CHAPTER IV
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Williams says that as a Marxist "I felt the excitement of contact with more new Marxist work: the later work of Lukacs, the later work of Sartre, the developing work of Goldmann and of Althusser, the variable and developing synthesis of Marxisms and some forms of Structuralism" (4). Besides, there was the influence of the Frankfurt school, notably the work of Walter Benjamin; the work of Antonio Gramsci, and decisively of Marx's Grundrisse, which was newly translated. This was during the 1960s and early 1970s. The newly acquired knowledge enabled him to "reopen" those "local and partial positions" of the late thirties and forties. Relying on insights from these theorists, Williams was to embark on a project of defining the terms of a cultural aesthetics. His theorizations in such works as Keywords ([1976] 1989), Marxism and Literature (1977) and Problems in Materialism and Culture ([1980] 1982) were to precisely lay down the terms of cultural materialism as a critical strategy, which in turn amounts to exploring the prospects and possibilities of a cultural Marxism.

Thus, the task of building up a radical concept of culture and society with a shared body of words and meanings to be used as reference points in analysis, though not exhaustive in anyway, was undertaken by Williams in
*Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* ([1976] 1983). It was originally intended as an appendix to Williams's work *Culture and Society*, but it had to be taken out as insisted by the publisher Chatto and Windus. Williams explains the dimension and purpose of the book:

It is not a dictionary or glossary of a particular academic subject. It is not a series of footnotes to dictionary histories or definitions of a number of words. It is, rather, the record of an inquiry into a *vocabulary*: a shared body of words and meanings in our most general discussions, in English, of the practices and institutions which we group as *Culture* and *Society* (*Keywords* 15).

As an active vocabulary, it is a way of recording, investigating and presenting problems of meaning in the area of *culture* and *society*. These are keywords in two connected senses: they are significant, binding words in certain activities and their interpretation (certain ways of seeing culture and society); they are significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought (opening up issues and problems, in the same general area) (15).

The emphasis of Williams's analysis is deliberately social and historical. As he says, it is not that language simply reflects the processes of society and history. On the contrary, the central aim of his book is to show that certain important social and historical processes, which occur *within* language indicate that the problems of meanings and relationships are really integral:
In the matters of reference and applicability, which analytically underlie any particular use, it is necessary to insist that the most active problems of meaning are always primarily embedded in actual relationships, and that both the meanings and the relationships are typically diverse and variable, within the structures of particular social orders and the processes of social and historical change (Keywords 21-22).

There were changing usages of the term "culture" between the immediate pre-War and post-War periods – the 1930s and the late 1940s. The word earlier meant a way of describing and claiming social superiority and as a word, which encapsulated the arts (painting, writing, film making, theatre and the like). Now, two other meanings of the word were identified: "culture" defined as a way of referring to the formation of some critical values (as in the study of literature) and culture used in the anthropological sense of a "way of life" (which is close to some concepts of society). The later meaning was to stimulate Williams's critical powers and, in important ways, engaged him all through his life.

Williams underscores the interconnections between the words, which he linked with culture: class, art, industry and democracy. These words form a cluster and exhibit a sort of structure in their interrelatedness (Keywords 13, 22). The importance of the idea of 'culture' was thus noticeable in two apparently separate areas – art and society, and posed new questions and
suggested new kinds of connections (14) in complex ways. As Eldridge and Eldridge says:

What Williams came to recognize was that this was not some abstract intellectual matter but required attention to history. In order to understand something about the problem of the contemporary world considerations had to be given to how the past was interpreted and, indeed, how it could be reinterpreted. The articulation of connections, the changing social relations which both link and distinguish the past from the present, became for Williams a crucial task. This kind of work could not be confined to any one disciplinary category, although Williams himself starts from the standpoint of literature (Eldridge and Eldridge 41).

Concepts are, in their relation to other concepts, ways of seeing the world as well as ways of not seeing the world. An attempt at sorting out presences and absences in the process of seeing and understanding has political implications. Difference or change in the meaning of words can also be indicative of sites of struggles between different groups in society. Thus a careful examination of words on their usage in society would provide clues both to the locus of power in a society and to the sources of resistance to it. Therefore Williams's vocabulary contains "the keywords in which both continuity and discontinuity, and also deep conflicts of value and belief, are in this area engaged" (Keywords 23). What he, then, seeks to accomplish is not a neutral review of meanings, or the learning of a tradition or the acceptance
of a consensus, "but . . . a shaping and reshaping, in real circumstances and from profoundly different and important points of view: a vocabulary to use, to find our own ways in, to change as we find it necessary to change it, as we go on making our own language and history" (Keywords 24-25).

It has been pointed out that the sort of historical philology represented by Keywords is an entirely original venture in English (PL 175). Williams accounts for the mutability of the terms discussed in the book, which is opposed simultaneously to the Leavisian and the structuralist notions of language. Keywords presents

a notion of language as not merely the creation of arbitrary signs which are then reproduced within groups, which is the structuralist model, but of signs which take on the changeable and often reversed social relations of a given society, so that what enters into them is the contradictory and conflict ridden social history of the people who speak the language, including all the variations between signs at any given time" (176).

It counters the Levisian idealist notion of language as a continuous legacy, a single heritage of meanings, which were held to sanction particular contemporary values (176-77).

The book, when published after twenty six years, was seen as a creature deformed over time, for it was a book which developed from intellectually rough-and-ready origins, that is, from the notes prepared for the
evening classes for adult education. By the time he published the book, his thinking had gone well beyond its method to the holistic inquiries ventured upon in "Base and Superstructure". And further, Williams demonstrated not to have noticed the constitutive force of language, namely that, social reality is itself made out of linguistic institutionalizations (Inglis 246-47).

The intellectual effect of Keywords is akin to that of the Marxist critique of political economy—the demonstration that ideas and categories, which are deemed universal and timeless, are in fact eminently changeable and time bound. Given that, the possibility to write a socially explanatory history could start from the same philological ground. It is found necessary to locate "the shifts of usage", find the way it is generalized and identify its class relationships (PL 177-78).

The etymological composition of Keywords, however, weighs more towards Latin than Anglo-Saxon. Already in The Long Revolution, he has pointed out that after the Norman Conquest, i.e., prior to the emergence of a common language (again by the fourteenth century), there was a division between French and Old English, and English became the language of the uneducated and the powerless. Conversely, the greater part of the vocabulary of learning and power, together with the bulk of the vocabulary of a richer way of living came from Norman sources and, thus accounts for its special class stamp (LR 240). Thus, due to historical reasons, the problem of
democratic comprehension and appropriation of the whole resources of the language was probably particularly acute in England. From this Williams derived a sense of commitment which he expresses with a view to give the working class confidence in their ability to use terms, the complex social history of which they do not know and so are unsure about employing them (PL 178-9).

In a way, Keywords is a critique of English political culture. The book has been praised for having exposed the crudity and illiteracy of the current campaigns in the bourgeois media for the preservation of English language. Williams felt it necessary to attack the whole position of establishment journalists who mistake linguistic change for degeneration, and all those who try to co-opt words like "democracy" or "representation" for political purposes. For example as late as 1880, the dictionary definition of democracy is England was "a republican form of government," which shows the ignorance of the propagandists of the very legacy they were claiming to defend (PL 179-80).

Similarly, certain keywords, for instance, "unconscious" impinge on psychoanalysis to suggest a normal and continuous process of transition from the unconscious to the conscious. Williams explains that there is a process of transition between manifest speech and what Volosinov called "inner speech". These processes are very difficult to identify, but are also matters of everyday
experience, as in the case of a writer's "act of writing" itself (PL 181). In fact, the process of unconscious being articulated and becoming conscious is not a normal but a "specialized" process. On the other hand, the normal process is the socio-cultural development of language as the historical, or even further revolutionary possibility of that transition.

But then, there are certain periods of language, which impose silent areas and certain language situations, which are repressive. These are of special interest to Marxists, since there will always be deeply social and historical conditions for that silence. So, language is not only "a means of expression", but it is also evidently a "means of selection" (PL 182). In Williams's terms, the possibility of a pre-emergent as well as an emergent structure of feeling corresponds to this phenomenon.

From this perspective, Williams presents a Marxist critique of the Freudian psycho-analysis. He speaks of the unconscious in terms of an inner zone of silence, of pure repression. While in Freud the unconscious is always active in speech, for Williams's repression amounts to an abnormal displacement in the conscious. What psychoanalysis categorizes as unconscious is nothing but the "unwitting content" in conscious expressions, like saying more than we know or revealing more than we realize (PL 183). And further within Marxism, unlike social and economic relationship, the unconscious has never been seen as problematic. For Williams, fundamental
human drives are not derivatives of an idealist human nature, but simply biological, material conditions. Therefore Freud and Marx could not be combined in a facile manner:

There can be no useful compromise between a description of basic realities as a historical and universal and a description of them as diversely created or modified by a changing human history. Though the biological data may indeed be universal, our relevant actions are biological and cultural, and neither can be reduced to the other (PL 184).

In the early seventies Williams had extended discussions on "what Marxism and literature amounted to" in an international context, and *Marxism and Literature* (1977) was the result. Williams's individual history was of some significance in relation to the development of Marxism and of thinking about Marxism in Britain during that period. This is very much evident from the character of the present work: the first part of the book is a discussion of four basic concepts: "culture," "language," "literature" and "ideology" – none of which is exclusively a Marxist category, though Marxist thinking has contributed to them, at times significantly, in general unevenly. Therefore he took it upon himself to "examine specifically Marxist uses of the concepts" and was also concerned to "locate them within more general developments" (*ML* 5). Thus he was attempting to make Marxist thought interacting with other forms of thinking.
The second part of the book discusses the key concepts of Marxist cultural theory, from which he develops a Marxist literary theory. Through his analysis and discussions Williams develops a position which he has arrived at over the years, and one which at several key points, differs from the widely known Marxist theory:

It is a position which can be briefly described as cultural materialism: a theory of the specificities of material, cultural and literary production within historical materialism. Its details belong to the arguments as a whole, but I must say, at this point, that it is, in my view, a Marxist theory, and indeed that in its specific fields it is, in spite of and even because of the relative unfamiliarity of some of its elements, part of what I at least see as the critical thinking of Marxism (ML 5-6).

Though the book is wholly theoretical, Williams says, "every position in it was developed from the detailed practical work that I have previously undertaken, and from the consequent interaction with other, including implicit, modes of theoretical assumption and argument . . . set into a new and conscious relation with Marxism" (6).

The first concept that Williams discusses, namely, "culture", is a pointer to the centrality of this concept in all his thinking. Though the concept is central to modern thought and practice, it at once fuses and confuses the radically different experiences and tendencies of its formation. The word "culture" originally meant "the growth and tending of crops and
animals, and by extension the growth and tending of human faculties" (ML 11). In its modern development 'culture' as a concept is affected by the movement of other closely related concepts — "society" and "economy."

In the 18th century there developed the notion of "civilization" which was used in two senses — an achieved state, contrasted with barbarism and an achieved state of development, which implied historical process and progress (13). The terms "civilization" and "culture" (in its early sense as "cultivation") were in effect interchangeable in the late 18th century. As their eventual divergence occurred, culture was associated with religion, art, the family and personal life, as distinct from or opposed to "civilization" or society in its abstract and general sense. It was from this sense, that "culture" as a general process of "inner" development was extended to include a descriptive sense of the means and works of such development, that is, "culture" as a general classification of "the arts", religious and the institutions and practices of meanings and values. The religions emphasis weakened in course of time, and was replaced by what was in effect a metaphysics of subjectivity and the imaginative process. Culture, or more specifically 'art' and 'literature' were seen as the deepest record, the deepest impulse, and the deepest resource of the "human spirit" "Culture" was then at once the secularization and the liberalization of earlier metaphysical forms and began to include such categories as the imagination, creativity, inspiration, the aesthetic impulse and myth making.
In course of time, the term culture acquired the secular sense as an interpretation of human development. It stressed human capacity not only to understand but also to build a social order — i.e. "man making his own history." Vico was one of the earliest to emphasise this sense: "the study of the world of nations or civil world, which since men had made it, men could hope to know" (331). Vico's description of a mode of development which was at once, the shaping of societies and the shaping of human minds, is probably in effect the origin of the general social sense of "culture". Herder advanced the concept in *Ideas on the Philosophy of the History of Mankind* [1784-91].

The Marxist notion 'man makes himself' (material history) was an important intellectual advance in modern social thought. Again, the stress on material history especially within the necessary polemic of its establishment was in one special way comprised. Instead of making cultural history material, it was made dependent, secondary, "superstructural": a realm of "mere" ideas, beliefs, arts, customs, determined by the basic material history. There is in this position not only the element of reduction, but also the reproduction, in an altered form of the separation of 'culture' from material social life, which had been the dominant tendency in idealist cultural thought:

Thus the full possibilities of the concept of culture as a constitutive social process, creating specific and different 'ways of life', which could have been remarkably deepened by the emphasis on a material social process, were for a long time
missed, and were often in practice superseded by an abstracting unilinear universalism (ML 19).

Twentieth century Marxism was overlaid with and stifled by this alternative sense.

In order to understand the full implication of the idea of a "constitutive human process", it is necessary to examine the changing concepts of language. Historians and theorists of civilization/culture from Vico to Herder have considered this as the defining question. A definition of language could be seen as a definition of human beings in the world. The received major categories – 'world,' 'reality,' 'nature,' 'human' – may be counterposed or related to the category "language" which is historically and socially constituting. From this position, we can define a dialectical process: the changing practical consciousness of human beings. Literature can then be distinguished as a specific socio-historical development of writing, from the abstract concept of it in orthodox Marxism, reduced (like language itself) to a function and then a (superstructural) by-product of collective labour (ML 44).

Literature, generally, is the process and the result of formal composition within the social and formal properties of a language. But Marx himself had not made any attempt to categorize literature either by taking the act of 'reading' or production of books into consideration. So the radical emphasis on "practical consciousness" was never carried through to the
categories of "literature" and "the aesthetic." When later, Marxist propositions were taken to literature, there were three kinds of applications: (1) assimilation of literature to ideology, (2) inclusion of popular literature as part of the literary tradition and (3) relating of 'literature' to the social and economic history. These applications, especially the last two, inspired 'Marxist criticism', for they allowed new kinds of reading and new kinds of question about 'the works themselves' (ML 52-53).

The crucial theoretical break came with the recognition of literature as a specializing social and historical category, especially as changes in the basic means of production began to take place, through advancement in technology (53-54). In their complex interrelations with political and economic transformations they compose a new substantial practice in social language, which was defining a changing practical consciousness. Values of literature, then, have to be seen as corresponding to this historical transition and so urged a theoretical redefinition of literature and the aesthetic (ML 54).

In almost all Marxist thinking about culture, and especially about literature and ideas, ideology figures as an important concept. Three versions of the concept are common in Marxist writing: (1) a system of belief characteristic of a particular class or group; (2) a system of illusory beliefs – false ideas or false consciousness – which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge and (3) the general process of the production of
meanings and ideas. It was the French philosopher Destutt de Tracy who coined the term "Ideology" for the "science of ideas" in the eighteenth century. In *German Ideology*, Marx and Engels specifically identified "ideology" as a consequence of the division of labour. As an improvement upon the abstracted notion of ideology, Lenin speaks much more specifically of a 'Socialist ideology':

Socialism, in so far as it is the ideology of struggle of the proletarian class, undergoes the general condition of birth, development and consolidation of any ideology, that is to say it is founded on all the material of human knowledge, it presupposes, a high level of science, scientific work, etc. In the class struggle of the proletariat which develops spontaneously, as an elemental force, on the basis of capitalist relations, socialism is *introduced* by the ideologists (Lenin II).

The point clarified here is that ideology is theory, which is at once secondary and necessary, the 'practical consciousness' of the proletariat will not itself produce it. This is a position, radically different from Marx's thinking, where all 'separate" theory is ideology, and where genuine theory — "real, positive knowledge — is, by contrast, the articulation of "practical consciousness." But Lenin's model corresponds to the orthodox sociological formulation, in which there is a "social situation" and an "ideology." Since their relation is variable without being dependent and "determined," separate and comparative history and analysis is possible (*ML* 69-70).
Williams maintains that there is an obvious need for a general term to describe not only the products but also the process of all significations, including the signification of values. Volosinov, for example, uses "ideological" to describe the process of the production of meaning through signs, and "ideology" is taken as the dimension of social experience in which meanings and values are produced. Williams insists that wherever be the term used, emphasis on signification, as a central social process is necessary. Lack of such an argument about practical consciousness is a limitation of the Marxist tradition: "For the practical links between 'ideas' and 'theories' and 'production of real life' are all in this material social process of signification itself" (ML 70).

Accordingly products such as 'art' and 'literature', which are not ideas and theories but elements of the general process called 'culture' and 'language' could be approached in ways other than reduction, abstraction or assimilation. This is the position that Williams wants to be extended to the Marxist cultural and literary studies.

Most of the topics discussed in part II of the book ("Cultural Theory") are topics which he had already examined in specific contexts elsewhere. Here he presents an abstract version of them. These are presented here as key concepts of Marxist cultural theory on which Marxist literary theory depends. But his position differs remarkably from the received Marxist theory.
Williams calls the position "cultural materialism,": a theory of the specificities of material, cultural and literary production within historical materialism. It is, in fact, an argument within Marxist theory. As he claims, "This book is not intended as a 'separated' work of theory; it is an argument based on what I have learned from all that previous work, set into a new and conscious relation with Marxism" (ML 6).

Theoretically, cultural materialism is concerned with the analysis of all forms of signification within the actual means and conditions of their production. The various essays in Problems of Materialism and Culture and the focus on cultural/literary theory in Marxism and Literature illustrate and elaborate this approach. Much of Williams's analysis pivots on his treatment of the "base and superstructure" problem in Marxist theory. He argues that contrary to a development in Marxism, it is not "the base" and "the superstructure" that need to be studied, but specific and indissoluble processes, which was expressed by a complex idea of "determination" (ML 82). Determination is a matter of setting limits and exerting pressures. So, social reality and the relationship between the individual and society, is to be understood problematically. 'Society' is, then, never only the 'dead husk' which limits social and individual fulfilment:

It is always also a constitutive process with very powerful pressures which are both expressed in political, economic, and cultural formations and, to take the full weight of 'constitutive',
are internalized and become 'individual wills.' Determination of this whole kind – a complex and interrelated process of limits and pressures – is in the whole social process itself and nowhere else: not in an abstracted 'mode of production' nor in an abstracted 'psychology' (ML 87).

Abstraction in these respects amounts to mystification of the real determinants of the social process and so should be done away with. Williams considers the different aspects of social process in an attempt to define "culture" and to formulate a theory of it.

Andrew Ross has argued that in the twentieth century the radical intelligentsia has weakened itself by its refusal to take popular culture seriously (1989). In Leavis, of course, the attempt was to pre-empt the term "culture" for literature by equating popular culture with, "civilization", but the manoeuvre is weak because its barely disguised class-bias makes it too easy to contest. T.S. Eliot provided a much better position, when he defined "culture", not in terms of an individual or a class, but more plausibly, as "the development . . . of a whole society" (21) which, considering the England after the second world war, he substantiates with a well-known but bizarrely populist listing:

Culture . . . 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 into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth century Gothic churches, and the music of Elgar (120).

It is the innovation of Raymond Williams in *Culture and Society* (1958) to reject the pastoral and consumerist definition of culture by invoking against it exactly the criterion that the concept of culture supposes the development of a whole society. According to him, to represent the whole of English national culture, Eliot's list would need to encompass "steel making, touring in motor cars, mixed farming, the stock exchange, coal mining and London transport" (CS 230), that is, forms of production along with consumption, and the activities of the working class along with those of the gentry, namely "sport, food and a little art" (CS 230).

In *Problems in Materialism and Culture* ([1980] 1982) Williams examines a much wider terrain of cultural criticism. The book deals with a variety of topics, each of which indicate the range and scope of the discipline of Cultural Studies. The opening essay of the book, "A Hundred Years of Culture and Anarchy" attempts to illuminate a decisive and profoundly ambivalent moment in the emergence of English cultural criticism: Arnold's response to the popular agitation of the late 1860s. Arnold argued that the Hyde Park riot was a symptom of the general anarchy of the period. The rioter was seen as opposed to the idea of social order, of the state as the collective
and corporate character of the nation, and so should be unflinchingly forbidden and repressed in the name of reason and culture and education. Though this was the kind of liberalism advocated by Arnold, other liberal intellectuals like J.S. Mill were opposed to the way the Hyde Park riot was dealt with by the authorities. As Williams argues, the issue continues, even after a hundred years, rendering the "culture and anarchy" argument contestable. He, therefore, warns that it is important to identify and prevent that short circuit in thought which Arnold represents, "where truth and reason and argument were systematically blocked, and where 'authorized' force was involved not to clear the barriers but to erect and defend them" (PMC 8). The point, then, is of making the necessary distinctions between positions, which would warrant repetition of similar protests: "For the culture which is then being defended is not excellence but familiarity, not the knowable but only the known values. And while people like that dominates and multiply, it will always be necessary to go again to Hyde Park" (PMC 8). Such a position inevitably calls for a new sociological understanding of men and matters.

Williams observes that sociology, which was quite an undeveloped branch of study in Britain in the early sixties had much to learn from Lucien Goldmann by way of theory and methodology. (In fact it was Goldmann's visit to Cambridge in 1970 during which he gave two lectures, which was instrumental in creating a serious interest in the sociology of literature and culture in England) Williams was perhaps the first in the English speaking
world to embark on a project on the sociology of literature and culture. Goldmann shows that an idea of theory suggests a methodology, which derives from the physical sciences, where objective, value-free and disinterested research is possible. Godmann calls his approach "scientism" which in England was opposed by literary critics, mainly by Leavis. As a result, the record in sociology has been "less clear" and "less honourable". It was therefore necessary to develop social studies, in the light of social relationships and history. It insists upon a rigorous internal textual methodology, in which the central inquiry has to become problematic or ultimate. Such a methodology is especially necessary to counter the several false totalities perpetuated as for example, through education, economics, political theory, anthropology and even contemporary sociology (PMC 16). The most obvious example from literary studies is the methodology of the study of 'kinds' or 'genres'. There is, in these cases, the prior assumption of the existence, within the 'body' of literature, of 'permanent forms' as epic, tragedy or romance. They were considered as static, passive and therefore empirically available totalities. Such an approach prevents one from seeing those radical and qualitative changes within the nominal continuity of forms, which demand a quite new method of study. Though much of the English work in literary sociology had come from "Practical Criticism", it was vulnerable at several points: in its hardening into an apparently objective method which was based on subjective principles; in its isolation of texts from contexts, in
its contemplative aspects, which made it hostile to new literary work (PMC 17-18). Attempts to overcome these limitations of practical criticism were made by a critical minority, which came up in the 1930s. Through a precise and principled approach they addressed the crucial questions of literary value in appropriate social relationships. Williams recognizes this radical group as the pioneers of English literary sociology.

However, central to their interpretation was a cultural decline in the destruction of an organic society brought about by industrialism and by mass civilization, which overlapped with the Marxist interpretation of the effects of capitalism. The critical engagement between Scrutiny and the English Marxists precipitated a fundamental hostility between them – while practical criticism was strong in its capacity to give accounts of actual consciousness, Marxist position was weakened in the received formula of "base and superstructure", encapsulated in the distinction that "the economic base determines the social relations which determines the consciousness which determines actual ideas and works" (PMC 19). Williams was opposed to this formula because it was methodologically weak, rigid, abstract and static in character – a bourgeois formula akin to utilitarian thought. Thus, first in Culture and Society and then, in a more developed form in The Long Revolution, Williams pursued an alternative project.
Lukacs's and Goldmann's views on reification seemed to Williams to be the real advance in an active interpretation. For, they gave a precise historical explanation to the dominance of economic activity over all other forms of human activity, the dominance of its values over all other values. In modern organized capitalism, the reification or false objectivity is more thoroughly penetrating every other kind of life and consciousness (*PMC* 21). Thus Goldmann's concept of "structure" and the distinctions he makes between "actual consciousness" and "possible consciousness" within a "totality" (developed from Lukacs), are very important for the relation between literary and social studies. That way, the idea of the totality of consciousness was to become central to English critical practice.

Williams acknowledges that his own concept of "structure of feeling" which he formulated as a critical tool is an improvement on Goldmann's sociological concept of "genetic structuralism". It emphasizes a relation between social and literary facts; not as a matter of content, but of mental structures: "the categories which simultaneously organize the empirical consciousness of a particular social group and the imaginative world created by the writer" (qtd 23). It is an organizing view of the social fact, which is realized in literature in terms of 'possible consciousness'. Williams, however, was opposed to Goldmann's view of identifying literature as worldview or world picture (like the Elizabethan, Greek or Victorian) for, such views do not take the idea of consciousness into consideration (*PMC* 24).
They are often more of a hindrance than a help in seeing the full substance of the particular literatures. He finds that both the idea of world pictures and Goldmann's idea of possible consciousness are often some distance away from the real structures and processes of literature. Williams developed the idea of "structure of feeling" in response to just this sense of distance. As he puts it,

But what seemed to me to happen, in some of the greatest literature, was a simultaneous realization of and response to these underlying and formative structures. Indeed, that constituted, for me, the specific literary phenomenon: the dramatization of a process, the making of a fiction, in which the constituting elements, of real social life and beliefs, were simultaneously actualized and in an important way differently experienced, the difference residing in the imaginative act, the imaginative method, the specific and genuinely unprecedented imaginative organization (PMC 24-25).

The "structure of feeling" was to indicate certain common characteristics in a group of writers in a particular historical situation. The most penetrating analysis would always be of forms (as Goldmann and Lukacs have shown), where changes of viewpoints, relationships and resolutions could be demonstrated as forms of literary organization. Williams has demonstrated this in actual cases as in the late nineteenth and twentieth century European drama (Modern Tragedy and Drama from Ibsen to Brecht), and in the development and crisis of the nineteenth and twentieth century English novel
(English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence). The changing structures of feeling reveal the corresponding changes of formal idea and belief which make up the ordinary history of consciousness, which in turn correspond to a very real social history. A radical view of art itself validates the point:

art is one of the primary human activities, and that it can succeed in articulating not just the imposed or constitutive social or intellectual system, but at once this and an experience of it, its lived consequence, in ways very close to many other kinds of active response, in new social activity and in what we know as personal life, but of course often more accessibly, just because it is specifically formed and because when it is made it is in its own way complete, even autonomous, and being the kind of work it is, can be transmitted and communicated beyond its original situation and circumstances (PMC 25).

Williams argues that it is necessary to go beyond the social theory developed in English in the 1930s, which was built on the crude base-superstructure model. Accordingly, the task of criticism is to formulate a real sociology concerned with the reality of the interpenetration, the unity of the individual and social forms. Thus an attempt to go beyond the 'text' to its real process would reveal connection that would answer the closest sense of the living process. Of course, it is necessary then to question some of the key assumptions of Marxist critical theory. Williams's interrogation of the "base-superstructure" model is significant in that respect.
"Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory" is a very important essay in the collection as it defines and represents Williams's polemical and critical engagement with Marxism. Williams argues that it would be preferable to begin a theory of culture considering the proposition that social being determines consciousness rather than by considering the proposition of a determining base and a determined superstructure. Though the two propositions do not contradict each other, the proposition of base and superstructure, with its figurative element, and suggestions of fixed and definite spatial relationship constitutes a very specialized and at times unacceptable version of the other proposition.

In Marxist cultural analysis it implies prefiguration, prediction or control. Williams in his critique offers certain qualifications and amendments to the notions of base and superstructure. Accordingly the "base" is revalued so as to include the specific activities of men in real social and economic relationships containing fundamental contradictions and variations and therefore always in a state of dynamic process, and away from the notion of a fixed, economic or technological abstraction; the "superstructure" is revalued so as to incorporate a related range of cultural practices and away from the common notion of a reflected, reproduced or specifically dependent content; and, "determination" is revalued to mean the setting of limits and the exertion of pressures and away from the common notion of a predicted, prefigured and controlled content.
Of course, what is examined in the "base" is the primary productive forces. But Marx's idea of "base" is incompatible with the economics of modern cultural activity. In his analysis of capitalist production Marx considered 'productive work' in a very particular and specialized sense corresponding to the mode of capitalist commodity production. Thus in the famous Grundrisse passage Marx illustrates the point with reference to the piano. While the piano maker and the piano distributor are the 'base' (because they contribute to surplus value), the pianist is the superstructure. Critiquing the point Williams states that as a way of considering cultural activity, this is very clearly a dead-end. It has a damaging effect in the cultural context. For according to the central notion of productive forces, the most important thing a worker ever produces is himself, himself in the fact of that kind of labour or the broader historical emphasis of men producing themselves, and their history (PMC 35).

As an alternative to the proposition of base and superstructure, Lukacs proposed the idea of the totality of social practices. This concept of totality, cannot adequately account for the process of determination, which is very significant in cultural theory. Since the facts of social intention and the class character of society are very important in cultural theory, there is no point in abandoning the superstructural emphasis altogether. However Williams finds it difficult to see processes of art and thought as superstructural, in the commonly accepted formula. The laws, constitutions, theories and ideologies
which were very much part of the superstructure in Marx's original formulations are in fact class-related aspects of reality. So, in revising the formula of base and superstructure, Williams is keen to emphasize the class character of the society. He does this by combining the notion of totality with Gramsci's concept of 'hegemony':

For hegemony supposes the existence of something which is truly total, which is not merely secondary or superstructural, like the weak sense of ideology, but which is lived at such a depth, which saturates the society to such an extent, and which, as Gramsci put it, even constitutes the substance and limit of common sense for most people under its sway, that it corresponds to the reality of social experience very much more clearly than any notions derived from the formula of base and superstructure (PMC 37).

Williams, however, rejects the usual Marxist analysis of hegemony in terms of 'epochal' questions rather than historical ones in a social formation.

Williams argues that there is in any society, in any particular period, a central system of practices, meanings and values, which are dominant and effective. These are not merely abstract, but are organized and lived ones. It thus constitutes, a set of reality as 'absolutes' beyond which it is difficult for the members of society to move. But an effective and dominant culture could be understood from the real social processes, namely, the process of incorporation, for which educational institutions and family serve as agencies.
Moreover, within this cultural model what is passed for as "the tradition", "the significant past" is in fact a "selective tradition", "a continual making and remaking of an effective dominant culture" (PMC 38).

Again, in a complex society, there are recognizable cultural realities, which are underemphasized in our notion both of superstructure and hegemony. Williams classifies them as "residual" and "emergent". A residual form refers to experiences, meanings, and values, which are lived and practised on the basis of cultural as well as social residue of some previous formation. These include certain religious values and certain notions derived from a rural past. There could also be the 'residues' of the struggles of the past, which significantly affect the consciousness of men, and so are of lasting importance in cultural history. An "emergent" form refers to the new meanings and values, new practices, new significances and experiences, which are continually being created. These could be seen as the forebodings of future events and developments. Both the residual and emergent culture are usually at some distance from the dominant culture, but in actual practice may get incorporated into it, and so maintain a temporal relationship between them. Unlike in the earlier phases of bourgeois society, where these were dispensed with as belonging solely to the domain of private or artistic life, in the post-War capitalist society, the process of incorporation was much more active owing to the "social character of labour, of communication and of decision" (PMC 41). The dialectical relationships between the 'residual' and
'emergent' forms of culture have to be considered as a basic point in our conception of culture in future.

Williams thinks that it is very important to maintain a "non-metaphysical and non-subjectivist" explanation of emergent cultural practices, for which it is necessary to consider the concept of "class" and its human practice. The formation of a new class is a process, which complicates any simple model of base and superstructure as well as the ordinary versions of hegemony. Of course, Gramsci was instrumental in formulating the idea of hegemony of a proletarian kind, which would be capable of challenging the bourgeois hegemony (Bocock 1986). With the emergence of a new class, new practices also come into being. Their cultural significance lies in the fact that no mode of production, no order of society and so no culture in reality exhausts the full range of its human practice, energy and intervention. Alternative perceptions in personal relationships, of material and media, in art and science would always come to be practised and they are very important culturally. Williams's proposition could then be seen as a central source of the very discourse of criticism itself (PMC 43-44).

Williams underscores the inseparability of literature and art from the general social (material) processes. The arts of writing, and the arts of creation and performance, like music, film and broadcasting embody, enact and perform meanings and values and so are parts of the cultural process.
They contribute to the effective dominant culture and are a cultural articulation of it. At the same time, they also embody residual and emergent practices and meanings and often get incorporated to and would effect changes in the dominant culture itself. His own study of the "British Culture of the Nineteen Sixties" (LR 293-355) illustrates the approach.

For Williams, such a perspective has implications for discovering a method or methodology for the analysis of particular works of art. This is in opposition to nearly all forms of contemporary critical theory which are theories of consumption and which treat the work of art as an object/text and in the process overlook the real social conditions of their production (PMC 46). The traditional Marxist notion of base and superstructure was satisfied with the relationship between the objects and the components of its production.

However, the notion of the work of art as object "as in itself it really is" had a theoretical effect since it could raise questions about the components of production, which form the base. In any case it is the relationship between the object and its components that was looked for, as for instance, in psycho analytic, myth and structuralist criticism. But Williams contends that it is further necessary to analyse the process of transformation or mediation these components have gone through before they arrived in this accessible state. Because, in literature and arts, what we permanently have are not objects but
notations (PMC 47). Therefore, in the act of criticizing, "we should look not for the components of a product but for the conditions of a practice" (48). According to him, the true crisis in cultural theory is between the view of the work of art as an "object" and the alternative view of art as a "practice". Williams's proposition is thus the point of break a well as the point of departure in practical and theoretical work within Marxist cultural tradition.

The argument is further extended to the area of communications in his essay "Means of Communication as Means of Production". Within the received formulation of the base and the superstructure, the productive role of communication was ignored. Williams argues that as physical forms of language and as technology, means of communication are always socially and materially produced and reproduced (PMC 50). They have, on the other hand, a historically variable relation to the general complex of productive forces and to the general social relationships. Williams's own book, Communications is a pioneering work in the area.

The role of communications and the historically changing means of production and reproduction and their complex social relationships call for a redefinition of 'base and superstructure'. That way communicative production could be properly situated within the totality of modern economic and industrial production. As he argues, the mechanical formulation of a 'base' and a 'superstructure' would prevent or displace analysis of the significant
relations of communicational means and processes to be crises and problems of advanced capitalist/industrial societies (PMC 53).

In a class-divided society certain social conditions determine technical forms and the nature of communication. Thus, advanced technology is used to convert means of communication as channels of capitalist consumption. The central communicative act is manipulated both by the ruling class and the production forces through specific processes of technical labour. Therefore Williams envisages an alternative communication system, which is a "democratic, autonomous and self-managing system" (PMC 261). The transforming potential inherent in film and television are of critical importance owing to their profound impact in contemporary life and culture. Through powerful modes of "naturalization" new generation get habituated to means of communicative production in the modern socio-economic processes where the real activities and relations of men are hidden behind a reified form of a "modern medium" (62).

The method of analysis, which Williams proposes in the area of communication, is what he calls "critical demystification", i.e., practice in the production of alternative images of the 'same event' in direct, autonomous composition. Reification has to be countered from falling back on "ideas of universal (inherent and unsurpassable) alienation, within the terms of a pessimistic and universalist psychology" (PMC 62). That way, Williams
hopes that the systems of communication under general control would be "transformed from their normal temporary functions as commodities or as elements of a power structure" (PMC 62). Here again "Socialism" is for Williams the key reference point, for it is not only the theoretical and practical "recovery" of the means of communicative production that matters, but also the institution of directness and community, over a wide social and intellectual range.

The radical posture with which he examines the nature of communication in the modern socio-economic processes could be seen in full application in his reexamination of the idea of nature vis-à-vis the social man. From Greek philosophy through Seneca, Hobbes, Rousseau, down to Marx, the distinction between man and nature have been relied on as a programme or as a critique. In "Ideas of Nature", Williams presents a view in opposition to the idealist philosophy where "nature" embodies an essential, principle (natura rerum), as for example, Burke's notion of "the state of nature." It is a fact that the idea of nature contains an extraordinary amount of human history. So what is often presented in the idea of nature is the idea of man in society. The physical sciences in their earlier phases looked at nature as an object, a fixed state, or fixed laws of motion with no history for them. Such interpretations continued till the nineteenth century when the question of human intervention in or command on nature and its processes were considered (PMC 75). Williams insists that nature has to be thought of as
separate from man, in order to conceptualize a more secular and a more rational idea of nature. The abstraction of man is not for a change from a metaphysical to a naturalist view but for a precise understanding of the social man. When nature is separated from the activities of men, it even ceases to be nature, in any full and effective sense. As men come to project onto nature their own unacknowledged activities and consequences, there occurs a split in men themselves – men as consumers and producers. The consumer wants only the intended product – scenery, landscape, image, fresh air (*PMC* 81).

Since ideas of nature are the projected ideas of men, Williams argues, that there is no point in counterposing or restating the great abstractions of Man and Nature. Men have mixed their labour with the earth, their forces with its forces too deeply to be able to draw back and separate either out. Therefore man – nature relationship has social implications—be it in capitalism, imperialism or socialism and the very process is problematic. More clearly than any one, Marx indicated this in terms of singular forces. It is necessary to develop that kind of indication. As Williams contends:

In industry, for example, we cannot afford to go on saying that a car is a product but a scrap yard a by-product, any more than we can take the paint-fumes and petrol-fumes, the jams, the mobility, the motorway, the torn city centre, the assembly line, the time-and-motion-study, the unions, the strikes, as by-products rather than the real products they are. But then of course to express this we should need not only a more
sophisticated but a more radically honest accounting than any we now have. It will be ironic if one of the last forms of the separation between abstracted Man and abstracted Nature is an intellectual separation between economics and ecology. It will be a sign that we are beginning to think in some necessary ways when we can conceive these becoming, as they ought to become, a single discipline (PMC 84).

Here we have glimpses of what John Bellamy Foster calls an ecological materialism or a dialectical conception of natural history (2).

Corresponding to the idealist, philosophical notions of nature as an essential principle with little social/historical implications, there was an attempt in scientific social theory as well as in imaginative literature, to validate evolutionary theory as an essential paradigm. The essay "Social Darwinism" is Williams's critique of the applications of evolutionary theory to social theory. Social scientists like Malthuse, Herbert Spenser, Bagehot, Sumner and even Rockefeller applied the theory of "the survival of the fittest" and perpetuated the belief that in human societies there were intrinsic competitions for the best shape of the society. Accordingly Europe, the central arena of conflict between states, ideas and religions, was projected as the centre of progress. Through such a paradigm, conflict and programme were directly correlated. Thus theory came to be used to rationalize the rich men – to describe the internal logic and necessity of social process (PMC 90).
The pervasive influence of Social Darwinism in areas of creative literature, scientific fiction, modern advertising as well as in contemporary social theories has all been counterproductive. Such works convey the idea that man cannot derive lessons and laws from the processes of what he sees as separated nature and from his social conditions. They hold that natural law is a process of unrestrained struggle and that social ethics is a qualifying mechanism for a cosmic law. Williams fears that the biological component of these works would become first a theory of elitism and then a theory of fascism. Modern advertising, through its strategies of animalization and territoriality builds upon the image of nation state and its means of armed defence in order to convey the ideology of dominance and power, and to ratify contemporary class and status relationships. Williams's critique is quite emphatic:

Of course, this was an ideology: it was consciously in opposition to liberal egalitarian tendencies, to measures of social welfare and reform, and classically to ideas of socialism. Because it was an ideology, not all the implications of this rather stark and powerful theory were always welcome even to some of its exponents (PMC 90-91).

Williams rejects such discouraging rationalizers and natural rhetoricians on the ground that Social Darwinism is contra cultural materialism (PMC 101-2).
Williams further argues that social Darwinism, by its crude logic of strength through competition implies, a case for racism and imperialism as in Gobinau's argument about the inequality of races and Von Molke's rationalization of war as the supreme example in human history of the Darwinian struggle for existence. It is interesting that even Marx looked at *The Origin of Species* as "a basis in natural science for a theory of class struggle in history" (qtd *PMC* 93). Of course, human history is a struggle — now between classes rather than races or individuals. But then, Engels was to point out the faults of the analogy. He argued that,

> the whole Darwinian theory of the struggle for existence is simply the transference from society to organic nature of Hobbes' theory of *bellum omnium contra omnes*, and of the bourgeois theory of competition, as well as the Malthussian theory of population. (qtd *PMC* 93).

And he further argued in *The Dialectics of Nature* that such a transference of theory from natural history to the history of society is "too naïve" to be "proved as eternal natural laws of society" (qtd *PMC* 94). The distinguishing feature of human society was production, and when "the means of development are socially produced the categories taken from the animal kingdom are already totally inapplicable" (qtd *PMC* 94). However, the concept of the struggle for existence is quite tenable, for it expresses the struggle of the producers against the capitalists who have appropriated their
means of production and reduced them to poverty. Therefore "the conception of history as a series of class struggles is already much richer in content and deeper than merely reducing it to weakly distinguished phases of the struggle for existence" (44). Thus in Engels's critique, the analogy is attacked and rejected but then, reinstated in a way radically different from other thinkers.

In an essay Ted Brenton (101-142) examines Engels's intellectual work in its political and cultural setting. He argues that though in biological doctrine Engels tended to follow Hackel's neo-Lamarkianism, rather than Darwinism, his protests against the Social Darwinists and their conception of society, demonstrates its backwardness and the necessity for its transcendence. Engels states that,

Darwin did not know what a bitter satire he wrote on mankind, when he showed that free competition, the struggle for existence, which the economists celebrated as the highest historical achievement, is the normal state of the animal kingdom (*Dialectics of Nature*, 19).

Engels's theoretical interventions in his later works on philosophy and the natural sciences (*Anti-Dühring, Dialectics of Nature, Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy*) deal with the interface between popular cultural struggles, historical materialism (as a theoretical discourse) and the natural sciences. It is instructive here to see Williams's theoretical
interventions in *Problems in Materialism and Culture* in the light of such a critique. For as Ted Brenton comments:

It is true that human transformative practices incorporate our natural environment into our internal condition of social existence, so that to a degree, and in certain respects, the human species and its natural environment are subject to a common history. But it must also be emphasized, as Engels knew, that the natural world — organic and inorganic — also has its own autonomous historicity, interconnected, though not fused, with that of human societies. If this is so, then questions must be posed, and answered, concerning the compatibility or otherwise of the different actual and potential forms of social existence and systems of production with their external conditions of existence in organic and inorganic nature. Both dualist and reductionist materialist philosophical premises are obstacles to the adequate posing of such questions. Socialist theory and practice is thus deprived of a major resource for reorienting its relationship in a constructive way to autonomous movements such as those against environmental destruction, women's oppression and racialism (137).

Williams's emphasis on historicity in his literary and cultural analysis and his concern for Socialism are all of a piece with the above critique.

Similarly, in tackling the question of materialism, Sebtastiano Timpanaro summons to his aid the work of natural scientists. He regrets the unusual uneasiness between Marxism and the natural sciences and argues that
failure to overcome it would be detrimental to materialism. Timpanaro defines materialism, as the acknowledgement of the priority of nature over mind in a formulation of physical science vis-a-vis the humanist categories. In his essay "Problems of Materialism", Williams offers a critique of Timpanaro's work. As in "Ideas of Nature", here, he argues that the separation and contrast between "man" and "nature" which developed as part of the idealist and humanist thought makes it difficult to move beyond them to material conditions and, to generalize on the relationships between the two (PMC 106-107).

What is important for Williams is an analysis of how the really basic conditions of life – the conditions of physical existence and survival – are perceived, selected and interpreted. The crucial question here is the extent to which these fundamental physical conditions and processes affect or qualify the social and historical interpretations and projects, which are the central specifications of Marxism. In his critique, Williams problematizes these in three ways, namely, the conquest of nature, the revival of Social Darwinism and the relation between our physical conditions and social projects. All these aspects are tantamount to the development of problems like capitalism, imperialism, racism and pessimism, and, in consequence, amount to theoretical deformations. By a careful examination of these questions Williams creates a materialistic framework, which is eventually to develop into what he calls "cultural materialism". As he argues,
Neither materialist triumphalism nor materialist pessimism is of any material help in the necessary processes of an extended secular knowledge and of definitions and redefinitions of our social processes in its light . . . . In all relevant secular terms, what is needed at this level is not 'philosophy' at all, but associated science and labour, under conditions to be achieved only by socialist transformation of control of these means of production (PMC 112).

Timpanaro views Social Darwinism as a dangerous version of triumphalism, in which biological conditions, which are elements of human activity are bypassed in the emphasis on human history and culture. Timpanaro relates this problem to the formula of base and superstructure and in particular to works of art which again relate to elements of our biological condition rather than to socio-historical experiences. But as Williams argues, these elements of the biological condition are mediated by socio-historical experiences and by their cultural forms. The orthodox Marxist thinking about art could then be amended to the effect that the material process of the production of art includes certain biological processes especially those relating to body movements and to voice, which are at times most powerful elements of a work. Art, perceived in this way, is inseparable from any political and economic liberation (PMC 113).

Even as Timpanaro makes an earnest attempt at checking both collective and subjectivist forms of triumphalism, he also expresses a strain of
materialist pessimism. According to him the rich-poor chasm is a result of our continuing physical limits. Rejecting this notion, Williams argues that, the barriers to extending conditions of prosperity from the richer to the poorer countries are economic and political, and not of some basic physical character. Even the relation between population and resources is a political and economic issue (PMC 115). Therefore in Williams's terms, the social project vis-à-vis the individual could not be settled between the received alternatives of triumphalism or pessimism, but within the terms of practical consciousness:

A materialist ethics, like a materialist politics, has then to be grounded on these inherent relational conditions, only not as relativism, which is merely their registration, but as activity, which is the conscious effort towards their common realization as human history (PMC 116).

In any fully materialist perspective, it then, appears that no singular political or ethical dimension nor the received alternatives of triumphalism nor pessimism would clear away an objective process. Williams here seems to suggest that the Marxist idea of materialism, in the modern context, has to be improved by taking these perspectives into active consideration so much as to ward off materialist pessimism (PMC 115). An opposition to the deliberately perpetuated excitement in the name of an orchestrated globalism characterizes this ideal, which is especially important in the present cultural context.
At this point it appears instructive to consider the fairly recent notions of "cultural pessimism". As Oliver Bennett (2001) argues 'cultural pessimism' was characterized by generalized negative certainty; there were some clear parallels between the modes of reasoning displayed and sum of the cognitive tendencies associated with depression and anxiety disorders. These could all be said to exhibit negatively 'contaminated' cognitive processes. There was also evidence to suggest that there had been a significant increase in the incidence of depressive and anxiety disorders during the second half of the twentieth century (192). This was occasioned by environmental, moral, intellectual and political decline. Oliver James (1997) argues that the social impacts of the 'new capitalism' (cf. Frederic Jameson's notion of 'late capitalism') produce an epidemic of 'learned at helplessness', 'maladaptive social comparison' and 'anxious attachment'. Thus in the post modern world cultural pessimism is not only a judgement about our culture but also a 'structure of feeling' that is increasingly produced by our culture (Bennett 193). Lewis Wolpert describes this experience as 'malignant sadness' (1999). Williams's positions, however, are astutely opposed to such notions and make a strong argument for progressive cultural change, informed by an active politics.

Andrew Collier points out that there are three related but logically independent doctrines comprising Marxist materialism. The first of these "ontological materialism" is a doctrine about the relations between the real-
objects of the various sciences, especially those of the natural sciences on the one hand and the human science on the other. It asserts the unilateral dependence of the latter upon the former. The second "epistemological materialism" which states the relations of human knowledge in general to its object, is considered an area of scientific enquiry. This is the aspect of materialism to which Lenin's remarks (in Materialism and Empirio-Criticism) about the philosophical sense of matter point. The third doctrine, "explanatory materialism", seeks to answer questions, which arise specifically in the human sciences. It is this notion of materialist explanation, which led Marx to call his theory of history "the materialist conception of history" (historical materialism) (Collier 36-38). Williams's cultural materialism, while it shares aspects and insights of these doctrines, leans more towards explanatory materialism in as much as it operates essentially within historical materialism.

The Marxist attempts to approach the natural sciences—notably biology—using the base-superstructure model was quite incorrect, in that they do not realize the fact that the dependence of social reality on biological reality is absolute and unilateral (PMC 42-43). The importance of Timpanaro's position lies in the place he gives to biology, which, as Collier points out, tends to be treated by the Marxists as something of a Cinderella among the sciences in relation to the ideological use made of it by ethologists who try to explain events in human societies directly in terms of biological instincts. As Collier puts it:
It is worth noting that biological reality is an ontologically dependent mode in relation to physico-chemical reality, and that the objects of all social or human sciences are ontologically dependent on it. When we say 'man thinks with his brain', it should be remembered that the brain is situated in biological reality, not merely in physico-chemical (43).

Again, Timpanoro insists that biology is not a ladder which history climbs and then throws away, but something, which continues to produce effects in social, cultural and psychological reality (43).

A similar critique of Marxism's neglect of biology was made by Kate Soper in his essay "Marxism, Materialism and Biology" (61-99). Soper presents an approach to the nature-society relationship as integral to human culture. Marxism suspected biology as if it would be implicated in vulgar materialism and 'biologism' (63). Thus it evaded such issues as the feminist challenge or racial oppression or questions as a politics separate from or tangential to Marxism and was rebuked for its continued neglect of the fact that the history of society is not only a history of class division but also a history of sexual division. The patriarchal order, which embodies the latter is, no less oppressive in its effects than is economic exploitation. Again in terms of a "theory of needs" Marxism cannot bypass questions of world ecology and the way population appropriates it. Therefore if 'rational' alternatives to capitalist mode of production are the task of socialism, it must also be
concerned with the entire structure and goals of the material-technical appropriation of nature in the satisfaction of human needs (65).

In developing a materialist position in which the evidence of cultural history could be crosschecked, Williams has two considerations. First, there is the methodological problem of concepts, which have a unique double character – as "findings" from empirical evidence and as normal linguistic concepts. Williams's own *Keywords* is a pioneering attempt in this respect. Secondly classical Marxism neglected not only the basic human conditions, but also the emotional conditions and situations which make up a large part of human relationship and practice; problems of sexuality are among the most prominent omissions. It is within this area that attempts to go beyond historical materialism have occurred (*PMC* 118).

As Suchting points out the central theme of Marx's "Theses" on Feurbach is materialism. More specifically they outline a critique of "all materialism uptill now". The key to the critique is the idea of practice. In his critique, Marx emphasizes two points: first, the role of human practice in constituting the character of the objective world in a straight forward, material way, as exemplified by the way economic-productive activity changes the world. Secondly, a materialist conception of practice as something to be analysed in terms of actual effects in the objective world in contrast to all subjectivist conceptions (Suchting 6-10).
Historical materialism, certainly, has done quite a lot by way of theory and practice, of method and evidence. But the field of social and cultural practice cannot be limited to a historical materialist framework. This realization is a source of energy for Williams to propose his own materialist project with a view to ward off cultural defeat which would take the shape of spiritualism within a disintegrating social order, mythologizing of human conditions and practices, and the vaulting ambition of epistemology to become the universal science (*PMC* 121).

The alternative, of course, is materialism of a new cast, namely, cultural materialism, and what makes it significant is its "rigorous openness to physical evidence." Chomsky's insistence on the concept of "physical explanation" reinforces the idea (97). But it is, as Chomsky points out, not an "interesting terminological reason" but the necessary social process through which the material enterprise defines and redefines its procedures, its findings and its concepts: the "physical" is nothing but "material." Williams's application of his own concepts and positions is well illustrated in his examination of such diverse topics as the English naturalist drama, the Bloomsbury group, advertising, science fiction and the Welsh industrial novels (*PMC* Section 4).

Though there was a much Marxist orientation and its ideological thrust in the cultural field in Britain from the 1930s, a decisive continuity of an
identifiable Labour Left was at work only since 1945. Williams considers the cultural ramifications of this phenomenon in "Notes on Marxism in Britain Since 1945". It was an amalgam of theory and practice within which elements of Marxism came in the form of social democracy – a parliamentary version of economism. Though it was generally called Marxist, its political vocabulary moved to the "right" as both the orthodox and social democrats opted for mixed economy, welfare programmes, and for military alliance against Socialist and national-liberation movements. At the same time, there were some extra pro-Left emphases. These distinctions clear the ground for a more accurate definition of Marxism and Marxists in Britain since 1945.

There are, according to Williams, three issues involved in this process: populism, culturalism and reformism. Populism is simple projections of the common interests of 'the people' or 'a people'; culturalism is the general feeling in the 1950s that Marxist cultural theory which derived from Engels, Plekhanov, Fox, Caudewell, West and Zhdanov needed radical revision. Williams has been instrumental in this process, which took him thirty years to come to a position, which he defines as "cultural materialism."

The emphasis of the transition—on the production (rather than only the reproduction) of meanings and values by specific social formations, on the centrality of language and communication as formative social forces, and on the complex interaction both of institutions and forms and of social relationships and formal
conventions – may be defined, if anyone wishes, as 'culturalism', and even the crude old (positivist) idealism/materialism dichotomy may be applied if it helps anyone. What I would now claim to have reached, but necessarily by this route, is a theory of culture as a (social and material) productive process, and of specific practices, of 'arts', as social uses of material means of production (from language as material 'practical consciousness' to the specific technologies of writing and forms of writing, through to mechanical and electronic communication systems) (PMC 243).

This position has been spelt out more fully in *Marxism and Literature* and in *New Sociology: Culture* and could be seen as the most important stride that British Marxism has taken since 1945. Williams calls the process a "long revolution." It is thus a theory of the historical variations of cultural process, which has connections with general, social, historical, economic and political questions. It is not *sui generis* a general social theory or a general practical option, but a response to radical change in the social relations of cultural process in British and other comparable societies. The problem could be resolved by unifying these responses within a theory of ideology – in the form of a single discourse. These questions call for a new perspective, which he compares between Mc Luhan, Marxism, and Gramsci:

Much of the actual controversy was against the conservative criticism of 'mass civilizations', against the technological determinism (mechanical production = mass society = mass
communications) of Mc Luhan and of some Marxists, and later, against formalism. None of this, as controversy, is yet over, but as a note on the development of Marxism in Britain, which in this field has not been an offshore island, but a major contributor, it can be suggested that the practical connections between this kind of cultural theory and the Gramscian account of hegemony and the hegemonic are significant, not only as a theoretical phase, but because they developed, in struggle, from such different preoccupations and sources. What 'Marxism' is at any time seems dependent, finally less on the history of ideas, which is still among most Marxists the usual way of defining it, than on the complex developments of actual social being and consciousness (PMC 246).

Western Marxism since 1945 has two versions of reformism, one speaking for capitalist transformation and the other for a radical transformation of social order. The British Labour Left and Communist Party promoted capitalist transformation ('modernization') but did not adequately respond to the working class and thereby rendered themselves impotent. The dire consequence of this was their inability to check the enemy, which came up in the shape of constitutional (populist) authoritarianism, which in comparable conditions had resulted in Fascism (before the war) or in Thatcherism (in the post-war period). And Williams himself had to break from the British Labour movement in 1966 when it took a detour from social democracy and reformism into "an actual and necessary agency of the mutation of capitalism by the representative incorporation of the working
class" (PMC 249). However, since the early 1960s there has been a concentration on Marxist theory. There were, thus, three distinct strands within British Marxism. Williams categorizes them as 'legitimating' (inspired by the Soviet Union and by a concern for world Communist movement); 'academic' (a decisive Marxist orientation in academic work) and 'operative' (theoretical analysis of late capitalist society and of socialist practice). These theoretical positions are important because their varying proportions would determine the character of Marxism in Britain.

Williams maintains that "the genuinely unprecedented social and economic crises" necessitates "continual discussion and contestation", in Marxist terms, "on such central questions as class, culture, the democratic process, the capitalist state, productive forces, the division of labour, industrial growth and political organization" (PMC 238). The New Left of 1957-63 was characterized by "electicism" which was furthered by theories of "altered social relations" (239).

Williams finally makes a case for "an authentic, accessible and adequate Marxism" (PMC 250). The real problem is one of connection between analysis and effective political practice. It is, proposed as a radical move beyond the theoretical loud hailing of the 1960s and 1970s to a more open and more rigorous re-examination and practical construction. For Marxism, is a history and analysis of ideas and of social forces and
movements through ideas; therefore it stands to be tested in quite new ways, as immediate and possible and sustainable organization (PMC 250).

"Socialism," Williams contends "is not what with luck might happen. It is what we can believe in enough to want, and then, by active wanting, make possible" (PMC 252). In the essay "Beyond Actually Existing Socialism" Williams presents a critique of Rudolph Bahro's book *The Alternatives in Eastern Europe* (1978), a very important work in Socialist thought, for it provides a relatively detailed outline of a practical and possible Communist society. It is opposed to the complacent economic order of Western Socialism and favours substantial civil and political liberties. As Bahro states:

> Humanity must not only transform its relations of production, but must also fundamentally transform the overall character of its mode of production, i.e. *the productive forces as well* . . . it should consider its perspective as not bound to any one historically inherited *form* of development and satisfaction of needs, or to the world of products that is designed to serve these (qtd PMC 254, italics original).

Besides such basic transformation processes, Bahro insists that "Not a growth in production, but cultural revolution – as the present form of *economic* emancipation—is the means finally to dissolve the capitalist structure" (255).
Cultural revolution as conceived by the British New Left used "culture" to designate a process and area of social and political struggle at the superstructural level, virtually ignoring the material struggles of the working class at the base. As Bahro views it, consciousness is no longer the mere product of social being but is at once a condition of its practical existence, and further, one of its central productive forces. Thus a cultural revolution is directed towards the general appropriation and expropriation of all the real forces of production including the intellectual forces of knowledge, skills and conscious decision, as means of revolutionizing social relations. Subordination or avoidance of the mode of production is a subaltern condition, against which the 'cultural revolution' has to act. Williams views it as a "possibility" of 'cultural revolution'. As he puts it "Possibility is the future – the Sunday after next" (PMC 258).

The most important point in Bahro's analysis is that for any general emancipation both capitalism and industrialism has to be overcome. The source of energy for 'cultural revolution' is what Bahro conceives of as "surplus consciousness" which he defines as "an energetic mental capacity that is no longer absorbed by the immediate necessities and dangers of human existence and can thus orient itself to more distant problems" (PMC 260). Historically "surplus consciousness" is at once a cultural and a material variable. Bahro distinguishes between "compensatory" and "emancipatory" uses of this surplus. The 'cultural revolution' is for the conditions of the
emancipatory and against *the need for* compensatory activities. Williams finds that Bahro's perspectives for "general emancipation" is identical with his own concepts of "long revolution", which calls for

A redivision of labour; unrestricted access to general education; a childhood centered on the capacity for development rather than geared to economic performance; a new communal life based on autonomous group activities; socialization (democratization) of the general process of knowledge and decision (*PMC* 262).

And further, Williams is one with Bahro in the terms of achieving these goals: "A society cannot be taken by surprise or with a coup d'etat . . . . The question is rather to create first of all the political and mental conditions . . . ." (Bahro 275). Bahro, following Marx, recognizes that "Collectives of associated individuals or Unions" would function as agency for general emancipation. What is visualized here is an integrated process in which mechanism such as the party and the modern communication technology could be directed towards political and educational practices. There is the stress on "democratic procedures" rather than the explicit substitutionalism of the party monopoly, which "represents" the working class in a nominal way.

Williams underscores the urgency of 'cultural revolution' in every area of social existence. He proposes this as an antidote to the pervasive "lethal combination of abstract desire and practical cynicism" which was the result of
repeated disappointments and failures. The decisive engagement, however, will be with problems of "the economy" which has to challenge the alienated logic of a capitalist order and its non-capitalist derivatives. All this depends upon conscious individuals who are capable of necessary association.

One of the advantages of 'cultural revolution' is that it identifies wide groups who are subject to the appropriation of knowledge and effective decision, but who are structurally different from the old or the new working class. The outstanding case is that of women who share subjection both as workers and as women. Similarly the local communities are also subject to appropriation both in their role as local powers and as mere infrastructures (PMC 272). Integration of the new proletariat and the marginalized groups like women in the process of cultural revolution will be long, hard, contentious and untidy, many of its forms will be extensive and pervasive, there will be certain decisive confrontations, with very powerful opposing forces. They are certainly inevitable because what is in question is a cultural revolution and not some unimpeded process of social growth.

It may be noticed that a very important task undertaken by Williams in his theoretical oeuvre, as exemplified by the above works, is the reformulation of the orthodox Marxist notions of "the base" and "the superstructure". The proposition of the determining base and the determined superstructure which has it source in Marx's 1859 "Preface" to A Contribution
to the Critique of Political Economy has been commonly held to be the key to Marxist cultural analysis. Williams maintains that this is hardly an obvious starting-point for any cultural theory. It is part of an exposition of historical materialist method in the understanding of legal relations and forms of state. Cultural activity is much broader than what is traditionally understood (religious, aesthetic or philosophic) forms in which 'men became conscious of this conflict', without necessarily supposing that these specific forms constitute the whole of cultural activity (PMC 76).

In the transition from Marx to Marxism, Marx's original formulations and their terms were either temporally or spatially correlated in the metaphor "base" and "superstructure". The orthodox analysts think of these categories as if they were separable concrete entities without recognizing the constitutive process which historical materialism should emphasize (80-81). Engels in his essay "Ludwig Feuerbach and the End of Classical German Philosophy" argued that there was "interconnection between conceptions and their material conditions of existence" (qtd. PMC 79). But what is fundamentally lacking in the Marxist theoretical formulation is any adequate recognition of the indissoluble connections between material production, political and cultural institutions and activity and consciousness. Plekhanov, for example summarized the relationship between base and superstructure as a sequential relationship between elements, which in practice are indissoluble.
Williams holds that, since they are both dynamic and internally contradictory processes, the principle of physical fixity cannot be ascribed to them. What need to be studied are, then, the specific and indissoluble processes within which the decisive relationship is determined. Determination in the sense of exerting of pressures rather than of setting limits is significant in all social formations (PMC 87). Freud, for example, uses the term "over determination" to indicate the structured, multiple causation of a symptom: a crystallization very similar to the Frankfurt School's concept of a "dialectical image". Adorno held that "Dialectical images are models not of social products, but rather objective constellation in which the social condition represents itself" (qtd 103). Here again there is the repetition of the basic error of economism, which subsumes all formative experiences. Williams has reservations against Marx's own distinction between "production in general" and "Capitalist production" (Grundrisse: 85) for having universalized these concepts as conflating them in history:

But the history had happened, in the language as in so much else. What is then profoundly difficult is that Marx analysed 'capitalist production' in and through its own terms, and at the same time, whether looking to the past or the future, was in effect compelled to use many of the same terms for more general or historically different processes (ML 90).

Marxism thus often took the colouring of a specifically bourgeois and capitalist kind of materialism (92). Williams argues that the capitalist idea of
a "self-subsistent world" (bourgeois materialism) suppresses the true material character of the productive forces:

The social and political order which maintains a capitalist market, like the social and political struggles which created it, is necessarily a material production. From castles and palaces and churches to prisons and workhouses and schools; from weapons of war to a controlled press; any ruling class, in variable ways though always materially, produces a social and political order. These are never superstructural activities. They are the necessary material production within which an apparently self-subsistent mode of production can alone be carried on (ML 93).

Failure to grasp the material character of the production of a social and political order was tantamount to a corresponding failure to understand the material character of the production of a cultural order. The concept of the "superstructure" was then not a reduction but an evasion (ML 93).

It is therefore, necessary first to specify the negative effects, in cultural analysis, of the specialised versions of 'productive forces' and 'production'. Williams does so, by offering a critique of the idea of production as contained in the famous Grundrisse note on the piano maker, and argues that

a piano-maker is a productive worker, engaged in productive labour, but that a pianist is not, since his labour is not labour which reproduces capital. The extraordinary inadequacy of this distinction to advanced capitalism, in which the production of music (and not just its instruments) is an important branch of
capitalist production, may be only an occasion for updating (ML 93).

The real, danger, involved in the orthodox Marxist definition of productive forces is more fundamental, for it would amount to exclusion of a whole body of activities, "the realm of art and ideas, aesthetics, ideology or the superstructure". They have to be seen as variable productive practices.

Williams had already rejected the explanatory power of Marxist concepts of base and superstructure in Culture and Society. The idea that complex poetic consciousness was wholly determined by the material conditions established by the particular economic mode of production appeared too mechanical to account for literary culture. Thus he could not accept that the valuable, high culture created by the romantic poets, for example, could be explained away or dismissed as merely ideological by Marxist historical materialism (CS 266). By the 1970s, and more specifically in Marxism and Literature (1977) in collaboration with the New Left and with greater access to the continental Marxists like Louis Althusser and Antonio Gramsci, Williams embraced a more sophisticated Marxism that could theorize in more detail, the way individual consciousness was materially shaped. A new explanatory model replaced the erstwhile opposition between culture and society. Stressing the limitations of an instrumentalist, idealist and vulgar materialist Marxism he gives the outlines of a cultural materialist model, improving upon his own position in Culture and Society:
Thus the full possibilities of the concept of culture as a constitutive social process, creating specific and different 'ways of life', which could have been remarkably deepened by the emphasis on a material social process, were . . . superseded by an abstracting unilinear universalism. At the same time the significance of the alternative concept of culture, defining 'intellectual life' and 'the arts', was compromised by its apparent reduction to 'superstructural' status, and was left to be developed by those who, in the very process of idealising it, broke its necessary connections with society and history and, in the areas of psychology, art, and belief, developed a powerful alternative sense of the constitutive human process itself (ML 19-20).

As Scott Wilson suggests, Williams here makes a double move, by which culture is to be seen, retrospectively, as part of a whole material history and thus, by rewriting the past, a properly materialist, culture can be envisaged for the future (34). There is also here a silent transition, from Williams's previous notion of culture as 'a whole way of life' to 'specific' different 'ways' of life. Just as art is not merely a superstructural effect of the base, so its relation to the base is not that of a passive reflector. The great nineteenth century realist novels illustrate the point, for in them literature does not "reflect" reality but "produces" a set of cultural meanings that function as a powerful framework for experiencing social life in a specific way. This is consistent with the Althusserian argument that different signifying and institutional practices have a certain relative autonomy from the base. Every cultural practice is involved in a process of production whereby certain raw
materials are transformed into a product—textiles, books, an economic or political theory, an idea of Shakespeare as a universal genius and the like; every specific mode of production has its own changing relations of production, its own independent speed of development of productive forces, in short, its own peculiar time and history (Althusser and Balibar 99).

In a primarily Althusserian sense Dollimore and Sinfield also define materialism in their "Forword" to Political Shakespeare. Materialism is opposed to idealism, but in the sense that the latter is incorporated into the former. "Cultural materialism insists that culture does not (cannot) transcend the material forces and relations of production. Culture is not simply a reflection of the economic and political system, but nor can it be independent of it" (VIII). Elsewhere Alan Sinfield has argued that Althusser's key importance, in the late sixties and the seventies lay in explaining why people did not more readily revolt in a capitalist system that was clearly exploitative. "It seems a failure at the level of culture" (Sinfield 4) that Althusser's general theory of ideology and ideological state apparatuses could not account for. It was precisely through cultural institutions like the church, schools, universities, the media and so on, that capitalism reproduced the conditions, and individual subjects, required for its continuing vigour.

Towards the last phase of his career, Williams was preoccupied with the cultural significance of Modernism. A set of five speculative 'hypotheses'
about the nature of avant-gard formations appeared in *Culture* (83-4). A trenchant brief analysis of Modernisation and its paradoxical fate in the epoch of 'paranational' capitalism features in "Beyond Cambridge English" in *Writing and Society* (212-26) and in *Towards 2000*. *The Politics of Modernism* ([1989] 1999) however, was his last project and was posthumously published. For Williams, the question of Modernism as a social position came through as a proposition about language. 'Ordinary' language was cliched, one-dimensional and abstract, and 'poetic'—language will accordingly embrace difficult, experimental forms in an effort to revitalize perception. From Flaubert, through Henry James, the Russian Formalists, Faulkner, Eliot and James Joyce, there has been a binary opposition of ordinary and poetic language, within which various kinds of cultural politics are possible (Pinkney 4-5). These and a few other important related topics – theater, film, technology, and socialism – are all examined within the broad ambit of cultural theory. As Tony Pinkney who edited this collection of essays and lectures states, Williams's project while being incomplete, owing to his premature death in 1988, must be grasped as a powerful, topical intervention as well as local, historical case-study in a general sociology of culture (2-3).

Williams challenges the conventional estimations of modernism as beginning with Proust, Kafka and Joyce. He argues that the beginning of modernism could be traced from the innovations in social realism, the
metaphoric control and economy of seeing discovered and refined by Gogol, Flaubert or Dickens from the 1840s on. The realist novelists, in fact, devised and organized a whole vocabulary and its structure of figures of speech with which to grasp the unprecedented social forms of the industrial city. In contrast, the Modernist writing was admired for their denaturalizing of language, their break with the reflective idea of language and for making in the very texture of their narratives the problematic status of the author and his authority. Thus in making the text the centre of the public and the aesthetic stage, they repudiate the fixed forms, the cultural authority of the academies and their bourgeois taste, and the very necessity of market popularity. Similarly, the symbolic poets of the 1880s, the dramatists Ibsen and Strindberg were all to be seen as Modernists. In painting, it was the Impressionists, who in the 1860s, defined a new vision and a technique to match their rendering of modern Parisian life, but it was the post impressionists and the cubists who were situated in the modernist tradition (PM 32-33).

Williams, thus, challenges the canonized version of modernism and its theoretic contours. Reviewing such a highly selected version of the 'modern' he identifies the late nineteenth century as the occasion for the greatest changes ever seen in the media of cultural production and reproduction – photography, cinema, radio and television. Besides, the 1890s were the earliest moment of the Modernist movements: Futurists, Imagists, Surrealists,
Cubists, Vorticists, Formalists and Constructivists. These movements arose in the new metropolitan cities, the centres of new imperialism, which offered themselves as transnational capitals of an art without frontiers. The marginal or rejected artists became classics of organized teaching, and of travelling exhibitions in the great galleries of the metropolitan cities. 'Modernism' was confined to this highly selective field and denied to everything else in an act of pure ideology whose unconscious irony was that it was stopping history dead. As Williams comments, "Modernism being the terminus, everything afterwards was counted out of development. It is after; stuck in the post" (PM 35).

In "Metropolitan Perceptions and the Emergence of Modernism", Williams argues that the retention of such categories as 'modern' and 'Modernism' to describe aspects of art and thought of an undifferentiated twentieth century world is now at best anachronistic, or archaic. For, there were in fact pre-modern forms of art, which in certain conditions led to actual and radical changes in form. Williams explores the hidden history of the conditions of these internal changes, taking examples from English literature, and sets them against the twentieth century clamour of modernist 'universals' (aesthetic, intellectual and psychological) or "modern absolute" (PM 38). According to him the crucial factor in the emergence of modernism was certain metropolitan perceptions, which he traces to Wordsworth (The Prelude III) and the theme persisted through Thomson, Fielding to Dickens.
Thus modernism in art and thought presents sequences of innovations and experiments more "by what they are breaking from than by what, in any simple way, they are breaking towards" (PM 43). However Williams contends that there is no point in treating these metropolitan perceptions as universals. This, it appears, is a point at which the theoretical discourse of the post-colonial condition can make a potential intervention. For Williams concludes that:

The formulation of the modernist universals is in every case a productive but imperfect and in the end fallacious response to particular conditions of closure, break-down, failure and frustration. From the necessary negations of these conditions, and from the stimulating strangeness of a new and (as it seemed) unbonded social form, the creative leap to the only available universality — of raw material, of medium, of process — was impressively and influentially made (PM 47).

This is because in spite of the perceived universal of the metropolis, there was no settled society to which the modernist work could be related. The only accessible form of its practice was the medium, which defined art. For Williams, the importance of such a process and definition lies in seeing the imperial and capitalist monopolies as a specific historical form. This calls for a critical practice which involved looking from outside the metropolis "from the hinterlands, where different forces are moving, and from the poor world which has always been peripheral to the metropolitan systems" (PM 47).
The most significant challenge posed to colonialism, the narrative of nationalism, while serving a crucial function for decolonization, nevertheless relied on the narrative of modernity as progress and accepted the universal value of Enlightenment notions of freedom and democracy (Mongia 5). Postcolonial theory, on the other hand, problematizes the nation-state and its ideologies and reveals the difficulty of conceiving the nation even as an 'imagined community'. It rejects both the Western imperium but also the nationalist project (Appiah 353). Its main task is the understanding and critique of the link between the structures of knowledge and the forms of oppression of the last two hundred years (Young 2).

The authors of *The Empire Writes Back* use the term post-colonial "to cover all the culture affected by the imperial process from the moment of colonization to the present day" (2). The conflation of the post-colonial and cosmopolitan subjects is fuelled to a large extent by the fractured subjectivities of post-structuralist theory. And further, notions such as hybridity, marginality, and the diasporic are used for describing contemporary constructions of conflict-ridden subjectivity of the colonized people. However, critics like Aijaz Ahmad took Bhabha's notion of 'hybridity' to task. He points out the dangers of Bhabha's exploration, which lends itself to the aspecificity and ahistoricity of hybrid subject free from gender, class or race constrains (Mongia 286-7).
While Said's *Orientalism* (1979) keeps the spheres of colonizer and colonized rather firmly apart, Bhabha, with his interest in their interaction sees important moments going both ways. Shifting his focus from "the noisy command of colonial authority" and "the silent repression of native tradition" to "the colonial hybrid", Bhabha argues that the cultural interaction of colonizer and colonized leads to a fusion of cultural forms that from one perspective, because it signals its productivity, confirms the power of the colonial presence, but that as form of mimicry simultaneously unsettles the mimetic or narcissitic demands of colonial power (Bhabha, *Location* 112). Williams's notions of the residual, dominant and emergent forms of culture would, it appears, come in handy to unsettle the colonized-colonizer tangle.

In contrast to Modernism, the Avant-garde evinces a much more pronounced political stance: an aggressive dynamism and a conscious affront to modernist claims to liberation and creativity (*PM* 57). However, within the avant-grade as in Modernism there are opposed formations and these have materialized in language. There is, therefore, room for both formal and formational analysis. It is necessary to move beyond such conventional definitions as "avant-grade practice" or "the modernist text" (*PM* 79). Thus, in a rigorous analysis, descriptions such as 'multivocal' or 'polyphonic' or 'dialogic' as features of texts, have to be understood in terms of social practice. In an analytical shorthand Williams identifies three groups of linguistic innovations: by those who had come to the metropolis from
colonized or capitalized regions; those who had come from linguistic border
and where a dominant language coexisted with an older native language; and
those who came as exiles from rejected or rejecting political regimes (PM 78).

Within the general processes of mobility, dislocation and paranational
communication, which occurred over the decades, the linguistic variety could
be offered as a definition of modernity itself (PM 79). There was also an
ideological polarization between the old, settled language and its literary
forms and the new, dynamic language and its new forms. However, the
cultural forms of the new, dynamic language were not only experimental or
liberating, but also manipulative and exploitative. The widespread adoption
and dilution of avant-garde visual and linguistic modes by advertising and
publicity agencies gave shape to an overtly commercial and paranational art.
As Williams observes, "There is then a practical linkage of a selective
definition of modernity with the asymmetries of political and economic
domination and subordination" (PM 79).

In considering 'theatre as a political form', Williams observes that the
diverse theatres of the avant-garde have been in its own ways a political
practice, which has continued to shock and challenge. Though it has
dramatized the dislocations, the disturbances and the forms of madness within
the orthodox society, it has often been equivocal about violence and has
attempted a programmatic reduction of human possibility and human action to
a repetitive, mutually misunderstanding condition. Such characteristics, however, does not constitute a politics of an avant-garde but of an arriere-garde: a condition of submission, which amounts to a defeat of theatre and politics (*PM* 93-94).

In "Afterward to Modern Tragedy" he presents a further development from the position, which he adopted in the sixties. It is a development from a condition of general disorder to a general sense of loss of the future. This, he perceives, is the consequence of a dying social order, a cultural shock. As he puts it, it is the shock of a disturbance brought about by the default of a capitalist economic order: "Millions will be thrown out of their expectations of work. Old and ravaged areas of heavy industrial exploitation, but more important the families and communities once decanted into them who have built and lived among their fallout, will be left exposed and hopeless as capital and calculation move away" (*PM* 97). The common response of such a shock and loss runs back to elements of the tragic form developed by Ibsen and from the form of 'private tragedy' developed by Strindberg (*PM* 98). Williams argues that the contemporary tragic form is born out of the basic connections between a form of history and a dramatic form. Such a connection involves a basic mutation of tragedy; the tragic event is no longer of any of the older kinds, and is not limited to a public world or a private feeling. The central fact and source of tragedy is now an inability to communicate (*PM* 101). The form and the ideas and feelings that it mediates
have long roots - in Wordsworth's 'crowd of strangers'. Its powerful dramatization is to be found in Chekhov and Pirandello. Sartre's concept of 'seriality' is an attempt to analyse such conditions. Of course in the modern period factors such as the failure of revolution, the experience of Stalinism, the pressures of imperialism and capitalism, have all been contributing to the perpetuation of tragedy, the very root of which is the end of hope (PM 102-3).

In "Cinema and Socialism" Williams argues that the question of reproduction is central to any socialist discussion of cinema. "Much more than ever in print, or within the evident and still visible mechanics of theatre, film can reproduce what can be widely taken as simple representation; indeed seeing as if with our own eyes" (PM 112). It is basically the externalization of images as an accepted form of direct reproduction. Here a specifically socialist emphasis enters the argument, that is, real but hidden or excluded relationships could be shown or demonstrated. In this process Williams makes a case for Naturalism, which he observes has close historical associations with socialism in showing that people are inseparable from their real social and physical environments. In contrast to the idealist versions of the human, naturalism insisted that actions are always specifically contextual and material (PM 113). And the hardest problem, Williams thinks, is to distinguish between the radically different cultural tendencies which overlap within the whole formation of capitalist cinema (114). It is not enough to show the idiocies and frustrations of bourgeois life as in the classical dissident
bourgeois formula of twentieth century art. On the other hand, the central socialist case is that the lives of the great majority of people have been almost wholly disintegrated by most arts. Another potential area for the socialist film is the process of 'image-making'. It should be conceived as a revolt against the fixed images, the conventional flows and sequences, of orthodox bourgeois art (PM 117). To develop a truly socialist film from the material realities of the long capitalist appropriation of the popular is not an easy task.

In "Culture and Technology" Williams, not only protests against the cultural conservatives but also contrasts the unholy combination of technological determinism with cultural pessimism. While cultural conservatism amounts to a rejection or distrust of new technology, technological determinism registers the notion that the emergence of a new technology can change the society or the sector into which it has emerged (PM 119-20). The cultural conservatives looked at technology with doubts and apprehensions and they looked at cable television, satellite technology and the computers as a threat to language and culture. Of course these technologies have deep economic, political and cultural significances. They can initiate a new marketing phase, override existing national, cultural and commercial boundaries and penetrate into politically closed areas. In such a condition lies the root of cultural pessimism. The threat could be countered only by creating genuinely alternative social and cultural order (PM 124). Already in The Long Revolution Williams had considered this question in the
context of public service institutions, which interlock with a capitalist-sponsored mass culture (*PM* 125).

To understand any artistic or intellectual project, it is necessary to consider the relationship between the project and the formation. The importance of cultural studies is that it engages with both, rather than specializing itself to one or the other. The theoretical emphasis here is a refusal to give priority to either the project, or the formation traditionally understood as the art or society. However, in course of time, due to the institutionalization of Cultural Studies, the formative area of human development was isolated from the educators. Therefore the future of cultural studies invariably lies in charting the intellectual history of such formational developments, though it would be resisted by many vested and political interests because "this new work will become more than a resented interruption from what is otherwise taught" (*PM* 162).

The advantages of such a project are the subject of Williams's lecture "The Uses of Cultural Theory". According to him the usefulness of the theory lies in its emphasis on specific and changing relationships as distinct from a catch-all theory of diverse artistic practices or as a form of alternative social theory (*PM* 163-4). The important task of any theoretical analysis is identification of key linkages and significant gaps within a real social history. It has to take the place of academic criticism, which has the worst legacy of
picking over of texts and individuals from above. As Medvedev and Bakhtin put it: "Works can only enter into real contact as inseparable elements of social intercourse . . . . It is not works that come into contact, but people, who, however, come into contact through the medium of works" (qtd. PM 173). This provides a direction to the central theoretical question in cultural analysis: the specific relations through which works are made and move. Language is a key point in this process as recognized by Volosinov in his *Marxism and the Philosophy of Language* in the late twenties.

The most significant task of cultural theory is the exploration and specification of distinguishable cultural formations. It is necessary within corporate-capitalist and bureaucratic societies, to analyze the more sociologically manageable institutions of culture. For unless more specific formations are identified, there is the danger of decline of cultural formations into such abstractions as the state ideological apparatus, or 'traditional' and 'organic' intellectuals. Thus we can learn from historical analysis the extending and interpenetrating activity of artistic forms and actual or desired social relations. Cultural analysis, says Williams, is much more than a specifying artistic analysis:

It is the steady discovery of genuine formations which are simultaneously artistic forms and social locations with all the properly cultural evidence of identification and presentation, local stance and organization, intention and interrelation with
others, moving as evidently in one direction—the actual works—as the other: the specific response to society (PM 175).

A series of questions can also be posed and answers sought concerning works and their formations; ideology, the question of exploitation, the ugliness and violence of radical art and the very fruitfulness of theory could also be interrogated. The problem of actual and possible class relationships through which new art and theory can be made in a shared search for emancipation is central here in our consideration of content, application, intention and work (PM 176). Stuart Hall's essay "The West and the Rest: Discourse and Power" (1992) can be seen as a fruitful instance of interrogation in the above lines. Challenging the much mythologised and much anthologized thesis concerning the centrality of Europe in the formation of modern societies, Hall argues that Europe's encounter with other peoples and cultures have been equally pivotal in the process. These "others" were incorporated into the West's image of itself, its language, systems of representation, forms of knowledge, visual imagery and even its conception of the accessibility of reason (276-330).