Allegories of One's Own Mind

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Acknowledgments

This book has been an unconscionably long time in production, partly because “melancholy” remains a notoriously difficult term to define with any precision and partly, no doubt, because, like Lou Gehrig’s disease, it tends to reproduce its symptoms in its students—all of its symptoms, it seems, except genius. A crucial Victorian symptom, I argue, is “multitudinousness,” an anomic lack of focus producing kaleidoscopic, disordered representation. I am grateful to a number of colleagues and critics who struggled through the multitudinous earlier versions of this book, or parts of it, for helping me to find and articulate foci to organize a structured argument, to the extent that I have done so. I am particularly indebted in this regard to Audrey Jaffe, John Maynard, Walter Davis, Herbert Tucker, Maneck Daruwala, Marlene Longenecker, and Jean Gregorek. For helping to dissipate other symptoms of melancholy, I am grateful not only to these helpful readers, critics, and friends, but also to the support of numerous others, including especially Jim Battersby, Lisa Kiser, Clare Simmons, Mark Conroy, and the many geniuses at O’Reilly’s. I am grateful also for research support from the Department of English and the College of Humanities at Ohio State, and for the support of Heather Lee Miller at The Ohio State University Press. Part ii of chapter 2 is a slightly revised version of an earlier article, “Tennyson’s Poetics of Melancholy and the Imperial Imagination,” reprinted with permission from SEL Studies in English Literature 1500–1900 40 (Autumn 2000), and I am grateful to be able to use it here. Finally, I am boundlessly grateful to Natalie Tyler for limitless intellectual and emotional support.