
Writing of the situation of the writer in 1947 in What is Literature? (p. 151) he said: "I argue: 'A clear-sighted view of the darkest possible situation is in itself already an optimistic act. It implies, in effect, that the situation can be thought about, that is, that we are not lost in a dark forest and that, on the contrary, we can break away from it, at least in spirit, and grapple with our resolutions in the face of it, even if these resolutions are hopeless." Some of this clearly informs the themes and writing in the shadows of the late 1970s and 1980s - from the opening quotations: "Dyma ni yna ar daith Ein goth (here we are now on the journey home)." Morgan Rhys: 'Y Cyflogwr Gymraeg, 1796 - who holds that it is the way to the Better there be, it exactly a full look at the worst. Thomas Hardy in Tenerife, 1985, through to the closing part of the book: He concludes in Part Three: "Towards 2000," his main hope is that there can be some sharing of this process of control and understanding and revision of outlook. This could be implemented beyond the book itself. I conclude it with an essay on "Resources for a Journey of Hope" (p. 242) which I elaborately encouraging argument. From what began in 1985, as an idea of the long revolution, the third, an interrelated and hopeful movement towards 2000." (p. 217)

The reference to 1985 is to his book The Long Revolution in which he has as its third part his essay "Britain in the Sixties", the main section of which is entitled "Towards a capitalist society," as Part Two of this essay Part Three is "The Analysis Reconsidered" and Part Four is "The Analysis Extend ed". Here, in Williams' own estima tion: "The pivotal essay is on the culture of nations: in it a complete choice of the perspective of the 1985 essay, in part a challenge to the controlling 'national' forms through which most of us still try to think. But, as he goes on to say: 'As an alternative, in the perspective of the national' perspective 'cannot be corrected by any simple move away from national to international forms'." Thus the reason why this chapter is one of the international features 'East-West, North-South', and the part concludes with War: The Last Enemy. It is a typically honest, courageous action for Raymond Williams to republish a proselytising analysis, on the edge of the decade it discusses, some 34 years later, it still reads well, as did it to me then. I have written elsewhere how of how Raymond Williams the historian is an acknowledged, gifted, author, comparing "Britain in the Sixties" with the superficial, "easy" talking of the closing pages of E.J. Hobsbawm's Industry and Empire. The "reconsiderations" (p. 17. Th is is because there are, the main, consolidations of the arguments of Williams' earlier analysis: they are in of themselves resources and strengths. I happen to be a disconcerting on peasants - in London, England, the Friday after that dark, dark Thursday 13th May 1979 when the Thatcher government was 'elected'. Two of the speakers were Ray mond Williams and Eric Hobs bawm. The first's of the resources to the previous day's events were striking. Williams was not. Hobsbawm was speaking of 'betrayal' by the working class. I meant to point the way to the resources of Williams' writing which were resources for a hope. The strengths of the current writing relate in part to this calm (a keyword) hopefulness. A key passage, for me, is the following: "There are, in times of the current crisis, when the image materialises of a dictatorship, of which somebody is trying to think, while there is a fact-dancing going on in one corner and a military band blazing away in the other. It is not the ordinary enjoyment of life, of life that are diverting serious concern, as at times, in a natural human rhythm, they must and should. It is a systematic cacophony which may indeed not be the ordinary life which is going to know that it is jamming and drowning the important things, but which is nevertheless, and so far successfully, doing just that." Out of this book come crucial, pensive prescriptive suggestions with regard to the necessary and sufficient forms for social militancy in our time - regarding production (pp. 98), socialism (pp. 164), culture and technology (p. 151), the general interdependence (pp. 163-164), the socialist movement (p. 174), a variable socialism regarding social identities and effective and efficient governing societies (p. 199), and more diverse recommendations regarding "internationalism" and "peace" in the concluding chapters of Part Four: I entirely endorse his points regarding the latter. "To build peace, more than ever, is nothing less than to build peace. To refuse nuclear weapons, we have to refuse much more than nuclear weapons. Unless the refusal can be connected with such building, unless protest can be connected with and surmounted by significant practical construction, our strength will be insufficient. It is then in making hope practical, rather than despair convincing, that the ways of peace can be entered." I would wager that the last sentence will be quoted in 2073 - if there is a 2073, in the way that I and others turn to that wondrous text of William Morris, Communist (1893).

In what ways, then, is hope made practical in Towards 2000? There is, first, the calmness (although I shall critically qualify this in a moment) which converts also a refusal of tendencies, of expecting sudden victories, which has marked the writing of other socialists and communists of Williams' generation. There is, second, the recognition that needs are always there to be the feature of his writing - of hope and strength, yes, but also of pervasive, common obstacles, difficult trolleys. More specifically, I want to say 'theoretically' that I check myself, these are historical experiences and understandings of millions of ordinary women and men after all - there are the twin emphases of much of Williams' other work, (1) reactions of production (and, I would stress, social forms) are not to be thought of as (a) secondary, (b) structuralist, (c) determinist, or (d) caused by forces of production (pp. 84), and this entails rethinking the whole strategy of involvement in the "very idea of the Mode of Production" (p. 2), (2) there was only one good way out of all this: A practical and possible general conception of (a) all reasonable particular interests, to be estranged with large, troubled and negotiated, agreed, constructed (p. 165). We have to begin again. In this, and only in this, in "new" and "other" forms and other passages which carry forward the energy of The Long Revolution through such staging posts as the excellent socialism in Williams' Problems in materialism and culture. Third, there is the new questioning and examining in relation to both the existing (classical, in turn, not trial, the book, but especially in Part Four - bringing to bear on an alienated politics, the detailed work on culture, there is a sense of change which follows from seeing life and work as production as "production" but as "society as a way of life", there cannot then be a reason for life and work as an emotion and rational intelligence (pp. 165), in which the central element is the shift from production to "livinghood": from an objectifying mode of life, to more practical ways of life-". But the book does not "work" for me - for that person who described (and I stand by that judgement) 'Politics and Letters' as "indefensible" - is a man who has compared Williams' writing here to that of Williams' movement (p. 174), a variable socialism regarding social identities and effective and efficient governing societies (p. 199), and more diverse recommendations regarding "internationalism" and "peace" in the concluding chapters of Part Four: I entirely endorse his points regarding the latter. "To build peace, more than ever, is nothing less than to build peace. To refuse nuclear weapons, we have to refuse much more than nuclear weapons. Unless the refusal can be connected with such building, unless protest can be connected with and surmounted by significant practical construction, our strength will be insufficient. It is then in making hope practical, rather than despair convincing, that the ways of peace can be entered." I would wager that the last sentence will be quoted in 2073 - if there is a 2073, in the way that I and others turn to that wondrous text of William Morris, Communist (1893).

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The Sexual Fix is a strange work which gets curiouser and curiouser the more I read it. Even though it is clearly, even to the only half awake reader, an adaptation of Michel Foucault's mischievously inspired speculations about sexuality, the man himself is never once mentioned. He is the ghost at the banquet. But he is a ghost with a method: a powerful work, the second curious thing about the book is its scopophilia, not to say hostility, towards Freud and all his works, which is similar to Foucault's critique of psychanalysis. Freud, it seems, was both the discoverer of the subversive workings or desire and its arch-recodifier.

Now Stephen Heath's was one of the first reviews of the end-of-the-century in the pages of the theoretical journal Screen and elsewhere we joined us to address ourselves to the insights of Lacan's recov- ery of Freud. But it is clear that he has gone astray, however, and so apparently for much of us the Foucaultian is not justiciable for this cause. Since Heath's book first appeared Foucault has de- parted from the scene. Indeed, had it not for Foucault, shall we have to wait very long the long institutions of one's present legacy?

There is of course nothing wrong in people changing their minds about the work. In this strange is that Heath's apostasy is another thing in the book. So much that it is not only the most straining of our spirits, but his wits and Fou- cault's, are almost completely destroyed in the book, or ignored. Is this how all great thinkers fall: not with an uproar but with silence and a yawning gap.

If you can forget that all, Heath's book does offer a lively account of the overwhelming significance assigned to the sexual over the past century. This book is a significant commonplace which fixes us into our society, which sees the human sexual and social activities. And so far as the truth of our being in the present is concerned, the book is illustrated through wide-ranging and intelligent discussions of a variety of topics, from the history of erotics, to the history of the sexual revolution in the West, and the history of modern pornography. No one could doubt Heath's liveliness of mind or sensi- tivity to cultural phenomena, but I for one was left with a deep sense of disappointment and dissatisfac-

As I have suggested, Foucault is right about much of this over two years ago, and a number of recently feminist historians have explored, sometimes subverting, some- times challenging, his arguments. Peter Gay's recent study of the "bourgeois experience," despite presenting a number of inadequacies, has at least exhaustively paved our way. The contrast of their conclusions, simi- larly, have been one of the dominant themes in this book. It is uncertain what is needed is a sharper debate on the implications, for theory and political practice, of the dominant arguments put forward by Foucault and his supporters: that sexuality is an historical apparatus that is deeply implicated in the play of power.

Several issues immediately come to mind. Firstly, if sexuality is an historical construction, what weight are we to ascribe to its effects. Stephen Heath argues that: "Sexuality is without the importance ascribed to it in our contemporary society: indeed it is capitalist; it is without that importance because it no longer exist as such, because there is no such thing as sexuality." There is a strange non sequitur here. We may agree that sexuality should not have the importance assigned to it in Western culture, but the impor-

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Heath's own solution, unfortunately, is to adopt what seems surprising to the conventional moral attitudes, with a touch of contem-

porary radical feminism thrown in for good measure. I am not in the least concerned with this conclusion by himself, I weigh in with the majority moralis-
tic tone to the effect that socialist politics should possibly support pornog-

Ography. Perhaps not, but I know how many feminists and socialists who believe that blanket hysteria against pornography ignores the absolute necessity to make dis-