The aim of the present dissertation is to explore the implications of the statement, which has so often been made by various writers, that Lionel Trilling is a critic in the tradition of Matthew Arnold. The strategy adopted has been to study key concepts/terms used by the two critics, and the assumptions and concerns that govern their critical writings. It has been discovered that in spite of many differences, some of them quite profound, the two critics are close to each other in what is likely to be enduring in their achievement.

The emphasis is on Trilling. The thesis does not set out to make a historical survey of the Arnoldian tradition or try to "place" Trilling in that tradition. Only incidental attention is paid to the work of other critics who in some ways and degrees show the influence of Arnold on them, e.g. F.R. Leavis or T.S. Eliot. Though Freud's influence on Trilling is taken note of, it is taken up for discussion only in so far as it illustrates or modifies Trilling's commitment to Arnoldian ideas. Trilling's creative work in fiction is also used only to throw sidelights on his general critical thinking.

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Writing on *Emma* Lionel Trilling observes that it is "one of the most attractive of the idyllic elements of the novel" that it proposes the Platonic idea that the active formation of a person's character by another person, that the giving and receiving of any knowledge, is the truest and strongest foundation of love. Trilling laments the fact that many readers today would not think such an ideal possible of realization nor would they give even a theoretical assent to it. The living Indian tradition of learning would not find anything surprising in such an idea. But the Indian tradition also holds that "the giving and receiving of knowledge" is itself impossible without a basis of love; for without love there is truly no understanding. *Ma vidvishāvahai* (Let us never hate each other) was the prayer with which the taught and the teacher started their joint pursuit of knowledge. It is to such a tradition that Dr V.S. Seturaman, my beloved and revered teacher, belongs. My salutations to him as I dedicate this humble work to him. If it was a privilege to have him as my Supervisor, it was indeed a blessing to study Matthew Arnold and Lionel Trilling with him and under his wise and affectionate presence. It shall be the grossest impertinence on my part to talk of measuring or repaying the debt of gratitude I owe to him. I can only pray, as he prays to the Mother, that I may never forget even for a moment all I owe to him.
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