

## Chapter 1 : Excerpt from Ulysses - Alfred Lord Tennyson - [www.nxgvision.com](http://www.nxgvision.com)

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Nevertheless, critical opinion on the poem varies quite a bit. Many critics do not really know what to think of the poem as it touches so many themes and therefore sometimes is seen as somewhat clumsily written. As a result, the poem has almost been ignored completely in recent years, with only very little material written about the poem and even less about its rich imagery. In this concise essay I will therefore deal with this aspect of the poem. Hence, I will be focusing on one set of imagery only, namely that of Time, as this concept appears to be the principal image, the leitmotif in the poem. Immediately, he is struck by a feeling of nostalgia and begins to revive old memories of the place and of his childhood. He tells us he used to walk along the beach, reflecting on the past and future: Here about the beach I wandered, nourishing a youth sublime With the fairy tales of science, and the long result of time; When the centuries behind me like a fruitful land reposed; When I clung to all the present for the promise that it closed: When I dipped into the future far as human eye could see; Saw the Vision of the world and all the wonder that would be. The speaker urges us to ask ourselves why he is using this anomalous phrase: If so "and I believe so" then we can regard this whole passage as ironical<sup>2</sup>. This line of thought puts the last words of the extract in a completely different light: The protagonist continues talking about his idealised past, in 1Bufkin, From here onwards the speaker, starting from personal reflections, passes on to more universal themes. His memories of her are the major source of his sorrow as they also recall her choice for another, wealthier man, a choice based on practical reasons instead of real, passionate love: Comfort scorned of devils! Does he want to live in a retrospective or prospective way? To escape from this choice, he tries to return to the present: He sums up some of the advantages civilization withholds: Yet, this process of change is not always positive: Ah, for some retreat Deep in yonder shining Orient, where my life began to beat. However, he realises in time that these thoughts are offshoots of his youthful naivety, that this image of nature is unrealistic: But I know my words are wild, But I count the gray barbarian lower than the Christian child. Eventually he 3 Patterson, Thomas. Forward, forward let us range, Let the great world spin forever down the ringing grooves of change. He eventually succeeds through an emancipation from his past life and is determined to start with a clean slate and with little expectations from the future, seizing the day. Perhaps this line of thought can also be seen from a broader perspective, namely the Victorian age in Britain, an age marked by change and progress but also an age in which many poets and writers became aware of the great history that lay behind them. Tennyson probably wanted to ventilate those feelings of indecisiveness, whether to be retrospective or prospective, in this poem. Yale University Press,

**Chapter 2 : The Mask of Conformity**

See also the Tennyson family trees in Philip Henderson, *Tennyson: Poet and Prophet* (Routledge, ), pp. xviii-xix; and Robert Bernard Martin, *Tennyson: The Unquiet Heart* (Oxford UP, ), , from which much of this information is taken.

Directions Numbers in brackets indicate page breaks in the print edition and thus allow users of VW to cite or locate the original page numbers. With the collection of poems published in Tennyson begins to assume his familiar guise as Victorian prophet. To bring the theme home to his age, Tennyson embeds it in melodramatic narrative of a kind dear to his heart: Furthermore, the poem concludes on a very much more positive note than "The Two Voices. Although not published until , "Tithonus" was contemporary in conception with "Ulysses" text. Taken so, Eos stands for the Keatsian ideal of beauty which holds the poet in bondage. Tithonus remembers the first thrilling visitations of the creative impulse: Let me go; take back thy gift. Why should a man desire in any way To vary from the kindly race of men, Or pass beyond the goal of ordinance Where all should pause, as is most meet for all? The general run of new poems published in , however, does not require, nor indeed call for, such probing after ulterior meanings. Tennyson had been less inattentive to criticisms of his previous work than he pretended; and in his desire for a wider measure of recognition he was beginning to court the public. The direction in which he was tending is clear from new developments which now begin to manifest themselves in his writing. In the first place, whereas he had before viewed contemporary life in the subjective and individualistic terms of "The Two Voices," he now made a determined effort to write poems of topical interest, realistic in situation and conventional in tone. These are the so-called English Idyls, sentimental narratives of domestic life. Along with "Locksley Hall," but more obviously addressed to Victorian tastes, the volumes included the following poems in this manner: In the collection, however, the reworking is undertaken with a didactic intent. The titles of these poems too often bring to mind the edifying tag-lines which incorporate their themes. In particular, that dream of progress towards an Utopian social order, which was so deeply ingrained in the age, keeps recurring throughout these poems: In her description of the proper ends of poetry Princess Ida of "The Princess" endorses that commingling of ethics and aesthetics which made for the highest artistic accomplishment in the eyes of the age: Yet, as Tennyson drew closer to the laureateship and popular recognition as the official poetic voice of Victorian England, doubts lingered in his mind-if not so much the old ones of his capacity to fill this role, then new and equally grave ones occasioned by a clearer comprehension of the compromises necessary to fame. More biting are the lines in "Walking to the Mail" which castigate society for its callous and blundering disregard for originality of mind: Wellâ€”after allâ€” What know we of the secret of a man? His nerves were wrong. What ails us who are sound, That we should mimic this raw fool the world, Which charts us all in its coarse blacks or whites, As ruthless as a baby with a worm, As cruel as a schoolboy ere he grows To pityâ€”more from ignorance than will. By , the year when *In Memoriam* was published, Tennyson had relinquished for good and all the confessional tone that runs through so much of his youthful poetry, including the early sections of *In Memoriam* itself. In the Prologue to the poem, not written until , the poet could say with the diffidence of hindsight: The author passes through four readily identifiable stages of development in clarifying his artistic intent; and these stages are roughly equivalent to his psychological advance from unrestrained grief through emotional numbness to hesitant hope and the eventual recognition that bereavement has provided a basis for religious certainty. What words are these have fallen from me? Can calm despair and wild unrest Be tenants of a single breast, Or Sorrow such a changeling be? By the nineteenth poem, however, a greater degree of objectivity has led to the discovery that the poetic impulse occurs only in moments of comparative detachment, such as follow on paroxysms of sorrow. As the artist regains control, he is increasingly reluctant to put his faculties at the disposal of undisciplined emotion. There is even a touch of scorn in the thirty-fourth poem with its reference to Fantastic beauty; such as lurks In some wild poet, when he works Without a conscience or an aim. Tennyson now enters a phase when, personal suffering somewhat alleviated, he can scrutinize his aesthetic motives more closely. He thinks of the Gospel story and concludes that the noblest expressions of spiritual truth are directly provocative of action: And so the Word had breath, and wrought With human hands the creed of creeds In

loveliness of perfect deeds, More strong than all poetic thought  
If these brief lays, of Sorrow born, Were taken  
to be such as closed Grave doubts and answers here proposed,  
Then these were such as men might scorn. Her care is not to part and prove;  
She takes, when harsher moods remit, What slender shade of doubt may flit,  
And makes it vassal unto love; And hence, indeed, she sports with words,  
And better serves a wholesome law, And holds it sin and shame to draw  
The deepest measure from the chords; Nor dare she trust a larger lay,  
But rather loosens from the lip Short swallow-flights of song, that dip  
Their wings in tears, and skim away. For this self-imposed limitation in scope  
Tennyson presents in the seventy-seventh poem additional historical justification.  
Since the modern age offers no themes comparable to those which inspired the masterpieces of the past,  
the contemporary poet cannot hope for lasting fame and may as well confine his art to his own individual concerns.  
By the eighty-fifth poem, however, Tennyson has seen hope dawn; and concurrently he begins to wonder,  
though as yet without any great amount of confidence, whether his poetic insights are solely attributable to grief  
playing with symbols and "pining life" fed on fancies. The dream allegory of the one hundred and third poem,  
which has interesting affinities with "The Palace of Art," sounds a new and altogether more ambitious note.  
But now to Tennyson, as to the hero in "Locksley Hall," has come "a summons from the sea,"  
in response to which he has gone out into the world, there to be greeted by the living presence of his friend  
grown to heroic size. After this it is not surprising in the one hundred and eighth poem to find the author  
renouncing the self-absorbed and inconclusive brooding of the earlier lyrics, and embracing in exchange that  
concept of participation in the common lot for which Tithonus had yearned: I will not shut me from my kind,  
And, lest I stiffen into stone, I will not eat my heart alone, Nor feed with sighs a passing wind.  
What find I in the highest place, But mine own phantom chanting hymns? And on the depths of death there swims  
The reflex of a human face. His doubts superseded by a firm faith in human destiny, Tennyson could look back as an  
artist and find that he had not undergone his spiritual ordeal in vain: I trust I have not wasted breath:  
I think we are not wholly brain, Magnetic mockeries; not in vain, Like Paul with beasts, I fought with Death.  
In this conviction he can pretend in retrospect to disown as either frivolous or ineffectual the promptings of an inner  
awareness so much at variance with what he now feels his poetic mission to be: No longer caring to embalm  
In dying songs a dead regret, But like a statue solid-set, And moulded in colossal calm. Regret is dead, but  
love is more Than in the summers that are flown, For I myself with these have grown To something greater  
than before; Which makes appear the songs I made As echoes out of weaker times, As half but idle brawling  
rhymes, The sport of random sun and shade.

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*Tennyson's Poems Questions and Answers. The Question and Answer section for Tennyson's Poems is a great resource to ask questions, find answers, and discuss the novel.*

Confronted again by domestic life, Ulysses expresses his lack of contentment, including his indifference toward the "savage race" line 4 whom he governs. His son Telemachus will inherit the throne that Ulysses finds burdensome. In the final section, Ulysses turns to his fellow mariners and calls on them to join him on another quest, making no guarantees as to their fate but attempting to conjure their heroic past: Push off, and sitting well in order smite The sounding furrows; for my purpose holds To sail beyond the sunset, and the baths Of all the western stars, until I die. It may be that the gulfs will wash us down; It may be we shall touch the Happy Isles, And see the great Achilles, whom we knew. Some see the verse turning from a soliloquy to a public address, as Ulysses seems to speak to himself in the first movement, then to turn to an audience as he introduces his son, and then to relocate to the seashore where he addresses his mariners. For example, the second paragraph 33-43 about Telemachus, in which Ulysses muses again about domestic life, is a "revised version [of lines 1-5] for public consumption": The ironic interpretations of "Ulysses" may be the result of the modern tendency to consider the narrator of a dramatic monologue as necessarily "unreliable". Culler himself views "Ulysses" as a dialectic in which the speaker weighs the virtues of a contemplative and an active approach to life; [8] Ulysses moves through four emotional stages that are self-revelatory, not ironic: In this structure, the first and third paragraphs are thematically parallel, but may be read as interior and exterior monologues, respectively. However, the poem is often printed with the first paragraph break omitted. The two friends had spent much time discussing poetry and philosophy, writing verse, and travelling in southern France, the Pyrenees, and Germany. Tennyson considered Hallam destined for greatness, perhaps as a statesman. His father had died in, requiring Tennyson to return home and take responsibility for the family. Tennyson shared his grief with his sister, Emily, who had been engaged to Hallam. According to Victorian scholar Linda Hughes, the emotional gulf between the state of his domestic affairs and the loss of his special friendship informs the reading of "Ulysses" particularly its treatment of domesticity. At the next, Ulysses is determined to transcend his age and his environment by travelling again. It was more written with the feeling of his loss upon me than many poems in In Memoriam. Other critics find stylistic incongruities between the poem and its author that make "Ulysses" exceptional. Literary context[ edit ] Tennyson adopts aspects of the Ulysses character and narrative from many sources; his treatment of Ulysses is the first modern account. A beast, no more. The last movement of "Ulysses", which is among the most familiar passages in nineteenth-century English-language poetry, presents decisive evidence of the influence of Dante. The strains of discontent and weakness in old age remain throughout the poem, but Tennyson finally leaves Ulysses "To strive, to seek, to find, and not to yield" 70, recalling the Dantesque damnable desire for knowledge beyond all bounds. Regard your origin, from whom and whence! The degree to which Tennyson identifies with Ulysses has provided one of the great debates among scholars of the poem. Key to the affirmative reading of "Ulysses" is the biographical context of the poem. Ulysses is thus seen as an heroic character whose determination to seek "some work of noble note" 52 is courageous in the face of a "still hearth" 2 and old age. Read straightforwardly, "Ulysses" promotes the questing spirit of youth, even in old age, and a refusal to resign and face life passively. Until the early twentieth century, readers reacted to "Ulysses" sympathetically. He declares that he is "matched with an aged wife" 3, indicates his weariness in governing a "savage race" 4, and suggests his philosophical distance from his son Telemachus. A skeptical reading of the second paragraph finds it a condescending tribute to Telemachus and a rejection of his "slow prudence" Eliot opines that "Tennyson could not tell a story at all". Contemporary appraisal and canonization[ edit ] Contemporary reviews of "Ulysses" were positive and found no irony in the poem. There is in this work a delightful epic tone, and a clear impassioned wisdom quietly carving its sage words and graceful figures on pale but lasting marble. Quoting three lines of "Ulysses" in an letter to Tennyson "It may be that the gulfs will wash us down, It may be we shall touch the happy Isles And see the great Achilles whom we knew! Homer presents

his thought to you just as it wells from the source of his mind: Tennyson carefully distils his thought before he will part with it. But the real Ulysses does not desire to wander at all. He desires to get home. Tennyson did not usually select it for publication in poetry anthologies; in teaching anthologies, however, the poem was usually included and it remains a popular teaching poem today. The protagonist sounds like a "colonial administrator", and his reference to seeking a newer world 57 echoes the phrase "New World", which became common during the Renaissance. Eliot called "Ulysses" a "perfect poem". An excerpt from "Gerontion" reads as an ironic comment on the introductory lines of "Ulysses": The woman keeps the kitchen, makes tea, Sneezes at evening, poking the peevish gutter. I am an old man, A dull head among windy places. Many readers have accepted the acclaimed last lines of "Ulysses" as inspirational. The final line is inscribed on a cross at Observation Hill, Antarctica, to commemorate explorer Robert Falcon Scott and his party, who died on their return trek from the South Pole in

### Chapter 4 : Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights - Poem by Lord Alfred Tennyson

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### Chapter 5 : Tennyson's Family Tree

*With the collection of poems published in Tennyson begins to assume his familiar guise as Victorian prophet. The dilemma of the divided will persists, but has become so overlaid by other concerns as to be all but unrecognizable to the reader not familiar with poet's habits of mind in their germinal state.*

### Chapter 6 : Philip Henderson - Wikipedia

*Tennyson's early poetry is determined by the same "romantic" conflict, "but whereas in Carlyle's writings this conflict is philosophically resolved, Tennyson's early poems lack this resolution. One may say that these poems represent Tennyson's "Everlasting No." Carlyle and Tennyson met first in 18J8 and soon became personal friends.*

### Chapter 7 : Tennyson - Essay

*Of Old Sat Freedom on the Heights by Lord Alfred Tennyson - Of old sat Freedom on the heights, The thunders breaking at her feet: Above her shook the starry lights: She heard th.*

### Chapter 8 : Ulysses (poem) - Wikipedia

*The Prophet and the Poet: The Relationship of Thomas Carlyle with Robert Browning, Alfred Tennyson and Arthur Hugh Clough.*

### Chapter 9 : tennyson poet prophet | eBay

*Tennyson touches us at deeper depths than any other poet of our generation, simply because he has a larger view of human nature, and a soul that itself has profounder emotions. The yearning of human love, and the sense of the Infinite, go together in him.*