I received a copy of the Cenci, as from yourself from Hunt. There is only one part of it I am judge of; the Poetry, and dramatic effect, which by many spirits now a days is considered the mammon. A modern work it is said must have a purpose, which may be the God—an artist must serve Mammon—he must have "self-concentration" selfishness perhaps. You I am sure will forgive me for sincerely remarking that you might curb your magnanimity and be more of an artist, and "load every rift" of your subject with ore. The thought of such discipline must fall like cold chains upon you, who perhaps never sat with your wings furl'd for six Months together.—John Keats to Shelley, 16 August 1820

The tempest of the Paris Revolution in February 1848 was heard of in New Zealand soon after I landed in the colony. What a time of boundless excitement for the young and unsteady was that year of 1848! Battles in the streets of great cities, constitutions torn to rags, insurrection everywhere, resignations of crowns, Chartist meetings, wars changing the frontiers of states, Italy rising against Austria, Hungary striking for independence, Russia sending her legions across the Carpathians, Rome turned into a republic—this was the sort of "foreign intelligence" that my friends at home expected to find, and usually did find, in their morning papers. Even I, at the distance of half the globe, having steeped myself in French revolutionary literature before leaving England, watched for the tidings of those mighty events, and seemed to feel the reverberation of those shocks. My brother, to whom literature then and always meant more than politics, wrote two admirable sonnets on the Revolution in France. Yet, with banter irrepressible, in the thick of the wild hubbub, he addressed to Clough a letter with the superscription, "Citizen Clough, Oriel Lyceum, Oxford."—Thomas Arnold the Younger
chapter two

Art and Revolution

The year 1848 was a momentous one for England and for all of Europe. There was revolution in France, Italy, and Germany, and near revolution in the form of Chartist riots in England. Karl Marx, who was shortly to seek refuge in London, published the *Communist Manifesto*, and John Stuart Mill his *Principles of Political Economy*. The world of Arnold and Ruskin was in upheaval, and they were to be deeply moved by the events they read of and witnessed.

The violent events in France that Arnold described to Clough in his letter of 24 February 1848 were in fact the prelude to the abdication of Louis Philippe, the "bourgeois" Orleanist monarch, who like his Bourbon predecessor eighteen years earlier now went into exile in England. The seventy-five-year-old king abdicated in favor of his ten-year-old grandson, the comte de Paris. But the French mob had already tasted so much blood—it had forced the king to dismiss his chief minister, Guizot (esteemed by Lord Acton and John Morley as the greatest statesman of the nineteenth century), before he himself was deserted by the National Guards—that it would accept nothing short of a Second Republic, which was presently proclaimed.

The underlying causes of this latest installment of the French Revolution were a grave economic crisis, an unpopular foreign policy, and a stubborn resistance by the government to parliamentary and to industrial reform. In spite of a movement for parliamentary reform that had begun before 1840, Guizot's government had refused to extend the franchise, so that this purported government of the middle class and the *juste milieu* seemed to embrace only the new aristocracy of industrial wealth, an aristocracy that Tocqueville called "one of the harshest that has yet appeared on earth." Largely as a result of the influence of this class within the government, no social legislation
of importance, apart from the 1841 Factory Act to restrict the use of child labor, had been promulgated.¹

Similar, though not identical, causes of discontent existed in England, but contrary to Dr. Pangloss, the same causes do not always have the same effects. The Chartist movement was not born in response to the revolutionary upheavals in Germany, Italy, and France. In fact, as early as May 1838 the London Working Men's Association had formulated its demands for political and social equality in a "People's Charter" containing six points: annual parliaments, universal male suffrage, equal electoral districts, removal of the property qualification for membership in parliament, secret ballot, and payment of members. Over the years the Chartists achieved some small successes and suffered many great failures, largely as the result of an unfortunate choice of leaders. From 1845 to 1847 the fortunes of the movement, or at least of its leader Feargus O'Connor, seemed to be on the upsurge. He had become a European figure, had been feted in Belgium, had been congratulated for his work by Engels and Marx, and in July 1847 had been elected as the first Chartist member of Parliament.² But in December of 1847 a new National Petition for the People's Charter proved a failure, and on 1 January 1848 it became public knowledge that the Chartists' entire party fund did not amount to £60.³

But after the first news of revolution, that from Italy, reached England, signatures to the national petition began to stream in; and by the end of February, when the news from Paris arrived, Chartist enthusiasm was soaring. The revolutions in Paris and Central Europe aggravated the country's economic crisis, and it seemed to some that England was ripe for revolution. A serious riot broke out in Glasgow on 5 March, followed by rioting in all the great manufacturing centers. But the Chartist leaders were both too divided and too vacillating to exploit their opportunity. On 4 April the thirty-nine delegates who comprised the national convention met near Tottenham Court Road to petition for the charter, and on 10 April a monster rally was scheduled for Kennington Common in South London, from whence a procession was to carry a petition to the Houses of Parliament.
There was widespread fear of revolution: the royal family left London to take refuge on the Isle of Wight, and Wellington stationed troops throughout the city. But Matthew Arnold, an eye-witness of these events, saw them in truer perspective:

The *National* of yesterday reports that London was *en pleine insurrection*. . . . I saw Emerson the other day, and had a very pleasant interview. . . . He said Carlyle was much agitated by the course of things; he had known, he said, a European revolution was inevitable, but had expected the old state of things to last out his time. He gives our institutions, as they are called, aristocracy, Church, etc., five years, I heard last night. . . . I was at the Chartist convention the other night, and was much struck with the ability of the speakers. However, I should be sorry to live under their government—nor do I intend to—though Nemesis would rejoice at their triumph. The ridiculous terror of people here is beyond belief. . . .

Arnold was right. O'Connor informed his followers that the police had banned their procession and that they were to disperse. At 4:45 on 10 April Arnold was able to report to Clough that

the Chartists gave up at once in the greatest fright at seeing the preparations: braggarts as they are, says my man: and Fergus O'Connor and Co—after giving themselves into custody expressed the greatest thankfulness to the Government that their polite offer was not taken advantage of on condition of their making the crowd disperse.—Then came 1/2 an hour after, the hard rain. The petition is quietly progressing in cabs, unattended, to Westminster.

Thus did Chartism come to its funereal end. Arnold was not to witness a mass political rally of such dimensions again until the Hyde Park riots of 1866.

But the events of 1848 could be neither forgotten nor ignored. Arnold's "man," his employer Lord Lansdowne, told the House of
Lords on 22 March of the following year that a change had come over the world "which entirely reversed the order of things throughout Europe. After that which took place at Paris—I mean the revolution with all its consequences—the danger which arose was not as before the interference of governments with the independence of States, but that a democracy without a throne would overturn all the crowns of Europe."  

In the years before 1848 the silence of Arnold and Ruskin on social and political questions was so nearly complete as to offer evidence for the accusation that literary men, although they are bored by the tasks of reform, adore revolution; that they ignore the despair of their fellow men until it turns into rage and violence; and that they are disinclined to speak of society at all until they can shriek with Byron that "revolution / Alone can save the earth from hell's pollution." The period from 1840 on had, after all, been the "hungry forties," a period of sharp class conflict brought on by new industrial conditions. The new poverty and the miseries it engendered became the subject of Carlyle, in Chartism (1839) and Past and Present (1843), of Engels in The Condition of the Working Class in England in 1844, and of Benjamin Disraeli, the future prime minister, in Sybil (1845).

University men in their early twenties have, after all, been known to pay some heed to social questions; yet before 1848 the writings, private and published, of Arnold and Ruskin are virtually bare of such references. Given his father's intense and even morbid obsession with social and political questions, Matthew's initial indifference to them may have been another instance of youthful revolt. Yet it seems astonishing that so knowledgeable a young man should have been so unaffected by, for example, the unprecedented disaster that befell Ireland in the years from 1845 on, during which time over half a million people died from the starvation and disease caused by the famine while English politicians reaffirmed their belief in the sanctity of laissez-faire. Benjamin Jowett, Arnold's contemporary and a Balliol tutor not noted for the intensity of his social convictions, could later recall, "I have always felt a certain horror of political economists
since I heard one of them [Nassau Senior] say that he feared the famine of 1848 in Ireland would not kill more than a million people, and that would scarcely be enough to do much good." Yet Arnold, who worked for Lord Lansdowne during the very years (1847–49) when he was a great proprietor in Ireland, ventured no comment on the great hunger there until April 1848 when he expressed his disapproval of "Saxon landlords" and "a Saxon Ch.[urch] Estab[lishmen]t" and his hope that the English would be wise enough to refrain from shedding Irish blood in defense of such things.

Ruskin, traveling in Italy in 1840, viewed the Italian poor mainly as objects of aesthetic distaste: "Beggars all day intolerable,—howling, dark eyed brats of children, to be got rid of by a centime, however. . . ." In 1845 he told his father he could not become a real poet because of the great chasm that separated him from the distresses of common life: "I don't see how it is possible for a person who gets up at four, goes to bed at ten, eats ices when he is hot, and beef when he is hungry, gets rid of all claims of charity by giving money which he hasn't earned, and those of compassion by treating all distresses more as picturesque than as real: I don't see how it is at all possible for such a person to write good poetry. . . ."

To some extent, Ruskin's seeming indifference to social questions during these years was a function of his conception of art. If the artist's vocation was to be a worthy substitute for the clergyman's, then the artist must be possessed of what Arnold would many years later call high seriousness: "Art, properly so called, is no recreation; it cannot be learned at spare moments, nor be pursued when we have nothing better to do. It is no handiwork for drawing-room tables, no relief of the ennui of boudoirs; it must be understood and undertaken seriously, or not at all." This pledge of seriousness comes at the outset of the second volume of Modern Painters (1846) and is part of another attempt by Ruskin to justify to himself and to others, "from a moral point of view," the utility of the artistic enterprise. For like Newman in his university discourses a few years later Ruskin felt obliged to justify the liberal activity of art as really more useful than so-called useful activities.

Ruskin announces that his purpose is nothing less than "to summon
the moral energies of the nation to a forgotten duty, to display the use, force, and functions of a great body of neglected sympathies and desires. . . .” Few activities could seem more useful, and yet because “men in the present century understand the word Useful in a strange way,” Ruskin must remind them that man’s use and function are “to be the witness of the glory of God” and to spread that glory by obedience and happiness. It is the baneful influence of the “men who insolently call themselves Utilitarians” that leads Ruskin’s contemporaries to speak and think as if food, clothing, and shelter were alone useful. In fact, warns Ruskin, the long continuance of peace and prosperity are national dangers that induce spiritual illness, and an abundance of bread, water, and peace may cause men to forget their dependence on God. Ruskin’s outlook in 1846 was thus hardly one that conduces to sympathy with those men who happen to lack bread, water, and peace; but it is to Ruskin’s credit that in the second (1848) edition of this volume he appended a note to the paragraphs just cited in which he remarked that “recent events have turned them into irony.”

The events of 1848 burst upon Ruskin like a thunderbolt and nearly unsettled the foundations of his being. Though he was not brought into immediate contact with the events of Paris by opening, as Arnold did, the latest dispatches to Lord Lansdowne, and though he did not stand in the streets, as Arnold did, among the Chartist demonstrators, Ruskin felt the cataclysmic events more deeply; and we shall see how it is the greater intensity of his reaction to them that marks the first important divergence between Arnold and Ruskin in gauging the pressure of society upon art.

Compared with Arnold’s, Ruskin’s reaction to the Continental upheavals of 1848 may seem belated since it is not even mentioned in his published correspondence until April. But we must recall that 1848 was also the year of Ruskin’s disastrous marriage (on 10 April, the day of the great Chartist rally) to Euphemia Chalmers Gray. At first, therefore, European revolutions enter his consciousness only as an irritating obstacle to a European honeymoon: “I don’t think a prison would do for us at all, my love,” he told Effie, “—a cavern—or a
Art and Revolution

desert island, are very well and a desirable family property—but a mere cell, with a sentinel before the door and nothing before the window but a flower pot or two . . . would be perhaps something too sober a way of passing the honeymoon.” But Ruskin was very quickly to recognize that far more than his honeymoon was imperiled by the revolutions. He had always believed that contentment was necessary for his work and his enjoyment, “for discontent not only makes us unhappy in the dwelling on the privation we particularly lament, but it shuts out all the pleasures which are waiting round about us to come in, if we would let them.” But now, suddenly, he found his contentment removed. The revolutions, once they penetrated his consciousness, nearly overwhelmed him, for they threatened not merely the destruction of the old order but of European civilization itself and of his sacred occupation along with it. The work whose seriousness he had so recently proclaimed had now been rendered precarious and even frivolous in his eyes:

I should be very, very happy just now but for these wild storm-clouds bursting on my dear Italy and my fair France, my occupation gone, and all my earthly treasures . . . perilled amidst “the tumult of the people,” the “imagining of vain things.” . . . But these are thoughts as selfish as they are narrow. I begin to feel that all the work I have been doing, and all the loves I have been cherishing, are ineffective and frivolous—that these are not times for watching clouds or dreaming over quiet waters, that more serious work is to be done, and that the time for endurance has come rather than for meditation, and for hope rather than for happiness.  

The doubts about his artistic occupation that Evangelical religious earnestness had first instilled in Ruskin were now aggravated by the social and political turmoil of Europe. Whereas earlier he had feared that art might obscure his duty to God, now he feared that the vocation of art critic was incompatible with his duty to man. On 1 May 1848 revolutionary events in distant Italy caused Ruskin to write in
despair from the family home at Denmark Hill to the painter George Richmond: "When will you come and see me, and tell me whether it is of any use to write or think about painting any more, now, or whether there will be no painting to be loved but that 'which more becomes a man than gilt his trophy'? I feel very doubtful whether I am not wasting my life, and very sad about all. Alas poor Milan, and my beloved spire, and now Verona in the thick of it." These are certainly not the sentiments of someone who has all at once become passionately concerned with the plight of his fellow men and who feels his own fate, safe and secure though he be, to be wrapped up in theirs; rather, they express the private dilemma of someone whose attention has been diverted from his natural course to the troubled world outside of himself and who fears that the course of history tends more and more to render his occupation obsolete. It is not primarily the Italians Ruskin mourns for—he was soon to assert that they were only being punished for their sins—but himself.

Nevertheless, Ruskin's growing awareness of society does coincide with his increasing interest in architecture at the expense of painting. As early as the Continental tour of 1846, his diary began to be filled with as many notes on architecture as on painting. But it was not until his sense of vocation had been unsettled by a new awareness of social questions that he decided to undertake a book-length study of architecture, an eminently social form of artistic expression. In August of 1848 Ruskin left for a tour of Normandy, where he studied French architecture and also a people and a society in the midst of a revolution. For perhaps the first time in his life his researches in art proceeded hand in hand with a sensitive observation of social conditions and human relations. Writing to his father from Lisieux in August, he was more than ever delighted with the beauty of the country and its buildings, yet "more disgusted than ever with its inhabitants" despite the fact that most people he met deplored the recent tumult and disorder. But Paris and Rouen, which he visited in October, moved him not only to disgust at their gloom and hideousness but to pity for their people's sufferings, to fear that the workmen would shortly resort to violence to relieve their distress, and
to the desperate hope that the country might be saved if the upper classes could bring themselves to acknowledge their common humanity with the lower:

Vagabonds and ruffians—undisguised—fill the streets, only waiting—not for an opportunity but for the best opportunity of attack. And yet even from the faces of these I have seen the malice and brutality vanish if a few words of ordinary humanity were spoken to them. And if there were enough merciful people in France to soothe without encouraging them, and to give them some—even the slightest—sympathy and help in such honest efforts as they make—few though they be—without telling them of their Rights or their injuries—the country might still be saved.21

Immediately upon his return from France, in the winter of this cataclysmic year of revolution, Ruskin set himself to the composition of *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, a statement of the principles of architecture illustrated mainly by examples of Gothic and Italian Romanesque work. The book, published in May 1849, was, indeed, an attempt to enumerate the principles of success in architecture. But it was also a continuation of Ruskin's exploration of the difference between liberal and utilitarian enterprises and of his attempt to discover and then to justify his vocation of art critic in a time of social strife and revolutionary upheaval.

Unlike earlier propagandists of Gothic like Pugin, Ruskin did not set out with a violent prepossession against the whole of modern civilization. This was already evident in his championship of Turner and the Moderns and in his frequent insistence on the compelling interest of modern subjects in literature. Yet in the preface to *Seven Lamps* he points out that two forces are at work in the modern world destroying the very subjects of his book. He tells his readers that he has been forced to postpone the completion of *Modern Painters* because it was imperative that he record his impressions of all the "medieval buildings in Italy and Normandy, now in process of destruction, before that destruction should be consummated by the Re-
storer, or Revolutionist." In "The Lamp of Memory" he speaks at length of the importance of preserving, "as the most precious of inheritances," the architecture of past ages. But preservation is not to be confused with restoration. Restoration, argues Ruskin, is a contradiction in terms, and means really "the most total destruction which a building can suffer." Great buildings can no more be "restored" without the breath of life of the artists and the society that created them than dead men can be resurrected.22

But if part of the hateful work of destruction was carried out by those with a misguided zeal for the past, the other part was carried out by those who liked to identify themselves with the immediate needs of the present, the revolutionary mob. Having chastised the restorers, Ruskin says, "Of more wanton or ignorant ravage it is vain to speak; my words will not reach those who commit them, and yet, be it heard or not, I must not leave the truth unstated, that it is again no question of expediency or feeling whether we shall preserve the buildings of past times or not. We have no right whatever to touch them. They are not ours. They belong partly to those who built them, and partly to all the generations of mankind who are to follow us." The mob whose indifference to both past and future Ruskin deplores is not only the mob that overthrew Louis Philippe; rather, "the people who destroy anything causelessly are a mob, and Architecture is always destroyed causelessly."23 Yet it was certainly the political events of 1848 that sharpened Ruskin's sense of the growing incompatibility between his work and the immediate needs, or supposed needs, of the world springing up about him and invading his consciousness.

The introduction to *The Seven Lamps* and its first chapter, "The Lamp of Sacrifice," offered an apologia for the disinterested activity of mind at a time when distress and political turmoil seemed to call for more practical and utilitarian endeavor. Ruskin begins by saying that failure in art is more often attributable to "a confused understanding of the thing actually to be done" than to "insufficiency of means or impatience of labour." In other words, an obsession with means obscures the ends, and the artist becomes so concerned with
what is practicable that he grows oblivious of "goodness and perfection in themselves." Nor is it only in art that men too readily satisfy themselves with what they think can be done instead of pondering what should be done: "As far as I have taken cognizance of the causes of the many failures to which the efforts of intelligent men are liable, more especially, in matters political, they seem to me more largely to spring from this single error than from all others, that the inquiry into doubtful, and in some sort inexplicable, relations of capability, chance, resistance, and inconvenience, invariably precedes, even if it do not altogether supersede, the determination of what is absolutely desirable and just."  

Thus does Ruskin announce at the outset that it is not only in art but in the management of the state that free, disinterested speculation on ends is ultimately more useful than short-sighted calculation of expedient means. His own inquiries into the principles of success in both areas of endeavor therefore can and will be conducted simultaneously. "What is true of human polity seems to me not less so of the distinctively political art of Architecture."  

In architecture, as in other realms that require the harmonious cooperation of technical with imaginative powers, of body with soul, or of doing with thinking, Ruskin maintains that it is the unfortunate tendency of the modern age and of "the necessities of the day" to submerge the higher part and to elevate the lower, materialistic part. These supposed necessities cannot even be numbered, for "they rise, strange and impatient, out of every modern shadow of change." We must respond to them not by asserting the inviolability of principles based merely on past practice, nor by dealing piecemeal with the host of new requirements and new abuses, but by determining "some constant, general, and irrefragable laws of right" based upon man's nature and thus immune from changes due to increase or decrease in man's knowledge. These laws, which are but particular versions—Ruskin cannot stress this too often—of the laws of all human action, shall, he says, be called the Lamps of Architecture.  

What, Ruskin finally asks in his introduction, is to be our estimation of the man who, in a time of revolutions abroad, of hunger and
Chartist turmoil at home, devotes himself to the elucidation of such laws? His own justification is, and must be—Ruskin is writing of himself—precisely that in the disinterested pursuit of the true laws of any branch of human work one is discovering the unity of all human exertion and thus celebrating the power and majesty of God. For Ruskin the rules of aesthetics and the laws of ethics are the same. In recommending any action, he says, "we have choice of two separate lines of argument: one based on representation of the expediency . . . of the work . . . the other based on proofs of its relations to the higher orders of human virtue, and of its acceptableness . . . to Him who is the origin of virtue." Ruskin himself has chosen always to take "the higher line of argument" not only because it is the best road to ultimate truth but because no other mode of treating a subject, no other justification of a man's vocation, is adequate to the present moment of history:

The aspect of the years that approach us is as solemn as it is full of mystery; and the weight of evil against which we have to contend, is increasing like the letting out of water. It is no time for the idleness of metaphysics, or the entertainment of the arts. The blasphemies of the earth are sounding louder, and its miseries heaped heavier every day; and if, in the midst of the exertion which every good man is called upon to put forth for their repression or relief, it is lawful to ask for a thought, for a moment, for a lifting of the finger, in any direction but that of the immediate and overwhelming need, it is at least incumbent upon us to approach the questions in which we would engage him, in the spirit which has become the habit of his mind, and in the hope that neither his zeal nor his usefulness may be checked by the withdrawal of an hour, which has shown him how even those things which seemed mechanical, indifferent, or contemptible, depend for their perfection upon the acknowledgment of the sacred principles of faith, truth, and obedience, for which it has become the occupation of his life to contend."
Having made this eloquent plea for the very temporary attention of the good man whose time and energy are mainly devoted to practical exertions for the relief of human misery, and having promised that "neither his zeal nor his usefulness" will be checked by his study of _The Seven Lamps_, Ruskin proceeds, paradoxically, to argue in chapter 1, "The Lamp of Sacrifice," that it is precisely _uselessness_ that distinguishes architecture from mere building. Architecture "concerns itself only with those characters of an edifice which are above and beyond its common use"; it adds just those arches, trefoils, cable mouldings, "which are useless" to good building. The Lamp of Sacrifice is exactly the anti-utilitarian principle that had already been championed in _Modern Painters_. It is the name Ruskin uses for the generous and religious spirit in man, and in the architect, which moves him to "the offering of precious things merely because they are precious, not because they are useful or necessary." Ruskin, in making himself the audacious champion of this spirit of contempt for economy and utility, was setting himself against "the prevalent feeling of modern times, which desires to produce the largest results at the least cost." Three years before Newman in his _Discourses on University Education_ eloquently defended intellectual culture as a good in itself and its own end, Ruskin was challenging the principle of utility and, implicitly, the reigning political economy. The objects of his attack quickly capitalized upon the terminology of the debate and joined the _Economist_ in labelling Ruskin "this expounder of a useless art."28

Following a line of argument which will recur in his later work—most notably in the attack on utility in _Unto This Last_—Ruskin argues that sacrifice must be conceived of as a good in itself, irrespective of its consequences. The worthiness of an activity is not measurable by its result. Men should, for example, sacrifice their wealth to the decoration of God's house instead of their own; yet "it is not the church we want, but the sacrifice . . . not the gift but the giving."29 The principle of intrinsic value here asserted was dear to Ruskin's heart; and yet, like the preacher he never quite became, he could not resist undermining the principle by asserting, much as he had already
done in *Modern Painters* II, that in the long run the Lamp of Sacrifice is more expedient than expediency itself:

While, however, I would especially deprecate the imputation of any other acceptableness or usefulness to the gift itself than that which it receives from the spirit of its presentation, it may be well to observe, that there is a lower advantage which never fails to accompany a dutiful observance of any right abstract principle. While the first fruits of his possessions were required from the Israelite as a testimony of fidelity, the payment of those first fruits was nevertheless rewarded, and that connectedly and specifically, by the increase of those possessions. Wealth, and length of days, and peace, were the promised and experienced rewards of his offering, though they were not to be the objects of it.

Thus, although religion may not need the service of the arts, "the arts will never flourish until they have been primarily devoted to that service."  

Ruskin is here writing about the vocation of architect, not that of art-critic; but Ruskin was a writer peculiarly incapable of separating his personality from his work, and it is not, I think, extravagant to see in the practical lessons enjoined on the architect by the Lamp of Sacrifice the principles by which Ruskin at this time justified to himself a vocation in which he never felt easy. The critic, like the architect, should always do his best, should put forth all his strength without thought of getting "money's worth"; and the critic, like the architect, should consider that the beauty of his work is enhanced by its visible evidences of great, disinterested labor. For Ruskin, like those "good men" whom he had called from the vineyard, wanted some assurance that "useless" work would ultimately prove the most useful work of all.

Yet between the opening chapter on the Lamp of Sacrifice and the concluding chapter on the Lamp of Obedience we hear relatively little from Ruskin in *The Seven Lamps* about the social or humanitarian function of the critic of architecture. The main impulse at work
in *The Seven Lamps* is aesthetic or naturalistic rather than humanitarian or moral. Readers of Ruskin or of his critics have become familiar with the book’s often quoted assertions about work that anticipate *The Stones of Venice*; and yet through most of *The Seven Lamps*, the distinctions enforced are aesthetic ones, and it is assumed that, as Ruskin remarks in “The Lamp of Beauty,” the ugly and the unnatural are one.

Questions of art’s utility and of the responsibility of the artist to society do appear on the peripheries of the discussion in the five chapters separating the first and the last. There is, for example, in “The Lamp of Truth” the emphasis on reuniting “the arts and all other subjects of human intellect, as matters of conscience.” There is also the assertion that majestic art sympathizes “with the effort and trouble of human life.” Above all, there is the famous injunction in “The Lamp of Life,” to “ask, respecting all ornament . . . Was it done with enjoyment—was the carver happy while he was about it?”

But a careful reading even of these passages shows that their moral emphasis, though genuine, is qualified by, if not subordinate to, an aesthetic standard that is naturalistic rather than moral. All architectural beauty, Ruskin asserts in “The Lamp of Power,” “is imitated from natural forms.” Noble buildings sympathize with “the vast controlling powers of Nature herself.” The principle of Organic Form afforded to Ruskin in 1848 and 1849 a kind of temporary refuge from the demands of a utilitarian and mechanical society. As yet unwilling to make social utility the standard of art and life, he looked to a nature that sought beauty through order as an ultimate standard.

*The Seven Lamps of Architecture* represents a transitional stage rather than a revolution in Ruskin’s career. The turmoil of 1848 has not made him forsake his vocation of art-critic, but it has made him question this vocation. He is not as yet primarily interested in social and political problems, but they have invaded his consciousness to the point where he feels obliged to justify his own vocation in relation to that of men who have joined in worldly struggle, and to explain his apparent detachment from that struggle. His argument is still primarily with himself, for he does not as yet know where his
true vocation and his true existence lie. In "The Lamp of Life" he states the dilemma in terms very like those Arnold was shortly to use in "The Buried Life":

... When we begin to be concerned with the energies of man, we find ourselves instantly dealing with a double creature. Most part of his being seems to have a fictitious counterpart, which it is at his peril if he do not cast off and deny. Thus he has a true and false (otherwise called a living and dead, or a feigned or unfeigned) faith. He has a true and a false hope, a true and a false charity, and, finally, a true and a false life. His true life is like that of lower organic beings, the independent force by which he moulds and governs external things; it is a force of assimilation which converts everything around him into food, or into instruments: and which, however humbly or obediently it may listen to or follow the guidance of superior intelligence, never forfeits its own authority as a judging principle, as a will capable either of obeying or rebelling. His false life is, indeed, but one of the conditions of death or stupor, but it acts, even when it cannot be said to animate, and is not always easily known from the true. It is that life of custom and accident in which many of us pass much of our time in the world; that life in which we do what we have not proposed, and speak what we do not mean, and assent to what we do not understand; that life which is overlaid by the weight of things external to it, and is moulded by them, instead of assimilating them; that, which instead of growing and blossoming under any wholesome dew, is crystallised over with it, as with hoarfrost, and becomes to the true life what an arborescence is to a tree, a candied agglomeration of thoughts and habits foreign to it, brittle, obstinate, and icy, which can neither bend nor grow, but must be crushed and broken to bits, if it stand in our way. All men are liable to be in some degree frost-bitten in this sort; all are partly encumbered and crusted over with idle matter; only, if they have real life in them, they are always breaking this bark away in noble rents, un-
til it becomes, like the black strips upon the birch tree, only a witness of their own inward strength.\textsuperscript{33}

The trouble was that Ruskin did not yet know which of his antithetical impulses represented his true, and which his false, life. We have already seen in his letters of this period a fear that what he had for some time supposed to be his own true life and occupation had been rendered frivolous and futile by the new world that was being conceived in violence. In "The Lamp of Life" he concluded his argument against the mechanical and utilitarian conceptions of work by asking, albeit uneasily, whether many occupations in life were not actually intended to be useless: "Perhaps all that we have to do is meant for nothing more than an exercise of the heart and of the will, and is useless in itself. . . ."\textsuperscript{34} But in the final chapter of \textit{The Seven Lamps} he again tried, almost desperately, to justify his own calling in the very terms of social utility that he had rejected in his first chapter.

"The Lamp of Obedience," more than any other of \textit{The Seven Lamps}, indicates Ruskin's awareness of a need to relate his own work to the revolutionary events of 1848. Although he has been pursuing "a subject that at first appeared to bear but slightly on the grave interests of mankind," Ruskin has in fact been drawing a great political lesson from his investigation into the conditions that are requisite to great architecture. For his investigation has furnished him and his readers with conclusive proof of "how false is the conception, how frantic the pursuit, of that treacherous phantom which men call Liberty. . . ." What men need is not Liberty but Law, and the visible embodiment of Law is work. Turning to those accusing critics—and they are but echoes of the self-accusing voices of John Ruskin—who question the immediacy of dissertations on architecture in the wake of revolutions, Ruskin launches into an exposition of the good social effects that submission to national architectural laws and a uniform inculcation of those laws through education would have. These would include fellowship, patriotism, social sympathy, and public-spiritedness among the first consequences. There would also be increased economy, greater domestic comfort, more sightly and harmonious
streets and buildings. But before articulating these consequences in any detail, Ruskin brings himself up short:

But it would be mere enthusiasm to endeavour to trace them farther. I have suffered myself too long to indulge in the speculative statement of requirements which perhaps we have more immediate and more serious work than to supply, and of feelings which it may be only contingently in our power to recover. I should be unjustly thought unaware of the difficulty of what I have proposed, or of the unimportance of the whole subject as compared with many which are brought home to our interests and fixed upon our consideration by the wild course of the present century. But of difficulty and importance it is for others to judge. I have limited myself to the simple statement of what, if we desire to have architecture, we MUST primarily endeavour to feel and do: but then it may not be desirable for us to have architecture at all.35

Perhaps, after all, Ruskin confesses, he has fallen into the common error of overestimating the importance of his own vocation. Nevertheless, he is at least certain of the need for architecture as a national employment, and he is "confirmed in this impression by what I see passing among the states of Europe at this instant." All the horror, tumult, and misery that now oppress the nations of Europe "are traceable, among the other secondary causes through which God is working out his will upon them, to the simple one of their not having enough to do." Ruskin does not deny the hardships suffered by the workers nor the recklessness of their revolutionary leaders, nor the absence of moral character in the upper and governing classes, but he maintains that underlying them all is "the commonest and most fruitful cause of calamity in households—idleness." Men, of whatever class, are not to be bettered, Ruskin now maintains (he was soon to alter this view), by education: "the chief thing they need is occupation."36

Thus does Ruskin justify his obsession with architecture in a period
of revolution. The true philanthropist will be he who ceases merely to warn potential revolutionaries that—what is indeed true—they are fools who will in the end make themselves and others miserable, and who instead finds them "some other employment than disturbing governments." Ruskin's prescription of an occupation as the outlet for the idle energy which otherwise expresses itself in revolution is less important as an anticipation—though it is that too—of "The Nature of Gothic" than as an indication of Ruskin's two obsessive concerns at the time he composed *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*: his own choice of an occupation and his justification of that choice at a time of revolution, when nothing seemed less needed than disinterested inquiry into the causes of a past greatness that was fast being swept out of the world:

I have paused, not once nor twice, as I wrote, and often have checked the course of what might otherwise have been importunate persuasion, as the thought has crossed me, how soon all Architecture may be vain, except that which is not made with hands. There is something ominous in the light which has enabled us to look back with disdain upon the ages among whose lovely vestiges we have been wandering. I could smile when I hear the hopeful exultation of many, at the new reach of worldly science, and vigour of worldly effort; as if we were again at the beginning of days. There is thunder on the horizon as well as dawn. The sun was risen upon the earth when Lot entered into Zoar.37

If we now try to compare Arnold's response to the events of 1848 with Ruskin's, we must say that Arnold saw more and felt less than did his contemporary. He had a greater awareness than Ruskin of the economic and political changes that were enveloping Europe, but a less intense response to them. He could already describe the crisis of industrial capitalism in terms that Ruskin would not encompass for another decade, but he could not yet sympathize with the distress of an individual worker. He understood, only too well, the threat that social and political upheaval posed to the imaginative life, but he
did not share Ruskin's fear that his occupation was gone and his world destroyed. Paradoxically, however, he at once saw, as Ruskin did not, that an adequate response to this new world of revolutionary urgency required not just a redefinition of one's calling but a strategy for personal survival, for the retention of one's mental balance.

Mrs. Humphry Ward, Arnold's niece, has offered as evidence of the excitement with which Matthew Arnold followed the revolutionary spectacle of 1848 a letter of 28 February that he wrote to his brother Tom shortly after the abdication of Louis Philippe. The letter, very long, begins with a detailed description of the great room in Lansdowne House in which Arnold has been working and then of the penetration of the shouts from the streets into the quiet of the house and into its serene courtyard; and "above all cries comes one whereat every stone in this and other lordly mansions may totter and quake for fear: 'Se . . . c . . . ond Edition of the Morning Herald —L . . . a . . . test news from Paris:—arrival of the King of the French.'" Arnold buys his paper and proceeds to give his brother a very detailed, very accurate, and very impartial, if not very calm, account of events in France from the time of Guizot's 1847 declarations "against the spirit of Revolution all over the world" up until the present moment. The flavor of the letter may be suggested by its concluding paragraphs:

They gathered all over Paris: the National Guard, whom Ministers did not trust, were not called out: the Line checked and dispersed the mob on all points. But next day the mob were there again: the Ministers in a constitutional fright called out the National Guard: a body of these hard by the Opéra refused to clear the street. They joined the people. Troops were brought up: the Mob and the National Guard refused to give them passage down the Rue le Pelletier, which they occupied: after a moment's hesitation, they were marched on along the Boulevard.

This settled the matter! Everywhere the National Guard fraternized with the people: the troops stood indifferent. The King dismissed the Ministers: he sent for Molé; a shade bet-
ter: not enough: he sent for Thiers—a pause; this was several shades better—still not enough: meanwhile the crowd continued, and attacks on different posts, with slight bloodshed, increased the excitement: finally the King abdicated in favor of the Count of Paris, and fled. The Count of Paris was taken by his mother to the Chamber—the people broke in; too late—not enough:—a republic—an appeal to the people. The royal family escaped to all parts, Belgium, Eu, England: a Provisional Government named.

You will see how they stand: they have adopted the last measures of Revolution.—News has just come that the National Guard have declared against a Republic, and that a collision is inevitable.

If possible I will write by the next mail, and send you a later paper than the Herald by this mail. 38

We find in this letter much curiosity and excitement but no signs of a genuine political commitment; and Arnold's ambivalent sympathies are well suggested by his fluctuation between "Mob" and "people" as the appropriate label for the class he would later blandly style "the Populace." Arnold does refer to the possibility that revolution may spread to England, but the reference, like the letter itself, is in a tone that is, if not exactly jocular, far from solemn.

But if Arnold described the French upheaval as a bystander rather than a partisan, this did not mean he was perfectly neutral about the issues involved. In the letter he had written to Clough on the eve of the Revolution, he had expressed strongly hostile views toward the bourgeois regime—"I trust in God that feudal industrial class as the French call it, you worship, will be clean trodden under"—although there too he had beaten a quick retreat into mock-seriousness: "Tell Edward I shall be ready to take flight with him the very moment the French land, and have engaged a Hansom to convey us both from the possible scene of carnage." 39

For the pieties of laissez faire capitalism Arnold had already acquired the contempt that he and Ruskin were later to exhibit in such works as Culture and Anarchy and Unto This Last. Having noticed in
the *Times* a leading article that severely criticized the new French government for socialistic schemes (in particular, national workshops guaranteeing work for the unemployed) that not only ignored "the laws which . . . govern human wealth and human labour" but went "absolutely contrary to the laws of nature itself,"

Arnold impatiently asked Clough:

—Don’t you think the eternal relations between labour and capital the *Times* twaddles so of have small existence for a whole society that has resolved no longer to live by bread alone. What are called the fair profits of capital which if it does not realize it will leave its [sic] seat and go elsewhere, have surely no absolute amount, but depend on the view the capitalist takes of the matter. If the rule is—everyone must get all he can—the capitalist understands by fair profits such as will enable him to live like a colossal Nob: and Lancashire artisans knowing if they will not let him make these, Yorkshire artisans will, tacent and sweat. But an apostolic capitalist willing to live as an artisan among artisans may surely divide profits on a scale undreamed of Capitalisto nobefacturo. And in a country all whose capitalists were apostolic, the confusion a solitary apostle would make, could not exist.

The *Times* editorialist says that socialistic promises are condemned by "inevitable necessity" to failure. But for Arnold there is no necessity in economic "laws" any more than in other man-made laws and institutions. "If there is necessity anywhere, it is in the Corruption of man. . . ." A week later Arnold went so far in demonstrating his conviction on this question as to tell rioters in Trafalgar Square that the true object of their rage was not royalty but economic and social oppression: "I have been a constant attender on the emeutes here—endeavouring to impress on the mob that not royalty but aristocracy—primogeniture—large land and mill owners were their true enemies here."

In nearly all of Arnold’s letters of this spring about the new repub-
lic in France, we can find expressions of approval and even of qualified enthusiasm for the idea of a social, and almost socialistic, democracy. He calls the French common people the vanguard of Europe because, unlike their English counterparts, they are capable of being moved by ideas rather than by mere appeals to selfish interest. The secret of France's power was that in France ideas and intelligence were the properties not of a class but of a whole people. The French, he tells his mother, have become "the most civilised of European peoples" because they at least proclaim an ideal of citizenship and consciously aspire to reach it. Nor was Arnold oblivious of the fact that the man who articulated the ideals of the Second Republic was the poet who had become minister for foreign affairs, Alphonse de Lamartine. "My man [Ld. Lansdowne] remarks that Poets should hold up their heads now a Poet is at the head of France." 

Still, Arnold knew that Lamartine had already more or less abandoned poetry for politics, and become "more clergyman than Poet." His awareness of the fact (and of the prominence of windy orators and journalists in the new government) can hardly have failed to influence his thoughts about the relation between the momentous events abroad that threatened to spread their influence to England and his own poetic vocation. After all was said and done, the value of the French movement was "always not absolute but relative" and was therefore best expressed in poetry rather than in socialist tracts that substituted for the pretended absolutes of the Times another set of absolutes, equally timebound: "I prefer to read their relative not their absolute literature. Which last is tiresome . . . Seditious songs have nourished the French people much more than the Socialist: philosophers. . . . 

It was literature alone that enabled one to understand the Revolution and also to grasp its spiritual limitations. Arnold is at this time much impressed by Carlyle's Examiner article of March 4 on Louis Philippe just because it is not journalism or philosophy, but poetry: "... How solemn, how deeply restful it strikes on one amidst the heat and vain words that are everywhere just now—Yet the thoughts extracted and abstractedly stated, are every newspaper's: it is the style
and feeling by which the beloved man appears. Apply this, Infidel, to the Oriental Poem.”

The “Oriental Poem” to which Arnold directed Clough’s attention was the _Bhagavad Gita_. From it Arnold was learning, or rather trying to learn (“the Oriental wisdom, God grant it were mine”) the secret of survival in, without escape from, the world of social and political action: “The Indians,” he told Clough on March 4, “distinguish between . . . abandoning practice, and abandoning the fruits of action and all respect thereto. This last is a supreme step. . . .”

That Arnold was already attempting to put into practice this distinction between being in the world and being of it is evident from a letter he wrote to his mother three days later. In one sentence he praises Carlyle’s article because “he alone puts aside the din and whirl and brutality which envelop a movement of the masses, to fix his thoughts on its ideal invisible character.” In the very next sentence he reports that “I was in the great mob in Trafalgar Square yesterday, whereof the papers will instruct you.”

Unlike Ruskin, who was also deeply moved by the cataclysms of 1848, Arnold at once began to cast about for the means of survival in what looked like a period of storm. Ruskin, in _The Seven Lamps_, urged architects to flee the modern city because “there is that in their miserable walls which bricks up to death men’s imaginations.” He told them to escape the supposed obligations of citizenship by going into the hills, and reminded them that “there was something in the old power of architecture, which it had from the recluse more than from the citizen.” Entire withdrawal from the physical scenes of human misery into mountains or monasteries became, and was always to remain, Ruskin’s imagined alternative to immediacy of involvement in the plight of his fellow men. Arnold also saw that the artist’s vocation and happiness were threatened by the universal din and whirl and brutality, and by the life of the modern city where most men “their lives to some unmeaning taskwork give, / Dreaming of nought beyond their prison-wall.” But Arnold believed that the integrity of his vocation hinged not on physical withdrawal but on a spiritual detachment that would preserve the wholeness of his being.
We recall how, as early as 1845, Arnold had spoken of the danger that the popular writer might "lose his self-knowledge, and talk of his usefulness and imagine himself a Reformer." Arnold, intensely curious about the political events of 1848 but shortly to publish his first volume of poetry, was determined to resist this danger. "Certainly," he tells Clough in March 1848, "the present spectacle in France is a fine one: mostly so indeed to the historical swift-kindling man, who is not over-haunted by the pale thought, that, after all man's shiftings of posture, restat vivere. Even to such a man revolutions and bodily illnesses are fine anodynes when he is agent or patient therein: but when is a spectator only, their kind effect is transitory." Now and throughout his life Arnold looks upon those who spiritually immerse themselves in revolutions as persons seeking to escape from self-knowledge and from the real, inward struggle of life through the distraction of action for its own sake. On 10 March he admitted to his mother that "I was myself tempted to attempt some political writing the other day, but in the watches of the night I seemed to feel that in that direction I had some enthusiasm of the head perhaps, but no profound stirring. So I desisted..." Arnold's reluctance to become either a full-time student or a wholehearted partisan of the revolution arose not so much from objection to any particular aspect of the revolution as from his conviction of the limitations of political action and of its tendency to distract men from their proper study and Arnold from his proper vocation.

Despite the admirable qualities of the French, the intelligence of their masses and the promise held out by their reforms, Arnold could not bring himself to say "that these people in France have much dreamed of the deepest wants of man, or are likely to enlighten the world much on the subject." The truth of the human condition, he still believed, was to be sought through poetry. It was, in fact, in this very month of March 1848 that Arnold addressed to Clough a pair of poems, entitled "To a Republican Friend," in which he tried to distinguish the desirable reforms that might be encompassed by revolution from the wild expectations that it could transform the human condition in a moment, in the twinkling of an eye.
It is a pity, though it tells us something of the relationship that existed between Arnold and Clough, that only one of all Clough's letters to Arnold has been preserved. But we may infer from Arnold's letters of this time that Clough's enthusiasm for the Revolution was immeasurably greater than his own. Clough's admission of 10 March 1848 that "If it were not for all these blessed revolutions, I should sink into hopeless lethargy" provides a choice illustration of Arnold's contention that writers often commit themselves to action as an escape from self-knowledge and confuse their own desire for psychic anodynes with a desire to change the world. In the first of his poems to his Republican friend, Arnold expresses sympathy with Clough's ideals and those of the French Revolution, if they do indeed comprise a love of fundamental human virtues, a loathing of the optimistic sophistries of those who are well-off, and a desire to help "the armies of the homeless and unfed." But in the second poem Arnold warns against a too sanguine expectation of what revolutions can achieve. He is moved more to patience than to optimism when

Seeing this vale, this earth, whereon we dream,
Is on all sides o'ershadowed by the high
Uno'erleaped Mountains of Necessity,
Sparing us narrower margin than we deem.

Nor will that day dawn at a human nod,
When, bursting through the network superposed
By selfish occupation—plot and plan,

Lust, avarice, envy—liberated man,
All difference with his fellow-mortal closed,
Shall be left standing face to face with God.

("To a Republican Friend: Continued," 5–14)

Louis Bonnerot has found in this poem an expression of Arnold's disbelief in the power of man to suppress social injustice and misery. But Arnold is only saying that danger lurks in the belief that the millennium lies ready to hand and that revolution is the way to
reach it. We may say that he is already approaching the position of Edmund Burke, provided we are willing to recognize that Burke favored reform but opposed revolution because "it is with infinite caution that any man ought to venture upon pulling down an edifice, which has answered in any tolerable degree for ages the common purposes of society, or on building it up again, without having models and patterns of approved utility before his eyes."55

The debate between Arnold and Clough over the measure of devotion that the French Revolution of 1848 merited was but one aspect of a wider debate between the two men in 1848 over the nature of the poet. For the greater one's belief in the efficacy of revolution, the less would be his conviction in the integrity and autonomy of poetry; the stronger his faith in political action, the weaker would be his attachment to the vocation of poetry. Lionel Trilling long ago pointed to the apparent paradox whereby "Arnold, perhaps the most serious poet of his time, stood among the Chartist crowds and went to Chartist meetings and was impressed by them."56 But we have already seen how aware Arnold was of the inherent conflict between social or political involvements and the calling of the poet; and even in 1848, as he stood amidst rioters and contemplated revolutions, his letters to Clough expressed his determination to keep his aesthetics pure.

In these letters Arnold indulges freely in criticism of those shortcomings in Clough's poetry and even in Clough's life that are attributable to his incapacity for detachment from "the world." Yet the world continued to sound in Arnold's own ears, and it is at least arguable that his creed of detachment becomes more strident as he sees even his own rather modest expectations of reform shattered. On 10 April he witnessed the death of Chartism. Later, on 24 June, civil war (almost, indeed, class war) raged for three days in Paris, during which time many were killed, 15,000 were arrested, and 4,000 deported. Republican France was now dead in all but name, and Arnold's reaction to the catastrophe was hardly stoical: "What a nice state of things in France. The New Gospel is adjourned for this bout. If one had ever hoped any thing from such a set of d---d grimacing
liars as their prophets one would be very sick just now. I returned and saw under the sun etc.—but time and chance happeneth unto all.” When current events do not go as one wishes them to, the desire to view them only *sub specie aeternitatis* is nearly invincible; and we may be sure that Clough’s best interests are not the exclusive concern of Arnold when he surrounds this lament for republicanism with an injunction to his friend to find a vocation, and a warning that poetry is not morality, religion, or rhetoric, that “the Muse willingly accom­pani­es life but . . . in no wise does she understand to guide it.” In a slightly later letter to his friend Arnold refers, albeit cryptically, to the political troubles in the Danube valley during the earlier part of the year, then guiltily chides both his friend and himself for their vain interest in contemporary events by noting that “the difference be­tween Herodotus and Sophocles is that the former sought all over the world’s surface for that interest the latter found within man.”

Arnold, then, like Ruskin in 1848, vacillated between a creed of artistic autonomy on the one hand and a desire to respond in some morally and socially adequate way to the political turmoil of the mo­ment. Like Ruskin he wanted to believe that art is a liberal activity that can nevertheless pass the test of social utility. His struggle to dis­cover at this period what Robert Stange has called “a balance be­tween involvement and removal” or “the razor-edge of sympathetic detachment” is evident in the poems he wrote in 1848 about the vocation of the poet and the nature of poetry. In these we see Arnold trying to distinguish, as he does in the letters to Clough, between poetry and rhetoric, between making something and merely thinking aloud; and we also see him trying to define the right relationship be­tween the poet and society. But in studying these poems we must re­member that for Arnold as for Ruskin the rules of art were but spe­cialized versions of the rules of life, and research into either was expected to yield wisdom about both.

The letter cited above, in which Arnold scolds himself and his friend for attending to current political struggles in Europe instead of following Sophocles’ example and remembering that the proper study of mankind is man, contains the first draft of a three-line tribute
to Epictetus that Arnold was in August or September incorporating into the poem entitled "To a Friend." The poem, almost certainly (like the pair on the French Revolution of 1848) addressed to Clough, begins with the clearest admission we have from Arnold that the political turmoil of 1848 had shaken more than his political convictions, and that he, like Ruskin, had been forced by the recent events to reconsider the nature of his vocation:

Who prop, thou ask' st, in these bad days, my mind?

Arnold proceeds to enumerate his chief "props" as Homer the blind prophet, Epictetus the Stoic philosopher, and Sophocles,

... whose even-balanced soul,
From first youth tested up to extreme old age,
Business could not make dull, nor passion wild;

Who saw life steadily, and saw it whole. . . .

(9–12)

Already, at age twenty-six, Arnold saw the task of life as the attainment of a middle way between the existence of the slave oppressed by law and the madman indifferent to it. Clough, whom Arnold was now calling "a great social fanatic," and others who jumped precipitately into social and political affairs jeopardized not only their poetic integrity of vision but the balance of their souls.

Arnold is nothing if not complex, and we would gravely misinterpret "To a Friend" if we supposed that it counseled withdrawal from the world. Avoidance of "business" did not, in Arnold's view, necessarily save a man from "dullness," though it was more likely to expose him to the wildness of passion. That is why his letters of 1848 so often insist upon the importance of an occupation for the poet:

My dear Love
"By our own spirits etc etc."

I desire you should have some occupation—I think it desirable for everyone—very much so for you. Besides since
the Baconian era wisdom is not found in deserts: and you again especially need the world and yet will not be absorbed by any quantity of it.\(^60\)

Dr. Arnold had once remarked of Coleridge that "his mind was a little diseased by the want of a profession, and the consequent unsteadiness of his mind and purposes."\(^61\) Dr. Arnold's son is now recalling how the question of the poet's occupation and his survival also weighed upon the consciousness of Coleridge's friend Wordsworth. The first line of this letter to Clough comes from another poem written in the aftermath of a revolution, Wordsworth's "Resolution and Independence." The poet, contemplating the unhappy fate of Chatterton and of Burns, was asking how poets manage to survive; and the line that Arnold quotes for Clough's edification comes from the following stanza:

\[
\begin{align*}
I \text{ thought of Chatterton, the marvellous Boy,} \\
\text{The sleepless Soul that perish'd in its pride;} \\
\text{Of Him who walk'd in glory and in joy} \\
\text{Behind his plough, upon the mountain-side:} \\
\text{By our own spirits are we deified;} \\
\text{We Poets in our youth begin in gladness;} \\
\text{But thereof come in the end despondency and madness.}
\end{align*}
\]

\(43-49\)

Wordsworth wrote this poem in 1802, not long before his marriage to Mary Hutchinson. He was becoming aware of new responsibilities in life and fearful that someone like himself who had thus far "liv'd in pleasant thought, / As if life's business were a summer mood," was unfitted to meet them. Poets, he knew, could be particularly cursed as well as particularly blessed. "A young poet," as Wordsworth himself described the action of his poem, "in the midst of the happiness of nature is described as overwhelmed by the thoughts of the miserable reverses which have befallen the happiest of men, \(viz\). poets."\(^62\) Arnold, though his letter offers advice to Clough, is drawing upon Wordsworth's experience to map out his own path as a poet.
and a man; and his allusion to "Resolution and Independence" as well as the celebration of the "even-balanced soul" in "To a Friend" make it clear that he saw the alternative to the poet's right definition of his calling as nothing less terrifying than madness.

Like Ruskin in *The Seven Lamps*, Arnold allowed his own obsession with defining his occupation to lead him, in a time of revolutionary turmoil, to recommend a steady occupation as a means of bringing a balance and an order into men's lives. This personal order could save one from submersion in the chaos of the social world because it was a version of, though not identical to, the order of nature itself.

We have already seen how, in the final chapter of *The Seven Lamps*, Ruskin proposes the law of work as the alternative to the phantom of liberty. But if we go back to examine the argument by which Ruskin there justifies the elevation of law and obedience at the expense of liberty, we can see how similar was the pattern of association of the ideas of nature, law, and work in the minds of Arnold and Ruskin in 1848.

In Ruskin and Arnold's time, the idea or the myth of nature was widely used, in very much the way that "social science" is used today, to cover the nakedness of partisan commitments with what Max Weber has called "protective authority." Having repeatedly invoked the principle of Organic Form to test architecture, Ruskin in the concluding section of *The Seven Lamps* tested the modern fiction of liberty by asking whether it existed in nature; and of course he discovered that it did not: "There is no such thing in the universe. There can never be. The stars have it not; the earth has it not; the sea has it not. . . ." Indeed, the lesson that the whole visible creation proclaims is "not Liberty, but Law." Ruskin, in this turbulent period, tried to sanction his own search for an ordered and balanced course by seeing in it an aspiration toward the condition of nature:

. . . Though restraint, utter and unrelaxing, can never be comely, this is not because it is in itself an evil, but only because, when too great, it overpowers the nature of the thing restrained, and so counteracts the other laws of which that
nature is itself composed. And the balance wherein consists the fairness of creation is between the laws of life and being in the things governed, and the laws of general sway to which they are subjected. . . .

The idea of an ordered nature as the support of the balanced soul, and the invocation of both to buttress the ideal of work, also provide the basis for two poems that Arnold wrote in 1848, "Religious Isolation" and "Quiet Work." The former, written in July or August "To the Same Friend," was another adjuration to Clough, whom Arnold always considered "too content to fluctuate," to act on his convictions and to choose an occupation. As Ruskin, while affirming the supremacy of law in the universe, distinguished between the laws governing individual life and the laws of "general sway," so Arnold could say:

What though the holy secret, which moulds thee,
Mould not the solid earth? though never winds
Have whispered it to the complaining sea,

Nature's great law, and law of all men's minds?—
To its own impulse every creature stirs;
Live by thy light, and earth will live by hers!

(9-14)

"Quiet Work," the first poem in the 1849 volume (The Strayed Reveller) and in most subsequent editions of Arnold's poems, begins with an invocation of nature: "One lesson, Nature, let me learn of thee. . . . " The workings of nature offer to the poet a model of two duties, often supposed antithetical, being harmoniously fulfilled:

Of toil unsevered from tranquillity!
Of labour, that in lasting fruit outgrows
Ear noisier schemes, accomplished in repose,
Too great for haste, too high for rivalry!

(5-8)
Arnold had in June of 1848 sought refuge from his disappointment at the failure of republicanism in France in the recitation of Ecclesiastes' dictum—"I returned and saw under the sun etc."—and now he looked to nature and specifically, like Ruskin, to the ordered course of the stars for a paradigm of human work that was detached from, yet a response to, the turmoil of revolutionary politics:

Yes, while on earth a thousand discords ring,
Man's fitful uproar mingling with his toil,
Still do thy sleepless ministers move on,
Their glorious tasks in silence perfecting;
Still working, blaming still our vain turmoil,
Labourers that shall not fail, when man is gone.

(9-14)

I have so far restricted myself to discussion of those poems that were almost certainly composed by Arnold in 1848, but it would be wrong to conclude the discussion of Arnold's idea of his vocation during his formative years without an examination of the most detailed treatment of the idea of poetry published in the 1849 volume, "Resignation: To Fausta." This is more especially the case when we are trying to compare Arnold's development with Ruskin's, for "Resignation" shows more clearly than any other poem of this period not only where Arnold's reactions to the events of 1848 corresponded to Ruskin's but where they went beyond his. "Resignation," in addition to being an exploration of the poet's function, is a search for the means of preserving one's soul intact in the midst of a world infected by evil.

The poem may have been begun, according to Kenneth Allott, as early as 1843, but it probably was not completed until 1848, and Arnold placed it at the end of the volume. He may have done so to call attention to the fact that the poem purports to resolve questions about the poetic calling that are raised but not settled in poems that appear before it in the volume, such as "The New Sirens" and "The Strayed Reveller." These poems define two types of poet with two different kinds of relationship to experience, suggest the rewards and the costs of both kinds of poetry, and choose neither; "Resignation," on the
other hand, is a clear affirmation of the spiritual condition Arnold now holds to be essential both to poetic achievement and human endurance.

The thematic center of the poem is a debate between the speaker, presumably Arnold as poet, and Fausta, or Arnold’s elder sister, Jane (although it must be noted that Fausta herself does not actually speak, but has her thoughts “scanned” by the speaker himself). The subject of the debate is exactly that which had begun to prey on the minds of Arnold and Ruskin in 1848: to what extent, if any, and in what way, may the artist detach himself from society and the common cares of ordinary men?

Although the choice between the life of imaginative sympathy and the life of imaginative detachment is the chief one to be made in the poem, two other alternatives—which may be seen as the plausible alternatives exaggerated into extremes—are briefly sketched and as quickly rejected. These are what in “To a Friend” Arnold has called wildness and dullness and what in a later poem he will call the life of the madman and that of the slave. On the one extreme stand the devotees of unthinking action, the true believers who are troubled by no doubts or perplexities. Like those sanguine believers in revolution whom Arnold chastised in “To a Republican Friend,” these pilgrims, warriors, Goths, and Huns “to themselves propose / On this side the all-common close / A goal which, gain’d, may give repose” (15-17). At the opposite extreme within the boundaries of the poem stand the gypsies, who are exaggerations of the speaker’s stoicism as the militant fanatics are exaggerations of Fausta’s activism. Far from supposing that violent action in this world can transform the human condition, as do the militants, they lack altogether the historical sense that would make them violent with dissatisfaction over their miserable state that grows worse with the years and with the increasing harshness of the laws against trespassing.

Having shown his awareness that resignation, like all things that are potentially good, can be carried to bad extremes, the speaker of the poem is free to expound the true ideal of resignation toward which the poet should aspire. This ideally resigned poet has not with-
drawn from the activities and burdens of the world; in fact, the code of resignation permits him to move mountains, to rule "on the proud heights of sway," to loose "a thousand chains," and to bear "immortal pains." Only his true life must lie elsewhere:

Action and suffering though he know—
He hath not lived, if he lives so.

(152–53)

Attempting to explain this paradox—if indeed it can be explained—Arnold ticks off some of the temptations that the poet must know yet to which he must not succumb. There is, for example, political power. Perhaps with the sorry example of Lamartine in mind, Arnold repeats in verse the warning he had uttered some years earlier to Clough against the poet fancying himself a reformer:

He sees, in some great-historied land,
A ruler of the people stand,
Sees his strong thought in fiery flood
Roll through the heaving multitude;
Exults—yet for no moment's space
Envies the all-regarded place.

(154–59)

The resigned poet resists too the temptations offered by human life in love and in domesticity; and he does not feel excluded from these pleasures because he does not crave them. Looking as from a height on the various activities of mankind, he sees them melt into a distant vision of the long process of the ages. He sees past and future as well as present; and all merge into "one general life, which does not cease,
/ Whose secret is not joy, but peace."

Kenneth Allott has argued that in viewing the life of nature as one of resigned acceptance of eternal change Arnold "is here separating himself from the Wordsworthian view . . . of the joy offered in nature." But this is to assume that for Wordsworth nature always epitomizes joy and emotion and not what Arnold calls
That life, whose dumb wish is not missed
If birth proceeds, if things subsist;
The life of plants, and stones, and rain. . .

(193–95)

In fact, in the very poem that Arnold recommended to Clough in August 1848 as a primer for young poets, "Resolution and Independence," Wordsworth had used this image of unfeeling nature as the symbol of that resistance to excessive feeling which poets need to acquire if they are to endure. The providential message sent to Wordsworth arrives via an old leech-gatherer, who is compared in the poem to that most unfeeling and joyless thing in nature, "a huge Stone." Naturally, the first question that occurs to the poet, who has been musing on the sad fate of earlier poets, is: "what kind of work is that which you pursue?" The occupation of leech-gathering is represented as a kind of dutiful submission to that law of nature whose secret, in Arnoldian terms, is not joy but peace, not passion but just as certainly not the madness of "mighty Poets in their misery dead."

Lionel Trilling has pointed out that what Arnold admired in Wordsworth was just this celebration of the moral dignity that derives from stoical courage and unfeelingness, and is linked not with joyous nature but with the Lucy who "neither hears nor sees, / Roll'd round in earth's diurnal course / With rocks and stones and trees!" Arnold recommended "Resolution and Independence" to Clough because he wanted his friend to learn from Wordsworth's leech-gatherer that men in general, and poets in particular, cannot endure with their sensibility wholly exposed. As Wordsworth, tired by an unchartered freedom, gained resolution by seeing in his mind's eye the leech-gatherer pacing "About the weary moors continually, / Wandering about alone and silently," so Arnold now visualized his ideal poet not exactly as a gypsy but as deriving some comfort from the gypsy's submission to the law of things in the quotidian life of nature.

But Fausta, who apparently speaks for that romantic tradition which Arnold is gradually discarding, and which stressed the poet's liberty from restraint, is offended by this link between the poet's resig-
nation to natural law and the gypsy's submission to deadening routine:

Those gipsies, so your thoughts I scan,
Are less, the poet more, than man.
They feel not, though they move and see. . . .

(203–5)

The poet, she insists (or is imagined to insist), is characterized by his liberty from the "iron round" that binds other men and by his superiority to the common life of men.

The speaker does not so much reject Fausta's notion as he qualifies it. Unlike the subjective or Coleridgean type of poet, the speaker recognizes that the external world does not depend for its existence upon human emotions or the poet's creative powers: "This world in which we draw our breath, / In some sense, Fausta, outlasts death" (229–30). Even the grandest of human wishes are therefore tainted with vanity. The ideal poet achieves his security by virtue of a "natural insight" that can discern what others, including both the speaker (Arnold) and Fausta, must, alas, learn through experience: the meaning of spiritual self-sufficiency.

. . . though fate grudge to thee and me
The poet's rapt security,
Yet they, believe me, who await
No gifts from chance, have conquered fate.
They, winning room to see and hear,
And to men's business not too near,
Through clouds of individual strife
Draw homeward to the general life.

(245–52)

"To men's business not too near" is for Arnold a counsel not of withdrawal from the common life but of spiritual independence from its risks, which comprise both dullness and wildness. This section of the poem concludes with an injunction to view life and one's own calling
in it under the aspect of eternity and as part of an ordered universe. Those who ignore the demands of the present, or rather who attach to them only their limited importance—Arnold may already be anticipating the hostile reaction to his uncontemporary and "irrelevant" poetry—are

Like leaves by suns not yet uncurled;
To the wise, foolish; to the world,
Weak; yet not weak, I might reply,
Not foolish, Fausta, in His eye,
To whom each moment in its race,
Crowd as we will its neutral space,
Is but a quiet watershed
Whence, equally, the seas of life and death are fed.

(253-60)

Arnold began "Resignation" when he was twenty-one, and concluded it at twenty-six. Both his circumstances and the lines just quoted suggest that in defining his vocation in a time of social and political turmoil he was thinking not only of Wordsworth but of Milton, who at age twenty-three could lament that "My hasting days fly on with full career, / But my late spring no bud or blossom shew'th," and nevertheless express confidence that he would inevitably attain "that same lot, however mean, or high, / Toward which Time leads me, and the will of Heav'n; / All is, if I have grace to use it so, / As ever in my great task-Master's eye." Arnold, fearful of the shortsightedness that was the penalty of obsession with the contemporary, fearful of having his work and his life enlisted in transient endeavors, sought like Ruskin to align himself with an order both natural and divine, natural because divine, that was above politics and society.

The concluding paragraph of "Resignation," like the final chapter of *The Seven Lamps of Architecture*, is a justification of the writer's work as an instance and an assertion of the natural principle of order and obedience in the universe that the modern love of change and of action both ignores and denies. "We may observe," wrote Ruskin in "The Lamp of Obedience," "that exactly in proportion to the
majesty of things in the scale of being, is the completeness of their obedience to the laws that are set over them. Gravitation is less quietly, less instantly obeyed by a grain of dust than it is by the sun and moon; and the ocean falls and flows under influences which the lake and river do not recognize. So also in estimating the dignity of any action or occupation of men, there is perhaps no better test than the question 'are its laws strait?' For Arnold as for Ruskin the ultimate evil was still man's violation of the natural order that guided the movements and actions not only of lifeless things but of man himself insofar as he approached the condition of unthinking and inanimate things; and no amount of liberty or of revolutionary action could remove that evil. Invoking once more the image of a nature that seems to bear rather than rejoice, rebuking once more man's "intemperate prayer/... For movement, for an ampler sphere," Arnold concludes the poem with the earliest of many warnings he was to give throughout his career, even at times when he was least withdrawn, least stoical, that action may be an escape from, rather than an alleviation of, the human condition:

Not milder is the general lot
Because our spirits have forgot,
In action's dizzying eddy whirled,
The something that infects the world.

(275-78)