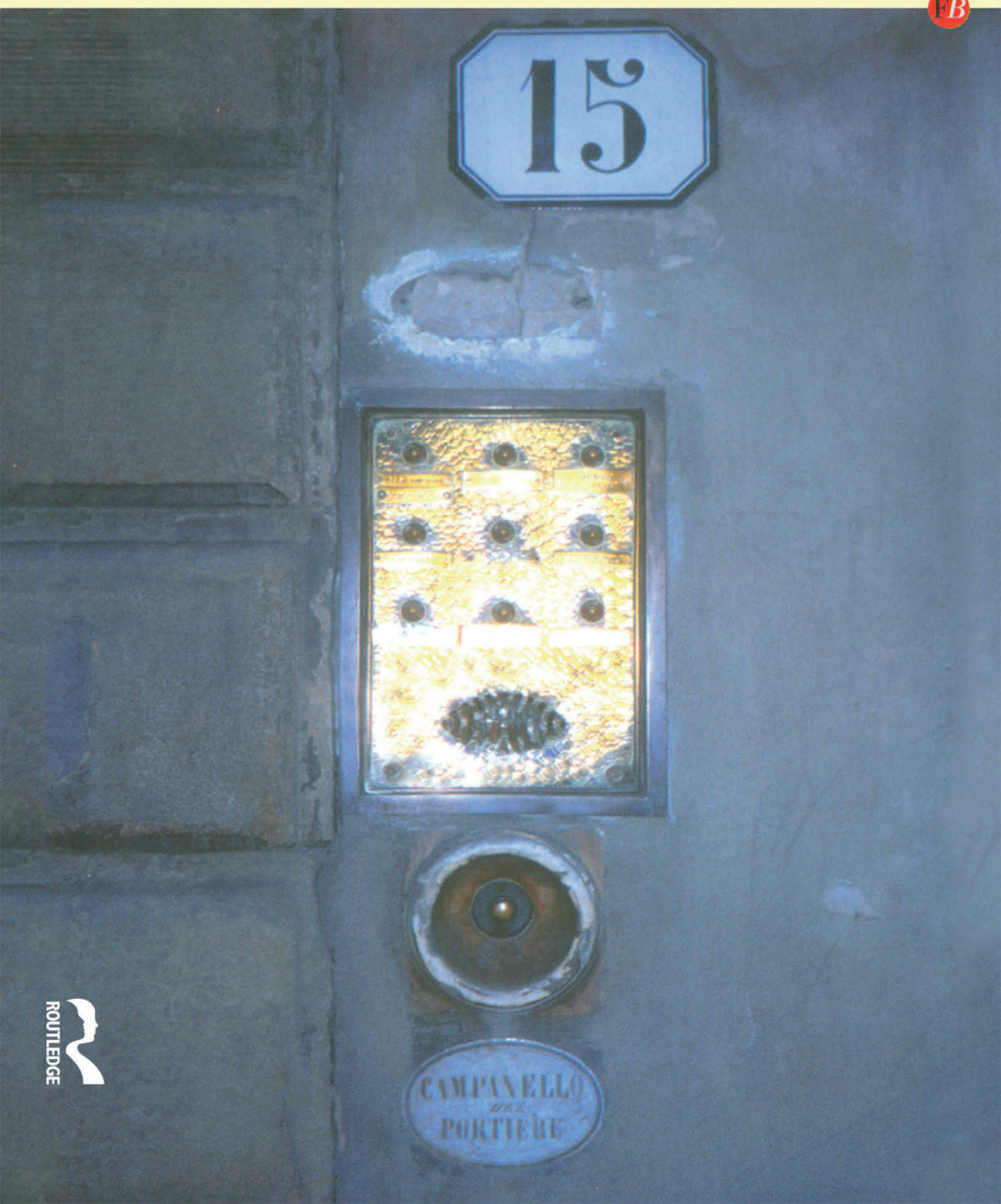


ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH *Selected Poems*

EDITED WITH AN INTRODUCTION BY SHIRLEY CHEW



SELECTED POEMS

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH was born in 1819 in Liverpool, the son of a cotton merchant. His family emigrated to South Carolina, where he spent his childhood, before he returned to England to attend Rugby School in 1829. It was while he was at Rugby that Clough made friends with Matthew Arnold, the son of the headmaster. After taking his degree at Oxford he became a fellow and tutor at Oriel College, but in 1848 his religious doubts led him to resign. He was appointed Professor of English at University College, London. In 1852 he resigned from University College and became a tutor in Cambridge, Massachusetts, where he mixed with the circle of New England intellectuals that included Ralph Waldo Emerson and Charles Eliot Norton. He returned to England in 1853 to take up a post as Examiner in the Education Office. Clough died in Florence in 1861.

SHIRLEY CHEW is Professor of Commonwealth and Postcolonial Literatures at the University of Leeds. She has a particular interest in the literatures of South Asia, Australia and Canada, on which she has published widely, as well as in Victorian literature and contemporary British writing.

FyfieldBooks aim to make available some of the great classics of British and European literature in clear, affordable formats, and to restore often neglected writers to their place in literary tradition.

FyfieldBooks take their name from the Fyfield elm in Matthew Arnold's 'Scholar Gypsy' and 'Thyrsis'. The tree stood not far from the village where the series was originally devised in 1971.

*Roam on! The light we sought is shining still.
Dost thou ask proof? Our tree yet crowns the hill,
Our Scholar travels yet the loved hill-side*

from 'Thyrsis'

ARTHUR HUGH CLOUGH

Selected Poems

Edited with an introduction by
SHIRLEY CHEW

 **Routledge**
Taylor & Francis Group
NEW YORK

Published in USA and Canada in 2003 by
Routledge
711 Third Avenue, New York, NY 10017

Routledge is an imprint of the Taylor & Francis Group, an informa business

By arrangement with Carcanet Press Ltd.

First published in Great Britain in 1987 by Carcanet Press Ltd

This impression 2003
Selection, introduction, and editorial matter Copyright © Shirley
Chew 1987, 2003

The right of Shirley Chew to be identified as the editor of this work
has been asserted by her in accordance with the Copyright, Designs
and Patents Act of 1988

All rights reserved

Cataloguing-in-Publication data is available from the Library of
Congress.
ISBN 0-415-96937-9

All rights reserved. No part of this book may be reprinted or
reproduced or utilized in any form or by any electronic, mechanical
or other means, now known or hereafter invented, including
photocopying and recording or in any information storage or
retrieval system, without permission in writing from the publishers.

ISBN 13: 978-0-415-96937-6 (pbk)

Contents

Chronological Table	7
Introduction	9
A Note on the Text	35
SHORTER POEMS	
<i>Sic Itur</i>	37
<i>Qui Laborat, Orat</i>	38
'Why should I say I see the things I see not?'	39
'Duty – that's to say, complying'	41
<i>Natura Naturans</i>	42
'Is it true, ye gods, who treat us'	45
<i>Epi-Strauss-ium</i>	46
Jacob's Wives	46
The Latest Decalogue	51
In the Great Metropolis	51
Easter Day (Naples, 1849)	52
'It fortifies my soul to know'	57
'To spend uncounted years of pain'	57
'Say not, the struggle nought availeth'	58
Peschiera	58
<i>Alteram Partem</i>	60
'On grass, on gravel, in the sun'	61
'Ye flags of Piccadilly'	63
'Where lies the land to which the ship would go?'	64
'That out of sight is out of mind'	64
'Upon the water, in the boat'	65
THE BOTHIE OF TOBER-NA-VUOLICH	67
AMOURS DE VOYAGE	127
from DIPSYCHUS	181
Notes	211
Select Bibliography	239



Taylor & Francis

Taylor & Francis Group

<http://taylorandfrancis.com>

Chronological Table

- 1819 Clough was born 1 January, in Liverpool. His father, James Clough, was a cotton merchant. His mother, Ann Perfect, was the daughter of a banker in Pontefract, Yorkshire.
- 1823-28 Lived in Charleston, South Carolina.
- 1829-37 At Rugby, under Dr Arnold.
- 1837-48 At Oxford – as student at Balliol, and as Fellow and Tutor at Oriel.
Letters to *The Balance* on political economy, 1846.
A Consideration of Objections against the Retrenchment Association, 1847.
Visited Paris during the Revolution, May 1848.
Resigned Fellowship, October.
The Bothie of Tofer-na-Fuosich, November.
- 1849 *Ambarvalia*, January (with Thomas Burbidge).
Visited Rome, mid-April to mid-July.
Wrote *Amours de Voyage*.
Principal of University Hall, London, October.
- 1850 Met Blanche Smith.
Visited Venice, early autumn.
Wrote *Dipsychus*.
Professor of English Language and Literature at University College, London.
- 1851 Applied for a professorship in Classics at University College, Sydney, but did not get the post.
- 1852 Resigned from University Hall, January.
Engaged to Blanche, June.
Left for America, October.
- 1853 Returned from America, July.
Became Examiner in the Education Office, London.
- 1854 Marriage, June.
Escorted Florence Nightingale to Calais on her way to the Crimea, October; after her return from the

- Crimea, he became strenuously involved with her work on reforming army hospitals.
- 1858 *Amours de Voyage* serialized in the *Boston Atlantic Monthly*, February-May.
Clough beginning to prepare an edition of his poems for publication in America.
- 1859 *Plutarch's Lives: The Translation called Dryden's*, corrected from the Greek and revised by A.H. Clough appeared in America.
- 1860 Publication of Clough's American edition of poems delayed on account of the political situation in America.
- 1861 Travelled in Europe for the sake of his health.
Beginning once more to write poetry, Clough worked on *Mari Magno* up till his death in Florence, 13 November.

Introduction

What sort of place is Nelson? I forget where it is. Would you take me for 3 years? You and Domett? You see I am just out of my old place, so that I am ready to look at every new place and likely enough to go to none. If the offer for foreign travel is actually made, I shall take it for a year; I have never seen Rome. That seems pretty clear to me; but I don't much expect it *will* be made. Then even if literature does look likely, I confess I should like to knock about the world a little bit more before I do much in that way: – yea, though I am all but 30 already.

Finally, my dear Tom, one lives in the daily possibility of falling in love. . . . (Corr. 1. 223)¹

I always think of coming out to you again, but this will stand in the way of it. Having got work which leaves me independent in all these respects, and which moreover has no competition in it and may be done in, I should think, as unmercenary a way as any daily labour at any rate in England – I don't doubt it will be difficult to quit it, so I don't plan anything –

(Corr. 2. 485)

Clough wrote the first letter in November 1848, a month after resigning his fellowship at Oriel. He had decided to leave Oxford because of his inability to subscribe to the Thirty-nine Articles. He also felt strongly about making the break and, as the uneven surface of his prose suggests, anxious about the uncertainties of his new freedom. At the same time, a lively sense of expanding possibilities, including the one of going out to visit Tom Arnold in New Zealand, is clearly present.

Clough did not after all visit New Zealand and the second letter of June 1854 was sent to Ralph Waldo Emerson in Boston, from the Education Office where he now held the post of Examiner. The phrase 'independent in all these respects' refers to his having extricated himself from teaching and thereby from a profession in which he was required to account for his religious views. But

Clough was independent too in a financial sense and, as he did fall in love, was now able to marry.

From the two letters it may seem that the broad prospects of 1848 had shrunk sharply by 1854. On the other hand Clough's life in that space of six years was one of extraordinary activity. He visited the centres of revolution in Europe – Paris in May 1848, Rome during the siege of April-July 1849, and Venice in the autumn of 1850. In between his travels, there were his duties as Principal of University Hall in London from 1849, and as Professor of English at University College. Relations between Clough and the authorities of University Hall were never very good and, after some gentle pressure from his employers, he resigned in January 1852. Failing to find a suitable post elsewhere, he decided to look into his chances in America where Emerson had promised him a warm welcome. By October, when he set out for Boston, he had also become engaged.

Unlike his more famous contemporaries, Tennyson and Browning, Clough did not consider poetry to be his vocation, and literature was only one of a number of directions he believed he could follow, as the letter to Tom Arnold indicates. Nevertheless his literary output in this period was large by any standards. *The Bothie of Toper-na-Fuosich* (as it was called originally) appeared in November 1848, to be followed in January by *Ambarvalia*, a volume shared with Thomas Burbidge and containing, in Clough's section, poems which he had written over the years at Oxford. *Amours de Voyage* was begun in Rome and, though it was not published until 1858, was in a sufficiently finished condition to be shown to friends by the end of October 1849. *Dipsychus* was drafted in 1850. There were numerous short poems, such as 'Easter Day (Naples 1849)', 'Peschiera' (1850), 'Songs in Absence' (1853), and more numerous fragments. As well as poetry, Clough wrote a series of lectures for University College and several articles for literary magazines in America. He pursued his experiments in translating Homer, and agreed to prepare for a Boston publisher an edition of Plutarch's *Lives* based on the translation generally known as Dryden's. In the light of these many and varied acti-

vities, it is not surprising that the advantages of his new position at the Education Office could only be described in terms of negatives.

Most notable about Clough's writings of this period – the letters, poems and criticism – and the constant exchanges and interchanges conducted among them, is the cohesiveness of his interests and explorations. In the main, these are concerned with the viability of traditional forms in an age of spiritual, political and social ferment, with change and reconstruction, and his discoveries as a poet and translator.

When Clough was asked by Edward Hawkins, the Provost of Oriel, to describe the kind of difficulties which 'most perplexes young men at present', he put the problem down to 'a growing sense of discrepancy' (*Corr.* 1. 249). A work such as Strauss's *Leben Jesu*² had, by denying the historical foundations of the supernatural elements in the Gospels, divorced Christian ideals from their outward and expressive forms, and relegated Christianity, it would seem, to the same rank as other faiths or as the 'old heathen philosophy'. Clough spoke from first-hand experience, it is clear. Only a few years before, he had written to J.P. Gell: 'Without the least denying Christianity, I feel little that I can call its power' (*Corr.* 1. 141). 'Easter Day (Naples 1849)' mourns the absence of Christ's body as much as it makes this the argument for doubt.

The 'growing sense of discrepancy' was not restricted to matters of faith. The successive failures of the Chartist movement, the revolution in Paris, and the Roman Republic seemed to indicate the impossibility of translating democratic ideas into practice. This certainly was the impression Clough received amid the turbulent events of Paris in May 1848:

On all hands, there is every prospect, on dit, of War – today the rumour ran that the armies had entered Piedmont and tomorrow comes the Polish question. The Socialists, i.e. the leaders, for the most part lament this extremely – the People of course are excited about Poland; and either are indifferent to the Socialist Ideas or are blind to the certainty of these questions being then indefinitely adjourned. (*Corr.* 1. 205)

Early in the next year, he wrote reminding Tom Arnold: 'Today, my dear brother republican, is the glorious anniversary of the great revolution of 48, whereof what shall we now say? Put not your trust in republics nor in any institution of man' (*Corr.* 1. 244).

When he turned to the literary scene and the recent attempts of younger poets, the situation seemed to be characterised by a similar incoherence. Writing about Alexander Smith's *Poems* and Matthew Arnold's *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems* for *North American Review* in 1853, he found Smith's work had energy and freshness in its treatment of familiar, everyday subjects but lacked discipline and sensitivity in its handling of form and language. 'His diction feels to us as if between Milton and Burns he had not read, and between Shakespeare and Keats had seldom admired.' In contrast, Arnold's work showed sensibility and judgement, elegance and organisation, but suffered from a large element of unreality and nervelessness, the result of imitating the Ancients too closely in his choice of subject and in his manner. The review is of all Clough's prose items the best known and in a way this is a pity, for it is also the least free of Victorian assumptions about poetry. The following passage suggests some ways by which poetry might recover the ground it had lost to novels like *Vanity Fair* and *Bleak House*:

Could it not attempt to convert into beauty and thankfulness, or at least into some form and shape, some feeling, at any rate, of content – the actual, palpable things with which our everyday life is concerned; introduce into business and weary task-work a character and a soul of purpose and reality; intimate to us relations which, in our unchosen, peremptorily appointed posts, in our grievously narrow and limited spheres of action, we still, in and through all, retain to some central, celestial fact?³

Clough's position here is rather curious. On the one hand, he adopts the habit common then among periodical reviewers of demanding that poetry should concern itself with the subjects of contemporary life, and offer moral guidance and spiritual consolation. On the other, his objections to the kind of poetry Arnold

was writing are delivered in cadences which might be described as Arnoldian. Poetry must comfort, must instruct. It must generate a sense of beauty and of purpose. As the pairings pile up and the sentences unfurl, 'palpable things', 'reality', even 'celestial fact' are enveloped in a mood of mournfulness.

There are explanations for Clough's unsympathetic review. The most important of these must be his realisation that Arnold was, in his practice as well as his theory of poetry, taking up a position the opposite of his own. As Professor of English at University College, Clough had given special attention to two writers who lived and worked in times of political revolution, and who themselves revolutionized language and poetry. Dryden created a 'new and living instrument' out of a crude linguistic mixture of light fashionable jargon and turgid pedantry, and effected a 'democratic movement in the language'.⁴ Wordsworth achieved in his best poetry a perfect unity of thought and style. 'For poetry, like science, has its final precision; and there are expressions of poetic knowledge which can no more be rewritten than could the elements of geometry.'⁵

In contrast to the review, the prose in these lectures has edge and suppleness, and answers exactly the play of intelligence, the shrewd and independent judgements demonstrated by the critic. Thus, while there is no doubt in Clough's mind that Wordsworth ranks greatest among the Romantics, 'he has not... the vigour and heartiness of Scott, or the force and the sweep and fervour of Byron',⁶ qualities also desirable in poetry. In an age in which, as he pointed out, the Augustans were little regarded, Clough advised his students to read Dryden along with Shakespeare and Milton. For the more a critic knows, the more correct will his judgement be.

You will appreciate *Antony and Cleopatra* all the better for having gone through *All for Love*. Few things are so instructive ultimately as to run counter to a general tendency; you will be a more discriminating admirer of Milton if you have learnt an admiration for the Poet who found no better means of expressing

his admiration for the Great English Epic than the conversion of it into an opera in rhyme...⁷

Clough must have enjoyed the bathos involved in comparing *The State of Innocence* with *Paradise Lost*.

What emerges from Clough's statements is his belief that, as the embodiment and expression of thought, form and language must continually be remade and renewed even as the artist's perceptions and attitudes change, and as the age he lives in changes. The struggle is of necessity endless, if one takes as one's premisses, first, that the mind's natural activity consists in the receiving and modifying of knowledge; and second, that the ultimate aim of art is the rare perfection represented by Homer, Shakespeare and Michelangelo. It can, of course, be bitterly discouraging

To spend uncounted years of pain
Again, again, and yet again,
In working out in heart and brain
The problem of our being here...

and, despite his protests, a side of Clough must have been drawn to 'Empedocles on Etna'. But while it has been said of Arnold that 'His tone is always of regret, of loss of faith, instability, nostalgia',⁸ certain aspects of Clough's temperament ensure that other and more varied notes are to be heard in his poetry. One of these is the instinct 'to run counter to a general tendency'. His sister recalled that as a child 'he would always do things from his own choice, and not merely copy what others were doing'.⁹ No other undergraduate could have put up so limber a resistance to being converted to Tractarianism by his tutor: 'Ward is always trying to put me on the horns of a dilemma; but somehow I generally managed to get over the wall.'¹⁰ It is not surprising then that, living in an 'unpoetical' age, Clough should aim at converting its main currents and characteristics into poetry.

Such a poetic conversion of an 'unpoetical' age would have been impossible without 'that interest in life and realities' which

Emerson observed in him.¹¹ Clough, it is more than likely, enjoyed notating the surfaces of modern living: train journeys, people eating ices and drinking in cafés, Victorian families on tour with 'seven-and-seventy boxes'. He also had a lively sense of irony and keenly appreciated what he called 'the strange contrast of juxtaposition and the intricacies of multitude'. Inseparable from the feel of the 'actual, palpable things' of everyday life in his poems is the vivid experience of a living language. In a lecture on Dryden and translation, Clough had presented his students with this critical tenet:

Most true it is, that the charm of all really great poems is the ease and familiarity and closeness to the common language with which they rise out of it and exceed and transcend common language. If you cannot in some way or other in your translation give the effect of living and vegetal and vital connection, as between plant and root, you certainly lose more than half the effect of your original.¹²

His own poems continually alert the reader to this 'living and vegetal and vital connection'. It is there, for example, in the witty, trenchant satire of 'The Latest Decalogue', in which the language of the Bible and the Ten Commandments is juxtaposed with the more fashionable one of *laissez-faire* economics; and in the jostling, heady mixture of idioms in 'Natura Naturans', extracted from common speech, science, Romantic poets, Milton, Virgilian pastoral.

The comic, ecstatic vision in 'Natura Naturans', which swirls out of an incident so prosaic as sitting in a second-class railway compartment next to an unknown young woman, draws attention to an aspect of Clough missing from the common image of the 'Too quick despairer',¹³ and this is his vigour and sensuousness. These qualities will be discussed in connection with *The Bothie of Tober-na-Vuolich* where they are especially prominent. They are also to be discovered in the lyrics, in that combination of fugitive grace and definition of thought which has a musical basis in the precise and delicate interplay of speech rhythms

against metre, the time values of sound against those of rest, and the shape and weight of words against the pattern of line and stanza.

Finally there is the active habit of sceptical inquiry which Clough had learnt from Dr Arnold at Rugby and then from W.G. Ward at Balliol.

Duty – 'tis to take on trust
What things are good, and right, and just;
And whether indeed they be or be not,
Try not, test not, feel not, see not.

As a poet, Clough did not only reflect the age. He examined and questioned its values and beliefs, bringing to bear upon the task a rigorous and subtle mind. An example of his independence in these respects may be noted in his attitude towards Carlyle. Like many young men in the 1830s and 1840s, Clough had fallen under the influence of the sage and his powerful conviction that a fully moral and spiritual life would once again be realised when the shams and hypocrisies of a mechanistic society had been eradicated. But Clough was not content with satirizing materialism, shallowness, and complacency. Carlylean imperatives themselves came under his critical scrutiny, as in *Dipsychus* ('In St. Mark's'), where what is sought from the gospel of Action and Work is the evidence of moral direction and purpose. If these were to exist, the prosaic temper of the age and the mechanical nature of work would not in themselves matter. But already in 1848, it had seemed to Clough that 'Carlyle has led us all out into the desert, and he has left us there.'¹⁴ In the cramped and frustrated movement of the following lines, a persistent feeling of disillusionment is registered, as seemingly new vistas lead back into the cul-de-sac of pragmatism and futility.

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.

Other folks do so; it is always done;
And it perhaps is right. And we are paid for it.

Clough would not be so convincing a sceptic if he did not also understand the frailties of human nature. Some of his insights are translated into the tactics the Spirit adopts in tempting the self-conscious Dipsychus. In 'How pleasant it is to have money' ('In a Gondola'), for example, the scintillating account of the delights which wealth can buy is underpinned by the reassurance that there is 'nothing to fear'; and the invitation to visit a Venetian prostitute is put in such a manner as to enhance the prospect of fleshly pleasures by titillating the mind with the ironies of the bedchamber.

You'll like to find – I found it funny –
The chamber *où vous faites votre affaire*
Stand nicely fitted up for prayer;
While dim you trace along one end
The Sacred Supper's length extend.
The calm Madonna o'er your head
Smiles, *col bambino*, on the bed . . .
(‘The Quays’)

A more serious treatment of the contradictions of experience is 'Jacob's Wives'. Here the arguments put forward by Rachel and Leah for the attention of a silent Jacob are arranged contrapuntally and the poem may be read as an allegory of the opposing claims of the ideal and real which Jacob's mind investigates, and seeks to reconcile. That possibility however is denied by the closing lines and the last words he hears propose instead a cynical compromise.

And Leah ended, Father of my sons,
Come, thou shalt dream of Rachel if thou wilt,
So Leah fold thee in a wife's embrace.

Then, of course, Clough knew the heroic strengths of which human beings are capable. The hope which emerges in 'Say not,

the struggle nought availeth' has been slowly and strenuously salvaged from 'vainly' through 'painful' to 'gain', and transformed from 'breaking' to 'making'. On the other hand, the hopelessness consequent upon loss of faith is faced with searing honesty in 'Easter Day (Naples 1849)'.

Eat, drink, and play, and think that this is bliss!
There is no heaven but this!
There is no Hell; –
Save Earth, which serves the purpose doubly well,
Seeing it visits still
With equallest apportionments of ill
Both good and bad alike, and brings to one same dust
The unjust and the just
With Christ, who is not risen.

Every detail in the above stanza returns the mind inexorably to the tragic realities of the situation. Its freedom – no Heaven, no Hell – becomes ironically a trap, and the images of close physical space, here and elsewhere in the poem, are the signs of what the mind has lost – its reach, its capacity for making moral distinctions, its transforming power.

These qualities in Clough's poetry are fully assembled and exemplified in *The Bothie* and *Amours de Voyage*, in which something of the breadth and variety of the novel is aimed at as well as the concentration of poetry. Using a number of novelistic techniques – plot, character, dialogue, political and social reference – these long poems construct an image of Victorian society in the late 1840s that brings into relief its fragmentation and multifariousness. It is a society which possesses enormous energy but seems incapable of remaking itself in the light of a unifying principle or idea. Yet it has been taught to believe that moral purpose and goals are possible. Its teachers and sages, influenced by the great Romantic poets and thinkers, have preached the theory of historical progress, the ideal of a Christian state and nation, the feasibility of a new Mythos of religion. These ideas are as much the property of the mid-Victorian mind as the most recent theories

of political economists and scientists. Clough saw the predicament in this manner in 'Letters of Parepidemus I': 'Each new age and each new year has its new direction; and we go to the well-informed of the season before ours, to be put by them in the direction which, because right for their time, is therefore not quite right for ours.'¹⁵ The cautious 'not quite' is significant in indicating Clough's own attitude towards 'the well-informed of the season before ours'. His long poems explore the possibilities of reconciliation as well as the conflicting directions; they lay stress on the powers and the action of the mind as well as its 'confusion, perplexity and suffering'; they enact the search for form as well as articulate 'a growing sense of discrepancy'.

The Bothie began as an experiment in versification, springing from Clough's dissatisfaction with the smooth, regular hexameters of Longfellow's *Evangeline* (1847). Clough's hexameters, like Longfellow's, are based on accent and not, as in classical hexameters, on quantity, and they exhibit, as he warns the reader, 'every kind of irregularity'. Nevertheless they are a versatile instrument in his hands, capable of communicating lyrical notes and satirical jibes, the grand and the low, the robust after-dinner speeches of drunken Scottish gentry as well as the lithe, teasing exchanges of lovers. The poem was written very quickly some time between 7 September and 23 October 1848, that is, in the weeks leading up to and following his resignation of his fellowship. If this accounts for a nostalgic strain, in particular in the descriptions of the carefree existence of the undergraduate reading-party, it is offset by the realistic context in which the events occur.

In the Scottish Highlands in 1847 (the year Clough organised his last reading-party), the seemingly stable and idyllic world of highland lords and ladies, concentrated study and bathing and walks, leisurely breakfasts and convivial dinners, is continually being impinged upon by the importunate world outside. The students themselves are an intrusion, 'the Strangers' they are called. Then there are other signs of the times – railways, the penny post, tourists, and politically sensitive issues like game-

laws. Clough's Victorian readers, remembering the recent victory of the Anti-Corn Law League and the even more recent Kennington Common 'demonstration', would have heard behind Philip Hewson's snide reference to 'game-keeper' and 'game-preserved', the political attacks of Cobden and Bright, and of the Chartists, against the class of selfish landlords, and resounding beyond them, the moral denunciations of Carlyle.

The narrative constructs a passage out of a world of security and privilege into one of change. The movement is figured in the shift from mock-epic into pastoral, in the clashes of dialogue, and the developing stages of Philip's education through love. The action involves a search for a language for new ideas and experiences. Though all the undergraduates are word-makers (Lindsay, for example, 'in three weeks had created a dialect new for the party'), it is the lovers, Philip and Elspie, and Hobbes, author of 'currentest phrases and fancies', and the 'I' narrator, whose efforts prove most significant.

Philip's interest in the position of women, in particular the working woman, demonstrates the close connection between feminism and the new social doctrines current in the 1830s and 1840s. It is a connection which underlies Tennyson's *The Princess* (1847).¹⁶ Clough himself had shown a deep interest in the state of women, a prominent issue at the time of the Paris revolution. In Philip's case, it is also significant that his emergent radical consciousness should have coincided with his sexual awakening. 'Was it embracing or aiding was most in my mind? Hard question!' (Book II).

His confusion is clear from his attempt to reconstruct his memory of the working woman. While she remains a blank outline, the details associated with her are invoked for their picturesqueness: 'fields' turns into 'garden', 'capless' is reinforced by 'bonnetless' to give an air of informality, 'uprooting potatoes' is untouched by any awareness of the Irish famine. When Philip tries to advocate a relationship between the sexes based on shared labour, his conventional attitudes are further betrayed by his inability to conceive of such a relationship except in terms of female depen-

dence and subordination – Eve created to be helpmeet for Adam and ‘from his own flesh taken’; Pygmalion and Galatea; the medieval lady who, through her knight’s devotion, shall ‘grand on her pedestal rise as urn-bearing statue of Hellas’. Critical of the over-dressed ‘doll’ of polite society, he dresses a ‘doll’ of his own, substituting for satin, gros-de-naples and sandals the plainer articles of worsted, linsey-woolsey and clogs. Unable to make human contact, he reverts to the aesthetic figures of patriarchal imagination.

Following Philip’s fortunes in love – first, with Katie, the farm girl, then Lady Maria, and finally Elspie, the daughter of an artisan – the narrative moves forward, retreats, and sweeps on again to fulfilment. No marble statue, Elspie lectures, teases and woos Philip into fresh ways of looking at relations between the sexes. Her convincingness as a character derives from her own ability to alter her perspectives on the subject as, stimulated by Philip’s love for her, she grows into new experiences of feeling and thinking. A word used several times to register her active and developing response to the situation is ‘revulsion’. From the Latin verb ‘revellere’, meaning to tear or pull away, it suggests in each instance a painful relinquishing of one position for another. In Books VII and VIII, therefore, argument, hostilities of feeling and of will are the dynamics of the love story and the movement of the verse beats back and forth seeking moments of pause and harmony.

It is a sign of Clough’s boldness as a writer that the basis for a relationship between the lovers should be sought first in an understanding of sexuality as power. Book VII opens with an assurance from Elspie that Philip’s sudden departure from Rannoch has not affected Katie badly. She is too independent and too resilient to be crushed by unpredictable young men. Nevertheless Philip is reminded that, by flirting with Katie, he has used his privileged position irresponsibly. The dialogue then shifts from the past to the present and to their feelings for each other. But, as Elspie finds herself caught up in the turmoil of heart and head, the ripples of lover’s talk begin to alternate with the massive

rhythm of epic similes.

Her response to Philip's passion is ambivalent. She both fears it and is fascinated by it, conscious of the force in herself. She tries to sublimate her feelings in ideas of stability and completeness, but the bridge she speaks of is an uneasy, ambiguous representation of these ideas, as she has to admit – 'This is confusion and nonsense.' The image of the sea and the burnie is another and more explicit attempt to articulate her feelings, and to confront Philip with the sexual aggression which underlies his love-making and with her own fear of subjugation. The despoiling, destructive effects of the encroaching, unstemmable tide are so totally realised that Philip is overwhelmed and reduced by the impact of another person's being. Only when this point has been reached in his education can a start be made at building up a genuine relationship between two people with such different backgrounds. His humility instils in her a sense of power but also reminds her of her responsibilities. In a delightful, though unconscious, parody of patriarchal myths, Elspie remodels the seemingly inert Philip, here at once 'doll' and 'statue', and kisses him back to life.

She stepped right to him, and boldly
Took up his hand, and placed it in hers; he daring no
movement;
Took up the cold hanging hand, up-forcing the heavy elbow.

Elspie's action is a simple one but it is a passionate one. And the passion is itself a part of an upsurge and release of vitality, so tremendous that its symbol is the tidewaters of the intricate, ramifying system of lochs, streams and springs among the Scottish mountains. In an age when a high value is placed upon chasteness of feeling and thought, especially in women, Elspie is portrayed as rejoicing in her sexuality; and when the grounds for equal opportunities between the sexes were being widely debated, one of Clough's arguments in favour of equality was situated in the natural energies they possess in common.

The sources of these energies are mysterious and inviolable,

but their manifestations are everywhere to be seen, from the landscape to sexual passion, natural growth and decay, the physical and intellectual exploits of the undergraduates, labour, technological progress, colonisation, democratic zeal. In a remarkable piece of reflexive writing at the beginning of Book III, the 'I' narrator admits the reader briefly into the process in which the imagination, having penetrated one of the secret places of nature, transforms the same scenery first into descriptive poetry, then poetic narrative, and finally poetic symbol. On a larger scale, in Books I-VIII, disparate details and images are painstakingly rendered and integrated to produce a vision of a universe harmonised by a single creative force. Carlyle's words are appropriate here. Nature is 'a Volume . . . whose Author and Writer is God', and 'the true Poet is ever, as of old, the Seer', with the gift to 'decipher some new lines of its celestial writing'.¹⁷

This vision of totality, however, is revoked in Book IX, the last section of the poem. In its structure, it is made up of scraps of letters, disconnected images, unresolved emotion and thinking. The impression of discontinuity, it is true, has been moderated in two ways. First, there is the tying-up of the loose ends of the story – examinations are sat, the wedding takes place, the couple emigrate to New Zealand. Second, the poem closes in a confident manner with Hobbes's consistently elaborated and optimistic interpretation of the allegory of Rachel and Leah, which is one of his wedding gifts to Philip and Elspie. But at the centre of Book IX, and beneath the sweep and force of its extended similes, the feeling is one of helplessness.

In a fragment of letter sent to the tutor, Adam, Philip compares his resurgent radicalism to a newly worked version of the sea in flood.

So in my soul of souls through its cells and secret recesses,
Comes back, swelling and spreading, the old democratic
fervour.

These lines lead immediately into a splendid description of a city at dawn slowly waking to the infiltrating rays of the sun.

But as the light of day enters some populous city,
Shaming away, ere it come, by the chilly day-streak signal,
High and low, the misusers of night...

The unfolding panorama is an analogy for the love of Elspie and the underlying idea is that this love will transform Philip and channel his radical energies into constructive action. The argument however is conducted in terms of imagery and, as it stands, the 'But' is a misleading turn. Just as Elspie's bridge in Book VII would not have stood because one half of it was conceived of as being stronger and better than the other, so tide and light are not true opposites, as the sea and the burnie were, and cannot be reconciled. The result is that Philip's 'democratic fervour', and the emotion generated by the image of the sea at its full, remain unresolved within the movement of the poem. The failure in vision is matched by the uncertainties of form, and reinforces Philip's earlier, pessimistic view of life as a night battle. Carlyle had Goethe in mind when he described the true poet as Seer. Clough was more sceptical of a poet's visionary gift, it would seem, for in his translations of Goethe's lyrics, he was inclined to dwell upon those moments when the poet doubts the fullness of his vision.

Oh, the beautiful child! and oh, the most happy mother!
She in her infant blessed, and in its mother the babe –
What sweet longing within me this picture might not occasion,
Were I not, Joseph, like you, calmly condemned to stand by!

It is likely that *Amours de Voyage* partly originated in an exchange of opinions between Clough and Matthew Arnold concerning Keats. Monckton Milnes's edition of Keats's life and letters appeared in September 1848 and Clough had recommended it to Arnold. But Arnold reacted against the 'confused multitudinousness' of the Romantic poet and took the austere view that, in order to safeguard themselves against such a weakness, poets like Keats 'must begin with an Idea of the world'. No doubt Clough was meant to benefit from this advice for Arnold saw in