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A Grammar of Uncertainty : Two Working-Class Voices of the 1950s.

"Nearly three quarters of the population is working class..."

Ralph Samuel, 'The Deference Voter' : *New Left Review*, Jan. 1960; p10.

Seán Matthews

- I -

> "Almost all our politicians, and most of the voting public, had their ideas formed in a different age, and it has not been easy for them to adjust, to learn a new part for which there is no script and for which the words and actions must be improvised. It is this that has given such an air of irrelevance to so much of British politics since 1945, that has made people less sure of what ought to be done, and what can be done..."

N.Mackenzie, 'After the Stalemate State' (1958). [1]

Mackenzie's words are taken from his introduction to a series of essays brought together to represent diverse disciplinary and intellectual arguments about the social and political interventions necessary for the Left in the late fifties - the title of the collection was *Conviction*. The writers engaged specifically with the need for improvisation, for the process of adjustment and of learning, which Mackenzie isolated here. *Conviction* thus emerged as broad assessment of social changes which had taken place since the 1939-45 war. By 1945, examination of the living conditions of the working class majority of the population had become central to the political agenda. The momentum gathering throughout the thirties in documentary film movements, the work of social critics such as George Orwell, and the efforts of the Mass-Observation group, had built up pressure which resulted in the Beveridge Report on social service provision (1942), focusing concern on the welfare of the lower classes.[2] The resulting Welfare State legislation, and the affluence generated by virtually full employment, had done much to improve working class material circumstances in the subsequent decade. As a result, the focus of the attention given to working class life altered. Although material well being evidently remained a concern, new priorities involved extensive study of the experience of living in working class communities. Sociological and ethnographic work tracing patterns of life in various areas was complemented by new directions in historical studies,

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1 N.Mackenzie, ed., *Conviction* (London: MacGibben and Kee, 1958): subsequent references to 'Culture is Ordinary' and 'Speaking to each other', the Williams and Hoggart essays, are taken from here.

2 See Stephen G.Jones, *The British Labour movement and Film, 1918-1939* (London: Routledge,1987) for the impact of the cinema on social politics. Orwell's *The Road to Wigan Pier* (London,1937) was the influential locus classicus of his social critique. Angus Calder's essay, 'Mass-Observation, 1937-49' in M.Bulmer, ed., *Essays on the History of British Sociological Research* (Cambridge: CUP, 1985) provides a brief account of that organisation and also A.H.Halsey's discussion of the post-war sociologists, 'Provincials and Professionals: the British post-war sociologists'. Paul Addison, *The Road to 1945* (London: Quartet, 1975) provides a good account of wartime debate of social services legislation.

developing analyses of "class consciousness" and the evolution of coherent working class identities.[3] "Through every medium and discourse - novels, plays, autobiography, political analysis, film - it was suddenly vital, especially on the left, to write about the working class".[4] Above all, writers from the working class came increasingly to prominence, which changed fundamentally the perspectives and presuppositions of "writing about the working class": they were no longer objects for study, but the subjects and writers of their experience.

As a part of my examination of the intellectual constituents of this historical moment, I concentrate here on the evolution of a "new part", the un-scripted voice which Mackenzie suggested might account for majority experience, might articulate "what ought to be done". To illustrate a general pattern of concerns in the period, I trace the parallel, interlocking, experiences of two such working class contributors to *Conviction*, Raymond Williams and Richard Hoggart. In the first section I describe the similarities of early careers (to 1962), drawing out the close correspondence of their concerns, and in the second section I consider the troubled articulation, the "grammar of uncertainty" of their critical voices.

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Hoggart and Williams were already, by the time of *Conviction*, linked as representative new voices within the arena of literary, cultural and social study. Indeed, the prevalent conjunction of these three terms within discussion was evidence of a shift in the parameters of debate with which they were closely associated. The first "meeting" of the two men had been in 1948, in the journal *Adult Education*, where Williams responded to Hoggart's short article on literature classes: Hoggart later recalled that this exchange "put us in touch".[5] Although there was nothing distinctively "oppositional" or "working class" about these pieces, they indicated a concern to generate an approach to the adult literature course, and by extension to literature generally, more appropriate to their pupils than intra-mural university precedents, which predominantly derived from Oxbridge models. From this point, their work gradually became known in educational and political circles as they published material through the fifties in journals. From these articles came Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*, published in 1957, which was closely followed by Williams's *Culture and Society*.[6] It was already symptomatic of a reflex of editorial policy that F.W.Bateson should have asked Williams to review Hoggart's book for *Essays in Criticism*, in 1957, the

3 See, for examples of ethnographic and sociological investigations, N.Dennis, F.Henriques and C.Slaughter, *Coal is Our Life* (London: Eyre and Spottiswoode, 1956), or M.Young and P.Willmott, *Family and Kinship in East London* (London: Routledge, 1957). For an early "class consciousness"article: E.J.Hobsbaum, 'The Machine Breakers' in *Past and Present 1* (1952), i. The journal itself was committed to developing such new approaches in history. See also, E.P.Thompson *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Gollancz, 1963). Also my survey of this material in, 'The strange History of Concept Man and a metaphor which defined in the last instance'.

4 A.Sinfield, *Literature, Politics and Culture in Postwar Britain* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989)p253. S.Laing, *Representations of Working-Class Life 1957-64* (London: Macmillan, 1986), also provides a good survey of this considerable range of material.

5 R.Hoggart, 'Some Notes on Aim and Method in University Tutorial Classes', *Adult Education* XX, 4 (June, 1948), pp187-93; R.Williams, 'A Note on Mr Hoggart's Appendices', *Adult Education* XXl, 2(Dec. 1948), pp96-9. Also, R.Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning* (Oxford: OUP, 1991, c1990) p126.

6 R.Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1958. First published, Chatto &Windus, 1957). R.Williams, *Culture and*

first meeting of the two men where their status as "representative" was an express concern.[7] Shortly afterwards Williams developed his views on Hoggart's book in 'Working Class Culture', an article forming part of a symposium on the work in a new journal, of which Williams was himself an editor, *Universities and Left Review.*

After *Conviction*, in 1958, the two met next on August Bank holiday, 1959, accompanied by a tape-recorder. The transcript of their conversation was published as 'Working Class Attitudes' in the first edition of the *New Left Review*, which had superceded the *Universities and Left Review.*[9] As the titles of these articles indicated, it was for an articulation of a specific, distinct, working class experience that Hoggart and Williams were known, and the value of their talk about working class culture and attitudes was related to their embodiment of them: they could talk about working class attitudes, they also had them. This association as representatives was further emphasized by the sharing of key rôles in two major cultural events of 1960. Their presentations to the NUT's extraordinary conference on 'Popular Culture and Personal Responsibility', where Hoggart's paper, 'The quality of cultural life in mass society', was circulated in advance as the keynote document, and Williams's talk, 'The growth of communications in modern society', formed the opening session, were interrupted by invitations to attend the Old Bailey as expert witnesses for the defence of Penguin Books, in the obscenity trial provoked by the latter's publication of D.H.Lawrence's *Lady Chatterley's Lover.*[10]

Throughout this period they continued to teach adult education classes, Hoggart from Hull and Williams from Oxford, regularly producing curriculum and teaching guides.[11] They both contributed to the WEA journal *Highway*, and to the professional journals *Adult Education* and *Tutors' Bulletin.* P.Hobsbaum, also an adult education teacher through the period, recalled in 1965, "Leavis's *Culture and Environment* was my great stand-by, to be supplemented, when they came out, by Hoggart's *Uses of Literacy* and Williams's *Culture and Society*".[12] Sir Roy Shaw inevitably linked these "two considerable figures who taught literature in adult education in the 1940s and 1950s - Richard Hoggart in the North and

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Society 1780-1950 (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961. First published, Chatto & Windus, 1958).

7 R.Williams, 'Fiction and the writing public': *Essays in Criticism* VII; 4 (1957), pp422-8. Reprinted, *What I came to say* (London: Hutchinson Radius, 1989) pp24-9.

8 R.Williams, 'Working Class Culture', *Universities and Left Review* (Summer, 1957) pp29-32.

9 R.Hoggart & R.Williams, 'Working Class Attitudes', *New Left Review* 1 (Jan-Feb., 1 960) pp26-30.

10 Proceedings of the conference published as *Popular Culture and Personal Responsibility* (London: NUT, 1961). See also S.Laing's excellent discussion, *Representations of the English Working Class*, ch.7. For an edited transcript of the trial, C.D.Rolph, ed., *The Trial of Lady Chatterley* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961). J.Sutherland, 'Novels and Erotic Love', *Critical Quarterly* (Vol.33, no.2 - Summer, 1991), p8ff, contains an interesting discussion of why Penguin Books, rather than ACE (the first publisher of a paperback *Lady Chatterley's Lover*), was prosecuted for obscenity.

11 For discussion of Williams's publications in this area, see J.McIlroy, 'Teacher, Critic, Explorer', in W.J.Morgan & P.Preston, eds., *Raymond Williams : Politics, Education, Letters* (London: Macmillan, 1993) ppl 5-42. See also the collection of Hoggart's work in the area, edited by W.E.Styler for the National Institute of Adult Education: R.Hoggart, *Teaching Literature* (London: NIAE, 1963).

12 P.Hobsbaum, 'Teaching Poetry to Adult Classes' (*Adult Education* XXXV111, 2, March 1965, p331. Cited in McIlroy. The relations with F.R.Leavis are drawn out further below, p12.

Raymond Williams in the South".[13] In many ways this has become the general currency of cultural memory: Terry Eagleton, for instance, remarked recently that at the time of his arrival in Cambridge, "I knew of Williams's work then only vaguely, mainly through association with Richard Hoggart and the so-called Angry Young Men of the 1950s".[14]

It would be wrong, however, to suggest that Williams and Hoggart were actively seeking to monopolize representation of the working class. Status and association placed them in the forefront of public debate, but were equally a source of unease. Whilst wanting to articulate and explain working class experience, they were uncertain both about the conventional or predetermined forms for such action, and about its effectiveness, though they both had also to support young, expanding families. Discussing the available voices for critical work, Williams pointed to the extent to which intellectuals, and those educated differently from the conventional learning of the majority (which for his generation extended little beyond the elementary school), were traditionally constrained to particular forms of address and experience:

> An isolated intellectual, or a rebel from his own class, too easily constructs, as his type of virtue, either the exile (the self-principled, proud opponent of a false society) or, worse, the vagrant (the despised and rejected non-conformist, who is seen as moral within a larger immorality).[15]

He had expressed this opinion strongly in his criticisms of Orwell and D.H.Lawrence in *Culture and Society*. He stressed that Orwell's "principal failure was inevitable" because he was a visitor to the working class: "He observed what was evident, the external factors, and only guessed at what was not evident, the inherent patterns of feeling".[16] Lawrence, by contrast, particularly in his early work, articulated directly these patterns of feeling, "his first social responses were those, not of a man observing the processes of industrialism, but of one caught in them".[17] The problems with Lawrence's later career, as he moved out and away from his original community, became a central motif of Williams's work. Williams struggled personally and intellectually, throughout his life, with the compulsion towards the experience of exile or vagrancy which he specified above, which seemed to be inscribed within success in education and in a bourgeois literary world.[18] The advantage, for Williams, for working class writers was

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13 Cited in McIlroy, p22. Shaw was of the same generation and background as the representative pair, and his career followed a similar pattern, particularly to Hoggart's, moving from "a (working-class)home almost devoid of any cultural influence" via adult education (as pupil and teacher) into "provincial academia" and,ultimately, the Secretary-Generalship of the Arts Council in the 1970s. See R.Shaw, *The Arts and The People* (London: Cape, 1987) where his discussions of "cultural policy" and their groundings reveal parallel experiences in the accession to "a voice", to articulacy, to those which I consider here.

14 T. Eagleton, ed., *Raymond Williams: Critical Perspectives* (Cambridge: Polity, 1989) pl.

15 Hoggart & Williams, 'Working Class Culture' p30.

16 R. Williams, *Culture and Society* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963 c1958) pp282-3.

17 R.Williams, *Culture and Society* p202.

18 See J.Wallace, 'Language, Nature and the Politics of Materialism: Raymond Williams and D.H.Lawrence' in W.J.Morgan and P.Preston, *Raymond Williams*. Also my 'Rotten and Rotting Others' (*Studies in English Languge and Literature* 46, The English Languge and Literature Society, Kyushu Univerity, February 1996). Critics from within this predominant group, with its specifice ducational patterns (Public School, Oxbridge), even direct contemporaries to Hoggart and Williams, did not see any necessary conflict or strain in a working class writing: Graham Hough noted, in his account of Lawrence, that "from Elizabethan times intellectual ability and education, however acquired, have been a passport to the central stream of British culture... the upperbourgeoisie remains culturally

their personal experience of forms of community and feeling specific to the class: the immediate disadvantage was that the National Education, and dominant forms of writing, seemed traditionally to disregard, even positively reject, the value of that original, majority experience. The form of voice appropriate to the articulation of working class experience was thus inevitably problematised.

Hoggart reflected further on the same problem, arguing that in modern communications, "the stress goes on presentation... the replacement of virtue - the heart of what is being said, by virtuosity - the manner of saying it".[19] The formulation of this age-old opposition of medium and message, particularly with the moral overtone which echoed Williams's concern for the intellectual's "type of virtue" (see above), was not as clear cut, however, as Hoggart might have wished - as at a simple etymological level the shared origins of virtue and virtuosity indicated. Hoggart and Williams were notably articulate - hence their success - and thus an important and revealing element in their progress was the navigation of this primary tension in representation, between their experience and judgement ("the heart of what is being said"), and their voice and idiom (with its potential "virtuosity"), in a perpetual recasting of relations to prevalent forms. In the next section, I analyse the intricacies of their negotiation of this problem, which runs through all Williams's early work, and was particularly brought out in his meetings with Hoggart.

This tension is directly evident in the meanings of the term "representative": the sense at once of being archetypal, the exemplary likeness of the thing itself, but also standing for, or in place of, some other thing or person. Alongside this difficulty in the voice, the idiom of representation, Hoggart and Williams feared that too much stress on their working class status would lead to absorption, as token representatives, into the very social and political system against which, they felt, working class people must inevitably struggle. Williams explained this fear forcefully at the close of his discussion with Hoggart:

> You're absolutely right about the system permitting, even needing, pseudo-non-conformists. In the last eighteen months or so I've felt a situation like they set up in the colonies, where they have members from native affairs, who are not going to influence decisions, but who are encouraged, even petted, to show their robes every so often. Being cast for this role of member for working class culture is just as insulting and useless as that.[20]

For what follows, it is worth noting that Williams here, and typically, associated the "working class culture" with non-conformist attitudes towards "Them", the culturally dominant. At the same time he insisted on the essentially indigenous nature, the status of the working class as authentic natives and creators of society, in contradistinction to forms of political and economic domination which were alien, and inimical, to them. In *Conviction*, Williams asserted:

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dominant because it makes itself accessible to all who have anything to bring to it, and thus attracts to itself all real outside talent", *The Dark Sun* (Harmondsworth:Pelican, 1961, c1956), p32. Hough fails to acknowledge that the criteria of "real talent", determined by what the upper bourgeoisie might want outsiders "to bring to it" necessarily disqualifies much material premised in different values and forms.

19 Hoggart & Williams, 'Working Class Attitudes' p30.

20 ibid.

> I come from an old place; if a man tells me that his family came over with the Normans, I say, 'Yes, how interesting; and are you liking it here ?' Oldness is relative, and many 'immemorial' English traditions were invented, just like that, in the nineteenth century.[21]

Hoggart described a similar sense of defining consciousness through opposition in his chapter, 'Them and Us' in *The Uses of Literacy.*[22]

The motif of the association of Hoggart and Williams, then, was woven distinctively throughout the central patterns of cultural debate in the 1950s - and into the subsequent record of that period. They maintained, though, that they had little personal contact: "Such relations as there are come out of the general situation, and not from our knowing each other".[23] An understanding of the "general situation" emerges from considering how their negotiations of a representative identity met, and diverged, and how the terms, or voice, of this representation developed: as Hoggart insisted, explaining his method of attending to the recurrent patterns and idioms of working class communication, in *The Uses of Literacy*, "Speech will indicate a great deal".[24] The primary evidence for this understanding is necessarily in the writings of Hoggart and Williams, and my method involves a close attention to the language and form of their statements. Evidently this largely ignores the distinct patterns of working class dialects and spoken language, but my focus here is more upon how the integration of working class sensibility with the dominant intellectual cultural forms happened, and writing was the primary location of this process. Similarly, although the period I consider here involved massive expansion of the television audience, and ended with pressure for regulation of broadcasting and communications within which Hoggart, as a member of the Pilkington Committee, and Williams, most notably in his book, *Communications*, were involved, their interventions were primarily of a written kind.[25] It was therefore above all in their practice of writing that the formal difficulties of "voice" were engaged, even though, as Williams consistently argued, "It's a question whether high culture is compatible with ordinary values", because the fine traditions of working class culture were not primarily "literary" in this sense, but were rather "institutions" like trades unions:

> There is a distinct working class way of life, which I for one value - not only because I was bred in it, for I now, in certain respects, live differently. I think this way of life, with its emphases of neighbourhood, mutual obligation and common betterment, as expressed in the great working class institutions, is in fact the best basis for any future British society. As for the arts and learning, they are in a real sense a national inheritance, which is, or should be, available to everyone.[26]

The uneasy generality of the last sentence did not mask the cultural tension he was describing. "Arts and learning" remained distinct, a different "emphasis" involving leisure, and priorities beyond the quotidian

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21 R. Williams, 'Culture is Ordinary', p88.

22 R. Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy*, ch. 3.

23 Hoggart & Williams, 'Working Class Attitudes' p26.

24 R. Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* p20.

25 R.Williams, *Communications* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968, c1962).

26 ibid., p26: and R. Williams, 'Culture is Ordinary' p80.

experience of "neighbourhood, mutual obligation and common betterment".

The "close reading" of the work of Hoggart and Williams which follows is further premised on the commitment which they both maintained through this period, in principle and practice, to the scrutiny of language as a "symbolic form", as a mediation of direct, or "first" experience. The tensions inherent in writing the experience of the working class invite, even require, such attention. Hoggart, in his inaugural address as Professor at Birmingham University, in 1963, stressed his understanding of language as in "complex and active relationship with individual experience and with the life of society... a way of using language towards people is a way of seeing people, of making assumptions about them".[27] In an essay on Orwell, he argued that "his style was a function of his search for truth" and that such prose, above all, must be subjected to critical analysis: "The apparently clear run of the prose can, like that of Matthew Arnold's at times, be deceptive".[28] Williams eventually developed an antipathy to the Cambridge "Practical Criticism" form of reading, which he associated with a refusal of *Scrutiny* writers to engage with political questions, but his work also consistently employed close verbal analysis: for instance, he too drew attention to the paradoxes in Orwell - "he was a notable critic of abuse of language, who himself practised certain of its major and typical abuses".[29] Williams and Hoggart are closely examined here, therefore, in their negotiation of their roles as representative writers of working class origin.

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> "I am not blaming Hoggart for this variety, but since the condition is general, I am trying to insist on the distinctions we shall all have to make, if the voice of this generation is to come clear and true. We are suffering, obviously, from the decay and disrepute of the realistic novel, which for our purposes (since we are, and know ourselves to be, individuals within society) ought clearly to be revived. Sound critical work can be done; sound social observation and analysis of ideas. Yet I do not see how, in the end, this particular world of fact and feeling can be adequately mediated, except in these more traditionally imaginative terms. Of course it cannot

27 R.Hoggart, *Schools of English and Contemporary Society* (Birmingham University, 1963) p3, p9.Incidentally, it was in this piece that Hoggart called for more critical attention to "the rise of reputations"(p14), to the ways in which cultural figures were formed, "offering my own current reputation to be dissected in this way, as a minor specimen".

28 R.Hoggart, 'Introduction' in G.Orwell, *The Road to Wiqan Pier* (London: Heinemann, 1965) p.xxiii. Reprinted in *Speaking to Each Other* vol. II , p111 ff. In a later essay on Orwell, discussing Bernard Crick's biography, he reiterated that "our language reveals us more than almost any of our ways of expression": 'Orwell and the art of biography' (1980), in R.Hoggart, *An English Temper* (London: Chatto, 1981) p116.

29 R. Williams, *Culture and Society*, p277. The early enthusiasm for Practical Criticism can be seen in R.Williams, *Reading and Criticism* (London: Frederick Muller, 1950), the surprising evidence of his educational practice is well discussed in McIlroy's essay. The terms of the later rejection were most stark in R.Williams, *Politics and Letters* (London: Verso, 1979) p66. Williams's most developed, close attention to the development of language was the much later, *Keywords : A vocabulary of Culture and Society* (London: Fontana, 1975), the sub-title indicating a continuity across time which Williams felt was apparent., and which he emphasized in the introduction, stressing that the book came from a file built up over twenty years of attention to language since *Culture and Society*, an attention itself generated by the feeling he first felt on retum to Cambridge after the war that "the fact is, they just don't speak the same language" (p9).

> be George Eliot, again, not even Lawrence, though the roots are in both. But there, I think, is the direction, and there... this solemn, earnest, heavy voice, that one hears, at the crises, in Hoggart, is a voice to listen to and to welcome..[30]

These lines are taken from a review by Raymond Williams of Richard Hoggart's *The Uses of Literacy*, which appeared in the journal *Essays in Criticism*, in the autumn of 1957. The article as a whole provides an index to tensions which gradually disrupted and redetermined the notion of English Studies in the nineteen-fifties, tensions with which Hoggart and Williams were typically associated. Even in this short passage many elements of a pattern in cultural debate may be isolated. Firstly, the period was marked by a persistent anxiety over the tone and position of the critical voice. Across this paragraph, Williams's voice is remarkably fragmented, slipping successively from active first person singular into a coercive first person plural ("I am trying to insist on the distinctions we shall all have to make.."), and thus to objectified third person ("this voice... one hears.."), via the imperative and passive moods ("the realistic novel... ought to be revived"; "critical work can be done"). Elsewhere in the article he completes the set of pronouns, noting of working-class mores that "you recognize in yourself the ties that bind you".[31] In a review giving such close attention to the strategies of Hoggart's prose, it is significant that the location of authorial position, the grounding of the critic's own prose, seems so uncertain. The repeated shifts imply a radical insecurity which runs counter to the series of confident judgements presented in the article. These judgements, in strong contrast, decisively located Williams simultaneously as forerunner, insisting that the language be made ready for "the voice of this generation"; as authentic audience, hearing "the earnest, heavy voice" occasionally in Hoggart; and, ultimately, in the act of writing, as confident authorial "I" or representative "we", speaking for "this generation". The tension within the prose, this contradiction between the sure evaluations and the insecure authority of the articulation, enacted a grammar of uncertainty, which, ironically and symptomatically, still more properly placed Williams as "the voice", caught in a confusion of representation which precisely reproduced a wider concern over authority and form in cultural criticism of the period.

Debate over authority and form in cultural criticism was the explicit topic of Williams's discussion in the passage. The article as a whole considered the "mediation", the representation, of a "particular world of fact and feeling". Specifically, it was the world of working-class experience with which *The Uses of Literacy* was concerned, "feelings and situation which... are in fact relatively new in writing". He read Hoggart's book as innovative but nevertheless representative of "the current mainstream of English writing, and the one which is likely to broaden and deepen".[32] Williams insisted that this was the "vital contemporary mainstream". The repetition of "mainstream" had a dual significance. First, taking up the contemporary critical agitation around a new and "provincial" movement in writing which had gained currency through the 1950s, Williams was programmatically emphasising that work such as Hoggart's was the priority, rather than that writing promoted either from metropolitan or Leavisian "centres".[33] Second,

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30 R. Williams 'Fiction and the Writing Public', p29.

31 ibid. p26.

32 ibid, p26; p25.

33 I discuss the issue of "central" and "provincial" question more fully in 'Notes towards the definition of a journal: the case of *Essays in Criticism*'.

standing against minority and élitist or avant-garde conceptions of "vital" work, he underlined his commitment to a culture which would more fully relate to and represent majority, working class experience - a commitment clear in the title, 'Culture is Ordinary', of his *Conviction* essay, and in the arguments for a "common culture" in the closing chapter of *Culture and Society.* In substantiating this "mainstream" Williams argued that Hoggart was representative of a "general group", a "group of mixed critics", who shared the "distinctive world of writers of Hoggart's generation and background".[34] *The Uses of Literacy* was symptomatic of the "new complex of feeling", which he described in broad terms as stretching from Orwell's novels and journalism, via Leavisite cultural and literary criticism, into the poetic modes of the *New Lines* collection and the novels of Amis, Braine and Wain.[35] These writers were linked because they were criticized by academics, literary purists, and metropolitan arbiters of taste for excessive attention in their writing to mundane, provincial, or working-class experience, "getting distracted by life and politics and the British Council and other irrelevancies which disturb the sweet clear line of exposition".[36] Nevertheless, the vagueness and incoherence of such a description indicated the difficulty of characterizing so substantial and disparate a movement in critical attention over time, where the senses both of general shift and of collective effort were in play. This difficulty, at the level of Williams's struggle towards its conceptualisation and also in terms of his lived experience of such a movement, was particularly revealing of the pattern of concerns here under examination.

Williams's attention to Hoggart and this "new complex of feeling" related closely to his work in *Culture and Society,* which was published shortly after 'Fiction and the Writing Public', in 1958. In *Culture and Society,* Williams traced the course of a modern tradition of social and cultural criticism from Cobbett and Burke to Orwell. His original definition of the parameters and precedents in the range of such work firmly established both the idea of such a tradition and his academic reputation.[37] At the same time, the polemical nature of the work, which involved much contradiction and refutation of the dominant figures of the tradition he was establishing, was crucial to Williams's fight for his own voice and articulacy. Throughout the book he related the voices of cultural criticism to the social origins of the particular speakers: both Cobbett and D.H.Lawrence, for instance, were more sympathetic to Williams because the tone, range and authenticity of their writings on the issues generated by industrialisation and urbanisation were enhanced by their formative experience of working class community.

Hoggart was similarly received by Williams, representing a movement beyond Orwell, the final figure in *Culture and Society.* Williams stressed the value of Hoggart's work in terms which reproduced his preference for D.H.Lawrence (see above p4), noting that Hoggart was "more reliable on all of this than

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34 ibid, p25; p26; p27; p25.

35 For example, relations with Q.D.Leavis were stressed in Williams's title, which took up that of her book *Fiction and the Reading Public* (London: Chatto, 1932). The shift from the original - that such a public should now be writing rather than reading - was the burden of his article, the movement he was discussing.

36 R. Williams, 'Fiction and the Writing Public', p25.

37 The effective establishment of this tradition paralleled the influential formulation of the 'Great Tradition' of novels, established by F.R. Leavis in the book of that name, in its rapid absorption as standard account.

Orwell; he writes, not as a visitor, but as a native". Williams associated himself intimately with Hoggart's effort: the publication of *The Uses of Literacy*, the troubled articulation of its particular voice, was a stage in "the coming to relative power and relative justice of your own people, whom you could not if you tried desert".[38] Once again, however, the movement of Williams's prose betrayed that grammar of uncertainty: He recognised Hoggart's authenticity, endorsing the general lines of his account because its emphases in particular forms of family, community and work experience essentially paralleled his own experience, but despite Williams's conviction that those origins bestowed the crucial value on the writing, rather than ground his opinion there he turned to appeal to the unknown reader for confirmation and support ("You would..."). Readers of *Essays in Criticism*, which appeared primarily to have addressed educated young provincial academics and schoolteachers, would only to a limited extent have been drawn from the same "people" as Williams, the majority being of a middle-class and grammar/public school background - an identity less coherent than that of the "majority" with whom Williams was asserting solidarity, and an identity deeply implicated in those dominant, alien cultural voices against which Williams was struggling.[39] To appeal to the reader in this way, therefore, even if only as a conventional rhetorical device, indicated again the uncertainty in Williams's own voice which paralleled the confusion, the insecurity in the grasp of the material figured through formal and linguistic tension, which he recognised in Hoggart.

The insufficiency and insecurity of Williams's developing critical voice, which corresponded to the "confusion" he met in Hoggart's writing, was further evident in the immaturity of his conceptual framework, most clearly revealed in the term "complex of feeling". The difficulty here was a function of the largely untheoretical tenor of criticism at the time - an inadequacy which the struggle to articulacy of the new voice with which Williams and Hoggart were associated did much to reveal and overcome.[40] In this review of *The Uses of Literacy*, Williams refered, as I noted above, to the general "complex of feeling" of which he felt Hoggart was representative. This concept was a prototype of the influential "structure of feeling" which Williams was beginning to develop as a critical tool. Here, Williams isolated a "confusion of forms" in that broad range of contemporary writing which took in Orwell, F.R.Leavis, the *New Lines* poets and some contemporary novelists. These writings were the formal elaborations of the "complex of critical habit, recording ability and imaginative impulse", the "particular complex of interest", which effectively constituted the "new complex of feeling". The "complex of feeling" thus denoted simply a confluence of authorial intentions which Williams first isolated, then specified as common habits across a range of apparently disparate writers. In this limited use the concept seemed to move little beyond familiar terms such as the "spirit of the age". Only the juxtaposition of imaginative or experiential categories

38 ibid, p26.

39 Again, this issue is more fully discussed in 'Notes towards the definition of a journal: the case of *Essays in Criticism*'.

40 It is a current critical commonplace to disdain the supposed theoretical naivete of the 1950s -not least in deriding F.R.Leavis's explicit refusal to engage with such questions - but the actual process through which "Theory" became an explict concern, or by which theoretical concerns were mediated in a putative time B.T (Before Theory), has nowhere been examined. That examination is a particular function of my doctoral thesis.

("imaginative impulse", "interest", "feeling"), with means or modes of articulation ("critical habit", "recording ability"), pointed towards the significant conceptual development which was taking place, but which became fully realised only in *Marxism and Literature*, in 1977.[41] 'Fiction and the Writing Public', with its emphasis on the necessary new voice for "this generation", was concerned with the disjuncture between the voice, the available idiom of representation, and the majority or mainstream of experience which required expression. In the polemical programme for a "common culture" which formed the conclusion of *Culture and Society*, the same concern was evident:

> Yet we are coming to realise that our vocabulary, the language we use to inquire into or negotiate our actions, is no secondary factor, but a practical and radical element in itself. To take a meaning from experience, to try to make it active, is in fact our process of growth. Some of these meanings we receive and recreate. Others we must make for ourselves, and try to communicate. The human crisis is always a crisis of understanding: what we genuinely understand we can do.[42]

The location of the important difficulty was again in the gap between experience and articulation: the medium of language or idiom was a part of the problem, not the unproblematic means of resolution. This formulation negotiated Williams's refusal of both the tradition of cultural criticism he had delineated in *Culture and Society* (which "gave us the greater part of our language and manner of approach" but which failed to correlate with "immediate experience"), and the available Marxist models of false consciousness (with their implication in a system both theoretically inadequate due to the emphasis on economic determinism and politically and morally unpalatable because of association with Stalinism and the suppression of the Hungarian uprising).[43] However, it was primarily in debate subsequent to *Culture and Society* that the labour of precision proceeded - as the Introduction to *The Long Revolution*, published in 1961, made clear.

For Raymond Williams *The Uses of Literacy* was, then, a representative case. It indicated the vital accession to articulacy of new voices grounded in majority experience; "What this group manages to get said, in its own accents, has a major directive importance".[44] However, he was troubled by the stuttering of this new voice, and his own articulation was hesitant and unsure. The terms of his disapproval, and of their shared difficulties, were supplied in the title of Hoggart's book: the "voice" of the working class was the central concern, but discussion was displaced into debate on "literacy": this was (and remains) a crucially multivalent term. It involved, at one level, Hoggart's damning analysis of the expanding mass media, where he questioned the commercial exploitation of the broadening reading public, particularly the working-class "for" whom most of this provision was made - his original title had been *The Abuses of*

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41 Perhaps the most precise (and most cited) definition came in *Politics and Letters*, in 1979, "The particular location of a structure of feeling is the endless comparison which must occur in the process of conciousness between the articulated and the lived" (p168). However, the terms by this point were polemically established as Williams's particular language through the querelles of the preceeding twenty years- see Peter Widdowson, 'Why structure feeling?" in *News from Nowhere*.6, February, 1989, pp50-7.

42 R. Wlliams, *Culture and Society* p323.

43 In their 'Working Class Attitudes' discussion Hoggart and Williams emphasised this geopolitical moment, along with the Suez crisis, as a strong influence on their attitudes and positions in *The Uses of Literacy* and *Culture and Society*.

44 R. Williams, 'Fiction and the Writing Public' p25.

Literacy.[45] However, the examination of this commercial expansion necessarily invited attention to its audience: here, the simple "acquaintance with letters" / "able to read" definition of literacy slipped inevitably in discussion to an evaluation of the quality of the practice of reading - involving "educated" and "lettered" in the sense of "well-read", able to engage at a certain critical level with written texts.[46]

Hoggart and Williams were forcefully clear in their work as to their point of divergence from Q.D.Leavis and much general contemporary criticism. There, the condemnation of the mass media was taken, through a false equation, as a straight reflection of the quality of mind of those at whom it is directed, the consumers.[47] This problem was inscribed in the ambiguity of "reading" - signalled most obviously in Q.D.Leavis's title, *Fiction and the Reading Public* - where "practice of reading" was coterminous with "reading matter". "Quality of reading" thus further compounded otherwise distinct meanings. This slippage also frequently involved a consideration of the reading public as a homogeneous mass, disregarding the specificities of individual experience: for example,

> Inane triviality sterilize(s) the emotions and standardize(s) the outlook and attitudes of millions of people... And these, it is necessary to remind ourselves, are the educated and literate descendants of the people who produced the folk song and the folk tale, who built the parish churches and nourished Bunyan. (my italics)[48]

This misapprehension, and resultant misrepresentation, of a "mass" audience was typically associated with an élitist conception of art and literature: the retreat of the educated few to preserve and transmit cultural values from an inimical context. At an extreme, it became anti-democratic - associating cultural decline with the irritating accession to an inadequate literacy of a clamouring majority. Williams repeated in his two articles on *The Uses of Literacy* and in the conclusion of *Culture and Society* a reference to Burke's fear of the "irruption of the swinish multitude" as an example of this antipathy towards the provision of education for the working class.[49]

It was against such a reactionary tradition of cultural and political thought which Williams had felt constrained to write *Culture and Society*, as he explained to Hoggart;

> Getting the tradition right was getting myself right, and that meant changing both myself and the usual version of the tradition. I think this is one of the problems we're both conscious of: moving out of a working class home into an academic curriculum, absorbing it first and then, later, trying to get the two experiences into relation.[50]

45 R.Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning* (Oxford: OUP, 1991, c1990) p141.

46 Much of the agitation around "literacy" is in the OED, but Williams teased out some of the implications in the entry on "literature" in *Keywords*.

47 See Williams on "the false equation' in 'Culture is Ordinary' p86. See, for a practical example of the attitude, Hoggart's discussion of the workings of the Pilkington Committee, *An Imagined Life* (Oxford: OUP, 1993, c1992) ch.3.

48 G.H.Bantock, 'The social and intellectual background', which opened the final volume of thePenguin Guide to English Literature - Boris Ford, ed., *The Modern Age* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963, c 1961) p38. See also Stuart Laing's excellent discussion of this conventional approach in ch.7, specifically concerned with the terms of criticism of popular culture at this point, in *Representations of the Working-Class 1957-64*.

49 R. Williams, 'Fiction and the Writing Public' p26; 'Working Class Culture'; *Culture and Society* p313.

50 Hoggart & Williams, 'Working Class Attitudes' p26.

The problem of the unknown audience was thus inverted: Williams's experience of moving from that "reading public" into the "writing public", even at the level of an academic essay, emphasized for him a disjuncture between "the articulated and the lived" (to use the later formulation of "structure of feeling"): his experience contradicted the easy equation of reading matter and practice in refusal of the prevalent terms of excellence or centrality and denial that exploitative mass-produced writing simply reflected crass mass-taste. His collation and reappraisal of the texts of *Culture and Society* was thus precisely a negotiation of the structure of feeling, premised on the belief that a new voice was attainable, being the product of working class experience working within, through, and against a ready tradition of articulate cultural criticism. The community of values from which originated the "we" of the nineteenth century was no longer available, nor desired, but the valuable force of the moral and political engagement - the language of representatives for, if not of, the working class - was an enabling precedent. Williams's movement away from that language and voice was evident in his comment in 'Fiction and the Writing Public' that Hoggart "writes at times in the terms of Matthew Arnold, though he is not Arnold nor was meant to be".[51] Hoggart also had argued, in *Conviction*, that the voice of the late-nineteenth century cultural critics could no longer be used, given such an altered society;

> [The] sureness with which prospects were assessed and expressed - often in statements which are now classics of their kind, or in new social agencies... (was) given vigour by the more plain relation, to both authors and audience, between evident needs and assured or assumed values.[52]

In 'Working Class Attitudes' he agreed with Williams that the relation with the working class background was problematised through accession to Higher Education and, interestingly, defered to Williams's formulations, suggesting that "you were surer sooner than I was of your relation to your working class background". Again, despite the knowledge that the origins were the determining, authenticating factor, the articulation was caught in uncertainty - an uncertainty which Williams may have masked with his firm evaluations and placings, but which was nevertheless undercutting the very judgements he was asserting.

The important point here was the nature of Williams's judgement in his two articles on *The Uses of Literacy*. His "insistence" on the priority of the realistic novel, evident in the opening quotation, was at the heart of his difficulties with Hoggart's articulation of working class life. This attitude was grounded in an association of the representation, the writing, of the cultural and spiritual life of the working class specifically with the terms of representation of "literature", a distinct category within writing, with its own formal genres and class overtones. Despite Williams's important emphasis on the institutions of community as the essence of working class culture, and his repeated insistence of the "whole way of life" definition of the national culture in opposition to the limiting "body of intellectual and imaginative work",

51 R. Williams, 'Fiction and the writing public' p26. Note, however, that whilst refusing that Arnoldian tone, Williams here indicated clearly his implication in a parallel and related paradigm, signalling his firm residual attachment to the modes of "Literature", through the knowing allusion to T.S.Eliot's 'The Lovesong of J. Alfred Prufrock' (whom Williams was not, nor meant to be). This is discussed further overleaf.

52 R. Hoggart, 'Speaking to each other' p122.

the parameters of Williams's conception of "literature" appeared tightly formed from within the "Great Tradition" of English literature. This tradition had largely been formulated by F.R.Leavis, for whom the "realistic novel" was also, in a movement from an earlier focus on poetry, the supreme form, the writing which most "adequately mediated" the writer's experience.[53] Leavis insisted, that "a study of human nature is a study of social human nature, and the psychologist, sociologist and social historian aren't in it compared with the great novelists". Leavis, Hoggart later recalled, "is said to have remarked that it [*The Uses of Literacy*] had some value but 'he should have written a novel'".[54] Hoggart intimated to Williams, in 'Working Class Attitudes', that he was initially drawn towards such a form, but did not find it fitted the experience:

> I was thinking about doing something quite simple in scope and size - a series of critical essays on popular literature... After this, a strange thing happened... things I'd been writing since 1946 (bits of a novel and some unconnected descriptive pieces) began to fall into place in the new book. (my italics)[55]

Williams's commitment to the novel tradition, by contrast, was continually evident in his writing practice. Firstly, his own professional work on the novel, in critical writing and teaching, was at this time closely formed by Leavis's priorities. Secondly, he was working on several novels, most notably *Border Country*, making substantive reappraisals of the realist form, further attempts to ensure that "the voice of this generation is to come clear and true". The prescriptive preference for the realistic novel which he stressed in his review was activated by his doubts over the "mixed form" of The *Uses of Literacy* - the "variety" for which he was, nevertheless, "not blaming" Hoggart (see the opening quotation to this section). He argued that Hoggart was caught in a hesitation "between fiction or autobiography on the one hand, and sociology on the other".[56] It was these generic distinctions upon which he was insisting, suggesting that "Hoggart has encountered literary problems - which I do not think we can say he has solved - that are of exceptional contemporary interest".[57] The naturalness of the self-evident "distinctions" of form or genre was matched by the unproblematic location of the problems as "literary" - a further slide within that

53 F.R.Leavis, *'Anna Karenina': thought and significance in a great creative work* (1961) in *'Anna Karenina' and other essays* (London: Chatto, 1967) p15. This period included Leavis's two major works on the novel *The Great Tradition* (London: Chatto, 1948), and *D.H.Lawrence : Novelist* (London: Chatto, 1955). In the fifties, Ian Watt was more questioning of the structure of Leavis's realist novel tradition, as Williams became in the sixties, but in the manner of their approach, the acceptance of Leavis's focus, they indicated the accepted centrality of the novel form - and Leavis's sense of its shape and terms - in mediation of experience. See, I.Watt, *The Rise of the Novel* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1963, c1957), and R.Williams, *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* (London: Hogarth Press, 1984, c1970) - the book was a collation of his lectures from the1960s. For an account of Watt's influence, often underplayed elsewhere, see also C.B.Cox, *The Great Betrayal* (London: Chapmans, 1992) p79. Hoggart's work was altogether less centrally focussed on the novel - his first publication having been a study of Auden, and his classes concentrating more on poetry, see also the discussion below, along with *Teaching Literature* (London: National Institute of Adult Education, 1963), a collection of his early essays on teaching, and his notes on 'The Working Tutor', culled from his contemporaneous class notes.

54 R.Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning* p.206.

55 Hoggart & Williams, 'Working Class Attitudes' p26. The novel doesn't appear to be mentioned anywhere else (certainly not in his autobiography), although he did publish a somewhat sexist short story, 'Summer School' in the *Tutor's Bulletin of Adult Education*, March 1948 which provoked a series of letters.

56 R. Williams, 'Fiction and the Writing Public' p28.

57 ibid., p25.

multivalent "literacy" of Hoggart's title. Similarly, in the interstice between "I do not think.." and "we can say..." there is further evidence of the uncertain coercion of Williams's judgement. The confidence of the nineteenth century voice, rooted in its cultural community of shared assumptions and tradition of writing, was - as Williams had demonstrated - not available to him, but neither was the working class experience on which he was basing much of his revaluation of the cultural tradition immediately compatible with the aesthetic priorities he was maintaining.

The cultural achievements of "great institutions" and of distinctive communal values, as Williams frequently argued, was at the core of his conception of the working class, and his perplexed relation to actual working class writing at this stage, in Hardy or Lawrence as well as Hoggart, indicated the problems of integrating this other Great Tradition. It was some time before Williams had the confidence to retrieve and revaluate a working class tradition of writing, in his later attention to Welsh writers or to Tressell, and he remained ironically hesitant of its literary value.[58] At this time he refused to equate the "common culture" with "the small amount of 'proletarian' writing and art which exists" and, also in line with F.R.Leavis, accepted that "the traditional popular culture of England was, if not annihilated, at least fragmented and weakened by the dislocations of the Industrial Revolution".[59]

The generic distinctions, upon which Williams insisted in 'Fiction and the Writing Public', isolated a confusion of projects in Hoggart's book:

> First, the professional (literary) critic, who gets through his work with a really intelligent mastery; second, the social observer, who has a fine, quick, descriptive talent which lends a background and depth to the critic's observations; then third, the man, the writer, seriously committed to the recall and analysis of first experience, seriously concerned with personal as well as social relationships, and with their interaction; involved, finally, in imaginative creation, as he draws figures from the world he has experienced and attempts to set them in a theme.[60]

The book was a symptom, for Williams, of a doubt about those "traditionally imaginative terms" to which he was attached, which he felt would best bring this material and these manners together: but at this point he "does not see how" there might be other solutions. The commitment to critical judgement was partly a function of the context and nature of this meeting - *Essays in Criticism* was a journal predominantly concerned with literary criticism, primarily projected towards a young academic and school-teacher audience: the long book review was expected to attempt some "placing" of the work. However, in Williams's eagerness to find fine distinctions of genre, and to insist on boundaries of genre and discipline, any positive or original force for the future in the particular form of Hoggart's book was refused, Williams's ear was only attuned to certain familiar accents.

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58 See, for instance, 'Region and Class in the novel' and 'The ragged-arsed philanthropists' in R.Williams, *Writing in Society* (London: Verso, 1983).

59 R. Williams, *Culture and Society* p307.

60 R. Williams, 'Fiction and the Writing Public. p28-9.

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The 'Lady Chatterley trial' seemed to concentrate and focus these issues of voice in cultural criticism. Not only was this a trial of a work broadly, if problematically, acknowledged to be "literature" (although difficulties in this status were part of the trial's concern); it also involved D.H.Lawrence, a figure whose life and work generated intense contemporary controversy, most importantly because of his iconic value as a working-class writer; these conflicts began in the late forties and were a staple of literary debate in this period. Furthermore, the ill-fated obscenity prosecution foundered because of the desperate difficulties of legislating for aesthetic standards, of asserting common 'literary' values. Although the principle of a jury trial reflected the terms of the Obscene Publications Act, 1959 - that a text was to be judged with regard to its likely effects on "the public good", its reception by a putative common reader - the mass of evidence, under section IV of the Act, was brought by the defence in the form of "specialist" witnesses, legitimated primarily by virtue of their academic qualifications (over half of them Oxbridge educated, with a further - distinct - quarter in academic posts), or their eminence as "public figures" whom the jury might be expected to recognize.[61] This implicit division into classes of literacy was further stretched by Penguin Books' editor and commentator of the trial, C.H. Rolph, in his description of the swearing in of the jurors, underlining the judgemental force of the term:

> Five of them read with some difficulty or hesitancy, a point of obvious relevance in a trial of this particular kind; but Mr Gardiner (defence counsel) made no further challenges, thinking perhaps that he could do with five 'ordinary men and women' as jurors - but no more. The other seven were manifestly literate and educated persons.[62]

The division of the "ordinary" from the "literate and educated" reflected not only presumption that a specific confidence in declamatory reading of a short text at a high-profile public event might be an adequate indication of an individual's educational experience or sensitivity to literature, but also the more general point that the "ordinary" classes were, almost by definition, not "educated".[63] Rolph also emphasized the force of the "specialist" evidence: referring to the thoughts of these "ordinary" folk as they discussed their verdict, he noted:

> It is rather difficult to see, in the case of a man who knows himself to have no literary judgement, what else he can do; and futile to tell such jurymen, at least, that 'you alone are the

61 The opening legal arguments covered much of the history and form of the obscenity law: see C.H.Rolph, ed., *The Trial of Lady Chatterley* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1961) p9-38.

62 ibid., p6.

63 The crude presumption of this position, and limiting dominant definition of education, was concisely criticized elsewhere by Williams, considering the status of George Eliot, Thomas Hardy and D.H.Lawrence as "autodidacts": "The flat patronage of 'autodidact' can then be related to only one fact: that none of the three was in the pattern of boarding-school and Oxbridge which in the late-nineteenth century came to be regarded not simply as education but as education itself: to have missed that circuit was to have missed being 'educated' at all." *The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence* p95-6. The debate around status and form in education was a central concern of the adult education movement in the post-war period.

64 ibid., p7.

judges' as if the opinions of the experts were a kind of side-show put on to relieve the tedium.[64]

Nevertheless, the way in which the credentials of Williams and Hoggart were established differed from the main body of luminaries. They were established as specialists in court, partly no doubt as an appeal to the "ordinary" jurors, as legitimate representatives of the working class. The nature of this representation involved two elements. Firstly, although no other witnesses were asked about their class background,[65] Hoggart was questioned by Mr. Hutchinson, counsel for the defence on just that matter;

> 'I want to pass now to the four letter words. You told the Jury yesterday that you were educated at an elementary school. Where was it ?' - 'Leeds.'
> 'How did you start your life ?' - 'I was born into the working-class and I was orphaned at the age of eight and brought up by my grandmother.'
> 'What is your view of the genuineness and necessity in this book of the four-letter words in the mouth of Mellors ?'[66]

Hutchinson's movement was thus from raising "the four letter words", to asking about schooling and class, to the request for judgement. Hoggart's origins, scholarship to the local Grammar School, and entry to Leeds University had been drawn out already on the previous day, but counsel wanted to reiterate them as grounding for the testimony. It was thus the working-class background which conferred an exemplary authenticity on the voice.

The second element of the representative status here was the experience of Hoggart and Williams in adult education. Mr. Hutchinson, questioning Williams, made specific reference to "classes which you take, and... the kind of people who attend them".[67] He had been introduced as "Staff Tutor in English at the Oxford University Extra-Mural Delegation, [and] WEA [Workers' Educational Association] lecturer...". His testimony was thus grounded on his function as a teacher in adult and continuing education, for here he would gain knowledge of the ordinary people, those having no literary judgement, and would be able to give an account of the likely effects upon them of reading *Lady Chatterley's Lover.* Hoggart had moved into internal teaching in 1959, after thirteen years in adult education based at Hull University, but his position was similarly at issue: Mr. Griffith-Jones, for the prosecution, asked Hoggart to refrain from answering as if he were lecturing at "Leicester University".[68] As Hoggart recalled, "He saw himself as cross-examining someone who taught at a provincial and therefore inconsiderable place, for inconsiderable people".[69] The marginal and peripatetic nature of the adult education work, despite the expansion in the immediate post-war period, was of a piece with that basic class experience of exclusion

65 In Rolph's account, only one of the seven women was asked about her academic qualifications.

66 ibid., p98.

67 ibid., p135. Presumably these kinds of people had "no literary judgement".

68 ibid., p100.

69 R.Hoggart, *An Imagined Life* p56.

70 Crude examples of this dominant "centre" were everywhere in the period: for instance, the establishment of new universities along the expensive residential, even occasionally collegiate, lines of Oxbridge; the preference for Oxbridge degrees in the appointment of teaching officers atthose universities (see R.Hoggart, *A Sort of Clowning*, pp73/4); and the predominance of models of education derived from these sources (Williams was so encouraged by one adult education class, in Eastbourne in 1955, that he wrote the following report:

from the cultural "centre", the community of the "literate and educated".[70] Adult education teachers were nevertheless employed, for the most part, by university extra-mural departments, liaising with the WEA and other similar groups to provide classes: they were thus employed along the faultline, being neither "proper" academics nor authentic working class, that was such a determinant feature in the articulation of this critical voice with which Hoggart and Williams were so strongly associated.[71] As Williams remarked much later, "In the end you cannot be financed and academically controlled by those kinds of universities (Oxford), and carry out a programme of education of the working class".[72] The "free-floating concept of a disinterested intelligence" to which "those kinds of universities" were committed was "a fantasy".

Adult education in the immediately post-war period expanded rapidly and eagerly. Typical of returning servicemen with experience of the Army education corps and socialist commitment, in 1946 Hoggart and Williams both moved into extra-mural departments, at Hull and Oxford respectively - even starting on the same annual salary, £400.[73] Within the expansion, however, there was considerable uncertainty around the terms and aims of adult education provision. Briefly, the movement was divided between those committed to developing the political consciousness and will of the working class, through a particularly practical and technical education in such matters as industrial relations, international affairs, and economics; and those arguing for a broader, liberal or humane ideal of education involving the development of critical intelligence towards a wide "quality of life".[74] The concern for a practical, political education frequently combined with a deep suspicion of minority, dominant culture and its terms, which were complicit with a whole class, political structure of oppression: to learn those terms was to risk incorporation, the blunting of the radical will -

> Arnold had often spoken of the need for softening and humanizing influence to be exerted on the masses in Britain, to wean them from class-conflict and intellectual turmoil, and had offered poetry as a means to that end. The introduction of literary study among the middle and working

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"I have waited several years for a class which was really ready to work at university level and I want to take this opportunity and use it extensively... I intend in the next session to raise the level of work to that of the special paper on Elizabethan literature in Pt.I of the Cambridge English Tripos": cited in Mcllroy, 'Teacher, Critic,Explorer' p28).

71 This ignorance of adult education, often combined with the patronizing nod towards its noble value, has generally been effectively reproduced in critical attention to developments in cultural criticism of this period. Acknowledgement of the considerable importance which Hoggart and Williams attached to both the project and its processes has nevertheless been followed by only isolated critical attention to the matter - and that, inevitably, from within contemporary adult education departments (notably, the excellent essays in *Raymond Williams : Politics, Education, Letters*). The difficulties and dangers of exaggerrating the influence of any context are evident, but in an account of the interaction of intellectual idioms with their complex historical moment such an attention to the quotidian site of intellectual activity, along with that given to other, more familiar, media of intellectual expression (such as journals), offers a valuable additionalperspective. The resources for such study are extensive - archives of contemporary classreports, curriculum plans and advisory pamphlets - and the material densely illustrative of much that is at issue here. In this nevertheless brief account this potential remains largely untapped.

72 R. Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with the New Left Review* (London: Verso, 1979)p82.

73 Salary information: (Hoggart) *A Sort of Clowning* p73, (Williams) R.Fieldhouse, 'Oxford andAdult Education' in *Raymond Williams: Politics, Education, Letters*, p47.

74 Typical of expressions of this division was R.H.Tawney's article, 'Education to meet the modern needs of Trade Unions' in *Highway*, vol.40, no.8; (June 1949).

75 C.Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848 -1932* (Oxford: OUP, 1983) p63. Baldick stressed the control factor rather

> classes through Mechanics Institutes, Working Men's Colleges, and extension lecturing was already taking place with this aim in mind.[75]

This dispute was mapped into the parallel concern for the altering constituency of the adult education class: there was a steady decline in attendance by manual workers, and a correlative increase in middle-class "leisure" students, provoking fears that the whole project was losing its original primary function.[76] The whole must be set, first, in the context of the pressure for ideological conformity in education associated with the outbreak of the Cold War, a pressure which was particularly strong in extra-mural departments - perceived as inherently radical because of their association with the WEA, even without the strong record of Communist sympathy which existed in the Oxford Extra-Mural department.[77] Secondly, and concurrently, this time saw the traditional drain of teachers to internal university departments (another indicator of the residual hierarchy of reward and office), exacerbated by the expansion of that provision and a squeeze, in the later fifties, on resources, as the atmosphere of "equality of educational opportunity" became a justification for cutting back on the marginal pursuit of "Further Education".

Within this changing and conflictual structure Williams and Hoggart were strongly committed to the political and moral necessity of continuing education, as a function in the coming to power and articulacy of the working class. Williams, following the Leavis and Thompson argument of *Culture and Environment* (one of his first series of classes had this title), argued that adult education must be, in part, the encouragement of defensive mechanisms against the mass media: "Most of our cultural institutions are in the hands of the speculators, interested not in the health and growth of society, but in the quick profits that can be made by exploiting inexperience".[78] This responded to the kind of challenge, premised in the sliding meanings and models which circulated in the term "literacy", of such assertions as that made at the NUT extraordinary conference, by Cecil King of Mirror Group Newspapers:

> It is only the people who conduct newspapers and similar organisations who have any idea quite how indifferent, quite how stupid, quite how uninterested in education of any kind the great bulk of the British Public are.[79]

Against this position, with its concomitant élitist model of culture, "Williams wanted to assert the democratic imperative of a discriminating working class".[80] Similarly, Hoggart argued that only nurture of critical faculties could reverse the degeneration of language, and with it quality of thought and life,

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than the self-determination element in his account.

76 J.McIlroy, 'Teacher, Critic, Explorer', pp17-20.

77 See R.Fieldhouse, *Adult Education and the Cold War* (Leeds University, 1985), and also 'Oxford and Adult Education'.

78 R.Williams, *Communications* (London: Chatto, 1961) p338: in the revised Penguin edition this reads, "the ordinary use of general communications is to get power or profit from the combination of people's needs and their inexperience" (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1968 c1966) p160. Williams maintained in the Preface that much of the work came out of adult education work and the NUT Popular Culture conference, and in the later edition noted the shift of context into internal university teaching as a narrowing of perspective to the point that he was unsure he was properly able to revise the book.

79 *Popular Culture and Personal Responsibility* p253.

80 J. McIlroy, 'Teacher, Critic, Explorer' p36.

81 R. Hoggart, *Schools of English and Contemporary Society* pp6-7; 'Speaking to Each Other' p129.

attendant on the inorganic or "processed" language, the "cracker motto hymning" of the mass produced culture.[81] The adult education class was important because "it may be the student's first experience of looking from outside at the conventional background of their age".[82] This defensive position was bound closely with the more offensive programme of making articulate the distinct working class voice. Williams's comment on the "inexperience" of the working class was paralleled by Hoggart's sense that "most of us can sense the complexities without necessarily being able to articulate them".[83]

The resolution of this repeated tension between working class experience and available idioms and voices was primarily attempted in Literature classes. However, the tone of uncertainty, even contradiction, was intensified by this context. Hoggart's commitment to the importance of Literature was more strongly grounded, within the teaching context, than in his other work, although his attitude towards the novel tradition remained sceptical. Discussing his experience of working class life, he argued that,

> ...Behind its appallingly dull appearances it had a quality of melodrama, of the histrionic and heroic which - so middle and upper class is our predominant literate culture - one rarely finds accurately reflected in, for example, the English novel during the last half-century.[84]

Although Literature was concerned with "our grasp of experience, and with what E.M.Forster calls 'the life by values'", and Hoggart was committed to this, the problem of "fit" remained: the most productive difficulty in the adult education classes was the consistent, sceptical attention of the student's "What has this to do with me ?".[85] At the same time, though, in his teaching handbook Hoggart could be more proscriptive. He noted that "what students lack is not usually brains or sensibility, but familiarity with our way of looking at and talking about literature".[86] Reading was never, then, an unproblematic absorption of the text, "literacy" was again trailing into particular forms and standards of reading. Furthermore, the division made explicit in "our way" could only partially be made good through the modifying collaboration of the discussion format.[87] The considerable literature of educational "theory" generated by the adult education classes in the period indicated the extent of these problems around the location of the teacher, the positioning of his voice as at once director, enabler, and learner: Hoggart noted, in this concern,

> We must accommodate ourselves to the life of the group... We must try to work almost entirely through questions, and through questions which do not, cumulatively, impose a pattern... We are not there to give them something so much as to bring out their own latent powers into play.[88]

Nevertheless, as he explained elsewhere, "Every enquiry contains within itself, must contain, a range of

82 R. Hoggart, *Teaching Literature* p15.

83 R. Hoggart, 'Speaking to Each Other' p127.

84 ibid., p131.

85 R. Hoggart, *Schools of English and Contemporary Society* (Birmingham: 1963) p4.

86 R. Hoggart, *Teaching Literature* p27.

87 Hoggart and Williams, in common with most tutors, devoted extensive reports and teaching pamphlets to the manner of "conducting" discussion classes: once more, the difficulties of attaining to Mackenzie's un-scripted voice were emphasized.

88 ibid., pl9.

89 R.Hoggart, *The Literary Imagination and the Study of Society* (Birmingham: Occasional Papers in Contemporary Cultural Studies, 3,

assumptions and concepts before it can begin to recognize 'facts' to collect".[89] Finally, despite the focus on discussion work and the collaborative process, the most traditional form of all, the written essay, still dominated proceedings. Hoggart stressed:

> I'm sure written work is the best single guide we have to the ability and needs of each student... But of course it is generally regarded as the bugbear of adult teaching, by tutors and students alike... At the right point for each student I believe the formal essay is irreplaceable... (Marking is) the closest personal contact we shall have with each student.[90]

The priority of written articulation over spoken could not be clearer, and yet the essay form was arguably even more alien than the nineteenth century novel, certainly it was equally distant from that "mixed form' of *The Uses of Literacy.* The adjustment towards the previously un-scripted voice, the new forms of articulation, was held as far off as ever.

Williams, early in his teaching career, ostensibly refused to view any inherent, internal contradictions to the reading process, of the sort found above between different "ways of seeing", suggesting that it was an essential, almost natural, act:

> A preoccupation with theories of literary judgement and value seems quite frequently to be of little relevance to the actual judgement of literature... often indeed one has seen a theoretical interest of this kind distract attention from literature.[91]

Although this may have been pedagogical polemic, since his other courses permitted some examination of collateral questions, in following this line, he argued simply that "Literature is the exact exposition of realised values. Reading extends, refines and co-ordinates sensibility. Criticism is reading of that order in its most conscious form".[92] He was, like Hoggart, wary of many elements in traditional university modes of teaching. Hoggart had contended, "I don't know whether anyone today regularly uses the one-hour lecture / one-hour discussion form, I rather hope not"; Williams was broadly in agreement: "The whole method of the class rests on discussion since there are no lectures but simply the reading and discussion of texts".[93] Nevertheless, he was equally committed to the production of written work in the essay form and, as noted above, he was pleased to find a class which could work within Cambridge University Tripos

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90 R. Hoggart, *Teaching Literature* p29.

91 R.Williams, *Reading and Criticism* (London: Muller, 1950) p25-6. Underlining Williams's commitment to the 'Leavisite' tradition, he was here echoing F.R. Leavis's blunt reponses to René Wellek when asked to "state his premises". For the Leavis/Wellek exchange see *Scrutiny* (Vol. V., March & June 1937): For a good account see J.Casey, *The Language of criticism* (London: Methuen,1966), which discussed the complex, and closed, system of Leavis's thought: "Leavis's key terms are so thickly interrelated that it is... misleading to talk about his 'premises'"(157); as a whole Leavis's approach "amounts to a rejection of certain presuppositions about 'facts' and 'emotions' which are very deeply ingrained in the empiricist tradition and which have generally dominated critical theory since Wordsworth" (177).

92 R.Williams, 'Syllabus of a Course of study in Literature' (Oxford University Archives, DES/RE). Cited in 'Teacher, Critic, Explorer' p23.

93 R. Hoggart, *Teaching Literature* p24: Oxford Course Reports, 'Bexhill', 1949-50 - cited in McIlroy, 'Teacher, Critic, Explorer' p26.

parameters. This pointed again to the continually perplexed relation of adult education to internal university paradigms of study. Hoggart and Williams were both aware of the freedom and relative autonomy of their positions but there were nevertheless inspections, curriculum meetings, and above all the dominant, ingrained disciplinary attitudes and assumptions which were nevertheless so profoundly in tension with their own sense of more appropriate forms and connections in study, but at such difficult levels of habit and training.

Teaching also existed as a crucial, professional maintenance of contact with the majority culture and the values it embodied, as the questioning at the "Lady Chatterley trial" clumsily indicated. Williams commented to Hoggart,

> It's a long effort to keep certain experiences, certain possibilities alive. Not even as a minority, though we have more time; this is our ordinary work. But because we know the human version we are offered is sterile, and that many people know this, and that to try to clarify it, try to act where we can, makes a life.[94]

In the opening to *The Uses of Literacy* Hoggart stressed that his account of working-class attitudes was "drawn mainly from experience in the urban North, from a childhood during the twenties and thirties and an almost continuous if somewhat different kind of contact since then".[95] This "different kind of contact" was the adult education class. Quite apart from the distinct principles of engagement in adult education discussed above, which had a political edge absent from the ostensibly "disinterested" ethos of the traditional centres of learning, this professional context determined a revision and modification of the cultural priorities and assumptions the internal university system had offered, from below.[96] Williams stressed, in *Conviction*, "I have the honour to work for an organisation through which, quite practically, working men amended the English university curriculum. It is now as it was then: the defect is not is what is in, but what is out".[97] In the establishment of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham Hoggart, above all, tried to alter the emphases of institutional English Studies.[98] In his Inaugural Lecture as Professor of English, having outlined his programme for a "mixed form" of English studies M.A., developing beyond the B.A. training with its concentration on Literature, Hoggart anticipated the inevitable criticisms: "Someone is bound to be thinking that all this is a long way from literary studies and literary criticism". He went on:

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94 Hoggart & Williams, 'Working Class Attitudes' p31.

95 R.Hoggart, *The Uses of Literacy* pl 9.

96 The Arnoldian term had a long and controversial life, and ideal programmes for the future of university education were thick on the ground: the Robbins Report on expansion was published in 1963. Nevertheless, the political origins of most adult education work were more clear-cut than the more opaque, neutral / natural terms of the traditional centres of learning.

97 R. Williams 'Culture is Ordinary' p.88. Williams was referring to the tradition of nineteenth century education in Mechanics' Institutes which began the shift towards English Studies, as opposed to the dominant Classical model. See, for an account, C. Baldick, *The Social Mission of English Criticism 1848 -1932* ch.3 'A Civilizing Subject'.

98 For Hoggart's account of the foundation of the Centre involving his negotiations with the vice-chancellor at Birmingham for his professorial post, see *An Imagined Life* p77.

> Most subject boundaries are categories of convenience and some of the best growing points occur where there is a friction between two disciplines, since from that friction a new subject is sometimes born.[99]

The "new subject", along with the Open University emphases on multi-media educational possibilities, was a formal recognition of the new voice, the new emphasis which Hoggart and Williams were moving towards from the uncertain conjuncture of their experience of working class life and the dominant educational and aesthetic forms.

A final, particular rôle of the adult education class, in the process of adjustment which Hoggart and Williams experienced, was in extending and altering their sense of the common reader, the informed audience to which their work might be directed. Hoggart argued in *Conviction* that,

> One of the best fruits of the considerable educational and cultural changes of the last few decades has been the increase in the informed minority in all parts of society... we need to realise that most of us at some time, with some part of our experience, belong to this group. There is no firm or final division into the eggheads and the rest. We are all in some ways more discriminating than the image of us which the mass media put out, we are all at intervals among the dissident, the concerned, the serious.[100]

Although the divisions remained evident in Rolph's account of the "Lady Chatterley trial", the very presence of a jury, replacing the Lord Chamberlain's erstwhile monopoly of such matters, indicated a shift of balance within the complex of public literacy. The confident tone of this assertion involved an understanding not only of the likely audience for a discussion document in a socialist collection of essays, but also of on-going alteration in the pattern of intellectual communities, an experience of movement out from the rigid lines of division, Us / Them and Centre / Margins.

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Recent work has tended to stress the distance between Hoggart and Williams, emphasizing those dissimilarities of background and temperament which they discussed in 'Working Class Attitudes'.[101] Certainly, as time went on, the political differences between the two men were reflected in radically different conceptions of their critical and cultural roles. However, during the period of this survey it is clear that their concerns were motivated by shared interests and aims. It was in their experience and

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99 R. Hoggart, *Schools of English and Contemporary Society* p15. When Hoggart left Birmingham,the Centre was absorbed into the Sociology department.

100 R. Hoggart, 'Speaking to Each Other' p134.

101 Paul Jones, 'The myth of "Raymond Hoggart": On "Founding Fathers" and Cultural Policy' in *Cultural Studies* 8, 1994, pp34-416; Francis Mulhern, 'A welfare culture? Hoggart and Williams in the fifties' in *Radical Philosophy* 77, May-June 1996, pp26-37.

articulation of these matters, their struggle in new voices and idioms to overcome the grammar of uncertainty of their early work, that they were jointly representative of the altered paradigm of criticism in the fifties.

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