

Near East University



**Faculty of Arts & Sciences
English Language & Literature
Department**

**The Concept of Nature
in**

**Matthew Arnold's
"The Scholar-Gipsy"**

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PREFACE

Victorian writers differed from the writers of the preceding ages in taking upon themselves the responsibility of reaching the public through the medium of novels and poems. Arnold's "The Scholar-Gipsy" is a great poem dedicated to one of nature's man's devotion to a single cause in an age when any kind of belief was almost impossible.

PREFACE

Like the youth of modern times, the youth of the Victorian Age suffered from aimlessness, lack of confidence and determination. Arnold's model was the pastoral elegy. Besides giving us excellent spectacles of English nature scenery, he also teaches us a moral lesson and shows us how to live in an unhealthy period in human history.

Classical in form, the poem is modern as far as it treats the problems of its age.

I consider the poem to be a highly satisfying example of a mature and sensitive Victorian poet.

PREFACE

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Like the youth of modern times, the youth of the Victorian Age suffered from aimlessness, lack of confidence and determination. Arnold's model was the pastoral elegy. Besides giving us excellent spectacles of English nature scenery, he also teaches us a moral lesson and shows us how to live in an unhealthy period in human history.

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INTRODUCTION

The concept of nature in English Literature is difficult to understand. There have been numerous attempts to define the concept of nature. Lovejoy points out that there are over sixty different definitions of nature in English (1). The word "Nature" has acquired a great number of meanings through the course of the development of the English language. We can trace the evolution of the word "Nature" and its meaning undergone during the 17th, 18th and 19th centuries. Some of the writers of those centuries defined the concept of nature as follows:

(1668) TEMPLE (Let. Ws. 1720 II, 119):

"There are some Natures in the world who can be pleased sincerely in themselves" (1).

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"Nature is shy and hates to act before spectators." (3)

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(1668) TEMPLE (Let.Wks.1720 II.119):

“There are some **Natures** in the world who
can be proceed sincerely in Business”(2)

(1789) STERNE (Journ., Act of Charity):

“**Nature** is sky and hates to act before
spectators.”(3)

(1732-92) SIR JOSHUA REYNOLDS:

"Nature is, and must be the fountain which alone is inexhaustible and from which all excellences must originally flow."(4)

(1874) R. GALTON:

"Nature is all that a man brings with himself into the world."(5)

Neo-classical poets and critics used the word **"Nature"** with reference to its physical and human characteristics. Some of the neo-classicists used the word only with reference to its human characteristics as they hated the wilder aspects of nature. These critics did not give much importance to the wild and the disordered aspects of nature. They mostly preferred the orderly city life to rural life and to the disorderly way of existence.

Before the eighteenth century, rural life and wild nature were not regarded as subjects fit for literature because they were believed to be uncivilized. For instance, the **Alpine** scenery were thought to be ugly, and it was many years before writers took any interest in rugged mountains and mysterious forests.

In English literature it was **James Thomson** who first started looking at rural life and nature with naked eye and offering us excellent descriptions based on direct observations. Here are some examples from his famous work, **The Seasons** :

“The keener tempests come; and fuming dun
From all the lived east or piercing north,
Thick clouds ascend, in whose capacious womb
A vapory deluge lies, to snow congealed.
Heavy they roll their fleecy world along,
And the sky saddens with the gathered storm.
Through the hushed air the whitening shower descends
At first thin wavering, till at last the flakes
Fall broad and wide and fast, dimming the day
With a continual flow. The cherished fields
Put on their winter robe of purest white;
‘Tis brightness all, save where the new snow melts
Along the mazy current; low the woods
Bow their hoar heed; and ere the languid sun
Faint from the west emits his evening ray,
Earth’s universal face, deep-hid and chill,
Is one wild dazzling waste, that buries wide
The works of man.”(6)

An example from a prose writer **Horace Walpole** will now be in order. We understand from the following passage that **Walpole** was introducing a new sensibility towards nature, which he calls "**Sublimity**" which is a romantic feeling:

Sublimity in Nature :

"But the road, West, the road ! winding round a prodigious mountain, and surrounded with others, all shagged with hanging woods, obscured with pines, or lost in clouds !. Below, a torrent breaking through cliffs, and tumbling through fragments of rocks!. Sheets of cascades forcing their silver speed down channelled precipices, and hasting into the roughened river at the bottom !. Now and then an old foot-bridge, with a broken rail, a leaning cross, a cottage, or the ruin of an hermitage !. This sounds too bombast and too romantic to one that has not seen it, too cold for one that has. If I could send you my letter past between two lovely tempests that echoed each other's wrath, you might have some idea of this noble

roaring scene, as you were reading it. Almost on the summit, upon a fine verdure, but without any prospect, stands the Chartreuse. (From a letter to Richard West, from a hamlet among the mountains of Savoy, September 28, 1739.)" (7).

In the broadest sense of the term, "**Romanticism**" is an artistic and literary movement, preoccupied with the "irregular," "strange," "picturesque," "wild," and "distant".

Many attempts were made in Europe to define **Romanticism**. In Germany towards the end of the eighteenth century, numerous attempts were made in reaching a satisfactory definition of the concept. **Schlegel brothers** accepted "**The Romantic**" to mean a kind of art which refused to recognize restrictions in subject matter or form and to enjoy freedom to deal with the abnormal, grotesque, and monstrous and to combine in a single piece, a variety of standpoints. Sometimes even mixing philosophy and poetry as well as other genres. They, however, used the term not for the writers of their day but for such writers as **Shakespeare** and **Cervantes**. As **Goethe** pointed out in 1830, it was mostly through the writings of **Schlegel brothers** that the word **Romantic**

“goes over the whole world and causes so many quarrels and division... everyone talks about classicism and romanticism - of which nobody thought fifty years ago.”(8)

Among the general characteristics of **Romantic Poetry** are an emphasis on **Nature** and personal feelings and emotions of the poet or writer writing in a free style defying any set of rules. In **William Wordsworth's** definition, this new kind of poetry

“is the spontaneous overflow of powerful feelings.”(9)

As a result of the **Industrial Revolution** in England, rural areas were gradually declining. The villages were immigrating from their villages to big cities or even to overseas countries. Many villages began to be depopulated. The decline of village life became a subject of deep concern for numerous poets of the **Romantic Period**. One of the romantics who profoundly dealt with this subject is **Oliver Goldsmith**. In his book **The Deserted Village**, Goldsmith treats this subject extensively :

"Thy sports are fled, and all thy charms withdrawn ;
Amidst thy bowers the tyrant's hand is seen,
And disolation saddens all thy green :
One only master grasps the whole domain,
And half a tillage stints thy smiling plain.
No more thy glassy brook reflects the day,
But, choked with sedges works its weedy way ;
Along the glades, a solitary gueast,
The hallow sounding bittern guards its nest ;
Amidst thy desert walks the lapwing flies.
And tires their echoes with unvaried cries ;
Sunk are thy bowers in shapeless ruin all,
And the long grass o'ertops the moldering wall ;
And trembling, shrinking from the spoiler's hand,
Far, for away thy children leave the land.
Ill fares the land to hastening ills a prey,
Where wealth accumulates, and men decay :
Princes and Lords may flourish, or may fade ;
A breath can make them, as a breath has made :
But a bold peasantry, their country's pride,
When once destroyed, cen never be supplied."(10)

In the **Romantic Period**, love of nature in English poetry reached at its highest level. The romantics used the term "**Nature**" to denote the physical world only. The romantic poets such as **Wordsworth**, **Coleridge**, **Shelly**, **Keats** and **Byron** were concerned with the concept of nature mostly with reference to its physical characteristics and described its beauty. The romantic feeling for nature varied from merely descriptive as in **Keats** to deeply philosophical as in **William Wordsworth**.

Among these romantics, **William Wordsworth** made the greatest contribution to the love of nature in English poetry. Besides the physical characteristics of nature, he also pointed out the feeling of man towards nature. He created a perfect harmony between nature and man in his poems. The following lines from his poem "**Tintern Abbey**" show **William Wordsworth's** success in constructing a profound relationship between nature and man :

" Five years have passed; five summers, with the length
Of five long winters and again I hear
These waters, rolling from their mountain-springs
With a soft inland marmur. Once again

Do I behold these steep and lofty cliffs
That on a wild secluded scene impress
Thoughts of more deep seclusion; and connect
The landscape with the quiet of the sky.
The day is come when I again repose
Here under this dark sycamore and view
These plots of cottage ground, these orchard tufts,
Which at this season, with their unripe fruits,
Are clad in one green hue, and lose themselves
'Mid groves and copses. One again I see
These hedgerows, hardly hedgerows, little lines
Of sportive wood run wild, These pastoral farms,
Green to the very door and wreath of smoke.
Knowing that Nature never did betray
The heart that loved her, 'tis her privilege,
Through all the years of this our life, to lead
From joy to joy : for she can so inform
The mind that is within us, so impress
With quietness and beauty, and so feed
With lofty thoughts, that neither evil tongues
Rash judgements where no kindness is, nor all
The dreary intercourse of daily life,
Shall e'er prevail against us, or disturb
Our cheerful faith, that all which we behold
Is full of blessings."(11)

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S LIFE & HIS PUBLICATIONS

MATTHEW ARNOLD'S LIFE

There is not much to write about **Matthew Arnold's** life. Therefore we can offer here only a very sketchy account of his life. **Arnold** was born on December 24, 1822, at **Laleham, Surrey**. He was the son of **Thomas Arnold** and **Mary Penrose**. In 1836, He was sent to **Winchester College**. In 1841, he obtained a scholarship to study at **Balliol College, Oxford**. In 1842, his father died. In 1845, he taught at **Rugby**. In the same year he became a fellow at **Oriel College, Oxford**.

Arnold liked travelling. He spent most of his time travelling to France, Belgium, Germany, Italy, Holland and Switzerland where he wrote most of his poems. His first visit was to France in 1846. In 1848, he visited Switzerland. In 1851, he was married with **Frances Lucy Wightman**. In 1854, he travelled to Belgium. In 1859, he had a long journey to France, Holland and Switzerland between April and August. In 1861, his closest friend **Huge Clough** died. In

1865, he had another long journey to France, Italy, Germany and Switzerland for **School Enquiry Commision**. In 1867, **Arnold's** professorship ended, and in 1868, he moved to **Harrow**. In 1871, he visited France and Switzerland again. In 1873, he moved to **Pain's Hill Cottage, Cobham, Surrey**. Between 1873 and 1886, he had a few visits to France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. After his visits to these countries, he felt tired and resigned from inspectorship. Arnold died on April 15, 1888, and he was buried at **Laleham**.

His publications were as follows :

- 1849.** The Strayed Reveller, and Other Poems.
- 1852.** Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems.
- 1853.** Poems. A New Edition (The Scholar-Gipsy was included in this work).
- 1857.** The Modern Element in Literature.

- 1859.** England and the Italian Question.
- 1860.** The Popular Education of France.
- 1861.** On Translating Homer.
- 1862.** Last Words on Translating Homer.
- 1863.** The Bishop and the Philosopher.
- 1864.** A French Eton.
- 1865.** Essays in Criticism (1'st Series).
- 1866.** Report on Secondary Education in Foreign Countries (May). Thyrsis (April).
- 1867.** The Study of Celtic Literature. New Poems.
- 1869.** Culture and Anachy. Poems in collected edition with revised text. Later editions, with alterations (1877, 1881, 1885, 1890).
- 1870.** St. Paul and Protestantism.

1871. Friendship's Gerland.
1872. A bible Reading for Schools : The Great Prophecy of Israel's Restoration.
1873. Literature and Dogma.
1875. God and The Bible.
1877. Last Essays on Church and Religion.
1878. Select Poems.
1879. Mixed Essays.
1880. Prose Passages.
1881. Burke's Letters, Speeches, and Tracts on Irish Affairs.
1882. Irish Essays.
1883. Isaiah of Jarusalem.

- 1885.** Discourses in America.
- 1886.** Report on Certain Points Connected with
Elementary Education in Germany,
Switzerland and France.
- 1888.** Essays in Criticism (2'nd Series).
- 1889.** Reports on Elementary Schools (1852-82)
ed. Sir Francis Standford.

THE LOVE OF NATURE IN
"THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY"

"The Scholar-Gipsy" is a kind of poem which has a simple structure, action and incident. It also has strong elements of symbolism and allegory. The action takes place in the country around Oxford. This poem is known as a kind of "epic" and is one of the best of Joseph

Matthew Arnold found the following information about the Oxford student who abandoned his studies at Oxford University as recorded in Clarendon's Vanity of Dogmatizing (1661):

"There was very early a man in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there, and at last to join himself to a company of vagabonds

THE LOVE OF NATURE IN **“THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY”**

“The Scholar-Gipsy” is a kind of poem which has a simple structure, action and thought. It also has strong elements of the pastoral elegy. The characters are shepherds and gipsies, people who live close to nature, and the action takes place in the countryside around Oxford. This poem is based on a book Vanity of Dogmatizing, 1661 by Joseph Glanvil.

Matthew Arnold found the following information about the Oxford student who abandoned his studies in Oxford University as recorded in Glanvil’s Vanity of Dogmatizing, 1661 :

“There was very lately a lad in the University of Oxford, who was by his poverty forced to leave his studies there; and at last to join himself to a company of vagabond

gipsies. Among these extravagant people, by the insinuating subtilty of his carriage, he quickly got so much of their love and esteem as that they discovered to him their mystery. After he had been a pretty while well exercised in the trade, there chanced to ride by a couple of scholars, who had formerly been of his acquaintance. They quickly spied out their old friend among the gipsies; and he gave them an account of the necessity which drove him to that kind of life, and told them that the people he went with were not such impostors as they were taken for, but that they had a traditional kind of learning among them, and could do wonders by the power of imagination, their fancy binding that of others: that himself had learned much of their art, and when he had compassed the whole secret, he intended, he said, to leave their company, and give the world on account of what he had learned.”(12)

The above note drawn from Glanvil's book Vanity of Dogmatizing became Arnold's source of inspiration for the poem "The Scholar-Gipsy".

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A PARAPHRASING OF "THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY"

1) All shepherds are asked to take part in the search
for the Scholar-Gipsy, and they are urged not to waste their
time but to hurry and begin the search as soon as possible.

2) In the second stanza we see a farmer preparing
corn. He has hung up his nose on the branch of a tree, placed
his food basket and pitcher nearby. He left his cattle and
came in out of his lunch on basket during his rest time to

A PARAPHRASING OF "THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY"

The poem begins with a call to all shepherds to start looking for the lost **Scholar-Gipsy**. Here, we see the employment of many of the conventions of the classical pastoral elegy as observed in the works of Theocritus and Bion.

1) All shepherds are asked to take part in the search for the **Scholar-Gipsy**, and they are urged not to waste their times but to hurry and begin the search as soon as possible.

2) In the second stanza, we see a farmer reaping corn. He has hung up his coat on the branch of a tree, placed his food basket and pitcher nearby. He left his sickle and came to eat of his luncheon basket during his rest time. He

hears the bleating of the flocks in the distance. It is a typical summer day with all its activities and noises.

3) The poet **Matthew Arnold** is also involved in this search. He pictures himself as lying among tall green grasses and yellowing stalks enjoying the beautiful fragrance of the blooms of linden trees.

4) Lying among the lovely pastures and flowers, he has **Glanvil's** book with him. In this book, he reads the story of the poor Oxford student who one summer morning left his friends and college to learn the gipsy lore.

5) Years after, two students whom at college the **Scholar-Gipsy** knew met him in the country-lanes and questioned him about his way of life with gipsies. He answered their questions and pointed out that his gipsy friends had arts and rules and that they could control the

brains of people. He said that after learning all the secret of arts of gipsies he would then teach the world everything of what he had learned from them. But to do this it needs time, and when this will be determined by God.

6) After leaving the two college friends from Oxford he never returned back. But according to rumours, the lost **Scholar-Gipsy** was occasional seen while wandering in the countryside. People observed him for a very short periods. He looked thoughtful and would not speak; he wore strange clothes not unlike those of gipsies. **Shepherds** had met him on the hills of **Hurst** in spring and at some lonely beer houses in the **Berkshire** moors. The villagers in long overcoats had found him sitting at their entering by the warm fire-place.

7) The **Scholar-Gipsy** would disappear in the middle of drink or talk. **Arnold** seems to know the appearance of the **Scholar-Gipsy**. He draws a picture of him in his mind. In this picture, he used to put the shepherds to

to dance at Fyfield, a village six miles southwest of Oxford, in May. These young girls have often watched his wondering through the shady fields, and **The Scholar-Gipsy** has often given them plenty of flowers of white anemony, purple orchises with spotted leaves and dark bluebells wet with summer dews. But none of these girls can give any news of him.

10) When the hay time begins in the fields above Godstow Bridge, **The Scholar-Gipsy** is seen sitting on the river bank by the reapers and black winged swallows. He is seen wearing strange clothes and looking with suspecting eyes and dreamy attitudes. But when the reapers and swallows approach him, he runs away from them.

11) **The Scholar-Gipsy** is seen leaning on a gate of a lonely farm in the Cummer hills and watching the threshers in the old barns. Children returning from search for cresses have seen him watching the growing pastures and the feeding cows. And thay noticed him walking slowly through the wet grasses.

12) In autumn, when the gipsies pitch their tents on the skirts of **Bagley Wood**, and hang hang their coloured garments, a blackbird above the forest-ground **Thessaly** sees the **Scholar-Gipsy**, but it is not afraid of him because he has become a familiar part of the countryside. Every creature in nature knows him and is not afraid of him. The blackbird sees him wandering and waiting in a rapt state for the spark from Heaven to perform his duty. He will be able to perform his duties when he is finally granted his permission.

13) **Arnold** feels as if he had passed by the **Scholar-Gipsy** on the wooden bridge or on the stone-raved road where the travellers go home through the wet fields. He visualized the **Scholar-Gipsy** wearing cloak and raincoat in winter and his face turned towards the wintry ridge of **Hinskey**. He climbs the hill and arrives in the white slope of the **Cummer** range. He also watches the snowflakes falling and the lights of the dining hall of **Christ Chuch College**. He has no wish to return to his friends. Instead he look for his straw bed in some lonely farm.

14) In **Arnold's** dream, the **Scholar-Gipsy** died a long time ago, and **Glanvil** wrote the story of him explaining how he left Oxford college to learn the strange arts of the gipsies. In this story, the grave of the **Scholar-Gipsy** is in some quiet churchyard through the tall grasses and nettles with white flowers under the shade of a yew tree.

15) **Arnold** argues that the **Scholar-Gipsy** has not felt the passing of time. He says that the passing of time which wears out the life of mortal people has not affected the life of the **Scholar-Gipsy** at all. To him, it is the shocks and changes that exhaust and consume the energy of man.

16) In this stanza, **Arnold** states his belief about the **Scholar-Gipsy** and claimsthat he will not die as he possesses one aim, one business and one desire in life. According to **Arnold**, the **Scholar-Gipsy** will continue to exist, for he has one purpose in life to follow. He represents on immortal idea-love of nature, which is a universal and eternal concept. He is imagined as exempt from age and regarded as an

immortal person. He is an idealized form of the love of nature. He has lived a spiritual life, not the life of a normal person. A spiritual life cannot come to an end with death. Death is the end of those who lead ordinary, day-to-day lives. He has high spiritual ideals; without them he would have long died. With these ideals he is immortal.

17) **Arnold** continues to praise the **Scholar-Gipsy** and admires his way of life. He appreciates his having a firm aim and not wasting his energy. **The Scholar-Gipsy** leads a life different from other people. Here, **Arnold** wishes to express the idea that ordinary people around him do not actually live; they lack firm ideas and strong convictions.

18) **Arnold** says that the **Scholar-Gipsy** believes in God and waits for the sign from Heaven, but the people together with **Arnold** are half-believers and their religious beliefs are shallow. They never fulfilled their ideas. Every year they have new beginnings in life, but they waste their time doing nothing. They lose the ground as soon as they win it. They do not have any firm purpose to fulfil in life.

19) **Arnold** and the majority of the English people wait for the divine moment to come, but it is delayed. This makes them upset. **Arnold** implies **Goethe** who is the most suffered man in Europe. **Arnold** describes the sad experiences of **Goethe**. He tells us how he suffered from pain and how he struggled to overcome this pain.

20) This was (**Goethe**) our wisest. We others continue to suffer. We have abandoned all claim to happiness, and try to bear our suffering. But you are full of hope. You are patient and hopeful to bear the difficulties in life. You are wandering through the fields and forests. You have thrown away all doubts and kept your aim in your mind with a feeling of deep joy.

24 - 25) You run away from us as a Tyrian trader in the East.
21) **O Scholar-Gipsy**, you were born when minds were clear and fresh like the waters of the **River Thames**. You were born before the disease of modern life with its sick hurry, scattered ideas and broken hearts. You never come close to us and fear to contact us. You run away from us as **Dido** ran away from the shade of **Aeneas** in **Heades**.

22) The Scholar-Gipsy still varries in his heart the endless hope which can not be destroyed. He is still hiding in shady parts of the woods, and brushes through tall grasses, and comes out in the open in a clearing and rests on moonlit pales listening to the nightingales singing in deep dark valleys.

23) The Scholar-Gipsy is advised to avoid coming into contact with regular people whose conflicts are contagious and do not lead to any happiness. Coming into contact with them means distraction and hopelessness and the loss of your clear aims. You would also lose your eternal youth and die a quick death.

24 - 25) You run away from us as a **Tyrean** trader in the **Mediterranean** ran from a cheerful **Greek** sailor loaded with figs, **Chian** wine and tunnies.

EVALUATION OF THE POEM

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“**The Scholar-Gipsy**” is a reflective poem with a strongly elegiac tone. A peculiar sadness runs throughout the poem. This feeling of sadness takes its origin mainly from the way of the life the **Scholar-Gipsy** has chosen for himself. The Oxford student might have chosen for himself a lucrative line of activity. With his present choice, it is doubtful he will come to much. The best he can achieve would not be an achievement exceeding that of the real gipsies, a mere hand-to-mouth existence. The sad story of the **Scholar-Gipsy** gives the poem an atmosphere of sadness and melancholy. The disillusioned young Oxford student is a young man completely withdrawn from his own social circle for the sake of a high pursuit. He is determined to learn from the gipsies the secrets they are believed to possess, that is their ability to control the minds of people.

Arnold shows a high degree of admiration for the **Scholar-Gipsy** because he can nourish a high ideal and believe in a lofty cause at a time when people find it hard to believe in everything. In an age of materialism this young man is a rare example of an individual with firm convictions.

In his "**The Scholar-Gipsy**" **Arnold** has chosen a theme which can be described as "serious" and capable of being interpreted from a variety of points of view. In his **Essays in Criticism** (1865) **Arnold** wrote :

"The grand power of poetry is its interpretative power; by which I mean, not a power of drawing out in black and white an explanation of the mystery of the universe, but the power of so dealing with things as to awaken in us a wonderfully full, new, and intimate sense of them, and of our relations with them. When his sense is awakened in us, as to objects without us, we feel ourselves to be in contact

with the essential nature of those objects,
to be no longer bewildered and oppressed
by them, but to have their secret, and to
be in harmony with them.” (13)

Great poets interpret to us nature as well as moral
profundity of man. In this sense **Arnold** as a poet fulfills a
didactic function, a distinguishing characteristic of many
great **Victorian** poets and writers.

Arnold took the mission of poetry very seriously. In his
view poetry should be directly concerned with life. It should
teach us how to live.

“It is important 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?” (14)

The poem excels in superb descriptions of the English countryside around Oxford and the pastoral scenes in that part of rural England. In the long search for the last scholar we are taken through sweet smelling dewy grass along the clear waters of the young Thames. The poem is remarkably rich in romantic imagery of all kinds. Stanzas describing the wanderings of the Oxford student among fresh grasses washed with early morning dews reach the highest point of lyrism rare in English literature. With these characteristics **Arnold's** poem is one of the finest examples of late romanticism.

CONCLUSION

The last two stanzas of the poem constitute a rare example of an extended simile concerning the idea of "running away". The poet urges the **Scholar-Gipsy** to run away from them as a Tyrian trader runs away from a **Greek** sailor.

Written in 1853, the poem "**The Scholar-Gipsy**" expresses an awareness of some of the environmental problems threatening our world today. In my opinion **Arnold's** description of modern life as a disease is very apt. I find the poem full of original ideas and profound thoughts for the future of mankind.

CONCLUSION

A detailed analysis of "The Scholar-Gipsy" has led us to the following conclusions:

- 1) The poem is an embodiment of the spirit of English Romanticism into the Victorian era.

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- 2) The poem is richly decorated with brilliant descriptions of English countryside overflowing with all types of imagery.
- 3) The poem was designed in such a way as to teach the reader a moral lesson. In this respect it is a typical piece of Victorian literature.
- 4) The conception of environment expressed in this poem seems to be far ahead of its time.

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NOTES:

(1) William Pitts Trenchard and Addison Hibbard (revised and enlarged by C. Hugo Holman). A Handbook to Literature. The Century Press, New York, 1967. pp 306-310.

NOTES

(2) The Oxford English Dictionary. Second Edition, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1951; p 1150.

(3) Ibid. p 1150.

(4) A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary, ed. R. W. Burchfield. The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976, Vol. II, p 142.

NOTES :

(1) **William Flint Thrall and Addison Hibbard** (revised and enlarged by **C. Huge Holman**):
A Handbook to Literature, The Odyssey Press, New York, 1960, pp.306-310.

(2) **The Compact Oxford English Dictionary**,
Second Edition, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1991,
p.1150.

(3) **Ibid.** p.1150.

(4) **A Supplement to the Oxford English Dictionary**, ed. R.W. Burchfield, The Clarendon Press, Oxford, 1976, Vol. II, p.1142.

(5) Taste and Criticism in the Eighteenth Century, ed. H.A. Needham, George G. Harrop, London, 1952, p.133.

(6) James Thomson, The Seasons, ed. Henry D. Roberts, London, 1939, 141, ll.223-238.

(7) Horace Walpole: "Sublimity in Nature", Taste and Criticism in the Eighteenth Century, ed. H.A. Needham, George G. Harrop, London, 1952, p.152.

(8) David Perkins, ed. English Romantic Writers, Harcourt Brace and World Inc., 1967, p.2.

(9) William Wordsworth, Preface to the Second Edition of the Lyrical Ballads (1800). Ibid. p.321.

(10) Anthology of Romanticism, ed. Ernest Bernbaum, The Roland Press Company, New York, 1948, p.64, ll.35-55.

(11) "Lines Composed a few miles above Tintern Abbey on revisiting the Banks of the Wye during a Tour. July 13, 1798", Poetical Works of Wordsworth, ed. Thomas Hutchinson, Oxford University Press, 1960, p.163-165.

(12) Victorian Poetry, ed. Robert Bernard Martin, Random House, New York, 1964, p.468.

(13) Arnold Prose and Poetry, ed. E.K. Chambers, "How Poetry Interprets?", Oxford, 1967, p.147

(14) Arnold, "Essays in Criticism", Ibid. p.144

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APPENDIX - A TEXT OF
"THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY"-

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

On, for they had yon "wyrd" f. in the hill,
On "wyrd" f. and again the wistful quest!
No longer leave the wistful quest!

APPENDIX - A TEXT OF "THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY"-

And the first men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and re-cross the grass of hazy-blanch'd green
Come, all day, and again begin the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work at last-
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His scythe, his basket, and his earthen cruet,
And all the rest of his tools and his things,
Then here, at night, when the moon is full and bright-

THE SCHOLAR-GIPSY

Go, for they call you, shepherd, from the hill;
Go, shepherd, and untie the watted cotes!
No longer leave thy wistful flock unfed,
Nor let thy bawling fellows rack their throats,
Nor the cropp'd herbage shoot another head.
But when the fields are still,
And the tired men and dogs all gone to rest,
And only the white sheep are sometimes seen
Cross and recross the strips of moon-blanch'd green
Come, shepherd, and again begin the quest!

Here, where the reaper was at work of late-
In this high field's dark corner, where he leaves
His coat, his basket, and his earthen cruse,
And in the sun all morning binds the sheaves,
Then here, at noon comes back his stores to use-

Here will I sit and wait,
While to my ear from uplands far away
The bleating of the folded flocks is borne,
With distant cries of reapers in the corn-
All the live murmur of a summer's day.

Screen'd is this nook o'er the high, half-reap'd field,
And here till sun-down, shepherd! will I be.
Through the thick corn the scarlet poppies peep,
And round green roots and yellowing stalks I see
Pale pink convolvulus in tendrils creep;
And air-swept lindens yield
Their scent, and rustle down their perfumed showers
Of bloom on the bent grass where I am laid,
And bower me from the August sun with shade;
And the eye travels down to Oxford's towers.

And near me on the grass lies Glanvil's book-
Come, let me read the oft-read tale again!
The story of the Oxford scholar poor,
Of pregnant parts and quick inventive brain,
Who, tired of knocking at preferment's door,

One summer-morn forsook
His friends, and went to learn the gipsy-lore,
And roam'd the world with that wild brotherhood,
And came as most men deem'd, to little good,
But came to Oxford and his friends no more.

But once, years after, in the country-lanes,
Two scholars, whom at college erst he knew,
Met him, and of his way of life enquired;
Whereat he answer'd, that the gipsy-crew,
His mates, had arts to rule as they desired
The workings of men's brains,
And they can bind them to what thoughts they will.
"And I," he said, "the secret of their art,
When fully learn'd, will to the world impart;
But it needs heaven-sent moments for this skill."

This said, he felt them, and return'd no more.-
But rumours hung about the country-side,
That the lost Scholar long was seen to stray,

Seen by rare glimpses, pensive and tongue-tied.
In hat of antique shape, and cloak of gray,
The same the gipsies wore.
Shepherds had met him on the Hurst in spring;
At some lone alehouse in the Berkshire moors,
On the warm ingle-bench, the smock-frock'd boors
Had found him seated at their entering,

But, 'mid their drink and clatter, he would fly.
And I myself seem half to know thy looks,
And put the shepherds, wanderer! on thy trace;
And boys who in lone wheatfields scare the rooks
I ask if thou hast pass'd their quiet place;
Or in my boat I lie
Moor'd to the cool bank in the summer-heats,
'Mid wide grass meadows which the sunshine fills,
And watch the warm, green-muffled Cumner hills,
And wonder if thou haunt'st their shy retreats.

For most, I know, thou lov'st retired ground!
Thee at the ferry Oxford riders blithe,
Returning home on summer-nights, have met

Crossing the stripling Thames at Bab-lock-hithe,
Trailing in the cool stream thy fingers wet,
As the punt's rope chops round;
And leaning backward in a pensive dream,
And fostering in thy lap a heap of flowers
Pluck'd in shy fields and distant Wychwood bowers,
And thine eyes resting on the moonlit stream.

And then they land, and thou art seen no more!-
Maidens, who from the distant hamlets come
To dance around the Fyfield elm in May,
Oft through the darkening fields have seen thee roam,
Or cross a stile into the public way.

Oft thou hast given them store
Of flowers-the frail-leaf'd, white anemony,
Dark bluebells drench'd with dew of summer eves,
And purple orchises with spotted leaves-
But none hath words she can report of thee.

And, above Godstow Bridge, when hay-time's here
In June, and many a scythe in sunshine flames,
Men who through those wide fields of breezy grass
Where black-wing'd swallows haunt the glittering

Thames,
To bathe in the abandon'd lasher pass,
Have often pass'd thee near
Sitting upon the river bank o'ergrown;
Mark'd thine outlandish garb thy figure spare,
Thy dark yague eyes, and soft abstracted air-
But, when they came from bathing, thou wast gone!

At some lone homestead in the Cumner hills,
Where at her open door the housewife darns,
Thou hast been seen, or hanging on a gate
To watch the threshers in the mossy barns.
Children, who early range these slopes and late
For cresses from the rills,
Have known thee eying, all an April-day,
The springing pastures and the feeding kine;
And mark'd thee, when the stars come out and shine,
Through the long dewy grass move slow away.

In autumn, on the skirts of Bagley Wood-
Where most the gipsies by the turf-edged way
Pitch their smoked tents, and every bush you see
With scarlet patches tagg'd and shreds of grey,
Above the forest-ground called Thessaly-
The blackbird, picking food,
Sees thee, nor stops his meal, nor fears at all;
So often has he known thee past him stray,
Rapt, twirling in thy hand a wither'd spray,
And waiting for the spark from heaven to fall.

And once, in winter, on the causeway chill
Where home through flooded fields foot-travellers go,
Have I not pass'd thee on the wooden bridge,
Wrapt in thy cloak and battling with the snow,
Thy face tow'rd Hinksay and its wintry ridge?
And thou hast climb'd the hill,
And gain'd the white brow of the Cumner range;
Turn'd once to watch, while thick the snowflakes fall,
The line of festal light in Christ-Chuch hall-
Then sought thy straw in some sequester'd grange.

But what-I dream! Two hundred years are flown
Since first thy story ran through Oxford halls,
And the grave Glanvil did the tale inscribe
That thou wert wander'd from the studios walls
To learn strange arts, and join a gipsy-tribe;
And thou from earth art gone
Long since, and in some quiet churchyard laid-
Some country-nook, where o'er thy unknown grave
Tall grasses and white flowering nettles wave,
Under a dark, red-fruited yew-tree's shade.

-No, no thou hast not felt the lapse of hours!
For what wears out the life of mortal 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 powers.
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.

Thou hast not lived, why should'st thou perish, so?

Thou hadst *one* aim, *one* business, *one* desire;
Else wert thou long since number'd with the dead!

Else hadst thou spent, like other men, thy fire!

The generations of thy peers are fled,

And we ourselves shall go;

But thou possessest an immortal lot.

And we imagine thee exempt from age

And living as thou liv'st on Glanvil's page,

Because thou hadst-what we, alas! have not.

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!

Who fluctuate idly without term or scope,

Of whom each strives, nor knows for what he strives,

And each half lives a hundred different lives;

Who wait like thee, but not, like thee, in hope.

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 fa'ter 'life away,
And lose to-morrow the ground won to-day-
Ah! do not we, wanderer! await it too?

Yes, we await it!-but it still delays,
And then we suffer! and amongst us one,
Who most has suffer'd, takes dejectedly
His seat upon the intellectual throne;
And all his store of sad experience he
Lays bare of wretched days;
Tell us his misery's birth and growth and signs,
And how the dying spark of hope was fed,
And how the breast was soothed, and how the head,
And all his hourly varied anodynes.



This for our wisest! and we others pine,
And wish the long unhappy dream would end,
And waive all claim to bliss, and try to bear;
With close-lipp'd patience for our only friend,
Sad patience, too near neighbour to despair-

But none has hope like thine!

Thou through the fields and through the woods dost
stray,

Roaming the country-side, a truant boy
Nursing thy project in unclouded joy,
And every doubt long blown by time away.

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,
Its heads o'ertax'd its palsied hearts, was rife-
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!

Still nursing the unconquerable hope,
Still clutching the inviolable shade,
With a free, onward impulse brushing through,
By night, the silver'd branches of the glade-
Far on the forest-skirts, where none pursue.

On some mild pastoral slope
Emerge, and resting on the moonlit pales
Freshen thy flowers as in former years
With dew, or listen with enchanted ears,
From the dark dingles, to the nightingales!

But fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!
For strong the infection of our mental strife,
Which though it gives no bliss yet 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,
Thy hopes grow timorous, and unfix'd thy powers,
And thy clear aims be cross and shifting made;
And then thy glad perennial youth would fade,
Fade, and grow old at last, and die like ours.

Then flyour greetings, fly our speech and smiles!

-As some grave Tyrian trader, from the sea,

Descried at sunrise an emerging prow

Lifting the cool-hair'd creepers stealthily

The fringes of a southward-facing brow

Among the Ægean isles;

And saw the merry Grecian coaster come,

Freighted with amber grapes and Chian wine,

Green, bursting figs, and tunnies steep'd in brine-

And knew the intruders on his ancient home.

The young light-hearted masters of the waves-

And snatch'd his rudder, and shook out more sail;

And day and night held on indingnantly

O'er the blue Midland waters with the gale,

Betwixt the Syrtes and soft Sicily,

To where the Atlantic raves

Outside the western straits; and unbent sails

There, where down cloudy cliffs, through sheets of foam

Shy traffickers, the dark Iberiand come;

And on the beach undid his corded bales.