
CHAPTER - 4

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CONCLUSION

We notice in the foregoing study of Matthew Arnold's verse that nothing in Arnold's verse is more arresting than its elegiac element. And we can say that his genius was essentially elegiac.

In ancient Greece, the Greeks judged elegy, by its form and not by its subject matter. It was written in the elegiac measure, a couplet composed a dactylic hexameter followed by a dactylic pentameter. But Matthew Arnold does not follow this conventional form for his elegies. The elegiac subject is important in his elegies than elegiac measure. There are two types of elegies : Pastoral elegy and Direct elegy. Under these type come general elegy and personal elegy. Arnold uses pastoral form, direct form, general form and also personal form in his elegies. He has used pastoral form successfully in his elegies. He has used pastoral form successfully in his elegies 'Thyrsis' and 'The Scholar gipsy'. He uses 'Direct form in his 'Rugby Chapel'. In 'Memorial Verses' and 'Stanzas From Garnac' he uses personal form. It clearly shows that he had thought 'elegy' as a best medium to express himself and his pessimistic attitude to life. His elegies are an expression of his inherent pessimism and loss of faith. He wants to confess through his elegies that his culture has failed. His elegies show the conflict in his mind between two worlds : One, the old world of faith which is dead and another, the new world of culture which is powerless to be born. As an

advocate of culture and civilization not based on materialism Arnold points out that materialism can never lead to truth and spiritualism.

Arnold's 'the Scholar Gipsy' and 'Thyrsis' are great pastorelegies. In 'The Scholar Gipsys' Arnold laments the death of faith in the age of materialism, while in 'Thyrsis' he mourns the death of his friend Arthur Clough. But 'The Scholar Gipsys' does not follow the conventional rules of pastorelegy in a very strict manner. Here the poet does not represent himself as a Shepherd. The scenes in the poem are not pastoral but urbanised, while 'Thyrsis' is an elegy fully in the pastoral convention written on the model of Theocritus, Bion, and Moschus. The names 'Thyrsis and Corydon are conventional in pastoral poetry. 'The Scholar Gipsy' is the lament for the vanished faith. It embodies Arnold's pessimistic attitude to life, his hope for a better world and his deep love for nature surrounding Oxford. In 'Thyrsis' the poet in the guise of a Shepherd mourns the death of another shepherd, Clough. But as in the 'The Scholar Gipsy' Arnold criticises the malady of the age, he points out through this elegy that materialism can never lead to Truth and spiritualism. But both the elegies end on a note of optimism and the message of hope. Both poems deal with the persons dissatisfied with life. 'The scholar Gipsy' wishes to learn the lore of gipsies and leaves his books, 'thyrsis' seeks truth and 'This does not come with houses or

withgold.' Again both these elegies describe the Oxford countryside. Arnold has immortalised Oxford and its surrounding through these two poems. Finally the unusual ten-line stanza comprising a sestet rhyming ab cb ca anda quatra in rhyming deed be fits well the elegiac strain of the two pastoral elegies.

The elegy 'Rugby Chapel' is not so much an elegy as a tribute, the tribute of a son to his father's memory. The poem opens in the typically Arnoldian manner, with the description of a scene as other elegies. The poet feels sad as he reflects on the 'buoyant Cheerfulness of the bygoneautumn, and the contrast between then and now. His father had been a protector, a saviour. But now he is no more. And the poet is confident that in the far shining sphere 'where his father now is, he is carrying on the same work he did on earth. thus, there is a note of hope in the elegy as in other elegies. The elegy 'Stanzas From Carnac' is written in the memory of Arnold's brother who died on his way from India to England. The poem opens with the description of scenes at Aurey. But like 'Rugby Chapel' there is also no sense of deep grief or of sad feeling in it. Hence, both the elegies are not mere mourning the death of an individual, but a profound mediatation on life. The 'Elegy Stanzas From The Grande Chartreuse' also opens on a note of description : The Alpine meadows, therein, the autumnal evening. Then he meditates over the struggle of his mind between two worlds. The elegy reflects the restless mind of Arnold. He may only hope for the better

world. 'Stanzas in memory of the another of Oberman is written in the memory of the author of Oberman who was a french philosopher it also opens with the description of scenes of Alpine track. It mourns for a wounded human spirit, on it's bed of pain and human agony. 'Memorial Verses' is an elegy to mourn the death of Wordsworth. He also takes an appportunity to pay his tribute to other great poets - Goethe and Byron. There is not much of personal sorrow in in these lines, but only regret that another Wordsworth will not come to ease the aching heart of humanity. 'Memorial Verses' is the only one of Arnold's elegies in which there is no reversal. All the others are marked bya sharp breck, a kind of lyric peripetia, in which the poet's attitude towards his subject is dramatically changed. As a result it is the only elegy which is elegiac in the conventional sense. While mourning the death of wordsworth, Arnold says that the loss caused by Wordsworth's death is irreparable. Goethe's sage mind and Byron's titanic force could be restored but not Wordsworth's healing power. So we can see that Arnold has emplyed elegy as a vehicle of literary appreciation.

In 'Stanzas In Memory of The Author of Obermann' he thinks about the agony of the soul of senancour, who looked upon the world and found it evil. But he attained some peace of mind when he fled from this world. In fact, he wants to express the agony of his own soul in this world through the elegy. Though, 'Rugby Chapel' is written in the memory of his father, it is a

profound mediation on life. As an elegy it mourns the tragedy of humanity in travail; seeking emancipation, but failing for the lack of leaders. In the same way 'The Scholar Gipsy' is not expression of the personal grief but it is the part's sigh for a vanished golden age and a bitter condemnation of his materialistic age. In the poem Arnold has poured all his disgust at the materialistic craze and Vulgarity of his age. According to him the people of his age never feel deeply and have no specific objectives. They hesitate, falter and waste away their lives. Arnold is a poet of sceptical reaction. He reacted more violently than any body else. To the spiritual distress of his age because he was extremely sensitive to the ideas of his age. He thought that as the civilization advanced culture declined. Modern prosperity, the expansion of democracy and the growth of science had hardly any appeal to him. Nothing could offer him any consolation. He found in the elegy the outlet for his melancholy, for his inherent pessimism and sense of loneliness. And expressing all his disgust, pessimism he seems relieved of worries and cares. And so there is a note of hope in his elegies except in 'Memorial Verses'.

In his verse we can see the reflection of Victorian age and its tendency. Because Victorian poets have a tendency to be serious, reflective and melancholic. Their thoughts often turned towards death, loss, regret for the vanished past. Collectively these states of mind constitute the elegiac. These

characteristics of Victorian poets are fully applicable to Arnold's poetry. So we have to agree with the critics opinion that Matthew Arnold is a versatile elegiac poet.