What's Left of Culture and Society?

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LECTURE I.
THE PROCESS OF COMMUNICATION
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A culture, while it is being lived, is always in part unknown, in part unreal-
ized. The making of a community is always an exploration, for consciousness
cannot precede creation, and there is no formulation for unknown experience.
A good community, a living culture, will, because of this, not only make room
for but actively encourage all and any who can contribute to the advance in
consciousness which is the common need. Wherever we have started from, we
need to listen to others who started from a different position.

—RAYMOND WILLIAMS, *CULTURE AND SOCIETY* (1958)

Shortly after I had been invited to deliver these lectures, a distinguished scientist of my close acquaintance stopped me at a Queen Mary graduation ceremony to ask me a question: how could one any longer advance an argument to justify funding research in the humanities?

Since the urbane and broad-minded scientist in question has always shown a healthy respect for humanities disciplines as a whole, I was, I confess, taken aback—and caught genuinely off-guard—by his question.[1] I was even more dismayed to discover as we talked that I no longer felt I could with any confidence provide him with a robust answer.

But what my colleague's question did do was to return me to an old train of thought of mine—nurtured by my long-standing admiration for the Socialist intellectual and literary critic Raymond Williams—which used, I believed, to allow me to answer my colleague's question confidently, and to prompt me to join it up to a more recent, equally pressing question I had already begun asking myself: what has been the effect on our understanding of what it means to participate in the culture of an advanced liberal democracy, of the rapid expansion of new media and the Internet?

The two lectures that follow have developed out of my efforts over recent months to bring those two questions together. In the first I reexamine Raymond Williams's account of the significant interconnectedness of a particular idea of "a common culture" with a politically aspirational, socialist (or, perhaps, radical) version of "a living community," or "an open,

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1. The colleague in question was, in fact, my principal at Queen Mary, University of London, Professor Adrian Smith. I salute him here for the inspiration he has given me throughout my years at QM, of which these lectures are an example.

democratic society." In the second I try to extend the reach and purchase of that account to engage with some of the (for many of us) pressing issues raised by the rapid and seemingly uncontrolled expansion of mass media, popular culture, and the Internet today.

I might as well tell you in advance that, entirely consistently with my own lifelong sense of optimism about the society in which we live, I believe that I have arrived at a satisfactory answer to my colleague's skepticism as to whether research in the humanities counts for anything—is indeed relevant to anybody—today.

In an interview in 1968, reflecting on the intellectual and political impact of his seminal book, *Culture and Society*, the left-wing literary critic and cultural theorist Raymond Williams explained why the idea of "culture" was of such vital importance to him, personally:

> Culture was the way in which the process of education, the experience of literature, and—for someone moving out of a working class family to higher education—inequality, came through. What other people, in different situations, might experience more directly as economic or political inequality, was naturally experienced, from my own route, as primarily an inequality of culture: an inequality which was also, in an obvious sense, an uncommunity. This is, I think, still the most important way to follow the argument about culture.[2]

In order to make apparent the full emotional weight of this statement of Raymond Williams's own sense of recognizing himself in a particular way through his engagement with culture (specifically in the form of canonical—and not so canonical—literary texts), it is helpful to set alongside it another, from his second similarly influential book, *The Long Revolution* (1961). There Williams makes it clear how animate—not to say dynamic—for him is the relationship between the individual and art:

> We cannot say that art is a substitute for other kinds of communication, since when successful it evidently communicates experience which is not apparently communicable in other ways. We must see art, rather, as an extension of our capacity for organization: a vital faculty which allows particular areas of reality to be described and communicated.
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>   To succeed in art is to convey an experience to others in such a form

that the experience is *actively* re-created—not "contemplated," not "examined," not passively received, but by response to the means, actually lived through, by those to whom it is offered.[3]

For Raymond Williams, it is the individual's *lived-through* response to art and culture that provides his or her vital connection to the community from which they come.

In conversation with his contemporary Richard Hoggart in 1960, Williams gave a more specific account of his personal journey from "uncommunity" to "community"—a fully realized personal sense of belonging, which for those of you trained in the humanities at least might make more concrete the terms of his earlier observation. Here is how he remembers himself responding to perceived inequality of access when he arrived as a "scholarship boy" at Cambridge:

> It seemed to me I had to try to go back over the [Arnoldian literary] tradition, to look at it again and get it into relation with my own experience, to see the way the intellectual tradition stood in the pattern of my own growing-up. As I saw the cultural tradition then, it was mainly Coleridge, Arnold, Leavis and the Marxists, and the development, really was a discovery of relationships inside the tradition, and also a discovery of other relationships: Cobbett and Morris, for example, who brought in parts of my experience that had been separate before. *Getting the tradition right was getting myself right*, and that meant changing both myself and the usual version of the tradition. I think this is one of the problems we're both conscious of: moving out of a working-class home into an academic curriculum, absorbing it first and then, later, trying to get the two experiences into relation.[4]

"Getting the tradition right was getting myself right, and that meant changing both myself and the usual version of the tradition." For Raymond Williams, it is in encountering, and engaging with, available culture that each individual will recognize his or her more or less belonging—in terms of inclusiveness or a sense of being part of the communal project. In spite of the poignancy of the first passage I quoted (and it is very poignant

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3. Raymond Williams, *The Long Revolution* (Westport, Conn.: Greenwood Press, 1961), 51 (emphasis added).

4. Transcript of a recorded conversation between Richard Hoggart and Raymond Williams, from the opening issue of *New Left Review*: "Working Class Attitudes," *New Left Review* 1 (1960): 26 (emphasis added).

for me, and is a passage I have used several times before),[5] I find it lastingly encouraging. Williams was absolutely confident that culture was the active bonding—the glue—that held a community or society together, giving its members a sense of personal participation, and an understanding of the shared social project. That was why, in the 1960s, under his towering influence, so many of us turned from the sciences to the humanities as part of a perceived urgent search for deeper understanding of the social and political structure of the society in which we lived.[6]

I have begun my train of thought for these Tanner Lectures somewhat nostalgically with a remark made by Raymond Williams, in an interview that took place ten years after the publication (fifty years ago this year) of his *Culture and Society, 1780–1950*—the book that, for many of us growing to intellectual maturity in those years, defined a radical new approach to the humanities, one that promised to place an understanding of culture at the heart of the radical political agenda. And already I have to confess that I have truncated Williams's comment. His final sentence in fact runs: "This is, I think, still the most important way to follow the argument about culture, because everywhere, but very specifically in England, culture is one way in which class, the fact of major divisions between men, shows itself."

So before I have even gotten going, I have to acknowledge that, in its explicit preoccupation with class, and its concentration on "men," *Culture and Society* belongs very specifically to its late-fifties moment. Nevertheless (within limitations), what I set out to explore in this first lecture is the extent to which the terms of Raymond Williams's analysis of culture in relation to his contemporary society (more concerned with class, and less aware of gender and ethnic inclusiveness than we are today) can be adapted usefully to gain understanding of the comparable situation—predicament, perhaps—in which we find ourselves fifty years later, in the first decade of the twenty-first century.

I should also admit here at the outset (given my title) that in my exploration I shall not in fact confine myself to *Culture and Society*, but will include that second book, *The Long Revolution*, published three years later, in 1961. In justification I would argue that the key themes in Williams's

5. I find I return regularly to this particular remark of Williams's, whenever I engage with his thinking about the importance of culture and its relation to the fundamental structure of our society.

6. I have explored these ideas before, at an earlier stage in my own formation, in the company of my close colleague Julia Swindells. For fuller discussion of some of the issues that I reconsider in these lectures, see Julia Swindells and Lisa Jardine, *What's Left? Women in Culture and the Labour Movement* (London: Routledge, 1990).

first groundbreaking book—particularly those maintaining a tight relationship between forms of culture and forms of social organization—were quite deeply buried, and surfaced more clearly in the second. It was also in *The Long Revolution* that it became obvious that Williams's project was not simply to account theoretically for the relationship between culture and society, but to use that theoretical account as a political lever, to produce a radical manifesto for culture-led social change.

Whereas *Culture and Society* had been greeted by the intellectual community in Britain with admiration, *The Long Revolution* was attacked at the time of its publication from both the Left and the Right. As Williams later remembered it, "The degree of hostility was quite unforgettable."[7] By this time Williams had been appointed to the English faculty at the University of Cambridge, from which he exerted an extraordinary intellectual influence over left-leaning students.[8] A fundamental mistrust, however, colored his relations with the English faculty (as I well remember). Raymond Williams died, suddenly and unexpectedly, in 1988, at the age of sixty-five, shortly before I myself left Cambridge for the University of London.

What interests me is how convincingly, in engaging as he did in his years at Cambridge largely with literary texts (taken in a broad sense), Williams gives an increasingly clearly formulated and persuasive account of the way shared experience is actively "lived through" in culture, such that it can be used to explore and articulate our relationship with key social and political structures, in order to develop an inclusive, democratic political agenda for the future.

So in moving from that sense of inequality into the exploration of culture, where he could find himself and model himself in reaction to (or in collaboration with) that place, and therefore forming, as he understood it, a shared community of those who had made that journey, I am going to argue that the trajectory of Raymond Williams's progress is a model we can still use today.

If Williams is right, and art and culture are where each and every one of us connects emotionally with each and every other one of those around us, in order to engage in the (unspecified) shared social project,

7. Raymond Williams, *Politics and Letters: Interviews with "New Left Review"* (1979; reprint, London: Verso, 1981), 133.

8. In my own case, I came up to read mathematics at Cambridge in 1963, and after two years of the mathematics tripos changed instead to complete my degree reading English—under the direct influence of Raymond Williams, whose lectures I had attended and who was an important political presence in the undergraduate university Labour Club, of which I was an active member throughout my Cambridge career.

then it continues to be important to give a sustained analysis of contemporary culture. It ought to offer us clues as to precisely how such bonds are formed, and of what kind they are (or might become), allowing us to go on recognizing them as such, in an increasingly unfamiliar, virtually unrecognizable (or indeed "unrecognizably virtual") contemporary cultural landscape.

Williams's own project in relation to culture is clear and explicit in his early writings. Enshrined in the creative arts and associated social interactions are to be found the shared structures of feeling that hold individuals in all their diversity together in a community. These are the common, but mostly unacknowledged, patterns of belief on the basis of which the members of a community together consent to the formal, structural constraints imposed by the economic and political institutions under which they live: "We are seeking to define and consider one central principle: that of the essential relation, the true interaction, between patterns learned and created in the mind and patterns communicated and made active in relationships, conventions, and institutions. *Culture is our name for this process and its results.*"[9] The more we understand how the individual engages with culture and finds his or her place within it, according to Williams, the better we will understand how change takes place in the social and political structures that bind individuals together into communities by its means.

Individual engagement with culture is an active process. The work of art or culture places before its audience an object for scrutiny that invites them to take it on board emotionally, and respond. "The 'creative' act, of any artist, is…the process of making a meaning active, by communicating an organized experience to others."[10] It is what he identified as the active, engaged character of this process that allows Williams confidently to turn to art and culture as the place where social change is articulated and engaged with by those less inclined to alter the status quo. It is, he contends, through close examination of works of art (for him, especially works of literature) that we can come to understand the way in which institutional reorganization (for him, industrialization) modifies the "patterns learned and created in the mind," thereby permanently altering society. "The history of the idea of culture is a record of our reactions, in thought and feeling, to the changed conditions of our common life."[11]

9. Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 89 (emphasis added).
10. Ibid., 49.
11. Raymond Williams, *Culture and Society* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1958), 285.

In fact, what Williams does is robustly to answer my scientific col-league's question about the continuing relevance or otherwise of close academic study in the humanities: "To see art as a particular process in the general human process of creative discovery and communication is at once a redefinition of the status of art and the finding of means to link it with our ordinary social life."[12] Williams is talking here—as he always is—about creativity in the arts, by which he means most specifically litera-ture, while including drama, film and TV, and, occasionally, painting and sculpture. But because his definition of culture ultimately extends to all creative responses to, and manipulations of, processes and structures of organization produced within any given society, there is no reason we should not nowadays include general or "popular" communication in the sciences and technology. That, at any rate, is what I propose. Since Wil-liams published *Culture and Society*, a considerable amount has been writ-ten about the fundamentally social nature of scientific investigation—the way in which exchange among scientists qua members of a defined com-munity defines topics for exploration, questions to be addressed, and the way answers to them are framed and executed. I think that that work, had it been conducted before Raymond Williams wrote, would have allowed him to include general communication concerning science and technol-ogy within his frame of reference.[13]

I shall particularly want this extended understanding of what "culture" includes in my second lecture. It is, in my view, the clearer understanding today that in spite of its perhaps greater claims for objectivity, science is subject to the same social formation as other forms of human interaction and communication, which lends additional force to Raymond Williams's original insights, allowing us (I shall argue) to extend them to account for today's much altered cultural milieu.

12. Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 53.

13. I have in mind particularly the work of Bruno Latour. See Bruno Latour and S. Wool-gar, *Laboratory Life: The Social Construction of Scientific Facts* (Los Angeles: Sage, 1979); La-tour, *Science in Action: How to Follow Scientists and Engineers through Society* (Cambridge: Harvard University Press, 1987); and Latour, *The Pasteurization of France* (Cambridge: Har-vard University Press, 1988). Although Latour's early work came out before Williams's death, it received real recognition for its importance only later. See also, for example, S. Shapin and S. Schaffer, *Leviathan and the Air Pump: Boyle and the Experimental Life* (Princeton: Prince-ton University Press, 1985): "The establishment of a set of accepted matters of fact about pneumatics required the establishment and definition of a community of experimenters who worked with shared social conventions: that to say, the effective solution to the problem of knowledge was predicated upon a solution of the social order. Hobbes's criticism was that no matter of fact made by experiment was infeasible, since it was always possible to display the labour expended on making it and so give a rival account of the matter of fact itself. The deci-sion to display or to mask that labour was a decision to destroy or protect a form of life."

There are secondary strands of Williams's thinking in *Culture and Society* that I suggest continue to resonate today. One of these is his careful resistance to designating any part of cultural production as "mass culture," with an accompanying sense of "dumbing down" or dilution. "The masses are always the others, whom we don't know, and can't know. Yet now, in our kind of society, we see these others regularly, in their myriad variations, stand, physically, beside them. They are here, and we are here with them. *And that we are with them is of course the whole point. To other people, we also are masses.* Masses are other people."[14]

In what I consider a helpful reminder, Williams suggests that it is the use of the word "mass" that allows us to persuade ourselves that universal suffrage and widened access to education have debased cultural standards—as opposed to broadening, deepening, or altering them:

> There are in fact no masses; there are only ways of seeing people as masses. In an urban industrial society there are many opportunities for such ways of seeing. The point is not to reiterate the objective conditions but to consider, personally and collectively, what these have done to our thinking.
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> The fact is, surely, that a way of seeing other people which has become characteristic of our kind of society, has been capitalized for the purposes of political or cultural exploitation. What we see, neutrally, is other people, many others, people unknown to us. In practice, we mass them, and interpret them, according to some convenient formula.... To the degree that we find the formula inadequate for ourselves, we might wish to extend to others the courtesy of acknowledging the unknown.[15]

We may want to hold on to this idea when we come to consider "mass communications" as they have developed at the beginning of the twenty-first century, and to heed Williams's warning not to assume that wider public access to communications will inevitably lead, at least in the longer run, to a lower quality of cultural output—to a debased idea of what "most people" share or believe culturally.

Finally, in *Culture and Society*, a key component for Williams in any development of the conditions for social and political change that is culture led is wider and broader access to education. It is a liberal education that provides the terms in which the culture all around us is understood, and it is the uneven reach of, and access to, that education that determines

14. Williams, *Culture and Society*, 289 (emphasis added).
15. Ibid.

the way in which those from different social backgrounds engage with it. At its worst, absence of education is a precondition for a settled sense of social exclusion:

> It is clear that the highest standards of literacy in contemporary society depend on a level of instruction and training far above that which is commonly available. For this reason it is still much too easy to conclude that a majority culture is necessarily low in taste.… Right action…is a matter of ensuring that the technical changes which have made our culture more dependent on literate forms are matched by a proportionate increase in training for literacy in its full sense. It is obvious that we have allowed the technical changes to keep far ahead of the educational changes.[16]

At the time when Williams was writing in the late 1950s, the responsibility for "training for literacy in its full sense" was still divided in the state sector between grammar and secondary modern schools, and the school leaving age was fifteen. He himself was directly involved with adult education (the education of what we would today call "returners") through the WEA, the Workers' Educational Association. It was, he believed, only by introducing those traditionally excluded from full literacy to a humane education that it would eventually become possible to transform and democratize British society.

In the field of education, in his heavy dependence on wider participation as the catalyst for social and political reform, Williams was, as he was later quick to confess, in agreement with the intellectual aspirations of the by no means socially radical Cambridge literary critic and educational reformer F. R. Leavis:

> The immense attraction of Leavis lay in his cultural radicalism, quite clearly. That may seem a problematic description today, but not at the time. It was the range of Leavis's attacks on academicism, on Bloomsbury, on metropolitan literary culture, on the commercial press, on advertising, that first took me. You must also allow for the sheer tone of critical irritation, which was very congenial to our mood.… Finally, there was Leavis's great stress on education. He would always emphasize that there was an enormous educational job to be done. Of course, he defined it in his own terms. But the emphasis itself seemed completely right to me.[17]

16. Ibid., 298.
17. Williams, *Politics and Letters*, 66.

Writing at a time when the British education system was still deeply socially fractured, Williams argued consistently for a single integrated system. In the manifesto "Britain in the 1960s" with which *The Long Revolution* ends, his insistence on the place of an educational system accessible to all is categorical:

> My whole case about social change is…that the interdependence of elements which I described as a matter of theory is an argument for conceiving change on the widest possible front: the changes in emphasis in our economy, in our ordinary working relationships, in our democratic institutions, and in education are all relevant to cultural change in this more explicit field. I would repeat my emphasis on the overriding educational problem: the provision of new kinds of education for the now neglected majority between fifteen and twenty-one. The growth of adult education is also relevant.[18]

According to Williams, vocational education, or education designed by a particular regime to inculcate its dogma, fails absolutely to provide that inclusivity—the possibility of responding and reshaping learned experience for one's own purposes—required for genuine social cohesion. The more any administration attempts to implement its own political agenda in its educational offering, the less adequate such an education is as part of a community strategy of belonging. At the same time, Williams believes that even limited engagement with the literary and artistic traditions of a community provides each individual with the tools for creative (and thus inclusive) thinking, as a member of it.

Williams's model of education is what is today labeled (borrowing a term from a discussion of Internet culture to which I will move on in my second lecture) as "generative"—not "locked down" to specified usages, but open to be developed and incorporated in a wider picture envisaged by the learner in his or her community. As part of an agenda for change, Williams comes down firmly on the side of an educational program that acknowledges its responsibilities in giving each individual access to a culture that sustains their inclusion within the wider community:

> It is a question of whether we can grasp the real nature of our society, or whether we persist in social and educational patterns based on a limited ruling class [educated elite], a middle professional class, a large operative class, cemented by forces that cannot be challenged and will

18. Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 374.

not be changed. The privileges and barriers, of any inherited kind, will in any case go down. It is only a question of whether we replace them by the free play of the market, or by a public education designed to express and create the values of an educated democracy and a common culture.[19]

In spite of the inevitably dated quality of some of his articulations of key points, here are the Williams-derived theoretical principles I am suggesting might still form useful components of an examination of the relationship between culture and society today. Crucially, the idea that culture plays an active part in the complex of influences that form us all emotionally, and define us as participating members of our community (be that a global one or a nation-state), brings the humanities back into the bigger picture, as intrinsic to social and political understanding. In my own capacity as a professor of humanities, rereading Williams reminds me that what I "profess" is a belief in the active, shaping influence of culture upon all aspects of our everyday lives.

So now, to draw this first Tanner Lecture to a close, I want to take a step away from *Culture and Society* and offer you some preliminary observations of my own, taking as my starting point that key idea of Williams's of the formative effect of culture on society—of the fact that culture is "not passively received, but…actually lived through, by those to whom it is offered."

If culture, at all levels and of all types, is a web of meaning engaging each of us directly, and actively forming our emotional understanding of our relationship to society, then it needs to be given serious consideration alongside other such shaping influences—economic, political, and social—as part of any assessment of "who we think we are." This means that any analysis of social structure ought to take into account the evidence and involvement offered by cultural sources contributing to an understanding of strategies for social cohesion in general. The skills for such consideration are the powerful array of tools developed within the disciplines of text studies and history (including history of ideas, textual analysis, close reading, linguistics, narratology, and psychoanalysis). These are deployed tellingly across research in the humanities, and their outcomes feed into that clarity of understanding of the culture-determined social fabric that I am interested in.

19. Ibid., 176.

We have, too, made a good deal of progress in the areas identified as key by Williams and as important for culture-led social change. In the fifty years since Raymond Williams wrote *Culture and Society*, the "great tradition" in art and literature has been replaced by a broader, distinctly more open version of actively formative cultural influences. In no small part this is a consequence of widened access to education, which has extended the boundaries of "relevance" in art and literature.

How does that vital process of drawing the individual into the community through culture take place in practice now? Let me give you a single example from the plastic arts (an area into which Williams never, as far as I am aware, actually strayed): the work of sculptor Antony Gormley. I choose Gormley because I think we can agree that his "canonical" artistic work has general accessibility and successfully straddles any putative "high"-"low" divide—as evidenced most strikingly by the way in which his monumental *Angel of the North* has captured the general public imagination.[20]

Gormley's own reflections upon the way he expects his audience to engage with the arrays of life-size cast-iron figures he creates, based around his own body, interestingly recapitulate some of the terms we have already met. In Gormley's view, in any encounter with a Gormley artwork, he anticipates—expects, and asks for—a strongly experienced sense of emotional kinship and collective involvement on the part of his audience: "The body is the collective subjective and the only means to convey common human experience in a commonly understood way."[21]

Gormley's art sets out to trigger connection between community and artwork by site-specific location and juxtaposition. It is a direct prompt for the onlooker—a request for an answering engagement and active, responding recognition. One of his recent installations in London, *Event Horizon* (summer 2007), featured a set of thirty-one life-size human figures located on the tops of key buildings around the Hayward Gallery (where there was an exhibition of his work at the time). Simply noting the figures in the course of one's ordinary movement around the city meant becoming aware, in an unfamiliar way, of the scale of buildings and skyline and using our eyes to test the relation of the human body to its built environment.

Every one of Gormley's figures is a body cast of his own body. In *Event Horizon*, as the onlooker gazed out at the buildings around the Hayward

20. I am starting with Gormley because his work has total acceptance as high art but has also been absorbed and accommodated in the common (or popular) imagination.

21. U. Kittelman, ed., *A. Gormley: Total Strangers* (Berlin: Hatje Cantz, 1999).

Gallery, he or she was suddenly given a depth of perspective not usually experienced in the urban environment. The fact that, from any particular vantage point, some Gormleys looked tiny (because placed on more distant rooftops) while closer figures loomed larger transformed the flat, uniform backdrop of city buildings into one whose concreteness and solidity the human eye could judge. Closer scrutiny from Waterloo Bridge, for example—on which a single lonely standing figure was positioned on the pavement—produced a troubling sense of individual insignificance and helplessness within the cityscape.[22]

A key moment in Gormley's artistic production came around 1990, when he took the aspiration to encourage his audience to make connections between his art and themselves one stage further by actively involving the local community in its production. *Field* (1989–1993) has become probably the most widely known of such Gormley installations (after *Angel of the North*). Site specific in each of its successive versions, it involves the participation of a whole community as unskilled artist's assistants—the material of art handed over to the audience, to contribute to the shaping and formation of the artwork themselves.

Every assistant (each member of the selected local community) modeled a quota of pint-size figures from clay, giving them simple human likeness—rough body contours and indented eyes. In *Field*, tens of thousands of the locally fired terra-cotta figures are arranged by Gormley to fill a carefully chosen gallery space—ideally so overwhelming it that they flood out of sight beyond the enclosure, and the viewer can never achieve a vantage point from which to see them all.

Field deliberately reversed the process whereby the work of art is the object of the onlooker's attentive gaze, thereby unsettling them. In any collection of visitors specific to a gallery in which *Field* was installed, it was a reasonable assumption that a number had come to view the part they themselves had played in making the work. Such individuals would also be able to recognize their own work, in spite of the simplicity of the form, produced to Gormley's instructions, because no pair of human hands will ever shape a morsel of clay into precisely the same form. And whether contributor or onlooker, the force field the community of sculpture makers had created drew other onlookers in, producing the experience that the boundary between local life-world and art-world had collapsed. Viewers experienced themselves as the object of myriad gazes directed toward

22. For a vivid sense of the experience of *Event Horizon*, as captured by any number of participants in the cultural event as "common readers," the reader is advised to go to http://www .flickr.com/ and enter the terms "Gormley" and "Event Horizon" into the Flickr search engine.

them, prompting questions about the limits of our individuality and the nature of group identity.

The emotional kinship and collective involvement Gormley requires of us, in each of his installations, revive—and then go beyond—an age-old, urgently felt need to locate our individual emotional understanding outside and beyond ourselves in a shared community of observers. For Gormley, our very identity is bound up in our capacity simultaneously to share and shape, with others recognizably like ourselves, a life-world (to use Jürgen Habermas's evocative term) that is permanently open and unbounded.[23]

I am conscious that the critic's voice (my voice) inevitably intrudes here, already translating Antony Gormley's work into the terms of my own argument. But that absolute recognizability of his *Angel of the North* stands here for the shift in our train of thought from 1960 to 1990, and the kind of habit of cultural sharing that had developed over that thirty-year period, as I draw this first lecture toward a conclusion.

In fifty years much of what Raymond Williams was talking about, in terms of educational opportunity and inclusive classroom strategies for overcoming an immediate sense of "uncommunity"—inequality—on the part of those from less privileged backgrounds encountering culture, has been achieved. As Williams predicted, some of this has been effected by means of the "mass media" F. R. Leavis and other more conservative cultural theorists of the 1950s and 1960s deplored. The less widely read (less inclined to engage with reading) have been made familiar with the "great tradition" through high-quality TV and film dramatization of classic fiction, bringing new groups of people to, for example, the nineteenth-century novels of Dickens, Jane Austen, the Brontës, and Elizabeth Gaskell. Breathtaking, accessible science has taken us all in the company of the likes of David Attenborough to the bottoms of the oceans and deep into previously unvisited wildernesses. Whole generations recall the impact on their understanding of major documentary series on TV such as Kenneth Clarke's *Civilisation* and Jacob Bronowski's *Ascent of Man*, and now the intellectually exacting history series written and presented by Simon Schama. Museums have become welcoming places for the general public, mounting great, informative, and factually scrupulous exhibitions like The First Emperor at the British Museum, with its record-breaking numbers of visitors.

23. See Jürgen Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, vol. 1, *Reason and the Rationalization of Society* (Cambridge: Polity Press, 1986).

Such accessible experiences and possibilities have unlocked culture from the academics and the elites. So the access questions Williams raised have been transformed radically over those fifty years. At the same time, since the 1980s there has been a massive increase in the fifteen- to twenty-one-year-old cohort continuing in education and in real possibilities for access to education for those who missed it the first time around (as Williams hoped to assist directly through his WEA efforts).

Yet we continue talk of the impoverishment of mass culture in the very same terms Raymond Williams cautioned us against fifty years ago. We deplore "dumbing down" all around us, the detrimental social effect of unscrupulous mass media, and the loss of national identity. In my second lecture I shall argue that we are still using the wrong indicators to judge the consequences of that active engagement between cultural consumer and cultural product. Fundamentally, what matters is that the culture we consume (we, the masses) be emotionally rich, open, and flexible, engaging us in acts of discernment that shape our emotional understanding of our "lived experience."

Might there, indeed, even be redemptive qualities to much maligned reality shows like *Big Brother*? Thinking aloud about these lectures over the summer, a young woman in her twenties, vacationing with the same generous friends I was visiting in France, explained to me that she watched *Big Brother* not for the production-contrived grotesque scenarios and contests but for the unexpected, marginal incidents that arose in the course of an unscripted on-screen drama, between contestants acting for themselves. From these, she maintained, she learned more about her own generation's emotional needs and responses. There was not, she explained, enough television in which she could find a place for herself. That was why she preferred the Internet.

In the tradition of soap opera—in which each episode must leave enough stories incomplete to tease the viewer into tuning in at the same time the following night—this is probably a good place for me to close this first Tanner Lecture. In my second I will turn to the technologies that power the culture all around us today, and take a hard look at the ways in which new media—including the Internet—are rapidly reshaping the context and forms of each and every individual's contemporary engagement with culture and society, reconfiguring the social process.

LECTURE II.
COMMUNICATION IS A WHOLE SOCIAL PROCESS

As my point of departure for this second Tanner Lecture, here is the quotation from Williams's *Long Revolution* from which I have taken the titles of these two Tanner Lectures:

> Our descriptions of our experience come to compose a network of relationships, and all our communication systems, including the arts, are literally parts of our social organisation…. Since our way of seeing things is literally our way of living, *the process of communication is in fact the process of community*: the sharing of common meanings, and thence common activities and purposes; the offering, reception and comparison of new meanings, leading to the tensions and achievements of growth and change.
>
> It is of the utmost importance to realise this sense of communication as a whole social process.[24]

"It is of the utmost importance to realise this sense of communication as a whole social process." If Williams is right here (and I think that he is), then it follows that any drastic alteration in the processes of communication will produce corresponding changes in "the whole social process," "the process of community."

One of the things that makes this passage so suggestive today is that reference to the way "all our communication systems" constitute a "network of relationships"—it reads like a prophetic comment about the Internet. Williams was, of course, thinking of physical works of art and literature, yet his is a context that transposes remarkably readily into terms directly relevant to our far more virtual twenty-first-century experience. Williams's insight, framed against a backdrop of print culture, transposes without strain to the new communication systems that are shaping new "networks of relationship" today. Just as the technologies of the printed book produced unanticipated collaborations, information exchanges, and social developments undreamed of (and unintended) by the early exploiters of the printing press, so, we might want to argue, is the Internet today.

This suggestion is not, of itself, of course, a new one. In fact, in discussions of the late-twentieth-century technological revolution whose effects we feel so powerfully today, it has become almost de rigueur to gesture to-

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24. Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 55 (emphasis added).

ward the invention of the movable-type printing press in the third quarter
of the fifteenth century as its precursor. Both can be characterized by the
rapidity of their impact on communications and the permanent social,
political, and economic changes heralded by the newly discovered tech-
nology. Like the PC, the book is a piece of technology well engineered
for efficient human use. The printed book, we are regularly told, is the
example par excellence of an easy-to-use, multipurpose, portable piece of
technology, perfectly adapted in its form to human hand-eye coordina-
tion and capable of transmitting meaning from one person or group to
another—often across time.

Fifty years on from *Culture and Society*, it is, indeed, possible to argue
that the "long revolution" that Williams identified as the ongoing cause of
social change—a revolution that he saw as beginning with the Industrial
Revolution ("It seems to me that we are living through a long revolution,
which our best descriptions only in part interpret")—was in fact a contin-
uation of (and perhaps a watershed moment in) a first information revo-
lution, whose origins lay with movable type and the printing press.[25] In
other words, "our communication systems" have become "a whole social
process," "a process of community," as a direct consequence of more than
five centuries of rapidly accelerating print technology.

It is certainly hard to exaggerate the impact of publishing and the print-
ing press historically on the dissemination of knowledge and the develop-
ment of that peculiarly European sense of identity that we associate with
the Renaissance and Enlightenment. The speed of the spread of learning
during the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries right across Europe can-
not be understood unless we appreciate the availability and convenient
access to knowledge made possible by print. Mass production of textbook
titles, competitive commercial dealing in standard classical texts required
by all scholars, extensive commissioning of new works, and almost instan-
taneous responses in print to controversial ideas and schools of thought
produced a massive escalation in the sheer volume of available sources of
knowledge.

Authors and publishers recognized and understood the financial
implications of the book trade within decades of its emergence as an

25. "It seems to me that we are living through a long revolution, which our best descrip-
tions only in part interpret. It is a genuine revolution, transforming men and institutions; con-
tinually extended and deepened by the actions of millions, continually and variously opposed
by explicit reaction and by the pressure of habitual forms and ideas. Yet it is a difficult revolu-
tion to define, and its uneven action is taking place over so long a period that it is almost impos-
sible not to get lost in its exceptionally complicated process" (ibid., 10).

educational and social force, and modified their commercial practices accordingly. At the height of the Renaissance, successful authors were already anticipating demand in the works they composed, printers were competing strenuously with one another for popular marketable titles, and booksellers and their agents were devising transport networks for moving books from one end of Europe to the other in bulk for local distribution, as a matter of course.

The printed book revolutionized the transmission of knowledge, and permanently changed attitudes and habits of thought, right across Europe. Print brought with it many of the features of a book-based culture that in our everyday lives we now take entirely for granted. The scribally produced manuscript was unique (the pagination of each copy would necessarily be different according to the handwriting of the scribe). The printed book for the first time allowed two readers to discuss passages in a work they were both reading (side by side or at a distance) by referring to the precise page on which it occurred. Consistent pagination also makes it possible for author or editor to provide an index, to which anyone collecting data on a particular topic inevitably turns to begin their search and retrieval of information. The comparatively effortless production of multiple copies meant that printed books could disseminate knowledge far more rapidly and widely than their handwritten antecedents, to a far broader general public. The dramatically lower price of the printed book also made written material available for the first time to a large and diverse readership.[26]

Thus far, Raymond Williams has provided me with the terms for my argument. Those from here onward come from a much more recent, but similarly thought-provoking, theoretical work on communication systems and social change: Jonathan Zittrain's book *The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It*.[27]

Zittrain is professor of Internet governance and regulation at the University of Oxford, Jack N. and Lillian R. Berkman Visiting Professor for Entrepreneurial Legal Studies at Harvard University, and cofounder of Harvard Law School's Berkman Center for Internet and Society. He is thus well placed to assess the current state of development of the Internet and its impact on our lives. In his book he warns that the clash between the openness of the technology and a whole raft of interests with an urge

26. See Lisa Jardine, *Worldly Goods: A New History of the Renaissance* (London: Macmillan, 1996), chaps. 3–4.

27. Jonathan Zittrain, *The Future of the Internet and How to Stop It* (London: Allen Lane, 2008).

to limit and control it currently threatens the very existence of the World Wide Web.

In securing the Internet's future, Zittrain believes, there are two possible, but opposed, ways forward. In the first, digital devices and the Internet remain "open" and "generative"—that is, they invite and allow tinkering and creative experimentation on the part of users (both those interested in the hardware that supports the Internet and those who are "ordinary" users of its communicative possibilities). The second way, he argues, involves handing the management and policing of the Web over to "authorities" (technical experts and corporations of various kinds), in order to protect those of us who use the Web from being exposed to ever more damaging kinds of computer malware such as viruses and "spam," thereby allowing us to get on with exploiting the many advantages the Internet offers anyone whose business is knowledge and exchange of information. This latter direction of development would give us a world of "tethered, sterile appliances"—"locked-down" technologies or networks that discourage or prevent any intervention or modification by the user. Zittrain's fear is that widely held, legitimate fears about the security and stability of fully generative systems could lead to a situation where locked-down appliances look preferable to more easily undermined and infiltrated open systems, and therefore become the norm. His cautionary tale of the attractiveness of a locked-down technology is the iPhone, which is delightfully easy and elegant to use but has been designed (1) to prevent users from interfering with its operation, or exploring its potential without Apple's approval, and (2) so that the manufacturer can modify the operation of the device remotely, without the consent of the user, who is generally unaware of the intervention.

Zittrain's definition of "generativity" captures convincingly a strong sort of ease of use and flexibility associated with particularly promising technologies: "What makes something generative? There are five principal factors at work: (1) how extensively a system of technology leverages a set of possible tasks; (2) how well it can be adapted to a range of tasks; (3) how easily new contributors can master it; (4) how accessible it is to those ready and able to build on it; and (5) how transferable any changes are to others—including (and perhaps especially) non-experts."[28]

A second desirable feature alongside generativity—resistance to "regulability"—according to Zittrain, is an intrinsic characteristic of a device (the PC itself, for example) that prevents a piece of new technology from

28. Ibid., 71.

being "locked down" or centrally controlled and is crucial for a technology's capacity to develop freely, without political constraint, or curtailment of its activities for their failure to conform to imposed norms of publicly agreed directions of development (either technical censorship or censorship of content).

Both "generativity" and "resistance to regulability" are, I would argue, already familiar features of the printed book, and have helped maintain the book's powerful position at the very heart of our cultural nexus since its first emergence as a technological force for change. I pause for a moment on this observation, because I think it is helpful to consider the consequences in the case of this older technology of that generativity Zittrain so applauds, as it has worked its way through culture and society.

Within fifty years of its emergence on the cultural scene, the book had made what had been relatively difficult tasks more simple across a whole range of activities—from distributing standardized catechisms and single-sheet "indulgences" to the religious faithful to disseminating the rediscovered Greek and Latin classics and promoting the educational agendas of distinguished (but until then comparatively isolated) individuals like Luther and Erasmus (both of whom were enthusiasts for the new medium). It has, indeed, been suggested that it was printed books that turned the European Protestant Reformation from a dream into a reality.[29]

Censorship—from the Inquisition's lists of prohibited books in the sixteenth century to Nazi book burnings in the twentieth—notoriously failed to stop the circulation of proscribed material. To some extent, the difficulty authoritarian governments have had in suppressing unwelcome print-produced comment is a consequence of the first characteristic. "Lockdown" is hard to achieve if, whenever there is proscription by force of certain types of printed material, new generators of print appear just beyond the reach of enforcement. The printing press is a simple piece of machinery. It can be set up and dismantled easily, so as to avoid detection by unfriendly authorities; it can be used effectively by semiskilled opera-

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29. On the early history of printing and the printed book, see E. L. Eisenstein's classic treatment, *The Printing Press as an Agent of Change*, 2 vols. (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1979); M. U. Chrisman, *Lay Culture, Learned Culture: Books and Social Change in Strasbourg, 1480–1599* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 1982); M. Davies, *Aldus Manutius: Printer and Publisher of Renaissance Venice* (London: British Library, 1995); L. Febvre and H.-J. Martin, *The Coming of the Book: The Impact of Printing, 1450–1800*, translated by D. Gerard (1976; reprint, London: Verso, 1990); M. Lowry, *The World of Aldus Manutius: Business and Scholarship in Renaissance Venice* (Oxford: Basil Blackwell, 1979); and L. Voet, *The Golden Compasses: A History and Evaluation of the Printing and Publishing Activities of the Officina Plantiniana at Antwerp in Two Volumes* (Amsterdam: Vangendt, 1969–1972).

tors (basic typesetting and working a press are easily learned). The porta-bility and ease of use of the printed page have meant throughout history that broadsheets, single-sheet libels, and newspapers can circulate even in the teeth of determined attempts to control and suppress them. Lack of susceptibility to centralized control is practically part of the definition of print communication.[30]

Books were extraordinarily well adapted to multiple tasks, and still are. They were easy to use, even by the relatively uneducated, once they had learned to read. Over the succeeding centuries since the invention of movable-type printing, all kinds of new adopters have adapted the book to new uses, taking advantage of the remarkable flexibility of the form and its ability to accommodate entirely different types of content. Both tabloid journalism and a phenomenon like J. K. Rowlings's Harry Potter books are products of this flexibility. Finally, it is remarkable with what confidence those with no preparation continue to pronounce themselves eager and ready to contribute to print culture—for example, the flood of would-be published novelists who send unsolicited manuscripts to publishers every year.

Zittrain maintains that fear of the consequences of an unregulated Internet is assisting corporations and governments in their drive to lock down the cultural activity it carries. That fear, he argues, is encouraging the public at large to consent to interference with the Internet, rather than allowing it to develop in its own way, and producing those new cultural forms Williams was sure would emerge from each modification in the machinery of communication.

So once again, we might want to take our cue from the printed book. Nobody in liberal democracies today (as far as I am aware) suggests that they are afraid of the book and its lasting cultural impact, nor do they bewail its remarkable resistance to centralized control. The dramatic economic, social, and political changes the printing press has made possible tend to be represented as beneficial and benign, or at least accepted as part of a continual process of social and cultural change. We are, of course, regularly told nowadays that the book is obsolete as a technology, but it is worth remembering that such pronouncements have been made at regular

30. For the early history of print censorship, see D. Shuger, *Censorship and Cultural Sensibility: The Regulation of Language in Tudor-Stuart England* (Philadelphia: University of Pennsylvania Press, 2006). See also E. Armstrong, *Before Copyright: The French Book-Privilege System, 1498–1526* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1990); and F. M. Higman, *Censorship and the Sorbonne: A Bibliographical Study of Books in French Censured by the Faculty of Theology of the University of Paris, 1520–1551* (Geneva: Librarie Droz, 1979).

intervals since remarkably early in its history. Indeed, Raymond Williams quotes a nice example in *The Long Revolution*, from a poem written in 1518, by an author who had been asked to commit his poetry to print:

> At your instaunce I shall it gladly impresse [print my poems]
> But the utterance [take-up], I thynke, will be but small.
> Bokes be not set by [valued]: there times is past, I gesse;
> The dyse and cardes, in drynkynge wyne and ale,
> Tables, cayles, and balles, they be not sette a sale.
> Men lete theyr children use all such harlotry,
> That byenge [buying] of bokes they ytterly deny.[31]

I am proposing that Internet forms of communication display many of the characteristics and potential of early print, both in the nature of their modes of production and in their output or content. They tend to be non-hierarchical, open to novices and nonexperts, beyond centralized control, and largely unmediated. They are not passive transmitters of cultural material (like international telephone systems, say, which I doubt anyone would claim create new types of knowledge); new forms like MySpace and Flickr rapidly develop recognizable styles and character that are in their turn emulated and modified by other users. Internet forms of communication alter the ways in which we think about being connected to one another in relationships and communities. In their evolving capacity to produce and disseminate culture in a variety of modes across a wide front—socially, educationally, and geographically—they are potentially powerful instruments for change (in terms both of form and of content).[32]

"Our descriptions of our experience come to compose a network of relationships, and all our communication systems, including the arts, are literally parts of our social organization." Remembering Williams's insistence that we recognize forms of communication as defining types of community, we might note that Zittrain has also characterized his "open" and "locked-down" models for the future of the Internet in terms of the social relations it encourages and builds: "We can actually carve our technologies into one or two categories: civic or non-civic. A civic technology is one that invites people to contribute to it, and the success of it depends on how many people choose to be a part of it."[33]

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31. Williams, *The Long Revolution*, 178.

32. See, for example, Zittrain, *Future of the Internet*: "[Generative technologies] foment change" (96).

33. Zittrain, speaking in the CBS Interactive Offices in San Francisco, August 2008: http://blogs.zdnet.com/weblife/?p=128.

Particularly if we keep the history of the book at the front of our minds, it is possible to follow Zittrain's and Williams's lead and see Internet phenomena like e-mail, social networking sites, unmediated online opportunities for comment (including amateur eyewitness accounts alongside traditional journalism), bulletin boards, and blogging as culturally generative, in spite of the fact that as yet we have no way of assessing their eventual impact on our broader cultural life. They are, I believe, rapidly redefining the ways in which Internet users construct their relationships with one another and gain their sense of "belonging" to communities that are no longer defined by geographical location or nationality. I suggest that it is important for us to recognize the broad social significance of these currently chaotic, informal, and unpredictable processes of communication, insofar as they are "in fact the process of community" (to use Williams's words), and thus part of "a whole social process." We may not yet be able to see the new patterns of relationship very clearly, or respond critically to new styles of representation and intellectual connection, but that does not mean we cannot sense that they are there.

So let me try tentatively to suggest how we might start to attribute current changes in our cultural formation to social changes encouraged, if not initiated, by the Internet. In a fascinating section of his book, Jonathan Zittrain explores one of the (to his way of thinking) positive generative consequences of Web use: "the impact of emerging reputation systems."[34]

"Search is central to a functioning Web, and reputation has become central to search," writes Zittrain. An authority on Internet search engines cited by Zittrain puts the matter succinctly: "Since the creation of the first pre-Web Internet search engines in the early 1990s, search engines have become almost as important as email as a primary online activity. Arguably, search engines are among the most important gatekeepers in today's digitally networked environment."[35] The most widely used search engines draw on the behavior of millions of other Web users for their rankings—a site with a lot of inbound links ranks higher than one with few links. Search engines can also invite users to express their views on the items they rank in a variety of ways. From activities like these, reputation systems emerge. They are, of course, open to abuse, but on the whole, the reputation systems incorporated in heavily subscribed sites like Amazon and eBay are convenient to those using them and begin to influence their patterns of use. The same is true for social networking sites.

34. Zittrain, *Future of the Internet*, 217.
35. Ibid., 318.

Zittrain proposes an example of the way in which the habits acquired online might spill over into "real" social life: "Imagine entering a café in Paris with one's personal digital assistant or mobile phone, and being able to query: 'Is there anyone on my buddy list within 100 yards? Are any of the ten closest friends of my ten closest friends within 100 yards?' Although this may sound fanciful, it could quickly become mainstream. With reputation systems already advising us on what to buy, why not have them also help us make the first cut on whom to meet, to date, to befriend?"[36]

At the level of everyday interaction with others, we may already be adopting social connections and creating expectations undreamed of by our twentieth-century selves. To take a single example: my children are reconnected virtually with significant numbers of their contemporaries from secondary school (starting with Facebook and Friends Reunited) and have rebuilt relationships with some of them on the basis of those restored, virtual connections. I, by contrast, doubt if I have encountered more than a handful of people from my own school days, and when I have, it has taken an effort of recall to place them, let alone connect their life histories with my own. For me "school days" is a closed episode in my life; for my children it remains open, and that historic community they belonged to—in another place, at another time—contains the possibility of continuing to develop, should they be inclined to do so.

Of course, search engines are information and idea connectors as well as people connectors. Here I feel on firmer ground talking about changed horizons and communities, because of the extraordinary impact of Web searching on my own academic research.

Search engines connect knowledge and ideas in previously unimaginable ways. They have completely transformed academic research that is based on primary materials—the increasingly rich body of digitized archival materials available in searchable form on the Internet. For a while academics tended to refer to the extraordinary additional connections we were able to establish using cross-site search engines for large corpora of materials as "random" or accidental, but it is now clear that patterns for searching have emerged that take as their starting point various assumptions about connectivity that were not used before. Searching has become increasingly sophisticated. It no longer simply involves single words but begins with carefully selected clusters of words—proper names, common nouns, combinations of terms—that triangulate a field of reference. Search skills now mean that people learn how to put in the words that intersect

36. Ibid., 219.

on an answer. The only satisfactory way to convey the effectiveness of this kind of searching is to perform it in real time, so here I will content myself by giving a single example from my own recent research.

In the course of preparing a public lecture on the letters of Dutch diplomat, poet, musician, and connoisseur Sir Constantijn Huygens, I found I needed to know when, after the death of her first husband, his correspondent Lady Mary Killigrew married Sir Thomas Stafford, gentleman usher to Charles I's wife, Henrietta Maria. I began by searching the *Oxford Dictionary of National Biography* online. The information was not to be found there—there is no entry for Stafford, and Lady Mary appears only as a short sentence in Sir Robert Killigrew's entry. I did, of course, globally search the site, using "Stafford" and "Killigrew" in various combinations, to no avail. I then turned to Google, entering "Lady Mary Killigrew" and "Thomas Stafford." There are enormous numbers of historical Killigrews and Staffords, so this produced a restricted set of Google entries, in which I was naturally not interested in those at the top—"most popular" was not a criterion I was using.

I did not find Lady Killigrew's date of remarriage. But my search took me to Google Books, and specifically to one of the large number of nineteenth-century specialist tracts that are available as part of an agreement between Google and Oxford University Press, the *Calendar of Carew Manuscripts* published in 1867.[37] There the search terms picked up a query from the author about a certain "Lady Mary Killigrew" who had been responsible for auctioning the Carew manuscripts in 1652, following the death of their owner, Sir Thomas Stafford. The author queried who this "Lady Mary Killigrew," whose name was to be found in the auction catalog as the vendor, might have been, and how she might have come by the manuscripts (he had not noted that she was in fact Stafford's widow).[38]

Since part of my argument in the paper I was writing was that Lady Killigrew—a close friend of Huygens, and agent for purchases of musical instruments on his behalf, in London—was a formidable public figure in England at the time in her own right, it was of great interest to me that in 1652 it was she who negotiated the sale of the Carew manuscripts, which had passed into her second husband's possession through family inheritance, during the Commonwealth period, shortly before she left England

37. Personal communication from Richard Ovendon of Oxford University Press, at the launch of the Electronic Enlightenment Web site at the Bodleian Library.

38. Given the uproar in the academic community when Google Books was launched, we might note that here the accessibility of searchable whole-book content was invaluable for my research, without in any way threatening book sales or author copyright.

to join her son Thomas Killigrew and his Dutch wife in Maastricht, where she died in 1656. This piece of information is, as far as I know, unavailable following any more conventional research route—I have so far failed to find her mentioned again in any of the extensive literature on the Carew manuscripts.

This word- or phrase-searching habit is, I suggest, already modifying the field of cultural production in interesting ways. My suggestion is that we can begin to detect altered patterns of connection between people and ideas, within the culture at large—that is, beyond the Internet, but in the light of its newly forged communication connections. Visible as new sorts of groups, or invisibly connected by shared interests of, say, buying patterns on niche Internet sites, these are new communities forming and communicating exactly as Raymond Williams predicted.

Back in the world of books, I suggest that new styles of fiction and narrative testify to these newly acknowledged and experienced communities—deracinated, international, unbounded, and constantly on the move. The nomadic has emerged as a key trope in the novel, as evidenced by the award of the 2008 Nobel Prize for Literature to French novelist J. M. G. Le Clézio, whose novels capture with a painful acuteness the fate of the European, adrift in a vast, unfamiliar world in which global social, economic, and political realities impose themselves upon all too narrow national experiences. His protagonists wander anxiously, vainly looking for a reassuring, settled Paradise elsewhere—in Africa or South America—and finding instead the threatening unfamiliarity and violence of developing countries locked in their own struggles for independence. Looking for confirming identity, Le Clézio's itinerant heroes find themselves to be, in fact, as settled members of discrete nation-states, irrelevant.

Inevitably, this final section of my argument is more tentative and exploratory than what has gone before. Those of us who are convinced that important new possibilities for more powerful archival research activities are available through the development of online resources of the kind I have described are ourselves, I believe, part of a new kind of community. We understand and accommodate research strategies undreamed of even ten years ago, which have modified the landscape of research to an extraordinary extent. We are building networks of historical connections impossible five years ago. If, to return to Williams's formulation, "the process of communication is in fact the process of community" and "the sharing of common meanings, and thence common activities and purposes," consti-

tutes a new community, then researchers in the humanities in fields like my own already constitute such a community.

In the end, I believe that we scare ourselves unduly when we (and I include myself in this number) react violently to manipulations and misrepresentations in our online news media, which we believe are forming "public opinion." We have, I believe, to follow Williams in trusting that "public" to form its opinions on the basis of its "common culture." And that "common culture" is certainly not identical with a set of views expressed in newspapers, on television, and online. Just as research scholars have learned to edit out—by astute choice of search terms and by increasingly sophisticated strategies for identifying reliable and unreliable Web sites (which I have no time to go into here)—so I believe the public at large will do the same. In their new community, too, it will have become habitual to sift and compare in order to arrive at better-informed, more personally relevant bodies of knowledge than were ever available to them before.

I find this thought not simply reassuring but inspirational. Knowledge gathering in the humanities is evolving rapidly under the concerted efforts of the community newly created under the pressure and influence of the Internet. The project for the humanities is surely now to find ways of providing a given community with the knowledge to ask the right questions. To return, finally, to my colleague's question—the one that prompted these lectures: continued funding for the humanities in this new community of research is an integral part of our intellectual future.