

National Conference	Rayat Shikshan Sanstha's Prof. Dr. N.D. Patil Mahavidyalaya, Malkapur (Perid)	Special Issue 4 th January 2020
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Rayat Shikshan Sanstha's
Prof. Dr. N. D. Patil Mahavidyalaya, Malkapur (Perid)

One Day National Interdisciplinary Conference
On

Recent Trends and Issues in Languages, Social Sciences and Commerce

Saturday, 4th January, 2020

Organized by

Department of English, Hindi, Marathi,
Economics, History, Commerce and IQAC

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The Theme of Cultural Materialism in Raymond Williams' *The Country and the City*

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Introduction:

The theory, Cultural Materialism, is associated with Raymond Williams. Cultural materialism came out as a theoretical movement in the early 1980s. Raymond Williams coined the term Cultural Materialism to portray a theoretical amalgamation of Marxist analysis and leftist culturalism. Williams emphasized the material implication of culture. For him, culture is a lived experience. It consists of meanings generated by ordinary men and women, the lived experiences of the participants and the texts and practices engaged by all people as they conduct their life. Culture is not free of the material conditions. This idea of Williams is in contrast with the theories which tend to focus on ideas, beauty and cultural ideals and view material culture as a secondary product of economic and technological process. According to cultural materialism, culture is simply neither a reflection of economic forces and relationships, nor is it an abstract and idealistic entity. In fact, culture is made up of texts which are produced and consumed through social processes and way of life of specific groups. Therefore, culture is material. Culture is termed material as it is made solid in a variety of forms, which are the products of industrial and social processes. Therefore, television has an impact on society through the programmes shown. Moreover, in a slightly different sense, we can say that a television set is a material object, which is placed in private and public spaces. In this way, as an object, it is a part of the décor and meaning of a living room, in fact, the rest of the décor is structured around it.

Raymond Williams in *The Country and The City* looks at the tradition of country house writing, and probes its role in idealising the social order of early capitalist Britain. He explained that texts such as Shakespeare's *The Tempest* or *Henry V*, or Jonson's *To Penshurst* are related to the political and social order of the day. By performing certain ideological and symbolic work, they contribute directly to its creation, and play a specific part in the dissemination of a poetics of nationhood.

Raymond Williams demonstrated that the relationship between writing and social order was dialectical. Events in the society give rise to their depiction in poetry; at the same time, the idealisation that occurs in poetry strengthens and helps to cement the social order. This was true not only of the period, in which the unified British nation-state was being created, but also of the period of empire. In other words, *The Country and The City* draw an implicit connection between the processes of nation-building at home and of empire-building overseas. Implicitly then, the breakup of empire might be related to an accompanying break-up of the nation-state itself.

This theory is also concerned with the specific historical documents which are analysed. Cultural materialists analysed the methods by which hegemonic forces in society took control over historically important texts like Shakespeare and Austen and then used them to validate or impose certain values on the cultural imaginary. The class-based analysis of traditional Marxism is extended by additional focus on the marginalized. Cultural materialists want to bring attention