

## **“Dover Beach”-an elegy or not.**

Arnold was a poet of Victorian unrest. The newly emerged industrialism and its concomitant materialism were somethings that the poet was really abhorrent to. He believed that the past civilization was an ideal one, essentially value-based and spiritualist. The modern era on the other hand is ruefully materialistic, brushing aside the age old religious and spiritual values. The poet persona could not bear up the deadening of the past values, particularly the religious values which gives the poem an elegy of air.

Whether the poem is an elegy or not is contestable. It cannot be denied that a note of mournfulness breaths through the whole poem, i.e. the mourning over the loss of faith and hope-“Hath really neither joy, nor love, nor light, nor certitude, nor peace, nor help for pain;”. A faithless world is explainably a hopeless one which was compared with a darkling plain by the poet, where there is much confusion doubt due to the want of spiritual light. People, shorn of biblical guidance indulged in fratricide and homicide.

Yet the argument that the poem is an elegy can be veritably confuted by pointing out that the poet here prescribed an antidote to the all-ravaging materialism. Amidst the regression of spiritual values the poet pins his hope on love which he believes can resist the advancement of material darkness. This is why he invites his wife to love and remain loyal to each other. Therefore the poem far from being elegy is a eulogy to love.

## **“Dover Beach”-an allegorical poem.**

An allegorical poem is a poem in which there is two themes comparable with each other in a certain respect. Dover Beach is veritably an allegorical poem in which there is an appropriate comparison between the retreating of sea waves with regression of spiritual values.

The poem is a typical Victorian poem stressing the emergence of materialism which eventually pushed Christian values to the corner. Industrialism gave rise to metropolitan culture which held religious value in low consideration. It had become conformity of the contemporary society to prefer the modern value of materialism to old age value of spiritualism. But Arnold was a non-conformist favouring the religious values and in the poem Dover Beach, he registered his preference for the same.

To ventilate his strong detestation for the modern values, he resorts to allegorical operation to make the idea more discernible by contrast. He used sea as the metaphor for conveying his intended theme of spiritual regression. He compared the sea waves with Christian values which is in its backward