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In his essay "Literature and Society" ([1950] 1999) Williams says,

My first topic is that of literature as evidence . . . Most people recognize by now that the arts have an intimate relation to society, that the consideration of artistic matters quickly leads to consideration of social and moral questions, and that in one important sense the arts can only be fully understood when they are examined within the context of the society in which they were produced (99).

This statement appears to be embryonic in the conception of his first theoretical work, Culture and Society 1870-1950 ([1958] 1963). It is in this work that Williams undertakes the mission of his life, namely, that of formulating a theory of culture, principally based on evidences from literature and literary studies. As he states in the "Introduction",

The development of culture is perhaps the most striking among all the words named. It might be said, indeed, that the questions now concentrated in the meanings of the word culture are questions directly raised by the great historical changes which the changes in industry, democracy and class, in their own way, represent, and to which the changes in art are a closely related response. The development of the word culture is a record of a
number of important and continuing reactions to these changes in our social, economic, and political life, and may be seen, in itself, as a special kind of map by means of which the nature of the changes can be explored (CS 16).

*Culture and Society* ([1958] 1963), *The Long Revolution* (1961), and *Communications* (1962) are the important works of Raymond Williams belonging to the first stage of his theoretical output. In these works, particularly in the first two, we find an overall statement of Williams's early general theory regarding the possibility of a shared and collaborative culture, which could be realized by the democratic extension and enlargement of the characteristically English cultural tradition, which had existed since the nineteenth century. For J.P. Ward these works are further characterized by a liberal humanist perspective, for Williams does not take any one separate intellectual discipline as the basis of his probing, in contrast to *Keywords* (1976) and *Marxism and Literature* (1977) wherein a remarkable shift to a more overtly Marxist position is quite evident (*PL* 11, 13). But for Terry Eagleton, Williams's work represents the "radical socialist perspective" on culture and society (*Criticism and Ideology* 110).

*Culture and Society* was a remarkably pioneering enterprise at the time of its inception. Williams was offering in this work a genealogy of 'culture' in the tradition of English criticism, which came to be designated as the
"culture and society tradition". As Allan O' Connor points out the work is not only a text but also a position within a text of reading and re-reading (49).

Williams finds that 'culture' is a remarkable force field of general change. He attempts to describe and analyse this general pattern of change and gives an account of its historical formation. He sees in the history of this word, in its structure of meanings "a wide and general movement in thought and feeling" significantly a nineteenth-century tradition, where in thoughts and ideas of a wide variety of writers converge. Williams is concerned with two types of analyses: first, an analysis of the previous usage of the word 'culture', and second the development of his own definition, based on its historical usage in which he attempts to reconcile inconsistencies and contradictions which he had high-lighted in the historical discussion. He argues that the concept represents two different, though related, responses discernible in the changing society:

In summary, I wish to show the emergence of culture as an abstraction and an absolute: an emergence, which in a very complex way, merges two general responses—first, the recognition of the practical separation of certain moral and intellectual activities from the driven impetus of a new kind of society; second, the emphasis of these activities, as a court of human appeal, to be set over the processes of practical social judgement and yet to offer itself as a mitigating and rallying alternative (CS 17).
Considering a variety of writers and thinkers from Edmund Burke down to George Orwell, Williams traces from their ideas the development of the notion of culture within the English tradition. Its distinction lies in the attempt to chart a typically British genealogy of culture from which an entirely novel "culture and society" discourse was made possible. Edmund Burke, 'the first modern conservative' and William Cobbett, "the first great tribune of the industrial proletariat" share a common concern for society in their criticism of the new industrialism. Burke established the idea of the state as the necessary agent of human perfection and condemned the aggressive industrialism of the nineteenth century. There was also the idea of an 'organic society' emphasizing the interrelation and continuity of human activities, rather than separation into spheres of interest. And further, it was Burke's idea of "the spirit of the nation" which was designated "national culture" by the end of the nineteenth century (30).

William Cobbett saw in the Industrial Revolution, the regimentation of men into two classes namely masters and abject dependents, an unnatural class system. Cobbett contrasted the apparent prosperity of industrialism with actual poverty. In an England groaning under the most oppressive commercial system, he advocated resistance, not violent agitation, but a movement of the people's own, for he was opposed to every kind of repression by state authority. In his recognition of labour as the only rightful property of the poor, Cobbett was approving, the course of the labour
movement from its infancy. At the same time he was arguing for a popular education of the workers' own and was paradoxically idealizing the Middle Ages, which consisted of an image of communal society as an alternative to the claims of industrialism. In this respect he was in line with Burke, Pugin, Carlyle, Ruskin and Morris (33). Southey criticized the political economy and manufacturing system, which reduced men to machines and drained them of their kindly and generous feelings of human nature. Owen, on the other hand, recognized the powers and values of Industrial Revolution in shaping a new moral world, which was both human and material. Both discern "the cause of all our difficulties" not in human nature but in the constitution of the society, as a problem of social engineering, a position which has got a bearing on the notion of culture in its formative phase. (44)

The generation of romantic poets from Blake and Wordsworth to Shelley and Keats were more deeply interested and more involved in the study and criticism of the society of their day. These romantic artists share "interlocking interests":

a conclusion about personal feeling became a conclusion about society, and their observation of natural beauty carried a necessary moral reference to the whole and unified life of man. For these two generations of poets lived through the crucial period in which the rise both of democracy and of industry was effecting qualitative changes in society: changes which by their
nature were felt in a personal as well as in a general way. (CS 48-49)

There was a corresponding change in ideas of art, of the artist, and of their place in society. This was especially pronounced in Wordsworth who in a Burkean sense contrasted the "people" with the "public" and conceived of the "embodied spirit" of a people's knowledge as something superior to the actual course of events, the normal run of the market. Williams finds in this insistence one of the primary sources of the idea of culture. Art, for Wordsworth, is not mere commodity; it is something more as he says in the 'Preface to Lyrical Ballads', the artist is "the rock of defense for human nature, an upholder and preserver, carrying everywhere with him relationship and love . . . the poet binds together by passion and knowledge the vast empire of human society . . . . The artists' creative imagination thus implies a revolution for life" (734-43). And further his theory of poetic language is inextricably linked with the idea of communication and solidarity with the common man. "The poet thinks and feels in the spirit of human passions". Again, "a poet is a man speaking to men". In this way a strong bond between the artist and society was established by the romantic artists contributing to the formation of a general idea of culture in varying degrees (62-63).

In 1958, Williams believed that Marxism with its key distinction between materialism and idealism was a product of the split between culture and society that it reproduced and perpetuated. Williams could not accept
that the valuable high culture created by Romantic poets could be explained away, or dismissed, as merely ideological by Marxist historical materialism. He rejected the explanatory power of the Marxist concepts of base and superstructure. The idea that complex consciousness was wholly determined by the material conditions established by a particular economic mode of production appeared too mechanical to account for literary culture (226).

From the time of Coleridge on, the idea of culture entered decisively into the English social thinking most notably in the writings of J.S. Mill, who was generally identified with the Germano-Coleridgean school. Their inquiry into the inductive laws of the existence and growth of human society was perhaps the largest contribution made by any class of thinkers towards the philosophy of human culture. The emphasis on culture was, according to Mill, the way to enlarge the utilitarian tradition, which attained its greatest height in Bentham. Bentham and Coleridge believed themselves to be inimical, the former demanding the extinction of existing institutions and creeds, and pressing the new doctrine of utilitarianism and the latter reasserting the best meaning and purpose of the old and demanding that they be made a reality. However, "The powers they wield are opposite poles of one great force of progression" (75).

In his Constitution of State and Church, Coleridge tries to set up a standard of 'health' of nation vis-à-vis civilization, which is but a 'mixed
good.' Coleridge defines this standard in the word 'cultivation', the word being used for the first time to denote a general condition, a 'state or habit' of, the mind, which was viewed as the task of an endowed class, the clerisy, or the National Church to achieve in the form of the social condition of man's perfection (77-78). Carlyle combines Coleridge's proposal and J.S. Mill's notion of an extended system of national education and presents the case for an 'Organic Literary Class' (Writing and Teaching Heroes) and an expanded popular education. To him the criterion for the perception of a new society was "the inspired wisdom of a Heroic Soul". Culture thus came to be defined as a separate entity and a critical idea (96-97).

The response to industrialism that we find in a group of novels written in the middle of the nineteenth-century provides some of the most vivid descriptions of life in an unsettled industrial society. The industrial novels are marked by a failure to imagine a solution to the problems of industrialization within the existing society. They typically end in death or in emigration to the colonies. The condition of the new society, its common criticism of industrialism and its general 'structure of feeling' are illustrated by such novels as *Mary Barton, North and South* (Mrs. Gaskell); *Hard Times* (Dickens); *Sybil* (Disraeli); *Alton Locke* (Kingley); and *Felix Holt* (George Eliot). What is remarkable about these novels from a cultural point of view is that.
Recognition of evil was balanced by fear of becoming involved. Sympathy was transformed, not into action, but into withdrawal. We can all observe the extent to which this structure of feeling has persisted, into both the literature and social thinking of our own time (CS 119).

In J.H. Newman's thoughts on university education as a system of national education there is the stress on perfection as the standard for the mind, as health is the standard for the body. In Coleridge and Newman the general opposition is to utilitarianism and an alarmed reaction to increasing working-class power; that is a general reaction to the social effects of full industrialism and in particular to the agitation of the industrial working-class. This tendency prepared the ground for Matthew Arnold's work where 'culture' is offered as the alternative to 'anarchy' (121, 123).

Matthew Arnold's definition of culture provides the tradition a single watchword and a name. His project in *Culture and Anarchy* is to recommend culture as "the great help out of our present difficulties". Culture being "a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know the best which has been thought and said in the world" could be achieved through a system of national education. The idea of culture thus stands not merely for literary culture but as a concept of general application denoting a standard of life. And further culture is conceived as "true human . . . harmonious perfection"
developing all sides of our humanity; and ... all parts of our society” (qtd 123-124).

In his understanding of the nineteenth-century society, Arnold had been significantly influenced by such thinkers as Coleridge, Burke, Newman and Carlyle. Yet the originality of his work consists in the authentic way in which he looks at modern civilization which unlike that of Greece and Rome is “mechanical and external, and tends constantly to become more so”. As opposed to this picture, he presents a charming and fascinating, spectacle of being 'cultured' in the way of life, habits, manners, tones of voice, and all the assortment of niceties of a select group of people. Williams dismisses this spectacle as consisting of priggishness and spiritual pride (125).

Arnold's views on Industry and production as 'stock notions' are of a piece with the ideas of Carlyle, Ruskin and Tawney. As Williams observes, Arnold was an excellent analyst of the deficiencies, of the gospel of "doing as one likes," individually and socially and so his position has consequences for both spheres: the danger of spiritual anarchy when individual assertion was the only standard; the danger of social anarchy as the rising class exerted its power (127).

Williams is very critical of the social implications of Arnold’s revaluations. As he observes, the state, which for Burke was an “activity” has become for Arnold an “idea”. The truth of this statement is born out by
Arnold's recommendation for a system of national education, his emphasis on the state as the agent of general perfection, "the centre of light and authority", the organ of "the best self" and his disavowal of the various social classes to be substituted by a state led by the "remnant" or "aliens" guided by the laws of human perfection. His quite unsympathetic attitude to the working-class (Populace) seriously limits his theory of culture in so far as he sees their work as "anarchy" and so detrimental to society. And Arnold's hopeful expectation of a "revolution by the course of law", through the agency of the state is for Williams a fallacious conception:

When the emphasis on state-power is so great, any confusion between that ideal state which is the agent of perfection, and this actual state which embodies particular powers and interests, becomes dangerous and really disabling (CS 133).

In Arnold's doctrine, the idea of culture means "right knowing and right doing"; a mutable process and not an absolute essence. His emphasis is so much on the importance of knowing and so little on the importance of doing. Perfection as "becoming", and culture as a "process" suggest that they are known absolutes, "the passion for sweetness and light". But then, as Williams points out, this view of culture as a process was limited to an abstraction in that Arnold fails to find the material of that process, either with any confidence in the contemporary society or in any particular order that transcended human society. Moreover while appearing to resemble an
absolute, it has in fact no absolute ground. Thus Arnold, was caught between two relativist worlds of reason: as the critic and destroyer of institutions, and as the maker of institutions. This confusion of attachment was marked by the word “culture”. However, Arnold's recognition of “a period of transformation when it comes” (in his essay “Equality”), and the importance of the idea of culture in relation to such a transformation, speak for Arnold as a great and important figure in nineteenth century thought (CS 135-136).

Williams examines the relationship between art and society as part of his venture to trace the development of the idea of culture in nineteenth century England. As he puts it, “An essential hypothesis in the development of the idea of culture is that the art of a period is closely and necessarily related to the generally prevalent 'way of life' and further that, in consequence, aesthetic, moral and social judgements are closely interrelated” (137). The works of A.W. Pugin, John Ruskin and William Morris exemplify an important line of argument in this respect in nineteenth century England. In the 1830s, the ground for such a development had been well prepared by Coleridge and Carlyle who both focused on the relationship between “culture” and “civilization”. Williams finds Pugin's emphasis on the relation between art and its period quite curious as it appears in the context of a revivalist tract where he had written that “the history of architecture is the history of the world” and he insists on the revival of the feelings from which it originally sprang. In his view, the most important element in social thinking, which
developed from the work of Pugin was the use of art of a period to judge the quality of the society that was 'producing' it (CS 137-138).

Both Ruskin and Morris were opposed to Pugin in matters of belief. According to Ruskin it is impossible for the artist to be good if his society is corrupt. In his view, the art, or the general productive and formative energy of any country, is an exact exponent of its ethical life, namely, social and political virtues. And so, noble art springs from noble persons. A society thus had to be judged in terms of all its making and using, and in terms of all the human activities and relationships which the methods of manufacture and consumption brought into existence (149). In Ruskin's radical criticism of nineteenth century society, a particular kind of experience, identified with the arts, is being used as a standard of the health of a civilization. In a civilization where experiences are being constantly overlaid by the attitudes of industrialism, Ruskin argues, not only that a national art is impossible, but also that the civilization itself is therefore bad. In the distinction that he makes between two opposite kinds of experience, mechanical and organic, the latter is the province of the "art" or the "aesthetic" which is but an operation of the whole being. The artist's goodness is also his "wholeness" and the goodness of a society lies in its creation of conditions for "wholeness of being." Thus Williams notices a transition to social criticism in Ruskin's thinking, a general transition between thinking about art and thinking about society, which is marked by the changes in the meanings of culture. The idea
of the “organic” is now central both in conservative and Marxist thinking about society. However both Carlyle and Ruskin ended in a deadlock, namely, that they failed to realize a society organized in terms of values (CS 144, 146).

It is only with William Morris, at the end of the nineteenth-century, that there is the courage to seek a solution in a different future: in a new kind of organization of working and living. Morris sought to attach the general values of society to an actual and growing social force: that of the organized working class. That way Morris was making a remarkable attempt to break the general deadlock experienced by Carlyle and Ruskin and was attempting his own extension of it. He was opposed to the Coleridgean civilization which was mechanical, scientific and characterized by eyeless vulgarity which has destroyed art, the one certain solace of labour. Instead he envisions a social revolution as the answer to the deadlock, wherein art has a stronger claim in its embodiment of the idea of culture. The Oxford culture represented by Arnold has done irreparable damage to art and literature in its “attempt to teach literature with one hand while it destroys history with the other….” Caught in the grip of commercialism the English middle class is quite ineffective in furthering an idea of culture. However art depends on the society, which produces it and Morris recognizes art to be a particular quality of labour (CS 156, 158).
What is central to Morris's social criticism is his desire to end the capitalist system, and for the institution of socialism, so that men could decide for themselves how their work should be arranged and where machinery was to be appropriate. These ideas have to be understood in the light of Morris's Socialism, which was developed in opposition to utilitarianism. His emphasis on the working people and their betterment contains an application of the country's thinking about the meaning of culture. The arts defined a quality of living, which it was the purpose of political change to make possible, namely, progress of civilization in a meaningful way. Williams, thus, finds in the works of Morris, a terra firma for a debate on culture vis-à-vis art and society, which would be of lasting merit (CS 161).

The second part of Culture and Society called 'Interregnum' is a brief discussion of the cultural criticism of the period 1880-1914 as they appear in the works of W.R. Mallock, Oscar Wilde, Walter Pater, James Whistler, George Gissing, Bernard Shaw and the Fabians, Hillaire Bellock, G.D.H. Cole and the Guild Socialists and T.E. Hulme. Williams considers this period an interregnum on the ground that by 1880 the tradition he is identifying had been formed and so the period had very little new to offer. "Such works require notice, but suggests brevity" (165). But as Eldridge and Eldridge point out, this is one of the significant omissions in Williams's treatment of the subject. (1994). The third part of Culture and Society, entitled "Twentieth Century Opinions," is a discussion of D.H. Lawrence, R.H.
Tawney, T.S. Eliot, I.A. Richards, F.R. Leavis, and George Orwell. Besides, there is a short chapter on "Marxism and Culture".

Lawrence continues the nineteenth century critique of industrialism in the manner of Carlyle and sees its acquisitiveness as debasing human purpose to "sheer mechanical materialism" (CS 201). Individuals become mechanical, disintegrated and amorphous, a condition of mind, which contributes to the ugliness of industrial society, which drains of common sympathy between people and frustrates the "instinct of community" (204). For Lawrence, "the actual living quick itself is alone the creative reality" (207), and the living self has one purpose only: to come to its own fullness of being. Education is only one agency in achieving this most difficult task. Yet this could only be possible on the basis of equality where the basic needs of all people had to be met. From this conception evolves the idea of culture as community, communication and love, moving against the grain of an industrial civilization.

R.H. Tawney, the social and economic historian, is presented as a link in the continuity with the nineteenth century tradition with his criticism of market philosophy and industrialism. His two books, The Acquisitive Society (1921) and Equality (1931) present critiques, which share the legacy of Arnold and Ruskin (217). He insists that the foundations of a common culture are economic and its condition is a large measure of equality (218),
which would promote the dignity and requirement of the individual human beings in the spirit of a confident humanism (CS 220). He was thus making a case for the extension of culture beyond a minority class and a full-scale attack on private property. Williams finds Tawney to be the last important voice in that tradition which had sought to humanize the modern system of society on its terms. This was the mark both of his achievement and his limitation (223).

T.S. Eliot, who was theoretically of great importance to Williams, was very much enamoured by the ideal of a Christian society, but at the same time was very much worried by the commercialized society (unregulated industrialism) which he feared would lead to "deformation of humanity". He sees industrialized society or modern material organization as a complication and a threat to Christian society. Eliot presents his penetrating reexamination of the idea of culture in his book *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948). His purpose in the book is to present the essential conditions for the growth and for the survival of culture (CS 228). The importance of the book, according to Williams, lies in two of its discussions: first its adoption of the meaning of "culture" as "a whole way of life" and the subsequent consideration of levels of culture within it; second, its effort to distinguish between "elite" and "class" and its penetrating criticism of the theories of an 'elite'. The sense of culture as a 'whole way of life' (230) – has been an appropriation from twentieth century anthropology especially of Malinovsky
and sociology which includes all the characteristic activities and interests of a people, like sport, food, art religion and philosophy. Eliot's arguments on culture as the pattern of a society as a whole were of great theoretical importance to Williams. Eliot has argued that religion and culture were a 'whole way of life' (CS 230). This also provides a very strong critique of the alternative notions of culture held by Bloomsbury, Leavis and the Fabian Socialists. It thus rules out Bloomsbury's individual search for culture as a social goal, Scrutiny's "minority culture" and the Fabian Socialist's idea of the extension of an already existing (dormant) culture (O'Connor 58).

As Eldridge and Eldridge point out, there are continuities in Eliot stemming from Coleridge and Carlyle but this is extended into a critique of mass society. So it is argued that the standard of art and culture are depressed in a profit-oriented society with its advertising propaganda and even its system of mass education. But the conservative element is located in the concept of hierarchy and the cultural elites for the maintenance of civilized values and the defence of the social order against the insipient mob. Hence, the idea of culture is set against egalitarianism. In Eliot's perspective, in contrast to Tawney, they can scarcely co-exist (Eldridge and Eldridge 57).

Williams is radically different from Eliot in considering 'culture' as 'a whole way of life'. He finds a contradiction at the heart of Eliot's position, a new conservatism which is at odds with his social principle and the
immorality of exploitation in the industrial capitalism which maintains the
social classes and human divisions that he endorses. And unlike Burke and
Coleridge he does not reject the basic economic system of the society.
Theoretically, the problem of Eliot is that he cannot accept the notion of a
contradictory totality. Similarly his theory of class also does not take into
consideration the complex ways in which functional groups, classes such as
merchants, industrial capitalists and financiers operate in a society. Williams
further detects a similar problem with Eliot's notion of culture as a whole way
of life: while a working knowledge of culture defined as ways of life is
impossible, Eliot argues that much of culture is not fully knowable; it is
unconscious or 'emergent'. This potential contradiction between an emergent
culture and a 'dominant' culture is left unrecognized by Eliot. Williams
accepts the argument about culture and totality but insisted that it might be a
contradictory totality (O'Connor 59).

Terry Eagleton clearly brings out the distinction of Williams's
concept of culture vis-à-vis Eliot's. For Williams, a culture can never be
brought to consciousness because it is never fully achieved. What is
constitutively open ended can never be completely totalized. Culture is a
network of shared meanings and activities, never self-conscious as a whole,
but growing towards the advance in consciousness and thus in full humanity,
of a whole society. A common culture involves the collaborative making of
such meanings, with the full participation of all its members; and this is the
key difference between Williams and Eliot's idea of a common culture. For Williams a culture is common only when it is collectively made; for Eliot a culture is common even when its making is reserved to the privileged few. For Williams a common culture is one which is continuously remade and redefined by the collective practice of its members; not one in which values formed by the few are then taken over and passively lived by the many; for this he prefers the term "culture in common" (Eagleton, The Idea 117, 119).

In thinking of all these matters, as central to the idea of culture, Eliot has closed almost all existing roads with unresolved contradictions. Therefore for a more positive guidance Williams turns to the works of two influential literary critics, I.A. Richards and F.R. Leavis. I.A Richards's Principles of Literary Criticism (1924) and Science and Poetry (1926) offer a particular idea of culture, which is essentially a renewed definition of the importance of art to civilization. Written as part of the critical revolt against the Romantic theory of the 1920s, the theoretical attack comes through the social facts of language and communication (CS 239). Williams contends that the judgements on which this attack was founded is a matter of the whole culture. But in his discussion of the mass society and the growth of science wherein the former challenges standards of morality and the latter undermines the old keys of wisdom in philosophy and religion, there is the imperative to think of safeguards against the encroachments of commercialism, which control majority taste. The suggested solution is the development of a new
consciousness, through the experience of literature, which should become a training ground for general experience against anarchy rather than a return to tradition. Williams's objection to this is on two counts. First, it begets an attitude to servility to the literary establishment, amounting to passivity. Thus Richards's account of the inadequacy of the ordinary response, when compared with the adequacy of literary response, is a cultural symptom rather than a diagnosis. Moreover when Richards prescribes poetry as "capable of saving us" it becomes the "new anthropomorph" (CS 245). His second objection is that a developed sense of the social, namely, "the complex of social action and interaction which constitutes the practice of living" is absent in Richards (245).

In F.R. Leavis's influential pamphlet *Mass Civilization and Minority Culture* published in 1930, the term "minority culture" refers to literary tradition as well as the critical spirit that should accompany it. Here again there is the continuity from Coleridge and Arnold, but Leavis addresses himself to the new situation in the twentieth-century which was marked by the developments in the press, advertising, popular fiction, films and broadcasting institutions which embodied ways of thinking and feeling in a threatening manner (CS 250). Leavis's analysis rests upon a myth of the past, a view of an organic, pre-industrial rural society with right relationship in a natural environment contrasted favourably with modern urban society – its meaningless work and commercialized and degraded values. Those involved
in the contemporary minority culture are struggling against the tide and are continually striving to formulate defensive positions. But Williams observes, "If there is one thing certain about the 'organic community', it is that it has always gone" (253). The real social experience is sidetracked in Leavis's evaluations. Literary criticism, then, could not stand in judgement on culture as a whole way of life. As Eldridge and Eldridge point out,

If culture is to be understood in this anthropological way then the very concepts of minority and majority culture become increasingly problematical. We have to find ways of understanding the variations of social experience in modern industrial societies and the causes of these variations, as a necessary prelude to critique. For all his energy and indeed his dislike of capitalism and its establishments, Leavis lapses into a mixture of mythology, conjuncture and dogmatism (60).

Williams's opposition to Eliot, Leavis and the whole of the cultural literary conservatism that had formed around them, was informed by a very specific national consciousness. When the New Left Review team posed this argument, his honest response was that his experience in the Welsh social relations was unconsciously operating on the strategy of the book. Another case in point is the process of industrialization, which was eminently European. But there is no international dimension in Culture and Society. Here Williams points out that the project was conceived rather as a short response to a particular English situation (PL 112-113).
Williams next engages in a brief but revealing discussion of Marxism and culture. Though Marx was the contemporary of Ruskin and George Eliot, Marxist interpretation of culture did not become widely effective in England until the thirties of the twentieth century. Marx himself outlined, but never fully developed a cultural theory. In the "Preface" to A Contribution to the Critique of Political Economy (1859) Marx wrote:

The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life. It is not the consciousness of men that determines their existence, but, on the contrary, their social existence determines their consciousness (qtd CS 259).

As Williams comments, "the superstructure is a matter of human consciousness, and this is necessarily very complex, not only because of its diversity but also because it is always historical: at any time, it includes continuities from the past as well as reactions to the present" (259). From this assumption emerges a theoretical perspective on culture:

A Marxist theory of culture will recognize diversity and complexity, will take account of continuity within change, will allow for chance and certain limited autonomies, but, with these reservations, will take the facts of the economic structure and the consequent social relations as the guiding string on which a culture is woven, and by following which a culture is to be understood (CS 261-2).
Here Williams makes another important presupposition:

Structure and superstructure, as terms of an analogy, express at once an absolute and a fixed relationship. But the reality which Marx and Engels recognize is both less absolute and less clear. Engels virtually introduces three levels of reality: the economic situation; the political situation; the state of theory. Yet any formula in terms of levels, as in terms of structure and superstructure, does less than justice to the factors of movement which it is the essence of Marxism to realize. We arrive at a different model, in which reality is seen as a very complex field of movement, within which the economic forces finally reveals themselves as the organizing element (CS 260).

Williams argues that Marxist writing in England in the thirties had been very mixed in both quality and occasion. These were primarily a response to actual conditions in England and Europe, which were characterized by dogmatic rather than a conscious development of Marxist studies. Accordingly he finds that R.E. Warner's view that "Capitalism has no further use for culture," is the conclusion of an analysis, which falls short of a proper Marxist interpretation. It was a tradition basically proceeding from the Romantics, and coming down through Arnold and Morris, with the sprinkling of a few phrases from Marx.

Marxist writing in the 1930s was a form of romantic protest which envisioned a place for the artist and the intellectuals in socialism to be established by the workers, but at the same time "the making over of the
workers' cause into the intellectuals' cause was always likely to collapse”.

Given that, culture was not so far ahead, not so firmly affiliated to the future, as was then thought (263-4). And as Terry Eagleton argues (Criticism and Ideology 21-22) the development of Marxist criticism was not a matter of continuity of what went before but precisely of bypassing it. When Raymond Williams came to write in the early 1950s the ethos of thirties' criticism was mainly represented by the powerful ideological moment of the Scrutiny. It was a compound of vulgar Marxism, bourgeois empiricism and Romantic idealism and it could yield him almost nothing. However both Scrutiny and Marxism supplied between them the formative influences of his early development. But he rejected Scrutiny as a whole position because of its elitism, and also rejected Marxism on the following ground:

As for Marx, one accepted the emphasis on history on change, on the inevitably close relationships between class and culture but the way this came through was, at another level unacceptable. There was, in this position, a polarization and abstraction of economic life on the one hand and culture on the other which did not seem to me to correspond to the social experience of culture as others had lived it and as one was trying to live it oneself (Eagleton and Wicker 28).

Thus questioning of the Levisian liberal humanist case led to the emergence of a Left-Leavisism, of which Williams's work has been the major exemplar. The English Marxism available to him was little more than an
intellectual irrelevance (as was also the case with Caudwell), which for that precise reason he had to reject in his own time only to prepare the ground for his own oeuvre (Eagleton *Criticism and Ideology* 22-23).

Similarly, Williams finds that Alick West's account of the continuity between Romantic and Marxist ideas precipitate a fault line: the Romantic poets were idealists who were unable to give a material meaning to their social conception. Contrary to this interpretation is E.P. Thompson's Marxist account of Morris who saw man's economic and social development always as the master process and tended to suggest that the arts were passively dependent upon social change (CS 264-5). Williams contends that what was attacked in Morris was precisely what Marx taught and the position that Marxists wished to defend. For Morris's master-process which Thompson criticizes is surely Marx's real foundation, which "determines consciousness". This is also what Engels meant by "the reflexes of all these actual struggles in the brains of the combatant" which would "exercise their influence upon the course of historical struggles and in many cases preponderate in determining their form". Williams thinks that these and the other contradictory and confusing positions render Marxist theories of culture vague. The Marxists see the arts variously as dependent on social reality, as determining social reality or as ultimately depending on social reality, and also reflecting, affecting or changing it. Marxist theories of culture in the thirties make use of all these propositions as the need serves and render them
confused (265-6). Such confusing interpretations exhibit “a quite shocking ignorance” of what Marx wrote and the word “superstructure”, had been used with “wholly ridiculous implications”. However Marxists assigned a high value to culture, and as Marxism became a major interpretative and active movement, a theory of culture was necessary. It was felt to interpret not only past and present culture in Marxist terms, but future culture also had to be predicted. In England, this work was done mainly in relation to literature. And, as he points out, the work of Christopher Caudwell, the best known of the English Marxist critics, was immensely prolific in ideas but the Marxist orientation in him is doubtful. Moreover, while Thompson praises him as a Marxist theoretician, JD Bernall accuses him for being influenced by “bourgeois scientific philosophy”. Williams observes that the English attempt at a Marxist theory of culture shows an interaction between Romanticism and Marx, between the idea of culture, which is the major English tradition and Marx's brilliant revaluation of it. And the interaction is as yet far from complete (CS 271).

A new realization in the nineteenth century was that the basic economic organization could not be separated and excluded from its moral and intellectual concerns. Society and individual experience was alike being transformed and this driving agency had to be taken into account. Of all who insisted on this, it was Marx who decisively gave a social and historical definition to the confusing idea of “industrialism”. The important question in
this context is the Marxist impact on thinking about 'culture'. The basic question is whether the economic element is in fact determining. Williams admits that it remains an unanswerable question (271). The shaping influence of economic change can be discerned in the period 1780-1950, the period with which *Culture and Society* is concerned. Williams looks at the problem in this way:

We can never observe economic change in neutral conditions, anymore than we can, say, observe the exact influence of heredity, which is only available for study when it is already embodied in an environment. Capitalism and industrial capitalism which Marx by historical analysis was able to describe in general terms, appeared only within an existing culture. English society and French society are both, today, in certain stages of capitalism, but their cultures are observably different, for sound historical reasons. That they are capitalist may be finally determining, and this may be a guide to social and political action, but clearly, if we are to understand the cultures, we are committed to what is manifest: the way of life as a whole (*CS* 272).

The rigid methodology of Marxist cultural interpretation involves the forcing and superficiality of procedure, which says Williams, would lead one to a critical trap:

For even if the economic element is determining, it determines a whole way of life, and it is to this, rather than to the economic system alone, that the literature has to be related. The
interpretative method which is governed, not by the social whole, but rather by the arbitrary correlation of the economic situation and the subject of study, leads very quickly to abstraction and unreality, as for example in Caudwell's description of modern poetry (that is since the fifteenth century) as 'capitalist poetry', where it remains to be shown that 'capitalist' is a relevant description of poetry at all (CS 272).

Similar flaws were there in the overriding generalizations in the description of Western European literature of the last century as "decadent"; the description of the English life, thought and imagination of the last three hundred years as "bourgeois" and English culture as "dying" were to surrender reality to a formula. Therefore Williams asserts that in all these points there was a general inadequacy among Marxists in the use of 'culture' as a term. It normally indicates the intellectual and imaginative products of a society. But it would seem that from their emphasis on the interdependence of all elements of social reality, and from their analytic emphasis on movement and change, Marxists should logically use culture in the sense of a whole way of life, a general social process. The difficulty lies in the terms of Marx's original formulation: 'structure' and 'superstructure' as descriptions of reality. Williams suggests that even as terms of analogy they need amendment. (273) It is significant to note here that this task of amendment of these concepts was undertaken by Williams in his essay "Base and
Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory." Arguments of the essay will be discussed in Chapter IV.

Williams argues that any attempt to define the culture of the socialist future in line with the Marxist interpretations of the past is inadequate. But the relation between literature and society is not "as simple and direct" as to enable one to make authoritative prescriptions for such a culture. Therefore Williams says:

But, if we are to agree with Marx that 'existence determines consciousness', we shall not find it easy to prescribe any particular consciousness in advance, unless, of course (this is how in theory it is usually done), the prescribers can somehow identify themselves with 'existence'. My own view is that if, in a socialist society, the basic cultural skills are made widely available, and the channels of communication widened and cleared, as much as possible has been done in the way of preparation, and what then emerges will be an actual response to the whole reality, and so valuable (CS 274).

Williams also points out that a theory of culture as propounded by Lenin is inadequate as he finds the growth of consciousness as 'chaos'. And further, so far as the development of consciousness is concerned, Lenin is inconsistent with Marx. For Lenin's argument that the working-class is capable of developing only 'trade union consciousness' calls for reexamination, redefinition and reconsideration of Marx's ideas. However he says, "We are
interested in Marxist theory because Socialism and Communism are now important", and therefore he looks for its clarification in the field of culture as a whole (275).

With this in mind, Williams hopes to find a way out through Orwell's approach to the study of culture and society. While he admires Orwell's human concern and sympathy for the victims of society – the poor, the outcast, and the exploited – he finds there a mood of disillusion, unredeemed by hope. Orwell represents the paradox of the exile, sometimes from his own country, typically from his class, without any settled way of living in which his own individuality could be confirmed. It was this distrust of society, caused by his own lack of grounding in community that leads Orwell to portray society as inherently leading to totalitarianism. Orwell, while rejecting the consequence of an atomistic society, retained within himself its characteristic mode of consciousness. The pessimistic mood in Orwell's writing is seen as an outcome of the pressures and tension he experienced. Though it is a negative mood, one of despair, it has resources of hope, to recover and nourish the critical tradition of opposition to capitalism. For Williams the task is to move beyond these disabling features in order to establish some basis for the argument that capitalism was not the last word (Eldridge and Eldridge 61-62).
It is significant to note that towards the end of *Culture and Society* Williams is assumes a Marxist position stronger than in the early chapters of the work. He is radically different from the Marxist criticism of the thirties and even from the post-War responses to society and arts. Making a significant shift from the superstructural categories of vulgar Marxist misinterpretations, Williams offers a new conceptualisation wherein such non-economic superstructural components as mass, communication and community are accommodated as potential points of consideration in the analysis of culture. However, in *Politics and Letters*, Williams was taken to task for not having included in the book a chapter on Marx and Marxism and Industrial Revolution. Williams clarified that at that stage he was preoccupied by the theory of art alone. He was quick to agree that insertion of Marx would have radically improved the book. Similarly, he was questioned on the silence of the book on the problems of the nation, of imperialism, and of community. He ascribes this absence mainly to his Welsh experience in which those notions were not so relevant. The term community then appeared ambiguous to him, and he was quite insufficiently aware of the post-War capitalist state (*PL* 116-20).

Williams concludes his study on culture hinging on seven points namely 'mass and masses', 'mass communication', 'mass observation,' 'communication and community', 'culture and way of life', 'the idea of community,' and the development of a 'common culture'. These points are
discussed in relation to three major issues: Industry, Democracy and Art. He says:

The history of the idea of culture is a record of our reactions, in thought and feeling, to the changed conditions of our common life. Our meaning of culture is a response to the events which our meanings of industry and democracy most evidently define. But the conditions were created and have been modified by men (CS 285).

From a historical perspective he focuses on the “idea of culture” and he knows that such a task is a slow reach for control. Williams recognizes that the idea of culture is a reaction to a major change in the conditions of English common life. Still, culture perceived as a whole form appears to be perpetually problematic:

The idea of culture describes our common inquiry, but our conclusions are diverse, as our starting points were diverse. The word, 'culture' cannot automatically be pressed into service as any kind of social or personal directive. Its emergence in its modern meanings, marks the effort at total qualitative assessment, but what it indicates is a process, not a conclusion. The argument which can be grouped under its heading do not point to any inevitable action or application. They define, in a common field, approaches and conclusions. It is left to us to decide which if any we shall take up (CS 285).
In relation to Industry, Democracy and Art there have been three main phases of cultural change. Eldridge and Eldridge schematize these phases (62) as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Phases</th>
<th>Industry</th>
<th>Democracy</th>
<th>Art</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Phase I</td>
<td>Rejection of machine production and social relations of the factory system</td>
<td>Threat to minority values</td>
<td>Independent value of art and its qualitative importance to the common life</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1790 – 1870</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase II</td>
<td>Hostility to machinery</td>
<td>Community/organic society Vs dominant individualist ethics and practice</td>
<td>Art as value in itself</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1870 – 1914</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Phase III</td>
<td>Acceptance of Machine production – social relations in industrial system of production is problematic</td>
<td>Twentieth century version of Phase I concern with mass communication</td>
<td>Reintegration of art with common life – communication</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>1914-1945</td>
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Here the periodization is not a sharp one; it represents times when there were dominant modes of thinking in response to the development of a capitalist society in England. Here comes the question of the contribution of critical thinking about culture in the second half of the twentieth century. Williams offers a set of interrelated reflections which hinge on the concepts of 'mass', 'communication', 'community' and of course 'culture.'

Williams seeks first to disentangle the meanings of the word "mass" and then to question the value of the term itself. The term mass came to be used as a synonym for 'mob', when applied to people, as for instance, mass production, mass action, mass meeting. This was then seen as a threat to "culture", and by extension, to the elite guardians of culture. But culture was
also threatened in terms of the quality of its artifacts by mass production. As Adorno puts it,

If indeed the advances of technology largely determines the fate of society, then the technical forms of modern consciousness are also heralds of that fate. They transform culture into a total lie, but this untruth confesses the truth about the socio-economic base which has now become identical. The neon signs which hangover our cities and outshine the natural light of the night with their own are comets presaging the natural disaster of society, it is frozen death (Culture Industry 83).

It is a dreadful condition, which men should fight out.

When democracy itself is described as mass democracy, it implies some of the grounds on which it was resisted. Thus the equation becomes: the masses = mob = rule by majority = (mass) democracy = threat to culture. Mass, then, becomes a negative term and whatever is linked with it is negatively defined – mass education, mass prejudice, mass thinking, mass suggestion, and mass communication. When the term is routinely used in this way, it can be deployed to justify the idea of a minority culture, to confirm elites and establishments and to capture the idea of culture so that it justifies exclusivity and systems of control over insipient mobs. For Williams such a line of thinking needs to be challenged in order to argue that culture is not the enemy of democracy but can be enlarged by it for the common good. This
accounts for the direct challenge that Williams makes to the validity of the concept of "mass":

There are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses. In an urban industrial society there are many opportunities for such ways of seeing. The point is not to reiterate the objective conditions but to consider, personally and collectively, what these have done to our thinking. The fact is surely, that a way of seeing other people which has become characteristic of our kind of society, has been capitalized for the purpose of political or cultural exploitation. What we see, neutrally, is other people, many others, people unknown to us. In practice, we mass them, and interpret them, according to some convenient formula (CS 289).

Williams is concerned to examine the formula, not the mass, because "we ourselves are all the time being massed by others". This contains the direct statement of Williams's views on cultural and political exploitation, which provided the underlying motivation for the writing of *Culture and Society*. In literary analysis and in historical accounts this 'sense of the many' is being robbed of their common culture by 'the few'. As Eldridge and Eldridge point out, "The challenge to the use of 'mass' as a concept is, therefore, not some quirky pedantry, but a way of drawing attention to its ideological functions and control implications" (1994: 60). John Storey argues that relations of power and politics inescapably mark the culture/ideology landscape. It thus suggests that the study of popular culture
amounts to something more than a simple discussion of entertainment and leisure (5).

The intersection of culture and ideology was an important project of the British 'Cultural Studies' as instanced by the 1980's projects of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS): *On Ideology and Culture, Media, Language* (London: Hutchinson, 1980). These were influenced by Althusser, Gramsci and the Frankfurt School. Both the British and the Frankfurt traditions saw culture as a mode of ideological reproduction and hegemony, in which cultural forms help to shape the modes of thought and behaviour that induce individuals to adapt to the social conditions of capitalist societies (Kellner 16-17). Again from a neo-Gramscian perspective Tony Bennett sees popular culture as a terrain of ideological struggle between dominant and subordinate classes and cultures:

The field of popular culture is structured by the attempt of the ruling class to win hegemony and by forms of opposition to this endeavour. As such, it consists not simply of an imposed mass culture that is coincident with dominant ideology, nor simply of spontaneously oppositional cultures, but is rather an area of negotiation between the two within which – in different particular types of popular culture – dominant, subordinate and oppositional cultural and ideological value and elements are mixed in different permutations (221).
The concept of 'mass' in relation to the growth of communications is an important problem. The fact of expansion and of growing diversity of communications is an important set of phenomena, but the nature of the relationships between those who sent and those who receive messages contains a range of possibilities. Certainly the notion of masses is a convenient way of looking at audiences if the intention is to manipulate, as in the case of propaganda or advertising. Yet this can be contested in the name of democracy in so far as commercial base of media activity, and its paternalist forms remain intact. At root, the way we look at the media and the decisions we make about control of it in our society are political questions. They have to be seen for what they are and what they enable specific groups to accomplish if we are to go beyond that and think of democratic alternatives. This become significant when we think about the way concepts are interlinked and affect our idea of the world. Thus the way we think about communication has to do with the way we think about community:

any real theory of communication is a theory of community. It is very difficult to think clearly about communication, because the pattern of our thinking about community is, normally, dominative. We tend, in consequence, if not to be attracted, at least to be pre-occupied by dominative techniques. Communication becomes a science of penetrating the mass mind and of registering an impact there. It is not easy to think along different lines (CS 301).
This notion is central to develop the idea and experience of democracy. Mass communication theory carries with it the idea of the few controlling the many, a point which has to be publicly contested. Whereas dominative thinking will depict the manner in terms of mobs, rioters, and strikers, democratic theory will rethink the questions of transmission and reception of messages and will be grounded in the value of equality of being. The democratic emphasis is central to Williams's concept of a common culture—a concept which is both an ideal and something to struggle for.

It is instructive at this point to consider some of the insights of the Frankut School theorists on the subject. Adorno, for example, in The *Negative Dialectics* (1973) has dwelt at length on the philosophical ramifications of the 'systems'. At the peak of the Enlightenment, it was de'Alembert who rightly distinguished between the two fold character of systems: l'esprit de systeme, and l'esprit systematique. Esprit de systeme is a manifestation of the abstract, or the metaphysical system-building propensities inherent in the nascent capitalist order. It is manifested in the imperial command to "coform"; the pernicious "will to power" of the new capitalist subjects, and the supremacist refusal of the colonizer to recognize heterogeneity in any form. In terms of "identity" and "non identity" he demonstrates that the formalist bias of esprit de systeme leads to the institution of the "tyranny of the concept". Esprit de systematique, on the other hand, has its origin in the beaurocrat's desire for order. Adorno further
argues "criticism of systems and asystematic thought are superficial as long as they cannot release the cohesive force which the idealistic systems had signed over to the transcendental subject" (26). Systems, he observes, imitate a central antinomy of bourgeois society, namely, "to remain the same, to "be", that society must constantly expand, progress, advance, its frontiers, not respect any limit, not remain the same" (26). What follows from this negative dialectic is that "Systematic unanimity would crumble" (27). Almost in the same vein, Jurgen Habermas identified a radical split between "Instrumental Reason" and "Communicative Reason" as inherent in the Enlightenment. As he puts it, in a totally administered society, only instrumental reason, expanded into a totality, found embodiment; everything that existed was transformed into a real abstraction (295-296). It so happens because the public sphere gets attenuated in monopolistic capitalism. This in turn leads to the manipulation of the public opinion (141-142). These distinctions will be of help to us in conceptualizing the manner in which the utopian, subversive potential of art/culture gets to be smothered by the culture industry.

The development of a common culture is not an easy task to achieve; it will be a very complex organization, requiring continual adjustment and redrawing. It is realizable in a context of material community and by the full democratic process. But the question is highly problematic because it involves the task of achieving solidarity between diverse elements, as well as the recognition of diversity without creating separation. As Williams puts it,
"No community, no culture, can ever be fully conscious of itself, ever fully
know itself. The growth of consciousness is usually uneven, individual, and
tentative in nature" (CS 319).

This accounts for the fact that the point has not been clearly and
practically recognized even in the English working class movement, inspite of
its long democratic tradition. Williams contends that the issue involves a
dialectic:

A culture while it is being lived, is always in part unknown, in
part unrealized. The making of a community is always an
exploration, for consciousness cannot precede creation, and
there is no formula for unknown experience (CS 320).

Thus, in a true democratic spirit, as an antithesis to the Arnoldean prescriptive
stubbornness, Williams assumes a healthy, tolerant position in respect of the
advance in consciousness which is necessary for the furtherance of a common
culture:

Wherever we have started from, we need to listen to others who
started from a different position. We need to consider every
attachment, every value, with our whole attention; for we do not
know the future, we can never be certain of what may enrich it;
we can only, now, listen to and consider whatever may be
offered and take up what we can (CS 320).

Liberty of thought and expression prefigures Williams's thoughts on
common culture as "less a natural right than a common necessity”. Education
and communication can be channels or blockages to the realization of common culture. So while emphasizing the role of the working class, he is also about to give a caution so as to ward off dogmatism:

To tolerate only this or only that, according to some given formula, is to submit to the phantasy of having occupied the future and fenced it into fruitful or unfruitful ground. Thus, in the working class movement, while the clenched fist is a necessary symbol, the clenching ought never to be such that the hand cannot open, and the fingers extend, to discover and give a shape to the newly forming reality (CS 320).

According to Williams, a culture is essentially 'unplannable'. Only the means of life, and the means of community can be ensured. But the kind of life that will be lived is unknowable. For,

The idea of culture rests on a metaphor: the tending of natural growth. And indeed it is on growth, as metaphor and as fact, that the ultimate emphasis must be placed. Here, finally, is the area where we have most need to reinterpret (CS 320).

Williams conceives of a more active idea of human beings and relationships in terms of human growth and human tending other than that of the long dominative mode. Industry and democracy have been the two major forces changing the world: "Understanding of this change, this long revolution, lies at a level of meaning which it is not easy to reach" (321).
And the democratic experience is very much central in this process. Williams brings out the inextricable relationship between the appropriate political experience and the idea of culture in the following way:

The idea of a common culture brings together, in a particular form of social relationship, at once the idea of natural growth and that of its tending. The former alone is a type of romantic individualism; the latter alone a type of authoritarian training. Yet each, within a whole view, marks a necessary emphasis. The struggle for democracy is a struggle for the recognition of equality of being, or it is nothing. Yet only in the acknowledgment of human individuality and variation can the reality of common government be comprised. . . . The natural growth and the tending are parts of a mutual process, guaranteed by the fundamental principle of equality of being (CS 322-323).

Raymond Williams's conceptual apparatus for a general theory of culture was set in motion with the publication of *Culture and Society* (1958). The work undertakes a mapping of the hitherto uncharted territory, opening up a new avenue of theoretical postulate and analysis hinging on culture. It was acclaimed as a life-changer for youngish readers in the 1960s — as evident from the fact that the work went into several editions and was translated into Italian, Japanese, Portuguese and German (Inglis 146). The book not only surveys an English tradition of radical dissent from industrial capitalism especially as it manifests itself in the semantic history of the word “culture” in the writings of a variety of authors but also establishes a powerful
critique of the political and economic structure which help to perpetuate cultural inequality in post-War society.

As Terry Eagleton acknowledges, the formulation of a discourse on culture was a task which Raymond Williams did almost single handedly as the most suggestive and intricate body of socialist criticism in English history. For, like Caudwell in the thirties, Williams in the fifties was severely deprived of the materials from which to construct a socialist criticism. The pioneering product of Williams's unflagging, unswerving labour was a criticism for which no English comparison is even remotely relevant, but which must be referred for comparative assessment to the aesthetic production of a Lukács, Benjamin or Goldmann. At the same time Eagleton was sharply critical of the idealist epistemology, organicist aesthetics, political gradualism and Romantic populism of Williams's work (Criticism and Ideology 23, 24, 27). Yet, as the single most important critic of post-War Britain Williams has extended himself over immensely diverse fields as history, sociology, political theory and thus evolved a global moral concern for a common culture (Eagleton 1984: 108-9).

*Culture and Society* has been recognized as a genuine voyage of intellectual discovery, not a mere reworking of an old Cambridge 'Moralist' course. It was an oppositional enterprise, attempting to redress the appropriation of a long line of thought about 'culture' to reactionary positions
especially in the earliest works of T.S. Eliot and F.R. Leavis. However it has been criticized that for Raymond Williams the idiom “culture and society” is a methodological rather than a substantive imperative. For he has been taken to task for certain 'absent traditions' and influences in the book: he has left out French Revolution, popular radicalism, sociology, an international perspective and Marx. Its failure to recognize the non-literary culture of popular radicalism is both a product of Culture and Society's literary centeredness. It has been accused that there is in the book the absence of any developed reference to the dominant intellectual formations of the time—political economy, political individualism, liberalism, and empiricism—against which the “culture and society” tradition was pitched. Thus it omits the roots of the 'English ideology' in the thought of the previous century and a half in Hobbes, Locke, Adam Smith and Bentham which would have given the work a better sense of the exceptional character of the literary-moral-social criticism and given it a more social and historical grounding (Eldridge and Eldridge 69).

It has to be seen, however, that two of the major concerns of Williams, as they appear in the book Culture and Society, namely, one, a conception and definition of culture in relation to industry and democracy and the other, the process and means of communication as integral to an understanding of culture find more detailed examination with greater theoretical vigour in the subsequent works, The Long Revolution (1961) and Communications (1962). Infact the selection of the semantic field of Keywords (1976) was originally
found in the project of *Culture and society*. It started as an appendix to this book, which Chatto & Windus insisted be dropped in order to shorten the book. (O'Connor 49) *Culture and Society* thus opened up an entirely new field of enquiry pivoting on 'culture' as an exceptionally complex term to become the basis for a distinct critical discourse known as the Cultural Studies (Wilson 26). With its analysis of nearly two centuries of cultural history as history of institutions and practices, the study of popular culture developed rapidly, first at the Birmingham Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS) founded in 1964 and then through courses (mainly taught at Polytechnics and Colleges of Education) variously described as “media studies”, “film studies”, “cultural studies” and “communications”. In this way it came to be recognized that popular culture could not be understood apart from the social institutions in which it is promoted and reproduced (Easthope 69-70).

As Allan O'Connor remarks *Culture and Society* is not only a text but a position within a text of reading and re-reading. The book's methodology of beginning with 'contrasts' (between Burke and Cobbet and, Southey and Owen) can usefully be compared with, as for instance that of Sartre's *What is Literature* (1947) and Roland Barthes's *Writing Degree Zero* (1953). Williams's post-War work shares with Barthes an insistence on form, *écriture* and the history of writing, giving the work the stature of a European book. Both Sartre and Barthes share an emphasis on the emergent experience of
living as a body in the world and also a critical stance towards bourgeois culture. It is also commonplace in Williams that writing is associated with power and historically was intended for a minority. Sartre described a history of writers, while Barthes describes the history of forms of writings, but Williams writes in *Culture and Society* about individual writers in relation to the history of collective forms. The focus is on the signs of literature. While he was employing his training in close analysis in identifying the culture and society tradition, he was diligent enough not to miss the presence of the writers and their commitment, a method different from Sartre or Barthes. *Culture and Society* characteristically shows that a residual but also oppositional tradition of writing was being used in post-War England in a wholly ideological way (O’Connor 55-7).

Several objections were raised by the New Left Review team on the lapses, silences, inadequacies, imbalances and omissions, which occurred in the composition of the book. The book, they pointed out, changes register notably in the conclusion, when Williams moves to something like a political—Marxist—discourse proper. But there is a systematic depreciation of the actual political dimension of all the figures considered by him. Asked on this lacunae Williams argues that it is not a general dismissal of politics as part of a conscious polemical stance: "It remains my firm conviction that their political thought is of radically less interesting than their social thinking". And further he did not go into the political aspect, partly because of the
contradictory character of politics after 1795 (PL 101-102). The epistemology of the book itself was challenged as a "slide into irrationalism" for in the method of his assessment of individual thinkers he was contrasting or counter posing ideas and arguments with "response" or "experience". Williams explains that this was a result of his literary training, which consisted of the primacy of the "response" to the articulated experience or instance where questions of truth or falsity are secondary (120-22).

*Culture and Society*, while it earned for Williams the reputation as a social and political thinker on the basis of the issues it raised and the body of reading and thinking about them which it lay down, also invited hostile criticism as for example by Terry Eagleton in his *Criticism and Ideology*. Williams answers to the point in an objective manner: "That was a new epoch, that needed a quite different book". *Culture and Society* perhaps seemed, as "a bridge from one to the next, but a bridge is something that people pass over". He calls the book "first stage radicalism" effecting a major shift in emphasis. It permitted a reconnection with a very complex tradition of social thought and of literature, which had been short circuited by *Scrutiny* and indeed by a whole class formation around it (PL 109-110).

There are inconsistencies in his evaluation of Lawrence and Caudwell. His great regard for Lawrence in *Culture and Society* on the ground of the latter's concern for democracy and socialism slides into one of repulsion in
The Country and The City on the ground of his bourgeois liberalism. Likewise in Culture and Society he is arguing against Caudwell but in The Long Revolution he admires Caudwell's interest in the "creative process". The political significance of Morris's work was also recognized only much later (PL 127-28).

An interesting "silence" in Culture and Society is on religion. Williams explains that he was unconsciously making an assumption characteristic of the Marxist tradition that if religious terms occurred in a discourse they were a transposition of social terms (PL 130). In this connection it is to be remembered that Max Weber, one of the founding fathers of Sociology in his study of the transition in Western Society from a feudal to a capitalist culture argued that it was a distinctive form of religious thinking (Protestant-ethic thesis) which led to the capitalistic culture in the West ([1904] 1976). Weber's "spiritualist interpretation" was attacked by the economic historian Kurt Samuelson (1961) pointing out that Weber and his supporters have reinterpreted religious texts in a way that enables them to extract meanings that confirm the thesis. Clifford and Marcuse point out this discrepancy while making a case for the notion of Cultural Translation (143). Cultural Translation is an anthropological notion of culture in which "capabilities and habits acquired by man as a member of society" is transformed into the notion of a text – that is, into something resembling an inscribed discourse (141). Weber's approach has got certain links with Durkheim's, notably in according
religion a central role in determining cultural formation. Williams did not emphasize enough the crucial role that the idea of literary value played as substitutes for religious and ethical values in the fashion of Matthew Arnold. Another significant omission was the re-emergence of radicalism in the 1770s and 1780s (PL 130-1).

However the reconstruction of a tradition of "culture and society", despite and through all these different criticisms and objections has been recognized by the interviewers as an enduring achievement. In spite of the above lapses and failures, the book was read, argued about and triggered an entirely new debate. It became a source of alarm to the sector of right-wing liberal opinion for its re-association of culture and social thinking which it had abandoned after the thirties (PL 132). It is important to notice that "culture" was not an indigenously Marxist concept in the sense in which "ideology" might be said to be (Outhwaite 127).

The significance of Culture and Society lies in the fact that it was the first English venture to transmute a concept – "culture", often held to be an elitist one – into a Marxist category. Consequently, there was a crucial cultural dimension to the whole Marxist and Socialist project of the twentieth century. Questions of culture and ideology have become so central to Western Marxism that they began to define aesthetic discussions. With his next work The Long Revolution (1961) Williams was able to make his
formulations much more precise, in a democratic spirit, recognizing the primacy of the working-class in social formation. The next chapter focuses on that aspect of his theorization on culture.