It is very interesting to observe in the study of English Literature the periodical changes of outlook which rule the human mind. Attention is focussed in the present study on the concept of culture as employed only by the English literary intellectuals since the mid-nineteenth century. The concept of culture is important as it is linked to the tradition of social criticism. Artistic imagination is represented by this tradition as a moral force in society which can be utilized as a tool for social change. The history of the concept of culture is complex and hence it is traced over a period of approximately a century with special reference to the works of Matthew Arnold and T.S. Eliot, both of whom have contributed much to the concept of culture. The Marxist concept of culture has also been dealt with in a detailed manner since the Marxists have been claiming to be the torch-bearers of culture. In this way, an attempt has been made to delineate the ideological and political limitations of the literary tradition associated with the concept of culture.
'Culture', as a term, has had manifold and often implicit meanings. Intellectuals, over the centuries, have sought to clarify the ambiguities involved in the term. Social Scientists of the twentieth century have been particularly engrossed in this task. 'Culture' is an important tool to be used in their task of social analysis. But in the nineteenth century, the concept of culture was largely used by literary intellectuals to signify social discontent. Their distress at the trends in their society was attempted to be conveyed by this protest. They tried also to provide a positive vision for their society by the employment of the concept of culture. The quality of life, as threatened by the industrial or mass society, was also sought to be conveyed by this protest. Hence the concept of culture became central to their comment on society.

It is difficult to arrive at a common definition of 'culture' which would satisfy all the demands made on it. An attempt has been made to show, in a detailed manner, how Matthew Arnold and T.S. Eliot viewed the concept of culture.

A number of words came, for the first time, into English usage or acquired new meanings, if already in existence, during the last decades of the eighteenth century and in the first half of the nineteenth century. The reason for the
change might be the common thinking about various institutions of social, political and economic importance. One such word is 'culture'. The idea of culture and the word itself in its general modern meaning came into English thinking during the period commonly designated as Industrial Revolution.

Raymond Williams traces the semantics of the word culture thus: 'culture' came to mean, first, "a general state or habit of the mind", having close relation with the idea of human perfection. Second, it came to mean "the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole". Third, it came to mean "the general body of the arts". Fourth, later in the Nineteenth century, it came to mean "a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual". The word created a favourable reaction. He sums it up thus: 'The development of the word CULTURE is a record of a number of important and continuing reactions to these changes in our social, economic and political life, and may be seen, in itself, as a special kind of map by means of which the nature of the changes can be explored.' Finally, the word emerges as an abstraction and as an absolute, involving in itself complex ideas. New types of relationship were identified on the personal and social basis. Thus, the concept of culture became a response to

industrialism and political and social developments in a new, emerging society. Thus, the term 'culture' signified first a state or habit of the mind, then a body of intellectual and moral activities and finally a whole way of life.

These changes in the meaning of the term can be traced through an examination of statements of writers spread over the nineteenth and the twentieth centuries.

S.T. Coleridge is one of the first of nineteenth century English writers to speak of culture though he does not use the word: 'The permanency of the nation...... and its progressiveness and personal freedom.... depend on a continuing and progressive civilization. But civilization is itself but a mixed good, if not far more a corrupting influence, the hectic of disease, not the bloom of health and a nation so distinguished more fitly to be called a varnished than a polished people, where this civilization is not ground in cultivation, in the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterize our humanity. 2

Coleridge had worked out this idea of culture as an authority over all social arrangements. Coleridge is here, very clearly, setting up a standard of 'health' to which a more certain appeal can be made than to the 'mixed good' of

civilization. He defines the standard in the word CULTIVATION - the first time that this word had been used to denote a general condition, a 'state or habit' of the mind. The word depends, of course, on the force of the important eighteenth century adjective CULTIVATED. What Coleridge here calls CULTIVATION was called CULTURE. This idea of cultivation or culture, was affirmed by Coleridge as a SOCIAL idea, capable of embodying true ideas of value. John Stuart Mill had declared that man was never recognized by Bentham as a being capable of pursuing spiritual perfection as an end. But, it was Coleridge who first attempted to define, in terms of his changing society, the social conditions of man's perfection. Coleridge's emphasis in his social writings is on institutions. The promptings towards perfection came indeed from 'the cultivated heart', from man's inward consciousness. But, Burke as well as Coleridge, wanted the confirmation of man's personal efforts through institutions. Cultivation, as ideal of personality, became a personal qualification for participation in polite society. Thus culture became an explicit factor in society. As a result of the changes in society at the time of the Industrial Revolution, cultivation could not be taken for granted as a process. It offered a social idea superior to mechanism. It became a court of appeal. It was in this spirit that Coleridge examined the constitution of the state, and proposed the endowment within it of a class dedicated to
the preservation and extension of cultivation. The terms of Coleridge's proposals for an endowed class whose business should be 'general cultivation' are worth noting. He calls this class clerisy or National Church, which 'in its primary acceptation, and original intention, comprehended the learned of all denominations; the sages and professors... of all the so-called liberal arts and sciences.' He saw this class as the third estate of the realm. Thus the tradition of equating the term 'culture' with 'cultivation', which in effect means 'the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterize our humanity' started with Coleridge.

In his Discourse VII, 'on the Scope and Nature of University Education', Cardinal Newman wrote: 'It were well if English, like the Greek language, possessed some definite words to express, simply and generally, intellectual proficiency or perfection, such as "health", as used with reference to the animal frame, and "virtue" with reference to our moral nature. I am not able to find such a term; - talent, ability, genius, belong distinctly to the new material, which is the subject matter, not to that excellence which is the result, of experience and training. When we turn, indeed, to the particular kinds of intellectual perfection, words are forthcoming for our purpose, as for instance, judgement, taste, and skill; yet even these belong, for the most part, to powers or habits

bearing upon practice or art, and not to any perfect
condition of the intellect, considered in itself. Wisdom,
again, which is a more comprehensive word than any other,
certainly has a direct relation to conduct and to human
life. Knowledge, indeed, and science express purely in­
tellectual ideas, but still not a state or habit of the inte­
lect; for knowledge, in its ordinary sense, is but one of
its circumstances, denoting a possession or influence; and
science has been appropriated to the subject-matter of the
intellect, instead of belonging at present, as it ought to
do, to the intellect itself. The consequence is that on an
occasion like this, many words are necessary, in order, first,
to bring out and convey what is surely no difficult idea in
itself - that of cultivation of the intellect as an end;
next, in order to recommend what surely is no unreasonable
object; and lastly, to describe and realise, to the mind, the
particular perfection in which that object consists.'

The need for a suitable word could have been met
with the word 'culture'. The substance of his argument is
clearly connected with the ideas of 'cultivated' and 'culti­
vation' as defined by Coleridge. That the word he was look­
ing for is 'Culture' is made clear elsewhere in his argument.
'And so, as regards intellectual culture, I am far away from
denying utility in this large sense as the end of education,
when I lay it down, that the culture of the intellect is a

good in itself and its own end.... As the body may be sacrificed to some manual or other toil..... so may the intellect be devoted to some specific possession; and I do not call THIS the culture of the intellect. Again, as some member or organ of the body may be inordinately used and developed, so may memory or imagination or the reasoning faculty; and THIS, again is not intellectual culture. On the other hand, as the body may be tended, cherished, and exercised with a simple view to its general health, so may the intellect also be generally exercised in order to perfect its state; and this is IS ITS cultivation.*

Newman's standard for the mind is PERFECTION as it is health for the body. 'There is a physical beauty and a moral; there is a beauty of person, there is a beauty of our moral being which is natural virtue; and in like manner, there is a beauty, there is a perfection of the intellect. There is an ideal of perfection in these various subject - matters, towards which individual instances are seen to rise, and which are the standards for all instances whatever.'5

Thus, the Cardinal is keeping himself within the tradition that later came to be associated with the names of Burke, Coleridge and Arnold. The work of perfection received

thus increasing emphasis. This is in direct opposition to Bentham's utilitarian conception of education as the training of men to carry out particular tasks assigned in a particular kind of civilization. Coleridge, Newman and others set a different ideal: 'the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterise humanity.'

Matthew Arnold wrote in the middle of the nineteenth century when the social effects of full industrialism were being felt. The industrial working class was fighting a battle for its rights, in its own violent way. This made Macaulay remark that 'we must educate our masters'. He argued that the 'ignorance' of the common people was a danger to property, and that their education was an immediate necessity. The argument for education, based on grounds of social expediency, was turned down by Carlyle with the argument that the function of the government was not to 'impart the gift of thinking'. The new 'Working Men's Colleges' are to be mentioned in this connection. They were supposed to give not only instruction in certain subjects but indoctrination in culture also. In 1853, the people of Sheffield had set up a people's college which had marked a new era in education. These colleges had not merely given to the workers a certain amount of indoctrination in certain subjects. They had not merely equipped the workers with professional skills. They had borne

witness of a culture, which, in the opinion of the workers, was the highest of all culture. The need for popular education could be met in a number of ways. The Utilitarians, in particular, had been early in the field. But the general opposition to Utilitarianism and the alarmed reaction to increasing working-class power, came together in a significant way.

The point to be stressed here is that the groundwork for Matthew Arnold's work in the field of culture had already been done. His concept of culture was to be built upon this basic foundation in the intellectual tradition of writers before him like Burke, Coleridge, Newman and others. It should be kept in mind that he was a disillusioned man when he began to write social criticism. His social criticism arose out of his social vision. The England of his days was his primary concern. Debates about education were prominent particularly with the increasing interest of the State in compulsory education. The Education Act of 1870 introduced education for all and this had far-reaching consequences. As His Majesty's Inspector of Schools, he wrote extensively on educational issues. The State's interference in the affairs of society was considered to be significant. Equally significant was the decreasing influence of the church and religion in the lives of the general population. The debates generated and provoked by developments in science in the second half of
the nineteenth century added to the complexity of the problem, facing the church. Changes such as these provided the background for Arnold's writings and led him to insist that culture solely aimed at the perfection of the society and the individual.

Arnold's work on the concept of culture is perhaps the best known among his social and educational writings. He has even been called the 'prophet of culture' in his own time. A concern for culture could be observed even early in his writings. Writing as an Inspector of Schools of His Majesty's Government, he complained of the lack of mental 'culture' in pupil-teachers. To elevate and humanize the minds of the pupil-teachers, he wanted them to study the 'best English authors'. He stressed that only a great store of information was imparted by the then prevalent type of education.8

A forceful and clear expression of his ideas on culture is given in 'Culture and Anarchy'. Arnold recommended culture 'as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world; and through this knowledge turning a stream of fresh and free

thought upon our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly but mechanically, vainly imagining that there is a virtue in following them staunchly which makes up for the mischief of following them mechanically. 9

A careful study of this statement reveals fully Arnold's thinking on culture. Culture was to be the pursuit and study of perfection; three aspects of this perfection are worth noting here: it should be harmonious, general and carried out in action, resulting in the development of all sides of human nature. Unless the individual promoted general perfection, his own perfection would be stunted. Hence Arnold's concept of culture is a social idea. This became necessary to him to counter the attack of critics like Frederic Harrison and periodicals like the 'Daily Telegraph'. He thus wanted to counter the charge of 'Dandyism' levelled against him. Hence he says: 'But there is of culture of another view, in which not solely the scientific passion, the sheer desire to see things as they are, natural and proper in an intelligent being, appears as the ground of it. There is a view in which all the love of our neighbour, the impulses towards action, help, and beneficence, the desire for removing human error, clearing human confusion, and diminishing human misery, the noble aspiration to leave the world better and happier than we found it, - motives eminently such as are called social, - come

in as part of the grounds of culture, and the main and pre-eminent part. Culture is then properly described not as having its origin in curiosity, but as having its origin in the love of perfection; it is a STUDY OF PERFECTION. It moves by the force, not merely or primarily of the scientific passion for pure knowledge, but also of the moral and social passion for doing good.\textsuperscript{10} The second involves the first, just as we must know God's will before we can make it prevail.

The second important part of his concept of culture is the notion of getting to know the best that has been thought and said. It is very important to recognise the fact that Arnold did not equate culture with 'the best which has been thought and said'. This was the basis of culture and not an end in itself. His argument is that a critical examination of our thoughts and ideas is the result of a study of the best which has been thought and said. But Arnold's notion seems to be that the result of such a study would enable us to use our intellectual and emotional resources to discard those ideas based purely on habit. This is Arnold's answer to the frequent criticism of his concept of culture, viz. the lack of criteria to judge the best which has been thought and said. Hence the literary intellectual has a two-fold role in society. He provided material, the product of his intellectual labour, for others to study. This is 'the criticism of life by gifted men'. The literary intellectuals were also the obvious embodiment

of Arnold's men of culture, who set an example for others to follow, leading to pursuit of culture. They can even be called, he claimed, the modern Socrates. Flexibility of thought is an important consequence of such an emulation of men of culture. He employed the term 'Hellenism' to signify this aspect of culture. 'Hellenism' is the turning of 'a stream of fresh and free thought on our stock notions and habits'; it is the concern to 'see things as they really are'. This was not enough for Arnold as is proved by the addition of conduct and obedience to this concern of 'Hellenism'. Conduct and obedience were designated by him as 'Hebraism'.

According to Arnold, 'Hellenism' and 'Hebraism' pursue the same aim by different courses. Arnold remarks: 'The final aim of both Hellenism and Hebraism, as of all great spiritual disciplines, is no doubt the same: man's perfection or salvation.' 11 He adds further: 'still, they pursue this aim by very different courses'. 12 'Both Hellenism and Hebraism arise out of the wants of human nature, and address themselves to satisfying those wants. But their methods are different, they lay stress on such different points, and call in to bring by their respective disciplines such different activities, that the face which human nature presents when it passes from the hands of one of them to those of the other, is no longer the same.' 13 'The governing idea of

12. Ibid., P.131.
13. Ibid., P.134.
Hellenism is SPONTANEITY OF CONSCIOUSNESS; that of Hebraism
STRICTNESS OF CONSCIENCE'. Historically, since the time of
puritanism in 17th century, one of the other was emphasized
at one time and in Arnold's own time, Christianity promoted
Hebraism in society. Arnold felt that it was his mission to
restore the balance by praising the virtue of Hellenism since
he felt that culture gave equal importance to both. The
anarchy observed during his time was, according to him, due
to Hellenism suffering neglect. Conduct was considered as an
end in itself owing to the excess of importance given to
Hebraism.

This attitude of Matthew Arnold was a natural
reaction to the strong puritanism and zeal of the early
Victorian period. Arnold exhibited very little interest
in examining religious issues. That was the time when he
was crystallizing his concept of culture. In 'Culture and
Anarchy', he even claimed that 'culture goes beyond religion'.
Culture is the harmonious development and blend of all sides
of human nature, whereas religion looked at conduct only.
But we find that by 1876, when he wrote 'Literature and
Dogma', he had reduced the relative importance of Hebraism.
In this instance, Arnold claimed that conduct or Hebraism,
which is religion's province, is 'three-fourths of human

14. Matthew Arnold, Culture and Anarchy, ed. J.Dover Wilson
   (London: Cambridge University Press, 1979), P.130.
15. Ibid., P.48.
that Arnold's whole pre-occupation with culture was a reaction to the romantic idea that the source of enlightenment for man lay within himself. Culture, he claims, is a reassertion of the classical ideal of perfection, which looks to an external discipline.  

In his Notebooks, Arnold provided indications of the influences not only from the romantic tradition, but also from the classical humanism of the Renaissance and its interest in Greek thought, particularly Plato. At one stage, Arnold did make an explicit connection between the concept of perfection and the individual attaining his fullest development. Raymond Williams discusses Arnold's relationship to Newman and Coleridge, thereby proving how he developed his concept of perfection along the lines of the classical idea. The classical tradition puts up an ideal of perfection against the Utilitarian concept of education. The notion of perfection, introduced by Newman and carried forward by Arnold, does appear to be an unattainable ideal, consisting of supra-personal values. Education was the medium through which Arnold tried to have this ideal realized. Education was a humanizing process, coinciding with that of culture in the opinion of Arnold. It leads to perfection. The goal of culture is wider since its aim is that perfection should not only be achieved but be made to prevail.

The concept of culture in the mid-nineteenth century formed the central theme of discussions regarding the nature of art and its relationship to society. Romantic notions of art and the artist's role in society prevailed in the literary circles then. The romantic poets forcefully expressed the superior reality of art and the special function of the artist as implied in the concept of culture. But Matthew Arnold and other writers rejected the idea that the artist should set himself apart from society. Arnold claimed for culture the special powers of the artistic imagination to judge the quality of life in modern industrial society. He represented the concept of culture as the guiding principle to preside over all activities of the society. Culture exhorted individuals to act in accordance with its notion of perfection, in both its individual and social form. Individualism and materialism prevailed, according to Arnold, crushing the most valuable qualities of the human spirit. His attack on Victorian England was a powerful expression of humanistic vision. Without changing the hierarchical structure of society, he wished to effect reforms in the quality of life of its members through a cultural regeneration.

William Morris rejected the concept of hierarchically structured society associated with the literary tradition and as a socialist attempted to promote its radical transformation.
Significantly, the concept of culture played no role in Morris's ideas. Unlike the other intellectuals of his period, he displayed no particular interest in the special role of the intellectual or artist in society. His concern for Art was no less but he saw art flourishing only in a changing society.

We must also pay attention in this survey to the Marxist theory of culture as the history of the concept of culture is incomplete without it. Marx, by himself, never outlined a distinct and specific theory of culture as such. His observations, scattered throughout his writings, have been gleaned together by his followers and postulated in the form of a distinct theory of culture. His observations are primarily those of a man of learning and refinement, a man of his age, who subjected himself to the discipline of facts. His views did not become popular until the 'thirties of this century even though he was a contemporary of Ruskin.

The most fruitful and important outline, drawn by Marx, appears most clearly in the preface to his 'Critique of Political Economy' (1859): 'In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations
of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society - the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, practical and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, it is their social existence that determines their consciousness; with the change of the economic foundation, the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations, the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophic, in short, ideological forms in which men can become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. 18

The distinction made between the consciousness of men and their social level of existence is of very great importance. The superstructure is a matter of human consciousness which is diverse and complex. The diversity and

complexity is due to the fact that at any given time, it includes the continuities from the past as well as reactions to the present. At times, Marx regards ideology even as false consciousness. He writes in 'The Eighteenth Brumaire': 'upon several forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, a whole superstructure is reared of various and peculiarly shaped feelings, illusions, habits of thought, and conceptions of life. The whole class produces and shapes these out of its material foundation and out of the corresponding social conditions. The individual unit to whom they flow through tradition and education may fancy that they constitute true reasons and premises of his conduct'.

The complexity of the whole is increased when a part of the superstructure is merely reduced to a rationalization. The essence of Marxism is the realization of movement. Then the structure and superstructure, outlined above, cannot be construed as absolute, having a fixed relationship. In Marxism, reality is a very complex field of movement within which the economic forces operate. Marxism denies that 'the laws of thought' are the prime mover of intellectual development. The prime mover is economic change. Hence Marxism believes that culture is woven around economic structure and the resulting social relations. It is to be clearly understood that

all this is not, as stated at the beginning, a substantiated theory. Hence Marxist writing in England, during the last few decades, should not be construed as a conscious development of a Marxist theory of culture but only a response to actual conditions in England and Europe.

The present day Marxist writing can be well illustrated by a mixed collection of essays by R.C. Warner, entitled 'The Mind in Chains'. His general point appears to be reasonable: 'capitalism has no further use for culture'. He elaborates thus: 'The progress of culture is dependent on the progress of the material conditions for culture; and, in particular, the social reorganization of any period of history limits the cultural possibilities of that period. Yet all through history, there is a constant interaction between culture and social organization..... we find that, at those periods of history when a change of social organization is necessary, culture comes into opposition to the time-honoured standards of society, standards which, by the way, were elevated and properly honoured by the culture of the past, but which have proved inadequate and uninspiring for a further advance in to the future'.

This may well be a modern conception of culture but one is not certain whether this is indeed a Marxist theory of culture. It recognises the material basis of culture but

at the same time admits that culture can be in advance of the economic and social organization, embodying the ideal future also. This is rather Arnoldian in tone. This is a tradition basically proceeding from the Romantics and has come down through Arnold and Morris. This is supplemented by certain phrases from Marx. Much of the Marxist writing, at the beginning of the twentieth century, was, in fact, the old Romantic protest that there was no place in contemporary society for the artist and the intellectual. These writings also foretold that the workers were about to establish socialism, ending the old capitalist system, and then provide a proper place for the artist and the intellectual. The identification of the intellectuals' cause with that of the workers was the only discordant note in these writings.

Alick West's 'Crisis and Criticism' (1937) includes an account of the continuity between Romantic and Marxist ideas. He writes: 'Romantic criticism was a great achievement. Its conception of social relations as constituting beauty in art, of a conflict and antagonism in these relations and of the same conflict reconciled in art, of poetry as the voice of humanity against oppression and injustice and of the duty of the poets to co-operate in ending them, or divorcing them from their social meaning or preserving only their idealism, we have to use them. We cannot use them simply as they stand, because of
that idealism. As indicated earlier, the romantic poets were unable in their particular circumstances to give a material meaning to their social relations which constitute beauty in art and are not the actual social relations, but the conception of the relations.\textsuperscript{21}

It is clear from the above that the abstractions of art and culture were a substitute for satisfactory social relations. But there was no social force to establish and maintain the superior reality of art and culture. Morris found in Marx's teachings a social force adequate to these traditions in the working class struggle for socialism. Marxist theories of culture appear to be confused as various writers used them to satisfy and explicate their individual needs. There was a known reaction to Marxism which had established the idea that Marx with his theory of structure and superstructure had diminished the value hitherto accorded to intellectual and imaginative creation. Marx certainly denied, what had hitherto been commonly believed, that it was intellectual and imaginative creative work that decided human development: 'It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but on the contrary, their existence determines their consciousness'. Marxism thus produced a reaction from among those accustomed to believe that they were the pioneers of humanity. It became necessary for Marxist writers to believe that they had a role to interpret past and

\textsuperscript{21} Alick West, \textit{Crisis and Criticism} (London: Faber and Faber, 1937), Pp.88-89.
present culture and also to predict future culture. The customary Marxist thinking that English life, thought and imagination during the last three centuries was 'bourgeois' and that English culture was at that time 'dying' can only be described as wishful thinking. The inadequacy, in Marxist writings, could be easily felt in the use of the term 'culture' when they used it to merely mean the intellectual and imaginative products of a society. This usually corresponded with the weak use of the term 'super-structure'. The logical use of the term 'culture' should correspond with 'a whole way of life', a general social process depending on movement and change. It is simplistic on the part of Marxist writers to say that a bourgeoise society produces, in a direct and simple way, a bourgeoise culture, just as a socialist society will produce, also simply and directly, a socialist culture. It appears that most of the speculation about the 'socialist culture' of the future is no more than a utopian habit; one cannot take it seriously.

As the nineteenth century drew to a close, the concept of culture and its claims of the relationship between art and society disappeared from intellectual discussions. Two alternative views emerged. Aestheticism was the logical outcome of the romantic tendencies in the concept of culture. The withdrawal of the artists from society and the emphasis
on the principle 'art for art's sake' expressed a firm belief in the superior reality of the artist's world. The Pre-Raphaelites were the only adherents of aestheticism but their creed was always tempered by a degree of social awareness. The Bloomsbury group stands out in English cultural history not so much for the talent of its members, but for the eccentricity of their claims.

The other alternative sought by literary and artistic intellectuals was socialism. Fabianism, even though it was pre-occupied with parliamentary politics, was part of the English liberal tradition, particularly in its utilitarian form. H.G.Wells and George Bernard Shaw rejected Fabianism at different stages in their lives. They adopted notions akin to Plato's philosopher kings. These ideals demonstrated a hierarchical vision of society similar to the one expressed by the concept of culture. But they did not visualise a belief in the superior reality of the artistic imagination. Wells and Shaw merely spoke of art as a powerful mechanism for the promotion of social ideas.

In the beginning of the twentieth century, literary intellectuals attempted to reassert the concept of culture, seeing the increasing importance given to science. Modern industrial society was criticised from this standpoint. F.R.Leavis extended Arnold's criticism of the supreme
individualism and materialism of the society to challenge the new cultural institutions of his age. The mass media was criticised for their lack of analytical standards. In Arnold's writings, the concept of culture affirmed a hierarchical vision of society. What was implicit in this context was made explicit by cultural critics like F.R. Leavis and T.S. Eliot. Culture and not democracy claimed their loyalty. Arnold had advocated the continued existence of classes in the society to serve specific functions in the promotion of culture. Leavis and Eliot were far more emphatic in putting forward a similar view of the necessity of elites in the society to preserve and revive the traditional culture.

Culture was, to Leavis, a moral force in society. The artistic imagination was a force for the betterment of society. But Leavis could not strengthen the concept of culture with the vigour given by Arnold. Leavis's work lacked coherence. Leavis revealed the lingering regrets of Arnold who chided the aristocracy for their lack of vision and glanced at American society with some apprehension. Americanization, for Leavis, contained a greater threat. It exemplified industrialism, materialism and fragmentation of modern industrial society that threatened the very existence of the traditional culture.
Eliot's concept of culture shows that he also follows the literary tradition as Arnold did. Eliot sought to return to a concept of culture similar to that employed by Arnold. He emphasizes the sense in which culture is 'a whole way of life', a sense which did not always clearly emerge in Arnold's work. It appears that Eliot did not give adequate thought to what is meant to speak of culture as 'a whole way of life', as very clearly demonstrated in his attempt to identify features of such a culture: 'It includes all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a Cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut in to sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth century Gothic churches and the music of Elgar'. As Raymond Williams points out, this description is nothing more than a list of some of the leisure activities of English life. Eliot seems to have added nothing to the definition of culture. His idea seems to be to merely make his audience believe that his analysis of society has some sociological basis. Eliot's analysis of society did have some sociological validity as it recognized the vital relationship in the English society between the minority culture and the social institutions of the family and the educational system.

Eliot criticized orthodox theories of the diffusion of culture. He believes that culture cannot be limited to that

which is transmitted through a formal system of education. But Eliot provided a legitimate foundation for the cultural domination of the ruling classes. Eliot's fundamental objection to the spreading of the minority culture throughout the general population was that it would lower standards and degrade the quality of that culture. He firmly believed that there was no direct way in which the culture of the minority could be promoted. Culture cannot be transmitted through schools. Such an attempt only leads to its degradation and adulteration. Eliot was of the firm belief that no direct steps can be taken to create the type of society in which the arts will flourish. Eliot called for vigilance to prevent trends in democracy as far as possible. Most insidious amongst these trends was: 'the steady influence which operates silently in any mass society organised for profit, for the depression of standards of art and culture. The increasing organization of advertisement and propaganda - or the influencing of masses of men by any means except through their intelligence - is all against them. The economic system is against them; the chaos of ideals and confusion of thought in our largescale mass education is against them; and against them also is the disappearance of any class of people who recognise public and private responsibility of patronage of the best that is made and written'. 23 Finally Eliot wanted to return to the system of centuries past; patronage of the

Thus we come to Eliot's theory of elites and his Anglo-Catholicism, the two aspects which formed very important facets of his concept of culture. Eliot looked to the establishment of a community to counteract the evils of modern industrial society. He was anxious that this society should be grounded in the idea of a Christian society. The idea of a community in Eliot's writing is synonymous with that of organic society that arises throughout the romantic literary tradition. But Eliot employed the term 'community' to describe only a 'community of Christians'; a notion, similar to that of Coleridge's 'clerisy'. It called for the formation of 'a body of consciously and thoughtfully practising Christians, especially those of intellectual and spiritual superiority'.

Eliot acknowledged the similarity between his concept of community of Christians and Coleridge's 'clerisy', but he claimed that his idea was at once wider and more restricted. The community of Christians, unlike Coleridge's 'clerisy', would not include all of the teaching body; but it would include some of the clergy and some intellectuals. He declared, in emphatic terms, that such a community would include 'those who are ordinarily spoken of, not always with flattering intention, as "intellectuals".'

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Such a comment denotes a significant change in tone which had taken place since Arnold's writings. Eliot felt a little uneasy when he went back to the literary, intellectual tradition, of which Coleridge and Arnold were part. To be a literary intellectual no longer carried with it a distinct role in society but was a possible object of derision. Hence Eliot clarified, at great length, the composition of the elite or community of Christians. He argued that it would not be a caste-like group: 'It will be their identity of belief and aspiration, their background of a common system of education and a common culture, which will enable them to influence and be influenced by each other, and collectively to form the conscious mind and the conscience of the nation'.

But his ideas regarding the 'identity of belief and aspiration' to be achieved altered between his writing his first major essay oriented to an analysis of society 'The Idea of a Christian Society' (1939), and his second major essay 'Notes towards the Definition of Culture' (1948). In the latter, Eliot was firm that 'identity of belief and aspiration' could not exist in any way other than through a concurrence of social background, in particular, family background. By this time, Eliot had turned to a notion of class-based elite. He denied that he identified the elite

with the upper class. It was because he was quick to recognise that a large part of the upper class had always been conspicuously lacking in the desirable culture. Even then, Eliot argued, to a great extent, that members of the elite should be 'drawn from the dominant class of the period.'

Members of the elite should communicate with each other properly. Hence identity of class background was essential to Eliot. 'In an elite composed of individuals who find their way into it solely for their individual pre-eminence, the differences of background will be so great, that they will be united only by their common interests, and separated by everything else. An elite must therefore be attached to SOME class, whether higher or lower: but so long as there are classes at all, it is likely to be the dominant class that attracts this elite to itself'.

Eliot was strongly opposed to any idea of a meritocratic system in which those judged most capable rose to the top of the hierarchical structure of society. He was convinced that only the family can transmit the necessary values and beliefs to be shared by members of the elite. He was opposed to the choice of criteria to select members of this elite class, as he felt that any choice of criteria would have an oppressive effect on novelty, and new works of genius would

27. Ibid., P. 42.
encounter great opposition because they would challenge these criteria. Eliot did not like to admit any suggestion that the class-based elite-system would deny opportunities to creative talents amongst the largest proportion of the population.

Eliot was not prepared to acknowledge the dominant role of education and religious institutions in maintaining the cohesion of the dominant class even upto the end of the nineteenth century. The hierarchical division of society continues, but the dominant class has changed over the centuries. Eliot essentially developed a feudal vision of society in which the dominant class resembled none of the existing fractions of the middle class, but instead echoed the aristocracy of the pre-capitalist society. Eliot wanted to return to a feudal aristocracy which would take up the responsibility for the moral and social welfare of its society. With an obsession for order, Eliot carried to extremes the notion of a consistent relation between class and function. But he did not care that in such a society, creativity would be stifled. His belief in the necessity of a hierarchical society showed a lack of concern for those not at the top of the hierarchy.

Eliot's appeal to the intellectuals is significant since he offered a coherent image of a society in which their
cultural preserve is protected. But Eliot adopted an aggressive posture on his claim that our traditional culture should be confined to the members of a class-based elite. He insisted that his arguments arose from the only legitimate use of the term 'culture': 'what I say is this': here are what I believe to be essential conditions for the growth and for the survival of culture. If they conflict with any passionate faith of the reader - if, for instance, he finds it shocking that culture and equalitarianism should conflict, if it seems monstrous to him that anyone should have "advantages of birth" - I do not ask him to change his faith, I merely ask him to stop paying lip-service to culture'.

Raymond Williams provides an excellent analysis of the passage: 'from TRY TO SAY and WHAT I BELIEVE TO BE there is an abrupt movement to something very different: the assertion, backed by the emotive devices of PASSIONATE, SHOCKING, MONSTROUS, and LIP-SERVICE, that if we do not agree with Eliot's conditions, we stand self-convicted of indifference to culture. This, to say the least, is not proved; and in this jump from the academy to the correspondence column, which Eliot is far too able and experienced writer not to know that he is making, there is evidence of other impulses behind this work than the patient

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effort towards definition; evidence, one might say, of the common determination to rationalize one's prejudices'.

Neither Eliot's anxieties nor his solutions were unusual ones at that time. For example, Aldous Huxley similarly wrote of the disturbing threat to the quality of the traditional culture, a threat which stems from the vulgarity and mass nature of modern society. He advocated that all available resources in the society should be concentrated on training a minority that shall be capable of appreciating 'the higher activities of the spirit'.

In the years prior to the Second World War, the issue that was hotly discussed was the role of the intellectual in society. This was the organising principle in the work of the writers of this period. Bertrand Russell, for example, in his attack on the 'tyranny of the herd' was insisting on the overriding necessity of the intellectual's detachment from society. In every instance, these writers declared the special nature of the intellectuals' contribution to society.

About the middle of this century, Raymond Williams sought to rework the romantic literary tradition of social criticism. He had more in common with humanistic criticism.

of the literary intellectuals than with the tradition of socialist thought in England. But he rejected any vision of a hierarchical society in his writings on culture. He proposed the concept of a common culture, in tune with his working-class background. Through this concept, he hoped to provide a basis for a promotion of excellence in the society, not just a select group in the society. He wanted the restructuring of the cultural institutions of education and the mass media in order to promote the evolution of a common culture. Common culture would lead to the elimination of class divisions in the society resulting in effective communication among all members of society. But there was a change in his attitude in the late nineteen-sixties, resulting in exploring the possibilities of a Marxist cultural theory. He also sought to avoid reducing culture to a total dependence on the economic structure of society. The particular value of creative activity in society and the specialness of art as a realm of human activity remain dominant issues in Williams's writings. Similarly, his analysis of society concentrates on the cultural level, neglecting all aspects of the economic level of society. Raymond Williams attempts to examine in his work the extent to which culture is as much about ways of conflict as about ways of life in the society.

Interest in the humanist literary tradition has become more wide spread in the 1970s. There has been an
emphasis on the analysis of class as being fundamental to the study of culture. Education was popularly represented as establishing a new structure of 'elites' in the society. Williams did not completely succeed in rejecting this connection between class and society. By discussing culture in terms of communication, he contributed to the depoliticization of the concept of class.

The concept of culture of the literary tradition has always been contained by the question of the role of art in society. In its very conception, the question of the role of art in society seeks to affirm its specialness as a human activity. In Arnold's work, the concept of culture articulated a belief in the superior reality of art and the special function of the artistic imagination in society. Similarly, Raymond Williams sought a special function for the artistic imagination as the basis of his concept of a common culture. The rejection of a moral critique of society is also a departure from the romantic literary tradition. This feature of thought is intimately connected with the desire to avoid a 'culturalist' orientation by examining the structures that support the way of life.

The tradition associated with the concept of culture significantly promoted a vigorous critique of society.
Despite its limitations, this critique has been the source of its vitality over a considerable period of time. It is crucial that this focus be retained.