

剑桥政治思想史原著系列（影印本）

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

“文化和无政府” 及其他著作

*Culture and
Anarchy and
other writings*

Arnold

阿诺德

Edited by

STEFAN

COLLINI

中国政法大学出版社

马修·阿诺德
MATTHEW ARNOLD

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Matthew Arnold's *Culture and Anarchy*, first published in 1869, is one of the most celebrated works of social criticism ever written. It has become an inescapable reference-point for all subsequent discussion of the relations between politics and culture, and it has exercised a profound influence both on conceptions of the distinctive nature of British society, and on ideas about education and the teaching of literature more generally. This edition establishes the authoritative text of this much-revised work, and places it alongside Arnold's three most important essays on political subjects – 'Democracy', 'Equality', and 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time'. The editor's substantial introduction situates these works in the context both of Arnold's life and other writings, and of nineteenth-century intellectual and political history. In order to make Arnold's work accessible to students, this edition also contains a chronology of Arnold's life, a bibliographical guide and full notes on the names, books, and historical events mentioned in the texts.

剑桥政治思想史原著系列

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在政治理论领域，“剑桥政治思想史原著系列”作为主要的学生教科丛书，如今已牢固确立了其地位。本丛书旨在使学生能够获得从古希腊到 20 世纪初期西方政治思想史方面所有最为重要的原著。它囊括了所有著名的经典原著，但与此同时，它又扩展了传统的评价尺度，以便能够纳入范围广泛、不那么出名的作品。而在此之前，这些作品中有许多从未有过现代英文版本可资利用。只要可能，所选原著都会以完整而不删节的形式出版，其中的译作则是专门为本丛书的目的而安排。每一本书都有一个评论性的导言，加上历史年表、生平梗概、进一步阅读指南，以及必要的词汇表和原文注解。本丛书的最终目的是，为西方政治思想的整个发展脉络提供一个清晰的轮廓。

本丛书已出版著作的书目，请查阅书末。

CAMBRIDGE TEXTS IN THE HISTORY OF POLITICAL THOUGHT

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public life of its time: it is neither a policy proposal nor a work of systematic theory. The book requires, if it is to exercise its subtle power, a certain willing complicity on the part of the reader. Both Arnold's distinctive style and the high degree of allusion and local reference in his writing can, on first acquaintance, obstruct this process. The notes to this edition are designed to remove the second of these obstacles, and the following discussion of Arnold's characteristic literary strategies and leading ideas is intended to help the reader who is coming for the first time to this elusive, but ultimately deeply rewarding writer.

The purpose and style of Arnold's social criticism

Arnold wrote as a critic of his own society, constantly attempting to correct the exaggeration and one-sidedness which in his view disfigured much of its political and intellectual debate. With some justice, he identified the besetting sins of the public life of Victorian England as parochialism, complacency, and (in a term of German origin which he did much to put into general circulation) 'philistinism'. His response was to try to open up English consciousness to European ideas and perspectives, and to provoke his readers into an uneasy awareness of the limitations of their established mental habits. He did not, therefore, occupy a position that can easily be characterized as 'radical' or 'conservative', in either intellectual or political terms. Although he was, like most of his educated contemporaries, apprehensive about the dangers involved in the as yet untried experiment of democracy, he was firmly committed to reducing existing inequalities and he could be a stinging critic of the failings of the English governing classes.

There is an important general question here about the degree of distance from one's society required by such a task. A certain reflective detachment is obviously indispensable, but effective cultural critics need to be sufficiently intimate with the assumptions and traditions of their society to criticize with the requisite discrimination, and they have to share enough of its values to be able to bring them to bear in inducing that kind of self-criticism which is the condition of persuasion. Complete outsiders, by contrast, can only denounce; they may disturb those within the walls who hear their curses, but they are unlikely to lead them to reform their ways. Arnold was in no sense an

Introduction

Matthew Arnold is not primarily read or remembered for his contribution to the history of what has come to be known as 'political thought', and at first sight it may seem surprising to find him in such company. 'Literary critic' is the label most readily applied to him today; certainly, he did more than any other single figure to endow the role of the critic with the cultural centrality it has come to enjoy in the English-speaking world. At the same time, his poetry, including such frequently anthologized pieces as 'Dover Beach' and 'The Scholar-Gypsy', has earned him a secure place in the canon of English literature. He also wrote extensively and influentially on religion and education, among other topics, and at his death in 1888 he was recognized as the leading man-of-letters in Victorian Britain. Nonetheless, his best-known work, *Culture and Anarchy*, first published in 1869, has left a lasting impress upon subsequent debate about the relation between politics and culture, not least by provoking vigorous disagreement, and this book and the selection of his other writings included here reveal him to have been a social critic and political commentator of rare power and persuasiveness.

Culture and Anarchy, which may be one of the most frequently cited non-fiction prose works in the English language, is hard to classify in terms of modern academic disciplines. However, its subtitle (misleadingly omitted in some selections from his writings) points us in the right direction: 'An Essay in Political and Social Criticism'. It is an 'essay', intended to be readable and stimulating: it is neither a treatise nor a text-book. And it is a work of 'political and social criticism', closely engaging with the beliefs and assumptions manifested in the

troublesome, feature of his style is his irony, and this is closely related to his characteristic strategy of taking the higher ground than his opponents. Irony is a particularly vital resource for a writer who wishes to embody as well as recommend an alternative to stridency, exaggeration and over-simplification. Skilfully used, irony can conjure up the suggestion of much wisdom and judgement held in reserve, accumulated stocks of experience that are not drawn on directly but which enable the too-simple or too-loud to be seen for what they are. Such a tone came naturally to Arnold, though he was also fully aware of its effectiveness. 'For my part', he reflected in a letter of 1867, 'I see more and more what an effective weapon, in a confused, loud-talking, clap-trappy country like this, where every writer and speaker to the public tends to say rather more than he means, is *irony* . . . The main effect I have had on the mass of noisy claptrap and inert prejudice which chokes us has been, I can see, by the use of this weapon.' Arnold's light touch has misled some readers into thinking him merely flippant. But what he called his 'vivacities' were not only a necessary form of artistic self-assertion on his part: they were in themselves also an essential element in the realization of a purpose which was, at bottom, profoundly serious. Moreover, he was surely right to take satisfaction from the thought that 'however much I may be attacked, my manner of writing is certainly one that takes hold of people and proves effective.'

'Democracy'

In 1859 Arnold was sent by the Newcastle Commission on Elementary Education on a five-month tour of the schools of France, Holland, and the French cantons of Switzerland, and two years later he published a revised version of his official report under the title *The Popular Education of France*. For this volume he composed a long introduction, reflecting upon the whole question of the proper role of the state in a modern society, and when he later republished this introduction as a separate essay, he entitled it 'Democracy'. This title, and still more the tenor of his reflections themselves, indicated an important affinity with the French political theorist Alexis de Tocqueville, whose *De la démocratie en Amérique* (which had appeared some twenty years earlier and had immediately been published in an influential English translation) explored the kinds of social as well as

outsider: he belonged, by upbringing and style of life, to the most comfortable stratum of the Victorian professional class, mixing easily with the more sympathetic members of the political and social elite. In intellectual style, he was, in Carlyle's adaptation of a biblical phrase that Arnold was fond of quoting, 'terribly at ease in Zion' (e.g. p. 130). Moreover, he took for granted much that men of his rank and time took for granted. Inevitably, this has left him vulnerable to the reproaches of an age more alert to some of the injustices of class, gender, and race. But it also gave him an insider's ear for significance and nuance, and it meant that he very rarely indulged in that deceptive form of self-flattery which consists in dramatizing oneself as locked in heroically lonely combat with forces that are both alien and overwhelming.

In engaging in such criticism, Arnold's tone of voice was at once his chief weapon and his most distinctive quality. It was not a matter of forcing his readers to abandon one position in favour of another, but of putting them in the way of the experience which, when reflected upon, would bring home to them the defects of the frame of mind that had found expression in the erroneous 'position' in the first place. This is one of the reasons why the sense of the engaging conversational presence of the author is exceptionally vivid when reading Arnold's prose. Arnold, as one might expect of such a self-conscious writer, could be knowingly aware of this effect (indeed, a sense of this awareness is sometimes allowed to edge into the prose itself, thereby drawing the reader further into complicity). As his essays began to attract attention, he took the measure of his powers with a frank confidence:

It is very animating to think that one at last has a chance of *getting* at the English public. Such a public as it is, and such a work as one wants to do with it! Partly nature, partly time and study, have also by this time taught me thoroughly the precious truth that everything turns upon one's exercising the power of *persuasion*, of *charm*; that without this all fury, energy, reasoning power, acquirement, are thrown away and only render their owner more miserable. Even in one's ridicule one must preserve a sweetness and good-humour.

(Letter, 29 Oct. 1863)

One cannot read very far into Arnold's prose, however, without recognizing that much the most important, if also potentially the most

Arnold deplored this neglect of what he took to be one of the most fundamental tasks of the state in a civilized community, and he frequently insisted that the superiority of educational arrangements in France lay not just in their practical effectiveness, but also in the example they provided of looking to the state to uphold and promote the highest ideals of civilization. Indeed, at times Arnold seems less concerned with the actual merits of a public system of education in its own right, and more with the way it instantiated a more expansive conception of the state as the embodiment of the national life:

The question is whether . . . the nation may not thus 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 the community, which will herein find a true bond of union. (p. 15)

On this question of the role of the state, Arnold was self-consciously challenging the established pieties of the day. He argued that there was little danger in England of the state exceeding its powers; the safeguards, especially the fierce public antagonism to such action, were too strong for that. Arnold was not indifferent to the dangers an over-mighty state could pose to the liberties of the individual; but he perceived that this case did not want for advocates in mid-nineteenth-century England, and he concentrated on pressing the claims of the opposite position. This led to a notable difference of view with the most obviously comparable social critic among his contemporaries, John Stuart Mill. The question of education crystallized the difference. Mill, fearful of the coercive power of an unchallenged democracy, argued that schools should not actually be run by the state lest that give it the power to impose its own views and press uniformity upon the next generation (though he accepted the need for the public setting and monitoring of minimal educational standards); he saw in the variety of private provision of education the best defence of individuality. Arnold, by contrast, feared that the danger of leaving education in private hands was that it would only be conducted by the narrowest or most eccentric or provincial of criteria. As he put it in 1861:

By giving to schools . . . a public character, the state can bring the instruction in them under a criticism which the stock of know-

political relations entailed by the inevitable movement of modern societies towards greater 'equality of conditions'.

That five-month visit to France was as much the occasion as the catalyst for the thirty-seven-year-old Arnold, hitherto known as a poet and essayist, to emerge in a new role as a social critic. His admiration of French intellectuality, of the 'idea-moved masses' of their democracy, and of the embodiment of these values in a rational, active state was already of long standing in 1859. Moreover, his experience in the dismally provincial society of the Dissenters (as members of the Protestant Nonconformist churches and sects were called), whose schools in central England he had been inspecting for the last eight years, formed the strongest counterpoint to this selectively perceived ideal.

The essay was his first extended statement of what was to become a familiar Arnoldian theme, namely that an hereditary aristocracy, whatever its political achievements in the past, was ill-equipped to understand a modern world that was essentially governed by ideas and inevitably moving towards greater social equality. Characteristically, Arnold focused not upon democracy as a set of political institutions, still less upon the economic arrangements these might presuppose, but upon the question of cultural values and intellectual and aesthetic standards. 'The difficulty for democracy', he declared, 'is, how to find and keep high ideals' (p. 14). It was a variant on a problem that preoccupied many nineteenth-century social thinkers: how were increasingly democratic societies to sustain those cultural and political activities which had in the past depended upon the existence of a wealthy and leisured aristocracy? Arnold thought that there were two reasons why the problem assumed a particularly acute form in England. The first was the way in which the sturdy independence which was claimed to be such a feature of the English national character had combined with a peculiar political history to produce a very deep antipathy to allowing the state to play a more active part. And secondly, from a rather similar combination of causes, the English middle class, which was thus left to determine the future tone of national life, exhibited a painfully narrow and impoverished conception of what that life might be.

Faced with this diagnosis, Arnold turned in the first instance to education. At that date, there was, in sad contrast to countries like France or Prussia, no national system of education in England.

of things" . . . ' (p. 37). What Arnold was attacking here was any attempt to subordinate criticism to some other purpose. By urging the critic to practise a kind of 'disinterestedness', he was not encouraging a posture of withdrawal from the world – 'disinterested', it ought to be unnecessary to say, does not mean 'uninterested'. The aim of criticism, as he had already insisted more than once, is 'to see the object as in itself it really is', and his reference later in that same passage to the situation in England gives the clue to what he was trying to avoid. Books and ideas were judged, he was complaining, by whether they were consistent with the true tenets of the Protestant religion, or supported a Whig or Tory view of the English constitution, or had an immediate bearing upon the great policy issues of the moment. It was precisely this habit of appealing to 'ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas' (p. 37) that in his view narrowed and stultified the intellectual life of Victorian England.

With late-twentieth-century condescension, we may feel that Victorian society provided Arnold with altogether too easy a target, all earnest humbug and ugly antimacassars. But that was not how it seemed at the time. Arnold was attacking a society that was at the peak of its self-confidence: it was not used to having some of its most cherished beliefs treated with scornful mockery, and still less to having the virtues of other nations held up for emulation. John Bull had shown his superiority over the foreigner at Waterloo, just as he was doing again in every workshop and factory in the land; he felt he could pride himself, and often did, on being heir to a unique tradition of political liberty, sensible religion, and respectable manners. Arnold himself was certainly not without deep patriotic feelings, but this emotional allegiance only made him detest English complacency and parochialism the more, and his diverse essays in social criticism were united by the purpose, much frustrated but resourcefully prosecuted, of teasing, educating, and shaming his countrymen into a greater awareness of these shortcomings.

Among those who did not take kindly to being schooled in this way was James Fitzjames Stephen, a leading representative of Benthamite Utilitarianism and a pugnacious controversialist. He had no patience with what he took to be Arnold's fastidious nose-holding about the unintellectual English in 'The Function of Criticism', and responded with the delicacy of a wounded rhinoceros in an article entitled 'Mr Arnold and his Countrymen'. This and other attacks led Arnold to

ledge and judgment in our middle classes is not itself at present able to supply. By giving to them a national character, it can confer on them a greatness and a noble spirit, which the tone of these classes is not of itself at present able to impart. (p. 19)

In Arnold's mind, the contrast to 'national' or 'public' – terms which he always endowed with strong positive connotations – was 'provincial' or 'sectarian'; even in this relatively early essay, the idea that what is 'central' is *in itself* superior to what is marginal or merely local is already evident.

'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time'

'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time' was written in the autumn of 1864 to serve as the introductory essay in his *Essays in Criticism* which appeared early in the following year. Partly because the majority of pieces in that volume are on literary subjects, and partly because Arnold has been retrospectively recruited as one of the founding fathers of the academic study of English literature, it is often assumed that this essay defines the function of what the twentieth century has come to understand by the term 'literary criticism'. The discussion in its opening pages of the English literature of the Romantic period may at first seem to reinforce this assumption, but closer inspection reveals that Arnold was discussing a much broader notion, an ideal which embraced social and political as well as literary criticism.

The organizing contrast which lies at the heart of the essay is between the intellectual as well as political energy released by the French Revolution – which he, with an enthusiasm rare among the Victorian educated classes, saw as 'the greatest, the most animating event in history' (p. 32) – and the insularity, complacency, and muddle-headed practicality which he found to be characteristic of public life in mid-nineteenth-century England. The essay pleads for all established practices and beliefs to be subjected to critical, sceptical scrutiny and to judgement by the highest standards. The term he famously used to represent the essential spirit of this activity was 'disinterestedness', and he glossed this much-misunderstood word in the passage which begins: 'And how is criticism to show disinterestedness? By keeping aloof from what is called "the practical view

English life not from the Industrial Revolution of the late eighteenth century, but from the linked religious and commercial developments of the early seventeenth. Like several subsequent English critics, T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis among them, he tended to idealize what he took to be the vigorous and expressive life of Elizabethan England, the great creative epoch of English history and literature alike, when English culture was not yet divorced from the mainstream of the European tradition. But then, as he had memorably put it in *Essays in Criticism*, 'the great English middle class, the kernel of the nation, the class whose intelligent sympathy had upheld a Shakespeare, entered the prison of Puritanism and had the key turned on its spirit there for two hundred years.'

The 'prison of Puritanism' is a striking phrase, but like many of Arnold's more resonant categories it is not always clear how far 'Puritanism' here is intended to stand for some ideal-typical set of qualities and how far it is supposed to refer to a particular historical embodiment of those qualities (the question will arise again with his famous pairing of 'Hellenism' and 'Hebraism'). Certainly, in this case he was less concerned with the details of seventeenth-century denominational strife than with the way the severer strains of Protestantism – those sects which had refused to acquiesce in the Anglican Settlement and hence were known as Nonconformists or, more commonly, Dissenters – had coloured, in drab and sombre hues, the texture of English life more generally. Ultimately, the importance Arnold assigned to Puritanism in English history was itself a reflection of his preoccupation with the part played by its descendants in Victorian Britain.

It is almost impossible to overestimate the importance of Arnold's response to Dissent in shaping his social criticism. We need to remember how deeply, fiercely, and consistently religious issues divided Victorian society. Arnold, of course, had ample first-hand experience of this sectarian temper from his school-inspecting duties. As he wrote in a letter in 1869, the year of *Culture and Anarchy's* publication: 'The feeling of the harm their [the Dissenters'] isolation from the main current of thought and culture does in the nation, a feeling that has been developed in me by going about among them for years, is the source of all that I have written on religious, political and social subjects.' But his discussion of this topic soon reveals itself to be just one more example of the role he assigned to criticism dis-

write a further series of articles; not until the majority of these had already been published did he decide to bring them together as a book, and the title *Culture and Anarchy*, which now seems so inevitably right, appears to have been settled on only a month or two before its publication in January 1869. Thus Fitzjames Stephen had, indirectly but not inappropriately, helped to provoke the work which has since become recognized as the classic indictment of English philistinism.

Culture and Anarchy

The piecemeal composition of the book over a period of more than a year left its mark in various ways, as generations of puzzled readers have had cause to testify. One chapter will make reference to published criticisms of the periodical form of the preceding chapter (see, for example, the opening paragraphs of Chapter Two, pp. 81-2), and the long Preface, which was written last, is clearly addressing a rather different political and religious situation from that supposed by the first few chapters proper. At the same time, the periodical origins of the work are also a source of strengths, such as its conversational, at times almost intimate, discursive tone. Arnold's prose more generally has been criticized as a monologue masquerading as a dialogue, but there is a genuinely responsive rhythm to much of his writing in this book: which of the other great English prose writers, after all, could get away with beginning not just a sentence or a paragraph but a *chapter* with the argumentative conjunction 'But' (p. 153)?

The book is linked to *Essays in Criticism* both by the thread of controversy and by the purpose signalled in its subtitle. No section of English society entirely escaped his 'political and social criticism', and among the happy coinages for which the work is remembered was his characterization of the three main classes as Barbarians, Philistines, and Populace. (Interestingly, the first and last of these terms are in effect classical allusions, while the middle one is, of course, biblical: these two sources always remained the chief reference-points of Arnold's thought and sensibility.) But although the aristocracy and the working class by no means escaped censure (the former perhaps being let off a little more lightly than the latter), the central target of the book, as of Arnold's work in general, was 'the bad civilization of the English middle class'. Revealingly, he dated the malaise of

attention for his ideas, and a talent for condensing an argument into a catch-phrase. His teasing labels for the three great classes of English society caught on almost immediately, but these were if anything overshadowed by a yet more lasting coinage (which he adapted from Heine): the binary categories of 'Hebraism' and 'Hellenism'. These terms characterize the two great traditions of thought and feeling that had influenced the Western world, but also stand for the two tendencies which are constantly struggling for dominance within each individual. His various definitions of these two terms prove, as so often in Arnold, to be diverse and not always obviously compatible, but the outlines are clear enough. 'The governing idea of Hellenism', as he puts it most pithily, 'is *spontaneity of consciousness*; that of Hebraism, *strictness of conscience*' (p. 128). Hebraism, that is, fixes above all on the idea of duty, of moral rules, of the subjugation of the self: its chief concern is to act rightly, and the emphasis here falls not only on the 'rightly', but also on the 'acting', for Hebraism is an ethic which stresses the exercise of will. Hellenism, by contrast, concerns itself more with knowledge and beauty, with the play of ideas and the charm of form. Hebraism attacks wrongdoing, moral laxness, and weakness of will; Hellenism attacks ignorance, ugliness, and rigidity of mind. Arnold constantly asserts that society needs a balance between these two forces, since both are essential to the full development of the human spirit, but that it must genuinely be a balance. It will already be obvious that, in his view, Victorian England was far too dominated by the ethic of Hebraism, and his work may be seen as a series of attempts to bring some of the resources of the tradition of Hellenism to bear upon the cramped consciousness of his contemporaries – indeed, the Greeks (albeit very selectively characterized) are the unacknowledged heroes of *Culture and Anarchy*.

The term, to come to it finally, which stands for the animating idea of the book, the term with which Arnold's name is now indissolubly linked, is, of course, 'culture'. In one of his many phrases which have subsequently become part of our common language, Arnold said that by culture he meant 'the best that has been thought and said'. In implicitly assigning priority to the literary and philosophical over the visual and musical, the phrase faithfully represents Arnold's own cultural tastes, yet in other ways it expresses rather poorly the richness of the idea behind his use of the term, since he treats culture not just as something that we can acquire or possess, but as an active force in