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**The Violence of  
Representation**  
Literature and the history of violence

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Edited by  
**Nancy Armstrong**  
and  
**Leonard Tennenhouse**

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## Violence and the liberal imagination

The representation of Hellenism in Matthew Arnold

Vassilis Lambropoulos

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Mr. Disraeli, treating Hellenic things with the scornful negligence natural to a Hebrew, said the other day in a well-known book, that our aristocratic class, the polite flower of the nation, were truly Hellenic in this respect among others, – that they cared nothing for letters and never read. (Arnold 1892: 1)

Culture and anarchy are two basic terms that regularly help define the spaces of public action and the range of creative opinions available to the contemporary (western) intellectual between the first and the last revolt in Paris (1789–1968). They are not necessarily oppositional, although they have been often perceived as such. But together they circumscribe a certain area of lofty concerns and self-reflective passions thriving in proud isolation from politics, religion, or science. Their combined problematic is by now familiar to us from explosive biographical cases (like those of Schiller, Pound, Byron, and Mayakovsky), artistic movements (like Surrealism), intellectual trends (like the Frankfurt School), legends (like Wagner in the Dresden barricades), or renunciations (like Rimbaud's). The problem is better known as Art and Revolution, but this is a narrow articulation whose clamorous, clever clarity elevates ideas to ideals. For a broader understanding, we may turn to philosophy, which has been obsessed with the problem: Locke, Rousseau, Fichte, Heidegger, Dewey, Derrida, Habermas – the list could continue and would probably not even exclude the analytic school. The unsettling problem of the culture-anarchy relationship has provided infinite inspiration to philosophers during the last three centuries. From Descartes to Gadamer, Lyotard, and Rorty, the persisting question has been: what are the tasks of culture in a world of anarchy, what is anarchy with or without culture? Some thinkers have taken sides openly, others have not. But the interaction of the two notions can be found to lie consistently at the foundations of their system, and support their pronouncements on physics and its prefixes.

Matthew Arnold even wrote a book on the subject in 1869, giving it as a



title this pair of terms. Understandably, its success has been massive and its influence pervasive. No other work in the Anglo-American cañon of criticism and aesthetics has enjoyed its popularity. Successive generations of scholars, theorists, and teachers wishfully succumb to its seductive advocacy of beauty, reason, and letters, or at least feel obliged to address themselves to the same issues. Every discussion of literature, art, or culture in general will take it under serious consideration and acknowledge the continuing relevance of its critical vocabulary. The intensity of the reverence is such that no other attempt has been made to deal with the same issue on a similar scale. To a disconcerting extent, Anglo-American literary and cultural criticism remains a series of laudatory or dissenting remarks dutifully submitted to the margins of that central book, deriving their agenda from its concise outline of culture's mission. Our political understanding itself is indebted to his social philosophy, and consequently our culture has been largely Arnold's.

The reasons for the book's appeal may be sought in two major strategies. The first is the close linking of the main terms. A disjunction is what would normally be expected: either culture or anarchy lie ahead for mankind. And indeed, nowhere does Arnold indicate that the two may coexist. On the other hand, he refuses to oppose them directly, as if they are not antithetical. Thus we are invited to think of them together, to combine them in a mutual challenge, to let them engage each other: culture makes sense in light of the possibility of anarchy, and anarchy dictates only culture as a proper response. The two constitute the horizon of our future course and encode the alternatives of our civilization. If we oppose them, we have to exclude one; only if we see them in their interdependence may we realize that they also activate a certain productive dynamism in each other, in a mutual transformation that may express the best human potential. In this respect, Arnold knew much better than most of his commentators: he presented anarchy as an option that does not have to be annihilated but rather neutralized, assimilated, almost redeemed into culture.

Nevertheless, no invocation of redemption may ultimately avoid the dilemmatic logic of opposition. Arnold was able to preserve the tension between his two main terms without sacrificing one to another, without banning totally the joy of self-affirmation from the process of salvation. Yet, a vision of salvation had to be offered, and therefore a basic dichotomy to be established. And this brings us to the second major strategy, which was the spectacular allegorization of that dichotomy. By the mid-nineteenth century, the idea of a secular salvation had taken many forms, including those of progress, scientific knowledge, racial purification, class revolt, and Puritanism. But all these forms were too immediate, too tangible to inflame and keep alight popular imagination, not to mention the mystical needs of the intellectual sensibility. A grandiose scheme, larger than life and purer than history, was required for the depiction of the present and the revelation of the future. The sacred and the earthly had to be transposed to a higher, a

transcendental level, and to be seen there in all their sublime majesty. Arnold suggested for this purpose an allegory amenable to multiple variations, which divided everything – man, the world, experience, society, history, knowledge – through two elemental forces: the Hebraic and the Hellenic.

As in many other cases, Arnold borrowed the terms and the basic idea from earlier sources, but through a dramatic rhetorical and ideological appropriation he turned them into integral and convincing parts of his own argument. Extensive discussions and a whole chapter, "Hebraism and Hellenism," are devoted to this distinction, which supports and illuminates the book. Its importance cannot be overestimated: it not only describes the "spirit of the age" and the tasks of the nation, but above all it provides the appropriate context for an adequate understanding of culture. Just to posit culture, Arnold needs this dichotomy more than anarchy, because it makes possible the space where the two terms of the title come into contact. Furthermore, the book shows how any discussion of literature, criticism, art, genius, nation, and the other cultural values of the modern state presupposes and requires an elaboration on the historical antithetical relation between the fundamental natural forces, the Hebraic and the Hellenic. More than anybody else before or after, Arnold brought this allegory of sin and salvation to the forefront of the debates of his age and reduced all of them to its binary form. By staging this conflict in the religious and national conscience he succeeded in presenting anarchy as just another cultural alternative.

## I

Commentaries on *Culture and Anarchy* tend to concentrate almost exclusively on the first term of the title, although the book is demonstrably less a defense of culture than a homily against anarchy. What accounts for this unanimous response may be the obvious fact that culture has become a totally positive term, without a negative opposite, while anarchy forms a strong polarity with authority. Culture only denotes cultivation, growth, and development, while anarchy directly recalls and indirectly refers to authority; culture implies both process and product, but anarchy imbalance and dissolution; culture does, anarchy undoes. Arnold's commentators, willingly or unwillingly, respond to his call for action against the impending anarchy when they devote their best attention to the workings of culture: they work to deter the onslaught of anarchy, to prevent the disease from spreading. And yet the direction of the project is indicated in the semantic structure of its title: anarchy is not placed against its opposite, authority, but is paired with culture; the implication is that culture deters anarchy by supporting authority. The main argument, then, as expressed elliptically here, is that authority needs culture to survive. Under the emergency created by the imminent danger of anarchy, the dissolution of order and the collapse of authority, the defense by culture becomes the absolute priority. This basic concern inspires Arnold's project and should

therefore be the starting point of any analysis. Although Arnold repeatedly defines and explains the notion of culture in great detail, he never offers a definition of anarchy. Not that the term in his time was clear or that its reality was familiar to all. His neglect seems systematic and aims at a certain vagueness, that is allowed to engulf the word in ominous implications. By leaving its meaning unclear while alluding to its threat in various contexts, he places the anomalous experience of disorder at the threshold of civilization and in the advancing horizon of progress. Anarchy is the anguish of the wrong move: he can always conjure its spectre up when he needs to discipline our ambitions. Nothing is said explicitly about anarchy, so that readers may feel and fear it. From its different appearances (or rather apparitions), we may infer what it is, but we are never told. We are encouraged to hear but not look, to read the signs but not ask about the wall. Anarchy is the difference, the absence, the otherness of order: we recognize and know it through our fear of lack of security and authority.

Arnold's observations cover mainly phenomena of discord and dispersion in two spheres, the religious and the political. In the first, intimations of anarchy are discovered in criticisms of traditional dogma and practices, and in suspicions toward orthodoxy expressed in sectarian movements of English Puritans and Protestant (English and Scotch) Nonconformists, such as the organization of the Independents (Arnold 1971: 44) or recent attempts to disestablish the Irish Church (1971: 17). In these trends against the establishment of the Church Arnold detects a cult of dissent, an addiction to intolerance and hatred, and a pervasive divisiveness. His estimate is that the whole Nonconformist movement is taking the Church apart, shaking its foundations, undermining its authority, and dividing the nation.

Signs of a parallel situation are found in the political sphere too. Here the threat of anarchy is manifest in local claims, criticisms of the class system, "outbreaks of rowdyism" (1971: 62), "worship of freedom in and for itself" (ibid.), and generally in demands for individual liberty.

More and more . . . are beginning to assert and put in practice an Englishman's right to do what he likes; his right to march where he likes, meet where he likes, enter where he likes, hoot as he likes, threaten as he likes, smash as he likes. All this, I say, tends to anarchy. (ibid.)

There is an obvious distinction here between the right and its practice: it is a good thing to have it but a negative one to see just about anybody exercise it. This worry is reinforced by the choice of verbs — meet, march, enter, hoot, threaten, smash: in their natural succession, they re-enact the procession of anarchy. The danger, claims Arnold in a most revealing example, is not the Irish Fenian, the alien and conquered papist who struggles for independence, because that resistance we can always crush, and for good reason, by brutal force; the real danger is the Hyde Park rioter, the Protestant Englishman of the working class who demands liberty, because "the

question of questions for him, is a wages question" (1971: 65). Arnold believes that he is not a revolutionary but a rough who "has not yet quite found his groove and settled down to his work, and so he is just asserting his personal liberty a little, going where he likes, assembling where he likes, bawling as he likes, hustling as he likes" (ibid.). The author's point is clear: the threat of anarchy comes not from the outsider, who can be repelled and punished, but from the insider who challenges the system. The choice and succession of verbs again warns against the self-affirmation that may lure every exercise of freedom into excess.

Still in the sphere of politics, but on a larger scale, Arnold expresses apprehension about the positivistic and Manichean "ways of Jacobinism" (1971: 52), with its absolute trust in reason, and about the supporters of an indiscriminate Liberalism, all of them advocating change without having a new realistic plan to suggest. Their attitudes are reflected in their blind trust in machinery, which is in fact "the one concern of our actual politics" (1971: 27). But technology will not prevent social unrest. Arnold concludes that faith in individual freedom and in industrial advancements, along with the rapid decline of the old religious devotion, are the most telling signs of an impending anarchy spreading in many areas of the personal and national life and threatening the established political and church institutions. Its overall picture, as painted in *Culture and Anarchy*, includes the critique of various forms of establishment, the degeneration of traditional authority, individualism in the name of freedom, and the development of a mechanical and materialist civilization. The social machine is out of order, as attested by the "exclusive attention of ours to liberty, and of the relaxed habits of government which it has engendered" (1971: 64). The unbalanced social condition is seen not only in the inability of the aristocrats to govern but also in the helplessness of the other classes to provide viable alternatives: The egocentric skepticism of modernity has corroded the pillars of supreme power.

We have found that at the bottom of our present unsettled state, so full of the seeds of trouble, lies the notion of its being the prime right and happiness, for each of us, to affirm himself, and his ordinary self; to be doing, and to be doing freely and as he likes. We have found at the bottom of it the disbelief in right reason as a lawful authority. (1971: 121)

For Arnold, the problem lies with the modern individual of the middle and lower classes – with the sovereign subject, that is, the individual of the modern, post-revolutionary era. And the specific problem is his newly acquired and much celebrated freedom: how can it be channelled and controlled? How can it be rendered harmless for the establishment and its institutions? How can it be neutralized, cleansed of its centrifugal tendencies? Belief in authority has to be restored – but this authority has now to be democratic, and its believers should be the subjects comprising the modern



political system. How then can the subject be subjected? How can freedom be administered? A new religion is obviously needed that will inspire trust, faith, and obedience – a religion of secular order that will help people resist the temptations of liberty and avoid the sin of anarchy. Arnold proposes a “religion of culture” (1971: 58), and as an ardent “believer” he seeks “to find some plain grounds on which a faith in culture . . . may rest securely” (1971: 32).

## II

Culture is “a study of perfection” (1971: 34),

a pursuit of total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world; and through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly but mechanically. . . . And the culture we recommend is, above all, an inward operation. (1971: 5–6)

Arnold promulgates “the idea of perfection as an *inward* condition of the mind and spirit,” “as a general expansion of the human family,” and “as a harmonious expansion of human nature” (1971: 38). His dogma replaces salvation with perfection, faith with knowledge, the transcendental with the inside, elevation with growth, purification with harmony, atonement with cultivation. He argues that “of perfection as pursued by culture, beauty and intelligence, or, in other words, sweetness and light, are the main characters” (1971: 58). His idea of culture is a private pursuit of beauty and intelligence by means of knowing the canon of our tradition – an inward operation of growth that leads to harmony and fulfillment. He offers this vision of personal cultivation and development to those who claim free exercise of their rights as an alternative goal in life and as a program for national survival – to the philistines of the middle class now in power and to the populace demanding equality.

Arnold’s idea of culture as a religion for the modern undereducated or underprivileged masses is based directly on the principles of aesthetics. He presents it as “the disinterested endeavour after man’s perfection” (1971: 22) that is free of materialist concerns and instead focuses on the mental faculties. “Culture, disinterestedly seeking in its aim at perfection to see things as they really are” (1971: 24), helps the intellect grow freely in harmony and knowledge. He outlines the “free spontaneous play of consciousness” (1971: 167) whereby the subject pursues pure intellectual fulfillment through the grasp of knowledge and the contemplation of beauty. Repeated references to beauty, freeplay, disinterestedness, harmony, perfection, inwardness, purity, and autonomy show that Arnold’s ideal of “culture and totality” (1971: 15) is an aesthetic one, and his praise of culture a strong defense of high art.

He establishes the parallel explicitly: "In thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection, culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry" (1971: 42). Culture propagates life as art, art as poetry, and poetry as writing. Culture, the disinterested contemplation of beauty, is the secular cult of disinterestedness, which ultimately promulgates leisure as writing, but also writing as leisure. Arnold is preaching to the bourgeoisie and addressing himself to their needs and worries — the demands for more profits and rights, the spiritual quest, education, training for government, exercise of power. All this is skillfully sublimated in the ideas of inwardness, disinterestedness, play, and perfection. Modern individualism can be both celebrated and controlled by being encouraged to celebrate its self — in purity, autonomy, harmony.

Any discussion of *Culture and Anarchy* should not lose the perspective provided by the subtitle of the book: "An Essay in Political and Social Criticism." Arnold's defense of culture is only part of a critique directed against the anarchy looming over society and its institutions. Therefore invocations of beauty and appeals to intelligence should be understood as strategic employments of notions that are intended to counter disorder. The pursuit of culture may be disinterested, but its uses serve (and are expected to continue to serve) very specific social and political interests. Arnold is careful to stress that culture, although a freeplay for the individual, is his duty towards society. It should therefore be "considered not merely as the endeavour to see and learn this [things as they really are], but as the endeavour also, to make it prevail" (1971: 36). The nation needs the enlightenment that only it can provide with its beneficial social/moral effects. "Now, then, is the moment for culture to be of service; culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail" (ibid.). Arnold is clearly talking not only about edification but also about real power.

Culture, in order to acquire power and prevail, should be broadly distributed. The old means of administration by coercion were in the hands of the few; culture, however, should be the privilege of the masses, and therefore made widely available in order to effect administration by subjection. All subjects must go through a process of enculturation. Sweetness and light are not enough, and "we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light for as many as possible" (1971: 55). Culture, as a bourgeois ideal, is egalitarian and liberal: it advocates equality in perfectibility in a democracy of independent subjects.

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 an atmosphere of sweetness and light, where they may use ideas, as it uses them itself, freely, — nourished, and not bound by them. This is the *social idea*; and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. (1971: 56)

In both its attempt to permeate society and prevail, and in its egalitarian

attitude, culture again strongly resembles religion. "Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here, too, it coincides with religion" (1971: 37). In regard to our duty to spread the message, "culture lays on us the same obligation as religion" (ibid.). The only substantial difference is that the former replaces faith with knowledge. "What distinguishes culture is, that it is possessed by the scientific passion as well as by the passion of doing good" (1971: 35). This is, then, the secular religion of the bourgeois era: democratic, egalitarian, disinterested, open-minded, expansive, it makes pure beauty and correct knowledge a common good and cause, protecting from public anarchy through private perfection.

Thus in Arnold's scheme culture is essentially a means for preserving, improving, and enhancing authority. For this reason, its subject is the canon itself, the respected tradition of acknowledged masterpieces.

The great works by which, not only in literature, art, and science generally, but in religion itself, the human spirit has manifested its approaches to totality and to a full, harmonious perfection, and by which it stimulates and helps forward the world's general perfection, come, not from Nonconformists, but from men who either belong to Establishments or have been trained in them. (1971: 9)

As we know, "establishments tend to give us a sense of a historical life of the human spirit, outside and beyond our own fancies and feelings" (1971: 16). Culture is the music produced by the operations of those establishments, the melody of their effective functions. In turn, its social task is to serve, to strengthen them. By its origin, culture is canonical, inextricably bound to authority. The establishment is the source and its master, authority its proper realm of development. When culture prevails, authority prevails as well; when people become enculturated, they are simultaneously subjected to rational control. Culture gives authority the ultimate justification – inherent value; in addition, by training subjects, it makes coercive subjection redundant.

### III

Culture, however, works both ways: it not only trains people for authority but also contributes to the reformation and modernization of authority. In regard to the latter, Arnold argues, culture is now suggesting a new model and center, the state. In a period of expansion and decentralization, innovations and revisions may happen too fast for the establishment to adjust. "Everywhere we see the beginnings of confusion, and we want a clue to some sound order and authority" (1971: 120). There is an urgent need for new organization and structure, for an orderly transformation of the old system that will contribute to what was called a "revolution by due course of law" (1971: 173). Only culture, with its sweet light, may point the way

to which "the assertion of our freedom is to be subordinated" (1971: 63). That authority, whose rules will be right reason, the will of God, and one's best self, is the modern state. Arnold closes his book by expressing the conviction that "our main business at the present moment is not so much to work away at certain crude reforms of which we have already the scheme in our own mind, as to create, through the help of that culture which at the very outset we began by praising and recommending, a frame of mind out of which the schemes of really fruitful reforms may with time grow" (1971: 167-8). Priority is given not to the system but to mind: reform must first be executed there. During the continuing decline of traditional authority, the state, through the appropriate cultural training, must distract the growing skepticism of the masses for the existing forms of establishment, and instead educate them, by disseminating the artistic and literary canon, in the pleasures and duties of subjectivity. Division, Nonconformism, disbelief, criticism, and protest; which are threatening the foundations of the class and Church systems, ought to be diverted by and into culture, while authority will undergo a transformation into a benevolent state. "Well, then, what if we tried to rise above the idea of class to the idea of the whole community, *the State*, and to find our centre of light and authority there?" (1971: 77). People are threatened by selfishness, the greed of their common, everyday selves, and a supreme authority is needed to save them from themselves. "We want an authority, and we find nothing but jealous classes, checks, and a deadblock; culture suggests the idea of *the State*. We find no basis for a firm State-power in our ordinary selves; culture suggests one to us in our *best self*" (1971: 78).

According to Arnold, then, the three steps that man has to take, if he is not to fall into chaos, are culture, self, and state. In his terminology, beauty and knowledge will cultivate right reason and apply it to the establishment of an enlightened, democratic authority. That authority is the "*State*, the power most representing the right reason of the nation, and most worthy, therefore, of ruling, - of exercising, when circumstances require it, authority over us all" (1971: 67). As this model of order shows, the state represents the rules, or, rather, rules by representing: it re-presents the people as a nation, and their rights as government. The government of the nation is the representation of the educated citizens, of the acculturated subjects, of that state. Authority is now turning into an exercise more of control than of force. Individual demands and practices of rights will be rendered meaningless by this highest manifestation of communal solidarity and desire which is already expressed in the "idea of a *State*, of the nation in its collective and corporate character controlling, as government, the free swing of this or that one of its members in the name of the higher reason of all of them, his own as well as that of others" (1971: 65). Thus the state, like the best, the individual self, will be built on the model of the autonomous, self-sufficient, radiant artwork and based on aesthetic principles suggested by culture. It is



time for people to create, and assimilate themselves into, the state of culture.

As we saw earlier, while the inward operations of culture are not of social relevance, their repercussions have major political importance. Activities within the realm of culture may be private and disinterested but they eventually affect the establishment. The relationship between culture and authority, however, is mutually constitutive and beneficial in that at the same time the latter sanctions and consecrates the former. As we can see clearly in the case of the state, culture and authority produce and support each other. In the state projected by Arnold, in this promised land of the bourgeoisie, culture, on the one hand, authorizes the validity of the communal consensus, while the state, on the other, recognizes it as its official faith and makes it the national religion of the secular kingdom. In this context, the role of culture is therapeutic: it cures people of their worst selves and authority of its unnecessary excesses, restoring health, reason, unity, sweetness, and light in the shaken establishments. But for a better understanding of its foundations, we ought to inquire deeper and "find, beneath our actual habits and practice, the very ground and cause out of which they spring" (1971: 106). And the ground and the cause of our being and plight is the double, schismatic, contradictory identity of our civilization = Hebraism and Hellenism.

#### IV

For almost three centuries, since it first posited itself as an essence, a problem, and a quest, western thought has conceived of the world in terms of an all-encompassing polarity: the Hebraic vs. the Hellenic. In literature, art, criticism, scholarship, epistemology, and metaphysics, in different forms and manifestations, whenever thought has portrayed itself (as conscience, subconscious, inspiration, knowledge, talent, language, Being, writing, subjectivity, fragmentariness, or gender) and has inquired after non-thought (the negative, God, difference, otherness, alienation, silence, lack, absence), it has always operated on the basis of this antithesis, where the Hebraic is the positive term – the depth, the horizon, and the meaning – while the Hellenic is the opposite – the surface, the moment, and the message. Thought thematizes and articulates itself as the Hebraic, the dark silence of the ontic; and it questions its materiality, its fleeting presence in this Greek world of blinding light and deceptive form. Ever since the western mind asked the question of identity, from Spinoza to Derrida, it has been searching for the different – because the question of identity is the search for the secular transcendence of difference. And the different is always Hebraic = muted, strange, exilic, always already chosen and punished: chosen to sin and punished to be chosen; while identity is the source and the cause of guilt – the material, the profane, the present, the temporary, the exchange-value of

the sign, the never before or again. The Hebraic stands for the transcendent: thought about itself and man against his (and lately her) self; while the Greek stands for the worldly, the earthly, the limited, the finitude of use. Ultimately, the distinction is between the Old Athens and the New Jerusalem, the Acropolis and the Temple, the philosopher and the prophet, beauty and faith, perfection and salvation. But as in every dialectical scheme, the two need, define, verify, support, reinforce each other: for thought to seek its other it must posit a self, to find salvation it must indulge in sin, to find meaning it must create form.

If Arnold's treatment of the polarity has been the most popular, this may be attributed partly to two reasons: his strong identification of the Hebraic with authority, and his vision of a possible reconciliation of the opposite forces. According to his program of national rejuvenation, the role of culture will be to renew and strengthen authority by preparing and cultivating individuals for a new national consensus to be expressed and monumentalized in the state. The old order will not be destroyed (let alone allowed to collapse) but rather supplemented by a new force, so that eventually a reconciliation of classes, religions, denominations, individual interests, and political goals will be implemented. In this scheme, the two forces of order and renovation are represented (and allegorized) respectively by Hebraism and Hellenism; and the remedy for the national malady is rational, orderly, educated, and informed Hellenization of the Hebraic order that has grown old, fanatic, and exclusive.

Arnold endorses the traditional absolute distinction between them: "Hebraism and Hellenism - between these two points of influence moves our world" (1971: 107). But he is careful not to accept their opposition as necessary: "And these two forces we may regard as in some sense rivals, - rivals not by the necessity of their own nature, but as exhibited in man and his history, - and rivals dividing the empire of the world between them" (ibid.). On the other hand, this situation should not continue, since the two trends have a major element in common: "The final aim of both Hebraism and Hellenism, as of all great spiritual disciplines, is no doubt the same: man's perfection or salvation" (1971: 108). In this sentence, especially the last parallelism, Arnold may have captured the essence of the whole dichotomy in its fundamental isomorphism: profane and divine, secular and holy, art and religion, beauty and faith - the equation of the two shows their ideological roots in the search for transcendence in both worlds, this and the other (- any other). Salvation and perfection, the Hebraic and the Hellenic, are the two sides of the dialectic coin. "At the bottom of both the Greek and the Hebrew notion [of felicity] is the desire, native in man, for reason and the will of God, the feeling after the universal order, - in a word, the love of God" (1971: 109). The forces may be radically different but they are isomorphically parallel, and their efforts converge in the search for God's love as the law of universal order. If we can work toward making them

converge on this earth and in this life, Arnold suggests, we shall establish, in the absolute, all-embracing institution of the state, the law of worldly order. And the model of perfection provided by art, as encoded in culture, will help us achieve secular salvation in the balanced, total order of communal will, reason, and desire – the state:

Distinctions between the trends are not and cannot, of course, be eliminated. “They are, truly, borne towards the same goal; but the currents which bear them are infinitely different” (1971: 110). Their approaches differ greatly. This, however, makes them complementary rather than antithetical:

their single history is not the whole history of man; whereas their admirers are always apt to make it stand for the whole history. Hebraism and Hellenism are, neither of them, the *law* of human development, as their admirers are prone to make them; they are, each of them, *contributions* to human development, – august contributions, invaluable contributions. (1971: 115)

But Arnold urges his audience to work toward reconciliation and combination, a final, stable synthesis. He envisions a world where “man’s two great natural forces, Hebraism and Hellenism, will no longer be dissociated and rival, but will be a joint force of right thinking and strong doing to carry him on towards perfection” (1971: 173). This is his dream of totality and integration of the two elemental forces, after their conflicts in history have been overcome: reconciliation and transcendence, because man needs them both. The spread of culture will help this happen, and it will take place in/as the institution of state. But before we elaborate on that, we ought to explain his conception of the two powers.

The Hebraic belongs to, and expresses, the realm of the moral: it represents doing, acting, and believing. It provides principles of behavior and rules of conduct; and commands obedience to them. The Hellenic belongs to, and expresses, the realm of the intellectual: it represents thinking, knowing, and exploring. It provides light and beauty, and inspires spontaneity. The first emanates from the social and the public, while the other from the personal and the private. Therefore the two define different spheres of experience, both basic and important. To generalize further, the Hebraic deals with issues of the soul, and the Hellenic with issues of the mind. And they find their most paradigmatic expression and systematization in religion and art respectively. This is in fact what each civilization contributed to humanity: our religion and faith are Jewish, our art and beauty Greek; we owe salvation to the former, perfection to the latter. Undoubtedly, religion is the more important experience; yet it is often stark, unsettling, demanding – it may even lead, in its fanatic expressions, to hostility to man, because self-conquest requires severe moral strictness. That is why it needs the clarity, simplicity, and freedom of art provided by Hellenism in the

comprehensive expressions of culture. Virtue needs to be balanced with disinterestedness, obedience must be sweetened with play. Extremes should meet, negotiate, and merge harmoniously according to the laws of their nature.

Hebraism and Hellenism, then, must be properly combined and balanced. That is not the case today, though, and the resulting disequilibrium has allowed anarchy to develop into a real threat. Authority, Arnold suggests, must again be balanced and its exclusiveness tempered. Historical developments, he proposes, have led to too much Hebraization. In his general view of history,

by alternations of Hebraism and Hellenism, of a man's intellectual and moral impulses, of the effort to see things as they really are, and the effort to win peace by self-conquest, the human spirit proceeds; and each of these two forces has its appointed hour of culmination and seasons of rule (1971: 116)

Thus in the sixteenth century Hellenism re-entered the world with the Renaissance after centuries of disappearance following the Hebraic triumph of Christianity. Then came a Hebraizing revival, the Reformation and the return to the Bible, which culminated in Puritanism. Arnold finds that this stage persists. "Obviously, with us, it is usually Hellenism which is thus reduced to minister to the triumph of Hebraism" (1971: 108). He agrees with Ernest Renan (1868) that this phenomenon has reached its extremest form with American Puritanism. "From Maine to Florida, and back again, all America Hebraises" (1971: 15). Therefore the current neglect of Hellenism may be attributed to "the long exclusive predominance of Hebraism" (1971: 130), which accounts for the loss of balance in the exercises of authority. Now it is deemed necessary to cure Puritanism of its excesses and redress the balance. Moral and religious feelings will not survive the onslaught of skepticism unless buttressed with the intellectual pursuits of culture. Faith must be fortified with knowledge and cultivated as an art.

Arnold's vision of an enlightened religiosity directly addresses this pressing issue, the rejuvenation of Hebraic authority with Hellenic culture. The roots of Christianity, he argues, are both Jewish and Greek. Therefore, a Christian nation should be organized as a system that draws from these two sources. In the present stage, Hellenism should receive more attention and encouragement. "Now, and for us, it is time to Hellenise, and to praise knowing; for we have Hebraised too much, and have over-valued doing" (1971: 27). Arnold is not, of course, advocating complete Hellenization, but only a minor (yet indispensable) adjustment of the existing system.

And when, by our Hebraising, we neither do what the better mind of statesmen prompted them to do, nor win the affections of the people we want to conciliate, nor yet reduce the opposition of our adversaries but



rather heighten it, surely it may not be unreasonable to Hellenise a little, to let our thought and consciousness play freely about our proposed operation and its motives, dissolve these motives if they are unsound, — which certainly they have some appearance, at any rate; of being, — and create in their stead, if they are, a set of sounder and more persuasive motives conducing to a more solid operation (1971: 145–6)

This is the gospel of Arnold's liberalism: if authority is losing ground, if division and animosity divide people and nations, then some freeplay, some informed rethinking, and some flexibility may help the reinforcement of law and order. Let us be more open-minded about administration and government, Arnold advises: when he defends the idea "to Hellenise, as we say, a little" (1971: 167), he simply means "the habit of fixing our mind upon the intelligible law of things" (1971: 166), of supporting religion with evidence and argument now that faith is far from able to guarantee the old habits of obedience. He is essentially defending the right of the new individual, the subject, to entertain his own thoughts at leisure and free of interest, when properly trained and informed: "Plain thoughts of this kind are surely the spontaneous product of our consciousness, when it is allowed to play freely and disinterestedly upon the actual facts of our social condition, and upon our stock notions and stock habits in respect to it" (ibid.). His principal concern is how the aesthetic attitude and behavior will be integrated in bourgeois life, at the same time fulfilling and justifying it. For this purpose, and for the ultimate task of the preservation of authority in mind, it would suffice to effect a "fruitful Hellenising within the limits of Hebraism itself" (1971: 154). Thus Hellenism will supplement, temper, and balance the excesses of Hebraism, and will preserve its essence intact.

Arnold makes an intense plea for "mutual understanding and balance" (1971: 122) between the two supreme forces. Still, throughout his discussion and his defense of Hellenism, he leaves no doubt about its subservient role and the superiority of Hebraism. Notice how he does not lose sight of his priorities when he admonishes that "we are to join Hebraism, strictures of the moral conscience, and manful walking by the best light we have, together with Hellenism, inculcate both, and rehearse the praises of both. Or, rather, we may praise both in conjunction, but we must be careful to praise Hebraism most" (1971: 123). This is an explicit warning: the Hellenic spirit in itself is unimportant, knowledge, culture, and the disinterested pleasures of subjectivity are meaningless, unless they serve the Hebraic establishment. Hellenism, through culture, will help "the diseased spirit of our time" (1971: 137) survive, and explore new ground for, and forms of, authority. "Hellenism may thus actually serve to further the designs of Hebraism" (1971: 133). Culture is necessary only to the extent that it protects and advances the causes of authority, whose foundations lie in the Jewish faith.

## V

In writing *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold is presenting a concrete political project: he is outlining a method for salvaging the existing modes of authority from the danger of anarchy by renewing order. He realizes that the old order has lost its credibility; he therefore looks for means of overcoming the rigidity and suffocation, and inspiring again confidence and obedience. Faced with voices publicly demanding change, exercising criticism, and claiming rights, he counter-argues by shifting the terms of the debate. For him the problem is not one of structure but of arrangement; not of default but of balance; not of power but of authority; not of politics but of science; not of religion but of culture; not of failure but of efficiency. His main aim is to fight the modern, the revisionary, the radical; he fights the combative with the dialectic. The main strategy consists in presenting the new, the unknown, the critical, as non-new, in fact as only the other, neglected half of the old. Religion and culture, he argues, together form the basis of our civilization: they represent faith and intellect respectively, and they need and entail each other. Naturally, the one is more basic and important than the other; but both are by definition implicated in a good and balanced society. The authority of religion needs the enlightenment of culture. When either predominates, the seeds of anarchy are sown. For Arnold, then, the contemporary problem is not the establishment but its excesses and abuses. He believes that cultivated, right reason may prevent them. For this reason, he seeks a strategic adjustment of power, one that will allow more individuals – namely, the participants of culture – to take part in its administration by volunteering their grateful submission. The liberalization of power will protect it from libertarian demands, and the modernization of authority will guard it against the modern. More power will not help establishments achieve subjection; instead, culture will cultivate subjects – disciplinary topics made for knowledge will educate disciplined individuals for authority.

The distinction between authority and culture is allegorized by Arnold in the Hebraic-Hellenic dichotomy. Hebraism represents authority at its best, most meaningful, and most enduring – religion. It gives it an apocryphal background, a timeless relevance, a transhistorical validity, and a prophetic power. Hellenism, on the other hand, represents enlightenment at its most comprehensive and consummate – culture. It gives authority a sense of tradition, a continuous past, a glorious history. The problem facing Arnold is how to protect religion from political criticism, and politics from individual intervention. To the threat of this problem he gives the name of anarchy, or lack of authority. His solution is to endow authority with the prestige of culture, religion with the wisdom of right knowledge, and to transform the esoteric, exclusive system of the establishment into the public, panoptically present institution of the state. The concrete suggestion, in terms of cultural enrichment, is to look at the “best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which

religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy" (1971: 43), and to imitate that model, 'to try to reach again that harmonious fusion. He observes that, in the modern world, literature, religion, and politics suffer from a severe "absence of any authoritative centre" (1971: 91). Religion and art/poetry have been of course separated, and the former is losing its justification while the latter is gaining in both independence and respect. But the center does not hold, and perfection is growing into an isolated aesthetic pursuit. "We have most of us little idea of a high standard to choose our guides by, of a great and profound spirit which is an authority while inferior spirits are none" (1971: 92). We should therefore look to art for a model and aspire to a broad culture which will provide "a certain ideal centre of correct information, taste, and intelligence" (1971: 91).

Culture is called upon to support, enlighten, and justify authority - not in its old form, though, the religion of authority, but in a new one: the art of authority. Until now, religion and its strict principles of conduct was the model of authority, as encapsulated in the Hebraic; but now, for the survival of the power of the establishment, a new model is needed, that of culture-as-art exemplified by the Hellenic. The Hebraic authority of religion, based on rules of obedience and belief, ought to be supplemented by the Hellenic authority of culture, which invites obedience as disinterested knowledge. Although authority and culture, religion and art, have so far been rivals and antagonistic forces, it is now time to be reconciled, because they can beneficially complement each other. Culture informs, enlightens, and serves authority, but without its grounding it is meaningless, if not impossible; religion, on the other hand, needs the sweetness and light of art. Culture is an auxiliary yet indispensable instrument of power, and this holds true for the Hellenic in its relationship with the Hebraic. Arnold argues that authority needs culture, religion art, virtue beauty, consciousness thought, the tyrant the poet, and power truth. In his vision of the new, all-embracing, benevolent establishment of democratic administration, the state, art will be the new faith and culture its religion: culture, as the religion of the state, will be the first secular dogma for all people, in which everybody can play freely and spontaneously. Culture will be the religion, the dogma, and the morality of the bourgeoisie.

Arnold's conception of culture-as-art, as the religion of the modern era, the cult of the dominant middle class, dictates two major principles and requires two corresponding socio-historical developments. The first is the state as the supreme form of political authority. Building it is an urgent priority because

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. Thus, in our eyes, the very framework and exterior order of the

State, whoever may administer the State, is sacred; and culture is the most resolute enemy of anarchy, because of the great hopes and designs for the State which culture teaches us to nourish. (1971: 170)

The state, then, is Hebraic authority fortified with Hellenic culture. It is characterized by sovereignty, order, direction, maturity, permanence, but above all a sacred form. In its case, the content or the agent of power are not as important as its surface and appearance as authorized by culture, because the state is pure form and total signification: authority as art. The state of culture is a product of the art, not the religion, of authority: it commands by soliciting perfection. The order of the state is sacred because it is the order of culture, of art, of form, of harmony, of the independent signifier, of the naturalized language, of pure writing, of the disinterested play with difference.

The second major principle and requirement dictated by Arnold's conception of culture is perfect individuality, the best self the bourgeois may submit for the approval of his rights. As he states in detail,

what we seek is the Philistine's [the middle class's] perfection, the development of his best self, not mere liberty for his ordinary self. And we no more allow absolute validity to his stock maxim, *Liberty is the law of human life*, than we allow it to the opposite maxim, which is just as true, *Renouncement is the law of human life*. For we know that the only perfect freedom is, as our religion says, a service; not a service to any stock maxim, but an elevation for our best self, and a harmonising in subordination to this, and to the idea of a perfected humanity, all the multitudinous, turbulent, and blind impulses of our ordinary selves. (1971: 153)

The crucial terms in this passage form a recognizable set (renouncement, subordination, service) and are together opposed to liberty. The task of the bourgeois is to improve and perfect his self, and that, as we saw before, he is encouraged to perform in the most disinterested way. But the outcome must serve the interests of a perfect, harmonious humanity. As with art, interest is no longer part of the process but a component of the result. Thus perfection is an aesthetic, private procedure that produces a political, public result. The Philistine bourgeois must mould himself into an artwork – perfect, total, autonomous, independent, fulfilled, asocial, transhistorical. But this perfect self must submit his harmonious independence to a social service. Perfection, as an aesthetic goal, justifies itself, but liberty, as a political one, does not. As Hebrew religion has taught, freedom is submission; and as Hellenic art has shown, freedom is perfection. The modern individual, then, as an independent subject, should be willing to perfect and submit himself for voluntary service. His freedom requires (and is based on) renouncement – of the ordinary, the everyday, the commonplace, the non-artistic in general.



The individual self, the absolute expression of the middle-class, is the common man purged of all commonness, absolved of all interests, who elevates himself to the level of art and serves the order of the state. His secular faith in culture generates his trust in worldly authority. The more independent and perfect he is, the better servant of the state he may become. His harmony with his self facilitates the harmonization of his pursuits with those of the state in that, through perfection, he subjects himself willingly. His highest ideals are a life of art and a state of culture. In Arnold's vision, the individual as artwork is the masterpiece of culture, and the state as site its museum, which succeeds the institution of the Church. From a matter of taste, the canon becomes a guide to good conduct. In this universe of decorated exteriors, natural signs, and self-conscious enjoyments, control reaches an incomparable purity as it turns into the sheer formalism of administration. The self at its best, a law of art unto himself, has been prepared to serve the rule of the state. Independence will cost him individuality, his rights will cost him his protests, and his culture his liberty. Art will administer his pleasure, culture his desire, science his thought, and the state his salvation. Selves are for service, subjects for subjection. Those who cannot be served by religion alone any more will be given another chance, this time on the personal level, to atone by/in/as art: they may renounce life and redeem the ordinary in beauty.

The Hebraism-Hellenism dichotomy that Arnold employs helps him dramatize the conflict between authority and dissent, and show a path toward reconciliation. The dramatization is effected through an opposition and allegorization of the two forces which are hypostasized as two natural powers, unraveling in (and constituting through their competition) western history. The Hebraic represents the dark kingdom of religion, while the Hellenic the radiant presence of art. In Arnold's scheme, the former stands for the moral austerity of order and authority, and the latter for the disinterested knowledge of harmony and culture. Culture is of course the first word in the title of the book. But as we noted earlier, the other basic notion, authority, appears in the title only through its semantic opposite, anarchy, and thus it is obscured - "made dark", i.e., Hebraic. The effect of this choice of words may be explained in two ways. One is to say that Arnold introduces a new polarity, implying that anarchy actually opposes culture and that, conversely, only culture can save us from anarchy. This view is partly corroborated by the original title of the book's first chapter, "Sweetness and Light," which, when the text was presented as a lecture, was "Culture and its Enemies." There is another possible reading, though, which may not be incompatible with this one. Let us again recall that the Hellenic represents mind, thought, exploration, spontaneity, and independence, and not soul, faith, morality, obedience, proper conduct, and strictness. As these polar distinctions imply, the Hellenic is not only what generates culture, but also what makes anarchy possible. If the Hebraic is order and the Hellenic play;

if order requires faith and play facilitates inquiry; if the faith in order produces obedience and the play of inquiry advances knowledge (whose consequence is sin) – then the power of the Hellenic is truly ambiguous and ambivalent: it may lead to either renewed or to overturned order, it may strengthen authority or engineer anarchy, it may release either the beneficial or the eruptive power of culture. Anarchy, then, is part of the Hellenic potential – it is the uncontrolled, untamed, free, skeptical, and irreverent Hellenic.

Arnold seems to realize that exclusive, static, coercive power provokes extreme critiques of authority, and invites disobedience with its traditionalism. His method of defense includes three tactics: first, to allegorize the two forces by branding them with the names and emblems of two ancient civilizations; second, to integrate dissent into the second, and depict it only as its worst potential, an irregularity, a disease of culture; and, third, to advocate the reconciliation of the two forces, provided that the Hellenic remains healthy and reasonable. The title *Culture and Anarchy*, then, reflects the two possibilities and faces, the double potential of Hellenism, and the book outlines the benefits of its positive version for authority, the secularization of religion through/as art by culture. When uncontrolled, Arnold implies, culture may lead and turn into anarchy: today, for example, its unrestrained exercise threatens the foundations of old authority. Instead of letting the rivalry grow by fighting against culture, we should graft it onto authority; instead of rejecting and suppressing it, we should bring it to contribute to the creation of a new establishment. Because of its earthiness, inquisitiveness, and irreverence, the Hellenic is the real threat. It must be properly controlled by being fashioned after art and by being given the administration of science. Its role and territory, then, will be the construction of a national tradition and of a canon of perfection. It will thus serve and grace authority by making training mandatory and coercion redundant. Arnold's approach to the world of craft, custom, and festival is wholly aesthetic and allegorical, and intends to avert its politicization. The praise of culture and of the Hellenic advocates the former as the religion of the state and the latter as the supplementary beauty and supporting knowledge of the Hebraic. In his method of argumentation, there is no Hebraic without the Hellenic, and no defense of authority without both. To invoke the two is to distinguish the two and thus to hierarchize them, all in order to justify the rights and exercises of authority by the middle class. In all cases, the Hebraic is the modern – the modernist, the middle class, the moral, soul, progress, utopia, God; and the Hellenic is its different – its negative, its other, its supplement, its plenitude, its waste; its debauchery, its debasement, its debacle; its dis-interest, its dis-sent, its dis-sonance. The polarity reveals the aesthetic fashioning of man in the construction of bourgeois identity.

## VI

Arnold kept the Hebraism–Hellenism distinction alive and graphic in all his work. But the most important return to it took place a few years after *Culture and Anarchy*, in *Literature and Dogma. An Essay Towards a Better Apprehension of the Bible* ([1873] 1892). The title of the former contains the two sides of the Hellenic; the new one contains both the Hellenic and the Hebraic. The first attempts to counter anarchy with culture, and combine the latter with authority; the latter tries to reconcile the two paradigmatic expressions of Hellenism and Hebraism, and show how they can work together. The opening sentence of its “Preface” sets the context unequivocally: “An inevitable revolution, of which we all recognise the beginnings and signs, but which has already spread, perhaps, farther than most of us think, is befalling the religion in which we have been brought up” (1892: v). Arnold worries about the “spread of scepticism” among the “*lapsed masses*” (1892: vi). People question the Bible and even reject it, while the churches can do nothing because theology is false and does not speak a relevant language. “Our mechanical and materializing theology, with its insane licence of affirmation about God, its insane licence of affirmation about a future state, is really the result of the poverty and inanition of our minds” (1892: xii). It excludes people by only confirming truth and power, without allowing them to participate through knowledge and understanding in faith. “Here, then, is the problem: to find, for the Bible, a basis in something which can be verified, instead of something which has to be assumed” (1892: ix–x). “The old religious institutions and their practices cannot protect the faith from its corruption and the imminent collapse under the critique of dissent. A radical change is necessary, a broad revision. “The thing is, to recast religion, if this is done, the new religion will be the national one” (1892: x). A national religion is needed to unite all people – one respecting the rights and expectations of the middle class.

Arnold’s aim is “to show that, when we come to put the right construction on the Bible, we give to the Bible a real experimental basis, and keep on this basis throughout” (1892: xi). His concern is the preservation of and correct approach to the Bible, so that a national religion may be built. And to this end he has again one remedy to recommend: “*culture*, the acquainting ourselves with the best that has been known and said in the world, and thus with the history of the human spirit” (ibid.). In regard to the question how can culture help our understanding of the Bible, this means “*getting the power, through reading, to estimate the proportion and relation in what we read*” (1892: xiv). Thus again he insists that culture, the secular religion, can help build the national religion. But, as we see, faith has been replaced by correct reading, believing by interpreting. Now the Bible is a text. His specific suggestion, as indicated in the title of the book, is that we read the Bible as literature, the Book as a book. We are not to take theological

explanations for granted; we are rather to read and interpret. We do not necessarily need the mediation of the Church, since we can develop a direct, personal relationship with the text. Culture will help our interpretation, interpretation our religion, religion our nation. As Heinrich Heine would say, it is time to exercise our basic civil right, interpretation, and advance our collective interests.

It comes as a surprise to see literary reading invoked as an aid to understanding the Bible (and recasting religion). Only a century ago, it was biblical criticism that gave birth to literary criticism and gave it its first credibility by letting it use other texts as scriptures. But it is a sure sign of literary criticism's great success that it can now lend its power to revive the authority of the Bible. Arnold admits that the canon does not hold (1892: xxiv, xxvi). Reading-as-interpretation, which was generated by biblical studies, must now contribute to the study of the Bible, and return to its original model. This will be done through culture. In a major aphorism, Arnold states that "culture is reading" (1892: xxvii). The statement ought to be amplified: bourgeois culture is literary reading; the bourgeois religion of the state (=culture) is reading of the literary scriptures (=interpretation). Literary interpretation is the consummate experience of the bourgeois, his supreme and purest civil right: it is private, domestic, silent, passive, faithful: It is what culture teaches the middle class to do, how culture trains people in subjectivity, how it accommodates their libertarian claims in the privacy of beauty. That is why the topic of Arnold's book is "the relation of letters to religion," "their effect upon dogma," and "the consequences of this to religion" (1892: 5). Letters and religion, literature and dogma, culture and authority - we are back again in the realm of the secularized Hebraic.

Close to the end of his book, Arnold returns explicitly to the Hebraism-Hellenism dichotomy, using now the more specific terms "Greece" and "Israel." The former, he argues, gave to the world art and science, the latter conduct and righteousness. All these elements are important for a full life. "But conduct, plain matter as it is, is six-eighths of life, while art and science are only two-eighths. And this brilliant Greece perished for lack of attention enough to *conduct*; for want of conduct, steadiness, character" (1892: 320). Anxious to disperse any lingering misunderstandings of his earlier position, Arnold repeats himself in the "Conclusion" to explain that he never questioned the supremacy of Hebraism. Even when he praised culture, the importance of righteousness was paramount in his mind and taken for granted:

And, certainly, if we had ever said that Hellenism was three-fourths of human life, a palinode, as well as an unmusical man may, we would sing. But we never said it. In praising culture, we have never denied that conduct, not culture, is three-fourths of human life. (1892: 345)



The awkward quantification highlights his despair about keeping the correct balance between the two forces. And his preference is strongly expressed, as when he states that "the revelation which rules the world," even now, is not Greece's revelation but Judaea's" (1892: 320). Of course it is true that the historical Israel perished too; but its lesson will never disappear.

Thus, therefore, the ideal Israel for ever lives and prospers; and its city is the city whereto all nations and languages, after endless trials of everything else except conduct, after incessantly attempting to do without righteousness and failing, are slowly but surely gathered. (1892: 318)

The Hebraic moral revelation rules the world, and culture is called to serve its ultimate victory. It is also true that "conduct comes to have relations of a very close kind with culture" (1892: 345) and that it is "impaired by the want of science and culture" (1892: 347). But authority belongs to the rules of conduct, not the laws of art and science.

Culture, however, is necessary in its subservient role as a defense against skepticism and dissent that question authority. "And therefore, simple as the Bible and conduct are, still culture seems to be required for them, - required to prevent our mis-handling and sophisticating them" (1892: 348). In recognition of the fundamental law of our human being, which is both "aesthetic and intellectual" and "moral" (1892: 349), we should accept that "even for apprehending this God of the Bible rightly and not wrongly, letters, which so many people now disparage, and what we call, in general, *culture*, seems to be necessary" (1892: 350). Aesthetics and literary criticism will repay a debt to theology and biblical interpretation, from which they arose, and will secularize their book, make it a literary text, translate it in terms the middle class understands and in situations it cherishes. Since reading/interpreting has become the fundamental experience, let us finally integrate it with its original subject, the Bible. Arnold seems to argue: if the bourgeois reads, give him the Bible to read, since you cannot expect him any longer to believe in it; now that he has no interest in the holy, give him the Bible for a truly disinterested experience.

In order to defend religion, the Bible, his class, and the nation, Arnold has to rehearse the Hebraism-Hellenism dichotomy. This thesis-antithesis rules his world, helps him make sense out of its divisions. It was also an integral part of his vision for the future. At the end of *Literature and Dogma*, he sees the possibility for a religious art that will only aspire to please God: "For, the clearer our conceptions in art and science become, the more they will assimilate themselves to the conceptions of duty in conduct, will become practically stringent like rules of conduct, and will invite the same sort of language in dealing with them" (1892: 349). But he does not stop here. He ventures into anthropological theories of race and, elaborating on the positions of Emil Burnouf, proceeds

to talk about the Aryan genius, as to say, that the lore of *science*, and the energy and honesty in the pursuit of *science*, in the best of the Aryan races, do seem to correspond in a remarkable way to the love of *conduct*, and the energy and honesty in the pursuit of *conduct*, in the best of the Semitic. To treat science with the same kind of seriousness as conduct, does seem, therefore, to be a not impossible thing for the Aryan genius to come to. (1892: 349)

Here the Hebraism–Hellenism dichotomy culminates in a radical differentiation between the Aryan and the Semitic races, and their respective basic characteristics. The suggestion is one of conciliation, of possible combination of science and religion. Arnold always cared deeply about a natural religion that would express the race naturally, utilize the resources of culture (i.e., art and science), and unite all people in the community of a national state. His advice to his nation was to support and propagate the Hebraic religion with Hellenic art, authority and culture. From our historical perspective, it may seem strange to see him putting so much trust in the Aryan race. When he used his basic dichotomy to divide people in two races, so that the institutions of the new national reality could be justified, he was unable to predict the war of Aryan religion and culture that was to follow later. But by that time bourgeois authority was too fortified with culture to be stopped from barbarism. Apparently all that its early advocates, like Matthew Arnold, knew how to worry about was just anarchy.

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