RICE UNIVERSITY

MATTHEW ARNOLD AND DEMOCRACY

by

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This thesis is a study of Matthew Arnold's "democracy" as it is defined and explained in select examples of his critical essays, especially in *Culture and Anarchy*. This first part of the thesis sets forth some of the literary theories and attitudes which have bearing on Arnold's views of society, for behind every critical judgment of literature that he will make lies a social and political judgment. It covers the "Preface to the First Edition of Poems, 1853," the essay on "Literary Influence of Academies," the political pamphlet on "England and the Italian Question," and the essays entitled "Democracy" and "Equality." It attempts to show the ideas, influences, and methods present in these essays which bear fruit in *Culture and Anarchy* and which contribute to an understanding of Arnold's "democracy". I have also made brief mention of his views on America and on religion.

The second part of the thesis is a discussion of *Culture and Anarchy*, the work which ranks as a political and educational classic, and the one in which Arnold presents his famous notion of the State, and his discussion of Hebraism, Hellenism, and culture. The conclusion attempts to make clear, finally, what "democracy" finally is to Matthew Arnold.
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Until he was thirty-nine years old, Matthew Arnold was primarily a poet. At that age, he embarked upon his career as a social reformer and spent most of the rest of his life writing prose: literary criticism; essays on education, politics and religion; and pieces on great figures of literature and history. His main object was to make the critical study of literature a guide to the business of living, having seen in his study of literature a training ground for clear thought and a field for the free play of ideas. Literature was just as important, in Arnold's view, as education, politics, and religion, in the work of creating an enlightened way of life for the English people.

He was born the son of Thomas Arnold, famous as the headmaster of the Rugby School, and lived from 1822 until 1888. This span of years included such historical events as the accession of Queen Victoria, passage of the two great Reform Bills of 1832 and 1867, publication of Darwin's Origin of the Species, and all of the social and political turmoil created by the influences and aftermath of the French Revolution and the English Industrial Revolution. It was a world of great and rapid change, and a world beset with all the modern problems and doubts which accompany such change. Throughout it all, at least in his prose writing, Arnold remained an unshakable optimist. If in his poetry, his overwhelming consciousness of the past and its traditions often led him to despair at their disappearance in his world, in his prose he is forever hopeful of enlightenment and reform, forever hopeful that if guided aright, the English middle class could overcome narrow interests and inflexibility and become aware of that firm intelligible law of things
which leads to the knowledge of the best that has been known and thought in the world.

Arnold considered himself a Liberal, that is, his friends and political sympathies were with the Whig Party, rather than with the Conservative, or Tory Party. At the end of his life, he professed a belief in democracy. "Democracy," of course, is a term so general that it conveys different meanings to different people, as do the terms "Liberal" and "Conservative". Problems of definition arise not only out of the fact that political terms mean different things to different people, but also stem from the fact that in the hundred years since Arnold's time, these terms have undergone radical change. Arnold did believe in democracy, but in my opinion a kind of democracy probably most unpalatable to the liberal, democratic mind of twentieth century America.

It is my hope that in this thesis I have made more clear what kind of "democracy" Arnold believed in and that I have showed what his "democracy" means to us today.

R. L. L.

Rice University
April, 1981
In a time when to the duplicity of nations is added a shrewd madness denying that words have any meaning at all, Arnold, with his insistence on objectivity and the powers of human reason, may well prop our minds.

Lionel Trilling, 1939
CHAPTER I

The Dialogue of the Mind With Itself

Matthew Arnold is driven in a search for a constructive outlook, in a desire for a wholeness in which the total personality may be alive and active. As regards poetry, Arnold's greatest criticism, as he says in his "Preface to the First Edition of Poems" (1853), is that "the calm, the cheerfulness, the disinterested objectivity" of the great monuments of early Greek literature has disappeared: "the dialogue of the mind with itself has commenced". In their place, we have modern problems, modern doubts, and modern discouragement. Generally, although there may be accuracy and interesting-ness and novelty, there is no enjoyment or pleasure. Arnold is in agreement with Aristotle and Hesiod and Schiller in his belief that from a poetical representation "it is demanded not only that it shall interest, but also that it shall inspirit and rejoice the reader: that it shall convey a charm, and infuse delight".  

"Action" is a key word in Arnold's philosophy. The poet's first duty is to select an excellent action, one "which most powerfully appeals to the great primary human affections: to those elementary feelings which subsist permanently in the race, and which are independent of time". A modern action, rendered however appealing to the reader's transient feelings and interest through "modern language, familiar manners and contemporary allusions" is not to be compared to the greatness and passion of the excellent actions presented in the art of a thousand years ago. The modern poet cannot indeed know clearly nor successfully represent a past action. He should not, according to Arnold, concern himself with the externals of a past action. His business, however is with the inward man engaging in such actions, for the feelings and behavior and passions of men "have in them
nothing local and casual; and they are as accessible to the modern Poet as to a contemporary.\textsuperscript{4} Arnold looks to the past, a time when he thinks unity of vision was possible, when the dialogue of the mind with itself had not yet commenced and to a time when belief in cosmic order and the divine origin of man gave man a point beyond himself to which he could refer his action, thought, and aspiration. The main difference between the poetry of the past, in particular the great Hellenic culture, is that "with them, the poetical character of the action in itself, and the conduct of it, was the first consideration; with us (the modern poet), attention is fixed mainly on the value of the separate thoughts and images which occur in the treatment of an action. They regard the whole; we regard the parts."\textsuperscript{5} Democracy is concerned with the individual - his rights to think, feel, and act as an individual as a singular member of society as a whole. The following passage from the "Preface" of 1853 is a description of the situation of the modern poet or writer. But, although its context limits it to a criticism of the state of modern literature, its underlying principles are the same ones upon which Arnold bases his social, moral, and political criticisms in his later prose works.

The confusion of the present times is great, the multitude of voices counselling different things bewildering, the number of existing works capable of attracting a young writer's attention and of becoming his models, immense. What he wants is a hand to guide him through the confusion, a voice to prescribe to him the aim which he should keep in view, and to explain to him that the values of the literary works which offer themselves to his attention is relative to their power of helping him forward on his road towards this aim. Such a guide the English writer at this present day will nowhere find. Failing this, all that can be looked for, all indeed that can be desired, is, that his attention should be fixed on excellent models; that he may reproduce, at any rate, something of their excellence by penetrating himself with their works and by catching their spirit, if he cannot be taught to produce what is excellent independently.
The idea of "models" is crucial in Arnold's poetry and prose, for these figures embody the objective ideals which he is seeking. Given Arnold's reverence for the past, it is not surprising that his models are ancient ones. In speaking of them, Arnold feels that it is the "unity and profoundness of moral impression" which "constitutes the grandeur of their works, and which makes them immortal". Modern taste should be fixed by a knowledge of this great past. Arnold says that he knew not how it was, but that "commerce with the ancients appears to me to produce, in those who constantly practice it, a steadying and composing effect upon their judgment, not of literary works only, but of men and events in general." Unfortunately, the individualism present in Arnold's England and the unwillingness to accept an intellectual authority ensnared modern man in the jargon of criticism and resulted in the habit of "producing political works conceived in the spirit of the passing time, and which partake of its transitoriness".

Part i

The effort to set up a recognized authority which could impose a high standard in intellect and taste upon the public was realized in France. Arnold's model for the "hand to guide the young writer through the confusion" was to be found in the French Academy. He discusses this institution in his essay on the "Literary Influence of Academies", written in 1864. Founded in 1629 through the efforts of Cardinal Richelieu, a man Arnold viewed as possessing both high culture and character, the purpose of the Academy was "to work with all the care and diligence possible at giving sure rules to our language, and rendering it pure, eloquent, and capable of treating the arts and
Along with its effort to improve language, the Academy was to function as a kind of supreme court of literature, a "sovereign organ of opinion." In Arnold's time its business was "to give the law the tone to literature, and that tone, a high one." "In France," says M. Sainte-Beuve, "the first consideration for us is not whether we are amused and pleased by a work of art, or mind, nor is it whether we are touched by it. What we seek above all to learn is, whether we were right in being amused with it, and in applauding it, and in being moved by it." Such deference to a standard higher than one's own habitual standard in intellectual matters is, according to Arnold, a sign of high sensitiveness of intelligence, and is both remarkable and commendable.

The English, complacent in the knowledge that "the literature now extant in the English language is of far greater value than all the literature which three hundred years ago was extant in all the languages of the world together" refused to recognize what the French knew: that "all ages have had their inferior literature; but the great danger of our time is that this inferior literature tends more and more to get the upper place". The two great banes of humanity, English humanity in particular, according to MacCaulay (with Arnold in hearty agreement) "are self-conceit and the laziness coming from self-conceit". This failure of the English people to establish their own version of the French Academy Arnold attributes to this English complacency, the reluctance to be "forced out of the atmosphere of commonplace habitual to most of us". This tendency must be resisted for man alone, of all creatures, has an impulse leading him to set up some higher law to control the bent of his base nature.
Although Arnold acknowledges those qualities of the English nation which cause it to excel in poetry and science (that is, energy and honesty), he criticizes his countrymen for their lack of openness of mind and flexibility of intelligence. It is precisely the English energy and honesty which demand absolute freedom, and independence of all authority, prescription and routine, which cause it to resist the establishment of an institution like the French Academy. In trying to resolve the question of the utility of academics to the intellectual life of a nation, Arnold believes that the right conclusion "is that we should try, so far as we can, to make up our shortcomings; and that to this end, instead of always fixing our thoughts upon the points in which our literature, and our intellectual life generally, are strong, we should, from time to time, fix upon those in which they are weak, and so learn to perceive clearly what we have to amend." Arnold is trying to improve the existing situation in England and he knows it is too late for the English to begin an institution like the French Academy. But, he does hope for the establishment of academics with a limited, special, scientific scope, in the various lines of intellectual work, which will tend to raise the standard among the English people for what he has called the "journeyman's work" of literature. He will do well who tries "to widen his culture, severely to check in himself the provincial spirit; and he will do this the better the more he keeps in mind that all mere glorification by ourselves of ourselves or our literature...is both vulgar, and besides being vulgar, retarding."

The emotional condition of modern man is one of a disheartening uncertainty; he feels insufficient and has diminished in spirit because he does not have goal or purpose; he does not, like the ancients, know what he wants.
Poetry should give men an "intellectual deliverance" from the oppressiveness of a confused and hostile world. Arnold did not feel that his poetry was "adequate". He excluded "Empedocles on Etna" from the 1853 volume of poetry because it was a faulty poem; however accurate it was in its representation, it produced no pleasure. There are, he says, situations which cannot be represented so as to produce poetical enjoyment, and they are those in which the suffering finds no vent in action; in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or resistance; in which there is nothing to be endured, nothing to be done. In such situations there is inevitably something morbid, in the description of them something monotonous. When they occur in actual life, they are painful, not tragic; the representation of them in poetry is painful also.

And so, Arnold abandons the writing of poetry and turns to the writing of prose, a prose addressed by and large to the problem of preserving culture in a society undergoing vast change. The great truth always before him is that "all human values, all human emotions, are of social growth if not of social origin". Arnold understands the causes of human isolation and the sterilization of the emotions, that the problem is not only religious but also social. "Understanding what the human individual must do for himself, Arnold knows how much of what man does for himself depends upon what society allows him to do". Society is not simply an aggregate of individuals but is something which man must be forever a part of and which is a primary source of observation and thought. Arnold engages in "the disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world", in an attempt to see an object as it really is. His criticism is realistic, he does not seek to ingratiate himself with current people of power or trendy public opinion, but instead attempts to teach people something to broaden their horizons and save them from Philistinism. As Arnold himself says, "The great art of criticism is to get oneself out of the way and let humanity
decide". In his search for affirmation, Arnold moves from the psychology of the individual we see in his poetry to the definite and actual of society in its constantly changing forms. "His poetry had probed the spiritual lacks of modern life; his critical effort undertakes to help the growth of a life molded to a nobler style." One might say that Arnold's poetry is ultimately destructive while his criticism attempts to be constructive.

Part II

Arnold believes that the presence of excellent writing is an indication of the moral and spiritual character of an age. As he writes in "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time," it is undeniable "that the exercise of a creative power, that a free creative activity, is the highest function of man; it is proved to be so by man's finding in it his true happiness." However, there are certain times when conditions of society preclude the exercise of the creative power in the production of great works of literature or art. In fact, great creative epochs in literature are rare. In such "dry spells" Arnold believes that it is more useful to spend time preparing for and rendering possible the exercise of the creative power rather than in vain attempts to be creative. The critical power in its aim to see the object as it really is (in all branches of knowledge, theology, philosophy, history, art or science),

tends, at last, to make an intellectual situation of which the creative power can profitably avail itself; it tends to establish an order of ideas...; to make the best ideas prevail. Presently, these new ideas reach society, the touch of truth is the touch of life, and there is a stir and growth everywhere; out of this stir and growth come the creative epochs of literature.

For Arnold, the French Revolution will long remain "the greatest, the most animating event in history" and he considers it such an event because "it appeals to an order of ideas which are universal, certain, permanent."
He says, (again in "The Function of Criticism),

That a whole should have been penetrated with an enthusiasm for pure reason, and with an ardent zeal for making its prescriptions triumph, anything so worthy and quickening as mind, comes into the motives which alone, in general, impel great masses of men. In spite of the extravagant direction given to this enthusiasm, in spite of the crimes and follies in which it lost itself the French Revolution derives from the force, truth, and universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas, a unique and still living power.

"To discover and define, then, the dominant tendency of his age, to analyze the good from the bad, foster the good, diminish the bad - this will be Arnold's program of criticism." There is a particular factor in the modern world which makes an intellectual deliverance of the first importance, and that factor is democracy. "For the first premise of democracy...is that each individual has the capability - actual or potential - of interpreting the world for himself and of choosing his own course. Democracy is based on the intellect; it can only progress by the intellect, by the circulation of sound ideas so clear and distinct as to win general agreement."

Joubert said that "force and right are the governors of this world; force till right is ready". By force, he means the existing order of things. Arnold admired Joubert because Joubert was, in a certain sense, "conservative in religion and politics, by antipathy to the narrow and shallow foolishness of vulgar modern liberalism", and because he had an "ardent impulse for seeking the genuine truth on all matters". Arnold writes in "The Function of Criticism" that "right is something moral and implies inward recognition, free assent of will" and as far as we are concerned "right" is not ready "until we have attained this sense of seeing it and willing it". How we see it and when it comes must depend entirely on us. The great error of the French Revolution was in "quitting the intellectual sphere and rushing furiously in the political sphere". If a change in human society is to be made, the "minds of men will
be fitted to it; the general opinions and feelings will draw that way" because "for other people enamored of their own newly discerned right, to attempt to impose it upon us as ours, and violently to substitute their right for our force, is an act of tyranny, and to be resisted".15

Part iii

At this point, it would be useful to look at Arnold's pamphlet of 1859, "England and the Italian Question" with which he enters directly into a discussion of politics. Arnold's secretaryship under Lord Lansdowne (from April, 1847 to June, 1851) allowed him to observe first hand the inner workings of Whig politics and gave him opportunity to mix and mingle with aristocracy. He confessed to a large element of worldliness in his composition and, his political appetite whetted during the years with Lansdowne, wanted to live abroad on a diplomatic appointment. The opportunity to prove his abilities to the Whig leaders came in the summer of 1959 when he accepted an appointment as assistant foreign commissioner of the duke of Newcastle's commission to report on the state of popular education in France.

The "Italian question" was one of Italian independence. Italy was then under Austrian rule, and Austria declared war on Piedmont after Louis Napoleon of France and Cavour of Italy planned to drive the Austrians from Italy and "establish throughout the whole peninsula a federation of free states, governed by a liberal Pope and dependent on France for protection". The war lasted a mere three months and actually accomplished little, as the peace of Villafranca, though it freed Milan, left the rest of Italy under the old Austrian rule. Visiting schools throughout France, Arnold studied public reactions to the war and to Louis Napoleon, and from his studies formulated the ideas for his pamphlet. During the war, England watched the situation carefully, as the conflict threatened to embroil Prussia and upset the balance of European
power, but she nevertheless remained aloof. "Arnold's pamphlet was a rebuke to the opinion that had determined English policy."16

On the question of Italian independence, Arnold did not disagree with the English policy which maintained neutrality: he concurred that Italian freedom should be earned and not bestowed as a gift from France, and he recognized the dangers of a too powerful Napoleon. Defending Napoleon's motives throughout, what Arnold did censure his countrymen for was their failure "to understand that Louis Napoleon was the exponent of rising democratic opinion in France".17 Arnold considered Napoleon great "because he had attracted to himself the newly released forces of modern France - the peasantry, first of all, and the commercial classes - and because he had offered these industrious classes an orderly government free from both anarchy and feudalism".18 Here, as he has in "Literary Influence of Academies," Arnold admires the French for the high qualities of the ideas which inspire and move them, and condemns the English aristocracy for their inaccessibility to ideas. In "England and the Italian Question",

Arnold wished to teach what he himself had only just learned, that the age of "the people and ideas" had replaced the era of "aristocracy and character" and that the new age needed strong leaders who could take into account the ideas of 1789. Since Arnold wrote to his "great Whig friends...in the earnest desire to influence them," he was in effect showing them the way of survival and continued power.

The time had come when force, historically the political instrument of aristocracies, must give way to reason, the instrument of the democratic masses.

Part iv

Arnold is obsessed with achieving some kind of permanence, ideality, and apartness. In the sense that he recognized the need and the right of the individual to achieve this, he is democratic. Unlike some of the "demo-
crats" of today, however, Arnold believes in a democracy of excellence. It is interesting that (in 1848, at least) he agreed with the following words of Wordsworth:

I am a lover of liberty, but know that liberty cannot exist apart from order; and the opinions in favor of aristocracy found in my works, the latter ones especially, all arise out of the consciousness that I have that, in the present state of human knowledge, and its probable state for some ages, order cannot, and therefore liberty cannot be maintained, without degree.

In short, Arnold feels that neither Carlyle's "captains of industry" nor Clough's "feudal industrial class" is capable of guiding the English political system, and he feared those who would prefer equality to liberty. Not that he was unaware of the problems in the aristocratic system: he continually measured the real against the ideal and consistently preferred things as they could be to what they actually were. The aristocracy was failing to set examples of culture and dignity, ideals and largeness of character; they were becoming less and less qualified to command and captivate. Arnold feels that it is because "aristocracies almost inevitably fail to appreciate justly...the instinct pushing the masses towards expansion and fuller life that they lose their hold over them". The problem in any political system, especially in a democracy, is how to find and keep high ideals. "Nations are not truly great solely because the individuals composing them are numerous, free and active; but they are great when these numbers, this freedom, and this activity are employed in the service of an ideal higher than that of ordinary man, taken by himself". Arnold feels that the dangers of the American system are those which come of a multitude being in power without ideals or any power to guide them. The State is simply the nation in its collective and corporate character; thus it is not "State-action in itself which the middle and lower classes of a nation ought in deprecate; it is State-action exercised by a hostile class, and for their oppression". Democracy is distinguished by a readiness for
new ideas and an ardour for the ideas it already possesses; it has character while aristocracy has culture and dignity. "Culture without character is, no doubt, something frivolous, vain, and weak; but character without culture is, on the other hand, something raw, blind, and dangerous." I think Arnold felt that the existing aristocracy was still capable of maintaining order while also being in a condition which lent itself to gradual reform. This synthesizing of character and culture he proposed to accomplish by education, by "levelling up" instead of levelling down. Now was the time for intelligence and ideas.

Arnold conceived his immediate and practical purpose to be that of convincing the middle classes "that they must re-organize the secondary education, to effect thereby an enlargement and enrichment of the lives of middle-class people, to give the masses an ideal towards which they would wish to move". Literature must move from its ornamental place in an aristocratic society to providing a more adequate, fortifying guide to the ideal-moved masses. And it must be recognized that "literature depends not upon the effort of the individual but upon the effort of a whole society". Real illumination in the area of education came for Arnold in 1859, when after eight years of serving as Inspector of Schools he spent six months in France examining the French educational system. By contrasting the workings of the French system to its English counterpart, he was able to perceive the possibilities for improvement latent in English education. He could see "the place public primary education could take within a broad, integrated and well-articulated system, a system that would embrace all classes, a system that would transcend sectarian differences, and a system that could carry England forward into the modern age."
CHAPTER II

Democracy

Arnold's experience in France reinforces his earlier opinions that England must turn her attention to middle-class education because these schools are the instruments of civilizing "the next generation of the lower classes, who, as things are going, will have most of the political power of the country in their hands". "Education was to be the means of preparing the idea-moved masses for their role as governors of a new, democratic England." Arnold's report on the popular education of France, Switzerland, and Holland, written between January and March, 1860, was prefaced, when printed separately in 1861, with an introductory essay later entitled "Democracy". A look at this essay is especially important not only because it contains the ideas further developed in Culture and Anarchy or because of its well articulated views on education and on France, but also because it further clarifies the political position Arnold takes after his observations of English and Continental schools.

"Democracy" is divided into two parts. In the first section, Arnold looks at the changed world of ideas in which his contemporaries lived, the actual state of things. Only after he has carefully dealt with the objections his audience is sure to raise does he attempt to suggest a positive and practical application of his ideas. The essay is a supreme example of Arnold's "un-radical" methods, of his continual measurement of the real against the ideal and his consistent preference to things as they could be instead of to what they are.

The first obstacle which Arnold must overcome is the opinion, firmly held by the great body of his laissez-faire minded countrymen, that the existence of a State endowed with great power is an event to be feared. Arnold concedes that State-action was once dangerous but proposes to demonstrate that not only has the present political condition in England removed that danger, but also
that very State-action is the means of safe-guarding the English people from the dangers of another quarter. Historically, the executive power in England has been aristocratical, and to administer as little as possible, to oppose an imposing executive, "to see in ministerial station rather the means of power and dignity than a means of searching and useful administrative activity, is the natural tendency of an aristocratical executive." Although unfitted for effectively governing the internal development of its country, the aristocracy has functioned to exert one strong and beneficial influence on a robust and sound people, and that is its "grand style", that elevation of character and noble way of thinking which Arnold locates as the source of great virtues. The English aristocracy has, as did its Roman counterpart, "fostered in the mass of the peoples they governed...a greatness of spirit;...they made peoples in the grand style." Aristocracy ruled by the substantial acquiescence of the body of the nation it led, but as it fails to set those examples of culture and dignity "the superiority of the upper class over all other is no longer so great" nor is the willingness of the lower classes to recognize that superiority any longer so ready. The time has come for change.

Life consists of the effort "to affirm one's own essence", to develop one's own existence fully and freely, and ever since "Europe emerged from barbarism, ever since the condition of the common people began a little to improve, ever since their minds began to stir," the effort of democracy to affirm its own essence has been gaining strength. Whether one censures or praises the movement of democracy, its existence is undeniable, and belonging to its field of conquest are social freedom and equality. No doubt there are ignoble natures which prefer equality to liberty, no doubt there is a gross and vulgar spirit of envy in some of those who cry for equality. Arnold is not unaware that there are those who would use the movement of democracy, as they
use other political tides, for their own purposes. But, one must recognize the vital impulse of democracy as something natural and inevitable, and, according to Arnold, the fact that this impulse is "identical with the ceaseless vital effort of human nature itself". One cannot deny that "there is such a thing as a manly and legitimate passion for equality". Without democracy, without social equality, "the lowly and poor feel themselves...overwhelmed with the weight of their own inferiority," and they cannot but fail to make the best of themselves, fail to experience that expansion of spirit which is the essence of life. Democracy is concerned with the bulk of average mankind, not with the exceptional individual who owes success and greatness to the efforts he is forced to make to overcome the strongest impediments and worst of circumstances. France, as Arnold has observed it, has given to ordinary individuals of the lower classes (who Arnold feels require "encouragement and directly favoring circumstances") "a self-respect, an enlargement of spirit, a consciousness of counting for something in their country's action, which has raised them in the scale of humanity". Undoubtedly, the growing power in Europe is democracy, and if the action of the French state is excessive in relation to what England would need, still "France has organized democracy with a certain undisputable grandeur and success".

It is because (as I have quoted Arnold earlier) aristocracies almost inevitably fail to appreciate justly the instinct pushing the masses towards expansion and fuller life that they lose their hold over them. The grand style and fine ideal of grandeur which the aristocracy is capable of providing, even if it does so completely, is not enough; nor is the fact that the English aristocracy "has been more in sympathy with the common people than perhaps any other aristocracy". Democracy and a powerful State have been slow in developing in England, too, because "the vigour and high spirit of the English common
people bred in them a self-reliance which disposed each man to act individually and independently; and so long as this disposition prevails through a nation divided into classes, the predominance of an aristocracy, of the class containing the greatest and strongest individuals of the nation, is secure." Arnold by no means disparages the individual qualities of self-reliance and independence, for he recognizes that without them his country would become static and petty. However, the times show that the effects of democracy with its promises to each individual of the multitude of increased self-respect and expansion, are irresistible.

Assuming this to be true (though Arnold clearly realizes that many segments of English society still resist) the one consideration is, who or what will take over the guidance of the country in a manner which will find and keep high ideals, which will, in short, keep an English democracy from becoming "Americanized". Arnold's famous answer is, of course, the action of the State, which State he defines as Burke did, "the nation in its collective and corporate character." England is safe from the excesses of democracy borne out in France and from the absence of a national dignity such as America suffers because of the distinctive temper of the English populace. Here is the really remarkable part of Arnold's argument, and the one which seems to me most un-liberal, ungenerous, and undemocratic, and certainly unrealistic. He maintains that "there is no danger at all that the native independence and individualism of the English character will ever belie itself, and become either weakly prone to lean on others, or blindly confiding in them"; that here, in England "the people will always sufficiently keep in mind that any public authority is a trust delegated by themselves, for certain purposes, and for certain limits; and if that authority pretends to an absolute, independent character, they will soon enough...remind it of its error." Arnold nationalistically and quite nobly believes that in
England, the nation can acquire in the State "an ideal of high reason and right feeling, representing its best self, commanding general respect, and forming a rallying point for the intelligence and for the worthiest instincts of a community." Whether or not one agrees with Arnold that common English humanity is different from its counterparts in the rest of the world or whether or not one can trust the singularity of the English character to successfully carry out its democratic mission, does not detract from the beauty and admirable qualities of Arnold's idealism. His democratic principles are indeed truly motivated and democracy politically necessary. I think one must agree with Arnold's corollary and realistic opinion that in order to successfully deal with a democratic state, the people must be informed about it and educated to handle it.

At this point begins the second section of "Democracy"; the matter of practical institution, the matter of the intervention of the State in public education. Admittedly, the State could not improve the Etons and Harrows of England, but what Arnold believes that it can do is to give the schools of the middle class a public and national character. In doing this, the State can "confer on them a greatness and noble spirit, which the tone of these classes is not of itself at present adequate to impart"; it can give them "the sense of belonging to great and honorable seats of learning, and of breathing in their youth the air of the best cultures of the nation"; and, most importantly, "it would really augment their self-respect and moral force; it would truly fuse them with the class above, and tend to bring about for them the equality which they are entitled to desire". Great benefit may be derived from a State-action reasonably and equitably exercised, and "it is not State-action in itself which the middle and lower classes of a nation ought to deprecate; it is State-action exercised by a hostile class, and for their oppression".
It is the duty of the free and industrious English middle class to avail itself of the high reason and fine culture which a reasonably exercised State-action can provide. Without both culture and character, a nation fails to be great. If the middle class, in Arnold's view still narrow, harsh, unintelligent and unattractive in spirit and culture, does not "seek the alliance of the State for their own elevation, if they go on exaggerating their spirit of individualism" and "persist in their jealousy of all governmental action" they will indeed rule the country by virtue of their energy, but "they will deteriorate it by their low ideals and want of culture". If the middle classes do not educate themselves in the way of aristocracies, "society is in danger of falling into anarchy". And, if the State falls into the hands of men incompetent or mediocre, since the State is the collective action of the nation itself, it is the responsibility of the people. "The want of concert reason, and organization in the State, is the want of concert reason and organization in the collective nation". Arnold believes that the genius of the English nation is greater than the genius of any individual, that "collective action is more efficacious than isolated individual efforts", and that it is then, again, the duty of the English people to employ a State power which truly represents its best self.

The modern spirit is upon us, and in times of great change and transformation a nation must "discern clearly its own condition, in order to know in what particular way it may best meet them". Openness and flexibility of mind are essential. "Perfection will never be reached; but to recognize a period of transformation when it comes, and to adapt themselves honestly and rationally to its laws, is perhaps the nearest approach to perfection of which men and nations are capable."
CHAPTER III

The Religion of Inequality

Part i

Before moving on the Culture and Anarchy, I think it is worthwhile to examine certain points Arnold makes in his essay on "Equality". First of all, Arnold defines equality as being not that equality before the law which all Englishmen take for granted, but social equality which, in the light of the French Revolution, the Englishman is inclined to see as the cause of the decline of prosperity, the demoralization and disintegration of society, and the inhibition of intellectual growth in France. Arnold is only interested in equality insofar as it affects civilization, which he defines as the "humanization of man in society". To be humanized is to "comply with the true law of our human nature". To make progress towards truth, and to be civilized is to make progress towards this perfection of our humanity in civil society "without which", Burke says, "man could not by any possibility arrive at the perfection of which his nature is capable, nor even make a remote and faint approach to it".

The ideal of the Liberal party that Arnold serves is that stated by the Education Minister Robert Lowe, "a view of things undisturbed and undistorted by the promptings of interests or prejudice, in a complete independence of all class interests, and in relying for its success on the better feelings and higher intelligence of mankind". With this idealism, Arnold can "prophesy the permanency of Liberalism and the extinction of Conservatism as a 'happy consummation', reflecting the 'instinctive struggle of the human spirit towards the light'". Arnold's belief in liberty grows from this instinct for expansion, and both are essential to the development of the human spirit. In "Equality", Arnold stresses the importance of having the opportunity for the maximal development in all men of the four powers making for civilization (the power of intellect
and knowledge, the power of beauty, the power of social life and manners, and the power of conduct). As he writes in the "Preface to Mixed Essays (1879),

First and foremost of the necessary means towards man's civilization we must name "expansion". The need of expansion is as genuine an instinct in man as the need in plants for the light, or the need in man himself for going upright. All the conveniences of life by which man has enlarged and secured his existence...are due to the working in man of this force or instinct of expansion. But the manifestation of it which we English know best, and prize most, is the love of liberty.

This instinct, this love of liberty, is inseparable from human nature, and Arnold concludes that the example of France suggests that the only political form in which this instinct can fulfill itself is democracy. Continuing,

even the individualistic English are becoming 'more and more sensible to the irresistible seduction of democratic ideas, promising to each individual of the multitude increased self-respect and expansion with the increased importance and authority of the multitude to which he belongs, with the diminished preponderance of the aristocratic class above him.' To go against history as well as nature, for 'the benevolent absolutism always breaks down. It is found that the ruler cannot in the long run be trusted. It is found that the ruled deteriorate'.

The notion of abstract rights Arnold dismisses, for he believes that it is sound English doctrine "that all rights are created by law and are based on expediency, and are alterable as the public advantage may require". The creation of rights (such as the right of property) by legal society makes a certain degree of inequality inevitable, but Arnold disagrees with those in English society who maintain that the "signal equality of classes and property is expedient for our civilization and welfare". He sees class structure with its 'religion of inequality' as the real obstacle to a humane civilization. "Aristocracies may help to carry forward a standard of social life and manners to 'the day of general humanization,' but in the sphere of intelligence they are resistant to modern social and political ideas." The aristocracy offers the inadequate ideal of materialism, and with this ideal out of reach the middle class "is thrown back upon its narrow and defective
type of life, which is in turn unattractive to the lower class as offering any incentive to leave its grosser satisfactions." As Arnold writes in "Equality", "our love of inequality is really the vulgarity in us, and the brutality, admiring and worshipping the splendid materiality".

The advance towards man's full humanity proceeds along many different lines, and nations may have felt the power of one particular element in their humanization so signally that they are characterized by it. "The power of intellect and science, the power of beauty, the power of social life and manner, - these are what Greece so felt, and fixed, and may stand for."

The power of conduct, as determined by law, characterizes the Hebraic nations, and this power of conduct is the defining characteristic of England. In support of this, Arnold notes the English feeling for religion and English industry. Another element of singular importance in the humanization of a people is the cultivation of social life and a system of manners, for such cultivation is, above all things a promoter of equality. "It is by the humanity of their manners that men are made equal". Arnold cites America as an example of what happens when social equality precedes the formation of any high standard of social life and manners. As the spirit of society is developed, the well-being of the many increases, but Arnold also warns that although it is good when more and more people partake of well-being, it is unwise to lower and coarsen the ideal of well-being in the attempt to extend its benefits to more people. He says, "socialistic and communistic schemes have generally, however, a fatal defect: they are content with too low and material standard of well-being". The equality Arnold desires is the general equality found in a humane kind of life.
Part ii

Some mention should be made of Arnold's view of America and Americans. Although he tended to view the American public as transplanted Philistines, as deficient in the powers of beauty, intellect, and manners as the English middle class from which they largely came, he did have respect for such writers as Franklin and Emerson. America in Arnold's view lacked respect for individual distinction and was entirely dominated by her middle class, and her middle class character was attributable to the fact that she had never had a priesthood or an aristocracy. "Of course, America was not to blame for lacking what she could never possibly have had; but she was to blame for not having substituted for aristocratic institutions 'the dignity and authority of the State.'" After his lecture tour of the United States in 1883-1884, he writes that although America had yet to solve the 'human' problems (involving a feeling for the qualities of delicacy and beauty, things that made life interesting), she had solved the political and social problems. He had found, from observation,

that, freed from the 'incubus' of aristocracy and from class distinctions in general, believing in equality and in opportunity open to all, Americans had indeed opened up a better life for the generality of men in material terms. Their political institutions also were so natural and easy, and so appropriate to all levels of government in functioning and in possibilities for growth, that England might well learn from them.

The problem with English society is its excessive attention to the power of conduct, to a narrow Puritanism which excludes the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, and the power of social life and manners. Such a concentration on conduct results in inflexibility and insufferable boredom. It emphasizes class differences and in perpetuating inequality, impedes civilization. This "religion of inequality" has the "natural and necessary effect...of materializing our upper class, vulgarizing our middle class, and brutalizing our lower classes." And this, he says, is to fail in civilization.
However inadequate the present social organization is, Arnold still does not feel that the middle class is ready to take over. The English society with all its class differences and interests must prevail until the middle class is provided with a better ideal of life. We are, it seems, back to education, and to Arnold's usual attempt at synthesis. "Certainly equality will never of itself alone give us a perfect civilization; but, with such inequality as ours, a perfect civilization is impossible". British nonconformity stands at one end of English society as a main obstacle to civilization while British aristocracy stands at the other. To use other words of Arnold's it is Hebraism versus Hellenism.

Part iii

One thing should be said about Arnold and religion. He claimed agnosticism, but the human element in religion and in the Bible, particularly, appealed strongly to him. He regretted the growing neglect of the Bible by the multitude, and it was the absence of appreciation of the Bible as literature for which he criticized theologians. He searched the Bible for some secure and permanent basis for faith apart from the traditional belief in the divine origin and inspiration of the Holy Scriptures. Conduct, or righteousness, Arnold defined as common sense, morality was a philosophical term, and religion is morality touched by emotion. The Bible was in Arnold's view the great masterpiece on the subject of conduct, and "as long as men aspire to virtuous living, they must go to it for guidance and inspiration". For conduct does make up at the lowest estimate three-fourths of life. Arnold's interpretation does not overthrow traditional theology but "simply compliments it by giving the practical side of faith as it issues forth and proves itself in conduct".
Arnold falls short of being a Christian, but his logical and extraordinary ability to extract the best from different philosophies and creeds, to form his ideal of culture is demonstrated in his reasonable approach to religion. As Arnold himself says, the function of criticism is to "try to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind; and to value knowledge and thought as they approach this best, without the intrusions of any other considerations whatever." Excellence was important to Arnold, and because religion has the power of instilling high standards of morality and conduct in a people, it was a necessary dimension of English society and played an important part in helping the nation achieve its "best self".
CHAPTER IV
Culture and Anarchy

...the culture of the individual is dependent upon the culture of a group or class, and...the culture of the group or class is dependent upon the culture of the whole society to which that group or class belongs. - T. S. Eliot

Matthew Arnold is hardly a radical - "he is not so much concerned with combating vile positions as with refining relatively good ones". He well knew that the limitations of men exist in varying degrees but that it is not the limitation itself which is degrading but the worship of it. To overcome his limitation, man must make the conscious effort to realize his complete humanity, to discover the "possible Socrates" in every man's breast. Writing in "A French Eton", Arnold wrote that "perfection will never be reached but to recognize a period of transformation when it comes, and to adapt themselves honestly and rationally to its laws, is perhaps the nearest approach to perfection of which men and nations are capable". In summary,

Democracy had destroyed the power and example of priesthood and aristocracy and it had not yet acquired a new model and ideal. In modern life there was only one agency which could resolve the crotchets of sect, unify the diversity of individual aims, improve the insufficiency of individual effort - that was the State.

Arnold, as I have mentioned earlier, employs Burke's definition of the State as the nation in its collective and corporate character. He bases his urging to perfection on the only thing which can prevent anarchy - the authority of the State. Arnold wishes to develop the notion of a state not based on class power but on the reason of each class voided of its interest. But class is a term "whose very essence is interest; take away the idea of a special interest...and 'class' ceases to have meaning".
It follows that "to speak of a State based on classes voided of interest is to assume a classless society and this, though Arnold truly desired it, he was not now contemplating".  

"The everlasting question of philosophical politics is how to place power and reason in the same agent, or how to made power reasonable, or how to endow reason with power". If Arnold is to make the notion of his State "both logically and practically valid, he must say that some people may have reason and others not and that the possession of reason by some people gives them the right to coerce others". He must say what he means by reason and show what it is. Arnold begins *Culture and Anarchy* with the following words:

...I am a Liberal, yet I am a Liberal tempered by experience, reflection, and renouncement, and I am, above all, a believer in culture. Therefore I propose now to try and inquire, in the simple unsystematic way which best suits both my taste and my powers, what culture really is and what good it can do, what is our own special need of it; and I shall seek to find some plain grounds on which a faith in culture - both my own faith in it and the faith of others - may rest securely.

Culture, to Arnold, serves as an ideal free from class interest; it poses an ideal of perfection, as religion had done before, and proposes to extend that ideal to all men. The best self must supplant the ordinary self and the emergence of the collective best self is, as I have noted, the State. Arnold is an authoritarian at the same time that he knows that it is only the individual who can give the assent to reason. He has said that right is not ready until we have attained the sense of seeing it and willing it. It is a circular problem: "the way in which society is ordered determines the way in which society is ordered". Arnold insisted on the practicability of the theories he sets forth in *Culture and Anarchy* but like all theoretical politics, his conception of the
State is essentially mythic. "The value of any myth cannot depend on its demonstrability as a fact, but only on the value of the attitudes it embodies, the further attitudes it engenders, and the actions it motivates. In these respects Arnold's myth is still fertile and valuable – and morally inescapable".8

Part i

The opening section of Culture and Anarchy (now comprising the Introduction and "Sweetness and Light") was delivered as Arnold's concluding lecture as Professor of Poetry at Oxford in May of 1867. The last five chapters of the work were published in Cornhill magazine between January and July of 1868, and the essay in its entirety was published in January, 1869. Because the atmosphere in which he wrote Culture and Anarchy was that of the political controversy and civil disturbances surrounding the passage of the Second Reform Bill in 1867, Arnold's work is a kind of political pamphlet, closely involved with the momentous events of his day. Arnold would have protested the practicability of his theories, in fact, what he foresaw "was the disillusionment and perhaps humiliation of the idealist and intellectual rushing into the practical sphere; what he feared was the waste of a brilliant mind seeing all sides of every question so clearly that no ordinary line of action seemed worthwhile."9 But the essay fails in practical structure because it deals with theoretical politics and Arnoldian idealism. It is because it takes an enduring rather than a temporary and localized view of problems that Culture and Anarchy is a political and educational classic. Arnold's theories of democracy and education contain large quantities of idealism, which idealism does not make Arnold or Culture and Anarchy, any less democratic.
What he is concerned with above all is the quality of life in an age he considered unpoetical and uncivilized. In *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold applies the efforts of his constructive critical faculties to all sides of man's being, and to make this work effectively meant "meeting the two-fold demand of the modern spirit for scientific thinking and democratic growth, rejecting obsolete notions on the one hand and proposing realistic ideals on the other". 10

Arnold is above all a believer in culture, by which he means not a mere dabbling in classical literature, but the love and pursuit of intellectual and ethical perfection. Culture has its origins in the love of perfection. What distinguishes culture is that it combines the scientific passion for pure knowledge with the moral and social passion for doing good. It proposes to make reason and the will of God prevail, and therefore declares that reason is ascertainable and attempts to show what it is. Culture teaches one how and what one ought to act and institute. The section "Sweetness and Light" is devoted to defining and clarifying culture and then to show what this means to English society. That is, the moment culture is considered not merely as the endeavor to see and learn the will of God but as the endeavor, also, to make it prevail, "the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest."

Culture is like religion in several ways. Both "enjoin and sanction the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail:, and both place human perfection in an internal condition. "It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds it ideal." Culture also coincides with religion in its conception of the character of perfection as "not a
having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming", and in its requiring the individual to promote perfection, to carry others along with him in his seeking of it. But, culture conceives perfection as "a harmonious expansion of all the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest", and here culture goes beyond religion. Arnold held a profound admiration for religion, and his insistence that culture goes beyond it gives one some idea of how truly magnificent this idea of culture is to Arnold.

The idea of perfection as an inward condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilization in esteem with us,...the idea of perfection as a general expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism,...our maxim of 'every man for himself',...and above all, the idea of perfection as a harmonious expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility,...with our intense energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following.

Culture ceaselessly tries, "not to make what each raw person may like the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that". Greatness is not coal, nor iron, nor population, nor railroads but is a "spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest, and admiration". Bent on seeing things as they are, culture serves to dissipate delusions of greatness as coal or iron or of bodily health and vigor by fixing standards of perfection that are real. Wealth, too, is but another kind of machinery, and "the people who believe most that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being very rich, are just the very people whom we call Philistines". Arnold does not underestimate the importance of material and mechanical things in laying the broad foundations for the material well-
being of the society of the future. What he does view as vulgarizing is the disjoinment of them from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition and the consequent pursuit of them for their own sake and as ends in themselves.

The exact notion of perfection which culture brings us to is a harmonious perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present, in which sweetness and light or beauty and intelligence, the two noblest of things, are united. Because sweetness and light are characters of perfection; "culture is of like spirit with poetry". The dominant idea of poetry is the idea of beauty of a human nature perfect on all sides; the dominant idea of religion a human nature perfect on the moral side. Religion, to date, has been a more important manifestation of human nature than has poetry, "because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection and with greater masses of men". It is a fault of the English people that they rely on religious organizations to provide the ideas of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection which only culture can provide, a culture destined to transform and govern religion by adding to its ideas of perfection the religious idea of a devout energy. It is a necessary first stage in achieving a harmonious perfection to brace the moral fibre, to subdue the great obvious faults of our animality. Men of culture and poetry have often failed in morality, "but their idea of beauty, of sweetness and light, and a human nature complete on all sides, remains the true idea of perfection still; just as the Puritans' ideal of perfection remains narrow and inadequate". Puritanism is the powerful manifestation of the impulse of the English race towards moral development and self-conquest but it has not been enough. "Indeed, the strongest plea for the study of perfection as pursued by culture, the clearest proof of the actual inadequacy of perfection held by the religious organizations...is to be found in the state of our life and society with these
in possession of it..."

There is, Arnold points out, a new and more democratic force superseding the old middle-class liberalism, a force which cannot yet be rightly judged. This new democracy needs the ideas of increased spiritual activity, increased sweetness and light, increased life and sympathy more than it needs the ideas of the blessedness of the franchise or the wonderfulness of its own industrial performances, because concentration on the latter teaches "a man to value himself not on what he is, but on the number of railroads he has built". Nor does this new force of democracy need the ways of Jacobinism which are characterized by a violent indignation with the past, a fierceness and addiction to abstract system. Culture is the eternal opponent of Jacobinism because it is "always assigning to system-makers and systems a smaller share in the beat of human destiny than their friends like" and because it resists the tendency of Jacobinism to impose on us a leader,"to impose on us a man with limitations and errors of his own along with the true ideas of which he is the organ". Culture is useful because it looks beyond machinery, because it hates hatred, and because it has the passion for making sweetness and light prevail for as many people as possible. The greatest epochs of humanity have been when "the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive". English political and religious organizations are an example of the way people will "try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party". Culture works differently:

It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own,...It seeks to do away with classes; to make the best that has been thought and known in the world current everywhere; to make all men live in atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely, - nourished, and not bound by them.
Thus, concludes Arnold in "Sweetness and Light", men of culture are the "true apostles of equality".

Part ii

In the chapter "Doing As One Likes", Arnold confronts the prevalent English notion that the most important thing in the world is that a man should be able to do as he likes, that assertion of personal liberty which is the central idea of English life and politics. The problem with this strong belief in freedom and weak belief in right reason is that it tends to anarchy, because to what a man is to do when he is thus free to do as he likes no attention is paid. This is no principle of authority embodied in the assertion of personal liberty. Arnold examines each of the three classes and concludes that it is "perfectly manifest that no more in the working class than in the aristocratic and middle classes can one find an adequate center of authority". We find no basis for a firm State - power in our "ordinary selves". Culture, however, in its pursuit of perfection, brings us light, or intelligence, and this intelligence shows us that "there is nothing so very blessed in merely doing as one likes,... (but) that the really blessed thing is to like what right reason ordains, and to follow her authority. Having declared that culture can provide the needed principle of authority, the question is how to organize it, in whose hands shall it be placed. The answer, of course, is the State, that power most representing the right reason of the nation and representing the collective best self of the nation. Arnold's "best self" and "right reason" are one and the same. This "best self" of the State is the answer because the "one salvation of an epoch of expansion is a harmony of ideas", and "by our best self we are united, impersonal, at harmony"; our best self "inspires faith, and is capable of affording a serious principle of authority". It is a classless center of authority, dealing equally with
aristocratical prejudices, the fanaticism of the middle-class Dissenter, and the street riots of the working class; and, "it has the testimony of conscience that it is establishing the State on behalf of whatever great changes are needed, just as much as on behalf of order."

Part iii

In "Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace", Arnold illustrates further "how indispensable to that human perfection which we seek is...some public recognition and establishment of our best self, and right reason". For the sake of clarity, he further defines the aristocracy, middle and working classes of England by placing them, respectively, in the categories of Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace. In using this division of English society, two things should be kept in mind. The first is that "since, under all our class divisions, there is a common basis of human nature, therefore in every one of us, whether we be properly Barbarians, Philistines, or Populace, there exists, sometimes only in germ and potentiality...the same tendencies and passions which have made our fellow-citizens of other classes what they are". This consideration, says Arnold, is very important "because it has great influence in begetting that spirit of indulgence which is a necessary part of sweetness". The second thing to remember is that all of us, whatever class, "imagine happiness to consist in doing what one's ordinary self likes. "The result of this general truth is that everyone is encouraged to keep his natural taste for the bathos unimpaired. In spite of the fact that within each class there exists a certain number of "aliens"--people who are led not by their class spirit but "by a general humane spirit, by the love of human perfection"--the absence of any powerful authority, or of any organ fitted to help and elicit the extrication of the best self tends to "prevent the erection of any very strict standard of excellence". Because
the different classes and political parties flatter and patronize each other in the quest for votes and political influence, they lead us all to believe that there is nothing more admirable than our ordinary self. "Thus everything in our political life tends to hide from us that there is anything wiser than our ordinary selves, and to prevent our getting the notion of a paramount right reason". Arnold takes care to make clear that he is not advocating the abolishment of the English political system. But, in the search for sound authority and right reason, "it is necessary to take note of the chief impediments which hinder, in this country, the extrication or recognition of this right reason as a paramount authority, with a view to afterwards trying in what way they can best be removed". The way to do this is to "try to put into the action of the State as much as possible of right reason or best self, which may, in this manner, come back to us with new force and authority; may...help to confirm us, in the many moments when we are tempted to be our ordinary selves merely, in resisting our natural taste of the bathos rather than in giving way to it". For the wise know that "we often need to hear most of that to which we are least inclined, and even to learn to employ...that which is capable, if employed amiss, of being a danger to us".

The Liberal believes in liberty, and liberty means the non-intervention of the State. In the end, the individual must act for himself, and seek perfection in himself. But such pure liberty is as yet only an ideal, and the only way to realize it for now is through the action of the State. And this fact, Arnold says, is "even truer of education than of any other department of public affairs". Having shown how our habits and practice oppose the recognition and establishment of our best self, now Arnold proposes to find "the very ground and cause" out of which these habits and practice spring, to
analyze the philosophy which rationalizes the anarchic tradition of doing as one likes.

Part iv

In Chapter IV of *Culture and Anarchy*, "Hebraism and Hellenism", Arnold names and then analyzes the two historical forces which effect and move English society. The first is Hebraism which he defines as the "energy driving at practice, the paramount sense of the obligation of duty, self-control, and work, the earnestness in going manfully with the best light we have". The second force is Hellenism, or "the intelligence driving at those ideas which are, after all, the basis of right practice, the ardent sense for all the new and changing combinations of them which man's development brings with it, the indomitable impulse to know and adjust them perfectly". Arising out of the wants of human nature, both forces seek the perfection of man; at the bottom of each of these great spiritual disciplines is the desire for reason and the will of God. But they pursue this aim by very different courses. "The uppermost idea with Hellenism is to see things as they really are; the uppermost idea with Hebraism is conduct and obedience." Or, put differently, "the governing idea of Hellenism is 'spontaneity of consciousness', that of Hebraism, 'strictness of conscience'". The difference between Hebraism and Hellenism, of whether it is by doing or by knowing that we set most store, is important, because "the practical consequences which follow from this difference leave their mark on all the history of our race and of its development". This main difference is one of optimism and pessimism. "As Hellenism speaks of thinking clearly, seeing things in their essence and beauty, as a grand and precious feat for man to achieve, so Hebraism speaks of becoming conscious of sin, of awakening
to a sense of sin, as a feat of this kind." Is man to be viewed as "a gentle and simple being, showing the traces of a noble and divine nature; or an unhappy chained captive, labouring with groanings that cannot be uttered to free himself from the body of his death?"

Neither Hebraism nor Hellenism of itself constitutes the law of human development. Rather, each is an august and invaluable contribution, and in the alternating pattern of history, each has had its appointed hour and seasons of rule: Hebraism in the great movement of Christianity, Hellenism in the Renaissance. Pointing out that Hellenism is of Indo-European growth while Hebraism is of a Semitic one, Arnold says that the English people would seem to tend towards Hellenism. That they do not, he attributes to the English Reformation and the triumph of Puritanism, for a Continent, especially during the 18th century, Hellenism flourished, and bore fruit in the Enlightenment and French Revolution. Because England has turned away from the Hellenic tendency of the modern age and held "with a racially anomalous tenacity to the Hebraic tradition", she faces confusion in the modern world. Hebraism's over-emphasis on the moral and religious aspects of man, along with its being incapable of disinterested intelligence and the suspicion of beauty seen as truth has resulted in an imbalance. The key to realizing some sound order and authority "we can only get by going back upon the actual instincts and forces which rule our life, seeing them as they really are, connecting them with other instincts and forces, and enlarging our whole view and rule of life." The Victorian Englishman "needed to cultivate the Hellenic component in his nature by an inward and spiritual operation as against an outward and mechanical one."
Part v

In "Porro Unum Est Necessarium" the object of Arnold's concern is any form of self-righteousness or self-satisfaction, the manifestation of which is seen primarily in the value given to personal liberty in England with its consequent disbelief in and mistrust of right reason as lawful authority. The reason for this light belief in right reason is that the Hebraists think their real and only important homage is owed to a power concerned with their obedience rather than with their intelligence; that "they have fancied themselves to have in their religion a sufficient basis for the whole of their life fixed and certain forever, a full law of conduct and a full law of thought." To the fanatic Hebraists, sweetness and light alone are not enough— with them must be put strength and energy, the fire of strength of religion which the world needs more than sweetness and light. As Arnold sees it, the great danger of the Puritan is that "he imagines himself in possession of a rule telling him the "unum necessarium," or one thing needful, and that he then remains satisfied with a very crude conception of what this rule really is and what it tells him, thinks he now has knowledge and henceforth needs only to act, and, in this dangerous state of assurance and self-satisfaction, proceeds to give full swing to a number of the instincts of his ordinary self." In his self-righteousness, the Hebraist cuts off morality from all the other human faculties and thereby makes conduct an end in itself rather than the means to an end of the whole, good life. Arnold insists that "there is no 'unum necessarium,' or one thing needful, which can free human nature from the obligation of trying to come to its best at all points." The Greeks singularly escaped the fanaticism which moderns tend to show and though they failed to give adequate satisfaction to the claims of man's moral side, they did arrive "at the idea of a comprehensive adjustment of the claims of both the sides
in man, the moral as well as the intellectual, of a full estimate of both, and of a reconciliation of both.

A limited conception of human nature or the notion of possessing the "one thing needful" is fatal to the right knowledge and comprehension of the very words or standards we thus adopt, and inevitably leads to distortion and perversion - the mechanization of - these words and standards. Hebraism has landed England into a mechanical and unfruitful routine of pursuing British freedom, British industry, and British muscularity as ends in themselves, with no ideal of harmonious human perfection before our minds. With the example of the suicide of a Mr. Smith, secretary to some insurance company, "who, it was said, labored under the apprehension that he would come to poverty, and that he was eternally lost," Arnold shows how entirely "does the narrow and mechanical conception of our secular business proceed from a narrow and mechanical conception of our religious business." By bringing into prominence the Hellenistic impulse to develop the whole man, to connect and harmonize all parts of him, to perfect all, Arnold finds it possible to conceive of an ideal of perfection in which an enlightened Hebraism, with its necessary moral fiber, would play a vital and harmonious role.

Part vi

Arnold, is declaring that the best way of finding right reason is not to be found in helping Liberals with their reform policies but rather in getting his countrymen to seek culture, leaves himself open to the challenge of "preaching up a spirit of unlimited inaction". Although he answers this challenge by saying that thinking can sometimes be more practical than action, in "Our Liberal Practitioners" he admits that it is dangerous to
indulge too much in generalities, and since he has spoken so slightingly of the practical operations in which his countrymen have been engaged for the removal of certain definite evils, he proceeds to analyze four pieces of middle class legislation: the disestablishment of the Irish Church, the bill to permit marriage with a deceased wife's sister, the Real Estate Intestacy Bill, and the question of Free Trade. In moving from the realm of theory into that of practice, we can see how far removed Arnold was from reaction. In this chapter he shows the critical way culture can assist with the propositions of politics: by letting "the natural stream of our consciousness flow over them freely," and so creating "a frame of mind out of which the schemes of really fruitful reforms may with time grow." For my purposes, it is useful to limit my discussion of this chapter to the Real Estate Intestacy Bill and the question of Free Trade.

The Real Estate Intestacy Bill proposes to prevent the land of a man who dies intestate from going to his eldest son (as by the existing law it did) and instead to divide it equally among all the children. Although in fact the bill was an attempt on the part of the manufacturing middle class to break up the aristocracy's monopoly of land, its supporters down-played their self-interested reasons and instead advanced the high philosophic reasons of natural law, natural right, and "fitness of things". For Arnold the theory of natural law and natural right had no meaning at all. He says, "for my part, the deeper I go into my own consciousness, and the more simply I abandon myself to it, the more it seems to tell me that I have no rights at all, only duties; and that men get this notion of rights from a process of abstract reasoning, inferring that the obligations they are conscious of towards others, others must be conscious of towards them, and not from any direct witness of consciousness at all." Furthermore, Arnold
disagreed with the promoters of the bill who held that the equal sharing of property is at all times an equal good, pointing out that "whether our children's welfare is best served by their all sharing equally in our property, depends on circumstances and on the state of the community in which we live." After the disintegration of the Roman Empire, for example, the centralization of property was necessary for organizing society out of the chaos left behind, and to have an organized society to live in was more important for the Roman child's welfare than to have an equal share of his father's property.

However, Arnold does not agree against the breaking up of the aristocracy in monopoly of land. His objections to the Real Estate Intestacy Bill are not to what it proposes but to what it avoids proposing - the question of private property in general. The Liberal method is to treat the issue "with stock notions and mechanical action". He prefers to treat the "living issues", which issue here is "that equality, or the tendency toward equality, of property is a clear social benefit and the tendencies to monopoly are clearly social evils." It seems to Arnold quite easy to show that "a free disinterested play of thought on the Barbarians and their land-holding is a thousand times more really practical, a thousand times more likely to lead to some effective result" than the attempts of the Liberals in the vehicle of their bill. Our consciousness tells us that "wealth, power, and consideration are, and above all when inherited and not earned, - in themselves trying and dangerous things". The aristocracy has lost its power to instill ideals and discipline into the lower classes, and "a class such as this provides a false and deteriorating ideal for the Philistine, and for the populace this false ideal is 'a stone which kills the desire before it can even arise,' so impossible is it of attainment".
In short, the real—the only sound-reason for the equalization of property has nothing to do with "natural right but with the social human harm which is worked by monopoly, with the barrier that inequality offers to human expansion. And reasons such as these are the reasons raised by culture. This is Hellenizing. In a time when change is necessary, culture is also necessary for it "teaches us how gradually nature would have all profound changes brought about." It does more, sweetness and light can, in Arnold's opinion, even make a feudal class quietly and gradually drop its feudal habits.

In the Free Trade section of "Our Liberal Practitioners" Arnold proceeds to turn his free stream of thought upon the doctrine of free trade and "see how this is related to the intelligible law of human life, and to national well-being and happiness." It seems clearly right to Arnold that the poor man should eat untaxed bread and that restrictions and regulations which favor one class or one person should be abolished. But this is not all that free trade means to the Liberals, who view it as a stimulant to manufacture, business and population of all classes. "Yet here culture notes an anomaly which Liberalism ignores, that free trade has not so much made the already existing poor man's bread cheaper and more abundant, as it has created poor men to eat it, a result which Liberalism blindly believes to be a mark of social progress."

Liberals, too, argue that, "other things being equal, the more population increases, the more does production increase to keep pace with it", and that "although population always tends to equal the means of subsistence, yet people's notions of what subsistence is enlarge as civilization advances, and take in a number of things beyond the bare necessaries of life". But, culture, with its ability to see things as they really are, sees that in fact there are large numbers of people who even fail to attain the barest necessities, and that while silk stockings may have become cheaper since Queen Elizabeth's day, bread and bacon have not. The error of the Liberals lies in their assumption that these axioms of theirs are self-acting laws
"which will feet themselves into operation without trouble or planning on our part, if we will only pursue free trade, business, and population zealously and staunchly." This pursuit of free trade, as of other things, has been too mechanical, and their fixation on the production of wealth as the one thing needful has resulted in the pursuit of it as an end in itself, without relating it to the whole intelligible law of things.

The Liberal acceptance of the cycles of ruin and prosperity as necessary, Arnold refutes, for he knows that it is not nature but man who has created the poverty and squalor of an area such as London's East End. Individual perfection is impossible as long as people continue to believe that no perfection can be real which is not a general perfection, embracing every one of our fellow men. The fewer there are who follow the way to perfection, the harder that way is to find and as long as Liberal policies continue to condone and encourage the creation of multitudes of "miserable, sunken, and ignorant human beings". Again, what England needs is to Hellenize, to face the facts before us. And what culture shows us is that

a man's children are not really sent, any more than the pictures upon his wall, or the horses in his stable are sent; and that to bring people into the world, when one cannot afford to keep them and oneself decently...is...by no means an accomplishment of the divine will or a fulfillment of Nature's simplest laws, but is just as wrong, just as contrary to reason and the will of God, as for a man to have horses, or carriages, or pictures, when he cannot afford them...

When our consciousness is allowed to play freely and disinterestedly upon the actual facts of our social condition, we are more likely to better that condition to make good at all points what is wanting in us, than by the mechanical pursuit of free trade by the Liberals. Arnold knows that moral life and growth cannot always be just simply willed - they need a fair chance, "a condition of mind out of which really fruitful and solid operations may
spring."

This is the outcome of the doctrine of culture and if in the evolution of that doctrine lapses of logic or of realism have appeared they are the lapses consequent upon most faiths. Arnold's own faith was a sound one: - that man by his wits and his virtue may perfect himself to become a whole human being.
CONCLUSION

Matthew Arnold believed that the aristocratical government of his England was inadequate, that the time had come for change, and that democracy with its flexibility and readiness for new ideas was the inevitable force of his own era and of the future. He believed in liberty, and in social and educational equality for the bulk of average mankind, and he recognized that the English love of inequality rose out of a vulgar love of materialism. He deplored the uncivilized and impoverished quality of life that many of his countrymen endured. In his opinion, what England needed was a State endowed with great power, a State that could found a public and national culture, establish a high standard of social life and manners, and serve as a recognized authority in intellectual matters, promoting the disinterested endeavor on the part of every individual to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world. The men in control of this great State would represent the collective "best selves" of the nation and in their public position, aware of the magnitude of their responsibilities, would ever perform their duties with a strong sense that they must do better than if they were merely working for themselves. It has been said that democracy is the creed of optimists, a statement that is certainly true in Arnold's case.

Arnold also believed that the culture of the individual was dependent upon the culture of the whole society, that the character and temper of that society was shaped largely by its political structure, and he knew that the political structure of his society was failing to establish any standards of culture or character. As a result of his search for a unifying principle of life, something that would join together all branches of knowledge - literature, science, and religion - and provide not only the necessary standards but
also an atmosphere in which the total personality of each individual could
flourish and rise to its full capabilities, he formulated his classless, dis¬
interested, and idealistic State. But in spite of his dreams and hopes that
society could achieve perfection, Arnold did not advocate the immediate
abolition of class in England; he did not wish to extend automatically
to every individual the inalienable right of having a voice in government,
a voice no greater or no less than that of any other person, simply by
virtue of the fact that that individual was a member of society. He well
knew that most people are not wise enough or enlightened enough to know
what is best for them and if he did believe that they could learn, he
also believed that they first had to be taught.

Arnold's democracy is an inward and intellectual one: every person has
the right to think, feel, and act as a singular member of society as a whole;
every person has the ability and the right of interpreting the world for
himself and of having the opportunity to do so. He wanted the political
structure of England to make the conditions of life such that every man
could realize the "possible Socrates" within him, and the educational system
such that men could learn how to effect that realization. Although he is truly
democratic in believing that every man has within him this possible Socrates,
that every man can be better than he is, he is rather aristocratic in his
conviction that the average man had to be shown how to find this better self
and, find it according to Arnold's particular method. The problem with his
State is circular: it's existence is necessary to provide each man with
the atmosphere and education essential to enlightenment, but no such State
could come into existence until men were already enlightened. Culture is
a people's imaginative, intellectual, and spiritual life. It is a civilizing
force and can wield great power, but it is also a vital, growing thing which
requires to be tended rather than generated. Arnold worked for the extension of education among a larger proportion of society. In democratic societies of today, the issue has become not one of extension or diffusion, but one of whether or not it is preferable to maintain a high level of education somewhere (to the exclusion of some) or to maintain a low level everywhere. Arnold did not have to make this choice, but given his campaign for excellence, I think it not reckless to assume that he would have chosen the first alternative.

In the conclusion of *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold re-states his belief in the power of culture "to make the actual present, and the frame of society in which we live, solid and seaworthy," his belief in right reason and in the duty and possibility of extricating and elevating our best self in the progress of humanity towards perfection.

His campaign against the Philistines was no simple and generalized struggle against ignorance and narrowness. It was nothing less than a fight in behalf of a way of life to which he had been raised. He defended the Establishment as the guardian and preserver of England's cultural heritage and he advocated a commitment to ideas as necessary to England's greatness in a world of increasing complexity.

He feared the deterioration of English government and life by the low ideals and want of culture characteristic of a middle class that had failed to avail itself of the high reason and fine culture which the reasonably exercised action of his State could provide. He feared a democracy which lacked the discipline of respect, and which was conceited and vulgar and grasping and dull and commercial and Philistine. Most of all he feared anarchy, and in his love of order he is perhaps his most un-democratic. He writes in the conclusion of *Culture and Anarchy* that the framework of society is no less than sacred, and "whoever administers it, and however we may seek to remove them from their tenure of administration, yet, while they administer, we steadily and with undivided heart support them in repressing anarchy and
disorder; because without order there can be no society, and without society there can be no human perfection. Furthermore, "a State in which law is authoritative and sovereign, a firm and settled course of public order, is requisite if man is to bring to maturity anything precious and lasting now, or to found anything precious and lasting for the future".

Finally, I would say that Arnold was not a democrat in the limited political sense in which that term is generally defined today. He was a "sufficiently accurate observer of social reality to see that high critical standards were only to be found among the few", but he also believed that the work of this elite was "to resolutely seek a wider currency for adequate ideas". His State sought to get men to see things as they are, but it was an impossibly idealistic form of government. He was a man of ideas before he was a man of action, and if some of his ideas were radical, certainly none of his actions were. The only revolution he looked forward to was one to be accomplished by due course of law, accomplished when the minds of the people were ready for change. He was not a political activist for he felt that democracy could only progress by the intellect, by the circulation of sound ideas so clear and distinct as to finally win general agreement. As may be seen in the last chapter of Culture and Anarchy, Arnold was in fact critical of many of the methods and measures of the politically energetic Liberals. If he was not a democrat in the sense of believing that the supreme power of government should be vested in a people without regard for their ability to govern, Arnold was nevertheless a democrat in spirit and intellect, an advocate of liberty, equality and education, and a man of feeling and conscience. He was indeed a man of culture, a man who believed in excellence, and excellence for all. If his idea of the State is but mythic, one would do well to remember that "without his mythologies, man is only a cruel animal
without a soul,...a congeries of possibilities without order and aim".  
At the least, in times such as ours, Arnold, with his insistence on objectivity and the powers of human reason, may well prop our minds.
NOTES TO CHAPTER I

1. From Arnold's "Preface to Poems", 1853.
2. Ibid.
3. Ibid.
4. Ibid.
5. Ibid.
6. Ibid.
7. Ibid.
9. Ibid.
10. From Arnold's "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time".
11. Trilling, page 159.
12. Ibid., page 60.
13. Ibid., page 161-162.
14. From Arnold's essay on "Joubert".
15. Burke quoted in "The Function of Criticism".
16. Trilling, page 162.
17. Ibid.
19. Ibid.
21 From Arnold's "Democracy".
23. Ibid., page 23.
24. Ibid.
25. McCarthy, page 82.
27. Super, page 87.
NOTES TO CHAPTER II


2. Ibid.

3. All of the remaining quotations in this chapter are taken from Arnold's essay "Democracy".
NOTES TO CHAPTER III


2. Ibid.

3. Ibid., page 39.

4. Ibid., page 43.

5. Ibid.


7. Robbins, page 44.


9. Ibid.
NOTES TO CHAPTER IV


2. Ibid., page 186.

3. Ibid., page 253.

4. Ibid.

5. Ibid.

6. Ibid.

7. Ibid., page 255.

8. Ibid.


10. Ibid., page 25.

11. Trilling, page 257.


14. Ibid.

15. Ibid., page 290.
NOTES TO CONCLUSION


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