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MATTHEW ARNOLD AND RELIGION'S COSMOPOLITAN HISTORIES

By Sebastian Lecourt

MATTHEW ARNOLD CUTS A FAMILIAR figure in narratives of Victorian secularization, although commentators often cast him in contradictory roles. In some accounts we meet him as an elegiac liberal who laments the loss of a no-longer-tenable faith but feels powerless to produce an alternative – "Wandering," in a famous couplet, "between two worlds, one dead, / The other powerless to be born" (Arnold, "Stanzas from the Grand Chartreuse" 85–86; see Miller 212–69). Meanwhile other studies portray Arnold as a cautionary example of aggressive counter-secularization, a humanist whose vaunted ideal of "Culture" becomes as absolutist as the religion it is designed to replace (Williams, *Culture and Society* 125–26). What both accounts share, however, is an understanding of secularization as the process whereby a definite thing called religion lost its hold upon European public life, leaving worried intellectuals to search for substitutes. Since the Second World War this view of secularization has come under increased scrutiny from sociologists, historians, anthropologists, and lately some literary critics;[1] yet it remains difficult to imagine nineteenth-century literary history without it, largely because it is a narrative that was first developed by major Victorian writers like Arnold himself. Perhaps the best way, then, to engage Victorian crisis-of-faith writers is to follow the lead of recent commentators like Talal Asad and Michael Kaufmann and reframe the problem in discursive terms. Rather than retrace the rise and fall of two definite things called religion and secularity, Kaufmann argues, we should instead assume from the outset that "[t]here is no idea, person, experience, text, institution, or historical project that could be categorized as essentially . . . secular or religious" and mark how the significance of this opposition gets reordered in "varying discursive contexts" (Kaufmann 608; see Asad 25–26). We can see such thinking at work in recent scholarship that effectively replaces "secularization" with the conceptual emergence of religion as such – that is, the modern redescription of religion as a specific and limited sphere of human life, marked by certain energies (the irrational, the affective), whose role within the public is considered problematic. Anthropologist Timothy Fitzgerald, for instance, suggests that the Enlightenment turn toward regarding religion as the arena of strong personal belief was instrumental in establishing the space of the secular in the first place, insofar as it helped to define by contrast the new public sphere of "this-worldly . . . freedoms, laws, and markets" (Fitzgerald 5). Similarly, historian Callum Brown argues that late

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eighteenth-century Evangelicalism produced, as a sort of necessary pair, both the sociological idea of religion as an empirically discrete thing and our popular notion of religion as under threat or in decline (C. Brown 1–34).

Bringing this perspective to bear on Arnold allows us to transform the familiar assertion that Culture replaces religion into the more fine-grained question of how Arnold constructs a functioning concept of the religious that mediates his understanding of Culture's work. In this essay, then, I would like to take a closer look at the role played by "Hebraism," Arnold's term for strong and problematic religiosity, in articulating the task of Culture in Arnold's major essays on the subject: *Culture and Anarchy* (1869), *St. Paul and Protestantism* (1870), and *Literature and Dogma* (1873). Hebraism is in one sense the antithesis of Culture, since it refuses Culture's demand that we "come to our best at all points," yet for this reason it also represents a key test of Arnold's claim that Culture can successfully incorporate all sides of human life (Arnold, *Complete Prose Works* 5: 180; hereafter *CPW*). Furthermore, it is precisely Hebraism's dangerous qualities of "fire and strength" that make it a source of "energy" that Culture must draw upon to have normative force itself (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 179, 5: 255). In this way strong religion becomes at once Arnoldian Culture's necessary subject, its intransigent opponent, and its model. It names a normative intensity that the secular state hopes to create by different means and draw upon to different ends. As such it mediates a particular kind of liberal faith that one can produce authority without sacrifice and consensus through the play of differences rather than through exclusion or violence.[2]

Revisiting Arnold in these terms opens up two new perspectives on his work. First, it links his essays on Culture to the emerging study of comparative religion as theorized in the mid-nineteenth century by F. D. Maurice, Ernest Renan, and others. Arnold's writings on Hebraism are often linked to German philology, with its distinction between Semitic and Indo-European thought-worlds (see Gossman), or to popular constructions of the Jew as a problem for modern nation states (see Mufti 37–126; Cheyette 1–54; Ragussis 174–233), but in many ways they show a stronger affinity to a discourse on global religious history that sought to retrace the debts owed by Enlightenment cosmopolitanism to radically anti-modern forms of theology. For Renan, Maurice, and company, the monotheism of Moses and Mohammed represents both the opposite of Enlightenment cosmopolitanism and its progenitor: it repudiates broad-minded humanism for a narrow ethic of "intolerance" (Renan 63), yet insofar as it aspires toward a single global community of faith it can also be said to have engendered the search for an ethic that knows no borders. This leads them to speculate that there may be two viable roads to universalism, one that attempts to create global rubrics by comprehensively accommodating all parts of human nature, and another that does so by unilaterally imposing a single vision of the good upon others. In short, what we see emerging in Arnold and the early comparative religionists is a particular conception of religion, increasingly popular in current writing on cosmopolitanism, as the parochialism lurking at the heart of cosmopolitanism, and the epitome of all those aspects of western universalism that cannot be defended in universal terms.

Second, this particular construction of religion ties it to *race* in Arnold's work – indeed, race and religion can sometimes seem like versions of the same problem for him – which raises a broader question: when does political liberalism want to regard religion and ethnicity as equivalent forms of affiliation, and when does it want to differentiate them? Currently there are two contrasting accounts of how liberal states construct religion as tolerable. In the first model, religion becomes easier for the state to tolerate when it is a commitment that individuals choose and can therefore compartmentalize if they need to. In the second, liberal

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states regard religion as acceptable when it is understood to be an inherited commitment because then it lacks the dimension of strong personal conviction that can conflict with the demands of citizenship. Arnold's work of the late 1860s and early 1870s suggests why both accounts have a certain descriptive validity: if Arnoldian Culture hinges upon a personal stance of disinterestedness, then both strong choice and strong inheritance, radical idealism and narrow racialism, may threaten it equally. This of course recalls Amanda Anderson's argument in *The Powers of Distance* (2001) that Victorian liberal writers sought to imagine cultivated stances that could avoid the extremes of both too much detachment and too much parochialism. Arnold's Semite, I would like to suggest, is an imaginary subject in whom the extremes of radical idealism and narrow parochialism converge, because in a sense they represent the same danger to a certain line of Victorian thought.

I

IN *CULTURE AND ANARCHY*, ARNOLD coins the terms "Hebraism" and "Hellenism" to denote what he sees as the two warring impulses within modernity – on the one hand, a middle-class ethic of "duty, self-control and work," driven by the simple imperatives of Biblical religion, and on the other hand a humanistic "love of art and science" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 163, 6: 410). Both aim for "man's perfection or salvation" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 164), but they approach this goal via the alternate routes of action and contemplation:

> [W]hile Hebraism seizes upon certain plain, capital intimations of the universal order and rivets itself, one may say, with unequalled grandeur of earnestness and intensity on the study and observance of them, the bent of Hellenism is to follow, with flexible activity, the whole play of the universal order, to be apprehensive of missing any part of it, of sacrificing one part to another. (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 165)

In a more abstract sense, then, Hebraism and Hellenism represent centripetal and centrifugal approaches to perfection. Hebraism maintains that it is possible to find a single principle for regulating human existence, "a rule telling [us] the *unum necessarium*, or one thing needful" for all spheres of life, while Hellenism insists that perfection can only be attained through a knowledge of the many and of the whole (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 180). This tendency of Hebraism toward monomania follows from Arnold's implicit definition of religion itself: if to "*Hebraise*" is "to sacrifice all other sides of our being to the religious side," this is because religiosity, in *Culture and Anarchy*, is always figured through images of narrow, motivating intensity – "intense and convinced energy," "conduct and obedience," the "earnestness in going manfully with the best light we have, as one force" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 238, 5: 255, 5: 165, 5: 163). Arnold will develop the more affective side of this definition in *St. Paul and Protestantism*, where he describes the religious drive for "righteousness, moral choice, effort" as "a powerful attachment that will give a man spirits and confidence which he could by no means call up or command of himself" (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 38, 6: 39).

In principle Arnold regards Hebraism and Hellenism as equally limited stances that "ought to be . . . evenly and happily balanced" against each other (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 164). Hebraism by itself "strikes too exclusively upon one string in us," while Hellenism's "scientific passion for pure knowledge" must be energized with Hebraism's "moral and social passion for doing good" if it is not to dissipate into mere "cultivated inaction" (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 125, 5: 91, 5: 191). And yet, as any reader of *Culture and Anarchy* soon discovers,

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it is Hebraism, with its drive for "perfection in one part of our nature and not in all," that Arnold sees underwriting, and indeed connecting, the majority of modern England's problems (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 185). Most famously the idea of Hebraism allows Arnold (anticipating Weber) to derive the modern business ethic, with its obstinate Utilitarianism, from the Protestant spirit of "faith alone." But it also enables him to link Biblical fundamentalism to the radical left-wing idealism of the French Revolution: "Jacobinism loves a Rabbi" because the Biblical religionist shares with the modern revolutionist a "fierceness" and an "addiction to an abstract system" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 111, 5: 109). Along these same lines, Arnold connects Hebraism's insistence that there is only "one thing needful" for human perfection to a reductive class-based politics that cannot envision a common good, only lesser goods uniting those with historically shared interests (see Arnold, *CPW* 5: 145). In all of these ways, Hebraism is responsible for "anarchy." Its radically authoritarian God, with his uncompromising moral demands, paradoxically produces an anarchist subject who considers it perfectly acceptable for everyone "to march where he likes, meet where he likes, enter where he likes, hoot as he likes, threaten as he likes, smash as he likes" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 119).

Culture is Arnold's term for the larger principle that can not only temper Hebraism with Hellenism but also bring the different parts of human life together into their ideal relation. By familiarizing ourselves with "the best which has been thought and said in the world," we turn "a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits," which limits our attachment to any one source of values and instead directs us toward a practice of "*harmonious* perfection, developing all sides of our humanity" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 233, 5: 235). This in turn establishes a sense of social "authority" that "control[s] individual wills in the name of an interest wider than that of individuals" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 117). Thus Culture is at once a program of personal cultivation and a model of the social, and these functions overlap in several ways. Metaphorically, the cultured individual becomes an image both of the well-balanced state and of the total human value-sphere; historically, the cultivation of the individual, the development of the nation, and the progress of civilization are all processes that participate in each other.[3]

Since the heyday of the American culture wars, Arnold has often been read as a sort of Victorian E. D. Hirsch, who hopes that a popular return to the canon might restore a "common culture," or as a forerunner of the modernist notion of culture as the set of historical traditions that binds a community together (Graff 193; Stocking 795). However, as we can see, *Culture and Anarchy* is pushing the more paradoxical idea that authoritarian religion and cultural traditionalism beget social anarchy, while broad, cosmopolitan learning leads to consensus and authority. Above all Arnold's doctrine of Culture manifests a faith that true consensus can only be produced through discursive freedom: if you can get a genuinely comprehensive view of the all the different products of the human mind, you will be able to perceive their ideal relation, and this will at once break up your insular fixation upon any one of them and establish a more adequate framework of authority in their place. Sometimes Arnold describes this process in terms of an Aristotelian doctrine of the mean, such as when he writes that Culture harmonizes "all sides of our humanity" in their ideal aspects (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 235). More often, however, his emphasis is on the simple defamiliarizing effects of liberal knowledge, and this is where Arnold truly parts ways with more recent culture-warriors. For if E. D. Hirsch and Mortimer Adler locate the social-centering effects of the canon either in its commonality (the fact that everyone has read it) or in its training of the classical reason (see Hirsch 1–33; Adler 96), Arnold insists that "[f]ar more of our mistakes

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come from want of fresh knowledge than from want of correct reasoning" (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 168). The Puritan's faith that the Bible provides the best guide to its own interpretation has so "narrow[ed]" and "impair[ed]" his "vision" that he now mistakes the scriptures for "something quite different from what they really are" (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 7). In contrast, the reader familiar with the world's various literatures will be able to "feel what the Bible writers are about," "to read between the lines" and "discern where he ought to rest his whole weight, and where he ought to pass lightly" (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 168).

For Arnold, Culture's capacity to work by "fresh knowledge" rather than "correct reasoning" is what distinguishes it from more violent forms of authority. Under the regime of Culture, "[w]e are not beaten from our old opinion by logic, we are not driven off our ground; – our ground itself changes with us" (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 168). Thus, in Arnold's mind, the function of public establishments like the universities and the Church of England is less to enforce rigorously uniform standards, after the French model, than to absorb as many different groups as possible in the hope that as they mingle they will each contribute something valuable while checking each other's errant peculiarities. The sheer internal diversity of an established church, "a Church which is historical as the State itself is historical, and whose order, ceremonies, and monuments reach, like those of the State, far beyond any fancies and devisings of ours," obliges its members to confront religious sensibilities different from their own, which then teaches them to distinguish what is "essential" in religion from "what is not essential" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 239).

Similarly, Arnold's claim that Culture helps to build the state is a program not for organicist nationalism but for the kind of cosmopolitan view of the state described by Eric Hobsbawm in his study of *Nations and Nationalism since 1780* (1990). According to Hobsbawm, nineteenth-century liberalism rejected models of the nation as "an expression of language, or common history" for the claim that it represented an intermediate stage in the historical expansion of social bodies:

> [T]he building of nations was seen inevitably as a process of expansion . . . it was accepted in theory that social evolution expanded the scale of human social units from family and tribe to county and canton, from the local to the regional, the national and eventually the global. Nations were therefore, as it were, in tune with historical evolution only insofar as they extended the scale of human society. (Hobsbawm 32–33)

Arnold's lectures *On the Study of Celtic Literature* (1867) develop this model at length by describing Great Britain as an agent that can absorb smaller ethnic groups and bring them into the developmental mainstream of civilization. In *Culture and Anarchy*, meanwhile, the state becomes a concrete image of the total human plenum rather than an enshrinement of particular national values. Lamenting that the English "have not the notion, so familiar on the continent and to antiquity, of *the State*" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 117) is, surprisingly, Arnold's way of chiding them for being too parochial: the state is an idea the English would have heard of if they were more receptive to the new waves of thinking coming from Germany and France.

II

WITH THIS BASIC RELATIONSHIP between Hellenism, Hebraism and Culture in mind, we can now generalize more broadly about the interactions among the latter two terms – what

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role a certain image of strong, intolerant religiosity plays in the kind of liberal theory exemplified by Arnold's doctrine of Culture. Many readers have been suspicious of Arnold's claim that the "fresh and free thought" provided by Culture can produce social cohesion better than religious dogma, seeing it, for instance, as a disingenuous front for a simpler authoritarianism (see Rothblatt 124). Charles Taylor's recent work on secularism, however, offers a more sympathetic take on why Arnold would want to present discursive freedom as the path to authority. In *A Secular Age* (2007), Taylor describes a tradition of humanist thought that sees orthodox religion as a failed attempt to achieve through sacrifice what can only be attained through many-sidedness. Classical Christianity, in Taylor's historical dialectic, perceived a deep-seated conflict between our spiritual and somatic natures and saw the "sacrifice" of the body as the only route toward "a fuller, higher good" (Taylor 605, 611). Enlightenment skeptics like Voltaire rebuffed this move by reversing it and valorizing the body over the soul, which in turn led humanists like Schiller to try and eclipse these twin sacrifices of idealism and materialism by imagining "a higher stage in which the drive to form and the drive to content . . . are harmoniously united," "a place of power" where "our highest aspirations and our life energies are somehow lined up" (Taylor 609, 5–6).

Arnold's essays on Culture fit the major contours of Taylor's account, both in their critique of modernity as a chain of action-reaction pairings (idealism and materialism, Jacobinism and jingoism) and in the somewhat paradoxical way that they excoriate orthodox religion both for being too narrow *and* for not living up to its own stated ideals. "Religion" for Arnold becomes Culture's ambivalent proxy, the doer of a kind of work that Culture, it turns out, can do better. In the Preface to *Culture and Anarchy*, he contrasts religion's exclusive predilection for "conduct and obedience" with Culture's approach of broad, comprehensive inclusion (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 165). Yet his phrasing of this contrast implicitly shifts onto Culture the power to decide what is "divine" and what is not:

> Culture, disinterestedly seeking in its aim at perfection to see things as they really are, shows us how worthy and divine a thing is the religious side in man, though it is not the whole of man. . . . Therefore to the worth and grandeur of the religious side in man, culture is rejoiced and willing to pay any tribute, except the tribute of man's totality. (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 252)

Elsewhere in the Preface Arnold goes even further, condemning orthodox religion for running afoul of its own keywords, which Culture now commands: "falling short of harmonious perfection," the Dissenters and other radical Protestants "fail to follow the true way of salvation" (Arnold *CPW* 5: 236).

In order to avoid returning to a kind of replacement-narrative, however, we must examine the specifics of how Arnold defines religion, which are in fact constantly shifting. "Culture" is being contrasted with "religion," but the exact terms of that contrast, and thus the precise understanding of Culture itself, change a number of times. In particular, I would argue, Arnold is uncertain as to whether religion differs from Culture in kind or in degree – that is, whether Culture is a fundamentally different sort of principle than religion, or whether it is a larger and nobler form of religion. Sometimes Arnold describes Culture and religion as different in kind and therefore compatible. For example, in one passage he writes that the ideal of our "totality" differs from "the religious side of man" in its refusal to "sacrific[e] one part" of human nature "to another," even those parts that, like religion, demand sacrifice themselves (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 165). Elsewhere, Arnold suggests that Culture and religion

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are fundamentally the same in kind and therefore at odds with each other. "Hebraism" now represents not the entire "religious side in man" but a particularly narrow form of religion, while Culture stands for a broader and more generous kind that identifies the pursuit of our "total perfection" with "reason and the will of God" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 233, 5: 91). Culture has morphed from "an English parliamentary tradition dedicated less to organic unity than to imperfect consensus amid difference" (Pecora 136; see Gossman 36) into a model of the state as necessarily underpinned by a Kantian "rational religion" (Kant 111), which opens the possibility of a conflict between itself and Hebraism. In *Literature and Dogma* Arnold speaks of two different Gods, the God of "righteousness" and the God of the "total man," and while his point is that the latter concept of God historically completes the former, he also dramatically suggests an image of two competing deities, one of whom is positively upset by the things that satisfy the other:

> [I]n this wider sense God is displeased and disserved by many things which cannot be said . . . to displease and disserve him as the God of righteousness. He is displeased and disserved by men uttering such doggerel hymns as: *Sing glory, glory, glory to the great God Triune!* (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 409–10)

Finally, Arnold sometimes suggests that, while Culture and religion may represent different kinds of principles, the sort of authority that Culture creates is not in fact a higher net-gravity produced among its internal parts but rather a specific energy it has inherited from Biblical religion, a "fire and strength" that must supplement Culture if it is to make perfection "*prevail*" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 93). Here, Culture needs to include religion not just to prove its own ultra-comprehensive nature but also because the will to apprehend "the whole play of the universal order" without "missing any part of it" cannot become a force for social regeneration unless it is supplemented by the "intense and convinced energy" of religion (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 165, 5: 238).

What is ultimately at stake in these different imagined relations between religion and Culture is the question of how "strong" Arnold wants Culture's authority to be. This is why all three models tend to sideline the question of religious heterodoxy (see Viswanathan) and instead conceptualize religion as a singular element which, as it grows more intense, increasingly tests how much positive authority the state itself is willing to exercise. On this question Arnold's second model is in subtle disagreement with the first, since it suggests that Culture cannot become a higher-order ideal than religion without also becoming a competing positive doctrine. Arnold's loosely Aristotelian claim that the different sides of human life all have a "best" aspect, whereby they are compatible with the goals of Culture yet also most themselves, is an attempt to avert this moment of normative violence. Yet the problem with this solution is that an ethos like Hebraism is defined precisely by what it resists and rejects. As Lionel Gossman notes, Arnold's belief that Hebraism might find a place within Culture by losing its "intransigent transcendentalism" forgets that intransigence *is* Hebraism's best aspect, the "special force . . . that underlies its capacity to generate the most radical and uncompromising criticism of worldly institutions" (Gossman 28–29). Lionel Trilling detects the same problem within Arnold's claim that England's classes can be harmonized by being "voided of interest" by Culture: Arnold, Trilling writes, seems to forget that class "is a category whose very essence is interest; take away the idea of special interest and . . . 'class' ceases to have meaning" (Trilling 253). In both cases, what might at first look like a simple

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matter of fitting a positive doctrine into an accommodating framework turns out to involve a conflict between the positive doctrine of particularism and the positive doctrine of many-sidedness.

This notion that a neutral and inclusive liberalism secretly represents what American theologian Harvey Cox once called "a new closed world view" has recently become a favorite riposte among commentators from Stanley Fish to Stephen Carter (Cox 18; Fish; Carter 3–22). Arnold's work, however, suggests that it stems not from any disingenuousness on the part of liberal thinkers but from the fact that pluralistic regimes must necessarily ask the parties that they include to self-identify in a particular way. Arnold details this process in his treatment of Anglican Church history in *St. Paul and Protestantism*, which traces the struggle of the "negative Protestantism of the Church of England" to incorporate the "positive Protestantism of Puritanism" during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 13). The problem with the Puritans, writes Arnold, was that they regarded their idiosyncratic reading of Christ's Atonement as the *unum necessarium* both for salvation and for church membership. This attitude could have been softened by inclusion within a national church (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 75), but in practice the Puritans rejected any institutional formulas broad enough to bring them into a diverse religious body in the first place. Thus resulted a series of cases in which the Anglican Establishment drafted rubrics that included Calvinist formulas, only to cast out the Calvinists themselves for insisting too strongly that the rest of the document be brought into line with their own theology. The Lambeth Articles of 1595 were "recalled and suppressed" because they were too strictly Puritan, while the Savoy Conference of 1661, convened after the Restoration to reconstruct the Book of Common Prayer along lines that both Puritans and High Churchmen could use, ultimately broke down when the Puritans refused to let their formulas be included only piecemeal (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 77). This led to a reactionary period during which documents like the Act of Uniformity pushed many individuals out into Dissenting congregations. Nevertheless, insists Arnold, while "the Church undoubtedly said and did to Puritanism after the Restoration much that was harsh and bitter," historians who portray "the Puritans as the religious party favorable to civil liberty, and on that account . . . favor Puritanism in its disputes with the Church," miss the necessary paradox that the post-Restoration squashing of Dissent resulted not just from

> the lust of haughty ecclesiastics for dominion and for imposing their law on the vanquished, but from a real sense that [the Anglican] formularies were made so large and open, and the sense put upon subscription to them was so indulgent, that any reasonable man could honestly conform. (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 81, 6: 77–78, 6: 82)

Arnold's use of the word "reasonable" here echoes John Rawls' when he writes that "[t]he problem of political liberalism is to work out a conception of political justice for a constitutional democratic regime that the plurality of reasonable doctrines . . . might endorse," while "unreasonable and irrational, and even mad, comprehensive doctrines" must be kept from "undermin[ing] the unity and justice of society" (Rawls xviii, xvi-ii). If reasonableness is to define the outer limit of inclusion, what then is the difference between a "reasonable comprehensive doctrine" and an unreasonable one (Rawls xvi)? For Rawls, the effective difference seems to be that a reasonable doctrine can acknowledge its own status as one possible position among many – it can, as Saba Mahmood puts it, "recognize itself, and articulate this self-recognition, within the terms of liberal national discourse" (Mahmood

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328n). But this then grants the state more coercive force than Rawls really wants it to have, namely the power to judge the contents of different comprehensive doctrines and to force some to change in accordance with its judgment.

There is, however, a more significant tension among Arnold's different positions on Culture and religion, and it lies between his claim that Culture's normative intensity emanates from the net gravity of its internal parts – the ideal relationship that it brings them into – and his suggestion that it is in fact supplied by the "fire and strength" that Culture derives from Hebraism. For if the first claim portrays Culture as reproducing the effects of religion by more benign means, this second claim suggests that Culture must harness the means of religion toward a different end: in order to bring all sides of human nature to their "total perfection," Culture has to draw upon the energy of "the religious side of man," even if it contradicts the spirit of total perfection. In *Culture and Anarchy* this contradiction within Culture tends to reveal itself in those passages that call for a strong state interventionism Arnold has elsewhere disavowed. Where Arnold's Preface insists that inward perfection "alone" is "sacred and binding for man," elsewhere in the text he is far more willing to insist that "the very framework and exterior order of the State, whoever may administer the State, is sacred," and that therefore strong authoritarian "machinery" can be perfectly consonant with the goals of Culture (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 251, 5: 223). Arnold wants Culture to produce invisible consensus without violence, yet he also seems to acknowledge that Culture cannot be disseminated until there is some degree of consensus established coercively; there must, as he puts it in "The Function of Criticism at the Present Time" (1864), be "*force till right is ready*" (Arnold, *CPW* 3: 265–66). This willingness to embrace the means of Hebraism becomes increasingly important in *Literature and Dogma* and *God and the Bible* (1875), both of which find Arnold insisting on the value of Hebraistic conduct-religion as a source of social authority. Where *Culture and Anarchy* and *St. Paul and Protestantism* portray middle-class religion as a potentially dangerous force that needs to be firmly couched within the larger value-complex of Culture in order not to grow unruly, these two subsequent texts find Arnold imagining Hebraism as a principle of authority that can restore order to "the *lapsed* masses" on whom religion now has "little hold" (Arnold, *CPW* 6: 148). In short, although Arnold retains the theoretical position that religion is subordinate to Culture's authority (see Arnold, *CPW* 6: 149), the changed class-context causes him to abandon his counterintuitive argument that authoritarian religion leads to anarchy for a more conventional claim that anarchy might be quelled by a revival of religion.

Interestingly, Arnold himself occasionally suggests that his turn toward strong-arm tactics represents Culture flexing its internalized Hebraism: "for resisting anarchy the lovers of culture may prize and employ fire and strength," even as they insist "that it is not at this moment true . . . that the world wants fire and strength more than sweetness and light" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 224–25). Such passages would seem to illustrate Carl Schmitt's thesis of the sovereign exception, which proposes that modern constitutional states depend for their survival on the ability of their rulers to occasionally act outside the law in the public interest, and that in such moments the modern state reverts from the orderly, legalistic worldview of Deism to the medieval idea that divine acts constitute positive law (Schmitt 48–49). But in fact a more immediate analogue may be found in the work of Arnold's own contemporary and model, the French Orientalist Ernest Renan. In his important early collection of *Études d'Histoire Religieuse* (1857), Renan constructs a genealogy that shows the crucial role played by stringent Biblical monotheism in forming the modern projects of cosmopolitanism

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and universalism. Like Arnold, Renan grounds his analysis in the dichotomy between the Semitic genius for religion and the Indo-European genius for civilization: "To the Indo-European race pertain nearly all the great military, political, and intellectual movements in the history of the world; to the Semitic race the religious movements" (Renan 61). For Renan, the "necessary consequence" of the Semites' exclusive religiosity has been an attitude of "intolerance" (Renan 63), and intolerance – or, as Taylor would say, sacrifice – is by itself the antithesis of "civilization," insofar as civilization as Renan understands it requires the complex coordination of the economic, the political, the agricultural, and so on. "A race, incomplete by its very simplicity, having neither plastic arts, nor rational science, nor philosophy, nor political life, nor military organization could" never comprehend "civilization in the sense we attach to that word" (Renan 64). Ancient Israel, for instance, failed to become a successful nation-state because it was "exclusively possessed by its religious idea" (Renan 85). Yet this same attitude of religious exclusivity also constitutes the Semites' major contribution to civilization's quest for a cosmopolitan ethic, since it insists that what is good for one should be good for all. In the case of Israel, intolerance bred parochialism, but in the case of the Indo-Europeans tribes, the Semitic spirit of intolerance which they learned through the Bible disciplined their instinct for plurality and turned them toward the global task of making the many into one. Their pluralism, in other words, was paradoxically able to assimilate intolerance and thereby transform itself into something greater than pluralism. "[B]efore their conversion to Semitic ideas," the Indo-Europeans remained "strangers to intolerance or proselytism"; they placed great value upon "freedom of thought," yet only by internalizing monotheism did they learn to proclaim such freedom as a good *for others* (Renan 63). "No doubt Indo-European tolerance springs from a loftier sentiment of human destiny, and from a greater breadth of mind; but who shall dare to say that by revealing the divine Unity, and definitely suppressing local religions, the Semitic race has not laid the foundation stone of the unity and progress of humanity?" (Renan 63–64).

If civilization is thus for Renan a project driven by its internalized opposite, then the figure of the Semite becomes its cautionary double. The ancient Hebrews come to represent an inverse image of cosmopolitanism, since their inability to tolerate "mere" difference produced isolation rather than universalism: they "aspir[ed] to realize a cult independent of provinces and countries," not because they wanted to found a universal religion, but simply because they "declare[d] all religions different from their own to be bad" (Renan 63). Similarly, when Renan describes "the cosmopolitan habits of the Jewish people," he refers not to their mingling with the different nations of the world but rather to their supposed talent for diffusing throughout the globe without intermixing: "we see Abraham, Isaac and Jacob . . . in possession of pure and simple ideas, passing through the different civilizations, without confounding themselves with them, and without accepting anything from them" (Renan 91, 65). The case of Islam, meanwhile, shows how the narrow agenda of Semitic monotheism could be expanded into a global political project without losing its essentially insular character. Where the Jews took the doctrine of One God to imply separatism and isolationism, Christianity and Islam both gleaned from it a project of universal empire; but while Christianity accomplished this by using the principle of divine unity to organize a foregoing respect for plurality, Islam simply amplified Old Testament intolerance and projected it outwards, shaving monotheism of its Greco-Roman accretions and then imposing it forcibly upon weaker nations. Islam thus parallels Christianity as an alternative road to modernity, or even a kind of parody-modernity, radically unlike civilization in its principles

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yet uncannily producing certain "civilizing" effects. For instance, Mohammed's "life has remained a biography like another, without prodigies, without exaggerations" (Renan 119), not because medieval Arab scribes had attained nineteenth-century historicism, but because their austere brand of monotheism "was completely wanting in the element which engenders mysticism and mythology" (Renan 121). Ultimately this "severe simplicity has everywhere been an obstacle to the fruitful development of science, the higher kinds of poetry, and a delicate morality" (Renan 167).

Renan's line of analysis would receive extended treatment in the Victorian period through the emerging study of world religions. As Peter Harrison and Tomoko Masuzawa have shown, the enterprise that the twentieth century would call "comparative religion" coalesced during the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries out of both the Deist project of theorizing a universal religion beyond the particulars of different local traditions and the Protestant missionary attempt to discover cross-cultural terms that could then be used to engage potential converts in the mission field (Masuzawa 37–104; Harrison 19–60). Masuzawa indeed criticizes comparative religion for trying to universalize a specifically Protestant understanding of what religion is, especially the idea that religion is constituted by doctrinal propositions (Masuzawa 72–74). It is therefore an interesting irony that mid-nineteenth-century comparativists like Renan were themselves interested in precisely this question of how ostensibly universalist ideals had emerged from more exclusive ones. In particular, Renan's view of Islam as a sort of failed cosmopolitanism became a popular theme in a variety of texts from the second half of the century. F. D. Maurice's seminal lectures on *The Religions of the World and their Relations to Christianity* (1847), for example, contrasted Christianity and Islam as divergent approaches to universalizing Hebrew monotheism. "The Mahometan claims to be a universal religion; to set up a universal society. The gospel does so too," but where Christianity was able to transform the figure of the priestly despot into the idea of an "Unseen King," Islam has missed the "vital, historical, progressive character" of Old Testament revelation, and has only ever attempted to establish a "visible, mortal man to reign over the Universal Family," much as the "Jewish king reigned . . . over a particular family" (Maurice 145, 157, 152, 157). This is not civilization; yet it has, Maurice notes, historically given Islamic states like the Ottoman Empire the capacity to build large, imperial bodies in a way that the West has found attractive. The simple assertion that "God is," he writes, has proven "capable of exercising a mastery over the rudest of tribes, of giving them an order, of making them victorious over all the civilization . . . which has not this principle for its basis" (Maurice 24). Maurice insists, however, that this "theological transcendent principle" represents only a prelude to civilization, a moment of stripping-away that in turn makes *Bildung* possible (Maurice 25). Mohammed "was right that there is something in the world which we are not to tolerate, which we are sent into it to exterminate," but by itself this principle of sacrifice leads to stasis:

> In the seventh century after Christ, Mahomet taught that the world was to begin its history again; but to begin it with no hope of a progress. That principle, which had been the mere starting-point of Jewish faith, the ground of what it was learning for nineteen hundred years, was to be the one, all-sufficing maxim of Mahometan life. (Maurice 33, 151)

German Protestant theologian Otto Pfleiderer would tell much the same story in his widely-read survey of *Religion and Historic Faiths* (1907), which argued that Islam's unilateral

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imposition of Semitic monotheism upon conquered races – its combination of expansionist ambitions and parochial mindset – explained how it could simultaneously "discipline raw peoples" while retarding the broader progress of "free human civilization":

> Islam, the religion of Mohammed, is the latest among the historical religions, a late after-impulse of the religion-forming power of the Semitic race. Founded by the prophet Mohammed under Jewish and Christian influences among the half-barbaric Arabic people in the seventh century, Islamism shares the monotheistic, rigidly theocratic and legalistic character of Judaism, without its national limitation; with Christianity, it shares the claim and propagating impulse of world-religion, but without the wealth of religious thought and motives and without the mobility and the capacity for development which belongs to a world religion. It might be maintained, probably, that Islamism is the Jewish idea of theocracy carried out on a larger scale by the youthful national vigor of the Arabians, well calculated to discipline raw barbaric peoples, but a brake on the progress of free human civilization. (Pfleiderer 274)

On a similar note, Dutch Biblical scholar and Arabist Abraham Kuenen argued in *National Religions and Universal Religions* (1882) that the radical moral tradition seen in the Hebrew prophets contained intimations of a genuine universalism that the Jews themselves could not realize and which would only come to blossom under the care of Christianity. Judaism itself had a "rigidly national and exclusive character to it," yet contained "the internal leaven of universalism" (Kuenen 169).

Surveying these texts, Masuzawa notes the suddenness with which the image of the indolent "Mussulman," who had played the foil to Enlightenment reason, gave way to that of the militant "Mohammedan" who still looms large in the European imagination (Masuzawa 170). We might speculate that the abruptness of this shift registered the import of what the new stereotype signified for post-1789 liberalism – the awareness that universalism had a dark side, that it potentially involved narrow imposition as much as cosmopolitan many-sidedness. In this way, Renan, Maurice and company were helping to establish what has since become an influential revisionist narrative of modernization. For if the Enlightenment tradition has traditionally vouched for its own universality through a narrative of secularization as the loss of non-transparent theological assumptions, the fact that western politics, philosophy and ideology may still be underwritten by such assumptions would seem to compromise that claim. Modernity may turn out not to be a universal language to which all peoples everywhere can expect to aspire, but may remain inextricably tied to the particulars of religious revelation or local tradition. Something like this position has been taken up in recent years by the great theorist of communicative rationality, Jürgen Habermas, who argues in a 2002 interview that "the modern forms of consciousness encompassing abstract right, modern science, and autonomous art . . . could never have developed apart from the organizational forms of Hellenized Christianity and the Roman Catholic Church" (*Habermas, Religion and Rationality* 147). For Habermas, the Biblical conception of God "signified a breakthrough" to the idea of "a standpoint that utterly transcends the this-worldly," one that was then imputed to the "knowing subject" in "the transition to modernity," and the fact of this genealogical continuity means that thinkers in the Enlightenment tradition must continue to draw upon Biblical language for sustenance:

> Philosophy, even in its postmetaphysical form, will be able neither to replace nor to repress religion as long as religious language is the bearer of a semantic content that is inspiring and even indispensable,

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> for this content eludes . . . the explanatory force of philosophical language and continues to resist translation into reasoning discourses. (Habermas, *Religion and Rationality* 148, 162)

Some neoconservative writers have developed this line of thought into an argument for a re-energized occidentalism (see Lewis), while other theorists have used it to stress the essentially parochial nature of European modernity (see Davie).

If this revisionist account of modernity's relation to secularization has a blind spot, it is that it tends to rely upon an overdetermined concept of the religious. Why, for instance, does Habermas assert that, in order to reap the benefits of its Biblical inheritance, the west must keep returning to the Biblical text wholesale? Why can't particular notions from the Bible or St. Augustine be given a different significance in new social imaginaries beyond (or against) those of the Bible or Augustine, as in the tradition of immanent critique? The answer, it seems, is that Habermas is trading on an idea of religion as a blind, opaque energy that fundamentally "resist[s] translation into reasoning discourses." Thus conceived, Biblical religion cannot influence the Enlightenment tradition without bringing along in tow its whole original complex of assumptions, thereby compromising modernity's aspirations to universality and transparency. Religion here stands for the dirty secret at the heart of the modern, something whose presence within the genealogy of Enlightenment projects necessarily calls them into question; as against a modernity that wants to imagine itself as a space of universally perspicuous norms, it becomes a metonym for all those ingredients of modernity that can't be defended or even assimilated into such terms, from the non-transparent truths of revelation to the peculiarities of cultural tradition. In this light, the advantage of returning to the Victorian comparative religionists is that they defamiliarize, by theorizing explicitly, these equally reductive ideas of the religious and the modern, and help us understand the useful alternative rubric of multiple modernities – recuperative accounts of modernity as something that does not hinge on wiping one's genealogy clean, but may be arrived at through a number of positive histories (see Eickelmann; Eisenstadt).

Arnold's own concern about the non-universal foundations of Culture comes across in his failure to define the precise difference between it and "Hellenism." Many commentators have found themselves hard-pressed to explain why Arnold insists on coining Culture as a third term beyond Hebraism and Hellenism, since it seems virtually identical to the latter – "Essential in Hellenism is the impulse to the development of the whole man, to connecting and harmonizing all parts of him, perfecting all, leaving none to take their chance" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 184) – and since many of the continental writers whom Arnold draws upon are content with a simple, two-term contrast between Jewish exclusivity and Indo-European inclusivity. In Renan, for example, "civilization" is both the master-synthesis of different racial traits and an intrinsic talent of the Indo-European race. Sometimes Arnold himself provincializes Culture in this way (see Arnold, *CPW* 5: 174), yet more often the burden of his argument is to show how Culture is a dislocated, cosmopolitan perspective that can challenge everyone's parochialism equally. He calls his final ideal Culture and not Hellenism because he wants to stress that, if Culture is to mean what it says it means, then it cannot be reduced to any one people's instinctive habits of thought. What results is a recurring rhetorical shuffle in which Arnold lays down a definition of Culture, fears that it comes too close to identifying Culture with a particular western tradition going back to the Greeks, and thus pulls back hastily to qualify it:

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> And the Greeks, – the great exponents of humanity's bent for sweetness and light united, of its perception that the truth of things must be at the same time beauty, – singularly escaped the fanaticism which we moderns, whether we Hellenise or whether we Hebraise, are so apt to show. They arrived, – though failing, as has been said, to give adequate practical satisfaction to the claims of man's moral side, – at the idea of a comprehensive adjustment of the claims of both the sides in man, the moral as well as the intellectual, of a full estimate of both, and of a reconciliation of both; an idea which is philosophically of the greatest value, and the best of lessons for us moderns. (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 179)

Here Arnold starts by holding up "the Greeks" as representatives of Culture, of the "comprehensive adjustment of the claims of both sides in man" that "we moderns" tend to miss either by fanatically Hellenizing or fanatically Hebraizing, but then cuts their achievement back down to size by adding that it "fail[ed], as has been said, to give adequate practical satisfaction to the claims of man's moral side." One moment, the Greeks attain the ideal synthesis of Hebraism and Hellenism; the next, they are mere Hellenists again. Similarly, in an earlier chapter of *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold writes that

> The best art and poetry of the Greeks, in which religion and poetry are one, in which the idea of beauty and of a human nature perfect on all sides adds to itself a religious and devout energy, and works in the strength of that, is on this account of such surpassing interest and instructiveness for us, though it was, – as, having regard to the human race in general, and, indeed, having regard to the Greeks themselves, we must own, – a premature attempt, an attempt which for success needed the moral and religious fibre in humanity to be more braced and developed than it had yet been. But Greece did not err in having the idea of beauty, harmony, and complete human perfection, so present and paramount; it is impossible to have this idea too present and paramount; only the moral fibre must be braced too. (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 100)

Arnold's sentence wanders into obscurity as he folds back upon his claim that the Greeks united religion and poetry to add that, in fact, the Greeks were not religious enough. He insists that Greeks' "idea of beauty, harmony, and complete perfection" is "impossible" to overstate; yet apparently they *did* overstate it, since they did not leave enough room for "the moral fibre." In the end, it seems as though the best way to imagine Culture's almost utopian comprehensiveness is keep displacing it into a space beyond historical realization, where it cannot ossify into yet one more provincial vision of the good.

III

AS THESE LAST EXAMPLES FROM *Culture and Anarchy* would suggest, Arnold's construction of religion as the site of certain narrow energies that both parallel and oppose the work of the state has an interesting tendency to associate religion with Victorian ideas of race (see Stepan 1–110; Young 29–54). Like race, strong religion for Arnold is linked to forms of parochial interest and to sites of value that lie beyond the purview of individual reason. This, however, broaches a larger question: why would a liberal like Arnold conflate religion and race at all? For in fact a great deal of current commentary has insisted that liberal theory constructs religion as tolerable to the state by personalizing and propositionalizing it, that is, by detaching it from non-chosen forms of inheritance. Mahmood, for example, argues that modern states have long been invested "in producing a particular kind of religious subject who is compatible with the rationality and exercise of liberal political rule" because

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she regards her religion as "an abstracted category of beliefs and doctrines from which the individual believer stands apart to examine, compare, and evaluate" (Mahmood 344, 341; see Keane 83–112). This Lockean view of religion informed most pushes for religious tolerance in Victorian Britain (see Henriques), and is in basic ways quite different from later multiculturalist approaches which see religion as most tolerable when it is something that the individual has not chosen and therefore lacks a strong, intolerant investment in (Hollinger 120–24). Wendy Brown, however, has recently shown how these two models have coexisted and cross-pollinated for some time, with many regimes alternately privatizing and ethnicizing religion as complementary strategies for circumscribing its public claims (W. Brown 50–58). Arnold's work of 1867–73, I will now argue, suggests one possible logic by which a liberal thinker might tack back and forth between these models: for Arnold, commitments that stem from idealistic belief and commitments that stem from unexamined inheritance come to look like equivalent threats to the stance of mitigated detachment that his imagined state is founded upon.

The conflation of the religious and the racial, like many of the more buried problems in Arnold, is developed with striking clarity in Renan's writings, which effectively argue that the ancient Semites became the most radically religious race because they were also the most "racial" race, the race least able to complement its innate instincts with ideas learned from others. Race and religion for Renan both imply a kind of single-mindedness, and both remain opaque to reason: the positive assertions of divine revelation and the arbitrary customs of the tribe are equally unaccountable before critical inquiry. Semitic monotheism, he suggests, became "the purest religious form which humanity has ever known" because it emerged from a set of "fixed and determinate views" that could not be cultivated, curbed, or questioned:

> When and how did the Semitic race arrive at that conception of the divine unity which the world has received upon the faith of its preaching? I believe that it was by a primitive intuition, and that from its earliest times. Monotheism was not invented; India, which has thought with so much originality and profundity, did not arrive at it in one day; all the force of the Greek spirit was not sufficient to lead humanity to this without the co-operation of the Semitic races. (Renan 61–62)

Here, "Semitic race" stands rhetorically posed against "Greek spirit" as a means by which ideas emerge upon the world-historical stage. Racial ideas are mysterious, static, "arrived" at "without any effort" and "without reflection or reasoning," while "spirit" is something whose products have a historical life and develop over time (Renan 61–62).

We might not expect race and religion to attain the same special equivalence in Arnold's work, both because race is a more general term that he uses to figure all of the different values that Culture internalizes, and because figuring them this way is his attempt to make them *less* problematic. By representing the different aspects of human life as the contributions of distinct racial groups – the Jews are his touchstone for religiosity, the Greeks for art and science, the Celts for fancy and sentiment, and so on – Arnold seeks to model a dialogic vision of "government as a matter of integrating and harmonizing different classes and interest groups within the political nation" (Parry 3; see Young 87). The lectures *On the Study of Celtic Literature*, most notably, draw upon then-scientific notions of race as an insoluble property to defend the continuing cultural viability of Great Britain's assimilated peoples. "How little the triumph of the conquerors' laws, manners, and language, proves the

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extinction of the old race," Arnold exclaims, following a survey of Celtic influences within English literature; for in truth

> Modes of life, institutions, government, climate, and so forth . . . will further or hinder the development of an aptitude, but they will not by themselves create the aptitude or explain it. On the other hand, a people's habit and complexion of nature go far to determine its modes of life, institutions, and government, and even to prescribe the limits within which the influences of climate shall tell upon it. (Arnold, *CPW* 3: 338, 3: 353)

Here, the "complexion" of a group's "nature" puts a final curb upon the work of nurture. The Saxons and the Celts may war, and they may miscegenate, but they will never be able to erase each other's core qualities. For this reason Great Britain must reject the enthusiasm of "Teutomaniacs" like Charles Kingsley and recognize that its strengths lie in its hybridity (see Faverty 13–40). We see a very similar move in *Culture and Anarchy*, where in a key passage Arnold switches from his figurative play of Hebraic and Hellenic traits to invoke a very literal idea of determinate natures that reminds Culture, in effect, of the limits of its power. Specifically, he suggests that the number of individuals who are capable of becoming disinterested cosmopolitans will remain limited by the resources of the human constitution. "[I]n each class," he writes, "there are born a certain number of natures with a curiosity about their best self, with a bent for seeing things as they are . . . for the pursuit, in a word, of perfection" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 146). These "aliens," as Arnold calls them, "emerge in all classes," and are "mainly led, not by their class spirit, but by a general *humane* spirit, by the love of human perfection" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 146). As such they would seem to be the ideal citizens of Arnold's state; yet in fact Arnold does not claim that all individuals should become aliens, but rather that "the number of those who will succeed in developing this happy instinct will be greater or smaller, in proportion both to the force of the original instinct within them, and to the hindrance or encouragement which it meets from without" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 146). The ancients, Arnold suggests, used the word "genius" to describe a certain zeal for perfection because it does seem to have "something original and heaven-bestowed" about it (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 146). If we keep the passage from *Celtic Literature* in mind here, we can see that the main consequence of this deterministic turn is to keep the work of Culture dialogic. The ideal Arnoldian state will not be achieved by making everyone the same – that would be Hebraistic move, the Jacobin move – but by the diplomatic work of a few unaffiliated subjects who can mediate differences if never abolish them.

For this reason both Robert J. C. Young and Vincent Pecora see in Arnold a proto-multiculturalist move to render differences tolerable by conceiving them as the products of involuntary inheritance (Young 88; Pecora 152–53). In the case of religion, Pecora persuasively argues, tying Christianity to a racialized trait called Hebraism allows Arnold to render it both a docile subject of Culture and a fit object for secular criticism. Yet this is really only half the story, since Arnold does not just tie religion to race when he wants to make it safer for Culture, but also when he is identifying both religion and race as carriers of an ambivalent property he calls "force" or "power." In his essay on Heinrich Heine, for instance, Arnold praises the German-Jewish poet because "[h]is race he treated with the same freedom with which he treated everything else, but he derived a great force from it" (Arnold, *CPW* 3: 127). Similarly, in *Celtic Literature*, he describes the "special power" to be found

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when an individual "blend[s] with the basis of his national temperament, some additional gift or grace not proper to that temperament" (Arnold, *CPW* 3: 358):

> So long as we are blindly and ignorantly rolled about by the forces of our nature, their contradiction baffles us and lames us; so soon as we have clearly discerned what they are, and begun to apply to them a law of measure, control, and guidance, they may be made to work for our good and to carry us forward. Then we may have the good of our German part, the good of our Latin part, the good of our Celtic part; and instead of one part clashing with the other, we may bring it in to continue and perfect the other, when the other has given us all the good it can yield, and by being pressed further, could only give us its faulty excess. (Arnold, *CPW* 3: 383)

The tone in this passage is optimistic, but Anderson notes a certain wariness lurking in the background. "Arnold is drawn to and wants to believe in the possibility of transformative and critical relations to what he construes as natural racial forces, but he is also haunted by the fact that such forces are starkly determining" (Anderson 101), and this, in effect, is the same ambivalence we have already seen him express toward religion. In short, both *Celtic Literature* and *Culture and Anarchy* propose that a narrow, stubborn energy, which in isolation rejects the universalism of Culture, can render Culture great service if it is channeled through critical reflection; in the former essay this energy is race, while in the latter it is a kind of radical religiosity that is not only figured as a racial force but also tends to encourage other forms of provincial thinking. Hebraism, indeed, comes to represent the nexus of several different forms of narrowness – an uncultured racial instinct that produces a reductive preoccupation with religious conduct and so discourages us from pursuing that free-play of ideas which could loosen the hold of race, class, and other parochialisms upon our minds.

Here Arnold would seem to illustrate a very different account of how liberalism constructs religion as tolerable – not by tying it to affiliations that precede choice, by making it an object of reflective reason. As Wendy Brown puts it, the liberal state constructs "religious, cultural, or ethnic differences" as "sites of . . . hostility" that are intransigent when they are simply inherited but can become sources of strength then they are rationally selected (W. Brown 151). Or in Anderson's description: Arnold praises Heine because he "understands . . . what effect his cultural heritage has on him, yet he also has the capacity to subject that heritage to the free play of the critical mind. Thus he delivers on the promise of modernity . . . to reflect upon – and transmute through art – that which otherwise operates as unconscious nature or unexamined custom" (Anderson 108). Yet we cannot forget here that in fact *Culture and Anarchy* tends to regard choice, opinion and belief as just as much of a threat to Culture as determinism and parochialism. Hebraism, as Arnold develops the term, comes to signify the narrowing power of *both* inherited prejudices and doctrinaire idealism; anarchy stems equally from the "*provinciality*" of the English Philistine, with his attic full of "stock notions and habits," and from Jacobinism, with "its fierceness . . . its addiction to an abstract system," and its penchant for what Gossman calls the "moment of choice and decision, which is always, by definition, exclusive and limiting" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 237, 5: 233, 5: 109; Gossman 25). On the face of things, of course, Jacobinism would seem to be the enemy of provincialism, and thus in its initial stages can appear to be the partner of Culture: "A current in people's minds sets toward new ideas; people are dissatisfied with their old narrow stock of Philistine ideas, Anglo-Saxon ideas"

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(Arnold, *CPW* 5: 109). Yet in the end the position of rational choice, untempered by other considerations, attains its own kind of "narrowness, one-sidedness, and incompleteness": "Violent indignation with the past, abstract systems of renovation applied wholesale, a new doctrine drawn up in black and white for elaborating down to the very smallest details a rational society for the future – these are the ways of Jacobinism" (Arnold, *CPW* 5: 237, 5: 109).

What does it tell us, then, that religious extremism for Arnold becomes the site of both radical idealism and narrow parochialism? Why do religion and race almost become versions of the same problem? Here we might turn again to Anderson, who argues that Arnoldian Culture is an ethos designed precisely to steer between these twin extremes. Arnold hopes to break up the English reader's narrow, limited point of view with a strong dose of "the best which has been thought and said in the world," but he is also wary of the disenchanting power of abstract universalism, and his strategy for avoiding both dangers is to embed cosmopolitan detachment in a "characterological" stance – "to make detachment ultimately indistinguishable from moral stance or ethos," and "to represent as moral character the very form of detachment he is advocating" (Anderson 113). Or, if we want to consider Culture as a political project instead of as a personal stance, we could say that this duality clustered around the figure of Hebraism represents the mutually implicated extremes of nineteenth-century politics. By embodying both the theoretical iconoclasm of the French Revolution and the *völkisch* nationalisms that it provoked in reaction, Arnold's Semite foregrounds the dilemma of uniting large bodies of people around a principle more generous than either.

To these two ways of situating Arnold I would like to add a third, one that brings back the broad questions about narrating secularization with which I began. Arnold's overdetermined figure of Hebraism, I would suggest, registers the contradictory fallout of the modern turn toward regarding religion as a matter primarily of belief. In the hands of liberal reformers, this move was designed to depoliticize religion, to make it something that would neither compete with the state nor cause public strife within it. Yet, as Michael Warner reminds us, defining religion in terms of belief was also the Evangelical project, and in that context had the very different effect of *intensifying* religion's public role by using it to authorize new modes of publicity tied to sincerity and earnestness. This duality is not a coincidence but a "real contradiction" that modernity has been working through: both strains can be seen, for example, in Locke's *Letter Concerning Toleration* (1689) which argues that religion belongs to the *res privata* precisely because it is so important (Warner 612). Arnold's work is of special interest here because it suggests that the opposite construction of religion – religion as closer to racial affiliation than to belief – carries a similar polarity. If confining religion to the realm of conviction can both intensify and depoliticize it, racializing religion, tying it to the realm of things we do not choose, detaches it from strong opinions but also makes it impervious to "the capacity for self-authorization of belief that forms the core of the Enlightenment concept of autonomy" (Anderson 114). Arnold's essays on Culture remain such a potent site for discussing the role of religion in liberal thought because, in their unsystematic way, they register both the contradictory dangers that liberalism can see religion as embodying and the contradictory strategies by which it may construct religion as something the state can incorporate.

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NOTES

1. See McKelvy 9–35 and Jager 1–40 for reconsiderations of secularization as a rubric for reading nineteenth-century literature, and Kaufmann for a reappraisal of its usefulness within literary studies generally. For overviews of postwar debates about the secularization-concept in the social sciences, see Casanova 11–39, Smith 1–96, and Gorski and Altinordu.
2. When I call Arnold a "liberal" I am placing him in a specific tradition that valorizes "many-sidedness" and the "free exposure to 'variety of experience' . . . issuing in an independence of mind and spirit" (Burrow 93, 81; see Thomas 26–28). Burrow sees John Stuart Mill as first translating this ideal from Humboldt into a "distinctly English, liberal, and mid-Victorian" idiom in a way that transforms the Lockean idea of negative liberty into a positive ideal of self-cultivated individuality which is also a model for the social (Burrow 94).
3. Williams famously distinguishes three main historical uses of the word "culture": "a general process of intellectual, spiritual and aesthetic development," "a particular way of life," and "the works and practices of intellectual and especially artistic activity" (Williams, *Keywords* 90–91; see Kuper 7–9). Arnoldian Culture has been central to discussions of the word's history because of the way that it can be seen to invoke all three senses: it unites the first and third senses in envisioning a process of *Bildung* both individual and civilizational, yet (as Herbert and Stocking note) it also has the more immediate function of ordering and integrating the nation, which gives it the authoritarian flavor of the second sense, more often associated with German romanticism and modernist anthropology (Herbert 55; see Stocking 795).

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