



RAYMOND WILLIAMS:
READING CULTURE AND COMMUNITY

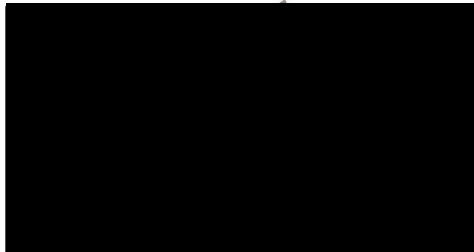
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I certify that the substance of this thesis has not already been submitted for any degree and is not currently being submitted for any other degree or qualification.

I certify that any help received in preparing this thesis, and all sources used, have been acknowledged in this thesis.



ABSTRACT

This thesis is a critical account of the work of Raymond Williams. It aims to essay Williams's problematic engagement with the concepts of "culture" and "community", and to demonstrate the manner in which his reliance on these paradoxical terms is responsible for much of the ambiguity and ambivalence present in his writing. The thesis argues that Williams's criticism and fiction is consistently embroiled in negotiating contesting definitions of "culture" and "community", definitions which oscillate between affirmations of their radical and counter-hegemonic potential and identifications of their ideological function in the legitimization of dominant power structures.

In pursuing this line of argument, this work seeks to locate the tensions within Williams's discourse on "culture" and "community" in the priority he places on the values of wholeness and homogeneity. Such values, despite his critique of the mythical organicism of a pre-industrial past, persistently underwrite his own critical perspective and political ideals. It is this totalising vision and constant desire to connect which Williams struggles to theoretically reconcile with his own account of the historical experience of division and dispossession, and modernity's own insistent narrative of conflict and alienation.

The schema of this dissertation is chronological, each chapter offering a treatment of an individual text with the exception of the conclusion which provides an account of Williams's fiction and its relation to his general critical project. The works examined are *Drama from Ibsen to Eliot*, *Culture and Society*, *Modern Tragedy*, *The Country and the City* and *Marxism and Literature*. Throughout the consideration of these works various essays from *Writing and Society*, *Resources of Hope*, *Problems in Materialism and Culture* and *The Politics of Modernism* are drawn upon. The interviews recorded in *Politics and Letters* provide a constant source of reference.

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