Key Words

A Journal of Cultural Materialism

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Editor's Introduction

Michael Coyle

That Raymond Williams (1921–1988) stands among the foremost critics of the modernist era is old news; that he was himself a distinctively *modernist* critic is less often remarked. This issue of *Key Words* essays some of the ways in which Williams's critique of the modern West itself deploys distinctively modernist strategies. Its focus is on literary studies, but the authors collected here conceive that field as a species of cultural history – and that they do so is itself one mark of Williams's enduring legacy.

The first section focuses on what has largely been regarded as Williams's most important contribution to critical thought: the notion of 'keywords' so familiar to readers of this journal. As John Higgins remarks in his article, 'it's perhaps worth remembering just how frustrating it is to turn to *Keywords* for the answer to something. It's a text that questions rather than embodies authority, and resolutely refuses to offer any easy answers.' The 'keyword' essays presented here proceed in just that interrogative spirit. Deborah Cameron, Stephanie Smith and Michael Coyle all implicitly pay tribute to Williams's ability to find questions precisely where the answers have always seemed settled – to find history where the state of things might seem natural.

The articles of section two look both backwards in time and forward, contextualizing Williams's writings in a variety of historical frames. Burton Hatlen explores Williams's parleying with the work of John Ruskin, whom scholars have recently learned to see less as the Victorian moralist against whom modernist poets rebelled than as a figure whose visionary inclusiveness (and political exclusiveness) virtually made modernism inescapable. Mauro Pala situates Williams's work in the context of his studies at Cambridge, arguing that his unmistakable crossing of Leavisism with Marxism did not disturb Williams's fundamental methodological continuity with Leavis. Where Hatlen and Pala look to Williams's transformation of the Victorian discourse of 'culture', John Higgins, by contrast, considers Williams's relation to Jacques Derrida, and to a postmodernist future that Williams, at least the younger Williams, could not have foreseen. In such a forward-looking gaze, Higgins is joined by the other contributors to this section of the journal: Melba Cuddy-Keane, Epiphanio San Juan, and Lisa Fluet.

The third section comprises three reviews that focus on modernism, two of which discuss recent books that consider modernism and Williams's relation to it. Diana Wallace takes the occasion of Suzanne Raitt's new book to consider that phrase 'a modern Victorian', which in certain ways might apply even to Williams. Aaron Jaffe reviews John Higgins's new book on

Williams, and the special modernist issue of the Spanish journal *Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies*, edited by Jennifer Birkett and Stan Smith. Alan Munton takes a rather surprising turn and raises questions about the relation of Williams and modernism not to Marxism but to anarchism.

In general, then, these scholars are as interested in using modernism to rethink the power of Williams's cultural critique as they are in drawing on Williams for insight into modernism. I am grateful to the editorial board of *Key Words* for the opportunity to gather this work.

Colgate University

Keywords: 'American'

Deborah Cameron

One of the differences between being British and being American is that the *words* 'British' and 'American' behave differently in everyday discourse. This might seem a small difference, but it's not inconsequential. 'American' is a noun as well as an adjective: when I lived in the USA, I was constantly struck by how often the plural form of the noun, in particular, was used. Presidents begin their addresses to the nation, 'My fellow Americans...'; legislators enact laws such as the 'Americans with Disabilities Act'. The usage is not confined to political discourse, either, but pervades all kinds of public language. It is frequently 'more/most Americans' who are said in advertisements to prefer this or that product to rival brands. Academics, too, find it natural to give their books titles like (to take a random example) *The Overworked American*,[1] where the generic 'American' personifies a phenomenon (the erosion of workers' leisure time) which is not in principle connected to nationality, nor in practice confined to the USA.

The point most often made about this usage as an ideological phenomenon is that it represents the USA as coextensive with the entire continent of America (Canadians tend to find this particularly annoying). But while the use of the word 'American' for 'citizen/resident of the USA' may indeed be criticized as exclusionary and solipsistic, it is also ideological at a different and arguably more basic level: it means that in the course of daily life, citizens of the United States are bombarded with little reminders, like star-spangled post-it notes, that they are indeed 'Americans'. In more theoretical (Althusserian) terms, they are continually being interpellated as 'nationalized' subjects.

The endless repetition of the word 'American' in US discourse exemplifies the phenomenon Michael Billig (1995) dubs 'banal nationalism'.[2] Banal nationalism is a kind of discourse that presupposes the nation as a natural, obvious and immutable entity, and that continually places the hearer/reader in relation to that entity. Precisely because it is 'banal' rather than being a highly articulated or obviously propagandist appeal to more 'extreme' kinds of nationalist sentiment, this kind of discourse is particularly effective in reproducing all kinds of ideological propositions about nationhood and national characteristics.

As Billig's work demonstrates, Britain has its own forms of banal nationalism; but there is no exact British equivalent for the usage of 'American(s)' noted above. It is possible to speak of '*the* British' (and 'the English/Scots/Welsh') in certain contexts – usually when the speaker is about to make a sweeping generalization about national characteristics. But 'British' would

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not fit into the slot occupied by 'American' in 'my fellow Americans' – it does not function as an address term – nor is it a plausible substitute for 'American' in phrases like 'the overworked American'. To specify British nationality in those contexts, one would need instead to insert the word 'Briton', and in many cases that would be problematic. 'Briton' has the ring of archaism – it calls to mind either the ancient, semi-mythical Britain of King Arthur and Boudicca or else the patriotic song whose occasional ritualized performance has probably done most to keep the word alive: 'Rule Britannia/ Britannia rules the waves/ Britons never shall be slaves'. (There may be people in the contemporary UK for whom this song, with its echoes of lost imperial glory, is not just an embarrassing relic or a self-ironizing joke, but I don't know any myself.) There is, of course, the abbreviated nominal form 'Brit', which does not have the same archaic feel, but it is too informal for serious usage (it is impossible to imagine the Queen beginning her annual Christmas broadcast to the nation 'My fellow Brits...'). In addition, although the word is now familiar in British discourse (its shortness and slangy quality makes it especially attractive to tabloid journalists), to me it always sounds – well, *American*.

Another thing we don't have in Britain is the capacity to name the various ethnic groups that make up the population by compounding in the manner of 'African-American', 'Italian-American', 'Greek-American', 'Japanese-American'. We do speak of 'British Asians' (meaning those of Indian, Pakistani and Bangladeshi descent), and sometimes of 'Black British' citizens (though 'African-Caribbean' is commoner in reference to the largest community denoted by that term). But there is no obvious 'British' designation for, say, people whose families migrated from Cyprus, Calabria or Hong Kong, though the relevant communities are long-established in many parts of the country. Occasionally this fact is adduced as evidence either that the British are less fixated on ethnic identity politics than their US counterparts (and that Britain is all the better for it) or else that the British are intolerant of diversity and regard non-Anglos as simply alien (in other words, we are a nation of xenophobes and racists whereas the USA is a genuine 'melting pot'). Whatever we make of such proposals, one rather more mundane reason for the difference is linguistic. The terms we could coin with 'British' would foreground ancestry rather than citizenship because of the rule that adjectives precede nouns in English – we would have 'British Cypriots' or 'British Italians'. Whereas the most obvious merit of the 'American' compounds (as Jesse Jackson pointed out when championing the term 'African-American') is, precisely, that they foreground the status of various ethnic groups as (equally) 'Americans'.

Whether 'hyphenated' or not, in the USA the word 'American' most commonly expresses 'banal nationalism'; in Britain, on the other hand,

'American' tends to be used as an evaluative shorthand, applying to things which are either strongly disapproved of, or else enthusiastically admired. Specifying something as 'American' brings into play a discourse of comparison between 'American' and 'British' which must always position the two terms in a clear relationship of superiority and inferiority, dominance and subordination.

Nowhere is this particular aspect of the 'special relationship' between the two nations more evident than in relation to the use of English, the common language that famously divides us. Until recently in Britain, labelling a linguistic feature 'American' was pretty unambiguously a way of disparaging it. In the early 1990s I had occasion to research the history and current state of the 'style books' which are used by newspapers and periodicals to ensure a consistent and uniform 'house style'. In the archive of *The Times* of London I discovered numerous old style book entries and personal memos dealing with the question of 'American' usage, which was axiomatically judged to be unacceptable – vulgar, or pretentious, or simply a meaningless foreign tongue. The *Times* stylebook for 1953, for instance, explains the phrase 'ranking officer' as follows: 'this is American for an officer who is senior to another. It has no meaning in English.'[3] A more recent (1986) style guide written for *The Economist* loftily remarks that 'many Americans read *The Economist* because they like to read good English. They do not want to read prose loaded with Americanisms.'[4] In fact, the items singled out as 'Americanisms' are not always particular to US varieties of English; some are just nonstandard usages considered solecisms by the educated on both sides of the Atlantic. It is one of the unwritten rules of British pedantry that almost any innovation one disapproves of may be attributed to American influence, however dubious the evidence.

During the 1990s, however, the term 'American' applied to language began to take on more positive associations, particularly in the sphere of business and commerce. As companies adopted the practice of explicitly training employees in how to talk to customers, service encounters of all kinds began to be peppered with US politeness formulae like 'how may I help you?' (the British analogue was 'can I help you?') and 'thank you for calling X company' (*call* for 'make a telephone call' had not been widespread in British usage; we understood it, but we usually used the verb *ring*.) One rail company even instructed employees to 'put American-style friendliness into your voice', as if sounding friendly were inherently an 'American' trait.

What these borrowings from the USA really reflected was a determination to change the notoriously surly traditions of customer service in Britain – the goal was 'better service' rather than specifically 'American service'. But as usual, America functioned as Britain's other; since British service was known to be appalling, the USA became, for the purposes of the discourse,

the home of service excellence. But invoking 'American' language-use as a model sometimes backfired precisely because of the symbolic weight of the British/American opposition. Relatively passive in the face of new management practices which increased their working hours, abolished their union rights and job security and policed their behaviour in countless undignified ways, British workers could still be incited to open rebellion by the apparently trivial demand that they adopt certain 'American' verbal customs. I met a Scottish waitress who had resigned when instructed by hotel managers to say 'have a nice day' to guests. Supermarket workers in a small Scottish town were outraged by the introduction of a 'greeter' who handed customers a basket at the door and exhorted them to 'enjoy your shopping experience'. This innovation was eventually suspended because of hostility from both staff and customers. And what they said about it was not 'this is demeaning' or 'this is ludicrous'; it was 'this is *American*'.

If someone had told the employees that the custom came from Japan (where in fact store greeters are a well-established feature of commercial culture) it would still have appeared 'alien', but might have escaped the very particular censure that is often applied by reflex to all things 'American'. To adopt a Japanese custom or verbal expression makes you cosmopolitan – there is no danger of becoming indistinguishable from what you imitate. But adopting American customs and expressions, in the British context, threatens to erase the differences without which, in a US-dominated world, we have come to suspect that we are nothing.

British speakers' uses of *American* are caught between desire and disapproval; in US usage, on the other hand, it is difficult to resist the impression that we are dealing with the lexical equivalent of Teflon: unpleasant substances do not stick to it. (Recall, for instance, the way the 1960s and 1970s counter-culture respelled 'America' as 'Amerika' to distance themselves from mainstream, positive meanings. This convention didn't stick either, or not for long.) A recent study of British (or, more specifically, English) people's talk about 'this country'[5] found that informants were reluctant to express pride in being British; not because they were necessarily ashamed of where they came from, but because they understood the *vocabulary* of British nationality as problematic, implying an unappealing mixture of nostalgia and xenophobia. This appears to be one problem denizens of the USA, excepting the most 'counter-cultural', don't have in describing themselves as 'American'. Or perhaps I should say that they don't have it *yet* ...

Notes

1 Juliet Schor, *The Overworked American: The Unexpected Decline of Leisure* (New York: Basic Books, 1992).

2 Michael Billig, *Banal Nationalism* (London and Thousand Oaks: Sage Publications, 1995).

3 *The Times Style Book* (London: *The Times*, 1953), p. 128.

4 *The Economist Pocket Style Book* (London: Economist Publications, 1986), p. 7.

5 Susan Condor, 'Pride and Prejudice: Identity Management in English People's Talk about "This Country"', *Discourse and Society* 11, 2 (1992), pp. 175–205.

Keywords: 'Scab'

Stephanie A. Smith

During the latter half of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth, both working conditions and wages for the average labourer in the United States were appalling; by the dawn of the twentieth century, labour unionization and activism, as well as international pressures with respect to what are now termed 'human rights' had forced an increasingly public, sometimes violent, debate about these conditions. Between 1900 and 1919, the National Labor Union (NLU) and the National Colored Labor Union (NCLU) gained steadily in membership; the International Workers of the World (IWW – sometimes vilified as the I Won't Work party) was formed; *Das Kapital* was published for the first time in the USA; the Uprising of the 20,000, as well as the infamous New York Triangle Shirtwaist Company disaster, riveted the public's attention; while in Russia, Japan, Germany and Mexico, women's groups, like the Japanese Seitoscha (Blue Stockings), were springing up. As both Michael Perleman, in his work *The Invention of Capitalism*,[1] and Alan Trachtenburg, along different lines in his work *The Incorporation of America*,[2] note, to work for a wage was a means of remuneration slow to become 'natural' or taken for granted, in either the United States or in Britain. Before and during the Civil War, slavocrats, who opposed the Northern industrialization, as well as those many who supported abolition, called working for a daily or an hourly wage 'wage slave labour' or 'industrial slavery'.

In 1910, anarchist Emma Goldman's essay 'The Traffic in Women' first appeared, published by her own press, the Mother Earth Publishing Association. Arguing that 'the economic and social inferiority of woman is responsible' for prostitution – loudly decried in the press by Christian reform workers and politicians at the time as 'white slave traffic'[3] – Goldman quotes sexologist Havelock Ellis as follows:

> The wife who married for money, compared with the prostitute ... is the true scab. She is paid less, gives more in return in labour and care, and is absolutely bound to her master. The prostitute never signs away the right over her own person, she retains her freedom and personal rights, nor is she always compelled to submit to man's embrace. (183)

Ellis's use of the word 'scab' in this context compels attention, since it seems, from the perspective of the early twenty-first century, out of place.

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Scab – American slang for a workman who refuses to join an organized movement on behalf of his trade – would seem to have little to do with sex.

The first recorded use of the word 'scab' was *circa* 1250. It meant what it still means to this day: a blemish or crust on the skin, sometimes associated with skin diseases such as scabies, eczema or mange. By 1529, the word had acquired another meaning in England. It became slang for a rascal or scoundrel (according to the *OED*): 'Love is such a proud scab, that he will never meddle with foules or children', and so the leap to its meaning in American slang seems to have begun in Britain, although the first recorded use of 'scab' as a strike-breaker did not officially make its appearance until *circa* 1806 at a trial of striking boot- and shoemakers, meaning to behave as a 'scab' or 'blackleg'. It also meant to scab a job: that is, to perform, or employ another to perform, the job of a striking worker, and take his or her place.

From blemish to heart-breaker to strike-breaker: the etymological history of the word 'scab' shows a displacement of meaning from the visceral or physical to the moral register; and yet the retention of the physical as metaphor still inhabits this word, since the 'scab' remains a blemish – a blemish on the social body of labour, an almost physical wound to the solidarity of workers. And if, as Marxism implies, labour under capitalism is that which is most one's own, yet most taken away, then the site of labour can also serve as the site of a wounding or trauma. Certainly slave labour and indentured servitude – the modes of labour with which the United States was first built and formed – were by and large backbreaking, agricultural labour, a lifelong and wounding punishment to those enslaved or virtually enslaved, as well as a serious blemish on the heady political experiment of representative democracy. As Herman Melville wrote during the Civil War, the American experiment from the outset seemed 'the word's fairest hope/ linked with man's foulest crime'.[4] Directly after the Civil War, when unpaid slave labour was no longer legally available, the criminal justice system stepped in to provide, so that any person found to be a 'vagrant' could be arrested and sentenced to hard labour – thus assuring the South a new-if-old population of African-American unpaid labourers. Today, despite the pressure brought to bear upon various Departments of Correction during the civil rights era, state prisoners continue to be exploited as a cheap workforce. Chain-gangs, which had virtually vanished during the late 1960s and 1970s, now clear brush, tend highways, clean up trash, and although equal opportunity may elude women in other spheres, the all-female chain-gang is not uncommon.

Thus while a scab may cover over a wound, the word marks the site of that yet-to-be-healed trauma, in the way scab labour, from the perspective of management, stems the resource drain (blood/money) of a strike – another word whose etymological history, as Alan Trachtenberg wrote,

> ran deep in the history of work, naming a variety of simple, basic acts in the crafts of carpentry, surveying, bricklaying, tanning, farming, shipbuilding, fishing and sailing. Directly from the nautical meaning of lowering sails or taking down, and more generally unfixing and putting out of use, the term began to appear early in the industrial era in its familiar sense of work stoppage. To strike work or tools was to assert the power of workers over the process of production: to strike was, in short, an act of work, albeit negative. (89)

Such an etymo-'logic' with respect to work and wounds has a long, involved and even mythic history. According to the Bible, Adam and Eve were made to labour – he in the fields, she in childbirth – as punishment for eating the apple of knowledge. This example tempts one to conclude that to labour is not only to be hurt; it is also to gain knowledge.

Common sense, however, says otherwise – and has done so for generations now, particularly in the United States. Thinking, writing, research: these activities are not considered labour, not precisely, even among those who spend their lives at this particular line of work. Nineteenth-century writers such as Emerson, Thoreau, Hawthorne, Alcott, Melville, Davis all knew full well that writing was wage-labour, since authors were paid by the word, a practice one could still find, in the early 1980s, among smaller trade or genre journals, a scale of pay that tended to make an author infamously long-winded. And yet, at the same time, each writer doubted that writing was legitimate work.

Certainly to labour in the fields of academe – despite the metaphor – is not regarded as bona fide 'labour' by the vast majority of Americans. Even teachers themselves doubt it and will claim to work 'for the love of teaching' despite indecent pay, low respect and increasingly hazardous if not fatal on-the-job conditions. In the late 1970s, for example, when faculty at Boston University tried to form a teachers' union, president John Silber called in the Boston police, who used tear-gas and truncheons to restrain the wild, tweed-clad professoriat. And although graduate students at major research institutions, where they do the bulk of the undergraduate teaching, have been creating and joining trade unions since the 1980s – for example, graduate students at UC Berkeley in the mid to late 1980s finally chose to affiliate with the AFL–CIO in order to give their union some teeth – such union organizing is still regarded by many as misguided.

But if the biblical link between labour and knowledge is often effaced by common sense, the link between sex and the division of labour is not. Women have laboured – and continue to labour, despite affirmative-action laws, which are under increasing scrutiny – in very different ways and on

different pay-scales to men. In one of his most ebulliently dark satiric stories of 1855, 'The Paradise of Bachelors, the Tartarus of Maids', Herman Melville laid bare all the links between sex, knowledge, law and labour under a burgeoning industrial capitalist economy; the paper millworkers, all 'maids' labouring in a man-made hell, have had to sacrifice 'sex' to an industry that supplies the material wealth of the gay and lusty lawyer-'bachelors'. The bachelors much prefer each other and food to heterosexual and domestic enslavement; they perpetuate their own system of bachelor privilege by writing laws designed to keep the 'maids' celibate, barren and in their place. Marriage, in Melville's satire, has become obsolete.[5] In a different vein, Emma Goldman pursued such links between sex and the division of labour, not only in the domain of economics but also in the social and moral registers, by noting that marriage contracted under circumstances of financial need or gain was the moral equivalent of prostitution because a prostitute 'properly defined is any person for whom sexual relationships are subordinated to gain' (182). The fact of a dowry, or the practice of marrying 'up', are evidence for Goldman's claim; and although 'marriage is the goal of every girl ... thousands of girls cannot marry ... [and] our stupid social customs condemn them either to a life of celibacy or prostitution' (181–2). Thus for Goldman, all women – no matter what their race or social position – are, functionally, prostitutes (unless celibate). Or, as she asked:

> What is really the cause of the trade in women? Not merely white women, but yellow and black as well. Exploitation, of course; the merciless Moloch of capitalism that fattens on underpaid labour, thus driving thousands of women and girls into prostitution.... Nowhere is woman treated according to the merit of her work, but rather as a sex. (176)

The only means of eradicating the 'oldest profession', she claimed, was 'a complete transvaluation of all accepted values – especially the moral ones – coupled with the abolition of industrial slavery' (189).

But such a complete transvaluation of accepted values has not yet, nearly a century later, taken place. From the 1950s' film *How to Marry a Millionaire* to one of the television 'events' of 2000, *Do you Want to Marry a Millionaire?*, American popular culture suggests that marriage and prostitution remain two sides of the same capitalist coin – although the rate of inflation has so grown since 1956 that any woman marrying for a million these days could be said to be selling herself *short*. At least Marilyn Monroe's sought-after million might have bought something besides the kind of press Darva Conga set herself up to receive, although that, I admit, is a debatable if not risible claim.

Notes

1 See Michael Perleman, *The Invention of Capitalism: Classical Political Economy and the Secret History of Primitive Accumulation* (Durham, NC and London: Duke University Press, 2000).

2 See Alan Trachtenberg, *The Incorporation of America: Culture and Society in the Gilded Age* (New York: Hill & Wang, 2000).

3 Emma Goldman, 'The Traffic in Women', in *Red Emma Speaks*, ed. Alix Shulman (Amherst, NY: Humanity Books, 1998), p. 175.

4 Herman Melville, 'Misgivings', collected in *Battle-Pieces and Aspects of the War: Civil War Poems*, introduction by Lee Rust Brown (New York: Da Capo Press, 1995), p. 13.

5 Herman Melville, 'The Paradise of Bachelors, the Tartarus of Maids', in *Billy Budd and Other Stories* (New York: Penguin Books, 1986), pp. 259–86.

Keywords: 'Cover Song'

Michael Coyle

No aspect of Raymond Williams's work has been more widely imitated or even appropriated than his concept of 'keywords' – and for good reason. His attention to the informing power of history in the words that we use to tell history, shape tradition, and generally understand ourselves lends itself to investigators of any political orientation.[1] Moreover, although Williams himself deployed his concept of 'keywords' to articulate a national tradition, other scholars, including many of those published in this journal, have used it to open up more particular areas of cultural activity. Such is my purpose in what follows, except that I hope to use this particular investigation to discover the progress of a fundamentally important cultural fault line.

Observing Williams's own tendency, in *Keywords* and elsewhere, to begin with 'problems quite literally of understanding my immediate world',[2] this essay grows out of a problem arising in the course of ordinary work. I teach English at Colgate University, in rural New York state, where I also serve as faculty adviser to the college radio station, and as a jazz DJ. Many of the student DJs with whom I work enrol in a course that I offer concerned with the changing formations of popular music after the Second World War (swing, bebop, r&b, jump blues, early rock'n'roll). These student DJs typically bring their accustomed radio-station vocabulary with them to class, and eventually I found myself growing increasingly interested in how poorly much of it fits post-war processes of production and distribution, reception and consumption. All vocabularies change with time, but there was one instance whose contemporary use to describe what was happening in the decade after the Second World War seemed particularly anachronistic – and particularly revealing of much that has happened since.

The notion (and I use the vague 'notion' instead of 'concept', as above, deliberately) of the 'cover song' is familiar to anyone who follows contemporary popular music: as commonplace among fans as it is with producers, DJs, managers and artists. The term functions today to designate any occasion where one artist records a song associated with another artist. It has not always been thus, and the ease with which we currently invoke the term conceals much that is historically specific about the circulations and function of contemporary popular music. Some of what I say about the 1940s and 1950s will be specific to North America. The term 'cover' carries perhaps less of the racial charge in Britain and in Europe than it does in the United States, in large part because virtually all of the so-called 'invasion' bands of the 1960s shaped their identity by covering African-American

material; nevertheless, the term carried over the Atlantic almost immediately after becoming current in North America.

Let's begin with an example from about five years ago: country singer Dwight Yoakum's 1997 release *Under the Covers*. Designed to show off Yoakam's range, the album invites us to admire Yoakam's boldness of choice, mixing versions of country chestnuts by Glenn Campbell, Jimmie Rogers or Buck Owens with oldies by the Beatles, the Stones or the Kinks, and even the Clash's 'Train in Vain' – itself now an oldie for certain audiences. Proposing relations wherein the unlikely can seem 'natural', the album highlights Yoakam's crossover appeal for pop audiences. Packaging visuals amplify the same semiotic process. Both inlay and programme notes offer images of Yoakam in bed, 'under the covers', with a comely model. Neither wears anything but a strategically draped sheet and lavishly tooled and prominently displayed cowboy boots; Yoakam also sports his cowboy hat. As a site for intimacy, the bedroom suggests a delivery of the 'real' Yoakam: half in jest, all in earnest. He can't help but be true to himself – those boots, like the identity they help perform, apparently stick out no matter what he plays. That promise is doubtless genuine, given the mainstream market for country music since the early 1990s, and is here more interesting in itself than the product for which it is guarantee.

Despite Yoakam's showy defiance of musical genres, there's nothing particularly iconoclastic about such border crossings.[3] In an age where singers become 'artists' as much by their songwriting ability as their delivery, numerous performers from the early Beatles and the Rolling Stones to Bryan Ferry or Madeleine Peroux have nevertheless made their reputations by reinventing familiar songs: they project their identity precisely *by* singing songs associated with another voice or style. Since the consolidation of rock'n'roll, the 'cover song' has established itself as a way for performers to signify difference, much as the presentation of 'standards' serves jazz musicians. But whereas 'standards' have long provided jazz audiences with familiar points of departure, 'cover' songs – or recordings, we should say – have a more troubled history. The practice of 'covering' the recording of another artist arises at a very particular moment in cultural history, and derives not from the play of 'standards' in jazz but from post-war forms of music-industry competition. My purpose is to clarify what is meant by a 'cover record', and explore why that clarity matters.

That purpose is unfortunately complicated by the survival of this single term through various historical changes, so that it now indiscriminately designates any occasion of rerecording.[4] Disentangling the various senses of the term teaches much about the changing relations of pop music both to its audience and to the discourses that plot its significance. What we now so ubiquitously refer to as 'cover' records developed from a practice as old

as the recording industry itself. Like everything else in the United States, that practice was informed by racial segregation, and acknowledged the existence of distinctly black and white musical markets. The 'cover' record per se developed only when 'race' records began to have mass appeal on 'white' pop charts, and the key figure in that process was none other than Elvis Presley: the 'King' came to his throne largely on the strength of the first cover records the world had ever known.

I say this wholly aware that the identification of 'the first cover record' has become something of a parlour game. Different critics identify different records, but they do so in large part because they understand the term in different ways. Four recent examples suffice quickly to make the point. First, Richard Aquila's recent essay, 'The Homogenization of Early Rock and Roll', exemplifies how the conflation of different historical practices can hinder even self-consciously revisionist history. In the course of an admirably balanced critique of the myth that rock'n'roll was virtually homogenized to death between 1958 and 1964, Aquila claims that 'the first imitative cover record came in [July of] 1954, when Mercury Records signed a white pop group, the Crew Cuts, to record a pop version of the Chords' r&b hit, "Sh-Boom".[5] Certainly Aquila is right to sense that the Crew Cuts' cutting in on the Chords' profits exploited the market in a newly insidious way. The Crew Cuts' very name signified their whiteness; hailing from Toronto, before signing with Mercury they had called themselves the Canadaires. Nevertheless, there were earlier instances of a white 'cover' record halting the crossover success of an r&b record. Charles Wolfe, in his programme notes to *Your Hit Parade: The Mid-50s* (Time–Life, HPD-21), describes an instance of a few months earlier that, while accidental, first caught the industry's attention. The McGuire Sisters recorded 'Goodnight, Sweetheart, Goodnight' after hearing a demo of the Moonglows doing it; but, in the meantime, a Chicago doo-wop group called the Spaniels issued their version of the song on the Vee-Jay label and watched it climb the rhythm and blues charts. When the McGuires got their version out, they unknowingly became the first group to have a major pop hit with a cover version of an r&b song.

In getting that hit the McGuire Sisters thus inadvertently knocked the Spaniels out of the game; it's the result in this instance and not the intention that exemplifies the general practice Aquila so rightly deplores. Mercury Records shrewdly seized on the accident of 'Goodnight, Sweetheart, Goodnight' and over the next few years regularly used American apartheid to exploit black artists. As Reebee Garofalo observes, only the Decca label approached Mercury's level of success in this regard. Nevertheless, Mercury's expropriation of the Chords' profits was not in any simple way unprecedented. Garofalo submits that

> The practice of making cover records began in earnest in 1953 when June Valli recorded 'Crying in the Chapel' for RCA. At the time it was released, there were three other versions of the song out, two country and one r&b. The r&b release by Sonny Til and the Orioles [August 1953] had crossed over to the pop market and was enjoying considerable success until it was eclipsed by the Valli cover, which became one of the best-selling records of the year.[6]

Garofalo's book is in general immensely valuable, but his account here unfortunately suggests a primarily racial basis for Valli's success. As Philip Ennis has explained, 'Crying in the Chapel' was originally a 'country "sacred" song' written by 'the father of a young country artist, Darell Glen, who moved it onto both the pop and the country charts'.[7] The Orioles had actually begun taking chart action away from Glen when the pop recording by June Valli buried everyone.

Ennis suggests an earlier and for our purposes a more useful instance. In late September of 1951, feisty little Atlantic Records debuted a recording that charted for twenty-two weeks, including six weeks as r&b and jukebox bestseller: the Clovers' 'Fool Fool Fool' (written by Atlantic president Ahmet Ertegun). As it began to cross over to the pop charts, 'Fool Fool Fool' was 'covered soon after by Capitol's Kay Starr', a white pop singer. 'Her version of the song in August 1952 was a moderate hit and reopened the door to the practice of pop performers covering r&b hits.'[8] Ennis takes interest in Starr's cover because he sees it as a formative moment in the consolidation of rock'n'roll, but what I find striking here is that there were but two competing versions of the song: *that* is the harbinger of things to come. Instead of a successful song inciting several competing recordings released on several competing labels, as we see even with 'Crying in the Chapel', 'Fool Fool Fool' was a contest with one contender black and one contender white. In this sense, it enacts a kind of exploitation that qualitatively differed from mere market opportunism. By contrast, when Mercury recut 'Sh-Boom' it did not, in today's sense of the word, create a 'cover' record but simply engaged in the time-honoured practice of *hijacking a hit*.

This is not to say that the A&R people at Mercury wouldn't have described what they were making as a 'cover'; the term was already a familiar synonym for 'hijacking a hit'. The point is that no one in 1954 would have used the word 'cover' to mean what we mean by it today. This is the confusion in Aquila's account, although it certainly is not one of his making. The confusion here arises from the continuity of a single descriptive term across discontinuous marketing practices. The notion of 'covering' a song has changed radically in meaning because the structure of the industry – the relation of writers to performers to audiences – has itself changed radically.

Since mid-century it has become virtually impossible to 'hijack' a hit because audiences today tend to identify songs with singers. In commenting on one of the earlier occasions of this kind of identification, Stuart Nicholson makes the point concisely. Discussing Billie Holiday's 1939 recording of 'Strange Fruit',[9] Nicholson remarks:

> 'Strange Fruit' was a landmark recording of a very different kind than was perceived at the time. It was one of the very first popular songs that became impossible to disentangle from a single, specific recording. This would later become commonplace in pop and rock music: songs such as 'Heartbreak Hotel' or 'What's Going On?' or 'Bohemian Rhapsody' are impossible to separate from their respective performances by Elvis Presley, Marvin Gaye and Queen. Singer and song are bonded in a way that exhausts the meaning of the material, achieving an autonomy that transcends simplistic chord progressions and mediocre lyrics by embracing both musical and non-musical factors, among them style, fashion and sex appeal.

That 'Strange Fruit' was one of the first records to bond singer and song does not, of course, mean that music industry marketing changed after its release. The changes to which Nicholson refers were not perceived at the time; it required another twenty years before the industry began to recognize what was taking place. It is nonetheless significant that this change made its historic appearance in one of the first recordings overtly to cry out against racism. 'Strange Fruit' was not a record that could be hijacked by even the most sympathetic of white singers. When 'cover' records later diverged from 'hijacked hits', it would be precisely over this issue of racial credibility.

Despite its origin within the music industry itself, the phrase 'the hijacking of hits' is misleading. It's misleading because it suggests that there was something illegal in the practice of producing new versions of money-making songs. In fact, there wasn't – though by the late 1950s there were lawsuits over the copying of specific arrangements. The practice had its origin in an earlier stage of the music industry, the long period unfolding across the nineteenth century and through the 1930s when the industry's principal source of revenue was the sale of sheet music: under those conditions it was good business to have as many performers plugging your song as possible. By the end of World War II, the formation of r&b was already changing all of that; but, while some recognized that the future of the music industry lay in recordings, the release of competing versions of the same song remained standard operating procedure.

Consider two post-war examples, both involving multiple parties and big

sales. First, the song that was number one on the *Billboard* 'Honor Roll of Hits' on 1 March 1947: 'Open the Door Richard'. As Arnold Shaw tells the story, the song emerged from an old routine by black vaudevillian Dusty Fletcher (who himself took the routine from comedian James Mason). Shortly after the war, former Lionel Hampton saxophonist Jack McVea joined that routine to a musical riff:

> The musical riff for these words ('Open the Door, Richard... Open the Door, Richard') became so familiar to radio listeners in 1947 that NY Station WOR banned all airings of the tune and requested comedians to lay off 'Richard' gags. By then there were as many as fourteen different versions. Among the majors, Capitol offered a disk by the Pied Pipers; Decca, by Louis Jordan; Victor, by Count Basie; Mercury, by Bill Samuels & the Cats'n'Jammer Three; and Columbia, a disk by the Three Flames and another by the Charioteers. Eight 'indies' sought to mine a bit of silver out of what seemed an endless vein. Apollo was on the market with a Hot Lips Page recording; King, with Hank Penny; Manor, with Big Sid Catlett's Ork; Majestic, with The Merry Macs; Empey with Tosh 'One-String' Weller & His Jivesters; [Black & White, with Jack McVea;] and National, with Dusty Fletcher himself.[10]

The crowd of competing 'Richards' is remembered by Shaw and other historians because it occasioned serious litigation over copyright. The 'song' was really more of a routine that developed over several years with contributions from numerous performers; after industry lawyers added *their* two bits 'songsheets and records carried four names: words by Dusty Fletcher and James Mason, music by Jack McVea and Dan Howell'.[11] I recall 'Open the Door, Richard' here, however, to illustrate what was then a common situation: it was not only that different record companies competed to win the biggest share of consumer interest in a particular song – individual companies themselves regularly released competing recordings. In the case of the multiple versions of 'Richard', some were black and some were white; some were r&b, some were pop and some were country. None of these versions – not even Dusty Fletcher's – claimed special status as the 'original'. In an era when 'crossover' was unlikely, and when the popularity of a song could still be regional, competition between different recordings of the same song helped sell sheet music, helped carry a song into new markets, and could even stimulate the sales of all versions. As a second example, consider the novelty song 'Rag Mop'. Originally written for Bob Wills's Texas Playboys, it was brought to the r&b charts in 1946 by trumpeter Henry 'Red' Allen, and then again – in a slyly naughty remake – by Louis

Jordan. In 1950 a new recording by Lionel Hampton returned the song to the charts – but Hampton's hit was immediately hijacked by three new pop versions, two additional r&b versions, and even another country & western version. None of the musicians involved was alarmed by the situation: after all, musicians tended to regard the primary purpose of records as boosting the price of personal appearances, rather than performances serving – as they have for the last forty years – to promote the sale of records.[12]

As of 1950, consumers, particularly consumers of pop, still generally bought the songs and not the singers. Apart from the practice of competing versions of any one song, the prevalence of this tendency can be measured by the long-running success of a radio show that eventually moved to television: running from 1935 to 1959, 'Your Hit Parade' presented the top seven to fifteen tunes of the week, 'served up by maestro Lennie Hayton, the Hit Paraders and the Lucky Strike Orchestra'.[13] Although it featured and sometimes created nationally celebrated singers on its staff, including Frank Sinatra, Dinah Shore, and – as we'll note momentarily – Georgia Gibbs, the show staff presented all songs. It was this feature that initially helped consolidate a national audience for 'Your Hit Parade', and it was just this feature that finally killed the show a couple of years after Elvis Presley's emergence changed the rules of pop success. However, before that change, the primary concern for any record company was not the exclusive identification of a song with one artist, but the timely release of *its* version so as to catch the wave of public interest before it subsided. Producers recorded songs 'on' singers, rather than made recordings 'of' an artist.

The business of 'hijacking hits' remained standard operating procedure as long as the market for popular music was driven more by the consumption of songs than by any particular recordings of them. Although the formation of rock'n'roll would eventually reverse that relation, it appeared at first only to compound it. Thus it was that the 'hijacking' of hits outlived its original context and, by enduring into new contexts, came to function and signify in ethically disturbing ways. As pop historians have often noted, in the first fifteen years after the Second World War, the hijacking of hits became one of the favoured means for white capital to exploit black talent. Many stars of 1950s' r&b lost money to pale yet promotionally powerful remakes of their most successful songs, but probably none lost more than LaVern Baker. Despite the fact that Baker came of age steeped in blues tradition, Atlantic Records had decided to market her as a pop and novelty singer; this orientation, ironically enough aimed at crossover, was to make her especially susceptible to hijacking. As soon as her 1955 recording of 'Tweedle Dee' hit, for example, Mercury Records rushed out a copy with pop-warbler Georgia Gibbs. Now, even though Mercury Records was only five years older than Atlantic, it exercised at the time considerably more market muscle; the

Gibbs hijack thus entered the lists with a significant advantage over Baker's small-label original. In a sense, the hijacking of hits just beginning to climb the charts had always been Gibbs's trademark; given her early national exposure as a staff member of 'Your Hit Parade' (1937), it was how she first had made her name. During her mid-1950s' tenure at Mercury, Gibbs rarely recorded a song that was not already a confirmed money-maker; besides Baker, she also made money on hits by Alan Dale, Hank Ballard, Lillian Briggs, even – her producers no doubt emboldened by earlier success – Tony Bennett.[14] In fairness, it has to be said that Gibbs had no more control over her material than did Baker; for most performers of the time – including Elvis Presley – it was producers and managers who determined the vehicles for singers. Still, the point is that the roster of Gibbs's hijackees suggests that there was no vision involved here, either heavenly or infernal; that Hank Ballard and Tony Bennett both enjoyed her attention suggests that she and her producers did not even target a particular market niche.

None of these hijackings displays any concern about artistic integrity, or about what critics today regard as 'authenticity'. In the 1990s, the discourse of 'authenticity' informs virtually all musical idioms, from jazz to hip-hop to alternative (it might be a sign of techno/electronica's claim to the pop future that it alone thus far remains outside the discourse). But as of the mid-1950s that discourse had yet to cross over from gospel, where it originated, or from the so-called 'folk' stream (as Ennis has dubbed it), or from modern jazz.[15] For the gospel community, it was of paramount importance to distinguish between those performers genuinely committed to spreading the word and those who sought the rewards of Mammon.

Of the earliest gospel performers to carry the music outside of the church, and consequently to be censured by the faithful, the case of Sister Rosetta Tharpe proves the most instructive. What distinguishes Tharpe from other performers like Wynona Carr or Ray Charles is that she never forsook her musical ministry – never wholly abandoned the narrow way for Broadway – and it was precisely her enduring commitment to God's work that made her sensitive to criticism. She was still young when that commitment was first tested. A singer–evangelist in the Sanctified Church, her growing reputation caught the attention of John Hammond, who invited her to perform in his 1938 'Spirituals to Swing' concert at Carnegie Hall. Her success there led to performances with Cab Calloway, and then in 1941 she signed with Lucky Millinder's Orchestra, where she was – with 'Mr. Blues' Wynonie Harris – one of the orchestra's two featured vocalists. Although Tharpe continued to sing adapted versions of gospel tunes – re-presenting 'Hide Me in Thy Bosom' as 'Rock Me', for instance – church people judged her by the company she kept. Despite her protests that it was her mission to carry the word to more than just the already converted, objections to her

profaning of sacred music grew increasingly intolerant. Consequently, in 1944, she recorded 'Strange Things Happen Every Day'. The song, perhaps because it charged 'church people' with hypocrisy, became one of the very first gospel recordings to cross over to secular audiences. In the spring of 1945 it held the number 2 spot for two weeks on *Billboard*'s national 'Race' charts, and charted for a total of eleven weeks. The opening lines of the song make her position clear:

> Oh we hear church people say they are in the 'Holy Way',
> There are strange things happening everyday.

For Tharpe, the 'strange thing' is that any believer should be so sure of their own sanctity as to declare it to the world. For us, however, the strange thing is not that her song about the church should have met with popular success, but that the insistence on 'authenticity' which Tharpe endured and from which she struggled to escape should itself eventually have crossed over along with her song.

The long and complex story of how the discourse of authenticity made that crossing is beyond my concerns here.[16] The effect of this discourse on the consumption of pop music, however, is very much to the point: the consumers of popular records expect that their purchase involves more than just a recording – they are buying a 'whole' product that somehow involves the ideological commitments of the artists. Pop musicians today characteristically must prove their right to trade in/on a particular musical idiom: like the gospel performers of Rosetta Tharpe's day, they are expected to live the life they represent in song. There are no formal rules on how such demonstrations should be made, but (to pick a couple of infamous examples from the 1980s) the noisy failures of performers like Vanilla Ice, MC Hammer or Milli Vanilli leave no doubt as to the pressure of informal rules. Moreover, although issues of authenticity become more significant when race is involved, they are by no means limited to black music. As our example of Dwight Yoakum exemplifies, they also play in the construction of various models of whiteness. In such constructions of identity, the making of 'cover' records has become a time-honoured way of asserting credentials.

Nevertheless, to return to Georgia Gibbs's service in Mercury Records' exploitation of LaVern Baker, the hijacking of black hits by white artists has not always involved questions of identity. In her hijackings of Baker, Gibbs was like any other pop musician of the era – including Baker. The only issue apparently motivating Gibbs and her handlers at Mercury was commercial success. Gibbs's cover of 'Tweedle Dee' certainly found that. Baker herself estimates that she lost at least $15,000 in royalties – big money in 1955 –

to Gibbs's enterprise.[17] Unfortunately for Baker, however, 'Tweedle Dee' was only the first time that Gibbs stole the fire from one of her hits. The next year Gibbs hijacked Baker's 'Tra La La', taking her version to number 24 on the pop disc-jockey charts; Baker's original didn't make these charts at all, and reached no higher than 94th in the Pop Top 100. These various chart distinctions are important, because they tell us that while consumers were happy enough to put down for Baker's records, both in record shops and in jukeboxes, white disc jockeys were still refusing to play black records for white audiences.

That all of this would change, and indeed was changing, is old news. Even in 1955 Alan Freed was already satisfying all doubts that the colour of money is green no matter what colour the hands that spend it. Still, the hijacking by white companies of black records just climbing the charts was the phenomenon of a particular historical moment. This is not to say that it didn't happen before or after, but that when it did it happened in different ways. Before the Second World War, before the development of r&b helped set the stage for Freed, Presley and white youth culture, few 'race' records could have appealed to white pop audiences. Again, as Philip Ennis and others have demonstrated, jazz presents somewhat different issues.[18] For the most part, when 1930s' black vocal groups like the Ink Spots or the Mills Brothers sold records to white audiences, they did so because they successfully adopted and adapted white vocal styles. But within a decade *after* Freed, white groups were striving to sound black. Rock bands of the 1960s didn't compete with contemporaneous black groups but hearkened back to material that black audiences had already largely abandoned. This tendency was as true of late 1960s groups like Ten Years After or Rare Earth – the first white act signed to Motown Records – as it was of the 'Invasion' bands of 1964 and 1965. Nevertheless, despite the fact that the 1950s-era hijacking of hits was a practice that lingered from an earlier era, it often fed off apartheid. The targets of white copies were sometimes white, and the targets of black artists sometimes black, but we would be hard-pressed to find any evidence of a black performer proving able to hijack the success of a white original. Black performers might *revive* white standards – though even such revivals could often be knocked out of the ring – but they could not compete with them.

The larger point here, and the aspect of all of this that anticipates our conclusion, is that hijacking exploited racist inequality but did not arise because of it. So much is evident from LaVern Baker's witty response to her situation – a response that in itself reopens a virtually lost vista on the tumultuous era. Needless to say, Baker was not happy about what she called Gibbs's stealing all the gravy. She was particularly bitter because Gibbs's versions of 'Tweedle Dee' and 'Tra La La' didn't simply remake the

songs – they reproduced almost exactly the very arrangement she and her band had so painstakingly created. In fact, when making these copies Mercury hired the same musicians used by Atlantic, and even tried to retain the same producer. Nevertheless, Baker retained her sense of humour. In an anecdote recounted by Chip Deffaa, when Baker 'boarded one airplane in 1957, she named Gibbs as the beneficiary on her flight insurance, explaining that if she were to die in a plane crash, leaving Gibbs with no one to copy, [Gibbs] would still have a source of income thanks to Baker. Baker let Gibbs know what she'd done; Gibbs was not amused.'[19] While the story testifies to Baker's spirit, it also clarifies the nature of her resentment. The crime was less artistic than economic – the Mercury hijackings cost Baker money. Gibbs had no more thought of signifying her street cred as a blues shouter than she did of paying tribute to Baker's delivery or style. In view of how cover recordings came to signify in the next decade, such innocence – such unabashed greed – is hard to imagine.

It's hard to imagine precisely because the ways in which pop music signifies have so profoundly altered. Or, to put it another way, and borrow from the post-Marxist sociology of Pierre Bourdieu, pop music today comprises a different kind of cultural capital than it did forty and fifty years ago. Today pop music is created and consumed inside a wholly different symbolic field than it was two generations ago, playing a significant (and still undertheorized) role in identity formation. Less likely than their grandparents to regard pop musicians as entertainers, young people in America discern in pop recordings 'a "space of symbolic stances" which is independent of, yet homologous to, "the space of social positions"'.[20] One of the more profound changes wrought by Elvis Presley, on the semiotics of both the pop and the r&b markets, was perhaps the consequence of his dependence on other songwriters. For all the debate over Presley's musical integrity, only once in his career did he hijack someone else's current hit. That occasion came early, just after his move to RCA, when producer Steve Scholes was desperate to recoup RCA's investment. After weeks of inconclusive sessions, Scholes called Elvis into the studio to remake Carl Perkins's 'Blue Suede Shoes', which had just hit the charts. Ordinarily, Presley depended either on songs written expressly for him, or, when first making his name at Sun Records, on material he had known since his school days. Again, Presley's career took off on the basis of what we might call the first 'covers' in musical history.

The songs he recorded for Sun studios had all long disappeared from the charts, so long that most of Presley's young fans wouldn't have recognized his records as remakes. Those fans would, however, have recognized much of the material as black: Arthur Crudup's 'That's All Right Mama', Wynonie Harris's 'Good Rockin' Tonight', Junior Parker's 'Mystery Train', Ray Charles's

'I Got a Woman', or Willie Mae Thornton's 'Hound Dog'.[21] Presley remade all of these records before the end of 1956. Moreover, unlike Georgia Gibbs's hijackings of Baker, these Presley covers were all of material whose brief moment in the limelight was over, without the songs having become 'standards'. And unlike Gibbs's hijackings, which sought to supplant the black originals, Presley's remakes in a certain way depended on those songs first being identified as race records. This is not merely to repeat the oft-told tale of Presley's interview with Memphis DJ Dewey Phillips, on the release of his first single, 'That's All Right', when Phillips went out of his way to establish Presley's racial identity.[22] The dynamics of the situation are more complicated than that. It was not that Presley needed continually to be mistaken for a black artist but, on the contrary, that he be recognized as a white artist performing black music in a miscegenated style. To argue that this music is *essentially* white or black is wholly to mistake its charge: the very formation of rock'n'roll testifies against essentialist identity of any kind, and its enduring popularity derives precisely from its hybridity.

In the most revealing interview of his career, in June of 1956, Elvis told a reporter from *The Charlotte Observer* that

> the colored folks been singing it and playing it just like I'm doin' now, man, for more years than I know. They played it like that in the shanties and in their juke joints, and nobody paid it no mind 'til I goosed it up. I got it from them. Down in Tupelo, Mississippi, I used to hear old Arthur Crudup bang his box the way I do now, and I said if I ever got to the place where I could feel all old Arthur felt, I'd be a music man like nobody ever saw.[23]

Now, one way of understanding this quotation is to take it, like LaVern Baker did, as proof that 'music has no color'. Baker thought that Presley was 'fantastic'; late in life she recalled an interview where he had said 'I give it all to LaVern Baker', and she noted with pleasure that Elvis eventually sang not only 'Saved' and 'C.C. Rider' but also 'Tomorrow Night' and even 'Tweedle Dee'.[24] All the same, it's no challenge to Presley's openness about his debt to African-American tradition to approach an almost antithetical understanding of the same quotation. Presley's love of black music was doubtless sincere, but his covers of older blues, r&b and gospel material are in large part meaningful precisely *because* they are 'colored'. His countrified take on 'That's All Right', for example, is persuasive because white America felt its racial/cultural transgression. Presley defined his 'whiteness' against the 'blackness' of his material, and made that identity exciting. What he seems intuitively to have sensed is that, as Toni Morrison or Fred Pfeil have more recently submitted, 'blackness' and 'whiteness' are essentially arbitrary

discursive values: as values in a discourse, neither means anything except in reference to or against the other.[25] The relative position of these terms is constantly shifting, and Presley's miscegenative recordings shifted them big time. Had he merely performed the role assumed by so many earnest rockers of subsequent decades, and feigned 'authenticity' as a blues singer, he would have left the relations between 'blackness' and 'whiteness' exactly where he found them. Presley, by contrast, generated energy precisely because he *wasn't* authentic – made no pretence of being anything other than 'white'.

In view of what happened with many of the 'British Invasion' bands of ten years later, Presley's insouciance is all the more remarkable. Bands like the Animals, the Stones, the Yardbirds, or even the Who (*Maximum R&B* is the title of their 1994 box set) worked overtime to create what today often looks like incongruous posturing – a merely antic authenticity. The issue isn't whether the records those bands made were really any good, but to understand something of the semiotics at work in their covers of r&b material: their covers of r&b did not try to hijack capital from current hits; rather – and here is their debt to Presley – they tended to cover older material and pay it homage as part of a tradition. These covers made money not by banking on what was already popular, but by treating r&b material as an investment – as 'cultural capital'. Invasion band covers valorized 'blackness' by positing it as the embodiment of difference from or resistance to the mainstream. The familiar claims about the supposed affinities between Anglo-American youth culture and African-American culture generally mistake the implicit 'othering' that such homage no doubt inadvertently effected. But, as Nelson George has observed, the r&b musicians whose work was being covered by the invasion bands could not have missed these effects;[26] by late 1965 r&b artists like Chuck Berry could barely find work, and it's hard to resist the simple conclusion that white America in 1964 and 1965 still wasn't ready to take its black music straight. These British bands, however, were simply enlarging on the pattern of Elvis's success. Only infrequently covering recordings made by Elvis himself, they followed his example rather than his play lists: they 'covered' records that would retain signs of their 'blackness', particularly blues records.

For American audiences, the British identity of these bands heightened that sense of transgression that had so marked Presley's earliest recordings. By comparison with his English progeny, Elvis's class and regional backgrounds could make him seem a part of the African-American heritage in which he participated. For British bands, however, that 'Americanness' was almost as important as that '*African* Americanness'. Although stateside audiences might have heard the 'yeah, yeah, yeah' of the Beatles' 'She Loves You' as an exuberant affirmation, for English audiences it signified a

brazen cultural promiscuity. 'Yeah' is, or at least was, an American colloquialism; it was bad English which the Beatles didn't just roll off their tongues but shouted repeatedly. We might say, in today's parlance, that their performance was an 'in your face' violation of English usage. As invasions go, this one might more properly be seen, from an American perspective at least, as chickens coming home to roost. The point is that the British bands had upped the ante with regard to cultural transgression. Wrapping themselves (both proudly and ironically) in the Union Jack, they embodied what Umberto Eco calls, in *Travels in Hyperreality*, 'the genuine fake'.[27]

The Beatles' 1963 cover of 'That's All Right' exemplifies the point. Their recording of it at the BBC studios makes it clear that they were not covering Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup but Elvis – whose revival of the song invested it with new cultural capital. For the Beatles, 'Elvis' was not a mediation, or a watering down of authentic tradition, but a bureau de change – a conversion point. The excitement of the Beatles playing 'That's All Right' is owed to the fact that they were *not* 'the real thing' rather than from their having assimilated themselves into American blues tradition. This is why the Beatles' music – not to mention their success – fundamentally challenges the kinds of connections between music and a way of life discussed with such conviction by modernist critics like LeRoi Jones (now Amiri Baraka) or Greil Marcus.[28] For all the difference of their perspectives, and their disagreement over the nature of rock's debt to African-American tradition, both Jones and Marcus affirm that musical forms grow out of forms of cultural life. This was not, however, a challenge the Beatles themselves sought to deliver. When the Beatles were making their first flight across the Atlantic, in February of 1964, George Harrison anxiously wondered aloud: 'They've got everything over there; what do they want *us* for?'[29] Certainly the work permits they had been required to obtain were not promising; the permits allowed the Beatles 'to play, within a strict two-week period, "so long as unemployed American citizens capable of performing this work cannot be found"'.[30]

However unlikely the possibility of finding such unemployed citizens might have been, the songs being covered by the Beatles and by subsequent invasion bands were not in any case hits currently in the charts, but were often eight or nine years old. Even covers of newer material, like the Swinging Blues Jeans' embarrassing 1964 imitation of Little Richard's apocalyptic 'Good Golly Miss Molly' (1958), or the Rolling Stones' 1964 remake of Willie Dixon's 'Little Red Rooster' (1961) – their last blues single – still did not challenge the originals for chart action. A typical example might be the Beatles' 1963 recording of Ray Charles's 'I Got a Woman': Charles cut his original in 1955; Elvis's cover was included on his first UK album, *Rock'n'Roll No. 1* [HMV CLP 1093; 1956]. Again, as with 'That's All Right' (recorded the same month), the Beatles' version covered Elvis. We might think further

about how such covers signify by turning to the Beatles' first album for Capitol Records, *Please Please Me* [Capitol/Parlaphone 46435]. The album opens with two originals, 'I Saw Her Standing There' and 'Misery', and then follows with three covers: 'Anna', written and first recorded by Arthur Alexander in 1962; 'Chains' (by Carole King and Gerry Goffin), which the Cookies took to the charts late in 1962; and then 'Boys' (by Luther Dixon and Wes Farrell), a 1960 recording by the Shirelles. Side B of the album includes three more covers: another Shirelles song ('Baby It's You' – 1961, by Mack David, Barney Williams and Burt Bacharach), Lenny Welch's 1962 'A Taste of Honey' (by Bobby Scott and Ric Marlow) and the Isley Brothers' 'Twist and Shout' (1962, by Phil Medley and Bert Russell) – which closes the album. In all of these covers, allowing for changes in gender, the Beatles strove to duplicate the originals. Their purpose was not, then, to make an artistic statement, any more than it was to cut in on hot chart action. The key to their purpose is colour: although the writers for the Cookies and Shirelles material were white, all of the covers on *Please Please Me* were originally *recorded* by black artists. Like other invasion bands, unfamiliar with American racial tensions, the Beatles imagined their r&b covers would help them find stateside acceptance – help make them more popular. And so their covers worked not to reinvent the individual songs, but to alter the relation of the Beatles originals to their audience: the covers on *Please Please Me* are there to recontextualize the music of a provincial British pop group – to propose not an origin for their sound so much as a destination.

This distinction too would change, and quickly, as subsequent bands revisited earlier material as an inscription of origin. Sometimes, as in LaVern Baker's 1958 album of songs sung by Bessie Smith, or in the Byrds' electric treatment of Bob Dylan's 'Mr Tambourine Man' (1965), these covers aimed to associate the latecomer with a particular inspiration, or scene. But most often, covers became a way for white artists to lay claim to an artistic origin outside of the pop-consumer mainstream. In Jim Crow's America, such claims sometimes depended on the popular failure of the black original, or at least on popular memory of them having grown dim enough that they could be reimagined as a part of folk legend. Consider the story of r&b star Chuck Willis, the turban-wearing 'King of the Stroll'. The Stroll was a bump-and-grinding, sax-driven sound, but for all the success it brought him, Willis aspired to something more. His career had begun in 1951 with the Okeh label – the old race division of Columbia Records. Once signed, Willis became the label's biggest moneymaker. But, by 1956, the rapid formation of the white rock'n'roll market was already making of 1950s' r&b a diminished thing. As Presley and others were richly demonstrating, the future (or at least near future) of pop music belonged to those who could cross over between the pop and r&b charts. A smart and driven man, Willis was quick

to learn the lesson. He had already logged crossover success as a writer: his song 'Oh What a Dream' that was a hit for Ruth Brown was successfully hijacked by pop chanteuse Patti Page. So, in April of 1956, two months after leaving Okeh and signing with Atlantic Records, Willis made his first deliberate play for the mainstream. He wrote a new ballad with a recycled title – 'It's Too Late' – and used the occasion to play with recorded effects that sounded a long way from r&b.[31]

After its release, 'It's Too Late' stiffed on the pop charts, but in a surprising sign of the times made the r&b top three: sign of the times because r&b audiences increasingly hungered for pop smoothness, while pop audiences craved r&b grit – the kind of grit that 'It's Too Late' pointedly avoids. The crossover gestures of 'It's Too Late' are readily apparent. First, Willis and producers Ahmet Ertegun and Herb Abramson used a marimba and a set of music box chimes to fill out the sound of his record, instead of relying on the honking saxes and other sounds more usual with r&b. Second, they deliberately imported a white and very white-sounding choral group. In other words, at about the same time that Sam Phillips at Sun studios was trying to find a white man who could sing black, this black musician was surrounding his lead vocal with overtly white harmony, rather than the kind of gospel-derived harmonies characteristic of r&b. These studio innovations are probably what blocked the record's crossover success. Willis's sense of the pop market was in large part (although, as we'll see, not completely) dated. Missing the effect on the mainstream of music like his own, his studio work exaggerated the politeness that an r&b musician might understandably associate with pop music.

As a song, however, 'It's Too Late' has proven stronger than its first recording. It was almost immediately subject to attempted hijackings: Sun Records, in a good example of its programmatic search for material with crossover appeal, quickly released recordings by both Charlie Rich and Roy Orbison. That so fine a songwriter as Buddy Holly should soon thereafter record Willis's ballad (1957) is not only its own special tribute but also a sign that Willis did not wholly misread the pop market. 'It's Too Late' was next recorded (though not released) a few years later by guitarist Link Wray, whom one imagines was attracted by very different features than the pop-oriented Holly had been, and in that kind of difference was a harbinger of things to come. Conway Twitty, who at the time already had one eye to the country market and was somewhat desultorily making the last of his rock'n'roll records, also released the last of the first-wave responses to Willis's composition, in 1963. Coming out seven years after Willis's own recording, Twitty's record was neither a hijack nor in any significant sense a cover: Twitty didn't so much remake the tune as affirm his solidarity with the figures through whose mediation he received it – Rich, Orbison and Holly.

Twitty's recording nods to them, and not to Willis. After Twitty's record, two years went by before anyone else recorded 'It's Too Late': two years that might as well have been twenty. In those two years came the so-called British invasion, and a renewed widening of the gap between black and white popular musics. In something approaching the near reversal of Willis's intention, it was a younger African-American artist who brought new significance to 'It's Too Late', and in so doing marked the changing nature of black-to-white crossover dreams. Otis Redding's passionate recording of 'It's Too Late' (1965) was the first that might usefully be considered a *cover*. Redding's record was less polite than Willis's and, unapologetically taking the song 'down home', invested it with an unmistakably black identity.[32] Redding's record was the mediation between Willis's recording and all those that followed, and in separating the ballad from its original crossover ambitions made it available first to blues musicians, and through them (because of the late 1960s 'blues revival' among white audiences) to various rockers: Ted Taylor (1970) and Merl Saunders (with Jerry Garcia, in 1973), arena rockers Foghat (1973), and – of most importance to our purposes – the band who doubtless inspired the Foghat cover, Derek & the Dominos (1970). In other words, it was Redding who probably inadvertently articulated the terms of crossover success for 'It's Too Late'. The longevity of Redding's transformation – the continued career of the trajectory he plotted – might be observed in the recirculation of 'It's Too Late' in the 1990s among zydeco musicians: accordionist Lynn August recorded it in 1993, and vocalist Lil Alfred in 1996. It was, then, Willis's recording more than his composition that revealed a dated sense of pop balladry. Indeed, he managed in the two years after he wrote 'It's Too Late' to score four more Top Forty hits, one of which went Top Ten, but all of which bore more obvious traces of their r&b roots.

It was precisely those 'roots' that attracted the attention of Derek & the Dominos, who as most everyone knows were Duane Allman, Eric Clapton, and what had been the rhythm section for blue-eyed soulsters Delaney & Bonnie. Derek & the Dominos' recording of 'It's Too Late' is from the famous album of October 1970, *Layla & Other Assorted Love Songs* (Atco 704; Polygram 531820). In view of Willis's ambitions, the Derek & the Dominos cover can't help but seem ironic. Everything about what Allman, Clapton and co. did reverses Willis's crossover gesture. The impulse is, of course, evident in their very name. When Billy Ward called his early 1950s group 'the Dominoes' the name played on their racial identity. When Clapton, twenty years later, called his group 'the Dominos' the name gestured (even in its misspelling) towards 'roots' authenticity, attempting to summon associations of a music indifferent to merely pop sensibilities. Except that by 1970 there was a blues revival well under way, and while the black audiences for

1950s-style r&b had long since moved on to other styles, there was an audience of 'serious' white fans who hungered for rock that offered more than psychedelic noodling or teen anthems.

In the Dominos' cover, the pace of Willis's ballad gets something of a booster shot. The music box chimes disappear, though not altogether – in the final verse Duane Allman's slide guitar alludes to them. Willis's embowering of his vocal line in allusions to polite, mainstream conventions is replaced by gritty slide and rhythm guitars, all of which energetically and enthusiastically invoke blues tradition. More important still, Willis's politely white chorus is replaced by the call-and-response shouting of hard gospel, with Bobby Whitlock's whiskey voice answering Eric Clapton's tensely sung lead vocal. In other words, true to their name, these Dominos work to create a distinctively r&b feel, or at least simulate that feel while rocking the blues. If Otis Redding's cover of the ballad had been 'ironic', in that Redding reversed Willis's crossover gesture, then we need a different word to describe what happens in Derek and the Dominos' recording. In taking 'It's Too Late' down home, Redding effectually brought it up to date – renewed its appeal for black audiences. Clapton and co. follow Redding's lead 'down home', but for them 'down home' meant the pursuit of roots rather than modernity. As we said of the Beatles and their early covers, the purpose of such a journey was to propose not so much an origin for their sound as a destination.

In such a world, or such a market, with black seeking white both to make money and to legitimize a musical idiom, and white seeking black in order to establish a performative if not essential legitimacy – and so make money – it becomes increasingly difficult to affix stable values or even identities to competing musical idioms. What we have generally understood as a single practice, the 'covering' of one recording by another, is in fact a more complex business. Generally, before the rise of Elvis Presley the old industry practice of remaking a popular record is best understood in terms of 'hijacking a hit'. At the same time, however, we need to acknowledge that during the 1950s the practice of 'hijacking' facilitated new forms of racist exploitation – forms that arose precisely *because* the popular music industry was opening up to black performers and African-American musical idioms. Without the market dynamics of crossover, white remakes of r&b hits would not have effected the sales of recordings by black artists. I have suggested that, in our modern sense of the term, Elvis Presley was the first cover artist. In recovering nearly forgotten recordings by black artists, Presley was doing much more than reviving potentially moneymaking properties; he was using recordings by black artists to perform for himself and for America a new identity. In this way, Presley opened a field for the British invasion of a decade later, a field defined by the transgression of 'authentic' boundaries.

For us, Presley's innovation serves to underscore the performative nature of racial or cultural identities.

Distinguishing between hijacking and covering can help us get beyond essentializing categorizations of black and white. Considerations of 'market' have often been regarded by rock critics as the source of all evil, but paradoxically that very consideration can help us understand black and white as signifiers rather than as essential categories. In the 1980s and 1990s, newer processes in pop music increasingly contributed to the deconstruction of those categories, and electronic 'sampling' is changing not just the function but the very nature of musical 'covers' (think, for instance, of the Fugees' 1996 crossover smash-recording of Charles Fox and Norman Gimbel's 'Killing Me Softly' – a song first brought to the charts by Roberta Flack in 1973).[33] In the meantime, the notion of the 'cover' song has become so ubiquitous as to detach from racial questions altogether. Not one of the 'covers' that Dwight Yoakam gets under crosses the traditional frontiers between 'black' and 'white' musical vernaculars. While it might still be open to question whether that is a sign of progress in race relations, or a sign of Nashville's enduring conservatism, it's still an unmistakable sign of the times. For half a century now rock-based musics have been the most lucrative area of music industry activity, but that hegemony is now more generically fractured than ever before. In the 1990s, country artists 'crossed over' with a regularity not unlike the crossings into pop of r&b (or country) artists in the 1950s. As always, hijackings and covers alike are attracted to the sound of money.

Of course, 'crossing over' is itself a term that invites reflection, precisely because it is used so often and with so little self-consciousness. Although genuinely related to the story we have followed here, and more obviously related to what W.E.B. DuBois called 'the color line', its telling must await another occasion. Still, it is the extent to which both 'cover' and 'crossing over' prove to be indices of cultural struggle – sites of ideological contest – that they are usefully to be regarded as keywords. Williams expected that the word in question would be so current that most people would feel confident of its meaning, but he knew that 'the questions are not only about meaning; in most cases, inevitably, they are about meanings'.[34] There is still something about making a 'cover' record that vaguely suggests putting on blackface: covering your identity in order to have access to material to which one might not otherwise feel entitled. 'Crossing over', by contrast, might seem a secularization from the discourse of gospels and spirituals: crossing over to the promised land. Carrying us well beyond the specificities of an industry-specific, technical term, these words bind together 'ways of seeing culture and society'.[35] They give a form to ideological contest and proffer a solution that strives to seem 'natural' – that is, not ideological. The term

'cover' began as an industry word with a literal meaning of 'security copy', something done to protect an investment. Today the word circulates widely in common parlance with a metaphorical meaning that, if more broadly and perhaps only obliquely, still refers to the protection of an investment. Inflected with questions of 'authenticity', the term 'cover' *song* (more than cover *record*) now involves claims to have the right to sing.

Notes

1 When following Williams's lead into the discourse of 'culture', for example, I learned that right-wing commentators like Allan Bloom were as interested in its historically specific formation as leftists. See Allan Bloom's essay 'Commerce and Culture', reprinted in his *Giants and Dwarfs: Essays 1960–1990* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1990); see also Michael Coyle, *Ezra Pound, Popular Genres, and the Discourse of Culture* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1995).

2 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society*, revised edn (London and New York: Oxford University Press, 1985), pp. 12–13.

3 See Yoakam's interview with Associated Press writer Jim Patterson, 17 July 1997, which can be found, among other places, on the Web's 'Dwight Site': www.dwightyoakam.com. Patterson has lots to say about Yoakam's 'unusual combination of songs', and Yoakam himself asserts his consistent refusal to be 'a prisoner to any specific genre of music'. Yoakam's use of covers to construct a modern, hybrid and unmistakably crossover 'country' identity might be contrasted with another country album of covers released just three years earlier: see Townes Van Zandt's *Road Songs* (Sugar Hill SHCD 1042; 1994).

4 The term 'cover' seems initially to have entered record industry parlance from the studios of Jack Kapp's Decca Records. Between 1943 and 1949, Decca routinely made 16 inch lacquer safety discs of all the wax masters from which it made metal parts. These lacquer safety discs were known as 'covers'. See Andy McKaie and Steven Lasker's note on sound sources to the MCA box set, *Bing: His Legendary Years: 1931–1957* (MCAD4/C4–10887; 1993), p. 67.

5 Richard Aquila, 'The Homogenization of Early Rock and Roll', in Kenneth J. Bindas (ed.), *America's Musical Pulse: Popular Music in Twentieth-Century Society* (Westport, CT: Greenwood Press, 1992), p. 272. Reebee Garofalo points out that, under the guidance of Mercury's management, the Crew Cuts thereafter 'systematically pillaged the r&b charts'. In addition to 'Sh-Boom', the Crew Cuts covered Gene and Eunice's 'Ko Ko Mo', the Penguins' 'Earth Angel', Nappy Brown's 'Don't Be Angry', and the Charms' 'Gum Drop'. See Reebee Garofalo, *Rockin' Out: Popular Music in the USA* (Boston and London: Allyn & Bacon, 1997), p. 155. For a brief insider's view of the marketing of 'Sh-Boom', see Arnold Shaw's *Let's Dance: Popular Music in the 1930s*, ed. Bill Willard (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), p. 4.

6 Garofalo, p. 155.

7 Philip Ennis, *The Seventh Stream: The Emergence of Rocknroll in American Popular Music* (Hanover and London: Wesleyan University Press, 1992), p. 216. The spelling 'rocknroll' is Ennis's attempt to rationalize and regularize the name for that youth music that developed in the early and mid 1950s.

8 Ennis, p. 216. All chart information here and throughout the essay is from Joel Whitburn's *Top R&B Singles 1942–1988* (Menomenee Falls, WI: Record Research, 1988), and *The Billboard Book of Top 40 Hits* (New York: Billboard Publications, 1996).

9 Stuart Nicholson, in his notes to *The Complete Commodore Recordings of Billie Holiday* (MCA/Commodore CMD-2–401; 1996), pp. 21–2. Readers interested in the historical context of this song should see David Margolick's *Strange Fruit: Billie Holiday, Café Society, and an Early Cry for Civil Rights* (Philadelphia: Running Press, 2000). Margolick has much to say about the extent to which Holiday made Abel Meeropol's (aka Lewis Allan) song her own, but he observes nevertheless that Holiday was neither the first singer to perform 'Strange Fruit' nor the last to lay claim to it. Blues singer Josh White began making the song a featured and regular part of *his* repertoire in 1944, only five years after Holiday's recording.

10 Arnold Shaw, *Honkers and Shouters: The Golden Years of Rhythm & Blues* (New York: Collier/Macmillan, 1978), p. 226.

11 Shaw, pp. 226–7. As Shaw explains, there remains even still some mystery as to the identity of 'Dan Howell': 'some said Dan Howell stood for Lou Levy, owner of Leeds-Duchess; others said it was Dave Kapp of Decca; and still others said that it stood for nobody, but was just a way of retaining a portion of royalties in the firm's treasury.' The litigation surrounding this massive hit demonstrates the extent to which the division of music industry profit depends on material being created in routinized ways. Whereas historians and critics often discuss how the making of a film involves many people, we still often overlook the number of steps required to make and market a recording. In fact, technological or commercial change comes more quickly and more often to the music industry than it does to the film industry. Any time money comes to be made in ways that confuse established divisions between writers, performers, producers and vendors, legal trouble quickly follows – as it did, for example, with the rise of radio in the 1920s, or with the emergence of 'sampling' in the 1980s.

12 'Rag Mop': *1946* Bob Wills (c&w), Henry 'Red' Allen (r&b), Louis Jordan – 'Get the Mop' (r&b); *1950* Ames Brothers (pop), Lionel Hampton (pop and r&b), Doc Sausage (r&b), Ralph Flanagan (pop), Johnny Lee Wills – one of the original writers of the song (c&w), Joe Liggins (r&b – marketed as 'the first dance version of universal appeal'). See Ennis, pp. 207–8; see also Galen Gart, *The History of Rhythm & Blues: Special 1950 Volume* (Milford, NH: Big Nickel Publications, 1993), p. 21. For a contemporaneous A&R executive's account of the relations between recordings and live performance, see John Chilton's *Let the Good Times Roll: The Story of Louis Jordan and His Music* (Ann Arbor: University of Michigan Press, 1994); Chilton quotes Berle Adams about his days working for the General Amusement Corporation. Remembering his early negotiations with Decca Records on Louis Jordan's behalf, Berle explains: 'I saw records as a means of exploitation: to build audiences for personal appearances and to help us increase our fees, rather than as a money-maker' (Chilton, p. 86).

13 Quoted from John Dunning, *Tune in Yesterday: The Ultimate Encyclopedia of Old-Time Radio 1925–1976* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1976), pp. 663–5. The format of the show varied greatly over the years; its television format usually featured five vocalists who would perform all songs. Lennie Hayton was followed by more than a dozen band leaders before the socio-cultural changes wrought by rock'n'roll transformed the hit show into an anachronism. See also Arnold Shaw, *Let's Dance: Popular Music in the 1930s*, ed. Bill Willard (New York: Oxford University Press, 1998), pp. 47–51.

14 Alan Dale, 'Sweet and Gentle', 1955; Hank Ballard, 'Work With Me Annie', 1954; Gibbs, 'Dance With Me Henry', 1955; Lillian Briggs, 'I Want You to Be My Baby', 1955; Tony Bennett, 'Happiness Street', 1956. Bennett, incidentally, later obliquely returned the favour by remaking a 1965 Baker single called 'Fly Me to the Moon'; see Chip Deffaa, *Blue Rhythms: Six Lives in Rhythm and Blues* (Urbana and Chicago: University of Illinois Press, 1996), p. 193. 'Fly Me to the Moon' was originally recorded in 1962 as a bossa nova instrumental by Joe Harnell and his Orchestra. Baker's version made the charts for five weeks beginning in February 1965 (reaching number 84 in the pop charts); Bennett's version came out a few months later. It's important to note that by 1965 this practice of multiple recordings of the same song was becoming increasingly uncommon; younger artists were already, when not recording original material, 'covering' earlier recordings chosen for their association with some other artist or scene. The changing nature of pop success also meant that Gibbs's career did not outlast the life of the show that made her: 'Your Hit Parade' was cancelled in 1958 (though revived for a few months the next year); Gibbs's last hit, 'The Hula Hoop Song' (1958), was an attempt to exploit the national toy fad.

15 See Ennis, pp. 71–98.

16 I have, however, addressed it in an essay written with *Spin* contributor, Jon Dolan. That essay appears in *Reading Rock'n'Roll: Authenticity, Appropriation, Aesthetics*, ed. Kevin J.H. Dettmar and William Richie, introduction by Anthony De Curtis (New York: Columbia University Press, 1999). See also Lawrence Grossberg's 'Rock, Postmodernity and Authenticity', in *We Gotta Get Out of This Place: Popular Conservatism and Postmodern Culture* (New York: Routledge, 1992), pp. 201–39.

17 Deffaa, p. 183.

18 See Ennis, particularly pp. 79–88, 320–22.

19 Deffaa, *Blue Rhythms*, p. 185.

20 I'm drawing on Edward LiPuma's 'Culture in a Theory of Practice', published in *Bourdieu: Critical Perspectives*, ed. Craig Calhoun, Edward LiPuma and Moishe Postone (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1993), pp. 14–34. See particularly p. 18.

21 Arthur 'Big Boy' Crudup recorded 'That's All Right' in September 1946, Presley cut his version in July 1954; Wynonie Harris recorded Roy Brown's 'Good Rockin' Tonight' in December 1947, Presley cut his version in September 1954; Junior Parker & His Little Blue Flames recorded 'Mystery Train' in June 1953, Presley cut his version in July 1955; Ray Charles recorded his 'I Got a Woman' in November 1954, Presley remade it in January 1956; Willie Mae 'Big Mama' Thornton's recording of 'Hound Dog' – a song that Jerry Lieber and Mike Stoller wrote especially for her – hit the charts in March of 1953, Presley's recording charted in August 1956.

22 The most complete telling of the story is in Peter Guralnick's *Last Train to Memphis: The Rise of Elvis Presley* (New York: Little, Brown, 1994), pp. 97–101. The interview happened on the very first night that Phillips played 'That's All Right'. As Phillips later remembered, 'I asked him [Presley] where he went to high school, and he said, "Humes." I wanted to get that out, because a lot of people listening had thought he was colored.'

23 Quoted in Guralnick, p. 289.

24 Baker reflected on music and race, and on Elvis, in an interview with Mai Cramer and Yolanda Parks. She told them that 'music is music: it has no color on it. When you put the note up for music, there's no color on it. There's no Black, there's no White. It's what you feel.' See Mai Cramer, 'Interview of the Month, February 1996, [with] LaVern Baker', available www.realblues.com/interv4.html, p. 3 of 14.

25 See Toni Morrison, 'Black Matters', in *Playing in the Dark: Whiteness and the Literary Imagination* (New York: Random House, 1992); see also Fred Pfeil, *White Guys: Studies in Postmodern Domination and Difference* (London: Verso, 1995).

26 See Nelson George, *The Death of Rhythm and Blues* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1989), particularly pp. 92–3.

27 Umberto Eco, *Travels in Hyperreality*, trans. William Weaver (New York and London: Harcourt Brace Jovanovich, 1986), pp. 3–58.

28 See LeRoi Jones, *Blues People* (New York: Quill, 1963); Greil Marcus, *Mystery Train: Images of America in Rock'n'Roll Music* (New York: E.P. Dutton, 1975; 4th rev. edn, New York: Plume/Penguin, 1997).

29 George Harrison, quoted in Phillip Norman, *Shout! The Beatles in Their Generation* (New York: Simon & Schuster, 1981), p. 220.

30 Norman, p. 220.

31 Willis recorded the jumping 'It's Too Late Baby' for Okeh Records (Okeh 6841) on 27 June 1951. He recycled that title (but not the music) when he recorded 'It's Too Late' for Atlantic Records (Atlantic 1098) on 13 April 1956. It debuted 7 July 1956, and reached no. 3 on the Disc Jockey charts, no. 5 on the R&B Best Seller charts, and no. 8 on the Juke Box charts.

32 I do not, of course, mean to imply any inherently 'black' or 'white' qualities, but refer only to the semiotic and ideological charges that attend the circulation and reception of these recordings.

33 The Fugees' cover was released on their 1996 album *The Score* (Ruffhouse/Sony 67147); Roberta Flack's version is from her 1973 album, *Killing Me Softly* (Atlantic SD 19154).

34 Williams, p. 16.

35 Williams, p. 15.

Raymond Williams, *Keywords* and Deconstruction

John Higgins

I am haunted by an image I have never seen.[1] The image in question comes from the closing shots (or so I have been told) of the documentary made about 'The Linguistics of Writing' conference which took place at Strathclyde University in July 1986.[2] At the end of the film the viewer sees the scattered chairs of the conference hall, empty but for two people sitting in slow and earnest conversation: socialist cultural critic Raymond Williams and doyen of deconstruction Jacques Derrida. What might they have been saying to each other? What could they have been saying? What could they have been saying when it can be taken as read that they wouldn't have had much to say to each other, at least in the terms dictated by the usual opposition between Marxism and deconstruction?[3] Or not much to say in terms of the usual opposition between deconstruction and Williams's particular variant of Marxism.

The editors of one recent collection of essays on Williams suggest there could be little profitable dialogue between Williams and deconstruction. The writers in their 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'.[4] Critical, no doubt, in something of the same spirit as the editors of the British journal *New Formations* when, in their valedictory editorial of 1988, they noted how Williams 'would doubtless have resisted the ways that many of our articles draw on radical post-structuralism', and insisted that, though 'his work constituted a sustained critique of the *content* of the Arnold–Leavis–Mill tradition, he retained from it a paradigm of the *form* of culture which made him reluctant to question the integrity of identity as such'.[5] To sum up, in Dennis Dworkin's later words, 'though he has been dead for only the last five years, he is already part of a different political age'.[6]

Raymond Williams: part of a different political age, and part of a different theoretical moment. As such, the question has to be raised: is it still possible to read Raymond Williams today? Is it still useful to read that body of work? It all depends on whether you take Williams's work as *read*, or whether you read it with care and attention. In this essay, I shall argue that there may be more of a dialogue possible between Williams and deconstruction than received ideas allow.

Inheriting Williams

For many, and in many ways, Williams's work is too often taken as already read. Since his death, we seem to have undergone a whole process of mourning in which the departed is first overvalued and overestimated, but then, once those feelings have been worked through, the dead can be decently forgotten. If traces of overvaluation were to be found, as R.W. Johnson for one suggested, in the spate of 'essentially fan-club books' which were published soon after Williams's death in 1988,[7] then surely the balance has been corrected in more recent assessments which suggest it is now time for Williams to be politely consigned to the past.[8]

And yet, in this social and collective process, it is important to distinguish the person from the work. While it is proper to stop mourning the person of Raymond Williams, lest we slide into pathological melancholia, does that mean that we should also forget – stop reading – the body of work in question? More than a decade after his death, it is now time to bring that work back into focus. One way of doing this may be by attending more carefully to the strange dynamics of intellectual inheritance described by Derrida in the opening pages of his *Specters of Marx*. Here, Derrida writes of 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.[9]

This passage seems to me to describe very well a certain problem with the reading – or rather the taking as read – of Williams's work. For in too many recent accounts the readability of Williams's legacy is taken as 'given, transparent, univocal' and there is nothing to 'inherit from it'. This position comes through in the strange dynamic which insists on remembering the personal worth of Williams, but somehow works to forget the value of his work, which is forgotten, or described and interpreted in such a reductive way that it might as well be forgotten. In this generally hostile context, to read Williams today can only be to read his work actively and carefully, to

interpret it against the grain of its current appropriation as something 'given, transparent, univocal'.

One point on which many current readings of Williams seem agreed is that his conception of the human subject is one no follower of Derrida or deconstruction could ever accept: it is a deeply empiricist and humanist conception. As we saw earlier, *New Formations* asserted that Williams was 'reluctant to question the integrity of identity as such' (3–4), while the *New Left Review* team, commenting on the central role of 'experience' in his work, asked him whether this didn't 'presuppose a kind of pristine contact between the subject and the reality in which the subject is immersed'?[10] Isn't Williams persistently guilty of the most obvious failing of logocentrism, a belief in the self-presence of the human subject to itself? Indeed, when Williams writes of language in *Marxism and Literature* as 'the articulation of this active and changing experience; a dynamic and articulated social *presence* in the world', isn't he writing to deliberately challenge a deconstruction he rejects?[11]

I think we need to be more careful about answering this question than the current state of critical opinion suggests. Indeed, I shall argue that the answer depends largely on how carefully we read Williams's work, and whether, in the first instance, we read it as a 'presumed unity', or as a body of work which developed over time and is internally heterogeneous. *Pace New Formations* and *New Left Review*, I want to show in the first place that while Williams certainly did maintain an empiricist point of view very strongly at one moment of his career, he did this only to abandon it in the next – and major – phase of his writing. As it happens, this early stage of Williams's work can be usefully characterized by drawing on one of Jacques Derrida's own early discussions of the work of Antonin Artaud, 'Le Théâtre de la Cruauté et la Clôture de la Représentation', first published in 1966.

Representation and Total Expression: Derrida/Artaud/Williams

Derrida, in one of those fascinating essays which clear the ground for his own intellectual project, uses the figure of Artaud to articulate something like the structure and implications of his own philosophical project. For Derrida, Artaud's work has historical significance in 'un sens absolu et radical. Elle annonce la limite de la représentation' ('an absolute and radical sense. It announces the limit of representation').[12] Like Nietzsche, argues Derrida, Artaud has had enough of the imitative concept of art, and the whole Western metaphysical tradition which goes with it (344/234). The texts gathered together as *The Theatre and its Double* go way beyond theatre criticism and are less a collection of precepts for improving theatrical performance than 'sollicitations', 'un système de critiques *ébranlant le tout* de l'histoire de l'occident plus qu'un traité de pratique théâtrale' ('more a

system of critiques *shaking the entirety* of Occidental history than a treatise on theatrical practice') (345/235). At the centre of Artaud's 'theatre of cruelty' lies a challenge to the whole theological basis of drama, a theological space defined by the centrality it gives to speech. And, in a paragraph which sums up both the targets of deconstruction and those of the theatre of cruelty, Derrida explains:

> La scène est théologique tant que sa structure comporte, suivant toute la tradition, les éléments suivants: un auteur–créateur qui, absent de loin, armé d'un texte, surveille, rassemble et commande le temps ou le sens de la représentation, laissant celle-ci le *représenter* dans ce qu'on appelle le contenu de ses pensées, de ses intentions, de ses idées. Représenter par les représentants, metteurs en scène ou acteurs, interprètes asservis qui représentent des personnages qui, d'abord par ce qu'ils disent, représentent plus ou moins directement la pensée du 'créateur'. Esclaves interprétant, exécutant fidèlement les desseins providentiels du 'maître'.
>
> [The scene is theological for as long as its structure, following the entirety of tradition, comports the following elements: an author–creator who, absent and from afar, is armed with a text and keeps watch over, assembles, regulates the time or the meaning of the representation, letting this latter *represent* him as concerns what is called the content of his thoughts, his intentions, his ideas. He lets representation represent him through representatives, directors or actors, enslaved interpreters who represent characters who, primarily through what they say, more or less directly represent the thoughts of the 'creator'. Interpretive slaves who faithfully execute the providential designs of the 'master'.] (345/235)

It is precisely this theological structure in which the intention of a primary logos governs and controls what happens on stage from a distance which informs Williams's writings on drama in the early 1950s.[13] Nothing is more fully logocentric than Williams's idea of '*total performance*', a new convention which would somehow guarantee the full and singular communication of the dramatic author's intentions, protecting them in particular from the distortions likely to be effected by the theatre director. What is necessary, argued Williams, is a new convention that would re-establish the possibility of 'total expression' that had apparently existed for the Greeks. A play 'written for total expression', he writes, contains

> 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 designed 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.[14]

Not surprisingly, Williams in the end settles for the medium of cinema as the only one likely to achieve this perfect iterability in which the pure artistic expression of the author/director could never be betrayed by the intermediary figure of the actor/director.

This early theory of dramatic expression is empiricist in the extreme. It encourages us to think, writes Sharratt, '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.'[15]

But is it consequently proper to imply that this is Williams's only view on theatre, and, by extension, on representation as a whole? I think not, and believe that it is necessary, as readers, to grasp the heterogeneity and shifting nature of Williams's thoughts and ideas on the question.

An early indication of a break with this empiricist or logocentric notion of drama comes at a moment where Williams parts company with his main influence – not, as many believe, F.R. Leavis, but T.S. Eliot. In *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot*, Williams criticizes in passing the instrumentalism apparent in Eliot's famous definition of the 'objective correlative'. 'Mr. Eliot's statement of the matter', Williams writes,

> 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.[16]

Here, Williams questions the instrumentalist view that understanding necessarily precedes expression, and argues for a view in which language is necessarily prior to the formation of understanding. As I argue elsewhere, this is a point of theory which will continue to trouble him throughout his work. Indeed, properly understood, the relation of the subject to language is a central thread of Williams's whole work, from *Culture and Society* and *The Long Revolution* through to *Marxism and Literature*.[17] I

argue here that a great deal of the substance of this theoretical argument is present in one of his most controversial studies, *Keywords*, first published in 1976 as a 'vocabulary of culture and society', and in a revised and extended edition in 1983, and present also in the troubled terms of its critical reception.

Keywords

Keywords has been both one of the most abidingly popular of Williams's books, and one of the most contentious.[18] In his biography of Williams (one which recalls only too strongly Benjamin's dictum that '*even the dead* will not be safe from the enemy when he wins'[19]), Fred Inglis appears to revel in its apparent conceptual and methodological weaknesses.[20] For Inglis, while *Keywords* 'has its uses of a lexicographical sort it is vitiated by nonchalance about the whole question of ideological distortion on the author's part, and by a series of more or less grievous errors, for which he was much castigated by Quentin Skinner'. 'Skinner', he recounts, 'rebukes Williams for quite failing to distinguish between possessing a concept and knowing a word.'[21] As we shall see, the central questions do indeed turn on the question of possession, though in a way quite different from that which Inglis imagines or prefers to think.

Quentin Skinner's arguments against *Keywords* were first made in a review of the book published in *Essays in Criticism* in 1979, and appearing again in a slightly revised version in 1988. Skinner, widely regarded as one of Britain's leading intellectual historians, is author of the magisterial *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*, and doyen of the Cambridge school of the history of ideas. His criticisms appear, on the surface at least, to demolish *Keywords*, and his final judgement of the book is damning. While 'the special techniques of the literary critic have – or ought to have – a central place in the business of cultural criticism', this is a place 'which a book like Williams's *Keywords* has scarcely begun to recognize'.[22] According to Skinner, Williams is guilty of two related mistakes. First, he shares the Marxist emphasis on economic determinism, and this makes him unable to give an account of the constitutive force of language in social change; second, he persistently fails to grasp the difference between words and concepts.

Skinner's essay is so confident, so sure of itself, so pleased with its original synthesis of analytic philosophy and the orthodox history of ideas – how can it be questioned? It's best to start where any historian would begin, with a consideration of the evidence Skinner brings forward in support of his arguments.

Selective Citation

In the footnotes to the later version of his essay, Skinner is pleased to point to a number of places in the 1983 revised edition of *Keywords* where Williams appears to have taken Skinner's criticisms to heart, and to have duly corrected his writing, though he is quick to add that these changes make no significant difference to the theoretical failure of the book as a whole ('I cannot see that the implications of [Williams's] scepticism have been accommodated even in the revised version of his text', he notes[23]). In one significant instance, Williams has removed a whole sentence from *Keywords*. The original sentence read: 'There have been interesting consequent uses of language, in the course of this controversy.'[24] This sentence, with its emphasis on 'consequent uses of language', had been used as textual evidence in Skinner's review for his contention that in *Keywords* the 'process of social change is treated as the primary cause of developments in our vocabulary', and that Williams holds the view that 'language is the mirror of reality'. To support this same point, Skinner had also offered a second piece of evidence, one he puts as follows: 'And in commenting more specifically on "the economic changes of the Industrial Revolution", he notes that these produced a "greatly sharpened" and extended "vocabulary of class"' (130). The implication is clear, and, as regards the case that Skinner is arguing, apparently damning: the economic changes of the Industrial Revolution produced a greatly sharpened and extended vocabulary of class. But even as we perform this (surely intended) paraphrase, we might notice that it is Skinner, and not Williams, who uses the crucial determining verb 'produced'. What verb did Williams himself use? And, more important, what was the context of argument in which these phrases appeared? The full original sentence of the 1976 edition reads: 'Under the pressure of this awareness [the awareness, as we shall see, of increased mobility in a newly structured society], greatly sharpened by the economic changes of the Industrial Revolution and the political conflicts of the American and French Revolutions, the new vocabulary of class began to take over' (53). As we read the original, we can see that Skinner's paraphrase distorts the actual argument through its use of deliberately selective quotation. For Williams, the new vocabulary of class is not some Pavlovian reflex of the determined mind, some mirroring in language of economic reality, as Skinner would have us believe. The new vocabulary of class is the result of a new awareness, the pressure of a new awareness. To be sure, this awareness is 'greatly sharpened by the economic changes of the Industrial Revolution', but it is also an awareness sharpened by the 'political conflicts of the American and French Revolutions'. These conflicts – as Williams, just as much as Skinner, was aware – took place discursively, as we can see if we follow the arguments concerning class in a little more detail.

If Skinner's version of the argument were correct, Williams would be suggesting that the vocabulary of class always mirrors changes or developments in the economic base, in the mode of production, as the classic mode of economist Marxism suggested. For any actual reader of Williams's work, any idea that he would write in support of this mode of analysis is a nonsense. From *Culture and Society* through *Marxism and Literature* to *Culture*, Williams spent a great deal of time precisely writing against just such versions of Marxism.[25] What, then, is his actual argument?

Let us pick up the trail of the word from the late seventeenth century, at the moment when Williams suggests that 'the use of class as a general word for a group or division becomes more and more common'. He cites Steele (1709) for an example; but his main assertion – in line with the whole argument of *Culture and Society* – is that the development of class 'in its modern social sense ... belongs essentially to the period between 1770 and 1840, which is also the period of the Industrial Revolution and its decisive reorganization of society' (51). He distinguishes two major senses: as a 'general term for any grouping'; and, second, 'as a would-be specific description of a social formation' (52). There is ambiguity between the senses at work in the period of transition, and of course before. In order to show this, Williams relies less on the internal uncertainty of the sense of the word, evident in quotations from both Defoe and Hanway, than on the existence of an 'alternative vocabulary for social divisions' (52) – of rank, order, estate and degree. This uncertainty surely reveals the lack of any clear possession of the concept, in Skinner's terms; and yet, at the same time, some sense that the concept of class – as the 'would-be description of a social formation' is there without the word.

Williams sees the development of the concept of class – if that is what we should call it now – 'as a word which would supersede older names for social divisions' and argues that this shift 'relates to the increasing consciousness that social position is made rather than merely inherited' (52). In turn, what was behind this 'increasing consciousness' was 'not only increased individual mobility, which could be largely contained within the older terms, but the new sense of a SOCIETY ... or a particular social system which actually created social divisions, including new kinds of division' (52). The emphasis is all on awareness, consciousness and agency, and not at all on the passive reflection we find in Skinner's account. We now come to the quotation paraphrased so carefully by Skinner:

> Under the pressure of this awareness [the awareness, as we shall see, of increased mobility in a newly structured society], greatly sharpened by the economic changes of the Industrial Revolution and the political conflicts of the American and French Revolutions, the new vocabulary of class began to take over. (53)

But the acquisition of this new sense of class was hindered, not only by reactionary forces, but by the original schism within the word itself:

> It [the emergence of the new vocabulary of class] was slow and uneven, and has remained difficult, mainly because of the inevitable overlap with the use of class not as a specific social division but as a generally available and often *ad hoc* term of grouping. (53)

In reality, Skinner's arguments amount to nothing less than an apparently deliberate misconstrual of Williams's arguments. We might speculate that such misconstrual is likely to have been the product not of Williams's distance from Skinner, but of the closeness of their respective intellectual and academic projects. For Skinner's championing of a history of ideas in which texts are read primarily in terms of their original context is very close to Williams's recommendations for the procedures of a cultural materialism, one that features 'the analysis of all forms of signification ... in relation to their means and conditions of production'.[26] Moreover, both Williams and Skinner are keen to reject the blunt economism of much Marxist inquiry and to promote the idea that – as Williams put it in *Culture and Society* – 'we are coming increasingly to realize that our vocabulary, the language we use to inquire into and to negotiate our actions, is no secondary factor, but a practical and radical element in itself'.[27] Seen in this context, Skinner's review is driven by discursive and professional rivalry, rivalry that leads to some considerable distortion of Williams's actual arguments. Skinner's final judgement, that 'the special techniques of the literary critic have – or ought to have – a central place in the business of cultural criticism which a book like Williams's *Keywords* has scarcely begun to recognize' (132), is best interpreted as an act of negation: in reality, *Keywords* has much to offer the semantic history which Skinner himself was working to develop.[28]

Yet the anxiety aroused by *Keywords* goes deeper than mere professional rivalry. It is also an anxiety regarding the theoretical core of Skinner's dynamic approach to intellectual history, and the theory of language and subjectivity which underpins it. To understand this, we need to reconsider Skinner's discussion of the relations between word and concept, and the threat that the idea of jargon poses to the possibility of their apparently secure coming together.

Possessing Language

'What is the relation between concepts and words?' asks Skinner. He responds:

> the surest sign that a group or society has entered into self-conscious possession of a new concept is that a corresponding vocabulary will be developed, a vocabulary which can then be used to pick out and discuss the concept with consistency. This suggests that, while we need to exercise more caution than Williams does in making inferences from the use of words to the understanding of concepts and back again, there is nevertheless a systematic relationship between words and concepts to be explored. (120–21)

Central to Skinner's arguments is just this idea of 'possession', the 'self-conscious possession of a new concept'.[29] Who enjoys this possession? A 'group or society'. A group *or* society. How are we to understand that 'or'? It can function either to introduce the second of two alternatives, or it can serve to introduce a synonym for the preceding word. If a group has entered into the self-conscious possession of a new concept, it means that the society as a whole hasn't. In other words, the group will use a jargon which is inaccessible to the society as a whole. They will possess the concept, but the society won't. And this is indeed the fear which undermines Skinner's argument. In his argument, the relation between concepts and words has to be a secure one, has to be a relation which is possessed by someone, is self-consciously possessed by someone – but by whom? For the systematic relation to be there, it needs to be a common possession. When it is a common possession, then everything is clear, there is no room for doubt, everything is possessed in common. In that case, the 'or' can function to introduce society as a synonym; the relation between a concept and a word is commonly understood, is possessed in common, and there is no need for the kind of doubts and hesitations at work in *Keywords*.

Skinner's whole argument against Williams turns on his ambivalent use of 'or'. *Keywords* takes as its starting point all the difficulties implicit in the chasm between the 'self-conscious possession of a new concept' by a particular group and by a society at large. This difference is precisely what Williams is interested in from the very opening paragraphs of *Keywords*, which address this very problem of conflictual possession through an analysis of the ordinary phrase or even cliche 'they just don't speak the same language'. 'It is a common phrase', writes Williams, and is 'often used between successive generations, and even between parents and children':

> When we come to say 'we just don't speak the same language' we mean something more general: that we have different immediate values or different kinds of valuation, or that we are aware, often intangibly, of different formations and distributions of energy and interest. In such a case, each group is speaking its native language, but its uses are significantly different, and especially when strong

feelings or important ideas are in question. No single group is 'wrong' by any linguistic criterion, though a temporarily dominant group may try to enforce its own uses as 'correct'. What is really happening through these critical encounters, which may be very conscious or may be felt only as a certain strangeness and unease, is a process quite central in the development of a language when, in certain words, tones and rhythms, meanings are offered, felt for, tested, confirmed, qualified, changed.[30]

This is the very passage which Skinner had started out by criticizing as 'confusingly vague' (121). I suggest that it can be read very differently as an account that is more subtle in its understanding of the flux and social instability of language which Skinner's all too philosophical account would wish to contain and control as the 'self-conscious possession' of a philosophical (and not social) subject.

This, in its turn, opens up a very complex area of debate, one there is no space to address here directly, but where I would argue that Skinner's correct emphasis on the constitutivity of language is somewhat at odds with his instrumentalist bias, a bias which simplifies and reduces his interpretations of Wittgenstein and Austin in familiar ways.[31] To argue this we could do no better than to follow through Williams's own very careful picking through the idea of linguistic constitutivity in the chapter on language in *Marxism and Literature*, published one year after *Keywords*, where Williams lays stress on the complex sociality of language.[32] I can do no better here than to indicate just one point in Skinner's essay where the problem seems to break surface.

Jargon

To read any text actively, we first have to break what might be called the surface tension of the text, and get through to the anxieties and contradictions which animate it and which it seeks to cover over. One point of entry is given in Skinner's use of the work of J.L. Austin. Skinner writes:

> To apply any word to the world, we need to have a clear grasp of both its sense and its reference. But in the case of appraisive terms a further element of understanding is also required. We need in addition to know what exact range of attitudes the term can standardly be used to express. (To adopt J.L. Austin's jargon: it is necessary to know what type of speech-acts the word can be used to perform.) (122)

Anything in parentheses always has a strange textual existence: whatever is said there is both a part of what is being said, yet kept apart from what is being said – kept at a distance, enclosed, closed off. Why should Skinner have this reference to Austin here, or why should he seek to keep this reference out of sight, even as it intrudes upon us? In the first instance, it is a way of registering the debt which is fully acknowledged in the endnotes: 'Among philosophers of language, my approach owes most to J. Austin's *How to Do Things with Words*' – perhaps the debt is too much to acknowledge, it intrudes. But there is, I think, a more fundamental anxiety, one which threatens to undo the whole of Skinner's essay, and this comes through in his use of the word 'jargon', here the jargon in use 'among philosophers of language'. And here, without any reference to Williams's intentions in adding this new entry, let's turn to the discussion of jargon in the 1983 edition of *Keywords*.

In the new entry, Williams notes that jargon is now commonly used to describe, unfavourably or contemptuously, the vocabulary of certain unfamiliar branches of knowledge or intellectual position (174). 'The specialized vocabularies of various sciences and branches of knowledge', he writes,

> do not ordinarily attract description as jargon if they remain sufficiently specialized. The problem is usually the entry of such terms into more general talk and writing.... It is interesting that it is mainly in relation to psychology and sociology, and studies derived from them, but also in relation to an opposing intellectual position such as Marxism, that some of the most regular dismissive uses of jargon are now found. (175)

Summing up, he writes:

> Every known general position, in matters of art and belief, has its defining terms, and the difference between these and the terms identified as jargon is often no more than one of relative date and familiarity. To run together the senses of jargon as specialized, unfamiliar, belonging to a hostile position, and unintelligible chatter is then indeed at times a jargon: a confident local habit which merely assumes its own intelligibility and generality. (176)

This assumption is precisely what threatens to undermine Skinner's project. Is that project no more than 'a confident local habit which merely assumes its own intelligibility and generality'? I think that at the very least this possibility can serve to indicate a real conceptual problem – a problem which comes to focus on the difficult question of the possession of language. And with this question we return to the core ideas of deconstruction;

and, indeed, the idea that the word 'deconstruction' might be the key word of deconstruction.

Derrida addresses this question in his 'Letter to a Japanese Friend' in a way that is far from assuming the 'intelligibility and generality' that Williams attributes to professional jargon and that I think Skinner wishes to claim for the vocabulary of his own philosophical project. Here Derrida writes to Professor Toshihiko Izutsu regarding some of the problems involved in the translation of his writings into Japanese, and just what those problems themselves reveal. 'At our last meeting', he writes, ' I promised you some schematic and preliminary reflections on the word 'deconstruction':

> What we discussed were prolegomena to a possible translation of this word into Japanese, one which would at least try to avoid, if *possible*, a negative determination of its significations or connotations. The question would be therefore what deconstruction is not, or rather *ought* not to be. I underline these words 'possible' and 'ought.' For if the difficulties of translation can be anticipated (and the question of deconstruction is through and through *the* question of translation, and of the language of concepts, of the conceptual corpus of Western metaphysics), one should not begin by naively believing that the word 'deconstruction' corresponds in French to some clear and univocal signification. There is already in 'my' language a serious [*sombre*] problem of translation between what here or there can be envisaged for the word and the usage itself, the reserves of the word. And it is already clear that even in French, things change from one context to another.[33]

Derrida's emphases here – on the lack or impossibility of 'some clear and univocal signification'; the problems, in translation, but also in one's own language, of possessing and controlling that language; the fact that 'it is already clear that things change from one context to another' – embody just the problems and complexities to be found in *Keywords*.[34] Both Derrida and Williams are sceptical of the philosophical dream (which Skinner for one seems to have) in which language could become a self-conscious possession, for ever under the control of the knowing subject. And it should come as no surprise to find that it is precisely this scepticism, which troubled Skinner, and caused him to reject or wish to reject the insights of *Keywords*, that has led at least some of Williams's critics to see some common ground between his work and deconstruction.

Strangely enough, this common ground is more visible in the writings of Williams's conservative critics than in his leftist admirers. Patrick Parrinder, for instance, writes in disappointed tones of the 'deconstructive' aspects of Williams's work, and refers to his 'negativity, his criticism of concepts', and

how this was all part and parcel of 'the general deconstructive tendency'.[35] Parrinder is referring to *Keywords* here, in an essay where he also takes note of Quentin Skinner's distorting review. Williams, in his own way, but perhaps just as much as Derrida, is deeply suspicious of the self-identity of concepts. For both thinkers, though in their very different idioms, while philosophers may dream of writing in a self-possessed language of pure concepts, that dream is always interrupted by the brute reality of a language in which the meaning of words is always both the stake and site of social, philosophical and political struggles.

Raymond Williams and deconstruction; Raymond Williams and Jacques Derrida, talking, conversing together. Unlikely images, unlikely starting points for a discussion. In conclusion, it's perhaps worth remembering just how frustrating it is to turn to *Keywords* for the answer to something. It's a text that questions rather than embodies authority, and resolutely refuses to offer any easy answers. Indeed, perhaps what is best about it is that *Keywords* prevents easy answers. In this aspect, it resembles nothing less than a twentieth-century version of Flaubert's great *Dictionary of Received Ideas*. And it is, I think, in this deep suspicion of received ideas, this questioning and critical scepticism, that Williams and Derrida might well have found the basis for conversation and exchange, sitting at the end of the conference, in a hall littered with empty and overturned chairs. Perhaps their two projects had more in common than received ideas would have us believe.

Notes

For Antony Easthope 1939–1999.

1 Preliminary versions and aspects of this paper were presented at the Deconstruction Reading Politics conference at Staffordshire University in 1999, and, in 1996, at the *Crossroads in Cultural Studies* conference in Tampere, Finland, and as public lectures at the University of Transkei and Duke University. I am particularly grateful to Stewart Crehan, former Head of Department of English in Transkei, for his critical comments on the paper; and to the HSRC and the University of Cape Town for funding towards the costs of these trips.

2 Alan Durant and later Mary Louise Pratt called my attention to the existence of this documentary. The papers from the conference are collected as N. Fabb, D. Attridge, A. Durant and C. MacCabe (eds.), *The Linguistics of Writing: Arguments between Language and Literature* (London: Macmillan, 1988).

3 Though for a sympathetic and ingenious attempt to bring the two together, see Michael Ryan, *Marxism and Deconstruction: A Critical Articulation* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 1982).

4 D.L. Dworkin and L.G. Roman (eds.), 'Introduction: The Cultural Politics of Location', in *Views Beyond the Border Country: Raymond Williams and Cultural Politics* (London and New York: Routledge, 1993), p. 13.

5 'Editorial', *New Formations*, 5 (Summer 1988), p. 3.

6 D.L. Dworkin, 'Cultural Studies and the Crisis in British Radical Thought', in Dworkin and Roman, p. 54.

7 R.W. Johnson, 'Moooovement', *London Review of Books*, 8 February 1990, p. 5.

8 See John Higgins, 'Forgetting Williams', in C. Prendergast (ed.), *Cultural Materialism: Essays on Raymond Williams* (Minneapolis: University of Minnesota Press, 1990); and, more generally, *Raymond Williams: Literature, Marxism and Cultural Materialism* (London and New York: Routledge, 1999).

9 Jacques Derrida, *Specters of Marx*, trans. P. Kamuf (London and New York: Routledge, 1994), p. 16.

10 Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (London: NLB, 1979), p. 167.

11 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), pp. 37–8. To my knowledge, Williams only makes two specific references to deconstruction as such. The first, which seems to understand it as the very structuralist mode it began by rejecting, talks of the 'production of a new myth, based on the following assumptions: that all "signs" are arbitrary; that the "system of signs" is determined by its formal internal relations ... and that the appropriate response to "codification" is "decipherment", "deconstruction"' (*Marxism and Literature*, pp. 167–8); the second, a little more open or informed, suggests a 'shift' to a 'new sense of "deconstruction": not the technical analysis of internal organization ... but a much more open and active process which is continually taking examples apart, as a way of taking their systems apart' ('Crisis in English Studies', in John Higgins (ed.), *The Raymond Williams Reader* (Oxford: Blackwell, 2001), p. 263).

12 Jacques Derrida, 'Le Théatre de la Cruauté et la Cloture de la Représentation', in *L'Ecriture et la Différance* (Paris: Seuil, 1966), p. 343/'The Theatre of Cruelty and the Closure of Representation', in *Writing and Difference*, trans. Alan Bass (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1978), p. 234.

13 See the first trilogy of works on drama: *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1952); *Drama in Performance* (London: Fredrick Muller, 1954); and (with Michael Orrom), *Preface to Film* (London: Film Drama, 1954).

14 'Film and the Dramatic Tradition', in Higgins (ed.), *The Raymond Williams Reader*, p. 38.

15 Bernard Sharratt, 'In Whose Voice? The Drama of Raymond Williams', in Terry Eagleton (ed.), *Raymond Williams: Critical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1989), p. 132.

16 *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot*, p. 17.

17 See Higgins, *Raymond Williams*, esp. pp. 119–21, 132–3, 163–5.

18 For largely negative responses, in company with Skinner's review, which is discussed below, see also R.W. Burchfield, 'A Case of Mistaken Identity: *Keywords*', *Encounter* 46 (1976); and William Empson, 'Compacted Doctrines', *New York Review of Books*, 27 October 1977. For more positive accounts, see Alan O'Connor, *Raymond Williams: Writing, Culture, Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989); and Christopher Norris, '*Keywords*, Ideology and Critical Theory', in J. Wallace, R. Jones and S. Nield (eds.), *Raymond Williams Now: Knowledge, Limits and the Future* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1997).

19 Walter Benjamin, *Illuminations*, ed. Harry Zohn (Glasgow: Fontana, 1973), p. 257.

20 I owe this comparison to Maria Elisa Cevasco; see her 'Our Best Man' in *Pretexts: Literary and Cultural Studies* 9, 1 (2000).

21 Fred Inglis, *Raymond Williams* (London and New York: Routledge, 1995), p. 247.

22 Quentin Skinner, 'The Idea of a Cultural Lexicon', *Essays in Criticism*, 29, 3 (July 1979), pp. 205–24.

23 Quentin Skinner, 'Language and Social Change', in J. Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context: Quentin Skinner and His Critics* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1988), pp. 312–13.

24 Raymond Williams, *Keywords* (Glasgow: Fontana, 1976), p. 43; 2nd revised edition, 1983.

25 The most succinct critique is to be found in Raymond Williams, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', in Higgins (ed.), *The Raymond Williams Reader*. See also *Culture and Society* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1958), pp. 265–84; *Marxism and Literature*; and, for a later discussion, 'Marx on Culture', in Raymond Williams, *What I Came to Say* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989).

26 'Crisis in English Studies', p. 264.

27 *Culture and Society*, p. 64.

28 See the Preface to *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought I: The Renaissance* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1978), where Skinner describes his own methods and procedures in ways very reminiscent of cultural materialism: 'I have tried not to concentrate so exclusively on the leading theorists, and have focused instead on the more general social and intellectual matrix out of which their works arose ... I take it that political life itself sets the main problems for the political theorist ... This is not to say, however, that I treat these ideological superstructures as a straightforward outcome of their social base ... I have tried to write a history centred less on the classic texts and more on the history of ideologies' (x–xi). More generally, see the essays gathered together in Tully (ed.), *Meaning and Context*.

29 Almost the same wording can be found in the Preface to *The Foundations of Modern Political Thought*: 'I turn ... in the Conclusion from history to historical semantics – from the concept of the State to the word "State". The clearest sign that a society has entered into the self-conscious possession of a new concept' (x). We note that the troubling 'society or group' has been excised in this version.

30 *Keywords*, pp. 9–10; the revised 1983 edition adds 'asserted' to the verbs crowding into the final sentence.

31 See John Higgins, 'The Age of Wittgenstein', *Pretexts: Studies in Writing and Culture* 8, 1 (1998), for a brief account of some of the reductive versions of Wittgenstein; and Jacques Derrida, 'Signature Événement Contexte', in *Marges de le Philosophie* (Paris: Minuit, 1972), for a challenging reading of Austin, one which provoked the infamous debate between Derrida and John Searle.

32 See Higgins, *Raymond Williams*, esp. pp. 119–22.

33 'Letter to a Japanese Friend', in *A Derrida Reader: Between the Blinds*, ed. Peggy Kamuf (New York: Cornell University Press, 1979), p. 270.

34 The most famous instance is, of course, Derrida's reluctance to grant *différance* the status of a concept: see 'Différance', in *Marges de la Philosophie* (Paris: Editions de Minuit, 1972).

35 Patrick Parrinder, 'Utopia and Negativity in Raymond Williams', in *The Failure of Theory* (Brighton: Harvester, 1987), p. 82.

Defining Cultural Democracy: Modernism and Universal Individualism

Melba Cuddy-Keane

Democracy, a 'keyword' in Raymond Williams's ideological vocabulary of British culture and society, has become a key site of contesting definitions in our global vocabulary today. As a reflector of cultural change, the term is undergoing multiple reformations involving both the frame of reference in which it signifies and the location where the defining is being done. Democracy might be associated with neoliberal and transnational economic practices or, alternatively, with a global network of counterpublics joined in mutual activist work; democracy might be seen as a traditionally Western construction or as a distinctive Asian form devised for Eastern use. Globally, democracy is no longer a term with a stable political reference and no longer a term whose definition is exclusively owned by the West.

This proliferation of usage furthermore encodes what Anthony Giddens calls the 'paradox of democracy': just at the point where 'democracy is spreading over the world', we find that 'in the mature democracies, which the rest of the world is supposed to be copying, there is widespread disillusionment with democratic processes'.[1] As Giddens suggests, the democratic touchstone of free elections is being increasingly replaced by one of free markets, causing a reorientation of power from the political to the economic sphere. The deflection from a political centre is furthered by the growing fear that political systems no longer have the 'flexibility and dynamism' adequate to the global flow of information and the new economic forces recently unleashed (90–92). On the positive side, the growing scepticism about the efficacy of democratic institutions is accompanied by an increasing interest in democratic citizens' networks, shifting attention away from parliamentary democracy to the modelling of democratic society. Voicing a claim that arises repeatedly in studies of globalization, Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri argue that if 'sovereignty has taken a new form, composed of a series of national and supranational organisms united under a single logic of rule', there is increasing need for the multitude to 'invent new democratic forms and a new constituent power that will one day take us through and beyond Empire'.[2]

What seems to be emerging, at least in the West, is a formation of cultural democracy that is both separate from, yet imbricated with, political and economic structures. And it is precisely here, at a time of changing definition, that Raymond Williams's approach to cultural 'keywords' offers a crucial tool. Words derive their meanings from their position within a cultural system, and my approach in the present essay is to explore, in a way that

is guided by Williams's historical semantics, the shifts occurring in and around the use of 'democracy' in the early twentieth century in the context of the emerging new system of mass society. My goal is to show, like Williams, how certain terms in our vocabulary become, from time to time, sites of 'different experiences and readings of experience' and how, in this very contestation over meaning, the crucial problems confronting a culture are revealed. The motivating force in such archaeology is not to establish authoritative meaning but to open up 'a vocabulary to use, to find our own ways in, to change as we find it necessary to change'.[3] Yet we need also to recognize the way earlier associations work to restrict and inhibit current definition. A final advantage of Williams's approach is that, in showing how meanings have accrued to words, it reveals that meanings are detachable. In its travels through the nineteenth century, 'democracy' accumulated certain kinds of baggage that it might be well to unpack.

When 'democracy' entered the English language in the mid sixteenth century, it derived its meaning from its Greek roots, *demos* the commons, the people, and *kratos* or rule, authority. But 'the people' has not, historically, been a stable category. The implications of 'democracy' have been subject to changing assumptions about collectivity, particularly those associated with the nineteenth-century terms 'elites' and 'masses' and the primary duality that they install. Even if we have currently moved towards more pluralistic constructions of group identity, what still has a powerful hold on our thinking is the model of two mutually exclusive centres of power, whether these are labelled 'elites' and 'masses' or 'transnationals' and the 'global left'. Perhaps it was once appropriate to analyse power in terms of such binary polarities, but the model is inadequate to the complex schemata of power dynamics today. Oppositional binaries, however, are deeply embedded in our social thinking, as Raymond Williams's historical semantics helps us more fully to understand.

In Williams's archaeology, 'elite' becomes entangled, in the nineteenth century, with the redistribution of governmental power. As its meaning shifts from the earlier theological signification of God's chosen, or 'the elect', to the politically inflected definition of those best fit to govern, it acquires associations of '*class* or *ruling class*' and of hierarchical privilege in the political state (*Keywords*, 98). Conversely, up to the late eighteenth century, 'democratic' was used primarily to refer to rule by the largest, and therefore by the lowest, class. Threatening the tyranny of the commoners, 'democracy' was employed, in almost all instances, as 'a strongly unfavourable term' (83). During the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries, conceptions of democracy shifted gradually towards positive, modern connotations but a new limitation arose in the construction of 'the masses' as a uniform, monolithic group. 'Masses', as a term for the populace, became entangled

with a second meaning signifying a rudimentary lump of raw material or a body of physical objects grouped together for common properties. With the conflation of the two meanings, 'masses' came to signify an aggregate of persons viewed as individually indistinguishable (159–61). Both conservative and radical groups tended to construct the lower class as uniform and homogeneous, although with the antithetical implications of unthinking 'mob' versus united 'solidarity' (161), and the different ends of electoral control versus organized collective action. Elsewhere, however, Williams has cogently argued the fallacy of any uniform construction of groups: 'There are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses.'[4] Yet the inherited political meaning of democracy both encodes the homogeneity of the disempowered and inscribes empowered and disempowered as two monolithic, mutually exclusive groups.

The earlier slippage between 'masses' and 'mob or solidarity' was then compounded, in the cultural context, by further slippages between 'mass' and 'popular'. The latter two words are usually used interchangeably, with the problematic consequence that an opposition to mass culture – a predominant strain among intellectuals in the modernist period – is often taken to imply an opposition to the multitude of the people. In this case, elite intellectuals are constructed as uniform and antithetical to those outside their group. But mass and popular cultures can be usefully disentangled, as, for example, Michael Kammen suggests in his analysis of American 'tastes'. Quoting Richard Slotkin, Kammen distinguishes works created for the purposes of mass consumption from the multiplicity of popular forms that are 'produced by and for specific cultural communities like the ethnic group, the family-clan, a town, a neighbourhood, or region, the workplace or the street corner'.[5] In similar fashion, W. Richard Neuman, who focuses on the audience for contemporary mass media, distinguishes between homogenous mass audiences and complex networks of crisscrossing and partially overlapping subgroups of the 'whole people'.[6] Resisting the technological determinism that assumes mass media *necessarily* produce a uniform audience, Neuman points to the way the Internet has fostered the development of special-interest 'narrowcasting' and the emergence of diversified 'issue publics'. Non-geographical communities, of varying sizes, form because like-minded people find each other by utilizing a format accessible to mass participation. By acknowledging the multiplicity of forms people generate, the models proposed by Slotkin and Neuman open the path to new paradigms of democratic culture as collaboratively constructed by multiple and border-crossings groups.

This shift in ways of thinking about the 'masses' both recuperates the original meaning of popular as involving the whole people while incorporating a later meaning as that which is generated not from above but from

below. As Williams points out, from the sixteenth to the eighteenth century, 'popular' signified large numbers, first referring to a political system that involved 'the whole people' and later acquiring the attribute of being 'widely favoured' or 'well-liked' (*Keywords*, 198–9). Subsequently, however, 'popular' began to imply interests or activities that originate from the people, in the sense of grassroots movements as opposed to culture or politics emanating from above. In this latter sense, 'popular' moves away from an emphasis on large numbers to signify forms that may not have broad appeal but that are open to self-selected participation and are generated from below. Unfortunately, it may no longer be possible to separate 'popular culture' from mass production, and we should perhaps devise a new term – such as 'plenary culture' – to signify the network of crisscrossing and overlapping subgroups existing within the whole, but incorporating, and produced by, a diversity of interests and needs. Such conceptual reconfiguring is crucial for modelling the discourse of a democratic culture permeated with complex and multiple fields of power.

Breaking the hold of binary structures can also lead us to rethink the assumption that *all* associations in the terms 'democratic' and 'aristocratic' are diametrically opposed. Certainly as systems of governance, an absolute monarchy is antithetical to a constitutional democracy, and various oppositions reasonably follow: hierarchy versus equality, hereditary privilege versus value according to ability, and exclusionary versus open participation of all. But when we shift from governance to general culture, the binaries break down. Limitation, narrowness, decadence or childishness may have been marked features of aristocratic circles at various times in British history; the qualities unfortunately do not remain the aristocracy's preserve. By similar token, if 'aristocracy' has leant itself to high standards, education, freedom, ease and eccentricity, there may be good arguments in favour of incorporating those qualities *within* a democracy, especially if that culture is threatened by standardization and mass manipulation. Aristocratic individualism is often assumed to be antithetical to democratic collectivity, but new configurations of the public sphere impel us towards less traditional thinking.

The artificial but established oppositions between elites and masses, elite and popular, and aristocratic and democratic thus threaten to contaminate twenty-first century thinking with the assumptions that empowered and marginalized are discrete oppositional groups, that high culture cannot be 'of the people', and that individualism necessarily works against collectivity. The nineteenth-century political construct, imported into a twenty-first-century global context, imposes a binary model that takes a complex interlocking network of numerous subgroups and reduces them to two uniform categories. Once we open ourselves to new configurations, possibilities for radical reformations arise.

During the early twentieth century, modernists began to reconfigure 'democracy' in precisely this way. Achieving the final stage of universal franchise shifted cultural debate away from democracy as a form of governance to the democratic values that political forms were intended to obtain. The primary question was no longer 'whether democracy' but 'whither democracy'. The extension of the franchise necessitated a corresponding extension of education, with the task of transforming the advantages hitherto possessed by a few into the democratic inheritance of all. In the aftermath of World War I, proponents of the League of Nations saw democratic culture as a possible basis for international understanding, and as a controversial but nonetheless crucial hope for world peace. At the same time, increasingly large-scale distribution systems linked to commodifying practices threatened to reduce the inclusiveness of democracy to a homogeneous and regulated mass. The dilemma is the paradox of the One and the Many: of imagining a *society* of *individuals,* or a *collectivity* of *nations.* Any adequate response must necessarily entail a certain doubleness of thinking; for many modernists, such doubleness was captured in a concept that, to adapt a phrase from Leonard Woolf, we might best designate as 'universal individualism'.

Cultural Democracy and Universal Individualism

When Leonard Woolf (hereafter 'Leonard', to distinguish from Virginia Woolf) defined democracy, like many modernists, he did so primarily in cultural terms. For Leonard, the fundamental democratic principle was a belief in *equality,* not in a system of government; universal suffrage was merely a way of implementing equality. Underlying his work for the Labour Party's two Advisory Committees on Imperial and International Affairs, and on the originating documents for the League of Nations, was a political philosophy founded on a respect for individuality – not, however, as a counter to the demands of society but as the very foundation of social organization.[7] 'Universal individualism' comes from a passage in Leonard's autobiography, *The Journey Not the Arrival Matters,* in which he takes 'the famous liberty, equality, fraternity of the French Revolution' as 'the ultimate communal ideal, ' but then explains that 'those words only translate into social and political terms the consciousness of *universal individuality* and the right of everyone to be treated as an individual, a free fellow human being'.[8] The sense of equal justice on which the construct of community as a whole depends comes from the recognition that each person is an 'I' like yourself.

Universal individualism is similarly the informing motif in a series on 'The Modern State' that Leonard Woolf presented for the BBC in October and November of 1931. Democracy, Leonard stated, resides in the idea, ushered

in by the American and French Revolutions, that the happiness of ordinary people is as important as that of the military and aristocratic classes; furthermore, he argued, the value of the happiness of *all* people leads to a belief in the *equality* of all people, and thus in equal access to education to ensure equal rights to individual growth. In the series' conclusion, Leonard asserted that a belief in the equal importance of all people should form the basis for both national and international community, and he extrapolated from democratic relations among individuals within a nation to a model of global relations in which people think of themselves as 'Citizens of the World'. Whereas the nineteenth-century patriot Giuseppe Mazzini had applied a democratic ideal of equal individuals to 'relations between whole peoples of different nationalities', modern patriotism, Leonard objected, was democracy's enemy (817). The prevailing notion of the homogeneous nation-state masked real diversity and, within many European states, minorities were denied equal rights and liberties and lived 'in a condition of permanent political discontent'. The same oppression by the majority, Leonard concluded, characterized the international level as well, where imperialism compounded the effects of patriotism: European states assumed the prerogative of self-government for themselves but regarded the inhabitants of Asia and Africa as incapable of managing their own affairs. Leonard did not gloss over the difficulties of achieving the democratic goal. The fundamental problem to be faced by a democracy, he admitted, was the task of resolving 'the claims of the whole community with the claims of the individual' (745). But democracy's respect for the individual, Leonard asserted, was inseparable from a respect for all citizens of the world.

In the United States, universal individualism provided a similar touchstone in the educational philosophy of John Dewey. In his influential *Democracy and Education* (1916), Dewey's argument for democratic education was first of all immediate and pragmatic: 'a government resting upon popular suffrage cannot be successful unless those who elect and who obey their governors are educated'.[9] But in addition, Dewey argued, democracy is 'more than a form of government'; it is 'a mode of associated living', and Dewey's idea of 'associated living', like Leonard Woolf's, was integral to individual growth. According to Dewey, for true development, 'each [person] has to refer his own action to that of others, and to consider the action of others to give point and direction to his own'; in this way, the requirements for educating the individual also require 'the breaking down of those barriers of class, race, and national territory which [keep] men from perceiving the full import of their activity'. Since the individual experiences the greatest expansion of identity by sharing in the 'associated activity' of the widest possible community (26), individual freedom and the democratic community go hand in hand.

Not all readers, of course, were convinced by Dewey's model for reconciling the individual and society; the reviewer in *The Nation* claimed that Dewey devalued the pursuit of a quiet, reflective life and reduced communal consciousness to the art of being a 'good mixer'.[10] But, like Leonard Woolf, Dewey did not minimize the difficulties of advocating an altruistic consciousness as part of the individual's growth. As David Kadlec points out, Dewey avoided a Utopian discourse by emphasizing 'what a complex and continual interaction it requires to bring the individual to a consciousness of the whole and of his identity or interest with it'.[11] Similarly, in Ross Posnock's view, Dewey's insistence on democracy as a 'perpetual pursuit of an end' kept his focus productively on the pragmatic, process-oriented nature of the democratic project.[12]

The pervasiveness of these themes in the 1920s and 1930s can only be suggested here, but it is important to note that such thinking crossed borders of class and race. In England, supporters of working-class education frequently emphasized the democratic right to individual growth. When R.H. Tawney outlined 'An Experiment in Democratic Education' (1914), he was concerned not with access to professional training but with the right to study for the purposes of a 'reasonable and humane conduct of life'.[13] Similar arguments were brought forward by the labour historian G.D.H. Cole, one of the formative figures, like Tawney, in the Workers' Educational Association. According to L.P. Carpenter, democracy, for Cole, 'was more than a political principle; it was a moral relationship among men'.[14] While bitingly critical of the reigning educational system, Cole built his arguments for reform upon the general belief that increased educational opportunity would lead to a new era of equality and social peace: 'every working-class student who has found his way to Oxford or Cambridge has been acclaimed as a sign and portent of the coming educated democracy'.[15]

A related dimension is the way cultural democracy was conceived by modernist black intellectuals. In his analysis, for example, of the connections between Dewey and W.E.B. DuBois, Ross Posnock argues, 'Instead of segregating culture from politics, DuBois (and the intellectuals he influenced) sought to develop a "higher and broader and more varied human culture", a project he described as the "main end of democracy". Like Dewey and Leonard Woolf, DuBois reconfigured the relation between individualism and universalism by conjoining individual development with sharing and reciprocity, defining the black intellectual 'as one who embodies and helps promote in others the "sovereign soul" and the 'higher individualism' of universal values'. Both DuBois and Dewey thus undid the binary of aristocratic and democratic: as Posnock states, in Dewey's thought, 'Because it "denotes faith in individuality, in uniquely distinctive qualities in each normal human being", democracy is "aristocracy carried to its limit".'[16]

In the early twentieth century, cultural usage was thus extending the meaning of 'democratic' from a system of governance to the whole framework of cultural thinking and expression within a society. Furthermore, in a wide range of writings transcending differences of race, class and nation, democratic thought was uniting the ideals of individualism and collectivism, tying the full realization of human potential to the principle of respect for other individuals within the whole community. In the next section of this essay, I turn to Virginia Woolf, not to claim she resolves the difficulties of achieving a democratic community but to examine her modelling of the democratic process. Struggling against the prevailing binary of individualist and collectivist systems, Virginia Woolf, like the other modernists I have mentioned, sought to imagine universal individualism in an era of mass society. Like Leonard, she asserts that lived experience, not political structure, is the democratic goal, but she furthermore envisions a discourse through which a democratic goal might be achieved.

Virginia Woolf, small-d democracy and Walt Whitman

Virginia Woolf was acutely aware of the problem that Leonard identified as endemic to all democratic formulations: the tension between individual and social interests. But her work inserts a new element into the discussion by engaging not simply the problem but also the issues of how and by whom a democratic society is to be defined. Woolf did not consider definition apart from the dynamic of how definition proceeds; and if 'democratic' was to refer to the whole people, she asked, how could a part define what that whole would mean? For Woolf to give her primary attention not to social structures but to social discourse was not an apolitical gesture but the very foundation of her political thought. In her ideal discursive community, all voices would participate. But individual expression would be legitimized – allowed, that is, free rein to be individual – only if writing were not authoritative but part of an open and equal conversation, operating without aggression, suppression or domination.[17] But that, she constantly argued, was not the social discourse of her time. Thus 'democratic' as an ideal condition differed, for Woolf, not only from the prevailing political paradigm but even, it would seem, from constructions of 'democratic' that were possible to imagine at the time. And, as usual in her writing, Woolf's approach to the issues is grounded in her treatment of language. When she uses the word 'democratic', there are different inflections in her use of the term and different times when certain inflections prevail. But the very shifts in Woolf's usage expose the word 'democratic' as a site of twentieth-century anxiety and reveal Woolf's own sense of it as a cultural keyword.

Fairly early in her career, Woolf encodes a difference between 'Democratic' and 'democratic'. In *Night and Day* (1919), when Mary Datchet writes on 'Some Aspects of the Democratic State' or plans with Mr. Basnett the formation of the 'Society for the Education of Democracy', her work involves three straightforward formal democratic projects: votes for women, provision of education for the working class, and the overthrow of capitalism. While Mary's intense dedication is admirable, precisely how Woolf regards her work is more difficult to say. The narrative view is positive about Mary's achievement of an independent identity through her work but cautious and sceptical about the likely accomplishment of her aims. Once 'democratic' is put into the titles of papers and the names of societies, Woolf suggests, it becomes one of those big words, like 'Women' and 'Fiction', that are hard to relate to daily individual experience.

Conversely, 'democracy' as a little, lower-case word connects to ordinary life in both its individual and communal aspects. Thus in 'Melodious Meditations' (1917), Woolf opposes small-d democracy to pretentious writing that inflates its own importance by literally or metaphorically 'spelling certain qualities with a capital letter'.[18] In this review of Henry Sedgwick's essays, Woolf finds that his attempt to elevate his prose by cultivating eighteenth-century abstractions exposes, at the same time, his desire 'to refine and restrain the boisterous spirit of democracy' (81). For her part, Woolf decries any move to turn literature into a 'special cult' of 'geniuses' and 'great men' to be treated with 'special reverence' by 'the masses'. She endorses an egalitarian democracy, asserting that 'the best artistic work is done by people who mix easily with their fellows' and, against Sedgwick, she upholds Walt Whitman's 1855 preface to the *Leaves of Grass*: 'As a piece of writing it rivals anything we have done for a hundred years, and as a statement of the American spirit no finer banner was ever unfurled for the young of a great country to march under' (81–2). She then concludes with Whitman's own words: 'There will soon be no more priests. Their work is done.... A new order shall arise, and they shall be the priests of man, and every man shall be his own priest.'[19]

Whitman, the self-styled poet of democracy, is, both here and elsewhere, a democratic touchstone for Woolf. Although she never wrote extensively about him, she was unreservedly sympathetic to his beliefs, giving him, for example, the second to last word in *Three Guineas* (1938). There, in her last note, before quoting George Sand on the solidarity that unites all individual human lives within the larger general life, Woolf uses Whitman's words to express the democratic vision: 'Of Equality – as if it harm'd me, giving others the same chances and rights as myself – as if it were not indispensable to my own rights that others possess the same.'[20] Woolf and Whitman: perhaps this may seem a surprising affinity to those for whom Woolf is

marked by upper-middle-class, or even upper-class, Englishness. But it is in an essay on Whitman that Woolf comes closest to figuring the ideal bond of democratic community.

In 1918, Virginia Woolf reviewed *Visits to Walt Whitman in 1890–1891*, written by 'Two Lancashire Friends', J. Johnston, MD, and J.W. Wallace, who were members of a reading and discussion group formed in the town of Bolton, Lancashire, around 1885. Ordinary, middle-class young men, with the occupations of 'clergymen, manufacturers, artisans, and bank clerks',[21] they offered striking examples of the common readers Woolf would later inscribe as the audience for her essays. In its composite nature, the group also attracted Woolf's attention as a model of community, for it combined individual difference with participatory togetherness, prefiguring the communal dynamics that she explored continually throughout her own writing, culminating in her last novel *Between the Acts*.[22]

According to Wallace, an assistant architect whose father was a millwright, the group was initiated shortly after his mother's death when a number of intimate friends began to meet in his house every Monday evening to discuss, not only current events, but 'subjects of more permanent interest and value'.[23] Although the group grew to include many members, they never organized into a society, never attempted to designate a leader, but remained 'a little company of men of widely different characteristics, ideas and training, who were united only in common friendship.' Their strikingly 'composite character', however, seemed formed upon these very differences: 'It resulted in part from our very diversity and from the curious way in which our several personalities seemed to fit in with each other, the limitations and idiosyncrasies of each other being offset and harmonized by the complementary qualities of the rest' (18–19). There was a sense as well of a mystic common identity: 'And there were times when it led us, by imperceptible stages, to a deepened intimacy, in which the inmost quests and experiences of the soul were freely expressed, and each grew conscious of our essential unity, as of a larger self which included us all' (19). Representing unity in diversity, the nature of the group suggests one possible resolution to the tensions, addressed by Leonard Woolf and John Dewey, between individualism and society in a democratic state.

Despite their many differences, the group was bound together by their interest in 'Cosmic Consciousness' – the title of a little pamphlet that Wallace had written after his mother's death and the title of a later influential book on Walt Whitman, written by a North American visitor to the group, Dr Richard Maurice Bucke.[24] For Whitman became the inspiring presence in the group; perhaps more strongly than anything else, they were united in their shared conviction of Whitman's pre-eminence as a writer and a thinker, claiming him to be 'the greatest epochal figure in all literature'.[25] Such an

intellectual passion among men not in intellectual professions stirs Woolf's admiration and optimism much more than the 'well tended and long established' fires burning at Oxford and Cambridge. When, she notes, 'one stumbles by chance upon an isolated fire burning brightly without associations or encouragement to guard it, the flame of the spirit becomes a visible hearth where one may warm one's hands' (205). Woolf's tone is one of absolute sincerity and respect; her only irony is that the historical fame of Bolton rests on its cotton market, not on these young men.

Then, too, although Whitman provides a focalized centre for group consciousness, he abjures the role of leader and insists on a relation of democratic equality. When two of the Lancashire company finally cross the Atlantic to meet him, he initially surprises and shocks his visitors with his simple, homely manner, his rough ways, his resemblance to a 'retired farmer.' But ultimately Whitman impresses more profoundly with the message that 'he had no relish for a worship founded upon the illusion that he was somehow better or other than the mass of human beings' (206). He is no less 'wise', no less 'free-thinking', for making his 'common humanity' the dominant note. And the same easy commerce with his readers marks his relations with his 'great' English contemporaries, Symonds, Tennyson and Carlyle: 'Their names dropped into his talk as the names of equals.' Then, just as Woolf was later to write, in *A Room of One's Own*, that 'the poor poet has not ... a dog's chance',[26] so, in her review, she singles out Whitman's words, 'no man can become truly heroic who is really poor'.[27] In the democratic vision, there is no elevation of priests; there is also no acceptance of poverty.[28]

In contrast to Woolf's ambivalence about organized political work, in which she admired the goal but generally despaired of the process, there was everything about Whitman and his readers to like: openness, frankness, honesty, kindliness, delight and – most of all – equality. The aims of peace and democracy, so fervently sought by many formal organizations of Woolf's time, were realized in Whitman's democratic vision and his democratic relation to his readers. In place of a capital-D Democratic Society, Woolf found, in Whitman's extended circle, a democratic culture of equality in daily life and a truly democratic discourse. Yet, at the same time, the modern crowd, the modern mass of people, was quite unlike the intimate group of Whitman and the 'Lancashire chaps'. Woolf did not ignore the awkward, discomforting questions that a thorough extension of the democratic principle would entail. Neither Whitman's celebration of the universal heroic nor his intimate commerce with his self-selected readership could translate easily to the modern intellectual's attempts to formulate a model of community in an era of cultural standardization and mass manipulation. Escalating noise (in the sense of demands on attention) and expanding scale recast

the problems of bringing democracy to birth. Woolf's recognition of mass democracy as the new spectre to be faced emerges clearly as the subject in her sketches of modern crowds.

Virginia Woolf on Crowds

'Abbeys and Cathedrals' and 'This is the House of Commons' (1932) confront the problems of democracy in a mass society. These personal essays are, in effect, travel narratives, written for *Good Housekeeping* as part of a series called *The London Scene*. The narrator is a tour guide, taking her readers through some of the famous historic buildings of London, engaging the not unexpected contrast between past and present. At heart, however, the essays probe the differences between aristocratic and democratic structures, embarking on a trail of shifting perspectives that make absolute polarizations difficult to sustain.[29] Woolf's sympathies with common life go hand in hand with her antipathies towards the hierarchical and monumentalized past, but the essays gesture as well towards a recuperated individualism as a necessary antidote to the regulation and standardization of modern life.

'Abbeys and Cathedrals' proceeds like a musical composition, conducting us through alternating spaces of order and chaos, quiet and noise. With a structure not unlike Mussorgsky's *Pictures at an Exhibition* (1874), the essay takes us inside a number of London's great landmarks – St Paul's, St Mary-le-Bow and Westminster Abbey – with the connecting leitmotif of the busy street outside. As we enter each interior, the roar from the street is suddenly hushed, and we are enclosed within the reverberating stillness of the past: 'Pause, reflect, admire, take heed of your ways', we are exhorted, and in response, '[m]ind and body seem both to widen' and 'expand' (31). In contrast, the busy street is all speed and movement: omnibuses, motor cars and vans rush by; people 'dive into tubes'; the crowds 'scuttle and hurry' or 'jostle and skip and circumvent each other' (30, 31). Everything is 'hubbub'; everything is 'helter skelter' (33). And this life of this street is both 'democratic' and marked by sameness. Massified in units of a million, the 'Mr Smiths and Miss Browns ... seem too many, too minute, too like each other to have each a name, a character, a separate life of their own' (30). Everything merges into 'the hum-drum democratic disorder of the hurrying street' (34).

The spatial relation between historic church and contemporary street thus charts the difference between a past aristocratic, individualist age and the present democratic age of the mass. The past, however, is not a better world to which the narrator longs to return. If people now '*seem* to have shrunk and become multitudinous and minute instead of single and substantial', and '*seem* ... too like each other to have each a name' (30; emphasis

added), the essay pushes its readers to question the grounds of that seeming. Much of the apparent elevation of the past has to do with assumptions about rank, which the narrator suggestively punctures: 'Often it is only the greatness of their birth that has exalted them' (33). Even the 'more potent royalty', the 'dead poets', have their limitations; their statues stand 'transfixed' in 'splendid crucifixion', like dead gods whose sacrifice is demanded to preserve a belief in some enduring ideal (34).

Correspondingly, the indistinguishability of the faces in the modern crowd has less to do with actual change than with the present lack of time and space for observation. Pointing to the eighteenth-century tomb of an ordinary citizen in St Mary-le-Bow, the tour guide ironically contrasts 'the space that the dead enjoy compared with what the living now enjoy', noting that the same area might now 'serve almost for an office and demand a rent of many hundreds a year' (30, 31). But there is also a change in discursive ground that imposes a different kind of perception: the lengthy inscription on the tomb recalls a world that allowed time and space for reflection, whereas the matter of rents foregrounds the economy of the fast-paced, modern business world – 'The mere process of keeping alive needs all our energy. We have no time ... to think about life or death.'

The question, then, is how to preserve the individual, given the scale and speed of modern life. Woolf answers with images of both integration and separation. The next place in the tour, the church of St Clement Danes, is another historic site but it is one – by virtue of its placement on an island in the middle of the busy Strand – that sits directly in the flow of London traffic. Here the ceremony of tradition interfaces with the democratic hubbub of the city. Springing from a car, a bridal party speeds into the church and, in the integrated voices of the London soundscape, the 'roar' of the bells – the famous chimes of 'Oranges and Lemons' – harmonizes with 'the roar of omnibuses' (35). What, from the Abbey, had seemed to be 'the flood and waste of average human life' now, in the city, appears as 'the full tide and race of human life' (34, 35). Although still with the anonymity imposed by the narrator's distant perspective, the bride and bridegroom testify to the endurance of human passions, even in a helter-skelter world.

The tour then makes one last, final stop: a quiet public garden on the site of an old graveyard, where the tombstones propped up along the walls further enclose the sheltered space. Removed, like the churches, from the noise of the city, the garden is nevertheless a place of democratic, common life: its inhabitants are mothers, nursemaids, children, an old beggar scattering crumbs from his meal to the sparrows. It is also a place for a reader and for the reading, too, of long works: 'Here one might sit and read *Pamela* from cover to cover' (35). The garden inserts a space, in the accelerated time of modernity, for private reflection; it juxtaposes to the business world

the alternate, largely feminized, discourse of the everyday. The day's walk through London thus ends with a trope of substitution: the public garden for the public monument, the ordinary individual for the heroic statue. Furthermore, in this alternative quiet space, anonymity acquires a different meaning: here finally is a place where 'the dead sleep in peace' (36). Part of the natural rhythm of the garden, they resign '[u]nreluctantly ... their human rights to separate names or peculiar virtues.' Part of the continuance of the natural world, they merge into a larger, communal life evocative of Whitman's cosmic consciousness.

By carving out a space for reading and for everyday life, Woolf signals one means of fostering the individual in mass society.[30] But since this portrait of the cultural democratic lacks a public dimension, the next essay turns to the parliamentary democratic by taking the tour group to the House of Commons. Again we encounter the swirling crowd, 'passing and repassing, ... nodding and laughing and running messages and hurrying' and again we note the venerable and distinctive figures of the great statesmen of the past, memorialized in the imposing statues outside the House (37). And the same tension persists: although the proceedings in the House testify to the portentous victory that 'we common people' won so long ago, there seems an enormous gap between the '[m]atters of great moment' in process of determination and the undistinguished and indistinguishable appearance of the men making the decisions (38, 41). Seeking the marks of individual life, the narrator questions, 'how ... are any of these competent, well-groomed gentlemen going to turn into statues?' (40)

While the narrator remarks a certain loss of dignity along with the upper-class manner, numerous reasons other than class explain the current machine-like stamp.[31] There is, first of all, the speed of modern life. In the past, there was time for individuality to unfold, time for the elaborate oratory that, however manipulative, nevertheless left an immense impression of individual skill. The faster pace of time is furthermore inseparable from the increased complexity of the proceedings; the scope of events now dealt with requires a devolution of personal power to the power of a committee, with the result that the 'intricacies and elegancies of personality are trappings that get in the way of business' (42). And finally, there is a vaster, more diverse audience to be considered: these are speeches not directed to the 'small separate ears' of those present in the House, but to men and women everywhere – 'in factories, in shops, in farms on the veldt, in Indian villages' (43). Impersonality is, in this context, not a defect but a fundamental aspect of good parliamentary discourse. If statues then become increasingly 'monolithic, plain and featureless', it is because the statesman's performance as an instrument of the state, rather than his personal character, is now the marker of his success (42).

But the essay ends with a gesture towards a paradigmatic shift, by turning from the parliamentary model to a projected alternative discourse of the people. At the end of the tour, we pause by one last historical site, the vast space of Westminster Hall. Although originating as a place for royal entertainments in the reign of William II, this Hall held the first meetings of the council that evolved into parliament; it later housed the courts of law and was used for state trials; it had latterly become a place of public ceremonies. As a hall of the people, it offers a fitting trope for Woolf's democratic modern age, marking a transition from the age of sculpture to the 'age of architecture': 'Let us see whether democracy which makes halls cannot surpass the aristocracy which carved statues' (43). Here modernity's expansion of scale works positively, for the vastness of the hall figures the inclusiveness of the whole.

Yet the new democracy can be anticipated with anxiety just as the old aristocracy is rejected with regret. In Leonard's BBC series – delivered just months after Virginia wrote her six essays for *The London Scene* – he identified 'standardization' as a disease that a true democracy must confront. And in Woolf's Westminster Hall, democratic dreams are rudely interrupted by the regulatory figures of policemen, reminding us that movement in the Hall is controlled. Conversely, as a place haunted by such heroic figures as Charles I, Thomas More and Guy Fawkes, the Hall stirs old desires for individual life. Just as individual freedom was essential to Leonard's definition of democracy, so Virginia longs for a space for 'the abnormal, the particular, the splendid' in hers (44). The direction Woolf proposes is not one of resurrecting the aristocracy; instead, she ends with the hope that 'by some stupendous stroke of genius both will be combined, the vast hall and the small, the particular, the individual human being'.[32]

Writing Democracy

Inclusiveness that preserves the individual voice may seem an impossible dream. What possible communal paradigm is capable of functioning on a vast scale without succumbing to regulation and standardization? Even if we can discover peaceful accommodations of difference, how can we, in a world of escalating speed, cultivate the reflection necessary for the growth of individual minds? And how can the new audience become involved in democratically writing the culture of the future? In Woolf's approach to this predicament, we see again a complex negotiation between rejecting the privilege inherent in aristocratic systems and retaining the enhancement of individual freedom that such privilege often produced. And we confront her assertion that the question of determining the democratic forms for the future has, of necessity, to be left to the future to decide.

The need to envision a democratic art, and the impossibility of doing so, form the heart of Woolf's essay 'The Niece of an Earl' (1928; 1932). Relating the form of the English novel to the capitalist system, Woolf admits that class distinctions have offered the novelist rich territory for satire. Woolf's own satire, however, targets the novels themselves and their unquestioned assumption of a world in which a General would *naturally* give his coat an 'extra brush' before proceeding to visit the niece of an Earl.[33] More importantly, she points to the cost that these naturalized, hidden assumptions exact in excluded voices (216). In British society, Woolf argues, novelists have come primarily from the middle class, since, in a capitalist economy, this is the one class to whom writing comes as an obvious, 'natural' profession. In consequence, the aristocracy are present as portraits, not voices, and the working class, if represented at all, are generally treated as signifiers for the 'evils of the social system'.

Woolf thus leads her reader beyond her initial mockery of the *content* of class distinctions to a more fundamental critique of discriminatory discourse: the class basis of novelistic discourse in itself inhibits a demographic expansion of voice. Aristocrats contribute little since they seldom write novels, especially novels about themselves, the only social rank they understand. The middle-class writer is separated from the working class by the very conditions of success: 'life is so framed that literary success invariably means a rise, never a fall, and seldom, what is far more desirable, a spread in the social scale. The rising novelist is never pestered to come to gin and winkles with the plumber and his wife' (217). For the aspiring working-class writer, the problem is even more insurmountable: acquiring the middle-class discourse of the novelist either produces a split consciousness in working-class writers or distances them from their community: 'For it is impossible, it would seem, for working men to write in their own language about their own lives. Such education as the act of writing implies at once makes them self-conscious, or class-conscious, or removes them from their own class' (218).[34]

It is important that we not mistake as absolute judgement what Woolf intends as localized critique. She targets the hierarchical class system for privileging middle-class discourse but she also suggests that the future need not be circumscribed by the present; 'it may well be', she states, 'that we are on the edge of a greater change than any the world has yet known'. Woolf's hopeful ending heralds a new paradigm so radically different that it is not thinkable in present paradigmatic terms, and thus the future is necessarily one that she removes herself from defining. In a classless world where there would be no Generals, no Earls, no nieces, maybe even no coats – a gesture to *Sartor Resartus* – certainly there is no need to assume the continuance of the class-derived genre of the novel. But having said that

a writer, in the English class system, 'cannot escape from the box in which he has been bred' (216–17), Woolf refuses to confine the future to the box of her own definition. All she can put on the page is a question mark: 'The art of a truly democratic age will be – what?' (219).

Woolf's interrogative does point, however, towards a form that would be more 'elastic' and less 'hide-bound' (218). In another essay, written just a year earlier, Woolf suggests that the new art of democracy will be one that transgresses borders, inscribes variousness, and gives shape to incongruities. 'Poetry, Fiction and the Future' (1927) was initially a paper read to students at the Oxford University English Club; as a talk addressed to the 'young', it seems designed to stimulate, to suggest possibilities, to open minds.[35] Woolf's topic is again the discursive meaning of genre and the growing disjunction between prevailing genres and the perspectives, problems and issues of the day. The poetic drama, she suggests, was happily compatible with the Elizabethan mind; the lyric poem with the Romantic. But neither form offers an adequate envelope for the 'tumultuous' and 'contradictory' modern experience of living in a technological, urban age (438). Leading her audience on an imaginary walk 'through the streets of any large town', Woolf directs attention to the compartmentalized and barricaded privacy of the dwellings yet also to the cataclysmic reconfigurations of social space as the voice of the radio penetrates individual households with news from all over the globe (432–44). The release from Victorian repressions also stimulates a new mental mapping. The modern mind goes everywhere but in consequence it often hovers in precarious balance on the borders of discordant territories.

Given the oppositions, the discordancies, the multiple modalities of this new life, Woolf turns to the novel, that most cannibalistic of forms,[36] as the genre most able to adapt to modern sensibilities. But the novel's very capacity for protean transformation means that, in 'ten or fifteen years' time', it will be scarcely recognizable by the same name (435). It will absorb poetry; it will absorb the drama; it will record the fact and trace the whisper: 'It will take the mould of that queer conglomeration of incongruous things – the modern mind' (436). Most pertinently, Woolf construes this new hybrid form as democratic in its inclusiveness and its elasticity, and in its ability to give shape to diversity and difference: 'Therefore it will clasp to its breast the precious prerogatives of the democratic art of prose; its freedom, its fearlessness, its flexibility.' Since Woolf's subsequent fiction moves increasingly towards hybrid experimental forms, this essay can easily be read as an articulation of her own goals. But we should not overlook Woolf's invocation of what is 'scarcely visible, so far distant it lies on the rim of the horizon' (439). As its original title suggests, 'Poetry, Fiction and the Future' looks forward to 'what has not been expressed' and a future generation who will,

in ways not possible to anticipate, find new forms to express it. Woolf may, in her own way, write *towards* her view of the democratic society; the true democratic writing, however, remains a question mark on the page.

Conclusion

Adopting Williams's approach to historical semantics, we can thus uncover a reorientation of the word 'democratic' that may have been only remotely detectable at the time he wrote *Keywords*. Whereas Williams's discussion of democracy is restricted almost exclusively to political contexts, one of the significant shifts we remark in the modernist period is the growing use of the term in cultural spheres.[37] Even in itself, this development anticipates later reorientations of power – the weakening of traditional political structures and the search for new, more inclusive formations. Furthermore, modernist concerns with massification raise crucial questions about the future of democratic discourse that continue to be debated in relation to our systems of electronic communication today. Pyramidal models are being displaced by networking structures, and one of the most pressing issues is whether citizens' networks at the cultural level will be able to assume a key role.

In our changing world, historical awareness works strongly to our advantage, lending greater clarity to our choices about directions for the future. Prefiguring our current dilemmas, many modernist thinkers, both in the USA and in England, were engaged in rethinking democracy in light of the new formations of mass society. Approaching democracy as a truly collective endeavour, they believed that effective democracy depends on a resistance to standardization and on fostering individual thinking and individual growth. Even more crucially, they approached individualism as, not the antithesis of, but the *route to* collectivity, locating the growth of the individual in a developing regard for other individuals, expanded to an international or indeed global scale. These conceptual and semantic reorientations shift us from the paradigm in which individualism and collectivism exist in binary opposition to the goal of universal individualism – to a model, perhaps, where 'by some stupendous stroke of genius' the hall and the statue could be combined.

Similarly, we can retrieve from these early discussions of cultural democracy a commitment to the whole of a working culture – not to deny frequently antithetical investments, but to avoid categorizing individual people as inevitably and totally on one side or the other of a divide. We need to recognize the whole culture as the inheritance of every individual and the whole culture as a product of every participating part. The modernist voices represented here link democracy to the idea of being citizens of a shared

world, rather than constructing the world in terms of confrontational polarizations. But this last is perhaps the most difficult binary to undo, and current terminologies are more likely to perpetuate oppositional models, pitting transnational elites against grassroots resistance, or technological determinism against the individual self.[38] The conflicts and tensions in these oppositions represent genuine and difficult issues to be confronted; my point is that we need, for both pragmatic and ethical reasons, to recognize the hybridity and multiple positionings of the participants.

There is, perhaps revealingly, no adequate word in English to signify a culture of the whole that comprises overlapping and contradictory constellations of groups. Recently there have been various returns to the word 'cosmopolitan' in ways that attempt to displace the accrued negative connotations of elitism and privilege with a dialectic of difference and sharing.[39] It may be that 'cosmopolitanism' can absorb such new inflections, or that 'plenary culture' can obtain a pluralistic and non-hierarchical sense; new paradigms inevitably occasion shifts in vocabulary, which – again as Williams has said – exists for us 'to use, to find our own ways in, to change as we find it necessary to change' (22). Whatever the words we choose, a heightened awareness of language in itself will clarify our ideological choices – what meanings to expunge, what meanings to introduce. Finally, remembering the question of who does the defining, we can learn from modernism's anti-foundationalism to resist the definitive in our definitions, acknowledging that our words inhabit a mutual space with the words of defining others.[40] Perhaps we will have most understood the message of democracy when we most understand Virginia Woolf's refusal to answer her question: 'The art of a truly democratic age will be – what?'

Notes

1 Anthony Giddens, *Runaway World: How Globalization is Reshaping Our Lives* (New York: Routledge, 2000), pp. 89–90.

2 Michael Hardt and Antonio Negri, *Empire* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 2000), pp. xii, xv.

3 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1976), p. 22.

4 Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society, 1780–1950* (1958; Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1976), p. 289.

5 Quoted in Michael Kammen, *American Culture, American Taste: Social Change and the 20th Century* (New York: Knopf, 1999), p. 5.

6 A distinction here needs to be made between 'mass culture', referring to practices that produce or exploit a uniform taste in a large population, and 'mass media', designating the technological means for distributing information widely.

7 Natania Rosenfeld similarly argues that Leonard's concept of the League of Nations was based on a 'co-operative ideal' and that he 'insists over and over in his political writings that world politics imitate interpersonal relations and must be organized in order to bring out the best in human nature', *Outsiders Together: Virginia and Leonard Woolf* (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 2000), pp. 178–9.

8 Leonard Woolf, *The Journey Not the Arrival Matters: An Autobiography of the Years 1939–1969* (New York: Harcourt, 1969), p. 19; emphasis mine.

9 John Dewey, *Democracy and Education: An Introduction to the Philosophy of Education* (New York: Macmillan, 1916), p. 101.

10 'Dewey's Philosophy of Education', review of *Democracy and Education*, *The Nation* (New York), 4 May 1916.

11 Quoted by David Kadlec in *Mosaic Modernism: Anarchism, Pragmatism, Culture* (Baltimore: Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000), p. 256 n86.

12 Ross Posnock, *Color and Culture: Black Writers and the Making of the Modern Intellectual* (Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press, 1998), p. 128.

13 R.H. Tawney, 'An Experiment in Democratic Education', in Rita Hinden (ed.), *The Radical Tradition: Twelve Essays on Politics, Education and Literature* (London: Allen, 1964, 70–81), p. 79.

14 L.P. Carpenter, *G.D.H. Cole: An Intellectual Biography* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1973), p. 50.

15 G.D.H. Cole, 'The Doubtful Value of Lectures in University Education', *New Statesman*, 7 October 1922, p. 8.

16 Posnock, pp. 3, 22, 320 n4.

17 For an analysis of the pragmatics of such discourse as conflict strategy, see my 'The Rhetoric of Feminist Conversation: Virginia Woolf and the Trope of the Twist', in Kathy Mezei (ed.), *Ambiguous Discourse: Feminist Narratology and British Women Writers* (Chapel Hill: University of North Carolina Press, 1996).

18 *The Essays of Virginia Woolf*, ed. Andrew McNeillie (London: Hogarth, 1986–), Vol. 2, p. 80.

19 Quoted by Woolf, *Essays*, Vol. 2, p. 82; ellipsis added by McNeillie.

20 *Three Guineas* (1938; London: Hogarth, 1986), p. 206. These lines first appeared in *Leaves of Grass* in 1860; they were later relocated in *Passage to India* and finally in *By the Roadside*.

21 Woolf, *Essays*, Vol. 2, p. 205.

22 For a fuller discussion of such dynamics, see my 'The Politics of Comic Modes in Virginia Woolf's *Between the Acts*', *PMLA*, 105 (March 1990).

23 J. Johnston and J.W. Wallace, *Visits to Walt Whitman in 1890–1891, By Two Lancashire Friends* (London: Allen, 1917), p. 17.

24 According to Edwin Haviland Miller, Bucke's '*Cosmic Consciousness*, which has been reprinted many times since its appearance in 1901, is one of the few books extolling Whitman that have been read beyond poetic and academic circles', Walt Whitman, *The Correspondence, 1890–1892*, in *The Collected Writings of Walt Whitman*, ed. Edwin Haviland Miller (6 vols; New York: New York University Press, 1969), Vol. 5, p. 2.

25 Quoted by Woolf, *Essays*, Vol. 2, p. 205.

26 *A Room of One's Own* (London: Hogarth, 1929), p. 108.

27 Quoted by Woolf, *Essays*, Vol. 2, p. 207.

28 See Woolf essays 'Rachel' (1911) and 'The Novels of George Gissing' (1912) for the detrimental effects of poverty on artistic careers.

29 'Abbeys and Cathedrals' and 'This is the House of Commons', in *The London Scene: Five Essays* (New York: Frank Hallman, 1975). Discussing the first two

essays, 'The Docks of London' and 'Oxford Street Tide', Pamela Caughie rejects Susan Squier's reading in terms of class contrasts and argues that the second essay displaces binary-oriented rhetorical conventions with a flexible model of signifying systems subject to constant change. Like Caughie in emphasizing Woolf's destabilizing rhetoric, I focus on the fourth and fifth essays to relate Woolf's problematizing of binaries to the dialectic between the individual and the crowd.

30 In my forthcoming book, *Virginia Woolf, the Intellectual and the Public Sphere*, from which the present essay is adapted, I argue that Woolf's essays offer an alternative pedagogy for the common reader, designed to foster individual thought.

31 Gladstone, Pitt and Palmerston all had fathers in the peerage whereas Stanley Baldwin was the son of an ironmaster, and Arthur Henderson the son of a cotton spinner. However, the two contemporaries Woolf singles out as potential sculptors' material are William Jowitt and Ramsay MacDonald – the first from yet another mercantile family, this time in the wool industry, and the second the illegitimate son of a servant.

32 Squier does see Woolf's age of architecture as promising a liberation from gender categories, although she reads the 'ambivalent closure' of this essay as Woolf's uncertainty about values attached to class. The uncertainty, as I see it, is not about values but about the possibility of their imminent achievement.

33 Virginia Woolf, *The Common Reader: Second Series* (1932), ed. Andrew McNeillie (New York: Harcourt, 1986), Vol. 2, p. 214. Woolf refers to George Meredith's *The Case of General Ople and Lady Camper*.

34 For a working-class writer's corroboration of Woolf's point, in response to her essay 'The Leaning Tower', see B.L. Coombes, 'Below the Tower', *Folios of New Writing* 3 (Spring 1941), ed. John Lehmann (London: Hogarth).

35 'Poetry, Fiction and the Future', in *Essays*, Vol. 4. Unfortunately, when Leonard posthumously reprinted this essay, he changed its title to 'The Narrow Bridge of Art', inadvertently contributing to critical misunderstandings of Woolf's ideas. In context, Woolf's statement, 'You cannot cross the narrow bridge of art carrying all its tools in your hands' (438), expresses regret that all forms of art inevitably omit something. The image of the narrow bridge functions not to urge selectivity but to encourage constant experimentation, driven by the writer's desire always to include a little more than has been netted in the past.

36 'That cannibal, the novel, which has devoured so many forms of art will by then have devoured even more' (*Essays*, Vol. 4, p. 435).

37 Williams does note a new tendency to speak of democratic 'manners or feelings' but seems largely to regret this shift away from 'the primary sense of the character of political power' (*Keywords*, p. 86).

38 Hardt and Negri's argument in *Empire*, for example, promotes the oppositional rhetoric of revolutionary forces confronting the enemy. Manuel Castells's mammoth study of the informational media may seem similarly to inscribe a binary opposition of 'the Net and the self' (*The Rise of the Network Society*, Vol. 1 of *The Information Age: Economy, Society and Culture*, 3 vols; Oxford: Blackwell, 2000, p. 3); however, Castells recognizes the 'diversification, multimodality, and versatility of the new communication system' as well as the 'diversity of interests, values, and imaginations' of the participants (405). He also urges 'the development of a multinodal, horizontal network of communication, of the Internet type, instead of a centrally dispatched multimedia system', to enable more people to be participants. While thus demarcating a divide between empowered and disempowered, Castells's model also incorporates fissures for *possible* movement.

39 Posnock, for example, drawing on the Greek Stoic ideal of a 'cosmopolitan utopia' that allies anarchy with cosmopolitanism, and on modern reconfigurations of the term by Julia Kristeva, Martha Nussbaum and others, proposes the term 'anti-proprietary cosmopolitanism' (294). David Held uses the term 'cosmopolitan democracy' to signify a diversification of political fora beyond the level of the nation-state to new formations at both the local and global levels, in David Held, Anthony McGrew, David Goldblatt and Jonathan Perraton, *Global Transformations; Politics, Economics and Culture* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1999), pp. 448–9.

40 My current work on modernism looks further to the mutual space of the global sphere. I would like to thank my research associate Kay Li for her invaluable assistance in researching globalization theories.

Fundamentals of Cultural Studies: Extrapolations from Selected Texts of Raymond Williams

Epiphanio San Juan, Jr.

By consensus Raymond Williams is considered the inventor of the field of 'cultural studies', at least in its British exemplification. His two books *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961), followed by *Marxism and Literature* (1977) and *The Sociology of Culture* (1982), may be regarded as foundational documents enunciating axioms, theorems and hypotheses that need to be explored, tested, illustrated, qualified and further elaborated. A fully responsible cultural studies, Williams suggests at the end of his 1982 summation, needs to be 'analytically constructive and constructively analytic' in dealing with 'altered and alterable relations' in both cultural forms and social circumstances. I take it that if there is any fundamental or guiding vision to this project, it is the principle that a historical, processual and relational view of the social totality be applied in order to achieve a democratic and socialized conception of culture. The phrase 'cultural materialism' has often been used to designate Williams's theory and practice of cultural analysis, his distinctive problematic.

I am using a 1992 article in *Social Text* by Catherine Gallagher on Williams as a point of departure for clarifying certain pivotal concepts at the heart of the controversy over method and intention in contemporary cultural studies.[1] Gallagher argues that Williams, in rejecting the Arnold/T.S. Eliot/Leavis tradition of privileging a minority culture, is guilty of mystifying culture. She claims that Williams ascribed the following massive properties to 'culture' that privileged and paradoxically reified it: 'living, particular, unique, common, communicative, active, interacting, reactive, ordinary, daily, exceptional'. If we look at the texts, however, we find Gallagher confusing 'art' and its irreducible specificity with 'culture' as the sum of the received and potential descriptions through which societies shape values and meanings from their common experiences.

In *The Long Revolution*, Williams sums up his observations on the limits of the British culture and society tradition (examined earlier in *Culture and Society*) by considering 'culture' as the site where crucial questions about historical changes in industry, democracy, class, and art as response to these changes, converged. Against the traditional emphasis on ideas or ideals of perfection divorced from material social life, Williams defines culture as the pattern of society as a whole, the differentiated totality and dynamics of social practices. Culture is a constitutive social process, an

expression of general human energy and praxis. This goes beyond the ethnographic, documentary definition of culture as 'whole way of life'.[2] Art in this framework is no longer the privileged touchstone of the highest values of civilization; it is only one special form of a general social process in the exchange of meanings, the development of a common 'ordinary' culture. So literature and art, the artefacts of high culture, are simply

> part of the general process which creates conventions and institutions, through which the meanings that are valued by the community are shared and made active.... 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 tensions and achievements of growth and change.... If art is part of society, there is no solid whole, outside it, to which, by the form of our question we concede priority. The art is there, as an activity, with the production, the trading, the politics, the raising of families. To study the relations adequately we must study them actively, seeing all activities as particular and contemporary forms of human energy.[3]

Hence, against the elitist and 'civilizing' definitions of culture, Williams insists (in *Culture and Society*) that the collective democratic institutions of the trade unions, co-operative movement, and political party, were the 'remarkable creative achievement' of working-class culture, the antithesis to bourgeois individualist culture (327). Both minority/dominative and popular (alternative, oppositional) 'cultures' formed part of the contradictory and variable process that is the 'object' of cultural analysis. The charge of Gallagher that Williams attributes 'excessive particularity' to culture is untenable.

The other criticism Gallagher offers to belabour an alleged mistake concerns Williams's definition of culture in his 1981 book. In it Williams rejects the idealist version and modifies the materialist one by stressing that cultural practice and cultural production are not simply derived from a constituted social order but are themselves constitutive. The new approach

> sees culture as the signifying system through which necessarily (though among other means) a social order is communicated, reproduced, experienced and explored.
>
> Thus there is some practical convergence between (i) the anthropological and sociological senses of culture as a distinct 'whole way of life', within which, now, a distinctive 'signifying system' is seen not only as essential but as essentially involved in all forms of social activity, and (ii) the more specialized if also more common sense of culture as 'artistic and intellectual activities', though these, because

> of the emphasis on a general signifying system, are now much more broadly defined, to include not only the traditional arts and forms of intellectual production but also all the 'signifying practices' – from language through the arts and philosophy to journalism, fashion and advertising – which now constitute this complex and necessarily extended field.[4]

According to Gallagher, because Williams fails to consider money as functionally signifying the more it becomes immaterial, his stance 'avoids confronting the conditions under which signification actually occurs' and thus relapses into the 'Arnoldian belief that matter and signification are harmoniously integrated' (88). I think it is rather naive to impute to Williams the error of conflating immanence and signification, matter and signs, in the instance of his remarks on money so as to discredit his entire project.

It is completely wrong to charge that Williams ignores the 'conditions under which signification occurs'. The long chapter on 'Language' in *Marxism and Literature*, in particular the chapter on 'Signs and Notations', will immediately confirm the opposite view that Williams assumes as fundamental the axiom that meaning is always produced. Language 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'.[5] In a fully historical materialist position, the use of signs – utterance or speaking as social practice – become 'notations' for performance. Money then, like any sign, becomes a notation performed under certain conventions. The dichotomy between signifier and signified is thus displaced in Williams's thesis that language is not a sign system but 'notations of actual productive relationships'.[6] The term that covers the performance of notations in variable circumstances is 'communication'.

For Williams, then, signification concerns language in history, a fully historical semiotics. Inspired by Bakhtin/Voloshinov, Williams would stress the vocation of cultural studies as the analysis of the social and historical production of signifying systems, systems which are constituted and reconstituted modes of formation. He instances his work *The Country and the City* as one which places forms of writing within a historical background (nothing new since this is within the old paradigm of literary studies), more precisely, 'within an active, conflicting historical process in which the very forms are created by social relations'. This approach – 'the analysis of all forms of signification, including quite centrally writing, within the actual means and conditions of their production' – is defined by Williams as 'cultural materialism'.[7]

The charge of culturalism is an old and recurrent one. It was first cogently formulated by Stuart Hall, in his well-known essay 'Cultural Studies: Two

Paradigms', where Williams's and Thompson's focus on experience and sensuous human praxis, the common form of human creative activities, is counterposed to the structuralist emphasis on ideology and determinate conditions.[8] Terry Eagleton, Antony Easthope and others amplify the charge of culturalism by attributing logocentrism and the blindness to differential histories and temporalities. Before responding to these charges, I would like to outline Williams's singular mode of tackling the central problematic of the base/superstructure relation, the complex articulation between consciousness and historical reality as registered in the social categories of thought and in the ongoing dialectic between 'knowledge' and 'power'. This task of adjudicating the claims of immanence and signification, the material and the ideal, proceeds through a confrontation with the Marxist philosophical tradition. It traverses the 'moments' of Goldmann/Lukács, Gramsci and Bakhtin/Voloshinov.

In *Culture and Society* and *The Long Revolution*, the initial aim of Williams's project was an ideology-critique: to expose the class bias of the idealist, conservative, elitist idea of culture. Culture is not produced by creative minds but is a selected and selective tradition arrived at through active operations within specific institutions, under determinate pressures. Conservative organicism (Burke) and romantic idealism (Blake, Wordsworth) evolved through social institutions and intellectual formations, through conventions that dictated specific styles, forms, and so on. Both the chapter on 'The Social History of Dramatic Forms' in *The Long Revolution* and the later essay 'The Bloomsbury Fraction' demonstrate the thesis that the 'informing spirit' of a whole way of life needs to be connected with the whole social order. The metaphysical or idealist tendency cannot, however, be rectified by electing its opposite, the orthodox materialist valorization of mode of production, economic base, and so on.

The challenge was how to mediate between existence, social being and consciousness without reduction of complex experience to its spiritual essences or static social forms. Because of his working-class roots, Welsh communal identification and the historical circumstances of his intellectual development, Williams acquired a realist perspective. But given the poverty of British Marxism as it existed then, its rigid methodology, and its resort to romantic individualism, Williams had to search for a way of grasping patterns of organization of human energy, their 'unexpected identities and correspondences' as well as their unexpected discontinuities. There is novelty as well as persistence of variable social practices. The critic needs to appreciate the movement and the total interaction of all the parts. The force of modernity and urban industrial development in the last two centuries has been to fragment, disintegrate and disperse human life so that if the crisis of the social and natural order is to be faced, what is needed is to

discover active relationships between practices and 'elements in a whole way of life'.

Williams then lays down the guiding vision: cultural analysis begins with 'the attempt to discover the nature of the organization which is the complex of these relationships'. By studying 'a general organization in a particular example', Williams seeks to discover 'patterns of a characteristic kind'. By connecting the separate activities of art, trading, production, families, politics, cultural inquiry seeks to grasp how interactions between practices and patterns are lived and experienced as a whole. To capture the configuration of interests and activities that distinguishes a historical period and at the same time register the 'actual living sense' of a community that makes communication possible, Williams deploys the term 'structure of feeling':

> We learn 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. The most difficult thing to get hold of, in studying any past period, is this felt sense of the quality of life at a particular place and time: a sense of the ways in which the particular activities combined into a way of thinking and living.[9]

Because he was doing literary history, because he was engaged in tracing historical patterns, especially the actively lived and felt meanings and beliefs which of course mix with 'justified experience' or systematic world-views or ideologies, Williams needed both the fixity of 'structure' and the spontaneous flow of (for want of a better word) sensibilities. Instead of describing formed wholes, Williams seeks to apprehend 'forming and formative processes' through this conceptual device which he elaborates in a chapter in *Marxism and Literature*:

> We are talking about characteristic elements of impulse, restraint, and tone; specifically affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelating continuity. We are then defining these elements as a 'structure': as a set, with specific internal relations, at once interlocking and in tension. Yet we are also defining a social experience which is still in process, often indeed not yet recognized as social but taken to be private, idiosyncratic, and even isolating, but which in analysis (though rarely otherwise) has its emergent, connecting, and dominant characteristics, indeed its specific hierarchies.[10]

The subtext of this methodological strategy is easily discernible: Williams opposes the assignment of ideas, meanings and experience to the domain

of the received notion of the superstructure, which, being merely reflective of and determined by the economic base, has no autonomy or social effectivity of its own. Culture, art and literature cannot be simply folded into the realm of ideology in the sense of 'false consciousness' or Althusser's 'imaginary relations'. In the1970s, Williams encounters Lucien Goldmann (and through him, Georg Lukács), which leads him to clarify his quest for a more sophisticated, nuanced theory to replace the static, rigid and abstract base/superstructure formula. As he said, in *The Long Revolution* he was searching for a 'more active idea of a field of mutually if also unevenly determining forces'.[11] He now recognizes that in a system characterized by commodity fetishism, where reification prevails, the idea of totality was 'a critical weapon' for oppositional critique.

Goldmann's 'genetic structuralism' (with its derivations from Lukács) introduces the difference between empirical actual consciousness lived in daily life and possible consciousness as embodied in art. One can judge the homologies or correspondences between the categories organizing the two domains (otherwise differentiated into base and superstructure). Structure connected social and literary facts through categories that operate in worldly experience and in the imagination. Williams now explains that his own 'structure of feeling' was an attempt to measure the distance between the actual and the possible, the underlying totalities of interactive practices. Literary works dramatized a process or fiction 'in which the constituting elements, of real social life and beliefs, were simultaneously actualized and in an important way differently experienced, the difference residing in the imaginative act, the imaginative method, the specific and genuinely unprecedented imaginative organization'.[12]

Williams agrees with Goldmann and Lukács that given the hold of bourgeois reification, an assumed world-view was distinct from the processes of literary creation. 'Structure of feeling' records the distance between mimesis and fabulation. The reason is the intervention of forms of literary organization, the fact of artists compelled to choose forms, that can be directly related to 'a real social history, itself considered analytically in terms of basic relationships and failures and limits of relationships'. Here Williams recognizes determination in the gap between formal consciousness and new creative practice.

Beyond this, however, Williams makes this an occasion to underscore his project: not just knowledge but 'all the active processes of learning, imagination, creation, performance'. For literary study, the object of knowledge is no longer just the individual but the communities of form, the collective subject that is realized in active processes of self-definition: 'it is a way of seeing a group in and through individual differences: that specificity of individuals, and of their individual creations, which does not deny but is the

necessary way of affirming their real social identities, in language, in conventions, in certain characteristic situations, experiences, interpretations, ideas' (28–9). Literary criticism is concerned with grasping 'the reality of the interpenetration, in a final sense the unity, of the most individual and the most social forms of actual life'. To accomplish this, we must go beyond isolated texts/products to investigate 'its real process – its most active and specific formation'. Determination again in terms of the levels of institutions and formations articulated with material means of cultural production, actual cultural forms, and modes of reproduction.

It is with the intervention of Gramsci, via E.P. Thompson, that Williams returns to the issue of determination. The key essay of 1973, 'Base and Superstructure in Marxist Cultural Theory', answers Thompson's comment on *The Long Revolution* that any social totality is shot through with conflict and struggle between opposed ways of life. Williams assents to this observation. In the essay he argues that the base is not a uniform state or a fixed technological abstraction but a complex of specific activities and relationships of real people replete with contradictions and variations, in short a dynamic heterogeneous process.

Williams conceives of vital productive forces – of humans producing themselves in labour; of people together producing themselves and their history – as basic, not superstructural or epiphenomenal. Criticizing the abstract totality of Lukács, an array of miscellaneous practices, as empty of content and not Marxist, Williams refines his notion of a complex totality founded on social intention and the class character of society:

> For while it is true that any society is a complex whole of such practices, it is also true that any society has a specific organization, a specific structure, and that the principles of this organization and structure can be seen as directly related to certain social intentions, intentions by which we define the society, intentions which in all our experience have been the rule of a particular class.[13]

This intentionality is given more precision by appropriating and qualifying Gramsci's theory of hegemony.

Hegemony for Williams refers to the central system of practices, meanings and values that are experienced as practices and appear reciprocally confirming. It is our experienced or lived reality and thus possesses a sense of the absolute whereby it induces consent and thus exercises effective dominance over us. It is not an imposed ideology or manipulated set of opinions. It is the 'whole body of practices and expectations; our assignments of energy, our ordinary understanding of the nature of man and his world'. It saturates public consciousness as the substance and limit of common sense for the majority.

Williams prefers hegemony to Lukács's totality because it foregrounds the fact of domination. Such domination depends on varied processes of incorporation enabled through education and other agencies that Althusser would call 'ideological state apparatuses'. In analysing the dynamics of hegemonic rule, Williams complicates his idea of the social whole by recognizing historical variability, a whole constituted by alternative and oppositional forms of meanings and practices that can then be classified as 'dominant', 'residual' and 'emergent'. Domination is a matter of conscious selection and organization. Agency asserts itself in the shaping of a selective, dominant tradition. But given the profound historicity of Gramsci's paradigm, the force of change always erupts: '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.' This is so because 'modes of domination select from and consequently exclude the full range of actual and possible human practice'. Ultimately, then, determination is uneven and can only be formulated as a sense of limit and pressure, not control or strict causality.

The last section of this essay prefigures the more axiomatic formulations in *Marxism and Literature* with respect to critical theory. Williams reaffirms his repudiation of the New Critical/I.A. Richards theory of consumption based on taste and sensibility. That approach regards the text as an object or isolated artefact divorced from its social conditions and practices of production.

In contrast Williams urges us to treat the work as activity or practice, a set of notations that should be interpreted in an active way, according to particular conventions, since its production and reception have been 'determined' by conventions, that is, by forms of changing social organization. In analysing the conditions (conventions, social relationships) of a practice, cultural criticism inquires also into the principles of the relations of practices, within intentional organizations that are either residual, dominant or emergent, together with the tensions between alternative and oppositional. This method of analysis is Williams's translation of Brecht's 'complex seeing' in drama, a way of demonstrating through performed action the ways in which that action could be different, in which the actors could have chosen other alternatives.

One way to illustrate how 'structure of feeling' functions as a mode of historical accounting is to focus on Williams's series of essays on modernism in *The Politics of Modernism*. In one essay, Williams begins with a juxtaposition of two strands of events in a unique historic conjuncture. In Zurich in 1916, a cabaret of Dadaism was being performed in Number One, Spiegelgasse, while in Number Six of the same street lived a certain Herr Ulianov (Lenin). One of the founders of Dadaism, Hugo Ball, reminisced how

Lenin must have heard the artist's music and tirades, their quixotic and 'unpurposeful' counterplay to the Bolshevik 'thorough settling of accounts'.[14] Williams remarks that within five years of Dada's launching, a revolutionary avant-garde theatre appeared in the newly founded Soviet Union, Europe's periphery. Williams sums up by observing that the emergence of modernism from metropolitan experience marks the peculiar confluence of residual, dominant and emergent cultural trends from both the imperial centres and the colonized peripheries of the world.

The concept of 'structure of feeling' as a heuristic instrument for elucidating the social history of forms subtends Williams's extended inquiries, in particular *The Country and the City* as well as his chapters 'The Social History of Dramatic Forms' and 'Realism and the Contemporary Novel', in *The Long Revolution*, and *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*. In this latter pioneering essay, Williams stresses the desideratum that technology, its application and responses, can only be understood 'within the determining limits and pressures' of particular historical periods in specific societies. Seen thus, television for him began to manifest its cultural form as a response to the specific crisis of industrial capitalist society, especially the conjunction of the social complex of the privatized home and mobility. The sequence or flow in television programming embodies residual, dominant and emergent trends in the history of communication.

In *The Country and the City* Williams charts the vicissitudes of tone and feeling towards the mutable and metamorphosing spaces of city and countryside. He warns us not to reify images or memories, to be sensitive to the immense actual variation in our ideas about lived spaces, and to register the confluence of persistence and change:

> For we have really to look, in country and city alike, at the real social processes of alienation, separation, externality, abstraction. And we have to do this not only critically, in the necessary history of rural and urban capitalism, but substantially by affirming the experiences which in many millions of lives are discovered and rediscovered, very often under pressure: experiences of directness, connection, mutuality, sharing, which alone can define, in the end, what the real deformation may be.[15]

Through his notion of 'knowable communities', which links epistemological realism and utopian speculation, Williams qualifies 'totality' as a mode of communication and transaction among diverse practices. His accent is on relations, not autonomy of spheres of activity. According to Alan O'Connor, 'knowable community' describes 'a strategy in discourse rather than immediate experience or an "organic" community'.[16] In other words, there is no

such thing as an organic, seamless community where experience is not discontinuous, fragmentary, in need of a connecting intelligence or sensibility. The connections are fashioned by artistic works and by critical analysis.

In the course of this historicizing aesthetics of place, Williams reminds us again of the dialectic between social consciousness and needs and the changing objective world in which the critic is 'always already' imbricated:

> 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 have then 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.[17]

So determination operates in the sense of 'limits and pressures', introducing levels of effectivity into what would otherwise be a homogeneous monolith of 'indissoluble practice' identical with sensuous, socially constituted praxis.

Within this framework of recontextualizing Williams, I don't agree with Stuart Hall that Williams conflates the two dimensions of culture – 'ways of living' with 'definitions of experience' – into material practice in general, thus abolishing the distinction between culture and not-culture. Structures of relationships are not collapsed into 'lived experience', a fictional culture-consciousness that authenticates any valid insight, so that one cannot identify institutions, formations, conventions, and so on. Williams's and also Thompson's emphasis on the creative agency of historical actors and their experiences has been censured as 'humanism', and for this reason Hall contends: 'This sense of cultural totality – of the whole historical process – over-rides any effort to keep the instances and elements distinct.'[18] Williams's search for homologous forms and his commitment to thwart the hold of reifying and reductive abstractions by valorizing the experiential have been called 'essentializing' in their implied adherence to a concrete, historically determinate, uneven totality.

Immediately one recalls here Williams's possible response to the question of what is not culture (in the essay 'Ideas of Nature') in which the varied and variable nature we seek to know is equated to 'the changing conditions of a human world'. The physical world has furnished the materials for our shaping a natural order as well as a human nature in societies. In his comment on the Italian Marxist Sebastiano Timpanaro, Williams appreciates Timpanaro's directing our attention to 'the physical realities which persist in and through and beyond all historical causes'. In fact, Williams sets out a protocol: 'The deepest cultural significance of a relatively unchanging biological human condition is probably to be found in some of the basic

material processes of the making of art.... But equally, where these fundamental physical conditions and processes are in question, there can be no reduction either to simple social and historical circumstances.'[19]

Let us review a few central points. Faced with intensified reification in modern capitalist society, including the ideological mystification of personal lives, Williams stressed the imperative of establishing connections and postulating dynamic totalities. He opposed the mechanical formulas of base/superstructure, and the positivist axioms of structural-functionalism, by a radical historicizing of contexts and collectivities. Recognizing the opposite danger of textualism, Foucauldian or Derridean 'decentring' as a fetish of a certain view of language or discourse, Williams returns us to the ineluctable pressures and limits of history. He does so not to revive determinism but, on the contrary, to recover the principle of intention – not individual aims but social agency and direction. This is not the postcolonial or poststructuralist notion of arbitrary closure and ambiguous positionality. It is the intention that affords us a genealogy of power, of determination, of differences between the hegemonic classes and the subaltern ones.

Two illustrations of the attempt to recover and define agency may be found in Williams's diagnosis of the 'dramatized consciousness' of society colonized by television. In the essay entitled 'Drama in a Dramatized Society', Williams develops the key insight that we live in a more complex, unknowable society: we live in enclosed rooms today, at home in our lives before the television, but 'needing to watch what is happening "out there": not out there in a particular street or a specific community but in a complex and otherwise unfocused and unfocusable national and international life'.[20] But the flow of experience that television provides, the representations that help make the world intelligible to its viewers, overwhelm even the last defence of personal privacy with official versions.

In Williams's commentary on the 1972 Munich Olympic Games, we have experience colonized with the coverage of the Games as a drama of the conventional politics of nation-states. But this prepared or hegemonic version was ruptured by the hostage-taking and the subsequent darkness that marked the killing of eleven members of the Israeli Olympic team and six Palestinian guerrillas.

> What was shocking at Munich was that the arranged version of what the world is like was invaded by an element of what several parts of the world are actually like. It happened with a certain inevitability, because the act of arranged presentation had created a point of political pressure.... Is this [the official Olympic ceremonies] one of the effects of conventional, rule-contained competition: that every moment is a starting-point, with all previous history forgotten?

> Were there no irregulars of a score of honoured revolutions, no Narodniki, Mau Mau, Stern Gang and a thousand others, before Black September? I knew I could only mourn the 17 dead if I remembered the history which had made them victims: a continuing history, without rules....

So television precipitates a rupture but does not offer any memory. You need cultural analysis of Williams's kind to respond to a whole complex of experiences obfuscated, distorted or mystified by the conventions and rhythms of television time determined by sports events, commercial advertising and official hegemonic ideology.

In the television coverage of the Malvinas/Falkland war, Williams discerns intention in the media culture of distance that enables the institutions of constitutional authoritarianism to dominate. The television distancing of war, an unnecessary one, was made possible by a bureaucratic culture that had already distanced mass unemployment:

> The cynical culture of late capitalism, which had used a national flag for underwear or for carrier bags, switched, as it seemed overnight, to an honorific fetishism which at the same time, though in different colours, was on the streets in Buenos Aires.... The sinking of a ship shocks and grieves, but is then sealed over by the dominant mood.... The larger argument that now needs to be started, with a patience determined by its urgency, is about the culture of distance, the latent culture of alienation, within which men and women are reduced to models, figures and the quick cry in the throat.[21]

Professional management of events, the distant calculating of actual experience of battles and deaths, the sanitized abstractions, are all related to the class and imperial system that thrive on reification.

But in contrast critics such as Derek Robbins,[22] who believe Williams is counterposing the authenticity of personal experience to theoretical representations of that experience, to theoretical and systematic knowledge, I think the matter is much more complex. In assessing where we are, in our historical specificity, he counselled that 'the most decisive facts cannot be generated from immediate experience but only from conscious analysis'.[23] The thrust of interrogating the pastoral convention in *The Country and the City* is motivated by exposing the mystifying appeal of a deliberately constructed 'organic' community.

In one of his last essays, 'Towards Many Socialisms', Williams argued that the theory of 'historical materialism is the clearest way of understanding these now complex and dynamic developments' concerning 'the changing forms of labour within an unarguably physical environment'.[24] And the idea

of community or common culture, for Williams, is much more complex and variable than most commentators make it appear. One of the best examples of Williams's application of historical materialism is his essay 'Metropolitan Perceptions and the Emergence of Modernism',[25] in which he shows how the privileging of the medium of communication/expression (in which all content is reduced to a question of form) can be explained by the complex and dynamic process of metropolitan life – its miscellaneity, the immigrant character of its intellectuals, commodity-fetishism and the market, with its liberating diversity and fragmenting mobility, and so on.

Cultural materialism finally acquires sharper and more wide-ranging physiognomy in William's two essays, 'The Uses of Cultural Theory' and 'The Future of Cultural Studies'.[26] In the first essay, Williams reviews the principle that cultural theory needs to be examined within its own social and historical situations. In this context, Williams reviews the problematic of the base/superstructure and recalls again the need to pursue the 'road to Vitebsk'. Williams underscores the need for specificity (versus the formalist analysis of autonomous elements of art and the generalized application of social categories to cultural production), the need to explore the relations among diverse, dynamic and specific human activities 'within describably whole historical situations which are also, as practice, changing and, in the present, changeable' (164). Formalism (whether New Criticism or structuralism) is inadequate because it cannot grasp how different arts change, how this change is a complex historical process, one involving 'a distinct historical practice, by real agents, in complex relations with others, both diverse and varying, agents and practices'. The Bakhtin Circle's contribution is that of historicizing formal analysis and socializing intention.

The second major advance in cultural theory came from the introduction of Gramsci's theory of hegemony and the role of intellectuals in cultural formations. This is where culture becomes the site of power antagonisms and differential lines of force. It is at this juncture that Williams takes up the actual genealogy of cultural studies from the debate over the 'changing and contested structure of public education' and the influence of the new media (television, film) that was modifying 'all received definitions of majority or popular cultural enterprise'. He reviews the contrast between Leavis and the *Scrutiny* approach of enlarging the elite/minority and the New Left agenda of adult education and the appreciation of a wide range of cultural practices. The influence of Saussure, Freud and later poststructuralist theory that valorized the text and the language paradigm above all strikes Williams as damaging in cancelling the key task of all cultural analysis, namely 'the identification of the matrix of any formation'.

Williams extols Bakhtin's concept of the artwork as indissociable from the dynamics of social language with its complex range of agencies and intentions – analytic, interpretic, creative and emancipatory. This is where Williams reiterates the mission of cultural studies: 'the analysis of specific relationships through which works are made and move'. It is the study of the socially and historically specifiable agency of the work's making, 'an agency that has to include both content and intention, in relative degrees of determinacy, yet is only fully available as agency in both its internal (textual) and social and historical (in the full sense, formal) specificities' (172).

Not just particular works or texts but also institutions require historical and structural analysis to determine purpose, intention and consequences. This is where Williams grapples with ideology as cultural process and practice. An instructive exhibit here is his essay on 'Advertising: The Magic System' (originally part of *The Long Revolution* but published separately).[27] Williams analyses advertising, the official art of modern capitalist society, as a form of communication shaped by converging social, economic and cultural forces. Advertising, for Williams, is a cultural pattern that responds to the need for objects to 'be validated, if only in fantasy, by association with social and personal meanings' that are not directly available in ordinary life. This system of magical inducements and satisfactions is a market mechanism that, in the service of profit-making, functionally obscures the choice that humans ought to make between being a consumer and being a user. Within a system where only a minority makes the major social decisions, consumption – humans as consumers – is offered as the 'commanding social purpose'. But many social needs (for hospitals, schools, quiet) can not be answered by the consumer ideal because consumption is always an individual activity. To satisfy the range of basic social needs would involve, Williams insists, 'questioning the autonomy of the economic system, in its actual setting of priorities'. The consumption ideal is fostered by advertising. Advertising 'operates to preserve the consumption ideal from the criticism inexorably made of it by experience' (188).

The magical aura of advertising conceals the real sources of general satisfaction for human needs because, according to Williams, 'their discovery would involve radical change in the whole common way of life'. Advertising is a symptom of 'the social failure to find means of public information and decision over a wide range of economic life'. Williams particularizes this failure in the fact that the dominant values and meanings do not give any answers or means of negotiating the problems of death, loneliness, frustration, the need for identity and love and respect, so that what advertising as organized fantasy does is to bind 'the weakness to the condition which has created it'. This analysis of advertising as a form of communication that now deeply orients political propaganda and guides the formation of public opinion leads to the moment of critique: the contradiction of capitalism (between controlling minority and widely expectant majority) is what

demands resolution if the ideology is to be broken. For this, cultural critics must possess the ethical will and political agency for feasible intervention.

I think that it is this key idea of agency that is paramount in Williams's mature version of cultural studies. The most central and practical element in cultural analysis, he writes, lies in 'the exploration and specification of distinguishable cultural formations' for which he devised the tools of 'structure of feeling', complex seeing, knowable communities, emergent/residual/dominant layers, and so on. Agency inheres in analysing significant specific relations in movement, in tension and contradiction with major institutions; 'the extending and interpenetrating activity of artistic forms and actual or desired social relations'. A specifying formal analysis combines with a generalizing social-empirical analysis to produce a singular knowledge: 'It is the steady discovery of genuine formations which are simultaneously artistic forms and social locations, with all the properly cultural evidence of identification and presentation, local stance and organization, intention and interrelation with others, moving as evidently in one direction – the actual works – as in the other: the specific response to the society'.[28]

The future of cultural studies, for Williams, is intimately connected to the primary task of probing actual structures of feeling tied to actually lived and desired relationships. The intent of cultural studies cannot be divorced from the crisis of the late bourgeois world, in particular the crisis of the existing educational curriculum where the pressures of the larger world are epitomized. Williams repeats again the vocation of cultural analysis: the understanding of an intellectual or artistic project in the context of its formation: project and formation are, to him, 'different ways of materializing ... of describing, what is in fact a common disposition of energy and direction'.[29]

Viewed in terms of its transformative mode, the project of cultural studies, for Williams, is to bring to as many people as possible 'that dimension of human and social knowledge and critical possibility' denied to them by a world of market priorities and bureaucratic reductions. In other words, the intention of cultural studies is shaped 'by the acceptance and the possibility of broader common relationships, in a shared search for emancipation' from the alienating world of capitalist production to what he calls, in *Towards 2000*, the 'new orientation of livelihood: of practical, self-managing, self-renewing societies, in which people care first for each other, in a living world.'[30] In short, cultural studies aims to promote genuine democracy in which 'the systems of production and communication are rooted in the satisfaction of human needs and the development of human capacities'. It might be appropriate to end these remarks about Williams's thoughts on cultural studies on this reckless utopian note.

Notes

1 Catherine Gallagher, 'Raymond Williams and Culture Studies', *Social Text* 10.1, 30 (1992), pp. 79–101.
2 Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780–1950* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1958), p. 325.
3 Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961), p. 55.
4 Raymond Williams, *The Sociology of Culture* (New York: Schocken Books, 1982), p. 13.
5 Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977), p. 166.
6 Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 170.
7 Raymond Williams, *The Country and the City* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1973), p. 210.
8 Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Studies: Two Paradigms', *Media, Culture, Society* 2 (1980), pp. 57–72.
9 Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 47.
10 Williams, *Marxism and Literature*, p. 132.
11 Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 20.
12 Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 25.
13 Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 36.
14 Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, ed. Tony Pinkney (London and New York: Verso, 1989).
15 Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 298.
16 Alan O'Connor, *Raymond Williams: Writing, Culture, Politics* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1989), p. 68.
17 Williams, *The Country and the City*, p. 165.
18 Stuart Hall, 'Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies', in *Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, ed. David Morley and Kuan-hsing Chen (New York: Routledge, 1996), p. 616.
19 Raymond Williams, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* (London: Verso, 1980), p. 113.
20 Raymond Williams, 'Drama in a Dramatized Society' (1975), in *Writing and Society* (London: Verso, 1984), p. 14.
21 Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, pp. 19–21.
22 Derek Robbins, 'Ways of Knowing Cultures: Williams and Bourdieu', in J. Wallace, R. Jones and S. Nield (eds.) *Raymond Williams Now: Knowledge, Limits and the Future* (London: Macmillan, 1997), pp. 40–55.
23 Raymond Williams, *Towards 2000* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1983), p. 255.
24 In Raymond Williams, *Resources of Hope*, ed. Robin Gable (London: Verso, 1989), p. 308.
25 'Metropolitan Perceptions and the Emergence of Modernism', in *The Politics of Modernism*.
26 Raymond Williams, 'The Uses of Cultural Theory', *New Left Review* 158 (July–August 1986), pp. 19–31; 'The Future of Cultural Studies', in *The Politics of Modernism*, pp. 151–62.
27 Reprinted in *Problems in Materialism and Culture*.
28 Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, p. 175.
29 Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, p. 151.
30 Williams, *Towards 2000*, p. 266.

The Fight over Culture and Society: Raymond Williams and the Cambridge School of Criticism

Mauro Pala

As diverse contemporary critics from Fred Inglis to Tom Steele cogently maintain, Raymond Williams represents the convergence of the most formative intellectual streams in British Cultural Studies: that is, of Leavisism and Marxism. This article aims to show that, despite obvious ideological stances, Williams continued to read literary and socio-historical contexts 'through the text', thus displaying an underlying methodological continuity with the critical orientation he learned from Leavis.

From such a perspective Williams's often awkward formulation of the notions of 'literature' and 'experience' can be explained by the enormous difficulties he had to cope with in trying to establish a critical coherence in his work, while still relying on the traditional – that is to say, Leavisite – categories at his disposal. Tracing such development throws light not only on Williams's scholarly activity but also on the entire story of Cultural Studies. In doing so, it also highlights – and this is the second point I would like to make – the mutual interaction between literary and social-oriented studies. Both Leavis's and Williams's preoccupation with the term 'culture' in its many meanings has, in fact, ultimately been responsible for the broadening of the scope of English Studies to the stage at which they became a new area of study. Williams's troubled groping with 'The Long (Critical) Tradition' certainly fostered this emancipation.

The establishment of English Studies as dominant institutional practice in the North Atlantic English-speaking world is a product of the early twentieth century, conditioned by the effects and demands of what Ernest Mandel has called the second technological revolution – the 'long period, lasting from the 1890s to the Second World War, characterized by the generalized and major structural transformation which built up during the period of expansion (1894–1913).'[1] This structural revolution created the conditions for new institutions at the administrative level, but, however revolutionary, this 'revolution' should not be understood as a time of economic growth: the formation and institutionalization of English Studies coincided with the onset of stagnation and social crisis between 1914 and 1939.

Leavis was the one who 'captured the odd-looking amalgamation of interests and subject-matters, idealism and contingency in the Cambridge English degree'.[2] He in fact transformed it into an intellectual instrument with which to confront and, at least intermittently, make sense of the times.

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Leavis made English literature a discipline of thought capable of confronting the modern world and naming its good and evils for what they are.[3] But his significance is also *methodical* – that is to say, not only methodological, but beyond and much more than a simple praxis of analysis. Leavis in fact means to define nothing less than an entire world-view radically alternative to that of Bloomsbury modernism; and this partly accounts for the fact that he recognizes no other options or methods except his own. He poses with extraordinary force the problem implied by the general move in European thought from analysing societies as political-historical unities to understanding them as structural-cultural organisms.

Leavis perceived the importance of recognizing one's identity as part of a vast body politic, rather than positivistically seeing history as shaped by deliberate and rational forces. Culture, in Leavis's view, exercises a profoundly shaping force, and consequently he was able to treat intellectual and domestic life as coterminous, recognizing no difference between life and thought. This conviction about the organic integrity of experience shaped Leavis's career – and life. In this regard, Leavis was part of a formation going back to early Romanticism and its abjuring of Bentham's utilitarian calculus for the ordering of social life, in particular, and the scientific study of humankind in general. 'Men ought to be weighed not counted', Coleridge wrote, and the tradition that flowered so intensely in Leavis's work lived and wrote by that dictum.

> I have ... found myself thinking of Leavis's critical work as a kind of novel in which the main events are certain novels and plays, and most of the characters are from fiction and drama, with a scattering of intensely representative figures from life; but in which the central consciousness and the central attention is on what he calls 'the lived question': an exploration, a dramatization, an inward finding and realization of values through this composed and apparently objective medium.[4]

If Williams describes a theory here, it is evidently singular in kind and arising within a new discipline of thought. Leavis's discipline was, of course, English and it pertained peculiarly to the new epoch. 'More important than one is oneself.' Leavis's work always carried moral and metaphysical purport. That, too, remained a part of the tradition Williams consciously took up.

The Marxist choice was, in Williams's words, a response to Leavis's stubborn refusal to engage with the major theoretical and practical questions within the discipline of English Studies and that, for Williams, became inescapable in the aftermath of World War II. Yet it was Leavis who, with his moral commitment, first raised the issues that made English Studies mature as an independent discipline. As Williams himself acknowledged, in the post-war years Marxism was able to present only a precarious handful of

works in opposition to the growth of an educational and critical practice that was to establish itself by long and prolonged fieldwork.

Leavis's contribution to literary-critical methodology stems, as we have seen, from a strong ethos that constantly led him to confront and, by confronting, understand the unprecedented nature of the new world emerging from the First World War. Such an understanding was to be the subject of a sympathetic and imaginative *re-creation* of the experience confronting him. Both Leavis and the New Critics assumed that the arts best reflected the entire spectrum of human experience, even if seen always through the inescapable, distorting filter of the individual. That is to say, he sought a vocabulary and an idiom – a way of *saying* that was also to become a way of *being* – which would ultimately immerse his readers in the depths of the experience described, while still considering them from the moral distance a critic should keep vis-à-vis his subject. Leavis's formula, 'English as a discipline of thought', places individual responsibility within the vast force-field of human achievement and potentiality.

Williams goes even further, saying that literature, including literary theory, affects all areas of human experience. Literature is there from the beginning as a practice *in* society, and cannot be separated from other kinds of social practice. Even in this case, the stress is constantly on *being*, regarded as an immanent quasi-idealistic category. But, unlike for Leavis, literature does not correspond to an independent reality of which it is a (mediated) reflection. Williams consistently argues that the object of knowledge is history, of which beliefs, values and especially 'feelings' are an inescapable component and must be studied in conjunction with economic and political institutions as a whole. His subsequent interest in sociology, from *The Long Revolution* (1961) on, shows that he is trying to map in his own terms that territory of human achievement that Leavis had defined.

Earlier in his career, the adult education courses he held in the 1950s were crucial in pushing Williams towards a position which was neither university- nor school-oriented, but rather aimed at the definition of the above-mentioned general cultural standards within the adult population at large. It was during this experience, in fact, that Williams's indebtedness to Leavis first emerged: this applies both to the characteristic Leavisite insistence – that Williams made his own – on education, as well as to the enormous educational work to be done to strengthen, or rather to rebuild from scratch, a sense of community in the modern world.

Yet even if Leavis and Williams could agree on the disruption of communal ties, either at family or state level in post-war British society, the latter did not subscribe to the master's pessimistic view of the wholesale corruption of our contemporary mechanized and impersonal civilization. Therefore, even if in many respects their diagnoses coincided, Williams (reflecting his

Welsh proletarian origins) ended up with a radical theoretical departure from the nihilistic view proposed by *Scrutiny*'s most authoritative contributor.

The New Left as a whole can be defined as a series of attempts by an emergent formation to move beyond Leavisism by reinvigorating early British Marxist thought. If the latter had itself been methodically mechanical and unresponsive to *cultural* dynamics, the former nevertheless needed sufficient revision to meet a changing political and cultural climate.

As a result, cultural materialism and Cultural Studies (including translation studies) have a wider ambit than Williams himself would have recognized. Still, even today the humanistic disciplines in the English-speaking countries face what effectively remains Leavis's agenda.

'Scrutiny's insistence on community, tradition, moral value and the centrality of the "lived" thus offered itself as the intellectual terms in which questions of personal identity could be explored and politically generalised.'[5] Williams and an entire generation of radical intellectuals are not only directly indebted to this perspective, but often locked in its ideological contradictions.

If one considers language, for instance, Leavis argued that 'at the centre of our culture is language and while we have our language tradition is, in some essential way, still alive.' I.A. Richards similarly declared 'that civilisation had been dependent upon speech, since words are our chief link with the past and with one another and the channel of our spiritual inheritance. As the other vehicles of tradition, the family and the community, for example, are dissolved we are forced more and more to rely on language.'[6]

Williams did not take 'tradition' and 'community' for granted but, following Voloshinov and Gramsci, saw the history which we have inherited and which we live as being scored through with the struggles and disputes by which differing material interests stake their claim to dominance and hegemony. Signs become multi-accentual, and there can be no history of meaning either of a given word or of a single sign: what is available is only a *conflictual* set of meanings, which both reflect and determine practice. In the refusal of a single set of meanings as a historically necessary rejection of representations of cultural unity there is, moreover, good evidence of similarities between Williams's historical semiotics and Derrida's deconstructionist practice, despite the Welsh critic's frequent misunderstandings of French postmodern thought.[7]

Williams's disagreements with his university mentors over the meaning and the importance of 'community' and 'neighbourhood' had already been familiar in pre-war academic debates at Cambridge. Modernism is a case in point because, as an essential part of both Williams's and the Leavisites' background, it soon turned into a battleground that magnified their different views of art and society.[8] Eliot's heritage in particular became representative of the complex dialectic that developed between the Cambridge School of

criticism and recognized founders of Cultural Studies, such as Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart. Right after their publication, for example, *The Four Quartets* were read by Leavis and his students as clear literary evidence of social chaos. Williams and Hoggart could not subscribe to such a view: both of them, as students, certainly admired Eliot and Joyce for their mastery of the language and the provocative nature of their work, which was counterposed then to socialist realism. But at the same time, unlike Leavis, Williams and Hoggart did not want by any means to define modernism in exclusively literary terms.

What was wrong with literature, in their analysis, was that it was out of touch with a large majority of the people. The point was not how to read a poem, but how to write one that meant something in the sociopolitical crisis of the time. Williams's interpretation of modernism represented first of all a cultural stance in opposition to what was then called the 'party attitude' to literature, which he criticized as being narrow and stuffy.

Williams's continuous stress on genuine personal experience as the only possible seal of authenticity eventually led him to the verge (and perhaps beyond) of contradiction. In the posthumous *The Politics of Modernism* Williams offers at least two almost incompatible preceptions of modernism and the avant-garde: on the one hand, modernism emerges as elitist bourgeois protest with clear right-wing leanings; and, on the other, it can seem the most advanced outpost of bourgeois dissidence.[9] In thus embracing Peter Bürger's clear-cut differentiation between modernism and the avant-garde,[10] Williams is once again trying to rescue the individual legacy enshrined in the utopic élan of the avant-garde: what in Ernst Bloch's phrase is the 'warm current' flowing underground in an excessively scientific socialism. Already in the essay 'Theatre as Political Forum' Williams had actually hinted at 'the only important question': that of the 'alternative directions' in which a continuing bourgeois dissidence might go – thus showing once again his ethical psychological dependence on Leavis, a productive element of his peculiar ambivalence which was never finally resolved in one direction or another. The cultural theorist in his mid-sixties, despite his own realist 'detour' in mid-career, is once again fascinated by the whole extraordinary modernist project as he was as an eighteen-year-old student at Cambridge. If Leavis experienced in his very being and life the problems connected with discontinuity, either in terms of Arnoldian tradition or in education, for the kind of political practice that should derive, after all, from education itself, Williams grappled with the same issues from the adult-education period up to his premature death in 1988.

And he did not argue for the case of experience, or, if you prefer, culture, 'from the outside: he lived it from within. In this, for all their mutual opposition, he was like Leavis. He ... stood a little aside, never avoiding a fight if one was needed, but drawing both morals and politics on behalf of the

"resources of hope" deposited in the veins of the culture always seen as potential of release.'[11]

Living the native cultural tradition 'from within', Williams's attempts at remapping culture and experience turned out to be only partially successful because 'in criticising "economism", there was a confusion of economic concern with reductionism and an analytic inability to attain a materialist cultural philosophy. The nature and implications of cultural changes were thus expounded from time to time as if spontaneous and isolated from actual historical movement.'[12] Struggling with an innovative frame of analysis, Williams's ever-recurrent dilemma was his departure from and continuity with the great tradition of literary evaluation on which Leavis had marked his personal, at times idiosyncratic, seal. On the other hand, Williams managed to revitalize a cultural critique trapped from the start in conservative idealism with an alliance between moral attitude, intellectual thought and a genuinely grassroots political culture.

Notes

1 See Ernest Mandel, *Late Capitalism* (London: Verso, 1975), pp. 120–21.

2 Fred Inglis, *Cultural Studies*, (Oxford: Blackwell, 1993), p. 35.

3 Leavis advanced such a claim, for instance, in his essay 'The Function of Criticism', where the careful – that is to say, Leavisite – critic is depicted as someone capable of comprehending the world much more clearly and thoroughly than the artist: 'But the business of critical intelligence will remain what it was: to ensure relevance of response and to determine what is actually *there* in the work of art. The critic will be especially wary how he uses extraneous knowledge about the writer's intention. Intentions are nothing in art except as realized, and the tests of realization will remain what they were.... These tests may very well reveal the deep animating intention (if that is the right word) is something very different from the intention the author would declare.' Frank Raymond Leavis, *The Common Pursuit* (London: Hogarth Press, 1984), p. 225.

4 Raymond Williams, quoted in Bernard Sharratt, *Reading Relations: Structures of Literary Production* (Brighton: Harvester Press, 1982), p. 10.

5 Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology* (London: Verso, 1976), p. 24.

6 Frank Raymond Leavis and David Thompson, *Culture and Environment* (London: Chatto & Windus, 1948), p. 81. Ivor Armstrong Richards, *Practical Criticism* (London: Keegan Paul, 1929), pp. 320–21.

7 See Michael Moriarty 'The Longest Cultural Journey: Raymond Williams and French Theory', in Christopher Prendergast (ed.), *Cultural Materialism: On Raymond Williams* (London, Minnesota University Press, 1995).

8 See, among others, Raymond Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*, ed. Tony Pinkney (London: Verso, 1989).

9 Williams, *The Politics of Modernism*.

10 Peter Bürger, *Theory of the Avant-Garde* (Manchester: Manchester University Press, 1984).

11 Inglis, p. 32.

12 Lin Chun, *The British New Left* (Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press, 1993), p. 29.

The Self-Loathing Class: Williams, Ishiguro and Barbara Ehrenreich on Service

Lisa Fluet

> A very large part of English middle-class education is devoted to the training of servants.[1]

Late in his conclusion to *Culture and Society* (1958), Raymond Williams allows himself a moment of metaphorical licence between 'servants' of old and contemporary middle-class service professionals. He critiques the Victorian middle-class legacy of 'the idea of service' as both a misguided interpretation of the possibilities for working-class solidarity, and as an inadequate alternative to the larger problem of bourgeois liberal individualism. Those products of 'English middle-class education' who submit to 'training' as society's 'servants' here strangely represent a testimony to the resurfacing of an older, *estate* form of community as an organizing factor in modern life – one 'inferior in feeling' to the working class and a poor substitute for its own ethic of solidarity (331).

I want first to trace a potentially redemptive shift in Williams's approach to 'service' and 'servants' as modern variations upon how we conceive professional middle-class consciousness, developing his critique and re-evaluation of class agency from *Culture and Society* through *The Long Revolution* (1961). From there, I move to the compatibility of Williams's account with the intentionally belated reinvention of the service-minded professional in Kazuo Ishiguro's novels: *The Remains of the Day* (1988), which I take up briefly, and *When We Were Orphans* (2000). To elucidate the crucial` yet theoretically problematic position of a guilty, self-loathing affect within these accounts of professional middle-class consciousness, I then consider them in the context of American professionalism, focusing specifically upon Barbara and John Ehrenreich's 'The Professional–Managerial Class' (1979) and Barbara Ehrenreich's *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class* (1989). Finally, through Barbara Ehrenreich's recent positions on the 2000 presidential election and her 'Maid to Order: The Politics of Other Women's Work' (2000), I return to Williams's servant, now still 'crucial in our own kind of society' for a contemporary service professionalism that would seek to challenge the state.

Our necessary 'respect' for contemporary members of the middle class who devote themselves to 'the generations of training which substantiate the ethical practice of our professions, and of our public and civil service', nevertheless should not blind us, as Williams cautions, to the paternalistic position that service professionals inevitably assume via their 'training' as

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'upper servants'. Along with the skills acquired through education into professional life, such training also 'instills' within 'upper servants' the 'kind of confidence which will enable [them] to supervise and direct the lower servants'. 'Confidence' among 'upper servants' emerges from the perceived necessity of their public role as monitors of the status quo, and in their felt superiority over the working class – those 'lower servants' to whom they minister. Class confidence therefore grows in direct proportion to the dangerously compelling altruistic spirit attending the assurance that one has, of course, given up one's life to a noble end: the needs of the 'lower' and less fortunate. As Williams argues: 'the real personal unselfishness, which ratified the description as service, seemed to me to exist within a larger selfishness, which was only not seen because it was idealized as the necessary form of a civilization, or rationalized as a natural distribution corresponding to worth, effort and intelligence'. Williams relegates 'unselfishness' among service professionals to their 'personal' self-conception – where this altruistic inclination 'really' exists for the individual 'upper servant', even as he or she only can justify this personal sense via a common, tacit participation in the 'larger selfishness' upon which such self-conceptions depend.[2]

This 'larger selfishness' rationalizes as 'natural' the unequal distribution of 'worth, effort and intelligence' that generates the crucial difference between 'upper' and 'lower' servants. The distribution of these forms of symbolic capital therefore relies upon the same 'denial of equity' that impels the more recognizable, older distribution inequalities of 'property' and 'remuneration' (329). In Williams's configuration, service professionals maintain their 'personal' sense of unselfishness in themselves and in those they train by collectively choosing not to see their monopoly of predominantly symbolic capital forms – like worth, effort, intelligence, education, and the 'respect' we might otherwise, unconditionally, grant them.[3] If we accept, with Williams, the primary project of *Culture and Society* as the 'making' of a tradition of 'common' cultural 'property' (in a spirit most resonant with working-class solidarity), his concluding stance on the education and maintenance of a professional middle class places this class's own, selective project in a position necessarily antithetical to that of the critical work that precedes it. However, as he goes on to observe in *Politics and Letters*: 'it is a curious effect of the style of the book that it reads like somebody selecting and redisposing something which is already a common property. Whereas what the book was really doing was making it one.'[4] A fundamental failure to acknowledge the denial of equity in 'existing distributions' of 'property, remuneration, education and respect' enables a professional middle class to perpetuate itself. Significantly, however, that very failure is replayed in the critical reception of *Culture and Society*. In other words, a work designed with the intention of creating common cultural property

where it did not previously exist can only measure its success via the 'curious effect' of the paradoxically comforting conclusion that emerges from reading it: that such a 'common property' always existed out there, simply waiting to be organized into recognition. The intellectual 'service' that *Culture and Society* provides, while ostensibly distancing itself from the monopolizing naivety of a professional class of 'servants', nevertheless finds that sort of naivety reinvented in the work's reception. Once we are involved in that reception, we are compelled into believing that – like the illusionary 'natural distribution' of worth, effort, intelligence, education, and respect – cultural property always existed out there as a common property, equally accessible to all, just waiting for the formalities of selection and redisposition to highlight its communal nature.

Rather than confirming a simple antagonism between the project of *Culture and Society* and the professional middle class it criticizes, therefore, we might take Williams's momentary observation on the public career of *Culture and Society* as evidence of a persistent naivety within even the most organized, well-intentioned attempts at intellectual service. The unconscious monopoly that Williams's 'upper servants' maintain over the varieties of symbolic capital necessary to modern professional life of course bears telling similarities to Richard Hoggart's 'them' and 'us' account of the upper/lower servant divide. Here again, in a similar estate–community metaphor, '"Them" is a composite dramatic figure, the chief character in modern urban forms of the rural peasant–big-house relationships';[5] the monopoly over serviceable knowledges (medicine, law, civil service, and so on) that has been engineered by 'them' replicates the older monopoly of propertied wealth accomplished by the 'big house'. Williams's concern has also resurfaced in late-twentieth-century Marxist critiques of professional knowledge-monopolies – like Magali Sarfatti Larson's *The Rise of Professionalism* (1977) – as well as in more positive accounts of 'professionalized society' like Harold Perkin's *The Rise of Professional Society: England since 1880* (1989), and, even, in more popular backlash-driven critiques like Derber, Schwartz and Magrass's *Power in the Highest Degree: Professionals and the Rise of the New Mandarin Order* (1990). Williams's difficulty with the 'upper servant' poses certain crucial problems to a happy wedding of Marxist class theory with the modern welfare state, and the vital role service professionals are supposed to occupy within the welfare state – a point I will return to later. Here, however, I want to emphasize how Williams's reading of monopolizing 'selfishness' in the idea of a career devoted to service is predicated upon the fundamental, perhaps willed absence of overt class consciousness within the middle-class group he analyses. The 'servant', as Williams's metaphor, generates an obvious parallel between modern *service* professionals and older forms of household service. But this metaphor also more

subtly proposes the questionable agency of service professionals as a group, by linking them to an older group that more traditionally lacks, within Marxist class theorization,[6] a conscious, collective awareness of agency.[7]

'Upper servants', in Williams's account, achieve their stations in life largely by remaining *unconscious* of their collective participation in a mentality of 'selfishness'. The defining mark of a working-class boy 'softened' by his successful ascent of service's educational 'ladder' into believing that 'such an opportunity constitutes a sufficient educational reform' is the boy's necessary abandonment of any consciousness of the class culture in which he originally participated: 'Yet, if he has come from any *conscious* part of the working class, such a boy will take leave to doubt the proffered version.'[8] Only a willingly 'unconscious' boy can ascend service's 'ladder', and then blindly agree to this 'proffered version' of advancement as the most reasonable option for others with his background. Successful recruitment of working-class boys to the 'idea of service' therefore dramatizes a larger, ongoing middle-class project – a training-into-unconsciousness of the conditions that enable the 'idea of service'. What appears, to the individual life devoted to a service profession, as a personal, unselfish life-choice within the 'necessary form of civilization' in fact relies upon an uncomfortable, and subsequently 'not seen', collective need among professionals to replicate an emerging, monopolistic class ideology. This replication proceeds through teaching new trainees the mantra of self-abnegation through 'service'. The 'forgotten middle class', as Harold Perkin first described late-nineteenth-century professional men – 'forgotten because they left themselves out of their largely tripartite analyses of the class system'[9] – emerges from Williams's analysis as a group that gained (and continues to gain) a great deal from 'forgetting', or, in Williams's terms, simply not seeing, its own emergent status *as* a class with a collective, 'selfish' agenda, one among other more recognizable, agenda-driven forms of modern group solidarity.

The position of service professionals therefore suggests not so much a failure of 'solidarity', but rather a hidden, solidarity-by-default that service professionals silently maintain through their common, unspoken desire for work meaningful enough to justify, at the level of the personal, the unequal distribution of symbolic assets that drives the larger replication of such work. In a way, the distinction Williams draws in *Keywords* (1976) between 'class' defined as an 'economic category, including all who are objectively in that economic situation', versus 'class' as 'a formation in which, for historical reasons, consciousness of this situation and the organization to deal with it have developed'[10] finds an ironic parallel in his characterization of the professional middle class. In this particular instance, an exploitative relation to symbolic forms of capital is informed by a collective unwillingness to see

and consciously address how the 'organization' of class selfishness 'deals with' the making of men devoted to the 'idea of service'. Williams offers two major examples of modern class culture – 'working-class culture' as 'the basic collective idea, and the institutions, manners, habits of thought and intentions which proceed from this' and 'bourgeois culture' as the 'basic individualist idea' and its attendant institutions (*Culture and Society*, 327). Against these examples, the 'idea of service' deludedly emerges without the virtue (one that even bourgeois culture allegedly possesses) of knowing itself and what it really wants, let alone what social damage its driving desire for self-justification 'really' causes. The allure of a meaningful, justified life, one where 'the upper servant is not to think of his own interests', has been 'the charter of many thousands of devoted lives' (329) – lives all, ultimately, unwilling to see their participation in a kind of shared, guilty solidarity of personal self-justification through public self-abnegation. With these defining conditions, service professionals persist in producing 'thousands' of lives devoid of the agency that necessarily adheres to those who, as workers or as capitalists, consciously participate in their respective class cultures and therefore can articulate what it is they really want for *themselves*; the service professional and the older household servant, by contrast, are conscious only of what they want for *others*.

That service professionals might be unintentionally hypocritical in their 'selfish' quest for a comforting, self-congratulatory persona of 'unselfishness' hardly seems like a radical observation, even for the late 1950s. If 'the idea of service' is the 'great achievement of the Victorian middle class' (326) (an achievement whose effects could still be felt in the post-World War II, slowly stabilizing welfare state when Williams writes), the idea that service to a conveniently vague 'larger good' might mask even larger, cloudier, and ultimately less beneficial personal motivations among professionals – or, that such service might have disastrous repercussions at a distant remove from the awareness of their actors – could be considered one obvious narrative achievement of, and critical commonplace about, the Victorian novel. Here, we could group together characters questionably devoted to 'service' as diverse as St John Rivers, Mr Vholes, Mr Tulkinghorn, Tertius Lydgate, Sherlock Holmes, Inspector Bucket, Allan Woodcourt, or even, beyond strictly professionalized realms, Caleb Garth. They of course serve as instances, for the most part, of characters applauded for their negotiation of an 'unselfish' devotion to service, in ways that reinforce Williams's critical revelation of a certain unironic proneness to self-congratulation, within the Victorian middle class, for its 'great achievement'. And yet the other, equally present aspects to this story, undercutting its triumphalism to a significant extent, would be the failed professional intentions, the naive projects gone horribly awry, or vanished altogether, the often petty, narrow coldness of

men ostensibly devoted to 'service', the revelation of the inevitable, compromising hypocrisies inherent to professional aspirations. The more original point to be gleaned here from Williams about modern service professionals, therefore, is not necessarily the inevitable hypocrisy of the 'idea of service'. Rather, Williams suggests how the modern middle-class 'training of servants', drawing upon a Victorian middle-class legacy of devoted affect, works to mask their fundamentally *trained* displacement from a collective consciousness of what they might really want, or what really motivates them. From this depiction a narrative develops that defines service professionals, from their moment of origin, in terms of their inadvertently negligent class *un*consciousness.

In this particular approach to the professional middle class, we can find an uncharacteristic scepticism in Williams about the necessity of conscious agency within the formation and pursuit of class desires. Perry Anderson's later critique of E.P. Thompson's 'criterion of consciousness' in *The Making of the English Working Class* (1963) more famously brought this type of scepticism over volitional class agency to the forefront. For Anderson, Thompson's virtual equation of class consciousness with class formation betrays a naive eagerness 'to make an abusive generalization from the English experience he has studied himself: the remarkable class consciousness of the first industrial working class in world history is projected universally onto classes as such'. Thompson's privileging of conscious, volitional group identity more significantly de-emphasizes what Anderson fervently hopes will be 'unlikely to need further reinstatement' – that is, '[t]he concept of class as an objective relation to means of production, independent of will or attitude'.[11] In Anderson's earlier 'Origins of the Present Crisis' (1964), Williams comes under a similar critique for privileging a volitional class consciousness in his own understanding of how 'fundamental unity' is 'conferred' on the formation of working-class culture. In this instance, Williams is faulted not for adhering to a universal projection of the English working-class experience, but for celebrating the 'very density and specificity of English working-class culture' that 'has limited its political range and checked the emergence of a more ambitious socialism in England'. The hermetically sealed working class that Anderson finds in Williams is so corporately conscious of its identity, so heavily invested in the complex of signs that make up its culture, that its 'adamantine social consciousness' paradoxically precludes its development of a 'commensurate political will' – one that could enable its advance from a 'corporate' identity to a 'hegemonic' capacity for socially transformative power.[12] Thus in Anderson's critiques the collective political agency that Thompson found implicit within the class = class consciousness equation suffers for lack of the greater critical accuracy of an economically objective, non-volitional theory of class

formation, and from the fundamentally limited radical agency allowed a working class too preoccupied with itself and its culture.

In light of these points, moments when Williams grants a particular social grouping a large measure of 'selfish' power, *without* an articulated, all-consuming awareness of what really motivates it as a group – as in his account of the deludedly 'unselfish' professional middle class at the close of *Culture and Society* – should attract more critical attention. When a group like Williams's professional middle class possesses an irresponsible, unintentionally exploitative relation to symbolic forms of capital, along with an at best vague overall relation to the 'dominant mode of production', agency is significant in its *absence* as a critical tool for characterizing middle-class formation. Once again, the 'training of servants' that Williams finds accomplished by middle-class education trades upon the sense of servants as both convenient older analogues to modern service professionals and as literally un*class*ifiable, both in terms of strict, quantifiable relations to production, and in terms of a group identity defined by a conscious awareness of its own motivations and effects. And yet, Williams's subsequent, and probably more well-known, approach to the 'situation of the servant' in *The Long Revolution* (1961) carries with it a sense of resignation to the servant's fundamental displacement from both earlier models of class formation, as those models ultimately come to seem inadequate to his purposes. His approach here redeems the servant and, I want to suggest, the modern service professional from their positions of questionable agency, by asserting the centrality of their experience as nostalgic testimonies to the lonely, wishful desire for membership, 'crucial in our own kind of society':

> The servant ... may come to identify himself with the way of life that is determining him; he may even, consciously, think of himself as a member.... Yet at many levels of his life, and particularly in certain situations such as solitude and age, the discrepancy between the role the individual is playing and his actual sense of himself will become manifest, either consciously or in terms of some physical or emotional disturbance. Given the right conditions, he can play the role as if it were really his, but alone, or in situations evoking his deepest personal feelings, the identification breaks down.... It is that we are told we are free, and that we are shaping our common destiny; yet, with varying force, many of us break through to the conviction that the pattern of public activity has, in the end, very little to do with our private desires ... It is only from the servant complex that we can both maintain this conviction and yet repeatedly pretend that we believe, wholeheartedly, in the purposes of our society.[13]

Although it is presented as one term in a rather broad conceptual framework for approaching the individual's relationship to 'society', 'membership' in *The Long Revolution* borrows significantly from the ethos specific to working-class solidarity – actually, *Welsh* working-class solidarity – that Williams articulates late in *Culture and Society*.[14] Like the 'basic collective idea', where 'common interest' is paradoxically the 'true' and only 'self-interest', 'it is of the essence of membership that the individual, so far from feeling that society is opposed to him, looks upon it as the natural means by which his own purposes will be forwarded'.[15] The aspirations of the 'member' within 'society' echo what Williams conceives to be the organizing force behind working-class culture: individual interests are fervently believed to be 'forwarded' best when they are not solely 'individual' interests at all, but rather when they coalesce 'naturally' with the advancement of the larger group.

In this sense, then, working-class consciousness can serve as the ideal form of class consciousness overall, as it is presented in *Culture and Society*, and can, in turn, be equated to the initial version of membership recounted in *The Long Revolution*. However, this equation is necessarily complicated, for Williams, by the centrality of the servant's position to the modern redefinition of membership. The 'servant complex' comes to connote a necessary falling away from both class consciousness and membership into a sort of split personality for the modern, 'servile' individual. The servant knows, when he is alone, that he is not a member. Yet he also knows that he likes (and needs) to think, most of the time, that what he wants somehow can be realized in what happens outside of himself, as a function of his role-play within a 'society' that does not conceive him to be a legitimate agent within it. Membership persists, paradoxically, in those brief moments of clarity when we, like the lonely servant, can own up to our compelling need to perpetuate the belief 'that we are shaping our common destiny', even though we know (and presumably always have known) that such a belief ultimately does little to alter 'the pattern of public activity' and advance our 'private desires' – whatever those desires may finally be. The servant, unlike the member, possesses only the 'illusion of choice' in identifying with the society that determines his role.[16] Yet membership, in 'our own kind of society', can only be preserved via an awareness that one always simply 'pretends', like the servant, to believe in it, out of the 'irresistible' need to feel that what one does matters on a larger, more universal scale. As Bruce Robbins has argued in a reading of this moment from Williams, '[i]n consenting to an illusory membership, servants submit to be ruled, but they also reactivate an image of membership' – and thereby 'reactivate' membership only to emphasize its presently declining, fragmented state against a projected 'whole', older society within which all

presumably once believed themselves to be members.[17] The 'real personal unselfishness' felt by the service professional in *Culture and Society* thus comes to seem more *un*real, more consciously something the service professional wearily knows that she merely tells herself, once we actually enter the highly 'personal' realm of the desiring, lonely servant.

While this conclusion on the 'servant complex' delineates, in a rather depressing way, some fundamental limitations on how one might realistically preserve working-class goals of social benefit, advancement and agency through solidarity, Williams does in a sense redeem, here, his harsher stance on the service professional from *Culture and Society*. In the earlier account, the middle-class 'education' of 'servants' trained professionals into a dangerously deluded state of questionable agency, where they learned to believe in personal unselfishness and, through this belief, inadvertently perpetuated a larger, unconscious class selfishness over symbolic assets. In the later account, however, this deluded state is redefined and, in a sense, *rescued*, as the only way we can reasonably act 'in our own kind of society'. In other words, we 'pretend' to believe that, in identifying with the 'society' that allows us a service role, our 'private desires' for a life of unselfishness, one that justifies the unequal distribution of symbolic assets, are advanced. The crucial difference proposed in *The Long Revolution* suggests that, for the individual exhibiting the 'servant complex', the delusion is always intentional, as an inevitable part of the preservation of 'membership' in a kind of modern, slightly debased form. The '*idea* of service' therefore travels, in Williams's account, from an inadequate interpretation of solidarity to the only remaining, and therefore 'crucial', interpretation of conscious solidarity.

Membership, and therefore, by Williams's earlier account, class consciousness, can only be preserved in some form via the unappealing acknowledgment of the servant's fundamental displacement from his 'private desire' for a truly devoted, unselfish and remotely efficacious life. A collective awareness of this displacement is, ironically, all that remains to group service professionals together, with an always-already postlapsarian class consciousness of the limitations intrinsic to their adherence to service. Again, this conclusion, as in the Victorian novel examples earlier, offers a largely endgame-structured vision of how one might build the best personal motives behind work to better the conditions of 'society' overall: the more faith I invest in the belief that I (like Rivers, Vholes, and Lydgate) have given up my life to a 'larger good', the less likely I (like them) have actually effected change in the way I had intended. Conversely, the more I believe in my own ultimate ineffectuality and realize that I can only 'pretend' to contribute to the 'larger good', the less likely I am to be duped by personal pretensions of unselfishness – and, consequently, the more likely

I am to 'get the joke' and grasp the irony of what my service class position is *really* all about.

With *The Long Revolution*, then, the Victorian middle class's 'idea of service' leaves in its wake a troubling legacy of self-sacrificing intentions, unforeseen effects and, ultimately, lives defined by a desire to *matter*, coupled with the periodically disturbing, lonely revelation that they do not matter – or, at least, not all that much, and certainly not in the way they had originally intended. An even better measure of the effects of this legacy can be gleaned from the ironically belated meditation on these themes that we find in Kazuo Ishiguro's *The Remains of the Day* (1988) and, more recently, in *When We Were Orphans* (2000). It is difficult not to view these later novels as, in one sense, intense meditations on what is perceived to be a chronic myopia indigenous to professional life, bearing strong similarities to the limited, naive perspective that Williams observed in *Culture and Society*. For all the associations with a rationalized, progressive modernity that 'professionalized society' carries with it as a critical subject, Ishiguro like Williams pointedly develops an account that links devoted public service to characters antiquated by their adherence to Victorian fictions of service, whom we now find grappling, for the most part inadequately, with the twentieth century. In these later novels, we therefore find him emphasizing, via a virtually omnipresent irony, how Stevens, the obedient butler, and Christopher Banks, the Sherlock Holmesian detective, simply 'don't get' the world around them, for all their oft-reiterated professionalism in dealing with that world – thereby exposing modern professionalism's troubling interdependence with older social models of compelled life.

I will focus primarily on *When We Were Orphans*, as *The Remains of the Day* has already attracted some critical attention to its depiction of Stevens's servant professionalism; here, to draw together previous arguments, I want to emphasize Stevens's closeness to Williams's 'servant complex', as an at once antiquated and immediately contemporary figure who echoes the paradoxically archaic relevance that we find in tracing the servant's development from *Culture and Society* through to *The Long Revolution*. For Stevens, along with the public-service-minded detective Christopher Banks in *When We Were Orphans*, a blinkered devotion to professional aspiration serves, in one sense, as a defence mechanism against what each presumably would know and dislike about themselves, if only they could comprehend their own capacities for self-deception like we can. Wouldn't these expert men hate themselves for their own naivety, in other words, if they could see how their capacity for service has largely been wasted, by each novel's end, on failed or manipulated enterprises and irrelevant quests? Or, if they could see how their desire for a life that matters, even in some small way, can only lead to the twin results that Ishiguro repeatedly returns to: a life that hardly

matters, and only matters at all in so far as it helps to generate, in its own very little way, unintended and often negative effects at a distant remove from their original purpose?

And yet, the parallels we can draw between lonely Stevens and Williams's lonely servant suggest that, even if we still find Stevens comfortably ensconced in his own deluded 'idea of service', on some level his delusion is a necessary one; and also, one that he calls 'the likes of you and I' to own up to, as well, in his concluding meditations. Having spent much of the novel at a comfortable, ironic remove from Stevens's naivety, it is strangely disconcerting to find that at this moment we are expected as readers to 'bond' with him over our similar fates.[18] The inclusiveness of Stevens's 'you and I' bears a certain similarity to the inclusive 'we' of Williams's account of the lonely servant; in both instances, the work of watching society's 'real' agents, the 'great gentlemen at the hub of this world', with the feeling that our own actions exist at a far remove from that hub is 'crucial in our own kind of society'. 'We' look on and hope our little bit will matter while knowing it probably will not, just as Stevens looks on with the same hopes and misgivings, and just as Stevens's invoked readers look on his story and his situation, literalizing the ineffectuality of his spectatorial relation to action. In holding self-awareness and self-loathing at bay through his reiterated devotion to service, Stevens 'pretends', like Williams's modern, 'servile' individual, to 'believe, wholeheartedly, in the purposes of our society'. For all that we hear from him, he may really believe in those purposes; the contradictory nature of Williams's point, however, allows for the possibility that the servant can believe he helps in 'shaping our common destiny' as well as 'maintain the conviction' that 'the pattern of public activity has, in the end, very little to do with our private desires' (244). Moments when Stevens protests too much about the sufficiency of self-sacrifice as a noble end in itself – as in 'surely it is enough' merely to act on such intentions, irrespective of their consequences – therefore serve as a kind of window into the fundamentally bifurcated psychic life of modern agency, as Williams perceives it. Williams and Ishiguro therefore both highlight an always-imminent danger in affect's proximity to service – though not because an emotional life interferes with the time constraints placed upon those seeking professional triumph, as Stevens would have us believe. Truly self-aware service, as these accounts would have us believe, can only lead, emotionally, to *bad* feelings, like self-loathing, indicative of the vast distance between the personal consolation sought in what 'our private desires' designate, and what really happens, or does not happen, as a result of those desires.

An inherent powerlessness, coupled with a necessary belief in the responsible utilization of service by other men closer to 'the hub' of social action, thus conditions the servile side to modern professional life, as we

find it in these texts. The lonely servant testifies to the impossibility of 'membership' in its purer forms, through his advocacy of the only (slightly debased) version of 'membership' available: a fallen version, where the powers for social action accorded members within the 'pattern of public activity' are always the domain of other men, to whom the servant can merely offer services – along with the hope that the ends he imagined for those services will be realized. In a way, the nostalgia for membership that the situation of Williams's servant exemplifies finds a better realization in Ishiguro's more recent work, *When We Were Orphans*. Here, the parallel situation of the professional public servant finds its most resonant metaphor in the somewhat antiquated, Holmesian detective career of the disconnected orphan, Christopher Banks. Banks continuously strives, both as the novel's central, orphaned figure (though he's not *really* an orphan) and as an adoptive parent to Jennifer (who really is an orphan) to present the orphaned state as one of eminently unflappable adaptability to whatever alternate parental figures, or institutions acting *in loco parentis* (like the English boarding school) the world offers. As with Stevens, we are conditioned to view Banks as necessarily self-mystifying over his ability to 'adapt ably', particularly when he utters such bland comments as 'Of course, I did miss my parents at times, but I can remember telling myself there would always be other adults I would come to love and trust.'[19] However, self-mystifying or otherwise, work towards regaining a sense of effectual membership rather obviously parallels the orphan's attempts, through a variety of detecting jobs, to alter his disconnected status:

> And those of us whose duty it is to combat evil, we are ... how might I put it? We're like the twine that holds together the slats of a wooden blind. Should we fail to hold strong, then everything will scatter. (144)

Careerism in crime-fighting detection offers a potentially attainable social connectedness for the orphan, consisting in equal measures of public service and modest celebrity. 'To combat evil – in particular, evil of the insidious furtive kind' (22), as well as to attain the status of a '*well-known* detective' (293), serve as two primary components of a new, professionally imposed solidarity metaphorized in the 'twine that holds together the slats of the wooden blind'. The 'well-connectedness' of Banks's aspirations therefore can never be, merely, what his schoolfriend Osbourne impatiently considers 'simply know[ing] people' (6). 'Knowing people' can never be 'simple' for Banks. Knowing others, and being known by them, both come under the domain of rigorous professional endeavour, the attainment of which serve simultaneously as his critical markers for career success and as a move

closer to the connected feelings of membership. The possibilities for membership, in Williams's sense, here merge with the possibilities for service professionalism – the collective identity of the wooden blinds only exists, in short, if the twine holds. The detective careerism advocated by Banks in turn holds out the possibility of international 'well-connectedness' as a substitute for national feelings of membership; Banks's twine metaphor notably emerges from his childhood anxiety over his 'mongrel' status within the International Settlement. In the earlier instance, Banks fears that 'everything might scatter' without a feeling of belonging specifically conditioned by national identification (80).

Banks's two career-defining cases – the search for his missing parents, whom he believes are being held captive for their critical stance towards the international opium trade in China, and the search for the 'Yellow Snake', an informant against communists in China – are remarkable both for their interchangeability, as Banks acts upon them, and for their suggestion of what the 'transnational ethic' of professionalism, presented as a type of solution to the problem of German war reparations in *The Remains of the Day*,[20] might really look like in action – with Banks as a professionally mobile detective-without-borders. Ishiguro's ironic homage to Conan Doyle derives its force not merely from the contrast between the hyper-efficient surveillance of Holmes and the general cluelessness of Banks. Following D.A. Miller, as numerous critics of the genre have, the 'explicit bringing-under-surveillance of the entire world of the narrative'[21] accomplished through the rational 'intervention' of the Victorian detective can also serve to render the detective's disciplinary professionalism complicit with surveillance over a specifically *national* imaginary. In other words, surveillance over London serves as an automatic metaphor for surveillance over empire, enabling and reinforcing distinctions between national and colonized subjects.[22] Banks's professionalism, however, places that imaginary in an international context, with a resultant loss of the panoptic visionary privileges afforded Holmes. In their place, we find the limited perspective Banks describes as 'uniquely' characteristic of Shanghai's International Settlement: the 'perennial source of irritation' in

> the way people here seem determined at every opportunity to block one's view. No sooner has one entered a room or stepped out from a car than someone or other will have smilingly placed himself within one's line of vision, preventing the most basic perusal of one's surroundings ... As far as I can ascertain, all the national groups that make up the community here – English, Chinese, French, American, Japanese, Russian – subscribe to this practice with equal zeal, and the inescapable conclusion is that this custom is one that has grown up uniquely here within Shanghai's International Settlement, cutting across all barriers of race and class (163).

The international detective, far from maintaining Holmes's top-down perspective, here finds even his most 'basic perusals' constrained by an impairment 'uniquely' sustained within a transnational settlement. We are hardly allowed to witness this moment without registering its heavy, ironically thematic import, as an emblem of Banks's chronic inclination to look around, and subsequently ignore what is literally staring him in the face: the irrelevance of his detecting career to the escalating situation in Shanghai; and, later, the disturbing reality of his mother's giving herself to the warlord Wang Ku as a concubine, in exchange for the funds that would support Banks's education towards his detective career. It is only Banks's apparent unwillingness to register the unavoidably harsh contrast between the enormity of her sacrifice, and the paltry return on it that he has made as a detective, that saves him from the sort of consuming self-loathing we find in his Uncle Philip – aka the 'Yellow Snake', who re-enacts his betrayal of Banks's mother, and of the internationally minded reform of the opium trade in China she advocated, in repeatedly betraying his former communist allies.

At the very least, the transnational professionalism called for as a solution in *The Remains of the Day* hardly fares well with Banks as its avatar in *When We Were Orphans*. In obvious ways Ishiguro undermines Mr Lewis's speech at Lord Darlington's 1923 conference by having Sir Cecil Medhurst echo some of its key points in another, drunken version of it to Banks, on the importance of specialized men, like the detective-without-borders, to the current international climate:

> We'll do what we can. Organize, confer. Get the greatest men from the greatest nations to put their heads together and talk. But there'll always be evil lurking around the corner for us.... The evil ones are much too cunning for your ordinary citizen.... That's why we'll need to rely more than ever on the likes of you, my young friend. The few on our side every bit as clever as they are. Who'll spot their game quickly, destroy the fungus before it takes hold and spreads. (45)

As much of what happens after this speech would seem to bear out, professional servants, whether they consciously yield socially transformative agency to 'great gentlemen at the hub of this world', or else attempt, as public-minded agents, to employ their detecting services in revealing and expelling the 'evil lurking around the corner', seem equally doomed to irrelevance. Once the invading Japanese army begins bombing Shanghai at the novel's climax, the 'ordinary decent citizen's' grasp of the obvious – of

high death tolls, and of how to negotiate survival in the face of them – seems more consistent with the situation than the specialist's ability to intuit what may lie cunningly below the surface of events. As Uncle Philip points out to Banks, vocalizing the ironies that, by virtue of their obviousness, probably have preoccupied most of us, 'A detective! What good is that to anyone? Stolen jewels, aristocrats murdered for their inheritance. Do you suppose that's all there is to contend with?' And, of course, even if that were all there is to contend with, there remains Uncle Philip's disturbing revelation of 'what made possible your comfortable life in England' and 'how you were able to become a celebrated detective' – his mother's sale into concubinage (315).

Uncle Philip's wake-up call certainly seems appropriate, though it hardly shifts Banks away, ultimately, from the self-mystification that both impelled his career forward and then allows him, in retirement, to reflect upon it at his leisure with 'a certain contentment' (336). As welcome as his berating of Banks seems, however, emphasizing both his career's irrelevance to the 'pattern of public activity', and the suffering that essentially bought his chance to delude himself about his effectiveness, only really draws attention to what we already know – and away from the one thing Banks wants from his career, and actually succeeds in demonstrating through it: 'well-connectedness'. That both his search for his parents and his work on the Yellow Snake murders *can* be complementary, interchangeable pursuits – a situation that seems faintly ludicrous, at the outset – testifies to Banks's ability to be the 'twine' he wishes to be, a force that through the mechanism of careerism links together such disparate elements as his mother, Uncle Philip, Wang Ku's money, his aunt in England, his education, Chinese communism, and the eventual abolition of the opium trade in China. Of all the situations Banks has misread throughout – of all the things he has failed to see staring him in the face – how can he actually be *right* about the most implausible of all, the central, vitally connected status of his personal life story to the larger social scene of the International Settlement?

In a way, Banks's 'well-connectedness' is most in evidence when he has little to do with effecting it. The centrality of his own personal life story to somewhat larger issues in Shanghai asserts itself most strongly when Banks himself is not consciously forging such connections through his career. His 'well-connectedness', after all, is not so much a product of his ability to be the 'twine' that binds, but rather a product of the circumstances, almost entirely engineered by others, that went into making him the 'twine', and the career man, that he is. The 'way of life that determin[ed]' this particular version of Williams's 'servant' – the rather fantastic, and certainly unanticipated, instance of triangulated desire between Wang Ku, his mother and Uncle Philip – draws a certain amount of its force from the

contrast between it and another familiar, even banal, parallel story that it also invokes: of the struggling middle-class family seeking only the best for its children, and making enormous (and in this case, hyperbolized to a macabre extreme) sacrifices at home to keep him in his position, oblivious to the enormity of their sacrifices. This 'way of life', in all its fantastic banality, conditions Banks's training into *un*consciousness of the conditions that both connect him and render him unintentionally culpable for simply not knowing how connected he truly was.

How to feel that one has had an effect on 'the pattern of public activity' – as a 'member' would, if true 'membership' were possible – thus entails that one realize, at least in the terms that the novel allows, that one only has an effect, paradoxically, when one's agency has been compromised. Though, again, Uncle Philip's criticism of Banks feels necessary, to agree with his version of events also invites the equally disturbing possibility of personal culpability for circumstances over which one has, truly, no real control. Can a well-intentioned international career – with mixed, often self-interested motives, perhaps, but not blatantly evil ones – *only*, inexorably, lead to the twin realizations that one's life will neither 'tur[n] out quite as we might have wished', to echo Stevens, nor, upon closer introspection, seem as small and safely innocuous as we might have always believed it to be? Professionalism in both *The Remains of the Day* and *When We Were Orphans* serves as a marker for the rather unwieldy discrepancy between well-intentioned action and the unintended effects of such action. While this moral does really deserve questioning, I want to limit myself here to emphasizing, and attempting to rethink, the significance of its incredible tenacity, for Ishiguro (in that it seems to pop up in a good deal of his work) and also for Williams. Servants like Stevens and Banks who are allowed to glimpse, briefly, how the life they identify with and the possibilities for membership it held out have both failed them, possess the potential for a level of self-awareness – and self-loathing, as they tend to go hand in hand here – unparalleled by most other characters in the worlds they live in. The potential to know oneself really well in these novels carries with it the potential to really dislike oneself for even daring to indulge in the ineffectual frivolity of 'private desires' for a life that matters. And yet, if that is the lesson here, it is one that strangely empowers the servant, who (unlike Lord Darlington or the 'Yellow Snake') can treat such self-loathing-awareness as a *momentary* conviction, rather than a life-disabling, insistently present force.

Here we can return, by way of the professionalism characterized by the 'situation of the servant', to Mr Lewis's model for 'professionalism' in international affairs from *The Remains of the Day*.[23] Mr Lewis's toast 'to professionalism' also toasts, as Lord Darlington correctly points out, the tacit separation of actually effective public work from the good, 'honourable'

intentions personified by amateur peace-seekers. The situation of the servant similarly reinforces the notion that well-intentioned service can (and generally does) remain distinct from its actual effects upon 'the pattern of public activity'. Effective public service can be construed, here, as best accomplished by those without any good intentions at all – and this could be considered the most troubling aspect, for all its tenacity, to Williams's and Ishiguro's professional models. In other words, it is both insistently tragic that the 'situation of the servant' ensures the inevitable compromise of agency in public life, and disturbingly reassuring that this is so. If one cannot consciously have good effects, one also cannot consciously have bad effects – one can only *unconsciously* have bad effects. Once the servant grasps, in those brief moments of clarity, the fundamental limits to effectual public life, daily life can continue – with all those routine, necessary monitorings of time that a servant's work, like serving drinks, turning out rooms, and polishing silverware, stand for. The 'situation of the servant' thus enables a day-to-day, privileged self-awareness of preserved good intentions that will never be allowed access to 'the hub', where they might turn horribly awry. That a specifically post-Progressive-era American politician articulates this split between good intentions and effective public service highlights the applicability of Williams's model for American professionalism, which I want to suggest buys into the tenacity of the 'servant complex' as a history for itself – in contrast to the history of British professionalism articulated by Harold Perkin, which yields the happier ending of the modern British welfare state. American professionalism, for its theorists and its public exemplar, invokes its own version of the 'servant complex' and thereby narrates a progression from the naivety of early, well-intended progressive efforts pioneered by the professional–managerial class to a professional–managerial class well conditioned by the need for a self-loathing, self-aware, and ultimately organized sense of itself.

Barbara and John Ehrenreich's essay on professional middle-class consciousness in the United States, 'The Professional–Managerial Class' (1979),[24] as well as Barbara Ehrenreich's later work, *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class* (1989), most clearly develop the spirit of Williams's approach. In the Ehrenreichs' account, the Victorian middle class's self-conception in terms of devotion to the 'idea of service' can correspond roughly to the rise of professionals and managers ('salaried mental workers', 12) in the Progressive-era USA. This group conceived of themselves as a service class devoted to the 'larger good' of an antagonistic relationship with the capitalist class and its abuses:

> The generation entering managerial and professional roles between 1890 and 1920 consciously grasped the roles which they had to play. They understood that their own self-interest was bound up in reforming capitalism, and they articulated their understanding far more persistently and clearly than did the capitalist class itself. (19)

The emergent professional–managerial class (PMC) of the early twentieth century can be characterized, in this account, by an earnest, reforming conscience – one similar to the attitude of 'unselfish' devotion to the 'larger good' that characterizes the service professional for Williams in *Culture and Society*. This awareness of itself, however, distracts the PMC (just as it distracted Williams's professionals) from its inadvertent, large-scale complicity with the needs of monopoly capital. In attempting to achieve the ostensibly beneficial goals of '*mediat[ing]* the basic class conflict of capitalist society and creat[ing] a "rational", reproducible social order' (19), the PMC failed to see its actual status as a 'derivative class', one that existed only to serve the 'unarticulated' class agenda of the bourgeoisie by 'specializing in the reproduction of capitalist class relations' (14) through its 'expropriation of the skills and culture once indigenous to the working class' into the closed-off realms of professional expertise (17). Here, again, we have another narrative of a 'selfish' monopoly over symbolic assets 'not seen' by the PMC due to the distraction afforded by personally unselfish aims. In contrast to Williams's account, however, the inadvertent selfishness of the PMC is really only a product of their being duped by *another* class's more overriding, tacitly selfish agenda.

The history of the early PMC offered by the Ehrenreichs is one that a contemporary 'salaried mental worker' might have a truly difficult time taking any conscious pride in. 'The Professional–Managerial Class' attempts on the whole to call the contemporary middle-class left to own up to, and come to terms with, this rather dangerously naive past:

> In the years since the New Left in the US matured from a radical to a socialist outlook, the left has dashed itself repeatedly against the contradictions between its 'middle-class' origins and its working-class allegiance. Some pursue the search for a 'pure' proletarian line to an ever more rarefied sectarianism. Others seem to find comfort in the ambiguities of contemporary class analysis, fearing that any attempt to draw more careful distinctions will leave them in an undesirable category ('petty bourgeois', etc.) At this point the very emotion surrounding the subject of class provides a further impediment to analysis. Yet if the left is to grow, it must begin to come to an objective understanding of its own class origins and to comprehend objectively the barriers that have isolated it from the working class. (6)

Class consciousness, within the PMC, will therefore redefine itself along postlapsarian lines. A collective sense of guilt will unite hitherto silent members of the PMC over the recognition of what went unseen in the past: an unintended, but nonetheless damaging, 'objectively antagonistic relationship to another class of wage earners (whom we shall simply call the "working class")' (9–10). The only alternative either to identifying hypocritically with a 'pure', proletarian vision of expert labour, or to hiding within the tenuous safety of class ambiguity, becomes a 'take-your-medicine'-style adherence to the new, necessary yet 'undesirable category' of the PMC. To adhere to PMC membership thus implies acceptance of the necessary given that you should never *really* be able to like who you are or what you do; the very conditions of membership demand an unwavering recognition of a collective, original sin against that 'other class of wage earners', whose thwarted needs, lost culture and PMC-derived commodity desires are, paradoxically, your primary source of identification. The Ehrenreichs' vision is not necessarily as bleak as Williams's, in that recognition of this original sin represents a starting point for professional–managerial class consciousness, and for progressive organization among the middle-class intellectual left overall. Yet, an ironic, self-loathing sense is crucially common to both. In either case, the service professional and the PMC member are given a wake-up call to past, inadvertent damages that encourages them to formulate – once they come to their senses – a newfound class consciousness, one that now can boast the rather dubious merit of knowing itself far too well.

Once a class that did not possess a legitimate awareness of what damages its desires really caused, the PMC comes full circle to a hyper-awareness of its own shortcomings. This situation consequently impels an obsessive quest for self-knowledge and discipline in order to correct a past, failed awareness of itself – perhaps best exemplified by the PMC's heavy reliance upon the expert services that it can now comfortably provide for its members

> in childraising, family living, sexual fulfillment, self-realization, etc., etc. The very insecurity of the class, then, provides new ground for class expansion. By mid-century the PMC was successful enough to provide a new *mass* market for many of its own services – and unsuccessful enough to need them. (30)

The 'idea of service' returns, oddly enough, with the provision of a market for those who generate expert services in the first place. If this 'idea' can be blamed for the Victorian middle class, and the early PMC, 'not seeing' themselves properly, it comes to be transformed in the Ehrenreichs' account into the very tool that will compensate for that initial delusion, with

the intense varieties of needed professional scrutiny generated by the PMC upon itself and its children. It hardly seems surprising, given these accounts, that the 'interior life of the class is shaped by the problem of class reproduction' (31) – what child would willingly want to embrace their parents' driven, hard-working professional lifestyle, if it will only yield a routinely disappointed self? Williams's working-class boy had to be 'dazzled' into 'scrambl[ing] up' service's meritorious ladder and 'go[ing] off to play on the other side' (*Culture and Society*, 331); but the children of the PMC, by virtue of their closer proximity to a real parental example, are more likely to resist the 'dazzle', and require alternate forms of persuasion to the self-loathing and 'deferred-gratification' necessary to their parents' way of life, as Barbara Ehrenreich later argues in *Fear of Falling*: 'All that parents can do is attempt, through careful molding and psychological pressure, to predispose each child to retrace the same long road they themselves once took.'[25] What the professional middle class really 'wants' for itself – its 'private desires' for fulfilling sexual lives, 'realized' selves, and families that replicate its work ethic – therefore comes to be viewed as the object of a mature, adult search, the necessary antidote to a childhood spent 'pressured' into 'molding' personal desires into a larger 'predisposition' to recapitulate parental example. Maturity among individual members of the PMC thus traces the same narrative pattern as the history that the Ehrenreichs want to grant the PMC: from blindness to ironic, self-loathing awareness; from a learned, blinkered 'predisposition' to live like one's parents, to an adult obsession with the reclamation of lost desires to live otherwise.

Whether ironic self-loathing really ought to be the galvanizing force behind professional middle-class consciousness in the twentieth century seems difficult, if not impossible, to answer. Whether this model for class consciousness is necessarily the only theoretical framework for understanding the professional middle class's position in relation to the capitalist and working classes is worth asking, however, particularly since this model possesses such a wide, 'irresistible' appeal for theorists of modern professionalism. Once we articulate that a specific class category is fundamentally 'insecure', due to its obsessive need to maintain a perpetual quest in 'realization' of itself – and thereby never again repeat its originary fault of failed self-awareness – any theory of a professional middle class that does not adhere to this narrative runs the risk of appearing naive, of not 'getting the joke' about what the professional ideal is *really* all about. In other words, once we articulate that a particular class only knows itself if it exhibits an eternal unease over its past sins and present desires, any theorization of a happier, 'secure' inner life for this class leaves itself open to charges of 'not seeing' what is really going on, of not getting that we all can only 'pretend' to believe in our wider social usefulness.

We may really want to question the ease with which an ironic, knowing relation to itself is ultimately claimed by theorists of professional life *for* professionals. We are speaking, after all, of a class of people who sought status as 'upper servants' not only through their devotion to the 'idea of service', but also through their claim to an expert, privileged awareness of what always lay beneath the surface of daily life, unseen by both 'lower servants' and the bourgeoisie. We also may want to consider how the narrative that both Williams and the Ehrenreichs construct systematically renders naive what we might otherwise consider as transformative, alternative narratives of the origin of professional middle-class consciousness. Harold Perkin's *Rise of Professional Society* (1989) and its sequel, *The Third Revolution: Professional Elites in the Modern World* (1996), both could be re-evaluated in this light. Perkin constructs an account of the rise of the 'professional ideal' in the twentieth century at a significant remove from the somewhat bleak, ironic 'pretending' vision we get from Williams and the Ehrenreichs. The earlier work specifically links the rise of the modern British welfare state, and the crucial role of public sector professional within it, to the varying degrees of success achieved in *persuading* the larger public of the continued necessity of 'esoteric, evanescent, and fiduciary' professional services:

> While all classes try to justify themselves by their own concept of distributive justice, the professional class can only exist by persuading the rest of society to accept a distributive justice which recognizes and rewards expert service based on selection by merit and long, arduous training.

The modern professional offers

> a service that is ... esoteric, evanescent and fiduciary – beyond the layman's knowledge or judgment, impossible to pin down or fault even when it fails, and which must therefore be taken on trust – he is dependent on persuading the client to accept his valuation of the service rather than allowing it to find its own value in the marketplace.[26]

Rhetorical success in the public sphere thereby ensures, for Perkin, an inner life of 'psychic security', and 'self-confidence to press his own social ideal' (9), for the service professional.

Should we find Perkin's account an appealing one, we run the inevitable risk of appearing to indulge in delusions of 'psychic security', and of 'self-confidence' in our own 'unselfish' motivations. Such feelings would be directly at odds with the fundamental insecurity and ironic ineffectuality that

Williams sought refuge in with the 'servant complex', and that the Ehrenreichs delineated more forcefully as the centrepieces of PMC consciousness. Perkin really does offer, in the midst of all the unapologetic fanfare that he grants the 'professional ideal', a potentially radical reading of modern professionalism in *The Rise of Professional Society*. He insists upon the crucial necessity of persuading the public to acceptance of a 'distributive justice'. This justice both validates meritorious achievement and extended experience in certain professional fields (whose standards of measurement may be neither readily quantifiable nor universally understood), and promotes the continued legitimacy and indispensability of the 'esoteric, evanescent and fiduciary' services provided by those fields. His emphasis upon this point suggests that, in reality, public-sector professionals cannot be (nor could they ever be) characterized by an eager, naive willingness to make unselfish, deluded claims about the essential goodness of their roles and 'social ideals'. Professional goals are always most fundamentally tied, for Perkin, to an occupation's awareness of the need to justify its procedural mysteries and services to both the non-professional public and to various other delimited realms of expertise engaged in similar projects of persuasion. Under such conditions, service professionals cannot ever, really, develop 'psychic security' and 'self-confidence' without remaining simultaneously conscious of how such security and confidence are dearly, rhetorically won from public approval, and can be taken away at any time if that approval is not courted and maintained. In contrast to both Williams and the Ehrenreichs, therefore, Perkin designates a professional middle-class consciousness that, at its origin, never blindly believed that its devotion to the 'idea of service' automatically secured its recognizably beneficent role in society, or its continued well-being and replication as a class. Rather, Perkin's narrative takes as a given the crucial, primary awareness among those who choose to promulgate and attach their future livelihoods to the 'professional ideal', of the necessarily contingent nature of their expertise, services and class positioning. Positioning the 'valuation' of one's service outside the market, so that persuasion of both the client and the larger public that he represents comes to serve as the crucial base of legitimating and keeping one's job, thus tacitly acknowledges a kind of originary void within the 'professional ideal'. First there was nothing, and then there was a professional service, called into a recognizable existence entirely through the ability of its practitioner to convince everyone else of its indispensability.

The different, often conflicting narratives generated by these three accounts should prompt us to analysis of what have been, and continue to be, the overall public gains inherent within the different models of class awareness that the professional middle class have created for themselves. If Perkin's account, through the centrality it grants to public persuasion,

possesses the benefit of designating a fundamental awareness of professional knowledge's contingency among members of this class, his account also significantly lacks any real pressing need to theorize about professional affect, and/or the 'inner life' of the class. Anxieties over class reproduction stemming from an insecure, self-loathing affect are afforded a contrast in Perkin's vision of a professional middle class that possesses no significantly complicated interior life at all. We are encouraged to view its 'psychic security' and 'self-confidence' as givens from the outset, and Perkin's professional middle class only really demonstrates the singular, uncomplicated desire to replicate itself via its persuasion of the public. If Perkin's account seems lacking in what Ehrenreich's *Fear of Falling* abounds in – a sense of what constructs the desires within middle-class *culture*, along with what the professional middle class does to keep its jobs safe – then we might ask whether a prerequisite sense of self-loathing, and the postlapsarian account of class consciousness from which it emerges, finally must be necessary, crucial components of what defines middle-class culture.

Barbara Ehrenreich's defences of Ralph Nader's 2000 presidential candidacy, along with her *Harper's Magazine* series of essays on contemporary low-income work in America – specifically, for my purposes here, 'Maid to Order: The Politics of Other Women's Work' (2000), on household cleaning services[27] – seem both appropriate and timely places to conclude. The uneasy affinity between servant class and service professional class that I discussed in opening with Williams's *Culture and Society* finds itself more positively transformed in both Ehrenreich's public pro-Nader position, and in her current 'undercover intellectual' reporting as a briefly employed housecleaner with 'Maids International'.

It is interesting to juxtapose 'The Professional–Managerial Class' and *Fear of Falling* with her pro-Nader statements – both those directed more generally to the left, and those more circumspectly addressed to left feminists.[28] For all the presentations of Nader, from his own campaign and from those like Ehrenreich who publicly supported it, as a romantic figure of dissenting American individualism, he actually occupies a less clichéd, more pragmatic position that really speaks more to Ehrenreich's own stance on the professional–managerial revamping of participatory democracy. His position also, I want to suggest, bears witness to the return of the 'situation of servant' as 'crucial in our own kind of society'. From the framework established through Ehrenreich's earlier works, Nader can be viewed as a kind of professional–managerial class exemplum. In spite of the fact that his formal anti-corporate positions, and chronic, reiterated suspicion of bureaucratically silent, white-collar institutions more often bolster his lone-wolf, unaffiliated public persona, and consequently preclude any sense we might have of him as a spokesperson for a wishful *group* identity, he really

represents a kind of best-case scenario for PMC identity. That the potential whistle-blower located within a corporate structure – like the implied engineer-with-a-conscience in the automobile industry, to whom much of *Unsafe at any Speed* is addressed – can be, for Nader, the only truly responsible professional and public citizen,[29] highlights the felt need for an adversarially *white-collar* manhood running through most of his work. Workers' rights activism and consumer advocacy, as reforming practices designed to inform the public about the hours it has been convinced it has to work in order to buy products it has been convinced it needs, could only come out of the same, educated professional–managerial class that simultaneously has been responsible, as Ehrenreich has argued, for accomplishing all this haphazard public convincing in the first place. If it takes a new class to accomplish all of this involved, often culpable persuasion of an unknowing public, then it follows that only a member of that class could undo the negative effects of this persuasion. Nader therefore most forcefully embodies the self-loathing, *mea culpa* position for left professionalism that Ehrenreich views as its troubling, yet finally organizing, group identity.

As a presidential candidate Nader necessarily complicated the truly vital goals he pursued, and continues to pursue, as a citizen advocate – and not just because his candidacy may have contributed to the election of George W. Bush. Nader's move from citizen advocacy to the heightened public visibility of political life can also be viewed as the angry revolt of Williams's otherwise rather acquiescent, lonely servant. The convincing 'identification' between servant and society has broken down, in the case of Nader's 2000 presidential run, and the feelings of public effectuality that come with 'consciously' believing oneself a 'member' whose public interests coincide with governmental policy have vanished. But rather than acknowledge the 'conviction' of these fundamental limitations along with the paradoxical, 'pretend' belief that the 'purposes of our society' can still be synonymous with the servant's own purposes, Nader's candidacy presents a fundamental unwillingness to endure under the 'servant complex'. His articulated reasons for entering the 2000 presidential race, in his mid-sixties and after years of professional citizen advocacy, bear a significant resemblance to the servant's revelation, 'in certain situations such as solitude and age', of the reality that 'many of us break through to the conviction that the pattern of public activity has, in the end, very little to do with our private desires':

> Over the past twenty years, big business has increasingly dominated our political economy. This control by the corporate government over our political government is creating a widening 'democracy gap'. Active citizens are left shouting their concerns over a deep chasm between their government and themselves. This state of affairs is a

> world away from the legislative milestones in civil rights, the environment, and health and safety of workers and consumers seen in the sixties and seventies. At that time, informed and dedicated citizens powered their concerns through the channels of government to produce laws that bettered the lives of millions of Americans.[30]

However we might question Nader's bleak assessment of the gradual, twenty-year erosion of gains made in the 1960s and 1970s (and there are, of course, important reasons both to agree and to disagree with the timing of his critique) it is more to the point, for a discussion of professional affect, that *he* feels the situation this way for 'active citizens' vainly 'shouting' like himself. As a public servant who has, in a sense, woken up to the realization that what he and so many others desired, and served on both national and transnational levels, no longer finds itself realized in the 'pattern of public activity', Nader's presidential campaign can be viewed as part of a larger, growing commentary on long-held feelings of professional–managerial class, and new left, ineffectuality. In a sense, this is a class not even allowed to loathe its shortcomings, and make amends for its wrongdoings, any more. Like a version of Stevens who is capable of getting rightfully angry, Nader's rhetorical strategies as a presidential candidate derive their force from an unwillingness to watch vainly 'those great gentlemen at the hub of this world' whom he feels no longer 'employ his services'.

Ehrenreich repeatedly defines the late-twentieth-century, middle-class left intellectual as one of the directly responsible inheritors of the PMC's monopoly of realms of serviceable expert knowledge and its 'objectively antagonistic' relation to the working class. As her career would demonstrate, however, this type of intellectual can also – like the professional advocate of workers and consumers – serve simultaneously as an effective criticizer of the PMC, a particular incarnation of the 'expert services' it can provide from within its own ranks to scrutinize and keep track of past and present doings. Her inside accounts of Taylorized maid services in the US participate in a two-part, intentionally overlapping critique: of 'mobile professional' middle-class families and their continued reliance upon the convenience of having others clean up after their arrogant, hurried, indifferent lives;[31] and of specifically middle-class feminist professionals within those families, whom she believes have abandoned an earlier project of making domestic work 'visible', in favour of transferring that work to low-paid, domestic female labourers. The 'invisibility' of these briefly employed workers serves as a direct function of the daytime, professional workday emptiness of the houses they service, when all who normally inhabit those houses are not around to see them.

I bring up this most recent work in part to call attention to the persistence of the self-loathing themes I have emphasized throughout. It is easy, and

perhaps too tempting, to juxtapose Ehrenreich's more general early critiques of what the PMC needs to own up to about its past and present crimes with her more pointed framework here for what unfinished business middle-class feminists have guiltily left behind them in their hasty retreat from the home:

> However we resolve the issue in our individual homes, the moral challenge is, put simply, to make work visible again: not only the scrubbing and vacuuming but all the hoeing, stacking, hammering, drilling, bending, and lifting that goes into creating and maintaining a livable habitat. In an ever more economically unequal culture, where so many of the affluent devote their lives to such ghostly pursuits as stock-trading, image-making, and opinion-polling, real work – in the old-fashioned sense of labour that engages the hand as well as the eye, that tires the body and directly alters the physical world – tends to vanish from sight. The feminists of my generation tried to bring some of it into the light of day, but, like busy professional women fleeing the house in the morning, they left the project unfinished, the debate broken off in mid-sentence, the noble intentions unfulfilled. Sooner or later, someone else will have to finish the job. (70)

The potentially risky move Ehrenreich makes here leaves her argument open to an immediate, and I think necessary, critique. That is, for all her rightful attempts to delineate the problem of the '"Brazilianization" of the American economy' evident in 'the sudden emergence of a servant class' as a professional middle-class *family* problem that men, women and children within such families are collectively responsible for (62), at the end of her essay, and at the end of the day, the problem persists for her in its most compelling depiction as a *female* abdication of a once-popular feminist project. 'Like busy professional women fleeing the house in the morning', guilt over middle-class arrogance can be construed, here, as most aptly metaphorized by feminist guilt over an intellectual unwillingness to continue the 'debate' over an earlier, unsolved dilemma about the status of 'visible', hands-on domestic labour. This dilemma, in its unsolved state, paradoxically serves as a crucial part of the formation of a consciously activist, modern feminist movement; as a result, for Ehrenreich this movement is only really 'conscious' to a point, and for the most part wilfully looks towards personal advancement in professional life, and subsequently away from the problem of who handles other, feminized forms of labour at home.

A primary PMC unwillingness to see its monopoly over serviceable expert knowledge and its subsequent dispossession of the working class finds an analogue, here, in a primary feminist unwillingness to acknowledge and

render 'visible' the housework left behind – housework that of course would otherwise remain undone, were it not for the dispossession of a certain other class of women from the socioeconomic opportunities that allow one to flee responsibility for one's house in the morning. In one sense, Ehrenreich makes a rather damaging critical move here, effectively feminizing a dilemma that perhaps would be better dealt with as a difficulty stemming from the middle-class division of household labour among *all* family members, male and female, parent and child. At the very least, her eagerness both to identify and to claim white-collar feminist guilt about the state of their houses capitalizes on a portrayal of women uneasily leaving the same house that white-collar men presumably leave behind them, quite comfortably, each day. To this simplification we could also add her final impulse to render 'real work' salvational, comfortingly material and relatively uncomplicated in its effects, when the rest of her essay would seem to suggest otherwise. However, I also want to propose that the rallying-cry tone of her conclusion on the abdication of middle-class feminist responsibility to low-income female labour attests to the degree to which the essay has relied upon, and tacitly *celebrated*, an optimistic identification between feminist intellectual and female domestic worker – or, between a contemporary service professional and a modern reincarnation of the household servant. Much of what I have said throughout takes as a given the importance of following through with the negative reading that Williams grants such a 'servile' identification; Ehrenreich's maid service work, in contrast, offers a way out of the critical antipathy that Williams takes as his own starting point.

A three-week undercover stint as a maid in a house-cleaning service of necessity cannot claim to represent adequately the lives of long-term employees of 'Maids International' – even if the essay happened to make such a claim, which I do not believe it does. We could, however, draw a connection between the fundamental limitations to adequate political representation for 'other women's work' that Ehrenreich's 'undercover' work reveals (intentionally or otherwise), and the current arguments made – by one of those postmodern academic feminists for whom Ehrenreich generally has little patience – concerning the contemporary problematics of feminist political representation. In her lecture series *Antigone's Claim: Kinship between Life and Death* (2000), Judith Butler begins by taking Antigone, and the potential rethinking of certain Oedipal legacies she offers, 'as a figure for politics' who 'points somewhere else, not to politics as a question of representation but to that political possibility that emerges when the limits to representation and representability are exposed'.[32] 'Maid to Order' briefly displays, through its author's performative foray into low-income drag, 'that political possibility', in the exposure of the limits a service professional

discovers in attempting representation of two groups that have been forcibly denied the right to represent themselves: the largely immigrant female, 'new servant class'; and also, as the earlier example of Ralph Nader emphasizes, the century-old, reform-minded professional–managerial service class. The very existence of a 'new servant class' verifies the PMC's late-twentieth-century, persistent inability to effectively represent and 'shout its concerns' for reform. If we can get beyond the at times moralizing, and at other times oversimplifying, tone of Ehrenreich's critique, her undercover project does offer one answer to Butler's wondering, impelling query at the opening of *Antigone's Claim*: 'I began to think about Antigone a few years ago as I wondered what happened to those feminist efforts to confront and defy the state' (1). If we even partly believe that our own state has often turned a deaf ear to the needs of the 'new servant class', and by association to professional–managerial class reformist concerns, a middle-class feminist intellectual's identification both with the underrepresented status of 'other women's work', and with the political goals of another, white-collar servant, could pose a direct challenge to the recent 'trend' that Butler also critiques, of 'seek[ing] the legitimacy of the state in the espousal of feminist claims' (1).

Ehrenreich's choice of identification thus ultimately offers a way out of the negative association between servants and service professionals initially broached by Williams in *Culture and Society*. 'A very large part of English middle-class education is devoted to the training of servants' offers an identification between an older servant class and a young professional middle class that joins the two in their shared inability to assert agency, and only rescues this undesirable identification via the acknowledgment of the overall debased status of modern potential for conscious agency. Ehrenreich's 'moral challenge' to make visible 'real work' that 'engages the hand as well as the eye, that tires the body and directly alters the physical world', borrows significantly from the example of the modern female domestic, in order to propose fundamental changes for the wayward state of the professional middle class and its 'invisible' daily labours.

Notes

1 Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society: 1780–1950* (1958; New York: Columbia University Press, 1983), p. 329.

2 Williams, *Culture and Society*, pp. 328–9.

3 Williams returns to the illusionary nature of the 'natural distribution' of these qualities, and the reinforcement of this illusion via the British educational system, in *The Long Revolution*. He characterizes the education of professional public servants there, again, as a Victorian holdover fundamentally antithetical both to the organizing premisses towards a common cultural property behind *Culture and Society* and, more generally, to the promise of 'a public education designed to express and

create the values of an educated democracy and a common culture'. Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1961), p. 155.

4 Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review* (1979; London: Verso, 1981), p. 99.

5 Richard Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (1957; New Brunswick: Transaction Publishers, 1992), p. 48.

6 For Marx's brief remarks on the recent growth of the 'unproductively' employed servant class as the reproduction of a system of 'ancient domestic slaves', and as a direct result of both 'the extraordinary increase in the productivity of large-scale industry' and 'a more intensive and more extensive exploitation of labour-power in all other spheres of production', see *Capital*, Volume 1, trans. Ben Fowkes (London: Penguin, 1990), pp. 574–5. It is worth pointing out here that Marx also draws a slightly different connection between household 'menial servants' and service professionals in terms of their complicity with the bourgeoisie, in exchanging services rendered for 'a share of the surplus product, of the capitalist's *revenue*': 'In bourgeois society itself, all exchange of personal services for revenue – including labour for personal consumption, cooking, sewing etc., garden work etc., up to and including all of the unproductive classes, civil servants, physicians, lawyers, scholars etc. – belongs under this rubric, within this category'. See Karl Marx, *Grundrisse*, trans. Martin Nicolaus (London: Penguin Books, 1993), p. 468.

7 In a way, Williams's characterization of an unconscious solidarity among professionals via the metaphor of the 'servant' can help to clarify further D.A. Miller's well-known account of the unconscious *discipline* that the servants within the estate–community emblematize in a novel like Wilkie Collins's *The Moonstone* (1868): 'The exercise of policing power inheres in the logic of the world, but only as a discreet "accident" of normative social practices and models of conduct. The community does not mobilize in a concerted scheme of police action, and yet things turn out as though it did.' The presentation of 'policing power's permeation into the normative social practices and models of conduct' within the novel – practices and models best exemplified in the daily tasks of household management performed by servants – is realized all the more effectively, for Miller, in our ultimate sense that this estate–community need not consciously 'mobilize' to achieve a 'concerted scheme of police action'. Individual members of such communities need not even be conscious of the fact that they participate, on a daily basis and through the most mundane tasks, in such discipline – just as, in Williams's configuration, service professionals need not be conscious of their participation in a monopoly in order to replicate the effects of that monopoly. See D.A. Miller, *The Novel and the Police* (Berkeley and Los Angeles: University of California Press, 1988), pp. 49–50.

8 Williams, *Culture and Society*, pp. 331–2, my emphasis.

9 Harold Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society: England Since 1880* (New York and London: Routledge, 1989), pp. 118–19. See also his earlier *Origins of Modern English Society 1780–1880* (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1969), pp. 257–8: 'They were the forgotten middle class, in short, because they forgot themselves. Except when postulating a place for their idealized selves in other classes' ideal societies, they generally left themselves out of their social analysis.'

10 Raymond Williams, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (New York: Oxford University Press, 1976), p. 58.

11 Perry Anderson, *Arguments Within English Marxism* (London: Verso, 1980), pp. 39, 40, 42, 40. Anderson goes on to attest more pointedly, 'The problem of *social order* is irresoluble so long as the answer to it is sought at the level of intention (or valuation), however complex or entangled the skein of volition, however class-defined the struggle of wills, however alienated the final resultant from all of the imputed actors. It is, and must be, the dominant *mode of production* that confers fundamental unity on a social formation, allocating their objective positions to the classes within it, and distributing the agents within each class.' *Arguments Within English Marxism*, p. 55.

12 Perry Anderson, 'Origins of the Present Crisis' (1964), in *English Questions* (London: Verso, 1992), pp. 36, 37.

13 Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 88.

14 Williams, *Politics and Letters*, p. 113: 'At this time my distance from Wales was at its most complete. However, unconsciously my Welsh experience was nevertheless operating on the book. For when I concluded it with a discussion of cooperative community and solidarity, what I was really writing about – as if they were more widely available – was Welsh social relations.'

15 Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 332; *The Long Revolution*, p. 85. See also Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 326: 'But both [the idea of service] and the individualist idea can be sharply contrasted with the idea that we properly associate with the working class: an idea which, whether it is called communism, socialism, or cooperation, regards society neither as neutral nor as protective, but as the positive means for all kind of development, including individual development.'

16 Williams, *The Long Revolution*, p. 87.

17 Bruce Robbins, *The Servant's Hand: English Fiction from Below* (New York: Columbia University Press, 1986), pp. 159–60.

18 Kazuo Ishiguro, *The Remains of the Day* (New York: Vintage, 1988), p. 244.

19 Kazuo Ishiguro, *When We Were Orphans* (New York: Knopf, 2000), p. 29.

20 'Something is clearly going on if the term *professionalism* can refer both to Stevens's ideological self-mystification and, at the transnational level, to something like a solution' – and if Mr Lewis, with the benefit of late-twentieth-century hindsight, can be considered 'right' about the need to recognize a 'transnational ethic' of professionalism in global concerns, as Robbins goes on to suggest, on some level Stevens's 'self-mystification' cannot be as transparently silly as we might be inclined to think it is. It also cannot be as without affect as it appears, not only because Stevens's perceived displacement of sexual desire for Miss Kenton with a loving attachment to professional standards testifies to an 'eroticizing of expertise and of the social bonds for which expertise stands'. See Bruce Robbins, 'The Village of the Liberal Managerial Class', *Cosmopolitan Geographies: New Locations in Literature and Culture*, ed. Vinay Dharwadker (New York: Routledge, 2001), p. 29.

21 Miller, *The Novel and the Police*, p. 35.

22 This is a very developed, far-reaching argument among critical accounts of detective fiction – specifically on Conan Doyle, and otherwise. See Rosemary Jann, 'Sherlock Holmes Codes the Social Body' (*ELH*, 57, 1990); Jon Thompson, *Fiction, Crime and Empire: Clues to Modernity and Postmodernism* (Champaign: University of Illinois Press, 1993); Edward Said, *Culture and Imperialism* (New York: Vintage, 1994); Stephen Arata, *Fictions of Loss in the Victorian Fin-de-siècle* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1996); and Ronald R. Thomas, 'Reevaluating Identity in the 1890s: The Rise of the New Imperialism and the Eyes of the New Detective' (1994) and *Detective Fiction and the Rise of Forensic Science* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1999).

23 See *The Remains of the Day*, pp. 101–2. Mr Lewis's own not-so-humble 'standards' call for an end to the well-intentioned but finally naive 'amateurism' of

cosmopolitan peace-seekers like Lord Darlington, in favour of international affairs run by 'professionals'. For these professionals, presumably, the negative tendency towards myopic expertise that we find in Stevens's slant on professional life would be translated into its positive other: total, full-time service unmitigated by the temptation to dabble in international affairs as a hobby, along with other hobbies, that we find in 'amateurs' like Lord Darlington.

24 Barbara and John Ehrenreich, 'The Professional–Managerial Class', in Pat Walker (ed.), *Between Labor and Capital* (Boston: South End Press, 1979), pp. 5–45.

25 Barbara Ehrenreich, *Fear of Falling: The Inner Life of the Middle Class* (New York: Pantheon Books, 1989), p. 83.

26 Perkin, *The Rise of Professional Society*, p. 117. The later work in part extends the critique of private-sector professionals Perkin began in *The Rise of Professional Society*, where the backlash against the professional ideal (really best characterized, for Perkin, by *public* sector professionalism) can be traced primarily to the failed recognition among *private*-sector professionals (managers, corporations) of their reliance upon state protection and their subsequent turn to the erroneous belief in their position as the primary generators of capital within the welfare state – capital to which public-sector professionals and public programmes attach themselves parasitically, in the private-sector professional's view. *The Third Revolution* takes an almost Foucauldian turn (one that, for the late 1990s, maybe makes this later book seem a bit outdated) in identifying the new elites of the late twentieth century – corporate managers and state bureaucrats – as those professionals possessing an almost unreal amount of power, and who seem, just like the private-sector professionals of the earlier book, to be above needing public approval of their existence or methods: 'They are the elites who will make or break modern post-industrial society, who will lead it to its full potential of service to the community or pitch it down into the abyss of corruption, violent conflict, and self-destruction.' See *The Third Revolution: Professional Elites in the Modern World* (New York and London: Routledge, 1996), p. 7.

27 Barbara Ehrenreich, 'Maid to Order: The Politics of Other Women's Work', *Harper's Magazine* (April 2000), pp. 59–70. For her earlier 'undercover' essay on waitressing, see 'Nickel-and-Dimed: On (Not) Getting By in America', *Harper's Magazine* (January 1999).

28 See Barbara Ehrenreich, foreword to *The Ralph Nader Reader* (New York: Seven Stories Press, 2000), 'Vote Nader', *The Nation* (21–28 August 2000), and 'Attacks on Nader Unfair, Unwise', *Women's Enews* (6 November 2000).

29 'Indeed, the basic status of a citizen in a democracy underscores the themes implicit in a form of professional and individual responsibility that places responsibility to society over that to an illegal or negligent or unjust organizational policy or activity. These themes touch the right of free speech, the right to information, the citizen's right to participate in important public decisions, and the individual's obligation to avoid complicity in harmful, fraudulent, or corrupt activities.' Ralph Nader, 'An Anatomy of Whistle Blowing', *Whistle Blowing: The Report of the Conference on Professional Responsibility* (New York: Bantam, 1972), p. 7.

30 Ralph Nader, 'Statement of Ralph Nader, Announcing His Candidacy for the Green Party's Nomination for President', *The Ralph Nader Reader*, p. 3.

31 Ehrenreich, 'Maid to Order', p. 61.

32 Judith Butler, *Antigone's Claim: Kinship Between Life and Death* (New York: Columbia University Press, 2000), p. 2.

Raymond Williams, Ezra Pound and the Heritage of John Ruskin

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The linkage that I have proposed in the title of this article may seem at first glance wildly improbable. Raymond Williams, after all, is a major figure within the British socialist tradition. Indeed, for many of us who grew up in the 1950s and the 1960s, he became the single most influential spokesperson for the political left. In contrast, Ezra Pound, as an anti-Semite and an outspoken admirer of Mussolini, seems to stand at the far right of the political spectrum. Nevertheless, I want to argue here that both Williams and Pound are best understood if we see them within a tradition of British social thought that descends from John Ruskin. This tradition, I will argue, differs from Marxism primarily in its emphasis on the artist, not simply as a by-product of and commentator on the productive system as it grinds on its way, but rather as the norm of human possibility. For Ruskin and all of his heirs, the profit motive is the most powerfully destructive force within the human community. Against the profiteer, the Ruskinian poses the artist, who works (and note the ambiguity in this word itself, between work as mechanical toil and the creation of 'works of art'), not out of desire for profit, but simply out of delight in the exercise of the human power to create, and in pride of the beauty so created. There is clearly a powerful critique of capitalist society implicit in Ruskin's thinking, but there is also a central contradiction in his social theories. Although he helped create the Worker's Education Association to nurture the creative potential of working men, Ruskin could not imagine a society that was not divided between masters and servants, rulers and ruled. The tension between his belief in the creative powers of all humans and his commitment to the principle of hierarchy has created a split between 'left' and 'right' Ruskinites; and I will here attempt to sketch the struggle between these two wings of the movement, with Pound as an exemplar of the right Ruskinites, and with Williams as spokesperson for the left Ruskinites. Politically, my sympathies are entirely with the left Ruskinites. Yet for both wings of the movement 'culture' remains a keyword, and both wings want to understand this word as describing what Williams called the 'whole way of life' of a people. Therefore I believe that we cannot fully understand either of these traditions of thought except in relationship to the other, and in this article I will attempt to set the two traditions into a dialectical relationship.

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I

In *Culture and Society 1780–1950*, Raymond Williams tells a story that runs something like this: The Industrial Revolution initiated a massive transformation in the conditions of life and in the relationships between people in Britain. A traditional village life centred on the rhythms of the natural world disintegrated, as the gentry continued to enclose farmlands, and as country people moved to the cities to take the jobs created by the new industrial system. The old face-to-face human relationships of the village gave way to an impersonal contractual relationship with employers, and to a life lived cheek by jowl with strangers crowded together in congested urban slums. Men, women, and even children ceased to be full human beings and became simple 'hands', interchangeable parts within the factory system. The fabric of a traditional culture woven from the rituals of the church, the language of the King James Bible, and song and story around the family hearth became frayed in these new living conditions, undermining the shared ethical standards that can alone bind together the community and allow new members of that community to define a stable individual identity. In response to these new life circumstances, social critics on both the right (Burke, or later Carlyle) and the left (Cobbett) called for a return to a more 'organic' society. The right saw the enemy as the French Revolution's assault on the traditional social hierarchy, and they sought to reaffirm traditional structures of deference toward one's 'betters' and *noblesse oblige* toward 'inferiors'. The left saw the problem as industrialization itself, which concentrated wealth in the hands of the few and left the vast majority impoverished. But both looked back to a medieval world as providing a standard against which to judge the cultural devastation caused by industrial capitalism. At the same time, Romantic artists, in particular the English poets, were defining art as a privileged space standing apart from the new society. The Romantic artist claimed both to speak as a whole human being and to speak for a sense of organic connection with the entire human community and the natural world itself. Perhaps a Wordsworth could preserve this sense of wholeness only by retreating from London to the Lake District. Nevertheless, the Romantic artist, as the embodiment of the full creative powers of humankind, claimed both a unique privilege as a person and a prophetic authority in summoning to judgement the 'dark satanic mills' of industrial capitalism.

Enter John Ruskin. Ruskin, of course, began as an art critic and came to social theory only relatively late, after a Road to Damascus illumination. The new capitalist economy promised wealth, the opportunity to rise within society, to become rich. The great myth of capitalism – at least in America, where millions of fundamentalist Christians flock to church every Sunday, to

be told that God 'wants you to be rich' – is that all people who put their mind to it can become rich: that if you are not rich, the reason must be that you lack sufficient desire, or that you suffer from some intellectual or moral fault. But Ruskin realized, with an unequalled clarity, that monetary wealth is always relative, and that you cannot have rich people without also having poor people:

> I observe that men of business rarely know the meaning of the word 'rich'. At least if they know, they do not in their reasonings allow for the fact, that it is a relative word, implying its opposite 'poor' as positively as the word 'north' implies its opposite 'south'. Men nearly always speak and write as if riches were absolute, and it were possible, by following certain scientific precepts, for everybody to be rich. Whereas riches are a power like that of electricity, acting only through inequalities or negations of itself. The force of the guinea you have in your pocket depends wholly on the default of a guinea in your neighbour's pocket. If he did not want it, it would be of no use to you; the degree of power it possesses depends accurately upon the need or desire he has for it, – and the art of making yourself rich, in the ordinary mercantile economist's sense, is therefore equally and necessarily the art of keeping your neighbour poor.[1]

The quest for riches is never, then, morally innocent, for the fundamental law of capitalism is the war of each against all. The spectacle of this war offended Ruskin's deeply Christian – if, on issues of dogma, sceptical – sensibility. And so, mid-career, he began to shift his attention from art criticism to social criticism.

Ruskin found himself driven to speak out on social issues because he found himself facing a world in which 'the economy' had begun to claim for itself autonomy. The economy, Ruskin's contemporaries increasingly assumed, was a self-generating system functioning by its own laws, and 'economists' dedicated themselves to understanding those laws. As the economy took on its own momentum, furthermore, not only economists but many politicians began to speak as if human beings existed primarily to serve that system – after all, doesn't the well-being of all of us depend upon a continuing 'economic expansion', fuelled by 'consumer confidence'? As the economy becomes the great Moloch that we all serve, 'culture' becomes simply one sector of that economy, or an ideological justification of 'the system', or 'entertainment' – that is, a momentary distraction from the tyranny that the economic system exercises over all parts of our lives. At best, we may get a split between culture and economy (or culture and

society, in Williams's terminology), with culture offering itself as a (steadily more feeble) critical voice, reminding us of all those life possibilities that can find no place within the economy. But at the very moment when culture and the economy were beginning to diverge, Ruskin said, firmly, 'No.' What we call 'the economy' is, he told us, only a grand illusion. Money is not wealth – it is only dirty paper. Only a rampant superstition has allowed us to confuse money and wealth; for, as Ruskin declares in emphatic capitals at the climax of *Unto This Last*, 'there is no wealth but life. Life, including all its powers of love, of joy, and of admiration' (185). And in the peroration of this tract, Ruskin links this theme of 'life' with his earlier emphasis on the relationship between great wealth and great poverty:

> Care in nowise to make more of money, but care to make much of it; remembering always the great, palpable, inevitable fact – the rule and root of all economy – that what one person has, another cannot have; and that every atom of substance, of whatever kind, used or consumed, is so much human life spent; which, if it issue in the saving present life, or gaining more, is well spent, but if not, is either so much life prevented, or so much slain. (192)

Ruskin's emphatic refusal to separate culture (read 'life') from society (read 'the economy') leads him to place art at the centre of human life. On the one hand, he assumes that we can measure the health of a society through its art: 'The art of any country *is the exponent of its social and political virtues*.'[2] Conversely, Ruskin also assumes that in a healthy society, the freedom to exercise one's inherent creative powers – the freedom claimed by the romantic artist – should be available to all human beings. As his biographer Joan Abse recognizes, 'Ruskin's view of man's need for the exercise of his whole individuality in his employment was a unique contribution to the debate on social justice which vexed the nineteenth century.'[3] Furthermore, as Williams astutely recognizes, Ruskin's writings both on art and on the polity rest upon a fundamentally religious sense of an order at work within the cosmos – an order that should body itself forth both in the work of art and in the human polity:

> In his criticism of art, his standard was always ... 'Typical Beauty', the absolute evidence, in works of art, of the 'universal grand design'. In his social criticism, his concern was with the 'felicitous fulfilment of function in living things', and with the conditions of the 'joyful and right exertion of perfect life in man.' ... Both sides of Ruskin's work are comprised in an allegiance to the same single term, Beauty; and the idea of Beauty (which in his writings is virtually interchangeable with Truth) rests fundamentally on belief in a universal, divinely appointed order.[4]

For Ruskin as for his Romantic forebears, then, the artist remains the prototype of the free, self-generating human being. But Ruskin recognized, however inchoately, that a division within human society between a few 'geniuses' and a mass of ordinary humans condemned to mechanical labour could produce only a degraded and degrading society. How to achieve, not simply a smoothly functioning society, in which the necessities of life are available to all, but a true culture, in which all of us will have the opportunity, not simply to 'make a living', but to exercise our full creative capacities in the joy of life itself? Ruskin seems to me the true father of the British socialist tradition, in so far as he was the first to recognize the radical implications that this question takes on, in the society created by nineteenth-century industrial capitalism.

Yet there is also a central contradiction in Ruskin's thinking. He may have hungered for a social order grounded on the principle that 'there is no wealth but life', but he could not imagine a virtuous society that was not divided between masters and servants, rulers and ruled. In *Unto This Last* he praises the unquestioning obedience of soldiers to their commander as the ideal form of human social relations, and he celebrates inequality, not as a necessary evil, but as an intrinsic good: 'Inequalities of wealth, unjustly established, have assuredly injured the nation in which they exist during their establishment; and, unjustly directed, injure it yet more during their existence. But inequalities of wealth justly established, benefit the nation in the course of their establishment; and, nobly used, aid it yet more by their existence' (135–6). No 'from each according to his abilities, to each according to his needs' for Ruskin. And if necessary, he is fully willing to enforce the 'inequalities of wealth justly established' by indoctrination or, if necessary, by force. Thus in one of the more unpleasant moment in *Fors Clavigera*, Ruskin declares that in the utopian society to be created by the St George's Company, 'The first essential point in the education given to the children will be the habit of instant, finely accurate, and totally unreasoning, obedience to their fathers, mothers, and tutors; the same precise and unquestioning submission being required from heads of families to the officers set over them.'[5] In passages such as this, Ruskin's celebrations of righteous authority and willing submission to the master (and within the St George's Company, he took the title of 'Master' upon himself) can take on a distinctly proto-fascist ring.

The tension between Ruskin's belief in the creative powers of all humans and his commitment to the principle of hierarchy created, among his heirs, a split between 'right' and 'left' Ruskinites. Alexandre Kojève somewhere

describes World War II as a civil war between the left Hegelians and the right Hegelians. That may have been true in continental Europe, but what Hegel represented for the continent, Ruskin represented for the Anglo-American world. As I have suggested, Ruskin detected a rupture between the economy (the means of production) and the culture (the symbol systems in terms of which we try to understand the world), and he saw this rupture as a crisis that undermined any effort to achieve 'wholeness of being'. The left Ruskinites, down to Raymond Williams and beyond, have insisted that this rupture can be healed only by working politically to correct the structural inequalities and injustices created by the new economy, and by developing an educational system that will make available to all people the richer structures of feeling nurtured by a genuine literacy. On the other hand, the right Ruskinites, terrified by the 'Rise of the Masses' (Ortega y Gasset), have sought to create a citadel in which Culture will be protected from the swelling tide of barbarism. But for all their disagreements, right and left Ruskinites have continued to insist that the goal of any society should be, not simply to maximize the quantity of goods produced or the median family income, but to give full scope to the creative powers of human beings. For both right and left Ruskinites, the artist at work, generating new forms of value out of human labour, remains the prototype of what human life should be, and the quality of the arts that a society produces is the best measure of its health. To both right and left Ruskinites, furthermore, 'culture' is a – or indeed *the* – keyword: the name of that common world that we create through the exercise of our power to imagine human possibility. And for Ruskinites of both right and left, the word 'culture' describes the 'whole way of life' of a people. For the right Ruskinites, as Williams implies in *Culture and Society*, culture is created by and for an elite, 'the best', and is at most a gift that the few offer to the many. To the left Ruskinites, 'culture' emerges from 'the people'. I don't want to minimize the significance of the differences between these two perspectives, but I do want to argue that the implications of both the right and the left Ruskinite position become clear only if we see them in relationship to one another.

II

From Ruskin himself, the left Ruskinite tradition passes down through his immediate disciple William Morris, who repeatedly avowed his direct debt to Ruskin, and then through non-Marxian socialists like R.H. Tawney and G.D.H. Cole, to Raymond Williams. In his college years before World War II, Raymond Williams was, his biographer Fred Inglis tells us, briefly a member of the Communist Party, and in the 1970s he opened up a fruitful dialogue with a revitalized tradition of Marxism. Nevertheless, I believe that his

deepest affinities lie with the tradition of 'ethical' (if we follow Dennis and Halsey) or 'cultural' (using Williams's own terminology) socialism that descends from Ruskin. In attempting to substantiate this assertion, I shall focus primarily on Williams's writings of the 1950s. In the introduction to *The Long Revolution*, published in 1961, Williams writes, 'With this book and *Culture and Society*, and with my novel *Border Country* which I believe to have, in its particular and quite different way, an essential relevance to the two general books, I have completed a body of work which I set myself to do ten years ago.'[6] The central concern of this group of works, I would propose, is the nature of culture, conceived as 'a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual' of a people (*Culture and Society*, xiv). *Culture and Society* records the history of a certain way of thinking about culture as it evolved in a particular place, Britain, in response to particular economic, social and political circumstances, especially industrialization, urbanization and the possibility of democracy; and the book concludes with a grand rhetorical affirmation of certain fundamental values: solidarity, liberty – and, above all, a belief that they are not incompatible. The autobiographical novel *Border Country* supplements *Culture and Society* by offering us a concrete picture of the specific experiences that gave Williams his sense both of the nurturing powers of a common culture and of the ways capitalism is eroding such cultures. Surprisingly, the book also reveals that despite Williams's deep engagement with a tradition of social thought that is overwhelmingly English, he sees himself as only ambiguously English, the child of a borderland between Wales and England, and an eternal outsider within the upper-middle-class academic world where he lived most of his life. In *The Long Revolution*, Williams first, in Part I, expands the conclusion of *Culture and Society* into an explicit credo or what I would call a 'cultural poetics'; then in Part II he looks at the evolution of certain key cultural formations; and Part II then offers an analysis of the cultural condition of contemporary Britain. In my discussion of Williams I shall first discuss *Border Country*; I will then turn to Part I of *The Long Revolution*. In both works, I believe, we can see clearly the Ruskinite roots of Williams's social thought.

Border Country centres on the relationship between Matthew Price, transparently based on Raymond Williams himself (the personal references are clear to any reader of Inglis's biography), and his father, Harry; and secondarily on the relationship between Matthew and a sometime workmate and friend of Harry, Morgan Rosser.[7] Matthew is summoned home after Harry, who has spent his life working as a signalman for the railway, suffers a heart attack on the job. Alternating chapters then give us the story of Matthew's efforts to come to terms with his father's illness, interspersed with a traditional *Bildungsroman* narrative of the life of Matthew from birth to his departure for the university. The book deliberately sets up Harry Price

as an ideal. Late in the novel, speaking of his father to Morgan, Matthew says, 'All my life I've had one centre, one thing I was sure of: that his life was good. And I suppose I'd believed that the good is somehow preserved.... Every value I have, Morgan, and I mean this, comes from him' (285–6). Morgan, in response, says of Harry, 'I learned something ... from him. He couldn't see life as chances. Everything with him was to settle. He took his own feelings and he built things from them. He lived direct, never by any other standard at all' (287). To 'live direct', to 'settle', to 'build from one's feelings' – these phrases sketch, in shorthand, a picture of the life that alone can be the foundation of an authentic culture. In this same conversation, we learn of Harry that 'his centre's been here, with his bees and his garden' (286), and indeed it is in his garden that we see Harry as an artist, a man who gives himself totally, with love and devotion, to the work at hand. (For Harry's 'centredness', his ability to find in his garden forms of work that give expression to his creative powers and thus make possible a productive relationship between him and his world, see in particular the long, richly textured scene in which Harry, aided by his son and his father, capture a hive of bees (193–7).) Morgan, in contrast, has lost his centre. The two friends had been joined in their commitment to the General Strike of 1926, and to the hope of building what Morgan calls a 'socialist society' (288). But with the failure of the strike the disillusioned Morgan has gone into business, developing a successful jam factory that he eventually sells to a large food-processing corporation. Matthew would like to believe that Morgan too has 'built from his feelings', but Morgan replies, 'what were those feelings? Just that life wasn't good enough. That others were ahead and why shouldn't I be? Negative feelings, ... because what I wanted I couldn't have' (287). And what of Matthew/Raymond, who has also left behind his father's world, for the perhaps broader but certainly thinner world of academia? Was he too impelled on his path by 'negative feelings'? Williams is content to leave this question unanswered.

The Long Revolution was published only a few months after *Border Country,* and Inglis tells us that Williams worked on the two books simultaneously. Thus it is not surprising that thematically they mutually illuminate one another. Part I of *The Long Revolution* begins with a chapter on 'The Creative Mind'. Not, we might note, 'The Class System', or some other title that would emphasize the constraints imposed on us by the structure of society or the processes of history. The unsympathetic reader might conclude from this chapter title that Williams is some kind of romantic idealist. Yet in fact this opening chapter, like the book as a whole, lays the foundations for a particular kind of socialist politics, by attempting, in the spirit of Ruskin and Morris, to see *all* human beings as artists. From a book by the biologist J.Z. Young, Williams takes the statement, 'The brain of each one of

us does literally create his or her own world' (16). All human beings, Williams concludes, thus share 'what is usually called the "creative imagination": that is to say, the capacity to find and organize new descriptions of experience. Other men share with the artist the capacity to transmit these experiences, which are only in the full sense experiences when they are in a communicable form. The special nature of the artist's work is his use of a learned skill in a particular kind of transmission of experience. His command of this skill is his art' (26). But if art is only 'a particular process in the general human process of creative discovery and communication' (37), then it loses the special status it has enjoyed since the Industrial Revolution. 'The suggestion that art and culture are ordinary', Williams recognizes, 'provokes quite hysterical denials', but '[t]he solution is not to pull art down to the level of other social activity as this is habitually conceived. The emphasis that matters is that there are, essentially, no "ordinary" activities, if by "ordinary" we mean the absence of creative interpretation and effort. Art is ratified, in the end, by the fact of creativity in all our living' (37). If all human beings are engaged in a constant process of the imaginative construction of a world, Williams goes on to argue in his second chapter, then 'culture' is in effect the common world that they create. Williams proposes the phrase 'structure of feeling' to describe this common world:

> this structure of feeling is the culture of a period: it is the particular living result of all the elements in the general organization.... I do not mean that the structure of feeling ... is possessed in the same way by the many individuals in the community. But I think it is a very deep and very wide possession, in all actual communities, precisely because it is on it that communication depends. (48)

These propositions about 'the creative mind' and the 'structures of feeling' that this mind generates come close to being platitudes, until we put Williams's argument into a (Ruskinian) political context. First, if all human beings are inherently creative, then an industrial system that denies them the opportunity to exercise these creative powers is necessarily dehumanizing. But second, if culture is the collaborative expression of our creative powers, then culture by nature stands in opposition to any society that would reduce human beings to cogs in the industrial system. We reify both the 'individual' and 'society', says Williams, but instead we must 'break down these fixed states, into the actual processes which are changing us and which we wish to change' (98).[8] The structures of feeling within and by means of which we live are never stable. We come to know ourselves through the structure of feeling within which we find ourselves, but even as we enter into possession of that structure we are also changing it. In

Chapter 4 of *The Long Revolution*, titled 'Images of Society', Williams sums up the argument in a distinctly Ruskinian statement: 'To take account of human creativity the whole received basis of social thinking, its conception of what man in society is, must be deeply revised' (115) – and, indeed, it is precisely such a revision that Williams has proposed in this book. This revision in turn provides the groundwork for his faith in 'the long revolution' itself: if human beings are by nature creative, and if their creativity issues in what we might call a permanent cultural revolution, then it seems inevitable that the condition of apparent stasis in which we now find ourselves, under the cultural hegemony of the corporate-controlled media, will be only temporary. Williams recognized the increasing power of the mass media; but writing on the cusp of the 1960s – at a moment when the barbaric yawp of Allen Ginsberg was already sounding through the streets of San Francisco, and when four young men in Liverpool were already experimenting with a beat that would become for an entire generation the rhythm of life itself – his deeply critical view of the future of Britain is nevertheless infused with hope.

III

If the left-Ruskinite tradition runs in an unbroken chain from Morris through Tawney to Williams, so too we can, I would propose, trace a continuous right-Ruskinite tradition that extends down to Ezra Pound. Pound's links to Ruskin have been most usefully explored by Michael Coyle, in the second chapter of his *Ezra Pound, Popular Genres, and the Discourse of Culture*.[9] Coyle cites a range of important critics who have affirmed the significance of the Ruskin/Pound connection: Guy Davenport ('almost all of Ruskin is taken up by Pound', 21), Michael Alexander ('the radical integrity Pound finds between economics, the life of the arts, craft, nature, procreation and religion' represents a 'logical development of the Ruskinian tradition', 179), Donald Davie (Ruskin is 'the last considerable figure before Pound' to maintain the principle that 'the level of craftsmanship ... registers the good or ill health of a period or society', 426). For Coyle himself, 'Pound's relation to Ruskin involves ... a historically specific vision of human productivity which shaped profoundly how both writers ordered their subject matter and presented that ordering' (44).[10] Yet Coyle and the other commentators on the Ruskin/Pound relationship all confront one major problem: as Coyle notes, while 'Ruskin is widely conceded to have been important to Pound', nevertheless 'Pound rarely refers to him explicitly' (42). And when Pound does mention Ruskin, as in a few passages cited by Coyle, the tone is likely to be mildly derisive. Nevertheless, as Coyle also argues, there was so much Ruskinism 'in the air' in the years up to World War I that Pound could

pick up a good deal of this way of thinking without necessarily even reading the master's work. Indirectly, Pound absorbed some right-Ruskinite ways of thinking from two Americans, Henry Adams and his brother Brooks Adams. But even more significantly, a Ruskinian influence permeated the offices of *The New Age*, where Pound was a frequent visitor in the years before and during World War I. During this period, the editor of this journal, A.R. Orage, espoused the doctrine of Guild Socialism, a theory taken seriously both by writers who would end on the political left (in particular, R.H. Tawney and G.D.H. Cole) and by writers who would end on the political right (especially G.K. Chesterton and Hilaire Belloc, whose *The Servile State* was initially serialized in *The New Age*). The theories and attitudes of Guild Socialism derive directly from Ruskin, and I believe Coyle is correct in his suggestion that Pound's Ruskinism came to him primarily as mediated by Orage and the other members of the *New Age* circle (54–64).[11]

Not all the members of the *New Age* circle placed as much emphasis on the role of the arts as did Ruskin (or Pound). However, all of them, like Ruskin, were deeply repelled by the prospect of a society governed solely by the profit motive. Individuals as heterogeneous as Orage, Tawney, Belloc, Chesterton and Pound also shared the diffuse religious sensibility that we have seen in Ruskin. Tawney, Belloc and Chesterton were all Christians, while Orage became a disciple of Gurdjieff, and Pound dabbled in occultism and neo-Platonism. All believed, or wanted to believe, in the existence of a sacred order within the cosmos that transcends the will of men. While given to anticapitalist and holistic ways of thinking, however, members of the *New Age* group also tended to be proudly individualist: Orage, for example, was attracted to Nietzsche's vision of the *Übermensch*. As individualists, the members of the *New Age* group rejected Communism. Instead they sought some sort of 'third way' between Communist collectivism and unrestricted capitalism. For some, including Tawney, a democratic, libertarian socialism offered such a third way. For others, the 'third way' took the form of Social Credit, or Chesterton's Distributism – or, in the case of Pound, an idealized and quite fictional conception of Fascism. But whatever path they chose, all the members of this group were seeking a way of life that would be grounded, not on greed and the satisfaction of appetite, but on service to the sacred mysteries at work within the cosmos; and in their writing and their lives, the members of this group sought to define the possibility of a culture (a 'whole way of life') that would honour these mysteries. In all of these ways, the members of the *New Age* circle look back to Ruskin.

For an example of the promise and the limitations of Pound's Ruskinism, I offer his *Guide to Kulchur*, with a few sideways glances at the *ABC of Reading*, which represents a kind of preface to the *Guide*. The *ABC* was published in 1934 and the *Guide* four years later, and the books draw

together most of the themes of Pound's work up to that date.[12] These books reveal Pound as a Ruskinite first of all in his passionate faith in the arts as central to any culture and a direct revelation of the character of that culture. In the *ABC of Reading,* Pound famously declares that 'artists are the antennae of the race' (73), and he echoes this statement in the *Guide*. The metaphor suggests that 'the race' is engaged in a journey through time, and that the artists are out in front, feeling the way – and sending back signals about what the species is likely to come upon next. Not only does Pound see artists as the pioneers of the human adventure, but he also, with Ruskin, insists that the arts can serve as a measure of the quality both of the artist's mind and of the society that shapes the conditions of artistic creation: 'A man's character is apparent in every one of his brush strokes. There are I believe scattered chapters in novels by F.M.H. which show civilization. Fox of the Forschunginstitut picked up a Japanese letter from my desk, and bowed to its civility' (91). ('F.M.H.' is Ford Madox Hueffer, who by the time Pound wrote these words had become Ford Madox Ford. Fox was an English associate and translator of Frobenius.) Thus it follows that the arts reveal the relative health of a society: 'the one thing you shd. not do is to suppose that when something is wrong with the arts, it is wrong with the arts ONLY. When a given hormone defects, it will defect throughout the whole system' (60). Or, conversely: 'I suggest that finer and future critics of art will be able to tell from the quality of a painting the degree of tolerance or intolerance of usury extant in the age and milieu that produced it' (27). (We will hear more soon about 'usury'.)

Both branches of the Ruskinite tradition place the arts at the centre of the human enterprise. But the left Ruskinites, as we have seen, like to see all human beings as artists, or at least potential artists. Thus to Williams, the power to create, to envision a material or spiritual habitation and bring it into being, is what makes us human. The right Ruskinites, on the other hand, are inclined to see some human beings as intrinsically superior to or more creative than others. In this respect, Pound is distinctly a right Ruskinite. He was absolutely convinced that we can distinguish a hierarchy of artists, ranging from the indisputably 'great' through a broader range of honest talent, down to the mediocre and the grotesquely amateurish. On this point once again, the *ABC of Reading* offers a useful supplement to the *Guide*, for in this smaller book Pound explicitly presents himself as a professional practitioner of the art of poetry, speaking to apprentices in the art. The poet, he proposes, must be a rigorously trained specialist, and he begins the book with an elaborate analogy of the poet and the scientist, as two types of trained observers. Accordingly, Pound assumes that we can place poets into a clear hierarchy, depending on their relative contributions to poetry as a steadily expanding body of techniques and forms of knowledge, a hierarchy

that ranges from the 'inventors' down through the 'dilutors' to the mere 'starters of crazes' (39–40). And ranged below this finely graded set of categories comes, of course, the ranks of the 'sub-literary', the poetasters – and, we might note, *all* women writers.

If the *ABC of Reading* offers a handbook to the craft for aspiring poets, the *Guide to Kulchur* has a larger ambition, to define what constitutes 'Kulchur' as a whole. Here is one of his definitions: 'Culture starts when you can DO the thing without strain. The violinist, agonizing over the tone, has not arrived. The violinist lost in the melodic line or rather concentrated effortlessly on reproduction of it has arrived. There is no faking in the arts. No artist can present what he hasn't got' (209). As a general authority on 'culture', Pound relies on the German Africanist Leo Frobenius, who 'has in especial seen and marked out a kind of knowing, the difference between knowledge that has to be acquired by particular effort and knowing that is in people, "in the air". He has accented the value of such record. His archaeology is not retrospective, it is immediate' (57). 'Frobenius uses the term "Paideuma" for the tangle or complex of the inrooted ideas of any period' (57). Pound insists that 'the Paideuma is not the Zeitgeist' (58). What is the difference? The Hegelian who talks of the Zeitgeist assumes that we can grasp the whole and then explain the parts in relationship to that whole, whereas Pound (and here again he seems to me essentially Ruskinian) assumes that the whole is ultimately ineffable, and that we can approach it only through the 'luminous detail', the concrete moment of experience in which the whole is, mysteriously, shadowed forth.

For Pound, a detail (the carving of a mermaid in Santa Maria dei Miracoli in Venice, a bowl of Persian soup, or whatever) is 'luminous' because it bodies forth an order, a light. Pound goes to quite extraordinary lengths to avoid naming this order. Sometimes he speaks of 'the gods', sometimes of the light of the mind – in Greek, the '*nous*'. Above all he does not want to call this transcendent order 'God', simply because in the course of history too many horrors have been perpetrated in the name of 'God'. In sum, Pound, like Ruskin, is a post-Christian writer. But, again with Ruskin, Pound is quite insistent that a transcendent order exists, manifesting itself in the rose that forms in the steel dust when a magnet passes over it, or in the emergence of a wasp from its cell, or in the workings of the moral sense that is present, so Ruskin and Pound assume, in each human being – except perhaps in the 'usurers' that Pound would exclude from humankind. 'Without gods, no culture. Without gods, something is lacking' (126). 'The worship of the supreme intelligence of the universe is neither an inhuman nor a bigoted action. Art is, religiously, an emphasis, a segregation of some component of that intelligence for the sake of making it more perceptible' (189–90). Like any other Ruskinite, Pound idealizes the Middle Ages: the

medieval Church, he says, 'gave order to Europe, it gave peace in one time or place or another, it built the cathedrals' (30). And yet ultimately Pound remains, as Robert Duncan called him, an unreconstructed 'Pagan fundamentalist'.[13] In the *Guide* he reminds us that all his life he has aspired to 'set up the statue of Aphrodite again over Terracina', because he is convinced that you cannot 'attain a living catholicism save after a greek pagan revival' (191).[14] For, in fact, Pound wants a religion without dogma: 'Two mystic states can be dissociated: the ecstatic-beneficent-and-benevolent, contemplation of the divine love, the divine splendour with goodwill toward others. And the bestial, namely the fanatical, the man on fire with God and anxious to stick his snotty nose into other men's business.... The first state is dynamism. It has, time and again, driven men to great living.... It is paradisical and a reward in itself seeking naught further.... The glory of life exists without further proof for this mystic' (223–4).

Pound, like earlier Ruskinites, is deeply suspicious of the profit motive as the engine of human activity: 'Communism as revolt again the hoggers of harvest was an admirable tendency' (191). But by the time he wrote the *Guide*, Pound's animus towards capitalism focused on two institutions: the media and the banks. Pound's analysis of the effects of monopoly control over the media still seems acute. 'No man knows the meaning of ANYTHING in any paper until he knows what interests control it' (196). The media have, Pound suggests, supplanted government as the true agency of power, and he recognized the potential of the new electronic media: 'The real government having long slipped from jaw-house [Pound's derogatory term for parliaments] to press controlled by interests, and by 1918 entering the radio phase' (258). As for the banks, by the time that he wrote the guide, Pound had found a name for the destructive force within capitalism: 'Usury always trying to supplant the arts and set up the luxury trades, to beat down design which costs nothing materially and which can come only from intelligence, and to set up richness as a criterion' (282). In his growing obsession with 'usurers', Pound follows in the heritage of Ruskin, who says in *Fors Clavigera* that

> usury is worse than theft, in so far as it is obtained either by deceiving people, or distressing them; generally by both: and finally by deceiving the usurer himself, who comes to think that usury is a real increase, and that money can grow of money; whereas all usury is increase to one person only by decrease to another; and every gain of calculated Increment to the Rich, is balanced by the mathematical equivalent of Decrement to the Poor. (670)

The Adams brothers and Chesterton also spoke with contempt of 'usurers', applying this medieval label to all those who reap the profits of

human labour without themselves engaging in productive work. Building on this tradition of thought, Major Douglas, the prophet of Social Credit, persuaded several members of the *New Age* group, including Pound and Orage, that the causes of poverty and its attendant ills lie, not in the system of ownership, but rather in the monopoly control that the banks enjoy over the money system. For Pound as for other Social Crediters, this diagnosis led almost immediately to a conspiracy theory of history. If freedom from want lies within easy reach by a simple change in the money system, then why have we not changed that system long ago? The answer can only be that someone must be profiting from the current system, and so Pound sees himself as a detective in pursuit of the villain of the story.

Pound's obsession with usury introduces a dark undercurrent into *Guide to Kulchur*, erupting in recurrent passages of seething invective directed at the 'ethical degradation, the sewage of the nineteenth century', the 'peculiar filth of the present age', the 'utter dastardliness of this age', and so on. All these phrases come from pages 130 and 131, in a passage that climaxes with a denunciation of the governments of France and England as 'an usuriocracy, that is foetor, and its protagonists rotten' (132). Banks, Pound insists, are the agency of a tyranny that saps the creative energies of all humans, by controlling the money supply. And who controls the banks? In the 1930s as still today, the Social Crediters and other monetary reformers who obsessed over this question almost all came sooner or later to the same answer: 'the Jews'. This becomes Pound's answer too, and so he slides from anticapitalism into anti-Semitism. Pound's identification of the enemy as 'the Jew' creates a festering conflict in his thinking. On the one hand, his pursuit of the meaning of culture has issued in a generous opening out to non-European cultures. The secret hero of *Guide to Kulchur* is, in fact, Confucius, who embodies the possibility of a fully realized culture: 'Confucius offers a way of life, an Anschauung or disposition toward nature and man and a system for dealing with both' (24). And Pound knows that his health as both poet and human being depends upon his capacity to open himself to the Other: '*A man does not know his own ADDRESS (in time) until he knows where his time and milieu stand in relation to other times and conditions*' (83). Yet to 'the Jews' as the historical 'other' *within* a predominantly Christian European culture, Pound could not and did not open himself. Instead during the late 1930s and on into the period of the radio broadcasts, Pound systematically reorganized his emotional and intellectual life around hatred of a demonized Other, whom he increasingly blamed for all that is wrong with the world. This mental orientation continued to control Pound's thinking through the post-war years, as the letters he wrote in the years 1947 to 1957 to his fellow ex-Fascist Olivia Rossetti Agresti amply attest. Only after his mental collapse in the early 1960s did he give any indications

that he had worked his way beyond this racism: two pieces of evidence are his statement to Allen Ginsberg that 'the worst mistake I made was the stupid suburban prejudice anti-Semitism',[15] and perhaps even more significantly his 1972 'foreword' to his *Selected Prose*, probably his last piece of writing before his death in that year: 'In sentences referring to groups or races "they" should be used with great care. re USURY: I was out of focus, taking a symptom for a cause. The cause is AVARICE.'

IV

Why did Pound's version of the Ruskinite dream go so spectacularly wrong? To answer this question, we must first recognize, I believe, that Pound's politics were always a function of his poetics, rather than vice versa. If artists are indeed the 'antennae of the race', then it is crucial not only that they be free to practice their various arts in peace, but also that they should have a visible and honoured position within the community, in proportion to the originality of their work. Since Pound established a strict hierarchy among artists, ranging from the 'great' to the negligible, he tended also to think that human society should be structured into a hierarchy – thus his rejection of socialism, despite a flirtation with the left in the early 1930s. But Pound also saw the inequities of capitalism as unjust, and he bitterly resisted the capitalist transformation of art into a commodity. In particular, he recognized the implications of corporate control over publishing, and he worked vigorously to create a counterculture (the world of the 'little magazine') in which writers would retain control over the dissemination of their work. Further, Pound saw himself as a 'revolutionary' spokesperson for an avant-garde in rebellion against a stagnant academic tradition in the arts; and in the early decades of the century, not only political but artistic 'revolutionaries' presented themselves as anti-bourgeois and thus anticapitalist too, in so far as the bourgeoisie were the historical agents of capitalism. Mussolini claimed to be both anticapitalist and anti-socialist, both 'revolutionary' and 'conservative', and Pound was drawn to Fascism because it seemed to reconcile the contradictions within his thinking. But these contradictions are also in some degree inherent in the Ruskinite tradition itself. At every stage of his life Pound was, in however deluded a way, pursuing a Ruskinian vision of a world in which the craftsman would own the tools of his trade and would control the fruits of his labour, and in which the frenzied pursuit of domination over others would give way to a community grounded in love among human beings and between humankind and the earth.

To understand the disastrous outcome of Pound's attempt to define a politics that would create a safe space for his art, it is also important to look at the causes and consequences of his decision to leave America for

Europe. In the United States during the nineteenth century, 'culture', in the Ruskinian sense, was in effect equated with the genteel tradition, and Pound, like other American modernists, was fiercely critical of that tradition. (See Lentricchia's useful discussion of this issue in *Modernist Quartet*.[16]) At the same time, Pound was, like Eliot and Stevens and other American modernist writers, acutely aware from childhood that his Anglo-Saxon America was being engulfed by waves of South and East European immigrants. His reaction, on the level of pure feeling, was a deep discomfort, which by the time of the Rome radio broadcasts became a conviction that the 'real' Anglo-Saxon America of Jefferson and Adams had been destroyed in the aftermath of the Civil War. In sum, Pound loathed the genteel postures of an American Anglophile culture, but he found it impossible to identify with the emergent multicultural America. In this respect Pound found himself in the same situation that Henry Adams and Henry James had confronted in the decades after the Civil War, or George Santayana a little later, or Eliot among Pound's contemporaries. Conversely, we can see in William Carlos Williams an example of a poet who embraced the new, multicultural America, and the same is true of many of Pound's disciples, including Zukofsky, Oppen and Olson. But Pound, like James and Eliot, resolved the contradiction in his view of America by escaping to Europe, and by erecting in his mind an idealized heritage of European culture that had survived down through the centuries (Eliot helped him here). Positioning himself within the European (and specifically British) cultural scene of the 1910s and 1920s, Pound picked up on the Ruskinian sense of the centrality of the arts, and on the Ruskinian dream of an 'organic' culture. But as an expatriate American, Pound was never forced to define the relationship between culture and politics as they were evolving in Britain itself: that is, he did not need to work through his relationship with the British people and their complex class fissures and loyalties, simply because he was not British. Thus Pound's cultural politics, in Britain until 1920 as in Italy later, have a peculiarly abstract character: unlike the citizens of these countries, he never confronted the challenge of bringing his vision of human possibility into the arena of practical political action. Instead he was a bystander – albeit a vocal and highly opinionated bystander. Even Pound's Fascism is a peculiarly abstract intellectual stance: whatever else it may have been, Fascism was an expression of Italian nationalism, and in what way could an expatriate American participate effectively in such a movement?

If Pound's political trajectory is a paradigm of 'Ruskinism gone wrong', does it follow that Raymond Williams's career offers a contrasting example, of a Ruskinism that we can draw upon in the continuing struggle for social justice? As I have already intimated, my answer to this question is 'yes' – but a somewhat qualified 'yes'. Williams was not immune to the absolutist

whole. Writing as a prisoner in the cage at Pisa, under indictment for treason, mourning the death of his idol Mussolini, Pound can write, 'rain also is of the process', 'the wind also is of the process,/ sorella la luna' (*Cantos*, 425). And at the end of *The Cantos*, recognizing that he can never 'complete' the poem, he nevertheless declares, 'it coheres all right,/ even if my notes do not cohere' (797) – and the 'it' here is 'the process' itself. In its full scope, *The Cantos* seeks to carry us toward a post-Christian, post-dogmatic religious vision of a cosmos in which a 'supreme intelligence' (*Guide*, 189) is everywhere at its work of renewal, so that for Pound as for Dante, Love is the force that moves the sun and the other stars. I have linked this religious vision to Ruskin's, for it was, I think, Ruskin who first recognized that the cultural crisis of the nineteenth century had revealed the inadequacy of dogmatic Christianity, thereby creating a need for a new, syncretic sense of the sacred; and Pound's *The Cantos* seeks to respond to this need. Pound thus offers us a range of aesthetic and cultural possibilities that Williams cannot provide: a rigorous reinvention of the artistic means of production (Williams's novels offer pleasure and instruction, but they are content to remain within a realistic *Bildungsroman* mode that seems, in the wake of Gabriel García Márquez and Toni Morrison, earnest but distinctly stale), a language that leaves a permanent impress on the eye and ear (no one, I take it, would make such a claim for anything that Williams wrote, however deeply his writings speak to our social and cultural condition), and above all a sense that certain obligations are incumbent upon us by virtue of our participation not only in an ongoing human history but also in an overarching cosmic process. In all of these ways, Pound too carries forward the Ruskinian tradition, with its summons to remake for our own time the cultural heritage, the 'whole way of life' that at once limits and nurtures our human potentialities: its summons, furthermore, to accept an absolute responsibility for the human community, and for the earth we share.

Notes

1 John Ruskin, *Unto This Last: The Political Economy of Art. Essays on Political Economy* (London: Everyman's Library, 1968), pp. 132–3.

2 Ruskin, *Lectures on Art*, quoted in Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society 1780–1950* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), p. 136.

3 Joan Abse, *John Ruskin: The Passionate Moralist* (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1981), p. 123.

4 Williams, *Culture and Society*, p. 135.

5 John Ruskin, *Fors Clavigera: Letters 37–72*, in *Works*, Library Edition, Vol. 28 (London: George Allen, 1907), p. 20.

6 Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1966), p. xiv.

7 Raymond Williams, *Border Country* (New York: Horizon Press, 1962); Fred Inglis, *Raymond Williams* (London: Routledge, 1995).

8 The concept of 'process' is also, as we will see, central to the work of Ezra Pound. Interestingly, the word 'process' is missing from Williams's own catalogue of *idées reçues* in *Keywords*, suggesting that here we may have come upon the unspoken foundation of Williams's thought. For the idea of 'process' makes possible a dialectical vision of the human life-world, which we remake even as it makes us.

9 Michael Coyle, *Ezra Pound, Popular Genres, and the Discourse of Culture* (University Park, PA: Penn State University Press, 1995).

10 For other discussions of the Pound/Ruskin link, see Leon Surette, 'Ezra Pound and British Radicalism', *English Studies in Canada* 9, 4 (December 1983), pp. 435–51; Robert Casillo, 'The Meaning of Venetian History in Ruskin and Pound', *University of Toronto Quarterly* 55, 3 (Spring 1986), pp. 235–60; Hugh Witemeyer, 'Ruskin and the Signed Capital in Canto 45', *Paideuma* 4, 1 (Spring 1975), pp. 85–9, and '"Of King's Treasuries": Pound's Allusion to Ruskin in *Hugh Selwyn Mauberley*', *Paideuma* 15, 1 (Spring 1986), pp. 23–31; Tony Tanner, *Venice Desired* (Oxford: Blackwell, 1992); Peter Nicholls, 'Ruskin's Grotesque and the Modernism of Ezra Pound and Wyndham Lewis', in Giovanni Cianci and Peter Nicholls (eds.), *Ruskin and Modernism* (New York: Palgrave, 2001), pp. 165–80; and Clive Wilmer, 'Sculpture and Economics in Pound and Ruskin', in Tony Cerutti (ed.), *Ruskin and the Twentieth Century: The Modernity of Ruskinism* (Edizioni Mercurio: Vercelli, Italy, 2000), pp. 169–87.

11 I have elsewhere (see Burton Hatlen, 'Pound and Fascism', in Marianne Korn (ed.), *Ezra Pound and History* (Orono, ME: National Poetry Foundation, 1985), pp. 145–72) described in some detail my sense of the impact that the discussions of Guild Socialism within the Orage circle had on Pound.

12 Ezra Pound, *ABC of Reading* (1934; New York: New Directions, 1960); *Guide to Kulchur* (1938; New York: New Directions, 1970).

13 Robert Duncan, 'From the H.D. Book, Part II, Chapter 5', *Stony Brook* 3/4 (1969), p. 340.

14 Pound first announced his desire to erect such a statue in 1930, in a short 'Credo' published in a journal called *Front*, p. 53. When he arrived in Brunnenburg after his release from St Elizabeths, he actually began to assemble materials for a temple to Aphrodite, before a mental breakdown reduced him to silence.

15 Michael Schumacher, *Dharma Lion: A Biography of Allen Ginsberg* (New York: St. Martin's Press, 1992), p. 492.

16 Frank Lentricchia, *Modernist Quartet* (New York: Cambridge University Press, 1994).

17 Schumacher, p. 492.

18 Ezra Pound, *The Cantos* (New York: New Directions, 1986), p. 492.

Reviews

Suzanne Raitt, *May Sinclair: A Modern Victorian.*
Clarendon Press, 2000. xvi + 307 pp. £27.49 hb. ISBN 0 19 812298 5.

Over fifty years after her death in 1946 we finally have the first British full-length biographical study of May Sinclair, a writer who was not only a bestselling novelist but also intimately involved in the major cultural and social events of her time. She was an active feminist, an articulate participant in the birth of literary modernism, an early student of psychoanalysis, and, albeit briefly, a volunteer worker on the Western front. Born in 1863, she was, as the title of Suzanne Raitt's intelligent and lucid biography indicates, both 'Victorian' and 'modern', and as such provides an important transitional link between the two.

Sinclair was also a lifelong spinster and this fact perhaps partially explains her exclusion from the literary canon (only two of her twenty-three novels are currently in print). A reviewer of her novel *The Helpmate* (1907), which opens with a married couple in bed on their honeymoon, for instance, suggested that Sinclair needed 'a wider knowledge of life' (121) before she could tackle subjects such as marital sex. Arnold Bennett referred to her as 'this prim virgin', though he added that she had 'great sense' (3). Viewed from such a viewpoint, Sinclair's is a life in which, as she herself wrote of Miriam Henderson in Richardson's *Pilgrimage,* 'Nothing happens'. There are no scandalous love affairs, no marriage, no children, and relatively little by the way of dramatic incident for the biographer to recount. Even her death was unobtrusive; suffering from Parkinson's disease, her last two decades were spent in such retirement that most of her friends assumed she had died years before 1946.

Moreover, Sinclair herself had strong feelings about the intrusive nature of biography, particularly when it entailed the search for a male love interest to 'explain' a woman writer. 'When a woman's talent baffles you', she wrote of Charlotte Brontë in her critical study *The Three Brontës*, 'your course is plain, *cherchez l'homme*'. She saw the critical obsession with Brontë's possible love for Paul Heger (the Heger letters were published just after the appearance of Sinclair's book) as 'a subtle way of suggesting that Brontë's "genius was, after all, only a superior kind of talent"' (9). Thus Sinclair took pains to control her own posthumous reputation, attempting to ensure that she was remembered as a writer not as a woman. She left no diary and destroyed or censored many of her papers (Raitt reports that some of the few extant letters have small sections cut out of them). And she refused to use the cult of personality to sell her books, even withdrawing permission to publish when one American journalist overstepped the mark and included

personal details in his interview. (One can imagine the horror with which Sinclair would have regarded our current publishing world, where a novel can be sold purely because it has the name of a supermodel, a television gardener or a politician on the cover.)

Ironically, this attempt to control the terms in which she was remembered has itself worked against Sinclair. During her own lifetime it was becoming increasingly clearer that personalities not only sell books in the short term, they also establish and enhance literary reputations in the long term. *The Divine Fire* (1904), the novel which made Sinclair a bestseller first in America and then in Britain, is in part a study of the corruption of the literary press and the commercialization of the book-selling trade. Without the interest of a scandalous, tragic or even eccentric private life, and with no husband to publish her letters or child to write her biography and thus promote her reputation, Sinclair has been relegated to a footnote in the standard literary histories. She is most often remembered as the first person to use the term 'stream of consciousness' in a literary sense, which she did in her delighted and appreciative 1918 review of the 'startling "newness"' of the method and form evolved by Dorothy Richardson in the first volumes of *Pilgrimage*.

Indeed, a further irony of Sinclair's neglect is that she was an intelligent and perceptive critic, who was not afraid (unlike the critics she castigated in *The Divine Fire*) to risk her own reputation by assessing and defending innovative and experimental new work. In essays which have now been reprinted in Bonnie Kime Scott's anthology *The Gender of Modernism* (1990), she used her pen to further the careers of, among others, T.S. Eliot, Ezra Pound, Richard Aldington and H.D. She was generous with her time, money and contacts, using them to help other writers. She introduced Ezra Pound to Ford Madox Ford, for instance, offering the young American an entrée into the English literary world which was important in the development of a transatlantic literary modernism.

This impeccably researched biography is an explicit attempt to move Sinclair from the footnotes to 'the centre of the page' (11). There have been two previous studies, both American in origin and both predating the development of feminist criticism and theory in the 1980s and 1990s. Raitt generously acknowledges her debt to Theophilus E.M. Boll's *Miss May Sinclair: Novelist. A Biographical and Critical Introduction (1973)* and the archive he assembled in the 1960s, now at the University of Pennsylvania. Hrisey D. Zegger's *May Sinclair* (1976) was a critical assessment of Sinclair's major prose work. Among the new material Raitt has discovered is a slyly comic 'Autobiographical Sketch' of 'The-Miss-May-Sinclair', written by Sinclair around 1907 or 1908, which notes that the eponymous 'little creature' was 'certainly more widely known' in America. (Even now it is easier to pick up

second-hand copies of her books in the United States than in Britain.) As with Sylvia Townsend Warner, however, this American reputation did not contribute to a secure place in British literary histories.

This study should go a long way towards re-establishing Sinclair within a history of literary modernism which is currently being remapped by critics like Bonnie Kime Scott, Jane Eldridge Miller and Alison Light, who have reassessed women writers who were regarded as 'minor' in traditional accounts (Rebecca West, Sylvia Townsend Warner, Dorothy Richardson, Charlotte Mew, Katherine Mansfield and Jean Rhys, for instance). It broadens the context within which Sinclair's work is placed in order to consider how her work contributed to the 'remaking of British culture in the early twentieth century' (11). Her active involvement in the significant movements and events of her day makes her life exemplary in many important ways.

Raitt acknowledges that 'it is crucial to our understanding of our culture's transition into modernity that we acknowledge the emotional costs of such significant changes to women like May Sinclair' (9). In order to do so she does reveal and discuss events which Sinclair took pains to hide, such as her father's bankruptcy and alcoholism. She also speculates, with sensitivity, on Sinclair's romantic life. At 30 Sinclair, then struggling with religious doubt, had a brief abortive romance with a young theology student, seven years her junior, whose interest in her seems to have been partially motivated by a desire to win her back to Christianity. Her subsequent atheism clearly made a relationship with a soon-to-be-ordained curate untenable. There are also tiny clues (vague rumours within her family) that Sinclair may have had an illegitimate baby. For the rest of her life Sinclair, as Raitt notes, 'continued to feel she had traded sexual intimacy for intellectual independence' (64). The emotional cost of this choice between sexual fulfilment and intellectual freedom had in Sinclair's time (and, indeed, still has) an intense immediacy for women, particularly women writers. It is a dilemma which Sinclair returns to again and again in her fiction. In *The Creators* (1910), for instance, she suggests that marriage and motherhood, in particular, are incompatible with sustained intellectual achievement. In *Mary Olivier* (1919) Mary gives up the man she loves in order to look after her ailing mother, but she is compensated with moments of intense joy which are the realisation of a fundamental spiritual freedom, what Sinclair calls 'the flashpoint of freedom' (235). Sinclair thought of *Mary Olivier* as her own intellectual autobiography, telling her translator that 'all this description of the *inner life* is autobiographically as accurate as I can make it (216).

It is in her handling of Sinclair's '*inner life*' that Raitt's study is most impressive. It is difficult, she acknowledges, for us today to 'believe in the existence of a woman like Sinclair who lived so fiercely the life of the mind,

and who empathised so passionately with romantic or sexual love without ever having experienced it herself' (7). The critical attitude to such women has tended to be either '*cherchez l'homme*' or to suggest that their work is inauthentic because it is not based on experience (witness the reviewer of *The Helpmate*).

In contrast, Raitt traces Sinclair's evolution as a writer with an inner life rich in spiritual and intellectual drama. The early poems (especially *Nakiketas and Other Poems*, published under the pseudonym 'Julian Sinclair' in 1886) and philosophical writings are already concerned with the ways in which the shape of intellectual, philosophical and spiritual endeavours are defined by familial and sexual elements. The advent of psychoanalytic thought gave Sinclair a theoretical framework and a language through which she could develop this thinking, although she inclined towards an eclectic adaptation rather than a wholesale adoption of such ideas. Her involvement with the younger generation of writers helped her develop a style which fused traditional narrative with the new modernist techniques. *The Three Sisters* (1914) brought together her interests in philosophy, psychoanalysis, feminism and the Brontës to produce an important transitional text which uses the material specificity of women's experience to embody and articulate the shift from a nineteenth century to a modern consciousness. It is a crying shame that this text is currently out of print. In *Mary Olivier* Sinclair utilized the concept of sublimation to develop further what Raitt aptly calls a 'poetics of celibacy' (110). Her use of stream of consciousness here produced a text which is Victorian in its themes but unashamedly modern in its technique. Sinclair's tour de force, however, is *Life and Death of Harriett Frean* (1922), a deceptively simple tale of a woman to whom, again, 'Nothing happens'. Students usually respond well to this bleak text, recognizing the technical sophistication of its use of interiority and symbol, and even sympathizing with its unattractive protagonist.

The wide context and interior focus of this study offer new insights, which in turn re-illuminate the broader picture of the period. Raitt reads Sinclair's complex friendship with Charlotte Mew, for instance, not as a somewhat farcical tale of lesbian 'bed hopping' (according to one somewhat dubious account Sinclair leapt over a bed five times in order to escape Mew's advances) but as a fruitful meeting of different literary modes. Attracted to the passion of the 'Victorian emotional drama' represented by Mew, Sinclair could also appreciate the cool, classical modernity of the Imagists, and thus becomes a mediator between the two. Raitt is also informative on the phrase 'stream of consciousness'. She points out that it did not necessarily originate with William James but was in common usage in a range of popular and scientific contexts at this point – for instance, Evelyn Underhill's *Mysticism* (1911). Even in James's text the phrase refers

not so much to issues of perception but to the processes of selfhood and particularly the unity of the perceiving mind.

Sinclair emerges from this rigorous yet sympathetic study as a central transitional figure both looking back towards the work of her nineteenth-century predecessors, the Brontës and Elizabeth Gaskell, and forward to that of her successors, 'modern' writers such as Rebecca West, Rosamond Lehmann and Elizabeth Bowen. It is ironic, given Sinclair's own reservations about biography, that *May Sinclair: A Modern Victorian* exemplifies what the genre at its best can achieve: the contextualizing of a life in ways which illuminate not only the writing but the broader culture itself.

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Lawrence Rainey, *Institutions of Modernism: Literary Elites and Public Culture.*
Yale University Press, 1999. x + 227 pp. $40.00 hb. ISBN 0 300 07050 0.

Jennifer Birkett and Stan Smith (eds.), *Special Issue on Modernism, Miscelánea: A Journal of English and American Studies.*
vol. 20 (1999), €9.00 pb. ISSN 1137–6368.

'How did this book get into my series?' On Amazon.com recently, someone pretending to be Henry McBride – the seminal and long-deceased critic of modernist art – asks this of Lawrence Rainey's *Institutions of Modernism*, published in the Henry McBride Series in Modernism and Modernity from Yale University Press. Strangely enough, this joke, however recondite, seems to characterize a recent pattern of response to materialist accounts of modernism and, stranger still, to Rainey's work specifically. The idols of the modernist past – according to certain latter-day ventriloquists, at least – are perturbed. The presumption figures prominently in a particularly indignant review of Rainey's book by Roger Kimball. McBride's criticism, Kimball writes,

> was the polar opposite of the grim, politicized irrelevancies that Rainey provides. The fact that Rainey is General Editor of the Henry McBride Series adds insult to injury. McBride was famous for his easygoing humor, so perhaps he is smiling at the irony of it all instead of rolling over in his grave. No doubt Rainey regards the publication of his book in this series as a gesture subversive of an outmoded aestheticism. For the rest of us, however – and above all for the patrons of this series commemorating the achievement of a great critic – *Institutions of Modernism* must be regarded as an impertinence that is as offensive as it is calculated to be.[1]

Best known for his anti-academic jeremiads, Kimball is no friend to the modes of intellectual inquiry current in academic discourse. His misrepresentation of the genesis of cultural studies, for instance – a 'popular pseudo-discipline that resulted from crossing Marxist animus with deconstructionist verbiage' – is so procrustean it is best read as a barometer of his intellectual bad faith (53). Given such conspicuous ill will, it is less noteworthy that Kimball finds a work like Rainey's *Institutions of Modernism* objectionable than that he singles it out as representative: the arch-symptom of the purported vices of 'chic academic criticism' (56).

No honest student of the vicissitudes of literary theory and criticism during the last thirty-five years would think to make such extravagant claims for this book. Rainey's fevered brand of archival materialism and altogether measured theoretical claims hardly exemplify recent trends in academic criticism, let alone Kimball's caricatured sense of a 'discipline in crisis' (56). In fact, his work makes a far more specific intervention – all the more offensive to Kimball because its specific purchase on the material underpinning of modernist culture threatens the *ex nihilo* brand of cultural authority he cherishes. It entails telling the unofficial, often all too commonplace stories of modernist cultural production, tracing a selection of modernist masterpieces – *The Waste Land*, *Ulysses*, *A Draft of XVI Cantos*, *The Collected Poems of H.D.* – to their initial sites of patronage, promotion and publication. Rainey's case studies exhibit a startling pattern: the network of co-conspirators, patrons, investors, publicists and editors who brought forth these works may not have, as a rule, relied on scrutinizing the aesthetic artefact as an elementary precondition of value. His *locus classicus* (and most impressive chapter) concerns the awarding of the first Dial Prize to *The Waste Land*. It seems that Eliot's masterpiece, the poem which Pound famously called the 'justification of the movement, of our modern experiment, since 1900', was bought and approved for publication sight unseen, on the strength of a reputation founded on publicity such as the comment just cited. In short, in Rainey's provocative formulation, much of modernism's success depended on promotion among non-readers, and 'the not-reading that was practised by the editors of the *Dial* [is] itself a trenchant "reading" of *The Waste Land*'s place in the structural logic and development of literary modernism' (106).

Not coincidentally, given the instrumentality of 'not-reading' to modernism's 'institutional profile' (to adopt Rainey's phrase), 'not-reading' also proves crucial to Rainey's avowed critical practice. His introduction warns those with 'literary critical training' that they 'will find … little of the detailed

examination of actual works that is sometimes held to be the only worthwhile or important form of critical activity' (6). This *caveat emptor* anticipates the consternation of readers like Kimball who complain that 'Rainey is really not interested in novels or poems' (52). What's really off the table here is the presumption that modernist novels and poems are self-positing works. Rainey's achievement is that he recognizes that understanding modernism as a mode and means of cultural production means moving beyond the hard carapaces of modernist masterpieces, beyond both the critical practices founded on 'unilateral focus on [their] formal devices' and sifting them for residue of 'ideological constellations'. Bracketing these concerns for 'the actual works' – that is, the actual contents strictly defined – allows Rainey to move his examination to 'the intervenient institutions that connect works to readerships, or readerships to particular social structures' (4). In practice, then, what Rainey calls 'not-reading' actually means reading other things and interpretation by other means. Glancing into his oversaturated endnotes, one finds a prodigious amount of reading: lecture programmes, travel guides, bibliographies, biographies, mass distributed periodicals, publishers' ledgers, newspapers, little magazines, family histories, memoirs, exhibition catalogues, letters, reviews and criticism. As this course of 'not-reading' suggests, the history of modernism's 'structural logic and development' is embedded in the very types of writing its logic and development tended to erase – that is, the kinds of discourse it habitually marks as subordinate, minor, un-literary or, worst of all, commercial. Furthermore, the full range and extent of the practices, conventions and institutions that regulate modernist cultural production remain one of the principal blind spots of contemporary criticism. This form of neglect pinches modernist studies especially hard, and the kind of outrage Kimball directs at *Institutions of Modernism* (as modernism's self-styled defender qua ventriloquist) helps explain why.

The book's putative offence, I submit, boils down to this presumption: modernist culture is ordinary. We arrive at the unthinkable formulation that modernist cultural production is, in fact, cultural production. (One imagines paroxysms in the offices of the *New Criterion*.) No formula seems more at odds with the familiar accounts of modernist cultural activity – from the 'extraordinary literary and critical authority' and elite pretensions of minority culture Kimball finds so beguiling to its claims to aesthetic autonomy and purported resistance to the mass marketplace. Yet, surely modernism is also, among other things, ordinary. As producers of culture, modernists were keenly involved with the exigencies of making a place for themselves in the world and their products in the cultural marketplace. Look at Pound's letter to Eliot's father in 1915, for example, anxiously making the case that Eliot's prospects for a career abroad in 'unpopular writing' is actually sound economy.[2] Not only does being an unpopular writer provide a living equal to

that of respectable professions like law, medicine or clergy, but, Pound reckons, it also provides the added benefits of 'an infinitely more interesting life'. Modernist culture is ordinary, then, in the particular sense Raymond Williams obtains in 'Culture is Ordinary'; modernist culture pairs descriptive claims about a whole way of life with prescriptive formulae about arts and culture. It is more than just the instances of conscious 'modernist' artistry – which is also to say that the 'ordinary' idioms, practices and institutions by which modernist aesthetic objects became known – that is, the ubiquitous tissue of promotion – are 'modernist', too. Williams's famous polemic hinges on the synthesis of these descriptive and prescriptive meanings of the word 'culture'. On the one hand, the sociological, culture is 'a whole way of life – the common meanings'; on the other, the axiological, it is 'the arts and learning – the special processes of discovery and creative effort'. 'Some writers', Williams explains, 'reserve the word for one or the other of these senses; I insist on both, and on the significance of their conjunction.... Culture is ordinary in every society and every mind.'[3] Modernist culture is ordinary yet everywhere mystified; that is where we must start – the sociology of modernist axiology.

It is just this sense of ordinariness Rainey brings out so aptly in his readings of modernism's institutions. Its fondness for publishing practices like rarefied limited editions, as he argues compellingly, represents not a flight from commercialism but rather a strategy of sounder economy, detouring the 'immediate consumption prevalent within the larger cultural economy' via a surprisingly remunerative 'circuit of patronage, collecting, speculation, and investment' (3). Pound, in fact, proves he is not oblivious to this logic of material causes when he tells Eliot's father that a 'man succeeds either by the scarceness or the abundance of copy' (103). Four years on, Eliot has the promotional strategy all worked out:

> there are only two ways in which a writer can become important – to write a great deal, and have his writings appear everywhere, or to write very little. It is a question of temperament. I write very little, and I should not become more powerful by increasing my output. My reputation in London is built upon one small volume of verse, and is kept up by printing two or three more poems in a year. The only thing that matters is that these should be perfect in their kind, so that each should be an event.[4]

Yet modernism's 'tripartite production program' – journal, limited edition and public or commercial edition – suggests that modernist literary value actually hinges on pairing Pound's two terms, exposure and underexposure, scarcity being rendered strategically abundant (101). Rainey's explanatory interests lie overwhelmingly in the second part of this production programme, the

limited edition, but there is more to be said about the uneasy conjunction of all three parts of the programme. The same modernists who willingly entered the rarefied economy of underexposure offered by limited editions and patronage were also committed to methods that promised widespread and large-scale exposure, the European and transatlantic circulation made possible by cosmopolitan journals and the unlimited possibilities of republication foretold by trade editions and inexpensive anthologies.

The bulk of Rainey's book discusses the affinities between modernism and the faux-aristocratic demands of patronage, but, as Rainey freely acknowledges, patronage is only one modernist institution among many, and sometimes he overestimates its role in modernist cultural politics. As I have already proposed, one of the chief obstacles to materialist accounts of modernism is the very critical apparatus erected by modernist writers like Pound and Eliot, publicists like John Middleton Murry and Edwin Muir, and, eventually, academic allies like I.A. Richards, the Leavises, and the *Scrutiny* writers. A critical regime that fetishises peerless originality and conjures forth free-floating aesthetic artefacts obscures the difficult passage of the modernist text to its readers: not only the promotional uses of criticism but also a host of other necessary cultural labours. For this reason in particular – *pace* Rainey with his emphasis on patronage – we should perhaps look to modernism's critical idioms for its most formidable institutions. The promotional services that modernists, would-be modernists, and their allies rendered to each other and to each other's causes were the most effective means they had to foster, in Rainey's words, 'a social reality, a configuration of agents and practices that converge in the production, marketing, and publicisation of an idiom, a shareable language in the family of twentieth-century tongues' (4–5). As Rainey's formula indicates, modernist institutions were, above all, not of mortar and bricks but institutions in a linguistic sense, familiar, iterated, often ad-hoc practices established in a speech community, a 'social and discursive space' (169). While modernism's promotional labours have never been wholly hidden from view, they have never been on display in modernism's canonical masterpieces either. Swept to one side of its arch literary compositions, books in print and collected works, they have been nevertheless enshrined in the bibliographic record. Prominently documented in the host of bibliographic endeavours modernists undertook in the period (in addition to high literary labour), the collaborative promotion of modernist idiom is documented in modernist limited editions, small magazines, little reviews, introductions, editing, anthologies, and other cultural furnishings.

The recent special number of *Miscelánea* dedicated to new scholarship on Anglo-American modernism raises some crucial questions about modernism's institutional profile and its dimensions as a means of cultural production. The editors, Jennifer Birkett and Stan Smith, have gathered a truly international group of contributors on a suitably miscellaneous range of topics from the continental avant-garde pedigree of stagecraft in pre-war London to the first expatriation of American Jazz to Paris. Despite the striking heterogeneity of the issue, three related matters of emphasis draw it together. First, and perhaps above all else, it affirms the crucial relationship between modernist culture and cosmopolitanism (appropriately for a Spanish journal of English and American Studies containing work by scholars from England, Scotland, Ireland, Wales, Germany, Poland, Australia, Hong Kong, Canada, and the United States). Second, it purposes both a new, post-romantic interest in influence and a concomitant interest in promotion as respective signs of cultural input and output. Third, it persistently emphasizes authors and forms of authorship over, say, formalist or post-formalist accounts of modernist canons of masterpieces. Be warned, true to Rainey's critical vocabulary, one finds more 'not-reading' than 'reading' here. While the matters I have mentioned do not quite represent a sea change for modernist studies, they serve instead as the fragments shored against its ruins, older critical constellations which merit rewriting, renewed scrutiny and reformulation.

First, the matter of modernist cosmopolitanism.[5] In their useful introductory essay, Birkett and Smith insist on the primacy of an account of Anglo-American modernism that has a 'self-consciously cosmopolitan orientation *ab initio*' (1). This insistence draws together a number of implications raised in the issue. It takes notice of the predominance of modernist experiences abroad, overseas, in transit to and from the metropole, and the effects of such movements on modernist cultural producers, who compulsively repeat scenes of exchange across the frontiers of the European and American avant-garde. It also conveys a comparativist, multilingual take on the range of modernist reading and writing habits, the sense that modernist cosmopolitanism begins in the interchanges and palimpsests of inner space, aided by encounters in little magazines, book stalls and reading rooms. Translation comes first; transit comes later. Craig Monk's insightful genealogy of the expatriate magazine shows how a succession of short-lived yet highly influential literary vehicles – *Broom*, *Secession*, *This Quarter*, *The Exile*, *the transatlantic review*, *transition* – embodied the logic of their editors and contributors shuttling through a succession of European cities: the mode of presentation for modernist works reproduces the cosmopolitan circulation staged by literary bodies. Pound's work and his movements through Europe are mutually revealing 'careers': from Venetian tourist 'on the Dogana's steps' to London informant for American magazines, from artist–conspirator in expatriate Paris to editor of *The Exile* in Rapallo. Not surprisingly, Pound's case is at once idiosyncratic and exemplary; his movements qua literary

work provide Monk with a governing framework for understanding the spatial dimensions, cultural negotiations and editorial agendas of lesser-known figures like Ernest Walsh, Harold Loeb, Matthew Josephson and Eugene Jolas. In schematizing the relationship between modernist editorial agendas and the displacement of modernist bodies, Monk's article echoes the preoccupations of a number of articles in the issue. John Lucas's 'American Jazz in Interwar Europe', Vassiliki Kolocotroni's '"Familiar Materials": Joyce among Europeans', Peter Marks's 'Odyssey of D.H. Lawrence', Jennifer Milligan's 'Jean Rhys: The French Connection', and Stan Smith's 'Lineages of "Modernism", or, How They Brought The Good News from Nashville to Oxford' all connect modernism's cultural achievements with modernist bodies trafficking across Europe and the Atlantic.

These articles illustrate how the connections between modernism and cosmopolitanism serve as a conceptual intersection between two critical vectors: the patchy development of modernism as a cultural formation and the formation of modernist identities. Smith formulates the link best: 'Literary modernism was a cosmopolitan, stateless hybrid, shuttling backwards and forwards across the Atlantic as its progenitors and carriers shifted between Old and New Worlds, endlessly repacking their intellectual baggage' (50). As this sentence makes quite plain, cosmopolitan modernism makes a necessity – if not a direct substitution – of the connection between the rubric, the agents ('progenitors and carriers') and the impedimenta. If modernist agents flew by the nets of nationalities, they were accomplishing these ends by displacing identities defined by national borders into the aesthetic registers of literary self-fashioning, a point illustrated by the popularity of four 'e-words' among modernists: exile, expatriate, émigré and enemy. A fifth 'e-word' also weighs heavily here, in modernist identities and *Miscelánea* contributions alike: European.

One of modernism's archest mystifications involves commuting cultural formations which are self-consciously localized in the European metropole ('minority concerns', to use the Leavisite term, or 'subcultures', to use the cultural studies one) into formations which claim to represent the modern experience *par excellence*. The editors discuss the developments of modernism as 'worlding', but there is some irony in this. After all, as the *Miscelánea* articles illustrate so well, modernism developed not globally but locally, in a mere handful of European and American metropoles. When it did look to the rest of the world – the provincial world, the non-European world – it often saw either peripheral backwater or repositories of primitivism and other forms of 'timeless' authenticity. The 'world' amounts to a few quarters in a few cities of Europe, maybe Greenwich Village, perhaps a few colonies and pockets elsewhere (Taos, Provincetown, Sussex, Majorca, and so on). In Alasdair D.F. Macrae's 'Edwin Muir: One Foot in Europe' and Michael

Coyle's 'European Radio Broadcasts of T.S. Eliot', particularly, we see modernists much taken with the idea of Europe as an impossible cultural ideal promising escape from parochialism (Whitman's 'barbaric yawp', the 'Caledonian Antisyzygy') and the nightmares of history (Macrae, 113; Birkett and Smith, 7).

Coyle's article is of particular interest in light of modernist institutions. He focuses on a series of BBC broadcasts made by Eliot between 1929 and 1964, particularly those following the Second World War written in the same vein as *Notes towards the Definition of Culture*. These broadcasts – some airing in Germany during the Allied occupation – tie the promise of post-war recovery to the restoration of a unified notion of European culture, influence and exchange. Eliot instructs listeners that 'the frontiers of culture are not, and should not be, closed' (quoted in Coyle, 346). This rhetoric is entirely constant with the emergent anti-Communist political alignments of the Cold War – though, as Coyle rightly points out, Eliot would never approve of his intentions described in propagandistic terms. This notwithstanding, the message of 'fundamental unity of victors and vanquished' in Eurocentrism has peculiar resonance on the cusp of the British decline, Bergen–Belsen and Auschwitz, and the end of Empire, and one imagines such sentiments even more discomfiting coming over the airwaves of the BBC Eastern Service broadcasting to India. Still, it shows the instrumentality of superseded ideals like 'die Einheit der Europaeischen Kultur' to the projects of Eliot and other modernists. As Coyle notes wryly, 'Eliot's broadcasts comprise a uniquely modernist moment: an attempt to use a new technology to recognize a dream in which the rest of the world was rapidly losing interest' (368). If the 'mind of Europe' so dear to Eliot – the exemplary site of cultural identification, the locus of intellectual tradition, and the unifying inheritance of mother tongues – is itself a modernist cultural artefact, then it is time we saw it as an institution of modernism, too. Modernism's trans-European pedigree serves it well as a vehicle of promotion, supporting the illusory claims of its 'global' reach in compensation for the reality of its numerically limited audiences.

The second matter of special concern in the issue is influence. Its connection with cosmopolitanism is obvious, but, contrary to the framework the editors propose, I think it merits specific attention. Here, influence means vetting cosmopolitanism through modernism's own reading materials. 'The texts of modernism', the editors note, 'repeatedly internalise the translation, and thereby the transvaluation, of diverse national literatures' (3). Instead of charting the 'careers' of modernists, a number of contributors track European textual influences across modernist desktops and European visual influences through modernist gallery and exhibition space: D.H. Lawrence with Max Weber (H.U. Seber), Dylan Thomas with surrealism

(Chris Wigginton), Joyce with Flaubert, Schlegel and Nietzsche (Brian Cosgrove), Auden with Rimbaud *inter alia* (Michael Murphy), Edwin Muir with Nietzsche, Kafka, *inter alia* (Macrae). Exemplary figures like Muir, Harold Monro, and, perhaps most notably, Roger Fry and Clive Bell, served Anglophone modernism as conduits for channelling direct and indirect experiences of continental avant-gardes and its intellectual genealogies to various quarters of the arts and culture scene in Britain. This is further evidence that modernism's logic and development is simultaneously patchy and overdetermined. Jane Goldman's 'Virginia Woolf and Post-Impressionism', for example, makes a suggestive case for the elective affinity of Woolf's modernist idiom 'both with the formulations by Fry and Bell on European art and with the formulations and practices of British suffragist artists' (361). The idea is that Woolf's approach to these new visual epistemologies is twice mediated, once by the depoliticized formalism supplied by her fellow Bloomsberries and once by the radically different reception new ways of seeing received from British feminists, 'who were repainting, reinventing, and restructuring the world anew' under a suffragist tricolour that owed much itself to a post-impressionist palette (185). Here, as elsewhere in the issue, causation is complex, sometimes even multidirectional, mediated by a system of 'exchanges' (to choose an appropriately multidirectional term) made possible by the warrants of literary names. It is made possible, in other words, by a sense of influence without anxiety, rendered visible for promotional ends. Modernists were not only constantly packing and repacking their bags; they were also constantly stealing the towels, the furniture, and other cultural particulars along the way, and, what's more, they were making this kleptomania selectively conspicuous.

For their part, Birkett and Smith favour the word 'translation' to 'influence', because it also evokes the word 'transit', collapsing the transit of bodies and the translation of discourse. The semantic evocations are apt, for they enable us to think about the place of material embodiment in modernist discourse: 'the idea of translation, the bearing of discourse, and of bodies, from one place to another'. Yet, for all its suggestiveness, this sense of 'translation' tends to obscure the issue's critical investment in yet a third significant matter, namely authors. There is a distinct emphasis on what could be loosely described as modernist self-fashioning, the instrumentality of signs of 'authorship' for not only modernist projects and idioms but also its critical posterity. When it comes to modernist studies, it seems, the name of the author won't go away. As so many entrance and exit visas, authorial names warrant the exchanges, the translations, the bearing of bodies and discourses. At best, authors are forever elusive, offstage paring fingernails, feigning disinterest (see Cosgrove, for a fascinating genealogy of this favourite modernist *modus operandi*). In their 'diminished' capacities,

however, they're arranging a host of contacts, ordinary labours, and promotional endeavours. In any case, the usual suspects are well-represented here. The collection documents the looming presence of the familiar cast of modernist author-geniuses in modernist studies, those figures who fit into Pound's famous taxonomy of literary posterity as 'masters' and 'inventors' (or who Foucault might have called the founders of modernist discursivity): two articles each on Joyce, Eliot, Auden and Lawrence, one on Yeats, one on Woolf, and Pound of course makes a number of significant cameos ('On Criticism', 147–8). More tellingly, perhaps, the rest of Pound's taxonomy is well represented: 'the diluters', 'the workers in "the style of the period"', 'the belle lettrists', 'the starters of crazes'. Contributors who attempt to connect or reconnect various literary figures to modernist idioms are working explicitly with and within these registers (for example, Peter Marks's article on Lawrence or Wigginton's piece on Dylan Thomas). To the Poundian literary rogues' gallery, I'd add the indispensable literary workers Robert McAlmon disparagingly calls 'intriguers' and 'politicians' in the uncut, original version of *Being Geniuses Together* (5). Some of the *Miscelánea* contributors understand modernist cultural production precisely in these dimensions (Smith's article figures Robert Graves's career in these terms, for example), but, as I have been suggesting, one of the issue's most compelling features is the way its case studies in modernist cosmopolitanism invite further inquiry into the relationship between modernist idiom and modernism's promotional registers, infrastructure and institutions.

Exchanges between discourses and bodies (Birkett and Smith's generative metaphor of 'translation') can also be understood as exchanges between a society's institutions and its cultural producers (Rainey's figure of modernism in 'institutional profile'). Macrae, for one, makes this connection explicit: 'Translators [to take one of modernism's key producers] are crucial mediators and prompters of the mysterious processes by which influences and themes are transferred between cultures, by accident, coincidence or design' (103). And, there is something of this connection in 'worlding', Birkett and Smith's other generative metaphor for describing modernist interconnections and interchanges: 'The new world that was 'worlded' by Eliot, Joyce and Pound extended back into, and broke away from a past that was already dislocated and disfigured in the texts of French symbolist poetry' (6). Yet, both versions of modernist cultural production are oddly two-dimensional. Neither finally enables a history of modernism from below (even though Rainey's work certainly brings us further in this direction). Demystifying the 'mysterious processes' in between modernist texts and contexts entails a far more literal and rigorous understanding of 'exchange', I think, one that directly accounts for the regulative institutional, technological and, yes, economic frameworks that make modernist culture possible. In this de-

mystified modernism, we see modernist cultural production at its utopian best and its dystopian worst. At its best, 'modernist exchange' – the rarefied system of mutually dependent, inter-signified authors, influences, interconnections, interchanges and literary labours – points to the possibility of a shadow economy of values within mainstream capitalism. The glimpsed escape from exchange (cf. Adorno's unsellable commodity) turns out to be only another form of exchange. Ironically, the very modernists who were often so critical of the destructive and desultory consequences of capitalist valuation were actively involved in the creation of an economy that was itself based upon the scarcity of a commodity, the artistic identity.

The difficulty of the 'modernist' rubric is by now so well known that making the point has become all but perfunctory. If we take as axiomatic John Harwood's observation that modernism, 'in any of the reified versions now deployed in academic debate, did not exist in 1909, or 1922 [but] is an academic invention ... retrospectively imposed on the works and doctrines it supposedly illuminates', we must also recognize that these works and doctrines, *now understood* as modernist, played a historical role in this process (13). The historical 'modernism' had an active stake in producing the conditions for, what effectively became, its own reification – in becoming, in other words, 'High Modernism'. For all its convenience and utility, a more inclusive rubric such as *modernisms*, now a preferred term following Peter Nichols's decisive book and recent developments such as the New Modernisms Conferences, tends to obscure these processes. The modes of literary criticism fostered and elaborated around the historical 'modernists' in the inter-war period entrenched many of the inured, 'modernist' assumptions underlying the practice of literary studies subsequently instituted in British and American universities after the Second World War. In his article, Smith argues that – on an empirical basis, at least – the familiar claim that 'modernism' is a retroactive construction is erroneous. Although it only took hold after the 'appearance of the usurping tanist, "postmodernism"', the usage 'in our current restricted sense has in fact surfaced and disappeared with equal rapidity in every decade of this century' (20, 35). From 'on or about December 1910', it seems, we've always been modernists; it's just that we keep forgetting. Perhaps modernism is best understood in terms of its struggle for cultural authority, its complex material intersection of practices, protocols and institutions conveying ostensible cultural continuity and legitimacy, on the one hand, and internal instability and bogus pretension, on the other. Both Rainey's *Institutions of Modernism* and Birkett and Smith's special *Miscelánea* issue point to possibilities for redefining 'modernism' along such lines – less as periodization or as bundle of formal concerns than as historically circumscribed modes of presentation and prescribed frameworks of expectations. Here we find an ineluctable point of

contact between modernism's aesthetic and social determinants, a means to account materially for the complex interactions between modernist 'creation' and its multiple sites of its presentation, distribution and consumption. Notice this entails more than merely detecting sociological or philosophical contexts for modernist literary themes. As Rainey argues, it is more than a matter of reading sources for modernist content or locating stimuli for modernist experiments; rather it means formulating better descriptions of modernist cultural practices by locating the modernist in the very publicity that makes possible the public figure, the public commitments and resentments, and the publications.

Notes

1 Roger Kimball, 'Barometer Falling', *First Things* 92 (April 1999).

2 *The Letters of T.S. Eliot*, ed. Valerie Eliot (London: Faber & Faber, 1988), p. 103.

3 Raymond Williams, 'Culture is Ordinary' (1958), in *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism*, ed. Robin Gable (London: Verso, 1989), p. 4. Tony Pinkney makes a provocative case for the 'modernist Williams' in his 'Raymond Williams and the "Two Faces of Modernism"', in Terry Eagleton (ed.), *Raymond Williams: Critical Perspectives* (Boston: Northeastern University Press, 1989). Still, as John Higgins argues in a recent response to Pinkney, in *Raymond Williams: Literature, Marxism and Cultural Materialism* (London: Routledge, 1999), Williams remained wary of modernism's politics over the course of his career and was at best ambivalent about its achievement in arts and learning. Still, the formula *culture is ordinary* places him squarely in a modernist framework, namely revaluation, the task of trying to make 'arts and learning' possible in an increasingly instrumentalized modern world. The difference here between Williams and Leavis – the difference that makes all the difference, I suppose – is Williams's insistence that the production of culture in the second sense not be merely a minority concern.

4 Quoted in Roger Kimball, 'A Craving for Reality: T.S. Eliot Today', *The New Criterion* 18, 2 (October 1999).

5 This stress on the cosmopolitan cast of modernism contrasts sharply with recent attempts to formulate modernism around the problematics of English nationalism, colonialism and postcolonialism, centring particulary around Bloomsbury, fictional canons of Conrad, Richardson, Ford, Forster, Joyce and Woolf, and nativist sources for modernist innovation.

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John Higgins, *Raymond Williams: Literature, Marxism and Cultural Materialism.*
Routledge, 1999. ix + 229 pp. $85.00/£60.00 hb., $27.95/£17.99 pb. ISBN 0 415 02344 0 hb., 0 415 02345 9 pb.

David Kadlec, *Mosaic Modernism: Anarchism, Pragmatism, Culture.*
Johns Hopkins University Press, 2000. 331 pp. $47.00/£35.00 hb. ISBN 0 8018 6438 0.

Michael North, *Reading 1922: A Return to the Scene of the Modern.*
Oxford University Press, 1999. vii + 269 pp. $50.00/£26.00 hb. ISBN 0 19 512720 X.

Raymond Williams went to the United States only once. After refusing invitations for years because of the Vietnam War, he suddenly visited Stanford in the early months of 1973, hiding away to write his book on television. With his wife Joy he took part in an anti-Nixon march, but that was all. Why did Williams regard the essence of the country as lying more in the actions of its government than in the massive protest movement against the war, which was generating a radical culture of great interest?

One reason may have been that the politics and culture of the United States caused difficulties for his theory. When Williams's concept of 'a whole way of life' as the motive and object of cultural enquiry has to confront the claims of internationalism, dislocation and small communities, the United States gets invoked, and not in welcoming ways. In 'Language and the Avant-Garde' of 1986 he refers to the way the 'experience of small minorities' could in some (false) interpretations define modernity itself. This was undesirable and occurred 'most notably in the United States'. A troubling moment occurs when Christopher Prendergast identifies this sentence from Williams's late lecture 'When Was Modernism?' as prejudiced: 'The whole commotion is finally and crucially interpreted and ratified by the City of Émigrés and Exiles itself, New York.' That may indeed make us 'think of other, deeply uncongenial forms of the attack on the "cosmopolitan"', as Prendergast remarks. There is distress, and perhaps anger, in Williams's late work on modernity, which is collected in *The Politics of Modernism* (1989). America, the site of a multiplicity of viable cultures and creative groupings was a living challenge to Williams's need for wholeness and for deeply rooted movements that capitalism could not degrade.

Williams's direct intellectual influence in North America appears now to be over, but it persists in the interests and emphases and procedures of writers who look to Fredric Jameson and those few others who make up the American academic left. But it is unlikely that the group around *Rethinking Marxism*, which emphasizes economics, is rethinking Williams,

because economics was one of his blind spots. There is an ironic appropriateness that Williams, so often unwilling to specify his sources, should himself be dispersed, unnamed, across a multitude of critical texts.

John Higgins's account of Williams's relationship with Cambridge English could scarcely be better done. That relationship was combative from the outset. The battle began with Williams's arrival at Cambridge as an undergraduate in 1939, continued with his brief return to get a First in 1945–46, and was institutionalized by his lectureship in 1961. After his repudiation of literary criticism he attempted in 1983 a decisive distancing from Cambridge English in his two retirement lectures as Professor of Drama. In one, he questioned whether there ever was such a thing as Cambridge English. Momentarily open to possibilities at its inception in the 1920s, it had never been a distinctive or coherent method of study, he argued. Above all it was flawed from the outset by its refusal to study language as a social practice. Why, then, spend so many years struggling with a historically flawed set-up that was by his time a deformation beyond reform? Yet he never freed himself from Cambridge's clinging attachment. At the same time, his constant complaints about being in Cambridge did not endear him to those who had to work in less privileged parts of the British educational system (most of it, in other words).

By 1974, when he became professor, it was all too clear that little of importance was going on at Cambridge, apart from his own work and that of Stephen Heath. This was my view, and that of numerous others, in the 1970s. By the 1980s it was possible to describe the place as a backwater, with the McCabe affair of 1980–81 representing a symbolic expulsion followed by a closing of minds. And a backwater it remains. Important work is now diffused throughout the system, in Europe, North America, southern Africa (Higgins's own work an example), Australia. The power of the Cambridge name continues to fascinate – can we imagine 'Warwick English' or 'Duke English' achieving the same mesmeric power? It was Williams who became mesmerized. Listening to his inaugural professorial lecture in 1974, it was possible to wonder why he should be so constrained, so cautious. Where was the radical effort? Was it cleverly concealed, to be dug out later, or not there at all? Were his final doubts about the coherence of Cambridge English a rejection formulated to conceal his personal distress at the inhibitions it had imposed upon him?

Higgins's study is strategic. In order to preserve cultural materialism as a force for the future he concedes enormous failures on Williams's part. The account of nineteenth-century culture and tradition in *Culture and Society* is inadequate, Higgins says. He alleges, without giving much evidence, that in his best book, *The Country and the City*, Williams's historical scholarship is weak. The concept 'structure of feeling' is theoretically lame, and Williams's

Marxism is without class, state or economics. His 'historical semantics', Higgins says, is amateurish (which will dismay those of us who still find *Keywords* useful). Williams's reading of Saussure is tendentious, his out-of-date view of psychoanalysis inadequate to the challenge of Lacan, whilst he does not engage adequately with his structuralist and post-structuralist antagonists.

Williams's positive notions (identity, social rootedness and community) are compromised by their conservative origins. There is nothing in his work about race, gender or imperialism. (Feminism doesn't even make it into the index of Higgins's book.) Others doubt if he understood Voloshinov properly, and on Chomsky (another failure, I would add: the page in *Marxism and Literature* falls into several traps) he obediently follows Timpanaro. Throughout, Williams fails because he accepts the limits of Cambridge as the limits of his world. Nevertheless, in my view Higgins's wide condemnation seriously underestimates the thoroughgoing influence that Williams has had upon the way questions are asked, today, in literary and cultural studies. There are a multitude of things that critics do, and properly refuse to do, as a result of his persuasion and his example.

The claims to Williams's legacy have been 'guarded and defensive', Higgins writes, 'the whole dynamic one in which Williams is remembered in such a way that his work seems better off forgotten'. From this low point he attempts to recover cultural materialism as a resource and as the ground for future research. Even this is argued cautiously: 'At the very least' the question of agency persists, so that culture is not now read as dependent upon social reality (the crude 1930s' view). Althusser's argument for the wholesale dominance of ideology has been largely rejected, and the base and superstructure argument disposed of. Language in Williams performs in a truly dialectical way, enabling as much as determining self-consciousness.

This is pessimistic because it shows Williams as most successful in his rejections. Higgins interprets this 'historical' account (as he calls it) as a challenge to our current positions, rather than a confirmation of them, but he leaves the impression that little enough of the legacy is workable as a resource, whether for political hope or for the writing of oppositional books. Then, in an unexpected final emphasis, Higgins turns to *literacy* as embodying the continuity in Williams's work, so that education marks the link between adult education (in which Williams began), Cambridge and cultural materialism as a project. Education, itself politicized, means empowerment and emancipation. This requires (in Williams's own words, cited twice for emphasis) a questioning of 'any and every pronunciation of a singular or assembled authority'. In this reading Williams – so much an authority himself – becomes important because he was anti-authoritarian. Was he, then, a decentralist? To put an end to the hierarchical base and superstructure

concept in favour of a field of activity in which the critic may choose where to engage is decentralist. Williams's demand for the democratization of communications media – for 'very flexible and complex multi-way interactive modes' – is again decentralist. 'Community', as it originates in the 1968 claim that 'we begin to think where we live', shows a valuable preference for the local over the metropolitan. But this last example raises problems: is it possible to think the world out of Cambridge English or from rural Wales, and from those two places alone? Evidently not; and so we return to the question of Williams's insufficient interest in America.

America is a 'whole way of life' of such multitudinous variety (and, yes, 'complexity' – Williams always discovered complexity) that Cambridge and Wales appear, in that perspective, to offer insufficient experience from which to argue for change. Williams lived out of historically authenticated forms of socialist opposition, sharply different from the spontaneous and untheorized American political radicalism of the 1960s and early 1970s. 'America' provokes exactly the questions of complexity, variable experience, and difference-in-relation that Williams liked to pose; but an interrogation of 'America' risked very different answers from those provided by Cambridge and Wales. Higgins's emphasis on Cambridge English as a major determinant of Williams's thought simply draws attention to the limits of his experience. This matters because Williams gambled so much on who is speaking in criticism, and from where. Two places, let alone one, are not enough.

Compare Williams with another public intellectual, Noam Chomsky. Chomsky originated from New York in the late 1930s, his anarchism unimpeded by the youthful Stalinism that Williams engaged in at the same moment. Chomsky has been a consistent decentralist, but his lack of attachment to place makes him quite different from Williams. Politically, Chomsky communicates directly and without fuss; Williams privileges communication in an educative effort generously intended for others yet self-regarding in its laborious formulations. Chomsky is known to write thousands of letters every year in an international communicative effort embracing politics and linguistics. Williams, by contrast, was inaccessible by phone, avoided his students when he could, and mostly wrote terse postcards. His interpretation of politics was shrewd and often profound, given in interviews in which he would, very typically, *adjudicate upon* the propositions put to him. How much more exhilarating, and consequently more politically empowering and effective, are Chomsky's books, pamphlets and articles – recently, his recategorization of the United States as a rogue state has been telling – which are offered with an involving irony rather than with a distancing authority.

Chomsky's attention to the state's misuse of language for political purposes is something that Williams recognized in his 1971 essay 'Literature

and Sociology', but the argument of that piece typically returns upon *English* thinkers. Chomsky's clear speech has been excluded as far as is practicable by the North American media; but Williams's mode of expression, 'a language and a manner of the monograph and the rostrum', as he put it in words not intended as self-criticism, has tended to exclude itself.

Can he be rescued from this situation? John Higgins argues cautiously for the future of cultural materialism in the Williams mode and implies that some kind of movement is possible. This runs against his tendency to explain later developments in Williams's thought in terms of what happened earlier. For example, the real focus of *Modern Tragedy* (1966) is, unsurprisingly, its opposition to Cambridge English. Later, cultural materialism is said to have emerged against the same opponent. When Williams develops a critique of modernism, Cambridge English turns out to have been an interfering modernist formation all along.

The fault of the New Conformist intellectuals – most of them from Cambridge, naturally – was to repeat the 'bourgeois dissidence' that Williams attributed to Orwell back in 1971, and which he would later interpret, very strangely, as lending a strand to the right-wing politics of a rampant Thatcherism. 'It is clear enough', writes Higgins, 'that the new conformism only repeated the main tenets of the old conformism that Williams had spent his life refuting'. In this account, Williams is engaged in a repetition compulsion whose target – Cambridge English – is always the same and yet always changing. By 1983 this entity is said scarcely to exist at all – although until that date it had the uncanny ability to metamorphose itself into every enemy required for the development of Williams's thinking.

Raymond Williams needed Cambridge in order to be a critic. This is not Higgins's conclusion, but it is inescapable. It is because he needed Cambridge that he did not need America, least of all a complex America that might explode the Welsh legacy of 'a whole way of life', and finally demonstrate the impossibility of a common culture. I make these points despite Williams's claim in *Marxism and Literature* (1977) that he had at last found a home in an international context. If that were so, why so late? Why, after himself fighting in a war against fascism that was won by the Soviet Union and the United States, did he turn so quickly and so fully towards English culture (drama excepted)? Why was Europe so difficult to reach again, and America beyond reach altogether? And why, for so long, suffer Cambridge, that place and those people? No wonder the arguments of the last essays are distorted by anger.

Dissatisfaction with Williams's formulations now extends into recent accounts of modernism by American critics. The most significant of these is David Kadlec's attempt to recover anarchist thought for modernism, but before confronting that argument I want to show that a displacement of

Williams's *Politics of Modernism* precedes another important discussion, Michael North's close reading of the cultural work of the year 1922. *Reading 1922* (1999) has the subtitle *A Return to the Scene of the Modern*, which suggests that such a return is necessary because the primary (if not primal) scene has yet to be adequately accounted for. In practice this means that Williams did not get it right. North quotes Williams from 'Language and the Avant-Garde': 'It is a very striking feature of many Modernist and avant-garde movements that they were not only located in the large metropolitan centres, but that so many of their members were immigrants into these centres, where in some new ways all were stranger.' North's strategy is to take this ponderous generalization at face value, and to attach to it examples of a kind that Williams never quite intended. He selects three 'strangers'. During 1922, the Londoner Charlie Chaplin was in Los Angeles, the Jamaican writer Claude McKay was in New York, and D.H. Lawrence moved through Italy, Sri Lanka (Ceylon) and Australia, and on to New Mexico. As Lawrence's itinerary suggests, not all the places sought out were metropolitan centres; if one declines to regard 1920s Los Angeles as a cultural centre of the kind Williams evidently had in mind, only New York fulfils the criteria. Since we can doubt that Joyce's Dublin, Trieste or Zurich were metropolitan centres, and can ask whether Pound's Rapallo was anything more than a place to set up a typewriter, we are left with T.S. Eliot and Ezra Pound in London, Wittgenstein in Cambridge, and – later in Paris – Joyce enjoying his prominence among a community of admiring American expatriates for whom French culture meant little, as indeed it meant little to Joyce himself. If this amounts to a social formation, it is one that lacks confirmatory bulk. Only in New York was there an essential and mediated relationship between the culture and the newcomer – and we have already observed that Williams's view of New York conveys a certain animus.

North shows that a global migration of an opposite kind occurred when colonial administrators, anthropologists and itinerant journalists spread out and away from the European centres to which they owed allegiance. (We might also consider Paul Gauguin and R.L. Stevenson in the nineteenth century – and the direction Ambrose Bierce was travelling when he got lost in Mexico.) This doubling of cultural movement suggests, as Michael North is surely correct to argue, that there existed a reflexive oscillation between the local and the global, a complexity which Williams's 'immigration to the metropolis' argument is unable to accommodate. North goes on to make the telling point that by 1922 network broadcasting, through the BBC, drew upon sources in Europe for both speech and music, and in doing so established a new community of listeners. Out of this eventually develops that virtual community of the media among which we now live and which (North gently hints) is amenable neither to Williams's terminology nor to that

preference for the local through which he attempts to disable cosmopolitan modernism. 'Mediation', North writes, 'has become an ordinary, inescapable fact of existence', and we have learned to mediate between the parochial and the global with ease, and in ways that by no means necessarily admit political complacency. Nor is the media the whole of what we daily mediate with such skill. In this analysis the arguments of Williams's *Television: Technology and Cultural Form* – the book that he wrote in America – are surpassed by the realization that he has failed to recognize both sides of a two-way relationship.

My remarks about the relation of centre to periphery, or rather about the reflexive action between the local and the global, are intended, at this point as in my discussion of Higgins, to bring Williams within the ambit of the term 'decentralism'. One judgement upon a desired or actual socialism must be of its capacity to enact a balance between centralized control of the economy and civic freedom. In another perspective, decentralization may he seen to work as either a component in socialism, or as an intrinsic requirement of anarchism. When we come to David Kadlec's important discussion of the place occupied by anarchism in both classic American modernism and in its more recent extension towards African-American writing, we find that his starting point is, again, a rejection of Raymond Williams. Kadlec makes a space for anarchism by refusing to accept Williams's version of dominant, residual and emergent forces in politics and culture. This denial of Williams's authority in a field that he defined so influentially significantly revises the basis of our understanding of modernity. Because large-scale political anarchism failed, it barely achieved emergent form; but it nevertheless persisted as a force in political thought and cultural activity throughout the latter part of the nineteenth century and into the first two decades of the twentieth. Anarchism may be regarded as a residual formation in that it was not obliterated as a political possibility until the Russian Revolution of 1917 and its aftermath, in which anarchists were tried and eliminated. Williams, however, does not recognize anarchism at all, concerned as he was during the 1970s to locate himself as a world-encompassing Cambridge Marxist who would strategically 'forget' his grounding in a local Welsh socialism (see the introduction to *Marxism and Literature*).

According to Kadlec, it is precisely because political radicalism has been understood to include only socialist and collectivist forms that anarchism has been treated as a variant of individualism, one that is assimilated to bourgeois individualism by poststructuralist thinking. Anarchism has been, and remains for many, the wrong radicalism. Kadlec believes it was a strength of anarchism that it could not be appropriated by dominant formations, as (for example) the early British Labour Party was co-opted by Edwardian liberalism. Many intellectuals preferred syndicalism, direct action,

local organization and an anticollectivist position over the abstracting collectivism of socialism, even though a consequence was the absence of any progressive theory. Kadlec's discussion of Ezra Pound's imagism and the *Cantos* identifies a double descent towards the ideogrammatic method, through Pound's idiosyncratic interest in Major C.H. Douglas's social credit theories from 1919 onwards, and the earlier influence of Proudhon arising from the radical community in London before the First World War. The second of these fulfils Williams's definition of the metropolitan formation, in that it combined politicians, writers, artists and feminists. The far from desirable post-war outcome is specified by Kadlec: 'What this new poetic genesis suggests is that fascism and institutionalized anti-Semitism can be elaborated from an economic approach with roots in both progressive [politics] and radical anarchist politics.' Here, 'progressive' means socialist, whilst 'radical' attaches to anarchism; and it is the economic content of Pound's thought that skews his thinking. Kadlec continues: 'By fastening rhetorical and monetary hardness too directly to a politics that forbids difference and play' – socialism is meant – 'contemporary critics have managed to overlook one of modern literature's more unsettling narratives' (87).

It is not primarily difference and play that bring together Kadlec's chosen authors, who are Pound, Joyce, William Carlos Williams, Marianne Moore and Zora Neale Hurston. The pervasive presence of anarchism in these writers, however diluted in particular instances, sets up a strong argument about absent or refused origins, the consequence of anarchist opposition to all beginnings, origins and principles. This allows Kadlec to argue that these writers share an antifoundationalist impulse, by which is meant a rejection of the view that beliefs require support from other beliefs in order to count as knowledge. In philosophy this creates the problem of distinguishing between beliefs that are epistemically justified, and those that are not. In literature, it appears, the modernist text validates itself as an object of knowledge by virtue of its structure as language (an argument whose evident tautology has not prevented its widespread acceptance by literary critics).

Kadlec explores the two anarchisms most significant for modernism: the individualist, egotistical thought of Max Stirner, and the mutualist, relational and ethical theories of Pierre-Joseph Proudhon. From Stirner's *The Ego and His Own* (1844; trans. 1907) he derives a second important principle, that the adoption of Stirner's nominalism led to the conscious rejection of such abstracting terms as 'Race' and 'Woman' by his English-reading interpreters after 1907. Nominalism rejects abstracting universals in favour of discourse about familiar concrete particulars, a discourse which when used outside philosophy may be understood to generate the texts of modernist poetry and fiction (if in forms of language that are far from being familiar.)

According to Kadlec, and to a number of recent writers presently or formerly attached to the University of Chicago, Stirner's philosophy was mediated by Dora Marsden, through her magazines *The Freewoman*, *The New Freewornan* and *The Egoist* between 1911 and about 1914. It was by this route, and in Marsden's correspondence, that his ideas reached Pound and Joyce. Kadlec provides better documentation of this possibility than have some critics, but I remain sceptical as to whether Marsden's impact was more than to confirm an already existing interest. It is not known when Joyce read Stirner, and I am not convinced that Joyce needed Marsden to introduce him to *The Ego and His Own*. (Kadlec mentions that Joyce owned Paul Elzbacher's *Anarchism*, which quotes extensively from Stirner; but Joyce did not buy that book until early in 1914, by which time the story of the 'egoist' Stephen Dedalus was being serialized by the *Egoist*, which took its name from Stirner.)

Marsden did assist Pound in relating the question of the condition of the arts to economics before the First World War, and probably influenced his move towards antistatist views of an anarchistic kind. This is a significant adjustment to our view of Pound's development, in that it brings his interest in economics forward from what has been thought to be its beginnings in 1919 and 1920, to the Imagist and Vorticist period immediately before the war. On the other hand, we have to recognize that while Marsden's thinking was influential, her own prose style was diffuse and wearying, so that it is not out of her writing that Imagist precision or Joycean stylistic multiplicity can have emerged. Further, since the culture/economics axis was to prove fatal for the enterprise of the *Cantos*, so the heavy responsibility previously attributed to Douglas, and to Pound's right-wing populism, will now be transferred to Marsden's egoist or individualist theories. Marsden was already worrying about usury in January 1913, and may have been anti-Semitic (though that is played down here). She was at first attracted by Proudhon, but had rejected him by late 1913 on the grounds that his key assertion, 'property is theft', was moralistic. Marsden, according to Kadlec, instead found empowerment in theft itself! This is a possible reading of Stirner, who wrote: 'Since the state is the "lordship of law", its hierarchy, it follows that the egoist, in all cases where *his* advantage runs against the state's, can satisfy himself only by crime.' There is surely a complicating irony here, however; Stirner's primary meaning is that the concept of crime creates the state: 'Without crime no state.' This indicates some of the difficulties in applying an idealizing philosophy.

Stirner advocated a new and disturbing form of possession – disturbing because it was so inclusive and so immoral, or non-moral: 'And it is only as this unique I that I take everything for my own.... I do not develop man, nor as man, but, as I, I develop – myself.' Stirner urges the ego's need to

possess the world as its own in an act of mental appropriation. The interest of such philosophical impossibilism lies in the arguments that precede this outrageous but altogether conceivable proposition. As for the texts of modernism, such a conception of appropriation suits the writer who wishes to create and possess a world in language. If Dublin is that world for Joyce, we must recognize that in *Ulysses* the egoistic Stephen enters the community of that city, and is inserted into triadic structures that modify the egoism of *A Portrait*. And *Ulysses*, we recall, was largely written in the non-metropolitan city of Zurich – whatever Stoppard's play may say otherwise.

In Kadlec's restructuring of modernism, one expects Proudhon to represent community, as against Stirner, who stands for individualism. To a degree, this is what occurs, although it is Proudhon's critique of money that is foregrounded in the discussion of Pound. In 1935 – late, in terms of this discussion – Pound wrote that 'Proudhon will be found somewhere in the foundations of all contemporary economic thought that has life in it', which Kadlec interprets as an acknowledgement of Pound's 'fundamentally Proudhonian' economic leanings, at the same time as he recognizes the poet as confused. My reading would be harsher; that the Pound of the middle and late 1930s was engaged in incoherent justifications of Italian Fascism, sometimes conducted at the borders of sanity, that cannot be safely situated in the main line of anarchist discussion.

In this respect Pound differs from the other American authors discussed here, whom Kadlec shows, most interestingly, to have derived decentralist and relational thinking from the pragmatism of William James and (to a lesser extent) of John Dewey. This occurred in Marianne Moore's case through university teaching contacts which preserved a philosophical basis whilst allowing its modification for the purposes of writing poetry. C.S. Peirce's impersonal and rigorously scientific version of pragmatism does not feature here, but the left-pragmatism of James does, because it permitted the examination of effects upon particular groups or individuals – 'What works for me' – through which subjectivity enters. Raymond Williams's entry for 'Pragmatic' in *Keywords* suggests a preference for Peirce, because he emphasizes the difficulty of ascertaining facts, 'and thus on knowledge and language as problematic', a phrase which neatly encapsulates the tendency of much of Williams's later work. Philosophers describe Peirce's position as 'right pragmatism' because it is indifferent to persons. Williams quotes Peirce as saying 'Our conception of the effects is the whole of the conception of the object', and describes this as a method of understanding, whereas James's pragmatism is a method of justification. This carries the clear implication that the former is preferable to the latter. Kadlec, working from the latter position, which I understand to mean a justification of the subject, successfully establishes a route from decentralizing politics, into

interpersonal structures of relationship, and towards a revaluation of subjectivity in modernist poetry and fiction. Along this route we encounter an anarcho-feminism which places Moore differently – the specific context is her use of eugenic theory – and which rescues Hurston from the Harlem Renaissance label. The appearance of American pragmatism alongside European anarchism is not intended to introduce a fresh instance of American dominance of the scene, but to establish a European-American form of cultural pluralism that is neither hierarchical in itself nor advocates hierarchical structures. If I understand Kadlec's conclusions correctly, the wider purpose of this strategy is to enable modernism to be discussed within postmodern contexts themselves predicated upon cultural pluralism, inclusiveness, relationality and the dissolution of hierarchies. It would be easy to slip from that relationship to one in which modernism became a sub-category of the postmodern, a move preventable only by vigorously maintaining the 'mosaic' of Kadlec's title against the intrusion of structured definitions.

Where does this leave Raymond Williams? Does the anarchist context add anything to the questioning of 'any and every pronunciation of a singular or assembled authority' which he asked for? The anarchist presence in modernism suggests that such a questioning was already happening; Williams, for all his stress upon context, specificity and formation, did not identify it, and his account of modernism is consequently incomplete. A defender of Williams would no doubt point out that an anarchism which originates in Max Stirner is invalidated by its radical subjectivity and its philosophical idealism, and that there is a great deal to be said for Marx and Engels's outraged and devastating critique of 'Saint Max' in *The German Ideology*. Equally decisively, anarchist antifoundationalism repudiates substantial tracts of history and knowledge. Theoretical objections, however, do not repudiate an actual formation. From about 1900, the political context of modernism was one in which syndicalism seemed to have as much potential as Marxism, at least until 1917. We now know that certain modernist texts generated new subjectivities by explicit reference to Proudhon and to Stirner. This conjunction means that the question of modernism is again open.

Alan Munton

Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution.*
Broadview, 2001. 400 pp. £10.99/$15.95 pb. ISBN 1 55111 402 X.

Raymond Williams, *The Raymond Williams Reader*, ed. John Higgins.
Blackwell, 2001. 304 pp. £16.99/$26.95 pb. ISBN 0 631 213112 X.

The first half of 2001 has seen two important reprintings of Raymond Williams texts. The Canadian press Broadview has just reprinted *The Long Revolution* in its 'Encore' series, which was launched only last year. Broadview here reprints the Pelican edition of 1975, which includes Williams's additional preface and notes. Like other Broadview texts, this edition is well made and would stand up to sustained classroom use. Broadview plans to reprint Williams's *Modern Tragedy* in the same series this coming autumn.

John Higgins's *Raymond Williams Reader* also takes a 'broad view' of Williams's oeuvre, including both influential essays and chapters from books. Higgins's selections join the well known with the near fugitive. I was particularly happy to see 'Culture is Ordinary' as the opening selection, and share the editor's sense that it makes for a good entrance into Williams's work. I was also pleased to see the text from Williams's radio broadcast of 1967, 'Literature and Rural Society' (later reprinted in the BBC periodical, *The Listener*). The book is organized chronologically, and Higgins's introduction offers a guided tour through the course of Raymond Williams's intellectual career. The book includes no selections from *Keywords*, but then that book remains easy to get and comparatively inexpensive. Nor does it include anything from Williams's novels – though I find that decision entirely understandable. But what it does do exceptionally well is provide an introduction to the principal struggles of Williams's career, and to the enduring richness of his work.

Michael Coyle

About the Authors

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Associate Professor of English at Colgate University, **Michael Coyle** serves on the board of directors of the T.S. Eliot Society and is founding president of the Modernist Studies Association. His interest in Raymond Williams's importance to contemporary modernist studies goes back some time: the question informed his 1996 article 'Organizing Organicism: J.A. Hobson and the *Interregnum* of Raymond Williams', in *English Literature in Transition 1880–1920* (January 1994), as well as his book, *Ezra Pound, Popular Genres, and the Discourse of Culture* (1995). He has recently published on the radio broadcasts of T.S. Eliot, and edited the collection *Ezra Pound and African American Modernism* (2001). He currently is working on the critical discourses that have mediated popular music and jazz, 1925–65, a book that will be organized around several keywords.

John Higgins is an Associate Professor in English at the University of Cape Town. He is the author of *Raymond Williams: Literature, Marxism and Cultural Materialism* (Routledge 1999; winner of the UCT Book Award 2000) and the editor of *The Raymond Williams Reader* (Blackwell 2001). He is also the founding editor of the South African journal *Pretexts: Literary and Cultural Studies*. For his services to literature and culture in South Africa, the Cape Tercentenary Foundation gave him their Award of Excellence for the year 2000.

Visiting lecturer at the University of Illinois, Urbana–Champaign, **Aaron Jaffe** is currently preparing for publication *High Regard: The Work of Modernism in an Age of Celebrity*: a book that examines the modes and mechanisms of modernist reputation, arguing that modernism's vaunted difficulty served as a conscious hedge against the ubiquity of celebrity culture and entrenched the two-tiered system of literary labour and publicity that remains one of modernism's most enduring cultural legacies. He is working on a new book project concerning literary *engagement*, cosmopolitanism and the cultural scene of the 1930s.

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Diana Wallace is Lecturer in English at the University of Glamorgan. Her research interests are in twentieth-century women's writing and her first book, *Sisters and Rivals in British Women's Fiction 1914–39* (Macmillan 2000) includes a chapter on May Sinclair. She has also contributed chapters to Maroula Joannou, ed., *Women Writers of the 1930s* (Edinburgh University Press 1999) and Marion Shaw, ed., *An Introduction to Women's Writing from the Middle Ages to the Present Day* (Prentice Hall 1998).

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