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PSYCHOLOGICAL ALIENATION IN THE POETRY OF ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

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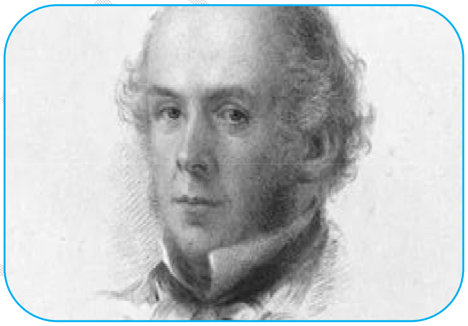
ABSTRACT:

Alienation is a psychological phenomena in itself : a state of mind, which finds its outlet in the works of a writer. Now an effort has been made to deal with some individual problems which can be held responsible for Clough’s alienation in later life.

Since his father was a cloth merchant, his parents shifted from one place to another from England to Liverpool, from there to Charleston. This process of running from one place to another, rooting and uprooting, making and remaking, developed a sense of rootlessness in the family and particularly in Clough, who was very sensitive. His father was always away from the family on business tours, and his mother was dependent too much on her second child, Arthur Hugh Clough. At an early age she made Clough shoulder family’s responsibilities. Apart from that she never let her children forget that ‘they were English’. Clough had to pay the penalty. He could not mix up with his American school mates. He kept a shy and reserve nature.



INTRODUCTION

When he was nine, he was sent to Rugby, where Dr. Arnold was the Head Master who was known for his strict discipline, intellect and religiosity. When he was at Rugby he met his mother and sister only once in a time of eight years, and his father only twice, thus, he was denied his family love and affection.

At Rugby Clough flourished under Thomas Arnold who loved Clough only after his own children. Since his mother had withdrawn herself, emotionally, he was left to find for himself, in a puzzling and alien world. Lonely and insecure he tried to find a clear identity. Capable of strand emotional attachment he had to learn at an early stage to suspect his relatives (for he had been subtle- cocked from one relative to another). He strained to live up his mother’s spotless ideals and he earned the satisfaction of Dr. Arnold’s approval, but always he was conscious of “never being………among those who I (am) sure love me”.[1]

At Rugby Clough won award after award between 1829 and 1837, and in 1836 won Balliol single competitive scholarship, then as now, one of the university’s most desirable awards.

He threw himself heart and soul into his position of moral leadership, for he had been appointed editor of the Rugby Magazine, an honorary position to which Arnold appointed a leading boy whom he wanted to set the school’s standard. Apart from his family circumstances, Dr. Arnold at Rugby, and Ward at Oxford had been formative influences on Clough. Clough experienced to be alien, at odds to some degree through nationality, politics or religion, or all three with the norms of surrounding social structure. From them he learned to fight against the forces of darkness around him.

Inconsistency in the religious interpretation of Arnold and devastating arguments (regarding religious questions as contrary to that of Dr. Arnold) of Ward aroused doubts in Clough's mind. At Rugby, Dr. Arnold's sermons, denouncing the sins of selfish-extravagance, idleness, excess in eating and drinking and calling for a life of Christian warfare against evil within and without, were constantly presenting his pupils lead most readily to worldly wealth and honour, or that in which they may best and safest follow Christ.[2]

Both paths were present in the school, for Rugby was still in the process of being reformed. One boy described by Clough was, "tormented by the very obvious contradiction between the evangelical exhortation given him at home (and in the school chapel), and the common school-boy view of life and conduct, distracted between conscientiousness and sociability".[3]

Clough felt the same tension at Oxford, for there the two paths were more conspicuous, and there Arnold's attack on worldliness reiterated with greater stress by Ward. Besides protesting strongly against the elements of ambition for success, measuring things practically by a worldly standard, he talked of worldliness as a false friend and dangerous foe.

> Worldliness, under the spacious appearance of knowledge of the world, or under the plea of common sense, would often obtain a footing which might afterwards grow until the spirit of this world had altogether expelled the spirit of God. He spoke of it as 'the circumbient poison', and waged against it a hearty and uncompromising war.[4]

This conflict in other words was between purity of the heart on the one hand and contaminations, on the other.

Clough's inwardness and academic excellence kept him aloof, most of the time in his room. He was seriously involved with the politics of Oxford and the religious restlessness, which was prevailing in the minds of liberals and young radicals.

At Oxford Clough formed the Decade, a discussion group, which became the centre of all intellectual, political and religious discussions. It was joined by the most intellectual persons at Oxford. Among the members of the club Clough spoke authoritatively and earned the satisfaction of being loved and respected by all. On religious and political problems Clough's remarks were penetrating as described by Tom Arnold.

But religious uncertainty and dilemma and the problem of XXXIX Articles created havoc in his academic career; his doubts did not allow him to get his first class. He did not compromise on principles and had to quit Oxford, which he loved so well. In his letter to Tom Arnold, he expressed his agony. His monthly income decreased. Private tutorship was the only solution if the society were radical enough to adjust his radicalism.

He met Blanche Smith in 1850. This was the time during which his own isolation and lack of success were beginning to take a sever tall: psychologically he was becoming more and more vulnerable. It is difficult to see how he could have avoided feeling utterly stranded as far as his professional life was concerned. In December 1851, he resigned from his position in University Hall, expecting an appointment to the classical chair at the University College Sydney. On 2 January 1852, he heard from Sir, John Herschel, Chairman of the electing board, that Dr. Woolley had been given that position. In a dispirited mood he began looking for a new openings. Unsuccessfully Clough next put in for a Roman Catholic Inspectorships. The Ragius professorship in Humanities at Aberdeen seemed a more likely possibility, but he withdrew when he learned that subscription to the Westminster confession was obligatory. It was his frustration again that he sailed for America. These odds, he was forced to undergo, made him psychologically and mentally disturbed. He was a case of 'Injured merit'. He found the world full of evils in which his talent was not used. He felt a lost case, utterly frustrated and almost ignored. Around 1851, Clough wrote 'conversation between the Sun and the Moon'. The pieces are primarily monologues by the earth to the almost wordless sun and the moon, his sweet companion. The 'conversations' are in essence a statement of the metaphysical dilemma of modern man, as he seeks, but is unable to communicate with the world around him. The failure of these pieces, to see the light of day epitomizes the inability of his own world and even of his own wife.

As the fable develops science's answers became more and more unsatisfactory and men's teleological dilemma stands naked once again. Neither love nor God have anything to say to him; their language is not his, there awareness of his existence is in some sense doubtful. The earth in these metaphysical, psychological little scenes is clearly man, and partly Clough. The moon is woman, and hears a certain resemblance to the Eve of 'The Mystery of the fall'; she also sounds very like Blanche Smith, to whom Clough was just engaged and with whom relations were frequently stormy. The moon is more content with life than earth. The sun is God, or the power that governs the universe. He exists as a resounding silence than as an active participant, and it is one of the achievements of the work that one accepts him and the earth's sense of awe about him. Like the fall who worships God in the 'paper on religion' because he supplies him with contrivances for our comfortable existence here, so the earth complacently begins by finding the sun circling round him, good and attentive. Questioning, isolated longing for knowledge, the earth feels misunderstood by the moon, who looks bright but has little stirring on her. He is unable to communicate with her. He does not know that he is moved by the Sun. but the Sun won't answer. The earth is jealous of the Sun for he wants to be the centre of things and be moved around at the same time. He is himself dissatisfied with his circular course. It suggests the universal nature of this dilemma as the earth and the stars themselves become as powerless as man to will the course of their orbits. These conversations are, paradoxically, a statement of the near impossibility of achieving true converse with the world.

Clough's marriage, quite at late stage, and his rejection of orthodox Christianity forced him to involve, in an attempt to find alternative definitions of individual morality, in the nature of good and evil. He was constantly blurred by the sense of guilt and corruption. The consciousness of depravity which Rugby had instilled in him, had entrenched itself eradicable in his psychology. He made an attempt at redefining the concept of sin which was an intense search for release.

He dealt with the psychological problems of evil in his notes on religious subjects which he made in 1845. Two years later he told his sister that he had given up his belief in eternal punishment. Evil had to be redefined, fresh terms had to be made with sin. In a letter written to his sister Anne he says:

Sad indeed it is not hear of the evil doings of the children, and what you are to do with them I really can't say. However I would not exaggerate either the sin or the evil.[5]

Even as an undergraduate Clough had begun to feel the compulsion of recognition to be granted to flesh and impulse. Clough discarded the notion of good and evil which man like Carlyle had and looked for guidance into the tradition of romantic naturalism. He followed optimistic writers like Spinoza and Emerson who had awareness of man's nether parts, for an anguished under-current to Clough's towards a less rigorous moral scheme reveals itself in his attempts to come to terms with the fact of sexuality. Some of the dominant elements in his response to sexual experience can be seen clearly in the poems on sexual love which he wrote during these years, the poems which scrutinized the complexities of the relationship between man and woman. This doctrine of 'free love' formulated and extended by Godwin, as a protest against the institution of marriage brought Clough to sympathize with the socialists who formulated the principle of rehabilitation of flesh against centuries of Christian disparagement.

On the problem of sexuality Clough was sharing a general anxiety which the visible weakening of religious belief had created. Unless the very basis of moral order was to disintegrate, an adequate accommodation of sexual energy would have to be divorced. This note of reconstruction in the literatuse of love' written during the forties and fifties, is persistent. Tennyson was conservative, Kingsley, with his 'women worship', his assertions of the purity of fleshly impulse, and Patmore, with his erratic-mystical idealization of womanhood attempted alternative solutions. Both, however, represented a broadly Christian adjustment. Gissing, Meredith and then Clough occupy a significant position in a pattern of development which culminates in Lawrence and leads on to modern understandings of sexuality.

The continual reppressed sexual feelings burst out in his poems but stopped after his marriage. This repression was severe in stresses. “His austerely was not only a commitment to intellectual and spiritual self possession, it was primarily a tense struggle to come to terms with the demon of realized carnality”.[6]

Treatment of war between flesh and spirit in a Latin dialogue anticipates something of the tone of earlier scenes of *Dipsychus*. The daring use of scripture and the frankness in describing Pondemia suggests a significant relaxation of puritan watchfulness. The spirit appears in a dream saying ‘I am spirit, that is nothing, body, that is substance, I have not’, she introduces her sister Pondemia, ‘who has body and flesh and limbs and substance’, and commands ‘come take her and lie with her, for to lie with me is impossible’.

The dreamer, being spirit cannot be with body and flesh. He cries to God, to help him. But heaven and earth are silent. No direction issues from them. The dreamer looks up once more and beholds a woman dressed in white, who takes him by the hand and announces herself his ‘fellow servant’. Love, as Clough later defined, was ‘fellow service’.

Clough brought a growing recognition of sexual forces within himself to the reflections about love and marriage which occupied him extensively over these days.

By November 1846 he had certainly fallen in love seriously enough to consider the possibility of marriage. He writes to Anne:

…as for her whom I hope someday to see you sister it is very true that it won’t be in a moment that you will quit understand each other but there is no fear in the end. She is very slow to advance – and I almost think that the visit to Ambleside, pleasant as it was, was too much an advance. If you can, let all advances come from her, and don’t be afraid, that they will.[7]

The identity of this person, probably was Agnes Walrond, the sister of the Dore. Clough met her in the summer of 1845 in Calder park near Glasgow, and had been considerably attracted by her charm.

Critics suspects an actual experience behind Clough’s respected recurrence to the theme of the ‘Higland Girl’ – a varient which can be detected in the figure of guilt in *Dipsychus – continued*. Phillip, the Oxford undergraduate of *The Bothie* appears in *The Lawyers Second Tale* as an Oxford tuter who has to leave his Hingland beloved, Christie. On 3May 1846, Clough wrote to his sister: “concerning marriage – it is true, my child: - but to fall in love without knowledge is foolery – to obtain knowledge without time and opportunity and something like an intimate acquaintance is for the most part impossible – and to obtain time, opportunity etc. is just the thing which somehow or other has never dully befallen me, at leasr in the cases where I could have wished it at the most”.[8]

This letter to Anne clearly shows his repressed feelings. He hoped to marry the lady he loved but he had not fixed his affections definitely. Clough’s intense feelings of love and alienation find its expression in *The Bothie*, a ‘long vocation postoral’, Clough spent much of that vocation with a reading party in Castleton Breamer in Aberdeenshire, and he utilized some of his experiences there for important details in *The Bothie*.

The ‘Highland Girl’ is for Clough a dual symbol. If she presents an ideal naturalness and purity, the simple daughter of lower classes is also sexually open, vulnerable to her socially superior’s symbol of sexuality. This symbol explores some of the central tensions in Clough’s understanding of human nature – is sex emancipating and natural, or is it death? In his attempt to face such questions his friendship with Burbidge culminated in 1849 in their joint authorship of *Ambervalia* poems, however, Clough pounced upon critics with force and aggressiveness.

I think, you people are making great donkeys of yourself about Burbidge’s freedom of speech. Go to the Bible than prude, consider its language and be wise. Consult also Shakespeare, Milton and Dante, also…….. and infact all great poets.[9]

It is likely that not only he shared with Burbidge an interest in the question of sex but that he and his friend had devoted some attention to the problem of frank treatment of sex as a subject in poetry. Such attempts at breaking through Victorian Taboo, on Clough’s part, can be seen in an unpublished poem entitled 'Homosum, nihil humani'. In an another poem one can see frank recognition of the sexual and social arrogance.

I kissed her on her carnaless
It could not come to me;
For I in my containedness
Was mightier force than she;
………… ………….. ……
For royal-rich I was of force
Exuberant of will;
And carnal if she were and course,
She was a woman still.

(*Poems*, 38)

*The Bothie*_supplies and embodies Clough's justification for quitting Oxford; only it is not the religious apologia that might have been expected. The view of advanced social thinking in the poem in which responsibly sexual love validates his theory is the aspect of Clough's vindication.

Hewson's views are based on experience --- Clough's repressed sexual feelings:

Never believe, I knew the feeling between man and woman,
Till in some village field in holidays new getting stupid,
Chanced it may eye fell aside on a capless, bonnetless , maide
Bending with three pronged fork in a garden uprooting potatoes,

(*The Bothie*, II, 39-50)

Throughout the poem his ideas about love and womanhood are tied in with his unfolding experience. Throughout, too, his sexual experience is colored by the romantic idealization of woman kind which all the emancipating radicalism of the 19th century shared.

Hewson has had the sexual consumation with the ferry – girl, a servant girl, Katie the youngest daughter of a farmer at Ronnock, and ultimately with Elspie Mackaye, towards the end of his journey. But Hewson is in ambivalent grip of guilt and longing. The mode of sexual guilt is too close to the outdated Victorian vision of the prostitute as ruined maiden.

In section VI, the poem has moved to the end of Hewson's quest for Elspie. In Elspie he finds the good. Hewson's adventure with Elspie, is Clough's frank discernment of the mysteries of sexual, which is marred by the pious sentimentalism of Victorian literary fashion. Elspie's domination over the intellectually and socially superior Hewson is to be understood only against the background of romantic primitivism, and the Victorian intellectuals need to find in woman an embodiment of that potent simplicity of elemental nature which dissolve all contradictions, and heals all differences. This romantic idealization, however, co-exists in *The Bothie* with a psychological realism and fidelity in the evocation of sexual response. In *Natura Naturarns,* Clough had imaged awakening sexuality in the lily growing to 'predent head'. Elspie sees her love for Philip Hewson, clearly as a Platonic completion but it is also a completion in the sexual content.

You are too strong, you see, Mr. Philip, just like the sea there
Which will come through the straits and all between the mountain
Foroing its great strong tide into every nook and inlet,
Cetting for in, up the quite stream of sweet in land water,
Sucking up, and stopping it, turningit, driving it backward,

(*The Bothie*, VII, 120-5)

For a moment Hewson is remorseful but Elspie recovers him, Hewson's love for this 'Hingland Girl' in her primal beauty is a democratic revolt against 19th Century Victorian notions. Towards the end Hewson's love for Elspie ripens and turns into marriage in the 'Hingland' glens' in the gold of autumn.

In the end Clough concludes *The Bothie* with the message that 'Nature' is rich in her benediction for these childerrn of hers, who set out in hope and strength for the Antipodes. Thus, *The Bothie* is about Clough's question of morality, it is a kind of wishfulfillment. A possibility, a hope for the survival as a radical intellectual.

Another prototype of Clough is Cloude, the over intellectual hero of *Amours de Voyage* . He thought love and marriage worth sacrificing of something that might be more valuable. Despite his resolution he did fall in love. But in this character Clough lays bare the depth of his psychology, his dilemma, timidity and endless hesitation.

J.A. Symonds held Cloude to be stupid and said; "He is meant, however, to be a poor creature, distract by his own waywardness of speculation, and confused in his impulses".[10]

Cloude's dilemma is that of Clough. Cloude's self criticism is worth-noticing:

Pitiful fool that I was, to stand
Fiddle faddling in that way.

(*Amours De Voyage,* IV, 38)

Primarily he is an intellectual, this response to Mary, therefore, is ambivalent. There is the desire to follow natural emotions and also to look at love romantically. This process is parallel to that of Clough in his letters to Blanche Smith from America, he expresses his waywardness and ambivalent feelings towards her. These desires urge him to go forward. On the other hand, the critical skeptical mind is opposed to any amorous attachment because of the danger of insincerity.

The problem of sincerity arose partly from evangelical training and partly from the collapse of traditional patterns of action forcing the individual to question whether what he did, was suited to his nature, was it from true line or false line? The resulting difficulty of decision demanded hesitation.

Ah, let me look, let me watch, unhurried, unprompted :
Bid me not venture on ought that could alter or add what is present :
Prime me not out, yet ill angels with fury awords, from my
Waiting, watching, and looking let love be its own inspiration

(*Amours De Voyage*, II, 276-285)

His resistance to falling in love is his recognition of the cost involved – especially for the intellectual. In the initial letter dealing with life, Cloude speaks of the feminine presence being a necessity for himself:

Yet as for that, I could live, I believe with children to have those
Pure and delicate forms in composing, moving about you
This were enough I could think; and truly with glad resignation
Could from the dream of romance, from the fever of flushed adolescence Look to escape and subside into peaceful avuncular functions.

(*Amours De Voyage*, I, 175-79)

These lines suggest Cloude's fear of being in love is connected with a fear of sex, but comes mainly from a deep distaste for the unreal and distorted vision of life that love creates.

The implied tension-between the life of the poet and thinker, and the life of husband and parent had long been in his work, and marriage was for him a problem of considerable difficulty. Since he had no money of his own, it could force him into a more lucrative career in order to support a Victorian wife in the style to which she was accustomed; and he must have thought that the responsibilities of a home would interfere with the life he desired. In 1852 he told Blanche, "What I look forward to originally ... Was unmarried poverty and literary work."[11]

In the Canto V, he looks forward to immortality as an escape from love into the absolute world of abstraction. A few moments later, however, as he hears of the fall of Rome and the Republic, counterpointing the collapse of his love affair, Cloude is swept again with ennui, this time to the lowest point of weakness and dejection. But as he goes to Rome to find that now priests and soldiers process it and there is no Mary Trevelyan, suddenly, his will to live revives and he rededicates himself to the intellectual life.

The poem hardly closes on a note of victory. Cloude's profound doubts, even of love, his fear of fictitious, his feeling of shame about sex, the long chain of mischance's that prevented him from finding Mary, and his dedication of the intellectual life, all unite to push him into the state of alienation and frustration. In Mary's final letter to Miss Roper one can see the aching awareness of a crucial opportunity lost:

You have heard nothing, of course,
I know you have heard nothing,
Ah, well, more than one I have broken my purpose,
And sometimes,
Only too often, have looked for the little lake – steames to bring him.
I myself could not help, perhaps, thinking only too much of; He would resign himself, and go, I see it exactly.
So I also submit, although in a different manner,
Can you not really come? We go very shortly to England.
(*Amours De Voyage*, V, 206-16)

This note of submission to a fate that might have been avoided and, yet never is, is the climax of alienation. It is also the theme of *Dipsychus.*

Dipsychus has been compared with Arnold's *Empedocles On Etna* and possibly Armold's poem was in the mind of Clough when he wrote *Dipsychus.* There are dialogues of mind with itself. In the course of both poems, *Empedocles* and *Dipsychus* we come to see ultimate pattern of their lives. They discover through a series of self-revolutions and choose death inorder to avoid submission.

All the three poems, *The Bothie, Amours de Voyage* and *Dipsychus* follow a logical pattern, a progressive movement from objective to subjective art – or, in temper of mind from gaity, to ennui, despair and alienation. It is parallel to Clough's own alienated state of being. In the summer of 1850 he was more introverted and alienated than he had ever been before.

It is true that in *Dipsychus,* the spirit is entirely sympathetic with Dipsychus and is ready enough to support the claims of lust, but the conflict is between Dipsychus himself, and one feels the marked difference between his sensual passion and the cool cynicism of the spirit. Through the first part (Scene I-VII) Dipsychus condemns the hypocrisies of society, questions the Utopian dream of life, and reacts with dismay to the lawlessness of a world without God. In the second part (Scene VIII-XIII) he sets up a life of noble deeds, one of contemplation in opposition to usual goals of man. But being a Dipsychus, he is able to feel the attraction of the world he condemns.

The spirit is the temper, bent on persuading Dipsychus to take his pleasure where he will, irrespective of religious sanctions of social justice and to abandon the life of lonely contemplations for a smart marriage and a successful career, in a word, to sell his youthful idealism for a means of worldly pottage. The spirit is so winning and convicting in some respects, and comes so close to capturing the role of hero – like Milton's Satan – that he almost persuades us to forget his real character. One comes to feel as if he was not a devil after all.

The subject of these scenes, however, is not religion but the 'sinful strests' and the most elemental of moral dilemmas. Dipsychus is tempted to spend the night with one of the 'Venetian pets' he sees in the public garden, a desire he has often felt before but never dared indulge. At first the spirit playing the traditional role of temper, adopts the obvious strategy:

Tis here I see the custom too
For damsels eager to be loved;
And doubtless there's a special charm
In looking at a well shaped arm.
In Paris, I was saying-
(*Dipsychus,* II, 49-54)

A moment later, under flesh provocation from the spirit, he speaks the very language of the Victorian 'ethic of purity', which influenced the protection exaltation of woman as angels.

O moon and stars forgive: And thou, clear heaven,
Look pureness back into me. O great God,
Why, why in wisdom and in graces name,
And in the name of saints and chaste wives
Of mothers, and of sisters, and chaste wives
and angel woman – faces we have seen,
And angel woman – spirits we have guessed,
And innocent sweet children, and pure love,

(*Dipsychus,* II A, 1-8)

The sensual temptation having failed, the spirit changes tactics, and speaking as a man of the world who knows the truth and is free of school-boy illusions, plays the whole thing down:

I know its mainly your temptation
To think the thing a revelation
A mystic mouthful that will give;
Knowledge and death – none know and live
I tell you plainly that it brings
Some lose; but the emptiness of things
(That one sole lesson you will learn by it –
Until we practice what she teaches)
Is the sole lesson you will learn by it.
Still you undoubtedly should try it.
"Try all things" – bad and good, no matter,
You can't till then hold fast the later

(*Dipsychus,* II, A, 20-31)

When it fails, the spirit proposes an alternative to tend his friends into 'good society' where he may learn the way of the world. But this is easier for Dipsychus to reject, Dipsychus is divinely inspired and sees the spirit's life as an ugly piece of deception.

Dipsychus says :

But play no tricks upon thy soul, o man,
Let fact be fact, and life the thing it can.
(*Dipsychus,* IV, 100-101)

The spirit finds that Dipsychus is identifying reality with appearance, claiming that the world is simply how it appears to him, namely filthy and unlovely. So it is he who is deciding himself and playing tricks. With witty irony the spirit defends the objective reality of good wine and female body:

These Juicy meats, this fleshing win,
May be an unreal mere appearance;
Only – for my inside, in fine,
They have a singular coherence.
This lovely creatures glowing charms
Are gross illusion, I don't doubt that;
But when I pressed her in my arms
I some how didn't think about that.

(*Dipsychus,* IV, 106-13)

Later on, Dipsychus finds that he cannot understand the world . But, as in scene IV., the idealist is too clear sighted to fall for a fancy dream. He sees that the pleasures are illusions, and that the mirth and joy are hollow. For, in a society without moral or civil law, the unconfined indulgence of the desire for sex and the desire for power is not so satisfying as it might seem:

Alas, alas! O grief and wrong,
The good are weak, the wicked strong;
And O my God, how long, how lomg?
Dong there is no God; dong

(*Dipsychus* V, 69-72)

This view of the world as it would be without faith is, in fact, what it largely is with 'faith'. That is why it is also the spirit's view, that his different reaction breaks across the moral disarters of Dipsychus. After arguing the wisdom, nonetheless belonging to the Church of England, he picks up the refrain, 'There is no God', to explore the psychological motivations of belief and unbelief, founded on the desires and needs of the moment.

The central struggle of Dipsuchus' life, brought on by the external events of the first part, is now abstracted and made internal in the second part. Now the issue is life or death, held in balance as the reader waits for Dipsychus to conquer or submit. He is brought to face the problem 'whether to act or not to act'. Although Dipsychus is not opposed to action. He longs for noble deeds but that is not what the spirit means at all or what the world had to offer, the only available course is to accept the spirit's proposition, to marry and to enter a profession. But the succession of debates leave the problem unresolved.

The reader sympathizes with Dipsychus's deep reluctance to act, for the dilemma was implicit in the puritan tradition of noble action like the flesh, and the devil was evil and yet one must not live in idleness. But the various assumptions, on which this ethics of action rested, were breaking down in the nineteenth century. These efforts of Evangelical leaders from Wilberforce to Arnold to Ward and Newman to check the growth of worldliness seemed distasteful.

The difficulty of action has another source that is peculiarly Victorian and modern. In a revolutionary period in which traditional beliefs and social structures are being questioned, and transformed, the individual is unsure of himself. He does not know where he stands or how he fits in to the scheme of things. What should he do? No doubt what suits his nature? In fact who is he? In this way the problem of action comes to involve the problem of identity.

In that state of mind one might well adopt this or that with a resulting sense of alienation. Dipsychus, a person is not quite in union with himself and finding no end that correlative of soul, feels confused and alienated:

Bewildered, baffled, hurried hence and thence,
All at cross purpose ever with myself,
Unknowing whence from whither.

(*Dipsychus,* X, 77-79)

The paralysis of inactivity and indecision makes him dismiss the spirit and Dipsychus, left alone, surrenders:

It must be than, I feel it in my soul;
The iron enters, sundering flesh and bone,
And sharper than the two edged sword of God.
Therefore, farewell along and left farewell,

(*Dipsychus,* XI, 73-75, 78)

The last two scenes, XII and XIII, are complementary studies of Dipsychus in defeat. It is actually the defeat of the writer. The poem is not a tragedy in true sense but in words of Symonds it is … "the deep and subtle tragedy of human life and action – of free souls caged, and lofty aspirations curbed a vulgar and diurnal tragedy over which no tears are shed in theatres, but which we might imagine, stirs the sorrow of the angels day by day as they look down upon our world".[12]

Thus the poem exhibits the alienated figure of Dipsychus, who, in turn dramatizes the experiences of Clough's alienation from Victorian ethics of purity and nobility as well as religious doubts Clough gathered at Oxford.

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