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“A REVOLUTION BY DUE COURSE OF LAW”: MATTHEW ARNOLD, G.W.F.
HEGEL, AND THE STATE’S REVOLUTIONARY ROLE

by

SHANNON N. GILSTRAP

Under the Direction of Dr. Paul Schmidt

ABSTRACT

This dissertation examines Matthew Arnold’s belief in the role the State must play in actualizing the ideals of the French Revolution in Victorian England by exploring parallels between Arnold’s development and implementation of this belief and similar elements present in G.W.F. Hegel’s philosophy. Beginning with Arnold’s early engagement with the *Bhagavad-Gita*, moving into the preface to his 1853 volume of poems, and finally ending with his more mature religious, political, and social works, this dissertation traces the sources and development of Arnold’s criticism of what he perceives as a widely held and dangerous antipathy towards State interference in the civil sphere in Victorian England. Believing this trajectory wrongheaded, Arnold asserts his belief in the connection between a strong State power and the emergence of true subjective freedom within a polity. By placing Arnold’s texts and ideas alongside selections from Hegel’s work, including *On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known as the Bhagavad-Gita by Wilhelm von Humboldt*, the preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, and some of Hegel’s early theological writings, one

realizes that Arnold's belief in both subjective freedom and a strong State power demonstrates a sustained and parallel engagement with Hegel's own commitment to both the ideals of the French Revolution and the role that a strong State power plays in realizing those ideals.

INDEX WORDS: Matthew Arnold, Victorian Literature, G.W.F. Hegel

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A Dissertation Submitted in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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Georgia State University

2010

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DEDICATION

For the family members and friends who passed away before this dissertation's completion.

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I offer grateful thanks first to the committee. Thanks to Dr. Paul Voss, who stayed committed to my scholarly development, even as my interests shifted from the Renaissance to the Victorians, and who remains an inspirational teacher. I thank Dr. Michael Galchinsky for the sincerity of his engagement with my ideas and his enthusiastic recommendation of many avenues for further pursuit. Finally, I cannot thank Dr. Paul Schmidt, my director, enough for his unfailing optimism about the project and faith in me as a student. If I can achieve half of that which he feels I am capable, I will consider myself a successful scholar, teacher, and person. Thanks to my entire family, but especially to Dad, Mom, Cayce, Wes, and Wyatt for their unfailing support, their consistent confidence, and for never asking what took so long. Several friends deserve special mention, including Jennifer Basye, Dr. Chris Bell, Dr. Tim Lytle, Aaron & Tracy Rathbone, Wade & Deanna Schuler, and Matthew Strickland. Thank you for encouraging me in the project and, when appropriate, helping me to forget about it. I also extend thanks to the colleges that have employed me during this endeavor. The faculty and staff at Georgia Military College in Fairburn, Georgia, and Gainesville State College in Gainesville, Georgia, have encouraged me as a teacher and scholar, and provided an environment conducive to this project. Finally, thanks to my dog, Aslo, who often patiently waited to play.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

I. Arnold and Hegel

“Hegel,” William Madden writes, “was the significant philosophical figure of the century because, Arnold wrote, he had seized Heraclitus’ single pregnant sentence and ‘cast it with a thousand striking implications into the world of modern thought’” (146). Though scholars have this from Matthew Arnold’s own pen, G.W.F. Hegel’s sustained influence on Matthew Arnold, especially insofar as it can help explain Arnold’s commitment to the ideals of the French Revolution, has received comparatively little extended treatment in Arnold scholarship.

Not that Hegel’s impact on Arnold has been entirely neglected. Most extended scholarly works on Arnold mention Hegel’s importance. Classics in Arnold scholarship all reference Hegel. William Robbins’s *The Arnoldian Principle of Flexibility* ties Arnold’s mental elasticity with Hegel’s dialectic. Lionel Trilling’s intellectual biography *Matthew Arnold* remains by far the most Hegelian approach to all of Arnold’s work, seeking to expose the dialectical movement of Arnold’s thought over his life. William Madden, too, in his *Matthew Arnold: A Study of the Aesthetic Temperament in Victorian England*, recognizes Arnold’s indebtedness to the great philosopher, evidenced by the opening quote. Park Honan’s recent biography of Arnold also traces the influence of German philosophy in general, and mentions Hegel in particular.

These touchstones of Arnold scholarship, however, often contain understated or qualified references. Although in Trilling’s work, for instance, Hegel, in the words of another critic, “appears as an intellectual precursor of Arnold’s,” Trilling references Hegel and Arnold together only six times in 369 pages (Joseph 34 n. 26). Hegel appears

in Trilling as the philosopher who impressed upon Arnold's manner of thinking the dialectical temperament. Critics often use this broad association with Hegel's dialectics both to temper over-hasty rejections of Arnold's often Olympian statements by pairing them with antithetical statements from Arnold's corpus, and to criticize Arnold's inability to adequately solve the theses and anti-theses he often proposes. Arnold, therefore, receives praise for possessing an "ondoyant et diverse" mind like Montaigne, but gets criticized for falling victim, too often, to his middle class Victorian ideology (Arnold, *Complete Prose Works* I. 174).¹

Scholars often limit more direct associations with Hegel to qualified connections between Hegel and Arnold's vision of the State, a connection that this dissertation seeks to make more credible and less qualified. Nicholas Murray, in the most recent and probably more sympathetic biographies of Arnold, is characteristic. Writing of Arnold's first series of *Essays in Criticism*, Murray repeats many of the accusations from present-day critics that Arnold's works resist advocating "cultural pluralism, [...] the right of sections of society to resist assimilation." In so doing, Arnold's "tendency to sanction at certain moments [...] an abrupt and draconian use of the power of 'centrality'" necessarily leads to his advocacy of State tyranny, with its "duty to suppress"; this makes for an "ugly [...] repressive streak in his vaunted liberalism" (216). Associating Arnold's belief in State power with Hegel's has the potential to bring unnecessary baggage into the portrait of Arnold that often his defenders try to paint. Eugene Goodheart, who brings Arnold's notion of the State into direct conversation with Hegel, seems to quickly depart from Hegel as too dangerous to deal with. Though he recognizes Arnold's Hegelian

¹ Hereafter, citations from *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold* will be referenced with CPW, then volume and page number.

method and idea of the State, Goodheart believes that Arnold and Hegel potentially commit the same error. German idealism removed the State from its historical realities, Goodheart believes, and placed it as a philosophical, transcendent, utopian entity. Having done this, a philosopher like Hegel can conveniently ignore historical realities in favor of his ideal. Goodheart writes, “The ironic consequence is that the utopic conception becomes repressive in its denial of the reality of conflict. The utopic conception can be invoked as a justification for repressing what resists its realizations” (424).

Yet, just as scholars hesitate to associate Arnold too closely with Hegel, they many times recommend Hegel as the very possible solution to Arnold’s paradoxical attachment to both State power and revolutionary ideals. At least twice Lionel Trilling points this out. After presenting the “confusion in a circle” concerning Arnold’s basing of the State on the best self of each individual composing it, but also of the State’s necessity for creating this best self, Trilling writes:

One may escape from the circle [...] by an Hegelian renunciation of pious liberalism and by admitting some process of history in which morality is the goal of the long range but not a means, in which the evil of the moment may work the good of the developmental process, and in which power is its own temporary justification. And Arnold, as we have seen, does indeed advance, though tentatively, along this way out of the dilemma. (232)

Later, Trilling asserts that from Arnold’s perspective justifies the use of force to impel the individual to cherish right reason because Arnold was “touched [...] with what, for convenience, we may call the Hegelian tradition” (239). Though Trilling offers the reader the Hegelian road out of the dilemma twice, he does not take time to trace it. However, German philosophy during and just after the French Revolution, the tradition that Hegel helped inaugurate and participated in, addresses and navigates the difficulties Arnold

tried to navigate in his post-Revolutionary vision of England. Moreover, Hegel's works engage both British and French political philosophers. Hegel's presence often lurks shadow-like in the background, and critics chastise Arnold for coming too close to Hegel's perceived rightist justification of the Prussian State status quo. Scholars admit this connection, but drawing Arnold too close to the unpopular notion of the State opens Arnold up to charges of the very reactionary thinking from which many critics attempt to rescue him.

Bringing Arnold's works into closer conversation with Hegel's works and ideas does not completely rescue Arnold from the many paradoxes that exist in his works. Moreover, one has a difficult time finding, in any single work, a sustained engagement with Hegel himself. This certainly begs the question of whether one can consider Hegel an influence on Arnold's thought and not just a simple parallel or convergent evolution. This dissertation contends that Hegel legitimately exerted a sustained influence on Arnold's thought, and that Hegel's vision of the relationship between the revolutionary ideals of 1789 and the State's necessity in realizing those ideals within a civil society informed Arnold's own vision of himself as a thinker in the revolutionary line, even while he consistently iterated the importance of a strong and occasionally eruptive State power in England.

Such sustained parallels, however, are not the only evidence of a close affinity between Hegel and Arnold. Scholars do not lack bibliographic evidence connecting Arnold to Hegel. Though many of Hegel's works had not been translated into English during Arnold's life, translation would not have proven a problem for Arnold, who clearly understood German well enough to tackle Hegel's philosophy. Kenneth Allott's

publication of Arnold's reading lists shows that Arnold was reading Kant's *Critique of Pure Reason* in German around 1846 after having read the first part of it in English in 1845 (Allott 262, 258). That Arnold could and did read Kant in German demonstrates that language would not have created a barrier to his access to Hegel's works. Additionally, Hegel's philosophical enquiries sprang from his critique of Kant, and Arnold would have certainly sought out Kant's critics. Likewise, von Humboldt's lectures on the *Bhagavad-Gita* were in German, and Arnold puts on his reading lists the German title of those lectures. Furthermore, ample evidence in the reading lists shows that Arnold was reading heavily in philosophy, and his interest in Cousin's lectures would certainly have led Arnold to at least a tangential familiarity with Hegel.

But personal reading did not circumscribe Arnold's familiarity with German Idealism. Park Honan demonstrates that Arnold was raised in a house wherein German thought was openly discussed. Dr. Thomas Arnold believed in the necessity of cultural exchanges with Germany for England's progress as a thinking country – even stating at his inaugural lecture as Oxford Professor of History, “our English race is the German race” – and when Dr. Arnold took control of Rugby's curriculum, he “raised the status of French, German, and mathematics” (Honan 7, 55, 28). When Matthew finally enrolled in Rugby in 1837, one of his tutors, Bonamy Price, “mixed liberal German divinity” with his mathematics lessons (Honan 34). Honan affirms that by the time Arnold ended his schooling at Oxford, he “had his ears crammed full of German thought. Goethe and Schiller were familiar; Schelling and Hegel he read about now in the *Revue des Deux Mondes*, in a work by Charles de Rémusat” (95). During the time that Arnold was writing the letters that would become *Friendship's Garland*, he likely read *The Phenomenology*

of *Spirit*, for he references it as a source for the theory of “*Geist*,” a running theme throughout *Friendship’s Garland* (CPW V. 76-77). Hegel emerges again in 1874, during which time Arnold was reading the *Encyclopedie des gens du monde*, and in his note book for that year he transcribes two different quotes from Hegel (Arnold, *Note-Books* 214-215). These probably provided the springboard from which he engaged Hegel that same year in *God and the Bible*. Perhaps the very fact that Arnold does not overtly reference Hegel often testifies to just how much he had internalized Hegel’s thought, his system, and his assumptions.

The trend in the work of both Arnold and Hegel as they critique, from their unique perspectives, the aesthetic, philosophical, political, and social worlds in which they lived and the voices within those worlds trumps biographic and bibliographic evidence. A similarity in assumption – perhaps flawed, but present and justified to Arnold and Hegel nonetheless – lies behind the judgments and critiques that both Arnold and Hegel launch against their contemporaries. Their assumptions parallel precisely because both come from a post-Romantic – one could say anti-Romantic – standpoint, rejecting the Romantic emphasis of emotion over reason. To Hegel, such Romanticizing destroys the properly philosophic endeavor, and to Arnold this same impulse destroys the poetic, social, critical, and political endeavors. Hegel and Arnold believed that those against whom they set themselves had become mired in a Romantic over-simplification of the ideals of liberty and freedom that the French Revolution had brought before the collective consciousness of Western Europe. Hegel laments that contemporary philosophy believes “that the true itself cannot be known, that instead the true is what we

allow to emerge from our hearts, minds, and enthusiasm” (*The Philosophy of Right* 4).² Reveling in the individual’s liberation from feudal rule and the *ancien régime*, both Arnold and Hegel see civil society characterized, in both its core and peripheral elements,³ by a mechanistic desire for individual liberty and subjective willfulness, as well as a strong distaste for any social or extra-social controls on the expression of said mechanistic desires. Such individualism undermines, in Arnold and Hegel’s vision, any hope for social, political, and philosophical endeavors, leading citizens away from a right understanding of true subjective freedom within a civil society. Just to demonstrate the strength of Arnold’s antipathy for this Romantic tendency, one can look at his description of the Romantics in his preface to *Merope*, wherein he writes that England remains “a stronghold for the romantic school,” a school whose adherents have only an “ill-formed curiosity” to motivate their minds (*CPW* I. 38). In an even stronger jab later against the Romantics and their inheritors, Arnold criticizes the family friend and constant presence during his youth, William Wordsworth: “But surely the one thing wanting to make Wordsworth an even greater poet than he is [...] was that he should have read more books” (*CPW* III. 262).

For Hegel and Arnold, such is the solipsistic world of the Romantic and post-Romantic philosophers, caught up in their own subjectivity and desire for individual liberty. Arnold and Hegel thus both find themselves in opposition to their contemporary intellectual, social, and political climates. Even so, both feel that their historical age

² Henceforth, references to Hegel’s *The Philosophy of Right* will be presented as *PR* and then page number.

³ By saying “core and peripheral” I am alluding to the early manifestation of civil society explained by Jeffrey Alexander in *The Civil Sphere*, which he calls Civil Sphere I, and which was characterized by an inclusive and pluralistic vision of civil society: “‘civil society’ was a rather diffuse, umbrella-like concept referring to a plethora of institutions outside the state. It included the capitalist market and its institutions, but it also denoted [...] voluntary religion [...], private and public associations and organizations, and virtually every form of cooperative social relationship that created bonds of trust – for example, currents of public opinion, legal norms and institutions, and political parties” (24).

demands an appropriate response. This response, though, should attempt to understand life; moreover, it should attempt to remain faithful to those ideals of 1789 that both Hegel and Arnold felt were rational and worthy of being implemented in their countries while avoiding the pitfalls of radical particularism and individualism gaining ground, Arnold believed, in England. Rather than providing a sense of democratic unity, a sense of solidarity, Arnold and Hegel believed that the cultural, social, philosophical, and political conditions that they observed, contrary to what the proponents of those societies believed, moved their countries away from, rather than towards, a fulfillment of the revolutionary and democratic ideals inaugurated by the French Revolution and towards which Europe and England were required to move. Both Arnold and Hegel respond to the temper of the age by introducing the idea of the State as a centralizing power as part of their plan to achieve true subjective liberty and freedom within a polity. By drawing Arnold and Hegel closer together, by looking at a critical method common to Arnold and Hegel, as well as by examining the influence of specific Hegel texts on the development of Arnold's beliefs, one can come to the conclusion that Hegel's work provides a framework for understanding Arnold's frequent insistence that his project, even with its emphasis on the State, stays far from reactionary and remains rather "in the revolutionary line" (Trilling 255).

II. Arnold, Hegel, and the French Revolution

Importantly, one must define *revolutionary's* meaning when applying the label to Arnold. Arnold was not a revolutionary in any common use of the term. However, one can consider him revolutionary because of his embracing of the ideals of the French Revolution, his perceived position within his own time period, and his active plan for

realizing, in his own time, the driving impulse behind the French Revolution – that is, the realization of true human freedom within a polity. Both Arnold and Hegel committed themselves to the animating principles of the French Revolution. Both, however, recognized that the French Revolution failed. Lionel Trilling writes that “Arnold is concerned with revolution, trying to see how far it is consistent with the order of the universe” (100). He concludes, later, “Arnold’s whole career had been spent in evaluating the French Revolution, and if this seems small distinction in a century whose whole effort was to accommodate itself to that event, it is nevertheless true that Arnold worried the problem more constantly and explicitly than his contemporaries, and was least satisfied with the simple answers” (336). Hegel, too, experienced the shock of the world following the French Revolution, having experienced the years leading up to the Revolution, the descent into Robespierre’s Terror, the Napoleonic Empire, and the eventual re-establishment of a limited monarchy. The commitment to the Revolution’s animating principles, combined with their very real failure, created a great tension in the minds of both these thinkers.

A slight digression can indicate that Arnold and Hegel’s paradoxical way of advocating revolutionary principles may not entirely rest in their time period, and also offers a glimpse into the paradoxes of revolutionary change itself. The word *revolution* has two very different meanings, a quality that Arnold the philologist would not have overlooked. The *Oxford English Dictionary*’s primary entry gives *revolution* as an astronomical term, the orderly and repetitive motion, or apparent motion, of celestial bodies, with the earliest usage of the term as such coming in 1390 CE (I. 1). One hundred years later, the term detaches itself from early astronomy’s natural and orderly cycles,

embracing the opposite – radical and sudden change: “An instance of great change or alteration in affairs or in some particular thing” (III. 6. b). Not until 1600 CE does revolution take a decidedly political turn: “A complete overthrow of the established government in any country or state by those who were previously subject to it; a forcible substitution of a new ruler or form of government” (III. 7. a). So a paradox resides within the term itself – revolution as cyclic, and revolution as violent, eruptive, and productive. Despite, or perhaps because of, this tension, Arnold embraced the term and highlighted this paradoxical nature in his own writing to describe both his views, associated with the French Revolution and its guiding ideals, and his method, associated closely with the order represented by the State, a method he perceived as opposed to an entrenched worldview to be worked against.

Matthew Arnold, keeping with the first interpretation of *revolution* presented above, did not believe in violently upending one form of government and supplanting it with another. In most of the eleven volumes of *The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold*, one can find Arnold stating as much. Importantly, Arnold’s dislike of violent upheaval should not immediately sideline him from espousing a revolutionary program. When considering all the changes necessary for England, Arnold believes that he should “neither despair on the one hand, nor, on the other, threaten violent revolution and change” (CPW V. 226). Later, when considering the French Revolution’s outcome, he writes, “It was an insurrection against the old routine, it furiously destroyed the medieval form of society; this it did, and this was well if anything had come of it” (CPW VII. 47). In the same passage, Arnold writes that anyone desiring to affect change in the world must avoid acting like “the drunkard who gets rid [of the old world] by breaking

windows and bringing the house about his ears.” Moving away from political revolutions and into the revolutions shaking up Christianity during the Victorian era, Arnold writes, “The practical lesson to be drawn from all this is, that we should avoid violent revolution in the words and externals of religion” (*CPW* VIII. 142). These comments, and so many others, indicate that if Arnold envisioned himself a revolutionary, his definition of the term remained inconsistent with violent change, violent reaction against established order and the sudden imposition of a new one *ex nihilo*. Arnold would consider such an approach to change “Jacobin” in its thrust, although Arnold’s meaning of this term is also broader.⁴

Privately and publicly, however, Arnold frequently protested his commitment to the French Revolution’s ideals, and he believed that England was ripe for change. For as many examples in his prose condemning violent revolutionary action, just as many, if not more, emerge in which Arnold affirms his sympathy with the democratic spirit as well as the ideals of 1789. Arnold frequently affirmed the fragility of the status quo. In a letter to his sister from March 7, 1848, he writes, “the hour of the hereditary peerage & eldest sonship and immense properties has I am convinced, as Lamartine would say, struck” (Arnold, *The Letters of Matthew Arnold* I. 91).⁵ Likewise, in *A French Eton* Arnold iterates a commitment to bottom up political boat rocking, writing, “in an epoch of transition society may and must say to its governors, ‘Govern me according to my spirit, if I am to obey you’” (*CPW* II. 274). Clearly, although Arnold opposed violent revolutionary change, he was not opposed to the French Revolution’s principles.

⁴ The implications of Arnold’s definition of the term “Jacobin” will be discussed more fully later.

⁵ Hereafter, references to *The Letters of Matthew Arnold* will be cited with *Letters*, followed by volume and page number.

The “spirit” Arnold addresses in the above quote directly references the spirit of 1789, to which Arnold remained committed throughout his life and believed his aesthetic, social, and political philosophy all worked together to promote. Certainly “my spirit” was not mere mechanical love of personal liberty or subjective willfulness. This was as true in his aesthetic philosophy as in his social and political philosophy. In his first political pamphlet, *England and the Italian Question*,⁶ he iterates what he believes constitutes the spirit of 1789: “ideas of religious, political, and social freedom” (*CPW* I. 81). Arnold reiterated this commitment throughout his prose output, but never, perhaps, more forcefully than in the following lines:

In spite of the extravagant direction given to its enthusiasm, in spite of the crimes and follies in which it lost itself, the French Revolution derives from the force, truth, and universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas, a unique and still living power; it is – it will probably long remain – the greatest, the most animating event in history. (*CPW* III. 265)

Arnold never wavered in his opinion that the French Revolution, particularly its animating spirit or ideas, was an historical event to which the entire western world, and especially England, was going to have to adjust itself. Arnold’s commitment to these ideals combined with his commitment to bringing them about should be reiterated when considering his status as a revolutionary thinker.

Hegel, too, falls victim to many of the same accusations that Arnold fell victim to concerning his commitment to the French Revolution’s ideals. Although, as will be

⁶ Arnold was hesitant about producing overtly political works at this time in his life, apparently. He wrote to “K” on March 10, 1848, “I was myself tempted to attempt some political writing the other day: but in the watches of the night I seemed to feel that in that direction I had some enthusiasm of the head, perhaps, but no profound stirring” (*Letters* I. 94). This was a full eleven years before *England and the Italian Question*. As will be explored later, the preface to his 1853 volume of poems, although literary in its thrust and published before *England and the Italian Question*, also contained a covert political message.

explored more fully in this dissertation, Hegel's early work decidedly favored the French Revolution, critics often characterize his later work as merely buttressing the Prussian State status quo. Rudolf Haym, as early as 1857, for instance, branded Hegel's philosophy one that paved the way to "political conservatism, quietism, and optimism," one that assumed the right reality of the State "as it stood in Prussia in 1821" (qtd. in Ritter 35). People, clearly, were misunderstanding Arnold and Hegel's ideas about the French Revolution.

However, like Arnold, Hegel asserted the principles of the French Revolution. Hegel was a member, while a student in Tübingen, of the Politischer Club, wherein he debated the Revolution and its significance. Popular legend about Hegel even locates him planting, along with other members of the club, a "freedom tree" in the woods near the college, carving in its bark the phrases "*Vive la liberte*" and (oddly enough, as will be demonstrated shortly) "*Vive Jean Jacques*" (Prior 6). Hegel did this, of course, despite college prohibitions. Andrew Prior quotes from a letter Hegel sent to Schelling in 1795, wherein Hegel writes, "the halo which has surrounded the leading oppressors and gods of the earth has disappeared. Philosophers demonstrate the dignity of man; the people will learn to feel it and will not merely demand their rights, which have been trampled in the dust, but will themselves take them, make them their own" (qtd. in Prior 6). These biographical anecdotes evidence more, however, than simple youthful idealism. Even the later work *The Philosophy of History* has Hegel celebrating, much as Arnold did above, "the destruction of the accumulated 'injustices' of the *ancien régime*, the sudden emergence of the principle of right, a 'sublime' attempt to reconstitute the real on a rational basis. The Revolution is, says Hegel, a radical (new) beginning, an upheaval of

truly cosmic dimensions, a ‘glorious mental dawn’, the event of universal significance *par excellence*” (Kouvelakis 25). The ideas of 1789, those that Arnold pegged as having to do with the liberation of humanity, exerted a continuous, powerful influence over Hegel’s philosophic thought, despite critical statements to the contrary.

Moreover, Hegel, like Arnold, believed that principles of true human freedom and liberty animated the French Revolution, and, again like Arnold, that the rational realization of freedom animated his social and political philosophies (Prior 9). Several moments in *The Philosophy of Right*, demonstrate this belief:

The basis of right is, overall, the domain of spirit; its more precise location and starting point is the will, which is free. Freedom thus constitutes the substance and the determination of right, and the system of right is the realm of actualized freedom. (*PR* 18)

Our determination is freedom; freedom must be realized, and its realization is right. We say in addition that other notions of freedom are false, because only this is necessary: that freedom give itself existence. This is the necessary content. (*PR* 35)

Right is concerned with freedom, the worthiest and holiest thing in us. (*PR* 167)

Clearly Hegel, like Arnold, believed that a commitment to the idea of freedom motivated his political and social philosophies.

Although both thinkers affirmed the French Revolution’s ideals, Hegel and Arnold had reservations about their current method of implementation in their respective countries. The path towards the realization of 1789’s ideas was not through violent political upheaval, as had happened in France. Their decision to move away from the trajectory of the French Revolution amounts to that critique of the liberal political philosophies in their respective countries. By this critique, Hegel and Arnold sought to expose the dangers that they felt manifested in the liberal philosophy of their day,

dangers they both perceived were motivated by misguided applications of revolutionary ideals of individual freedom and subjective willfulness. This motivation did not actualize the revolutionary principles, as Arnold and Hegel saw them, of freedom and rationalism; rather, they believed this liberalism reproduced the very opposite of freedom and rationalism, conjuring up instead, especially in Arnold's mind, something akin to Robespierrean Terror. Both Arnold and Hegel felt that the type of liberalism being expressed in the civil society of England and Germany put their countries on a disastrous and backwards course that would result in, not an achieving of democratic solidarity, but rather continued fracture. Only by exposing their perception of the flaw at the heart of present-day liberalism – a resistance to an external State power in favor of subjective freedom – could Arnold and Hegel each hope to prove their point that the State's role in Germany and England was intimately bound up with the ability to actualize true, free, rational subjective life within a polity. Their endeavor consisted of both exposing this liberal fallacy that they perceived and pointing towards the idea of the State as the true standard-bearer of French Revolutionary ideals in a post-French Revolution world.

Having established Matthew Arnold's sympathies with the ideals of the French Revolution, one must also assert his belief that they could be actualized in England, for without a belief that these ideals can be realized in a polity Arnold's status as a revolutionary thinker would be purely theoretical. Arnold did believe in England's ability to realize the French Revolution's ideals. Sometimes he couches his beliefs in what Linda Peterson might term a "Pisgah vision" in which Arnold projects the completion of his project into a sort-of utopian future, glimpsed only from afar (14, 49). Arnold often presents such visions at the end of some of his works, but perhaps most clearly at the end

of “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time” wherein, after establishing the importance of the critical project, he concludes rather melancholically, “That promised land it will not be ours to enter, and we shall die in the wilderness: but to have desired to enter it, to have saluted it from afar, is already, perhaps, the best distinction among contemporaries” (*CPW* III.285). However, statements attesting to Arnold’s belief that the French Revolution’s ideas can be achieved in the present counterbalance such utopic, Pisgah visions.

As stated earlier, Arnold disapproved of violent, sudden change that quickly substituted one form of government for another; therefore, Arnold’s visions for revolutionary change imply a more organic, but nonetheless revolutionary in its aims, form of change. Moreover, his commitment to 1789’s ideals does not make the French Revolution immune to criticism. In the following lengthy passage, in which Arnold discusses creative literature, he presents the core of what makes him revolutionary even while distinguishing himself from common understandings of the term:

At first sight it seems strange that out of the immense stir of the French Revolution and its age should not have come a crop of works of genius equal to that which came out of the stir of the great productive time of Greece [...]. But the truth is that the stir of the French Revolution *took a character* which essentially distinguished it from such movements as these. [...] The French Revolution took a political, practical character [...]. The French Revolution, however, -- that object of so much blind love and so much blind hatred, -- found undoubtedly its motive-power in the intelligence of men, and not in their practical sense; this is what distinguishes it from the English Revolution of Charles the First’s time. This is what makes it a more spiritual event than our Revolution, an event of much more powerful and world-wide interest, though practically less successful; it appeals to an order of ideas which are universal, certain, permanent. [...] And as no sincere passion for the things of the mind, even though it turn out in many respects an unfortunate passion, is ever quite thrown away and quite barren of good, France has reaped from hers one fruit – the natural and legitimate fruit, though not precisely the fruit she expected: she is the country in Europe where *the people* [sic] is most alive.

But the *mania for giving an immediate political and practical application* to all these fine ideas of the reason was fatal. [...] Ideas cannot be too much prized in and for themselves, cannot be too much lived with; *but to transport them abruptly into the world of politics and practice, violently to revolutionise this world to their bidding*, -- that is quite another thing. (CPW III.263, 264, 265, emphasis mine)

This passage demonstrates quite clearly the paradoxical (some might say inconsistent) quality of Arnold's revolutionary thought. Arnold's words show that he believes 1789's ideals were important and necessary – it was an “immense stir,” it found its impulse in the “intelligence” or reason, and it left in its wake some good, even though it “took a character” that Arnold felt was flawed. With those comments, one can see one side of the revolutionary paradox, that desire for significant change. The emphasized elements, though, demonstrate the other side of the revolutionary coin, of order, as Arnold opposes himself to such terms as “mania,” “abruptly,” and “violently.” Although Arnold opposes such violent change, he remains committed to the revolutionary agenda and does, in fact, suggest a plan for affecting the ideals of the French Revolution in England.

For both Arnold and Hegel, realizing the ideals of 1789 could travel a different route. A commitment that both men had to the necessary power of an entity they termed the State marks this route. Concerning the continued work of the French Revolution in England, Arnold affirms, “On what action may we rely to replace [...] the action of the aristocracy [...] what influence may help us to prevent the English people from becoming, with the growth of democracy, *Americanized*? I confess I am disposed to answer: On the action of the State” (CPW II. 16). The assertion that only through the State's power in England and in Germany can the ideals of 1789 be realized strikes many as paradoxical. The following lines from §153 of *The Philosophy of Right* show this paradox: “The right of individuals to be subjectively determined as free is fulfilled when

they belong to an ethical actuality, because their certainty that they are free has truth in such an objectivity; within the ethical they actually possess their own essence, their inner universality” (130). Several phrases strike any reader as difficult in this passage, including the “right [...] to be [...] determined” and “free[dom] has its truth in [...] objectivity.” These phrases, the pulling together of such opposites as freedom and determination, individual and objective, characterize Hegel’s political philosophy throughout *The Philosophy of Right* and contribute to this paradox of the State’s role in actualizing the same freedom that motivated the French Revolutionaries, including the freedom of individual subjects within a polity. And yet clearly a connection exists, in both Arnold and Hegel, between the State and the realization of revolutionary ideals and a truly free civil polity. Hegel feels the State “makes the achievements of the revolution its own even while managing to avoid the revolution itself,” and Arnold writes, appropriating the words of the Duke of Wellington, that “We are on our way to [...] ‘a revolution by due course of law’ [...] for a revolution cannot accomplish itself without great changes; yet order there must be, for without order a revolution cannot accomplish itself by due course of law” (Kouvelakis 42; *CPW* V. 135-136). The relationship between the idea of a State and the relationship that it has with a civil society as well as with the individuals who compose both the civil society and the State must now be addressed in order that Arnold’s paradoxical idea that only through State power can true subjective freedom be felt by the individuals within a polity can be understood and traced throughout the rest of this dissertation’s body.

III. *The State and Matthew Arnold*

“*The State – but what is the State?*” cry many.”

- Matthew Arnold (*CPW* II. 26)

Matthew Arnold only provides one concrete, positive definition of the State, as he sees it, and he returns to that definition over and over again in his prose works. Moreover, this definition must be kept in mind when considering Arnold’s belief in the current State’s rightful interference in civil society, in the civil life of an individual citizen, and for understanding how that intervention into civil society can be understood as achieving revolutionary ends, even though it initially seems like a reactionary move. He says, over and over again, that the State is defined as the citizens of a polity “*in their collective and corporate character*” (*CPW* II. 294). Elsewhere, Arnold modifies this definition slightly as “the nation in its collective and corporate character” (*CPW* II. 26). Although Arnold defines the State as the nation in its collective and corporate character, Arnold does not conflate or collapse the distinction between the State and civil society. Quite the opposite is true. Arnold holds out the possibility of a dialogical relationship between the State and civil society, both of which can be characterized by a sense of solidarity even as they are recognized as different spheres. Arnold recognizes, in other words, that the citizens of a polity have a right and a duty not only to obey the State’s mandates, but that they have a right and a duty to bend and mold those mandates. Recall Arnold’s earlier comment that the State must govern according to the civil society’s spirit if civil society is to consider itself duty-bound to obey the State. However, having said this, Arnold maintains the equally necessary impulse that civil society must recognize the State as a power capable of making changes in the social fabric.

Unfortunately, Arnold believes that English civil society does not currently foster the possibility for a dialogical relationship between civil society and the State as a bureaucratic entity. In Arnold's opinion, British civil society desires more and more to distance itself from any regulative powers coming from the State. They favor, in Arnold's estimation, rather an individualist ethos that they consider self-regulating, or regulated solely by the civil sphere and the individuals composing it. Arnold believes that citizens consider that the State as a bureaucratic entity should be "a mere tax-collector and policeman," a purely negative vision of the State whose purpose is solely "to prevent disorder, jobbery, and extravagance; that [the State] need 'have no notion of securing the future, nor even of regulating the present;' that it may and ought to 'leave the course of events to regulate itself, and trust the future to the security of the unknown laws of human nature and the unseen influences of higher powers'" (*CPW* II. 306, 304). Arnold recognizes that democracy is the future, and it should be clear that Arnold in no way opposes democracy. At various times in his prose works he refers to it as a natural process, an undeniable fact, and a great positive change in the political landscape of England and all of Europe. A democratic spirit, however, does not characterize civil society in England during his time, Arnold believes. British civil society, as Arnold sees it, lacks the capacity of moving towards that idea of "nation" in Benedict Anderson's formulation as "an imagined political community – and imagined as both inherently limited and sovereign" (6). Anderson's ideal of nation does not perfectly map onto Arnold's vision of culture, but one can see how the civil society Arnold saw emerging certainly does not have many of the characteristics Anderson assigns to nation. There is no image of a collective presence "in the minds of each [member] [...] the image of their

communion” (6). Nor is there the “*community*,” the sense that “regardless of the actual inequality and exploitation that may prevail in each, the nation is always conceived as a deep, horizontal comradeship” (7). Civil society, in Arnold’s opinion, was not even sovereign unto itself because such a devotion to willful individualism subjects each person to the tyranny of individual conscience, an idea that will be explored more fully in chapter 4 of this dissertation (7). Rather, Arnold’s interpretation of the civil society currently operating in England is characterized by an internal flaw that does not allow for the possibility of self-regulation, or the development of a culture or nation, apart from a bureaucratic entity like the State – or, since every advanced society has to have *some* semblance of bureaucratic operations, a State as remote as Arnold believes British citizens want to make it.

As will be explored and explained more fully in the chapters that follow, Matthew Arnold believed that British civil society was characterized by a faith in radical individualism. This “false” interpretation of liberty – a perceived inheritance from the French Revolution and the first moves towards democracy in England – rises to become “the central idea of English life and politics [as] *the assertion of personal liberty*,” or, as Arnold famously puts it, the “prevalent notion [...] that it is a most happy and important thing for a man merely to be able to do as he likes” (*CPW* V. 117). Arnold believes that every element of British civil society as it currently exists works together to ensure that the citizens composing civil society believe that this interpretation of liberty is their rightful democratic inheritance, and that the ability to put this belief into practice, without restrictions from other individuals within civil society and without bureaucratic influence from the State, provides evidence of their true freedom within the polity. The result may

be, as one newspaper that Arnold quoted states, “that everybody has more liberty of action and of speaking here than anywhere else in the Old World” (*CPW* V. 156); however, this liberty of action and speaking are, as Arnold puts it elsewhere, “machinery,” valued “as an end in itself, without looking beyond it to the end for which alone, in truth, it is valuable” (*CPW* V. 117). When the public perceives freedom of action alone as the end – without laying any stress on “what he is to do when he is thus free to do as he likes” (*CPW* V. 117) – the practical political action of the public shows “only the power and disposition to *affirm itself*, not at all the power and disposition to *transform itself*” (*CPW* II. 317). Moreover, as Arnold will also remark, “and so long as a people works thus individually, it does not work democratically” (II.13). As can be seen, the individualism cultivated in every aspect of British civil society, rather than fostering a culture of democratic solidarity and communication, further fragments and isolates its citizens from one another. Their continued aversion to a strong State, in Arnold’s opinion, indicates that the civil society of England is not on a course for realizing the revolutionary ideals presented above.

The fact that Arnold holds out hope for a relationship between the bureaucratic State and civil society recommends reading Arnold in light of Jeffrey Alexander’s notion of the civil sphere. Although Arnold plans to achieve something like Alexander’s civil sphere through, as Arnold himself puts it, the State’s putting into place “stringent powers for the general advantage, and controlling individual wills in the name of an interest wider than that of individuals” and “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” (*CPW* V. 117,122) – a path quite different from Alexander’s vision of civil society regulating itself

and access to State power through rational means of communication like public opinion, mass media, civil associations, voting, and political parties, among others – Arnold desires to achieve in England something akin to Alexander’s vision of the civil sphere. In Alexander’s definition, “solidarity” characterizes the civil sphere as well as the extra-civil institutions like the State: “the feeling of being committed to others, of being part of something larger than ourselves, a whole that imposes obligations and allows us to share convictions, feelings and cognitions, gives us a chance for meaningful participation, and respects our individual personalities even while giving us the feeling that we are all in the same boat” (13). Arnold characterizes this vision of solidarity as a “best self” which must be cultivated in every citizen, even as it wars with a “base self” that also constitutes us as humans.⁷ Moreover, Alexander’s vision of the civil sphere echoes Arnold’s vision of an England with culture – defined as a way of thinking and not “a smattering of the two dead languages of Greek and Latin [...] a desirable quality in a critic of new books, and sits well on a professor of *belles-lettres*” (CPW V. 87). Consider the following vision of the civil sphere that Alexander presents:

[...] civil society should be conceived as a solidary sphere, in which a certain kind of universalizing community comes to be culturally defined and to some degree institutionally enforced. To the degree that this solidary community exists, it is exhibited and sustained by public opinion, deep cultural codes, distinctive organizations – legal, journalistic, and associational – and such historically interactional practices as civility, criticism, and mutual respect. Such a civil community can never exist as such; can only be sustained to one degree or another. It is always limited by, and interpenetrated with, the boundary relations of other, non-civil spheres. (31)

⁷ See CPW V. 134-136 for the distinction and some characteristics.

One finds so many words and assumptions from Alexander's definition in Arnold's vision: "community," "culture," "criticism," "enforced," and, in the term "non-civil sphere," Alexander introduces the importance of the State as bureaucracy.

One of the civil sphere's elements, that of "office," can help a reader understand how Alexander's ideals inform a reading of Arnold's vision both of revolutionary change and the idea of a strong State power, and, though office, the civil sphere and the State, as one of its "boundary relations" with "non-civil spheres," function dialogically and influence one another ideally. Key to Arnold's position as it will be explored in the chapters that follow, though, are that the conditions Alexander delineates for the successful relationship between the civil sphere and the State, through office, are not present in Arnold's vision of British civil society as it is. The State, as a bureaucratic entity, being as maligned as Arnold considers it to be in civil discourse, is not seen as worthy of being entered into as a vehicle for social change by the individual citizens.

Alexander explains that, ideally, the civil sphere and the elements that constitute it (mentioned briefly above) cannot themselves constitute a well regulated polity (4). In order, though, for a civil society to be sustained, "Only bureaucracies can supply political structure to mirror the complexity of social life, developing procedures for coordinating the practical tasks of putting government decisions into play" (108). The State, according to Alexander and Arnold, cannot be conflated with civil society (108). The citizens of a civil society need access to some measure of force, a mode of persuasion with "teeth in it" (Alexander 5). "There must," Alexander continues, "in other words also be institutions of a more regulative kind, which means [people] need access to the violence monopolized by the state" (5). Office is one way that citizens can insert themselves into the

bureaucracy. It is “a regulative institution [...] function[ing] as an invisible kind of control that warns and periodically publicizes and pollutes actions of the powerful when they slide towards self-interest alone” (5-6). Office allows the citizen access to an ability to reconstitute “law,” another mediate point between civil society and the State, that “highlights, stereotypes, and pollutes actions that are considered threatening to civil society. Such legal representations possess extraordinary regulative powers. They constitute simultaneously symbolic constructions and normative judgments, and, in the name of civil community, they can draw upon coercion and even control the bureaucratic state” (6).

However, bureaucracies have what Alexander calls an “Achilles’ heel,” which actually allows for both their exploitation by class – the exploitation that has characterized States in the past and that Arnold recognizes has caused, rightfully, many middle-class and lower class Englishers to be wary of it (see, for one example among many, *CPW* II. 305-307) – and their potential for being vehicles of change in solidary communities. Bureaucracies, Alexander explains:

[...] while terribly effective as means, can never be [...] end[s]. As Weber pointed out, every bureaucracy is nonbureaucratic at the top [...]. The goals of government, its ends, are established by forces outside the state organization itself. At the head of state organization sits an authority that is instituted by some nonbureaucratic power, which aims to make the bureaucracy work in its own interests and name. (108-109)

If civil society is well constituted, this feature of State bureaucracy allows the civil sphere to help determine who works within the State’s hierarchy by valuing and respecting the duties and ethics of office. Civil power can be exercised through and in the State. This happens when, as Alexander writes, within:

[...] an independent civil sphere, the people ‘speak,’ not only through the *communicative* institutions that provide cultural authority, but through *regulative* institutions as well. The civil community regulates access to state power. To do so, it constitutes a new and different kind of power of its own. To the degree that society is democratic, to that degree regulatory institutions are the gatekeepers of political power. It is civil power that opens and closes the gate. (110)

As can be seen, in Alexander’s schematic for the civil sphere, a democratically constituted and solidary civil society becomes ground zero for the successful interplay between State and the civil sphere. Without a civil society thus constituted, there can be no faith in the office holders that have been elected to represent civil society’s solidarity within the State. There cannot be, Alexander asserts, a disparity between the people who produce State power and its recipients: “Without solidarity, civil power cannot be produced, and without its moral pressure the officeholder will not feel an obligation to civil society in turn” (134). A rather lengthy passage will help solidify the relationship between civil society as ground zero for the creation of a citizen capable of wielding bureaucratic power:

But office is much more than a code of law. It is an ethic of responsibility, a norm of impersonal and universalistic behavior in which members of civil society are socialized from their earliest years. [...] With the ethic of responsibility, the question becomes not ‘to whom and for what one is responsible’ – a question for the organizational flow chart – but ‘to whom and for what one *feels* responsible.’ For those who wield power in an office, the compelling object of responsibility is larger than the specialized task, pointing beyond the organization as such to the community writ large. It is the civil society that ultimately compels the deep sense of responsibility upon which the institution of office depends, and which it regulates in turn. (136)

Of course, Arnold takes to task this “norm of impersonal and universalistic behavior” in British civil society, and from that point begins making his argument in favor of State

interference in civil society in order to allow it to progress forward along truly revolutionary lines.⁸

For Arnold, every element of civil society as it currently exists is not geared towards generating the kind of responsibility – what he would term “culture,” or “disinterestedness,” or “criticism” – for itself that Alexander rightly believes creates the conditions for successful democratic and truly liberal free life within a polity. Moreover, the very idea of a State capable of having such a dialogical relationship with civil society seems, in Arnold’s estimation at least, to be losing traction in a society more and more beholden to its own willfulness and desire to define itself apart from any limitation or regulation. As this dissertation will demonstrate, Arnold will, over the course of his career, call the British citizenry’s attention to their resistance to any idea of a regulative force existing outside of themselves, and – an idea maintained in this dissertation – he provides his rationale for why this resistance to extra-civil regulation – and even against regulation within the traditional elements of the civil sphere as Alexander presents them, including philosophical, aesthetic, and social spheres – does not create the conditions for the realization of true subjective freedom within a polity, but rather further fragments the civil sphere and sets it up for a condition that, in Arnold’s estimation, appears analogous to tyranny itself. If this results not the tyranny of the individual, it results in

⁸ Such an assumption about the pre-existing democratic condition is necessarily an assumption about the relationship between State power and civil society in modern political theory. For example, Amy Gutmann remarks, “democratic institutions, more than any others, tend to expose citizens to a diverse set of cultural values. Hence liberal democracy enriches our opportunities, enables us to recognize the value of various cultures, and thereby teaches us to appreciate diversity not simply for its own sake but for its enhancement of the quality of life and learning” (10). Likewise, Charles Taylor remarks about the necessity of a certain level of ability for the public to have the language of democracy: “People do not acquire the language needed for self-definition on their own. Rather, we are introduced to them through interaction with others who matter to us [...]. The genesis of the human mind is in this sense not monological, but dialogical” (32). Both of these statements, right as they are, make assumptions about civil societies that are infused with democratic language themselves. Arnold, as will be demonstrated, does not believe this to be the case for England as he sees it.

powerlessness. Without a powerful State within which to hold office, a State capable of both influencing and being influenced by the civil sphere, of what purpose is the newly acquired “democratic” civil ability to hold office?

But with an eye to the creation of such a civil sphere, Arnold remarks, (in)famously, the following in “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time”:

Joubert has said beautifully: [...] (Force and right are the governors of this world; force till right is ready.) *Force till right is ready*; and till right is ready, force, the existing order of things, is justified, is the legitimate ruler. But right is something moral, and implies inward recognition, free assent of the will; we are not ready for right, -- *right*, so far as we are concerned, *is not ready*, -- until we have attained this sense of seeing it and willing it. The way in which for us it may change and transform force, the existing order of things, and become, in its turn, the legitimate ruler of the world, should depend on the way in which, when our time comes, we see it and will it. Therefore for other people enamoured of their own newly discerned right, to attempt to impose it upon us as ours, and violently to substitute their right for our force, is an act of tyranny, and to be resisted. It sets at nought the second great half of our maxim, *force till right is ready*. (CPW III. 266)

In this passage Arnold highlights his paradoxical belief that State intervention in the civil life of a citizen can not only be beneficial, but can help bring about revolutionary change. Such an intervention forces the citizen to recognize the power of the State within which he or she can participate, within which he or she can hold office. Having been shaken out of his or her solipsistic individualism, that pursuit of personal liberty at the expense of extra-civil regulating institutions, as well as the recognition of all the ways civil society continues to popularize such personal pursuit, the demos will recognize that by participating in the State it becomes the nation in its collective and corporate character. Arnold’s assertion that “Unswerving firmness in redressing disorder is always a government’s duty” often overshadows the ends – even Arnold tries to distance himself from allowing the State to become machinery – that Arnold always has in mind for civil

society, which is the State's simultaneous "unswerving firmness in redressing injustice" (CPW IX. 250). Arnold recognizes the necessity of moving towards, in civil society, a liberal democratic worldview, but also maintains the necessity of making the civil and extra-civil spheres work together. Such a vision appears much like John Dewey's vision of a liberal democratic worldview: "Liberal democratic politics are strong and healthy only when a whole society is pervaded by the spirit of democracy – in the family, in the school, in businesses and industry, and in religious institutions as well as in political institutions. The moral meaning of democracy is found in reconstructing all institutions so that they become instruments of human growth and liberation" (Rockefeller 91). Arriving at the reconstruction of both civil society and the State appears as part of Arnold's project for achieving revolutionary ideals in England. Arnold's subtle yet effective method for bringing this to his countrymen's attention is explored below.

IV. Pointing Towards the State: Arnold and Immanent Critique

As has already been stated, the taint of reactionaryism has surrounded Arnold since his own time, and his contemporaries were fond of volleying such charges against him. Although Arnold was constantly offering social criticism to a public that was reading more than ever, Arnold's critics claimed that he never offered any practical solution to the problems that he exposed. Certainly Arnold's own claims that the critic was to remain aloof from the practical, political sphere did not help his position much, his advocacy of "*disinterestedness*" which was characterized, among other ways, as "keeping aloof from what is called 'the practical view of things;' [...] by steadily refusing to lend itself to any of those ulterior, political, practical considerations about ideas" (CPW III. 270). According to his detractors, Arnold's works, rather than showing concern for the

working classes, exhibited an “effeminate horror of simple, practical, common-sense reforms, aiming at the removal of some particular abuse” (qtd. in Coulling 195). Arnold seemed to recognize this tendency himself, for he described himself in one lecture as an impractical, “nearly worn-out man of letters [...] with a frippery of phrases [...] which never had much solid meaning, and have now quite lost the gloss and charm of novelty” (CPW X. 74). Between December 11, 1865, and January 17, 1866, however, Arnold sent three anonymous letters to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, signed merely “A Lover of Light.” Seemingly in answer to his critics, Arnold took these moments to weigh in on a contemporary social issue: affordable secondary education for the middle-class. Although he offers – in true form – no practical solution to the problem, the manner of his critique and that to which it points makes these letters interesting, particularly the last one, titled “The Mansion-House Meeting.” These letters, though offering no practical solution, emerge as effective normative critiques, much more effective than the radical critiques offered so frequently, in Arnold’s perspective, by his critics, and demonstrate that civil society, as he saw it, missed its own imperative to recognize the State’s role in bringing about change.

Education was, of course, a social issue with which more than any other Victorian “sage” Matthew Arnold had first-hand experience. In 1851, Lord Landsdowne, for whom Arnold had been secretary since leaving a temporary teaching position at Rugby, recommended Arnold for an Inspectorship of Schools (an H.M.I.). It was a position that Arnold would hold for the majority of his adult life, rising to Chief Inspector of Schools in 1884. By 1866, the time of the letter in question, Arnold had already traveled twice to the Continent to study educational practices. In 1859 he went as part of the Newcastle

Commission on Elementary Education, and in 1865 he went again as part of the Taunton Commission studying foreign education. Likewise, by the time he wrote these anonymous letters to the *Pall Mall Gazette*, Arnold had already composed *The Popular Education of France*, its well-received introduction essay “Democracy,” and was finishing his second report, *Schools and Universities on the Continent*. He would travel twice more to the Continent in an official role before his death in April 1888, once to Germany in 1885 and then to France, Switzerland, and Germany in 1886. To be sure, Arnold’s qualifications for entering into this debate are formidable; these letters, though, are most interesting because of how they assert the State’s necessary role for Victorian England’s future.

Arnold often used the condition of English education as a vehicle for expressing his vision of increased State power in England. *The Popular Education of France*, “Democracy,” “A French Eton,” “The Literary Influence of Academies,” and *Schools and Universities on the Continent* each emphasize the important role that Arnold saw the State playing in the realm of popular education on the Continent. “The Mansion-House Meeting” constitutes one small charge in Arnold’s continuing campaign in favor of affordable secondary public education in England. The letter’s warrant lies in the real condition of middle-class education at the time, a condition with which, as has already been noted, Arnold was deeply familiar but which calls for a brief historical re-cap here.

Middle-class Englanders considered secondary education a vexatious issue for several reasons. According to Richard Altick, secondary education was dominated by the nine publicly endowed schools, headed by Eton and including Arnold’s *alma mater* Rugby, which were economically, religiously, and socially prohibitive to a majority of

middle-class children. If secondary education was desired, middle-class scholars had to either burden their parents' purses with the exorbitant costs of an Eton or Harrow, or peruse the papers for private academies or education houses, neither of which had quality control since they were operated as private enterprises (Altick 246-255). One recalls the interminable conversation in George Eliot's *The Mill on the Floss* between Mr. Tulliver and Mr. Riley about the school to which Tom Tulliver would go as the two men bemoan the "uncommon price" of education and the fact that Tom's teacher will be a parson (18). If a middle-class student could afford nor find either of these, he would have no secondary education at all.

The British government did, eventually, exercise some power over primary education. The Forster Education Act of 1870 – spearheaded by Matthew Arnold's brother-in-law Col. William Forster – assured, and in 1880 mandated, government-provided primary education for all Englanders. Before this, however, providing affordable and mass education to the poor had been dominated by private Anglican and Nonconformist education reform societies who, according to Altick, "were much less concerned with improving the quality of their instruction than with protecting their respective denominations' interests" (248). The two sides competed for small amounts of government aid (whose spending was overseen by too few, overworked H.M.I.s [Honan 218]), one often lobbying to snatch money from the other along religious principles, their desire clearly indoctrination rather than educational enlightenment. Moreover, the awful conditions and poor content of the education was often perpetuated on the assumption "[f]rom the political economists' standpoint, which was not uncongenial with that of the religious parties, [that] the schools would serve their purpose if they guaranteed a steady

flow of productive, sober, and docile recruits into the labor force” (Altick 250). Such conditions and beliefs often led to situations such as those caricatured by Charles Dickens in *Hard Times*. However, Forster’s Education Act did not prove to be the panacea for English primary education that many hoped it would be, nor did it address the availability of secondary education for the middle-class, to which Arnold had already turned his attention as early as “The Mansion-House Meeting.” The entire condition of English education and the attempts at its reform comprise the social background of this letter, further complicating the conditions into which private charity and lack of oversight had plunged many middle-class schools, providing Arnold with ample reasons for emphasizing the role of the English State in education along a Continental model. Honan calls attention to just how far England was behind others in education: “When W.J. Fox, the M.P. for Oldham, introduced a bill to establish a national system of education in 1850, his motion was defeated in the House of Commons by 287 votes to 58. Yet Holland had a state system of schools, the finest in Europe. France and Prussia had intelligent, humane, centrally organized school systems – and the United States was not far behind” (218).

Into the above-mentioned dilemmas Arnold’s letter enters, addressing itself to one of the proposed solutions to secondary middle-class education. The meeting to which Arnold refers in the letter’s title was held twice, both times at the Lord Mayor’s house in London, once on November 7, 1865, and again on January 12, 1866. At those meetings, the Rev. William Rogers, already a noted philanthropist in the field of charity education, gathered together a committee to set about educating the children of town clerks, tradesmen, and mechanics, all of whom had a per annum income of under £300. The

committee first appealed for funding to the great public endowments already in use, but was thwarted by legal complexities. They therefore sought and received voluntary donations from private citizens. By their second meeting, the committee had gained enough funding to announce their plan publicly and break ground on their first school near Finsbury Circus. The school flourished, received a charter by the Government (of course, with little oversight), and was considered a success (*CPW* IV. 342).

Arnold opens his letter by praising the charitable impulses of the English people, demonstrated by the funding they gave for Rev. Rogers's project; however, Arnold questions whether the ends and the means of Rogers's project are compatible. The project desires to provide adequate schooling for the children of lower middle-class workers, first in London and then, eventually, in the surrounding suburbs. Being a charitable endowment initiated by private donations, "Mr. Rogers and his shower of aldermen are the corporation by the new Charter [...] who will settle what schools are wanted, what the scholars are to pay, and what to learn. No public establishment of middle-class education will be attempted, no stringent scheme for applying charitable endowments to school purposes authorized" (*CPW* IV. 10). However, the Mansion-House Meeting's plan will grow throughout the suburbs and, eventually, all of England. New schools will be established via the same method as the Finsbury Circus school, through private donations overseen by other philanthropists like Rogers, who will themselves constitute "other councils [...] and we shall have about the country several centers of volunteers" (*CPW* IV. 11). Upon this foundation, avoiding "every sort of centralization" because it epitomizes "individual enterprise and self-reliance as the country likes to see it," a "few good schools will probably be established; so much is gain" (*CPW* IV. 11, 10, 12). Thus

Arnold exposes the Mansion-House Meeting's plan for addressing and satisfying England's need of affordable secondary middle-class education, all without State interference.

In the midst of this summation, several of Arnold's core ideas about the efficacy of State action emerge, especially concerning the wrong-headedness of many Englishmen's attitude toward State interference. One should note that Arnold does not propose specific actions that the State should take on this particular matter; rather, he uses this historical moment as an opportunity for political and philosophical critique. Rather than prescribing solutions, Arnold, by reflecting on the actual moment being addressed, captures the irrationality of this moment, and exposes how Rogers's solution comes up short of achieving its ends, not because of any external set of standards, but because of its own internal, irrational limits. Arnold's letter, therefore, is a normative critique, but a normative critique of a very specific sort.

Rather than being a radical critique, "The Mansion-House Meeting" emerges as an example of immanent critique. On this distinction Arnold's contemporary critics missed his letter's normative tendency, as well as the connection with Arnold's perception of himself as speaking from a revolutionary perspective, even though he does not propose specific solutions to the problem addressed. Arnold does not, in this letter, approach the issue of affordable secondary education for middle-class children from an external abstract system that he wants to apply wholesale. Rather, Arnold here explores an actual historical moment and examines whether or not it achieves its ends sufficiently. Arnold makes his reader aware of the method at the letter's outset: "let us ask how the end for which all this money is given is really being served" (*CPW* IV. 8). Immanent

critique emerges dialectically, thus frequently becoming associated with Hegel's philosophical method.⁹ Arnold, too, often touted the efficacy of an immanent critique over a radical one. Perhaps the best example of Arnold's tendency to dismiss a radical critique comes in the following lines on "systematic judgments":

But the systematic judgment is altogether unprofitable. Its author has not really his eye upon the professed object of criticism at all, but upon something else which he wants to prove by means of that object. He neither really tells us, therefore, anything about the object, nor anything about his own ignorance of the object. He never fairly looks at it, he is looking at something else. Perhaps if he looked at it straight and full, looked at it simply, he might be able to pass a good judgment on it. As it is, all he tells us is that he is no genuine critic, but a man with a system, an advocate. (CPW VIII. 254)

Immanent critiques avoid the utopian "oughts" that often come with radical critiques, or critiques that approach a problem from an external set of a priori desires or desired outcomes. Immanent critiques recognize that solutions to problems arise within the logic of the problem itself. Radical critiques substitute an external "ought" for an internally present "is," a methodology that Hegel himself rejects in *The Phenomenology of Spirit* because of an "ought's" distance from the actual. Hegel explains the problem located in this distance:

What is universally valid is also universally effective; what ought to be, in fact also is, and what only ought to be without [actually] being has no truth. The instinct of Reason...rightly holds firmly to this standpoint and refuses to be led astray by figments of thought which only ought to and as 'oughts' are credited with truth, although they are nowhere met in experience. (qtd. in Phillips par. 8)

Hegel does not suggest in this passage that immanent critiques cannot produce normative "oughts." Both radical and immanent critiques have the capacity of producing normative reasons for change, even revolutionary change. By calling the reader's attention to the

⁹ Although an Hegelian dialectic is a sufficient condition for the emergence of an immanent critique, it is not a necessary condition.

distance between a radical “ought” and an immanent critique, Hegel clearly overrules a common critical misinterpretation of his own thought, namely that Hegel’s philosophy moves from heaven to earth. Rather, through the logic of an immanent critique, one sees how the anti-thesis is not externally opposed to the thesis, but is rather contained within it as its own limit; Hegel means just this when he says that what ought to be already is.

Hegel does not sanction the status quo. Arnold himself, in a late essay “The Zenith of Conservatism,” remarks on this same distance, stating, “The epoch of concentration has now ended for us, the ice has broken up, things are no longer looked upon as part of the order of creation merely because we find them existing. If they are absurd, this is now a positive objection to them” (*CPW* XI. 130). By examining Rev. Rogers’s solution to affordable secondary education for middle-class children, Arnold finds both its limitations and its emancipatory potential in the progress of history. Philips further describes the normative characteristics of an immanent critique, writing, “An immanent critique is the dialectical method of inquiry applied to history and political economy to get at radical potentiality – the sense of a future possible reality contained within present reality. It is an attempt to discover the transcendent within the mundane” (par. 6). Hegel scholar David Rose also explains that “cultural frameworks which supply one’s moral obligations may become inconsistent when new moral problems cannot be adequately articulated or comprehended by the existing structures of experience” (Rose 20). He continues explaining how Hegel recognized that the immanent critique was also normative, writing, “The existing state of affairs, that is the contemporary and real structures of society, its practices, institutions, conventions and laws, can still fail to be actual. They may exist but not be fully rational. Social reality can fail to be actual in that

it is a mere appearance and contradicts what is essential to the state” (28). Modern readers must look at Arnold’s letter as an example of immanent critique, unlike his contemporaries. For the purposes of the issue under Arnold’s analysis, the radical, and thus flawed, solution rests in a vehement opposition to State action, or “centralization.” Arnold’s demonstrates his genius in “The Mansion-House Meeting,” as well as gesturing towards the influence that Hegel’s thought had on his own intellect, through his ability to demonstrate how the prevailing solution to the problem in question meets its own limits and simultaneously suggests the necessary use of the State as a solution.¹⁰ From this perspective of immanent critique, one can extrapolate several elements that, in Arnold’s mind, make State action a more rational approach to democratic, liberal, civil society than what Rev. Rogers’s plan for secondary middle-class education suggests.

Through Arnold’s critique, three problem areas emerge in and from Rogers’s plan: private interests; *laissez-faire* politics; lack of progress. The willful imposition of private investors with special interests – already pegged problematic with the Anglican and Non-Conformist education societies – proves especially problematic for achieving a sense of universality among the students. Arnold writes, “They [i.e. Rogers and the Corporation] define middle class in their own way, they fix the school charge in their own way, they arrange the plan of studies in their own way” (*CPW* IV. 9-10). Having been left alone, and spurning a broader interest in education beyond those who have put up the money to start it, Arnold sees the quality of the students’ education being left to

¹⁰ Arnold’s advocacy of immanent critique is not limited to this instance. In “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” he recognizes that the failure of the French Revolution rested in its radically taking ideas and “transport[ing] them abruptly into the world of politics and practice, violently to revolutionise this world to their bidding” (*CPW* III. 265). In “A Psychological Parallel,” Arnold insists that immanent critique will eventually prove the irrationality of an idea, for “one inevitable consequence of a thing’s want of conformity with truth and fact is, that sooner or later the human mind perceives it” (*CPW* VIII. 146).

“hardly an adequate body” (CPW IV. 10). The problem becomes exacerbated when the Corporation makes Finsbury school a model – though not a center – upon which the other schools will be built throughout England. However, having the model extend to the manner of school funding ensures that there will come along other philanthropists, “working away to collect subscriptions, negotiate with trustees, peck at charities, and potter at middle-class education in general” (CPW IV. 11). This, as Arnold wrote several years earlier, demonstrates “management [...] by chance private associations” (CPW II. 308). In “A French Eton,” Arnold had already established the problems associated with this privatization in schools and had extended it to civil society at large: “But what is meant by the habit of local self government, on which our middle-class is so incessantly felicitated, is its habit of voluntary combination, in bodies of its own arranging, for purposes of its own choosing – purposes to be carried out within the limits fixed for a private association by its own powers” (CPW II. 307). Here Arnold does not criticize local self-government in its Idea; rather, he criticizes the way the volunteer charity organizations carry it out and, by doing so, Arnold recognizes the irrationality of this concrete manifestation of local self-government, much as he does in Rogers’s solution. Such a closed system of private interests anticipates the type of politicking that Arnold explores more fully in *Culture and Anarchy*, and also demonstrates the self-satisfaction and provincialism of England in Arnold’s estimation. For instance, in *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold writes that in England, “everybody is comforted” by politicians (CPW V. 150). With everyone being so comforted, no hope presents itself for rising out of a subjective mire. Politicians, also, delude themselves by pandering to class interests; when they then receive votes from the classes to whom they pander, politicians convince

themselves that they are receiving “real” support, when the support is, in fact, illusory (*CPW V*. 150-152).

An antipathy for centralization, the “favorite catchword that the State must not meddle with these things,” fractures civil society by alienating its constituent parts from one another, setting them in competition with one another (*CPW IV*. 9). Along this line, Matthew Arnold next demonstrates the Mansion-House Meeting’s irrationality by criticizing the *laissez-faire* position of both the British government and the philanthropists regarding education. Arnold even puts into the mouth of his detractors the literal translation of *laissez-faire*: “*let them alone*, and the thing will work itself right in the end” (*CPW IV*. 11, emphasis mine). Arnold’s reflections on this policy fit with his “peculiarly British form of Quietism,” the “devout, but excessive, reliance on an over-ruling Providence” (*CPW V*. 159). In an earlier work, Arnold demonstrated that such a hands-off approach, because of its basis in economics, throws secondary education back into the system that birthed the problem of good middle-class education in the first place. Arnold points out that *laissez-faire* capitalism already governs the secondary education deemed in need of reform:

They [i.e. middle-class parents] have only to open the *Times*. There they read advertisement upon advertisement [for secondary education homes], offering them [...] in almost any part of England which suits their convenience. [...] And all this is provided by the simple, natural operation of the laws of supply and demand, without, as the *Times* beautifully says, ‘the fetters of endowment and the interference of the executive.’ Happy country! happy middle classes! (*CPW II*. 281-282)

From this satirical approach, which Arnold drops, he goes on to state boldly, “by this time we know pretty well that to trust to the principle of supply and demand to do for us all that we want in providing education is to lean upon a broken reed. We trusted to it to

give us fit elementary schools till its impotence became conspicuous; we have thrown it aside, and called upon State-aid, with the securities accompanying this” (*CPW* II. 282). The system, in Arnold’s estimation, here creates the very problems it ostensibly seeks to redress. Founding secondary education on individual charity ensures that there will be many centers of education, working separately and against one another without any unified plan of operation or coherence in quality, as opposed to State oversight, which affords the securities of “competent supervision [...] not occasional and extraordinary, but periodic and regular; it is not explorative only; it is also, to a considerable extent, authoritative” (*CPW* II. 283). The plan, as Rogers has made it, leaves the real issue unaddressed behind a makeshift solution posing as market competition. In another work, Arnold makes the necessity of the State in education even more clear, remarking that complete liberty in education in France enters the picture “once, and once only; it appears there in 1793, under the Reign of Terror” (*CPW* II. 37). This association with the Jacobin Terror is certainly a forceful flourish in Arnold’s argument against Rogers’s plan and its implications for a democratic, truly liberal, and progressive England.

Finally, choosing not to see the irrationality of Rogers’s plan and its clear intent to promulgate aversion to State action will cause England to stop progressing in the modern world. Arnold mentions, as an analogy, the current English hospital system, operated on private interests much like the school proposal. Such systems as the voluntary hospitals and the workhouse hospitals do well to provide a veneer of workability, but clearly Arnold sees this as mere show. Like the secondary education proposal, people consider those overseeing the hospitals as in the field. They therefore allow the system as it stands to work itself right along the “Quietist” line mentioned earlier. Arnold continues, “it does

enough to keep up appearances, to prevent our being forced to organize a public system; and the horrors of that miserable makeshift, the workhouse hospital, are the price we pay. So it threatens to be with middle-class education” (*CPW* IV. 11). The desire to rid society of as much State interference as possible causes England to lag behind, in education, modern nations like France: “In other words, for adequately fulfilling a public service [...] private effort has not, and cannot have, the necessary powers” (*CPW* IV. 11).

In “The Mansion-House Meeting,” then, Arnold reveals some core ideas concerning his belief in the efficacy of the State in a modern civil society, unlike many of his liberal contemporaries. He presents and then allows to manifest the inherent limits of Rev. Rogers’s plan for securing affordable secondary education for middle-class students. The presence of vested interests via private charitable donations, the limitations of a “peculiarly British form of Quietism,” and a lack of progress emerge, in Arnold’s letter, from this moment, pointing towards the necessary emergence of the State; in other words, Rev. Rogers’s plan smells of atomism, alienation, and stagnation, terms that become foundational in his critique of short-sighted liberalism and the dangers, in his perspective, that it poses to real progress towards revolutionary goals.

However, by refraining from identifying the emergent State with the actually existing State in England, Arnold secures a critical position that avoids radical Liberal and Conservative positions both, emerging at a very unique position. Likewise, by affirming, as he does in another letter on the same subject, that “the people suffers in its liberty, its self-respect, its education, when the State’s duty is so handed over” to institutions like Rev. Rogers’s, he brings the fundamental idea of rational human freedom – the people suffering in their liberty – into direct communication with the idea of the

State (CPW IV. 4). In *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold will make it clear that the actually existing State in England is not the end that he has in mind; rather, human liberty, true freedom, remains the revolutionary end in mind:

But what says one of the staunchest of these friends, M. Renan, on State action; and even State action in that very sphere where in France it is most excessive, the sphere of education? Here are his words: -- ‘A Liberal believes in liberty, and liberty signifies the non-intervention of the State. *But such an ideal is still a long way off from us, and the very means to remove it to an indefinite distance would be precisely the State’s withdrawing its action too soon.*’ (CPW V. 162)

“The Mansion-House Meeting,” although a very slight work in comparison to Arnold’s more well-known treatises, allows for a unique constellation of influences to be noticed. In this work, Arnold demonstrates his position outside of the current liberal project being acted out, he believes, in England (in this instance, under the heading of affordable secondary education for middle-class students).¹¹ By approaching the problem that he isolates via immanent critique, Arnold aligns himself, albeit marginally, with an Hegelian apparatus. Finally, by exposing how Rev. Rogers’s solution undermines what Arnold perceives as the ideals of 1789, Arnold takes the opportunity to align the ideals of 1789, primarily the idea of real subjective freedom within a rational polity, with an authoritative force he terms the State, a position also taken by Hegel. This slight work, then, uniquely provides a representation of that “revolution by due course of law” that Arnold believed characterized his vision of actualizing revolutionary ideals in England.

Arnold’s immanent critique in “The Mansion-House Meeting” has exposed the seemingly impossible position that critics even today accuse him of occupying: a belief in

¹¹ One might even argue that Arnold occupies a position similar to that which Slavoj Žižek assigns to his own project, a position that asserts “*today, actual freedom of thought must mean the freedom to question the predominant liberal-democratic post-ideological consensus – or it means nothing*” (A Plea for Leninist 545).

the ideals of 1789, which Arnold defines as the realization of real liberty, with “ideas of religious, political, and social freedom” within a polity (*CPW* I. 81), and a simultaneous belief in a strong State. Such a position, however, has plagued political philosophers for many years and can be formulated thus: How does one reconcile *reason* with *authority*? How does one valorize Revolutionary principles like “Liberty, Equality, Fraternity,” yet simultaneously celebrate the need for a strong center of authority like the State? The intervention of years since the French Revolution has brought to the world negative associations between idealism and strong States. Both Hegel and Arnold (although Arnold only from stories) would remember how liberty rapidly descended into Robespierre’s Terror. Today, people associate names like Stalin, Mussolini, Hitler, Mao, and Kim Jong Il with a strong State attempting to instill revolutionary ideals in its citizens. As Lionel Trilling sums up, “the refinements and impasses into which the thinker falls who undertakes to reconcile reason and authority are inevitable; his conclusions must be either disturbing or sterile” (258). Analyzing Arnold’s letter, moreover, exposes the Hegelian method of immanent critique that brings Hegel into this conversation, furthering fears of a reactionary Arnold.

V. Outline

The full depth and outline of Arnold’s perceived position of himself as a revolutionary thinker, as well as some of the characteristics of his project for achieving the revolutionary ideals of 1789 through the power of the State in England will be explored in the pages that follow. However, it must be acknowledged that the breadth of Matthew Arnold’s writing hinders as much as it helps in tracing this position and project. Very often, Arnold complicates – perhaps even contradicts – an idea asserted in one of

his works by a line or idea in another. Like many educated men and women of letters in Victorian England, Arnold wrote voraciously. He was the epitome of a consumer of information, even though Arnold frequently used the unfettered proliferation of information as a basis for criticism. His now published and available output includes hundreds of poems (some of which were extended dramatic pieces), hundreds upon hundreds of diary and pocket notebook pages, six volumes of collected letters, and eleven volumes of prose. This dissertation seeks to touch on most of these sources of information in order to demonstrate what appears to be an impulse in Arnold's work, an insistent and reappearing opinion that Arnold held of himself and his position as well as his project.

As has been demonstrated, Arnold must be considered revolutionary in a paradoxical way. However, hopefully by insisting on this revolutionary tag as well as his assertion of the State's role in achieving it, even though it is paradoxical, the complexity of Arnold's image of himself, as well as the subtleties of some of his aesthetic, social, and political positions, can be actualized, and, perhaps, Arnold can be situated outside of the reactionary or radically conservative and "safe" moderate or gradualist camps into which critics often place him. He repeatedly asserts his commitment to the revolutionary ideas of 1789, but by occupying a position emphasizing the necessary role of the State in achieving those ideas, Arnold opposes himself to the very group that felt themselves the torchbearers for the French Revolutionary ideals. He assigns himself a position outside of what he considers to be the "majority." Arnold was convinced, as was Hegel, that the current liberal project was in actuality eliminating the possibility of the realization of true human freedom within a polity because of its commitment to a liberal democratic

ideology that opposed itself to the idea of any center of authority like the State. This introduction has set the groundwork for this dissertation's project, firmly asserting that Arnold's commitment to the rational ideas of 1789 and the marginalized position from which he perceived himself as agitating for change in line with that commitment make him a revolutionary thinker. Tracing the background, development, and application of that understanding of Matthew Arnold's status as a revolutionary thinker, as well as its indebtedness to Hegel, especially the role that the State plays in it, emerges as the focus of this work.

Examining G.W.F. Hegel's influence on Matthew Arnold's thought requires that one work through several problematic areas, noting how Arnold and Hegel's solutions to these problems eventually weave themselves together into a vision of the relationship between the ideals of 1789 and the individual's relationship to an authoritative State power. Often, critics do not reference many of the texts that will receive extended commentary here. Shorter works, as well as letters and notebook entries, receive the same level of consideration as Arnold's more well-known works. Hopefully, the reader will understand that the more popular pieces of Arnold's prose output do not constitute Arnold's final or even complete words on the issue of completing the work of the French Revolution in England. Rather, Arnold continually re-examined his own ideas. Likewise, several chapters in this dissertation end with a section titled "Discourse With the Future," a section that, while admitting that Arnold's copious output makes it difficult to assert any definite continuous thread, nevertheless asserts the lifetime commitment that Arnold held to exploring the very difficult ideas he struggled with as he tried to bridge the ideals of 1789 with the necessity of a strong State in realizing those ideals. "Discourse With the

Future” will, therefore, examine a selection from one of Arnold’s later works, many of them published only shortly before his death in April of 1888.

This work will proceed in four sections. The first section establishes the parameters of the scholarly debate surrounding Matthew Arnold and his avowed commitment to the ideals of the French Revolution and to the idea of the State. This section sketches a matrix of some commonplace interpretations of Arnold’s holding of these two seemingly incompatible positions at the same time. Having done this, this section argues for the role that Hegel’s philosophical ideas, as well as Hegel’s own commitment to the French Revolution’s impulse and his simultaneous belief in the necessity of the State for the actualization of true subjective freedom within a polity, plays in a re-examination of Arnold’s position vis-à-vis this critical matrix.

The second section examines the difficulties Arnold had, early in his life, coming to terms with what could be called the location of his subjectivity. As Arnold tried to define himself apart from his father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, his friends including Arthur H. Clough, and the tumultuous world around him (especially during the February Revolution of 1848), he betook himself to the *Bhagavad-Gita*, a work enjoying a continued vogue since the time of the English Romantic poets. For as much as the *Gita* offered food for thought, though, Arnold ultimately rejected the theory of subjectivity recommended therein. More importantly, Arnold rejected this theory based on the same grounds that Hegel did in a critique of one of the *Gita*’s major interpreters, Wilhelm von Humboldt. Knowing that Arnold read von Humboldt and witnessing the major parallels between Arnold’s rejection of the *Gita* and Hegel’s, one can tentatively assert that this period of Arnold’s life was formative in associating him with Hegel’s philosophy and perhaps even

laying the groundwork for the parallels that emerge between them later in Arnold's career and thought.

Having established Arnold's rejection of the *Bhagavad-Gita's* theory of subjectivity, Arnold's positive movement towards a theory of subjectivity can be seen occurring in his famous preface to the 1853 volume, *Poems*. For as much as this preface is a statement of poetics, it is also a statement of personal philosophy, a positive statement concerning the relationship of the self to the larger world. Several of Arnold's aesthetic conclusions in the preface not only foreshadow later political and social beliefs, but also outline a dynamic relationship between the individual and the world, a relationship that would eventually emerge as the individual's relationship to the State. Arnold's preface to this edition of his poems parallels, in many respects, G.W.F. Hegel's preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, a mature statement of his political philosophy and the role of a truly free individual in a polity as well as the relationship between that individual and the State. To say that Arnold modeled his own preface on Hegel's would probably be to say too much; however, the parallels demonstrate that Arnold's thought was proceeding along Hegelian lines.

The fourth chapter attempts to synthesize the connections that the two previous sections have established by looking at some of Arnold's more mature beliefs about the role of the State in a free polity. Scholars have been reluctant to identify Arnold's State too closely with that of Hegel's, fearing the charges of reactionary thought that may be brought against him. However, taking some recent works on Hegel that demonstrate his continued belief in the project of freedom instantiated with the French Revolution recommend a progressive, liberal, and even revolutionary vision of the State's role in a

free society. This fourth part, then, hopes to bring these readings of Hegel's State to bear on Arnold's vision of the State's role in achieving revolutionary ideals, as well, concluding that a commitment to the State as an authoritative center might be seen, not as reactionary, but as revolutionary in a positive sense.

The conclusion provides a capstone for the entire discussion by exploring a recurring trope in Arnold's work – the remnant. This group, although it changes names throughout Arnold's output, seems to be the best place to locate the vehicle through which Arnold hopes to achieve his vision of the State's role in bringing about a revolutionary change in English civil and State society. The conclusion explores some critical interpretations of the remnant's role in Arnold's social and political thought, and then provides a history of its development in its many different guises, as well as an explanation of the different functions Arnold assigns it in his project for revolutionary change. Although the remnant seems to offer a solution for bridging civil society and the State, Arnold's explanation for how, exactly, the remnant will either wield or respond to State power exhibits a certain tension. Although the remnant seems to provide the best expression of Jeffrey Alexander's idea of office, explored in this introduction, by constantly pitting the remnant against the majority, Arnold seems to commit a "return upon himself" and give to the remnant some of the qualities of revolutionaries that he rejected early in his life.

CHAPTER 2

SELECT CRITICAL RESPONSES TO ARNOLD, THE STATE, AND REVOLUTIONARY IDEALS

I. Hypocritical or Dangerous?

Arnold scholars, as has been mentioned, have spent decades tracing Arnold's varying comments about the French Revolution and the England that inherited its ideals, trying to find a figure in the carpet that Arnold's massive written output weaves. Conclusions are varied, but many scholars believe that Arnold's claims of continuing the French Revolution's work as well as his belief in a strong State power lead to the conclusion that Arnold was either insincere, hypocritical, dangerous, or confused in his beliefs. Several examples out of the many scholarly approaches, though, may provide sufficient evidence of this matrix as well as some of the problems that arise when examining Arnold's revolutionary beliefs and his advocacy of State authority.

Gerald Graff believes that Arnold's advocacy of democracy and reason, both of which are revolutionary ideals, are at odds with the stability that Arnold characterizes as coming from the authority of the State. "This democratic condition," Graff writes, "of perpetual conflict, contestation, and negotiation, however, in which there is no authority that cannot be challenged and the terms of cultural commonality are always in the making, is precisely what Arnold meant by *anarchy*. [...] Arnold seems to have been unwilling to imagine a vital culture whose citizens simply agree to disagree about religion, art, philosophy, morality, and politics" (192-193). Democracy and rationality require, Graff believes, conflict and controversy, thus working against the "cultural commonality" Graff believes Arnold wanted England's citizens to move towards (192). Though Arnold praised democracy and equality, he "could not reconcile himself to

democracy as a *cultural* concept [...]. For Arnold a true common culture is one in which there is no reason for fundamental controversy about cultural ‘values’ to arise” (192).

Graff presents a confused Arnold – at worst a hypocritical Arnold. Though he acknowledges Arnold as a powerful voice in the English prose tradition, Graff nevertheless consigns him to a spot outside of modern academic debate.

Graff’s critique exposes an obstacle in Arnold’s thought, namely between Arnold’s desire for a universal point of reference as well as the plentitude of ideas and opinions on which democracy depends. One can capture something of what Arnold was struggling against by examining some of the statements from Graff’s essay presented above. Graff argues that Arnold equated the democratic condition with anarchy, and that the democratic condition was one characterized by conflict, contestation, and negotiation. Arnold, however, perceived just the opposite situation occurring when he looked at the world around him. Rather than perceiving a world of productive perpetual conflict, Arnold believed England was experiencing entropy, stagnation, and by *anarchy* Arnold possibly meant this stagnation, this entropy. This idea, that Arnold’s anarchy relates to stagnation, even in *Culture and Anarchy* emerges in some of the water images that Arnold employs. Arnold writes of persons who are apt to “swim with the stream,” by which Arnold means focusing on one’s subjective willfulness: “This is the more easy for them, because they are not wanting [...] thinkers [...] to swim with the stream, but to swim with it philosophically; to call the desires of the ordinary self of any great section of the community edicts of the national mind and laws of human progress, and to give them a general, a philosophic, and an imposing expression” (Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* 24). Here Arnold evidences his fear of the loss of any conception of cultural values. The

elevation of opinion to the position of general cultural values undermines rationalism and, therefore, progress. Shifting the “national mind” towards accepting this fetish of subjective willfulness, in Arnold’s mind, emerges as dangerous. Arnold, continuing with his “stream” metaphor (which runs throughout *Culture and Anarchy*) calls attention to what he terms “cross” and “side” streams, or “checks” (Arnold, *Culture and Anarchy* 96). These are forces that arise at different historical moments that act as “some sound order and authority” when stagnation threatens, stirring up the waters and getting society moving again (96). Clearly one of the elements of the State, as Arnold envisioned it, was as this force that has the power to “check” the current ideological landscape.

Unlike what Graff suggests, Arnold did not desire a world in which there was “no reason for fundamental controversy about cultural ‘values’ to arise” in the sense that Arnold’s vision of what constituted cultural values could not be contested; Arnold, rather, feared the loss of the very idea of cultural values in the swirl of opinion he perceived around him. In the essay “A Psychological Parallel,” wherein he writes of James Smith, who preached on witchcraft in England, one sees this. In that essay, Arnold does judge the values and the reasoning power of both this religious thinker and of St. Paul as insufficient. Their thoughts often give the reader evidence of much error, but that they also occasionally provide one with the “error’s future corrective” (*CPW* VIII. 129). Arnold does not, then, dismiss people outright simply because they have made an error in their idea of what is valuable in a culture which was arrived at through their reasoning and judgment. One may readily assume, then, that Arnold would think the same of himself and his time. Rather, the tendency to conflate the right to hold an opinion – regardless of its rationality, or to hold an opinion simply because one possesses the right

to “think what he likes” – with real rational, democratic progress is the very thing to be resisted in Arnold’s estimation.

If Gerald Graff’s Arnold is confused, then Terry Eagleton’s Arnold is downright dangerous. In Eagleton’s estimation, Arnold was a darling of the status quo, an enemy of democracy and individuality, a staunch – if understated and perhaps deluded – supporter of the aristocracy and a rising bourgeois ideology that sought to take the wind out of a fomenting working class’s sails. Through the apparatus of State education, strongly grounded in an adequate literature, Eagleton believes Arnold was establishing a sense of common British culture that would serve several repressive ideological purposes. Eagleton explains how literature achieves such ideological goals. Primarily, literature operates – much like religion – in the realm of timeless truths; therefore, literature in Arnold’s vision was opposed to the scientific rationalism sweeping through the lower classes, deconstructing timeless truths and prejudices that were holding them in bondage. Feeling, not rational discourse, remains the province of literature, and Arnold recognized the modern era’s tendency to make of the mind a “devouring flame of thought,” much as it did his own Empedocles (Arnold, *Poetical Works* 438).¹² Again like religion, literature would be the vehicle for indoctrinating morality into the working class, since religion’s influence was clearly on the wane. Literature would operate through a web of symbols, an ideological opiate, reinforcing assumed certainties to keep the working classes in check. Eagleton explains what he believes Arnold meant by morality in literature:

Morality is no longer to be grasped as a formulated code or explicit ethical system: it is rather a sensitive preoccupation with the whole quality of life itself, with the oblique, nuanced particulars of human experience. Somewhat rephrased, this can be taken as meaning that the old religious

¹² Henceforth, quotes from Arnold’s poetry will be from *Poetical Works*, edited by Tinker and Lowry, and referenced with *PW* and page number.

ideologies have lost their force, and that a more subtle communication of moral values, one which works by “dramatic enactment” rather than rebarbative abstraction, is thus in order. (2247)

Through literature, the lower classes could see acceptable morality and moral behavior.

Rather than feeling preached to, the working classes could, via literature, experience a life that could be theirs, actions that could be theirs, and would thus subtly be inaugurated into the ruling middle class ideology, the capitalism that continually produced the “residuum” of the Populace, as Arnold once termed it (*CPW* V. 143). Eagleton, however, is not alone in this cynical and almost conspiratorial approach to the role of the State.

Michel Foucault also proceeds along these lines in “The Political Technology of Individuals.” David Durst explains Foucault’s argument:

The state is strengthened by fostering the development of societal relations, in which the individual’s desire for happiness is linked to institutional power. In light of this political economization of life, the happiness of the modern individual no longer represents the highest end of the modern state; instead, it enters into the calculations of this new governmentality to the extent that the well-being of citizens becomes a factor in the solidification of state power. [...] The end of the state is no longer, then, in good liberal manner simply the well-being of each individual (e.g., Humboldt); instead, a sort of reversal takes place in which what is claimed to be a means to individual human happiness, the state, now becomes the determinate end. (230)

As can be seen, in Durst’s explanation, Foucault sees the dangers of a State that hides State interests behind what citizens see as their own best interests. Eagleton recognizes this same movement in Arnold’s belief in the State’s role in education, with all the malignancy implied.

In Eagleton’s estimation, the literature Arnold would have all people read would thus reinforce shared, unquestioned social values that supposedly transcend class distinctions and therefore do away with petty disagreements and ideological extremism.

Arnold's literature, Eagleton suggests, saw itself as the enemy of fracturing ideologies, even though its own ideological impulse kept the classes apart. Literature brings all together in a feeling of shared English beliefs, though not shared social and political status. Though only in imagination, literature would allow the proletariat to experience a life outside themselves, thus allowing the impression of plurality, undermining the individualism that Arnold saw rampant in England's working class, "the very centre and stronghold of our national idea, that it is man's ideal right and felicity to do as he likes" (CPW V. 118). The individual would recognize the ideas and position of others, "namely their masters" (Eagleton 2246). So, where Arnold defenders like Mary Schneider see Arnold believing that "democracy could succeed only where the people were influenced by genuine learning, and his criticism [...] not offer[ing] the people something suited to their limited circumstances and tastes, nor [...] literary criticism offer[ing] them a lesser literature" (90), Eagleton sees Arnold's affirmation of the State in education functioning thus: "If the masses are not thrown a few novels, they may react by throwing up a few barricades" (2245). Although Eagleton makes salient points about Arnold's vision of literature functioning as religion, he may have overstated his point, especially concerning literature's supplanting of scientific rationalism, quoted earlier. Arnold's intimate relationship with Thomas Huxley led Arnold to firmly believe, and say outright, that a proper cultural education would include both science and the humanities, for the best that has been thought and said in the world, Arnold wrote, includes science (CPW X.56-60).¹³

According to Eagleton, for all of his talk about the ideals of 1789, of rationality, equality, liberty, and progress, Arnold was doing little more than paying lip service to

¹³ Arnold smoothes the seeming disparity between humanities and sciences a little awkwardly, but he does assert that knowing "*the best which has been thought and said in the world*" includes "knowing also what has been done by such men as Copernicus, Galileo, Newton, Darwin" (CPW X. 56, 59).

these revolutionary ideas, all the while ensuring that the status quo would remain staunchly in place even as it incorporated a newly enfranchised class of voters. As one of Arnold's contemporaries noted, he was the "down-encradled darling of the revolutionary boudoir" (qtd. in Coulling 202). The striking image suggests that Arnold was content to ponder revolutionary goals and ideas, but was afraid of moving out of the comfort of his bourgeois ideological cradle.

Eagleton, like Graff, notices that the problematic element of Arnold's revolutionary intent is his simultaneous advocacy of the State. Graff appropriately understood Arnold's vision of the State as a force, as demonstrated by the water metaphors in *Culture and Anarchy*. However, Graff understood the State to be an entity that overshadowed civil society so completely that it quelled any idea of resistance or argument within civil society in favor of externally imposed universal standards that were unchanging. Eagleton paints a similar portrait, and isolates a specific element – literature – of the State's apparatus as forcing civil society, through education, to accept the status quo. In Eagleton's assessment, the status quo gets to have its proverbial cake and eat it, too. Universal male suffrage and education often quell social agitations, but social and political hierarchies become reinforced with a sense of cultural hierarchy through the works of literature that are taught and imposed upon those newly enfranchised people. Here is the malignant genius of education as a State apparatus that Durst saw Foucault exposing: the literature now accessible by a reading population presents that population with a happy, orderly, and well-functioning society that the reader is less likely to disrupt since he or she now actively participates in it, politically, economically, and socially. As

Durst wrote, the ostensible means to human happiness, the State, has become the end of human happiness – the happiness of the State is human happiness.

Graff and Eagleton each see Arnold's State as the political and legislative status quo, eliminating or undermining disagreement or political agitation within the civil sphere. Likewise, Graff and Eagleton see the State's apparatus extending into and taking over civil society, again eliminating problems before they arise or creating an environment such that problems do not have the opportunity to arise. In one of his earliest comments about the State, Arnold certainly affirms that the State should directly intervene in the civil life of the individual citizen. He writes to Clough, "Those who cannot read G[ree]k sh[ou]ld read nothing but Milton and parts of Wordsworth: the state should see to it" (Arnold, *The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough* 97).¹⁴ Although this line was tossed off in a letter to a close friend, Arnold nevertheless had a vision of the State as having a direct and palpable influence on the civil life of a citizen. In this way, Graff and Eagleton are right in their recognition, but do not capitalize on what Arnold envisions as the productive and progressive reason for such State intervention into the civil sphere. Arnold does not collapse civil society and the State into the same thing, but rather highlights the dialogical relationship that the two spheres have one with the other, holding out hope that the two can influence one another and not be conflated with each other.

As the introduction pointed out, Arnold's perception of civil society was colored by his belief that civil society was not capable of self regulation, was not, at least in Arnold's opinion, capable of what Jeffrey Alexander and others believe necessary for an

¹⁴ Henceforth, references to *The Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough* will be cited with CL and then page number.

appropriate relationship between civil society and the State, explored in the introduction. And so Arnold was rightly, in his mind, encouraging a shift in where a citizen's faith in progress should be placed. Rather than, as Alexander writes, the civil sphere regulating and mitigating the hierarchies necessarily enforced by the non-civil spheres such as the State, Arnold gestures towards the necessity for the non-civil spheres to intervene in re-establishing a sense of limitation, or hierarchy, within the civil sphere itself in order to "short circuit" what he saw as the radical individualism characterizing civil society. With the main movement of mind being away from stronger non-civil elements – that is, away from the State as a force pressuring the civil life of an individual – Arnold fears a dangerous march down a path leading, not to a better civil society, but a worse one. In fact, the context of the quote from the above quoted letter to Clough seems to support such a reading, even at such an early time in Arnold's life (circa September 1848 or 1849). Arnold writes, "for the failures of the *σταθμοί* [i.e. "march of the day"; in plural here because it means 'stages along the royal road'" (*CL* 97 n. †)] may leave them good citizens enough, [...] but the others go to the dogs failing or succeeding" (*CL* 97). This "*σταθμοί*," then, needs to respond to such "State" interference, for civil society's perceived progress, in Arnold's opinion, currently runs counterproductively to the people operating within it.

II. Sympathetic Responses

Whereas Graff and Eagleton exploit the dangers of a State power encroaching too far into the civil sphere, other critics have offered a more sympathetic picture of Arnold's seemingly contradictory beliefs in revolutionary ideals and State power, recommending that Arnold should still be read as one who was in the "revolutionary line" (Trilling 225).

Arnold scholars still consider Lionel Trilling's biography *Matthew Arnold* to be the most sweeping exploration of Arnold's intellectual development. In the work, Trilling embarks on an examination of Arnold's sources, including the influences that created this problematic marriage between revolutionary ideals and State power. Trilling notes that the State as a revolutionary corollary or as an outcome of the French Revolution makes Arnold part of a series of political thinkers who have also had to come to terms with State power in a pre- and post-French Revolutionary world. Trilling focuses his exploration of Arnold's intellectual development on John S. Mill, Edmund Burke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau. By examining Trilling's placement of Arnold in the company of these thinkers, one can easily see the benefits and limitations of these associations; moreover, Trilling's analysis points towards the potential benefits of reading Arnold more closely with Hegel.

It would seem that Matthew Arnold and John S. Mill make strange bedfellows, considering how much Arnold, like Thomas Carlyle before him, despised the "machinery" of Utilitarianism, which Mill's father and his father's mentor, Jeremy Bentham, developed and spread. However, Mill and Arnold, Trilling points out, both base their social and political philosophies on the power of reason to advance mankind. This inheritance from the Enlightenment makes both of them descendants of the French Revolutionaries. The two part company, however, in exactly how they believed reason was to help spread and advance society. Mill conceived of the social body in atomistic terms, of society as an agglomeration of individual wills, each pursuing his or her own best rational interests. Reason, in Mill's estimation, can only be fully respected by allowing each individual, without government interference, to actualize his or her

freedom in all directions, including the possibility of advancing in a wrong direction. Though not “capital T” True, these attempts by groups of individuals to advance society – both failed and successful attempts – nevertheless have validity in that they are all attempts at rational progress. Arnold scholars do not have to imagine what Arnold’s response to such an advancement in any and all directions would be, for he describes an imaginary conversation between himself and someone arguing for a position similar to Mill’s: “‘Ah, but, my dear friend [...] only think of all the nonsense which you now hold quite firmly, which you would never have held if you had not been contradicting your adversary in it all these years!’” (*CPW* V. 244). For the State, as a part of what Jeffrey Alexander termed the non-civil sphere (7), to intervene in the social life of an individual, other than to prevent that individual from bringing harm to another, necessarily breeds tyranny, Mill believes. This atomistic understanding, in Trilling’s estimation, makes Mill’s social philosophy governed by a rudimentary social Contractarianism in Arnold’s mind (Trilling 237-240).

Trilling suggests, however, a much more organic vision. He understood that the individual springs forth from society just as much as the individual makes up society. Arnold believed that, in the interests of the whole, an individual’s own personal development should not only be protected from other individuals (i.e., Mill’s vision of government power), but also that an individual had to be protected from him or herself. Therefore, force and reason are necessarily tied together, and the State, with an executive arm, has a role to play in bringing people to a right understanding of reason and the road to a better society that reason implies. Society, rather than a series of failed experiments,

progresses on a path towards Truth, and through the use of right reason that Truth can be known and, moreover, enforced by the rational State (Trilling 240).

Though Arnold's position avoids the atomism of Mill and other contract thinkers Mill was heir to, the same position makes Arnold, in Trilling's estimation, a political thinker who justifies the executive use of force in service of a vision of history's wider, positive pattern of development. Trilling calls this belief in the accessibility of right reason, its ability to apprehend and thus be enforced, Arnold's mystical sanctioning of Truth. Trilling uses such terms as Arnold's "search for universal standards" and Arnold's project to "bring opinion to a conformity with right reason" as threatening the inverse conclusion of reason turning into merely "monolithic opinion" enforced by the State (Trilling 239). This position is certainly a valid one, and the threat of the State, rather than civil society, wielding the tyranny of opinion is a very real danger, as so many authoritarian countries up to the present day have demonstrated. Jeffrey Alexander, as was pointed out earlier, noted that bureaucracies have an Achilles' heel that hinders them – the fact that a void exists at the top of all State bureaucracies. To reiterate the comment: "The goals of government, its ends, are established by forces outside state organization itself. At the head of state organization sits an authority that is instituted by some nonbureaucratic power, which aims to make the bureaucracy work in its own interests and name" (108-109). The State can, if governed irrationally, itself simply fall victim to enforcing monolithic opinion and not right reason.

Having established some of the difficulties that Mill's thinking posed for Arnold, even though they were both attempting to continue the Enlightenment project, Trilling sweeps Arnold off to the other side of the spectrum for a look at why he would have

found comfort in the seemingly anti-Revolutionary ideal of the State as the enforcer of monolithic opinion disguised as rational Truth. Trilling thus aligns Arnold with Edmund Burke, whose organic conception of society, antipathy for Jacobinism, and valorization of State power all seemed to buttress Arnold's conception of the State as the possessor of reason in society.

More than anything, Romantic philosophers in the vein of Burke were reacting to what they considered Jacobinism, and certainly Arnold has nothing positive to say about Jacobinism. It is quite possible that Arnold's hatred of Jacobinism was inherited from his father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, as well, who "hated revolution" (Trilling 48), and even pitted revolutionary action against Christianity: "The oppressed, on the other hand, also abandoned Christian principles and listened to counsels of violence and revolution" (qtd. in Williamson 161). In Matthew Arnold's mind, Jacobinism was not a single political movement, confined to the latter-day French Revolutionaries. Rather, Jacobinism was "Violent indignation with the past, abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future" (*CPW* V. 109). The idea that any human system could always and sufficiently provide for a utopian future is anathema in Arnold. Recall that, in keeping with Arnold's immanent critique (explored in this dissertation's introduction), an abstract "ought" applied to a concrete situation is considered an element of a radical critique, instead of seeing the rationality contained in the concrete situation, thus Hegel's famous comment at the end of the preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, "What is rational is actual; / and what is actual is rational" (8). Change is a necessary element of historical progress, is more powerful and ultimately more significant than

those people who affect it. Burke and other political theorists after the French Revolution similarly rejected “change dictated by a group of presumptuous men,” by which they meant Jacobinical thinkers (Trilling 249). Burke and others rather preferred the slow and steady organic progression of history, with the rationalism of a social order justified by its staying power. Trilling writes of Burke’s general distrust of new systems that he and his inheritors “learned to see conscious reason as the source of all cruelty, and habit, prejudice, custom – all that was unconscious – as the beneficent ties which keep society together” (248).

Arnold, however, knew that some habits, prejudices, and customs, especially ones that had to do with social and political order, were not the proper vehicles for political progress, for they were too apt to become “machinery.” He chastises the aristocracy, the Barbarians who have held political control for so long, for their very habit of being inaccessible to new ideas, especially democratic ones, as well as their own tendency to downplay the State’s power in favor of their own willful desires. Although Trilling recommends that Burke, also, believed that “change in itself is not bad, provided it comes about as the inevitable, organic fruit of the past, the right development of all that has gone before,” and that, like Arnold, “at certain times [...] the current of men’s minds turns in a new direction, and what has before been wise resistance becomes mere obstinacy,” Burke was often, unlike Arnold, willing to locate himself in the camp of the defenders of the past, perhaps too fearful of the new current to be willing to go along with it. Believing that “the correctness of a social order is marked by its continuation and by which insufficiency is signaled by its defeat,” Burke was perhaps too apt to rally the standing social

order for another fight, instead of bowing gracefully in defeat.¹⁵ Arnold, however, understood that a time of change and transition was coming. His emphasis on the State should be seen, rather than him digging in his heels against the burgeoning spirit of democracy, as a vehicle for bringing that spirit of democracy to its full rational realization within the polity. “I am convinced,” he wrote at the end of “Democracy”:

[...] that if the worst mischiefs of democracy ever happen in England, it will be, not because a new condition of things has come upon us unforeseen, but because, though we all foresaw it, our efforts to deal with it were in the wrong direction. At the present time, almost every one believes in the growth of democracy, almost every one talks of it, almost every one laments it; but the last thing people can be brought to do is to make timely preparation for it. [...] [T]o recognize a period of transformation when it comes and to adapt themselves honestly and rationally to its laws, is perhaps the nearest approach to perfection of which men and nations are capable. (*CPW* II. 29)

Arnold’s full power, as this dissertation hopes to point out, was meant to prepare and enable democracy, that real product of the ideals of 1789, to emerge rationally in England through the power of the State.

How, though, does the State help to recognize a period of transformation, this democratic condition, and ensure that a nation follows it in the right direction? Trilling writes that Arnold believes certain people, or groups of people, must come to recognize the limiting influences of their class and individual interests, rise above them, and they must constitute the State. At this point, Trilling believes, the charges against Arnold of absolutism and tyranny often start, for stating that a small number of enlightened people have access to a mystical, rational Truth somehow beyond the grasp of others opens up

¹⁵ Although Arnold did admire Burke, he was not above seeing his faults. Even before praising his “return upon himself” in “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” Arnold criticizes Burke well: “I will not deny that [Burke’s writings] are often disfigured by the violence and passion of the moment, and that in some directions Burke’s view was bounded, and his observation therefore at fault” (*CPW* III. 266). There are, scattered through the prose writings, other examples of Arnold’s qualified admiration of Burke.

this connection with the externally mystical Truth to the tyrannical imposition of that Truth on others. Trilling notes, “Out of the belief that the [...] State [...] is in touch with the order of the universe, with right reason, with the will of God, may flow chauvinism, imperialism, Governor Eyre, [...] all things which make us turn to Mill and skepticism, well-nigh willing to rest in ‘anarchy’” (252). The order of the universe and the will of God are both inventions of Arnold’s culture, Arnold’s plan for arriving at a discernable Truth towards which society can be compelled and ultimately perfected. Through culture, the State can know the difference between right reason and wrong reason, for society determines its misery or happiness inasmuch as it conforms to this stream of tendency in the universal order. Though Arnold was democratic, in Trilling’s estimation, in that he wanted culture to be available to as many people as possible, the application of culture wholesale by the State, or the idea that culture resides only in the State, often leads to the view of a reactionary Arnold (Trilling 245). Culture’s desire that its conclusion of what is reasonable is right gets mixed up with power politics, and politics were controlled by aristocratic and upper middle-class interests. Culture assumes the availability and ascertainability of Truth, and once a single class or a single tradition established itself as having the best access to that Truth, or of having the best road of access, then tyranny inevitably steps in. Arnold, attempting to avoid what he considered the social anarchy of Mill’s atomistic development in many directions, has moved to the side of conservatism. When aligning Arnold with Edmund Burke, one must remember how Trilling earlier formulated Burke’s definition of the State – “the justification of the institutions of the present” (49) – for in his definition of the State as such, and in his alignment of Arnold with Burke, Trilling situates Arnold firmly in defense of an unchanging status quo.

However, Arnold rarely speaks of Truth as something established, and this begins tempering Trilling's assertion of the tyranny of Truth. One never apprehends Truth wholesale in Arnold's works, nor is Truth ever located completely in anything as earthly as a system of government or an historical manifestation of a State. Rather, Arnold approaches it always from many sides, like the Buddhist proverb of the blind men each grabbing hold of a different part of an elephant, each coming to a different partial conclusion about the elephant's nature. Consider, for instance, his preface to *Essays in Criticism: First Series*. In it, Arnold describes approaching Truth:

To try and approach truth on one side after another, not to strive or cry, nor to persist in pressing forward, on any one side, with violence and self-will, -- it is only thus, it seems to me, that mortals may hope to gain any vision of the mysterious Goddess, whom we shall never see except in outline, but only thus even in outline. He who will do nothing but fight impetuously towards her on his own, one, favourite, particular line, is inevitably destined to run his head into the folds of the black robe in which she is wrapped. (CPW III. 286)

Earlier, in his lectures *On Translating Homer*, he speaks of the "thing itself," the object of literary criticism: "The 'thing itself' with which one is here dealing, -- the critical perception of poetic truth, -- is of all things the most volatile, elusive, and evanescent; by even pressing too impetuously after it, one runs the risk of losing it" (CPW I. 174).

Moving out of the sphere of metaphysics and into the sphere of ontology, Arnold even, early in his life, questions the ability of a person to ever delve within him- or herself and find a sense of oneness or at-homeness in the world of subjectivity: "And many a man in his own breast then delves, / But deep enough, alas! none ever mines. / And we have been on many thousand lines, / And we have shown, on each, spirit and power; / But hardly

have we, for one little hour, / Been on our own line, have we been ourselves” (PW 246).¹⁶ Suggesting, then, that Arnold believed the State was a single class’s vision of the Truth, or even that it was the vehicle for imposing monolithic opinion onto the citizens emerges, therefore, as over-hasty.

III. Towards Arnold and Hegel

In order to mitigate Arnold’s movement to this potentially anti-Revolutionary position, Trilling associates Arnold with one of Burke’s great enemies, the very essence of the French Revolution: Jean-Jacques Rousseau. As presented in the previous section, Arnold believed in the necessity of a sound source of authority to help guide in the process of realizing democratic ideals. Rousseau, too, according to Trilling, found himself in the same situation, and Trilling writes “[Rousseau’s] *Social Contract* is commonly regarded as a paradox, beginning as it does, ‘Man is born free and is everywhere in chains,’ and then going on to establish a rationale for authority” (255). Trilling believes that Rousseau can help temper the tendency in Arnold’s critics to quickly associate him with reactionaryism. Trilling’s recognition of this association is certainly helpful, but it does reach certain limits that need to be asserted.

Rousseau’s ideal of the general will and Arnold’s ideal of the individual’s best self are, in Trilling’s estimation, analogous since both terms refer to an impulse within the citizens of a community extending beyond their bounded, personal, selfish impulses and reflecting the general feeling of an entire nation, not simply the sum of all individual wills within a society (which would be analogous to Mill’s vision, presented earlier). The general will expresses a universalized willing of the good for all, a desire for the good

¹⁶ A more in-depth exploration of the significance of Arnold’s exploration of subjectivity and its relationship to his revolutionary ideas appears in Chapter 2 of this dissertation.

extending beyond the individual him or herself (Trilling 255). As Rousseau and Arnold both recognized, however, rarely do the individual members of a polity clearly see the good that they will. They are frequently a blind multitude, caught up in their vision of personal liberty, a feeling that Arnold sees taking greater and greater hold in English society. The people, therefore, need a hand to guide them, to, as Rousseau writes:

[...] be got to see objects as they are [...] and sometimes as they ought to appear to it [...]; it must be shown the good road it is in search of, secured from the seductive influences of individual wills, taught to see times and spaces as a series, and made to weigh the attractions of present and sensible advantages against the danger of distant and hidden evils. The individuals see the good they reject; the public wills the good it does not see. All stand equally in need to guidance. The former must be compelled to bring their wills into conformity with their reason; the latter must be taught to know what it wills. (qtd. in Trilling 256)

Rousseau proposes the idea of the Legislator as his solution to abstracting the general will from the polity and into a figure that becomes the focus and location of the good that the people cannot, themselves, see. The Legislator can draw people out of themselves, impose on them ideas alien yet necessary to them for their rational development. The Legislator, in other words, seems to do exactly what Arnold proposed should happen to the “raw man”: “But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that” (*CPW* V. 96). If one reads this quote as recommending that the “raw person” (certainly not the best appellation for Arnold to award a citizen) necessarily like the beautiful, graceful, and becoming, then this would recommend that tyranny of monolithic opinion, disguised as Truth, that Trilling believes comes from at least one understanding of Arnold’s vision of State power. However, if the pronoun at the end of the quote – “that” – has its antecedent

not in “beautiful, graceful, and becoming,” but rather in “draw[ing] ever nearer to a sense of,” then one gets a very different implication. Arnold, rather than recommending his own opinion of what is beautiful, graceful, and becoming, recommends that people not lose the belief in their ability to draw nearer to a sense of that, rather than resting comfortably in subjective willfulness.

However, Rousseau recognizes that his idea of the Legislator has its disadvantages, primarily because though the Legislator can be seen as the figurehead of law and the general will, the Legislator has no ability to enforce the law. The people must themselves consent to be the authors of the laws that the Legislator represents. In order to gain legitimacy, Rousseau believes, the Legislator must apply a tactic that begins moving him away from, even though it certainly helps us understand, Arnold’s idea of the State. Trilling explains that Rousseau’s Legislator must himself appeal to another authority in order to gain legitimacy: divinity. This allows the Legislator to become, in Trilling’s words, a “transcendental judge” (258). The Legislator’s tactic (and it is certainly just a tactic, but one that poses some problems nonetheless) rests in an external authority, not in the immanent presence of State power that Arnold perceives as already existing in England, only in immanent form. Potentially, however, the people may recognize the authority of the Legislator, not because he expresses their own general will, but because of the Legislator’s tactic of equating his vision with an external divinity. Thus, reason comes, apparently, not from the Legislator, but through a perceived divine sanction, a mystical force outside even himself. This runs the risk of having people not recognize the Legislator as themselves in their collective and corporate character, but towards something akin to a theocracy. Arnold’s State, on the other hand, is not a new individual,

but is rather a real present force, currently existing, that must immanently emerge as a force for democratic change before it can, itself, be changed. Arnold, rather than appealing to divine intervention, appeals to the promise of democracy that the current State offers. Rousseau held out the hope for democracy in the figure of the Legislator; Arnold presents the hope in an already existing body he terms the State.

Trilling's summation of this initial connection with Rousseau has its merits, and it also goes far to mitigate that vision of the State as oppressive and tyrannical, the vision, in other words, promoted by the readings of Graff and Eagleton. Trilling, by bringing Arnold into conversation with the myriad voices echoing across Europe and England when Arnold's own voice was developing and maturing, definitely offers a way out of the cramped, ideologically based critique that Graff and Eagleton engage in and that leads them to see Arnold as a reactionary. It places Arnold in the current of ideas that political philosophers were attempting to come to terms with after the French Revolution. However, identifying elements of Arnold's thought with the voices of John S. Mill, Edmund Burke, and Jean-Jacques Rousseau, rather than unifying Arnold's thought, seems to fracture it. Trilling himself recognizes the problem, for he states, "Arnold's theory of the State does not hold up as a logical structure, nor does it hold up as a practical structure" (232); rather, Arnold's thinking amounts to nothing more than abstract political thoughts, "constructs embodying complex assumptions and desires" (233). Trilling, too, ultimately rests his interpretation of Arnold's position in Arnold's middle class ideology. Shirley Letwin, while recognizing Trilling's contribution to Arnold scholarship and the first foray into Arnold's whole intellectual development, nevertheless recognizes the confusion that his analysis initiates:

Trilling nevertheless concluded that Arnold was reasserting “the political tradition of the English Romantics” among whom Trilling includes Burke, along with Coleridge and Wordsworth. The oddity here is that Burke’s ardent defense of Adam Smith’s view of government which the others – and Arnold – opposed [...] are ignored by Trilling. What is more, he attributes to Arnold also an affinity with Rousseau, but he does not explain how Arnold could at the same time have an affinity with Rousseau’s great opponent, Burke. (347)

Such heterogeneous affinities make for a confusing portrait of Arnold’s revolutionary ideals, and such a scholarly tradition calls for an exploration of a potentially unifying figure whose thought, though perhaps not constituting – to appropriate Arnold – the *unum necessarium*, may nevertheless allow for an understanding of some of Arnold’s ideas by relying on less disparate traditions. This figure is Hegel, and exploring the limits of Arnold’s association with Jean-Jacques Rousseau provides an excellent segue into Hegel’s importance for understanding Arnold’s simultaneous belief in the power of the State and the importance of the ideals of 1789. Arnold and Hegel, in addition to both believing in the simultaneous importance of a strong State and the ideals that the French Revolution placed on to the world stage, likewise betake themselves to similar criticisms of Jean-Jacques Rousseau, their own readings and reactions to him, that demonstrate a fundamental disagreement about where the power for revolutionary change is located.

Although placing Arnold in line with some of Rousseau’s ideas does line him up with this most revolutionary of Revolutionary philosophers, some limitations exist to this identification, as the preceding paragraphs have suggested. Two primary problematic areas emerge: Contractarian philosophy; Arnold’s own comments about Rousseau. Some of these problematic areas amount to what could be termed a misunderstanding or a misreading on Arnold’s part of some of Rousseau’s ideas.¹⁷ However, this dissertation

¹⁷ A misreading perpetuated and even inaugurated by Hegel.

proposes to try to understand why Arnold considered himself a revolutionary thinker even as – or, one might say, because of the fact that – he advocated the importance of a strong State power. As such, Arnold’s misunderstanding of a particular idea can nevertheless still be a strong reason for why he continued to think as he did, even if it was based on a misreading.

The primary limitation of Arnold’s association with Rousseau, and what begins linking Arnold and Hegel together, emerge with Rousseau’s ideal of the Noble Savage. One first sees the figure in *Discourse on the Origin and Foundations of Inequality* in which Rousseau occupies himself with showing a secular vision of the Fall, as humankind descends from a certain natural state in which he is self-sufficient and certainly at one with nature and into a “degeneration and corruption as it joins together with others to make up tribes, societies and eventually states” (Dent 370). Concern for one’s natural health and well-being gets displaced by issues of jealousy, status, and property, as well as the desire to hold on to these: “Those who have acquired dominance then conspire together to consolidate their position. They argue that everyone needs a more peaceable and stable society, which can only be achieved through the apparatus of government, law, punishments. Thus it is that they consolidate the *status quo*, but without right or justice and acting only to perpetuate unfair privilege and the oppression of the weak” (Dent 370). This establishment predicates itself on individualism and individual desires, and therefore cannot be, in either Arnold’s or Hegel’s estimation, a proper place for beginning a State. “I cannot,” Arnold writes, “perceive that man is really conscious of any abstract natural rights at all. [...] It can not be too often repeated: peasants and workmen have no natural rights, not one. Only we ought instantly to add, that kings and

nobles have none either” (*CPW* VIII. 285). Freedom is not something inherent. One obtains it socially, in a society free and rational itself. Hegel interprets this element of Rousseau’s philosophy to signify the limitations of Contractarianism.

Moreover, although Rousseau’s vision of the individual and his/her relationship to the polity is organic, it does not capture the subtleties of Arnold’s and Hegel’s dialectics. For Rousseau, the individual must necessarily precede the establishment of the State, or the establishment of the Individual Will molded into the General Will. Hegel has a different vision, one that, as Trilling rightly states, has the individual and the emergence of the State almost coinciding. This Trilling terms the circular confusion in Arnold’s philosophy, but it is, as will be seen, at least one potential way out of this apparent circular reasoning.

Arnold’s own comments about Jean-Jacques Rousseau, however, detract most from placing him too close to this revolutionary thinker. As an artist, Arnold found him, at different points in his life, wanting. Late in life, especially in the essays “George Sand” and “Amiel,” one finds Arnold praising Rousseau’s style and recognizing that his *literary* works were “inspired by the love of goodness and the desire for beauty” (*CPW* X. 188). However, in the essay “Obermann,” Arnold writes that Rousseau sacrifices sincerity for expression (*CPW* V. 296); likewise, in the essay “Joubert,” Arnold writes that Rousseau’s works are characterized by one-sidedness, and that though Rousseau can be classified as a “genius,” his works have a “limiting effect” on their readers “in certain spheres and for certain periods” (*CPW* III. 205, 203). In the field of politics, though, Arnold does not waver in his judgment. Again, in “Joubert,” Arnold approvingly cites several statements from Joubert that are judgments against Rousseau and his politics. Joubert is “justly

severe” on Rousseau in statements such as, “there is a great difference between taking for idols Mahomet or Luther, and bowing down before Rousseau and Voltaire. People at any rate imagined they were obeying God when they followed Mahomet, and the Scriptures when they hearkened to Luther” (*CPW* III. 206, 197). In “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” Arnold affirmatively quotes Goethe’s claim that Rousseau helped “throw quiet culture back” (*CPW* III. 264). In an essay on Renan, Arnold cites Renan on Rousseau’s contribution to the French Revolution: “the false policy of Rousseau won the day. It was resolved to make a constitution *a priori*” (*CPW* VII. 41). In the immensely popular “Equality,” Arnold, over the course of several pages, criticizes Rousseau’s ideals both of Abstract Right and Natural Right (*CPW* VIII. 284-286). It seems clear that Arnold’s opinion of Rousseau’s political philosophy was negative, and that Arnold singled out for criticism Rousseau’s ideas of Abstract and Natural Right, the Social Contract, and the problems that the French Revolution encountered when it tried to implement these very ideals.

The heterogeneity that Trilling uncovered in the development of Arnold’s mind makes for a potentially confusing presentation of Arnold’s ideas about the French Revolution’s ideals and Arnold’s simultaneous valuation of State power. This does justice to the complexity of Arnold’s political, social, and religious notions, and it also pays homage to a man whose mind was always playing over the best that has been thought and said in the world. However, by exploring a similarity in another trajectory of Arnold’s thought, a progression towards the merging of a belief in State power and a simultaneous desire for true human freedom paralleled in Hegel, this dissertation hopes to

gain a better foundation from which to explore Arnold's attitude towards the necessary connection between revolutionary ideals and State power.

This chapter has hopefully established the critical matrix that in many ways defines how Arnold's simultaneous holding of revolutionary ideals and belief in the necessary presence of a strong State power has been approached in some modern scholarship. The approaches of Gerald Graff, Terry Eagleton, and Lionel Trilling have in their own ways contributed to understanding Arnold's paradoxical position as disingenuous, hypocritical, downright dangerous, or hopelessly flawed. Moreover, other evidence has demonstrated that this interpretation of Arnold is not new; rather, that it has been a critical commonplace since Arnold's own day. Critics often volley these same criticisms at Hegel, yet Hegel, too, maintained a perception of himself as committed to revolutionary ideals, even as he advocated for the presence of a strong State power. There has also been evidence presented recommending reading Hegel along with Arnold in this very area, but the scholarly tendency moves Arnold away from Hegel, especially on their common holding of a belief in State power. The next chapter examines in more detail how Arnold began recognizing the deficiencies in both the original French Revolutionary project and his interpretation of the current artistic, social, and political landscape that believed it was carrying forward the impulse of the French Revolutionaries. Matthew Arnold had to touch the limits of that very philosophy before he rejected it as insufficient for his project of carrying forward the ideals of 1789, by which he meant, as has been presented, "ideas of religious, political, and social freedom" (CPW I.81). Significantly, the path Arnold took towards both accepting and then rejecting those insufficient grounds for revolutionary change is one that owes a debt to *The Bhagavad-Gita*, and to a work

that Hegel himself took great pains to criticize: Wilhelm von Humboldt's *On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known as The Bhagavad-Gita*. Having recognized the limits of the philosophy as presented in the *Gita*, Arnold begins preparing the way for his wider vision of the limitations of current liberal aesthetic, political, and social projects that see themselves as carrying forward the revolutionary project, and makes way for understanding the role of the State in achieving revolutionary ideals in England, further aligning Arnold with Hegel's belief in the same.

CHAPTER 3

THE *BHAGAVAD-GITA*, HEGEL, AND SUBJECTIVITY

I. A Whoreson Bullrush: Ungrounded Subjectivity

“After dinner walked alone to Brathay churchyard and sate there till dark ... Thorough bad day; & could never collect myself at all.”

- Matthew Arnold, Diary, 1/5/1851 (qtd. in Honan 159)

“But, my dear Clough, have you,” a young Matthew Arnold wrote his best friend, “a great Force of Character? That is the true Question. For me, I am a reed, a very whoreson Bullrush” (*CL* 56). The letter, written in March of 1845, effectively shows that Arnold was concerned, even at a young age, with the nature of his own subjectivity, of an ontological foundation on which he could build an identity. He describes himself here as a “reed” or a “Bullrush,” blown about by the wind, completely at the mercy of forces greater than himself, a feeling he would later, in “A Summer Night,” reprimand himself for: “Hast thou then still the old unquiet breast, / Which neither deadens into rest, / Nor ever feels the fiery glow / That whirls the spirit from itself away, / But fluctuates to and fro” (*PW* 243). When he praised Shakespeare in his sonnet “Shakespeare,” he highlighted the Bard’s self security, he who was “self-schooled, self-scanned, self-honored, self-secure” (*PW* 3). Though anchored on the shore of a river – so often symbolic of life and the flow of history in Arnold’s poetry and prose – the waters of that river pass the reed by in that early letter. To be sure, Arnold worried the problem of subjectivity for much of his early life. As with many of Arnold’s ideas, he offers conflicting conclusions and statements about it, publicly and privately. If, in early manhood, he reads John Locke and exclaims to Clough that his “respect for reason as the rock of refuge to this poor exaggerated surexcited humanity increases and increases” (*CL* 116), he also recognizes

the inappropriateness of Utilitarianism – that *über*-rational system of ethics and social order – because it atomizes individuals and estranges subjects from one another: “When shall we learn that it is our weakness not our superiority that hinders our feeling with every man & action we come across” (Arnold, *The Yale Manuscript* 109).¹⁸ Likewise, his reprimand of Keats and Browning for not having an “Idea of the world” in order not to be overcome by the world’s multitudinousness conflicts with a later letter to his sister, Jane “K” Arnold, declaring his frustration with Clough because Clough “wants to impose one rule on all the world before we can believe it ourselves” (*CL* 97; *Letters* I. 116). Matthew Arnold’s difficulties with his own identity, difficulties that would eventually amount to a metaphysical and ontological crisis, were seeded, though, deeply in his upbringing and in his attempts to differentiate himself from the power of his famous father, Dr. Thomas Arnold.

Though Matthew Arnold would find temporary solace in the introspective Hindu and Buddhist philosophy found in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, he would ultimately have to abandon the life philosophy presented therein because the work raised, in Arnold’s interpretation of it, more problems than it solved. It led him, however, to the same conclusions to which G.W.F. Hegel had come earlier after reading, himself, a book that Arnold also read. Arnold and Hegel find common ground in a workable philosophy antithetical to that which the *Bhagavad-Gita* offered concerning a subject’s relationship to the world. This chapter, by examining Arnold’s early infatuation with the *Gita* as well as the similarities between Hegel’s rejection of the *Gita*’s philosophy and Arnold’s own movement away from it, provides the necessary foundation for understanding why Arnold chose to justify his belief both in the ideals of 1789 – not least true subjective

¹⁸ Henceforth, citations from *The Yale Manuscript* will be referenced using *YMS* and page number.

freedom within a rational polity – but also the roots of why Arnold felt that the liberalism of his day, with its continual rejection of the idea of State influence in the civil life of its citizens, would undermine rather than further realize the continued importance of the French Revolution in world history.

Matthew Arnold's need to define himself came, initially, from the imposing figure of his father, Dr. Thomas Arnold, headmaster of Rugby. Although Dr. Arnold died when Matthew was only 19 years old, he made quite an impression on his oldest son and on the world that he would occupy. Even as a boy, Arnold found it hard to position himself so as not to be in his father's shadow. Though raised in "every sober virtue in one of the most pious households of England, taught everlastingly by precept and example that life was serious," and visited regularly by an aging William Wordsworth, Matthew Arnold was always singling himself out from the rest of the Arnold flock (Trilling 23). In the *Fox How Magazine*, a publication that the Arnold children regularly issued within the family, Arnold's penchant for fine dress was frequently commented upon, such as in the following lines from an Arnold sibling: "Eau de Mille Fleurs, Eau de Cologne and twenty eaux beside / Rowland's Odonto, scented soaps, jostle his books aside" (qtd. in Hamilton 47). In fact, before leaving for France, Arnold took a moment to visit an oculist to purchase a monocle (Murray 27). Likewise, one of the many jibes directed at him during his first lecture tour through America was his dapper dress and, again, his monocle. Dr. Arnold enrolled his eldest son in his own boyhood *alma mater*, Winchester, at fourteen, and after a year there Matthew came to Rugby, where Dr. Arnold was headmaster. Even with a headmaster for a father, Matthew ensured that his fellow students would not associate him too much with the headmaster by playing tricks such as the one Lionel

Trilling recounts: “when as a member of the Sixth form he displeased Dr. Arnold and was stood behind the Doctor’s chair, he gratified his friends by making faces over his father’s head” (20). Once at Balliol College in Oxford, Arnold perhaps most displeased his father by going regularly to hear John Henry Newman’s sermons, Newman and Dr. Arnold being great antagonists.¹⁹

As Lionel Trilling notes, though, Matthew Arnold’s jocose personality distanced himself not only from his father, but also from his friends who he felt were endangering the integrity of his own selfhood with their incessant questioning, their desperate attempts to, as he reprimanded Clough, “*solve* the Universe” (CL 62). The identity that he had constructed for the public as a never wholly serious person hid a very real and very pressing ontological crisis.²⁰ Matthew Arnold was still trying to form a subjectivity, a position from which he could go about entering and engaging with the world. As he wrote of Keats and Browning, again to Clough, “They will not be patient neither understand that they must begin with an Idea of the world in order not to be prevailed over by the world’s multitudinousness: or if they cannot get that, at least with isolated ideas: and all other things shall (perhaps) be added unto them” (CL 97). For all of Arnold’s ability to recognize the deficiency in others, though, he was not able to find a strong center himself. Another letter to Clough reflects this rupture in his own sense of self. He confides the following:

[A]s I get more awake to this it will I hope mend for I find that with me a clear almost palpable intuition (damn the logical senses of the word) is necessary before I get into prayer: unlike many people who set to work at

¹⁹ Just before becoming a professor of history at Oxford, Dr. Arnold had published an attack on the Oxford Movement titled, provocatively, “The Oxford Malignants.”

²⁰ This characterization followed Arnold throughout his life and became part of his legacy. One is reminded of the Max Beerbohm cartoon from 1904 wherein Arnold’s niece, the later Mrs. Humphrey Ward, asks him, “Why, Uncle Matthew, oh why, will not you be always wholly serious?”

their duty self-denial etc. like furies in the dark hoping to be gradually illuminated as they persist in this course. Who also perhaps may be sheep but not of my fold, whose one natural craving is not for profound thoughts, mighty spiritual workings etc. etc. but a distinct seeing of my way as far as my own nature is concerned. (CL 110)

This letter was composed in 1849, and certain words, like “duty” and “self-denial,” indicate one way that Arnold was setting about finding a sense of self – through the popular “Oriental” work the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Through this Hindu/Buddhist text, Arnold would seek for what he later in life, in reference to his translation of *Merope*, told his sister was “what Buddha called – the ‘character of *Fixity* – that true sign of the Law”” (*Letters Digital Edition* v1p364d1).²¹ Though, as will be shown, Arnold was aware of the *Bhagavad-Gita* early in his life, he moves from meditating on it personally to corresponding about it with others at the same time that revolution was exploding on the Continent during the February Revolution of 1848 in France. In the years preceding and immediately following the February Revolution, Arnold will not only recommend the *Gita* as a viable plan for others, but will try to integrate its teachings, as he understood them, into his own life, trying to find through its tenets a subjective core of his own.

If asking to control the winds and waters was too much, he would at least allow himself the possibility that he could ride the waters, not stay rooted on the shores next to them, and he would harness the power of the wind, not be blown about by it. As late as 1850 Arnold still struggles with his sense of self, evidenced by a letter in which he writes to “K” of his frequent subjection to “these periods of spiritual eastwind when I can lay hold only of the outside of events or words – the material east wind which now prevails has something to do with it, and also the state of strain and uneasiness in which these

²¹ References to the *The Letters of Matthew Arnold: A Digital Edition* will be cited as *Letters Digital Edition* and then the document number as listed on the website.

days and in London it is hard not to live” (*Letters Digital Edition* v1p171d1). The many conflicting statements that Arnold makes during this time demonstrate how hard he tried to make from the *Gita* a workable life-theory; however, he would ultimately abandon it as a system of subjectivity for reasons that parallel Hegel’s own rejection of the philosophy of the *Gita*. Although, as will be noted, some of Arnold and Hegel’s conclusions about the philosophy contained in the *Bhagavad-Gita* result from misreading, they nevertheless provide, for them, a foundation for a continued criticism of a liberal aversion to State action. This abandonment of the philosophy in the *Gita* merely appears as the first of many moves that Arnold will make over the course of his life-long criticism of the liberalism of his contemporaries, leading ultimately to his attempt to bridge revolutionary ideals with the necessity of a strong State power to bring them about. It becomes the first step in Arnold’s project to temper what, in his opinion, is subjective willfulness masquerading as subjective freedom, as well as a first step in pointing towards the necessity for a force like the State to short circuit the solipsistic egotism of the liberal project as Arnold sees it being carried out.

II. *The Bhagavad-Gita and the February Revolution*

The earliest date at which Matthew Arnold can be said to be familiar with the philosophy presented in the *Bhagavad-Gita* comes thanks to Kenneth Allott’s publication of six of Arnold’s early reading lists, discovered in Arnold’s diaries from his Oxford years. These, along with other bibliographical information, allow scholars to establish a date range during which time Arnold would have been engaging with the *Gita*. Arnold was led to the *Gita*, however, through a circuitous route. On Reading-list II, dated early 1845, Arnold lists Victor Cousin’s *Introduction à l’histoire de la philosophie* as

definitively read. Allott describes Cousin's importance to Arnold as "considerable but [...] as a source of ideas which can be transferred to a literary or more popular context and as a lively guide to a comparatively mysterious field of knowledge" (259). This mysterious field of knowledge is the *Bhagavad-Gita*, for Cousin's lectures on philosophy cover it. His sixth lecture in the second volume of the *Introduction* gives it considerable attention. Arnold places on his reading list for Michelmas 1845 "Cousin Cours. vol: ii" (Allott 260). Through a citation in Cousin, Arnold discovers the work of Wilhelm von Humboldt, the German humanist. Humboldt published an extensive reading of the *Gita* in 1827 titled *On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known as the Bhagavad-Gita*, and on his Michelmas 1845 reading list Arnold writes, "Humboldt. uber die B.G." (Allott 260). Humboldt's analysis of the *Gita* was sympathetic, and so Arnold would have gained some insight into the work from both Cousin and Humboldt. Humboldt again appears on the undated Reading-list IV as "Humboldt on the Bhagavad Gita" and Reading-list V "To be read or finish [sic], Lent Term 1846" (Allott 262-263). Moreover, there were several editions of the *Gita*, as well as much secondary material, that Arnold would have had access to. Though Wilkins's translation was the primary source, one cannot exclude the readily available translations by Schlegel from 1823 and Lassen in 1846, both of which Arnold may well have consulted (Nagarajan 336). Clearly, the late 1840s emerges as a time of intense concentration and meditation on the *Bhagavad-Gita* for Arnold.

Arnold did not stop with just the *Gita* as he explored Hinduism and Buddhism, even if he mostly abandoned them as life philosophies later. His *Note-Books* demonstrate that he read the *Manava-Dharma Sastra; or the Institutes of Manu* (an early poetic work giving the proper organization of and laws governing society, gender roles, and class

structures according to Brahma) and *A Manual of Buddhism* (by Robert Spence Hardy). Arnold was also familiar with the work of Jules Michelet, who references the *Gita* in *La Sorcière*. Arnold likewise would certainly have been familiar with H.T. Colebrooke's essays. No hard evidence links Arnold to Colebrook's work, but Nagarajan writes that Arnold's reading habits "make it very probable that he took some pains to consult whatever was available on Indian thought" (337). Finally, the fact that Clough's review in *The North American Review*, July 1853, of Arnold's 1852 volume, *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems*, mentions Hinduism clearly establishes that throughout the time Arnold was composing the famous preface to his 1853 volume, he continued struggling with Buddhist and Hindu philosophy; Clough gladly notices Arnold finally putting aside the "dismal cycle of his rehabilitated Hindoo-Greek" philosophizing (Clough 1266). So, though this chapter's exploration will confine itself to the *Gita* and its influence on Arnold's life from roughly 1845 through 1853, thus setting the groundwork for his eventual incorporation of Hegel's philosophy, one must understand that Arnold continued reading in Hindu and Buddhist philosophy throughout his life, and that the ideas he encountered in these early years were never far from his mind, even if he did ultimately reject them. This chapter's final section presents evidence, through a late work, of this continued engagement.

Although Arnold spent a good deal of time with the *Bhagavad-Gita* before 1848, no mystery surrounds why he betook himself to that same work during the years leading up to and following the February Revolution in France. The *Gita*'s narrative framework lends itself to the sense of turmoil experienced by many in England as France once again became disenchanted with monarchy and, during the last days of February 1848,

overthrew the government, declaring the commencement of the Second Republic. The *Gita* presents the reader with a similar situation. Led by Arjuna, the main character, the armies of the Pandavas range themselves on a battlefield against the armies of Dhrtarastra, led by Dhrtarastra's eldest son, Duryodhana. The Pandavas, having lost their right to rule the kingdom because of Dhrtarastra's scheming, attempt to wrest power from a king they perceive rules without right. As Arjuna and Duryodhana position themselves across from one another on the battlefield, however, Arjuna has a momentary moral dilemma. He looks across the field and sees friends, teachers, and relatives all ready to fight and die in battle – some for him, some against him. How can he justify his hostile takeover of Dhrtarastra's kingdom, especially if it necessitates killing his own cousins, teachers, and other noble persons? Arjuna throws down his bow and arrow and, along with his cousin – really the god Krishna in disguise – rides out to an area between the two armies, in the middle of the battlefield. There Krishna gives Arjuna the *Bhagavad-Gita*, the “song of God,” to help him towards an understanding of his place and duty within the war, as well as within the universe.

Certainly Matthew Arnold found a kindred spirit in the character Arjuna. Arnold, having been appointed Lord Landsdowne's secretary, was at a hub of political activity and correspondence in London, receiving, apparently, almost daily updates from emissaries and ambassadors concerning developing situations on the Continent. He boasts, for example, in a letter at having obtained information about the February Revolution “later [...] than any of the papers” (CL 66).²² However, Arnold also kept himself at more of a distance from the actual events in France than did Clough, who spent

²² That is, Arnold boasts that he has received more recent news than that which has appeared after the press has run, thus “later” news.

time there with Ralph Waldo Emerson during the late days of the Revolution in May. Clough returned to England on May 19, but was present during the famous mob rioting in Paris on May 15; Arnold, however, in a letter to “K”, expresses his discontent with all the political talk: “It is so hard to sequester oneself here [i.e. at Landsdowne’s office] from the rush of public changes and talk and yet so unprofitable to attend to it” (qtd. in *CL* 67). Caught in the middle, then, both Arnold and Arjuna are forced to find solace away from the frenzy of activity surrounding them.

Like Arjuna, though, Matthew Arnold could not completely ignore a pressing feeling to engage with the revolutionary stirrings on the Continent, as well as at home in England. So, despite his letter to “K”, he writes on March 8, 1848, to Clough that he has “been a constant attender on the *emeutes* [Fr. “riots”] here,” a reference to the March 6 and 7 riots in Trafalgar Square which drew some of their motive force from the February Revolution (*CL* 74).²³ Though pushed towards a certain sympathy with the revolutionary stirrings, as well as with the mob agitators in Trafalgar Square, Arnold admits to having moved through the crowd at a cross-current, engaging with their frustration, but attempting to direct it towards what he felt was a more appropriate foe. He continues writing that as he attended the crowd, he constantly “endeavour[ed] to impress on the mob that not royalty but aristocracy – primogeniture – large land and mill owners were their true enemies here” (*CL* 74). This line demonstrates Arnold’s sympathies with the crowd’s general feeling of discontent and disenchantment; however, Arnold also recognizes a distinction between what was happening in France and what the people in England needed. Perhaps, like Arjuna, when Arnold looked across Trafalgar Square he

²³ Critics who enjoy pointing Terry Eagleton’s quip, quoted earlier in this dissertation, that Arnold felt the State should throw the masses a few books so that they would not throw up a few barricades would do well to recall on which side of the barricades Arnold was in this instance, at least.

saw on the other side of the crowd visions of his father, Carlyle, Newman, Goethe, and his employer, Lord Landsdowne, and he lost some of his nerve. In what might be even a veiled reference to Arjuna and Krishna's chariot ride to the center of the battlefield, Arnold writes to Clough, "Tell Edward [Arnold's younger brother] I shall be ready to take flight with him the very moment the French land, and have engaged a Hansom to convey us both from the possible scene of carnage" (CL 66). Clearly, the *Gita* has situational relevance for Arnold, for, like Arjuna, "he was troubled and dispirited by the difficulties and confusion of the world. He had not yet formed within himself a central core or body of ideas that would give him a consistency and confidence in facing up to the tasks that lay before him. He had not yet, in effect, constructed his 'self'" (Connell 27). Arnold finds himself in a moral predicament, and could well have said, with Arjuna, "Now I am confused about my duty and have lost all composure because of miserly weakness. In this condition I am asking You [Krishna] to tell me for certain what is best for me. Now I am your disciple, and a soul surrendered unto You. Please instruct me" (*Bhagavad-Gita* 2.7). How to engage with the February Revolution emerges as a major philosophical question for Arnold, causing him to question who he is and, following from that, what role he should play in world history. Heretofore he had struggled privately; however, that would change.

During February of 1848, the swirl of revolution in France caused the *Gita*'s influence to precipitate out of Arnold's internal thoughts and into his correspondence. The February Revolution caused the *Gita*'s philosophy to surface, bringing Arnold face to face with an opportunity to apply what he had been reading and thinking to the world without. The February Revolution was the first revolution in Arnold's adult life that

presented the potential to make it across the Channel and into the minds of the British people. Arnold seems to have used some of the *Gita*'s ideas to justify his overall aloofness, however, from the actions of the revolutionaries, either on home soil or abroad, unlike Arthur Clough. One has a more difficult time reconciling though Krishna's urging Arjuna into action, not away from the battle, throughout the *Gita*. Ultimately, Arjuna fights the armies of Dhrtarastra and triumphs, winning back the kingdom. Arnold, however, never actively engages in the February Revolution. The closest that he can be said to have come is his mingling with the mobs in Trafalgar Square and his attendance at some Chartist meetings. Through the *Gita*, Arnold hoped to get some sense of his place in the midst of all of this revolution. Arnold, however, misunderstood or misapplied the *Gita*'s principles, but in doing so he led himself towards what he felt was a more viable life philosophy, and what he learned had lasting implications for both his social and his political ideas. As Arnold would write later of St. Paul, "He may give us [...] current error and also fruitful and profound new truth, the error's future corrective" (*CPW* VIII. 129). The same could be said of Arnold and his misinterpretation of the *Gita*.

Three telling letters that Arnold writes to Arthur Clough in the early months of 1848 are evidence that the February Revolution of 1848 and the *Bhagavad-Gita* are closely connected to Arnold's development as an individual. Arnold recognized, and wanted to communicate, this deep connection, for he moves from writing about one into writing about the other quickly. In the first letter, after apologizing for giving Clough incorrect information about the progress of the Revolution in a previous letter, Arnold comments on the "fine" spectacle happening in France. He ends the letter, though, with, "I am disappointed the Oriental wisdom, God grant it were mine, pleased you not" (*CL*

69). The Oriental wisdom is the *Bhagavad-Gita*, a copy of which Arnold had apparently sent to Clough for his perusal. The second letter, of March 4, has Arnold again commenting on the February Revolution and then moving directly into the *Gita*:

It seems as if the French Government might fall into the relaxation naturally consequent on great tension and trust to routine like other people: in which case they will infallibly be done for: nothing but a perennial enthusiasm can now work France – which may or may not be impossible. [...] The Indians distinguish between meditation and absorption – and knowledge: and between abandoning practice, & abandoning the fruits of action and all respect thereto. This last is a supreme step, & dilated on throughout the poem. (CL 79-80)

Finally, in the letter of March 8, Arnold explains an article from the *Examiner* of March 4, 1848, by Thomas Carlyle that he included in his last correspondence to Clough. Arnold writes, “how solemn, how deeply *restful* it strikes on one amidst the heat and vain words that are everywhere just now – Yet the thoughts extracted and abstractly stated, are every newspaper’s: it is the style and feeling by which the beloved man appears. Apply this, Infidel, to the Oriental Poem” (CL 75). Clearly, Arnold mentally connects the events in France during the February Revolution and the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The significance of this connection, though, must be teased out.

The February Revolution represented a chance for Matthew Arnold to define himself with respect to a world-changing historical event. Where, exactly, he fit into the picture, and what that position meant for his sense of self, though, were questions that were still undecided and that Arnold was using the *Gita* to help him through. On the one hand was Arthur Clough, traveling away to the Continent with Emerson to witness the birth of the Republic. On the other hand was the quiet office of Lord Landsdowne where Arnold spent his day reading the Classics, writing some letters, doing occasional translations, and making appointments for “my man.” The excitement, though, that the

Revolution wrought in him permeates the letters of this time period. When he writes to his mother on March 7, he states that he believes the French people are up to the challenge to which they have put themselves for proclaiming “this ideal city” (*Letters I.* 91). Likewise, on March 10 he writes to “K”, praising the “*intelligence* of [the French] *idea-moved masses*” (*Letters I.* 94). Arnold, however, seems to have kept himself aloof from stirring the revolutionary pot at home in London.

A clue about Arnold’s reluctance comes in a letter of March 1 to Clough, in which he writes that the present “spectacle” occurring in France is a “fine one”; Arnold, though, places a caveat upon the type of person that this spectacle would impress. He writes:

Certainly the present spectacle in France is a fine one; mostly so indeed to the historical swift-kindling man, who is not over-haunted by the pale thought, that, after all man’s shiftings of posture, *restat vivere* [Latin; “it remains to live”]. Even to such a man revolutions and bodily illnesses are fine anodynes when he is no longer agent or patient therein: but when he is a spectator only, their kind effect is transitory. (*Letters I.* 86)

The letter, again, shows that Arnold wants to remain removed from the external particulars of this revolution, although he still retains some larger ideal about the positive possibilities of revolution. The swift-kindling man does not concern himself, though, with the fact that he must continue living in the world after the revolution has ceased to hold his attention. The swift-kindling man, who flares up when excitement arises in which to become involved, feels good when involved with that excitement. However, when standing back in observation, the transitory effect of that excitement leaves him to deal with the products of the revolution, the polity in which one must live. Though in another letter Arnold remarks that only a “perennial enthusiasm” will “work France” as the February Revolution began losing momentum, Arnold knows that enthusiasm alone cannot be perennial when it comes to revolution; it “may or may not be impossible” (*CL*

79). One must not be “the drunkard who gets rid of [outdated social structures] by breaking the windows and bringing the house about his ears,” as Arnold will later assert (*CPW* VII. 47).

Evidently, Arthur Clough was, for Arnold, the epitome of this historical swift-kindling man. Clough’s political views were legendary at Oxford, even causing Arnold to, at one point, address a letter to him there as “Citizen Clough,” a joking reference to the tendency of Frenchmen to address each other as “Citizen” during Robespierre’s revolutionary government (Hamilton 96). Add to this Clough’s much more overtly political poetry and his infamous praise in the July 1853 *The North American Review* for Alexander Smith’s poetry over Arnold’s 1852 *Poems*, as well as his trip with Emerson and the Paris mob rioting, and one witnesses a man who gets caught up in the spectacle of revolutionary events. Arnold attempts to set himself apart from Clough’s fervor, much like Arjuna did during the battle, recognizing and wanting rather to understand his place vis-à-vis the outward spectacle of revolution in France and riots in London. The hansom ride with his brother away from the carnage, then, emerges not so much as a refutation of revolution but as a desire to observe and understand his relationship to it. As can be seen, Arnold begins navigating a sense of self, questioning how much the outside world determines his sense of self and how much one has to abstract from those same outside circumstances.

What Arnold had a problem with was that the world without, the revolutionary historical circumstances, was a fractured world. Identifying with it did not bring, for him, a sense of subjective unity, nor, apparently, did merely toying ironically with his engagement with it, that façade he put up explored early in this chapter. He would later

write to John Duke Coleridge, complaining of his friends' opinion of him: "I laugh too much, and they make one's laughter mean too much" (*Letters Digital Edition* v1p60d1). As Arnold continued reading the *Bhagavad-Gita*, searching for a path by which to ascertain his heretofore uncertain ontological position, he interpreted and struggled with certain tenets from the *Gita*. Even if Clough did not want to further discuss the Oriental poem,²⁴ Arnold continued mulling it over in his personal notebooks. Occasionally it spilled over into his poetry; however, Arnold's struggle with the *Gita*'s ideas in the world leading up to and following the February Revolution of 1848 was intensely personal. The *Yale Manuscript*, a collection of early notebook entries, makes this fact especially evident. In this work, one can watch Arnold engaging a particular interpretation of the *Gita* that helps explain the close metonymic association between it and the 1848 February Revolution in the letters explored above. Several elements underscore Arnold's understanding of the *Gita*'s philosophy that merit attention, and Arnold's conflicting comments about these points testify to the difficulty he had making the *Gita* a viable life philosophy. Arnold, as has been noted already, ultimately abandons it along Hegelian lines in favor of what seems to him a more workable and livable subjective position.

III. Applying the Bhagavad-Gita to Life During the February Revolution

"How long halt ye between two opinions [...]?"
- Matthew Arnold, to Arthur H. Clough (*Letters* I. 90)

In many entries of the *Yale Manuscript*, a reader comes across instances wherein Arnold negotiates his interpretation of at least one tenet from the *Gita* relevant to this time of war. Primarily, this tenet involves Arnold's understanding of the idea of detachment from the spectacle of life in favor of an absorption into one's true self,

²⁴ Arnold's letters never again mention the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

defined apart from the arena of illusory external circumstances and concerns – the spectacle within which the historical swift-kindling man gets consumed. For Arnold, the outward spectacle that brought him face to face with the necessity of applying this philosophical tenet, as he understood it, was the February Revolution. Hindu and Buddhist philosophy would term this external world of spectacle *maya*, or “illusion,” and one should fight against it as one comes to terms with living rightly. In the *Yale Manuscript*, one can see Arnold, during and around the time of the February Revolution, negotiating several distinct ways of removing himself from association with spectacle and illusion. These come through images of being physically removed, the praising of self-sufficiency over outward action, separation from others, and finally the ultimate good of being absorbed into the All of God. Significantly, though, after attempting to use all the above tactics in order to find a secure sense of the location of his true ontological nature, Arnold will come to the conclusion that this path towards subjective security actually implies its very opposite, and he will begin engaging in a different project that, as will be demonstrated, parallels a criticism of the *Gita* offered by Hegel.

The ideal of remaining physically removed from any contact with the external world remains an ideal coursing through much of Arnold’s work. One recalls his injunction to the Scholar Gypsy that he “fly our paths, our feverish contact fly!” (*PW* 261). William Madden fully explores this trope of separation from contact with the world in much of Arnold’s poetry in *Matthew Arnold: A Study of the Aesthetic Temperament in Victorian England*. Madden explores and then exposes a landscape motif in Arnold’s poetry that always includes, in some way, a cloister or a secluded grove wherein the speaker remains safely guarded from the external world (Madden 48-60). One has also

only to recall the sanctuary to which the speaker goes at the end of “Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse” to be reminded of this motif’s power and presence. However, this physical separation comes frequently in the *Yale Manuscript*, as well, both in excerpts from unpublished verses as well as prosaic mental wanderings.

Early in the *Yale Manuscript*, Arnold writes a brief lyric that includes the following image: “What are man’s works / Whereon he sets most store [...] / what are these, / The Darling Gods of his dear Workmanship, / Seen from the diz[z]y Summit of an Alp?” (YMS 68). In this perspectival shift, Arnold’s speaker distances himself from direct involvement with action, “man’s works,” and realizes that from a great physical distance they mean little to nothing. This connects to Arnold’s later feelings about the February Revolution when he reminds the historical swift-kindling man to recall that, after the spectacle of the revolution ceases, one must necessarily live in the world that the revolution has brought about. Likewise, Arnold recognizes mankind’s tendency to rest contentedly in external things that he has created, those “Darling Gods of his dear Workmanship,” rather than plunging into self-examination, removed from the external world. Arnold thus criticizes those persons avoiding what he believes marks the *Gita*’s insistence that one should distance oneself from the fruits of action. Although the poem titled “To Meta” would be composed a good while after the end of the February Revolution, Arnold, in the *Yale Manuscript*, already thinks that a major theme in the poem should be “the cloister & life liveable” (114). Again, the “cloister” suggests being removed from the external world in favor of quiet, subjective contemplation.

In a more prosaic vein, Arnold reflects not only on the physical removal of one’s person from the world, but he also recognizes the existence of a spiritual remoteness,

distant from one's physical body. This trope will re-emerge in his poem "The Buried Life," but he sets the idea out in the following entry of the *Yale Manuscript*: "our remotest self must abide in its remoteness awful & unchanged, presiding at the tumult of the rest of our being, changing thoughts contending desire &c as the moon over the agitations of the Sea" (186). This "remotest self" parallels the Hindu ideal of the *atman*, one's true self divorced from the physical body in which it finds itself. This *atman* is also God, or God-in-us. Interestingly, by this time in the *Yale Manuscript*, Arnold has come to some sort of compromise about this remotest self, writing that it "must abide" in its remoteness, leaving the physical body to be tossed by thoughts, desires, and agitations. Clearly, this ideal of remaining aloof physically from the fray of battle, as Arjuna decides to do when he rides out to the middle of the battlefield, was an image that Arnold took to heart and meditated upon in his private moments, as well as working them into his more public poetry.

In one of the letters quoted above in which the February Revolution and the *Bhagavad-Gita* have a close metonymic connection, Arnold remarks that the *Gita* makes a distinction when it comes to action in the world. He remarks on the difference between abandoning action and abandoning the fruits of action. Arnold's comment could reference several passages in the *Gita* wherein Krishna urges Arjuna to continue fighting in the war that he has begun, mainly because it is his duty. However, Krishna urges Arjuna to recognize that he must perform this duty – that of a *ksatriya*, or an elite member of the warrior caste – without considering the fruits of his actions, or without concerning himself with whether or not he accomplishes the ultimate right thing by fighting on one side or another. Simply by doing his duty, Krishna tells Arjuna, he will be

doing the right thing ultimately and in the grand scheme of world history, just as those on the other side. Such a commitment to results, to the ends, rather than confidence in the rightness of one's actions, create the paralysis that Arjuna feels.

The same could be said of Arnold's relationship to much that was happening in early 1848 as well as what Clough was hoping for from the February Revolution, especially its potential effects on England. Of course, Arnold long fought against meaningless actions, what he would later term "spectacle" or "machinery," the mistaking of means for ends that he would often accuse the middle-class of doing. Although Arnold will concern himself with "ends," the ends are not connected to the results of something as temporary as a revolutionary fray. Rather, commitment to duty, without concerns for the fruits of action, should concern one. However, Arnold, at this point in his life, questions precisely his duty, his place in the world. His relationship to this particular tenet of the *Gita*, then, rests on a misinterpretation. However, he does spend some time ruminating on the ways in which the people of England, including Clough, wrap themselves up in the immediate fruits of their actions, focusing on the external trappings rather than on the cultivation of their sense of self, the image of their self both structured by and structuring the world around them.

In passages such as the following, Arnold deplores middle-class England's passion for outward show:

[N]othing makes me more despise the world than the homage it pays to experience. [...] all this the world seems to think, implies a possessing of the scrupulous mind full of its delicacies and apprehensions & newnesses, & at the same time of the philosophy wch [sic] overcomes this: but it generally implies only the total absence of all youth & richness of soul, and the presence of a dead barren negative callosity – too pleasant to the possessor. (*YMS* 168)

Here Arnold, though writing at a much later time than February 1848, still considers the unimportance of outward action, which he here terms “experience.” Overly concerning oneself with outward action takes away from the importance of self-examination and self-sufficiency, the trust that one has that one acts rightly, a primary importance in the *Gita*. Throughout the *Yale Manuscript*, entries from the time that Arnold was engrossed in the *Gita* or in its secondary sources reflects this direction of thought.

Yet another instance in the *Yale Manuscript* of Arnold directly engaging the *Gita* comes in the following excerpt: “ha, say we, what a power conviction lends to our practice: the next day the nerves are wrong, the manners full of blunder & despicability, and the conviction, metamorphosed into consciousness, riding us like a nightmare” (84). Here, particularly, one hears Arnold’s lack of faith in external actions as a means of self-mastery; rather, self-sustaining conviction, regardless and independent of external successes, must be a human’s measure of self-mastery and sufficiency. One may easily create conviction; however, conviction often too easily sways when it contacts the external world and one’s attempts to act on those convictions, presumably because one looks only at the “fruits of action” as the measure of judging success.

In his notes for two future poems, Arnold writes that their subject will be the “refusal of limitation” by the sentiments of love and religion (*YMS* 114). In both instances, one can see that externals, like love and religion, are for Arnold at this point in his life limiting conditions to be discarded as outward actions that cause one’s conviction to ride the individual like a nightmare. Continually searching for affirmation of the conviction that one’s actions are right in the outward or phenomenal sphere causes one to lose control of those actions and begin performing them for the sake of their fruits, not

for the sake of the action itself done in accordance with one's self-knowledge. Rather than recognizing one's duty, as Krishna encourages Arjuna to do, one begins doing what one believes will have the most positive external fruits as results. Arnold recognizes this tendency in his friends and in himself, and he struggles with this tendency and its implications for his life.

Beyond even outward action, Matthew Arnold seems to have had difficulty involving himself with other people in general. Lionel Trilling's comments, in *Matthew Arnold*, have already demonstrated that Arnold in many ways concocted a façade to help distance himself from his friends so that he could concentrate on cultivating his inner life – or to hide the fact that he was uncertain about the state of that inner life. Arnold was clearly having ever more difficulty communicating with Clough after the February Revolution had run its course. As Clough was reveling in his publication of *Ambervalia*, published along with the poems of Richard Burbidge, a fellow student, Arnold sends a scathing letter to him that accentuates Arnold's difficulty in communicating with others, as well as Arnold's recognition that to come into close contact with others potentially damages one's life progress. In late November of 1848, Arnold writes:

I have been at Oxford the last two days and hearing Sellar and the rest of that clique who know neither life nor themselves rave about your poem gave me a strong almost bitter feeling with respect to them, the age, the poem, even you. Yes I said to myself something tells me I can, if need be, at last dispense with them all, even with him [i.e. Clough]: better that, than be sucked for an hour even into the Time Stream in which they and he plunge and bellow. I became calm in spirit, but uncompromising, almost stern. [...] and took up Obermann, and refuged myself with him in his forest against your Zeit Geist. (CL 95)

The Time Stream, or the Zeit Geist, that Arnold speaks of here does not just concern the aesthetic world, but also the political, for Arnold was repulsed when listening to his

associates speak about Clough's more overtly political poetry. Thus, Arnold wants to sequester himself so as to avoid those who will continue to fracture the sense of self-sufficient unity that he is working so hard to attain. Returning to the *Yale Manuscript*, one finds several more entries that echo this same sentiment, including one wherein Arnold asserts that one should concern oneself with the affairs of other people merely as "a result of our world-insight & objective prudence" (128). The effort to understand others must not be confused with what he terms "our duty of self discipline & self-cultivation" (YMS 128). These last two terms have close affinities with the *Gita*, for the idea of *yoga* connects with self-discipline and self-cultivation, and Arnold considers this to be a duty, a term to which Krishna often calls Arjuna's attention. An entry closely following the former one continues this line of thought and draws a direct connection to the necessity of staying removed from others: "Self discipline and self-cultivation [...] require detachment from the distractions of society" (YMS 130). Could Arnold be any more blunt? Perhaps so. In a letter to Clough of late 1849, he writes that the times are "damned," and that what makes them so are "the absence of great *natures*, the unavoidable contact with millions of small ones" (CL 111). When one considers Arjuna's chariot ride to the middle of the battlefield, away from the armies on either side, one can visualize again how Arnold found in Arjuna a sympathetic figure.

"Think what we like," Arnold writes, "delusion after delusion – there are enough of them to last our whole life through" (YMS 109). This comment, written around March of 1848, clearly demonstrates Arnold's difficulty with committing himself to an ideal as radical as the February Revolution, and also of the subsequent uprisings in England. Delusion comes directly from Arnold's reading of the *Gita* and other Hindu and Buddhist

texts. The idea of delusion relates, again, to *maya*. Though usually used in conjunction with desires, the doctrine encompasses any attachment one has to fundamentally impermanent things or feelings. *Maya* fragments life, and Arnold's life certainly seemed fragmented at this time. The idea even spills over into his poetry. He writes to his sister "K" that she should not trouble herself to make his recently published poems "square" in all their parts, for "they are fragments"; he then adds, tellingly, "i.e. that I am fragments" (*Letters Digital Edition* v1p143d1). Through all this, Arnold seems to be seeking something into which he can drive himself solidly, something not marred by illusory, transitory, or fragmented nature and on which he can ground his own thinking. The spectacle of revolutionary action around him does not provide this. In fact, the revolutionary stirrings, at home and abroad, distract him from his search for a sense of his own subjective core. Arnold connects his perception of his own inability to sufficiently ground himself to his sense of England as a whole during this time. In a letter to Clough from 1848, Arnold writes:

[...] our [i.e. England's] weakness is that in an age where all tends to the triumph of the logical absolute reason we neither have courageously thrown ourselves into this movement like the French: nor yet have driven our feet into the solid ground of our individuality, as spiritual, poetic, profound *persons*. Instead of this we have stood *up* hesitating: seeming to refuse the first line on the ground that the second is our *natural* one – yet not taking this. (*Letters* I. 90)

Here one sees the hesitation Arnold experiences at this time in his life, the difficulty he was having bridging a desire to become involved in an epoch-making historical event, and a simultaneous recognition that, like many Englishmen, he has not driven his feet into his own personhood.

Arnold ends up striving for the *Gita*'s notion that God is the All, the substance that underlies the apparent fragmentation of day to day living and even of our own selves. This idea works its way into Arnold's poem *Empedocles on Etna*, and we see Arnold very early in his musings about the poem working on this attempt to gain a connection with the All. He writes, "Before [Empedocles] becomes the victim of depression & overtension of mind, to the utter deadness to joy, grandeur, spirit, and animated life, he desires to die; to be reunited with the universe, before by exaggerating his human side he has become utterly estranged from it [i.e., the universe]" (*YMS* 137). In the *Gita*, when Krishna finally reveals himself to Arjuna in the theophany with which the work ends, Krishna displays to Arjuna his universal nature. It comes in myriad forms, none consistent with another, and yet each part of a whole, unified, beatific vision. This suggests that Krishna is everything, the All, including the paradoxes of his many external manifestations (*Bhagavad-Gita* 11.8-31). For Arnold, then, Empedocles's action should be seen, at least at this point in his life, as a triumph. When Empedocles flings himself into the crater of Etna, he does so with the understanding that he thus merges himself with the All, and he does so having recognized the problems of ego-consciousness and the necessity of remaining detached from the world. Trilling interprets the poem this way, writing, "It is not entirely a suicide of escape. The act is done in ecstasy, and is, as it were, the affirmation of human desires by merging with the All and mingling with the elements, much as the devotee of the Bhagavad Gita [sic] desired absorption in the All" (83).

Clearly, Arnold's engagement with the *Bhagavad-Gita* sprang out of his internal world and into correspondence with others when the February Revolution broke out in

France in early 1848. There can be no doubt that Arnold had been ruminating on the ideas in the *Gita* explored here – those of remaining physically aloof from the world, his focus on self-sufficiency rather than outward action, his removal from contact with others, and his desire to be unified with the All of God – for a good while before the revolution, and undoubtedly, when one peruses the *Note-Books*, the rest of the *Yale Manuscript*, and Arnold's prose works, Hinduism and Buddhism continued to be a touchstone for his ideas. The February Revolution of 1848 presented Arnold with the opportunity to apply what he had been thinking to the world at large, ironically by justifying Arnold's removal from it.

Arnold, however, recognizes that the individual cannot sequester himself away from events happening in the world around him, and yet he must at the same time not get swept away by those same events. The true activist must understand how the world and its changing events make a place for him. Frasier Neiman writes of Arnold's relationship with the Zeit Geist, the Time Stream, "These [inner] tenets are always supportable in the exclusive privacy of Obermann's forest; Arnold's problem was to find a reading of humanity in society that could contain them, for his growing sense of public responsibility compelled him to accommodate a larger experience than that of the individual" (983). Arnold was becoming increasingly concerned about his public responsibilities, but he was also understanding the limits of the philosophy about the subject's relationship with the world as presented in his interpretation of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. These had to do with what Neiman states, namely that one's inner life cannot be the measure of all things and that one must look for the place of one's subjectivity in society. Later, in *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold will clearly associate his ideal of culture with the

opposite of isolation, writing, “perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated” (*CPW* V. 94). In other words, plunging into the depths of oneself, opposed to the external world, is insufficient.

So, not unlikely, for as many passages in the *Yale Manuscript* positively applying the *Gita*’s philosophy to life, there exist passages noting the limits of that same philosophy. In fact, Arnold was not solid about where he stood with regards to his understanding of these tenets in the *Gita*. Lionel Trilling believes that the clearest evidence of Arnold’s inability to apply the tenets of the *Gita* lies in the crumbling of his poetic abilities. Trilling’s explanation remains fruitful and certainly apt, as the waning of Arnold’s poetic output does correspond to his distancing himself from the “Oriental wisdom.” During the February Revolution, Trilling believes, Arnold found himself believing that poetry participates in the world around him, that the social world directly determines the type of poetry necessary. “Poetry,” Trilling writes, “the product of the complete personality, is a social thing, dictated by society to serve society” (32). Arnold, it seems, found his way of participating in the revolution without looking for directly political results by writing poetry that merged style, form, and content. If the world of *maya* surrounding him and all those with whom he was coming into contact was drawing everyone away from a sense of wholeness and unity, not only within themselves but also their outward lives, then Arnold believed that through poetry and his poetic theories he could affect change similar to the way that Krishna tells Arjuna he, through yogic practice, can master himself and his relationship with the world. George Forbes notes the same idea in an essay wherein he writes that Arnold believed the poet could serve society in a manner similar to what Clough was hoping for and what the mobs in Trafalgar

Square were looking for through direct political action (159). One cannot remain aloof from the world because some engagement with the world must take place in order for one to be able to master the world. One must be in the world, and yet not of it. One must be in the revolution, but not of it. In this way, Arnold deepens his relationship to the world, which upon first reading the *Bhagavad-Gita* he interpreted as necessitating physical removal, through a deeper understanding of the *Gita*, and he realizes that he cannot concern himself solely with protecting his inner self from the world; rather, he needs to emphasize his presence in the larger social world through poetry.

However, Trilling concludes that Arnold's poetic power passes away with his youth and, simultaneously, his fascination with the *Bhagavad-Gita*. Seemingly, Arnold cannot live up to the standards of uniting the social world with the deep buried self. In Trilling's estimation, Arnold loses his power of unification and succumbs to the same fate that he saw Clough and his friends succumbing to: the *Zeit Geist*. Trilling writes, "In the end, however, the fate [Arnold] feared and fought overtook him; the poetic power passed away. It passed with youth and the ability to maintain the youthful dandyism. [...] the youthful quality which had sustained his poetry disappears" (33). Ultimately, Arnold's relationship with the *Gita* is untenable from an aesthetic perspective in Trilling's estimation.

Trilling's explanation is, again, valid in the aesthetic sphere, and does explain one reason for Arnold's turn away from poetry and from the *Gita*'s philosophy. However, the ambiguity that Arnold demonstrates throughout the *Yale Manuscript* suggests a more formal disagreement on ontological, metaphysical, and epistemological levels. As will be explored, Arnold's movement away from the *Gita* as a viable philosophy of subjectivity

and subjective action parallels Hegel's direct criticism of one of Arnold's own sources for his early understanding and appreciation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* – Wilhelm von Humboldt's *On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known as the Bhagavad-Gita*. The parallels in philosophy suggest that Arnold's turn away from the *Gita* was more than a mere aesthetic move. Both Arnold and Hegel find, in the *Gita*'s philosophy, a parallel for their criticism of the solipsistic egoism that characterizes, in their opinion, the aversion to the idea of the State as a force in a citizen's life. The following section examines, therefore, Hegel's criticism of the *Gita* and the parallels it has with Arnold's own turn away from the *Gita* as a source with a viable path to ontological certainty.

III. Hegel Against the Bhagavad-Gita

“[T]here are characters who are truest to themselves by never being anything, when circumstances do not suit.”

- Matthew Arnold, to Arthur Clough (CL 135)

“Matt was at one time really heated to a very fervid enthusiasm, but he has become sadly cynical again of late.”

- Arthur Clough, to Tom Arnold (qtd. in Murray 74)

As Matthew Arnold matured through the events of the 1848 February Revolution, he began realizing the necessity of abandoning some of the ideas he had gleaned from the *Bhagavad-Gita*. His ideas for dealing with a world that was fragmented changed. He knew that he could not throw himself into the heat of a revolutionary mob, as Clough had done; however, he also knew that estranging himself from the outside world and plunging into the depths of self-examination was not sufficient for him. In order to achieve a balance, Arnold had to abandon some of the principles from the *Gita* that he held dear. He had to move away from a sense of self that was defined, in accordance with his interpretation of the *Gita*, apart from the world. He began to see the possibilities of a

world that reflected the self, that participated in the construction of a self, and that the self had to move towards in order to recognize itself properly. This movement of Arnold's represents a criticism by Hegel of one of the *Gita*'s interpreters with whom Arnold was familiar, Wilhelm von Humboldt.

Like many Romantics and Victorians, Hegel regarded Eastern philosophy in a paradoxical way. He felt it worthy of examination and spent time exploring it, merging some ideas with his own while leaving others aside. He included Hindu and Buddhist thinkers as part of history, not persons to be tossed aside wholesale. That being said, however, Hegel also believed that the Hindu and Buddhist philosophies were a stop on the ride to historical becoming that had already been passed and, therefore, subsumed into present philosophical thought. What was rational from the *Gita* had been preserved – actually, had been there all along and had finally realized itself – and what was not worth anything had been eschewed or was being clung to in the East, as Hegel knew it, in the form of “backwards” religious and social attitudes, such as the caste system and tyrannical rule.

In 1827, Hegel published two essays meant to critique the work on the *Bhagavad-Gita* that Wilhelm von Humboldt had published earlier that same year. Hegel's work, *On the Episode of the Mahabharata Known as the Bhagavad-Gita by Wilhelm von Humboldt*, contained an early examination of the philosophy that the *Gita* presents as Hegel understood it. Hegel's primary objections to the *Gita* as a philosophical system are:

[...] there is no distinction between religion and philosophy, and no concept of the individual as a moral agent on its own account, [...] their [i.e. Hindus and Buddhists] whole thought is preoccupied with the dominance of the One absolute yet entirely unqualified indeterminate substance, [...] its abstractness (its renunciation of the external world) and

the lack of the concept of the autonomous, free individual and its self-consciousness. (Hegel, *On the Episode* xviii, xxii)

Hegel's objections to the *Gita* as a workable philosophic system are, in many ways, objections to the very things that Arnold felt, during the time of the February Revolution, the *Gita* justified for him, as explored in the previous section. However, Hegel's objections became more and more a part of Arnold's own thinking as he either abandons the *Gita* or merges Hegel's thought into the elements of the *Gita* that he wants to retain but modify for living through an age of transition.

Hegel's critique of the *Gita*'s philosophy, as he understood it, mainly concerns its tenet of renouncing the external world, an act that Hegel terms "abstraction." "Too often," Hegel writes, "the Bhagavad-Gita pronounces to think nothing as a necessity" (Hegel, *On the Episode* 61). For Hegel, this renunciation, this abstracting of oneself from the world and turning inward, creates an unsuitable foundation upon which the individual can construct his or her subjectivity. As one participates in the meditative and introspective processes that the *Gita* recommends:

[...] knowledge is achieved only by means of abstraction from the sensible and through reflection [...] wherein thought remains equally motionless and inactive as the senses and feelings should be forced to inactivity. [...] The Indian isolation of the soul into emptiness is rather a stupefaction which perhaps does not at all deserve the name mysticism and which cannot lead to the discovery of true insights, because it is devoid of any contents. (Hegel, *On the Episode* 63-65)

In order to think, in order to even be self-conscious, Hegel believes that the mind has to perceive contents – the self, for instance – as something external: "consciousness [...] has contents only in so far as the content is its subject" (Hegel, *On the Episode* 105). To abstract from oneself, in Hegel's estimation, is metaphysically impossible, a tendency that must be avoided if one wants a secure sense of self.

Although abstraction can be noble, for it can lead to performing duty for duty's sake and not for its fruit (one recalls here Arnold's explanation of the *Gita* to Clough), and can also lead one to think beyond the immediate external world, Hegel still asserts what he believes constitutes its erroneous core: "That abstraction from all external and internal determinateness, all contents of sensation and of the spirit in their affirmative specific existence is objectless thinking" (Hegel, *On the Episode* 107). "Objectless thinking" is, for Hegel, an impossibility. Note, at this point, Hegel's use of the phrase abstraction from all "determinateness," for in his notes for *Empedocles on Etna* and "To Meta," Arnold states he wants to "chew" the theme of the title characters' "refusal of *limitation* by the religious sentiment" (*YMS* 114, emphasis mine). In Hegel's opinion, such a refusal of limitation is peculiar because Hindus and Buddhists "did not proceed from the enormous abstraction of this to the concrete; their spirit is thus only the unsteady reeling from one to another and finally the misery to realize moksha [i.e., liberation from suffering] only as the annihilation of the individual" (Hegel, *On the Episode* 109). In Hegel's understanding of the philosophy presented in the *Gita*, the result of introspection should be the annihilation of any sense of subjectivity, a desire represented in Buddhism as *anatta*, or "no self" or "egolessness." However, in Hegel's system, one cannot get away from self. One cannot be emptiness or complete abstraction.

This "unsteady reeling" is a familiar sentiment. The letter that Arnold wrote to Clough, quoted at the beginning of this chapter, asks, "But, my dear Clough, have you a great Force of Character? That is the true Question. For me, I am a reed, a very whoreson Bullrush" (*CL* 56). Though Arnold tried valiantly to institute an "intellectual dietetics" and abstract himself from thought and, eventually, from those around him, he recognized

the problems of so doing (*CL* 129). He recognized the black hole into which he was plunging. In another letter, Arnold complains of his tendency to hoist his sail to the wind and let it blow rather than keeping on some prescribed course of action (*CL* 110). Though he uses the metaphor playfully in the letter, the unsteady reeling became, as was demonstrated, problematic for him. The abstraction from all content leads to an unsteady reeling from one idea to another, a feeling, in Arnold's estimation, not conducive to the production of a viable subjectivity. Though Arnold might hold up for admiration the fact that there are those who are "truest to themselves by never being anything" when the circumstances do not suit, he and Hegel both realize the philosophical unsoundness, for them, of persisting in "never being anything" (*CL* 135).

The unsteady reeling becomes, for Hegel, a key metaphysical/ontological problem. Hegel terms the ability to abstract oneself from all external content the will's "purely formal freedom." Hegel describes this "unrestricted infinitude of absolute abstraction or universality, the pure thinking of [the will] itself" as "the element of pure indeterminacy or of the pure reflection of the I into itself, within which is dissolved every restriction, every determinate content, be the content immediately present through nature, need, desire, or drive, or be it given, no matter how" (*PR* 20). Certainly here one recognizes the Arnold of the *Yale Manuscript*, wanting to sequester himself away from others, not concerning himself with others. Also, one cannot help but look forward to the mature Arnold and his abhorrence of the average Englishman's tendency to "do as [one] likes" (*CPW* V. 119). In Hegel's estimation, forming the basis of subjective freedom on such an idea is faulty, based on the belief in a fundamental dissociation between thinking and willing. Hegel writes that those who consider thinking an act dissociated from the

will, those who believe that the will should be employed in getting the mind to stop thinking – recall here Empedocles’s eternally restless mind haunting him, his recognition of a devouring flame of thought – demonstrate, according to Hegel, “from the outset that they know nothing at all of the nature of willing” (*PR* 20). In order to will, one must will something, and to think of thinking as void of content demonstrates, in Hegel’s estimation, a deficiency of knowledge about the nature of the self, of subjectivity.

Content cannot be denied, for in thinking anything one must think on content. Arnold’s desire to celebrate Empedocles and Meta’s refusal of limitation denies the will or the self any positive content, and thus robs both of the ability to move forward. Hegel ridicules this stagnation of the mind in *On the Episode*, recalling an image of “The Yogi sitting there mentally and physically unmoved, staring at the top of his nose” which, in his estimation, “is that enforced arrested thought, strengthened to empty abstraction” (109). This solipsistic existence, then, is stagnation, not purity. Arnold already thinks along these lines when he recognizes, in the *Yale Manuscript* entry for July 1849/1850, “the desire for the all which makes content impossible” (154). Does Arnold emphasize, in the word “content,” the first or second syllable? Either way one reads the entry, Arnold’s intent remains the same: Desiring complete abstraction from the external world and a refusal of limitation, in Arnold and Hegel’s estimation, denies the subject any contentment or content on which to act.

In *The Philosophy of Right*, Hegel continues criticizing the, in his estimation, one-sided view of the will’s or the self’s freedom. He does so by drawing the philosophy of the *Gita* directly into his own work:

In India, for example, what is held to be the highest is for one to persevere merely in the knowledge of one’s simple identity with oneself, to abide

within this empty space of one's interiority as the colorless light of pure intuition, and to renounce every activity of living, every goal, every representation. In this way, the human being becomes Brahma; there is no longer any distinction between the finite human being and Brahma. Instead, every difference has disappeared within this universality. (PR 21)

In contrast to this apotheosis of self, Hegel reminds the reader that the Western concept of God, though still considering God as an ultimate being, has "the idea of something concrete, of spirit, and that what is thought is richer than what is said" (*On the Episode* 119). David Rose glosses Hegel's thinking:

[T]he purely formal will is contradictory because even thinking is activity for Hegel, and activity produces objects [i.e. content]. The 'I' translates its subjectivity into objectivity through will and a will that does not act is no will at all. Actions, even thinking, are expressions of the will in the world and to seek to annihilate oneself, as the Brahmin does, is to be involved in a contradictory enterprise that is impossible. (35)

Interiority, for Hegel, cannot exist abstracted from externality.

Hegel's criticism here does not, however, end his critique of, in his belief, the error involved in conceiving the will as purely formal, which the *Bhagavad-Gita*, in his estimation, recommends. Instead, as he continues in *The Philosophy of Right*, he connects this purely formal will with the violence of revolutionary fervor. He writes:

If it [i.e. freedom of the understanding] turns itself toward actuality, it becomes in the political as in the religious the fanaticism of the destruction of any standing social order, the disposal of individual humans suspected of [being within any] order, and the annihilation of every organization that seeks re-establishment. [...] [I]t may well believe that it wills some positive condition, e.g. the condition of universal equality or of universal religious life, but in fact it does not will the positive actuality of any such condition, for such actuality would bring with it right away some sort of order, a particularization both of institutions and of individuals, and it is precisely through the annihilation of particularization and objective determination that the self-consciousness of this negative freedom emerges. (PR 20-21)

Arnold also recognizes this tendency even early in life, or at least he struggles with the implications that his inward turn causes him to manifest, especially during the troublesome times of the February Revolution. One passage reflecting this ideal reads:

If every one would mend one – Well they cry we have mended one: and we must now cry aloud till we have mended you & the world. – I will not ask, are you sure you are mended in this or that particular? but I will ask, are you sufficient for that new, that self contained, abundant life, which we should be mended into? This crusade, this attacking state, is abnormal temporary: it occupies Existence with the same stimulus of noise & outward action, the cowardly self-betaking whereto has been the source of the meanness & blindness of all those you [...] would mend. (YMS 79)

Written close upon the heels of the February Revolution, probably in October 1848, Arnold here admonishes those who want to impose their own wills on the outside world through their opposition to the outside world, simply in order to feel their wills being imposed, in order to feel that they are “mending” something. He turns the tables on these “cowardly” self-imposers, wondering if they would be willing to accept the life into which they are mending others, or if they, once having established order, plant to continue in their “attacking state.”²⁵ Hegel writes along similar lines, and even brings the French Revolution, particularly the Terror, to bear on the discussion:

More concretely, this form [of the will] appears in the active fanaticism of political and religious life. Here belongs, for example, the time of terror of the French Revolution, when all distinctions of talent and authority were to have been suspended. This time was an agitation, an upheaval, a refusal to tolerate any particular, because what fanaticism wills is a specific abstraction, i.e., the utter absence of articulation [i.e., in the literal sense of the word as “separation”]: where distinctions develop, fanaticism finds

²⁵ Is Arnold here mirroring the realization that J.S. Mill came to as he moved away from the Benthamism of his father? Mill writes in *Autobiography*, “‘Suppose that all your objects in life were realized; that all the changes in institutions and opinions which you are looking forward to, could be completely effected at this very instant: would this be a great joy and happiness to you?’ And an irrepressible self-consciousness distinctly answered, ‘No!’ At this my heart sank within me: the whole foundation on which my life was constructed fell down. All my happiness was to have been found in the continual pursuit of this end. The end had ceased to charm, and how could there ever again be any interest in the means?’” (112). Although Mill and Arnold have been shown to have worked from different perspectives, the shift in thinking that Mill and Arnold both recognize is clearly a potent one in Victorian England.

them contrary to its indeterminacy and suspends them. For this reason, in the revolution the people destroyed the institutions it itself had made, because any institution is contrary to the abstract self-consciousness of equality. (*PR* 21)

Arnold would carry this idea from Hegel into his adult writing. He disapproves, to cite merely one example among many, of the *Nonconformist* magazine's slogan, "The Dissidence of Dissent, the Protestation of the Protestant Religion," as exemplary of the typical Dissenter attitude towards any established or limiting ideas, any force applied to the individual from without (*CPW* V. 101). Although Arnold will ultimately judge the religious life to be part of a complete development of humanity, he here recognizes that a religion such as that expressed in the *Nonconformist* and other Dissenter newspapers represents "a life of jealousy of the Establishment, disputes," an "ideal of life so unlovely, so unattractive, so incomplete, so narrow, so far removed from a true and satisfying ideal of human perfection" (*CPW* V. 103). Arnold believes that such an attitude, rather than expressing a viable subjective stance, descends into anarchy and "pure abstraction," which Arnold and Hegel both believe leads not only to mental, but political and social stagnation, as well. It is, however, what both thinkers will later perceive is gaining ground in the liberal glorification of individualism, and the tendency to abhor any authority such as the State.

Hegel's most consistent objection to Buddhist and Hindu thought as he understood them was the problem of Nothingness, of *Insichsein* (Being-in-itself). In this criticism, Hegel revisits an early critique of another German philosopher, Johann Gottlieb Fichte. Early in life, Hegel was critical of Fichte's definition of the human subject as "I = I," or complete self-identification. In Hegel's mind, Buddhism and Hinduism are both built on an impossible foundation related to Fichte's "I = I": Nothingness as the void.

Early in his *Logic*, Hegel expresses this when he defines Pure Being as a “mere abstraction”: “Therefore [it is the] absolutely Negative: which, in a similarly immediate aspect, is just Nothing” (qtd. in Morton para. 10). He continues writing, “The Nothing which the Buddhists make the universal principle, as well as the final aim and goal of everything, is the same abstraction” (qtd. in Morton para. 10). When one abstracts oneself from all external determinants, Hegel believes, one withdraws impossibly into oneself and runs the risk of implosion. Timothy Morton demonstrates this by calling the reader’s attention to another passage in Hegel wherein he brings up Buddhism. In the passage, Hegel describes a particular image of the Buddha, “in the thinking posture, with feet and arms intertwined so that a toe extends into the mouth – this [is] the withdrawal into self, this absorption in oneself” (qtd. in Morton para 10). Morton clarifies this image:

The toe-sucker is practicing literal, physical introversion. The body turns round on itself and disposes of itself down one of its own holes. [...] This Buddhist being is only recognizable in Hegel’s universe as an inconsistent distortion, at once too insubstantial and too solid. Buddhism stands for both an absolute nothingness, a blank zero that itself becomes heavy and dense, unable to shift itself into dialectical gear, and for a substantiality that is not even graced with an idea of nothingness. Contemplation, meditation, is tantamount to reducing the body to a horrifying inertia. (Morton para. 11)

Not only impossible, Hegel believes that such solipsistic self-involvement cannot have merit, for by shutting himself off to anything higher than Nothingness, there can be no “virtue” and no “immortality” because any such equation would imply a relationship with an external form not merely “indifferent” and “accidental.” Again, the image remains consistent with Hegel’s criticism of Fichte’s “I = I.”

As has been shown, the young Arnold desired this dialogue of the self with self. In Arnold’s reading, the *Bhagavad-Gita* offered that opportunity, and a philosophy to go

along with it. However, as Arnold experienced the February Revolution, this crisis point in France – and, as the mobs in Trafalgar Square prove, English political history – the limits of this philosophy began to emerge in ways that mirror Hegel’s criticism of the *Gita*. Arnold’s character Empedocles in the title poem of his redacted 1852 volume of poems *Empedocles on Etna and Other Poems* takes his suicidal plunge in an effort to completely assimilate his self into the All, a move just as nihilistic as the image of the Buddha sucking his toe. Arnold, in notes to the poem, comments on the end of Empedocles’s life as he will present it in the poem: “Before he becomes the victim of depression & overtension of mind, to the utter deadness to joy, grandeur, spirit, and animated life, he desires to die; to be reunited with the universe, before by exaggerating his human side he has become utterly estranged from it” (*YMS* 137). Glossing this passage, S.O.A. Ullmann writes that certainly Arnold’s vision of Empedocles’s character “in part grows out of his concern at this time with ‘spiritual distress,’ ‘intellectual & spiritual Vision,’ and Froude’s view of the needs of ‘the Spiritual’ that cannot be met by social or political action” (*YMS* 138). However, even Arnold recognized, later in life, that Empedocles’s act could not be one held up for emulation by others, even himself.

Arnold’s desire to remove himself from contact with others as well as to remove himself physically and emotionally from the confusion of the fragmented world around him resulted, however, from fundamental misunderstandings about the *Gita*’s message, especially Krishna’s injunction that Arjuna should move back into formation, away from the middle ground no-man’s land between the two armies, and fight. Nagarajan, in an excellent exploration of the *Gita*’s reflection in *Empedocles on Etna*, notes that during

times of transition, such as the Revolution of 1848, humans tend to retreat into their own ego-consciousness. He writes:

The winds of change provoke us to wrap the cloak of the ego more closely round us. (Arnold's attitude towards the scholar gypsy is relevant here.) Arnold is saying, in effect, that the sense of the unity of all being which is the only source of abiding happiness is difficult to realize in an age of transition. The pace of external change frightens men into seeking stability, the sense of 'I am,' by developing their egos. Empedocles has become a devouring flame of thought, a naked, eternally restless mind. He decides that the only way of escaping from his ego consciousness, of realizing the unity of all being, is to die [...]. But, of course, mere death unaccompanied by the annihilation of the ego sense leads to rebirth. (Nagarajan 345)

Arnold was criticizing Clough for doing this very thing: Identifying his self with the swift-kindling blaze at home and abroad. This "false I" that humans tend to retreat into is one caught up in and defined by the spectacle of life. However, Arnold recognizes, as time goes on, that removing himself from the spectacle of life defines him just as much as Clough's immersion in external circumstances defined him. Nagarajan states that the *Gita* recommends that humans develop a sense of self divorced from the world around them while simultaneously recognizing that they must remain a part of the material world. Though we should not desire to be defined by it – either by fully identifying with it or by abstracting ourselves from it – and though we cannot hope to completely shape the world to our will, subjects must act in the world. Arnold's intense struggle, at this period in his life with the *Gita*'s philosophy and its application to life at the time of the February Revolution, clearly evidences the difficulty in so doing.

Nagarajan recognizes that Arnold's potential mistake in withdrawing from the external world completely and from contact with others is reflected in Empedocles's suicide. Though, as mentioned earlier, Trilling judges Empedocles's act one of joy and

celebration, an affirmation of life, Nagarajan recognizes Empedocles's error, as did Arnold. Empedocles wants to shed his material body and be reunited with the elements, eliminating his subjectivity; however, by doing so, Empedocles is forsaking his duty to remain in the world. Krishna warns Arjuna of this very tendency in the *Gita*:

Considering your specific duty as a ksatriya, you should know that there is no better engagement for you than fighting on religious principles; and so there is no need for hesitation. [...] If, however, you do not perform your religious duty of fighting, then you will certainly incur sins for neglecting your duties and thus lose your reputation as a fighter. [...] The great generals who have highly esteemed your name and fame will think that you have left the battlefield out of fear only, and thus they will consider you insignificant. (*Bhagavad-Gita* 2.31, 33, 35)

Arnold recognizes, late in life, this very mistake, for he not only excludes *Empedocles on Etna* from the 1853 collection, but he also writes in a letter to Henry Dunn that if Empedocles had really overcome his spiritual distress, he would not have killed himself, but would have kept working in the world (qtd. in Nagarajan 347).

V. Discourse With The Future: Arnold & Eastern Philosophy Forty Years On

"I cannot deceive myself as to the fate in store for me: increasing isolation, inward disappointment, enduring regrets, a melancholy neither to be consoled nor confessed, a mournful old age, a slow agony, a death in the desert. [...] I turn in a vicious circle."

- Henri-Frédéric Amiel (qtd. in *CPW* XI. 272-273)

When Matthew Arnold sailed to America for the last time in 1886, he took with him a copy of *The Journal intime of Henri-Frédéric Amiel*, recently translated and introduced by his niece, Mrs. Humphrey Ward. Arnold had promised Mrs. Ward an essay on the French academic soon after her translation was published. However, by the start of 1887 he had still not fulfilled his promise, and so he made great efforts to do so as the

year went on. The essay “Amiel” was finally published near the end of 1887 and would become part of his *Essays in Criticism: Second Series*.

On the whole, yet respecting his niece’s translation, Arnold judges Amiel unfavorably. He finds his poetry lacking in style – “the specimens of his work given by his critics left me hesitating,” he writes, and later adds, referencing his old standby Senancour, “even in translation we must surely perceive that the magic of style is with Senancour’s feeling for nature, not Amiel’s” (*CPW XI*. 265, 268) – but certainly finds him an apt literary critic, and “Of Amiel’s cultivation, refinement, and high feeling, of his singular graces of spirit and character, there could be no doubt” (*CPW XI*. 265). Significantly enough for this chapter, Arnold turns his attention first to Amiel’s speculative philosophy. Arnold believes that this element of Amiel’s work closely intertwines with Amiel’s failure as an academic and as a poet. Clearly, Amiel’s philosophy has much in common with the philosophy that Arnold struggled so hard with during the years surrounding the 1848 February Revolution in France and ultimately abandoned as a viable philosophy in order to follow Hegel’s trajectory. Elements of the struggle and the criticism that this chapter has demonstrated Arnold applying are in “Amiel” being reiterated only a few months before his death on April 15, 1888.

Two particular criticisms that Arnold applies to Amiel are closely related. One comes early in the essay when Arnold mentions Amiel’s history, noting that although he exhibited a great amount of promise, Amiel never seemed to live up to his potential, at least in the eyes of his friends and mentors. The only things worth admiration that Amiel published, it seems, are the selections from his private journals which, in Arnold’s term, explain his “sterility” (*CPW XI*. 267). Page after page in the journal, Arnold notes,

contain Amiel's recognition of his own sterility, his paralysis: "he became impotent and miserable" (*CPW XI*. 272). After quoting several lines from the journal to this effect, Arnold has to note that, whereas many contemporary readers have praised the vastness of Amiel's "speculative philosophy," and though Arnold again notes that Amiel was "no doubt greatly Senancour's superior in culture and instruction generally; in philosophical reading and what is called philosophical thought he was immensely his superior," he nevertheless cannot resist asking what the "positive value" of all this thinking was for Amiel (*CPW XI*. 269). He concludes that rather than being a glowing and "beatific vision," Amiel's self-analyses depict "the secret of his sublime malady" (*CPW XI*. 273). Arnold continues: "I hesitate to admit that all this part of the Journal has even a very profound psychological interest: its interest is rather pathological. In reading it we are not so much pursuing a study of psychology as a study of morbid pathology" (*CPW XI*. 273). What has led Arnold to conclude this about Amiel's deepest and most personal musings? Arnold gives his answer just prior to drawing his conclusion.

Arnold believes that Amiel was brought to this morbid pathology because of his own subjective implosion. Amiel, Arnold makes it clear, recognizes this himself, and he devotes "hundreds of pages of Journal" to the problem (*CPW XI*. 272). The root of this melancholy and subjective implosion can be found in the Eastern philosophies that Amiel attempted to make the guiding philosophies of his life. Two particular elements stand out to a reader already familiar with Arnold's own struggles with the *Bhagavad-Gita*: a fascination with nothingness, and a longing for the infinite in which one loses subjective grounding. Arnold calls the reader's attention, first, to Amiel's fascination with nothingness at the core of the individual, or of mind. Amiel describes the mind as "the

universal virtuality, the universe latent,” and equates it with “the germ of the infinite” expressed “mathematically by the double zero (00)” (qtd. in *CPW* XI. 269). Later, Arnold gives another of Amiel’s expressions of this nothingness at the core of being, quoting the following: “psychological reinvolution [...] implies the simplification of the individual who, allowing all the accidents of personality to evaporate, exists henceforth only in the indivisible state, the state of point, of potentiality, of pregnant nothingness. Is not this the true definition of mind? is not mind, dissociated from space and time, just this? [...] This nothing is an all” (*CPW* XI. 269-270). Just as Arnold and Hegel recognized the impossibility of allowing “nothingness” or “pure abstraction” to be the foundation of subjectivity, Arnold here judges Amiel’s ruminations on such ideas to be “perfectly futile” (*CPW* XI. 270); moreover, one cannot help but hear an echo of that early letter to Clough, written during the February Revolution, when Arnold, too, was struggling with his subjectivity, the letter wherein he writes, “revolutions and bodily illnesses are fine anodynes when he is no longer agent or patient therein: but when he is a spectator only, their kind effect is transitory” (*Letters* I. 86). The “bodily illnesses” of Amiel seem to have remained and become a malady.

After exposing the paralyzing nature of seeing “nothingness” as the core of mind or of subjectivity, Arnold moves next to another idea with which he, too, struggled early in life – the longing for the totality of the All, a fascination with the infinite. Arnold notes that Amiel desires to lose his own subjectivity in favor of a unity with a larger ideal, what he describes as “the capacity for all form, not *a* soul but *the* soul [...] to be *man* [rather than] *a* man” (qtd. *CPW* XI. 270). Arnold connects this desire for absorption in the All immediately to “the thought of absorption and extinction, the *Nirvâna* of Buddhism,” and

it leads fundamentally to a distaste for all limits and form (*CPW XI*. 270). Arnold traces Amiel's paralysis to this very desire, for "with the infinite and this drift towards Buddhism comes the impatience with all production, with even poetry and art themselves, because of their necessary limits and imperfection" (*CPW XI*. 270, 271). Again, Arnold quotes extensively from Amiel's journal:

We must treat our subject brutally and not be always trembling lest we should be doing it a wrong. We must be able to transmute and absorb it into our own substance. This sort of confident effrontery is beyond me; my whole nature tends to that impersonality which respects and subordinates itself to the object; it is love of truth which holds me back from concluding and deciding. (qtd. in *CPW XI*. 271)

The *Bhagavad-Gita* clearly influences Amiel's own conclusions about the nature of the artist in the face of his subject. Moreover, it echoes precisely what Trilling notes Arnold wanted to glean from the *Gita*'s philosophy as he was sharing it with Clough. Trilling takes a moment to quote from Schopenhauer, prefacing the quote by noting that it gives a good approximation of what Arnold wanted Clough to see in the *Gita*:

Only through the pure contemplation ... which ends entirely in the object, can Ideas be comprehended; [...] this requires that a man should entirely forget himself and the relations in which he stands [...]. Thus genius is the faculty of continuing in the state of pure perception, of losing oneself in perception, and of enlisting in this service the knowledge which originally existed only for the service of the will; that is to say, genius is the power of leaving one's own interests, wishes, and aims entirely out of sight, thus of entirely renouncing one's own personality for a time, so as to remain *pure knowing subject* [...]. (qtd. in Trilling 26)

By the time that Arnold reviews Amiel's journal, though, he has apparently renounced such a vision; moreover, from the explorations of Arnold's engagement with the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Arnold himself, even early in his life, was not entirely certain about the feasibility of such a vision of the world. By the time "Amiel" was written, though, Arnold had fully internalized his vision of the *Gita*'s inadequacy. "It is a prosaic mind which has

never been in contact with ideas of this sort, never felt their charm,” he writes, seemingly recalling his own early love affair with these ideas. “They lend themselves well to poetry, but what are we to say of their value as ideas to be lived with, dilated on, made the governing ideas of life? Except for use in passing, and with the power to dismiss them again, they are unprofitable” (*CPW* XI. 271).

What remains in Matthew Arnold’s mind at the close of his life after rejecting the unprofitable life philosophy presented in the *Bhagavad-Gita* and other Hindu and Buddhist texts with which Arnold was familiar throughout his life, is the need for limits. Abstracting oneself from the external world, identifying completely with the external world, or collapsing in on the solipsism of “I = I” all lead to the same pathological metaphysical sickness and sterility that characterized the life of Henri-Frédéric Amiel. Perhaps Arnold was so harsh with Amiel because in the failed poet and academic he saw a possible image of himself had he not struggled and overcome the problematic influence of the *Bhagavad-Gita* early in his life. The life portrait that Amiel paints of himself, the quote Arnold places in his essay and that heads this section, is one filled with images that the young Arnold included in his own personal writing – images of isolation, of sickness, and of unprofitability.

As Arnold continued writing poetry, he became increasingly concerned about limitation, the restrictions placed on subjects, the borders that appear between people and places. As Isobel Armstrong remarks, Arnold fills his poems with border imagery, of invading armies, of protecting the borderlands, keeping invading forces at bay (207). This does indicate what has been noted in this chapter about Arnold’s fear of contact with others, of separating himself from the outside world. However, Arnold’s borderlines

become necessary things that he must begin running up against in other works. Arnold recognizes that one cannot exist apart from the world. Increasingly he will recognize, as he does in “Amiel,” that fruitful life cannot come from a fascination with the infinite, with a descent into nothingness, with abstraction in whatever form. Rather:

[...] the thoughts which have positive truth and value, the thoughts to be lived with and dwelt upon, the thoughts which are a real acquisition for our minds, are precisely thoughts which counteract the ‘vague aspiration and indeterminate desire’ possessing Amiel and filling his Journal: they are thoughts insisting on the need of limit, the feasibility of performance. Goethe says admirably – [...] ‘He who will do great things must pull himself together: it is in working within limits that the master comes out.’ [...] The ideas to live with [...] are [...] ideas of this kind, ideas staunchly counteracting and reducing the power of the infinite and indeterminate, not paralyzing us with it. (CPW XI. 272)

Matthew Arnold, one may say, had to pass through the crucible of self-examination explored at length in this chapter before he could see what he perceived as its dangers and the way out towards which it pointed. The ontological inquiry Arnold subjected himself to by following his interpretation of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and its recommendations can be considered a microcosm of a larger social and political landscape that Arnold, and Hegel, would eventually take to task. Arnold eventually equated the solipsistic subjectivism that the *Gita*, in his interpretation of it, recommended with the Romantic subjectivism, sentimentalism, and (in his perspective) radical democratic populism that was being popularized, in his opinion, by the liberals of his day. Arnold and, as will be seen over the next two chapters, Hegel both believed that the abstraction from all particularities that the *Gita* recommended was mirrored in a tendency to disavow the importance of an external force in the larger social sphere, a force that both Arnold and Hegel termed the State. Although Arnold’s concrete vision of the State was ill-defined (as explored in this dissertation’s introduction), his fear was that, just as

the subjective philosophy of the *Gita* pushed the individual into an ontological black hole, a broad based movement to reject the idea of State interference in the civil life of citizens would cause a similar catastrophic collapse. In keeping with the revolutionary foundation of both Arnold and Hegel's social vision, though, the two thinkers tried to demonstrate that only through an external force like the State could liberty, equality, and fraternity emerge. The freedom that the *Gita* offered was, to Arnold and Hegel, not a freedom at all, but rather something akin to a nightmarish void that ended, not in progress, but paralysis and stagnation. Arnold thus begins the preface to his 1853 volume of poems with a vision of this inadequate response to the world, one that certainly prefigures his criticism of Amiel, with Empedocles's "dialogue of the mind with itself" that has caused his destruction and paralysis (*CPW* I. 1). Arnold's poetic theories were deeply related to his political theories. Remarkably, Arnold's preface has similarities, both in content and in structure, with Hegel's preface to the ambitious statement of his own social theory, *The Philosophy of Right*. An exploration of the philosophical and political dialogue between these two prefaces is the content of the next chapter.

One would not be remiss to note, even here, a certain irony in Arnold's rejection of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and his move towards an advocacy of the State in allowing true subjective freedom to emerge in a polity. As was mentioned earlier, Arnold (and Hegel) was guilty of misinterpretation as he pondered the *Gita*. Krishna, near the end of the *Gita*, urges Arjuna towards battle, demanding that he follow his duty as a *ksatriya* warrior and through that commitment to duty, never minding whether he was following it towards good or bad ends, he would be considered good in the eyes of God. As this dissertation progresses, it will be evident that Arnold, when recommending that citizens pursue a

“revolution by due course of law,” advocates following a similar path towards gradual rather than radical and violent revolutionary overthrow. However, even here one must not rush to judgment. Arjuna’s duty was determined by a caste system that did not change; Arnold’s State was not the status quo and was therefore open to change by the very people who were reflected in it. Arnold’s fear, and Hegel’s as well, was that the members of the polity were turning more and more away from the State as an idea, thus descending too far into their own individualism and, eventually, subjective willfulness. Arnold therefore begins advocating for ideas of limitation to be reintroduced into a world that, in his opinion, was running unfettered, not towards liberty, but towards destruction.

CHAPTER 4

THE POETICS OF LIMITATION: MATTHEW ARNOLD'S PREFACE TO *POEMS* (1853) & HEGEL'S PREFACE TO *THE PHILOSOPHY OF RIGHT*

I. "I am fragments"

Clearly the February Revolution created a crisis in Matthew Arnold's life. His ontological struggles, with a sense of identity, and with trying to find a place within himself from which to act in the world, pushed him, early in life, away from those around him, into the Alpine forests of his idol, Senancour's Obermann, and into communion with the Hindu and Buddhist philosophy that he believed was typified in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. The philosophy of the *Gita*, however, presented its own problems, in Arnold's interpretation of it, as he tried reconciling himself to his place in the world and his subjective relationship to the outside world. Ultimately, Arnold rejected the *Gita*'s philosophy, and, as the previous chapter demonstrated, his rejection parallels in many points G.W.F. Hegel's critique of the *Gita*. Having rejected the *Gita* along these Hegelian lines, not surprisingly Arnold's new life philosophy mirrors Hegel, as well. In the famous preface to his 1853 volume *Poems*, one witnesses a reversal of many of the early ideas that Arnold tried to put into action and that demonstrate such conflict in his personal journaling explored in chapter 2 of this work. In this preface, Arnold appeals to an exterior force against which one must struggle in order to see one's true self, or to compose poetry.

Matthew Arnold's preface to his 1853 volume of poems mirrors Hegel's preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, and bringing the two together provides some connection between Arnold and Hegel's vision of the State and its necessary connection to revolutionary ideals. More importantly, though, such parallels as will be discussed here

between Hegel and Arnold in Arnold's first publicly published work of criticism make a further case for reading Arnold's work more closely with Hegel's. These parallels prompt even more close connections between Arnold's literary criticism and his social and political criticism. Critics commonly note, as Lionel Trilling does, that for every literary judgment Matthew Arnold makes one can read an underlying social and political judgment (Trilling 145). To find in Arnold's earliest work of poetic theory echoes of Hegel's ultimate expression of his social and political thought reinforces the link between these two great thinkers.

The road to that point, though, was tough. Arnold took his separation from those around him to an extreme when, in the course of just over one year, he journeyed twice to the Continent. From Switzerland, among Obermann's Alpine forests, Arnold composed two letters to Arthur Clough, one in 1848 and the second in 1849. These two letters offer the reader evidence of the shift in Arnold's worldview suggested in the previous chapter, particularly as regards his feelings about the outside world, himself, and others. The letters also point the way towards the philosophy with which Arnold will replace the *Gita*. The shift these letters evidence point to the major move away from the *Gita* and towards Arnold's mature vision of the State's necessity in progressing humanity towards a realization of French Revolutionary ideals. In the first letter, one notices Arnold tiring already of the introspection to which he has been committing himself. He writes, from the hotel at the Baths of Leuk, of feeling "all alone in this vast hotel" (CL 91). Perhaps most telling, though, are his comments on his beloved Béranger. This French poet, a favorite among the young liberals of Arnold's day for his light, airy *chansons* and his liberal politics, was also, for a time, a favorite of Arnold's. In fact, Arthur Clough, upon

Arnold's return from Paris in 1846, writes, "Matt is full of Parisianism. [...] Theatres in general, and Rachel in special: he enters the room with a chanson of Béranger's on his lips – for the sake of French words almost conscious of tune: his carriage shows him in fancy parading the Rue de Rivoli; and his hair is guiltless of English scissors" (qtd. in Trilling 21-22). To the Baths of Leuk, Arnold took Béranger, but he writes to Clough:

of [Béranger] I am getting tired. Horace whom he resembles had to write only for a circle of highly cultivated desillusionnés roués [Fr. circle of disillusioned (men?)], in a sceptical age: we have the sceptical age, but a far different and wider audience: *viola pourquoi* [Fr. therefore], with all his genius, there is something 'fade' [Fr. insipid, tasteless, dull] about Béranger's Epicureanism. [...] In the *reste* [Fr. In the end], I am glad to be tired of an author: one link in the immense series of *cognoscenda et indagenda* [L. known and learned] despatched. (CL 92-93)

Clearly, Arnold's self-examination leads him to cut himself off further from the very things he hoped were helping him find his subjectivity, and he dispatches even Béranger on his way to self-discovery.

Arnold recognizes, though, this path's dangers. He ends this letter on a negative note. He admits learning from all of his experiences and trying to retain the knowledge, but then writes, "Tho: this *uti possedetes* principle may be compatible with entire loss of individuality and the power to recognize one another" (CL 93). The military principle of "*uti possedetes*" describes the right of a country to keep those areas that it has acquired during war. Arnold fears, though, losing his ontological status, a loss, as he puts it, of "individuality" and the ability to recognize another subject even as he acquires some sense of knowledge on this difficult path. This ability to recognize another individual as different from oneself functions as a keystone in Hegelian philosophy, for only through mutual recognition can a subject feel completely free, an idea that will be explored more fully in Chapter 4. Arnold, by this time seeing the confusion that the 1848 Revolution

plunged France into, recognizes the problems that emerge from the philosophy presented in the *Gita* calling for identifying oneself apart from anything else, pure negative self-identification.

One year later, 1849, on Arnold's second visit to Switzerland, he writes again to Clough, and the letter's tone changes markedly. If the dispatching of links in the chain of his knowledge were written off lightheartedly in the first letter, his recognition of a change in attitude following from his intense engagement with the *Gita* has taken on a level of gravity by the second. Likewise, this letter provides a path into the intense shift in aesthetics, metaphysics, and politics that Arnold would demonstrate over the next few years. It provides, moreover, a direct link between the philosophy of the *Gita* and Arnold's changing relationship with it.

To witness this second letter's shift, one must go back one year, to the letters, referenced in the previous chapter, Arnold wrote to Clough during the February Revolution, when he was bringing the *Gita*'s philosophy to Clough's attention. He writes on March 8, 1848, that Thomas Carlyle's editorial on the Revolution strikes Arnold as "solemn" and "deeply *restful* [...] amidst the heat and vain words that are everywhere just now" (CL 75). Arnold continues, "Yet the thoughts extracted and abstractly stated, are every newspaper's: it is the style and feeling by which the beloved man appears" (CL 75). In this letter, Carlyle's style, removed from the hasty confusion and the "swift-kindling" situation of revolutionary fervor, allows Arnold to grasp more clearly the nature of the situation than even Clough, immersed in the Paris mobs, can. Stylistically, Arnold writes, it mirrors the *Gita*'s philosophy, which emerges out of a removal from the situation, much as Arjuna removes himself from the battlefield. Carlyle's ability to do the

same, it seems, allows Arnold much more clarity and insight about the events of the February Revolution.

However, only one year later, as Arnold reposes at Thun and takes up his pen to write Clough, he has already recognized a problem with the very thing that he admired both the *Gita* and Carlyle for. “My dearest Clough,” he begins, “these are damned times – everything is against one – [...] moral desperadoes like Carlyle, our own selves, and the sickening consciousness of our difficulties” (CL 111). Carlyle’s deeply “restful” and “solemn” style has become evidence of a wildly individualistic and self-absorbed morality that does not, apparently, strike Arnold as conducive to life in the “damned times” in which he lives. Arnold desires another way out, one that neither makes him a “fanatic” nor “chalf [sic] blown by the wind,” neither a man deeply and immovably absorbed in a particularly limited and removed ideology (like Carlyle) nor a man who flares up with the historical moment but has no subjective unity of his own on which to stand (like Clough) (*Letters Digital Edition* v1p155d2). These two positions, of course, constitute the two positions that Hegel saw emerging from the philosophy presented in the *Gita* and that Arnold was in the process of rejecting. He remarks in the letter of his own “impatience at being faussé in which drove me some time since so strongly into myself” (CL 109). Arnold provides his solution to the problem with recourse to a maxim of Aristotle, which H.F. Lowry glosses in a note to the letter: “but let us be ‘as the prudent man would define’, and not as any one [sic] else would ‘define’” (CL 112 n.6). Arnold references Aristotle’s vision of acting by virtue, a “habit, accompanied with deliberate preference, in the relative mean, defined by reason, and as the prudent man would define it” (qtd. in CL 112 n.6). Carlyle’s removed style now evidences Carlyle’s

moral desperado character, suggesting a self-assuredness not tempered by virtue and prudence.

Arnold's change of opinion concerning Carlyle is relevant because it demonstrates that the life philosophy he felt the *Gita* would provide him presents itself simultaneously as an aesthetic problem. Once again, though, the influence of Hegel emerges as important here, for in his criticism of von Humboldt's assessment of the *Gita*, Hegel finds the work lacking not just in philosophical consistency, but also in artistic value. Krishna's recommendation that Arjuna act without concern for the fruits of his actions, to act merely according to his duty, does not establish a good basis for composing a successful poem. At one point in the *Gita*, even, Krishna literally tells Arjuna he should "fight for the sake of fighting" (2. 38). Can the conversation between a god and a warrior in the middle of a battlefield, fighting simply for the sake of fighting, be the proper situation for poetic expression? Hegel answers, engaging von Humboldt several times:

Here as the [practical/active] principle (p.6) we have the necessity to give up all claims to the fruits of actions, to all results. Never, says Krishna, is an action's value estimated by its fruits. This tranquility marks [...] 'without doubt philosophically a mental constitution coming close to the sublime'. We can recognize in this the moral obligation to do the good for the sake of the good only and duty only for duty's sake. But that the demand of such indifference towards the result may at the same time (in itself) produce a great poetic effect, can well be doubted if one is inclined to demand of poetic characters a more concrete individuality and the direction of their whole intensity towards the realization of their goals, and to see great poetic vivacity and hence great poetic effect only in the harmony of their will-power with their interests. (Hegel, *On the Episode* 13-15)

Hegel criticizes the *Gita*'s poetic power because the poem secures itself neither on the levels of characterization nor poetic action. The poem is didactic. Stylistically it may be

polished, but it does not have unity of action and style, of action and expression. It teaches, but as a piece of poetry it falls short. For great actions to occur and for great characters to participate in those actions, one must address intensity, Hegel believes, “towards the realization of their goals,” and the character’s “will-power” must coincide with the character’s investment in that project, or, as Hegel puts it, the harmony of will-power with the realization of “their interests.” Recall that Hegel believed the application of the Hindu and Buddhist philosophy of subjectivity – or lack of subjectivity – would result in an ontological black hole, a point that parallels Hegel’s “night of the world” imagery. Certainly with this as the foundation for Arjuna’s character, and with Krishna’s counsel towards this sort of relationship between Arjuna and with the battle, the *Bhagavad-Gita* provides no subject for adequate poetry.

This sliding between metaphysical and aesthetic criticism in Hegel’s critique of von Humboldt prefigures Arnold’s own merging of his metaphysical considerations with his later assessment of Carlyle in the letter from Thun. As Arnold matured, he questioned what the effects would be of the *Gita*’s life philosophy on his poetry. Truly, melancholy marks Arnold’s best poetry, the lyrical “I” of his poems hearkens to the best Romantic writers. But Arnold’s poems were perhaps too much of an open book. Moreover, if they were an open book to his struggles, they were demonstrating the fragmentation that he felt in his life and that he recognized in the world around him. Those around him recognized the depth and the laying bare of Arnold’s struggle. His younger sister, Mary, upon first reading one collection of poems, remarked, “Indeed [*Poems*] was almost like a new Introduction to him...I felt there was so much more of...practical questioning in Matt’s book than I was at all prepared for; in fact, that it showed a knowledge of life and

conflict which was strangely like experience if it was not the thing itself; and this with all Matt's great power I should not have looked for" (qtd. in Trilling 18). Arnold, too recognized the tension evident in his collections. To "K" he wrote:

the whole effect of my poems is quite vague & indeterminate – this is their weakness; a person therefore who endeavoured to make them accord would only lose his labor; and a person who has any inward completeness can at best only like parts of them....I shall do better some day I hope – meanwhile change nothing, resign nothing that you have in deference to me or my oracles; & do not plague yourself to find a consistent meaning for these last, which in fact they do not possess through my weakness.
(*Letters Digital Edition* v1p143d1)

Matthew Arnold realized what he had to do after turning away from his struggles with the *Gita*. It was necessary, he felt, to turn from his old ways, not only philosophically, but also aesthetically. After only a brief run, Arnold retracted his 1853 publication of *Empedocles on Etna, and Other Poems*. He retracted the title poem from that volume and, in 1853, published a new volume with a preface attached which carried within it a new aesthetic philosophy as well as a critique of his age and the poetry being produced in response to the age.

Much has happened in the intervening years when he wrote to Clough from Thun, first vocalizing his disgust with the world around him and his heretofore response to it. Not least significant of the events would have been his first love affair, which went awry and was chronicled in the poems collectively titled *Switzerland*. Arnold's love interest, Marguerite in the series, has been a source of scholarly intrigue for years.²⁶ The poems, though, help to provide a real-world example of the consequences of trying to incorporate the *Gita*'s philosophy into life. Scholars find it difficult to understand why, exactly, Arnold's love affair with Marguerite did not blossom, for blame seems to be on both the

²⁶ See pages 79-80 of Nicholas Murray work for his three arguments in favor of a flesh and blood Marguerite.

lover and beloved. However, the poems evidence Arnold's difficulty in establishing relationships, primarily because of his recognition that he does not know himself enough to be grounded. In the poem "Meeting," for example, a reader witnesses Arnold's excitement as he sees, after a year's time, Marguerite coming. He sees "My Marguerite smil[ing] upon the strand" and "spring[s] to make my choice" (*PW* 174); however, he immediately hears "in tones of ire" a "God's tremendous voice; / 'Be counseled, and retire'" (*PW* 174). In the next poem, "Parting," Arnold, just as he physically touches Marguerite, is immediately whisked away to the upper regions of the Alps where he once again presents the reader with a scene of isolation and removal such as was explored in the previous chapter:

Hark! the wind rushes past us!
 Ah! with that let me go
 To the clear, waning hill-side,
 Unspotted by snow,
 There to watch, o'er the sunk vale,
 The frore mountain-wall,
 Where the niched snow-bed sprays down
 Its powdery fall.
 [...]
 No life but, at moments,
 The mountain-bee's hum.
 - I come, O ye mountains!
 Ye pine-woods, I come! (*PW* 176)

All in all, as Nicholas Murray concludes, the *Switzerland* series provides a real-world example of the consequence of the posture Arnold had taken from the *Gita* and that he found particularly wanting. The encounter with Marguerite has shown him "a reminder of his restless, transitional state," showing him at least that the *Gita*'s philosophy, as he understood it, could not provide a romantic partner with what she would desire, "steadiness and constancy of purpose" (Murray 82, 85).

By 1853 Arnold's entire life philosophy, as well as his life, had changed.

Although many critics point to practical matters as the reasons Arnold abandoned his poetry (working life, courtship of Fanny Lucy Wightman, marriage, children), Arnold was also working out what he felt were the kinks in his life philosophy and his aesthetics in a more abstract way. It also must be asserted that Arnold was not making a purely practical decision when he chose to reject the title poem from his new volume and to publish a preface of the provocative magnitude that he did. Arnold was recognizing a flaw he believed was present in the *Gita*, believing that it not only had moved him in a new direction subjectively, but that it also had implications for art as well as for an adequate political response to an age fractured by revolution and marked by rapid transition. The philosophy with which Arnold replaced the *Gita*'s is one that provides the first positive foundation from which he will eventually develop his beliefs about the necessary role that the State must play in the formation of a free subject within a rational polity.

As stated earlier, many elements of Arnold's 1853 preface mirror Hegel's preface to *The Philosophy of Right*. Admittedly, no direct evidence shows that Arnold read *The Philosophy of Right* as he was composing his preface; nevertheless, the fact remains that both men were responding in these works to their contemporaries, who they felt were inadequately responding to the age in which they were living and were, moreover, recommending troublesome solutions. Both Hegel and Arnold launch into a series of strikingly similar attacks, coming as they do from an anti-Romantic standpoint, rejecting the Romantic emphasis of heart over head. As the preceding chapter demonstrated, Arnold was moving towards a life philosophy that emphasized a check to the solipsistic

introspection characterized by the *Gita*. Arnold, and Hegel, both recognized a trend that Charles Taylor remarks was:

[...] intensified by the new understanding of individual identity that emerges at the end of the eighteenth century. We might speak of an *individualized* identity, one that is particular to me, and that I discover in myself. This notion arises along with an ideal, that of being true to myself and my own particular way of being. [...] The original point of this doctrine was to combat a rival view, that knowing right and wrong was a matter of calculating consequences, in particular, those concerned with divine reward and punishment. The idea was that understanding right and wrong was not a matter of dry calculation, but was anchored in our feelings. (28)

Arnold was not completely opposed to this idea of a “massive subjective turn of modern culture,” this “new form of inwardness” (Taylor 29); however, he felt, along with Hegel, that the radicalization of this idea had resulted in the solipsistic egoism that equated liberty with “doing as one likes.” The inward turn, however, as Charles Taylor asserts, has the tendency to become “monological” in its insistence on the subjective turn away from external forces (Taylor 32).

Trilling observes that an emphasis on style marks many of Arnold’s letters to Clough, and “For young Arnold the problem of style is inevitably bound up with the events of ‘48” (Trilling 30). Both form and content shape the harmonious poet for Arnold, just as for Hegel form and content shape the harmonious philosophical science. Taking Arnold’s poetics directly into the realm of Hegel’s *The Philosophy of Right*, Trilling writes, “Style is character, it is the quality of a man’s emotion made apparent; then, by an inevitable extension, style is ethics, style is government” (31). Style, in Arnold’s estimation, needs to be re-emphasized in the present age. The same idea that marked both Hegel and Arnold’s aversion to the *Gita*’s philosophy begins working its way into Arnold’s ideas about poetry and, inevitably, politics.

Arnold feared the inevitable anarchy that could come to an England ill-prepared subjectively, stylistically, ethically, and politically, to deal with it. Arnold remains, however, conflicted, for he understands the inherent necessity and goodness of the revolutionary impulse – the impulse towards real subjective liberty and freedom in a polity – behind the tumult. The ideals of 1789 are still being played out across England and the Continent, and Arnold does not condemn them. Arnold, for instance, writes to “K” that the principle of the revolution does not agitate him vis-à-vis the current French state of affairs, but rather the English peoples’ undeveloped sense of subjectivity combined with a willingness to accept the French way without thinking of the consequences first. Though hesitancy on Arnold’s part marks the letter, there can be no doubt that he advocates a core of revolutionary belief. He continues:

[...] such is the state of our masses that their movements now *can* only be brutal plundering & destroying. And if they were, there is no one, as far as one sees, to train them to conquer by their attitude and superior conviction; the deep ignorance of the middle & upper classes, and their feebleness of vision becoming if possible daily more apparent. [...] [the French masses are] far superior to the *insensible masses* of England as to the Russian serfs. (*Letters* I. 94-95, italics in original)

Arnold’s fear, expressed here, that the English masses can and will only manifest their revolutionary fervor in breaking down park rails and benches suggests the same ferocity that Hegel feared would result from a wholesale application of the political principles of the *Gita*. The ideas in the *Gita*, and von Humboldt’s popularization of them, were, in Hegel’s interpretation, further proselytizing what Arnold and Hegel both believed was the fundamental principle of the *Gita*’s message: That the subject’s freedom should be the sole focus of a democratic government.

However, bringing Hegel's preface to *The Philosophy of Right* to bear upon Arnold's 1853 preface initially admits the problem of purpose, although this is easily surmounted. Hegel's work is one of philosophical inquiry and normative political philosophy, while Arnold's preface is a statement of poetic theory. Poetry and literature both represent for Arnold, though, a "criticism of life," just as for Hegel the science of philosophy affords a "reconciliation [...]" to those in whom there has once arisen an inner voice bidding them to comprehend life" (CPW IX. 163; PR 6). These two prefaces, then, have similar motivations behind them, and these similarities need to be explored especially with regards to Arnold's direct incorporation of Hegelian political ideas as foundational in his own political and social philosophy. Three areas allow for reading Arnold's preface with Hegel's, and they are an exposé of the faulty contemporary temper and how to respond to it, the relationship between content and form, and, finally, a mutual appeal to the Greek notion of *architectonic*. Through each of these parallels culminating in Arnold's distrust of the contemporary liberal project for putting into action the French Revolution's ideals in England, one can see Arnold moving towards his solution to the actualization of these revolutionary ideals and the State's role therein.

II. Parallel: The Temper of the Age

If in 1849 the times were, in Arnold's opinion, "damned," by 1853 times had become even more difficult for Arnold. This was due primarily to a loss of faith in the Romantic attitude and a move towards a more rational approach to life. According to Hamilton, "During the 1860s, Arnold was more inclined to blame the poets [for the times]: or to blame rather that post-romantic self-absorption which the poets, himself included, had allowed themselves to be lured into" (205). Heretofore, Arnold's poems

had been characterized by uncertainty, a sense of loss and isolation that had descended, according to many of his critics, into melancholy. Lionel Trilling offers an excellent sampling of the critical responses to Arnold's early poetry:

The *English Review* regretted that 'A' [the pseudonymous initial under which Matthew Arnold published his early poems] was a 'helpless, cheerless doubter' [...]. *Fraser's* [...] displayed its liberal modernism by scolding Arnold for *not* dealing with modern themes. 'The man who cannot ... sing the present age, and transfigure it into melody [...] or who cannot, in writing of past ages, draw from them some eternal lesson about this one, has no right to be versifying at all.' [...] [I]t teaches nothing, it fiddles while Rome burns [...]. And *Blackwood's* reviewer [...] finally reads the volume and discovers its true nature [...]: *What would our friend be at? If he is a Tory, can't he find work enough in denouncing and exposing the lies of the League, and in taking up the cudgels for native industry? If he is a Whig, can't he be great upon sewerage, and the scheme of planting colonies in Connaught, to grow corn and rear pigs at prices which will not pay for the manure and the hogs'-wash? If he is a Chartist, can't he say so, and stand up manfully with Julian Harney for 'the points,' whatever may be their latest number?* (Trilling 74-75)

By 1852, however, Arnold was trying to pull himself out of this stagnant position, and his personal crisis. He writes at one point to Clough of reading, around this time, the works of John Locke, and he remarks that more and more he understands "reason" as the "rock of refuge to this poor exaggerated surexcited humanity" (*CL* 116). However, neither Romanticism nor pure rationalism could offer him refuge. The former pushed Arnold too far inside himself, estranging him from the world and society, as was explored earlier, thus precluding any serious or worthwhile interaction with the world. Rationalism, though, would not allow Arnold any peace of mind, either, for it led to skepticism and a continual analyzing of himself and the world around him. True, Arnold wrote to Clough saying, "woe to me if I analyzed not my situation," but one can take analysis too far and fracture oneself (*Letters Digital Edition* v1p239d1). Neither provided unity of thought, yet towards unity Arnold wanted desperately to move.

The fact that in the preface of 1853 Arnold does not so much take time to defend what he has included in *Poems*, but rather what he has excluded – the title poem, *Empedocles on Etna* – makes the 1853 preface interesting. Arnold explains his decision in the notes that Arnold took for his composition of the poem and his character description of Empedocles. He writes, in the preface, that his intention was to “delineate the feelings of one of the last of the Greek religious philosophers, [...] having outlived his fellows, living on into a time when the habits of Greek thought and feeling had begun fast to change, character to dwindle, the influence of the Sophists to prevail” (*CPW* I. 1). One can easily here recognize Arnold’s own situation mirrored in that of Empedocles’s.

Arnold does not rest content, however, with only criticizing the tendencies he saw in his past work, and he feels that the flaws that *Empedocles on Etna* demonstrates emerge also in the work of other poets, but that critics insistently recommend that type of poetry to the young poets of his day, thus proclaiming false ends for poetry. Critics recommend that poets should only choose subjects drawn from their own modern times. Arnold takes that opinion to be “completely false” (*CPW* I. 3). What, then, are the appropriate objects of poetry? Arnold explains.

The object of poetry is action – human action – communicated in an interesting way by the poet (*CPW* I. 3). This may seem a very limited view of poetry, but Arnold here attacks a tendency he sees around him of choosing to present mundane, everyday events and actions as if they were as noble as those actions of Ulysses or Oedipus. This also takes one back to Hegel’s criticism of the *Gita* as an artistic piece. There was a reason that the Greeks continually returned to the stories of Ulysses and Oedipus, for an excellent action appeals to some deep-buried sentiment in the human race, a sentiment in

many ways outside of time. Arnold has been criticized, and he refers frequently to his own critics in the 1853 preface, for only using subjects from the past, but since great actions exist outside of time and place, Arnold feels certain that he cannot be accused of being “unmodern” in this sense. The sentiments behind those actions that the poet must record are outside of time, so contemporaneity proves unimportant. Arnold, in 1854, composed a brief two page addendum to the 1853 preface, explaining this very point further (see *CPW* I. 16). Though a modern or contemporary event may be written in current language, and though one thus follows and understands the circumstances surrounding that action better, this by no means suggests that it appeals to permanent human passions, in Arnold’s estimation, or that on these accounts it should be seen as an appropriate poetic subject.

Arnold tries rooting readers out of their solipsistic involvement with themselves and in their own time and immediate surroundings just as he had to root the same out of himself, as demonstrated in the preceding chapter. In his first two volumes of poetry, Arnold was, to use his own terms, “prevailed upon” by his own modern age, its dizziness and instability. He was being swept up in the *maya*, or the illusion, of the external world. Wrapped up in either the analytic reason that would not allow his mind to rest or in the Romantic vision that whirled around in his breast, Arnold did not feel that he was fit to write poetry because his subject did not extend outside of himself and towards something larger than himself. He was falling victim to what he wrote was problematic about William Wordsworth’s style – it encouraged “thinking aloud rather than making anything” (qtd. in Murray 23). Taking, again, a look at his reasons for excluding *Empedocles on Etna* from the 1853 collection, one can see that Arnold felt the character

of Empedocles lacked the impulse to action. The poet must not just present interesting spectacle; the poet must also engender joy in the reader. The representation, whether accurate or not, of a personality suffering yet finding no vent in *action*, a character “in which a continuous state of mental distress is prolonged, unrelieved by incident, hope, or *resistance*; in which there is everything to be endured, nothing to be *done*” does not bring joy (*CPW* I. 2-3, emphasis mine). The emphasized words here clearly reflect Arnold’s movement away from the isolation of his earlier years, influenced by his reading of the *Bhagavad-Gita* as explored in the previous chapter, and towards action in the world. His aversion, then, in that early letter from Thun, to the “moral desperado” Carlyle becomes more clear as Carlyle has sacrificed action to style, a purely formal moralizing. Likewise, the emphasized words recommend a more social role for poetry, something that moves beyond mere mimesis to provide understanding about the world because of its style, structure, and content together. However, to the above quoted category Arnold feels Empedocles, the character, belongs, and thus he excludes it from the 1853 volume of poetry, as an inadequate representation of a response to the modern age. One may quote Horace’s famous dictum here, for *Empedocles on Etna* is neither “pleasing” nor “serviceable for life” (132).

In Arnold’s preface, a similar post-Romantic trend dominates, he feels, the sphere of literary criticism. Modern poets, as well as the critics whose work tends to help establish right poetic practice, ground their judgments about what constitutes good poetry, as well as poetry’s true object, on pure subjectivity. Arnold writes, “But the modern critic not only permits a false practice; he absolutely prescribes false aims. – ‘A true allegory of the state of one’s own mind in a representative history,’ the poet is told,

‘is perhaps the highest thing that one can attempt in the way of poetry’” (*CPW* I. 8).²⁷

Arnold rejects such subjectivist, monological tendencies as starting points for poetic practice in the modern age, for they run the risk of watering down not only taste, but Truth, a false democratization of Truth.

This parallels Hegel’s criticism of his own contemporary philosophers. Hegel, too, takes issue with, in his opinion, a similar inadequate philosophical response to the age in which he lives. The inevitable results, which Hegel summarizes as follows, mirror Arnold’s later contempt for what he terms “anarchy”:

For in that this so-called philosophizing holds coming to know the truth to be a foolish undertaking, it has leveled all thought and all matter [...]. The result is that the concept of the true, and the laws of ethics, become nothing more than opinions and subjective convictions; that the most criminal axioms, as convictions, are accorded the same dignity as those laws; and that likewise any object, no matter how paltry and idiosyncratic, and any material no matter how insipid, are accorded the same dignity as that which constitutes both the interest of all thinking human beings and the bonds of the ethical world. (*PR* 7-8)

To thus place Truth solely in the realm of the particular destroys both the content and the form of philosophy, leaving it, as Arnold would write later concerning society, “a colossal machine for the manufacturing of Philistines” (*CPW* III. 275). The Philistine, or middle-class, Arnold would later frequently write, does not have a mind for high ideals to live by, the Barbarian aristocracy has not a turn for new ideas, and the Populace a too-quick energy for applying new ideas without thinking them through first.

²⁷ The critic to whom Arnold here refers is J.B. Ludlow, whose article “Theories of Poetry and a New Poet” was published in the American edition of the *North British Review* in August of 1853. There he writes, “Now, as we have already said, a true allegory of the state of one’s own mind in a representative history, whether narrative or dramatic in form, is perhaps the highest thing that one can attempt in the way of fictitious art” (*CPW* I.221 n. 8:12-15). Arnold may also be referencing William Wordsworth’s “Prelude: The Growth of the Poet’s Mind,” recently published, but, if so, it is only elliptically.

The conclusion that Arnold and Hegel have both come to in the above paragraphs needs to be understood, however, for what it is, for their objection to a radical democratization of Truth is the very thing that has led many critics to peg them as reactionary philosophers. They both based their concern on a fear, perhaps overstated but honestly felt by the two thinkers nonetheless, about the temper of their age. Arnold does not advocate for the suppression of particular voices. Arnold and Hegel both fear the loss of the domain of “capital T” Truth. Just as the tendency to reject the *idea* of the worth of State intervention in the civil life of individuals, explored in this dissertation’s introduction, undermines the very idea of the political power that an individual citizen can wield in his or her capacity as a member of a government, so too does the radical democratization of Truth take away from the value of a Truth allowed to emerge dialogically. Arnold seems to be recognizing an issue that re-emerged in 20th century multiculturalist scholarship. The tendency to want to recognize and validate all uniqueness (individual, ethnic, gender, cultural) as Truth could be detrimental to the values associated with liberal democracy. As Amy Gutmann remarks, “The liberal democratic value of diversity therefore may not be captured by the need to preserve distinct and unique cultures over time” (9). Although, as another critic writes, true liberal democratic governments cannot accept the ability of a government to violently suppress democratic growth and progress, it also “challenges all cultures to abandon those intellectual and moral values that are inconsistent with the ideals of freedom, equality, and ongoing cooperative experimental search for truth and well-being. It is a creative method of transformation. This is its deeper spiritual and revolutionary significance” (Rockefeller 92). Can, Arnold and Hegel here ask, a society progress towards the

recognition of liberty and equality, those revolutionary values that both Hegel and Arnold adhered to throughout their projects, if the accepted and taught preoccupation is with the “protection of one particular culture [for Arnold and Hegel, this would be the protection of the individual’s subjective willfulness] to the extent of allowing the government to maintain that culture at the expense of individual human freedom” (Rockefeller 93)?

Both Arnold and Hegel, in their advocacy against the radical democratization of Truth, embark on a critique of their age’s tendency, in their interpretation, to elevate the individual *at the expense of* the larger human ideal. One may usefully evoke John Dewy’s understanding of liberal democracy in this situation, for his conception of true liberty in a polity is one in which the governmental apparatuses are charged with instilling the revolutionary ideals into the citizens: “Liberal democratic politics are strong and healthy only when a whole society is pervaded by the spirit of democracy – in the family, in the school, in business and industry, and in religious institutions as well as in political institutions. The moral meaning of democracy is found in reconstructing all institutions so that they become instruments of human growth and liberation” (Rockefeller 91). The turn away from universality, in Arnold and Hegel’s mind, actually undermines Dewy’s “moral meaning” of a truly free polity. The subjective turn that Arnold and Hegel see being celebrated in the philosophical inquiry and poetic composition reaches a certain limit: “respect for, and pride in, one’s own particular identity [is valuable] only insofar as such respect and pride grow out of a recognition of the value of the uniqueness in the identity of all other peoples” (Rockefeller 96). As will be seen later, the tendency, as Arnold and Hegel see it, moves rather towards more fragmentation rather than unity through diversity.

Perhaps in some ways Wordsworth and other Romantic poets fell victim to the absolute negativity of the *Gita* that Hegel warned against and that Arnold struggled against and finally managed to avoid. Both Hegel and Arnold recognize in their respective prefaces the necessity of something that can limit the tendency towards the absolute negativity that their own age tends towards, a tendency that will lead, in their opinion, to philosophy, poetry, and society's peril. Both thinkers thus oppose themselves to their contemporary intellectual climates. Even so, they both feel that their age demands a response. This response should be an attempt to understand and participate fully in life. Arnold writes, "[Poets and critics] wish to neither applaud nor revile their age; they wish to know what it is, what it can give them, and whether this is what they want" (*CPW* I. 3). As has already been stated, the current response is not adequate, is not conducive to allowing citizens to understand what they really want. What, then, does constitute an adequate response to the age? Again, parallels surface between the two thinkers, and reading their prefaces side by side allows these parallels to emerge.

III. Parallel: Responding to the Age

Hegel feels that the Romantic subjectivism he has criticized already colors current responses to the world's perplexity. Hegel first remarks, in the preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, how many people, in the face of "infinitely many different opinions," become prevailed upon by them. They end up adopting a "perplexity" themselves and "can easily take this perplexity to reflect a rightful and truthful seriousness about the subject matter itself [i.e. the infinite variety of opinions in the world]" (*PR* 3). This perplexity in the face of modern times often descends into Romantic melancholy, characterized by an intensely subjective stance against the world, becoming lost in one's own thoughts. Hegel writes:

An additional difficulty comes from the fact that human beings think, and in their thinking seek their freedom and the ground of their ethicality. The right so to seek, no matter how high and divine it may be, is inverted into wrong if it is the only right that counts for thinking; thinking then knows itself to be free only insofar as it diverges from what is universally recognized and valid, and knows itself to have invented for itself something particular. (*PR* 3)

This characterizes false thinking, unfree thinking, even though many of the people involved in it feel that this sort of thinking constitutes freedom in and of itself – recall here Hegel and Arnold’s criticism of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, that this freedom to diverge from other opinions exemplifies simply reacting against establishment for its own sake, the Jacobinical attitude. The type of thinker mentioned by Hegel represents the independent subject considered apart from any sense of universal Truth. The philosophers emerging from these particular characters do not appeal, in Hegel’s estimation, to reason when they think; believing, as they do, that they have the “philosopher’s stone” almost by birthright (“as [we] live and breathe” according to Hegel), they make a mockery out of philosophy and out of its objects (*PR* 4). The intellectual climate, the temper of the age explored in the preceding section, has created, in Hegel’s estimation, a group tendency towards hyper-subjective thinking and concepts of freedom and liberty.

Arnold deplores the current modes of poetic composition as much as Hegel deplores the current modes of philosophizing. Arnold especially denounces the belief that poetry should take, as its primary object, current events only. Arnold writes of his present times, “The confusion of the present times is great, the multitude of voices counseling different things bewildering, the number of existing works capable of attracting a young writer’s attention and of becoming his models, immense” (*CPW* I. 8). Yet, just as the

philosophers of Hegel's day flatter and counsel the young in poor philosophical habits,²⁸ the literary critics of Arnold's day mislead poets by providing them with false and unsatisfactory poetic ends: "'The poet,' it is said, and by an intelligent critic, 'the poet who would really fix the public attention must leave the exhausted past, and draw his subjects from matters of present import, and *therefore* both of interest and novelty'" (CPW I. 3). Just as Hegel judges false philosophers for wallowing in their present perplexities, Arnold criticizes poets for allowing themselves to be caught up in the confusion of present times and to present merely that confusion in their work. Disregarding the universal, Arnold sees poets dealing with "transient" topics, reading "poems which seem to exist merely for the sake of single lines and passages," and listening to "critics who seem to direct their attention merely to detached expressions" and being pleased so long as they are "gratified [...] with [occasional] outbursts of fine writing, and with a shower of isolated thoughts and images" (CPW I. 4, 7). Such poetry and poetic objects are, just as in Hegel's judgment of philosophizing, inadequate.

Thus, both Arnold and Hegel deplore the pleasure and zeal with which people uncritically take up new ideas. Arnold's later social criticism reflects this, as well, but significantly Hegel brings it up in the preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, especially considering the similarities in purpose being explored in this chapter between it and Arnold's own preface. Hegel describes current philosophical science as not progressing, but simply being "the same old stew [...] warmed up again and again [...] dished out to all. [...] [I]t is as though the world had lacked only these zealous disseminators of truths,

²⁸ "And what a lot of flattery has been uttered on these matters, especially to the young! The young have certainly let themselves be flattered. 'He giveth to his own in sleep' has also been applied to science, and all sleepers have counted themselves among 'his own'; but the concepts thus acquired in sleep are of course only commodities of the kind sleep has to offer [i.e. dreams]" (PR 4-5).

as though the warmed-over stew brought new and unheard-of truths, which were above all to be taken to heart chiefly ‘at the present time’” (*PR* 2). At one point in the future, Arnold too will criticize thinkers for believing and following an idea or a cause simply because a great many people support it and a great many newspapers print it: “it is enough to give importance to things that this or that person says them decisively, and has a large following of some strong kind when he says them” (*CPW* V. 148). He will even, in a letter to “K”, use language similar to Hegel when he writes that modern literature “is all only what has been before and what will be again, and not bracing or edifying in the least” (qtd. in Murray 114). Arnold wanted true and valuable ideas, ideas that would help society progress and help the subject progress towards the actualization of his or her freedom in the world. This, however, could not happen if subjectivism continued unchecked and, moreover, unaware of itself.

Hegel continues along the same lines after his stew metaphor. The sectarian nature of party politics and the push and pull of philosophers not paying any attention to form or rules result in one “see[ing] that what are presented from one party as such truths are dislodged and brushed aside by truths served up by another party. And if there is something in this throng of truths that is neither old nor new, but rather abiding, how is it to stand out from these formless, random observations, how is it to be distinguished and confirmed?” (*PR* 2). Once again, one must assert that neither Arnold nor Hegel desires to impose their truth on people; rather, Hegel concerns himself with the extreme application of subjectivism to thinking. Arnold also asserts a very similar sentiment, a recognition of what is taking place in England thanks to the press and the middle class’s inability to recognize distinctions. He writes of a conversation that he has overheard:

But I remember once conversing with a company of Nonconformist admirers of some lecturer who had let off a great firework, which the *Saturday Review* said was all noise and false lights, and feeling my way as tenderly as I could about the effect of this unfavourable judgment upon those with whom I was conversing. ‘Oh,’ said one who was their spokesman, with the most tranquil air of conviction, ‘it is true that the *Saturday Review* abuses the lecture, but the *British Banner*’ (I am not quite sure it was the *British Banner*, but it was some newspaper of that stamp) ‘says that the *Saturday Review* is quite wrong.’ The speaker had evidently no notion that there was a scale of value for judgments on these topics, and that the judgments of the *Saturday Review* ranked high on this scale, and those of the *British Banner* low; the taste of the bathos implanted by nature in the literary judgments of man had never, in my friend’s case, encountered any let or hinderance. (CPW V. 147-148)

In the quote above, Arnold makes two interesting statements relevant to the ideas being traced in this chapter. Firstly, he makes a direct equation between literary judgments and socio-political concerns by allowing his concern about the “literary judgments” to extend into this conversation about religion and its social implications. Secondly, he draws the reader’s attention directly to this person who believed the opinions of one, inferior newspaper to be below those of another more widely accepted and well-researched newspaper. This flawed reasoning directly results from the fact that his judgments had never been forced up against a “hinderance” or a “let,” both words that reference limitation.²⁹ As Arnold’s career progressed, and as will be shown in the concluding section to this chapter, his beliefs about America and its socio-political landscape follow along similar lines as this in an attempt to check the subjective tendencies of poets and critics.

Ultimately, these first parallels between Arnold and Hegel in their respective prefaces draw attention to their simultaneous concern with the present time as well as the

²⁹ The *Oxford English Dictionary* defines the noun “let” as “Hinderance, stoppage, obstruction; also, something that hinders, an impediment.” The definition is provided here because Arnold’s use of the term is archaic.

appropriate response to it, either through poetic composition, criticism, or philosophical inquiry. Both the philosopher and the poet feel that their subjects have a deep relationship with the temper of the age, can even help form the right response to the temper of the age.

Hegel writes of philosophy's relationship to the times, the *Zeit Geist*:

When a historical justification confuses an origin in external factors with an origin in the concept, it unconsciously achieves the opposite of what it intends. If it can be shown that the origin of an institution was entirely expedient and necessary under the specific circumstances of the time, the requirements of the historical viewpoint are fulfilled. But if this is supposed to amount to a general justification of the thing itself, the result is precisely the opposite, for since the original circumstances are no longer present, the institution has thereby lost its meaning and its right. (qtd. in Rose 20)

However, the specific temper of the age cannot be that which solely determines proper philosophy and poetry. Another parallel between Arnold and Hegel's prefaces emerges as they provide a way forward.

*IV. Parallel:
Architectonicé: The Marriage of Content and Form*

“People do not understand what a temptation there is, if you cannot bear anything not *very good*, to transfer your operations to a region where form is everything. Perfection of a kind may there be attained [...] without knocking yourself to pieces, but to attain or approach perfection in the region of thought and feeling, and to unite this with perfection of form, demands not merely an effort and a labour, but an actual tearing of oneself to pieces which one does not readily consent to [...].”

- Matthew Arnold (qtd. in Murray 164)

Too often, Arnold suggests, poets in his own day and age follow a false dictum, as has been presented already: ““A true allegory of the state of one's own mind in a representative history [...] is perhaps the highest thing that one can attempt in the way of poetry”” (*CPW* I. 8). Of course, to this idea Arnold wholeheartedly objects. Rather than

sinking inside of themselves, poets need to look outside of themselves for help in creating good poetry. This good poetry – adequate poetry, Arnold will later term it (*CPW IX*. 180) – will not be found in the hasty and noisy confusion currently being captured by poets proceeding upon the false grounds indicated in the previous sections. Approaching poetry strictly as *mimesis* is neither necessary nor advisable. Rather, there needs to be a guide for poets, best found exhibited in models from the past: “all indeed that can be desired, is, that [the poet’s] attention should be fixed on excellent models; that he may reproduce, at any rate, something of their excellence, by penetrating himself with their works and by catching their spirit, if he cannot be taught to produce what is excellent independently” (*CPW I*. 8-9). Here Arnold does not state that the poet must simply and only re-produce those ancient poems, or even those same actions. Rather, Arnold’s vision of the poet requires that they must produce the same effect upon the reader that the ancients did. This unifying effect can only be accomplished, though, by unifying the content and the form of the poem, and not simply reproducing the fragmentariness evident in the world around the poet or in the poet’s own mind.

To offer both a positive and a negative example of the necessity of his theory, Arnold references Shakespeare. He remarks that Shakespeare often got lost in expression. He had both matter and manner, but often manner got the better of him and, unfortunately, contemporary poets now attempt to recreate those rhetorical flourishes in their poetry, not paying attention to the more important poetic element that Shakespeare also embodies. Arnold has iterated three things that a young poet can learn from the Ancients instead of from Shakespeare: “the all-importance of the choice of a subject; the necessity of accurate construction; and the subordinate character of expression. He will

learn from [the Ancients] how unspeakably superior is the effect of the one moral impression left by a great action treated as a whole, to the effect produced by the most striking single thought or the happiest image” (*CPW* I. 12). Once a poet recognizes this, he or she will recognize also the “danger of producing poetical works conceived in the spirit of passing time, and which partake of its transitoriness” (*CPW* I. 13). Arnold here argues for a correlation between content and form, between matter and manner. Arnold terms this *architectonic*, “that power of execution, which creates, forms, and constitutes; not the profoundness of single thoughts, not the richness of imagery, not the abundance of illustration” (*CPW* I. 19). One recalls here his comment concerning mountains in Switzerland when he visited there in 1848, that they were “ungifted with self-controul” (*CL* 92). Arnold finds a similar flaw in Keats’s works, particularly “Isabella, or the Pot of Basil.” Arnold recognizes the poem’s beautiful expression, but also its deficiency in action. The “what is expressed” is most important – the “how it is expressed” should follow from it, but be of equal consideration. Arnold, in fact, uses an Hegelian expression about the action, or lack thereof, in Keats’s poem: “The action in itself is an excellent one; but so feebly is it conceived by the poet, so loosely constructed, that the effect produced by it, *in and for itself*, is absolutely null” (*CPW* I. 10, emphasis mine). This “in and for itself” is an Hegelian expression meant to signify the unity of matter and manner, of content and form.

Hegel’s terminology requires some clarification, but through the clarification Arnold’s indebtedness to Hegel, as well as the recognition of limitation’s importance not only to subjectivity but also to poetry, becomes clearer. Translators often render “for itself” as “as itself.” A new translation of Hegel’s *The Philosophy of Right* glosses the

distinction between “for/as itself” and “in itself”: “to determine anything simply *in itself* is to determine it as an empty universal, to determine anything simply *as itself* is to determine it as an indeterminate individual, but to determine it *in and as itself* is to specify the particular determinations that make it what it is” (PR 265). Hegel means this distinction and combination of the two terms to express true self-consciousness. The editor goes on to use human beings and self-conscious will to further describe the distinction between in itself and as itself as they relate to freedom. In sum, the editor suggests that in myself, as a human being, I am rational and therefore ethical because I have the capacity, in myself as a human being, for both rationality and – consequently – ethicality. However, as/for myself, I may perhaps be completely irrational and unethical. Nothing necessitates that I act for myself as I am in myself. There emerges, then, a tension between what I am in myself (my potential) and what I am as/for myself if I act willfully (on the basis of whim and caprice). The editor quickly points out, though, “there is also a tension if I do what ethicality demands, but only in obedience to some authority” (PR 265).

The effect of modern poetry, according to Arnold, is insufficient in and for itself. It seems that modern poetry mistakes both its capacity (what it is in itself) as well as its realization (what it is for itself). Arnold’s use of the phrase, then, connects his new aesthetic project with the new sense of life philosophy, and both emerge as having roots in Hegelianism. Poetry must be the meeting place between the universal and the personal, just as Arnold must learn to exist at the union point between the social and the personal, between the universal and the particular. This moves outside of the *Gita*’s philosophy as

Arnold understood it early in life and towards a view of a world co-determinate with externality in order to help give it shape.

Arnold criticizes the actually existing conventions of poetry and also determines whether those ideas are reflective of the concept of poetry or if they collapse. In *The Philosophy of Right*, Hegel makes a distinction between concept and Idea that can further our understanding both of Arnold and of Hegel's use of the terms "in-itself," "for-itself," and "in-and-for-itself," as well as how they relate to both Hegel's criticism of contemporary philosophy and Arnold's criticism of the current poetic trends. A concept, for Hegel, is abstracted from a set of particulars. However, the Idea is a concept both expressed and coinciding with an existence. The concept that Arnold addresses is extrapolated from the existing poetry of his age and time, as well as before his age and time. The poetry, however, that Arnold sees currently being produced does not move towards the Idea of poetry. Just as Hegel recognizes that the Idea of right has a positive sense in that it is an actually existing set of social conventions and expectations that have their positivity in laws, Arnold recognizes that the Idea of poetry currently exists in the rules and laws that he sees being given to poets by the critics and that he sees emerging in the poetry of those people of the current generation.

However, Hegel not only says that one can justify the Idea of right by the rules that currently exist, but also that "The *philosophy* of right should not just explain the existence of particular laws, but *justify* them; that is, demonstrate that certain laws and mores have a necessity independent of their particular historical coming into being" (Rose 18). Similarly, Arnold's attitude towards poetry shows an affinity with Hegel's thought. "Right," David Rose explains, "is both what exists and what ought to exist" in

Hegel's *The Philosophy of Right* (Rose 19). Poetry is what it currently is, but what it currently is is neither rational nor what it ought to be in Arnold's estimation, not simply because Arnold believes it to be the case, but because Arnold recognizes an irrationality in the continued production of current poetry. Poetry, for Arnold in the 1853 preface at least, follows lines similar to what Hegel establishes for right in his work:

[T]he realm of right [...] is an historical development, but any particular instance of right can be justified only in terms of being either the progress towards or the fulfillment of the *rational* state. The concept of right cannot exist in abstraction like the concept of an irrational number in mathematics: it must find suitable expression in existence and exist over time, and it has to play a role in the actions of individual members of the community. (Rose 19)

Just as was demonstrated in the introduction to this dissertation, Arnold in the 1853 preface engages in an immanent critique in his poetics, just as he did in his criticism of education and as Hegel does in his political critique in *The Philosophy of Right*.

As Arnold draws his preface to a close, he hones in on an element of criticism that he feels will help poets begin moving poetry to its rightful place. He writes that rather than merely the accurate presentation of the state of the poet's own mind – a solipsistic “dialogue of the mind with itself,” characteristic of his modern age (*CPW* I. 1) – poets need a “hand to guide [them] through the confusion, a voice to prescribe to [them] the aim which [they] should keep in view, and to explain to [them] that the value of the literary works which offer themselves to [their] attention is relative to the power of helping [them] on [the] road towards this aim” (*CPW* I. 8). Hegel also recognizes that a lack of fidelity to established guidelines causes philosophy to veer off of its rightful course. He writes, seemingly anticipating Arnold, “For if it were a matter of truthfulness, if it were not a matter of the vanity and particularity of opining and being, then

[philosophers] would have held fast to the substantial right, namely, to the commands of ethicality and of the state; they would have guided their lives by these” (*PR* 3). For both Arnold and Hegel, then, these guidelines, commands, or hands to guide poets and philosophers along in their respective fields have to do with the elevation of form to, if not above, at least equal to the content of philosophy and poetry. Hegel situates himself in this position very early in the preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, stating, “For what [*The Philosophy of Right*] concerns is [philosophical] science, and within [philosophic] science content is essentially bound to form” (*PR* 2). Who cannot hear and echo here of an early letter of Arnold to Clough wherein Arnold writes that Clough, through Arnold’s poetry, can surely hear Arnold’s “sinews cracking under the effort to unite matter....” (*CL* 65)? Though the letter abruptly stops there, one must conclude that Arnold meant to write “effort to unite matter and style.” Here one sees form and content, just like Hegel.

Hegel recognizes that in the intellectual climate of his day such an emphasis on form will not go over well, for most of his contemporaries believe philosophy discovers truths. Hegel points out, though, that this idea of truth is, in his time at least, bound up with the subjective, while form has been “discarded as mere shackles, so that one could speak willfully from the heart, from fantasy, or from accidental intuition” (*PR* 2). These latter all present themselves as the Truth. However, “if there is something in this throng of truths that is neither old nor new, but rather abiding, how is it to stand out from these formless, random observations, how is it to be distinguished and confirmed, if not through [philosophic] science?” (*PR* 2). The petty confusion and unsophisticated skepticism towards established forms such as the State throw the false philosopher away from the only source of regulation that he or she has, the only path to Truth that can be

got, and into their own subjective intellect which, without rules other than those dictated by heart, emotion, and passion, only churns out opinion. At the close of his preface,

Hegel returns to this notion of form's relationship to content:

[F]orm in its most concrete sense is reason as the knowing that grasps conceptually, and content is reason as the substantial essence of ethical as well as of natural actuality; the conscious identity of the two is the philosophical idea. – It is a great obstinacy, an obstinacy that honors human beings, to want to recognize nothing within a disposition that is not justified through thought, -- and this obstinacy is characteristic of modern times. (*PR* 10)

As can be seen, the Idea (or Truth) emerges in Hegel at the intersection of form and content, becoming not just “for-itself” or “in-itself” but also as a concrete universality “in-and-for-itself.”

And so Arnold's 1853 preface also counsels a return to form – or, rather, a *returning of* form in its proper place alongside content. Thanks to the counsels of contemporary critics, new and young poets get, to use Hegel's term, “flattered” into thinking that a thing said prettily suffices to count as poetry. Hegel would agree with Arnold's repetition of a judgment upon a French poet that Arnold feels sums up the problems of producing a poetry that neglects form for content: “*Il dit tout ce qu'il veut, mais malheureusement il n'a rien à dire* [Fr. It says all that it wants, but unfortunately it has nothing to say]” (*CPW* I. 10, translation mine). Years later, in *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold will write, “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” (*CPW* V. 148). Arnold admonishes poets, as he does the later political activists of his day, to return to the epics and poems of the past, not for their content or their past systems of government, but for their attention to both form and content: “[The Greeks]

regarded the whole; we regard the parts. With them, the action predominated over the expression of it; with us, the expression predominates over the action. Not that they failed in expression [...]. But their expression is so excellent [...] because it draws its force directly from the pregnancy of the matter which it conveys” (CPW I. 5). Whereas Arnold asserts that the object of poetry should be an excellent action, he also recognizes that the action must be presented in the form or style most appropriate to it. Moreover, the poem must be presented with great attention to form or style in general. He writes, “But for all kinds of poetry alike there was one point on which [the Greeks] were rigidly exacting: the adaptability of the subject to the kind of poetry selected, and the careful construction of the poem” (CPW I. 7). Ian Hamilton sums up succinctly what seems to be Arnold’s movement of thought at this time of his life: “‘Classical’ meant ‘sane’; ‘romantic’ meant ‘unstable’ – or, as Goethe put it, ‘sickly’” (168). Just as Hegel recognized that philosophical science must exist at the intersection of form and content, Arnold felt that the true practice of poetry exists at the same. And as poetry is a “criticism of life,” Arnold’s aesthetic judgment transfers to the social sphere and the misguided liberal politics he observes being popularized in England.

That Arnold and Hegel work along the same lines in their attention to form as well as content emerges most demonstratively by their mutual use of the term to designate form, the Aristotelian term *architectonicé*. Arnold first presents the term in the previously discussed section of the 1853 preface on Shakespeare and Keats and the pitfalls of using them as models for emerging poets. Recall that Arnold has distinguished Shakespeare as a good model, but that this recommendation comes with caveats. Shakespeare chose excellent subjects (content), and the often executed them in good style

(form); however, the Bard's love for beautiful phraseology sometimes got in the way, in Arnold's estimation, of the total impression that his works sought to create. At this point, Arnold offers the term: "what distinguishes the artist from the mere amateur, says Goethe, is *architectonicé* in the highest sense; that power of execution, which creates, forms, and constitutes; not the profoundness of single thoughts, not the richness of imagery, not the abundance of illustration" (CPW I. 9). R.H. Super provides Goethe's original comment, which states that the poet without a sense of *architectonicé* gets only the gist of his content rather than the control of it (CPW I. 221 n. 9:25-29). One can see Arnold building up to this idea even earlier in the preface, though. He, paraphrasing Sidney's "A Defense of Poetry," writes that by lacking the energy to create a "total impression" by choosing "any action [the poet] pleases, and to suffer that action to go as it will," poets and critics alike "permit [the poet] to leave their poetical sense ungratified, provided that he gratifies their rhetorical sense and their curiosity" (CPW I. 7-8). Sidney, who in "A Defense of Poetry" was moving away from Aristotle's emphasis on *architectonicé*, emphasized rhetoric over construction, in Arnold's estimation. Arnold, by moving away from the rhetorical emphasis and back to *architectonicé*, demonstrates a clear movement back to Aristotle.³⁰

Hegel holds the same opinion of the term, and, tellingly, he associates it with the State. Like Arnold's poets, Hegel's philosophers come up short in their execution of the philosophical science. Hegel writes:

This is the quintessence of shallowness; it locates [philosophic] science not in the development of thought and the concept, but rather in immediate perception and contingent imagination, and it dissolves into the soup of

³⁰ Interestingly, and certainly relevant to this dissertation's focus, Mary Schneider's *Poetry in the Age of Democracy* argues for reading Arnold's poetics closer to Aristotle in order to prove her thesis that "Arnold became increasingly concerned with the question of a literature for a democratic age" (12).

‘heart, friendship, and enthusiasm’ the cultivated structure, the rich articulation of the ethical within itself that is the state – the architectonic of its rationality, which makes the strength of the whole emerge from the harmony of its members, through the determinate distinction of the spheres of public life and their justifications, and through the strength of the measure that holds in place every pillar, arch, and buttress. (PR 5)

Like Arnold, such philosophy without *architectonic* would, in Hegel’s mind, ultimately have “nothing to say.”

Obviously, through Arnold and Hegel’s mutual use of the term *architectonicé* (though Arnold uses it for poetry and Hegel for philosophy) both men later on extend their thoughts to the State, which both feel exerts a necessary influence on human action and thinking socially and politically. This looks forward to Arnold’s future belief that there need to be limitations placed on human action if any progress or any true human freedom hopes to emerge. Just as in poetry unbridled passion and the expression of one’s own mind in a subjectively faithful way constitute improper rules for or objects of poetry – especially if the poet’s mind is fractured and fragmented – human freedom in the polity cannot progress if subjective willfulness, a refusal to believe that the individual must see him or herself set against a “let,” continues being propagated as the real end in sight for the liberal or revolutionary project. Once again, one returns to Hegel’s critique of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and its relationship to Jacobinical thought of revolutionary reformers. Limitations are salutary, but mainly for the good that they bring to a rational polity populated by truly free and rational citizens and subjects.

*V. Discourse With the Future:
Limitation in Arnold's Essays on America*

“It seems as if few stocks could be trusted to grow up properly without having a priesthood and an aristocracy to act as their schoolmasters at some time or other of their national existence.”

- Matthew Arnold (qtd. in Murray 176)

Like Hegel, Arnold clearly made good use of the idea of limitation as a necessary element for progress through his emphasis on *architectonicé*. The unfettered expansion in all directions, without a guiding hand to control the expansion, was, in neither Hegel's nor Arnold's mind, an appropriate philosophical, poetic, critical, or social response to an age that was rapidly demonstrating elements of fragmentation in poetic composition, philosophical inquiry, and social movement. Continuing to build upon his dissatisfaction with the life philosophy found in his reading of the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Arnold turned from his own earlier poetics and found both comfort and a more appropriate political response through the same criticisms that Hegel offered philosophers in his preface to *The Philosophy of Right*. As Arnold matured, his emphasis on limitation as a necessary element in political and social progress, as well as poetic composition (although to a lesser degree) did not waver, and he applied it in many instances directly to a political and social criticism of a particular place. Again, Arnold's criticisms, as explored in this dissertation's introduction, emerge as normative, but in a particular Hegelian way. They are immanent critiques, and in Arnold's essays on America, written late in his life, one can see Arnold allowing what he perceives as the irrationality of American social and political life to emerge and to point towards the idea of the State as a limiting element as necessary for human progress and true, rational human freedom, in line with the ideals of the French Revolution.

In his last published essay, “Civilisation and the United States,” Arnold does something at which he is quite adept. He compliments, while simultaneously introducing points that qualify his compliments. One may look profitably at what Arnold compliments America on in this essay, as well as see how his qualifications emerge from these same compliments. These points, because they appear in his last published piece, demonstrate that even at the end of his life Arnold was consumed by the relationship between liberal democracy and force, between the revolutionary ideals of freedom and the seemingly reactionary limiting force, the same tension that emerged in his preface under an aesthetic disguise.

Arnold’s complimentary gesture comes by way of his affirmation that “what, in the jargon of the present day, is called ‘the political and social problem,’ does seem to be solved [in the United States] with remarkable success. I pointed out the contrast which in this respect the United States offers to our own country, a contrast, in several ways, much to their advantage” (*CPW* XI. 350). The political and social results that Arnold states are observable in America include equality, a result of the lack of class distinctions. The material manifestation of this equality comes in an American’s tendency to drop “Esquire” from the name of a person presuming to belong to the gentleman class, as well as the “perfectly natural manner” of American women. Such a natural manner in American women results from their not being “in presence of an upper class [...] that is, of a class of women recognized as being the right thing in style and manner, and whom she imagines criticizing *her* style and manner [...]”. The American woman in general is perfectly unconcerned about their opinion, is herself, enjoys her existence, and has consequently a manner happy and natural” (*CPW* XI. 356). Add to this the general ease

with which the majority of Americans can purchase fruit, ice, and warm rail cars, and one has the material fruits, in Matthew Arnold's estimation, of the Americans' solution to the political and social problems of civilization.

Arnold complicates his opening by his second one which, seen together with the first, causes the essay to dance, Shiva-like, across the objects of Arnold's attention: America and her British admirers. Though America has solved the political and social problems plaguing a modern society, America has not solved the "human problem" (CPW XI. 350). The characteristics of this human problem Arnold does not define all at once, for to do so would be to lose the appearance of his opening complimentary statements. However, taking all of the characteristics of his definition of the human problem and how to solve it together, a reader recognizes that, apart from those material products of the solution to the political and social problem in America, the failure to solve the human problem remains the ultimate failure even of these.

Solving the human problem solves, in Arnold's estimation, the problem of civilization and its ability to progress. Arnold's definition of civilization provides the key to this: "the humanization of man in society, the satisfaction for him, in society, of the true law of human nature." He continues:

Man's study, says Plato, is to discover the right answer to the question *how to live?* Our aim, he says, is very and true life. We are more or less civilized as we come more or less near to this aim, in that social state which the pursuit of our aim essentially demands. But several elements or powers, as I have often insisted, go to build up a complete human life. There is the power of conduct, the power of intellect and knowledge, the power of beauty, the power of social life and manners [...]. And we are perfectly civilized only when all these instincts in our nature, all these elements in our civilization, have been adequately recognized and satisfied. But of course this adequate recognition and satisfaction of all the elements in question is impossible; some of them are recognized more

than others, some of them more in one community, some in another; and the satisfactions found are more or less worthy. (*CPW* XI. 352)

Subsequent to this definition, Arnold provides those elements of American society, the solutions to the political and social problem, meant to justify the tendency of Englishmen to look to America as the model for the humanization of man in society. If, as Arnold has said in *Culture and Anarchy*, the true law of human nature is the natural born right of a man to do as he likes, then why not look to America for evidence of a society that allows humanization in this direction? Arnold, though, does not content himself with this solution. In the remainder of the essay, Arnold attempts to “get nearer still to the heart of the question raised as to the character and worth of American civilization” (*CPW* XI. 356).

Arnold begins undermining all of America’s achievements by using their solutions to the political and social problems as negatives when trying to solve the human problem. Industry, commerce, wealth, liberty, equality, numerous churches, schools, libraries, and newspapers all constitute a narrow definition of civilization when considered against the human problem. Unfortunately, all of these have been, and will continue being, presented as the very things that America uses, and that England when looking to America uses, as indications that America is a bastion of progress and liberal democracy. Moreover, Arnold shows the insufficiency for solving the problem of these practical solutions. Most likely, this continues Arnold’s long battle with the “disparagers of culture” who find Arnold’s method – his emphasis on culture – evidence of his desire to keep his hands clean when advocating for the betterment of society (*CPW* V. 90). By turning the tables on America, already a perceived model of social reform by liberals in

England, Arnold takes a jab at his critics, much as he does at length in *Culture and Anarchy*.

Rather than the false achievements listed above, Arnold presents those characteristics of society that *will* promote the solution to the human problem: distinction and beauty. The word “distinction” immediately catches one’s eye, for it signifies the opposite of that classlessness, praised earlier in his essay, that produces such manifest results as peaches for all, affordable rail cars, the lack of “Esquire” as a title, and the natural grace of American women. In fact, as one reads back through these definitions, one finds that Arnold has already hinted at the lack of distinction even in these successes all the while: “Do not believe Americans when they extol their peaches as equal to any in the world, or better than any in the world; they are not to be compared to peaches grown under glass” (*CPW* XI. 354); “Much may be said against the voices and intonation of American women” (*CPW* XI. 356). Even Arnold’s metaphor for American social and political institutions as the “image of a man in a suit of clothes which fits him to perfection, leaving all his movements unimpeded and easy, a suit of clothes loose where it ought to be loose, and sitting close where its sitting close is an advantage; a suit of clothes, able, moreover, to adapt itself naturally to the wearer’s growth, and to admit of all enlargements as they successively arise” emerges as only a qualified compliment (*CPW* XI. 351). One must only recall a very early image presented in the *Yale Manuscript* to see that Arnold saw clothing much as Carlyle did in *Sartor Resartus* – a pretty cover for a rotten body. Consider Arnold’s characterization in the *Yale Manuscript* of a fellow traveler met one day: “Meeting a cockney on a Greenwich steamer, instead of laughing, say – does this gay unled varmint thing *succeed* with his accoutrements better

than I do or worse” (83-84). This image of the Cockney doing and dressing as he likes, being “unled” in his habits and thus becoming a “varmint thing” mirrors America’s suit of clothes that will fit and expand as it needs, though whether or not those sartorial alterations will reflect a positive or a negative change in the body underneath Arnold leaves uncertain.³¹ Rather, because of a lack of distinction, American solutions to the political and social problems are nugatory when considering the human problem’s looming presence.

Arnold’s solution to the human problem, the root of political and social problems that plague modern society, comes by way of an awareness of distinction, “the discipline,” he writes, “of awe and respect” as a counteragent to the “glorification of ‘the average man,’ who is quite a religion with statesmen and publicists” in America (*CPW* XI. 360). This ability to make a distinction between what “holds us all in bondage, the common and ignoble,” makes up part of our human nature. In order to solve the human problem, civilization must follow this law. But Arnold’s proposal for solving the human problem cannot fundamentally merge with America’s solutions to the political and social problems. The very things that Arnold praised America for at the beginning of his essay – equality, classlessness – emerge as the very things keeping America enslaved to the common and the ignoble. He writes, quoting Amiel, “the human heart is, as it were, haunted by confused reminiscences of an age of gold; or rather, by aspirations towards a harmony of things which everyday reality denies to us.” Arnold continues:

[Amiel] says that the splendor and refinement of high life is an attempt by the rich and cultivated classes to realize this ideal, and is ‘a form of

³¹ One cannot help but wonder, also, if Arnold is implying a vulgar growth in American society, for the image of a suit that adapts itself to all “enlargements” as they “successively arise” could be a reference to sexual arousal. Certainly if Arnold did intend – even surreptitiously – such an interpretation, the image of American unrestrained passion is again a qualification in this otherwise flattering picture.

poetry.’ And the interest which this attempt awakens in the classes which are not rich or cultivated, their indestructible interest in the pageant and fairy tale, as to them it appears, of the life in castles and palaces, the life of the great, bears witness to a like imaginative strain in them also, a strain tending after the elevated and the beautiful. (*CPW XI*. 358)

In this quote from his last published essay, one hears the echo of an early note to himself in the *Yale Manuscript* wherein he praises the existence of class because of its ability to afford a sense of distinction: “man is born with a ‘turn for being a sovereign prince’ -- & accordingly this desire, as all his, is stereotyped in the actual & visible world by the existence of aristocracies &c – to be sure, the individual desirer is often not one of them – but the rule is saved” (98). This passage should be understood much as the passage quoted above from “Civilisation in the United States” should be understood: as a psychological defense of the necessity of distinction, a call to look outside of the individual’s expression of his subjective willfulness as a necessary component of true liberty and freedom. The praise for class structure, the aristocracy, represents, according to S.O.A. Ullman, “not so much eternal verities as stereotypes designed to embody and satisfy basic human wishes” (*YMS* 10). Thus, this class arrangement reflects not so much class tyranny, or even a desire on Arnold’s part to keep the class structure intact, as it does something more philosophical, something that indeed satisfies an individual human need more than America and England’s current interpretation of liberal democracy: the right of every Englishman to do and say as he likes, the “malady” of the “predominance of the common and ignoble, born of the predominance of the average man” (*CPW XI*. 368).³² And so, though to American classlessness Arnold had pointed in order to demonstrate how they had solved the social and political problem, their lack of solving

³² de Tocqueville, in *Democracy in America*, finds also that one of the dangers of democracy as it was being practiced in America when he visited there in the 1830s was the threat of a tyranny of the majority, & certain middlingness emerging there.

the human problem Arnold attributes precisely to this same lack of distinction, or, as he elsewhere terms it, “elevation,” “awe,” and “respect.” To look, therefore, to America for the solution to England’s issues with the modern age takes the first step towards ruin and superficiality rather than towards progress. The criticisms that Arnold had volleyed against the poets and critics of his own day in the 1853 preface, ones that this chapter demonstrates mirror and are perhaps influenced by Hegel’s own preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, emerge here in a socio-cultural criticism of America and immanently point to the same solution.

Arnold also evidences this idea of progress by way of distinction in a passage from “Milton” that also conveys, in aesthetic terms, the very argument Arnold was making about America in “Civilisation in the United States.” Interestingly enough, it comes via an American art critic. Arnold remarks and explains why distinction, why standards, elevation, awe, and respect, are necessary in order to progress forward with the following example:

[I]t appears to me difficult to deny that the growing greatness and influence of the United States does bring with it some danger to the ideal of a high and rare excellence. The *average man* is too much a religion there; his performance is unduly magnified, his shortcomings are not duly seen and admitted. A lady in the State of Ohio sent to me only the other day a volume on American authors; the praise given throughout was of such high pitch that in thanking her I could not forbear saying that for only one or two of the authors named was such a strain of praise admissible, and that we lost all real standard of excellence by praising so uniformly and immoderately. (CPW XI. 328-329)

Here we have most succinctly Arnold’s rationale for distinction, for *limitation*, in politics and in society, coupled with the recognition that limitation, rather than hindering progress, enables its necessary continuance. Arnold, for all of his emphasis on limitation, distinction, elevation, and class, undeniably concerns himself with the ability of England

and the rest of humanity to progress forward and change, to realize freedom. Importantly, one must recognize this emphasis because not to recognize the relationship that force has to progress causes one to miss the emphasis on the possibility for the realization of revolutionary ideals that characterizes Arnold's work, truly in line with the realization of the democratic spirit and true subjective freedom within a polity.

However, both Arnold and Hegel believe that their vision of poetry and philosophical inquiry are destined to be understood only in hindsight, that their efforts to provide some path out of the contemporary world's multitudinousness – or a way to adequately respond to and move along with this multitudinousness – will come only after that world has been prevailed upon by another. This provides a final parallel between these two prefaces. Hegel closes his preface to *The Philosophy of Right* with a very famous image of hindsight:

To add a word concerning teaching how the world should be: in any case, philosophy always comes too late for that. As the thought of the world, it always appears only in the time after actuality has completed its process of cultivation, after it has finished [...] the owl of Minerva begins its flight only with the falling of dusk. (*PR* 10)

Only at the close of Hegel's epoch will Hegel's explanation of his epoch be understood. As a condition passes away, Hegel believes, philosophy finally apprehends it. For this reason, Hegel avoided a prescriptive philosophy, settling instead for an immanent critique.

The same holds true for Arnold's opinion of his poetic and critical task, set forth in the preface. Arnold acknowledges that the present time makes "great claims upon" him, and that he owes it the service of, if not understanding it, at least of "know[ing] what it is" (*CPWI*. 13). In this attempt, Arnold warns poets and critics alike, as Hegel does in

his preface, against becoming hostile to the world around them, the world that they must try to understand and comprehend. Only in the world does Hegel feel one can find the answers one seeks. Arnold writes that poetry will help the poet “succeed in banishing from his mind all feelings of contradiction, and irritation, and impatience” so as not to become “overwhelmed by [the false pretensions of the age]” (*CPW* I. 14). Like Hegel at the close of his own preface, Arnold makes an appeal to the future at the close of his:

[I]f it is impossible for us, under the circumstances amidst which we live, to think clearly, to feel nobly, and to delineate firmly, [...] let us, at least, have so much respect for our art as to prefer it to ourselves. Let us not bewilder our successors; let us transmit to them the practice of poetry, with its boundaries and wholesome regulative laws, under which excellent works may again, perhaps, at some future time, be produced. (*CPW* I. 15)

This same sentiment continues, as has been shown with the essay “Civilisation in the United States,” into Arnold’s social criticism and social vision. The practice of poetry is translated into the practice of society, and the coming democracy – which Arnold recognizes is part of the natural progression of humankind, a direct result of the ideals of the French Revolution trying to actualize themselves – must have these boundaries and wholesome regulative laws in order to emerge and function properly. It is that revolution by due course of law that Arnold sets so much store by in other writings. Though Arnold may not have been as deterministic about the progress of history – and though he definitely did not believe that the end of history had emerged with Hegel’s German State – Arnold did recognize that human history moved forward through human agency, and he was trying to call his contemporaries’ attention to the fact that they were, at least culturally in their production of poetry and in the aims that they were prescribing for criticizing and creating poetry, advancing along flawed lines. Arnold’s emphasis on boundaries and limitations protect the practice of poetry, and the progress of society,

from its enemy: Caprice. Caprice will later become such things as “crotchets” and the right of every Englishman to do and say as he likes. Arnold therefore, in the 1853 preface, takes Hegel’s hand more firmly. Arnold’s works demonstrate not only parallels with Hegel in how and why the current liberal response to the age is improper, but also show a closer connection to how this false track can be righted. The limitation of form in art from his younger days emerges in Arnold’s more mature political, cultural, and social criticism on the necessary and benevolent role of the State in helping to actualize, in a rational polity, the desires that the French Revolutionaries had, but had failed to actualize.

CHAPTER 5

A “REVOLUTION BY DUE COURSE OF LAW”

I. Church and State?

The last two chapters have demonstrated just how deeply Matthew Arnold and G.W.F. Hegel plumbed the depths of, consequences of, and potential solutions to the type of willful subjectivism recommended, they believed, by the liberal and democratic radicals of their day. The atomism that Hegel believed emerged from this liberalism, based as it was on his reading of Jean-Jacques Rousseau’s Contractarianism, also parallels Arnold’s criticism of the poetic and critical practices he believed were becoming too prevalent in England, reflecting, he believed, a deep-seeded problem in the current liberal response to what he termed “modern” times (*CPW* I. 22).

Although both men believed, though their reading of Rousseau, that the Rousseauian ideas motivating the French Revolution were wrongheaded, the two men nevertheless felt that the individual freedoms that the French Revolution brought to the world’s attention, as well as their undermining of the outdated feudal order and class-structures of France, England, and Germany – in short, the toppling of the *ancien régime* – were right, inevitable, and, moreover, necessary in their own countries. Matthew Arnold, as has already been noted, overwhelmingly affirmed the French Revolution’s motivations. Arnold’s earliest references to the French Revolution come during a family trip to France in August of 1837. A fourteen-year-old boy at the time, Matthew unguardedly records a range of experiences in a journal addressed to his younger brother, Edward. Arnold provides historical glosses as he comments on the landscape, such as the family’s “Beautiful drive through the Park of the Chateau of Ramouillet where King Charles the 10th of France retired after his expulsion” (*Letters* I. 30). En route to their

hotel, Arnold notes, “We entered by the Rue Rivoli; and through The Place de la Concorde where Louis Sieze was guillotined [...] thence to the Place Vendome where Napoleon’s Pillar was put up and where is our hotel” (*Letters* I. 30). The journal’s first entry, in a comment that seems typically boyish, provides for his brother a gruesome detail of Montreuil: “I saw a Lamp Post such as men were in the habit of getting hanged upon in the French Revolution. Altogether I was much interested, it being the first fortified place we saw” (*Letters* I. 25). Though the captivation here could be easily dismissed as a boyhood interest in the macabre, a resurgence of positive references to the French Revolution suggests something more. In one of his few directly political pamphlets, *England and the Italian Question*, Arnold praises the “ideas of 1789,” which include “ideas of religious, political, and social freedom”; in the same text, he mocks the English sense of superiority to those ideas after the war: “The defeat of France by England in the war which ended in 1815 no more proves the falsehoods of the ideas of 1789 than the repulse of [Islam] from Western Europe proves a plurality of Gods” (*CPW* I. 81, 84). Arnold, in a letter to his sister, sounds remarkably like Hegel when he writes to her that “the hour of the hereditary peerage & eldest sonship and immense properties has I am convinced, as Lamartine would say, struck” (*Letters* I. 91). As can be seen, the impulse behind the French Revolution as well as its ideals were perceived by Arnold as positive and necessary. This final chapter presents the reader with the synthesis of the long interconnected journey that has been traced thus far, from the rejection of the *Bhagavad-Gita*’s philosophy, to the criticism of art and philosophy it engendered, to the acceptance of a life philosophy with which to replace it, to, finally, the revolutionary nature of the philosophy both thinkers championed.

Church may seem like an odd place to begin this chapter's approach to the intimate connection both Arnold and Hegel find between the State and the ideals of 1789. However, both writers believe that the relationship between the current liberal project and its roots in their reading of Rousseau and the Protestant Reformation create a nexus for understanding why the French Revolution ultimately failed to bring about the ideals it set for itself. In fact, the dangers posed by Protestant Dissenters throw into relief the potential for atomistic subjective willfulness characteristic of Arnold and Hegel's reading of Rousseau's Contractarianism, to become its very opposite – despotic terror. Hegel's understanding of the trajectory that the Protestant Reformation took in Germany parallels Arnold's own understanding of the increasing importance of Dissenters in middle-class England and their rising political influence. This first section explores the connection in four movements, beginning with Hegel's early writings on what he termed "positive" religion, then moving into Arnold's discussion of "Aberglaube," and finally into the necessity of religion as a form of cultural unity. Having established these connections, this section ends by emphasizing how Dissenters, in Arnold's estimation, threaten to plunge England into a type of tyranny parallel to Robespierrean Terror.

Although Hegel's early work on religion was not available to the public during Arnold's lifetime,³³ noting a similarity between Hegel's idea of "positive religion" and Arnold's critique of "Aberglaube" in *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible* not only affirms their positive assessment of the free individual conscience and its release from the shackles of the Catholic Church, but also provides the starting point for

³³ Andrew Prior notes the following concerning Hegel's early writings on religion: "Hegel's earliest surviving manuscripts date from the period 1793-1800. They were first published in 1907 by Herman Nohl, who gave to the collection the somewhat misleading title of *Hegel's Theologische Jugendschriften*. [...] [T]he main outlines arising from [these early manuscripts] are consistent with the later development of his thought" (12).

understanding how both thinkers saw the salutary initial movement go wrong. Hegel opposes beneficial subjective freedom to the “positive” religions of Judaism and, eventually, Protestant Dissent in these early texts. Hegel’s term “positive” has to, awkwardly enough, be understood here as a derogatory term. Positive religions, he claims, like Judaism, the Catholic Church, and Dissenter sects, are not inwardly moral; rather, they see, in Hegel’s estimation, religious devotion as adherence to a set of externally imposed laws or commands that the individual sees himself opposed to rather than reflected in. “All that positive religion demands,” according to Prior, “is a mindless conformity to dead formulae. A mechanistic obedience is the inevitable result. [...] [C]hoice and inclination give way to compulsion and necessity” (14). As the previous chapters have demonstrated, though, freedom in opposition to positivity does not necessarily mean the absence of an externally imposed law. For Hegel to have identified religious freedom as the absence of all religious law would be to plunge the human subject into the dark night of the soul, the subjective nihilism characteristic of the philosophy of the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the Jacobins, which both Hegel and Arnold found inadequate.

But Hegel’s critique of positive religion goes beyond his comments about the Jewish faith, extending into a criticism also of Christian belief. Prescriptive and unchanging commands do not allow, he feels, for autonomous self-determination since, in positive religion, following the rules remains externally imposed. Having proceeded from a removed God, external to the self, the individual cannot see him or herself reflected in the rules or even participating in them. According to Hegel, however, when

Jesus stepped onto the world stage, he preached a different message, one that saw its foundation in the individual conscience:

Jesus preached on freedom which was designed to liberate the individual from the bondage of law and slavery, but it was not simply opposed to all laws as such. This gospel invited the listener to free himself from the objective weight of law and to submit to the true moral law. Freedom means, therefore, that objective law must be subjectified, heteronomy must be replaced by autonomy, exterior authority must give way to interior self-determination. (Prior 15)

Unfortunately, Hegel believed that Jesus's teachings had been corrupted by the Catholic Church, and had become yet again characterized by blind submission to authority. Thus, Hegel praised the initial moment of the Protestant Reformation.

The Reformation, however, eventually placed Jesus's spiritual authority in miracles, based on a literal interpretation of Christian scripture, and this proves problematic for Hegel yet again because it begins moving back towards positivity in religion. Acceptance of Jesus's message became tied up with an acceptance of the truth of Jesus's divinity through miracle working; an acceptance of Jesus's message, then, rests on his miracles, and "when freedom is thus abrogated to authority, freedom is undermined" (Prior 15). A miracle, by its own logic, points to an authority other than itself; therefore, acceptance of Jesus's message based on miracles equals accepting Jesus's message via an imposed authority outside of the self. As a foundation for belief, miracles are irrational. A miracle cannot be understood because miracles, by virtue of their very nature, are irrational. The problematic element of miracles for Arnold mirrors Hegel's. Arnold believes, as will be shown, that even if a miracle *can* be explained and justified through either natural laws or through the recognition that miracles are merely part of the poetic language of the Bible, then the authority of Jesus's message, if founded

on his divinity exemplified through his miracle working, becomes estranged from the believer.³⁴

Arnold asserts, likewise, that the Church has lost touch with Jesus's message – or religion's importance – when he writes in the preface to *Literature and Dogma* that “the churches cannot even conceive the Bible without the gloss they presently put upon it” (CPW VI. 149). Arnold thus also recognized the problems inherent in a religion that was “positive” in the sense of its being unfree, not resting on the autonomy of the individual. In several works, he addresses ideas similar to Hegel, most notably *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible*. In fact, even from the preface to *Literature and Dogma*, Arnold, like Hegel, attacks not only positive religion as he sees it manifested in Judaism, but also in Catholics and Protestant Dissenters:

And therefore we see that Jesus Christ never dreamed of assailing the Jewish Church; all he cared for was to transform it, by transforming as many as were transformable of the individuals composing it. [...] Mildness and sweet reasonableness is the one established rule for Christian working, and no other rule has it or can have it. But, using the Bible in the mechanical and helpless way in which one uses it when one has hardly any other book, men fail to see this, clear as it is. And they do really come to imagine that the Dissenters' 'spirit of watchful jealousy,' may be a Christian temper; or that a movement like the Liberation Society's crusade against the Church of England may be a Christian work. And it is in this way that Christianity gets discredited. (CPW VI. 154)

Through Arnold's criticism of what he terms “Aberglaube” and his criticism of the

³⁴ Arnold reflects a similar line of argument as David Hume in “On Miracles.” Hume places religious miracles' credulity not on the people who actually performed them, but on the credulity of those who witnessed the event. He concludes that a person cannot believe in the veracity of miracles performed by Jesus without being “conscious of a continued miracle in his own person, which subverts all the principles of his understanding, and gives him a determination to believe what is most contrary to custom and experience” (131). The rational dissection that Hume executes on miracles and their veracity is what Arnold recognized was taking hold of Victorian England's populace. For that reason – and not for or against whether or not a miracle could occur – Arnold wanted to shift the focus away from the truth of Jesus's message being founded on miracles. As Hume noted, the miracles were counter to all experience. So Arnold admits, but looks for the experience of the religious sentiment, the truth of Jesus's message and secret, which he felt could be rationally proven and were thus appropriate foundations.

Dissenters' faith in miracles, one can witness the parallel tracks in Arnold and Hegel's thought on religion. Taking a cue from Hegel, Arnold sums up his vision of positive religion as follows: "And to our popular religion it is especially difficult; because [Dissenters] have been trained to regard the Bible not as a book whose parts have varying degrees of value, but [...] as a sort of talisman given down to us out of Heaven, with all its parts intact" (*CPW VI*. 159). There can be no doubt that Arnold's vision of religion here parallels Hegel's positive religion.

Arnold translates a governing term in *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible*, the German term "Aberglaube," as "*extra belief*, belief beyond what is certain and verifiable" (*CPW VI*. 212). To a basic and right understanding of God, Arnold believes, the Jewish people added this Aberglaube. Such things as Messianic prophecy, steeped not in a desire for righteousness but rather in the desire for earthly power and success, Arnold argues, moved the Jewish religion towards Aberglaube, and it hampered the Israelites' acceptance of the message of Jesus when he came. Importantly, though, Arnold does not limit his application of Aberglaube to the Jewish faith, just as Hegel's comments about positive religion are not limited to Judaism. Aberglaube ties also into the beliefs governing Dissenting Christianity in Arnold's day (*CPW VI*. 212).

Jesus's message, according to Arnold, was an attempt to bring religion back to its true import. The Jewish religion had splintered, because of Aberglaube, from its original and right intuition and cultural significance, becoming mired in ceremonies rather than the religious feeling from which it originally and rightly proceeded. Throughout the first chapter of *Literature and Dogma*, Arnold traces his understanding of the original Jewish conception of God as that force, outside of our selves, towards which mankind wants to

move or progress through conduct or righteousness. According to Arnold, a large part of righteousness (which he also terms “conduct”) does not belong to ourselves. Arnold terms this “not ourselves” which pulls mankind to it “The Eternal,” and the Jewish people, Arnold writes, were attentive to this in a high degree. However, through the anthropomorphization of God, the above-described pull was lost in a host of superstitious beliefs, *Aberglaube*, that rested conduct and righteousness on following laws given, not through an instinctual pull towards God, but as commands handed down from a figure in Heaven or through church leaders. Thus, the Jewish people and, Arnold will argue, Dissenters, moved away from the true understanding of God as “the enduring power, not ourselves, which makes for righteousness” (*CPW VI*. 196). Although the enduring power remains external to subjects, the motivation towards a relationship with the enduring power comes from within, and believers desire to see themselves reflected in this conception of God.³⁵

To counteract this growing *Aberglaube*, Jesus brought with him his message of inwardness, “*restoring the intuition*” (*CPW VI*. 285). The method and the secret of Jesus signals a return to the autonomous self, Arnold believes: Repentance (a change of the inner man), “the setting up a great unceasing inward movement of attention and verification in matters which are three-fourths of human life” (*CPW VI*. 288); and Peace, defined as dying to the self, or self-renunciation (*CPW VI*. 299). The method and the secret of Jesus, though, which was meant to combat the force of *Aberglaube*, has been

³⁵ Certainly this reminds one of Hume's observation that guilt arises from the above-described emphasis on ritual: essentially, humans know that they must perform rituals in order to appease God, but they hate doing those rituals, and God knows this; therefore, the distance from the desire to follow God is increased by a sense of guilt (Hume 176-179). Additionally, this movement makes Arnold's vision of religion and its externally imposed laws different from his belief that one must submit to State authority. The vision of God, as a “magnified and non-natural man,” or the Church, is not appropriately defined, just as the State is not properly viewed as “the nation in its collective and corporate character.” The vision of the Church or of God here remains purely external, unable to reflect the worshipper.

corrupted also by the Dissenters, and in them Arnold sees Aberglaube re-invading in several forms, including the following: Faith in the Apostles' Creed and the Nicene Creed, neither of which contain "mention of either the 'method' or 'secret'" for they are "occupied entirely with external facts" (*CPW VI*. 341); Mechanical faith in the miracles of Jesus's resurrection, the second advent (*CPW VI*. 344); Catholic and Protestant dogmas, including the Athanasian Creed, priestly intervention, justification by faith, and the Catholic Eucharist (*CPW VI*. 358-361); Mechanical reliance on prophecy and, therefore, a structure the Bible does not necessarily have (*CPW VI*. 347-349). In these ways, among others, in *Literature and Dogma*, Arnold exposes the positivity of the Protestant religion as he sees it being practiced in England.

One of the forms of Aberglaube mentioned above deserves more exploration, for it directly intersects with one of Hegel's comments concerning the positivity of Dissent, explored earlier – the belief from miracles in Jesus's message. In Chapter 5 of *Literature and Dogma*, Arnold explains his conclusion that his contemporaries must begin endeavoring to make Jesus's revelation independent of miracles in order to retain the method and secret's strength in the changing Zeit Geist. This changing Zeit Geist figures prominently in both *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible*. Arnold wants, in these works, to argue for the continued cultural value of religion in the true sense of the word – *relicare*, or "unity." However, Arnold also has to acknowledge the changing intellectual climate surrounding Christianity. Christianity, or religion in general, cannot be made to rest on such positive grounds as the acceptance of miracles as the proof of the cultural value of Jesus's message. These grounds are being currently undermined by the spirit of rationalism and science. Arnold has been noting in *Literature and Dogma* that "the proof

from the fulfillment in Jesus Christ of a number of detailed predictions, supposed to have been made with supernatural prescience about him long beforehand, is losing, and seems likely more and more to lose, its constraining force,” just as has “the authority of Jesus [...] altogether established by *miracle*” (CPW VI. 244). Because of this, Arnold feels that the impulse towards accepting the message of Jesus has to be reconsidered.

Arnold undermines proof from miracles in two ways: psychologically and naturally, or scientifically. Psychologically he gives many examples of how the accompaniment of any doctrine with a “miraculous” event makes the doctrine more “true” to the superstitious mind, even though no necessary connection between the idea and the miracle exists. Arnold even notes that many people will allow a doctrine to run counter to all common sense so long as a miracle accompanies it (CPW VI. 245). Moreover, as the human mind expands, Arnold notes, miracles become explained, either as the product of imagination or as natural occurrence (CPW VI. 247). Likewise, one witnesses the inconsistency of modern Protestant theology, which allows for all the miracles of the Bible, but does not allow for any miraculous occurrence outside of the Bible or after the last events of the Bible (CPW VI. 246). In *God and the Bible*, as Arnold defends his argument that miracles cannot be the sole foundation of the truth of Jesus’s message and the error and harm done to the religious impulse by resting faith in Jesus’s message on the verity of his miracles, he concludes the following:

[I]n traveling through [the Bible’s] reports of miracles [mankind] moves in a world, not of solid history, but of illusion, rumor, and fairy-tale. [...] One other thing, though, he has done besides this. He has discovered the hollowness of the main ground for making God a person who thinks and loves, a magnified and non-natural man. Only a kind of man magnified could so make man the centre of all things, and interrupt the settled order of nature in his behalf, as miracles imply. (CPW VII. 172)

As can be seen, miracles cannot be the foundation for belief in the message of Jesus, and to ground one's belief that way emerges as positive in an Hegelian sense.

One should note a significant last example of Aberglaube working in Dissent: a blind adherence to duty as prescribed by literal interpretations of the Bible. Arnold repeatedly affirms the Bible's poetic language in *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible*. Dissenters even use the word "God" erroneously, according to Arnold, "as if it stood for a perfectly definite and ascertained idea, from which we might, without more ado, extract propositions and draw inferences, just as we should from any other definite and ascertained idea" (*CPW VI*. 170). However, in truth, the term "God" is "a term of poetry and eloquence, a term *thrown out*, so to speak, at a not fully grasped object of the speaker's conscience, a *literary* term, in short; and mankind mean different things by it as their consciousness differs" (*CPW VI*. 171). In fact, Arnold considers, in *Literature and Dogma's* introduction, the Bible's language "fluid, passing, and literary, not rigid, fixed, and scientific" (*CPW VI*. 152). Dissenters, though, in both Arnold and Hegel's estimation, turn the inwardness of Jesus's message into positivity, perceiving morality as a mere formal duty. Moral adherence to prescribed duty, however, can be appealed to after the fact to justify any willful position. Arnold recognizes this tendency to misappropriate Biblical principles in a passage from *Culture and Anarchy*. Herein, Arnold rails against the Dissenters' conflation of moralizing and political activism, which merge in the Biblical injunction that "The poor shall never cease out of the land":

I remember [...] a good man looking with me upon a multitude of children who were gathered before us in one of the most miserable regions of London, -- children eaten up with disease, half-sized, half-fed, half-clothed, neglected by their parents, without health, without home, without hope, -- [who] said to me: 'The one thing really needful is to teach these little ones to succor one another, if only with a cup of cold water; but now,

from one end of the country to the other, one hears nothing but the cry for knowledge [...]!’ And yet surely, so long as these children are there in these festering masses [...] and so long as their multitude is perpetually swelling, charged with misery they must still be for themselves, charged with misery they must still be for us, whether they help one another with a cup of cold water or no; and the knowledge how to prevent their accumulating is necessary [...]. May we not, therefore, say, that neither the true Hebraism of this good man, willing to spend and be spent for these sunken multitudes, nor what I may call the spurious Hebraism of our free-trading Liberal friends, -- mechanically worshipping their fetish of the production of wealth and of the increase of manufactures and population, and looking neither to the right nor left so long as this increase goes on, -- avail us much here [...]. (*CPW* VI. 217-218)

The mechanical submission to perceived Biblical commands – either doing one’s duty to continue having children that one cannot support, not doing something to prevent the spread of misery, not helping the poor because of a commitment to Capitalism’s injunction that the poor shall never cease out of the land – is wrongheaded. For Hegel, too, such solipsistic certainty about one’s adherence to duty exemplifies:

[...] the bad infinity of a subjectivity that reflects only itself [...]. Stubbornly refusing to go down the path of objective morality, the subjective consciousness loses itself in a labyrinth of hypocrisy, carried away by the extravagant pretension that it can justify its actions simply by invoking its good intentions. From the heights of this ‘solitary divine worship,’ it topples into the complacency of those who share ‘the rejoicing over this mutual purity, and the refreshing of themselves in the glory of knowing and uttering, of cherishing and fostering such an excellent state of affairs’: the community of beautiful souls. (Kouvelakis 24)

This community of beautiful souls becomes a perfect example, in both Hegel and Arnold’s estimation, of the self-satisfied Dissenter, justified in his righteousness because of his fidelity to a narrow interpretation of Biblical commands as “talismans.” Positive religion in Hegel and the notion of Aberglaube in Arnold both call attention to how Dissenters merely repeat, in their emphasis on an individual’s relationship to the law, the tyranny that they were trying to escape. The subjective relationship to an external law

begins moving the middle-class towards a dangerous atomism as well as a slavish devotion to external authority for its own sake.

Reformation Germany, however, was not wholly a negative historical moment, for it *was* capable of achieving both a turn away from the form of repression represented, Hegel believed, by the Catholic Church without doing away with the necessity of religion as part of a cultural cohesion, as a form of tradition. Whereas French liberalism succeeded in actualizing the subjective will's importance, it did so at the expense, Hegel believes, of a shared feeling of inwardness: "it combin[ed] a break with a corrupt institution, the Church, and a radical experience in winning freedom of conscience and freedom of thought" (Kouvelakis 32). However, whereas French Enlightenment thinkers rejected the idea of religion in their external and political break with the Church, the German Reformers did just what their name suggests – they *reformed* their religious thinking and achieved, through that, a cultural and intellectual reform that likewise theoretically acknowledged freedom and subjective will while hanging on to the role of religion in the nation. Hegel, according to Kouvelakis, by emphasizing the connection between Reformation and the French Revolution, looks forward to a "movement which, superseding liberal individualism, would combine Reformation and Revolution: 'for it is a false principle that the fetters which bind Right and Freedom can be broken without the emancipation of conscience – that there can be a Revolution without a Reformation'"

(32). Hegel continues:

[T]hat formal, individual Will is in virtue of the abstract position [...] made the basis of political theories; Right in Society is that which the Law wills, and the Will in question [i.e. the abstract individual will] appears as an isolated *individual* [*einzel*]; thus the State, as an aggregate of many individuals, is not an independently substantial Unity, and the truth and essence of Right in and for itself – to which the will of its individual

members ought to be conformed in order to be true, free Will; but the volitional atoms are made the starting point, and each will is represented as absolute. (qtd. in Kouvelakis 28)

Hegel thus connects the necessity of the State with realizing true subjective freedom even in this guise of a religious critique.

Matthew Arnold also frequently hailed the role that the Reformation played in the advancement of human culture. Arnold, like Hegel, hailed the Reformation as part of a necessary historical process that indicated the collective becoming of humanity. Arnold celebrates its role in England's political and intellectual advancement. He gives it frequent attention in *Culture and Anarchy*, for instance. Arnold allows the Reformation a place in the undulating and dialectical movement of the two forces he believes propel culture forward – Hebraism and Hellenism. Like Hegel, Arnold believes that the Protestant Reformation signaled a break with the Catholic Church that was cultural rather than political, just as Hegel demonstrates that the Enlightenment's break with the Catholic Church in France was political. Arnold writes that the Protestant Reformation was a "moral" one, allowing the "inwardness" that Hegel allowed it in Germany and that was lacking, Hegel believed, in the French break with the Church. Arnold writes, "Whatever direct superiority, therefore, Protestantism had over Catholicism was a moral superiority, a superiority arising out of its greater sincerity and earnestness, -- at the moment of its apparition at any rate, -- in dealing with the heart and the conscience" (*CPW* V. 171). This emphasis that Arnold gives to the Protestant Reformation's dealings with the heart and with conscience make it, like Hegel believed it to be, a move towards inwardness tethered to its cultural roots in religion. Moreover, Arnold positively associates the emergence of the Reformation with the Hellenism that he champions as

needful and characteristic of human and cultural development:

The Reformation has been often called a Hebraising revival, a return to the ardour and sincereness of primitive Christianity. No one, however, can study the development of Protestantism and of Protestant churches without feeling that into the Reformation too, -- Hebraising child of the Renaissance and offspring of its fervour, rather than its intelligence, as it undoubtedly was, -- the subtle Hellenic leaven of the Renaissance found its way, and that the exact respective parts, in the Reformation, of Hebraism and of Hellenism, are not easy to separate. (*CPW* V. 172)

The Reformation, then, began as a positive advance in the becoming of free and rational humanity.

However, Hegel also isolates the relationship between French Enlightenment thinkers and the Catholic Church as quite important when understanding the troublesome outcome of the French Revolution, particularly its descent into Robespierrean Terror and the emergence of the July Monarchy; both outcomes, he believed, were problematic and indicated a troublesome spot at the heart of liberalism as he interpreted it. French Enlightenment thinkers, spurred on as they were by the philosophy of Rousseau, reacted against what they felt was the tyranny of the Catholic Church and its threat to the individual's freedom. This reaction relates to the "positivity" that both Hegel and Arnold opposed in religion. Opposed, as they believed it to be, to the spirit of the Enlightenment, radical liberal thinkers believed that they could do away with the Catholic Church and replace it with a religion of the rational mind, access to which was not impeded by anything as formal as the church and which naturally rested its truth in the heart of every human. To demonstrate this relationship, Prior writes:

The church stands over against the individual, dictating the conditions of faith and morality through the multiplication of formal rules and dogmas. 'Subjective' religion, which allows free play for the imagination, heart and feeling, is replaced by 'objective' [another, later term for "positive"] religion, which suppresses emotional spontaneity by demanding no more

than intellectual assent, through the blind acceptance of authority. Emotion and intellect, which should be united in the integrated individual, polarise into mutual opposition and set the individual against himself. Consequently, religion becomes a private concern and loses its social significance. (Prior 28)

Thus, in Hegel's philosophy and through his understanding of the liberalism championed by Rousseau, the Enlightenment thinkers threw out the Catholic Church and, with it, religion's role in France.

The Enlightenment thinkers, however, began a plunge into atomism, for they had swept away religion, and Hegel understood religion to be part of the socio-cultural web that held polities together, part of *Bildung*. There had not been a "reformation" in religious life, as had happened in Germany; rather, there had been a clean sweeping away of religion as a cultural force. Each individual was plunged into the depths of his or her own breast to seek there his or her subjective will and to seek for the preservation of the freedom of that subjective will. The Enlightenment's destruction, in Hegel's estimation, of the Catholic Church and, effectively, of religion was liberalism's first step towards absolutizing the role of the individual will, rocketing it into the sphere of the universal with no mediating institution to bridge the particular individual with a sense of the universal.

When discussing Hegel's praise of the Reformation and its intimate connection with the French Revolution, however, Stathis Kouvelakis points out that Hegel recognizes a certain problem that eventually rose from the Protestant Reformation. Kouvelakis addresses the issue in order to fight the notion that Hegel was simply praising Lutheran theology as part of a Germanic theocracy or an oppressive State religion. Although Hegel does believe that "Catholicism had degenerated to the point of becoming

a purely external means of bringing the subject into conformity with the world,” Protestantism itself began degenerating into a tyrannical policing of one’s own soul, “characterized by a self-tormenting disposition and an aspect of spiritual wretchedness” (Kouvelakis 33). The Protestantism originally characterized by a celebration of intellectual freedom, apart from the positivity/objectivity of Catholicism, had become mired in its own introspection, suffering a break from the temporal order that could have infused this culturally aware inwardness into a universal goal. Hegel, according to Kouvelakis, thus witnesses Germany lagging behind the political advancement that France had achieved, sliding into the atomism of sectarian Protestantism and atomistic denominations. Even philosophy, via Kant, had descended into this policing of morality as it became mere fossilized morality in the form of the Categorical Imperative.

Arnold observes this same shift in his criticism of the Dissenting sects in England. They sought to bring abruptly the inwardness of the Protestant Reformation into an absolute expression in religion and, consequently Arnold believed, politics. One cannot help but hear Arnold’s criticism here of the French Revolution from “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” wherein he praises the impulse of the Revolution while simultaneously expressing disdain for the direction that it took as it rocketed into the sphere of public practice:

The French Revolution, however, -- that object of so much blind love and so much blind hatred, -- found undoubtedly its motive-power in the intelligence of men, and not in their practical sense [...]; it appeals to an order of ideas which are universal, certain, permanent. [...] In spite of the extravagant direction given to this enthusiasm, in spite of the crimes and follies in which it lost itself, the French Revolution derives from the force, truth, and universality of the ideas which it took for its law, and from the passion with which it could inspire a multitude for these ideas, a unique and still living power; it is -- it will probably long remain -- the greatest, the most animating event in history. [...] Ideas cannot be too much prized in

and for themselves [notice the Hegelian language here], cannot be too much lived with; but to transport them abruptly into the world of politics and practice, violently to revolutionise this world to their bidding, -- that is quite another thing. (*CPW* III. 264-265)

Arnold believes that he sees this same dangerous movement, one that Hegel also believed characterized the atomized subject catapulted to an abstract universal during the French Revolution, in the atomization characteristic of English religious thought. The “hole-and-corner” religions, as Arnold disparagingly terms them, remove, in their atomization, the individual further from participation in a collective culture like that which the Anglican Church holds, or should hold, on the polity. Arnold writes, in *Culture and Anarchy*, that the Dissenter publication, *The Nonconformist*, has the problems of atomization in its very motto: “The dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion” (*CPW* V. 101). This motto presents nothing of the unity that should call to the free and rational human will, and that the rational human will should see him or herself reflected in.

Arnold describes this call to unity as the:

[...] ideal of complete harmonious human perfection [...] with its instinct for perfection [...and] language to judge [Dissenters] [...]. ‘Finally, be of one mind, united in feeling’ [...]. Such, I say, is the wonderful virtue of even the beginnings of perfection [such as the Reformation], of having conquered even the plain faults of our animality, that the religious organisation which has helped us to do it can seem to us something precious, salutary, and to be propagated, even when it wears such a brand of imperfection on its forehead as this. (*CPW* V. 101)

Thus, the atomism into which Dissent had plunged England was not a progressive move.

Arnold’s argument with modern Dissent remained its atomism. Responding to a critique that within the Church of England exists a sect of Evangelicals that apparently professes the same doctrines as the Puritan sects that Arnold attacks, Arnold agrees with his critics concerning their existence; however, “there is this difference between the

Evangelical party in the Church of England and the Puritans outside her,” he writes.

“[T]he Evangelicals have not added to the error of holding this unsound body of opinions the second error of separating for them. They have thus, as we have already noticed, escaped the mixing of politics and religion, which arises directly and naturally out of this separating for opinions.” These Evangelicals in the Church of England do not “do their best to cut themselves off from outgrowing [their opinions], by resolving *to have no fellowship with the man of sin* who holds different notions. On the contrary, they are worshippers in the same Church, professors of the same faith [...] as men who hold that their *Scriptural Protestantism* is all wrong” (CPW VI. 109). Clearly, Arnold’s view of British Puritanism and Nonconformity reflects Hegel’s observations about the nature of Protestant sects and their connection to the problems that eventually plagued the French Revolutionaries and that continue haunting the background of the current liberal political agenda in Arnold and Hegel’s estimation, namely atomism and negative subjectivity. Moreover, this ability of a church to accommodate multiple perspectives hearkens back to that vision of the State as it helps to form one of the boundaries of the civil sphere, explored by Jeffrey Alexander and presented in this dissertation’s introduction.

Similarly, for Arnold and for Hegel, such atomism contributes to the liberal understanding of the formation of the State as merely a conglomeration of atomized wills. These atomized wills, raised to the level of an abstract absolute, are incapable of transformation from within, for they are absolutes unto themselves. Here we see the problematic that Hegel and Arnold both exposed through their readings of the impossible subjective philosophy of the *Bhagavad-Gita*. To sustain such a freedom of subjective will, Hegel believes, a polity must necessarily descend into Terror. Although Hegel, like

Arnold, actively praised the French Revolution throughout his texts, in such works as the *Phenomenology of Mind*, Hegel “actively distances himself” from the Terror that followed (Prior 6-7). Kouvelakis explains this progression in Hegel’s thought:

Incapable of transforming consciousness from within, the subjective will, promoted to the rank of sole possible foundation for the state and public virtue, necessarily becomes sheer coercion, brought to bear on the individual consciousness from without. It is identified with the policing of individual feeling and the destruction of singularities by a ‘simple, inflexible, cold’ universality; it is changed into its opposite, becoming a form of tyranny – the Robespierrian Terror [...]. French freedom, formal and abstract, is still only the freedom of liberalism. But, in Hegel’s estimation, liberalism remains external to the spirit of the peoples; it is incapable of creating a self-sustaining form of collective life, of constituting an actual community. (29)

This policing of one’s own soul mired the individual in introspection, distancing him from a sense of the collective life, in Hegel’s estimation.

A contemporary of Kouvelakis allows for a better understanding of how atomism, the valorization of the individual’s access to the absolute without mediation through the State or through some third party like religion, comes through Slavoj Žižek’s analysis of Robespierrian Terror. Although Žižek ultimately affirms Robespierrean Terror, a stance that does not conform to this dissertation’s thesis, his examination of how Robespierre’s Terror emerged logically out of the French Revolution’s trajectory as Hegel and Arnold understood it certainly helps affirm Arnold and Hegel’s fear of the political ramifications of hole-and-corner religions based on atomism. Žižek’s position can be seen by exploring passages from two works in particular: “Robespierre, or, The ‘Divine Violence’ of Terror” and *For They Know Not What They Do*.

Like Kouvelakis and other Hegel scholars insist, Robespierre’s radical liberalism was necessarily tied to the Terror that imposed the French Revolutionary ideals. The

misguided impulse that the French Revolution eventually took as its truth – that of equality based on the atomistic idea of the individual as Absolute – can only be “enforced in a terrorist manner” (Žižek, “Robespierre” vii). Quoting Robespierre’s right-hand man, Saint-Just, Žižek calls attention to the terror inherent in the imposition of radical subjectivity: “‘That which produces the general good is always terrible.’ These words should not be interpreted as a warning against the temptation to impose violently the general good onto society, but, on the contrary, as a bitter truth to be fully endorsed” (Žižek, “Robespierre” ix). Žižek terms Robespierre’s terroristic enforcement of the ideals of 1789 “divine violence” (Žižek, “Robespierre” x). Divine violence, as Žižek applies it to Robespierre, describes an acting out of a part of the social edifice that has been outside of the social network, a blind striking out, “demanding *and* enacting immediate justice/vengeance [...]. Like the biblical locusts, the divine punishment for men’s sinful ways, it strikes out of nowhere, a means without end” (Žižek, “Robespierre” x-xi). As if to reinforce the idea that divine violence acts from a point of Absolute Truth, not subordinate to cultural laws but rather from an assumed immediate access to a sublime Truth, Žižek continues:

The Benjaminian ‘divine violence’ should be thus conceived as divine in the precise sense of the old Latin motto *vox populi, vox dei*: *not* in the perverse sense of ‘we are doing it as mere instruments of the People’s Will,’ but as the heroic assumption of the *solitude of a sovereign decision* [emphasis mine]. It is a decision [...] made in absolute *solitude*, *not covered by the big Other* [emphasis mine]. (Žižek, “Robespierre” xi)

A terrifying consequence, however, follows from directing this divine violence inwardly. Žižek quotes Robespierre’s charge against the moderates who, in his belief, want a “revolution without a revolution,” a revolution Žižek describes as “decaffeinated,” “deprived of the excess in which democracy and terror coincide, a revolution respecting

social rules, subordinated to pre-existing norms, a revolution in which violence is deprived of the 'divine' dimension and thus reduced to a strategic intervention serving precise and limited goals" ("Robespierre" xi, vii, xi). In Žižek's analysis, Robespierre's absolute subjectivity emerges in his evocation of an almost Puritanical self-analysis concerning one's relationship to the tenets of the revolution, one in which doubt about one's absolute assurance of one's subjective position proves one's guilt of treason against the new France. Consider, for example, Robespierre's speech of 31 March 1794 concerning the Committees' arrest of Danton for treason: "I say that anyone who trembles at this moment is guilty; for innocence never fears public scrutiny" (qtd. in Žižek, "Robespierre" xvi). What could be more Puritanical, more evocative of the terrorizing of individual souls going on in Dissenting churches – what would be more worthy of a scene from Gosse's *Father and Son*? Commenting on Robespierre's own assumption of his subjective stance, Žižek associates Robespierre's Terroristic subjective position with that of the Hegelian Master, the one who "is the figure of sovereignty, the one who is not afraid to die, who is ready to risk everything" (Žižek, "Robespierre" xvii). Hegel, however, recognizes the untenability in *The Phenomenology of Mind* of the abstract Master position. It must be subsumed in a politics of recognition. Thus, one can see not only Hegel's rejection here of Jacobin terrorist impositions of this impossible atomism elevated to an Absolute, but also Hegel's rejection of Kantian Transcendental Idealism in favor of his own Absolute Idealism, which rests on a connection between the particular and the universal, and not a conflation of the two.

In his work *For They Know Not What They Do*, Žižek further solidifies the Protestant atomization elements that Arnold and Hegel recognize, in their interpretation,

as parallel to the Jacobinical movement towards Terror. Žižek, a Marxist, demonstrates the Jacobinical, atomistic nature of Protestantism by examining Protestantism's role in creating the bourgeois, capitalistic, individualistic ethic. In his estimation, as western society progressed from a feudal to a capitalistic form of economics, Protestantism played a major role. The Protestant work ethic – “accumulate wealth instead of sending it thoughtlessly, to live in temperance and modesty [...] to accomplish his instrumental-economic activity ‘with God in mind’ [...] compulsive work and the accumulation of wealth – renunciation to consumption” (Žižek, *For They Know* 183) – for a brief period brought the role of religion into a social function via its association with economic activity. However, although this universalization happened for a moment, its moment was fleeting and it soon achieved its opposite. Žižek explains:

[...] it opens the way to the devaluation of religion, to its confinement to the intimacy of a private sphere separated from state and public affairs. The Protestant universalization of the Christian stance is thus merely a transitory stage in the passage to the ‘normal’ state of bourgeois society where religion is reduced to ‘means’, to a medium enabling the subject to find new strength and perseverance in the economic fight for survival. (*For They Know* 183)

The Protestant work ethic, once universalized through its association with economics, withdraws into the private sphere. From that private position, the private citizen gauges the worth of his or her own soul on his or her economic vitality. Arnold makes the same point in *Culture and Anarchy* as he gives an extended account of a businessman named Mr. Smith:

The newspapers a short time ago contained an account of the suicide of a Mr. Smith, secretary to some insurance company, who, it was said, ‘laboured under the apprehension that he would come to poverty, and that he was eternally lost.’ And when I read these words, it occurred to me that the poor man who came to such a mournful end was, in truth, a kind of type, -- by the selection of his two grand objects of concern, by their

isolation from everything else, and their juxtaposition to one another [...]. 'He laboured under the apprehension that he would come to poverty, and that he was eternally lost.' The whole middle class have a conception of things [...] just like that this poor man; though we are seldom, of course, shocked by seeing it take the distressing, violently morbid, and fatal turn, which it took with him. But how generally, with how many of us, are the main concerns of life limited to these two: the concern for making money, and the concern for saving our souls! And how entirely does the narrow and mechanical conception of our secular business proceed from a narrow and mechanical conception of our religious business! (CPW V. 186)

This suicide parallels, in Arnold's estimation, the Jacobinical policing of the citizen during Robespierre's terror. As Arnold continued ruminating on the many implications of Protestant Dissent and its infiltration into the economic activity of the private citizen, he would eventually also connect his concerns with politics, writing in *God and the Bible* that the French Revolution proved there are only poor political solutions for religion (Arnold, *God and the Bible* xv).³⁶

Žižek immediately follows his analysis of Puritanism with comments about how Robespierrean Jacobinism (which Žižek writes "can even be determined as 'political Protestantism'" [*For They Know* 183]) followed the same trajectory because its ideals about egalitarianism ended up nestled firmly in terrorism. As the Jacobins sought to entrench their radical democratic and egalitarian principles absolutely, their "political radicalism prepared the way for its opposite, for the bourgeois universe of egotistic and acquisitive individuals who care not a pin for egalitarian moralism" (Žižek, *For They Know* 184). By violently and immediately suffusing the entire social edifice with these abstract ideals of democratic egalitarianism, Robespierre set about not only a police state seeking to enforce, terroristically, these absolute ideals, but also it required the individual to police him or herself to see if he or she was living up to those abstracted ideals. If one

³⁶ In *The Civil Sphere*, Jeffrey Alexander gives an account of the improper conflation of the economic and the civil sphere that is similar to Žižek's. See Alexander 24-29.

finds any want or lack, then Mr. Smith provides a commendable example to follow.

Significantly, though, both Hegel and Arnold, as they synthesize their interpretations of Protestantism, radical liberalism, and terror, also assert these connections had already played themselves out on the historical stage during the French Revolution. They realized that world history had come through the crucible of the French Revolution and that the Robespierrian Terror as well as the inherent problems with hole-and-corner religions and their atomization had told strongly on their world. They recognized, to use again Žižek's Hegelian terminology, that the Terror and Protestantism had played their roles as "vanishing mediators" in the movement of world history (Žižek, *For They Know* 182). What both Hegel and Arnold were attempting, through their incessant advocacy for an increased State power in both Germany and England, was to avoid the exact same slip into Terrorism – Arnold might call it anarchy – that both saw emerging from the liberal politics of their day and the trajectory those politicians were, in their estimation, taking. Žižek explains the position of the liberals against whom Arnold and Hegel believed they were reacting by referencing, as Kouvelakis did, the position of what Hegel termed the community of Beautiful Souls: "[W]hat the Jacobins overlooked is the fact that the ideal after which they strove was, in its notional structure, *already realized* in the 'dirty' acquisitive activity which appeared to them as the betrayal of their high ideals. Vulgar, egotistic bourgeois everyday life is the actuality of freedom, equality and brotherhood: freedom of free trade, formal equality in the eyes of the law, and so on" (*For They Know* 185). Clearly, then, Arnold and Hegel both believed that the liberal project as it was being carried out by their contemporaries, rooted as it was in Protestantism and the Jacobinical nature of its atomization, was a path that had been tried

and had proven a failure. In fact, the liberal project, as Hegel and Arnold saw it interpreted by their contemporaries, has as its end point something akin to Robespierrean Terror. Hegel and Arnold both recognize that liberalism “thus remains trapped in the atomism of individual interests, and is incapable of rising to the level of *Vereinigung* (union or association), of collective existence in its objectivity and universalizing significance” (Kouvelakis 29). As will be shown in the following sections of this chapter, Arnold and Hegel turn to their interpretation of the role of the State in helping to mediate and actualize true, rational, subjective freedom in a post-Revolutionary world, freedom that, although dependent on the role of the State, is no less founded on true subjective freedom within a polity.

II. Freedom and the State in Hegel

The atomism that emerged as problematic for Arnold and Hegel in the Dissenting churches in England and in Germany helps explain the limitations of liberalism as Hegel and Arnold understood them. The atomism they saw emerging from Dissenting Protestantism mirrored a movement that both thinkers recognized as similar to the Jacobinism that expressed itself during Robespierre's Reign of Terror. This recognition, by both Arnold and Hegel, points the way towards their belief that only through the State could individuals in a polity recognize and actualize their true freedom as rational subjects within a rational polity. Both Hegel and Arnold's understanding of the State's relationship to true human freedom should not be read as repressive. As has been demonstrated, the trajectory of Dissenting Protestantism shows how radical liberalism, resting on Hegel and Arnold's interpretation of Rousseau, paves the way towards tyranny quicker than Arnold or Hegel believed their vision of the State would. Arnold's continued

emphasis, throughout his career as a social and political critic, follows a trajectory similar to Hegel's vision of the State's role in emerging human freedom. Bringing these two thinkers closer together, then, tempers the supposed incompatibility between Arnold's revolutionary beliefs and his belief in the citizen's duty towards the State in which he finds himself. In this section, primary attention will be paid to Hegel's critique of the Contractarian notion of Natural Right, as he understood it, as well as his politics of recognition, which both explain his belief in the necessity of the State for realizing true human freedom within a polity. Establishing Hegel's idea of a politics of recognition, mediated by the State, provides the foundation for seeing the same politics emerge in Arnold's theory of the State's role in realizing true freedom in England.

As Chapter 1 demonstrated, one of Hegel's disagreements with the philosophy presented in the *Bhagavad-Gita* was that it, in his logic, rested on impossible foundations of subjectivity. The philosophy of the *Gita* depended far too much on an abstraction from the external world as well as an impossible descent into the self, culminating in a nihilistic self-implosion. The same criticism holds true as Hegel, in *The Philosophy of Right*, critiques the Contractarian relationship between individual freedom and the polity. For Hegel, humans are not immediately aware of freedom. This assertion marks the beginning of Hegel's many disagreements with Contractarian notions of freedom, or Natural Right, throughout his works, and it points the way towards the intimate relationship in his philosophy between freedom and the necessity of the State. Hegel believes that as natural beings we may be willful, but we are not free. Hegel writes, "[E]specially popular since Rousseau [is the belief] according to which the substantial foundation, the starting point, is supposed to be particular individuality, the will of the

individual in its own peculiar willfulness, not will as it is in and as itself – the rational will – thus not spirit as true spirit” (*PR* 35). Hegel goes so far, in fact, as to affirm the State’s necessity before humans can begin realizing themselves as free. Rather than originating outside of the polity, in the breast of “natural” man, freedom emerges as a concept. A supplement to §29 in *The Philosophy of Right* reinforces this notion: “The natural condition of human beings is not yet the condition of freedom, but rather the condition of wrong. Human beings [...] must make the transition to consciousness [...]. Granted, natural freedom – willfulness – must be sacrificed within the state” (35). Hegel here gets to, he believes, the root of Contractarianism by going after Rousseau’s faith in the Noble Savage, the belief that only in a state of nature are human beings free and rational. In the state of nature, according to Hegel, human beings are anything but free and natural.

Although Hegel agrees with Rousseau’s belief that in a state of nature human beings are living in an inhospitable environment (the Hobbesian definition of the natural state of man as “no Arts; no Letters; no Society; [...] And the life of man, solitary, poore, nasty, brutish, and short” [Hobbes 186]), rather than valorizing this situation, he uses it to critique the Contractarian belief that from this state of nature a human being can make a rational and effective decision to become a member of a polity, to draw up a social contract to which he or she can rationally agree. In a state of nature, Hegel believes, human beings are furnished only with the most willful and simple needs as well as the means to satisfy these needs. In this condition, according to Hegel, a human being cannot make a rational decision to found or even enter into a rational and truly free polity. Hegel writes:

Human beings have been represented as living in freedom, as far as their needs are concerned, within the so-called 'state of nature,' wherein they are supposed to have had only so-called simple, natural needs and to have used for their satisfaction only the means that nature immediately and contingently offered them. [...] [T]his representation is a false opinion because natural need as such, and its immediate satisfaction, characterize the condition of spirituality immersed in nature, a condition therefore of crudeness and the absence of freedom. (*PR* 154)

Hegel reasons that, from the Contractarian standpoint, the human's choice to enter into the social contract or not becomes arbitrary, too weak a foundation for anything approximating a rational polity, and especially anything approximating true human freedom within the polity. Again, humans at this point, in Hegel's analysis, are merely willful, governed by base drives and not by the rational desire for recognition as free subjects.

For Hegel, the State precedes the free human, unlike what he believes characterizes the Contractarian positing of the supposedly naturally free human existing before the formation of the State. Because human freedom cannot be felt naturally, the subject, in order to be free, must become conscious of this freedom, and this can only happen within the confines of a polity. The human can only know himself as truly free when the laws of a polity that govern his daily, civil life are rational and the human subject recognizes him or herself in the State and the State recognizes him or her through those laws. According to Hegel, rational thinking and thus free thinking are produced by, at least partially, *Bildung*, or culture, and the State helps support *Bildung*. The State, in Hegel's estimation, includes more than simply the laws of a particular society; the State can also influence and be influenced by civil life.

By insisting that freedom can only begin to be actualized and realized through the State, Hegel believes he has a more solid point of departure for actualizing and realizing

freedom than Rousseau's supposedly untenable point of departure in the individual abstracted from all external constraints. In *The Philosophy of History*, Hegel writes:

Freedom [...] has to be earned and won through endless mediation of *discipline* acting upon the powers of cognition and will. [...] *Restrictions* ... are part of that process of mediation whereby the consciousness of freedom and the will to realize it in its true (i.e. rational and essential) form are engendered Such *restrictions* are the indispensable conditions of liberation; and society and the state are the only situations in which freedom can be realized. (qtd. in Patten 173-174, emphasis mine)

Many words in the above selection suggest the restriction and limitation that this dissertation's third chapter explored in the politics and poetics of Hegel and Arnold. Such emphases on limitation and restriction are Hegel's way of reinforcing his many assertions in *The Philosophy of Right* that Rousseau's state of nature is a delusional state of freedom. Having only itself to be accountable to, and having only circumstantial or situational objects, Hegel describes the will of the Noble Savage alternately as "the childish will" and the "slavish or superstitious will" (*PR* 33). It is, ultimately, a will unconscious of its freedom. The State, then, not only in its laws themselves but in the way that the subject perceives his or her relationship to those laws and how those laws govern his or her civil life, must be that element of limitation pre-existing the subject, before the subjective will comes to know itself as free.

How, though, does a subject know that the laws of his or her particular polity are rational enough to deserve following, rational enough to constitute a willingness to accept this level of limitation? Hegel explains that neither historical justification nor intuition can be the measure by which we compute the rationality of our own State's laws. One critic explains:

Ethical life is the union of objective and subjective freedom [...]. It is objective because it satisfies the requirements of morality, in that it

determines the duties and obligations of the subject, whereas inward individuality alone cannot. But it must also be subjective because objective freedom which is not rational and is only immediate in the reality of the subject's form of life is a blind authority which determines the subject without the moment of self-consciousness essential to full, human freedom. Such authority is external and acts as a *cause of* rather than a *reason for* action. (Rose 112)

Recall that subjects, in order to be free, must have the means of recognizing themselves as free. In a state of nature, such as the one that in Hegel's estimation Rousseau proposed, people are laboring under the delusion of freedom. The state of nature indicates only the greedy subjective will, or willfulness. Hegel uses subjective here in a pejorative sense, and it parallels Arnold's "doing as one likes" as well as his criticism of the bourgeois belief that a nation's wealth determines its worth (the "machinery" that he criticizes so roundly in *Culture and Anarchy* and "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time").

Hegel writes:

We may call 'subjective' a goal that is the goal only of a determinate subject. [...] The word may also be applied, however, to the content of the will, and it is then roughly synonymous with 'willful'; a 'subjective' content is one [i.e. content] that belongs to the subject alone. Hence bad actions, for example, are purely 'subjective.' But, further, the pure empty I, which has only itself as its object and possesses the power to abstract from any other content may be called 'subjective.' 'Subjectivity,' then, can signify what is wholly idiosyncratic, but it can also signify something highly justified, in that everything I am to acknowledge also has the task of becoming mine and of attaining its validity within me. This is the insatiable greed of subjectivity: to grasp another and consume everything in this single wellspring of the pure I. (PR 33-34)

Likewise, Hegel notes in §57 that the human being, taken in the natural state, remains "external" to his or her freedom. Recognition of the self as free, though, can only occur looking at a human "from the opposite point of view" (PR 53). This last comment indicates Hegel's politics of recognition at work in *The Philosophy of Right*, for another free subject's perspective constitutes this opposite point of view. In order to be free in and

as themselves, subjects must “give up the truly natural will and thereby take freedom into possession” (*PR* 54).

Taking freedom into possession, however, happens via a two-fold process: the recognition of an other as a truly free human being, and the presence of a mediator to help facilitate that recognition. When the subject makes the turn towards freedom, according to Hegel, he or she sees his or her duty towards the State and begins, through the process of *Bildung* – including laws and customs and institutions within the polity – to understand how to renounce particularity, or willfulness. In order for the subject to free himself from that bad subjectivity, that willfulness, the individual must become a member of a community of mutually recognizing free agents. One has, however, no choice in this matter. The individual must be a member of a polity, even if the individual has not consented to being involved in it. There can be many different levels of recognition in the polity, some good and rational and others not. However, Hegel has, he believes, undermined Rousseau’s beginning in the individual’s freedom, known only naturally and outside of a polity. In a war of all against all, Hegel suggests, there can be no *free* mutual recognition. “For Hegel,” writes Patten, “the mistake made by Contractarians is overlooking the fact that it is only through the state that the struggle for recognition can be resolved and that agents can thus acquire the very capacity for free and rational agency that social contract theory presupposes” (176).

This struggle for recognition, for taking freedom into possession, happens primarily through what Hegel terms a politics of recognition. The community of mutually recognizing free agents constitutes the ideal polity towards which Hegel’s philosophy moves. A process initiated by the Master-Slave dialectic moves his philosophy towards

this ideal polity. The main points of Hegel's Master-Slave struggle are presented in *The Phenomenology of Spirit*, and these main points repay a brief recap. The Master-Slave struggle has to do with freedom, and in its emphasis on freedom Hegel's vision of this early, mythic encounter between two self-consciousnesses mirrors part of the French Revolution's tendencies, although the encounter occurs in mythic time. Two self-consciousnesses encounter one another. In the other, each sees an obstruction to obtaining what it wants; in effect, each sees the other as impeding the satisfaction of his desire. The two fight almost to the death. However, whereas one is willing to sacrifice all, including life, in order to satisfy desire, the other backs off the moment the possibility of death confronts him. The one who backs off becomes the Slave, and the one who was willing to die becomes Master. The Master thus has recognition from the Slave, but does not return this recognition.

Problems arise, however, when the Master begins to realize that, though the Slave offers him recognition, the Master lacks a truly free self. The Master merely sees his own self reflected back to him in the Slave. However, as the Master puts the Slave to work out of respect for the Master, the Slave begins slowly recognizing his own self-respect. He begins recognizing that he makes the world around him. The Master remains unreflected in the world by merely taking all that the Slave makes into himself. The Slave, recognizing himself in the world around him and affording recognition to others, obtains a certain level of self-sufficiency. The Master, on the other hand, though recognized by all, does not recognize others as selves, and remains in a state of impotent dependency. Demanding recognition figures prominently in both figures' attaining autonomous personhood. Through Hegel's drama, the only way the Master can attain proper

perspective on himself comes by being confronted by an individual who refuses to *not* be recognized (Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit* 630-636).

In one of the more direct parallels between Arnold and Hegel to emerge recently, Elizabeth Frame explores the dynamic outlines of the Master-Slave struggle as they are dramatized in Arnold's poem "Sohrab and Rustum." Frame sees the outlines of this struggle in the poem as indicative of Arnold's future critical project, and she even hypothesizes that Arnold uses Sohrab as his first tragic presentation of a critic (tragic in the sense that Sohrab must die in his attempt to bring Rustum into mutual recognition). Certainly the contours of the dialectic are present in the poem, and certainly Arnold recognized the poem's importance. Its importance for this chapter's argument lays not so much in that Frame recognizes in Sohrab the first presentation of the critic, but rather that in it one witnesses the necessity for the renunciation of particularity that must be done and that the State helps to bring about.

Arnold himself recognized the importance of "Sohrab and Rustum." The work was slated for composition in 1851, but did not make it into print until after May of 1853, when the volume of poems of that same year was printed. Arnold expressed his conviction to his mother that the poem was "by far the best thing I have yet done" (qtd. in Tinker 73). It was composed while he was working on the 1853 preface, so unsurprisingly many of the Hegelian underpinnings of the preface, explored in this dissertation's previous chapter, had worked their way into this dramatic narrative poem. His poem evidences a substitution in Arnold's thought. Significantly, in the 1853 volume of poems Arnold places "Sohrab and Rustum" after the preface. Likewise, instead of *Empedocles on Etna* occupying a pivotal place in the volume, Arnold uses "Sohrab and

Rustum,” which contains within it the drama of a man forced to return to a field of battle, a world, Rustum admits himself, unpleasant to him yet one that he desires to re-enter. In that world, in that battle, Rustum returns to the world after having gained critical perspective on himself and his own limitations after being confronted by the younger Sohrab. Rustum is Empedocles reborn. Likewise, Rustum participates in a “dialogue of the mind with itself” in the poem’s middle, fraught with difficulties and characterized by a lack of critical perspective, the very things that, in the opening of the preface to the 1853 volume, Arnold says characterize modern poetry and from which he tries to escape.

In her essay, Frame asserts that enduring elements of “Sohrab and Rustum” rest in Arnold’s first engagement with idea to which he will continually return through his prose:

[...] the major obstacle to human community [is] the individual’s resistance to recognizing the boundaries of his own knowledge and power. [...] In fact, [Arnold’s] entire critical project is an attempt to overcome what [he] perceives as his audience’s resistance to other people and ideas. Arnold’s prose also thematizes the importance of others in attaining critical perspective and the necessity of this perspective for maintaining community. (17)

In the character Rustum, Arnold presents the representative figure for the resistance of critical perspective, the resistance to recognizing others in the fight to be simply recognized by others. Significantly, Frame asserts that Rustum, when he first agrees to fight Sohrab, does not want to be recognized in any new capacity, but rather wants to reassert his old hero status in the community. This characterizes not only Arnold’s criticism of the Dissenters, explored in section II of this chapter, but also his criticism of those resisting change. As Frame asserts, “[Rustum] wants to prove that his own understanding of himself is more accurate than the community’s. He remains closed to any new critical perspective on himself that participation in the community might

provide” (19). The Aristocratic Barbarians, who want to reassert old privileges and maintain the level of recognition they have always had without bending to any sense of forward progress, are indicative of this position.

According to Frame, Sohrab possesses critical perspective. Rather than simply demanding to be recognized by another, as Rostam does, Sohrab offers recognition to others and demands to receive it from others. When Sohrab and Rostam meet on the battlefield, the Hegelian Master-Slave dialectic begins being played out as Rostam (the Master figure) demands recognition from Sohrab (the Slave figure) without granting recognition in return. Rostam, therefore, refuses Sohrab any subjectivity. Sohrab appeals to Rostam to acknowledge his own limitations, to recognize the need Rostam has to be recognized by Sohrab, just as Sohrab disclosed his own identity to Rostam early and has acknowledged Rostam’s greatness and power, recognitions that have been met only by Rostam’s solipsistic demands for peace on his own terms.

Frame’s exploration certainly establishes the contours of this Master-Slave dynamic. However, Frame too quickly ends her engagement there. Hegel asserts that the Master-Slave dialectic that Frame claims appears in “Sohrab and Rostam” *establishes* a civil society and a State governed by the Master mentality and that the Slave must work on and must try to make rational. The Slave builds up civil society through his work. For Hegel, individuals can only recognize one another through, or mediated by, certain institutions, and this includes the State. The demand for recognition, combined with a selfish or willful refusal to grant recognition, initiates the Master-Slave struggle. The struggle precipitates the establishment of the Master-Slave dialectic. The Master gains recognition from the Slave, but does not have to grant the Slave recognition in return.

However, the order established by the Master cannot appropriately mediate recognition, for the Master is passive, demanding recognition without granting it. Through work and labor, though, the Slave begins demonstrating a free and recognizable existence. The order or State that the Master sets up, and that that the Slave works on and in, eventually gives way to the truly free society. The State begins mediating relationships between men, and through those men it becomes free and rational. As Patten writes, “The individual [...] ‘makes himself worthy of ... recognition’ by showing himself to be a rational being: he does this by obeying the law, by filling a post, by following a trade, and by other kinds of working activity” (178). This, to connect with the idea of duty presented in the second section of this chapter, is not a “positive” submission; rather, it is an opportunity for an individual to see him or herself reflected in the polity being created.

Yet civil society, Hegel believes, cannot by itself overcome the Master-Slave dialectic. Civil society merely re-creates the initial conflict in different guises. This is especially true if one sees civil society only as an amalgamation of individual wills, governed by laws that ensure the protection of the selfish, willful, acquisitive individual. Throughout *The Philosophy of Right*, Hegel calls the reader’s attention to the importance, not of the struggle between the Master and Slave, but of the importance of a third element mediating recognition between subjects. This recognition of a mediating force is one element of the Master-Slave dialectic that Frame does not address in her essay.

Perhaps in the economic sphere, characterized by free market and unbridled capitalism, a citizen can experience subjective freedom and recognition. Certainly one of the elements that Arnold believed his contemporaries used as an index of the level of freedom available in England was the “machinery” of wealth (*CPW* V. 97). Hegel

recognizes, though, that unbridled capitalism and disproportionate wealth and standards of living are not considered means by which mutual recognition gets established. Rather, the economic sphere is anti-civil in its functions.³⁷ Hegel writes, “When a large mass of people is depressed below a certain standard of living [...] and when there is a consequent loss of right, of honesty, and of the dignity of supporting oneself through one’s own activity and labor, the result is the creation of a rabble” (*PR* 181). As can be seen, the operations of the economic realm of the polity can serve to mediate relationships between humans, but only temporarily. When these relationships continue pushing a significant portion of the population away from the ability to actualize their freedom through labor and action in the civil sphere, “there arises within the rabble the evil of its members’ lacking the self-respect to secure their livelihoods by their own labor and yet of claiming the right to receive a livelihood” (*PR* 181). The same is true for membership in the communal interests of the marketplace, and the bourgeois businessman, by acting on purely selfish motives, exiles himself from the fabric of society, eventually becoming the slave of his own selfish desire for profit (*PR* 185). The economic sphere, therefore, is insufficient for mediating between individuals within the civil sphere. In fact, in Hegel’s estimation, the economic sphere exacerbates inequality and contributes to the continued fracturing of the civil sphere.

³⁷ Hegel actually occupies an interesting point here in the history of the idea of civil society. Jeffrey Alexander writes that Hegel operated within a world that included the capitalist market and its institutions as part of a conception of this idea of “civil society” (24). Moreover, this late 17th century to mid-18th century conception of civil society as including the economic sphere believed that “the civilizing qualities associated with civil society most definitely extended to the capitalist market itself, with its bargaining and trading, its circulating commodities and money, its shopkeepers and private property. [...] [T]he capitalist market [was] benignantly conceived [...] as helping to produce qualities associated with international peace, domestic tranquility, and increasingly democratic participation. Capitalism was understood as producing self-discipline and individual responsibility. It was helping to create a social system antithetical to the vainglorious aristocratic one” (Alexander 25). Hegel makes the same assumption that the economic sphere influences the civil sphere, but he believes that its influence is a negative one. Arnold, too, believes that the two spheres influence one another negatively.

The State, however, has the capacity to overcome and mediate the atomization that the economic sphere can create. This requires, though, that the State be seen as a force that has a certain level of control over the civil sphere. If laws merely protect mutually restrictive subjective freedoms, the State continues atomizing civil society, repeating the endless struggles indicative of the Master-Slave dialectic. Stathis Kouvelakis explains:

French freedom [during the Revolution and the Terror] formal and abstract, is still only the freedom of liberalism [i.e. atomistic]. But, in Hegel's estimation, liberalism remains external to the spirit of the peoples; it is incapable of creating a self-sustaining form of collective life, of constituting an actual community. Revolutions give way to counter-revolutions and securely entrenched regimes, but 'agitation and unrest' do not therefore come to an end. (Kouvelakis 29)

Hegel argues, against liberalism – essentially as Arnold does, as well – that “liberalism absolutizes the viewpoint of civil society, which it tends systematically to confound with the state. Liberalism thus remains trapped in the atomism of individual interests, and is incapable of rising to the level of *Vereinigung* (union or association), of collective existence in its objectivity and universalizing significance” (Kouvelakis 29).³⁸ In their zeal to sweep aside the existing State, the French Revolutionaries started over with a new constitution, conceived of *a priori*, based solely on the concept of the general will, which, in Hegel's estimation, was too closely associated with the will of all. Doing so restricted the power of the State to solely protect the arbitrary willfulness of either individuals or groups of individuals operating now in the civil sphere:

[W]hen those abstractions were invested with power, they afforded the tremendous spectacle, for the first time we know of in human history, of

³⁸ As he argues for the emergence of what he terms the “civil sphere,” an idea that is meant to go beyond the old concept of “civil society,” Jeffrey Alexander even remarks, “Civil society is not a panacea. Modernity is strewn with the detritus of civil societies [...]. The discourse of civil society can be as repressive as liberating, legitimating not only inclusion but exclusion” (4).

the overthrow of all existing and given conditions within an actual major state and the revision of its constitution from first principles and purely in terms of *thought*; the intention behind this was to give it what was *supposed* to be a purely *rational* basis. On the other hand, since these were only abstractions divorced from the Idea, they turned the attempt into the most terrible and drastic event. (qtd. in Kouvelakis 31)

Beginning so, sweeping away the State as a mediator between individual willfulness and universality, the new rational constitution thinks that it can form a completely new polity and state *ex nihilo*, out of a vacuum.

The benefits and freedoms experienced by citizens in civil society are, for both Hegel and Arnold, merely external machinations that operate as means and not ends. Arnold makes this abundantly clear in, among other works, *Culture and Anarchy*, in passages such as the following:

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but machinery? what are railroads but machinery? what is wealth but machinery? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them. (*CPW* V. 96)

This machinery remains important – neither Hegel nor Arnold denies this. In fact, we have Arnold just a few pages later discussing how striving after such things as those mentioned above have lent, to the English nation, “great worldly prosperity [...] great inward peace and satisfaction.” He follows this praise, though – as Arnold so often does – with a caveat about its inadequacy: “But to me few things are more pathetic than to see people, on the strength of the inward peace and satisfaction which their rudimentary efforts towards perfection have brought them, employ, concerning their incomplete perfection [...] language which properly applies only to complete perfection, and is a far-

off echo of the human soul's prophecy of it" (CPW V. 100). These machinations, including laws establishing freedom within the civil sphere, operate as a first impulse towards the totality of Hegelian *Sittlichkeit*, or ethical society; however, civil society cannot be the State, for "a horizon defined by [the] pursuit of [...] atomistic interests" characterizes, as Arnold made so abundantly clear in the quotes above, civil society (Kouvelakis 35). Although within civil society people work together in a common interest of preserving individualistic freedom at all costs, their acquisitiveness tends to fracture civil society instead of unify it. Civil society cannot, of itself, guarantee work and property to all.

Because civil society cannot guarantee work and property to all, civil society necessarily fractures and polarizes into haves and have-nots. This necessary result of the economic marketplace's antagonisms reflected into the civil sphere cannot be solved by civil society itself via individual charity. An extensive quote from Kouvelakis helps to explain how this happens:

Confronted with the reality of extreme poverty, Hegel speaks of the need for public institutions, especially corporations – centres of mutual assistance for their members which have a public character in so far as they are integral parts of the state. He does not think that private aid and voluntary charity are sufficient, although they are the sole legitimate forms of support in the view of the liberals, who scream social subversion at the merest suggestion that the rights of the poor or their claims to assistance should be made into legal entitlements. Hegel does not deny that private charity serves a useful purpose; as he sees it, however, the struggle against poverty cannot be made to depend on the contingency and caprice of individual virtue: laws and institutions are indispensable here. The reason [...] is that [...] poverty has objective causes which have their roots in the contradictions inherent in the functioning of bourgeois society. (35-36)

Hegel believes he has undermined the atomistic liberal programme that conceives of civil society as the State, "a new type of rationality based on the diagram of a well-ordered

society regulated by the principle of individual responsibility and the unconditioned right to hold and enjoy property” (Kouvelakis 36). Thus this dissertation’s introduction resurfaces with Arnold’s attack in his three letters to *The Daily Telegraph* on the Mansion House Meetings. The wants of those who, because of class distinctions that necessarily follow from the impact that the economic sphere has on the realities of civil society, are excluded or are polarized and unable to acquire basic cultural necessities cannot be satisfied through individual charity because to do so merely repeats the deadlocks and the creation of conflict intrinsic to civil society as Arnold and Hegel both saw it. The State, by positively interfering with civil society, actually enforces a higher universal standard of freedom while temporarily limiting charity. For Arnold and Hegel, the State’s intervention in civil society helps to universalize the particular laws that govern civil society by keeping the universal constantly in the picture when and only when civil society itself experiences a deadlock. Kouvelakis sums up Hegel’s position, his merging of the State with revolutionary politics:

Without denying the specificity of *Sittlichkeit*, Hegel rejects the liberal conception of the relationship between civil society and the state as a relationship between two distinct, mutually limiting orders that fall under the jurisdiction of different systems of right. Civil society [...] is merely an ‘external state’, one particular aspect of the idea of the state in its moment of division. ‘An absolute and unmoved end in itself’ that is already contained in its origins, the state now appears to have it in its power to banish the antagonisms of civil society and the impotence of a philosophy limited to affirming an abstract ‘ought’ [...]. He can therefore present the state as the solution to the riddle of history: it makes the achievements of the revolution its own even while managing to avoid the revolution itself and make it impossible in the future. (41, 42)

Likewise, Arnold can continue emphasizing the importance of keeping the ideal of the State, “the nation in its corporate and collective character,” in mind even while recognizing the necessity of all the fetishes and machinery that constitute civil society.

III. Freedom and the State in Arnold

Matthew Arnold always recognized democracy as a powerful new force in the world and in England. Many of his comments about democracy are a straightforward indication that he was not in favor of the status quo, or that he wanted to quell the emergence of democracy in England. Democracy was, he believed, part of humankind's necessary progress. "Our society," he states, "is probably destined to become much more democratic" (*CPW* II. 18). Arnold fully recognized the rising power of the Populace, recognized the necessary role they would play as England progressed through time. Recall that Arnold insisted that great changes there must be in England. However, moving away from a faith in the power of the State as a bureaucratic entity, moving solely towards faith in the regulating abilities of civil society as the *unum necessarium*, threatens to move England away from the realization of revolutionary ideas, for such faith only in civil society does not represent the revolution by due course of law, is not a rational movement. He fears the anarchy (that is, the atomism) into which England and her civil society may plunge with a continued perception of the State as "a mere tax-collector and policeman," a merely negative vision of State power as that which "prevent[s] disorder, jobbery, and extravagance; that [the State] need 'have no notion of securing the future, nor even of regulating the present;' that it may and ought to 'leave the course of events to regulate itself, and trust the future to the security of the unknown laws of human nature and the unseen influences of higher powers'" (*CPW* II. 306, 304). Arnold knows that such perceptions of the State will not help to actualize freedom in England. In *England and the Italian Question*, Arnold warns that exaggerations of the spirits of freedom and liberty can fracture a country, thus moving away from one of the

characteristics of a truly democratic culture – solidarity – as mentioned in the introduction (*CPW* I. 82). Arnold recognizes the rationality inherent in a movement towards freedom and democracy, but the attempt to actualize this rational movement without the influence of the State is irrational. As he writes in “Democracy,” “The ideas of 1789 were working everywhere in the eighteenth century, but it was *because in France the State adopted them* that the French Revolution became an historic epoch for the world, and France the lode-star of Continental democracy” (*CPW* II. 11, emphasis mine). Although, as the preceding section explained, the imposition during the French Revolution was wrongheaded, it did begin the process. For Arnold, the State was necessary for the emergence of freedom – and for him, freedom did mean democracy – in England, not an impediment. “I am convinced,” he writes, “that if the worst mischiefs of democracy ever happen in England, it will be, not because a new condition has come upon us unforeseen, but because, though we all foresaw it, our efforts to deal with it were in the wrong direction” (*CPW* II. 19). Clearly, Arnold recognizes that willful individualism and true human freedom, even in a democracy, cannot work together well because “so long as a people thus work individually, it does not work democratically” (*CPW* II. 13).

Arnold was present early in the appearance of liberal democracy in England and in Europe. The world that Matthew Arnold knew was coming into being was a world that he wanted to be open, democratic, and characterized by the subjective freedoms that we, in our current political landscape, take for granted. He wanted it to be, as was suggested in the introduction to this dissertation, something akin to Jeffrey Alexander’s notion of the civil sphere, characterized by a sense of solidarity. One must necessarily, therefore,

reiterate some facts about Arnold's beliefs, already presented throughout this dissertation but worthy of emphasis again as his beliefs about the necessary relationship between revolutionary ideals, subjective freedom, and the State are traced. Arnold was against closed-minded thinking, which he termed frequently provincialism. In all that he did, Arnold advocated for the opening up of closed minds, not the opposite: "narrowness, one-sidedness, and incompleteness is what they most suffer from; in a word, that in what we call *provinciality* they abound" (*CPW* V. 237). Secondly, Arnold did not believe that there was only one avenue for apprehending the dimension of Truth: "To try and approach truth on one side after another, not to strive or cry, nor to persist in pressing forward, on any one side, with violence and self-will, -- it is only thus [...] that mortals may hope to gain any vision of [truth]" (*CPW* III. 286). Arnold was, also, not a reactionary. He did not believe that a return to past systems of government was a viable option. Arnold did not exclude other cultures, nor did he dismiss all the literature of his age, when he considered what all should go towards constructing a democratic culture for England: "a criticism which regards Europe as being, nor intellectual and spiritual purposes, one great confederation, bound to a joint action and working to a common result; and whose members have, for their proper outfit, a knowledge of Greek, Roman, and Eastern antiquity, and of one another" (*CPW* III. 284). Likewise, consider Arnold's treatment of Celtic literature, a Persian passion play, and his extensive reading in Eastern philosophy as evidence of this pluralism. Moreover, Arnold did not believe that a status quo was desired or should be maintained. His ideal of perfection, even, was "Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming" (*CPW* V. 94). Arnold also believed that the people of a polity have a role and a right to maintain and to change the

government of the polity in which they live, and that no class had any inherent best right to control the government. In “Democracy” he notes that the responsibility for the type of government a society has falls squarely on the shoulders of the citizens composing that society:

If the executive government is really in the hands of men no wiser than the bulk of mankind, of men whose action an intelligent man would be unwilling to accept as representative of his own action, whose fault is that? It is the fault of the nation itself, which [...] being free to control the choice of those who are to sum up and concentrate its action, controls it in such a manner that it allows to be chosen agents so little in its confidence, or so mediocre, or so incompetent, that it thinks the best thing to be done with them is to reduce their action as near as possible to a nullity. (*CPW* II. 28)

Finally, Arnold believed that English society, as it existed at the present moment, was not characterized by a shared sense of democratic progress, but was rather fractured and fragmented: “By our every-day selves, however, we are separate, personal, at war” (*CPW* V. 134). Readers need to be reminded of these ideals in Arnold’s work and thought because in them are the seeds of his revolutionary commitment, that commitment to the “ideals of 1789” so often referenced in this dissertation, which include “ideas of religious, political, and social freedom” (*CPW* I. 81).

Arnold, though, as this dissertation has continually emphasized, held these ideas along with a firm belief in the necessary power of an entity he termed the State. This entity has executive powers, as was explored in the introduction to this dissertation, and can justly, in Arnold’s schema, enter into the civil sphere and curtail certain liberties there that many today take to be off limits to government interference. Contemporary thinking leans rather towards the notion that the executive arm of the bureaucracy should check itself from interfering in civil liberties, that is, a citizen’s liberty to act according to his or

her own directives within civil society. For many today, this vision of the State is the true inheritance from the French Revolution and its ideals; it is also the vision that Arnold saw manifest in the population of England, mentioned above.³⁹ How, then, does Arnold claim the opposite? Can he claim that the State has a necessary role in realizing true human freedom within a polity and still call himself a liberal? a proponent of equality? a participant in the revolutionary line? Not a wonder, then, that critics too frequently malign the following statement from Arnold: “But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that” (*CPW* V. 96). The pronoun “that” in the quote refers to the *act* of drawing nearer, not some preconceived standard of the Beautiful, the Graceful, or the Becoming. Arnold emphasizes the subject’s very ability to enjoy the idea of getting out of a purely individualistic vision of him or herself and to consider the democratic ability to progress and grow. Arnold questions a civil sphere’s ability to, by itself, given what Arnold feels is its tendency to malign the State, allow the citizen to discern and articulate on a level conducive to democratic culture.

Unlike what Hegel proposed in *The Philosophy of Right*, Arnold was not interested in establishing what, exactly, his future vision of the British polity would look like. However, Arnold did recognize that the status quo was irrational in England, both the status quo in civil society and in the State as it existed. Progress was necessary, but was to emerge immanently, from the conditions already present and available in England. Time and again, as has been demonstrated, Arnold was criticized for not proposing any

³⁹ This trend has direct parallels in American civil society today, with the emergence in the 21st century of the Tea Party movement.

specific measures to England's political or social administration (a not entirely accurate criticism); however, his project was always recommending the increased importance of limitation, of regulation, and since he believed that civil society as it currently existed was incapable of, or unwilling to, regulate itself and bring forth a solidary culture, the immanent power of the already present State should enter into the process, establishing and demanding recognition from civil society so that the dialogical relationship between the two spheres, to use Jeffrey Alexander's terminology, could begin. To demonstrate why and how Arnold's rather revolutionary ends can be achieved, this final section will explore the civil and state spheres' powers as Arnold perceived them, and how, in Arnold's estimation, the executive powers of the State intervening in the civil life of a citizen can, seemingly counter-intuitively, short circuit the solipsism that he saw in civil society's assertion of "personal liberty" and rewire England for revolutionary change. The three works to be explored are "The Literary Influence of Academies," *A French Eton*, and a selection from *Culture and Anarchy*.

In "The Literary Influence of Academies," like the preface to his 1853 volume of poetry, a work ostensibly about literature merges seamlessly into a socio-political critique, engaging with wrong-headed liberalism and pointing towards the importance of the idea of the State for England's implementation of the revolutionary ideals of 1789. In "The Literary Influence of Academies," Arnold does not advocate specifically for an Academy in England; however, he notes the power that such a government arm *like* the Academy has in mediating order as well as affecting change in society. The influence of something like an Academy, an idea already present in England but being pushed aside (the State) can help facilitate the type of democratic culture, the type of solidarity,

incapable of being called forth in English civil society, in Arnold's estimation. A reader finds Arnold's argument in the following lines: "In short, where there is no centre of authority like an Academy, if you have genius and powerful ideas, you are apt not to have the best style going; if you have a precision of style and not genius, you are apt not to have the best ideas going" (*CPW* III. 248-249). In this sentence, Arnold calls the reader's attention to the necessary dialogic relationship between both genius and style, or, metaphorically, civil society and the State. Clearly, Arnold recognizes that both elements of intelligence and genius are important for the progress of democratic culture. Humanity needs both genius (ideas) and intelligence (or form, style) in order to progress, as was demonstrated earlier. However, without a mediating influence, one or the other of these gets the upper hand, and, as Hegel has pointed out frequently in *The Philosophy of Right*, both sides must recognize themselves in each other. The concept of the Academy points the reader towards what the French Academy suggests, and one of the ideas towards which it points is the necessity of a mediating party that draws the two sides of mankind closer towards the actualization of true human freedom within a polity. Arnold recognizes that the English, in his estimation, are on a path towards exaggerating one side above the other. Arnold therefore calls the people's attention to the fact that their desire to abandon some authoritative center moves away from development and, rather, down a bad path.

Arnold wants to pull the subjective will out of its solipsism, and this can only be done via a mediating element like the State. The French Academy, thanks to its being a "recognized authority, imposing on us a high standard," brings human beings "out of the atmosphere of commonplace," the commonplace being the "freedom of our lower nature" that we experience as willfulness (*CPW* III. 235). Elsewhere, Arnold has recognized that

the State has the ability to be a “working power” and not “a sentiment” in the lives of citizens (*CPW* V. 134). The State, like the Academy, has the capacity to represent back to the individual citizen his own high ideal (*CPW* II. 17-18). Moreover, if the citizen recognizes the State as a mediating element, it provides “worthy initiative” and sets “a standard of rational and equitable action” larger than the individual taken alone (*CPW* II. 28). England needs to be lifted out of the “level [our base nature] keeps if left to itself, and to bring it nearer to perfection” (*CPW* III. 236). Arnold’s vision of the State’s role in civil society parallels what Stephen Rockefeller presents as John Dewey’s vision of a democratic liberal worldview: “Liberal democratic politics are strong and healthy only when a whole society is pervaded by the spirit of democracy – in the family, in the school, in business and industry, and in religious institutions as well as in political institutions. The moral meaning of democracy is found in reconstructing all institutions so that they become instruments of human growth and liberation” (Rockefeller 91). Arnold drives the point home by making the same distinction between humans and animals that Hegel had referenced when discussing the willfulness of the “natural” human drives: “Other creatures submissively follow the law of their nature; man alone has an impulse leading him to set up some other law to control the bent of his nature” (*CPW* III. 236). As Hegel suggested, Arnold recognizes that natural man has not set up society from a position of perfection, but needs laws and a State in order to actualize freedom.

Arnold, however, does more than pull the subjective will out of its solipsism with his distinction between genius and intelligence. He has delineated the merits and defects of each, just as Hegel has developed the problems between the subjective and the

objective, and the necessity for each of these to meet and recognize one another through some sort of mediating force. Arnold associates genius with the demand for “freedom[,], entire independence of all authority, prescription, and routine” (*CPW* III. 238). Although Arnold praises the English for this genius, he also notes the problems that accompany genius if left unchecked: “it may show many grave faults to which the want of a [...] strict standard [...] tends to impose [...]; it may be full of hap-hazard, crudeness, provincialism, eccentricity, violence, blundering” (*CPW* III. 241). What better description could Arnold provide of his own impression of English civil society as it currently existed? These characteristics do not create a condition from which civil society alone can self regulate. These familiar words have also already emerged in the characteristics that Hegel gives to pure subjectivity, explored and critiqued in chapter 2 of this dissertation.

Genius lacks intelligence, characterized by “quickness of mind and flexibility [...]. The form, the method of evolution, the precision, the proportions, the relations of parts to the whole” (*CPW* III. 238). Intelligence generates form and style, helping check and channel genius. However, Arnold recognizes, as does Hegel, that too heavy an emphasis on form and style becomes oppressive. In an early work on religion, Hegel distinguishes “positivity” in religion, the oppressiveness of rules and forms, explored earlier. These check the properly religious spirit because they do not allow the subject to see him or herself in them. Likewise, too much emphasis on style can cause problems, much like Arnold writes, in the preface to this 1853 volume of poems, happened to the Renaissance writers and those who imitated them (*CPW* I. 9-12). This aesthetic critique emerges simultaneously as a critique of past State tyranny, of a certain unwillingness to

open old ways of thinking and governing to new and necessary modes. This is the attitude that Arnold characterizes as Barbarian, or Aristocratic, with its tendency to wholeheartedly reject new ideas.

In *A French Eton*, Arnold gives an excellent summary of his fears concerning the majority of the English citizenry's attitude towards the idea of the State. Arnold explains that citizens currently take the very idea of the State interfering in the lives of its citizens as anathema. More and more people, Arnold believes, in the current social climate, are moving away from even the notion that the State *can* do anything or that it *should* do anything. Rather, more and more people are placing their faith in pure individualism (the idea whose formation and problems earlier chapters in this dissertation have demonstrated), and by allowing the idea of the State to become out-dated in their minds they are hindering their own progress. Arnold again draws attention to how fond the English people are of deprecating the State without even thinking of exactly what they are deprecating. He writes:

The State had better leave things alone. One constantly hears that as an absolute maxim; now, as an absolute maxim, it has really no force at all. The absolute maxims are those which carry to man's spirit their own demonstration with them; such propositions as, *Duty is the law of human life*, *Man is morally free*, and so on. The proposition *The State had better leave things alone*, carries no such demonstration with it; it has, therefore, no absolute force; it merely conveys a notion which certain people have generalised from certain facts which have come under their observation, and which, by a natural vice of the human mind, they are then prone to apply absolutely. (CPW II. 299)

The notion of the State has become so far removed in favor of individualism that its very existence has threatened, in Arnold's estimation, to become extinct. The potential exists, as Jeffrey Alexander also sees, of collapsing the idea of the State into civil society, mentioned in the introduction.

However, the impotent and void character given to the State in what Arnold sees as the current civil climate makes, in actuality, the State impotent and void. He writes:

Our own wisdom has planned our contrivance for providing for our own wants. And what sort of a contrivance has our wisdom made? According to the *Times*, a contrivance of which the highest merit is, that it candidly avows its own impotence. It does not provide for our wants, but then it 'always told us' it could not provide for them. It does not fulfil its function, but then it 'never fed us with false hopes' that it would. It is perfectly useless, but perfectly candid. And it will always remain what it is now; it will always be a contrivance which contrives nothing: this with us 'is usage, it is a necessity.' Good heavens! what a subject for self-congratulation! What bitterer satire on us and our institutions could our worst enemy invent? (*CPW* II. 302)

For Arnold, then, the State is what it currently is, but what it is is not what it should be, nor is it rational as it stands. It must be changed and rationalized. But in order for it to be changed, it has to exist as a power over civil society. Arnold understands the history behind why the State has attained the status it currently has among citizens, and he takes time to trace it and then to offer a critique of the current solution to it.

One reason that British civil society maligns the State is that the aristocracy has for so long been seen as a class that has total control over the executive arm of the State, and, because it also controls so many other elements of government, wants itself to limit State power. The aristocracy, by holding the place of power in bureaucracy, can limit that very power to interfere in its own civil functioning, thus allowing itself greater privilege and ability to dominate on a local level. Arnold perceives, in this picture, that the State is impotent and always seen as subordinated to class interests, outside of the realm of solidarity and democracy that has now entered into England's social history. However, as more people are allowed into the running of the State, thanks to the Reform Acts, more people continue to adopt the attitude of limiting State power in order that their personal

willfulness can be continually expressed legally in the civil sphere, and will thus keep the State's power severely limited. However, such a continued class control in the civil sphere, or also of willful individualism allowed to progress unchecked in the civil sphere, merely allows, in the civil sphere, the perpetuation of the class control already in position. Arnold writes:

A tradition unfavourable to much State-action in home concerns [...] is thus insensibly established in the Government itself. This tradition, this essentially aristocratic sentiment, gains even those members of the Government who are not of the aristocratic class. In the beginning, they are overpowered by it; in the end they share it. [...] Far from trying to encroach upon individual liberty, far from seeking to get everything into its own hands, such a Government has a natural and instinctive tendency to limit its own functions. It turns away from offers of increased responsibility or activity; it deprecates them. [...] And why? Because the members of an aristocratic class are preponderating individuals, with the local government in their hands. [...] [Local government, or voluntary institutions were] not depending on the State, but on the local government, on the lord of the soil, on the preponderating individual. (*CPW* II. 303-304)

Thus, the State cannot become the nation in its collective and corporate character, for emphasis is not on brotherhood or solidarity in civil society or in a vision of participation in the State through office, mentioned in this dissertation's introduction. Arnold's fears about what happens when individualism and voluntary organizations are allowed to take control over things in the civil sphere thus reflects, in his opinion, the very issues being raised by the middle and working classes against aristocratic domination in the past. The new order, characterized by a maligned State, merely parallels the old order. The middle classes mimic the aristocracy of the past, and are destined to repeat their tyranny, not champion the revolutionary ideals of freedom. Arnold even remarks that the aristocratic class and their tendency to deprecate State action is the result of "the general interest of their order to personal temptations of aggrandizing themselves," and the "natural

prejudices and the seeming immediate interest of their own order” (*CPW* II. 305).

The fact that for so long the aristocracy used the State to force personal ideals upon those who were not privy to changing any of those ideals, yet were forced to conform to them, was one reason that the middle-class disliked any notion of State intrusion into the civil sphere. However, the middle-class, by refraining from any devotion to the State as a real power now that they have a level of political power, will not advance, in Arnold’s mind, because it wants to be completely self-referential in the civil sphere. Arnold believes that the practical action of the middle-class, as it currently practices it in the civil sphere, “has hitherto shown only the power and disposition to *affirm itself*, not at all the power and disposition to *transform itself*” (*CPW* II. 317). Arnold, by asserting that the middle-class needs to change in tandem with the actual existing governing system, says that the middle-class should not think that they are merely being asked to be satisfied with the present: “And when one says this, they [the middle-class] sometimes fancy that one has the same object as others who say the same to them; that one means that they are to yield themselves to be moulded by some existing force, their rival; that one wishes Nonconformity to take the law from actual Anglicanism, and the middle class from the present governing class” (*CPW* II. 320). Rather, the dissatisfaction with the present should be the very motivating force for them affirming the State’s positive role in dialoguing with civil society, which also threatens to become an oppressive sphere motivated by subjective willfulness.

However, because civil society, along with its institutions and media outlets, continues painting a picture of the State as over and against the betterment of civil society and the individual, citizens have no desire, in Arnold’s mind – moreover, are ill-

motivated even if they do desire – to enter into office as Jeffrey Alexander has characterized it in the introduction to this dissertation. Mere subjective willfulness and caprice make law, also, their servant, in Arnold's estimation. Who, indeed, would want to participate in a State bureaucracy whose impotence Arnold presents in the following passage?

[The citizen] sees the rich, the aristocratic class, in occupation of the executive government, and so if he is stopped from making Hyde Park a bear-garden or the streets impassable, he says he is being butchered by the aristocracy. [...] But he does not break many laws, or not many at one time; and, as our laws were made for very different circumstances from our present (but always with an eye to Englishmen doing as they like), and as the clear letter of the law must be against our Englishman who does as he likes and not only the spirit of the law and public policy, and as Government must neither have any discretionary power nor act resolutely on its own interpretation of the law if any one disputes it, it is evident our laws give our playful giant, in doing as he likes, considerable advantage. Besides, even if he can be clearly proved to commit an illegality in doing as he likes, there is always the resource of not putting the law in force, or of abolishing it. So he has his way [...]. (CPW V. 122-123)

Such a State, if it can be called a State, provides no reason for any citizen in the civil sphere to desire to enter into it. Neither the current State nor current civil society is representative, in Arnold's estimation, of a nation in its collective and corporate character, nor can it be if citizens allow the situation to stand as is.

And so Arnold presents, at the end of his chapter in *Culture and Anarchy* titled "Doing as One Likes," a most paradoxical task for the State, but one that this dissertation has been demonstrating is, in Arnold's schema, his solution. Because civil society, in Arnold's estimation, resolutely resists any sort of self-regulative institutions beyond those that merely reaffirm a person's right to do as he or she likes without resistance from others, Arnold believes the State is duty-bound to positively enter into the civil sphere and thus provide evidence of its power to be the nation in its collective and corporate

character, in order to insert into the civil discourse a positive check to that which threatens to fracture solidarity. Only by the State's thus acting resolutely can the State shake civil society out of its solipsism, can it "short-circuit" civil society into recognizing the potential of an extra-civil sphere – open to those very citizens with the advent of democracy and the recent suffrage extended to more and more citizens through Reformation Acts – with the power to institute a democratic and a solidary discourse that recognizes differences but does not tolerate, or at least does not respect, that which fractures the civil sphere.

The current quietist attitude of both the civil sphere and the State toward mass rioting and speech that Arnold considers inflammatory (bordering on what we might consider "hate-speech" today) does not tend towards establishing brotherhood, *fraternité*, publicly. By thus publicly condemning, and forcefully stopping, such acts, the State demonstrates, in Arnold's estimation, that its action is the location for the "action of the nation" (*CPW* II. 27). When confronted with violent outbursts, when confronted with speech and politics that tend to fracture solidarity, a citizen must "encourage and uphold the occupants of the executive power [i.e. the State], whoever they may be, in firmly prohibiting them" (*CPW* V. 136). However, the citizen must do this willingly, and with the understanding that:

[...] in provisionally [note the temporary term here] strengthening the executive power, [the citizen] is not doing this merely to enable our aristocratical baronet to affirm himself as against our working-men's tribune, or our middle class Dissenter to affirm himself as against both. It knows that it is stablishing *the State*, or organ of our collective best self, of our national right reason. And it has the testimony of conscience that it is stablishing the State on behalf of whatever great changes are needed, just as much as on behalf of order; stablishing it to deal just as stringently, when the time comes, with our baronet's aristocratical prejudices [...]. (*CPW* V. 136)

The State, once recognized as capable of intervening in the civil sphere for the benefit of the citizen in one temporary case, enables the individual citizen to recognize his place as part of the State in its executive powers acting for the production of a democratic order and culture, and can then see himself participating in or reflected in the mediating role that office plays between the individual and the nation or the community. The State thus establishes, temporarily, the limitations of individuals, and has thus provided the impulse for the vocabulary for an emergent democratic culture. This is the impulse of revolutionary ideals working in England: “[T]o recognize a period of transformation when it comes, and to adapt themselves honestly and rationally to its laws, is perhaps the nearest approach to perfection of which men and nations are capable. No habits or attachments should prevent their trying to do this; nor, indeed, in the long run, can they” (*CPW* II. 29).

From the State can come the impulse for democratic culture, and then civil society can in turn produce the same democratic culture, one not characterized by always harmonious ideas, but one that recognizes itself “not as a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming” (*CPW* V. 94). In so doing, the State opens itself up to being recognized as capable of being “a worthy initiative” in which to participate as the collective energy and intelligence of the nation (*CPW* II. 27). A citizen recognizes the power open to him or her in an office in such a State, thus realizing, through the dialogical relationship between State and civil society, the impulse of Arnold’s culture:

And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a *general* expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible

while the individual remains isolated. The individual is required, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry other along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward. (*CPW* V. 94)

Arnold alludes to the sentiment of a people willingly allowing a government to intrude into the civil sphere in *England and the Italian Question*, Arnold's first piece of overtly political writing, suggesting the power that this idea had over Arnold. He writes there that the English "have a natural antipathy to absolute government, and a predisposition to believe that it cannot exist by the wish of the governed" (*CPW* I. 76). Although Arnold clearly in the interpretation presented here did not believe in "absolute" government, he alludes to the idea of a nation allowing State intrusion into the civil sphere for their betterment. This conscious submission to the law characterizes a double move in the creation of a democratic, solidary political society. It acknowledges the idea of a State beyond the civil sphere that nevertheless reflects it, and the individuals, recognizing that the State therein has come into being because of them, acknowledges their reflection in it and its reflection in them. Thus begins a respectful recognition and dialogical process that begins both *in* the order and simultaneously moves beyond it. The citizens have to take the reins here, for Arnold himself recognizes that if the State in its executive power is not recognized as emanating from the will of the people, it necessarily descends into tyranny. Once seen, though, as operating outside of and above individual interests, the State can be molded and changed by the very people who make up the Nation it has power over.

IV. Discourse With the Future: Revolutionary Measures in Ireland

Arnold's later essays on the "Irish Problem" demonstrate the centrality of Frame's depiction of the Hegelian struggle for recognition. In the preface to his collection *Irish*

Essays, in which Arnold addressed generally the question of the Irish land Bill and Home Rule, Arnold makes it very clear that the struggle between Ireland and England is not only a political one, but one that involves recognition and England's ability to gain critical perspective on itself, much as Frame demonstrated Rustum had to do in "Sohrab and Rustum." Arnold makes this clear in the preface to *Irish Essays*, writing:

English people keep asking themselves what we ought to do about Ireland. The great contention of these Essays is, that in order to attach Ireland to us solidly, English people have not only to *do* something different from what they have done hitherto, they have also to *be* something different from what they have been hitherto. As a whole, as a community, they have to acquire a larger and sweeter temper, a larger and more lucid mind [...] to *be* something different, much more, even, than to *do* something different. (CPW IX. 312-313)

Arnold sees the Master as England, and the Slave as Ireland, and recognizes, not that Ireland only must continue to be a part of Great Britain, but that in order for the English and the Irish to express full autonomy, *England* must change its perspective, moreover must gain perspective and open itself up to recognizing Ireland so that Ireland can recognize herself in England. Certainly Arnold's belief was that Ireland should remain governed by England, but his ideal is not as imperialistic as some of the defenders of English rule in Ireland, nor was it as short-sighted as those who wanted to offer Ireland home rule. Nicholas Murray sums up the rather complex position that Arnold held on the Irish problem: "[Arnold] was not in fact against 'Home Rule' on principle, as William [Forster] had been. He was opposed to Gladstone's idea of a separate national parliament for Ireland but he was very much in favor of 'giving real powers of local government' to the Irish. He was thus a devolutionist but not a separatist" (336). Rather, Arnold saw the necessity of a symbiotic relationship with Ireland, one characterized by something akin to the struggle that Frame sees dramatized in "Sohrab and Rustum." Arnold even uses the

terminology of Hegel's famous struggle:

And one of the features of it is, that the Irish tenants prefer to stop the hunting of those whom they regard as a set of aliens encamped amongst them for sporting purposes, who have in the past treated them and spoken to them as if they were slaves, and who are disposed, many of them, to treat them and speak to them as if they were slaves still, -- the Irish people had rather stop this hunting, than profit by an expenditure upon it to the tune of ten thousand a year. (CPW IX. 316)

So long as both sides remain isolated and provincial, there will be no understanding and no peace between the two countries.

Arnold's Irish essays are definitely marred by his belief that Ireland should not separate itself from England. Arnold viewed Ireland as part of Great Britain, just as Scotland and Wales were. Rather than emphasize Arnold's desire to keep Ireland part of Great Britain, though, this final chapter section wants to emphasize the criticism Arnold offers of England and its past behavior towards Ireland, its present methods of governance, and the hopes he has for the future. As will be seen, Arnold takes England to task for its poor governance of Ireland, but he refuses to acknowledge what he considers a false dilemma regarding solutions to the problems surfacing between Ireland and England. Likewise, he characterizes England's policy as that of the Master in Hegel's dialectic. Moreover, a significant portion of his plan for overcoming the difficulties mirror Hegel's politics of recognition, as well as Hegel's belief in the necessity of a mediator – such as the State as a bearer of culture – in order that both Ireland and England can recognize full freedom for their citizens.

The current state of Ireland proves England's lack of open and receptive qualities, what he terms *eutrapelia*, “[l]ucidity of thought, clearness and propriety of language, freedom from prejudice and freedom from stiffness, openness of mind, amiability of

manners” (*CPW IX*. 24). The middle class, who the Irish see, in Arnold’s estimation, as the ambassadors of English culture, live “in a narrow world of their own, without openness and flexibility of mind, without any notion of the variety of powers and possibilities in human life. They know neither man nor the world” (*CPW IX*. 17). Thus, the description of English policy-makers mirrors the language Frame uses to characterize the Master mentality. Arnold believes that England’s policy makers, rather than being guided by their rational abilities, are guided solely by custom, habit, and catch-phrases.

He writes:

The true explanation of any matter is therefore seldom come at by us, but we rest in that account of things which it suits our class, our party, our leaders, to adopt and to render current. We adopt a version of things because we choose, not because it really represents them; and we expect it to hold good because we wish that it may. (*CPW IX*. 240)

The middle-classes thus become characterized by “hard and narrow prejudice,” become stuck in “confining ruts” and possess a “clouded vision of things” (*CPW IX*. 260).

Certainly this is neither the language of England working to get outside of its own willfulness, the language of recognition, nor the language of a culture that mediates and encourages a politics of recognition. Another excellent example of the English not being able to see beyond their own ideals comes in a particularly vehement tirade in *Culture and Anarchy*, wherein Arnold exposes the irrationality of the English policy towards Ireland:

And clearly the Nonconformists are actuated by antipathy to establishments, not by antipathy to the injustice and irrationality of the present appropriation of Church-property in Ireland; because Mr. Spurgeon, in his eloquent and memorable letter, expressly avowed that he would sooner leave things as they are in Ireland, that is, he would sooner let the injustice and the irrationality of the present appropriation continue, than do anything to set up the Roman image, -- that is, than give the Catholics their fair and reasonable share of Church-property. Most

indisputably, therefore, we may affirm that the real moving power by which the Liberal party are now operating the overthrow of the Irish establishment is the antipathy of the Nonconformists to Church-establishments, and not the sense of reason or justice, except so far as reason and justice may be contained in this antipathy. (*CPW* V. 194-195)

Because of this narrow vision, England's policy towards the Irish situation has taken on a false, fatalistic dualism not characterized by a politics of recognition. More and more, the language of willfulness and the Master mentality emerge in the essays that Arnold collected under the title *Irish Essays and Others* in 1882. Seeing the situation, policy makers retreat either into a refusal to recognize Ireland at all by cutting it off, or – the more dangerous option – desire to wrest submission from the Irish by sheer force: “And then there come eloquent rhetoricians, startling us with the prediction that Ireland will have either to be governed in the future despotically, or to be given up” (*CPW* IX. 239). Such language, such false dualism, reminds one of his distinction, in *Culture and Anarchy*, of “peculiarly British” forms of Quietism and Atheism. Cutting Ireland loose, pulling out, in Ireland's present unsettled state would be detrimental to Ireland's internal security and Ireland's own sense of culture. Would true freedom be experienced by them, or would they, too, become characterized by willfulness? Arnold believes the latter.

Although a modern reader cannot help but look unfavorably on Arnold's rationalization for not allowing Ireland total independence, one cannot ignore Arnold's bitter indictment of the violence that has characterized England's policy towards the Irish people for so long. Arnold's anger at the treatment of Ireland by England was evident much earlier than even the writing of these essays. For instance, Arnold writes in a letter to “K” about the Fenian bombing of Clerkenwell Gaol in 1867, “Who can wonder at these Irish, who have cause to hate us, and who do not own their allegiance to us, making

war on a State and society which has shown itself irresolute and feeble?” (*Letters* I. 377). Although he does not believe in cutting the Irish off, he equally opposes the violent crushing of Ireland’s morale and its citizenry. Those who support the despotic rule option believe all they can do “is to hold down the poor brainsick creatures and punish them, which, to say the truth, we have done freely enough in the past” (*CPW* IX. 245). The general violent despotism which has been in many ways the root of England’s policy towards Ireland has been the reason why things there have never progressed past their “first violent, confiscatory stage” (*CPW* IX. 251). Arnold asserts later in “The Incompatibles” that “the irresistible might of Great Britain” maintains the system of land ownership in Ireland, and that the Irish hold a moral grievance against the continuance of this same system because it “represent[s] a hateful history of conquest, confiscation, ill-usage, misgovernment, and tyranny” in the Irish imagination (*CPW* IX. 262).

The result of England’s past policies and the continued subjugation of its people have resulted in the creation of what Hegel termed a “rabble” in *The Philosophy of Right* (181). Keeping the Irish people from participating in a larger national culture – even a British one – has caused the Irish to become estranged from the polity, unable to see or recognize themselves in or through the mediating element of the State or of a national culture. Considering the condition of the Irish citizenry from this perspective, one can see why Arnold would fear cutting Ireland loose to handle its own business. “[T]he mass of the Irish people were kept without well-being and without justice,” he notes, and, averring here to Edmund Burke, remarks that when men are “kept as being no better than half-citizens,” they “will be made whole Jacobins” (*CPW* IX. 248). Considering the remarks on Jacobinism and the Terror explored in this dissertation, Arnold’s comment

cannot be considered flippant. Keeping them in a position of subjugation, due to England's Master mentality, "prevents the solid settlement of things, prevents the dying out of desires for revolt" (*CPW IX*. 243). Arnold remarks that England's mismanagement has "rendered them slaves" and has caused the Irish to continue being perceived as "a race of bigoted savages, to be treated with contempt and tyranny at [the English's] pleasure" (*CPW IX*. 246, 263). By refusing to recognize the Irish, England has done irreparable damage, even when conciliatory gestures were offered. Because a majority of English good will gestures came only under threat of open Irish rebellion, the gestures cannot be said to have been given rationally by England. They therefore carry little weight in the way of mutually and freely recognizing subjects.

And so, in the midst of this critique of England's policy towards Ireland, one clearly characterized by qualities reminiscent of Hegel's Master figure, Arnold proposes a politics of recognition. This does not simply state that England should be sympathetic to Ireland's position, although it certainly does mean that, too. Arnold will say that one characteristic of England's middle class – the class most frequently seen as bearers of English culture and civilization – is a "want of consideration for other people's feelings, [an] inability to enter into them" (*CPW IX*. 277). By not considering measures that have Irish interests in sight as well as England's, Arnold writes, "Not only do we not exceed our duty towards Ireland [...] we have not even gone to the extent of our duty" (*CPW IX*. 257). There are, Arnold insists, certain people capable of recognizing "that certain insufficient remedies" are not at all sufficient, nor that they "are also the only remedies possible," who think, moreover, that "this sort of thing is pedantry and make-believe, and who dislike and distrust our common use of it, and think it dangerous" (*CPW IX*. 257).

Arnold begins to employ the language of recognition and asserts the necessity for recognition to guide British and Irish policy.

Arnold remarks that there are some specific measures that can be taken that would help facilitate Ireland and England's merger. Satisfying what he calls the material and the moral grievances of Ireland against England are the practical measures he recommends. These include the necessity of giving land back to the Irish people, which will address the material grievance and the moral grievance simultaneously:

[O]wnership is better still. The absolute ownership of a part, by a process of commutation [...] engages a man's affections far more than any tenant-right, or divided and disputed ownership in a whole. Such absolute ownership was out of the question when the Irish occupier invented tenant-right; but it would in itself please him better than tenant-right, and commutation might have not given it to him. (*CPW IX*. 265)

Likewise, Arnold recognizes the necessity of extending to all the people in a polity the ability to be in close proximity to the municipal governance of the State: "For the peasant, moreover, for the agricultural labourer, municipal life is a first and invaluable stage in political education; more helpful by far, because so much more constant, than the exercise of the parliamentary franchise" (*CPW IX*. 12). Extending beyond this is the necessity of allowing all members of a polity a voice in the government, not because of any supposed natural right, but rather because of its rationality, allowing for recognition through the State:

Not that there is either any natural right in every man to the possession of a vote, or any gift of wisdom and virtue conferred by such a possession. But if experience has established any one thing in this world, it has established this: that it is well for any great class and description of men in society to be able to say for itself what it wants, and not to have other classes, the so-called educated and intelligent classes, acting for it as its proctors, and supposed to understand its wants and to provide for them. (*CPW IX*. 140)

Practical measures such as these begin, Arnold feels, employing a politics of recognition, mediated by the State, that will hopefully begin binding the Irish and the English together.

However, Arnold also recognizes the presence of a more subtle force at work for binding the Irish and English together in a common, shared culture, and this goes beyond simply stating that the Irish must bind themselves to English culture because English culture and civilization are superior. In fact, Arnold scoffs at the very idea, saying sardonically to those who suggest as much, “The dislike of Ireland for England the resistance of a lower civilisation for a higher one!” (*CPW IX*. 281). Rather, England’s culture and its civilization must reform because it is based on a tendency to not allow for a politics of recognition, and for that reason neither the Irish nor the English are finding themselves moving forward within a polity or a State perpetuating such an irrational thinking.

The second half of “The Incompatibles,” as well as several other essays included in *Irish Essays and Others*, explore the creation of this new civilization and culture that will renew both the English and the Irish. The Irish, Arnold writes, “must find in us something that in general suits them and attracts them; they must feel an attractive force, drawing and binding them to us, in what is called our civilisation” (*CPW IX*. 270). Arnold presents this same idea as early as *Culture and Anarchy*, wherein Arnold also emphasizes the importance of creating a State in which rationality makes itself known to the citizens:

[A]n operation performed in virtue of a mechanical rule, or fetish, like the supposed decision of the English national mind against new endowments, does not easily inspire respect in its adversaries, and make their opposition feeble and hardly to be persisted in, as an operation evidently done in

virtue of reason and justice might. For reason and justice have in them something persuasive and irresistible; but a fetish or mechanical maxim, like this of the Nonconformists, has in it nothing at all to conciliate either affections or the understanding. Nay, it provokes the counter-employment of other fetishes or mechanical actions on the opposite side, by which the confusion and hostility already present are heightened. (*CPW V*. 195)

Only through a culture maintained by and continually produced by a State function, like education for the middle classes, can England hope to attain a culture that the Irish can see themselves participating in and that recognizes them as free, rational humans. Their attachment, as has been noted earlier, cannot be affected through force, nor through a handout resulting from Irish threat (*CPW IX*. 265).

At this point, Arnold takes recourse, once again, to the role of the State in England, especially the State's role in education. As it currently stands, middle-class education in England produces a middle-class with "a defective type of religion, a narrow range of intellect and knowledge, a stunted sense of beauty, [and] a low standard of manners" (*CPW IX*. 276). Arnold repeats this idea in "An Unregarded Irish Grievance" and "Ecce, Convertimur ad Gentes" (*CPW IX*. 304, 14). Arnold believes in the essential nature of the reform of this element of culture in order to overcome the problems with Ireland. He writes:

[E]stranged as the Irish at the present are, it would be further necessary to manage their tempers and cultivate their good affections by the gift of a common civilisation congenial to them. But our civilisation is not congenial to them. To talk of it, therefore, as a substitute for perfectly healing measures is ridiculous. Indeed, the pedantry, bigotry, and narrowness of our middle class, which disfigure the civilisation we have to offer, are also the chief obstacles to our offering measures perfectly healing. And the conclusion is, that our middle class and its civilisation require to be transformed. (*CPW IX*. 282)

The current social system in England, based on class, will not win Ireland over to union.

The middle-class, with whom the Irish come frequently into contact, exemplifies the

worst expression of British culture and civilization. Not only do the schools that educate the middle classes produce poor culture, but this translates into laws and policies, made by the middle-class, that show lack of logic and lucidity (*CPW IX*. 277).

Arnold returns to where this dissertation's introduction first presented a connection between Arnold and Hegel: to the role of the State in middle-class education. Again, in *Irish Essays and Others*, he frequently references the middle-class's antipathy of State action. They have a "repugnance to being meddled with, a desire to be let alone [...] he [i.e. a middle-classman] likes to act individually whenever he can, and not to have recourse to action of a collective and corporate character" (*CPW IX*. 304). Arnold recognizes that others malign his emphasis on State action as socialist propaganda; "Socialism and recourse to the action of the State go always together," the English public is told (*CPW IX*. 14). Against this, Arnold notes in "An Unregarded Irish Grievance," the Irish desire for State action in this sphere, a desire "clearly formed, rationally conceived, and steadily persisted in" by the Irish (*CPW IX*. 310). To continue resisting the role of the State in bringing English civilization and culture to the next level through education keeps English civilization immobilized, thereby "exaggerating the blessings of self-will and self-assertion, in not being ready enough to sink our imperfectly informed self-will in view of a large general result" (*CPW IX*. 15) – to not, in short, practice a politics of recognition. Arnold, therefore, in his sweeping examination of Ireland's attitude towards England near the end of his life, was advocating a solution that was not simply one that would absorb Ireland, protozoa-like, into English culture as it stood. Rather, Arnold recognized that English civilization was not one worthy of Irish involvement, and he rather understood the Irish resistance to becoming one with a country that would not

recognize them as free and rational human beings.

Is Arnold, in his exploration of the “Irish Problem,” slightly looking forward to the type of politics of recognition that Charles Taylor hypothesizes in his influential essay “The Politics of Recognition”? Although Arnold’s approach to the Irish issue does not perfectly parallel Taylor’s, there are some striking similarities that might further mitigate the sting of those critics who peg Arnold as an imperialist or a reactionary when it comes to the question of Irish rule. Taylor, at the end of his essay, asserts that, in the current 20th and 21st century political landscape wherein nations are increasingly faced with the problem of addressing multiple cultural perspectives while simultaneously trying to establish a larger, national framework that accommodates them, the demand of these marginalized cultures to be recognized is as important a claim as previous claims of inequality, exploitation, and injustice at the hands of hegemonic cultures (64). The demand exists, on the part of the excluded, that the reflection the hegemonic culture gives the excluded culture of themselves be an acceptable one to the excluded culture.⁴⁰

Arnold, perhaps, by calling England’s attention to its tendency to *not* recognize or to reflect back to the Irish people a picture of themselves that they are willing to accept, suggests that England itself has caused of the Irish revolt. One can look back to Arnold’s lectures *On the Study of Celtic Literature* and can see Arnold noting this very thing.

Arnold notes with disdain the following paraphrase from the *Times* on the Welsh language and the study of Celtic culture. Arnold believes that the paraphrase exemplifies

⁴⁰ Taylor cites, as examples, the tendency of hegemonic cultures to reflect back to excluded cultures a demeaning reflection of themselves: “Thus some feminists have argued that women in patriarchal societies have been induced to adopt a depreciatory image of themselves. They have internalized a picture of their own inferiority [...]. An analogous point has been made in relation to blacks; that white society has for generations projected a demeaning image of them, which some of them have been unable to resist adopting” (25-26).

England's unwillingness to recognize a different culture, especially one associated with Ireland: "*Cease to do evil, learn to do good*, was the upshot of [the *Times*'s] exhortations to the Welsh; by *evil*, the *Times* understanding all things Celtic, and by *good*, all things English" (*CPW* III. 391). As if to drive home the connection between revolution and recognition in the Irish issue, Arnold writes, years before writing his Irish essays, "but what I said to myself, as I put the newspaper down, was this: 'Behold England's difficulty in governing Ireland!'" (*CPW* III. 392).

Taylor does not just suggest that these images need to be changed for the good of all the people in the culture (although certainly the thrust lies also in that direction), but rather suggests the necessity of the appropriate reflection "to give due recognition to the hitherto excluded" (66). Taylor remarks that his policy of recognition rests on a certain first principle that all cultures are worth considering as worthwhile – nobody, no culture, should be approached as intrinsically without worth. Taylor, like Arnold, though, does not descend into that absolute negativity that Arnold rejected when studying the *Bhagavad-Gita* when he asserts that cultures should be approached as equally worthy of consideration. And here Arnold could find some sympathy in Taylor's approach to the multiculturalist perspective:

As a presumption, the claim is that all human cultures that have animated whole societies over some considerable stretch of time have something important to say to all human beings. I have worded it in this way to exclude partial cultural milieu within a society, as well as short phases of a major culture. There is no reason to believe that, for instance, the different art forms of a given culture should all be of equal, or even of considerable, value; and every culture can go through phases of decadence. (66)

Taylor even holds out the possibility of *not* finding value in a culture to be a necessary part of his politics of recognition, or at least a possible result (69). In fact, Taylor

criticizes what he calls a “patronizing” position that conflates the presumption to approach a culture with the idea of equal worth with an assertion that a work of literature or a culture is indeed worthy (70). People who agitate for recognition, Taylor asserts – and think of Arnold’s vision of the politician’s rhetoric pandering to a people’s perceived self-worth – do not want condescension: “Any theory that wipes out the distinction seems at least *prima facie* to be distorting crucial facets of the reality it purports to deal with” (70). The giving real ear and real recognition to a culture, not just giving it what it wants, recalls Arnold’s belief that each class of people in England has something to offer the future of England, and also that the study of Celtic literature can “point out the many directions in which the results of those studies offer matters of general interest, and to insist on the benefit we may all derive from knowing the Celt and things Celtic more thoroughly” (*CPW* III. 387). This does not mean, though, unequivocal acceptance simply because a thing is Celtic. Arnold takes time, on another page, to criticize “Celtophiles” who tend towards this apotheosizing of Celtic literature simply because of its exclusion (*CPW* III. 388-389). Taylor even begins closing out his analysis by noting a paradox that Arnold, also, has alluded to and that has been commented on throughout this dissertation: “The peremptory demand for favorable judgments of worth is paradoxically – perhaps one should say tragically – homogenizing” (71). Taylor’s assertion that his new politics of recognition must have a vocabulary of standards that emerge from a continued interaction with other cultures, an interaction predicated on being willing to find new standards even within that new culture, might be a difficult one for Arnold to have agreed with; however, Arnold also notes that standards cannot become mechanistic (recall his criticism of Renaissance writers in the preface to his 1853 volume of poems). By withholding

judgment when presented with something new – not blindly accepting it and praising it simply for its newness – Taylor’s vision of cultural interaction may approach Arnold’s ideal of criticism, curiosity, and disinterestedness.

Having given extensive criticism of English policy towards Ireland in the past and the inadequate lines of action England was at present pursuing in order to redress the situation, Arnold offers a solution that, through the mediating power of the State, would provide a culture in which both England and Ireland could participate fully as rational and free human beings. Although the term Arnold uses to describe his solution may be one that current parlance would think inappropriate, when understood through the lens that this dissertation has been exploring – the lends of an Hegelian relationship between the Revolutionary ideals of 1789 and the role of the State in bringing them about – one may understand why Arnold asserts, in “The Incompatibles,” that his solution is a “revolutionary measure” (*CPW* IX. 264). The move that Arnold makes towards his belief in the State’s necessary importance for actualizing true subjective freedom in England takes, as has been demonstrated, intricate turns. The entire movement of Arnold’s thought throughout distinct parts of his life, though, demonstrates that each of these movements were necessary in order for Arnold to reach his mature conclusion. He, early in life, immerses himself in and then rejects the *Bhagavad-Gita*’s philosophy. He then replaces the *Bhagavad-Gita*’s philosophy with a socio-politico-aesthetic creed that emphasizes style, form, and limitation. Finally, Arnold connects Protestant Dissent and Robespierrean Terror. The current liberal project, he concludes, was misguided and putting England on a trajectory not to actualize the best impulses of the French Revolution, but rather to descend into anarchy and tyranny.

CHAPTER 6

CONCLUSION

I. Arnold's Doctrine of the Remnant

By now, the rationale behind Arnold's belief that increased State power in England was necessary in order for England to enter into the promises of democracy and true subjective freedom that the ideals of the French Revolution heralded should be clear. Liberal democratic reformers, seeking to minimize the State's role in citizens' lives, were taking a wrong course and, although with the best intentions, were leading England away from and not toward the emergence of true freedom in the modern era. Arnold's belief takes its impulse, as has been demonstrated, from Hegel. Moreover, it should be clear that Arnold's devotion to the idea of the State, and even his belief in the power that the present State in England has, does not presuppose his belief in the perfection of the present State, or the status quo as it exists in England.

As noted in the last chapter, though, Arnold was rather nebulous about what, exactly, was to constitute England's future State. Undeniably, Arnold did not believe that the current State in England was ideal, nor did he believe in a throw-back State, one that looked to a past manifestation of the State as the one thing necessary for England. What Arnold did realize, and consistently emphasize, though, was the function that a strong State power played in the liberation of humanity. This dissertation claims that the State's role as a necessary corollary for the emergence of true subjective freedom in any polity characterizes and motivates Arnold's entire project and helps to characterize it as revolutionary; additionally, this establishes a relationship with G.W.F. Hegel. The belief in the power of the State's function for liberating humanity from, to use Arnoldian language, crotchets, hole-and-corner religion, provincialism, and doing as one likes,

should be one way to assert Arnold's belief that he was a liberal thinker, albeit a liberal "tempered by experience" (*CPW* V. 88).

One significant element of Arnold's thought, however, introduces some complications into his overall parallel with the trajectory of Hegel's thought, and even complicates his own philosophy. Arnold's doctrine of the remnant recurs in various guises throughout his work. When brought into close conversation with his belief in a strong State power, Arnold seems to commit a return upon himself, although not necessarily a positive one such as he associates with Burke's revision of his criticism of the French Revolution (see *CPW* III. 267). In its different guises, one sees the *potential* that the remnant has for becoming, like Jeffrey Alexander's notion of office presented at length in the introduction, the means by which the State and the civil sphere dialogically inform each other and temper each other. On the other hand, Arnold's association of the remnant too much with the State reveals a tension in his philosophy, threatening to cause his philosophy to take on the very Jacobinical nature that he criticized and turned away from, as was demonstrated in chapter 2, early in his life. Arnold thus commits, with his doctrine of the remnant, an unconscious immanent critique of himself.

One can rightly ask, as one does about the State with Arnold's rhetorical interlocutor in "Democracy," "*The remnant? but what is the remnant?*" The remnant, as an idea, remains perhaps one of the more consistently present ideas throughout the years in Arnold's poetic and prose works. This perennial presence, though, signifies both its power and its problem. It is powerful because Arnold believed the idea was important, but the remnant, appearing as it does in different guises, has an element of inconsistency to it. This conclusion seeks to trace the doctrine of the remnant and expose its several

(although certainly not all) definitions and characteristics. This conclusion does so with the purpose of demonstrating how the remnant at the same time is an effective means of bringing civil society and the State into successful communication with each other, as a powerful force affecting revolutionary change both within the civil society and within the State while avoiding revolutionary violence, as well as how the remnant associates itself with that Jacobinical absolute negativity Arnold and Hegel noticed as a flaw in the philosophy presented in the *Bhagavad-Gita*. This conclusion will examine the limits and the possibilities of different definitions of the remnant, including the remnant as a group of elite, removed intellectuals, a group capable of achieving revolutionary change without violence, a civil group acting within the State as a constant immanent critique of it for the good of civil society and the State, as well as a potentially radical party that, if connected too closely with the State, could be considered an engine of social control.

II. The Genealogy of the Remnant

There have been several different explanations of Arnold's doctrine of the remnant, and one should explore them before looking into the different guises in this conclusion. For some scholars, like Richard Altick, Arnold binds his notion of the remnant with his idea of the State. In *Victorian People and Ideas*, Altick explains Arnold's remnant in light of Coleridge's idea of the clerisy, presented in *On the Constitution of Church and State*. Coleridge and Arnold both, Altick asserts, were reacting against the laissez-faire economics and the individualism which were both gaining ground as industrialism and capitalism exploded in England and were self-satisfactorily equated with England's wealth, progress, and civilization.

Against this idea, both Arnold and Coleridge believed that England's prosperity and its culture were not to be found in these rather superficial results of England's industrialism. Rather, there needed to be social institutions put in place to truly develop a culture independent of vulgar materialism. Coleridge's National Church would form a center of cultural and intellectual norms, something like Arnold's understanding of the French Academy: "Co-equal with those branches of the state which govern its material affairs, the National Church would have the use of a certain allotted portion of the country's wealth to support schools, universities, museums, libraries, scientific institutions, and other cultural undertakings" (Altick 263). This National Church arm of the State would be run by a group that Coleridge terms the "clerisy," a group of educated intellectuals, "definitely superior to the large run of people," who could, through the vehicle of education in schools and universities and also layman roles like vicars and rectors, begin spreading the true cultural wealth of England to the people who "remained in an inferior cultural position" but who, via the clerisy, could "benefit by [contact with superior culture] to whatever degree their intelligence allowed" (Altick 263-264). Altick directly links Coleridge's clerisy to Arnold's remnant, writing that after dismissing the majority of each of the current classes in England as equally unfit for the project of cultural growth, "There remained, then, the intellectual elite, or what Arnold called the saving 'remnant.' These were the few men who rose above the restrictions characteristic of their respective classes and were devoted to discovering, cultivating, and propagating the truth as apprehended by the genuinely disinterested mind" (Altick 264). In the interim between the present and when the State would accept its role as a purveyor of culture, the remnant represented to Arnold the temporary location of this transformative power.

Unfortunately, as Altick goes on to explain, though there was a group that could be termed the remnant in England (the university graduates and educated gentlemen) as well as a group of more middlebrow learners (“lit and phil” institutions and middle-class mechanics’ institutes), these groups could not be considered a remnant as Arnold had intended it. Altick explains, “True, neither the elite nor the middlebrow clerisy functioned as Coleridge and Arnold hoped they would, as culture-bearers to the multitude. They received and treasured knowledge, but they did not spread it except among themselves” (267). Likewise, as science and knowledge continued increasing, the members of these groups, who were widely read, began succumbing to the necessity of expert knowledge – the generalist began losing to the specialist. For such a reason, the democratization of knowledge and, in Arnold’s estimation, therefore of culture imploded, moving once again far away from the reach of the masses.

A more focused analysis of Arnold’s doctrine of the remnant comes in Bill Bell’s “Arnoldian Culture in Transition: An Early Socialist Reading.” Bell sees Arnold’s influence resurfacing in, of all places, early 20th-century socialist thought, particularly in a splinter group of Fabian Socialists called Guild Socialism. The primary voice of Guild Socialism was Alfred Orage, editor of the *New Age* newspaper. In opposition to the materialism of Fabian Socialism, Orage and other Guild Socialists believed in the primary power of art and literature and, overall, culture to affect social change. Art and literature, just as Arnold had often said, were a criticism of life for these Guild Socialists, and thus art and literature had the power to affect social change and progress. They believed that the popular literature of the day, rather than raising cultural awareness in the population was playing to the lowest common denominator, thus affecting a decrease in

the critical faculties of citizens (one can easily recall here Arnold's many assertions, explored particularly in chapter 2, that the current state of society was tending towards a fracturing rather than a solidifying of a citizen's worldview). Bell writes, quoting Orage and Arnold at several points:

While culture seeks to 'make the best that has been known and thought current everywhere,' popular literature, Arnold had claimed, tries 'to teach down to the level of the inferior classes.' Orage elaborated on this tension between democracy and aesthetic values throughout the pages of the *New Age*, making war on the mass-oriented literature of his own day and suggesting that, rather than having seen Arnold's desire for the wide dissemination of sweetness and light, 'all we have done in education is to spread out, very thin, over many the culture that before was concentrated in a few. Everybody now has a scraping of culture, but there is no cultured class. This is what I complain of. Writers have watered down their art to the thickness of the veneer of culture in the largest class.' Rather than having set a standard that might have rescued the middle classes from their Philistinism, as Arnold had advised, the producers of literature and criticism had merely sought to achieve popularity. (153)

The remnant, in Bell's estimation, was picked up on by Orage when he believed that there was a group that could maintain this level of critical integrity. Orage called this group the "custodians of culture," and they hold similarities to Arnold's remnant. Orage recognized that these custodians of culture were primarily the critics that wrote so frequently for journals and held such sway in both social and cultural matters. However, he was aware that they did not often realize the importance of their position. Rather than seriously and disinterestedly engaging and criticizing society, they were frequently guilty of "'passing' contraband upon the public" (Bell 153). What Orage did do, however, according to Bell, was recognize that these custodians of culture were not evidence of a cultural aristocracy, but were rather compatible with democracy and were dissociated from any sense of class structure. Moreover, in reference to Altick's identification of Arnold's remnant with Coleridge's clerisy, Bell writes, "these same conditions, that men

of culture should be classless and in sympathy with the march of democracy, were exactly the qualifications that set Arnold's elite apart from those of Coleridge, Carlyle, Ruskin, and later Wells" (153).

Several instances occur in which Arnold presents the incompatibility of an elite, removed group of people with social progress and reform. In "Count Leo Tolstoi," one of Arnold's few forays into novel criticism, Arnold comments fondly on one of Tolstoi's remarks that he believed himself to be, for a long time, a member of an elite group of men of letters – artists and poets – whose function in the great progress of life was to teach and instruct the world. However, the question always lingered for Tolstoi of what he was to teach people. He continues writing, "I passed for a superb artist, a great poet, and consequently it was but natural I should appropriate this theory. I, the artist, the poet – I wrote, I taught, without myself knowing what. I was paid for what I did. I had everything [...]. This faith in the importance of poetry and of the development of life was a religion, and I was one of its priests" (qtd. in *CPW* XI. 298-299). To this, Arnold remarks, as Tolstoi himself did:

The adepts of this literary and scientific religion are not numerous, to be sure, in comparison with the mass of the people [...] but of the mass of the people our literary and scientific instructors make no account. Like Solomon and Schopenhauer, these gentlemen, and 'society' along with them, are, moreover, apt to say that life is, after all, vanity: but then they all know of no life except their own. [...] And this pretentious minority, who call themselves 'society,' 'the world,' and to whom their own life, the life of 'the world,' seems the only life worth naming, are all the while miserable! (*CPW* XI. 299)

Herein one has Arnold admitting that the remnant cannot be an elite group, removed from the rest of society or removed from contact with the rest of society, determined to preach, but to only "preach to the choir." Their action is just as solipsistic as the social world that

Arnold hoped his remnant could help transform. The culture to which Tolstoi pointed was too far removed from contact with life to be of any real service to it. Arnold's conceives his remnant, as will be shown, as a real force in the civil and the extra-civil sphere.

The emergence as a real force in the civil and extra-civil sphere, however, was a characteristic of the remnant that had to emerge in Arnold's thinking, and it is definitely at a remove from its first appearance. Matthew Arnold's first published work of poetry was his 1840 Rugby prize poem "Alaric at Rome." In it, one sees the first presentation of a group that could be an early version of the remnant. The group of slaves in this poem behave in such a way, and Arnold's speaker comments upon them in such a way, as to make them worthy of note since they change the course of history, although they constitute a marginalized group of people. In stanza XX, Arnold poeticizes the role that the Roman slaves and domestics had in helping Alaric, the Goth, sack Rome. In a prefixed note, Arnold quotes Gibbon's depiction of these events, laying the poem's historical context: "'They (the Senate) were unable to guard against the secret conspiracy of their slaves and domestics.' 'At the hour of midnight, the Salarian gate was opened and the inhabitants were awakened by the tremendous sound of the Gothic trumpet'" (*PW* 466 n. c). Arnold notes this marginalized minority and their act of helping Alaric overthrow Rome. Although Arnold calls the reader's attention to this act, his poem's speaker judges the action less than favorably. He offers the following commentary:

Think ye it strikes too slow, the sword of fate,
 Think ye the avenger loiters on his way,
 That your own hands must open wide the gate,
 And your own voice guide him to his prey;
 Alas, it needs it not; is it hard to know
 Fate's threat'nings are not in vain, the spoiler comes not slow. (*PW* 466)

The poem judges the actions of this minority group as vain in “Alaric at Rome.” A powerful force Arnold terms “Fate” subsumes the slaves’ defiant act of overthrowing their superiors. In this presentation, at least, Rome’s sack was inevitable. The slaves’ conspiracy was not the cause of Rome’s fall. The inevitability of Alaric’s victory in history’s larger scope negates such action on the slaves’ part. Change, as a necessary component of history, is more powerful and, ultimately, more significant than the people who affect it. In this very early poem, Arnold calls his own and his readers’ attentions to a larger picture and to an almost impotent assessment of human action in the larger vision of history, perhaps even man’s actions in the hands of a fate or a history that wills certain things without regards to mankind at all (an idea explored at length in Alan Grob’s *A Longing Like Despair*).

That Fate brings Alaric to Rome, thus ushering in the Empire’s downfall, suggests that Arnold recognizes that change marks historical progress, especially a change of power and a change of rule. “Alaric at Rome” calls the reader’s attention, at least with regards to the slaves’ actions, to the role that Arnold believes humans have in affecting that change. History and its events, though, were a major concern of Arnold’s throughout his life, especially revolutionary events. Eight years after writing “Alaric at Rome,” he would witness the fall of France, again, under revolutionary pressure. As a child, he traveled with his father and mother to post-Revolutionary France where he looked in awe upon the reminders of its recent uprisings (see *Letters* I. 25, 30). Alaric, in the poem, also recognizes that empires are merely constructs meant to change. Arnold will write later, “Human thought, which made all institutions, inevitably saps them, resting only in that which is absolute and eternal” (*CPW* II. 29); likewise, he has Alaric, in the poem, state,

“‘All earthly things must die’” (*PW* 469). As the poem’s speaker continues, he says, “Alas! that fiery spirit knew / The change of life, the nothingness of power, / How both were hastening, as they flowered and grew, / Nearer and nearer to their closing hour” (*PW* 469). Who holds this agency, though? Who, or what, determines the course of human action? Arnold places, early on, this agency in a construct termed Fate, analogous to a divine guiding hand. The connection is difficult to make, and Arnold’s early poem loses its definition of agency, descending almost into morbidity. This lack of agency persisted in Arnold’s early poetry. It resurfaces in a later poem, “To a Republican Friend, 1848 (Continued),” wherein, after sharing, in the previous sonnet, the enthusiasm for revolutionary change of a Republican Friend’s (Arthur Clough) with the lines, “If these [i.e. Republican ideals] are yours, if this is what you are, / Then I am yours, and what you feel, I share,” Arnold concludes that the revolutionary ideal will not appear “at a human nod” (*PW* 7). Interestingly enough, “Alaric at Rome” ends with a reference to Alaric’s burial underneath a river. Alaric’s men bury him there, inert in the stream of time, himself taken over by the time stream of history.

The remnant idea, as presented in the early poems, does not stay the same, especially as Arnold’s thought progresses. Historical progress becomes less captured in capricious fads – illustrated by the ill-advised actions of the slaves in “Alaric at Rome.” Conceiving, early on in life, of the time stream merely as the temper of the age suggests that Arnold does not feel that humankind can adequately participate in movements or revolutions because both are full of caprice. Rather, one must shelter oneself away from the time stream in which others “plunge and bellow” (*CL* 95). “I do not believe,” he writes to “K” in 1849, “any *fruitful* revolution can come in my time” (*Letters* I. 151).

From this tendency to shelter emerges the reclusive and removed figure, which chapter 2 demonstrated was done away with as Arnold matured.

Arnold's philosophy developed away from the fatalism that the above position suggests, moving towards a view of history as changeable. Lionel Trilling writes of the shift:

[...] old forms of society vanish and new ones arise, [...] the cadence of living changes, [...] fresh needs of the mind develop and must be satisfied. But [Arnold] now sees, apart from this unconscious movement, the possibility of a conscious activity on the part of a people to control the almost blind tendency of History. If an historical tendency be really the dominant one of an age, social groups that oppose it will be swept away; those that go along with it may modify and aid it and themselves eventually become ascendant. (149)

Here Arnold presents a vision of historical progress that not blind and unyielding, a vision that does, in some measure, respond to human action and pressure. This is not the Fate of "Alaric at Rome," but rather a *Zeit Geist* that allows humanity the opportunity of shaping and changing its own course. This group that will shape the course of history can collectively be called the remnant.

In a late essay, Arnold sketches out what he terms the "doctrine of the *remnant*," establishing the remnant as a viable force for change (*CPW* X. 152): "Numbers; or The Majority and the Remnant." In the essay, Arnold makes it clear that a true devotion to one's country, over and above the shallow patriotism which is the "last refuge of a scoundrel," characterizes his conception of the remnant (*CPW* X. 143). A sense of self-satisfaction bordering on delusion characterizes false patriotism, as does faith in the contingent apparatuses of the polity in which one lives, the *staus quo*. Such a devotion to contingent legal and political elements recalls Hegel's warning that devotion to habit and custom can cause spiritual and political death:

Yet human beings can also die from habituation: this occurs when they are wholly habituated to their lives, when they have become dull spiritually and physically and the opposition between subjective consciousness and spiritual activity has disappeared; for they are active only insofar as there is something they have not yet attained, with respect to which they want to develop themselves and prove themselves. When this has been accomplished, activity and vitality disappear, and the lack of interest that ensues is spiritual or physical death. (*PR* 130)

The true devotion to the progress of the polity, of which Arnold's remnant will be exemplar, comes through a commitment to change the unsoundness at the heart of the State as it is currently being administered.

The remnant is a serious force for potential change; they constitute an "actual power" in the State (*CPW* X. 150). However, making it clear, at least at this point, that the remnant is an immanent critique rather than a radical one, Arnold distinguishes the remnant from "a voice outside the State, speaking to mankind or to the future, perhaps shaking the actual State to pieces in doing so" (*CPW* X. 149). This shaking of the State to pieces characterizes the radical, violent revolutionary action characteristic of Jacobinical thinking. The remnant, rather, in its critique of the State's actual existing institution, helps to uphold the community, "reform[s] the State in order to save it, [...] preserve[s] it by changing it" (*CPW* X. 149). As can be seen, although Arnold demonstrates here his devotion to the necessary idea of the State, even the State as it currently exists, he by no means the perfection of the State as is. Although Arnold does not approve of radical revolution, he neither opposes revolution as a change in thought, as part of the natural progress of humankind. He supports a revolution by due course of law, as he says. In this way, he upholds the natural law of progress and change at the same time the he critiques laws and the State becomes a means to that ultimate end, human freedom within a polity. Near the essay's close, Arnold remarks that the remnant must help not only England, but

France as well, recovering it “through a powerful and profound renewal, a great inward change” (*CPW X*. 162). “[T]he remnant,” he continues, quoting Isaiah, “‘The remnant shall return;’ shall ‘convert and be healed’ itself first, and then shall recover the unsound majority. [...] A remnant of how great numbers, how mighty strength, how irresistible efficacy!” (*CPW X*. 163).

In “Numbers,” Arnold gives two examples of the remnant from earlier times, and one may note how his first example reflects a remnant that did not succeed. Plato presents an image of the remnant that he felt was present in his own time. This remnant consisted of followers of wisdom in the midst of Rome’s decline, ones who recognize the multitude’s madness, especially those who govern public policy. Unfortunately, this remnant, according to Plato, was impotent. Arnold quotes Plato:

They may be compared [...] to a man who has fallen among wild beasts; he will not be one of them, but he is too unaided to make head against them; and before he can do any good to society or his friends, he will be overwhelmed and perish uselessly. When he considers this, he will resolve to keep still, and to mind his own business; as it were standing aside under a wall in a storm of dust and hurricane of driving wind; and he will endure to behold the rest filled with iniquity, if only he himself may live his life clear of injustice and of impiety, and depart, when his time comes, in mild and gracious mood, with fair hope. (*CPW X*. 145-146)

Plato’s remnant comes across as impotent, not only because they are too few in number, but also because they removed themselves from the fray. How similar are Arnold’s early figures of lone geniuses, the gipsy child by the seashore, the Shakespeare who looks out wordlessly from a picture, the scholar gipsy who Arnold’s poem encourages to fly the feverish contact with the world, and Obermann in the Alps? However, by this point in Arnold’s career, his isolated geniuses have changed into powerful forces for change in the world. Arnold presents, then, a critique of his earlier vision, offering instead a

powerful remnant who will be a force for change, an immanent critique of England, by being involved in the fray.

The remnant emerges in several different guises in Arnold's prose criticism. They emerge under the terms "intellectual deliverer," "genius," "children of spirit/light," and "aliens." A brief summation of their appearances in Arnold's prose work, accompanied by some context suggesting their roles, follows. One first comes across this remnant in the prose in the form of "intellectual deliverers." Arnold characterizes such a person as possessing "the desire to find the true point of view from which to contemplate this spectacle [i.e. that of modern life]. He who has found that point of view, he who adequately comprehends this spectacle, has risen to the comprehension of his age: he who communicates that point of view to his age, he who interprets to it that spectacle, is one of is age's *intellectual deliverers*" (CPW I. 20). This version of the remnant possesses not only a critical perspective on the current age, but also communicates that interpretation to others. Interestingly enough, in Arnold's preface to *Merope*, he takes time to explore the role of the Chorus in Greek tragedy. The Chorus has many of the same characteristics as this intellectual deliverer. Rather than being a single person, though, the Chorus is a group of people. Arnold writes that the Chorus represents the ideal spectator, one who purposes "To combine, to harmonize, to deepen for the spectator the feelings naturally excited in him by the sight of what is passing on the stage – this is one good effect produced by the chorus in Greek tragedy" (CPW I. 61). By using the term "spectator," Arnold connects this Chorus with the "spectacle" that the intellectual deliverer interprets for the people of his age, just as the spectator of Greek tragedy, excited and perhaps

confused by the action passing on the stage, has that spectacle combined, harmonized, and interpreted by the Chorus.

Culture and Anarchy finds Arnold giving yet another name to this remnant – geniuses. Arnold directs this more towards individuals, and Arnold occasionally names these geniuses; however, these geniuses clearly make up part of the remnant. These geniuses, Arnold believes, have the capacity to produce change in England: “they appear where and when one least expects it, they set up a fire which enfilades, so to speak, the class with which they are ranked [...] and seasonably disconcert in their worship of machinery” (*CPW V*. 146). That Arnold has his geniuses “enfilade,” or to fire upon as if in combat, their own class demonstrates the subversiveness, and in some ways militaristic nature, of Arnold’s plan for this group of people. Like the remnant in other works, Arnold does not take his geniuses from one class only. They appear in all classes. This remains true, also, of Arnold’s aliens, which he speaks of several times, but that he often references indirectly, such as in the following quotes. Note, however, that these people appear in all classes, and that they continue to perform the duties that Arnold has been giving to those other manifestations of the remnant presented thus far:

There is among them [the Populace] a small body of workmen with modern ideas, ideas of organization, who may be a nucleus for the future. (*CPW V*. 329)

But I remarked at the same time, that scattered throughout these classes were a certain number of generous and humane souls, lovers of man’s perfection, detached from the prepossessions of the class to which they might naturally belong, and desirous that he who speaks to them should, as Plato says, not try to please his fellow servants but his true and legitimate masters – the heavenly Gods. (*CPW VIII*. 283)

I speak of classes. In all classes, there are individuals with a happy nature and an instinct for the humanities of life, who stand out from their class and who form exceptions. (*CPW IX*. 9)

Arnold does not confine his vision of the remnant, this body of individuals who affect change, to the province of one class, but rather acknowledges their presence throughout England in an equally small degree. Doing this, Arnold hopes, will make members of all classes become part of the movement towards progress and the future. He writes, “and those powers thus exhibited, tend really not to strengthen the aristocracy, but to take their owners out of it, to expose them to the dissolving agencies of thought and change, to make them men of the modern spirit and the future” (*CPW* V. 126). Such phrases as “dissolving agencies of thought” certainly suggest a breaking down or breaking apart of the old orders, as well as mechanistic ways of thinking that have characterized England’s civil society, in Arnold’s perspective, during his time.

In the essay “Heinrich Heine,” Arnold provides his readers with yet another name for the remnant – “Children of Light.” Although again the name has changed, the qualities of this remnant group have remained the same. According to both Heine and Arnold, a group exists that opposes the Philistine middle class. The Philistine, as Heine conceived of it, was the “unenlightened opponent of the chosen people, of the children of light.” Arnold continues with his own definition of this group: “The party of change, the would-be-remodelers of the old traditional European order, the invokers of reason against custom, the representatives of the modern spirit in every sphere [...] regarded themselves [...] as children of light” (*CPW* III. 112). Here Arnold makes, in his terminology, a direct connection between the children of light and the intellectual deliverers of the 1853 preface because both represent the modern spirit, trying to make sense of the fragmentary world around them. Once again, Arnold makes it clear in this essay that this group of people is a remnant, a leftover group, after completing his classification of the

other three classes in England. He sees the remnant's position as under attack by the other classes. Arnold remarks that liberal reformers in Parliament attack those who desire reform, "treating children of light like the very harshest of stepmothers" (*CPW* III. 114).

Not until *Culture and Anarchy* does Arnold definitively place the remnant in a position to bring about revolutionary change. He does this at the end of the work's first chapter and it comes, not from Arnold's mouth, but rather from a translation of a passage from St. Augustine's *Confessions*. Arnold writes, "'Let us not leave thee alone to make in the secret of thy knowledge, as thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of the light from darkness; let the children of thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the times; for the old order is passed, and the new arises; the night is spent, the day is come forth'" (*CPW* V. 113-114). Several phrases mark that Arnold is revising and building upon the ideas of the remnant that have been explored thus far. Arnold uses the term "children of thy spirit" as well as the phrase "light shine," which combine elements of his "children of light." Perhaps more importantly, these "children of thy spirit" will "announce the revolution of the times," whose characteristics are an old order passing away and a new one arising. The original Latin that Arnold here translates "revolution" is "*et significant tempora*," also translated as "signs of the times." The transition from "signs of the times" to "revolution of the times" is significant. During the "Turbulent Sixties," during which Arnold was composing most of *Culture and Anarchy*, the word "revolution" would not have dropped idly from Arnold's pen. Arnold clearly believes that England is due for a revolution, though in *Culture and Anarchy* he

sees that revolution as taking place by due course of law. It appears, though, that however Arnold foresees this revolution taking place, the remnant will herald and bring it about.

The names that Arnold gives to this group that can collectively be called the remnant changes, understandably, over time. Likewise, the role that this remnant would play on the stage of world history shifts as Arnold's own ideas about humanity's ability to affect the course of world history changes. Ultimately, the remnant emerges – despite its different guises – as a force for change and progress in the world. As was demonstrated in the brief looks at the appearance of the remnant in *Culture and Anarchy* and “Heinrich Heine,” Arnold even associated his remnant with revolutionary change. However, as Arnold continued developing this doctrine of the remnant, he began merging the remnant more and more with his notion of the State. This proximity, when viewed in context of the movement that this dissertation has been exploring, represents a return to an issue that both Arnold and Hegel believed was dangerous – the absolute negativity represented by the Jacobinical philosophy of the *Bhagavad-Gita*.

III. The Return Upon Himself

The role that the remnant should play in Arnold's social theory represents, though, perhaps one of the most perplexing turns that Arnold makes in his social theory. This is especially true when seen in light of the movement that has been traced throughout this dissertation, namely from an early infatuation with the *Bhagavad-Gita*, Arnold's subsequent recognition of the *Gita*'s limitations with regards to subjective action in the world and freedom of the subjective will along Hegelian lines. Arnold, in several places, believes that the remnant must play the role of the State. In “The Literary Influence of Academies,” Arnold includes sidelong references to the remnant and then

gives them their position in his larger framework for social reform in England. The remnant, the geniuses, the children of light, the aliens, will form the very body of his State, just as the French Academy gathers together the best minds in France, thus constituting a cultural center and standard. He writes, “It is not that there do not exist in England, as in France, a number of people perfectly well able to discern what is good [...]; but they are isolated, they form no powerful body of opinion, they are not strong enough to set a standard [...]; they easily persuade the multitude that this is so when the minority is scattered about as it is here; not so easily when it is banded together, as in the French Academy” (*CPW* III. 242). To band the scattered remnant together will bring about reform. In this way, Arnold hopes that his remnant will do what it could not during the time of Plato and Isaiah. With Plato, the remnant were impotent; with Isaiah, the remnant were too small. However, by banding the remnant together and placing it into a position of power within the State – even allowing it to become that engine of social control – this remnant will have more power for change than that of Plato or Isaiah.

A difficulty arises when Arnold identifies the remnant too closely with the authority of the State, for in doing so he comes back into contact with an Hegelian idea that he apparently did away with early in life. This occurs on several levels. By identifying the remnant with the State, Arnold reinscribes the remnant into the system that he believes needs changing. His remnant becomes the very authority, the very mechanistic thinking, the very spectacle that he warns his readers against so much in his prose. This very possibly marks a contradiction in Arnold, but Arnold’s thinking may be falling victim to his own necessary logic. Arnold may not have been a historical thinker. Perhaps he was thinking of some ideal of progress, but he was not certain that the end of

history was something to be desired. One wonders if Arnold even believed that there was going to be a perfect, utopian world at the end of this progress. Arnold's project does not end in a definite utopia. Arnold envisions his project as the continued progress through revolutionary actions. If, as Trilling remarks, Arnold spent the majority of his life trying to adjust himself to the idea of revolution, trying to figure out just how much the notion of revolution was in line with the natural order, then perhaps here one works towards an answer. Arnold did feel that revolution was part of a natural order. The attempt to stop revolution, or the attempt to subsume revolution – rhizome-like – is unnatural. This is the correct interpretation of Arnold's famous misquotation of the Duke of Wellington, that a revolution must take place by "due course of law" (*CPW* V. 136). In this quote, Arnold merges the political definition of revolution with its natural sense.

Arnold seems to be moving back towards a definition of the self that he tried to avoid early in life when he was struggling with Buddhism, only this time he grafts that subjectivity onto an entire group of people. The remnant becomes defined apart from the "masses" necessarily. Arnold mentions that the masses will always be incompetent. Therefore, the remnant must always be defining itself in opposition to something else. This is Jacobinical. Arnold expects this remnant to take over and become the mechanistic power that he struggles so hard against.

As has been shown, the remnant appears in many guises throughout Arnold's work, usually with varying degrees of impact on society as well as varying degrees of involvement in society. One problem with the remnant, at least as presented in "Numbers," remains that this remnant emerges out on the other side of the problem, becoming Jacobinical in its implications and participating in what Hegel defined as

“absolute negativity” when critiquing the *Bhagavad-Gita*. By having as a saving remnant a group that defines itself apart from the unsound majority, Arnold has set himself up for a recurrence of absolute negativity. Most striking, Arnold appears aware of this. “The great majority,” he writes of both Athens and Israel, “were unsound, and their State was doomed” (CPW X. 147). This is his critique of why the remnant was not very powerful, either in Athens or in Jerusalem. However, the majority is always unsound: “‘The majority are bad,’ said one of the wise men of Greece [...]. ‘[M]any are called, few chosen.’ [...] Perhaps you will say that the majority is, sometimes, good; that its impulses are good generally, and its action is good occasionally. Yes, but it lacks principle, it lacks persistence; if to-day its good impulses prevail, they succumb to-morrow; sometimes it goes right, but it is very apt to go wrong” (CPW X. 144). That Arnold is moving back towards a position he had when he was reading and considering the philosophy as presented in the *Bhagavad-Gita*, perhaps before he was able to put it aside completely under the influence of critiques like Hegel’s, becomes evident in how familiar this line sounds to an entry in the Yale Manuscript, dated approximately 1848: “ha, say we, what a power conviction lends to our practice: the next day the nerves are wrong, the manners full of blunder & despicability, and the conviction, metamorphosed into consciousness, riding us like a nightmare” (84). The majority has a hard time hanging on to a conviction, for it soon becomes something of a nightmare to the majority. Moreover, the majority’s tendency to lack conviction, to lack principle and persistence, makes for frequent failures and, Arnold continues, “Nor is it true that after repeated failures, we stand” (84). The participant in the remnant must always be differentiated from the average man, the majority. “If we are to enjoy the benefit,”

Arnold continues in “Numbers,” “of the comfortable doctrine of the remnant, we must be capable of receiving also, and of holding fast, the hard doctrine of the unsoundness of the majority, and of the certainty that the unsoundness of the majority, if it is not withstood and remedied, must be their ruin” (*CPW* X. 159). In his doctrine of the remnant, then, Arnold presents the reader with a revolutionary group of outcasts, part of the polity and yet setting themselves against the majority of that same polity. Through their resistance to the will of the many, they assert the importance of whatever the majority has excluded from the polity. They act as a constant immanent critique of the State, at once a part of and excluded from the State.

Thus, in Arnold’s doctrine of the remnant, Arnold misses a core of radical revolutionary potential. Unfortunately, it is a core of revolutionary change that Arnold had judged impotent and dangerous.

IV. “[N]emo doctus unquam mutationem
consilii inconstantiam dixit esse.”
- Cicero (qtd. *CPW* III. 279)

Scholars will do well to remember that Matthew Arnold was one of the more forgiving critics of his age. He was aware enough of his own historical situated-ness to recognize that, even if he did make often Olympian pronouncements, those same pronouncements were just as likely to need to be modified and rectified as time and circumstances changed. This did not preclude his belief in the rightness of what he was saying, nor did it preclude his belief in what, for lack of a better phrase, one could term the truth of the Truth. In an early work of criticism, he writes the following about pressing impetuously for a particular opinion: “It is impossible to go very fast when the matter with which one has to deal, besides being new and little explored, is also by its

nature so subtle, eluding one's grasp unless one handles it with all possible delicacy and care" (*CPW* III. 361). Truly, Arnold occasionally went overboard in his criticism.

However, he seemed always to recognize this transgression when it happened, and would offer a sincere apology, all the while maintaining his line of argument, never backing down if he believed that the principle of what he was expressing was correct, even if the expression of it fell short of the tactful mark.

Nowhere was this more evident than in his extended repartee with Francis Newman on Newman's recently published translation of Homer, a translation that Arnold felt was not only aesthetically faulty, but bore within it all the dangers of the political climate of the time. Arnold never backed down from his belief that Newman's translation was a failure; however, when he realized that many of his remarks had cut the man deeply, Arnold expressed sincere regret. As a young man he wrote to Clough, after reading Newman's *Phases of Faith*, that Francis Newman had "written himself down an ass [i.e. ass]" (*CL* 115). Later in life, Arnold volleyed much more public criticisms at Newman. He writes to Clough that his third lecture in the series that would become *On Translating Homer*, would "lay down a little positive doctrine having negated enough" (*CL* 153). *The Spectator*, according to a letter of 3 July 1861, writes that Arnold attacks Newman in a "cavalier" style, and remarks that "Mr Arnold lectures a man who is as superior to him in learning and probably also in weight of character, as he is inferior in poetic insight" (*Letters Digital Edition*). Ultimately, in a letter of 30 July 1861, Arnold writes to his mother that he will write a fourth lecture for *On Translating Homer*, in which he will "try to set things straight, at the same time soothing Newman's feelings, which I am really sorry to have hurt, as much as I can without giving up any truth of

criticism” (*Letters Digital Edition*). Clearly, then, Arnold felt a deep sense of his own limitations.

One sees Arnold’s forgiving nature in another place in his attitude towards an ancestor of his own who played a major role in some of the first witch trials in England. One sees this in his essay “A Psychological Parallel,” wherein he writes of both this ancestor as well as of St. Paul that though their thoughts often give the reader evidence of much error, they also occasionally provide one with the “error’s future corrective” (*CPW* VIII. 129). Arnold does not, then, dismiss people outright simply because they have made an error in reasoning or judgment. In this light he uses the quote from Cicero that opens this chapter – “Change of mind is not inconsistency.”

And this change of mind, or at least a change of doctrine, is somewhat apparent, as has been demonstrated, in Arnold’s relationship with several of Hegel’s ideas that, over time, were significant in forming Arnold’s thought, from his early encounters with the *Bhagavad-Gita* and the problems involving subjectivity therein, to his paralleling of his preface to the 1853 volume of poems with many of the ideals present in Hegel’s preface to *The Philosophy of Right*, to, finally, the awkward relationship between the State as a limiting force necessary for revolutionary change and the “doctrine of the remnant” as a source of revolutionary change. Perhaps no parallel between Matthew Arnold and G.W.F. Hegel can come without some caveat, but the parallels explored in the preceding chapters have, hopefully, contributed in some small way to a closer and more sympathetic vision of the relationship of Hegel and Arnold’s thought, and to an ability to affirm Arnold’s own commitment to 1789.

Moreover, hopefully through this work scholars will take up recent, and not-so-recent, trends in Hegel studies that examine the more progressive elements of Hegel's political thought, especially those elements of his thought that attempt to marry the ideals of the French Revolution to his simultaneous belief in the necessity of State power. Arnold, too, held such a tenuous belief in the powerful connection between both of these seemingly incompatible forces of the 19th century and beyond.

It should be noted that much of what Matthew Arnold states and believes, many of the conclusions that he was irrevocably drawn to through his thinking and through the influence of Hegel, were proved wrong in world history, and certainly seem wrong to an educated mind now. Arnold and Hegel were both products of their own time. However, what I believe some of the comments from Hegel and Arnold in this conclusion call the scholar's attention to is that they recognized the possibility of this tendency in themselves. This work does not mean to prove the necessary rightness of Arnold's vision or of Hegel's vision. Although critics may consider many areas of both Arnold and Hegel's writings and philosophies necessary in today's post-modern world, glutted with meaning and with information and perspective, just as many dangers exist in the wholesale application of their ideas.

As can be seen, the ideas that Arnold began wrestling with in his early engagement with the *Bhagavad-Gita* progressed through his early statement of poetic and political philosophy and finally merged together into a vision of society that, in his opinion, created the best opportunity for the realization of true human freedom, the revolutionary principle on which he believed his entire life's work depended. By rejecting firmly, early in life, the solely individualistic view of freedom, Arnold was able

to recognize the problems that were potentially surfacing in poetics which mirrored these completely subjective ideas of poetry that rejected limitation and adherence to form.

From this general aesthetic vision, Arnold proceeded to establish his social philosophy and political philosophy, both of which relied heavily on the ideal of the State as the only social and political situation that could adequately allow for humans to realize themselves as free beings. Certainly Arnold recognized that human beings had to take an “inward turn” and that true human freedom came first through an “inward recognition” before true freedom could be realized, but Arnold also recognized that without Culture and certainly without a strong State to participate in that Culture, this inward turn could not even take place. To attempt to turn inward without any reference to an outside force, or to turn inward solely as a reaction to every outside force, would both result in the “black hole” experience that Arnold flirted with as he read the *Bhagavad-Gita* and that he recognized, even late in life, as the “pathological” sickness present in the work of Amiel. Moreover, Arnold’s entire progress, from the beginning of his life until the end, can be seen certainly as Hegelian, and this association should *not* cause scholars to further entrench Arnold in the realm of totalitarian or authoritarian *status quo* support; rather, only by understanding how Hegel, too, realized that true human freedom was the final end result of his philosophical, political, and social project can both of them, and especially their close association, be seen as truly revolutionary.

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