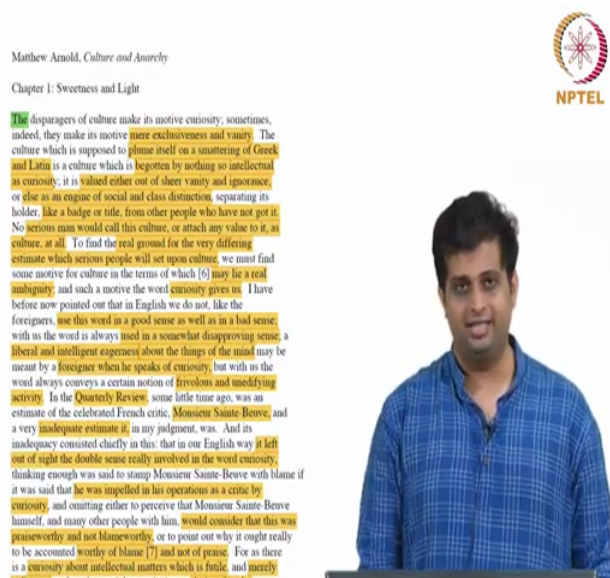


**Literary Criticism**  
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**Matthew Arnold's Sweetness and Light**  
**Lecture 32**

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Hello everyone, today we are going to discuss a chapter from the book *Culture and Anarchy* by Matthew Arnold called 'Sweetness and Light'. This is part of a book *Culture and Anarchy* that Matthew Arnold published in 1869. So, you must remember the historical condition that England was going through at that time. In 1859, Charles Darwin had published his groundbreaking book *The Origin of Species*.

So, it was, as Freud calls it, one of those trademark events in the history of humans that kind of put a stop or questioned the authority that humans thought they had upon their own lives and their surroundings. It showed that we were not a part of God's creation or something, but that we have evolved over time as any other species and that humans held no kind of special place in the order of things in society.

But also in this time, we see that in the Victorian era, the colonial expeditions of the British Empire had spread a lot and there was the Industrial Revolution taking place which had also created a lot of industries in England and a lot of factories. And we see in writings of Charles Dickens, how this industry, this faith in machinery, kind of brought out a new aspect of civilization.

It was one of those trademark events in civilization, it was one of those events that had changed humanity again forever. So, we see that Matthew Arnold here is writing from a very poignant spot of time where he has to make certain very important observations for human society or human culture to continue as it were.

Otherwise, he is seeing that these certain moves from the classical values in society, there are moves happening, he says that capitalism is slowly coming in. So, the values that previously people had of culture is waning a little bit while people are running more after money, more after wealth, more after outside grandeur than inside development.

Arnold wants to here introduce culture as a force that helps us to not only express our external riches, not only to express our external wealth, but also to cultivate our inner life, inner culture that will help us to outgrow our affinity for this outward expression of our well-being. And that is where he is coming in.

If we look at this book, *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold has divided the English society into three aspects. The upper class were called the barbarians who had a lot of money, but did not have the time to think about society, did not have the time to think what would make it better. The Philistines, the middle class which he believed had the actual potential to change society as it were.

But they were too enmeshed in other ideological activities to cultivate culture, to understand what importance culture had in society. And the third were the populace who were accorded the lower rung of society, whom the Philistines had to educate. So, here we see that Arnold's view of culture is also a very evangelical, a very proselytizing view.

It is almost like a view of a Christian missionary who believes in the faith or in the supremacy of his own religion so that he can go out in the world and spread it. But here also, Arnold tries his best to pose culture as a very secular phenomenon as opposed to a religious phenomenon, and as we shall see through our reading of the text, how Arnold kind of compares and contrasts religion in contemporary Victorian society and its role in how culture should be perceived.

So let us get into the text and how we will do it? We will read three passages from the text, and then we will discuss them because Arnold is very lucid and his writing style in this essay is very clear and very entertaining to read. I would suggest that we actually read Arnold to

see what he says in the interesting parts and then we will add some commentary to it to elucidate it further.

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Chapter 1: Sweetness and Light

The disparagers of culture make its motive curiosity; sometimes, indeed, they make its motive mere exclusiveness and vanity. The culture which is supposed to plume itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin is a culture which is begotten by nothing so intellectual as curiosity; it is valued either out of sheer vanity and ignorance, or else as an engine of social and class distinction, separating its holder, like a badge or title, from other people who have not got it. No serious man would call this culture, or attach any value to it, as culture, at all. To find the real ground for the very differing estimate which serious people will set upon culture, we must find some motive for culture in the terms of which [6] may be a real ambiguity, and such a motive the word curiosity gives us. I have before now pointed out that in English we do not, like the foreigners, use this word in a good sense as well as in a bad sense; with us the word is always used in a somewhat disapproving sense, a liberal and intelligent expression about the things of the mind may be meant by a foreigner when he speaks of curiosity, but with us the word always conveys a certain notion of frivolous and unedifying activity. In the *Quarterly Review*, some little time ago, was an estimate of the celebrated French critic, Monsieur Sainte-Beuve, and a very inadequate estimate it, in my judgment, was. And its inadequacy consisted chiefly in this: that in our English way it left out of sight the double sense really involved in the word curiosity, thinking enough was said to stamp Monsieur Sainte-Beuve with blame if it was said that he was impelled in his operations as a critic by curiosity, and omitting either to perceive that Monsieur Sainte-Beuve himself, and many other people with him, would consider that this was praiseworthy and not blameworthy, or to point out why it ought really to be accounted worthy of blame [7] and not of praise. For as there is a curiosity about intellectual matters which is futile, and merely a disease, so there is certainly a curiosity,—a desire after the things of the mind simply for their own sakes and for the pleasure of seeing them as they are,—which is, in an intelligent being, natural and laudable. Nay, and the very desire to see things as they are implies a balance and regulation of mind which is not often attained.

The ‘Sweetness and Light’ essay or the chapter starts with reference to what culture was commonly perceived as in contemporary Victorian society. He says that the disparagers of culture pose culture as a badge of honour or as a badge of value, like if I have culture, it sets me apart from other people. It makes me a better person, in a sense that it is an effort in elitism, not as in an effort in social well-being.

Arnold is first kind of hitting at that sort of elitism-- that culture is not a tool of elitism, that culture does not make someone elite, to make them different from the other people in society. Whereas culture’s main function is a more social function; it is a very socialist function that if I have culture, then I must help others to cultivate it.

And it is not something that is very passive. It is not something that comes to us from outside, it is something that is very active, that we must always cultivate. So that cultivate aspect in culture is very much highlighted by Arnold in this essay. So, he is saying that this is not a culture that prides itself on a smattering of Greek and Latin.

So, here we see that the English culture, the English idea, the English identity is slowly kind of asserting itself more and more. It is coming out of the values that people have previously placed on Latin and Greek; and English as a language, English as a source of pride, Englishness as a source of pride, is slowly coming out.

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The image displays two sequential frames from a video lecture. Each frame features a slide on the left and a speaker on the right. The speaker is a man with dark hair, wearing a blue patterned shirt, standing behind a podium. The slide contains text from an essay, with certain parts highlighted in yellow. In the top frame, the highlighted text discusses the value of culture and the concept of curiosity. In the bottom frame, the highlighted text continues the discussion, focusing on the motives for curiosity and the role of the intellect. The NPTEL logo is visible in the top right corner of each slide.

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He is saying that no serious man would call this culture or attach any value to it as culture at all. So, Arnold is talking about serious men, serious men of culture who are dealing with culture in society.

So, here we see another aspect of culture and we will keep doing this throughout the essay, we will kind of try to relate Arnold's thinking to much later thinkers, maybe postmodern thinkers like Foucault, Deleuze and try to see how he relates to them, how he relates to many contemporary thinkers in helping us understand our own society better.


So, this is not, I would like to mention, a very timed essay. This is a very pertinent essay even for our own times, and as we will read through it, we will understand the pertinence that it

still holds today. And he also begins by saying that many people in the English society have held curiosity to be a very bad virtue, that curiosity is not a good thing.

But he says that this is something that is very typical of the British, many people from other cultures do not think of curiosity like that. They have two ideas of curiosity. One is that which is probably best expressed in the aphorism curiosity killed the cat. It is a meaningless curiosity. It is a nosiness in other people's business that should not be allowed.


But he is saying that curiosity is also a curiosity for the faculties of the mind, for understanding how the mind works.

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passion; and it is a worthy ground, even though we let the term curiosity stand to describe it.

But there is of culture another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent [8] being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for stopping human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing the sum of human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it, - motives eminently such as are called social, - come in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part. Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection: it is a study of perfection. It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good. As, in the first view of it, we took for its worthy motto Montesquieu's words: "To render an intelligent being yet more intelligent" so, in the second view of it, there is no better motto which it can have than these words of Bishop Wilson: "To make reason and the will of God prevail." Only, whereas the passion for doing good is apt to be overhasty in determining what reason and the will of God say, because its turn is for acting rather than thinking, and it wants to be [9] beginning to act, and whereas it is apt to take its own conceptions, which proceed from its own state of development and share in all the imperfections and immaturities of this, for a basis of action; what distinguishes culture is, that it is possessed by the scientific passion, as well as by the passion of doing good; that it has worthy notions of reason and the will of God, and does not readily suffer its own crude conceptions to substitute themselves for them; and that, knowing that no action or institution can be salutary and



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This culture is more interesting and more far-reaching than that other, which is founded solely on the scientific passion for knowing. But it needs times of faith and ardour, times when the intellectual horizon is opening and widening all round us, to flourish in. And is not the close and bounded intellectual horizon within which we have



But he is also saying that curiosity, another kind of curiosity would be a looking into the faculties of the mind, how the mind works, and how it can, as Montesquieu mentions, how it can make an intelligent being yet more intelligent.

So, culture as Arnold will constantly point to us, is not a process of being, but a process of becoming. And here again, as we can see in the writings of Deleuze and Guattari, they also say that when they are defining the rhizome as more than a process of being, it is a process of becoming; it is a process of forever growing.

So, culture for Arnold was a form like that, it is not where we stand, but where we should be standing. It is a scope for immense growth, for infinite growth, a potential.

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So, here also, he says that culture is then properly described as not having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection, it is a study of perfection. We see that Arnold starts giving us descriptions or definitions of what he thinks of culture at the outset.

He thinks that it is love of perfection, it is a study of perfection. In this whole writing, we see these terms coming up, love, beauty. So, it is an aesthetic plane where Arnold places culture, it is not a very utilitarian plane, where in Victorian times we see there are many utilitarian philosophers coming in.


One of them was Bentham, and Arnold will come to Bentham; but for him culture is not a very utilitarian thing. It is not something that has very outward use, but inward use; but at the

same time, if everyone can practice culture at that level, then we can have a more grown up society where we can match that outward growth with the inward growth so that the outward growth does not look like a protrusion, does not look like a monstrous growth.

And he also quotes Bishop Wilson to say that “To make reason and the will of God prevail! Only, whereas the passion for doing good is apt to be overhasty in determining what reason and the will of God say”. And he then goes on to critique that freedom of speech is not freedom of speech unless we have something good to say.


If we do not have something good to contribute, then saying anything will not make a difference and we should not exercise that kind of freedom of speech. He says “that it can remember that acting and instituting are of little use, unless we know how and what we ought to act and institute”. He is saying that culture is a pedagogical form, it is a pedagogical institute which can teach us how to act, how to institute and how to carry ourselves better.

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no use to think of adapting the world's action to them. Where was the hope of making reason and the will of God prevail among people who had a routine which they had christened reason and the will of God, in which they were inextricably bound, and beyond which they had no power of looking? But now the iron force of adhesion to the old routine,--social, political, religious,--has wonderfully yielded; the iron force of exclusion of all which is new has wonderfully yielded. The danger now is, not that people should obstinately refuse to allow anything but their old routine to pass for reason and the will of God, but either that they should allow some novelty or other to pass for these too easily, or else that they should moderate the importance of them altogether, and think it enough to follow action for its own sake, without troubling themselves to make reason and the will of God prevail therein. Now then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail, believes in perfection, in the study and pursuit of perfection, and is no longer debarr'd, by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting acceptance for its ideas, simply because they are new.

The moment this view of culture is seized, the moment it is regarded not solely as the endeavour to see things as they are, to draw towards a knowledge of the universal order which seems to be intended and aimed at in the world, and which it is a man's happiness to go along with or his misery to go counter to,--to learn, in short, the will of God,--the moment, I say, culture is considered not merely as the endeavour to see and learn this, but as the endeavour, also, to make it prevail, the moral, social, and beneficent character of culture becomes manifest. The mere endeavour to see and learn it for our own personal satisfaction is indeed a commencement for making it prevail, a preparing the way for this, which always serves this, and is wrongly, therefore, stamped with blame absolutely in itself, and not only in its caricature and denervation. But perhaps it has not



And so, here again, we see that even though Arnold brings in Bishop Wilson and starts to compare culture with religion, he also starts contrasting culture with religion. So, this becomes a very important passage. “Where was the hope of making the reason and the will of God prevail among people who had a routine which they had christened reason, and the will of God in which they were inextricably bound, and beyond which they had no power of looking?”

He is saying that at a point of time, religion and every other social institution had created walls, had created boundaries around us, beyond which we could not look, where we were

forbidden-- do not look beyond that, do not look beyond that person. We can see that exemplified in the biblical narrative of eating the apple in the Garden of Eden.

There were many prohibitions in place in society before which he is saying, right now, that they are yielding, "has wonderfully yielded; the iron force of exclusion of all which is new has wonderfully yielded". We see that Arnold is already bringing in the word, iron.

He is saying that the previous modes of social construction were kind of shackling us, were constraining us into places where we should not be, where the horizon should open up. And as I have already mentioned, the Victorian time was a time of great learning. It was a time of great expansion and Arnold is not criticizing the expansion, Arnold is not saying that, that expansion should not happen in learning.

And in some senses, we can see that Arnold does not provide a critique of colonialism either. So, we can see that there is a certain amount of collusion that he might have with the project of colonialism because he is for any sort of expansion. But what he says is that culture should be used to kind of give a margin to those expansions, to make us think where that expansion is good and where that expansion is bad, and how much faith we should put on that expansion.

"Now. then, is the moment for culture to be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the will of God prevail, believes in perfection, is the study and pursuit of perfection, and is no longer debarred by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting acceptance for its ideas simply because they are new".

Culture here was the new culture, it is not a study of things that have been from the past, but it is as already mentioned, a process of becoming, a process of accepting things that are new in society and it is a belief in perfection. As already mentioned, Arnold relates these keywords that we must remember with relation to culture.

Perfection, it is the pursuit of perfection. There is not only being but also becoming. It is not about being perfect, but always about the prospect of becoming more and more perfect because perfection is a project that can never have an end.

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be of service, culture which believes in making reason and the [11] will of God prevail, believes in perfection, in the study and pursuit of perfection, and is no longer deterred, by a rigid invincible exclusion of whatever is new, from getting acceptance for its ideas, simply because they are new.

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And religion, the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself, - religion, that voice of the deepest human experience, - does not only enjoin and sanction the aim which is the great aim of culture, the aim of setting ourselves to ascertain what perfection is and to make it prevail, but also, in determining generally in what human perfection consists, religion comes to a conclusion identical with that which culture, - seeking the determination of this question

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Here he brings in religion again, and he says that religion is the greatest and most important of the efforts by which the human race has manifested its impulse to perfect itself. So, Arnold here is not critiquing religion as an outmoded institution, but he considers it as one of the institutions that has helped human beings to get to their best, to be their best.

If we look at all the art and all the architecture that religion has inspired over the years, we will be amazed to find that it has inspired in human beings a sense of beauty, it has created in human beings a pursuit of beauty which they have followed and it has manifested itself beautifully. The best religious books are also very good works of poetry; temples, mosques and churches are beautiful works of architecture. So, religion has also helped us to hone our skills for beauty, our aim for beauty.

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The image shows two screenshots from a video lecture. In both, a man in a blue shirt is speaking. The top screenshot has a text overlay on the left side of the frame, and the bottom screenshot has a similar text overlay. Both overlays contain the same text, which is a transcript of the lecture. The text discusses the relationship between culture, religion, and human perfection, citing various philosophical and religious ideas. The NPTEL logo is visible in the top right corner of both screenshots.

through all the voices of human experience which have been heard upon it, art, science, poetry, philosophy, history, as well as religion, in order to give a greater fulness and certainty to its solution,-- likewise reaches. Religion says: The kingdom of God is within you, and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in an internal condition, in the growth and predominance of our humanity proper, as distinguished from our animality, in the ever-increasing efficaciousness and in the general harmonious expansion [13] of those gifts of thought and feeling which make the peculiar dignity, wealth, and happiness of human nature. As I have said on a former occasion: It is in making endless additions to itself, in the endless expansion of its powers, in endless growth in wisdom and beauty, that the spirit of the human race finds its ideal. To reach this ideal, culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture. Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming, is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here, too, it coincides with religion. And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest, or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to suit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a general expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated: the individual is obliged, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he does, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge [14] and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward; and here, once more, it lays on us the same obligation as religion, which says, as Bishop Wilson has admirably put it, that "to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness." Finally, perfection,--as culture, from a thorough disinterested study of human nature and human experience, learns to conceive it,--is an harmonious expansion of all the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. Here it goes beyond religion, as religion is generally conceived by us.

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culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in

And he says, "The kingdom of God is within you and culture, in like manner, places human perfection in internal condition". We see Arnold constantly contrasts that outward appearance of thing and an inward condition of things.

He again claims that the kingdom of God is within us that we are the temple of God, and what could be a better way to take care of this temple than probably indulge in culture a little bit, understand what culture wants to say to us. He says it is "general harmonious expansion of those gifts of thought and feeling which make the peculiar dignity, wealth and happiness of human nature".

He says, "It is in making endless additions to itself..." I would like to draw your attention to the way he repeats the term endless here, in the endless expansion of its powers, it is a

“growing and becoming”. So, here again we see that the word endless is coming in and we can relate it to the idea of Deleuze and Guattari that they pose of ‘the body without organs’, the body without organs that can expand without boundaries, it is also endless.

And they also compare modern capitalism to a body without organs. And here we see that this endlessness that Arnold brings into culture is already being seen in other aspects of society. Colonial expansion was an endless expansion; the British had reached all the corners of Earth, they had conquered many parts of land and it was an endless project.

They were continuing to grow, it was not a time when they were shrinking. The shrinking would start only after the modern period and after the Second World War, but this is a time when it is increasing. The primacy of the British culture is increasing. So, he is, at that point, saying that culture must also be an endless nature, that culture is also a process of growing and becoming at all times.

It is not something that should stop and he says that this is where it coincides with religion, because religion has also been with human beings since almost the beginning of time. And here, he brings a very nice point that perfection as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated, the individual is obliged under pain of being stunted and enfeebled.

He is saying that culture is not only a harmonious growth of all our faculties, but harmonious growth of all the faculties in all the people in society. So, the project of culture, the aim of culture will only succeed, not only when there is a harmonious expansion in the individual, but when every individual is also in a similar manner, taken into a harmonious expansion of this culture.

What he brings forward is a very a socialist idea of culture, that it is not something that is restricted to the elite. It is not something that is a badge of honour that separates certain people from other people. But it teaches us to take every person as equal, every person with equal rights and it teaches us that we must impart this view of culture to everyone else.

Again, but as I said, that this can have some proselytizing connotations in it, but Arnold kind of tries to skirt going there, because he tries to put culture in a secular plane all the time.

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culture is an indispensable aid, and that is the true value of culture." Not a having and a resting, but a growing and a becoming is the character of perfection as culture conceives it; and here, too, it coincides with religion. And because men are all members of one great whole, and the sympathy which is in human nature will not allow one member to be indifferent to the rest, or to have a perfect welfare independent of the rest, the expansion of our humanity, to unit the idea of perfection which culture forms, must be a general expansion. Perfection, as culture conceives it, is not possible while the individual remains isolated: the individual is obliged, under pain of being stunted and enfeebled in his own development if he disobeys, to carry others along with him in his march towards perfection, to be continually doing all he can to enlarge [14] and increase the volume of the human stream sweeping thitherward; and here, once more, it lays on us the same obligation as religion, which says, as Bishop Wilson has admirably put it, that "to promote the kingdom of God is to increase and hasten one's own happiness." Finally, perfection,—as culture, from a thorough disinterested study of human nature and human experience, learns to conceive it,—is an harmonious expansion of all the powers which make the beauty and worth of human nature, and is not consistent with the over-development of any one power at the expense of the rest. Here it goes beyond religion, as religion is generally conceived by us.


If culture, then, is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection, and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something, in an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not in an outward set of circumstances,—it is clear that culture, instead of being the frivolous and useless thing which Mr. Bright, and Mr. Frederick Harrison, and many other liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind. And this function is particularly [15] important in our modern world, of which the whole



So, here he gives a very beautiful description of culture. "If culture then is a study of perfection, and of harmonious perfection, general perfection and perfection which consists in becoming something rather than in having something". So here also he is undermining the idea of possession. That possession can be of some importance to us.


"In an inward condition of the mind and spirit, not an outward set of circumstances". So see the binaries he is creating, inward versus outward. "It is clear that culture instead of being the frivolous and useless thing, which Mr. Bright"— so he is also critiquing in the essay some other view, other people in his society who were opposed to the culture and were kind of proposing that the mechanical aspects of the British society should be taken forward, it is something that should be taken pride in-- Arnold constantly points to their views and says that no, this mechanistic expansion is not something that we can take pride in and as an end to itself. "Mr. Bright and Mr. Frederick Harrison and many other liberals are apt to call it, has a very important function to fulfil for mankind". So, culture has an important function to fulfil for mankind as he points out here.

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civilisation is, to a much greater degree than the civilisation of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilisation tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. Indeed nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which throws them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an inward condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilisation in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us. The idea of perfection as a general expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism, our hatred of all limits to the unrestrained swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of 'every man for himself'. The idea of perfection as an harmonious expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, with our aptitude for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense [16] energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country, and its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs, than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere; and meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, should be made quite clear to every one who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve, but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but



And he is saying, why do we need culture more than the people of Greece and Rome needed it? The culture of the modern time-- he is already kind of hinting that the societies have entered modern times. How we understand modern times and as we shall see in later literature of Elliott, of Joyce, even Virginia Woolf, the modern writers, are describing human beings as mechanized.

They are describing human functions as being mechanized. So, we see that Arnold had kind of foreseen that this society is going to change into something like that. And he had already tried to speak against this mechanization of every faculty in society.

But somehow it was like culture had to give a lot of ground to this mechanical expansion, as it still has to do now. Because we will see that the value that people place in humanities has receded as opposed to other kind of vocational arts where production becomes very important.

We see that this is an onslaught that has been happening for a long time and Arnold in this essay critiques liberalism as one of the main forces that silence culture and brings this sort of mechanical production to the front. We will see that right now we are in a position of neoliberalism, where in neoliberal societies the humanities are kind of downplayed.

The importance of humanities itself is downplayed and we see that culture is related to human perfection and to humanities in this essay. But the flow of history, as it happened, has been constantly trying to downplay this, because only at that cost can the value of outward reaches, the value of outward gains can be promoted.

And we see that in today's social media platforms, there is a sort of exhibitionism that goes on. So, that exhibitionism is something that Arnold, even in those days, would have been very critical of and something that he probably foresaw before it even came to being. He is criticizing this terminology 'every man for himself'.

We will see that once the American Independence was achieved in North America, the North American ideal as propounded by Thoreau and Emerson had a very strong idea of the individual; Emerson even has an essay called self-reliance.

The individual should rely on the self and there is an infinite scope for growth of the individual, and this libertarianism, this liberalism, has given rise to modern capitalism where we see that 1 percent of the population has access to 99 percent of the wealth.

So, this 'every man for himself' has created a society of inequality where people who achieve wealth, who accumulate wealth, are not looking after people who do not have it, are not imparting it. Arnold believes that culture could have taught us how to create a more just society.

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civilisation is, to a much greater degree than the civilisation of Greece and Rome, mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so. But above all in our own country has culture a weighty part to perform, because here that mechanical character, which civilisation tends to take everywhere, is shown in the most eminent degree. Indeed nearly all the characters of perfection, as culture teaches us to fix them, meet in this country with some powerful tendency which thwarts them and sets them at defiance. The idea of perfection as an inward condition of the mind and spirit is at variance with the mechanical and material civilisation in esteem with us, and nowhere, as I have said, so much in esteem as with us. The idea of perfection as a general expansion of the human family is at variance with our strong individualism; our hatred of all limits is the uncontrolled swing of the individual's personality; our maxim of 'every man for himself.' The idea of perfection as an harmonious expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility; with our insatiable for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense [16] energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country, and its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs, than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere; and meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, should be made quite clear to every one who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Fault in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve; but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but machinery? what are railroads but machinery? what is wealth but machinery? what are religious organisations but machinery? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they [17] were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had



And he is saying that the people of culture will be much oftener be regarded “for a great while to come as elegant or spurious Jeremiahs”. The Jeremiah image is very important here. Jeremiah was a prophet and we see that he is saying that for a great while to come, people of culture will be regarded as spurious Jeremiahs.

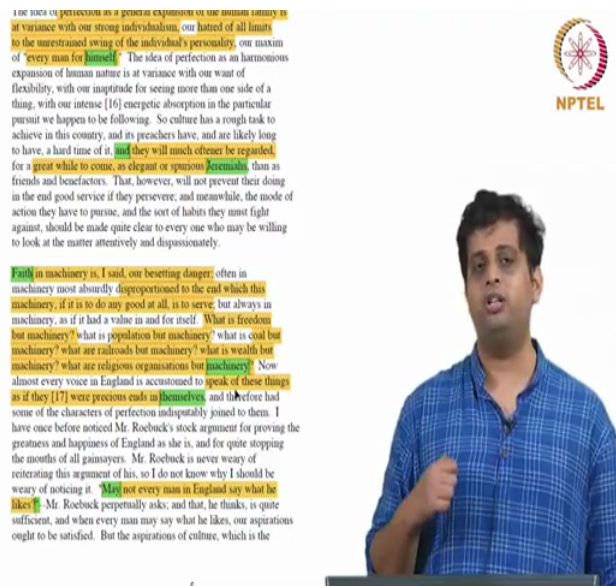
We see here that he is making a prophecy almost, and not is unlike a prophet. Now, we see that again this problematic idea of proselytizing is coming in.

But we must see another thing, culture as opposed to religion, as a monolithic religion. Arnold does not say that culture originates from some core ideas or some core beliefs or some person or some holy words; culture is more like, to Arnold, what Foucault would later call discursive.

Discursive, as in, it is not dependent on a single author or the edicts of a single author, but it is a combination of all that is written in society, all that is thought in society, all that is in currency in society. As we will see, in postmodern times, there is this idea of what Barthes says about the death of the author, Foucault questions what an author is and says and discusses an author function.

So, here also, Arnold poses culture as a discursive field where it is not the sayings of one or two persons, it is all the good things he mentions that all the good things that all the good people and society have said. So, culture is a combination of all that. It is not what a monolithic person has said, but it is all that is being said around the world.

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The idea of perfection as a general exponent of the human faculty is at variance with our strong individualism; our hatred of all limits to the unrestrained swing of the individual's personality, our maxim of "every man for himself." The idea of perfection as an harmonious expansion of human nature is at variance with our want of flexibility, with our insatiable for seeing more than one side of a thing, with our intense [16] energetic absorption in the particular pursuit we happen to be following. So culture has a rough task to achieve in this country, and its preachers have, and are likely long to have, a hard time of it, and they will much oftener be regarded, for a great while to come, as elegant or spurious Jesuits, than as friends and benefactors. That, however, will not prevent their doing in the end good service if they persevere; and meanwhile, the mode of action they have to pursue, and the sort of habits they must fight against, should be made quite clear to every one who may be willing to look at the matter attentively and dispassionately.

Faith in machinery is, I said, our besetting danger; often in machinery most absurdly disproportioned to the end which this machinery, if it is to do any good at all, is to serve, but always in machinery, as if it had a value in and for itself. What is freedom but machinery? what is population but machinery? what is coal but machinery? what are railroads but machinery? what is wealth but machinery? what are religious organisations but machinery? Now almost every voice in England is accustomed to speak of these things as if they [17] were precious ends in themselves, and therefore had some of the characters of perfection indisputably joined to them. I have once before noticed Mr. Roebuck's stock argument for proving the greatness and happiness of England as she is, and for quite stopping the mouths of all gainers. Mr. Roebuck is never weary of reiterating this argument of his, so I do not know why I should be weary of noticing it. **Not every man in England says what he likes.** Mr. Roebuck perpetually asks; and that, he thinks, is quite sufficient, and when every man may say what he likes, our aspirations ought to be satisfied. But the aspirations of culture, which is the

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And he says, "Faith in machinery as I said is our besetting danger" and for machinery he gives some examples. "What is freedom but machinery? What is population but machinery? What is coal but machinery? What are railroads but machinery? What is wealth but machinery? And what are religious organizations but machinery?"

So, here we see that Arnold is already kind of approaching the criticism that modern times would have against organized religion and he is kind of cautioning against that kind of organized religion.

His critique of machinery is very important here because he poses machinery as something that is opposed to culture, not because people are using machinery but people are using machinery as an end to themselves, and Arnold is saying that we must look at machinery as how they are.

They are means but they are not the ends themselves. It is a problem when we make the means and ends in themselves that this issue arises to him. And he is mentioning a Mr Roebuck who says that may not every man in England say what he likes. Again, we are brought back to the idea of free speech where Arnold had mentioned that free speech is only valid when we have something important to contribute to society.

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study of perfection, are not satisfied, **unless what men say, when they may say what they like, is worth saying-- has good in it, and more good than bad.** In the same way The Times, replying to some foreign structures on the dress, looks, and behaviour of the English abroad, urges that the English ideal is that every one should be free to do and to look just as he likes. But culture indefatigably tries, not to make what each raw person may like, the rule by which he fashions himself; but to draw ever nearer to a sense of what is indeed [18] beautiful, graceful, and becoming, and to get the raw person to like that. **And in the same way with respect to railroads and coal.** Every one must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failure of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an end of the greatness of England. But what is greatness?-- culture makes us ask. Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest, and admiration. **If England were swallowed up by the sea to-morrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind--would most, therefore, show the evidences of having possessed greatness--the England of the last twenty years; or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal, were very little developed?** Well then, what an unsound habit of mind it must be which makes us talk of things like coal or iron as constituting [19] the greatness of England, and how salutary a friend is culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and thus dissipating delusions of this kind and fixing standards of perfection that are real!

**Wealth,** again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantage are directed--the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself; and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are



**And come:** Every one must have observed the strange language current during the late discussions as to the possible failure of our supplies of coal. Our coal, thousands of people were saying, is the real basis of our national greatness; if our coal runs short, there is an end of the greatness of England. But what is greatness?-- culture makes us ask. Greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love, interest, and admiration; and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love, interest, and admiration. **If England were swallowed up by the sea to-morrow, which of the two, a hundred years hence, would most excite the love, interest, and admiration of mankind--would most, therefore, show the evidences of having possessed greatness--the England of the last twenty years; or the England of Elizabeth, of a time of splendid spiritual effort, but when our coal, and our industrial operations depending on coal, were very little developed?** Well then, what an unsound habit of mind it must be which makes us talk of things like coal or iron as constituting [19] the greatness of England, and how salutary a friend is culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and thus dissipating delusions of this kind and fixing standards of perfection that are real!

**Wealth,** again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantage are directed--the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself; and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe anything more falsely than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that **our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich.** Now, the use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so. If it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines. The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare [20] are proved by our being very



He says, “unless what men say, when they may say what they like-- is worth saying, has good in it and more good than bad”. We see that even these days, there are some flippant comments that are made in social media that are reported and a lot of trouble comes up because of that. He is saying that we must enact a sort of restriction as to what we want to say and what we need to say and see if it will have a better impact on society than a worse impact.

It is being said that greatness lies in coal and railroad but Arnold is saying what is greatness? He is asking and he is answering that “greatness is a spiritual condition worthy to excite love,

interest and admiration and the outward proof of possessing greatness is that we excite love interest and admiration”.

Now we might ask the fact that there are different kinds of people in society who might admire different kinds of people. So why would we get to homogeneity like that? But we must also remember again, Arnold's idea of culture is that it must pervade all the aspects of society.

That is why he is saying that it must be a very harmonious growth among all people, because only then when we have a certain understanding of culture, we will know what to admire and what not to admire and that is very important in this essay.

He is saying that in a very prophetic and a doomsday prophet type of way that if England was swallowed by the sea tomorrow, it is something that we are seeing, as global warming is looming near, as ice caps are melting, these kinds of possibilities are really being enacted in movies already and people are starting to kind of see that, that the water levels might rise. So, here we see again, a very dark prophetic side of Arnold that he says that if the seas were to cover England.

What will the historians of future find more entertaining, more enthralling? The England of the Victorian era, 20 years around the time that he is writing, or the England of the Elizabethan era, where coal, railroad were not that important, but a sort of understanding of culture was more in currency.

So, he is more for an Elizabethan England than a kind of Victorian England where culture has suffered a serious blow.

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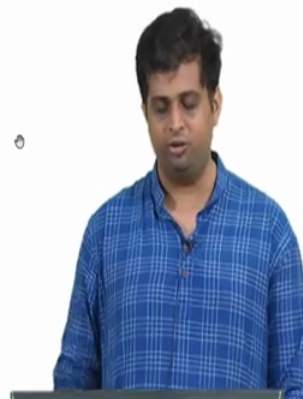
Wealth, again, that end to which our prodigious works for material advantage are directed, - the commonest of commonplaces tells us how men are always apt to regard wealth as a precious end in itself, and certainly they have never been so apt thus to regard it as they are in England at the present time. Never did people believe anything more firmly, than nine Englishmen out of ten at the present day believe that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so very rich! Now, the use of culture is that it helps us, by means of its spiritual standard of perfection, to regard wealth as but machinery, and not only to say as a matter of words that we regard wealth as but machinery, but really to perceive and feel that it is so. If it were not for this purging effect wrought upon our minds by culture, the whole world, the future as well as the present, would inevitably belong to the Philistines. The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare [20] are proved by our being very

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rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich, are just the very people whom we call the Philistines. Culture says: 'Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively, observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds, would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?' And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction which is of the highest possible value in stemming the common tide of men's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future, as one may hope, from being vulgarised, even if it cannot save the present.

Population, again, and bodily health and vigour, are things which are nowhere treated in such an unintelligent, misleading, exaggerated way as in England. Both are really machinery, yet how many people all around us do we see rest in them and fail to look beyond them! Why, I have heard [21] people, fresh from reading certain articles of The Times on the Registrar-General's returns of marriages and births in this country, who would talk of large families in quite a solemn strain, as if they had something in itself beautiful, elevating, and meritorious in them, as if the British Philistine would have only to present himself before the Great Judge with his twelve children, in order to be received among the sheep as a matter of right! But bodily health and vigour, it may be said, are not to be classed with wealth and population as mere machinery; they have a more real and essential value. True; but only as they are more intimately connected with a perfect spiritual condition than wealth or population are. The moment we divest them from the idea of a perfect spiritual condition, and pursue them, as we do pursue them, for their own sake and as ends in themselves, our worship of them



And again, he is criticizing wealth. He is saying that our greatness and welfare are proved by our being so rich, and here he has a huge problem that being rich to him has nothing to do with being culturally superior or being a better person. He would be a very important prophet for our times also where there is a certain kind of control that the rich exercise in society in what we should learn, what we should not learn, what learning would make us more money.

So, riches and wealth are kind of dominating what we should do in society these days, but according to Arnold, riches and wealth should not be ends, but just means to something. And he regards wealth as machinery also here. And here he gives the first explanation of what he means by the Philistines.

“The people who believe most that our greatness and welfare, approved by our being very rich, and who most give their lives and thoughts to becoming rich, are just the very people we call Philistines. Culture says, consider these people”--this is a very biblical tone here-- “their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice, look at them attentively, observe the literature they read”.

He is critiquing these Philistines, that they are always possessed with the idea of becoming rich, of the idea of becoming wealthy. And he is saying, look at what they read, look at what they understand and he is saying that this pursuit of being rich, this pursuit of being wealthy has kind of hollowed out their internal spiritual lives where there is no growth; it is like a tumorous growth that is happening on the outside, but there is only deadness inside.

Would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it? And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction. It is a dissatisfaction with the wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future as one may hope from being vulgarised even if it cannot save the present.

We see that these problems have continued into the future and that is why I pointed out that this essay is very pertinent for our times also where we have this inordinate amount of pursuit of riches, the pursuit of wealth, where people like Jeff Bezos accumulate a huge amount of money that is not even possible for a person to spend.



But what societies are even these days doing instead of calling it out as vulgar, instead of calling it out as an inordinate amount of holding, we are putting those people as ideals, those people as ideals to where we must reach. So, the Philistines, the middle class, that Arnold critiques in this essay is still almost in the same path, they have not diverted from that path and that is why this essay becomes very important to study.

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“Consider these people, then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds; would any amount of wealth be worth having with the condition that one was to become just like these people by having it?” And thus culture begets a dissatisfaction which is of the highest possible value in stemming the common tide of men's thoughts in a wealthy and industrial community, and which saves the future, as one may hope, from being vulgarised, even if it cannot save the present.

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[22] “Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things,” says the author of the Epistle to Timothy. And the utilitarian Franklin says just as explicitly:—“Eat and drink such an exact quantity as suits the constitution of thy body, in reference to the services of the mind.” But the point of view of culture, keeping the mark of human perfection simply and broadly in view, and not assigning to this perfection, as religion or utilitarianism assign to it, a special and limited character,—this point of view, I say, of





And here he again calls out bodily health and vigour and population as machinery, things that should not be ends in themselves. As for bodily health and vigour, it is good to exercise and everything but we must exercise the mind. We should only exercise the body as a place where a healthy mind can reside. Without a healthy mind, only exercising the body, only building muscles will not help us out.

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Next, we come to a very interesting idea in the essay, and he is quoting from the Epistle to Timothy. “Bodily exercise profiteth little, but godliness is profitable unto all things.”


And utilitarian Franklin says, “Eat and drink such an exact quantity, as suits the constitution of thy body in reference to the services of the mind”. So, the mind must be serviced, the mind should not be indulged in only a betterment of the body, but the body and the mind. The mind should look after itself.

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culture is best given by these words of Epictetus. “It is a sign of  
aphua” says he, “that is, of a nature not finely tempered, “to  
give yourselves up to things which relate to the body, to make, for  
instance, a great fuss about exercise, a great fuss about eating, a  
great fuss about drinking, a great fuss about walking, a great fuss  
about riding. All these things ought to be done merely by the way  
the formation of the spirit and character must be our real concern.”  
This is admirable; and, indeed, the Greek words aphua, euphuia, a  
finely tempered nature, a coarsely tempered nature, give exactly the  
notion of perfection as culture brings us to conceive of it: a  
perfection in which the [23] characters of beauty and intelligence  
are both present, which unites “the two noblest of things,”—as  
Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too  
little, most happily calls them in his *Battle of the Books*,—“the two  
noblest of things, sweetness and light.” The euphuia is the man who  
tends towards sweetness and light; the aphues is precisely our  
Philistine. The immense spiritual significance of the Greeks is due  
to their having been inspired with this central and happy idea of the  
essential character of human perfection, and Mr. Bright’s  
misconception of culture, as a smattering of Greek and Latin, comes  
itself, after all, from this wonderful significance of the Greeks  
having affected the very machinery of our education, and is in itself  
a kind of homage to it.

It is by thus making sweetness and light to be characters of  
perfection, that culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one  
law with poetry. I have called religion a more important  
manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a  
broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But  
the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides,  
which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea,  
though it [24] has not yet had the success that the idea of  
conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature  
perfect on the moral side, which is the dominant idea of religion,  
has been enabled to secure, and to the detriment of education itself.



Now we come to Epictetus, and this is a very interesting part of the essay where we go through the ideas of aphua and euphuia. Epictetus says that “it is a sign of aphua that is of a nature not finely tempered, to give yourself up to things which relate to body, to make for instance, a great fuss about exercise, a great fuss about eating, a great fuss about drinking, a great fuss about walking, a great fuss about riding”.

We see that in this society also there is food that is marked as for the calorie conscious, there is so many dieticians and nutritionists coming in, but what they fail to consider at all times is the body as an end to itself, where you have all the calories mentioned behind a food packet.

But as much stress we give to the body these days, we do not give it to the mind. And that is what Epictetus called in Greek times sign of aphua and he contrasts it with euphuia which is “a finely tempered nature, a coarsely tempered nature, gives exactly the notion of perfection as sculpture brings us to conceive of it, a perfection in which the characters of beauty and intelligence are both present which unites the two noblest things”. And what are these two noblest things? He is now quoting Jonathan Swift in his *Battle of the Books* where he makes two distinctions between the spider and the honeybee.

According to Swift, the spider makes webs and he eats in his web and there are empty husks of insects lying in that web and it is dirty and not a very beautiful thing to see. Here we see that there is a very specific idea of beauty that is coming up; but contrast it to the bee, the honey bee who makes wax and honey.

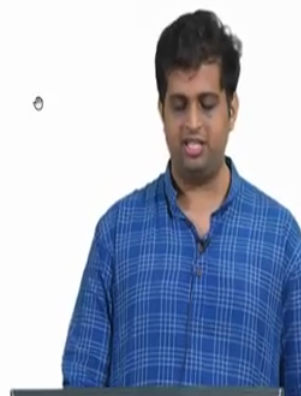
Wax is the source of light and honey is the source of sweetness. Swift also poses the honeybee as more of a person of culture than the spider here and Arnold's essay borrows from that. So, sweetness and light is actually a reference to the honeybee. The work of the honeybee that it does all its life, the gathering of honey and the creation of wax.

The wax gives us light and the honey gives us sweetness and it is from the *Battle of the Books*. And Euphyes is the man who tends towards sweetness and light and Aphyes is precisely a Philistine. So, he is saying that we should be more Euphyestic than Aphyestic.

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are both present, which unites "the two noblest of things" -- as Swift, who of one of the two, at any rate, had himself all too little, most happily calls them in his *Battle of the Books*. -- "the two noblest of things, sweetness and light". The euphyes+ is the man who tends towards sweetness and light; the aphyes+ is precisely our Philistine. The immense spiritual significance of the Greeks is due to their having been inspired with this central and happy idea of the essential character of human perfection; and Mr. Bright's misconception of culture, as a smattering of Greek and Latin, comes itself, after all, from this wonderful significance of the Greeks having affected the very machinery of our education, and is in itself a kind of homage to it.

It is by thus making sweetness and light to be characters of perfection. But culture is of like spirit with poetry, follows one law with poetry. I have called religion a more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale for perfection, and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is the dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea, though it [24] has not yet had the success that the idea of conquering the obvious faults of our animality, and of a human nature perfect on the moral side, which is the dominant idea of religion, has been enabled to have; and it is destined, adding to itself the religious idea of a devout energy, to transform and govern the other. The best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was, -- as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed, having regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own, -- a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed than it had yet been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, so



And he makes an observation that "culture is like of spirit with poetry". We must remember that Arnold was also a very prominent poet of the Victorian times. No wonder that he sees in poetry the prospect that it can further culture, "follows one law with poetry. I have called religion a more important manifestation of human nature than poetry, because it has worked on a broader scale of perfection and with greater masses of men. But the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all its sides, which is a dominant idea of poetry, is a true and invaluable idea". We see that a lot of important books of religion have also been written with the help of poetry, they engage poetry. So, poetry and religion are not some two binary terms,

two distinguishable terms that we can use, but oftentimes they are correlated with each other, entangled with each other.

There is a book by Elaine Scarry called *On Beauty And Being Just* where she addresses the positive aspects of beauty and she also points out how, in different times of society, beauty as a category has been downgraded; but she also questions for a re-evaluation of beauty, where we learn to see beauty for what it is and probably make a finer judgment about it.

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when we rely as we do on our religious organisations, which in themselves do not and cannot give us this idea, and think we have done enough if we make them spread and prevail, then, I say, we fall into our common fault of overvaluing machinery.

Nothing is more common than for people to confound the inward peace and satisfaction which follows the subduing of the obvious faults of our animality with what I may call absolute inward peace and satisfaction. --the peace and satisfaction which are reached as we draw near to complete spiritual perfection, and not merely to moral perfection, or rather to relative moral perfection. No people in the world have done more and struggled more to attain this relative moral perfection than our English race has; for no people in the world has the command to resist the Devil, to overcome the Wicked One, in the nearest and most obvious sense of those words, had such a pressing force and reality. And we have had our reward, not only in the great worldly prosperity which our obedience to this [26] command has brought us, but also, and far more, in great inward peace and satisfaction. But to me few things are more pathetic than to see people, on the strength of the inward peace and satisfaction which their rudimentary efforts towards perfection have brought them, use, concerning their incomplete perfection and the religious organisations within which they have found it, language which properly applies only to complete perfection, and is a far-off echo of the human soul's prophesy of it. Religion itself, I need hardly say, supplies in abundance this grand language, which is really the severest criticism of such an incomplete perfection as alone we have yet reached through our religious organisations.

The impulse of the English race towards moral development and self-conquest has nowhere so powerfully manifested itself as in Puritanism; nowhere has Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organisation of the Independents. The modern Independents have a newspaper, the Nonconformist, written with great sincerity and ability. The motto, the standard, the profession of faith which this organ of theirs carries aloft, is: 'The Dissidence of Dissent and the [27] Protestantism of the Protestant religion.'



Inward peace comes from cultivation of culture. He is says what I may call inward peace and satisfaction, the peace and satisfaction which are reached as we draw near to complete spiritual perfection, at not merely to moral perfection or rather to relative moral perfection. The Victorian times were a time of great moral turbulence, and so the morality of Victorian times is very high.

We have a term called Victorian mortality and Arnold in this essay does not say that morality is not important, that it is something we can discount. But he is saying that it is a spiritual perfection that goes beyond morality, the confines of morality. So, culture is a point where you will understand morality on your own than have morality pushed upon you from an outside authority.

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The impulse of the English race towards **moral development and self-courtesy** has nowhere so powerfully manifested itself as in **Puritanism** nowhere has Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organisation of the Independents. The modern Independents have a newspaper, the Nonconformist, written with great sincerity and ability. The motto, the standard, the profession of faith which this organ of theirs carries aloft, is: **'The Dissidence of Dissent and the [27] Protestantism of the Protestant Religion**. There is sweetness and light, and an ideal of complete harmonious human perfection! One need not go to culture and poetry to find language to judge it. Religion, with its instinct for perfection,


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“Religion itself, I need hardly say, supplies in abundance, this grand language”, the grand language of poetry and of culture, “which is really the severest criticism of such an incomplete perfection as alone we have yet reached through our religious organizations”.

Arnold is critiquing, not religion, but organization of religion, organized religion, and to a certain extent, as we shall see later how Puritanism/Protestantism has failed England in this project. He is saying that Puritanism has helped England towards moral development, because “Puritanism found so adequate an expression as in the religious organization of the Independents”.

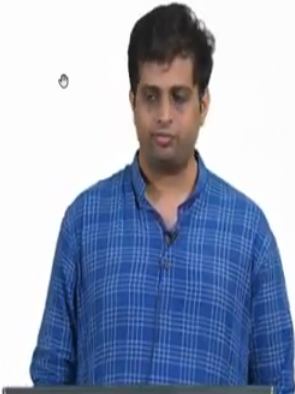
He now mentions a newspaper called the Nonconformist, the tagline of which is The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant Religion.

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supplies language to judge it. Finally, be of one mind, united in feeling," says St. Peter. There is an ideal which judges the Puritan ideal. "The Dissidence of Dissent and the Protestantism of the Protestant religion!" And religious organisations like this are what people believe in, rest in, would give their lives for! Such, I say, is the wonderful virtue of even the beginnings of perfection, of having conspired even the plain faults of our animality, that the religious organisation which has helped us to do it can seem to us something precious, salutary, and to be propagated, even when it wears such a brand of imperfection on its forehead as this. And men have got such a habit of giving to the language of religion a special application, of making it a mere jargon, that for the condemnation which religion itself passes on the shortcomings of their religious organisations they have no fear; they are sure to cheat themselves and to explain this condemnation [28] away. They can only be reached by the criticism which culture, like poetry, speaking a language not to be sophisticated, and resolutely testing these organisations by the ideal of a human perfection complete on all sides, applies to them.

But men of culture and poetry, it will be said, are again and again failing, and failing conspicuously, in the necessary first stage to perfection, in the subduing of the great obvious faults of our animality, which it is the glory of these religious organisations to have helped us to subdue. True, they do often so fail: they have often been without the virtues as well as the faults of the Puritan; it has been one of their dangers that they so felt the Puritan's faults that they too much neglected the practice of his virtues. I will not, however, exculpate them at the Puritan's expense; they have often failed in morality, and morality is indispensable; they have been punished for their failure, as the Puritan has been rewarded for his performance. They have been punished wherein they erred; but their ideal of beauty and sweetness and light, and a human nature



It is very interesting to see what we have downplayed these days in society, Arnold brings out a view of culture where it has a very important part to play in society, where it is not just books that we read when we have leisure, as opposed to worldly activities or important activities, but culture that shapes how we look at the world, culture that helps us become better persons.

We see here, he has already mentioned the newspaper, The Nonconformist, and later he will also mention the Daily Telegraph. He is already talking about the magazines we read, the newspapers that we read, the books that we read, that play such an important part in how we conceive of society, how we order society.

So instead of pushing culture as a background force in society, he is kind of bringing it into the foreground because it helps us to think about things, it organizes our thought around things.

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Again, he says morality is indispensable. He is never says that morality should be let go, because in Victorian times, he understood that morality was a huge thing. But he is saying that a sort of Protestantism slowly gave birth to Puritanism and Puritanism was a very severe, a very ascetic form of religion.

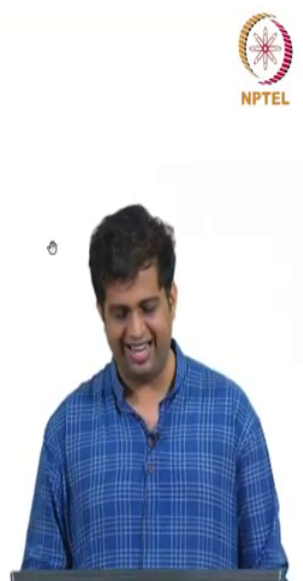
We see the Americans when they went there, they followed a high form of Puritanism and he is also criticizing that form of Puritanism, that form of moral asceticism, that form of very aggressive religiosity. The Pilgrim Fathers are the people who went from Europe to America and looked around the continent and settled there. And he is saying that if Virgil and Shakespeare were riding with the Pilgrim Fathers, if they were sailing with the Pilgrim Fathers, they will find their company very hard to bear. They would have been intolerable company.

Here we see that Arnold is not proposing a very ghettoized culture, not a very segregated society, but a society where all kinds of people come in contact with them, where we must encounter all different kinds of people and unless we have a certain parity among other people, these encounters can become very problematic.

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he proposed to cure all this vice and hideousness without religion. I confess I felt disposed to ask the asker this question. And how do you propose to cure it with such a religion as yours? How is the ideal of a life so unlovely, so unattractive, so narrow, so far removed from a true and satisfying ideal of human perfection, as is the life of your religious organisation as you yourself image it, to conquer and transform all this vice and hideousness? Indeed, the strongest plea for the study of perfection as pursued by culture, the clearest proof of the actual inadequacy of the idea of perfection held by the religious organisations,—expressing, as I have said, the most wide-spread effort which the human [31] race has yet made after perfection,—is to be found in the state of our life and society with these in possession of it, and having been in possession of it I know not how many hundred years. We are all of us included in some religious organisation or other; we all call ourselves, in the sublime and aspiring language of religion which I have before noticed, *children of God*. *Children of God*,—it is an immense pretension,—and how are we to justify it? By the works which we do, and the words which we speak. And the work which we collective children of God do, our grand centre of life, our city which we have builded for us to dwell in, is *London*. *London*, with its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of public egestas, *privatum opulentia*,—to use the words which Sallust puts into Cato's mouth about Rome,—unequaled in the world! The word, again, which we children of God speak, the voice which most hits our collective thought, the newspaper with the largest circulation in England, nay, with the largest circulation in the whole world, is the *Daily Telegraph*! I say that when our religious organisations,—which I admit to express the most considerable effort after perfection [32] that our race has yet made,—land us in no better result than this, it is high time to examine carefully their idea of perfection, to see whether it does not leave out of account sides and forces of human

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And he is saying that a newspaper had asked Professor Huxley, pointing to the crowd that had gathered at Epsom on Derby Day, how do you propose to make this crowd better? And Arnold asks the reporter back, with your kind of religious aggressiveness, how do you propose to make society better?

“How is an ideal of life, so unlovely, so unattractive, so narrow, so far removed from a true and satisfying ideal of human perfection, as is the life of your religious organization as you yourself manage it, to conquer and transform all this vice and hideousness?” He is very critical of religion that is restrictive, that tells us not to do this, not to do that.

He is more about religion that gives us a freedom to cultivate culture. He is saying here, “Children of God-- it is an immense pretension!” As we mentioned in the beginning, this was 10 years after Darwin's *Origin of Species* was published. So, no wonder that this ‘children of God’ sounds more like a pretension to Arnold than ever before.

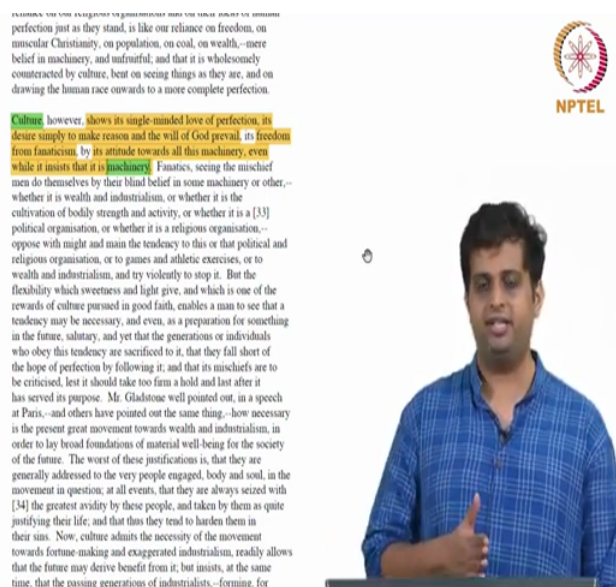
Previously, humans probably have gotten around with saying these things. But now after Darwin had expounded his origin of species, it becomes harder and harder to pretend that we come directly from God. And again, he is criticizing London for its unutterable external hideousness, and with its internal canker of public egestas and privatim opulentia.

This means private opulence and public misery. As individuals are getting richer, the public on its whole is getting poorer-- as we already mentioned, the 1 percent in the world now possess more than 99 percent of its riches. This critique of London will only get worse with time as we shall see in the modern times.

As we mentioned that Arnold is kind of anticipating the modern times already. He is seeing the problems of modern times to come that will cause further disillusionment in people of culture like James Joyce or TS Eliot or Virginia Woolf. At the end of *Mrs. Dalloway*, Virginia Woolf notes how through the death of Septimus Smith, London is a very unempathetic city. It has nothing to say about how a beautiful person like Septimus Smith dies.

And in TS Eliot's 'Wasteland', we see London is accused of being an unreal city that has filled the world with unambitious people.

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perfection just as they stand, is like our reliance on freedom, on muscular Christianity, on population, on coal, on wealth,—mere belief in machinery, and unfruitful; and that it is wholesomely counteracted by culture, bent on seeing things as they are, and on drawing the human race onwards to a more complete perfection.

Culture, however, shows its single-minded love of perfection, its desire simply to make reason and the will of God prevail, its freedom from fanaticism, by its attitude towards all this machinery, even while it insists that it is machinery. Fanatics, seeing the mischief men do themselves by their blind belief in some machinery or other,—whether it is wealth and industrialism, or whether it is the cultivation of bodily strength and activity, or whether it is a [33] political organisation, or whether it is a religious organisation,—oppose with might and main the tendency to this or that political and religious organisation, or to games and athletic exercises, or to wealth and industrialism, and try violently to stop it. But the flexibility which sweetness and light give, and which is one of the rewards of culture pursued in good faith, enables a man to see that a tendency may be necessary, and even, as a preparation for something in the future, salutary, and yet that the generations or individuals who obey this tendency are sacrificed to it, that they fall short of the hope of perfection by following it, and that its mischiefs are to be criticised, lest it should take too firm a hold and last after it has served its purpose. Mr. Gladstone well pointed out, in a speech at Paris,—and others have pointed out the same thing,—how necessary is the present great movement towards wealth and industrialism, in order to lay broad foundations of material well-being for the society of the future. The worst of these justifications is, that they are generally addressed to the very people engaged, body and soul, in the movement in question; at all events, that they are always seized with [34] the greatest avidity by these people, and taken by them as quite justifying their life; and that thus they tend to harden them in their sins. Now, culture admits the necessity of the movement towards fortune-making and exaggerated industrialism, readily allows that the future may derive benefit from it; but insists, at the same time, that the passing generations of industrialists,—forming, for

Again, he provides us another definition of culture where he says “Culture, however, shows its single minded love of perfection, its desire simply to make reason and the will of God prevail, its freedom from fanaticism, by its attitude towards all this machinery even while it insists that it is machinery.”

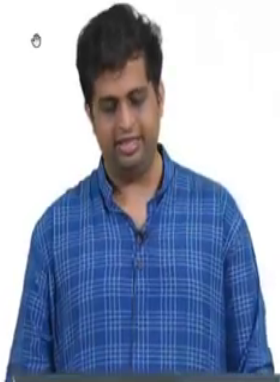
Here, we see the religion that Arnold is espousing, that he is for, is without fanaticism, it does not have fanaticism in it. It is a religion of beauty.

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improved physical basis, but it points out that our passing generation of boys and young men is, meantime, sacrificed. Puritanism was necessary to develop the moral fibre of the English race. Nonconformity to break the yoke of ecclesiastical domination over men's minds and to prepare the way for freedom of thought in the distant future; still, culture points out that the harmonious perfection of generations of [35] Puritans and Nonconformists have been, in consequence, sacrificed. Freedom of speech is necessary for the society of the future, but the young lions of the Daily Telegraph in the meanwhile are sacrificed. A voice for every man in his country's government is necessary for the society of the future, but meanwhile Mr. Beales and Mr. Bradlaugh are sacrificed.

Oxford, the Oxford of the past, has many faults; and she has heavily paid for them in defeat, in isolation, in want of hold upon the modern world. Yet we in Oxford, brought up amidst the beauty and sweetness of that beautiful place, have not failed to seize one truth: **that truth that beauty and sweetness are essential characters of a complete human perfection.** When I mused on this, I am all in the faith and tradition of Oxford. I say boldly that this our sentiment for beauty and sweetness, our sentiment against ugliness and cruelties, has been at the bottom of our attachment to so many beaten causes, of our opposition to so many triumphant movements. And the sentiment is true, and has never been wholly defeated, and has shown its power even in its defeat. We have not won our political battles, we have not carried out [36] main points, we have not stopped our adversaries' advance, we have not marched victoriously with the modern world, but we have told silently upon the mind of the country, we have prepared currents of feeling which sap our adversaries' position when it seems gained, we have kept up our own communications with the future. Look at the course of the great movement which shook Oxford to its centre some thirty years ago! It was directed, as any one who reads Dr Newman's Apology may see, against what in our world may be called, 'liberalism.' Liberalism prevailed; it was the appointed force to do the work of the hour; it



Here also I would like to note previously how the word 'endless' was repeated. Here Arnold is again stressing his point about being sacrificed. He is saying that many people are getting sacrificed to this very philistine attitude to life and this sacrifice here is not the sacrifice in religious terms or martyrdom.

Religious sacrifice will put a person at the level of martyrdom. It has a meaning to that sacrifice, but the sacrifice that Arnold mentioned here, the sacrifice of people is a meaningless sacrifice. It is not some religious one that can elevate people to the status of martyrdom.



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Quae regio in terris nostri non plena laboris?+

But what was it, this liberalism, as Dr. Newman saw it, and as it really broke the Oxford movement? **It was the great middle-class liberalism, which had for the cardinal points of its belief the Reform Bill of 1832, and local self-government, in politics, in the social sphere, free trade, unrestricted competition [37] and the**



And Arnold, next comes to the Oxford movement, where he is upholding the ideas of Doctor Cardinal Newman and everyone else that the Oxford movement was associated with. The Oxford movement tried to bring in some elements of Catholicism into the Anglican Church which they thought would kind of reduce its rigidity.

But he says that the force that broke the Oxford movement was liberalism. It is about local self-government in politics and free trade, unrestricted competition. So, this free trade is also something that is continuing today and it continues in the form of neoliberalism. And neoliberalism has kind of privileged certain first-world countries against third-world countries.

And while it has made the first-world countries richer, it has made the third-world countries poorer. We can see that Arnold was right in his critique of free trade, of liberalism, that has taken a much worse route now in society.

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himself fighting with; this was the force which till only the other day seemed to be the paramount force in this country, and to be in possession of the future; this was the force whose achievements fill Mr. Lowe with such inexpressible admiration, and whose rule he was so horror-struck to see threatened. And where is this great force of Philistinism now? It is thrust into the second rank, it is become a power of yesterday, it has lost the future. A new power has suddenly appeared, a power which it is impossible yet to judge fully, but which is certainly a wholly different force from middle-class liberalism; different in its cardinal points of belief, different in its tendencies in every sphere. It loves and admires neither the legislation of middle-class Parliaments, nor the local self-government of middle-class vestries, nor the unrestricted competition of middle-class [38] industrialists, nor the dissidence of middle-class Dissent and the Protestantism of middle-class Protestant religion. I am not now praising this new force, or saying that its own ideals are better; all I say is, that they are wholly different. And who will estimate how much the currents of feeling created by Dr. Newman's movement, the keen desire for beauty and sweetness which it nourished, the deep aversion it manifested to the hardness and vulgarity of middle-class liberalism, the strong light it turned on the hideous and grotesque illusions of middle-class Protestantism, who will estimate how much all these contributed to swell the tide of secret dissatisfaction which has ruined the ground under the self-confident liberalism of the last thirty years, and has prepared the way for its sudden collapse and supersession? **It is in this manner that the sentiment of Oxford for beauty and sweetness conquers, and in this manner long may it continue to conquer!**

In this manner it works to the same end as culture, and there is plenty of work for it yet to do. I have said that the new and more democratic force which is now superseding our old middle-class liberalism cannot yet be rightly judged. It has its [39] main tendencies still to form. We hear promises of its giving us administrative reform, law reform, reform of education, and I know not what; but those promises come rather from its advocates, wishing to make a good plea for it and to justify it for superseding middle-

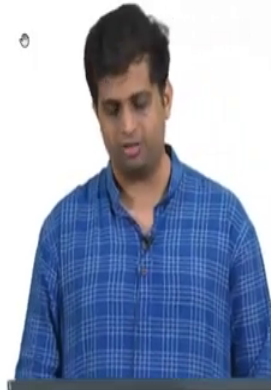


And he is saying that even though the Oxford movement has failed, Oxford University as a place and the people of Oxford have still conquered society, because it has the centre. “It is in this manner that the sentiment of Oxford for beauty and sweetness conquers and in his manner, long may it continue to conquer”.

Arnold is not disillusioned by losses in society, but the losses that society suffers at the hand of these liberal forces, this free trade forces. But he says that we will still continue with culture, with the love for beauty and truth that will forever continue.

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of middle-class liberalism in which he was bred, always inclines to inculcate that faith in machinery to which, as we have seen, Englishmen are so prone, and which has been the bane of middle-class liberalism. **He complains with a sorrowful indignation of people who "appear to have no proper estimate of the value of the franchise,"** he leads his disciples to believe, "what the Englishman is always too ready to believe, [40] that the having a vote, like the having a large family, or a large business, or large immodes, has in itself some edifying and perfecting effect upon human nature. Or else he cries out to the democracy—"the men," as he calls them, "upon whose shoulders the greatness of England rests,"—he cries out to them: **"See what you have done!"** I look over this country and see the cities you have built, the **railroads** you have made, the **manufactures** you have produced, the **gargoes** which freight the ships of the greatest mercantile navy the world has ever seen! I see that you have converted by your labours what was once a wilderness, these islands, into a fruitful garden. I know that you have created this wealth, and are a nation whose name is a word of power throughout all the world." Why, this is just the very style of laudation with which Mr. Roebuck or Mr. Lowe debauch the minds of the **middle classes**, and make such **Philistines of them**. It is the same fashion of teaching a man to value himself not on what he is, not on his progress in sweetness and light, but on the number of the railroads he has constructed, or the bigness of the Tabernacle he has built. Only the middle classes are told they have [41] done it all with their energy, self reliance, and capital, and the democracy are told they have done it all with their hands and unweys. But teaching the democracy to put its trust in achievements of this kind is merely training them to be Philistines to take the place of the Philistines whom they are superseding; and they too, like the middle class, will be encouraged to sit down at the banquet of the future without having on a wedding garment, and nothing excellent can then come from them. Those who know their besetting faults, those who have watched them and listened to them, or those who will read the instructive account recently given of them by one of themselves, the **Journeymen Engagers**, will agree that the idea which culture sets before us of perfection, an increased spiritual activity, having for its characters increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased exuberance...it is an idea



country they are novel and untrod ways. **I may call them the ways of Jacobinism.** Violent indignation with the past, abstract systems of innovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future,—these are the ways of **Jacobinism**. Mr. Frederic Harrison and other disciples of Comte,—one of them, Mr. Comte, is an old acquaintance of mine, and I am glad to have an opportunity of publicly expressing my respect for his talents and character,—are among the friends of democracy who are for leading it in paths of this kind. **Mr. Frederic Harrison is very hostile to culture**, and from a natural enough motive, for culture is the eternal opponent of the two things which are the signal marks of Jacobinism,—its fierceness, and its addiction to an abstract system. Culture is always assigning to system-makers and systems a smaller share in the beat of human destiny than their friends like. A current in people's minds sets towards new ideas; people are dissatisfied with their old narrow stock of Philistine ideas, Anglo-Saxon [43] ideas, or any other; and some man, some Bentham or Comte, who has the real merit of having early and strongly felt and helped the new current, but who brings plenty of narrownesses and mistakes of his own into his feeling and help of it, is credited with being the author of the whole current, the fit person to be entrusted with its regulation and to guide the human race. **The excellent German historian of the mythology of Rome, Preller, relating the introduction at Rome under the Tarquins of the worship of Apollo, the god of light, healing, and reconciliation, observes that it was not so much the Tarquins who brought to Rome the new worship of Apollo, as a current in the mind of the Roman people which set powerfully, at that time towards a new worship of this kind, and away from the old rim of Latin and Sabine religious ideas.** In a similar way, culture directs our attention to the current in human affairs, and to its continual working, and will not let us river our faith upon any one man and his doings. It makes us see, not only his good side, but also how much in him was of necessity limited and transient; nay, it even feels a pleasure, a sense of an increased freedom and of an ampler future, in so [44] doing. I remember, when I was under the influence of a mind to which I feel the greatest obligations, the mind of a man who was the very incarnation of culture and whose name is now the most remarkable



Here again, he criticizes a person called Mr. Bright, who asks the Englishman to take pride over the railroads he has built, the manufacturing that they have produced and the cargoes they have built. But Arnold is saying that this is a very philistine idea again-- that railroads, manufacturing and cargoes are not something that you take pride in.

Arnold also, is very adamant in this way-- that only culture is something that can be a source of pride. He comes to call this faith in machines and this faith that railroads and cargoes that we build are important, that they are the height of human perfection and achievement, Jacobinism.

So he is against this sort of Jacobinism. And he says that culture is the eternal opponent of the two things which are the signal marks of Jacobinism-- its fierceness and its addiction to the abstract system.

Again, he goes back to the Greek times and the Roman times to show what part culture played in the times of antiquity, to throw light on how it can save us now and he says, "The excellent German historian of the mythology of Rome, Preller, rewriting the introduction at Rome under the Tarquins, the worship of Apollo, the God of light, healing, and reconciliation observed that it was not so much the Tarquins who brought to Rome, the new worship of Apollo as current in the mind of the Roman people, which set powerfully at the time towards a new worship of this kind and away from the old run of Latin and saving religious ideas".

And it continues with the human affairs. So this is also a very Foucaultian idea of government. Foucault later says that power can be snatched from the hands of government by the people. The people through constituting certain practices can make sure of that. And Arnold here is also saying that we cannot trust authority to always make the changes for the better.

If people find that there is changes that must be made, people must make them themselves.

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agreeable. "I give," he continues, "a few verses, which may serve as a sample of the kind of version I would recommend." We all recollect the famous verse in our translation: "Then Satan answered the Lord and said: 'Doth Job fear God for nought?'" Franklin makes this: "Does Your Majesty imagine that Job's good conduct is the effect of mere personal attachment and affection?" I well remember how when first I read that, I drew a deep breath of relief, and said to myself: "After all, there is a stretch of humanity beyond Franklin's victorious good sense!" So, after hearing Bentham's mind and ideas proposed as the rulers of our future, I open the Deontology. There I read: "While Xenophon was writing his history and Euclid teaching geometry, Socrates and Plato were talking nonsense under pretence of talking wisdom and morality. This morality of theirs consisted in words; this wisdom of theirs was the denial of matters known to every man's experience." From the moment of reading that, I am delivered from the bondage of Bentham! the fanaticism of his adherents can touch me no longer. I feel the inadequacy of his mind and ideas for being the rule of human society, for perfection. Culture tends always thus to deal with the men of a system, of disciples, of a school; with men like Comte, or the late Mr. Buckle, or Mr. Mill. However much it may find to admire in these personages, or in some of them, it nevertheless remembers the text: "Be not ye called Rabbi!" and it soon passes on from any Rabbi. But Jacobinism loves a Rabbi; it does not want to pass on from its Rabbi in pursuit of a future and still unreached perfection. It wants its Rabbi and his ideas to stand for perfection that they may with the more authority recast the world. [46] and for Jacobinism, therefore, culture,—eternally passing onwards and seeking,—is an impertinence and an offence. But culture, just because it resists this tendency of Jacobinism to impose on us a man with limitations and errors of his own along with the true ideas of which he is the organ, really does the world and Jacobinism itself a service.

So, too, Jacobinism, in its fierce hatred of the past and of those whom it makes liable for the sins of the past, cannot away with culture,—culture with its inexhaustible indulgence, its consideration of circumstances, its severe judgment of actions joined to its merciful judgment of persons. "The man of culture is in politics," cries Mr. Frederic Harrison, "one of the poorest mortals alive!" Mr. Frederic Harrison wants to be doing business, and he complains that the man of culture stops him with a "turn for small



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He goes on to criticise Benjamin Franklin. He first hails Franklin in a very satiric manner as one of the best wits of American culture. Then he finds issues with what Franklin says and then he goes on to criticize Bentham as well for his utilitarianism.

And Bentham is the person, we have to remember, who invented the idea of Panopticon which we can see was a prison system, a surveillance system that again, Foucault criticizes. So, Bentham proposes the idea of Panopticon which Foucault also criticizes later on, and we can see it is a prison system, a system of surveillance. If we go to the cellular jail in Andaman Islands, we can see the cellular jail is built upon this principle of the Panopticon, created by Bentham. And here, actually Arnold makes the statement that I am delivered from the

bondage of Bentham. So, Bentham is a utilitarian, is a builder of prisons from which Arnold wants to distance himself.

It is not the part of colonialism that he would like to associate himself with, that builds prisons and everything. He says, “Be ye not called a Rabbi. Jacobinism loves a rabbi”. Culture for him is a discursive thing than an authoritarian thing. So, he is asking us to move away from having this Rabbistic figures where we have to listen to one person to understand what is good in society. Culture does not prefer rabbis.

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[47] asks that question, it reminds us that the perfection of human nature is sweetness and light. It is of use because, like religion, -that other effort after perfection, -it testifies that, where bitter envying and strife are, there is confusion and every evil work.

The pursuit of perfection, then, is the pursuit of sweetness and light. He who works for sweetness works in the end for light also; he who works for light works in the end for sweetness also. But he who works for sweetness and light united, works to make reason and the will of God prevail. He who works for machinery, he who works for hatred, works only for confusion. Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred, culture has but one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. Yes, it has one yet greater! -the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied till we all come to a perfect man, it knows that the sweetness and light of the few must be imperfect until the raw and unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. If I have not shrunk from saying that we must work for sweetness and light, so neither have I shrunk from saying that we must have a broad basis, must have sweetness and light [48] for as many as possible. Again and again I have insisted how those are the happy moments of humanity, how those are the flowering times of a people's life, how those are the flowering times for literature and art and all the creative power of genius, when there is a national glow of life and thought, when the whole of society is in the fullest measure permeated by thought, sensible to beauty, intelligent and alive. Only it must be real thought and real beauty, real sweetness and real light. Plenty of people will try to give the masses, as they call them, an intellectual food prepared and adapted in the way they think proper for the actual condition of the masses. The ordinary popular literature is an example of this way of working on the masses. Plenty of people will try to indoctrinate the masses with the set of ideas and judgments constituting the creed of their own profession or party. Our religious and political organisations give an example of this way of working on the masses. I condemn neither way; but culture works differently. It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or

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We will conclude now. He is concluding also that “the pursuit of perfection then is the pursuit of sweetness and light”. We see that these ideas of perfection, of harmony, of harmonious perfection, of well-rounded development are the ideas that have been brought up in this essay, time and again.

It is way to make reason and God prevail. He works for missionary, he who works for hatred only works for confusion. Culture looks beyond missionary, culture hates hatred. So, any form of hatred, any form of discrimination that might be in society, culture hates that.


Here culture can also be a vindictive force like the Gods but Arnold kind of poses it like that. And he says that it is the function of culture to aim for this sweetness and light. Again as he says, that must have sweetness and light for as many as possible. So, it is not again an elitist thing but a socialist thing.

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FOR ARTIST, WORKS ONLY FOR CULTIVATOR. CULTURE HATES MACHINERY, CULTURE HATES HATRED, CULTURE HAS BUT ONE GREAT PASSION, THE PASSION FOR SWEETNESS AND LIGHT. YES, IT HAS ONE YET GREATER-- THE PASSION FOR MAKING THEM PREVAIL. IT IS NOT SATISFIED TILL WE ALL COME TO A PERFECT MAN. IT KNOWS THAT THE SWEETNESS AND LIGHT OF THE FEW MUST BE SUPERFECT UNTIL THE LOW AND UNKINDLED MASSES OF HUMANITY ARE TOUCHED WITH SWEETNESS AND LIGHT. IF I HAVE NOT SHRUNK FROM SAYING THAT WE MUST WORK FOR SWEETNESS AND LIGHT, SO NEITHER HAVE I SHRUNK FROM SAYING THAT WE MUST HAVE A BROAD BASIS, MUST HAVE SWEETNESS AND LIGHT [48] FOR AS MANY AS POSSIBLE. AGAIN AND AGAIN I HAVE INSISTED HOW THOSE ARE THE HAPPY MOMENTS OF HUMANITY, HOW THOSE ARE THE MARKING EPOCHS OF A PEOPLE'S LIFE, HOW THOSE ARE THE FLOWERING TIMES FOR LITERATURE AND ART AND ALL THE CREATIVE POWER OF GENIUS, WHEN THERE IS A NATIONAL GLOW OF LIFE AND THOUGHT, WHEN THE WHOLE OF SOCIETY IS IN THE FULLEST MEASURE PERMEATED BY THOUGHT, SENSIBLE TO BEAUTY, INTELLIGENT AND ALIVE. ONLY IT MUST BE REAL THOUGHT AND REAL BEAUTY, REAL SWEETNESS AND REAL LIGHT. PLENTY OF PEOPLE WILL TRY TO GIVE THE MASSES, AS THEY CALL THEM, AN INTELLECTUAL FOOD PREPARED AND ADAPTED IN THE WAY THEY THINK PROPER FOR THE ACTUAL CONDITION OF THE MASSES. THE ORDINARY POPULAR LITERATURE IS AN EXAMPLE OF THIS WAY OF WORKING ON THE MASSES. PLENTY OF PEOPLE WILL TRY TO INDOCTRINATE THE MASSES WITH THE SET OF IDEAS AND JUDGMENTS CONSTITUTING THE CREED OF THEIR OWN PROFESSION OR PARTY. OUR RELIGIOUS AND POLITICAL ORGANISATIONS GIVE AN EXAMPLE OF THIS WAY OF WORKING ON THE MASSES. I CONDEMN NEITHER WAY, BUT CULTURE WORKS DIFFERENTLY. IT DOES NOT TRY TO TEACH DOWN TO THE LEVEL OF INFERIOR CLASSES; IT DOES NOT TRY TO WIN THEM FOR THIS OR THAT SECT OF ITS OWN, WITH READY-MADE JUDGMENTS AND WATCHWORDS. [49] IT SEEKS TO DO AWAY WITH CLASSES; TO MAKE ALL LIVE IN AN ATMOSPHERE OF SWEETNESS AND LIGHT, AND USE IDEAS, AS IT USES THEM ITSELF, FREELY-- TO BE NOURISHED AND NOT BOUND BY THEM.

This is the social ideal and the men of culture are the true apostles of equality. The great men of culture are those who have had a passion for diffusing, for making prevail, for carrying from one end

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“It does not try to teach down to the level of inferior classes; it does not try to win them for this or that sect of its own, with ready-made judgements or watchwords. It seeks to do away with classes”. Here we almost see, he is anticipating the Marxist tenets, that Marx will slowly start writing.

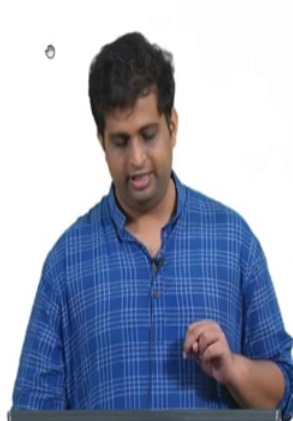
“To make all live in an atmosphere of sweetness and light and use ideas as it uses them itself freely-- to be nourished and not to be bound by them”. This is again he says, a social idea. Men of culture are the true apostles of equality.

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of society to the other: **the best knowledge, the best ideas of their time** who have laboured to divert knowledge of all that was harsh, uncouth, difficult, abstract, professional, exclusive; to humanise it, to make it efficient outside the clique of the cultivated and learned, yet still remaining the best knowledge and thought of the time, and a true source, therefore, of sweetness and light. Such a man was **Abelard in the Middle Ages** in spite of all his imperfections; and thence the boundless emotion and enthusiasm which Abelard excited. Such were **Lessing and Herder in Germany**, at the end of the last century; and their services to Germany were in this way inestimably precious. Generations will pass, and literary monuments will accumulate, and works far more perfect than the [50] works of Lessing and Herder will be produced in Germany; and yet the names of these two men will fill a German with a reverence and enthusiasm such as the names of the most gifted masters will hardly awaken. Because they humanised knowledge; because they broadened the basis of life and intelligence; because they worked powerfully to diffuse sweetness and light, to make reason and the will of God prevail. With Saint Augustine they said: "Let us not leave Thee alone to make in the secret of thy knowledge, as thou didst before the creation of the firmament, the division of light from darkness; let the children of thy spirit, placed in their firmament, make their light shine upon the earth, mark the division of night and day, and announce the revolution of the times; for the old order is passed, and the new arises; the night is spent, the day is come forth; and thou shalt crown the year with thy blessing, when thou shalt send forth labourers into thy harvest sown by other hands than theirs; when thou shalt send forth new labourers to new seed-times, whereof the harvest shall be not yet."

NOTES

22. \*aphania.



He concludes the essay by giving some more examples of people that he considers people of culture. I hope this lecture has helped you understand this essay *Culture and Anarchy* better. Please let us know in the forum if you have any questions. Thank you.