertly implies that only through the actions and reactions of human love can one read the means by which the safe-guarding of the Union in the 1850s could take place. Through a thoughtfully considered union of sincere language and fit action, the United States could forestall their dissolution. At its heart, Longfellow's idyl is a domestic allegory.

In its equal emphasis on conjoining language and action Enoch Arden is also a domestic allegory. Tennyson melded several genres for this idyl--his own and others, and, in so doing, created a text with even greater intricacies and an even more successful reaching out to a broad spectrum of readers than Miles Standish.

The immediately recognizable genre that Tennyson drew upon for Enoch Arden is the domestic idyl that he invented in the English Idyls for the 1842 Poems. Chapter four has explained aspects of several idyls as complementary poems to Tennyson's revised lyrics for the same volume. As Fredeman points out, the most remarkable feature of the domestic idyls is their variety of style and treatment. For the most part, however, he views them as "intentionally stark, militantly anti-lyrical. Pared of all surface decoration, they are marked by an almost total absence of characterization, an economy of narration, . . . stylistic simplicity and directness" (369). In this fashion, Tennyson echoed the Renaissance Idyl that

began to incorporate social commentary via allegorical symbolism--Spenser's Shepherd's Calendar for example. Yet, it was Victorian society itself that fostered Tennyson's direct treatment of social abuses, "marriage-hindering mammon" being the most common.

Simplicity and directness, however, were not Tennyson's usual methods. He preferred to move "in a strange diagonal" as in The Princess. This Medley interweaves the domestic frame narrative with the medieval romance narrative of Princess Ida and, later, with the newly added intercalary lyrics. Tennyson's narratively-woven lyrics in In Memoriam and the dramatic monologue, Maud, reveal the poet continuing to experiment with oblique meaning in relation to genre in the 1850s. But he returned to the idyl as a foundational genre in the 1859 Idylls, in which he acknowledged the inherently narrative tenor of female behaviour in love relations. Once wed to male narratives of quest, conquest, and misadventure, however, the twelve-book Idylls achieved its epic stature.

At this point, it seems reasonable to consider Victorian critics' demands for a "long poem" upon an important, topical issue. In their different ways, British reviewers in the 1830s and 1840s had been asking their poets for another Paradise Lost, a poem of epic sweep and grandeur to complement what they felt to be the august nature of the times in which they lived. However, as Aubrey de Vere points out in his review article "Modern Poetry and the Poets" (Edinburgh Review

1849 rpt. in Stasny's Victorian Poetry: A Collection of Essays from the Period), the times were hardly propitious for writing national poetry of epic stature. Like Tennyson's The Princess, which de Vere reviews for the purpose, the age was itself a "Medley": diversities in philosophy, society, politics, art, and architecture abounded. Despite this recognition, de Vere concludes with an argument hinting that, through the prior exercise of versatile talents, Tennyson is imaginatively preparing to write a national poem. He adds:

A great poem is a great action; and requires the assiduous exercise of those high moral powers with which criticism has no concern and action much;-- courage, prudence, enterprise, patience, self-reliance founded on self-knowledge, a magnanimous superiority to petty obstacles, a disinterested devotion to art for its own sake, and for that of all which it interprets and communicates. Should Mr. Tennyson devote himself to a great work, he has already exhibited the faculties necessary for his success. (Edinburgh 227 rpt. in Stasny)

De Vere's praise is not surprising since he and Tennyson were friends, De Vere had heard parts of The Princess before it was published, and he knew that the poet was contemplating The Idylls of the King in the late 1840s. Tennyson later came to stay with him in Curragh, Ireland, in the spring of 1848 (Charles Tennyson 224-6). Still, de Vere's article and his final recipe on how to write a great poem bespeak much of the tenor of the times since he obviously implies defects in either the age or its writers that militate against epic poetry.

Fischer argues that earlier in the century the "romantic verse narrative [had] dethroned the epic, in order that an epic type appropriate to the age might be created. That was the original aim [of Romantic poets] but in practice this was never achieved" (214). Fischer adds, however, that in this attempt,

many important discoveries were made: hybrid genres of great beauty and expressiveness were produced and a higher class of light fiction in verse came into being which delighted thousands because it was more understandable and dealt with subjects with which it was possible to identify, by contrast with the neo-classical epic in which the emotions were subdued by reason, the will and a controlled style, and with the classic epic from a remote period of history. Another of the many important consequences of this attempt was the development of the symbolic and allegorical continuity on which all great romantic poetry is based. (214)

The relation of lyric and allegory is discussed below; for the moment, it is necessary to outline Tennyson's reaction to the romantic verse narrative.

The early Tennyson's use of this genre is evident in his long, diffuse "Lover's Tale" (comp. 1832). This poem combines passages of luxuriant descriptive detail with the hero's monologues of psychological pain in a loose romance narrative of love forsaken, retaken, and restored to its rightful "owner." In this early narrative poem, Tennyson presages several of the themes of Enoch Arden: the love triangle (Julian's dreams of happiness are dashed by Camilla's marriage to Lionel); wedding bells as an ironic harbinger of doom; the presumed death of one of the protagonists (in this case

Camilla is mistakenly entombed and Julian resuscitates her); and the secret life (Camilla lives at Julian's house unbeknownst to all until Julian can find Lionel and return Camilla to him). Unlike the later poem, "The Lover's Tale" ends with Camilla and Lionel reunited in lawful wedlock, a conclusion that also, as in Enoch Arden, comes about because of the hero's self-sacrifice. Indeed, it is this heroic martyrdom that maintains the link between Tennyson's romantic narrative poem and the epic. Although not a self-sacrifice to the future stability of one's community or nation, Julian's foregoing of his own pleasure in favour of Camilla's happiness is an early step in Tennyson's development toward his great epic poem: The Idylls of the King.

Enoch Arden is an intermediate step in this process. What John D. Rosenberg asserts of the Idylls, could be said equally of Enoch Arden: "Like every great long poem, the Idylls draws on traditional forms and is itself a new genre [W]e have yet to assimilate into our literature this poem which is at once epic and lyric, narrative and drama, tragedy and romance" (33). The difficulty in writing about Enoch Arden stems from its profusion of genres rather than its so-called simplicity. An examination of readings of this "idyl," reveals that it can and has provoked responses in keeping with each of the above genres.¹²

¹² The discussion that follows does not include "lyric" because this genre is dealt with later in relation to allegory. It also does not mention the various genres and

The epic tendencies in Enoch Arden are most clearly presented in Douglas Fricke's article, "A Study of Myth and Archetype in 'Enoch Arden'." Fricke asserts that "the movement of 'Enoch Arden' resembles the mythic pattern of voyage to an other world/underworld (Paradise-Hades), a symbolic death, and a subsequent rebirth" (106). Therefore, Enoch's isolation on the "beauteous hateful isle" is his descent into an "underworld", while his return--and his subsequent gaze upon Annie's new home with Philip--is read as his renewal and rebirth. Because all earthly avenues are now blocked for him, "Enoch cannot be renewed in life or on earth, but only in death and in heaven" (113). From his trance-like prayer of resolve not to reveal his true identity, he emerges as a man transformed (113). According to Fricke, once "[c]ondensed into a single image, life and death are seen from Tennyson's perspective as a timeless, mythic cycle in which death is just a phase from which new life will sprout" (114). Fricke's overlay of myth upon Enoch's all-too-human struggle

texts by Tennyson's contemporaries that may have influenced the theme and structure of Enoch Arden. Scott has covered this topic thoroughly so that there is no need to retrace this ground. In brief, however, they are: Homer's Odyssey of the returning sailor; "Auld Robin Gray"--a ballad by Lady Anne Barnard (1772); the Adventures of Gil Blas (1802); Crabbe's and Wordsworth's poems of humble life; John Thomas Haines's My Poll and My Partner Joe--a popular nautical melodrama (1830s); "The Manchester Marriage"--Elizabeth Gaskell's short story (1858); "Homeward Bound"--Adelaide Procter's verse monologue (1858); Castle Richmond--Anthony Trollope's novel (1861); Lady Audley's Secret--Elizabeth Braddon's best-selling novel (1862); and Sylvia's Lovers--Elizabeth Gaskell's novel (1863) (Scott 4-6).

with jealousy and his sense of violated personal property do entail a reader's leap of faith. But this leap is not one which requires too much stretching beforehand, since the underworld paradigm is a standard literary convention. It is difficult to believe that Tennyson did not have this mythic structure at least partly in mind for this poem's creation.

Tennyson's Enoch Arden as poeticized narrative or verse-novella has been the more common interpretation, however, both by critical and neutral readers. In his Reaction Against Tennyson, Bradley found Tennyson too elaborate in his "narrative poetry" (15). He thus began a modernist trend favouring Tennyson's lyricism to the exclusion of other genres: "his style is most constantly and perfectly right when he is using lyrical forms" (14).¹³ Since the 1960s, several readers have tried to validate Tennyson's use of poetic narrative. Sometimes, as in Gerhard Joseph's analysis of Tennysonian Love, readers carry their narrative expectations too far, and demand of this poetry a social realism that only novels can genuinely provide. Joseph claims that "Tennyson's narrative poems [in general] rarely show a believable impingement of class differences upon the private entanglements of his lovers--what he gives us instead are the

¹³ Fredeman argues that, after 1842, "Tennyson does not abandon the lyric, but he utilizes it largely in conjunction with other forms": the descriptive texture of the language in Idylls of the King; intercalary relief in The Princess or "The Brook"; or the intensely personal emotions within the drama of Maud or In Memoriam (369).

broad melodramatic familial oppositions . . . " (189).¹⁴ But the believability of sociological dilemmas contained within popular narrative poetry is something provided for by its readers more than it is by the poetic texts themselves. Hence judgements of this kind must be made within a historical context.

One issue from Enoch Arden illustrates the importance of readers in the above determination: Annie's shop-keeping. As Elizabeth Helsinger and her co-authors point out in The Woman Question, for many Victorians the Woman Question focused on the difficult issue of "do we want women to work or do we want them to stay home? . . . On perhaps no other issue were the arguments of both sides--of those who favoured women's work, and those who opposed it--so impossibly and paradoxically intertwined" (II 110). For middle-class women, one of the arguments that drew them to labour outside the home was the implicit self-definition that accrued through "work" especially strong among those who might have "internalized the work ethic that Thomas Carlyle had raised to the status of a new religion" (II 113). Enoch is definitely influenced by this ethic, and so he naturally assumes that Annie will be

¹⁴ Joseph does add that "[p]erhaps novelistic social realism is not what one requires from a poet." However, he returns to his original intent by also adding that "in such poems on love and marriage as Clough's The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich, Coventry Patmore's The Angel in the House, Elizabeth Barrett Browning's Aurora Leigh, as well as Tennyson's own The Princess, the Victorian poet seems to be reaching for the narrative range of the novel form" (189).

too. Yet women forced into "work" through poverty are revealed in parliamentary commissions (Blue Books), and recast in various fictions, as victims of a new economy: needlewomen, governesses, and factory girls (II 114-15). Annie's business failure ultimately transforms her into one of these impoverished victims of a new economic order that causes Enoch to aspire to material wealth at the expense of his family's emotional security.

Although not explicit in Enoch Arden, the moral controversy concerning women's work increases the tension that Tennyson's readers might feel in the poem when Annie's business fails because of her ineptitude--"not being bred / To barter" (248-9); when her business frequently calls her away from attending her sick child who eventually dies (260-69); and when--at long last--she agrees to marry Philip, give up her unprofitable shopkeeping, and relieve herself and her children from poverty and want (503-05). Even though the poem is set a hundred years previous to the dilemma surrounding women's right to labour, Tennyson could very well have stirred his contemporary readers' anxieties by pitting the working "widow's" poverty and maternal failings against the security of hearth and home guaranteed by marriage.¹⁵

¹⁵ In 1858, a controversy erupted over the "working mother" led by John Simon--a noted health reformer--who in one study linked high infant mortality rates with working mothers. The debate continued in the 1860s through papers of the National Association for the Promotion of Social Science (see Helsing II 130-33, and 228 n.28).

Far from melodramatic, this scene implies a morally complex social reality that its readers would feel although not necessarily recognize ideationally. The same, of course, holds true of the controversy over the Deceased Wife's Sister's Bill that, by association, plays a part in Tennyson's emotional allowance for bigamy at the end of the poem. Although the theme was popular in Victorian melodrama, this fact does not suffice to discredit Tennyson's handling of bigamy. Scholars such as Hagen and Scott do not see melodrama as contrary to Tennyson's use of narrative structures, nor as necessarily unintended by the poet.¹⁶

June Hagen takes a thematic approach. She attributes the incredible success of Enoch Arden to "the public's appreciation of Tennyson's handling of a theme current in both non-respectable fiction, ballads and popular melodrama: the bigamous marriage" (112). To support her claim, she points to Hallam Tennyson's inclusion of popular female novelists in his

¹⁶ Certainly the morality of bigamy prompted the strongest negative reactions to Enoch Arden. As Scott explains in section three of his study, Annie's controversial choice to remarry ultimately is judged by "emotional compassion" (12). Critics, naturally, were not always inclined to sympathize. Nor should one assume that women would necessarily take Annie's side in the matter, though they might get hotly involved in her dilemma. The publicity surrounding the poem is in shown in the fact that Miss C. H. Parish, for instance, published Enoch Arden (Continued) (1866) in order to punish Annie and Philip for her legal transgression. She "grasped the Poet's golden lyre" and sings a much inferior song as post-mortem. It morbidly dwells on gossip and on the children's bewildered gaze upon their father's stiffened corpse and Annie's agony of guilt.

mention of his father's "catholic" reading habits: Miss Braddon, Mrs Oliphant, Rhoda Broughton, and Ouida" (see Memoir 730). Scott, on the other hand, is primarily interested in technique and structure. Section four of his study outlines three features of the "common narrative tradition" evident in Enoch Arden: a series of dramatic set pieces, a shared corpus of generalized moral sentiments, and the frequent use of dramatic irony (18). While it is true that these elements find their expression in fictional narratives, Tennyson's emphasis on tone and setting over the development of character in action suggests that his idyl borrows more from melodrama than it does from fiction. The "events" of Enoch Arden register symbolically at the level of mood or sentiment more than they do linearly as advances of plot or character development. Hence, even the drama here is melodrama rather than adventure, social realism, or satire.¹⁷

Fredeman labels Tennyson's idyl of the 1840s as a "narrative-dramatic mode," "a close cousin to the dramatic monologue" (368). But Enoch Arden is less dramatic than these early poems particularly since the three characters in the love triangle seem to spend most of their time in enforced isolation from one another. Their potential for dramatic interaction is minimal. However, the key scenes which involve

¹⁷ Still, readers must be careful in applying necessarily negative connotations to melodrama as a genre to evoke human sympathy, as the discussion below concerning sentimentality reveals.

dialogue and/or action do register their effects--as melodrama. The audience is called upon to sympathize actively with the character whose desires are unheeded: Enoch's departure from the village when he disregards Annie's pleas that he remain (Annie's fear and foreboding); thereafter, Philip's infrequent communications with Annie and her futile prolongation of the hope that Enoch is alive (Philip's frustration and longing for happiness); and, finally, the returned Enoch's actions as a man who has lost his identity and is denied voice as his true self until the final telling of his tale to Miriam Lane (Enoch's anguish and cathartic relief in his resumption of voice).

Indeed, Enoch Arden seems ideally suited for silent film since much of its "drama" occurs in still-life pictorials of frustrated desire and unvoiced needs. Scott's added "Note on the [Silent] Film Versions of 'Enoch Arden'" (of which there were four), records not only "an elaborate reverence for Tennyson's poem, but also the development of new techniques for the cinema, springing directly from the poem's narrative structure"(26). Tennyson's idyl was transformed into "An English Picture Poem" (as one reviewer termed the 1914 Neptune production), a transformation made possible because of Tennyson's visually exact details of setting in both the fishing village and Enoch's tropical island. It was also made possible through what Scott describes as Enoch's "voyeurism of the hearth" (15)--his looking in through the window at the

scene of Annie's and Philip's blissful domesticity. Joseph summarizes what Enoch sees as key features of a Victorian domestic scene painting:

The children are carefully disposed according to size, sex, and the demands of symmetry. Poised in their innocence, charmingly devoted to one another and to their parents, they are starched exemplars of a harmony that is sanctioned by and proof of a beneficent God. Annie, the satisfied wife and all-protecting mother, oversees a domain of polished furniture and gleaming cutlery. John Ruskin has apotheosized the type And 'stout, rosy' Philip is Tennyson's version of the Victorian husband presiding over a hearth whose glow provides sufficient refuge from a threatening universe.¹⁸ (4-5)

According to Richard Altick,

Tennyson's genre studies and domestic narratives typified the close bond between Victorian popular

¹⁸ In "Of Queens' Gardens" from Sesame and Lilies (1865), Ruskin's portrait of virtuous womanhood stood for more than a century as the supposed apex of Victorian female morality and domestic responsibility. After depicting the home as a "sacred place, a vestal temple of the hearth watched over by Household Gods" (122), Ruskin then equates woman with this home: "wherever a true wife comes, this home is always around her" (123). For ultimately, she is "enduringly, incorruptibly good; instinctively, infallibly wise--wise, not for self-development, but for self-renunciation: wise, not that she may set herself above her husband, but that she may never fail from his side: wise, not with the narrowness of insolent and loveless pride, but with the passionate gentleness of an infinitely variable, because infinitely applicable, modesty of service--the true changefulness of woman" (142). In 1969, Kate Millet challenged Ruskin's "sentimentalized" view of women as reinforcing inegalitarian social systems and furthering the subjection of women within the home. Her revolutionary work, Sexual Politics, began an ongoing process of rethinking female social stereotypes as inscribed in Western culture's artistic products. In this process, Helsinger and her co-writers, in turn, have recently challenged Millet's analysis of Ruskin's views. They argue that Ruskin was fashioning women to be the "nation's moral conscience" (I 79) as Ruskin later expands her role in keeping with the larger, domestic protection of the state.

art and literature. Indifferent or blind to aesthetic effects, the ordinary man and woman "read" pictures, as Lamb said people read Hogarth's The important thing was that each episode or story should have immediate and unmistakable impact on the beholder No explication or interpretation was needed: the meaning was instantly clear. And when artists chose, instead, the allegorical mode, they took pains that the lesson be spelled out as plainly as it was in Pilgrim's Progress.

Subtlety and indirection were not highly valued in Victorian art, because they delayed and confused rather than assisted the beholder's response.

(Victorian 277-

8)¹⁹

"Readings" of the key scenes in Tennyson's "Picture Poem," however, are not as easily executed as Altick claims. As Joseph himself recognizes, the above scene must be read "not through the consciousness of those who experience it but through the eyes [of Enoch] a despairing exile" (6). Readers are thus voyeuristically inside and outside the tableau at once, and must negotiate for themselves where they feel most comfortable. This is also true of other key scenes in Enoch Arden: Annie's and Enoch's romancing seen through the eyes of Philip; Enoch's departure seen through the eyes of Annie; and Enoch's death-bed scene seen through the eyes of Miriam Lane. Rather than "instantly clear," the meaning of each of these

¹⁹ Rod Edmonds's Affairs of the Hearth begins with the set piece of Philip's and Annie's snug hearth from Enoch Arden almost as a prototype of the family tableau. "It combines two common subjects of mid-nineteenth century painting: family rituals; and the father returning home from work, war, or sea" (2).

tableaux is imbedded within a complex narrative of tragedy and romance--the last two of the genres identified by Rosenberg.

Perhaps heroic tragedy is too strong a term for what happens to the hero of Enoch Arden, yet Tennyson's "fisherman" is far more than a common seaman. He is seen fishing and selling his wares for a mere 25 of the 911 lines in the poem (44-60, 91-100). His primary part in the narrative is as an embodiment of the desolation of the soul, as Valerie Pitt defines it, "another meditation on the individual isolated from his society, and, like the Idylls of the King, a study in heroic failure" (218). The force that leads to Enoch's isolation and failure is not unique to him, for it recurs throughout Tennyson's work--early and late--the tragic flaw of pride. Before Enoch is humbled by fate, according to the innkeeper, Miriam Lane, he had "[h]eld his head high, and cared for no man" (844). Enoch's hubris places him amid numerous other Tennyson heroes who suffer from a similar character weakness of putting themselves and their desires before others.²⁰ As Fredeman suggests of Tennyson's early egoists, all of them "may well ask, with Tithonus": 'Why

²⁰ Fredeman's study of "St Simeon Stylites" identifies a pride similar to Saint Simeon's in Paris in "Oenone," the Soul in "The Palace of Art," the Mariners in "The Lotos-Eaters," "Ulysses," and "Tithonus." Later Tennyson characters who suffer from the same flaw include Princess Ida in The Princess, the deranged speaker in Maud, and several Knights of the Round Table in Idylls of the King.

should a man desire in any way/ To vary from the kindly race of men . . . ?'" (28-9).

One of the reasons that Fredeman gives for Ulysses's desires, at least, calls into question the stature of Tennyson's mythic hero. More than just to "drink life to the lees," the adventurer's impulse to resume voyaging also derives from his overweening sense of self-importance to the exclusion of others--presumably loved ones ("Sphere" 380).

Ulysses's "abnegation of domestic responsibility . . . does not go unpunished or . . . is not without dire consequences elsewhere in Tennyson" (382). Fredeman draws a parallel to "Enoch Arden" as well although he does not pursue its causes or "unhappy" consequences. The ostensibly laudable (potentially heroic) causes for Enoch's departure, and the forces at work against his leaving, are actually more problematic in Enoch Arden than in Ulysses's monologue.

Socio-economic determiners cause him to leave:

- 1) Enoch wishes to provide a better life for his children; and
- 2) his broken leg and reduced employment have injured the family's economic stability. These are pitted against romantic forces that should make that leaving more emotionally difficult for Enoch than it turns out to be: 1) Enoch and Annie have enjoyed seven years of wedded bliss; and 2) Annie begs him not to go. Within context, the unreformed Enoch's motives are not as potentially self-serving as Ulysses's, nor are they yet without suspicion. Thus, moral complications

militate against the poem's interpretation strictly as either epic or tragic heroism, at least to this point.

Both the romantic ties that bind and the socio-economic fetters that chafe, once again harken back to the genre they represent. Annie's role as a deterrent to Enoch's materialistic pursuits issues from the idyl's initial fairytale-like romance, the last of Rosenberg's genres. Donald Hair maintains that "Victorian readers and critics generally expected an idyl to present a pastoral landscape, a paradisaal retreat that criticism has labelled the locus amoenus or 'the pleasance,' a landscape where living is easy and pleasure continuous." Hair adds that Victorian readers accepted "domestic bliss" in Enoch Arden as a pastoral substitute (97). Yet from the outset, the three children's quarrels at the start of the poem foreshadow future domestic trouble. Although Enoch's physical superiority as a child carries into adulthood, and he gets the girl "in the end," they do not live happily ever after. In addition, Enoch does not journey from home on a romantic (Ida's Prince) or heroic quest (the knights of the Round Table). Hair's interpretation of the Victorian domestic scene as a variant of a traditional pastoral structure mistakenly reinforces Enoch Arden as a romance (even if its fairytale ending must now be the second one), and excludes the obvious social realism in the reasons why Enoch feels he must leave the fishing village.

As even Fricke who reads the poem's mythos realizes, the "suggestions of Enoch as a mythic hero" are undermined by the fact that he is common, and has common flaws--"strong-willed, possessive, and fearful of poverty" (106). His pursuit of economic independence makes him "blind to love" (106). In weighing the pros and cons of joining the crew of the "Good Fortune" (128-47), Enoch, in Fricke's view, reveals himself to be "as bent upon adventure and the accumulation of riches as upon the happiness of his own family" (106). In Enoch Arden, Tennyson ambivalently implies that a private concern for self-worth and not the "self-help" philosophy of Samuel Smiles may actually be driving the public machinery of laissez-faire capitalism.

If such a reading of Enoch's adventures is allowed, then it can only be so through the additional allowance that, ultimately, the meaning of a literary text, especially if it is "a great poem," rests more with its readers than it does with either the author or the text itself. For although Enoch Arden is "at once epic and lyric, narrative and drama, tragedy and romance," this idyl actually achieves its greatest potential as a domestic allegory. And allegory, more than any other literary form, draws its significance from its readers. For the "message" to be understood allegorically, readers must willingly respond--almost at a pre-cognitive level--to codes within the text that provoke moral interpretations different

from though still allied to the ideational meanings ostensibly provided by the author.

Indeed, for a great many readers of Longfellow's and Tennyson's popular narrative poems, the initial catalyst for allegorical reading was affective and not cognitive. One of the most serious twentieth-century misinterpretations of Longfellow's and Tennyson's poetry in general, and of Miles Standish and Enoch Arden in particular, concerns the allegedly soft, "feminine" response to literature, the sentimental, a charge against popular narrative poetry that it has shared with popular fiction.²¹

For example, Baum's comments on Tennyson's English Idyls and on Enoch Arden are interesting because not only do they typify many twentieth-century reactions to nineteenth-century sentimentality, but they also work at lessening Tennyson's culpability for the sentimental in his work. Speaking of the

²¹ Two clarifications need to be made here. Misinterpretation or misreading implies intellectual or ideological analyses at odds with the emotions or sentiments that constitute poems' tones. Secondly, the use of gendered terms, "feminine" or "masculine" processes of reading, does not carry negative or positive connotations. This binary is not meant to stereotype women as reading primarily with their hearts and men with their heads. Victorian men's frequent and frank admissions to tearful responses to poetry and many women's judicious comments about Tennyson's verse dispel any notion that individuals were, as a group, dominated by one level of response or the other. "On One Who Effected an Effeminate Manner" clearly reveals that, for Tennyson, when readings were at their best, they activated both halves of the personality.

early idyls, Baum absolves Tennyson of responsibility for his "Victorian" emotionalism:

[I]t need not be thought that Tennyson deliberately wrote down to a middle-class audience for the mere sake of popular appeal. The temptation to do so may have existed later, yet there was something genuine in Tennyson as in his contemporary readers which made this kind of thing attractive. Both he and they liked it. It was part of the sentimental strain, beginning before the accession of Victoria, which made Victorian hearts bleed easily and which Tennyson came to rely upon hereafter to satisfy his numerous following. A sincere insincerity made him falsely true. (145-6)

He then asserts that Enoch Arden was "conceived in sentiment and brought forth in complacency" (167). Yet, later, Baum qualifies these criticisms. Of Tennyson's treatment of contemporary issues, he remarks that

His age placed on him that bad eminence of Interpreter General, and it gave him the gift of its own weakness, sentimentality in the serious concerns of daily life. It gave him the dangerous gift also of popularity--which at first unsought grew by what it fed upon. It recreated him in his own image and therefore in the end dominated him. It made him, to a large degree, or encouraged him to make himself, a mirror indeed, rather than a poet. (250)

Baum's interpretation casts Tennyson as a victim of sentimentality, in the throes of a presumed emotional passivity similar to that of the thousands of Victorian readers who indulged in sentimental fiction and poetry.

Baum assumes that sentimentality necessarily arises from artists' emotional weaknesses and their recipients' passivity. To vindicate Tennyson from the charge of sentimentality, he argues that basically the poet could not help himself: he was

victimized by the times in which he lived. Since Baum's Tennyson: Sixty Years After (1948), several scholars have been intent on correcting charges of sentimentality against Tennyson through interpretations that try to persuade readers against passive, sentimental readings in favour of ones more actively "intellectual." This, for example, is what Thomas Assad tries to do in his study of "The Major Poems of Tennyson's 'Enoch Arden' Volume."²² At the end of his article, Assad dismisses exclusively affective responses: "It is well known that affection without an adequate basis of cognition cannot long command our interest. We call such feelings sentimental" (55). He can do this because he feels confident that he has, in place of the sentimental, supplied readings of Tennyson's "conscious techniques and themes" in the first five poems of the Enoch Arden volume.

²² Assad reads the first five poems in reverse order and in relation to one another: "Enoch Arden," "Aylmer's Field," "Sea Dreams," "The Grandmother," and "Northern Farmer." In the "Farmer," Assad points out the farmer's sense of duty versus nineteenth-century materialism (33). In the "Grandmother," "time and a wealth of spiritual relationships have brought the old grandmother to a state of peaceful ripeness in which neither material wealth nor dogmatic religion have any part" (36). "Sea Dreams" "shows the wife's truly Christian spirit of forgiveness, pity, and gentleness--as contrasted with the preacher's loud, empty formalism--finally successful in quelling the rage of hatred inspired by the evils of materialism" (40), and in "Aylmer's Field," "[p]ride nourished by materialism has caused the death of innocent young lovers, has changed a Christian spirit of gentleness and pity into one of vengeance and wrath, and has brought the name and house of Aylmer to desolation and ruin" (44). With each poem, Tennyson's condemnation of materialism is revealed; Assad then re-examines the more subtly developed "Enoch Arden" in light of this key preoccupation.

With these poems, Tennyson allegedly created increasingly dramatic renderings of the tragic consequences that result from obsessions with physical and material welfare to the exclusion of the emotional and spiritual (49). Assad is correct in identifying the evils of materialism in this volume since this is a preoccupation of Tennyson's throughout his work. And Assad's analysis of Enoch Arden in relation to the other four poems reveals interesting parallels between religious and materialist dogma. Yet, in his treatment of the "sentimental" ending of Enoch Arden, Assad betrays his biases. Enoch's emotional and spiritual acceptance of his destiny draws a "current of . . . easy tears" from his auditor, Miriam Lane, and would likely have had a similar effect on Tennyson's Victorian auditors also. However, Assad moves quickly past this emotionalism to the formerly materialistic Enoch dying in an "impoverished lonely hostel" so as to claim that the "final irony of the story is hammered home" (53). The strong "hammer" of this part of his argument precipitates his conclusion that Tennyson's techniques and themes "provide the intellectual edge which keeps the affective part of the awareness from being sentimentally soft" (55). Because Assad writes out of a modernist literary tradition that privileges ideational over emotional significance, even affective responses are made to supply the metal for a steely, hard-edged intellectualism.

However, there is no reason to believe that heightened emotionalism in the nineteenth century was unconditionally felt to produce flawed work. In Sacred Tears: Sentimentality in Victorian Literature, Fred Kaplan redefines sentimentality in the nineteenth century as a natural product of eighteenth-century moral philosophy, examining without the ahistorical pejorativism of the twentieth century the means by which authors such as Dickens, Thackeray, and Carlyle worked within and against a known literary tradition of sentimentalism.²³ Essentially, he concludes that while all three shared with the majority of their Victorian contemporaries a faith in "human nature," only Carlyle pessimistically doubted the value of sentiment to release the moral responsiveness inherent in that nature (142-3). As Kaplan points out, "Carlyle was aware that sentimentality in the eighteenth century had divided into two main currents, one associated with sensibility, the other with moral philosophy" (134). In Kaplan's view, by being thus aware, Carlyle mistrusted them both: sensibility had been taken up by Romantic poets and had, supposedly, become devoid of moral content while moral philosophy fostered among Victorian writers the incitement of potentially moralistic

²³ Leo Lowenthal's chapter on the historical "Debate over Art and Popular Culture" summarizes a similar argument to that outlined by Kaplan. Here, various figures from Montaigne to Flaubert, Pascal to Nietzsche voice the conflicting demands of the audience's need for pleasure and the artist's alleged moral responsibility to improve society (14-51).

feelings that were without transcendence and were rarely transformed into any purposeful action (134-41).

Somehow, it is Carlyle's disparaging voice rather than the approving ones of Dickens and Thackeray that has come to dominate twentieth-century interpretations of the sentimental in Victorian poetry and of Tennyson's sentimentality in particular. Initially, Carlyle exempted Tennyson's early poetry from his critical disdain. Kaplan argues that in the 1840s Carlyle saw in Tennyson's poetry a "consonance between the poetic language and the moral content" (137), a Bardic voice "generating cosmic visions and the optimism of a regenerative belief system" (136). With the publication of the domestic idyls and the Idylls of the King, however, Carlyle felt that Tennyson's poetry had become "merely sentimental." That is, lacking a transcendent moral vision, it had become domestic rather than epic, exacting only "sacred tears" from its audience (Kaplan 137-8). Robert Martin, in his discussion of "Idylls of the King, 1872-1874" (493-510), echoes Carlyle's later attitude as explained by Kaplan despite having earlier in his biography attributed Carlyle's criticisms of Tennyson either to his disdain for poetry in general or to Carlyle's usual irascibility (see 241, 267, 303). The crux of the matter is whether or not poets such as Tennyson deliberately produced work that provoked protean levels of response, including the sentimental. Tennyson's obvious popularity increased dramatically with the publication

of Enoch Arden, and generated a suspicion among his contemporaries and his later readers that was to last for more than a century. Presumably, a poet of Tennyson's stature who deliberately chose poetic subjects that would appeal to the broad sentiments of his audience could only have meretricious intents. Tennyson, however, did not prostitute himself and his art with Enoch Arden.

In direct opposition to Carlyle's belief that sentimentality lacks a transcendent moral vision, Jane Tompkins stresses the "Sentimental Power" of Victorian American female novelists, the most popular of whom was Harriet Beecher Stowe. Tompkins initially summarizes the standard view that she argues against: "these women are generally thought to have traded in false stereotypes, dishing out weak-minded pap to nourish the prejudices of the ill-educated and underemployed female readership. Self-deluded and unable to face the harsh facts of a competitive society, they are portrayed as manipulators of a gullible public who kept their readers imprisoned in a dreamworld of self-justifying clichés" (269). If judged solely by these criticisms, then certainly Longfellow--if not Tennyson--could join hands with female sentimentalists. In Tompkins's mind, though, this joining would have been to these male poets' credit.

Opposing the standard view, Tompkins alleges that through their work female novelists actively pursued social reform.

She adds, however, that "[t]heir fight against the evils of their society was a fixed match from the start" (269). It was so because even if in their work and their lives they supported systems of belief "that gave women the central position of power and authority in the culture," socio-economic and political power were the exclusive rights of men (269). Obviously, under these circumstances, direct appeals to readers' rational, intellectual sympathies for all-encompassing political change would be ineffectual. Consequently, popular female novelists stimulated their readers' collective emotionalism and sentiment, in the hopes of changing the individual's private belief system.

Contrivances that many twentieth-century readers regard with contempt, Tompkins claims had legitimate political purposes. First, both the continual and obvious appeals to the reader's emotions and technical devices distinguished by their utter conventionality situated popular women's novels in a familiar literary terrain, "halfway between sermon and social theory, that both codifies and attempts to mold the values of its time" (271). Second, sentimental responses to these techniques, in turn, could activate awareness of preset assumptions regarding family and social institutions, power and its relation to individual human feeling, political and social equality and, most importantly, the religious beliefs that organize and sustain the rest (271). Third, by entrenching a religious ethic of self-sacrifice through the

power of the dead or dying--in particular children--these novelists could suggest redemption even for the unregenerate (272). Fourth, religious or spiritual conversions were to form the basis for a new social order; therefore, a novel's events were read allegorically, as the eternal truths of Heaven and Hell, Death and Judgment rather than as historical realism (276-8). And, finally, settings would be read allegorically as well, as positions upon a spiritual map rather than specific times or places (278).

Given the cultural prominence of women and domesticity in the nineteenth century, Tompkins suggests that novelists such as Stowe used stock, sentimental situations and characters in domestic settings not because they were weak-minded or feeble, but because they wanted deliberately to draw upon their readers' emotional responses in order to activate an affective awareness of social problems that, in turn, could prompt an inner, spiritual transformation. That such processes have very little to do with cognition makes their stages difficult to articulate in ideational terms. In "Sentiment and Suffering: Women's Recreational Reading in the 1860s," Sally Mitchell attempts a definition of these stages by suggesting--along lines similar to Tompkins--that the power of the "popular emotional novel" lies in its very commonness: "it provides a mode of distancing which makes repressed emotions a form that is publicly acceptable and that makes them a source of pleasure. It also affords recognition that these needs are

common--shared between author and reader, and reader and reader" (34). This shift from affective pleasure to cognitive awareness of collective response requires further study if Longfellow's and Tennyson's narrative poems are to be read approvingly as domestic allegories rather than watered-down imitations of classical poetic forms or inferior cousins to the far more realistic--and therefore more valued--fiction of the period.

Tompkins's and Mitchell's studies of sentimental fiction go only so far in assisting interpretations of Longfellow's and Tennyson's poetic uses of the sentimental because they, of course, focus on elements of fiction--event, character, and setting--in their fostering of sentimental moods. For Longfellow's and Tennyson's readers, the activation of sentiment occurs less at the level of responses to stock, melodramatic characters in action as such than at the level of emotional/visceral reactions to the affective lyricism of each poet's voice. But Tompkins's overall conclusion, however, has political significance for Longfellow's and Tennyson's narrative poetry since, through sentiment, literary texts can be transformed into allegories of a new political order that posits woman at its centre.

Tompkins's identification of sentiment's allegorical purpose--to engender a new, female political order--relates to the means by which Longfellow's and Tennyson's narrative poems generated their popular appeal. Sentiment's allegorical

function, in relation to form and audience, intersects this chapter's earlier analysis of the overlapping poetic genres that constitute Miles Standish and Enoch Arden as popular narrative poems. Obviously nineteenth-century readers and writers of both genders questioned the social value of the "affections" in relation to poetic genre. And male critics frequently assigned female poets to lyricism--the lower reaches of the traditional poetic hierarchy--because this genre presumably allowed them to display their greatest strengths: compassion and beauty. In Female Writers (1842), Mary Ann Stodart argues the same rationale for female lyricism but from a woman's perspective and with greatly different results. Rather than acknowledge the traditional male hierarchy, she argues for separate but equal spheres: "to the man belongs the epic, with its grand manner, its sense of history, and its knowledge of good and evil; to the woman belongs the lyric, with an emphasis on individual feeling and domestic experience" (summarized by Helsinger III 30). Stodart champions female poets for their lyrically expressed, domestic sentiments:

We may not, we cannot 'murmur tales of iron wars,' follow the currents of a heady fight, portray with the vivid power of Homeric song, the horrid din of war, the rush of contending warriors, the prancing of the noble steed, the clang, the tumult, the stirring interest of the battle-field--no--but we can do what mightier man would perhaps disdain--we can follow one solitary soldier as he drags his wounded limbs beneath the sheltering hedge; and while we mark his glazing eye, we can read with woman's keenness, the thoughts of wife, children,

and home, which are playing around his heart. (qtd. 30-31)

As male poets working within and against female thematic paradigms, often from women's perspectives if not with their voices, Longfellow and Tennyson crossed back and forth between the separate spheres Stodart outlines above. Through each poet's extraordinary skill at conflating seemingly opposed genres in Miles Standish and Enoch Arden and, through selective lyricism, Longfellow and Tennyson encouraged the heightened emotionalism of which Stodart speaks. For many of their readers--women and men alike--this emotionalism could readily have fostered allegorical readings of women's central role in social stability.

The sentimental trigger in popular narrative poetry that puts this allegorical process into play is not the melodramatic characters and scenes of fiction. It is affective lyricism. Although Longfellow's and Tennyson's lyric voices are wed to narrative purposes and become diffused into action, character, setting, and mood--the elements of fiction--they are perhaps even more sonorous because more resonant in narrative than they are in song. Eric Griffiths describes Victorian lyricism in a way that suggests strongly its potential ties with allegory: "the lyric utterance consciously idealizes the facts of the dark world it issues from as it idealizes that world's speech. It doesn't come as a surprise when we find that people actually behaved towards

each other in ways quite different from what we imagine if we read works of the imagination as if they weren't at all imaginative" (Griffiths 177). Neither Longfellow nor Tennyson could have realistically expected his readers to behave as either as Priscillas or Annies. However, in the lyric utterance of the domestic solutions that each poet sought, he registers the allegorical power of the feminine principle within humanity as a whole.

In Miles Standish, Longfellow implicitly vilifies his society's loss of this feminine principle by voicing strong sentimental bonds between a just and humane Christianity and the domestic world of the Puritan maid, Priscilla. The Puritans, of course, sailed to America because of their religious convictions that the Christian Word was Law. From a mid-nineteenth-century perspective, Longfellow reaffirms this original "sentiment" on which his nation was founded. On the brink of the United States' ultimate dissolution into Civil War, Longfellow allegorically suggests that social disintegration stems from a people's loss of compassion for one another: their loss registers in their insincere uses of language and equally insincere reactions to the words that others use to describe their differing realities. By exposing these causes, Longfellow's poem thereby seeks its solutions internally in Priscilla as she both voices and manifests true Christian compassion. At the same time, Longfellow's domestic allegory of his nation draws upon its external readers' own

willingness to identify sentimentally with the dilemmas and solutions posed--not necessarily to like what they hear, but to listen.

Listening is something that both Miles Standish and John Alden have great difficulty doing. Because the Captain is solely occupied in interpreting the world via himself and his military exploits (his figurative language consists almost entirely of metaphors of weaponry), his most frequent response to others' words is "unheeding." When Alden interjects during Standish's tale of near death at Flanders, the Captain continues right on, "unheeding the words of the stripling" (I 34). When Alden interrupts their discussion about Julius Caesar with information of his own, Standish again ignores him, "not heeding or hearing the other" (II 12). More seriously, Standish dismisses completely the Plymouth Elder's Christian petition for peace in response to the Indians' "challenge of warfare" via "arrowy tongues of defiance" (IV 113-14). For the Captain intends to return like with like since he is convinced that "'the only tongue that is understood by the savage / Must be the tongue of fire that speaks from the mouth of the cannon!'" (IV 124--5). Thus when the Elder delivers him a mild rebuke for his "irreverent language," it too falls "unheeded" on deaf ears. For Miles Standish is by now so committed to the venting of his anger at being rejected by Priscilla that native insolence is just the spark he needs to set off his emotional powder keg. In both

Priscilla's rejection of Standish's words by proxy, and the Indians' refusal to listen to Puritanical gospel, Longfellow implicitly compares various sites of conflict over the sincere bestowal of sentiment. For not heeding is not the same as rejection or refusal. The latter two imply a genuine hearing and a carefully considered, "no."

Alden also suffers from not heeding because he is too caught up in the fashioning of phrases to pay attention to the import of his conversant's speech. He ignores Priscilla's indignant response to Standish's proposal by proxy because by now he has warmed to his task: "unheeding the words of Priscilla," he urges the suit of his friend by "explaining, persuading, expanding" (III 131-2). Although Alden's metaphorizing does not stop immediately once he and Priscilla pledge their friendship, in the domestic community-building chapter, "The Spinning-Wheel," Priscilla is able to direct Alden's attention away from his "idle" spinning of words into a practical spinning of actual wool. Therein, she is "to be the pattern for housewives," and guide him in how to become "equally worthy of being the model of husbands" (VIII 64-5). Their domestic labour together thereby presages their union.

Priscilla's practical, no-nonsense approach to life does not, however, prevent her from being portrayed in postures that prompt readers' sentimental responses. For she is frequently read through Alden's poeticizing. Although she alone carries the allegorical weight of this domestic idyl,

she is yet to Alden, in its simplest lyrical sense, the "Mayflower of Plymouth." Hence, her inward unity of words and action is expressed outwardly for him in stock postures of domestic bliss. For instance, Alden hears the "musical voice of Priscilla," even before he sees her, as she sits singing the hundredth psalm while she spins. Through Alden's eyes and ears she is transformed into "the Puritan girl, in the solitude of the forest, / Making the humble house and the modest apparel of homespun / Beautiful with her beauty, and rich with the wealth of her being!" (III 52-4). A similar pastoral lyricism gently blesses the couple on their wedding day. Even this "land of toil and privation" that is said to lie before them, Priscilla and Alden transfigure through their love into "the Garden of Eden" (IX 63). The final stanza's murmuring brooks, golden leaves, and odorous grape vines whose scents mingle with the balm of pine and fir-tree, complete the poem in a parting image "of the primitive pastoral ages" (IX 85-9).²⁴

This sentimental, happy-ever-after ending, however, does not have to be scorned for mawkishness. Moreover, the narrator clearly admits that it is merely external, that idealism has momentarily coloured this youthful Puritan world. Moreover, the poem's comic resolution of youth over age is

²⁴ The recovery of the Lotus lapsus, with which Miles Standish concludes, mirrors the many eighteenth and nineteenth-century Edens encyclopediacally treated in Max F. Schultz's Paradise Preserved (1985).

also merely external convention because it is undermined by Standish's "return from the dead" allegedly to bless Priscilla's and Alden's union. His spectral appearance at the church door, however, recalls an earlier "spectre of terror": the bloody "trophy of war the head of the brave Watawamat" upon the roof of this same church/fortress (VII 94).

Priscilla had initially "averted her face" from this spectre because she read in Watawamat's fate a future that might have symbolically been hers. She thanks God then that she did not marry Miles Standish, for she fears that "coming home from his battles" he might have one day laid "claim to her hand, as the prize and reward of his valour" (VII 99-100). The Captain's arrival at the wedding--even though it is meant to convey his apology--by association continues to threaten peripherally the peace of Priscilla's and Alden's union at centre stage. Standish still has "an iron will" that stays his full communication; and when he is called upon to explain his mysterious disappearance, he relapses into metaphors of warfare.

In short, Longfellow's affective lyricism in Miles Standish works through allusion and the tonal qualities of the verse, even as it did in "A Psalm of Life," to encourage readers' participation in both the dilemmas of warfare and their domestic solution. That his resolution lies in the distant Puritan past does not diminish its potential as allegory. The idyl engages readers' private, spiritual selves more than

their intellects so that as a collective emotional force they can participate actively and publicly in the moral crisis facing their nation in the 1850s. As in Miles Standish, this too was to erupt in a war between language and action, fought in the houses of government and on the battlefields. In the scribe's winning of the maiden and in the poem's attempts to inspire domestic peace--within the self, within the home, within the nation--Longfellow may well have been alluding to the well-worn metaphor that "the pen is mightier than the sword." Unfortunately, by 1860, the adage had worn out altogether--it was to prove as much a sham as Miles Standish's proclamation on self-reliance.

The threats to domestic bliss which continue to linger at the periphery of Miles Standish find their parallel outside the text in a contemporary atmosphere of social tension and political unease. Consequently, the narrative itself, like the bivouac of the "Psalm," can only ever really provide a temporary shelter from the storm. For the true shelter could not be gained objectively even in lyricism of poetry--it could only rest within the self. If responsive to sentiment and compassion, then readers--whether they be Miles Standish or Enoch Arden--are subsequently provoked by a desire to recreate the security of the hearth within themselves, to make of their own persons domestic havens of emotional and psychological comfort.

This transformation occurs in Enoch when he "reads" the bliss in Annie's and Philip's family tableau and then wishes to protect it. This, in turn, is what Tennyson's readers are to do when--through Miriam Lane's eyes--they "read" Enoch's emotional and psychological peace. It cannot be overstressed that this reading does not take place only at a cognitive level. Readers' affective responses to texts, particularly if teased into a type of visceral activity through the physical sensation of sound, inspire an equal if not greater participation in the creation of meaning than do cognitive ones. For instance, Enoch Arden may have caused its contemporary readers to sense impressionistically that the life lived one-hundred years ago was superior to that of the 1860s. But when called upon to articulate exactly why this is true, they may not have been able to explain their response; the "feel" of the poem simply suggests it.

To be effective as allegory, Enoch Arden must inspire its readers outside the text to take up the poem's events as if they were their own, and to associate themselves vicariously with the characters within the poem who are called upon to "read" various situations and people. The places within the poem where this response occurs are punctuated by a heightened emotionalism that registers in the sonorous lyricism of Tennyson's blank verse. The first is Philip's view of Annie and Enoch in love. Tennyson ensures that his readers' sympathies are with Philip even before he goes to the hazel-

wood by pointing to his self-sacrificing, feminine role of nursing his sick father as the reason for his delay. Then, he sees the lovers:

And in their eyes and faces read his doom;
Then, as their faces drew together, groan'd,
And slipt aside, and like a wounded life
Crept down into the hollows of the wood. (73-6)

Echoes of the opening of Maud link Philip's "lifelong hunger in his heart" to Tennyson's many other jilted lovers. The impact of Philip's reading is felt viscerally in his groaning, and in the assonance of the long "i" and short "o" that creates a long drawing out of the misery that he feels. Tennyson manages through sound to transform Philip's emotional anguish into physical pain. He responds like a kicked dog, who must hide himself to lick his wounds. The sentiments brought into play here necessarily influence readers' interpretation of Philip's suffering throughout while Annie waits for a sign from God to bring an end to her and his sorrow.

Annie's highly emotional pleading with Enoch not to go on his merchant venture is yet another instance where readers are made to feel physically the painful effects of a character's unrequited needs (157-66). It registers more forcefully still in her response to his sermonizing just before Enoch leaves:

. . . she heard,
Heard and not heard him; as the village girl,
Who sets her pitcher underneath the spring,
Musing on him that used to fill it for her,
Hears and not hears, and lets it overflow. (205-9)

The repetition is the key means by which Annie's lingering fear and doubt stimulate in her a kind of somnambulism. She is numb to the reality of present and future; she dwells only as a symbol of the abandoned village girl. Enoch's words are now a waste of breath that recall water wasted upon the ground, for her predetermined role as "widow" has been taken up even before Enoch leaves. As in Philip's alienation from love, responses to Annie's are set early so that initial sentiments can be drawn upon later in the poem. Her most tragic moment, for example, comes about by her use of the Bible to authorize a choice that she is too weak to make openly. She misreads Enoch's predicament as death so that she can get on with life. In a letter to Joan Agnew, 19 June 1869, Ruskin explains the depth of his own emotional response to this scene in particular: "To my mind, the saddest and strangest thing--yet so like human life--but the deepest piece of the tragedy--is the deceiving of the wife by the True Dream, 'Under the Palm Trees.' The Vain Providence, the Good Spirit becoming a lying one. Every day the world and its ways get more terrible to me" (XXXVI 570-71). The quintessential humanism in Annie's dilemma makes Enoch's actual death pathetically tragic.

Of course, once Enoch is cast away upon a tropical island, his physical isolation and alienation are felt most acutely. This sense is achieved primarily through the lines that describe the island, lines that Walter Bagehot, and many other

readers after him, determined as too ornate for narrative poetry (lines 568-95, see Jump 282-93). But what Bagehot failed to hear in these lines is the sensation of being almost physically sickened by the lushness of visual imagery and the human emptiness in the powerful sounds of nature that have no resonance for the hero. The vision he most desires, "the kindly human face," and the sound he longs for, "a kindly voice," are denied to him as a form of punishment for his failure to register these before in the compassionate looks and pleadings of his wife. But this face and voice can now be supplied by the readers of the poem if they visually and audibly read Enoch's loneliness as if it were their own. If sympathetic to the affective lyricism of the verse, then readers feel the tedium and experience vicariously the overstimulation of sense and understimulation of emotion. They begin here to identify with Enoch's suffering, and feel anxiety at his rescue because of events back in the village.

Obviously, Enoch's masochistic desire to look in upon Annie's and Philip's hearth once he returns is the climax to the idyl's set-pieces. What Enoch sees has been discussed previously; what remains is Enoch's emotional response to this domestic tableau. Here, Enoch echoes Philip's earlier misery, at a heightened pitch. Enoch wishes to destroy what he sees visually by uttering a "shrill and terrible cry, / Which in one moment, like the blast of doom, / Would shatter all the happiness of the hearth" (764-6). However, he turns away

softly. His voice is silenced for the duration of the poem by his invocation to God to bring him the strength of inner resolve so that he will not intrude upon Annie's peace.

Subsequently, Enoch achieves his inward spiritual peace through his heroic self-sacrifice. This final contentment is felt by the poem's readers through Miriam Lane who undergoes a process similar to Enoch's on hearing his tale. She at first vents her emotions physically in an "half-hysterical cry" of disbelief. Then, "Fast flow'd the current of her easy tears" (862) as she sympathetically identifies with Enoch's pain and suffering. Finally, Miriam resists the urge to rush out and proclaim "Enoch Arden and his woes" (864), for she is bound to Enoch as Enoch is to God in vows of silence. She and the "lazy gossips of the port" are--like Enoch--also not allowed to intrude on Annie's and Philip's lives by taking pleasure in the retelling of Enoch's suffering. They are to express compassion, not fascination, and must sympathetically bear other people's pain even as their own.

That Tennyson's readers necessarily read Enoch Arden through sympathetic eyes and ears is suggested by its thousands of purchasers. Whether they read into this idyl the deeper connotations of domestic allegory is less certain. One allegorical interpretation of Enoch Arden concerns this process of allegorical reading itself. Readers of this poem must be made to feel that love for the emotional and not merely the material well-being of others has to supersede

self-love to ensure the stability of the community. Enoch's true caring for Annie allows him, finally, to read her future correctly and avoid the legal ramifications of his self-disclosure. In his refusal to intrude upon Annie's and Philip's "bigamous" married life, Enoch ironically preserves the sanctity of the bonds of unselfish love that have preceded it. He idealizes a marriage of the heart at the expense of the legal institution. This, in turn, reaffirms the community's generation through the self-sacrifice of the hero so that the children will be secure.

By activating the sympathetic emotions of his audience for Enoch's dilemma, Tennyson achieves his allegorical purpose: his readers get outside of themselves and their own narrow concerns, and imaginatively feel for the plights of their "created" friends. For Tennyson, this is what it means to be fully human. Accordingly, he sets his poem a hundred years in the past because he wishes to convey that time period when "all things human" began to change, when people allowed market-forces and the desire for wealth to replace both their love of home and community and their emotional satisfaction, in short, at that point when the dehumanizing process in society began.

Clearly, the locus of human interaction is the domestic hearth and home since it is there that children first learn how to live and love as social beings. Pitt rightly asserts that, contrary to the opinions of many of Tennyson's

twentieth-century critics, it "is foolish to laugh at Tennyson's concern with domestic relationships--they were at the forefront of the Victorian ethical tableau, they are the basis of a literary convention, and Tennyson uses that convention, as most poets use the conventions of their period, as the medium of something else." This something else Pitt defines as oblique writing, not true allegory where "both actors and actions are designed to stand for some specific situation outside themselves, but . . . type stories, stories in which the action, though complete and satisfying in itself, points to and reflects some other situation" (136-7). Pitt's "type story" is here referred to as domestic allegory in which the text's pointing to and reflecting, a process which Pitt does not explain, actually occurs in the hearts and minds of Tennyson's readers.

Instead, Pitt explains Tennyson's use of allegory within the context of his public responsibilities. "The Laureate's voice was meant to warn and to encourage, he receives and expresses the subconscious fears and doubts of his generation, but he also feels and presents their sense of vast achievement and their obstinate sometimes irritating optimism" (153). Although in her interpretation of Tennysonian allegory Pitt again privileges the author's intentions over the reader's, she nevertheless acknowledges that, as a public poet, Tennyson performed on the two levels of incoming and outgoing stimuli simultaneously: receiving and expressing, feeling and

presenting. As noted above for Tennyson's own readers, the first is primarily impressionistic. It is performed by the "feeling hearts" (feminine) that Arthur Hallam posits as one half of Tennyson's ideal readership. The second, naturally, is cognitive, taken up by the "imaginative tempers" (masculine) of the second half. Their perfect union in Tennyson's androgynous voice fashioned a haven of domestic peace and security out of Enoch Arden itself that, in turn, led to its immense popularity.

According to Fredeman, the "domestic element in Tennyson's poetry goes well beyond matters relating to the hearth, the heart, and the home: it is the stabilizing force in individual life, the protection afforded by a civilized order in society, and the assurance of a purposeful meaning. Its concomitants are those values on which the Victorians placed so high a premium--virtue, integrity, loyalty, duty, discipline, chastity, honour--values which Tennyson thought of as universal, the humanizing denominators that bridge distinctions of sex, class, generations, and even nations" (365-6). That the domestic idyl affords stability in the face of instability, reassurance in the face of doubt has always been acknowledged as a primary reason for its popularity among Victorian readers. Yet purposeful meaning and a bridging between social barriers--these responses come about through sentiment and, where applicable, allegory. Influenced by the New Criticism's privileging of the text, most twentieth-

takes place within the fixed domicile of the poem itself in which authority is incarnate in the very breath of the logos.

The logos or head of this family unit is a corporeal counterpart to the divine Logos and is masculine. Yet the masculine logos is without signification until experienced by a reader who, if not biologically female, nonetheless responds emotionally, in a "feminine" way, to the interaction of word and reader: only together do they create meaning. Spoken from the male point of view voiced by King Arthur, it is the "maiden passion for a maid" that will "teach high thought, and amiable words / And courtliness, and desire of fame, / And love of truth, and all that makes a man" ("Guinivere" 476-80). The passion must therefore be compassion. For the medieval knight, the first terms of this appositive series are most important: "high thought," "courtliness," and "love of truth." But for the poet, the second terms are paramount: "amiable words," "desire of fame," and "all that makes a man." For as a purveyor of truth through language, Tennyson can only achieve his own "fame"--his true masculinity--through successful attainment of the reader/maid.

One of the most problematic features of nineteenth-century popular narrative poems is that, in their multiplication of genres, they risk several times over the potential to be misread. For genre carries with it an entire host of literary presuppositions that guide readers' determinations of meaning. These function as cognitive grids through which texts are

interpreted. Educated readers, of course, have access to more grids than uneducated readers. Yet prior to genre expectations coming into play, readers of all classes and both genders are affected by poetry that stimulates the ear and, likely, touches the heart, perhaps even without their knowing it. Through this basic, almost primitive responsiveness in everyone, Longfellow and Tennyson conceived their initial popularity via lyric. In lyric's felicitous union with allegory via narrative, Longfellow and Tennyson nurtured that popularity to worldwide success.

CONCLUSION

How will men speak of me when I am gone,
 When all this colourless, sad life is ended
 And I am dust? They will remember only
 The wrinkled forehead, the marred countenance,
 The rudeness of my speech, and my rough manners,
 And never dream that underneath them all
 There was a woman's heart of tenderness.
 They will not know the secret of my life,
 Locked up in silence, or but vaguely hinted
 In uncouth rhymes, that may perchance survive
 Some little space in memories of men!
 Each one performs his life-work, and then leaves it;
 Those that come after him will estimate
 His influence on the age in which he lived.

--Longfellow (Michael Angelo II iv)

Popular, Popular, Unpopular!
 'You're no Poet'--the critics cried!
 'Why?' said the Poet. 'You're unpopular!'
 Then they cried at the turn of the tide--
 'You're no Poet!' 'Why?'--'You're popular!'
 Pop-gun, Popular and Unpopular!

--Tennyson 1874 (Ricks Poems III 14)

One of the best means of understanding how and why Longfellow's and Tennyson's poetry was popular in the nineteenth-century is to consider when, how, and why their work passed from former popularity. In fairness, these questions demand a thorough investigation of the reception processes at work in shaping Longfellow's and Tennyson's different prospects, but such an investigation is not attempted here. Risking reductionism perhaps, the following remarks outline general trends more than identify exactly the process by which poetic popularity was lost, but the intention

is to provoke discussion about rather than invoke closure on this much maligned body of genteel poetry. Indeed, one almost hesitates to close the book at all on Longfellow, knowing that, in the process, his voice could be "[l]ocked up in silence," his fate sealed once more by those writers who, coming after him, scorned his "influence on the age in which he lived." Here again, the intention is not to lobby for Longfellow's inclusion in the American literary canon. Rather, it is to consider how changes to both Longfellow's and Tennyson's reputations developed in a socio-economic and cultural milieu in which "popular poetry," because poetry has become almost exclusively attached to academic pursuits, is now little more than an oxymoron.

As early as the 1860s, the tides of poetic popularity that had washed both shores of the Atlantic were beginning to recede for Longfellow and Tennyson. Today, Longfellow's voice has long since been silenced by waves of modernist criticism against an effete Victorian America. The full range of Tennyson's voice was also dampened--if not altogether silenced--by similar waves of revisionist British history after the First World War. Nevertheless, along with the Victorian age itself, Tennyson gradually managed to regain some of his lost glory, so that in academic circles at least he is now considered Victorian Britain's finest poet. Longfellow's and Tennyson's present imbalance of fortune, particularly since they had shared equally in the successful

evocation of the "people's voice" in the mid-nineteenth century, raises many questions about poetic posterity in relation to popularity for which definitive answers are hard to find. In the broadest terms, however, both Longfellow's and Tennyson's decline, and the latter's partial restoration, stem from readers' increasingly bifurcated sensibilities over the last 120 years. Ultimately, Tennyson was allowed restoration by halves--Longfellow not at all.

The first binary opposition concerns the public versus private conception of the artist in relation to audience. Particularly acute in Victorian Britain, professional critics' voices registered and sought to guide the shifts and vicissitudes of readers' tastes: from the cries such as those of Christopher North in the 1830s concerning Tennyson's neglect of "the straight-forward and strong simplicity of nature and truth" (Jump 52) to Hippolyte Taine's derision in the 1860s that Tennyson could be read "in the family circle by night" (Jump 272).¹ Tennyson's epigrammatic stanza on popularity clearly identifies the changes that had taken place over forty years from the directives by early reviewers that poets not separate themselves from their popular readership to equally forceful demands by later reviewers that they exist apart in private worlds of their own artistic design.

¹ Christopher North's famous review was in Blackwood's (May 1832) while Hippolyte Taine's comments first appeared in his Histoire de la Littérature Anglaise (1863-4), translated in 1871 by H. van Laun.

Tennyson's enormously successful poems such as Enoch Arden may have garnered a wide readership at the time of publication, but so-called public poems such as this became touchstones for ridicule that has, as chapters three and four point out, continued to this day.²

Related to the above shift in critical sensibility away from poetry that is accessible to all levels of the reading public is a second binary that concerns taste in relation to class. Edmund Clarence Stedman's reevaluation of Longfellow and Tennyson a year after Longfellow's death (Century Magazine 1883) reveals directly the class divisions being drawn in their late nineteenth-century transatlantic reception. His insights into the influences of his own and future audiences' divided perceptions on the two poets is worth citing at some length:

In England, Longfellow has been styled the poet of the middle classes. Those classes include, however, the majority of intelligent readers, and Tennyson had an equal share of their favour. The English middle classes furnish an analogue to the one great class of American readers, among whom our poet's success was so evident. This was because he used

² In his introduction to Critical Essays on the Poetry of Tennyson, John Killham provides "A Review of Modern Criticism," in which he contends that there "is no doubt that Enoch Arden set" off the reaction against Tennyson (3). Killham cites briefly those comments of the 1860s that have passed into posterity by being "ascribed to by innumerable critics ever since": Bagehot's criticism of Tennyson's ornate treatment of an inferior subject in "Pure and Ornate Art" (Jump 282-93); Gerard Manley Hopkins's disparagement of Tennyson's "Parnassian" verse in a letter to W. M. Baille in September 1864 (Jump 278-81); and slights against Tennyson's overweening morality in Swinburne's Notes on Poems and Reviews (Hyder 15-32).

his culture not to veil the word, but to make it clear. He drew upon it for the people in a manner which they could relish and comprehend. Would not any poet whose work might lack the subtlety that commends itself to professional readers be relegated by University critics to the middle-class wards? Caste and literary priesthood have something to do with this. Were it not for "Lucretius" and "In Memoriam," the author of "The May Queen" and "Locksley Hall" and "Enoch Arden" would be in the same category; as it is, he scarcely escapes it in the judgment of the psychologic and Neo-Romantic schools So far as comfort, virtue, domestic tenderness, and freedom from the extremes of passion and incident are characteristics of the middle classes, [Longfellow] has been their minstrel (Cameron 183)

Stedman's remarks suggest several layers of the dualism that would come to dominate the institutional reception of Longfellow's and Tennyson's popular poetry in this century. Concerning poetic texts themselves, the opposing issues became clarity versus ambiguity and straight-forwardness versus subtlety, clearly the harbingers of the New Criticism that would have deleterious consequences for poetry that appealed to the poetic sensibilities of readers of all classes. As for its recipients, they too were to become split by the dualism generated by the construction of an elite university priesthood above and against the amorphous middle-class public.³

³ Stedman also suggests the means by which Tennyson's voice would be preserved within academic circles, that is, through the creation of the two Tennysons legend. Dualism in relation to Tennyson's and Longfellow's own specific poetic canons is discussed below.

In 1908, for example, Paul Elmer More could claim that Longfellow was still "the most beloved poet of the past century, and this not only among the ignorant and half educated, but among people of the finest culture" (136). Such an even-handed assessment, however, could not survive the institutionalization of literary taste in the early part of this century. By the 1930s, at least one university professor had relegated Longfellow to the classrooms of "wretched schoolchildren" (Lewisohn 65), and many more were to follow.⁴ In one attempt thereafter to rejuvenate at least part of Longfellow's former reputation, Norman Pearson identified "Both Longfellows," along lines similar to the two Tennysons legend, although in the American bard's case divided by class. "There were in fact two Longfellow's," Pearson argues, "whose careers were in conflict. There was the 'better maker' who, like an Ezra Pound de ses jours, wished to bring to the craft of American poetry and to the resources of the court of Cambridge and of the Harvard Yard all that was dextrous and ennobling from the resources of the past" (245-6). Pearson's

⁴ To this point, the question of taste has virtually been absent from this study of poetic popularity. Granted, most of the responses to Longfellow's and Tennyson's poetry betray the individual recipient's met or unmet literary expectations governed largely by taste or sensibility. However, it was not until contemporary literature began to be perceived in both America and Britain as a subject for academic study that taste began to influence their reputations. While the shifts and changes in Longfellow's academic reputation is itself a topic worthy of further study, twentieth-century canon formation is not the primary concern here.

perception of New England's intellectual "aristocracy" clearly oversimplifies Longfellow's attempts as a middle-class American poet to negotiate his cultural inheritance. Pearson continues: "and there was the familiar bard, he who for the middle classes and the populace could now through periodicals and collected-editions sing to the people by their firesides" (246). Pearson's conclusion that to "serve both [audiences] at once is a democratic concept, but it makes for awkward poetical relationships" (252) leads to no solution other than to excise one-half of Longfellow's corpus. And although Pearson never states directly which of Longfellow's two voices he would silence, one suspects very strongly that it is "the people's voice."

However, antebellum America was no where near as divided by class as Pearson makes it seem, particularly with respect to education, as chapter one has demonstrated. Prior to the institutionalization of literature, and for most of his entire career, Longfellow realized the enormous influence of Victorian America's idealistically "classless," multi-ethnic audience. If a poet were to speak to this heterogeneous audience's concerns, he would have develop a varitonal lyric voice and versatility of genre and style. As shown throughout this study, Longfellow did indeed promote and excel in numerous poetic genres to such an extent that, in essence, he created an appreciation for poetry among a widespread audience where previously it had existed only for the Brahmin literati

of New England. By the 1860s, however, Longfellow's literary interests were changing. The tragic death of his wife in 1861 and the start of the Civil War seem to have exhausted the grist for Longfellow's emotional mill. Thus, even as the cultural landscape was becoming increasingly diversified, with the exception of "The Hanging of the Crane," Longfellow's poetry published after the Civil War became more narrowly prosaic and moralistic. Less the lyrics of home and hearth that might have continued to prompt readers' modest private responses, his new public narratives of myth and legend in Tales of a Wayside Inn required little emotional involvement from his readers. His final turn to drama continued this trend in its several attempts to exorcise society's religious doubts about the relevance of Christianity in modern life. The most important in Longfellow's estimation, the three-part Christus (1871), sold badly, while the most powerful in critical estimation, Michael Angelo (1884), was left unfinished at his death, 24 March 1882.

What this meant for Longfellow was that even as his current work attracted fewer readers among the public at large, processes were at work in the development of literature as a field for special study that would also have considerable negative effects on both his future reputation and on the future of popular poetry in general. Interested in exposing their students to British and European cultures in the broadest ways possible, Harvard instructors such as Longfellow

(1835-54) and James Russell Lowell (1855-86) had set a trend for an impressionistic style of teaching, in Gerald Graff's terms, a "generalist-professor" approach (82) that had continued throughout much of the nineteenth century. The "generalist professor" had allowed for far more crossing back and forth between cultural activities for the general public such as literary societies, than the inner sanctums of later literature and language departments were to do. In "Victorian Culture in America," Daniel Howe argues that nineteenth-century "[c]ollege professors taught what seems to us a bewildering variety of subjects; ladies and gentlemen of letters felt free to pontificate on all topics." Howe adds, however, that in the twentieth century, scholarship became "so recondite and specialized, so consciously exclusive, as to be inaccessible to all but a handful of initiates. When this happened, it was a symptom of the disintegration of Victorian culture" (14). It also tolled the death knell for popular poetry. In the first thirty years of the twentieth century, American colleges and universities established "literary criticism" as it is known today as an academic endeavour; according to Graff, American scholars "wanted to purge literary studies of the sentimentality and amateurism of the nineteenth-century" (121-2). Longfellow's sentimental verse could not help but become part of this larger purge.

In England, the processes at work that would expunge Tennyson's poetry from "serious" consideration seem to have

been invidiously at work throughout his career and were thus not exclusively the result of a full-scale institutional revolution. In the comments that follow, one must bear in mind, however, two points: 1) that after 1850 Tennyson was Laureate until his death on 6 October 1892; and, 2) that both the sales of his work and the severity of critics were influenced by his public stature. Its influence is most apparent in the sales of his last volume of poetry. According to Hagen, "over 26,000 copies" of The Death of Oenone, Akbar's Dream, and Other Poems, published posthumously on 28 October 1892, were sold in a few months, whereas sales dropped off sharply thereafter (184). Late nineteenth-century interest in Tennyson's new poetry had waned for at least two reasons: like Longfellow, Tennyson turned to poetic dramas that did little to advance and may actually even have damaged his reputation among the public at large; and poetic tastes in literary circles accepted many of the aesthetic precepts of France's "art for art's sake" movement to which Tennyson himself was a self-professed opponent (see "Art for Art's Sake" in Ricks Poems III 12).

The products of Tennyson's experiment with drama--Queen Mary (1875), Harold (1876), The Cup and The Falcon (1884), and Becket (1884)--appear to have been written with a confidence that was seldom warranted in their productions. Hagen writes of "lack-lustre" sales and Tennyson's difficulties at getting Henry Irving to perform Becket on the London stage (it was

performed in 1893 after Tennyson's death).⁵ Why Tennyson chose drama at this late stage in his career is intriguing from the point of view of the study of genre in relation to audience discussed in chapter six. Sir Charles contends that Tennyson had exhausted other genres--the epic, dramatic monologue, and idyl--and "felt that his full powers could not be realized unless he could successfully exert them in the field of poetic drama Moreover, successful plays based on Dora and Enoch Arden had been produced in America, and in 1870 young W.S. Gilbert had made a hit at the Olympic with a respectful parody of The Princess (410-11). However, rather than merely new ventures into the theatre, Tennyson's poetic dramas can be read as continuations of the dramatic narrative voice that he adopted for the later Idylls of the King, a voice that required increasingly active participation on the part of listeners if the moral and social dilemmas underlying the action were to be understood. In addition, the historical subjects of his new plays themselves encouraged a collectivist, public awareness of Britain's past in the face of current political and social dissolution that Tennyson feared was threatening the stability of the nation. When his dramas proved unsuccessful conveyances of this warning, Tennyson returned to the dramatic monologue, "Locksley Hall

⁵ Reasons for Tennyson's shift to drama in the 1870s require further study than they have received to date. One of the only recent discussions of Tennyson's plays is Dennis Organ's Tennyson's Dramas: A Critical Study (1979).

Sixty Years After," for example, to chastise his age. And although Tennyson's late volumes--Ballads and Other Poems (1880), Tiresias and Other Poems (1885), Demeter and Other Poems (1889), and The Death of Oenone, Etc. (1892)--sold much better than his plays and contained some technically brilliant poems, his popularity had eroded too far to reclaim the vast readership he had once commanded (see Hagen 156-7, 176-7, 181-2, 184-5).

Richard Altick maintains in Victorian People and Ideas that in Victorian Britain the "critics of its present self were joined by critics of its earlier phases, so that the age sponsored numerous reactions against itself while it was still running its course" (299). One early Victorian self-criticism that spawned an enormous reaction against Tennyson in the 1860s was suspicion--even disparagement--of the feminine: "the woman's tender heart" as Longfellow called it.⁶ For example, with the publication of Poems and Ballads (1866), Swinburne suffered a hostile critical reaction which he attributed, in part, to the Laureate's transforming "the domestic circle" into the "outer limit and extreme horizon of [the male poet's] world of work" ("Notes on Poems and Reviews" Hyder 29).

⁶ In his examination of the principle ingredients used by the poetic chefs he discusses in Every Man his own Poet; The Inspired Singer's Recipe Book (1877), W.H. Mallock observes that it "is difficult to know what to say of Mr. T*nn*s*n, as the milk and water of which his books are composed chiefly, make it almost impossible to discover what was the original nature of the materials he has boiled down in it" (9).

Although Swinburne's comments were as much a reaction to the public distaste for his work as they were slights against Tennyson's poetry per se, Swinburne's castigation of "the idyl" and his refusal to join "the silver flock of idyllic swans" (Hyder 31), followed by further charges against the "effeminate poetry" of the time in "Under the Microscope" (Hyder 35-87), set a tone for criticism against Tennyson that would continue into the twentieth-century. One of the features of Swinburne's criticism of the "feminine" voice in Tennyson's poetry that foreshadowed the development of formalist schools of criticism at the end of the nineteenth-century was his reaction against the emotional demands that "feminine" poetry required of its audience. Far from being autonomous, organic wholes, Tennyson's idyls required affective responses from his readers in order to be appreciated and understood.⁷

The coincidence of an anti-feminine movement in the 1860s and 1870s (heard most virulently in Alfred Austin's "Poetry of the Period" in Jump 294-311) and the demand for poetic

⁷ Paradoxically, Robert Buchanan in his notorious attack on the Fleshly poets, locates Swinburne among the "sub-Tennysonian school" who distort the sensualism of Tennyson's "Vivien" and the "hysterical tone and overloaded style" of Maud. "The ways of a great poet," Buchanan says, "lead him in all directions, into all moods, while the way of a small poet is narrow and without variety. The gain of good in the Pre-Raphaelite style comes from the laureate; what is bad comes from Italy and France" (32n.). Buchanan deemed "Vivien" "an essential pendant to that wonderful apotheosis of Masculine Chastity, which is the heart of that Arthurian epic on which the laureate has poured all his orient wealth" (86).

autonomy stemming from "art for art's sake" presaged the paradox at the heart of Tennyson's reputation today. On the one hand, poetry that appealed to "feminine" emotionalism was to be scorned by both the public at large and by academicians as the artificial products of an effeminate culture. On the other, if Tennyson's "feminine" Victorianism were excised, then Tennyson could assume his "proper" stature among literary scholars seeking to preserve from the past those cultural products which should yet remain in the wake of strident modernist campaigns against a Victorian cultural and socio-political inheritance. In 1923, Hugh I'Anson Fausset captures this mood at its most strident: Tennysonian morality "cannot bear the candid scrutiny of a generation which has reaped the bitter fruits of high-sounding egotism" (299). As Longfellow's also would be, Tennyson's "feminine" voice was drowned in waves of reactionary history.

Perhaps even more strongly than in Britain, women of antebellum America had managed to assume cultural status in a society economically and politically driven by men. Howe summarizes their status as follows:

The innovations in printing and in women's education brought with them the emergence of an enormous new audience of women readers, who were served to a large extent by a new group of women writers. There was a women's communication network in middle-class Victorian society. Often this feminine Victorianism operated as complementary, even compensatory, in relation to masculine Victorianism, emphasizing values like security and sentiment. In the hands of women like Harriet Beecher Stowe and Sarah Josepha Hale, these could be powerful appeals. (27)

As chapters two and six demonstrate, Longfellow became very popular because of his ability to appeal to the feminine sentiments of his readers. However, postbellum America was vastly different, for along with its lost idealism came a turn to naturalism in literature in which Longfellow could have no possible share since sentimentalism and naturalism could not be more diametrically opposed.

Paul More, for example, advances several reasons for Longfellow's popularity, all of them tied in some way to More's belief that popular poetry begets a craven spirit and engenders passivity in the reader. The emotion in Longfellow's poetry is "barely, if at all, distinguished from the sentimental pathos of daily, commonplace life" (140). Longfellow's "peculiar popularity is due to the fact that he does not require of us any violent readjustment of our ordinary moods, that he sets our own daily thoughts and emotions to music" (140). Longfellow is the "one poet you will find in almost every household, the poet who is really read and enjoyed by the people; for it is just this sentiment of facile pathos that marks the true popularity" (141). Finally, Longfellow "represents a beautiful society now passed away and almost forgotten" (151). However, Jane Tompkins alleges that such "forgetting" has been part of a conscious effort to construct a history of nineteenth-century frontier American culture at odds with the way at least fifty percent

of life was actually lived; her remarks about fiction could apply equally to poetry:

The very grounds on which sentimental fiction has been dismissed by its detractors, grounds that have come to seem universal standards of aesthetic judgment, were established in a struggle to supplant the tradition of evangelical piety and moral commitment these novelists represent. In reaction against their world view, and perhaps even more against their success, twentieth-century critics have taught generations of students to equate popularity with debasement, emotionality with ineffectiveness, religiosity with fakery, domesticity with triviality, and all of these, implicitly, with womanly inferiority. ("Sentimental Power" 82)

Tompkins argues against such a limited view of what constituted sites of political power in the nineteenth century, and against the modernist disparagement of Victorian literature of sentiment because it demands of readers an active integration of the world outside the text with the world inside it.

The disparaging contrasts between passive emotionalism and active cognition echo a now familiar view of Longfellow as a too gentle, feminine poet read only by the uneducated. Fred Lewis Pattee's remarks on Longfellow's popularity, made in 1940, capture the mid-twentieth-century view of his work that continues to this day:

Hiawatha, whatever its realistic defects, has won the American people, at least the vast majority that have ended their education with the eighth grade.

(171)

and,

. . . though he wrote with no thought of the newspaper reading masses, it was they who bought his books and it was they who gave him to-day what is

his most enduring fame. In a critical period of American history, Longfellow presented popular literature that was on the high levels of its time. Hiawatha may not be true to history or to ethnology, but as poetry of beauty and soul it undoubtedly brought to the uncultured many of America a new vision of real poetry. (176)

Yet, Pattee assumes a dichotomy between "high" culture and "low" culture in nineteenth-century America that was in no way as clear-cut as it has become in this century. The same was also true of nineteenth-century Britain, as Howe points out:

Some divisions that we take for granted within our own cultural system did not yet fully exist during the Victorian age. One of these is the dichotomy between "mass" and "high" culture. It was 1915 when Van Wyck Brooks [America's Coming of Age] complained that American culture was bifurcated into "lowbrow" and "highbrow." Victorian authors with large readerships like Longfellow, Horace Bushnell, Harriet Beecher Stowe, however, had defied this classification, as had performers like Edwin Booth and the European visitor Jenny Lind. Nor did only a few great individuals transcend the categories; many long-since obscure writers like Lydia Sigourney and William Ware did too. [Asa Briggs] has written: "I have no doubt that there was a higher proportion of the population who had read and were prepared to discuss the novels of Dickens and the poems of Tennyson than could be found to discuss the works of any particular novelist or poet today." Substitute Longfellow for Tennyson and the same could be said of the Victorian United States That which we would regard as 'high' culture was characteristically undifferentiated in the Victorian world; the specialized "expert" had not yet become prominent. (14)

The several binary oppositions identified thus far--a public versus private poetics; a mass middle class versus an educated elite; generalist versus specialist approaches to literature as an academic study; and feminine sentiment versus masculine intellect--point finally to at least one reason for the

devaluation of popular culture in this century, and the near impossibility that poetry will ever garner such large readerships again in either the United States or Britain: the loss of pleasure as a collectivist moral principle.

In "Complicit Pleasure," Colin Mercer tries to understand "the specific ways in which we consent to the forms of popular culture" (50) even though we may not support them ideologically. One such way is through "pleasure." Mercer claims that "in the interstices of regret, desire, ambition, identification, nostalgia . . . pleasure does its work" (53). Mercer recognizes that one of the regrettable reasons why scholars avoid discussions of pleasure is a sense of guilt: "'guilt' of enjoyment of such and such in spite of its known ideological and political provenance" (54). In other words, once readers can no longer ideologically support Longfellow's patriotism or Tennyson's jingoism, to use two extreme examples, they refuse to support the poetry at all through a sense of guilt that they have responded affectively to the pleasure the texts provide. This naturally leads to an avoidance of sites of pleasure, and such a process is revealed no where more clearly than in the negative aesthetic that has come to dominate twentieth-century literary criticism. And it is just such an aesthetic that has severely distorted interpretations of nineteenth-century popular poetry.

Modern and post-modern overreliance on ideational significance and ideological analysis has, in general, limited

theorists' understanding of the reasons for various forms of consent and resistance to popular culture. Specific to the popular poetry of the Victorian period, the privileging of intellect over emotion has led to a too hasty disregard for the multiple levels of complicity that govern the pleasurable creation of meaning. Responding to this disregard of what Longfellow has still to offer twentieth-century readers, Steven Allaback tries to reactivate an appreciation for the multiplicity of poetic response. In "Longfellow Now" (1982), he argues that readers' "embarrassment" over Longfellow's simplicity derives from professors of literature teaching students to appreciate more "problematic" realities than the ones which most of them actually live. That is, out of embarrassment, they refuse to "allow a more vulnerable and teachable reading self to come forward," a reading self "more in need" he adds (113). The point here is that the affective level of response (instigated by corporeal, visceral responses to various devices of sound and image), can easily cause readers conditioned to expect intellectual enlightenment from poetry to feel gulled by complicit pleasure in the text (as Mercer would argue) or embarrassed into silence (as Allaback posits) if they feel called upon to lend ideational support to ideologies embodied in the text that they find intellectually unappealing.

As Henry Giroux and Roger Simon argue in Popular Culture: Schooling and Everyday Life, limiting theoretical analyses of

popular culture to an ideological terrain, "limits our ability to understand how people actively participate in the dominant culture through processes of accommodation, negotiation, and even resistance" (17). Pleasure, need, desire--various levels of affective response--these are all embodied in Longfellow's intention to work upon his recipient's "feelings" and in Hallam's and Tennyson's resolve to induce a morality of human love out of aesthetic response. To fail to respond emotionally to nineteenth-century popular poetry is to fail to understand its true power in its time and, perhaps, its power for all time. As Allaback remarks, in rejecting Longfellow "we reject a part of ourselves which thrives upon straightforwardness, simple wisdom, and honest expressions of unadorned emotion" (120). Popular poetry in general, and Longfellow's and Tennyson's in particular, has lost its value in Western culture because non-cognitive reading pleasure has become devalued in this century.

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APPENDIX I

A: AMERICAN VOLUMES OF LONGFELLOW'S POETRY: 1839-1865

Note: The following information and figures provide only an incomplete record of Longfellow's volumes and sales, drawn from several different sources: Charvat's The Profession of Authorship (106-67); Tryon's "Nationalism and International Copyright" and Livingston's A Bibliography of the First Editions of the Writings of Henry Wadsworth Longfellow.

Year	Volume	Publisher	Format & Cost	Copies
1839	<u>Voices of the Night</u>	John Owen	fine paper 75¢ 14 editions-1852:	8,800
	(large paper issue of 250 copies of 3rd edition; similar practice occurs with each major volume even with Ticknor and Fields)			
1841	<u>Ballads and Other Poems</u>	Owen	fine paper 75¢ 9 editions-1848:	3,770
1842	<u>Poems on Slavery</u> (Longfellow gives plates to Anti-Slavery Tract Association for reprinting)	Owen	fine paper 75¢	1,750
1843	<u>The Spanish Student</u>	Owen	fine paper 75¢ 5 editions-1845:	1,600
1845	<u>Belfry of Bruges</u>	Owen	fine paper 75¢ 4 editions-1846:	2,050
1845	(Longfellow purchases plates from Owen, and will own all plates of his poems until 1865)			
1845	<u>Voices of the Night</u>	Redding	double column pamphlet 12 1/2¢	1,000-2,000
1845	<u>Collected Edition</u>	Carey and Hart	illustrated Moroccan leather, steel plates	1,000 \$3.50-\$7.00
1846	<u>Collected Edition</u>	Harpers	double column pamphlet paper covered	50¢ 2,000
1846	(Ticknor and Fields buy all Owen's old stock and become Longfellow's publisher until 1882)			
1847	<u>Evangeline</u>	Ticknor and Fields	*trade edition 37 editions-1869:	\$1.00 28,005

1849	<u>Collected Edition</u> (with <u>Evangeline</u>)	Harpers	double column pamphlet paper covered 62¢	6,000
1849	<u>The Seaside</u> and the <u>Fireside</u>	Ticknor and Fields	trade edition	\$1.00 5,000
1850	<u>Collected Edition</u> Two Volumes	Ticknor and Fields	trade edition	\$2.00 1st edition: 20,000 (other prices range from 50¢ to \$8.00; 85 impressions from 1850-70: 164,168 copies sold)
1851	<u>The Golden Legend</u>	Ticknor and Fields	trade edition	\$1.00 13 editions-1864: 9,848
1855	<u>Song of Hiawatha</u>	Ticknor and Fields	trade edition	\$1.00 29 editions-1868: 50,771
1856	<u>Collected Edition</u>	Ticknor and Fields	Blue and Gold	\$1.75 40,000
1858	<u>Miles Standish</u>	Ticknor and Fields	trade edition	\$1.00 1st edition: 10,000 10 editions-1865: 29,424
1863	<u>Tales of a</u> <u>Wayside Inn</u>	Ticknor and Fields	trade edition	\$1.00 3 editions-1865: 22,000
1865	<u>Household Poems</u> (selected)	Ticknor and Fields	Illustrated	50¢ 20,000 blue paper covers

*Ticknor and Fields' trade edition was of stamped brown cloth covers, 12mo.; other editions might also be coloured: Hiawatha (red); Miles Standish (purple) with sides stamped in gilt and gilt edges.

B: LONGFELLOW'S RECORDED INCOME FROM WRITING: 1840-64

Year	Books	Periodicals	Total
1840	\$173.00	\$46.00	\$219.00
1841	212.00	45.00	257.00
1842	202.00	315.00	517.00
1843	235.00	100.00	335.00
1844	225.00	300.00	525.00
1845*	2,610.00	250.00	2,860.00
1846	1,700.00	100.00	1,800.00
1847	1,100.00		1,100.00
1848	1,425.00	100.00	1,525.00
1849	2,556.25	305.00	2,861.25
1850	1,750.00	150.00	1,900.00
1851	2,537.70		2,537.70
1852	1,055.60	50.00	1,105.60
1853	1,275	250.00	1,525.00

1854	1,600.00	100.00	1,700.00
1855**	3,475.00	200.00	3,675.00
1856	7,400.00		7,400.00

* Longfellow's first Collected Edition appeared in 1845.

** Longfellow published Hiawatha in 1855.

1857	2,450.00	100.00	2,550.00
1858	2,410.00	250.00	2,660.00
1859	1,767.00	50.00	1,817.00
1860	1,132.00	50.00	1,182.00
1861	874.50	50.00	924.50
1862	1,022.50	50.00	1,072.50
1863	1,131.00	250.00	1,381.00
1864	2,382.00	300.00	2,682.00

Longfellow established a new contract with Ticknor and Fields in 1865. His average yield for collected editions was \$3,284 for the next ten years. After 1875, he was paid a flat sum of \$4,000 per annum for all his old books (Charvat Profession 112-13).

Average wages in the 1840s-60s were
 Congressmen: \$8.00 per day
 Laborers: \$2.00 per day

APPENDIX II

A: ENGLISH VOLUMES OF TENNYSON'S POETRY: 1830-1865

Note: The following information and figures provide only an incomplete record of Tennyson's volumes and sales, drawn from several sources: Hagen's Tennyson and his Publishers, Shannon's Tennyson and the Reviewers, Sir Charles Tennyson's Alfred Tennyson, and Wise's Bibliography.

Year	Volume	Publisher	Format & Cost	Copies
1830	<u>Poems Chiefly Lyrical</u>	Effingham Wilson	5s drab paper or pink boards	600
1832	<u>Poems</u>	Edward Moxon	drab paper boards	6s 450
1842	<u>Poems</u> (2 vols)	Moxon	drab paper boards	12s
	24 editions-1872: 800, 1000 (drab or green), 1500 (green), 2000; 5th (one vol): illustrated, engraved steel, 9s; 7th morocco: 18s			
1847	<u>The Princess</u>	Moxon	*trade edition	5s
	17 editions-1868: 1500, 1500, 1500, 2000, 2000 (1000 annually thereafter); 1875 reduced to 3s 6d			
1850	<u>In Memoriam</u>	Moxon	purple cloth boards	6s
	21 editions-1872: 5000+3000, 5000, 3000, 3000 (60,000 in a few months); in 1875 reduced to 5s, in 1877 reduced to 4s			
1855	<u>Maud Etc.</u>	Moxon	trade edition	5s
	19 editions-1884: 10,000, 2000,			
1857	<u>Illustrated Edition</u>	Moxon	blue cloth boards	10,000
	wood block illustrations, gilt design cover: 31s 6d			
(Moxon's death in 1858; Bradbury & Evans manage publishing)				
1859	<u>Idylls of the King</u>	Moxon	trade edition	7s
	8 editions: 40,000, folio edition (1867--) engraved steel illustrations: 1, 3, and 5 guineas.			
1864	<u>Enoch Arden Etc.</u>	Moxon	trade edition	6s 60,000
	illustrated (1866); in 1875 reduced to 3s 6d			
1865	<u>Moxon's Miniature Poets: a Selection from the Works of Alfred Tennyson</u>	Moxon	cloth boards	5s
	8 parts mauve wrappers, 6d per			

* Moxon's trade editions were in green cloth boards with gilt lettering on the spine; this format becomes standard with other Tennyson publishers after Moxon (1869-1892).

B: TENNYSON'S INCOME FROM WRITING: 1840-1864Poems (1842)

1843 £156 2s 6d

1844

1845 £259 18s 1d

Civil List pension: £200 per annum

1846 £330 7s 6d

(averages £100 annually thereafter)

Princess (1847)

1848 £103 13s 7d

1849 £118 4s 7d

1851 £106 19s 4d

1852 £147 3s 10d

1853 £182 3s 2d

1854 £166 4s 10d

(averages £175 annually thereafter)

In Memoriam (1850)

1850 £445

Laureate pension: £200 per annum

1851 £273

1852 £133

1853 £175

1854 £150

1855 £100

1856 £100

(annual averages thereafter unknown)

Maud (1855)

1856 £2000 (cumulative from all volumes to date)

Illustrated (1857)

1858 £2000 (by contract with Moxon)

1863 £923 4s (royalties from Routledge on remaindered volumes)

Routledge issues 5000 (1865) and 5000 (1869)

1865 £924 6s

1869 £924 6s

Idylls of the King (1859)

(averages £2300 per year for five years: £11,500)

Enoch Arden (1864)

1865 £8065 1s 10d

Selection (1865)

1865 £5710 4s 2d

Average annual income in the 1840s-60s:

Skilled artisans, printers: £400

APPENDIX III

The Graves of a Household

They grew in beauty, side by side,
 They fill'd one home with glee;--
 Their graves are sever'd, far and wide,
 By mount, and stream, and sea.

The same fond mother bent at night
 O'er each fair sleeping brow;
 She had each folded flower in sight,--
 Where are those dreamers now?

One, midst forests of the west,
 By a dark stream is laid--
 The Indian knows his place of rest,
 Far in the cedar shade.

The sea, the blue lone sea, hath one,
 He lies where pearls lie deep;
He was the lov'd of all, yet none
 O'er his low bed may weep.

One sleeps where southern vines are drest
 Above the noble slain:
 He wrapt his colours round his breast,
 On a blood-red field of Spain.

And one--o'er her the myrtle showers
 Its leaves, by soft winds fann'd:
 She faded midst Italian flowers,--
 The last of that bright band.

And parted thus they rest, who play'd
 Beneath the same green tree;
 Whose voices mingled as they pray'd
 Around one parent knee!

They that with smiles lit up the hall,
 And cheer'd with song the hearth,--
 Alas! for love, if thou wert all,
 And nought beyond, oh, earth!

Felicia Hemans 1828

A Psalm of Life

What the Heart of the Young Man
Said to the Psalmist

Tell me not, in mournful numbers,
Life is but an empty dream!--
For the soul is dead that slumbers,
And things are not what they seem.

Life is real! Life is earnest!
And the grave is not its goal;
Dust thou art, to dust returnest,
Was not spoken of the soul.

Not enjoyment, and not sorrow,
Is our destined end or way;
But to act, that each to-morrow
Finds us farther than to-day.

Art is long, and Time is fleeting,
And our hearts, though stout and brave,
Still, like muffled drums, are beating
Funeral marches to the grave.

In the world's broad field of battle,
In the bivouac of Life,
Be not like dumb, driven cattle!
Be a hero in the strife!

Trust no Future, howe'er pleasant!
Let the dead Past bury its dead!
Act,--act in the living Present!
Heart within, and God o'erhead!

Lives of great men all remind us
We can make our lives sublime,
And, departing, leave behind us
Footprints on the sands of time;

Footprints, that perhaps another,
Sailing o'er life's solemn main,
A forlorn and shipwrecked brother,
Seeing, shall take heart again.

Let us, then, be up and doing,
With a heart for any fate;
Still achieving, still pursuing,
Learn to labor and to wait.

Henry Wadsworth Longfellow 1838

Break, break, break

Break, break, break,
On thy cold gray stones, O Sea!
And I would that my tongue could utter
The thoughts that arise in me.

O well for the fisherman's boy,
That he shouts with his sister at play!
O well for the sailor lad,
That he sings in his boat on the bay!

And the stately ships go on
To their haven under the hill;
But O for the touch of a vanished hand,
And the sound of a voice that is still!

Break, break, break,
At the foot of thy crags, O Sea!
But the tender grace of a day that is dead
Will never come back to me.

Alfred Tennyson 1842