

# Culture and Anarchy

## Essays by Matthew Arnold

Preface.

Preamble. What is Culture?

Chapter I. Sweetness and Light

Chapter II. Doing as One Likes - Anarchy

Chapter III. Barbarians, Philistines, Populace

Chapter IV. Hebraism and Hellenism

Chapter V. Porro Unum est Necessarium

Chapter VI. Our Liberal Practitioners

## In Urdu and Hindi



## Introduction:

Culture and Anarchy is a series of periodical essays by Matthew Arnold, first published in Cornhill Magazine 1867-68 and collected as a book in 1869. The preface was added in 1875.

Arnold's famous piece of writing on culture established his High Victorian cultural agenda which remained dominant in debate from the 1860s until the 1950s.

Matthew Arnold's "Culture and Anarchy" is a cultural and political critique written in 1869 that addresses the state of England's cultural and political systems during the time. The essay explores the idea of culture as a means of promoting order and unity in society, while contrasting it with the chaos and disorder caused by a lack of cultural values. Arnold argues that the lack of a strong cultural foundation in England was leading to social and political unrest and that the cultivation of a broader, more sophisticated culture was necessary for the country's progress and stability. The essay is considered a classic of cultural criticism and remains relevant to discussions of the role of culture and values in shaping society.

The published book on these essays is divided in following chapters:

Preface.

Preamble. What is Culture?

Chapter I. Sweetness and Light

Chapter II. Doing as One Likes - Anarchy

Chapter III. Barbarians, Philistines, Populace

Chapter IV. Hebraism and Hellenism

Chapter V. Porro Unum est Necessarium

Chapter VI. Our Liberal Practitioners



# Chapter One: Sweetness and Light

The opening chapter is where the author lays down the fundamental foundation of his perspective of the definition of culture. That definition, put simply, is a society's always moving movement toward the idea. In seeking perfection, there are two requirements: an eagerness to learn based on seeing things as they really are and the effort to ensure that the rest of society is constructed upon this knowledge and recognition. As a result, the irony is that culture is never completed because perfection cannot be attained; culture is always in flux and adaptable.

Arnold discusses how and why perfection is the essence of true culture. He also describes true culture as working to perfect both individuals and humankind at large. He argues that Victorian England's obsession with materialism and industrialism has led to a neglect of true culture. He portrays Englishmen as fundamentally fixated on liberty and their own selfish pursuits instead of caring for "sweetness and light." Jhonathan swift, work.



## Chapter Two: Doing as One Likes

Rather than an assertion of philosophy like the first chapter, the second chapter is really more like a response essay. The response to criticism, however, effectively serves the purpose of defining what lies in opposition to culture: anarchy. Anarchy is the result of doing as one likes on the basis of the freedom to enjoy the act rather on the consequences of that act. Thus, in Arnold's mode of structural thinking, anarchy differs substantially from the modern definition in that it is worshiping freedom itself as a concept rather than the benefits which come with understanding the responsibilities that come with being free. This conceptualization of anarchy is rooted the idea of British citizens having become too willing to trust in the machine of parliamentary democracy to solve problems created by the conflict of everybody doing as he likes.

Arnold speaks more about industrialism and its harmful effects on the national psyche while also exploring the dangers of anarchy and unchecked individualism.



## Chapter Three: Barbarian, Philistines, Populace

The terminology of the past is exploited by Arnold to describe the then-modern subdivision of classes. The Barbarians are represented by the privileged aristocracy while the role of the Philistines had been handed down to the middle class. That means, of course, that the working class got off pretty easy with just being called the Populace. He then goes on to sharpen the definition of the signature character traits separating these classes from the other. Barbarians suffer from too great a refinement that winds up caring for most empty matters. The Philistines are defined by self-satisfaction and too prone to conservative acceptance of the status quo. The Populace turns out to be the real fly in the ointment here because although they recognize they will never be considered equal to the Barbarians, they view the Philistines as within reach and so aspire to their ability to do as they like. Now we're talking too much freedom for too many people and that is the essence of anarchy.

Arnold examines the English class system, which he divides into three sections: the “Barbarians” (the aristocracy), the “Philistines” (the middle class), and the “Populace” (the working class). He argues that each class has fundamental flaws to which members of that class often succumb to the detriment of true culture. He asserts that a believer of culture can come from any class and that believers in true culture transcend class to make their humanity their defining feature. He claims that English subjects often mistrust the state because they believe it only represents the interests of whatever class puts them into power.

## Chapter Four: Hebraism and Hellenism

Or, put another way, Jewish traditions and Greek traditions. The Hebraic system is far too taxed by the wages of sin and is much closer himself to Team Hellenism with embodies those twin principles of culture: seeking knowledge and seeing the world as it really is. The ideal, however, is very much a synthesis of the two, with the Hebraic system's highly constructed and codified system of conduct and obedience having its dark side, but also manifesting a clear dogged tenacity in surviving long after Hellenistic society collapsed.

Arnold discusses the difference between Hebraism (the Semitic influence in culture) and Hellenism (the classical Greek and Roman influence in culture). He argues that Hebraism has long been more dominant in English culture and that now it is time for Hellenism to once again gain the ascendancy.



## Chapter Five: Porro Unum Est Necessarium

The Latin translates to “but one thing is needful.” These essays were written at a time when the Puritans dominated the discourse of British theology and for them the one needful thing most virtuous above all else was the vaunted Puritan work ethic. Arnold’s response is essentially Jack Torrance-like in its estimation: all work and no play make Puritan Jack dull. And by dull is meant not boring, but incomplete. The entire ideological framework of the text is that the ideal balance of the state is moderation. Recognizing a kindred spirit between the Hebrew and the Puritans in their tenacity to get the work done, Arnold is not so much suggesting that they start carving nude statues or anything in particular, but rather hinting quite strongly that perhaps the problem is that there is never just one needful thing.

Arnold expounds upon the benefits of Hellenism and the role it should now play in English culture.





# Chapter Six: Our Liberal Practitioners

Arnold discusses the nature of freedom, claiming that freedom is more about service and duties than the idea of “rights.” He once more stresses that true perfection is an inward perfection, working from the inside out and affecting both individuals and communities at large. Arnold acknowledges the many injustices present in Victorian England, such as the impoverishment of the working class, but says this is no justification for rapid and radical action—instead, believers in culture should focus on determining what is truly good. In his Conclusion, he denounces all forms of mass protests and demonstrations—even for those on behalf of causes he accepts as worthy—saying that a believer in culture should always support the state, as without order society is at risk and perfection can only be achieved within a society. Therefore, all forms of popular demonstrations must be strictly forbidden. He concludes by stating that the believer in culture should not actively participate in public life but should instead seek to observe, reflect, and promote true culture and its ends.

# Subscribe to our **You** **Channel**

Thank you For Watching!

Kindly Share this Video with your class.

Ask me your Questions in Comment Box.

Subscribe for more videos.