

2 Ministering to a Mind Diseased

Matthew Arnold, Her Majesty's Inspector

In 1875 Matthew Arnold was invited to make a public toast at an anniversary banquet for the Royal Academy, a space created in 1768 by George III for the exhibition of contemporary art. Arnold, who by this point in his life had served as an inspector of schools for nearly a quarter of a century, found himself in rich company: there “were two English ‘royal highnesses’ present, as well as several from the Continent” (qtd. in Super 478). According to a reporter for the London *Times*, following “the toasts to the Queen, the Royal family, the Army and the Navy, the President of the Academy proposed ‘Prosperity to the Interests of Science and Literature,’ ” Sir John Lubbock provided the toast for science, and then Arnold, as requested, spoke on behalf of literature (373). With the stage thus set, Arnold turned to those present—the royalty, the aristocrats, the president of the Academy, a group of his superiors from the Education Department—and made this remarkable statement:

Literature, no doubt, is a great and splendid art, allied to that great and splendid art of which we see around us the handiwork. But, Sir, you do me an undeserved honor when, as President of the Royal Academy, you desire me to speak in the name of Literature. Whatever I may have once wished or intended, my life is not that of a man of letters, but of an Inspector of Schools (a laugh), and it is with embarrassment that I now stand up in the dreaded presence of my own official chiefs (a laugh), who have lately been turning upon their Inspectors an eye of some suspicion. (A laugh). (“Three Public Speeches” 373–74)

That Arnold was disappointed not to have been able to lead the life of a “man of letters” is clear enough: his professorship at Oxford had ended

eight years before this speech and he had never been able to support his family solely through his writing or his lecturing. In fact, Arnold had been driven into public service twenty-four years earlier because the life of a man of letters did not permit him the means to start and support a family.

There is also ample evidence that Arnold was not particularly taken with the bureaucratic work of school inspection. Although Arnold wrote his wife after receiving the appointment, "I think I shall get interested in the schools after a little time," within two months he had a clearer sense of how demanding his job was to be: "I have had a hard day. Thirty pupil teachers to examine in an inconvenient room and nothing to eat except a biscuit, which a charitable lady gave me" (*Letters, 1848–1888* 20–21). And a little more than a year later, in early 1853, he was dreaming of a different life altogether: "I don't know why, but I certainly find inspecting peculiarly oppressive just now; but I must tackle to, as it would not do to let this feeling get too strong. All this afternoon I have been haunted by a vision of living with you at Berne, on a diplomatic appointment, and how different that would be from this incessant grind in schools" (30–31). Around this time, as well, Arnold observed with resignation, in a letter to his friend Arthur Clough, that "a great career is hardly possible any longer. . . . I am more and more convinced that the world tends to become more comfortable for the mass, and more uncomfortable for those of any natural gift or distinction—and it is as well perhaps that it should be so" (*Letters to Clough* 122).

And so, although Arnold neither "wished" nor "intended" it, he spent his working hours living the life of an inspector of schools, under conditions of economic necessity few of his listeners in the Academy that evening were likely to have ever experienced. When we keep this in mind, the audacity of Arnold's toast becomes apparent, for he used this public occasion to criticize those in power—both his immediate superiors and the aristocracy in general—for their support of a political system whereby it was impossible for a man (and Arnold most certainly would have meant "a man") to make a living by writing poetry and criticism. What Arnold wanted his auditors to understand, apparently, was that while they stood surrounded by works of art, he lived in a world in which teaching others about sweetness and light, Hellenism and Hebraism, culture and anarchy did not put food on the table. And yet, if Arnold really was expressing his bitterness about what he perceived as the injustice of the system of social relations that dominated his life, how are we to make sense of the reporter's parenthetical observations that each moment in this opening salvo was met by laughter? Who is laughing? And why?

Perhaps those present thought Arnold was being ironic. After all, given the amount of work he had published by 1875, his claim might well have

seemed a comic gesture of self-deprecation. Arnold, not a man of letters? Imagine! While it is certainly possible that some of those present responded to Arnold's remarks in this way, it is clear that others picked up on the barbs imbedded in his toast. In fact, years later, prior to Arnold's arrival in the United States for a lecture tour in 1882, a local editorial in the *World* admirably noted Arnold's insistence on always letting the "fine gentlemen and ladies" know he considered himself to be their superior. Addressing Arnold directly, the writer of the editorial went on: "There is, perhaps, no other man of letters now alive who would have had the intrepidity to make such a speech as you did a couple years ago in returning thanks for the toast of literature at the Academy dinner" (qtd. in Super 478). Thus, if there were those who understood Arnold's toast to be ironic, there were others who saw it as an open attack on those in the audience. Both groups, though, took a common pleasure in rejecting Arnold's claim not to have lived the life of a man of letters.

There are still other explanations for the laughter, of course. Perhaps those present at the banquet followed the intent of Arnold's critique and laughed out of nervousness in hopes of smoothing over a difficult social situation. It is even possible that Arnold's audience understood the toast quite well and laughed out of disdain for Arnold and his circumstances—the vicious laughter that the privileged save for those less well-to-do. What is unlikely, though, is that Arnold was among those laughing; in this crowd, those who didn't *have* to work could afford to have a laugh at the expense of one who did. But Arnold, who at the time of this toast was required to examine every student individually in the schools he inspected, surely had little to laugh about. The disparity in the material conditions of the man giving the toast and those of his auditors is also what allows those assembled to respond, according to the *Times* reporter, with "Cheers and a laugh" when Arnold compared the annual congregation at the Academy to the gathering of a group of Greek expatriates in Italy who "once every year... assembled themselves together at a public festival of their community, and there... reminded one another that they were once Greeks" (374). Again, one can imagine nervous laughter in response to this open display of ridicule. But cheers? How are we to explain those cheers? Is it possible that any of those Barbarians could "hear" what Arnold was saying to them about themselves and the world they had created?

While at one time the effect of Arnold's words could be located somewhere on this spectrum spanning from irony to utter inconsequentiality, it is safe to say that Arnold's words subsequently have taken on a greater weight. Indeed, in his current role as standard-bearer for those committed

to studying “the best that has been thought and said in our time,” Arnold has assumed a position of central importance in debates about multiculturalism and the mission of English Studies, about the function of criticism, and about the educator’s role in social reform. As Chris Baldick has argued so persuasively, this has been Arnold’s fate *not* because his approach to literature was unique or because his thoughts about the role of the middle class in revitalizing British culture were particularly innovative. Rather, as Baldick puts it, Arnold’s achievement “was to be a kind of prophecy, a reference point for all future combatants in debates over the uses of literary study” (60).¹ And, perhaps because Arnold is now regularly figured as the prophet who fearlessly supported elevated standards and academic excellence against a rising tide of mediocrity, he is also regularly deployed as the negative foundational trope by those interested in launching a critique of English Studies and the status quo. Baldick himself uses Arnold in this way, asserting that Arnold’s most lasting and most unfortunate achievement was to create “a new kind of critical discourse which could, by its display of careful extrication from controversy, speak from a privileged standpoint, all other discourses being in some way compromised by partial or partisan considerations” (25). Baldick contends that because everyone who followed Arnold had to take up and respond to this “innocent language,” “the title of ‘criticism’ was usurped by a literary discourse whose entire attitude was at heart uncritical. Criticism in its most important and its most vital sense had been gutted and turned into its very opposite: an ideology” (234).

Edward Said finds Arnold’s influence to have been even more nefarious, if possible:

What is too often overlooked by Arnold’s readers is that he views this ambition of culture to reign over society as essentially combative: “the best that is known and thought” must contend with competing ideologies, philosophies, dogmas, notions, and values, and it is Arnold’s insight that what is at stake in society is . . . the assertively achieved and *won* hegemony of an identifiable set of ideas, which Arnold honorifically calls culture, over all other ideas in society. (10, original emphasis)

What is striking about Said’s loose rendering of Arnold’s definition of culture is that it occurs directly beneath Said’s own citation of an extended passage from *Culture and Anarchy*, where Arnold speaks of “the *best* knowledge and thought of the time” (qtd. in Said 10, original emphasis). By truncating and rephrasing the formulation, Said effectively pushes Arnold’s concerns into the past and out of the world, a rhetorical move that provides Said with the occasion to call for a new brand of “secular criticism” that

would reconsider the relationship between the world, the text, and the critic. The passage cited above comes as Said commences this argument, at the moment when he is establishing Arnold as an example of someone who articulated and authorized a hierarchical definition of culture, one in which culture was understood to move “downward from the height of power and privilege in order to diffuse, disseminate, and expand itself in the widest possible range” (9). Said goes on to assert that Arnold shows these commitments most clearly at the conclusion of *Culture and Anarchy*, where in the last (and most telling) instance, Arnold is to be found unequivocally siding with those in power against the powerless and the homeless. In taking this stance, Arnold shows that what is at stake in the combat between culture and society is control over the system of state-imposed exclusions whereby some members of society are marked as insiders—those “at home,” those who are “cultured”—and others are deemed outsiders—the homeless, the anarchical, the irrational, the insane, the disenfranchised. In other words, Said argues, to “be for and in culture is to be in and for a State in a compellingly loyal way” (11).

Turning to Macaulay’s *Minute of 1835 on Indian education*, Said then sets out to demonstrate how this notion of a superior, discriminating culture—which assumes something of a benign aspect in Arnold’s criticism—had particularly detrimental effects when applied by the British in India. As Said puts it, Macaulay “was speaking from a position of power where he could translate his opinions into the decision to make an entire subcontinent of natives submit to studying in a language not their own” (13). Here again, Said is at pains to establish the urgency of *his own* critical project, which involves the exploration and enactment of a criticism “reducible neither to a doctrine nor to a political position on a particular question, . . . in the world and self-aware simultaneously,” this time by asserting the existence of an affiliative relationship between the Arnoldian mission and the broader project of British imperialism (29). However, by using Arnold in this way, Said appears to have lost sight of two important facts. First, Arnold was thirteen years old when Macaulay’s *Minute* was published, so if anything Arnold stood in a filial relationship to Macaulay’s educational ideas rather than the other way around.² Second, and more important, Arnold, unlike Macaulay, never occupied a position of power from which he could legislate the actions of others. Indeed, one of Arnold’s abiding disappointments was to find himself living in a country where everyone was free to do as he or she pleased. So what Said forgets, in order to make his argument, is that Arnold never was a member of Parliament, nor did he serve on the Supreme Council of India; he was, rather, an inspector of schools. And, as we

will see, in this position Arnold exercised very little control over his own working conditions and absolutely no control whatsoever over how the education of the masses was handled in Britain or in its colonies.

This is not to say that Arnold didn't dream of a different world order, one guided not by the machinery of British politics but by the wise council of "aliens" such as he fancied himself to be—those able to take a disinterested approach to problems, those at liberty to allow their minds to play freely over possible solutions without fear of being diverted by partisanship. Indeed, it is well known that Arnold wished he had the authority necessary to squash his opponents if they disagreed with him. Arnold's most open expression of this desire caused such a stir that it was deleted from later editions of *Culture and Anarchy*, thereby depriving future readers of the opportunity to share in Arnold's fond memory of his father's advice about how to rule: "As for rioting, the old Roman way of dealing with that is always the right one; flog the rank and file, and fling the ringleaders from the Tarpeian Rock" (526)!³ And, though Arnold was hardly the model of consistency, his opposition to extending the franchise and his fear of the organizing masses were constant themes for him. To both he unflinchingly responded in the spirit of his father's advice: "monster processions in the streets and forcible irruptions into the parks, even in professed support of this good design [of allowing 'an Englishman to be left to do as far as possible what he likes'], ought to be unflinchingly forbidden and repressed" (223). So Arnold certainly wished for radical redistribution of political power in Britain and he unquestionably hoped that the government would become more centralized and more united in its response to those who opposed rule by "sweetness and light." It is too easy to overlook the fact, though, that Arnold was *never* in a position to realize either of these goals.

While Arnold's authoritarian dreams are well known, very little work has been done to document his influence on the material practices of English education in the classroom.⁴ This is not to say that Arnold's work as an inspector of schools has gone unnoticed. To the contrary, shortly after Arnold's death in 1888, Sir Francis Sandford edited a collection of Arnold's professional writing, which was published under the title *Reports on Elementary Schools, 1852–1882*. F. S. Marvin followed with a revised edition of these reports in 1908. Sir Joshua Fitch published *Thomas and Matthew Arnold and Their Influence on English Education*, a mixture of biography and reference, in 1897; Leonard Huxley offered a more complete sampling of Arnold's writings on schooling in *Thoughts on Education from Matthew Arnold*, published in 1912. There have even been two book-length studies that focus on Arnold's work as an inspector of schools: W. F. Connell's *Ed-*

ucational Thought and Influence of Matthew Arnold and Fred Walcott's *Origins of Culture and Anarchy: Matthew Arnold and Popular Education in England*. What this incomplete catalogue reveals, then, is that belief in the importance of Arnold's official activities is long-standing: indeed, Raymond Williams, one of the academic community's most thoughtful critics, has argued that *Culture and Anarchy* "needs to be read alongside the reports, minutes, evidence to commissions and specifically educational essays which made up so large a part of Arnold's working life." If this is done, Williams asserts, one can recuperate Arnold on the grounds that his "effort to establish a system of general and humane education was intense and sustained" (*Culture and Society* 119).

As one might expect, those who have worked to preserve Arnold's educational writings and to establish the ongoing relevance of his thinking tend to lapse into hagiographic celebrations of the man and his accomplishments. Connell, for instance, notes that Arnold "was an indefatigable essayist, not voluminous, but reasonably copious, and certainly forthright. It is this characteristic of forthrightness that largely justifies the title of 'Prophet' that has been applied to him by various writers from time to time" (273). And Walcott declares in an ecstatic moment that with some effort one can "perceive about the prophet's [Arnold's] head—within these middle years, at least—the faint, the almost imperceptible aura of the ineffectual angel" (135). While such responses simply judge Arnold as having been "ahead of his time," my concern in what follows is to resituate Arnold's critical writing within the historical context of his civil service career, so that we don't lose sight of the significance of his inability to effect change in his own time. By exacerbating the disjunction between the various ways Arnold has been used to name a kind of otherworldly critical work in English Studies and the ways he actually spent his time while serving as an inspector of schools, I hope to make sense of the anger, annoyance, and disappointment registered in Arnold's toast cited at the opening of this chapter. I hope to suggest, as well, that the ongoing preoccupation in English Studies with Arnold's critical work reflects a disciplinary disinclination to consider how rarely the business of critique has a demonstrable impact on the work that students, teachers, and inspectors actually do in and for the schools.

Arnold Confronts a Student-Teacher: The Transparent Power of the Paraphrase

In his thirty-five years of service as an inspector of schools, Arnold visited classrooms and examined students and teachers all across England. On

three separate occasions, he was sent overseas by his government to collect information on the state of popular education in Europe. He published two book-length reports, *The Popular Education of France* in 1861 and *Schools and Universities on the Continent* in 1867, as well as countless essays touching on educational matters. And yet, so far as I've been able to determine, Arnold refers directly to student work only once in all of this writing. As it turns out, Arnold was unwilling to draw evidence of the failures of Britain's educational system from such an obvious and rich source; in fact, he even avoided speaking directly about student work in the General Reports he was required to write each year as an inspector of schools. As he explained in his General Report for 1874, "I dislike the practice of culling in an official report absurd answers to examination questions in order to amuse the public with them; what I quote will be for the purpose of illustrating the defect of mind to which I have been calling attention, and I shall quote just what is necessary for this purpose and no more" (*Reports*, 177).⁵

It should thus come as no surprise to learn that when student work does make its way into Arnold's writing, its role is to illustrate the failure of the educational system and the student's "defect of mind." The reference that interests me here occurs in the midst of Arnold's debate with T. H. Huxley over the merits of a literary education. In 1880 Huxley asserted in his inaugural address at Sir Josiah Mason's Science College that "for the purpose of attaining real culture, an exclusively scientific education is at least as effectual as an exclusively literary education" (T. Huxley 141). Objecting to Huxley's rendition of his own commitment to "the best that has been thought and said in the world" as merely belletristic, Arnold insists in "Literature and Science" that he had never intended to exclude science from his recommended program of study: "In that best I certainly include what in modern times has been thought and said by the great observers and knowers of nature" (59). However, as Arnold develops his argument with Huxley, it becomes clear that for him the "great observers and knowers of nature" are not scientists at all, but poets and artists. For evidence of the failings of the natural sciences, Arnold refers to Darwin's theory about our ancestral relation to the "hairy quadrupeds," a proposition that he must admit is "interesting" and "important." The problem with men of science, though, is that they resist "the invincible desire to relate this proposition to the sense in us for conduct, and to the sense in us for beauty" (64–65). Poetry and the arts, in contrast, are superior precisely because they respond to the desire for moral rectitude and aesthetic completion.

At this point in the argument, Arnold dramatizes the steep decline in literary education by referring back to a school report he had written in 1876,

where he recorded the response a “young man in one of our English training colleges” made to the assignment: “Paraphrase the passage in *Macbeth* beginning, ‘Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?’” To Arnold’s dismay, the young man “turned this line into, ‘Can you not wait upon the lunatic?’” Arnold does not explain why this response is unacceptable, perhaps because what makes it “bad” is, in his estimation, self-evident. What he does say is this: if he had to choose between working with students who knew the diameter of the moon (his version of scientific knowledge) but who couldn’t judge the quality of this paraphrase, and students who were ignorant of the moon’s diameter, yet who knew this paraphrase to be “bad,” Arnold would prefer to spend his time with the latter group (69).

It’s a strange example, serving as it does to undermine the sense that education in either the scientific or the literary realm is particularly important. And, for his part, Arnold quickly abandons it in favor of his next illustration, which is drawn from a speech made in Parliament. But even though Arnold uses the student almost in passing, the example is worth lingering over precisely because it is so puzzling and ineffective. To begin to make sense of why Arnold deems the pupil-teacher’s paraphrase unsatisfactory and why he considers paraphrasing the best activity for initiating work with a literary text, we must turn to Arnold’s earlier essay, “The Study of Poetry,” where he charts out a preliminary rationale for this way of commencing work with poetry:⁶

Yes; constantly, in reading poetry, a sense for the best, the really excellent, and of the strength and joy to be drawn from it, should be present in our minds and should govern our estimate of what we read. But this real estimate, the only true one, is liable to be superseded, if we are not watchful, by two other kinds of estimate, the historic estimate and the personal estimate, both of which are fallacious. (163)

Given the low premium Arnold places on these other ways of reading, he no doubt approved of the fact that the pupil-teacher in his example was not asked to produce either the historical context of the line from *Macbeth* (even within the limits of the play itself) or a personal response to the line. As far as Arnold can see, such tasks merely distract one from “the enjoyment of the best.” What is less readily apparent, though, is how Arnold felt about the examination’s failure to ask the pupil-teacher to “estimate” whether the given line of poetry was “really excellent.” By withholding this question, the examination Arnold himself has administered appears willfully to deprive the pupil-teacher of the opportunity to participate in the very activity Arnold believes is central to the appreciation of poetry.⁷

From an institutional standpoint, how one resolves to evaluate an act of reading is of critical importance, since this produces the standards to which teachers and students must adhere. Inadvertently, Arnold reveals in “The Study of Poetry” just how unmanageable this issue can be, as he struggles to explain what makes his ten exemplary “touchstones” instances of truly excellent poetry: “if we are urgently pressed to give some critical account of [the touchstones], we may safely, perhaps, venture on laying down, not indeed how and why the characters arise, but where and in what they arise. They are in the matter and substance of the poetry, and they are in its style and manner” (171–72). In other words, Arnold cannot say how or why the touchstones achieve their effect; he can only gesture toward those places where effects are felt. Recognizing that this way of discussing the act of reading produces “but dry generalities” about “the matter and substance” and the “style and manner” of the highest poetry, Arnold proffers a rare piece of concrete advice: it is best if the student of poetry applies the touchstone method on his own, since “made by himself, the application would impress itself upon his mind far more deeply than made by me” (172). And with this observation that one learns to judge poetic quality only by engaging in the act of forming such judgments, the moment of critical “estimation” disappears into a vast and private interiority, far beyond the reach of the examination system.⁸

Given that the moment of estimation was, thus, necessarily unavailable for evaluation, paraphrasing provided the closest approximation of an act of reading that could be tested. In Arnold’s example, as we saw, being able to paraphrase is analogous to knowing the diameter of the moon: isolating a single line of poetry produces a discrete object of study comparable to (and perhaps as distant from the reader as) the moon, supplying a similarly contained site for measurement and evaluation. With this in mind, it is worth pausing to consider the line selected from *Macbeth* for the pupil-teacher to paraphrase. The question—“Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased?”—occurs in the act 5, scene 3, just as Macbeth is coming to realize how terribly he has misread the witches’ prophecy. Upon receiving intelligence that ten thousand soldiers are descending on his castle, Macbeth turns to the doctor and asks after Lady Macbeth’s health, only to be informed that “she is troubled with thick-coming fancies / That keep her from her rest.” Macbeth then makes this desperate plea to the doctor:

Canst thou not minister to a mind diseased,
Pluck from the memory a rooted sorrow,
Raze out the written troubles of the brain,
And with some sweet oblivious antidote

Cleanse the stuff'd bosom of that perilous stuff
Which weighs upon the heart? (5.3.40–44)

The “ministering” Macbeth demands for his queen is one of forgetting, an antidote to erase the “written troubles of the brain,” a physic that would cure her of her feelings of guilt by “razing” her memory. The doctor’s response, which causes Macbeth to curse all medicine and declare he will have “none of it,” is that there is nothing a doctor can do for a patient with the symptoms Macbeth has described: “Therein the patient must minister to himself” (5.3.45–46)

Now, if the pupil-teacher’s paraphrase “Can you not wait upon the lunatic?” is placed in this context, it does indeed appear clumsy, failing—one can imagine Arnold saying—to fully capture Shakespeare’s “matter and substance”: glossing Lady Macbeth as a “lunatic” offers a jarring image of Macbeth’s feelings for his wife, neutralizing the tension in the play between mental wellness and mental illness and ignoring the role guilt plays in both realms. This, at least, is one way to account for why Arnold judged the paraphrase “bad.” It should not go unnoticed, though, that the form of the examination question itself truncates the quote from Shakespeare, removing the train of redactions that provides the specific referents that define what “minister” and “mind diseased” might mean in the cited passage. In other words, the only way to produce a “good” paraphrase of this partial citation is to situate it at least within the full sentence from which it has been drawn, if not the context of the entire play. Based on what Arnold tells us in “Literature and Society,” it is impossible to know whether we can reasonably assume that a pupil-teacher would possess the reading skills and the depth of knowledge about Shakespeare’s works necessary to perform this task. In fact, in paraphrasing his own General Report of 1876, Arnold has left out the information that would allow one to determine whether the question posed to the pupil-teacher is “fair,” for here we are told that the “bad” paraphrase was produced by a “youth who has been two years in a training college, and for the last of the two years has studied *Macbeth*” (*Reports*, 176)!

Had Arnold included this information in “Literature and Science,” he not only would have made it easier for his readers to estimate the quality of the pupil-teacher’s paraphrase, he also would have been in a position to sharpen his critique of Britain’s educational system. He could have argued that given the extended preparation that preceded the student’s sitting for this exam and given the results, all would have to agree that the pupil-teacher’s training was seriously flawed. Whatever Arnold’s reasons may have been for doing such a poor job of paraphrasing his own words, though, there can be

no question that he was heavily invested in this particular passage from *Macbeth*. Indeed, as we will see, Arnold quite specifically saw his own social role as “ministering” to the problem of Britain’s “diseased mind.” In this role, Arnold did not suggest ways to “raze” the problem of popular education from Britain’s memory nor did he propose techniques for covering over this problem with “some sweet oblivious antidote.” To the contrary, because he fancied himself the doctor qualified to diagnose the nation’s ills, Arnold voiced the doctor’s response: the only way for Britain to resolve the problems with its educational system was for it to begin to “minister” to itself.

Educating the Populace: Policy and Practice in Nineteenth-Century England

In *Discipline and Punish*, Foucault issued a challenge: “People write the history of experiments on those born blind, on wolf-children or [on those] under hypnosis. But who will write the more general, more fluid, but also more determinant history of the ‘examination’—its rituals, its methods, its characters and their roles, its play of questions and answers, its systems of marking and classification?” (185). Yet after Foucault’s work on disciplinarity, it would seem that a history of the examination would contain few surprises, requiring only that one fill in the details of the state’s increased interest in surveilling, classifying, and controlling the threat posed by the body politic. Indeed, it would be easy enough to read the events I am about to relate concerning British education in the nineteenth century in exactly these terms. However, because Foucault is not concerned with resistances to the transformation of the schoolroom into a site for expressing disciplinary power, he gives scant attention to the small-scale actions of individuals who were unhappy to find themselves working at the time he rightly characterizes as marking “the beginnings of a pedagogy that functions as a science” (187). Arnold was one of many who worked at this crossroad, where a vast array of contrary instincts and uneasy alliances came into play during the British movement toward popular education.⁹ And, I would argue, Arnold warrants our renewed attention precisely because he failed in his efforts to arrest what he termed the increased “mechanization” of the educational process. By understanding the dynamics involved in Arnold’s failed attempt to shape public policy and in his response to that failure, we may put ourselves in a position to devise more successful strategies for intervening in the business of educational reform. But in order to place Arnold’s work in its historical context, we must first review the events that led up to the British government’s direct involvement in educating its poorest citizens.

At the beginning of the nineteenth century, the government had no formal role in educating either the poor or the lower middle class. Instead, it allowed this work to be taken up by two separate private groups: the British and Foreign School Society, established in 1808, which provided non-denominational education, and the National Society, founded in 1811, which was allied with the Church of England and provided both general and religious instruction. Each society offered its services at substantially reduced rates for the poor and at no cost for those entirely without means. Each relied, as well, on the “monitorial” method for delivering its educational product to the most students at the lowest cost. This system, in which a single teacher monitored his or her assistants as they moved through the classroom monitoring the work of the other students in turn, was certainly economically efficient: indeed, Dr. Andrew Bell, the man credited with bringing this pedagogy to England, dreamed of the day when “a single master, who, if able and diligent, could, without difficulty, conduct ten contiguous schools, each consisting of a thousand scholars” (qtd. in Godsen 2). What the single master at the hub of this ideal institution would do “without difficulty” was to issue instructions to the ten thousand students amassed about him. The student monitors would then see to it that the master’s or mistress’s orders were carried out as they swept through the rows of seated students. It’s one version of the bureaucrat’s ultimate fantasy, where all is order and obedience, hierarchy and control.¹⁰

Whatever misgivings government officials might have had about this approach to educating the poor, they were in no position to reform or replace the mode of instruction as long as such work was left up to philanthropic organizations. But as soon as the government began in 1833 to allocate annual grants to both societies for building and maintaining new schools, its fiscal policies drew it deeper and deeper into the work of educating the poor. And, with the ballooning of the amount of time and money devoted to increasing the number of public elementary schools and to addressing the critical shortage in qualified teachers to work in these newly erected schools, there was a growing call for tracking how this money was being spent. All of this activity came to a head in 1839 when Queen Victoria, newly ascended to the throne, had Lord John Russell announce her concern that the government’s reports clearly showed “a deficiency in the general Education of the People which is not in accordance with the character of a Civilized and Christian Nation” (qtd. in Maclure 42). The queen then empowered Lord Lansdowne to create the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, which was to directly supervise the distribution and use of the government’s grant money, thus discontinuing the policy of turning the

money over to the two school societies to parcel out as they saw fit. And thus, in just six years, the government went from leaving the education of the poor to its philanthropic societies to being directly and inextricably involved in the business not only of funding the education of the poor but of formulating educational policy as well.

Although Lansdowne's committee was unable to overcome resistance to establishing a system of Normal Schools for training teachers to meet the demand produced by the construction of the new schools, it did succeed in creating the position of "inspector of schools" in 1840, which would be filled by a corps of civil servants who would evaluate the schools receiving grants from the government. Sir James Kay (later Kay-Shuttleworth), secretary to the committee, informed the inspectors that they were to visit schools in their assigned districts from time to time "in order to ascertain that the grant has in each case been duly applied, and to enable you to furnish accurate information as to the discipline, management, and methods of instruction pursued in such schools" ("Extract from the Minutes" 11). The instructions go on to elaborate the three distinct duties the inspectors were to perform: the inspection of neighborhoods requesting grant money for the erection of new schools; the inspection of schools receiving aid and "an examination of the method and matter of instruction, and the character of the discipline established in them"; and, finally, the inspection of elementary education in particular districts ("Instructions to Inspectors" 12–13). In practice, what this meant was that Her Majesty's inspectors saw the nation's educational machinery working under the least favorable conditions—the poorest students instructed by the least experienced teachers, who depended for their livelihood on a budget always in flux.

And, sure enough, once such inspections began, some of the horrific excesses of the monitorial system did come to light. For example, in an 1844 report, one inspector reported:

I have visited schools in which a system of signals, communicated by the aid of a semaphore fixed to the master's desk, was substituted for the word of command. The precision with which the boys interpreted and obeyed the instructions telegraphed to them was an interesting spectacle. Any person who might have been induced from it to form a favorable opinion of the efficiency of the instruction, would have been, I fear, in error. (qtd. in Hyndman 18–19)

Another inspector recorded inquiring after why it was taking so long to begin a particular reading lesson, only to find "that the monitors were in the act of placing the finger of each individual boy upon the first word of the

lesson to be read" (qtd. in Hyndman 18). In response to reports such as these and further compelled by the shortage of teachers, the committee proposed in its minutes of 1846 a system for training and certifying new teachers that effectively turned each schoolhouse into a potential normal school. Under this new system, only successful *graduates* from elementary school could work as apprentices and pupil-teachers, rather than this work being left to monitors who were themselves still in the process of acquiring an elementary education. The government committed itself to subsidizing this program by offering a series of stipends to the apprentices, pupil-teachers, and the schoolmasters and -mistresses.

In its earliest, most ambitious form, the committee's program promised poor students who had excelled in elementary school a better wage for continuing on as pupil-teachers than they could earn in a factory or in the fields. Upon successful completion of three years' service as a pupil-teacher, the candidate was guaranteed employment either in the school system or, if the candidate so chose, in government service. The minutes from 1846 further stipulated that in order to enter this program, the students had to be at least thirteen years old and, among other things, had "to read with fluency, ease and expression" ("Minutes of the Committee" 2). The committee's principal instrument for ensuring the steady replacement of the monitorial system with the pupil-teacher system was none other than the inspector of schools, for it became the inspector's additional responsibility to annually test all pupil-teachers involved in this new program. And it was the fulfillment of this very responsibility that eventually brought Arnold into contact with the unnamed pupil-teacher who produced the "bad" paraphrase discussed earlier in this chapter. It is this task as well that dictated, at least in part, the form of their exchange.

This, then, was how popular education stood at the time Arnold received his appointment in 1851 to serve as an inspector of schools: interest in popular education was uneven, with funding of the nascent venture in this direction neither guided by a consistently thought-out government policy nor supported by any clear constituency. To make matters worse for Arnold in particular, the successful extension of education to Britain's poorest citizens relied heavily on the inspector of schools, whose job it was to determine whether or not the government funds were being well spent, whether the students were learning, whether the teachers were sufficiently challenging, and whether the pupil-teachers were being prepared to take on the increased teaching demands the future promised to provide. Given that the inspector's job entailed this constant and expanding evaluation of schools, teachers, students, and pupil-teachers, the history of British popular educa-

tion up to this point does, at first, seem to fully illustrate Foucault's assertion that a "relation of surveillance, defined and regulated, is inscribed at the heart of the practice of teaching, not as an additional or adjacent part, but as a mechanism that is inherent to it and which increases its efficiency" (176). The issue that concerns us now, though, is how Arnold worked within and resisted the surveilling tasks required of an inspector of schools. That is, what kind of a surveillant was he? In whose interest was he performing such surveillance and to what end? Or, to put the question another way, when Arnold turned his gaze on the children of the poor to observe them as they were being educated by the state, what did he see?

Arnold and the Newcastle Commission: Placing Hope in the Middle Class

Arnold's first Inspector's Report, written in 1852, comments on the strengths and weaknesses of the new pupil-teacher system. Acknowledging that the system was beneficial in the main, Arnold concludes with these observations about the apprentice teachers:

But I have been much struck in examining them towards the close of their apprenticeship, when they are generally at least eighteen years old, with the utter disproportion between the great amount of positive information and the low degree of mental culture and intelligence which they exhibit. Young men, whose knowledge of grammar, of the minutest details of geographical and historical facts, and above all of mathematics, is surprising, often cannot paraphrase a plain passage of prose or poetry without totally misapprehending it, or write half a page of composition on any subject without falling into gross blunders of taste and expression. (*Reports* 16)

Although Arnold does not define or provide examples of how "gross blunders of taste and expression" are constituted, he does speculate about the cause of the poor performances in these areas and about their appropriate resolution:

I cannot but think that, with a body of young men so highly instructed, too little attention has hitherto been paid to this side of education; the side through which it chiefly forms the character. . . . I am sure that the study of portions of the best English authors, and composition, might with advantage be made a part of their regular course of instruction to a much greater degree than it is at present. Such a training would tend to

elevate and humanize a number of young men, who at present, notwithstanding the vast amount of raw information which they have amassed, are wholly uncultivated; and it would have the great social advantage of tending to bring them into intellectual sympathy with the educated of the upper classes. (16–17)

Arnold's first report thus appears to capture what has since come to be called "the Arnoldian mission" as it moves away from the relatively isolated arena of literary criticism into the much larger space of the classroom. That is, we find Arnold arguing that by improving the reading material presented to the pupil-teachers and introducing them to "the best English authors, and composition," it would be possible to achieve that hegemonic feat politicians alone are unequal to—generating new teachers who are in "intellectual sympathy with the educated of the upper classes."

Before we assess Arnold's position, it is worth recalling that this report was addressed to a parliamentary board whose members certainly would have considered themselves part of the educated upper class. Thus, it is not impossible to suppose that Arnold has adopted a rhetorical strategy that allows him to appeal to the self-interest of the board members while arguing for his own curricular changes. This, at least, is one way to explain why Arnold doesn't elaborate on the connection between high reading and the development of high-class sympathies: there isn't one, but insisting otherwise allows Arnold to promote his own brand of curricular reform. Whatever Arnold's reasons for justifying his proposal along these lines, though, one thing is certain: by the time he published *Culture and Anarchy* in 1869, he had permanently abandoned the idea that the upper classes even had an intellectual life to develop a sympathy for. And once Arnold came to see the upper class as Barbarians in the making, he had to revise his argument about the importance of studying literature.

Signs of Arnold's growing disenchantment with the educated upper class can be readily discerned in the work he performed in 1858 for the Newcastle Commission, whose mission was to "inquire into the present state of Popular Education in England, and to consider and report what Measures, if any, are required for the extension of sound and cheap elementary instruction to all classes of the people" ("Report on Popular Education" 6). To this end, the commission appointed ten assistant commissioners to explore the state of popular education in five specimen districts in England—agricultural, manufacturing, mining, maritime, and metropolitan—two assigned to each district. For comparative purposes, the commission made two additional appointments to study popular education on the Continent:

Mark Pattison was sent to Germany and Arnold was sent to France, French Switzerland, and Holland.¹¹

Before leaving for the Continent, Arnold described the appointment to his sister in the following terms: "You know that I have no special interest in the subject of public education, but a mission like this appeals even to the general interest which every educated man cannot help feeling in such a subject. I shall for five months get free from the routine work of it, of which I sometimes get very sick, and be dealing with its history and principles" (*Letters, 1848–1888* 90–91). Within three years he was openly involved in battling the government's plans to revise the system for allocating grants to public schools and declaring to his wife that he would publish his critique of the government's Revised Code even if it meant that he would lose his job: "If thrown on the world I daresay we should be on our legs again before very long. Anyway, I think I owed as much as this to a cause in which I have now a deep interest, and always shall have, even if I cease to serve it officially" (195). Arnold's trip to the Continent was the catalyst that moved him from having "no special interest" in public education to having a "deep interest" in it, proof of which may be seen in his request that the commission allow him to publish his official report at his own expense so that he could make it available to the general public.

Although Arnold misjudged the popular interest in his views on education, his report, published under the title *The Popular Education of France*, has much of interest in it for our purposes. To begin with, Arnold writes admiringly of "the common people" of France, who "seems [sic] to me the soundest part of the French nation. They seem to me more free from the two opposite degradations of the multitudes, brutality and servility, to have a more developed human life, more of what distinguishes elsewhere the cultured classes from the vulgar, than the common people in any other country with which I am acquainted" (9–10). Arnold attributes this elevated status to the quality of the French educational system, which at that time provided an elementary education to a greater percentage of the population, for a longer period of time, and at a lower cost than was available anywhere under the British system. Acknowledging that it would be a "serious misfortune" to lower the salaries of officials and schoolmasters to the levels offered in France, Arnold nonetheless maintained that "there can be no doubt that a certain plainness and cheapness is an indispensable element of a plan of education which is to be very widely extended" (102). One example that Arnold provides to underscore this point also serves to illustrate the level of attention he was required to bring to bear on the minutiae of the educational process: he draws attention to the difference between the length

of the inspector's report for individual schools in France and that in Britain, as well as to the significant variation in the quality of the paper used. "These appear insignificant matters; but when you come to provide for the inspection of 65,000 schools, it makes a difference whether you devote to each six sheets and a half of good foolscap [as the British do], or a single sheet of very ordinary note-paper [as the French do]" (103). Building his case on an overwhelming compendium of such details, Arnold thus sets out to demonstrate the benefits of adapting a similarly centralized and cost-efficient approach to education in Britain.

That Arnold's understanding of the mission of popular education with respect to class relations had changed is readily apparent early on in *The Popular Education of France*. Anticipating the inevitable spread of democracy to Britain, Arnold could foresee the aristocracy clipped of its powers; for this reason, he placed his hope in the middle class who, as the "natural educators and initiators" of the lower classes, were in a position to prevent society from "falling into anarchy" (26). While such revolutionary social reform had already occurred in France, Arnold saw Britain's own educational system as standing in the way of a similar cultural revival. Noting, for example, that a greater number of secondary schools were to be found in France than in Britain, Arnold reports:

Our middle classes are nearly the worst educated in the world. But it is not this only. . . . It is far more that a great opportunity is missed of fusing all the upper and middle classes into one powerful whole, elevating and refining the middle classes by the contact, and stimulating the upper. In France this is what the system of public education effects; it effaces between the middle and upper classes the sense of social alienation; it raises the middle without dragging down the upper. (88)

The shift in Arnold's position here is significant. It is one thing to have argued for bringing the lower and middle classes into "sympathy" with the educated upper class; it is quite another to say that the upper class was in need of "stimulation" and that the final goal of education ought to be "fusing" the upper and middle classes and effacing social alienation. One need only recall that there were many in Arnold's audience who felt that universal education was neither a right nor a desirable good—many who had a substantial investment in the maintenance of the class system and the perpetuation of social alienation—to realize that Arnold is not rehearsing a familiar or popular argument here. He is, rather, stepping into the ring where a fight over the function and necessity of popular education was in progress. As he says at the opening of his report, he is well aware that in call-

ing for the state to take a much larger role in the education of the nation's citizens, he has "often spoken of the State and its action in such a way as to offend" some of his readers (3).

That the lower classes are absent from Arnold's vision requires explanation. Within the context of the argument made in the passage cited above, the lower classes don't take part in the grand fusing because, quite simply, they never made it into Britain's secondary system of education. Arnold certainly felt this situation should be rectified and, as early as 1853, recorded in his General Reports that "the children of the actually lowest, poorest classes in this country, of what are called the masses, are not, to speak generally, educated" (*Reports* 19). In his report to the Newcastle Commission, he returned again and again to the necessity of providing the lower classes with access to higher education, arguing, for example, that "The French system, having undertaken to put the means of education within its people's reach, has to provide schools and teachers. Here, again, it altogether diverges from ours, which has by no means undertaken to put the means of education within the people's reach, but only to make the best and richest elementary schools better and richer" (*Popular Education* 145). Arnold goes on to make it clear that he is not insisting on free, universal, compulsory education: he understands such a governmental policy to be available only to the wealthiest of countries, like the United States, or to countries where he believes a profound love of knowledge resides, like Greece. Acknowledging Britain's fiscal limitations and dismissing the possibility of the nation's possession of such a preternatural fondness for learning, Arnold nevertheless recommends that something must be done: "What Government can do, is to provide sufficient and proper schools to receive [the rising masses] as they arrive" (149).

To those who felt that such a commitment to education was beyond the government's means and, further, that it was wasted on people who would never rise above their "natural" level no matter how much instruction they received, Arnold responded: "It is sufficient to say to those who hold [this position], that it is vain for them to expect that the lower classes will be kind enough to remain ignorant and unbettered merely for the sake of saving them inconvenience" (159). The import of the "inconvenience" Arnold speaks of here should be clear; the lower classes in France, after all, inconvenienced the upper classes a great deal in 1789. That Arnold saw education as the best means for preventing another such inconvenience is certain: as he put it in *The Popular Education of France*, he saw "the intervention of the State in public education" to be the "matter of a practical institution, designed to meet new social exigencies" (21). (It is also true that Arnold saw the threat of "anar-

chy” where one of his better-known contemporaries saw the promise of a “proletarian revolution.”) Thus, while government officials argued that poor children were better off working in factories than in going to schools and that the extension of universal education was not fiscally feasible, Arnold was willing to entertain the possibility that poor and lower-middle-class children were being deprived of something fundamentally important by policies that declined to make education more readily available to all.¹²

Arnold literally failed to sell this argument to the public when he published *The Popular Education of France* at his own expense, and he also failed figuratively to sell it to the Newcastle Commission, which found more convincing evidence in reports like the one it received from Rev. James Fraser. Fraser rejected both the possibility and the desirability of giving the children of the poor access to the secondary school system, declaring:

Even if it were possible, I doubt whether it would be desirable, with a view to the real interests of the peasant boy, to keep him at school till he was 14 or 15 years of age. But it is not possible. We must make up our minds to see the last of him, as far as the day school is concerned at 10 or 11. We must frame our system of education upon this hypothesis; and I venture to maintain that it is quite possible to teach a child soundly and thoroughly, in a way that he shall not forget it, all that is necessary for him to possess in the shape of intellectual attainment, by the time that he is 10 years old. If he has been properly looked after in the lower classes, he shall be able to spell correctly the words that he will ordinarily have to use; he shall read a common narrative—the paragraph in the newspaper that he cares to read—with sufficient ease to be a pleasure to himself and to convey information to listeners; if gone to live at a distance from home, he shall write his mother a letter that shall be both legible and intelligible. (“Report on Popular Education” 243)

Fraser goes on to record that if he had ever had hopes for a brighter future for elementary education than those expressed in this melancholy list, what he had seen during his six months’ service inspecting schools for the commission had “effectually and for ever dissipated them” (243). Given the choice between Arnold’s idealistic vision, on the one hand, where primary and secondary schooling would be made more generally available and where students would read the “best English authors,” and Fraser’s pragmatic vision of what was “possible,” on the other, the commission opted to embrace Fraser’s standards for what one could “reasonably” expect a peasant boy to learn in school by the age of ten.

This was the first of a series of failures for Arnold. And because Arnold was unable to generate a counterargument powerful enough to convince his superiors to take a less instrumentalist approach to education, over time his work as an inspector of schools grew increasingly “mechanical”; more important, the content of the education delivered in the primary schools he inspected came to be more fully determined by its potential to produce a measurable product. We can see this in the Newcastle Commission’s final recommendations to the Committee of the Privy Council on Education, in which there was no proposal for bolstering secondary education or for increasing the number of elementary schools available to the poor in Britain. Rather, there was a call to simplify the bureaucratic system for allocating funds, which was to be accomplished by making the amount distributed to any given school depend *entirely* on how well students at that particular school performed on a series of exams administered by the inspector. The commission gave its rationale for this proposal, which quickly became known as “payment by results”: “Till something like a real examination is introduced into our day schools, good elementary teaching will never be given to half the children who attend them. At present, the temptation of the teachers is to cram the elder classes, and the inspector is too cursory to check the practice, while there are no inducements to make them attend closely to the younger children” (341). From the commission’s vantage point, in other words, the best solution to this problem of cramming teachers, crammed students, and cursory inspectors was to increase the surveillance of the teachers, the students, and, through the new reports, the inspectors as well on the assumption that a “real examination” administered to each student individually by the inspector and his assistant examiner would bring everyone back into line. No new infusion of funds was necessary. No new pedagogical approach was called for. No new materials need be made available. The one thing needful, the commission informed the government, was a better system for monitoring and controlling how the government’s money was being spent in the nation’s primary classrooms.

Once again, the state’s principal instrument for accomplishing this additional monitoring and controlling of the disbursement of its funds, the examination of its poorest students, and the assessment of its teachers was to be the inspector of schools. When the Newcastle Commission’s suggestions were taken up in the Revised Code, what this came to mean was that the inspector had to examine each student individually in the areas of reading, writing, and arithmetic, since the size of each school grant was made to depend directly on how each student performed on this battery of exams.

Arnold described in his General Report for 1863 how this new method of payment by results had changed his job: under the old system, the inspector served as “an agency for testing and promoting the intellectual force of schools, not [as under the new system] as an agency for testing and promoting their discipline and their good building, fitting, and so on” (*Reports* 91). Rather than exercising an “intellectual force” in the schools, Arnold and all the other inspectors found their work suddenly and completely given over to the activity of “testing” and “discipline,” work that fundamentally involved reorganizing the educational environment into what Foucault calls “*tableaux vivants*” — a series of charts, tables, reports, commands, and recommendations that serve to “transform the confused, useless or dangerous multitudes into ordered multiplicities” (148).¹³ And, as I will argue in the following sections, Arnold’s turn to cultural critique must be understood in relation to his failure to prevent this reorganization of his working conditions.

Arnold and the Revised Code: The Question of Ascertainable Knowledge

When the Newcastle Commission’s Report was published in 1861, the government’s annual grant for education was £813,441, up from the £20,000 originally allocated in 1833. Charged with the responsibility of bringing this rampaging expense under control, Robert Lowe, vice-president of the recently established Education Department, proposed consolidating the entire system of grants to schools into a single payment, which would be based on how students in the schools performed on examinations of their abilities in reading, writing, and arithmetic.¹⁴ For each exam passed, one-third of the student’s capitation grant would be released to the school, with the full grant being paid for successful work in all three areas. A similar system was to be applied to the apprentices and pupil-teachers, thereby relieving the government of the stipendiary system for underwriting teacher training initiated in 1844. In both cases, Lowe insisted, joining eligibility for funding to the process of examination would help direct the teacher’s attention back to the class of students as a whole. Those schools with good teachers would prosper, while those staffed with poor teachers would fail (Walcott 63–64).

In a letter years later to R. Lingens, who had served as secretary for the Committee of the Privy Council from 1849 to 1869, Lowe reflected on the forces that motivated his decision to restrict the examinations to reading, writing, and arithmetic:

As I understand the case, . . . you and I viewed the three Rs not only or primarily as the exact amount of instruction which ought to be given, but as an amount of knowledge which could be ascertained thoroughly by examination, and upon which we could safely base the Parliamentary grant. It was more a financial than a literary preference. Had there been any other branch of useful knowledge, the possession of which could have been ascertained with equal precision, there was nothing to prevent its admission. But there was not. (qtd. in Connell 210)

As a true Benthamite, Lowe's understanding of this system's virtues rests heavily on terms like "exact amount," "useful knowledge," "precision": they express his overriding interest in seeing education as a "free market" for exchanging practical information. Consequently, Lowe's goal in reforming the examination system was, according to James Winter, "to concentrate authority, to apply to the school system the stimulus of free trade, and to simplify the enormously complicated clerical work at the Privy Council office" (177). Indeed, at the time he introduced these proposed reforms, Lowe proudly announced to the Parliament: "we are about to substitute for the vague and indefinite test which now exists, a definite, clear, and precise test, so that the public may know exactly what consideration they get for their money" (qtd. in Connell 207).

Whether this system ever succeeded in letting "the public" "know exactly" what they were getting for their money is doubtful. But there is no doubt about whether "payment by results" succeeded in reducing government outlays to education. In 1859 the committee distributed £836,920 for constructing new schools, for maintaining already established schools, and for subsidizing salaries for teachers and pupil-teachers. After a revised version of Lowe's proposal was put into effect, the committee's distributions fell to £693,078 in 1865 on their way down to £511,324 in 1869—a decrease of nearly 40 percent in just ten years. The number of new candidates interested in teaching dropped from 2,513 in 1862 to just 1,478 in 1864, signaling a decline in the applicant pool of more than 40 percent in just two years (Walcott 94–95). This was all just as Lowe had promised during the parliamentary debates over the proposal in 1862: "If [the reform] is not cheap it shall be efficient; if it is not efficient it shall be cheap" (qtd. in Connell 207).

At the time, Lowe's assault on the system's teachers and students must have seemed strange indeed to Arnold. While the government's reading of the Newcastle Report enabled it only to see a problem with *the people* in the system, his work for that same commission had allowed him to see the problems arising from *the system's* low expectations and meager provisions for

its students. Thus, for example, in his General Report of 1860, Arnold records that the poor quality of schoolbooks in the French schools had led him “to reflect on the great imperfection exhibited by our [British] schoolbooks also. . . . [W]hat was wanting [in France], as it is wanting with us, was a good *reading-book*, or course of reading-books. It is not enough remembered in how many cases his reading-book forms the whole literature, except his Bible, of the child attending a primary school” (*Reports* 81, original emphasis). Aware of the consequences of this absence of valuable reading material from the classroom, Arnold goes on in this report to request the development of a set of “well selected and interesting” reading books, a collection that would inspire “a real love for reading and literature” (83). While Arnold fails all too predictably to specify what such literature might be or how it might produce such a “love” for a certain kind of literacy, he does go into some detail over what makes the available reading books unsatisfactory. They are either “dry scientific disquisitions” or anthologies where “far more than half of the poetical extracts were the composition either of the anonymous compilers themselves, or of American writers of the second and third order” (82). Arnold returns to this concern later, in his General Report for 1863, noting a typical sentence from one of the schoolbooks then in vogue: “some time after one meal is digested we feel again the sensation of hunger, which is gratified by again taking food” (97–98). Thus, by virtue of his direct experience as an inspector of schools, Arnold could see what was invisible to Lowe from his perch high atop the Privy Council: examining students on their reading abilities would serve no pedagogical purpose as long as so little attention was paid to the material the students had at their disposal to read.

In “The Twice-Revised Code,” the writing in which Arnold most openly engages in politics, he draws on this same wealth of practical experience in the nation’s classrooms in an attempt to influence the parliamentary vote on Lowe’s proposed reforms. Momentarily accepting the Newcastle Report’s assessment that under the current system of education only one student in four successfully learned to “read and write without conscious difficulty, and to perform such arithmetical operations as occur in the ordinary business of life,” Arnold argues that reducing educational funding and limiting the scope of the curriculum would not address the root cause of this manifest failure of the school system—namely, the shortness of school life experienced by the poor (215). That is, changing funding and examination practices would not alter the fact that reigning economic conditions compelled working children to leave school at an early age so that they could earn money for their families—a fact, Arnold asserts, any schoolteacher,

school manager, or inspector could have presented to the commission or Mr. Lowe had they been asked (220).¹⁵ Arnold goes so far as to predict that the proposed changes would actually exacerbate this problem, since the Revised Code promised to dismantle the one aspect of the educational system that assisted students in escaping their lowly economic conditions—the pupil-teacher stipendiary program.¹⁶

Having cast the Revised Code's purported benefits into doubt, Arnold then set about dismantling the evidence the code's supporters relied on in making their case for "payment by results." Arnold was particularly interested in the discrepancy between the Newcastle Commission's determination that only one in four students could "read without conscious difficulty" and the inspectors' assessment that three out of five students attained this level of proficiency. Arnold bristled at the allegation—made both in the Newcastle Report and in Lowe's introductory remarks to Parliament concerning the Revised Code—that the discrepancy showed the Inspectors had attempted to conceal the gravity of the educational crisis and the inefficiency of the current system.¹⁷ The discrepancy arose, Arnold explains, because the inspectors and those on the commission had used different standards for evaluating the act of reading. For those on the Newcastle Commission, reading "without conscious difficulty" became, under the rubric of Rev. Fraser's recommended standards, the ability to "read the Bible with intelligence" and "the newspaper with sufficient ease to be a pleasure to [the reader] and to convey information to listeners." Arnold was more than ready to agree that by those standards, no more than one in four of the nation's poorest students achieved reading proficiency. But, Arnold goes on to explain, the inspectors use quite a different standard when evaluating student performance in these schools:

If, when we speak of a scholar reading fairly or well, we merely mean that reading in his accustomed lesson-book, his provincial tone and accent being allowed for, his want of home-culture and refinement being allowed for, some inevitable interruptions in his school attendance being allowed for, he gets through his task fairly or well, then a much larger proportion of scholars in our inspected schools than the one-fourth assigned by the Royal Commissioners, may be said to read fairly or well. And this is what the inspectors mean when they return scholars as reading fairly or well. (221).

This point *should have been* as obvious to the commission, Arnold asserts, as it was to anyone who worked in the field. As Arnold puts it, all who "are familiar with the poor and their life, and who do not take their standards

from the life of the educated classes, [know] that the goodness of a poor child's reading is something relative, that absolute standards are here out of place" (223).

To find Arnold championing *relative* rather than universal standards of evaluation may come as a surprise, given the general thrust of his critical writing, but this is one of the fruitful disjunctions that emerges by turning to practice; for here we see Arnold attempting to apply evaluative criteria that are responsive to local exigencies. In concluding his critique of the Revised Code, Arnold explains why those proposing the reform were blind to these same local constraints: "Concocted in the recesses of the Privy Council Office, with no advice asked from those practically conversant with schools, no notice given to those who largely support schools, this new scheme of the Council Office authorities...has taken alike their friends and enemies by surprise" (232). However surprised the school inspectors were by these proposed reforms, their experientially based counterarguments were powerless before the government's desire to transform "the knowledge ascertained" in the educational process into a fixed and visible object, subject to universal standards of appraisal. Thus, when it came time to vote, Lowe's Revised Code was passed with some slight revisions and payment by results became the law of the land. In the process, the pupil-teacher stipendiary program was shut down and the job of school inspector was effectively reduced to that of exam administrator.

As stunning as this defeat was for Arnold, he nevertheless insisted on declaring it a victory. In his article "The Code out of Danger," published anonymously after the vote, Arnold focused on the fact that in the compromise bill that passed, only *two-thirds* of the state's grant to the schools would depend on the individual examination of the students, with the other third based on attendance. Leaning on this thin reed, Arnold crowed, "In direct contradiction to Mr. Lowe it has been successfully maintained, that to give rewards for proved good reading, writing, and arithmetic is *not* the whole duty of the State toward popular education" (248, original emphasis). In Arnold's subsequent General Reports, however, it clear that this distinction is insignificant: in fact, Arnold's report for 1862 had to be suppressed because it complained openly about the new provision requiring that schools be notified in advance of an inspection (Connell 223).¹⁸ And when Arnold was sent abroad once again—in 1865, this time at the behest of the Taunton Commission, to investigate the handling of the secondary education of the middle class on the Continent—the preface to his subsequent report freely criticized the Revised Code and its effects on the British educational system. Thus, *Schools and Universities on the Continent* begins:

“In England, since the Revised Code, the school-course is more and more confined to the three paying matters, reading, writing, and arithmetic; the inspection tends to concentrate itself on these matters; these matters are the very part of school-teaching which is most mechanical, and a natural danger of the English mind is to make instruction mechanical” (22). Arnold reiterated this point in his General Report for 1867, decrying “In a country where every one is prone to rely too much on mechanical processes, and too little on intelligence, a change in the Education Department’s regulations, which, by making two-thirds of the Government grant depend upon a mechanical examination, inevitably gives a mechanical turn to the school teaching, a mechanical turn to the inspection” (*Reports* 112–13). By emphasizing that the code had driven teachers to teach one book over and over throughout the year so that their students would pass the “reading” part of the exam, Arnold wanted to make it clear that he felt this problem would not be solved, as some had suggested, by simply expanding the number of areas of examination: “In the game of mechanical contrivances the teachers will in the end beat us” (115).

Thus, the passage of the Revised Code compelled Arnold to see that the source of Britain’s cultural decline lay in its very fascination with “mechanization.” In this regard, his critique resonates with Foucault’s later assertion that “the examination is the technique by which power, instead of emitting the signs of its potency, instead of imposing its mark on its subjects, holds them in a mechanism of objectification. In this space of domination, disciplinary power manifests its potency, essentially, by arranging objects” (187). Arnold’s position was contradictory and conflicted, for as an inspector of schools, his labor time constituted one of the principal sites where this governmental fascination with mechanization expressed itself. But he did not take his defeat in the battle to arrest the growth in the government’s “mechanism of objectification” as the occasion to resign himself to the inevitable rise of disciplinary power. Instead, that defeat revealed to him the ways in which his government’s policies reflected a national fascination with mechanization. And it is this insight, of course, which Arnold then proceeded to develop into a wholesale critique of British society in *Culture and Anarchy*.

In light of the foregoing discussion, we are now in a position to see that the mechanization of British culture was an issue Arnold knew not in the abstract but rather experienced firsthand in his role as the instrument of the government’s educational policy for structuring, controlling, and surveilling the work done by everyone in the nation’s poorest classrooms—students, teachers, and inspectors alike. But while *Culture and Anarchy* pro-

vides Arnold with a forum to deliberate over the significance of this expansion in the government's powers, it marks as well his retreat from the sphere of direct political action to a safer place where he could identify problems, detect patterns, produce his own loose systems of categorization, and refrain from the brutally disappointing business of proposing actual plans for enacting the reforms he supported. Ultimately, then, Arnold's turn to criticism in *Culture and Anarchy*—coming, as it does, in the wake of his failure to influence the shape of the country's educational policy—must be seen both as an act of despair and as evidence of how overwhelmingly seductive it can be to believe that in a better world, criticism alone would have the power to bring about cultural change. With this in mind, it may be more appropriate to say that Arnold's lasting legacy to the academy is not his argument for “the best that has been said and thought in our time,” but rather his inculcation of a habit of mind that seeks refuge from a world gone mad in the comforting activity of producing literary and cultural critique.

Revisiting the Diseased Mind: Anarchy, Despair, and the Safe Haven of Criticism

Shortly after the successful passage of the Revised Code, Arnold published what is arguably his most influential essay, “The Function of Criticism at the Present Time,” where he defines criticism as “*a disinterested endeavor to learn and propagate the best that is known and thought in the world*” (283, original emphasis). Much has been made of Arnold's insistence that in propagating “the best that is known and thought in the world,” one must rely on “*force till right is ready; and till right is ready, force, the existing order of things, is justified*” (265–66, original emphasis). If Arnold could have his way, it would seem, he would bring all the force of the state to bear on the project of compelling others to accede to the dictates of Reason—“the legitimate ruler of the world” (266). However chilling this proclamation may be in isolation, when it is read in the context of Arnold's failure to avert the passage of the Revised Code and his inability to control the material conditions of his own employment, it assumes a more desperate tone. It is, I would argue, an example of the plaintive cry made by the structurally dispossessed and the politically impotent when they dream of another world order, one in which the truly meritorious, now inexplicably out of power, would have the means to force others to bend to their wishes. In other words, it is a utopian wish and nothing more, a dream of inverted social relations that Arnold is in no position to bring about—partly because he's an inspector of schools and not a sitting member of Parliament, but

also, and more important, because he writes as a polemicist and a critic, and thus traffics in diatribe and distance rather than the arts of the engaged response, of compromise, of multivocalic persuasion.

Arnold, of course, has his reasons for insisting that criticism be removed from the world of practical concerns and consequences. As he puts it: “But criticism, real criticism, is essentially the exercise of [curiosity]. It obeys an instinct prompting it to try to know the best that is known and thought in the world, irrespectively of practice, politics, and everything of the kind; and to value knowledge and thought as they approach this best, without the intrusion of any other considerations whatever” (268). As Arnold understands the workings of the zeitgeist, the production of such criticism is necessary because of the paucity of “true and fresh ideas” in Britain. And from here it is but a small step to realize that Arnold’s criticism is itself the expression of all “the force” that is available to him, all that he has to rely on until “right” — that “time of true creative activity” — is ready (269). Thus, what has been lost in all the hand-wringing over Arnold’s authoritarian designs is a sense of just how feeble and ineffectual is the force that the critic wields. For his part, Arnold certainly didn’t attempt to conceal this weakness. Indeed, he admitted it openly, turning his inability to generate change into a virtue and a structural necessity, given British culture. The aim of such “disinterested” criticism, he declared, was

Simply to know the best that is known and thought in the world, and by in its turn making this known, to create a current of true and fresh ideas. Its business is to do this with inflexible honesty, with due ability; but its business is to do no more, and to leave alone all questions of practical consequences and applications, questions which will never fail to have due prominence given to them. (270)

The function of criticism, in short, is to be curious and disinterested. And for this to happen, the critic must leave the project of working out the “practical consequences and applications” to other, lesser beings.¹⁹

And yet, if we return to the events surrounding the passage of the Revised Code, it seems odd that Arnold disdains the business of thinking about the practical consequences of implementing ideas. After all, he himself had eloquently argued on behalf of those who were being sacrificed to *the principle* of “payment by results” and he had stridently opposed the Revised Code on the basis of its practical consequences. He was thus fully taken up with practical considerations and criticized those around him who refused to be deterred by such matters. Arnold wriggles free of these contradictions by arguing that the critic abstains from worrying over the “practical consequences

and applications” of creating “a current of true and fresh ideas,” of promoting an awareness of “the best that has been thought and said in our time.” The critic, in other words, does exactly what Arnold did in his response to the Revised Code: he allows for “a free play of the mind on all subjects which it touches” (270). And this free play consists, primarily and perhaps paradoxically, of looking at the practical consequences of failing to enact policies based on “the best.” What it does not do, tellingly, is consider the material constraints that stand in the way of realizing “the best” or the practical consequences that might follow from pursuing “the best.”

With regard to the Revised Code, Arnold released his thoughts to play freely over Lowe’s proposal in hopes of changing a specific government educational policy in a specific way. In all subsequent cases, he made no attempt to propose practicable alternatives: he had, apparently, learned his lesson. This shift was hardly without consequence, for, as Keating has observed, it caused the rhetorical relationship Arnold established with his readers to become more and more strained. As Keating puts it: “When his middle class readers were slow to respond [to his critique of social relations], he asked them to admit that not only were they narrow-minded, ugly, intolerant, and ignorant, but that their cherished traditions were responsible for their condition. It was not an attractive proposition, and when the awaited response did come it caricatured Arnold as the languid and unpractical aesthete” (222). While Keating prefers to see Arnold’s failure to get his readers to embrace his critique of British society as proof that “Arnold’s ultimate significance lies elsewhere” (223), I would argue, quite to the contrary, that Arnold’s ultimate significance is to be found in his failure to find a way to speak to his target audience, for he transformed his inability to bring about the kinds of social change he desired so fervently into a principled position. This willed impotence, emerging in response to a *single* failure in the political sphere, is surely the central legacy of Arnoldian criticism, for here we find the all-purpose and apparently irresistible justification for the necessity of writing about the world but not acting in it, save through the production of more prose about the failure of the world and the people who live in it to meet one’s high expectations.

Seen in this light, *Culture and Anarchy* captures Arnold in his first sustained effort to enact the argument made in “The Function of Criticism in the Present Time.” By way of conclusion, I’d like to turn to the moment when Arnold himself silently cites the very same passage from *Macbeth* that the pupil-teacher he was to examine years later would paraphrase so badly. Near the end of the fifth chapter of *Culture and Anarchy*, Arnold catalogues the range of problems threatening Britain: the nation’s fascination with

mechanization; its general disdain for culture; the triumph of Hebraism over the land; the sorry condition of all of the nation's classes—the Barbarians, Philistines, and the Populace, alike; the dire need for more “*aliens*, if we may so call them,—persons who are mainly led, not by their class spirit, but by a general *humane* spirit” (146, original emphasis). Confronted with this mass of problems, Arnold returns to the language of Macbeth's question to capture the importance of the critic's function:

We shall say boldly that we do not at all despair of finding some lasting truth to minister to the diseased spirit of our time; but that we have discovered the best way of finding this to be not so much by lending a hand to our friends and countrymen in their actual operations for the removal of certain definite evils, but rather in getting our friends and countrymen to seek culture, to let their consciousness play freely round their present operations and the stock notions on which they are founded, show what these are like, and how related to the intelligible law of things, and auxiliary to true human perfection. (191)

And with this, we find Arnold beating a hasty retreat from the realm of political action, his failure with respect to the Revised Code having taught him that the critic must abstain from the disappointing activity of seeking to remove “certain definite evils.” But even as he makes this argument, Arnold maintains that he has not elected to abandon the political sphere or to become suddenly and unequivocally a yes man for the state or even, in reality, to relinquish his commitment to “the removal of certain definite evils.” For given the physician's response in *Macbeth*, that “the patient must minister to himself,” it seems likely that Arnold would have us believe that he does not abandon the “diseased spirit” of his time but rather, as part of that time, stays above the realm of politics to assist in the process of having the state minister to itself—a ministering that takes the form of allowing the critic's “consciousness to play freely” over the government's operations, determining whether or not such operations lead to “true human perfection.”

Arnold begins this ministering work in the closing chapter of *Culture and Anarchy*, titled “Our Liberal Practitioners,” where he takes on “stock notions” about how to remove “certain definite evils” with regard to contemporary legislative proposals. Arnold finds that none of these Liberal proposals can reasonably be supported, least of all the system of free trade. As he puts it:

We must not let the worship of any fetish, any machinery, such as manufactures or population,—which are not, like perfection, absolute goods

in themselves, though we think them so,—create for us such a multitude of miserable, sunken, and ignorant human beings, that to carry them all along with us is impossible, and perforce they must for the most part be left by us in their degradation and wretchedness. (216)

Part of the machinery that Arnold imagined himself fighting against was the machinery of capitalism, machinery that produces “a multitude of miserable, sunken, and ignorant human beings” by fetishizing commodities. Neither a capitalist nor a predictable imperialist, and certainly not a Marxist, Arnold wages his critique of capitalism not in the name of “the people” or the “masses,” but in the name of “culture.”

It is a contradictory position to occupy and the conclusion to *Culture and Anarchy* collects the contradictions together nicely:

Every one is now boasting of what he has done to educate men’s minds and to give things the course they are taking. . . . We, indeed, pretend to educate no one, for we are still engaged in trying to clear and educate ourselves. But we are sure that the endeavor to reach, through culture, the firm intelligible law of things. . . . is the master-impulse even now of the life of our nation and of humanity, — somewhat obscurely perhaps for this actual moment, but decisively and certainly for the immediate future; and that those who work for this are the sovereign educators. (229)

Renouncing the claim to educate, only to reclaim the larger role of cultural critic and “sovereign educator” who teaches others how to live by “the firm intelligible law of things,” Arnold removes himself from the realm of worldly concerns and then insists that in so doing he has actually placed himself at the very heart of those concerns. Thus, Arnold himself may try to conclude *Culture and Anarchy* by leaping into the ethereal realm of the sovereign educator, but such claims must be read against the backdrop of his life as an inspector of schools, where his labor was squarely situated in the worldly realm of the day school educator.

Arnold may claim to be concerned only with educating himself, but he does so after announcing that the goal of learning the firm intelligible law of things is “to get a basis for a less confused action and a more complete perfection than we have at present” (191). He may assume a pose of wanting to “educate no one,” but during his working hours he did what little he could to ensure that those children toiling in the factories and fields—children he himself described as “miserable, sunken, and ignorant human beings”—had a better chance to receive, at the very least, an elementary edu-

cation. Arnold may, in short, cast himself as outside and above the worldly concerns that constrain others, but because he lived the life of an inspector of schools and not that of a man of letters, the only place he could escape the demands of the working world was in the utopian hollow created by his critical project, where his mind could play freely and not have to worry over the bureaucratic detail that filled the hours of his working life.

In commencing my own critical project here with this reassessment of the institutional significance and ramifications of Arnold's work as an inspector of schools, I have returned repeatedly to that single instant when Arnold allowed a voice heard during his labor time to speak in his critical work—Arnold's citation of the student's "bad" paraphrase. By approaching this citation from a number of different perspectives, I have enabled it to tell other stories about the history of the exam in Britain, about the emergence of the pupil-teacher system as a replacement for the monitorial method, about the assumptions informing Arnold's definition and evaluation of the act of reading, and, finally, about the complex and contradictory activity of ministering to a mind diseased when the "mind" in question is understood to be an entire nation and the "ministering" to be the responsibility of this strange, "alien" hybrid of school inspector, literary critic, and poet. What has emerged as a consequence is an image of Arnold as neither visionary prophet nor reactionary renegade. The figure that gets drawn in the ideological space where hegemonic powers battle for the consent of the populace could never function effectively if it ever were so unified: subjects who labor at the site of contradiction and concealment get produced and reproduced in contradiction and concealment.

The contradictions that constrained Arnold are particularly illuminating. Faced with the failure of his initial effort to intervene in the political sphere, Arnold blamed a world unresponsive to the dictates of a disinterested observer. He then withdrew to a rhetorical position of purity, protected by an array of arguments that transformed political quietism into a virtue and that took as proof of their veracity the very fact that others refused to embrace them. In this systematic and sustained solipsism, Arnold found a safe haven from his working conditions, a place where he could imagine himself as exercising a control over his material circumstances that was, in reality, well beyond his reach. To Arnold's credit, what he learned on his travels for the government and through his tours of inspection was the immense complexity of bringing about institutional reform. The availability of suitable reading materials, for instance, was revealed to be intimately related to the allocation of government funds, competing standards of competence, conflicting means of evaluation and levels of expectation, pre-

valent pedagogical practices, the provision of the means and methods for training teachers, and the laws governing child labor. Given the sheer quantity of variables affecting the form and function of institutionalized education and the resistance to change that was produced by their interaction, Arnold elected, understandably enough, to construct an alternative world, one ruled by “sweetness and light” rather than bureaucratic constraint. In this world, those who objected to change—those, in other words, who refused to follow the dictates of what Arnold termed “the best”—would be forced to accede to his designs until that time when “Reason” overtook them and they could begin to comply of their own volition.²⁰

Arnold’s flight from the lived realities of a highly bureaucratized state is, no doubt, understandable. Its true significance, though, lies in what it reveals about Arnold’s assumptions concerning the instrumentalist interrelationship between the function of education and the function of the critic as the engine for cultural change: within this utopian worldview, the critic produces the “current of true and fresh ideas,” the educational system delivers a mass of people ready to be carried along by this current, and the culture’s values are elevated. This has become an all-too-familiar model for cultural and institutional reform. Indeed, Arnold’s own efforts to defeat the Revised Code reveal this model’s woeful inadequacies, since his “current of true and fresh ideas” proved to be no match for the array of forces determined to restrict education to the realm of “ascertainable knowledge.” Seen in the best light, Arnold’s commitment to the free play of the mind does provide a relatively unrestricted approach for diagnosing shortcomings in institutional policies, if not the means for responding to those diagnoses. But, at the same time, his critical approach is inherently unable to produce useful analyses of social conflict, because it assumes that all who don’t ascribe to “the best that has been thought and said in our time” have minds that are diseased in one way or another—minds that are in need of “sweetness and light,” of “Hellenism,” of Reason, of a desire for true perfection, and so on. The Arnoldian approach, in other words, doesn’t acknowledge or contend with competing motivations for acting in ways other than those advocated by “the free play of the mind”; it dismisses and degrades all ways of acting in the world that are more responsive to social conditions and local constraints than to that force which Arnold would like to call Reason. Of course, to attend to the social conditions and local constraints of one’s audience is to enter the world of rhetoric, and this requires considering the reasons others act as they do and rejecting that explanation which is always too ready to hand for Arnold and his progeny—namely, that those who don’t conform are ignorant, lost, in need of the critic’s guidance.

Although Arnold tirelessly proclaimed the dangers posed by a love of machinery, he seems not to have considered the dangers posed by his own highly mechanistic model for engineering cultural reform, perhaps because the production of his criticism was what allowed him to escape the machinery of his own working life. This blindness is all the more striking in light of his work as an inspector of schools, for Arnold had ever before him the consequences of his superiors' efforts to mandate from above changes in the educational system. As one final example of the simultaneity of Arnold's insight and blindness, we have his observations, recorded in the General Report for 1878, on efforts to turn teaching into a science, when instructors were taught a set of first principles that they were then to deploy in their classrooms. Disapproving of this approach as just so much machinery, Arnold declared that the "apparent conformity [of such methods] to some general doctrine apparently true is no guarantee of their soundness. The practical application alone tests this, and often and often a method thus tested reveals unsuspected weakness" (*Reports* 189–90). What is true of pedagogical theories is true of cultural theories as well, though Arnold obviously declined to make such a connection. Nevertheless, by applying Arnold's own critical method to his practical situation, we are able to detect an "unsuspected weakness" at the core of his own "model" for understanding and encouraging the process of cultural and institutional reform. That is, because Arnold's criticism provided him with the means to escape the material conditions of his life—a way to live, however briefly, as a man of letters—and because it rationalized his own attenuated relationship to the world of lived concerns shared by other British citizens, his critical approach was structurally incapable of producing either a rhetorically persuasive argument that resulted in an actual change in his own working conditions or a blueprint for how to bring about broader social reforms.

Thus, while no one would deny that Arnold's writing has since exercised an immense influence over the form and function of literary criticism in the academy, it is much harder to trace or verify how this influence has played itself out in terms of shaping concrete institutional practices or determining the educational experiences of actual students. Though Arnold did leave behind a remarkable amount of writing about the social world, there is little evidence to suggest that he effected any material change in how the business of education was carried out in that world. While the reformers discussed in the chapters that follow all share something of Arnold's faith in the power of education to produce and underwrite cultural change, their various efforts in educational reform forced them into those same murky waters that Arnold refused to enter and refrained from acknowledg-

ing in his own critical work—that world of working relations where one is intimately involved in the creation and administration of actual educational programs, as well as the development of the machinery meant to ensure that the institution preserves and reproduces such programs. As we will see, when these educators entered the sphere of practice that Arnold came to disdain on principle, they were compelled to develop other strategies for generating viable and sustainable educational communities beyond declaring a commitment to “the best that has been known and thought in our time.”