ART
BEHAVIOR
CLASS
DIALECTIC
EXPERIENCE
FAMILY
GENIUS
HEGEMONY
INDUSTRY
JARGON

KEYWORDS

A VOCABULARY OF CULTURE AND SOCIETY

REVISED EDITION

RAYMOND WILLIAMS

LIBERATION
MEDIA
NATURALISM
ORDINARY
PEASANT
RACIAL
SEX
TRADITION
UNDERPRIVILEGED
VIOLENCE
WELFARE

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Raymond Williams

Keywords

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Introduction

In 1945, after the ending of the wars with Germany and Japan, I was released from the Army to return to Cambridge. University term had already begun, and many relationships and groups had been formed. It was in any case strange to travel from an artillery regiment on the Kiel Canal to a Cambridge college. I had been away only four and a half years, but in the movements of war had lost touch with all my university friends. Then, after many strange days, I met a man I had worked with in the first year of the war, when the formations of the 1930s, though under pressure, were still active. He too had just come out of the Army. We talked eagerly, but not about the past. We were too much preoccupied with this new and strange world around us. Then we both said, in effect simultaneously: 'the fact is, they just don't speak the same language'.

It is a common phrase. It is often used between successive generations, and even between parents and children. I had used it myself, just six years earlier, when I had come to Cambridge from a working-class family in Wales. In many of the fields in which language is used it is of course not true. Within our common language, in a particular country, we can be conscious of social differences, or of differences of age, but in the main we use the same words for most everyday things and activities, though with obvious variations of rhythm and accent and tone. Some of the variable words, say *lunch* and *supper* and *dinner*, may be highlighted but the differences are not particularly important. When we come to say 'we just don't speak the same language' we mean something more general: that we have different immediate values or different kinds of valuation, or that we are aware, often intangibly, of different formations and distributions of energy and interest. In such a case, each group is speaking its native language, but its uses are significantly different, and especially when strong feelings or important ideas are in question. No single group is 'wrong' by any linguistic criterion, though a temporarily dominant group may try to enforce its own uses as 'correct'. What is really happening through these critical encounters, which may be very conscious or may be felt only as a certain strangeness and unease, is a process quite central in the development of a language when, in

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certain words, tones and rhythms, meanings are offered, felt for, tested, confirmed, asserted, qualified, changed. In some situations this is a very slow process indeed; it needs the passage of centuries to show itself actively, by results, at anything like its full weight. In other situations the process can be rapid, especially in certain key areas. In a large and active university, and in a period of change as important as a war, the process can seem unusually rapid and conscious.

Yet it had been, we both said, only four or five years. Could it really have changed that much? Searching for examples we found that some general attitudes in politics and religion had altered, and agreed that these were important changes. But I found myself preoccupied by a single word, *culture*, which it seemed I was hearing very much more often: not only, obviously, by comparison with the talk of an artillery regiment or of my own family, but by direct comparison within the university over just those few years. I had heard it previously in two senses: one at the fringes, in teashops and places like that, where it seemed the preferred word for a kind of social superiority, not in ideas or learning, and not only in money or position, but in a more intangible area, relating to behaviour; yet also, secondly, among my own friends, where it was an active word for writing poems and novels, making films and paintings, working in theatres. What I was now hearing were two different senses, which I could not really get clear: first, in the study of literature, a use of the word to indicate, powerfully but not explicitly, some central formation of values (and *literature* itself had the same kind of emphasis); secondly, in more general discussion, but with what seemed to me very different implications, a use which made it almost equivalent to *society*: a particular *way of life* – 'American culture', 'Japanese culture'.

Today I can explain what I believe was happening. Two important traditions were finding in England their effective formations: in the study of literature a decisive dominance of an idea of criticism which, from Arnold through Leavis, had *culture* as one of its central terms; and in discussions of society the extension to general conversation of an anthropological sense which had been clear as a specialist term but which now, with increased American influence and with the parallel influence of such thinkers as Mannheim, was becoming naturalized. The two earlier senses had evidently weakened: the

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teashop sense, though still active, was more distant and was becoming comic; the sense of activity in the arts, though it held its national place, seemed more and more excluded both by the emphasis of criticism and by the larger and dissolving reference to a whole way of life. But I knew nothing of this at the time. It was just a difficult word, a word I could think of as an example of the change which we were trying, in various ways, to understand.

My year in Cambridge passed. I went off to a job in adult education. Within two years T. S. Eliot published his *Notes Towards the Definition of Culture* (1948) – a book I grasped but could not accept – and all the elusive strangeness of those first weeks back in Cambridge returned with force. I began exploring the word in my adult classes. The words I linked it with, because of the problems its uses raised in my mind, were *class* and *art*, and then *industry* and *democracy*. I could feel these five words as a kind of structure. The relations between them became more complex the more I considered them. I began reading widely, to try to see more clearly what each was about. Then one day in the basement of the Public Library at Seaford, where we had gone to live, I looked up *culture*, almost casually, in one of the thirteen volumes of what we now usually call the OED: the Oxford *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles*. It was like a shock of recognition. The changes of sense I had been trying to understand had begun in English, it seemed, in the early nineteenth century. The connections I had sensed with *class* and *art*, with *industry* and *democracy*, took on, in the language, not only an intellectual but an historical shape. I see these changes today in much more complex ways. *Culture* itself has now a different though related history. But this was the moment at which an inquiry which had begun in trying to understand several urgent contemporary problems – problems quite literally of understanding my immediate world – achieved a particular shape in trying to understand a tradition. This was the work which, completed in 1956, became my book *Culture and Society*.

It was not easy then, and it is not much easier now, to describe this work in terms of a particular academic subject. The book has been classified under headings as various as cultural history, historical semantics, history of ideas, social criticism, literary history and sociology. This may at times be embarrassing or even difficult, but

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academic subjects are not eternal categories, and the fact is that, wishing to put certain general questions in certain specific ways, I found that the connections I was making, and the area of concern which I was attempting to describe, were in practice experienced and shared by many other people, to whom the particular study spoke. One central feature of this area of interest was its vocabulary, which is significantly not the specialized vocabulary of a specialized discipline, though it often overlaps with several of these, but a general vocabulary ranging from strong, difficult and persuasive words in everyday usage to words which, beginning in particular specialized contexts, have become quite common in descriptions of wider areas of thought and experience. This, significantly, is the vocabulary we share with others, often imperfectly, when we wish to discuss many of the central processes of our common life. *Culture*, the original difficult word, is an exact example. It has specialized meanings in particular fields of study, and it might seem an appropriate task simply to sort these out. But it was the significance of its general and variable usage that had first attracted my attention: not in separated disciplines but in general discussion. The very fact that it was important in two areas that are often thought of as separate – *art* and *society* – posed new questions and suggested new kinds of connection. As I went on I found that this seemed to be true of a significant range of words – from *aesthetic* to *work* – and I began collecting them and trying to understand them. The significance, it can be said, is in the selection. I realize how arbitrary some inclusions and exclusions may seem to others. But out of some two hundred words, which I chose because I saw or heard them being used in quite general discussion in what seemed to me interesting or difficult ways, I then selected sixty and wrote notes and short essays on them, intending them as an appendix to *Culture and Society*, which in its main text was dealing with a number of specific writers and thinkers. But when that book was finished my publisher told me it had to be shortened: one of the items that could be taken out was this appendix. I had little effective choice. I agreed, reluctantly. I put in a note promising this material as a separate paper. But the file of the appendix stayed on my shelf. For over twenty years I have been adding to it: collecting more examples, finding new points of analysis, including other words. I began to feel that this might make a book on its own. I went through the whole file again, rewrote all the notes and

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short essays, excluded some words and again added others. The present volume is the result.

I have emphasized this process of the development of *Keywords* because it seems to me to indicate its dimension and purpose. It is not a dictionary or glossary of a particular academic subject. It is not a series of footnotes to dictionary histories or definitions of a number of words. It is, rather, the record of an inquiry into a *vocabulary*: a shared body of words and meanings in our most general discussions, in English, of the practices and institutions which we group as *culture* and *society*. Every word which I have included has at some time, in the course of some argument, virtually forced itself on my attention because the problems of its meanings seemed to me inextricably bound up with the problems it was being used to discuss. I have often got up from writing a particular note and heard the same word again, with the same sense of significance and difficulty: often, of course, in discussions and arguments which were rushing by to some other destination. I began to see this experience as a problem of *vocabulary*, in two senses: the available and developing meanings of known words, which needed to be set down; and the explicit but as often implicit connections which people were making, in what seemed to me, again and again, particular formations of meaning – ways not only of discussing but at another level of seeing many of our central experiences. What I had then to do was not only to collect examples, and look up or revise particular records of use, but to analyse, as far as I could, some of the issues and problems that were there inside the vocabulary, whether in single words or in habitual groupings. I called these words *Keywords* in two connected senses: they are significant, binding words in certain activities and their interpretation; they are significant, indicative words in certain forms of thought. Certain uses bound together certain ways of seeing culture and society, not least in these two most general words. Certain other uses seemed to me to open up issues and problems, in the same general area, of which we all needed to be very much more conscious. Notes on a list of words; analyses of certain formations: these were the elements of an active vocabulary – a way of recording, investigating and presenting problems of meaning in the area in which the meanings of *culture* and *society* have formed.

Of course the issues could not all be understood simply by analysis

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of the words. On the contrary, most of the social and intellectual issues, including both gradual developments and the most explicit controversies and conflicts, persisted within and beyond the linguistic analysis. Yet many of these issues, I found, could not really be thought through, and some of them, I believe, cannot even be focused unless we are conscious of the words as elements of the problems. This point of view is now much more widely accepted. When I raised my first questions about the differing uses of *culture* I was given the impression, in kindly and not so kind ways, that these arose mainly from the fact of an incomplete education, and the fact that this was true (in real terms it is true of everyone) only clouded the real point at issue. The surpassing confidence of any particular use of a word, within a group or within a period, is very difficult to question. I recall an eighteenth-century letter:

> What, in your opinion, is the meaning of the word *sentimental*, so much in vogue among the polite . . . ? Everything clever and agreeable is comprehended in that word . . . I am frequently astonished to hear such a one is a *sentimental* man; we were a *sentimental* party; I have been taking a *sentimental* walk.

Well, that vogue passed. The meaning of *sentimental* changed and deteriorated. Nobody now asking the meaning of the word would be met by that familiar, slightly frozen, polite stare. When a particular history is completed, we can all be clear and relaxed about it. But *literature, aesthetic, representative, empirical, unconscious, liberal*: these and many other words which seem to me to raise problems will, in the right circles, seem mere transparencies, their correct use a matter only of education. Or *class, democracy, equality, evolution, materialism*: these we know we must argue about, but we can assign particular uses to sects, and call all sects but our own *sectarian*. Language depends, it can be said, on this kind of confidence, but in any major language, and especially in periods of change, a necessary confidence and concern for clarity can quickly become brittle, if the questions involved are not faced.

The questions are not only about meaning; in most cases, inevitably, they are about meanings. Some people, when they see a word, think the first thing to do is to define it. Dictionaries are produced and, with a show of authority no less confident because it is

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usually so limited in place and time, what is called a proper meaning is attached. I once began collecting, from correspondence in newspapers, and from other public arguments, variations on the phrases 'I see from my Webster' and 'I find from my Oxford Dictionary'. Usually what was at issue was a difficult term in an argument. But the effective tone of these phrases, with their interesting overtone of possession ('my Webster'), was to appropriate a meaning which fitted the argument and to exclude those meanings which were inconvenient to it but which some benighted person had been so foolish as to use. Of course if we want to be clear about *banxring* or *baobab* or *barilla*, or for that matter about *barbel* or *basilica* or *batik*, or, more obviously, about *barber* or *barley* or *barn*, this kind of definition is effective. But for words of a different kind, and especially for those which involve ideas and values, it is not only an impossible but an irrelevant procedure. The dictionaries most of us use, the defining dictionaries, will in these cases, and in proportion to their merit as dictionaries, list a range of meanings, all of them current, and it will be the range that matters. Then when we go beyond these to the historical dictionaries, and to essays in historical and contemporary semantics, we are quite beyond the range of the 'proper meaning'. We find a history and complexity of meanings; conscious changes, or consciously different uses; innovation, obsolescence, specialization, extension, overlap, transfer; or changes which are masked by a nominal continuity so that words which seem to have been there for centuries, with continuous general meanings, have come in fact to express radically different or radically variable, yet sometimes hardly noticed, meanings and implications of meaning. *Industry, family, nature* may jump at us from such sources; *class, rational, subjective* may after years of reading remain doubtful. It is in all these cases, in a given area of interest which began in the way I have described, that the problems of meaning have preoccupied me and have led to the sharpest realization of the difficulties of any kind of definition.

The work which this book records has been done in an area where several disciplines converge but in general do not meet. It has been based on several areas of specialist knowledge but its purpose is to bring these, in the examples selected, into general availability. This

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needs no apology but it does need explanation of some of the complexities that are involved in any such attempt. These can be grouped under two broad headings: problems of information and problems of theory.

The problems of information are severe. Yet anyone working on the structures and developments of meaning in English words has the extraordinary advantage of the great Oxford *Dictionary*. This is not only a monument to the scholarship of its editors, Murray, Bradley and their successors, but also the record of an extraordinary collaborative enterprise, from the original work of the Philological Society to the hundreds of later correspondents. Few inquiries into particular words end with the great *Dictionary*'s account, but even fewer could start with any confidence if it were not there. I feel with William Empson, who in *The Structure of Complex Words* found many faults in the *Dictionary*, that 'such work on individual words as I have been able to do has been almost entirely dependent on using the majestic object as it stands'. But what I have found in my own work about the OED, when this necessary acknowledgment has been made, can be summed up in three ways. I have been very aware of the period in which the *Dictionary* was made: in effect from the 1880s to the 1920s (the first example of the current series of Supplements shows addition rather than revision). This has two disadvantages: that in some important words the evidence for developed twentieth-century usage is not really available; and that in a number of cases, especially in certain sensitive social and political terms, the presuppositions of orthodox opinion in that period either show through or are not far below the surface. Anyone who reads Dr Johnson's great *Dictionary* soon becomes aware of his active and partisan mind as well as his remarkable learning. I am aware in my own notes and essays that, though I try to show the range, many of my own positions and preferences come through. I believe that this is inevitable, and all I am saying is that the air of massive impersonality which the Oxford *Dictionary* communicates is not so impersonal, so purely scholarly, or so free of active social and political values as might be supposed from its occasional use. Indeed, to work closely in it is at times to get a fascinating insight into what can be called the ideology of its editors, and I think this has simply to be accepted and allowed for, without the kind of evasion which one popular notion of scholarship prepares the way for. Secondly, for all its deep interest in

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meanings, the *Dictionary* is primarily philological and etymological; one of the effects of this is that it is much better on range and variation than on connection and interaction. In many cases, working primarily on meanings and their contexts, I have found the historical evidence invaluable but have drawn different and at times even opposite conclusions from it. Thirdly, in certain areas I have been reminded very sharply of the change of perspective which has recently occurred in studies of language: for obvious reasons (if only from the basic orthodox training in dead languages) the written language used to be taken as the real source of authority, with the spoken language as in effect derived from it; whereas now it is much more clearly realized that the real situation is usually the other way round. The effects are complex. In a number of primarily intellectual terms the written language is much nearer the true source. If we want to trace *psychology* the written record is probably adequate, until the late nineteenth century. But if, on the other hand, we want to trace *job*, we have soon to recognize that the real developments of meaning, at each stage, must have occurred in everyday speech well before they entered the written record. This is a limitation which has to be recognized, not only in the *Dictionary*, but in any historical account. A certain foreshortening or bias in some areas is, in effect, inevitable. Period indications for origin and change have always to be read with this qualification and reservation. I can give one example from personal experience. Checking the latest Supplement for the generalizing contemporary use of *communications*, I found an example and a date which happened to be from one of my own articles. Now not only could written examples have been found from an earlier date, but I know that this sense was being used in conversation and discussion, and in American English, very much earlier. I do not make the point to carp. On the contrary, this fact about the *Dictionary* is a fact about any work of this kind, and needs especially to be remembered when reading my own accounts.

For certain words I have added a number of examples of my own, from both general and deliberate reading. But of course any account is bound to be incomplete, in a serious sense, just as it is bound to be selective. The problems of adequate information are severe and sometimes crippling, but it is not always possible to indicate them properly in the course of an analysis. They should, nevertheless, always be remembered. And of one particular limitation I have been very

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conscious. Many of the most important words that I have worked on either developed key meanings in languages other than English, or went through a complicated and interactive development in a number of major languages. Where I have been able in part to follow this, as in *alienation* or *culture*, its significance is so evident that we are bound to feel the lack of it when such tracing has not been possible. To do such comparative studies adequately would be an extraordinary international collaborative enterprise, and the difficulties of that may seem sufficient excuse. An inquiry into the meanings of *democracy*, sponsored by UNESCO and intended to be universal and comparative, ran into every kind of difficulty, though even the more limited account that Naess and his colleagues had to fall back on is remarkably illuminating. I have had enough experience of trying to discuss two key English Marxist terms – *base* and *superstructure* – not only in relation to their German originals, but in discussions with French, Italian, Spanish, Russian and Swedish friends, in relation to their forms in these other languages, to know not only that the results are fascinating and difficult, but that such comparative analysis is crucially important, not just as philology, but as a central matter of intellectual clarity. It is greatly to be hoped that ways will be found of encouraging and supporting these comparative inquiries, but meanwhile it should be recorded that while some key developments, now of international importance, occurred first in English, many did not and in the end can only be understood when other languages are brought consistently into comparison. This limitation, in my notes and essays, has to be noted and remembered by readers. It is particularly marked in very early developments, in the classical languages and in medieval Latin, where I have almost invariably simply relied on existing authorities, though with many questions that I could not answer very active in my mind. Indeed, at the level of origins, of every kind, this is generally true and must be entered as an important reservation.

This raises one of the theoretical problems. It is common practice to speak of the 'proper' or 'strict' meaning of a word by reference to its origins. One of the effects of one kind of classical education, especially in conjunction with one version of the defining function of dictionaries, is to produce what can best be called a sacral attitude to words, and corresponding complaints of vulgar contemporary misunderstanding and misuse. The original meanings of words are always

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interesting. But what is often most interesting is the subsequent variation. The complaints that get into the newspapers, about vulgar misuse, are invariably about very recent developments. Almost any random selection of actual developments of meaning will show that what is now taken as 'correct' English, often including many of the words in which such complaints are made, is the product of just such kinds of change. The examples are too numerous to quote here but the reader is invited to consider only *interest* or *determine* or *improve*, though *organic*, *evolution* and *individual* are perhaps more spectacular examples. I have often found a clue to an analysis by discovery of an origin, but there can be no question, at the level either of practice or of theory, of accepting an original meaning as decisive (or where should we be with *aesthetic*?) or of accepting a common source as directive (or where should we be as between *peasant* and *pagan*, *idiot* and *idiom*, or *employ* and *imply*?). The vitality of a language includes every kind of extension, variation and transfer, and this is as true of change in our own time (however much we may regret some particular examples) as of changes in the past which can now be given a sacral veneer. (*Sacral* itself is an example; the extension from its physical sense of the fundament to its disrespectful implication of an attitude to the *sacred* is not my joke, but it is a meaningful joke and thence a meaningful use.)

The other theoretical problems are very much more difficult. There are quite basic and very complex problems in any analysis of the processes of meaning. Some of these can be usefully isolated as general problems of signification: the difficult relations between words and concepts; or the general processes of sense and reference; and beyond these the more general rules, in social norms and in the system of language itself, which both enable sense and reference to be generated and in some large degree to control them. In linguistic philosophy and in theoretical linguistics these problems have been repeatedly and usefully explored, and there can be no doubt that as fundamental problems they bear with real weight on every particular analysis.

Yet just because 'meaning', in any active sense, is more than the general process of 'signification', and because 'norms' and 'rules' are more than the properties of any abstract process or system, other kinds of analysis remain necessary. The emphasis of my own analyses is deliberately social and historical. In the matters of reference and

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applicability, which analytically underlie any particular use, it is necessary to insist that the most active problems of meaning are always primarily embedded in actual relationships, and that both the meanings and the relationships are typically diverse and variable, within the structures of particular social orders and the processes of social and historical change.

This does not mean that the language simply reflects the processes of society and history. On the contrary, it is a central aim of this book to show that some important social and historical processes occur *within* language, in ways which indicate how integral the problems of meanings and of relationships really are. New kinds of relationship, but also new ways of seeing existing relationships, appear in language in a variety of ways: in the invention of new terms (*capitalism*); in the adaptation and alteration (indeed at times reversal) of older terms (*society* or *individual*); in extension (*interest*) or transfer (*exploitation*). But also, as these examples should remind us, such changes are not always either simple or final. Earlier and later senses coexist, or become actual alternatives in which problems of contemporary belief and affiliation are contested. It is certainly necessary to analyse these and other consequent problems as problems of general signification, but my emphasis here is on a vocabulary of meanings, in a deliberately selected area of argument and concern.

My starting point, as I have said, was what can be called a cluster, a particular set of what came to seem interrelated words and references, from which my wider selection then developed. It is thus an intrinsic aim of the book to emphasize interconnections, some of which seem to me in some new ways systematic, in spite of problems of presentation which I shall discuss. It can of course be argued that individual words should never be isolated, since they depend for their meanings on their actual contexts. At one level this can be readily conceded. Many of the variable senses that I have analysed are determined, in practice, by contexts. Indeed this is why I mainly illustrate the different senses by actual examples in recorded use.

Yet the problem of meaning can never be wholly dissolved into context. It is true that no word ever finally stands on its own, since it is always an element in the social process of language, and its uses depend on complex and (though variably) systematic properties of language itself. Yet it can still be useful to pick out certain words, of

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an especially problematical kind, and to consider, for the moment, their own internal developments and structures. This is so even when the qualification, 'for the moment', is ignored by one kind of reader, who is content to reassert the facts of connection and interaction from which this whole inquiry began. For it is only in reductive kinds of analysis that the processes of connection and interaction can be studied as if they were relations between simple units. In practice many of these processes begin within the complex and variable sense of particular words, and the only way to show this, as examples of how networks of usage, reference and perspective are developed, is to concentrate, 'for the moment', on what can then properly be seen as internal structures. This is not to impede but to make possible the sense of an extended and intricate vocabulary, within which both the variable words and their varied and variable interrelations are in practice active.

To study both particular and relational meanings, then, in different actual speakers and writers, and in and through historical time, is a deliberate choice. The limitations are obvious and are admitted. The emphasis is equally obvious and is conscious. One kind of semantics is the study of meaning as such; another kind is the study of formal systems of signification. The kind of semantics to which these notes and essays belong is one of the tendencies within *historical semantics*: a tendency that can be more precisely defined when it is added that the emphasis is not only on historical origins and developments but also on the present – present meanings, implications and relationships – as history. This recognizes, as any study of language must, that there is indeed community between past and present, but also that *community* – that difficult word – is not the only possible description of these relations between past and present; that there are also radical change, discontinuity and conflict, and that all these are still at issue and are indeed still occurring. The vocabulary I have selected is that which seems to me to contain the key words in which both continuity and discontinuity, and also deep conflicts of value and belief, are in this area engaged. Such processes have of course also to be described in direct terms, in the analysis of different social values and conceptual systems. What these notes and essays are intended to contribute is an additional kind of approach, through the vocabulary itself.

For I believe that it is possible to contribute certain kinds of

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awareness and certain more limited kinds of clarification by taking certain words at the level at which they are generally used, and this, for reasons related to and probably clear from all my other work, has been my overriding purpose. I have more than enough material on certain words (for example *class* and *culture*) and on certain formations (for example *art, aesthetic, subjective, psychological, unconscious*) to write, as an alternative, extended specialist studies, some themselves of book length. I may eventually do this, but the choice of a more general form and a wider range was again deliberate. I do not share the optimism, or the theories which underlie it, of that popular kind of inter-war and surviving semantics which supposed that clarification of difficult words would help in the resolution of disputes conducted in their terms and often evidently confused by them. I believe that to understand the complexities of the meanings of *class* contributes very little to the resolution of actual class disputes and class struggles. It is not only that nobody can 'purify the dialect of the tribe', nor only that anyone who really knows himself to be a member of a society knows better than to want, in those terms, to try. It is also that the variations and confusions of meaning are not just faults in a system, or errors of feedback, or deficiencies of education. They are in many cases, in my terms, historical and contemporary substance. Indeed they have often, as variations, to be insisted upon, just because they embody different experiences and readings of experience, and this will continue to be true, in active relationships and conflicts, over and above the clarifying exercises of scholars or committees. What can really be contributed is not resolution but perhaps, at times, just that extra edge of consciousness. In a social history in which many crucial meanings have been shaped by a dominant class, and by particular professions operating to a large extent within its terms, the sense of edge is accurate. This is not a neutral review of meanings. It is an exploration of the vocabulary of a crucial area of social and cultural discussion, which has been inherited within precise historical and social conditions and which has to be made at once conscious and critical – subject to change as well as to continuity – if the millions of people in whom it is active are to see it as active: not a *tradition* to be learned, nor a *consensus* to be accepted, nor a set of meanings which, because it is 'our language', has a natural authority; but as a shaping and reshaping, in real circumstances and from profoundly different and important points of view: a vocabulary to use, to find our own ways in, to

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change as we find it necessary to change it, as we go on making our own language and history.

In writing about a field of meanings I have often wished that some form of presentation could be devised in which it would be clear that the analyses of particular words are intrinsically connected, sometimes in complex ways. The alphabetical listing on which I have finally decided may often seem to obscure this, although the use of cross-references should serve as a reminder of many necessary connections. The difficulty is that any other kind of arrangement, for example by areas or themes, would establish one set of connections while often suppressing another. If *representative*, for example, is set in a group of political words, perhaps centring on *democracy*, we may lose sight of a significant question in the overlap between *representative* government and *representative* art. Or if *realism* is set in a group of literary words, perhaps centring on *literature* or on *art*, another kind of overlap, with fundamental philosophical connotations and with descriptions of attitudes in business and politics, may again not be readily seen. Specialized vocabularies of known and separate academic subjects and areas of interest are, while obviously useful, very much easier both to write and to arrange. The word-lists can be fuller and they can avoid questions of overlap by deliberate limitation to meanings within the specialism. But since my whole inquiry has been into an area of general meanings and connections of meaning, I have been able to achieve neither the completeness nor the conscious limitation of deliberately specialized areas. In taking what seemed to me to be the significant vocabulary of an area of general discussion of culture and society, I have lost the props of conventional arrangement by subject and have then needed to retain the simplest conventional arrangement, by alphabetical order. However, since a book is only completed when it is read, I would hope that while the alphabetical order makes immediate use easier, other kinds of connection and comparison will suggest themselves to the reader, and may be followed through by a quite different selection and order of reading.

In this as in many other respects I am exceptionally conscious of how much further work and thinking needs to be done. Much of it, in fact, can only be done through discussion, for which the book in its present form is in part specifically intended. Often in the notes and essays I have had to break off just at the point where a different kind

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of analysis – extended theoretical argument, or detailed social and historical inquiry – would be necessary. To have gone in these other directions would have meant restricting the number and range of the words discussed, and in this book at least this range has been my priority. But it can also be said that this is a book in which the author would positively welcome amendment, correction and addition as well as the usual range of responses and comments. The whole nature of the enterprise is of this kind. Here is a critical area of vocabulary. What can be done in dictionaries is necessarily limited by their proper universality and by the long time-scale of revision which that, among other factors, imposes. The present inquiry, being more limited – not a dictionary but a vocabulary – is more flexible. My publishers have been good enough to include some blank pages, not only for the convenience of making notes, but as a sign that the inquiry remains open, and that the author will welcome all amendments, corrections and additions. In the use of our common language, in so important an area, this is the only spirit in which this work can be properly done.

I have to thank more people than I can now name who, over the years, in many kinds of formal and informal discussion, have contributed to these analyses. I have also especially to thank Mr R. B. Woodings, my editor, who was not only exceptionally helpful with the book itself, but who, as a former colleague, came to see me at just the moment when I was actively considering whether the file should become a book and whose encouragement was then decisive. My wife has helped me very closely at all stages of the work. I have also to record the practical help of Mr W. G. Heyman who, as a member of one of my adult classes thirty years ago, told me after a discussion of a word that as a young man he had begun buying the paper parts of the great Oxford *Dictionary*, and a few years later astonished me by arriving at a class with three cardboard boxes full of them, which he insisted on giving to me. I have a particular affection for his memory, and through it for these paper parts themselves – so different from the bound volumes and smooth paper of the library copies; yellowing and breaking with time, the rough uncut paper, the memorable titles – *Deject to Depravation, Heel to Hod, R to Reactive* and so on – which I have used over the years. This is a small book to offer in return for so much interest and kindness.

Cambridge, 1975, 1983 RW

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Preface to the Second Edition

The welcome given to this book, in its original edition, was beyond anything its author had expected. This has encouraged me to revise it, in ways indicated in the original Introduction, though still with a sense of the work as necessarily unfinished and incomplete. In this new edition I have been able to include notes on a further twenty-one words: *anarchism*, *anthropology*, *development*, *dialect*, *ecology*, *ethnic*, *experience*, *expert*, *exploitation*, *folk*, *generation*, *genius*, *jargon*, *liberation*, *ordinary*, *racial*, *regional*, *sex*, *technology*, *underprivileged* and *western*. Some of these are reintroduced from my original list; others have become more important in the period between that original list and the present time. I have also made revisions, including both corrections and additions, in the original main text.

I want to record my warm thanks to the many people who have written or spoken to me about the book. Some of the new entries come from their suggestions. So too do many of the additions and corrections to the original notes. I cannot involve any of them in my opinions, or in any errors, but I am especially indebted to Aidan Foster-Carter, for a series of notes and particularly on *development*; to Michael McKeon, on many points but especially on *revolution*; to Peter Burke, for a most helpful series of notes; and to Carl Gersuny, for a series of notes and particularly on *interest* and *work*. I am specifically indebted to Daniel Bell on *generation*; Gerald Fowler on *scientist*; Alan Hall on *history*; P. B. Home on *native*; R. D. Hull on *industrial*; G. Millington, H. S. Pickering and N. Pitterger on *education*; Darko Suvin on *communist* and *social*; René Wellek on *literature*. I am also indebted for helpful suggestions and references to Perry Anderson, Jonathan Benthall, Andrew Daw, Simon Duncan, Howard Erskine-Hill, Fred Gray, Christopher Hill, Denis L. Johnston, A. D. King, Michael Lane, Colin MacCabe, Graham Martin, Ian Mordant, Benjamin Nelson, Malcolm Pittock, Vivien Pixner, Vito Signorile, Philip Tait, Gay Weber, Stephen White, David Wise, Dave Wootton, Ivor Wymer and Stephen Yeo.

Cambridge, May 1983 RW

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Abbreviations

The following abbreviations are used in the text.

fw: immediate forerunner of a word, in the same or another language.
rw: ultimate traceable word, from which 'root' meanings are derived.
q.v.: see entry under word noted.
C: followed by numeral, century (C19: nineteenth century).
eC: first period (third) of a century.
mC: middle period (third) of a century.
lC: last period (third) of a century.
c.: (before a date) approximately.
AN: Anglo-Norman.
mE: Middle English (c. 1100–1500).
oE: Old English (to c. 1100).
F: French.
mF: Medieval French.
oF: Old French.
G: German.
Gk: Classical Greek.
It: Italian.
L: Latin.
lL: late Latin.
mL: Medieval Latin.
vL: Vulgar Latin.
Rom: Romanic.
Sp: Spanish.
OED: *New English Dictionary on Historical Principles* (Oxford).

Quotations followed by a name and date only, or a date only, are from examples cited in OED. Other quotations are followed by specific sources. References to secondary works are by author's name, as entered in References and Select Bibliography.

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AESTHETIC

Aesthetic first appeared in English in C19, and was not common before mC19. It was in effect, in spite of its Greek form, a borrowing from German, after a critical and controversial development in that language. It was first used in a Latin form as the title of two volumes, *Aesthetica* (1750–8), by Alexander Baumgarten (1714–62). Baumgarten defined beauty as phenomenal perfection, and the importance of this, in thinking about art, was that it placed a predominant stress on apprehension through the *senses*. This explains Baumgarten's essentially new word, derived from rw *aisthesis*, Gk – sense perception. In Greek the main reference was to material things, that is things perceptible by the senses, as distinct from things which were immaterial or which could only be thought. Baumgarten's new use was part of an emphasis on subjective sense activity, and on the specialized human creativity of art, which became dominant in these fields and which inherited his title-word, though his book was not translated and had limited circulation. In Kant beauty was also seen as an essentially and exclusively sensuous phenomenon, but he protested against Baumgarten's use and defined **aesthetics** in the original and broader Greek sense of the science of 'the conditions of sensuous perception'. Both uses are then found in occasional eC19 English examples, but by mC19 reference to 'the beautiful' is predominant and there is a strong regular association with art. Lewes, in 1879, used a variant derived form, **aesthesics**, in a definition of the 'abstract science of feeling'. Yet **anaesthesia**, a defect of physical sensation, had been used since eC18; and from mC19, with advances in medicine, **anaesthetic** – the negative form of the increasingly popular adjective – was widely used in the original broad sense to mean deprived of sensation or the agent of such deprivation. This use of the straight negative form led eventually to such negatives as

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unaesthetic or **nonaesthetic** in relation to the dominant use referring to beauty or to art.

In 1821 Coleridge wished that he could 'find a more familiar word than aesthetics for works of TASTE and CRITICISM' (qq.v.), and as late as 1842 **aesthetics** was referred to as 'a silly pedantical term'. In 1859 Sir William Hamilton, understanding it as 'the Philosophy of Taste, the theory of the Fine Arts, the Science of the Beautiful, etc.', and acknowledging its general acceptance 'not only in Germany but throughout the other countries of Europe', still thought **apolaustic** would have been more appropriate. But the word had taken hold and became increasingly common, though with a continuing uncertainty (implicit in the theory which had led to the coinage) between reference to art and more general reference to the beautiful. By 1880 the noun **aesthete** was being widely used, most often in a derogatory sense. The principles and practices of the 'aesthetic movement' around Walter Pater were both attacked and sneered at (the best-remembered example is in Gilbert's *Patience* (1880)). This is contemporary with similar feeling around the use of *culture* by Matthew Arnold and others. **Aesthete** has not recovered from this use, and the neutral noun relating to aesthetics as a formal study is the earlier (mC19) **aesthetician**. The adjective **aesthetic**, apart from its specialized uses in discussion of art and literature, is now in common use to refer to questions of visual appearance and effect.

It is clear from this history that **aesthetic**, with its specialized references to ART (q.v.), to visual appearance, and to a category of what is 'fine' or 'beautiful', is a key formation in a group of meanings which at once emphasized and isolated SUBJECTIVE (q.v.) sense-activity as the basis of art and beauty as distinct, for example, from *social* or *cultural* interpretations. It is an element in the divided modern consciousness of *art* and *society*: a reference beyond social use and social valuation which, like one special meaning of *culture*, is intended to express a human dimension which the dominant version of *society* appears to exclude. The emphasis is understandable but the isolation can be damaging, for there is something irresistibly displaced and marginal about the now common and limiting phrase 'aesthetic considerations', especially when contrasted with *practical* or UTILITARIAN (q.v.) considerations, which are elements of the same basic division.

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See ART, CREATIVE, CULTURE, GENIUS, LITERATURE, SUBJECTIVE, UTILITARIAN

ALIENATION

Alienation is now one of the most difficult words in the language. Quite apart from its common usage in general contexts, it carries specific but disputed meanings in a range of disciplines from social and economic theory to philosophy and psychology. From mC20, moreover, it has passed from different areas of this range into new kinds of common usage where it is often confusing because of overlap and uncertainty in relation both to the various specific meanings and the older more general meanings.

Though it often has the air of a contemporary term, **alienation** as an English word, with a wide and still relevant range of meanings, has been in the language for several centuries. Its fw is *aliénacion*, mF, from *alienationem*, L, from rw *alienare* – to estrange or make another's; this relates to *alienus*, L – of or belonging to another person or place, from rw *alius* – other, another. It has been used in English from C14 to describe an action of estranging or state of estrangement (i): normally in relation to a cutting-off or being cut off from God, or to a breakdown of relations between a man or a group and some received political authority. From C15 it has been used to describe the action of transferring the ownership of anything to another (ii), and especially the transfer of rights, estates or money. There are subsidiary minor early senses of (ii), where the transfer is contrived by the beneficiary (*stealth*) or where the transfer is seen as diversion from a proper owner or purpose. These negative senses of (ii) eventually became dominant; a legal sense of voluntary and intentional transfer survived, but improper, involuntary or even forcible transfer became the predominant implication. This was then extended to the result of such a transfer, a state of something having been alienated (iii). By analogy, as earlier in Latin, the word was further used from C15 to mean the loss, withdrawal or derangement of mental faculties, and thus insanity (iv).

In the range of contemporary specific meanings, and in most con-

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sequent common usage, each of these earlier senses is variously drawn upon. By eC20 the word was in common use mainly in two specific contexts: the **alienation** of formal property, and in the phrase **alienation of affection** (from mC19) with the sense of deliberate and contrived interference in a customary family relationship, usually that of husband and wife. But the word had already become important, sometimes as a key concept, in powerful and developing intellectual systems.

There are several contemporary variants of sense (i). There is the surviving theological sense, normally a state rather than an action, of being cut off, estranged from the knowledge of God, or from his mercy or his worship. This sometimes overlaps with a more general use, with a decisive origin in Rousseau, in which man is seen as cut off, estranged from his own original nature. There are several variants of this, between the two extreme defining positions of man estranged from his *original* (often historically primitive) nature and man estranged from his *essential* (inherent and permanent) nature. The reasons given vary widely. There is a persistent sense of the loss of original human nature through the development of an 'artificial' CIVILIZATION (q.v.); the overcoming of alienation is then either an actual primitivism or a cultivation of human feeling and practice against the pressures of civilization. In the case of estrangement from an essential nature the two most common variants are the religious sense of estrangement from 'the divine in man', and the sense common in Freud and Freudian-influenced psychology in which man is estranged (again by CIVILIZATION or by particular phases or processes of CIVILIZATION) from his primary energy, either libido or explicit sexuality. Here the overcoming of **alienation** is either recovery of a sense of the divine or, in the alternative tradition, whole or partial recovery of libido or sexuality, a prospect viewed from one position as difficult or impossible (**alienation** in this sense being part of the price paid for civilization) and from another position as programmatic and radical (the ending of particular forms of repression – CAPITALISM, the BOURGEOIS FAMILY (qq.v.) – which produce this substantial alienation).

There is an important variation of sense (i) by the addition of forms of sense (ii) in Hegel and, alternatively, in Marx. Here what is alienated is an essential nature, a 'self-alienated spirit', but the process of alienation is seen as historical. Man indeed makes his own

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nature, as opposed to concepts of an original human nature. But he makes his own nature by a process of objectification (in Hegel a spiritual process; in Marx the labour process) and the ending of alienation would be a transcendence of this formerly inevitable and necessary alienation. The argument is difficult and is made more difficult by the relations between the German and English key words. German *entäussern* corresponds primarily to English sense (ii): to part with, transfer, lose to another, while having also an additional and in this context crucial sense of 'making external to oneself'. German *entfremden* is closer to English sense (i), especially in the sense of an act or state of estrangement between persons. (On the history of *Entfremdung*, see Schacht. A third word used by Marx, *vergegenständlichung*, has been sometimes translated as **alienation** but is now more commonly understood as 'reification' – broadly, making a human process into an *objective* thing.) Though the difficulties are clearly explained in some translations, English critical discussion has been confused by uncertainty between the meanings and by some loss of distinction between senses (i) and (ii): a vital matter when in the development of the concept the interactive relation between senses (i) and (ii) is crucial, as especially in Marx. In Hegel the process is seen as world-historical spiritual development, in a dialectical relation of subject and object, in which alienation is overcome by a higher unity. In a subsequent critique of religion, Feuerbach described God as an alienation – in the sense of projection or transfer – of the highest human powers; this has been repeated in modern humanist arguments and in theological apologetics. In Marx the process is seen as the history of labour, in which man creates himself by creating his world, but in class-society is **alienated** from this essential nature by specific forms of **alienation** in the division of labour, private property and the capitalist mode of production in which the worker loses both the product of his labour and his sense of his own productive activity, following the expropriation of both by capital. The world man has made confronts him as stranger and enemy, having power over him who has transferred his power to it. This relates to the detailed legal and commercial sense of alienation (ii) or *Entäusserung*, though described in new ways by being centred in the processes of modern production. Thus **alienation** (i), in the most general sense of a state of estrangement, is produced by the cumulative and detailed historical processes of **alienation** (ii). Minor

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senses of **alienation** (i), corresponding to *Entfremdung* – estrangement of persons in competitive labour and production, the phenomenon of general estrangement in an industrial-capitalist factory or city – are seen as consequences of this general process.

All these specific senses, which have of course been the subject of prolonged discussion and dispute from within and from outside each particular system, have led to increasing contemporary usage, and the usual accusations of 'incorrectness' or 'misunderstanding' between what are in fact alternative uses of the word. The most widespread contemporary use is probably that derived from one form of psychology, a loss of connection with one's own deepest feelings and needs. But there is a very common combination of this with judgments that we live in an 'alienating' society, with specific references to the nature of modern work, modern education and modern kinds of community. A recent classification (Seeman, 1959) defined: (a) *powerlessness* – an inability or a feeling of inability to influence the society in which we live; (b) *meaninglessness* – a feeling of lack of guides for conduct and belief, with (c) *normlessness* – a feeling that illegitimate means are required to meet approved goals; (d) *isolation* – estrangement from given norms and goals; (e) *self-estrangement* – an inability to find genuinely satisfying activities. This abstract classification, characteristically reduced to psychological states and without reference to specific social and historical processes, is useful in showing the very wide range which common use of the term now involves. Durkheim's term, *anomie*, which has been also adopted in English, overlaps with **alienation** especially in relation to (b) and (c), the absence of or the failure to find adequate or convincing norms for social relationship and self-fulfilment.

It is clear from the present extent and intensity of the use of **alienation** that there is widespread and important experience which, in these varying ways, the word and its varying specific concepts offer to describe and interpret. There has been some impatience with its difficulties, and a tendency to reject it as merely fashionable. But it seems better to face the difficulties of the word and through them the difficulties which its extraordinary history and variation of usage indicate and record. In its evidence of extensive feeling of a division between *man* and *society*, it is a crucial element in a very general structure of meanings.

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See CIVILIZATION, INDIVIDUAL, MAN, PSYCHOLOGICAL, SUBJECTIVE

ANARCHISM

Anarchy came into English in mC16, from fw *anarchie*, F, rw *anarchia*, Gk – a state without a leader. Its earliest uses are not too far from the early hostile uses of DEMOCRACY (q.v.): 'this unleful lyberty or lycence of the multytude is called an Anarchie' (1539). But it came through as primarily a description of any kind of disorder or *chaos* (Gk – chasm or void). **Anarchism,** from mC17, and **anarchist,** from lC17, remained, however, much nearer the political sense: 'Anarchism, the Doctrine, Positions or Art of those that teach anarchy; also the being itself of the people without a Prince or Ruler' (1656). The **anarchists** thus characterized are very close to *democrats* and *republicans*, in their older senses; there was also an association of **anarchists** and *atheists* (Cudworth, 1678). It is interesting that as late as 1862 Spencer wrote: 'the anarchist . . . denies the right of any government . . . to trench upon his individual freedom'; these are now often the terms of a certain modern liberalism or indeed of a radical conservatism.

However the terms began to shift in the specific context of the French Revolution, when the Girondins attacked their radical opponents as **anarchists,** in the older general sense. This had the effect of identifying **anarchism** with a range of radical political tendencies, and the term of abuse seems first to have been positively adopted by Proudhon, in 1840. From this period **anarchism** is a major tendency within the socialist and labour movements, often in conflict with centralizing versions of Marxism and other forms of SOCIALISM (q.v.). From the 1870s groups which had previously defined themselves as *mutualists*, *federalists* or *anti-authoritarians* consciously adopted **anarchists** as their identification, and this broad movement developed into revolutionary organizations which were opposed to 'state socialism' and to the 'dictatorship of the proletariat'. The important *anarcho-syndicalist* movement founded social organization on self-governing collectives, based on trade unions; these would be substituted for all forms of state organization.

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Also, however, mainly between the 1870s and 1914, one minority tendency in **anarchism** had adopted tactics of individual violence and assassination, against political rulers. A strong residual sense of **anarchist** as this kind of *terrorist* (in the language, with *terrorism*, from C18) has not been forgotten, though it is clearly separate from the mainstream **anarchist** movement.

Conscious self-styled **anarchism** is still a significant political movement, but it is interesting that many **anarchist** ideas and proposals have been taken up in later phases of Marxist and other revolutionary socialist thought, though the distance from the word, with all its older implications, is usually carefully maintained.

See DEMOCRACY, LIBERAL, LIBERATION, RADICAL, REVOLUTION, SOCIALISM, VIOLENCE

ANTHROPOLOGY

Anthropology came into English in lC16. The first recorded use, from R. Harvey in 1593, has a modern ring: 'Genealogy or issue which they had, Artes which they studied, Actes which they did. This part of History is named Anthropology.' Yet a different sense was to become predominant, for the next three centuries. *Anthropologos,* Gk – discourse and study of man, with the implied substantive form *anthropologia,* had been used by Aristotle, and was revived in 1594–5 by Casmann: *Psychologica Anthropologica, sive Animae Humanae Doctrina* and *Anthropologia: II, hoc est de fabrica Humani Corporis*. The modern terms for the two parts of Casmann's work would be PSYCHOLOGY (q.v.) and *physiology,* but of course the point was the linkage, in a sense that was still active in a standard C18 definition: 'Anthropology includes the consideration both of the human body and soul, with the laws of their union, and the effects thereof, as sensation, motion, etc.' What then came through was a specialization of physical studies, either (i) in relation to the senses – 'the analysis of our senses in the commonest books of anthropology' (Coleridge, 1810) – or (ii) in application to problems of human physical diversity (cf. RACIAL) and of human EVOLUTION

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(q.v.). Thus until the later C19, the predominant meaning was in the branch of study we now distinguish as '**physical anthropology**'.

The emergence (or perhaps, remembering Harvey, the re-emergence) of a more general sense, for what we would now distinguish as 'social' or 'cultural' **anthropology**, is a C19 development closely associated with the development of the ideas of CIVILIZATION (q.v.) and especially CULTURE (q.v.). Indeed Tylor's *Primitive Culture* (1870) is commonly taken, in the English-speaking world, as a founding text of the new science. This runs back, in one line, to Herder's lC18 distinction of plural *cultures* – distinct ways of life, which need to be studied as wholes, rather than as stages of DEVELOPMENT (q.v.) towards European *civilization*. It runs back also, in another line, to concepts derived from this very notion (common in the thinkers of the C18 Enlightenment) of 'stages' of *development*, and notably to G. F. Klemm's *Allgemeine Kulturgeschichte der Menschheit* – 'General Cultural History of Mankind' (1843–52) and *Allgemeine Kulturwissenschaft* – 'General Science of Culture' (1854–5). Klemm distinguished three stages of human development as savagery, domestication and freedom. In 1871 the American Lewis Morgan, a pioneer in linguistic studies of kinship, influentially defined three stages in his *Ancient Society; or Researches in the Line of Human Progress from Savagery through Barbarism to Civilization*. Through Engels this had a major influence on early Marxism. But the significance of this line for the idea of **anthropology** was its emphasis on 'primitive' (or 'savage') cultures, whether or not in a perspective of 'development'. In the period of European imperialism and colonialism, and in the related period of American relations with the conquered Indian tribes, there was abundant material both for scientific study and for more general concerns. (Some of the latter were later systematized as 'practical' or 'applied' **anthropology**, bringing scientific knowledge to bear on governmental and administrative policies.) Yet the most important effect was the relative specialization of **anthropology** to 'primitive' cultures, though this work, when done, both provided models of studies of 'whole and distinct ways of life', with effects on the study of 'human structures', generalized in one tendency as STRUCTURALISM (q.v.) in the closely related linguistics and **anthropology**; in another tendency as *functionalism*, in which social institutions are (variable) cultural responses to basic human needs; and, in its assembly of wide

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comparative evidence, encouraging more generally the idea of *alternative* cultures and lines of human development, in sharp distinction from the idea of regular stages in a unilinear process towards *civilization*.

Thus, in mC20, there were still the longstanding physical **anthropology**; the rich and extending **anthropology** of 'primitive' peoples; and, in an uncertain area beyond both, the sense of **anthropology** as a mode of study and a source of evidence for more general including modern human ways of life. Of course by this period SOCIOLOGY (q.v.) had become established, in different forms, as the discipline in which modern societies (and, in some schools, modern *cultures*) were studied, and there were then difficult overlaps with what were now called (mainly to distinguish them from *physical* **anthropology**) 'social' or 'cultural' **anthropology** ('social' has been more common in Britain; 'cultural' in USA; though *cultural* **anthropology**, in USA, often indicates the study of material artefacts).

The major intellectual issues involved in this complex of terms and disciplines are sometimes revealed, perhaps more often obscured, by the complex history of the words. It is interesting that a new grouping of these closely related and often overlapping concerns and disciplines is increasingly known, from mC20, as 'the *human sciences*' (especially in France 'les *sciences humaines*'), which is in effect starting again, in a modern language, and in the plural, with what had been the literal but then variously specialized meaning of **anthropology**.

See CIVILIZATION, CULTURE, DEVELOPMENT, EVOLUTION, PSYCHOLOGY, RACIAL, SOCIOLOGY, STRUCTURAL

ART

The original general meaning of **art**, to refer to any kind of skill, is still active in English. But a more specialized meaning has become common, and in **the arts** and to a large extent in **artist** has become predominant.

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Art has been used in English from C13, fw *art*, oF, rw *artem*, L – skill. It was widely applied, without predominant specialization, until lC17, in matters as various as mathematics, medicine and angling. In the medieval university curriculum the **arts** ('the seven arts' and later 'the LIBERAL (q.v.) arts') were grammar, logic, rhetoric, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy, and **artist**, from C16, was first used in this context, though with almost contemporary developments to describe any skilled person (as which it is in effect identical with **artisan** until lC16) or a practitioner of one of the **arts** in another grouping, those presided over by the seven muses: history, poetry, comedy, tragedy, music, dancing, astronomy. Then, from lC17, there was an increasingly common specialized application to a group of skills not hitherto formally represented: painting, drawing, engraving and sculpture. The now dominant use of **art** and **artist** to refer to these skills was not fully established until lC19, but it was within this grouping that in lC18, and with special reference to the exclusion of engravers from the new Royal Academy, a now general distinction between **artist** and **artisan** – the latter being specialized to 'skilled manual worker' without 'intellectual' or 'imaginative' or 'creative' purposes – was strengthened and popularized. This development of **artisan,** and the mC19 definition of *scientist,* allowed the specialization of **artist** and the distinction not now of the *liberal* but of the **fine arts**.

The emergence of an abstract, capitalized **Art**, with its own internal but general principles, is difficult to localize. There are several plausible C18 uses, but it was in C19 that the concept became general. It is historically related, in this sense, to the development of CULTURE and AESTHETICS (qq.v.). Wordsworth wrote to the painter Haydon in 1815: 'High is our calling, friend, Creative Art.' The now normal association with *creative* and *imaginative,* as a matter of classification, dates effectively from lC18 and eC19. The significant adjective **artistic** dates effectively from mC19. **Artistic temperament** and **artistic sensibility** date from the same period. So too does **artiste,** a further distinguishing specialization to describe performers such as actors or singers, thus keeping **artist** for painter, sculptor and eventually (from mC19) writer and composer.

It is interesting to notice what words, in different periods, are ordinarily distinguished from or contrasted with **art**. **Artless** before mC17 meant 'unskilled' or 'devoid of skill', and this sense has

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survived. But there was an early regular contrast between **art** and *nature*: that is, between the product of human skill and the product of some inherent quality. **Artless** then acquired, from mC17 but especially from lC18, a positive sense to indicate spontaneity even in 'art'. While **art** still meant skill and INDUSTRY (q.v.) diligent skill, they were often closely associated, but when each was abstracted and specialized they were often, from eC19, contrasted as the separate areas of imagination and utility. Until C18 most sciences were **arts**; the modern distinction between *science* and **art**, as contrasted areas of human skill and effort, with fundamentally different methods and purposes, dates effectively from mC19, though the words themselves are sometimes contrasted, much earlier, in the sense of 'theory' and 'practice' (see SCIENCE, THEORY).

This complex set of historical distinctions between various kinds of human skill and between varying basic purposes in the use of such skills is evidently related both to changes in the practical division of labour and to fundamental changes in practical definitions of the purposes of the exercise of skill. It can be primarily related to the changes inherent in capitalist commodity production, with its specialization and reduction of use values to exchange values. There was a consequent defensive specialization of certain skills and purposes to **the arts** or *the humanities* where forms of general use and intention which were not determined by immediate exchange could be at least conceptually abstracted. This is the formal basis of the distinction between **art** and *industry*, and between **fine arts** and **useful arts** (the latter eventually acquiring a new specialized term, in TECHNOLOGY (q.v.)).

The **artist** is then distinct within this fundamental perspective not only from *scientist* and *technologist* – each of whom in earlier periods would have been called **artist** – but from *artisan* and *craftsman* and *skilled worker*, who are now *operatives* in terms of a specific definition and organization of WORK (q.v.). As these practical distinctions are pressed, within a given mode of production, **art** and **artist** acquire ever more general (and more vague) associations, offering to express a general *human* (i.e. non-utilitarian) interest, even while, ironically, most **works of art** are effectively treated as commodities and most **artists**, even when they justly claim quite other intentions, are effectively treated as a category of independent *craftsmen* or *skilled workers* producing a certain kind of marginal commodity.

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See AESTHETIC, CREATIVE, CULTURE, GENIUS, INDUSTRY, SCIENCE, TECHNOLOGY

B

BEHAVIOUR

Behave is a very curious word which still presents difficulties. There was an oE *behabban* – to contain, from rw *be* – about, *habban* – to hold. But the modern word seems to have been introduced in C15 as a form of qualification of the verb *have* (cf. *sich behaben*, in G), and especially in the reflexive sense of 'to have (bear) oneself'. In C16 examples the past tense can be *behad*. The main sense that came through was one of public conduct or bearing: the nearest modern specialization would perhaps be *deportment*, or the specialized sense (from C16) of *manners* (cf. C14 *mannerly*). In the verb this is still a predominant sense, and to **behave** ('yourself') is still colloquially to behave well, although to **behave badly** is also immediately understood. In the course of its development from its originally rather limited and dignified sense of public conduct (which Johnson still noted with an emphasis on *external*), to a term summarizing, in a general moral sense, a whole range of activities, **behave** has acquired a certain ambivalence, and this has become especially important in the associated development of **behaviour**. Use of the noun to refer to public conduct or, in a moral sense, to a general range of activities is still common enough; the classic instance is 'when we are sick in fortune, often the surfeits of our own behaviour' (*King Lear*, I, ii). But the critical development is the neutral application of the term, without any moral implications, to describe ways in which someone or something acts (reacts) in some specific situation. This began in

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scientific description in C17 but is not common before C19. The crucial transfer seems to take place in descriptions of material objects, with a strong sense of observation which is probably related to the earlier main sense of observable public conduct. Thus: 'to watch . . . the behaviour of the water which drains off a flat coast of mud' (Huxley, 1878). But the term was also used in relation to plants, lower organisms and animals, and by lC19 was in general use in its still current sense of 'the externally apparent activity of a whole organism'. (Cf. **animal behaviour,** and its specialized synonym *ethology*; *ethology* had previously been defined as mimicry, C17; the science of *ethics*, C18; the science of character (Mill, 1843). The range from moral to neutral definitions is as evident as in **behaviour,** and can of course be seen also in *character*.)

One particular meaning followed from the extension of the methodology of the physical and biological sciences to an influential school of psychology which described itself (Watson, 1913) as **behaviourist** and (slightly later) **behaviourism**. Psychology was seen as 'a purely objective experimental branch of natural science' (Watson), and data of a 'mental' or 'experiential' kind were ruled out as unscientific. The key point in this definition was the sense of *observable,* which was initially confined to 'objectively physically measurable' but which later developments, that were still called **behaviourist** or **neo-behaviourist** (this use of *neo,* Gk – new, to indicate a new or revised version of a doctrine is recorded from C17 but is most common from lC19), modified to 'experimentally measurable', various kinds of 'mental' or 'experiential' (cf. SUBJECTIVE) data being admitted under conditions of controlled observation. More important, probably, than the methodological argument within psychology was the extension, from this school and from several associated social and intellectual tendencies, of a sense of **behaviour,** in its new wide reference to all (? observable) activity, and especially human activity, as 'interaction' between 'an organism' and 'its environment', usually itself specialized to 'stimulus' and 'response'. This had the effect, in a number of areas, of limiting not only the study but the nature of human activity to interactions DETERMINED (q.v.) by an environment, other conceptions of 'intention' or 'purpose' being rejected or treated as at best secondary, the predominant emphasis being always on (observable) effect: **behaviour.** In the human sciences, and in many socially applied (and far from

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neutral) fields such as COMMUNICATIONS (q.v.) and *advertising* (which developed from its general sense of 'notification', from C15, to a system of organized influence on CONSUMER (q.v.) **behaviour,** especially from lC19), the relatively neutral physical senses of *stimulus* and *response* have been developed into a reductive system of 'controlled' **behaviour** as a summary of all significant human activity. (*Controlled* is interesting because of the overlap between conditions of observable experiment – developed from the sense of a system of checks in commercial accounting, from C15 – and conditions of the exercise of restraint or power over others, also from C15. The two modern senses are held as separate, but there has been some practical transfer between them.) The most important effect is the description of certain 'intentional' and 'purposive' human practices and systems as if they were 'natural' or 'objective' stimuli, to which *responses* can be graded as 'normal' or 'abnormal' or 'deviant'. The sense of 'autonomous' or 'independent' response (either generally, or in the sense of being outside the terms of a given system) can thus be weakened, with important effects in politics and sociology (cf. 'deviant groups', 'deviant political behaviour'), in psychology (cf. RATIONALIZATION) and in the understanding of intelligence or of language (**language behaviour**), where there is now considerable argument between an extended sense of **behaviourist** explanations and explanations based on such terms as *generative* or CREATIVE (q.v.).

Apart from these particular and central controversies, it remains significant that a term for public conduct should have developed into our most widely used and most apparently neutral term for all kinds of activity.

BOURGEOIS

Bourgeois is a very difficult word to use in English: first, because although quite widely used it is still evidently a French word, the earlier Anglicization to *burgess*, from oF *burgeis* and mE *burgeis, burges*, borges – inhabitant of a borough, having remained fixed in its original limited meaning; secondly, because it is especially

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associated with Marxist argument, which can attract hostility or dismissal (and it is relevant here that in this context **bourgeois** cannot properly be translated by the more familiar English adjective *middle-class*); thirdly, because it has been extended, especially in English in the last twenty years, partly from this Marxist sense but mainly from much earlier French senses, to a general and often vague term of social contempt. To understand this range it is necessary to follow the development of the word in French, and to note a particular difficulty in the translation, into both French and English, of the German *bürgerlich*.

Under the feudal regime in France **bourgeois** was a juridical category in society, defined by such conditions as length of residence. The essential definition was that of the solid citizen whose mode of life was at once stable and solvent. The earliest adverse meanings come from a higher social order: an aristocratic contempt for the mediocrity of the **bourgeois** which extended, especially in C18, into a philosophical and intellectual contempt for the limited if stable life and ideas of this 'middle' class (there was a comparable English C17 and C18 use of *citizen* and its abbreviation *cit*). There was a steady association of the **bourgeois** with trade, but to succeed as a bourgeois, and to live *bourgeoisement*, was typically to retire and live on invested income. A **bourgeois** house was one in which no trade or profession (lawyers and doctors were later excepted) could be carried on.

The steady growth in size and importance of this **bourgeois** class in the centuries of expanding trade had major consequences in political thought, which in turn had important complicating effects on the word. A new concept of SOCIETY (q.v.) was expressed and translated in English, especially in C18, as *civil* society, but the equivalents for this adjective were and in some senses still are the French *bourgeois* and the German *bürgerlich*. In later English usage these came to be translated as **bourgeois** in the more specific C19 sense, often leading to confusion.

Before the specific Marxist sense, **bourgeois** became a term of contempt, but also of respect from below. The migrant labourer or soldier saw the established **bourgeois** as his opposite; workers saw the capitalized **bourgeois** as an employer. The social dimension of the later use was thus fully established by lC18, although the

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essentially different aristocratic or philosophical contempt was still an active sense.

The definition of **bourgeois** society was a central concept in Marx, yet especially in some of his early work the term is ambiguous, since in relation to Hegel for whom *civil* (*bürgerlich*) *society* was an important term to be distinguished from STATE (q.v.) Marx used, and in the end amalgamated, the earlier and the later meanings. Marx's new sense of **bourgeois** society followed earlier historical usage, from established and solvent burgesses to a growing class of traders, entrepreneurs and employers. His attack on what he called **bourgeois** political theory (the theory of *civil society*) was based on what he saw as its falsely universal concepts and institutions, which were in fact the concepts and institutions of a specifically **bourgeois** society: that is, a society in which the **bourgeoisie** (the class name was now much more significant) had become or was becoming dominant. Different stages of **bourgeois** society led to different stages of the CAPITALIST (q.v.) mode of economic production, or, as it was later more strictly put, different stages of the capitalist mode of production led to different stages of **bourgeois** society and hence **bourgeois** thought, **bourgeois** feeling, **bourgeois** ideology, **bourgeois** art. In Marx's sense the word has passed into universal usage. But it is often difficult to separate it, in some respects, from the residual aristocratic and philosophical contempt, and from a later form especially common among unestablished artists, writers and thinkers, who might not and often do not share Marx's central definition, but who sustain the older sense of hostility towards the (mediocre) established and respectable.

The complexity of the word is then evident. There is a problem even in the strict Marxist usage, in that the same word, **bourgeois,** is used to describe historically distinct periods and phases of social and cultural development. In some contexts, especially, this is bound to be confusing: the **bourgeois** ideology of settled independent citizens is clearly not the same as the **bourgeois** ideology of the highly mobile agents of a para-national corporation. The distinction of **petit-bourgeois** is an attempt to preserve some of the earlier historical characteristics, but is also used for a specific category within a more complex and mobile society. There are also problems in the relation between **bourgeois** and *capitalist*, which are often used

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indistinguishably but which in Marx are primarily distinguishable as social and economic terms. There is a specific difficulty in the description of non-urban capitalists (e.g. agrarian capitalist employers) as **bourgeois,** with its residual urban sense, though the social relations they institute are clearly **bourgeois** in the developed C19 sense. There is also difficulty in the relation between descriptions of **bourgeois** society and the **bourgeois** or **bourgeoisie** as a class. A **bourgeois** society, according to Marx, is one in which the **bourgeois** class is dominant, but there can then be difficulties of usage, associated with some of the most intense controversies of analysis, when the same word is used for a whole society in which one class is dominant (but in which, necessarily, there are other classes) and for a specific class within that whole society. The difficulty is especially noticeable in uses of **bourgeois** as an adjective describing some practice which is not itself defined by the manifest social and economic content of **bourgeois.**

It is thus not surprising that there is resistance to the use of the word in English, but it has also to be said that for its precise uses in Marxist and other historical and political argument there is no real English alternative. The translation *middle-class* serves most of the pre-C19 meanings, in pointing to the same kinds of people, and their ways of life and opinions, as were then indicated by **bourgeois,** and had been indicated by *citizen* and *cit* and *civil*; general uses of *citizen* and *cit* were common until lC18 but less common after the emergence of *middle-class* in lC18. But *middle-class* (see CLASS), though a modern term, is based on an older threefold division of society – *upper*, *middle* and *lower* – which has most significance in feudal and immediately post-feudal society and which, in the sense of the later uses, would have little or no relevance as a description of a developed or fully formed **bourgeois** society. A *ruling* class, which is the socialist sense of **bourgeois** in the context of historical description of a developed capitalist society, is not easily or clearly represented by the essentially different *middle* class. For this reason, especially in this context and in spite of the difficulties, **bourgeois** will continue to have to be used.

See CAPITALISM, CIVILIZATION, CLASS, SOCIETY

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BUREAUCRACY

Bureaucracy appears in English from mC19. Carlyle in *Latter-day Pamphlets* (1850) wrote of 'the Continental nuisance called "Bureaucracy" ', and Mill in 1848 wrote of the inexpediency of concentrating all the power of organized action 'in a dominant bureaucracy'. In 1818, using an earlier form, Lady Morgan had written of the 'Bureaucratie or office tryanny, by which Ireland had been so long governed'. The word was taken from fw *bureaucratie*, F, rw *bureau* – writing-desk and then office. The original meaning of *bureau* was the baize used to cover desks. The English use of **bureau** as office dates from eC18; it became more common in American use, especially with reference to foreign branches, the French influence being predominant. The increasing scale of commercial organization, with a corresponding increase in government intervention and legal controls, and with the increasing importance of organized and professional central government, produced the political facts to which the new term pointed. But there was then considerable variation in their evaluation. In English and North American usage the foreign term, **bureaucracy**, was used to indicate the rigidity or excessive power of public administration, while such terms as *public service* or *civil service* were used to indicate impartiality and selfless professionalism. In German *Bureaukratie* often had the more favourable meaning, as in Schmoller ('the only neutral element', apart from the monarchy, 'in the class war'), and was given a further sense of legally established rationality by Weber. The variation of terms can still confuse the variations of evaluation, and indeed the distinctions between often diverse political systems which 'a body of *public servants*' or a **bureaucracy** can serve. Beyond this, however, there has been a more general use of **bureaucracy** to indicate, unfavourably, not merely the class of officials but certain types of centralized social order, of a modern organized kind, as distinct not only from older *aristocratic* societies but from popular DEMOCRACY (q.v.). This has been important in socialist thought, where the concept of the 'public interest' is especially exposed to the variation between 'public service' and '**bureaucracy**'.

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In more local ways, **bureaucracy** is used to refer to the complicated formalities of official procedures, what the *Daily News* in 1871 described as 'the Ministry . . . with all its routine of tape, wax, seals, and bureauism'. There is again an area of uncertainty between two kinds of reference, as can be seen by the coinage of more neutral phrases such as 'business methods' and 'office organization' for commercial use, **bureaucracy** being often reserved for similar or identical procedures in government.

See DEMOCRACY, MANAGEMENT

C

CAPITALISM

Capitalism as a word describing a particular economic system began to appear in English from eC19, and almost simultaneously in French and German. **Capitalist** as a noun is a little older; Arthur Young used it, in his journal of *Travels in France* (1792), but relatively loosely: 'moneyed men, or capitalists'. Coleridge used it in the developed sense – 'capitalists . . . having labour at demand' – in *Tabletalk* (1823). Thomas Hodgskin, in *Labour Defended against the Claims of Capital* (1825) wrote: 'all the capitalists of Europe, with all their circulating capital, cannot of themselves supply a single week's food and clothing', and again: 'betwixt him who produces food and him who produces clothing, betwixt him who makes instruments and him who uses them, in steps the capitalist, who neither makes nor uses them and appropriates to himself the produce of both'. This is clearly the description of an economic *system*.

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The economic sense of **capital** had been present in English from C17 and in a fully developed form from C18. Chambers *Cyclopaedia* (1727–51) has 'power given by Parliament to the South-Sea company to increase their capital' and definition of 'circulating capital' is in Adam Smith (1776). The word had acquired this specialized meaning from its general sense of 'head' or 'chief': fw *capital*, F, *capitalis*, L, rw *caput*, L – head. There were many derived specialist meanings; the economic meaning developed from a shortening of the phrase 'capital stock' – a material holding or monetary fund. In classical economics the functions of **capital,** and of various kinds of **capital,** were described and defined.

Capitalism represents a development of meaning in that it has been increasingly used to indicate a particular and historical economic system rather than any economic system as such. **Capital** and at first **capitalist** were technical terms in any economic system. The later (eC19) uses of **capitalist** moved towards specific functions in a particular stage of historical development; it is this use that crystallized in **capitalism**. There was a sense of the **capitalist** as the useless but controlling intermediary between producers, or as the employer of labour, or, finally, as the owner of the means of production. This involved, eventually, and especially in Marx, a distinction of **capital** as a formal economic category from **capitalism** as a particular form of centralized ownership of the means of production, carrying with it the system of wage-labour. **Capitalism** in this sense is a product of a developing bourgeois society; there are early kinds of **capitalist** production but **capitalism** as a system – what Marx calls 'the capitalist era' – dates only from C16 and did not reach the stage of **industrial capitalism** until lC18 and eC19.

There has been immense controversy about the details of this description, and of course about the merits and workings of the system itself, but from eC20, in most languages, **capitalism** has had this sense of a distinct economic system, which can be contrasted with other systems. As a term **capitalism** does not seem to be earlier than the 1880s, when it began to be used in German socialist writing and was extended to other non-socialist writing. Its first English and French uses seem to date only from the first years of C20. In mC20, in reaction against socialist argument, the words **capitalism** and **capitalist** have often been deliberately replaced by defenders of the system by such phrases as 'private enterprise' and 'free enterprise'.

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These terms, recalling some of the conditions of early capitalism, are applied without apparent hesitation to very large or para-national 'public' corporations, or to an economic system controlled by them. At other times, however, **capitalism** is defended under its own now common name. There has also developed a use of **post-capitalist** and **post-capitalism,** to describe modifications of the system such as the supposed transfer of control from shareholders to professional management, or the coexistence of certain NATIONALIZED (q.v.) or 'state-owned' industries. The plausibility of these descriptions depends on the definition of capitalism which they are selected to modify. Though they evidently modify certain kinds of capitalism, in relation to its central sense they are marginal. A new phrase, **state-capitalism,** has been widely used in mC20, with precedents from eC20, to describe forms of state ownership in which the original conditions of the definition – centralized ownership of the means of production, leading to a system of wage-labour – have not really changed.

It is also necessary to note an extension of the adjective **capitalist** to describe the whole society, or features of the society, in which a **capitalist** economic system predominates. There is considerable overlap and occasional confusion here between **capitalist** and BOURGEOIS (q.v.). In strict Marxist usage **capitalist** is a description of a mode of production and *bourgeois* a description of a type of society. It is in controversy about the relations between a mode of production and a type of society that the conditions for overlap of meaning occur.

See BOURGEOIS, INDUSTRY, SOCIETY

CAREER

Career is now so regularly used to describe a person's progress in life, or, by derivation from this, his profession or vocation that it is difficult to remember, in the same context, its original meanings of a racecourse and a gallop – though in some contexts, as in the phrase 'careering about', these survive.

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Career appeared in English from eC16, from fw *carrière*, F – racecourse, rw *carraria*, L – carriage road, from *carrus*, L – wagon. It was used from C16 for racecourse, gallop, and by extension any rapid or uninterrupted activity. Though sometimes applied neutrally, as of the course of the sun, it had a predominant C17 and C18 sense not only of rapid but of unrestrained activity. It is not easy to be certain of the change of implication between, for example, a use in 1767 – 'a ... beauty ... in the career of her conquests' – and Macaulay's use in 1848 – 'in the full career of success'. But it is probable that it was from eC19 that the use without derogatory implication began, especially with reference to diplomats and statesmen. By mC19 the word was becoming common to indicate progress in a vocation and then the vocation itself.

At this point, and especially in the course of C20, **career** becomes inseparable from a difficult group of words of which WORK, LABOUR (qq.v.) and especially *job* are prominent examples. **Career** is still used in the abstract spectacular sense of politicians and entertainers, but more generally it is applied, with some conscious and unconscious class distinction, to *work* or a *job* which contains some implicit promise of progress. It has been most widely used for jobs with explicit internal development – 'a career in the Civil Service' – but it has since been extended to any favourable or desired or flattered occupation – 'a career in coalmining'. **Career** now usually implies continuity if not necessarily promotion or advancement, yet the distinction between a **career** and a *job* only partly depends on this and is often associated also with class distinctions between different kinds of work. On the other hand, the extension of the term, as in '**careers** advice', sometimes cancels these associations, and there has been an American description of 'semi-skilled workers' as having a 'flat **career** trajectory'.

It is interesting that something like the original metaphor, with its derogatory C17 or C18 sense, has reappeared in descriptions of some areas of work and promotion as the *rat-race*. But of course the derogatory sense is directly present in the derived words **careerism** and **careerist**, which are held carefully separate from the positive implications of **career**. **Careerist** is recorded from 1917, and **careerism** from 1933; the early uses refer to parliamentary politics.

See LABOUR, WORK

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CHARITY

Charity came into English, in C12, from fw *charité*, oF, *caritas*, L, rw *carus* – dear. Forms of the Latin word had taken on the sense of dearness of price as well as affection (an association repeated and continued in *dear* itself, from oE onwards). But the predominant use of **charity** was in the context of the Bible. (Greek *agape* had been distinguished into *dilectio* and *caritas* in the Vulgate, and Wyclif translated these as *love* and *charity*. Tyndale rendered *caritas* as love, and in the fierce doctrinal disputes of C16 this translation was criticized, the ecclesiastical **charity** being preferred in the Bishop's Bible and then in the Authorized Version. *Love* was one of the key terms of the C19 Revised Version.) **Charity** was then Christian love, between man and God, and between men and their neighbours. The sense of benevolence to neighbours, and specifically of gifts to the needy, is equally early, but was at first directly related to the sense of Christian love, as in the Pauline use: 'though I bestow all my goods to feed the poor . . . and have not charity, it profiteth me nothing' (1 *Corinthians* 13) where the act without the feeling is seen as null. Nevertheless, **charity** in the predominant sense of help to the needy came through steadily; it is probably already dominant in C16 and is used with a new sense of abstraction from lC17 and eC18. A **charity** as an institution was established by lC17. These senses have of course persisted.

But there is another movement in the word. **Charity begins at home** was already a popular saying in eC17 and has precedents from C14. More significant is **cold as charity,** which is an interesting reversal of what is probably the original use in *Matthew* 24:12, where the prophecy of 'wars and rumours of wars' and of the rise of 'many false prophets' is capped by this: 'because iniquity shall abound, the love of many shall wax cold'. This is the most general Christian sense. Earlier translations (e.g. Rhemish, 1582) had used: 'charity of many shall wax cold'. Browne (1642) wrote of 'the general complaint of these times . . . that Charity grows cold'. By lC18 the sense had been reversed. It was not the sense of a drying-up or

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freezing of love or benevolence; it was the more interesting sense of what the **charitable** act feels like to the recipient from prolonged experience of the habits and manners of most charitable institutions. This sense has remained very important, and some people still say that they will not 'take charity', even from public funds to which they have themselves contributed. It is true that this includes an independent feeling against being helped by others, but the odium which has gathered around **charity** in this context comes from feelings of wounded self-respect and dignity which belong, historically, to the interaction of charity and of class-feelings, on both sides of the act. Critical marks of this interaction are the specialization of **charity** to the *deserving poor* (not neighbourly love, but reward for approved social conduct) and the calculation in bourgeois political economy summed up by Jevons (1878): 'all that the political economist insists upon is that charity shall be really charity, and shall not injure those whom it is intended to aid' (not the relief of need, but its selective use to preserve the incentive to wage-labour). It is not surprising that the word which was once the most general expression of love and care for others has become (except in special contexts, following the surviving legal definition of benevolent institutions) so compromised that modern governments have to advertise welfare benefits (and with a wealth of social history in the distinction) as 'not a charity but a right'.

CITY

City has existed in English since C13, but its distinctive modern use to indicate a large or very large town, and its consequent use to distinguish urban areas from rural areas or *country*, date from C16. The later indication and distinction are obviously related to the increasing importance of urban life from C16 onwards, but until C19 this was often specialized to the capital city, London. The more general use corresponds to the rapid development of urban living during the Industrial Revolution, which made England by mC19 the first society in the history of the world in which a majority of the population lived in towns.

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City is derived from fw *cité*, oF, rw *civitas*, L. But *civitas* was not **city** in the modern sense; that was *urbs*, L. *Civitas* was the general noun derived from *civis*, L – citizen, which is nearer our modern sense of a 'national'. *Civitas* was then the body of citizens rather than a particular settlement or type of settlement. It was so applied by Roman writers to the tribes of Gaul. In a long and complicated development *civitas* and the words derived from it became specialized to the chief town of such a state, and in ecclesiastical use to the cathedral town. The earlier English words had been *borough*, fw *burh*, oE and *town*, fw *tun*, oE. *Town* developed from its original sense of an enclosure or yard to a group of buildings in such an enclosure (as which it survives in some modern village and village-division names) to the beginnings of its modern sense in C13. *Borough* and **city** became often interchangeable, and there are various legal distinctions between them in different periods and types of medieval and post-medieval government. One such distinction of **city**, from C16, was the presence of a cathedral, and this is still residually though now wrongly asserted. When **city** began to be distinguished from *town* in terms of size, mainly from C19 but with precedents in relation to the predominance of London from C16, each was still administratively a *borough*, and this word became specialized to a form of local government or administration. From C13 **city** became in any case a more dignifying word than *town*; it was often thus used of Biblical villages, or to indicate an ideal or significant settlement. More generally, by C16 **city** was in regular use for London, and in C17 **city** and *country* contrasts were very common. **City** in the specialized sense of a financial and commercial centre, derived from actual location in the City of London, was widely used from eC18, when this financial and commercial activity notably expanded.

The **city** as a really distinctive order of settlement, implying a whole different way of life, is not fully established, with its modern implications, until eC19, though the idea has a very long history, from Renaissance and even Classical thought. The modern emphasis can be traced in the word, in the increasing abstraction of **city** as an adjective from particular places or particular administrative forms, and in the increasing generalization of descriptions of large-scale modern urban living. The modern **city** of millions of inhabitants is thus generally if indefinitely distinguished from several kinds of **city**

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– cf. *cathedral city*, *university city*, *provincial city* – characteristic of earlier periods and types of settlement. At the same time the modern **city** has been subdivided, as in the increasing contemporary use of *inner city*, a term made necessary by the changing status of *suburb*. This had been, from C17, an outer and inferior area, and the sense survives in some uses of *suburban* to indicate narrowness. But from lC19 there was a class shift in areas of preference; the *suburbs* attracted *residents* and the *inner city* was then often left to offices, shops and the poor.

See COUNTRY, CIVILIZATION

CIVILIZATION

Civilization is now generally used to describe an achieved state or condition of organized social life. Like CULTURE (q.v.) with which it has had a long and still difficult interaction, it referred originally to a process, and in some contexts this sense still survives.

Civilization was preceded in English by **civilize**, which appeared in eC17, from C16 *civiliser*, F, fw *civilizare*, mL – to make a criminal matter into a civil matter, and thence, by extension, to bring within a form of social organization. The rw is *civil* from *civilis*, L – of or belonging to citizens, from *civis*, L – citizen. **Civil** was thus used in English from C14, and by C16 had acquired the extended senses of orderly and educated. Hooker in 1594 wrote of 'Civil Society' – a phrase that was to become central in C17 and especially C18 – but the main development towards description of an ordered society was **civility**, fw *civilitas*, mL – community. **Civility** was often used in C17 and C18 where we would now expect **civilization**, and as late as 1772 Boswell, visiting Johnson, 'found him busy, preparing a fourth edition of his folio Dictionary . . . He would not admit *civilization*, but only *civility*. With great deference to him, I thought *civilization*, from *to civilize*, better in the sense opposed to *barbarity*, than *civility*.' Boswell had correctly identified the main use that was coming through, which emphasized not so much a process as a state of social order and refinement, especially in conscious historical or

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cultural contrast with *barbarism*. **Civilization** appeared in Ash's dictionary of 1775, to indicate both the state and the process. By lC18 and then very markedly in C19 it became common.

In one way the new sense of **civilization**, from lC18, is a specific combination of the ideas of a process and an achieved condition. It has behind it the general spirit of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on secular and progressive human self-development. **Civilization** expressed this sense of historical process, but also celebrated the associated sense of modernity: an achieved condition of refinement and order. In the Romantic reaction against these claims for **civilization**, alternative words were developed to express other kinds of human development and other criteria for human well-being, notably CULTURE (q.v.). In lC18 the association of **civilization** with refinement of manners was normal in both English and French. Burke wrote in *Reflections on the French Revolution*: 'our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners, and with civilization'. Here the terms seem almost synonymous, though we must note that *manners* has a wider reference than in ordinary modern usage. From eC19 the development of **civilization** towards its modern meaning, in which as much emphasis is put on social order and on ordered knowledge (later, SCIENCE (q.v.)) as on refinement of manners and behaviour, is on the whole earlier in French than in English. But there was a decisive moment in English in the 1830s, when Mill, in his essay on Coleridge, wrote:

> Take for instance the question how far mankind has gained by civilization. One observer is forcibly struck by the multiplication of physical comforts; the advancement and diffusion of knowledge; the decay of superstition; the facilities of mutual intercourse; the softening of manners; the decline of war and personal conflict; the progressive limitation of the tyranny of the strong over the weak; the great works accomplished throughout the globe by the co-operation of multitudes . . .

This is Mill's range of positive examples of **civilization**, and it is a fully modern range. He went on to describe negative effects: loss of independence, the creation of artificial wants, monotony, narrow mechanical understanding, inequality and hopeless poverty. The

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contrast made by Coleridge and others was between **civilization** and *culture* or *cultivation*:

> The permanent distinction and the occasional contrast between cultivation and civilization ... The permanency of the nation ... and its progressiveness and personal freedom ... depend on a continuing and progressive civilization. But civilization is itself but a mixed good, if not far more a corrupting influence, the hectic of disease, not the bloom of health, and a nation so distinguished more fitly to be called a varnished than a polished people, where this civilization is not grounded in cultivation, in the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterize our humanity. (*On the Constitution of Church and State*, V)

Coleridge was evidently aware in this passage of the association of civilization with the *polishing* of manners; that is the point of the remark about varnish, and the distinction recalls the curious overlap, in C18 English and French, between *polished* and *polite*, which have the same root. But the description of **civilization** as a 'mixed good', like Mill's more elaborated description of its positive and negative effects, marks the point at which the word has come to stand for a whole modern social process. From this time on this sense was dominant, whether the effects were reckoned as good, bad or mixed.

Yet it was still primarily seen as a general and indeed universal process. There was a critical moment when **civilization** was used in the plural. This is later with **civilizations** than with *cultures*; its first clear use is in French (Ballanche) in 1819. It is preceded in English by implicit uses to refer to an earlier civilization, but it is not common anywhere until the 1860s.

In modern English **civilization** still refers to a general condition or state, and is still contrasted with *savagery* or *barbarism*. But the relativism inherent in comparative studies, and reflected in the use of **civilizations,** has affected this main sense, and the word now regularly attracts some defining adjective: **Western civilization, modern civilization, industrial civilization, scientific and technological civilization**. As such it has come to be a relatively neutral form for any achieved social order or way of life, and in this sense has a complicated and much disputed relation with the modern social sense of *culture*. Yet its sense of an achieved state is still

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sufficiently strong for it to retain some normative quality; in this sense **civilization, a civilized way of life, the conditions of civilized society** may be seen as capable of being lost as well as gained.

See CITY, CULTURE, DEVELOPMENT, MODERN, SOCIETY, WESTERN

CLASS

Class is an obviously difficult word, both in its range of meanings and in its complexity in that particular meaning where it describes a social division. The Latin word *classis*, a division according to property of the people of Rome, came into English in lC16 in its Latin form, with a plural *classes* or *classies*. There is a lC16 use (King, 1594) which sounds almost modern: 'all the classies and ranks of vanitie'. But **classis** was primarily used in explicit reference to Roman history, and was then extended, first as a term in church organization ('assemblies are either classes or synods', 1593) and later as a general term for a division or group ('the classis of Plants', 1664). It is worth noting that the derived Latin word *classicus*, coming into English in eC17 as **classic** from fw *classique*, F, had social implications before it took on its general meaning of a standard authority and then its particular meaning of belonging to Greek and Roman antiquity (now usually distinguished in the form **classical**, which at first alternated with *classic*). Gellius wrote: '*classicus ... scriptor, non proletarius*'. But the form **class**, coming into English in C17, acquired a special association with education. Blount, glossing *classe* in 1656, included the still primarily Roman sense of 'an order or distribution of people according to their several Degrees' but added: 'in Schools (wherein this word is most used) a Form or Lecture restrained to a certain company of Scholars' – a use which has remained common in education. The development of **classic** and **classical** was strongly affected by this association with authoritative works for study.

From lC17 the use of **class** as a general word for a group or division became more and more common. What is then most difficult

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is that **class** came to be used in this way about people as well as about plants and animals, but without social implications of the modern kind. (Cf. Steele, 1709: 'this Class of modern Wits'.) Development of **class** in its modern social sense, with relatively fixed names for particular classes (**lower class, middle class, upper class, working class** and so on), belongs essentially to the period between 1770 and 1840, which is also the period of the Industrial Revolution and its decisive reorganization of society. At the extremes it is not difficult to distinguish between (i) **class** as a general term for any grouping and (ii) **class** as a would-be specific description of a social formation. There is no difficulty in distinguishing between Steele's 'Class of modern Wits' and, say, the *Declaration* of the Birmingham Political Union (1830) 'that the rights and interests of the middle and lower classes of the people are not efficiently represented in the Commons House of Parliament'. But in the crucial period of transition, and indeed for some time before it, there is real difficulty in being sure whether a particular use is sense (i) or sense (ii). The earliest use that I know, which might be read in a modern sense, is Defoe's ' 'tis plain the dearness of wages forms our people into more classes than other nations can show' (*Review*, 14 April 1705). But this, even in an economic context, is far from certain. There must also be some doubt about Hanway's title of 1772: 'Observations on the Causes of the Dissoluteness which reigns among the lower classes of the people'. We can read this, as indeed we would read Defoe, in a strictly social sense, but there is enough overlap between sense (i) and sense (ii) to make us pause. The crucial context of this development is the alternative vocabulary for social divisions, and it is a fact that until lC18, and residually well into C19 and even C20, the most common words were *rank* and *order*, while *estate* and *degree* were still more common than **class.** *Estate*, *degree* and *order* had been widely used to describe social position from medieval times. *Rank* had been common from lC16. In virtually all contexts where we would now say **class** these other words were standard, and *lower order* and *lower orders* became especially common in C18.

The essential history of the introduction of **class**, as a word which would supersede older names for social divisions, relates to the increasing consciousness that social position is made rather than merely inherited. All the older words, with their essential metaphors of standing, stepping and arranging in rows, belong to a society in

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which position was determined by birth. Individual mobility could be seen as movement from one *estate*, *degree*, *order* or *rank* to another. What was changing consciousness was not only increased individual mobility, which could be largely contained within the older terms, but the new sense of a SOCIETY (q.v.) or a particular *social system* which actually created social divisions, including new kinds of divisions. This is quite explicit in one of the first clear uses, that of Madison in *The Federalist* (USA, c. 1787): moneyed and manufacturing interests 'grow up of necessity in civilized nations, and divide them into different classes, actuated by different sentiments and views'. Under the pressure of this awareness, greatly sharpened by the economic changes of the Industrial Revolution and the political conflicts of the American and French revolutions, the new vocabulary of **class** began to take over. But it was a slow and uneven process, not only because of the residual familiarity of the older words, and not only because conservative thinkers continued, as a matter of principle, to avoid **class** wherever they could and to prefer the older (and later some newer) terms. It was slow and uneven, and has remained difficult, mainly because of the inevitable overlap with the use of **class** not as a specific social division but as a generally available and often *ad hoc* term of grouping.

With this said, we can trace the formation of the newly specific **class** vocabulary. **Lower classes** was used in 1772, and **lowest classes** and **lowest class** were common from the 1790s. These carry some of the marks of the transition, but do not complete it. More interesting because less dependent on an old general sense, in which the **lower classes** would be not very different from the COMMON (q.v.) *people*, is the new and increasingly self-conscious and self-used description of the **middle classes**. This has precedents in 'men of a middle condition' (1716), 'the middle Station of life' (Defoe, 1719), 'the Middling People of England . . . generally Good-natured and Stout-hearted' (1718), 'the middling and lower classes' (1789). Gisborne in 1795 wrote an 'Enquiry into the Duties of Men in the Higher Rank and Middle Classes of Society in Great Britain'. Hannah More in 1796 wrote of the 'middling classes'. The 'burden of taxation' rested heavily 'on the middle classes' in 1809 (*Monthly Repository*, 501), and in 1812 there was reference to 'such of the Middle Class of Society who have fallen upon evil days' (*Examiner*, August). *Rank* was still used at least as often, as in James Mill

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(1820): 'the class which is universally described as both the most wise and the most virtuous part of the community, the middle rank' (*Essay on Government*), but here **class** has already taken on a general social sense, used on its own. The swell of self-congratulatory description reached a temporary climax in Brougham's speech of 1831: 'by the people, I mean the middle classes, the wealth and intelligence of the country, the glory of the British name'.

There is a continuing curiosity in this development. *Middle* belongs to a disposition between *lower* and *higher*, in fact as an insertion between an increasingly insupportable *high* and *low*. **Higher classes** was used by Burke (*Thoughts on French Affairs*) in 1791, and **upper classes** is recorded from the 1820s. In this model an old hierarchical division is still obvious; the **middle class** is a self-conscious interposition between persons of *rank* and the *common people*. This was always, by definition, indeterminate: this is one of the reasons why the grouping word **class** rather than the specific word *rank* eventually came through. But clearly in Brougham, and very often since, the *upper* or *higher* part of the model virtually disappears, or, rather, awareness of a *higher* class is assigned to a different dimension, that of a residual and respected but essentially displaced aristocracy.

This is the ground for the next complication. In the fierce argument about political, social and economic rights, between the 1790s and the 1830s, **class** was used in another model, with a simple distinction of the **productive** or **useful classes** (a potent term against the aristocracy). In the widely-read translation of Volney's *The Ruins, or A Survey of the Revolutions of Empires* (2 parts, 1795) there was a dialogue between those who by 'useful labours contribute to the support and maintenance of society' (the majority of the people, 'labourers, artisans, tradesmen and every profession useful to society', hence called *People*) and a **Privileged class** ('priests, courtiers, public accountants, commanders of troops, in short, the civil, military or religious agents of government'). This is a description in French terms of *the people* against an aristocratic government, but it was widely adopted in English terms, with one particular result which corresponds to the actual political situation of the reform movement between the 1790s and the 1830s: both the self-conscious **middle classes** and the quite different people who by the end of this period would describe themselves as the **working**

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classes adopted the descriptions **useful** or **productive classes,** in distinction from and in opposition to the *privileged* or the *idle.* This use, which of course sorts oddly with the other model of *lower, middle* and *higher*, has remained both important and confusing.

For it was by transfer from the sense of *useful* or *productive* that the **working classes** were first named. There is considerable overlap in this: cf. 'middle and industrious classes' (*Monthly Magazine*, 1797) and 'poor and working classes' (Owen, 1813) – the latter probably the first English use of **working classes** but still very general. In 1818 Owen published *Two Memorials on Behalf of the Working Classes*, and in the same year *The Gorgon* (28 November) used **working classes** in the specific and unmistakable context of relations between 'workmen' and 'their employers'. The use then developed rapidly, and by 1831 the *National Union of the Working Classes* identified not so much privilege as the 'laws . . . made to protect . . . property or capital' as their enemy. (They distinguished such laws from those that had not been made to protect INDUSTRY (q.v.), still in its old sense of applied labour.) In the *Poor Man's Guardian* (19 October 1833), O'Brien wrote of establishing for 'the productive classes a complete dominion over the fruits of their own industry' and went on to describe such a change as 'contemplated by the working classes'; the two terms, in this context, are interchangeable. There are complications in phrases like the **labouring classes** and the **operative classes,** which seem designed to separate one group of the **useful classes** from another, to correspond with the distinction between *workmen* and *employers*, or *men* and *masters*: a distinction that was economically inevitable and that was politically active from the 1830s at latest. The term **working classes,** originally assigned by others, was eventually taken over and used as proudly as **middle classes** had been: 'the working classes have created all wealth' (*Rules* of Ripponden Co-operative Society; cit. J. H. Priestley, *History of RCS*; dating from 1833 or 1839).

By the 1840s, then, **middle classes** and **working classes** were common terms. The former became singular first; the latter is singular from the 1840s but still today alternates between singular and plural forms, often with ideological significance, the singular being normal in socialist uses, the plural more common in conservative descriptions. But the most significant effect of this complicated history was that there were now two common terms, increasingly

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used for comparison, distinction or contrast, which had been formed within quite different models. On the one hand *middle* implied hierarchy and therefore implied **lower class**: not only theoretically but in repeated practice. On the other hand *working* implied productive or useful activity, which would leave all who were not **working class** unproductive and useless (easy enough for an aristocracy, but hardly accepted by a productive **middle class**). To this day this confusion reverberates. As early as 1844 Cockburn referred to 'what are termed *the* working-classes, as if the only workers were those who wrought with their hands'. Yet *working man* or *workman* had a persistent reference to manual labour. In an Act of 1875 this was given legal definition: 'the expression *workman* . . . means any person who, being a labourer, servant in husbandry, journeyman, artificer, handicraftsman, miner, or otherwise engaged in manual labour . . . has entered into or works under a contract with an employer'. The association of *workman* and **working class** was thus very strong, but it will be noted that the definition includes contract with an employer as well as manual work. An Act of 1890 stated: 'the provisions of section eleven of the Housing of the Working Classes Act, 1885 . . . shall have effect as if the expression *working classes* included all classes of persons who earn their livelihood by wages or salaries'. This permitted a distinction from those whose livelihood depended on fees (**professional class**), profits (**trading class**) or property (**independent**). Yet, especially with the development of clerical and service occupations, there was a critical ambiguity about the class position of those who worked for a *salary* or even a *wage* and yet did not do manual labour. (*Salary* as fixed payment dates from C14; *wages and salaries* is still a normal C19 phrase; in 1868, however, 'a manager of a bank or railway – even an overseer or a clerk in a manufactory – is said to draw a salary', and the attempted class distinction between salaries and wages is evident; by eC20 the *salariat* was being distinguished from the *proletariat*.) Here again, at a critical point, the effect of two models of **class** is evident. The **middle class**, with which the earners of salaries normally aligned themselves, is an expression of relative social position and thus of social distinction. The **working class**, specialized from the different notion of the *useful* or *productive classes*, is an expression of economic relationships. Thus the two common modern class terms rest on different models, and the position of those who are conscious

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LANGUAGE/CRITICISM

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Raymond Williams, a Fellow of Jesus College, Cambridge University, is the author of *The Long Revolution, The English Novel from Dickens to Lawrence*, and *The Country and the City.*

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