William Morris and Matthew Arnold: Some social aspects of their contrasting concepts of "culture".

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WILLIAM MORRIS AND MATTHEW ARNOLD: SOME SOCIAL ASPECTS OF THEIR CONTRASTING CONCEPTS OF "CULTURE"

A Thesis Submitted to the Faculty of Graduate Studies through the Department of English in Partial Fulfillment of the Requirements for the Degree of Master of Arts at the University of Windsor

by

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Windsor, Ontario, Canada 1969
ABSTRACT

During the nineteenth century, a time of rapidly changing conditions, questions concerning ethical, political, sociological and religious problems were matters of concern among thinking men. These questions come together in the general concept of "culture". William Morris, and Matthew Arnold were among those who exercised their minds on this topic. Arnold feels culture to be the pursuit of total perfection by means of getting to know the best that has been thought and said. As man cannot exist in a vacuum he must attempt to extend perfection to others. Morris accepts a similar function but his approach differs. The exterior world must be changed first and internal changes will follow.

As perfection cannot exist in an imperfect world both men consider the question of equality; Arnold saw inequality as an economic matter stemming from the law of bequest. Morris, also concerned by inequality, saw the working man as the victim of the upper, parasitic classes. Arnold saw equality as coming from the State which he regards as a benevolent agent of perfection. Morris cannot see the State as either desirable or potentially desirable. Education is an important tool as it is one way by which perfection may be achieved. Neither man considers it as a means to a material end. Neither man is a traditional Christian; both find fault with the contemporary Christian Church. Arnold wishes to remain close to traditional teaching.
He is a liberal thinker and is willing to accept change within the confines of the system as he knew it. Morris is a radical, prepared, if necessary, to tear down the structure of contemporary society so that a new way of life may be instituted. For Arnold culture is the prerogative of the educated class; it is for the man who is able to consult the best which has been thought and said. The lower class may aspire to culture but they will need to be led by the educated and culturally more aware class. Morris feels culture to be an enveloping way of life, closer, in fact, to the lower than the upper class. Man, Morris felt, cannot just learn culture, he must live with it.
I am especially indebted to Dr. E.D. Le Mire who directed this thesis. During the latter stages of its preparation it coincided with his sabbatical leave and I am both conscious and appreciative of the time he took from his own research to work with me upon this paper. His high standards and his detailed criticisms made the writing of this paper a rewarding experience. I am also grateful to Dr. E. McNamara who agreed, in Dr. Le Mire's absence, to sit upon the examining committee.

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My thanks as well to Miss Rosemary Avery who typed the manuscript.
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CHAPTER ONE

INTRODUCTION

William Morris and Matthew Arnold were contemporaries in a changing century. That change introduced vast inequities in the human condition and accentuated those inequities already in existence. The changing conditions affected the way in which man lived, the way in which he worked and the way in which he thought. Questions concerning ethical, political, sociological and religious problems became matters of concern among thinking men. All these topics come together in the concept of "culture"; a term which was itself undergoing change during this period. Among the people who considered the problems involved in this developing concept of culture were William Morris and Matthew Arnold. Responses to the changing century are typified in their writings. Although both men were aware of and sympathetic to the inequities involved, Arnold remained the inheritor of an older tradition while Morris became the rebel who struck off in a new direction. It is the purpose of this paper to examine their writings on the broad subject of culture and on some of those more specific topics which go to make up that broader concept. Besides illuminating two important elements in the evolution of our meaning of culture, this method should clarify the portrait of Arnold as an evolutionary thinker and of Morris as a revolutionary one; of Arnold as a man of his century and of Morris as a man who looks for--
ward to the twentieth century.

Both William Morris and Matthew Arnold were influenced in their approach to the question of culture, by their environment and experience. Both came from middle class backgrounds, but there the similarity ended. Born in 1822 and the elder by twelve years, Matthew Arnold was the son of a man destined to be a symbol of his age. His attitude towards his father was as ambivalent as that of any son of a famous father. His rebellion was typical of that of any spirited youth expected to conform too closely to another pattern. This rebellion took the form of a levity displeasing to Dr. Arnold, who appears to have seen boys in his own image rather than as they really were. Matthew Arnold built a reputation as a cheerfully audacious young man and capped his charade by taking a Second at Oxford.

William Morris was not born to the burden of a virtuous parent. Son of a businessman, he was the inheritor of a comfortable income, and albeit tainted by "trade" his background was not as embarrassing as it would have been fifty years before. His father, who died when Morris was fourteen, appears to have had little influence on his son's life. Morris emerged from Marlborough College with a desire to become a High Church clergyman (how much this may have been due to Morris's romantic susceptibility to colour and ritual and how much to a genuine religious commitment is open to question; the Morris family was evangelical). Attending Oxford ten years after Arnold, Morris was still in time to appreciate the unspoilt medieval beauty of the buildings, a beauty which had a lasting effect upon him. Intellectually, he
was not challenged by Oxford but his reaction was not a "social" one as Arnold's had been but rather a churning, chaotic involvement in matters as diverse as the proposed foundation of a monastic order and the writing of highly romantic poetry. From religion his interest swung to architecture; and after taking a pass degree he began a brief involvement with that profession. He later turned his allegiance to poetry. He married a woman who was visually the embodiment of his pre-Raphaelite dreams. The experience gained in furnishing their home led him to set up that firm later known as Morris and Company. Possessor of an independent income Morris was responsible for the major part of the financial support and he met the early deficits.

Financially, Arnold was not so fortunate. Thomas Arnold bequeathed nothing to his son except a reputation and the status of a gentleman. It was always necessary for Arnold to support himself; although his father's fame did provide him with an entrée. At first his life continued in the carefree manner which he had assumed as his own but with his marriage in 1851 it became obvious that his butterfly existence was ended and that he must seek a position of some permanence. He became an inspector of schools. It was not congenial work. For the next thirty-five years he travelled constantly through England and came to loathe the rigid middle class minds which dominated so much of education. Although his earliest writing was exclusively poetry, and that poetry of a rather esoteric sort, Arnold began an involvement with the broader problems of his day in 1859 when he joined a commission investigating the state of education in France, Switzere-
land and Holland. Questions arose, among others, of the role of education, of the State and of equality. He began to write on these topics, and, as his prose writings increased his poetic output decreased.

By 1859 Morris had become involved with all kinds of artistic endeavour. His firm was manufacturing stained glass, metal work, furniture and all kinds of decorative art. Their work was far from cheap. Morris, full of vitality and energy, tried it all and wrote poetry at the same time, claiming "If a chap can't compose an epic poem while he's weaving tapestry he had better shut up." In the ensuing years he experienced some difficulty in his private life; his daughter Jenny, was discovered to be epileptic and some reports intimate a tension between Morris, his wife, and Rossetti. He found comfort in the stoicism of the Icelandic sagas and was enthralled by his travels in that country. What he referred to as "the worship of courage" became a factor in his life. In the 1870's his mind began to focus on the evils of his society. The first public expression of this involvement came with the Eastern Question in 1877. From that time on he was part of an evolving movement which took him from a passive liberalism through socialism to a revolutionary commitment. He commenced lecturing, firstly on art, design and architecture and finally on the economics and politics of communism. From polite groups of art patrons he passed to socialist groups and finally to street corner rallies. From

2. Ibid., I., 395.
reform he passed to revolution, from art to activism. He was no par­
lour pink; he was a street corner radical, a marching, demonstrating
revolutionary. His last years were spent in relative quiet, writing
his later romances and, enthusiastic as ever, developing the Kelmscott
Press.

As has been noted, material considerations dogged Matthew
Arnold all his life. Even after thirty years as an inspector of schools
his salary was not such as to afford him security. In 1870, assessed
at $1,000 in taxes, he protested with the wry humour characteristic of
him that he must be that rare thing, an unsuccessful writer.3 Finan­
cially he was not successful, but he was, in his later years, known in
his own right rather than as his father's son. He had become one of
the names of his age.

Although contemporaries, it is not recorded that the two men
ever met. Their lives were far apart, but, as has been indicated,
their minds were often exercised by like problems. Much of their
prose writing is occasioned by or specifically involved with that
which Matthew Arnold dubbed "culture".

Raymond Williams suggests that the emergence of culture as
an abstraction and an absolute merges two general responses:

...first, the recognition of the practical separation
of certain moral and intellectual activities from the
driven impetus of a new kind of society; second, the
emphasis of these activities, as a court of human ap­
pearance, to be set over the process of practical social


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Judgement and yet to offer itself as a mitigating and rallying alternative. 4

It was concerned with the new kinds of personal and social relationships; it was, he feels, not only a reaction to industrialization but also to democracy. The new industrial impetus of the nineteenth century caused a parallel intellectual and moral development which felt the need to set up certain values as a standard against which the times could be judged. That the motivating causes of the changing times were not only the growing industrialization but also the burgeoning of the democratic movement imposed a further complication. All this contributed to the difficulties involved in the consideration of the nature and role of culture.

It has been indicated that the term "culture" underwent changes during the nineteenth century and it is still so variously used that there is difficulty in isolating a single, unchanging meaning. Williams states of the period 1780-1950:

The ... word, culture ... changes ... . Before this period it had meant, primarily, 'the ending of natural growth', and then, by analogy, a process of human training. But this latter use, which had usually been a culture of something, was changed in the nineteenth century to culture as such, a thing in itself. It came to mean, first; a general state of habit of the mind; having close relations with the idea of human perfection. Second it came to mean 'the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole'. Third, it came to mean 'the general body of the arts'. Fourth, later in the century it came to mean 'a whole

way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual.' 5

In 1869 when Matthew Arnold wrote *Culture and Anarchy* the popularly accepted meaning was that of an intellectual refinement and this caused misunderstanding when this book first appeared. Arnold took culture to be the

...pursuit of our total perfection be means of getting to know, on all the matters which concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world, and, through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits... 6

It is interesting to note that, in his lecture *On the Origins of Ornamental Art*, William Morris notes,

Absolute perfection in art is a vain hope; the day will never come when the hand of man can thoroughly express the best thoughts of man. 7

The presumed unattainability of perfection does not make its pursuit invalid. Culture, for Arnold, is not only a matter for the individual. Man cannot live in a vacuum; if he is to achieve perfection he must also extend it to the world around him:

Culture leads us ... to conceive of true human perfection as harmonious perfection, developing all sides of our humanity and as a general perfection developing all sides of society. 8

The search for culture is spurred by a desire to see all things as they really are:

There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour,

5. Ibid., p. xvi.
the impulses towards action, help and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminished 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. 9

It is not enough to recognise what perfection might be; one must try and make it prevail.

Not much given to abstract discussion, Morris never sets out to discuss culture as such. He relates his theories in concrete terms in relation to the men and women around him. Morris suggests that perfection is unattainable. But even if it was unattainable it does not mean that man should not seek it, not should he seek it alone. He is in agreement with Arnold here; perfection could not be attained if fellow men were suffering. Where Morris will differ is in the means whereby man may approach perfection.

Arnold carries an inward struggle outward. He feels that all the powers that go for the beauty and wealth of human nature should be expanded equally. Culture is an inward condition of the mind and spirit. This contrasts with Morris's thought. His involvement with culture began with art which, for him, is an all-enveloping interest. His entire life is involved with producing art and living amid art; he even, of course, married an art object. This is not to suggest that every man should marry a beautiful woman (of course News from Nowhere includes nothing but beautiful women so it becomes, perhaps, unavoidable), but he can see no valid reason why all mankind cannot live with and produce beauty. He begins, in fact with the exterior world and moves from that

9. Ibid., p. 91.
to the interior. Beautiful surroundings and congenial employment will lead to beauty of spirit. In *News from Nowhere* Old Hammond says:

The art of workpleasure, as one ought to call it, of which I am now speaking, sprung up almost spontaneously, it seems, from a kind of instinct among people, no longer driven desperately to painful and terrible overwork, to do the best they could with the work in hand - to make it excellent of its kind, and when that had gone on for a little a craving for beauty seemed to awaken in men's minds, and they began rudely and awkwardly to ornament the wares which they made; and when they had once set to work at that, it soon began to grow. Thus at last and by slow degrees we got pleasure into our work; then we became conscious of that pleasure and cultivated it, and took care that we had our fill of it; and then all was gained and we were happy. 10

By the time William Guest arrives, this involvement with and appreciation for beauty has lead to an approximation of what Morris considers a perfect society. From social and economic reform will come the opportunity for human development towards that unreachable perfection.

Arnold moves the other way. First comes a state of spiritual perfection, of sweetness and light, "... an inward spiritual activity, having for its characteristics increased sweetness, increased light, increased life, increased sympathy." 11 From this the individual moves to the outside world:

He who works for sweetness and light untied, works to make reason and the will of God prevail.... Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred; culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light. It has one yet greater! - the passion for making them prevail. It is not satisfied until we all come to a perfect man; it knows that the sweetness and light of a few must be imperfect until the raw and

unkindled masses of humanity are touched with sweetness and light. 12

Both men wish to make "sweetness and light" available to all men.

Culture cannot exist in a vacuum. Arnold and Morris both see the pursuit of perfection as involving their fellow men. No man, they feel, can be perfect in an imperfect world. Therefore the question of man's equality (or inequality) must be considered. A major factor in the maintenance of an hierarchy of inequality is the State. The State may be the instrument of either promoting or frustrating equality. In order to urge the State to progress towards the goal of greater, or even complete, equality education must be used as a tool. A major force involved with and influencing all these aspects is provided by religion. It is hoped to indicate what religious beliefs were held by Morris and by Arnold and to identify what effect these beliefs may have had on their approach to culture.

Although a discussion of their literary thought is not attempted here it is recognised that Arnold's consideration of culture had its origin in his literary criticism. An appreciation of "the best that has been thought and said" admittedly requires a critical evaluation of poetry, letters and philosophy. To this point it should be noted that "art" is used throughout this paper to denote "Fine Art" rather than that wider usage which does encompass letters and poetry.

12. Ibid., p. 112.
CHAPTER TWO

EQUALITY

Culture, both Arnold and Morris recognised, could not be achieved by the few at the expense of the many. It followed then, that the position of the many needs to be considered. Both men were aware of, and deeply concerned by, the serious inequalities of the life surrounding them. Although there was a certain overlapping of their views they differed gravely in their appraisal of the situation and, most significantly, in their solutions.

What is equality? Who is equal? In what way are they equal? If they are not equal is there a valid reason why they should be equal? As this is a term liable to misinterpretation a definition will be attempted. The question of equality must always arise in response to a seen condition of inequality; it is a question which cannot exist in itself. In a truly equal society the term would have no meaning. What is meant by “equality”? When the American Declaration of Independence states that “All men are created equal” it must immediately qualify that statement by explaining that they are equal in that they are endowed “with certain inalienable rights, Life, Liberty and the pursuit of happiness.” The authors of the Declaration are thus invoking two meanings of the term; it is a reasonable assumption that all men do indeed desire their own brand of happiness.
and in possessing this desire they are equal. The other usage calls for a different definition - it is desirable that all men should have liberty even though they do not, in fact, have it. Both meanings can be found in the right to "Life"; all men now existing have life and in this way they are equal but they are also entitled to the right to live and this calls for the second definition. There are, apparently two definitions which can be ascribed to this term. The first may be described as "Equality as a fact" and in speaking of this we speak of an equality which is demonstrably present among all men. It is a fact shared by all men; one in whose possession all men are equal. The second usage is an ideal; it describes an equality which men do not, in fact, possess but to which they are entitled. It demands that the privileges available to the few should be available to the many. Instead of stating that all men are equal it demands that all men should be equal. It may be described as "Equality as a right".

It has been said that the question of equality must arise in response to a seen condition of inequality. The situation in England during the latter half of the century was particularly conducive to this response. It was an exceedingly hierarchical society. It was conscious of this, and a large part of the society was, indeed, quite proud of it. The Industrial Revolution had created a new sub-class, a class which existed in greater degradation and with less hope of amelioration (for it was before the days of the Muck Rakers) than any class in existence today. It was a time of unrest; the Reform Bill of 1832 had been a small limited step in the direction
of greater equality. It was a time when intelligent men could not but be aware of the ferment and unrest; their response to this depended on their sensitivity.

Matthew Arnold was deeply involved with the problems of his day. As an inspector of schools he travelled widely and saw at first hand the serious inequities of the times. He gave the problem considerable thought. What does he mean when he talks of "equality"? He does not specify; he apparently assumes a commonly accepted meaning. The lecture entitled Equality begins with a quotation from Xenander, "Choose equality and flee greed." When this has been examined it can be seen that this is not what has been called "equality as fact". A fact is either valid or it is not. It cannot be a matter of choice. Arnold must then be speaking of "equality as a right". He further establishes this when he states,

Equality before the law we all take as a matter of course; that is not the equality we speak of when we speak of equality. When we talk of equality, we understand social equality. 1

He assumes a commonly understood definition but he makes it clear that it is "equality as a right" which concerns him.

William Morris, in this case, is concerned with definition. In a lecture entitled What Socialists Want he begins by discussing "equality as a fact". He agrees that men are not naturally equal but that they are equal in that they share certain needs:

So you see whatever inequality I admit among people, I claim this equality that everyone should have enough food, clothes and housing, and full enough leisure, pleasure and education; and that everyone should have certainly of these necessaries; in this case we should be equal as Socialists use the word; if we are not so equal I assert something is wrong either with nature, the individual or the society which tells him how to live.

At first glance one could argue that although there is a universal need for food and housing (or "shelter") yet there are societies such as that of the nomadic aborigine which neither need nor wear clothing and so this need could not be admitted as "equality as fact". The significant word, however, is "enough"; enough clothing for an eskimo may be fur pelts, for the aborigine it may be ceremonial paint or, indeed, nothing at all. The need for leisure (or "rest") may be admitted as "equality as fact" as may pleasure in the sense in which it is used in the Declaration of Independence - "Life, liberty and the pursuit of happiness" - it should, of course, be borne in mind that the definition of happiness is extremely broad and one man's happiness may be another man's misery. Education, even when described as "full enough education" remains Morris's suggestion of "equality as a right". There is not, however desirable we might think it, a universal recognition of its need. Although Morris does recognise and does discuss "equality as fact" both men are primarily concerned with "equality as a right".

Both Morris and Arnold are involved with economic aspects of the problem, for although Arnold claims to be involved with social equality yet the foundation of social inequality for him lies in the inequities of the bequest system - an economic matter. This system he sees as an anachronism. Once valid, its justification for existence has disappeared. It once was necessary in that it provided for the preservation of the large estates and so provided strength and stability for the state. The need for the preservation of these large estates has since passed and the continued existence of laws to preserve them has resulted in the continued existence of an upper class without justification for its being.

Morris's condemnation of economic inequalities also leads him to a consideration of the class structure. In a lecture entitled Dawn of a New Epoch he sees the existing situation as the result of the commercial system:

Like all other systems, it is founded on the necessity of man conquering his subsistence from Nature by labour, and also like most other systems that we know of, it presupposes the unequal distribution of labour among different classes of society, and the unequal distribution of the results of that labour; it does not differ in that respect from the system which it supplanted [the feudal system]; it has only altered the method whereby that unequal distribution should be arranged... The richest are still the idlest, and those who work the hardest and perform the most painful tasks are the worst rewarded for their labour. 3

For Morris, the wealthy man is always the parasite. He lives on the

Soil toil of the worker who is degraded by the nature of his work and by the exploitation which he suffers.

Arnold's attitude is vastly different from Morris's. The three traditional classes he labelled the Barbarians, the Philistines and the Populace. The inequality between the classes he deplores because it...

...materialises our upper class, vulgarises our middle class, brutalises our lower and the greater the inequality the more marked its bad action upon the middle and lower classes. 4

The action upon the middle and lower classes, he feels is that it maims and stunts them and keeps them in imperfection. But, unlike Morris, he does not feel the ruling class should be indited along with the system. He feels that, their faults and imperfections aside, they are "...the most energetic, the most capable, the honestest upper class which the world has ever seen." 5 He does fear the bad effect of their rule upon the other classes. He twice quotes a remark by Gladstone to the effect that the English lack any interest in equality at all; rather, the English have made a religion of inequality. This statement does not appear to have come to the attention of William Morris; it would have disturbed him greatly, suggesting, as it does, an ultimate futility for his work and ambitions.

On the middle class, Arnold's "Philistines", both men are in

5. Ibid., p. 374.
tentative agreement. Arnold finds them narrow and rigid. His experience of this class came mainly from his many unhappy years as a school inspector. During these years he was in constant contact with its representatives and deplored the narrowness and ignorance with which they approached those problems of education which exercised his mind. Although Morris saw the working class as the body from which effective change would come he had originally hoped that the middle class would lead the way. In a letter to C. B. Maurice in 1883 he writes "... what we of the middle classes have to do, if we can, is show by our lives what is the proper type of a useful citizen, the type into which all classes should melt at last!" As time passed he found that the middle class, as a whole, had little inclination for this type of leadership, and eventually he abandoned hope of any action by them.

In News from Nowhere the struggle which led to the new order is represented as a conflict between the masters and the workers; an exemplary, benevolent middle class is conspicuous by its absence.

It is in their attitudes towards the populace that both men contrast most strongly. Arnold's attitude is curiously ambivalent. It is tempting to think that although he sympathises with them intellectually, emotionally he suspects them of being an anarchical mob. A passage which Arnold himself had second thoughts about and later deleted from the second edition of Culture and Anarchy is revealing.

He quotes his formidable father:

"As for rioting, the old Roman way of dealing with that is always the right one; flog the rank and file, and fling the leaders from the Tarpeian Rock!" 7

Arnold speaks of the middle class with understanding and his personal experience also encompasses the upper class, but the lower class is always a stranger to him. When he sees their condition and the gulf between it and his own, his intellectual sympathies are stirred; yet Culture and Anarchy is permeated by his fear of the Populace become mob. A critic has commented:

Arnold was simply too much out of touch with common people to understand that the responsible union member who made up an increasingly greater proportion of these demonstrations could not be a jacquerie. Through his pages march only the roughs, bent on mischief, calling for blood... 8

Arnold, in some measure, recognises this gulf and comments:

But you know how often it happens in England that a cultivated person ... talking to one of the lower classes, feels, and cannot help but feel, that there is sometimes a wall of partition between himself and the other, that they seem to belong to two different worlds. 9

This is one of the occasions in which Morris would find himself in agreement. Despite his deep emotional response to the plight of the lower class he found himself writing to Mrs. Burne-Jones "...it is s

great drawback that I can't talk to them roughly and unaffectedly....
I don't seem to have got at them yet - you see this great class gulf
lies between us...."10 His sympathy for the working class is deep
and very real; his later writings are permeated by the outrage he
felt at the situation in which this class was placed. Of the working
class he writes:

...their education, their leisure, their refinement,
their religion is weighed in a different balance
from that of the gentleman, nay, they are in all
respects the lower classes, really and not conventio-
nally I say, so that a working man is not fit
company for a gentleman, or a gentleman for a work-
ing man. 11

For Arnold, the cause of this class inequality lay in the
existence of an outmoded system perpetuated by the law of bequest
which preserved large fortunes and estates. Arnold’s solution was to
reform this law - which in itself shows the gap between himself and
the working class which felt itself supremely unfettered by this law.
Arnold was greatly influenced by his visits to France where the law
of bequest was different; many of the large estates had been broken
up and he found the peasants free of servility. Arnold romanticizes
the French: "France developed a highly civilized society before it
developed equality." 12 and

It was not the spirit of philanthropy which mainly im-

pelled the French to that Revolution, neither was it the spirit of envy, neither was it the spirit of ideas, though all these did something towards it; but what did most was the spirit of society. 13

Civilised revolutions are undoubtedly the best. Whatever led to the present situation he admires the "humanity of their manners" and feels that

...a community having such humane manners is a community of equals and in such a community great social inequalities have really no meaning, while they are at the same time a menace and an embarrassment to perfect ease of intercourse. A community with the spirit of society is eminently, therefore, a community with a spirit of equality. 14

This provides nothing but a veneer. A polite peasant is still a peasant; it is just that his politeness helps to make the upper class feel secure. In the context of the Civil Rights movement a hundred years later, a Negro who becomes an "Uncle Tom" is no less unequal than the Black Power advocate. Arnold's wish to abolish law of bequest will eventually lead to an equality of opportunity of a sort, but his fear of the mob and its anarchy stops him from proceeding any further with the problem.

Morris is far more certain. He sees the situation (perhaps in rather overly-simplistic terms) as a straightforward one. The battle is between Mastership and Fellowship. He sees no reason why an accident of heredity should permit one man to control the life of another.

13. Ibid., p. 52.
Why, he asks, have masters at all?

Let us be fellows working in harmony of association for the common good, that is, for the greatest happiness and completest development of every human being in the community.

This ideal and hope of a new society founded on industrial peace and forethought, bearing with it its own ethics aiming at a new and higher life for all men, has received the general name of Socialism, and it is my firm belief that it is destined to supersede the old order of things founded on industrial war, and to be the next step in the progress of humanity.

Morris has gone a step further than Arnold. He has recognized the problem in his own mind, and he is seeking a solution of some immediacy.

The presumption that men could work as fellows was immediately challenged, and Morris is called upon to explain this more clearly. He has been asked how a ship would be sailed under the communist condition.

How? Why with a captain and mates and a sailing master and an engineer (if it be a steamer) and A.B.'s and stokers and so on and so on. Only here will be no 1st, 2nd and 3rd class among the passengers; the sailors and the stokers will be as well fed and lodged as the captain or passengers; and the captain and the stoker will have the same pay.

There may be some doubt as to Morris's assessment of the situation and question may be raised as to the respective contribution of the sailor and the captain. When Morris speaks of the role of the subordinate he can speak with a certain sternness:


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Again, as regards the workmen who are under his direction, he needs no special dignity or authority; they know well enough that so long as he fulfills his function and really does direct them, if they do not heed him it will be at the cost of their labour being more irksome and harder. 17

The punitive aspects of this statement suggest that Morris does not always expect the workers to live up to those standards which he proclaims in News from Nowhere. In that ideal existence the derelict worker is recalled to his proper duty by nothing more than his fellow workers' disapproval.

How does Morris expect to achieve his ideal society? The privileged classes must be abolished. All the members of the Socialist State must work according to their ability. Socialism would abolish the power of men to compel others to live poorly. Morris feels that this would eventually lead to the end of private property for, when men found that there was more than enough for all, then no man would desire to accumulate more than he could use. If any man wanted more then he would need to work harder and make personal sacrifice in order to obtain it. If this is to be allowed then Morris appears to have opened the door for future inequality; this is the way in which many of the great fortunes were begun. Besides, who shall judge what is "enough"? As indicated earlier, what is "enough" clothing for an aborigine is not enough for an Eskimo, what may be enough books for one man to read would be markedly insufficient for another.

17. "Dawn of a New Epoch", Ibid., XXIII, 137.
Morris sees the communization of the means of industry leading to the communization of goods and thus to an equality of condition among men:

Socialism asserts that everyone should have free access to the means of production or of wealth ... the land and plant and stock of the community, which are now monopolized by certain privileged persons who force others to pay for their use. This claim is founded on the principle which lies at the bottom of Socialism that the right to the possession of wealth is conferred by the possessor having worked towards its production, and being able to use it for his own needs. 18

Arnold's investigation of the economic and political aspects of equality is restrained. He is extremely wary of socialistic and communistic schemes which he feels

... have generally, however, a fatal defect; they are content with too low and material a standard of well-being. That instinct of perfection, which is the master power in humanity, always rebels at this, and frustrates the work. Many are to be made partakers of well-being, true; but the ideal of well-being is not to be, on that account, lowered and coarsened. 19

No bread is better than half a loaf? He does not feel that equality is a question for English politics.

The abstract right to equality may, indeed be a question of speculative politics, French equality appeals to this abstract natural right as its support. It goes back to a state of nature where all were equal, and supposes that "the poor consented" as Rousseau says, "to the existence of rich people," reserving always the right to return to a state of nature. 20

20. Ibid., p. 45.
The poor, then, consented to a state of inequality and, as they have the right to return to the state of nature then the French Revolution was merely, one assumes, an exercise of this right. England does not recognize this right. If the present inequality originated in the need, a political need, to preserve the large estates so that they might support the crown (or state) then it becomes the right of the crown (or state) to revoke that inequality by repealing the existing laws of bequest. Equality is a political matter.

Arnold retains his faith in action by an enlightened hierarchy. His solution is by no means an immediate one; he must educate the ruling class to accept this solution and to pass a measure opposed to its immediate self interest. The first to suffer this measure will be the immediate families of those men who will be called upon to make this move. Even when this daunting task is accomplished, the benefits of the repeal will not affect the lives of those in need for many years, if, indeed the change will come in their lifetime. Morris's faith lies with socialism. How does socialism expect to be able to achieve its ends? He foresees a transitional period during which

... the State - that is, the nation organized for wasteful production and exchange of wealth - will be the sole possessor of the national plant and stock, the sole employer of labour which it will so regulate in the general interest that no man will ever need or fear lack of employment and due earnings therefrom. Everybody will have an equal chance of livelihood, and, except as a rare disease, there would be no hoarding of money or other wealth. This view points to an attempt to give everybody the full worth of the productive work done by him, after having ensured
the necessary preliminary that he shall always be
free to work. 21

This "State" involvement is a transitional stage only. The further develop-
ment of Morris's ideas on the State and education as a tool of socialism
will be continued in later chapters.

Morris is not optimistic about the possibility of a gradual
change or a change brought about by an enlightened ruling class. He does
not believe in the existence of such a class. He believes that the "whole
basis of Society, with all its contrasts of rich and poor, is incurably
vicious," 22 he can see only one solution - revolution.

One of Arnold's major statements on equality is the subject of
direct comment by Morris. It is the lecture entitled "Ecce, Convertimur ad
Gentes" which Arnold addressed to the Ipswich Men's College in 1882.
Mackail records Morris's reaction. The particular passage cited from
Arnold reads:

I have no very ardent interest in politics in their
present state in this country. What interests me is
English civilization; and our politics in their present
state do not seem to me to have much bearing upon that.
Both the natural reason of the thing and also the
proof from practical experience seem to me to show the
same thing; that for modern civilization some approach
to equality is necessary, and that an enormous in-
equality like ours is a hindrance to our civilization.
Our middle class know neither man nor the world, they
have no light and can give none. 23

So far Morris is in agreement. He says:


22. May Morris, William Morris, Artist, Writer, Socialist,
    II, 83.

    II, 89-90.
Can the middle class regenerate themselves? ... at first sight one would say that a body of people so powerful, who have built up the gigantic edifice of modern commerce, whose science, invention and energy have subdued the forces of nature to serve their everyday purpose, and who guide the organization that keeps the natural powers in subjection in a way almost miraculous; at first sight one would say, surely such a mighty mass of wealthy men could do anything they please. And yet I doubt it. Why do not you - and I set about this tomorrow? Because we cannot. 24

Arnold urges the working class to step forward, but Morris's involvement is more direct:

The cause of art is the cause of the people. We well-to-do people, those of us who love art, not as a toy, but as a thing necessary to the life of man, have for our best work the raising of the standard of life among the people. How can we of the middle class, we the capitalists and our hangers-on help? By renouncing our class, and on all occasion when antagonism rises up between the classes, casting our lot with the masses; those who are condemned at best to lack of education, refinement, leisure, pleasure and reason; and at worst, to a life lower than that of the most brutal of savages. There is no other way. 25

The difference between the two men is most clearly shown here.

The very tone of the two passages is utterly different. Arnold's restraint is apparent in the first paragraph; he is speaking with some detachment, he disclaims "ardent interest," he looks for "some approach" to equality, and even admits that an enormous inequality is a "hindrance," nothing more, simply a hindrance. Morris is not restrained in his lan-

24. Ibid., II, 90.

25. Ibid., II, 90-91.
guage or reactions. He is involved, he is emotional and his language reflects it; inequality has resulted in the masses being "condemned", their life is lower than "that of the most brutal of savages", the middle classes are described as capitalists - not necessarily offensive, and their "hangers-on" - which is derogatory. They are not urged to look for "some approach", they are urged to take immediate action by renouncing their class.

It is Morris's willingness to follow his arguments through which distinguishes him from Arnold. Morris explores the implications of what he says. He attempts to define what he is talking about; he is not content to assume a commonly understood meaning for the term "equality", he identifies a meaning and his arguments follow from this meaning. Arnold attempts to discuss this problem without ever fully defining it. He stops short of a full investigation. His solutions are ones which may in time have effect; but hardly within the lifetimes of his hearers. The ultimate effect of these solutions would be to provide equality of opportunity but beyond that he is not really prepared to go.

Despite his effort, Morris does not present a clearly defined and developed argument but he is consistent in his position. His optimism often betrays him into an oversimplistic approach; it is hard to accept the selflessness with which he credits the socialist future. He believes all too often that what would satisfy him would satisfy all. Nevertheless, the honesty of his opinions compels respect. His emotions are clearly engaged on the side of the poor and exploited classes and
he demands an equality of condition for them.
A major factor controlling the possibility of equality is the State. Matthew Arnold specifically invokes the name of the State in his discussion of equality. Morris does not, but some consideration of the role of the State is involved in his consideration of the problem. It is necessary to examine the concept of the State, as understood by each man, in order to fully understand their positions on equality and ultimately on the idea of culture.

What is meant by "the State"? Entire substantial volumes have been written to define and substantiate this term. Only a brief and limited definition will be attempted here. The State is an organized entity. The State is neither Society nor the Nation. It formulates policy and speaks for the Nation. In an absolute monarchy the State may be, in effect, the King: "L'etat, c'est moi!" In a democracy the State is represented by the elected officers of the people. The State in turn has certain controls over those people whom it represents. The State controls through a system of law, of whatever nature, and has the power to enforce that law through military or civil organizations. The function of the State may vary but it is essentially a regulatory one, whether its function is to regulate the distribution of wealth amid the people or whether it is to acquire that wealth for the State itself for whatever purpose it desires. Friedrich Engels says that the State is
...a product of society at a particular stage of development; it is the admission that this society has involved itself in insoluble self-contradiction... But in order that those antagonisms... shall not consume themselves and society in fruitless struggle, a power, apparently standing above society, has become necessary to moderate the conflict and keep it within the bounds of "order"; and this power, arisen out of society, but placing itself above it and increasingly alienating itself from it, is the state. 

So, it seeks to maintain civil order; there is a varying involvement with the protection of the rights of the people whether this involves regulation of working conditions, provision of education or, in a democratic state, protection of free speech and individual liberty. There is also the question of protection and conservation of national resources, which may lead to protectionist tariff policies or regulation of credit. Finally, the State is concerned with national security. These are the main areas in which the State may move to control and support the fortunes of its people. Individual states may become involved with more, or less, functions than are included here.

The State, however, ultimately rests its power in the will of the people. Even a tightly controlled Police State will, unless it obtains popular support (perhaps through a charismatic leader) be in eventual danger of collapse. In all except the Police State a constitution of laws protects the people from undue harassment from the state. Here lies a conflict, probably unresolvable, between individual

liberty and the will of the many as represented by the State. The dividing line between these two opposing forces will vary between country and country, and within any one country it may vary between decade and decade. The particular position of that dividing line may at any time effect the position of the reformer within the country. If the division favours the controlling State then there will be a demand for more individual freedom, if the inclination is, instead, towards a more individualistic society then there may well be more demand for State involvement.

What was the situation in England during the last half of the nineteenth century? The Industrial Revolution had created a sub-class whose social wrongs called for correction. England has always had a talent for producing men of conscience who are willing to work to alleviate social ills. Men such as Edwin Chadwick (inspired by his experiences on the Poor Law Commission in the 1830's) had already caused government regulation of public health measures. The Public Health Act (1848) was the first measure of its kind which the State had imposed upon local governments. The Northcote-Trevelyan reforms of the Civil Service in 1853 opened that service to men of varying origins and it ceased to be the perquisite of the political hack. It became at least possible to have effective and honest administration.

The State edged further and further into regulation of working hours and conditions. The commissions which investigated working conditions of women and children produced reports which dismayed compassionate men. By the middle of the century a widening philosophy of
state regulation was accepted. It was all the more palatable because England was experiencing a boom period and such regulation as had occurred had caused relatively little inconvenience. The boom began to dissipate in the 1870's and in the 1880's England became gripped by a depression. The introduction of railways and steam driven ships had opened up new trade routes and English agriculture and industry began to suffer from the competition. It was becoming cheaper to use goods from foreign lands, or even the colonies, than it was to use those produced in England. Germany and America had adopted protectionist policies which hurt England's export trade. As industry suffered working men became unemployed and endured severe privation. Economic regulation by the State became more probable.

D. L. Keir says:

The functions of the State, whether exercised centrally or locally were carried far beyond the maintenance of a general framework of rules within which uncontrolled private initiative moved without check... The function of the State, as henceforth concerned, was to ensure where individual enterprise promoted the well-being of the citizen and society, its creative impulses should be allowed free course, but where it did not, it should be restrained or supplanted by the act of government itself. 2

From his youth Matthew Arnold was predisposed to accept the concept of the central, controlling State. Dr. Arnold had exalted the role of the State. He spoke of it as a "divine and perfect thing and its essence is power; the State is 'sovereign over human life, control-

ing everything; and itself to no earthly control." With this influence in his background and his day to day involvement with education, it is altogether fitting that Matthew Arnold's first discussion of the role of the State came as the result of a State investigation of contemporary education. In 1859, he travelled as a member of the Newcastle Commission through France, Switzerland and Belgium and recognised there the advantages of state involvement. Throughout that decade he continued to consider the role played by the State in regard to education. In 1868 he refined his thoughts on the nature of the State itself in a lecture which later became the chapter "Doing as one likes" in *Culture and Anarchy*.

Following from his consideration of culture as being the pursuit of a total perfection, he must consider the role of the State as a possible agent of that perfection. After considering the problems imposed by the very existence of social classes he continues: "Well, then, what if we tried to rise above the idea of class to the idea of the whole community, the State, and to find one centre of power and authority there?" He recalls the unease felt by many at the thought of too much power being allowed to accrue to the State, and he is aware of the people's attachment to individualism and the overriding distrust between the classes:

> By our every-day selves, however, we are separate, personal, at war; we are only safe from another's

tyranny when no one has any power; and this safety, in its turn cannot save us from anarchy.... But by our best self we are united, impersonal, at harmony. We are in no peril from giving authority to this because it is the truest friend we all of us can have; ...

Well and this is the very self which culture, or the study of perfection seeks to develop in us; ...

We want an authority and we find nothing but jealous classes, checks and a deadlock; culture suggests the idea of the State. We find no basis for a firm State-power in our ordinary selves; culture suggests one to us in our best self. 5

Arnold's thought contrasts interestingly with that of Friedrich Engels. Both feel the existing antagonisms, both recognise the existence of a power outside the common order of things, a power which is the State. Engels, however, feels it to be evil and doomed to destruction even in its highest form, the democratic state.6 Arnold feels it to be good; seeing it - as did his father - as the outward and visible sign of an inward, invisible spiritual reality. Arnold, as will be seen in the discussion of his thoughts on education, holds that man must know himself and the world, that he must become aware of the capabilities and performance of the human spirit. This is partly achieved through the study of man's thought throughout history. This study can then make man aware of his best self, and ideal, a Platonic ideal perhaps. Perfection is something not necessarily outside man's experience but rather ahead of him. It is not necessarily unreachable. From this idea of the best self to the idea of the State requires a leap of the

5. Ibid., p. 134-5.
imagination; a careful logical process of thought does not lead one to it. Thomas Arnold had a mystical approach to the State, his son appears to share it.

Morris does not undertake to discuss the role or nature of the State as such. His consideration of the State comes almost accidentally as part of his discussion of socialism in general. It is further complicated by his tendency to refer to what is essentially the State as "the government", "the parliament", or "the nation" although these terms are far from synonymous. He also speaks of the State in two different contexts; he speaks of the State power then existing, a quasi-democracy based on a limited franchise and headed by a titular monarchy, and he speaks of State Socialism involving "...the State - that is, society organized for the production and distribution of wealth..." 7 This is, of course, a Marxist interpretation. His attitude to the contemporary State is exceedingly virulent and he gives his invective full reign in News from Nowhere wherein Old Hammond discourses of the defunct State to that most irritating of "yes-men", William Guest:

...We have seen already that it was the function of Government to protect the rich against the poor. 8

and:


8. Ibid., XVI, 78.
Was not the Parliament on the one side a kind of watch committee sitting to see that the interests of the Upper Classes took no hurt; and on the other side a sort of blind to delude the people into supposing that they had some share in the management of their own affairs?

History seems to show this.

I think we shall not be far wrong if we say that government was the Law Courts, backed by the executive which handled the brute force that the deluded people allowed them to use for their own purpose; I mean the army, navy and police.

Reasonable men must needs think you are right. 9

The passiveness of William Guest appears to damage Morris's point here. Although Old Hammond is in no way challenged, the State had taken some steps in the direction of protection of the working classes. These steps had not taken the workers to the position which the Socialists would like to have seen but the Factory Acts, at least, had been a limited step. In his comments on the army and police, Morris is affected by his experiences on Bloody Sunday and other less violent occasions. The government had misread those demonstrations and had reacted with an unjustified severity but Matthew Arnold was by no means the only Englishman who feared anarchy. He saw the maintenance of law and order as one of the prime functions of the State; he does not appear to have difficulty in reconciling this with a conflicting concept of justice or individual liberty.

Because a State in which law is authoritative and sovereign, a firm and settled course of public order is requisite if man is to bring to maturity anything precious and lasting for the future.

9. Ibid., XVI, 76-77.
Thus in our eyes the very framework and exterior order of the State, whoever may administer the State, is sacred; and culture is the most resolute enemy of anarchy, because of the great hopes and designs which culture teaches us to nourish. 10

For Arnold, the maintenance of order is a most necessary function of the State. For Arnold, revolution must be followed by anarchy; for Morris, it must be followed by a newer and better day. The State is Arnold's bulwark against anarchy; it is the centre of authority. He recognises that many fear that which comforts him; they fear that that authority may become despotism. Arnold doubts that such a despotism would be possible in England unless the people chose to make it so. The final guard against abuse of State power would be, in Arnold's mind, that he sees the basis for firm State-power in "our best selves" in which we are "united, impersonal, at harmony" 11 and thus abuse becomes inconceivable. In any case he feels that the agency of the State has already become indispensable. 12

Morris cannot feel this way about either the contemporary State or the Socialist State. A central control is anathema to him. He is scornful of those who think it might serve a useful purpose. In his article "Philanthropists" he assails these misguided optimists:


11. Ibid., p. 134.

We many of us have experienced the bitter hostility of the philanthropists to Socialism, which in point of fact they realise as the foe doomed if successful to make an end of their occupation; a foe which would quite change that class on which they try their benevolent experiments, and which they look upon meantime as a necessary appendage of capital, and would convert it into an all powerful organization that would at last absorb all society, and become nothing less than the State. 13

He was also opposed to those Socialists, the Fabians, who felt that Socialism could be achieved through constitutional means. Morris felt that their attempts would be thwarted; he feared they would be engulfed by party politics and the parliamentary system with its balance of power and the consequent compromises and accommodation. Such a system was abhorrent to his nature.

Possibly because of this involvement with the operation of the State in education, Arnold is inclined to view the contemporary State in a more indulgent fashion; but then he is akin to those philanthropists criticized by Morris. He is well aware of opposition to the State and he attempts to consider and answer these criticisms:

...as to the objection that our State-action - our "beneficence working by rule" - often bungles and does its work badly. No wonder it does. The imperious necessities of modern society force it, more or less, even in this country, into play; but it is exercised by a class to whose cherished instincts it is opposed - the aristocratic class; and it is watched by a class to whose cherished prejudices it is opposed - the middle class. It is hesitatingly

exercised and jealously watched. It therefore works without courage, cordiality or belief in itself .... But it need not work so; and the moment the middle class abandons its attitude of jealous aversion it will work so no longer. 14

His use of the term "State-action" is a little confusing but it should be interpreted in its widest sense, in those terms defined at the beginning of this chapter rather than in the more limited sense as the administrative arm of the State. Arnold is susceptible to the Hegelian justification of force by success, and this is apparent in his discussion of the role of the State. But even taking into account his aversion to the middle class, it seems a little harsh to blame the errors of the State in operation on that class alone. He also finds fault with conventional thinking and unreasoning acceptance of catch phrases for lack of trust in the State: "Such a catchword as this The State had better leave things alone." 15 He finds this without meaning. It is an incomplete generalization and would be better expressed: "Some things the State had better leave alone others it had better not." 16 Among the things which the State had better not leave alone he includes regulation of trade and commerce, which directly affect the well-being of the nation, and education which is a necessity if the nation is ever to make its way along the path to perfection.

15. Ibid., p. 299.
16. Ibid., p. 299.
Morris is as dubious about the role of the Socialist State as he is about that of the existing State. He is aware of what many of his fellow Socialists propose; he describes two views of Socialism:

According to the first, the State — that is, the nation organized for unwasteful production and exchange of wealth — will be the sole possessor of the national plant and stock, the sole employer of labour, which she will so regulate in the general interest that no man will ever lack of employment and due earnings therefrom.

Everyone will have an equal chance of livelihood, and, except as a rare disease, there would be no hoarding of money or other wealth. This view points to an attempt to give everyone the full worth of the productive work done by him, after having ensured that he shall always free to work.

According to the other view, the centralized nation would give place to a federation of communes who would hold all the wealth in common and would use that wealth for satisfying the needs of each member, only exacting from each that he should do his best according to his capacity towards the production of commonwealth. Of course it is to be understood that each member is absolutely free to use his share of wealth as he pleases, without interference from any, so long as he really uses it, that is, does not turn it into an instrument for the oppression of others. 17

The first view of socialism proposed above corresponds to that proposed in the Communist Manifesto although Marx and Engels also suggest that once class distinctions have disappeared the public power will lose its political character and there will be instead "an association in which the free development of each is the condition for the free development of all." 18 Morris accepted, however reluctantly, that the Socialist


State was probably to be an intermediate step along the road to pure communism. He accepted that the change must come through revolution and, with Engels, that a strong State must exist to consolidate and maintain the victories that have been won. The State would need to fix the limits of private and public property, would need to enforce the abandonment of inheritance (this, at least, would gladden Arnold's heart) and put down accumulation of wealth. To do this force would be needed; there might even be counter-revolutionary moves, (this sequence of events is described in *News from Nowhere*). But this central State would never be more than a transitional stage, and Morris looks forward to its complete disappearance and, coming in its place, a proliferation of communes handling all wealth in common. He foresees that these communes would handle only local affairs and would not attempt to administer the affairs of those living far off. He sees matters affecting widely scattered communes as being handled by large meetings to which the various villages would send delegates; the villages themselves would appear to be controlled by a kind of town meeting.

Arnold prefers to work within the confines of the system as he knows it. Cautiously pragmatic, he tries to answer objections to the contemporary State and to argue for the full participation of the community within the State:

Is a citizen's relation to the State that of a dependent to a parental benefactor? by no means; it is that of a member in a partnership to the whole firm. The citizens of the State, the members of a society are really a partnership, "a partnership," as Burke nobly says, "in all science, in all art, in every virtue,"
in all perfection." 19

What does Arnold suggest by his use of the word "partnership"? Is it what William Morris means by "fellowship"? Both terms involve participation, but "partnership" invokes a contractual relationship while "fellowship" involves a more social relationship; it is closer to "brotherhood" than to "partnership". It is a fine point but consistent with the characters of both men.

In his own way Arnold also seeks a revolution, but a revolution by law:

Great changes there must be, for a revolution cannot accomplish itself without great changes; yet order there must be, for without order a revolution cannot accomplish itself by due course of law. 20

As in his discussion of equality, Arnold believes in gradualism; he believes in supporting the power of the existing government against anarchy while working to transform the nation by informed State action. Although he talks of partnership, the system he describes smacks more of a paternalistic nature.

It is at this point that Arnold formulates his conception of "a State which shall be above all classes, above all sects, synthesizing their diversities, resolving their conflicts." 21 A God-like function indeed.


Factors in each man’s life undoubtedly shaped his attitude toward the State. For Arnold, the State was a logical instrument to be used in the cause of reform. His involvement with education had given him a chance to see the effect that State action could have; his involvement with the State coloured his attitude. One may also speculate on the influence of his father, both in relation to Thomas Arnold's known position on the State and in relation to Thomas Arnold as a figure of authority. This must remain speculation but Arnold did spend his life under the aegis of an external, directing authority.

Morris, on the other hand, was engaged for much of his working life in what was, for all his theoretical formulations, a commercial enterprise. His public involvement with the State began with the disillusionment of the Balkan Crisis of 1876 and he distrusted a State in the hands of the politicians of the day. He could not see that a State could be controlled for, or administered by, the people and, as in industry, he prefers to discount the industrial revolution, so, in organization he prefers to discount the modern State and opt instead for a system of communal living in small villages.

Arnold, ever the gradualist, prefers to work within the system as he know it; Morris, disillusioned with that system, will sweep it away and establish a system and a State as he wills it to be. For both men, education will be a major tool in accomplishing these ends.
Throughout Matthew Arnold's writings on culture the question of education constantly recurs. How may perfection be achieved? By getting to know the best that has been thought and said and acting upon that knowledge; this requires education. One of the barriers to equality is the lack of knowledge possessed by the lower classes. What is the main function of the State? In Matthew Arnold's eyes it is to provide education. It is therefore necessary to consider Arnold's views on education rather more closely and to discover how far William Morris would be in agreement and how far he would differ.

Matthew Arnold's initial involvement in education was almost accidental. When he married in 1851 he needed a job to support himself and his family and he was offered an inspectorship in the Education Department. He wrote to his wife:

I think I shall get interested in the schools after a little time; their effects on the children are so immense, and their future effects in civilising the next generation of the lower classes, who, as things are going, will have most of the political power of the country in their hands, may be so important. 1

Despite his hopeful resolution his mind appears to have been occupied by little but the drudgery of the office until, in 1859, he was appoin-

ted by the Newcastle Commission to report on the educational system in France. In 1865 he was again appointed, this time under Lord Taunton's School Inquiry Commission, to report on secondary education in France, Germany, Switzerland and Italy. In 1885 the Education Department directed him to investigate Germany, Switzerland and France on four specific points; free education; quality of education; status, training and pensioning of teachers; and compulsory attendance and release from schools. Much of the writing which stemmed from these investigations was involved with the minutiae of teaching; and Arnold frequently appears to lose sight of the entire picture in his necessary pursuit of the detail.

Although William Morris was not involved with the day to day workings of education he was, on occasion, consulted by the government on matters touching art education. In 1882 he appeared as a witness before the Royal Commission on Technical Instruction to offer his views on the condition of the arts in England and to recommend a desirable form of training. He draws attention to his own lack of immediate involvement when he is asked if there are any departures from the present curriculum which he would consider essential and he replies: "I think not. I do not know with any degree of nicety what the training is, but I think not." From his position as an artist and a manufacturer he is able to speak of what the training of an artist should be but he

is not involved in that training process as Arnold was with the regular educational process. Morris’s view is of the aims and purpose of the educational system.

Behind the involvement of Arnold and Morris, education itself, like so much else of Victorian society, was in a state of evolution, changing from being the privilege of the few to being the right of many. Arnold became an inspector at a time when change had commenced but when so many abuses and tyrannies remained that it is no wonder that his enthusiasm was so little stirred. Kay-Shuttleworth had retired, his health destroyed by his prodigious efforts; he had been replaced by R. W. Lingen. Lingen was later joined by Robert Lowe who enjoyed the reputation of being the most hated man in England. In the ensuing years Arnold was to find himself almost continually in opposition to the methods and aims of both men.

As an inspector of schools, Arnold was expected to cover thirteen Midland Counties and most of Wales. In this entire area there were one hundred and four schools. Although Kay-Shuttleworth had instituted training colleges for teachers, many of the teachers in the schools were still those incompetent illiterates who had disgraced the system in earlier years. Contemporary descriptions of school conditions are appalling; the buildings were a menace to health and the teaching a menace to minds. It is no wonder that Arnold’s letters reflect such a

depressed and depressing picture of his early inspecting days. The conditions which Arnold experienced explain his pre-occupation, in his educational writings, with the methods of teaching rather than the ends. He writes exhaustively of the methods and manners of primary and secondary education in England and the Continent but only occasionally does he discuss the aims and purpose of education as a whole.

State control, for Arnold, would involve a coherence of organisation and of result. He was greatly interested in the humanization of society and claimed this as one of the objects of education. But he suffered a grave disappointment after his work for the Newcastle Commission; the infamous "Revised Code", sponsored by Robert Lowe, based funds for schools on the basis of examination results thus substituting a mechanical numbers game for the humanising purpose which Arnold had hoped to see. He expressed himself bitterly in Fraser's Magazine:

"The duty of a State in public education is," it is said, "when clearly defined, to obtain the greatest possible quantity of reading, writing and arithmetic for the greatest number." ... But the State has hitherto given more than this. It has paid for a machinery of instruction extending itself to many things other than this. It has thus been paying for discipline, for civilisation, for religious and moral training, for a superior instruction to clever and forward children...4

Arnold had some qualms about this public criticism of Lingen and Lowe

but there appears to have been no retaliation. In later years there was some revision of the Code but payment by results remained an integral part of the British educational system until after Arnold's death. The high hopes he had had of the Commission were never realised and its results were, for him, a severe blow to English education. He published his own accounts of the investigation of European education and some of his main statements on the purpose of education occur in his book *Schools and Universities on the Continent*.

The aim and office of instruction, say many people, is to make a man a good citizen, or a good Christian, or a gentleman, or it is to fit him to get on in the world; or it is to enable him to do his duty in that state of life to which he is called. It is none of these and the modern spirit more and more discerns it to be none of these. These are at best secondary and indirect aims of instruction; its prime direct aim is to enable a man to know himself and the world. To know himself, man must know the capabilities and performance of the human spirit; and the value of the humanities, of Alterthumwissenschaft, the science of antiquity, is, that it affords for this purpose an unsurpassing course of light and stimulus.

William Morris, a modern spirit, would agree that the aim and office of education was neither to make a man a good citizen nor to do his duty in the state of life to which he was called. If "to fit him to get on in the world" is to be taken at its commercial connotation then Morris would oppose it most vigorously; if it was to be taken with a social connotation then he might very well agree. Morris wanted man to de-

velop himself fully; he did not want him to be shackled by the chains of the commercial system. He wanted man to have that equality and that freedom which would permit him to live in beauty, in harmony and in peace. If education will fit him to get on within that world then such an education would be fully acceptable to Morris. It is all a question of to what world this education is to fit man.

Morris's connection with formal education is slight. He acquired, and retained, a dislike for formal education at Oxford and had little cause to change his mind later. Education is important to him, however, because he is involved in the forwarding of the socialist ideal and in order to do this he is in need of an informed audience. To an audience at Burslem Town Hall he said:

Well, I have said that education is the first remedy for the barbarism which has been bred by the hurry of civilization and competitive commerce. 6

Although, on this occasion, he was addressing himself to the problems of art his statement applies to his position on social change as well. In Morris's view it is all one. He goes on to point out that a knowledge of those who went before and of their accomplishments can go a long way towards aiding the present struggle; he appears to be nearing Arnold's thought of the value of Alterthumwissenschaft. Before his listeners can move forward towards the socialist ideal they must be aware of what has been done to them; they must know that their situa-

tion is not a natural one. This can be accomplished by education. Much of Morris's earlier writing touches on the question of education as it is related to the arts. He registers his disapproval of education with a commercial end:

At present all education is directed towards the end of fitting people to take their places in the humanity of commerce - these as masters, those as workers. The education of the masters is more ornamental than that of the workers, but it is commercial still; and even at the ancient universities learning is but little regarded, unless it can in the long run be made to pay. Due education is a totally different thing from this, and concerns itself in finding out what different people are fit for, and helping them along the road which they are inclined to take. In a duly ordered society, therefore, young people would be taught such handicrafts as they had a turn for as part of their education, the discipline of their minds and bodies; and adults would also have opportunities of learning in the same schools, for the development of individual capacities would be of all things chiefly aimed at by education, instead, as now, the subordination of all capacities to the great end of "moneymaking" for oneself - or of one's master. The amount of talent, and even genius, which the present system crushes, and which would be drawn out by such a system, would make our daily work easy and interesting.

He feels that the present system is aimed at perpetuating the existing condition, and his assumption is correct. When the early reformers sought to extend education to the lower classes one of the main reasons for the opposition which it met was the ruling classes' fear that such a move would foment revolution. As the reformers, not only the educational reformers but their social counterparts as well, gained

7. "Useful Work Versus Useless Toil", The Collected Works. XXIII, 112-3,
ground the ruling class reversed their position and instead tried to use education as an ameliorative instrument to forestall revolution. The working class were educated as working class (when they were educated at all), and the ruling class were educated as the ruling class. Morris's comment: "...the development of individual capacities would be of all things chiefly aimed at by education,..." contrasts interestingly with the previous statement by Arnold and there seems an underlying agreement. In order to develop individual capacities man must first know himself which Arnold further defines as knowing "the capabilities and performance of the human spirit." For Arnold the primary aim is to enable a man "to know himself and the world", for Morris it is to find out "what different people are fit for" and then to help them achieve it. They are not too far apart; for a man to discover what he is fit for he must, presumably, learn to know himself. Arnold, in seeking to know the capabilities and performance of the human spirit, searches for a universal truth; Morris, on the other hand, seeks the particular, the capabilities peculiar to the individual. The most immediately apparent difference, however, is that the process for Arnold appears a solitary one, for Morris a relationship is involved. Another difference is implied in Arnold's view of the humanities as a source of light and stimulus, a mental process, while for Morris development of the physical capacities is also stressed.

Despite his denial that education should fit a man for his "state in life", Arnold approaches this position. In "A French Eton"
he states:

The education of each class in society has, or ought to have, its ideal determined by the wants of that class and by its determination. Society may be imagined so uniform that one education shall be suitable for all its members. We have not a society of that kind nor has any European country. 8

Here, in as far as he does not go on to consider the possibility or, indeed, the desirability of change, he contradicts his writings on equality. In this paragraph he is apparently prepared to perpetuate that inequality indefinitely.

Arnold received a letter from M. E. Grant Duff, M.P.:

...to call attention to the expediency of making the Secondary Endowed Schools throughout the country more available for the purposes of those who wish to give their children a liberal but not a learned education. 9

Arnold comments:

...it is well, also to take the distinction which you have taken between liberal and learned education, because this is one of the things which the public has got into its head, and one can do most with the public by availing oneself of these things. To give the means of learning Greek, for instance, but not to make Greek obligatory, is a proposal for secondary education, which half the world are now prepared to pick up their ears if you make. 10

Here Arnold takes a hesitant step towards a position dear to William Morris's heart. Arnold's liberal education, however, was one which

10. Ibid., p. 232-3.
stretched to encompass natural history, or Naturkunde, rather than that artistic involvement towards which Morris's concept of a liberal education led. Arnold discusses his position more fully in his lecture Literature and Science:

And the more that men's minds are cleared, the more that the results of science are frankly accepted, the more that poetry and eloquence come to be received and studied as what in truth they really are, - the criticism of life by gifted men, alive and active with extraordinary power at an unusual number of points; - so much the more will the value of humane letters, and art also, which is an utterance having a like kind of power with theirs, be felt and acknowledged, and their place in education be secured. 11

This is one of the few times that Matthew Arnold talks of art at all; his inclination was not in that direction. He is a stranger to Morris's world of artistic creation, and this mention of art appears almost as an afterthought.

Morris's view of a liberal education is a very different thing:

What I claim is a liberal education; opportunity, that is, to have my share of whatever knowledge there is in the world according to my capacity or bent of mind, historical or scientific; and also to have my share of skill of hand which is about in the world, either in the industrial handicrafts or in the fine arts; picture painting, sculpture, music and the like; I claim to be taught more than one craft to exercise for the benefit of the community...
But I also know that this claim for education involves one for public advantages in the shape of public li-

libraries, schools, and the like, such as no private person, not even the richest, could command; but these I claim very confidentially, being sure that no reasonable community could bear to be without such help to a decent life. 12

He follows this with a demand for greater leisure so that working men would be able to undertake this further development. This quotation shows clearly the distinguishing feature of William Morris's views on education. It is to be an all encompassing, totally involving process. It is to develop the mind, the personality and the body. He develops this theme in his description of "A Factory as it Might Be":

To begin with, such a factory will surely be a centre of education; any children who seem likely to develop gifts towards its special industry would gradually and without pain, amidst their book learning be drawn into technical instruction which would bring them at last into a thorough apprenticeship for their craft; therefore, the bent of each child having been considered in choosing its instruction and operation, it is not too much to expect that children so educated will look forward eagerly to the time when they will be allowed to work at turning out real useful wares; a child whose manual dexterity has been developed without undue forcing side by side with its mental intelligence would surely be as eager to handle shuttle, hammer, or whatnot for the first time as a real workman, and begin making, as a young gentleman is now to get hold of his first gun and begin killing. 13

Morris's liberal education is far more "liberal" than that envisaged by Arnold who, in all fairness does not appear to have been manually oriented. Morris was certainly opposed to "learned" education and,


in the persona of Old Hammond, in *News from Nowhere*, criticizes it to William Guest. The children of the future learn whether they go through a formalized system or not. They are surrounded by materials and their own curiosity will lead them to take up a book and try to decipher it, or, the presence of art materials will lead them to experiment with art. The children will imitate their elders, if they read books or speak foreign languages then the children will seek to emulate them. Old Hammond argues that much nineteenth century knowledge is forced upon the child who subsequently forgets it and it is never put to good use.

William Morris did not draw his various theories of education together to form a detailed, consistent whole, let alone attempt to implement them. Nevertheless, like so many of his other writings they influenced those who came after and a school embodying his principles does exist today in England. Apparently his theories of an organic education have been found successful. An article in the *Times Education Supplement* states that pupils trained by his principles

> can all do something well, for they have been educated in the round. They have of course had an appropriate measure of academic training; but they have also learned by perceiving through their senses, in an atmosphere where feelings are recognised as important and to be nourished; and they have learned through using their hands creatively. 14

The "appropriate" measure of academic training is vague enough to be
intriguing, it may be included here to forestall twentieth century
criticism or, depending on its extent, be enough to invalidate the
entire concept; it may only be a partial vindication of Morris's
views. But, however incomplete the implementation of Morris's theo­
rries may be, there does appear to be reason to accept that his views
had some validity.

Arnold is not so radical, although, in his day, he was felt
to be. He wishes a systematized and formalized educational system
controlled by the State and administered by properly trained and able
teachers. He recognizes a certain self interest in the part of the
State "... the State has an interest in the primary school as a
civilizing agent even prior to its interest in it as an instructory
agent." He is not opposed to this point of view; he feels that the
final result remains desirable. The establishment of a state-con­
trolled educational system must owe its genesis to the ruling class:

Such a system must owe its first establishment to the
intelligence and patriotism of the educated class; it educates the poor to prize it, to be no longer
"neutral and indifferent"; they will defend it, they
will not demand it. 16

The poor have no knowledge of education and so cannot be moved to de­
mand something of whose existence they are ignorant. He appears to
be at variance with Morris but how different, in fact, are their


standpoints? For the child to be surrounded by the artifacts of culture an enlightened person, or class, must have made them available. Morris himself was an enlightened person trying to reach the adult poor and to awaken their minds to such a need. Arnold knew from his experience in the classroom that these aids to education were sadly lacking. Once these aids have been provided Arnold does not deny that a learning process will occur. He believes that

Every man is born with aptitudes which give him access to vital and formative knowledge by one of these roads; either by the road of studying man and his works or by the road of studying nature and her works. The business of instruction is to seize and develop these aptitudes. 17

He accepts a universal desire for knowledge but has a rather patrician feeling that that desire should be shaped and guided to its best use.

There are some surprising echoes of William Morris in some of the phrases Arnold employs in A French Eton.

It seems to me that, for the class frequenting Eton the grand aim of education should be to give them those good things which their birth and rearing are least likely to give them. (besides mere book learning) the notion of some sort of republican fellowship, the practice of a plain life in common, the habit of self help. To the middle class, the grand aim of education should be to give largeness of soul and personal dignity; to the lower class feeling, gentleness, humanity. 18

There remains that certain philistine arrogance in his view of the lower classes which manifests itself in his writings on equality, and William Morris would feel that the lower classes already shared at

17. Ibid., p. 291.
least an intrinsic humanity; but the notion of a "republican fellow-
ship, the practice of a plain life in common" is one which could as
well have issued from the pen of Morris.

One aspect which appears in Morris's writings alone is that
of adult education. For Morris this is all part of the developing,
life long process which he conceives education to be. Time must be
found and room must be made for a continuing education process and men
who live like machines cannot take advantage of it. Towards this end
he wishes to improve their surroundings and their working conditions
so that they might learn the condition of man as it might be. Arnold
does not concern himself with the problems of adult education, ap­
parently he considers that process following formal secondary or
university education as a matter for individual or even solitary pur­
suit.

Matthew Arnold sees education as being a rather self-centered
process. Man seeks to know himself; in order to do this he must de­
velop his knowledge by learning what has been thought and said in
earlier times. It is a mental process. It is also, in a certain
sense, a rather second-hand process. In seeking to know himself man
should study the past. He must discover that which others have re­
corded as the capabilities and performance of the human spirit.
Eternal verities, of course, do not become second-hand because they
are expressed in writing rather than spoken; but many aspects of the
capabilities and performance of the human spirit were obvious in the
world around Matthew Arnold and were the subject of study by William
Morris. Morris seeks to know man as he exists and in relation to his fellow man. It is not enough for him that man should seek to develop his mental and spiritual aspects alone; man is a social and physical creature as well. Morris urges a broad education, an education generated by man's curiosity about the world around him. This self-education, he feels, should be given freedom to develop as man wishes, it should not be guided and directed, as Arnold would feel prudent. In Morris's eyes nothing should be forced upon man, if it is truly valuable to man then it will attract him and he will desire to learn.

Divergent attitudes have become apparent in this discussion of education. Arnold veers consistently towards a mental-spiritual pole while Morris heads instead towards a socio-physical one. The spiritual/social antithesis will also be apparent in the succeeding discussion of their religious opinions.
It has been said that discussion of culture invokes the consideration of equality which in turn gives rise to questions of the role of the State and of education. Impinging on all these more specific topics and intertwined with the entire question of culture is the role and nature of religion. When Arnold speaks of culture as being the pursuit of perfection he often appears to be speaking in almost Biblical terms. Consider his words: "Culture looks beyond machinery, culture hates hatred, culture has one great passion, the passion for sweetness and light." St. Paul echoes through his prose. How close is Arnold's concept of culture to his concept of religion? What, if any, is the relation of Morris's concept to his concept of religion?

Arnold wrote voluminously on religion. His main statements are included in Literature and Dogma and St. Paul and Christianity. On reading these works the correspondence between his attitudes to religion and those to education and equality is immediately apparent. He is a reformer but a cautious reformer. Like so many of his contemporaries he was concerned by the condition of his church and of

religion in general but his doubts lead neither to Rome nor to atheism. He tried, as he did in other fields, to find an accommodation within Christianity itself. Like his father he wished to provide mankind with a new basis for religion; one which could be supported scientifically. He felt that man could not do without religion but that tradition religion had become obscured by "sberglaube", that is, extra belief, belief beyond that which is certain and verifiable. These extra beliefs often occur when a leap of the imagination has been required. A figurative explanation may be given for the purposes of elucidation; this explanation may later become embedded in the dogma and then become subject to literal analysis.

In his writings Arnold accepts Luther's definition of God - "The best that man knows or can know" - a clear linking to his idea of perfection. He feels that religion is based on moral experience. He seeks his scientific fact:

And of all 'facts' none is more inescapable, more completely attested by the universal experience of humanity, than that righteousness tendeth to life, that by transcending our lower everyday selves and entering upon the life of the spirit, we do have life and have it abundantly.

What is the object of religion?

The object of religion is conduct; and conduct is


really, however we may overlay it with philosophical
disquisitions, the simplest thing in the world. 4

Here he is influenced by his father who had been ready to follow the
lead of Coleridge and the German thinkers in an enlightened theory of
Scripture interpretation. For Matthew Arnold conduct is three fourths
of life. What does he mean by "conduct"? In Literature and Dogma he
quotes the New Testament:

"Watch that ye may be counted worthy to stand before
the Son of Man" put into other words, what is it? It
is this: so live as to be worthy of that high and
true ideal of man and man's life which shall at last
be victorious." All the future is here. 5

He equates 'conduct' with 'righteousness'. He forsees that he will be
accused of discussing morality and not religion but asserts that re-
ligion means:

... simply either a binding to righteousness, or also
a serious attending to righteousness and dwelling upon
it. Which of these two it most nearly means depends
on the view we take of the words derivation; but it
means one of them, and they are really much the same.
And the antithesis between ethical and religious is
thus quite a false one. Ethical means practical, it
relates to practice or conduct passing into habit or
disposition. Religious also means practical, but
practical on a still higher degree; and the right an-
tithesis to both ethical and religious, is the same as
the right antithesis to practical; namely, theoreti-
cal. 6

The distinction between "ethical" and "practical" remains a little neb-

4. Ibid., p. 75.
5. Ibid., p. 184.
6. Ibid., p. 176.
ulous and Arnold continues his definition:

But is there... no difference between what is ethical, or morality, and religion? There is a difference; a difference of degree. Religion... is ethics heightened, enkindled, lit up by feeling; the passage from morality to religion is made when to morality is applied emotion. And the true meaning of religion is thus, not simply morality, but morality touched by emotion. 7

Emotion for Arnold appears to be a mystical, poetical experience. To make the distinction he quotes a number of statements: Quintilian said "By the dispensation of Providence to mankind, goodness gives men most satisfaction." This, Arnold believes to be morality. The Bible says "The path of the just is as the shining light which shineth more and more unto the perfect day." Herein Arnold finds morality but morality touched with emotion; therefore this is religion. 8

Arnold holds the Bible to be the inspiration of conduct. Men should read it properly and with the help of culture. As they read it they should keep in mind the best that has been thought and said and they should apply the experience of literary training. If man does this then he will avoid the pitfall of taking poetry as dogma ("aberglaube"). He argues that much of the Bible should be read as poetry, as a heightening of experience. If this is done then its passion will move the soul. While arguing for the retention of the poetry and the mysticism he still needs to find a scientific basis for religion and suggests that this basis lies in our experience as moral

7. Ibid., p. 176.
8. Ibid., p. 176.
Unlike Arnold Morris discards both conventional and institutional Christianity. He did have an early interest in the clerical life but abandoned it. Whether he left the church entirely at that stage or whether it was a gradual withdrawal is not clear, but towards the end of his life he seems to have felt that socialism filled the same function in his life. He sees both Christianity and socialism as including a system of morality:

...if Christianity is "a revelation addressed to all time" it cannot be neutral as to political and social institutions, which, if they are to be binding on men's consciences and not merely pieces of arbitrary coercion, must be founded on a system of morality; and that morality must not be founded on explanations of natural facts or a theory of life in which people have ceased to believe.... Christianity has developed in due historical sequence from the first, and has taken the various forms which social, political and economic circumstances have forced on it; its last form moulded by the sordid commercialism of modern capitalism.... When this beggarly period has been supplanted by one in which Socialism is realized, will not the system of morality, the theory of life, be all embracing, can it be other than the Socialist theory? Where then will be the Christian ethic? - absorbed in Socialism. 9

Morris accepts the morality but not the mystical emotion which, for Arnold transformed it into religion.

Morris also corresponded with the Reverend George Bainton on this matter and protested:

I do not understand what you mean by your question as

to Socialism ignoring the moral facts and relations of human life.... Does not every Socialist say that it is immoral to steal? and don't they, the Socialists, often with some emphasis, denounce the present masters of Society for so stealing? 10

It is unfortunate that the Reverend Bainton's letters are not quoted, it seems possible that Morris may have been giving an overly-simplistic answer to a wider question.

He goes on to disclaim any desire to discuss the metaphysical side of religion as he feels that such discussions become more juggling with words (although, in the Gothic Revival II, he asserts that man can know neither his origin nor his destination - he exists on "an island in a dark sea of before and after.").11 Morris sees Christianity as a phase through which the world is passing and feels it to be no more eternal than Judaism, Zoroasterism or Ancestor Worship, although he concedes that its principles may be higher. He disclaims a philosophical aptitude and claims to be a "practical person" with a determination to do nothing shabby; he will admit and regret his errors. "This appears to me to be the Socialist religion, and if it is not morality then I do not know what is."12

To agree that Morris's religion, or religion substitute, was socialism alone appears overly-simplistic. What happens when his


ultimate, pure communism is achieved? What remains for the people of that condition? News from Nowhere is not informative upon this point.

Morson, the antiquary, criticizes past ages in that they had wanted to automate labour so that

"...the energies of the most intelligent part of mankind would be set free to follow the higher forms of the arts, as well as science and the study of history. It was obvious, was it not, that they should thus ignore that aspiration after complete equality which we now recognize as the bond of all happy human society." 13

Equality appears to have been achieved; it is curious that it is still aspired after. It may need to be maintained but it no longer appears to be an objective. What began to appear after the Great Change had taken place? Machines were gradually de-emphasized and hand produced works of art began to appear. At first crude, more and more delicate work begins to appear. As William Guest looks at contemporary work he

"...wondered indeed at the deftness and abundance of beauty of the work of men who had at least learned to accept life itself as a pleasure and the satisfaction of the common needs of mankind and preparation for them, as work fit for the best of the race." 14

Is his (and Morris's) ultimate aim, or religion if you will, a pursuit or creation of beauty? In his lecture The Gothic Revival II Morris says:

Surely the root cause for making whatever is noble and beautiful must always be the strong desire for the production of beauty; and these glorious works which were

of necessity the creation of the whole people were created by the people's aspirations towards nobility and beauty. 15

What is beauty? In his lecture The Origins of Ornamental Art he suggests that man has always sought to make his belongings beautiful as well as useful. Man had an ability to recognize something which he "...must have dimly known for beauty." 16 Possibly there is a hint of the Platonic Ideal, possibly the Cartesian theory of a priori knowledge. It does appear to be an indication of something existing outside human experience. Man's first attempts to produce beauty were inspired not only by a desire to escape from the wearisomeness of labour but also an "expression of pleasure in the hope and sense of power and usefulness which men felt in the making of things in the childhood of the world." 17 Here the aim is one of pleasure in the work rather than the emulation of an ideal. Man's expression of his thoughts falls short of those thoughts; the nobler the race the more exalted the thought. There is a goal for which man strives no matter how limited his gifts and Morris says, "Courage: it is enough for a work of art if it shows real skill of hand, genuine instinct for beauty, and some touch of originality; cooperation will show you how your smaller gifts may be used along with the greater ones." 18 Beauty being, like per-

16. Ibid., p. 385.
17. Ibid., p. 390.
18. Ibid., p. 393.
fection, unreachable, remains an abstract towards which man strives.

Beauty has not only aesthetic implications but social ones as well. In his lecture *The Aims of Art* he says:

> Therefore the Aim of Art is to increase the happiness of men, by giving them beauty and interest of incident to amuse their leisure, and prevent them wearying even of rest, and by giving them hope and bodily pleasure in their work; or shortly, to make man's work happy and his rest fruitful. Consequently, genuine art is an unmixed blessing to the race of man. 19

In may appear that the terms "art" and "beauty" are being confused in this chapter but it is suggested that, in the mind of the artist, be he Leonardo or Warhol, they are equivalent. Morris himself states in his lecture *The Beauty of Life* "That the beauty of life...; for that beauty, which is what is meant by art, using the word in its widest sense..."20

He wants man to produce beauty and to do so in beautiful surroundings; what is the result of this? What will be achieved by man when he has reached this condition? It is suggested that the ultimate aim, Morris's religion, is what he called the "pleasure of life"21 but what, if he had not used the term in a different context, might be called the "Beauty of life". It is suggested that this is an aesthetic, a social and a moral ideal; a state in which all men will live in harmony with themselves, with each other and with nature.

In his lecture *Some Hints on Pattern-Designing* Morris discusses the role of "the best art":

Stories that tell of man's aspirations for more than material life can give them, their struggles for the future welfare of their race, their unrequited service; things like this are the subjects for the best art; in such subjects there is hope surely... 22

Morris is speaking here of the best art as distinguished from the lesser arts; the lesser arts have their role though they do not stir man to his depths. Man cannot continually live in a state of exaltation. The best art provides emotion in addition to inspiration. It aims at expressing that which man cannot ever fully reach or express. It seeks to provide solace for "...the longing for beauty which men are born with..." 23

Morris, then, discards accepted religion and finds a substitute in the ultimate aim of the pleasure (or beauty) of life, an unattainable goal which remains even after the socialist revolution and the establishment of a world of equality and freedom. Does this pleasure (or beauty) of life have any relation to Arnold's "best self" which was "united, impersonal at harmony"? It is united, but often united in diversity, it is certainly at harmony but it is never impersonal; the essence of Morris's religion is that, although an ideal is sought, it is sought in fellowship with others. While Morris leaps the walls of nineteenth century religion Arnold remains within them,


23. Ibid., XXII, 134.
rearranging the furniture. He seeks to return to what he feels to be the eternal, valid basis of religion while discarding those obscuring accretions which have distorted religion over the centuries. Morris tends to find the truth in the future; Arnold in the past. Morris discards accepted teaching; Arnold evaluates it. Morris rebels; Arnold reforms. The methods are constant.
CHAPTER SIX

CONCLUSION

Arnold assumes "culture" to be "...the pursuit of our total perfection" by means of getting to know the best that has been thought and said. It is not just a matter for the individual. Man cannot exist in a vacuum - he must try to extend perfection to other people. There is a proselytizing function. Morris accepts a similar function but his approach is different. For him the exterior world must be changed first. Man may then have leisure and will be able to react to his environment. Arnold approaches from the other direction; for him it begins as an individual, inward struggle which is then carried outward to change the environment.

Both men consider the question of equality because perfection cannot exist in an imperfect world. Arnold, although he claimed to be concerned with social equality, saw inequality stemming from the law of bequest - an economic matter. Morris similarly deplored economic inequality and saw the working man, the producer, as the victim of the parasitic upper classes. Arnold appears to come face to face with his own class feelings, when he comes to extend his theory and to suggest how it may be put into practice. He is not able to go beyond a reformation of the bequest law. He remains wary of anything which might inflame the Populace. Morris is not deterred by the prospect of change, whether peaceful or violent. He accepts in his own mind that equality is essential. Once having accepted this he follows the implications...
of his thinking through to their conclusions. Privileged classes will be abolished, private property will cease to exist, communication of property will eventually lead to an equality of condition among men. Arnold looks for a change from an enlightened hierarchy; it is a long term solution and he is happy to wait until this solution is achieved by law. Morris is not optimistic about such an outcome and he accepts the alternative - revolution.

Arnold's equality will come from the State and he is receptive to the idea of a central, controlling entity; for him the State is a possible agent of perfection. It may help, as the embodiment of an enlightened hierarchy, to alleviate inequalities. Morris does not see the State as either desirable or potentially desirable. The faith which Arnold reposed in the State as the instrument of law and order was antipathetical to Morris who recognized the need for a coeval justice which he saw as by no means implicit in the context.

For both men education is an important tool; a means by which their aims may be achieved, whether these aims are to be achieved within the classroom or without. Neither man sees education as a means to achieve a purely material end. For Arnold education will enable man to know himself and the world; for Morris it is to find out what people are fitted for and then to assist them to achieve this end. There remains a consistent theme. Matthew Arnold again advocates an inward process - a "self-centred" process - man must know himself. Morris again is directed outward; to find out what people are suited for and then to help them achieve their potential. Arnold recognizes
a mental process; Morris also a physical one.

In almost everything Arnold proposes a limit is involved - a point beyond which it is not prudent to go. This limit does not exist for Morris - when he commences a line of thought he carries it through to its logical conclusion. Neither man is a Christian in the traditional sense. Both men are dissatisfied with the contemporary Christian Church and its teaching. Arnold wishes to remain fairly close to traditional teachings; Morris accepts the need for a moral code but sees no need to seek it within the Church. He finds this code within socialism and claims to rest content with this although there does appear to be a further commitment to which he subscribes; that which has been dubbed the "pleasure (or beauty) of life".

Matthew Arnold recognises the changing currents in Victorian life and he attempts to consider them in his theories. He is not a reactionary; he will allow for change undertaken as a result of careful, measured thought. He does not look for radical change; the thought of violence disturbs him greatly. He feels that change should come from within the existing system and that, as in all things, man should be guided by the best knowledge, the best thought and utterance, by, in fact, his best self. Arnold is a liberal thinker, a man of prudence, a man of optimism and a man of good will. He has great faith in the capabilities of the human race as long as it is well informed.

Whereas much of what Matthew Arnold wrote has lost its power to startle, thoughts expressed by William Morris are still being voiced
by young radicals today. A conversation between a group of young European radicals is reported in The Windsor Star:

RUDI DUTSCHKE—Such a factory would be an association of free individuals. That is only possible through the negation of division of labor. That assumes development of technology in the direction of automation, but a tremendous reduction of working hours.

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BERNDT KABEHL—The factory will become the centre of political self-determination, of self-determination over one's own life. People will debate every day in the factory. A collective will slowly arise, a collective without anonymity, limited to 2,000 or 3,000 people, who all the same have a direct relation to each other.

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DUTSCHKE—Since the factory will be placed under our own control, life can unfold in it. Work can then mean realization of individuality, instead of alienation.

Morris, of course, does accept the use of machinery in some instances. William Morris has not been claimed as one of the forefathers of this modern radical movement. Perhaps his misleading reputation as an "arty-crafty" mediaevalist has obscured him; perhaps the sunny, bluff optimism with which he wrote may have put him out of step with the more pessimistic approach of today but these young men are travelling along the paths where William Morris once walked.

Both men were optimistic in their view of their fellow man and his future; the basic difference between them is one of involve-

With Arnold there is always a limit, a stage beyond which he will not go. Equality is desirable but must wait until an enlightened ruling class will impose it; the State is the agent which may make this possible. Education is another agent by which equality may come, but it is an education within certain bounds. Religion is questioned but not far. He is a reformer but also a conciliator. Morris does not accept limitations. He is not bounded by conventional attitudes; if revolution is necessary then it will come; if the State is undesirable then it should be abandoned; education is an all-enveloping process and morality may be found as easily in socialism as in conventional Christianity.

With Matthew Arnold culture is still the prerogative of the educated class. It is the possession of the man who is able to consult the best which has been thought and said, it is for the man who is able to interpret the Bible as poetry to inspire the soul. In time the Populace may, through the enlightened beneficence of the ruling class be educated to a level where they may also benefit from this blessing but it is essentially a goal to be achieved. William Morris, on the other hand, sees culture as a thing already available and waiting for all men. It is, in fact, rather closer to the Populace than any other class. Culture is not a goal to be achieved by dry cerebration, it is a way of life to be lived, it is work to be done, clothes to be worn, the immediate surrounding world. Man cannot just learn culture, he must live with it. There are no limits whatsoever.

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