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# “A Whole Way of Life”: Ontology of Culture from Raymond Williams’s Perspective

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**ABSTRACT.** An overall understanding of culture, both the culture of community one lives in and the culture of communities one communicates with, seems to be important for people to live their lives under the shelter of peace. This study hands over and foregrounds what people should notice when they face with their own and other nation’s culture in order to understand it better and prevent probable problems. Knowing about the essence of one's own culture, the person can protect it while it is being attacked by other cultures. It is predicted that by being aware of all the criteria just mentioned, people can both protect their own genuine culture and communicate with other communities, with different cultures, without facing with or creating crucial problems; as a result, they can live peacefully and help the matter of globalization. The main goal of this study is to present ontology of culture through which people would be able to get how to know their own and other's cultures. This knowledge helps them to communicate properly by knowing about what aspects of culture they should focus on when facing other cultures in order not to create any crucial problem.

## 1. INTRODUCTION

Culture, a very complicated and broad subject affecting every individual’s life in the modern time, has had a very influential role in the life of mankind from the very beginning of the formation of communities. The influence is so noteworthy that Clifford Geertz (1973), one of the critics in the realm of culture, believes that, “... there is no such thing as a human nature independent of culture” (49); he further goes on to insist on the mutual relationship of culture and man, maintaining that, “without men, no culture, certainly; but equally, and more significantly, without culture, no men” (ibid). Undoubtedly, as far as one is talking about a human being, he should not forget noticing the concept of culture he is living in.

The importance of studying culture has always been engaging both the critic and people’s mind. Pat Duffy Hutcheon (1999), explaining about the significance of knowing about culture, believes that, “... culture is our destiny: the source of both the beliefs that inform us and the values that guide us” (1). What she tries to convey is the *instructive* aspect of culture as a guideline for the life of human beings which creates the “destiny” of humankind. She, moreover, continues to clarify the advantages of knowing more and more about culture when she mentions that, “once we understand that a culture is, in fact, a web of interacting, complex adaptive institutions, we can begin to identify more effective approaches to solving the problems faced by modern industrial societies” (20). Hence, she is showing the *constructive* function of culture when somebody is aware of it which helps him to be able to use it. Another scholar in the sphere of studying culture is Ruth Benedict, who also persists in the influential role of culture in the life of an individual and the necessity of knowing about it, when she declares that, “we must understand the individual as living in his culture; and the culture as lived by individuals” (1960: XIV), and that,

... culture may value and make socially available even highly unstable human types. If it chooses to treat their peculiarities as the most valued variants of human behaviour, the individuals in question will rise to the occasion and perform their social roles without reference to our usual ideas of the types who can make social adjustments and those who cannot. (1960: 233)

It is obvious that Ruth Benedict, quite like other scholars, emphasizes the mutual relationship of culture and the individual, on the one hand, and the instructive role of culture in a community on the other.

Looking deep into the definitions and views of critics regarding culture, it is evident that most of them emphasize on some key elements as the substantial components of culture. Regarding these elements, one can easily understand the concept of culture in a particular community. Pat Duffy Hutcheon, explaining about the patterns that lead to the formation of culture, believes that the members of a society should pass through some particular processes in order to create an institution forming the ultimate structure of culture. These processes, according to her, are,

- (1) their family relationships and rules of behavior having to do with procreating and nurturing the young, ministering to the sick and elderly and the dead and dying;
- (2) their language and the history embedded in it; (3) the arts and the drawings, literature, music and other artifacts produced by those who seek both to communicate and to create; (4) their scientific knowledge (6).... and the technology following in its wake; (5) the sacred objects and rituals which they worship and pursue, along with the mores that determine appropriate behavior and the ideals to which the group as a whole aspires; (6) their organized means of acquiring and defending territory; (7) their arrangements for providing order and security within society; (8) their organizations for making and administering policy decisions; (9) their established customs for producing and distributing resources; and (10) their formal means of socialization—or ways of preparing new members for adult roles. (1999: 7)

She, wisely, refers to the key factors a person needs to pay attention to in order to understand a community's viewpoint towards culture. She, further, continues to underscore the important function of language and education as the basic elements of culture, when he mentions that, "...the basic unit of culture is either a single idea (or belief) *capable of being communicated through language*, or a social custom requiring transmission by means of verbal description and direction, rather than resulting merely from imitation during the lifetime of an individual," (ibid: 16) and that,

the institution of education is closely related to that of procreation and the nurture of infants. Education involves the preparation of the young for membership in the human group, whenever it is assigned to specific people and pursued with specific objectives in mind and by specific means. It is the deliberately planned aspect of the more comprehensive process known as *socialization*. This process is the means by which people acquire the habits, intuitions, attitudes, standards, values, concepts and beliefs of their species in general—and of their immediate subculture in particular. It provides for that all-encompassing humanization without which members of our species are incapable of functioning in civilized society. It is only through this process that children are enabled to "take in" the *memes* of the human group and, ultimately, to refine and improve them; or, where necessary, to select and discard them. (ibid: 40)

Hereby, Hutcheon, as one of the scholars in the domain of analyzing culture, starts from family, as the first element, and goes on to language, art, knowledge, customs, territory, policy, and so on to pinpoint important elements while trying to investigate culture. Talking about culture and culture area, the importance of mapping, as one of the ways which has been common to clarify culture and its elements is noteworthy. Mapping an area in a specific culture, for sure, is located under the domain of "cultural geography" about which Mark J. Smith (2000) states,

cultural geography considers the formation of identities in relation to space and place. The way we see ourselves in relation to the places where we live, work and play is itself a complex product of the boundaries we construct between ourselves

and others. The kinds of boundaries we draw have had an impact through the inclusion and exclusion of others. (116)

He, further, continues to explain that, “cultural geography also assumes that ‘culture’ involves constant struggles for dominance and generation of resistance through which identities are accomplished” (ibid). What Smith tries to clarify is the close connection among place, culture, and identity in a way that a special place has a culture of its own which creates the special identity of its residents; as a result, any power which tries to dominate it will create a form of clash which leads to the resistance of its residents. The resistance is, for sure, because of the identity which has been constructed over many years and unable to be changed overnight. He, likewise, tries to explain the connection between culture and the effect of hegemony while it is used to approach culture. He believes that, “by approaching culture through the use of the idea of hegemony, culture can be conceptualized as a space within which struggles between social forces are conducted” (ibid: 81). Antonio Gramsci, an Italian Marxist, uses hegemony, “...the assumptions, values, and meanings that shape meaning and define reality for the majority of people in a given culture” (Bressler 2007: 198), in a way that it- hegemony- plays an important role in the way culture continues its existence. By creating especial priorities for especial, mainly upper class or dominant groups in a society, culture highly affects the way people should treat one another or behave in a community.

It is also very significant to notice the role of history in the formation of culture. History has always been an important element in the formation of the ‘heritage’ of culture. Judy Giles and Tim Middleton (2008), elaborating on the relationship of culture and history, believe that, history is “a key practice in the processes of culture” (91) and view it “as one aspect of culture and identity” (ibid). They, further, continue to explain on the role of history, mentioning that, “history is one of the ways in which human beings acquire identities and make sense of the world and their experiences of it. Thinking about how the past is represented, and how ideas about it are communicated, in the present can offer insights into the process by which meaning is produced and circulated” (ibid: 91-2).

Clashes among cultures always lead to the formation of high or mass culture and popular culture(s). Explaining Raymond Williams’s ideas about this phenomenon, Judy Giles and Tim Middleton state that, “... dominant cultural forms are always integral to the social structures of society, in the sense that they interact with economic factors, family structures and the education system to produce, reinforce and sustain that society’s social relations and stratifications” (ibid: 184) as if it is the power and dominance of high culture that leads the society to a way to continue its existence. Hereby, again, the relationship between culture and power is emphasized.

As the purpose of the study requires knowledge of culture, the following books are reviewed and proved to be informative and invaluable:

*Patterns of Culture* (1960), written by Ruth Benedict, a prominent anthropologist of the twentieth century, explores the important role of culture to create a framework for human life. Furthermore, by comparing three different cultures- the Zuni of the southwestern United States, the Kwakiutl of western Canada, and the Dobuans of Melanesia – she explains their different behaviors, and also the important role which culture plays in everyday and every individual's life. This book has been a necessary one for the study of culture so far.

Edward W. Said, in his *Culture and Imperialism* (1994), analyses the imperial power of the West and its dominant cultural subjugation. He examines the double presence of imperialism in both the material world and the world of imagination; that's why- he believes- the elimination of imperial or colonial power does not mean that the influence of it has been faded away as well, because it has still remained in the beliefs and actions of people. He examines the ways that the colonizer influences the colonized and also builds its culture.

*The Location of Culture* (1994), a very important and moving book written by Homi Bhabha, is a collection of twelve essays of him in which he explains –as he opposes- the emergence

of colonial and anticolonial subjectivity and also colonial discourse. He reads many texts of British colonial to show the breakdown of colonial power and dominance.

*The Blackwell Companion to the Sociology of Culture* (2005), edited by Mark D. Jacobs and Nancy Weiss Hanrahan, contains 28 scholarly essays which are original in the content and totally important, concerning the concept of cultural turn; furthermore, it shows that how culture plays an important role as a systematic process which creates meaning in life.

This is a library research, and since the ultimate goal of this study is to present an understanding of culture, the major discipline of the study will be critical theory. Furthermore, the ideas of the influential literary figure in the field of cultural studies, Raymond Williams, are analyzed to strengthen the purpose of the study, which is formulating the ontology of culture.

## 2. DISCUSSION

Raymond Henry Williams (1921-1988), is an influential writer and critic in the domain of Cultural Studies, as the son of a railway worker born in Llanfihangel Crucorney, near Abergavenny, Wales. He received his education there and attended Trinity College, Cambridge, where he got familiar with The Communist Party of Great Britain and became one of its members. After receiving his MA from Trinity College in 1946, he started a job as a tutor at Oxford University. His important publications in the domain of culture and cultural studies are *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (1958), *The Long Revolution* (1961), *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976), and *Marxism and Literature* (1977).

To understand Raymond Williams' perspective towards culture chronologically, one should start with his *Culture and Society 1780-1950* (1958). He begins his discussion by pinpointing that some keywords came into "common English usage" (Williams 1960: xi) and got new meanings. These new words, "industry, democracy, class, art, and culture," (ibid) are of high importance so far as they affect our "ways of thinking about our common life" (ibid). He believes that, among these words, culture has been changed during history in a way that these changes influenced people's life and ways of thinking; he, moreover, states that,

... before this period, it [culture] had meant, primarily, the 'tending of natural growth', and then, by analogy, a process of human training. But this latter use, which had usually been a culture of something, was changed, in the nineteenth century, to culture as such, a thing in itself. It came to mean, first, 'a general state or habit of the mind', having close relations with the idea of human perfection. Second, it came to mean 'the general state of intellectual development, in a society as a whole'. Third, it came to mean 'the general body of the arts'. Fourth, later in the century, it came to mean 'a whole way of life, material, intellectual and spiritual'. It came also, as we know, to be a word which often provoked either hostility or embarrassment. (ibid: xiv)

This is the very gist of what he had in mind and expanded in this book.

Culture, as a keyword of the period whose meaning has been changed during history, is not a one-dimensional word pregnant by itself and in itself, but it is in close connection and contact with other important words of the period, "industry, democracy, class, and art" whose meanings have also changed. To delineate the evolution of the meaning of culture during past years, he goes to thinkers of the period and highlights their ideas towards culture till he comes to a conclusion and states his own experience of this study.

Williams begins his discussion by referring to Edmund Burke and his 'idea of the State'. He states that,

... he [Burke] established the idea of the State as the necessary agent of human perfection, and in terms of this idea the aggressive individualism of the nineteenth century was bound to be condemned. He established, further, the idea of what has

been called an 'organic society', where the emphasis is on the interrelation and continuity of human activities, rather than on separation into spheres of interest, each governed by its own laws.... Immediately after Burke, this complex which he describes was to be called the 'spirit of the nation'; by the end of the nineteenth century, it was to be called a national 'culture'. (ibid: 12)

In Raymond Williams' point of view, for Burke, the role of the State is crucial for human beings to reach the state of perfection. Moreover, the establishment of a unique law is necessary to reach an 'organic society' which is called national 'culture' later on.

After Burke, Williams goes on to Southy and focuses on his idea of culture when he states that, "there can be no health, no soundness in the state, till Government shall regard the moral improvement of the people as its first great duty" (qtd. in Williams 1960: 27). Williams (1960) elaborates on the idea of Southy, mentioning that, "the word, culture, indicates here the line which was to be so extensively pursued: the setting-up, in opposition to the laissez-faire society of the political economists, of an idea of active and responsible government, whose first duty was the promotion of the general health of society" (27). Hereby, Williams pinpoints the role of the government to distribute 'health' in the society as a primary privilege of the culture of the time.

Robert Owen is the next thinker who is important to Williams. Studying about culture Owen maintains that,

I [Owen] was completely tired of partners who were merely trained to buy cheap and sell dear. This occupation deteriorates, and often destroys, the finest and best faculties of our nature. From an experience of a long life, in which I passed through all the gradations of trade, manufactures and commerce, I am thoroughly convinced that there can be no superior character formed under this thoroughly selfish system. Truth, honesty, virtue, will be mere names, as they are now, and as they have ever been. Under this system there can be no true civilization; for by it all are trained civilly to oppose and often to destroy one another by their created opposition of interests. It is a low, vulgar, ignorant and inferior mode of conducting the affairs of society; and no permanent, general and substantial improvement can arise until it shall be superseded by a superior mode of forming character and creating wealth. (qtd. in Williams 1960: 31)

Explaining Owen's idea about culture, Williams (1960) maintains that Owen "... accepts, without equivocation, the increase of wealth as the means of culture" (28). Continuing Owen's idea towards culture, Williams mentions that in Owen's perspective a "new moral world" is created by "active government and a national system of education" that moves towards the 'idea of positive culture' (ibid: 32).

In his discussion about culture, then, Williams refers to culture as "the 'embodied spirit of a People', the true standard of excellence, became available, in the progress of the century, as the court of appeal in which real values were determined, usually in opposition to the 'factitious' values thrown up by the market and similar operations of society" (ibid: 37). He believes that in the domain of the ideas about art, artist, and 'their place in the society', beside the political, social, and economic changes, a radical change has happened that leads to the rise of 'a large middle-class reading public' and 'commercial publishing of the modern kind' that resulted in the transformation of writer as 'a fully-fledge 'professional man'' who expresses a feeling of satisfaction toward public, exactly contrary to the sense of dissatisfaction that he previously had (ibid: 35-36).

Williams, later on, talks about Egerton Brydges and Tom Moore, emphasizing that for them there is a kind of difference between the 'mob' and the 'cultivated few' in a way that "...the adjective 'cultivated' contributed to the newly necessary abstractions, 'cultivation' and 'culture'. In this kind of argument, 'culture' became the normal antithesis to the market (ibid: 39). It is worth mentioning that by 'market' Williams refers to Brydges's view which considers that literature as a sort trade in Europe.

Coleridge, as one of the important thinkers, does catch the eyes of Raymond Williams. He sees Coleridge as a thinker who accentuates the importance of "... cultivation as 'the ground, the necessary antecedent condition, of both ... 'permanency and progressiveness'. This idea of Cultivation, or Culture, was affirmed by Coleridge, as a social idea, which should be capable of embodying true ideas of value" (ibid: 67). Institutions, on the other hand, beside cultivation, are required to guide people to a state of consciousness in the society.

Williams turns his attention towards Thomas Carlyle as a new voice in the area of culture who emphasizes "the idea of culture as the whole way of living of people" and criticizes industrialism and notes that "... the idea of culture as the body of arts and learning, and the idea of culture as a body of values superior to the ordinary progress of society" (ibid: 91) mingle into one another.

Matthew Arnold, a sage thinker in the domain of culture and criticism, is the next one about whose ideas Williams talks. Arnold, as a critic who defined culture, wrote a book entitled *Culture and Anarchy*. In this book, as he states, his intention is to

... recommend culture as the great help out of our present difficulties; culture being a pursuit of our total perfection by means of getting to know, on all the matters which most concern us, the best which has been thought and said in the world; and, through this knowledge, turning a stream of fresh and free thought upon our stock notions and habits, which we now follow staunchly but mechanically, vainly imagining that there is a virtue in following them staunchly which makes up for the mischief of following them mechanically. Culture, which is the study of perfection, leads us ... to conceive of true human perfection as a harmonious perfection, developing all sides of our humanity; and as a general perfection, developing all parts of our society. [Culture states] consider these people ['Philistines'] then, their way of life, their habits, their manners, the very tones of their voice; look at them attentively; observe the literature they read, the things which give them pleasure, the words which come forth out of their mouths, the thoughts which make the furniture of their minds; (qtd. in Williams 1960: 124-126)

What Williams takes out of this text is that culture covers all aspects of human life gained through "right knowing and right doing" (ibid: 136). Culture is, at last, as Arnold believes and Williams emphasizes, a critic of institutions that looks out to make them better or replace them.

Williams briefly refers to Newman's idea in which for him "culture had a reality in experience, as an element of the divine perfection" (138). He, then, directs the argument towards Otho Laurence's idea about culture when he says, "It is with the life about us that all our concern lies; and culture's double end is simply this to make us appreciate that life, and to make that life worth appreciating" and that, "the aim of culture is to make us better company as men and women of the world" (qtd. in Williams 1960: 176). Elaborating on this aspect of culture, Williams pinpoints that, "The first emphasis of culture was an emphasis of the function of certain kinds of thought and feeling in the whole life of man: a function properly described as moral" (ibid: 180).

T. S. Eliot is the other important thinker of the modern age, to whom Williams refers finally, and sees his trend of thought as an "... emphasis of culture as a whole way of life [which] is useful and significant" (ibid: 250). From Eliot's perspective "Culture ... includes all the characteristic activities and interests of a people: Derby Day, Henley Regatta, Cowes, the twelfth of August, a cup final, the dog races, the pin table, the dart board, Wensleydale cheese, boiled cabbage cut into sections, beetroot in vinegar, nineteenth-century Gothic churches, and the music of Elgar" (qtd. in Williams 1960: 250).

Having all the ideas, mentioned above, concerning culture, Williams (1960) finally wraps up the discussion by mentioning that, "What we sometimes call 'culture'-a religion, a moral code, a system of law, a body of work in the arts- is to be seen as only a part, the conscious part of that 'culture' which is the whole way of life" (254).

*The Long Revolution* (1961) shows the durable revolution in the domain of culture about which Williams elucidates. He believes that along with the democratic and industrial revolutions, a revolution in the culture has taken place through the improvement of the press technology, the growth of standard English language, and also the reading public. He refers to three categories in the definition of culture. First of all, he recognizes the 'ideal' category, about which he states that in the 'ideal' category,

... culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values. The analysis of culture, if such a definition is accepted, is essentially the discovery and description, in lives and works, of those values which can be seen to compose a timeless order, or to have permanent reference to the universal human condition. (Williams 1961: 57)

But for Williams, this category alone is not acceptable. He explains that,

... an 'ideal' definition which attempts to abstract the process it describes from its detailed embodiment and shaping by particular societies- regarding man's ideal development as something separate from and even opposed to his 'animal nature' or the satisfaction of material needs- seems to be unacceptable. (ibid: 59-60)

In the second place, Williams refers to the 'documentary' category of culture which he explains,

... culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded. The analysis of culture from such a definition, is the activity of criticism, by which the nature of the thought and experience, the details of the language, form and convention in which these are active, are described and valued. (ibid: 57)

He continues, mentioning that such aspect of the definition observes 'a kind of historical criticism' in which 'traditions and societies' into which these works have been created. Again, for Williams, this category alone is not acceptable, for he explains that, "a 'documentary' definition which sees value only in the written and painted records, and marks this area off from the rest of man's life in society, is equally [the same as 'ideal' category] unacceptable" (ibid: 60).

Furthermore, Williams highlights the 'social' definition of culture,

... where culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in institutions and ordinary behavior. The analysis of culture, from such a definition, is the clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture. Such analysis will include... historical criticism... in which intellectual and imaginative works are analyzed in relation to particular traditions and societies, but will also include analysis of elements in the way of life that to followers of the other definitions are not 'culture' at all... (ibid: 57)

Elaborating on this part, again, Williams does not accept it alone. He believes that, "a 'social' definition, which treats either the general process or the body of art and learning as a mere by-product, a passive reflection of the real interests of the society, seems to me equally [like 'ideal' and 'documentary' definitions] wrong" (ibid: 60).

What Williams, as a cultural critic, cultivates in his mind is a broad category which is a combination of the three definitions given above. He states that, "it seems to me that any adequate theory of culture must include the three areas of fact to which the definitions point, and conversely that any particular definition, within any of the categories, which would exclude reference to the others, is inadequate" (ibid: 59). Regarding all these aspects, Williams reveals his definition of the theory of culture:



... as the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life. The analysis of culture is the attempt to discover the nature of the organization which is the complex of these relationships. Analysis of particular works or institutes is, in this context, analysis of their essential kind of organization, the relationships which works or institutions embody as parts of the organization as a whole. A key-word, in such analysis, is pattern: it is with the discovery of patterns of the characteristic kind that any useful cultural analysis begins, and it is with the relationships between these patterns, which sometimes reveal unexpected identities and correspondences in hitherto separated activities, sometimes again reveal discontinuities of an unexpected kind, that general cultural analysis is concerned. (ibid: 63)

In order to be able to study culture properly, Williams believes that

we need to distinguish three levels of culture, even in its most general definition. There is the lived culture of a particular time and place, only fully accessible to those living in that time and place. There is the recorded culture, of every kind, from art to the most everyday facts: the culture of a period. There is also, as the factor connecting lived culture and period cultures, the culture of the selective tradition. (ibid: 66)

He believes that a culture may not be lived, but we can study it based on the recordings and knowing about 'its social characters,' 'its general patterns of activity,' and 'its structure of feeling' that lead to the formation of 'tradition' which can be recognized as a 'continual selection and re-selection of ancestors' (ibid: 66-96).

Raymond Williams, as one of the key critics in the realm of cultural studies and one of the influential writers who focuses on the definition and analysis of culture, writes a book, *Keywords: A Vocabulary of Culture and Society* (1976), in which he collects and analyzes the key elements and vocabularies used in the domain of culture and sociology. Culture, as one of the key vocabularies and elements in the study of societies and communities, occupies many pages of his book. He persists in the importance of culture when he says,

culture is one of the two or three most complicated words in the English language. This is so partly because of its intricate historical development, in several European languages, but mainly because it has now come to be used for important concepts in several distinct intellectual disciplines and in several distinct and incompatible systems of thought. (Williams 1976: 87)

He goes deep into the concept of culture and looks at it from multiple perspectives. He believes that the word culture is from '*cultura*,' which is from the Latin '*Colere*' and has a variety of meanings which are "inhabit, cultivate, protect, honour with worship" (ibid). He explains about the development of the word, mentioning that some of its meanings have been changed during history, like the word 'inhabit' which developed through '*colonus*,' from the Latin to '*colony*,' and the word 'honour with worship' which developed through *cultus*, from the Latin to '*cult*' (ibid).

Williams starts a chronological discussion about culture, believing that "culture in all its early uses was a noun of process: the tending *of* something, basically crops or animals" (ibid). He believes that this "natural growth" aspect of culture leads to the "process of human development" which reflects the next usage of the word (ibid); he hands over examples from the writers of the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> century to prove his point, as in "More: 'to the culture and profit of their minds'; Bacon: 'the culture and manurance of minds' (1605); Hobbes: 'a culture of their minds' (1651); Johnson: 'she neglected the culture of her understanding' (1759)" (qtd. in ibid). He, then, traces the development of the word through different languages such as French and German, about which he

discusses that "in French, until the eighteenth century, culture was always accompanied by a grammatical form indicating the matter being cultivated" (Williams 1976: 88) and that in German language:

... the word was borrowed from French, spelled first (1C18) [last period of 18<sup>th</sup> century] *Cultur* and from C19 [19<sup>th</sup> century] *Kultur*. Its main use was still as a synonym for *civilization*: first in the abstract sense of a general process of becoming 'civilized' or 'cultivated'; second, in the sense which had already been established for *civilization* by the historians of the Enlightenment, in the popular C18 [18<sup>th</sup> century] form of the universal histories, as a description of the secular process of human development. (ibid: 89)

Afterwards, he refers to Herder as one of the figures who changed the use of the word with his attack on the 'European Subjugation' and his belief in the use of the word with its plural form, 'cultures' because of "the specific and variable cultures of different nations and periods, but also the specific and variable cultures of social and economic groups within a nation" (ibid). Williams, then, points to 1840s Germany when 'Kulture' is synonymous with 'civilization' (ibid: 90).

Furthermore, Williams elaborates on the artistic aspect of culture with its affinity and emphasis on "music, literature, painting and sculpture, theatre and film" (ibid). At last, Williams discusses the hostility towards the word 'culture' :

... the central area of hostility has lasted, and one element of it has been emphasized by the recent American phrase culture-vulture. It is significant that virtually all the hostility (with the sole exception of the temporary anti-German association) has been connected with uses involving claims to superior knowledge (... the noun INTELLECTUAL), refinement (*culchah*) and distinctions between 'high' art (culture) and popular art and entertainment. (ibid: 92)

He continues mentioning that this hostility has been eliminated through "the steadily extending social and anthropological use of culture and cultural and such formations as sub-culture" (ibid).

*Marxism and Literature* (1977), a distinguished book of Raymond Williams, discusses the basic concepts of studying society of the age such as, culture, language, literature, and ideology in a way that one can clearly feel the movement and taste of the age towards these concepts. He, further, goes on to discuss the ingredients of cultural theory and literary theory of the age so that the profundity of the discussion and subject would be clear.

Beginning his discussion on the concept of culture, Williams (1977) believes that "until the eighteenth century it [culture] was still a noun of process: the culture of something- crops, animals, minds" (13). The turning point in the concept of culture took place with the turning point of the age in the area of 'society' and 'economy' in which culture came into a close connection with '*civilization*.' Elaborating on this aspect of interaction of 'culture' and 'civilization,' Williams states that "the notion of 'civilizing', as bringing men within a social organization, ... rested on *civis* and *civitas*, and its aim was expressed in the adjective 'civil' as orderly, educated, or polite;" (ibid) however, it was not confined just to this sole purpose. The concept of 'civilization', covering a broad area, "expressed two senses which were historically linked: an achieved state, which could be contrasted with 'barbarism', but now also an achieved state *of* development, which implied historical process and progress" (ibid).

Having completed his discussion on 18<sup>th</sup> century concept of culture, Williams starts talking about the modern age and the views towards culture in it. He maintains that there were 'responses of a modern kind' towards 'culture' and 'socialism' in which "the idea of culture, offering a different sense of human growth and development, and ... the idea of socialism, offering a social and historical criticism of an alternative to 'civilization' and 'civil society' as fixed and achieved conditions" became important (ibid: 14). Williams believes that 'culture' and 'civilization' were previously 'interchangeable terms;' but, then, civilization came to be seen as something "superficial" and "a cultivation of 'external' properties-politeness and luxury" which were against "'human' needs

and impulses;" that's why civilization was the point of attack that led to "alternative sense of 'culture' –as a process of 'inner' or 'spiritual'.... [which] associate[s] culture with religion, art, the family, and personal life as distinct from or actually opposed to 'civilization' or 'society' in its new abstract and general sense" (ibid: 14). From such perspective, then, culture came to be seen "... as a general classification of 'theatre', religion, and the institutions and practices of meanings and values" (Williams 1977: 14-15). Afterwards, 'culture', along with 'art' and 'literature', was considered as the source of 'human spirit (ibid: 15). Williams completes his discussion about culture by mentioning that

... it [culture] became a noun of 'inner' process, specialized to its presumed agencies in 'intellectual life' and 'the arts'. It became also a noun of general process specialized to its presumed configurations in 'whole ways of life'. It played a crucial role in definitions of 'the arts' and 'the humanities', from the first sense. It played an equally crucial role in definitions of the 'human sciences' and the 'social sciences', in the second sense. (ibid: 17)

Though studying culture and knowing about it have always been of great significance, the corrupt practice of this knowledge happens when a power starts knowing about the built webs of a culture and then deconstructing and abusing it.

### 3. CONCLUSION

Undoubtedly, from the beginning of the formation of communities, especially in the modern time, culture has affected the life of every single individual all around the world; accordingly, it seems quite essential to be well-informed of the nature of one's culture in general and your own culture in particular. As a result, it is obvious that nobody should ignore the substantial role of culture in the life of people. Undoubtedly, culture is present everywhere to influence the life of people, so understanding culture and the role of it in every single person's life would help people to live peacefully beside one another, in a smaller scale, and in the world, in a broad scale. Raymond Williams (1981), one of the forerunners of literary criticism and cultural studies in the world, hands over a very clear definition and explanation of culture which is helpful in understanding it, regarding our purpose of study in the domain of humanities. He believes that,

there are three general categories in the definition of culture. There is, first, the 'ideal,' in which culture is a state or process of human perfection, in terms of certain absolute or universal values .... Then, second, there is the 'documentary,' in which culture is the body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded .... Finally, third, there is the 'social' definition of culture, in which culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values not only in art and learning but also in the institutions and ordinary behavior. (43)

As a result, it is conspicuous that not only do people from the same culture need to know about the culture they are living in, but also people from different countries and cultures need to know about each other's culture in order to be able to understand one another and communicate better.

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