

On Raymond Williams: Complexity, Immanence, and the Long Revolution

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The work of Raymond Williams is at risk of becoming residual at the very historical moment it could enable true emergence.¹ From the current explosion of social reproduction theory to the nascent development of world-ecology, from the gradual break-up of Britain that has enabled the emergence of socialist-inflected nationalisms, to the wave of collective struggles that have exploded across the world since 2011, the work of Raymond Williams has "got there before us again"² and is now more timely than ever.³ Yet the commentary on Williams — as in Geoff Dyer's recent introduction to Verso's important reissue of *Politics and Letters* — is often bogged down in sentimental biographical nostalgia. This 'residual' construction of Williams is drastically partial:⁴ it focuses solely on those passages of his work emphasising the importance of 'experience' or autobiography, failing to connect them to the broader project of politico-philosophical speculation in which they are embedded. Even more insidiously, Tristram Hunt's recent article on the occasion of the Penguin Vintage Classics reissue of *The Country and the City* attempts to co-opt Williams into a project of reconstitution of English national identity — the very Englishness that Williams, a self-described "Welsh European," consistently revealed to be part of a specific ruling-class formation.⁵ Hunt goes so far as to suggest — bizarrely — that Williams's work would have provided a much-needed dose of "realism" to Occupy protestors led astray by the utopian pronouncements of Antonio Negri and David Graeber.

The present article attempts to counteract this dual tendency of residualisation and incorporation by reconstructing the systematic unity of Williams's life's work.⁶ While this runs the risk of a certain 'synchronic' or — in Williams's terms — 'epochal' bias, it is necessary if we are to retain a sense of the wholeness of Williams's vision. To do so is important both to our sense of his overall political project and, arguably, to our capacity to think and intervene in the complicated totality of our own historical present. In other words, I believe that reconstructing a sense of the integral whole of Williams's oeuvre is a precondition of his continued actuality — a necessary ground-

clearing operation prior to more substantial elaborations of Williams's multiple connections to our contemporary concerns. One way of articulating this wholeness is via two seemingly banal maxims that I believe inform his work at all levels: Firstly, the world is more complex than you think it is (the maxim of complexity); secondly, you are in it (the maxim of immanence).

For the remainder of the article I shall attempt to educe the meanings of these two maxims and the ways in which they inform his theory of the 'long revolution.' In doing so, I hope to shed new light on some of his best-known concepts, such as the 'structure of feeling,' and to emphasise aspects of his work that have been hitherto neglected — not least the centrality of his lifelong engagement with naturalist drama. What follows is not intended as an introduction to his work, nor should it be taken to suggest that the maxims of complexity and immanence usurp other more canonical concepts (e.g., "cultural materialism" or "dominant, residual, and emergent") as the "keywords" of Williams's oeuvre. Rather, it is an attempt to articulate the informing logic that unifies and animates his overall project.

Maxim of Complexity

The word "complexity" has its own complex history. Originating in the Latin *complexus*, the past participle of *complectere* meaning "embrace" or "comprise," 'complex' entered the English language in the mid-seventeenth century. It rose to prominence as a theoretical term in the fields of philosophy of science and cybernetics in the mid-twentieth century. In an article entitled "Science and Complexity" (1948), Warren Weaver argued that science up to 1900 had focused on "problems of simplicity" involving only two variables, whereas the science of the first half of the twentieth century had developed powerful techniques of probability theory and statistical mechanics to deal with "problems of disorganized complexity" comprising billions of variables.⁷ The task for the coming decades was then to devise a method for understanding mid-range complexity, located between simplicity and disorganized complexity, which he called "organized complexity."⁸ For Weaver, complexity is thus a problem of scientific epistemology and method, linked primarily to situations comprising multiple variables.

In the sociology of Niklas Luhmann, however, complexity assumes a different meaning. Influenced by Talcott Parsons's 'structural functionalism,' Luhmann came to define the problem of complexity as that "of the threshold beyond which each element [of an environment] can no longer be connected with every other."⁹ This "enforces selectivity, which in turn leads to a reduction of complexity via the formation of systems that are less complex than their environment."¹⁰ Complexity for Luhmann is thus not so much an ontological condition as the retrospective projection of that from which a system differentiates itself. A system exists only to the extent that it maintains this process of self-differentiation; social systems are ultimately nothing but internally automated operations of self-reproduction. Perry Anderson

has provocatively described Luhmann's sociology as a "tacit construction of the Bonn Republic as a matter-of-fact complex of so many mechanisms of technocratic routine."¹¹ Where Parsons's structural functionalism, purged of all social contradiction, was a sociology appropriate to "the optimism of American capitalism in the epoch of its world supremacy,"¹² Luhmann's was a "saturnine variant" of Parsons, correlative to a Federal Republic based on consensus and "devoted to banality and blandness."¹³

This schematic overview is intended simply to suggest that the maxim of complexity informing Williams's work bears no substantial or political relation to Luhmannian sociology or systems theory more generally.¹⁴ Complexity in the work of Williams is part of "lived culture"¹⁵ or "the socio-cultural process,"¹⁶ which consists of a potentially infinite number of social and artistic practices, relationships, values, and documents. The potential infinity of practices and values naturally exceeds the documents in which they are recorded. This means that from one historical period to another, all that will survive of the previous period is its "recorded culture."¹⁷ Yet the very survival of recorded culture depends on the construction of what Williams calls "selective traditions": "an intentionally selective version of a shaping past and pre-shaped present," it is not a neutral selection from previous periods, but "a version of the past which is intended to connect with and ratify the present."¹⁸ Thus, Williams's social ontology always presupposes two interconnecting levels: a present in which the totality of potentially infinite social relationships and activities intersect, and an overdetermination of this present by a selective tradition, which is active within it and attempts to suture it to a selected past. Our contact with the past is then doubly limited: the recorded culture of any period is only a very small part of its total human activity, but even this part has been radically selected by the selective tradition. Hence the political importance of the maxim of complexity, encapsulated in one of the most emphatic passages of Williams's oeuvre: "*no mode of production and therefore no dominant social order and therefore no dominant culture ever in reality includes or exhausts all human practice, human energy, and human intention.*"¹⁹ Neither a problem of epistemology nor an excess of environment over system, complexity for Williams is the socio-ontological fact of the potential infinity — and infinite multiplicity — of human practices.

Williams's emphasis on complexity is both political and methodological: it is an attempt to produce a theory adequate to the discontinuities and potentialities of the *present* with a view to intervening into it towards a complex, common future. In developing and refining his major conceptual innovation, the "structure of feeling," Williams would further elaborate his theory of those elements of social complexity that are usually overlooked by what he calls "epochal" analysis.²⁰ The latter treats cultural processes as *systems*, thereby perpetuating the politically and methodologically fatal notion that dominant social orders do in fact exhaust all human practice and intention. As we shall see, his attack on epochal analysis is critical not only to his attempt to locate sources of resistance in the present, but also to his understanding

of the post-revolutionary process which, if it is to endure, must not be reduced to the simple seizure — and subsequent optimistic withering — of state power.

By the time of *Marxism and Literature*, Williams had come to define structure of feeling as “social experiences *in solution*, as distinct from other social semantic formations which have been *precipitated* and are more evidently and more immediately available.”²¹ He was concerned to capture those elements of social life which are still in process, still emergent, and which are irreducible to pre-existent (“precipitated”) modes of thought or representation, but which are nonetheless not pure anarchic flux: they possess a “structure of particular linkages, particular emphases and suppressions”²² and “specific internal relations.”²³

Williams developed the concept of ‘structure of feeling’ through a lifelong investigation of the politico-philosophical implications of literary style. This is clear from one of his earliest formulations of the concept:

All serious thinking about art must begin from two apparently contradictory facts: that an important work is always, in an irreducible sense, individual; and yet that there are authentic communities of works of art, in kinds, periods and styles ... The individual dramatist has done this, yet what he [*sic*] has done is part of what we then know about a general period or style.

It is to explore this essential relationship that I use the term “structure of feeling.”²⁴

Structure of feeling is thus located at the crossroads of two problems commonly associated with style. The first concerns individual style: the precise relation of an individual work or writer to collective literary conventions such as forms and genres. The second pertains to period style, or the general issue of periodizing and of generationality as such — that ineffable quality common to a distinct number of disparate phenomena at a certain point in time. In teasing out some of the wider implications of these issues, I shall refer to the first as the problem of transindividual subjectivity, and the second as that of historical temporality.

Williams’s theory of style began with an investigation of the problem of speech in naturalist drama. Drawing on and criticizing the ideologies of language contained in the Leavisite journal *Scrutiny* and the influential writings of T. S. Eliot, he argued that the basic problem faced by dramatists (traced throughout *Drama From Ibsen to Brecht* [1968]) is that “once a certain level of conversational speech is set, you can never move beyond it: people are confined to its limits at moments when a greater intensity of expression is needed.”²⁵ At the other extreme, however, “[w]hat becomes intolerable is either the adoption of an overall verse form which pitches everything at the level of myth, or the descent from the metaphysical to the trivial within a

uniform verse medium, such as you find in Eliot's later plays."²⁶ Thus, if a dramatist faithfully reproduces probable human speech, she risks an inadequacy of expression at crucial moments of intensity, but if she pitches her diction at too uniformly formal a level, she risks either negating the naturalist ideals of verisimilitude or of inviting comically bathetic switches from the sublime to the everyday.²⁷ It is no wonder, then, that Williams's implicit ideal of dramatic speech, from first to last, was an integration of multiple stylistic levels. Such an ideal would aim to produce a style adequate to the expression of the entire range of human feeling, from the seemingly most personal and pre-conscious affective fluctuation to the most officially, formally, and publicly recognized emotions.

Williams had long noticed the significance in naturalist drama of the domestic setting:

It is perhaps a particular stage of bourgeois society, in which the decisive action is elsewhere, and what is lived out, in these traps of rooms, are the human consequences: in particular, the consequences of a relatively leisured society. To stare from a window at where one's life is being decided: that consciousness is specific [...] The rooms are not there to define the people, but to define what they seem to be, what they cannot accept they are.²⁸

Contrary to ancient Greek drama, which was characterised by an innate total stylistic integration,²⁹ the linguistic embodiment of this bourgeois structure of feeling is a style condemned to superficiality, one that is forced to hint at hidden depths of experience beneath what is actually articulated, and in constant danger of mere "wished significance."³⁰ As Vladimir Nemirovich-Danchenko once observed of the plays of Chekov, "[t]he dialogue the author has written is merely a pale reflection of those emotions, their outward manifestation, which still leaves a great deal over."³¹ That Williams felt this was an untenable situation is significant for two reasons. Firstly, it was central to his whole conception of drama, in that his work exhibited a lifelong search for styles that would embody a "total form" — a modern equivalent of the ancient Greek totality of expression.³² Yet it was also a constitutive aspect of his sustained critique of contemporary Marxist approaches to culture (which, in his view, were essentially variations on the base-superstructure model). These approaches all depended on "a *known* history, a *known structure*, *known products*"³³ — on internally complete systems of thought with an assumed fully achieved articulation without remainder. What such approaches to culture thus ignored was precisely that realm of pre-articulated transindividual experience at which naturalist drama was constantly forced to hint and in response to which Williams developed his theory of the "structure of feeling": "social experiences in solution, as distinct from other social semantic formations which have been precipitated and are evidently and more

immediately available.”³⁴ Thus, Williams’s recognition of the constitutive inadequacy of linguistic expression in early naturalist drama simultaneously provided his key line of attack — and, ultimately, the basic trajectory of his attempted reconstruction — of Marxist theories of literature and culture. It was also the source of his antipathy to those enthusiasts of revolution who believe that the seizure of the organs of the state was sufficient to achieving enduring social transformation; what such a view underestimates is the hidden depth of our social attachments and alignments — that which the eloquent silences of naturalist drama made apparent.

The problem of transindividual experience is also inherently connected to the issue of historical temporality. This covers topics ranging from historicism to the nature of modernity that arise from the attempt to theorize period styles. In its most basic form, it asks how it is possible simultaneously to think the sameness of heterogeneous phenomena unified by a single historical principle, and the difference that emerges with the advent of historical novelty. Williams attempted to do just this by developing a theory of historical temporality based on an expanded notion of inheritance.

When he returned to Cambridge after the war to complete his studies, he felt it had become an alien world: the people here seemed to speak a different language from the Cambridge he had known before.³⁵ In the context of this feeling of alienation — one in which the seemingly unproblematic political optimism of the 1930s had given way to a wave of political apostasy — Williams experienced a powerful connection to the drama of Ibsen, whom he studied for many months while producing a fifteen thousand word thesis for the Tripos. The intensity of this connection is significant: Williams says overtly that the central structure of feeling of Ibsen’s plays — that everybody is defeated, but that this does not cancel the validity of the impulse that moved them — was precisely his own structure of feeling from 1945 to 1951.³⁶ He even goes so far as to state that it was Ibsen’s plays which “protected him from the rapid retreat from the thirties” which his former Party comrades were now performing, and that it was at this time that “a quite different personality emerged, very unlike [his] earlier self.”³⁷ The importance of Ibsen’s plays in the formation of Williams’s intellectual and political project is thus central because they touched the roots of his deepest personal and political commitments.

Their thematic material also provided him with the basis for some of his theoretical concepts. That is, Williams translated certain dramatic themes from Ibsen’s plays into a theoretical register. The most important of these was the theme of filial inheritance: from financial bequeathment and indebtedness to genetic diseases.³⁸ I believe there are three reasons why this theme appealed to Williams so intensely. Firstly, F. R. Leavis’s mode of literary criticism — the mode which affected Williams most deeply — was one based on the construction of lines of literary inheritance, which Leavis called either “traditions” or “bearings.”³⁹ Secondly, as we have already seen, the situation of postwar Cambridge confronted Williams with the starkest possible embodiment of the discrepancy between two generations — that is, his obsession

with generationality was born from the unique historical circumstances of his return to Cambridge. Finally, as his autobiographical novel, *Border Country* (1960), testifies, Williams himself felt his relation to his own father to be torn between biological inheritance and social inheritance, this latter being disrupted by the changing patterns of economic development (whereby fathers no longer pass on knowledge of a specific trade to a child who will follow in their footsteps). Consequently, Williams was attuned to Ibsen's broadening of 'inheritance' from the primarily familial sphere to the social sphere more generally. After quoting a key passage from Ibsen's *Ghosts* — "I almost believe we are all ghosts ... It is not only what we have inherited from our fathers and mothers that walks in us. It is every kind of dead idea, lifeless old beliefs and so on. They are not alive but they cling to us for all that"⁴⁰ — Williams concludes: "We are, Ibsen insists, the creatures of our past. From the moment of our birth we are inevitably haunted, by every inherited debt."⁴¹

Such inherited debts include pre-existing cultural and social forms. Spectre-like, they haunt us, urging us to reproduce their modes of sociality. It is then no wonder that Williams would later modify Gramsci's theory of hegemony, which sees "relations of domination and subordination ... as in effect a saturation of the whole process of living,"⁴² by fusing it with his own tripartite schema of inheritance: dominant, residual, and emergent. This schema involves a suturing of past, present and future via three modes of presence — three modes in which the present presents itself. There are residual social inheritances which "formed in the past," but which are "still active in the cultural process," and which can offer alternatives to, oppose or reinforce the social order;⁴³ the dominant which is a totalizing but non-total incorporation of the social as such; and the emergent which is the making-becoming of an alternative future — that which the present will bequeath to future generations, provided it escapes incorporation into the dominant. The concept of "structure of feeling" is applicable primarily to this third mode of presence: "The idea of structure of feeling can be specifically related to the evidence of forms and conventions — semantic figures — which in art and literature are often among the very first indications that such a new structure of feeling is forming."⁴⁴

The key to this temporal complexity is its dynamism: the dominant remains dominant only insofar as it constantly incorporates emergence. The social hegemon must capture all emergent social relations if its own are to remain hegemonic. The status quo is never static, but a tireless operation of incorporation. In the literary realm, dominant styles and forms maintain their hegemony only to the extent that they catch and incorporate all emergent structures of feeling. Moreover, because dominant forms embody or imply certain distributions of social relations favorable to the ruling class, they act as a cultural bulwark to its state power. Truly emergent creation does, however, occur, and it is usually either prefigurative of, contemporary with, or an imminent successor to other widespread changes in the social formation (this is most obvious at times of social revolution: Romanticism with the French

Revolution, Modernism with the Russian). Such creation does not simply reflect these emergent forms of life, but directly and immanently embodies them.

There is no better proof of Williams's conviction in this regard than his work in the Workers Educational Association. Sharing that association's traditional objection to "Public Speaking" — "it produces a mechanical voice Style [sic], in the manner of an average RADA actress"⁴⁵ — he invented a course called "Public Expression." Rather than the superficial beautification of speech proposed by traditional public speaking courses, his own syllabus was designed specifically to "[equip] members of working-class movements for the discharge of actual public responsibilities."⁴⁶ The course was intended as a way of releasing latent social relations and of giving linguistic body to working-class consciousness: "Does one impose on a social class that is growing in power the syllabus of an older culture; or does one seek means of releasing and enriching the life-experience which that rising class brings with it?"⁴⁷ Rather than incorporating the working-class students into written and spoken styles whose origins lay in the social consciousness of the ruling class and its selective tradition, Williams sought to work with his students to enable them to produce styles which would be adequate to their unique social experience and would release their emergent practical consciousness. For Williams there simply would not be a self-respecting democratic society until the linguistic and cultural modes of social relation immanent to class society were transformed. It is precisely this emphasis on the necessary transformation of the whole range of social, cultural and linguistic forms that characterizes the expansive social scope of the 'long revolution.'

Thus, the maxim of complexity — "the world is more complex than you think it is" — can now be summarized as follows. Firstly, the potentially infinite multiplicity of social practices, relationships, values, and documents exceeds all thought, all surviving material artifacts, and all selective traditions that constitute our relation to the past. Secondly, social experience is not (yet) entirely articulable; it consists of patterned but unspoken or unrecordable elements which elude all known systems of thought and expression. Finally, the present is always discontinuous: a battle between residual, dominant, and emergent social relations. Together, these practical, experiential, and temporal modes of complexity constitute the maxim of complexity as such. All three of them are integral to Williams's theory of the long revolution. Before pursuing this line of thought, however, we must now turn to the second maxim of Williams's approach: that of immanence.

Immanence

The term "absolute immanence" first entered the Marxist lexicon via Gramsci's critical reconfiguration of its use by Croce. Gramsci's aim was to elaborate Marx's second thesis on Feuerbach, in which Marx stresses the secular "this-sidedness" [*Diesseitigkeit*] of thinking, an absolute "being-within-history."⁴⁸ Gramsci believed that Marx's inheritance of David Ricardo's notions of "tendential laws" and "determinate

markets” had enabled him to break definitively with the speculative philosophical tradition by positing “laws which have a validity within determinate and historically limited social formations.”⁴⁹ Gramsci held that by extending Ricardo’s insights to the whole of human history, Marx had produced a new concept of immanence understood as a “unitary synthetic moment’ which allows the transformation of the three pre-Marxian movements of classical German philosophy, French politics and classical [British] economy into theoretical moments, in relations of continual translation, of the philosophy of praxis.”⁵⁰ Thus, for Gramsci, immanence means the mutual imbrication, constitution and translatability of politics, economics and thought via the philosophy of praxis. I claim that the principle of immanence informing Williams’s work shares crucial similarities to this Gramscian sense of “absolute immanence,”⁵¹ but that it is supplemented by a stress on *existential* immanence: the political imperative of dwelling (*immanere*) within (*immanere*) historical processes. Williams himself, however, never refers to his own theories in terms of immanence, so my task will be to reconstruct the central immanentist strands of his work in order to justify my larger claim. While the principle of immanence informs his work at all levels, for the sake of the present article I shall focus solely on his theory of “keywords” and his understanding of politics.

Williams describes *Keywords* (1976) as “the record of an inquiry” into “the [general] vocabulary we share with others, often imperfectly, when we wish to discuss our common life.”⁵² He continues: “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.”⁵³ Keywords like “culture” and “society” do not simply denote clearly delimitable things within reality (as with nouns like table and chair); they are in some sense constitutive of the very conception of reality to which they supposedly ‘refer.’ There is thus a clear mutual imbrication between historical antagonisms as they exist in ‘reality’ and the concepts which are deployed to think them; thought — the domain of concepts — is not transcendent of social being, but immanent to it, and this immanence results in a theory of logical coherence completely at odds with traditional conceptions of analytic rigour.⁵⁴ Keywords are “not concepts but problems, not analytic problems either but historical movements that are still unresolved.”⁵⁵ These problems cannot be resolved in terms of internal logical coherence precisely because they are “historical movements”; they are immanent and constitutive factors of ongoing historical struggles. The resolution of these problems must then be practical, yet this must not be taken to mean that conceptual thought is null and void. On the contrary, precisely because these concepts are constitutive factors in the historical process, a conceptualisation of the contradictions they contain — That is, a theoretical and philological elaboration — will be a necessary part of any *practical* intervention into those struggles. Theory and practice are not opposed here but become two modes of the same historical substance. From the perspective

of the long revolution, this would suggest the necessity of a constant vigilance as to the very terms in which revolutionary action is conceived. Without it, one risks the unwitting inheritance of residual conceptualizations which will internally limit, and potentially even defeat, the revolutionary process.⁵⁶

Immanence, however, is not just a conceptual imperative in Williams's work; it is also a political principle. This can be seen most clearly in his response to Terry Eagleton's now infamous (and parricidal) attack on his former mentor. Having played the apprentice to the master from the early 1960s, in 1976 a new, structuralist Eagleton — armed with Althusser and Poulantzas — struck out at his one-time mentor in an article which gained immediate notoriety.⁵⁷ He subsequently apologized for the occasionally shrill tone of the piece, but to this day stands by much of what he wrote.⁵⁸ Eagleton made three major criticisms of Williams's work: it was reformist, idealist, and populist. Williams, claimed Eagleton, had fused *Scrutiny's* liberal humanist emphasis on the importance of individual experience with those "radical" elements of the Romantic "radical-conservative" lineage outlined in *Culture and Society* which could be "ingrafted into a 'socialist humanism.'"⁵⁹ This latter, however, was effectively a strand of labourist reformism. Indeed, Williams was only able to graft Romantic organicism to socialist humanism in the first place precisely because "the working-class movement is as a matter of historical fact deeply infected with the Carlylean and Ruskinian ideology in question."⁶⁰ The maneuver was enabled

by the fact that both Romantic and labourist ideologies are in partial conflict with bourgeois hegemony; but it is precisely that partiality which allows them to embrace. Neither tradition is purely antagonistic to bourgeois state-power: the first preserves it by displacing political analysis to a moralist and idealist critique of its worst "human" effects, the second seeks to accommodate itself within it. What the book did, then, was to consecrate the reformism of the labour movement, raise it to new heights of moral and cultural legitimacy, by offering to it values and symbols drawn in the main from the tradition of most entrenched political reaction.⁶¹

Finally, to these charges of reformism and idealism (the latter the result of "displaced political analysis") Eagleton added the charge of populism. What he meant was the paradox by which Williams's "belief in the need for a 'common culture' was continually crossed and confounded with an assertion of its present reality."⁶² This resulted in "the contradictory position of opposing a crippling hegemony whose power he had simultaneously to deny."⁶³

Eagleton's attack was premised upon a set of unspoken assumptions as to what constitutes a supposedly authentic Marxism. What were its attributes? Firstly, if labourism or Romanticism were only partially antagonistic to bourgeois state power,

then true Marxism would be “purely antagonistic.”⁶⁴ Secondly, Marxism was not to be contaminated with labourism or reformism: Revolutionary politics is seen as almost categorically distinct from them. Thirdly, having criticised Williams for placing his own theory within the same horizon as the very writers he was analysing, it is obvious that for this Althusserian Eagleton a clear distinction must be drawn within Marxist theory between ideology and science: “For historical materialism stands or falls by the claim that it is not only an ideology, but that it contains a scientific theory of the genesis, structure, and decline of ideologies. It situates itself, in short, outside the terrain of competing long perspectives in order to theorise the conditions of their very possibility.”⁶⁵

It took Williams several months to publish his response, “Notes on Marxism in Britain Since 1945.”⁶⁶ It appeared, tellingly, in an issue of *New Left Review* notable for its emphasis on the problematic translation of the Russian revolutionary model to the advanced capitalist nations of Western Europe.⁶⁷ Williams does not mention Eagleton by name, but responds methodically to almost every accusation levelled against him. In a characteristic opening, he takes issue with the terminology that forms the basis of the whole exchange: “Marxism,” he says, has changed its meaning several times since the war, depending on the specific political conjuncture in which it was active;⁶⁸ likewise, the meaning of “Labour Left” has also constantly shifted, as has its relations to “Marxism.”⁶⁹ In other words: “What ‘Marxism’ is at any time seems dependent, finally, less on the history of ideas, which is still amongst Marxists the usual way of defining it, than on the complex developments of actual social being and consciousness.”⁷⁰ By using the key terms from Marx’s core formulation of historical materialism — namely, that social being determines consciousness and not the other way around — the cutting edge to this observation is clear: here, Eagleton is the idealist. The problem with Eagleton in this light is that he writes as if there existed some “pure ... essence called Marxism.”⁷¹

In that sense, he was an exemplar of the bad kind of what Williams named “legitimizing theory,” one of the three theoretical strands he saw as constitutive of Marxist theory in Britain since 1945. Legitimizing theory dealt with “the legitimate inheritance of an authentic Marxism”;⁷² “academic theory,” the second of the three strands, was concerned with the insertion or reinsertion of Marxism into a range of strictly academic work (“the question of ‘communism’ or one of its variants did not necessarily arise” in this context);⁷³ finally, “operative theory” provided theoretical analyses of the specificities of late capitalist British society, with a view to intervening into it.⁷⁴ Eagleton, the text implies, offered the worst of academic Marxist theory — his was an “academically congenial formalism”⁷⁵ — and the least helpful aspect of legitimizing theory: “it can lead, at its worst, to a series of self-alienating options, in which our real political presence is as bystanders, historians or critics of the immense conflicts of other generations and other places, with only marginal or rhetorical connections to the confused and frustrating politics of our own time and place.”⁷⁶

Thus, for Williams, immanence is clearly a political principle: there is no 'outside' from which to look in; the outside is already a constitutive element of the inside. In that sense, the emphasis on the lived, or experience, in his work is not simply a residuum of petit-bourgeois ideology; it is a key component of his immanentist conception of politics. For Williams, experience names at once one's mode of insertion into transindividual socio-matieral processes (one's affective attachments, belongings, and alignments), and the constant imperative to remain one's own contemporary: to dwell within the true processual depths of the present.

Williams develops his attack on Eagleton's formalism when countering the accusation of populism. Like "Marxism" and "Labour Left," the meaning of "populism" has shifted repeatedly depending on its political context. Marxism has been constantly imbricated with various forms of populism throughout its history, and was thus never as pure as Eagleton made out. Nonetheless, Williams states overtly that he had never been a populist "in the sense of that residual rhetoric": "But because I saw the process as options under pressure, and knew where that pressure was coming from, I could not move either to the other most generally available position: that contempt of people ... which makes the whole people, including the whole working class, mere carriers of the structures of a corrupt ideology."⁷⁷ Eagleton's blanket generalisation always smacked of Brecht's satirical remark that the government should dissolve the people and elect a new one; here, Williams hints at that angle, but adds to it a term taken from his reconfiguration of the Marxist concept of "determination." He understood determination as both the "setting of limits" and the "exertion of pressures"; such pressures "are by no means only pressures against the limits ... They are at least as often pressures derived from the formation and momentum of a given social mode: in effect a compulsion to act in ways that maintain and renew it."⁷⁸ By voiding theory of the lived, immanent pressures of daily existence, Eagleton's formalism was not only contemptible in its abstract denigration of an entire class, but also politically futile in that it lacked all felt connection to contemporary political reality. The better solution, claims Williams, was to "stay with the existing resources; to learn and perhaps to teach new resources; to live the contradictions and the options under pressure so that ... there was a chance of understanding them and tipping them the other way."⁷⁹ Formalism, in this light, is the insubstantiality of a thought that has failed to absorb the lived pressures of a political reality, to process them and, in doing so, to transform them into positive political potential.

It is in the section on reformism that Williams takes on Eagleton's self-proclaimed "pure antagonism" to bourgeois state power. He shows that at a pragmatic level reformism has always been a constitutive element of Marxism, not least because "a working-class political formation which does not respond to and represent the perceived, often short-term interests of the working class becomes impotent."⁸⁰ The problem with Eagleton's revolutionary strategy is that it relies far too heavily — and ahistorically — on the Russian model of revolution (one which, as we have seen, this

issue of *New Left Review* was designed to interrogate). Williams argues that this model is premised upon “societies in which the *political and social* defences of the system were very much weaker, and with its consequent reliance on simple breakdown as the crisis of capitalism which makes possible the socialist transition.”⁸¹ By ignoring the complexly stratified layers of civil societies in advanced capitalist countries, ones which act as a buttress to the bourgeois state, Eagleton’s polemic is downright dangerous: “There is now a real danger, in a kind of theoretical opportunism leading to political, economic and sub-military (‘terrorist’) opportunism, of using the rhetoric against ‘reformism’ to the point where isolated militant sectors enter battles in which a totalizing alternative is precipitated against them.”⁸² What had seemed in Eagleton’s attack a version of a pure Marxism has ended up running the risk of a descent into “terrorism.” Indeed, one might even say that this is the limit case of immanence’s nemesis: the terrorism of transcendence.

The principle of immanence thus generates, firstly, a methodology that seeks out the internal translatability between keywords and the historical situations of which they are constitutive elements, and, secondly, a politico-philosophical imperative that calls on theory to dwell within the pressures and contradictions of contemporary historical reality.

Long Revolution

Both principles — complexity and immanence — merge on the site of what has been interpreted as an *absence* in Williams’s work: his supposed lack of a theory of modernity.⁸³ On one reading, of course, this is absurd; his entire oeuvre, structured as it is around the central notion of the long revolution, is nothing but an epic mapping out of modernity. Yet at the same time, it is true that Williams’s work does not overtly recognize a sense of modernity as a qualitatively new experience of time (an experience premised upon the primacy of novelty as such). The reasons for this are complex. It is quite clear that Williams’s theory of the emergent is implicitly premised upon the modern logic of temporal negation in its championing of the search for new social and artistic forms freshly adequate to new structures of feeling. Yet there is also a second, competing temporality at work in his writings: the time of tradition. The sheer strangeness of Williams’s conception of historical temporality is that it combines a valorization of novelty typical of modernity with an emphasis on the force of biological, generational and (relatively) unconscious attachments typical of tradition. Williams’s is precisely an immanent, self-conscious traditionality. It rejects the futurism of modernism, the desire abstractly to negate all traces of the past, by opening up the present to a consciousness of its attachments and selections — its determining lines of inheritance — the very traditional immanence of which means they cannot be simply wished away but must be worked through. Thus, it is not entirely true to say, as certain critics have done, that he lacks a theory of modernity: It would be more accurate to say that his conception of modernity is a

strictly oppositional one, in that it is a historically specific, political and theoretical rejection of the ideology of modernism — that mode of thought which believes it can break with the past by sheer voluntarism.⁸⁴

It is also a rejection of those incipient transcendent strands of Marxist thought which reduce revolution to a non-complex, immediate seizure of state power. What such approaches ignore — beyond their underestimation of the powerful, stratified layers of civil society — is precisely the necessity of working through those Ibsenite inherited debts that is central to Williams's theory of revolution:

[...] I see revolution as the inevitable working through of a deep and tragic disorder, to which we can respond in varying ways but which will in any case, in one way or another, work its way through our world, as a consequence of any of our actions. I see revolution, that is to say, in a tragic perspective [...].⁸⁵

This “tragic perspective” has nothing in common with the vague, anti-communist pessimism so beloved of contemporary liberals. Nor should it be mistaken as an aestheticization of social reality; on the contrary, Williams is arguing that tragedy is, in Alberto Toscano's words, “an experiential, narrative and political form.”⁸⁶ He writes: “The tragic action, in its deepest sense, is not the confirmation of disorder, but its experience, its comprehension and its resolution. In our own time, this action is general, and its common name is revolution.”⁸⁷ Whereas liberals construe the moment of revolutionary insurrection as an exceptional outbreak of violence and disorder, Williams argues that the capitalist social order is nothing but violence and disorder: revolution is the crisis and attempted resolution of this institutionalized disorder. He writes that “it is not simply that we become involved in this general crisis, but that we are already, by what we do and fail to do, participating in it.”⁸⁸ Given that this is the case, “the only action that seems adequate is, really, a participation in the disorder, as a way of ending it.”⁸⁹ As ever, the political principle — perhaps even the political *ethic* — of immanence forces us, firstly, to a realisation that we are *already* involved in specific historical processes, and secondly, to a *proactive* involvement in them as a way of transforming or ending them.

By echoing Aristotle's argument that tragedy is a “*whole* action,”⁹⁰ Williams extends both the social and temporal scope of what is conventionally understood by revolution. “[T]he absolute test,” he writes, “by which a revolution can be distinguished, is the change in the *form* of activity of a society, in its deepest structures of relationships and feeling.”⁹¹ It is here that what may initially have seemed primarily literary or cultural concerns with form become retrospectively revolutionary. For revolution means, not only seizing state power, but also working through — and, where necessary, transforming — all the inherited forms and social relations which enable the reproduction of the capitalist mode of production. Certainly, many of the

principal forms will be related to economic production, but many others will relate to the deep “alignments” that constitute our very selves: our spontaneous ways of living and seeing the world.⁹² It is this stress on the wholeness of social revolution that also informs Williams’s later criticism of the Marxist category of the mode of production: “For the abstraction of production is a specialised and eventually ideological version of what is really in question, which is the form of human social relationships within a physical world.”⁹³ Arguing that the notion of the ‘mode of production’ is too reliant on the capitalist definition of production (an argument he had already made in 1977 regarding the term productive forces)⁹⁴ Williams prefers the term “way of life.”⁹⁵ This seemingly vague term must be understood as an attempt to broaden the scope of the Marxist conception of totality and to connect it to the new social movements — of peace, ecology and feminism — which “are active and substantial in almost every area of life except [the economy]. It is as if everything that was excluded by the economic dominance and specialisations of the capitalist order has been grasped and worked on.”⁹⁶ In such passages the logic of the structure of feeling assumes a revolutionary character: Williams is attempting to connect the revolutionary movement to precisely those elements of society which the capitalist order excludes.⁹⁷ There is a direct connection here between the eloquent silences of naturalist drama and the areas of excluded sociality from which the new social movements emerged. Thus, the first major consequence of Williams’s understanding of revolution as a tragic whole action is his enlargement of the social scope of revolution; it is a scope whose complexity and existential depth defies both the simplifying inherited categories of capitalist social thought and the terroristic voluntarism of transcendent strands of Marxism.

The second consequence is his extension of the temporal scope of revolution: the long revolution. The meaning of this term shifted throughout Williams’s life. In the 1961 book of that title, Williams distinguished between three revolutions which, together, constituted what most would call (though he often did not) modernity: the democratic, industrial, and cultural revolutions. The emphasis here was on the interrelation of the three revolutions, and the extreme difficulty of understanding them as a single process, not least because we find ourselves within it and many of the terms we use to investigate it were produced by it.⁹⁸ By the time of *Modern Tragedy* (1966), however, long revolution came to refer to what Toscano has aptly described as “a long transition, immersed and entangled in the ponderous legacies and contradictions of the capitalist society it determinately negates.”⁹⁹ Even with a sudden capture of power — a short revolution — “the essential transformation is indeed a long revolution.”¹⁰⁰ It is a protracted, potentially multi-generational process of working through the tragic disorder. By 1979, however, the Althusserian interviewers of the *New Left Review* were in no mood for gradualism dressed in sheep’s clothing. When pressed, Williams made two important amendments to the concept. Firstly, he cuts the ground from under the interviewers by giving a more precise definition than theirs of the *short* revolution:

It is accomplished when the central political organs of capitalist society lose their power of *predominant* social reproduction ... The condition for the success of the long revolution in any real terms is decisively a short revolution, which I would define not so much in terms of duration as of the loss by the state of its capacity for predominant reproduction of the existing social relations.¹⁰¹

The second amendment sees the temporal duration of the long revolution extend, not only *forwards beyond* the short revolution, but backwards before it. The possibility of a short revolution in an advanced capitalist society “requires a considerable process of preparation which must not itself be limited to the immediate actions necessary to assure the transfer of power in a revolutionary situation.”¹⁰² Once again, what may have appeared at first to be relatively marginal linguistic concerns in the example of Williams’s work with the Workers’ Educational Association can be seen, retrospectively, as one instance of the long preparation for revolutionary transformation.

Conclusion

What I hope to have shown is that the unity of Williams’s life’s work consists in its constant, occasionally unorthodox, theorization of the long and difficult process of revolution. Everywhere guided by the political and theoretical principles of complexity and immanence, Williams’s work — from his writings on naturalist drama to his analyses of a nascent neoliberalism — offers patient and profound reflections on the enormous obstacles to, and utopian possibilities of, social revolution. Directed as much against the myopic voluntarism and potentially fatal short-termism of certain contemporary Marxisms as against the dominant capitalist social order he so despised, his oeuvre maps the uncharted depths of sociality at which the future will be decided. The words with which Williams concluded his 1979 interview with the *New Left Review* capture the interrelation of complexity and immanence in his vision of the long revolution; they remain, in Williams’s sense, emergent:

The challenge is therefore to a necessary complexity. I have been pulled all my life, for reasons we’ve discussed, between simplicity and complexity, and I can still feel the pull both ways. But every argument of experience and of history now makes my decision — and what I hope will be a general decision — clear. It is only in very complex ways that we can truly understand where we are. It is also only in very complex ways, and by moving confidently towards very complex societies, that we can begin that construction of many socialisms which will liberate and draw upon our real and now threatened energies.¹⁰³

Notes

1. Parts of this article draw on my forthcoming book, *The Politics of Style: Towards a Marxist Poetics* (Leiden: Brill, forthcoming). Certain passages in the section on complexity are adapted from Daniel Hartley, “Style as Structure of Feeling: Emergent Forms of Life in the Theory of Raymond Williams and George Saunders’s *Tenth of December*,” *Emergent Forms of Life in Anglophone Literature: Conceptual Frameworks and Critical Analyses*, eds. Michael Basseler, Daniel Hartley and Ansgar Nünning (Trier: WVT Trier, 2015): 163-182. An earlier version of this article was published online in French in *Revue Période* and Spanish in *Marxismo Crítico*. I am grateful to Félix Boggio Éwanjé-Épée, Alexander Scherr, and the anonymous reviewers of *Mediations* for their helpful comments on a previous draft. All remaining errors are my own.
2. Terry Eagleton, “Resources for a Journey of Hope: The Significance of Raymond Williams,” *New Left Review* 1.168 (1988) 11.
3. From the republication of classic texts of Marxist-feminism such as Lise Vogel’s *Marxism and the Oppression of Women: Toward a Unitary Theory* (Chicago: Haymarket Books, 2013), to special issues of respected online Marxist publications (the entirety of issue 5 of *Viewpoint Magazine* deals with social reproduction) and dedicated “Marxist-Feminist” streams at major international conferences (*Historical Materialism*), to increased attention to the rich Canadian tradition of ‘social reproduction feminism,’ the present moment is characterized by an embarrassment of SRT riches. While it has become a (partly justified) commonplace in the secondary literature on Williams that feminism constituted a significant lacuna of his work, the guiding impulse of much of his reconstruction of Marxist paradigms was nonetheless precisely to enable Marxist theory to incorporate social reproduction. The term, “World Ecology” is Jason W. Moore’s, developed at length in *Capitalism in the Web of Life: Ecology and the Accumulation of Capital* (London: Verso, 2015). I have begun to make the case that cultural materialism should be seen as a precursor — and important interlocutor — of world-ecology in Daniel Hartley, “Anthropocene, Capitalocene, and the Problem of Culture,” *Anthropocene or Capitalocene? Nature, History, and the Crisis of Capitalism*, ed. Jason W. Moore (Oakland, CA: PM Press, 2016): 156-167. Finally, for important works on Williams’s writings on nationalism, see Daniel Williams’s introduction to Raymond Williams, *Who Speaks for Wales? Nation, Culture, Identity*, ed. Daniel Williams (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2003); chapter 4 of Wade Matthews, *The New Left, National Identity and the Break-up of Britain* (Leiden: Brill, 2013); and Hywel Dix, *After Raymond Williams: Cultural Materialism and the Break-up of Britain* (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 2013).
4. I recognize that Williams also allows for alternative and oppositional senses of the residual but the recent nostalgic memorializations of his life and work are neither of these.
5. Tristram Hunt, “From Jane Austen to Zadie Smith — the City v the Country in Literature,” *The Guardian*, March 13th, 2016: <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2016/mar/12/raymond-williams-the-country-and-the-city-rural-versus-urban>. Last accessed March 13th 2016.
6. In doing so, I am building on the systematizing impulses of Alan O’Connor’s *Raymond Williams: Writing, Culture, Politics* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1989), John Higgins’s *Raymond Williams: Literature, Marxism and Cultural Materialism* (London: Routledge, 1999), Paul Jones’s *Raymond Williams’s Sociology of Culture: A Critical Reconstruction* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2004), and Andrew Milner’s *Literature, Culture and Society*, (Oxford: Routledge, 2005).
7. Warren Weaver, “Science and Complexity,” *American Scientist* 36 (1948) 537.

8. Warren Weaver, "Science and Complexity" 539.
9. Niklas Luhmann, *Introduction to Systems Theory*, ed. Dirk Baecker, trans. Peter Gilgen (Cambridge: Polity, 2013) 125.
10. Eva M. Knodt, "Foreword," *Social Systems*, by Niklas Luhmann, trans. John Bednarz, Jr., with Dirk Baecker (Stanford: Stanford University Press, 1995) xvii.
11. Perry Anderson, *The New Old World* (London: Verso, 2009) 262.
12. Perry Anderson, "Components of the National Culture," *New Left Review* 1.50 (1968) 10.
13. Anderson, *The New Old World* 262, 260.
14. Certainly, there are dim echoes of Parsons's four subsystems (economy, polity, societal community, fiduciary system) in the four social systems listed in *The Long Revolution* (system of maintenance, system of decision, system of learning and communication, and the system of generation and nurture). Likewise, as we shall see, there exists a certain formal homology between the simplifying selectiveness of Luhmann's systems and the operation of what Williams calls "selective traditions." Yet this is where the similarities end. The informing impulse, as well as the actual substance, of Williams's social ontology has nothing in common with the technocratic autopoiesis of Luhmann's saturnine universe.
15. Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (London: Penguin Books, 1965) 66.
16. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Materialism: Selected Essays* (London: Verso, 2010) 246.
17. Williams, *Long Revolution* 66.
18. Raymond Williams, *Marxism and Literature* (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 1977) 115-116.
19. *Marxism and Literature* 125 (emphasis in the original).
20. *Marxism and Literature* 121.
21. *Marxism and Literature* 133-134.
22. *Marxism and Literature* 134.
23. *Marxism and Literature* 132.
24. Raymond Williams, *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht*, 2nd revised ed. (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1973), 8-9.
25. Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with "New Left Review"* (London: NLB, 1979) 208.
26. *Ibid.*
27. "The biggest single mistake that Eliot made was his attempt to find an all-purpose dramatic verse which could function as a substitute for conversation. For the whole case for verse as capable of greater precision and intensity of meaning collapsed when characters had to ask whether someone had bought an evening paper, a perfectly ordinary conversational exchange, in a uniform poetic mode" (*Politics and Letters* 207).
28. Raymond Williams, *Drama from Ibsen to Brecht* 387.
29. See, Williams on *Antigone*: "The more one looks at the text of the play, the more one realizes that a simple, yet radical, pattern, a controlling structure of feeling, has been clearly isolated and designed in the writing. And then, if one looks at the performance, one sees that this design is being continually enacted, in the parts as in the whole. For it is a design made for performance; the purpose of the play is not report, not description, not analysis, but enactment of a design. The structure of feeling is the formal written structure, and also the structure of performance." Raymond Williams, *Drama in Performance* (Milton Keynes: Open University Press, 1991 [1954/ rev. ed. 1968]) 39.
30. Raymond Williams and Michael Orrom, *Preface to Film* (London: Film Drama, 1954) 45.
31. Cited in Raymond Williams and Michael Orrom, *Preface to Film* 46.

32. In his earlier writings Williams had called this ideal “total expression” but when the *New Left Review* interviewers quote his early definition of “total expression,” he responds: “The idea is inadequately put there: I should have spoken of total form” (*Politics and Letters* 230).
33. *Marxism and Literature* 106-107.
34. *Marxism and Literature* 133-134.
35. This was the basic feeling and insight which sparked his idea for what would become *Keywords* (London: Fontana, 1983) 10.
36. Raymond Williams *Politics and Letters* 62-63.
37. *Politics and Letters* 63.
38. The whole of the chapter on Ibsen in *Drama From Ibsen to Brecht* focuses on this theme.
39. For example, F. R. Leavis, *New Bearings in English Poetry* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1932) and F. R. Leavis, *The Great Tradition: George Eliot, Henry James, Joseph Conrad* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1972).
40. Cited in Raymond Williams, *Drama From Ibsen* 49.
41. *Drama From Ibsen* 49.
42. *Marxism and Literature* 110.
43. *Marxism and Literature* 122.
44. *Marxism and Literature* 133.
45. Raymond Williams, “The Teaching of Public Expression,” *Border Country: Raymond Williams in Adult Education*, eds. John McIlroy and Sallie Westwood (Leicester: NIACE, 1993) 181.
46. Raymond Williams, “The Teaching of Public Expression,” 181.
47. “The Teaching of Public Expression” 182.
48. For a detailed overview of this elaboration, see Peter D. Thomas, *The Gramscian Moment: Philosophy, Hegemony and Marxism* (Leiden: Brill, 2009) 307-383.
49. Peter D. Thomas, “Immanence,” *Historical Materialism* 16 (2008) 241.
50. “Immanence” 241.
51. Note that what began as my maxim has now become a principle informing Williams’s work.
52. Raymond Williams, *Keywords* 14, 15.
53. *Keywords* 15.
54. I choose the word “coherence” here quite consciously to highlight the affiliations between Gramsci’s theory of conceptuality and that of Williams. Cf. Thomas, *The Gramscian Moment* 364-379.
55. Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 11.
56. In the final part of this article I give a brief example of this problem: Williams’s criticism of the Marxist category of the mode of production.
57. Eagleton’s attack initially appeared as “Criticism and Politics: The Work of Raymond Williams” in the January-February 1976 edition of the *New Left Review*. It was subsequently reprinted in Eagleton’s *Criticism and Ideology: A Study in Marxist Literary Theory* (London: NLB, 1976). I refer throughout to the reprinted version.
58. Terry Eagleton and Matthew Beaumont, *The Task of the Critic: Terry Eagleton in Dialogue* (London: Verso, 2009) 141.
59. Terry Eagleton, *Criticism and Ideology* 24-25.
60. *Criticism and Ideology* 25.

61. *Criticism and Ideology* 25.
62. *Criticism and Ideology* 28.
63. *Criticism and Ideology* 28.
64. *Criticism and Ideology* 25.
65. *Criticism and Ideology* 16-17.
66. As noted, the earliest version of Eagleton's attack was published as "Criticism and Politics: The Work of Raymond Williams" in *New Left Review* in the January-February 1976 edition. Williams's "Notes on Marxism in Britain Since 1945" was published in the November-December 1976 volume. I refer here to the version of Williams's article reprinted in *Culture and Materialism* 233-251.
67. Williams's essay featured alongside Perry Anderson's profoundly influential "The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci" as well as an interview with Ernest Mandel on "Revolutionary Strategy in Europe." See *New Left Review* 1.100, November-December 1976. For a detailed critique of Anderson's article, see Thomas, *The Gramscian Moment*.
68. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Materialism* 233-234.
69. *Culture and Materialism* 234-236.
70. *Culture and Materialism* 246.
71. *Culture and Materialism* 239.
72. *Culture and Materialism* 237.
73. *Culture and Materialism* 237.
74. *Culture and Materialism* 237.
75. *Culture and Materialism* 239.
76. *Culture and Materialism* 238.
77. *Culture and Materialism* 241.
78. *Marxism and Literature* 87.
79. *Culture and Materialism* 241-242.
80. *Culture and Materialism* 247.
81. *Culture and Materialism* 248-249. Anderson's article cites Gramsci on this point: "In the East, the State was everything, civil society was primordial and gelatinous; in the West, there was a proper relationship between State and civil society, and when the State trembled a sturdy structure of civil society was at once revealed. The State was only an outer ditch, behind which there was a powerful system of fortresses and earthworks: more or less numerous from one State to the next, it goes without saying—but this precisely necessitated an accurate reconnaissance of each individual country" ("The Antinomies of Antonio Gramsci" 10).
82. *Culture and Materialism* 249.
83. This absence has been noted by Jones in *Raymond Williams's Sociology of Culture* 181-194; and by Lawrence Grossberg in "Raymond Williams and the Absent Modernity," *About Raymond Williams*, eds. Monika Seidl, Roman Horak and Lawrence Grossberg (Oxford: Routledge, 2010) 18-33.
84. For a far more detailed account of "immanent, self-conscious traditionality," see my *The Politics of Style* chap. 5.
85. Raymond Williams, *Modern Tragedy*, rev. ed. (London: Verso, 1979) 75.
86. Alberto Toscano, "Politics in a Tragic Key," *Radical Philosophy* 180 (2013) 25. It is significant that Toscano

turns to Williams precisely in search of “a more immanent way of conceptualizing the tragic form of revolutionary and transitional politics” (“Politics in a Tragic Key” 30).

87. Raymond Williams, *Modern Tragedy* 83.
88. *Modern Tragedy* 80.
89. *Modern Tragedy* 81.
90. *Modern Tragedy* 65 (emphasis added).
91. *Modern Tragedy* 76.
92. “Any such resolution would mean changing ourselves, in fundamental ways, and our unwillingness to do this, the certainty of disturbance, the probability of secondary and unforeseen disorder, put the question, inevitably, into a tragic form” (*Modern Tragedy* 81). For more on “alignment,” see the essay “The Writer: Commitment and Alignment” in Raymond Williams, *Resources of Hope: Culture, Democracy, Socialism* (London: Verso, 1989): 77-87.
93. Raymond Williams, *Towards 2000* (Harmondsworth: Penguin, 1983) 264.
94. *Marxism and Literature* 90-94.
95. *Towards 2000* 266 (emphasis in the original).
96. *Towards 2000* 253.
97. “... it is a fact about the modes of domination, that they select from and consequently exclude the full range of human practice. What they exclude may often be seen as the personal or the private, or as the natural or even the metaphysical. Indeed it is usually in one or other of these terms that the excluded area is expressed, since what the dominant has effectively seized is indeed the ruling definition of the social” (Williams, *Marxism and Literature* 125).
98. For more on this point, see Anthony Barnett’s (2011) excellent introduction to a recent reissue of *The Long Revolution*: “We Live in Revolutionary Times... But What Does This Mean?”, *Open Democracy* URL: <https://www.opendemocracy.net/anthony-barnett/we-live-in-revolutionary-times-but-what-does-this-mean>. Last accessed 13th March 2016.
99. Toscano, “Politics in a Tragic Key” 30.
100. *Modern Tragedy* 76.
101. *Politics and Letters* 420-421.
102. *Politics and Letters* 421.
103. *Politics and Letters* 437.

