Returning to the Long Revolution

Returning to the Long Revolution:

The Crisis of Recognition

By

Stewart Ranson

In memory of Raymond Williams

CONTENTS

PREFACE

The project of recent neo-liberal governments over thirty years has been nothing less than the demolition of the post-war social democratic prospectus of valuing the capabilities of each and providing opportunities for all. This has been replaced by returning to a distant tradition of rationing limited opportunities through tacit as well as explicit social selection. The underlying assumptions of fixed human nature and of a society that is believed to work only when constituted as an arena of predatory competition serve to provide a rationale for the few to accumulate their advantage above the needs and well-being of the many who become socialised once more to know their place and limit their horizons. The complementary agenda of weakening the public spaces of democratic deliberation silences objection to the appropriation of power, wealth and opportunity. The neo-liberal agenda thus lacks legitimacy as well as pedagogic integrity.

The struggle to achieve social justice for all had been developing since the beginning of industrialisation in the eighteenth century. TH Marshall's celebrated 'Citizenship and social class',[1] charts the movement to achieve the rights of democratic citizenship from the 18th century (civil rights), through the 19th century (political rights) and into the 20th century (social rights). Civil rights were established principally in the 18th century providing the individual with freedoms of speech, thought and faith, and the rights to own property and enter into contracts with others. Marshall demonstrates the way that while according civil rights of equality before the law was an historic achievement, without the material conditions, social and political, to take advantage of those rights they were necessarily limited. According civil rights had little effect upon the class structure because the working class had no access to political power and thus the possibility of equalising the material goods that make a reality of formal rights. This only began to materialise with the expansion of political rights from 1832 to 1928, and the establishing of social rights in the 20th century, in particular with the war-time political settlement which established what Rawls would call the 'basic structure' of social goods that provide the material conditions to live a worthwhile life.[2] Egalitarian liberals, like Rawls, argue that a social democracy is required for a just society because 'we cannot exercise our civil and political liberties without the provision of basic social and

economic needs; government should therefore assure each person, as a matter of right, a decent level of such goods, as education, income, housing, health care, and the like'.[3]

This class analysis is deepened further by Raymond Williams' cultural materialism. He conceptualizes this unfolding struggle as 'the long revolution' which is meant to convey… a sense of movement through a very extended period.'[4] Williams was disappointed that even with the possibilities of change presented after the Second War, the path to radical reform was being blocked. There was still a long journey to travel. What did Williams mean by 'the long revolution'? It was not a palace coup, or even a larger insurrection: rather, the term was meant to convey a sense of a long movement[5] from the Industrial Revolution to the present day and continuing into the future. The long revolution was 'a genuine transforming of men and institutions; continually extended and deepened by the actions of millions, continually and variously opposed by explicit reaction and by the pressure of habitual forms and ideas.'[6] He begins by describing three central and interrelated transformations which characterise the long revolution: in democracy, industry and communications.[7] In *politics* he observes 'the rising determination, almost everywhere, that people should govern themselves, and make their own decisions, without concession of this right to any particular group, nationality or class.[8] This movement has developed globally through the 20th century, in liberation movements as well as in the extension of suffrage especially for women. However, this expansion of rights has typically been opposed by different political traditions, but also by fraud and violence. It is evident, Williams says, 'that the democratic revolution is still at a very early stage'.[9] The more familiar *industrial revolution*, in science, technology and manufacturing has been unfolding since the late 18th century transforming man's relationship with and control of nature. These changes are also at an early stage of growth, and often stand in an uneasy tension with developments in democracy, sometimes opening industrial organisation to more inclusive decision-making, but as often repressing participation. It is with a third *revolution in communications* that Williams is particularly interested, though it leads him into conceptual duplication.[10] It is the aspiration to extend the active process of learning, with the skills of literacy and other advanced communication, to all people rather than to limited groups, which he regards as comparable in importance to the growth of democracy and the rise of scientific industry.'[11] This expansion, also at an early stage, has also been resisted by reactionary forces.

Each of these transformations is significant in its own terms, yet Williams insists that they cannot be understood separately, but only together. Changes in the economy, the polity and in communications and education describe a more fundamental cultural revolution, which has transformed the whole way of life of a society. Culture expresses the evaluative schema, the codes, of a whole way of life. Its basic element, Williams says, 'is its effort at total qualitative assessment' [12]. When a society undergoes major systemic change to its way of life, this is reflected in changes to the cultural schema and codes which register the reactions of people in thought and feeling to the transformations they are experiencing. Such an overall qualitative re-assessment occurs because 'general change, when it has worked itself clear, drives us back to our general designs, which we have to learn to look at again, and as a whole'. [13]

Attempts to single out particular dimensions, such as expanding adult suffrage, or even educational opportunity, distort the analysis that is necessary. The changes can only be understood as a deep cultural change of the way of life of a people: 'from the shape of our communities to the organisation and content of education, and from the structure of the family to the status of art and entertainment, is being profoundly affected by the interaction of democracy and industry and by the extension of communications. Now at the centre of our history it is not for democracy as a political system alone, nor for the equitable distribution of more products, nor for general access to the means of learning and communication.' [14] It is more a cultural transformation of the ambition of men and women to become creative makers of their society. The long revolution is not merely an extension of what already exists for a minority, but the people as a whole seeking to participate in the articulation of meanings and values' to shape their communities in a democratic society. [15]

For Williams this ambition has not been a series of separate, successive struggles towards democratic citizenship; rather it has formed the same struggle, unifying the whole period from the Industrial Revolution to the present: to overcome the order of cultural domination that is experienced in the daily lives of ordinary people, subordinating them as inferior members of the polity. Society is in the grip of an elite culture which is assured that only some have the qualities to rule society. Whether these ideas are articulated by Coleridge or Carlisle, Newman or Arnold, Eliot or Leavis, their claims have remained the same: industrialisation has brought with it democracy, and together they have undermined civilized society.

What this means is that the struggle to achieve the long revolution to an educated democracy has been permanently resisted at every stage by those who believe in the natural right of a cultural elite to rule denying recognition to 'the mass' they denigrate. The struggle has been long because the goal of creating a democratic society that can realise social justice and opportunity for all has been opposed at every turn.

The basic question now facing social democracy is whether this long revolution that was driven in pursuit of opportunity, voice and justice for all, is halted or lies in ruins. The challenge for the progressive tradition is to learn again the stages of that long struggle, to understand the conditions for remaking social democracy. The place to begin, paradoxically, is in the second half of the nineteenth century with public intellectuals, liberals, radicals and socialists attacking the same dominant ideology of laissez-faire economics of possessive individualism that corrupts out own society 150 years later. It took the work of brilliant public intellectuals, including the liberals John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, the puritan idealist TH Green, and the revolutionary socialist, William Morris, to begin to articulate a conception of the common good that valued social justice and recognised the human worth of all citizens. Such values legitimated the gradual expansion of the franchise, opportunities and the material conditions of citizens at work and in the community. Yet only also as a result of those radicals who led the movement not only for equality but to create the trades unions, political parties, and campaigns for feminism that would establish justice: including Annie Besant, Clementina Black, John Burns, Millicent Fawcett, William Lovett, Tom Mann, Eleanor Marx, Will Thorne, Emmeline Pankhurst, Emily Davison and countless more. Not just ideas but courage and collective determination to make a political movement will need to be recovered if social justice for the common people is to be realised once more.

England is not well. Inequality and poverty grow and with it the spectre of hopelessness, democratic spaces are eroded and there is a loss of trust in the polity. The challenge now for the progressive tradition is to learn again the crucial conditions for remaking social democracy.

The Crisis of Recognition

The transformations of our own time, especially the restructuring of labour markets and the collapse of meaningful work for many, are reinforcing divisions in society and intensifying misrecognition. What is at stake in

these structural changes in the historical context being described? Gellner[16] had argued that the principal condition for modernity was the achievement of a common language of citizenship enabling strangers from parochial backgrounds to communicate effectively in the worlds of work and commerce. Now, however, the upshot of accelerating inequality, poverty and unemployment is a divided society that no longer speaks the same public language of citizenship and recognition of common humanity.

The tradition of England as two nations[17] is reborn, with one nation asking, in the context of hopelessness, what it is any more to live a life, to be human? We are led to ask what kind of society we wish to live in, what principles to live by? The human crisis, Williams argues, 'is always a crisis of understanding', about what exists and what is possible. The significance of the choice of cultural formation could not be more fundamental: one direction leads to the suffocation of capabilities, the other to letting them breathe and live. What has to be defeated is 'the long dominative mode',[18] that deep *habitus* as Bourdieu calls it, a belief in the superiority, the distinction, of some above others who are regarded with contempt as 'masses'. For a community to move towards 'more actual and more active conceptions of human beings and relationships' would be to generate a new freedom. For Williams this slow struggle to expose as false those images and beliefs in the superiority of some is the fundamental long transformation, although 'understanding this change, this long revolution, lies at a level of meaning which is not easy to reach'.[19]

Williams argues that the preconditions for establishing such a community of common culture lie in citizens *recognising* their equality of being: 'the struggle for democracy is a struggle for recognition of equality of being or it is nothing'.[20] In using the concept of recognition Williams is tacitly building on Hegel's *Phenomenology* and anticipating Axel Honneth's (1995) *Struggle for Recognition*. The willingness of citizens to enter with conviction into such a common democratic process will depend on overcoming the extensive inequalities which divide them and make a sense of community almost impossible. Cooperative practice in community will depend on recognition of practical equality. This will mean a considerable movement towards material equality but, for Williams, this is not the most fundamental meaning of equality. 'The only equality that is important, or indeed conceivable, is equality of being. Inequality in the various aspects of man is inevitable and even welcome; it is the basis of any rich and complex life. The inequality which is evil is inequality which denies the essential

equality of being. Such inequality, in any of its forms, in practice rejects, depersonalises, degrades in grading, other human beings'.[21]

A common culture does not mean that people have to be regarded as the same, yet unless citizens are acknowledged as equal in their humanity then there is likely to be reluctance to value and enter the space of common experience. There are inequalities which do not damage the essential equality of citizens. People will come to differ in their defining capabilities – being a good scientist, or chess player, carpenter or sportswomen, but these do not imply that they are unequal in their common humanity. But those who seek to use inequality of property ownership or even seek to establish 'equality of opportunity' as an entitlement to their sense of superiority, thus justifying denial of respect to others and a right to rule over them, are generating unacceptable fissures in the common culture. 'The inequalities which are intolerable are those which lead to such denial or domination'.[22]

The most fundamental preconditions, therefore, for the long revolution towards an educated democracy depend upon citizens acknowledging their essential equality in a common culture. In the last paragraphs of *Culture and Society* Williams sharpens his conceptualising of the contemporary dilemma, concluding more darkly however, that realising a common culture will require citizens not only to respect and value each other, but to recognise the structures of domination that block the path to the actualising of a just democracy. 'Our measure of success in recognising these (structures), and in naming them, making possible their common recognition, may be literally the measure of our future'.[23] The long revolution as the common struggle for mutual recognition will be the central theme of this book leading to analysis of the institutional structures that have contributed to enabling and limiting its realisation.

Recovering the Long Revolution

What is to be done? The predicaments of our time are public, 'collective action' dilemmas, those that can only be resolved together rather than by individuals alone. It will take cooperation to remake civil society yet neo-liberalism has eroded the public institutions and spaces needed for collective action. Where is the motivation for change to come from now to achieve enough cohesion for cooperative action? In our historically divided society it took the prospect of military catastrophe in 1940 to arrest the deep habitus of misrecognition and exclusion to create the conditions for social cohesion

and a political settlement for social democracy. McKibbin,[24] however, helps us to understand what we need to learn about the limitations of this earlier settlement (1942-45). While it created the material conditions for the well-being of the common people, it failed to transform the cultural conditions of their subordination: the institutional formations that embodied and reproduced elitism, particularly the public schools, the Church and the establishment. Different institutional arrangements will now be needed to secure social justice and repair the rents in the fabric of the public sphere. What will it take? Another catastrophe, of global warming, is failing to generate co-operative action. Instruction will be ineffective and material incentives unlikely to achieve the scale of change needed.

The key to motivating change now lies in a radical re-imagining of our democratic citizenship, empowering citizens to participate in and take responsibility for remaking the communities in a period of structural change. Only a transformation in democracy can engage citizens, and through the practice of deliberating common goods, achieve mutual recognition of cultural differences and social cohesion. A new political settlement can constitute the framework of material social justice enough to allow the larger purpose of democratic change. It took a century of reform 1832-1928 to universalise the franchise but those structures of representation left citizens as passive spectators bereft of voice and agency. Democratic community participation can create the necessary public spaces and encourage the voices of different communities to deliberate common concerns so that citizens become makers rather than merely detached voters in the polity.

This new beginning for democracy called for by Arendt[25] places learning at the centre. Yet a different pedagogy of democratic learning communities, of expansive learning, is needed to re-motivate local democracy. Such a theory of learning embracing, not only the school or college, but all the spheres of living, focuses not on passive transmission but on recognition, mediation and activity. What has been grasped in research is that engaging and motivating the learner grows out of activities having meaning and relevance for the worlds in which we live. A learner cannot be educated independently of her community's webs of significance. Yet the purpose of learning is to develop understanding and valuing of a public world the learner will share with strangers from other communities. The process of learning is thus inescapably a journey between worlds, connecting the language of home and community with the language of the collective space. Learning is

always a bi- (or multi) lingual experience, as we learn to move between the genres and codes of the tacit and particular to the explicit and universal.

Democratic learning communities cannot achieve their purposes without mediating worlds – recognising communities of difference, so as to understand the interdependent nature of learning and living, and yet bridging them to imagine and value a shared, cosmopolitan public world. Lived experiences, identity and history need to be recognised and valued: 'their culture, language and dialect, and countless experiences, stories and memories of their families, communities and friends, including in particular stories of oppression and injustice'.[26] This mediation of difference is more likely to occur when citizens can enter public spaces, forums and associations to deliberate and take responsibility for concerns facing the community about educational opportunities, health and social services, the environment and employment. Working together different communities can develop shared understanding through doing as well as deliberating, about common projects of remaking the community: on the conservation of energy, ideas for play areas for the young, the greening of the environment, the use of public art, as well as investment in economic regeneration that continues the heritage of constituent communities. Public space is educative. Through participation on a school governing body to protect my child's special educational needs, I learn that other children have such needs, and I learn about the changes required in public services to address them. Learning progresses from the particular to the universal. Cooperative endeavour enables citizens to learn about 'the other'; their humanity, intelligence, reasonableness, courage. Learning about others can generate respect, cooperative activity generates cohesion enough to seek to resolve conflicts.

Styles of Discussion

The purpose of this book is to understand the conditions for remaking the long revolution to create a society, as Williams hopes, in which all can become makers of the meanings and values which shape their lives and work. The argument of the book unfolds in three parts each with its own distinctive discursive style. Part I (chapters 1- 3) develops a narrative style to describe contributions to the struggle to achieve a moral order and social structure embracing the common good. Part II (chapters 4-5) presents analyses to explain or account for the continuing barriers of class prejudice and power to progress towards social democracy and Part III (chapters 6-8) proposes social imaginaries to argue for alternative futures.

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PART ONE

THE LONG STRUGGLE FOR THE COMMON GOOD: NARRATIVES

The long revolution to achieve the rights of democratic citizenship and to realise the possibility of the common people being able to participate in making the meanings, values and material conditions of the communities in which they live and work has been described in terms of a struggle between traditions stretching over time since the industrial revolution. Traditions, as MacIntyre[27] argued, 'form historically extended and socially embodied arguments about the goods which constitute that tradition', borne and made by countless individuals forming movements for social and political change. The long revolution for the common good through a just democracy was driven by William Lovett and the Chartists, Eleanor Marx and Williams Morris in the nascent labour party, Emmeline Pankhurst and Emily Davison in the Suffragette movement, the leaders of the trade union movement and many more. The chapters in this part of the book describe aspects of this long struggle, to achieve civil rights, to articulate the common good and to establish the political and material conditions for a just democracy.

The chapters form narratives of the long revolution. Narratives, MacIntyre proposes, are not mere chronicles, a simple listing of events in time, nor are they presented as a simple causal sequence. Rather the narrative seeks to make different historical episodes intelligible by identifying the intentions of the actors over time, in similar social and cultural contexts, sharing common purposes of political change. Though marked by difference and conflict there is a unity, an identity to movements for change as well as the lives of individuals. For MacIntyre what provides the unity of human lives and, I wish to argue, of movements, is the quest for a conception of the good that will order the development of the life and the pursuit of the movement. The quest, moreover, is never a search for something which already exists, rather, 'a quest is always an education both as to the character of that which is sought and in self-knowledge.'

CHAPTER 1

ACHIEVING CIVIL RIGHTS IN LAW

I Introduction

To be citizen of a modern state, TH Marshall[28] proposed, is to be entitled to three sets of human rights. Each right had its principal development in a particular century: *Civil rights* were 'the rights necessary for individual freedom – liberty of the person, freedom of speech, thought and faith, the right to own property and to conclude valid contracts, and the rights to justice. The last is of a different order from the others, because it is a right to defend and assert all one's rights in terms of equality with others and the due process of law. This shows us that the institutions most directly associated with civil rights are the courts of justice'. These rights developed principally in the eighteenth century. *Political rights* are those 'to participate in the exercise of political power, as a member of a body invested with political authority or as an elector of the members of such a body. The corresponding institutions are parliament and the councils of local government'. These rights developed principally in the nineteenth century. *Social rights* are the whole range, 'from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to the right to share to the full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society. The institutions most closely associated with it are the educational system and the social service'. These rights are principally the achievement of the twentieth century.

Although Marshall developed his narrative as a typology of rights emerging in specific centuries he acknowledged that there had been considerable overlap: so, for example, though he perceived civil rights as an achievement principally of the eighteenth century he recognized that the period which secured the creation of civil rights extended between the Revolution of 1640 and the first Reform Act of 1832, thus including before 18th century, Habeas Corpus, the Toleration Act and the abolition of the censorship of the press, and beyond his period into the next century, Catholic Emancipation and the repeal of the Combination Acts. Similarly, political rights though emerging in the nineteenth century were only fully realized in the twentieth century.

Given the extent of overlap between centuries the emphasis on picking out a particular century can seem a little arbitrary and, at best, offers a convenient classification. In developing my discussion I want, in this chapter and those that follow, to give more emphasis to how the conditions for democracy developed in relation to the distinctive historical political and economic formations: of laissez-faire capitalism, of liberal democracy and then social democracy.

II Civil Rights: the Foundation Stone of Laissez-Faire Capitalism

Marshall notes that in early times the three rights were woven into a single thread[29]. Members of an estate could expect some remedy of justice, elements of social support and the possibility of taking part in the administration of the community in which they were a member. Yet though each member of the community could expect such legal, political and social rights within the hierarchy of 'the estate', there was no universal set of rights and duties which applied to all members of the society. Nevertheless, as Maine[30] understood, even in feudal society the ties which bound the different status ranks together in the locality was a form of mutual undertaking, though not one of free agreement. There was no equality between citizens and indeed there was no citizenship, if we mean by that entitlement to rights as members of a nation. Any rights and duties were accorded to persons only as members of their local feudal order.

Becoming a member of the nation evolved over time, initially, from the twelfth century 'when royal justice (had) effective power to define and defend civil rights of the individual…. on the basis, not of local custom, but of the common law of the land.'[31] Parliament followed, constituting the political powers of national government, and then social relief was recognised based on local membership of village, town and gild. These social rights were, however, gradually dissolved by the enclosures of the commons, and were progressively replaced by a Poor Law and a system of wage regulation which gained a national foundation though administered locally. The institutions which had supported local rights of membership also were reformed to suit the emerging national character of citizenship and inescapably became remote for most citizens.

The single distinctive achievement of early modern society was the establishment of civil rights, principally, the rule of law. Trevelyan is quoted as concluding that law, with all its grave faults, was at least a law of freedom.

On that solid foundation all our subsequent reforms were built[32]. One of the basic economic freedoms that was established in this process was the right to work, that is to say 'the right to follow the occupation of one's choice in the place of one's choice, subject only to legitimate demands for preliminary technical training. This right had hitherto been denied by statute and custom. Thus, the seventeenth century established the status of freedom for all men (though not yet women!). R. H. Tawney described the progression from servile to free labour 'as a high landmark in the development both of economic and political society', and as 'the final triumph of the common law' in regions from which it had been excluded for centuries. The English peasant became, nominally at least, 'a member of a society in which there is one law for all men'[33]. The significance for Marshall's analysis of citizenship is that 'when freedom became universal, citizenship grew from a local into a national institution' (p. 84).

Yet the civil freedoms achieved to enhance citizenship coincided with, and indeed were required by, the rise of capitalism. As Maine[34] famously described it, societies were moving from one based on a principle of status to one based on contract and exchange. Civil rights were indispensable for the emergence of a capitalist society. Marshall was interested in the paradox of citizenship, being a principle of social equality, unfolding in a society that was replacing a hierarchy of legally grounded social status with a structure of unequal social classes distinguished by differential ownership of property. The equality of civil rights was actually a necessary condition for the emerging form of class inequality. 'Civil rights were indispensable to a competitive market economy. They gave to each man, as part of his individual status the power to engage as an independent unit in the economic struggle and made it possible to deny him social protection on the ground that he was equipped with the means to protect himself'.[35] The nature of the early modern capitalist contract was an agreement between men, free and equal in status, though not necessarily in power. Where status in the society had been differentiated by property, function and family, now it became 'a single uniform status of citizenship, which provided the foundation of equality on which the structure of inequality could be built'.[36] These rights did not conflict with the inequalities of capitalist society. Rather they were required by it. Formal, legal equality legitimated economic inequality.

Social rights, which had originated as membership of local communities and functional associations, began to wither with the growth of capitalism. Karl Polyani[37] saw in the demise of the Speenhamland system of poor relief the passing of an epoch. That system provided a significant set of social rights,

guaranteeing a right to work or maintenance, a minimum wage and allowances for the family. But a system which sought to assure income in relation to need rather than the market value of labour went against the very grain of free market exchange. The Poor Law Act of 1834 brought to an end any attempt to remedy social needs, and regulated provision of poor relief for the infirm, sick and helpless. But Marshall[38], importantly brings out the significant implications of this legislation for citizenship (with resonance for our own times in the 21st century).

> "the minimal social rights that remained were detached from citizenship. The Poor Law treated the claims of the poor, not as an integral part of the rights of the citizen, but as an alternative to them – as claims which could be met only if the claimants ceased to be citizens in any true sense of the word. For paupers forfeited in practice the civil right of personal liberty, by internment in the workhouse, and they forfeited by law any political rights they might possess. This disability of defranchisement remained in being until 1918, and the significance of its final removal has, perhaps, not been fully appreciated. The stigma which clung to poor relief expressed the deep feelings of a people who understood that those who accepted relief must cross the road that separated the community of citizens from the outcast company of the destitute."

Civil rights, as equality before the law, was the central characteristic of citizenship under laissez-faire capitalism into the 19th century. Political rights were regarded as subordinate to civil rights, recognizing a capacity – of income and property ownership – rather than conferring a separate right. Civil rights, however, created a veneer of equality between members of society, when the reality revealed the inability of most to exercise rights which they thought they were entitled to exercise as citizens.

III Class-Abatement in Support of Class Inequality

In laissez-faire capitalism, however, inequality was regarded as necessary and providing a purpose in society, wealth regarded as evidence of merit and poverty as proof of failure. Patrick Colquhoun believed that poverty was the motive force for men to work hard from which riches ensued: 'poverty therefore is most necessary and indispensable ingredient in society, without which nations and communities could not exist in a state of civilization.'[39] Nevertheless, Colquhoun, argued that when families fell into destitution lacking the minimum necessary for a basic living then this formed a scar on society, a nuisance which needed removing, though not the system of inequality as such. Measures were thus developed in the 19th century - the Poor Law of 1834, the early Factory Acts, and laying the

foundation of universal elementary education culminating in the 1870 Education Act – though not to undermine the capitalist class system but to reinforce it. These cases reveal the first foundations of social rights, although the principle of social rights as integral to the status of citizenship was not acknowledged. Marshall picks out education as a unique service in the evolution of citizenship. I reproduce this quote at length because the argument it contains is one I shall wish to return to later:

> "It is easy to say that the recognition of the right of children to be educated does not affect the status of citizenship any more than does the recognition of the right of children to be protected from overwork and dangerous machinery, simply because children, by definition, cannot be citizens. But such a statement is misleading. The education of children has a direct bearing on citizenship, and, when the State guarantees that all children shall be educated, it has the requirements and nature of citizenship, in mind. It is trying to stimulate the growth of citizens in the making. The right to education is a genuine social right of citizenship, because the aim of education during childhood is to shape the future adult. *Fundamentally it should be regarded, not as a right of the child to go to school, but as the right of the adult citizen to be educated.* And there is no conflict with civil rights as interpreted in an age of individualism. For civil rights are designed for use by reasonable and intelligent persons, who have learned to read and write. Education is a necessary prerequisite of civil freedom.'[40]   (My emphasis)

These measures, especially the education legislation, reveal the state beginning to intervene to secure the framework of class society in liberal capitalism. Elementary schooling 'increased the value of the worker without educating him above his station, while the Poor Law relieved industrialists from any responsibility for workers outside the contract of employment'[41]. Yet Marshall emphasises throughout his lectures the fundamental tension between the principle of equality embodied in citizenship and the practice of class inequality in a society dominated by market exchange. A dynamic force was at work, leading to the expansion of rights and the capability of men and women to enjoy them. In the latter part of the nineteenth century, Marshall argues, there was growing interest in promoting the principles of equality and social justice implicit in the concept of citizenship. This meant acknowledging the limits of civil rights, the importance of social rights needed to secure rights, and in particular recognising a different concept of human worth.

IV Class Prejudice and Wealth: the Barriers between Rights and Remedies

Conferring civil rights on all presupposed that all had the capacity to exercise those rights. But formal equality before the law does not imply economic equality. We can all visit the Ritz, yet only some will be able to afford afternoon tea. Civil rights entitle an education or pursuit of property, but cannot ensure access or ownership. Those rights existed from the 18th century but the remedy was usually beyond reach for most. Real equality in economic and social rights was needed to make a reality of civil, legal rights. The barriers between rights and remedies, Marshall argues, were of two kinds: wealth and class prejudice. The redistribution of wealth would be needed to enable exercise of civil rights, for example to pay for court or barrister fees, or eliminating property qualifications to enable those who wished to exercise their political rights to gain election to parliament. 'But these blatant inequalities are not due to defects in civil rights, but to lack of social rights' which in the nineteenth century were a distant prospect. Rights existed but the remedy was typically absent.

The existence of class prejudice is given prominence by Marshall and I pick it out because of its significance for a central argument in my book. A fundamental barrier to the advance of citizenship was the beliefs and prejudices of the middle classes towards the poor. The climate of bourgeois opinion and thought about the lower ranks of society acted as a principal barrier to their recognition by and admission to society. 'Class prejudice which undoubtedly coloured the whole administration of justice in the eighteenth century, cannot be eliminated by law, but only by social education and the building up of a tradition of impartiality. This is a slow and difficult process, which presupposes a change in the climate of thought throughout the upper ranks of society.'[42]

Marshall believed that although, even by the end of the nineteenth century, little had been done to make significant reductions in social inequality, the climate of intellectual middle-class thought had begun to change understanding that 'the formal recognition of an equal capacity for rights was not enough'. Society needed to develop a 'conception of equal social worth, not merely of equal natural rights'.[43] Citizens of a modern state require different ties than the sentiments of kinship or the fictions of common descent to bind them into a community. 'Citizenship requires a bond of a different kind, a direct sense of community membership based on loyalty to a civilisation which is a common possession. It is a loyalty of free

men endowed with rights and protected by a common law'. Its growth presupposes a struggle to win those rights but also the mutual recognition and value of the different social classes.

The sense of a common heritage began to develop from the eighteenth century, with the growth of patriotic nationalism. But, Marshall argues, 'this growing national consciousness, this awakening public opinion, and these first stirrings of a sense of community membership and common heritage did not have any material effect on the class structure and social inequality' because the working class even by the close of the nineteenth century had no access to political power and therefore the possibility turning the formal equality of civil rights into the reality of equal citizenship based on political and social rights.[44]

V The Expansion and Limits of Rights

The long evolution of rights, Marshall contends, can be seen as a gradual movement over a considerable span of time from the eighteenth to the twentieth century illustrating the soft shades of power being exercised to enable citizenship in a social democracy. Marshall had defined social citizenship as including a range of rights 'from the right to a modicum of economic welfare and security to a right to share in full in the social heritage and to live the life of a civilized being according to the standards prevailing in the society'[45]. Michael Mann[46] builds upon Marshall to enumerate the rights that were achieved by the end of the Second World War. These included:

1. The right to relative levels of equality that enable citizens to reach a common standard of living, especially between men and women. The decline through the mid-20th century of wealth as a basis of inequality meant that income equality became more significant. Relative income equality emerged in post Second War industrial capitalism as a result of the low dispersion of wage scales and full employment that followed economic growth and policies of full employment;

2. The right to rewarding employment that enables the employee to achieve dignity in supporting a family and fulfilment in being able to express and develop capabilities through work. The right for women to receive maternity leave from employment and child care support to support them in maintaining career development;

3. The right to a fair system of taxation, which redistributes tax progressively along the income axis from rich to poor households;
4. The right to social housing in times of need;
5. The right to welfare support and security in times of hardship;
6. The right to universal education and health public services.

Underlying social citizenship is the presupposition that a common politics of social democracy has developed over time. What is implicit and needs to be articulated and conceptualised is that the potentially disparate elements which have been central to the discussion of the long revolution – acquiring rights, recognition of worth, the basic material goods – actually form a coherent whole as the precondition for democracy to flourish. These elements need to be understood as constituting a prior public domain of common goods without which the existence and practice of democracy – participation, voice, deliberation, collective choice and accountability - gradually wither away. It is the beliefs and practices of a public domain that secures citizens their recognition, due rights, their voice, their opportunities and securities in times of vulnerability. And it is these components together that strengthen democracy: without recognition, rights, opportunities, and security citizens will lack the will and confidence to enter the public arena to promote the common goods of all let alone their own interests.

The educating of citizens is enabling them to learn the fundamental significance of the public domain for the quality of our democratic life. In my writing with John Stewart we have emphasised that collective responsibilities of the public domain are, in the last resort, much more deep-seated than producing public goods and services or dissolving the harmful unintended consequences of individual transactions. This is because they depend upon understandings – which in the end cannot be taken for granted but have themselves to be articulated and decided upon. The fundamental purpose of the public domain is to constitute the social and political preconditions that make society possible: to create those agreements that enable social life to proceed and develop. Those constitutive agreements establish the framework of political purpose, process and structure that provide the necessary conditions for individual and social relationships. Who is to be a member and what are the defining qualities? What are to be their rights and duties towards each other? What are the rules for determining the distribution of status and opportunity?

Decisions about such matters have implications for every individual. They determine the bases of individual identity, their well-being, and the nature

of their social ties. Yet those considerations of membership, of rights and duties, of ownership and obligation can only be determined collectively. The public domain has the responsibility for constituting a community or society as a political community, that is, a public, which has the capacity to assume such responsibilities and make such collective choices. By enabling agreement about the constitutive framework for any society, it establishes the conditions which make social relations and individual development possible at all.[47]

The historical struggle of the long revolution for democracy has thus been to create a public and a public sphere that enables the people to participate and shape meanings and values, as Williams expresses it, that serve the whole community. This struggle over time is not yet complete for if all the people are to be able to contribute to the polity then the public domain needs to expand the public spaces that enable democratic participation and influence. Analysis of the changing periods and forms of education governance will need to take into account this elaborated notion of the long revolution, to enable a public domain that makes an educated democracy possible.

The discussion at this stage needs to address Marshall's point that if a common citizenship was to unfold which had any material reality beyond the fiction of legal equality, then the dominant climate of ideas - that the structure of class inequality followed from the superiority of the middle classes and the inferiority of working people – had to change. How did the grain of a different class imagining – based on the conception of equal social worth, grounded in common community membership - begin? It is to his narrative that I turn to in order to develop understanding of a different set of conditions necessary for citizenship in an educated democracy to emerge.

CHAPTER 2

ARTICULATING THE COMMON GOOD

I Introduction

The dominant climate of thought in the early 19th century was the classical liberalism of 'laissez-faire' individualism.[48] Deriving from John Locke (1690) and Adam Smith (1775) classical liberals believed in limited government, the rule of law, the sanctity of private property and contract, and the responsibility of individuals to determine their futures. They were not confident about the potential of human nature or the virtues of social justice. The classical utilitarians, Jeremy Bentham and James Mill, built on this tradition emphasising the importance of economic liberalism, of individuals exercising their right to enter markets to exchange goods and services, freely making their own contracts within the rule of law.

The limitations of such laissez-faire individualism began to be exposed in mid-century Victorian Britain. Although granting civil rights of equality before the law had been an historic achievement, without the material conditions, social and political, to take advantage of those rights they were necessarily limited. There was, as Marshall has emphasised, a need to change the prevailing climate of thought which celebrated utilitarian philosophy - with its egoistic hedonism and felicific calculus - and 'laissez-faire' individualist economics promoting a society divided between the wealth of a few and the poverty and squalor of many. Matthew Arnold[49] came to know this Victorian individualism through his work as an HM Inspector of Schools meeting the lower middle-class parents whose children attended the schools and the middle-class employers who managed the schools he inspected. This Nonconformist Victorian England was preoccupied only with making money and personal salvation. 'The lower middle class and middle class believed in both theological and economic grounds in individualism, in every man's being free to do what he likes with no obligation to any other man beyond that of not harming him. Representing trade and dissent with their maxims of every man for himself in business, every man for himself in religion, these groups dreaded a powerful administration (government) which might interfere with them.'[50]

The questions implied in the everyday moral order of mid-Victorian society and again in ours were and are: Why should I believe in anything beyond my own self-interest? Is there a common good, the good for all? These are questions which the leading public moralists, as Collini[51] calls them, wanted to answer so as to persuade society to adopt a more expansive public virtue. If we are to understand how the climate of thought changed we need to consider the influence of those public intellectuals in the mid nineteenth century who had the courage to challenge the dominant orthodoxy of utilitarian ideas and values. Their number was not limited. The Victorian novelists - Dickens, Eliot and Gaskell - inveighed against the effect of industrialism on relationships and communities. Raymond Williams' *Culture and Society* picks out the literati – including Coleridge, Carlyle and Ruskin – who attacked not only the destructive effects of industrialism on society but also the cash nexus of nascent capitalism. For my purposes in trying to understand the educating of democracy I want to identify those who shared with the novelists and literati their grave concern about the degenerate state of mid-century Victorian England but sought to develop a political philosophy for the common good as a precondition for social and political transformation.

Three public intellectuals have been picked out, representing successive movements in political thought from mid to late nineteenth century: John Stuart Mill and Harriet Taylor, Liberals; Thomas Hill Green, a Puritan Idealist; and William Morris, a revolutionary Socialist. Each pursued a different political philosophy, yet nevertheless reached similar conclusions about the need for radical change. They inveighed against the greed and self-interest which pervaded their society and the urgent need to grasp the essential value of common goods, of equality and freedom for all, if a just society for citizens was to be created. They did not begin their intellectual journeys in this place, but they ended sharing the value of democracy. Mill, Green and Morris were not alone determinant figures in creating change in the climate of opinion towards the end of the century that saw other political ideologies emerging, including "the new liberalism", fabianism, and socialism. But they were significant influences in the movement for change. I have devoted space to their ideas about social justice and the common good not just out of historic interest but because we in the 21st century need to immerse ourselves in their texts and language to learn again the arguments which these mid-Victorian thinkers developed to challenge their world: that unfettered capitalism, whether in its 19th century laissez-faire form or its 21st century neo-liberal form generates a divided, brutal, unstable society whose members are unable to participate as equal citizens in the