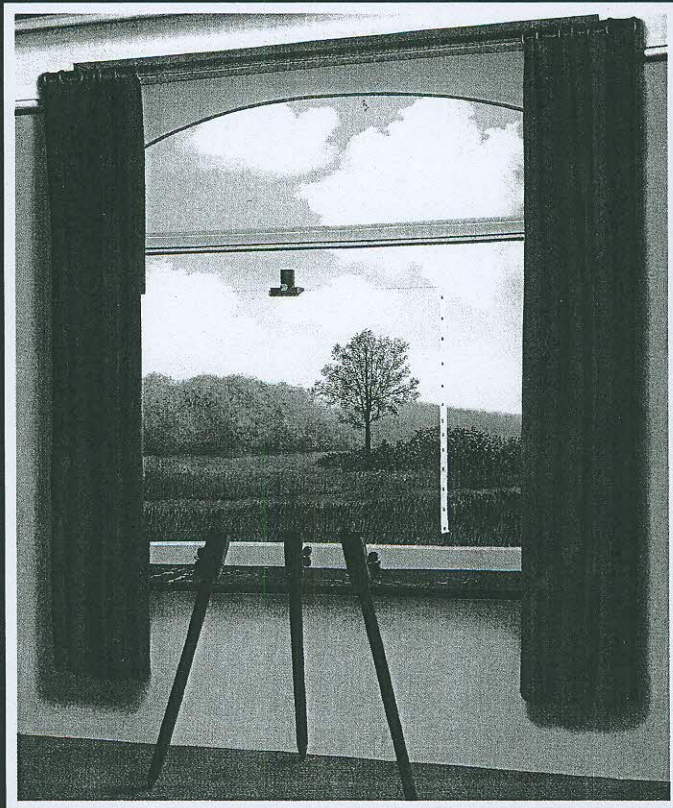# A Dictionary of
CULTURAL AND CRITICAL THEORY

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B

is a questioning of the project of self-unification and the power the moral and the ideal seems to have over us. Williams none the less explicitly distances himself from Nietzsche's comments about politics (Williams, 1993, pp. 10f.). And yet there is another, perhaps even more important difference: Nietzsche claimed that modern natural science had not yet "de-deified" nature enough, and so would be skeptical of Williams's claim that modern natural science can offer us an "absolute conception of the world" (Williams, 1985, chapter 8). Nietzsche was thereby led to a perspectivism more radical than that of Williams, whose apparently unshakable commitment to some form of scientific realism also distinguishes him from contemporary thinkers following the path of Richard RORTY. For Williams, modern natural science is decidedly not "just one more story" about the way the world is.

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JEFFREY S. TURNER

Williams, Raymond (1921–88) British cultural critic. One of the most significant socialist intellectuals in postwar British history, Raymond Williams's work had a major influence on CULTURAL THEORY and history from the late 1950s. He was born in the Welsh border village of Pandy, the son of a railway signalman, and after a local schooling went to Trinity College, Cambridge, in 1939, from which he was called up from 1941 to 1945. After leaving Cambridge he worked in adult education from 1946 until 1961, when he returned to Cambridge as a Fellow of Jesus College, where he stayed for the rest of his working life. He always saw himself as an active socialist, and as a "Welsh European" occupying the "border country" between different cultural and social worlds. His writing ranges across cultural and literary history, studies of drama and society, theories of cultural formations and institutions, and the changing social significance of language and the media. He also wrote fiction alongside and in dialog with his theoretical work.

Williams's work both grows out of and against the dominant cultural traditions that he analyzed. *Culture and Society* (1958) emphasized the notion of CULTURE as *process* – not simply the highest products of a society, the great works of an individual genius – and traced a history of the cultural critique of industrial capitalism (which, he argued, was profoundly politically contradictory) from Burke and Cobbett, through Ruskin, ARNOLD, Morris, ELIOT, and LEAVIS. Its sequel, *The Long Revolution* (1961), emphasized and developed the broader definition of culture as a way of life. It analyzed the evolving history of cultural forms and institutions in Britain over the previous 200 years and developed a theoretical framework within which to explore this process of dynamic change. Here Williams develops his concepts of STRUCTURES OF FEELING and DOMINANT, RESIDUAL, AND EMERGENT cultures to help understand the complex ideological negotiations which might exist at any particular moment and the uneven ways these structures of feeling shift historically, and both dominant and oppositional forms emerge.

These concepts, elaborated and developed throughout his work, became central to what Williams was to later term CULTURAL MATERIALISM. He argued that cultural forms are not simply the effect of a primary economic process but also actively constitute that process, and that cultural struggle and the acknowledgement of the diversity of cultural identity are central to any genuinely democratic society. Thus studies of the politics of language are crucial to this analysis: *The Long Revolution* traces the development of standard English as a key process in the establishment of the HEGEMONY of a dominant metropolitan culture; *Keywords* (1976) teases out these questions in a more intricate way by looking at the complex history of specific notions and concepts. Also crucial is his analysis of the broadcast media; he refuted both technological determinism, whereby mass communications become a monolithic agent of control, and the elitist perception of users of the media as "telly-glued masses," manipulated by the state and consumer capitalism.

Raymond Williams's work flourished on TENSION, COMPLEXITY, and CONTRADICTION – between "HIGH" and "POPULAR" CULTURE, between tradition and MODERNITY, between a sense of cultural roots and the experience of their dislocation, between public and private, region and metropolis. As in his analysis of the changing meanings of rural and urban life, *The Country and the City* (1973), he wanted to analyze the structural formation of economic and cultural divisions and identities, without losing sight of the lived experience in which these identities are embodied, or the "resources of a journey of hope" which can look optimistically toward the future, as he does in *Towards 2,000*. "Community" is a key word throughout his writing, but it is a shifting term: it is made up of the combination of relations, place, mutual recognition, shared experience, and class identity.
See also CULTURAL MATERIALISM; DOMINANT/RESIDUAL/EMERGENT; STRUCTURE OF FEELING.

Reading
Raymond Williams 1958: *Culture and Society*.
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——1979: *Politics and Letters*.

JENNY BOURNE TAYLOR

Winnicott, Donald Woods (1896–1971) British pediatrician, child psychiatrist, and psychoanalyst associated with the OBJECT-RELATIONS school and influenced by KLEIN.

Winnicott often remarked that there is no such thing as a baby, meaning that a baby cannot exist outside a relationship with a carer. The successful development of the child depends upon the provision of a facilitating environment by a "good enough" mother – the choice of terminology reflects an attempt to avoid an idealization of the maternal function. Good enough mothering permits a gradual development toward independence; its absence may result in the creation of a false self which colludes with environmental demands and hides the true self.

Winnicott is noted for the introduction into psychoanalytic thought of the notion of the transitional object. Typically, this is a material object such as a blanket to which the child develops a powerful emotional attachment. It allows the child to begin the transition from the initial oral relationship with the mother to true object-relations. As it is the child's first "not-me possession," the transformational object permits an initial spatial differentiation between me and not-me.

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Wittgenstein, Ludwig (1889–1951 pher, born in Vienna, studied at Cam versity with Bertrand Russell and G He received his PhD in 1929 and was Fellow of Trinity College in 1930. losing touch with academic life, he wa fortable with it and constantly sought re ing many years away from Cambridg his philosophical work was done outsi environments, and he often felt the ne completely give up his work in favor of He spent six years (1920–26) teachin Austrian school children (mainly age an experience that resulted in the pu 1926, of a small dictionary *Wörterbuc schulen*, which he developed for use b Shortly thereafter he spent two years and build a house for his sister. Wh journs and desires to leave academic continued throughout his life, he wa pulled back to Cambridge to lecture, a ence and reputation grew greatly th lectures. He was, however, dissatisf efforts and often remarked that he was ing but harm and that he was teaching ing but a new jargon. Only two of his than the dictionary) were published du time, *Tractatus Logico-Philosophicus* (by Moore) and "Some remarks on l (1929). His central work *Philosophical* (which he began writing while living i in Norway in 1936) was published pos 1953. Several other influential works a posthumously include *Remarks on th of Mathematics* (1956), *Zettel* (1967), (1969), all named and organized by e

It is sometimes convenient to disting an early and a late Wittgenstein, wl refers to his work in logic and the 7 the second looks at the *Investigations* cerns with language. While convenien spective can be misleading. Wittgenste of "grave mistakes" in his first work not repudiate that work or cease to be its topics. Rather he situates these " cerns within his broadened and contin about language. (He had hoped, in

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ultural forms – say the cultures of the
The study of cultural policy and the
n of cultural studies to policy issues, or
different instance the cultural study of
r religion, have scarcely begun.
rrent situation is, as before, paradoxical.
studies" has become a widely recognized
enced body of work, of interest to many
tudents but at times also outside educa-
acterized by a rich (and not yet absorbed)
f approaches and interests and also by a
(possibly cherished) marginality. There
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n of important issues outside the exist-
ional agenda, but the previous disciplines
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w has its own languages and institutional
not always conducive to participation in
d public debate. Work in cultural studies
remain volatile, self-reflexive, and alert
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rd more of a common agenda with at-
iorities, across the specialist interests of
ities and social sciences, and to respond
eriod in which the hegemony of the New
l also of the West, is fast breaking up.

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MICHAEL GREEN

cultural theory *See* INTRODUCTION

culture A term of virtually limitless application, which initially may be understood to refer to everything that is produced by human beings as distinct from all that is a part of nature. However, it has often been observed that since nature is itself a human abstraction, it too has a history, which in turn means that it is part of culture. In his efforts to deal with the apparently universal occurrence of incest prohibitions in human societies, Claude LÉVI-STRAUSS candidly admits that the distinction between culture and nature is an instance of theoretical BRICOLAGE, in the sense that the distinction is simultaneously inadequate and indispensable. Two extreme attempts to limit the meaning of the term can be found in its technical use by North American anthropologists to refer to the primary data of anthropology, and in its honorific use, from the seventeenth to the nineteenth century (for example, by Matthew ARNOLD) to refer to the finest products of civilization. In a bold effort to avoid these extremes, Clifford Geertz defines culture by way of SEMIOTICS as the "webs of significance" spun by human beings (1973, p. 5). Yet even such an open definition as this presupposes an extraordinarily powerful (but perhaps justifiable) role for the semiotic in human life.

Raymond WILLIAMS begins his famous essay on "culture" by admitting that it is "one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language" (1983, p. 87). The complexity, however, is not just a matter of the utility of a term or the efficacy of a concept. For those who confront the living reality of cultural conflict, the issue may be one of having –or not having – oneself or one's relations recognized by another culture's definition of the human. Homi Bhabha, accordingly, concludes that "there can be no ethically or epistemologically commensurate subject of culture." If it is not possible to identify a transcendent humanity that is not itself based on a particular culture's sense of value, then all that is left is what Bhabha calls "culture's

archaic undecidability" (1994, p. 135). If one ethnic or national group can define another as nonhuman or subhuman, then culture becomes suddenly and tribally specific and exclusive. The definition itself is an act of violence and an invitation to potential if not actualized genocide. When one culture eliminates what it considers not human, it identifies itself, according to its own definition, as human. Cultural identification in such a context takes on ultimate power.

Although some of the initial violence of cultural definition has been recognized as an instance of ORIENTALISM, or a Western effort to define and specify Asian culture as the alien – or idealized – other, more recent politically active efforts have been exerted to draw cultural definitions within what were once unified nation states in Eastern Europe or Africa. Just as Nazi definitions of the human required efforts to exclude Jews and just as southern American definitions of humanity once excluded blacks, so now in South Asia, Africa, and elsewhere in the world cultural definitions are instruments of the political power of identity exclusion. To define "culture" is to define the human; to be excluded from the definition can have an ultimate cost.

Since the middle of the nineteenth century, culture has been subjected to a range of definitions that extend from Arnold's all-embracing sense of the possibility of human perfection to Pierre Bourdieu's systems of symbolic violence. In *Culture and Anarchy* (1869) Arnold thought of culture as a redemptive pursuit through a principally literary education of the best that human beings had thought and said. In his view, culture in this sense has the potential of harmoniously unifying all of human society. In part transmitted by T.S. ELIOT, this mission for literary culture has been very influential in Britain and the United States. Not surprisingly, the intellectual revolutions brought about by the thought of Charles Darwin, Karl MARX, Friedrich ENGELS, Friedrich NIETZSCHE. and Sigmund FREUD have had profound effects on post-Arnoldian theories of culture. In a perverse version of Darwin's theory of evolution, the American anthropologist Lewis Henry Morgan in 1877, despite his humanitarianism and efforts on behalf of native American culture (See NATIVE AMERICAN STUDIES), developed a system for hierarchically classifying cultures according to evolutionary stages. Other early cultural evolutionists included Edward Burnett Tylor (1832–1917), who founded the British school of

social anthropology. ENGELS too had an evolutionary (or perhaps de-evolutionary) view of culture, most clearly expressed in his *Origin of the Family, Private Property and the State*, where he sees the emergence of civilization as not only magnifying previously existing systems of labor but also creating the merchant class, "a class that makes itself the indispensable intermediary between any two producers and exploits them both" (Marx and Engels, 1968, p. 548). While suspicious of progressivist ideas and uses of history, Nietzsche (1983, p. 123) thought he saw "*true* culture" emerging from a recovery of the "*moral* nature" of the classical Greeks in repudiation of the legacy of Rome. For Freud, especially in *Civilization and Its Discontents* (1930), culture provides not only a bulwark against nature but also as such an unrelenting source of opposition to instinct, which leads in turn to a continuous discontent by human beings with that structure of defense that they have created out of their always divided subjectivity.

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MICHAEL PAYNE

culture, consumer *See* CONSUMER CULTURE

culture, counter *See* COUNTERCULTURE

culture, enterprise *See* ENTERPRISE CULTURE

culture, folk *See* FOLK CULTURE

culture, high *See* HIGH CULTURE

culture industries Culture industries can be defined, simply enough, as those industries which produce cultural goods. Or, to put it the other way round:

Generally speaking, a cultural industry is held to exist when cultural goods and services are