MATTHEW ARNOLD'S SPIRIT OF DISINTERESTEDNESS AND ITS INFLUENCE ON HIS RELIGIOUS PROSE

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PREFACE

The spirit of disinterestedness, which is in evidence in the prose and poetry of Matthew Arnold, has been largely overlooked by critics of Arnold's religious prose. This oversight has led to a divergence of critical interpretation which might be resolved if critics would consider Arnold's shifting intellectual point of view.

E. K. Brown's Matthew Arnold: A Study in Conflict and Lionel Trilling's Matthew Arnold (which is described as a biography of Arnold's mind) have served as the basis for development of the critical approach proposed in this thesis. Both men have recognized the influence of Arnold's search for disinterestedness; each devotes a chapter to the religious prose; each comments on disinterestedness and its effect on the religious prose. But neither seems to have extended his observation of Arnold's pendulousness between disinterestedness and interestedness to a critical theory of its influence on the religious prose.

Arnold's pendulousness from disinterestedness to interestedness and back to disinterestedness is traced in Chapter II; Chapter III presents the major nineteenth and twentieth century critics, and discusses how each of them has overlooked or ignored the spirit of disinterestedness. But before one can recognize the difficulty which nineteenth century critics had in accepting the spirit of disinterestedness,

one must have a scenario of the religious events and personalities of the period. This same background is necessary to realize how narrow the twentieth century critics have been in their inability to recognize and apply the spirit of disinterestedness. Chapter I presents that scenario as a prologue to Matthew Arnold's religious prose. Chapter IV is a conclusion which presents a proposal for the reevaluation of Matthew Arnold's religious prose in light of a recognition of the spirit of disinterestedness and its influence.

The libraries of Harvard College, the University of Indiana, and Yale University have graciously and generously provided the bulk of materials used in the research for this thesis. I am grateful to these institutions and to Mrs. Suzanne Jenkins of the William Allen White Memorial Library staff, who has worked as a faithful, sympathetic and efficient negotiator between these libraries and my research needs. I appreciate the stimulating criticism and unfailing kindness of Dr. Vincent L. Tollers and Dr. Charles E. Walton who have served as first and second readers. I also wish to extend my sincere appreciation to S. F. M. who has withstood my own pendulousness between interestedness and disinterestedness as the thesis and my concept of it have developed.

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INTRODUCTION

The last line which Matthew Arnold wrote in the Preface to the popular edition of *Literature and Dogma* asserts that "miracles do not happen." This statement is the conclusion which Arnold had reached through a disinterested review of the writings of St. Paul in the work which preceded *Literature and Dogma*, *St. Paul and Protestantism*. In *Literature and Dogma* and again in *God and the Bible*, Arnold explores the implications of this terse statement which swept away the *Aberglaube* from the creation of the earth to the Immaculate Conception. These two books are the heart of Arnold's religious prose. *St. Paul and Protestantism* introduces the two central works; *Last Essays on Church and Religion* is Arnold's farewell to religious prose. These four works represent Arnold's religious prose. They are his response to what he saw as the weakening of the very foundation of religion in the nineteenth century. When Arnold wrote about religion, he used two different meanings of the word, often interchangeably, which can lead to misinterpretation of the universal message which Arnold believed he was presenting. When he refers to religion which is threatened by the *Zeitgeist*, or time-spirit, he means the search for values, the ideal life, and the world-view which that search offers. When he refers to religion which is concealed by the *Aberglaube*, or extra belief, he means the particular system in which the search for the ideal life has been codified.

For Arnold, this system was the Church of England. The Anglican Church, however, was not the only religion that he felt was threatened by the Zeitgeist. Arnold, like the German theologians who had exerted a strong influence on him, believed that the traditional faith of all churches which were based on dogmas and miracles, as recorded and interpreted in the Bible, was being undermined by science and the effects of the industrial revolution--the Zeitgeist.

Religion had always been important to Arnold. Willey, a leading nineteenth-century critic, even states that "all his efforts--in criticism, in politics, in education--really led up to it."[1] Arnold, far more than the public, was aware that the Zeitgeist had weakened the Church. Thus, in the religious turmoil of the nineteenth century, it was important to Arnold that he find a middle ground where religion would not be annihilated by science yet would have an ethical basis of its own. He knew that the people who were comfortable in their illusions would be shocked by the positive criticism which Literature and Dogma encountered on the Continent.[2] Though Literature

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[1]Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold, p. 264.

[2]G. W. E. Russell (ed.), The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold, IX, vii. Hereafter referred to as Russell (ed.), Works. This collection will be used for all prose works of Matthew Arnold which are not included in R. H. Super's The Complete Prose Works of Matthew Arnold. Super's edition is complete only to Volume VI, Dissent and Dogma.

and Dogma was considered a revolutionary and anti-religious book in England, on the Continent it was regarded as too traditionally religious for the progressive times.[3] Literature and Dogma was, indeed, religious. Arnold wanted to provide a new basis for religion so that, when the Continental Zeitgeist finally reached England and swept away the comfortable underpinning of the Church, religion would not be swept away, too. Arnold felt that this new basis lay in the methods of science--the very force that was questioning so much of traditional religion. He uses the word "Science" to mean the search for truth, or the modern spirit that tries to prove all things and hold only those which have meaning. The following example illustrates his use of the term:

> To popular religion, the real kingdom of God is the New Jerusalem with its jaspers and emeralds, righteousness and peace and joy are only the kingdom of God figuratively. The real sitting in heavenly places is the sitting on thrones in a land of pure delight after we are dead; serving the spirit of God is only sitting in heavenly places figuratively. Science exactly reverses this process; for science, the spiritual notion is the real one, the materialist notion is figurative.[4]

In God and the Bible, Arnold makes clear the audience he was addressing in Literature and Dogma. He believed that his audience was composed of those who are

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[3] Loc. cit.

[4] R. H. Super (ed.), The Complete Works of Matthew Arnold, VI, 93. Hereafter referred to as Super (ed.), Works.

> . . . won by the modern spirit of habits of intellectual seriousness, but who cannot receive what sets these habits at nought, and will not try to force themselves to do so, but who have stood near enough to the Christian religion to feel the attraction which a thing so very great, when one stands really near to it, cannot but exercise, and who have some familiarity with the Bible and some practice in using it.[5]

For this audience, Arnold wanted to preserve religion by building a new foundation of verifiable spiritual experience. He believed that the growing influence of breakaway sects was weakening the Church and that, through development of an understanding of the truth which lay concealed by the Aberglaube of the Bible, truth in religion could be found. This truth could then be flexible enough to include the sects and, thus, reduce their fragmenting influence.

This truth in religion, Arnold believed, was the poetry of the Bible which was merely awaiting interpretation by the plain man. Hopper has observed that, to evaluate fairly Arnold's new religion, one must first understand his theory of the meaning and influence of poetry.[6] Arnold believed that literature would take over the province of religion and serve equally with science in leading man to acquire Culture. To Arnold, religion, considered as myth, not as fact, became a

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[5]Russell (ed.), Works, VIII, xxiii.

[6]Stanley R. Hopper, Spiritual Problems in Contemporary Literature, p. 129.

highly spiritual vehicle for values.[7] Arnold was not the sophomore that T. S. Eliot would have modern readers believe.[8] His system, which begins with the premise that miracles do not happen, is based on a complex, but completely, developed theory. Arnold says that the great myths in the Bible embody unique insights, but that myths, which are not supernatural revelations and are not, therefore, factual, are really great poetry. Arnold believed that, when the Bible was recognized solely as literature, the subsequent re-evaluation of religious dogma would, in effect, allow religion to be replaced by poetry. Sixty years later, Richards concludes the same thing:

> If philosophic contemplation, or religious experience, or science gave us Reality, then poetry gave us something of less consequence, at best some sort of shadow. If we grant that all is myth, poetry, as the myth-making which most brings "the whole soul of man into activity" . . . becomes the necessary channel for the reconstitution of order. . . . Poetry . . . will remake our minds and with them our world.[9]

It is the very "reconstruction of order" which Arnold felt was so imperative in what he saw as the crumbling structure that was religion in nineteenth-century England. Arnold's plan for achieving this reconstruction, through a recognition of the

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[7] H. M. Campbell, "Arnold's Religion and the Theory of Fictions," Religion in Life, XXXVI (1967), 230.

[8] T. S. Eliot says of Arnold that ". . . in Philosophy and theology Arnold is an undergraduate, in religion a Philistine." The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, p. 283.

[9] I. A. Richards, Coleridge on Imagination, pp. 228-229.

myth and poetry of the Bible, may be sophomoric in its confident assumption that the plain man would first acquire the intellectual advantage offered in Culture, then apply this advantage to the Bible, but the complex and carefully explained system, itself, is not so readily dismissed as Eliot would have one believe.

This complex system is developed in the four books of religious prose; Arnold believed that this system was vital to the preservation of religion in England. But this religious prose was received with strong critical hostility in the nineteenth century, and it has been treated in a cursory manner in the twentieth century. The ten years of productivity in the realm of religious criticism have always been considered out of the context of Arnold's canon. It is the opinion of this writer that much of the misunderstanding of the religious prose lies in the fragmented critical approach which it has had.

In St. Paul and Protestantism and in Literature and Dogma, Arnold proposes that the Bible must be read as literature, stripped of the Aberglaube which cloaked its true meaning and allowed the Zeitgeist to undermine its contemporary validity. In God and the Bible, he further objects to the anthropomorphism that would give God a personality and characteristics of a man.[10] Eliot quotes F. H. Bradley's objection

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[10]Reverend J. Llewelyn Davies points out in "Mr. Matthew Arnold's New Religion of the Bible," Contemporary Review, XXI (1873), 850, that, as disciples of Goethe, Arnold and Carlyle were both emancipated from anthropomorphic theology, but they have in common a profound reverence for righteousness and for the Old Testament which they did not learn from Goethe.

to this emancipated anthropomorphic theology:

> "Is there a God?" asks the reader. "Oh, yes," replies Mr. Arnold, "and I can verify him in experience." "And what is he then?" cries the reader. "Be virtuous, and as a rule you will be happy," is the answer. "Well, and God?" "That is God," says Mr. Arnold; "there is no deception, and what more do you want?" I suppose we do want a good deal more. Most of us, certainly the public which Mr. Arnold addresses, want something they can worship; and they will not find that in an hypostasised copybook heading, which is not much more adorable than "Honesty is the best policy." or "Handsome is that handsome does," or various other edifying maxims, which have not yet come to an apotheosis.[11]

This unwillingness to identify God as more than a "tendency which makes for righteousness" is very disturbing to Eliot; it disturbed all the Arnold critics in the nineteenth century.

Defining the terms Arnold used and the audience he was addressing, or even emphasizing the main objections which critics have made about the religious prose has little meaning when considered out of the context of Arnold's canon. It is exactly this fragmented approach to the religious prose that has led to misunderstanding. The spirit of disinterestedness which Arnold sought throughout his life holds the key to the meaning of the religious prose and its place in the Arnold canon. Arnold searched for disinterestedness in his early poetic works.

After searching for a state of disinterestedness in his early poetic works, Arnold renounced disinterestedness, and

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[11]T. S. Eliot, Selected Essays, 1916-1932, pp. 412-414.

with it poetry, and began the prose section of his canon. In his prose, he first implicitly, then explicitly, recommended disinterestedness to the English public as a cure for what he saw as lamentable provincialism. He moved from a recommendation of disinterestedness to an applied political criticism, and from that to the religious prose. The religious prose formed a microcosm of the pendulousness toward and away from disinterestedness which is shown in the Arnold canon as a whole. Within the two central works, Literature and Dogma and God and the Bible, he also moved from disinterestedness--a calm, intellectual evaluation of the Bible and its influence--to a highly involved (interested) position of application of that evaluation to a new religion. This pendulousness infuriated and confused his critics.

It is possible to trace pendulousness through the religious prose. Because Arnold's first explicit statements about religion are in Culture and Anarchy, it is prudent to begin the scholar's search for disinterestedness here. Unlike Essays in Criticism which implicitly supports disinterestedness, Culture and Anarchy explicitly applies the theory of disinterestedness in a social context. The Preface to Culture and Anarchy deals with the political situation in England, but it is here, too, that Arnold sows the seeds of his religious prose. The definitions of Hebraists and Hellenists are given here, and it is in the Preface that he proposes to turn a

"stream of fresh and free thought upon stock notions and habits which we now follow staunchly and mechanically."[12] In Culture and Anarchy this fresh stream was applied to politics and society; he then, in the religious prose, turned it upon religion.

Though many critics agree that Culture and Anarchy is central to Arnold's work, they seem to have ignored this clear statement of intent that extends to the religious prose immediately following Culture and Anarchy. The critics have also overlooked the meaning of Arnold's pendulousness as he strives for disinterestedness in the four religious works. Culture and Anarchy (1869) grew logically out of Essays in Criticism (1865); St. Paul and Protestantism (1870) grew from Culture and Anarchy. Campbell calls St. Paul and Protestantism a "kind of preliminary sketch for Literature and Dogma."[13] He further states that God and the Bible and Last Essays on Church and Religion are simply repetitions of Literature and Dogma with more illustrations.[14] In a literal sense, Campbell is right. Arnold's religious prose contains a radical proposal about the reappraisal of religion; that proposal and its explanation are the four books of religious prose. Since Arnold knew as early

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[12]Super (ed.), Works, V, 233-234.

[13]Campbell, op. cit., p. 223.

[14]Loc. cit.

as 1869, when he wrote the Preface to Culture and Anarchy, that he wanted to suggest this reappraisal of religion, it is quite believable that the four books should resemble each other. What is remarkable, however, is Arnold's own involvement in the dilemma he created. The key to understanding his religious prose lies in this involvement, which Arnold called disinterestedness.

CHAPTER I

THE PROLOGUE TO MATTHEW ARNOLD'S RELIGIOUS PROSE[15]

One can read Matthew Arnold's religious prose and have an unsettled opinion of the individual work's meaning, or of the meaning of the religious prose as a whole. One can also read the critical works on Matthew Arnold's religious prose and still have an uncertainty of opinion. Why, when Arnold's "Dover Beach" is generally agreed to be one of the clearest

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[15]Though eight works were used in gaining the background information for this chapter, a ninth work, A. O. J. Cockshut's Religious Controversies in the Nineteenth Century, Selected Documents, has been relied on most heavily for structure and, in some cases, direct quotations to supplement the chronology of religious events in the nineteenth century. Professor Cochshut's approach is unique in its emphasis on the Hampden and Gorham cases which seem more important than other scholars have chosen to consider them. The other works consulted are Phillip Appleman, William A. Madden and Michael Wolff, 1859: Entering an Age of Crisis; Horton Davies, Worship and Theology in England, IV, 1850-1900; Leonard E. H. Eliott-Binns, English Thought, 1860-1900: The Theological Aspect, and Religion in the Victorian Era; V. H. H. Green, Religion at Oxford and Cambridge; E. E. Kellett, Religion and Life in the Early Victorian Age; Vernon F. Storr, The Development of Theology in the Nineteenth Century, 1800-1860; and Clement Webb, A Study of Religious Thought in England from 1850. Though most of these works consider the latter half of the nineteenth century, the roots of the religious problems confronted lie in the period, 1815-1850. Kellett and Storr deal specifically with this period, but each of the other authors includes extensive reviews of the earlier period. A similar structure is used in this thesis. Though Matthew Arnold wrote in the latter half of the century, the turmoil to which he was reacting began with the initial weakening of the Church by dissenting fragmentation. His writing must be seen in perspective with that turmoil to appreciate the urgency with which he wrote.

poems in the language, should the same artist's prose work be the subject of such confusion? One cannot offer the excuse for Arnold that he was not a prose writer but a poet, as one can for a writer such as Tennyson; nor is it possible to say that he was not a deep thinker, but a prose babbler such as Macaulay. Matthew Arnold devoted ten years of his adult life to the writing of his religious prose. He believed that religion in England was threatened by the Zeitgeist of the nineteenth century. Because of his extensive reading, Arnold was particularly familiar with the concept of the Zeitgeist which originated on the Continent. The Germans were aware of the new spirit of the times which called all into doubt and looked to science, rather than to faith, for "truth." Arnold knew that the Zeitgeist was undermining the foundation of the Church in England, and that, if the Zeitgeist swept away faith, there would be nothing left with which to replace it. To rescue religion from this vacuum, Arnold wrote his religious prose works which were published from 1872 to 1877. He proposed a new religion based on proof from experience; a religion that would answer the strident voice of science that demanded evidence. But it was more than the Zeitgeist that threatened the foundation of religion in nineteenth-century England. It was the Church of England, the official church of State, itself.

The Anglican Church was divided into two camps: those believing the Prayer Book and those believing the Thirty-Nine

Articles. The proliferation of dissenting sects who broke away from the main Anglican Church further weakened the structure of the Church. In addition to the division of the Church by these dissenting sects, three main movements were apparent within the Church, itself, during the time span 1815-1860. These movements are Evangelicalism, the Broad Church Movement, and the Oxford Movement. Each contributed to the unrest that characterized the religious climate of the entire period. A review of the events and personalities who influenced the religious situation in the period 1815-1860 will provide a general prologue to Arnold's concern for the condition of religion in England in the 1870's.

In 1815, the Napoleonic Wars were over; England, it seemed, could settle herself for a century of self-contemplative calm. The nineteenth century proved to be one of contemplation, but not one of calm. Even in such a staid and reverent world as religion, movements were stirring which would finally shake the very foundations of the concept of a State Church and its authority in matters of the spirit. The Evangelical Movement is the earliest of the three movements, Evangelical, Broad Church, and Oxford, which began this unrest. The Evangelical Movement was calling members from smaller dissenting groups and from the established Church as well; the Movement included members from all ranges of social standing and public privilege, from laborer to Lord and from village school master to Oxford don. Though the ability of Evangelicalism to call men of every

rank was of little concern to Englishmen in 1815, to twentieth-century scholars this ability to include opposing poles of religious understanding is fascinating. With the clarity of hindsight, scholars can see the disparity of circumstances which the three main movements in religion suffered. The Anglican Church had preeminence as the constitutionally authorized State Church; the dissenters, as breakaway sects, had no such right to economic or patriotic support. The Evangelicals, who took their members from both groups, had neither the acceptance of the Anglican Church, nor the insularity and rigidity of breakaway sects who had to jealously protect their fledgling creeds and traditions. The Anglicans had an additional advantage over the breakaway groups: they had a monopoly on higher education because a prospective student at either Oxford or Cambridge had to be of the Anglican faith. Cockshut points out that the Irish Catholics and English dissenters thus seldom had the intellectual training to argue on equal terms with the Anglicans.[16]

The opposing groups did not need the training for philosophical debate to make their point with the Anglicans. The Church was doggedly arguing from a false position that would ultimately prove her weakness even to her own hierarchy. The Anglicans, who were staunchly Protestant, were haunted by

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[16] A. O. J. Cockshut, Religious Controversies of the Nineteenth Century: Selected Documents, p. 1.

the threat of Popery. Yet, the high church branch of this very Church believed in Apostolic Succession, episcopal authority, and the importance of sacramental tradition--all quite Popish. The determined Protestantism of the Anglicans was rather futile, however, because it was not true. In 1833, the Tractarians, as members of the Oxford movement were called, pointed out that the foundations on which the Church of England rested were not Protestant at all. The Anglicans were horrified, in 1842, to hear Newman say that their creeds were identical to those of the Catholic Church. The Tractarians further revealed that the very practices which Protestants held in such horror, such as auricular confession, were recommended in the Prayer Book. Cockshut notes stubborn insistance that Protestant bishops should have religious functions beyond sitting in the House of Lords and withstanding a rigorous social schedule.[17]

This insistance by the Tractarians that bishops must have religious functions raised another problem for the Anglicans. When one anonymous bishop read Newman's Tracts LXXXV and XC and was unable to understand them, one of the fundamental weaknesses of the Church was revealed. Most bishops were stupid, uneducated men who were unable to deal with the intellectual revolution that was rocking the Church.

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[17] Ibid., p. 2.

But it was neither the bishops' stupidity, nor their complacent willingness to sit in the House of Lords and bow to the Royal Family that threatened the Church's power. It was, as Cockshut phrases it, "taking the everlasting Protestantism of England for granted, and not guessing how soon indifference and worldliness might be replaced by active unbelief."[18] The Churchmen were ignoring the Zeitgeist. The intellectual as well as the physical insularity of England was gone. The Continental theologians were beginning to influence the intelligensia; the scientific and industrial revolution was beginning to influence all segments of the population. The docile followers of the religion of the past were offered a new faith--the unbelief of the unprovable: science. And the Church of England chose to ignore the spirit of the times. Thus, the dissenters appeared able to win their case without the aid of an Oxford education.

The Evangelical Movement, the Broad Church Movement, the Oxford Movement each reacted to the degenerate state of the Church of England in the nineteenth century. The Oxford Movement created a great furor, but never attracted substantial numbers of followers; the Broad Church Movement, with its sociological implications, has perhaps had the most lasting influence, but it did not have far reaching implications in its own time; the Evangelical Movement, in the first third of

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[18] Loc. cit.

the century, was the most sweepingly successful. This sweeping success makes its sudden decline and subsequent lack of influence seem most tragic of all.

Cockshut describes the Evangelical's faith as a "vital religion." In other words, it was a highly personal religion whose cornerstone lay in Christ's death as an individual's salvation. Unless each person recognized Christ's sacrifice, repented and experienced conversion, his good works and church attendance were for nought. Thus, the Evangelicals were disdainful of theology and intellectual conversion; emotion, fed by Biblical revelation, was the source and justification of their religious experience. This reliance on emotion made the Evangelicals particularly vulnerable to the inevitable skepticism of their children. With no intellectually based theology from which to argue, the Evangelical fathers in 1815 could not will their emotional fervor to their children who were adults in the late 1830's. The youth looked instead to other more intellectually oriented explanations of religion. In fact, Samuel Wilberforce, a son of the Evangelical leader, William Wilberforce, became a High Church Bishop, and several of his brothers and sisters became Roman Catholics after they reached maturity.

Like the Evangelicals, the Broad Church men were little concerned with theology. In contrast to the Evangelicals, whose main concern was personal salvation, the Broad Church

was concerned with the salvation of England, itself. A. P. Stanley and Thomas Arnold, the spokesmen of the Broad Church Movement, were distressed by the fragmentation of Protestantism. They felt that the unity offered by the State Church was more important than the personal exploration offered by the more individually oriented dissenting sects. They accepted Royal Supremacy because it offered a truly national and comprehensive character to religion. The salvation of members' souls in the Broad Church would be a natural result of the unity of State worship. Stanley and Arnold wanted to interpret the theology of the Church as liberally as possible so that no group would feel compelled to dissent. The dignity of the liturgy was seen as a symbolic and public affirmation of the unity created by public worship.

Of the three movements that developed in response to the confusion that was disrupting the Anglican Church in the first half of the nineteenth century, the Oxford Movement is perhaps most misunderstood. Part of this confusion might come from the looming personalities who dominated it: Hurrell Froude, John Keble, John Henry Newman, and E. B. Pusey. In the other movements, neither Wilberforce for the Evangelicals nor Stanley and Arnold for the Broad Church had the exciting public presence nor the following of such men as Keble and Pusey. And who, in the nineteenth century, compared with Newman? Each of these personalities made a part of the shape of the Oxford Movement.

The four men who began the Oxford Movement had highly divergent personalities. The bond which held them together was their concern for the Church and its future. Hurrell Froude was perhaps the most arresting of the four. He had a strong personality but little talent for compromise. His early death, in 1836, only three years after the movement began may have saved the other Oxford leaders from trouble long before they reached it on their own. Gentle and profoundly spiritual, Keble is a striking contrast to impulsive, flambouyant Froude. Though a scholar, he was not given to spiritual insight or questioning. He was a member of the movement which was to have a significant role in the reform of the Church, but Keble relished the serenity of the past and preferred to remain unaware of the theological storm in which he was living and passively participating. He was content to view the Oxford Movement as a simple continuation of the High Church practices he had known as a boy.[19] His work, Christian Year, was immensely popular with the Victorians, but it is not regarded as an intellectual monument today.[20] In this regard, Keble is similar to the leaders of the Evangelical Movement--he spoke

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[19] Ibid., p. 5.

[20] Though Amy Cruse in The Victorians and Their Readings, p. 47, quotes John Campbell Shairp as saying that the Oxford Movement had bequeathed to England "two permanent monuments of Genius, Newman's sermons and the Christian Year," Cockshut, nor any of the other authors consulted even mentioned this "monument."

well to his own generation, but his approach was too comfortable for a new era.

Newman and Pusey are the other two important members of the Oxford Movement. They, like Froude and Keble, offer a series of striking contrasts. Newman, in fact, contrasts in some way to almost every leader in the Oxford Movement. He offered, like Keble, a selfless and devoted allegiance to the Anglican Church; but in contrast to Keble, who believed almost as a child, Newman's allegiance was conditional. His devotion extended to the Anglican Church only as a branch of the Catholic Church. Newman's subsequent doubting of that status, and his final disbelief in the acceptability of the Anglican Church is poignantly detailed in his Apologia Pro Vita Sua. In contrast to both Keble and Pusey, Newman was a dynamic thinker; he refused to be lulled by what he called the "paper systems" of religion. When he came to see Anglicanism as another of these systems, he had little choice but to leave it. On the other hand Pusey, like Keble, was a student of the past. He relied on the first six centuries of Christian history as the sole authority for theological problems. Though Newman, too, revered the authority of the past, he also insisted on a living contemporary authority which would contribute to the development of man's continual spiritual growth.

In 1845, thirteen years after the Oxford Movement began with Newman one of its strongest Anglican leaders, John Henry

Newman was received into the Roman Catholic Church. The years 1815 to 1845, had been unsettled ones for those people who cared deeply about religion, but after that date, after one of the most popular and revered leaders of the Church of England left it--and left it in favor of Roman Catholicism--the uneasy turmoil of the first half of the century seemed mild in comparison to the later years of conflict, doubt and agony.

The Hampden and Gorham cases are two examples of the political and theological unrest that troubled the public and shook the foundations of the concept of a State Church. In 1847, John Hampden was judged by the University of Oxford as unfit to teach theology. The Crown then appointed him Bishop of Hereford. Though this may seem irresponsible, it was not an uncommon practice to "find a place" in the Church for an easy going and socially acceptable man. The clergy unexpectedly rebelled. Clerics petitioned against Hampden's appointment. They reasonably argued that the Church was entitled to be consulted by the Crown before bishops were imposed on them. The clergy further maintained that a bishop in whom they had no confidence could not possibly carry out his duties effectively. The unfortunate Hampden was the center of a controversy that had very little to do with his learning or character. The problem was really doctrinal. The Hampden case challenged the validity of the view of the Church of England as a department

of State. When the challenge was made in open court, the past ended.[21]

The Gorham case, three years later, questioned, in even stronger terms, whether the Church was a department of State. The choosing of Hampden as Bishop of Hereford was, after all, a question of how and who will choose a man for a position. Three years later, the Gorham case took the question from the general one of State administration to the more difficult one of State control over doctrine. Charles Gorham was a Calvinist. He believed that God knew, in all eternity, who were the elect. He did not accept infant baptism. Henry Phillpotts, the High Church Bishop of Exeter, felt that any one who could not accept baptism as a symbol of washing away of Original Sin would not qualify as an Anglican minister. Thus, he refused to allow Gorham a living in his diocese. In the dispute that followed, Phillpotts stood by the Prayer Book; Gorham by the Thirty-Nine Articles. This argument revealed to the public the theological incompatibility of the two schools of Anglican thought represented by these two standards, the Prayer Book and the Thirty-Nine Articles. But much more serious than this public statement of what was generally known in religious circles, was the resolution of the controversy. A court was set up by the State which not only decided whether Gorham should be

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[21]Cockshut, op. cit., pp. 8-9.

granted the living, but also decided whether Baptismal Regeneration was a part of the doctrine of the Church of England. The court found that Baptismal Regeneration was not an indispensable requirement of the faith. This determination of doctrine, not the judgment, itself, implicitly revealed that the Church of England was not a universal faith, but was whatever the State chose to say it was.[22] Gorham was granted the living. Bishop Phillpotts wrote a spirited letter to the Archbishop of Canterbury for accepting the judgment. Though the decision was probably galling to Phillpotts on a purely personal level, it was shattering to deep thinking, spiritually concerned men such as Gladstone and the Archdeacon of Chichester who could see it as an undercutting of the whole basis of faith. These profoundly religious men could not accept this judgment. It was at this point, 1849, that the great movement from Anglicanism to Roman Catholicism began in England.

The Gorham case was an important event, but the midyear of the century contained two external events which contributed to the religious turmoil in yet another way. First, the Pope established a hierarchy of Vicars Apostolic. These were the same men who had served Rome in England for many years, as bishops, but the use of English city names for these bishopric titles horrified the English because they seemed to be claims

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[22] Ibid., pp. 9-10.

to government of English territories. The publication of In Memoriam by Alfred, Lord Tennyson, was another event which, though external to the Church, had an alarming, if a more subtle influence in weakening the simple faith of the people. For the first time in literature that was available and comprehensible to the middle class, In Memoriam presented a time-scale of aeons rather than centuries; the hills, generally considered unchangeable, disolved like mists; not just individual animals, but whole species, disappeared in a struggle for existence. Though Lyell's Principles of Geology (1820) had said almost the same things in another vocabulary, the public's imagination had not been caught by it in the same way as it was by In Memoriam. Tennyson portrayed a loving God as infinitely good, but also as infinitely threatening. This concept, which would have even clearer statement in Origin of Species nine years later, was revolutionary and shocking to the Victorian public. It put the old religion in a new perspective with which the fragmented and weakened Church was not intellectually or even spiritually prepared to deal.

Storrs says that

> . . . when Origin of Species was published, it forced those who had before refused to face the facts to do so by the force of circumstances. Public interest was fully aroused; thinking laymen were growing impatient for some modification of the traditional position; . . . theology could no longer adopt the policy of the ostrich, and hide its head in the sand.[23]

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[23]Vernon F. Storrs, The Development of Theology in the Nineteenth Century, 1800-1870, p. 5.

Origin of Species put not only the Victorian religious position in question, but it made every facet of life--social, economic and political--subject to question and reexamination. The order which had been assumed to exist in the universe was gone; how much more was the order dissolved in each man's life. England itself could no longer hide in the comfort of its insularity. The ideas of the Continent were crossing the channel. In the 1830's, Thomas Arnold, who had studied the German theologians, applied their philosophy and techniques to his own theory of religion's role in society and wrote about them extensively and influentially within the Broad Church Movement. In 1846, Mary Ann Evans (George Eliot) translated Strauss's Life of Jesus, and thus made the German practice of Biblical criticism available to the English public for the first time. The Germans had advocated Biblical criticism for years, but this influence had not been felt in England, except for enlightened scholars such as Dr. Arnold, before the publication of Miss Evans's translation. All of these influences, however, are outside influences which were affecting the Established Church.

In 1860, seven highly respected men, six of them clergymen, published Essays and Reviews.[24] Two of the contributors,

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[24]The contributors were Frederick Temple, Headmaster of Rugby, later Archbishop of Canterbury; Benjamin Jowett, professor of Greek at Oxford and later Master of Balliol College; Mark Pattison and Baden Powell, professors at Oxford; Rowland Williams, H. B. Wilson and C. W. Goodwin, scholars of lesser fame than the others, were catapulted into the limelight after Essays and Reviews was published.

Rowland Williams and H. B. Wilson, were prosecuted for heresy. A lay court was again assembled by the State. These laymen had the Thirty-Nine Articles for their law book. When they tried to apply the Articles, which Newman in his Tract XC had previously demonstrated meant many things, the heresy prosecution failed. This was especially galling for some opponents of Essays and Reviews because Wilson, one of the defendants, had argued in his essay that the only moral obligation to clergy who assented to the Articles was a strictly legal obligation. The court's decision, as in the Gorham case, had further reaching implications than just the immediate solution. Their decision in effect said that the National Church was a national association of Englishmen who called themselves Christian and who saw the Crown as an ultimate authority in religious matters. This, of course, was the very point which the High Churchmen or Roman Churchmen could not accept.

This very brief review of just one part of the complex social structure of nineteenth-century England indicates the reaction and reevaluation that characterize this century of change. It is a small wonder, then, that Arnold felt that the time-spirit was threatening religion. It was threatening everything. There was upheaval in theological circles, and Arnold, as holder of the Poetry Chair at Oxford, where religious discussion was always earnestly persued, was aware of it. The theological chaos was not so much his concern as was the result of the chaos--the dogma that would develop out of it, and

whether or not the people would accept it. Arnold was a spokesman for the plain man; he was a man who could stand between the plain man and the theologians who either chose to ignore the Zeitgeist or who wrote about solutions in terms which a layman could not understand. Arnold was well qualified for his role as mediator: he wrote for Cornhill Magazine, a popular and widely read magazine; he was a recognized and admired poet; he was an Oxford don; he was a school inspector who knew how the English educational system worked. But most of all, he was a man of conscience. He was genuinely concerned about the state of affairs both within the Church of England and between the Church and State. He, like the writers of Essays and Reviews, wanted less emphasis on dogma.

Trilling, in his biography of Arnold's mind, traces Arnold's concern with the problem of religion to four important factors:

1. In Culture and Anarchy (1867) Arnold had attacked the dissenters for their creation of political discord; now he needed to show why, on grounds of doctrine and ecclesiastical policy, Puritanism need no longer be separate from the Church of England.

2. He needed to show, through demonstration, how each man could discover the existence and nature of God.

3. In Culture and Anarchy he had based his concept of government on Culture, the "possible Socrates" in every man; now he needed to show how that Socrates could discover God through personal experience.

4. Arnold felt a deep personal need to settle the relationship of God to man and man to the universe. He examines this relationship again and again in his poetry. He felt the need to rescue the world from

> the cheerless conclusions of science and to establish joy in its stead.[25]

These reasons grew out of the body of Arnold's prose works, Essays in Criticism (1865), On the Study of Celtic Literature (1867), Schools and Universities on the Continent (1868), and Culture and Anarchy (1869). These works are an introduction to Arnold's interest and growing concern about religion and its future in England. An examination of the Arnold bibliography reveals that his choice of genre and subject matter evolved from poetry, which seems to be constantly striving for disinterestedness, to literary criticism, to religious commentary, and finally to works relating to his position as a school inspector.

THE MAJOR WORKS OF MATTHEW ARNOLD

BIBLIOGRAPHY[26]

1849	The Strayed Reveler
1852	Empedocles on Etna
1853	Poems
1855	Poems. Second Series
1858	Merope
1861	On Translating Homer
1864	A French Eton
1865	Essays in Criticism
1867	On the Study of Celtic Literature

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[25] Lionel Trilling, Matthew Arnold: Biography of a Mind, pp. 317-318.

[26] Lewis E. Gates, Selections from the Prose Writings of Matthew Arnold, p. xc; a complete list of Arnold's writings in prose and poetry, and of criticisms and reviews of Matthew Arnold's works to 1891 is admirably presented in Bibliography of Matthew Arnold by Thomas Burnett Smart.

1867 New Poems
1868 Schools and Universities on the Continent
1869 Culture and Anarchy
1870 St. Paul and Protestantism
1871 Friendship's Garland
1873 Literature and Dogma
1875 God and the Bible
1877 Last Essays on Church and Religion
1879 Mixed Essays
1882 Irish Essays
1885 Discourses in America
1888 Essays in Criticism. Second Series
1888 Civilization in the United States

This evolution of subject matter and genre is important to an understanding of the movement of thought in Arnold's canon. He had sought disinterestedness in his own life so that he could write great poetry. When he found that this complete disinterestedness was impossible for one who would feel concern for the world, he turned from poetry to prose writing. His prose subjects, however, still dealt with the achieving of disinterestedness, but now he recommended it to the national conscience, not specifically to individuals. As Trilling has indicated, Arnold's writing drew him deeper and deeper into controversies of explanation of his earlier works. The further Arnold moved in time and genre from his poetry, the further he, personally, moved from the disinterested position he had sought as a poet. He became the highly interested critic. But, he never deserted the spirit of disinterestedness. It is this duality, this pendulousness between the two distinct poles of interestedness and disinterestedness, that makes Arnold's religious prose difficult to understand and seemingly impossible to implement.

CHAPTER II

THE EVOLUTION OF MATTHEW ARNOLD'S THOUGHT: HIS CANON

In 1840, when Matthew Arnold was eighteen years old, he won the Rugby Prize for a poem, "Alaric at Rome." The poem shows his pleasure in stillness and reverie. Three years later, at Oxford, he won the Newdigate Prize for a poem on Cromwell. Brown interprets this poem as serenity assaulted by the ideal of heroic and responsible action.[27]

The epigraph to "Cromwell" is from Schiller:

> Schrecklich ist es, deiner Wahrheit
> Sterblickes Gefass zu seyn

"It is awful to be the mortal vessel of thy truth." This epigraph and the two poems offer a summary, in microcosm, of Matthew Arnold's literary career. His life was one of responsible action, touched, perhaps, by heroic devotion to the dreary role of school inspector though he believed his true vocation to be that of a poet. Yet, explicitly in his poetry and implicitly in his prose there is the constant search for solitude--disinterestedness. Arnold believed that only through this spirit of calm, disinterested evaluation could the world be rescued from the turbulence of the nineteenth century.

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[27] E. K. Brown, Matthew Arnold--A Study in Conflict, p. 24.

Brown's interpretation of "Cromwell" is a succinct statement of Arnold's view of life. Serenity is disinterestedness; heroic and responsible action is interestedness which is the result of involvement in the problems of one's times. Trilling echoes Brown in describing "Cromwell" as a profoundly personal poem.[28] These two important Arnold critics are using divergent language to say the same thing: there are two distinct poles in Matthew Arnold's writing; one is disinterestedness, one is personal involvement--interestedness. "Alaric at Rome" and "Cromwell" offer a simplified picture of what becomes highly complex as the Arnold canon grows. They are the two poles--disinterestedness ("Alaric") and interestedness ("Cromwell")--between which Arnold's thought was to move.

The movement from cool disinterestedness to passionate interest and back can be traced most easily in the poetry. Lines from "Oberman" show the pull of the two poles:

> Ah! two desires toss about
> The poet's feverish blood.
> One drives him to the world without,
> And one to solitude.[29]

Tracing the movement from disinterestedness to interestedness in the prose works is more difficult. Only when the prose canon is seen as a whole does this pendulousness become clear.

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[28]Lionel Trilling, Matthew Arnold, p. 17.

[29]"Stanzas in Memory of the Author of 'Oberman,'" Oxford Standard Edition, 11. 93-96. This edition will be used in subsequent references to the poetry of Matthew Arnold.

In Culture and Anarchy, Arnold challenges the English to achieve disinterestedness, which he sees as the highest intellectual virtue. If a man is disinterested, he can detatch himself from inhibiting idiosyncracies of environment and education, he can put himself in touch with the world at large, and he can know the limits of reason both in its analytical and its dialectical function.[30] Arnold personally tried to achieve this disinterestedness, and, even more difficult, he tried to get the English people to see their need for it. When he recommended disinterestedness to the public, he called it Culture. But no matter for whom it was prescribed, the attempts to achieve disinterestedness are a key to interpreting Arnold's religious work. Of all his works, the religious prose, written from 1872 to 1877, is the most strongly debated and divergently interpreted. The waxing and waning influence of the spirit of disinterestedness and the tracing of that influence through the religious prose works can lead to a more just and valid interpretation of the religious prose part of the canon. Arnold's prose writing has fallen into neglect because of pronouncements by Eliot and Leavis. Their judgments were made without the aid of the context of Arnold's canon for background. If Arnold's attempts at achieving disinterestedness are used as a guide, one can explain why Arnold's religious prose seems

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[30]Russell (ed.), Works, VIII, 173.

so paradoxical, how the paradox can be resolved, and how Arnold's critics have not so much misjudged him as judged him without all the evidence. One must recognize the interrelationship of Arnold's poetry, personality and philosophy revealed in his letters and poetry and extend this recognition to his religious prose. Since the beginning of Arnold's search for disinterestedness lies in his poetry, an examination of his major poetry precedes the examination of his religious prose.

Arnold's first book of poems, The Strayed Reveller and Other Poems (1849), was published when he was twenty-seven years old. When it became known that the author of this volume, modestly signed "A," was the high-spirited, prankish, and decidedly foppish Arnold, his friends and his family were amazed at the serious intensity which permeated so many of the poems.[31] His sister, Mary, told a friend that the poems "are almost like a new introduction to him . . . they could have come only from someone who had stood face to face with life and asked it, in real earnest, what it means."[32] This same question was repeatedly asked by Arnold in his poetry and later in his prose. It may seem paradoxical that a man who could write such intense poetry should have revealed so little of this side of himself to his friends. But an affected gaiety was all part

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[31] Trilling, op. cit., pp. 15-16.

[32] Mrs. Humphry Ward, A Letter Writer's Recollections, I, 58-60. Quoted by E. K. Brown, Arnold, p. 34.

of Arnold's strategy of disinterestedness. He seems to have maintained this appearance of sauvity all of his life. Charlotte Bronte met Arnold and his mother in 1851. Her impression of the pair is perhaps more revealing of Arnold's public personality than the more sympathetic accounts by biographers:

> Mrs. Arnold . . . is a good and amiable woman, but the intellectual is not her forte, and she has no pretensions to power or completeness of character. . . . Those who have only seen Mrs. Arnold once will necessarily, I think, judge of her unfavorable; her manner on introduction disappointed me sensibly, as lacking what genuineness and simplicity one seemed to have a right to expect in the chosen life companion of Dr. Arnold. . . . It is observable that Matthew Arnold, the eldest son, and the author of the volumes of poems . . . inherits his mother's defect. Striking and prepossessing in appearance, his manner displeases from its seeming foppery. I own it caused me to regard him with regretful surprise: the shade of Dr. Arnold seemed to me to frown at his young representative.[33]

It is only in his writing that one sees the other Arnold who is so pensive, brooding and shy and of whom Miss Bronte might have approved had she read his "volume of poems."

The intricate interrelationship between Arnold's poetry, his personality, and his philosophy must be recognized before the movement from disinterestedness to interestedness and back can be understood in his canon.[34] Critics have usually chosen

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[33]Quoted without documentation by Lionel Trilling, The Portable Matthew Arnold, pp. 11-12.

[34]Trilling, op. cit., p. 22.

to restrict this statement to Arnold's poetry.[35]

"The Strayed Reveller," the title poem in Arnold's first collection, illustrates his strategy of disinterestedness through a series of decorative pictures, with only suggestions of characters and their ideas. Brown calls the poem "almost insignificant in substance, unless a series of delicate moods may be regarded as substance."[36] He attributes the power of the poem to structure and style.[37] This style was an implementing of Arnold's as yet nascent theory of poetry. He wanted to achieve the beautiful--to offer pleasure to his reader. Personal emotion in the poems is transmuted to aesthetic pleasure which is contrived by triumphant artistry.[38]

"A Modern Sappho" and "Resignation" from this collection, however, show the first glimmer of the moralizing self-analytic

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[35]Basil Willey in Nineteenth Century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold, p. 253, reaches the same conclusion but from the opposite approach. Willey believes that Arnold's religious writings are ". . . the cornerstone of his work, and that to [Arnold] religion was the highest form of culture and of poetry." Richard Holt Hutton in his essay, "The Two Great Oxford Thinkers, Cardinal Newman and Matthew Arnold," Contemporary Review, XLIX (1886), 327-354, 513-534, quotes from Arnold's poetry to prove his interpretation of the religious prose. This reliance on the poetry of a younger, more idealistic Arnold to interpret the mature, experienced man is a critical weakness which has persisted from Arnold's contemporaries to the present.

[36]Brown, op. cit., p. 36.

[37]Loc. cit.

[38]Ibid., p. 37.

theme which Brown says is what was natural for Arnold to write. This didactic self-analysis was what he deplored in Arthur Hugh Clough's poetry, yet he could not avoid it in his own. Disinterestedness was his attempt to escape this tendency in himself. He felt that it was a solution to the intellectual and spiritual pressures of the Victorian period. Only by this escape could he achieve the inner serenity which he felt was necessary to the poet and which would allow the strategy of disinterestedness its fullest scope. Fausta, in "Resignation," wants experience to relieve the dullness of her life. Arnold contrasts the fretful unrewarding view of Fausta with the more admirable life of the Poet. Trilling traces this Poet to the writings of Bhagavadgita: "The man whose spirit is controlled, who looks on all impartially, sees Self abiding in all beings, and all beings in Self."[39] Disinterestedness, then, is the Poet in "Resignation"; Fausta is the interested participant.[40] Thus, almost from the beginning, Arnold challenges the strategy of disinterestedness. Arnold, like the Poet, at times wanted to withdraw from the active world; he wanted to ignore

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[39]Quoted by Lionel Trilling in Matthew Arnold from W. Douglas P. Hill (translator), The Bhagavadgita, p. 160.

[40]Trilling defines the chief characteristics of the Poet as "that he lives without personal feeling or desire: he is sensitive to the world's charms but he 'bears to admire uncravingly.'" This writer interprets this ability as the ultimate achievement of disinterestedness.

intellectual and spiritual influences of the period to try to attain the controlled spirit of the Bhagavadgita.[41]

The pure disinterestedness achieved by the Poet in "Resignation" was not possible for Arnold, who, despite all his attempts, was unable to remain aloof from life. His theory of poetry was developing during the years after The Strayed Reveller was published. Beauty, which had been his primary objective in his early works, began to share its primacy in Arnold's thinking by 1852; he had become aware of his belief in the primacy of pure form, the belief that matter was superfluous in poetry, was not a doctrine by which he could adequately express his poetic powers. He wrote Clough that "the subject is everything, and form, whether of structure or of style is but its garment."[42] This was the position he took in the Preface to Poems, 1853.

"Sohrab and Rustum," "Tristram and Iseult," "Balder Dead," "Scholar Gipsy," and "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" show how Arnold decided to deal with the conclusion that subject is everything. The myth is used as a shield to

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[41] Trilling bases this interpretation of "Resignation" on Arnold's urging of Arthur Hugh Clough to read the Bhagavadgita because "the Indians distinguish between meditation and absorption--and knowledge." Arnold advised Clough to read this in order to make his poetry more natural--less intellectual.

[42] H. F. Lowry (ed.), Letters of Matthew Arnold to Arthur Hugh Clough, pp. 123-125.

keep the world removed as much as possible, and yet to allow Arnold to examine his experiences in the world. In "Sohrab and Rustum" he shows through a myth the complex father-son relationship that is reminiscent of his father and him; in "Tristram and Iseult" a triangular relationship which might be a reflection of Marguerite and Lucy Wrightman is discussed, again disguised as myth. This same element veils personal emotions in even the lyrical poems such as "The Scholar Gypsy" and "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse."[43] In the previously cited letter to Clough, he expands his decision that poetry must be content alone:

> Modern poetry can only subsist by its contents: by becoming a complete magister vitae as the poetry of the ancients did: by including as theirs did, religion with poetry, instead of existing as poetry only and leaving religious wants to be supplied by the Christian religion, as a power existing independent of the poetical power.[44]

This is a foreshadowing of Arnold's later religious prose writing. Though Arnold continued to believe that the poet must produce beauty, he now insisted that the poet think, too.

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[43]The evidence for this interpretation of "Tristram and Iseult" and "Sohrab and Rustum" is taken by Brown from the general tendency of Arnold's thought and feeling. H. W. Garrod has examined the personal element in "Tristram and Iseult" in his Poetry and the Criticism of Life, pp. 34-45. No external evidence exists for this interpretation of "Sohrab and Rustum," yet the significant likenesses between Matthew and Thomas Arnold are touched upon by almost every Arnold scholar; the conflict between the very sober, stately elder and his dashingly worldly son is the never failing subject of comment.

[44]Lowry, op. cit., p. 124.

Implementing this criterion of thought filled with beauty, however, was more difficult than Arnold, the critic, had expected; the poetry of thought was all too likely to fall short of beauty and the offering of pleasure. When this poetry put such heavy emphasis on the intellectual level, it lost its beauty; thus, in the subsequent loss of balance, it lost the ultimate goal--disinterestedness.

Empedocles on Etna, published in 1852, is Arnold's first attempt to practice his new dictum of the thinking poet which Brown describes as "a prolonged struggle with thought."[45] Empedocles faces many of the same problems that Arnold had faced, and he reaches nearly the same conclusion that Arnold does at the end of his religious prose writing:

> A living man no more, Empedocles!
> Nothing but a devouring flame of thought--[46]
> But a naked eternally restless mind. . . .

Arnold hoped to draw Empedocles as a man who "sees things as they are--the world as it is--God as he is: in their stern simplicity."[47] Empedocles is represented as a man looking back with nostalgia toward an irrecoverable time when he and Parmenides could think without becoming all intellect. So long

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[45] Brown, op. cit., p. 42.

[46] Matthew Arnold, "Empedocles on Etna," II, ll. 328-330.

[47] C. B. Tinker and H. F. Lowry, The Poetry of Matthew Arnold: A Commentary, p. 291. This statement is a revealing restatement of Mary Arnold's reaction to Strayed Reveller.

as thought was only one of their activities, their mood was perfect peace.[48] In Empedocles, Arnold presents a terrible divergence between a disinterested state and one where the intellect captures and consumes everything. Empedocles feels that life can no longer be tolerated.[49] This ennui, or as Eliot calls it, "a true form of acedia arising from the unsuccessful struggle towards the spiritual life,"[50] is a haunting foreshadowing of Arnold's own future as revealed in his religious prose. Empedocles, at the end of the poem, comes to a point wholly incompatible with the disposition of disinterestedness.[51] When Arnold moved from his position of disinterestedness to involvement in social, religious and education criticism, he was lost to poetry.

But in 1852 this loss of disinterestedness lay in the future. Brown calls "The Scholar Gipsy" (1853) Arnold's most intellectually impressive poem. Like "Empedocles," "The Scholar Gipsy" is a poem about discontent with intellectualism. It is "a passionate indictment of the new dictatorship of the never-resting intellect over the soul of modern man."[52] The

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[48]Brown, op. cit., p. 42.

[49]Trilling, op. cit., p. 83.

[50]T. S. Eliot, "Introduction to Charles Baudelaire," Intimate Journals, translated by Charles Iskerwood, p. 14.

[51]Brown, op. cit., p. 42.

[52]Trilling, op. cit., p. 112.

Gipsy, however, in contrast to Empedocles, attains his disinterestedness. He is characterized by repose, dignity and inward clearness, at one with himself and without the strain and imperfection of the moralist.[53]

"The Scholar Gipsy" can be considered as an intermediary step between "Empedocles on Etna" and "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse." "The Scholar Gipsy" proposes the idea that all human values and emotions are of social growth, if not of social origin.[54] Arnold has, thus, revealed the weakness of the disinterested position: man cannot understand society if he withdraws from it. All values and emotions are found within society; a withdrawal from that society places one in an alienated position, not a disinterested one. Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse finally confronts this impasse. Within the development of the poem, this idea and the impasse which it presents to the proponent of disinterestedness is explored. "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" (1855) is Arnold's last major poem. Brown judges it as Arnold's most successful attempt to deal poetically with the place of the intellect in the disposition of disinterestedness. Opening with a sympathetic survey of the contemplative silence of the monastery and its inmates,

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[53]Brown, op. cit., p. 46. The author also has an extensive treatment of this poem in his "The Scholar Gipsy: An Interpretation," Revue anglo-américaine, XII (1935), p. 221.

[54]Trilling, op. cit., p. 113.

Arnold then balances the picture of the monastery with one of the modern world where he admires the progress and appreciates the gaiety and movement. Yet, though he is sympathetic with the monks, he says, "Not as their friend or child I speak."[55] But he is equally alien from the moderns when he says, "We laud them, but they are not ours."[56] Between these two stand the Romantics. The poet subscribes to them, but even, here, he is not comfortable. His description of the creed and way of life of the Romantics indicate that he was as alien from them as he was from the monks and moderns. However, association with the Romantics is only accidental, because he is living in a transitional age between the old order of Christian Europe and the new order of science and technology. Thus, in the poem, Arnold has established three worlds; but he is not really a member of any of them. Because this is extending disinterestedness to the mood of extreme skepticism, it negates the serenity which Arnold was striving for in disinterestedness. The "truth" which Brown believes Arnold recognized in "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse" is

> . . . that a disinterested fashion of presenting the ideas which recommended themselves most strongly to him as a

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[55]Matthew Arnold, "Stanzas from the Grande Chartreuse," l. 79.

[56]Ibid., l. 168. The original form of this line, "They awe us, but they are not ours." is a stronger statement of alienation.

> modern man was not to be reconciled with the presentation of the ideal of human character which he had formed, the man of dignity, repose, and inward clearness, serene and unharassed.[57]

In other words, the attempts to reach a spirit of disinterestedness had reached an impasse in poetry.

Perhaps Arnold recognized the impasse into which he had written himself. Merope, A Tragedy (1858) was composed almost entirely for form. In a letter to his sister, "K," Arnold explained his turning from the poetry of thought and feeling to the poetry of pure form:

> People do not understand what a temptation there is, if you cannot bear anything not very good, to turn your operations to a region where form is everything. Perfection of a certain kind may there be attained or at least approached without knocking youself 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 (although one is sometimes forced to it) unless one can devote one's whole life to poetry.[58]

This renunciation is interpreted by Brown as a recognition of the failure of disinterestedness. It is part of Brown's central thesis that Arnold turned from verse to prose because of his discovery of the inconsistency of the ideal of the disinterested position.[59]

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[57] Brown, op. cit., p. 47.

[58] G. W. E. Russell (ed.), Letters of Matthew Arnold, pp. 62-63.

[59] Brown, op. cit., p. 52.

Whatever the cause, Arnold turned from poetry to prose. The first of his prose works that has remained important to twentieth-century readers is Essays in Criticism (1865).[60] The disinterestedness which had been so elusive to Arnold was personified in the people about whom he chose to write. The collection is an extension of Arnold's attempt to define the human ideals which he had presented in various guises in his poetry. In separate essays, Arnold examines Eugenie de Guerin, Joubert, and Marcus Aurelius as examples of those who had the disposition of disinterestedness that Arnold relentlessly pursued in his earlier writing.[61] He seems also implicitly to have expanded his definition of disinterestedness from an

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[60] The prose works between "Merope" and Essays in Criticism are England and the Italian Question (1859), Popular Education of France (1861), On Translating Homer (1861), On Translating Homer, Last Words (1862), and A French Eton (1864).

[61] Brown, op. cit., p. 90. Lionel Trilling in Matthew Arnold, pp. 192-193, expands this statement to include the principal essays between 1863 and 1865: "four essays deal primarily with the literary life, with poetry and criticism: 'The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,' 'The Literary Influence of Academies,' 'Maurice de Guerin' and 'Heinrich Heine.' Six deal, directly or indirectly, with religion: the nub of the essay on Eugenie de Guerin is the comparison of her life of Catholic piety with a Protestant lady's life of good works; the essay on Joubert reflects the Platonic religiosity of the 'French Coleridge's' mind; 'Pagan and Medieval Religious Sentiment' gives the palm to the medieval while pleading for an understanding of any religion, even the decadent pagan; and the essays, 'Spinoza and the Bible,' 'Dr. Stanley's Lectures on the Jewish Church,' and 'Marcus Aurelius,' are all concerned with distinguishing between the life of religion and the life of the intellect."

attitude of serene dignity to include an elevation of spirit over all else. This shift in the meaning of disinterestedness takes on heightened meaning when it is applied to the religious prose. Disinterestedness, like that which Empedocles sought, would not include such mundane concerns as the revitalization of religion through experience; but disinterestedness which emphasized the elevation of spirit could employ that elevated spirit to examine the Bible, and through that examination re-evaluate all the dogma of religion. This examination is what Arnold ultimately does in his religious prose. In Essays in Criticism, his first prose volume dealing even obliquely with disinterestedness, Arnold perfects the urbane, balanced irony which marks so much of his prose. Several writers have examined Arnold's subtle but highly effective prose style.[62] This examination is helpful in tracing Arnold's attempts at disinterestedness. His style is particularly effective, because it serves as the perfect medium for an author who wishes to avoid the tone of direct controversy, to keep his feelings in rein, rather than to dictate, and to suggest what the reader should think. The adjectives describing Arnold, the young man, and

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[62]John Holloway's The Victorian Sage: Studies in Argument gives the most thorough treatment of Arnold's prose style. He discusses Arnold's urbane wit and self effacing tone which implies a much less intense attitude than his subjects seem to deserve. Holloway believes that this juxtaposition of opposites puts Arnold's readers so off balance that his style succeeds where a more serious one might fail.

Arnold's style are strikingly similar: "witty," "urbane," "flippant," "cool." The dandy habits of his youth seem to have been transferred to his writing in his maturity. The tone suits the attitude and strategy of disinterestedness. The use of myth in the poetry was part of the strategy to achieve disinterestedness; in the literary and social prose, Arnold drops the appearance of disinterestedness when he becomes the interested critic--even one who writes about and implicitly recommends disinterestedness. The Essays are the recognizable curve in the circle which Arnold travels in his canon from the search for disinterestedness to a position of disinterestedness, the movement away from that position and finally back to a plea for disinterestedness. While Essays in Criticism is only the beginning of a curve, On the Study of Celtic Literature is an even more pronounced part of the curve which begins in a volcano and ends in the Epistle to the Romans.

Arnold delivered a series of four lectures in 1865 and 1866 on Celtic literature which were immediately serialized in Cornhill Magazine and were then published in book form in 1867. His objective was to influence English policies toward Ireland and Wales. This goal, which is obviously not a disinterested one, would, if realized, produce disinterestedness on the part of the English. The achievement of this disinterestedness would be reached through the moderate means of cultural growth:

> Let us reunite ourselves with our better mind and with the world through science; and let it be one of our angelic

> revenges on the Philistines, who among their other sins are the guilty authors of Fenianism, to found at Oxford a chair of Celtic, and to send through the gentle ministration of science a message of peace to Ireland.[63]

This rather oblique approach to committing the English to at least an awareness of the Irish and Welch problem may seem rather time consuming to the oppressed, but Arnold points out that

> . . . it needs some moderation not to be attacking Philistinism by storm, but to mine it through such gradual means as the slow approaches of culture and the introduction of chairs of Celtic.[64]

On another level, however, On the Study of Celtic Literature recommends the development of disinterestedness for each man, not just for Arnold. Thus, each man would balance the emotional with the intellectual, the present with the past. This extension of disinterestedness from a personal quest to one which would influence the nation is the beginning of Matthew Arnold's involvement in social criticism, and, ironically, the beginning of his loss of the disinterestedness which he had been so diligently pursuing through the years of his canon in which his poetry was produced.

Essays in Criticism, then, shows the first prose glimmer of Arnold's movement from a personal search for disinterestedness to the implicit belief in a national need for

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[63] R. H. Super (ed.), The Complete Works of Matthew Arnold, III, 386.

[64] Loc. cit.

disinterestedness. In On The Study of Celtic Literature this belief is explicitly, but subtly, developed. Schools and Universities on the Continent (1868) presents this same theme even more urgently. Brown notes that in Schools and Universities Arnold senses a broader and deeper crisis in the social and political attitudes of the English. Coupled to this crisis is Arnold's strong conviction that education must, at all levels, play a determining role in the formulation of a civilization's qualities. Arnold raises two rhetorical questions in this work: "Who will deny that England has life and Progress? But who will also deny that her course begins to show signs of uncertainty and embarrassment?"[65] These queries bring him almost to the starting point of Culture and Anarchy. The title, Schools and Universities on the Continent, implies that Arnold believed that England should be a part of the main stream of life and thought on the Continent. To the smugly insular English, this view was startling enough, but in this same work Arnold first discusses his view that England is, in fact, in a state of anarchy. This concern is a pole away from the resignation of an Empedocles facing a volcano. He saw the development of disinterestedness as England's salvation from anarchy. Arnold moved from the highly personal poetry of his youth, a poetry which examined disinterestedness,

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[65] Ibid., IV, 35.

and tried to achieve disinterestedness through myth, to a recommendation of disinterestedness for society--Arnold became a social critic. He interpreted a problem which belonged to the practical life of the nation; and his theory of disinterestedness had evolved to the point in which he could not speak of it in theoretical terms, but with detailed, explicit recommendations and objections required in practical criticism.[66]

Culture and Anarchy was the beginning of that practical criticism. The first article, "Culture and Its Enemies," which appeared in Cornhill Magazine (July, 1867), was Arnold's farewell lecture as Professor of Poetry at Oxford.[67] Culture and Anarchy was written during what the writers of the period considered to be social upheaval. George Eliot, speaking as Felix Holt, the Radical, wrote an address to the middle class Westminister Review pointing out to the workers that to destroy the middle class would be to destroy their own freedom.[68] Thomas Carlyle, too, was horrified at the result of Swarmery--the "Gathering of Men in Swarms."[69] Arnold wrote Culture and Anarchy not with George Eliot's apprehension or Carlyle's disgust, but with the firm conviction that now, more than ever,

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[66] Brown, op. cit., p. 119.

[67] Trilling, op. cit., p. 251.

[68] Ibid., p. 251.

[69] Ibid., p. 250.

the principle of State and of authority must be understood. The six essays, an Introduction and Preface, which Trilling calls the keystone of Arnold's intellectual life, were collected in 1869 under the title, Culture and Anarchy.[70]

In Culture and Anarchy, Arnold praises action only if it is guided by thought. He says that what is needed is calm observation and habitual reflection to see things as they really are. He is recommending in new words the same position of disinterestedness that he had recommended in Celtic Literature and in Schools and Universities. The man of Culture, thus developed, will transmit to the next generation his observation and reflection. That generation, because it has had the benefit of disinterested counsel, can act wisely. This development of wise counselors is the culture side of Arnold's Culture and Anarchy: the theoretical face which looks to the future. The other face looks at the present, the practical. In the second chapter of Culture and Anarchy, "Doing as One Likes," Arnold confronts his critics who had scorned his previous criticism as being too impractical. He states his intention ". . . to drive at practice as much as [he] can by showing the communications and passages into practical life from the doctrine which [he is] inculcating."[71] He felt that

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[70]Charles Frederick Harrold and William D. Templeman (eds.), English Prose of the Victorian Era, p. 1544.

[71]Super, Works, V, 116.

he was proposing a concept that might save England from the anarchy into which he felt it was rushing. He believed that he was making ". . . a contribution in aid of the practical necessities of our times."[72]

Chapters two and three have the beginning of the movement between the interested and disinterested poles which was to infuriate the critics of his religious prose. Arnold offers culture as a solution to the Englishman's difficulties. This culture would come from the best that had been thought and said in the past. He, then, treats the most difficult issues with a consumate disinterestedness; coining names for each of the social classes, Populace, Philistines and Barbarians, he charges them with extremes of excess and defect, and then abruptly withdraws to begin a highly involved--interested--attack on two individuals, Jacob Bright and Sir Thomas Bateson. Chapters four and five expand his definitions of Hellenism and Hebraism. It is in these extensive definitions and their application to the English people that Arnold's spirit of disinterestedness shows its clearest dichotomy. He removes himself from a direct confrontation with his public with these coined names, yet their very applicability keeps him in the midst of the conflict. He explains that both Hellenism and Hebraism seek the perfection of man through

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[72] Ibid., p. 135.

knowledge of the past. Hebraism, though, is concerned with conduct and obedience of the law; Hellenism is concerned with spontaneity of consciousness. He believes that the two had been passing each other through the ages, the decline of one bringing the rise of the other. The current reaction against Hellenism in England seemed especially harsh to him. He is alarmed at this harshness, because he believes that the demands of an increasingly complex world are for Hellenism rather than Hebraism.

In his last chapter, "Our Liberal Practitioners," Arnold tests the practical worth of his theory as he sits in judgment of the principal points in the current Liberal program. Brown interprets this chapter as "a revelation of the communications and passages into practical life of the doctrine Arnold has been inculcating throughout the papers on Anarchy and Authority." This deep involvement in the politics of the period indicates Arnold's withdrawal from the disinterestedness which he had sought in his poetry. Arnold, the social critic, has evolved from Arnold, the poet of disinterestedness.

In his poetry, Arnold first extravagantly praises, then minutely examines, and finally regretfully renounces the disinterested position. In his critical works, beginning with Essays in Criticism, and ending with the last of his practical criticism, Culture and Anarchy, he illustrates this renunciation of an attempt to achieve personal disinterestedness.

Twenty years remained of his life. The first half of those years, from 1870 to 1877, were devoted to writing the religious prose: St. Paul and Protestantism, 1870; Literature and Dogma; An Essay Toward a Better Appreciation of the Bible, 1873; God and the Bible; A Review of Objections to "Literature and Dogma," 1875; and Last Essays on Church and Religion, 1877.[73]

In these years, Arnold seems to pendulate between the poles of disinterested and practical critic. St. Paul and Protestantism[74] is an attempt to show how the modern Hebraist, the Philistines, have inevitably failed to understand the text of one of the masters of Hebraism. In this work, Arnold becomes a calm analyst, the disinterested historian of religious ideas. The text of St. Paul should be read, according to Arnold,

> . . . with the sort of critical tact which the study of the human mind and its history, and the acquaintance with many great writers, naturally gives for following the movement of any one single great writer's thought, . . .

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[73]After Arnold withdrew from the religious controversy with Last Essays on Church and Religion, he wrote a variety of works: Mixed Essays and Others (1882), Discourses in America (1885), Reports on Elementary Schools (1852-1882). He told G. W. E. Russell, a close friend and later the editor of his Complete Works, that Discourses in America was the prose-writing he most wished to be remembered for. G. W. E. Russell, Matthew Arnold, p. 12.

[74]The third edition of this work was retitled "Modern Dissent" and is included by Super in his Volume VI, Dissent and Dogma, with Literature and Dogma.

> without preconceived theories to which we want to make his thoughts fit themselves.[75]

This is surely the perfect prescription for disinterestedness.

This disinterestedness is put to work, however, in Literature and Dogma where he undertakes the delicate task of reinterpreting the Bible in the light of the most modern knowledge.[76] He examines the Bible with the serenity and detachment which he began recommending in Essays in Criticism, but in Literature and Dogma he is suggesting something to be done, not just commenting on something already accomplished. And, inevitably, when disinterestedness is employed, it becomes

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[75]Quoted by E. K. Brown from St. Paul and Protestantism (First ed., p. 91), p. 144.

[76]The religious prose works were printed first in article form, then collected and published as books. The chronological order of the respective chapters is helpful in avoiding confusion. St. Paul and Protestantism: in The Cornhill Magazine, October and November 1869, in book form 1870; "Puritanism and the Church of England"; Cornhill, February, 1870, reprinted in St. Paul and Protestantism; Literature and Dogma, in part in the Cornhill, July and October, 1871, complete in book form 1873; "A Persian Passion Play" in the Cornhill of December, 1871, reprinted in the third edition, 1875, of Essays in Criticism. (Trilling notes that this article is often mistaken for a work of the earlier period because of its inclusion in Essays in Criticism.) "Review of Objections to 'Literature and Dogma,'" The Contemporary Review, October and November, 1874 and January, March, May, July, September, 1875, reprinted as God and the Bible, 1875; "Bishop Butler and the Zeit-Geist," The Contemporary Review, February and March, 1876; "The Church of England," Macmillan's Magazine, April 1876; "A Last Word on the Burials Bill," Macmillan's, July, 1876; "A Psychological Parallel," Contemporary Review, November, 1876. The last four were reprinted with a preface as Last Essays on Church and Religion, 1877. Trilling, Matthew Arnold, pp. 340-341.

practical criticism--or criticism which leads to action, not contemplation.

Arnold contends in Literature and Dogma and God and the Bible that the supernatural does not exist. The last line of the Preface to Literature and Dogma emphatically states "miracles do not happen." This firm statement and the reiteration of it throughout God and the Bible present a man with opinions that are a pole away from disinterested contemplation. That one statement opened the floodgates of controversy and involved action on Arnold's part. He could not retain the serene dignity and predominance of spirit which he had advocated in his earlier prose works. He had to prove his conclusion. Once again, disinterestedness has revealed, through contemplation, the "truth." But now, that very truth led to action, not serene disinterestedness. A moderate manner and serene disposition of disinterestedness are not evident in these two early sentences from the Preface to Literature and Dogma:

> Our mechanical and materialising theology, with its insane license of affirmation about God, its insane license of affirmation about a future state is really the result of the poverty and inanition of our minds. It is because we cannot trace God in history that we stay the craving of our minds with a fancy-account of him, made up by putting scattered expressions of the Bible together, and taking them literally, it is because we have such a scanty sense of the life of humanity, that we proceed in the like manner in our scheme of a future state.[77]

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[77] Super (ed.), Works, VI, 152.

Arnold is not the disinterested observer, here. He is deeply involved in what he believes is the "growing discredit befalling miracles and the supernatural."[78] He is convinced that "by the sanction of miracles Christianity can no longer stand."[79] In Literature and Dogma, Arnold is the highly interested critic. His next work was God and the Bible. It, too, is practical criticism--interestedness. His Last Essays on Church and Religion, which followed God and the Bible, is a renunciation of the religious controversy and an announcement of his planned return to literature. In the Preface to Last Essays he concludes,

> I am persuaded that the transformation of religion can be accomplished only by carrying the qualities of flexibility, perceptiveness, and judgement, which are the best fruits of letters to whole classes of the community which now know next to nothing of them, and by procuring the application of those qualities to matters where they are never applied now.[80]

This is Arnold's return to the highly disinterested critic of the early writing. Essays in Criticism is an examination of great figures who possessed disinterestedness; and On the Study of Celtic Literature is his objective plea for the recognition of greatness and value beyond the narrow bounds of nineteenth-century England. Culture and Anarchy extends this plea from

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[78] Ibid., p. 143.

[79] Loc. cit.

[80] Russell (ed.), Works, IX, 174.

an understanding of the Irish situation, to one of understanding the world. Arnold says that Englishmen must acquire culture from the best of the past; his St. Paul and Protestantism and Last Essays on Church and Religion act as a framework to Literature and Dogma and God and the Bible. In these four works, he has traversed a circle beginning with disinterestedness, moving through an attitude of dictated national involvement, to one of personal involvement, and returning to the disinterestedness of Essays in Criticism. Arnold returns to flexibility and perceptiveness.

If one is aware of the ascendency of interestedness in Arnold's canon and its final rejection in favor of the disinterestedness which he had sought in his youth, the similar evolution and subsequent dissolution of disinterestedness in his religious prose becomes more understandable. The spirit of disinterestedness and its influence have not been fully considered in the critical evaluation that Arnold's prose has received. The spirit of disinterestedness is evident in the canon, yet critics have chosen either to ignore it, or to write about it only as an interesting psychological phenomenon. Its influence has apparently been ignored; yet, it does exist. The criticism, beginning with the reviews and critical analyses of Arnold's contemporaries and extending to the views of Eliot and Trilling, has been highly fragmented and diverse in the conclusions drawn, because the critics have not brought Arnold's

personal search for disinterestedness into their own attempts at interpretation.

CHAPTER III

THE CRITICS AND MATTHEW ARNOLD'S RELIGIOUS PROSE

The four books central to Matthew Arnold's religious criticism are St. Paul and Protestantism, 1870; Literature and Dogma; An Essay Towards a Better Appreciation of the Bible, 1873; God and the Bible: A Review of Objections to "Literature and Dogma," 1875; and Last Essays on Church and Religion, 1877. These four books were the subject of extensive review in the nineteenth century, and they have had periodically renewed interest in the twentieth century. The nineteenth-century reviewers and critics were unanimously horrified by Arnold's proposal contained in the books: i.e., that religion, including God, should be accepted only after proof from personal experience. The twentieth-century critics' reactions have ranged from caustic dismissal to fervid support of Arnold's proposals. This divergence of opinion in the twentieth century and the misinterpreting of Arnold in the nineteenth century are the result of an overlooking of Arnold's theory of the influence of the spirit of disinterestedness and its importance in interpreting Arnold's religious prose. The four books of religious prose were published in essay form in popular magazines.[81] Even before the essays were collected in book

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[81] Cf. fn. 76.

form, they were strongly censured by critics and church authorities.[82] The books fared no better when the reviewers, who customarily remained anonymous, reported upon them.[83] After the single essays had been discussed in letters to the editors of the publishing magazines and their collection reviewed by the leading reviewers, nineteenth-century critics analyzed them. None of Arnold's contemporaries was kind to his religious prose, but the critics, who, in contrast to the reviewers signed their material, had more space to examine the individual works, and usually treated the prose more tactfully, if not more kindly than the reviewers.

Although the Victorian reviewers were hostile to the proposals which Arnold presented in his religious prose, it was difficult directly to attack the careful scholarship and sincere concern evident in each of the four works. Instead, they found it easier to attack Arnold's style. His style was flippant, self-effacing, witty, even amusing. This style was understandably disconcerting to a reading public accustomed to Newman's and Keble's theological arguments presented in the

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[82]Henry Sidgwick, "A Review of Last Lecture at Oxford--First Chapter of Culture and Anarchy," Macmillan's Magazine, XVI (1867), 271-280.

[83]Walter E. Houghton, The Wellesley Index to Victorian Periodicals, 1824-1900, attempts to establish the identity of the anonymous reviewers, but because identifying the writers was not important to the thesis of this paper, the Index was not used.

solemn, complex, and often dull style that the subject seemed to dictate. Compounding the irritation of Arnold's style was his lack of credentials even to write on religious matters. He was highly regarded as a poet; his Essays in Criticism had shown his ability as a literary and social critic; his Culture and Anarchy had certainly established him as a political critic. But knowledge in these fields did not qualify him in the eyes of the Victorians as a theological critic. In Blackwood's Magazine one finds a typical comment of reviewers' irritation at Arnold's self-confident intrusion in a realm for which he had had no training:

> Our complaint is, not that theology is undergoing, as it must undergo, great modifications of its accumulated opinions and traditions, but that its old opinions are frequently set aside as valueless by those who have never studied them, and that its accumulated treasures are held to be so much waste paper by many who know nothing of them, and have never tried to estimate them.[84]

But Arnold was not in an unfamiliar realm; he had a firm foundation in the writings of the nineteenth-century German theologians. He had read Baur, Feuerbach, Schleiermacher and Strauss, as well as Renan's Life of Jesus.[85] Although a substantial

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[84]"A Review of Literature and Dogma," Blackwood's Magazine, CXIII (1873), 680.

[85]Kenneth Allot, "Matthew Arnold's Reading Lists in Three Early Diaries," VS, II (1959), 256-257; Basil Willey, "Matthew Arnold, What He Read and Why," New Studies, XLIV (1946), 108; Eugene L. Williamson, Jr., "Matthew Arnold's Reading," VS, III (1963), 317-318. Numerous critics have researched the influence of Renan on Arnold's religious prose. The most comprehensive works on this subject are found in J.

body of research has developed on Renan's influence on Matthew Arnold, the influence of the German theologians cannot be over emphasized. LaTourette points out that

> Germany was the scene of a ferment of daring thought and conflicting convictions. . . . It applied to the Bible and to the history of Christianity and methods of research and analysis which were being developed by historians, . . . to determine the dates, authorship, and reliability of the documents upon which they depended in their efforts to understand and reconstruct the past.[86]

Like Arnold, the intellectuals on the Continent were reading the German theologians, and their faith was shaken by them.[87]

Arnold's faith was not necessarily shaken by the Germans, since his father, Thomas Arnold, had been very interested in Continental Biblical criticism and wrote extensively on the subject.[88] It would not be unreasonable to assume that Matthew Arnold knew his father's opinions, and surely Thomas

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(continued) W. Angel, "Matthew Arnold's Indebtedness to Renan's Essais de morale et de critique," R. Litt. Comp., XIV (1934), 714-733; Rose Bachem, "Arnold's and Renan's Views of Perfection," RLC, XLI (1967), 228-237; Sidney M. B. Coulling, "Renan's Influence on Arnold's Literary and Social Criticism," Florida State University Studies, V (1952), 95-112; Joan N. Harding, "Renan and Matthew Arnold: Two Saddened Searchers," HJ, LVII (1959), 361-367.

[86]Kenneth Scott LaTourette, A History of Christianity, pp. 1126-1127.

[87]Ibid., pp. 1134-1135.

[88]Eugene L. Williamson, Jr., "Significant Points of Comparison between the Biblical Criticism of Thomas and Matthew Arnold," PMLA, LXXVI (1961), 539-543; Walter Phelps Hall, "The Three Arnolds and Their Bible," in Essays in Intellectual History Dedicated to James Harvey Rolunsor, pp. 71-88.

Arnold's library was available to his son in his formative student days. Thomas Arnold realized even in 1830 that contemporary Anglican religion was inadequate; the rationalism of Continental Biblical scholars and historians appealed to Thomas Arnold as it was to appeal to his son thirty years later.[89] Christensen has carefully documented the influence of the German theologians, through Thomas Arnold, on Matthew Arnold's Literature and Dogma. He says that Thomas Arnold refined the German theologians' Biblical criticism to three main points:

1. Nature and the value of the religion of Israel can best be understood in terms of its historical process.

2. Many of the accounts and the expressions of the Old Testament were accommodations to man's knowledge and situation at a particular stage in his development.

3. Many of the ideas of the Bible were presented by means of myths--traditional stories lacking at least complete historicity.[90]

These three points can be seen implicitly restated in Matthew Arnold's own religious prose. Points one and two are discussed in Literature and Dogma's Parts I and II, "Religion Given" and "Aberglaube Invading." Point three is the basis for St. Paul and Protestantism, Literature and Dogma and God and the Bible. Matthew Arnold admits in the Preface to St. Paul and Protestantism that everything in his work had been stated

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[89] Williamson, op. cit., p. 539.

[90] Merton A. Christensen, "Thomas Arnold's Debt to German Theologians: A Prelude to Matthew Arnold's Literautre and Dogma," MP, LV (1957), 17.

earlier and more learnedly. He was, of course, referring to the German theologians. Matthew Arnold restated the conclusions of the German theologians in his religious prose, because he was deeply concerned about the invasion of the Zeitgeist and its influence on religion. Arnold saw, as the continental thinkers saw, that the old rigid stance of religion could not withstand the assault of the nineteenth-century time spirit.[91] If Arnold were merely restating, shy, then, was he so vigorously and solemnly attacked by his contemporaries, and why is the divergence of opinion so great even in the twentieth century about his religious prose? All of Arnold's nineteenth-century critics seem to have ignored his attempt to estimate the value of dogma through the application of a critical, intellectual method, rather than through emotional proof from faith that had sufficed in the past. Arnold knew that the influence of science and the doubts that it created were causing "men to recognize the growing discredit befalling miracles and the supernatural."[92] Arnold wanted to provide a new basis of religion which would accept the discoveries of science, not ignore them; he wanted to find God from personal experience--thus, prove Him empirically, not strictly from faith. He repeatedly said that each man, supported by the best from all previous ages, could

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[91] LaTourette, op. cit., pp. 1134-1135.

[92] Super (ed.), Works, VI, 143.

discern God through the literature of the Bible without the artificiality of dogma. When Arnold published St. Paul and Protestantism in 1870, the reviewers were fairly warned about what Arnold would surely do in Literature and Dogma, since it is simply an extension of his thesis proposed in the earlier work.[93] Instead of understanding Arnold's quiet but revolutionary proposal, the reviewers allowed themselves to become so involved with Arnold's condescending tone and his flippant style that they finally retreated to the dogmatic stand from which they regularly castigated him. The Spectator's review is an example:

> As for strife, Mr. Arnold no doubt hopes to remove it by showing his antagonists how completely they are in the wrong and he in the right; but for the rest, there is the very spirit which has in these latter days prolonged Dissent,--the spirit of bland superiority, the calm attitude of a higher caste, the loftiness of mind which deems the Dissenter indefinitely, though perhaps involuntarily, lower than ourselves, in the whole tone of Mr. Arnold's disputation. A man who believes, like Mr. Arnold, that all theological dogma is premature, has hardly the right to arbitrate on differences between men the noblest of whom cling with their whole hearts to the belief that dogmatic truth on theological subjects is not only

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[93]Reviews of St. Paul and Protestantism from Atlantic, I (1870), 669-670, Fortnightly Review, VII (1870), 752; Edinburgh Review, CXXXIII (1871), 399-425; The Spectator, (London) XLIII (1870), 642-644; Quarterly Review, CXXXI (1871), 432-462; and CXXXVII (1874), 389-415; and Contemporary Review, XIV (1870), 329-341, were examined during the research for this paper. Since they do not add information, nor offer any important deviation from the general opinion of Arnold's religious prose, they are not discussed. The bibliographical information above is complete; thus, these listings will not be included in the complete bibliography.

> attainable by all men, but that inability to attain it has been due to some deep moral delinquency in the spirits of those who have confessed it.[94]

The reviewer unwittingly interprets Arnold well, for he continually advocates "bland superiority . . . calm attitude . . . and the loftiness of mind" which are aspects of the disinterestedness that each man must achieve--through Culture--in order to perceive God. Arnold's style, in combination with the apparently revolutionary proposals he was making about the reformation of traditional beliefs, hid the impact of what he said. Even when faithfully interpreted by the reviewers, it masked itself with its own clarity. Reviews, such as The Spectator's, above, often contain the exact sense of what Arnold was proposing, but the meaning of his proposals was lost, because the reviewer, and indeed, the public, could not understand Arnold's requirement of disinterestedness in those who would resolve their growing doubts about religion. The paradox was, understandably, too great for the men who were so vitally involved; they could not achieve a balance of interestedness and disinterestedness. The attack on Arnold's style, which was a part of his form of disinterestedness, was misdirected; but in the nineteenth century, critics should not be too severly castigated for decrying a tone of disinterestedness in a subject which held such intense interest.

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[94] "Review of St. Paul and Protestantism," The Spectator (London), XLIII (1870), 642.

Gates, in his Introduction to Selections from the Prose Writings of Matthew Arnold, admits that Arnold's "style has an unfortunate knack of exciting prejudice."[95] It is more than prejudice against this unfortunate knack that makes the Edinburgh Review comment:

> . . . we never saw so many good thoughts spoilt by slovenly explanations, so many sound judgments oversetting each other for want of clear definitions and limitations, so many classical columns and capitals tumbling about in such disorder and buried in such heaps of rubbish. . . . They ought therefore, in the quaint phrase of Lord Bacon, to be carefully chewed and tasted before they are either swallowed or rejected. The most defective will be found, upon careful examination, to contain what diplomatic jargon terms "the elements of a solution." We wish we could add that there is a single one among them which the indolence of their accomplished author has not left more or less defective.[96]

This is a strong, succinct summary of what all of Arnold's first reviewers said.[97] They were so incredulous at the

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[95]Lewis E. Gates, Selections from the Prose Writings of Matthew Arnold, p. ix.

[96]"A Review of Matthew Arnold's Critical Works," Edinburgh Review, CXXIX (1869), 503.

[97]Reviews examined but not included in comments regarding Literature and Dogma include the following: North American Review, CXVII (1873), 240-247; Atlantic, XXXII (1873), 108-112; Nation (New York), XVII (1873), 131-132; Scribners, VI (1873), 755-756; Christian Union, VII (1873), 501-502; Methodist Quarterly Review, LV (1873), 507-509; Baptist Quarterly, VII (1873), 377-378; Frasers, VIII (1873), 134-144; Blackwoods Magazine, CXIII (1873), 678-692; Dublin Review, XX (1873), 357-380; Contemporary Review, XXI (1873), 842-866; Quarterly Review, CXXXVII (1874), 389-415. The bibliographical information above is complete; thus, these listings will not be included in the bibliography.

religious theory which this poet-school inspector, this Dandy Isaiah, dared to propose that they found his style to be simpler to attack. Style, however, was not the only thing the reviewers attacked. Arnold proposed that, to give God personality was to make Him a victim of the Aberglaube, the extra-belief which had led men away from the true meaning of the Bible. The Spectator found this proposal irritating, but cloaked its objections with reference to style:

> In a word, we do not really know whether Mr. Arnold means his opposition to the word "person," as applied to God, seriously or not. We do not really know whether he regards God as something infinitely above man in all that is best in us,--in love, in power, in reason, in goodness,--or as an attenuated sublimate of the human morality. Mr. Arnold has written a very powerful book, after the most careful study of which, we remain in serious doubt as to the meaning he attaches to its most fundamental term.[98]

In the same issue of The Spectator, a second reviewer continues:

> And so with regard to his interpretation of Christ's special contribution to revelation,--while there is much of beauty and force in his manner of putting it, he appears to us either to rob Christ's teaching of its very heart, or to be pretending to do what he does not really wish to do, and actually undoes in the very moment in which he affects to be doing it. His main teaching as to Christ's revelation is this: that he came "to restore the intuition" which formerly identified the permanent or Eternal in conduct with righteousness, and which had always regarded righteousness as the source of blessedness.[99]

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[98] "A Review of Literature and Dogma." (Mr. Arnold's Gospel), The Spectator (London), XLVI (1873), 244.

[99] "A Second Notice of Literature and Dogma." (Mr. Arnold on Christianity), The Spectator (London), XLVI (1873), 278.

But again, the reviewer has ignored Arnold's point of view of disinterestedness. He, like his brother reviewers, has expressed, though crudely, Arnold's thesis; but he does not extend the meaning of Christ's coming to man's knowledge of the best that has been thought and said. Arnold insists that man prove religion through experience, or intuition, and that man should dismiss dogma if its meaning is not relevant to his experience, but this experience must be seen in the light of lessons learned from past ages--he wants each man to learn Culture. Arnold, then, would have a reader of the Bible see Christ's birth, death, and resurrection as symbolic, not as fact. He would refuse to accept Christ's ascension into heaven, for example, because it cannot be verified in experience. Thus, Arnold is not Christian if the dogma is accepted that one must believe, on faith, that Christ is sitting at the right hand of God.

God and the Bible, as an explication and expansion of the Literature and Dogma suffered at the hands of the critics, too.[100] Arnold is accused by The Spectator of having a "want

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[100]Reviews of God and the Bible examined but not used in this paper because of their similarity to reviews of Literature and Dogma include Nation, XXII (1876), 86; Athenaeum (London), II (1875), 781-782; The Spectator, XLIX (1876), 407-409; Atlantic, I (1884), 769. Janet E. Courtney, in Freethinkers of the Nineteenth Century, p. 247, offers a succinct breakdown of God and the Bible into the following criticism to which Arnold replied in that work: (1) that the first Israelitish conception of God was a crude Jehveh [sic] worship and not the

of intellectual seriousness" and a misunderstanding of the dogma which he would deny.[101] Last Essays is reviewed by Saturday Review in a similarly derisive vein:

> Although Mr. Arnold's modesty has prevented him from describing his literary attempt as an opus magnum, he does offer it to our notice as an opus supremum; and in this we must frankly say--even at the risk of the Zeitgeist being let loose and set upon us--he is just a little irritating.[102]

Arnold's shocking statements in combination with the religious turmoil of the period, probably were a little irritating to the reviewers and even to the public to which he wished to speak.

Arnold's books of religious prose were published during a time when the internal turmoil of the church was creating troublesome questions in the minds of many people in England. Arnold, an outside force, echoed this tumult. It is not surprising, then, that the reviewers chose to attack Arnold either with cutting sarcasm or an a priori argument from faith. But

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(continued) revelation of righteousness as described by Arnold; (2) that the evolutionary explanation of the moral faculties necessarily destroys the theory of the Israelitish institution of righteousness; (3) that religion is a matter of faith and cannot be grounded in experience; (4) that the anthropomorphic elements in Israel's conception of God prevent us from accepting the orthodox origin of the Israelitish conception of religion.

[101]"A Review of God and the Bible: A Review of Objections to 'Literature and Dogma.'" The Spectator (London), XLIX (1876), 408.

[102]"Review of Last Essays," Saturday Review (London), XLIII (1877), 491.

perhaps the medium of a review forced a hasty examination of Arnold's religious criticism. Arnold's work was also the subject of longer, more substantial articles in the critical and religious periodicals and books of the period.

Traille in Contemporary Review, 1884, presents a well-argued refutation of Arnold's religious criticism, describing Arnold as the founder of a new religion.[103] But he is opposed to Arnold's theory, because it would not work for the whole society:[104]

> Surely the truth is, that Mr. Arnold's Neo-Christianity is essentially a religion for the cultivated and comfortable, for those who are removed from the grosser temptations, who have learnt by experience that the exercise of the virtues under these conditions on the whole increases the sum of their comfort, and who feel that that touch of emotion which elevates morality into religion will give the finishing refinement to their happiness.[105]

Traille has ignored the clear statement that Arnold does not mean his work for everyone. He offers it only to those who feel doubt in the face of the Zeitgeist, which Arnold knew was destroying the old ways of life, including the belief about religion. Since the critics who were Arnold's contemporaries were not as concerned about nor as aware of the time-spirit, it is understandable that they were annoyed with Arnold for

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[103]Henry Duff Traille, "Neo-Christianity and Mr. Matthew Arnold," Contemporary Review, XLV (1884), 564.

[104]Ibid., pp. 567-569.

[105]Ibid., p. 573.

adding confusion to what was already a bewildering maze of dissent and dogma. Arnold's conviction that religion was being threatened by the Zeitgeist never weakened. Several years after the end of his religious prose period, he wrote Sir M. Grant Duff:

> . . . the central fact of the situation always remains for me this: that whereas the basis of things amidst all chance and change has even in Europe generally been for ever so long supernatural Christianity, and far more so in England than in Europe generally, this basis is certainly going--going amidst the full consciousness of the continentals that it is going, and amidst the provincial unconsciousness of the English that it is going.[106]

While Traille and the other critics ignored Arnold's plea, they interpreted his poignant attempt to supply England with a new and true basis for their religion as only "more valuable than the incredible and unspiritual creed of Exeter Hall."[107] Davies admirably summarizes the opinion of Arnold's religious criticism in the nineteenth century.[108] He employs calm, judicious language to state clearly Arnold's ideas about the revival of religion; then, he negates Arnold's "New Religion of the Bible" by saying, "We must demure to his assuming that he is for experience and practice, and that we are for theory."[109] Davies was perhaps an exception to the generally

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[106] Letters, II, 234.

[107] Traille, op. cit., p. 573.

[108] The Reverend J. Llewelyn Davies, "Mr. Arnold's New Religion of the Bible," Contemporary Review, XXI (1873), 842-866.

[109] Ibid., p. 865.

dogmatic, uneducated, overbearing clergy who blindly followed traditional dogma which the Zeitgeist had robbed of meaning. Perhaps, personally, Davies could demure to Arnold's opinion that the Church was hopelessly mired in theory, or dogma. But the theologians on the Continent had recognized the undermining influence of the Zeitgeist, and Arnold knew and respected their opinions. The fallacy inherent in Davies's and Traille's interpretation is the same as that of the nineteenth-century reviewers. They could see what Arnold said, but they could not accept his statement in the spirit of disinterestedness from which it was offered. It is this spirit which Arnold believed would give man a superior knowledge of the past so that he could apply that knowledge to the present. This spirit of disinterestedness is difficult to achieve, as even Arnold knew, yet it is central to his religious criticism, and the nineteenth-century reviewers and critics ignored it.

Other spokesmen for religion had mixed replies to Arnold and to critics like Traille, who broke ranks to even obliquely side with him. In 1883, an emotional article in Catholic World attacked Arnold, his religious prose, and even his theory of Zeitgeist, on a highly personal basis, because he had dared to attack dogma.[110] Here, Arnold is strongly rebuked for applying the German theologian's concepts to Englishmen, and even his

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[110]"Some Remarks on Mr. Matthew Arnold," Catholic World, XXXVII (1883), 537-589.

poetry is maligned for its lack of faith.[111] Catholic World dismisses Arnold and the need for his new religion in this way:

> With faith as his basis Mr. Matthew Arnold might have written for eternity, whereas his pen belongs to time, and, as in the case of worn-out human mortality, the earth will close over its tomb.[112]

In contrast, theologian Thayer in Critic, 1884, writes graciously about Arnold's style, scholarship and ability--in Arnold's own field. Thayer objects, though, when Arnold steps into theology. He kindly but firmly refutes Arnold's plan to replace dogma and miracles with a personal religion which takes its proof from personal experience. Thayer concludes that Arnold's religion which requires "the application of the literary method in judging the Bible and the works of theological science has landed him in bewildering inconsistencies."[113]

In 1898, fifteen years after Traille's and Thayer's articles appeared, Gates wrote his Introduction to Selections from the Prose Writings of Matthew Arnold. Brown evaluates Gates's work as "the most perceptive treatment of Arnold's prose as of so many aspects of Arnold's art and thought." Gates concludes that Arnold

> . . . takes life as it offers itself and does his best with it. . . . He has faith in the instincts that

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[111] Loc. cit.

[112] Ibid., p. 589.

[113] Stephen Henry Thayer, "A Theologian's Estimate of Matthew Arnold," Critic (New York), IV (1884), 6.

> civilized men have developed in common, and finds in the working of these instincts the continuous realization of the ideal.[114]

Gates's appraisal published in 1898 is far afield from what the reviewers and critics had said less than a decade before. Though Gates never explicitly examines the spirit of disinterestedness, his decision that Arnold has "faith in the instincts that civilized men have developed" is based implicitly on the acceptance of Culture which springs from disinterestedness.

Fifteen years after the appearance of Gates's work in 1913, Chesterton wrote The Victorian Age in Literature. His opinion of Arnold is more subjective than Gates's; to some readers Chesterton cuts to the heart of Arnold's religious prose when he summarizes Arnold as

> . . . trying to restore Paganism: for this State Ritualism without theology, and without much belief, actually was the practice of the ancient world. Arnold may have thought that he was building an alter to the Unknown God; but he was really building it to Divus Caesar.[115]

This statement, in its comforting clarity, seems to present the final pronouncement on Arnold's religious prose. But Chesterton is not the only Arnold critic who can turn a short, apparently terminal phrase. In 1933, Eliot judges Arnold an undergraduate in philosophy and theology, and in religion a

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[114]Gates, op. cit., p. lxxxvii.

[115]G. K. Chesterton, The Victorian Age in Literature, p. 77.

Philistine.[116] In his essay, "Pater and Arnold," Eliot expands this terse judgment:

> Arnold is really affirming that to Culture all theological and ecclesiastical differences are indifferent.
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> . . . . . .
>
> The total effect of Arnold's philosophy is to set up Culture in the place of Religion, and to leave Religion to be laid waste by the anarchy of feeling.[117]

Neither Chesterton nor Eliot has allowed disinterestedness to play the influential role which Arnold had meant it to. The "anarchy of feeling" would result only if the spirit of disinterestedness, which allows man to know the best of all ages and to use that knowledge, is ignored. Chesterton's comment is closer to a fair judgment of Arnold's religion, but it, too, ignores Arnold's canon and his personal search for disinterestedness. To judge Arnold's religious prose fairly, one cannot ignore that search. His religious prose grew out of his search for disinterestedness, and it must be considered within the context of that search.

In 1939, Trilling wrote Matthew Arnold: A Biography of His Mind. This book and Brown's Matthew Arnold: A Study in Conflict, published in 1949, offer a context in which to view

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[116] T. S. Eliot, The Use of Poetry and the Use of Criticism, p. 283.

[117] T. S. Eliot, "Pater and Arnold," Victorian Literature, p. 242.

Arnold's religious prose. With the critical aid of these two books, Arnold's prose can be interpreted to include, but to extend beyond, the simple boundaries which Chesterton charted in 1915. The use of this context in interpreting Arnold's religious criticism makes Eliot's statement appear shallow and injudicious. Thus, it must be conceded that Eliot and Chesterton are correct in their evaluation of Arnold's religious prose if it is to be read out of the context of the canon. Arnold does propose a reorganization of religion based on experience, not dogma; he does propose a reinterpretation of the Bible based on the thesis that it is literature or poetry, not literal truth; he does propose the destruction of theological and ecclesiastical autocracy. But it must be emphatically noted that he proposes these things in the light of the spirit of disinterestedness. Arnold believed, as his father had, that the ritual and tradition of public worship was a vital part of religion. He did not propose a dissolution of the Church; he proposed a recognition of the humanism of Christ. He did not propose a refusal of the resurrection of Christ; he proposed a recognition of that and the other miracles in the Bible as symbols--poetry that could lead man, through emotion, to God. The religious prose section of Arnold's canon, as a microcosm of his prose career, shows the same withdrawal to form which his poetic career had shown. In "Merope" Arnold implicitly concludes that form provides meaning; in his religious prose

he reaches the same conclusion. He believes that public worship is important to reveal inner truth. This writer does not argue the validity of Arnold's proposals, only that they must be seen in light of his canon and his own attempts at achieving disinterestedness. Trilling, Brown, and Willey have each, in slightly varying ways, supported this conclusion.

A slow but steady increase in interest in Arnold's works from 1932 to 1965 is noted by Tollers in an unpublished Masters Thesis (1965). The midpoint in the twentieth century, however, seems to show a marked increase in interest in Arnold.[118] Willey published Nineteenth Century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold in 1949. In 1961, Eliot expanded his terse evaluation of Arnold in an essay republished in Austin Wright's Victorian Literature. Willey and Eliot, two eminent and highly qualified critics, reached divergent conclusions about Arnold's religious prose. Eliot's decision is given above. In contrast to Eliot's dismissal of Arnold's philosophy, Willey feels that Arnold's religious writings are the "corner-stone of his work."[119] The entire entry in Nineteenth Century Studies for Arnold is a commentary on his religious prose. He evaluates the religious prose as

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[118]Vincent Louis Tollers, "A Study of Matthew Arnold, with a Bibliography of Arnoldiana (1932-1965). Unpublished Masters Thesis, p. 5.

[119]Basil Willey, Nineteenth Century Studies: Coleridge to Matthew Arnold, p. 253.

> . . . the thing that mattered most; all his efforts--in criticism, in politics, in education--really led up to it. It was therefore of vital importance to preserve it, to find a basis for it which should make it invulnerable to "scientific" criticism and yet leave it ethically as powerful as before.[120]

Perhaps Arnold is given the strategically final essay in Willey's book because he is the last of the men who try to believe. In Willey's second book, More Nineteenth Century Studies, he introduces the volume as devoted to the un-believers in the century.[121]

Other twentieth-century critics disagree with both Eliot and Willey. Cockshut sees Arnold not as the last of the believers, but as among the first of the unbelievers; he calls him a conservative agnostic.[122] Hicks presents a strong case for Arnold as a Stoic.[123] Implicitly supporting Cockshut and Hicks, Campbell extends their theses further to include a statement of what Arnold proposes to replace religion with:[124]

> Arnold's whole point is that religion considered not as fact but as myth is better, because more "spiritual," vehicle for values. All his books on religion are devoted

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[120] Ibid., p. 264.

[121] Basil Willey, More Nineteenth Century Studies, p. ii.

[122] A. O. J. Cockshut, The Unbelievers: English Agnostic Thought, 1840-1890, pp. 59-72.

[123] John Hicks, E. E. Sandeen and Alvan S. Ryan, Critical Studies in Arnold, Emerson, and Newman, pp. 3-67.

[124] H. M. Campbell, "Arnold's Religion and the Theory of Fiction," Religion in Life, XXXVII (1967), 223-232.

> to explaining that the "great myths" in the Bible embody unique insights--bringing "peace, joy, life," etc.--but that the myths, not being supernatural revelations and not therefore being factual, are really great poetry.[125]

Each of these men has, on his own terms, interpreted Arnold well. But Arnold must be accepted on his terms, not those which a critic would have him accept. And Arnold's terms revolve around disinterestedness. The critics' unwillingness to accept Arnold's spirit of disinterestedness has kept them from understanding him; Arnold's contemporaries had the same resistance to disinterestedness. In his contemporaries, this weakness is understandable, because they were emotionally involved in the controversy; and emotions must be balanced by intellect to achieve disinterestedness. The twentieth-century critics have no such ready excuse. Both Trilling and Brown recognize Arnold's search for disinterestedness; both men apply these insights to his poetry. But neither extends his observations to a critical theory of its influence on Arnold's religious prose.

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[125] Ibid., p. 229.

CHAPTER IV

CONCLUSION

Matthew Arnold believed that men "cannot do without [religion], and that they cannot do with it as it is."[126] He thought that religion in the nineteenth century could only be saved by placing emphasis not on traditional dogma, but on experience--truth--which would be immune to the Zeitgeist. But while he discards dogma, Arnold does not propose to discard the Bible. To him the Bible is the incomparable, unique inspiration of conduct--and conduct is three-fourths of life. The Bible must not be seen, however, as a story or set of facts; it is the key to emotion that will touch morality and make religion. This emotion is communicated by the poetry and mythology of the Bible. This reverence for poetry, however, may not have been as easy for Arnold's audience to accept as it was for him. Arnold believed that to say a thing is poetry is not a diminuation of its importance. In fact, in "The Study of Poetry," (1865), he had stated that a religion without poetry has no power to move souls and is therefore no religion at all.[127] It is to poetry that Arnold finally retreats in

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[126] Super (ed.), Works, V, viii.

[127] H. P. Owen, "The Theology of Coleridge," Critical Quarterly, IV (1962), 63, notes that "The role of Reason in religion, as Professor Basil Willey observes, is closely allied

Last Essays on Church and Religion when he concedes that his best service to religion lies in literature.[128] It is this retreat to what Arnold's critics consider a field not allied with religion that makes Arnold's religious criticism seem unacceptable. His prediction that poetry would replace religion casts a shadow of doubt over his religious prose works which even sympathetic critics find difficult to dispel.[129] But there is no real need to dispel it if Arnold's religious prose is read in light of his attempt to achieve disinterestedness. That attempt, the subsequent renouncement of disinterestedness in favor of involved, practical criticism,

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(continued) to the role of Imagination in poetry. Just as in poetry the imagination brings new life and unity to the dead and splintered world that Coleridge inherited from Newtonian mechanics and associationist psychology, so in Religion the intuitive power of reason revivifies those ideas of God that had become petrified in the deistic proofs. And just as imagination overcomes the dichotomy between mind and nature, so reason spans the gulf between man and God."

[128]In Last Essays on Church and Religion, Arnold announced, "I am persuaded that the transformation of religion, which is essential for its perpetuance, can be accomplished only by carrying the qualities of flexibility, perceptiveness, and judgment, which are the best fruits of letters to whole classes of the community which now know next to nothing of them, and by procuring the application of those qualities to matters where they are never applied now," Russell (ed.), Works, IX, 174.

[129]"We should conceive of poetry worthily, and more highly than it has been the custom to conceive of it. . . . More and more mankind will discover that we have to turn to poetry to interpret life for us, to console us, to sustain us. Without poetry, our science will appear incomplete; and most of what now passes with us for religion and philosophy will be replaced by poetry," Russell (ed.), Works, IX, 27.

and the renewed search for disinterestedness, can be traced through Arnold's canon. The influence of the spirit of disinterestedness is shown in microcosm in Arnold's religious prose. If that influence is considered when evaluating the religious prose, the works do not seem lacking in logic, order, and reasonableness. It is only when a reader attempts to dictate to Arnold from his own experience that he finds Arnold confusing and finally meaningless. Arnold was proposing a new religion which would answer the attack of the Zeitgeist. His proposition must be seen in that light, in combination with Arnold's own belief that disinterestedness, the ability to see and accept the best from all ages, was the key to survival in a century of change.

The proposition that religion must be true in scientific terms, yet must be discovered through the poetry of the Bible, represents the two poles between which Arnold pendulates in his quest for disinterestedness. The poetry, or myth, of the Bible is the height of disinterestedness; science, or proof of religion through experience, is its reverse. When Arnold became concerned with the question of religion he was really following a natural evolution of his attempts to achieve disinterestedness. Religion, with its traditions and dogma, held much that Arnold believed should be saved. He could apply his disinterested evaluation to religion, and through that evaluation save it. But the critical response was so strong against

Literature and Dogma that he had to defend it by writing a reply: God and the Bible. This second book drew him ever deeper into an involved, practical application of what had begun as a disinterested appraisal. This movement from disinterestedness to interestedness is the same as the attempt to achieve disinterestedness that is revealed in his poetry. That attempt had begun in his student days when he praised the contemplative life, but saw it assaulted by responsibility. He examined the spirit of disinterestedness in his poems--sometimes allowing his protagonist to achieve it, as the Scholar Gipsy seemed to, or to realize that it is impossible, as Empedocles does. Arnold then turned from poetry to prose. He sought disinterestedness, not personally, but, as a solution to the political anarchy that he believed was attacking England. Finally, he turned from political and social prose to religious prose in the subject of religion he could touch both poles of disinterestedness and interestedness which drew him so steadily. He was truly involved--or interested--in the problem, yet his solution to the problem lay in a disinterested appraisal of the past.

In St. Paul and Protestantism, Arnold introduced the subject of the spirit of disinterestedness by illustrating that the Zeitgeist had made meaningless the theological grounds for Puritan separation from the Church. He showed that the Protestant St. Paul was not in concert with Culture's St. Paul,

who would permit questioning and understanding. Arnold, then, was not the pagan that G. K. Chesterton would have one believe. Arnold wanted to retain the meaningful parts of the State religion; he only wanted to eradicate the parts which the Zeitgeist was proving untenable. Through the spirit of disinterestedness, which Arnold says St. Paul had, the Church of England could accept and tolerate development; the separatists, in their stiff, "fixed" truths, could not. Thus, Anglicanism with the flexibility of disinterestedness can continue striving toward the Kingdom of God on earth.[130]

Arnold seems to desert the spirit of disinterestedness in his next book, Literature and Dogma, when he says that religion can only be achieved through experience--an interested involvement. But, he is merely illustrating the thesis expressed three years earlier in St. Paul and Protestantism: the dictates of science must be used to keep religion strong in an age of doubters. Although Arnold seems to have removed God from religion in his repeated attacks on anthropomorphism, and although he seems to want to discard a great deal of the Bible

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[130] J. Hillis Miller, in his article, "The Theme of the Disappearance of God in Victorian Poetry," VS, VI (1963), 214, notes that a recurring phrase in Arnold's notebooks is that man's essential task is the establishment of the kingdom of God on earth. Miller cites ten specific instances in the notebooks when Arnold quotes from Edward Reuss the French: "Voilà le but présenté par le Christianisme à l'humanité tout entière comme son but dernier et définitif: le royaume de Dieu sur la terre," Histoire de la théologie chrétienne au siècle apostolique (Strasbourg, 1860), II, 542.

in his insistance that the miracles did not and do not happen and that the Bible stories are not, in fact, "true," he has instead added the ingredient of disinterestedness which he believed would keep religion above the flood waters of science. Critics who hope to see the meaning of Arnold's religious prose must accept the spirit of disinterestedness and its influence on Arnold's writing and thinking. He was neither a pagan nor a sophomore who wanted to find the simplicity of the past. Rather, he was a man aware of and concerned about the influence of the nineteenth century. Arnold did not want to discard religion, nor even to change it beyond what he believed the Zeitgeist demanded. He was attempting to preserve, as his father had, the dignity and meaning of the church. The attempt is indeed "an attempt conservative, and an attempt religious."

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