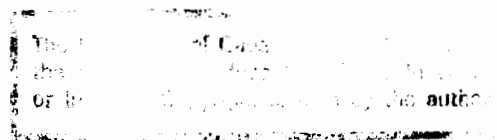


RAYMOND WILLIAMS:
LITERATURE, MARXISM AND CULTURAL MATERIALISM

by

JOHN HIGGINS

Thesis Presented for the Degree of
DOCTOR OF PHILOSOPHY
at the Department of English Language and Literature
UNIVERSITY OF CAPE TOWN
January 1998



The copyright of this thesis vests in the author. No quotation from it or information derived from it is to be published without full acknowledgement of the source. The thesis is to be used for private study or non-commercial research purposes only.

Published by the University of Cape Town (UCT) in terms of the non-exclusive license granted to UCT by the author.

In Loving Memory

of

Margaret Higgins

1922-1982

CONTENTS

Acknowledgements

Introduction	1
1. The Tight Place: Marxism or Literature? 1947-1950	7
2. Drama and the Structure of Feeling 1947-1954	48
3. Culture and Communication 1950-1962	98
4. Cambridge Criticism 1962-1973	149
5. Marxisms: Contra Caudwell, Against Althusser	226
6. Towards a Cultural Materialism 1977-1981	312
7. Against the New Conformism 1981-1987	357
Conclusion	407
Notes	442
Bibliography	518

Acknowledgements

'for years he was writing a book he wrote years ago in his head'

(Tom Raworth)

Tom Raworth's line, from his poem 'South America', always seemed to capture some of the main difficulties I had with writing this book. It would never have made it into the page without the encouragement of friends and family too numerous to mention, but they all know who they are, and what their kind support has meant to me over the years, whether in South Africa, Switzerland, the USA or Great Britain.

More formally, though the indebtedness goes beyond formality, I would like to take the opportunity to thank those who provided concrete occasions for writing or speaking on Williams. For their early encouragement to write on Williams, many thanks to Bruce Robbins and Jonathan Arac (boundary_2), and to Michael Sprinker (the minnesota review); thanks also to Susan van Zyl (Journal of Literary Studies), and Christopher Prendergast (Social Text Collective) for later opportunities. My thanks are also due to Peter de Bolla (University of Geneva); P eter Kohler (University of the Western Cape); Reingard Nethersole (University of the Witwatersrand); Maud Ellmann (King's College, Cambridge); Stewart Crehan (University of Transkei); and Fredric Jameson (Duke University) for invitations to speak on Williams at their respective institutions. All of these occasions contributed in some way to the formulations presented here.

More specifically, thanks to Tina Barsby, Louise Green and David Schalkwyk, who each read parts of the manuscript and gave their always welcome and insightful advice. Christopher Prendergast read an early draft of the book as a whole, and his critical comments were acute and stimulating. Some particular conversations with Terry Eagleton, Edward Said, and Gareth Stedman Jones were also very valuable, as was the general encouragement of Tony Tanner and Gayatri Spivak. My most pervasive debt is to Frances Long-Innes, for more than a decade of ever stimulating and critical dialogue.

I benefited enormously in the final stages of writing from the very careful readings of the book made by John Coetzee, Anthony Morphet, and John Kench: to respond adequately to their probing critical concerns would have made it necessary to write a different and better book than this. I should also record that the late Raymond Williams was kind enough to offer help and encouragement at an early stage in the planning of this work.

My thanks also to the staff at the University Library in Cambridge, the British Museum Reading Room, and the library of the University of Cape Town, who were unfailingly patient and helpful with my search for materials and information. My thanks are also due to the King's College Research Centre for giving me office space during a visit to Cambridge, and to Tony Tanner for enabling this.

Introduction

Raymond Williams died, a full decade ago now, in January 1988. The immediate response was overwhelming: progressive intellectuals throughout the world mourned the passing of one of the foremost socialist thinkers, intellectuals and cultural activists of the post-war period. In the obituary columns of leading newspapers, at conferences and on television, and in the pages of academic journals, we saw the public mourning of a figure who was, in Patrick Parrinder's words, 'father-figure to thousands', who was, for Juliet Mitchell and many more like her, 'an intellectual and moral touchstone'.¹ Who was this remarkable figure and why should his work continue to hold our interest and attention? We can begin to answer these questions by looking briefly at the background and career of Britain's most distinguished socialist thinker on culture of the past forty years.

Raymond Henry Williams was born in the small Welsh village of Pandy in 1921, the son of a railway signalman. He won a scholarship to Cambridge in 1939 where he was active in the student branch of the Communist Party and the Cambridge University Socialist Club.² He was called up in 1941 and fought as a tank commander in a number of the most bloody battles of the Second World War, returning to Cambridge in 1946 to complete his degree in English with a powerful dissertation on Ibsen in which some of his own sense of vocational crisis came through. For the next fourteen years, Williams worked as a tutor in Adult Education.³

This move, and the consequent departure from the usual university syllabus of English studies, provided some of the ground for the writing of two seminal works which challenged the existing paradigm of literary studies, and did much to help the emergence of the new disciplines of cultural studies. Culture and Society 1780-1950 (1958) and The Long Revolution (1961) established his reputation as the leading thinker of the New Left, in the words of the historian Edward Thompson, "our best man".⁴

In 1961, Williams received a letter from the English Faculty of the University of Cambridge informing him that he had been appointed Lecturer in English; a few days later, other letters arrived, encouraging him to apply for the post!⁵ Discouraged by the shift of emphasis in adult education away from working-class education and towards middle-class provision, Williams accepted the post and was to spend the rest of his working life at Cambridge, first as a lecturer, and then, from 1974, as Professor of Drama. It was from here, the centre of Britain's elite educational system, that Williams was to produce a body of work which challenged many of that elite culture's central assumptions, not only as they appeared in English studies, but also as they informed the dominant modes of thinking about politics and society, and as they swayed assessments of the very possibility of progressive social and political action. As he clarified during the exhaustive interviews with the New Left Review, published as Politics and Letters in 1979, his work was above all the work of an oppositional intellectual: "If you look at the implied

relationships of nearly all the books I have written. I have been arguing with what I take to be official English culture' (Williams 1979: 316).

This study takes that argument with 'official culture' as its guiding-thread, and follows it across the twenty-four or so volumes of his academic writing. On the way, it challenges some of the received ideas concerning his work. Chapter One examines Williams's earliest writings, and particularly the essays written for the journals he helped to found in the late 1940s, Politics and Letters and The Critic, as well as his first major study, Reading and Criticism (1950). Drawing attention to the pervasive influence of Eliot (rather than Leavis, as is commonly assumed), it argues that the tensions between literary and Marxist analysis which Williams found so crippling in this early period in fact provided the motor of his development as a whole. Chapter Two argues for the formative (rather than marginal) role usually assigned to Williams's early thinking on drama, and examines neglected works such as Drama from Ibsen to Eliot (1952), the first version of Drama in Performance (1954), and the book co-written with Michael Orrom, Preface to Film (1954). The third chapter focuses on the largely neglected context of cultural, educational and political debate from which Culture and Society and The Long Revolution emerged, while Chapter Four concentrates on the significant detail of Williams's oppositional relation to 'Cambridge English' in his books Modern Tragedy (1969), The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence (1970), and The Country and

the_City (1973), and the way these studies also carried on his critical dialogue with Marxism. Chapter Six investigates the ways in which cultural materialism is offered as the theoretical alternative to existing formations of English studies, while Chapter Seven examines the final, interrupted, stage of Williams's argument with 'official culture' through his renewed attention to the ideological and disciplinary forces at work in the related formations of modernism and English studies, both in their historical trajectory and in terms of their contemporary theoretical assessment and practice.

The guiding principle of this study is that Williams's engagement with English studies cannot be understood in terms purely internal to the discipline of English. As well as writing against the official culture of liberal and conservative literary studies, Williams also wrote in opposition to what he read as the orthodoxies of Marxist thinking on literature, culture and politics. Arguing first against Marxist literary criticism as he knew it from the 1930s, he maintained an ever sceptical and ever critical stance towards the later trends of Althusserian and post-structuralist theory, while at the same time continuing his always defining commitment to socialist politics. While the terms of this larger argument are necessarily present throughout, Chapter Five focuses on them more narrowly, and traces their development in Williams's thinking from the late 1950s through to the development of the concept of cultural materialism in Marxism_and Literature in 1977.

Similarly, no one can read Williams's work without becoming aware just how far its concerns reach beyond the bounds of the academy and extend the usual confines of a professional academic identity. The single most striking characteristic of his work is its commitment to the connection of literary argument and debate with the broader issues of politics and society. This account seeks to foreground some of the ways in which it always interacted with the cultural and political debates of his day. Williams was never just an academic, but always, to borrow Edward Said's terms, a public and fully secular intellectual.⁶ The study closes with an examination of the difficult dynamics of settling Williams's intellectual legacy in the decade since his death.⁷ The Conclusion argues that the striking fact of his joint commitment to academic work and cultural politics was the ground for the production of the central concept urged and embodied by his work as a whole, though nowhere named as such, the concept of a 'critical literacy'.

I make no claim to cover every aspect of the extraordinary range of Williams's writing and thinking. Conspicuously absent: any assessment of his own fictional and dramatic writing, any substantial account of his specifically political ideas and activities, or even a full engagement with his important work on television and mass communication.⁸ The focus is narrow, but, I hope, productive. While this study is not intended as a final word or judgement on Williams's work as a whole, it is intended as

a counter to some of the 'final words' that have been offered, to my mind prematurely. For there seems to be an implicit (and at times explicit) judgement in some recent accounts that 'we can now only read Williams's work historically', as if its relevance has dissipated.⁹ My own feeling is that reading Williams historically - as is attempted here - can be a salutary challenge to any tendency on our own parts to either theoretical or political complacency. This study therefore presents an account and analysis of the interaction in Williams's thinking between his principled opposition to and questioning of both Marxist cultural theory and Cambridge literary criticism across some forty years of academic writing and debate.

Chapter One The Tight Place: Marxism or Literature 1947-1950

Raymond Williams's first critical writings - from, say, the essays and reviews in Politics and Letters (1947-48) to Preface to Film (1954) - have been powerfully characterized as 'Left-Leavisite'. Perhaps in consequence, they have been too little read. For, as Williams himself noted, in The Long Revolution, sometimes the very availability of a description and the ascription of a name can work to block fully historical analysis (Williams [1961a]: 89-90). The aim of the first two chapters of this study is to prize open some of the internal complexities and contradictions that the label 'Left-Leavisite' works to contain, and to provide a more historically nuanced account and assessment of Williams's early criticism than is generally available.¹ In so doing, I shall challenge the dominant view that this early period is best viewed as a merely probationary, and easily superseded, moment in Williams's formation. I argue that, duly considered, the early work presents us with the constitutive dynamic of Williams's intellectual identity. This first chapter examines the uneasy development of Williams's thought from the autumn of 1939, when he began his undergraduate studies in English at Cambridge University, through the first years of his work as Staff Tutor for the Workers' Educational Association in the Extra-Mural Delegacy at Oxford University, to the publication of his first book, Reading and Criticism, in 1950.

Terry Eagleton, probably Williams's single most extensive critic, proposed the term 'Left-Leavisite' in his provocative and polemical assessment of Williams's work, first published as an essay in New Left Review, and then as the opening chapter of his Criticism and Ideology, both in 1976.² Of course, others had remarked on the importance to Williams of his formation in the discipline of English. But no one had done it with as much vigour as the self-consciously iconoclastic Eagleton.³ In Criticism and Ideology, 'Left-Leavisism' figures as the first of the three main stages in Williams's incomplete move towards a genuinely Marxist criticism. What I wish to examine here, in the first instance, is the enabling rhetoric behind Eagleton's description - one which makes it less a description of Williams's work, and more an interested representation of it.

In the essay, Eagleton pays tribute to his former teacher as someone who produced 'the most suggestive and intricate body of socialist criticism in English history', and argues that 'any Marxist criticism in England which has shirked taking the pressure of Williams's work will find itself seriously crippled and truncated' (Eagleton 1976: 24). Williams has been 'the English pioneer', asserts Eagleton; 'but like every pioneer must now submit to criticism from those he has enabled to speak'. What follows are the 'necessarily astringent criticisms' made nonetheless in a 'spirit of comradeship and good faith' asserts Eagleton; though what comes through, in a language fraught with some Oedipal angst or rivalry, is a desire to supersede Williams,

a desire implicit in the very placing of him as a 'pioneer'. For what 'taking the pressure' of Williams's work amounts to in practice is turning the pressure back on him, subjecting him to criticisms whose bitter necessity lies in making it possible for Marxist criticism not to be crippled, not to be truncated, but to be finally and more fully articulated by Eagleton himself.

It is worth quoting Eagleton's description in full in order to grasp the implications of the story it tells:

Williams's intuitive knack of pre-empting intellectual positions is nowhere more apparent than in his development since 1968. The work of this period can be seen as constituting a definite phase of his production, just as the period from Culture and Society to Modern Tragedy represents a partial but significant break with the early literary-critical writings. That early phase, characterised by such works as Reading and Criticism and Drama from Ibsen to Eliot, is most aptly describable as 'Left-Leavisite': at this probationary point, Williams still has to discover the idiom which will allow him to extend 'practical criticism' and organicist social positions into fully socialist analysis. It is this task which is undertaken in the work of the 'middle' period, in which the concept of 'culture' becomes a crucial mediation between literary analysis and social enquiry, and the socialist orientation of Williams's enterprise receives increasingly

explicit, if gradualist, formulation...Williams is now closer to Marxism than at any stage in his career - an evolution which seems logically continuous, yet which has come about precisely at the point where the Marxist challenge to his early positions is gathering strength. (ibid., p. 39)

What is the logic behind this story? What are its rhetorical effects? First, note how Williams's work is represented as almost but not quite achieving the Marxism of a 'fully socialist position'. This comes through most strongly in the emphasis on the evolutionary aspects of Williams's development: Eagleton's emphasis on 'Left-Leavisism' as a 'probationary point', and the related assumption that there is a Marxist 'idiom' out there to be discovered, though Williams never did quite get to it... The implication is that the author who is able to state that 'Williams is now closer to Marxism than at any stage in his career', must himself occupy that 'fully socialist position', must of necessity be in full possession of just that Marxism. Indeed, the reference to 'the point where the Marxist challenge to his [Williams's] early positions is gathering strength' is puzzlingly vague until we realize that this point is precisely the one we have reached in Eagleton's own text - a moment where the pressure of Williams's work is being taken, or rather taken on. In other words, the substance of Eagleton's criticisms of Williams depends in large part on the self-generated authority of the writing, a writing in which Eagleton attributes to himself the position of secure knowledge associated with the Althusserian Marxism just then

coming into vogue in Britain. The natural evolution of Williams's work must lead beyond Williams; beyond Williams to Marxism, and, it is implied, to the Althusserian Marxism now embodied in Eagleton's own work.

For beneath the surface of Eagleton's nuanced description of Williams's work, there is a structurally familiar story, one in which Eagleton plays Althusser to Williams's Marx. As with Marx in Althusser's account, to be properly understood, Williams's work needs to be divided into three distinct phases.⁴ First, there is the early humanist phase from which there must be an absolute break in order for there to be 'fully socialist analysis'. For Althusser, this is represented by the works of the 'Young Marx': early writings such as 'On the Jewish Question' and the 1844 Manuscripts, with their intrusive Feuerbachian elements. For Eagleton, there is Williams's 'Left-Leavisite' phase, and all its corresponding humanism. Then there are the 'works of the break', corresponding for Eagleton to Williams's 'work of the "middle" period'. And this is followed by the truly scientific works. Or rather, those works in which the truly scientific can be discerned, but only through the process of a 'symptomatic reading'. This corresponds in Williams to then recent works (such as The_Country_and_the_City, and the essay 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory') in which traces of 'fully socialist analysis' can be discerned, and where 'Williams is now closer to Marxism than at any stage in his career' - but where the interpreter is even closer still, by virtue of the fact

that he is able to judge the degree of closeness that Williams has attained.

It was just this rhetorically generated assumption by the interpreter of a position of easy and automatic authority which most troubled Williams in his first public response to Eagleton's essay.⁵ In an important but little-known interview with the Cambridge journal Red Shift in 1977, Williams said that though he 'would accept much of [Eagleton's] account', he was disturbed by some aspects of it. Questioned about the contradictions of his own position and intellectual history, Williams responded wryly with 'What I want to ask is who Eagleton is?'; and went on to argue vigorously that the 'basic fault of the kind of formalist Marxism which Eagleton is now in is that it assumes that by an act of intellectual abstraction you can place yourself above the lived contradictions both of the society and of any individual you choose to analyse, and that you are not yourself in question'. Against this, Williams asserted that 'the belief that one is above that deeply contradictory situation is a fantasy...There is no position except in fantasy where one can merely examine what others are inscribing' (Williams 1977b: 12, 15).

A year later, in a discussion with New Left Review which was in part prompted by Eagleton's essay, Williams had sharpened his response, and now rejected 'the general label Left-Leavisism' because it implied far too unified and far too comfortable a position. Except in fantasy, 'Left-Leavisism' could only be an

'inherently unstable' position (Williams 1979: 195). As we shall see, what troubled Williams was the way in which Eagleton's confidently theoretical description glossed over instabilities and contradictions which had been felt very deeply and very painfully.

The Tight Place

'The tight place, where you stick fast; there is no going forwards or backwards.' Ibsen's words - from When we dead awaken - held a particular resonance for Raymond Williams as he completed his undergraduate studies in Cambridge in 1946.⁶ He quoted them in his final year dissertation on Ibsen (an essay which later formed the basis for the first chapter of Drama from Ibsen to Eliot); and some thirty years later, he recalled how that sense of being unable to move, of being trapped, which he had found in Ibsen, seemed to sum up his own intellectual and political predicament, his own troubled sense of self and vocation. 'That was exactly my sensation. The theme of my analysis of Ibsen is that although everybody is defeated in his work, the defeat never cancels the validity of the impulse that moved him; yet that the defeat has occurred is also crucial' (Williams 1979: 62-3).

What were the terms of this defeat? Why did the young Williams suffer from such a sense of failure when, by all ordinary standards, he already appeared to be an achiever, indeed a success? He had, after all, survived the war and come through some of its bloodiest fighting in the Normandy and Ardennes

offensives. He had married in 1942; and he and his wife Joy had their first child in 1944. He graduated from Cambridge with a first class degree in English, was offered a place to do research, but chose instead to become a tutor in the burgeoning Adult Education movement. Between 1946 and 1953 he completed three books, wrote most of a fourth, collaborated as editor of and contributor to two new (though short-lived) journals, and at the same time worked through the preliminary drafts and versions of his first novel. On the surface, Raymond Williams in the late forties and early fifties was already a successful academic and intellectual. Why then this troubled sense of blockage and of failure?

To understand this, we need to grasp something of the depth of Williams's commitment, one which we can read in the terms he appropriated from Ibsen as commitment to a vocation, and as a commitment always under threat of failure. If we see Williams's vocation as, in the first instance, that of a socialist literary critic, then we can read that commitment as riven by a conflict between its two main components. Literary criticism provided Williams with both something of an intellectual base and the superstructure of a professional identity; but its generally apolitical or even conservative stance was deeply unattractive to him, as were its usually apolitical and ahistorical modes of analysis. In a sense, the discourse of literary criticism was the 'tight place' in which Williams felt so trapped. At this point, as we shall see, he was unable either to go back to the Marxist

literary criticism which he decisively abandoned - on professional grounds - in the course of his undergraduate studies; but neither was he able to move forwards beyond the terms of existing literary studies.

And at the same time we need to understand that it was just this sense of being stuck which proved to be the necessary ground for Williams's major work. For the deep feelings of failure and defeat which dogged him in this early period provided the necessary dynamic for a reworking not only of the possible relationships between Marxism and literary studies, but for a significant revision and recasting of both. This first chapter examines the constitutive tensions of that 'tight place', of the young Williams caught unhappily between a literary criticism he couldn't accept politically and a Marxism he couldn't reproduce professionally. It was the extreme discomfort of Williams's 'position' in this period that proved to be the very motor and motive of his intellectual development.

Beginnings

In the autumn of 1939, Raymond Williams arrived at Trinity College Cambridge to begin his studies for a BA degree in English literature. It was the beginning of a combative relationship with 'Cambridge English' which was to structure and define the main contours of Williams's intellectual identity. It was to shape both the nature of his particular contribution to Marxism and to

literary studies that together form the focus of this account: that attention to the politics of culture, and to the primacy of culture in politics, which he finally came to name a 'cultural materialism'.

Unlike most students at Trinity, and indeed in the university as a whole, Williams did not belong to the privileged elite who had received their secondary education in one of Britain's 'public' schools. For these, three years study at 'Oxbridge' was simply a stepping stone to an already established place in the natural hierarchy of British society.⁷ Instead Williams 'came up' to Cambridge as what was to become a familiar icon of 1950s culture: as a 'scholarship boy', that is to say, as one of a number of students from working-class families who won a place in one of the prestige universities through the highly competitive Entrance Examinations.⁸

Born in the Welsh village of Pandy, and educated first at the local primary school, and then at King Henry VIII Grammar School for Boys four miles away in Abergavenny, Williams arrived at Cambridge unwilling to be intimidated, and, initially at least, full of the brash self-confidence characteristic of first year students.⁹ Trinity had no Fellow responsible for teaching English, so in the first year, Williams worked with Lionel Elvin and had his weekly tutorials on Shakespeare and the literature of the Renaissance at Trinity Hall. As a member of the Communist Party - which he joined in December - he devoted a great deal of

his time to the Cambridge Socialist Club, writing for the Club Bulletin, participating in debates at the Cambridge Union, and, at the urging of the CP, as editor for the Cambridge University Journal. As a member of the ironically named Aesthetes, Williams also showed a keen interest in film. Far from being the alienated figure suggested by critics such as Jan Gorak, the young Williams found a ready place in the active socialist life of the university: as he was later to put it, 'I had to dine in Hall and the class stamp of Trinity at that time was not difficult to spot. But it did not have to be negotiated as the only context at Cambridge. The Socialist Club was a home from home.' (Williams 1979: 40)¹⁰

Certainly the details of an average week's activities in the Club show the fullness of its timetable. We might take the week beginning March 6 1940 as presenting an average week's activities in the Club: Wednesday March 6 - Hand's Off Russia - Lobbying and Poster Parade 12.30; Friday Hand's Off Russia - Meeting in The Dorothy; Saturday 2-30 Film Club - Pabst's Westfront; 8.00 pm Social; Sunday 2.00 Film Show; 4.30 Tea; 8.00 Film; Monday 8.00 pm Business Meeting; Tuesday Union Debate - Intervention against the USSR; Wednesday 8.00 pm - 1.30 am Dance. In addition, there were three Faculty Group meetings for students in History, Physics, and English.¹¹ Williams gave a short paper 'Culture and the People' on Friday 1 November 1940 which CUSBC reports was 'followed by keen discussion providing enough questions to keep the group going for the rest of the year.'¹²

And yet a notable feature of the later Culture and Society was its hostile chapter on the Marxist literary criticism which was the staple diet of young socialists like the undergraduate Williams. The 'home from home' was to be repudiated. Chapter Five of Part Three - 'Marxism and Culture' - is the only place in Culture and Society where the famously balanced and objective tone of Williams's assessment breaks down, most obviously in its notorious judgement on Caudwell whose writing is described with contempt as 'not even specific enough to be wrong' (Williams [1958] 1967: 277). The thirties had seen the publication of a number of works which became standard reading for socialist students of literature: Alick West's Crisis and Criticism (1937), Ralph Fox's The Novel and the People (1937), Christopher Caudwell's Illusion and Reality, and the Day-Lewis collection, The Mind in Chains (1937). All of these are the targets of Williams's sharpest criticism. What it is important to recognise, and what is in any case evident from the angry tone of the account, is that it was just these works which formed the initial basis of Williams's literary analysis as he worked for Part One of the English Tripos. The savageness of Williams's later criticism should alert us to the existence of what he was later to acknowledge as a painful - and determinant - break with these available forms of Marxist literary analysis under the pressures of the availability of the techniques and skills of Cambridge English. That this break was to be the very condition for the formation of Williams's own distinctive version of literary and

cultural studies is relatively easy to see in hindsight. It did not and could not appear to be anything so promising at the time.

Impasse

The first cracks began to appear in the second year of Williams's studies at Cambridge, when he moved from Elvin's sympathetic supervision to a more challenging encounter with E.M.W. Tillyard at Jesus College.¹³ For Tillyard - one of the first lecturers to be appointed to teach the new Cambridge degree in the 1920s, and the pioneer of studies in the historical 'background' of English literature that Williams was later to attack with regularity - raised a number of questions which the young Williams was unable to answer.

The second year of the English Tripos focused on the history of the novel and Romantic poetry. In his tutorials with Tillyard, Williams sought to apply the stock-responses of thirties' Marxist criticism. In this 'proleptic criticism', the literature of the present and of the past is read and evaluated in terms of future needs. In his introduction to The Mind in Chains (1937), the poet C.Day-Lewis repeated with approval Edward Upward's contention that 'the most enduring books are those in which the writer has seen so deeply into contemporary reality that he has exposed "the shape of things to come" latent there' (Day-Lewis 1937: 16). Upward himself argued that for the Marxist 'a good book is one that is true to life...For the Marxist critic, therefore, a good book is

one that is true not merely to temporary existing situations but also to the future conditions which are developing within that situation' (ibid., p.46). In the same vein, Ralph Fox, in his The Novel and the People, also stresses the need for a new Marxist realism: 'The new realism it is our task to create must take up the task where bourgeois realism laid it down. It must show man not merely critical, or man at hopeless war with a society he cannot fit into as an individual, but man in action to change his conditions, to master life, man in harmony with the course of history and able to become the lord of his own destiny' (Fox 1937: 100). Christopher Caudwell could write in all brash confidence that in 'bourgeois art man is conscious of the necessity of outer reality but not of his own, because he is unconscious of the society that makes him what he is. He is only a half-man. Communist poetry will be complete, because it will be man conscious of his own necessity as well as that of outer reality' (Caudwell 1937: 298). In this view, novels of the past should be judged in terms of how novels should be written in the present; Romantic poetry represented an unfinished project of human liberation.¹⁴ Tillyard's reply to this was apparently blunt and forceful: '[he] told me this was not a tenable procedure; it was a fantasy' :

The truth is that for the first time in my life, long after it should have been, I looked at myself with a radical doubt. I did not feel very pleased. Nobody could construe from reading my published works the sort of person I then was. I was very

hostile and angry in immediate ways with Tillyard, and very rude to him. The aggression was all from my side. Tillyard was not an aggressive man, and he did absolutely nothing against me, which he could easily have done. I just met with a total sense of incomprehension and sense of put-down. There was no one in the faculty then who could have spoken to my problems. Leavis would probably have responded much more angrily to my notion of how novels should be judged, although he might have answered in terms nearer to the language of objection. (Williams 1979: 52)

Williams found the encounter very stressfull: 'I was engaged in having to satisfy somebody who was professionally teaching a subject that my ideas were tenable and reasonable, and I could not. I was continually found out in ignorance, found out in confusion...You must remember that a hell of a lot of my self-image was devoted to the notion that I could handle academic work. It now became clear to me that I could not' (Williams 1979: 51). What was at stake were the very terms of Williams's developing sense of self and vocation, and it is significant that Williams later remembered his callup and entry into the army in July of 1941 as something of a relief, as a temporary way out of the tight place he had found himself in.

But only temporary. Williams spent the next four years in the army, but was given the early release available to university students who had interrupted their studies to take part in the

war. He returned to Cambridge in the autumn of 1945 and went on to complete the third year of the Tripos with a special paper on George Eliot and a 15,000 word essay on Ibsen. In both of these areas of work, Williams found himself troubled by the arguments raised by Tillyard, arguments he still felt unable to resolve. He felt he had reached an impasse, one in which a major part of his own sense of self-identity and self-esteem was at stake: his professional identity as a literary scholar. In this crisis, we can recognise what was to become a central and defining characteristic of his work: its unusual biographical impetus, its powerful sense of an integrity and focus located in the personal voicing of the academic.

The feeling of impasse is crucial to an understanding of the forces which drove Williams in his attempt to forge a new way of doing literary studies. By his return to Cambridge in 1945, Williams had rejected the available forms of Marxist literary criticism. At the university, the energies of the Socialist Club had waned, though Williams found society and stimulus with two new friends, Henry Collins and Wolf Mankowitz, both enthusiastic Leavisites. Together, the three were keen to promote left-wing literary and cultural criticism which, while it accepted the Leavisite criticism of Marxist literary analysis, refused the Leavisite rejection of politics.

Politics and Letters

In an early review, Williams repeats the standard Leavisite line, and writes of the failure of Marxist literary criticism to 'emerge from theory into respectable practice' (1947b: 52). The practice in question was literary criticism, and the first attempt to force such an emergence came with the founding of the journal Politics and Letters in 1947. Williams put the journal together with the help of his two Cambridge friends, Wolf Mankowitz and Henry Collins. Its contributors, over its short lifespan, included Jean-Paul Sartre, George Orwell, Christopher Hill and F.R. Leavis. A 'complementary' journal - one more purely concerned with the 'literary', The Critic - also began at the same time, but was amalgamated with Politics and Letters after the second issue. Politics and Letters itself ran for four issues before it collapsed in 1948.

As Williams was later to put it, the journal signalled an attempt to 'unite a radical left politics with Leavisite literary criticism. We were to be to the left of the Labour Party, but at a distance from the CP. Our affiliation to Scrutiny was guarded, but it was nonetheless quite a strong one' (Williams 1979: 65). This is the position now generally known as 'left-leavisism', though rejected by Williams for implying too unitary and too static a position.

Politics and Letters defined itself in opposition to three currents of thought. First of all, it was directed against the failed Marxist literary theory of the thirties; secondly, it rejected the (a)political stance of Leavis's Scrutiny, by now the key journal in literary studies; and thirdly, it was set against what Williams saw as the self-conscious metropolitanism and self-indulgent aestheticism of Cyril Connolly's Horizon, (1940-49). It was here that, in April 1947, Connolly saw fit to declare that 'the honeymoon between literature and action...is over...the left-wing literary movement has petered out.'¹⁵ In positive terms, Politics and Letters was intended as the spearhead of political activism in the Adult Education movement and sought to ensure that the Labour government did not ignore the importance of cultural politics in the struggle for working class emancipation and the achievement of (in Williams's phrase) a participatory democracy.

The very title of its first editorial - 'For Continuity in Change' - embodied the difficult reliance on and yet combative relation to Leavisism in its repetition and adjustment to the title of Leavis's most polemical collection of essays, For Continuity (first published by the Minority Press in Cambridge in 1933). The editorial chose the literary scandal of 1946 known as the Zoschenko debate as the grounds of the journal's first public intervention. The central argument was that the usual 'dichotomy between politics and letters' - exemplified in Leavis's writing of the period, and in the pro- and anti-Marxist stances of Modern Quarterly and Horizon respectively - needs to be challenged. A

proper understanding of the issues involved in the Soviet literary debate shows why this challenge is necessary:

In our opinion, both sides in this debate neglect evidence which is important in resolving the essential difficulty. On the one hand, the 'moralists' [i.e. Cyril Connolly and Horizon] too often rest their case on a parade of abstract values which they rarely seem concerned to relate to any detailed experience of living. Morality, in such cases, is merely a theoretical, at times a personal, indulgence. Yet, on the other hand, the 'political' group, [i.e. John Lewis and the Modern Quarterly] which centres around the English Marxists, rarely misses an opportunity to attack, often gratuitously, a position (under the heading of 'literary decadence', 'idealism', 'absolutism', etc.,) of the real nature of which they are demonstrably unaware. (Williams et al. 1947a: 3)

For Williams and his co-editors, both Marxists and anti-Marxists miss what Leavis had grasped: the 'real nature' of literature. The Horizon moralists miss the 'detailed experience of living' which literature embodies, and are therefore unable to prevent their 'values' from being too abstract, or worse, too self-indulgent. The ideologues of the Modern Quarterly are blind to the very existence of a professional literary criticism whose tools and methods should be brought to bear in any cultural debate. Against these positions, the editors suggest the following:

What is valid, and in our opinion supremely important, is that the structure of society, its institutions and directions, should be constantly assessed by standards resting on certain immediate qualities of living, qualities which social history scarcely records, but which, 'for continuity', our cultural tradition embodies. (3-4)

'Embodies' is the key term. It articulates the journal's debt to the 'Cambridge English' of the Scrutiny school, where literature is not merely a record of past experience; it is the still living embodiment of that experience. According to the metaphysics of this school, the literary critic enjoys a highly privileged relation to history. For somehow through the experience of reading literary texts, the critic can re-experience the structure and specificity of any historical moment. And hence the idea - first put forward by I.A. Richards, and later taken up by F.R. Leavis, was the idea that the 'standard of living' of a society could best be judged - indeed, could only be judged - by the literary critic.¹⁶ The editors of Politics and Letters allowed this same centrality to the critic; but went on to point out that the critic needs to be concerned with more than the understanding of literature alone.

In short, we must ensure that critical activity continually draws attention to 'the best that is thought and known in the world', while at the same time we must recognise that the

mechanisms of society, acting by their own laws, must also be examined and reckoned with. No backwater social group can hope to preserve the human values of the arts merely by concentrating on personal cultivation and personal communication. But, on the other hand, the usual 'progressive, scientific' assessment leaves no room for anything but the satisfaction of routine appetites in group activity. It is not sufficient to label the significance attached to inwardness as 'morbid introspection'. Nor, on the other hand, can active social participation be dismissed as a mere escape from the deeper problems of personality and tradition. There is a 'self' to be reckoned with at the level at which it finally comes to rest, a level which can have the sanction of our main literary tradition. But at the same time this self remains not only impotent but unexpressed unless it continually interacts with the group. For the survival of the group, diagnosis at every level is needed. (4)

There are then two primary tasks for the journal: the creation of 'an intelligent reading public'; and secondly, the creation of a group which could and would intervene politically. The problem was, of course, that there was no necessary connection between the two groups, any more than there was a necessary connection between the two journals originally imagined as 'complementary'. Despite the desire to go beyond Scrutiny's apolitical stance, Politics and Letters remained, in the end, trapped by its inadequate conceptualisation of politics. As the second editorial, 'Culture

and Crisis', put it, in the rather desperate terms which signalled the journal's imminent collapse:

The critic stands subject to two autonomies: that of planning for material survival and prosperity (it is an estimate we must make objectively and with the methods of science); and that of allowing for and fostering responsibility in society, an effort in which we are supported by that evidence there is of human maturity, by tradition evidenced by literature and social history, by experience. We have at present to make separate estimates of these problems remembering that as literary critics we have training to aid us in the latter, while in politics we are undoubtedly naive. (Williams et al. 1947b: 7)

Subject to two autonomies, trained in one and yet naive in the other: it is hardly surprising that Politics and Letters could only reproduce in the end the tight place of Williams's frustrations.

Williams contributed some thirteen essays and reviews to the two journals and these reflect his interests and preoccupations of the time.¹⁷ His single most important essay was 'Soviet Literary Controversy in Retrospect', published in the first issue of Politics and Letters (Summer 1947). Many of the principles outlined in the 'For Continuity in Change' editorial are here put into practice (the editorial itself states that it 'brings our outlined preoccupation to bear on current disagreement in this

country, as well as in the Soviet Union' (op. cit., p. 4). The essay is worth some detailed attention as it marks Williams's definitive and public break with Communist Party orthodoxy as well as representing the first of Williams's attempts to move beyond that orthodoxy through the practice of literary analysis.

Soviet Literary Controversy

1946 had seen an intensification of repression in the Soviet Union as Stalin responded to the pressures of a disastrous harvest and the beginnings of Cold War attitudes in Britain and the USA.¹⁸ As a part of a renewed drive to discipline and cow the intelligentsia, Andrei A. Zhdanov, a key figure in the elaboration of Socialist Realism in the 1930s, and now Secretary of the Central Committee of the Communist Party, launched an attack on two avant-garde Leningrad journals, Zvezda and Leningrad. He was particularly scathing about the work of the modernist poet Anna Akhmatova, and a short story - 'Adventures of an Ape' - by the satirical writer Mikhail Zoschenko.¹⁹ At a meeting of the Leningrad Party Committee Zhdanov declared: 'Why should we provide a literary platform for all these decadent literary tendencies so completely alien to us?' His criticisms were picked up by Cyril Connolly in the October issue of Horizon and read as a warning of what socialism could mean in Britain.²⁰ The Soviet position was defended in turn by John Lewis in Editorial to the Winter 1946 issue of the Communist Party journal, the Modern Quarterly, as an exemplary instance of democratic self-criticism:

`what we witness is not the spectacle of cowed and intimidated writers reluctantly toeing the Party line, but writers, readers and critics everywhere in the Union overhauling their work...Nothing can be done in the Soviet Union that is dictated from above'.²¹

Williams saw the debate itself as symptomatic of the emerging Cold War. How else explain the attention paid to it in a press usually hostile to literary discussion? Nonetheless it was useful in revealing the `prevailing muddle about the relation of politics and letters' (Williams 1947c: 21), and particularly so in regard to two topical questions - `the place of literature in the modern, centralised state, and...the obligation of such a state towards literature' (21).²² For Connolly, the stakes were `the principle and practice of state interference in cultural affairs'; while for John Lewis, Zhdanov's intervention was a prime example `not of interference, but of healthy self-criticism, [one] which might be expected to arise in a country where human values are assured by a rational social organisation' (22).

According to Williams, Lewis's editorial is `typical of the popular Marxist writing on culture' (ibid: 22) in that it simply fails to understand anything about the `the nature of literature itself' (23). Drawing on Leavis's literary empiricism to argue his case, Williams insists that `the practice of literary criticism, and of creative literature, is bound to be different from the administrative self-criticism to which he has attempted

to relate it' (23). It is bound to be so because above all literature is concerned with 'realised immediate experience' and not the dry abstractions which form social theory. 'The function of literature in keeping society healthy', concludes Williams, in full Leavisite tones, 'is that it injects realised immediate experience, personal and traditional, into the abstractions which inevitably form the body of social thinking' (23). All in all, Lewis can do nothing to prove his central assertion that the Soviet literary controversy is a good example of how self-criticism works in a socialist society. On the contrary, writes Williams: 'Criticism from below is the essence of the democratic safeguard in Soviet society. The way this business has gone does nothing, in itself, to disprove allegations that Soviet government is based on decision from the top, followed by organized and manipulated public approval' (23). Small wonder that Williams had allowed his membership of the CP to lapse in 1941. Williams later did not recall or choose to recall and was not asked the precise circumstances of this. Certainly his assertion of the necessity for 'criticism from below' ran directly counter to the prevailing Communist Party practice of 'democratic centralism', in which, according to Raphael Samuel in a fine historical and autobiographical account, the 'Party allowed no conceptual space...for dissent.'23

As far as Horizon is concerned, Williams cannot agree with Connolly's complacent suggestion that judgement of art should always be left to the 'Reading Public'. How could Connolly not be

aware that such a cohesive 'Reading Public' no longer existed? After all, this had been the burden of Q.D. Leavis's Fiction and the Reading Public as well as Leavis and Thompson's Culture and Environment, the very centre of Scrutiny's whole intervention. 'It is no use saying' argued Williams

that state interference with art, or the suppression of non-conforming writers which may be involved in state patronage, is worse than the effects of commercialism or of advertising manipulation. Both are bad; neither is admissible...to ignore the destructive elements in our own society, and to concentrate on them in another (a society moreover which can hardly be criticised without large political repercussions) - surely that is not a defence of culture but rather political opportunism in the real sense of that abused term?' (25).

Williams continued his attack on Connolly in the following issue of Politics and Letters, where he defied him to write about the American Congress Committee on UnAmerican Activities with as much passion as he had about Russia (Williams 1947d: 105-6). For Williams, as he was later to record, Connolly represented 'a self-indulgent decadence' which he attacked 'with ferocity' (Williams 1979: 72).

Williams then turns to examine Zhdanov's criticisms. 'The disturbing thing', he writes, 'is the exclusiveness, the

narrowness, of the role which literature is called upon to play' (1947c: 27). Against this, it is urged that

We must, then, retain the right to judge a civilization by its culture. For culture is the embodiment of the quality of living of a society; it is the 'standard of living' with which the critic is concerned. Assessment of it is the social function of the critic and the creative writer...Our precept is clear: we must, negatively, by the application of the strictest critical standards, ensure that inwardness is neither abused (becoming 'profitable introspection') nor set up for sale in the commercial market; and positively, we must attempt, however often we fail, to ensure that in our own inevitable development towards a planned, rational, society, the distinctive values of living embodied in our literary tradition are preserved, re-created, expanded, so that ultimately with material may grow human richness.

(1947c: 30-31)

The 'standard of living argument' had become a commonplace of literary studies, adequate testimony to the strength of I.A. Richards's founding rhetoric of the 1920s. Williams sees little chance of the raising of this standard in the Soviet Union where he fears that 'Soviet Man' will become a comparably caricatural figure to the West's 'Average Man', or the 'Successful Man' of the advertising world. Both East and West show signs of failing to understand the nature and importance of culture and the literary tradition insisted on by the Cambridge school.

In the end, the Politics and Letters project proved (to borrow Williams's own later terms) to be emergent rather than - as Jan Gorak suggests - residual. For Gorak, 'Williams and his fellow-editors ventured into the postwar world with the prejudices of prewar intellectuals. A new cultural politics could hardly be constructed from materials such as these' (Gorak 1988: 47). But Politics and Letters is better understood as challenging rather than confirming the prewar attitudes to be found in Scrutiny, Horizon, and the Modern Quarterly. Though Williams's two journals only survived for two years, and though they owed something to the Leavisite orthodoxy, they did nonetheless signal an important challenge to it.²⁴

Reading and Criticism Revalued

When Reading and Criticism, Williams's first published book, is mentioned, it is usually in dismissive terms. Reading and Criticism is treated as the expression of Williams's most complete accommodation to orthodox literary studies, and, as such, something better left alone. Terry Eagleton, in his still influential account, writes of 'the techniques of textual analysis which Williams inherits from Scrutiny and reproduces without question in Reading and Criticism' (Eagleton 1976: 38). Jan Gorak sees the book as an act of significant intellectual dishonesty on Williams's part, accusing him of employing in it 'a style of literary criticism he had intellectually repudiated' (Gorak 1988:

47). Fred Inglis asserts that it 'came directly out of his teaching, and that teaching was in the direct line of Leavis's famous journal Scrutiny' (Inglis 1995: 126). All agree on the identification of Reading and Criticism with the practical criticism of the Scrutiny school. Even Williams's most respectful interrogators, the New Left Review team, seem to support this identification when they conclude that Reading and Criticism not only reproduces 'the classic Leavisite argument', but reproduces it 'at its most circular' (Williams 1979: 238). Nonetheless they feel obliged to give Williams a chance to defend himself, and ask whether he was aware of 'any substantive divergences... [any] unexpressed differences' (237) between the positions advocated in Reading and Criticism and the work of the Scrutiny tradition; whether, in other words, Eagleton was correct in suggesting that Williams had simply reproduced that position 'without question'.

We need to examine both Williams's reply in the late seventies - that he took a distance from Scrutiny through his criticism of the method of evaluating an author by extract only - and the evidence offered by a closer examination of Reading and Criticism. For Reading and Criticism deserves more careful attention than it has hitherto been given: it needs to be read as a formative work in his intellectual and theoretical development, rather than left largely unread, and avoided as an embarrassment to the usual image of him. Once this is done, we see that it helps to throw some light on the development of one of Williams's most central and

most problematic ideas, that of the 'structure of feeling'.

Reading and Criticism was written up in 1948 and can certainly be taken as a partial record of Williams's teaching as a Tutor in Adult Education. It was published in 1950 in the Man in Society series, edited by three leading figures in the Adult Education movement: Thomas L. Hodgkin, S.G. Raybould, the Director of the Leeds branch, and Vice-President of the Association, and Lady Simon of Wythenshawe. The books in the series were 'intended for the use of students in adult classes such as those promoted by the W.E.A.' ^(Williams, 1950: 10) - just the classes which Williams taught for fully the first third of his academic career. The main aim of the series was introductory: they were how-to books, designed to help students acquire the dominant skills and practices appropriate to particular subjects and disciplines.

In this sense, it is hardly surprising that Reading and Criticism can offer plenty of evidence for Williams's accommodation to existing literary studies since the basic purpose of the book was to be an introduction to them. However, we should also be aware of an important recommendation of the series editors, one crucial to the ethos of W.E.A. policy. This is that even introductory texts should not 'exclude topics which are matters of current controversy' ^(Williams, 1950: 10). Simple reproduction or critical distancing? We certainly need to examine Reading and Criticism with both options in mind, as the expression of Williams's debt to

the dominant Scrutiny positions, but also with an awareness of the ambivalence inherent in any indebtedness.

How did Williams - at the age of twenty-eight - see his own relation to the literary studies of the late forties? And how do we assess that self-image? Perhaps the strongest element in this is the assertion, however qualified, of independence. In the Preface to the book, he makes three basic moves. First, he acknowledges his debts to a whole catalogue of critical influences. Eliot, Middleton Murry, I.A. Richards, Empson, L.C. Knights are all given honourable mention; F.R. Leavis is singled out as being 'largely responsible for the intelligent development of critical analysis as an educational discipline.' '[T]o his work, and to that of Scrutiny, I am indebted' admits Williams. But in the next breath, in what was to become a characteristically distancing gesture, he asserts that he has 'never consciously or formally belonged to any "school of criticism"'. This assertion is then itself qualified by the admission of a common point of departure: 'As an independent student I have found the work of these critics valuable because it insisted on "the text as the starting-point of criticism"' (Williams 1950: ix-x). This movement - from indebtedness, to independence, to the acceptance of the text as the 'starting-point of criticism' - suggests that at this point in his career, Williams was perhaps more able to articulate a desire for intellectual autonomy rather than to establish it. Nonetheless this desire is itself crucial for any understanding of his development. It is the source of all his

later achievements. We need then to be aware of Williams's desire to make Reading and Criticism somehow independent of the tradition it was its primary task to teach.

From a first reading, it is clear that the nine chapters of Reading and Criticism largely reproduce and embody the conventional terms and assumptions of literary criticism. I. A. Richards's Principles of Literary Criticism (1924) and Science and Poetry (1926), Leavis's seminal pamphlet 'Mass Civilization and Minority Culture' (1930), and Q.D. Leavis's authoritative Fiction and the Reading Public (1932) all leave their traces, and are acknowledged in the bibliographies, as are such secondary-school text-books as Leavis and Thompson's Culture and Environment (1933) and Thompson's own Reading and Discrimination. In a repetition of the founding gesture of Cambridge English, the Introduction defines criticism as a practice of reading and not just the accumulation of the rote-facts of a literary history. In Chapter One, criticism is defined as a 'mature reading' to set against the reading habits spawned by the mass culture of advertising, journalism and popular fiction, that 'mechanization' of reading which stems from 'the influence of newspapers and deliberately written-down publications' (Williams 1950: 9). Chapter Two of the book 'The Way we read now' examines, in a way familiar from Leavis and Thompson's Culture and Environment, an advertisement for tea, a newspaper report, and some examples of 'popular' fiction in order to argue that the 'last thing which writing of this kind encourages is a conscious and disciplined attention to

the words which comprise the statement' (14). Chapter Three locates the position of the critic as the 'mediator between the artist and the serious reading-public', a position all the more necessary in the fallen world of mass culture where 'the facts of our reading being what they are', he has to be 'increasingly concerned...with the extension of literacy in the fullest sense' (21). Chapters Four, Five and Six show analysis at work in a number of comparative passages of verse and prose while Chapter Seven seeks to show what an analysis of a whole work might look like (Conrad's Heart_of_Darkness). The two final chapters offer brief discussions of drama, where Williams anticipates the central theme of Drama_from_Ibsen_to_Eliot, the tendency 'to believe that the naturalist method is the permanent and universal dramatic method' (91); while in 'Literature and Society', Williams argues for a distinction between the reductive view of literature as evidence and 'the fact of the text', suggesting that literature should be read as 'a highly aware and articulate record of individual experience' (101). All in all, Williams's 'mature reading' is concerned with the three mots_d'ordre of Scrutiny criticism, with 'evaluation, with comparison, and with standards'.

Yet though Reading_and_Criticism repeats so many of the orthodox pieties of Scrutiny criticism, and reads at times like nothing so much as an updated version of Culture_and_Environment (1933) or Reading_and_Discrimination the repetitions are not complete, and there are numerous points at which Williams seeks to give substance to his claims for intellectual autonomy.²⁵

In the most general terms, we can cite Williams's concern, expressed in self-consciously socialist terms which recall the polemics of Politics and Letters, to stress the social nature of critical judgement against the Horizon and Scrutiny emphasis on criticism as essentially a matter of personal taste or individual judgement:

Criticism...is essentially a social activity. It begins in individual response and judgement...But its standards of value, if it is to acquire meaning, must be ultimately matters of agreement between many people: values which are instinct in the culture of a society. The doctrine of the self-sufficiency of personal taste is hostile to criticism for the same reason that the doctrine of individual self-sufficiency is hostile to society. (Williams 1950: 29)

There is also a major difference of attitude towards the very idea of a reading public. The Leavisite version worked to establish a hierarchy of high and low culture, between minority literature and mass culture, one in which the task of the critic was to fight for higher standards. In Leavis's seminal pamphlet, the argument runs as follows:

In any period it is upon a very small minority that the discerning appreciation of art and literature depends: it is only a few who are capable of unprompted, first-hand judgement.

They are still a small minority, though a larger one, who are capable of endorsing such first-hand judgement by genuine personal response...The minority capable not only of appreciating Dante, Shakespeare, Donne, Baudelaire, Hardy (to take major instances) but of recognising their latest successors constitute the consciousness of the race (or of a branch of it) at a given time... Upon this minority depends our power of profiting by the finest human experience of the past; they keep alive the subtlest and most perishable parts of tradition. Upon them depend the implicit standards that order the finer living of an age, the sense that this is worth more than that, this rather than that is the direction in which to go, that the centre is here rather than there. In their keeping, to use a metaphor that is metonymy also, and will bear a good deal of pondering, is the language, the changing idiom, upon which fine living depends, and without which distinction of spirit is thwarted and incoherent. By 'culture' I mean the use of such a language. (Leavis 1933: 13-15)

Williams takes issue with this representation of those who appear to be innately capable of 'unprompted, first-hand judgement' in his own emphasis on literary criticism as a training in 'mature reading'. Against the implicit emphasis (and mystification) surrounding the abilities of the literary critic in the Scrutiny mode, with its emphasis on the creative and reparative powers of the critic himself, Williams offers a down-to-earth reminder of the fact that skills in literary criticism

may be acquired - indeed, have to be acquired - just like any others, through hard work and practice. 'To be able to read serious literature requires training. A "born reader" is just as much a fantasy as a "born writer": there are no such persons' (Williams 1950: 8). It is hardly then surprising that Williams differs from the Scrutiny assessment regarding the possible size of the 'minority culture' of critically trained readers:

The public for serious literature, in spite of almost universal literacy, remains small. And, while it is possible to argue that such publics will always be small, it seems doubtful whether the present intelligent reading public in Britain is anything like as large as it might reasonably be. There is no need to surrender to popular sentimentalities in this matter, but the aristocratic converse is no more acceptable. There exist what would seem to be remediable reasons for the smallness of the serious reading public...one should remember that an increase in the serious reading public by the number of students who annually attend formal courses - some 100,000 - would revolutionise the material situation of literature... (1950: 4,6)

Against the gifted few of Leavis's account, there are the capable many of Williams's adult education experience.

In response to the NLR's prompting, Williams himself drew attention to another point of difference with Leavis, one 'which

may not appear obvious now, but was important then' (Williams 1979: 237). This was his challenge to the standard Scrutiny practice of assessing the quality of a novel or a novelist through the careful analysis of an extract from the work. Williams mounted this overt attack in Chapter Four of the book, 'What is Analysis?'.

He begins by quoting Leavis's definition of analysis, from Education and the University, as 'the process by which we seek to attain a complete reading of the poem' (Williams 1950: cit. p. 31). For Williams, there is a problem whenever this kind of analysis is applied to a longer work, and particularly to the novel. What is at stake is the status of the extract through which such analysis then necessarily works, and the principles of selectivity which govern the choice of such passages. He easily demonstrates, through an examination of two sets of paired extracts from George Eliot and D.H. Lawrence, that either can be made to appear the better writer depending on the selection of the passages. '[W]hen we make a judgement by analysis we commit ourselves to a judgment on that piece of writing alone' he insists. 'We do not say that the analysis of a short extract is sufficient analysis of the work of an author' (Williams 1950: 43). At the same time, the aim of the critic must always be to arrive at 'a total judgment of a work and of an author' (45). 'A writer's work is integral' (74) he urges; and for this reason, the question of selection is crucial. Williams foregrounds the

practice of selection itself, and argues for it as a fundamental feature of interpretation or 'response':

The structure or pattern of a work is more than the text; it is the text and the response. It goes without saying that such response must be everywhere actual, and its elements justifiable from the text which is the only fact of the work.
(73)

Though the elementary rules of textual evidence must always be adhered to, Williams recognises something like the agency of the critic and of criticism itself, in the fact of the work performed on the text. The 'structure or pattern' is at once a property of the text, and of the critic's response: 'A critic assessing a writer's work as a whole will find that his primary task is the perception of this fundamental pattern, and then the finding of adequate passages which convey this pattern...' (74). In the next chapter, we shall see how the 'structure or pattern', which the critic finds in the text, is the forerunner of the idea of the 'structure of feeling' which, argues Williams, the author articulates from the culture and experience of his or her time.

In the Conclusion to Reading and Criticism, Williams seeks to sum up his understanding of the importance of literature not just for the literary critic, but also for the social critic. It is a statement which is torn and tortured by the tensions in his attempt to find a position which can supersede - that is, both

retain and go beyond - the insights available from either a dogmatic Marxism or an orthodox Leavisism:

What is it that literature represents which has reference to our social needs? It is valuable primarily as a record of detailed individual experience which has been coherently stated and valued. This may be the commentary of a fully intelligent mind - informed, detached, emotionally aware - on the society and culture of its day. Or it may be the articulate statement of a perception of certain individual relationships which set the pattern of a culture. Or it may be the coherent evaluation of close personal relationships, or the exposition of intense and considered personal experience...Literature is communication in written language. To the language of a people, which is perhaps the fundamental texture of its life, literature is supremely important as the agent of discovery and analysis. (107)

While Williams accepts the conventional focus on literature as valuable 'as a record of detailed individual experience', he is keen to twist that expression of individual experience to a social end. This record need not then be concerned only with 'close personal relationships' or 'intense and considered personal experience'. It may instead be a commentary on contemporary 'society and culture', the framing of the 'pattern of a culture'. In other words, Reading and Criticism, just at the moment when it looks back to Politics and Letters, also looks forward to and

anticipates, and not by verbal echo alone, something of the project of Culture and Society.

What we can see at work in the formulations of Reading and Criticism are Williams's attempts to think for himself, beyond the available formulae of literary criticism. For this reason alone, Reading and Criticism needs to be read with more attention than it is usually given, and not passed over as quickly as possible, as something best forgotten in the Williams canon. With his emphasis on criticism as 'mature reading', and his concern with 'the extension of literacy in the fullest sense', he is struggling to articulate what will become the focus of his later work. For what comes into play in the critic's assessment of the 'structure of pattern' in a writer's work is no less than the whole of a person's experience. Already, mature reading is not only a literary critical method; it is an ethical and implicitly political practice, a dialectical positioning of both self and text. 'Mature reading' is the name he gives at this early moment to the practice of a critical literacy which defines much of the distinctiveness of his work as a whole - that unusual combination of the academic and the autobiographical which is the trademark of later works such as Modern Tragedy and The Country and the City.

But at this stage, the formulations are often hesitant, often awkward. Still in the tight place of contradiction, Williams's

resort to the impersonal pronoun is most unlike him at the moment he is most like himself:

one wishes to read adequately, and to set one's reading in order with relation to one's personal experience and to the experience of the culture to which one belongs. The basic standards one seeks are those traditional valuations which have been re-created in one's own direct experience (26).

To describe and then to see these early works as merely probationary is to blind oneself to their tortuous internal dynamic, and to their significance for any assessment of Williams's developing project. For in these early writings we can see something of the contradictory dynamic of his thought. This is a deeply formative period for Williams, one in which we can see the first attempts to bring literary studies and socialist cultural criticism together by partially rejecting both. For Williams, 'Left-Leavisism' was not simply an assured position he held for a while and then quite naturally grew out of: it was the tight place in which he felt trapped and unable to move. These attempts to get out of that trap can help us to better understand the nature, limits and success of his entire oeuvre.

Ch 2 Drama and the Structure of Feeling 1947-1954.

Williams's reputation as a public intellectual was formed in the late 1950s as the author of Culture and Society (1958), and consolidated by the publication of The Long Revolution in 1961. This fact has tended to obscure the earlier and formative years of his academic and intellectual development. It is the early writings on drama which have suffered most from this neglect, and many commentators have found it difficult to get his work on drama as a whole into proper focus. This chapter examines the writing on drama published between 1947 and 1954, but leaves aside the later - and better known - recastings of it in order to emphasise and understand the contribution this early work made to the formation of Williams's distinctive theoretical vocabulary. I argue that this writing on drama was the crucible in which he forged some of his central theoretical ideas, including that most contested and most characteristic item in his conceptual repertoire - the idea of the 'structure of feeling'. Properly understood, this notion represents Williams's first direct conceptual challenge to Marxist literary orthodoxy.

In fact, a significant portion of Williams's work was devoted to the history and analysis of dramatic forms. Cambridge University acknowledged and celebrated his scholarly stature by appointing him Professor of Drama in 1974. No less than three of his first four books were concerned with drama and naturalism, and

he retained a consistent interest in the history and dynamics of dramatic production, whether on stage, in film, or on television. In 1964 and 1968, the early studies Drama from Ibsen to Eliot and Drama in Performance were revised, extended and republished; and these were joined by a new work, Modern Tragedy, in 1966. Williams wrote a regular column on television for The Listener between 1968 and 1972, and in 1974 published his influential study, Television: Technology and Cultural Form. Chapter Six of Culture (1981) deploys a 'breathtaking chronological sweep' of the history of drama in order to substantiate his claims for what 'comparative formal analysis' of a cultural form can yield. All the essay collections - Problems in Materialism and Culture (1980), Writing in Society (1984), and posthumous collections such as What I Came to Say (1989c) and The Politics of Modernism (1989a), contain essays on film and drama, and show his continued interest in the history of dramatic forms.¹ To the most casual eye, it should surely be apparent that drama was one of Williams's persistent preoccupations. And yet, for many commentators, the considerable bulk of his work on the dramatic forms of theatre, film and television is viewed as peripheral to his main interests.

In this, many students of his thought appear to follow the lead given by Terry Eagleton in his powerful 1976 assessment. Here Eagleton noted that 'a volume of dramatic criticism has regularly punctuated his production of "social" texts', but wrote that

though he found 'the place of dramatic criticism within his work... an interesting, even intriguing one', in the end could only suggest that 'the relations between the two bodies of work are not easy to decipher' (Eagleton 1976: 37). J.P. Ward, in the first monograph on Williams, describes drama as the one area of his writing that is 'insulated, as though an interest that is sealed off and self-contained' (Ward 1981: 28). Similarly, for Jan Gorak, writing in 1988, Williams's 'dramatic interests remain difficult to place in the light of his work as a whole' (Gorak 1988: 15). And even the scrupulously attentive New Left Review team could only suggest, in the course of their exhaustive interrogation of Williams, that his work on drama represents a 'central paradox' for any of his readers (Williams 1979: 201). In the general view, the writings on drama are eccentric to the main body of his work, his interest in it, peripheral. This chapter takes a contrary view, and argues that Williams's work on drama - and particularly the early writings - are central to the foundation and formation of his whole intellectual project.²

In this general neglect, the early writings on drama have been even less attended to. Few have sought to establish any significant distinctions between the early body of writing and what came to replace it, or any significant connections between it and the rest of Williams's work.³ In part, this may be due to its relative inaccessibility, and the fact that two of the three early books have been superseded by later versions: commentators

focus on the revised editions. Drama from Ibsen to Eliot, written between September 1947 and completed by April 1948, was published in November 1952. Drama in Performance and Preface to Film (with Cambridge friend Michael Orrom) were both written in 1953 and published in 1954. In 1968, Drama in Performance was republished in an enlarged edition; and Drama from Ibsen to Eliot was similarly revised and enlarged to become Drama from Ibsen to Brecht. Only Preface to Film has been out of print since its first publication.

As in some academic version of the mystic writing-pad, this early work is hidden beneath layers of subsequent rewriting and revision. Drama from Ibsen to Eliot disappears beneath Drama from Ibsen to Brecht. The first version of Drama in Performance is lost beneath the second. This chapter recovers some of what has been lost or hidden in revision and rewriting in order to better understand the difficult dynamic of Williams's developing thought. One consequence of this is to further challenge the orthodox view of Williams's 'left-leavisism' as it becomes clear that the single most powerful influence on his thinking about drama was T.S. Eliot. That this was an influence he was later to do his best to forget perhaps only makes the point more strongly: the most positive references to Eliot are silently removed from the later versions of Drama from Ibsen to Eliot and Drama in Performance.⁴

Against Naturalism

The early writings on drama express the sense of commitment common to socialist intellectuals of the nineteen-forties and fifties. They seek, in the first instance, to intervene in the contemporary cultural situation, and to subordinate academic analysis to cultural effectivity. The young Williams intended his writings on drama to have a practical effect on the dramaturgy of his time. In the process of revision, some of the urgency of this address has been lost, and these studies have come to be treated as textbooks and reference points in the history of naturalism.⁵

Williams was not alone in perceiving something of a crisis in the contemporary theatre. British drama in the late forties and early fifties was widely seen to be in the doldrums. That deadly calm was not to be broken until the acclaimed first performance of John Osborne's Look Back in Anger in May 1956. Observer critic Kenneth Tynan, writing in 1954, gives something of the flavour of the pre-Osborne theatrical scene in his essay 'West-End Apathy':

The bare fact is that, apart from revivals and imports, there is nothing in the London theatre that one dares discuss with an intelligent man for more than five minutes. Since the great Ibsen challenge of the nineties, the English intellectuals have been drifting away from drama. (Tynan 1964: 31)

Four years later, Tynan offered a succinct and perceptive analysis of the power and appeal of John Osborne's work. In his 1958 essay 'The Angry Young Movement', Tynan describes Look Back in Anger as a major break-through in British drama in terms very appropriate to understanding some of the thrust of Williams's own project:

The new intelligentsia created by free education and state scholarships was making its first sizeable dents in the facade of public-school culture....For the first time the theatre was speaking to us in our own language, on our own terms.... For too long British culture had languished in a freezing-unit of understatement and 'good taste'. In these chill latitudes Jimmy Porter flamed like a blowtorch.... The ivory tower has collapsed for good. The lofty, lapidary, 'mandarin' style of writing has been replaced by a prose that has its feet on the ground. And the word 'civilized', which had come to mean 'detached, polite, above the tumult', is being restored to its old etymological meaning: to be civilized nowadays is to care about society and to feel oneself a responsible part of it. (Tynan 1964: 56, 57, 62).⁶

For Williams, as for Tynan and others, the pre-war dramas had no purchase on the new world of the fifties. For a time, the appearance of verse-dramas such as Eliot's The Cocktail Party seemed to promise a new vitality, but this was not to last. In his writings on drama, Williams sought to help revitalise the dramatic scene.⁷ The first blows were struck in a number of

essays and reviews written for The Critic and Politics and Letters.

Actors

Williams's first essays on drama were published in 1947, in the two journals he helped to edit, The Critic and Politics and Letters.⁸ The most substantial of these was the essay 'A Dialogue on Actors' which appeared in the first issue of The Critic. Here the debt to Eliot is evident throughout. The essay is consciously modelled on Eliot's own 'A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry' [1928], and adopts virtually all of Eliot's main ideas on drama.⁹ Eliot was keen to stress three main points: first, the importance of convention in drama; second, the new possibilities and energies offered by the new poetic drama; and third, the insistence that good drama had to be good literature as well. All of these come through in his influential essay, 'Four Elizabethan Dramatists'.

Eliot argues that Lamb's selections of the Elizabethan dramatists set the terms for contemporary attitudes towards drama in which the reader is committed 'to the opinion that a play can be good literature but a bad play and that it may be a good play and bad literature' (Eliot [1934a]: 9); while William Archer's The Old Drama and the New fails largely because of Archer's inability to see that the 'faults' of Elizabethan drama may be due to simply the existence of different and non-naturalistic conventions, or

more accurately for Eliot, the unsettledness of Elizabethan conventions. Eliot chooses the figure of a great dancer of the Russian school as a model for what the actor should be like: 'a true acting play is surely a play which does not depend upon the actor for anything but acting, in the sense in which a ballet depends upon the dancer for dancing' (14).

In William's dialogue, all of these points are picked up. There are four 'speakers' in the dialogue - L, M, N, and O - but these enjoy little characterisation and tend to speak only variants of Williams's own ideas. The main problem of the modern theatre is identified by N as a problem of acting and actors. 'It is the most fashionable current heresy to regard drama and acting as one and the same thing...Because people identify drama with acting, because they judge the plays and performances by acting standards, real dramatic values are neglected' (Williams 1947a: 17) he asserts while the current vogue for actor-directors is responsible for the 'lie' 'that a play can be a good play without at the same time being good literature' (21). Crucial to the whole discussion is the problem of naturalism. N argues that 'You cannot condemn contemporary actors without an inclusive condemnation of naturalism' (22) and insists that 'A competent analysis of naturalism, with the record of its growth, would be the most important piece of scholarship our dramatic literature could receive.' (22). M sums up the case as a whole:

Our specific point here is that naturalism involves, inevitably, the actor's attitude we have condemned. Constructively, we can only say this: that revival in quality of drama (quantity can wait) depends on the use of dramatic conventions, within which dramatists and actors can collaborate; which will enable the dramatist, and the actors who complete his work on the stage, to penetrate below the superficial verisimilitude which has been the curse of naturalism, and to produce work which is likely to remain powerful and valid regardless of superficial social changes, work which is central in the whole human situation and which does not depend on chance audience-identification. (1947a: 23-24)

This was the basis of the case which Williams was to argue at greater length and with greater detail in his study Drama from Ibsen to Eliot.

From Eliot to Ibsen

Drama from Ibsen to Eliot is the first of three works which will seek to provide that 'analysis of naturalism, with the record of its growth' that Williams had deemed necessary in his 1947 essay. It extends Eliot's insights into a fully historical and academic account, one which can be used to support the contemporary argument for the reform of the drama.

In the Introduction to Drama from Ibsen to Eliot, Williams writes that the aim of the book is to give 'not so much a history of the drama of these hundred years [1850-1950] as a critical account and revaluation of it' (Williams [1952]: 11). As the term 'revaluation' suggests, the project is conceived in terms of the application of practical criticism to the drama. 'My criticism is,' writes Williams 'or is intended to be, literary criticism. It is literary criticism, also, which in its major part is of the kind based on demonstrated judgements from texts, rather on historical survey or generalized impressions' (12). The study is a 'working experiment in the application of practical criticism methods to modern dramatic literature', and follows the lead given by Eliot on Elizabethan drama and L. C. Knights and G. Wilson Knight on Shakespeare.¹⁰ It is 'practical criticism' in a very direct sense: 'not as a part of that process of tidying-up which we sometimes call literary history, but as an expression of values in the drama, from which we may assess our position, and decide upon future directions' (38).

The first stage in this project is to place drama firmly as a worthy object of critical scrutiny, to establish the literary status of drama. Following Eliot, Williams argues that this status is one that has been obscured by the 'popular habit' of distinguishing drama sharply off from literature 'while the terms "drama" and "acting" are often virtually exchangeable.' 'It is assumed' writes Williams, in the scornful accents of an Eliot, 'very widely, that the value of a play has not necessarily

anything to do with its literary value; it is held, and firmly asserted, that a play can quite commonly be good, without at the same time being good literature.' (13) For Williams the 'average playgoer assumes that the attitudes and practices of the contemporary theatre are things necessary and permanent in drama itself.' (13) He attributes this prejudice to the dominance of theatrical naturalism, which he sees as 'a particular stage in the development of the drama' and which, he insists, 'as a form is only a phase in the drama's long and varied history.' Against this, Williams submits his own definition of literature, and of drama as literature:

Literature, in its most general definition, is a means of communication of imaginative experience through certain written organisations of words. And drama, since it has existed in written plays, is clearly to be included under this general definition. A play, as a means of communication of imaginative experience, is as clearly the controlled product of an author - the control being exerted in the finalised organisation of words - as any other literary form. But, in the drama, when the actual and specific means of communication are considered, what is essentially a singular literary statement becomes, in performance, apparently plural ([1952]: 14).

We see here Williams's commitment (articulated in Reading and Criticism) to the idea of literature as 'the controlled product of the author' - extended to drama. The main problem for drama - and

here Williams returns to the themes he had sketched out in his 'Dialogue on Actors' - is the expectation that drama is primarily a vehicle for actors, rather than a means of using actors in a certain way. 'All we are obliged to remember, for ordinary purposes, is that character and action, in any good play, are ordered parts of a controlled expression, and that the author's control over their presentation ought to be final...the literary nature of drama needs re-emphasis' (18). The model of expression and artistic control which Williams draws on begins as Eliot's; but, as we shall see, Williams was to make it his own through the insistence on the possibility of drama - and particularly film - as a form of Total Expression, the interpretation of the social totality at one particular historical moment.

In the first instance, though, we can read the various histories, or moments of history, which Williams discusses in the naturalist trilogy as exemplifications of the ideas and insights of Eliot's work on drama. In Drama from Ibsen to Eliot, Williams sees Ibsen as the exemplification of the urge towards controlled dramatic expression argued for by Eliot. Ibsen's purpose 'was the re-establishment of a total dramatic form' (96) in the wake of Romantic drama; his failure was largely due to the retention of a naturalist 'representational language' (96). Peer Gynt is the play which most successfully realised Ibsen's formal intentions. In much the same way Strindberg also hoped to overcome the limitations of naturalist drama. Williams sees evidence of this in Strindberg's attempted distinction between naturalism and

realism where 'true naturalism' is that which 'seeks out those points in life where the great conflicts occur' (cit. 103), though in practice Strindberg is limited by the existing naturalist conventions. This limitation, writes Williams 'as in The Father and Lady Julie, is in the incongruity between the bared, elemental experience of crisis and the covering apparatus of seen and spoken normality' (110). Chekhov's use of symbolism signals another attempt to escape the confines of naturalist drama; and it too fails due to the lack of enough vital language: 'this [the seagull] is a poor substitute for the concrete and precise realisation of the central experience of the play which is achieved in more formal drama by conventionally exact speech' argues Williams. 'Rejection of convention, in the interest of character-drawing and lifelike speech, is the root of the difficulty.' (130)

On the positive side, Synge, Yeats, and Hauptmann all move towards the kind of speech necessary to great drama. In the best of Synge's work, 'language is no longer confined to "flavouring", but uses metaphor and verbal symbolism for strict dramatic ends...[Deirdre] approaches those permanent levels of great drama which seem to be accessible only when a major dramatist subordinates all else to the exploration of a major experience, through a language which the experience alone determines' (168). William Butler Yeats 'first showed poetic drama to be possible again in our century' (221): he 'restored to words "their ancient sovereignty" in the drama' (222); while Hauptmann's The Weavers is

that rare thing, a successful realist play, and this is 'because its realism operates at every level of creation - action, persons, and speech, instead of being reserved mainly for the convenient elements' (178-9). But for all his appreciation of these earlier writers, Williams reserves his greatest praise for Eliot's work. It is in his writing that such speech is best represented.

Eliot's plays are 'experiments in a new dramatic form' (223), writes Williams, one which is particularly important for its 'experiments in language' (225), and its move towards 'the discovery of a dramatic method which should have the status of poetry' (227). In Murder in the Cathedral, Williams writes with approval, 'language reasserts control in performance' (229). His only criticisms are directed at moments where that control is weak and falters. These are usually the moments where the acting is too apparent, and draws attention to itself. Williams picks out Irene Worth's performance as Celia in Eliot's The Cocktail Party as an example. At a climactic moment, the 'gestures of her hands were not controlled by the movement of the words, but by the movement of the general emotion. Now this is normal naturalist acting, but in this case, when the words were so adequate and so final, the essentially separate "acting" not only did not support the words, but actually distracted attention from them' (246). Though Eliot's experiments are not completely successful, they nonetheless represent 'a very considerable achievement, whatever the immediate future of the drama may be; and in its nature it is beyond the mode of praise' (246).

As it happened, despite such enthusiasm, the 'immediate future of drama' did not prove to follow Eliot's lead.¹¹ Nonetheless, for the young Williams, Eliot's ideas on drama, and their partial realization in his plays, seemed to represent the most promising way forward. This judgement is later abandoned and forgotten, and is carefully excised in the revision of Drama from Ibsen to Eliot, and its working over into Drama from Ibsen to Brecht.

Differences

Jan Gorak has been one of the few critics to register Williams's debt to Eliot; but he underestimates the characteristic attempts, even at the early stage, to assert independence. According to Gorak, Williams 'remained locked within Eliot's guiding assumptions and values' even though he 'signalled his partial independence from Eliot by electing to study nineteenth-century drama' (Gorak 1988: 21). But Williams's attempts to take a distance from Eliot go beyond the mere selection of a canon, and reveal the processes of a thought in formation.

First, let us examine the central idea of the place of speech in drama. Of course, the emphasis which Williams gives to speech in drama connects across Eliot to what were by the forties the standard terms of the Scrutiny critique of modernity. In Drama from Ibsen to Eliot Williams also writes, in the familiar terms of Leavisite literary criticism, that 'contemporary spoken English

is rarely capable of exact expression of anything in any degree complex' and this is due in large part to 'that pressure of forces which we call industrialism' (Williams [1952]: 26) . We need only compare contemporary with Elizabethan drama to see that 'the medium of naturalism - the representation of everyday speech - is immeasurably less satisfying in the twentieth century than in the sixteenth' (26). For Williams, this decline in the richness of dramatic speech is 'related, in fact, not only to the impoverishment of language but to changes in feeling' (22-3). As the NLR team are quick to observe, 'The set of propositions here is quite unlike anything else in your work. It seems to be a pure distillation of Leavis' (Williams 1979: 194). But with that single word 'feeling', Williams seeks to give his own twist to the orthodox line, and as he does so, he starts the slow elaboration of his own distinctive concepts. For, as we shall see, 'feeling' will become the key element in the idea of 'structure of feeling'.

Another moment at which Williams seeks to take a distance from the existing orthodoxy is with regard to the more authoritarian implications at work in the usual representation of Elizabethan drama and its society. Yes, Elizabethan drama enjoyed a moment where the common language contained all the 'elements of literary precision and complexity' ([1952]: 26) necessary to poetic drama. Because of the existence of a 'community of expression', the limitations of naturalism were invisible: there was an indiscernible blending of the 'lowest naturalism' with the 'highest conventionalism' (26). For Eliot and others, all this

was evidence for 'the idea that a fully serious drama is impossible in a society where there is no common system of belief' (26).¹² But Williams refuses to accept this implication, and turns directly against it. He asserts that 'the condition of a fully serious drama is less the existence of a common faith than the existence of a common language' (26). The existence of a common language does not imply the existence of a unitary moral - or political - outlook. It is not necessarily authoritarian. 'Morality in literature is not necessarily the assumption of certain ethical conclusions as background against which the immediate experience of the drama is paraded and tested' he argues,

The moral activity of the artist can also be an individual perception of pattern, or structure, in experience; a process which involves the most intense and conscious response to new elements of substantial living, so that by this very consciousness new patterns of evaluation are created or former patterns reaffirmed. (27)

Against the authoritarian emphasis of a 'community of belief', Williams calls for a 'community of sensibility', one which would function in the open and democratic fashion he was to make central to Culture and Society and The Long Revolution:

The artist's sensibility - his capacity for experience, his ways of thinking, feeling, and conjunction - will always be

finer and more developed than that of the mean of his audience. But if his sensibility is at least of the same kind, communication is possible. Where his sensibility is of the same kind, his language and the language of his audience will be closely and organically related; the common language will be the expression of the common sensibility. There is no such common sensibility today. (26)

In this 'community of sensibility' somehow the right ideas will win the arguments in the end. Though there is no such common sensibility today, the implication is that it will come through in the end, communication will triumph. It is one of the the weakest points of Williams's thought, as critics like Thompson were to pick up in relation to The Long Revolution. Nonetheless it marks an attempt at moving away from the conservative and authoritarian implications of Eliot's general cultural views.¹³

Williams also chooses to disagree explicitly with Eliot over one very significant idea. Characteristically, this comes at a moment where the flow of argument demands that Williams acknowledge his full debt to Eliot. He finds in so doing that he wishes to establish a distance from Eliot. 'Story, character, idea, seem to have two related uses to the artist' he writes. 'In one sense,'

they serve as a formula for the expression of his experience, in the way defined by T.S. Eliot: 'The only way of expressing

emotion in the form of art is by finding an "objective correlative", in other words, a set of objects, a situation, a chain of events which shall be the formula of that particular emotion; such that when the external facts, which must terminate in sensory experience, are given, the emotion is immediately evoked.' (17)

The quotation is one of Eliot's most famous formulations, taken from his 1919 essay on Hamlet.¹⁴ The formulation - and the essay as a whole - powerfully expresses Eliot's own ambivalence with regard to the notion of expression. On the one hand, there is what was picked up by many Scrutiny critics, and by Williams himself on the whole: the idea of the ideal of artistic expression which lies in the extraordinary ability of the artist to use language as an instrument for the expression of his experience. Yet at the same time there is some implicit fascination with the idea that the very power and appeal of artistic expression may lie in what the artist has been unable to master, may be the effect, in part, of the breakdown of the artist's control over the instrumentality of language. What interests Williams is the Eliot's emphasis on the use of language as instrument, its ability, when controlled by the artist, to fully express experience and emotion. Williams criticises this instrumental view as he writes:

In another sense, they may serve as a precipitant to the artist, in that through their comprehension the artist is able

to find a provisional pattern of experience. By the force of his own grasp on their actuality, the artist is able to release his own, and their, reality. The only difference in the senses here outlined concerns the placing of these stages in the artistic process. Mr. Eliot's statement of the matter implies an ordered process, in which the particular emotion is first understood, and an objective correlative subsequently found for it. The second statement suggests that finding the objective correlative may often be for the artist the final act of evaluation of the particular experience, which will not have been completely understood until its mode of expression has been found. (17)

For a moment, but only for this moment in this period of his work, Williams questions the view that understanding precedes expression, and that language is simply the instrument of expression, and argues for the view in which language - figured here as the 'finding of an objective correlative' - is necessarily prior to the formation of understanding. This is a moment of real contradiction. For, as will be clear from the upcoming discussion of 'film as total expression', so many of Williams's arguments in this early work on literature and drama tend towards just the instrumental view which he criticises here.¹⁵ It is a moment of contradiction, in which Williams contradicts his own most powerful influence, and at the same time contradicts a great deal of the theoretical structure he has taken as his own. It is a focus on

the question of language and expression that will not come into its own until the chapter on language in Marxism and Literature.

All in all, Drama from Ibsen to Eliot is a book deeply influenced by Eliot's ideas. Contemporary drama had come to lose the power proper to drama because it had forgotten that this power was above all generated by a vigorous but controlled use of language. The naturalist insistence on preserving the 'illusion of reality' is the single factor most responsible for the disabling restriction of dramatic speech to everyday prose. Though many have tried to get round this through the use of symbols, or an elevated language at moments of crisis, the problem of speech remains as 'the central one in modern drama' (26). In the end, the modes of naturalism are the problem and the techniques of Eliot offer the answer: 'The reform of modern English drama has two main phases: first, the development of naturalism; and, second, the establishment of verse plays in the theatre' (269-70).

In Drama in Performance and Preface to Film, Williams extends and develops the main argument against naturalism. Where Drama from Ibsen to Eliot emphasised the lack of any fully historical grasp of dramatic conventions in the available literary criticism, Drama in Performance sets out to provide at least a few moments from such a history, while Preface to Film goes on to argue that cinema might represent the possibility of a successful new convention of dramatic performance. In this new convention, the

limitations of naturalism would finally be overcome. The new mode of Total Expression would return absolute control over expression to the author, and so fulfil the ideal of artistic instrumentality so dear to Eliot - and, with the exception of that one moment in Drama from Ibsen to Eliot, to Williams too.

Performance and Convention

In Reading and Criticism, Williams had noted the tendency 'to believe that the naturalist method is the permanent and universal dramatic method' (Williams 1950: 91). At the centre of Drama in Performance is the argument that naturalism is a convention with a history, but a history that has been forgotten. The book traces the shape and structure of this forgetting. It shows how the dominant naturalist attitude has led to an anachronistic reading of some of the major texts in the Western dramatic canon. In line with the strictures of Drama from Ibsen to Eliot, the book seeks to bridge the gap between theatrical criticism, the criticism of a play's performance, and literary criticism, the analysis of a play as a written text, though one written for performance. Williams, following Eliot, finds the usual separation of these two elements 'deeply disabling', and he therefore proposes to examine 'as a formal point of theory, the relation between text and performance' (Williams 1991: 18). This, in turn, can throw light on the nature of the contemporary failure of naturalism, and even suggests remedy for it, once we realise how the success of these early

works depends largely on the working of conventions eclipsed by the moment of naturalism.

This is the challenge Williams issues by suggesting that the usual response to a play such as Shakespeare's Antony and Cleopatra is anachronistic. 'The construction of the play has often been condemned,' writes Williams

on the grounds of its frequent shifts and apparent disintegration. But this is to look for integration in the wrong place: in the realistic representation of time and place which have little to do with this kind of drama. The measure of time in the play is the dramatic verse; the reality of place is the reality of played action on the stage. (1991: 67)

The Antigone of Sophocles and the drama of the Medieval period present examples of the successful integration of writing and performance: 'Sophocles, working through the known conventions, has written the words so that they are necessarily enacted in this way, and with this issue. The words are the whole situation, for they contain and compel the intense physical realization' (1991: 31-2); Everyman is 'not only a masterpiece of literature, but a masterpiece of dramatic literature...For a compelling feeling, at once individual and general, has been realized in a fully dramatic pattern, where speech, action and design are one' (58). For Williams, these earlier - and often misunderstood - dramas were able to embody in performance a more coherent realization of the

dramatic author's intentions than is possible in the conventions of contemporary drama.

Crucial to this success was the availability of coherent conventions of performance, conventions which, in turn, were made possible by the existence of a certain 'structure of feeling' shared by dramatist and audience. The problem for the present is that no new conventions have been formed which fully express the contemporary structure of feeling. Dramatists and their audiences are trapped in the tight place of a transitional moment. Williams argues - at least in the 1954 edition of Drama_in_Performance - that a comparative moment of transition can be found between 1896 and 1898 - between the disastrous reception given to the first production of Chekhov's The Seagull by Karpov at the Alexandrinsky Theatre, and the extraordinary success of Stanislavsky's production only two years later. For the present, all that can be said is that

many writers no longer conceive their themes in a naturalist way. The emphasis has changed, in the mind, from the representation of apparent behaviour to a very different process: the process of attempting to discover a pattern, a structure of feeling, which is adequate to communicate, not merely the acknowledged and apparent, but the whole and unified life of man. One can see, in certain contemporary novels, and in certain plays, that the theme is obviously of this kind.

(Williams 1954: 116)

Not merely 'the acknowledged and apparent, but the whole and unified life of man'. The phrase is worth pausing over, as it indicates the work to be done by Williams's emerging idea of the structure of feeling. To put it in a different theoretical idiom, the new drama will have at its core the desire to represent a social totality which is otherwise invisible, otherwise inaccessible to empirical human scrutiny. This social totality can nonetheless be adequately communicated by the structure of feeling which the dramatist expresses in his or her work. The structure of feeling can somehow represent the inexpressible social totality. That is the very promise of representation; that is the necessary aporia of what it means for expression to stand in for something.

But, to return to the focus of Williams's own attention, what counts is that the naturalist attitude still prevails, despite the efforts of dramatists of the past thirty years or so to break with it. For Williams, Eliot has been the closest to realising such a break; but even he has been unable to overcome the disabling contradiction between the naturalist representation of speech and the need for a non-naturalist dramatic action. Naturalism has no adequate convention for the proper linking of speech and action in drama. In the conclusion to the 1954 edition, Williams can only offer his argument that

certain changes in the minds of writers and others have made naturalism outmoded; and that a conscious acceptance of a different dramatic intention can be realised, in practical terms, by the full use and development of skills that already exist in the theatre (Williams 1954: 122)

But he has to accept that these 'have not been integrated into a satisfactory general form' (ibid., p. 122). Drama, then, and even Eliot's drama, seemed at a dead end. What was needed was some new convention of performance which could break the stranglehold of a naturalism which had even repressed the existence of previous conventions in the history of drama. It was film, for Williams, which seemed to provide exactly the right ground for the emergence of a new convention and a newly realised structure of feeling. For film promised to return the dramatic performance to a condition of singular utterance, one in which the intentions of the dramatic author could be fully realized without the distortions imposed through actual production and direction.

Film as Total Expression

Preface to Film is the only one of the three books on naturalism which has never been republished, and this may account for its relative neglect in critical accounts of the Williams canon. Yet the main essay in the book, 'Film and the Dramatic Tradition', is the most powerful version of Williams's critique of

naturalism, and gives the most insight into the development of the concept of structure of feeling.

As an undergraduate at Cambridge, Williams had the opportunity to develop an interest in film as a regular spectator at the Socialist Film Club's weekend shows. Williams's work on and interest in film ran against the grain of Leavisism. Leavis had given a notable characterisation of film in his early pamphlet, 'Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture'. Here, because of its greater power and immediacy, the cinema was seen as more of a threat to the vitality of culture than even the emergent tabloid press pioneered by Lord Northcliffe. 'Films have a so much more potent influence' wrote Leavis:

They provide now the main form of recreation in the civilised world; and they involve surrender, under conditions of hypnotic receptivity, to the cheapest emotional appeals, appeals the more insidious because they are associated with a compellingly vivid illusion of actual life. It would be difficult to dispute that the result must be serious damage to the 'standard of living'...it will not be disputed that broadcasting, like the films, is in practice, mainly a means of passive diversion, and that it tends to make active recreation, especially active use of the mind, more difficult. (Leavis 1933a: 20-21)

In brief, if the purpose of the new literary studies was to save the world from mass culture, as it was for Leavis, then film

should never receive a place in the curriculum. Implicit in Leavis's argument is, of course, the idea of English studies as a form of 'active recreation', a training in the 'active use of the mind'. Leavis's argument relied upon a claim that literary texts were intrinsically capable of generating intellectual activity, and refused to see that this activity of the mind might itself be simply a product of critical attention and analysis when devoted to texts of any kind, whether of high or low culture. There is no such prejudice at work in Williams's approach to cinema. In 'Film as a Tutorial Subject', Williams had argued against the Leavisite line, and for the addition of film to WEA tutorials, insisting that film 'provides opportunities for criticism' just as much as literature, and promised to extend his arguments in the forthcoming Preface to Film.¹⁶

The first imperative of Preface to Film is to connect cinema to the history of the traditional dramatic canon, and this is the aim of the first chapter by Williams: 'Film and the Dramatic Tradition'. Michael Orrom contributes a chapter, 'Film and its Dramatic Techniques', and the book as a whole concludes with a Postscript by Williams.

In 'Film and the Dramatic Tradition', Williams argues that criticism to date has been marred by its refusal to understand cinema in relation to the history of drama. Properly understood, the advent of cinema may represent a shift in the possibilities of dramatic expression equivalent to Aeschylus's introduction of the

second actor, thus subordinating the words of the chorus to the now newly dramatic dialogue. Only when seen in this large historical perspective can the essential novelty and importance of film be grasped. For Williams, what is most important is

the fact that the performance which it embodies is recorded and final. It is, that is to say, a total performance, which cannot be distinguished from the work that is being performed. (Williams and Orrom 1954: 1)

Film, in other words, seemed to offer what was most lacking in contemporary drama: a convention of performance which would guarantee the full and singular communication of the dramatic author's intentions, without the distortions characteristic of dramatic production in Britain since the advent of the theatre director.¹⁷

Once again, Eliot's verse-drama provides the necessary limit-case of existing naturalist conventions, particularly with regard to a naturalist style of speech and movement. Williams sees this style as a major drawback, 'the familiar one of naturalism: that the concern is to represent "real life", rather than to communicate a dramatic emotion' (48). Eliot's verse-drama, which tried to break away from this style, could only enjoy partial success and this was a symptom of the general crisis of naturalist convention. 'What is necessary' argues Williams 'is that dramatists, in collaboration with actors, think again in terms of

writing for speech and movement, as an integrated dramatic form' (49). What is necessary is a convention which would re-establish the possibility of 'total expression' which, Williams argued, had existed for Sophocles, and for some Medieval drama:

a play written from this idea of total expression contains, in its essential conception, the total performance which is necessary to communicate it in the theatre. That is to say, not only the speech, but also the movement and design, have been devised by the dramatist, in terms of his understanding of the appropriate conventions of actions and designers, so that the written play contains everything that is to be performed; the performance itself is the communication of this. (50)

At the centre of this theory of Total Expression lies the idea of a fully realised authorial intention which Williams had drawn from Eliot. It was above all the iterability of film which appealed to the young Williams: the pure artistic expression of the author/director could never be betrayed by the intermediary figure of the actor/director. The new medium of cinema offered significant opportunities for the realization of this Total Expression. 'The moving-picture camera itself is,' concludes Williams, 'a most effective agent for the kind of controlled total effect which I have been urging' (51).¹⁸ All in all, cinema presents a 'practical alternative' to the problems inherent in 'the methods of naturalism' (vii-viii).

Tony Pinkney has recently offered a summary of Williams's position in his early writings on drama which differs from mine, but I think he is only able to justify it by bending his evidence a little.¹⁹ He emphasises repeatedly the importance of German Expressionism to Williams, and concludes that certainly

Williams had his reservations, about the occasional externality of expressionistic devices of spectacle and its relative devaluation of dramatic speech, but these are only qualifications within a deep overall endorsement. (Pinkney 1989b: 22)

As a key piece of evidence he cites Williams's apparent enthusiasm and endorsement for German Expressionist cinema in a passage towards the end of 'Film and the Dramatic Tradition': Williams's claim that the German Expressionist film is 'the kind of film which has most nearly realized the ideal of a wholly conceived drama' (Williams 1954: 52), that is, of the Total Expression which so interested Williams. But while he registers that Williams made 'significant qualifications' to this claim, he does not detail them. He does not detail them for the very simple reason that Williams's claim for the interest of German expressionist film is so limited by Williams's reservations that it could never count as a 'deep overall endorsement'. The fact is that films like Dr Caligari were silent films, and most of Williams's interests - as we have seen - in going beyond naturalism were concerned with the

problem of the dramatic and controlled use of speech in drama. As Williams goes on to say:

it has always seemed to me significant that the most successful examples were in silent film. For, if one looks at expressionist drama as a whole, one sees a very exciting new convention of movement and design, which has been achieved, however, at the cost of a radical neglect of speech....it is clear that the use of sound, particularly for dramatic speech, would have presented the expressionists with very difficult problems, which might have ruined such conventional integrations as they had achieved. (Williams and Orrom 1954: 52)

In terms of the general argument which Williams was maintaining, and which focuses on the difficulty and importance of dramatic speech, this hardly gives expressionism the centrality to Williams's thinking that Pinkney lends it. Williams's main point is that Expressionist cinema proved to be a dead end, despite its early promise. Similarly, Pinkney's claim that Drama from Ibsen to Eliot (though in a 'displaced way') 'engages the great Expressionism debates of the 1930s' (Pinkney 1989b: 21) is exaggerated, and he can only sustain it by selective quotation. Though Williams does indeed state that it is 'very common, in England, to be patronising about the expressionist experiment', he does not go as far as Pinkney suggests, lending it his 'deep endorsement'. Once again, Williams's claims for Expressionism are

severely limited: when 'expressionist drama is set against the poetic drama, or against the very best of the naturalists...it is true that it must be judged inferior' - and the reason for this lies with the same fault as he had observed vis-a-vis Expressionist cinema - 'it served to confirm the impoverishment of dramatic language' (Williams and Orrom 1954: 184). Each time Williams's point is the same: expressionism is only partially successful, it suffers too much from impoverished dramatic language. In the end it is Eliot's verse-dramas which point the way forward - a claim that Pinkney can only ever diminish and read anachronistically, from the point of view of Williams's later change of heart.²⁰

Structure of Feeling

Most commentaries treat 'structure of feeling' as if it were a concept which emerged in Williams's work in the late rather than the early fifties, and, as such, it has been the object of considerable discussion and criticism. But something is lost when the history of the emergence of the term is not fully traced. Preface to Film is the first work in which Williams deploys the term and seeks to establish the distinctive reach and explanatory power which made it a point_de_repere of his later work. Duly examined, it becomes clear that he was using the idea of 'structure of feeling' as a deliberate challenge and alternative to the existing explanatory framework of Marxist literary and cultural analysis.²¹

By the time of the interviews with the New Left Review team, published as Politics and Letters in 1979, structure of feeling had become known as one of Williams's most characteristic concepts, a keyword of Williams's own vocabulary, and just as shifting and unstable in its conceptual identity as any item in Keywords itself. David Simpson - though he neglects its emergence in Preface to Film - has given an excellent survey of its mutation in Williams's thinking from its use in Culture and Society (1958), where 'it occurs somewhat casually....[and] seems to define something like ideology in its classic and negative sense', across 'his first sustained account' of it in The Long Revolution (1961), through to its reappraisal in Marxism and Literature (1977), where 'for all its appearance in a modernized and theoretical format, the spirit and most of the letter...has not much changed' since 1961 (Simpson 1989: 42).²²

The discussion of 'structure of feeling' in Politics and Letters brings out some major theoretical problems with the term, though here again, the NLR team concentrate on the deployment of the concept in The Long Revolution, ignoring the fact of its first appearance in Preface to Film until Williams draws their attention to it. The interviewers point to difficulties with the point of reference for the term - structure of feeling seems to refer to a generation, and yet at times to have a longer life span than any single generation, it seems far too unitary in its expression of social consciousness with its casual reference across classes

(Williams 1979: 156-162). Nonetheless, for the NLR team, the

concept of 'structure of feeling' remains 'one of the most notable theoretical innovations of The Long Revolution' (1979: 156).

In his replies to their various criticisms, Williams accepts many of their arguments, and yet manages to defend his basic positions in a complex and nuanced defence of his arguments and their original context of discussion and debate. He suggests that the proper starting-point for any discussion of the idea of the structure of feeling is with its first appearance and definition in 1954. 'The first time I used it was actually in Preface to Film' he notes, and insists that

the key to the notion, both to all it can do and to all the difficulties it still leaves, is that it was developed as an analytic procedure for actual written works, with a very strong stress on forms and conventions. (1979: 159)

'To this day' he notes 'I find that I keep coming back to this notion from the actual experience of literary analysis rather than from any theoretical satisfaction with the concept itself' (159). In other words, under the pressure of the NLR's probing questions, Williams admits that there are problems with the use of the term as a concept, but then defends its use pragmatically, as 'an analytic procedure for actual written works' (ibid.). Quite aside from the question of whether the two uses can be so easily

separated, it is important to ask whether the original use of the term was pragmatic or conceptual in the senses at work here. We shall see that Williams gives a selective account of its original use in Preface_to_Film, one which does its best to conceal the term's original ambitious valency. For despite the emphasis on the casually pragmatic usefulness of the term for literary analysis, it did begin life very much as a direct challenge to the existing explanatory orthodoxy of Marxist literary criticism. There is a forgetting at work in Williams's own account of the term's origin just as important as its neglect in most of the existing secondary material.

This forgetting comes through in a quite literal elision in Williams's discussion. In support of this emphasis on the textual and pragmatic nature of the idea (that it is an 'analytic procedure for actual written works') he quotes the following section from Preface_to_Film:

In the study of a period, we may be able to reconstruct, with more or less accuracy, the material life, the social organization, and, to a large extent, the dominant ideas. It is not necessary to discuss here which, if any, of these aspects is, in the whole complex, determining; an important institution like the drama will, in all probability, take its colour in varying degrees from them all.... To relate a work of art to any part of that observed totality may, in varying degrees, be useful, but it is a common experience, in analysis,

to realize that when one has measured the work against the separable parts, there yet remains some element for which there is no external counterpart. This element, I believe, is what I have named the structure of feeling of a period and it is only realizable through experience of the work of art itself, as a whole. (1979: cit. pp. 158-9)

The emphasis here falls on the idea of the structure of feeling as the result of a work of textual analysis, 'only realizable through experience of the work of art itself'. What is de-emphasised - through selective quotation - is the larger theoretical point Williams was seeking to make in his original formulation. Structure of feeling was intended as a direct challenge to the Marxist explanation of cultural reproduction. As we shall see, the first sentence of the quoted extract reads differently if we see it in the context of the whole paragraph from which it is extracted, and in relation to the flow of argument as a whole. But let us first of all relocate this selective quotation in the context of argument at work in Preface to Film.

Structure of Feeling as Convention

In theoretical terms, what interests Williams most in Preface to Film is the necessity for understanding dramatic conventions not merely as questions of technique and staging but as themselves forms of social consciousness. There are in fact two senses at

work in the idea of convention, 'convention covers both tacit consent and accepted standards' (Williams and Orrom 1954: 15). A convention is, on the one hand, simply an agreed on standard or method of performance. An audience will willingly suspend its disbelief, and accept that an actor can put on a grey cloak and become 'invisible', though in reality he continues to be seen. Spectators agree to believe that they can 'overhear' a soliloquy, even at the back of the auditorium, while it goes unnoticed by any other actors on stage. The second sense of convention as tacit - not fully conscious - agreement comes through most clearly when the usual conventions are disturbed:

We will agree that a murderer may hide behind a door (where we can still see him), and that he may look down, with an expression of agony, at his hands (which we at once agree are stained with innocent blood); but if he should come forward to the front of the stage, and in twenty lines of verse, or in recitative or song, or in dance, express (if more fully and intensely) the same emotion, we at once, or many of us, feel uneasy, and are likely to say afterwards that it was 'unreal'.
(Williams and Orrom 1954: 18)

This deeper sense of convention comes through most visibly when its sense as agreed standard is challenged. 'A convention, in the simplest sense' writes Williams,

is only a method, a technical piece of machinery, which facilitates the performance. But methods change, and techniques change, and while, say, a chorus of dancers, or the cloak of invisibility, or a sung soliloquy, are known dramatic methods, they cannot be satisfactorily used unless, at the time of a performance, they are more than methods; unless, in fact, they are conventions. (19)

Conventions then in the second sense refer to the tacit agreement, likely to be unconscious, which yet forms and grounds social consciousness. Thus the very existence of dramatic conventions as methods always indicates at the same time the existence of a level of tacit consent to and understanding of them amongst the audience. The question is then how and why do changes in convention take place?

For Williams, the answer is that such changes in convention as dramatic method must in some sense reflect or articulate some degree of change in the grounds of social consciousness itself. According to Williams, it seems likely that 'the effective changes took place when there was already a latent willingness to accept them, at least among certain groups in society, from whom the artist drew his support' (20). And it is precisely this 'latent willingness' which most interests Williams. For potentially at least, it gives a place for the contemporary artist or critic to create something new:

It may be possible, eventually, so to understand the relation of particular conventions to the life of the time in which they flourished, that a reasonable prediction of what is necessary in a present situation may be made and argued. I do not think that any such understanding at present exists, but certain points seem to me to be sufficiently grounded to be put forward as tentative argument. (21)

What Williams returns here to the starting-point of Communist Party criticism - that a position exists from which 'a reasonable prediction of what is necessary in a present situation may be made and argued'. But - doubtless bearing in mind the criticisms he had received from Tillyard on just this point - he writes with considerable circumspection. No such position or understanding exists at present; all that Williams can put forward is a 'tentative argument', though one he thinks is reasonably well grounded. What follows is the elaboration of the idea of structure of feeling, his recasting or supersession of the Marxist idea of structure and superstructure, in the crucial paragraph from which Williams makes his selective quotation in 1979.

The paragraph in fact begins with a strong statement which can only be understood as being written against the Marxist structure and superstructure argument. 'In principle,' writes Williams:

it seems clear that the dramatic conventions of any given period are fundamentally related to the structure of feeling in

that period. I use the phrase structure_of_feeling because it seems to me more accurate, in this context, than ideas or general life. All the products of a community in a given period are, we now commonly believe, essentially related, although in practice, in detail, this is not always easy to see. (21)

When Williams writes that the phrase 'structure of feeling' seems 'more accurate' than 'ideas or general life', he is arguing against the Marxist structure and superstructure paradigm in which 'The mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, political and spiritual processes of life' (in Marx's words, as cited in Culture_and_Society p. 266). By eliding the topic sentence of the whole paragraph, Williams distorts the thrust of his argument in 1954. Without these qualifying sentences, the first sentence which he quotes in 1979 reads as a partial endorsement of the usual structure and superstructure analysis (as it is translated in Culture_and Society):

In the study of a period, we may be able to reconstruct, with more or less accuracy, the material life, the social organization, and, to a large extent, the dominant ideas. It is not necessary to discuss here which, if any, of these aspects is, in the whole complex, determining; an important institution like the drama will, in all probability, take its

colour in varying degrees from them all....(cited in Williams 1979: 159; Williams and Orrom 1954: 21)

But read in context, the 'may' has more of a negative than a positive sense, the orthodox Marxist analysis is belittled rather than endorsed. In orthodox Marxist analysis, dramatic or literary conventions of any kind would be 'fundamentally related' to the economic base, not to Williams's 'structure of feeling'. In Politics and Letters, three more sentences are then cut from the original version, and their excision also has the effect of blunting the original force and address of Williams's argument. They read:

But while we may, in the study of a past period, separate out particular aspects of life, and treat them as if they were self-contained, it is obvious that this is only how they may be studied, not how they were experienced. We examine each element as a precipitate, but in the living experience of the time every element was in solution, an inseparable part of a complex whole. And it seems to be true, from the nature of art, that it is from such a totality that the artist draws; it is in art, primarily, that the effect of the totality, the dominant structure of feeling, is expressed and embodied.
(Williams and Orrom 1954: 21)

No mere practice of textual analysis, what is at work in Williams's idea of the structure of feeling is a statement of the

fundamental claims of literary criticism: its insistence that 'it is in art, primarily, that the effect of the totality, the dominant structure of feeling, is expressed and embodied' - and, or because, if in art, then in criticism. The function of the structure of feeling is then much more important than it appears if the final sentences are quoted alone:

To relate a work of art to any part of that observed totality may, in varying degrees, be useful; but it is a common experience, in analysis, to realize that when one has measured the work against the separable parts, there yet remains some element for which there is no external counterpart. This element, I believe, is what I have named the structure of feeling of a period, and it is only realizable through experience of the work of art itself, as a whole. (21-22)

Williams's original claims, in 1954, for the 'structure of feeling' are far stronger than he represents them in 1979. Structure of feeling needs to be recognised for what it was - a concept deployed as a conscious alternative and direct challenge to the available Marxist formula.

Indeed, this comes through, though obliquely, a little later in the discussion in Politics and Letters, where Williams remembers the criticisms of a friend or colleague: 'I know what you are really doing', he was told, 'you are writing a socialist history of culture, but whenever you see a socialist term coming up you

omit it and put in another term': structure of feeling for

structure and superstructure. When Williams admits that 'my language was very different from that in which I would have written between '39 and '41' (1979: 156), we should remember that what Williams was arguing against was the Marxist criticism he had espoused as an undergraduate, but which he had turned away from under the pressure of the discursive constraints of the discipline in general and the unanswerable criticisms of Tillyard in particular.

If we examine the actual emergence of the term 'structure of feeling', we soon see that it is best understood as Williams's most significant attempt so far to preserve and yet to go beyond the Marxist arguments concerning literary and cultural reproduction which had been so thoroughly criticized within the new literary criticism of Cambridge English. The means of this supersession is to be the idea of 'structure of feeling'. Its task is then twofold: first, to explain the nature of major shifts in dramatic convention, but second, to explain these shifts without recourse to the clumsy Marxist metaphor of 'base and superstructure'. As Williams himself put it, though referring to the composition of The Long Revolution:

the kind of 'relating' I was thinking of...was the idea that, say, because there was an industrial revolution there must have been industrial poetry....It would seem to be a reasonable deduction from a very simple version of economic determination, that since the decisive phenomenon was the

advent of capitalism, there should be capitalist poetry. When

I was writing The Long Revolution I was probably over-preoccupied by these one-dimensional sorts of explanation and relation. (Williams 1979: 144)

- just the kind of one-dimensional thinking he had found at work - as we discussed in Chapter 1 - in writers such as Christopher Caudwell in his chapters on the English poets in Illusion and Reality.^{2 3}

Conclusion

Those critics who have had something to say about Williams's early writings on drama have tended to restrict themselves to the repetition of a point first made in a review of Drama from Ibsen to Eliot in 1953. Mr. J.R. Williams saw a certain 'extremism' at work, 'the kind that says drama consists entirely of words', and went so far as to accuse Williams of 'fanatical overstatement'.^{2 4} Jan Gorak turns this observation into yet another instance of Williams's fundamental 'alienation'. '[I]t is clear', he writes, that Williams

views naturalist drama as a reader. Unable to free himself from the limiting assumptions that language provides all dramatic life, his commentaries often ignore the substance of the action, focusing instead on the inadequacies of the playwright's words...By applying Leavisian criteria to literature that will not bear that kind of verbal close

scrutiny, Williams alienates himself from the very canon he seeks to re-examine. (Gorak 1988: 23-4).

And, following him, in surely the best single essay on Williams's writings on drama to date, Bernard Sharratt articulates the same point around a central issue of theory - the emphasis which Williams places on the artist's instrumental relation to language. Sharratt refers to Williams's empiricism as one which invites us

to think in terms of a simple empiricist notion, of an elementary encounter with some recalcitrant particular, some inner 'I' forging a shape for its own localizable and specific 'experience' prior to the secondary act of writing this down in a formal dramatic mode, and subsequently releasing that shaped whole for inevitable partial realization in an essentially inadequate theatrical performance (Sharratt 1989: 132).

Similarly, Graham Holderness, in his fine introduction to the new edition of Drama in Performance, writes:

The emphasis on the primacy of the text can lead towards too rigid and mechanistic a conception of the control exercised by text over performance. If the dramatic text is a completely written exposition of all the play's potentialities of performance, as Williams seems to affirm, then each 'correct'

performance should be identical to every other. (Holderness 1991: 10)

Just as, in Preface to Film, Williams had found the 'performance' of cinema to be. In other words, these critics are correct in stating that Williams had an overriding interest, in these early works on drama, in the idea of what he called 'total expression', the iterability of performance. But what they neglect to ask is the significance of this interest. If Williams was treating drama as a 'kind of reader', what kind of reader was he? The answer - at least as regards the structure of feeling - is less as a Leavisite and more as the non-Marxist Marxist that Williams had set himself the task of becoming.

For the significance of the dramatic text was in the end subordinated to the structure of feeling it could - even if only partially - express. As Williams put it in Preface to Film:

naturalism was a response to changes in the structure of feeling, which, in the event, it could not wholly express. The structure of feeling, as I have been calling it, lies deeply embedded in our lives; it cannot be merely extracted and summarized; it is perhaps only in art - and this is the importance of art - that it can be realized, and communicated, as a whole experience (Williams and Orrom 1954: 54)

In the end, the most serious charge that the NLR interviewers put to Williams with regard to the idea of structure of feeling is, in fact, its very raison d'être, the ways in which it assures the literary or dramatic critic access to a social consciousness somehow behind the available evidence. As they put it, isn't Williams guilty of:

a silent elision from the texts of the period as privileged evidence of the structure of feeling to the structure of feeling as privileged evidence of the social structure or historical epoch as such? The concept then tends to become an epistemology for gaining a comprehension of a whole society. (Williams 1979: 164)

In fact, that was precisely what English studies meant to Williams in this early period - an epistemology for gaining a privileged insight into the history of the social totality. And this is why the study of drama - properly understood - is central, and not peripheral, to Williams's work as a whole. Indeed - as with Williams's reply to this question, we can see a part of the progress from this early point of Williams's work as a whole lies in a relinquishing of this kind of totalising claim. Nonetheless, it remains a part of his work through to the end, as a careful reading of his inaugural lecture as professor of Drama reveals.

For let us examine some of Williams's reflections on the place of drama in his work in the 1974 inaugural lecture at Cambridge,

'Drama in a Dramatized Society'. 'People have often asked me why,' said Williams 'trained in literature and expressly in drama, making an ordinary career in writing and teaching dramatic history and analysis, I turned - turned - to what they would call sociology if they were quite sure I wouldn't be offended' (Williams 1984: 19). As the emphasis and repetition make clear, what the ordinary professional critic might see as some intrusive element, as some eccentric or peripheral concern on Williams's part in his writings on drama was its 'sociological' bent - the Cambridge codeword for anything resembling a Marxist analysis of literature. But for Williams the 'sociological' was central. In a telling aside, which works to locate Williams in the very tradition of social criticism he had delineated in Culture and Society, Williams refers to the example of John Ruskin. 'Ruskin didn't turn from architecture to society' he notes; 'he saw society in its architecture', and because of this was able to 'learn to read both architecture and society in new ways' (19-20). For Williams, the study of drama has worked in much the same way as Ruskin's architecture. 'I learned something from analysing drama' he writes, something

which seemed to me effective not only as a way of seeing certain aspects of society but as a way of getting through to some of the fundamental conventions which we group as society itself. These, in their turn, make some of the problems of drama quite newly active. It was by looking both ways, at a stage and a text, and at a society active, enacted, in them,

that I thought I saw the significance of the enclosed room - the room on the stage, with its new metaphor of the fourth wall lifted - as at once a dramatic and a social fact. (Williams 1984: 20)

In the end, Williams's insistence on 'looking both ways' can serve to correct both orthodox literary analysis, and the orthodox social analysis of Marxist economism. For to be able to understand the significance of the lifted fourth wall of the naturalist theatre means understanding both the history of the conventions of drama, but also the deeper conventions underlying that narrowly academic history. It is to see through to 'the fundamental conventions which we group as society itself', what Williams refers to as 'a structure of feeling in a precise contemporary world' (21). The analysis and interpretation of dramatic form cannot take place, for Williams, outside the understanding of the basic structures of a social order. It is that this analysis can help to understand the fundamental conventions of the social order itself. Where techniques become methods, 'significant general modes' of consciousness, then the analysis of dramatic forms questions and corrects both orthodox literary studies and orthodox marxist thinking. This is then the major line of theoretical continuity - however revised, improved and elaborated - between Williams's earliest work on drama and his final positions on cultural materialism.245

Chapter Three: Culture and Communication 1950-1962

Culture and Society 1780-1950 was first published in September 1958, and reprinted four months later in January 1959. Since then, it has hardly been out of print. Culture and Society (as it is now usually known) is Williams's best-seller. By 1979, it was reckoned to have sold some 160,000 copies world-wide; and had been translated into Catalan, Japanese, German and Italian. For critics and scholars of Williams's work it is regarded as 'one of the most widely read texts of cultural history ever written', one of the 'founding texts of cultural studies', 'probably the most formative socialist work of the period', 'a lifechanger for youngish readers in 1960', 'foundational', 'probably his most famous' book. As one advertisement put it in 1960s, 'Not to know about... Culture and Society is to brand oneself the intellectual equivalent of a square'. Culture and Society is William's classic; and, perhaps like all classics, its original circumstances and address have been forgotten.¹

Culture and Society is that rare thing in academic writing, a crossover work, one read by at least two generations of liberal and leftist academics, and by an extraordinary number of non-academics. Most commentators have tended to divide into two camps. For the first, the book represents a masterpiece of disinterested academic commentary, while the second see it as exemplifying the worst of Williams's theoretical and political failings. The NLR interviewers, for instance, remark on its

'striking tone of equanimity and authority' (Williams 1979: 98), while J.P.Ward applauds the 'level reasonableness of the writing' (Ward 1981: 17). But for the Althusserian theorist of the seventies, the book seemed 'an idealist and academicist project', too deeply rooted in the 'empiricist' problematic; while from the post-structuralist position of the late eighties, it - and Williams's related works - demonstrated a commitment to a dated and unrealisable 'Enlightenment ideal of culture'.² By the late seventies, in the NLR interviews, Williams himself seemed tired of discussing the book. Culture and Society appeared too deeply marked by his 'disgusted withdrawal' from all forms of collaboration, as well as by the 'intense disappointment that they were not available' (Williams 1979: 106).

What tends to disappear in such readings - including, at moments, Williams's own - is any sense of the impact of Culture and Society on contemporaries. The polemical edge of Culture and Society is forgotten as the context of its production and the circumstances of its address disappear over the horizon of the present. In this chapter, I seek to revive some of the central lines of argument in Culture and Society and the related work, The Long Revolution, and argue that these two books - which represent a significant defining phase in Williams's work - are best understood when placed in the broad context of the cultural politics of the time, and, particularly when brought into relation with the debates in and around adult education through the late 1940s and into and across the '50s. For Williams's work in this

period constitutes what Edward W. Said described as a 'beginning' when he wrote, in his influential study Beginnings: Intention and Method, of how in retrospect 'we can regard a beginning as the point at which, in a given work, the writer departs from all other works; a beginning already establishes relationships with works already existing, relationships of either continuity or antagonism or some mixture of both' (Said 1975: 3). Culture and Society embodies just such a set of antagonistic and yet continuous relations.

The starting-point of this massively popular work was insistently local, emphatically conjunctural, but belonged in many ways more to the late 1940s than the late 1950s. In the Foreword to the study, Williams acknowledges that the origins of the project go back to the 1940s, and to the initiative of the journal Politics and Letters: 'Our object then was to enquire into and where possible reinterpret this tradition which the word 'culture' describes in terms of the experience of our own generation.' ([1958] 19 : vii). 'Our generation': in retrospect, that of The Angry Young Men, the Scholarship Boys, and, ultimately, the New Left. Perhaps most strikingly, the 1950s sees the first appearance of distinctively working-class voices on the cultural scene of the new welfare state.³ In drama, John Osborne and Arnold Wesker; in fiction, John Wain and Kingsley Amis; and in the new form of cultural criticism, Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams. 'I knew perfectly well who I was writing against,' remembered Williams in 1979, 'Eliot, Leavis and the whole of the

cultural conservatism that had formed around them - the people who had pre-empted the culture and literature of this country' (Williams 1979: 112). With the publication of The Long Revolution in 1961, and the later study, Communications (1962), Williams became the spokesperson of the New Left, and perhaps even the first public intellectual of the British working class.⁴

Williams's final results in the English Tripos Examinations were outstanding, and Trinity College immediately offered him a scholarship to stay on as a graduate student.⁵ This was usually the first step on a relatively easy climb - in that period - to tenure as a lecturer in the University. But Williams, as did a significant number of his generation, turned away. Like a significant number of other leftist intellectuals, he preferred to move away from the academy to work in what was perceived as the more politically charged and more politically positive environment of the Workers' Educational Association.⁶ He worked as a Staff Tutor for the Oxford Delegacy for Extra-Mural Studies, organising and teaching classes in collaboration with the Workers' Education Institution from 1946 until his appointment as Lecturer in Drama and return to Cambridge in 196¹~~7~~.⁷

Despite his academic achievements, and the material security afforded by the new job, Williams was still troubled intellectually. After the closure of Politics and Letters in 1948 (a year which had also seen the failure of a projected documentary film with Paul Rotha), he felt a sense of depression and isolation

settle on him. 'The collapse of the journal' he later related, 'was a personal crisis...':

So many other initiatives, like the film, had also been blocked or failed. The experience confirmed the pattern of feeling I had found in Ibsen. For a period I was in such a state of failure and withdrawal that I stopped reading the papers or listening to the news. At that point, apart from going on with the adult education teaching, I felt I could only write myself out of this in a non-collaborative way. I pulled back to do my own work. For the next ten years I wrote in nearly complete isolation (Williams 1979: 77).

We need to distinguish here between what Williams experienced or remembered as a sense of intellectual isolation - the fact that he felt no one was thinking on the same lines as himself - and the real resources of sociality, friendship and professional support he was able to draw on from his group of colleagues and friends. After all, as John McIlroy has charted, with exemplary precision, Williams had good relations and debates with many colleagues and friends in the adult education movement and beyond.⁸ The real sense of isolation lay rather in the hostile consensus of conservative opinion which he faced and argued against in Culture and Society and The Long Revolution. The task of this chapter is to recover something of this context of argument and debate. We can better understand that sense of intellectual isolation if we see just how different the central and related ideas of Culture

and Society - culture and the masses - were in the dominant discourses of the period. And we can get some idea of what lay behind this by examining some of the first responses to Culture and Society by contemporary reviewers, particularly from those who were hostile to the very nature of Williams's arguments.

Reviews and Reviewers

An early review of Culture and Society by Frank Kermode was one of the few to take issue with its literary history as such.⁹ In 'From Burke to Orwell', Kermode found the book to be of 'quite radical importance' (Kermode 1959: 86); but found Williams guilty of misrepresenting the history of the figure of the Romantic Artist, 'perhaps in order to be over-generous to working-class culture' (87). For many other reviewers (and this became clearer still in responses to The Long Revolution in 1961), the political agenda which Kermode read in the margins of the work became the central focus of attention and argument. Indeed, aside from Kermode's essay, most contemporary reviews of the two works saw them less as academic contributions to literary and cultural history, and more as political polemics. The reviews then fell into two broad categories: those which welcomed the books as expressions of the 'New Left' sensibility; and those which rejected them on just that account. The debate on Culture and Society in the pages of Bateson's journal, Essays in Criticism may serve as an exemplary instance for our analysis of their

contemporary impact and resonance.10

Richard Hoggart's review prompted the debate between Williams and some opponents in the Critical Forum section of the journal. Hoggart, despite the history of differences with Williams, welcomed the book as both a 'a cogent study' of the culture and society tradition and as 'a substantial contribution to it' (Hoggart 1959: 171). He singled out its final chapter for particular praise. Culture and Society was 'the most solidly based and intelligent' piece of work to come from the 'New Left'; it captured 'the extraordinary sense of social change in the air' (171). This review - from a fellow tutor in the WEA and the author of The Uses of Literacy (1957) - was the occasion for a Critical Forum debate in which Ian Gregor, Malcolm Pittock and Williams himself took part.11

For Ian Gregor and Malcolm Pittock, it was precisely that sense of social change which posed the main problem, and their negative responses may help us grasp the political challenge represented by Williams's work. A striking feature of their accounts is a certain rhetorical ploy in which the political motivations of Williams's arguments are ruled out of court for contravening the apparent rules of objective academic criticism, while the political motivations of their own arguments are held to be irreproachable.

Both Gregor and Pittock single out the Conclusion to Culture and Society as the focal point for their disagreements. Gregor goes straight to the point and accuses Williams of being guilty of a 'sleight-of-hand' in arguing for a definition of culture as a 'whole way of life', and consequently as one which can include both 'conscious art' and the creation of democratic institutions by the working-class as cultural achievements. He therefore rejects any definition of culture which might claim that 'the National Union of Mineworkers is a creative achievement of the same kind as Sons and Lovers' (Gregor ^{ed} 1959: 428). Since such a definition is unthinkable in the terms given by Leavisite cultural analysis, it is unthinkable tout court. Williams is guilty of advancing arguments 'in general terms' when 'they are in fact politically weighed' (425). In a word, Gregor disagrees with Williams's cultural politics, but prefers to attribute that disagreement, not to the fact of Williams holding different political views to his own, but in a daze of conservative blindness, to his holding political views at all!

Similarly, Malcolm Pittock claims he does not want Williams 'to show his political colours', only 'to give his ideas a sharper definition' (Gregor ^{ed} 1959: 431), but he then goes on to offer a series of criticisms, which, though they are presented as if they were simply neutral, common-sense, or even logical, are clearly derived from his own sense of political identity. His concluding remark, with its insulting condescension to working-class intelligence, does much to explain Williams's later ire in

recalling the debate. The review closes by quoting from the final chapter of Culture and Society the phrase 'The human crisis is always a crisis of understanding: what we genuinely understand we can do' (Williams 1958: 338), and then querying: 'What we genuinely understand we can do...But what happens if most of us are incapable of understanding?' (432). Such a remark embodies the conservative consciousness which is the very target of the arguments in Culture and Society. Gregor and Pittock clearly belong to that group of people who, in Williams's terms, 'had pre-empted the culture and literature of this country' (Williams 1979: 112).

A later review of The Long Revolution, also in Essays in Criticism, offers striking confirmation of the reactionary nature of Pittock's own conservative agenda.¹² Here, in a general complaint about the book's 'omissions' and 'wishful-thinking', Pittock argues that Williams 'converts what is really only a theory of change into a theory of progress' (Pittock 1962: 88), and asserts his almost Burkean conservative pessimism against Williams's socialist optimism:

The power over our environment offered by the revolution in technology and communications is inseparable from power over ourselves: as in the most extreme instance we can use this power just as easily to destroy human society as to develop it....Mr. Williams has, in short, the optimism about human

possibility which usually goes with a political commitment to Socialism. (90)

It is perhaps difficult now to imagine the depth of opposition to these arguments. Another telling account is the essay which greeted Williams on his arrival in Cambridge in 1961. Maurice Cowling, conservative historian and Fellow of Peterhouse College, was the author of the lead article 'Mr Raymond Williams', which appeared in the university's major humanities journal, The Cambridge Review of May 27.13 Never in the history of the university had a new lecturer been treated to such an unwelcoming welcome.

In this essay, Cowling gives an extraordinarily dismissive and yet indignant description of the 'central place' held by Williams amongst a whole 'group of English radicals, lapsed Stalinists, academic Socialists and intellectual Trotskyites... with others from the extra-mural boards, the community centres and certain Northern universities' (Cowling 1961: 546). We can see at work here what we may call the rhetoric of the centre. What most disturbs Cowling is that someone so determinedly, in Cowling's terms, from the periphery of British cultural and academic life should come to occupy a central position in national cultural life. 'In this movement,' writes Cowling, the movement we we now know as the New Left,

Mr Williams has a central place - not just because of what he is saying, but because he covers his Leavite (sic) refurbishing of Marx's and Rousseau's political slogans with an academic solemnity which in England the liberal mind can seldom resist (547).

Cowling's review, and its appearance in the Cambridge Review at the very moment of Williams's return to Cambridge, signals some of the real vehemence with which 'the Establishment' responded both to Williams and to the issues raised by the New Left. In particular, Cowling remarked on one central aspect of Williams's enterprise, rejecting with disdain the very motivation of Williams's work: '[I]t should not be imagined', he sniffs in conclusion, 'that it is the function of an English scholar to engage in social criticism.' (548). With this pronouncement, Cowling sought to confine literary studies to the very dimension of apolitical professionalism from which Williams was trying to free it.

Cowling was not alone in seeing Culture and Society as one of the first books to articulate the concerns of the New Left. 1956 is usually seen as the crucial year. The vicious crushing of the Hungarian Revolt by Soviet tanks brought an end to hopes of the internal transformation of socialism in the East, despite Stalin's death in 1953, while the British and French invasion of the Suez canal zone similarly tore through any illusions concerning the equally implacable rapaciousness of Western capitalist interests,

despite the much touted 'end of imperialism' and the partial

gains, in Britain, of the Welfare state. Within a year, the Communist Party of Great Britain had lost a third of its membership and many people on the left felt the need for a new direction, one which could reject both the tired dogma of the CP and the new liberal rhetoric.¹⁴

The founding of Universities and Left Review and The New Reasoner, the publication of Norman Mackenzie's Conviction revealed the need for a new socialist alignment, one which could challenge and go beyond the Stalinist heritage, and at the same time question the complacency induced by the new Welfare state policies and the extraordinary period of near full employment and zero inflation. A new attempt at synthesis was provided by the focus on the centre of Williams's concerns since the late forties - the idea of culture. In a recent retrospective account, Stuart Hall offers three motives for this particular intellectual and political investment by the New Left in culture:

First, because it was in the cultural and ideological domain that social change appeared to be making itself most dramatically visible. Second, because the cultural dimension seemed to us not a secondary, but a constitutive dimension of society. (This reflects part of the New Left's long-standing quarrel with the reductionism and economism of the base-superstructure metaphor.) Third, because the discourse of culture seemed to us fundamentally necessary to any language in which socialism could be redescribed. The New Left

therefore took the first faltering steps of putting questions of cultural analysis and cultural politics at the centre of its politics. (Hall 1989a: 25-6)

Not surprisingly, Hall picks out Williams as the trailbreaker: 'No one expressed the fundamental and constitutive character of this argument for and within the New Left more profoundly than Raymond Williams' (1989a: 27).¹⁵

Nor is this simply a view afforded by hindsight. The publication - and attendant public attention and acclaim - of Culture and Society 1780-1950 in 1958, followed by the related essays of The Long Revolution in 1961, and of Communications in 1962 brought an end to at least one dimension of Williams's isolation. From that point onwards, Williams was not only a central figure for Britain's New Left, but also that rare figure in British intellectual life: a public intellectual, enjoying a wide measure of respect from and access to Britain's mass media, writing for daily newspapers and broadcasting for the radio. For Labour politician Richard Crossman, The Long Revolution was 'the first theoretical exposition of the new socialism'; not to have read Culture and Society was to brand oneself 'the intellectual equivalent of a square.'¹⁶

The Great Debate

But if Culture and Society 1780-1950 should certainly be

recognised as a manifesto for the New Left, and situated as a key

work of the post '56 realignment, it is still necessary to go a step further, and to remember that the book itself began as a project as far back as the late 1940s. Culture and Society needs to be read both in terms of the continuity of Williams's intellectual development, his ongoing struggle with literary studies and Marxist analysis, as well as his response to specific debates. If the New Left found much of interest in his idea of culture, we must not forget that this idea was itself the product of Williams's own particular interests. One dimension of assessment which has been largely neglected is that provided by the general conservative backlash against the extension of working-class education heralded by the Beveridge Report of 1942 and inaugurated by the Education Act of 1944.

According to the terms of this Act, secondary education was now extended to cover all children up to the age of fifteen, and each child had a chance of going to grammar school and then on to university if they passed the crucial hurdle of a general examination at the age of eleven. The results of these changes were, in fact, to be only a marginal increase in the number of working-class children at universities. Nonetheless, the very possibility of increased access to higher education was perceived by some as threatening.

T.S. Eliot, the unlikely hero of Drama from Ibsen to Eliot, was quick to respond to what he and others perceived as a major threat

to the status quo. In a series of essays and lectures composed between 1943 and 1948, Eliot weighed in against the egalitarian impulse of the Beveridge Report and the new Education Act.17 'Equality of opportunity' wrote Eliot, 'is "Jacobinism in education"'; and went on to assert that:

the ideal of a uniform system such that no one capable of receiving higher education could fail to get it, leads imperceptibly to the education of too many people, and consequently to the lowering of standards to whatever this swollen number of candidates is able to reach. (Eliot [1948]: 100-101)

The reactionary panic is clear from the confusion of Eliot's language. The initial idea is that those 'capable of receiving higher education' should have a right to it; but somehow these capable students suddenly mutate into 'a swollen number of candidates'. Though he is forced to qualify that this ugly swelling takes place 'imperceptibly', he insists that this unperceivable and unjustified swelling must necessarily lead to a 'lowering of standards'. With arguments such as these at work, it is hardly surprising that Eliot's Notes towards the Definition of Culture (1948) figures as the work which provided the 'initial impetus' for Culture and Society. Williams saw it as one of the first to articulate the reactionary appropriation of the idea of culture as the Cold War settled in (Williams 1979: 97).

Williams's careful response to Eliot is fully documented in Culture and Society - and, less visibly but more acutely, in the silent revisions in his studies of drama, with their removal of Eliot and promotion of Brecht. At the same time, and of particular concern to Williams as a tutor in the WEA, were the arguments in and around the related notions of adult and workers' education in the post-war period, known by its participants as the 'Great Debate'.¹⁸

The extraordinary shift in social sensibility as Britain recovered from the rigours of the Second World War, moved towards almost full employment and zero inflation, and began to feel the effects of the implementation of welfare state policy, had the paradoxical effect of diluting progressive political thought. J.F.C. Harrison, examining the social forces at work in the shifts in WEA policy, hit the nail bang on the head:

The problem for the WEA comes primarily not from within but from without - from a new social environment and from new developments in the world of adult education. Without suggesting that we are now living in a new world, it is nevertheless clear that a full employment welfare state has begun to create new social attitudes which make obsolete many approaches based on pre-war suppositions and data. (Raybould 1959: 10)

In other words, any concern with the politics of class was seen as inappropriate in the 'full employment welfare state'. For Harrison as for others, the very centre of the WEA movement - the figure of the working adult seeking a politically stimulating education - was no longer a valid one: 'the whole concept of the manual worker,' he argued, and

the whole approach implied in the idea of the working-class movement no longer means what they once did. They are part of a world which is passing away. (16)19

S. G. Raybould, Director of Extra Mural Studies at Leeds University and Vice-Principal of the WEA from 1949 to 1957 was a key figure in the whole debate. In a series of works published between 1947 and 1951 Raybould argued - against figures such as G.D.H. Cole and Robert Peers - that the crucial question for adult education was not that of offering a general cultural and political education, but the attainment of 'university standards' in adult education classes.²⁰ A central feature of Raybould's own arguments for raising the standard of adult education to university level was the same apparent disappearance of the worker as Harrison had noted. In The English Universities and Adult Education, Raybould argued the

urgent need for fresh thinking about the nature and purpose of adult education...It [the impulse to form the WEA] was an impulse born of the situation, educational, political, and

economic, of working-class people at the beginning of the century, and was expressed in the phrase 'education for social and industrial emancipation'. That impulse has not spent its force, but it is less compelling than it was. (Raybould 1951: 41)

Certainly less compelling enough for Raybould to argue for the redefinition of adult education away from the extra-mural classes for working-class students and towards the provision of university education for the middle-classes.

It is then in these debates in and around adult education that one of Williams's central interests - in what has come to be known as 'historical semantics' which is so central to the whole method and intention of Culture and Society - first began to take shape as he made his own contributions to the Great Debate about the future of Adult Education in a number of essays for The Highway. For Williams and others the Adult Education movement had seemed an important opportunity for providing working-class people with the elements of a broadly political education. In this, they were following the original impetus of the movement.

Albert Mansbridge, in the inaugural speech of the Institute for Adult Education, had, on May 28 1921, asserted that

[b]y the foundation of the Institute it is hoped to create a widespread public opinion which shall ultimately win for adult

education its rightful place in the national system...essentially it will be an instrument of research and propaganda. (Cited in Hutchinson 1971: 10)

Similarly, R.H. Tawney in his address to the WEA, published in The Highway in 1934, had argued:

It is to serve the working class movement in the way proper to an educational body, not by propaganda, but by offering its members the educational opportunities which are one condition of its progress, and by creating a climate of public opinion impatient of educational privilege and determined to end it. (Tawney 1934: 69)

It was a harsh historical irony for Williams and at least some of his fellows that just at the moment when this climate came into existence - with the postwar Labour government and the boom in adult education numbers - that the directly political aims of the movement were to be successfully challenged by Raybould and others in the name of standards.²¹ Raybould's reforms threatened to remove the very raison-d'être for socialists to work at all in adult education rather than in the university system. As Williams recollected in his Tony Maclean Memorial lecture of 1983:

the impulse to Adult Education was not only a matter of remedying deficit, making up for inadequate educational resources in the wider society, nor only a case of meeting new

needs of the society, though these things contributed. The deepest impulse was the desire to make learning part of the process of social change itself (Williams 1989c: 158).

Nothing better illustrates that impulse to make learning a part of the force of social change than the central arguments in, and structure of, Culture and Society itself, and the related studies of The Long Revolution.

In Politics and Letters, Williams noted the ways in which he was able to move away from traditional canonical concerns of the university in his WEA classes: 'There seemed little point in teaching the writing of essays' he recollected; 'I taught the writing of reports, minutes, memoranda, and committee speaking and oral reports - skills relevant to their work' (Williams 1979: 78). But more important than this simple question of relevant skills, was the challenge to the founding notions of culture implicit in the usual ideas of the curriculum as a whole. It was in one of the essays where Williams argued for a form of what we might call a critical literacy that he articulated a question which we can now read as absolutely crucial for our understanding of the impetus of Culture and Society, and beyond that, to the related emergence of cultural studies. In 'The Teaching of Public Expression', he issued the following challenge:

Does one impose on a social class that is growing in power the syllabus of an older culture; or does one seek means of releasing and enriching the life-experience which the rising class brings with it? If the latter, as I choose, then the WEA has a lot of its thinking in front of it. (Williams 1953b: 248)

With Culture and Society, Williams sought both to examine that 'syllabus of an older culture' and the 'life-experience' of the 'rising class' in an all out attack on the reactionary appropriation of the idea of culture as it was being defined by the forces for a 'minority civilisation' in the institution of academic literary studies, and in the new definitions of adult education promulgated by Raybould and his followers.

In Eagleton's judgement, Culture and Society is an 'idealist and academicist project' (1976: 25); but it is important to recognise that this is a political judgement held from a distinctive Althusserian position on the meaning of intellectual activism. In Williams's terms, Culture and Society was certainly not to be seen as merely an academic history of cultural thought. Culture and Society was a strategic response, written from within the imperatives of the adult education movement, to the pressing debates in what he was beginning to understand not just as the politics of culture and education, but as cultural politics tout court. This politics took place at the very level of meaning and was embodied in the debates about the continued relevance of words

such as 'worker' and 'manual worker', as well as in the very idea of culture itself.

The Idea of Culture

Culture and Society begins with an outline of dates - the years in which the writers discussed in the book reached the age of twenty five. For Edmund Burke, that was the year 1754; for Christopher Caudwell it was 1932. Many readers would find the list more complete if it were to add that Raymond Williams was himself twenty-five in 1946. For the purpose in writing the book was always to add to the tradition and never simply to describe it. So it is that the Conclusion to Culture and Society 1780-1950 represents Williams's 'own statement...an attempt to extend [the tradition] in the direction of certain meanings and values' (Williams 1958: xix); it is a 'personal conclusion' (297).

1946 had seen the founding of Politics and Letters; while 1950 - the terminal year of the study - was the year in which Williams began work on the book, originally to be called The Idea of Culture. In the Foreword to Culture and Society, Williams describes the central aim of the journal as the attempt 'to enquire into and where possible reinterpret this tradition, which the word "culture" describes in terms of the experience of our generation' (vii) - that is, the generation of those who were in their mid-twenties at the end of the war. Though Culture and

Society appealed because of its apparently effortless contemporaneity, and its articulation of the central concerns of the New Left, we need also to recognise the fact that it represented the culmination of work begun in the 1940s: it represented a breakout from the tight place of Williams's intellectual and political predicament.

The preliminary work for the book was done in the Adult Education classes which Williams taught on the idea of culture from 1949, and this was prompted in the first instance by the publication of Eliot's Notes Towards the Definition of Culture in 1948. The first writers under discussion were Eliot, Leavis, Clive Bell and Matthew Arnold, with Bell's Civilization - just republished in 1947 - serving as a particular source of aggravation.²² By 1953 he had amassed enough material to publish 'The Idea of Culture' in F.W. Bateson's new journal Essays in Criticism. Under Bateson's editorship, the journal sought to integrate more cogently than Scrutiny had been able historical with practical critical analysis. This essay, with its attention to and insistence on 'the intimate and complex relations between ideas and the other products of man's life in society', clearly fitted this general rubric, and Williams's concern to argue against the ahistorical abstraction associated with the Scrutiny approach, would have been particularly welcome. '[W]e need a more than ordinary awareness of that pressure of active and general life which is misrepresented entirely by description as

'background'. There are are no backgrounds in society; there are only relations of acts and forces' (Williams 1953a: 245).

'The Idea of Culture' was originally intended as the introduction to the book of the same name, and in a final footnote Williams laid out the main themes of what was to become, over the next three years, Culture and Society 1780-1950:

It is argued that in an industrial society the problem [theories and ideas of culture] became essentially new, both in content and expression, and the consequent revaluation of the relevant work of Arnold, Ruskin, Morris, Eliot, Read, the English Marxists, and some others, differs from the traditional estimate. The book will include also an estimate of the effect of the abstract idea of culture on the theory and practice of literary criticism, with particular reference to the issue of tradition, and to the various ways in which the 'standard of perfection' has been critically expressed or assumed. (Williams 1953a: 266)

Though the Leavisite keyword 'revaluation' is used here, it is used to issue a direct challenge to the orthodox view of cultural history at work in English studies. The focus is not, as it had been ad nauseam since Eliot's famous pronouncement of 1921, the 'dissociation of sensibility' which had somehow 'set in' during the seventeenth century; but the industrial revolution of the nineteenth. 23 In so doing, Williams will also address the

background to the history of literary criticism itself, a history whose values underlie the current debates regarding adult education. In other words, though the book hit the spot as a New Left manifesto on its publication in 1958, we should not forget that it was some eight years in the making and that Williams's starting-points were in the theory and practice of literary criticism, and the related debates in adult education where the idea of standards had become crucial.

In the essay, Williams argues that the word culture is taking on an important new sense. A more neutral term than civilization, it is now used to refer to the 'whole way of life' of a society and corresponds to 'the strong tendency to wish to study societies as wholes' characteristic of both Marxism and anthropology. For older critics such as Ruskin and Arnold, as well as for contemporaries like Eliot and Leavis, the idea of culture enables the critic to do more than just make particular judgements of individual works of art. It enables and empowers the critic to make an evaluation of a society's 'whole way of life', producing a fully cultural criticism which goes beyond the merely aesthetic. This new work forms a 'distinctive tradition of influential social thinking, by men who took their experience of the arts as a starting point...the key word in these inquiries... has been culture' (Williams 1953a: 240).

This idea of culture as a response to and not just a reflection of change was also crucial to Williams's own attempt at distancing

himself from what he understood as the cruder models of Marxist interpretation familiar from his undergraduate years. In this developing model of an active, reactive and finally proactive culture, the key idea is that of tradition, and tradition is deeply bound up with the living language. 'The history of a word' writes Williams

is in the series of meanings which a dictionary defines; the relevance of a word in in common language. The dictionary indicates a contemporary scheme of the past; the active word, in speech or in writing, indicates all that has become present. To distinguish the interaction is to distinguish a tradition - a mode of history; and then in experience we set a value on the tradition - a mode of criticism. The continuing process, and the consequent decisions, are then the matter of action in society. (242)

If the relevance of words like 'worker' and 'manual worker' were being challenged in the WEA and beyond, it needed the resources of history and criticism to answer that challenge. He distinguished three main areas of investigation:

They are, first, the idea of a standard of perfection, ground for ultimate valuation; second, the new conceptions of art, and of the artist, and the consequent re-definition of their relation to the rest of society; and, third, the process of

development of Cultivation into Culture, with reference to the changing relation between social classes. (245)

He was addressing, in other words, the pressing issues in and around the related questions of education and adult education, in the context of argument provided by English studies and such works as Q.D. Leavis's Fiction and the Reading Public (1932). As Patrick Parrinder rightly observed, Culture and Society tends to be read in a 'highly selective' way, 'the result of its having earned a place on so many student booklists'; but it needs to be read for the argument it articulates as a whole (Parrinder 1987a: 58).

Williams's central aim is to examine the shifts in the word culture through the nineteenth to the twentieth century. In so doing, he divides his history of the tradition into three periods. First, from Burke and Cobbett through Carlyle and the 1840s novelists to Ruskin and Morris; second, the period from 1880 to 1914 which he describes as 'a kind of interregnum' (Williams [1958] : 161); and third, a range of twentieth century 'opinions' from Lawrence through Tawney, Eliot, Richards and Leavis, through the work of the thirties Marxists, and to Orwell, and then to Williams's own Conclusion. The purpose of this 'clarification' of the tradition is to authorise and empower a number of arguments concerning the deployment of the idea of culture now. The single most important proposition put forward by the book as a whole is that most contested by his conservative

reviewers: the argument that trade unions are the most important cultural creation of the working-classes. In this way, Williams answered the profoundly critical implications of his questions in his earlier Public Speaking essay. The final end of the culture as a whole way of life argument came to no less than refusing the centrality of what was structurally an expression of middle or upper class culture, culture as art.

It is this provocative redefinition of culture which fitted so well with the thinking of the New Left, and explains how Culture and Society is often seen as the starting-point for 'cultural studies', since cultural studies in one definition at least, find their identity in the refusal of the distinction between high and low culture which literary studies had established in its founding gesture of the 1920s.

In all of this, Williams saw the historical and critical analysis of what he was later to call 'keywords' as crucial. 'The history of a word', he writes

is in the series of meanings which a dictionary defines; the relevance of a word in in common language. The dictionary indicates a contemporary scheme of the past; the active word, in speech or in writing, indicates all that has become present. To distinguish the interaction is to distinguish a tradition - a mode of history; and then in experience we set a value on the tradition - a mode of criticism. The continuing process, and

the consequent decisions, are then the matter of action in society. (Williams 1953a: 242)

Language was inherently political, the very stuff of ideology, and the promised book was to be a composite work which brought together the two modes of history and criticism in order to make an ideological response, to participate in that 'action in society.' To write in this composite mode is necessarily to participate in the tradition of which one writes, to add oneself to the list, to speak for one's own generation. For Williams, such a study promised to unite the professional and the political impulses whose sundering had so troubled him throughout the Politics and Letters period. With Culture and Society he at last managed to break out of the tight place of the 1940s, and it is not surprising that he later recorded the sense of relief with which he completed the project in 1956:

I have never known a book which more completely seemed to close itself with the last page that was written. I had the strongest sense I have ever experienced that now it was done, I was in a quite new position and could move on. (Williams 1979: 109)

In this sense, we may wish to read Williams's magisterial and even-handed tone as more than the expression of the liberal ideal of academic objectivity; it works as a part of the necessary machinery for generating the academic authority with which

he wished to strengthen his oppositional political objectives, his response to the right-wing appropriation of the idea of culture. Culture and Society is best seen as the polemical and oppositional work which it is, the first major expression of Williams's long struggle with 'official English culture' (Williams 1979: 316). Its very success in founding the 'culture and society tradition' has necessarily blinded us to its own real achievements, while opening the way to many criticisms of the gaps in the book's idea of the 'tradition'. 23

The Tradition

Williams's success lies first of all in the establishment of the very idea of there being a culture and society tradition, the existence of a distinctly British discourse on culture which broadly opposed the tendencies of the new industrial society. In the Preface, he outlines his main argument as follows:

The organizing principle of this book is the discovery that the idea of culture, and the word itself in its general modern uses, came into English thinking in the period which we commonly describe as that of the Industrial revolution. The book is an attempt to show how and why this happened, and to follow the idea through to our own day. It thus becomes an account and an interpretation of our responses in thought and feeling to the changes in English society since the late eighteenth century. Only in such a context can our use of the

word 'culture', and the issues to which the word refers, be adequately understood. (Williams [1958a]: iii)

The word 'culture', then, embodies a whole social and political history in terms of a history of the responses, in the changing vocabulary of the nation, to the forces of industrialisation and democratisation. The history of the complex uses of a word like 'culture' serves as an index to thinking on these issues, and, argues Williams, to thinking of a certain kind: the resistance to the forces of capitalism, which he describes in the following terms:

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. ([1958a]: xviii)

This tradition of thought on and around the word 'culture' is one which resists that 'driven impetus of a new kind of society' which the Marxists would call capitalist; and one of its major means of resistance is through an assessment of society as a whole. In a major sense, what Williams is seeking to achieve is a

framing of Cambridge English in a wider historical debate. In so doing, he is able to empower what is, implicitly at least, his own Utopian view of the discipline of literary studies, what it can achieve in the present time apart from bemoaning the loss of the notorious 'organic society' and the emergence of mass culture.

In theoretical terms, this is done through an extraordinary focus on the history of these 'key words'. The central claim is then the following:

There is in fact a general pattern of change in these words, and this can be used as a special kind of map by which it is possible to look again at those changes in life and thought to which the changes in language evidently refer. ([1958a], xiii)

Words such as industry, democracy, class, art and culture are the key words for his 'account and interpretation' since the 'changes in their use, at this critical period, bear witness to a general change in our characteristic ways of thinking about our common life' (xiii). And 'culture' is the key word of all key words: 'For what I see in the history of the word, in its structure of meanings, is a wide and general movement in thought and feeling' (xvii-xviii). In this semantic history, Williams reveals some of the powerful presuppositions underlying his general methodological approach:

My terms of reference are not only to distinguish the meanings, but to relate them to their sources and effects. I shall try to do this by examining, not a series of abstracted problems, but a series of statements by individuals. It is not only that, by temperament and training, I find more meaning in this kind of personally verified statement than in a system of significant abstractions. It is also that, in a theme of this kind, I feel myself committed to the study of actual language: that is to say, to the words and sequences of words which particular men and women have used in trying to give meaning to their experience... The framework of the enquiry is general, but the method, in detail, is the study of actual individual statements and contributions. (xix)

The very terms 'statements and contributions' is important here, as is the emphasis on the actuality of language. It is as if the meaning of language depended in a large part on the experience of the individual filling the word with meaning in a 'personally verified statement' - of just the kind that this book itself is, and as is an often noted characteristic of Williams's work as a whole. The book as a whole will not then be just an academic and historical survey; the Conclusion will 'offer my own statement on an aspect of this common experience: not indeed as a verdict on the tradition, but as an attempt to extend it in the direction of certain meanings and values' (xix).

Indeed, by the end of the book, through the processes of argument and persuasion which structure it as a whole, Williams is able to sum up his case with convincing authority:

The development of the idea of culture has, throughout, been a criticism of what has been called the bourgeois idea of society. The contributors to its meaning have started from widely different positions, and have reached widely various attachments and loyalties. But they have been alike in this, that they have been unable to think of society as a merely neutral area, or as an abstract regulating mechanism. The stress has fallen on the positive function of society, on the fact that the values of individual men are rooted in society, and on the need to think and feel in these common terms. This was, indeed, a profound and necessary response to the disintegrating pressures which were faced. (328)

And this authority is turned to good account in the arguments put forward in the Conclusion. But before we examine these, let us briefly examine the basic line of argument which the book as a whole puts forward.

With a casual disdain for the usual divisions of cultural political analysis, Williams establishes the beginnings of the major nineteenth century tradition in the work of two figures whose work usually represents the oppositions between conservative and radical thinking, Edmund Burke, vociferous opponent of the

French Revolution, and William Cobbett, champion of the labouring classes.²⁴ It was they who started 'traditions of criticism of the new democracy and the new industrialism ... traditions which in the middle of the twentieth century are still active and important' (4). This same tradition continued through the writings of Robert Southey, Robert Owen and the Romantic poets, with Wordsworth providing one of the seminal statements of the new idea of culture as the

"embodied spirit of a People", the true standard of excellence...the court of appeal in which real values were determined, usually in opposition to the "factitious" values thrown up by the market and similar operations of society.

(34)

Following Wordsworth, Coleridge, in his On the Constitution of Church and State (1830), 'worked out this idea of Culture, the court of appeal to which all social arrangements must submit' (61). Mill, Bentham, Carlyle, Newman, Arnold, and the novelists of the 1840s all made their own contributions to the tradition; and Pugin, Ruskin and Morris all wrote persuasively in support of the central idea 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. (130)

Williams found little of interest in the second phase of the tradition (from around 1880 through to 1914). He prefaces Part II of the book with the admission that 'we shall not find in [the major writers of the period] ...anything very new: a working-out, rather, of unfinished lines; a tentative redirection' (161-2). Consequently he offers only the briefest outlines of work by W.H. Mallock; Whistler, Wilde and Pater; or even of Gissing and Shaw. Part II closes with a brief assessment of the work of T.E. Hulme, whose work 'challenged the tradition at its roots' (190), but whose main importance Williams assigns as Hulme's influence on T.S. Eliot. Critics of Culture and Society are surely right to see this as the weakest part of the book as a whole (it is clearly the part where Williams himself is least engaged, least interested, and least knowledgeable), and point rightly to the implications of this blindness to what was, after all, the main period of Victorian imperial expansion. . . 25

Part III of the study focuses on the real origins of the project as it began in 1946. It examines the work of D.H. Lawrence, R.H. Tawney, T.S. Eliot, George Orwell, I.A. Richards and F.R. Leavis, as well as the British Marxist writers of the 1930s. We can see at work just what the project as a whole owed to the tradition of literary criticism, as well as to the particular debates at work within adult education. A great deal of the internal drama of the book is Williams's attempt to draw some support for his arguments from the leading figures of a discipline which in so many ways was actively hostile to the idea

of the participatory democracy which he invoked in the name of

furthering a 'common culture' - itself a phrase used by Eliot to describe an antithetical cultural and political order. The constitutive tension of the book is its turning of the tradition against some of its own preconceptions.^{2,6} As we shall see, the pivot of the argument can be found in the idea of the masses.

It is this tension which explains what otherwise seems an oddly unmotivated set of remarks concerning literacy. Williams writes with disdain of the 'ready-made historical thesis' (306) which argues that the 1870 Education Act brought a new mass-reading public into being, and that this public was 'literate but untrained in reading, low in taste and habit'. This public was then the harbinger of the new crude popular culture of the twentieth century, the culture of radio, movies, and the gutter press. Against this, the founding rhetoric of Cambridge English, Williams argues long and hard. The new institutions of popular culture were never produced, he insists, 'by the working people themselves', and to identify them with the actual wishes and desires of the working class is deeply mistaken. What needs to be identified instead are the motives and ideology of the producers of the new mass media. In any case, he writes, 'the contemporary historians of popular culture have tended to concentrate on what is bad and to neglect what is good' (308). This selectivity is in turn reinforced by a certain déformation professionnelle: 'in judging a culture, it is not enough to concentrate on habits which

coincide with those of the observer' he argues:

To the highly literate observer there is always a temptation to assume that reading plays as large a part in the lives of most people as it does in his own....To the degree that he acquires a substantial proportion of his ideas and feelings from what he reads he will assume, again wrongly, that the ideas and feelings of the majority will be similarly conditioned. But, for good or ill, the majority of people do not yet give reading this importance in their lives; their ideas and feelings are, to a large extent, still moulded by a wider and more complex pattern of social and family life. There is an evident danger of delusion, to the highly literate person, if he supposes that he can judge the quality of general living by primary reference to the reading artifacts.

(ibid.: 308-9)

He notes and rejects the contempt which the highly literate tend to have for other intelligent creative activities, general skills such as gardening, metalwork and carpentry, and active politics. 'The contempt for many of these activities, which is always latent in the highly literate, is a mark of the observer's limits, not those of the activities themselves' he insists (309).

It is in these arguments that Williams reveals both his deep connection to literary criticism, and the distance he wishes to take from it. For at the very moment when he is arguing for the

relevance of the culture and society tradition to contemporary arguments in favour of democracy, he was arguing against the general case put forward by the literary critics, and in particular by I.A. Richards and F.R. Leavis, the two literary critics covered in the book, and rightly seen as the formative figures in the discipline of English studies in Britain; and against, in particular, the implications of Q.D. Leavis's study, *Fiction and the Reading Public*, the most sustained attempt to put historical flesh on the bones of Leavis's assertions.²⁷

The Masses

Central to the urgency of much literary critical thought, was a certain representation of 'the masses' which Williams turns to in the Conclusion to the book.²⁸ Here he argues that all the connotations of 'mob' are to be found at work in most compounds of masses:

masses was a new word for mob, and the traditional characteristics of the mob were retained in its significance: gullibility, fickleness, herd-prejudice, lowness of taste and habit. The masses, on this evidence, formed the perpetual threat to culture. Mass-thinking, mass-suggestion, mass-prejudice would threaten to swamp considered individual thinking and feeling. Even democracy, which had both a classical and a liberal reputation, would lose its savour in becoming mass-democracy.

(Williams [1958]: 298)

He takes a hard line here, and points out that the term mass democracy can either be used as 'an observation or a prejudice' (298). As an observation, it may refer to the fact that the complex reality of twentieth century democracy in Britain is very different from what its nineteenth century partisans could have imagined, and that the new mass media do have a powerful shaping effect on that reality. But the everyday use of the term is hardly ever in this sense. Instead, it is used in almost all cases in the deeply prejudicial way which is articulated in the following terms:

Democracy, as in England we have interpreted it, is majority rule. The means to this, in representation and freedom of expression, are generally approved. But, with universal suffrage, majority rule will, if we believe in the existence of the masses, be mass-rule. Further, if the masses are, essentially, the mob, democracy will be mob-rule. This will hardly be good government, or a good society; it will, rather, be the rule of lowness or mediocrity. At this point, which it is evidently very satisfying to some thinkers to reach, it is necessary to ask again: who are the masses?

(ibid.: 298-99)

For Williams, the real answer to this question is that the masses are the working people of England:

But if this is so, it is clear that what is in question is not only gullibility, or lowness of taste and habit. It is also, from the open record, the declared intention of the working people to alter society, in many of its aspects, in ways which those to whom the franchise was formerly restricted deeply disapprove. It seems to me, when this is considered, that what is being questioned is not mass-democracy, but democracy. If a majority can be achieved in favour of these changes, the democratic criterion is satisfied. But if you disapprove of the changes you can, it seems, avoid open opposition to democracy as such by inventing a new category, mass-democracy, which is not such a good thing at all.

(ibid.: 299)

'The submerged opposite', he argues 'is class-democracy, where democracy will merely describe the processes by which a ruling class conducts its business of ruling' (299).

It is from this discussion - the pivotal argument of the whole book - that Williams goes on to make his most celebrated and most contentious point: the difficulty he has with 'the whole concept of masses'. 'We have to return the meanings to experience', he argues in a characteristic formulation:

Our normal public conception of an individual person, for example, is 'the man in the street'. But nobody feels himself to be only the man in the street; we all know much more about ourselves than that. The man in the street is a collective

image, but we know, all the time, our own difference from him. It is the same with 'the public', which includes us, but yet is not us. 'Masses' is a little more complicated, yet similar. I do not think of my relatives, friends, neighbours, colleagues, acquaintances, as masses; we none of us can or do. The masses are always the others, whom we don't know, and can't know. Yet now, in our kind of society, we see these others regularly, in their myriad variations; stand, physically, beside them. They are here, and we are here with them. And that we are with them is of course the whole point. To other people, we also are masses. Masses are other people. (299-300)

'There are in fact no masses' he asserts; 'there are only ways of seeing people as masses' (300). And it is just these ways of seeing, the formulae by which we may conveniently interpret others, 'for the purposes of cultural or political exploitation' that we need to consider in analysis. His central point can be understood as the urging of a critical literacy which will untie the knots of representation through which the empirical data of the facts of the world are put forward for social action. With this central point, Williams deconstructed, if we may use one of the senses of Derrida's labile term, the dominant system of representation which had emerged, perhaps most vividly in the 1930s.²⁹ The isolation experienced by Williams was not a social one, but an intellectual one - one described best, perhaps, in Althusser's phrase, as a 'theoretical solitude'. And it is this

which comes through most strongly in the turn he gives to the idea of working class culture.

For Williams writes against both Marxist and reactionary conceptions of culture, which consider it either as 'the inheritance of the rising class', or call for its defence 'against new and destructive forces' (319). Working-class culture, writes Williams, has nothing to do with 'the small amount of "proletarian" writing and art which exists' (320). It needs to be understood in terms of the implications of the idea of culture as a 'whole way of life'. It then refers not only to intellectual and imaginative work, or even to housing, dress, and modes of leisure. 'Industrial production tends to produce uniformity in such matters,' he writes 'but the vital distinction lies at another level....The crucial distinction is between alternative ideas of the nature of social relationship' (325). First, there is the bourgeois understanding of social relationship as individualism: 'an idea of society as a neutral area within which each individual is free to pursue his own development and his own advantage as a natural right', though this idea is modified in practice by idea of service to the community. The working class idea and practice of social relationship is different. It is above all 'an idea which, whether it is called communism, socialism or cooperation, regards society neither as a neutral area nor as protective, but as a positive means for all kinds of development, including individual development' (326).

Once this is grasped, it becomes easier to see that working class culture is not a matter of proletarian art, but rather the practice of 'the collective idea' itself (327). It is the idea of solidarity versus the idea of service which, argues Williams, always serves in practice 'to maintain the status quo' (330). 'We may now see what is properly meant by 'working-class culture', he writes:

It is not proletarian art, or council houses, or a particular use of languages; it is, rather, the basic collective idea, and the institutions, manners, habits of thought and intentions which proceed from this....The working class, because of its position, has not, since the Industrial Revolution, produced a culture in the narrower sense. The culture which it has produced, and which it is important to recognize, is the collective democratic institution, whether in the trade unions, the cooperative movement or a political party. Working-class culture, in the stage through which it has been passing, is primarily social (in that it has created institutions) rather than individual (in particular intellectual or imaginative work). When it is considered in context, it can be seen as a very remarkable creative achievement. (327)

With this idea of culture as something like a Wittgensteinian ^{the senses of} form of life' and ^{the} ~~the~~ Marxist idea of ideology, rather than a matter of aesthetic taste, Williams could do little more than to underline the differences which separated him from a Gregor and a

Pittock. In fact, there was no common ground between them: Culture and Society had deconstructed it. In the end he could only insist that 'However difficult it may be to understand in detail, art is part of the whole way of life, and the individual artist has behind him and within him an important body of social experience without which he could not even begin'. And he looks forward to the central arguments of The Long Revolution to further substantiate his case:

Communication as a whole is a creative activity, in the sense that (as the neurologists are now showing) it is by learning to perceive, to describe and to communicate description to others that we create the common reality of our lives. Institutions are best seen as forms of communication, embodying a particular version of reality and a particular response to it. Art is one of the most important of these, and its biological, social and personal functions can be usefully compared with those of other kinds of institution. For there are no 'entirely different order(s), economic, political - what you will'; there is one lived reality, within which we respond and act in varying forms. (435)

The Long Revolution

There is no space here for a thorough consideration of the essays which make up The Long Revolution, nor for anything like a full account of its critical reception.³⁰ In Part One of the

book, Williams examines a number of broad theoretical questions - the nature of creativity, the idea of culture, the relations between individuals and societies, and the determining effects on our thinking of the images of society we hold. Part Two presents in brief a sketch of the social histories of education, the reading public, the popular press, Standard English, English writers, Dramatic Forms, and an overview of the contemporary novel. And the final part of the book presents an analysis of 'Britain in the 1960s', drawing on the insights generated through the theoretical and historical analysis of the previous sections.

It is nonetheless worthwhile, I think, to briefly consider some of the ways in which the book as a whole picks up and amplifies some of the main arguments underlying Culture and Society. In particular, there is the increasing emphasis on the relations between culture and communication. In Culture and Society, it was argued that communication was not to be understood only as transmission, as it was understood in the dominative mode of mass-communication, 'a minority exploiting a majority' (314); communication was also 'reception and response' (313).³¹ If a 'common culture' is to be understood as 'a particular form of social relationship, at once the idea of natural growth and that of its tending' (337), then communication is the medium of that growth and tending, the substance of culture, the stake and the site of political growth and political conflict. As Williams put it, in the formulation to which Pittock for one took such exception:

In every problem we need hard, detailed inquiry and negotiation. Yet we are coming increasingly to realize that our vocabulary, the language we use to inquire into and negotiate our actions, is no secondary factor, but a practical and radical element in itself. To take a meaning from experience, and to try to make it active, is in fact our process of growth. (Williams [1958a]: 338)

It was this emphasis on the constitutive, rather than the merely reflective, ideas of culture and communication which formed the focus of the essays brought together in The Long Revolution in 1961. Looking back in 1980, in the course of a review of Rudolph Bahro's The Alternative in Eastern Europe (London: New Left Books 1978), Williams found Bahro's positions on the importance of cultural revolution to be very similar to his own arguments in and for the 'long revolution':

Bahro's emphasis is the common factor in the propositions of 'cultural revolution'. Consciousness is no longer the mere product of social being but is at once the condition of its practical existence and, further, one of its central productive forces. (Williams 1980: 256)

Indeed, the central argument of the essays which make up The Long Revolution as a whole is the insistence on what Williams terms the third revolution, the cultural revolution, take its

place alongside the more widely recognised democratic and industrial revolutions as driving forces in the history of the present. '[W]e must certainly see' he writes

the aspirations to extend the active process of learning, with the skills of literary and other advanced communication, to all people rather than to limited groups, as comparable in importance to the growth of democracy and the rise of scientific industry. (Williams [1961a]: 11)

In The Long Revolution Williams inverts the usual image of a crass modernity, and challenges the easy nostalgia for the apparent order of pre-democratic society. Williams does not see the present as a present decayed from the fullness of a past glory, exemplified in T.S. Eliot's writing, and in his assertion 'that our own period is one of decline; that the standards of culture are lower than they were fifty years ago; and that the evidences of this decline are visible in every department of human activity' (Eliot 1962: 19). He argues for the real vitality of the present, and against the structural distinctions of class, education and culture at work in the arguments of Eliot and others. The essays mix theory with history and ideological analysis into a complex critical literacy which challenges the received assumptions of much contemporary opinion. 'We do not solve', he writes,

the critical questions by understanding the history, but still an adequate sense of the history, as opposed to the ordinary functional myths, is the basis of any useful approach. (Williams [1961a]:236)

The essays in Part Two, in particular, question the idees reçues at work in the formation of the discipline of English studies, and reproduced as the orthodoxy of conservatism. 32 He points out how 'no lion of the new journalism would have had anything to teach eighteenth-century journalists in the matter of crudeness and vulgarity' (219) and notes how ironic it is 'to consider how many of the works for which we now honour the period [the seventeenth century] would have been condemned by substantial sections of opinion as evidence of the idleness and vulgarity of the times' (181). In 'The Growth of the Reading Public', in a conclusion drawn from his experiences in adult education, he writes how

the whole argument about 'cheap literature' has been compromised by its use as a form of class-distinction, whereas the real problem is always the relation between inexperience and the way it is met. (191)

In other words, Williams argues for the full recognition of the links between education and democracy, and against those, like Eliot, who set themselves against the extension of education. In the end, the only real aim for education is to meet 'what a member

146a

of an educated and participatory democracy needs' (169). In the ideological climate of the 1950s - and even more so in the neo-liberal nineties - this, in the bitter arguments over 'equal opportunity', entails facing

the really hard fact that we are now meeting this problem [the problem of the extension of education] in a particular way which serves in the end to magnify the differences ['in learning ability among all children'] and then pass them off as a natural order. (168)

Both The Long Revolution and Culture and Society were powerful responses to the post-1945 hardening of attitudes in politics and education. To write them, and to make a beginning, Williams had to distance himself from his own early influences, and to subject the orthodoxy of which they were a part to critical and historical analysis. No one summed up the achievement better than Edward Thompson in his review of The Long Revolution:

With a compromised tradition at his back, and with a broken vocabulary in his hands, he did the only thing that was left to him; he took over the vocabulary of his opponents, followed them into the heart of their own arguments, and fought them to a standstill in their own terms. (Thompson 1961: 27)¹³

This argument with 'official English culture' was to continue in the next phase of Williams's work on his return to Cambridge as a University lecturer in 1961.

Chapter Four -- Cambridge Criticism 1962-1973

The turbulent decade of the 1960s was an extremely active one for Williams, both as a public intellectual and as a professional academic. He gave his support to various activist groupings - the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, the Cambridge Left Forum, the Vietnam Solidarity Campaign, the National Convention of the Left and the consequent writing of the May Day Manifesto, the defence of Rudi Dutschke, and even participation in the Arts Council and canvassing for the Labour Party. At the same time, he continued his non-academic writing with the completion of his novel Second Generation in 1962, and the beginning of The Fight for Manod (published in 1979), plus the writing of three plays: Koba, never performed, but published as the third section of Modern Tragedy in 1966, A Letter from the Country (1966), and Public Enquiry (1967), both of which were shown on the BBC; as well as a constant flow of journalism, reviews, and a regular column on television for The Listener.¹ And Williams continued his usual process of self-correction, making significant revisions to his view of the history of drama with the revision and republication of Drama in Performance and the retitled Drama from Ibsen to Brecht, both in 1968, an important reassessment of the appeal and limitations of the work of George Orwell (1971), and edited Volume 2 of The Pelican Book of English Prose: From 1780 to the Present Day (1969).² For the sake of this study, it is necessary to narrow the focus of attention and assessment. This chapter concentrates

on his oppositional relations with his new institutional setting - his renewed contact with 'Cambridge English'; and with the development of his ongoing debate with Marxism.

In Williams's recollection of the events, it was on a Spring morning in 1961 that he opened a letter from the University of Cambridge to find that he had been appointed to a Lectureship in the English Faculty.³ Over the next two days other letters arrived explaining the situation and asking him whether he would accept such an appointment were it to be offered. Tired of the losing battles in Adult Education, he was glad to accept, and after the obligatory ordeal-by-dinner at High Table, was given a Fellowship at Jesus College which he took up in the summer of 1961. He was to remain a Fellow of the college until his death in 1988, though he had formally retired as then Professor of Drama in 1983. This chapter examines the renewal of Williams's contact with Cambridge English, and its particular, and particularly productive, frictions; as well as the continuation of his troubled dialogue with Marxism as he sought to respond to the telling criticisms made of Culture and Society and The Long Revolution by Victor Kiernan and E.P. Thompson.

In one of his two formal retirement lectures in 1983, Williams reviewed the history of his relations with Cambridge English. He closed the lecture with an emphasis on what he termed his own distance from it:

What there was not, however, because in any fully worked-out sense there never had been, was a 'Cambridge English'; a distinctive and coherent course and method of study. The Golden Age was golden only in its beginnings, its searchings, its open and freespeaking and for some years tolerant experimentation and enquiry. My own social and intellectual distance from it should not need emphasising. Indeed many friends have told me that I have never distanced myself enough, but they are wrong. The distance is entire, the intellectual conflicts absolute. My only community and inheritance in Cambridge is with some of the questions then posed and with the campaigning energy and seriousness that were brought to them. (Williams 1984: 190)

But distance and conflict both presuppose some common ground, some site of contested perspective. This was to be found in 'some of the questions then asked'. What were these questions, what were the terms of his renewed professional contact with Cambridge English? In Politics and Letters, he had claimed 'If you look at the implied relationships of nearly all the books I have written, I have been arguing with what I take to be official English culture' (1979: 316). For this we can read 'official English culture', in large part at least, as English culture as it was defined and disseminated by the Cambridge English Faculty.⁴ For, as Williams goes on to say, his Modern Tragedy (1966) was a reply to George Steiner's The Death of Tragedy (1961); The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence (1970) his riposte to Leavis's

seminal The Great Tradition (1948); while The Country and the City (1973) started life as a sharp reaction to a Special Paper in Part Two of the English Tripos on the Country House poem.⁵

At the same time, Williams's work continued, though somewhat obliquely, in its critical dialogue with Marxism. In response to a question concerning that obliquity, he gave the following response:

people on the left no longer intervene with the audience, or against the thinking, that I was intervening with and against. In a sense, the very power of the expanded Marxist tradition can supply a reason for renouncing what still seems to me the necessary engagement with established English culture. Why do I discuss a minor eighteenth-century poet in more detail than I do Marx? because this is where a really reactionary social consciousness is being continually reproduced, and to till your own alternative garden to it is not enough. In fact, it would be a trap for me. There would be a good many people in English cultural circles who would be delighted if I spent the rest of my time clearing up some questions of Marxist literary theory. I don't propose to give them the satisfaction. (1979: 317)

Nonetheless, despite this oblique response to Eagleton's criticisms, and the probings of the NLR team, the writings of this period continually interact with problems in Marxist theory, and Marxism and Literature, published in 1977, is nothing if not a

thorough attempt at settling accounts. In this chapter, we shall focus on both the oblique oppositional dialogue with Marxism as well as with the more direct critique of Cambridge English.

To be sure, Williams had already formulated some important objections to the methodology of Cambridge English, both in the early Reading and Criticism, where he criticised the foundations of Leavisite 'evaluation' through close-reading by attending to the pre-selective nature of passage selection, and again, in Culture and Society, where he developed this line of argument in relation to I.A. Richards.

He sums up the main elements of Richards's positions as follows: 'The experience of literature is thus a kind of training for general experience: a training, essentially, in that capacity for organization which is man's only profitable response to his altered and dangerous condition' (Williams [1958]: 249) - the new and dangerous condition of mass society and mass culture. Above all, he is critical of what he sees as the essential passivity inherent in Richards's definition of the reading experience. 'Great literature is indeed enriching, liberating and refining' he writes,

but man is always and everywhere more than a reader, has indeed to be a great deal else before he can even become an adequate reader; unless indeed he can persuade himself that literature, as an ideal sphere of heightened living, will under certain

cultural circumstances operate as a substitute. 'We shall then be thrown back...upon poetry. It is capable of saving us.' The very form of these sentences indicates the essential passivity which I find disquieting. (Williams [1958]: 251)

In conclusion, Williams argues that 'All that Richards has taught us about language and communication, and for which we acknowledge our debt, has to be reviewed'. For in the end, Richards remained a captive to the image of 'Aesthetic Man' which Richards had unknowingly inherited from his own opponents and predecessors: 'alone in a hostile environment, receiving and organizing his experience' (252). He was to argue against just this image of both reader and writer as passive and isolated in this next stage of writing. In particular, he was to question the embodiment of these tendencies in the figure of the observer, as exemplified in Orwell's work as 'the plain man who bumps into experience in an unmediated way and is simply telling us the truth about it' (Williams 1979: 385).⁶

Tragedy, Revolution and the Modern World

Williams sums up the agenda of Modern Tragedy in the following terms: 'We are not looking for a new universal meaning of tragedy. We are looking for the structure of tragedy in our own culture' (Williams [1966]: 62). This was, in fact, to be a double task: the criticism both of that 'official English culture', and its relentless search for universal meanings in literature, but also a

thinking through of the idea of political revolution itself. The two came powerfully together in the ways in which Cold War values were embodied in the official view of the 'universal' values of Tragedy.

It was hardly surprising that the English Faculty should expect a new lecturer with a recognised expertise in the history of drama to make a particular contribution to lecturing and teaching for the Tragedy Paper. The Tragedy Paper was taken by all final year students in English, who sat a three-hour written examination in which their knowledge of the history of tragic drama from the Greeks to Ibsen and Chekhov, through Seneca and Shakespeare, Medieval, Renaissance and Romantic, and through the nineteenth century to the present, was tested. It was and is one of the few papers to acknowledge anything like the existence of Comparative Literature (Williams's own undergraduate dissertation on Ibsen was allowed as a stand-in for the exam itself, in terms of the special arrangements for students returning from the war); and one of two compulsory papers in Finals - the other being, of course, Practical Criticism, the testing of skills in textual analysis.

Modern Tragedy grew out of the lectures Williams gave for the Tragedy Paper. 'It was never a book I had foreseen writing' he averred; rather it was 'a response to the shock of returning to Cambridge and encountering the course on tragedy there in a much more ideological form than it had been when I was a student...It was as if I went into the lecture room with the text of a chapter

from Drama from Ibsen to Eliot in front of me, and came out with the text of a chapter from Modern Tragedy.' The main difference between the two lay in the shift from the relatively technical address of the earlier work, its focus on dramatic conventions and dramatic performance, to something which was 'closer to ideological criticism.' (Williams 1979: 211) Modern Tragedy was above all a polemical work, addressed to the dominant ideology which Williams saw as produced and reproduced in the Cambridge English Tragedy paper.

Disconcerted to find that teaching for the paper had become, by 1961, a haven for a style of reactionary thinking and critical practice, Williams gave his first reaction in an essay published by New Left Review in 1962. In 'A Dialogue on Tragedy', he began to articulate the themes and ideas which were to achieve their final form with the publication of Modern Tragedy in 1966.

Dialogue

The 'Dialogue' brings together six voices, forming a spectrum of opinion stretched between the two opposing views of tragedy presented by Ridyear and Clark. While Ridyear's views are the closest to Williams's own, Clark's bear considerable resemblance to those of his Cambridge colleague, George Steiner, whose The Death of Tragedy he singled out as the main object of attack in his own work.⁷

The dialogue begins by articulating the differences between Ridyear and Clark. For Ridyear, the recent death of a friend is tragic; for Clark, a mere accident. Clark argues that because tragedy as a form excludes the category of accident, the use of the word 'tragic' to describe such a death is a mistake, a failure of discrimination. Ridyear questions this separation between literary form and ordinary living. Singer gives a watered down version of Clark's views; while Holt speaks more angrily and passionately than Ridyear.

Like Steiner, Clark argues that tragedy is impossible in a secular society ('When man is his own measure, or, worse, when the attributes of God are transferred to man or to life, you simply cannot have tragedy' (Williams 1962b: 26)); that modern tragedy is no more than 'the dwindling of tragedy to the problem play' (30); and holds to a belief in an unchanging human nature ('Contingencies change. Secondary characteristics change. The essential human condition does not change' (32)). Central to these views is the rejection of the political as proper to tragedy. While Ridyear insists that the case of Stalin represents an instance of genuine tragedy, Clark replies 'Surely first humanism and liberalism, then the whole flood of socialism and communism, denied the tragic response altogether. If man can change himself and his condition, tragedy is merely irrelevant. The conditions that lead to it will simply be altered.' (31)

Like Williams, Ridyear is primarily interested in retying the links between tragedy and ordinary experience, and refuting the idea of the death of tragedy. Such a thesis which would deny the possibility of tragic experience - and therefore tragic expression - as a real possibility in the modern world.

Williams

One of the benefits of the dialogue form for ^A was that it allowed him to express directly some of the anger and passion which always motivated his formal academic writing, but tended to be contained by it. Thus Holt's response to Clark's assertion - '[G]enuine tragedy defines itself' - is angry, and threatens to break the polite conventions of academic exchange. 'You see. Genuine tragedy. You can tell, always, when Clark is on the track of a substance. Down to the capital letters and the jealous zeal in routing pretenders, this is merely the cult of a tribal god.' Ridyear's response articulates the measured balance and distance which had characterised the successful tone of Culture and Society - 'Leave it though now. Let be for a moment.' (1962b: 26)

The basic problems and ideas of the Dialogue were taken up in the essays which constitute Modern Tragedy. Part One - 'Tragic Ideas' - extends and deepens the debate on the meanings of tragedy to be found in the Western tradition; while Part Two - 'Modern Tragic Literature' - offers specific case studies of a number of contemporary dramatists in order to show the different forms of tragic expression available in the modern world. And, in the first editions of the book, Williams included his own drama

'Koba', a dramatic biography of Stalin written in the late 1950s and loosely based on Isaac Deutscher's classic biography.⁸

Williams starts by questioning the assumptions which seek to separate the tragedy of ordinary life from tragedy as a literary form, and which argue that to 'confuse this tradition with other kinds of event and response is merely ignorant' (Williams 1966: 14). This questioning takes two forms: first, whether the literary form itself carries 'so clear and single a meaning' as is confidently supposed; and second, what are the actual relations between the tradition of tragedy and 'what we ordinarily and perhaps mistakenly call tragic?' (15). Williams offers first of all a historical analysis of the tragic tradition.

The argument of the book as a whole is best understood in terms of Williams's deepening interest in the circulation and instability of meanings, and particularly in the relations between the meanings associated with tragedy as a dramatic form, and the common or everyday uses of the word tragedy. In fact, argues Williams, the meanings at work in the formal analysis of tragedy can not in the end be separated from the ordinary meanings at work in the word tragedy: any assertion of the 'death of tragedy' as a form relies upon a wider circulation of the idea of tragedy active in everyday discourse. For Williams, there is a significant connection between these ordinary meanings and the academic or formal meanings of tragedy, and the idea of 'modern tragedy', both

as a distinctive form and as a central meaning of twentieth century experience. This is the wager of the book as a whole. The fact of connection is itself grounded in Williams's developing notion of a 'structure of feeling', that almost Wittgensteinian sense of the deep sociability of language at work in Williams's thinking as a whole.

To this end, the book is divided into three sections. The first, 'Tragic Ideas', examines the history of thought on tragedy from the Greeks to the present day, concluding with a highly original section on tragedy and revolution, in which Williams states his central claim that the 'structure of feeling' of modern tragedy is largely determined by the experience of social revolution, and particularly the experience of Stalinism. The second section provides some evidence for Williams's theoretical analysis in the form of seven essays dealing with variants within the 'structure of feeling' of modern tragedy from Ibsen and Henry Miller to Camus, Sartre and Brecht. The third section presents Williams's own attempt, begun in the fifties, to write a drama about the tragedy of Stalinism, 'Koba'.

What were the main points in this debate? George Steiner's The Death of Tragedy, published in 1961, but first given as a series of lectures in Cambridge, is the locus classicus of the ideology of tragedy which so appalled Williams (1979: 243) and put forward the case that Williams sought to answer in Modern Tragedy.

Steiner's study has all the hallmarks of his peculiar talents. Wide-ranging, multi-lingual, enthusiastic and erudite, it is not afraid to use a wide range of reading of primary texts as the basis to argue a grand thesis. Written in a passionate and enthusiastic style, it easily gained a wide readership while pernicky scholars were grieved at its lack of secondary scholarship, and saw its grand argument achieved at the expense of fine detail. The main thesis of the book is easily stated. Tragedy has been in decline since the moment of the Greeks; and though the causes of this decline are multiple and multi-causal, in essence they can be reduced to the fact that real tragedy fits neither the Christian worldview nor (and here Steiner joins the ranks of Cold War polemicists) the Marxist ideology.

First, and most important, Steiner saw the history of tragedy as the history of the decline of a form which had achieved its moment of unparalleled perfection with the Greeks. For Steiner, the idea of tragedy and the vision of man which it implies are Greek. And nearly till the moment of their decline, the tragic forms are Hellenic' (Steiner 1961: 3). The death of tragedy 'is inseparably related to the decline of the organic world view and its attendant context of mythological, symbolic and ritual reference. It was on this context that Greek drama was founded, and the Elizabethans were still able to give it imaginative adherence' (292). The history of tragedy is the history of this decline, with dramatists like Racine able to rekindle some of the fire of the ancient form from the half-extinguished embers of the

present. Others were not so fortunate. Ibsen cannot be regarded as a tragic dramatist: in his work there is, properly speaking, 'no tragedy at all, but dramatic rhetoric summoning us to action in the conviction that truth of conduct can be defined and that it will liberate society' (291). Yeats's work only confirms the general case: his 'failure to construct a mythology for the age is part of that larger failure or withdrawal from imaginative commitment which occurs after the seventeenth century. Greek tragedy moved against the background of rich, explicit myth' (319).

But for all the impressionistic passion of its local readings, the argument is in the end unable to generate the level of conceptual consistency necessary to sustain his thesis. In the last chapter, Steiner offers his final conclusion. It is significant that this is argued from anecdotal evidence, as commentary on a medieval parable overheard in Poland. 'Tragedy is that form of art which requires the intolerable burden of God's presence' asserts Steiner, and after the seventeenth century, God is simply not there: 'I would suppose that He turned away during the seventeenth century' (353).

As a whole, the book embodies a distinctive anti-Marxist stance.¹⁷ Steiner identified three main elements in the death of modern tragedy. First, there was the impossibility of reviving the original Greek forms themselves; second, the ways in which Christianity, with its belief in redemption, spread antipathy to

the harshness of Greek tragic values. And finally, there was the denial of tragedy by a Marxism which Steiner sees as the twentieth century heir to the wilful delusions of Christian belief. For Steiner, Marxism is the twentieth century mythology:

For we have before us now the startling fact of a mythology created at a specific time by a particular group of men, yet imposed upon the lives of millions. It is that explicit myth of the human condition and of the goals of history which we call Marxism. Marxism is the third principal mythology to have taken root in Western consciousness. (Steiner 1961: 323)

Steiner repeatedly refers to Marx on necessity as if that term were synonymous with the Greek concept of Ananke; and to Lunacharsky, first Soviet commissar of education, and his views that

one of the defining qualities of a communist society would be the absence of tragic drama.... In a communist state, tragedy is not only bad art; it is treason calculated to subvert the morale of the front lines. (343, 344-5)9

Against this, what did Williams have to argue? In the first instance, he was able to deploy his growing armoury of concepts against traditional literary criticism. The most powerful of these was his developing sense of 'semantic history', the history of cultural struggle in and through language. Tragedy, like

culture, like industry, like so many other keywords is admittedly 'a single and powerful word' (Williams [1966]: 16), but it is above all a word with a history. And this history is not only open to interpretation, but is itself the embodiment of a history of interpretation through the mechanisms of the 'selective tradition'. It is all too easy, writes Williams, 'to see this tradition as a continuity... so many of the later writers and thinkers have been conscious of the earlier, and have seen themselves as contributing to a common idea or form' (15); but for the cultural historian any tradition 'is not the past, but an interpretation of the past: a selection and valuation' (16).

That interpretation is shown first of all in the primacy given to Greek tragedy, and the many 'attempts to systematise a Greek tragic philosophy, and to transmit it as absolute' (17). The valuation then lies in the essentialisation of Greek tragedy as a form, along with the consequent view of later tragic drama - exemplified in Steiner's study - as a falling away from the Greek achievement, a gradual fading of the form through the ages to its eventual demise in the modern world. This essentialising attitude is then responsible for a refusal to see and understand the later forms of tragedy in and on their own terms. The usual under-valuation of Medieval tragedy is a case in point: 'Only an extraordinary powerful attachment to an absolute meaning of tragedy could force us to overlook the use of the word, in a quite specific sense, in a major historical period' (19). In an almost Wittgensteinian way, Williams urges us to seek for the meaning of

tragedy in the word's use at a particular moment, a useage embodied in social convention and (to borrow Wittgenstein's term) in 'forms of life'. Against essence, Williams poses history.¹⁰

For what is necessary is a fully historical understanding of tragedy, a history of its forms, and the different social conventions underlying those forms. For Williams, the specific differences in the idea of tragedy correspond to shifts in the basic structures of social organisation. The medieval emphasis on 'the fall of princes' is comprehensible in a feudal period; while Dryden's idea of the necessity for 'decorum' is 'an aristocratic rather than a feudal conception' (25). The ahistorical idea of tragedy relies above all on the notion of 'an unchanging human nature' (46), and only if we reject this assumption can we see that tragedy:

is not then a single and permanent kind of fact, but a series of experiences and conventions and institutions. It is not a case of interpreting this series by reference to a permanent and unchanging human nature. Rather, the varieties of tragic experience are to be interpreted by reference to the changing conventions and institutions. ([1966]: 45-6)

Central to this historical view is the emphasis placed on the historicity of contemporary tragic theory itself. 'The most striking fact' he writes, 'about modern tragic theory is that it is rooted in very much the same structure of ideas as modern

tragedy itself, yet one of its paradoxical effects is its denial that modern tragedy is possible, after almost a century of important and continuous tragic art' (46). In particular, he argues, the 'real key, to the modern separation of tragedy from "mere suffering", is the separation of ethical control and, more critically, human agency, from our understanding of social and political life' (48-9).

Williams isolates three distinctive elements in this mode. First, the contemporary emphasis on the destruction of the hero, and related to this, the focus on the hero at the expense of an understanding of the tragic action as a whole (54-5). Second, the ways in which death is represented as a singular and solitary event, 'as a proof of the loss of connection' when it is rather 'a theoretical formulation of liberal tragedy, rather than any kind of universal principle' (58). And third, the assumption of a 'transcendent evil' (58). Together these form the ideological assumptions informing both modern tragedy, and the interpretation of the history of tragedy. 'The most common interpretation of tragedy' he writes, 'is that it is an action in which the hero is destroyed' (54); but this focus solely on the hero marginalises the tragic action as a whole: 'we are taking a part for the whole, a hero for an action. We think of tragedy as what happens to the hero, but the ordinary tragic action is what happens through the hero' (55). Similarly, the real universality of death is shifted, in the interpretation of liberal tragedy, to the singular

loneliness of death. Since death 'is universal...the meaning tied to it quickly claims universality' (56).

To move beyond this ideology, Williams argues that we have to make an effort to reconnect our academic thinking and intellectual experience with an analysis and understanding of broader realities. 'If we find' he writes 'a particular idea of tragedy, in our time, we find also a way of interpreting a very wide area of our own experience; relevant certainly to literary criticism but relevant also to very much else... We must try also, positively, to understand and describe not only the tragic theory but also the tragic experience of our own time' (61). This tragic experience is located in the experience of revolution, and particularly in the history of the Russian Revolution. The fourth section of Part One of the book, 'Tragedy and Revolution', turns to examine these powerful connections and ideas.

Tragedy and Revolution

In this concluding section of Part One, Williams sets out to counter and to question the leading ideas of both liberalism and Stalinism. For Williams, the most complex effect of any powerful ideology, such as that informing the contemporary idea of tragedy, is 'that it directs us, even when we think we have rejected it, to the same kind of fact' (Williams [1966]: 61-2). We find in the present the same forms and structures of tragic experience which we have already and unknowingly read into the past. A central

feature of this constitutive blindness has been the elision of the social and political dimensions of tragedy - 'That kind of interest is commonly relegated to politics, or, to use the cant word, sociology. Tragedy, we say, belongs to deeper and closer experience, to man not to society' (62). The major aim is therefore to refuse such a division and to reintegrate our thinking about tragedy, and modern tragedy in particular. For modern tragedy, argues Williams, is above all a response to the human experience of revolution, an experience which is necessarily at once personal and political, public and private. Here the links between the two divided realms of experience posited by the bourgeois theory of tragedy are in reality 'inescapable and urgent' (74).

To this end, we have to go beyond the usual alternatives of either turning a blind eye to the reality of revolutionary violence, or, the insistence on seeing only the forces of violence and terror at work in revolution, and then wishing to forego revolution altogether. 'Revolution' he argues 'asserted the possibility of man altering his condition, tragedy showed its impossibility, and the consequent spiritual effects' (68). We need to get beyond the 'contemporary reflex', which we have seen at work in a liberal thinker like Steiner, and which maintains that 'the taking of rational control over social destiny is defeated or at best deeply stained by our inevitable irrationality, and by the violence and cruelty that are so quickly released when habitual forms are broken down' (74); but we must

also question a number of blind spots in the Marxist tradition itself.

Characteristically, Williams challenges a 'main current' of thinking to be found in Marxism, one 'which though Marx may at times have opposed it is also profoundly mechanical, in its determinism, in its social materialism, and in its characteristic abstraction of social classes from human beings' (Williams [1966]: 75). It is from such a perspective, fears Williams, that it is possible 'to interpret revolution not only as constructive and liberating', and not to see or to accept or to question its violence, its dehumanisation and consequent liquidation of its enemies:

Real suffering is then at once non-human: is a class swept away by history, is an error in the working of the machine, or is the blood that is not and never can be rosewater. The more general and abstract, the more truly mechanical, the process of human liberation is ordinarily conceived to be, the less any actual suffering really counts, until even death is a paper currency. ([1966]: 75)

He urges a constant resistance to the dehumanising abstraction related in most people's minds to the excesses of Stalinism, and emphasises that the tragic essence of revolution is to be found above all in the simple fact that revolution is a struggle not only 'against mere institutions and social forms, but against

other men' (Williams [1966]: 77). At the same time, he also questions the usual liberal response. First, by situating it as a product of the 'long revolution' in the West, and second by calling attention to everyone's involvement in violence. He argues against the ways in which we commonly narrow down the meaning of revolution to a moment of violence and terror, rather than accepting revolution as a moment of violence in a whole history of violence and terror:

The essential point is that violence and disorder are institutions as well as acts. When a revolutionary change has been lived through, we can usually see this quite clearly. The old institutions, now dead, take on their real quality as systematic violence and disorder; in that quality, the source of the revolutionary action is seen. But while such institutions are still effective, they can seem, to an extraordinary extent, both settled and innocent. Indeed, they constitute, commonly, an order, against which the very protest, of the injured and oppressed, seems the source of disturbance and violence. (66)

It is all too easy, from the perspective of a Western democracy, committed to the principles of what Williams called the 'long revolution', to denounce the obvious violence of other situations, while enjoying the fruits of an invisible structural violence in the comfort of home. What is finally necessary is the recognition of our own involvement in such structural violence, and to see

that this must be faced as itself a kind of disorder: 'From the experience of this disorder, and through its specific action, order is recreated. The process of this action is at times remarkably similar to the real action of revolution.' (66). He locates this as the contradictions engaging 'the identification between a permanent order and a social system' (67). 'I am writing', he notes, to sharpen his general point, 'on a day when British military power is being used against 'dissident tribesmen' in South Arabia' (79).

Part Two of Modern Tragedy, 'Modern Tragic Literature', consists of seven essays which may be taken as evidence to support the general positions advanced in the first part of the study. The works and authors discussed illustrate various constituents of the modern structure of tragic feeling. Ibsen anticipates Arthur Miller in the way his protagonists are no longer heroes but victims, caught and defined in a conflict with a social world beyond their control. Lawrence's novel Women in Love represents a crucial turning away from the social dimension, and the attempt 'to create the individual person without any relationships' (138), and Williams contrasts this turning away with Tolstoy's emphasis on the social understanding of characters in his novel Anna Karenina.¹¹ The drama of Pirandello, Ionesco and Becket re-interprets and remoulds the substance of Chekhov's drama, moving it away from his emplacement in nineteenth century realism and its assumption of a 'total world' (139) to the twentieth-century emphasis on the 'general consciousness of illusion' (141). In

each essay, Williams pushes his central point - that the 'deepest crisis' in modern thinking 'is the division of experience into social and personal categories' (121). This division mars the work of even those dramatists like Camus who wish to try and face the difficult relations between tragedy and revolt. Only Bertolt Brecht, in Williams's view, has some partial success with his 'recovery of history as a dimension for tragedy' (202), and his full recognition of the tragic nature of revolution as 'the known harshness of the revolutionary struggle' (203).¹²

Contemporary reviews of the book were unable to make or accept this connection.¹³ Two instances can serve as example. The first, by Frank Kermode; the second, anonymous, but likely, from the focus of its own interests and knowledge, to have been written by George Steiner. Kermode comments on the 'oddness of the book'; its structure 'seems finally to be self-indulgent, however strangely the general tone of sullen, incorrigible intelligence may seem to tell against such a judgement' (Kermode 1966: 83). Kermode praises the intentions of the author to make the book about 'the connections, in modern tragedy, between event and experience and idea, and its form is designed at once to explore and to emphasise these radical connections' ('Foreword' 1966 ed. p. 9); but insists that 'I doubt if it will feel like a work of such ambitious unity to anyone but the author' (84). For Kermode, the best are the opening pages where some of those connections are made through the writing: 'only here is the word 'I', though heavily muffled, allowed to make its necessary appearance' (84).

On the potted history of tragic ideas, and the supporting essays, Kermode is unaggressive: 'the surprizing thing is not that it is unconvincing but that it is never ridiculous' (84). But, in the end, he would be happy to follow Williams's advice about choosing which parts of the book to read - but to read none of it: 'there are still those earlier works to learn from, books in which the equations to be solved were of more general interest, less a personally satisfying 'structure of feeling' (85).

The anonymous reviewer of the Times Literary Supplement rejects the central argument of the book ('the category of Tragedy is no longer very useful...drama after Chekhov and Samuel Becket is a mixed open form' (Anon. 1966: 717)); praises it as a 'deeply honest book' and sees 'Koba' as evidence of 'the depth of his [Williams's] imaginative involvement' (718); but, in the end, judges the book negatively: 'a book on modern tragedy which does not touch on the sociology of the audience and of the literary act, which hardly alludes to the interactions between stage drama and other modes of dramatic performance, must inevitably appear somewhat anachronistic and donnish in bias' (718). In the end, it is an 'honest, often moving, yet disappointing book' (718).

But perhaps what counts most - and certainly what counted most to Williams - is what is most occluded in these responses: the terms of the opposition to the dominant ideology of tragedy at work within 'Cambridge English'. In a sense, the substance of the book is to be found in its address, its situatedness. It is this

which gives this 'donnish book' the paradoxically anti-academic force registered by at least one reader, who recorded how Modern Tragedy 'changed my life in a way few books have.'¹⁴

The Novel and the Question of Form

Modern Tragedy sought to contest the versions of Cold War ideology at work in the Cambridge English Tragedy Paper. In part, this consciously anti-Marxist discourse had relied for its arguments on a massive repression of the historicity of tragic forms. In the place of the study and analysis of this real formal historicity, a critic like Steiner had promoted the idea of a single tragic essence as the measure of all tragic forms, and argued from that basis that the modern period was one in which the death of tragedy had been accomplished. For Steiner, real tragedy was just not possible in an age of secular values and mass democracy.¹⁵

In large measure, something of that same ahistorical or even anti-historical impulse had long been characteristic of the Cambridge English approach to the novel. E.M. Forster, eminent novelist and Fellow of King's College from 1946 until his death in 1970, had struck the decisive note in his Clarke lectures at Cambridge in 1927, published as Aspects of the Novel in the same year. 'Time' he stressed 'is to be our enemy (Forster [1927]: 16) and took the slogan 'History develops, Art stands still' as the 'crude motto' of the study which was to stress what Forster saw as

the timeless problems of the novelist's craft, the universal struggle with recalcitrant form. 'All through history' he asserts, in accents strengthened by his own natural authority as novelist,

writers while writing have felt more or less the same. They have entered a common state which it is convenient to call inspiration, and, having regard to that state, we may say that History develops, Art stands still. (28)

Forster's concern is with the novelist's craft, his technique, and in this sense with the novel as form; and these concerns are articulated around T.S.Eliot's idea of tradition:

We are to visualize the English novelists not as floating down that stream which bears all its sons away if they are not careful, but as seated together in a room, a circular room, a sort of British Museum reading room - all writing their novels simultaneously. (16)16

When novels and novelists are seen in this light, the critic - the new critic in the Cambridge English mould - will be able to avoid the dangers of pseudo-scholarship characteristic of older forms of literary studies. He or she will become purely and more actively a reader:

The reader must sit down alone and struggle with the writer, and this the pseudo-scholar will not do. He would rather relate a book to the history of its time, to events in the life of the author, to the events it describes, above all to some tendency. (21)

A part of the task of The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence will be to break out of this circular room, and to reconnect the writer's problems with form to the world outside the British Museum, to that threatening flow of experience of which Forster urges the novelist and the critic to beware. Although Williams's central antagonist is F.R. Leavis, and his seminal The Great Tradition (1948), it is as well to remember that Leavis had taken Forster at his word, and had elevated the critic to the position of judge over that 'common state' of inspiration.

The Great Tradition

Structurally, The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence is the 'symmetrical inversion' of Leavis's The Great Tradition (Williams 1979: 244). Both books begin with Jane Austen, but soon part company: Leavis marginalises Dickens, who is central for Williams; Leavis prefers George Eliot's later novels, and the Lawrence of Women in Love, while Williams's preference is for both early Eliot and early Lawrence; and while Hardy is a negligible figure for Leavis, for Williams he is central to the tradition as a whole.

But beyond the mere facts of this inversion, at times 'quite deliberate' as Williams informs us, and which has led some to see no more than a principle of alternative selection at work in The English Novel, there is in fact a more fundamental disagreement being worked out in the book. This concerns the central idea of form. Properly considered, The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence does not merely offer an alternative canon; it is a challenge, through the idea of form, to the principles of canonical selection itself, and ultimately, to the very idea of criticism at work in Leavis's study.¹⁷

'What,' asks Leavis, 'is the "form" from which a "picture of life" derives its value?' Leavis's answer comes through in a series of largely rhetorical questions:

Is there any great novelist whose preoccupation with 'form' is not a matter of his responsibility towards a rich human interest, or complexity of interests, profoundly realized? - a responsibility involving, of its very nature, imaginative sympathy, moral discrimination, and judgement of relative human value? (Leavis [1948]: 41)

At work here is the inextricable link, for Leavis, between formal and moral criteria. Indeed, the link between the two is strong enough to be counted as causal and therefore diagnostic: formal failure is always the symptom of moral failing. When Eliot, or Conrad or James, is writing well, they write with that key but

conceptually elusive quality, 'maturity'; and when badly, it is always because that 'maturity' has somehow failed. Leavis's discussion of George Eliot exemplifies the deep connections between formal success and moral maturity which form the basis of Leavis's critical judgements.

In Eliot's writing, Leavis notes 'an alternation between the poised impersonal insight of a finely tempered wisdom and something like the emotional confusions and self-importances of adolescence' (Leavis [1948]: 92). The presentation of Maggie Tulliver in The Mill on the Floss is exemplary. Her character is figured 'too purely from the inside': in the end, Eliot herself suffers from the same immaturity as the character she identifies with so strongly:

Maggie's emotional and spiritual stresses... exhibit, naturally, all the marks of immaturity... they belong to a stage of development at which the capacity to make some essential distinctions has not yet been arrived at - at which the poised impersonality that is one of the conditions of being able to make them can't be achieved. (55-56)

Since it is that 'poised impersonality' which is the sine qua non of the novelist's art, it is George Eliot's own impersonality which has failed her through an over-identification with the character. For Leavis, Maggie Tulliver 'represents an immaturity that George Eliot can never leave safely behind her' (56); and it

even returns to mar the almost perfect achievement of Middlemarch in the character of Dorothea, which Leavis reads as similarly betraying a failure of impersonality on Eliot's part, an emotional flaw in the formal structure of the novel. Thus, in his final summing up of Middlemarch, Leavis argues that 'the emotional fulness represented by Dorothea depends for its exalting potency on an abeyance of intelligence and self-knowledge'. Eliot's own emotional maturity has failed her, and consequently we find that in the novel

the situations offered by way of 'objective correlative' have the day-dream relation to experience; they are generated by a need to soar above the indocile facts and conditions of the real world. They don't, indeed, strike us as real in any sense; they have no objectivity, no vigour of illusion. In this kind of indulgence, complaisantly as she abandons herself to the current that is loosed, George Eliot's creative vitality has no part. ([1948]: 96)

And this failure can be measured against what Leavis sees at work in Eliot's writing at its best, when

her sensibility is directed outward, and she responds from deep within. At this level, "emotion" is a disinterested response defined by its object, and hardly distinguishable from the play of intelligence and self-knowledge that gave it impersonality.

Such are the key terms of Leavis's mode of evaluation - it is not only that great art is mature and impersonal; it is that the one is the condition for the other: there can be no great art without maturity. The maturity of the author and the formal excellence of the novel come together in what might be called the practice of impersonality. As far as writing is concerned, this is a state of mind which allows the object to be seen exactly for what it is; and this state of mind is only accessible to the truly mature for it is the 'play of intelligence and self-knowledge' which constitutes emotional maturity. This circle of certitude makes it impossible for Leavis to spell out any 'theoretical' (a hated word) position: everything necessary is embodied in the concrete evaluations.¹⁸

So it is that, despite Leavis's claims to the contrary, actual novels are valued and judged in relation to some ideal type or model of the novel as Leavis himself understands it: the novel as 'a dramatic poem in prose', novels in which the writer sees 'clearly and understandingly, sees with a judging vision that relates everything to her profoundest moral experience: [Eliot's] full living sense of value is engaged, and sensitively responsive' (106). In the ideal novel, a mature judgement of life is fully embodied in the visionary textuality of the writing. The task of the critic is to assess how far particular novels are able to go in realising these ideals, and to offer criticism and correction where necessary. So that even the novelists of the 'great

tradition', though they may enjoy all the necessary attributes of the great novelist, might not manage to write the great novel. Though all the ingredients may be there in the oeuvre as a whole, there is no guarantee that they will come together in a single text. Hence Leavis's final judgement of Middlemarch:

only one book can, as a whole (though not without qualification), be said to represent her mature genius. That is, of course, Middlemarch. (76)

- for, in reality, as Mulhern observes, the definitive Eliot novel would in some sense comprise the sub-plot of Felix Holt, the 'good half' of Daniel Deronda and only then almost all of Middlemarch! (Mulhern 1979: 259.)

And as with Forster, time, or rather history, is the enemy if any such account of the novel is to be sustained. The aim of the critic, in this mode of evaluation, is to discern the line of the 'great tradition'; but this means in turn, to go back to T.S.Eliot's formulation, to attempt to see the history of the novel 'not as consecrated by time, but to see it beyond time' (Eliot cit. in Forster: 30). And if, ideally, this means imagining the world's authors 'all writing their novels at once' (Forster [1927]: 21), then this implies that the critic is able to oversee them, can 'look over their shoulders for a moment' (21) and either chide them gently, as Forster does, or speak to them a little more harshly, as is Leavis's tendency.

Commentators have only been partly right in seeing Williams's study as merely offering some alternative points of interest on the same map of the novel. For The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence is in the end less concerned with the pronouncement of local judgements regarding the inclusion or exclusion of particular novelists, and more interested in challenging both the principles of evaluation at work in the novelistic canon, and in the idea of criticism underlying these principles. As Stuart Hall astutely remarked, the main interest of the book lies in 'the manner in which the term "form" is deployed' (Hall 1990: 63). This comes through most strongly in Williams's assessments of Dickens, Eliot and Hardy.

Form and Structure in the Novel

'By the standards of one kind of novel,' writes Williams 'which has been emphasised in England as the great tradition, Dickens's faults - what are seen as his faults - are so many and so central as to produce embarrassment' (Williams [1970]: 31). He mentions Forster's criticism, in Aspects of the Novel, regarding the 'flatness' of Dickens's characters, and the Leavisite critique of Dickens's use of the language of direct persuasion rather than as the medium of Jamesian analysis and introspection, acknowledging that in Dickens's writing 'Significance is not enacted in mainly tacit and intricate ways but is often directly presented in moral address and indeed exhortation' (31). But while Williams allows

that according to the criteria of 'the fiction of an educated minority' Dickens is easily criticised, he insists that 'we get nowhere - critically nowhere - if we apply the standards of this kind of fiction to another and very different kind' (31). To get somewhere, the first step to take is to examine the situatedness of Dickens's writing, the social context to which his form - or even his apparent lack of form - was the embodied response.

The formal criteria for canonisation in the great tradition are ahistorical and ignore the real situatedness of the author who uses form, or who experiences, through formal problems, the disturbances of social history. To resolutely adopt only formal criteria would lead in the end to patently absurd conclusions, as Williams spells out in an imagined formal comparison between Trollope and Eliot:

To read Doctor Thorne beside Felix Holt is not only to find ease in Trollope, where there is disturbance in George Eliot... It is also, quite evidently, to see the source of these differences in a real social history. And I think we have to remember this when we are asked by several kinds of critic to abstract 'construction', 'organisation', 'thematic unity', 'unity of tone' and even 'good writing' and judge novels by these canons. On these abstract criteria - and especially those of unity - we should have to find Trollope a better novelist than George Eliot. ([1970]: 84-5)

While this is a move which Leavis explicitly rejects, the main point certainly holds. Leavis is, in fact, as constant as Williams in his insistence on the importance of the novel as an almost cognitive representation of a social order, but his understanding of form is classically liberal, and individualistic to the point of asociality. Formal failure can only and always ever be a symptom of failed maturity, of individual moral consciousness. Though the novelist may well write about society, the novelist at his or her best stands - like the critic - somehow outside it, divorced (and this is the very sign of Leavis's idea of maturity) from the social reality which he or she is then judging. For Williams, it is just this idea of the novelist's - and the critic's - ideal position of objective 'outsiderness' that is most troubling, since to understand the constitutive tensions of form, it is above all necessary to understand the inescapable positionality of the author or critic.

This comes through most clearly in the consideration of those formal or technical problems which Leavis had seen as evidence of immaturity or moral failing. Since mature writing implied impersonality, anything which detracted from that impersonality led to formal failure. Leavis writes of 'the supremely mature mind of Middlemarch' (Leavis [1948]: 52); but even Middlemarch suffers from George Eliot's inherently dangerous tendency towards autobiographic identification. It was precisely this tendency which was responsible for the failure of The Mill on the Floss.

Like Leavis, Williams finds something of a new consciousness at work in Middlemarch; but, unlike him, he cannot recommend it. He too finds 'elements of Maggie Tulliver' in Dorothea; but insists, against Leavis, that 'she is now at arm's length being looked at'. This, for sure, represents a new 'signifying consciousness' in Eliot's work; but it is not one Williams can endorse:

It is a consciousness, a fictional method, that has been widely recommended. It is referred back to the cool 'impersonality' of Jane Austen; forward to the wrought observation of Henry James and thence to what is often called, in a sweeping indeed overbearing dimension, maturity....it is a method that when abstracted is a cold placing, a critic's fiction. Indeed, more than that, it is a social mode in which the observer, the signifier, is not himself at stake but is refined into a fictional process, indeed into a fiction. ([1970]: 90-91)

For Williams, this mode of analysis - the method of Leavis's The Great Tradition - has both general and highly specific components. Generally, it is 'the mode of an anxious society - an anxious class preoccupied with placing, grading, defining'. And more specifically, it is the critical mode of Cambridge English itself, as he emphasises:

As you'll have gathered, I don't really find it particularly mature, though when it bears down on you in a whole place - in a university for example - it has an apparent poise that takes

some time to live through: a mode in which we are all signifiers, all critics and judges, and can somehow afford to be because life - given life, creating life - goes on where it is supposed to, elsewhere. (91)

There is a false confidence to such maturity, which is only ever the brittle maturity of the outsider: to this Williams prefers the real uneasiness of the 'participant who is also an observer' (110).

The novelist who exemplifies this position of participant-observer is Thomas Hardy: the most unjustly neglected author of Leavis's account. Leavis can find no better words for Hardy than Henry James, in a disparaging moment, found for him: the 'good little Thomas Hardy' whose Tess of the D'Urbervilles is 'chock-full of faults and falsity, and yet has a singular charm' (cit. Leavis [1948]: 34). In comparison with George Eliot, Hardy 'decent as he is', is no more than 'a provincial manufacturer of gauche and heavy fictions that sometimes have corresponding virtues' (Leavis [1948]: 146). For Williams, this evaluation, made on the apparently formal grounds of technique, though in fact on technique confounded with maturity, is unwarranted and unhelpful. The real criteria for any meaningful assessment lie elsewhere - in the writer's engagement with 'a real social history', in and through the materiality of form. 'What we have to emphasise,' writes Williams, bringing both Hardy and Eliot together, is

the creative disturbance which is exactly George Eliot's importance: the disturbance we shall see also in Hardy. That is where the life is, in that disturbed and unprecedented time. And those who responded most deeply, who saw most, had no unified form, no unity of tone and language, no controlling conventions, that really answered their purposes. Their novels are the records of struggle and difficulty, as was the life they wrote about. (Williams [1970]: 85)

For Williams, in terms which anticipate his reading of Volosinov, the formal problem of expression faced by such writers are not the product of some aspect of a private subjectivity - a question of self-knowledge or maturity. It is a problem of social subjectivity, what Williams calls 'the recurring problem of the social consciousness of the writer' (77). Hardy is an exemplary case, since he was

neither owner nor tenant, dealer nor labourer, but an observer and a chronicler, often again with an uncertainty about his actual relation. Moreover his is not writing for them, but about them, to a mainly metropolitan and unconnected literary public. (101)

Thus the most significant problem with Hardy's writing is the product of that key situation: he was a 'participant who is also an observer' (110). The phrase provided the key to some of the

central arguments of The Country and the City, as we shall see below.

Williams links Leavis's casual disparagement of Hardy to a much wider field of force, out of which a British Council critic could write of Eliot, Hardy and Lawrence as 'our three great autodidacts' - meaning, as Williams points out, only that they happened not to have been educated at a public school and then at an Oxbridge college. The conflict between 'customary and educated life' - itself so central to Hardy's own work - continues in and through the continuing assessments of Hardy in academia.¹⁹

Alive in Williams's assessment of Hardy, and at work in the very high value he places on him (he is 'our flesh and grass'), is the very heart of Williams's whole argument, his conception of the novel. If, for Leavis, the novel at its best was the 'poem in prose' he had outlined as early as 1933, what was it for Williams? The novel, for Williams, was, of course, 'a major form in English literature'; but it was also much more than a literary genre. We may better grasp the force of Williams's idea of the novel in terms of what we may now call the general practice of representation.

The key to this is given in the Conclusion to The English Novel, where Williams discusses the 'particular bearing' of his study, the idea of the 'knowable community'. He writes:

When I say that the problems including the formal problems of the novel are in the end mainly problems of relationships I am pointing to an area where it is still difficult to relate, a continuing and more general experience of the educated and the customary. (188)

Williams takes Virginia Woolf's writing as an example of how deeply this problem has entered the question of form itself. He quotes from her famous essay on 'Modern Fiction', and turns to its representation of the 'ordinary mind on the ordinary day' and argues:

that 'the ordinary mind on the ordinary day' is social, and that it relates us necessarily to others, and that consciousness, real consciousness, doesn't come passively like that, a receiving of impressions, but is what we learn, what we make, in our real relationships, including with fathers and mothers and shops. (189)

For Williams, Woolf's brilliant description of the tasks of the new modernist and anti-realist novel falls too easily into an over-emphasis on the private life in the bourgeois division of life into public and private aspects, and ignores the real problems to be faced by the novel, 'the problems of knowable community', that is, the acceptance of the real indissociability of public and private life, not to speak of the divisions of class once Woolf's public/private split is accepted.²⁰

In the end, the very existence of such a deep division of experience is itself a symptom of a complex social history. The history of the novel testifies to an 'important split' which takes place between 'knowable relationships and an unknown, overwhelming society' (15). This whole history, this whole process is exemplified for Williams in James Joyce's Ulysses, which Williams reads as being about 'the loss of a city, the loss of relationships' and where the only 'knowable community' exists in 'the need, the desire, of a racing separated consciousness' (167). This is the task and the burden of the novel, the problem of the knowable community in the new urban society. Williams sums up his case in the following terms, in the Introduction to the book:

The problem of the knowable community, with its deep implications for the novelist, is then clearly a part of the social history of early nineteenth-century England and of the imaginative penetration and recoil which was the creative response. But what is knowable is not only a function of objects - of what is there to be known. It is also a function of subjects, of observers - of what is desired and what needs to be known. A knowable community, that is to say, is a matter of consciousness as well as of evident fact. Indeed it is just this problem of knowing a community - of finding a position, a position convincingly experienced, from which community can begin to be known - that one of the major phases in the development of the novel must be related. (17)

In the end, this is a question of representation. The novel may seek to provide a representation of society, in the usual sense of a realist representation, the use of language to reflect an external world; but what Williams draws constant attention to is the sense of representation in its social-political sense, that writing is always a writing from a position, a matter of the subject and of consciousness, and not only of the object, of the external world. In this sense of representation, the role of language in writing is constitutive, and not merely instrumental; the writer is always a participant and not only an observer, marked by the language he or she adopts at the same time as they try to get beyond that language, in the move which denies any authority not only to the Leavisite formalist model of the novel, but also to any Marxist theory of literature as reflection, 'tendency' or simple product of base and superstructure dynamics. As Williams puts it in the Conclusion to the book:

Much ordinary social experience is of course directly reflected, represented, in what is indeed an ideology, what can be called a superstructure. But in any society at all like our own, and especially in this one in the last hundred and fifty years, there's a very vital area of social experience - social experience - that doesn't get incorporated: that's neglected, ignored, certainly at times repressed; that even when it's taken up, to be processed or to function as an official consciousness, is resistant, lively, still goes on its way, and

eventually steps on its shadow - steps, I mean, in such a way that we can see which is shadow and which is substance.

It is from this vital area, from this structure of feeling that is lived and experienced but not quite yet arranged as institutions and ideas, from this common and inalienable life that I think all art is made. (192)

Williams closes The English Novel with this challenge to too mechanical and too reductionist accounts of the relations between culture and society, between art and economy and anticipates his later formulations of dominant, residual and emergent energies which were later to be picked up by critics who wished to challenge any too reductive formulations of ideology or power.²¹

The Country and the City

Early reviewers were divided in their responses to what is now commonly regarded as Williams's greatest oppositional text, The Country and the City, published in 1973. Many ignored E.P. Thompson's warning that it was 'not a conventional work of scholarship, and whoever reads it this way will end up in disagreement and irritation.' H. Coombes, for example, could only conclude that Williams's 'idee fixe [the critique of the organic community] inhibits the use of any literary critical powers he may have possessed', and Evan Watkins seemed to agree, writing in 1978, that The Country and the City was 'deeply flawed...too immersed in the analysis of historical detail...too immediately

personal'. Roger Scruton, in his conservative study, Thinkers of the New Left, asserted, in 1985, it was 'one of the most two-dimensional surveys of English literature ever to have retained the lineaments of academic respectability'. Others had more positive responses. Lawrence Lerner, in Encounter, wrote approvingly that he doubted 'if it is possible...ever again to read the country house poems in the same way', and Marshall Berman, in what became the standard judgement, wrote that in The Country and the City 'the intellectual power and the ideological passion and the personal integrity come together more convincingly than ever before.' The Country and the City is Williams's magnum opus, his 'richest book', 'his greatest book', 'one of the most brilliant and seminal he has produced', his 'necessary book'. ²²

The Country and the City begins with a characteristic discussion of the varied historical meanings of 'country' and 'city' as keywords - 'powerful words', writes Williams, and not surprisingly so 'when we remember how much they seem to stand for in the experience of human communities' (Williams [1973]: 9), and moves - long before this kind of situated writing was to become a standard ploy in academic identity politics - from this 'general problem' to its location as a 'personal issue'. ²³ Williams had not only read the available 'descriptions and interpretations' of moving from country to city, he had in a sense lived them through in the move from Wales to England, from Pandy to Cambridge, and

lived and thought through them 'as a problem.' The study is the attempt to resolve that problem, and to better understand the relations between the country and the city, so that the study,

though it often and necessarily follows impersonal procedures, in description and analysis, there is behind it, all the time, this personal pressure and commitment. (Williams [1973]: 11)

The Country and the City is a magisterial work, and in a strong and particular sense. It generates its air of massive authority not only through academic knowledge and the deployment of its protocols, but through the power and appeal of the autobiographical. Surveying with professional expertise and personal experience the images of the country and the city available across a very broad (though mainly English) range of writing, The Country and the City is by far the most successful realisation of the ideal of committed academic writing which Williams had learned as a youth. For purposes of discussion, we can divide the book into two main sections, dealing respectively with the country and then with the city, and a two-part conclusion in which Williams discusses first a selection of the available present writing on country and city, and then, in the two final chapters, puts forward the wider political implications of the argument as a whole .

The first section deals primarily with the history of pastoral writing. Chapters 1 to 14 focus on images of country life, mainly

in poetry, from Hesiod's Works and Days, through Theocritus and Virgil to Carew and Jonson, across Pope and Crabbe, up to and as far as Clare and Wordsworth. The second, Chapters 14 to 20, concentrates on representations of the city and of city life, borrowing and at times adapting material from the previously published The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence (1970). It examines the development of ways of seeing and representing the city from the eighteenth century, across Dickens, Eliot, and Hardy and through Virginia Woolf to James Joyce, whose Ulysses Williams sees as the 'climax' of the tradition, just as Finnegans Wake represents its 'crisis' (294). Chapters 21-23 examine twentieth century 'country' writing, including Meredith, Lawrence and Grassic Gibbon, the journal The Countryman, and some science fiction. The two final chapters - 'The New Metropolis' and 'Cities and Countries' - examine the troping of the country and city figure into the contemporary world of imperialism and post-imperialism, concluding, through an analytic twist which annoyed many non-Marxist readers, with a final transformation of the country and city opposition into the very idea of capitalism itself:

capitalism, as a mode of production, is the basic process of most of what we know as the history of country and city. Its abstracted economic desires, its fundamental priorities in social relations, its criteria of growth and of profit and loss, have over several centuries altered our country and

created our kinds of city. In its final forms of imperialism it has altered our world. ([1973]: 363)

There is no space here for a thorough consideration of the many analyses and arguments put forward in Williams's rich and varied study. I shall rather examine the ways in which the book as a whole represented a response to two currents of thought and analysis, and how these came together to give The_Country_and_the_City its distinctive place in his work as a whole. The first of these is the continued opposition to the ways in which Cambridge English constructed its version of literary history, in this instance, around the tradition of the country house poem; and second, as a way of replying to some of the substantial criticisms put to his earlier work by two Communist Party historians, Edward Thompson and Victor Kiernan. These came together in an emphasis on the politics of all acts of representation in and through the idea of the embodied observer. Let us first examine some of the key terms in leftist criticisms of Williams's earlier work.

Disembodied Voices

As we saw in Chapter Three, Culture_and_Society and The_Long_Revolution were greeted with some hostility and opposition by conservative critics. But the two works were also the focus of some challenging and incisive criticisms from the left, and in particular from two Communist Party historians, Victor Kiernan and Edward Thompson, who wrote perhaps the two most thoughtful

reviews. Victor Kiernan's review of Culture and Society appeared in the summer 1959 issue of The New Reasoner, and Edward P. Thompson's assessment of The Long Revolution ran across two issues of the New Left Review in 1961.

While Kiernan accepts that Williams has written a 'fascinating and important book', his final judgement is that the study lacks the essential credentials of a properly Marxist study of culture and society. For Kiernan, the 'prime requisite for any study of cultural history is a firm framework of historical fact - economic, social, political...the one great deficiency of the book is the lack of just this' (Kiernan 1959: 75-6). In particular, Kiernan criticises Williams for failing to define any precise sense for the term 'Industrial Revolution', and for neglecting the crucial importance of class in the ideological debates which he analyses. He is also guilty of neglect with regard to what Kiernan identifies as the three absolutely essential components of any historically based survey of nineteenth century culture - the forces of religion, nationalism and imperialism; while the final chapter, Williams's own 'tract for the times', omits any discussion of the crucial role of the state as an actor essential to any account of the political and ideological conflicts involved in the book's arguments.

Kiernan attributes these failures of analysis to Williams's entrapment in the discipline and accompanying ideology of literary

studies themselves. 'To be seen in the round, and understood in its real bearings,' he argues,

a pattern of ideas must be seen taking shape in the minds of members of a determinate social group in a specific epoch. Mr Williams's method in this book has been to take a number of individual publicists of each generation in turn, extract passages from their works, and add his comments...a procession of individuals does not add up to a class...As a result these writers have somewhat the style of disembodied intelligences, spirit-voices addressing us through the lips of a medium.
(Kiernan 1959: 78)

In other words, Kiernan argued that Williams's predilection for the formalism of textual analysis hindered or pre-empted the possibility of real historical and social analysis afforded by the concept of class.

Thompson's review was in broad agreement with many of Kiernan's points, and he too located Williams's failings in his training in the discipline of English studies. His lengthy review appeared in two consecutive issues of the New Left Review and it constitutes one of the major engagements with Williams's work from a left-wing perspective. Thompson is more than willing to acknowledge the importance of Williams's work: 'so far as we can speak of a New Left - he is our best man' (Thompson 1961: 24); but he too was disturbed by the ways in which he saw some of Williams's project

undermined by Williams's own entanglement in the presuppositions of English studies. He took issue, in the first instance, with what many came to regard as one of the strengths of Williams's style. J.P. Ward later described this well as the

level reasonableness of the writing, the suggestion that wholeness and unity were available in a class-divided society and the suggestion that it was not just an intellectual's abstraction but a cultural discovery, there ready and waiting to use, were unquestionably the main reasons for the book's huge success and appeal. (Ward 1981: 17)

But for Thompson, the problem was that this 'reasonableness' itself represented what he called a 'concealed preference - in the name of genuine communication - for the language of the academy' (Thompson 1961: 25). The real violence and the real stakes of the whole argument lay concealed and obscured within this academic reasonableness and he criticised the ways in which, as he put it, a 'sense of extreme fastidiousness enters whenever logic prompts us to identify those 'patterns', 'systems' and 'forms' with precise social forces and particular thinkers' (25). How can T.S. Eliot be placed in something called the same 'tradition' as D.H. Lawrence and Williams Morris, when Eliot writes in opposition to everything they stood for? We cannot do so, writes Thompson

unless we are using 'tradition' in the sense in which we describe both Calvin and Ignatius Loyola as belonging to a

common 'Christian tradition'. But once we include both Reformation and Counter-Reformation within one common tradition, we must recognise that we are in danger of becoming so aloof that the energies of the disputants cannot be seen through the haze. (Thompson 1961: 25-6)

In fact, a fatal weakness of the whole account is the absence of the primary conceptual tool of the historian: the idea and understanding of context, and implicit in the historian's sense of social context, the idea and understanding of ideological conflict. The final judgement is damning: 'There are no good or bad men in Mr Williams's history, only dominant and subordinate 'structures of feeling' (29). What the book's narrative finally has to offer is no more than 'a procession of disembodied voices - Burke, Carlyle, Mill, Arnold - their meanings wrested out of their whole social context' (24-5), and consequently, a version of history which lacks any properly developed idea of ideological struggle: 'What Mr Williams has never come to terms with is the problem of ideology' (35). Thompson reads Williams's emphasis on communication as value - perhaps the central theme of The Long Revolution - as the crucial index of this general theoretical failing:

It is this confusion [value-making = communication] which enables him to lose sight of power: and it is only when the systems of communication are replaced in the context of power-

relationships that we can see the problem as it is. And it is the problem of ideology. (37)

With characteristic adroitness, Thompson insists that Williams is wrong to represent culture as a 'whole way of life'; culture if anything represents a 'whole way of conflict' (33). Anything less than this is to depart from 'the main line of the socialist tradition' (34). In the end, judged Thompson, the

aspiration for a common culture in Raymond Williams's sense ('common meanings, common values') is admirable: but the more this aspiration is nourished, the more outrageous the real divisions of interest and power in our society will appear. The attempt to create a common culture, like that to effect common ownership and to build a co-operative community, must be content with fragmented success so long as it is contained within capitalist society. (36)

Disembodied intelligences; disembodied voices; an incoherent account of tradition; a mistaken aspiration for a common culture. There is no doubt that Williams felt the force of these criticisms, even if it seemed for quite some time that he could only do his best to deflect rather than confront them. Awareness of them still pricked his thinking enough for him to begin his response to the many points raised about his work at the Slant Symposium with a response, if not a reply, to one of Thompson's points: 'I would therefore agree that in this sense the problem of

a common culture is the problem of revolutionary politics' (Williams 1968c: 297).²⁴ But it was only with The_Country_and_the_City that he sought to refute the criticisms, though this is not a dimension of the study that Williams ever foregrounded, or that to my knowledge, has been remarked on by other critics. Yet it is essential to understanding the argument of the book as a whole.

The Country House Ideology

Critics have followed Williams in emphasising the institutional context of The_Country_and_the_City. Like Modern_Tragedy, it was 'a very antagonistic book' (1979: 304), and one whose starting-point - the 'much discussed question of how to read the English country-house poems' (303) - was grounded firmly in Cambridge English. The 'Country House Poem' was the topic of one of the optional examinations that could be taken in Part Two of the English Tripos, and the germs of the book as a whole can be found in the lectures he gave on this topic as early as 1967.²⁵ (Williams 1967a, 1967b) We can take G.R. Hibbard's 1956 essay, 'The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth Century' as an exemplary instance of the 'particular literary orthodoxy' Williams set out to challenge (304).²⁵

Hibbard constructed his argument in terms of the orthodox idea of literary history as the formal history of literary genres and traditions. The 'country house poem' forms a 'thin but clearly defined tradition' in English literature, a tradition of poems

which are written in praise of 'the English country house and of a whole way of life of which the country house was the centre'. This 'homogenous body of poetry' (Hibbard 1956: 159) extends from Ben Jonson through Andrew Marvell and stretches as far as Pope's writing. While there is no doubt that this poetry owes a 'considerable debt to Latin poetry', Hibbard is confident that it is a poetry best described in the particular sense of Augustan that literary criticism has given to seventeenth and eighteenth century English writing. 'It is truly Augustan', writes Hibbard

in the sense that it voices and defines the value of a society conscious of its own achievement of a civilized way of living, and conscious also of the forces that threatened to undermine and overthrow that achievement. The function of the poet in this society was to make it aware of itself; and because the poet had a function the relation between poet and patron in these poems is sound and wholesome. (Hibbard 1956: 159)

In this way, the essay repeats and exemplifies the founding claims for literature and for literary criticism of the Cambridge English project. Leavis had earlier expressed something of this same stress on the image of an achieved society with his own view of the Common Reader of the eighteenth century. Take, for instance, the following passage from his seminal text Education and the University (1943):

The acquiring of taste is probably more difficult today than it ever was before. Consider for contrast the eighteenth century. Not only were there fewer books to read, fewer topics and fewer distractions; the century enjoyed the advantages of a homogeneous - a real - culture. So Johnson could defer to the ultimate authority of the Common Reader. For the Common Reader represented, not the great heart of the people, but the competent, the cultivated, in general; and these represented the cultural tradition and the standards of taste it informed. And the competent, with their more-than-individual judgement, their better-than-individual taste, were common, for to be born into a homogeneous culture is to move among signals of limited variety, illustrating one predominant pervasive ethos, grammar and idiom and to acquire discrimination as one moves...

[Today] There is no Common Reader: the tradition is dead.

[Leavis 1943: 106-7])

This representation of the eighteenth century is made for the twentieth: Today the acquiring of taste is more difficult than it was: consider for contrast the eighteenth century. Within this focus of attention and argument, eighteenth century culture is everything which twentieth century culture is not: 'a homogeneous - a real - culture'. But it is at the point of this assertion that we have to begin reading very carefully indeed, and asking questions where Leavis appears to be giving the answers. What does Leavis mean by 'a homogeneous - a real - culture'?

On the surface, what he wishes to say is clear enough, and a casual reading of the passage might paraphrase as follows. The eighteenth century enjoyed a homogenous culture, one in which there was enough agreement and consensus to assure to the critic, a critic like Johnson, the position of a Common Reader: 'Johnson could defer ultimately to the authority of the Common Reader.' Now, today, 'there is no Common Reader: the tradition is dead.' Of course, in Leavis's more extended argument, the role of the twentieth century critic is to work towards that common culture again - precisely the point where the contradictions of the passage itself emerge.

For what we can then remark, in a second moment of analysis, is some confusion around the critic's position and the question of cultural authority. Johnson could ultimately defer to the authority of the Common Reader; but, once that is said, the question of just who that Common Reader is, and where that authority can be said to properly reside, comes to the fore. The Common Reader, writes Leavis, 'represented, not the great heart of the people, but the competent, the cultivated, in general.' What now of the homogeneity - the consensual unity of opinion - of a real culture? For this is now a culture divided between 'the great heart of the people' and 'the competent, the cultivated, in general' - between in fact critics (for the terms are the terms of Leavis's own critical project of minority culture) and the rest. So that Johnson defers to the ultimate authority of the critic, a critic who represents himself as representative, as the Common

Reader. In other words, in the end, Johnson, the critic, can ultimately defer to - himself. The eighteenth century finally enjoys a real culture because it somehow embodies the project of vanguard minority culture that is Leavis's own project in the twentieth.

The work of representation here is to represent the eighteenth century as the age of the common reader, the age of a homogeneous, a real, culture. Such a representation of the eighteenth century necessarily involves the elision of social and cultural divisions in the name of an impossible homogeneity, whose passing is regretted only in the name of seeking to bring it about again. There is no Common Reader: the tradition is dead - but Long live the tradition, let us revive the common reader, that is, let us revive the culture of criticism which can create critics in the image of common readers. For the literary critic of the twenties and thirties, and beyond, the eighteenth century represented an image of a stable, orderly and harmonious society to set against the fragmented world of modern commercial culture, of Leavis's 'techno-Benthamite' civilization.

Williams set himself clearly against any idea of tradition, and any such consequent system of representation. 'When I first went to Cambridge,' he remarked in 1967, in a lecture which outlines the main arguments of the book:

I was offered the interpretation I am now rejecting: a convention of rural order, of Old England, against industrial disorder and the modern world. I had the strongest personal reasons for doubting it, but it has taken me many years to reach the point where I can try to say, intellectually, where it was wrong. (1967a: 632)

Such a 'convention of rural order' structured Leavis's arguments about Augustan culture as it did his broader opposition between minority culture and mass civilization; and it also comes through very strongly in Hibbard's whole argument, with its casual assumption of the 'sound and wholesome relation' between poet and patron.

As Truth will paint it

Ben Jonson's poem 'Penshurst' presents a useful site for some elaboration of Williams's critical relation to orthodox readings of rural writing. First published in 1616, the poem is written in praise of the great house where Sidney had once lived, and in which he had begun to write his Arcadia in 1580. In Hibbard's reading, Jonson's poem 'represents the norm, slightly idealized, but still the norm' (Hibbard 1956: 159) of the relations between poet and patron, landowner and peasant in the seventeenth century. The country house of Penshurst is the 'embodiment of a natural bond between lord and tenant' (164), and a poem such as this

exemplifies a social and moral order which we, in the mass-democracy and mass culture of the twentieth century, have lost.

But to an alert reader, Hibbard's phrase 'slightly idealized' gives away the game. Such a reading of the poem is actually a refusal to read it. As Williams notes, the first thing to notice about a poem like Jonson's 'Penshurst' (or, for that matter, Carew's 'To Saxham' (1638)), is that this particular country house is not given to represent the norm of available hospitality; it is rather treated as the exception to a general practice of meanness and deprivation. He pays particular attention to the role of negative identification in the poems - Penshurst and Saxham are in fact defined against unmentioned other houses and hospitalities. 'The morality is not, when we look into it, the fruit of the economy; it is a local stand and standard against it' he argues (42), and sums up:

Any mystification, however, requires effort. The world of Penshurst or of Saxham can be seen as a moral economy only by conscious selection and emphasis. And this is just what we get: not only in the critical reading I have referred to, but in Jonson's and Carew's actual poems. There were of course social reasons for that way of seeing: the identification of the writers, as guests, with the social position of their hosts, consuming what other men had produced. But a traditional image, already becoming complicated, was an indispensable poetic support. (44)

It is precisely the effort involved in mystification which gives literary writing its defining textual density. This textual density prevents literary writing from holding any secure place in any simple category of reflection or presentation, and similarly withholds from it any status as direct evidence in historical inquiry. Literature belongs in the category of representation, and as such, any description which literary writing has to offer always needs to be understood in relation to the fact of address, and the consequent idealizations and mystifications which are likely to accompany this. With his analysis of pastoral writing, Williams anticipates the theoretical point he was to find expressed with such force and clarity in the writings of Volosinov, and which he was to insist on as a central component of his own theory of cultural materialism, as we shall see in the following chapter.

A central component of this general mystification - and one that has since become the common starting point for a whole generation of critics - is quite simply the removal or displacement of the fact of labour from the poems in question.²⁶ Williams writes of the 'magical extraction of the curse of labour' from the world of the poems, and how this is often achieved by 'a simple extraction of the existence of labourers' (45). Against this way of seeing, or better, this refusal to see, he quotes the poet-labourer Stephen Duck on 'the cheat' of the whole thing, and sums up:

It is this way of seeing that really counts. Jonson looks out over the fields of Penshurst and sees, not work, but a land yielding of itself....To call this a natural order is then an abuse of language. It is what the poems are: not country life but social compliment; the familiar hyperboles of the aristocracy and its attendants. (46)

The Revd. George Crabbe - in many ways the point of reference and identification for Williams's own account - was right.²⁷ He opens Chapter Three with a couplet taken from the second book of Crabbe's poem The Village, originally published in May 1783:

No longer truth, though shown in verse, disdain,
But own the Village Life a life of pain. (Crabbe 1851: 118)

For Williams, Crabbe's work is crucial to any assessment of the pastoral tradition, including the Country House poems, because it sets out to position itself against the mediating power of existing conventions, and refuses to simply repeat the 'Mechanic echoes of Mantuan song' (1851: 114). It thus raises the central question: the conflict and opportunity afforded by the inevitable discrepancies between 'experience' and 'conventional seeing', the question of 'perspective'. For in order to 'own' - to own up to, to be willing to admit, and, crucially, to articulate - that the Village Life was, in reality, a 'life of pain' meant challenging the poetic conventions which had done their best to disown and

disavow that fact. Crabbe takes the first and necessary step in grasping the existence and force of literary convention; while Williams pursues the second - to see that any convention is itself grounded in questions of social positioning and social understanding - just the questions of 'mystification' (Williams's preferred term) which the book as a whole then goes on to examine.

The chapter closes - in a pointed alternative to Hibbard's reading of Herrick - with an analysis of 'The Hock-Cart'. Here, the reality of labour is acknowledged in the 'rough hands' which perform the 'tough labours'. But the centre of the poem lies less with the peasant workers than in the recipient of its formal address - the Right Honourable Lord Mildmaye, Earl of Westmorland. As Williams observes, Herrick 'places himself between the lord and the labourers to make explicit (what in Jonson and Carew had been implicit and mystified) the governing social relations' (47). While the labourers are allowed the brief respite and pleasure of drinking the lord's health, it is only to refresh themselves for a moment and then, as Herrick emphasizes, to get back to work. 'It is perhaps not surprising' notes Williams

that The_Hock-Cart is less often quoted, as an example of a natural and moral economy, than To_Penshurst_or_To_Saxham. Yet all that is in question is the degree of consciousness of real processes. What Herrick embarrassingly intones is what Jonson and Carew mediate. It is a social order, and a consequent way of seeing, which we are not now likely to forget. (47).

In many ways, these comments can serve to sum up the whole impetus of The Country and the City. At stake is the question of 'the degree of consciousness of real processes': Williams argues against readings like Hibbard's, which, in representing the eighteenth century (or any other) as the time of a 'homogeneous - a real - culture', fail to engage with these processes, and are blind to just the kind of social conflicts which Williams's own critics had charged him with being blind to. In the chapters which follow he deepens and extends his general argument, urging the need to understand the historical processes to which the literary texts are in part a response, and therefore to grasp the ideological force of literary convention.

The Observer Embodied

From Chapter 14, 'Change in the City' through to Chapter 20, 'The Figure in the City', Williams examines the dynamics, continuities and shifts in the representation of London from the early eighteenth and up to the twentieth century. He rejects any too easy a contrast between 'the fiction of the city and the fiction of the country' in which '[i]n the city kind, experience and community would be essentially opaque; in the country kind, essentially transparent', arguing that 'in realizing the new fact of the city, we must be careful not to idealize the old and new facts of the country' (202). The key point concerns the positionality of the writing subject:

For what is knowable is not only a function of objects - of what is there to be known. It is also a function of subjects, of observers - of what is desired and what needs to be known. And what we then have to see, as throughout, in the country writing, is not only the reality of the rural community; it is the observer's position in and towards it; a position which is part of the community being known. (202-3)

In other words, in the village 'as in the city there is division of labour, there is the contrast of social position, and then necessarily there are alternate points of view' (203). Williams illustrates this through a fine comparison between the work of Jane Austen and George Eliot, starting with a characteristically wry observation that, for Jane Austen, neighbours 'are not the people actually living nearby; they are the people living a little less nearby who, in social recognition, can be visited' (203). With George Eliot, the matter stands differently. The 'knowable community' of Austen's novelistic world is, as Williams notes, 'socially selected'; but 'what it then lacks in full social reference it gains in an available unity of language' (206-7). It is just this unity which is lacking in Eliot. 'There is a new kind of break in the texture of the novel,' writes Williams, 'an evident failure of continuity between the necessary language of the novelist and the recorded language of many of the characters' (207) and this, he argues, can be attributed to the 'very recognition of conflict, of the existence of classes, of divisions

and contrasts of feeling and speaking [which] makes a unity of idiom impossible' (207).

With these and similar observations, Williams sought to distance himself from the criticisms of a Thompson or a Kiernan. By trying to show and assert the importance of the social positionality of the subject, and how this comes through in problems of narrative texture and discursive idiom, he demonstrated the ways in which a reading and analysis of literary tradition could demonstrate the existence, functioning, and consequences of a conflictual and class-differentiated culture. This same positionality of the subject, and the related question of the observer's perspective, the observer, is similarly crucial to representations of the city.

Williams draws out some of its implications through an analysis of marginal and non-canonical writers such as Alexander Somerville, Joseph Archer, and Richard Jefferies ('no neutral observer...[if] at times the committed writer...at times the class reporter or even the party hack' (235)), as well as the better known work of novelists such as Dickens, Hardy and Gissing. What is decisive, though, is the development he sketches in Chapter 20, 'The Figure in the City', where he argues that 'Perception of the new qualities of the modern city had been associated, from the beginning, with a man walking, as if alone, in its streets' (280).

In Blake, in Wordsworth, in Dickens, Gaskell, through Baudelaire, Balzac and Dostoievsky, we read of this common figure. Williams's main focus is on the question raised by his phrase 'as if alone', for the city experience can always be read, he affirms, in either of two ways: as

an affirmation of common humanity, past the barriers of crowded strangeness; or into an emphasis of isolation, of mystery - an ordinary feeling become a terror. (281)

Though the nineteenth century writers explore both alternatives, it is the latter which becomes dominant. As this happens, the representation of the city tends to lose the firmness and solidity of its empirical and referential qualities, and to assume the implications of the symbolic. James Thomson's two poems 'The Doom of the City' (1857) and the more famous 'The City of Dreadful Night' (1870-73) exemplify a shift in which

Struggle, indifference, loss of purpose, loss of meaning - features of nineteenth-century social experience and of a common interpretation of the new scientific world-view - have found, in the City, a habitation and a name. For the city is not only, in this vision, a form of modern life; it is the physical embodiment of a decisive modern consciousness. (287)

- a modern consciousness which is traced through Eliot's poetry, and across the atomised subjectivities of Virginia Woolf and James Joyce.²⁸ In the end, writes Williams, the choice is between this atomised subjectivity, which tends to take refuge in myth, and the development of a more fully collective consciousness, the consciousness which can power social improvement and ultimately revolution. 'Out of the cities' he concludes,

came these two great and transforming modern ideas: myth, in its variable forms; revolution, in its variable forms. But they are better seen as alternative responses, for in a thousand cities, they are in sharp, direct and necessary conflict. (296)

Framed in this way, 'the images of country and city' examined by the book (347), amount to no less than a certain history - a literary history - of capitalism itself since 'capitalism, as a mode of production, is the basic process of most of what we know as the history of country and city' (363). With this assertion, Williams seeks to connect the 'limited inquiry' of The_Country_and_the_City - and even the 'country and the city within a single tradition' (368), largely that of Great Britain - with the pressing issues of contemporary politics and the wider forces of imperialism and a now global capitalism.²⁹ In so doing, he is defending the claims of literary analysis for politics against both his apolitical opponents in English studies, and against his Marxist critics in the discipline of history, who saw his training

in literary studies as the source of his conceptual failings (Kiernan 1959: 78, Thompson 1961: 25). But not content with defence only through defensiveness, he also turns to the attack.

For this same opposition between country and city has also played a role in Marxist theory and analysis. Marxism doesn't allow an intellectual vantage point or improved perspective outside of the arguments under consideration. It is itself fully caught up in the system of representation he describes, and the role of the structuring opposition between town and country within it has not, he argues, enjoyed sufficient critical attention. In a famous passage in The Communist Manifesto, Marx and Engels wrote of how the bourgeoisie

has subjected the country to the rule of the town. It has created enormous cities, has greatly increased the urban population as compared with the rural, and has thus rescued a considerable part of the population from the idiocy of rural life. Just as it has made the country dependent on the towns, so it has made barbarian and semi-barbarian countries dependent on the civilized ones, nations of peasants on nations of bourgeois, the East on the West.

(Marx and Engels ([1888]: 71-2)

Here, Marx and Engels retain the bourgeois opposition between town and country in the contrast between civilization and 'the idiocy of rural life'. This opposition is echoed by Trotsky, who

saw the history of capitalism as 'the victory of town over country' (363); and in the end the structure of this opposition enabled 'one of the most terrible phases in the whole history of rural society' (364): Stalin's programme of modernization and industrialization, and his self-styled "victory" over the peasants' (364). Ultimately, argues Williams, this 'major distortion in the history of communism was erected' on just the 'kind of confidence in the singular values of modernization and civilization' that was the yield of the town and country opposition.³⁰

And yet, more recently, in the process of the Cuban and Chinese Revolutions, Williams finds that another emphasis is being made, one in which 'the exploited rural and colonial populations became the main sources of continued revolt' (365). This emphasis corresponds to 'a formulation which is at once the most exciting, the most relevant and yet the most undeveloped in the whole revolutionary argument' (365). Theoretically, in other words, it can be stated in the broad terms of Williams's distinctive version of the New Left project - at its centre the idea of a common culture as the starting-point and rallying call of contemporary political action as 'not only analytic but programmatic response: on new forms of decision-making, new kinds of education, new definitions and practices of work, new kinds of settlement and land-use' (366). In the end, he writes, the 'division and opposition of city and country'

industry and agriculture, in their modern forms, are the critical culmination of the division and specialization of labour which, though it did not begin with capitalism, was developed under it to an extraordinary and transforming degree. Other forms of the same fundamental division are the separation between mental and manual labour, between administration and operation, between politics and social life. The symptoms of this division can be found at every point in what is now our common life: in the idea and practice of social classes; in conventional definitions of work and of education; in the physical distribution of settlements; and in temporal organization of the day, the week, the year, the lifetime. Much of the creative thinking of our time is an attempt to re-examine each of these concepts and practices. It is based on the conviction that the system which generates and is composed by them is intolerable and will not survive. (366)

As the NLR team note, seen in these terms the book 'represents a progression beyond the characteristic problematic of classical Marxism' (1979: 315). And yet, at the same time, they are curious as to why this dimension of the book as a 'very powerful, even polemical, corrective to a main tradition of revolutionary socialism' is down-played. Why is there no 'properly extended engagement' with the tradition, why is discussion of it confined to only 'a few paragraphs' (316)? Williams replies in terms of his particular 'biographical trajectory', and the limitations of his 'curious entry' into Marxist culture as an undergraduate

student in the 1940s, a statement which is best understood as at least a partial confession of (situated) ignorance. This, I think, is a part of the truth.

But what Williams doesn't mention is what I believe is crucial to the structuring arguments of The Country and the City: the particular ways in which a significant dimension of the book's address is determined by the desire to respond at last to the earlier Marxist criticisms of his work, the criticisms of Kiernan and Thompson. This dimension, his argument with 'official Marxist culture', just as much as his opposition to 'official English culture' is what drives the writing and arguments of The Country and the City, though it is characteristic that the former is done so obliquely. Nonetheless it is important to recognize this dimension of the study which takes the Marxist criticisms levelled at his own earlier work - the charges of analysing literary texts without due regard to conflict and context, of presenting them as the work of 'disembodied intelligences' - and turns them against the orthodox literary historical accounts of rural and metropolitan writing. In so doing, Williams replies implicitly to the criticisms he never responds to explicitly, in a sense insulating himself against these this criticisms by projecting them out onto orthodox literary history. And at the same time, not content with this purely defensive measure, he goes on the attack by criticising Marxist tradition itself by placing it within the framework of literary history, the history of representations of the country and the city that the book

criticises. Just as he had done earlier by placing Marx's thinking, or the English appropriation of it, within Romanticism, he places Marxism firmly within Literature, and so asserts the force of his own thinking and analysis against his leftist critics.³¹

With these three related works - Modern Tragedy, The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence, and especially with The Country and the City, Williams found himself writing a literary criticism which was both professional and personal, academic and political, scholarly and yet committed. E.P. Thompson's warning that The Country and the City was 'not a conventional work of scholarship, and whoever reads it this way will end up in disagreement and irritation' was correct, though Thompson's insight can be extended. The book was deliberately not a conventional work of scholarship in two senses. First, it set out to criticise the practice and assumptions of conventional criticism, and did so in a powerful and revealing way which helped to open the way, particularly for an invigorated and more politically and historically aware mode of literary studies in general, and perhaps of eighteenth century studies in particular.³² Second, as its detractors noted, it was only in part a conventional work of scholarship: its autobiographical stance challenged the position of neutral observer associated with academic criticism, and, in this sense, Williams's work anticipates - though in a much more historically nuanced mode - some of the contemporary forms of reader response theory.³³ Thus while some readers did end up in

'disagreement and irritation', many more found a strong appeal in what Williams had described as the intellectual resolution of an experientially generated problem with academic orthodoxy (1967a: 632). Finally, here was a criticism which was textual and political at one and the same time, fully able to place and argue a political question in the frame of literary history:

There is only one real question. Where do we stand, with whom do we identify, as we read the complaints of disturbance, as this order in its turn is broken up? Is it with the serfs, the bordars and cotters, the villeins; or with the abstracted order to which, through successive generations, many hundreds of thousands of men were never more than instrumental? And supposing we could make that choice rightly - though the historian who really places himself with the majority of men, and tries to see the world as they were experiencing it, is always improbable - where do we identify, as the order develops into new kinds of order? (52-3)

Conclusion

Called upon to sum up the theoretical impetus of The Country and the City, Williams stressed the idea of representation - a term which doesn't appear as a term of art in the book itself. 'The emphasis of the book is certainly not on literary texts as records, but as representations of history - including what I am still realist enough to call mis-representations' (Williams 1979a:

304). Representation - perhaps the key term in much theoretical and political writing of the 1970s, and yet a term never theorised as such by Williams, despite being the conceptual centre of his arguments against the formalisms of Cambridge English.³⁴ In this chapter, we have seen how some of the depth and complexity of this sense of representation as it developed through Williams's arguments against the reductive senses of tragedy, against trivialising ideas of form in the novel, and against shallow discussions of the long opposition between town and country. At the centre of this is the theory of the embodied observer - his argument against the literary formalism of Cambridge English, and his response to his Marxist critics. As Stuart Hall later noted, with characteristic insight, The Country and the City represented 'a different kind of critical practice' for Williams, perhaps 'the most challenging of Williams's efforts...to put to use his own specialized notions of what is involved in seeing literary form historically' (Hall 1989b: 64).

Seeing literary form historically. This meant seeing the subject - that key term of seventies' theory - as embodied in, but not absolutely determined by, the signifying systems through which experience was made into active consciousness. Or such was to be the theoretical argument around what Williams specified as the constitutive force of language which was to be at the centre of his next major work, Marxism and Literature - a work in which, as he put it, 'while [it] is almost wholly theoretical, every position in it was developed from the detailed practical work I

have previously undertaken' (Williams 1977a: 6). What it is important to stress in retrospect is that this 'practical work' - the development of Williams's anti-formalist case - was never couched simply in the dualistic terms attributed to him by some of his more recent critics.

In the course of the NLR interviews, for instance, Williams is questioned about the role and status of 'experience' in his work, and its absence from the first editions of Keywords is taken as a significant one, indicating Williams's containment in the Leavisite theoretical paradigm. Doesn't the term, and Williams's use of it, 'presuppose a kind of pristine contact between the subject and the reality in which the subject is immersed'? (Williams 1979: 167). Williams denies this, and notes that in current debates, largely conducted in the accents of Althusser, experience has become 'a forbidden word, whereas what we ought to say about it is that it is a limited word, for there are many kinds of knowledge it will never give us, in any of its ordinary senses' (172). While Williams shows willing to take his interviewer's point that certain kinds of historical process are not immediately experienced and can be described only from a conceptual or scientific discourse, he goes on to emphasise his rejection of the too scientific a position this may entail. 'Just as I am moving in that direction' he notes,

I see a kind of appalling parody...beyond me - the claim that all experience is ideology, that the subject is wholly an ideological illusion, which is the last stage of formalism - and I even start to pull back a bit. (172)

In fact, as Williams points out, from as far back as The Long Revolution, he had emphasised the fact that 'there is no natural seeing and therefore cannot be a direct and unmediated contact with reality' (167).³⁵ But it looked like something of the same battle would have to be refought and rethought, this time, not on the grounds of literary studies alone, but on the terrain of the new 'critical structuralism.' This emergent discourse - usually associated in Britain with the strengths and weaknesses of Althusserianism - and Williams's understanding of it as a characteristic 'last stage of formalism' would be the focus of his next major work, Marxism and Literature.

Ch 5 Marxisms: Contra Caudwell, Against Althusser

Most of this study assumes something of the narrative shape of an intellectual biography, charting Williams's academic trajectory from its beginnings in the 1940s through to the work completed before his unexpectedly early death in 1988. This chapter interrupts the flow of that narrative in order to discuss one particular, and particularly problematic, line of thought: the question of Williams's relations to Marxism. More precisely, it examines his changing relations to a changing body of work, as someone writing throughout as a committed socialist whose professional affiliations lay with literary and cultural criticism, to a body of thought whose own internal history has itself been composed of a wide and often competing variety of definitions and re-definitions, interpretations and re-interpretations, applications, developments and utilisations.

Most readers of Williams's work have been struck by its ambivalent relation to Marxism.¹ This comes through in any selection from the archive of statements which have attempted to describe or identify it. For sure, The Country and the City (1973) and Marxism and Literature (1977) are usually regarded as key works in the Western Marxist tradition of cultural and aesthetic theory.² With Georg Lukacs and Lucien Goldmann, Williams shared a commitment to teasing out the relations between history and form; alongside Sartre and Gramsci, he explored the ideas of commitment and hegemony; like Benjamin, Brecht, and the

Frankfurt school, he sought to understand the dynamics of contemporary culture. Throughout his career, he argued for a better understanding of the constitutive force of culture in social reproduction than orthodox Marxist theory appeared to allow. It is somehow typical that while Martin Jay, in his casually encyclopaedic study Marxism and Totality, observes that Williams is 'perhaps the only English Marxist able to hold his own with his continental peers', he refrains from any substantial discussion of that work (Jay 1984: 9)³. Certainly, while it is customary to place or claim Williams as a major thinker in the Marxist tradition, it is just as usual to mark out his differences and deviations from it. The person who appears as the 'Communist Professor of Communications' of one description did 'not even seem to be aware of what Marxism is' in another.⁴

Critics sympathetic to both Williams and Marxism have at times been eager to bring them together; others, more concerned to keep them apart. The former have sometimes found a means of resolving at least one element of this ambivalence by dividing his thinking on Marxism into two distinct phases, a first stage of hostility towards Marxist theory followed by a second moment of greater accomodation to it. In this view, 1973 is usually seen as the decisive moment, with the publication of the lecture 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory' and the study The Country and the City. These mark the Williams's entry or re-entry into a more fully Marxist mode of intellectual enquiry. Thus Aijaz Ahmad, whose In_Theory has been one of the most passionate

and consistent attempts of recent years to respond, from a Marxist position, to Anglo-American post-structuralist and 'postcolonial' theory, writes of Williams's 'ambiguous relationship...with theoretical Marxism', but has no doubt of his adoption of 'increasingly Marxist perspectives', or the way that his intellect 'kept moving leftward' (Ahmad 1994: 49, 47, 48), and identifies 'the real turn' as coming 'in the mid 1970s' (49). Similarly, the editors of the Marxist Literary Theory: A Reader suggest that '[f]rom a socialist humanist or Left-Leavisite approach, Williams's early critical distance from Marxism had, by the 1970s, developed into a more explicit rapprochement with Marxism' (Eagleton and Milne 1996: 242). This in turn echoes Eagleton's own earlier judgement of The Country and the City as 'the only one of his texts in which Marxist positions constitute the very terms of debate' (Eagleton 1976: 41). And this whole general judgement seems to receive confirmation in Williams's own statement, in 1979, that 'now I wouldn't want to write on any question without tracing the history of it in Marxist thought' (1979: 316).

Or at least this view seems confirmed just as long as we do not read the full sentence. 'I wouldn't want to write on any question without tracing the history of it in Marxist thought', but, or as Williams put it and, 'and then seeing where I stood in relation to that' (1979: 316). Where did Williams 'stand'? The verb itself is somehow characteristic of that life-long assertion of critical independence which sometimes made it just as difficult to identify his friends or his foes. 'Seeing where I stand': the

assumption is that the stance is already there, just waiting to be found, but separate from the Marxist position. As what he knew as Marxism changed, did Williams's stance towards it change? We need to examine the available evidence with some care, and this chapter therefore focuses on his accounts of his relation to Marxism in Culture and Society and in Marxism and Literature: that is, Williams contra Caudwell and against Althusser.

We saw in Chapter One how the rejection of the available forms of Marxist literary criticism provoked both a major intellectual crisis for the young Williams, yet also provided a significant starting point for his work as a whole. Chapter Three argued that Culture and Society, published in 1958, was in part his response to that crisis, and seemed to him - along with The Long Revolution, which followed in 1961 - to provide a sense of what politically progressive work in literary studies could become. Chapter Five of Part III of Culture and Society, 'Marxism and Culture', represents Williams's first direct and systematic attempt at understanding the nature, force, limits and possibilities presented by Marxist theory meant to him, and how he understood it in relation to his own developing sense of the reach and force of the idea of culture.

Marxism and Culture

There are three sections to the chapter 'Marxism and Culture' in Culture and Society. The first deals with what Marx himself

had to say on questions of literary and cultural theory, and then notes how this was modified - or, as Williams stresses, 'codified' - in the later work of Engels, and of writers such as Plekhanov; the second focuses on the English Marxist literary critical tradition of the thirties; and the third - which I shall not discuss in any detail - examines some of the implications of Lenin's 1905 essay 'What is to be Done?', arguing against the authoritarian implications of Lenin's vanguardist position, which Williams sees as yet another example of the contemptuous attitude towards 'the masses' which Culture and Society as a whole aimed to identify and criticise. Central to all this is the Marxist literary criticism which Williams had learned as a young member of the Communist Party, and had tried to apply in his undergraduate studies, but abandoned under the pressure of the discipline's internal constraints of evidence and interpretation. ⁵ This is the object of the second section of the essay, which we shall therefore examine first.

According to Williams, the Marxist interpretation of culture 'did not become widely effective in England until the 'thirties' (Williams [1958]: 265). The work of Christopher Caudwell is taken to exemplify English Marxist criticism, and, for most readers, it is the sense of Caudwell's failings and limitations as a literary critic which comes through most strongly in his discussion. It is one of the few moments when the famously balanced and even-handed tone of assessment which characterises Culture and Society breaks down in the description of Caudwell's work as 'not even specific

enough to be wrong' ([1958]: 277): Caudwell 'has little to say, of actual literature, that is even interesting' (Williams 1958: 277).. ⁶

Of course, this focus on 'actual literature' is inherited from the Scrutiny reservations about Marxist literary criticism in general, and regarding Caudwell in particular. H.A. Mason's caustic review of Illusion and Reality in 1938 was typical of the Scrutiny stance. Mason found a 'surprising staleness and tameness in their [the Marxist] approach to literature' (Mason 1938: 429). Books like Caudwell's were 'essentially amateur works and consequently the proportion of unrelated generalisation is high...the book [Illusion and Reality] does not get anywhere' (429, 433). Behind Mason, there were Leavis's magisterial pronouncements. As Mulhern put it, quoting Leavis, 'Marxist criticism...became a byword in Scrutiny for its "shamelessly uncritical use of vague abstractions and verbal counters."' (Mulhern 1979: 159).. ⁷

Williams's critical rejection of Marxist literary criticism is then in the first instance generated from within this circle of professional literary critical judgement. 'What many of us have felt about Marxist cultural interpretation' (my emphasis),

is that it seems committed, by Marx's formula, to a rigid methodology, so that if one wishes to study, say, a national literature, one must begin with the economic history with which

the literature co-exists, and then put the literature to it, to be interpreted in its light. (281)

And though he refers more widely to Alick West's Crisis and Criticism (1937), Ralph Fox's The Novel and the People (1937), and the collection of essays edited by the poet Cecil Day-Lewis, The Mind in Chains (1937), it is Caudwell's work which is singled out for particular discussion. ⁸ Illusion and Reality (1937), Studies in a Dying Culture (1938), and Further Studies in a Dying Culture (1949) are all marked for Williams by the inevitable reductionism of too rigid and mechanical an application of Marx's base and superstructure formula. ⁹

Caudwell's Illusion and Reality has chapters on 'The Development of Modern Poetry', and 'The Future of Poetry'. These sketch the phases of the history of English poetry from the period of 'primitive accumulation', through the industrial revolution, to the present 'decline of capitalism'. The chapter 'English Poets' closes with a table which, in Williams's phrase, 'puts' the literature to the economic history, 'to be interpreted in its light' ([1958a], 281), and it charts the main phases of Britain's economy alongside first the 'General Characteristics', and then the 'Technical Characteristics' of poetry. When the economy in Britain was at the stage of primitive accumulation, the 'dynamic force of individuality ... is expressed in poetry' generally, and this comes through as technique in the prevalence of a 'iambic rhythm' which expresses 'the heroic nature of the bourgeois

illusion' and so 'is allowed to flower luxuriantly and naturally; it indicates the free and boundless development of the personal will' (Caudwell [1937] . . . : 117).¹⁰

For Williams, undoubtedly remembering the objections posed by Tillyard in his undergraduate tutorials, this kind of sketch is little more than fantasy. Any such a rigid application of the structure and superstructural model 'leads very quickly to abstraction and unreality' ([1958]: 281). He derides Caudwell's description of poetry since the fifteenth century as modern poetry, and modern poetry as capitalist poetry - 'the superstructure of the bourgeois revolution in production' in Caudwell's phrase (Caudwell [1937]: 55). 'To describe English life, thought and imagination in the past three hundred years simply as "bourgeois", to describe English culture now as "dying", is' he writes damningly, 'to surrender reality to a formula' ([1958]: 281-2). Such unreal and badly grounded ideas come through even more damagingly in the the related Marxist tendencies of prediction and prescription. Confident in the ultimate triumph of the proletariat, it is an easy step for Caudwell and others (though Williams refers only to Alick West, Ralph Fox, and Rex Warner, he is undoubtedly recollecting the Zhdanov of the Zoschenko Affair) to predict and then prescribe the nature of 'socialist realism'. This 'authoritative prescription' is just 'the kind of literary criticism which has made Marxism notorious' he notes (276); and, we can add, perhaps especially notorious amongst the literary

critics of the Cambridge English school in which Williams was trained.

A great deal of the acerbity of the tone in dealing with Caudwell comes, no doubt, from the projection on to him of Williams's own humiliation when trying to argue the Marxist line with Tillyard, and failing to convince. 'I was engaged in having to satisfy somebody who was professionally teaching a subject that my ideas were tenable and reasonable, and I could not. I was continually found out in ignorance, found out in confusion', recalled Williams (1979: 51). This humiliation is projected outwards, and turned onto Caudwell himself. 'It is not only that it is difficult' he writes

to have confidence in the literary qualifications of anyone who can give his account of the development of medieval into Elizabethan drama, or who can make his paraphrase of the 'sleep' line from Macbeth, but for the most part his discussion is not even specific enough to be wrong. (Williams [1958, a]: 277)

Caudwell's clumsy abstractions could not meet the discipline's demands for textual evidence. While Caudwell asserts that the history of drama in Britain was driven by the emergence of individuation as the effect of an increasing division of labour, he is unable to produce the detailed readings to support this assertion which would count as textual evidence in the explanatory

procedures of English studies. He asserts but cannot prove that Elizabethan tragedy emerges as the result of the alliance of the monarchy with the bourgeois class: 'the mystery moves to court and becomes the Elizabethan tragedy' (Caudwell [1937]: 257). This mechanical and impressionistic account of the drama is matched by the principles and practice of his textual analysis. What is striking is not so much the sheer clumsiness of Caudwell's paraphrase of Shakespeare's line - 'Sleep, that knots up the ravelled sleeve of care' becomes 'Slumber, that unties worry, which is like a piece of tangled knitting' - but rather the explanation that goes with it. For Caudwell, in a reductive adaption of Freud's distinction between manifest and latent content in The Interpretation of Dreams, this paraphrase

carries over most of the manifest content, but the affective tones which lurked in the associations of the words used have vanished. It is like a conjuring trick. The poet holds up a piece of the world and we see it glowing with a strange emotional fire. If we analyse it "rationally", we find no fire. Yet none the less, for ever afterwards, that piece of reality still keeps an afterglow about it, is still fragrant with emotional life. So poetry enriches external reality for us. (Caudwell [1937]: 214)

This impressionistic enthusiasm recalls the examples of bad critical writing which I.A. Richards demolished with glee in his Practical Criticism (1929). For the literary critic trained in

the practical criticism of a Richards, an Empson or a Leavis, the semiotic charge of poetry certainly did not resemble a 'conjuring trick', and the whole premise of the new practical criticism was that poetry could be analysed 'rationally'. Caudwell's impressionistic style of description - 'glowing with a strange emotional fire', 'fragrant with emotional life', 'afterglow' - was anathema to the careful semantic analysis of practical criticism. As Richards famously put it: 'The corrective [to such impressionistic criticism] is equally obvious - exercise in analysis and cultivation of the habit of regarding poetry as capable of explanation' (Richards [1929]: 216). Caudwell's literary analysis - like that of the other English Marxists - was unprofessional, unable to fit into the rules and structures of analysis and evidence provided by the paradigm of Cambridge English studies.

Yet it would be a mistake to assume that this stance of critical rejection, the result of Williams's internalisation of the new professional techniques of Cambridge English, provided the only frame for his discussion and assessment of Caudwell. Just as important was to seek to retrieve and extend some elements from the Marxist tradition in order to carry forward the critique of English studies themselves. In part, as we have seen in Chapter Three, this was generated through the focus on culture and communication. Crucial to Williams in this regard were some of the hotly contested debates around Caudwell's work conducted in the Modern Quarterly in 1951 and 1952. For in this debate,

Caudwell figures as just the opposite of what we have seen above: not the exponent of a rigid mechanical marxism, but the purveyor of what E.P. Thompson refers to as a "heretical" rejection of reflection-theory' (Thompson 1977: 265).¹¹

For Maurice Cornforth, doyen of Marxist cultural criticism in Britain, Caudwell's work appeared to challenge the most fundamental tenet of Marxism: the primacy of the material world.¹² 'It is a fundamental tenet of materialism' writes Cornforth,

(I quote Stalin and add my own italics) 'that the multifold phenomena of the world constitute different forms of matter in motion,' and 'that matter is primary, since it is the source of sensations, ideas, mind, and that mind is secondary, derivative, since it is a reflection of matter, a reflection of being' (cited in Thompson 1977: 240)

Caudwell's idea of an 'inner energy', which Williams connects to the Romantic heritage, is no more than a bourgeois idealism: 'The energy of man is itself a form of the motion of matter, just as the consciousness of man is a reflection of matter. Any other idea of energy or consciousness is idealism and mysticism' (cited in Thompson 1977: 248; Caudwell [1937]: 356). Viewed in this perspective, Caudwell is guilty of both.

For Williams, the 'hub' of this controversy - the charge of idealism - connects directly to his own arguments regarding culture. For Caudwell, art is valuable because the artist has the power to articulate 'new feelings as yet unformulated', to constitute new adaptations to reality. Artists are explorers, lonely individuals, ahead of their time: 'they are engaged in dragging into the social world realms at present non-social' (cited in Williams [1958a]; 278). For orthodox Marxists of the thirties like Cornforth, this is an idealist emphasis; it challenges the passive mode of reflective consciousness inherent in the structure and superstructure model. As Williams puts it:

in writing of this kind, it would seem that Marx's basic conception of the relation between 'the real foundation' and 'consciousness', and hence between structure and superstructure, is being revalued. (Williams [1958a]; 279)

In fact, this revaluation (a positive key term in the Cambridge English vocabulary) is a valuable aspect of much writing in the English Marxist tradition, both of the thirties and the fifties. Williams cites E.P. Thompson's comment on William Morris - 'Morris has not emphasized sufficiently the ideological role of art, its active agency in changing human beings and society as a whole, its agency in man's class-divided history' - to hammer the point home, and argues

it is surely surprising to find a Marxist criticizing Morris for seeing 'man's economic and social development always as the master-process'. It has normally been assumed that this was precisely what Marx taught, and the position Marxists wished to defend. One had understood that the arts were 'dependent upon social change' (273)

In the end, what he finds at work in the English Marxists is a significant debt to Romanticism in their conception of the value of art as an active force in social change: 'It certainly seems relevant to ask English Marxists who have interested themselves in the arts whether this is not Romanticism absorbing Marx, rather than Marx absorbing Romanticism' (274). In other words, at their best, the English Marxists owe more to the 'culture and society' tradition that is the topic of Williams's own study than to Marx - or at least to Marxism. 'In fact' he writes confidently:

as we look at the English attempt at a Marxist theory of culture, what we see is an interaction between Romanticism and Marx, between the idea of culture which is the major English tradition and Marx's brilliant revaluation of it. We have to conclude that the interaction is as yet far from complete.

(279-80)

This claim needs to be recognised for the challenging one that it is. It presents no less than a recasting or reframing of the orthodox conceptions of the central object of Marx's works. Most

Marxists would probably identify philosophy, history, politics, and economics - but not culture - as the main constituents of Marx's writing, and argue from that point regarding their relative weights in the causal hierarchy of his thought. Indeed, the history of just what 'orthodox marxism' may be lies in some measure in just these debates.¹³

Of course, Williams's recasting is in part supported by the significant emphasis that Marx came to place on the critique of political economy. His greatest work, the three volumes of the unfinished Capital (1869 -) is, after all, subtitled a 'Critique of Political Economy', and political economy is largely regarded as the British contribution to the three dimensions of Marx's project and formation, alongside the German philosophical idealism of Hegel and Feuerbach and the French socialism of Proudhon. Certainly the response to the great British and Scots political economists from Adam Smith through to Ricardo and Mill is a concern of many of the figures in Williams's culture and society canon. In this sense, some idea of culture as a component of the critique of political economy can indeed be said to be important to both, though in very different conceptual senses. But Williams's claim is, implicitly at least, far stronger than this. For the real claim is that the 'object' of Marx's thinking, the most appropriate name for the focus of his life and writings, was the idea of culture as Williams understood it. In any event, in his reading, the interest of the debate around Caudwell is that it exemplifies the problems of the whole Marxist paradigm: the

`general inadequacy among Marxists, in the use of "culture" as a term':

It normally indicates, in their writings, the intellectual and imaginative products of a society; this corresponds with the weak use of `superstructure'. 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, however, in the terms of Marx's original formulation: if one accepts `structure' and `superstructure', not as the terms of a suggestive analogy, but as descriptions of reality, the errors naturally follow. (282)

There were, as we have seen, plenty of such errors in Caudwell's work. And yet it had at least one one redeeming feature: the emphasis - entirely sympathetic to Williams's developing conception of creativity - on the agency of the creative artist. That this was precisely the emphasis which threatened Caudwell's status as a Marxist was more likely to attract Williams than not, and it is this emphasis which has been insufficiently appreciated in accounts of his relation to him. For sure, for the professional literary critic in Williams, Caudwell was worthless; but for the budding cultural theorist, certain aspects of his work were well worth absorbing.

Pro Caudwell

Indeed, too much emphasis has been placed on Williams's negative identification with Caudwell, and not enough on what Williams drew from him. Critics who have been alerted to the existence of a more positive relationship have been puzzled not to find it where they expected. Thus, R.J. Sullivan, in his study Christopher Caudwell, finds it 'especially disappointing' that the only attention Caudwell receives in Marxism and Literature is 'mention in a prefatory note', when his arguments, and particularly those concerning 'the part played by language in the formation of consciousness' considerably anticipate Williams's own, and especially so in his use of Volosinov (1988: 122).¹⁴ But this is to look in the wrong place. It was rather with The

Long Revolution in 1961, some sixteen years before Marxism and Literature, and only three years after the caustic comments in Culture and Society, that Caudwell's work began to appear to Williams in a much more positive light.¹⁹

Caudwell's redeeming features came through more strongly as Williams prepared the essays which made up The Long Revolution, and found he could 'read with him', rather than, as in Culture and Society, 'against him' (Williams 1979: 128). He found ready-made in Caudwell a powerful formulation of the dangers of Freudianism; and, more positively, his emphasis on the creative aspects of human subjectivity were taken up in the important chapter 'The Creative Mind' in The Long Revolution. Here the measure of

Caudwell's positive influence on Williams can be gauged by the way his arguments are taken up as a support for an absolutely crucial turn in the argument.¹⁵

'The Creative Mind' repeats and amplifies some of the discussion of the 'Romantic Artist' in Culture and Society (Williams: [1958 a]: 48-64). One of the major aims of Williams's cultural theory was to criticise the notion that creativity is the property only of a special kind of person, the artist.^{1b} Theories of art commonly oppose the 'exceptional seeing' of the artist to the 'natural seeing' of the ordinary person. This opposition has remained constant through the three major epistemological periods of Western culture - the Platonist, the Romantic, and the Modern; and only in the Modern period does it seem possible to go beyond it, and pay due respect to the power of education and cultural formation in helping to develop innate creativity. This emphasis on the natural creative powers of every human being is a central aspect of Williams's cultural politics.

He turns to psychology as a discipline which can offer an explanation of creativity grounded securely in empirical observation, rather than in the prejudices which have gathered around the figure of the creative artist. The explanation of perception 'as a process of the brain and the nervous system' is crucial, and the work of the psychologist and Reith lecturer J.Z. Young, is enlisted to support the main claim that creativity is

'not merely the artist's activity, but the activity of every human mind' ([1961a]: 33).

Young's emphasis on the centrality of communication was particularly attractive. For Young, the 'creative artist is an observer whose brain works in new ways, making it possible for him to convey information to others about matters that were not a subject for communication before. It is by search for means of communication that we sharpen our powers of observation. The discoveries of artist and scientist are exactly alike in this respect' ([1961a]: 44). Nothing could have better helped Williams in his task of 'demystifying' the long Western tradition of the artist's lonely creativity and special revelatory insight.

For what is excluded by these emphases is the essentially social nature of art. The dominant tradition

tacitly excludes communication, as a social fact. Yet communication is the crux of art, for any adequate description of experience must be more than a simple transmission; it must also include reception and response...The discovery of a means of communication is the discovery of a common meaning, and the artist's function, in many societies, is to be skilled in the means by which this meaning can continue to be experienced and activated...Since our way of seeing things is literally our way of living, the process of communication is in fact the process of community: the sharing of common meanings, and thence

common activities and purposes; the offering, reception and comparison of new meanings, leading to the tensions and achievements of growth and change. ([1961a], 46, 47, 55).

This was precisely the emphasis he found in Caudwell. Despite the orthodox denunciations of a Cornforth, the stress on the culturally constituted nature of human perception (it is 'impossible for us to assume that there is any reality experienced by man into which man's own observations and interpretations do not enter') is no mere idealism, insists Williams. As Caudwell's work, when properly understood, demonstrates:

the facts of perception in no way lead us to a late form of idealism; they do not require us to suppose that there is no kind of reality outside the human mind; they point rather to the insistence that all human experience is an interpretation of the non-human reality. But this, again, is not the duality of subject and object - the assumption on which almost all theories of art are based. We have to think, rather, of human experience as both objective and subjective, in one inseparable process. (36)

One inseparable process; both objective and subjective; not the duality of subject and object. With these phrases, and in this flow of argument, Williams sought to articulate a challenge to what Charles Taylor has described as the 'naturalist' outlook, a perspective from which all disciplines, including those in the

human sciences, wrongly seek to emulate the methods and methodologies of the natural sciences, often with crippling conceptual consequences. In particular, Taylor singles out the extremely impoverished views of human agency to be found in much psychological and ideological theory, and the related and common assumption of a disastrously instrumental conception of human language. As Taylor argues, in terms not too far removed from Williams's own later emphases in Marxism and Literature, 'language does not only depict ourselves and the world, it also helps constitute our lives' (Taylor 1985: 10).¹⁷

Williams found that Caudwell's essay 'Consciousness: A Study in Bourgeois Psychology' helped to approach some of the central problems of what was later to become a 'crisis of the subject'; in 1961, it provided the source for an authoritative statement of this process. Bourgeois psychology is wrong to separate consciousness from the world, consciousness changes 'as the world changes, not with it or separately from it but in mutually determining interaction with it' (Caudwell [1949]: 208-9, cited in Williams [1961a], 37); he then reiterates this in his own terms:

We cannot refer science to the object and art to the subject, for the view of human activity we are seeking to grasp rejects this duality of subject and object: the consciousness is part of the reality, and the reality is part of the consciousness, in the whole process of our living organization. (39)

That this central statement of this New Left epistemology owes so much to Caudwell reveals something of his importance to the formation of Williams's ideas on culture and communication.

Caudwell's work was Janus-faced for Williams. While one face gloomily confirmed the weakness and self-deception of Marxist literary criticism, the other offered some promise and allure. It presented the consistent interest and appeal which Marxist cultural theory could hold - when it wasn't too dogmatically Marxist. In the end, this double judgement on Caudwell perfectly reflects his judgement on Marxist cultural theory as a whole, and particularly what he sees as its confusions and self-contradictions around the explanatory status of the base and superstructure model. '[I]n one way or another' he sighs, 'the situation will have to be clarified':

Either the arts are passively dependent on social reality, a proposition which I take to be that of mechanical materialism, or a vulgar interpretation of Marx. Or the arts, as the creators of consciousness, determine social reality, the proposition which the Romantic poets sometimes advanced. Or finally, the arts, while ultimately dependent, with everything else, on the real economic structure, operate in part to reflect this structure and its consequent reality, to help or hinder the constant business of changing it. I find Marxist theories of culture confused because they seem to me, on different occasions and in different writers, to make use of

all these propositions as the need serves. (Williams [1958]: 274; his emphasis)

One lesson to be learned from Caudwell was the need to distinguish between the potential which Marxist theories of culture could offer, and the dead-end dogma which Marxist literary criticism had become in the hands of Communist Party ideologues like Cornforth, or, behind him, Zhdanov. But what had Marx himself had to say about all this? The first section of 'Marxism and Culture' offers a brief sketch of Marx's ideas, and then of their fall: how they were extended and codified - sometimes more richly, usually more reductively - in the 'scientific Marxism' of Engels and later, of Plekhanov.

Marxism versus Marx

Marx was certainly not a practitioner of 'what we would now know as Marxist literary criticism'; he 'outlined, but never fully developed a cultural theory' ([1958 : 265). Williams selects two major passages from Marx as the sources for this outline of a cultural theory. The first is the seminal paragraph from the 1859 Critique of Political Economy:

In the social production which men carry on they enter into definite relations that are indispensable and independent of their will; these relations of production correspond to a definite stage of development of their material powers of

production. The sum total of these relations of production constitutes the economic structure of society - the real foundation, on which rise legal and political superstructures and to which correspond definite forms of social consciousness. the mode of production in material life determines the general character of the social, 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.... With the change of the economic foundation the entire immense superstructure is more or less rapidly transformed. In considering such transformations the distinction should always be made between the material transformation of the economic conditions of production which can be determined with the precision of natural science, and the legal, political, religious, aesthetic, or philosophic - in short, ideological forms in which men become conscious of this conflict and fight it out. (cited in Williams [1958^a], 266)

The second, a paragraph from Marx's The Eighteenth Brumaire, in which Marx argues that 'Upon the several forms of property, upon the social conditions of existence, a whole superstructure is reared of various and peculiarly shaped feelings, illusions, habits of thought, and conceptions of life' (cit 266). What Williams is quick to argue, putting to work the skills of the textual analyst, is

Even if we accept the formula of structure and superstructure, we have Marx's word that changes in the latter are necessarily subject to a different and less precise mode of investigation. The point is reinforced by the verbal qualifications of his text: 'determines the general character'; 'more_or_less rapidly_transformed'. 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. (266)

All in all, argues Williams, the formula of structure and superstructure may be less a concept and more an analogy: 'In Marx this formula is definite, but perhaps as no more than an analogy' (267); and he turns to Engels's later clarification of the topic in the letter to Bloch of 21 September 1890 as further evidence of this.²⁴ In the letter, Engels stresses that though 'the determining element in history is ultimately the production and reproduction in real life', the various elements of the superstructure 'also exercise their influence upon the course of the historical struggles' (cited in Williams [1958], 267). There is, in other words,

a lessening of the usefulness of the formula which Marx used. 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. (267-68)

In the end, in literary and cultural theory, Marx, like Williams, may not have been a Marxist at all. Or certainly not a Marxist such as Lenin. The chapter ends with a damning indictment of Lenin's 1905 essay What is to be Done?. Lenin's statement - that 'the working-class, exclusively by its own effort, is able to develop only trade-union consciousness' (cited in Williams [1958a]: 283) is 'inconsistent with Marx', and against the grain of the political arguments in Culture and Society as a whole. Williams's final conclusion is that it is not easy to discover what can be taken, in cultural criticism, 'as finally and authentically Marxist' (284).

In this first settling of accounts, Williams is able to internalise the criticisms he had himself suffered as an undergraduate in an often searing account of the limitations of English Marxism, and especially regarding its deployment of base and superstructure criticism by writers such as Caudwell. And yet, at the same time, he is able to extract with considerable profit some aspects of Caudwell's thought in order to support his own developing sense and theory of the importance of culture in any account and analysis of social, cultural and political reproduction. Indeed, it was the very tension between rejection and incorporation which produced perhaps the greatest statement - in Culture and Society and The Long Revolution - of the New Left

case for a participatory democracy, and at the same time provided something of an authorising and differential backing for that case in the culture and society tradition itself. How this ambivalent stance - fending off, drawing in - continued to characterise Williams's relation to Marxism, and how the theory of cultural materialism grew out of this is the topic of the rest of the chapter.

The Alternative Tradition

With the benefit of hindsight, it is easy to see that perhaps the most striking feature of Williams's account of Marxist cultural theory in the late 1950s was its extremely limited range of textual and conceptual reference.¹⁹ For the Williams of Culture and Society, Marxist cultural theory is the English Marxism he knew as a Cambridge undergraduate: no Korsch, no Lukacs, neither Brecht nor Benjamin, not a trace of Sartre. It was to be over a decade before he began to read more deeply into the wider history of European Marxism, as we can see from the paucity of references to or discussions of Marxism in his work until the early 1970s.²⁰ And yet, these arguments anticipate the major themes in the great 'theory of the subject' debates of the late sixties and early seventies, though in a vastly different theoretical vocabulary, where the later emphasis on subjectivity is couched (with significant effect) in terms of consciousness.²¹

As one of the key figures in the New Left revision of Marxist theory, Williams must have felt that with the publication of Culture and Society, and particularly its chapter 'Marxism and Culture', and the related essays of The Long Revolution, that he had settled his accounts with regard to Marxism. What need was there to say more? Marx, as he put in one essay, had correctly stressed the connection between culture and the economy; but had badly mistaken the nature of that connection. Culture and communication were to be understood as primary and not secondary components of the social totality, constitutive and not reflective in the maintenance and development of a social order. Human consciousness was always to be understood as a matter of agency, however severe determination might be. Thus, in 1961, the main constituents of the emerging theory of cultural materialism were stressed as Williams wrote that 'we cannot really think of communication as secondary':

We cannot think of it as marginal; or as something that happens after reality has occurred. Because it is through the communication systems that the reality of ourselves, the reality of our society, forms and is interpreted. ([1961c]: 22-23)

In 1965, Williams still sees the New Left as part of a 'general attack on dogmatism within the Marxist tradition' ([1965]: 140). The May Day Manifesto of 1968, for all its commitment to the renewal of socialist politics and policies in Britain, and though

it had plenty of time for the understanding of totality, found no place to discuss or promote any particular variety of Marxism other than New Left humanism. Even up to the time of the Slant Symposium of 1967 - that strange amalgam of Catholics and socialists, gathered together by Terry Eagleton and Brian Wickers - Williams still found no need to revise his central take on Marxism. In his reply to criticisms of his work raised at the conference and elsewhere, he concludes:

One of the differences of emphasis between orthodox contemporary marxism, and the common culture case as it has ordinarily been argued, is the latter's insistence that literature and communication are primary activities; we reject the idea that literature and thought are secondary, superstructural activities occurring after the creation of social reality. Literature and communication, on the contrary, are ways in which, at any time, reality is formed, on a level and simultaneous with work, the family, the whole complex of relationships. (Williams 1968c: 305)

As late as 1967, 'orthodox contemporary marxism' seems to have had nothing to offer. But by the 1970s all this is changing, and Williams begins to criticise those who, like his earlier self, had, too complacently, given up reading Marxist work. So that when he refers to the 'extraordinary renewal of serious study of Marx' in 'the last ten years' (Williams [1972b]: 71), or to Marxism as 'a system of political thought which until 1960 and

beyond was very generally regarded as un-English, irrelevant and irremediably out-of-date' ([1976b]: 233), he is, in part at least, referring to himself. And in a 1974 review of Martin Jay's The Dialectical Imagination, he writes

It is hard to believe, and impossible to justify, but there are still very many senior members of British universities, with responsibilities in these fields, who are convinced that when they hear, for example, of Marxism, they are hearing of something which they mastered in the thirties: a now effortless mastery, which too many of their successors inherit with their stipends. (Williams 1974c:14)

It seems that Lucien Goldmann's visit to Cambridge in 1970, only months before his death, seemed to symbolise or trigger off Williams's renewal of interest in Marxist theory. ²² In a memorial tribute broadcast on Radio Three, Williams noted:

In the student generation of the last ten years there has been an active rediscovery of Marxism, but this has been little understood by their elders...in part at least because most of their interested elders already know, or think they know, what Marxism is, from memories of the thirties. (Williams 1972a: 375)

In fact, the key to Williams's own rediscovery of Marxism is the finding of what he calls its 'alternative tradition', and

particularly 'its account of consciousness: a social analysis which seems to me radically different from what most people in Britain understand as Marxist' (1972a: 375), and certainly what he had understood as Marxist in his own previous account. In the work of Goldmann, and behind him, in the powerful figure of Georg Lukacs, he finds - characteristically - 'not a matter of influence', but rather affinities between his own work and theirs. In particular, Lukacs's distinction between 'actual' and 'possible' consciousness, taken up by Goldmann, fits with Williams's own sense of consciousness as a primary activity. 'Consciousness is restored as primary activity', he writes approvingly:

that is the central result of this alternative Marxist tradition. But this consciousness is still social, and it is centred in history. (376)

In other words, Williams refinds an interest in Marxism once he sees that its concerns run in parallel with his own. Goldmann's idea of the 'transindividual subject' does something like the conceptual work Williams was trying to achieve in his own idea of the 'structure of feeling'. Marxism's 'alternative tradition' is no more and no less than a parallel confirmation, in a different theoretical vocabulary, of the arguments and insights he had been asserting since the 1950s. While there is no doubting the deeply-rooted strength of Williams's commitment to left politics in general and his specific aim of realising this commitment

professionally, to review and renew the study of literary and cultural forms and theories, Marxist cultural theory as it was commonly understood held little or no appeal for him. It was only perceived as useful when it gave conceptual support to his own existing and - as he liked to insist - independantly argued positions.

In his memorial lecture for Goldmann, 'Literature and Sociology', given in Cambridge in April 1971, Williams suggests that the debate with Marxism - which Scrutiny seemed to have won conclusively in the thirties - is, in fact, far from over. The work of thinkers such as Goldmann and Lukacs can no longer be confined to an 'abandoned battlefield' (Williams 1980: 19), as in fact it had been in his own work. ²³ Two years later, with the lecture 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', Williams returned to the ground of his own criticism in Culture and Society in order to re-assess Marxist cultural theory in the light of what he now saw as this 'alternative tradition': the work of Goldmann, Lukacs, and, above all, Antonio Gramsci. ²⁴

Base and Superstructure

'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory' - for many, Williams's single most important theoretical statement - was first delivered as a lecture in Montreal in April 1973. ²⁵ The essay belongs to 'an active and self-renewing Marxist tradition' (Williams [1973b] 1980: 49), one which seeks to both clarify and

complicate the apparent certainties of the Marxist base and superstructure model. It is framed as the recovery of an emphasis somehow lost 'in the transition from Marx to Marxism' (31). The first and most important of these is the sense of the verb 'to determine'.

In the classic Marxist model, the economic base determines the ideological superstructure. This determination is absolute, the superstructure is understood as the wholly predictable event of a known cause, the economic base. Ironically, this sense of 'to determine' has its roots in idealist and theological modes of reasoning which Marx's own use of the term is deliberately meant to counter. Marx places the origin of determination in human activity and in social practice where determination is better understood as the setting of limits to, and the exertion of pressures on, human agency. As a counter to the absolute sense usually at work in the base and superstructure model, Williams emphasises an 'equally central, equally authentic' proposition of Marx's: the idea that 'social being determines consciousness' (31).

In fact, most discussions of the idea of the economically determined area of the superstructure do admit some qualification, moving from Engels's notion of time-lags and delays, through to Walter Benjamin's 'mediations' and Lucien Goldmann's 'homologous structures'. More important, Williams calls for a thorough re-assessment of 'the received notion of the "base" (Basis,

Grundlage)' (33). In much Marxist theory, the figure of 'the base', by sleight of phrase, has come to be considered as an object in its own right, as the mode of production in a particular stage of its development. But this loses the quiddity of Marx's own emphasis on the volatile, active, and contradictory nature of productive activity itself. To get the real sense of determination at work here, we have to realise that 'when we talk of "the base", we are talking of a process and not a state' (34), of the setting of limits and the exertion of pressures rather than 'a predicted, prefigured and controlled content' (34). If we return to Marx's emphasis on the volatility of productive forces:

we look at the whole question of the base differently, and we are less then tempted to dismiss as superstructural, and in that sense as merely secondary, certain vital productive forces, which are in the broad sense, from the beginning, basic. (35)

In this idea of the base as process, culture is far from secondary and reflective; it has rather a constitutive force. 26
 In this Williams remains absolutely true to the main emphases of his earlier criticisms of the base and superstructure model in Culture and Society. All that is different is that he is now able to turn to other thinkers in Marxism's 'alternative tradition' for conceptual support. He sees Gramsci's notion of hegemony as of vital importance:

For hegemony supposes the existence of something which is truly total, which is not merely secondary and 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 limits 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. (37)

And yet, at the same time, for all its emphasis on saturation and determination, terms which might suggest a total and closed and static state of affairs, hegemony is always and essentially an active and ongoing process:

its own internal structures are highly complex, and have continually to be renewed, recreated and defended; and by the same token, that they can be continually challenged and in certain respects modified. (38)

Hegemony is determination at work, and as such it is a volatile, heterogeneous and mobile system, an economy of experience governed by the interplay of what are referred to as dominant, emergent and residual social forces and social meanings. As is stressed, in an often quoted moment,

no mode of production, and therefore no dominant society or order of society, and therefore no dominant culture, in reality exhausts the full range of human practice, human energy, human intention.... it is fact about the modes of domination that they select from and consequently exclude the full range of actual and possible human practice. (43)

Understood in this way, hegemony expresses that sense of determination as the setting of limits which human agency may always challenge, with neither success or failure written in from the start. The new emphases of Gramsci, Goldmann and Lukacs now allow the Marxist cultural theorist to face the challenge of historical analysis with 'a much greater precision and delicacy of analysis' (38) than before. Marxist cultural theory need no longer be restricted, as it was in the days of a Christopher Caudwell, to merely epochal analysis, the grand but rather sketchy portraits of classic base and superstructure theory.

In many ways, this essay can serve as a summary of the main themes developed in Marxism and Literature as a whole, themes which - despite the insistence of some commentators - have not changed in any conceptually substantial way from the arguments put forward in Culture and Society. However, as we shall see, there is one entirely new dimension to Williams's thinking in Marxism and Literature, and that is language. The single and most important new aspect of Marxism and Literature lies in its discussion of the status of language in social and cultural

reproduction. In classic terms, should language be understood as a reflective element, belonging to the superstructure; or as a constitutive one, a part of the base? It is worth examining the central chapter on language in some detail, particularly on account of what most readers have found to be the extreme compression of the book's arguments as ^awhole, and compounded by ²⁷ Williams's own notorious style of disengaged polemic.' We shall first offer a brief exposition of the book's main arguments with regard to Marxist cultural theory.

In the Introduction, Williams contrasts 'the situation of the socialist student of literature in 1940 and in 1970' (Williams 1977a: 4). While in the forties, both Marxism and literature appeared to be relatively unproblematic terms for settled areas of investigation and analysis, by the seventies, Marxism enjoyed a ²⁸ 'new openness and flexibility of theoretical development' (1). Williams distinguishes very usefully between the sense of Marxism as the 'basic political position' into which he had grown as a member of a relatively militant working-class family, and the cultural and literary arguments which were an 'extension' or 'affiliation' of that basic political identity. 'Hardly anyone becomes a Marxist for primarily cultural or literary reasons, but for compelling political and economic reasons' he writes, and this can easily become - as it became in the forties - the source of major theoretical problems:

it can mean that a style of thought and certain defining propositions are picked up and applied, in good faith, as part of a political commitment, without necessarily having much independent substance and indeed without necessarily following from the basic analysis and argument. (2)

This indeed had been the 'tight place' of Williams's predicament as an undergraduate. On the one hand, there was the political commitment which came through as the British variant of socialist realism, 'a radical populism' which was concerned more 'with making literature than with judging it' (2), and, on the other, the inadequacy of this as the basis for the academic study and interpretation of literature.

As the New Left emerged in the late 1950s, Williams began to discover new versions of Marxism (he mentions Lukacs, and, decisively, Brecht), and to understand the English Marxism which he had criticised so forcefully in Culture and Society as only a particular variant: 'primarily systematized by Plekhanov, with much support from the later work of Engels, and popularised by the dominant tendencies in Soviet Marxism' (3). From the arid dogma of Marxism as a 'model of fixed and known Marxist positions, which in general had only to be applied, and the corresponding dismissal of all other kinds of thinking as non-Marxist, revisionist, neo-Hegelian, or bourgeois' (3), the sixties saw its transformation into a more open enquiry, 'active, developing, unfinished, and persistently contentious' (4):

It was in this situation that 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 syntheses of Marxism and some forms of structuralism. At the same time, within this significant new activity, there was further access to older work, notably that of the Frankfurt School (in its most significant period in the twenties and thirties) and especially the work of Walter Benjamin; the extraordinary work of Antonio Gramsci; and, as a decisive element of a new sense of tradition, newly translated work of Marx and especially the Grundrisse. (4)

The story Williams tells in Marxism and Literature is, he acknowledges, above all a hybrid one in which he is 'concerned to see different forms of Marxist thinking as interactive with other forms of thinking, rather than as a separated history, either sacred or alien'. It is also polemical one. For as well as 'an analysis and discussion of key elements and variants of Marxist thinking', the book is also the exposition of Williams's own position of cultural materialism. Marxism and Literature, in other words, continues the trend of Williams's relation to Marxism as in equal measure a critical and appropriative one.

Marxism and Literature

Any Marxism is, like any Freudianism, likely to be a selective interpretation which claims to represent the unity of an author's thought through a careful process of selection and elision. What are the main elements of Williams's version of Marxism in Marxism and Literature? At first glance, Williams seems to put to work the usual rhetoric of unitary interpretation: 'in the transition from Marx to Marxism' is a key phrase which seems to suggest that privileged access to the unity of the author's intentions characteristic of any selective interpretation. He returns again and again to the terms of Marx's original emphases, and seeks to correct the mistaken interpretations of the Marxist traditions. He poses his selective interpretation against others and indeed openly argues that Marxism and Literature is a polemical and not a neutral account, his own critique and contribution to Marxist cultural theory.

But where we might see Williams as differing from the usual author-centred rhetorics of interpretation is in his selection of interpretive focus. For this focus is given by Williams's concern with what he calls historical semantics, with the keywords which tend to structure our thinking and analysis. In the first instance, Williams is concerned with the semantic field in which Marx was working and thinking. He is less concerned with the author and more with the keywords of an author's intellectual labour.

This choice of focus constitutes the specificity of Williams's project, and this is immediately apparent if we compare Marxism and Literature to the usual accounts of this topic. Williams engages at a level of conceptual abstraction, for all his commitment to the precisely constituted materiality of any act of individual authorship. For in a sense Williams's mode of analysis, his historical semantics, his practice of keywords, fully acknowledges - and perhaps even goes beyond - Roland Barthes's arguments in 'Death of the Author', where

We now know that a text is not a line of words releasing a single 'theological' meaning (the 'message' of the Author-God) but a multi-dimensional space in which a variety of writings, none of them original, blend and clash. The text is a tissue of quotations drawn from the innumerable centres of culture.
(in Lodge 1988: 170)

He is concerned above all with the blending and clashing of the key words of cultural analysis, with concepts which 'fuse and confuse the radically different experiences and tendencies of [their] formation' (Williams 1977a: 11), in the first instance with society, economy and culture.

For Williams, any Marxist cultural analysis, including the fragmentary work of Marx himself, inherits the inherent problems of any use of the term 'culture', as well as creating a few of its

own. By the nineteenth century, 'culture' may call up and refer to several distinctive and even opposing senses:

The complexity of the concept of 'culture' is then remarkable. It became a noun of 'inner' process, specialized to its presumed agencies in the 'intellectual life' and 'the arts'. It became also a noun of general process, specialized to its presumed configurations in 'whole ways of life'. It played a crucial role in definitions of 'the arts' and 'the humanities', from the first sense. It played an equally crucial role in definitions of the 'human sciences' and the 'social sciences', in the second sense. Each tendency is ready to deny any proper use of the concept to the other, in spite of many attempts at reconciliation. (17)

In its first sense, culture refers to a certain 'inner' process, to the arts and to intellectual life; in the second, anthropological sense, it refers to a general process, one which defines 'whole ways of life'. Williams seems to believe that there is a possible 'reconciliation' of the two uses in a single and unitary concept of culture; or that it is necessary to find one. He argues that it is certainly necessary to find one if one is to have a Marxist theory of culture. Its absence is a striking problem for any Marxist theory of culture:

The problem of knowing, at the outset, whether this would be a theory of 'the arts and intellectual life' in their relations

to 'society', or a theory of the social process which creates specific and different 'ways of life', is only the most obvious problem. (17-18)

The story he tells is one of transition - from what Marx tried to say to what the selective tradition of Marxism has made of what he tried to say. It is a tragically ironic story, as what is repeatedly emphasised is the ways in which Marx's original insights were consistently refocused. The interpretation is then posed as in some sense a restorative one: the return to the complex unity of the original insight into the 'indissoluble unity' of the 'whole social process'. In fact, it is an interpretation which brings together the two main currents of thought which have stood against bourgeois ideology of civilization since the late eighteenth century:

The two decisive responses of a modern kind were, first, the idea of culture, offering a different sense of human growth and development, and second, the idea of socialism, offering a social and historical criticism of and alternative to 'civilization' and 'civil society' as fixed and achieved conditions. (14)

Thus, while he is willing to state that Marxism is simply 'the most important intellectual advance in all modern thought' (19), it still somehow comes second to the culture and society tradition identified by Williams himself in 1958. Centrally, Marxism

repeated the emphasis on 'man making his own history' which is identified as the decisive heritage of Vico's work, but brought to it a new and transforming attention to material history:

The original notion of 'man making his own history' was given a new radical content by this emphasis on 'man making himself' through producing his own means of life. For all its difficulties in detailed demonstration this was the most important intellectual advance in all modern social thought. It offered the possibility of overcoming the dichotomy between 'society' and 'nature', and of discovering new constitutive relationships between 'society' and 'economy'. As a specification of the basic element of the social process of culture it was a recovery of the wholeness of history. It inaugurated the decisive inclusion of that material history which had been excluded from the 'so-called history of civilization, which is all a history of religions and states'.

(19)

In this sense, Marxism promises the healing of an old wound and division. It is this healing - this reconciliation - which Williams sees as the key feature of what Marxism has to offer to the theory and understanding of culture as a whole. And yet the account is at the same time concerned to describe the ways in which this original possibility and emphasis were lost. This loss comes through most strongly in his discussion of two central and related concepts of Marxist cultural theory, the concepts of

ideology and hegemony, and particularly in the ways in which he plays the one off against the other.

Ideology

I have argued elsewhere that a key component of Williams's polemical address in Marxism and Literature was the work in British cultural analysis in the seventies which had largely been inspired by the work of Louis Althusser (Higgins 1986). Locally, Althusser's work on ideology, with its provocative coupling of Freud and Marx, had been used as the basis for a new 'materialist' approach to film studies, with film understood as a 'specific signifying practice' always intricately involved with questions of ideology and interpellation. ²⁹ A significant part of Williams's work in the seventies took the form of an often indirect dialogue with Screen theory, and it was undoubtedly Screen's emphasis on signification which led Williams to a new interest in ideas and concepts of language. ³⁰ Marxism and Literature traces a polemical history of the uses of the term in ways which highlight what he sees as the current problems with the concept.

For Williams, many of the current problems with the concept of ideology to have been present in the the term from the very beginning. Antoine Destutt de Tracy, one of the leading figures in the new Institut de France, charged with the task of revitalising France's entire education system on the new revolutionary principles of the 1790s, coined the term in his

Elements d'Ideologie of 1801. Here it refers to the 'science of ideas' which, traced back from Condillac through to Locke, he argued could be the basis of a whole new approach to education, learning and scientific progress. The 'natural history of ideas' meant that psychology could now be analysed in the truly scientific terms of biology, totally replacing the old reliance on religion as the source for moral, social and political theory.

This essentially Enlightenment project was immediately challenged by conservative and religious opponents. Williams cites one such opponent - the Vicomte de Bonald - in order to make a theoretical point. De Bonald, turning to Rousseau rather than to Locke for his language theory, drew attention to the passive elements in de Tracy's theory, 'its preoccupation', as Williams puts it, 'with "signs and their influence on thought"' (56). As we shall see, De Bonald's critique prefigures the contemporary theoretical problems which Williams had with the structuralist theory of Althusser and others. Summing up, he concludes:

The rejection of metaphysics was a characteristic gain, confirmed by the development of precise and systematic empirical enquiry. At the same time the effective exclusion of any social dimension - both the practical exclusion of social relationships implied in the model of 'man' and 'the world', and the characteristic displacement of necessary social relationships to a formal system, whether the 'laws of

psychology' or language as a 'system of signs' - was a deep and apparently irrecoverable loss and distortion. (57)

The phrase 'apparently irrecoverable' indicates the polemical stake of Williams's own argument: his criticisms of the idea of language as a purely formal system of signs was the essence of the new high structuralism - a variant of the same old mistake - but apparently in the sense that the stake of his own study is to make that recovery possible. As Hegel had noted, ideology was in this sense 'a reduction of thought to sensation' (cited in Larrain, 1979: 28).

De Bonald's criticisms put into philosophical form Napoleon's political rejection of the idéologues. Though an initial member of the Institut, and a supporter of its aims in the 1790s, Napoleon turned against them in the early 1800s. In 1802, Chautreaubriand signalled the changing political climate by dedicating the first edition of his Le genie du christianisme to Napoleon; in 1803 Napoleon abolished the most directly challenging section of the Institut, that dealing with moral and political studies. By 1812 he was ready to tell the State Council that:

It is to the doctrine of the ideologues - to this diffuse metaphysics, which in a contrived manner seeks to find the primary causes and on this foundation would erect the legislation of peoples, instead of adapting the laws to a knowledge of the human heart and of the lessons of history - to

which one must attribute all the misfortunes which have befallen our beautiful France (cited in Williams 1977a: 57).

For Napoleon, 'ideology became a 'nickname...used to distinguish every species of theory' (ibid.) which didn't rest on the solid grounds of self-interest.

Marx, who had also criticised the Institut members, though from a different perspective, took over these now pejorative connotations of the term in the very title of his and Engels's critique of the Young Hegelians, The German Ideology (1846). More importantly, in addition to this polemical and pejorative sense, ideology began to take on a new theoretical distinctness for Marxism in this important text. Williams compares passages from The German Ideology and from Capital I in order to illustrate and exemplify some of the tensions between this new theory and its polemical context.

The first is taken from Marx and Engels's The German Ideology (1846), generally held to be the first work in which the essentials of historical materialism first make their appearance in the Marxist oeuvre in a concerted critique of Left-Hegelians such as Ludwig Feuerbach, Max Stirner and Bruno Bauer. Marx - originally a member of the Doktorclub in Berlin where the Young Hegelians met and argued, a friend and correspondent of Bruno Bauer, and deeply impressed by the work of Ludwig Feurbach - had learned much from them. His turn away from them marks a decisive

moment in his own intellectual development. Williams quotes a passage from early in the mammoth study:

We do not set out from what men say, imagine, conceive, nor from men as narrated, thought of, imagined, conceived, in order to arrive at men in the flesh. We set our from real, active men, and on the basis of their real life-processes we demonstrate the development of the ideological reflexes and echoes of this life-process. The phantoms formed in the human brain are also, necessarily, sublimates of their material life-process, which is empirically verifiable and bound to material premisses (sic). Morality, religion, metaphysics, all the rest of ideology and their corresponding forms of consciousness, thus no longer retain the semblance of independence. (cited in Williams 1977a: 59)

Williams finds two different emphases at work in the passage, as through the book as a whole. First, there is the important theoretical point that thinking always take place in a specific material and ideological context; it can have no 'semblance of independence': this is judged 'entirely reasonable'. And a great deal of The German Ideology is devoted to showing the ways in which the idealist arguments of the Young Hegelians - what they took to be the solutions to Germany's social and political problems - were in fact no more than the very symptoms of those problems. Thus Bruno Bauer's sincere belief that his own philosophical positions were revolutionary could only be held

through a mystificatory and self-defeating over-valuation of the real social impact of his own writings. Despite the sincerity of his own convictions, his removal from his university position was never going to be the tinder which sparked off a full-scale social revolution. ³¹ For all their idealist ferocity, the Young Hegelians were never going to be in a position to lead a social revolution.

At the same time, Williams is dismayed - just as he had been in Culture and Society - by the implications of the recourse to a pseudo-scientific vocabulary in the passage:

the language of 'reflexes', 'echoes', 'phantoms', and 'sublimates' is simplistic, and has in repetition been disastrous. It belongs to the naive dualism of 'mechanical materialism', in which the idealist separation of 'ideas' and 'material reality' has been repeated, but with its priorities reversed. The emphasis on consciousness as inseparable from conscious existence, and then on conscious existence as inseparable from material social processes, is in effect lost in the use of this deliberately degrading vocabulary. (59)

While this 'deliberately degrading' vocabulary answers a polemical need, this same polemical emphasis comes to threaten the essential balance of the argument as a whole. If 'circumstances make men just as much as men make circumstances' (59), it can also be said that men make circumstances just as much as circumstances make

men. The vocabulary of an essentially passive human response - used to highlight the failings of the Left-Hegelians - is in contradiction with the philosophy of revolutionary practice or praxis which is the centre of The German Ideology, and which many argue is the main new element in Marx's thinking in this period.³²

Against this over-emphasis on human passivity, Williams poses a paragraph from Capital, in which the distinctively creative character of human labour is figured through a bold comparison:

What distinguishes the worst architect from the best of bees is this, that the architect raises his structure in imagination before he erects it in reality. At the end of every labour-process, we get a result that already existed in the imagination of the labourer at its commencement. (cited in Williams 1977a: 59)

Here consciousness is correctly seen 'as part of the human material social process' (59); and, he emphasises,

its products in 'ideas' are then as much a part of this process as material products themselves. This, centrally, was the thrust of Marx's whole argument, but the point was lost... What they were centrally arguing was a new way of seeing the total relationships... In a polemical response to the abstract history of ideas or of consciousness they made their main point

but in one decisive area lost it again. This confusion is the source of the naive reduction, in much subsequent Marxist thinking, of consciousness, imagination, art, and ideas to 'reflexes', 'echoes', 'phantoms', and 'sublimates', and then of a profound confusion in the concept of 'ideology' (59-60)

This 'loss', this 'profound confusion' comes through in the restricted sense of ideology as false consciousness, and the implied model of human subjectivity as passive, static, receptive only: the main weakness of Althusser's own theory.

Closely linked with this is the sense of ideology as 'false consciousness', and the associated emphasis on the idea of a scientific Marxism as the source of a 'true consciousness'. In one way, argues Williams, this is to mistake the idea of science. For Marxism science is best understood as closer to the original German sense of any systematic knowledge or organized learning: Marx's work can be understood as above all 'critical and historical' (63), rather than in the polemical sense of science as natural science deployed by Engels as a 'polemical catchword' (63). In this 'strong' sense of science which is most dangerous to Marxism. It ends up in the 'a priori assumption of a "positive" method' which is not subject to self scrutiny or self-criticism, and this ends up as 'either a circular demonstration or a familiar partisan claim that others are biased but that, by definition, we are not' (64). For Williams, this is simply 'the fool's way out' of a genuinely difficult problem.

In the weaker sense of scientific enquiry as any detailed and connected knowledge, methodically applied to the world, Williams is sure that this can indeed lead to the challenging of received assumptions and points of view. Indeed, a first principle of any genuine enquiry comes through in the call to examine from the outset the organising assumptions, concepts and points of view which organise any body of knowledge. When this is done, we are led away from the over-general and dogmatic 'epochal' analysis of a Christopher Caudwell to a genuinely historical analysis, one in which ideology:

reverts to a specific and practical dimension: the complicated processes within which men 'become' (are) conscious of their interests and their conflicts. The categorical short-cut to an (abstract) distinction between 'true' and 'false' consciousness is then effectively abandoned, as in all practice it has to be. (68)

The way forward is actually to be found in Volosinov's Marxism and the Philosophy of Language (1929), with its emphasis on the ideological as '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...some form of this emphasis on signification as a central social process is necessary' (70).

The chapter began by distinguishing three versions of ideology: 1) a system of beliefs characteristic of a particular class or group; 2) a system of illusory beliefs which can be contrasted with true or scientific knowledge; and 3) the general process of the production of meanings and ideas. By the end of the chapter, it is that third sense associated with Volosinov's work - which is seen as the more useful, especially since it 'undercuts' (55) the other two, and inhibits their tendency to result in the unproductive - and dangerous - dogmatism which Williams always associated with the failed Marxism of his youth, and which he now saw as seeking a return in the arid scientism of Althusser and his followers.

If the emphasis on ideology as the name for the general process of the production of meanings and ideas, a 'radical semiotics' is accepted, is ideology likely to remain a central concept for cultural theory? The second section of the book - 'Cultural Theory' - works to answer this question in the negative. Williams works through the main associated concepts in literary and cultural analysis - base and superstructure theory, concepts of determination, reflection and mediation, 'typification and homology' - unpicking the 'scientist' thread which constantly reduces cultural intellectual and artistic production to a secondary phenomena. In the end, he argues, the cultural critic is likely to find more use in Gramsci's concept of hegemony.

Cultural Theory

The first chapters of Part Two of Marxism and Literature repeat and amplify the main arguments of the 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory' essay and there is no need to follow the extra detail of the arguments in any detail. Irony is again the dominant figure, as Williams insists on the ways in which Marx's original emphasis on the complexity of the social totality, the necessity for understanding it as 'an indissoluble social process', was lost, transformed beyond recognition in the hasty process of codifying a more dogmatic Marxism. Thus he bemoans how, in 'the transition from Marx to Marxism, and then in the development of expository and didactic formulations, the words used in the original arguments were projected, first, as if they were precise concepts, and second, as if they were descriptive terms for observable "areas" of social life' (77). In this way base and superstructure theorists such as Plekhanov soon 'lost sight of the key processes - not abstract relations but constitutive processes - which it should have been the special functions of historical materialism to emphasize' (81). With regard to the key concept of determination, Marx's own emphasis on the necessity for historical objectivity gave way to the abstract objectivism of economism. Once again, Williams noted how, 'with bitter irony':

a critical and revolutionary doctrine was changed, not only in practice but at this level of principle, into the very forms of

passivity and reification against which an alternative sense of 'determination' had set out to operate' (86).

In similar fashion, the crucial concept of 'productive forces' was soon restricted to idea of the economy alone, a reduction which Williams reads as a reduction to the bourgeois sense of the production of commodities for a market, rather than the truly Marxist sense in which the productive forces need to be understood on the level of politics, in relation to the 'direct material production of "politics"' (93). 'From castles and palaces and churches to prisons and workhouses and schools' writes Williams, 'from weapons of war to a controllable press':

any ruling class, in variable ways, though always materially, produces a social and political order.... These are never
33
 superstructural activities. (92-93)

And again, with the concepts of reflection and mediation, typification and homology, he argues for the necessity of the recognition of culture and cultural processes as active processes in social reproduction, and not reflective ones. The problems are seen differently, he argues, 'from the beginning':

if we see language and signification as indissoluble elements of the material and social process itself, involved all the time in production and reproduction. (99)

Even great thinkers in the Marxist tradition - Georg Lukacs and Lucien Goldmann, Theodor Adorno and Walter Benjamin, though they all came at times very close to recognising the primacy and positivity of culture, all failed, in the end, to fully grasp the implications of this, blinkered as they are by the still dominant metaphors of the base and superstructure argument, constrained by the scientistic emphases on 'false' versus 'true' consciousness. For Williams, only one thinker manages to escape the pitfalls of most Marxist cultural theory: Antonio Gramsci.

Hegemony

Gramsci's work, and particularly his concept of hegemony, represents for Williams 'one of the turning-points in Marxist cultural theory' (108).³⁴ If anything can repair the losses accrued in the transition from Marx to Marxism, it is the concept of hegemony - a concept which also brings together what Williams had earlier called the 'two decisive responses' to bourgeois ideology - socialism itself, broadly understood, and the culture and society tradition which Williams had outlined in 1958 (1977a: 14). For hegemony is a concept

which at once includes and goes beyond two powerful earlier concepts: that of 'culture' as a 'whole social process', in which men define and shape their whole lives; and that of 'ideology', in any of its Marxist senses, in which a system of

meanings and values is the expression or projection of a particular class interest. (108)

It goes beyond culture - and can therefore correct, at least by implication, some of the faults spotted in Williams's own works by critics like Thompson and Eagleton - in its attention to the 'specific distributions of power and interest' which are always at work within culture. And it goes beyond ideology because of its recognition of the 'wholeness' of the social process, and its 'refusal to equate consciousness with the articulate formal system which can be and ordinarily is abstracted as "ideology"' (109) as in the case of Althusser. Williams explains:

It of course does not exclude the articulate and formal meanings, values and beliefs which a dominant class develops and propagates. But it does not equate these with consciousness, or rather it does not reduce consciousness to them. Instead it sees the relations of domination and subordination, in their forms as practical consciousness, as in effect a saturation of the whole process of living - not only of political and economic activity, nor only of manifest social activity, but of the whole substance of lived identities and relationships, to such a depth that the pressures and limits of what can ultimately be seen as a specific economic, political, and cultural system seem to most of us the pressures and limits of simple experience and common sense....It is a lived system

of meanings and values - constitutive and constituting - which as they are experienced as practices appear as reciprocally confirming. (109-110)

When seen in this way, 'the whole question of class rule, and of opposition to it, is transformed' (110):

Gramsci's emphasis on the creation of an alternative hegemony, by the practical connection of many different forms of struggle, including those not easily recognizable as and indeed not primarily 'political' and 'economic', this leads to a much more profound and more active sense of revolutionary activity in a highly developed society than the persistently abstract models derived from very different historical situations. (110-111)

And similarly, 'there is a whole different way of seeing cultural activity, both as tradition and as practice' (111) - once again, not as secondary superstructural effects of some given base, but as active constituents of a whole social order. As Williams emphasises: 'A lived hegemony is always a process. It is not, except analytically, a system or a structure' (112). And neither can hegemony be singular:

it does not just passively exist as a form of dominance. It has continually to be renewed, recreated, defended, and

modified. It is also continually resisted, limited, altered, challenged by pressures not at all its own. (112)

Thus Williams would, in the end, and in a further detotalising move, prefer to refer to the hegemonic rather than to hegemony:

The reality of any hegemony, in the extended political and cultural sense, is that, while by definition it is always dominant, it is never either total or exclusive. (113).

This is particularly visible in the history of cultural production itself, where Williams returns to his own concept of the selective tradition as 'a deliberately and selective and connecting process which offers a historical and cultural ratification of a contemporary order' (116); and the related emphasis on the coincidence and conflict between dominant, residual and emergent forces in any single historical moment. As he puts it, in an often quoted moment,

no mode of production and therefore no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention.
(125)

And all of this - what has been summed up as the lessons of Marxism's 'alternative tradition' - comes to bear on the renewal of Williams's own innovatory concept of structure of feeling.

Though it is as well to remember that 'concept' may not be quite the right word to describe Williams's use of the term. In fact, any survey of its appearance in his work will find that it is deployed in a number of very different ways across his writing as a whole, and seems to come to acquire - or acquire the need for - conceptual rather than merely descriptive status rather through its repeated use than through any consistent theoretical exposition. Hence Williams's admission that he has 'never been very happy' with the phrase, though he keeps coming back to it 'from the actual experience of literary analysis rather than any satisfaction with the concept itself' (1979: 159). The centrality - and uncertainty - of the term reflects many of the tensions in Williams's whole relation to Marxism.

Structures of Feeling

As we saw in Chapter Two, the idea of structure of feeling came into existence as an alternative to the Marxist emphasis on ideology at work in thinkers such as Christopher Caudwell. Williams's own detailed work on drama had left him very dissatisfied with the epochal application of ideology to the history of drama, and the phrase 'structure of feeling' was introduced in the Preface to Film in 1954 as a direct alternative to base and superstructure theory. After that, it returned with increasing explanatory emphasis throughout the main body of Williams's work, though rarely with any explicit conceptual framing.

How does Williams construct his new account of his trademark concept in Marxism and Literature? The introductory paragraphs outline what he sees as the central problem facing all analysts of cultural expression: 'the basic error' remains 'the reduction of the social to fixed forms' (129).

For common to both Marxism and Literature is a tendency to think cultural process through an opposition between the social and the personal. For Marxists, implies Williams, the social is seen as given or fixed in some way and this is apparent in the ways in which crude theories of ideology place and understand the history of cultural expression as the superstructural reflection or effect of the economic base, the 'secondary evidence of changed social and economic relations between and within classes' (131). In its turn, and in its own crude forms, Literature has tended to privilege the personal in the guise of 'the human imagination' as somehow free from determination, as accessing a realm of initiative and creativity ordinarily unavailable. Against these, he argues that the social is best understood as the dimension in which people experience and resolve the pressures of determination in ways which always vary specifically, from one group or individual to another, and from one historical moment to another. These pressures may be conscious or unconscious, and may in the end be resisted or prove determining: the outcome is never decided in advance, because the resolution always (for the agent) takes place in the present tense. 'Structure of feeling' is then the

concept which tries to focus on this present tense experience as opposed to notions of ideology or world-view which tend to reduce 'practical consciousness' to frozen subjection. What's at stake, argues Williams, are

meanings and values as they are actively lived and felt, and the relations between these and formal or systematic beliefs are in practice variable (including historically variable), over a range from formal assent with private dissent to the more nuanced interaction between selected and interpreted beliefs and acted and justified experiences. (132)

'Feeling' is then used to capture the mobility, delicacy and intricacy of this whole interactive process, with its 'characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone' and its 'specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships' (132). This is 'practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating continuity' (132).

The word Williams deliberately avoids here is the keyword of Althusserian and post-Althusserian debate, subjectivity. For it is clear that what is at stake in the whole discussion of structure of feeling - though never named as such - is the question of the subject. It would, of course, be easy to read William's reference to and insistence on 'presence', in this chapter and elsewhere in Marxism and Literature, as symptomatic of his outdated humanism, and as a sign of his lack of theoretical

sophistication by later standards. And it is hard to imagine that Williams's use of the term isn't provocatively intertextual. Nonetheless, despite his use of a term which forms part of the official anathemata of Derrida's thought, Williams's actual argument around it comes surprisingly close to some of the main critical points Derrida himself sought to establish. Indeed, it is with the discussion of 'presence' that Williams seeks to justify the need for his idea of the 'structure of feeling', and this does offer something of a distinctive development - or at least framing - of Williams's founding arguments, though these are also present.

At the same time, these fluid subjective feelings are always related to some larger structure, 'a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension' as a part of a social experience 'which is still in process'. In this sense, 'structure of feeling' is somehow prefigurative: once it is fully formed, it is no longer a structure of feeling and 'a new structure of feeling will usually already have begun to form, in the true social present' (132). It is a 'cultural hypothesis' which best fits the available evidence of cultural expression, and Williams's main point is, as always, to stress the primary nature of cultural expression;

as a matter of cultural theory this is a way of defining forms and conventions in art and literature as inalienable elements of a social material process: not by derivation from other

social forms and pre-forms, but as social formation of a specific kind which may in turn be seen as the articulation (often the not fully available articulation) of structures of feeling which as living processes are much more widely experienced. (133)

This large - and somewhat confusing - claim is a familiar one. Literature can present somehow more substantial evidence of historical process than the dry facts and statistics of - for example - the ordinary historian, of, for that matter, the abstract conceptualisations of the sociologist. Structure of feeling is anticipatory, and not merely reflective of social change. It presents 'in solution' a social consciousness which has not as yet fully emerged. This is the very centre of Williams's important reminder that '[p]ractical consciousness is almost always different from official consciousness' (130), and, despite the implicit reference to the recently discovered work of Volosinov, goes all the way back to Williams's original formulations in Preface to Film. Nonetheless, the theoretical dimension, which brings into play the linguistic dimension, and the differences between inner and social speech, is of considerable value against the rather one-dimensional accounts of linguistic determinism which seemed to be currently available in British post-structuralism.

Williams is certainly right in his basic intuition - to steer clear of the Scylla of superstructural determination by a too

narrowly conceived idea of an 'economic' base - and the Charybdis of literary idealism - that the individual imagination can always transcend its circumstances. But in the end he falls into precisely the trap he had spotted with regard to base and superstructure theory when he rightly remarked that a mere phrase or figure had assumed too great an explanatory task. Unfortunately, Williams chose to set one phrase - structure of feeling - against another - determination of superstructure by economic base. In the end, there is neither the conceptual focus or clarity necessary to make Williams's own phrase more than a very suggestive one. Ironically, 'structure of feeling' is still itself a phrase which betokens a thought 'in solution' rather than one fully 'precipitated' - and articulated - as a concept.

Nonetheless, at the centre of the new account is no longer 'consciousness', as it was in 1958, but the marxisant 'practical consciousness', derived from Marx's use of the term in The German Ideology. In addition, this new 'practical' consciousness is deliberately and significantly related to Volosinov's arguments against linguistic idealism. ^(Volosinov [1924]: 96-7) Practical consciousness, insists Williams,

is almost always different from official consciousness, and this is not only a matter of relative freedom or control. For practical consciousness is what is actually being lived, and not only what it is thought is being lived. Yet the actual alternative to the received and produced fixed forms is not

silence: not the absence, the unconscious, which bourgeois culture has mythicized. It is a kind of feeling and thinking which is indeed social and material, but each in an embryonic phase before it can become fully articulate and defined exchange. Its relations with the already articulate and defined are then exceptionally complex. (131)

Exceptionally complex, and requiring some considerable attention to the structures of language, the possibilities of expression and repression at work in any language system. In Politics and Letters, Williams refers to Volosinov's distinction between manifest speech and inner speech to argue much the same claim -

historically there are certain language situations which are repressive. People talk of language as a means of expression, but it is also evidently a means of selection. In certain socio-historical circumstances, there are things which could not be said, and therefore, in any connecting way, not thought. This may help to explain the very common cultural phenomenon of an extraordinarily shocking innovation in discourse which yet produces elements of recognition. The possibility of a pre-emergent as well as an emergent structure of feeling corresponds...to this phenomenon. (1979: 182)

What is clear is that the idea of language itself needs considerable attention and scrutiny if the idea of culture is to

have any significant explanatory force in an account of social and political reproduction.

As we have seen, and as a number of early reviewers remarked, a great deal of what Williams argues in Marxism and Literature is familiar, both as the summary of recent work like the essay 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', and beyond that, of the thinking and arguments of Culture and Society in the 1950s.³⁸ Williams's central emphasis remains the same: the insistence on the idea of culture as a way of thinking the social totality, the refusal of cultural production as a secondary effect of the economic base. While it is correct that the range of references to Marxist cultural theory has significantly increased, and that Williams's tone is considerably more welcoming, little has changed in the substance of his own arguments. Though he is now able to refer to a European-wide range of work in what he termed 'Marxism's alternative tradition', what is most notable about it is the way in which it seemed to share Williams's own emphases on the importance of cultural production to social and political reproduction.

In consequence, I would argue that those who, like Ahmad, seem to see a substantial shift in Williams's relations to Marxist cultural theory in the 1970s are mistaken. As had been the case from the beginning, it would be better to see Williams's relation to Marxism as always an unusual one, with its combination of disciplinary rejection, political sympathy, conceptual criticism

and conceptual support. In the end, Williams's relation to Marxism presented a distinctive - but not unusual, in the larger discourse of Western Marxism - mixture of the critical and the incorporative.

And all this is reasonably explicit in what was to be Williams's final word on the subject, the essay 'Marx on Culture'. As always, the very title indicates how Williams has selected the idea of culture as the background, he gives himself a slight advantage in the contest. The essay adds little to the basic elements of his earlier analysis, despite or perhaps because of its exclusive focus on Marx's own writings. 'To learn from Marx is not to learn formulae or even methods', he insists (1983: 224), and in a detailed commentary on passages from The German Ideology and elsewhere, he distinguishes historical from merely categorical analysis, arguing that the 'worst consequence' of certain readings of Marx has been to mistake the two, 'to the neglect of the real social and material history of the production of art and ideas' (210). In the end, he writes,

It is only from the most active senses of the material production of culture and of language as a social and material process that it is possible to develop the kind of cultural theory which can now be seen as necessary, and even central, in Marx's most general theory of human production and development. That he did not develop such a cultural theory, and indeed that

from some more limited formulations and misleading forms of 'Marxist' cultural theory were developed and propagated, in ways that actually blocked the inquiry, must now be acknowledged. (1983c: 225)

And certainly acknowledged 'now', some twenty-five years since the general case had first been made. For the critical conclusion is very similar to that reached in 1958, where Williams had already argued against the 'limited formulations and misleading forms of 'Marxist' cultural theory', and for the need to pursue an open and less dogmatic inquiry. That the 'limited formulations' were now those of French Althusserians rather than the English Communist Part of the 1930s changed the object but not the substance of the criticism. That he now found allies for his own views in Gramsci and Volosinov rather than Caudwell and J.Z. Young did not alter the essential case.

And yet there is one major difference in the articulation of Williams's idea of cultural process between 1958 and 1977. This is the concentration and focus on the idea of language. As a matter of fact, this emphasis did not come through until the writing of the actual text of Marxism and Literature itself: the original lectures on Marxism and Literature in the 1970s contained no significant references to language.³⁹ Once again we can see the importance of that oppositional and dialectical strain in Williams's thinking. For the new emphasis on language came above all from a desire to combat the centrality given to language in

the new structuralist and post-structuralist theories which were referred to collectively as 'the newly dominant mode of critical structuralism'. As he noted in Politics_in_Letters:

I also particularly didn't want [Marxism_and_Literature] to be a replay of the unfinished polemic between Marxism and the Scrutiny of the thirties. In a sense my thrust was much more against the limits of the newly dominant mode of critical structuralism, because this was what was being taken as Marxist literary theory all over Western Europe and North America.
(Williams 1979: 339)

It is this 'critical structuralism' which is the major polemical target of Marxism_and_Literature, 'a mode of idealist literary study claiming the authority of Marxism and the prestige of association with powerful intellectual movements in many other fields' (340).⁴⁰ We need to pay particular attention to this third aspect, which seemed to Williams to ironically reduplicate so many of the worst aspects of the traditional literary criticism he had argued against from the very beginning.

In discussion with Red_Shift soon after the publication of the book, Williams drew attention to what he himself saw as a major new element in his thinking: 'Marxism does not have a theory of language' he noted:

It has borrowed certain theories of language from other disciplines and other theoretical positions, and because it does not have one it goes wrong again and again on this question. (Williams 1977b: 15-16)

and he was enthusiastic about what he regarded as his new discovery: 'I've found, I believe, a way of showing that language is primary because it is material....I believe that language is the material process of sociality' (16). It is because of this new and distinctive attention to the question of language, and the ways in which they form the substance of his attack on the new 'critical structuralism', that we need a very careful account of the arguments in Chapter Two Part One of the book.

The Constitutivity of Language

There are five basic sections to the chapter. The introductory section occupies just the first two paragraphs, and states that the focus of the account will be on the history of the theory of language in relation to the idea of language as activity. The second section argues that the eighteenth century is the crucial period for the development of the idea of language as activity, and concentrates on the ideas which the eighteenth century theorists were arguing against to set up their own notions (1977a: 22-3). Section three examines the development of the argument from Vico through Herder and Rousseau and sees how that argument was slowly deformed by the objectivist ideology which came to

dominate linguistics from William Jones to Saussure (23-28). Section four introduces a comparison between the 'objectivism' of the emergent discipline of linguistics and the more recent forms of structuralist Marxism; it deals with the vicissitudes of the idea of language as constitutive in Marxist theory from Marx to Marr (28-35). Section 5 examines the work of Volosinov, from whose Marxism and the Philosophy of Language a great deal of Williams's general arguments are in fact derived. In particular, Williams examines Volosinov's emphasis on language as social; and the consequent revision of ideas of language as system, of language as expression, and of the concept of the sign, which are necessitated by this fundamental assertion (35-41). Section 6, the conclusion, points to some problems in Volosinov's own account, and looks forward to the development of Vygotsky's work, especially in response to Chomsky's emphases on biology, competence and performance (41-44).

The beginning of an essay is often worth attention, and a careful analysis of it can often help in understanding an author's argument as a whole. Williams begins with a statement of his central argument: 'A definition of language is always, implicitly or explicitly, a definition of human beings in the world'. What will be offered, in other words, is an assessment of the ideological bearing of different theories of language, whether they foreground that bearing or not. While Marxism has 'contributed very little to thinking about language', its two main emphases - the idea of language as an activity, the second, the

need for a historical account of theories of language themselves - are worthwhile. Taken together, these can mount a significant challenge to what Williams sees as 'relatively static ways of thinking about human beings in the world' (21). In other words, Williams's own move in this discussion of language theory is to parry representations of language which reduce or threaten the human subject's capacity for agency and activity in relation to the language-system. ⁴¹

The second section suggests the idea of language as an activity began in the eighteenth century 'in close relation to the idea of men having made their own society'. ⁴² What were theorists such as Vico arguing against? ⁴³ Their object was the previously dominant Platonist tradition in which '"language" and "reality" had been decisively separated' and where attention was focused exclusively on the problem of 'the correctness of naming'. This was an idealist theory, an inquiry into the constitutive realm of 'ideas'.

Against this, a theorist like Vico argued that 'we can have full knowledge only of what we can ourselves make or do' (23): language is a human creation, indeed something that helps to constitute the society in which people live. 'Vico opened a whole new dimension' (23) because of the centrality he gave to the idea of language as a human activity, one which was 'positively, a distinctively human opening of and opening to the world: not a distinguishable or instrumental but a constitutive faculty' (24).

This opposition between instrumental and constitutive capacities of language later becomes the crux of Williams's thinking about language.

The third section traces some of the historical development of this idea of language as activity, including the 'extraordinary advance in empirical knowledge of languages' which took place in the eighteenth and early nineteenth centuries. Once again, in keeping with the starting assertion that representations of language - even in theoretical terms - always imply a political representation of the world, Williams stresses the ways in which this apparently neutral scientific activity can best be understood in particular relation to 'the dynamic development of Western societies in a period of extending colonialism' (25). This is the context which informs that the work of a linguist like William Jones in India, and Williams deploys the insights of Volosinov to argue his basic point. ⁴⁴ 'What was characteristically studied in comparative philology' he notes

was a body of records of language: in effect, centrally, the alien written word...On the one hand there was the highly productive application of modes of systematic observation, classification and analysis. On the other hand there was the largely unnoticed consequence of the privileged situation of the observer: that he was observing (of course scientifically) within a differential mode of contact with alien material: in texts, the records of a past history; in

speech, the activity^{/of} of an alien people in subordinate (colonialist) relations to the whole activity of the dominant people within which the observer gained his privilege. This defining situation inevitably reduced any sense of language as actively and presently constitutive. (26)

In other words the colonialist situation of the observing linguist reinforced the tendency to 'objectivism', and threatened to reduce the idea of language away from its idea as activity towards its definition as a system. 'Language-use' he stresses 'could then hardly be seen as itself active and constitutive' (27). In the development of comparative linguistics:

Language came to be seen as a fixed, objective, and in these senses 'given' system, which had theoretical and practical priority over what were described as 'utterances' (later as 'performance'). Thus the living speech of human beings in their specific social relationships in the world was theoretically reduced to instances and examples of a system which lay beyond them. (27)

And Saussure is the main twentieth century inheritor of this reified understanding of language, an understanding of language in which the early sense of language as activity has been decisively
 or. lost. (54)

We might note that at this point in the argument, Williams looks aside to 'an important and often dominant tendency in Marxism itself': the idea of society as 'a controlling "social" system which is a priori inaccessible to "individual" acts of will and intelligence' (28). Williams is undoubtedly thinking here of Althusser's theory of Marxism, and in particular, his development of the theory of ideology which - as I argue elsewhere - rests on just such a conception of language (Higgins 1986). For this glancing aside is in fact Williams's way of making his own discussion of language a contribution to the ongoing struggle over representations and definitions of 'human beings in the world'. The polemical centre of his arguments is the structuralist Marxism of Louis Althusser, though that polemic is curiously marginalised in the chapter - and indeed, in the book - as a whole. Williams is in any case very quick to move from this polemical moment to a brief account of Marxist work on language, and this constitutes the fourth section of the chapter.

Here there is a difficult intellectual knot. Marxist thinking is 'wholly compatible with the emphasis on language as practical, constitutive activity' (29) to be found in Vico; but it also opens up some of major problems regarding the meaning of the key idea of language as 'constitutive'. There is, writes Williams,

an obvious danger...of making language 'primary' and 'original', not in the acceptable sense that it is a necessary part of the very act of human self-creation, but in

the related and available sense of language as the founding element in humanity: 'in the beginning was the Word'. It is precisely the sense of language as an indissoluble element of human self-creation that gives any acceptable meaning to its description as 'constitutive'. To make it precede all other connected activities is to claim something quite different. (29).

This takes us to the very core of Williams's objections to most thinking on language, where the main problem lies in the conception of the subject which underlies the theory. Here the

exclusion of activity, of making, from the category of 'objective reality' left it contemplated only by 'subjects', who might in one version be ignored in the observation of objective reality - the active 'subject' replaced by the neutral 'observer'... (32)

- precisely the ideology he had fought against in The Country and the City, as we saw in the previous chapter. And this same exclusion of activity is to be found in contemporary communication theory, which in constantly reducing language to the status of an instrument, ignores the real and complex force of language as constitutive.

It is in the neglected work of Vygotsky and Volosinov that some way out of this impasse may be found. Their work challenges the usual opposition between expressive and systematic ideas of language, in which the subject is either seen as all-powerful, or totally subdued, and brings into focus the constant negotiation between system and expression which is the main force of a fully social understanding of language. 'Volosinov argued that meaning was necessarily a social action, dependent on a social relationship', emphasises Williams (36). This focuses crucially on the idea of sign which is never for Volosinov merely an arbitrary element in a Saussurean 'system of signs', but is rather always a socially activated element in such a living system. For Volosinov:

signs can exist only when this active social relationship is posited. The usable sign - the fusion of formal element and meaning - is a product of this continuing speech-activity between real individuals who are in some continuing social relationship. The 'sign' is in this sense their product, but not simply their past product, as in the reified accounts of an already-given language system. The real communicative 'products' which are usable signs are, on the contrary, living evidence of a continuing social process, into which individuals are born and within which they are shaped, but to which they then actively contribute, in a continuing process. This is at once their socialization and their individuation: the connected aspects of a single process which the alternative

theories of 'system' and 'expression' had divided and dissociated. We then find not a reified 'language' and 'society' but an active social language. Nor is this language a simple 'reflection' or 'expression' of 'material reality'. What we have, rather, is a grasping of this reality through language, which as practical consciousness is saturated by and saturates all social activity, including productive activity.

(37)

In the end, argues Williams, it is 'of and to this experience - the lost middle ground between the abstract entities, 'subject' and 'object', on which the propositions of idealism and orthodox materialism are erected - that language speaks' (37-8). And he elaborates on Volosinov's distinction between sign and signal to push this point further, stressing the 'multi-accentuality of the sign' (38-9):

The signal, in this sense, is fixed, exchangeable, collective property; characteristically it is easily both imported and exported. The true signifying element of language must from the beginning have a different capacity: to become an inner sign, part of practical consciousness. Thus in addition to its social and material existence between actual individuals, the sign is also part of a verbally constituted consciousness which allows individuals to use signs of their own initiative, whether in acts of social communication or in practices which,

not being manifestly social, can be interpreted as personal or private. (40)

This emphasis allows one to escape some of the dead-end arguments which Williams found in the new 'critical structuralism', with its reliance on a certain reading of structural linguistics. The central point is always to resist the 'reduction of the key fact of social determination to the idea of determination by a system' (40). In conclusion, writes Williams

We can add, to the necessary definition of the biological faculty of language as constitutive an equally necessary definition of language development - at once individual and social - as historically and socially constituting. What we can then define is a dialectical process: the changing practical consciousness of human beings. (43-4)

The changing practical consciousness of human beings. That had been Williams's emphasis from the start - a focus he had found present but blurred in Marx's own writing, and dissolved to the point of near invisibility in the history of the transition from Marx to Marxism which followed.

Conclusion

It is hardly surprising that the main response of Williams's committed Marxist readers was to question the questions he posed

to orthodox Marxism. Where, it has been asked, is Williams's acknowledgement of the importance of the state to his discussions of social change? What is the role and status of class consciousness in his arguments? Where in his work is there any serious consideration of the dynamic of the forces and relations of production? How do his arguments relate to the classical Marxist conceptions of mode of production and social formation? Above all, can his rejection of the base and structure model really be intended to deny the fundamental Marxist emphasis on the determination by the economy of the social totality, in however final an instance? ^{4b}

Williams's lack of attention to these questions - the terms and tenets of orthodox marxist analysis - led to Perry Anderson's magisterial judgement in 1976. While Williams is 'the most distinguished socialist thinker to have come from the ranks of the Western working class', his work 'has not been that of a Marxist' (Anderson 1976: 105). But then, one might reply, that was never Williams's aim. Anderson's remark needs to be supplemented, I think, by something like Terry Eagleton's judgement in 1989. '[T]here are many sterile ways of being correct', he notes, and, troping a phrase of Milton's, concludes that in relation to orthodox Marxism, Williams is best seen as a 'truthteller in heresy'. '[W]hatever he has contributed to Marxism has been founded, necessarily, on his early break with it' (1989b: 175). The judgement perfectly captures the paradox at the centre of

Williams's relations to Marxism, as well as the ambivalence of Eagleton's relations to Williams.. ⁴⁷

Williams had little patience with any taxonomy of the orthodox. A propos the ambivalence in Marxist circles towards the work of Christopher Caudwell, he affirmed that it was 'a quarrel which one who is not a Marxist will not attempt to resolve' (1958: 277), and made it clear in Culture and Society that he in no way regarded himself as a Marxist. Again, in 1971, with regard to criticisms levelled at Goldmann and Lukacs as Left Hegelian or left idealist, he remarked 'If you're not in a church, you're not worried about heresies' ([1971d]: 20), again implying that he had no wish to be counted as one of the faith. Throughout his career he argued consistently against the tendency to reduce intellectual positions to a common currency of proper names, referring contemptuously to those 'robots' who believe 'that the world exists in terms of their own fixed points':

Are you a marxist, a revisionist, a bourgeois reformist? Are you a Communist, a left radical, a fellow-traveller? What answer can a man make to that kind of robot questioning?
(1961b: 129)

His response to any such questioning in 1961 was simple and direct: 'Go away' (ibid.). But what is abundantly clear in any account of Williams and Marxism is that the question of Marxism never did go away. As we have seen, throughout this study

as well as in this particular chapter, it is probably true to say that, on some level, Williams was always thinking about Marxism, even if he didn't exactly want to.

Chapter One examined how the very motor and dynamic of his thinking was formed from an attempt to reconcile the apparently irreconcilable clash between Marxism and literature. The essays, indeed the very project, of Politics and Letters (1947-48) asserted the need for a political criticism, though one which could not be easily sustained within the disciplinary and conceptual framework of English studies. In Chapter Two, we saw how, with the elaboration of the idea of a 'structure of feeling' in Preface to Film (1954), he sought to articulate an alternative to any too mechanistic an explanation of the relations between economic base and cultural superstructure. Modern Tragedy (1966) continued the dialogue with Marxism through its original attempt to come to terms with the fact of Stalinism by placing it within the category of the tragic, while at the same time seeking to refresh tragedy as an aesthetic category through the consideration of revolution. The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence (1970) ended with a rejection of the base and superstructure model whose very marginality and casualness - just the tag-end of a sentence - reveals just how central the issues remained to Williams. The writing of Marxism and Literature gave him an opportunity to review the core of questions and theoretical problems which had been central to his work throughout.

Can Marxism then be said to be central to Williams's thought? Or merely marginal? Neither term really fits the nagging constancy with which Marxism provided a background and point of reference for his more foregrounded preoccupations with literature and culture. It must never be forgotten that Williams was first and foremost a literary and cultural critic, and that his interest in and interpretation of Marxism was constructed largely from within the discursive boundaries of his profession. This simple fact only makes his theoretical achievement all the more striking: no literary critic before him had ever thought through what Marxism might mean to literary criticism quite so thoroughly, so forcefully, or so originally.

One thing for sure is that Williams's engagement with Marxism was just as oppositional and combative as his relation to orthodox literary criticism. As he put it in 1958, 'I could not have begun this work [the writing of Culture and Society] if I had not learned from Marxists and from Leavis; I cannot complete it unless I radically amend some of the ideas which they and others have left us' ([1958b]: 14). Williams was not only the critic of 'official English culture' whose work contra Cambridge English formed the subject of the previous chapter; he was also and always a critic of what he took to be official Marxist culture. His aim was never to be or become a Marxist in any orthodox sense. It was rather to offer a series of 'amendments' and corrections to what he saw as a range of mistaken emphases in orthodox Marxist theory.

In this sense, there can be no doubt that his rejection of the base and superstructure argument was intended as a direct challenge to the related strains of economism and functionalism which he was not alone in finding at work in a great deal of Marxist theory, including Marx's own.⁴⁸ Williams argued consistently against those who would construe the mechanisms of social reproduction in any way which reduced people to the status of mere 'bearers' of social relations, the dupes of ideology. He argued consistently for a better understanding of the situational complexity of human agency, and came to figure his case, in the end, on the idea of the constitutive force of language in a way which was the product of some forty years of thinking on, through and against the orthodox ideas of literature and Marxism. This oppositional thinking came through as a theory of cultural materialism which Williams was willing to set against what he saw as the dogmas of historical materialism. In the next chapter, we shall examine cultural materialism in relation to the other great doxa that Williams set himself against: the formation he came to call the 'bourgeois idea of literature'.

Ch 6 Towards a Cultural Materialism 1977-1981

The previous chapter traced some of the main contours of Williams's complex relations to Marxist cultural theory. We saw how his central emphasis on the constitutive force of culture in social and political reproduction culminated in the advocacy of a cultural materialism. Cultural materialism challenged the Second International's commitment to the singular, absolute and uni-causal priority of the economy, and refused its equally firm relegation of cultural activity to a secondary role in the reproduction of the social order. The means and relations of communication belong alongside the means and forces of production as one of the constituents of any explanation of the functioning of the social totality.¹ Williams's cultural materialism argued instead for the centrality of a line of thought occluded in the usual accounts - Marx and Engels's stress on the importance of 'practical consciousness' - and suggested that culture be recognised as a primary force in the reproduction of, and therefore all challenges to, any existing social order. Hence his persistent emphasis on the necessity of the 'long revolution': while ready to accept the need for a punctual 'short' revolution, he argued that no concept of revolution could ever be really complete without an understanding of the necessity for a 'long revolution', a cultural revolution.²

But the theory of cultural materialism looks two ways. As cultural materialism, it is the name Williams gave to his

distinctive version of Marxist theory, but, as cultural materialism, it refers to his response to the theory and practice of literary analysis at work in the existing institutions of English studies. This theory and practice, the discipline of English literature is distinctively bourgeois in nature and effect. Bourgeois literary analysis is marked by an over-emphasis on the individual at the expense of the social; and a tendency to ahistorical and apolitical analysis. To borrow and adapt Edward Said's useful terms, bourgeois literary theory produces an idea of literature as a pure textuality cut off from the entanglements of all worldly circumstance.³

Cultural Materialism versus Cambridge English

In Williams's view, both Leavisism and literary structuralism share a series of family resemblances, the common features of the bourgeois response to the pressures of modernity and mass culture. In Culture and Society Williams had argued that this structure of response, first articulated in the 1920s, was ^prepeated with renewed vigour and stridency in the post-1945 period. In Marxism and Literature, he argues a further continuity between the modernist dilemma and the advent of structuralist and post-structuralist theory: the textualising focus is common both to the founding project of Cambridge English in which he had been trained as an undergraduate, and to the more recent work in literary theory and analysis branded, perhaps rather too summarily, as 'structuralism', and more recently extended and developed as the

self-consciously post-structuralist theory appropriate to the new global world of post-modernity. The theory of cultural materialism was intended as a challenge and check to this subterranean continuity. In this chapter, we examine how the case for a cultural materialism, first argued in Marxism and Literature, was deployed in the debates around 'structuralism' provoked by the 'MacCabe Affair', and subsequently extended and developed in Williams's later study, Culture (1981).

Literature and Marxism

Few reviewers of Marxism and Literature attempted the daunting task of trying to chart or to assess Williams's argument as a whole; and few of the broader discussions of his work have done so either. Reviews focused largely on the first item in the title - Marxism - and much less attention was paid to the second, Literature. This has had the unfortunate consequence - which I discuss further in the Conclusion - that while Williams's term 'cultural materialism' has been adopted by a number of progressive academics, that adoption has always involved what we might call a certain translation of Williams's own concept, and, as with any translation, a certain loss or simplification of the original. This chapter seeks to revive the force and complexity of Williams's own arguments.

Marxist stalwart Arnold Kettle reviewed the study unsympathetically, rejecting it because of its foundation in

Cambridge English and New Left attitudes. For Kettle, any Marxism in which 'concepts are given so central a place...and in which the particular concept of "reflection" is placed on a sort of Stalinist dunce's or whipping stool, is almost bound to err on the side of theoreticism and academicism'. From a different perspective, George Woodcock belittled the book as a 'confessional document - the autobiography...of a true believer [in Marxism]', while Bernard Sharrat saw little in it save 'a summary and summation of most of Williams's already published work.' The most detailed account appeared in the American journal Telos, where Michael Scrivener wrote (against Anthony Barnett's view that Williams 'pleads too much for the continuity of his position') of the 'real continuity' between his arguments in 1958 and 1977, but notes how the chapter on language demonstrates just 'how innovative Williams actually is.' Many commented on the daunting abstraction of the language and the arguments as the book sought to compress the competing idioms of a century's thinking on Marxism and culture into one volume and one argument.⁴ Generally missed was the attempt in Marxism and Literature to forge the theory of a new discipline through the critique of the existing discipline of English studies.

The principles of the cultural materialism which Williams developed as the theoretical and disciplinary critique of Cambridge English are given most fully in the third part of Marxism and Literature. but the main lines of attack are anticipated in the chapter on Literature in Part I of the study,

where he deconstructs or defamiliarises the orthodox idea of literature by tracing its emergence from the eighteenth century to the present day.

Contra Leavis

'It is relatively difficult' he writes at the beginning of the chapter 'Literature' 'to see "literature" as a concept' (Williams 1977a: 45). That 'relatively' has a complex force: it implies the difficulty may be, and may only be, a relative one, but relative to what? Perhaps the implication is that the conceptual difficulty may be there, only or especially there, for someone trained in the Cambridge English school, where literature appears as a 'specific description' of particular works, but certainly never anything so cold and abstract as a 'concept'. In Cambridge English terms,

it is common to see 'literature' defined as 'full, central immediate human experience', usually with an associated reference to 'minute particulars'. By contrast, 'society' is often seen as essentially general and abstract: the summaries and averages, rather than the direct substance, of human living. Other related concepts, such as 'politics', 'sociology', or 'ideology', are similarly placed and downgraded, as mere hardened outer shells compared with the living experience of literature. (45)

The references are, of course, to the work of F.R. Leavis, for so many years the effective doyen of Cambridge English, despite his lack of institutional recognition.⁵ Leavis argued over some fifty years for the value and specificity of literary criticism through an extremely strong negative contrast of it with both traditional conceptions of literary history, and against any criticism based in theory - be it psychoanalytic, Marxist or philosophical.⁶

As Leavis put it in his essay 'Literary Criticism and Philosophy': 'the reading demanded by poetry is of a different kind from that demanded by philosophy....Philosophy, we say, is "abstract", and poetry "concrete"' (Leavis [1952] 1962: 212). And this came through even more strongly in Leavis's responses to the two most explicit challenges to his and Scrutiny's procedures.⁷ Rene Wellek's challenge, in a review of Leavis's Revaluation, published in Scrutiny in March 1937, was met - or avoided - with a stinging response in which Leavis refused Wellek's request to make his theoretical assumptions explicit on the grounds that he was a literary critic and not a philosopher. If he, Leavis, 'avoided such generalities, it was not out of timidity. It was because they seemed too clumsy to be of any use' he asserted. 'I thought I had provided something better' he offered. 'My whole effort was to work in terms of concrete judgement and particular analyses (215) - to work through the particularity of textual analysis and literary evaluation.'

And again, some sixteen years later, faced with the challenge of F.W. Bateson's new Oxford journal Essays in Criticism, and its promotion of a new 'contextual reading', one which demanded a consistently historical dimension to literary analysis, Leavis could only reply by refusing to meet the grounds of the accusation, and launching a counter-accusation at Bateson and other contextual critics. Such critics were guilty of 'the academic over-emphasis on scholarly knowledge', one which 'accompanies a clear lack of acquaintance with intelligent critical reading' (Leavis [1953] 1968: 281). In the end, as far as Leavis is concerned Bateson's proposed discipline of contextual reading 'is not merely irrelevant; it isn't, and can't be, a discipline at all: it has no determinate field or aim' (Leavis [1953]: 292). All that 'Bateson's posited relation between poem and "social context"' can amount to 'is a matter of vain and muddled verbiage' (296-7). Or, as Williams summed it up, with a rather different emphasis:

Arguments from theory or from history are simply evidence of the incurable abstraction and generality of those who are putting them forward. They can then be contemptuously rejected, often without specific reply, which would be only to fall to their level. (Williams 1977a: 45)

For Williams, Leavis's project - the project of Cambridge English in its most powerful form - represents an 'extraordinary ideological feat', one in which the specific literary process of

`formal composition within the social and formal properties of language' is effectively elided, `or has been displaced to an internal and self-proving procedure in which writing of this kind if genuinely believed to be (however many questions are then begged) "immediate living experience" itself' (46). To fully understand this ideological and theoretical achievement - one which `can hardly be examined or questioned at all from outside' - we need, he urges, to grasp the history of the concept of literature itself. For it is only in terms of this history that we can find a point of entry into an otherwise self-supporting structure of arguments, establish a point of address from which to prise open an otherwise closed system of assumptions.

From Literacy to Literature

For Williams, the history of the term literature is one of the increasing specialisation and reification of its component senses. This is summed up in the striking shift in the meaning of literature away from its original sense as literacy, to the now dominant sense of literature as `a category of use and condition rather than of production' (1977a: 47). He locates the beginnings of this shift in the eighteenth century, where, in a new extended meaning, literature goes `beyond the bare sense of "literacy"' to become the `apparently objective category of printed works of a certain quality'. Once this has happened, the term loses the basic reference to `reading ability and reading experience' (48) which it initially held and could express. Since the eighteenth

century, 'three complicating tendencies' have emerged - tendencies which have by now become 'received assumptions.' First, there was a move from 'learning' to 'taste' as the criterion for literary quality; second, the meaning of literature was increasingly restricted to imaginative works only (in the early part of the century, literature covered history, philosophy and virtually all forms of bound and printed communication); and third, the period saw the development of the concept of a national literary tradition.

All of these came together in the idea of a canon of national literature, a selective tradition which is apparently - but only apparently - based in objective judgements of literary value and worth. Long before it became a regular professional move to 'question the canon', Williams was sharp and to the point in his assessment of its foundational rhetoric, the grounding of the canon in apparent norms of aesthetic judgement:

As subjective definitions of apparently objective criteria (which acquire their apparent objectivity from an actively consensual class sense), and at the same time apparently objective definitions of subjective qualities, 'taste' and 'sensibility' are characteristically bourgeois categories. (48-9)

Similarly, he charts the related development of literary criticism, the shadow of literature in the new senses. Indeed, in

the argument, it is the practice of literary criticism which acts as the main guarantee of the new restricted senses of literature. He is harsh on its emergence as an academic discipline in the twentieth century: the so-called (in Basil Willey's phrase) 'Golden Age of Cambridge English' - the moment of its entry as a 'new conscious discipline into the universities' in the 1920s - was no more than 'forms of class specialization and control of a general social practice, and of a class limitation of the questions which it might raise' (49).⁸ By the time of this development,

the category which had appeared objective as 'all printed books', and which had been given a social -class foundation as 'polite learning' and the domain of 'taste' and 'sensibility', now became a necessarily selective and self-defining area: not all 'fiction' was 'imaginative'; not all 'literature' was 'Literature'. 'Criticism' acquired a quite new and effectively primary importance, since it was now the only way of validating this specialized and selective category....What had been claimed for 'art' and the 'creative imagination' in the central Romantic arguments was now claimed for 'criticism', as the central 'humane' activity and 'discipline'. (51)

- precisely Leavis's idea of the discipline.⁹ With the idea of the canon, the practice of literary criticism was justified by literature, and the idea of literature was confirmed by literary criticism, in the mutually supportive dynamic which Williams had

identified as the dynamic of a 'selective tradition' in which

[t]he 'national literature' soon ceased to be a history and became a tradition. It was not, even theoretically, all that had been written or all kinds of writing. It was a selection which culminated in, and in a circular way defined, the 'literary values' which 'criticism' was asserting....To oppose the terms of this ratification was to be 'against literature'.
(51- 52)

- exactly the structure of argument and assumption so powerfully welded together in Leavis's seminal series of canonical studies, his famous 'revaluations'.¹⁰

Williams rightly regarded this transformation, within the discipline of literary studies, of a full history into a selective tradition as an 'extraordinary ideological feat'. The first step in combatting it was to grasp the idea of "literature" as a specializing social and historical category' (53), and next, to seek to recover some of the basic senses of literature as literacy which have been repressed in and through the developing history of the word. Literacy in this sense goes beyond the basic mastery of reading and writing to become a secondary or critical literacy; and it also extends the usual boundaries of textuality to include the relatively new practices of composition and communication available in film, television and video.

Williams moves on, from this point in Marxism and Literature, to a similarly challenging discussion of the Marxist idea of ideology, and from there to his analysis of the Marxist debates on cultural theory which we have examined in Chapter Five. In Part III, 'Literary Theory', he returns to the discussion and dissection of bourgeois literary theory and its particular idea of literature. He begins by questioning the restricted sense of literariness underlying traditional conceptions of the literary.

The Multiplicity of Writing

Against the reified and separated conception of literature at work in orthodox literary studies, Williams asserts what he calls the 'multiplicity of writing'. Though he does not use the term 'representation' in his discussion in Marxism and Literature, the concept of representation is perpetually at work in it, understood as the totality of signifying practices through which a society forms its expression and expresses its deep forms and structures. Williams asserts the generality of signifying practices which together make up a society's forms of representation against the idea of literary writing as an activity and production somehow separate and different from other forms of social creation and expression.

In the orthodox terms of the discipline, 'literature' has been restricted to aesthetic writing, and its study has taken the form of a largely evaluative criticism. Against this, Williams urges

what he calls the 'multiplicity of writing.' In The Long Revolution, he had argued for the recognition of creativity as an everyday activity, rooted in perception itself, rather than as a special instrumental feature of the artistic temperament alone.¹¹ The concept of literature, he reprises in Marxism and Literature, has operated a 'specialization and containment' of this ordinary creativity, though never with complete success. The main obstacle to the full recognition of the ordinariness of creativity, and the consequent acceptance of the multiplicity of writing, is the orthodox division established, in theory and across time, between literary and non-literary writing. Against this falsely specialising opposition between 'fictional' and 'factual' writing, he insists that the

range of actual writing similarly surpasses any reduction of 'creative imagination' to the 'subjective', with its dependent propositions: 'literature' as 'internal' or 'inner' truth; other forms of writing as 'external' truth. These depend, ultimately, on the characteristic bourgeois separation of 'individual' and 'society' and on the older idealist separation of 'mind' and 'world'. The range of writing, in most forms, crosses these artificial categories again and again, and the extremes can even be stated in an opposite way: autobiography ('what I experienced', 'what happened to me') is 'subjective' but (ideally) 'factual' writing; realist fiction or naturalist drama ('people as they are', 'the world as it is') is

'objective' (the narrator or even the fact of narrative occluded in the form) but (ideally) 'creative' writing. (148)

In other words, the artificial categories deny the most significant feature of all forms of writing, namely 'the very fact of address...stance' (149). Stance - the mutual positioning of reader and writer through the process of composition and address was constitutive in all writing.¹² And this fact of address includes, and is perhaps even especially relevant to, writing in which the stance is consciously and conventionally 'impersonal', as in the composition of scientific papers and their 'necessary creation of the "impersonal observer"' (149). There is a rhetoric of objectivity, one which can range from the activation of the conventions of scientific writing and research, to their rather more suspicious troping and deployment in other forms, where, by sleight of phrase, the rhetoric of impersonality cloaks the figure of an interested observer, as occurs, in exemplary fashion, in the case of Orwell.¹³

In the end, the bourgeois dichotomies of fact and fiction, and the orthodox positing of objective versus subjective, work to contain and occlude nothing less than the social and ideological bearings of all composition and language-use, and alongside this, the real sociality of the human subject. Against the banal assertions of the independence, separation and 'freedom' of the individual subject of bourgeois and liberal theory, but also against the arguments of Althusserian theory and its many

variants, in which the human subject is placed as the absolutely determined 'bearer' of social relations, and against the carceral subject of Foucauldian analysis, endlessly repeating its initial conditions of socialisation as the content of its subjectivity, Williams argues for a conception of the human subject in which the agency of human subjectivity is given a measure of recognition equal to that accorded to the idea of its determinations. Acceptance of the 'actual multiplicity of writing' makes of every person - as in the starting-point of Gramsci's theory - an intellectual in the basic sense of an active and responsive language-user, rather than merely the subject of an always determining language-structure, the product and 'bearer' of always external determinations.¹⁴

The Social and the Aesthetic

A part of the problem with the orthodox category of literature is the ways in which it embodies the constitutive tensions of the larger concept of the aesthetic. The aesthetic shares some of the negative aspects of literature in its careful selection and specialization of human creative energy to forms of class culture; but it also has positive aspects, as Williams had argued - though in a very different theoretical language - in Culture and Society. For the history of the concept of the aesthetic is 'in large part a protest against the forcing of all experience into instrumentality' and represents a resistance to those same

alienating and reifying forces of bourgeois culture which make literature such a restrictive and specialised category.

Following the work of his former research student, John Fekete, Williams praises Lukacs's attempt to place the aesthetic as a category of action and agency, one which is neither 'practical' nor 'magical', but which represents 'a real mediation between (isolated) subjectivity and (abstract) universality' (151).¹⁵ Nonetheless, he argues that Lukacs's placing of the aesthetic as a distinguishable category of material production is open in the end to the same difficulties which plagued the Russian Formalists' earlier attempt to distinguish and separate out a specific 'poetic language' from within the ordinary social processes of language.¹⁶

There were two responses to this problem. First, 'the conversion of all social and political practice to "aesthetic" forms'; and second, a way of seeing the aesthetic as a function or practice rather than as a property of either special objects or the use of specific devices. Williams favoured the second option - to be found in Jan Mukarovsky's Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value as Social Facts (1970) - over the first, which he sees exemplified in the "closed forms" of structural linguistics and in structuralist-semiotic literary and cultural studies' (152). In fact, Mukarovsky's work represents 'the penultimate stage of the critical dissolution of the specializing and controlling categories of bourgeois aesthetic theory' (153). In an important

passage, he summarises just how, in the given terms of this theory:

'Art' is a kind of production which has to be seen as separate from the dominant bourgeois productive norm: the making of commodities. It has then, in fantasy, to be separated from 'production' altogether; described by the new term 'creation'; distinguished from its own material processes; distinguished, finally, from other products of its own kind or closely related kinds - 'art' from 'non-art'; 'literature' from 'para-literature' or 'popular literature'; 'culture' from 'mass culture'. (153-54)

As Williams had argued in Culture and Society, ^the consequences of this separation are profound and mystificatory. This 'narrowing abstraction' of art, he writes, 'is then so powerful that, in its name, we find ways of neglecting (or of dismissing as peripheral) that relentless transformation of art works into commodities' which is characteristic of capitalist societies (154). 'Art and thinking about art', he emphasises, 'have to separate themselves, by ever more absolute abstraction, from the social processes within which they are still contained' (ibid). 'Aesthetic theory is the main instrument of this evasion', he asserts, and concludes that:

In its concentration on receptive states, on psychological responses of an abstractly differentiated kind, it represents the division of labour in consumption corresponding to the abstraction of art as the division of labour in production. (153-4)

And yet, though Mukarovsky's work is correct in making these emphases, it doesn't go quite far enough. Mukarovsky shows that art

is not a special kind of object but one in which the aesthetic function, usually mixed with other functions, is dominant. Art, with other things (landscape and dress, most evidently), gives aesthetic pleasure, but this cannot be transliterated as a sense of beauty or a sense of perceived form, since while these are central in the aesthetic function they are socially and historically variable, and in all real instances concrete. (153)

A further step is necessary. Williams is critical of what he sees as Mukarovsky's abstraction of the aesthetic as a unitary 'function', and suggests that the aesthetic can always be better described in terms of 'a series of situations'. This avoids the positing of the usual false antithesis between art as either pure 'ideology' - understood as the communication and imposition of social and political meanings and values - or as the pure 'aesthetic' - concerned only with the beauties of language and

form. He argues that it is better to 'face the facts of the range of intentions and effects, and to face it as_a_range':

All writing carries references, meanings and values. To suppress or distort them is in the end impossible. But to say all 'all writing carries' is only a way of saying that language and form are constitutive processes of reference, meaning and value, and that these are not necessarily identical with, or exhausted by, the kinds of reference, meaning, and value that are also evident, in other senses and in summary, elsewhere.

(155)

The aesthetic, whatever else it is, is always a particular response to a specific situation, in a given signifying medium. At this point, Williams once again deploys his new sense of the constitutive force of language to great effect: 'language and form are constitutive processes of reference, meaning and value'. To argue otherwise is to see language merely as the medium for expression, understood as an essentially private act, one made possible by the individual possession of language as an instrument under the control of the sovereign ego of the bourgeois subject. That is, to see the aesthetic as Williams had himself seen it, particularly in his early work, where an ideology of artistic expression and instrumentality - elements of which, as we saw in Chapter Two, were derived from Eliot and fetishized in the theory of cinema as 'Total Expression' - held sway. In order to stress the importance of this new sense of the constitutivity of

language, he examines some of the dynamics of that misleading term, medium, and the role it plays in the orthodox view in which language is simply the transparent medium for an always instrumental expression, the property of an always centred and always knowing subject.

Language as medium

For Williams, the constitutive properties of language are all too easily abstracted and objectified in the orthodox idea that 'thoughts exist before language and are then expressed through its 'medium'' (158).¹⁷ Against this, he argues that if language is to be understood as a medium, then it needs to be grasped as a medium which - far from being neutral or value free - is in itself the concrete embodiment of social, political, and ideological conflicts. Language is never merely a system; it is always a social practice. And it is in this notion of language as a social practice that the radical aesthetics of modernism - which so stressed the potential defamiliarising effects of language-use - joins the revolutionary theory and practice of Marxism. In the end, the 'full sense of practice' in Marxism or modernism 'has always to be defined as work on a material for a specific purpose within certain necessary social conditions' (160). As Williams had argued in Part 1 Chapter Three of Marxism and Literature, language 'is not a medium; it is a constitutive element of material social practice' (165), even, indeed, 'a special kind of material practice; that of human sociality' (165).

Full recognition of the real constitutive force of language in human sociality has been evaded by the two alternative views of language available to orthodox literary theory. Here language is either seen as instrumental or systematic, 'expressive' or 'formalist'. 'Each of these general theories' writes Williams, 'grasp real elements of the practice of writing, but commonly in ways which deny other real elements and even make them inconceivable' (165). Following Volosinov, whose work he had discovered by a happy accident on the open-stack shelves of Cambridge's University Library, Williams insists that 'meaning is always produced; it is never simply expressed.'¹⁸ 'No expression', he emphasises

no account, description, depiction, portrayal - is 'natural' or 'straightforward'. These are at most socially relative terms. Language is not a pure medium through which the reality of a life or the reality of an event or an experience or the reality of a society can 'flow'. It is a socially shared and reciprocal activity, already embedded in active relationships, within which every move is an activation of what is already shared and reciprocal or may become so. (166)

And with a theoretical insight refreshed by his happy encounter with Volosinov, Williams reiterates the core of the theory of communication present in Culture and Society and The Long Revolution: 'to address an account to another is, explicitly or

potentially, as in any act of expression, to evoke or propose a relationship' (166).¹⁹

The Russian Formalists had grasped one aspect of this, drawing attention to the devices through which expression could be strengthened; but in the end they lost their way. Reacting against notions of language and expression as 'natural', they reduced language to what they saw as its basic elements, to 'signs' within a totalised 'system of signs', anticipating in this regard the inner dynamic of the new 'critical structuralism.' In the end, the Formalists were responsible for the creation of 'a new myth': the idea

that the 'system of signs' is determined by its formal internal relations; that 'expression' is not only not 'natural' but is a form of 'codification'; and that the appropriate response to 'codification' is 'decipherment', 'deconstruction'.(167-68)²⁰

Williams sees this form of analysis - which, once again following the arguments first put forward by John Fekete, he associates with both French structuralism and American New Criticism - as dangerously compatible with the very forms of alienation it seeks to analyse. For, he argues, what really follows from this position 'is the universality of alienation, the position of a closely associated bourgeois idealist formation, drawing its assumptions from a universalist (mainly Freudian) psychology' (168). In this sense, the Russian Formalists anticipate the

arguments of the structuralist movement, and all those caught up in what he calls elsewhere, again borrowing from Fekete, the 'language paradigm'.²¹

What in the end is necessary to combat this paradigm is, argues Williams, a 'fully social theory of literature' in which the over-emphases of both expressionism and formalism are refused, rejected and redefined. For the notations beloved of the 'language paradigm' are in fact 'relationships, expressed, offered, tested, and amended in a whole social process, in which device, expression, and the substance of expression are in the end inseparable' (171-72). Such is the founding argument of cultural materialism, and Williams argues that evidence for this could be established through any fully social history and analysis of existing literary concepts such as convention, genre, form, and author.

These indeed are the key terms whose analysis constitutes the remainder of the study, demonstrating in each case the ways in which the force of these concepts is lessened by their failure to fully comprehend the force of language in the constitutivity of the social process in the way that cultural materialism recommends. Thus Williams argues - drawing on the arguments and evidence gathered in The_Country_and_the_City - that 'the presentation of place depends on variable conventions':

Descriptions of great houses, of rural landscapes, of cities, or of factories are evidence examples of these variable conventions, where the 'point of view' may be experienced as an 'aesthetic' choice but where any point of view, including that which excludes persons or converts them into landscape, is social. (177)

Similarly, genre is described as 'neither an ideal type nor a traditional order nor a set of technical rules' but a 'social relationship' (185); while the discussion of an orthodox literary theory in which 'the figure of the individual author', - 'a characteristic form of bourgeois thought' (193) - needs to be challenged by the 'reciprocal discovery of the truly social in the individual, and the truly individual in the social' (197). In all of these assertions, language needs to be seen as in a strong and indeed constitutive sense the social practice, 'the practice of human sociality itself.'

At the centre of cultural materialism is the call for a critical attitude towards all forms and practices of representation, and not only those associated with literature. A key characteristic of cultural materialism is its bringing together three dimensions of intellectual analysis and enquiry which are far too often kept apart, to the detriment of each: the textual, the theoretical or conceptual, and the historical. Cambridge English, at least in the evaluative mode bequeathed by Leavis and his followers, had tended to privilege the textual at

the expense of the theoretical and the historical, as Leavis's non-debates with Wellek and Bateson had shown. Contemporary structuralism - as Williams understood it - tended to focus on the theoretical over the historical and, in a curious sense, over the textual, often allotting texts only the role of example in the demonstration of the 'truths' of theory, just as in some historical analysis - both liberal and Marxist - texts were regarded merely as 'illustrations' of a historical process which was already comprehended in full.

In all of these partial approaches, bourgeois and Marxist alike, what might be called the productivity of the text was ignored - that productivity which meant that texts could contest as well as articulate or embody given ideologies. This, in turn, exemplified the ways in which the constitutive role of culture in the production and reproduction of society was badly understood and in consequence marginalised in most liberal and Marxist accounts. The task of a cultural materialism was to attend to that constitutive role of signification within cultural process, and so to seek to integrate the three usually separated dimensions of textual, theoretical and historical analysis. Only through this kind of integration could the fundamentally social role of language and communication be fully understood and asserted against the separated and reified analyses of both bourgeois and also (insofar as it had insufficiently freed itself from bourgeois categories) Marxist literary and cultural theory.

Against the orthodox emphases of the 'bourgeois theory of literature', which limits and reifies the workings of expression through the category of the aesthetic, cultural materialism emphasises the depth, richness and complexity of the fully theorised sense of language as constitutive. Cultural materialism is the analysis of the constitutive grounds and force of all forms of signification at work in human society.

Crisis in English Studies

Published in 1977, Marxism and Literature presented equal challenges to the orthodoxies of both Marxist cultural analysis and traditional literary criticism through its arguments for a cultural materialism. In many ways, these arguments anticipated or participated in, the emergence of a new body of work whose theoretical force and impetus led to a widespread sense of a 'crisis in English studies', one which continues some twenty years later as the self-contained discipline which English literature was for the first fifty years of its professional existence struggles to respond to the infusion of ideas, concepts and practices from the diverse constituents of 'theory'.

It is beyond the scope of this chapter to examine, in the necessary detail, the relations between Williams's work and what Anthony Easthope has usefully dubbed 'British post-structuralism' (Easthope 1988). A full-scale comparative exercise, placing Williams's work in direct comparison with the

work of European thinkers, would require a different framing than this narrowly focused study of its relations to English studies. It would entail the establishment of a discursive common ground that would accommodate Williams's theoretical vocabulary, and the conceptual vocabulary of post-structuralism, as well as a detailed reading and analysis of the major works of Foucault, Derrida, Lacan et_cie, and at the same time a detailed appraisal of the selective deployment of the work of the French school in British work.

Yet it is worth saying, before examining the detail of some of Williams's arguments, that Easthope's study, which does much to establish that larger frame, is interestingly blind to and silent on the ways in which cultural materialism was an attempt to come to terms with the problems of that whole formation.²² Easthope, like many of Williams's other 'obituarists', locates the main force and value of his work with the arguments of the Culture and Society period, rather than with the later and more sophisticated arguments of Marxism and Literature and Culture. Against this placing of it, which has the effect of limiting its force and relevance to the 1950s, 'left-liberal, culturalist and empiricist' in Easthope's description (Easthope 1988: 2), let us examine some of the ways in which the arguments were intended to carry some force in and against the emerging theories of 'British post-structuralism'.

The MacCabe Affair

In Cambridge, 'British post-structuralism' came into focus in the arguments and debates surrounding the notorious MacCabe affair of 1980-81, 'Cambridge's biggest academic row since the bitter days of Dr. F.R. Leavis'.²³ A few remarks about the tenure system at the University of Cambridge are necessary to set the scene.

Generally speaking, to become a tenured lecturer in the English Faculty at Cambridge University, it is necessary first of all to go through a preliminary and probationary appointment as an Assistant Lecturer for a period of five years. This is then followed - or not - by what is known as 'upgrading' to the tenured position of University Lecturer. Assistant Lectureships are themselves hard fought for, and promotion or upgrading is usually dependent upon maintaining a good record of academic publication, the translation of the completed Ph.D into a publishable book, and demonstrated competence and expertise in the field of the appointment. There is, in other words, general agreement and consensus about the workings of promotion. The MacCabe Affair attracted unusual national attention in the press as that consensus visibly broke down, and brought into focus emergent shifts and trends in the study of literature, and moves beyond the given paradigm of literary study as British academic work in literary studies began to move away from its intensely enclosed

and nationalist focus, and to examine work from Europe and the USA.

Colin MacCabe was hired by the Faculty as an Assistant lecturer in 1976, and was refused tenure in the second of a number of meetings of the Faculty Board in 1980 (the first meeting was apparently inconclusive). This seemed a highly unusual decision, as MacCabe had already made a name for himself in British intellectual and political life through the publication of a number of seminal essays on film, literature and theory, and the publication of his thesis as a provocative book on James Joyce.²⁴

This already significant body of work represented some of the first stirrings of Easthope's 'British post-structuralism', that heady mixture of Lacanian psychoanalysis, Althusserian Marxism, and the textual analysis of film and literature.²⁵ As David Simpson wryly remarks, MacCabe's publications alone made him 'by any publicly recognized standard spectacularly overqualified for tenure' (Simpson 1990: 251); but he was nonetheless refused upgrading. The decision was bitterly fought and the occasion of much debate both within and without the university.²⁶ One moment in this debate was a lecture given by Williams to the English Faculty in March 1981, later revised and published as 'Crisis in English Studies'.²⁷ Criticised by many at the time for too distanced and magisterial a view of the conflict, the lecture can

best be read in terms of Williams's predilection for the longer historical view of crises and debates.

The lecture opens with an oblique and ironic reference to the MacCabe affair ('Recent events in Cambridge, of which some of you may have heard') as the occasion for the lecture. Williams describes his main purpose as one of 'identifying and briefly explaining some currently controversial positions beyond the labels which are being so loosely attached', of clarifying, in effect, the ideas of Marxism and 'structuralism' which were being used to identify, and vilify, MacCabe's work and positions in the dispute over his promotion.²⁸ In the first instance, argued Williams, it was necessary to stress the simple diversity of available positions in both Marxism and structuralism. While several of these positions are in fact in sharp opposition to each other (Williams is far from endorsing MacCabe's own position, as we shall examine in the next chapter), what is at stake in the present dispute is the general compatibility of these tendencies with the existing paradigm of work in literary studies in Cambridge, that is with the current 'working definition of a perceived field of knowledge', one which 'as object_of_knowledge, based on certain fundamental hypotheses... carries with it definitions of appropriate methods of discovering and establishing such knowledge' ([1984b]: 192).²⁹ For Williams, the MacCabe affair was a symptom, 'although at a relatively early stage', of crisis in the explanatory power of the Literature paradigm, and

consequently a moment for the elaboration of his alternative, cultural materialism.

In an impressive piece of synthesis and condensation, Williams outlines many of the main themes of Marxism and Literature, focusing on the question of the compatibility of Marxist and structuralist arguments with the dominant literary paradigm. Structuralist literary criticism, he argues, is in the end no more than

an indirect inheritance from the kind of thinking which Richards had been doing about the isolated internal organization of a poem...What had happened in Cambridge was...a confused but striking association of moral and indeed normative judgement with these techniques of isolated internal analysis.

(206)

The apparently new literary structuralism of the 1960s and 1970s 'is not only congruent with the paradigm...It is the paradigm itself in its most influential modern form' (206). Indeed, argues Williams, Althusserianism - a key influence on MacCabe's own work - can itself be understood as a particular variant of this literary structuralism. Here society is understood as a rule-governed system, determined in the last instance by the economy, in which there are a number of sub-systems or practices which enjoy a relative autonomy from that determination. The binding force of this is ideology in general, understood as 'the condition

of all conscious life'. In Althusserian theory, human experience itself is seen as 'the most common form of ideology. It is where the deep structures of the society actually reproduce themselves as conscious life' (207), and Williams's tone is mocking as he writes that ideology is in this account 'so pervasive and so impenetrable...that you wonder who is ever going to be able to analyse it' (207). For Althusser, Theory made this possible; but literature itself also enjoyed a 'relatively privileged situation':

Literature is not just a carrier of ideology, as in most forms of reflection theory. It is inescapably ideological, but its specific relative autonomy is that it is a form of writing, a form of practice, in which ideology both exists and is or can be internally distanced and questioned. Thus the value of literature is precisely that it is one of the areas where the grip of ideology is or can be loosened, because although it cannot escape ideological construction, the point about its literariness is that it is a continual questioning of it internally. (208)

While Williams admits that this method has been used in some 'very detailed and interesting analysis', it still participates in the logic of the dominant paradigm. ³⁰

Finally, he turns to semiotics, understood as bringing an important new emphasis to structuralism. This new emphasis comes

through the re-admission of the category of agency into the idea of structure. Instead of seeing literary works

as produced by the system of signs, which has been the central emphasis of the most orthodox forms of structuralism, this later semiotics has on the contrary emphasized that productive systems have themselves always to be constituted and reconstituted, and that because of this there is a perpetual battle about the fixed character of the sign and about the systems which we ordinarily bring to production and interpretation. One effect of this shift is a new sense of 'deconstruction': not the technical analysis of an internal organization to show where all the parts, the components, have come from, but a much more open and active process which is continually taking examples apart, as a way of taking their systems apart. (208-9)

Here Williams moves a little away from the rather slight definition of 'deconstruction' he had adopted and criticised in Marxism and Literature, and finds some common ground with the emerging 'post-structuralism' of his Cambridge colleagues like MacCabe and Heath, suggesting that this new 'more open and active process' of analysis might be better termed a 'radical semiotics'. This radical semiotics, despite its connections to the 'structuralist version of production and reproduction which has been much more widely influential - and more welcome and at home - in literary studies' (209) differs significantly from it and could

contribute to the challenging of the dominant paradigm of literary studies. In this challenge, there is common ground between a radical semiotics and cultural materialism.

While ready to admit that much of his own work - as we saw in Chapter Four - is located well within the dominant literary paradigm, though 'with an exceptionally strong consciousness of the social determinants upon it'. But, he argues, and most critics seem to agree, The_Country_and_the_City signalled a break with the dominant paradigm,

because it sets out to identify certain characteristic forms of writing about the country and the city, and then insists on placing them not only in their historical background - which is within the paradigm - but within an active, conflicting historical process in which the very forms are created by social relations which are sometimes evident and sometimes occluded. (209)

The key word is 'active'. Cultural materialism and radical semiotics come together in their recognition of subjective agency, the ways in which systems of language and conventions of representation not only coerce but also enable expression. And it is this recognition which places them 'outside the paradigm altogether' (210). Nonetheless, this does not mean the abandonment of the study of literature as such. Cultural materialism has not

moved away from the ultimate common concern, the works about which knowledge is to be gained. It has moved much wider than literature in its paradigmatic sense, but it still centrally includes these major forms of writing, which are now being read, along with other writing, in a different perspective. Cultural materialism is the analysis of all forms of signification, including quite centrally writing, within the actual means and conditions of their production. (210)

It is this emphasis on the analysis of the means and conditions of production of all forms of signification that cultural materialism and radical semiotics may connect. There are still major differences, writes Williams, especially with reference to the ways in which radical semiotics draws on structural linguistics and psychoanalysis, 'but I remember saying that a fully historical semiotics would be very much like the same thing as cultural materialism' (210).

'Very much like the same thing as cultural materialism' - this is how Williams refers, in a characteristically oblique fashion, to MacCabe's own work, and to what Christopher Ricks, a brilliant liberal professor of English at Cambridge, and a major player in the MacCabe Affair, described as the work of 'a particular radical, Marxist, semiological clique' (cited in Simpson 1990: 264). In retrospect, it seems clear that though the local battle against this new work was lost in MacCabe's own case, the war was

not. In reality, there were many diverse strands to this work, ranging from the emphasis on psychoanalysis to be found in the theory and practice of film analysis of what became known as 'Screen Theory' of MacCabe himself and his mentor Stephen Heath, as well as feminist critics such as Laura Mulvey and Jacqueline Rose; the exciting extension of this to the analysis of painting to be found in the work of Norman Bryson; and the more historically-based work of critics such as John Barrell and David Simpson, to name but few.³¹ Indeed, if anything has come to dominate contemporary literary studies, it has been the combination of theoretical and textual analysis characteristic of structuralist writing; but what is less evident is whether the third dimension of analysis, the historical, so crucial to Williams's own project of a cultural materialism, has been so widely adopted.

Some indication of the importance which Williams gave to the historical dimension comes through in his discussion of the procedures of cultural materialism in Politics and Letters in his opening remarks concerning the aims of The Country and the City. First of all, he notes how in his project he wanted to get away from the theoretical project associated with Macherey and Eagleton in which 'since all literature is a mode of production employing certain conventions, what we must now do is systematise our perceptions of this fact into an overall literary theory' (Williams 1979: 304).³² Instead, his project was 'quite different':

it was to try to show simultaneously the literary conventions and the historical relations to which they were a response - to see together the means of the production and the conditions of the means of production. For the conditions of the means of production are quite crucial to any substantial understanding of the means of production themselves. The tendency in some recent criticism on the left has been to exclude these conditions, dismissing any concern with them as historicism or sociologism. (1979: 304)

The emphasis of cultural materialism lay in the ways in which in the very process of restoring produced literature to its conditions of production reveals that conventions have social roots, that they are not simply formal devices of writing' (1979: 306). The lecture closes with some serious questions concerning the future viability of English literature as a unitary discipline, asking whether 'radically different work' can

still be carried on under a single heading or department when there is not just diversity of approach but more serious and fundamental differences about the object of knowledge (despite overlapping of the actual material of study)? Or must there be some wider reorganization of the received divisions of the

humanities, the human sciences, into newly defined and newly collaborative arrangements? (1981: 211)^b

This emphasis on the possibilities offered by such 'newly defined and newly collaborative arrangements' is taken up in Williams's next major study, Culture, published as the first volume in Gavin Mackenzie's New Sociology series in 1981.³³

Culture

Culture is a relatively neglected work in Williams's oeuvre. Mainly, I think, this is due to the ways in which his usually very clear sense of an opponent is too internalised in this work.³⁴ Bruce Robbins, an American scholar with a long and consistent record of intelligent interest in Williams's work, provided a defensive Foreword to the second American edition, retitled The Sociology of Culture, where he notes its 'strange, austere, formal, somewhat unprepossessing appearance' (Williams 1992: xi). He attributes this, in part at least, to the book's desire to 'see the big picture...to rise above the usual signposts, landmarks, and boundaries by which the cultural landscape has been known' (xi). What is lacking in the account (and in Robbins's too) is the small picture: any foregrounding of the fact that the book is best understood as the attempt to sketch out the contours of a new discipline with which could replace actually existing literary studies, one based in the theory of a cultural materialism.

As such, it calls for the analysis of all forms of signification, including quite centrally the diverse forms and occasions of writing, but an analysis which is conducted at all times in terms of the means and conditions of production. As Anthony Giddens, a Cambridge sociologist who shared many of Williams's reservations about structuralism, put it, in a respectful review which also made the key link to the Cambridge English debate around 'structuralism', cultural materialism

regards culture as a 'signifying system', but not in the abstract way characteristic of structuralist thought; for Williams emphasises strongly the need to analyse the ways in which signifying practices are constituted institutionally, and reproduced over time. (Giddens 1981b: 216.)³⁵

Williams writes, in the familiar accents of the New Left arguments he had helped to develop in the 1950s, of the need for a sociology of culture which would challenge the 'general social and sociological ideas within which it has been possible to see communication, language and art as marginal and peripheral, or as at best secondary and derived social processes' (Williams 1981: 10). Instead, and here he puts to work the more precise theoretical vocabulary he had acquired through the writing of Marxism and Literature, it would take as its starting point the 'constitutive' features of cultural practices, and emphasise the ways in which culture is better understood as 'the signifying

system through which necessarily a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored' (13). The new sociology of culture emphasises 'the social as well as the notational basis of sign-systems', adding 'a deliberately extended social dimension' to what would otherwise remain a textual analysis confined within the barrenness of purely formal attention (31).

Throughout the book, Williams is wary of what we might call the tendency for premature theorisation at work in much of the available sociological inquiry. '[T]heoretical constructs derived from empirical studies' he warns 'and their extension or generalisation are always likely to presume too much, in the transition from local and specific to general concepts' (33), and in Chapter 2, 'Institutions', he examines the relations between cultural producers and institutions and the ways these have always been historically mediated by cultural formations - 'the variable relations in which "cultural producers" have been organised or have organised themselves' (35). In this way, he is able to present a far more nuanced view of the relations between artistic production and patronage than the usual formulae - of the artist and his public, or of economic base and cultural superstructure - allow. Chapter 3 'Formations' similarly focuses on another problem which is usually ignored in the orthodox sociology of culture: that posed by artistic movements, cultural formations in which 'artists come together in the common pursuit of some artistic aim' (62). While 'orthodox sociology' has found it easy to 'analyse cultural effects, where large numbers and control

groups are available' as in the press, the publishing combine or the broadcasting company, the small and temporally specific groups which occur so often in the actual history of cultural production tend to slip through the wide mesh of orthodox investigation. Williams writes suggestively - but rather too schematically - of just how important such analysis can be in brief accounts of the Godwin Circle and the Bloomsbury Group (74-7; 79-83).

The study constantly urges the need for a more narrowly focused analysis, one which attends to the specificities of textual analysis, and yet with an equal eye to the means and conditions of that textual production. The advice is good; but it is not followed through in Culture itself, which remains, in the true sense of the term, a theoretical study: the urging through abstract argument of the need for a historically precise and theoretically specific form of cultural analysis which accepts the full force of the idea of the primacy of cultural production. The difficulty is that Culture argues abstractly for a cultural materialism whose explanatory force is less embodied in abstract theory and assertion, and more in the practice of a precise contextual analysis which draws a great deal on textual evidence for its strength.

Indeed, Culture is best read alongside the essays in Problems in Materialism and Culture and Writing in Society which more fully embody the theoretical insights at work in Culture. Far too many of the interesting and central assertions made in Culture remain

too abstract in the primary sense of the word - too summary, too withdrawn from particular examples, and the particularity of examples - in a (negative sense of the) word, too theoretical. The interesting claim that the establishment of soliloquy as a convention in English Renaissance drama was at one and the same time a development of social practice and the discovery 'in dramatic form, of new and altered social relationships' (1981a: 142), is better made as a case in the essay 'On Dramatic Dialogue and Monologue' (1984: 31-64); similarly, the idea that in 'French mid seventeenth-century neo-classical tragedy...the social content of the formal changes is especially clear' (153) reads only as a bare assertion in Culture, while in the essay 'Form and Meaning: Hippolytus and Phedre' (1984: 22-30), this general point is given specific substance. So it is that while an essay such as 'The Bloomsbury Fraction' represents Williams's work at its best - theoretically sophisticated, historically nuanced, textually acute - the four or five pages in Culture are simply too compressed to do justice to the depth and sophistication of the arguments, and Williams's fine insight - that 'the extreme subjectivism of...the novels of Virginia Woolf belongs within the same formation as the economic interventionism of Keynes' (81) - can only come through as an unsubstantiated claim in a somewhat tedious blur of abstract argument.

36

All in all, the book as a whole calls in a thin theoretical way for the necessity of a thick analysis. Cultural materialism - if it were to become a professional academic discipline - would be

the analysis of all forms of signification within their means and conditions of existence, with these conditions understood in terms of both their formal and socio-political context. In this way, cultural materialism promises to supersede the usual opposition between 'formalist' and 'sociological' approaches which has been so damaging to progressive analysis, the cause of such 'damaging and widespread' confusion (138). It is only when we pause to articulate that what Williams means by that damaging and widespread confusion is virtually the whole of existing literary studies, whether orthodox literary, orthodox Marxist, or orthodox theoretical, that we realise the real scope of his ambitions for cultural materialism. Culture is Williams's sketch for a sociology of culture which isn't, but could become, 'a new major discipline' (233).

A constitutive feature of this new discipline would be its supersession of orthodox literary studies. Williams had begun his professional career as an academic student of literature and culture with great uneasiness, torn, as we saw in Chapter One, between a Communist party orthodoxy he could not sustain in the face of the greater explanatory power of the discipline of English, and yet equally unable to accept its deliberately liberal or conservative apoliticism. Cambridge English - the local version of English studies which nourished his oppositional thinking - saw itself as an attempt at solving or at least responding critically to the pressures of modernity and the new mass society. What the ever-deepening critique of Cambridge

English led him to was, as we have seen, the formation of the theory of cultural materialism.

'We begin to think where we live' was one of Williams's most striking - and most characteristic - formulations, the formulation of the very typicality he often seemed to claim for his own experience of the social and political divisions of Great Britain.³⁷ Certainly, with regard to the study of literature and culture, there can be no doubt that Williams lived and thought and argued in Cambridge.³⁸ We saw in Chapter One just how decisive a starting-point Cambridge English was for him: it represented the 'tight place' from which he had to escape; and, in the chapters which followed, just how much of his subsequent work and thinking was the product of a more or less continuous oppositional dialogue with Cambridge English, whether focused on drama, tragedy, the novel or the country house poem. As he later noted, he was involved with Cambridge English for a full two-thirds of its history.³⁹ Similarly, in his autobiographical essay 'My Cambridge', he notes just how important it was for him 'to work out [his] particular argument in Cambridge' (Williams 1989c: 12), and this despite - or rather precisely because of - the fact that he detested so many things about it:

after fifteen years I am intellectually more isolated from it, and from anything at all likely to happen in it, than I was when I came. The key moment, perhaps, was my rejection of

literary criticism: not only as an academic subject but as an intellectual discipline. (ibid., p. 13)

'My rejection of literary criticism...But nobody quite believes I mean it', he went on. 'I no longer believe in specialized literary studies. In fact,' as he put it in a 1977 interview, 'I don't believe, in any simple way, in the specialization of literature' (Williams 1977b: 14). Strong - and paradoxical - words from someone whose professional life had been devoted to literary criticism! And yet the paradox was absolutely defining, determinately constitutive. Marxism and Literature is the summary, in the necessarily abstract terms of theoretical exposition, of that continued narrative of opposition. Or, as Williams put it, with his usual dry humour, the book spells out 'theoretically a position that has been developing over a long time' (ibid., p.16) - over, in fact, a working lifetime. As we shall see in the chapter which follows, it was from within the theory of cultural materialism that Williams was able to articulate, in the last phase of his thinking, the deep irony that Cambridge English was in the end a part of the problem of the modernity it sought to transcend.

Ch_7_Against_the_New_Conformism_1981-1987

This chapter examines the last phase of Williams's work, the writing completed after the publication of Culture in 1981, and before his untimely death in 1988. His sudden demise left his final projects incomplete, though we are fortunate to have available some of their major components. Tony Pinkney has assembled most of the essays intended for the projected study, The Politics of Modernism, and these were published in 1989; and two of the projected three volumes of novels dealing with the history of Wales, People of the Black Mountains, have appeared. 1983 saw the publication of his most directly political book since the collaborative May Day Manifesto of 1967, the study Towards 2000, as well as the monograph Cobbett. Throughout Williams's impressive industry produced the usual range of cultural, political, and literary essays, lectures, and reviews, as well as a further novel, Loyalties, in 1985. Writing and Society, a collection of literary essays appeared in 1984, and in 1989, Alan O'Connor edited the collection Raymond Williams on Television, which principally consisted of the television reviews written for The Listener between 1968 and 1972. Two further posthumous selections also appeared in 1989: Resources of Hope, edited by Robin Gable, drawing mainly on Williams's political writings; and What I Came to Say, selected by Francis Mulhern, focusing primarily on literature and culture. These brought Williams's critical writings up to a total of some twenty-four volumes, the

most substantial body of work in cultural politics produced by any socialist academic of his generation.¹

What were Williams's main preoccupations in this final period? The phenomenon of Thatcherism provided the dominating cultural and political context. Virtually all his work in this period, though on different levels and in different ways, sought to provide a socialist response to the agenda of political and ideological issues which were largely set by the emergence and ascendancy of the New Right.² In this chapter we shall examine the terms of the active opposition to, and critique of, what he came to call the 'New Conformism': a political mood of the moment whose cultural roots, it was argued, lay in the long history of twentieth century modernism and its appropriations. Something of this history, and its particular relation to the formation of Cambridge English, formed the focus of his retirement lectures in 1983.

Revisionary Retirement

Williams took up the option of early retirement from his post as Professor of Drama at Cambridge University in the summer of 1983. He wanted to devote himself full-time to writing, though he did in fact continue to teach a few classes on Practical Criticism, and to give a number of seminars on Modernism for the Modern Languages Faculty, and these formed the basis for The Politics of Modernism.³ On April 25 and 26, he delivered his two formal

retirement lectures, and took the opportunity both to look back on the troubled history of Cambridge English as an intellectual and academic project, and forward to the new focus of interest for his own continuing work: the ideas and differential practices of modernism.

In the first of these, 'Cambridge English, Past and Present', Williams reviewed the history and future prospects of English studies at Cambridge in the light - or rather the pall - cast by the MacCabe Affair. 'Was there ever in fact a "Cambridge English"?' he asks. For certainly the situation of literary studies in Cambridge was just 'as tangled, as problematic and as unresolved' as it had been in 1961, on his return to Cambridge as a Lecturer in the English Faculty, though no more and no less so than it had been in his undergraduate years in the late 30s and early 40s. Why this tangle, why this confusion?

In Williams's view, Cambridge English was flawed from the start by the very condition of existence it so prided itself upon: its deliberate separation, as an academic discipline, from the formal study of language.⁴ 'Theoretically' he urged, 'it is clear that it is in language that the decisive practices and relations which are projected as "literature", "life" and "thought"' - the triple focus of attention in Cambridge English - 'are real and discoverable' (Williams [1983a]: 188). But in its founding gesture, Cambridge English had turned away from the history of language - 'Language in history: that full field' (189), as he put

it - and the consequent possibility of treating it as something more than 'a background to be produced for annotation', in some private transaction of reading pleasure. For, taken 'in the fullest sense', language (as he had argued in Marxism and Literature) was the necessary ground for

the kind of reading in which the conditions of production, in the fullest sense, can be understood in relation to both writer and reader, actual writing and actual reading. A newly active social sense of writing and reading, through the social and material historical realities of language, in a world in which it is closely and precisely known, in every act of writing and reading, that these practices connect with, are inseparable from, the whole set of social practices and relationships which define writers and readers as active human beings, as distinct from the idealized and projected 'authors' and 'trained readers' who are assumed to float, on a guarded privilege, above the rough, diverse and divisive world of which yet, by some alchemy, they possess the essential secret. (189)

Despite the self-regarding myths of a Tillyard or a Willey, it was because of its abandonment of the study of language as a social practice that Cambridge never did develop a fully coherent course of study around the discipline of English Literature.⁵ In reality, there was never a 'Cambridge English', if by that one were to understand

a distinctive and coherent course and method of study. The Golden Age was golden only in its beginnings, its searchings, its open and freespeaking and for some years tolerant experimentation and enquiry. (190)

'For some years' indeed, since, as we saw in the previous chapter, the MacCabe Affair had precisely demonstrated at least the present absence of any such intellectual and academic virtues.

In the second lecture, 'Beyond Cambridge English', Williams reframes the substance of his own career as an attempt to challenge and question the assumed relations between the methods, practices and techniques which had come together as Cambridge English, and the larger cultural formation of literary modernism. He repeats and amplifies his central concern -the strange fact that 'many people still think that "language" is self-evidently a separate "subject" from "literature"' (Williams [1983b]: 213), and reiterates his view that it would be in the matter of how the complex general problems of language 'are dealt with, in the coming years, that the success or failure of English studies, will...be decided' (213). In line with the core arguments of Marxism and Literature, the social reality and effectivity of language is emphasised, a reality in which language is to be understood neither as absolutely determining system, nor as absolutely spontaneous expression, but rather as constitutive in the active and dialogical sense which Williams had learned from Volosinov. This emphasis provides the core for what was to be his

final challenge to the complacent self-understanding of Cambridge English, and the focus of the final phase of his writing and research: what North American critic Jonathan Arac has called his 'remarkable retrospect on modernism' (Arac 1986b: xxxviii).

Cambridge English had always assumed a defensive stance in relation to the perceived pressures of modernity, acting as the champion of figures such as Eliot and Lawrence against the dark forces of mass society and mass civilization. From the beginning of his career, Williams had argued against the anti-democratic bias which was all too evident in many of the founding arguments of the Cambridge English school and its allies.⁶ In the retirement lectures, he is firmer than ever in placing the discipline of English within modernism, rather than, as it wished to be seen, outside it, as a bulwark against the sinister forces of mass civilization, shoring its cultural fragments against the threatened ruin of civilization. Cambridge English was not the ground of some possible solution to the pressures of modernity: it was itself a part of the larger problem posed by the conservative response to modernity. With an insight sharpened by some thirty years of argument and analysis, he suggested there were significant connections between contemporary theory and argument and the wider structures of early twentieth century modernism.

In a review written around the same time as the retirement lectures, Williams suggested that the 'central problem' was 'the understanding of "modernism" itself. Is it a general name for a

group of diverse innovations and experiments in the arts?' he asked, or

are these innovations and experiments the specific elements of a much more general shift in social relationships, which has led to theoretical changes in a much wider field, including the theoretical positions from which 'modernist art' is favourably or unfavourably interpreted? (1983d: 439).

The cultural materialist perspective - which emphasises the role of the arts in any shifts in social relationships - favoured the second option. Hence his assertion, in the second lecture, that a great deal of contemporary analytical orthodoxy is in fact derived from an unexamined structure of modernist thinking:

Formalism in literary analysis; the epistemological break that is said to distinguish Marxism; the break and innovation of psychoanalysis; the break and innovation of theoretical linguistics, from Saussure; structuralism in anthropology and sociology: these, as forms of thinking and in the cultural practice that accompanies them, compose 'modernism'. (1983b: 220)

This should be recognised as an unusually broad definition of a much contested term, and one which moves decisively beyond its ordinary deployment in literary history.⁷ Indeed, it is striking that in many ways the definition is best read as

referring to the literary theory emerging in Britain through the mid- to the late 1970s. The definition thus encompasses and seeks to connect the work of figures in very different discursive fields across some sixty years of intellectual history, assembling a montage of the ideas of a Victor Shlovsky in 1916 with those of the school of Althusser in the 1960s, as well as placing Freud with his great interpreter Lacan, and suggesting connections between all of these and developments in and from the work of Saussure, Levi-Strauss and Goldmann and others.⁸

For Williams, all of these - the staple constituents of Theory - compose the 'specific cultural formation' generally known as modernism. As the single most decisive aspect of this formation, Williams singles out how it 'has been at once a response to and governed by an underlying and decisive unevenness of literacy and of learning: the unevenness, specifically, of a class society, at a definite and critical stage' (221).⁹ This 'unevenness' comes through in the symptomatic emphasis on alienation and estrangement in this whole cultural formation. 'The common factor', he argues, 'in the different theories and practices that are grouped together as modernism'

is an estrangement - a sense of both distance and novelty - which is related in its own terms to some large characterisation of the 'modern world' but is in reality the response of a disturbed and exposed formation - writers,

artists and intellectuals - to conditions which were blocking their own most significant kinds of work. (221-2)

This estrangement - celebrated as the ostranenie of Russian Formalism - was never only a question of form or technique.¹⁰ According to the theoretical and historical emphases of cultural materialism, literary explanation does not come to an end with formal observation. The fact of technique needs itself to be interpreted socially:

The decisive condition of the practice was the availability, within a new kind of social formation, of social relationships which eventually corresponded to the practical initiatives. They were found within the new social form of the metropolis: typically the imperial metropolis of Paris, London and eventually New York. An extraordinary number of the innovators were not so much exiles and emigres, though this was how they started, but immigrants, which is where the conditions of their practice formed. (222)¹¹

Seen in this light - that cast by the methodological commitment of cultural materialism to examine cultural expression in terms of its means and conditions of existence - the 'aesthetic universality' claimed by the modernists was forged from an 'initial strangeness', the product of 'experiences of both estrangement and exposure', and, as product, marketed from a newly metropolitan civilization:

What began in isolation and exposure ended, at many levels, in an establishment: as the decisive culture of an international capitalist world, which could trade both the original and the adapted forms. (223)

At the same time, a significant constituent of this whole cultural formation was constituted, expressed and disseminated in the activities and practices of educationalists and intellectuals, mainly based in the universities, where, as Williams argues it, a

new sense of the objectivity of systems, and of this objectivity as something that needed to be penetrated by new forms of analysis, taking nothing as it appeared but looking for deep forms, deep structures, with the eyes of a stranger, came through in field after field: in linguistics, in anthropology, in economics, in sociology, in aesthetics, in psychoanalysis.... The whole text was to be read without date and author: this was the new and necessary discipline. (223)

The implicit logic of Williams's whole argument is easy to follow. This discipline, this mindset, had been anticipated as an academic discipline in the 1920s and 1930s as the 'new and necessary' discipline of Richards's Practical Criticism (1929). It re-emerged in the 1950s and 1960s as the structuralism of Saussure and became influential in the work of figures such as Levi-Strauss, Goldmann, Todorov and Lacan.¹² And in the post-1968

period, this mutated into the new and necessary discipline of the postmodern in the work of writers like Baudrillard. For Williams, there is a significant continuity of position running through all of these, and it is that stance he is concerned to identify.

With an unusual rhetorical colouring, he turns to look back on this whole development 'in turn, with the eyes of a stranger':

What I then see is not only what they have achieved but their own deep forms. I can feel the bracing cold of their inherent distances and impersonalities and yet have to go on saying that they are indeed ice-cold. I see, practically and theoretically, the estranging consequences of the general assumption - as active in modernist literature as in theoretical linguistics and structuralist Marxism - that the systems of human signs are generated within the systems themselves and that to think otherwise is a humanist error.

(223)

Just the humanist error which had been the target of so many critical positions since the 1960s, ranging in idiom from Lacan's insistence that 'a signifier represents the subject for another signifier', across Althusser's stirring call, in the sharp tones of a structuralist Marxism, for a revival of 'Marx's theoretical anti-humanism' (Althusser [1965] 1969: 229), to Foucault's enigmatic wager 'that man would be erased, like a face drawn in sand at the edge of the sea' (Foucault [1966] 1970: 387), as well

as many other claims of the 'death of the subject' by Barthes, Deleuze, Derrida and others.¹³ What most concerned Williams was - as we shall see below - the terms of its local manifestation in the debates around the 'classic realist text' in both film and fiction. He found these arguments, based as they were in a broadly Althusserian theory of ideology, to be theoretically compromised and historically incorrect. Ironically, the arguments of the avant-garde theorists of the cultural left shared too many basic assumptions with the New Conformism. We shall first examine how Williams saw these basic assumptions in Towards 2000, and then examine how these came through, though in different guise, in the arguments around ideas of modernism and the 'classic realist text' in the work of some of Williams's Cambridge colleagues and broad political allies.¹⁴

Towards 2000

The 'estranging consequences' of the bourgeois modernist world-view are taken up as the central thrust of Williams's arguments in his most specifically political essay since the collaborative May Day Manifesto, the book-length study, Towards 2000, published in 1983. Thatcherism - and the debates on the left which it provoked - provides the essential context for understanding the book's central arguments and address.

Thatcherism and, more importantly, Thatcherism apparently triumphant. Margaret Thatcher had rather surprisingly defeated

Edward Heath in the leadership contest of 1975, two years after his administration had been brought down in the 1973 General Election. Heath's failure was generally attributed to his inability to deal forcefully enough with the Miners' Strike of 1972. The indomitable Maggie - the 'Iron Lady' - went on to win ^{never} no than three successive election victories in 1979, 1983, and 1987. As had been promised, the period saw a significant redistribution of wealth, largely through selective income tax cuts and the increase in VAT, from the poor to the rich; a massive and unparalleled increase in unemployment and in bankruptcies in the manufacturing sector; a partial dismantling of the welfare state; increased political centralisation; a significant erosion of trade union rights; and - to contain the protests, riots and disruptions provoked by these aggressive policies - an equally significant strengthening and militarisation of the police force.¹⁵ 'To those who had, much was given' - Hugo Young's summary encapsulates much of the agenda and achievements of Thatcher's administrations (Young 1989: 502).

Thatcherism was the object of some major analysis and rethinking on the left, and the occasion for not a little immediate despair. The jingoism and jubilation following Britain's victory in Falklands War of June-July 1982 marked perhaps the nadir of left-wing feeling, summed up in Tom Nairn's desperate cry that the lesson of the Falklands War was to show that the 'real England is irredeemably Tory' (Nairn 1983: 288). Similarly, in a series of provocative articles, Stuart Hall

brought the arguments and insights of the Birmingham Studies Cultural Centre into play, emphasising the strength and force of Thatcherism as an ideology, and, above all, as an ideology that had found something the left was missing: 'a powerful means of translating economic doctrine into the language of experience, moral imperative and common sense' (Hall 1983: 28).¹⁶

Thatcherism enjoyed hegemony because it had created had created an almost unassailable 'authoritarian popularism'. While many were swayed by Hall's arguments, others were more cautious, and refused to lend Thatcherism the kind of internal coherence apparently granted to it in Hall's analysis. Bob Jessop and others preferred to stress the internal contradictions of Thatcherism, and urged that it 'must be seen less as a monolithic monstrosity and more as an alliance of disparate forces around a self-contradictory programme' (Jessop et al 1984: 34).¹⁷

Throughout this entire period, Williams maintained a sturdy sense of his own political identity, holding to the continued force and relevance of socialist ideas. In 1983, just four weeks before the General Election, Williams had argued against the easy conclusion, that if Thatcher were to win 'this would show 'that the majority of the British people can be defined as Thatcherite in consciousness' ([1983e]: 163), and warned of a danger on the left of acquiescing to 'an interpretation which, as it were, would blame the majority of the British people for not accepting a socialist analysis' (164).¹⁸ Later, in 1986, he lamented what he saw as too defeatist a tendency on the left, asking, with some

anger and disdain whether it was 'only an accident that one form of the theory of ideology produced that block diagnosis of Thatcherism which taught despair and political disarmament in a social situation which was always more diverse, more volatile and more temporary? Is there never to be an end to petit-bourgeois theorists making long-term adjustments to short-term situations?' (Williams [1986c]: 175). And in July 1987, in one of his final interviews, asked whether he felt 'disillusioned' by the rise of the Right and Thatcher's recent election victory - her third, his reply was characteristic: 'Disillusionment, not at all; disappointment, of course': it was clearer than ever 'that the socialist analysis is the correct one' ([1987c]: 315). Williams's political writing - but not only his political writing - set out to combat and challenge that block diagnosis and the sense of despair which fed it.

Against Stuart Hall's idea of an 'authoritarian populism', Williams set the idea of Thatcher's 'constitutional authoritarianism', preferring to focus attention on the actual mechanisms and contradictions of state democracy than on ideological explanation. In a striking essay on the tv coverage of the Falklands War, he stressed the ways in which the reporting raised questions crucial to the 'culture of contemporary democracy', and what was happening to it in Thatcher's administration. What was evident was 'the unique modern combination of a Cabinet with absolute sovereign power, acting within a complex of parliamentary parties, opinion polls and

television'. This combination represented 'a new political form, latent for many years but now at least temporarily made actual' ([1982]: 42). Its name: constitutional authoritarianism; and it needed to be thought as an expression of that larger 'culture of distance' which Williams associated with Thatcherism, but also more broadly with the New Conformism which underlay Thatcherism, that 'latent culture of alienation, within which men and women are reduced to models, figures and the quick cry in the throat' (43).

Similarly, in an essay 'Mining the Meaning', written for the London Review of Books during the bitter, prolonged, and ultimately failed Miners' Strike of 1984-85, he put out a challenge to the key words of Thatcherite economic 'common sense'. The destructive catchwords of management, economic and law-and-order', he argued, work to conceal 'the real operations of a new and reckless stage of capitalism' ([1985c]: 127). Against the new 'common ground' proposed by Thatcher and her ideologues, Williams argued that the miners' struggles 'outlined a new form of the general interest' (ibid.), one which could challenge 'the logic of a new nomad capitalism' (124), and its confident belief that 'all the redundant people and discarded communities can continue to be politically marginalized or, if they act on their own behalf to be controlled by centralized communications (the political argument, as in this strike, taking place not in Parliament but on radio and television) and [accepting here some of Hall's arguments] by new forms of policing' (127).¹⁹

In other essays and speeches - many delivered for the Socialist Society, at whose inaugural meeting Williams spoke in 1981, or written for its fortnightly political magazine, New Socialist - he addressed the issues of nuclear disarmament, ecology, and the need for labour party reform and called for a thorough reassessment and redefinition of socialist goals and strategies. All of this came together with the publication in 1983 of Williams's most extended piece of socialist analysis and advocacy, Towards 2000. Never was Williams more active as a socialist thinker than in this last decade of his life.

What is striking, argues Williams, in the book's central insight, is the ways in which the 'innovative forms' of modernist representation - which were originally composed to challenge 'the fixed forms of an earlier period of bourgeois society' - have themselves become 'stabilised as the most reductive versions of human existence in the whole of human history':

The originally precarious and often desperate images - typically of fragmentation, loss of identity, loss of the very grounds of human communication - have been transferred from the dynamic compositions of artists who had been, in majority, literally exiles, having little or no common ground with the societies in which they were stranded, to become, at an effective surface, a 'modernist' and 'post-modernist' establishment. (Williams 1983c: 141)

These new forms have now become 'a widely distributed "popular" culture that is meant to confirm both its own and the world's destructive inevitabilities' (142) as if every active citizen was no more than a Vladimir or an Estragon, a Hamm or a Klov.²⁰

Although Towards 2000 is concerned with the local struggle against Thatcherism in Britain, it also seeks to address that struggle in the global context of late capitalism. In a controversial move, Williams takes as his starting-point the final section of The Long Revolution (1961), the prescient analysis 'Britain in the 1960s', which is reprinted in full as the first chapter of the new book.²¹ In a 1965 note, Williams had already admitted, under the pressure of criticisms from historian Asa Briggs, that the original framework of the essay suffered from too nationalistic a focus.²² In Towards 2000 the terms of the nationalist focus are themselves examined alongside the orthodox forms of international analysis.

The book as a whole is concerned with the fixed terms of 'normal' political analysis of late modernity. He contrasts public with private projections of the future, and questions the supposedly 'objective' projections which are used as the basis for current party-based political thinking. In fact, argues Williams, the political manifesto, based as it is on the rhythms of the electoral process is too short-term in focus to deal with social and political phenomena which are only susceptible to proper

analysis and adjustment in a much larger time-scale. Such a time-scale has more in common with our private thinking where, for example, the

relatively ungraspable date of 2050...is within the normal lifespan of my grandchildren, and all the more traditional ways of thinking about the future would certainly include this kind of natural human foresight and concern. The apparently more practical urgencies which foreshorten calculation, for temporary advantage, are in this respect as in others more damaging to the most basic human order. (Williams 1983c: 16)

Williams notes how modernism has favoured the 'systematic dystopia' (1984, Animal Farm, Brave New World) as a form, and how these works commonly suggest that 'the very attempt to achieve a systematic utopia leads straight to a systematic dystopia'. They imply 'a complacent projection of actual and historically instituted social orders as permanently necessary and exclusive', and it is this implication which 'most deeply discourages those who see very clearly that their own social order is in crisis'. Against this, Williams calls for a renewal of positive utopian thinking, one which offers 'an imaginative reminder of the nature of historical change: that major social orders do rise and fall, and that new social orders do succeed them'. Such a reminder is a necessary part of the formation of any socialist discourse which wishes to offer a projection of the future contrary to the prevailing negative and modernist versions.

Indeed, a large part of the book is devoted to a critique of just these prevailing versions, which Williams associates with modernism. Deploying the particular kinds of linguistic, historical and ideological analysis of language which are essential components of his cultural materialism, it is argued that there is an ideological unity to the basic prevailing attitude towards the world, a distinctively modernist frame of thinking and analysis: 'The dominant version' he writes

has been a basic orientation to the world as raw material. What has been steadily learned and imposed as a way of seeing the world not as life forms and and land forms, in an intricate interdependence, but as a range of opportunites for their profitable exploitation. (261)

Against this, we need to assert the 'principle of a society sustained by its economy has to replace the practice of a society determined by a market' (97). The argument, in other words, turns partly on the force of representation as a systematic 'way of seeing' which provides or enforces 'a basic orientation to the world as raw material'.²³ As such, this same way of seeing is active both in modernism, and in our contemporary understandings of modernism, though with one significant difference. As Williams was to argue in his final essays, the orthodox interpretations of modernist practice itself tended to select just one strand of the the ideology of modernism and so repeat and enforce it, the strand

of 'bourgeois dissidence' which Williams had first criticised in relation to Orwell, and which he renamed, in his final essays, the New Conformism.²⁴

New Conformisms

Tony Pinkney has collected most of the essays which Williams had intended for publication, and adding some cognate supplementary material, together with a lengthy editorial introduction, and this was published in 1989 as The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists.²⁵ Many readers found the collection somewhat unsatisfactory. Prendergast wrote of 'an uncomfortably strained quality in much of the writing' (1995b: 196), while Loren Kruger described it as 'thought-provoking but sometimes sketchy' (1991: 144). Chris Baldick, in a review for the Times Literary Supplement, found problematic Williams's division of interest between 'the original modernist formation itself and an academically processed version of it', and suggested that the first 'is not carried through to substantial detail, while the second suffers from a characteristic reluctance to name or even adequately describe the position polemically assailed' (Baldick 1989: 1205). In the account which follows I seek to describe a little more fully the positions under attack, and to show why, for Williams, there was no division of interest between the original modernist formation and the later academic histories of it. First it is necessary to examine some of Pinkney's framing of Williams's work in this final phase.

In a substantial Introduction to the selection - 'Modernism and Cultural Theory' - Pinkney sets up a fascinating intellectual, political and historical context through which to frame and read the final essays. These same arguments are taken up, extended and amplified in a related essay, also published in 1989, 'Raymond Williams and the "Two Faces of Modernism"', and together these form the basis for a later monograph on the novels.²⁶ In his Introduction, Pinkney distinguishes between the "official" line' which Williams takes in his final essays, and what he claims as an equally important but implicit 'sub-text' to the book. This sub-text 'runs the case rather differently', and consequently there are 'two almost incompatible views of Modernism and the avant-garde' at work in The Politics of Modernism. The second, concedes Pinkney, only comes through only 'as trope rather than argument' (26). As trope indeed: for there are several moments at which he has to twist the evidence to fit his case that 'it was Expressionism that aesthetically formed Williams' (1989b: 25).

Thus, in support of his assertion that Williams must have known about Brecht in the late 1930s, he quotes him as saying that 'there were ways of knowing about [Brecht's] work, if distant and specialized ones' (cited Pinkney p. 17; Williams 1979: 215-16), but neglects to mention Williams's own admission of his own 'lack of awareness' of Brecht's work in this period, or his defensive remark that such ignorance concerning Brecht was 'very common at the time'. 'It was only in the mid and late fifties that most of

us got to know Brecht', he states (215-6), in direct contradiction to Pinkney's view. Similarly, Pinkney writes that Williams 'adds the name of German Expressionism' (1983b: 19) to the modernist litany, and quotes Williams as saying that 'in the late thirties admiration for Dr Caligari or Metropolis was virtually a condition of entry to the Socialist Club at Cambridge' (Williams 1979: 232). The only problem is, that when read in context, this is best understood as a wry remark, the phrase 'condition of entry' heavily ironic. For far from demonstrating an admiration for German Expressionism, Williams is actually engaged in distancing himself from it. His own stated admiration - in complete accord with the arguments of The Politics of Modernism - is for the 'early Soviet cinema', which had always seemed to him to be 'the major work that took up the original naturalist project' (ibid.). He praises Eisenstein's work against that of the German Expressionists. German Expressionist cinema is in fact identified as the forerunner of the mistakes and excesses of avant-garde cinema. 'In the sixties,' he says, 'there was a development of incredibly complex seeing, but of nothing very much. The complexity became a fetishized concentration on the point of view at the expense of what was viewed. This cinema could genuinely be described as formalist in the sense that it was preoccupied with problems of the medium without any adequate relation between its methods and the kind of content these were supposed to interpret' (Williams 1979: 232). Nothing could be clearer: the quotation which Pinkney picks as evidence for Williams's interest in and support for German Expressionism comes in reality from a context

of argument which is critical of expressionism as an avatar of the 'arid formalisms of the sixties'. Pace Pinkney, Williams is criticising - and not endorsing - the German Expressionist experiment.

In arguing for the 'sub-text' of The Politics of Modernism, Pinkney overstates his case, and can only support it by bending the available evidence to fit his preconceptions. Indeed, the larger case compounds the problems discussed in Chapter Two, a propos of Pinkney's discussion of Williams on drama. There is a repeated over-estimation of the impact and appeal of Expressionism, and a tendency to substitute his reading of the dynamics of modernism for Williams's own which leads to a certain blurring or misalignment in explanatory focus, as well as a substantial neglect of the political context which Williams was always addressing, however indirectly. Pinkney is much more correct - though in contradiction with some of his own assumptions - when he writes that Williams had, from the beginning, 'major reservations' about Brecht's work, and particularly its 'enthronement of the critical spectator' (1983b: 20), and this will be discussed further below.

The reason for the over-estimation doubtless lies in Pinkney's desire to overturn the usual idea of Williams as an 'English Lukacs'.²⁸ He chooses Lukacs's expressionist opponent Ernst Bloch as an alternative figure of comparison. ²⁷ In both cases, it would be a mistake to try and turn what works as a partially

illuminating comparison into any theoretically substantial case. Williams's own formation was very different from either that of Lukacs or Bloch, notwithstanding Pinkney's attempt at making common ground in expressionist modernism. The simple fact was that Williams's main formative influence was Cambridge English, which can be understood, and as Williams grew to understand it, as itself a modernist cultural formation, rather than an objective analytic response to the pressures of a perceived mass modernism. ²⁸

Rather than seeking the 'sub-text' of The Politics of Modernism, let us examine the ways in which the book continues the argument against the 'new critical structuralism' which Williams had begun in Marxism and Literature, and which he now continued, under the new pressures of Thatcherism, as an argument against the 'New Conformism'. This dimension of address - Williams contra Thatcher - lies outside the scope of Pinkney's fascinating but in the end academicist and anachronistic analysis. Writing against the New Conformism meant writing against the new right-wing forces represented in the Thatcher regime of 1979-1990, and anticipated in the period in opposition which the Conservative Party spent from Edward Heath's defeat as Prime Minister in 1974 until the election of Margaret Thatcher in 1979. For Williams, this also meant arguing against those modes of analysis in literary theory which leant unwitting support to the conceptions of the self, individual or subject which Thatcherism drew upon for its representation of an acquisitive and asocial world. That these

modes of analysis could be found in theoretical work intended for the left only made these criticisms the more urgent.

The sovereign individual

The 'New Conservatism' which became known as 'Thatcherism' set out by defining itself against the 'social-conscience Conservatism' which had dominated the British Conservative Party since Labour's victory in 1945 (Riddell 1985: 2). Sir Keith Joseph was the first to articulate its main directions as something of a conversion experience. In April 1974 he realized that though he had believed himself a true Conservative for some twenty years, he had been mistaken: only now could he see what true Conservatism really was (Young 1989: 79). In a series of speeches and articles, Joseph argued that the Conservative Party had betrayed itself by granting too much to the imaginary 'middle-ground' of the post-war consensus on the centrality of welfare state policies. This 'middle-ground' was unstable, with a built-in drift leftwards 'dictated by extremists of the left' claimed Joseph (Joseph 1976: 21). The party needed to identify and occupy a new and distinctively conservative 'common ground' if they wished to re-establish the real principles of conservatism. As a part of this, think-tank ideologues Norman Strauss and John Hoskyns prepared a strategic plan for Joseph in the autumn of 1977, one whose main component was a direct challenge to trade-union power. Though the report was never published, and had no immediate effect on policy, it did articulate, for the first time,

the 'subterranean impulses of hard-right Conservatism' which slowly made their way into the Thatcherite agenda (Young: 115).

A new common ground; new, or perhaps at least distinctive in the fervour and forthrightness with which socialism was excluded from any rightful part or participation in the social whole. 'The choice facing the nation is between two totally different ways of life' urged Thatcher on the eve of the 1983 election. 'And what a price we have to fight for: no less than the chance to banish from our land the dark, divisive clouds of Marxist socialism'. On another occasion: 'I have always regarded part of my job as - and please do not think of it in an arrogant way - killing socialism in Britain'; and again: 'Britain and socialism are not the same thing, and as long as I have health and strength they never will be' (cit Hayes: 98). Another way of putting this, which came through in a notorious moment in a live interview with Woman's World, was more brutal and much more contentious: 'there is no such thing as society. There are individual men and women, and there are families' (cit Hayes: 89).

This unscripted remark was the cause of much immediate controversy, and provided a useful way in to the full implications of Thatcher's free-market ideal of the non-society. 'To say there is no society but only individuals is fundamentally an amoral position' thundered Ralf Dahrendorf, 'It's the philosophy of social darwinism' (Dahrendorf 1988: 197).²⁹ As Mark Hayes has emphasised, what this meant in practice 'was that certain groups

were deprived of full citizenship by material deprivation: social security claimants, the unemployed, the sick, the disabled, the homeless and many pensioners began to constitute a new alienated under-class....Under Thatcher citizenship status very much depended upon one's position in the market - a citizen had no tangible value independent of the market order' (Hayes: 91-2).

As the linchpin of this asocial social philosophy lay a conception of the individual which placed a particular emphasis on the subject's moral capacity, or rather, on an unusual definition of just what moral capacity was. As Thatcher herself put it, 'a moral being is one who exercises his own judgement in choice. In so far as a citizen's right and duty to choose is taken away by the state, the party, or the union, his moral faculties atrophy and he becomes a moral cripple' (Thatcher 1977: 108). Seen in a positive light, Thatcher's moral code simply insisted 'on treating people as rational and responsible rather than as candidates for special favours' (Minogue 1988: 141). But as Minogue also emphasises, this soon shades into 'the repudiation of collective guilt' around the issue of pursuing profit above all else (Minogue 1988: 125). From there, it was easy to see Thatcherites as 'supremely selfish to the exclusion of all other concerns' (Letwin 1992: 18-19). Kenneth Baker summed up this aspect of Thatcher's moral vision nicely in April 1988: 'Tories did not need to apologise for the increased scope to what might be called acquisitive individualism' (cit Young: 526).

'Acquisitive individualism': the phrase could be Williams's, though uttered in an angry rather than complacent tone. This definition of the human subject as essentially an acquisitive individual, with this acquisitiveness somehow the necessary property of a moral subject, was central to the 'new conformism' of Thatcher's 'counter-revolution' (Williams [1986c]: 172). As one defender of Thatcherism put it, the 'Thatcherite conception of the individual is the most important and at the same time the least understood element of Thatcherism' (Letwin 1992: 32). For Williams at least, it was best understood as one line of descent from a particular branch of bourgeois dissidence. Many of the arguments of these post-modernists of the New Right rested on a certain conception of the subject as the 'sovereign individual':

The politics of the New Right, with its version of libertarianism in a dissolution or deregulation of all bonds and all national and cultural formations in the interests of what is represented as the ideal open market and the truly open society, look very familiar in retrospect. For the sovereign individual is offered as the dominant political and cultural form, even in a world more evidently controlled by concentrated economics and military power. ([1988a]: 62)

What was curious was that the conservative promotion of the 'sovereign individual' should share some common ground with the idea of the 'critical spectator' deployed in some leftist literary and cultural criticism. The 'sovereign individual' was

essentially asocial, its definition of freedom an illusion. The 'critical spectator' occupied - or would like to occupy - a place impossibly outside social determination - as Williams had argued vis-à-vis Eagleton's critical commentary: the 'basic fault' was to assume that 'by an act of intellectual abstraction you could place yourself above the lived contradictions both of the society and of any individual you choose to analyse, and that you yourself are not in question' (Williams 1977b: 12). Common to both was the denial of the precisely constituted social materiality of the human subject, an aspect which the rationalist (or irrationalist) critique of the knowing subject failed to grasp.³⁰

Some of the main components of Williams's arguments against this New Conformism came together in the Guardian Film Lecture he gave on 21 July 1985, where he took up one of the main themes of Towards 2000, arguing that the 'celebration of possibility is the most profound need' (Williams [1985a]: 129). In the lecture, Williams dwells on the over-determinations of the idea of cinema as a 'popular' medium of entertainment. At best, he says, this classification is 'double-edged': it celebrates the possibilities for working-class culture that some early theorists and practitioners saw in cinema as a popular medium, but this celebration all too often ignores the ways in which cinematic narration presents a swerve away from any genuinely radical solutions to common problems. For a key element in film melodrama

is that after many twists and turns, and seemingly hopeless situations, the poor victim is saved and the poor hero or heroine lives happily ever after. There is no problem in understanding why these resolutions were popular. But there is a problem, in trying to relate these often magical or coincidental lucky escapes of individuals to anything that could be called, in the easy slide from 'popular', a genuinely radical or socialist consciousness. (111)

Similarly, Williams argues that the common claim that film 'was inherently open, as against the relatively closed forms of other media' (111) needs careful examination, especially when this assertion settles into 'the now conventional rejections of what are called "naturalism" and "classical realism"' (111). These are 'muddled and muddling concepts' he warns, and goes on to reiterate some of the objections to the 'contemporary radical rejections of Naturalism' that he had first made, pointedly enough, at a Screen summer school in 1976. 'Naturalism' he reminds us

has close historical associations with socialism. As a movement and as a method it was concerned to show that people are inseparable from their real social and physical environments. As against idealist versions of human experience, in which people act under providence...naturalism insisted that actions are always specifically contextual and material. (113)

It is therefore a 'a bitter irony' that in the terms of contemporary debate on film, 'Naturalism came to be understood as the very thing it had challenged: mere reproduction' (114). 'In our kind of time' he warns, 'the dissident bourgeois is not necessarily a radical, though that is often the self-presentation' (114).³¹ In discussion after the lecture, he had harsher words still for those who falsely claimed the terrain of the popular:

All I would say is that those whom with some deliberateness I called enemy artists - I don't just see them as different, I see them as enemy - endlessly harp on the failure of relationships, the dislocation of communities, the defeat of noble efforts, the end of idealism. This really is the only thing with which they can defend this social order: not that it's good, but that it's inevitable...And because of that there is what I called a bourgeois dissident form of art which shows all this with great power.³²

It was this 'deliberateness', and the anger which Williams's use of the word contained, which powered these final essays on modernism, and their repeated attacks on 'the broad formation which he named and understood as the New Conformism.

The Critical Spectator

A central component of the orthodox version of modernism which Williams wished to challenge came through as an academic argument

about modernism, one which had focused particularly on the idea of language. A part of the reticence to name his opponents, commented on many times by critics, and mentioned in particular relation to The Politics of Modernism, might be read as the necessary delicacy - or unworthy indirection - of political solidarity: Williams was at times criticising his allies here. More generously, and I think more correctly in Williams's case, it can be seen as the refusal to entirely associate intellectual positions with the fullness and complexity of individual identity. Williams had an unusually equal respect for both the specificity of theoretical argument, with its sometimes too easy talk of 'positions', and the specific agency and historicity of any embodied human subject. The case of Orwell - so critical and yet so respectful - need only be recalled.³³ The work of at least two of Williams's Cambridge colleagues and allies - Stephen Heath and Colin MacCabe - was at issue with regard to the arguments of The Politics of Modernism.³⁴ I shall focus in particular on the arguments put forward by Colin MacCabe as these exemplified some of the trends criticised by Williams, and particularly what he came to call the 'enthronement of the critical spectator' (Williams 1979: 216).

As we saw in the previous chapter, Williams had supported and defended MacCabe through the violent Cambridge dispute over the question of his tenure in the English Faculty. But, within that general support, there were a few critical and theoretical reservations. In particular, as he had put it in his 1981 lecture

on the affair, there were still 'radical differences' between his own position and the 'reliance on structural linguistics and psychoanalysis' which characterised the work of his Cambridge fellows, though he had put it to them 'that a fully historical semiotics would be very much the same thing as cultural materialism' (1981b: 210). We can take MacCabe's arguments in the 1970s - culminating in his controversial study James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word (1979) - as points where these 'radical differences' come through in the elaboration of what has come to be known as 'British poststructuralism'.³⁵

MacCabe's arguments - in common with what has become generally known as the 'Screen-theory' - assumed a broadly Brechtian stance on the politics of culture, arguing the critique of realism as an urgent necessity.³⁶ His seminal essay, 'Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses', takes its focus from Brecht's remark that realism 'is an issue not only for literature: it is a major political, philosophical and practical issue and must be handled and explained as such - as a matter of general human interest' (cited MacCabe [1974]: 34). Brecht's original arguments on this matter were sharpened by the application of a powerful new theoretical vocabulary, drawn from Althusser's work on ideology, and the theories and arguments concerning the subject's relation to language to be found in Freud and Lacan. These came together in a focus on the idea of the 'classic realist text', and the political necessity of mounting a formal challenge to it. In some sense, the 'classic realist text' threatened to

implications for a society based on the notion of the individual as an independent and self-sufficient entity. It is only by the acceptance of the most reductive account of the relation between politics and literature that Joyce's texts can be dismissed as non-political' (152). These 'political implications' are primarily the result of Joyce's deconstruction of the ideological implications of a classic realism. 'Instead of a traditional organisation of discourses which confer an imaginary unity on the reader' he argues,

there is a disruption of any such position of unity. The reader is transformed into a set of contradictory discourses, engaged in the investigation of his or her own symbolic construction. What is subverted in the writing is the full Cartesian subject and this subversion is a political event of central importance. (152-3)

MacCabe's position - and the work with which it was associated - was powerful, stimulating and controversial and helped to launch a whole wave of similar studies which - predictably enough - found something of the same challenge to classic realism and its liberal humanist subject in an increasing variety of writers, forms, and periods.³⁸ In an interesting autobiographical sketch, MacCabe later noted how he and other of the 'radical semioticians' had been strongly influenced by the French interpretation of modernism as a form of 'writing which disrupted the stability of meaning and identity' (MacCabe 1985: 8). At the very least, the work of

theorists such as Derrida, Barthes and the Tel_Quel group on writers such as Mallarme, Bataille and Artaud 'broke with the sterility of Leavis's restriction of modernism to Lawrence and Eliot' (ibid). Yet MacCabe also acknowledged, with the benefit of hindsight, the ways in which the 'political weight' he and others gave to their arguments 'was deeply problematic' (ibid).

MacCabe's own retrospective judgement in 1985, if not prompted by Williams's arguments, would certainly have been shared by him. In The Politics of Modernism Williams repeatedly criticises any literary-historical interpretation which would reduce the complex historicity of actual modernist works and the question of their address to the status of mere evidence for the truth of the theories of a self-proclaimed contemporary avant-garde in literary theory. It was surely no accident that Williams chose the Strathclyde conference of 1986, 'The Linguistics of Writing', organised by Colin MacCabe, Derek Attridge, Alan Durant and Nigel Fabb, and with guests including Jacques Derrida and Gayatri Spivak, as the moment to argue this point very fully.³⁹

Williams begins the lecture combatively with two quotations from August Strindberg's Naturalist manifesto, the Preface to Lady Julie. Strindberg writes of his characters in terms reminiscent, for Williams, of current post-structuralist dogma: they are

conglomerations from past and present stages of civilization;
they are excerpts from books and newspapers, scraps of

freeze its reader into a stance of ideological complicity as unchallengeable as that ascribed to the subject in Althusser's theory of ideology. Challenging it therefore offered a way out of the functionalism inherent to Althusser's theory and the political impotence associated with it. In cinema, this meant adopting a critical stance towards apparently progressive films such as Klute or Days_of_Hope on the grounds that 'the classic realist text cannot deal with the real as contradictory' (39), and endorsing the more avant-garde work of film-makers like the Straub-Huillet team and Jean-Luc Godard which seemed to offer 'the possibility of articulating contradiction' (50).³⁷ To 'change the position of the subject within ideology' (53) was the task of cultural practice and therefore of any progressive film-making and film-criticism. In literature, the critique of classic realism and the liberating potential of contradiction could be found at work in the classic modernism of James Joyce.

For MacCabe, Joyce's work gave an unparalleled 'primacy to the material of language' and in so doing offered 'a different experience and ...different political consequences, from the classic realist text' (MacCabe 1979: 133). In a powerful and persuasive argument, he charted Joyce's increasing challenge to realism across Dubliners, Stephen_Hero and A_Portrait_of_the_Artist_as_a_Young_Man, and through to its culminating point in Finnegans_Wake. In this text, he concludes, the 'acceptance of movement and process, coupled with the awareness of identity as a constant effect of the passage of language, has profound political

humanity, pieces torn from festive garments which have become rags - just as the soul itself is a piece of patchwork' (cited in Williams [1986a]: 65).

His point in doing so, and the polemical focus of his essay as a whole, is to act as 'a challenge to certain tendencies in applied linguistics, and to forms of literary analysis seemingly derived from them, which have appropriated a selective version of Modernism, and within this an internal and self-proving definition of the avant-garde, as a way of ratifying their own much narrower positions and procedures' (65). The first consequence of this appropriation is a fundamental distortion of the actual history of modernist and avant-garde movements: '[W]e can still not say,' he argues, 'of either supposed movement, that what we find in them is some specific and identifiable position about language, or about writing, of the kind offered by subsequent theoretical or pseudo-historical propositions' (66). He finds no evidence to support the idea that there is in modernism

a common rejection of the representational character of language and hence of writing...we shall misunderstand and betray a century of remarkable experiments if we go on trying to flatten them to contemporary theoretical and quasi-theoretical points. (66)

All of Williams's suspicions regarding the idea of the 'classic realist text', the critique of representation, the explanatory

value of psychoanalysis and the utility of any attempt to conjoin it with Marxism come through in the harsh tones of this reference to 'contemporary theoretical and quasi-theoretical points'.⁴⁰ Against any such appropriation, he returns to the 1920s debates around Russian Formalism which had become increasingly central to his own arguments.⁴¹

Shklovsky's slogan the 'resurrection of the word' has often, argues Williams, been taken by contemporary theorists as the core definition of literary Modernism. In this appropriation, it is read in relation to Saussure's deconstruction of the sign, and used as the basis for an argument in favour of the non-referentiality of language. Against this, Williams points to Eikhenbaum's account of his participation in the movement (Eichenbaum [1926]). For him, 'the basic slogan uniting the initial group was the emancipation of the word from the shackles of the philosophical and religious tendencies with which the Symbolists were possessed' (cited in Williams 1989a: 67). In its historical context, Shklovsky's emphasis is best understood as a rejection of the religious and idealist elements of the Russian Symbolist movement, that is, as 'a secularisation, a demystification, of the "poetic word" of the Symbolists' (68).

In fact, there were two broad attitudes towards language to be found in the diversity of modernist writing. The first is that which 'treats language as material in a social process' and the second, that which 'sees it as blocking or making difficulties for

authentic consciousness' (77). For Williams, Breton's surrealism is a major manifestation of the second tendency, as can be seen by its preoccupation with and promotion of 'automatic writing'. Here language is

simultaneously identified with the blocking of 'true consciousness' and, to the extent that it could emancipate itself from its imprisoning everyday forms and, beyond that, from the received forms of 'literature', as itself the medium of the idealized 'pure consciousness'. (73)

But what is absent from this kind of account is any recognition of the real sociality of language. This absence comes through particularly strongly in the case of Artaud, where 'the purpose of writing (as we have since often heard) is not communication but illumination' - a contrast, which Williams wryly notes 'seems necessarily to modify the second term to self-illumination' (71).⁴² What this can then lead to, and what in practice it did lead to, is 'an emphasis - which indeed became a culture - on the experience itself, rather than on any of the forms of embodying or communicating it' (71).

Against Surrealism, Williams poses the forces of social rather than subjective Expressionism, and its emphasis on the cry.⁴³ While surrealism sought to transcend contradictions, he argues, social expressionism confronted them, even to the point of 'raising them to a principle of form' (74). In this form, the

individual cry may carry a social charge, and even become, as in the dramas of a Toller or a Brecht,

the cry that fights to be heard above the news bulletins, the headlines, the false political speeches of a world in crisis; even the cry which can become a slogan, a fixed form, to shout as a means of collective action. That direction in language sought, in its own terms, to intervene in the social process and to change reality by struggle. (75)

He then returns to the crucial case of Russian Formalism, which, 'as it came through into an influential tendency in literary theory, was a disastrous narrowing of the very facts to which it pointed' (75). The formalist arguments were taken to imply the rejection of any notions of 'content', 'representation' and 'intention'; but this interpretation misses out entirely the great contribution of Volosinov, whose argument regarding the 'multiaccentual' nature of the sign. What the theorists all too often forgot what was their own conditions of practice, the existence of their own intentions in what Williams calls 'a characteristic error':

Under the spell of their own selected examples, of valued but highly specific uses, they forgot that every act of composition in writing, indeed every utterance, at once moves into specific processes which are no longer in that way open: which indeed, as acts, even in the most seemingly bizarre cases, necessarily

have 'content' and 'intention' and which may, in any many thousands of ways, even in these terms 'represent'. To retain the useful abstraction of basic linguistic material, which is properly the ground of linguistic analysis, in arguments which offer to deal with what is already and inevitably a wide range of practices, in which that material is for this and that purpose being used, has been to misdirect several generations of analysts and even, though fewer in number, some writers.

(76)

It was an error he had indicated earlier in the paper, through his example of Hugo Ball's famous reading of Gadji_Beri_Bimba. For here, as he pointedly remarks, the 'relapse to the rhythms of the mass in the middle of an outraging Dadaist spectacle is not only funny; it is, like the sudden locating appearance of Zanzibar, a reminder of how deeply constituted, socially, language always is, even when the decision has been made to abandon its identifiable semantic freight' (68-9).

Though each of the two positions is historically located in the period we know as modernism, the first, with its emphasis on language as material in a social process is, for Williams, 'modernist in both theory and practice' while the second, though modernist in practice, needs to be understood, 'in its underlying theory' as 'intransigent idealism' (77). In conclusion, he summarises:

what we have really to investigate is not some single position of language in the avant-garde or language in Modernism. On the contrary, we need to identify a range of distinct and in many cases actually opposed formations, as these have materialized in language...Formal analysis can contribute to this, but only if it is firmly grounded in formational analysis. (79)

- the formational analysis which brings together history and theory in cultural materialism..

Williams was deeply suspicious of a view of literary history in which texts from the past somehow confirm the theoretical paradigms of the present. In the first instance, he challenged the all too-easy periodisation and unitary description of modernism, and from that, what he saw as a dangerous formulation of the present as the post-modern. So, in 'Metropolitan Perceptions and the Emergence of Modernism', he extends the basic arguments from the last chapters of The Country and the City, and his remarks on modernism in his retirement lectures and Towards 2000 to argue that 'the metropolis of the second half of the nineteenth century and of the first half of the twentieth century moved into a quite new cultural dimension' (Williams [1985b]:44), and that this did indeed result in some common themes and forms, as a response to the character of the new metropolis, and most deeply, 'the artists and writers and thinkers of this new phase found the only community available to them: a community of the

medium; of their own practices' (45); but he closes the essay by challenging the consequent 'metropolitan interpretation of its own processes as universals' (47). This was the burden of his lecture on March 17 1987 at Bristol University, 'When was Modernism?', when he warned against 'a highly selected version of the modern which then offers to appropriate the whole of modernity' (Williams 1987a: 33), and again, with some warmth, repeated in the W.D. Thomas Memorial lecture, 'Country and City in the Modern Novel', on 26 May 1987, where he urges 'we must not make the mistake of supposing that the contemporary is really the universal, but lately discovered' (Williams [1987b]: 4). Modernism, he warns

not so much in practice but as a set of ideas, really does reduce all past experience in this way: the contemporary becomes the universal, even the eternal. A genuinely modern consciousness, on the other hand begins by recognising that its very modernity is historical, that is to say, that it is a product of specific and discoverable social and historical changes. (1987b: 4-5)

The case was pursued with renewed vigour in two essays published in 1988. In 'The Politics of the Avant-Garde' and 'Theatre as a Political Forum', both written for the collection Visions and Blueprints, ^(Timm and Collier, 1988?) he further develops his case for the necessity of a more historically differentiated view of the avant-garde.

In the first essay, Williams argues that differentiations between modernist and avant-garde artists are best achieved through a formational rather than an individual analysis. He then distinguishes between modernists and the avant-garde in the following terms: 'Modernism had proposed a new kind of art for a new kind of social and perceptual world. The avant-garde, aggressive from the beginning, saw itself as a breakthrough to the future' ([1988b]: 51), that is, these belong to the third phase of the modernist movement as a whole. In the first phase, innovative groups of artists 'sought to protect their practices within the growing dominance of the art market and against the indifference of the formal academies' (50) and in a second moment, these groups shifted to 'the defence of a particular kind of art became first the self-management of a new kind of art and then, crucially, an attack in the name of this art on a whole social and cultural order' (51). It is only in this third phase that the term avant-garde can properly be used.

Though both groups might call for revolution, the substance of that call could be very different. For sure, the 'Futurist call to destroy "tradition" overlaps with socialist calls to destroy the whole existing social order', but Williams finds a 'decisive difference' between 'appeals to the tradition of reason and the new celebration of creativity which finds many of its sources in the irrational, in the newly valued unconscious, and in the fragments of dreams' (52). Hostility to the bourgeois order could similarly develop in two directions: the conservative, with its

claim that the artist was the only true aristocrat, and the consequent rejection of both the unwashed masses and the bourgeoisie; and the radical, in which the artist affiliated him- or herself directly with the people or the workers against the bourgeoisie and the aristocrats (55). In the end, he suggests, many modernists are best seen and understood as 'bourgeois dissidents' only, and one way of recognising them as such lies in the emphasis they give to the idea of the 'sovereign individual'. The real inheritors of this 'bourgeois dissidence' are the post-modernists of Thatcherism and the New Right.

In 'Theatre as a Political Forum', Williams further substantiates his case, and in the process offers a significant⁴⁵ correction to his own early views on twentieth century drama. Where Yeats and particularly Eliot had figured large, with the promise that their poetic drama apparently held for a work of Total Expression, they are confined, with Paul Claudel, to a telling parenthesis at the end of this essay as examples 'of an avant-garde as an arriere-garde' (Williams [1988c]: 94). He insists above all, in this telling piece cultural materialist analysis, on the necessity for understanding the theoretical claims of any avant-garde in relation to their historical circumstances. This is particularly important in the case of something like the avant-garde, a movement whose rhetoric characteristically insists 'even the immediate past', and is especially so when

the rhetoric of the avant-garde, characteristically rejecting even the immediate past, has survived into what appears to be scholarly and critical discussion, with deeply negative effects not only on the work of the earlier period but, more to the present point, on the understanding of the complex character of avant-garde theatre itself and especially its relation to politics. (83)

As a first and necessary move, the work of the avant-garde in theatre must be located in relation to what it so stridently rejected in its origins, and whose rejection has become almost meaningless in repetition - the broad movement known as Naturalism. It was from within this movement (which he traces back to the emergence of bourgeois drama in eighteenth century England) that the first phase of the modernist revolt began, in the work of figures such as Ibsen and Strindberg. In their work, a division between the deep conventions of naturalism and the surface of what by then had become the mere naturalist habit is effected. The 'furious denunciation' which this deep naturalism produced represents, argues Williams, 'a direct continuity from Modernist Naturalism to the work and the reception of the avant-garde' (85).

And yet, he continues, the common rejection of naturalism has worked to conceal 'the only important question: that of the alternative directions in which a continuing bourgeois dissidence might go' (86). The example of German Expressionism shows some of

the main differences between 'social' and 'subjective' Expressionism. Here the case of Brecht is central, passing as he does from the subjective Expressionism of the early plays, through to the social Expressionism of the Lehrstücke, the teaching plays, in which there was a 'direct interaction of avant-garde theatre with a militant working-class movement which has found the appropriate cultural institutions' (90). This moment was cut short by the brutality of the Nazi regime; and Brecht moved ahead to what he became most known by - the theatre of estrangement, and its emphasis on 'complex seeing'. Against the apolitical Brecht of mainstream commentary, Williams argues for the insights yielded by the cultural materialist method:

To abstract the specific methods, or the theoretical phrases attached to them, as determining forms without reference to their very specific and limiting social situations, is to confirm the actual development of the avant-garde, culturally and politically, towards a new aestheticism. (91)

In this cultural politics, which he associated both with the critique of the classic realist text and the arguments underlying Thatcherism, the 'fragmented ego in a fragmented world has survived as a dominant structure of feeling' (93). The main consequence of this 'is to render all activity and speech as illusory and to value theatre, in its frankly illusory character, as the privileged bearer of this universal truth' (93). Taken in this direction, as Williams feared was the direction of

contemporary theory as well as some contemporary theatre and writing, the avant-garde becomes an arriere-garde, and the provocative images of the avant-garde settle into the conventional representations of a powerful new conformism.

Conclusion

Williams did not live to write the concluding essay of the book, 'Against the New Conformists', or to fully decide on the contents of the book as a whole. But it is clear enough that the new conformism only repeated the main tenets of the old conformism that Williams had spent his life refuting. Both expressed a counsel of despair and subjugation that needed to be challenged and rejected whether it was expressed in the claims of monetarist economic theory or structuralist Marxism. As we have seen, a substantial amount of Williams's writing in these final years was devoted to the critique of the New Right and the need to develop strategies on the left to meet the challenge of Thatcherism and its key conception of the 'sovereign individual'. At least an equal amount of energy and force was spent in developing a critique of its strange mirror-image: the critical spectator.

For Williams, contemporary theory had internalised the most passive images of human subjectivity available in the modernist repertoire: trapped and frozen in place like characters in Endgame, ideologically defined as the mere bearer of economically determined social relations, contemporary theory as Williams

understood⁽⁵⁾ threatened to produce a subject whose idea of liberation was reduced to the politics of textuality. While these New Conformists might claim to wield the cutting edge of structuralist or post-structuralist theory, and to give authentic voice to the rigours of postmodernity, their claims needed to be read against the longer history in which they participate but would prefer to forget; their theoretical assumptions to be checked against the findings of a broader intellectual⁴⁶ analysis.

In the end - and this was the end for Williams - the lesson of these final writings is that we need to subject all conformisms to the critical, historical and theoretical analysis of which his own work was such a powerful exemplar. That this was left incomplete at his death alters nothing of its basic lesson: that the tasks of critical assessment can never in principle be complete as long as a fundamentally divisive and unjust social system prevails. These tasks now include the necessity of coming to terms with Williams's cultural materialism. In the Conclusion, I shall examine some of the first attempts at doing this.

Conclusion

It is now almost a decade since the death of Raymond Williams. The elegaic obituaries and the occasionally hostile memorials have been written, and the first attempts have been made to take the measure of his work. As the person and presence of Raymond Williams fades into memory, what becomes of the body of work that remains behind? The question can no longer be how to respond to Williams's always careful, always strategic interventions. It is how to place his work, and how to resolve or at least come to terms with the necessary tension between its historical and contextual interpretation, and its contemporary theoretical assessment. Where are we in the difficult task of settling Williams's intellectual legacy?

To pose the question, when we are hardly beginning to understand the real complexities of intellectual property, is not an easy task, as Lacan so deliberately contrived to dramatise. Jacques Derrida, writing of the especially difficult case of Karl Marx, has given some indication of the theoretical complexity of the very idea of an intellectual legacy in his recent and timely study, Spectres_of_Marx (1994). As he writes there, we need to first consider:

the radical and necessary heterogeneity of an inheritance...An inheritance is never gathered together, it is never one with itself. Its

presumed unity, if there is one, can consist only in the injunction to reaffirm by choosing...If the readability of a legacy were given, natural, transparent, univocal, if it did not call for and at the same time defy interpretation, we would never have anything to inherit from it. (Derrida 1994: 16)

We have seen in previous chapters just how aware Williams was of this general problem of heterogeneity, both in relation to the canons of the literary tradition, as well as to the interpretation of a complex body of thought such as Marxism. Williams made repeated challenges to the orthodoxies of literary interpretation, posing the idea of the 'selective tradition' against Leavis's 'great tradition', asserting the complex reality of modern tragedy against Steiner's 'death of tragedy', as well as working to demystify the conventions of pastoral and modernist writing. In the same questioning mode, Williams was ever alert to the dangers implicit in what he termed the 'transition from Marx to Marxism', and urged the need to question the received ideas and images of Marx's legacy. Williams's consequent analysis - which was consolidated in the theory of cultural materialism - was, as Terry Eagleton puts it, the work of a 'truthteller in heresy', someone who deviated 'from a deadening orthodoxy in order to recover and revitalize what [was] of value in it' (Eagleton 1989: 175). In all this, Williams was certainly one who - in Derrida's terms - 'reaffirmed by choosing': we owe his work no less careful

attention, and so need to withstand, in the first instance, a certain bewitchment of language in operation around the idea of inheritance.

To speak of an intellectual legacy, to speak of it as if it were some kind of stable property or fixed goods to be inherited, gives entirely the wrong impression. For the subject of intellectual inheritance - as Derrida emphasises - is not and cannot be a passive recipient, a lucky legatee. The legatee must always be active, an interpreter. Intellectual inheritance rewrites the grammar of legacy. To inherit in this sense can only mean to re-read, and to possess through reading in the strongest senses of interpretation: reaffirmation through choice. It means at least two things. To be alert to the possibility of rereading the work, and to the implications of its deployment in new circumstances; but at the same time to recognise just how much this possibility itself depends upon a certain vigilant and critical attention to the production and dissemination of ideas about the meanings and limits of Williams's work, ideas which constantly threaten, by sheer repetition, to become received ideas in the sense which so troubled Flaubert. That these are necessary, but not easy, tasks is apparent in the studies of Williams that have appeared to date. The tensions between historical account and theoretical assessment are apparent in the difficulty - or ease - with which readers of Williams place his work, and in so doing, position themselves, and seek to position

their readers through the dialogical dynamics of writing which Williams explored in Marxism and Literature and elsewhere.

These dynamics can be observed around the ways in which Williams's theory of a cultural materialism is remembered and redeployed. This was, as we saw in Chapters Five and Six, a theory which, as a cultural materialism, seeks to establish the constitutive force of culture for any account of historical change and any political practice; and, as a cultural materialism stresses the historical and political determinants of any cultural or signifying practice against bourgeois theories which are usually predicated upon an over-estimation of individual creativity. Any account of Williams's legacy needs to include discussion and assessment of this project. How satisfactory has this assessment been so far?

While the statement that cultural materialism makes up the substance of Williams's intellectual legacy is hardly likely to be challenged, exactly what constitutes cultural materialism is much less certain, despite Williams's attempts to spell it out in Marxism and Literature and Culture. In the claims and counter-claims regarding just what cultural materialism is, there are certainly no guarantees that what Williams thought of as a concept - what he spent spent, in a sense, his whole intellectual life thinking towards as a concept, one with a defined theoretical content, and which described the shape of a new potential discipline - could ever be simply inherited. The difficulties are

particularly striking and present once cultural materialism is treated less as a concept and more as a 'term', that is, as a signifier whose signified content can be filled in according at the whim of the interpreter.

Cultural Materialisms

Such problems were evident at an early stage, even in as politically well-intentioned a collection of essays such as that edited by Jonathan Dollimore and Alan Sinfield. Their influential Political Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism (1985) laid strong claim to Williams's cultural materialism, defining this as a method which combined 'historical context, theoretical method, political commitment, and textual analysis' (1985: vii), and describing the content of that commitment as 'the transformation of a social order which exploits people on grounds of race, gender and class' (viii). While there is no doubt that this commitment to commitment is in line with Williams's own record of cultural and political activism, and that the general definition is broadly in accord with Williams's own, something of the specificity of Williams's cultural materialism is lost or dissolved, both in regard to cultural materialism as a concept and as a concept intended to support significant disciplinary transformation. Dollimore and Sinfield's presentation of cultural materialism keeps it bound too much within the borders of existing literary studies. In the end, though the work displayed here under the banner of cultural materialism may be welcomed as a

radical strategy within literary studies, it needs to be recognised as internal to English studies in much the same way as Williams recognised much of his own early work as 'compatible...with the dominant literary paradigm' (Williams [1981] 1984: 209).¹

This becomes more apparent if we examine Dollimore's further description in his own essay in the volume, 'Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism and the New Historicism'. Here Dollimore describes "cultural materialism" as a 'term...borrowed from its use by Raymond Williams' - but, as the scare-quotes around 'cultural materialism' indicate, this 'borrowing' is also something of an adaption and redefinition. In practice, Dollimore's sense of cultural materialism is derived from 'an eclectic body of work', one which includes 'the convergence of history, sociology and English in cultural studies, some of the major developments in feminism, as well as continental Marxist-structuralist and post-structuralist theory, especially that of Althusser, Macherey, Gramsci and Foucault' (1985: 2-3). The problem lies with just that eclecticism. Williams spent a great deal of his time criticising structuralist Marxists such as Althusser and Macherey, and post-structuralist theory more generally, and indeed intended his own theory of cultural materialism as a conscious alternative to 'the newly dominant mode of critical structuralism' (Williams 1979: 339), it is hardly surprising that Williams, in his cautious 'Afterword' to the volume, recorded a 'certain wariness, an unease,' about the volume, centred on its 'main title' (Williams

1985: 231) - Political Shakespeare - but, I think, going beyond the issue of the title alone.

For Williams, the title suggested too strong a kinship with the usual appropriations of Shakespeare around the critic's own beliefs, and especially apparent in the 'dismal practice...of assembling lists of reactionary or progressive writers' (1985: 237) current in the 1930s. Thus, though he commends the collection for the 'edge of challenge to existing confusions and certainties' which it provides, and welcomes in particular 'the studies of contemporary productions of Shakespeare, in education and performance' (237), he nonetheless closes his essay with a recommendation for the actual procedures of his own cultural materialism, intimating that these have not been followed in the collection as a whole:

the most practical and effective new direction will be in the analysis of the historically based conventions of language and representation: the plays themselves as socially and materially produced, within discoverable conditions; indeed the texts themselves as history. (239)

Reading Williams's 'Afterword', there is a strong sense that there is some distance - both conceptual and practical - between Williams's idea of a cultural materialism and the sense given to it as a 'term' by Dollimore and others.

Similarly, the most recent study that I know - Scott Wilson's Cultural Materialism: Theory and Practice (1995) - goes so far as to distinguish between a 'mainstream' cultural materialism, associated with Williams, who (again) is credited with devising 'the term "cultural materialism"' (my emphasis), but not the concept; and an apparently natural development from this which would integrate it with 'the general economic theories of George Bataille' and 'the work of Lacan and Derrida' (Wilson 1995: xi). This new cultural materialism is again striking for the diversity of approaches which are held to be in its scope. It includes 'influential critics such as Stephen Greenblatt, Jonathan Goldberg, Jonathan Dollimore, Alan Sinfield, Francis Barker, Catherine Belsey and Terry Eagleton' (viii); but neglects - to my mind - many more obvious candidates for the practice of cultural materialism in the more narrow sense which Williams wished to give to the concept. These include critics such as John Barrell, Norman Bryson, Stephen Heath, Christopher Prendergast, Morag Shiach, and Paul Willis in Great Britain; and John Fekete and David Simpson (both formerly of Cambridge, and now in the USA); as well as Edward W. Said and Bruce Robbins in the USA whose works seem to have much closer ties to Williams's own conception of the theory, though never without differences of qualification and emphasis.²

The main danger in all this is that cultural materialism the concept is threatened by its dissolution into cultural materialism

the term. This can all too soon and too easily become something less than the attempt at an ambitious programme for a new discipline which occupied Williams's thoughts in the early 1980s than a politically correct version of already existing English studies, and is all too easily reduced to the single dimension of enquiry which American critic Louis Montrose described as 'the uses to which an historical present puts its versions of the English past' (1989: 27).³ Of course, while this was always an element in Williams's attention to historical semantics and to the dynamics of the selective tradition, it was never the whole story, and represents only one question which the cultural materialist critic can put to the history of cultural production.

The motive for this extension of cultural materialism into much more flexible and eclectic dimensions of enquiry may well be a desire to renew or revitalise interest in Williams's increasingly distant thought, a sense captured in Dworkin's comment that 'though he has been dead for only the last five (sic) years, he is already part of a different political age' (Dworkin 1993: 54), or Cornel West's characterisation of Williams as 'the last of the great European male revolutionary socialist intellectuals' (West 1995: ix). Such comments express - at least implicitly - the assumption that the simple fact of our historical posteriority gives the vocabulary of our own intellectual formation an unchallengeable theoretical supremacy: post_hoc,_ergo_hoc_melius. It is an assumption which is alien to the deeply historical mode of enquiry present in Williams's cultural

materialism, which always embodied the principles of open and self-critical dialogue in its readings of the past.

Yet this assumption is very apparent in a certain confident inflection present in some recent theoretical assessments, and is, indeed, picked out by the editors of Views Beyond the Border Country (1993) for particular comment. As they point out, many contributors to the collection

remain critical of [Williams's] failure to employ psychoanalysis, deconstruction, and other avant-garde approaches to theorise the relationship between colonial and post-colonial formations. (Dworkin and Roman 1993: 13)

Here the vocabulary of 'failure' obscures the nature and persistence of Williams's critical engagement with what he understood as psychoanalysis, deconstruction 'and other avant-garde approaches', as well as his ground-breaking, though limited, attempts to discuss the relations between colonising metropolis and a colonised world. Similarly, the editorial team of the British journal New Formations stress how Williams 'would doubtless have resisted the way that many of our articles draw on radical post-structuralism' and note how though 'his work constituted a sustained critique of the content of the Arnold-Mill-Leavis tradition, he retained from it a paradigm of the form of culture which made him reluctant to question the integrity of

identity as such' (1988: 3-4). Again, the deployment of a vocabulary of 'resistance' and 'reluctance' characterises intellectual disagreement as a personal flaw or failing, and thus makes impossible any account of Williams's objections to post-structuralism.⁴

It is now necessary to get beyond this stage of current assessment, in which it appears to be enough - at least in some cases - to register differences of theoretical jargon, or field of focus, to criticise Williams for his hostility to psychoanalysis, or his apparent indifference to issues of gender or 'postcoloniality'.⁵ For the claims made - or at least implicitly present - in many of these accounts run the risk of refusing the basic rule of historical interpretation, shared by cultural materialism, that an author's thought needs to be understood within its means and conditions of production if commentary on it is not to fall into ahistoricism and anachronism. Any claims that our own theoretical vocabulary is indeed superior to Williams's clearly needs to be tested in practice, rather than simply assumed as a starting-point. Indeed, in my view, the best recent essays on Williams are precisely those which submit their claims to the test of interpretive practice, probing the limits of Williams's thinking, and offering revisions of and extensions to it in a spirit of critical and constructive dialogue which is far removed from the brash claims of New Formations.⁶

As is evident from the structure of this study, I believe that any real assessment of the force of Williams's work needs to be historical as well as theoretical. It needs to attend to the terms of the conceptual vocabularies available to Williams, a sense of their limits, as well as a sense of what use and difference Williams made of and to them, before seeking to describe the limitations of Williams's thinking. The analysis of Williams's own work can best be made in terms of its cultural, conceptual and political means and conditions of production, in line with the theory (or at least Williams's theory) of cultural materialism. I have argued in this study that two essential dimensions for such assessment are provided by the discourses of literary criticism and Marxist cultural theory which Williams knew or imagined he knew, and the consequent history of his critical and questioning relations with them.

But, in the spirit of Derrida's injunction, and as a way of bringing this study to a conclusion, I wish to move away from this general examination of Williams's work as a critic, both social and literary, and reaffirm my own sense of the continued value and significance of Williams's work by examining a single thread of argument which, though it runs throughout and is ever present in Williams's work, has never received, to my knowledge, specific attention as such. This is Williams's powerful revaluation of the idea of literacy.⁷ This revaluation or reworking of literacy does two things: it extends the scope of literacy, that is, extends the kinds of text which it is held to be appropriate to

lend critical scrutiny to, and it increases, if you like, the depth of literacy, the understanding of literacy as a force in the world, in the constitution and reproduction of any social order.

Literacies

Literacy is a term which appears with increasing frequency in the final phase of Williams's work: the essays collected in Writing and Society examine 'the changing relationships...between writers and assumed or intended readers, in conditions that developed from uneven or partial literacy to a more general literacy in which there were persistent inequalities in access to writing and reading' (1984: 5); 'It is often said that there are more than six centuries of English literature. It is not often said that there are less than two centuries of English literacy' (Williams [1983] 1984: 212); the 'struggle for literacy was as real a social struggle as any struggle for subsistence or food or shelter' ([1987] 1989c: 154); Williams's final recorded interview was focused on the 'Politics of Literacy' ([1988] 1991). Yet - as I shall show - Williams's concern for literacy was there from the start as a major constituent of all his thinking and analysis from Reading and Criticism through to the final essays.

In Chapter Six, we examined Williams's reservations about the most closely related term, literature, and showed how Williams argued for a return to its original sense as reading capacity or ability. In Marxism and Literature, Williams points out how

literature first comes into English in the fourteenth century from the Latin littera, a letter of the alphabet. Litterature was then in effect a condition of reading, of being able to read and having read, a sense much closer to contemporary literacy. Indeed, argues Williams, the very emergence of literacy as a separate word in the nineteenth century corresponds to a shift in the meaning of literature away from its sense as reading ability to the idea of literature as canon, as the apparently objective category of printed works of a certain quality, and then with a usual further restriction to fictive and imaginative writing only (Williams 1977: 46-7). In Keywords, he further stresses how

in recent years literature and literary...have been increasingly challenged, on what is conventionally their own ground, by concepts of writing and communication which seek to recover the most active and general senses which the extreme specialization had seemed to exclude. (Williams 1983: 187)

For if stage-drama had consistently posed problems to the specialised definition, and with difficulty had found a place in the literary canon, what of the new compositions for radio and tv broadcast, for film and video? Williams's 'deconstruction' (as we might now say) of the meaning of literature opened up the whole field of what is now generally known as cultural studies, which might be described, in Williams's terms, simply as 'the analysis

of all forms of signification', and not only literature in the restricted senses.

This extension of analysis beyond the boundaries of conventional English studies is widely recognised as a significant theoretical advance and disciplinary challenge, and is the simple basis for Williams's position as one of the 'founding-fathers' of cultural studies.⁸ In many ways, the emergence of cultural studies marks the recognition of the interest and value of non-literary signifying practices, and consequent new modes of literacy, which go beyond and destabilise the powerful opposition in literary studies between 'high' and 'low' culture. This opposition had been the object of Williams's critique in the 1950s in crucial essays such as 'Culture is Ordinary' as well as in the seminal Culture and Society, later studies such as Communications (1962) and Television: Technology and Cultural Form (1974), and accompanying essays and analyses. All this helped to consolidate the major shift in disciplinary focus associated with the extension of English as a discipline and the emergence of cultural studies.

But if a significant part of Williams's legacy is the extension of the idea of literacy beyond the specialised and restricted senses available in mainstream literary studies, it is also in part a matter of the sheer moment and force which Williams attributed to literacy in the world. Williams's work presents a challenge to the understanding of what we might call the social

dynamics of literacy, literacy as a force in the world. This comes through most visibly in the repeated scepticism that Williams showed towards the idea of literacy at work in orthodox English studies. For despite the local intensity and energy which Cambridge English brought to bear in its reading practices, Williams found that these nurtured a paradoxical passivity in the reader. This passivity was precisely the opposite of the conscious agency with which Williams wished to charge the idea of literacy as a social - and not only textual - practice.

The basic point was made as early as Reading and Criticism in 1950. Here Williams urged the need for the definition of literary studies as a 'mature reading' a question of 'the extension of literacy in the fullest sense' (Williams 1950: 21). Literacy in the fullest sense: the phrase captures a central and unifying feature of Williams's diverse and heterogeneous work. From the studies of drama in performance, through the study of keywords, across the literary criticism, and into the heart of Williams's theory of the 'long revolution', are the ties between education and democracy, the figuring of literacy as a crucial element in social reproduction and the questioning of social order, the idea of literacy as the practice of the citizen as well as the property of the reading subject.

Something of what this 'fullest' sense' of literacy might be in relation to literary criticism was amplified in Culture and Society. Here Williams criticised the ways in which the seminal

work of I.A. Richards nonetheless embodied 'a kind of servility to the literary establishment' ([1958]: 251). Despite the fact that with Practical Criticism, Richards 'did more than anyone else to penetrate the complacency of literary academicism' (ibid.), Richards, 'even as a brilliant opponent' (252), was in thrall to the figure of 'Aesthetic Man': 'alone in a hostile environment, receiving and organizing his experience' (ibid). In the end, the 'account of the inadequacy of ordinary response when compared with the adequacy of literary response is a cultural symptom rather than diagnosis'; Richards's 'idea of literature as a training ground for life is servile'(ibid).

Servile is the key word. It sums up that sense of subjection to class norms of aesthetic judgement which Williams saw as a substantially disabling constituent of traditional conceptions of literature, and a a major impediment to the full understanding of the dynamics of cultural process. The point is forcefully made in Politics and Letters, where Williams sums up one of the main lines of argument in Marxism and Literature as the realisation 'that its categories of literature and of criticism were so deeply compromised that they had to be challenged in toto' (1979: 326). What 'has come to be understood as criticism is a detached process' he asserted, and stressed how 'it is all over this tradition that the process of judgement is something which occurs above any specific instances or situations' (335). 'I had this training very hard' he acknowledges,

and what you were told to do was to forget yourself, to forget your situation, to be in a naked relation - but with your training, of course - to the text; while the text itself was similarly taken out of all its conditions and circumstances. My whole encounter with literary criticism really revolved around this pseudo-impersonal attempt to judge works without any sense of presence of the individual making judgement - its effort to divest itself of circumstances, to rise above history, to talk of literature rather than the individual or group making a critical judgement. (335)

Williams associates this 'textualism' (which is a danger any purely 'theoretical' assessment is always open to, including assessments of Williams's own work) with the 'ideological capture' of Richards's work, one in which the practice of reading is privileged over its theorisation, with a consequent emphasis on the 'activity of reading' over attention to 'the process of composition' (Williams 1979: 193). 'The result' he sums up

was the subsequent definition of the work as a text, an ideological capture which has persisted relatively intact from English Practical Criticism to American New Criticism right down to Literary Structuralism today. (Williams 1979: 193)

Williams's resistance to this 'servile' textualism provides a significant continuity across Williams's work as a whole, linking early works such as Reading and Criticism, and Culture and Society, with the 'Cambridge English' studies Modern Tragedy and The Country and the City, and connecting these in turn with the cultural materialist studies Marxism and Literature and Culture. Against this, he placed an idea of literacy as a means to cultural empowerment and political emancipation: the theory of cultural materialism, and the practice of a critical literacy. This idea and ideal of a critical literacy constitutes the basic -and in many ways most powerful - aspect of his intellectual legacy. It unites and expresses the connections between education and politics implicit in Williams's central political ideal of a participatory as opposed to a parliamentary democracy.⁹

At the same time, in Williams's thinking about and thinking through of Marxist cultural theory, this active literacy serves as to figure a self-reflexive agency with which to oppose too rigid an idea of determination at work in base and superstructure theory, with its evidently reductionist conception of the relations between cultural and economic practices. Williams argued throughout his work against any interpretation of Marxism in which the human agent is represented only as a passive and servile subject, whether the argument was presented in the form of the 'mechanical materialism' which he knew from the 1930s debates, and in which 'the arts are passively dependent on social reality' (Williams [1958]: 274), or whether it appeared in its 1970s guise,

as that 'fashionable form of Marxism' - the more sophisticated Althusserian argument - 'which makes the whole people, including the whole working class, mere carriers of the structures of a corrupt ideology' (Williams [1976/77] 1980: 241).

His work is often at its most powerful when the two constituents of this critical literacy - the textual and the political - come together in the sceptical analysis of the available representations of the world through which the world is thought about and acted upon. Culture and Society had deployed this critical literacy to great effect in its deconstruction of the casual use of the term 'masses', as we saw in Chapter Three; and we can observe the same force and moment in Williams's analysis of the idea of the 'consumer' in The Long Revolution.¹⁰ It was the very principle which motivated the political analyses of the May Day Manifesto in 1968, whose starting-point was 'the dangerous gap: between name and reality; between vision and power; between our human meanings and the deadening language of a false political system' (1968: 13), and in which Williams and his co-editors called for a 'new total description' (185) of the social order to set against the dominant ideological representation. 'In any complicated society' it was argued,

social realities not only exist; they are formed and interpreted. For any actual people, including the most exposed, direct experience of the society is fragmentary and discontinuous. To get a sense

of what is happening, at any given time, we depend upon a system of extended communications. The technical means for this now exist in many new and effective forms. But it is then necessary to realize that the overwhelming majority of these means are firmly in capitalist hands. (39-40)

If in any complicated society social realities not only exist but are formed and interpreted, then a part of any political struggle must be a critical sense of the ways in which reality is formed and interpreted through its representations. A great deal of what a critical literacy is about has to do with just that critical analysis of representations, of the ways we think through our social realities in order to act upon them. In the Introduction to Keywords, Williams gave some sense of the importance of this extension of the basic sense of literacy into a critical literacy.

What the analyses in Keywords can offer, he writes, 'is not resolution [of the conflicting senses of key words] but perhaps, at times, just that extra edge of consciousness' which can be the turning-point in social and political struggles (Williams 1976: 21). Keywords, in fact, can be taken as the exemplification of Williams's commitment to a critical literacy, as we can see through his description of the book's central task and central stance.¹¹ 'This is not a neutral review of meanings', he advises the reader:

It is an exploration of the vocabulary of a crucial area of social and cultural discussion, which has been inherited within precise historical and social conditions and which has to be made at once conscious and critical - subject to change as well as continuity - if the millions of people in whom it is active are to see it as active: not a tradition to be learned, nor a consensus to be accepted, nor a set of meanings which, because it is 'our' language, has a natural authority; but as a shaping and reshaping, in real circumstances, and from profoundly different 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.

(Williams 1976: 21-22)

This is a lengthy and agitated sentence, as Williams tries to cram in the various tasks of a critical literacy as well as give some sense of what the criticism is directed against. '[I]nherited within precise social and historical conditions', 'real circumstances', 'making our own language and history': the echoes of Marx's discussions of the question of agency in historical materialism are deliberate.¹² And just as deliberate is Williams's attention to and emphasis on the constitutive force of language and critical analysis with regard to this central

question of historical agency. The vocabulary is inherited, and it has a determiningⁱⁿ role - the strong sense of constitutive - in forging human consciousness; it is active 'in millions of people'. But that strong constitutive force can be challenged, and the vocabulary appropriated by the people themselves if that inheritance is 'made at once conscious and critical'. When this happens, and the time or the tense is important here, the apparently 'natural authority' of the language can be challenged, and it becomes 'a vocabulary to use, to find out own ways in, to change as we find it necessary to change it, as we go on making our own language and history' (ibid).

As we saw in Chapter Five, Williams differs significantly from one strand of thinking in structuralist and post-structuralist theory. In this profoundly textualist emphasis, the language-system appears to be seen as entirely constitutive of human subjectivity, a nightmarish view apparent - at least at times - in the writings of a wide range of thinkers from Adorno and Althusser, through to Foucault and Derrida. Against this, Williams was scrupulous in assigning a fully dialectical function to language, as a system which at one and the same time enables even as it tends to determine the possibility for the production of human thought and subjectivity. For Williams, the self or subject is never simply an effect of language, as it sometimes appears to be in the more rhetorical pronouncements of some structuralist and post-structuralist thinkers. Language does not simply determine self-consciousness; it also enables it. This

reflexivity - what Anthony Giddens has usefully characterised as the 'reflexive monitoring of action' - is the key to Williams's belief in the possibility of developing, through analysis, that 'extra edge of consciousness'.¹³

For these reasons, the question of literacy engages (to borrow Edward Said's useful terms) not only with textuality, but with the worldliness of discourse.¹⁴ Williams's 'more than a reader' works to promote an engaged and critical literacy in which the attention of the reading subject is never merely textual, but turned outward, always seeking the connection between the world and the text, always placing the reader as a potentially political agent in a participatory - rather than merely representative - democracy. This active literacy was at the very centre of his vision of the role of education in the 'long revolution', that third (after the industrial and democratic revolutions) and 'most difficult' revolution to interpret, the cultural revolution, the revolution of literacy:

We speak of a cultural revolution, and we must certainly see the aspiration to extend the active process of learning, with the skills of literacy and other advanced communication, to all people rather than to limited groups, as comparable in importance to the growth of democracy and the rise of scientific industry. (Williams [1961]: 11)

These, ultimately, were the terms and conditions of Williams's cultural-political agenda. All education participates in the reproduction of social consciousness; but also, potentially at least, it can be the ground for challenging existing social consciousness. This was the lesson Williams drew from his formative experience in Adult Education (examined in Chapter Three), as we can see from the comments made looking back over the debates of that period in his 1983 Tony MacLean Memorial lecture:

The true position was, always essentially was, that the impulse to Adult Education was not only a matter of remedying deficit, making up for inadequate educational resources in the wider society. nor only a case of meeting new needs of the society, though those things contributed. The deepest impulse was the desire to make learning a part of the process of social change itself.

([1983] 1989c: 158)

As Williams concluded: 'The building of social consciousness is of real consciousness, of real understanding of the world' (166). There is no better - or simpler - definition of the aims of a critical literacy.

And perhaps there is no place where the recognition of this aspect of Williams's legacy - the theory and practice of a critical literacy - is more important than in South Africa, and in the debates around education, particularly university education, and, more specifically still, in current discussions of the future of English studies. I shall first discuss the relevance of Williams's critical literacy to debates on English studies, and close with a few remarks on the relevance of critical literacy to university education in general.¹⁵

To focus for the moment on the area of literary studies. It is clear that the particular emphasis which Williams gave to the question of literacy within literary studies could make a vitally important contribution towards their reformulation in South Africa (not to speak of elsewhere). Most discussions of the future of English studies in South Africa have focused on the question of the canon.¹⁶ Not surprisingly, it seems increasingly strange for a country like South Africa, with its eleven official languages, to devote most of its energies to studying a literary canon originally imposed by the colonising power of the British Empire. Should English studies be the study of English literature, understood as the national canon of Great Britain? Williams had at any rate showed the difficulty of the question with relation to the internal history of 'English literature', and also pointed to the further difficulties once varieties of 'World-English' were taken into account (Williams [1987] 1989c: 150-53). There have been welcome developments in the changing of the content of the

canon, and the ever greater inclusion of South African, Southern African, African, Commonwealth and World English texts. But is the best way forward to think only in terms of a new version of coverage, revising the contents to the canon?

I think not, and suggest that in this moment of crisis we might do well to follow Williams's lead and think the question through less in terms of the canon's contents, and more in terms of the actual practices involved in literary studies, the actual practices of a critical and extended literacy. In the first place, we need to focus on the very special and distinctive place which 'English studies' has given, in practice, to the idea of language.

For literary studies, language is grasped not only as an instrument of communication, or a totalised synchronic system, but as an object of attention and analysis in its own right, as language in action. Literary studies is above all a hermeneutic or interpretive discipline, a discipline which scrutinises our unthinking notions of communication, and problematises any too simple idea of language as instrument. Because we are, in George Steiner's phrase, 'language animals', because language seems so natural to us that we have usually forgotten we ever had to learn it in the first place, we are usually willing to regard language unproblematically as an instrument, as a medium of communication, and to see communication as a simple exchange of information through dialogue, and to think of that dialogue as taking place

between equal partners.¹⁷ Literary studies poses a challenge to each and every one of these assumptions. When language is understood only as instrument, its capacity to refer to the world is likely to be understood as an ability to reflect reality, and that reflection judged in terms of scientific exactitude, in terms of scientific objectivity. It is in relation to these questions that contemporary theoretical debates around structuralism and poststructuralism repeat and extend the concerns of the emergence of literary studies as a discipline in the Britain of the 1920s.

It was precisely against this emergent orthodoxy - perhaps most rigorously articulated by the British school of analytic philosophy, in the work of Bertrand Russell and the Wittgenstein of the Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus (1921) - that literary studies began in the nineteen-twenties, with key theorists like I.A. Richards, William Empson and F.R. Leavis, to argue for a very different view of language, one that emphasised its expressive and constitutive characteristics and against reductive views of language as merely reflective. Indeed, the work of the literary critics oddly anticipates and has some common ground with Wittgenstein's later philosophy, itself so critical of his own earlier work and formation.

For the later Wittgenstein language did not simply reflect the world, more or less correctly, for a disembodied and hence neutral observer. Rather language constituted the very terms of that reflection of the world for the observer. For critical

theorists, language is not the transparent window on the world of an empiricist philosophy, language constitutes the very frame of that view. Language gives the necessary (though not sufficient) conditions for seeing the world, and seeing is understood as the active interpretation of the world, rather than its passive reception. The primary task of criticism is to remind us that even the most habitual seeing is always a matter of representation - a question of the ways in which existing descriptions attempt to position us in relation to understanding the world.

It was just this element of interpretation which was absent from the Tractatus and which Wittgenstein, in his later work, was concerned to restore. In a sense, we can read that later work as an attempt to thoroughly deconstruct the implications of the idea in the Tractatus that language could be a picture or reflection of the world, and to undo the simple scientific opposition between truth and falsity present in its statement that any 'picture agrees with reality or fails to agree; it is correct or incorrect, true or false' (Wittgenstein 1961 [1921]: 10). For what is absent from this formulation is just that element of embodied (socially, politically, historically) subjectivity which makes interpretation the key to expressive or constitutive theories of language. The critical theorist would have to rewrite this as 'a picture always claims to agree with reality, to be correct and true; but we must never forget that a picture is always a re-presentation of reality and be skeptical of its claims, recognising it as an interested and active interpretation of reality.' Language is the medium of

our knowledge of the world and not the world itself. It is never the event itself, but the analysis and interpretation of the event. Critical literacy, as a second-order literacy which seeks to identify what Williams called the address of the text as well as its content, offers the opportunity for resistance to the authority of representation.

As I have argued elsewhere, English departments in South Africa might do well to consider the lessons of Williams's critical literacy, and to move towards a pedagogical model which emphasised the skills and techniques of critical analysis, observing the three dimensions of textual, historical and theoretical analysis which distinguish Williams's cultural materialism, and to work to deploy these skills in critical literacy outside the traditional canonical content of English studies to include (as, in practice if not in theory many departments do) film, television and media studies more broadly which do not have an assured institutional setting.

It is not surprising that Williams - in a phrase quoted earlier - referred to the struggle for literacy as just 'as real a social struggle as any struggle for subsistence or food or shelter' (1989c: 154), and pointed out, in the same lecture, how the struggle for an active literacy was

at several points viciously beaten back, and then
in a sense only admitted on terms which are again

becoming highly fashionable and contemporary:
 because people would need to read instructions and
 even to write down certain things in the way of
 record to be able to work. ([1987] 1989c: 154)

Against this servile literacy, Williams posed the capacity to
 read, and to read critically, which he termed, in a 1984 lecture
 given to the Classical Association, 'high literacy:

It is high literacy, finally, which calls the
 bluff of authority, since it is a condition of all
 its practical work that it questions sources,
 closely examines offered authenticities, reads
 contextually and comparatively, identifies
 conventions to determine meanings: habits of mind
 which are all against, or should be all against,
 any and every pronunciation of a singular or
 assembled authority. ([1984] 1989c: 55)

To be sceptical of and questioning towards 'any and every
 pronunciation of a singular or assembled authority'. A difficult
 task indeed.¹⁸ What is for sure is that the project of such a
 critical literacy easily moves beyond the tasks of a single
 discipline, and Williams's definition is deliberately broad (after
 all, Williams is discussing the future of Classical studies in
 British universities - in some ways suffering much the same sense
 of threat in Thatcherite Britain as Eng. Lit. does in the new

South Africa, where, as I shall discuss in a moment, a similar definition of instrumental or vocational education is at work). In the end, the tasks of this high or critical literacy can be seen as no less than a way of summing up or describing the aims and ideals of academic education as such, particularly in the disciplines associated with critical thinking as such - disciplines such as history, philosophy, and sociology, for example and not in any way seeking to provide an exhaustive list.¹⁹

Throughout this study, I have tried to show the ways in which this high or critical literacy is at work in Williams's studies in literature, cultural production, and in the theories of cultural production associated with both Marxism and English studies. This 'high literacy', or as I prefer to call it, critical literacy, identifies or names a central feature of Williams's legacy. But it also reaches beyond, to the broader questions facing academic university education in general - a topic which is, like English studies themselves, under pressure and under discussion in South Africa just as much as it is elsewhere.²⁰

That the widescale lack of educational provision for providing even primary literacy in South Africa clearly represents a major challenge to the effective practice and extension of democracy in any of its significant senses. Yet the visibility of this crisis of primary literacy should not obscure the existence of the related crisis in higher literacy. Debate on university

education in South Africa - at least as it is represented in the National Commission for Higher Education's recent report, A Framework for Transformation (1996) - is significantly divided between two emphases which are certainly in tension with each other, and may in the end prove practically if not logically contradictory.

On the one hand, the Report claims - in line with Williams's broad definition of what 'high literacy' has to offer - that it is

the task of higher education to support a healthy public opinion and vibrant public debate by developing a culture of critical discourse in society, and by nurturing those intellectual and moral qualities which are preconditions for independent and critical thinking, maturity of judgement, social responsibility and commitment to the public good. (60)

This emphasis on the critical component of higher education, and its relation to the functioning of democracy through open and critical debate is mentioned several times in the Report as a whole. At the same time, much of the report is couched in the discourse which Williams had identified as that of the 'industrial trainers' in The Long Revolution, that is, those who defined education 'in terms of future adult work, with the parallel clause of teaching the required social character - habits of regularity,

'self-discipline', obedience, and trained effort' ([1961]: 162). Thus the Report argues for the implementation of a neo-conservative redefinition of university education around the needs of globalisation and the world-market.²¹ The main task of higher education is seen as providing the labour market, 'in a knowledge-driven and knowledge-dependent society'

with the high level competencies and expertise necessary for the growth and prosperity of a modern or modernising economy. Higher education is in other words expected to teach and train people with a view to fulfilling specialised social functions or to occupy learned professions and other vocations in administration, trade and industry. (68)

In this kind of formulation, it is striking - though depressingly familiar to any reader of Williams - how 'society' and the 'needs of society' become in the end code or cover-words for the needs of the economy. This is apparent, just to give one instance, in the following recommendations from the Report, with their casual reification of 'human talent and potential' into 'human resource development', and finally into the 'provision of person-power for the changing labour market':

It should be clear that the features of the South African economy listed above present direct

challenges to higher education, the first and foremost being human resource development; that is, the mobilisation of human talent and potential through the training and provision of person-power for the changing labour market. (54)

That this is completely at odds with the very different definition of 'human resource development' implicit in the previous definition of the task of higher education to 'support a healthy public opinion and vibrant public debate by developing a culture of critical discourse in society' and 'by nurturing those intellectual and moral qualities which are preconditions for independent and critical thinking' is clear. How this tension will be resolved and whether this apparent contradiction can be overcome remains to be seen. What is more certain is that in this respect, as in so many others, the example of Raymond Williams's commitment to the teaching and deployment of a truly critical literacy will remain an important one in the struggle to work towards a viable and participatory democracy, whether in South Africa or elsewhere.

Notes to Introduction

1. See, for example, The Independent January 28 (Terry Eagleton and Frank Kermode); The Guardian January 29 (Frances Mulhern); The Morning Star February 4 (Tony Benn); The Listener February 4 (Anthony Barnett); Times Higher Educational Supplement February 5 (Fred Inglis); The New Statesman February 5 (Stuart Hall); The Nation March 5 (Edward W. Said and Edward P. Thompson). The BBC's Channel Four broadcast a special tribute to Williams on 28 February. Warwick University also organised a memorial conference on 30 April: for a brief account, see Lovell 1989. The British journal, News from Nowhere devoted a special issue to Williams - Raymond Williams: Third Generation February 1989, as did the US journal Social Text in 1992. See also Blackburn 1988 and Eagleton 1988. Patrick Parrinder's remark is drawn from his 'Diary' (Parrinder 1988), and Juliet Mitchell's from the report on the National Film Theatre forum 'Raymond Williams - Towards 2000' (June 30 1989) in Higgins 1989. I borrow and adapt a few paragraphs from that essay in this introduction.

2. The interviews with the New Left Review, conducted in 1977 and 1978, and published as Politics and Letters in 1979 remains an extraordinarily useful, detailed and stimulating account of Williams's life. It can now be supplemented, and at times corrected, by Inglis 1995, though this study is marred by some considerable ambivalence towards Williams and his work (in this regard, Raphael Samuel's important review (Samuel 1995) is a necessary corrective). Alan O'Connor's thin study (1989)

provides an outstanding bibliography of Williams's writing, and of criticism on Williams - though one in need by now of some extension.

3. For a scrupulously detailed account of this period of Williams's life, as well as an outstanding selection of work from this period, see McIlroy and Westwood 1993.

4. See E.P. Thompson 1961: '[H]is work is very important indeed, and...so far as we can speak of a New Left - he is our best man' (p. 24). See also Perry Anderson's repeated praise of Williams: in 'Origins of the Present Crisis' (Anderson 1965) Culture and Society and The Long Revolution are said to 'undoubtedly represent the major contribution to socialist thought in England since the war' (1965: 11); and, above all, in his seminal essay, 'Components of the National Culture' (Anderson 1969).

5. Or so Williams tells the story (Williams 1977d). Inglis (1995: 176) contests this view, but gives no sources for his disagreement.

6. See the report on Edward W. Said's memorial speech in Higgins 1989, especially pp. 83-4; Said 1990; and, more generally, Said 1994.

7. This initial phase of public mourning was followed by a surge of critical interest in Williams, as the first attempts were made to get his work as a whole into focus. Jan Gorak's The Alien Mind of Raymond Williams (composed before his death) was published in 1988, and was soon followed by Alan O'Connor's too hasty study Raymond Williams: Writing, Culture, Politics (1989). Nicolas Tredell's Uncancelled Challenge: The Work of Raymond Williams

followed in 1990; and, the best of these monographs, Andrew Milner's Cultural Materialism, came in 1993. These were followed by John Eldridge and Lizzie Eldridge Raymond Williams: Making Connections (1994); and Fred Inglis's biography, Raymond Williams (1995). Various aspects of Williams's work were examined separately in volumes of essays edited by Terry Eagleton (1989c) and Dworkin and Roman (1993), and in special issues of the journals News from Nowhere (1989) and Social Text (1992), with the latter becoming the basis for a further volume of essays, Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams ed. Christopher Prendergast (1995).

8. For Williams as a novelist, see Davey 1989; Robbins 1990; Pinkney 1991; Di Michele 1993; discussions of Williams's own plays are to be found in Gorak 1988: 32-39, and Sharrat 1989: 136-49; and accounts of Williams's political identity are to be found in Eagleton 1976b; Barnett 1976; Hirschkopf 1988; Blackburn 1989 and Brenkman 1995. For Williams on the mass media, see Williams [1962a] and [1974a], and the lengthy interview 1986e. Accounts of this work can be found in Eldridge and Eldridge 1994: 98-110; Hitchcock 1995; and, for general discussion, see Lusted (ed.) 1989.

9. See, for instance, the memorial editorial 'Identities' in New Formations 5 (Summer 1988), as well as Cornel West's statement, 'Raymond Williams was the last of the great European male revolutionary socialist intellectuals born before the end of the age of Europe (1492-1945)' (West 1995: ix). More explicitly, R.L. Dworkin's remark that 'though he has been dead for only the last

five (sic) years, he is already part of a different political age' (Dworkin 1993: 54). I examine the implications of the New Formations editorial in Higgins 1995. Prendergast (1995b) makes a careful interrogation of the implications of West's statement. I examine Dworkin's comment - and the whole issue of Williams's relevance to us today - in the Conclusion.

Notes to Chapter One

1. Most commentators follow Eagleton's assessment of this early period as probationary, and pass over it without serious consideration. Ward (1981) makes no mention of these early works, beginning his analysis only with Culture and Society. For Gorak, the early work is 'programmatic....[it] reflects Cambridge training and Cambridge tastes' (1988: 19). O'Connor (1989) similarly focuses on the post-Culture and Society works. Recent exceptions to this blindness are Pinkney (1989a, 1989b) (these accounts are discussed in Chapters 2 and 4); McIlroy (1993a, 1993b); and Eldridge and Eldridge (1994), where there is brief discussion of the early works on drama (1994: 115-21).

2. See Eagleton 1976a, 1976b. My references are to 1976b. Eagleton's relations to Williams's work have a long and complex history, and really need attention as an item of discussion in their own right. Eagleton himself later writes of the 'brisk impatience of relative youth' (Eagleton 1989a: 4) which had characterised his 1976 assessment; but, at the same time, he

reaffirms the central drift of his criticisms in Eagleton 1989b. See also Eagleton 1984: 108-15.

3. Notably Kiernan (1959) and Thompson (1961) in their respective review essays. I examine their views in some detail in Chapter 4.

4. See the discussion of the 'epistemological break' in Althusser [1965]: 26-30. The broad division into three phases - the works of the young Marx, the works of the break, and the mature works is further broken down into further sub-divisions, with the youthful works of 1840-1845 divided into the 'liberal-rationalist' phase of 1840-42, and the 'community-rationalist' phase of 1842-45; and the mature works themselves divided into the mature works proper (1857-1883) and the writings of the maturing phase (1845-57). 1845 is the year of the break. The most comprehensive account I know of to date is Gregory Elliot's Althusser: The Detour of Theory. See especially p. 139: 'Althusser took the scientificity of Marxism for granted - it was a donne of his whole enterprise. He elaborated an indigenous Marxist epistemology which he employed to exclude the Early Works from the canon and to purge historical materialism of any remaining ideological elements. Suitably rectified, historical materialism was submitted to the scrutiny of the epistemology which proceeded triumphantly to uphold its claims to scientific status by virtue of its a-humanism and a-historicism: another circle of circles. What was never in doubt was the scientificity of Marxism: the raison-d'etre of Althusser's intervention was to defend that status.' (Elliot 1987: 139). Much the same might be said of Eagleton's claims.

5. Inglis recalls asking Williams about Eagleton's attack in 1976, and records his reply as follows: "I think he might have sent me a copy beforehand," he said imperturbably, but I think he was a bit hurt, even so, by Eagleton's swashbuckling' (Inglis 1995: 252). See also Inglis 1995: 248 for Anthony Barnett's immediate response to Eagleton, the ground of his essay (Barnett 1976). This debate 'initiated a long moment of reparation by Anderson and his fellow-editors which culminated as the interviews published as Politics and Letters' (Inglis 1995: 251). Inglis includes some particularly interesting - and poignant - correspondence between Williams, Perry Anderson and Frances Mulhern over some particular details of the book. See Inglis 1995: 249-251; 259-265.

6. The words are uttered by the hunter, Ulfheim, to the artist Professor Rubek in Act III of the play. A more recent translation renders them as 'No, nothing seems difficult at first; but then you come to a tight corner where you can't go forward or back. And there you stick - "tree'd", we sportsmen call it' (Ibsen 1974: 286).

7. See Annan (1955) for a description of the closely-knit society of 'Oxbridge'. For his particular response to Williams, see Annan 1991, where his work is described as 'rhetorical, evasive and vacuous' in tones heavily marked by class condescension (1991: 360).

8. Other 1950s 'scholarship boys' included Kingsley Amis, Donald Davie, John Wain and Richard Hoggart. It is interesting to distinguish Williams amongst these. The usual casual

identification made between Williams's and Hoggart's respective projects, seen as the founding moments of British Cultural Studies, stands in need of some serious questioning. See, for instance, the debate in Adult Education between Hoggart and Williams (Hoggart (1948) and Williams (1948); now easily available in McIlroy and Westwood 1993: 136-45); Williams's review of The Uses of Literacy (Williams 1957b; also in McIlroy and Westwood 1993: 106-10); and the later discussion between them (Williams and Hoggart 1960; McIlroy and Westwood 1993: 111-20). See also Williams 1957c where he explicitly criticises Hoggart's separation of politics from family life: 'Hoggart is wrong, however, in supposing that these are to be set on one side of a line [family values, neighbourhood etc], while on the other is set the wider social product - the Labour movement - which he describes as the work of a minority. Of course only a minority is really active, politically but we must not be confused by bourgeois ideas of the nature of a minority. There, a minority is thought of as isolated, self-defensive, opposed to the majority's values' (1957c: 31).

9. See, in particular, Williams 1977d: 'There was little personal difficulty or dislike, but the formation was easy to hate - and I have to record that I responded aggressively. The myth of the working-class boy arriving in Cambridge... is that he is an awkward misfit and has to learn new manners. It may depend on where you come from. Out of rural Wales it didn't feel like that. The class which dominated Cambridge is given to describing itself as well-mannered, polite, sensitive. It continually contrasts

itself favourably with the rougher and coarser others...If I then say that what I found was an extraordinarily coarse, pushing, name-ridden group, I shall be told that I am showing class-feeling, class-envy, class-resentment. That I showed class-feeling is not in any doubt. All I would insist on is that nobody fortunate enough to grow up in a good home, in a genuinely well-mannered and sensitive community, could for a moment envy these loud, competitive and deprived people' (pp. 5-6). Inglis gives an excellent and well-researched account of Williams's schooldays in his Raymond Williams, especially pp. 38-69.

10. Gorak bends the evidence a little in order to argue his case that Williams's entire intellectual identity was grounded in his own profound alienation. He writes, for instance, of how '[Williams's] working-class status in an emphatically middle-class university marginalised him still further' (Gorak 1988: 10). But as O'Connor notes, the Socialist Club claimed as many as 1,000 members in 1939 - approximately 20% of the membership of the university (O'Connor 1989: 7). Pinkney also stresses the 'intensely Modernist political sub-culture around the university Socialist Club' available to Williams (Pinkney 1989a: 8). For details of the very active social life of young communists in the 1950s, see Samuel 1986a and 1986b. And for Williams's own recollections of the period, see Williams 1979: 39-54; and Williams 1977d.

11. See Cambridge University Socialist Club Bulletin March 6 1940.

12. See Cambridge University Socialist Club Bulletin Vol 4 No 4 Tuesday November 5 1940 p. 2.
13. Lionel Elvin was a Fellow of Trinity Hall 1930-44. See McIlroy and Westwood 1993: 24 for useful biographical notes. E.M.W. Tillyard, along with Mansfield Forbes and I.A. Richards, was one of the trio of new appointments made to lead the new English school. Tillyard, a former Classicist, specialised in Shakespeare and Milton. His study, The Elizabethan World Picture (1952), can be taken as an exemplary instance of the 'background' approach to literary history that Williams detested. See also his 1948 essay, 'Is a New History of Criticism Possible?', for a warning against a history of literature which is too attendant to the interests of the day: 'there is the risk that the premises on which the book was being written would have changed before the end was reached' (164).
14. Williams singles out Fox as the centre of leftist discussions of literature in Williams 1979: 44. For an excellent discussion of socialist realism in the Russian context, see Regie Robin, who concludes that it 'marked a historical period of Soviet society with, at heart, an aesthetic of transparency and clarity, a monologic dream of cultural and ideological homogeneity, and a very specific figuration, the positive hero' (Robin 1992: 299).
15. Cited in Hewison 1981: 23. The publication of The Condemned Playground: Essays 1927-1944 in 1945 brought Connolly significant public attention. See Sheldon 1989: 'Given his ambition to influence the cultural policy of the new government, he could not have managed better the timing of the book's publication. The

argument of 'Writers and Society' received prominent attention in many of the reviews of the book' (p. 140).

16. See Leavis 1933: 63-67.

17. For Politics and Letters, as well as the Soviet Literary Controversy essay in Vol 1 No 1, Williams wrote 'Lower Fourth at St Harry's' - challenging Connolly to write about the American Congress Committee on UnAmerican Activities as he had done about Zhdanovism in Russia; 'Radio Drama' - a discussion of Macneice's The Dark Tower in relation to Williams's developing theory of naturalism; 'Dali, Corruption and his Critics', a review of Dali's autobiography in which Williams argues that 'biography and psycho-analysis have nothing to do with literary criticism' - all in Vol 1 Nos 2 & 3. In the final Summer 1948 issue, a section from Drama from Ibsen to Eliot, 'The Exiles of James Joyce'; '...And Traitors Sneer', a review of Coward and West; and possibly, under the name Michael Pope, another review, 'The American Radio'. For The Critic, Williams wrote three reviews ('Saints, Revolutionaries and Carpetbaggers, Etc'; 'Ibsenites and Ibsenite-Antis'; and 'The Delicacy of P.H. Newby'); and one major article, 'A Dialogue on Drama'.

18. For an interesting account of the development of 'cold war culture' in Britain, see Sinfield 1989, and especially Chapter 6 'Freedom and the Cold War' (1989: 86-115), though the Zoschenko Affair is not discussed.

19. Zhdanov echoes and elaborates the criticisms first made by the Central Committee of the Party and published in Pravda 21

- August 1946. See Zhdanov 1947. See also Lewis 1946-47a, 1946-47b. For a useful account of the whole affair, see Vickery 1963.
20. Connolly quoted extensively from Culture and Life (28 June 1946) and Pravda (21 August 1946) in his article 'The Fifth Form at St. Joe's', (first published in Horizon September-October 1946). See Connolly 1953, especially p. 135: 'The artist who cares truly for individual freedom, aesthetic merit or intellectual truth must be prepared to go once more into the breach against the Soviet view with all the patience, fervour and lucidity with which, ten years ago, he went into action against the nascent totalitarianism of the Nazis.'
21. The Modern Quarterly 2:1, pp. 3, 4.
22. In fact the debates go back to the 1940s. See, for example, 'Writers and Society, 1940-43' in Connolly 1945: 260-87. These essays best represent the decadent aestheticism Williams so detested. An interesting comparative response from George Orwell can be found in his review of Connolly's The Unquiet Grave (1945), which he describes as 'a cry of despair from the rentier who feels that he has no right to exist, but also feels that he is a finer animal than the proletarian' (Orwell [1945]: 365). For an excellent general discussion of the issues involved, see Sinfield 1989: 43-47.
23. For a fascinating study of Communist Party culture in the 1940s and 1950s, see Samuel 1986a and 1986b, and especially 1986b: 63-68. According to Inglis, Williams certainly had a very strong personal motive for leaving the Party. He quotes Annette Lees - a friend of Williams and his wife-to-be, Joy Dalling, on the Party's

check on their political suitability: 'They said we were "politically unconscious" - well, we were, to their way of thinking. Raymond was very angry at once, and that's why he left the Party. He said, "They're not telling me who I can marry"' (Inglis 1995: 84). See also Williams 1979: 52-3.

24. As Mulhern noted, Politics and Letters was one of the journals which signalled a clear shift away from the Scrutiny paradigm. See Mulhern 1979: 226-7; 230-233.

24. Williams does use the term 'environment' to describe the contemporary cultural context and refers directly to Leavis and Thompson's book in footnote seven of page 20.

Notes to Chapter Two

1. See Williams 1991 for a fine bibliography compiled by Graham Holderness. See the 'Foreword' to the American edition of Culture, retitled The Sociology of Culture for Bruce Robbins's description of Chapter 6.

2. Anthony Barnett was the first to challenge Eagleton's view of the relevance of drama to Williams's work (Barnett 1976: 54). Pinkney picks up Barnett's point, and argues against the tendency to trivialise Williams's interest in drama as some kind of 'quaint, engaging, marginal hobby' with no real bearing on his 'general social concerns' (Pinkney 1989b: 19-20); but, as I shall discuss below, his essay misrepresents the nature of Williams's early interests. See also Graham Holderness's introduction to

Williams 1991. More generally, see Sharratt 1989, Kruger 1993, and Eldridge and Eldridge 1994, especially Chapter 6, pp 115-116.

3. O'Connor 1989 is symptomatic in this regard. No detailed examination of the early work is given. It is dismissed in the single sentence 'The existentialist themes of his early work on Ibsen are revised and replaced by the idea of "complex seeing" from Brecht' (O'Connor 1989: 80). See also Note 2 above.

4. In the Politics and Letters interviews, the NLR team do ask about Williams's 'high appreciation of Eliot's drama'; but his response avoids any direct mention of Eliot, or discussion of the question of his formative influence. The four pages of his response do not address the question of Eliot's influence directly: 'Let me say it was impossible for me to write adequately about dramatic forms until I fully understood the nature of the historical movement of naturalism and realism, which I did not at the time' (Williams 1979: 202). Gorak (1988: 21) is partially correct in stating 'Williams remained locked within Eliot's guiding assumptions and values', as I shall discuss below.

5. Fred Inglis, for example, refers to Drama from Ibsen to Eliot simply as a 'critical guide to modern drama' (Inglis: 126).

6. See also his review of Look Back in Anger as 'the best young play of the decade' (Tynan 1964: 41-2).

7. Williams's impatience with the existing dramatic criticism can also be seen in his review of studies by Muriel Bradbrook and Brian Downs in The Critic where he argues 'there is no acceptable literary criticism of Ibsen's plays available in English' (1947e: 65). Inglis records that the publishers of Drama from Ibsen to

Eliot sent on a letter from Kay Burton of Newnham College, objecting that Williams drew too much from Muriel Bradbrook's lectures of 1945-46 in his own study. Inglis quotes selectively from Williams's reply to the publishers, and notes that Ms. Burton was satisfied by Williams's account, but maintains his own scepticism (see Inglis 1995: 138-139). In point of fact, Bradbrook's study, Ibsen the Norwegian is fully acknowledged in Williams's text, and is explicitly discussed at several points ([1952]: 42, 44, 56, 61, 65, 73). Even a casual comparison of the two suggests little in common save that they are writing about the same play. For Bradbrook, Peer Gynt 'is a far better play than Brand, which was written out of despair, but lacks the true clarity of tragedy. The story of Peer is the story of his struggle to get away from the trolls - in Christian phrase, the search for salvation...he is also a comic character, a gaily caricatured typical Norwegian' (Bradbrook 1946: 54). Williams interprets the play around ideas of vocation and relationship foreign to Bradbrook's reading, and his reading owes more to Eliot than to any other single influence. See, for instance, his concluding remarks: 'Peer Gynt's success, and its difference from Brand, is that they mythological and legendary material which Ibsen uses provides a more completely objective formula for the central experience than any he found before or after...In Peer Gynt words, once again, are the sovereign element of the drama' (Williams [1952]: 60). Inglis misreads the book title as Ibsen the Dramatist, perhaps in a Verlesen which seeks to annul Bradbrook's central theme - to show how Ibsen's plays reveal

typical aspects of the Norwegian character - and to seek to connect it more closely with Williams's interest in Ibsen's work as showing the possibilities of verbal drama.

8. See Williams 1947a, 1947e, and 1947f.

9. See, for instance, Eliot's "'Rhetoric" and Poetic Drama', 'A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry', and 'Four Elizabethan Dramatists' in his Selected Essays (London: Faber, 1951).

10. See Eliot 1924; Knights 1937; Wilson Knight 1930.

11. For a succinct overview of Eliot's career as a dramatist, see Innes 1992, especially p. 387: 'In the era immediately following the Second World War, too, when serious new drama was restricted to J.B.Priestley's restatements of his 1930s themes or Terence Rattigan's naturalistic problem plays, the religious vision of Eliot's poetic drama set the standard...But their Establishment traditionalism relegated Eliot's plays to period pieces the moment the first post-war generation of playwrights stormed the theatre.'

12. Eliot's views on the social importance of such common systems of belief are most strongly expressed in 'The Idea of a Christian Society' [1939]: and in Notes Towards the Definition of Culture [1948]. Williams confronts Eliot's social philosophy head-on in Williams 1958a: 227-243.

13. These come through most strongly in Eliot 1934, [1939], and [1948]. For excellent recent assessments, see Asher 1995, Cooper 1995, and Julius 1995.

14. See Eliot 1966: 145.

15. Inglis has described this well, suggesting that 'Williams made the mistake so many people make, that we know what we feel by

introspection' (1995: 220), and therefore believed that writing worked by 'producing in others a facsimile of his feelings' rather than through persuasion (221).

16. See Williams [1953c]: 186. This essay was written prior to Preface to Film.

17. For more detail, see Williams 1979: 230-33.

18. The revised and extended version of Drama in Performance published in 1968 includes a new chapter on Bergman's film Wild Strawberries repeats many of the same emphases. See, for example, Williams 1991, p. 150: 'What has happened in Bergman's case, though by no means in all films, is that the dramatic author has become his own director: the unity of text and performance is achieved, not conventionally, but in the phases of the work of one mind.'

19. See Pinkney 1989a and 1989b. I further discuss Pinkney's inflation of the evidence for Williams's interest in German Expressionism - necessary to make his 'anti-Lukacsian' case - in Chapter 6.

20. Thus he writes of Williams's 'overvaluing of [Eliot's] "break" with Naturalism in Drama from Ibsen to Eliot in 1952' (Pinkney 1989a: 9), but doesn't register just how central Eliot's ideas were to Williams in this early period.

21. Eagleton (1976b) focuses his discussion of the term on the book which came from the lectures he heard as an undergraduate student (Williams 1970) (1976b: 33-34). Simpson, in his acute essay 'Raymond Williams: Feeling for Structures, Voicing "History"', begins his discussion of the term with Culture and

Society, and only examines the term as it appears in the later versions of the books on drama (1995: 29-50). Only Peter Middleton's essay, 'Why Structure Feeling?', examines its first use in Preface to Film. Middleton asks the right question - 'To understand Williams's attachment to the concept we need to explore the nature of the problem he was trying to resolve by its introduction' (1989: 52); but his account is marred by its failure to recognise that Williams is less interested in attacking the 'post-Comtean philosophical tradition', and more concerned with criticising the Marxist tradition, or at least the scientist variant of it associated for us primarily with Althusser, and by Williams with the English Marxism of the 1930s and 1940s.

22. See Simpson 1995b, especially pp. 36-37, 42. Simpson shares many of Eagleton's doubts about the theoretical value of the term.

23. See especially Chapters 4 - 6, 'English Poets: (I) Primitive Accumulation', 'English Poets: (II) The Industrial Revolution', and 'English Poets: (III) Decline of Capitalism'. Here Caudwell argues, for instance, that in the 'period of primitive accumulation the conditions for the growth of the bourgeois class are created lawlessly....The absolute-individual will overriding all other wills is therefore the principle of life for the Elizabethan age' (Caudwell [1937]: 73-4).

24. See J.R. Williams [1953], and the reply and counter-reply by Raymond Williams and J.R. Williams in McIlroy and Westwood 1993: 196-198.

25. Thus it is no surprise that in Culture, William's sketch of the form cultural materialism might take as a new discipline - the

sociology of culture - the history of drama is the privileged example chosen to exemplify the central assertion that 'certain forms of social relationship are deeply embodied in certain forms of art' (Williams 1981a: 148).

Notes to Chapter 3

1. See Williams 1979: 7; Parrinder 1987a: 58; Anderson 1965: 15; Dworkin 1993: 41; Simpson 1995: 36; Inglis 1995: 146; Gorak 1988: 40. John Beaver's review from The Twentieth Century is quoted on the back cover of The Universities and Left Review Vol 1: 5 Autumn 1958: 'Among the young, not to know about - I won't say have read - The Uses of Literacy and Culture and Society is to brand oneself the literary equivalent of a square.'
2. See Eagleton 1976b: 25, and New Formations 5 Summer 1988 p. 4. The New Formations Editorial is further discussed in the Conclusion, and the issues it raises are discussed at length in Higgins 1995.
3. See John Mander's comment, in his 1960 review of Julian Symons The Thirties, A Dream Revolved: 'In the thirties the working-class intellectual was a bit of a joke...It is difficult nowadays to think of younger left-wing intellectuals who do not come from working-class or lower middle-class homes' (cited in Hewison 1981: 199).
4. See Morrison for an interesting portrait of the social, political and aesthetic tensions at work in the 1950s: 'Consciously identifying with socialist agents of change, Amis and

other members of the Movement are nevertheless attracted to the "old" pre-1945 order....To be politically astute in the 1950s, the Movement implied, was to be politically inactive' (1980: 77, 95). Unfortunately there is no space here for a thorough consideration of Williams's relations to contemporaries like Kingsley Amis and Donald Davie, although some of the strength of the antipathy is felt in Williams's only published poem 'On First Looking into New Lines' (Williams 1984: 257-8). For Amis on Williams, see Amis 1962. See also Hewison: 'Amis and Wain prepared the stage for the Angry Young Man, Colin Wilson gave him an identity as the Outsider, John Osborne gave him a voice. John Braine proceeded to demonstrate that he had absorbed the materialistic morality of his times' (1981: 135), and Chapters 5 and 6 in general. Sinfield offers a useful distinction between 'middle-class dissidence' and a 'left-liberal class fraction' in his insightful study of the period (1989: 238).

5. See Inglis 1995: 109: 'His answers to the special paper on George Eliot...were clear in the memory of Muriel Bradbrook twenty years after she had marked them.'

6. As Williams later wrote. 'it should be stressed that it was a choice: it was distinctly as a vocation rather than a profession that people went into adult education - Edward Thompson, Hoggart, myself and many others whose names are not known' (Williams 1986b: 154). He also records that the extra money was welcome: 'Trinity offered me a senior scholarship at 200 a year for three years, but the adult education job I saw advertised at Oxford paid 300 a year. So a financial factor came into it' (Williams 1979: 64).

7. Richard Hoggart worked in the Department of Adult Education at Hull University from 1946 to 1959. The Uses of Literacy, usually associated with Williams's Culture and Society, appeared in 1957. Edward P. Thompson was Extra-Mural lecturer at Leeds University from 1948 to 1965.

8. See McIlroy 1993a; he sums up: 'We can, therefore, whilst granting the importance of his lonely professional regime, make too much of his intellectual isolation.... he was in contact with and in dialogue with leading scholars, and in the first dozen post-war years was editor of three important journals' (1993a: 12). See also Inglis 1995 Chapter 6 'Worker's Education in the Garden of England'.

9. Kermode 1959. Here, as in his later review of Modern Tragedy, Kermode prefers to turn a blind eye to the fundamentally political address of Williams's work, and to focus only on its literary critical aspect.

10. But see also reviews of Culture and Society by Dwight Macdonald: 'I don't think Mr Williams's ideas are effective. In fact I don't think they are ideas at all. They are, rather, prejudices - prejudices on the right side, generous and sincere and democratic prejudices, but still idees-recues, unexamined assumptions' (MacDonald 1961: 79); Briggs 1961; and especially Anthony Hartley's three essays, which for Williams, summed up 'that sector of right-wing liberal opinion...which saw it as a new attempt at a reassociation of culture [sic] and social thinking which it thought had been seen off after the thirties' (Williams 1979: 132): Hartley 1958, Hartley 1959, and Hartley 1961,

especially p. 581: 'His [Williams's] own view of culture - which can roughly be called populist - seems to be based on a series of confusions as to the meanings covered by the word and to neglect the necessarily individual and aristocratic function of the creative artist.'

11. Hoggart 1959; Gregor et al. 1959.

12. See Pittock 1962.

13. Cowling was later one of the founder members of the Salisbury Group, a gathering of Conservative academics, commentators, and politicians, most of whom had present or past connections with Peterhouse College. This was established in 1977 to promote 'traditional conservatism'. Cowling expressed just what that meant in his keynote statement of the group's first publication, Conservative Essays: 'It is not freedom that Conservatives want: what they want is the sort of freedom that will maintain existing inequalities or restore lost ones' (cited in Edgar 1984: 44). The group also included Roger Scruton, author of an essay on Williams in his Thinkers of the New Left (1985). In the essay, Scruton characterises Williams's interests in democracy and social justice as sentimental. See also Scruton 1984.

14. Williams took a characteristically longer view, and had drifted out of the Communist Party by 1941. In Politics and Letters, he describes the key event for him as the East German Rising and its suppression in 1953 (Williams 1979: 88-89).

15. See also Hall 1989b. This essay remains one of the finest single essays on Williams's work as a whole. For useful discussion of some of the tensions around cultural studies between

- Hall and Williams, see Dworkin 1993; and Milner 1993: 76-84, 87-90.
16. Crossman is cited in Dwight Macdonald p. 83 from The Guardian 9 March 1961; also cited Inglis 1995: 170. Gorak's judgement betrays the over-emphasis and tendentiousness which mars his study 'In fact, without Culture and Society the work of the British "new left" with its sustained critique of British social and political institutions, might never have occurred' (1988: 52).
17. Biographers Peter Ackroyd and Lyndall Gordon pass over Eliot's specific targets and prefer to see Notes towards the Redefinition of Culture merely as evidence for Eliot's increasingly pessimistic mood. See Ackroyd 1984: 291-2 and Gordon 1988: 221-3. Against this psychologisation and privatisation of public and political arguments, see Cooper 1995.
18. See Shaw 1959 for a survey of the 'Great Debate' concerning the attainment of 'university standards' in Adult Education, as well as a discussion of the related questions of 'voluntaryism' versus 'professionalism'. See also McIlroy and Westwood 1993.
19. The argument in adult education reflected broader ideological and political discussions: see, classically, Bell 1960. Lasch 1973 gives a useful account of the 'end of ideology' movement in the US context. For a useful survey of the British arguments, see Stedman Jones 1984b.
20. See Raybould 1947, 1948, 1949, and 1951.
21. For Williams's own account, see Williams 1979: 78-83. See also McIlroy and Westwood 1993: 203-06.

22. Bell's identification of civilization with the values of a well-educated elite who would, if necessary, be supported by an ignorant working-class gives an excellent idea of the kind of arguments Williams was opposing. A particularly revealing passage reads: 'The rich men and women of the eighteenth century cultivated their taste. The poor, as I hope presently to show, so long as to be poor means to be unfree and uneducated, are concerned actively with civilization only in so far as by their labours they make it possible, and, passively, in so far as their manners, habits, opinions and sentiments are coloured by it....I have not yet noticed that the soon-to-be sovran [sic] proletariat, the working men of old England, manifest any burning desire to avail themselves of such means of civilization as they already dispose of. Rather it appears to me their ambitions tend elsewhere. Far from discovering amongst them any will to civilization I am led to suspect that the British working man likes his barbarism well enough' (Bell [1928]: 49-50, 156).

Perhaps Williams's definitive reply is to be found in the essay 'The Bloomsbury Fraction', where he sums up their general position as one in which the function of the 'social conscience, in the end, is to protect the private conscience' (Williams 1980: 167).

23. Some recognition of this is to be found in Lloyd and Thomas's description of Culture and Society as 'a counterhegemonic work of enormous significance' (Lloyd and Thomas 1995: 271). See also Robbins's interesting discussion, and especially his comments 'Culture and Society is so powerful and moving a case for professional legitimation not despite but because of its

fundamental commitment to political opposition' (Robbins 1993: 79). And see the whole discussion in Williams 1979: 97-107.

24. Cobbett began like Burke as an opponent of the French Revolution. See Williams's monograph Cobbett (1983b) for a fine analysis of the continuity across Cobbett's differing political allegiances.

25. See, for instance, Viswanathan who argues, that Williams 'consistently and exclusively studies the formation of metropolitan culture from within its own boundaries....Despite [his] life-long commitment to contesting purely abstract categories of analysis that draw on system rather than history, his critical practice paradoxically reproduces them in the context of imperialism' (1993: 218, 224). A propos The Country and the City, see also Said 1993: 98-100. For a spirited defence of Williams in this context of argument, see Prendergast 1995b.

26. 'See, for instance, Eliot's description of the 'Community of Christians' 'It will be their identity of belief and aspiration, their background of a common system of education and a common culture which will enable them to influence and be influenced by each other, and collectively to form the conscious mind and the conscience of the nation' (1982: 68).

27. As Mulhern remarks, in Fiction and the Reading Public, the 'notion of an original unity of 'culture' and 'civilization', which in F.R. Leavis's argument had been an unobtrusive assumption, was now expounded as the first principle of a theory of cultural history' (Mulhern 1979: 38). It was Williams's

implicit criticisms of the Leavis's that drew the ire of critics such as Green (1968: 108-09); and Watson 1977a, and 1977b.

28. Eliot may well have played a central role in this. See, for instance, his statement, in The Idea of a Christian Society that 'the tendency of unlimited industrialism is to create bodies of men and women - of all classes - detached from tradition, alienated from religion and susceptible to mass suggestion: in other words, a mob. And a mob will be no less a mob if it is well clothed, well housed and well disciplined' (Eliot 1982: 53).

29. See Cunningham 1988, especially Chapters 9 and 10, 'Movements of Masses' and 'Mass Observations'. See also Carey 1992. Carey appears ignorant of Williams's arguments in Culture and Society while presenting a mirror-image to them, and writing in terms very close to Williams's central point regarding the use of the term masses: 'I would suggest, then, that the principle around which modernist literature and culture fashioned themselves was the exclusion of the masses. The defeat of their power, the removal of their literacy, the denial of their humanity. What this intellectual effort failed to acknowledge was the masses do not exist. The mass, that is to say, is a metaphor for the unknowable and invisible. We cannot see the mass. Crowds can be seen; but the mass is the crowd in its metaphysical aspect - the sum of all possible crowds - and that can take on conceptual form only as metaphor. The metaphor of the mass serves the purposes of individual self-assertion because it turns other people into a conglomerate. It denies them the individuality which we ascribe to ourselves and to people we know' (1992: 21; my emphases).

Carey appears to be guilty either of plagiarism or an extraordinary oversight in his scholarly preparation for the study. See also Eldridge and Eldridge 1994: 'The challenge to the use of 'mass' as a concept is, therefore [sic], not some quirky pedantry, but a way of drawing attention to its ideological and control implications' (64). For a contrary and critical view, see Parrinder 1987a. What is at stake in Williams's discussion is the site of observation, one which is always implicated in society, and never free from interest and implication.

30. I discuss The Long Revolution a little more fully in Chapter 5 below. For some interesting and substantial discussion, see Williams 1979: 133-174, and Eldridge and Eldridge 1994: 76-97.

31. For an interesting critical extension of Williams's arguments in this regard, conducted with particular reference to feminism, see Kappeler 1986, especially pp. 167-95.

32. Baldick 1983 remains an indispensable guide to this topic.

33. Though Thompson also had some major critical points to make, as we shall see in Chapter 5.

Notes to Chapter Four

1. See Inglis 1995, especially chapters 8 and 9, for a general sketch of the period. The May Day Manifesto was largely drafted by Williams after lengthy discussions with other members of the group, including Stuart Hall and Edward Thompson. See Hall *et al.* 1968; and for an account of this, and related matters, see Williams 1979: 369-376. See Williams 1971a and 1971b for an

extract from Williams's speech a propos of the Dutschke affair. For an account of Williams's role and activities in the Arts Council, see the essays 'Politics and Policies: The Case of the Arts Council' in Williams 1989a: 141-50, 'The Arts Council' in Williams 1989b: 41-55 and 'Middlemen' in Williams 1989c: 98-107. See Stand 12 (1971) pp. 17-34 for A Letter from the Country, broadcast in April 1966; and Stand 9 (1967) pp. 15-53 for Public Inquiry, broadcast 15 March 1967. The best discussion of them is to be found in Sharrat 1989. Williams's columns for The Listener have been collected (Williams 1989d). See also Williams 1974a, and D. Lusted (ed.) 1989.

2. Drama in Performance includes extra chapters 'Plays in Transition', 'Modern Experimental Drama', and 'Wild Strawberries. by Ingmar Bergman', as well as silent elisions of passages in praise of Eliot; Drama from Ibsen to Brecht is restructured, and has additional chapters: 'The Exiles of James Joyce', 'Federico Garcia Lorca', 'Dylan Thomas's Play for Voices', 'O'Neill: Mourning becomes Electra', 'Giraudoux: Electre', Sartre, The Flies', 'Georg Buchner: A Retrospect', 'D.H. Lawrence: The Widowing of Mrs Holroyd', 'Arthur Miller', 'Bertolt Brecht' and a whole section, Recent Drama, as well as a completely new Conclusion. Once again, a central revision lies in the downplaying of Eliot's example and achievement. In Orwell (London: Collins, 1971) Williams is much harsher in his assessment than in his discussion in Culture and Society. In his 'Introduction' to The Pelican Book of English Prose, Williams formulates some of the themes of writing and observation crucial

both to the study Orwell, and to The Country and the City. The Introduction is reprinted, with minor changes, as 'Notes on English Prose 1780-1950' in Williams 1984: 67-118.

3. As mentioned in the Introduction, Inglis (1995:176) disputes this, suggesting that Williams had been contacted by a Faculty legate before the letter arrived, and had already agreed to accept a lectureship if one were offered; but he gives no source or evidence for this view. For Williams's own account, see [1977d]:

4.

4. This chapter - and indeed this study as a whole - assumes the centrality which Williams lent to Cambridge English. It comes through most evidently in his 1974 remark: 'If I take my example from Cambridge English, it is not only because of local experience and concern, but mainly because, by common consent, the changes embodied in Cambridge English, especially between the mid-1920s and the 1940s, have been so widely influential in many parts of the English-speaking world. If an old definition of the subject was anywhere broken up, and a new curriculum and new definitions decisively propagated, it was, at least in the early stages, in Cambridge' (1974b: 1293).

5. Williams's two talks for the BBC Third Programme, 'Literature and Rural Society' and 'Literature and the City' establish a starting-point of the project as a whole (1967a, 1967b).

6. See in particular Williams 1971, especially Chapter 4 'Experience and Observation', and Williams 1989e.

7. For a later continuation of the argument, see Williams's review of Steiner's Antigones (1984b).
8. See Deutscher (1949). Williams notes he began working on Koba in 1957 (Williams 1966: 9). The play is omitted from the 1979 reissue by Verso books on the grounds that it 'now seems to me to belong to another area of my work' (Williams 1979: 9). It has been little discussed: Sharrat observes 'I don't quite know what kind of relation Williams saw between the written text of Koba and any possible production of it' (1989: 132). This was perhaps to put politely what some put more frankly: Kermode observed that Koba was 'disastrously bad' (1966: 85).
9. For a succinct expression of Anatoly Lunacharsky's views, see his essay 'On Socialist Realism' (Lunacharsky [1933]).
10. In a curious way, Steiner shows his own awareness of the ahistorical features of his own interpretation, but manages at the same time to make a virtue of them. See especially p. 192: 'In the imagination of the nineteenth century the Greek tragedians and Shakespeare stand side by side, their affinity transcending all the immense contrarities of historical circumstance, religious belief, and poetic form. We no longer use the particular terms of Lessing and Victor Hugo. But we abide by their insight. The word 'tragedy' encloses for us in a single span both the Greek and the Elizabethan example. The sense of relationship overreaches the historical truth that Shakespeare may have known actually next to nothing of the actual works of Aeschylus, Sophocles and Euripides. It transcends the glaring fact that the Elizabethans mixed tragedy and comedy whereas the Greeks kept the two modes severely

distinct. It overcomes our emphatic awareness of the vast difference in the shape and fabric of the two languages and styles of dramatic presentation. The intimations of a related spirit and ordering of human values are stronger than any sense of disparity.'

11. Williams may be recalling some of the detail of Ralph Fox's argument in The Novel and the People. Compare Fox [1937]: 99.

12. The final chapter on Brecht - 'A Rejection of Tragedy' - is in many ways the weakest and most schematic. As the anonymous reviewer in the Times Literary Supplement (possibly George Steiner) noted, it was irritatingly brief and paid little attention to existing scholarly work. See Times Literary Supplement 1966: 717-18.

13. Though for Walter Stein, Modern Tragedy was unusually successful in bringing together political sensibility and literary analysis. 'Unlike so many who have sought to bring modern literary and political concerns into active relation, he [Williams] really has the interests and equipment of a serious literary critic. Modern Tragedy bears the fruits of this conjunction; though its special significance, both literary and political, seems to have been almost entirely missed on its appearance' (Stein 1969: 22). Nonetheless, Stein criticises Williams for its tendency to 'overstatement' (211) and its over-identification of the everyday tragedies of modern experience with 'remediable social disorders' (210). As John O. Thomson (1980) also noted: 'Fabianism and Stalinism are the twin positions on the left which Williams is writing against' (1980: 49).

14. This was Anthony Barnett's personal response, recorded in Inglis (1995: 250). See also Barnett 1976. For a recent overview of the book, which focuses on the German Romantic tradition of tragic thinking marginalised in Williams's study, see Surin 1995.
15. See George Steiner Real Presences (London: Faber, 1989) for a very different critical assessment of modernity.
16. Compare Eliot's essay, 'Tradition and the Individual Talent', and its key assertion that 'the historical sense involves a perception, not only of the pastness of the past, but of its presence; the historical sense compels a man to write not merely with his own generation in his bones, but with a feeling that the whole of the literature of Europe from Homer and within it the whole of the literature of his own country has a simultaneous existence and composes a simultaneous order' (Eliot [1919]: 14).
17. Ward notes how the book is 'in effect an answer to Leavis's influential book' (1981: 53). Jon Thompson, for example, sniffs at Williams's 'propensity, as in The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence (1971) (sic) [actually 1970] to merely offer an alternate version of Leavis's Great Tradition' (1993: 73). Inglis describes the book as the 'unacknowledged correction by Williams the class-warrior to Leavis's The Great Tradition' (1995: 213), while O'Connor mentions The English Novel as 'a record of his lectures on the English novel', but curiously makes no mention of its direct opposition to Leavis (1989: 25), though he does lay stress on the importance of its concept of 'knowable community' in Williams in Chapter 5. Only Eagleton (1976: 34) and Hall (in Eagleton 1989: 63) appear to appreciate the theoretical substance

of the book as a whole, though Eldridge and Eldridge have a good assessment of Williams's arguments concerning the book's discussion of the 'knowable community' (Eldridge and Eldridge 1994: 132-33).

18. Mulhern has described the self-enclosure of Leavis's thinking well: 'Premised upon a refusal of "abstraction", Leavis's "system" could not consistently be defended - except in the name of a process offered as the alternative to "abstraction" and "system" as such. For the system as a whole, reticence was the price of cohesion' (Mulhern 1979: 170- 71). See also Baldick 1983, Bell 1988 and Belsey 1982 for interesting accounts.

19. See Peter Widdowson's excellent account of the reception of Hardy's novels in his indispensable Hardy in History: A Study in Literary Sociology (1989), especially Chapter 1 'The Critical Constitution of "Thomas Hardy"' (Widdowson 1989: 11-76).

20. See 'Modern Fiction' in Woolf 1968, especially pp. 189-92. And compare Williams's further remarks, in 'The Bloomsbury Fraction': 'In the very power of their demonstration of a private sensibility that must be protected and extended by forms of public concern, they fashioned the effective forms of the contemporary ideological dissociation between 'public' and 'private' life. Awareness of their own formation as individuals within society, of that specific social formation which made them explicitly a group and implicitly a fraction of a class, was not only beyond their reach: it was directly ruled out, since the free and civilized individual was already their founding datum....The final nature of Bloomsbury as a group is that it was indeed, and differentially, a

group of and for the notion of free individuals' (Williams 1980: 168-69).

21. See, for instance, Said 1983: 240; Jameson 1991: 6.

22. See, respectively, Thompson 1975: 34; Coombes 1973: 71; Watkins 1978: 141; Scruton 1985: 61; Lerner 1973 63; Berman 1973: 1; Said 1989: 152; Ferrara 1989: 102; Eagleton 1976: 39; Ward 1981: 46. See also Eldridge and Eldridge 1994: 175-97 for a useful general commentary on Williams's study.

23. See Simpson 1995a: 72-91 for a fascinating discussion and critique of more recent examples of this mode. In some senses, Simpson 1995b can be regarded as a continuation of the same discussion.

24. Perhaps Williams's most direct response, though still evasive in that it doesn't address Kiernan or Thompson's points directly, and in some ways trivialises them, is to be found in his remarks at the Slant Symposium in 1967. Here he tries to escape the problem by using a different phrase - a 'culture in common' rather than a common culture; but he insists that in 'speaking of a common culture...one was speaking critically of what could be summarised as a class society'; and he closes by asserting that 'the fantasy that some critics have had, that a common culture would be a uniform and conformist culture, or the fear that some friends have expressed, that a common culture would be notoriously difficult to attain because it is impossible to find any large number of people in general agreement, do not seem to hold' (Williams [1968b]: 34, 36, 38) See also 1968c. p. 297: 'I would therefore agree that in this [Thompson's] sense the problem of a

common culture is the problem of revolutionary politics: the problem of intervening constantly in society to extend and transform the institutions which enable people to get that kind of access.'

25. Though Williams does not discuss Hibbard's essay directly, it is included - though mis-referenced - in the bibliographical notes to The Country and the City.

26. See, for example, Barrell 1972; Barrell and Bull 1973; Barrell 1980; and Simpson 1987.

27. It may be that this partial identification with Crabbe blinds Williams to the need to place his work with far greater historical precision. More likely, it is a question of the large focus of the study as a whole which inevitably means it is often mistaken on particular points. Compare some of the critical comments in Barrell and Bull 1974: 380-81, and, again, in Barrell 1980, where he argues that 'the "real" history that Raymond Williams has praised Crabbe for introducing into the tradition of rural poetry, as opposed to the nostalgic mythology of Goldsmith, is revealed instead as an attempt to abolish the sense of history altogether' (87-88). See also Inglis 1995: 237-38.

28. For a more recent account, focusing particularly on Joyce, see Moretti 1995. There is much common ground between Moretti and Williams, though Moretti appears not to know Williams's work. Compare also the account of tragedy in Moretti 1983: 42-82.

29. Williams's attention to imperialism, and to some third-world writing, though cursory, was unusual at the time, and makes it important to be very careful with claims that Williams was

absolutely indifferent to what has become known as colonial discourse. While it is certainly true to say that it was not the focus of his attention, it was there in the margins at a time when most criticism was absolutely blind to it: this itself seems something of an achievement. See, for instance, the ways in which Said's observation that the 'few tantalizing pages in The Country and the City that touch on culture and imperialism are peripheral to the book's main idea' (Said 1993: 77), are transformed into critical attack in Viswanathan (1993), Pyle (1993), and Radhakrishnan (1993).

30. This argument was anticipated as early as 1961. See Williams 1961b. Though Williams was not to know it, the Chinese Revolution - which he mentions with respect alongside the Cuban revolution - in fact represented a similar catastrophe. For very contrasting accounts, see Hinton 1966, and the play David Hare made from it, Fanshen, 'an optimistic document' (Hare 1976: 9); and Becker (1996) for new research on the whole period.

31. Compare Williams 1958a, p. 274: 'It certainly seems relevant to ask English Marxists who have intersted themselves in the arts whether this is not Romanticism absorbing Marx, rather than Marx transforming Romanticism.'

32. For a survey and exemplary collection of such new work, see, for instance, Nussbaum and Brown who declare that the 'new' defined in their collection The New Eighteenth Century 'has its roots in recent renewed attention to interdisciplinary work and in particular the relationship of literature and history' (1987: 9).

33. See Simpson 1995a and 1995b.

34. Compare, for instance, Jonathan Arac's focus in Postmodernism and Politics, on 'one of the most vexed areas in contemporary theory, that of representation' (1986: xx), and his further discussion pp. xx-xxviii.

35. See Williams 1961a, Chapter 1 'The Creative Mind', and Chapter Five below for further discussion of this important essay.

Notes to Chapter Five

1. I distinguish in this chapter between Williams's relation to Marxism as a socialist, engaged in a wide variety of practical political activities, and the question of the relation of his academic work and writing to Marxism. This chapter deals with the latter, though there is considerable overlap between them. For accounts and assessments of the former, see Eagleton 1976b, Barnett 1976, Mulhern [1984], Hirschkop 1989, Brenkman 1995.

2. And therefore participating in the dilemma first mapped out by Perry Anderson in 1976, in which the dominating characteristic of Western Marxism was its shift in attention away from the practice of politics to the contemplation of culture as the prospect of European-wide revolutionary insurrection declined. As Anderson later summed up the case: 'the major exponents of Western Marxism also typically pioneered studies of cultural processes - in the higher ranges of the superstructures - as if in glittering compensation for their neglect of the structures and

infrastructures of politics and economics' (Anderson 1983: 17).

3. Jay refers to Gallagher 1980 as the main source for his take on Williams. See also the spirited exchange between Gallagher (1992), Aronowitz (1992) and Ross (1992) in Social_Text 30: 79-101. Gallagher's essay was reprinted unaltered in Prendergast 1995.

4. The first is cited as Anthony Sampson's description in Williams [1975]: 65; the second, the judgement of C.L.R. James: [1961]:

115. We have already examined, in Chapters One and Four, some of the arguments of Eagleton, Kiernan and Thompson. Arnold Kettle's reviews of Williams present a usefully consistent record of the orthodox Marxist criticisms of Williams. See his reviews of Culture and Society and The Long Revolution (1961), Marxism and Literature (1977), and Politics and Letters (1979), in which he writes 'all this is typical of bourgeois sociology...[Williams fails to] really get to grips with the nature of class division' (1961: 305), and, in summation, 'A Marxism in which "concepts" are given so central a place as Williams gives them and in which the particular concept of "reflection" is placed on a sort of Stalinist dunce's or whipping-stool, is almost bound to err on the side of theoreticism and academicism' (1977: 72). As McIlroy and Westwood put it, 'Raymond Williams remained an original and unconventional swimmer in the contradictory currents of Marxism' (1993: 267). For a more positive assessment, see Merrill 1978/79.

5. Leon Trotsky's Literature and Revolution [1923] was, of course, absent from the Communist Party's literary critical canon

in the 1930s - 'a crucial lack', Williams later ruefully acknowledged (1979: 49).

6. Indeed, so strong was the influence of Williams's judgements on Caudwell in Culture and Society that they have only recently begun to be challenged. Eagleton's comments reproduce Williams's own dismissive tone: 'Who is the major English Marxist critic? Christopher Caudwell, *helas...*there is little, except negatively, to be learnt from him' (1976b: 21). Mulhern launched the first defence of Caudwell in an essay for New Left Review (Mulhern 1974); but, strangely, though Mulhern mentions Culture and Society, he does not try and meet Williams's arguments on Caudwell head on. E.P. Thompson joined the debate with an essay published in The Socialist Register, seeking to rescue Caudwell as 'an anatomist of ideology' (Thompson 1977: 234). In the most recent study, following Thompson's line, but translating it into a somewhat Althusserian vocabulary which Thompson would have rejected, R.P. Sullivan sees Caudwell as primarily concerned with 'the problem of the subject, the role of language in the structuration of consciousness, and the nature of "reality" in relation to humanity's imaginary or illusory understanding of it' (1987: 161). The editors of Marxist Literary Theory: A Reader note that although 'it is one of the landmarks of British Marxist literary criticism, Caudwell's work has been dismissed more than admired. Raymond Williams, for example, commented that Caudwell was often not specific enough to be wrong' (Eagleton and Milne 1996: 91).

7. Mulhern is citing Leavis 'Under Which King Bezonian?' (Leavis 1933: 171) here. See also Leavis 1933, pp. 5-9: 'Marx as a Marxist, one ventures, was not really concerned about literature and art; his concern was for a simplification involving, as an essential condition, the assumption that literature and art would look after themselves...it is certain that for most Marxists the attraction of Marxism is simplicity: it absolves from the duty of wrestling with complexities; above all, the complexities introduced if one agrees that the cultural values - human ends - need more attention than they get in the doctrine, strategy and tactics of the Class War....There is, then, a point of view above classes; there can be intellectual, aesthetic and moral activity that is not merely an expression of class origin and economic circumstances; there is a 'human culture' to be aimed at that must be achieved by cultivating a certain autonomy of the human spirit.' And Leavis [1952]: 182-203.

8. Though Pechey, in a fascinating discussion of the Scrutiny image of Marxism also draws attention to the significant influence of Allick West, whose 'antithetical reading of Romantic discourse' is seen as the 'precondition of Culture and Society' (Pechey 1985: 71).

9. Milner 1993 gives an excellent concise account of Caudwell and others (pp. 23-32).

10. As Mulhern notes, the 'frequency with which the word "express" occurs in his text is due to no lexical frugality on his part: it denotes precisely the relationship between poetry and economy in his system' (1974: 50-51)

11. Williams wonders with evident frustration why Thompson didn't publish his views at the time of the original debate. See Williams 1979: 77.
12. For an interesting and informed discussion of the history of this 'fundamental tenet' in the context of debates within the Second International, see Colletti 1972, especially Chapter 2 'Bernstein and the Marxism of the Second International'. There is considerable common ground between Colletti and Williams on many points of theory, though, as Ferrara (1989) notes, little knowledge of Williams's work in Italy.
13. The literature on this is, of course, immense, and the debates continue. For a slightly hostile survey of the first century of competing definitions, see Kolakowski 1981.
14. Sullivan's study is perhaps marred by its too insistent attempt to see Caudwell's work as the precursor of post-structuralist doctrines, as in his assertion that Caudwell's 'emphasis on the role of the subject to effect change, to reshape reality through an "inner design"...opened up a debate within Marxism that still has contemporary relevance (1988: 109). As Amigoni rightly observes, 'what his study lacks is a sustained attempt to theorize the contestatory historical relationships between the various strands of critical discourse that Caudwell was negotiating and Sullivan is tracing' (1989 289-90).
15. Amigoni repeats Sullivan's error in his review, asserting - wrongly - that while Williams suggested that 'the interrogatory approach to "orthodox" Marxist positions...enabled him to reread Caudwell's aesthetics with new eyes...he never specified the

nature of the vision' (1989: 287). By 1977, he had already done so in The Long Revolution. Thus, for example, and as I have argued elsewhere (Higgins 1990, 1991), Williams takes his position on psychoanalysis almost word for word from Caudwell. Compare, for instance, Williams 1961: 93-7 with Caudwell [1949]: 160-62, 175, 177.

16. In the tradition so brilliantly discussed in Frank Kermode's seminal study The Romantic Image (Kermode 1971). See, for instance, his summary of Walter Pater's position: 'The artist or the "aesthete", so elevated above all others, "refines" the instruments of "intuition" till "his whole nature" becomes one complex medium of reception; what he receives is the vision - the "beatific vision"' (Kermode 1971: 33). See also Kappeler 1986: 178-83 for an interesting discussion of both Kermode and Williams around these issues.

17. See Taylor 1985, Chapter 9, 'Language and Human Nature' pp. 215-247. And, for a magisterial extension of the general argument across the whole range of Western philosophy, see Taylor 1989a. Taylor was, of course, one of the founding editors of the New Left Review, and participated in the Slant symposium alongside Williams in 1967. For a concise account of his later move away from Marxism and towards a socialist humanism - worth comparison with Williams's criticisms of the 'transition from Marx to Marxism' - see Taylor 1989b. A similar critique of these 'naturalist' assumptions is to be found in Giddens 1979a and, as one of the components of a powerful critique of orthodox Marxist assumptions, in Giddens 1981a.

18. See in particular Engels's Anti-Duhring and Georgy Plekhanov A Contribution to the Question of the Development of the Monist View of History (1894) and Art and Social Life (1953). Kolakowski (1978) gives a succinct summary of the main lines of Plekhanov's thought, concluding 'Marxist philosophy as expounded by Plekhanov was a repetition, without attempt at further analysis, of Engels's formulas, generally in an exaggerated version' (340). For an important analysis and differentiation of the thought of Marx and Engels in general, see G. Stedman Jones 1977.

19. As Williams himself was the first to admit: 'I was talking about the people and ideas I first focussed as Marxism when I was a student... It was a deficiency of my own generation that the amount of classical marxism it knew was relatively small' (1979: 316).

20. Williams's activity as a reviewer gives some indication of this. Before 1970, only four reviews deal with Marxist works: reviews of Lukacs's The Historical Novel in 1962, of Sartre's philosophy and of The Left Review, in 1968, and in 1969, a review of Marcuse. After 1970, some 11 reviews are published. These are from a total of over two hundred published in The Guardian alone. Nonetheless, we don't have to go quite so far as Aronowitz, who states that 'Williams first seriously engaged Marxist theory only in the 1970s' (1995: 321), and further suggests that Williams's rejection of the base and superstructure argument was present only in 'the last fifteen years of his life' (ibid.: 333).

21. For an interesting critique of both structuralism and orthodox Marxism which has much in common with Williams,

particularly with regard to questions of agency, see Giddens 1979a and 1981a.

22. There is no discussion of Goldmann's monumental work on Pascal and Racine, The Hidden God [1956], in Williams's Modern Tragedy, though the book was published in English translation in 1964. Explicit references to Goldmann's work all postdate his Cambridge visit.

23. The lecture rates as one of Williams's strongest single performances, and only the considerable overlap with the central ideas of 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory' inhibits me from dealing with it more fully here. In it, he makes his case for his own cultural materialist analysis against both Cambridge English and orthodox Marxism. 'Looking at our work' he writes of the Cambridge English school, 'it could be said that we lacked a centre, in any developed philosophy or sociology. Looking at his [Goldmann's] work...it could be said that he had a received centre, at the level of reasoning, before the full contact with substance began' (1971: 22). For succinct expressions of the views of Goldmann's which Williams discusses, see, for 'scientism', the lecture 'Dialectical Thought and Transindividual Subject' (Goldmann [1970]), especially pp. 90-92; for the concept of 'structure', the essay 'La Methode structuraliste genetique en histoire de la litterature' (Goldmann 1964b), especially pp. 338, 344-45; for something of the nature of the debt to Lukacs, 'Introduction aux problemes d'une sociologie du roman' (1963a: 21-57). His relatively static methodological principles are spelt out in Goldmann 1952: for their most fruitful

realisation, see Goldmann's masterpiece, The Hidden God [1956]. Jay (1994) has a useful survey of Goldmann's work as a whole. For a probing account of Williams's essay, see Said 1984, where he writes in favour of Williams as a 'reflective critic' (1984: 238), noting 'however far away in time and place Williams may be from the fiery rebelliousness of the early Lukacs, there is an extraordinary virtue to his distance, even the coldness of his critical reflections on Lukacs and Goldmann, to both of whom he is otherwise so intellectually cordial' (240).

24. For Goldmann, see previous footnote. Williams had reviewed Lukacs's The Meaning of Contemporary Realism favourably in 1963, noting it was 'far from the simple abuse of "decadence"....I have not seen a better correlation of the style and structure of the modern novel' (1963: 385). In 1971, he refers to History and Class Consciousness, and in 1977 to Studies in European Realism, The Theory of the Novel, and The Historical Novel (which he had also reviewed (1962c)).

25. See Said 1984: 240.

26. For an insightful commentary on this passage, see Prendergast 1995b. He reads it as the location of a significant knot in Williams's whole thinking about the primacy of culture, noting that 'there are two stories, complementary but not fully compatible' at work, and pointing out that 'if everything is there at the beginning, it would seem that some things are more at the beginning than others' (1995b: 12-13). Compare also Simpson 1995b; Eagleton 1976b, 1989b.

27. Inglis is characteristically rude, describing Marxism and Literature as Williams's 'unreadable book' (Inglis 1995: 249), and quite simply refuses to engage with any of its actual arguments.

28. Perhaps it is time for a study of the 'moment' of the New Left Review, on the lines of Mulhern's study of Scrutiny?

Certainly Williams's knowledge of a wider range of Marxist thinking would have been very different without the work of that journal and its wider publishing projects.

29. See, for instance, Heath 1981, MacCabe 1979, 1985. For an excellent account of what has become known, sometimes in reductive fashion, as 'Screen theory', see Lapsley and Westlake 1988. The line of Williams's dialogue can be traced through essays such as 'A Defence of Realism', first delivered at a Screen summer school in 1977 (Williams 1977e), 'The Reader in Hard Times' (in Williams 1984: 166-74), Williams [1983j], and [1985a]. See also Coward and Ellis 1977 for a full statement of the 'new critical structuralism' which Williams opposed.

30. See, for instance, the ways in which the doyen of Screen-theory, and Williams's colleague at Jesus College, Stephen Heath, picks out the emphasis on language in Marxism and Literature as the key point of contact with his own formulations in Heath 1984.

31. The example is David McLellan's, not Marx's. See McLellan's still informative The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx (London: Macmillan, 1969) p. 61.

32. Compare Lichtheim 1967 and Larrain 1979 (40-9, 64-6) for further discussions of this.

33. On this passage in particular, see especially the valuable discussions with the New Left Review team in Williams 1979: 350-55, and Eagleton's reprise of the whole argument in Eagleton 1989b.

34. Williams was certainly not alone in thinking this. As Perry Anderson observes, in the opening sentence of his nuanced and convincing account of Gramsci's work, 'Today, no Marxist thinker after the classical epoch is so universally respected in the West as Antonio Gramsci. Nor' he warns, 'is any term so freely or diversely evoked on the Left as that of hegemony, to which he gave currency' (1976-77: 5). Milner (1993) describes the publication of Gramsci's Selections from Prison Notebooks in 1971 as 'a major intellectual event' (54), while Dworkin notes the 'critical adoption' of Gramsci's work in the 1970s as a part of the 'theoretical project of negotiation between "structuralism" and "humanism"' which characterised the work of the Birmingham Centre for Cultural Studies (Dworkin 1993: 47). See also, in a different vein, Trevor Griffith's play, Occupations (Griffiths [1972] 1980); and the special issues of the journals Telos 31 (1977) and boundary_2 'The Legacy of Antonio Gramsci' (1986). Jay 1994 has a characteristically useful and incisive survey (1994: 150-173).

35. As I argued in Chapter Two, its first useage in Preface to Film is distinctly offered as an alternative to Marxist explanation though this is something glossed over and indeed occluded in Williams's account of the matter in Politics and Letters.

36. Simpson notes some of the key moments in the history of the terms use in Williams's work, and correctly observes how the 'literary-critical definition of the structure of feeling has the effect of distracting Williams from any detailed engagement with nonliterary historical data.... This allows Williams to float the structure of feeling as a prototheoretical concept that never quite takes on a sharp outline...' (1995b: 40).

37. In the 1965 lecture, 'Differance', Derrida wove together many of his main philosophical themes around the idea of 'differance', noting first how the simple graphic distinction between it (a neologism) and the actual word 'difference' can be seen but not heard, can be read but not articulated. For Derrida, this usefully illustrated that division between writing and speech, or system and subject, and this in turn helped to bring into unusual focus: the assumption of a founding or pre-given state of self-consciousness as the basis for philosophical reasoning. Alongside this assumption, and indeed helping to constitute it, was the similarly unquestioned assumption of the philosophical subject's apparently or potentially instrumental control of the medium of philosophical reflection, human language. Thus Derrida, in the course of the essay, imagines a voice questioning his own arguments, wistfully asking 'can one not conceive of a presence, and of a presence to itself of the subject before speech or signs, a presence to itself of the subject in a silent and intuitive consciousness?' (Derrida 1965: 16). His reply is firmly in the negative: 'Such a question...supposes that, prior to the sign and outside it, excluding any trace and any differance, something like

consciousness is possible. And that consciousness, before distributing its signs in space and in the world, can gather itself into its presence' (16). This supposition, or better, presupposition, is precisely the target of Derrida's arguments.

38. See, for example, Sharrat 1982. I discuss the main reviews of Marxism and Literature in Chapter 6.

39. Williams was kind enough to give me some tapes of the original lectures, and these confirm this view, so strangely reminiscent of John Locke's tardy inclusion of language in the great Essay Concerning Humane Understanding of 1689.

40. Lesley Johnson, for one, is sceptical regarding Williams's success in this, commenting 'Such a rejoinder [as that presented by Marxism and Literature] to a major school of thought whose impact on cultural studies in England in the 1970s has been considerable is more than disappointing. It indicates that Williams is unable to confront its fundamental principles from within the confines of his own thought' (1979: 165). My main point in the section which follows is that Williams does manage to make something of a break or at least a significant extension to his own thought through the new considerations of language.

41. Anthony Giddens and Pierre Bourdieu, from their respective places in the discipline of sociology, have similarly argued against some of the excesses of the structuralist and post-structuralist emphasis on the determination of the language system on human subjectivity. See, for instance, Giddens 1979a, especially pp. 9-48; and Bourdieu's summary of his own stance: 'I wanted to reintroduce agents that Levi-Strauss and the

structuralists, among others Althusser, tended to abolish, making them into the simple epiphenomena of structure. And I mean agents, not subjects. Action is not the mere carrying out of a rule, or obedience to a rule' (1990: 9). See Garnham and Williams 1980 for an interesting consideration of Bourdieu in relation to the claims of cultural materialism.

42. Like so many literary critical historians, Williams ignores the massive contribution of John Locke to these debates. For a welcome beginning to questioning the usual representations of Locke's work in literary criticism and literary theory, see Walker 1994 and Schalkwyk 1995.

43. See Vico 1948. And, for a commentary which anticipates Williams's own emphasis, see Said 1975, especially the Conclusion 'Vico in His Work and in This' (pp. 347-381). Said similarly deploys Vico's work against 'the general line of French New Criticism' which 'has been entirely to doubt and subsequently nullify the constitutive, authorizing powers of the human subject in the soc-called human sciences' (374). For Said like Williams 'The New Science never loses sight of its intention to describe man among men' (355).

44. Compare Volosinov [1929] (1986): 73-6. See also Clark and Holquist's valuable discussion of the whole question of Marxism and language in Chapter 10 of their study, Mikhail Bakhtin (1984: 212-237); and, more generally, Holquist 1990.

45. For a detailed challenge to this view, see Moriarty 1995, especially pp. 94-101.

46. See, for instance, Kiernan 1959 and Thompson 1961, and the discussion of these in Chapter Four. The interviews with the New Left Review team present a fascinating dialogue around all these questions. See especially Williams 1979: pp 164-72. For a more recent critique of Williams in this regard, see Robbins 1993: 144-45.

47. Though it must be said that Eagleton's own essay is not itself without some considerable ambivalence. In my reading, Eagleton agrees with virtually all of Williams's criticisms of the base and superstructure model, and can do no more than affirm that nonetheless these arguments need to be supplemented by some kind of improved version of the model, which Eagleton can only offer as a refiguring of it.

48. It is interesting to compare Williams's positions with those independantly argued in and through the different disciplinary discourse of sociology. Giddens, for instance, suggests that 'Only if historical materialism is regarded as embodying the more abstract elements of a theory of human Praxis, does it remain an indispensable contribution to social theory today' (1981a: 2), and his subsequent discussions suggest much common ground with Williams. Not surprisingly, the New Left Review response to Giddens shares many of the same features as their criticisms of Williams. See Wright 1983, especially p. 32: 'Particularly once the simple functionalist version of the base-superstructure model is abandoned, it is difficult to argue systematically for the structural unity of economic and political relations within the theory of social development and the concept of class.'

Notes to Chapter Six

1. For a usefully condensed account, not discussed in the previous chapter, see Williams 1978a. Anderson notes that the work of the Cambridge anthropologist Jack Goody shares something of this same emphasis with Williams (Anderson 1990a: 76-8). See especially Goody 1977 and 1986; and his essay 'Alphabets and Writing' in Williams 1981c.
2. See, for example, Williams's insistence, in Politics and Letters: 'When I wrote [The Long Revolution] I was mainly conscious of the immense length of the full social transformation, which has usually been underplayed, yet which should be intrinsic to all strategic socialist thinking. I have no doubt now that the short revolution, to use that phrase, has to occur. I wouldn't at all dissent from the traditional notions of the violent capture of state power, but I would put this revolution in a more specific way: it is accomplished when the central political organs of capitalist society lose their power of predominant social reproduction...the condition for the success of the long revolution in any real terms is decisively a short revolution, which I would define not so much in terms of duration as of the loss by the state of its capacity for predominant reproduction of the existing social relations (1979: 420-21). See also Williams [1975], esp. pp. 73, 76; and his review of the work of Rudolph Bahro (1980b).

3. See Said 1983.
4. See, respectively, Kettle 1977: 72; Woodcock 1978: 593; Sharrat 1982: 37; Barnett 1977 145; Scrivener 1979/80: 193. Gorak goes so far as to suggest that the 'work itself viewed independantly remains too drastically abbreviated to be comprehensible' (1988: 75)
5. The history of Leavis's relations to the Cambridge English Faculty was itself a fraught and combattive one. As Williams put it in a memorial essay, Leavis 'had worked a lifetime in a Faculty he opposed and despaired of' (1984c: 20)
6. For a sympathetic assessment, see Bell 1988. Bell's defence of Leavis can be summarised in his statement 'The critical impact of Leavis lies not in the complexity of his ideas about literature so much as in the quality of attention to it' (1988: 12). For a philosophically sophisticated defence, see Casey 1966. See also Inglis 1982. For more sceptical assessments, see Mulhern 1979 and Baldick 1983.
7. In Mulhern's words: 'The most notable feature of Leavis's humanism was its obdurate anti-scientism. The improper aggrandisement of the established sciences of nature and society, and misconceived attempts to transpose their models into the domain of culture, were in his view among the greatest threats posed by contemporary "civilization" to human integrity' (Mulhern 1979: 170).
8. For the rather self-congratulatory accounts of the 'Golden Age' of Cambridge English. see Willey 1964; Tillyard 1958; Bennet

1973, and Bradbrook 1973. For more sceptical approaches, see Mulhern 1979, Doyle 1982, and Baldick 1983.

9. As, classically, in Leavis 1943. I argued in Chapter 1 that Leavis's direct influence on Williams had been over-exaggerated, and the extent of Eliot's influence relatively unregistered; but there is no doubt that that Leavis's work formed a reference point for English studies per se. For more detail on Williams's actual and complex relations to Leavis and his work, see Williams 1959b, 1978c, and 1984c.

10. See especially, Leavis [1932]; [1936]; and [1948].

11. See Williams 1961a, especially Chapter 1 'The Creative Artist'.

12. For a rich formulation and exemplification of this topic, see Williams [1969b].

13. For more on this, see Williams 1989e, and Williams's crisp monograph Orwell (1971a).

14. See Gramsci 1971: 5-23, and especially p. 9: 'All men are intellectuals, one could therefore say: but not all men have in society the function of intellectuals.' And, for an interesting development of this, Said 1994, and Williams's brief discussion in 1981b: 214-16. Here as elsewhere, there are strong similarities between Williams and Said: see Higgins 1996a for some basic points of comparison.

15. See Fekete 1977 where he observes how the tradition of literary criticism 'becomes locked into an ideological subject/object dualism that separates experience and expression, instead of seeking significance precisely in their

relationship' (p. 21). The accompanying footnote, to be found on pages 224-25, traces the idea back to Lukacs's late work, The Specificity of the Aesthetic. See Lichtheim 1970: 116-29 for a brief but useful commentary.

16. For a succinct account of the Russian Formalist movement, see Bennet 1979, and, for a more sophisticated survey, see Jameson 1972. The standard scholarly account remains Ehrlich 1955. See also Trotsky ([1923] 1960). Williams was particularly influenced by Bakhtin and Medvedev [1928].

17. This, of course, was the starting-point for Ludwig Wittgenstein's revolutionary arguments concerning the role and status of language in thought and philosophy. Despite Wittgenstein's centrality to Cambridge philosophy, and to Cambridge thinking more generally, his work seemed to have no impact on Williams. See Eagleton 1982 for a provocative account. Similarly, many of Williams's arguments are put with great force in the particular context of structural linguistics by Emile Benveniste (1966), especially Chapters 18-21.

18. See, for instance, Volosinov [1929], and especially its supercession of the 'two basic trends' in the understanding of language - 'individualistic subjectivism' and 'abstract objectivism' - in favour of a theory of language as 'verbal interaction' or 'utterance' in Part II Chs 1-3 pp. 65-98.

19. Williams owed a large debt to Volosinov, many of whose works are now thought to be principally inspired or even written by Mikhail Bakhtin. In this regard, Clark and Holquist conclude 'a conclusive answer to the question of Bakhtin's authorship cannot

be found' (1984: 148). I simply follow Williams's references here and make no attempt to adjudicate the issue. His accidental discovery of their work, in the early 1970s, was due to the open-stack system prevailing at the Cambridge University Library (see Williams 1979:)

20. He argues the case more fully in his later essay, 'The Uses of Cultural Theory', and attends to some of the difficulties in distinguishing the work of Volosinov from that of Bakhtin. See Williams 1986c: 163-176.

21. See Williams's 'Foreword' to Fekete 1977: 'Since the middle sixties, and with gathering pace, there has been a form of apparent rejection of this critical tradition which is in fact only a new, more powerful but also more alienated version of its fundamental problematic of objectivist organization. Critical structuralism, often in confusing association with an objectivist form of Marxism, has indeed to be seen, as Dr Fekete argues, as a phase of this destructive tradition, rather than as any kind of alternative to it' (1977: xiii).

22. The best Easthope can say is that 'two pages' of Williams's essay, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory' 'inaugurate what will be referred to as "left-deconstruction"' (Easthope 1988: 14), and, later, that the essay opened the road 'for an analysis of literature not as texts but as a practice of reading in which they are institutionally constructed' (153) - a familiar deformation of Williams's cultural materialism in its restriction to and containment within literary studies, as I argue in the Conclusion.

23. See The Guardian Jan 17, 1981 (cited in Simpson 1990 p. 256). The best accounts of the whole affair are to be found in Simpson 1990 and Inglis 1995: 278-85. See also Colin MacCabe's own discussion and analysis of events in 'Class of '68: elements of an intellectual autobiography 1967-81' in MacCabe 1985: 1-32.
24. See MacCabe 1985, 1979, and MacCabe et al.
25. See Easthope 1988, especially pp. 41-2, 135-41.
26. See Cambridge University Reporter 10 February 1981, pp. 1-35 for the discourses of Stephen Heath, John Barrell, Michael Long, Howard Erskine-Hill, Geoffrey Kirk, and Williams himself.
27. The essay was first published in New Left Review 129: 51-66 as 'Marxism, Structuralism and Literary Analysis'. I quote from the retitled version, Williams [1981b].
28. As Simpson notes, the term 'structuralist' was the one that the "business as usual" faculty majority chose as their omnium gatherum definition of the enemy' (Simpson 1990: 246). Compare MacCabe's own account, in 'Class of '68': 'By calling me a "structuralist" my opponents revealed their ignorance about both structuralism and my own work' (MacCabe 1985: 30).
29. See especially the three essays, 'The Fiction of Reform', 'Forms of English Fiction in 1848', and 'The Reader in Hard Times' in Williams 1984a: 142-74, and my review of Writing in Society for a discussion of Williams's 'ambivalence' with regard to the 1970s 'critique of realism' (Higgins 1985: 169). MacCabe's influential essay, 'Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses' was first published in Screen 15:2. Summer 1974 (MacCabe 1974).

See Docker 1989 for a useful survey of the whole debate between Williams and the Screen position.

30. See Althusser's own 'A Letter on Art' [1966] in Althusser 1984; and, under the influence of Althusser, Macherey 1966.

31. See, for instance, Bryson and Kappeler 1983, produced as a response to the MacCabe Affair, but focusing on 'the issue of teaching, and the issue of theory and its relation to practice' (vii).

32. Williams was very likely thinking of two chapters in Eagleton's Criticism and Ideology: Chapter 2, 'Categories for a Materialist Criticism' and Chapter 3 'Towards a Science of the Text' in which Eagleton follows the Althusserian emphasis of Pierre Macherey's A Theory of Literary Production (Macherey [1966]).

33. For further elements of that 'wider reorganisation', see the essays gathered together in Williams (ed.) 1981c. In the 'Introduction', Williams explains how 'the study of communications, in its modern forms, is a convergence, or attempted convergence, of people who were trained, initially, in very different fields: in history and philosophy, in literary and cultural studies, in sociology, technology, and psychology' (1981c: 11). Contributors include - amongst others - Jack Goody on 'Alphabets and Writing' and Ferruccio Rossi-Landi on 'Language'.

34. Nicholas Tredell, in rather neglected study, Uncancelled Challenge (1990) rightly observes that 'To some extent, Culture both challenges and incorporates an idealizing (and by this time failing) Althusserisme' (73).

35. There are many points of contact between Williams and Giddens. Compare, for example, Giddens 1979a and 1981a, as well as his review essays [1979b] and 1981b.

36. Williams's arguments in this regard are given more fully in one of his best single essays, 'The Bloomsbury Fraction' (1978/80).

37. This was the opening sentence of his address to the Slant Symposium From Culture to Revolution in 1968. See Williams 1989 p. 32. And it summed up just the phenomenological certitude which - aside from Williams's strictly political agenda - most perturbed Eagleton. See especially his comments on 'his consistent over-subjectivising of the social formation' in Eagleton 1976 pp. 32-35. Eagleton speaks more warmly of the same traits in his memorial essay, noting how 'he could be aware of the massive importance of his own work without the least personal vanity...because he had a curious ability to look on himself from the outside. to see his own life as in a Lukacsian sense "typical" rather than just individual' (Eagleton 1989b: 8).

38. The New Left Review team have it almost right when noting, 'Your rejection of literary criticism appears to be founded on a very narrow identification of it with one American school in the 20th century - it ignores the whole history of German, French or Italian aesthetics for example. You seem to be arguing that since New Criticism is objectionable we must reject criticism tout court' (Williams 1979: 337). Of course, Williams was never interested in the New Criticism as such, seeing it as only a

selective repetition of some of the elements of Cambridge English.

39. See Williams 1983g, especially p. 177, and 1983h.

Notes to Chapter Seven

1. See, respectively, Williams 1989a, 1989d, 1990, 1984, 1989b, 1989c, 1989e.

2. This includes the only substantial work (aside from People of the Black Mountains) not concerned with modernism that Williams produced in this final period - the monograph Cobbett (1983b).

Even here, concern with the dynamics of Thatcherism pervades the book as a whole, as one can see from the following paragraph:

"Nobody owes the British people a living," governments now regularly tell the British people. This astounding revelation is addressed to people for whom, in majority, the problem has always been how to make and keep a living through successive crises of economic disorganisation and war. It is addressed to hard-working people by the representatives of a system which has at its best made the results of hard work uncertain and at worst nullified and squandered them. But there is deeper irony than that. The address is made by representatives of a system which insists that the possessors of capital and of privilege are, precisely, owed a living by everybody else. This no doubt accounts for the sense of a novel truth, as it forms in their mouths. For it is no surprise to anybody else. It was only the great proprietors of the 'National Debt' and the Funds who believed and took steps to

ensure that a living was owed to them. It was a debt, as we have seen, which Cobbett wanted to repudiate, in the real interests of the nation' (1983b: 73-4). The book is also noteworthy for Williams's return to the Marxist debate regarding the understanding between the forces and relations of 'production: see especially pp. 59-68.

3. Personal communication 1987. With characteristic generosity, Williams was kind enough to lend me the only typescript copies of a series of essays intended for The Politics of Modernism. For an account of our discussion, see Higgins 1989.

4. The point was first argued in a lecture given in 1974, which sadly remains unpublished in any of the collections of Williams's essays. See Williams 1974. Standard accounts of the origins of Cambridge English and its inaugural break from the study of language include Mulhern 1981; Baldick 1983; and Doyle 1982.

5. See Tillyard 1958 and Willey 1964.

6. See Mulhern 1979, Baldick 1983, Doyle 1982, and Eagleton 1983 for useful general accounts.

7. For a useful guide to the literary deployment of the term, see Bradbury and McFarlane (eds.) 1991.

8. Compare, for instance, the contents of three popular readers in literary theory: David Lodge's Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader (1988), which has essays and selections by Saussure, Shklovsky, and Lacan; Robert Con Davis's Contemporary Literary Criticism: Modernism through Post-Structuralism (1986), which features Shklovsky, Levi-Strauss, as well as several essays on Freud and Lacan; and Dan Latimer's Contemporary Critical Theory.

Terry Eagleton's Literary Theory: An Introduction (1983) is the best overall introduction to the field; see also Jefferson and Robey (eds.) 1982.

9. See the Conclusion for a discussion of Williams's renewed interest in the idea of literacy.

10. See, classically, Victor Shklovsky's extraordinary essay, 'Art as Technique' [1917], and, more generally, the summary account and defence (against Trotsky's influential critique [1923] by Eichenbaum [1926]). For a useful discussion of the term itself, see Jameson 1972: 75-79.

11. Pyle, for one, rejects this account. 'What remains unexplored' in this analysis of modernist language, he argues, is 'the possibility that these eruptions of the material sign that characterize the modernist text are not attributable solely to the social fact of immigration. Williams's historicism does not permit him to entertain the possibility that this historical condition of modernism, the engagement with a language that is not one's own, is less an exception than an inevitable feature of our insertion into language. Perhaps, in other words, modernism represents a particular thematization of inherent properties of language' (1993: 269). This still leaves Pyle to account for why this thematization should take place with modernism rather than at any other time. His related claim that 'Williams's conceptions of culture and community demand that one understand language as a human instrument' (1993: 269) seems to be contradicted by Williams's arguments in Marxism and Literature, at least as they are construed in Chapter Five of the present study, and by the

complex challenge to instrumental notions of language implicit in Keywords. I develop some of these arguments in relation to Quentin Skinner's badly focused critique of Williams (Skinner 1988) - so strongly endorsed by Parrinder 1987a and Inglis 1995 - in an unpublished conference paper (Higgins 1996b).

12. Compare Williams's similar accounts in 1979: 337 and [1981b]: 206. Moriarty is, I think, rightly sceptical of the logic of Williams's genealogy here when he writes that, not content with the plausible argument 'of a congruence between New Criticism and structuralism' he 'insists to a striking extent on a suppositious actual influence of the former on the latter', but is in the end unable to offer any 'empirical or textual evidence for his account' (Moriarty 1995: 102-3).

13. See, for instance, Barthes [1968], Foucault [1969], Derrida (1965). For an account of 'death of the author' theory which also seeks to place it historically, see Jameson 1991: 14-15.

14. Something of a comparable position - though articulated in a very different conceptual idiom, and with a very different range of cultural references - is to be found in Jameson's work on postmodernism. See, for instance, his remarks concerning the Brecht-Lukacs debate, and particularly his provocative assertion 'there is some question whether the ultimate renewal of modernism, the final dialectical subversion of the now automatized conventions of an aesthetics of perceptual revolution, might not simply be...realism itself! For when modernism and its accompanying techniques of "estrangement" have become the dominant style whereby the consumer is reconciled with capitalism, the

habit of fragmentation needs itself to be "estranged" and corrected by a more totalizing way of viewing phenomena' (Jameson 1977: 211).

15. The well-prepared attack on the National Union of Mineworkers, as well as the general curbing of trade union activity was initiated through the Employment Acts of 1980 and 1982, and completed by the Trade Union Act of 1984; attacks on the autonomy of local government; the 'increasing militarization of the police force' (Hayes: 79) was effected by the Criminal Justice Act of 1982, the Police and Criminal Evidence Act of 1984, and the Public Order Act of 1986.

16. See especially Hall 1983, 1988.

17. Compare Riddel's judgement: 'There was therefore no upsurge of popular support for Mrs Thatcher and her administration.... The 1983 election did not suggest there was yet any new consensus about British society and the management of the economy...Mrs Thatcher and her administration have aroused as much bitter antagonism as fervent support' (Riddel 1983: 4-5). Of course, Hall's point was precisely to examine the dynamics of that 'alliance of disparate forces' as that is precisely the role of the hegemonic in his Gramscian based theory.

18. See Milner 1993: 76-84 for a useful discussion of Hall and Williams's differences. As Milner puts it, 'A structuralist understanding of discourse as necessarily "polysemic" is thus combined, in Hall's account, with an equally structuralist sense of popular passivity, so as to "construct" much of the British working class itself as positively Thatcherite. Unsurprisingly,

the substantive analysis appeared to Williams even more wrongheaded than the theoretical' (ibid.: 82).

19. This essay was the occasion for some dispute regarding Williams's stature as a public intellectual. 'One must ask what good is a critical intellectual if he won't criticize his own side?' stated R.W. Johnson in a 1990 review essay. Johnson found 'no mention' in the essay 'of the fact that a substantial minority of miners had broken away over the issue of the denial of democracy, and that some had suffered violence as a result' (6), and all in all 'complete failure, indeed refusal, to confront the cardinal facts of the strike' (6). As always, the selection of what counts as 'cardinal facts' is often the expression of a prior political perspective. There is no mention, in Johnson's account, of the Thatcher government's long preparation for inflicting a defeat on the National Union of Mineworkers for their part in the downfall of the Heath administration: a much more significant 'denial of democracy'. See Young for a detailed account: pp. 365-78. Several aspects of the review are, to say the least, odd: the charge that the historical labour movement was 'a truly sacred cow to Williams' is not supported by the criticisms which Williams had levelled at it since the 1950s (see Williams 1979: for examples), nor does this accusation quite fit with the critical stance taken in many of the essays in Resources of Hope which Johnson is reviewing. Similarly, Johnson's claim that after the 1960s Williams managed to write only 'one good book' of literary and cultural criticism, Orwell, is decidedly eccentric, ignoring as it does The Country and the City. Robin Blackburn's response,

despite its fury, is undoubtedly correct here: 'It is not Williams who is 'vacuous', but your reviewer if he fails to see the effort to spell out alternatives in these essays [from Resources of Hope, edited by Blackburn] or in Towards 2000' (Blackburn 1990: 4).

See Hall et al. 1978 for the policing argument.

20. Adorno's discussion of Samuel Becket makes an interesting point of comparison. For Adorno, the force of Becket's work is located precisely in the ways in which it embodies the new cultural and political situation without the comfort of the usual bourgeois illusions. See for example, his remarks that 'all subject matter appears to be the sign of an inner sphere, but the inner sphere of which it would be a sign no longer exists.... 'Endgame is the epilogue to subjectivity...The only aspect of freedom still known to it is the powerless and pitiful reflex action of trivial decisions' (1991: 251, 259).

21. See Stedman Jones 1984a for some critical comments on this procedure.

22. See Briggs 1961: 'Mr Williams's last chapter seems to suffer also from being confined to an English framework of reference' (387).

23. Gorak emphasises the book's 'unusual combination of progressive analysis and sympathetic human understanding' (1988: 118). while Morgan finds that 'balanced discussion...is followed by pages of appallingly loose argument' (Morgan 1983: 1223). The most thorough account and analysis of Williams's proposals is to be found in Mulhern [1984].

24. See Williams 1958a: 285-94; and again, more harshly, in 1971a. As he admits in 1979, 'I must say I cannot bear much of it [Orwell's writing] now' (391).

25. In addition to the essays it appeared Williams intended for publication, Pinkney adds transcripts of a lecture given in Bristol in 1987, 'When was Modernism', and of a discussion between Williams and Edward Said in 1986, 'Media, Margins and Modernity'. It excludes 'Country and City in the Modern Novel', a text which Williams told me he intended for the book in our discussion in 1987. This essay is available in Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 3:1 (1989).

26. See Pinkney, 1989a, 1989b, and 1991.

27. For a classic staging of their opposed views, see the two essays 'Discussing Expressionism' (Bloch) and 'Realism in the Balance' (Lukacs) in Bloch et al. 1977. The debate as a whole is best framed by Lukacs's 1934 essay, 'Expressionism: Its Significance and Decline' in Lukacs 1980. See Lunn 1985: 78-90 for a useful general discussion of Lukac's position.

28. Robbins grasps this dimension of the argument well in his interesting discussion of the dynamics of literary professionalism. See, for instance, his acute remark 'Rather than tracing a fall from modernism into professionalism. Williams suggests that in its essence modernism already was professionalism' (Robbins 1993: 59). In this sense, Williams's arguments may be read against Anderson's claim that Britain produced no significant modernist formation. The institution of the discipline of English studies itself corresponds to at least

two of Anderson's three criteria for modernism (Anderson 1984: 105).

29. See Williams's 1972 lecture, 'Social Darwinism', for a fine anticipation of many of the ways in which conservative thinkers tried to draw on Darwin's thought. Indeed, the concluding sentences of the lecture can be read as anticipating the main lines of argument at work in The Politics of Modernism: Social Darwinism is a part of 'the social theory of that system which had promised order and progress and yet produced the twentieth century. Instead of facing that fact, in all its immense complexity, the rationalizers and the natural rhetoricians have now moved in to snap at and discourage us: not to ratify an imperialist and capitalist order, but to universalize its breakdown and to persuade us that it has no alternatives, since all "nature" is like that' (Williams [1974d]: 102).

30. For some further development of this, see 'The Politics in Identity: Hume and Derrida on Subjectivity' (Higgins, forthcoming in Transpositions 1, 1998).

31. Compare Williams 1977e. As we shall see below, Williams's remarks should be read in the context of MacCabe's assault on the 'classic realist text' (MacCabe [1974]). For a useful overview (though they neglect Williams's distinctive contribution) of the Screen debate on realism in film, see Lapsley and Westlake 1988.

32. The post-lecture discussion is not given in Williams 1989a. For this, see Britton (ed.) 1991: 27.

33. Or, for that matter, his own response to Eagleton's criticisms, as we discussed in Chapter 1.
34. See, for instance, Heath 1981. Many of Williams's oblique criticisms are met in Heath 1991.
35. This useful phrase is Anthony Easthope's, who has commented, in several accounts, on the importance of MacCabe's arguments in the development of British poststructuralism (see Easthope 1988, etc). He describes James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word as contrasting 'the classic realist text with Joyce's modernism' and as 'prepared to argue that Joyce's modernism, specifically that of Finnegans Wake, leads to a revolutionary politics because in denying thereader's pleasure it opens the reader's desire' (Easthope 1988: 136, 138). Lodge (1982) presents the best critical account of MacCabe's arguments from an orthodox literary perspective.
36. For the fullest statement of this case, see Walsh 1981.
37. Some of the strains and tensions in the position had already become apparent by 1976 when MacCabe asserted, in adjacent sentences, both that 'the breaking of the imaginary relation between text and viewer is the first pre-requisite of political questions in art', and also 'that the breaking of the imaginary relationship can constitute a political goal in itself is the ultra-leftist fantasy of the surrealists and of much of the avant-garde work now being undertaken in the cinema' (MacCabe [1976]: 73).

38. See, for instance, Belsey 1982, 1986; Dollimore 1985; Durant 1981; Easthope 1983.
39. The conference papers as a whole are brought together in Fabb et al. 1988.
40. For discussion of Williams's views on psychoanalysis, see Higgins 1990, 1991, 1995.
41. See especially Williams 1986c.
42. See Derrida [1965] and [1966] for two fascinating accounts of Artaud which in some ways confirm, and in others, contradict, Williams's general argument. His general argument is confirmed in so far as Derrida uses Artaud for a general attack on the notion of representation ([1966]: 343-352), but Derrida's arguments as a whole are considerably more subtle than those attacked by Williams here.
43. To this extent, Pinkney's claims for Williams's interest in expressionism are partially correct, though his serious distortions of the evidence remain a problem.
44. Williams might have sought support here from Bakhtin and Medvedev. As they rightly note in their discussion of Shklovsky's conception of poetic language in The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship, 'Every word, as such, is involved in intercourse and cannot be torn away from it without it ceasing to be a word of language' (Bakhtin and Medvedev [1928]: 94). Many of the arguments have resurfaced and been given considerable redefinition in recent debates surrounding the L=A=N=G=U=A=G=E poets and their tradition. See, for instance, Perloff 1985 and Perelman 1996.

45. He had earlier acknowledged the need for such a correction, noting that 'it was impossible for me to write adequately about dramatic forms until I fully understood the nature of the historical movement of naturalism and realism, which I did not at the time' of writing Drama from Ibsen to Eliot (Williams 1979: 202).

46. In the spirit of Williams's remarks on Lacan, so central to the Screen-theory approach, in Politics and Letters: 'What is needed is not a blending of concepts of literature with concepts from Lacan, but an introduction of literary practice to the quite different practice of experimental observation. That would be the materialist recovery' (1979: 341). And see especially his endorsement of Timpanaro (Williams 1978b), particularly on the related questions of psychoanalysis and linguistics.

Notes to Conclusion

1. This is certainly true, for instance, of Jonathan Dollimore's Radical Tragedy: Religion, Ideology and Power in the Drama of Shakespeare and his Contemporaries in which, as David Schalkwyk has acutely observed, there is a 'persistence of a grammar throughout [the book] which signals his own radical (in the sense of deep-rooted) entrapment in traditional modes of critical exposition' (Schalkwyk 1992: 89).

2. It would take another essay - or even book! - to argue this through in any significant detail. But it is worth remarking that what the studies by these different authors is a commitment to

historical and theoretical analysis, as well as the extension beyond the boundaries of the usual literary canon. See especially Barrell 1980 and 1983; Bryson 19 ; Heath 1981; Prendergast 1996; Shiach 1989, and Willis 1977; Fekete 1977; Simpson 1987; Said 1983, 1993; Robbins 1993.

3. Compare Barry's survey, where cultural materialism is presented as 'the study of historical materia; (which includes literary texts) within a politicized framework, this framework including the present which those literary texts have helped to shape' (Barry 1995: 182). This follows Dollimore and Sinfield's definition, rather than Williams's.

4. See Higgins 1995 for more detailed arguments in this regard.

5. See, for instance, on psychoanalysis Higgins 1990; on gender, Jardine and Swindells 1989, Levy 1989, Watts 1989, Shiach 1995; Kaplan 1995; and on colonial discourse, Said 1988, Viswanathan 1993, Radhakrishnan 1993.

6. Many essays do indeed follow or at least intend to follow just this route. See, for example, the essays by Shiach, Surin, de Bolla, Kaplan, Lloyd and Thomas, all in C. Prendergast (ed.) 1995; and by Kruger, Apple, Kohli, Rizvi, Roman, Skurski and Coronil, all in Dworkin and Roman (eds.) 1993; and Crowley 1989a and 1989b.

7. Though Tony Crowley comes very close in his excellent essay 'Language in History: That Full Field' (1989b). For some sense of this, see especially p. 23, where Crowley draws attention in Williams's work to 'what was always a central preoccupation with language; a preoccupation linked to a commitment to human

creativity and the possibilities of gaining a rational, informed and just social order.'

8. See, for instance, Inglis 1982; Dworkin 1993; and the debate between Gallagher, Aronowitz and Ross, first in Social_Text 30 1992 pp. 79-101; and, in a revised form, between Gallagher and Aronowitz in C. Prendergast (ed.) 1995: 307-339. For a sense of the resonance of Williams's work in cultural studies, see the references to Williams in the index of Cultural_Studies eds. Grossberg, Nelson and Treichler 1992. Forty-three references are noted for Williams, thirty-three for Marx, and fifty-four for Stuart Hall.

9. Since this study is focused on Williams's work in literary and dramatic criticism and theory, I am well aware that there has been an inevitable marginalisation of Williams's directly political writings. Williams's argued scepticism about representative, as opposed to participatory democracy is first voiced in The_Long_Revolution (Williams [1961a]: 332-43) and continues throughout his work. A useful summary of his position can be found in the 1982 essay 'Democracy and Parliament' in Williams 1989b: 256-280. See also Williams 1983a: 102-27 for a slightly amended formulation and argument. And, as always, the entry in Keywords, Williams 1983b: 93-98.

10. See Williams [1961a] p. 323: 'it becomes increasingly obvious that society is not controlling its economic life, but is in part being controlled by it. The weakening of purposive social thinking is a direct consequence of this powerful experience, which seems to reduce human activity to predictable patterns of

demand. If we were not consumers, but users, we might look at society very differently, for the concept of use involves general human judgements - we need to know how to use things and what we are using them for, and also the effects of particular uses on our general life - whereas consumption, with its crude hand-to-mouth patterns, tends to cancel these questions, replacing them by the stimulated and controlled absorption of the products of an external and autonomous system. We have not gone all the way with this new tendency, and are still in a position to reverse it, but its persuasive patterns have much of the power of our society behind them.'

11. In his recent biography, Inglis refers to the project of Keywords in disparaging terms (1995: 247-8), relying on Quentin Skinner's superficially powerful critique (Skinner 1983). I challenge Inglis's characterisation of Keywords, and Skinner's critique of it, in a paper delivered at the Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference in Tampere, Finland (Higgins 1996b).

12. The locus classicus of discussion is, of course, Marx's statement in The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte: 'Men make their own history, but not of their own free will; not under circumstances they themselves have chosen but under the given and inherited circumstances with which they are directly confronted' (Marx [1851] 1973: 146). See also Derrida's remarkable commentary in Derrida 1994: 107-19.

13. See Giddens 1979a, especially pp. 9-48. There is much common ground between Williams's work and Giddens's alert and always sceptical account of major trends in the history of sociology.

For Giddens's own awareness of this, see his two review essays, Giddens 1979b and 1981b.

14. See Said 1983.

15. I take the discussion further, and adapt material from, a number of essays dealing with critical literacy, the 'future' of English Studies, and questions of the university and academic freedom. See Higgins 1990b, 1992, 1995, 1996a, and 1997.

16. See, for instance, Journal of Literary Studies 8:3-4 1992; and the recent exchanges in Alternation 3:1 1996 pp. 5-29, between Bernth Lindfors, and Judith Lutge Coullie and Trish Gibbon.

17. See Williams's final interview for a succinct account of these and similar points (Williams [1987d] 1991).

18. And, perhaps, as the example of Flaubert shows, ultimately an impossible one. See Prendergast 1988 for an excellent discussion of the inherent difficulties of such a project.

19. Indeed, it is striking just how close Giddens's description of some hostile attitudes towards sociology could apply to literary studies with the mere substitution of the key terms.

'What is it with sociology?' he asks, 'Why is it so irritating to so many? Some sociologists might answer: ignorance; others: fear. Why fear? Well, because they like to think of their subject as a dangerous and discomfiting one. Sociology, they are prone to say, tends to subvert: it challenges our assumptions about ourselves as individuals and about the wider social contexts in which we live' (Giddens 1996: 1).

20. The nature of this general threat has been interestingly discussed by Wlad Godzich in his study The Culture of Literacy.

'As far as faculty and administrators were concerned' he argues, 'the roots of the problem were sociological and the immediate cause was the larger access to university education' (ibid). Against this view, Godzich argues for the recognition of a deeper malaise, a longer-term opposition between the culture of literacy and market forces which has come through in the proliferation of new courses in composition: 'The new writing programs, lacking either tradition or intellectual legitimation, sought to gain acceptance, and thus a legitimacy of sorts, by becoming responsive to what their practitioners saw as societal needs, and what were in fact the impulses provided by these market forces. In the spirit of the 'New Vocationalism', these programs took to defining literacy as the mastery of specific codes of linguistic usage defined by career objectives of the students....In effect, the teaching of the New Vocationalist literacy meant that the educational system was turning its back upon the values of the classical literacy, that it renounced the ideal of a sphere of communicative interpretation where all the able wielders of the language, in their capacity as citizens, would overcome the heterogeneity of specialized linguistic practices in order to inquire into, and determine, their collective destiny' (12). That there is much common ground between Williams's idea of the connections between literacy and participatory democracy, and Godzich's position there can be little doubt. Godzich insists, in terms which echo many of Williams's own arguments, that in the culture of literacy: 'the political sphere was defined precisely by its linguistic status as a sphere of universal access. For it

to become specialized and autonomous is tantamount to emptying out the meaning of citizenship and to reducing the exercise of its rights and privileges to an increasingly meaningless formalism, such as a form of voting or poll-taking characteristic of plebiscites rather than the democratic determination of policy' (9).

21. See Blade Nzimande's reservations regarding the discourse of globalisation in his article 'Neo-liberal ideologues are hijacking the transformation of education' in The Sunday Independent February 23 1997 p. 24; but see also his attack on the idea of academic freedom as involving institutional autonomy in 'Academic freedom depends on successful transformation of higher education system' in The Sunday Independent October 6 1996 p. 23. It is clear that a great deal of hard thinking and conceptual clarification needs to be done for the renewal and practice of academic freedom in South Africa. For some debate, see Sisulu 1991, Woolf 1991, and Said 1991 (all in Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture (1991) 3:1-2, pp. 48-81); and Spivak 1995, Taylor 1995, Muller 1995, Swartz 1995 and Higgins 1995 (all in Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture (1995) 5: 1-2, pp. 117-190; and Higgins 1997.

Bibliography

The Bibliography is divided into two parts: Section A 'Works by Raymond Williams', and Section B 'Secondary Sources'. Please note that when the year of first publication differs from that of the edition referred to, it is given in square brackets.

A. Works by Raymond Williams

- Williams, Raymond (1947a) 'A Dialogue on Actors', The Critic, 1:1, pp. 17-24.
- (1947b) 'Saints, Revolutionaries, Carpetbaggers', review of The New Spirit by E. W. Martin and Writers of Today (ed.) Denys Val Baker, The Critic 1:1, pp. 52-4.
- (1947c) 'The Soviet Literary Controversy in Retrospect', Politics and Letters, 1:1, pp. 21-31.
- (1947d) 'Lower Fourth at St. Harry's', Politics and Letters, 1:2-3, pp. 105-6.
- (1947e) 'Ibsenites and Ibsenite-Antis', review of Ibsen the Intellectual Background, by Brian W. Downs and Ibsen the Norwegian, by M.C. Bradbrook. The Critic 1:2, pp. 65-8.
- (1947f) 'Radio Drama', Politics and Letters 1:2/3, pp. 106-09.
- (1948) 'A Note on Mr Hoggart's Appendices', Adult Education, 21, pp. 96-98.

- (1950) Reading and Criticism, Man and Society Series,
London: Frederick Muller.
- [1952] (1954) Drama from Ibsen to Eliot, London: Chatto and
Windus. Second edition 1954.
- (1953a) 'The Idea of Culture', Essays in Criticism 4, pp.
239-266.
- (1953b) 'The Teaching of Public Expression', The Highway,
April, pp. 42-8.
- [1953c] 'Film as a Tutorial Subject' in J. McIlroy and S.
Westwood (eds.) Border Country: Raymond Williams in Adult
Education eds. Leicester: National Institute of Continuing
Education.
- (1954) Drama in Performance, London: Frederick Muller.
- (1957a) 'The New Party Line?', review of The Outsider by
Colin Wilson, Essays in Criticism 7: 68-76.
- (1957b) 'Fiction and the Writing Public', review of The Uses
of Literacy by Richard Hoggart, Essays in Criticism 7: 422-8.
- (1957c) 'The Uses of Literacy: Working Class Culture',
Universities and Left Review 1:2, pp. 29-32.
- [1958a] (1990) Culture and Society 1780-1950, London: The
Hogarth Press. 1990 edition includes new Foreword by Williams.
- [1958b] 'Culture is Ordinary' in Williams 1989b.
- (1959a) 'Critical Forum' in Essays in Criticism
- (1959b) 'Our Debt to Dr Leavis', Critical Quarterly 1: 245-7.
- [1961a] (1975) The Long Revolution, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

- (1961b) 'The Future of Marxism', The Twentieth Century, pp. 128-42.
- [1961c] 'Communications and Community' in Williams 1989b.
- [1962a] (1976) Communications, Harmondsworth, Penguin.
Third Edition with new 'Reading and Retrospect, 1975'.
- (1962b) 'A Dialogue on Tragedy', New Left Review, 13-14, pp. 22-35.
- (1962c) 'Books of the year', The Guardian, 21 December, p.8.
- [1965] 'The British Left' in 1989b.
- [1966] (1979) Modern Tragedy, London: Verso. New edition without the play Koba and with new Afterword 1979.
- (1967a) 'Literature and Rural Society', The Listener, 78, 16 November, pp. 630-32.
- (1967b) 'Literature and the City', The Listener, 78, 23 November, pp. 653-56.
- (1967c) Public Inquiry, Stand 9: 15-53.
- [1968a] Drama from Ibsen to Brecht, Harmondsworth: Penguin. Revised and Extended edition of [1952].
- [1968b] 'Culture and Revolution: A Comment' in Williams 1989b.
- (1968c) 'Culture and Revolution: A Response' in From Culture to Revolution: The Slant Symposium eds Terry Eagleton and Brian Wicker (London and Sydney: Sheed and Ward, 1968) pp. 296-308

- (1969a) 'On Reading Marcuse', review of Negations by Herbert Marcuse, The Cambridge Review 90 pp. 366-8.
- (1969b) 'Notes on English Prose 1780-1950' in Williams 1984a.
- [1970] (1984) The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence, London: The Hogarth Press.
- [1971a] Orwell, Fontana Modern Masters Series. Glasgow: Collins. 1984 edition has new Afterword by Williams.
- (1971b) 'Dutschke and Cambridge' in The Cambridge Review 29 January pp. 94-95
- (1971c) 'The Dutschke case and Intellectual Freedom: Two statements', The Cambridge Review 29 January pp. 95-96.
- [1971d] 'Literature and Sociology: In Memory of Lucien Goldman' in Williams 1980a.
- (1971e) A Letter from the Country, Stand 12: 17-34.
- (1972a) 'Lucien Goldman and Marxism's Alternative Tradition', The Listener, 87, 23 March pp. 375-6.
- [1972b] 'Ideas of Nature' in Williams 1980a.
- [1973a] (1975) The Country and the City, St Albans: Paladin.
- [1973b] 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory' in Williams 1980a.
- (1974a) Television: Technology and Cultural Form,
- (1974b) 'The English Language and the English Tripos', Times Literary Supplement. 15 November, pp. 1293-94.
- (1974c) 'The Frankfurt School', a review of The Dialectical Imagination by Martin Jay, Negative Dialectics by Theodor

Adorno, The Jargon of Authenticity by Theodor Adorno, 14
February, p. 14.

- [1974d] 'Social Darwinism' in Williams 1980a.
- [1974e] 'Drama in a Dramatised Society' in Williams 1984a.
- [1975] '"You're a Marxist, Aren't You?'" in Williams 1989b.
- [1976a] (1983) Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society, Glasgow: Fontana. Second edition, revised and extended.
- [1976b] 'Notes on Marxism in Britain since 1945' in Williams 1980a.
- (1977a) Marxism and Literature, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (1977b) 'Two Interviews with Raymond Williams', Red Shift 2, pp. 12-17; 3, pp. 13-15.
- [1977c] 'Form and Meaning: Hippolytus and Phedre' in Williams 1984a.
- [1977d] 'My Cambridge' in Williams 1989c.
- [1977e] 'A Defence of Realism' in Williams 1989c.
- (1977f) 'Foreword' to Fekete 1977.
- (1978a) 'Means of Communication as Means of Production' in Williams 1980a.
- [1978b] 'Problems of Materialism' in Williams 1980a.
- (1978c) 'A man confronting a very particular kind of mystery', Times Higher Educational Supplement 5 May p. 10
- [1978/80] 'The Bloomsbury Fraction' in Williams 1980a.
- (1979) Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review, London: New Left Books.

- (1980a) Problems in Materialism and Culture: Selected Essays, London: Verso.
- [1980b] 'Problems in Materialism' in Williams 1980a.
- (1981a) Culture, Fontana New Sociology Series, Glasgow: Collins. Second US Edition, The Sociology of Culture, with Foreword by Bruce Robbins, 1992, New York:
- [1981b] 'Crisis in English Studies' in Williams 1984a.
- (1981c) (ed.) Contact: Human Communication and its History, London: Thames and Hudson.
- [1982] 'Distance' in Williams 1989c.
- (1983a) Towards 2000, London: Chatto and Windus.
- (1983b) Cobbett, Past Masters Series, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- [1983c] 'Marx on Culture' in Williams 1989c.
- (1983d) 'The Estranging Language of Post-Modernism', New Society 16 June pp. 439-40.
- [1983e] 'Problems of the Coming Period' in Williams 1989b.
- [1983f] 'Adult Education and Social Change' in Williams 1989c.
- [1983g] 'Cambridge English, Past and Present' in Williams 1984a.

- [1983h] 'Beyond Cambridge English' in Williams 1984a.
- [1983i] 'On Dramatic Dialogue and Monologue (particularly in Shakespeare) in Williams 1984a.
- [1983j] 'Film History' in Williams 1989c.
- (1984a) Writing in Society, London and New York: Verso.
- (1984b) 'The Resonance of Antigone', The Guardian, 20 July, p. 14.
- [1984c] 'Seeing a Man Running' in Williams 1989c.
- [1985a] 'Cinema and Socialism' in Williams 1989a.
- [1985b] 'Metropolitan Perceptions and the Emergence of Modernism' in Williams 1989a.
- [1985c] 'Mining the Meaning: Key Words in the Miners' Strike' in Williams 1989b.
- [1986a] 'Language and the Avant-Garde' in Williams 1989a.
- [1986b] 'The Future of Cultural Studies' in Williams 1989a.
- [1986c] 'The Uses of Cultural Theory' in Williams 1989a.
- [1986d] 'Media, Margins and Modernity' in Williams 1989a.
- [1986e] 'An Interview with Raymond Williams' in T. Modleski, Studies in Entertainment: Critical Approaches to Mass Culture, Bloomington and Indianapolis: Indiana University Press. Reprinted in C. Prendergast (ed.) 1995a.
- [1987a] 'When was Modernism?' in Williams 1989a.
- [1987b] 'Country and City in the Modern Novel', Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 3:1, pp. 3-13, 1989.
- [1987c] 'The Practice of Possibility' in Williams 1989b.
- [1987d] 'The Politics of Literacy', Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 3:1-2, pp. 136-43.

- [1988] 'The Politics of the Avant-Garde' in Williams 1989a.
- [1988c] 'Theatre as Political Forum' in 1989a.
- (1989a) The Politics of Modernism: Against the New Conformists, Tony Pinkney (ed.) London and New York: Verso.
- (1989b) Resources of Hope, Robin Gable (ed.) London and New York: Verso.
- (1989c) What I Came to Say, Francis Mulhern (ed.) London: Hutchinson Radius.
- (1989d) Raymond Williams on Television: Selected Writings, Preface by Williams, A. O'Connor (ed.) London: Routledge.
- (1989e) 'Fact and Fiction' in International Encyclopedia of Communications ed. E. Barnouw, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- (1991) Drama in Performance, revised and extended edition of Williams (1954), with Introduction by Graham Holderness, Milton Keynes: Open University Press.
- (1992) The Sociology of Culture 2nd ed. Introduction by Bruce Robbins, Chicago: Chicago University Press.
- Williams R., and Garnham, N. (1986) 'Pierre Bourdieu and the sociology of culture: an introduction' in R. Collins et al. Media, Culture and Society, London: SAGE.
- Williams, R., and Hoggart, R. (1960) 'Working Class Attitudes', New Left Review 1: 26-30.
- Williams, R., and Orrom, M. (1954) Preface to Film, London: Film Drama Limited.
- Williams, R., Mankowitz, W. and Collins, C. (1947a) 'For Continuity in Change', editorial, Politics and Letters 1:1.

pp. 3-5.

---- (1947b) 'Culture and Crisis', editorial, Politics and Letters 1:2-3, pp. 5-8.

Williams, R., Hall, S., Thompson E. (1968) May Day Manifesto, Harmondsworth: Penguin. Second edition.

B. Secondary Sources

Ackroyd, P. (1985) T.S. Eliot, London: Abacus.

Adorno, T. (1991) Notes to Literature: I, trans. S.W. NicholSEN, New York: Columbia University Press.

Ahmad, A. (1994) In Theory: Classes, Nations, Literatures, London and New York: Verso.

Althusser, Louis [1965] (1977) Pour Marx, Paris: Francois Maspero.

---- [1966] (1984) 'A Letter on Art in Reply to Andre Daspre' in L. Althusser, Essays on Ideology, London: Verso.

Amigoni, D. (1989) Review of Robert Sullivan, Christopher Caudwell. Textual Practice 3:2, pp. 287-90.

Amis, Kingsly (1962) 'Martians Bearing Bursaries', The Spectator, 27 April: 554-5.

Anderson, P. (1965) 'Origins of the Present Crisis' in Anderson, P. and Blackburn, R. (eds.) Towards Socialism, London: Collins.

- (1969) 'Components of the National Culture', in Student Power: Problems, Diagnosis, Action Cockburn, A. and Blackburn R., (eds.) Harmondsworth: Penguin and New Left Review.
- (1976) Considerations on Western Marxism, London: New Left Books.
- (1976/77) 'The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci', New Left Review 100: 5-78.
- (1984) 'Modernity and Revolution', New Left Review 144: 96-113.
- (1990a) 'A Culture in Contraflow', New Left Review 180: 41-78.
- (1990b) 'A Culture in Contraflow II', New Left Review 182: 85-137.
- Angenot, M. (1989) 'Structuralism as Syncretism: Institutional Distortions of Saussure' in J. Fekete (ed.) The Structural Allegory, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Annan, N.G. (1955) 'The Intellectual Aristocracy' in J.H. Plumb (ed.). Studies in Social History: A Tribute to G.M. Trevelyan, London and New York: Longmans.
- (1991) Our Age London: Fontana.
- Arac, J. (ed.) (1986a) Postmodernism and Politics, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- (1986b) 'Introduction' in J. Arac (ed.) 1986a.
- Archer, R., Bubeck, D., Glock, H. et al. (eds.) (1989) Out of Apathy: Voices of the New Left Thirty Years On, London and New York: Verso.

- Aronowitz, S. (1992) 'On Catherine Gallagher's Critique of Raymond Williams', Social Text 30: 90-97.
- (1995) 'Between Criticism and Ethnography: Raymond Williams and the Intervention of Cultural Studies' in C. Prendergast (ed.) 1995a.
- Asher, K. (1995) T.S.Eliot and Ideology, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Attridge, D. (1987) 'Language as history/history as language: Saussure and the romance of etymology' in D. Attridge, G. Bennington, and R. Young (eds.) Post-structuralism and the Question of History, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bakhtin, M. and Medvedev, P. N. [1928] (1985) The Formal Method in Literary Scholarship, trans. A. J. Wehrle, Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.
- Baldick, C. (1983) The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848-1932, Oxford: The Clarendon Press.
- (1989) 'An Extending Humanism' in Times Literary Supplement Nov 3-9, p. 1205.
- Barnett, Anthony (1976) 'Raymond Williams and Marxism: A Rejoinder to Terry Eagleton', New Left Review 99: 47-64.
- (1977) 'Towards a theory', New Society 21 July: 145-6.
- Barrell, J. (1972) The Idea of Landscape and the Sense of Place: An Approach to the Poetry of Clare, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1980) The Dark Side of the Landscape: The Rural Poor in English Painting, 1730-1840, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

- (1983) English Literature in History 1730-80: An Equal, Wide Survey. London: Hutchinson and Co.
- Barrel, J., and Bull, J. (eds.) (1973) The Penguin Book of English Pastoral Verse, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Barry, P. (1995) Beginning Theory, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Barthes, R. [1968] 'The Death of the Author' in D. Lodge (ed.) 1988.
- Becker, J. (1996) Hungry Ghosts: China's Secret Famine, London: John Murray.
- Bell, C. [1928] (1947) Civilization: An Essay, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Bell, D. (1960) The End of Ideology, New York: Glencoe Free Press.
- Bell, M. (1988) F.R. Leavis, London and New York: Routledge.
- Belsey, C. (1980) Critical Practice, London: Methuen.
- (1982) 'Re-reading the great tradition' in P. Widdowson (ed.) Re-Reading English, London and New York: Methuen.
- (1985) The Subject of Tragedy, London: Methuen.
- Benjamin, W. (1969a) Illuminations, trans. H. Zohn, New York: Schocken Books.
- (1969b) 'Franz Kafka: on the Tenth Anniversary of his Death' in W. Benjamin 1969a.

- (1969c) 'Some Reflections on Kafka' in W. Benjamin 1969a.
- Bennet, J. (1973) "How It Strikes a Contemporary": The Impact of I.A.Richards' Literaray Criticism in Cambridge, England' in R. Brower, H. Vendler, J. Hollander (eds.) I.A. Richards Essays in His Honour, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bennet, T. (1979) Marxism and Formalism, London: Methuen.
- Benveniste, E. (1966) Problemes de linguistique generales, Paris: Gallimard.
- Berman, M. (1973) Review of The Country and the City, New York Times Book Review 15 July 1973 p.1
- Blackburn, Robin (1988) 'Raymond Williams and the Politics of a New Left' New Left Review 168: 12-22.
- (1990) Reply to Johnson, London Review of Books, p.4.
- Bloch, E., Lukacs, G., Brecht, B., Benjamin, W., and Adorno, T. (1977) Aesthetics and Politics, Translation Editor, R. Taylor, London: New Left Books.
- Bourdieu, P. (1990) The Logic of Practice, trans. R. Nice, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Bradbury, M. and McFarlane, J. (eds.) (1991) Modernism, 1890-1930, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Bradbrook, M.C. (1946) Ibsen the Norwegian, London: Chatto and Windus.
- (1973) 'I.A. Richards at Cambridge' in R. Brower, H. Vendler, J. Hollander (eds.) I.A. Richards Essays in His Honour, New

York: Oxford University Press.

Brenkman, J. (1995) 'Raymond Williams and Marxism' in
C. Prendergast (ed.) 1995a.

Briggs, Asa (1961) 'Creative Definitions', New Statesman 61: 386-
387.

Britton A. (ed.) (1991) Talking Films: The Best of The Guardian
Film Lectures, London: Fourth Estate.

Brower, R., Vendler, H., Hollander, J. (eds.) (1973)
I.A. Richards Essays in His Honour, New York: Oxford University
Press.

Bryson, N. and Kappeler, S. (eds.) (1983) Teaching the Text
London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.

Burchfield, R.W. (1976) 'A Case of Mistaken Identity: Keywords'
Encounter 46: 57-64.

Buttigieg, J. (ed.) (1986) 'The Legacy of Antonio Gramsci: A
Special Issue', boundary 2, XIX:3.

Carey, J. (1992) Intellectuals and Masses: Pride and Prejudice
among the Literary Intelligentsia 1880-1939, London: Faber.

Casey, J. (1966) The Language of Criticism, London: Methuen.

Caudwell, C. [1937] (1958) Illusion and Reality: A Study of the
Sources of Poetry, London: Lawrence and Wishart.

---- [1938] Studies in a Dying Culture in C. Caudwell 1971.

---- [1949] Further Studies in a Dying Culture, in C. Caudwell
1971.

---- (1971) Studies and Further Studies in a Dying Culture. London
and New York: Monthly Review Press.

- Clark, K. and Holquist, M. (1984) Mikhail Bakhtin, London and Cambridge: The Belknap Press of Harvard University Press.
- Colletti, L. (1972) From Rousseau to Lenin: Studies in Ideology and Society, trans. J. Merrington and J. White, London: New Left Books.
- Connolly, Cyril (1945) The Condemned Playground: Essays 1927-44. London: Routledge.
- (1953) Ideas and Places, London: Weidenfield.
- Coombes, H. (1973) Review of The Country and the City, Human World 13: 69-72.
- Cooper, John Xiros (1995) T.S. Eliot and the Ideology of Four Quartets, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Coward, R. and Ellis, J. (1977) Language and Materialism: Developments in Semiology and the Theory of the Subject, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Cowling, M. (1961) 'Mr Raymond Williams', The Cambridge Review, 27 May, pp. 546-51.
- Crabbe, G. (1851) The Poetical Works of the Rev. George Crabbe. London: John Murray.
- Crowley, T. (1989a) The Politics of Discourse: the standard language question in British cultural debates, Basingstoke: Macmillan Education.
- (1989b) 'Language in History: That Full Field', News from Nowhere 6: 23-37.
- Cunningham, V. (1988) British Writers of the Thirties, Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Dahrendorf, R. (1988) 'Changing Social Values under Mrs Thatcher'

in R. Skidelsky (ed.) 1988.

Davey, K. (1989) 'Fictions of Familial Socialism', News from Nowhere 6: 38-49.

David, R.C. (ed.) (1986) Contemporary Literary Criticism: Modernism through Post-Structuralism, London and New York: Longman.

Day-Lewis, C. (ed.) (1937a) The Mind in Chains: Socialism and the Cultural Revolution, London: Fredrick Muller.

(1937b) 'Introduction' in Day-Lewis (ed.) 1937.

de Bolla, P. (1995) 'Antipictorialism in the English Landscape Tradition: A Second Look at The Country and the City' in C. Prendergast 1995a.

Derrida, J. [1965] 'La Parole Soufflee' in Derrida 1967.

---- [1966] 'Le Theatre de la Cruaute et la Cloture de la Representation' in Derrida 1967.

---- (1965) Differance in J. Derrida, Margins of Philosophy tr. A. Bass, Brighton: Harvester Press 1986.

---- (1967) L'écriture et la difference, Paris: Editions du Seuil.

---- (1994) Spectres of Marx, trans. P. Kamuf, London and New York: Routledge.

Deutscher, I. (1949) Stalin, Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dews, P. (1987) Logics of Disintegration: Post-structuralist Thought and the Claims of Critical Theory, London: Verso.

Di Michele, L. (1993) 'Autobiography and the "Structure of Feeling"' in Border Country' in D.L. Dworkin and L. Roman (eds.) 1993.

- Docker, J. (1989) 'Williams's Challenge to Screen Studies',
Southern Review 22:2
- Dollimore, J. (1984) Radical Tragedy, Brighton: Harvester.
- (1985) 'Shakespeare, Cultural Materialism, and the New
 Historicism' in J. Dollimore and A. Sinfield (eds.) 1985.
- Dollimore, J. and Sinfield, A. (eds.) (1985) Political
 Shakespeare: New Essays in Cultural Materialism, Manchester:
 Manchester University Press.
- Donoghue, D. (1984) 'Examples' London Review of Books 2-15
 February: 20-22.
- Doyle, B. (1982) 'The Hidden History of English Studies' in
 P. Widdowson (ed.) Re-Reading English, London: Methuen.
- Durant, A. (1981) Ezra Pound, Identity in Crisis: a fundamental
 reassessment, Brighton: Harvester.
- Dworkin, D.L. (1993) 'Cultural Studies and the Crisis in
 British Radical Thought' in Dworkin and Roman (eds.) 1993a.
- Dworkin, D.L. and Roman, L.G. (eds.) (1993a) Views Beyond the
 Border Country: Raymond Williams and Cultural Politics,
 London and New York: Routledge.
- (1993b) 'Introduction: The Cultural Politics of Location'
 in Dworkin and Roman (eds.) 1993a.
- Eagleton, T. and Milne, D. (eds.) (1996) Marxist Literary Theory:
 A Reader, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Eagleton, T. and Wicker, B. (eds.) (1968) From Culture to
 Revolution: The Slant Symposium 1967, London and Sydney: Sheed
 and Ward.

- Eagleton, T. (1976a) 'Criticism and Politics: The Works of Raymond Williams', New Left Review 95: 3-23.
- (1976b) Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory, London: New Left Books.
- (1982) 'Wittgenstein's Friends', New Left Review 135: 64-90.
- (1983) Literary Theory: An Introduction, Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- (1984) The Function of Criticism: From the Spectator to Post-structuralism, London: Verso.
- (1985) 'Capitalism, Modernism and Postmodernism' in New Left Review 152: 60-73.
- (1988) 'Resources for a Journey of Hope: The Significance of Raymond Williams', New Left Review 168: 3-11.
- (1989a) 'Introduction' in T. Eagleton (ed.) 1989c.
- (1989b) 'Base and Superstructure in Raymond Williams' in T. Eagleton (ed.) 1989c.
- (ed.) (1989c) Raymond Williams: Critical Perspectives, Oxford: Polity Press.
- Easthope, A. (1983) Poetry as Discourse, London: Methuen.
- (1988) British Post-Structuralism Since 1968, London and New York: Routledge.
- Edgar, D. (1984) 'Bitter Harvest' in James Curran (ed.) The Future of the Left, Cambridge: Polity Press and New Socialist.

- Eichenbaum, B. [1926] 'The Theory of the "Formal Method"', in Russian Formalist Criticism: Four Essays, ed. and tr. L.T. Lemon and M.J. Reis, Lincoln and London: Uni of Nebraska Press 1965.
- Ehrlich, V. (1955) Russian Formalism: History - Doctrine, The Hague: Mouton.
- Eldridge, John and Eldridge, Lizzie (1994) Raymond Williams: Making Connections London and New York, Routledge.
- Eliot, T.S. [1919a] 'Rhetoric' and Poetic Drama' in Eliot 1966.
 ---- [1919b] 'Tradition and the Individual Talent' in Eliot 1966.
 ---- [1921] 'The Metaphysical Poets' in Eliot 1966.
 ---- [1924] 'Four Elizabethan Dramatists: A Preface to an Unwritten Book' in Eliot 1966.
 ---- [1928] 'A Dialogue on Dramatic Poetry' in Eliot 1966.
 ---- (1934) After Strange Gods, London: Faber.
 ---- [1939] 'The Idea of a Christian Society' in Eliot 1982.
 ---- [1948] (1983) Notes Towards the Definition of Culture. London: Faber.
 ---- (1966) Selected Essays, London: Faber.
 ---- (1982) The Idea of a Christian Society and Other Writings. London: Faber.
- Elliot, Gregory (1987) Althusser: The Detour of Theory, London: Verso.
- Empson, W. (1977) 'Compacted Doctrines', The New York Review of Books, 27 October, pp. 21-2.
- Engels, L. [1894] Anti-Duhring, trans. E. Burns, Moscow: Progress Publishers, 1978.

- Fabb, N., Attridge, D., Durant, A. and MacCabe, C. (eds.) (1988) The Linguistics of Writing: Arguments between Language and Literature, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Fekete, J. (1977) The Critical Twilight: Explorations in the Ideology of Anglo-American Literary Theory from Eliot to McLuhan, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- (ed.) (1989) The Structural Allegory: Reconstructive Encounters with the New French Thought, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Ferrara, F. (1989) 'Raymond Williams and the Italian Left' in T. Eagleton (ed.) 1989c.
- Foucault, M. [1969] 'What is an Author?' in D. Lodge (ed.) 1988.
- Fox, R. [1937] (1979) The Novel and the People, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Frank, M. (1989) What is Neo-Structuralism?, trans. S. Wilke and R. Gray, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Gallagher, C. (1980) 'The New Materialism in Marxist Aesthetics', Theory and Society 9:4, pp. 633-46.
- (1992) 'Raymond Williams and Cultural Studies', Social Text 30: 79-89. Reprinted in C. Prendergast (ed.) 1995a.
- Giddens, Anthony (1979a) Central Problems in Social Theory, London: Macmillan.

- [1979b] 'Raymond Williams's Long Revolution' in
Giddens 1982: 133-43.
- (1981a) A Contemporary Critique of Historical Materialism.
London: Macmillan.
- (1981b) 'The State of Sociology', Times Literary
Supplement 27 February, 215-6.
- (1982) Profiles and Critiques in Social Theory. London:
Macmillan.
- (1996) In Defence of Sociology: Essays, Interpretations,
and Rejoinders. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Gilroy, P. (1987) 'There Ain't no Black in the Union Jack': The
Cultural Politics of Race and Nation. Chicago: University of
Chicago Press.
- Godzich, W. (1994) The Culture of Literacy. Cambridge and London:
Harvard University Press.
- Goldmann, L. (1952) Sciences Humaines et Philosophie. Paris:
Presses Universitaires de France.
- [1956] (1964) The Hidden God: A Study of Tragic Vision
in the Pensees of Pascal and the Tragedies of Racine. trans.
P. Thody. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul 1964.
- [1963] 'Introduction aux problemes d'une sociologie du roman'
in Goldmann 1969.

- [1964a] 'La methode structuraliste genetique en histoire de la litterature' in Goldman 1969.
- (1969) Pour une sociologie du roman, Paris: Collection Idees
- Goody, J. (1977) The Domestication of the Savage Mind, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1981) 'Alphabets and Writing' in R. Williams (ed.) 1981.
- (1986) The Logic of Writing and the Organization of Society, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Gordon, L. (1988) Eliot's New Life, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Gramsci, A. (1971) Selections from the Prison Notebooks, trans. Q. Hoare and G. Nowell-Smith, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Green, M. (1968) 'Literary Values and Left Politics: a Liberal Criticism' in T. Eagleton and B. Wicker (eds.) From Culture to Revolution: The Slant Symposium 1967, London and Sydney: Sheed and Ward.
- Gregor, I., Pittock, M., and Williams, R. (1959) 'Critical Forum'. Essays in Criticism 9: 425-37.
- Griffiths, T. [1972] Occupations, London: Faber and Faber.
- Grossberg, L., Nelson, C., Treichler, P. (eds.) (1992) Cultural Studies, London and New York: Routledge.
- Hall, S. et al. (1968) May Day Manifesto, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Hall, S. and Jacques, M. (1983) The Politics of Thatcherism,

London: Lawrence and Wishart

Hall, S. [1980] 'Politics and Letters' in T. Eagleton (ed.)

Raymond Williams: Critical Perspectives, Cambridge: Polity Press.

---- (1983) 'The Great Moving Right Show' in S. Hall and M. M. Jacques (eds.) 1983.

---- (1988) 'The Toad in the Garden: Thatcherism among the Theorists' in C. Nelson and L. Grossberg (eds.) Marxism and the Interpretation of Culture, Urbana: University of Illinois Press.

---- (1989) 'The "First" New Left: Life and Times' in R. Archer et al. Out of Apathy. London and New York: Verso.

Hall, S. et al. (1978) Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order, London: Macmillan.

Hare, D. (1976) Fanshen, London: Faber.

Harrison, J.F.C. (1959) 'The great debate' in Raybould (ed.) 1959.

Hartley, A. (1958) 'The Loaf and the Leaven' Manchester Guardian 7 October: 10.

---- (1959) 'Philistine to Philistine?' in Wain, J. (ed.) International Literary Annual 2, London: Calder.

---- (1962) 'The Intellectuals of England' The Spectator 4 May pp. 577-81.

Hayes, M. (1994) The New Right in Britain, London and Boulder: Pluto Press.

Heath, S. (1981) Questions of Cinema, London: MacMillan.

---- (1984) 'Modern English Man'. Times Higher Education

Supplement, 20 July 1984, p. 17.

- (1991) 'The Turn of the Subject' in R. Burnett (ed.)
Explorations in Film Theory, Bloomington and Indianapolis:
Indiana University Press.
- Hewison, Robert (1981) In Anger: British Culture in the Cold War
1945-60, New York: Oxford University Press.
- Hibbard, G.H. (1956) 'The Country House Poem of the Seventeenth
Century', Journal of the Warburg and Courtauld Institute, XIX:
159-74.
- Higgins, J. (1985) Review of Writing in Society and Beyond 2000 in
the minnesota review N.S. 24: 168-171.
- (1986) 'Raymond Williams and the Problem of
Ideology' in J. Arac (ed.) Postmodernism and Politics,
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- (1989) 'Raymond Williams 1921-1988', Pretexts: Studies in
Writing and Culture 1. 1: 79-91.
- (1990a) 'A Missed Encounter: Raymond Williams and
Psychoanalysis', Journal of Literary Studies 6. 1-2: 62-76.
- (1990b) 'The Warrior-Scholar versus the Children of Mao:
Conor Cruise O'Brien in South Africa' in B. Robbins (ed.)
Intellectuals: Politics, Aesthetics and Academics,
Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press/
- (1991) '"In Short, Poststructuralist Freudianism": Misreading
as Reading Through', Journal of Literary Studies 7, 1: 76-81.

- (1992) 'Critical Literacies: English Studies Beyond the Canon', Journal of Literary Studies 8: 3/4, pp. 86-100.
- (1995) 'Forgetting Williams' in C. Prendergast (ed.) Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- (1996a) 'Critical Literacy in Action', Southern African Review of Books Jan-Feb pp. 26-7.
- (1996b) 'Keywords and Critical Literacy', paper given at Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference, Tampere, Finland. July.
- (1997) 'De la liberte academique', Rue Descartes 17: 75-86.
- (forthcoming) 'The Legacy of Raymond Williams', English Academy Review 14 (1998).
- (forthcoming) 'Hume, Derrida and the Politics in Identity', Transpositions 1:1. 1998.
- Hill, C. (1976) Review of Keywords, New Society, 5 February,
- Hinton, W. (1966) Fanshen: A Documentary of Revolution in a Chinese Village. New York: Vintage.
- Hirschkop, K. (1989) 'A Complex Populism: The Political Thought of Raymond Williams' in News from Nowhere 6: 12-22.
- Hoggart, R. (1959) 'An Important Book', Essays in Criticism 9: 171-9.
- Holderness, G. (1991) 'Introduction to this edition' in Williams 1991: 1-14.

- Holquist, M. (1990) Dialogism: Bakhtin and his World. London and New York: Routledge.
- Hutchinson, E. M. (1971) (ed.) Aims and Action in Adult Education. London: National Institute of Adult Education.
- Ibsen, H. (1974) Ghosts and Other Plays, trans. P. Watts. Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Inglis, F. (1982) Radical Earnestness. Oxford: Martin Robertson.
- (1995) Raymond Williams. London and New York: Routledge.
- Innes, C. (1992) Modern British Drama 1890-1990. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- James, C.L.R. [1961] 'Marxism and the Intellectuals' in Spheres of Existence. London: Allison and Busby 1980.
- Jameson, F. (1972) The Prison House of Language. Princeton, N.J.: Princeton University Press.
- (1977) 'Reflections in Conclusion' in Bloch et al. 1977.
- (1991) Postmodernism, or, The Cultural Logic of Late Capitalism. London and New York. Verso.
- Jardine, L. and Swindells, J. (1989) 'Homage to Orwell: the death of a common culture, and other minefields' in Eagleton (ed.) 1989c.
- Jay, M. (1984) Marxism and Totality. Berkeley & Los Angeles: University of California Press.
- Jefferson, A. and Robey, D. (eds.) (1982) Modern Literary Theory: A Comparative Introduction. London: Batsford.
- Jessop, B., Bonnet, K., Bromley, S., Ling, T. (1984) 'Authoritarian Populism, Two Nations and Thatcherism' in New Left Review 147: pp. 32-60.

- (1985) 'Thatcherism and the Politics of Hegemony: A Reply to Stuart Hall' in New Left Review 153: pp. 87-101.
- Johnson, L. (1979) The Cultural Critics: From Matthew Arnold to Raymond Williams. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Johnson, R.W. (1990) 'Mooovement', London Review of Books, 8 February: 5-6.
- Joseph, K. (1976) Stranded on the Middle Ground? London: Centre for Policy Studies.
- Julius, A. (1995) T.S.Eliot, Anti-Semitism and Literary Form Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Kappeler, S. (1986) The Pornography of Representation. Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Kermode, F. (1959) Review of Culture and Society, Encounter 12: 86-88.
- (1966) 'Tragedy and Revolution', Encounter 27: 83-5.
- (1971) The Romantic Image, London: Fontana.
- Kettle, A. (1961) 'Culture and Revolution: A Consideration of the Ideas of Raymond Williams and Others', Marxism Today, 5: 301-07.
- (1977) Review of Marxism and Literature, Red Letters 6: 71-3.
- (1979) Review of Politics and Letters, Marxism Today 23: 28 - 29.
- Kiernan, Victor (1959) 'Culture and Society', The New Reasoner 9: 74-83.

- Knights, L. C. (1937) Drama and Society in the Age of Jonson.
New York: Barnes and Noble.
- Kolakowski, (1981) Main Currents of Marxism: Its Origins, Growth and Dissolution II: The Golden Age, trans. P.S. Falla, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Kruger, Loren (1991) 'Modernism in Exile: Raymond Williams's The Politics of Modernism', Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 3:1-2, pp.144-51.
- (1993) 'Placing the Occasion: Raymond Williams and Performing Culture' in Dworkin, D.L. and Roman, L.G. (eds.) Views beyond the Border Country, London and New York, Routledge.
- Lapsley, R. and Westlake, M. (1988) Film Theory: An Introduction.
Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- Larrain, Jorge (1979) The Concept of Ideology, London: Hutchinson.
- Lasch, C. (1973) 'The Cultural Cold War: A Short History of the Congress for Cultural Freedom' in C. Lasch The Agony of the American Left, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Latimer, D. (ed.) Contemporary Critical Theory, New York and London: Harcourt, Brace, Jovanovich.
- Leavis, F.R. [1932] New Bearings in English Poetry, Harmondsworth: Penguin.

- (1933) For Continuity. Cambridge: Minority Press.
- [1936] Revaluation: tradition and development in English poetry, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- (1943) Education and the University, London: Chatto and Windus.
- [1948] The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1983.
- [1952] The Common Pursuit, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- (ed.) (1968) A Selection from Scrutiny II, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Leavis, F. and Thompson, D. (1933) Culture and Environment: The Training of Critical Awareness. London: Chatto and Windus.
- Lerner, L. (1973) 'Beyond Literature: Social Criticism versus Aesthetics', Encounter 41 4 July pp. 62-5.
- Lewis, J. (1946-47a) 'Editorial', The Modern Quarterly, 2:1. pp. 3-15.
- (1946-47b) 'The Soviet Literary Controversy', The Modern Quarterly 2:1. pp. 74-84.
- Letwin, S.R. (1992) The Anatomy of Thatcherism, London: Fontana.
- Lichtheim, G. (1967) The Concept of Ideology and Other Essays, New York: Vintage.
- (1970) Lukacs, London: Fontana.
- Lloyd, D. and Thomas, P. (1995) 'Culture and Society' or "Culture and the State" in C. Prendergast (ed.) 1995a.
- Lodge, D. (1982) 'Middlemarch and the Idea of the Classic

- Realist Text' in Arnold Kettle (ed.) The Nineteenth Century Novel.
- (ed.) (1988) Modern Criticism and Theory: A Reader, London and New York, Longman.
- Lovell, T. (1989) 'Knowledgeable Pasts, Imaginable Futures', History Workshop Journal 27: 136-40.
- Lukacs, G. (1980) Essays on Realism, trans. D. Fernbach, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- (1954) Die Zerstörung der Vernunft, East Berlin: Aufbau Verlag.
- Lunacharsky, A. [1933] (1971) 'On Socialist Realism' in Socialist Realism in Literature and Art, Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Lusted, D. (ed.) (1989) Raymond Williams: Film TV Culture, London: NFT/BFI Education.
- MacCabe, C. [1974] 'Realism and the Cinema: Notes on Some Brechtian Theses' in MacCabe 1985.
- [1976] 'Theory and Film: Principles of Realism and Pleasure' in MacCabe 1985.
- (1979) James Joyce and the Revolution of the Word London: Macmillan.
- et al. (ed.) (1981) Godard: Images, Sounds, Politics, London: BFI/ Macmillan.
- (1985) Theoretical Essays: Film, Linguistics, Literature, Manchester: Manchester University Press.
- MacDonald, D. (1961) 'Looking Backward'. Encounter 16: 79- 84.

- Macherey, P. [1966] (1978) A Theory of Literary Production, trans. G. Wall. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- McIlroy, J. (1993a) 'The Unknown Raymond Williams' in McIlroy and Westwood (eds.) 1993.
- (1993b) 'Border Country: Raymond Williams in Adult Education' in McIlroy and Westwood (eds.) 1993.
- McIlroy, J. and Westwood, S. (eds.) (1993) Border Country: Raymond Williams in Adult Education, Leicester: National Institute of Continuing Education.
- McLellan, D. (1969) The Young Hegelians and Karl Marx, London: Macmillan.
- Marx, K. [1851] (1973) The Eighteenth Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte, in Karl Marx Surveys from Exile: Political Writings II, ed. D. Fernbach. Harmondsworth: Penguin 1973.
- Marx, K. and Engels, F. [1888] Manifesto of the Communist Party in Karl Marx The Revolutions of 1848: Political Writings I ed. D. Fernbach, Harmondsworth: Penguin 1973.
- (1975) Selected Correspondence ed. S.W. Ryazanskaya tr. I. Lasker, Moscow: Progress Publishers.
- Mason, H.A. (1938) 'The Illusion of Cogency' in Scrutiny VI:4. pp. 429-33.
- Merrill, M. (1978/9) 'Raymond Williams and the Theory of English Marxism', Radical History Review 19: 9-31.
- Middleton, Peter (1989) 'Why Structure Feeling?', News from Nowhere 6: 50-57.
- Milner, Andrew (1993) Cultural Materialism, Carlton: Melbourne University Press.

- Minogue, K. (1988) 'The Emergence of the New Right' in R. Skidelsky (ed.) 1988.
- Montrose, L. (1989) 'The Poetics and Politics of Culture' in H.A. Veenser (ed.) The New Historicism, London: Routledge.
- Moretti, F. (1983) Signs Taken for Wonders: Essays in the Sociology of Literary Forms, trans. S. Fischer, D. Forgacs, and D. Miller, London: Verso.
- (1995) Modern Epic, trans. Q. Hoare, London and New York: Verso.
- Morgan, J. (1983) 'Unquestioned Questions', Times Literary Supplement 4 November 1983 p. 1223.
- Moriarty, M. (1995) 'The Longest Cultural Journey': Raymond Williams and French Theory' in C. Prendergast (ed.) Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- Morrison, Blake (1980) The Movement: English Poetry and Fiction of the 1950s, Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Mukarovsky, J. (1970) Aesthetic Function, Norm and Value as Social Facts, Boston: Ann Arbor.
- Mulhern, Francis (1974) 'The Marxist Aesthetics of Christopher Caudwell', New Left Review 85: 37-58.
- (1979) The Moment of 'Scrutiny', London: New Left Books.
- [1984] 'Towards 2000, or News from You-Know-Where' in T. Eagleton (ed.) 1989c.
- Muller, J. (1995) 'Response to Said: Navigating Difference', Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 5:1-2, pp. 169-74.
- Nairn, T. (1983) 'Britain's Living Legacy' in Hall and Jacques

- (eds.) 1983.
- New Formations (1988) 'Identities' Number 5 Summer 1988 pp. 3-4.
- Nussbaum, F. and Brown, L. (1987) 'Revising Critical Practices: An Introductory Essay' in Nussbaum and Brown (eds.) The New Eighteenth Century: Theory/Politics/English Literature, London and New York. Methuen.
- Nzimande, B. (1996) 'Academic freedom depends on successful tranformation of higher education system'. The Sunday Independent, October 6, p. 23.
- (1997) 'Neo-liberal ideologues are hijacking the transofrmation of education', The Sunday Independant, Feb 23 p. 24.
- O'Connor, A. (1989) Raymond Williams: Writing, Culture, Politics. Oxford: Basil Blackwell.
- Orwell, G. [1945] Review of The Unquiet Grave by 'Palinurus' in G. Orwell The Collected Essays, Journalism and Letters of George Orwell: Volume III, (eds.) S. Orwell and I. Angus, Harmondsworth: Penguin.
- Parrinder, P. (1977) Authors and Authority, London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- (1981) 'Politics and Letters' in Literature and History 7: 124-6.
- (1987a) 'Culture and Society in the 1980s' in P. Parrinder The Failure of Theory: Essays on Criticism and Contemporary Fiction, Brighton: Harvester Press.
- (1987b) 'Utopia and Negativity in Raymond Williams' in

- P. Parrinder The Failure of Theory: Essays on Criticism and Contemporary Fiction. Brighton: Harvester Press.
- (1988) 'Diary' London Review of Books, February 18: 25
- Pechey, G. (1985) 'Scrutiny, English Marxism and the Work of Raymond Williams', Literature and History 11:1, pp. 65-76.
- Perelman, B. (1996) The Marginalisation of Poetry: Language Writing and Literary History, Princeton: Princeton University Press.
- Perloff, M. (1985) The Dance of the Intellect: Studies in the Poetry of the Pound Tradition, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Pinkney, T. (1989a) 'Editor's Introduction: Modernism and Cultural Theory' in Williams 1989a.
- (1989b) 'Raymond Williams and the "Two Faces" of Modernism' in Eagleton (ed.) 1989c.
- (ed.) (1989c) Raymond Williams: Third Generation, A Special Issue of News from Nowhere.
- (1991) Raymond Williams Cardiff: Poetry Wales Press.
- Pittock, M. (1962) 'The Optimistic Revolution', Essays in Criticism 12: 82-91.
- Plekhanov, G. (1953) Art and Social Life, London: Lawrence and Wishart.
- Prendergast, C. (1988) The Order of Mimesis, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (ed.) (1992) Social Text 30: Special Issue on Raymond Williams.
- (ed.) (1995a) Cultural Materialism: Essays on

- Raymond Williams. Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- (1995b) 'Introduction: Groundings and Emergings' in
C. Prendergast (ed.) 1995a.
- (1995c) 'Raymond Williams and the Culture of Nations'
Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 5, 1/2: 191-204.
- Pyle, F. (1993) 'Raymond Williams and the Inhuman Limits of
Culture' in Dworkin and Roman (eds.) 1993.
- Radhakrishnan, R. (1993) 'Cultural Theory and the Politics of
Location' in Dworkin and Roman (eds.) 1993.
- Raybould, S.G. (1948) University Standards in WEA Work. London:
WEA.
- (1949) The WEA: The Next Phase. London: WEA.
- (1951) English Universities and Adult Education. London: WEA.
- (ed.) (1959) Trends in Higher Education. London: Heinemann.
- Richards, I.A. [1929] (1970) Practical Criticism: A Study of
Literary Judgement London: Routledge and Kegan Paul.
- Riddel, P. (1985) The Thatcher Government. Oxford: Basil Blackwell
- Robin, R. (1992) Socialist Realism: An Impossible Aesthetic.
trans. C. Porter, Stanford University Press.
- Robbins, B. (1990) 'Espionage as Vocation: Raymond Williams's
Loyalties' in B. Robbins (ed.) Intellectuals: Aesthetics,
Politics, Academics. Minneapolis: university of Minnesota
Press.
- (1992) 'Foreword' to R. Williams The Sociology of Culture.
Chicago: University of Chicago Press. Second American
Edition of Williams 1981a.
- (1993) Secular Vocations: Intellectuals, Professionalism,

Culture, London and New York: Verso.

Ross, A. (1992) 'Giving Culture Hell: A Response to Catherine Gallagher', Social Text 30: 98-101.

Rossi-Landi, F. (1981) 'Language' in R. Williams (ed.) 1981c.

Said, Edward W. (1975) Beginnings: Intention and Method
Baltimore and London: John Hopkins University Press.

---- (1983) The World, the Text and the Critic, London: Faber.

---- (1989) 'Jane Austen and Empire' in T. Eagleton (ed.) 1989c.

---- (1990) 'Narrative, Geography and Interpretation', New Left Review 180: 81-97.

---- (1991) 'Identity, authority and freedom: the potentate and the traveller', Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 3:1-2, pp. 67-81.

---- (1993) Culture and Imperialism, London: Chatto and Windus.

---- (1994) Representations of the Intellectual, New York: Viking.

Samuel, Raphael (1986a) 'The Lost World of British Communism I', New Left Review 155: 119-24.

---- (1986b) 'The Lost World of British Communism II', New Left Review 156: 63-113.

---- (1989) 'Philosophy Teaching by Example: Positions present in Raymond Williams', History Workshop 27, Spring: 141-53.

---- (1996) 'Making it Up', London Review of Books, 4 July, 18:13, pp. 8-10.

Schalkwyk, D. (1992) 'The Shock of the Old: Theory and the Renaissance', Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 4:1, pp 85-97.

---- (1995) 'From Saussure to Locke', Pretexts: Studies in

- Writing and Culture 5:1/2, pp. 14-31.
- Scrivener, M. (1978/80) Review of Marxism and Literature. Telos 38: 190-98.
- Scruton, R. (1984) The Meaning of Conservatism. London: Macmillan.
- (1985) Thinkers of the New Left, London: Longman Publishing Group.
- Sharrat, B. (1982) 'Poisson: A Modest Review' in B. Sharrat Reading Relations, Brighton: Harvester Press.
- (1989) 'In Whose Voice? The Drama of Raymond Williams' in T. Eagleton (ed.) 1989c.
- Shaw, R. (1959) 'Controversies' in S.G. Raybould (ed.) Trends in Higher Education, London: Heinemann.
- Shelden, M. (1989) Friends of Promise: Cyril Connolly and the World of Horizon, London: Hamish Hamilton.
- Shiach, M. (1989) Discourse on Popular Culture: Class, Gender and History in Cultural Analysis, 1730 to the Present. Oxford: Polity Press.
- (1995) 'A Gendered History of Cultural Categories' in C. Prendergast (ed.) 1995a.
- Shklovsky, V. [1917] 'Art as Technique', in D. Lodge (ed.) 1988.
- Simpson, D. (1987) Wordsworth's Historical Imagination: The Poetry of Displacement, New York and London: Methuen.

- (1990) 'New Brooms at Fawltly Towers: Colin MacCabe and Cambridge English' in B. Robbins (ed.) Intellectuals: Aesthetics, Politics, Academics, Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press.
- (1995a) The Academic Postmodern and the Rule of Literature: A Report on Half-Knowledge, Chicago and London: University of Chicago Press.
- (1995b) 'Raymond Williams: Feeling for Structures, Voicing "History"' in C. Prendergast, (ed.) 1995a.
- Sinfield, Alan (1989) Literature, Politics, and Culture in Postwar Britain, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Sisulu, W. (1991) 'Academic Freedom and Intellectual Empowerment', Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 3:1-2, pp. 62-66.
- Skidelsky, R. (ed.) (1988) Thatcherism, London: Chatto and Windus.
- Skinner, Q. (1988) 'Language and Social Change' in J. Tully (ed.) Meaning and Context: Quewntin Skinner and his Critics, Cambridge: Polity Press.
- Spivak, G.C. (1995) 'Academic Freedom', Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 5:1-2, pp. 117-156.
- Stedman Jones, G. (1977) 'Engels and the Genesis of Marxism', New Left Review 106: 79-104.
- (1984a) Review of Towards 2000 and Wigan Pier Revisited, Marxism Today, July: 38-40.
- (1984b) 'Marching into History?' in J. Curran (ed.) The Future of the Left, Cambridge: Polity Press and New Socialist.

- Stein, W. Criticism as Dialogue, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press 1969.
- Steiner, G. (1961) The Death of Tragedy, London: Faber.
- (1977) 'Introduction' in W. Benjamin The Origin of German Tragic Drama, trans. J. Osborne, London: New Left Books.
- (1986) Antigones, London: Faber.
- (1989) Real Presences, London: Faber.
- Sullivan, R.P. (1988) Christopher Caudwell, London and New York: Routledge.
- Surin, K. (1995) 'Raymond Williams on Tragedy and Revolution' in C. Prendergast (ed.) 1995
- Swartz, L. (1995) 'Response to Said: Violence, freedom and psychology', Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 5:1-2, pp. 175-78.
- Tawney, R.H. (1934) 'Opening Address to the WEA', The Highway 27 pp. 67-71.
- Taylor, C. (1985) Philosophical Papers I: Human Agency and Language, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1989a) Sources of the Self: The Making of Modern Identity, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- (1989b) 'Marxism and Socialist Humanism' in Archer et al. 1989.
- Taylor, J.B. (1990) 'Raymond Williams: Gender and Generation' in British Feminist Thought: A Reader, T. Lovell (ed.) London: Basil Blackwell.
- Taylor, P. (1995) 'Response to Spivak: Deconstruction is an academic philosophy'. Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture

5:1-2. pp. 157-68.

Thatcher, M. (1977) Let our Children Grow Tall, London: Centre for Policy Studies.

Thomson, J.O., (1980) 'Tragic Flow: Raymond Williams on Drama', Screen Education 35: 45-58.

Thompson, E.P. (1961) 'The Long Revolution' in New Left Review 9 and 10: 24-33, 34-9.

---- (1975) 'A Nice Place to Visit' New York Review of Books 6 Feb: 34-7.

---- (1977) 'Caudwell' in R. Milliband and J. Saville (eds.) The Socialist Register: 14, London: Merlin Press.

Thompson, J. (1993) 'Realisms and Modernisms: Raymond Williams and Popular Fiction' in Dworkin and Roman (eds.) 1993

Tillyard, E.M.W. [1948] 'Is a New History of Criticism Possible?' in Tillyard 1962.

---- (1952) The Elizabethan World Picture, London: Chatto and Windus.

---- (1958) The Muse Unchained: An Intimate Account of the Revolution in English Studies at Cambridge, Cambridge: Bowes and Bowes.

---- (1962) Essays: Literary and Educational, London: Chatto and Windus.

Times Literary Supplement (1961) 'Notes towards the definition what?'. 10 March p. 147.

Times Literary Supplement (1966) 'A Time for Tragedy' 11 August pp. 717-18.

Tredell, N. (1990) Uncancelled Challenge: The Work of Raymond

- Williams. Nottingham: Pauper's Press.
- Trotsky, L. [1923] (1960) Literature and Revolution. Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press.
- Tynan, Kenneth (1964) Tynan on Theatre Harmondsworth, Penguin.
- Upward, E. (1937) 'Sketch for a Marxist Interpretation of Culture' in C. Day-Lewis (ed.) 1937.
- Vickery, Walter N. (1963) 'Zhdanovism (1946-53)' in Hayward, M. and Labedz, L. (eds.) Literature and Revolution in Soviet Russia 1917-1962. London: Oxford University Press.
- Viswanathan, G. (1993) 'Raymond Williams and British Colonialism: The Limits of Metropolitan Cultural Theory' in D.L. Dworkin and L. Roman (eds.) Views Beyond the Border Country, London and New York: Routledge.
- Volosinov, V.N. [1929] Marxism and the Philosophy of Language. trans. L. Matejka and I.R. Titunik. London and Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1986
- Walker, W. (1994) Locke, Literary Criticism, and Philosophy. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Walsh, M. (1981) The Brechtian Aspect of Radical Cinema. London: British Film Institute.
- Ward, J.P. (1981) Raymond Williams University of Wales Press for the Wales Arts Council.
- Watkins, E. (1978) The Critical Act: Criticism and Community. New Haven and London: Yale University Press.
- Watson, G. (1977a) The Leavises, the "Social", and the Left. Swansea: Bryn Mill Publishing Co.

- (1977b) 'Criticism and the English Idiom' New Universities Quarterly 31. 3: 316-40
- Watts, C. (1989) 'Reclaiming the Border Country: Feminism and the Work of Raymond Williams', News from Nowhere 6: 89-108.
- Wellek, R. (1937) 'Literary Criticism and Philosophy', Scrutiny 5:4. pp. 375-83.
- West, C. [1989] (1995) 'In Memoriam: The Legacy of Raymond Williams' in C. Prendergast (ed.) 1995a.
- Widdowson, P. (ed.) (1982) Re-Reading English. London: Methuen.
- (1989) Hardy in History: A Study in Literary Sociology, London and New York: Routledge.
- Willey, B. (1968) Cambridge and Other Memories, London: Chatto and Windus.
- Williams, J.R. [1953] Review of Drama from Ibsen to Eliot in McIlroy and Westwood (eds.) 1993.
- Wilson, S. (1995) Cultural Materialism, Oxford: Blackwell.
- Wilson Knight, G. (1930) The Wheel of Fire: Essays in the interpretation of Shakespeare's sombre tragedies. London: Oxford University Press.
- Woodcock, G. (1978) 'The Two Faces of Modern Marxism', The Sewanee Review 86: 588-94.
- Wolf, E.R. (1991) 'Freedom and Freedoms: Anthropological perspectives', Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture 3:1-2. pp. 48-61.
- Wolf, V. (1968) The Common Reader: First Series. London: The Hogarth Press.
- Wright, E. O. (1983) 'Giddens's Critique of Marxism', New Left

Review 138: 11-35.

Young, H. (1989) One of Us: A Biography of Margaret Thatcher,

London: Macmillan.

Zhdanov, Z. (1947) 'The Responsibility of the Russian Writer',

The Modern Quarterly 2, 2: 104-12.