Chapter V

Humanisation of Man
The first and second Series of *Essays in Criticism* are not enough to show the range and interest of Matthew Arnold as critic and artist. Other prose-writings, specially the Oxford lectures, educational reports, and *Discourses in America* are, in a sense, more revealing. The essays in the Series are largely on men of letters and on the personages of Arnold's choice, such as, Joubert, Marcus Aurelius, etc. But these writings reflect his own personality and bear the marks even of his temperament. The subjects of the Oxford lectures are chosen with an eye to the dignity of the Chair but these are no less expressive of Arnold's personality. The educational reports are expected to be objective, and these are really objective; but Arnold could place in them his long-cherished ideals about human society. 'On the Study of Celtic Literature', originally delivered as Oxford lectures, reveals his temperament as an artist more than his tact as a critic. Arnold thought that he put his best self in *Discourses in America*. He said that of all his prose-writings this was the book by which he would most wish to be remembered.\(^1\) Opinions differ as to his theological and political writings. Yet *Literature* and *Dogma* cannot be easily set aside, nor can such essays as 'Equality' and 'Democracy' be dismissed summarily. Arnold's concern with religion and politics does not make him a fanatic but a practical man of the world; and the writings

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have the usual artistic accent with a critical exposition. A close examination of such prose-work would be rewarding in a study of Arnold as critic and artist.

Arnold's inaugural lecture at Oxford, 'On the Modern Element in Literature' can hardly be accepted by the so-called moderns. The sense of modernity here is not governed by the concept of time but by some characteristics which may be called classical. These are both outward, such as, the banishment of the ensigns of war and bloodshed from the intercourse of daily life; and inward, like the growth of a tolerant spirit and the intellectual maturity of man himself. With the multiplication of the conveniences of life, there should be the formation of taste. Arnold finds the presence of all these characteristics in the age of Pericles. In this sense the Elizabethan era cannot be called modern. The comparison between the two ages is made with details of evidence from a critical point of view. But Arnold is concerned not so much with the modern element in literature as with "the demand of the present age". The demand is an "intellectual deliverance" which means an adequate comprehension of the spectacle around oneself. The man who comprehends the spectacle and communicates his point of view is an intellectual deliverer of his age. So a truly modern age is an epoch in the history of the human race which exhibits, on the one hand, the presence of a significant spectacle to contemplate, and on the other hand, the desire to find the point of view from which to contemplate this spectacle. The spectacle is the collective life of humanity, that is, "the events, the institutions, the sciences, the arts, the literature, in which human
life has manifested itself up to the present time". Arnold
says also that the most perfect, the most adequate interpreta-
tion of such a spectacle would be found in the poetical litera-
ture of that age. All this anticipates Eliot's idea of histori-
cal consciousness as illustrated in 'Tradition and the Individ-
ual Talent'. The method is then one of comparison and
analysis; and the intellectual deliverer must have a highly
developed critical acumen.

Arnold makes his argument more concrete in the latter half
of the essay. He considers the adequacy of the interpretation
of some important epochs by their respective intellectual
deliverers. Homer is beyond any questioning; he is free. But
he has not the age as interesting as himself. The poetry of
Pindar, Aeschylus, and Sophocles is an adequate interpretation
of Greece in the fifth century B.C. The epoch is as significant
as its literature. Arnold finds an adequate representation even
in the poetry of Aristophanes. Of course, the difference between
the tragedy of Sophocles and the comedy of Aristophanes has
been outlined critically. Tragedy has "noble serenity" while
comedy has "the vital freshness". Arnold is strangely silent
on Plato and Aristotle, though they belonged to about the same

2. Eliot says, "What is to be insisted upon is that the
poet must develop or procure the consciousness of the
past and that he should continue to develop this conscious-
ness throughout his career".

The Sacred Wood ( Methuen & Co.Ltd.,; London; 1967 ),
p. 52
age as Sophocles and Aristophanes. The silence can hardly be justified. His regard for Aristotle is well expressed elsewhere, in the 1853 Preface, but the Platonic philosophy was anathema to him. Yet he admits that the spectacle and its interpretation make the Periclean age a modern epoch. Then Arnold passes on to the Roman world. The Rome of Cicero and Augustus marks a great period; it is a greater, a fuller period than the age of Pericles. But the interpretation of the age in literature is not adequate. Theocritus, Virgil and Horace are considered and found inadequate. Theocritus is modern in feeling; he exhibits the disease of the most modern societies — depression and ennui. But "he who is morbid is no adequate interpreter of his age". Virgil has also "an ineffable melancholy", though it differs from that in Theocritus. It is not a rigid, a moody gloom, but a sweet, a touching sadness. Arnold calls Virgil "the most attractive figure in literary history", and yet he is not the adequate interpreter of the great period of Rome. Horace is inadequate for another reason; he wants seriousness. Arnold proceeds no further beyond the Roman period, though he has made clear his point about the modern element in literature and the corresponding intellectual deliverance. But the essay itself is not 'adequate', it had better be called 'On the classical element in literature'. Arnold seeks an intellectual deliverer of his age but he has not a word on this point. He says that the present age shows a significant spectacle and it demands an adequate comprehension of it by an intellectual deliverer. Does he imply from the Chair at Oxford that he
himself might have taken the burden on him? This mute ambition finds a faint expression in one of his letters to his mother 3 much later in 1869: "My poems represent, on the whole, the main movement of mind of the last quarter of a century". But Arnold's attempt at interpretation, if at all, of the time is not again adequate. However hard he may be on Empedocles on Etna or 'The Scholar Gipsy', 4 he cannot shake off his morbid, melancholy feeling, not even in 'Sohrab and Rustum' and 'Balder Dead', the professed poems of action. He oscillates between joy and melancholy, animation and depression. He feels the need of joy and animation quite consciously, but he is sad and depressed in his secret poetic self.

With all its limitations the essay is a neat piece of criticism. Arnold is nowhere obscure or indistinct. He maintains a steady confident tone in what he says. And to keep it steady he does not step beyond the classical ages of Greece and Rome in his discussion of the intellectual deliverance. But one may ask why, in his analysis of the short-comings of the Elizabethan age, he does not mention Shakespeare at all. The lapse cannot be excused as Shakespeare is more than an intellectual deliverer for not one age only but, perhaps, for all ages. It is a practice with Arnold as observed earlier to avoid Shakespeare when Shakespeare cannot be well managed. Yet in

this hard core of criticism Arnold could insert his artistic self, and this he does in his estimate of Theocritus and Virgil. Arnold quotes a solemn passage from Lucretius to show how every one flies from himself, and comments on it in his characteristic way: "What a picture of ennui! of the disease of the most modern societies, the most advanced civilisations!" Arnold himself is a victim of this society; he suffers from this disease and seeks to fly from himself — the Scholar gipsy is his other self. His description of Lucretius is an expression of his artistic feeling: "... there is no peace, no cheerfulness for him either in the world from which he comes, or in the solitude to which he goes". Is Lucretius very far from the Matthew Arnold of 'Dover Beach'? Arnold had, in the same way, an affinity to Virgil, the melancholy, sensitive, overburdened Virgil. The "affectionate veneration" for him is due to this spiritual kinship. "Over the whole of the great poem of Virgil, over the whole Aeneid, there rests an ineffable melancholy ..." is as much the judgment of a critic as the true voice of feeling of an artist. If, as a critic, Arnold is against melancholy, he is drawn to it as an artist. This is the dual nature of Arnold's personality. But he has his favourite notion that the same man may be melancholy and happy. In this essay he speaks of the serious cheerfulness of Sophocles, the great poet mastered the problem of human life, knew of its gravity, and was therefore serious; but he knew also that he comprehended it, and was, therefore, cheerful. Arnold has said the same about Goethe in 'Memorial Verses':
And he was happy, if to know
Causes of things, and far below
His feet to see the lurid flow
Of terror and insane distress,
And headlong fate, be happiness.  ( ll. 29-33 )

Another characteristic of Arnold as a critic is his belief in the human instinct of self-preservation. Menander has been much praised by Plutarch as against Aristophanes. Yet, Arnold says, Menander has perished, and Aristophanes has survived; and this is attributed to the instinct of self-preservation. He has elaborately explained the point in 'Literature and Science', reproducing the conversation between Diotima, a Greek prophetess and Socrates. The desire in men that good should be for ever present to them is fundamental, and this instinct of self-preservation exists with men in general. Here Arnold takes a broad view that criticism is not all; it is the human impulse for good and beauty that matters. The artist in Arnold works often behind the critic and manoeuvres him.

There could perhaps be no worthier subject than Homer for the purpose of a professorial lecture. 5 But the subject was not the works of Homer. Arnold spoke on translating Homer in English and attacked the translators of his time. The attack, as usual, may have a tone of banter and sarcasm, and

5. Lionel Trilling is all praise for the series of Lectures as he finds in them "an athletic quality in which austerity and elegance combine".

Matthew Arnold, p. 167
this certainly is below the dignity of the Chair. But Arnold has his defense. He must not allow Homer to be misrepresented in English. The Chair of Poetry gives him the right to remonstrate. The occasion again provides him the chance to speak of his mind about Homer, and this accounts for the gravity and beauty of the lectures. The first of The Three Lectures is an 'Advice to the Translator', and an advice is a kind of affront. So the translators, Francis William Newman and Ichabod Charles Wright had to give their answers to the charges made against them. Arnold gave the reply in his lecture, 'Last Words on Homer'. All these lectures are, in fact, centred round four cardinal qualities of Homer: "that Homer is rapid, that he is plain and direct in word and style, that he is plain and direct in his ideas, and that he is noble". The translator should have a sense of these four qualities while rendering Homer. Arnold observes how Cowper and Mr Wright, Pope and Sotheby, Chapman and Mr Newman have failed in appreciating one or the other of the qualities in their translation. So he gives practical advice to a translator of Homer, and his advice should properly be heeded to. But he knows that a good translation can only be produced by the union of the translator with his original, and to make it clear he takes the help of a metaphor by Coleridge regarding the union of the human mind with the divine essence. Coleridge says that union takes place when the mist which stands between God and man defecates to a pure transparency. The metaphor is rightly used by Arnold, and this is, perhaps, the last word on the theory of translation. But in these lectures Arnold could not keep a sustained tone, nor make any good
contribution to Homer criticism. Rather they reveal Arnold's ingenuity in treating a subject which is perhaps not after his heart. In Amiel's words, one may say that he has heaped the faggots for the pile but could not bring the fire. The arguments on the four Homeric qualities, the difference between Ballad Poetry and the Grand Style, the extravagance of the Elizabethans, the classical and the romantic modes of representations are packed together but not ignited into an illumination. Mrs Forster was sensitive enough to find the tone in the Lectures too dogmatic. Arnold gave his explanation that "... the tone of a lecturing professor to an audience supposed to be there to learn of him, cannot be quite that of a man submitting his views to the great world". Besides Arnold was defending the commonsense view of Homer. So only at rare moments he achieves the artistic accent:

The old English balladist may stir Sir Philip Sidney's heart like a trumpet, and this is much; but Homer, but the few artists in the grand style, can do more: they can refine the raw natural man, they can transmute him.

'Metrical Vehicles' in Lecture III is a sustained piece of criticism, and Arnold is in his element here. He recommends three metres which may be capable of the grand style — the

7. Letter to Mrs Forster, Feb'y, 1861; *MA* (ed. Bryson), p. 753
8. 'Ballad Poetry and the Grand Style'; *ibid*.; p. 301
ten-syllable or heroic couplet, the blank verse and the hexameter. The merit of each in reproducing Pomer's nobility is discussed in detail. The exclusion of the Spensarian stanza has been explained with an example. But the strength of the passage is in the reference to Keats, "the one modern inheritor of Spenser's beautiful gift". One may question Arnold's epithet, "an Elizabethan born too late", about Keats, but the description, "a genius by natural endowment richer probably than even Spenser" has much truth in it. Arnold makes comparative studies between Dante and Horace, Homer and Milton, and Milton and Shakespeare in respect of their use of blank verse. The comparison between Milton and Homer is elaborate and excellent, and Arnold shows here his capability as a critic. The point of difference is simply told that Homer's movement is rapid, Milton's is laboured and self-retarding. But it is developed in a way which reminds one of Johnson's distinction between Dryden and Pope in Lives of the Poets. The distinction is made through such antithetic statements as "Homer ... says a thing, and says it to the end, and then begins another, while Milton is trying to press a thousand things into one" and "with Milton line runs into line, and all is straitly bound together; with Homer line runs off from line, and all hurries onward". Arnold shows his courage rather than discretion when he says that Shakespeare does not share with Milton his distinction in producing a body of poetry in the true grand style. But if the blank verse is used in rendering Homer, the best specimens of it are not often found in Shakespeare. As a critic Arnold has rarely any prejudice. His estimate of Homer, Milton and Shakespeare, though in a
limited sphere, can hardly be disputed. This is partly because
the critical wisdom is acquired through his artistic sensibility.
The same may be said of his criticism of Clough's poem *The
Bothie* which he considers in connection with the applicability
of the hexameter for translating Homer. Clough's hexameters are
rough and irregular, yet these produce the rapidity of movement.
For achieving the plainness and directness of style, Arnold
recommends, with examples from Shakespeare, a loose, idiomatic
grammatical style. The fourth quality of nobleness which is
allied with plainness of speech is to be found in *The Bible*.
Arnold quotes agreeably Pope's comment for corroboration: "This
pure and noble simplicity is nowhere in such perfection as in
the Scripture and Homer". The advice itself to the translator
of Homer has a nameless grace in this lecture of *Metrical
Vehicles*. It never loses its contact with the main thesis but
strays into other areas (Milton, Shakespeare and Dante). This
also compels Arnold to conclude that no advice or example is
enough for the rendering of Homer. The individual personality
of the artist is what counts most.

The merit of the essay is that it is detailed and concrete.
It may also be taken as a good lesson for the translators of
Homer. Yet there is nothing schoolmasterish in it. Nor is there
any attacking tone of the previous lecture, nor any banter or
scorn. Arnold's sincerity is manifest throughout the essay. He
gives serious thought to the representation of Homeric rapidity,
plainness and nobility in translation. If his motive is to give
a perspective for a true translation, he is no less guided by
a love for Homer. This great love in him quickens such artistic expression as

Homer's grandeur is not the mixed and turbid grandeur of the great poets of the north, of the authors of Othello and Faust; it is a perfect and lovely grandeur. Certainly his poetry has all the energy and power of the poetry of our ruder climates; but it has, besides, the pure lines of an Ionian horizon, the liquid clearness of an Ionian sky.¹

He uses again his favourite ploy for creating an artistic charm in the conclusion of his Lecture III. Arnold imagines that Homer addresses his English admirers who love to talk of him in boistering and rollicking way, "It is very well, my good friends, you do me a great deal of honour, but somehow or other you praise me too like barbarians". The lecture has, in the words of Arnold himself, the English vigour and the Greek grace.

'Last Words on Homer', the first Oxford lecture of 1862, was Arnold's reply to an attack made on the previous lectures and to the defence offered by Francis Newman. In this lecture, on the grand style, he traces some admirable Homeric qualities in Arthur Clough's poem: "out-of-doors freshness, life, naturalness, buoyant rapidity". Some passages of The Roothing ring the true Homeric tune. So Clough would have been a good translator of Homer. For a successful translator of Homer should

have "a true sense for his subject" and a "disinterested love of it". Clough had both. Arnold is sadly conscious of the loss at his death. Yet his claims on the translation of Homer can hardly be met, even in Clough. It is made clear in the section 'The Grand Style'. Arnold says that Homer "is in the grand style", and "the best model of the grand style simple is Homer". The grand style in simplicity is inimitable "except by a genius akin to the genius which produced it". The main body of the lecture is, of course, a discussion on the grand style. The grand style, Arnold says, cannot be defined adequately. It "arises in poetry, when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with severity a serious subject". There are then four parts of the definition — noble nature in a man, poetical gift, serious subject, and its treatment, either simple or severe. Though, to Trilling, the definition is "not sufficiently clarifying", Arnold asserts: "And I think it contains no terms which are obscure, which themselves need defining". In fact, the definition, though not wide enough, has no obscurity in its words and their meanings. He is again clear in observing that

The best model of the grand style simple is Homer;

perhaps the best model of the grand style severe is Milton. But Dante is remarkable for affording examples of both styles.....

He admits further that the grand style simple which Homer has is the more magical. There is, in the grand style severe, something intellectual which "a little spoils its charm". But to
achieve the grand style one must have all the qualities enumerated in the definition. Mr Newman's translation is not satisfying as "he has not the poetical gift". Arnold's comments on Mr Newman and his translation of Homer have created a false impression. For example, Trilling takes it from Arnold that Mr Newman was not noble, and has pages to prove that he was noble. In fact, Newman's version is called 'ignoble' (but not the man). In this lecture Arnold states it quite clearly, "Mr. Newman has zeal for learning, zeal for thinking, zeal for liberty, and all these things are noble, they ennoble a man; but he has not the poetical gift". Newman's translation, therefore, cannot have the Homeric grandeur. But Arnold's lecture itself has a kind of grandeur in its neat, well-planned structure. The specimens chosen from Milton, Dante and Pindar give a taste of the grand style, severe and simple.

The grand style is such a lofty subject that the differences of opinion over it cannot easily be split. Of course, there is little scope of difference. Arnold, as Trilling says, refuses to define the grand style. No verbal definition is adequate, and "one must feel it in order to know what it is". George Saintsbury agrees with Arnold that it is a "mysterious entity", and that "this Grand Style is not easily tracked or discovered by observation, unless you give yourself up primarily to the feeling of it". He admits also with Arnold the respective qualities of

10. MA, p. 168
the grand style in Homer, Dante and Milton: "Homer has it in a form scarcely comparable with the others", Dante has "the gravest style perhaps in all literature, yet in no sense stiff or stilted" and in Milton it is "all-pervading". But Saintsbury would not share Arnold's views regarding Shakespeare's use of the grand style. Arnold could accord to Shakespeare a sort of 'uncovenanted' Grand Style, an occasional magnificence. Shakespeare does not share with Milton the distinction of producing a body of poetry in the true grand style. He has both the affected style and the grand style, and the grand style may be harsh, or obscure, or cumbersome, or over-laboured. Here Saintsbury differs from Arnold: "... Shakespeare held the Grand Style in the hollow of his hand, letting it loose or withholding it as good seemed to him: and further, that seeming almost always was good". To prove his point, Saintsbury gives examples from the sonnets and from such plays as Pericles, Comedy of Errors, Titus Andronicus, Richard II, Timon of Athens, Troilus and Cressida, and refers obviously to the famous passages in Macbeth, Othello, King Lear, The Tempest and Antony and Cleopatra. On Shakespeare's employment of the Grand Style, Saintsbury comments in a rather grand way: "he uses the Grand Style as his Attendant Spirit" or "He knows that to employ a being so majestical for every purpose of a dramatic household is a profanation — that she is for the pageants and the passions, for the big wars and the happy or unhappy loves, for the actions and the agonies of pith and moment". The Arnoldian stand on the issue is toppled down and turned over. But there is somewhere
an error of judgment between Arnold and Saintsbury. This ensues perhaps from the difference in their definitions of the grand style. Saintsbury calls his definition wider than Arnold's as he includes the great and the small, the tragic and the comic, the serious and the ironic while Arnold insists only on the 'high seriousness'. But the real difference lies in the fact that Arnold sees the grand style as it is, and Saintsbury defines the grand style from the effect it is supposed to produce on the hearer or the reader:

Whenever this perfection of expression acquires such force that it transmutes the subject and transports the hearer or reader, then and there the Grand Style exists, for so long, and in such a degree, as the transmutation of the one and the transportation of the other lasts". 12

The grand style may not be long sustained or "perpetual" without "pitfalls" as in Milton; it again may not "persist or cease, or disappear and reappear" at short notices, as Saintsbury finds in Shakespeare. The grand style cannot be so flippant, if it is grand. It must be serious and sustained as Arnold thinks. Shakespeare has grand style, but as a dramatist he has many styles, each even for a particular character. Prospero may speak in grand style but Caliban cannot. This is not so with Sophocles who, Arnold confirms, constantly has grand style. For Sophocles has not in his plays God's plenty which Shakespeare decidedly has. Besides, Saintsbury's main point is that the grand style

transmutes the subject and transports the hearer or the reader. If this is so, the shorter poems of Wordsworth, of many others, are all written in the grand style. Bradley observes how the line "Will no one tell me what she sings"? brings a note of remoteness and wonder, or, again how the cry of the cuckoo brings "a tale of visionary hours" when the earth appeared to Wordsworth's bewildered fancy "an unsubstantial fairy place". The lovely final stanzas of 'Lucy Gray' written in the ballad measure have the same visionary appeal. Saintsbury's definition is too wide to describe the grand style. Again how could the Grand Style have its gradations? What is grand is grand. But he speaks of "the middle or average Shakespearean Grand Style". In fact, the main function of the grand style is not to transmute or transport, rather it is, as Arnold implies and Pater expresses, to "ennoble and fortify us".

It is, of course, pointed out that there are mistakes and overstatements in Arnold's criticism. To him one of the four Homeric qualities is that Homer is plain and direct in language. But, in fact, that Homer is often the very reverse of plain and direct in language seems to be odd and obscure, and the details of his descriptions cannot be easily comprehended. Again, this

14. 'Style' Appreciations ( Macmillan and Co., Ltd; 1944 ), p. 33
is not quite true that "we cannot possibly tell how the Iliad affected its natural hearers". It is noted that the classical Greeks learnt Homer in childhood and quoted and heard him throughout their lives. Further, Arnold's recommendation of hexameter for translating Homer is not sound. Yet Arnold's lectures are interesting documents on the translations of classical books, specially Homer's epic poems. This advice to the translator has not yet lost its validity. The translator must attempt to reproduce, as far as practicable, the very thought and style of the author he is translating. Perhaps Arnold has said the last word on the art of translation that the translator must be a genius akin to the genius which produced the original. Apart from the advice to the translator, Arnold's criticism served some important purposes. He destroyed the false parallel between Homer and the ballads and "raised Homeric criticism out of the morass of pedantry, conjecture, dissection and tastelessness into which it had been sinking". The Professor of Poetry must look to poetry first and then to criticism. So he protested against the scholarly attitudes to Homer prevalent at the time. The critics ignored the great poetic quality of the Iliad and the Odyssey and indulged in collecting the facts about the Bronze and early Iron Ages or discovering the relics of Aeolic dialect. Homer was neither a ballad-monger nor a museum piece. Arnold put him on a level with Dante and Milton and discussed "their grandeurs as being unlike but comparable". The artistic impulse in Arnold the critic helped him find the true perspective from which to study Homer. Gilbert Highet has nicely touched the point:

"What was wrong with Newman's version, and with his principles,
was that he omitted beauty. Arnold had taste; Newman had none". Arnold could not tolerate "the deficiency of the beautiful" of which he complained years ago about Clough's poems. The critical judgment is shot through with artistic admiration in his plain and direct estimate of Homer: "... he is in the grand style. So he sheds over the simplest matter he touches the charm of his grand manner; he makes everything noble".

In Oxford lectures it was, for Arnold, a happy transition from the Homeric to the Celtic. He regrets that the Sigeian land washed by the waves has never had its Homer. But he knows well at heart that "the true home of the Cossianic poetry" is quite alien to the Homeric strain. The Celt has not the sense of measure, sanity and steadfastness which are decidedly Greek qualities. Yet the Celtic race is much nearer the Greek in the perceptive emotional temperament, intoxication of style which Arnold calls Pindarism, and in the magic of nature. The Celtic genius is as much closer to the Greek as further from the Germanic genius. Arnold characterises the Germanic genius by "steadiness with honesty" whereas he traces the English spirit of "energy" mixed with "honesty" to Celtic source. The Celt again has not the Germanic patience for science. Lacking in science the Celtic mind cannot adequately comprehend and interpret the world, but it makes up for the deficiency in poetry by the power of the style. On the other hand, the principal

16. The Classical Tradition, p. 483
deficiency of German poetry is in style. Arnold is emphatic on this point: "... there is a fire, a sense of style, a distinction, in Icelandic poetry, which German poetry has not". This comparative analysis in the study of Celtic literature may easily lead one to believe that Arnold is an exponent of the racial theory. Trilling has really made much of this by dragging in a reference from *Culture and Anarchy*. He brings, in support of his argument, a conspectus of history — the trial of Governor Eyre in 1866 and the Fenian disturbances of 1867. It is, however, true that Arnold had an interest in ethnology and anthropology, and had his own natural groupings of the human race. But the lecture on the Study of Celtic Literature should not be judged in that way. It is not about any racial, nor even social characteristic. In one sense it is rather personal. Arnold is very much in his element with the Celtic sensibility, melancholy and natural magic. He is consciously an advocate for action, animation and hopeful joy. But there is a secret unrest in his soul, and in this quality he has an inner alliance with the Celt. 17 This closeness has quickened in him more the artistic impulse than the critical rigour.

The artistic impulse cannot allow Arnold to exercise the

17. Mrs Humphry Ward has noted the point in a vivid picture of her uncle: "He stood foursquare — a courteous competent man of affairs, an admirable Inspector of Schools, a delightful companion .... Yet his poems show what was the real inner life and genius of the man; how rich in that very 'emotion', 'love of beauty and charm', 'rebellion against fact', 'spirituality', 'melancholy', which he himself catalogued as the cradle gifts of the Celt crossed indeed always with the Rugby 'earnestness'...."

*Essays and Studies, Vol. XV,* (Oxford; 1929), p. 16
disinterested mode of seeing things. So he takes a pleasure in spending some weeks at Llandudno, on the Welsh coast. Ever a landscape-lover, he could enjoy "the eternal softness" standing over the mouth of the Conway and its sands, and notice how "hill behind hill, in an aerial haze, make the horizon". He recalls with an Ossianic relish the bloody city of Creuddyn, where every stone has its story and recounts artistically the story of Mael-gwyn who shut himself up in the church of Llan-rhos "to avoid the yellow Plague, and peeped out through a hole in the door, and saw the monster and died". The 'Introduction' to the study is thus full of personal feelings and thoughts. In the part, 'The English Spirit', Arnold traces the quality of energy in the English genius to Celtic and Roman sources, and contrasts the quality with that of steadiness in the Germanic genius. Like a true critic he analyses both the strong and weak sides of this Germanic steadiness with honesty. He had the real insight to foretell "an immense development" in Germany for this excellence of a national spirit imbued with science. The Celt has not the Germanic patience for science, nor the Greek sense of measure. The Celtic spirit is sentimental, "always ready to react against the despotism of fact". The result is that it has accomplished nothing great, in the arts of music or poetry. The great poetical works like the Agamemnon or the Divine Comedy are beyond the power of the Celt. He has at best given "to short pieces, or to passages, lines, and snatches of long pieces, singular beauty and power". As a piece of criticism this is valid. But there is in it an undercurrent of self-criticism. Does it not point to Arnold's self-assessment "... my poems are fragments — i.e.
that I am fragments". Much earlier on Dec. 24, 1859 he generalises the sentiment in a letter 18 to Mrs Forster:

I have long felt that we owed far more, spiritually and artistically, to the Celtic races than the somewhat coarse German intelligence readily perceived....

The division between the two selves — the critic and the artist — is well marked here. The Celt's failure to achieve the highest success is rightly attributed to "his want of sanity and steadfastness". If emotion counts for much in poetry, so much do reason, measure and sanity. Arnold reveals here sound critical judgment. But at the same time he himself feels keenly the despotism of fact. He admits that one has a kind of sympathy for Celtic temperament. The conscious critic discovers a soul of goodness in Philistinism. It is the steady-going habit which leads up to science and creates the comforts and conveniences of life. But is this all? Deep within, he yearns for the things of the mind rather than the things of daily use. This yearning breaks the bounds of discipline and makes him 'anarchical'. The scholar gipsy is no other than this yearning self of Arnold. He could not resolve the conflict in him, but he has stated it with sufficient clearness in 'Celtic Sensibility'. There is an attempt for a theoretical solution: "Sensibility gives genius its materials; one cannot have too much of it, if one can but keep its master and not be its slave". It can rarely be achieved in Arnold's poetry. But the relevance of Arnold lies in the fact

18. MA (ed. Bryson), p. 752
that he has touched the real point of conflict pressing ever on the human mind.

If at any time the conflict reaches a point of compromise, the result is astonishingly good. 'Style' is a product of this coalescence. Arnold is untiringly an advocate of style. He speaks of it, whenever the occasion arises. He refuses to give any verbal definition of 'grand style' in his Homer lectures, but style in general is defined often in his writings. In a letter to Clough he writes: "... in a man style is the saying in the best way what you have to say". In this essay the definition is as much critical as artistic: "Style, in my sense of the word, is a peculiar re-casting and heightening, under a certain condition of spiritual excitement, of what a man has to say, in such a manner as to add dignity and distinction to it". The "condition of spiritual excitement" cannot be consciously created. Arnold makes it clear while speaking of Milton's style in the essay: "... style ... seems to have for its cause a certain pressure of emotion, and an ever-surging, yet bridled, excitement in the poet, giving a special intensity to his way of delivering himself". This is to imply that style comes out of no conscious effort. The subject is bodied forth spontaneously with the same power of inspiration as produces the content. The harmony between the form and content is nowhere so clearly expressed. But Arnold does not quite deny the necessity of conscious effort in the definition given here. The manner of saying would be such as "to add dignity and distinction to it". This dignity can only be added with an effort. Arnold has drawn
the scholars' attention to the practice of most of the great authors. If the work of art is produced under pressure of emotion and excitement, it is also pruned and trimmed to give a worthy shape.

Yet, perhaps, the last word on style can never be said. It would be interesting to note here a few points which may support Arnold's view. What Pater says about the function of mind in style tallies well with Arnold's observation. To Pater "All the laws of good writing aim at a ... unity or identity of the mind in all the processes by which the word is associated to its import". The Celtic style is a product of the Celtic mind that cannot tolerate the despotism of fact. This fits in well with Schopenhauer's remark that style is "the physiognomy of soul" and with the Renaissance phrase "mentis character". The epigrammatic definitions tend to show that style is the mental picture of the man who writes. Pater might have held, after Arnold, that "the chief stimulus of good style is to possess a full, rich, complex matter to deal with". But it is different with the Celtic race. It threw all its force into style as it was "unable to master the world and give an adequate interpretation of it". Yet Arnold cannot admit in respect of the Celtic style, that "the literary artist,... will be well aware of physical science" for achieving a good style.

19. Appreciations, p. 18
20. Encyclopaedia Britannica, 1965/e, Vol. 21; p. 488
The Germans, with their steady-going nature leading up to science, have not the power of style. The English have this "poetical gift" inherited from the Celts. The most striking quality of Celtic poetry is style. The Celt have it to such a degree that Arnold calls it "a sort of intoxication of style — a Pindarism". The essay, which could have been an abstract discussion, has a concreteness about it because of this comparative study of style. The study is both literary and ethnological. Arnold shows how, in respect of style, Menander and Goethe differ from Pindar and Dante. It is the difference of the simplicity of prose from the poetical simplicity. Arnold has not made the point of difference sufficiently clear but has referred to the authors whose work can serve as illustration. In poetry, the power of style is manifested in Dante or Milton, and in prose, it is in Cicero, Bossuet or Bolingbroke. But the particular remark about poetical simplicity has an artistic twang: "... poetry gets the privilege of being loosed, at its best moments, into that perfectly simple, limpid style, which is the supreme style of all ..." Arnold's use of the word 'loosed' is significant. It carries the sense of ease and freedom with which the supreme style gets itself manifest in poetry. In English, the best examples are the simple passages in Shakespeare. Arnold himself is in a heightened mood when he speaks of these passages:

They are golden, easeful, crowning moments of a manner which is always pitched in another key from that of prose, a manner changed and heightened.

But the pitch in Arnold is much lowered towards the close of
the essay where the ethnological study is made. He goes on to say if the Scandinavians are genuine Teutons, or the Scandinavian Teutons differ from the German Teutons. He finds support in Zeuss' grammar in favour of his opinion that Norse poetry had an early Celtic influence or intermixture. The realism in the Scandinavian genius proves their relationship with the Germans. But if the prose tales of the Norsemen have a Teutonic nature, the poetry of the Norsemen has 'something' which the Germans have not, and which the 'elts have. This 'something', Arnold says, is style. The discussion of the racial characteristics, though not elaborate, has its value in the context. It has made the argument convincing and enjoyable. It also proves that Arnold could move on unequal planes at ease. He attains the artistic height and comes down to the critical level, and this varying movement does lend a charm to this essay. It is not a piece of sustained criticism, nor all a venture in the realm of art. It is rather a specimen in which criticism and art show a peaceful co-existence.

But in the part 'Melancholy' the critic cannot be distinguished from the artist. The artistic mood is dominating and pervasive. Arnold does not speak much critically of the Celtic melancholy. He gives examples of it in full passages from Macpherson's Ossian. The desolate walls of Balcutha and Llywarch Hen's address in old age to his crutch reveal the struggling, fierce, passionate melancholy. This Titanism, as Arnold calls it, is traced in the poetry of Byron and, strangely enough, in Milton's Satan. All these passages in prose and poetry cast an artistic spell over the writing and make it appear as a work of
The tone of criticism prevails from the beginning to the end. The nature and source of the Celtic melancholy has been ascertained critically. It has its source in the reaction against the despotism of fact, in the sensuous nature, in the adverse destiny and in the immense calamities of the Celts. Its nature is "struggling, fierce and passionate". Arnold is more critical in his comparison of the Celtic melancholy with the German Sehnsucht. Goethe's heroes have melancholy; but Werther's melancholy, Faust's discontent and Prometheus's revolt have nothing turbulent and Titanic about them. But the English have this Celtic melancholy with all its piercing regret and passion. Arnold refers to Byron's heroes — Manfred, Lara, Cain — who are all Titanic. But he shows his courage rather than discretion in discovering the Celtic fibre in Milton in his portrayal of Satan. The passage quoted from Paradise Lost (ll. 106-9) reveals how Satan, in his fall, stands against God. It is true that Satan revolts passionately against God in his fallen condition. But it is strictly not melancholy, rather Satan hopes for the best: "All is not lost". And besides, Milton cannot think of the despotism of God. Satan is given here the Satanic character and speech, and not Titanic. But the English have also the Germanic strain in their melancholy. Arnold quotes a passage from Southey and shows how the poet reveals the Germanic docility, and fidelity to nature, in place of the Celtic Titanism. Arnold could have easily supplied many more examples from the English poets of two kinds of melancholy, the Celtic and the Germanic, but these would have been superfluous. Yet the finest expression of the Celtic nature is in Shelley's "I fall upon the thorns of life, I bleed"
and that of the Germanic is in another romantic poet, Keats: "Where but to think is to be full of sorrow / And leaden-eyed despairs". The melancholy mood is dominant in Arnold's poetry. In fact, he is at his best in this mood. But he has often the Germanic patience and, rarely, the Celtic passion.

In Arnold the Celtic melancholy cannot be expected as he is, by nature, not rebellious but resigned. Even in Tristan and Isolde, which offers enough scope to express the Celtic melancholy, Arnold is patient and reasonable:

No, we suffer deeply, yet retain
Power to be moved and soothed, for all our pain.

('Isolde of Brittany' ll. 116-17)

Lionel Trilling observes: "Between Arnold's separation from Marguerite and the full course of his life of action, there intervenes a period of profoundest melancholy, personal and intimate." When he is personal, he has restrained melancholy, as in the Marguerite poems:

.... this heart, I know,
To be long loved was never framed.

('A Farewell' ll. 17-18)

Who renders vain their deep desire?
A God, a God their severance ruled.

('Isolation Continued' ll. 21-22)

21. Matthew Arnold, P. 132
So on the sea of life, alas!
Man meets man—meets, and quits again.

('The Terrace at Berne' ll. 47-48)

Perhaps the intense grief that approaches gloomy submission and not piercing passion is in 'The Forsaken Merman'. The Merman will come back to the sea with his children,

Singing: 'There dwells a loved one,
But cruel is she!
She left lonely for ever
The kings of the sea.

(ll. 140-43)

This is Germanic melancholy and not Celtic. This note of melancholy runs through all Arnold's early poems. It may be traced in 'Mycerinus', 'Human Life', 'To a Gipsy Child by the Sea-Shore', 'The Sick King in Bokhara', etc. But Arnold is not alien to the Celtic passion. His Tristram reveals it at times:

I think, I have a fever in my blood.

(ll. 280)

I am dying: build —(thou mayst)—my grave.

(ll. 12)

Arnold knows

There's a secret in his breast
Which will never let him rest.

(ll. 245-46)
In general, Arnold cannot reveal the piercing passion, though he feels it at heart. His melancholy is a reaction against the despotism of fact, but he submits to the scheme of things: "We mortal millions live alone". So this cannot reach the tragic height; this is at best intensely pathetic. The difference between the Celtic melancholy and the Germanic melancholy is one of intensity and effect. The Germanic melancholy teaches stoical fortitude in misfortunes and sorrows but the Celtic melancholy offers a heroic resistance against all ills of life. In fact, human life is so constituted that melancholy is an essential element of it; and it is so universal that it cannot be branded as Germanic or Celtic. But Matthew Arnold has, as a critic, this trick of popularizing phrases and formulas. The Celtic Pindarism and the Celtic Titanism are an attempt in this direction, though these are not yet duly recognized in critical jargon.

Arnold's tendency to formulize is manifest enough in 'Natural Magic' where he makes clear the distinction between modes of handling Nature. He mentions only four out of many such modes — the conventional, the faithful, the Greek and the Celtic. He has defined each deftly with illustrations. Yet the distinction seems somewhat strained and blurred. The conventional mode of handling Nature does certainly not mean here the traditional way. Rather the example which Arnold offers as an illustration indicates the artificial method, the drawing-room study of Nature. The faithful way is just the contrary; it is to see Nature as it is and then to present it quite objectively. It
seems to be a faithful transcription of natural details. But the really faithful mode of presenting Nature is rarely possible. The author has then to act as the mere lens of a camera. The objectivity on the part of the poet which alone can ensure faithfulness may not be easy to achieve for any poet. The very selection of details for description involves the personal factor. Keats' handling of external nature in 'Ode to Autumn' may well be cited as an example of the faithful way. But in fact, the selection and arrangement of the scenes has behind it the chastened mind of Keats with a deep undertone of personal pathos. So though objective and faithful, the images have on them a ray of imagination. They are half-seen and half-created. Besides, the blending of man and Nature in the 'Ode' points to the Hellenic way of handling Nature. The distinction between the faithful way and the Greek way then cannot be definitely drawn. The Greek radiance and the Celtic magic are again not so distinct. Arnold gives one of the best examples of the sheer, inimitable Celtic note from Shakespeare:

in such a night

Stood Dido, with a willow in her hand,
Upon the wild sea-banks, and waved her love
To come again to Carthage.

To him, the passage is drenched and intoxicated with the fairy-dew of natural magic. The willow in Dido's hand and the wild sea-banks are thought to have the magic of nature as Keats'
magic casements, opening on the foam
Of perilous seas, in fairy lands forlorn
('Ode to a Nightingale').

strikes the same Celtic note. Nature, as described here, has
"a mysterious life and grace". Arnold says that the power of
moral and spiritual emotion can give any poem this Celtic magic.
If in the Greek way a radiance is shed over the beauty of nature,
in the Celtic it is soaked in emotion. One may ask if the dis-
tinction is clear at all. The natural magic may be created in
either way. The Dido passage as cited by Arnold, would lose its
magic, if set over against the similar passages in Keats:

And sometimes like a gleaner thou dost keep
Steady thy laden head across a brook.
('Ode to Autumn')

and

Perhaps the self-same song that found a path
Through the sad heart of Ruth, when, sick for ho.
She stood in tears amid the alien corn.
('Ode to a Nightingale')

To Arnold the first passage appears to have the Greek radiance
while the second the Celtic magic. But the distinction defies
any logical analysis. It is based chiefly on the reader's sense
of hearing and feeling. It might be true that Celts could
reveal "the intimate life of nature, her weird power and her
fairy charm", and that the natural magic in English has come
from them. Yet the Celtic magic is not only confined to the
Celts. It is a particular way of looking at Nature as opposed to the artificial mode. The faithful and the Greek ways are more transitional stages between these two antipodal points. But the natural magic is not the ultimate way of handling nature. Wordsworth's way is far more advanced. He goes far beyond discovering the weird power and the fairy charm, when he feels

a sense sublime
Of something far more deeply interfused
Whose dwelling is the light of setting suns,
And the round ocean and the living air,
And the blue sky, and in the mind of man.

('Tintern Abbey', 11. 96-100)

Nature is charged here not only with emotion, moral and spiritual, but is felt as a spirit pervading the creation as a whole. It is not again the 'symbolic' way of the moderns to deal with Nature. It represents rather the depths of thought and feeling "into which we cannot peer". Matthew Arnold was impervious to Wordsworth's visionary power, and as such he could not speak of this 'visionary' way of handling Nature as superior to the Celtic magic. Of course, the visionary way cannot be traced to any source such as Greek or Celtic. It can be achieved only when one loses all racial or personal characteristics and becomes "asleep in body". The vision enables one to "see into the life of things".

22. Eliot, T.S., Selected Prose, p. 95
Arnold's final lecture as Professor of Poetry was on 'Culture and its Enemies', and this was published in Cornhill in July, 1867. It provoked 'Culture: A Dialogue' from Frederick Harrison in the Fornightly Review for November. Arnold replied with five articles on 'Anarchy and Authority' in Cornhill from January to August, 1868. He published in 1869 the original lecture along with the Cornhill articles, somewhat revised, as a book under the title *Culture and Anarchy: an essay on political and social criticism*. The title itself is indicative enough that the 'essay' has little of that artistic charm of the literary essay. But the fact is otherwise. For Arnold, "political and social criticism" is in no way different from his "criticism of life". Perhaps Dover Wilson has made this point clear, though a little exaggerated, in : "a great poet's great defence of poetry, a profoundly religious book, and the finest apology for education in the English language". 23 The 'essay' extends beyond the pale of criticism to the domain of art. Arnold, who professes himself to be fragmentary, attempts here to be all of a piece, and the criticism includes in it religion, poetry and education. In his conception of culture nothing is alien, everything works towards 'perfection'. The seeker after perfection proceeds with a conviction that 'culture' as opposed to 'anarchy' is not all a

romantic dream but an actuality. So the critic and the artist conjoin to achieve the goal. The artist here is no more a victim, a suffering soul, but a robust rational creature wishing a dream to be realised.

In *Culture and Anarchy* Arnold takes up the role of his "intellectual deliverer" of the age, and he plays his part as best he can. The chief impulse is then the *zeitgeist* which he cannot pass by. No artist with a sense of criticism can ignore the spectacle around him and live in isolation. Arnold accused Clough long ago of plunging and bellowing in the Time-Stream, but here he himself follows the track left behind by his friend. Of course he had, by this time, acquired the mastery which Clough had not. Besides, Arnold has a rich inheritance along this line. He draws heavily on such thinkers as Coleridge, Burke, Newman and Carlyle. He has learned much also from his father. Yet, in spite of this influence, *Culture and Anarchy* is "original in tone and in certain of its examples and emphases...", and "it has remained more influential than any other single work in this tradition". 24 Arnold's analysis of the social situation is pointed and clear:

In our modern world ... the whole civilisation is, to a much greater degree than the civilization of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. 25

25. *Culture and Anarchy*, 1966/e, p. 49
The analysis in three chapters — 'Doing as one Likes', Barbarians, Philistines, etc. and 'Our Liberal Practitioners' — of the situation with the dominant nineteenth-century notions and habits is a witty observation. The chapters contain serious criticisms on contemporary society, religion and politics, but a light vein of malicious humour lessens the seriousness and proves Arnold's power to move at ease between the two.

In 'Doing as One Likes' Arnold pleads against the habit of laissez-faire as an Englishman's impulse to do as he likes tends to anarchy. He says, "... the clear letter of the law must be against our Englishman who does as he likes". The blessed thing is "to like what right reason ordains and to follow her authority". Arnold analyses in brief the position of the three classes — aristocracy, middle-class and working class, and finds the inadequacy of each to supply the principle of authority. So his recommendation is "to rise above the idea of the class to the idea of the whole community, the State" which may be the centre of 'light and authority'. Arnold calls the state an "organ of our best self", of our national right reason". But this constitution of the State is not clear. He himself has a clear idea of the best self, though this is not made clear in the essay. That "by our best self we are united, impersonal, at harmony" needs an explanation. Trilling has attacked Arnold's theory of the State that it "does not hold up as a logical structure, nor does it hold up as a practical structure". He goes so far as to say that "His essentially mystic conception of the state reads almost like a Platonic myth", though he admits that "Arnold's
myth is still fertile and valuable — and morally inescapable". But, in fact, Arnold is not making any myth in a mystic mood. He is aware of the conflict between our ordinary self and our best self. But he believes in the progression of the human society — "a revolution by due course of law" as he quotes approvingly from the Duke of Wellington. The strength of it is in Darwin's parallel theory of the origin and evolution of species (1859). A revolution by due course of law is really an evolution of the human mind to the best self. The Athens of the past is not the ideal here, but Arnold points to a distant future from the anarchic condition of his country at the time. This is a kind of social Darwinism. Of course the difference is clear. He is denied the visionary power, and here he has no "visionary schemes of revolution and transformation". He knows that "without order a revolution cannot accomplish itself by due course of law". Even if it is taken as a prophetic vision, it is not allowed "to soar out of sight of the solid ground of cumulative knowledge". Arnold offers practical criticism when he says that all the three classes want to affirm their ordinary selves, and that "By our every-day selves, however, we are separate, personal,

26. Matthew Arnold, p. 255

27. The publication of Darwin's Origin of Species brought about a revolution in the world of thought. Matthew Arnold was much disturbed in his mind and thought. "The Scientific Materialism to which it gave rise was a far more formidable foe to Religion than eighteenth century Atheism or Tennysonian doubt. Seeing this grim wolf, with privy paw daily devouring the soul of the younger generation, Matthew Arnold rode out to their rescue, mounted on what can only be called,... a Fancy Religion".

at war". He makes then a metaphor and poetry when he says, "But by our best self we are united, impersonal, at harmony", as it conveys an important insight.

In the chapter 'Barbarians, Philistines, Etc.' Arnold analyses the structure of English society and the characteristic ideas of each class. He shows that no one of the three main classes can serve as an organ of culture. The classification of English society is so well known that Arnold "had become a classic in his own life-time". He thought it was "a great achievement" to set up a number of current phrases. But the real achievement is not phrase-making, nor the survey of the English scene. It is in "the belief that excellence dwells among high and steep rock and can only be reached by those who sweat blood to reach her". He could crane his thought from the sociopolitical bog to the high rocks of artistic joy. He explains how "to relish the sublime" with a quotation from Martinus Scriblerus:

The taste of the bathos is implanted by nature itself in the soul of man; till perverted by custom or example, he is taught, or rather compelled, to relish the sublime.

The English scene or the human nature may not have changed much since Arnold's time. Yet what matters is not so much the social and political criticism as the putting forward of his life-long quest — 'the full perfection of our humanity'. He refers to