THE DIALECTICAL PRINCIPLE IN THE POETRY OF
ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

by

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ABSTRACT

The title of Walter Houghton's recent article, "Arthur Hugh Clough: A Hundred Years of Disparagement," could not fail to strike any reader familiar with the general tone and subject matter of the major criticism which has appeared on Clough to the present day. Most of the studies have been in the nature of personal appreciations and have dealt primarily with Clough as a man. Even the more scholarly and objective studies which have been published lately have failed to treat his poetry in any comprehensive way, but have tended, rather, to emphasize one aspect of Clough and then have referred briefly to certain poems which support a thesis. There has been no noteworthy attempt to subject his poetry to a close textual analysis in order to determine if any general principle underlies it. For this reason, I have been primarily concerned in this study with examining the poetry of Arthur Hugh Clough to assess the presence in it of what I have called the dialectical principle—the way in which his most characteristic approach to experience is carried over into his poetry and finds expression in theme, mood, tone, form, imagery and characters.
Chapter II discusses the presence of the dialectical element in the theme of Clough's poetry—particularly in the poems which deal with religion, in those which attempt to answer the unanswerable questions, why man is here, how he should live while here, and if he will continue to exist in some form after death, and in those which probe the nature of love. Chapter III examines the way in which the dialectical principle is reflected in juxtaposed moods, in the tone, and in the external form of Clough's poetry. And, finally, Chapter IV considers imagery and characters, the imaginative and dramatic embodiment of the dialectic in themes dealt with in Chapter II.

The study concludes with the suggestion that Clough, for the most part, did not succeed in solving his intellectual and spiritual problems and in conveying the solution through his poetry. For the poems here analyzed, with perhaps the exception of "Easter Day, Part II," record his failure to cross "the darkling plain" and find some new light of truth which would satisfy him both emotionally and intellectually. In many of them, the dialectic exists as unresolved debate when Clough, unable to find an intellectual synthesis, concludes with an admission of defeat or with the decision to wait for some further revelation of Truth. At other times, when his desire for certainty will not permit him to let the dialectic end in an impasse, he is forced to shift the terms
of the debate and to "synthesize" his intellectual difficulties in a realm of pure feeling or on an ideal plane. Thus, the conclusion becomes an emotional, rather than an intellectual solution—usually one in which Clough ends by trusting an undefined "larger hope," when he is unable to answer the problem posed by rational means.
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INTRODUCTION

The title of Walter Houghton's recent article, "Arthur Hugh Clough: A Hundred Years of Disparagement," cannot fail to strike any reader familiar with the general tone and subject matter of the major criticism which has appeared on Clough to the present day. Most of the studies have been in the nature of personal appreciations, have dealt primarily with Clough as a man, and have tended to pass quickly over the poetry with apologies to the reader for having even considered the work of one who so manifestly was not a poet. The general opinion has been that Clough, while possessing many admirable qualities, had somehow failed to realize his potentialities and had, indeed, been a failure in most ways--particularly as a poet. Even the more scholarly and objective studies which have appeared recently have failed to treat Clough's poetry in any comprehensive way, but have tended, rather, to emphasize one aspect of Clough and then have referred briefly to certain

poems which support a thesis.² There has been no noteworthy attempt to subject Clough's poetry to a close textual analysis in order to determine if any general principle underlies it. For this reason, I will mainly be concerned in this study with examining the poetry of Arthur Hugh Clough to assess the presence in it of what I am calling the dialectical principle—the way in which his most characteristic approach to experience is carried over into his poetry and finds expression in theme, mood, tone, form, imagery, and characters. As most of Clough's poetry was written between 1837 and 1853 and no marked change in style or theme occurs between these dates, I have chosen to organize my discussion according to the categories of theme, mood, tone, form, imagery, and characters, hoping in this way to avoid, for the reader's sake, repetition and confusion.

CHAPTER I

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH: THE VICTORIAN, THE MAN, THE POET

"I will look straight out, see things, not try to evade them;
Fact shall be fact for me, and Truth the Truth as ever,
Flexible, changeable, vague, and multiform, and doubtful.--"

Amours de Voyage, V, 100-02.

In his introduction to the two volumes of Clough's letters which he edited, F. L. Mulhauser shows how Clough's life, short as it was, touched at so many points on important elements of Victorian life:

Schoolboy at Rugby under Dr. Arnold, student at Balliol under Ward in the midst of the Tractarian controversy, Fellow of Oriel at the time when university reform began to be agitated and subscription again became a serious issue, observer of the uprisings in Paris in 1848 and the Roman Republic of 1849, head of University Hall and Professor in the University of London, resident in Cambridge, Massachusetts, and welcome guest in the homes of Boston Brahmins, civil servant in the Education Office, and devoted admirer and helper of his cousin by marriage, Florence Nightingale—all these he was, as well as friend of Matthew and Thomas Arnold, Carlyle, Emerson, Froude, Charles Eliot Norton, and many others whose activities were important to their time.1

However, important as a knowledge of these biographical details may be as a basis for viewing Clough as a true representative of his age, there is an even more telling reason for regarding him in this light. For Clough, in common with so many other key Victorian figures, under the pressure of the new scientific theories, the current materialistic explanations of the universe and the Higher Criticism of the Bible lost his faith in traditional religion and in its explanations of God, man's relationship to God, and the meaning and purpose of human existence; and, like them, he experienced the disillusionment and spiritual conflict attendant on this loss of faith. He, too, felt himself, like Matthew Arnold, to be "on a darkling plain" and was torn by religious doubt, "the nagging philosophical nightmare of the sensitive Victorian."\(^2\) As F. L. Lucas rather facetiously, but nonetheless truthfully, remarked: "For us he remains the impersonation of an age when religious doubt was not, as now, a rare and mild greensickness, but a crippling, even a fatal malady."\(^3\) His poetry is the record of the


spiritual crisis he underwent, of his attempt to cross this "plain" and find some new light of truth which would satisfy him both emotionally and intellectually, and of his failure to do so. In the process, he gave expression not only to his own doubts, but also to those of his age, earning himself the title of "the poet of dilemma" and the credit of "having written poetry really characteristic of this century."

Moreover, through the characters of the heroes of his longer poems, particularly Claude and Dipsychus, Clough explored not only the problems which he and his fellow Victorians faced, but also the psychology, the working of the mind, of the nineteenth-century intellectual, and drew attention to the dangers attendant upon protracted self-analysis. He was only too well aware that introspection and intellectual conscientiousness, when carried to extremes in a sensitive nature, could lead to over-scrupulousness and a general paralysis of the will to act—"the vitiating habit of the nineteenth century" deplored by Matthew Arnold and described by him in his preface.

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6 Armstrong, Arthur Hugh Clough, p. 21.
to the Poems of 1853 as "the dialogue of the mind with itself." This is the state of mind satirized by Clough in his portrait of Claude in Amours de Voyage—a character who strongly reminds one of the "superfluous men" who appear throughout nineteenth century Russian literature in works such as A Hero of Our Time by Lermontov, or Rudin or Smoke by Turgenev. Lacking a firm basis from which to judge and hence unable to decide on any clear course of action, these characters exhibit "a disposition to press too far the finer and subtler intellectual and moral susceptibilities"; they are the victims of "an over-educated weakness of purpose," and of a morbid tendency to self-analysis which has been pushed "to the verge of monomania," with the result that "all the springs of action are clogged and impeded by the cobwebs of speculation." As Claude cries in a moment of reaction against this tendency in himself:

HANG this thinking, at last! what good is it? oh, and what evil!
Oh, what mischief and pain! like a clock in a sick man's chamber,
Ticking and ticking, and still through each covert of slumber pursuing.

(Amours, III, 207-09)†

8 Ibid., p. 377.
10 H. F. Lowry, A. L. P. Norrington, and F. L. Mulhauser,
or as Dipsychus despairingly asks after a period of prolonged analysis has once more deadened his instinctive desire to act:

Is it a thing ordained, then? is it a clue
For my life's conduct? is it a law for me
That opportunity shall breed distrust,
Not passing until that pass? Chance and resolve,
Like two loose comets wandering wide in space,
Crossing each other's orbits time on time,
Meet never. (Dip., XI, 6-12)

The reason, one would suggest, that Clough was so well qualified to speak for and to examine this type of mind is essentially the same as the reason why he could so faithfully express the doubts and anxieties which beset his age—namely, that Clough spoke in these poems from his own experience. He recognized in himself the same tendency to consider carefully every aspect of the situation at hand before acting and to analyze minutely his own conflicting attitudes to experience. He knew the dangers of this approach to life as well as its values, and the habit of debating each question within himself had been aggravated in him also by the moral and religious uncertainty of the period in which he

eds., The Poems of Arthur Hugh Clough, Oxford at the Clarendon Press, 1951, pp. 203-04. This is the standard edition of Clough's poetry, and hence, the one we have chosen to use for this paper. Hereafter, quotations from the poetry will not be footnoted. Instead, page references for the shorter poems and scene and line numbers (and titles, where necessary) for the longer ones will be incorporated in the text. "The Mystery of the Fall" will be referred to as "The Fall," Amours de Voyage as Amours, and Dipsychus as Dip.
lived, by the lack of any absolute authority and the consequent need to rely solely on the individual conscience.

Clough had not begun his career in this state of mind. When he arrived at Oxford in 1837, he was as secure in his religious beliefs as a pious mother and eight years at Rugby under the guidance of Dr. Arnold could make him. However, it appears that these beliefs rested on a very shaky foundation, for they crumbled under the onslaught of the new ideas which he met with at Oxford. His emotionally-rooted faith in the traditional teachings of Christianity was defenceless against the arguments which daily presented themselves to his intellect—the new scientific theories, the unsettling logic of W. G. Ward and the Straussian Higher Criticism of the Bible. As Katherine Chorley very aptly comments: "Beliefs based on emotion are either impervious to intellectual attack or completely defenceless against it. Clough was among the defenceless."\(^{11}\) Hence, the beliefs which had been disturbed by Ward's\(^{12}\) constant

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\(^{11}\)Chorley, *Arthur Hugh Clough*, p. 52.

\(^{12}\)W. G. Ward was a friend of Clough's at Oxford. He took part in the Tractarian Movement and later, like Newman became a convert to Roman Catholicism. Ward later deeply regretted the unwitting effect he had had on Clough and said:

"The result was not surprising. I had been prematurely forcing Clough's mind, and there came a reaction. His intellectual perplexity for some time preyed heavily upon his spirits; it grievously interfered with his studies; and I take it for granted it must have very seriously disturbed his religious practices and habits. I cannot to this day think of all this without a bitter
probing finally fell under the seemingly unanswerable arguments of the Higher Criticism, and he was left with "Sails rent, / And rudder broken,--reason impotent,--/Affections all unfixed" (p. 28).

Perhaps this is to overstate the case somewhat. In fact, Clough never lost his intuitive belief in the eventual emergence of Truth, in the existence of a transcendent and unknowable Deity (whom he often refers to simply as Truth), or in the essence of Christianity, the eternal truths of human religious experience which he felt the discredited Biblical stories had merely served to illustrate. The immediate result of this loss of belief was, rather, to set him looking for a new principle which would satisfy his intellect as well as his moral consciousness and his emotional need for belief, and, at the same time, to increase his determination to accept nothing which he had not personally proved to be true. Henceforth, he was to seek Truth within, in the individual conscience and the reason--

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13I have touched only briefly on the history of the spiritual crisis which Clough underwent at Oxford, because the details may be found in almost any one of the studies which have appeared on Clough, and his relationship to the Higher Criticism will be discussed in more detail in Chapter Two.
For not by observation of without 
Cometh the Kingdom of the Voice of God: 
It is within us--let us seek it there. 
("The Fall," IV, 58-60)

But, as Clough was to discover, this was a difficult task he had set himself, in view of the fact that he had forgone all appeal to revealed truth and the fact that there were so many different avenues open to man, none of which appeared to lead to the whole truth. The existence of a higher Truth or Deity might be unmistakable, but, since God had not seen fit to reveal Himself to man, the question of how to live in accordance with Truth was still left unanswered.

This dedication to "the uncoloured light of Truth," which began in his Oxford days, became the keynote of his life. It was this love of truth which prevented him from clinging to the beliefs of his youth once his intellect had been satisfied that they were false, and which led him finally to resign his Fellowship at Oriel, because he did not feel that he could conscientiously remain in a university that required its Fellows to subscribe to the Thirty-Nine Articles of the Church. It is worthy of note here that the one point on which all his friends and critics agree is in crediting him with an unswerving sense of honesty and truth. They all appear to have been particularly impressed by this quality, both as it appeared in his life and
in his work. His friend Matthew Arnold, who still remains one of the sternest critics of his poetry, could not help but be struck by the quality of "sincerity" evident in it—"which always produces a powerful effect on the reader." For "the spectacle of a writer striving evidently to get breast to breast with reality is always full of instruction and very invigorating." Henry Sidgwick, whose article, which appeared in the October, 1869 issue of the Westminster Review, is one of the most perceptive studies of Clough, comments on his "horror of illusions and deceptions of all kinds," "his perpetual watchfulness against prejudices and prepossessions," as a result of "his passionate devotion not to the Search after Truth, but to Truth itself, absolute, exact truth." Finally, it is significant that

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14 Goldie Levy, who wrote one of the first book-length biographies of Clough, declared: "Clough's most outstanding trait was his intellectual honesty" (Arthur Hugh Clough, 1819-1861, London, Sidgwick and Jackson, 1938, p. 210). Similarly, T. S. Perry found that "what is most noticeable in Clough is his earnestness" ("Arthur Hugh Clough," p. 411), and F. L. Lucas noted that his "intellectual conscientiousness . . . remains one of the central things in the worth of Clough's poetry and in the unhappiness of his life." (Ten Victorian Poets, p. 60).


one of the epigraphs that Francis Woodward chose to preface the chapter on Clough in his book, *The Doctor's Disciples*, again emphasizes Clough's austere adherence to the ideal of truth—"'If God were able to backslide from truth, I would fain cling to truth and let God go (Meister Eckhart)."17

One perhaps needs to be reminded at this point to retain a sense of proportion and to guard against the type of exaggerated statement often used about Clough's dedication to truth. For Clough was still a man, subject to the same faults and weaknesses as other men. He himself was only too well aware of the times when he fell short of this ideal, and would, no doubt, have been surprised to see himself pictured as a saintly devotee before the shrine of Truth. What can be claimed for him, however, without fear of being charged with overstating the case, is that Clough kept this ideal of Truth before him all his life and strove valiantly, in spite of all the obstacles that confronted him, to remain faithful to it everywhere. It was a conscious ideal and a conscious effort on his part—one which is evident in his life, in his poetry, and in his prose. What he consciously sought throughout his career was to be a man of "intellectual as well as moral honesty"18—one who knew the


18*P.P.R.*, p. 422.
High triumphs of convictions, sought  
And won by individual thought;  
The joy, delusive oft, but keen,  
Of having with our own eyes seen. (p. 403)

His constant admonitions against adopting some arbitrary belief or position without having first subjected it to the test of the reason can be traced to his belief that intellectual honesty is the only path to truth.

As he soon found out, it was very difficult to follow this path. In the first place, his instinctive desire "to attain a fixed point" was constantly at war with the intellectual need to determine that "the fixed point be a right one." And it was precisely the rightness of any one course of action or belief which was so very hard to ascertain. For Clough's dedication to truth and his conviction that no absolute truth had yet been revealed to man faced him with a dilemma. Even after he had weighed all the evidence and considered the problem from every possible point of view, he could never be sure that he had found the truth or made the right decision. There was no way of proving that he had, no recourse except to his own reason and conscience--two faculties which were not entirely trustworthy, since they had been known to lead men astray in the past. Moreover, as truth was relative and ever-changing, it was

19Ibid., p. 324.
even dangerous to come to any conclusion, let alone decide whether it was valid; for there was always the possibility of new facts coming to light that might modify the present conclusion. This is the thought which is expressed so vividly in Clough's poem, "To spend uncounted years of pain," and which caused Henry Sidgwick to comment that, in spite of Clough's frequent attempts "to reconcile and settle, his deepest conviction is that all settlement is premature":

To spend uncounted years of pain,  
Again, again, and yet again,  
In working out in heart and brain  
The problem of our being here;  
To gather facts from far and near,  
Upon the mind to hold them clear,  
And, knowing more may yet appear,  
Unto one's latest breath to fear  
The premature result to draw-- (p. 90)

Yet, although he was aware of the blank wall that confronted him, he still could not abandon his attempt to find the answers to the questions, both metaphysical and personal, which tore at him. His emotional desire for certainty and the intense moral idealism, which never left him even when he discarded the religious beliefs that had first engendered it, would not let him rest easily in his scepticism, or allow him to turn to more

21 Italics mine.
immediate and practical problems which could be more readily solved. They drove him on to find an intellectual basis for the convictions which he intuitively felt, but could not consciously accept or wholeheartedly adopt until they had been proven true by his reason. Indeed, it is further testimony to his whole-hearted commitment to truth and to his powers of perseverance that he continued to pursue this goal, in spite of the fact that he knew that, at best, he could arrive at only partial knowledge, never the complete truth. As he stated in his essay on "The Religious Tradition," the foreknowledge of failure in no way released man from the necessity of making the attempt—even though humanly discoverable truth be ever "flexible, changeable, vague, and multiform, and doubtful."

I do acquiesce in this humble doctrine; I do believe that, strive as I will, I am restricted, and grasp as I may, I can never hold the complete truth. But that does not the least imply that I am justified in shutting the eyes of my understanding to the facts of science, or its ears to the criticism of history, nor yet in neglecting those pulsations of spiritual instinct which come to me from association at one time with Unitarians, at another with Calvinists, or again with Episcopalians and Roman Catholics.

I cannot see beyond the horizon; but within the natural horizon am I to make an unnatural new horizon for myself?22

It was just this commitment to truth, coupled with the multiform and changeable nature of human knowledge and experience, that led to the development in Clough of a **dialectical method** of reasoning—the process of reasoning from accepted opinions by means of discussion or debate. As nothing could be taken on faith and no "willing suspension of disbelief" could be made anywhere, every opinion had to be tested and analyzed by the reason before it could be accepted or considered as a possible solution.  

According to *The Concise Encyclopaedia of Western Philosophy and Philosophers*, the word "dialectic" derives "from the Greek verb meaning 'to converse,' and originally meant 'the art of conversation, discussion or debate.'" The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines it as: "The art of critical examination into the truth of an opinion; the investigation of truth by discussion." The beginning of the dialectic, regarded primarily then as "the art of debate by question and

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23 One remembers at this point Adam's awareness in "The Mystery of the Fall" of there being "A wakeful, changeless touchstone in my brain, / Receiving, noting, testing all the while" and his decision "To watch the seething process out" (II, 34-35, 57).

answer," is usually associated with the Socrates of the Platonic dialogues. Plato himself regarded dialectic as "the supreme philosophical method, 'the coping-stone of the sciences,'" although many of his references to it are vague and "almost any form of non-specialized reasoning could fall under it." Aristotle, in his handbook of Topics, is usually credited with having defined dialectic more precisely and with making it a principle of formal logic. In his handbook, he distinguishes between dialectical reasoning, which proceeds syllogistically from opinions generally accepted, and demonstrative reasoning, which begins with primary and true premises; but he holds that dialectical reasoning, in contrast with eristic, is 'a process of criticism wherein lies the path to the principles of all inquiries.'

With Hegel (and later with Marx), dialectic was given an additional function, for they viewed it "as a process not merely of reasoning, but one found in history, and in the universe as a whole, consisting of a necessary movement from thesis to anti-thesis, and then to a synthesis of the two."

26 Urmson, Concise Encyclopaedia, p. 117.
27 Runes, Dictionary of Philosophy, p. 78 (italics mine).
28 Urmson, Concise Encyclopaedia, p. 117.
Since Clough did not feel that man could arrive at any knowledge of absolute truth, it is natural that he should have used a method of probable reasoning, one which proceeded from accepted opinions and which moved towards a conclusion or synthesis by means of a debate. This is not to suggest that Clough consciously adopted this philosophical principle, but rather that, given his distinctly intellectual habit of mind, his rejection of revealed truths and, at the same time, his lifelong desire to determine which of the many accepted opinions or relative truths confronting him held the most truth, he naturally developed a dialectical method of reasoning. His mind became the focal point of a constant intellectual debate which encompassed every fundamental assumption held by men and which never abated, because he could never feel certain that any of the conclusions he had reached were final or completely valid. Tomorrow might bring a new perception or fact which could modify, or even invalidate, today's decision. Indeed, Clough's poem, "Upon the water, in the boat," gives, one feels, a very apt description of his approach to life:

Still as we go the things I see,
E'en as I see them, cease to be;
Their angles swerve, and with the boat
The whole perspective seems to float.

*.................................*
Yet still I look, and still I sit,
Adjusting, shaping, altering it. (p. 108)
It is not surprising that the strong dialectical strain in Clough's mode of reasoning is also present in his poetry; for his poetry is very much an expression of himself. His poems are intensely personal and subjective—fascinating revelations of his own thought processes, of the conflicts he experienced, of the problems he faced and attempted to solve. Even when he tries to be more objective, as, for example, in his longer poems, his own personality shines through the mask he has assumed. The traits of the main characters are still Cloughian traits, even though they have been exaggerated at times for the purposes of satire. And, even then, he is really laughing wryly at his own weaknesses. Other critics have commented on the strongly intellectual flavour of Clough's poetry (or on what I am calling the dialectical strain) and have then gone on to stress the close relationship between Clough's personality and the subject matter and tone of his poetry. Stopford Brooke says that:

29 Michael Timko says:

"To Clough, the nature of the poetry and the character of the poet were inseparable. Poetry, for him, was basically the expression of a man's character, the reflection of his essential nature; poetry was, in short, the verbal expression of a man's innermost being." ("The Poetic Theory of Arthur Hugh Clough," English Studies, vol. 43 (August 1962), p. 240.)
Of all the poets who played on England as on a harp, Clough was one of the most personal. . . . He contemplated his soul and its sensitive and bewildered workings incessantly, and saw in them the image of that which was going on in the soul of the younger men in England.30

Henry Sidgwick expresses this view even more clearly when he observes that Clough's "production is always in accordance with the inner laws of his nature and expresses . . . faithfully the working of his mind."31 "His poetical utterance," Sidgwick continues, "was connected by an inner necessity with his personal experience" and then concludes that "the whole man is in the poems, they spring from the very core of his being." John Addington Symonds was also struck by the personal quality of Clough's poems and describes them as "the very pith and marrow of a deeply-thinking, deeply-feeling soul—the most heartfelt utterances of one who sought to speak out what was in him in the fewest and the simplest words."32 Finally, there is the comment made by John Dowden which contains a vital truth, if one can overlook its tendency to exaggeration and the question-begging, to most readers, of the words, "songs" and "music."


The whole range of our literature shows no poet whose writings so fully and faithfully represent the man as those of Clough. We know none who so freely and entirely gives us himself. There is not one of his poems in which we do not find the personal outcome of his nature. His songs he sings out of his own heart. To give expression to his own thoughts and feelings was the motive of his music.33

The last line of this quotation is particularly interesting, as it suggests a reason why Clough's poetry was so personal—namely, that it was his way of working out the problems which worried him, or, at least, a means of relieving the tensions built up in him by the continuing mental debate to which he was committed. Furthermore, remembering his dialectical method of reasoning, one is prepared for these conflicts to emerge, to a large extent, in the form of a dialectic. It seems natural to expect that the inner debate, when given expression, would take the same form that it had in the mind of its creator. There is evidence that Clough himself regarded poetry in the light both of an emotional outlet and an external medium through which he could work out his difficulties. In the poem which begins "It is not sweet content, be sure, / That moves the nobler Muse to song," he attributes the source of poetry to some inner conflict and continues:

It is not calm and peaceful breasts
That see or read the problem true;
They only know on whom't has prest
Too hard to hope to solve it too. (p. 90)

Here he seems to suggest also that this inner conflict is somehow necessary before one can become a good poet, as only those who have experienced these pains themselves can adequately understand and express the problems which beset most men. It is an idea which he advances again in his essay on Wordsworth: "Perhaps it is only those that are themselves engaged in the thick of the struggle and conflict, that rightly can cheer on, or fitly can admonish their fellows, or to any good purpose assume the high moral tone." Elsewhere in his writing, Clough also stresses the purgative effect of poetry. In Dipsychus, for example, he describes it as one of the ways in which "the procreant heat and fervour of our youth escapes" (VIII, 23-24) and has Dipsychus answer the Spirit's question as to why he writes poetry with the words:

To please my own poor mind! To find repose;
To physic the sick soul; to furnish vent
To diseased humours in the moral frame. (VII, 29-31)

It is tempting here to see a special significance in the title of Clough's first volume of poems, Ambarvalia, which also

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34 P.P.R., p. 323.
included some poems by Thomas Burbidge. For the name "Ambarvalia," as Isobel Armstrong tells us, "refers to the annual festival in ancient Rome during which the fields and boundaries were purified." Could the title, one wonders, have appealed to Clough because he regarded his poetry as a means of self-purification?

In any event, it does seem significant, in the light of our suggestion that Clough regarded poetry as an emotional release and as a means of objectifying and resolving his personal conflicts, that he only revealed himself thus fully in his poetry. His letters, for example, are markedly impersonal—with the possible exception of the letters he wrote to Blanche from America, but even these, as Armstrong comments, "are outstanding only for their uncompromising reserve." Indeed, any biographer would be hard-put to discover more than a few personal facts from them. As F. L. Mulhauser remarks:

Clough's letters are letters of statement rather than letters of confession. He rarely explores his ideas for his correspondent, looking at them from first one angle and then another; likewise, he rarely explores his feelings. Indeed for this he had a personal distaste and he tried to avoid it.

35 Armstrong, Arthur Hugh Clough, p. 17.
36 Ibid., p. 11.
37 Mulhauser, Correspondence, vol. 1, p. xiv.
It appears that the same reserve was also evident in his conversation, if we can credit the letter which Matthew Arnold wrote to Mrs. Clough in 1868, in answer to her request that he tell her all he knew of such important events in Clough's life as his resignation of the Oriel Fellowship:

On this and many other such points he expressed himself in his poems with more ease and unreserve than in his conversation; and his poems, to my mind, rather enlarge the communication he made of himself, than are capable of having what they tell of him enlarged by the report of friends.38

Finally, it is important to note that most of Clough's poetry was written during periods of great stress, at the times in his life when he was most uncertain and most unhappy—the period at Oxford, particularly from 1839-40, and the years from 1848-53 which witnessed his resignation of the Oriel Fellowship, his trip abroad, and his acceptance and later resignation of the position at University Hall in London.39 There are a few letters of Clough's from Oxford which chronicle the unsettling

39 As F. L. Mulhauser comments:

"At two important periods of his life, 1839-40 and 1849-51, Clough lost his sense of himself, his fundamental personal confidence; the injury was deep and serious, and it is during these two periods that most of his important poetry was written." (Correspondence, vol. 1, p. xvi).
effect that Ward was then having on him, and there are also some which date from the University Hall period, such as the letter that he wrote to the younger Thomas Arnold in 1851 in which he cautions him against returning home with the words:

As for your coming home, I incline to think it would be a very great hazard. I, like you, have jumped over a ditch, for the fun of the experiment and would not be disinclined to be once again in a highway with my brethren and companions. My situation here under a set of mercantile Unitarians is in no way charming.

The conclusion of this letter contains a confession, unusual in its honest revelation of emotion, that he was later to make to Blanche in 1853—"In London I felt myself pretty well helpless to effect anything":

Ibid., p. 93.

In 1839 he writes to John Gell:

"If you were to come here, you would at once have Ward at you asking you your opinions on every possible subject...beginning with Covent Garden and Macready and certainly not ending till you got to the Question of the Moral Sense and Deontology. I do not quite like hearing so much of these Matters as I do--but I suppose if one can only keep steadily to one's work (which I wish I did) and quite resolve to forget all the words one has heard and to theorize only for amusement, there is no harm in it." (Ibid., vol. 2, p. 380.)
Nothing is very good, I am afraid, anywhere. I could have gone cracked at times last year with one thing or another, I think—but the wheel comes round. If I were out in V.D.L., I think I should stay, at least till I had done something.43

Up to this point then, we have been concerned with establishing the thesis that Clough had a dialectical method of reasoning and that this habit, in turn, was carried over into his poetry, because of the intensely personal nature of his writing. It remains now to determine if other critics have noticed the dialectical strain in Clough's thinking or in his poetry, if Clough himself was aware of it, and then finally, to suggest the form that the dialectic takes in his poems. Many of Clough's friends and critics have commented on the "Dipsychus" element in him--his "double-mindedness," the strongly intellectual and analytical bias of his own life and of his poetry, his refusal to compromise with truth, and his fear of committing himself or of reaching conclusions prematurely--yet few of them have attempted to discover the source of these characteristic tendencies of Clough, or to analyze the poems for the evidences of the dialectic at work.

Both Stopford Brooke and Goldie Levy perceived that Clough's poetry often took on the nature of a debate. Stopford Brooke says that much of the pleasure he experienced upon

43Ibid., vol. 1, p. 290. (V.D.L. is an abbreviation for Van Diemens Land.)
reading Clough's early poetry came from "its clear image of a certain type of men and women in a spiritually troubled time, its close contact with and intimate expression of the constantly debating soul . . . ."\(^44\) In like manner, Goldie Levy, after stating that Clough's poetry is primarily intellectual in its appeal, concludes: "His poetry is an intellectual debate, full of the speculative doubt of the age."\(^45\) Also, one cannot help but be amused by Hoxie Fairchild's exasperated remark--"It is not my fault that this chapter moves like a seesaw: Clough never advances an important idea which he does not elsewhere deny."\(^46\) To return again to Stopford Brooke, both he and Henry Sidgwick came close to discovering a dialectical movement in the mood of Clough's poetry. Brooke is fascinated by the illusion in the poetry of "a ceaseless change of mood within one atmosphere, like the ceaseless change of cloud scenery in a day of the same kind of weather from morning to evening,"\(^47\) and Sidgwick's attention is caught by the moods

\(^{44}\) Brooke, *Four Poets*, p. 30.


\(^{47}\) Brooke, *Four Poets*, p. 37.
in their "balanced, complex character; there is either a solemn reconciliation of conflicting impulses, or a subtle and shifting suggestion of different points of view." One might conclude by quoting another passage from Sidgwick's essay on Clough; for Sidgwick, perhaps more than any of the other critics, seems to have been greatly struck by the very element in Clough's poetry which I have presumed to term the dialectical element. Clough's skill, he states, "lay in balancing assertions, comparing points of view, sifting gold from dross in the intellectual products presented to him, rejecting the rhetorical, defining the vague, paring away the exaggerative, reducing theory and argument to their simplest form." It is also, one feels, precisely this dialectical strain in Clough, although Arnold never uses this term, which prompted Matthew Arnold's criticism of Clough's poetry and provoked his impatient commands to Clough to stop thinking and get on with something. In 1848, after Clough's resignation of the Oriel Fellowship, Arnold wrote frequent letters admonishing him to stir himself and find something else to do—"Shake yourself--it is easier to discover what we can do than our vanity lets us think. For God's sake don't mope, for from

49 Ibid., p. 367.
that no good can come." He obviously felt that a prolonged period of inactivity would only serve to aggravate Clough's natural disposition to analyze rather than to act and that this was to be avoided at all costs. Hence his letter to Clough on August 12, 1848, in which he says:

I desire you should have some occupation—I think it desirable for everyone—very much so for you. Besides since the Baconian era wisdom is not found in deserts: and you again especially need the world and yet will not be absorbed by any quantity of it. . . . you poor subjective, you—. . . .

And again in 1851 when Clough is once more looking for a position after resigning his post at University Hall, Arnold advises him to "be bustling about it; we are growing old, and advancing towards the deviceless dark: it would be well not to reach it till we had at least tried some of the things men consider desirable."  

Arnold felt that Clough's tendency to vacillate, rather than act, to question, rather than affirm, to debate, rather than decide an issue was another example of the modern habit of mind which he deplored and labeled as "the dialogue of the mind with itself." He believed that it was necessary in one's

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50 Lowry, Letters to Clough, p. 84.
51 Ibid., pp. 88-89.
52 Ibid., p. 118.
personal life to accept some premise or starting point in order to be able to act and that only through action could one find the answers to the other questions which puzzled man. Arnold did not seem to understand that Clough's reverence for truth would not allow him to compromise in this fashion, or to act without first having determined that this particular course of action was the right one, and that his method of arriving at the truth was just this same dialectical process of reasoning that Arnold objected to. Instead, he saw it as a type of "morbid conscientiousness" and told Clough so:

You ask me in what I think or have thought you going wrong: in this: that you would never take your assiette as something determined final and unchangeable for you and proceed to work away on the basis of that: but were always poking and patching and cobbling at the assiette itself—could never finally, as it seemed—'resolve to be myself'—but were looking for this and that experience, and doubting whether you ought not to adopt this or that mode of being of persons qui ne vous valaient pas because it might possibly be nearer the truth than your own. . . .

53 Blanche also accuses him of having "something of a morbid sensitiveness to truth that makes you think the opprobrium and the necessity for speaking greater than they are." (Italics mine) (Mulhauser, Correspondence, vol. 2, fn. 3, p. 381).

54 Lowry, Letters to Clough, p. 130.
Consequently, as one might expect, it was also the intellectual tenor of Clough's poetry, the element of debate and dialectic in it, which drew Arnold's criticism. For Arnold wanted modern poetry to become a *magister vitae* as the poetry of former ages had been--poetry which exhibited a comprehensive view of life, which was satisfying to the whole man, which would help men to answer the question of "how to live," because it had been written by poets "who saw life steadily and saw it whole." Hence, he found Clough's attempts "to solve the Universe" through his poetry irritating and accused him of being "a mere d-d depth hunter in poetry," of trying "to go into and to the bottom of an object instead of grouping objects," when ideally "'Not deep the poet sees, but wide.'" He disliked Clough's poetry because it was questioning in tone and fragmentary, rather than affirmative and whole--because it asked not answered the question of how man was to live. One feels here that some of the vehemence of Arnold's attack may be attributed to the fact that he sensed these same tendencies to question and debate in himself and in his own poetry (the character of Empedocles, for example) and feared that Clough's influence might bring to the fore the very qualities which he had been fighting all his life to suppress.

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55As Lowry comments: "Much as he [Arnold] discourages in him the over-questioning spirit, he was himself mightily of Clough's way." (Ibid., p. 35)
As he says in a letter to Clough written on November 30, 1853, what people want is something to animate and ennoble them -- not merely to add zest to their melancholy or grace to their dreams -- I believe a feeling of this kind is the basis of my nature -- and of my poetics. You certainly do not seem to me sufficiently to desire and earnestly strive towards -- assured knowledge -- activity -- happiness. You are too content to fluctuate -- to be ever learning, never coming to the knowledge of the truth. This is why, with you, I feel it necessary to stiffen myself -- and hold fast my rudder.56

To the best of my knowledge, the term "dialectic" is never used by Clough, in either his prose, or his letters, or in his poetry. However, there are instances in his poetry where he employs a terminology associated with a dialectic, as, for example, the title of the poem, "Thesis and Antithesis," which takes the form of a debate between youth and age--instances which suggest that he was consciously aware of this particular philosophical method of reasoning. Moreover, there is a very interesting passage in Dipsychus in which Clough satirically describes the very form which a dialectic usually takes and, in the process, suggests that he was aware of this principle at work in his own mind and in his poetry and all too conscious of the detrimental effect which this habit of thought would have on a man's personal

56 Ibid., p. 146. (Italics mine)
life. It is the Spirit, Dipsychus' more worldly and practical self, who is speaking at this time, and he attacks Dipsychus for failing to enter wholeheartedly into any aspect of life, for being in "all things vague":

For a waste far-off maybe overlooking
The fruitful is close by, live in metaphysic,
With transcendentental logic fill your stomach,
Schematise joy, effigate meat and drink;
Or, let me see, a mighty Work, a Volume,
The complemental of the inferior Kant,
The Critic of Pure Practice, based upon
The antimonies of the Moral Sense: for, look you,
We cannot act without assuming \(x\),
And at the same time \(y\), its contradictory;
Ergo, to act.\(^57\) (XI, 153-63)

It is difficult, after reading this passage with its wry note of self-condemnation, not to feel that Clough was fully aware of this dialectical principle in his thinking and in his poetry, and that he saw how it paralyzed the will to act, while, at the same time, regarding it as the only way open to a man of integrity whose goal was the discovery of truth.

Although no critic has actually made a study of the dialectical principle in Clough's poetry, a few writers have used this term to describe some aspect of it. The comments are usually brief and unsupported, and there is no attempt to pursue this thought or to examine his poetry in the light of this principle. John Heath-Stubbs, in his book, *The

\(^{57}\) (Italics mine--11. 161-62)
Darkling Plain, credits Clough with possessing, at his best, "a faculty for straightforward imaginative reasoning in verse, for genuine metaphysical poetry, such as had not appeared since the days of Pope." It becomes clear in the parenthetical remark which follows this statement that Heath-Stubbs regards Clough's faculty for "imaginative reasoning" as being a successful attempt at "dialectic," in contrast to Wordsworth's failure to achieve it in *The Excursion*—"(Wordsworth indeed is a great philosophical poet; but he is so by virtue of the personal lyrical experience he presents. When he attempts dialectic—as in *The Excursion*—he fails.)"

J. A. Symonds attributes the variations in tone to be found in Clough's poems to his dialectical method of reasoning:

An ironical tone runs through them, and is strangely blended with bitterness, gravity, and a kind of tender regret. They ought not to be separated; for nothing is more true of Clough's mind than it worked by thesis and antithesis, not reaching a clear synthesis, but pushing its convictions, as it were, to the verge of a conclusion.

The dialectical element is implicit in the terms Symonds chose to use—"thesis," "antithesis," and "synthesis." In the same vein, Walter Houghton finds that one of the characteristic techniques of Clough's poetry is "the dialectical

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movement"^60; Thomas Arnold praises The Bothie for "its
penetrating dialectic"^61; Katherine Chorley feels that the real
theme of Amours de Voyage is "the dialectic between engagement
and disengagement"^62; and lastly, Richard M. Gollin suggests
that the title "Adam and Eve," used by Clough, Mrs. Clough,
and Matthew Arnold when referring to the poem we now know as
"The Mystery of the Fall," is more suited to its subject
matter, as it points to "the two attitudes toward sin and
redemption Clough dialectically opposed in the poem's
structure."^63 Admittedly, all these references to "dialectic"
are rather cursory, but the fact that these writers have
noticed this element in Clough's poetry does seem to add
further weight to our argument.

Having thus established the existence of a dialectical
principle in Clough's method of reasoning and in his poetry,
our concern now will be to examine the way in which this
principle manifests itself in the poetry—in theme, mood, form,
tone, imagery, and characters.

^60 Houghton, "Arthur Hugh Clough: A Hundred Years of
Disparagement," p. 44.
^63 Richard M. Gollin, "The 1951 Edition of Clough's
Because of the close relationship which exists between theme and form, the theme, as it develops in a work of art, tends to dictate its own form. Hence, when one is handling ideas in a balanced or contrasting way or debating an issue, the theme inevitably shapes itself into a dialectical form. However, for the purposes of discussion, I have decided, perhaps arbitrarily, to consider the question of theme and form separately, placing the emphasis in Chapter II on the ideas and in Chapter III on the form.
CHAPTER II

DIALECTIC IN THEME

"If it is so, let it be so,
And we will all agree so;
But the plot has counterplot
It may be, and yet be not."
(Is it true, ye gods, who treat us,"
p. 43)

As Clough's dialectical habit of mind may be traced
to the crisis which he underwent at Oxford, it is not surprising
that religion constitutes the subject of a number of his poems
in which the dialectical principle may be seen operating
thematically. His subsequent efforts to determine by reason
how man can live in accordance with Truth, even though the
exact nature of this higher Truth has not yet been revealed,
gave rise to another such body of poems--those which attempt
to answer the unanswerable questions, why man is here, how
he should live while here, and if he will continue to exist
in some form after death. Finally, there is the group of
poems in which Clough examines the nature of love and the
degree of importance it should assume in a man's life. In
most of these poems, there is a basic pattern that the clash
of ideas takes, although, of course, this pattern undergoes
variations, and the actual dialectical process is often
complex. Generally, however, each poem begins by presenting two or more opinions commonly held about the subject under consideration, moves toward a conclusion by a process of debate, and then reaches either a synthesis (compromise solution), or an impasse.¹

From the outset, Clough was well aware that, in his determination to accept only those religious beliefs which he had personally proved to be true, he was setting out on a difficult and little-travelled path—one beset with loneliness, self-doubt, and perhaps, ultimately, failure. The temptation to give up the quest and rejoin his fellows, those who receive

The implanted word with faith; believe
Because their fathers did before,
Because they learnt, and ask no more,

was constantly with him and provided the impetus for many inner debates similar in theme to the one which forms the basis of the poem, "O happy they whose hearts receive" (p. 403). In this poem, Clough balances the happiness which results from the peace and serenity of mind enjoyed by those who unquestioningly accept a traditional creed against the joy "delusive oft, but keen" which comes from "having with our own eyes seen"

¹In our discussion, I have tried to choose for detailed analysis those poems which I have felt to be particularly good examples of the dialectic in theme, mood, form, imagery, and characters and then to refer briefly, either in the text or in the footnotes, to other poems which illustrate this principle.
and, as one might expect, he decides that the latter joy is the more satisfactory one. There were also times when Clough despaired of finding any rational grounds for man's belief in God and was tempted to adopt the opposite point of view—that of the atheist or complete religious sceptic. At such moments, he could see only two alternatives: to ignore the conclusions of his reason and retreat to the orthodox religious position, or to face the truth, as he saw it then, and deny the existence of a higher Truth, or Divine Being. It was while in this frame of mind that he wrote such poems as "Cease, empty Faith, the Spectrum saith" (p. 110) and "Easter Day, Part I" (p. 54).

As the biblical story of Christ's Resurrection is regarded by Christians as proof of His divinity, Clough made this doctrine the focal point of the dialectic in "Easter Day, Part I." The first section of the poem (ll. 1-63) begins with Clough's passionate denial of Christ's Resurrection—

Christ is not risen!
Christ is not risen, no,
He lies and moulders low;
Christ is not risen—

a denial which becomes the refrain of Part I and appears with some slight variations of phrasing at the end of each stanza. He has been provoked into uttering this vehement protest by the sight of "the great sinful streets of Naples" which seem to provide clear proof that the Christ of the Gospels never
existed and that the idea of new life implicit in the doctrine of the Resurrection has no basis in reality. In the following stanzas, Clough examines and then discards as insufficient proof all the details found in the biblical account of Christ's Resurrection which could be advanced by Christians as evidence that the Resurrection was an actual historical event. The tone of voice in which he does this ("What though . . .") implies that he is answering someone. Thus, this part of the poem takes on the form of a debate, as the nature of his opponents' statements can be deduced from the answers that Clough makes.

He first challenges that part of the gospel which states that when Christ's followers arrived at the tomb on Easter morning, they found the stone rolled away and the grave empty--

What though the stone were rolled away, and though
The grave found empty there?

This cannot be accepted as evidence of Christ's divinity, for someone could easily have moved Him to another grave where His body, like all things human, would gradually decay--

Ashes to ashes, dust to dust;
As of the unjust, also of the just--
Christ is not risen.

Clough then sets aside the second most commonly offered
Scriptural proof of Christ's Resurrection—that the women saw angels, "or Him himself" near the tomb—with the ironic comment that He has never appeared to anyone since, "save in thunderous terror to blind Saul"\(^2\) and "in an after-Gospel and late Creed." In other words, the Christ and the Angels that these people saw were simply the creatures of imagination, and other men believed and founded a religion on this incident because of their desire for faith. Similarly, he disposes of the story that the Apostles and the travellers to Emmaus saw Christ with the words, "Ah! 'some' did well to doubt." Having thus shown how vulnerable that faith is which rests on historical facts, Clough ends this section by bringing his thesis to its logical conclusion and comparing the growth of Christianity to the growth of a rumour in a large city which, starting from a small incident, soon gains widespread fame and authority, because no one can trace it back to its origin and determine if it is based on truth or not.

As circulates in some great city crowd  
A rumour changeful, vague, importunate, and loud,  
From no determined centre, or of fact,  
Or authorship exact,  
Which no man can deny  
Nor verify;  
So spread the wondrous fame.

\(^2\)Italics mine.
In the second section of Part I, Clough depicts the initial reaction of those people who, struck by the truth of his arguments, have come to accept the thesis that "Christ is not risen." An overwhelming sense of despair is conveyed by such lines as:

Is He not risen, and shall we not rise?
Oh, we unwise!
What did we dream, what wake we to discover?
Ye hills, fall on us, and ye mountains, cover!

The discrediting of the doctrine of Christ's Resurrection has tragic import for men, because their belief in redemption and in immortality—a belief which made the hardships of this life bearable—was, in a large measure, derived from the significance they attached to the Resurrection. Deprived of the faith which gave meaning to their lives, they are filled with a sense of loss and of hopelessness, feeling that they have been deceived and betrayed by someone they trusted:

Eat, drink, and die, for we are men deceived,
Of all the creatures under heaven's wide cope
We are the most hopeless who had once most hope
We are most wretched that had most believed.

However, in keeping with the dialectical treatment of the theme of the poem, in the third section (ll. 95-156) Clough presents man with an alternative way of meeting this spiritual crisis. He counsels man to avoid both optimism and despair and to
adopt an attitude of stoic resignation. One remembers here the timely words that Arnold has Empedocles speak: "Because thou must not dream, thou need'st not then despair." Man must endure and make the most of the small comforts that life brings, for he can expect no more—

... if there is no other life for you,
Sit down and be content, since this must even do:
He is not risen.

The thesis of this poem could not satisfy Clough for long, however, as his most persistent belief was that no position contained the whole truth. "If he saw two sides of a question," Sidgwick observed, "he must keep seeking a point of view from which they might be harmonized." Moreover, the decision reached in "Easter Day, Part I" left no outlet for his religious sense. Hence, in "Easter Day, Part II" (p. 59), he makes use of the basic premise underlying Strauss's Higher Criticism of the Bible to formulate a more generally acceptable

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3 Sidgwick, "Review of 'The Poems . . .'" p. 368.
4 J. M. Beatty says:

"The Bete Noire of the orthodox during this period, however, was the German Strauss, who published the first volume of his Leben Jesu in 1834 and the whole work in the following year. This work was a powerful attack upon the supernatural in Christianity. Strauss attacked even the historicity of Christ. Yet as he says in his preface, "The author is aware that the essence of the
solution by interpreting the Biblical story metaphorically, a solution which is actually a synthesis of the dialectic in "Part I"—

But in a later hour I sat and heard
Another voice that spake, another graver word.
Weep not, it bade, whatever hath been said,
Though He be dead, He is not dead.
In the true Creed
He is yet risen indeed,
Christ is yet risen.

"Christ is yet risen," because, even though the biblical stories themselves, such as the one which tells of Christ's Resurrection, have no basis in history or fact, the truths of human religious experience which they illustrate remain eternally true. "Manuscripts are doubtful, records may be unauthentic, criticism is feeble, historical facts must be left uncertain," but the "essence" of Christianity still warrants man's belief. A higher Truth exists, although its precise nature is yet unknown, and men, as Tennyson says, can still rise "on stepping stones of their dead selves to higher things." Taken

Christian faith is perfectly independent of his criticism. The supernatural birth of Christ, his miracles, his resurrection and ascension, remain eternal truths, whatever doubts may be cast on their reality as historical facts.¹ This point of view is significant as being closely akin to Clough's.¹¹ ("Arthur Hugh Clough as Revealed in his Prose," South Atlantic Quarterly, vol. 25 (April 1926), p. 175.)

¹P.P.R., p. 421.
symbolically, the doctrine of the Resurrection gives man hope; it suggests that he can rise to a new life in himself, experience a psychological and moral transformation. Clough had expressed this idea earlier in a letter which he wrote in May, 1847:

But I cannot feel sure that a man may not have all that is important in Christianity even if he does not so much as know that Jesus of Nazareth existed.

The thing which men must work at, will not be critical questions about the Scriptures, but philosophical problems of Grace and Free Will, and of Redemption as an Idea, not as an historical event.  

The synthesis he reaches in "Part II" is also implicit in the following passage from his essay on "The Religious Tradition"—an essay which is strongly dialectical in theme and form:

It is impossible for any scholar to have read, and studied, and reflected without forming a strong impression of the entire uncertainty of history in general, and of the history of Christianity in particular.

It is equally impossible for any man to live, act, and reflect without feeling the significance and depth of the moral and religious teaching which passes amongst us by the name of Christianity.

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6 Mulhauser, Correspondence, vol. 1, p. 182.
7 P.P.R., p. 421.
Clough develops the theme of "Easter Day, Parts I and II," then, according to the principle of a dialectic, with Part II forming the synthesis. It is his characteristic way of resolving any issue, whether it be religious or not, and of arriving at some measure of the truth. In this case, it enables him to avoid wholeheartedly adopting either the thesis or the antithesis of Part I. Instead, he discards the elements of the Christian religion which he feels to be incompatible with reason, while retaining, at the same time, his belief in the essence of Christianity and thereby reaches a solution which satisfies him both emotionally and intellectually. The dialectic of the poem, "'Old things need not therefore be true:'" (p. 89) is resolved in a similar manner. Here Clough counsels man to acknowledge the truth wherever it appears and to hold fast to it, for neither in the past, nor in the present has man arrived at full knowledge of any subject.

'Old things need not therefore be true;
O brother men, nor yet the new;
Ah! still awhile the old thought retain,
And yet consider it again.

The idea contained in this stanza thus links the poem with others such as "Easter Day, Part II", although the topic is not specifically religion.

The dialectic in the theme of "When Israel came out of Egypt" (p. 16) is essentially the same as the one in "Easter
Day." Again, Clough balances the orthodox religious position against the modern "atheistic unbelief" and after a process of debate decides that neither position warrants man's full support. Each position contains some truth, but neither one contains the whole. The error in each position stems from man's desire for certainty, and his subsequent habit of making arbitrary decisions prematurely for the sake of certainty. Not content simply to believe in the existence of God and to wait for His complete plan to be revealed, some men have gone on to attribute various characteristics to God, to form "idol thoughts," and to develop a variety of religions, all claiming to have the truth. These men, Clough says, are like children who still need the security of a father and who must be presented with concrete examples before they can grasp an abstract concept. Other men, products of the modern, scientific age, have gone to the opposite extreme. Rejecting many of the forms and dogmas of religion on rational grounds, as Clough did, they have then gone on, wrongly he feels, to deny the existence of God as well--

By Science strict so speaks He now
To tell us, There is None!
Earth goes by chemic forces; Heaven's
A Méchanique Céleste!
And heart and mind of human kind
A watch-work as the rest!

The conclusion Clough comes to is essentially that no conclusion
is possible at the moment; man must wait for some further revelation. At this time, Clough states, man must neither accept a traditional creed as completely true, nor espouse the atheistic view and abandon all belief in God. Rather, he must "take better part, with manlier heart" and develop the courage to resist adopting either point of view--

No God, no Truth, receive it n'er--
Believe it n'er--0 Man!*
But turn not then to seek again
What first the ill began;--

and the fortitude to wait patiently for the whole truth to be revealed--

... ah, wait in faith
God's self-completing plan;
Receive it not, but leave it not,
And wait it out, 0 Man!**

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**Similarly in the poem, "That there are powers above us I admit" (p. 409), he concedes the existence of the supernatural "powers," but, since he cannot prove it one way or the other, decides neither to accept, nor reject the possibility of their being beneficent ones.

"At any rate--
That there are beings above us, I believe,
And when we lift up holy hands of prayer,
I will not say they will not give us aid."

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**In a letter of May, 1847, Clough mentions various religious positions held by other men and then concludes:

"I think others are more right, who say boldly, we don't understand it, and therefore, we won't fall down and worship it. Though there is no occasion
The exact nature of this truth may be still uncertain, but Clough is fully confident that one day it will be revealed—

He shall yet bring some worthy thing
For waiting souls to see.

Until this time, man's attempts to define this higher Truth or to describe God must inevitably fall far short of the truth. This is the reason why Clough usually refers to God simply as Truth and why he carefully avoids explaining what he means by this term. It is enough for him that "Truth" exists; he does not need to translate this abstract concept into a particular image.\(^\text{10}\) This is the idea which he expresses in the poem, "Hymnos Ahymnos" (p. 87)—the title of which contains the key to the dialectic of the poem. It is a hymn, in the sense that it is a poem of praise in which he affirms his belief in the existence of God or Truth—

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\(^{10}\) Hoxie Fairchild comments:

"But Clough was one of those uncomfortable people who 'will not make their image.' They struggle after an 'actual abstract,' refusing to accept a pattern for their ignorance." (Christianity and Romanticism in the Victorian Era, p. 507.)
Yet, on the other hand, it is not a hymn in the traditional sense, because he makes none of the statements about God usually found in religious songs—

I will not frame one thought of what Thou mayest either be or not.

He is content simply to feel that

... in our soul and heart
Thou, whatsoever Thou mayest be, art.

Through the medium of these poems dealing with religion, Clough thus eventually comes to the point, after a prolonged inner debate, where he feels justified in making certain affirmations in which he expresses his belief in the existence of God ("Truth"), in the essence of Christianity, and in the eventual emergence of Truth. This hard-won belief brought him some peace of mind, but it did not put an end to the dialectic constantly going on within him—a number of vital questions were still left unanswered. Since a higher Truth existed, it was plainly man's duty, Clough felt, to try to live in accordance with this principle; but, as the nature of this higher Truth had not yet been revealed to man, the means of man's doing so was manifestly uncertain. As Dipsychus comments, it appears hopeless.
To expect to find in this more modern time
That which the old world styled, in old-world phrase,
Walking with God. It seems His newer will
We should not think of Him at all, but trudge it,
And of the world He has assigned us make
What best we can. (IX, 9-14)

Once more, it seemed that man would have to arrive at the truth on his own, that he would have to find the best way "to pace the sad confusion through" himself, with only his reason and conscience to guide him. This conclusion of Clough's resulted in another group of poems in which the dialectical principle is evident in the theme--those in which he attempts to answer the unanswerable questions, why man is here, how he should live while here, and if he will continue to exist in some form after death.

Another fundamental problem which occupies Clough's attention in a number of poems is the necessity of action. In spite of man's instinctive desire to act, the wisest course for the present would seem to be to repress this desire and wait for some further revelation of God's plan. For, in acting now without full knowledge, man may be committing himself to a point of view or a course which will eventually prove to be false. It is this thought which prompts the frequent expressions of fear found in Clough's poems--the fear of being forced to come to a decision or to act prematurely and on insufficient evidence. It is this fear, in an exaggerated form, which motivates the following speech of Claude:
I do not wish to be moved, but growing where I was growing,
There more truly to grow, to live where as yet I had languished.
I do not like being moved: for the will is excited; and action
Is a most dangerous thing; I tremble for something factitious,
Some malpractice of heart and illegitimate process;
We are so prone to these things with our terrible notions of duty.

(\textit{Amours}, II, 270-75)

Yet, clearly, as Clough was well aware, man cannot wait for the revelation of a truth which will make doubt and hesitation unnecessary. As Dipsychus says: "Life loves no lookers-on at his great game" (IX, 89). The nature of life and of man himself demands that his role be an active one.

Hence a dialectic or debate takes place within Clough and within his characters whenever they are faced with a situation that requires action or commitment on their part. For example, the attempts of the main characters to decide between action and inaction, engagement and disengagement, becomes a major theme in such poems as "Sa Majéste très Chretiènne (p. 69)\textsuperscript{11} and \textit{Dipsychus}. In Scene IX of \textit{Dipsychus}, Dipsychus, seeing that his submission to the world is

\textsuperscript{11}One of the main subjects of the "dialogue of the mind with itself" in this poem is the active versus the contemplative life, engagement versus disengagement. The poem consists of the King's attempt to justify, ostensibly to his confessor, but really to himself, the sins that he has committed on the grounds that, given the necessity of action and the lack of any clear direction by which to act, error is inevitable. He considers and then rejects the possibility of his having adopted a
inevitable unless he can find a better alternative, makes a supreme effort to discover, through reason, a better way to live. His rejection, after much thought, of the possibility that either religion or love can provide modern man with a satisfactory purpose for living forces him to consider the one course that he has tried to avoid and that the Spirit (or his more worldly self) has advocated all along—action. The necessity of considering action as a possible solution "stagger" him, for his most persistent conviction has always been that man could only retain his ideals by resisting the forces which would draw him into society. But, as there seems to be no escape, the problem remains now of deciding when and how to act. The dialectic of this passage results from his subsequent effort to determine whether it is better to enter immediately into active life, hoping that action will eventually bring belief, or to wait until the truth, God's plan for man, is revealed, until the clear call to right action comes which will make further doubt and hesitation impossible.

Dipsychus begins by examining the view that it is better to wait until the one true course can be seen and cites the example of Napoleon who let pass the "lesser chances and more passive role, outlines the necessity of action and yet the difficulty of deciding in "this waste and wild infinity of ways" which path "conducts to Thee," and then concludes that, in spite of everything, "somehow I think my heart is pure."
inferior hopes" (51), waiting for the right moment, "the one thin piece that comes, pure gold" (56), when action ensures victory. The thought that perhaps in letting these "lesser chances" go by he is losing valuable experience which would enable him to be successful in the main encounter causes him to shift to the other point of view (the antithesis) for a moment. But there is no gain here, for this point is immediately balanced by the after-thought that, if he becomes preoccupied with these "lesser chances," he may forget his ultimate goal--

To base mechanical adroitness yield
The Inspiration and the Hope, a slave! (77-78)

The advantage then, for the present, seems to lie with the thesis, "to wait," and he concludes:

Were it not better done, then, to keep off
And see, not share, the strife; stand out the waltz
Which fools whirl dizzy in? (82-84)

He does not remain in this frame of mind for long, however; immediately the question of whether it is possible to remain aloof from life occurs and he has to admit that the nature of life itself precludes this course. The only avenue open to man under these circumstances would thus seem to be the acceptance of the antithesis--to put aside all hesitation, let instinct take over, and act (85-102). But, before he can
act on this decision, thought again intervenes and causes him
to question the assumption on which this conclusion was based—
namely, that man's instincts, if followed, will guide him to
truth. This may have been true for former generations, Dipsychus
thinks, but not for modern man—

The age of instinct has, it seems, gone by,
And will not be forced back. And to live now
I must sluice out myself into canals,
And lose all force in ducts. (105-08)

Neither the individual nor the society in which he lives seems
to be progressing naturally to any goal beyond a purely material
and immediate one. Action for a man in this industrial age
seems to consist of a series of menial and humdrum tasks which,
far from leading anywhere, seem to be an end in themselves.

... We ask Action,
And dream of arms and conflict; and string up
All self-devotion's muscles; and are set
To fold up papers. To what end? We know not. (131-34)

The dialectic ends with Dipsychus reluctantly accepting the
need to act, even though it will have to be on the world's
terms. For, as "action is what one must get, it is clear"
(147), and as man seems destined never to be presented with the
right course of action, only numerous smaller ones, he has no
choice but to "submit" to the world as it is.

The disheartening implications of this conclusion were
not lost on Clough. He realized that his search for Truth must
inevitably end, for the most part, in failure, but this realization in no way lessened his conviction that this course was the only one possible for a man of integrity. The effort must be made, even though the answers might never be found. This view is clearly expressed in the two poems, "The human spirits saw I on a day," and "Come back again, my olden heart!" "The human spirits saw I on a day" (p. 1) is essentially a justification for adopting a sceptical, questioning attitude to life, on the grounds that a man's integrity and his right to turn finally to active life are dependent upon his having first attempted to discover truth. This point of view is presented by the spirit who passes around the ring, "hardly tasking" and "subtly questioning" each of the other spirits. The antithesis is expressed through the attitudes taken and the answers given by the other spirits who represent mankind in general—those who have given up without really trying to find the answers to the questions that the one spirit still asks and have turned to more immediate and practical matters which can be more easily solved. Some of them are irritated by his efforts to rouse them from their inertia and answer him in a "querulously high" tone; others reply in a voice "softly, sadly low," but they all utter the same words:

We know not, sang they all, nor ever need we know!
We know not, sang they, what avails to know?
The answer of the last spirit questioned, "I know not, I will do my duty," leads to the conclusion of the poem which combines this point of view and the one expressed by the questioning spirit. The compromise solution is contained in the words, "true ignorance" and "thee" ("thee," presumably referring to the spirit who advocates duty). By "true ignorance," one feels, Clough means an ignorance which is the result, not of a refusal to face responsibility (as the other spirit's was), but of the fact that, in spite of all man's determined efforts to gain knowledge, the true answers cannot be found. Then, after this point has been reached, man's only recourse is duty and the hope that through duty and the activities of life, the truth will somehow be revealed.

The quality man must cultivate, then, in order to avoid giving up too soon as the other "spirits" did, is courage—courage to resist acting until this "true ignorance" has been reached, or until some measure of truth has been discovered. This is essentially the theme of Clough's poem, "Come back again, my olden heart?" (p. 9). In it, he compares his "olden heart" to his present state of mind, assessing the type of courage he possessed in each state, and decides that, although he may have been a bit too hesitant and scrupulous then, the courage to forego acting until the truth has been discerned is of a higher calibre than the courage required to
cast aside hesitation and doubt and arbitrarily adopt some false position in order to have a starting point from which to act. For, in choosing the latter course, he betrayed himself and Truth—saying, in effect, "because I willed it, it is good." In the conclusion of the poem, he says that, in the future, he will try to steer a middle course between the "wild self-will" of today and the "fear that faltered, paltered still" of yesterday—a course that will combine his present confidence and the higher courage he had formerly,

Courage to let the courage sink,  
Itself a coward base to think,  
Rather than not for heavenly light,  
Wait on to show the truly right.

Another topic which, in the absence of any certain knowledge, called for consideration was the nature of man himself. The question, "What is man and why is he here?", becomes the refrain of a number of poems which illustrate the dialectic in theme. On the surface, as Clough states in the poem, "What we, when face to face we see" (p. 61), man appears to be no more than a passive instrument,

A mind for thoughts to pass into,  
A heart for loves to travel through,  
Five senses to detect things near.

Yet, man's innate feeling of his own worth, his need to feel that he has a significant work to do here, precludes his
acceptance of this view. He is compelled to find an answer which will substantiate his inner conviction that he is serving a higher purpose than this on earth and has a higher goal to reach. Clough finds in this poem, however, that it is impossible to validate this belief by observation of life or by reason. This conclusion leaves him with two alternatives: he can either, "for assurance' sake," adopt some "arbitrary" explanation of man's reason for existing, or he can continue "to pace the sad confusion through" without any assurance. As neither the thesis nor the antithesis is acceptable to Clough, he is finally forced to trust his feelings and the hope that these lead him to in order to arrive at a "solution" to this dialectic.\(^\text{12}\) As the problem cannot be solved intellectually, he is forced to shift terms and "synthesize" his intellectual difficulties on another plane--an

\(^{12}\) The dialectic in the poem, "Whence are ye, vague desires" (p. 386), ends on a similar note. Unable to determine the source of the vague aspirations and longings which perplex and tantalize men, to decide whether they are "A message from the blest, 
Or bodily unrest; 
A call to heavenly good, 
Or fever in the blood," he concludes, essentially on faith, that they are "for some good end designed," and that their existence indicates an intuitive awareness on man's part of some higher Good which he will eventually achieve union with.
emotional or ideal one.

Ah yet, when all is thought and said,
The heart still overrules the head;
Still what we hope we must believe,
And what is given us receive;

Must still believe, for still we hope
That in a world of larger scope,
What here is faithfully begun
Will be completed, not undone.

This is essentially the course that he is forced to follow in his sonnet sequence on death, for, once again, he finds that it is impossible to arrive at any definite conclusion through reason. He begins, in Sonnet #IV, by attempting to determine, through the dialectical method, which of the popular beliefs about death—death as the end, or death as the beginning—contains the most truth and ends, in Sonnet #VII, by trusting the "larger hope." The dialectic in Sonnet #IV, "But whether in the uncoloured light of Truth" (p. 398), centers on Clough's effort to decide whether man's confidence in immortality is founded or unfounded, whether the belief will hold up under "the uncoloured light of Truth." The antithesis is implicit in the questioning tone which suggests that he feels that the opposite point of view (that with death man ceases to exist in any form) may be equally true. He questions whether man's "inward strong assurance" that there is life after death is based on anything more concrete than his own desire to
believe this, whether it is not just an attempt "to shut out fact," because life would be "insupportable" without this faith, and whether "this vital confidence" is any more than his, who upon death's immediate brink knowing perforce determines to ignore, as a bird sensing the hunter is near will bury her eyes, so that she "can forget her fear." He is unable to answer these questions, because there is no discoverable evidence which points one way or the other—nothing but man's persistent belief—and hence concludes the poem with an admission of defeat—"Who about this shall tell us what to think?"

There appears to be no synthesis which will resolve this dialectic.

In Sonnet #VI, "But if, as (not by what the soul desired)" (p. 399), he continues the debate, this time taking into consideration the duration of man's belief in immortality and the number of "wise" men who have held it. The mood is still very questioning and tentative; indeed, the whole poem is an expression of his wistful longing for some assurance, even if it be only the bare minimum of belief. He states that, if he could believe as other men throughout the ages have "thought"—"(not by what the soul desired/Swayed in the judgment)—that in this "human complex" there is something which still lives after death, he would be so relieved that he would not even ask "when and how." In Sonnet #VII, "Shall
I decide it by a random shot?" (399), his desire for certainty becomes so insistent that he attempts to solve the dilemma "by a random shot." The poem thus begins with the assertion that

Our happy hopes, so happy and so good,  
Are not mere idle motions of the blood;  
And when they seem most baseless, most are not.

He supports this statement by suggesting that, just as the flower could not have grown if there had not first been a seed, so man's intuitive confidence in immortality could not have arisen if it had not had some basis in fact from which to start. He then suppresses the dialectical thought that this argument could hold true for the time when man despairs of there being a life after death, too ("What if despair and hope alike be true?") and concludes, rather feebly, that, since death is inevitable, man will find life easier to face if he trusts his moments of hope, rather than the moments of doubt. Since there is no real proof one way or the other, he might as well choose the best alternative.

Clough's love poems are the last group which call for consideration in this chapter, for the subject of love is one that he gave a great deal of thought to. This in itself is not unusual in a poet, but his approach to the subject, for a Victorian, is. As Henry Sidgwick rather wryly comments:

Poets, in fact, are the recognized preachers of the divinity, eternity, omnipotence of Love. It is true
that with some of them fits of despair alternate with enthusiasm, and they proclaim that Love is an empty dream: but the notion of scrutinizing the enthusiasm sympathetically, yet scientifically, and estimating the precise value of its claims and assertions, probably never entered into any poetic soul before Clough.13

The majority of his love poems are dispassionate and realistic studies, developed, for the most part, along the lines of a dialectic. They are the records of the attempts he made to analyze the nature of love and to discover the degree of importance it should assume in a man's life. For, as many men before (and after) him had turned to love as a refuge when religion failed them, he could not afford to overlook this possibility in his search for a satisfactory solution to the problems of life. The conclusion he comes to, however, differs greatly from the attitude taken towards love in a poem such as Arnold's "Dover Beach." He finds that the possibility of a man actually experiencing a love which would be

Restorative, not to mere outside needs
Skin-deep, but thoroughly to the total man (Dip., IX, 30-32)

is too uncertain to warrant his viewing it as an end and final

13Sidgwick, "Review of 'The Poems . . .'," p. 377. F. L. Lucas also comments: "It was not only religious uncertainty that tormented him. Even in love, where few men find any difficulty in being foolish enough, his intellectual conscience pursues him with doubts . . . ." (Ten Victorian Poets, p. 63)
answer in itself. Thus, Dipsychus decides that such love exists, but

... so, so rare,
So doubtful, so exceptional, hard to guess;
When guessed, so often counterfeit; in brief,
A thing not possibly to be conceived
An item in the reckonings of the wise. (IX, 33-37)

However, before arriving at this decision, Clough wrote a number of poems which illustrate the dialectic in theme—poems such as "When panting sighs the bosom fill" (p. 4) in which he tries to determine how one can decide if the present emotion is love. What are the symptoms of real love, and should a person follow his instincts, his reason, both instinct and reason, or some higher faculty in this matter? In the first stanza, Clough describes the experience to be analyzed in the poem—the turbulent and contradictory feelings which can be produced in two people by a chance meeting of hands or eyes—and then proceeds to examine a number of possible ways of dealing with the question. In the second stanza, he considers the possibility that the emotion described in stanza one may be only sexual desire.

Or is it but the vulgar tune,
Which all that breathe beneath the moon
So accurately learn--so soon?

But, he answers himself in stanza three, what if "Reason"
suggests that the sympathy, admiration and esteem he feels for
the other person indicates that the emotion is not just sexual
attraction, but love instead? However, before he can accept this
explanation, the inner debate begins again. The voice of "Pru­
dence" speaks from within and warns him against making this
"irrevocable choice" too quickly, because, by so doing, he may
forfeit the chance of finding a truer love later on--

I hear high Prudence deep within,
Pleading the bitter, bitter sting,
Should slow-maturing seasons bring,
Too late, the veritable thing.

For, as reason entered the picture after the initial sexual
attraction occurred, emotion may have prompted him to raciona­
ize and to attribute qualities to the relationship which it
did not, in fact, possess. Hence, he may be mistaking a short­
lived attraction for the more durable "treasure" which will
appear at some future time.

Thus, he turns in stanza four to consider the possibili­
lity that it may be better to begin the relationship on a
rational basis and then let the emotional aspect of it develop.
But this approach proves to have limitations, also, for there
is no way of determining whether the emotion experienced later
is a lasting one or merely one of

... Phosphoric exhalation bred
Of vapour, steaming from the bed
Of Fancy's brook, or Passion's river,
which will quickly dry up and leave him with the feeling of having been denied

The gift for which all gifts above
   Him praise we, Who is Love, the giver.

The argument, at this point, reaches an impasse, as once again his reason is incapable of solving the problem. There seems to be no rational way of determining if the experience is "Love" or not, of resolving the dialectic. Hence, in order to reach some conclusion, he suggests in stanza five that Love must be a higher faculty than reason, "Of Seraph-kind, the loftier lot," which is its own testimony, its own validation, and which includes and supersedes both emotion and reason and goes at once, by a type of intuition, to the truth. There is no need to subject love to this type of intellectual analysis, for, when man experiences it, there will be no doubts and hesitations left—he will know. The dialectic thus ends, once more, with Clough having to trust "the larger hope" when he is unable to answer the problem posed, by rational means.
CHAPTER III

MOOD, TONE, AND FORM

"Still as we go the things I see,
E'en as I see them, cease to be;
Their angles swerve and with the boat
The whole perspective seems to float.

Yet still I look and still I sit,
Adjusting, shaping, altering it.
("Upon the water, in the boat," p. 109)

In view of the close relationship which exists between mood and theme, it is natural that the dialectical principle should be reflected in juxtaposed moods of Clough's poetry, as well as in its themes. The conflicting points of view which he attempts to reconcile or synthesize in his poetry give rise to contrasting moods which reflect the intellectual debate. Sidgwick remarks on this quality of Clough's poetry:

"He is, then, pre-eminently a philosophic poet, communicator of moods that depend on profound and complex trains of reflection, abstract and highly refined speculations, subtle intellectual perceptions."

This is true of at least a good many of his poems--those in which the opposing moods serve to point up and clarify the dialectic in theme.

1Sidgwick, "Review of 'The Poems . . . '," p. 367.
There are passages in Clough's longer poem, *Dipsychus*, which provide particularly good illustrations of the contrast in mood—passages in which the contrasting emotional attitudes adopted by Dipsychus and the Spirit towards a certain situation or question emphasize the two different views of life they hold. Although, on the surface, *Dipsychus* appears to be a dialogue between two people, it is actually a "dialogue of the mind with itself," an "internal subjective mental fight," as the Spirit is a projection of Dipsychus' more worldly and materialistic self. The name, "Dipsychus," means "two-souled" or "double-minded," and this poem is the record of the hero's attempt to reconcile the soul and the world, the ideal and the real, his desire for certainty and truth and the need for practical action, his vague aspirations to Good and his strong attraction to the things of this world, the intuitions that come to him of a "More Beyond" and the voice of common sense which tells him to "submit" and accept life as it is. Dipsychus himself gradually becomes aware in the course of the debate that the voice of the Spirit is, in fact, the creation of his own imagination, born of his refusal to face the fact that these baser thoughts are his own. In Scene II, in an attempt to ascertain the origin and nature of "this persecuting voice that haunts me," he asks:

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Myself or not myself? My own bad thoughts, 
Or some external agency at work, 
To lead me who knows whither? (19-21)

Finally, in Scene X, he is forced to admit the truth and exclaims:

To thine own self be true, the wise man says. 
Are then my fears myself? O double self! 
And I untrue to both. (62-64)

This, then, is why Clough gives the neutral name of "Spirit" to Dipsychus' antagonist, for he is not evil incarnate, a devil, or another Mephistopheles—rather, as Thomas Arnold remarks, "the 'Spirit' is his worldly self—his own common sense; ironical, sarcastic and prudent." He is the side of Dipsychus that would like to give up the struggle to achieve perfection, truth, and the Absolute and pursue more immediate and terrestrial goals, to forget the spiritual and the ideal and think only of the material and the real. As Clough says to his uncle in the Epilogue to the poem:

... 'perhaps he wasn't a devil after all. That's the beauty of the poem; nobody can say. You see, dear sir, the thing which it is attempted to represent is the conflict between the tender conscience and the world. Now, the over-tender conscience will, of course, exaggerate the wickedness of the world; and the Spirit in my poem may be merely the hypothesis or subjective imagination, formed--' (p. 294)

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The nature of the struggle which Dipsychus undergoes in the poem is intensified by the fact that there is a basic truth of life inherent in many of the Spirit's arguments—a truth which is contained in his comment that

... *Tis time you learn
The Second Reverence, for things around. (XI, 115-16)

For the Spirit is not simply a cynical and corrupt opportunist; he is the voice of Dipsychus' practical common sense as well. It is his common sense which tells him that life necessitates compromise, that the real demands man's attention and appreciation too, that one must, of necessity,

... truck and practise with the world
To gain the 'vantage-ground to assail it from.
(XII, 37-38)

The answer, thus, as usual, is the mean which lies somewhere between the two extreme positions represented by Dipsychus and the Spirit.

This, however, is to anticipate the conclusion, for the greater part of the poem is taken up with the debate between the Spirit and Dipsychus--each upholding his own view of life and attempting to bring the other to accept this opposite view. The two sides of the dialectic are defined for the reader perhaps as much by the mood, style, and form of their respective statements, as by the content. A feeling of idealism
and moral earnestness informs most of Dipsychus' utterances—a depth of feeling and thought which, in turn, is reflected in the formal and dignified style and tone of his speeches. On the whole, he speaks in blank verse, uses words associated with formal usage, and employs a number of biblical references in his arguments. The Spirit, on the other hand, usually speaks in simple rhyming couplets which have a jingling, almost nursery-rhyme effect, employs an informal and colloquial style, and uses a number of slang words and popular expressions. The emotions expressed in his speeches parody the high seriousness of Dipsychus. By contrast, the Spirit's comments are light, superficial, materialistic, cynical, bantering, and often bitingly sarcastic. This is his way of attacking Dipsychus' idealism—by ridiculing it and making it appear to be a silly and romantic whim.

4Katharine Chorley says:

"He defines Mephistopheles as much by his metrical manner as by his sentiments. Mephistopheles speaks in rhyme, and the metres used for his speeches are jaunty, designed to give an impression of smartness and cynicism.

By contrast, Dipsychus speaks almost always in blank verse with smoother and richer cadences, and this emphasizes, partly by its association with poems of a high moral and intellectual purpose, his moral seriousness and his meditative and unworldly character.

(Arthur Hugh Clough: The Uncommitted Mind, p. 254)
Scene I, for example, finds Dipsychus in the same frame of mind and the same mood as when Clough wrote "Easter Day." The locale has changed from Naples to Venice, but the situation which provoked his outburst in Naples has not. The discrepancy between the significance of the Resurrection—the idea of psychological and moral transformation, of rising to a new self—and the corruption and sin he sees around him brings the old verses to mind, and he repeats the first four lines of "Easter Day," ending again with the anguished denial, "Christ is not risen." The Spirit's condescending and mocking reply,

Christ is not risen? Oh indeed! Wasn't aware that was your creed, (12-13)

is in direct contrast to the moral seriousness and idealism inherent in Dipsychus' outburst. The dialectic in mood operates here by a process of counterpoint—idealism is set against materialism, and earnestness is juxtaposed with facetiousness and light-hearted mockery. For the Spirit, as the materialist, as Dipsychus' worldly self, speaks for the elements of life that Dipsychus' conscience and religious sense make him rebel against. His jeering words reflect the attitude the world adopts towards those who will not accept its ways and conform to them—

... Dear, how odd!
He'll tell us next there is no God.
I thought 'twas in the Bible plain,
On the third day He rose again. (15-18)
Ridicule is a favorite weapon of the world, as is the use of a word such as "odd" to describe any deviation from the norm, for it immediately suggests that there is something wrong with the critic, rather than with what he is attacking.

As Scene I continues, the Spirit becomes the spokesman for the need to get the most enjoyment from every moment, from each sensual good that presents itself. He does not look beneath the bright surface of life as Dipsychus does. For he lacks Dipsychus's vision of the ideal and hence, he cannot understand the disillusionment and repulsion which assail Dipsychus when he compares the revelry taking place around him with the "silent stars" and with the aspirations and higher feelings of man which these stars symbolize to him. Unable to reconcile his perceptions of the ideal with the reality surrounding him, Dipsychus rejects the imperfect world; while the Spirit revels in the action and gaiety and urges Dipsychus to join the fun. The wistful and disillusioned mood evident in Dipsychus's words at the end of this scene is opposed to the energetic, bracing, practical, and jocular tone of the Spirit's advice to him.

...Enjoy the minute,
And the substantial blessings in it;
Ices, par exemple; evening air;
Company, and this handsome square; (50-53)

.................................

Up, up; it isn't fit
With beggars here on steps to sit.
Up--to the café! Take a chair
and join the wiser idlers there. (55-58)
Singing, ye gods, and dancing too—
Tooraloo, tooraloo, tooraloo, loo;
Fiddle di, diddle di, diddle di da
Figaro su, Figaro giu—
Figaro qua, Figaro là!
How he likes doing it! Ah, ha, ha! (63-68)

One notes in this passage the impression of action and energy
which is conveyed by the short, swiftly moving lines and by
the numerous ejaculations and exclamatory sentences, the slang
expressions, and the words which suggest singing and laughter.
The lines capture perfectly the light-hearted mood of the
crowd, their complete absence of interest in the moral questions
which concern Dipsychus and which prompt his wistful and dis-
illusioned reply: "While these do what—ah heaven!" (69).

Scene IIA, which takes place at the quays, continues
the debate begun in the public garden in Scene II with the
Spirit still urging Dipsychus to cast aside his moral scruples
and have a brief affair with one of the Italian girls walking by—

Ill's only cure is, never doubt it,
To do—and think no more about it.

Dipsychus cannot regard the matter so lightly, however; he
has an ideal conception of love and feels that it should exist
on a higher plane than the sexual one. He calls on his memories

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, (5-8)
to keep him pure and prevent him from accepting the Spirit's advice. The mood of "righteous" contempt in which he attacks the Spirit's attitude towards women and love provides a striking contrast to the mood of amused tolerance evident in the Spirit's reply. Dipsychus says:

Could I believe that any child of Eve
Were formed and fashioned, raised and reared for nought
But to be swilled with animal delight
And yield five minutes' pleasure to the male— (42-45)\(^5\)

The words, "swilled" and "animal delight," very powerfully convey Dipsychus' contempt for this type of relationship and the attitude taken by the Spirit and the world towards it--the spirit of acceptance and amused tolerance evident in the Spirit's reply:

With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonino!
Betwixt the acres of the rye,
With a hey and a ho, and a hey nonino!
These pretty country folks would lie--
In the spring time, the pretty spring time. (46-51)

This carefree song which echoes "It was a lover and his lass" from As You Like It illustrates how lightly such a relationship is generally regarded. By contrast, the seriousness of Dipsychus' approach to the subject stands out even more clearly--for the Spirit's reply is a satiric mockery of all Dipsychus' feelings

\(^5\)Italics mine.
and thoughts about love. The form, mood and content of their statements once again, then, are dialectically opposed.

The second major topic to be discussed in this chapter is the way in which the dialectical principle reveals itself in the form of Clough's poetry. Before beginning, it would be well to clarify what is meant by form here. My examination of the dialectic in form is based on the older literary use of the term--form in the sense of an external arrangement of stanzas, lines, and words, rather than in the more modern sense of organic form. I have chosen to adopt this approach to the question of form, because I feel that, as a number of Clough's shorter poems show an external dialectical pattern, this method is more suitable to the poems under discussion.

In "The human spirits saw I on a day" (p. 1), for example, the dialectic in form is particularly evident in the second stanza, which consists of a series of questions and answers that point up the two different attitudes to life examined in this poem:

Dost thou not know that these things only seem?--
I know not, let me dream my dream.
Are dust and ashes fit to make a treasure?--
I know not, let me take my pleasure.
What shall avail the knowledge thou hast sought?--
I know not, let me think my thought.
What is the end of strife?--

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6See the discussion of this poem which appears in Chapter II, p. 56.
I know not, let me live my life.

And when the rest were over past,
I know not, I will do my duty, said the last.

In the general plan of the poem, there is evidence of the dialectical principle also. Stanza one establishes the topic and the basic positions taken by men towards the topic and sets the scene, and stanza two develops the thesis and antithesis by a series of questions and answers. Stanza three pushes the last answer to its logical conclusion—when life is finished, will he still be able to rely on duty, "Or wilt thou be where there is none?"; and finally, stanza four resolves the dialectic by a compromise solution which outlines the need to arrive at "true ignorance" first before one then, of necessity, turns to duty.

The subject of the poem, "Say will it, when our hairs are grey" (p. 388), is old age and how one can best occupy one's time then. Clough is confronted by a number of possibilities, and, as he is unable to decide which one of them is the most reliable source of comfort, he presents these various points of view in the form of questions, rather than in the form of statements. The stanza arrangement in the poem, then, is not too important; rather, the dialectic in form resides in the grouping of lines, with every few lines constituting another question and an alternative point of view.
Say, will it soothe lone years to extract
From fitful shows with sense exact
Their sad residuum small of fact?
Will trembling nerves their solace find
In plain conclusions of the mind?

Or were it to our kind and race,
And our instructed self, disgrace
To wander then once more in you,
Green fields, beneath the pleasant blue;
To dream as we were used to dream,
And let things be whate'er they seem?

One remembers here that the fourth sonnet on death, "But whether in the uncoloured light of Truth" (p. 398), also takes the form of a series of questions and that Clough is not able to resolve the dilemma there either—"Who about this shall tell us what to think?"

Perhaps the most characteristic pattern that the dialectic in form takes, however, is the one found in miniature in the first stanza of "'Old things need not be therefore true'" (p. 89).

'Old things need not be therefore true,'
0 brother men, nor yet the new;
Ah! still awhile the old thought retain,
And yet consider it again?

The first line states the thesis, the second line gives the antithesis, and the following lines suggest a possible solution.

7See Chapter II, p. 60.
If one expands this basic pattern, one has the form which is present in a good many of Clough's poems. The first stanza of such a poem usually introduces the topic of the debate and the conflicting opinions generally held about the topic. Then, in the middle section of the poem, the thesis and antithesis are examined in detail and their respective merits and fallacies carefully noted. Finally, the poem concludes either with an admission of defeat in the last stanza, as no answer can be reached at the moment, with the decision to avoid adopting either point of view until some further truth is revealed, or with a definite synthesis or solution which has either been arrived at intellectually, or, as in most cases, by shifting to the realm of the emotional or the ideal.

This is basically the pattern followed in the poem, "Whence are ye, vague desires" (p. 386). In stanzas one and two, Clough presents the problem to be worked out in the poem—

Whence are ye, vague desires,
Which carry men along,
However proud and strong;
And, having ruled to-day,
Tomorrow pass away?
Whence are ye, vague desires?
Whence are ye?

Then in stanzas three and four, carefully balancing one point of view against the other, he examines two of the explanations which could possibly be advanced by men concerning the source
of these vague aspirations and longings which unsettle and perplex mankind.

From seats of bliss above,
Where angels sing of love;
Or from the airs around,
Or from the vulgar ground,
Whence are ye, vague desires?
Whence are ye?

One notices that the question, "Whence are ye, vague desires?", is repeated at the end of each stanza until a conclusion is reached--whereupon the form of the line changes to the exclamation, "Ah yet, ye vague desires,/Ah yet!" The fact that the refrain is set off from the other lines in the stanza also serves to emphasize Clough's uncertainty and the difficulty he has in solving this problem. From stanza five to stanza eight, he catalogues the effect which these desires have on men, women, boys and girls, but is still unable to arrive at an answer to the question. The turning point comes in stanza nine when Clough, finding that the problem cannot be solved rationally, decides to trust his intuition and emotions and the affirmative conclusion that these lead him to--

Ah yet, though man be marred,
Ignoble made and hard;
Though broken women lie
In anguish down to die;
Ah yet, ye vague desires,
Ah yet!

..............................
The petals of to-day,
To-morrow fallen away,
Shall something leave instead,  
To live when they are dead;  
When you, ye vague desires,  
When you

Have vanished, to survive;  
Of you indeed derive  
Apparent earthly birth,  
But of far other worth  
Than you, ye vague desires,  
Than you.

Another external form that the dialectical principle often assumes in Clough's poetry is that of a debate between two people or groups of people. In the poem, "Thesis and Antithesis" (p. 400), for example, the form necessarily follows the theme of a debate between age and youth—the perennial argument between different generations which pits wisdom and experience against youth's enthusiasm and desire to live and experience for itself. The poem begins with the young people's plea to the older generation not to judge them before listening to their side of the argument—

If that we thus are guilty doth appear,  
Ah, guilty tho' we are, grave judges, hear!

Stanza one, thus, is concerned with the development of the thesis, with youth's point of view and the argument that, if their elders have erred in their youth, have indulged in any sensuous and eager living ("--as which of you has not?--"), then they should take this fact into consideration and not be too harsh on those who are in that stage of life now.
Then be not stern to faults yourselves have known,

To others harsh, kind to yourselves alone.

Stanza two contains the antithesis—the older people's reply to youth. They consider the point made in the preceding stanza and admit its validity—"That we went wrong we say not is not true"—, but decide that the fact that they erred does not disqualify them as judges, but, on the contrary, increases their responsibility to see that their youngsters do not make the same mistakes.

 But, if we erred, were we not punished too? 
If not—if no one checked our wandering feet,—
Shall we our parents' negligence repeat?—
For future times that ancient loss renew,
If none saved us, forbear from saving you,
Nor let that justice in your faults be seen
Which in our own or was or should have been?

In stanza three, youth makes one last attempt to bring the older generation to accept its point of view—

Yet, yet, recall the mind that you had then,
And, so recalling, listen yet again.

"If you escaped," they argue, it is clearly proof that "impunity may leave a culprit good," and "if you were punished," you, doubtless, did not feel then, as you do now, that the punishment was just. They then conclude their argument by asking their elders to follow a middle course which will avoid the extremes inherent in the "indulgence" of youth and the "severity" of age—
In youth's indulgence think there yet might be
A truth forgot by grey severity;
That strictness and that laxity between,
Be yours the wisdom to detect the mean.

Stanza four contains age's answer to this request and the conclusion of the poem. The basic idea expressed here by the older men is that it is impossible to resolve the debate in a way which will satisfy both sides, because, if they took every aspect of the question into account, they would never act. There comes a time when a decision must be made and adhered to, even though it be a rather arbitrary one. Here Clough ruefully laughs at his own tendency to weigh every point of view before coming to a decision—a tendency which too often prevented him from acting.

'Tis possible young sir, that some excess
Mars youthful judgment and old men's no less;
Yet we must take our counsel as we may
For (flying years this lesson still convey),
'Tis worst unwisdom to be overwise,
And not to use, but still correct one's eyes.

The external form of this poem, then, is that of a debate--with stanza one presenting youth's point of view (the thesis); stanza two, age's (the antithesis); stanza three returning to youth again; and stanza four, to age and the conclusion of the poem.
CHAPTER IV

IMAGERY AND CHARACTERS

"I also know not, and I need not know,
Only with questionings pass I to and fro,
Perplexing these that sleep, and in their folly
Imbreeding doubt and sceptic melancholy."
("The human spirits saw I on a day,"
p. 1)

This final chapter will discuss imagery and characters, the imaginative and dramatic embodiment of the dialectic in theme dealt with in Chapter I. That Clough possessed the imaginative resources of a poet is clear from the magnificent imagery present in a shorter poem, such as "Say not the struggle naught availeth" (p. 63)—

For while the tired waves, vainly breaking,
    Seem here no painful inch to gain,
Far back through creeks and inlets making
    Came, silent, flooding in, the main,
And not by eastern windows only,
    When daylight comes, comes in the light,
In front the sun climbs slow, how slowly,
    But westward, look, the land is bright.

Or, in a longer poem, such as The Bothie—

But a revulsion wrought in the brain and bosom of Elspie;
And the passion she just had compared to the vehement ocean,
Urging in high spring-tide its masterful way through the mountains,
Forcing and flooding the silvery stream, as it runs from the inland; That great power withdrawn, receding here and passive, Felt she in myriad springs, her sources, far in the mountains, Stirring, collecting, rising, upheaving, forth-outflowing, Taking and joining, right welcome, that delicate rill in the valley, Filling it, making it strong, and still descending, seeking, With a blind forefeeling descending ever, and seeking, With a delicious forefeeling, the great still sea before it; There deep into it, far, to carry, and lose in its bosom, Waters that still from their sources exhaustless are fain to be added. (VII, 153-65)

However, in the few poems of Clough in which the dialectic is conveyed primarily through imagery, the imagery itself is not, on the whole, this successful. In these poems, particularly in "Why should I say I see the things I see not" and "The Silver Wedding! on some pensive ear," the reader is aware that the images are being used to present the terms of an argument and hence, they do not evoke as intense an emotional response from him. Analysis and reason seem to be more dominant here than imagination and emotion—with the exception of the poem, "Epi-Strauss-ium," in which a more imaginative fusion of thought, feeling, and image takes place.

In the poem, "Epi-Strauss-ium" (p. 49), Clough returns once more to the subject of the Straussian Higher Criticism of the Bible in an effort to determine whether man should recognize and accept--
Matthew and Mark and Luke and holy John
Evanished all and gone!—

the change which the Straussian criticism has wrought in his view of Christianity or whether he should feel a sense of irreparable loss—

Are, say you, Matthew, Mark and Luke and holy John? Lost is it? lost, to be recovered never?

After examining the nature of religious belief before and after Strauss, he concludes that, although religion has lost much of its richness and colour, it is now more in accordance with reason and Truth. This is a rather prosaic statement of the subject matter of "Epi-Strauss-ium," however, for Clough achieves a more genuinely imaginative expression of theme by embodying the dialectic and the conclusion in imagery. Truth (Clough's term for God) is represented in the poem by the sun, "the Orb." Formerly, Clough says, the sun shone through the multi-coloured stained glass windows of medieval churches (representing traditional Christianity with its dogmas and rituals, and its belief in the Bible as inspired truth) that "intercepted" the light—

Yea, he that erst, his dusky curtains quitting,
Through Eastern pictured panes his level beams transmitting,
With gorgeous portraits blent,
On them his glories intercepted spent.

But, since Strauss, the sun has moved to the southwest and now
shines "through windows plainly glassed," and, in the bright light of Truth which the clear windows (reason) let pass through, belief in everything but the essence of Christianity has disappeared. Thus, after balancing the advantages of the stained glass windows against those of the clear and plain glass windows, Clough concludes that

The place of worship the meantime with light
Is, if less richly, more sincerely bright,
And in blue skies the Orb is manifest to sight.

Similarly, in the poem, "Why should I say I see the things I see not" (p. 21), Clough uses imagery to dramatize the debate taking place within him. Should he conform to the world's standards of behaviour or wait for the voice of his own conscience to show him the way, dance to the music of the world or of the soul. Part I of the poem begins with the defiant question,

Why should I say I see the things I see not,
Why be and be not?

Since, in fact, he neither understands many of the ideas people believe in, nor feels naturally inclined to act, think and respond in the prescribed manner, he cannot see why he should conform to the standards of society and "dance about to music that I hear not." For, in so doing, he is playing the part of a hypocrite and denying his own individuality. In the following
lines, Clough proceeds to answer this question himself, citing through an extended metaphor of the dance of life the high price of non-conformity—

Who standeth still i* the street
    Shall be hustled and justled about;
And he that stops i* the dance shall be spurned by the dancers' feet,—
    Shall be shoved and twisted by all he shall meet,
And shall raise up an outcry and rout.

His consideration of the problems which result from a refusal to think and act like most people causes him to question next the very basis of his initial stand—his confidence in the validity of his own feelings and beliefs. What if, he thinks, his reluctance to take his part in the "dance" is the result of his own failure to understand? Perhaps up to now a "humming" in his ears has prevented him from hearing the "music" that the rest of the world seems to hear, and, once this static clears, he will suddenly "in a moment read the whole" and voluntarily take his place in society—

And hand in hand, and heart with heart, with these retreat, advance;
    And borne on wings of wavy sound,
    Whirl with these around, around,
Who here are living in the living dance?

In view of this possibility, it may be best to "keep amid the throng" and go through the motions of life for the present. For, by rejecting society too quickly, he may miss the chance to
acquire the knowledge that the others seem to possess—and "Why forfeit that fair chance?" However, the inner debate does not end here; for, before he can act on this thought, his old doubts re-assert themselves and he cries in sudden fear:

Alas! alas! alas! and what if all along
The music is not sounding.

This expression of doubt marks the conclusion of Part I and his examination of one point of view—namely, the view that there is only one version of truth, the world's, and man must either accept these rules of conduct or else face life alone without any guide to action.

In Part II, Clough weighs the possibility of there being two guides that man can follow when acting—"Are there not, then, two musics unto men?" The dialectic in this section of the poem is conveyed primarily through imagery, with Clough balancing two images—the music of the world against the music of the soul—and thus seeking to determine which is the most trustworthy sound for man to listen to. The decision which he finally reaches is apparent from the beginning in the adjectives used to describe these two musics. He finds that the music of the world is "loud and bold and coarse"—

Only of fumes of foolish fancy bred,
And sounding solely in the sounding head.
Men are so overpowered by the volume of this music that they fail to realize that it is leading them astray, that it is based not on Truth, but on false and materialistic values. The music of the soul, in contrast, is "soft and low,"

Stealing whence we not know,
Painfully heard, and easily forgot,
With pauses oft and many a silence strange;
(And silent oft it seems, when silent it is not).

As man is pressed upon from every side and encircled by such variety of opinion, it is hard for him to find the true way to live. However, if man resists the inclination to follow the louder music of the world and searches, instead, his own soul and conscience, he will, Clough feels, eventually be rewarded with a glimpse of Truth.

This is the conclusion that he comes to in Part III, as once again he is forced to resolve his intellectual and spiritual difficulties by trusting to his intuitive belief in the ultimate emergence of Truth, to his faith that, in time,

Though drums do roll, and pipes and cymbals ring;
So the bare conscience of the better thing
Unfelt, unseen, unimaged, all unknown,
May fix the entranced soul mid multitudes alone.¹

¹One notes in this passage that, once again, Clough makes no attempt to define the nature of this Truth, for fear that, in so doing, he may misrepresent or distort it.
The expression of this poem, with perhaps the exception of Part III, is not as genuinely imaginative as that found in "Epi-Strauss-ium." The imagery appears, at times, to be imposed on the argument, and the poem, as a whole, appeals more to the intellect than to the emotions. However, the contrasting images of the music of the world and the music of the soul do serve to make the terms of the inner debate more concrete.

In the last poem to be considered here, "The Silver Wedding! on some pensive ear" (p. 19), the imagery embodying the dialectic seems rather contrived. This is perhaps because, as is the case with most occasional poems, the creative impulse arose not from a personal emotion or problem of Clough's, but from an external source, a request that he write a few verses to commemorate some friends' twenty-fifth wedding anniversary. The way in which he works out the dialectic by using imagery taken from metallurgy, the art of separating and refining metals, is rather ingenious. The subject of the poem, as one might expect, is romantic love and the gradual change which it undergoes with the "subtlest alchemy of the years," as it is refined in the crucible of life. Clough begins by balancing the intensity of the initial emotion—

The golden joys of fancy's dawning bright,
The golden bliss of, Woo'd, and won, and wed—
against the more subdued attraction he feels must exist now after twenty-five years have passed. As gold is a purer and more valuable metal than silver, the contrasting images that he uses to describe each state (gold versus silver) suggest that their love was at its height when they were first married. Hence he concludes:

Ah, golden then, but silver now! In sooth,
The years that pale the cheek, that dim the eyes,
And silver o'er the golden hairs of youth,
Less prized can make its only priceless prize.

One finds in the following stanza, however, that Clough has proposed this point of view only for the sake of argument; for he now offers an alternative explanation. "Not so," he says, the "golden joy" of youthful love was a "baser metal," the "fairy gold of dreams." In reality, their love has been refined and transmuted into a more "genuine substance" by the crucible of life, by the "cares and tears,/And deeds together done, and trials past" of the ensuing years. It has been purified by suffering and experience and is a stronger and truer emotion now than it was at the beginning—such a "Strange metallurge is human life!" He then takes this analogy one step further and suggests that the silver of their present love will also undergo a change and will be refined into "pure" gold by their fiftieth anniversary or after their death. At this point, the process will be complete, and their love, the
. . . earthly chains of metal true,
By love and duty wrought and fixed below,
Elsewhere will shine, transformed, celestial-new,

Will shine of gold, whose essence, heavenly bright,
No doubt-damps tarnish, worldly passions fray;
Gold into gold there mirrored, light in light,
Shall gleam in glories of a deathless day.

The wheel has thus turned a full circle; once again Clough compares their love to gold, but this time it is pure gold, rather than the "fairy gold" of youth.

Clough also uses characters to dramatize the clash of ideas and the balancing of points of view examined in the second chapter. In the longer poems, such as "The Mystery of the Fall," Amours de Voyage, and The Bothie of Tober-na-vuolich, for example, the dialectic is conveyed, in part, through the interaction and the exchanges between the characters. It may be best, before moving on to a more detailed consideration of the characters in "The Mystery of the Fall," to look briefly at the characters of Claude and Mary in Amours de Voyage and Philip and Elspie in The Bothie.

Claude, the hero of Amours de Voyage (p. 177), is a striking example of the harmful effects which can result from persistent self-analysis. He has indulged the habits of introspection and of debating each question within himself before acting to such an extent that he has developed a morbid self-consciousness and an almost pathological fear of action. What began as a healthy and praiseworthy desire for truth and knowledge
has degenerated into vexatious hair-splitting and a general paralysis of the will to act. He is a pitiable and yet, at the same time, a rather contemptible figure, for he is weak. His intellectual conscientiousness is a negative, rather than a positive quality; for he uses it not as a means of arriving at truth, but as a way of escaping the truth, of rationalizing or justifying his fear of emotion and of becoming involved in life. He is oppressed by his surroundings and dissatisfied with his age, but his anger is not channelled in any specific direction, and hence it becomes a destructive, rather than a constructive force—as it turns back on him and on those near to him. Lacking any clear goal or positive program of action, all he can do is rail peevishly against the conditions and restrictions of his society.

Mary Trevellyn, on the other hand, is completely at home in her age and in the middle-class circle of society in which she moves. She is beset by none of the self-doubts and anxieties which perplex Claude, and hence she is able to retain her serenity of mind and to sympathize with Claude without experiencing the same hesitations and fears that he does. As Claude says of her:

It is a pleasure indeed to converse with this girl. Oh rare gift, Rare felicity, this! She can talk in a rational way, can Speak upon subjects that really are matters of mind and of thinking,
Yet in perfection retain her simplicity; never, one moment, 
Never, however you urge it, however you tempt her, consents to 
Step from ideas and fancies and loving sensations to those 
vain 
Conscious understandings that vex the minds of man-kind. 
No, though she talk, it is music; her fingers desert not the keys. (II, 255-62)

Mary senses, from the beginning, the weakness in Claude—his fear of action and of instinct and emotion—and realizes that, given his character, there is little chance of their mutual attraction culminating in a positive relationship, but she cannot help cherishing the hope that he will persist in his search for her and that everything will eventually work out.

The different ways in which Mary and Claude accept the odds of their never meeting again and the end of their love further enforces the difference between their characters and points of view. The initial impulse which prompted Claude to leave Rome and set out in search of the Trevellyns gradually wanes as the days move on and he still fails to reach her. The delay gives him time to think and to begin questioning the reality of the emotion he feels, until finally, after a lengthy mental debate, he decides:

After all, do I know that I really cared so about her? 
Do whatever I will, I cannot call up her image; 

Only, try as I will, a sort of featureless outline, 
And a pale blank orb, which no recollection will add to. 
After all perhaps there was something factitious about it; 
I have had pain, it is true: have wept; and so have the actors. (V, 156-65)
Thus, the original emotion loses its immediacy as it is translated into the realm of ideas, his old fear of action reasserts itself, and he ends by rationalizing his failure with the thought that, after all, the love he felt was probably "factitious." One remembers here James Osborne's comment that the love which has "run up and down sand dunes . . . finally loses itself in the waste." Mary's natural optimism and unwavering affection would have led her to fight against the circumstances which daunt Claude, but, with his submission, she is forced to bow to the inevitable, too—although, as she says, "in a different manner":

Oh, and you see I know so exactly how he would take it:
Finding the chances prevail against meeting again, he would banish
Forthwith every thought of the poor little possible hope, which
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.
(V, 210-15)

The conclusion of the love story in *The Bothie* (p. 116) provides an interesting contrast to the impasse reached at the end of *Amours de Voyage*, especially as the difference in character which separates Claude and Mary is similar in kind, although not in degree, to that which divides Philip and Elspie.

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For, at the beginning, Philip Hewson, like Claude, cannot decide how he should live, experiences a reaction against his age and his society, becomes known, in consequence, among his friends as something of a "radical," and undergoes a period of "inner debate and choice" (VI, 63) before marrying Elspie. In his efforts to determine what qualities one should look for in a woman, Philip goes from one extreme to another; first he idealizes Katie, the peasant girl, because of his theory that "labour and labour alone, can add to the beauty of women" (II, 26) and then, suffering a revulsion from Katie, he decides that the decorative personal beauty of the Lady Maria is worth all the "labour and pain" of the "poor and the weary" (V, 51) needed to provide her with the comfort and service she is accustomed to. In both instances, Philip is attracted by outward appearances, until finally, after learning to know and love Elspie, he comes to recognize the truth of the prophecy of Adam, his tutor, that someday he will learn to value only the good--

Good, wherever it's found, you will choose, be it humble or stately,
Happy, if only you find, and finding do not lose it.
(II, 163-64)

While Philip is a romantic and an idealist, Elspie, on the other hand, is more of a realist. It is a glance of "simple superior insight" from her eyes which shows Philip how
foolish his idealization of Katie is. This exchange of glances occurs in Part IV, before he is even acquainted with Elspie, but her eyes seemed to him to say:

--Yes, there he is still in his fancy,
Letting drop from him at random as things not worth his considering
All the benefits gathered and put in his hands by fortune,

 Doesn't yet see we have here just the things he is used to elsewhere;
People here too are people, and not as fairy-land creatures;
He is in a trance, and possessed; I wonder how long to continue;
It is a shame and a pity—and no good likely to follow—
(135-44)

For, like Mary, Elspie possesses a tranquility of mind and an intuitive wisdom which keep her on a steady course, whereas Philip often feels like a "needle which in the shaken compass" flies "hither and thither" (VI, 52). In the conclusion of the poem, the differences between them are resolved, as, with his marriage to Elspie, Philip succeeds in reconciling the ideal and the real, "Rachel-and-Leah" (IX, 171). He learns the lesson contained in the following quotation from Clough's "1849 Roma Notebook":

It is the virtue of man to know and learn the ideal
It is the wisdom of man to accept and love the real. 3--

a truth of life which Claude fails to realize. Moreover, the other issues which divide them--questions of formal education,

of social class, and of environment, of Elspie's ability to move up to his class or his own to move down, of living a peasant life in the Highlands or residing in the city, of tilling the soil or finding some work commensurate with his classical education—are resolved by their decision to emigrate to New Zealand, to a new country where everyone must initially work with his hands, but where an education will still be of use, and where no established social classes yet exist.

They are married, and gone to New Zealand.
Five hundred pounds in pocket, with books, and two or three pictures,
Tool-box, plough, and the rest, they rounded the sphere to New Zealand.
There he hewed, and dug; subdued the earth and his spirit;
There he built him a home; there Elspie bare him his children,
David and Bella; perhaps ere this too an Elspie or Adam;
There hath he farmstead and land, and fields of corn and flax fields;
And the antipodes too have a Bothie of Tober-na-vuolich.
(IX, 193-200)

"The Mystery of the Fall" (p. 410) finds Clough once more attempting to resolve his religious difficulties through his poetry, with the inner debate focusing this time on the Biblical account of the Fall of Man. The dialectic arises from Adam and Eve's efforts to understand the nature and significance of the event which has just occurred--their vague memories of the Garden of Eden, God warning them not to eat the
fruit of a certain tree, the serpent, the act, the ensuing self-awareness, knowledge and guilt, and the expulsion from the Garden. For, as God has not appeared to them since the Fall, they are left to solve this problem for themselves, just as modern man, in the absence of certain knowledge, must find the answers to these ultimate questions himself. Basically, the debate is between the orthodox religious position and the modern post-Straussian position—between faith and reason, between the spirit of acceptance and the feeling that man must think and decide for himself, between the belief that Truth is without and the conviction that Truth is within the individual conscience, between a literal interpretation of the Fall and a symbolic interpretation of it—with Eve and Abel representing the traditional religious view, and Adam and Cain, the modern position.

Scene I opens with Adam trying to calm Eve's fears by treating the whole issue of the Fall in as matter-of-fact a manner as possible, in an effort to make her see that the deed cannot be undone and that their only course now is to make the most of the life left to them:

Since that last evening we have fallen indeed! Yes, we have fallen, my Eve! Oh yes!—One, two, three, and four;—the appetite, The enjoyment, the aftervoid, the thinking of it—Specially the latter two, most specially the last. There, in synopsis, see, you have it all: Come, let us go and work! (1-7)
He suggests that the Fall should not be viewed as a calamity or as cause for guilt and repentance, but as a necessary stage in their development—for "that which we were, we could no more remain" (13) than a seed could.

We were to grow. Necessity on us lay This way or that to move; necessity, too, Not to be over-careful this or that, So only move we should. (16-19)

Thus, he cannot see how they could be "damned to death eterne" and "parted from God" (125) for this one act, as Eve believes; on the contrary, he welcomes this guilt because it makes him "free," because it has given him the opportunity to think and act for himself, to express his own individuality. The details connected with "the mighty mythus of the Fall" he rejects as man-invented—as having resulted from man's attempt to explain the trials of life in terms of a punishment visited on him by an angry God.

Eve, however, is obsessed by a sense of guilt and remorse and refuses to be comforted by his logical arguments. As she is basically an emotional being, her fears cannot be calmed by Adam's appeal to reason. Her despairing words, "Oh, guilt, guilt, guilt!" echo throughout the scene and lead up to her final prophecy of the spiritual doubt and uncertainty which is to torment future generations:
Ah me! alas! alas!
More dismally in my face stares the doubt,
More heavily on my heart weighs the world.
Methinks
The questioning of ages yet to be,
The thinkings and cross-thinkings, self-contempts,
Self-horror; all despondencies, despairs,
Of multitudinous souls on souls to come
In me imprisoned fight, complain, and cry.
Alas!
Mystery, mystery, mystery evermore. (121-32)

One sees in Scene II that Adam himself, in spite of the confident pose he assumes in front of Eve, is not free from this inner doubt. He is divided within himself—his emotions and instincts prompting him to regard the Fall in the same light as Eve and his reason telling him that these fears are just childish fancies and that the world and man are the same as before. Moments of clear and lucid thought alternate in him with moments of blind panic and despair, but, even at the times of greatest stress, he never loses his curiosity about life, his confidence in the future and in his ability to deal with any problem the years may bring, or his belief that eventually man will pass through these "straits of anguish and doubt" (III, 54) and will reach "the calm ocean" of "consummated consciousness of self" (58).

In fact, the restless, questioning intellect, which has become the dominant characteristic of fallen man and which repels and terrifies Eve, fascinates Adam. He revels in the "curious seething process" (II, 57) of analysis and debate
taking place within him and in the feeling of self-reliance and independence which this gives him. Eve, on the other hand, looks regretfully at the past and longs for a return of their former certainty and peace of mind and the sense of dependence on a personal God that they had. The debate between them continues in Scene IV, with Eve upholding the orthodox Christian view of the Fall and of man's relationship to God, and Adam still trying to convince her that God does not speak to man "in that unmeaning arbitrary way" (52), that the commandment "'You shall not'" that she heard, came not from God, but from her own imagination, and that she must learn, as all men must, "to discern the Voice amidst the voices" (65) in her heart. He believes that man must be the arbiter of his own actions and that he must look for Truth in his own conscience and not in some outside authority--

For not by observation of without
Cometh the Kingdom of the Voice of God:
It is within us--let us seek it there. (58-60)

The differences of personality and point of view which separate Adam and Eve become even more pronounced in their sons. Abel surpasses Eve in his adoption of the orthodox Christian position. His relationship to God, whom he sees as a transcendent Being, is the most important thing in his life.

\textsuperscript{4}See Chapter I, fn. \#23, p. 16.
He views the stirrings of his own spirit and will as essentially evil and stresses the need for self-abnegation and humility, for unquestioning faith, and for the submission of self to the Will and the laws of God. He believes wholeheartedly in the Biblical story of the Fall, in the need for prayer, repentance and penance, and in the view that Redemption comes through Grace. His eyes and his thoughts are always turned upwards, and he feels keenly the separation between himself and Adam and Cain:

My God! spurn not my mother's prayer and mine.  
Since I was born, was I not left to Thee,  
In an unspiritual and godless house  
Unfathered and unbrothered—Thine and hers? (VI, 6-9)

Cain, on the other hand, represents (even more than Adam) the secular, modern, sceptical spirit with its emphasis on reason and on self-reliance and self-development. One sees in Scene VII that he is primarily concerned with the development of his own nature and the exercise of his individual will, and with taking his place in the "world of action." His statements reveal his intense curiosity about the world and about himself as an individual and his desire to test the powers that he feels surging within him through action--

... a strange impulse, struggling to the truth,  
Urges me onward to put forth my strength,  
No matter how--Wild curiosity
Possesses me moreover to essay
This world of action round me so unknown;
And to be able to do this or that
Seems cause enough, without a cause, for doing it.

(10-16)

Thus, Scene VII ends with Cain's decision that he must perform some action which will "vindicate my nature" and prove that "I also am, as Adam is, a man" (24).

When the impulse to act comes, it results in the murder of Abel. After the deed, Cain goes through a period of inner conflict similar to the one that Adam underwent after the Fall. His initial reaction is one of wild exultation at the victory, at the thought that man can rid himself of any one who "will not let us be, nor leave us room to do our will" (IX, 9) combined with a feeling of disappointment that the act was not more of a challenge, that Abel had not "struggled more"—"That passiveness was disappointing" (22). Then, once he has time to think, he is stricken with guilt and remorse and imagines that he hears voices asking him where his brother is. The scene ends with his anguished cry:

O Abel, brother mine,
Where'er thou art, more happy far than me? (49-50)

This experience does not cause Cain to change his basic position, but it does prompt him to modify it slightly. For
through the murder of Abel and his ensuing remorse and guilt, Cain comes to a knowledge of good and evil and to the realization that man is responsible for his actions and that when he acts wrongly he must face the censure of his own conscience.

Thus, in Scene XI, when Eve begs him to repent and to seek "atonement from a gracious God" (12), using the "rites and holy means of Grace" (9) initiated for this purpose, Cain neither denies his guilt, nor accepts her advice. He is fully aware of his sin and of the fact that he will bear the burden of guilt for the rest of his life, but he asks for no outside aid, no "self-delusion" of forgiveness, to help him to endure the years ahead--all he asks is "never to forget" what "one impulse blindly followed to its end" (28) resulted in. He stands convicted of sin before the only judge he reveres, his own conscience. Hence, even when Adam warns him against becoming "overscrupulous" (XIII, 6) and counsels him not to refuse the "due consolemens" which life brings, not to be "too wise for God" (70), he does not heed him, but, instead, asks his father to curse him so that he will always remember

That to forget is not to be restored;
To lose with time the sense of what we did
Cancel's not what we did; what's done remains--
I am my brother's murderer. (XIII, 35-37)

He is determined to face life and all its bitterness and pain with no illusions and to find his only comfort in work and duty--
"But welcome Fact, and Fact's best brother, Work" (52).

Adam's speech in the final scene of the poem in which he affirms that, in spite of "doubt, despondency and death," the lack of certain knowledge and, at times, the absence of faith or hope,

Life has been beautiful to me, my son,
And if they call me, I will come again (XIV, 47-48)

softens the severity of Cain's conclusion—as does the dream which Adam has in this scene. For, the merging into one of Adam, Eve, Cain, and Abel which occurs in his dream hints at the possibility of some future reconciliation of the opposing views represented by these characters in the poem, the reconciliation of faith and reason, of orthodoxy and scepticism, perhaps through the adoption by all men of a philosophy similar to Strauss's. Thus, in the dream, Adam sees Abel take Cain's hand and say:

"Forgive me, Cain.
Ah me! my brother, sad has been thy life,
For my sake, all through me—how foolishly;
Because we knew not both of us were right! (XIV, 9-12)

and, while he is watching, they both fuse into one--

The decomposing of those coloured lines
Which we called you, their fusion into one,
And therewithal their vanishing and end. (17-20)
Then, Eve comes and asks to "vanish" into him, whereupon a general merging of the four characters takes place--

I was alone--yet not alone--with her
And she with me, and you with us, my sons,
As at the first, and yet not wholly--yea,
And that which I had witnessed thus in you,
The fusion and mutation and return,
Seemed in my substance working too. I slept,
I did not dream, my sleep was sweet to me. (30-36)
CONCLUSION

The main concern of this paper has been to subject Clough's poetry to a textual analysis in order to assess the presence in it of what I have called the dialectical principle, to show how his most characteristic approach to experience is carried over into his poetry and finds expression in theme, mood, tone, form, imagery, and characters. The paper was organized according to these headings, because I felt that this was the most natural method to use when dealing with Clough's poetry and also because I hoped that the adoption of these traditional critical terms would help to clarify the discussion for the reader—although I was aware, at the same time, that such divisions are necessarily rather arbitrary and that it is often difficult to separate "the dancer from the dance."

The question which remains to be answered here is whether Clough succeeded in solving his intellectual and spiritual problems, and in conveying the solution through his poetry. A careful examination of Clough's poetry leads one to answer this question in the negative. The poems here analyzed, with perhaps the exception of "Easter Day, Part II" and its conclusion derived from the Straussian Higher Criticism of the Bible, record his failure to cross "the darkling plain"
and find some new light of truth which would satisfy him both emotionally and intellectually. The emphasis in these poems thus tends to be an analysis and debate, rather than on synthesis, and on reason, rather than on imagination. In many of them, the dialectic exists as unresolved debate when Clough, unable to find an intellectual synthesis, concludes with an admission of defeat, "Who about this shall tell us what to think?" or with the decision to accept neither the thesis, nor the antithesis at the moment, but to wait, rather, for some further revelation of Truth—

Receive it not, but leave it not,
And wait it out, O Man!

At other times, when Clough's desire for certainty will not permit him to let the dialectic end in an impasse, he is forced to shift the terms of the debate (as he shifts the scene to New Zealand, to a new world, at the conclusion of The Bothie) and to "synthesize" his intellectual difficulties in a realm of pure feeling or on an ideal plane—as, for example in the poems, "Whence are ye, vague desires," "Shall I decide it by a random shot," and "When panting sighs the bosom fill." In these instances, when emotion and imagination take over from reason, the dialectic moves to a resolution which cannot strictly be called a synthesis, because the affirmation Clough makes does not follow logically from the argument of the
poem. Thus, the conclusion becomes an emotional, rather than an intellectual solution—usually one in which Clough ends by trusting an undefined "larger hope," when he is unable to answer the problem posed by rational means. In the poem, "What we, when face to face we see," for example, he finds that it is impossible to validate man's belief that he is serving a higher purpose than that of a passive instrument on earth and has a higher goal to reach by observation of life or by reason, and comes finally to trust his feelings and the hope that these lead him to in order to arrive at a "solution" to the dialectic--

Ah yet, when all is thought and said,
The heart still overrules the head;
Still what we hope we must believe,
And what is given us receive;

Must still believe, for still we hope
That in a world of larger scope,
What here is faithfully begun
Will be completed, not undone.
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