

Scholar Gypsy as an Elegy

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Elegy is a short poem of lamentation or regret. In Greek and Roman literature, the term elegy is applied for any poem dealing with the subjects of love, war death as well. Since the 16th century it is strictly confined to a dignified poem mourning the death of an individual or all men. Pastoral elegy is an offshoot of elegy popularized by the Sicilian Greek poets Theocritus, Bion and Moschus .English poets have successfully handled various elegiac forms. Whereas Auden's In Memory of W.B.Yeats and Gray's Elegy written in a country churchyard are placed in the former category, Milton's Lycidas, Shelley's Adonais and Arnold's Scholar Gypsy are placed in second category. The poet and his subjects are spoken of shepherds and the setting is classical pastoral world. The nymphs, shepherds and other inhabitants of this world join in mourning. A pastoral elegy evokes the blissful joy of a heavily romanticized rural life and laments someone recently deceased and presented in the guise of a shepherd.

The elegies of Arnold can be placed into two categories—oxford elegies and pastoral elegies.. Scholar Gypsy and Thirisis are placed in the first category .In pastoral elegy the poet assumes the

shape of and laments the loss of his friend who is also disguised as a shepherd. Arnold is a celebrated elegiac poet by virtue of both by virtue of both the quality and the quantity of his poems W.H. Hudson has pointed out that the basis of an elegy is sincerity of emotion as well as felicity of expressions. If these features are applied to the poetry of Arnold he can undoubtedly treated as the most celebrated elegiac poet.

Scholar Gypsy is marked by stateliness of utterance and a sad undertone.. Huge Walker has rightly affirmed that nothing is more in Arnold's poetry more arresting than its elegiac temper. The poem is based on a story in Richard's Granvis' Vanity of Dogmatizing .Poverty forced him to leave from Oxford studies and join a band of gypsies and learn their tricks The background of the poem is rural which is evident from the presence of ship and shepherds, flowers and fields and pipes and plants. The poet develops his theme without budging an inch from the rural setting.

In the Victorian era modern man fluctuated without term or scope. The scholar gypsy was fed up with the life around him .Oxford in those days was in turmoil on account of religious controversy which crippled the life of people eroding the warmth and vitality. The Oxford movement tried to revive the lost glory of religion.Arnolds poetry is equipped with musical as well as melodious qualities which places him close to the romantic association. He also deeply concerned with out pouring of materialism in society which has eroded the warmth and vitality of society which is repeatedly highlighted in the songs of scholar gypsy. Arnold has taken keen interests in the description of nature and has left the romantic poets far behind. Arthur Quitter Coach has rightly observed 'No English poet, not even Wordsworth had more passionate love for the country

than Arnold'. Scholar Gypsy highlights the pathetic condition which gripped Victorian England and Arnold excels others in this field.