

CHAPTER-III

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The present chapter aims at discussing various interpretations of Arnold's concept of poetry as a 'Criticism of Life' by Arnold himself and other critics and evaluating his poetry in the light of these interpretations.

Arnold has defined poetry as a "Criticism of Life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty". Arnold in his essay on 'Joubert' writes :

There are famous men of literature, - Homers, Dantes, Shakespeares, of them we need not speak; their praise is for ever and ever. Then there are the famous men of ability in literature. Their praise in their own generation. And what makes this difference? The work of two orders of men is at the bottom the same, - 'a criticism of life. The end and aim of literature, if one considers it attentively, is, in truth, nothing but that. But the criticism which the men of genius pass upon human life is permanently acceptable to mankind, the criticism which men of ability pass upon human life is transitorily acceptable.¹

In this way, according to Arnold the end and aim of all literature is 'a criticism of life'. But the criticism passed by Homer, Dante and Shakespeare is permanently acceptable to mankind, on the contrary, the criticism passed by men of ability is transitorily acceptable. Thus, the very

concept of literature as 'a criticism of life' by Arnold tends to convince that he chose to be thoughtful and intellectual rather than passionate and emotional. Douglas Bush explains Arnold's role behind his concept of literature as 'a criticism of life'. He says :

Taking literature in general as a criticism of life, Arnold took literature and criticism not only as an educator and guardian of public opinion and the taste but as an intellectual and philosophical discoverer of ideas, a necessary precursor of valuable creative activity. Thus he imposed upon criticism, a much weightier function that it had been accustomed to bear.²

Criticism has a wider sense. It is not only an act of passing judgement but also includes critical spirit in general. Rene Wellek comments :

Arnold is first of all a very important apologist for criticism. Criticism of course, means for him not simply literary criticism but rather the critical spirit in general.³

Arnold in his essay on 'Byron explains his concept of 'a criticism of life' in a better way. He says :

"So far from it, that when I first used this expression, a criticism of life, now many years ago, it was to literature in general that I applied it, and not to poetry in especial. "The end and aim of all literature," I said, "is, if one considers it attentively, nothing hut that : a criticism of life". And so it surely is; the main end and aim of all our utterance, whether in prose or in verse, is surely a criticism of life. We are not brought much on our way, I admit, towards an adequate definition

of poetry as distinguished from prose by that truth; still a truth it is, and poetry can never prosper if it is forgotten. In poetry, however, the criticism of life has to be made conformably to the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. Truth and seriousness of substance and matter, felicity and perfection of diction and manner, as these are exhibited in the best poets, are what constitute a criticism of life made in conformity with the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty; and it is by knowing and feeling the work of those poets, that we learn to recognise the fulfilment and non-fulfilment of such conditions".⁴

Arnold's poetry doesnot exist apart from life. Perhaps, more than any other poet of his time he saw life around him and was deeply affected by the changes that were occurring. Democracy, science and industry flourished and brought about a revolutionary change in the society. His poetry reflects deeply felt convictions on all those issues. If Tennyson dealt with problems of faith, democracy and war, and Browning engaged himself with psychological insight and philosophical profundity, then Arnold was interested in life as a whole. With Arnold poetry was not an ~~idle~~ ^{idea} past time but it had a purpose, a message and a moral significance. Poetry, for him was not an escape from life but into life and more and more of life.

Lytton Strachey explains ^{the} close connection between literature and life regarding the role of Matthew Arnold with them. He writes :

Life, as everyone knew, was the one serious affair in the world - active, useful life; but then literature it turned out - or rather, all literature was worth only thing - was a criticism of life; and so, after all Matthew Arnold was justified in writing about it, and the public were justified in reading what Matthew Arnold wrote, for they were not merely reading about literature - who would do that? - they were reading about the criticism of life.⁵

But the truth and seriousness of substance and matter, felicity and perfection of diction and manner are the very essence of his criticism of life. What Arnold actually means by criticism of life is that poetry is not a photographic picture of life. It will present an ideal life which one seek to realise. The ideas expressed in poetry will be integrated with life. Poetry will follow the principles of poetic truth and poetic beauty. By poetic truth Arnold means truth and high seriousness. In other words, poetry must be richer in matter. By poetic beauty Arnold means expression. Matter and expression, form and content should go hand in hand in this way poetry becomes a source of consolation and delight. Thats why Raghukul Tilak say "By Criticism of Life Arnold means an attempt to realise an ideal life. There may be moral tinge in it".⁶

According to Aristotle, poetry is the most philosophic of all writings. Poetry imitates like the other fine arts, but poetry is not a mere mimicry, a mere slavish representation of surface reality. It imitates imaginatively

and so gives higher truth, a higher reality. It shifts and orders its material, disregards ~~its~~ the non essential, the purely accidental, and thus gives us the universal. The process of poetic imitation is the process of idealisation, and in this way is achieved a higher truth; a higher reality, than that of Nature. According to Aristotle, poetic truth is much higher and universal than that of history, and poetry is more conducive to understanding than philosophy. The poet gives not reality but reality idealised. Poetry deals with universal. History is based upon facts; but poetry transforms these particular facts into universal truths. Thus poetic truth is much higher order. It is permanent and universal. Ideas are permanent and poetry is also permanent as it deals with them. In this way, the faculty of poetic truth enables the poet to contribute to the criticism of life.

In this way, Arnold at his early stage of life connected literature and life, commenting that literature is criticism of life. Later on Arnold tended to say that poetry is a criticism of life because he was fully aware of the power and function of poetry. Malcolm Hardmann believes in the power of poetry. He comments " Poetry's power to renew the individual consciousness has also a potential for guarding society from the manipulations of that consciousness by various forms of vested interest⁷.

Moreover, Walter Jakobson Bate states how poetry functions, provided it is supposed that the faculty of poetic truth is on his side, while the historian couldnot have it. Poetry gives something concrete. He says :

To begin with, poetry doesnot merely interpret chronicle specific details. It interprets details in the light of ideals, of aspirations, of knowledge and of moral evaluation. On the other hand, poetry is rooted in concrete; it is not a branch of theoretical ethics. Poetry joins together ideas and the concrete. By serving meltaneously as the "interpreters of the natural world" and as the "interpreters the moral world", by feeling and conceiving the concrete, that is in the terms of human values - poetry is thus analogous to human experience itself. For in our actual lives, Arnold's insists, we are constantly seeing and feeling things in the light of what we regard as their desirability or value : as we experience things, the concrete is not divorced from idea, from the interpreting and evaluation of it - it is not divorced if we are have genuine experience rather than being confused or bewildered⁸.

Thus, in the beginning, one thing is clear that 'Criticism of Life' involves the whole of literatüre and life; - 'Criticism is the pivot round which Arnold's theory of poetry revolves. His definition then, does not mean criticism of life abstracted from life, but it is the critical force which enters into the authors presentation of life. The mundane life and the woes and worries dull the senses but it is the poet who sheds away dullness and rises like an interpreter of life, showing the goodness, and

greatness and charm of life, which an ordinary man bound of the materialism of the world cannot see and experience. Thus criticism of life beautifies, intensifies, illumines, and heightens life. The 'Criticism of life' is thus not only an 'appreciation of life' but also a creation of life. It is not the function of poetry to present life as it is. It inculcates a sense of wonder that what perceived is not the end - there is a happy, harmonious life beyond. The 'criticism is thus consolation that the world is not so wearisome as it was thought to be. Life gapes at the poet - naked, shapeless, colourless. It is poetry (or literature, as these two words are interchangeable for Arnold) which clothes life in the finest yarn of culture, sweetness and light, shapes it into magister vitae, colours it with nobility and makes it beautiful and truthful. the poet puts his soul in the remaking of life'.

Moreover, the author means by 'criticism of life' the artists critical penetration into life he presents. In other words, it means interpretation of life and it implies " the judgement that he selects, the imagination that he re-arranges, the passion that turns the whole world to its bent, fancy with her dainty fingers picking up images, in fact, that faculty of man which carries an emotional meaning into outside things, the creative faculty, which must be

called critical only because it has to work upon life, which is outside it. So Arnold's definition includes not merely an interpretation of life but also the blending of objective life and the poet's imagination. Rene Wellek rightly explains :

Very often, Arnold conceives of poetry very widely; as all human utterance at its best. It is simply the most beautiful, impressive, and widely effective mode of saying things, "the most delightful and perfect form of utterance that human words can reach", "the most perfect speech of man". He usually distinguishes two functions of poetry : poetry as an interpretation of the moral world. Poetry interprets either the physiognomy and movement of the outward world of the ideas and laws of inward world of man's moral and spiritual nature". In other words, poetry is interpretative both by having natural magic in it, and by having moral profundity. In both ways, it illumines man; it gives him a satisfying sense of reality; it reconciles him both with himself and the universe.⁹.

Lionel Trilling is of the opinion that ~~the~~ poetry is much more than what is suggested by the phrase 'criticism of life'.

He spoke of literature as one who loved it and lived in it; but he spoke too as one who knew the world and lived in the world and believed that literature was connected in a complex multitude of ways with actual practical life. There is famous phrase of Arnold's which, like so many of his phrases that caught the mind of his contemporary readers, has been much worried by the critics of our time : Arnold said that poetry - or literature in general - is a criticism of life, and the objection which is usually made is that poetry is

so much more immediate and intense an experience than is suggested by the phrase, that it does so much more although it does indeed, in one of its activities, say specifically what is wrong with life - characteristically discharges its critical function by possessing in a high degree the qualities that we may properly look for in life but which we are likely to find there in all too small an amount - such qualities as coherence, energy, and brightness; and it its possession of these qualities literature stands as the mute measure of what life may be and is not.

There is one more reason for making poetry the criticism of life. Arnold, of course, endeavours to recreate a world devoid of immoral and materialistic values of the Victorian life. But he does not stretch his imagination to that world which may only exist in dreams. Though he puts his heart and soul in the making of noble and beautiful world, his feet remain firmly planted on mother earth. By making poetry as 'criticism of life', he makes poetry earthly not ethereal. Though Arnold himself could not remain completely unimaginative and objective, yet he tried his best to strike a classical balance of imagination by reason. Besides aesthetic implication, the term 'criticism of life', has a moral implication. In the essay of 'Wordsworth', Arnold says :

It is important, therefore, to hold fast to this : that poetry is at bottom a criticism of life; that the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life, - to the question : How to live. Morals are often treated in narrow and false fashion; they are bound up with systems of thought and belief which have had their

day; they are fallen into the hands of pedants and professional dealers; they grow tiresome to some of us....in a poetry where the contents may be what they will, but where the forms is studied and exquisite. We delude ourselves in either case; and the best cure for our delusion is to let our minds rest upon that great and inexhaustible world life, until we learn to enter into its meaning. A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against life; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of indifference towards life¹¹.

In this way, Arnold's 'criticism of life' has a deep moral implication, which is part and parcel of life. Arnold is of the opinion that the term moral should be given a large sense. Arnold himself explains the scope of the term moral in the light of various examples from Milton and Shakespeare. Arnold explains :

Long ago, in speaking of Homer, I said that the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness. I said that a great poet receives his distinctive character of superiority from his application, under the condition, under the conditions immutably fixed by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth, from his application, I say to his subject, whatever it may be, of the ideas

On man, on nature and on human life,

which he has acquired for himself. The line quoted is Wordsworth's own; and his superiority arises from his powerful use, in his best pieces, his powerful application to his subject, of ideas "on man, on nature, and on human life"¹².

Arnold answers to Voltaire's objection that "no nation has treated in poetry moral ideas with more energy and depth than the English nation". He says :

He means just the same thing as was ment when I spoke above "of the noble and profound application of ideas to life"; and he means the application of these ideas under the conditions fixed for us by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth. If it is said that to call these ideas moral ideas is to introduce a strong and injurious limitation, I answer that it is to do nothing of the kind, because moral ideas are really so main a part of human life. The question, how to live, is itself a moral idea; and it is the question which most interests every man, and with which, in some way or other, he is perpetually occupied. A large sense is of course to be given to the term moral. Whatever bears upon the question, "how to live", comes under it

Nor live they life, nor hate; but, what thou liv'st, Live well; how long or short, permit to heaven.

In those fine lines Milton utters, as every one at once perceives, a moral idea. Yes, but so too, when Keats consoles the forward-bending lover on the Grecian Urn, the lover arrested and presented in immortal relief by the suclptor's hand before he can kiss, with the line,

Forever wilt thou love, and she be fair_____ he utters a moral idea. When Shakespeare says, that

We are such stuff

As dreans are made of, and our little life Is rounded with a sleep.

he utters a moral idea.

Voltaire was right in thinking that the energetic and profound treatment of moral ideas, in this large sense, is what distinguishes the English poetry....If what distinguishes the greatest poets is their powerful and profound application of ideas to life, which surely no good critic will deny, then to prefix to the term ideas here the term moral makes hardly any difference, because human life itself is in so preponderating a degree moral¹³.

In this way, Arnold's concept of poetry as a criticism of life also constitutes a noble and profound application of moral ideas to life. Thus, Arnold's concern for poetry was a moral concern. He could not conceive life without morality. It was a major concern of the Victorian life. Which they lacked. Vernon Hall Jr. explains

Arnold looked around at mid-nineteenth century England and did not like what he saw ~~industrial~~ progress. Industrial progress, there was, but moral grandeur was lacking from cultural point of view. Most of the aristocrats were 'barbarians' the middle class philistines and the people brutalised the populace"¹⁴.

Moreover, A.C.Ward agrees with the above opinion and says : " He was of his time in concentrating attention upon the moral values of poetry in which the form is studied and exquisite"¹⁵.

That's why Arnold insists to hold fast to this that the poetry is criticism of life and the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful and beautiful application of moral ideas to life, - to the question : How to live. A.C.Ward comments "Arnold's conviction in this and other matters were the outcome of the Victorian assumptions that current English standards were final in morals and that life could be written about as a monosyllabic abstraction but his confidence in the function of poetry as a criticism of life was based upon its

effective demonstration in Wordsworth, whose work he approached as an enthusiastic interpreter"¹⁶.

Thus, there is a close connection between human life and moral ideas. Arnold brings them so closer. Arnold says "A poetry of revolt against moral ideas is a poetry of revolt against life; a poetry of indifference towards moral ideas is a poetry of in difference towards life". T.S.Eliot has very nicely illustrated this intimacy between life and moral ideas. He says :

Arnold seems to think that because, as he says, Wordsworth deals with more than of life, than Burns, Keats and Haine, he is dealing with life; and a poetry concerned with life is concerned with moral ideas"¹⁷.

Arnold prefers moral values to aesthetic ones when he deals with life. His interest is in whatever is living and profound and accessible in poetry. It is this that has a moral interest. Vincent Buckley illustrates :

As he himself insists, his concern for life is a concern for morals; and we shall therefore be interested in what he thinks and feels about life. And here the promise of a dynamic or visionary force in his interpretation of life, of a forceful and metaphysical insight in his interpretation of poetry, is not fulfill when he says that the poetry is ' the noble and profound application of ideas to life', the ideas are generally moral ones and the 'life', that part of human experience which offers itself for illumination through moral ideas"¹⁸.

Arnold explains 'criticism of life as a noble and profound application of moral idea to life. The greatness of poet lies in the same fact. Arnold means application of these moral ideas under the condition fixed for such criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. Walter Jakobson Bate explains Arnold's concept, he says :

Accordingly, poetry must first of all work within and through the concrete. Secondly presence of relevant and significant ideas is naturally to be expected in poetry of substantial worth.

But of course, neither the concreteness nor the intellectual significance of the idea can be evaluated separately. The unique achievement of literary genius is a work of synthesis - of bringing together these two elements. It is the noble and profound application of ideas to life.¹⁹

Thus, Arnold's poetry is a criticism of life at various levels of meaning of the criticism of life. Criticism of life occupies a central place in his poetry. But H.W.Garrod comments : " for Matthew Arnold the great interests of life are the social and political and religious."²⁰

Arnold in his essay on 'The Study of Poetry also defines poetry as a criticism of life'.

In poetry, as a criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty, the spirit of our race will find, we have said, as time goes on and as other helps fail, its consolation and stay.

But the consolation and stay will be of power in proportion to the power of the criticism of life. And the criticism of life will be of power in proportion as the poetry conveying it is excellent rather than inferior, sound rather than unsound or half-sound, true rather than untrue or half-true²¹.

But Arnold says that the superiority of poetry over history consists in its possessing a higher truth. Arnold writes :

Only one thing we may add as to the substance and matter of poetry, guiding ourselves by Aristotle's profound observation that the superiority of poetry over history consists in its possessing a higher truth and a higher seriousness²².

According to Arnold there is an intimate connection between higher truth and higher seriousness.

The two superiorities are closely related, and are in steadfast proportion one to the other. So far as high poetic truth and seriousness are wanting to a poet's matter and substance, so far also, we may be sure, will a high poetic stamp of diction and movement be wanting to his style and manner. In proportion as this high stamp of diction and movement, again, is absent from a poet's style and manner, we shall find, also that high poetic truth and seriousness are absent from his substance and matter²³.

Besides powerful application of ideas to life, there must be 'high seriousness for supreme poetical success Arnold writes :

But for supreme poetical success more is required than the powerful application of ideas to life; it must be an application under the conditions fixed by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. Those laws fix as an essential condition, in the poet's treatment of such matters as are here in question, high seriousness;— the high seriousness which comes from absolute sincerity. The accent of high seriousness, born of absolute sincerity, is what gives to such verse as

in la sua volontade e nostra pace...²⁴
to such criticism of life as Dante's its power²⁴.

The 'high seriousness' comes from sincerity on the part of the artist, the faithfulness in depicting his inner vision. But Takakhav equals high-seriousness with 'criticism of life'. He says : "By this high seriousness Arnold means the presence of 'criticism of life'. According to Vernon Hall Jr. high seriousness means moral excellence. He writes :

The best poetry he says must possess in the eminent degree 'truth and seriousness'. The poetry that does not have 'high seriousness' is not truly great : By high seriousness he means a moral excellence which is congruent with his own morality²⁵.

In the process of poetic creation, when the poet has to utter the truth, he cannot soar high in the realm of fancy and imagination. Until and unless the quality of 'high seriousness' is not present in the mental make up of the poet, 'poetic truth' cannot be rendered. It is this high seriousness and poetic restraint which impart 'truth' to poetry. Poetry depends

on moral considerations, while moral values provide a spiritual basis for mankind. The poet first acquires the quality of high seriousness and then tries to propagate it by using this quality in his poetry. This is a Sophoclean concept that 'the style is the expression of the nobility of the poet's character, as the matter is the expression of the richness of his mind'. Poetry then is more a mode of self-expression than a form of literature. Arnold's idea of poetry is deep rooted in life. The subject matter is derived from life, life is examined under the light of moral ideas, the society or the 'miliue' tries to influence and mould these ideas, but the poet has to channelize this course of reshaping of ideas towards in experience of joy. Therefore, the poet brings truth, high seriousness and joy in the society.

Rene Wellek has illustrated Arnold's concepts of high seriousness well. He comments :

The poetry may not be philosophy, but it must to be truly great, have 'high seriousness'. The phrase - By which he translates Aristotle's *spoudiaotes* - has a strong implication of solemnity and sublimity and is excessively narrow as a definition of a great poetry. Arnold certainly laid himself wide open to criticism when he denied 'high seriousness' to Chaucer but allowed it to Gray and Shelley. Chaucer gives "a large, free, sound representation, of things" he has a truth of substance but not 'high seriousness', that Arnold

finds though fitfully in villon. One suspects that Arnold knew only parts of Chaucer, or that, in this particular context 'high seriousness' meant villon's sense for transitoriness of life, his acute feeling for the presence of death²⁶.

Thus, 'high seriousness' is interpreted in a very different manner. Some call it sincerity. It is voice from the very in most soul of the genuine (man). Vincent Buekley explains its true essence :

The accent of 'high seriousness' born out of sincerity, is a quality of poetry, not of human conduct. But it exists in poetry only because it exists, in a different form, in the inner life of the poet. It may exist, too, in society; because it is in the personalising of social values (that is, of values held socially and a given a form of manners) that the substance and matter of poetry normally arise; it is in poetry of high seriousness that process of personlising issues. The mark of genuine man becomes the mark of poetry and the guarantee of its genuineness. When it does so, we find a diction and movement, a note a mark an accent. It is in such strictly literary characteristics that we recognise the moral force of the poet's utterance : His self-utterance.²⁷

The second clause in Arnold's definition of poetry is 'the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty'. The laws of poetic truth is a moral concept of moral interpretation of life which involves 'truth and high seriousness'. This refers to the matter of poetry which is permanent feelings, emotions and the excellent objects of poetry. The 'law of poetic beauty' deal with the manner in which the matter of poetry is treated and presented.

Arnold's poetry is a 'criticism of life' it is 'criticism of life' in the Victorian age, with social, cultural and religious issues. Arnold considered that it was not the duty of poet to look at life steadily and as a whole and then try to bring out a proper understanding and intergration of complex modern life. The soundness of Arnold's definition of poetry will appear more clearly when we take into account the age of which his poetry was the reflection. It was an age of science, the age of new ideas the age marked by materialistic tendencies and religious uncertainty. In such a chaotic and revolutionary age, no true, sincere and highly educated poet could be away from the perplexing problems of the age. Thats why J.H.Buckley remarks " perhasps more insistently than any other critic, Matthew Arnold demanded for his time, a subject matter sound in moral values and a style designed quietly to convey larger truth than private feeling could intuit"²⁸.

Thats why, Arnold's defination of poetry as a 'criticism of life' is quiete suitable for the age of critical enquiry. Criticism is the dominant feature of the Victorian age. Thus, Matthew Arnold gives his definition of poetry as 'criticism of life', not because he was blind to the other aspects of poetic art rhyme, rhythm, passion,

colour and so forth - but because the age demanded it. It also demanded a critic deeply concerned with moral ideas. Vincent Buckley interprets Arnold's concept of 'criticism of life' he says :

His chief point is that poetry is a 'criticism of life'. 'Criticism' means a sense for, an interpretation and healing re-presentation. The whole transforming power of poetry is involved in it; and whether its object is the life of man or life of nature, it is in fact valuable to the extent that it affirms something of the life and nature of man²⁹.

Arnold's poetry reflects the Victorian spirit. In most of the poems Arnold compares and contrasts the Victorian age marked by loss of religious faith, materialism, spiritual degeneracy, with the earlier ages to, achieve greater effect. Arnold's letter to his mother reveals Arnold's confession of the fact that his poems are related to the various aspects of Victorian age. Arnold wrote "my poems represent on the whole, the main movement of the mind of the last quarter of the century".³⁰

Thus, Arnold had a truer grasp of the Victorian age and more insight into its problems than Tennyson and Browning. No poet was as critical as Arnold. When we read his poems Arnold visualises the Victorian experience. That's why Nirmaljeet Oberoi remarks :

Matthew Arnold was a modern in his style and subject matter. He could not tolerate the backwardness and shallowness of his age. He diagnosed the ailments of his age more correctly and more efficiently than his contemporaries. He may be labeled as physician of the iron age. He pointed out the deficiencies of his age in his poems and after reading such poems we feel as though, Arnold was presenting a picture of our own polluted society.³¹

In writing criticism in verse, Arnold conforms to his own definition of poetry as a 'criticism of life', "under the conditions fixed for such criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty". He observed, and was repelled by, the condition of contemporary society. The loss of religious faith and the decline of spiritual and moral values because of the growth of materialism, sickened his soul. The various social evils caused by the unbridled industrial and mechanical progress, filled his heart with gloom. The spiritual unrest, aimlessness and conflicts in the world around him, troubled his mind. The romantic poetry of the preceding age, with all its exuberance, subjectivity and emotional glow, could not satisfy his classical temper which favoured the qualities of objectivity, restraint and wholeness in writing. A man of acute sensibility as well as great intellectual powers, he could not but react against the conditions prevailing in his Age, and express his reaction in the poetry as well as prose. His reaction is critical, and

not emotional, and his critical reaction has found its way into his verse. He does so by reviewing the situation existing in the fields of literature and society and by passing judgement on it. Thus he sticks fast to his theory of poetry, and makes poetry the 'criticism of life'. His poetry is more of a critical than creative nature.

Hugh Walker is of the opinion that Arnold's poetry is 'criticism of life'. He explains :

His much-condemned definition of poetry as a 'criticism of life' is at least true of his own poetry. Even in a literary sense, there is a surprising quantity of wise criticism in his verse. Goethe, Byron, Wordsworth and Senancour are all examined with wonderful insight; and in the Epilogue to Lessing's Laocoon we have a discussion of the principles of the arts of music, painting and poetry. BUT Arnold's verse is critical in a far deeper sense than this. It is, in accordance with his own definition critical of life. In all his deepest poems, in Thyrsis and The Scholar Gipsy, in Resignation, in the Obermann poem's in a Southern Night, Arnold is passing judgement on the life of his age, the life of his country, the lives of individual man...

In all this Arnold's is quite consistent with himself. Holding that what Europe in his generation principally needed was criticism, he give this criticism in verse as well as in prose. And it may be remarked that the principle underlying his literary verdicts in prose is the same as that which underlines his poetic view of life. He treats his author not as an isolated fact, and judges him not by any abstract canons. He tries to put him back as part of the life in which mingles³².

In this way Arnold's definition of poetry as a criticism of life seems too wide. It is more of a philosophical definition rather than literary one. By making poetry as a criticism of life, 'Arnold made poetry more of an exercise to extract moral values from poetry than to enjoy a poem as an entity'. Of course, Arnold speaks of beauty and truth both; but beauty has been severely limited compared to truth. He has a softer corner for moral profundity than for natural magic.

In the later part of this chapter, it is my attempt to evaluate Arnold's poems in the light of those interpretations discussed earlier and to see how his poems serve as examples of his poetry as criticism of life. I am aware to the fact that Vincent Buckley says "There is difficulty of choosing enough poems which are representative enough to enable one to define any question at all".³³

1. Self-Dependence

'Self-Dependence' is an account of the glorification of Nature and one of the best examples of 'a criticism of life'. It is a beautiful and powerful application of moral ideas to life, - to the question : How to live. Arnold treats moral ideas energetically and profoundly. Arnold in this poem asks people to follow nature, objects of which are the best example of self-dependence.

The poet is tired of the Victorian an age which is full of doubts and confusion. It is also an age of materialism and scepticism, doubts and distractions. Arnold has lost the peace of mind and he is in search of it. He does not find teacher who can show him the way to peace. Nature alone comes to his rescue. The stars twinkling in the sky and the sea flowing placidly ask him to emulate their example. They try to impress upon him the supreme need of Self-dependence.

Weary of myself, and sick of asking
 What I am, and what I ought to be,
 At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me

Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.
 And a look of passionate desire
 O'er the sea and to the stars I send :
 'Ye who from my childhood up have calmed me,
 Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!.

Arnold further compares the life to a ship voyaging on a unchartered sea. He wist fully watches the tranquil sea and prays to it that he may share its tranquility to get rid of all despair and a sense of frustration which were an inevitable lot in the Victorian age. He addresses the sea and stars, which have solaced him since his childhood. He seeks consolation from them even now. Nature, he hopes is symbolised by the sea and stars, which will assuage his aching heart and resolve his doubts and perplexed questioning.

He also longs for a carefree and severe life like the sea and stars. They are self-dependent. That's why Arnold asks to live as they.

From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven,
Over the lit sea's unquiet way,
In the rustling night-air came the answer :
'Wouldst thou be as these are? Live as they.'

Thus, the greatness of Arnold lies in his powerful and beautiful application of moral ideas to life, - to the question : How to live. Arnold advises to take refuge from human troubles in the example of Nature. It is in this sense one of the best examples of 'a criticism of life'. Moreover, Arnold is tired of his age and seeks refuge in the company of Nature, criticising the life of Victorians. Thus it also serves an example of 'a criticism of life in the Victorian age. Arnold uses the sea as a symbol of serenity, eternity, faith and melancholy. Here sea and stars stand for tranquility and self-dependence. He turns to Nature and wants to become vast like Nature. Nature will exercise a salutary and magical influence upon the poet. The stars and sea are objects of Nature. They tell us how to live in the age of doubt and despair. Every object of Nature is independent of others and does not feel weak and miserable at its own suffering. They perform the tasks assigned to them by God calmly and quietly. In this way ^{the} poet, learns a lesson of

self-dependence from Nature and asks to follow Nature. He resigns himself to his lot as he listens to the voice of God quiet distinctly. He finds that his inner voice is similar to the voice of God, H.C.Duffin comments :

In the earlier poem, self-dependence, he had identified the soul with the self, and had decided that only by living as undistracted as the stars of heaven, can man be himself and possess his soul. This leads into the quietism which is, poetically, Arnold's ideal. He like the world, has chosen the path of work, action, success, but feels attraction of the contemplative life"....³⁴

Arnold represents full spirit of age and examines the ills besetting the life and society of his time. But he blends his criticism with a fine poetic sensibility and gives a beautiful artistic expression. 'Self-Dependence' has truth of substance which is marked by simplicity, clarity, aim, sagacity and largeness.

'Self-Dependence' is a lyrical poem abounding in slow musical cadences, sweet melody and a rhythmic flow. The musical effect is enhanced by the repetition the consonant /s/ in the series of words, 'vessel's', 'stand', 'bears', 'forwards', in the following line :

"At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
Forwards, forwards, o'er the starlit sea.

Moreover pictorial quality is found in 'star-sown vault of heaven', 'And the sea its long moon-silvered roll',

'starlit sea'. Arnold makes apt use of symbols and imagery. The sea and stars stands for objects of self-dependence. Nature stands for peace and Vessel for life. Images in the following lines are appealing.

And the sea its long moon-silvered roll
or
From the intense, clear, star-sown vault of heaven

The stanza is a quatrain. Each lines has four feet, which in their nature are anapaestic, but convertible into iambs, and sometimes, as in the first two feet of 1.4 in to trochees. Line 13 is full of spondees in

From the intense clear star-sown valut of heaven

We can note the effect produced by spondee. Each adjective is stressed and loaded with a strength and meaning and fused with energy. There is often an extra unaccented syllable at the end of a line. The second line rhymes with the fourth.

'Self-Dependence', abounds a number of figures of speech. The metaphor is kept in

At this vessel's prow I stand, which bears me
moreover

"Calm me, ah, compose me to the end!" is personification. Thus 'Self-Dependence' is one of the fine examples of Arnold Concept of criticism of life. It has a truth of substance and felicity of expression.

2. DOVER BEACH

Arnold's 'Dover Beach' is one of the fine pieces of verse-criticism of contemporary life and society. It is an example of Arnold's concept of criticism of life. The gloom, joylessness, despair, the loss of faith and excessive reliance on the scientific and materialistic formulas have been exposed to the poet's critical attack. Arnold used the Natural landscape symbolically for conveying the moral instruction. That's why J.D.Jump comments : "As far as it is possible for a single short lyric to do so it represents the main movement of the mind the last quarter of a century".³⁵

In 'Dover Beach' Arnold describes the tranquil English channel at Dover. The tide was full and the moonlight was reflected on the water. The poet asked his beloved to listen to the harsh sound of waves alternatively advancing and retreating and carrying away the pebbles from the sea-beach and fling them back to the beach. The poet wanted his beloved to notice how the pebbles move along with the waves of the sea. The process of advancing and retreating continues ceaselessly. In spite of harsh sound there is a rhythm in it. The poet found a note of sadness in the rhythmic movement. He recalls that the famous tragic playwright Sophocles also heard a note of sadness in the waves of the Aegaeon sea,

which symbolised for him the rise and fall in human life. It is a noble and profound application of ideas to life.

Sophocles long ago
 Heard it on the Aegæan, and it brought
 Into his mind the turbid ebb and flow
 Of human misery; we
 Find also in the sound a thought,
 Hearing it by this distant northern sea.

Then, Arnold returns to the present and remarks that melancholy sound of the sea produces in him thought about the suffering in human life and the miserable lot of man on this earth. Thus, both Sophocles and Arnold experience the same lot of human misery on this earth.

In his essay on 'Wordsworth', Arnold says : "The great poet receives his distinctive character of superiority, from his application, under the conditions immutably fixed by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth; from his application, I say to his subject whatever it may be of the ideas

on man, on nature and on human life
 (Essay on Wordsworth)

It is Arnold's application of ideas to life, that contributes to the criticism of life.

Arnold next, compares the sea with religion. He considers the sea as a symbol of religious faith. Once the

sea of faith was full. People in the past had a deep religious faith. But in the Victorian age, the sea of faith has run dry. People are sceptical. It is now leaving the world barren and dry. With the decline of religion men are getting more and more materialistic. When the waves of the sea recede, pebbles on the dry shore are exposed. The religious faith declined and the loss of higher values entailed miseries doubts, despair, and dull materialistic life. Doubts and despair disturbed the tranquil and harmonious life, which was fortified against such evils by higher religious values. It is nothing but the situation of Arnold's own age. Thus, it is a criticism of life in the Victorian age. What Arnold observed was true.

The Sea of Faith
 Was once, too, at the full, and round earth's shore
 Lay like the folds of a bright girdle furl'd.
 But now I only hear
 Its melancholy, long, withdrawing roar,
 Retreating, to the breath
 Of the night-wind, down the vast edges drear
 And naked shingles of the world.

Arnold compares and contrasts the religious situation of the Victorian age with the previous age when people believed in the religion fully, and finds that it is declining. Arnold offers a solution to the problem by describing the situation in the world.

Ah, love, let us be true
To one another! for the world, which seems
To lie before us like a land of dreams,
So various, so beautiful, so new,
Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;
And we are here as on a darkling plain
Swept with confused alarms of struggle and flight,
Where ignorant armies clash by night.

Arnold warns against the situation and advises to be loyal and faithful in love because what around them is dreamy and illusionary world. Love is the only source of solace in life. In such uncongenial atmosphere of disbelief and incertitude, Arnold says that the only thing that endures is love. Arnold suggest that with the help of true love man can live well. Arnold finds to his horror that the traditional values and religion are fast crumbling down. There is no joy or comfort anywhere. In such a state of chaos and disintegration, Arnold hugs the found belief that love can sustain mankind. For love is unchanging.

The world has lost its joy, love, security, peace. The world is a darkling plain. In this world men are fighting in the dark, completely ignorant whom they are fighting against, and what exactly they are fighting for. It is nothing but the Victorian situation. It is a cross-section of Victorian, life and hence it is 'a criticism of life'. Arnold does not take the Victorian age lightly. From the beginning the tone is gloomy, melancholy and sat and serious enough.

It is a criticism of life in a sense that what Arnold described in his essay on Byron. He says "Truth and seriousness of substance and matter, felicity and perfection of diction and manner, as these are exhibited in the best poets, are what constitute a criticism life made in conformity with the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty". (Essay on Byron). Taking in to account the criteria mentioned above 'Dover Beach' has a truth of substance. It is marked by reality, aim, melancholy, intensity, vastness. The reality in a sense that what Arnold describes is a true to the Victorian age. Aim in sense that Arnold has specific intention to expose the deficiencies of the Victorian age. Intensity a sense that the tragic vision of the world gets darkened for example

"Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light,
Nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain".

vastness in sense that personal becomes universal in the poem.

Truth of substance is a expressed with a superb artistic skill and deft craftsmanship. The abstract thinking is closely linked with an actual personal ~~situation~~ situation and is conveyed through concrete descriptions and imagery. The poem has a psychological depth of feeling and a universally applicable thought content. And both are presented in a skillful artistic manner.

Thus 'Dover Beach' has truth of matter and felicity of expression. It is nothing but a criticism of life.

3. RESIGNATION

Resignation is a reflective and philosophical poem that expresses Arnold's philosophy of life. In it, travelogue and philosophy run side by side. It is one of the best examples of Arnold's concept of 'poetry as a criticism of life'. In this poem Arnold praises the virtue of 'Resignation' i.e. being resigned in spirit to the will of God. The poet asks his sister, Jane Foster to follow the principle of 'Resignation' which is obvious in the natural objects. The mood of the poet is sad but doesn't wish his melancholy to settle on others. 'Peace of mind' - and sad lucidity of 'soul', he prays for and he acquired them after an effort'. 'Resignation' is a noble and profound application of ideas to life. It is the result of Arnold's powerful use of ideas. This poem has a truth of substance which is marked by simplicity, aim definiteness and sagacity. The sombre tone of philosophy of 'Resignation' marks the style throughout. That's why R.D.Trividi call it a poem that reveals "criticism of life, He says :

Though Arnold's definition of poetry as a criticism of life limits the province of poetry, most of his poetry answers to that definition. Like Wordsworth, he was frankly a didactic poet. What is his criticism of life, his philosophy, his teaching. It is a sombre philosophy and its teaching may be summed up in one word : Resignation. Though he had assimilated the Greek spirit. Though he had assimilated the Greek spirit, there is one important difference between him and the Greeks. There is the little of the Greek joy of life in his poetry. its dominant characteristics is an elemental note of sadness. According to him the secret of joy is not joy but peace (Resignation). A peace he saw was difficult to attain in the hurly-burly of the age. Like Hamlet he found the time out of joint. He was saddened by the spectacle of chaotic creeds, disinterested lives, commercialism and moral degradation, and in his heart of hearts longed for a simpler and less sophisticated age³⁶.

Arnold describes various features of philosophy of 'Resignation' practiced by various type of men. In the beginning of the poem, Arnold cites the examples of those travellers who are not disturbed by metaphysical questions. They are essentially men of action. They are like 'pilgrims proceeding to Macca', the dauntless Crusaders, the Goths and Huns, who are ready to stake everything, in fact, even their life, to attain their goal. All these people had assigned to themselves to the some tasks. They all sought their goal. And once they attained it, they could have peace and satisfication. Hence, they pray for achieving the goal or death.

To die be given us, or attain!
Fierce work it were, to do again.

Arnold describes, then, another type of men who are not boisterous men of action they believe in the principle of quiet 'Resignation'. They are free and can enjoy peace. They know how to control their mind and passions. They are not subjected to the surroundings or the spirit of the age. In short, they behave in accordance with the principles of 'Resignation'. Arnold wants his sister to practice the philosophy of quiet and unambitious people. She must abstain from a life of hectic activity.

These, Fausta, ask no this; nor thou,
Time's chafing prisoner, ask it now!

Moreover, poet recalls the walking trip which he and his sister had taken ten years go. Arnold speaks about four attitudes to life and experience : the pilgrims who are constantly moving in the face of enormous odds; the philosophically trained men who believe in a life of quiet Resignation, which is synonymous with stoical forbearance; the sensationalists like Fausta; and Arnold, who is a severe believer in the cult of 'Resignation'.

Arnold reminds Fausta the situation they observed ten years ago and notices her that in course of ten years Nature has undergone no change whatever. The brook murmuring, the sun light, banks covered with grass are the same. Arnold

also tells his sister the case of gypsies who follow the philosophy of resignation. Gypsies are wanderers. They don't have permanent homes, and wherever they live for a while they leave traces about themselves on the grass. Wanderers as they are, they may visit the same spot for the second or third time. They recognize the same spot. Their children gather round the fire exactly in the same manner as their ancestors did in the past. There has been no change in the pattern of life. They live exactly like their ancestors. Death rings down a curtain upon their earthly sorrows, their trial and tribulations.

And they will rub through, if they can,
 To-morrow on the self-same plan,
 Till death arrive to supersede,
 For them, vicissitude and need.

Arnold speaks of superiority of a poet to the average run of people. The poet has a keener observation and more sensitive and sympathetic mind. He loves mankind. He can shed his egoism and overcome personal interests. What he should do is to think as much of mankind as of Nature. He watches a mighty king, who inspires his subjects with his words. He watches beautiful woman with as much interest and admiration. But he feels no lust for them. He mixes freely with common men, watches their joys and sorrows, their triumph and defeats. He watches men and women engaged in

various occupations. He identifies himself with them and never feels that he is isolated. He meditates upon human life - its joys and sorrows, which compel his tears. He also watches and reflects on Nature, which has been living for thousands of years. The life of Nature is unending. The secret of Nature is not joy but peace and tranquility.

The general life, which does not cease,
Whose secret is not joy, but peace.

Here the greatness of a poet lies in his powerful use of ideas to the subject. Arnold as a philosopher of 'Resignation' has been best illustrated in these lines. But Fausta is not convinced. She objects against his comments. Arnold tries to justify them and seeks a chance to reflect upon the general lot of humanity. he says that human emotions like interest hope, remorse, grief and joy are ephemeral and the vast World we live in outlives them all. Misery is the inevitable lot of mankind. Man finds the world in a state of flux. His hopes in most cases remain unfulfilled. Knowing full well that death is round the corner, and man still nurses hopes and plans.

Nature has no hopes and desires, and therefore, she does not suffer from bitter disappointments. She has ceaseless and continuous life. Nature and Universe are synonymous. Hence, Nature knows no death or decay.

Poet asks Fausta to leave hectic life and follow Nature.

Yet, Fausta, the mute turf we tread,
The solemn hills around us spread,
This stream which falls incessantly,
The strange-scrawl'd rock, the lonely sky,

Thus, man should learn of lesson of peaceful existence from Nature.

In this way, the poem is vindication of the philosophy of 'Resignation'. The quality of 'Resignation' is purely Arnoldian. Character and setting are well defined. Arnold is Wordsworthian in his attitude to Nature. But unlike Wordsworth Arnold compares man with Nature. It has a truth of substance marked by philosophy of 'Resignation'. Superiority of substance is given by his simple, clear and objective view of Nature. It is Arnold's universal, broad and sound representation of things in the Nature. It has a wholeness and perfection. It is a lovely lyric also may be enjoyed for its diction, felicity of expression and the description of the beauty of Nature rather than the philosophy of 'Resignation'. It has fluidity of movement.

That general life, which does not cease,
Whose secret is not joy, but peace.

The poem is written in octosyllabic couplets, i.e. rhyming couplets of verses containing four feet each. But the

lines are not necessary end stopped - i.e., every line does not necessarily have a full pause at the end, which may often be shifted into next verse or at an earlier point in its own verse.

Thus, 'Resignation' to Fausta is a Criticism of life. It has a truth of substance, felicity of diction and manner. It is also a blending of objective life of Nature and poet's imagination. It is also noble and profound application of ideas to life. It is powerful and beautiful application of moral ideas, - to the question : How to live. It is a critical penetration into the life of Nature. Moreover, it is one of the best illustrations of Arnold's philosophy of 'Resignation'. It has a grace of lucidity and fluidity of manner. There is a purity and integrity of thought. That why it is 'a criticism of life'.

4. MEMORIAL VERSES

'Memorial Verses' is an elegiac poem. Arnold found in the death of a prominent man or some beloved person, a truly poetic situation to write on. However, while mourning the death of a particular person, he finds an occasion to reflect on the tragedy of human life in general and to comment on the whole contemporary situation. The death of an individual provides him an opportunity to offer his

'criticism of life' and to muse over the condition of humanity in general and the destiny of man on this earth. The dual tendency of mourning a personal loss and lamenting the fate of man, characterises almost all his elegies.

'Memorial Verses' commemorates not only Wordsworth's death but also of two other great poets of that time, Goethe and Byron. It conforms to Arnold's ideal of poetry being a criticism of life and pinpoints the ideal function of a poet i.e. his 'healing power'. Praise and criticism occur simultaneously. Thus the poem has both personal and general implications.

The poem begins with a reference to the death of Goethe, Byron and Wordsworth. Arnold considers these three to be the greatest poets of the 19th century and mourns their death. Byron died in 1824. He was not a teacher in a strict sense. But he fought valiantly against all kinds of cant and hypocrisy. His force and energy were titanic. With fierce force he waged war against orthodox morality. It was this crusade that commanded everybody's respect and admiration.

He taught us little; but our soul
 Had felt him like the thunder's roll.
 With shivering heart the strife we saw
 Of passion with eternal law;
 And yet with reverential awe
 We watch'd the fount of fiery life
 Which served for that Titanic strife.

Arnold has stated his criteria of greatness of a poet in his essay on 'Wordsworth'. He writes :

Long ago, in speaking of Homer, I said that the noble and profound application of ideas to life is the most essential part of poetic greatness. I said that a great poet receives his distinctive character of superiority from his application, under the conditions immutably fixed by the laws of poetic beauty and poetic truth, from his application, I say, to his subject, whatever it may be of the ideas.

On man, on nature, and on human life.

Arnold's greatness lies in his noble and profound application of ideas to the life of three great poets of that time, including Goethe, Wordsworth and Byron.

Moreover, Arnold praises Goethe. He calls Goethe "Europe's sagest head". Goethe's death was regarded as a sad end of the wisest man of Europe. He was according to Arnold a 'physician of the iron age' who diagnosed the seekness and disease of contemporary materialistic age. He discerned the wounds and ailments of the 'suffering humanity' and pointed out various maladies of his age. He observed the illusory hopes and feverish emotion excitement created by the French Revolution and Napoleon's ambition to conquer the whole Europe. It was 'dying hour' for Europe. Realising the threats posed to human life and observing the ~~spiritual~~ and cultural malaise in Europe, he advised people to 'take refuge' in Art which alone could, with its power of truth provide a source

of happiness to the ailing humanity.

Arnold here indirectly tells us how to live in the world marked by doubt, uncertainty, materialism, distractions, disputes fears etc. It is Arnold's beautiful and powerful application of moral ideas to life. This constitutes also to his 'criticism of life'. Arnold in his essay on 'Wordsworth' writes :

It is important, therefore, to hold fast to this : that poet lies is at bottom a criticism of life, that the greatness of a poetry in his powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life, - to the question : How to live. Morals are often treated in a narrow and false fashion". (Essay on Wordsworth)

Arnold says :

"The end is everywhere,
Art still has truth, take refuge there!"

Arnold for most of the time considers himself as a central character of the situation he created in his poetry and offers solution to the problems people are facing. G. Robert strange comments "The other distinguishing mark of Arnold's poetry is desolation is his ability to transcend a purely focus by placing himself in a historical context or seeing himself as a symbol of man in the modern world"³⁷.

Arnold admires Goethe's poetic vision, his world view, his concern for suffering humanity and his prescription of Art as a way out of spiritual crisis which Europe was

facing. In this way Arnold's description of Byron and Goethe is his powerful application of ideas. It has a truth and seriousness of substance and manner because it was a reality in Europe and the whole poem is marked by their nobility, sublimity and serenity. Arnold also praises Goethe :

Physician of the iron age,
 Goethe has done his pilgrimage.
 He took the suffering human race,
 He read each wound, each weakness clear;
 And stuck his finger on the place,
 And said : Thou ailest here, and here!
 He look'd Europe's dying hour
 Of fitful dream and feverish power;
 His eye plunged down the weltering strife,
 The turmoil of expiring life.

Like Goethe Wordsworth also lived in an age of spiritual degeneration, doubt, despair and joylessness. Both found to their distress that people were steeped in materialism. It is nothing but 'a criticism of life in the Victorian age'.

He too upon a wintry clime
 Had fallen-on this iron time
 Of doubts, disputes, distractions, fears.
 He found us when the age had bound
 Our souls in its benumbing round.

People living in the age of Wordsworth had no vision of beauty. They were leading material life. Wordsworth persuaded them to follow Nature. Arnold has a firm belief in the power Wordsworth's poetry. Moreover, Arnold laments that the loss of Wordsworth's death is irreparable.

In this way, 'Memorial Verses' is noble and profound application of ideas to life. It is marked by nobility of the central figures and sublimity of thought. It tells us how to live in the world marked by materialistic tendencies. It is nothing but the criticism of life. It has a truth and seriousness of substance and matter. But all this is expressed in a magnificent manner. It is a critical penetration into the life of three poets. All this contributes to the criticism of life. In this poem truth of substance is marked by reality, universality, praise and criticism, vastness, deep human concern and respect. Arnold in 'Memorial Verses' exposed reality, when he says :

He look'd Europe's dying hour.

It has vastness in a sense that the range of his poetic genius covers all Europe and its happenings. We find praise and criticism occurring simultaneously. Arnold praises three poets and criticises people living in Europe including Germany and England. Arnold's deep human concern is obvious when he says :

The end is everywhere,
Art still has truth, take refuge there!

Arnold respects, Wordsworth, Byron and Goethe when he says :

"And yet with reverential awe".

'Memorial Verses' is full of images, It is marked by rhythmic quality. It has a lucid style. which seems suitable for his critical spirit. Thats why Carl Dawson comments :

Memorial Verses' first printed in Fraser's magazine, is in that vein of poetical criticism so distinctive of Arnold.... Arnold is rarely happier than in his criticism in his verse. Their peculiar charm is that they always penetrate to the heart of the writer criticised, and always bring into prominence his lesson to the world. Thus in the 'Memorial Verses', it is the Titanic Force of Byron, the vast intellectual sweep and penetrating sagacity of Goethe, and the soothing calm of Wordsworth, that he insists upon; and probably nowhere within equal compass is there such illuminating criticism of these writers. It is a remarkable illustration of Arnold's fine taste that he never in these critical verses forgets the difference between prose and poetry³⁸.

In this way, 'Memorial Verses' is one of the best examples of criticism of life. This poem has truth of substance and felicity of expression.

5. A SOUTHERN NIGHT

'A Southern Night' is an elegy on the death of Arnold's brother, William Delafield and his wife, Fanny. Arnold's brother died on his way home to England from India, at Gibraltar, April 9th, 1859. His wife had died shortly before in India. He mourns the deaths of his brother and his wife. The poem reaches the depths of meditative pathos, without ~~any~~ extravagance in display of grief.

The poet is on the Mediterranean coast, so full of corn fields vines and olives. But once on such a quiet moonlit night, the poet was much vexed in spirit. He is sad with the memory of his brother.

But now that trouble is forgot;
The memory, thy paid, to-night,
My brother! and thine early lot,
Possess me quite.

The memory of his brother death makes poet sad. The poet describes the circumstances in which his brother was dead. His brother on his way to England left at Gibraltar. He was lowered in a boat, as his health broken down. He was landed on the Gibraltar when turned very serious, he was buried there. But his wife is buried further away under Himalayas. It is a surprise for the poet that English people who spend their time in incessant activity should die in such quiet places as the East, Egypt and Mediterranean. The poet knows the sages died in Himalayas, or a crusader, or a troubadour or the sweet heart of some pirate dying on the Mediterranean side. Their death in such far off places seems unnatural! He emphasizes that they should have died in England.

Strange irony of fate, alas.
Which, for two jaded English saves,
When from their dusty life they pass
Such peaceful graves!.

Moreover, Arnold thinks that his brother and his wife had certain traits of character which brought them nearer to God. The resting places of William and Fanny are in natural and solitary spots. Arnold thinks that both of them part took of the life of divinity, of which Nature was also a part. Arnold compares and contrasts the English men with contemplative like Indian sages and medieval romantics. He remembers that these two who are dead were so gentle and good that they, as much as those others, were allied to Divine.

Further Arnold criticises the way of living by Englishmen. He feels that it is wrong that William and his wife should be buried away from their own country, because, 'We English' who 'never once possess our souls' ought to lie amid the traffic of cities. It is a criticism of life in the Victorian age.

In cities should we English lie,
Where cries are rising ever new,
And men's incessant stream goes by
We who pursue.

This poem is nothing but the speeches of a poet mourning on their death. But it must be note worthy that it is mourning by the poet, who has a critical penetration into their life and death. Both William and Fanny died but the poet has elevated them to divinity. The poet regrets the fact that a sense of pressure of the world prevents him from

realising 'our best selves'. Reflecting upon the lives of his brother and sister-in-law, he sees them as standing out from the ruck of their bustling contemporaries, carrying the gentility and tranquility of a slower world into the unromantic business of their time. Nature is no longer 'our!'.

In cities should we English lie.

But William and his wife had remained in harmony with Nature :

Mild O'er her grave, ye mountains shine!
Gently by his, ye waters, glide!
To that in you which is divine
They were allied.

Thus, 'A Southern Night', has a truth and seriousness of substance and matter. In addition to it, Arnold has achieved the felicity and perfection of diction and manner. Personal sorrow becomes universal when the poet expresses it in a beautiful manner. The poems is rich in imagery and symbols.

In this way, 'A Southern Night' proves as Arnold's example of his concept criticism of life because it has both truth of substance and felicity of manner.

6. A SUMMER NIGHT

'A Summer Night' is among Arnold's poems that presents a criticism of life. It contains a profound philosophical world view. Arnold criticises the way of people live in this world - either as madmen or slaves and points out a better way of life, the way of living in the soothing contact of Nature, above common human aspirations and activities. He brings out the contrast between human life of hectic activity and higher life of Nature. According to him nature can have a soothing influence on the troubled spirits of man. It is a powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life, - to the question : How to live. Arnold suggests to follow nature to attain the peace of soul.

Arnold describes a natural scene and expresses his personal reaction to it as a human being. The poet is loitering on a moon lit-night street, which is deserted. He hears the sound of his own foot steps. He is conscious of his loneliness. He glances at the windows of a house which is shut. He is eager to see his beloved but windows seem to frown at him. He therefore, grows sad and ~~per~~ve. The closed windows symbolise for him the heartlessness and dreariness of the world around him. The contrast between human life and the life of Nature is presented through the deserted streets and

the whole tract of heaven visible in dark obscurity behind the moon. It is a beautiful application of ideas on Nature, which contributes to criticism of life.

Next, the poet describes a similar moonlit night scene of the past. He was on the sea-shore and the moonlight was reflected upon the sea. The headlands were visible. The moon light was also as bright as that of the sun. The spring tide was at the full. The houses were also bathed in the moonlight. But the mood of the poet remains the same on both night, in spite of natural scenes around him. The poet felt that he suffered intensely from despair, restlessness and confusion.

Moreover, moonlight is presented as if it is inquiring about poet's condition. It asks whether a poet has the same heart as it was earlier night. He is completely involved in mood and could not get rid of it. Soon, the mood of despair decreases but couldn't leave him completely. He is hesitated and could not control himself. He is the victim of Victoria uncertainty. He describes the life of confused human beings and offers his criticism of life in the Victorian age.

Arnold divides human beings into two groups, slaves and madmen'. First, Arnold describes the life prisoners, for the world is a vast prison. They work like

slaves in the pitiless heat of the sun. Their sensibilities are deadened. They cannot think of anything beyond the four walls of the prison, where they are forced to live. Life of them is meaningless and a colossal mockery. It is Arnold's gloomy and pessimistic world view. It is a criticism life in the Victorian life. Prisoners follow mechanical routine of the world year after year without rest and joy. Gloom and despair are their inevitable lot. But they could not overcome the state of affairs. Death is the only relief for them. They have a cursed life - a life of suffering and bondage. Arnold describes another type of human beings. They are few in number :

And the rest, a few,
Escape their prison and depart
On the wide ocean of life anew.
There the freed prisoner, where'er his heart.

Unlike prisoners, they don't remain confined to the narrow prison of world nor they live the life of blind conformity to its customs and laws. They try to live a free life, and sail on the vast sea of life in whatever direction they wish. They live a life of mariners on a unchartered sea, who are unaware of their goals. They receive violent storms with a frolic welcome. Such people are not slaves in bondage. Their is a wayward life. They may be called madmen. They have no regard for materialism. They are the architects of their own destiny.

Arnold contrasts between slaves and madmen to offer his criticism of life. Nature acts as background and makes him sad but gives him an opportunity to meditate upon the lives of human beings on this earth.

After describing the lives of slaves and madmen Arnold suggests another way of life unlike the ways of slaves and madmen.

Is there no life, but these alone?
Madmen or slave, must man be one?

Arnold in this way first prepares a background to offer his criticism of life. He described beautiful natural scenes and his reaction to it. He also described two types of human beings, madmen or slaves. Arnold then suggests a good alternative to the life of madman or slave in the form of the life of high, clear, and plain heavens above. Indirectly Arnold suggests to follow nature. It is his counsel to the human beings how to live in the world. In the pattern suggested there is a plainness and clearness without the shadow of strain. Nature alone can offer such a life.

But I will rather say that you remain
A world above a man's head, to let him see
How boundless might his soul's horizons be,
How vast, yet of what clear transparency!
How it were good to abide there, and breathe free;
How fair a lot to fill
Is left to each man still!

Arnold says that man should draw his lesson from different objects of Nature. The vast sky above is pure and calm. It performs its daily tasks and never gets agitated. The stars that twinkle in the sky never get agitated, yet they perform their work calmly and steadfastly. The sky is a picture of unblemished beauty and peace. The sky is therefore, much superior to earth where man has toil and moil, but no rest and peace. It is a blessing to watch pure sky and emulate its noble example. To watch the sky is to widen the narrowed soul of man.

What Arnold described is true of the Victorian age. Carl Dawson comments :

'A summer Night', gives with greater completeness and also with greater sadness, Arnold's gloomy view of life. The alternative is that the human being must be either a 'madman' steering some false course across the ocean of life till he steers himself to ruin, or a 'slave' bending languidly over 'some unmeaning task work'. This in Arnold's opinion, is the case of his own generation, because the old motives which gave dignity meaning to life have lost their force, and those which have taken their place are mean and low. His indictment against his own time is that it either neglects altogether the necessity of nourishing the spiritual nature, and bends its whole energies to a task work unmeaning except as subservient to spiritual needs; or else it attempts to feed the spirit on the more leavings of bygone ages, the husks which the swine should it³⁹.

In this way "A Summer Night" is a Arnold's criticism of life in general and in conformity to his definition to poetry as criticism of life under the conditions fixed for such a criticism by the laws of poetic truth and poetic beauty. It has truth and high seriousness of substance and matter, felicity of manner. It is a powerful and beautiful application of moral ideas to life to the question : How to live. Arnold tells us to follow nature. It is noble and profound application of ideas to life.

The poem began as a description of poet's personal condition but ended with the reflection on human life in general. It is an elegiac poem which nicely blends the personal and the universal, the worldly and natural. Instead of advocating a life of passivity and resignation, he here favours active life lived in the soothing and ennobling contact of Nature. Arnold seeks to liberate the soul of man from the commitment of the world, and elevate his vision to Heavens and thus widens the prospects of his soul.

It is a philosophical poem which reveals the wide sweep of Arnold's imagination. Worldly human life, the natural landscape, and the heavenly or higher spiritual are all encompassed within its scope. It is nothing but to realise an ideal life of Nature.

Arnold has expressed his philosophy of life in an excellent manner.

Thus, it is not only a criticism of life in the Victorian age. It has truth and seriousness of substance. Sublimity of thought, felicity of diction and manner which also contribute to criticism of life. It is noble and profound application of ideas to life. Serenity on Nature is used to achieve greater effect. In this way it is an example of criticism of life.

7. THE SCHOLAR GIPSY

'The Scholar Gipsy' is one of his greatest elegies that illustrates Arnold's theory of poetry as 'a criticism of life'. It testifies to the representative character of his poetry and conveys his views on the materialistic tendencies of his age. It is full of fine descriptions of natural scenery, melancholy tone and presents the poet's world view, and his criticism of life. It combines fanciful treatment of an old tale from Granvill's "The Art of Dogmatizing" and a realistic portrayal of contemporary life. Arnold adapted an old story for the purpose of his poem to offer his criticism of life. Arnold's own search for the scholar represents his pursuit of an ideal. Granvill's story is free from the moralising but Arnold's poem contains much pensive moralising. Arnold's 'The Scholar Gipsy' serves as one of the

best examples of his concept a criticism of life. It is also noble and profound application of ideas to life. It also conveys people how to live in the world which is marked by materialism. It is Arnold's critical penetration into the life of Scholar Gipsy. It is also blending of objective life and poets imagination, Arnold's method of comparison and contrast proves useful because it gives him chance to compare the Victorian age with earlier ones and thus to expose deficiencies.

Arnold is weary of materialism and scepticism of the age. His reflections centre round a character known as Scholar Gipsy. The Scholar Gipsy represents to him a man interested in the study of Gipsy way of life. It is a pastoral poem and Arnold has not merely followed the Greek pastoral conviction of the mourning of the death of one shepherd by another, or merely describing the rural landscape. He has modernised the poem by expressing a lament not for an individual but for an ideal, and offering consolation in the form of the perpetuity of that ideal. He uses the landscape for symbolic purpose. It not only a lament but also a criticism of life in the Victorian age and a condemnation of the materialistic world from which the scholar has to escape. It has a truth of substance and felicity of expression. Arnold's view of things is marked by

clarity, sagacity, melancholy, criticism and insecurity. Arnold offers solution to the problem faced by Scholar Gipsy.

The poem opens with pastoral atmosphere and scenery around Oxford. The poet addresses the shepherd, which reminds of the poems pastoral character. The poet asks him to resume his quest of the Scholar Gipsy, who is supposed to be wandering around the country side. He describes beautiful scenery around Oxford with scarlet poppies, pale pink convolvulus and creeper. Then he wishes to read a story of the Scholar written in Granvills's book.

'The Scholar Gipsy' was a poor talented Oxford Scholar with great imaginative powers. The scholar failed in his attempts to get material gains through patrons, and so he left Oxford and friendship there. He went to live among gipsies to learn their intuitive wisdom. He roamed with them all over the world.

He could gain little in their company. His hopes and aspirations were not fulfilled and he never returned to Oxford to join the company of fellow students. When the Scholar Gipsy met to his friends, he told them that the gipsies knew the art of controlling the brains of men and channelize them in whatever direction they liked. He was trying to learn the secret of their art but never came back. But in the country side that the missing scholar had been

seen straying here and there. Some saw him sitting in Birkshire moors. But the maidens peasants, housewives and the poet himself saw roaming here and there.

The poet thinks that he must be dead as hundred years have ~~been~~ passed since his departure. But the poet expresses disbelief that physically he might be dead but for his ideal or eternal quest he could be alive. Nor can passage of time have brought any change in him. According to poet the Scholar Gipsy will not die because he is free from this world of perpetual conflicts and tensions. The Victorians died but the Scholar did not. It gives him chance to offer his criticism of life in the Victorian age.

No, no, thou hast not felt the laspse of hours!
 For what wears out the life of moral men?
 'Tis that from change to change their being rolls;
 'Tis that repeated shocks, again, again,
 Exhaust the energy of strongest souls
 And numb the elastic poers.
 Till having used our nerves with bliss and teen,
 And tired upon a thousand schemes our wit,
 To the just-pausing Genius we remit
 Our worn-out life; and are - what we have been.

He emphasizes the immortality of Scholar Gipsy because he did not involve himself in material pursuits or the sceptical attitude of his age. He cannot, therefore, die like other men. He is free from the cruel jaws of time and age. He has been immortalised in Granvill's book because he had steadfastness of purpose, a faith in the intuitive wisdom.

The scholar left the world very early when his powers of spirit were still fresh, and not wasted by being used in materialistic world around him. His soul remained steady fast, and not troubled by the sick fatigue and 'the languid doubt' of the modern world which baffled men of his Age and made their life miserable. The people of Arnold's age were torn by doubts, fears, distrust and distractions and lived fragmentary lives. They fluctuated between various extremities of doubt and hope, despair and joy, frustration and hectic activity. They lived fragmentary lives of divided aims and uncertain goals.

For early didst thou leave the world, with powers
 Fresh, undiverted to the world without,
 Firm to their mark, not spent on other things;
 Free from the sick fatigue, the languid doubt,
 Which much to have tried, in much been baffled, brings.
 O life unlike to ours!.

Moreover, Arnold presents 'criticism of life' in the Victorian age. According to him the scholar had a single aim or ideal in life, and waited for moments of illumination when this ideal could be fulfilled. On the other hand, the people in the Victorian Age were believers in several creeds and believed in them only half - heartedly. They never had any deeply felt religious faith, nor pinned their hopes on a clearly perceived ideal of life. Their schemes did not

materialize. Their uncertain aims and aspirations were not fulfilled. They suffered failure when they started new schemes every year, but all this resulted in disappointment.

They made no progress in life, and soon lost what they had already gained. Thus, their lives were futile, and unsuccessful. In this way, the poet has presented a searching analysis of the lives of people. The people of the Victorian age were unlike the Scholar Gipsy who had no aim in life. The people of the age are kept in background against which he will sketch the Scholar Gipsy ideally. In fact, it is poets attempt to realise an ideal life of the Scholar Gipsy. It is poet's critical penetration into the life of the Scholar Gipsy. It is a blending of objective life and poet's imagination. Arnold's view of things is marked by critical spirit and melancholy mood. Thus the Scholar Gipsy had nobility of character and purity of soul.

Thou waitest for the spark from heaven! and we,
 Light half-believers of our casual creeds,
 Who never deeply felt, nor clearly will'd,
 Whose insight never has borne fruit in deeds,
 Whose vague resolves never have been fulfill'd;
 For whom each year we see
 Breeds new beginnings, disappointments new;
 Who hesitate and falter away,
 And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day-
 Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it t

People of the Victorian age suffered much. Tennyson also suffered and recorded his sad experience in his

works. He has analysed human misery and traced its origin and growth, and the signs indicating it. He also tried to find a cure for the ills of his time.

Arnold reveals his primitive attitude, and contrasts the happy life of the past with the troubled life in the world around him. He tells about the Scholar Gipsy being man born in time when the minds of men were not affected by doubts, materialism and scientific rationalism; and in the absence of fears, distrust and distractions, the stream of life flowed gaily like 'the sparkling Thames'. The 'strange disease of modern life' with its sick hurry and divided aim's had not spread. That, is the life then was serene, healthy and joyful.

O born in days when wits were fresh and clear,
 And life ran gaily as the sparkling Thames;
 Before this strange disease of modern life,
 With its sick hurry, its divided aims,
 With its sick, hurry, its divided aims,
 Its heads o'ertax'd, its palsied hearts, was rife-

The society was not polluted in the past. Then the poet advises the Scholar Gipsy to avoid the contact of such society and fly away.

Fly hence, our contact fear!
 Still fly, plunge deeper in the bowering wood!
 Averse, as Dido did with gesture stern
 From her false friend's approach in Hades turn,
 Wave us away, and keep thy solitude!.

It is nothing but powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life - to the question : How to live? Arnold depicts the situation and offers the solution. That's why Henry Charles Duffin comments :

The thought that underlay Arnold's presentation of the immortal wonderer was that the living world was fit only to be stunned, that modern life was in itself 'a strange disease' which would in itself free spirit with doubt and despair⁴⁰.

Moreover, the poet advises the Scholar Gipsy to live in solitude away from the contact of human beings. He advises further that he should continue to have hope of achieving his ideal, and should remain engaged in the difficult quest of it. He should be guided by his free and uninhibited impulse, and enjoy the pastoral landscape around him. He should live in a solitary places where none may peruse him. The poet repeats his advice and says that he should fly the human society and avoid the 'feverish contact' with human beings.

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
 For strong the infection of our mental strife,
 Which, though it gives no bliss, yeat spoils for rest;
 And we should win thee from thy own fair life,
 Like us distracted, and like us unblest,
 Soon, soon thy cheer would die.

The poet asks to avoid all human contacts. The poet employs a simile to suggest the necessity of scholar's flight. He asks the Scholar Gipsy to fly like the Tyrian

trader when he saw the Greek traders coming in their ships full of trade goods.

In this way, 'The Scholar Gipsy is a criticism of life in a sense that it criticises the life of people in the Victorian age. It is moreover, noble and profound application of ideas to life. It answers to the question : How to live. It is a powerful and beautiful poetic application of moral ideas. It is a criticism of life in a sense that it has truth of substance and felicity of diction and manner. The truth of substance is marked by reality because Arnold describes the true Victorian situation. It is also marked by one definite aim i.e. to expose various defects of the age.

The whole poem is marked by melancholy mood which is Arnold's usual in spirit in most of his poems. The truth substance has a large human concern because he suggests to avoid human contact and to join the company of nature which is only source of purity. The ideas are expressed in a excellent manner.

Thus, the Scholar Gipsy serves as a criticism of life in the Victorian age. It has truth of substance and felicity of manner, and it is in this sense also appears a criticism of life.

8. THYRSIS

'Thyrsis' is a companion piece to 'The Scholar Gipsy'. Like 'The Scholar Gipsy' 'Thyrsis' also contains a 'criticism of life' in the Victorian age. It also contains a searching analysis of the human condition on this earth and an examination of the ills that beset humanity.

'Thyrsis' was occasioned by Arnold's visit to Oxford countryside after the death of his friend Arthur Hugh Clough. The recollections of his associations with Clough in the past when they roamed about the countryside and engaged together in the quest of knowledge and truth, produced nostalgic feelings in him. He was grieved over the death of his friend and his separation from him. He uses the device of recalling the past associations with his friend. The poet speaks as a shepherd with the name Corydon, who mourns the death of a fellow shepherd, Thyrsis. Arnold thus, sought an opportunity to offer his criticism of life by the way of mourning the death of his friend.

Coming after the death of Clough, Arnold remembers a beautiful Oxford atmosphere with the ale house and its hostess, chimney pipes and the hill with elm Tree. Arnold has presented a contrast between changes occurring in the world of human beings and the permanence of the world of nature. he

also presented recollections of his associations with his friend. Then Arnold points out the significance of elm tree which symbolized the ideal of Truth and Knowledge. The Tree or the ideal of Truth was the object of his eternal quest. The poet cannot see the Tree in the absence of his friend, because he too has given up his quest of Truth owing to his absorption in the materialistic world of conflicts, doubts fears, hurry and purposeless struggles.

Now seldom come I, since came with him
That single elm - tree bright
Against the west - I miss! is it gone?

In this way, *Thyrsis* is a criticism of life in the Victorian age. It is also critical penetration in the life of Clough. The poet has considered the elm Tree an ideal of Truth and Knowledge and it is his attempt to realise the ideal of Truth and Knowledge. *Thyrsis* is thus the process of idealisation. It is a progress towards an ideal.

As Clough is dead, the parting from his friend has resulted in the loss of his constant contact with the countryside around Oxford, and this in turn, has led to decline in his poetic talents. Now he is wasting his energy in getting and spending. Moreover, Arnold gives the reasons for Clough's departure from Oxford and also from this world. It was evil condition of the world around him that caused a

gloomy and sombre tone of it. He compares the departure of Clough with the Cuckoo from the garden.

So have I heard the cuckoo's parting cry,
From the wet field, through the vext garden-trees,
Come with the volleying rain and tossing breeze:
The bloom is gone, and with the bloom go I!

Arnold implies that Clough left Oxford when he found the serene and joyous atmosphere disturbed by the storms of religious and intellectual controversies there. He took the leave of the joyless and spiritually gloomy surroundings of Oxford and went away. He also regrets the haste and impatience shown by Clough in going away from Oxford. He left Oxford due to the attitude of indifference and neglect of people towards Clough's poetry. But Arnold expresses his inability to please the ancient goddess and bring back his dead friend.

When Arnold again visits Oxford countryside he points out the change brought about in a natural landscape around Oxford. Arnold remembers the event when boatman's daughter unfastened their boat when he and his friend went to sail in it. After the death of Clough the poet is also becoming aware of his death. He is growing old and feels the approach of Death. His life is marked by melancholy and despair.

Laid pausefully upon life's headlong train;
 The foot less prompt to meet the morning dew,
 The heart less bounding at emotion new,
 And hope, once crush'd, less quick to spring again.

As the poet is growing old, the path that leads to Truth seems very long and difficult. He could now no more possess an ideal of Truth and knowledge. The mountain tops where the Truth is enthroned obscured by the misty air, seems to be very high and inaccessible. The world stands before him an impregnable fort and the strange and futile strife and the noise of the earth increases around him. The poet is envious of the friend who is enjoying a real serenity of death. The poet is thus, without a friend and he wants to welcome the death.

Of the long-batter'd world uplifts its wall;
 And strange and vain the earthly turmoil grows,
 And near and real the charm of thy repose,
 And night as welcome as a friend would fall.

But the Tree appears as a token of hope. The poet's youthful idealism remains unhampered even in old age. The tree revived his youthful ideal and he wishes to communicate the existence of the Tree on the hill. As he is dead, the poet could not communicate. He is sure that his friend is the purest and subtlest of souls that have ever dwelt in the company of Nature.

The poet remarks that Thyrsis has gone away to the southern country leaving him alone in the Oxford countryside.

But his feelings of despair are dispelled by the sight of Elm Tree standing on the hill. Arnold expresses belief in the fact that the Scholar Gipsy still haunts this place even after the death of Thyrsis. He is still wandering in the blossoming fields in the Oxford countryside. The poet thinks that the quest of Truth is eternal and continues even after the death of Thyrsis and the Scholar Gipsy. He seems to be inspired by the spiritual presence of the Scholar Gipsy around him. The Scholar Gipsy is engaged in the quest of the elusive and dimly light of Truth.

But the poet is also engaged in the quest of this light. He remarks that this light is not bought or sold in the market in exchange for money, houses rank, honours or flattery. It is difficult to acquire it. It requires constant patient and untiring efforts by seeker over a long period. The seeker must not feel fatigue, he is to continue the quest of it. The Scholar Gipsy, who is seeker after this light of Truth, has gone out of the bounds of human thought and the reach of mortals to continue his quest Arnold points out the singleness of purpose and firmness of devotion in the Scholar Gipsy, with which he continued his quest of Knowledge and Truth. It is nothing but the noble and profound application of ideas to life.

A fugitive and gracious light he seeks,
Shy to illumine; and I seek it too.
This does not come with houses or with gold,
With place, with honour, and a flattering crew;
'Tis not in the world's market bought and sold-

The Thyrsis was also engaged in the quest of Truth like the Scholar Gipsy during their stay at Oxford. People there didn't recognise Clough's merit and worth. The poet expresses belief in the immortality of Thyrsis and his eternal Nature of his quest of Truth.

The poet presents a criticism of the contemporary world and life which obstruct the free flow of his poetic energy. Thyrsis could not retain its joyful, quiet and simple tone for a long time because contentions and religious controversies raging among unhappy men of his time, especially the Oxford Movement which affected him deeply. Such controversies and his involvement in some of them, put a great strain on his poetic talent and caused an exhaustion of his poetic energy. But he always cherished the vision of Truth. His youthful idealism did not allow him to live in the company of men torn by worries and conflicts. Thus the poet points out that Thyrsis followed the ideal of the Scholar Gipsy by remaining engaged in the quest of Truth ceaselessly throughout his life.

What though the music of thy rustic flute
 Kept not for long its happy, country tone;
 Lost it too soon, and learnt a stormy note
 Of men contention-tost, of men who groan,
 Which task'd thy pipe too sore, and tired thy throat-

The poet also criticises the way of men living in cities. The poet rarely visits the Oxford countryside because the circumstances of his life have forced him to live in the noise and bustle of the city and get involved in the struggles and strifes there.

Too rare, too rare, grow now my visits here!
 'Mid city-noise, not, as with thee of yore,
 Thyrsis! in reach of sheep-bels is my home.

The poet asks him not to be discouraged or to faint in his quest of Truth. He indirectly advises, how to live. It is powerful and beautiful poetic application of moral ideas to life to the question : How to live. The poem ends with the poet's re-affirmation of his belief in the permanence of youthful ideal of Scholar Gipsy.

Why faintest thou? I wander'd till I died.
 Roam on! The light we sought is shining still,
 Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
 Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side.

In this way, Thyrsis is a criticism of life in the Victorian age. It is a noble and profound application of ideas to life. It is also a powerful and beautiful poetic

application of ideas, - to the question : How to live. It is moreover a criticism of life in a sense that it has Truth of substance and felicity of diction and manner. The Truth of substance is marked by sublimity, nobility, serenity, respect, quest of ideal melancholy, despair and materialism.

The poem is marked by the sublimity and nobility of the Thyrsis and Scholar Gipsy and by serenity of Nature. The poet has a deep respect and the 'Thyrsis' is the expression of respect and admiration for Clough. Arnold's poetry at the end is always directed towards something permanent i.e. the quest of Truth solution to the problem. The Truth of substance is marked by spirit of materialism and despair. The melancholy mood is usual to Arnold because it is his vision of the world. Then, it is the critical penetration into the lives of Clough and the Scholar Gipsy. It is a fine blending to objective life and poet's imagination. Though Dead, Clough and the Scholar Gipsy has been immortalised by the art of the poet. Thus, all these factors contribute to the criticism of life. Moreover the ideas are expressed lucidly. 'Thyrsis' serves as a companion to 'the Scholar Gipsy', A.D.Culler comments : "The two poems employ the same locale, they are written in the same stanza and the same pastoral mode and they were placed one after another in all of Arnold's collections"⁴¹.

The poem is written in a ten line stanza which was Arnold's own invention. But this stanza has a fairly close resemblance to that used by Keats in his 'Ode to A Nightingale'. Both poets have one line short. In Arnold's stanza, the sixth line consists of three feet only, while in Keats, the eighth line consists of three feet. The other lines are of five feet each in both poets. The rhyme scheme is different : In Arnold, we have a sextet.

In this way 'Thyrsis' also serves as a criticism of life in the Victorian age. It is also criticism of life in a sense that it has truth of substance and felicity of expression.

9. RUGBY CHAPEL

'Rugby Chapel' is among the most prominent of Arnold's elegiac poems. It is a personal elegy written to commemorate his father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, who was, the Headmaster of the famous Rugby school for a long period. He exerted a great influence on the life and thought of his son who had been a student in his school. However, like most he had been a student in his school. However, like most of Arnold's elegies, it does not confine itself to a personal element, but includes in it a lament on the common lot of humanity in this world, and offers a criticism of life in

general. It is one of the spiritual poems of Arnold's which deals with spiritual issues related to human life, over and above the merely physical ones. It is also vindication of the honour and reputation of Dr. Arnold. The poet wants to defend his father against calumnious attacks of persons. The theme of the quest of ideal is also discussed. Dr. Arnold is represented as a saviour of mankind.

In the beginning of the poem, poet describes cold and cheerless evening in November. The play ground of Rugby school is full to dead leaves. The boys are playing but the whole atmosphere is gloomy and melancholy. The poet's father was buried in the chapel. The poet recalls how years ago they used to pass the gloomy days in November in the cheerful company of his father. But the poet has a firm belief that his father's spirit must be engaged in some constructive work elsewhere. His must be at the moment, in some heavenly sphere doing some good. He must be carrying out God's command. His father played various roles as a friend, philosopher and a guide to mortal man on this earth.

Arnold gives an account of what type of life the mortal men lead on this earth. He offers a criticism of life in general. According to him, the most men live a life of purposeless and futile activity and are engaged in materialistic persuits. They move about aimlessly and are

absorbed in eating, drinking, gossiping, loving hating, earning and spending. They come from the dust and are, after their death, mingle in dust. They continue to wage aimless struggle and blind strife, achieving nothing. Having achieved little in life, they die or perish. They die unknown and unremembered. Such is the life of people who are selfish and self centred.

What is the course of the life
Of mortal men on the earth?—
Most men eddy about
Here and there—eat and drink,
Chatter and love and hate,
Waste and squander, are raised
Aloft, are hurl'd in the dust,

The poet describes another kind of men who are different from the earlier ones. According to him they are fired by a great enthusiasm to do something remarkable, and not to die without achieving anything. Such men do not want to live and die among the crowd of people leading a meaningless and purposeless life. They do not like to move aimlessly. They wish to perform some deed which may make them remembered even after death. Such people are eager to do something in their life. They are fond of personal achievements.

The poet gives an account of people like himself who have a definite aim or goal in their life, and try to

achieve it inspite of all the difficulties that may come in their way. Such people choose a path leading to some definite and clearly perceived goal. In the course to their achievement, they are ridiculed, criticised and condemned. But they continue their struggle without any interruption.

And there are some, whom a thirst
 Ardent, unquenchable, fires,
 Not with the crowd to be spent,
 Not without aim to go round
 In an eddy of purposeful dust,
 Effort unmeaning and vain.

Arnold describes the third type of men to which his father belonged. unlike the people described above, he didn't like to reach his goal alone, leaving others in the storm or solitude. He has unselfishness and selfless devotion. His fathers mortal, intellectual and spiritual qualities are described. He remained cheerful, helpful and steadfast in his devotion to the task of supporting others.

But thou would'st not alone
 Be saved, my father! alone
 Conquer and come to the goal,
 Leaving the rest in the wild.

Moverover, Arnold presented a contrast between ideal men and the real common mass of humanity. Such ideal men seem to be unreal in the poet's age, because it has produced such a helpless and spiritually weak race of men. Arnold presents men who were unlike ideal men. They live a

life of deception and cowardice, and vitiate the whole atmosphere and tone of life on this earth. The few noble men have virtuous souls. They were servants of God, or rather His sons. Arnold has given an account of common men unlike his father.

Not like the men of the crowd
Bluster or cringe, and make life
Hideous, and arid, and vile;
But souls temper'd with fire.

Thus, Arnold has glorified his father condemning other types of men living in the world. What Arnold expressed was a noble and profound application of ideas to life. Arnold's father is sketched ideally. It is Arnold's attempt to realise the ideal life of his father.

But souls temper'd with fire,
Fervent, heroic and good,
Helpers and friends of mankind.
Servants of God!-or sons

The poet points out the difficulties that men face in the path leading to the goal of salvation.

An, but the way is so long!
Years they have been in the wild!
Sore thirst plagues them; the rocks,
Rising all round, overawe.
Factions divide them; their host
Threatens to break, to dissolve.

Then, Arnold explains the importance of the sons of God, like his father, in the modern times full of doubts,

despair, conflicts and uncertainties. He remarks that in the time when the human race is discouraged, disunited and faltering, it needs the help and guidance of his father. The poet's father Dr. Arnold appears on the scene like angel endowed with divine light and vigour.

Then, in such hour of need
Of you fainting, dispirited race,
Ye, like angels, appear,
Radiant with ardour divine
Beacons of hope, ye appear!

Men feels inspired and encouraged by his presence and helpful activity among them, and they are re-organised to continue their march in an orderly manner. They regain their vision, and bless him with prayers wherever he goes. He fills the gap in their line by bringing or re-including the stragglers into it, and thus makes mankind strong and steady enough to continue its march beyond the limits of the desert-like world, up to the city of God, or the promised Land in Heaven.

In this way 'Rugby Chapel', is a noble and profound application of ideas to life. It is a glorification of his father's personality. It is powerful and beautiful application of moral ideas to the question : How to live. It is a critical penetration in the life of his father. It is a blending of objective life and poet's imagination. Though

written to commemorate his father, it is poet's attempt to realise the ideal life of father. The poet has equaled him with the Divine. Life in the Victorian age is criticised through the cases of two types of men. It is a criticism of life in a sense that it has truth of substance and magnificence of manner. The truth of substance is marked by glory, criticism, melancholy, reality and largeness. The personal lament becomes universal when his father is described as a saviour of man kind.

It has also high seriousness because the tone of the poem is marked by solemnity and nobility of the central figure. It is remarkable for its clarity and simplicity of its style. There are no vague expressions or conceits in it and the plain diction helps in conveying the sense of lucidity. It is full of apt images and similes. It is loosely dactylic, in each line there being about two and a half to three dactylic feet and though the dactyls / - UU/ change into trochees [- U], there is at least one dactyl in each verse, if not at the commencement, at least in the middle. There are three stresses in each line. There is no rhyme. In this way 'Rugby Chapel' is a criticism of life in the Victorian age. It is also a criticism of life in sense that it has truth of substance and felicity of manner.

10. STANZAS FROM THE GRANDE CHARTREUSE

'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse' was written in 1852 after Arnold's honeymoon visit to charactreuse on 7th September, 1851. The couple visited the monastery of the Grande chartreuse. Arnold was very much impressed and sought an opportunity to describe the religious life led by monks there. In the Victorian age a monastery had become almost an anachronism. People had lost their faith in religion. In the wake of the conflict between science and religion, man had lost his mooring and was wandering between two worlds, one dead and the other powerless to be born. Arnold feels like a typical Victorian. He cannot pin his faith in the cartunsian ideals. The religious ideas, propogated and symbolised by ancient institutions like the Grande chartreuse have had their day.

The poet gives an account of the beautiful Alpine scenery on the autumnal evening with the mountain, stream, sailing clouds. When the poet approached the Grand house of the carthusian monks, he watched the chapel, humid corridors, cells with crucifix adorning the wall, the library, the overgrown garden and the halls for the hospitable reception of foreigners. The poet wondered how he a ~~strict~~ Protestant and a man of reformed view like himself found himself in such

orthodox monastery. But he liked the place and its discipline and he admired it as a Greeks might have admired the Scandinavian Gods.

But the poet recalled his teachers who exercised an influence upon his mind and sustained him spiritually and intellectually. He also owed apology for his teachers presumably Goethe, senancour and Dr. Arnold, who had taught him how to seek truth.

He felt with deep melancholy that he was wandering between two worlds - one dead and the other powerless to be born. Christianity weighed in the balance was found wanting. But unfortunately no new faith had emerged to minister to his spiritual needs. He was therefore, feeling lonely, though surrounded by mortal million. Arnold represents here a typical Victorian. He had come to the monastery of the carthusian monk to shed his tears secretly and he chose to remain isolated from the rest of humanity as the monks. Though he didn't share the faith of monks, he felt akin to them, because both the poet and the monks were laughed at. It is criticism of life in the Victorian age.

Wandering between two worlds, one dead,
The other powerless to be born,
With nowhere yet to rest my head,
Like these, on earth I wait forlorn.
Their faith, my tears, the world deride-
I come to shed them at their side.

The poet felt so lonely that he preferred to remain in the darkness of the monastery. He imagines that he lost his soul, since he had no faith in traditional religion. That's why Carl Dawson comments : "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse is not only faiths that are dead and gone, but the paralysis which smites the lyre in the interval between their disappearance and some hoped - for palingenesis, that move him to this mournful strain"⁴². But he hoped to recover his poise only when the monks could extend to him warm hospitality. So long in the sophisticated human society he was feeling suffocated. But in the company of the monks the poet felt quiet at ease. He would now like to throw all restraints.

People laugh at the faith of carthusian monks as a sort of anachronism. People also laughed at Arnold because his melancholy was a mere pose. Arnold asks people that outdated faith the monks and the melancholy of the poet are meaningless, they should devise ways and means for the removal of faith and melancholy. He therefore, chooses to remain aloof from the rest of the world and pass his days in the company of monks who life in an atmosphere of peace.

Arnold remembers the great efforts put out by his fore-fathers, the prophets and philosophers and thinkers to

bring spiritual sustenance to the afflicted humanity. But in this material age their teaching and philosophy have lost their worth. People think that their teaching is outdated in the material age. Arnold quotes the cases of Byron, Shelly, Senancour who tried to establish peace through their deeds, are futile to the next generation.

The poet and the kindred souls weep. They are often forced by circumstances to 'admire with awe' the spectacular achievements of the Victorian age, the material prosperity, the comforts and amenities of life, the triumph of science, industry and technology, the rise of democracy and political rights, all of which are objects of pride. They praise them, but their hearts are not there.

Allow them! We admire with awe
 The exulting thunder of your race;
 You give the universe your law,
 You triumph over time and space!
 Your pride of life, your tireless powers,
 We laud them, but they are not ours.

The cases of Arnold and his kindred souls are compared with the cases of children brought up in shade, near an abbey-wall, inside a forest, where common people have no access. The abbey is surround with the graves and woods and trees. When the children catch a glimpse of armed soldiers marching along the road. They cannot respond to the call of the soldiers because they are brought up in the different

atmosphere. The call of soldiers is a symbol of the call to action and life. The hunters and the beautiful women, representing pleasure and sensation, tempt him to live a life of pleasure. And here also he does not respond. The children have preferred to live in the shade of Abbey. Used to this sort of life, they cannot be transplanted elsewhere in different surroundings. They therefore, avoid the life of action as well as pleasure. They have chosen shade rather than light, isolation rather than the crowd, contemplation rather than action, austerity rather the pleasure.

Fenced early in this cloistral round
 Of reverie, of shade, of prayer,
 How should we grow in other ground?
 How can we flower in foreign air?
 -Pass, banners, pass, and bugles, cease;
 And leave our desert to its peace!

In this way 'Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse' is religious poem marked by melancholy thought. It has a solemnity of its own, which has heightened its charm. Like most of his poems, it also presents a criticism of life. The poet reflects upon the worlds - one dead and the other powerless to be born. For him Christian faith is dead. The armed soldiers represent men of action. The hunters and the beautiful women representing pleasure and sensation, tempt him to live a life of pleasure. He ably relates Byron, Shelley and Senancour to their age. It is a noble and profound

application of ideas to life. It is a critical penetration in to the religious problems of the day. It tells people how to live and it is a powerful and beautiful application of ideas to life. The melancholy mood dominates the thoughts expressed by Arnold in a sense it was suited to Arnold to express religious uncertainty.

It has a truth of substance marked by reality, melancholy, criticism, uncertainty and real human concern. It has lucidity of style for there is no vague expression. The ideas come to reader as an uninterrupted flow. It is a picture of Victorian religious uncertainty. It is thus 'a criticism of life'.

11. OBERMANN ONCE MORE

'Obermann Once More' was published in eighteen years later in Arnold's last volume of poetry. By Obermann, Arnold means Etienne Pivert Senancour (1770-1846), author of 'Obermann'. It is a psychological romance describing the sentimental speculations and aspirations of a melancholy egoist. Arnold returns to the Senancour's Swiss Village. The ghost of Senancour appearing to Arnold in a vision, announces the dawning of a new age and exhorts Arnold to return to the world with renewed hope and strength Obermann is made to trace of coming of Christianity in hope and its decline, giving way to the humanitarian promise which is its turn was

frustrated by the failure of French Revolution which disillusioned many including Senancour. It is Arnold's most explicit utterances of hope

GLION ? - Ah, twenty years, it cuts
 All meaning from a name !
 White houses prank where once where huts !
 Glion ! but not the same,

According to Arnold the lapse of twenty years is enough to change a place altogether past all recognition of its older appearance. The houses etc, are changed but the sky, turf and pines remain unchanged. The poet is musing on the time and Nature. He sits among the hills that rise above the castle and Chillion at the very end of the lake of Geneva where Senacour's mountain Chalet had once stood in the midst of solitudes which now are populated. Arnold calls Senancour his master.

And who but thou must be in truth,
 Obermann ! with me here ?
 Thou master of my wandering youth,
 But left this many a year !

As night ran gently over the hill and wood, the shade of Obermann stood before him on the grass, and thus way worn man who is in his youth had called the shy recluse his master

While thus I mused, night gently ran
 Down over hill and wood.
 Then, still and sudden, Obermann
 On the grass near me stood.

Senancour now passes in review the world's spiritual history - The Roman empire. The Roman world grown sceptic

On that hard Pagan world disgust
And secret loathing fell.
Deep weariness and sated lust
Made human life a hell.

Arnold then gives an account of the rise of Christianity and then the disillusionment about Christianity to the final renewal of the new made world. The Roman perished for having disobeyed religion and Nature. The infancy of the world was renewed with all its sweet illusions. But the infancy and its illusions must for ever be transitory, and we are again in the place of Roman world, our illusions past, devoted to the service of religions and Nature. Feeling and religious mood are eternally the deepest beings of man, the ground of all joy and greatness for him.

But Senancour thought that man had strewed from harmony because religion had sought to central human conduct by supernatural sanctions instead of trusting the tendency of to order; which held to be basic human instinct. Paganism and Christianity all alike have tempered with man's mind and heart, and wrought confusion in turn.

And Obermann begins to trace through history, the rise and fall of power of faith - for it is now faith that is

now bringing new hope. The Roman like the contemporary was rich, clear headed and unpausing in its activity, but its heart was a stone and a disgusted ennui descended upon it, and activity but which it tried to satisfy itself.

Roman turned from its glory to Christ, who gave peace so long as men believed. But the saving quality of Christianity faded, man no longer believed. Grierson and Smith explain.

Arnold saw himself as one who stood alone on a naked beach from which the tide of faith had ebbed. In the ages of faith Christ had lived in the hearts of the faithful.

Now he is dead. Far hence he lies
In the lorn Syrian town,
And on his grave, with shining eyes,
The Syrian stars look down.

Yet Arnold's was a soul naturally Christian. When he outgrew the dogmas in which he had been strictly reared, he still clung to what he regarded as the truth of Christianity its exaltation of righteousness, self, renunciation, kindness and faith to depreciate these Christian values, as men abandoned the kind of life of the country with its ancient pieties for the feverish competition of the manufacturing town.⁴³

Yet the sun in the new washed sky saw the race of man after the upheaval plying upon a chartered sea, clinging to the remnants of their dead faith, "the blocks of the past", like the icebergs high, it is doubtful indeed that the destructive storm had been kind to man; it destroyed his poor spiritual habitator without bringing him another.

The past, its mask of union on,
 Had ceased to live and thrive.
 The past, its mask of union gone,
 Say, is it more alive ?

But like the promise of Revelation, the promise of revolution failed, and Obermann despairing must flee to his alps. But the time of destruction has passed and new hour was came.

But now the past is out of date,
 The future not yet born -
 And who can be alone elate,
 While the world lies forlorn ?

The vision ended, and the poet awoke as out of sleep only the peak of Jaman could be seen and summit of the Malatrait, and the morning broke in the vale of Valies

And Sunshades' piny flanks I gaze
 And the blanch'd summit bare
 Of Malatrait, to where in haze
 The Valais opens fair,

In this way it is nothing but the critical penetration into the life of Senancour. It is also a noble and profound application of ideas to life. It is a criticism of life in a sense that it criticises the loss of Christian faith. Arnold's view of things is marked by Senancour's view of Christianity. It is full of natural description of the Alpine Scenery. It is written in a four feet lines (Iambic) and the lines rhyme alternatively.

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