

Matthew Arnold on Grand Style Introduction: The 'Grand Style', also known as 'High Style', is a term used by the English poet and critic, 'Matthew Arnold'. Grand Style is a highly ornamented style with stylistic devices such as metaphors and similes, as well as the use of personification. In poetry, the grand style may feature a rhyming couplet, in which the last two lines of a section rhyme. This creates a sense of control by the narrator of the poem or speaker. The grand style is mostly used in speeches and can be used to influence an audience around a particular belief or ideology. Matthew Arnold described the term 'grand style' in a series of lectures he gave 'On Translating Homer'. This term also relates closely to what Longinus calls 'sublimity'. Grand Style according to Matthew Arnold: In his Oxford lecture 'On Translating Homer: Last Words', Matthew Arnold's describes the grand style in the following words: "I think it will be found that that the grand style arises in poetry when a noble nature, poetically gifted, treats with simplicity or with a severity a serious subject." So, for the grand style to occur there must be three things: (1) there should be a nobility of soul, (2) subject or action chosen must be serious enough; (3) the treatment should be severe or simple. 'Noble Nature' and 'Poetically Gifted': According to Arnold, the poet should have 'noble nature' and should be 'poetically gifted' to achieve the grand style. Just like there can be no sublimity without sublime thoughts, and sublime emotions issuing from a sublime heart, in the same way, the grand style can't be reached in its full potential without a noble heart with a lofty thoughts and ideas. So, to achieve the grand style, a person needs to be noble, have a good character, he should be well-educated, well-experienced, and he should possess an enlightened soul. The poet also

- 1. 2. needs to be gifted. He needs to have the skills needed to truly affect the reader with the grand style. For this purpose, Arnold gives the example of Newman. According to him, Newman has zeal for learning, zeal for thinking, zeal for liberty, and all these things are noble, they ennoble a man but he does not have the poetical gift. The poetical gift or the 'divine faculty' is just as necessary as the noble nature. The Subject: In Matthew Arnold's definition of the 'grand style', a trivial subject cannot**

bear the weight of grand style. It should be serious and grand enough to bear the weight of the grand style. The action or situation to be treated under grand style must have the power 'to please, to move, to elevate'. It must powerfully appeal to the great primary human affections; to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and which are independent of time. **Simplicity/Severity:** According to Matthew Arnold, grand style is the treatment of a serious subject with simplicity or severity. Arnold says that "severity arises from saying a thing with a kind of intense compression or in an allusive, brief, almost haughty way; as if the poet's mind were charged with so many and grave matters that he would not deign to treat any one of them explicitly". So, the word 'severity' seems to indicate certain restraint or control in words or style. Arnold attributes simplicity to Homer and severity to Milton. **The Verses Capable of Achieving Grand Style:** Matthew Arnold says that there are only two forms of verse capable of achieving the grand style. The first is heroic couplet or blank verse. Heroic couplet consists of pairs of rhymed lines, while the blank verse is unrhymed. Both comprise lines ten syllables long, typically in iambic pentameter. The second form he stated is dactylic hexameter, the form employed by Homer and Virgil. **Greatest Practitioners of Grand Style:**

2. According to Matthew Arnold, the ancients were the masters of grand style, and its greatest practitioners were Homer in Greek, Dante in Latin, and Milton in English. To Arnold, Homer is the best model of a simple grand style while John Milton the best model of severe grand style. Dante, however, is an example of both. He advises the modern poets to study and analyze their style and subject matter if they seek to develop grand style in their own writings. Conclusion: Grand style is a vaguely defined term of Matthew Arnold. It is defined as arising from a certain number of different things but Arnold does not actually elaborate on what does the actual term mean. So, the "grand style" remains one of the more ambiguous of Arnold's ideas, a fact which Arnold himself acknowledges in 'On Translating Homer' by saying that "one must feel it

in order to know what it is". But having certain well-elaborated specific qualities, the grand style can be easily distinguished in the poetic works.