IN THIS ARTICLE I shall examine the cultural paradigm, organised around the idea of the 'organic community', which provided the basis for the critical attitude to contemporary society promulgated so energetically in the journal Scrutiny from the 1930s into the post-war period, and consider the question whether there is a possible continuity here with Morris's cultural criticism at the end of the nineteenth century.

There is an autobiographical element in this project, as I recall setting out to teach in adult education in 1957 armed—if that is the word—with a Cambridge education in which Leavisite ideas played a central role, though I was not at Downing College and was never taught by either of the Leavises. I recall deciding to offer a course on nineteenth-century literature in relation to industrialism, and it was fortunate for me that Edward Thompson had published his William Morris: Romantic to Revolutionary in 1955. The first part of that great book provided me with stimulation and helpful guidance, especially in the 'literary' sections entitled 'Sir Lancelot and Mr. Gradgrind' and 'Oxford—Carlyle and Ruskin'. In his account of Carlyle, Thompson wrote about the development of Victorian medievalism as a reconstructing of medieval society ‘as a real community of human beings—an organic pre-capitalist community with values and an art of its own, sharply contrasted with those of Victorian England’. And then, just as I began teaching the course in 1958, Raymond William published Culture and Society. But it seems to me, looking back, that what I by then knew of the Scrutiny tradition also underlay my planning and thinking, and it is the
question of this tradition and its relation to Morris that I would like to explore.

F. R. Leavis first set out the cultural-critical position he shared with his wife Q. D. and with the collaborators who made Scrutiny possible in the pamphlet Mass Civilisation and Minority Culture in 1930. He argued that what he termed 'the plight of culture today' was 'desperate'. The minority on whom, Leavis argued, cultural continuity depended were failing in their task. In the new kind of society resulting from 'the Machine' there had been a 'breach in continuity'; mass-production and standardisation were causing a process of levelling-down of which the popular press and the associated advertising system were both causes and symptoms. A 'strong current of criticism' (p. 158) was needed to make readers aware of 'work expressing the finest consciousness of the age' (p. 164). There was no possibility of resisting 'the triumph of the machine', but the hope must be sustained that 'the machine will yet be made a tool' (p. 171). It was to further that process that the journal Scrutiny was established in 1932; it was to run until 1953.

Also in 1932, Q. D. Leavis published Fiction and the Reading Public, based on her doctoral research on the topic. The book begins with an account of 'The Contemporary Situation', in which she argues that what she calls 'a drug addiction to fiction' had developed in the modern world in which work provided no fulfilment, and people could seek satisfaction only in leisure pursuits. She then gives an historical account of the relation of readers to fiction, arguing that what she terms 'The Disintegration of the Reading Public' had occurred in the mid- to late-nineteenth century, leading to the current situation in which the fiction market was dominated by best-sellers, and more demanding kinds of fiction were dismissed as 'high-brow'. In the pre-industrial past, country people may have read no literature, but they had a real 'social' life which sustained them creatively in 'country arts, traditional crafts and games and singing . . . ' (p. 209). Their language, too, possessed a richness unmatched by 'the suburban idiom spoken around us and used by journalists' (p. 210). Her witnesses to this richer language are George Eliot, Hardy, T. F. Powys, Cecil Torr and George Sturt.

In a long Note, Leavis refers to three of Sturt's books, published
under the name George Bourne, *Memoirs of a Surrey Labourer* (1907), *Change in the Village* (1912) and *The Wheelwright's Shop* (1923). She quotes from *Change in the Village* the account of the vanishing way of life of a man of the older generation: 'His day's work is his day's pleasure' (p. 283), and relates it to D. H. Lawrence's recent - 1930 - essay, 'Nottingham and the Mining Country'. *The Wheelwright's Shop* is quoted in relation to the same contrast: 'Although they have so much more leisure men can now taste little solace in life, of the sort that skilled hand-work used to yield to them' (p. 285). Sturt was writing from experience of his own life as proprietor of a small business in Farnham through a period of rapid change: farm carts were beginning to make way for the motorcar in these years. He had contributed several articles to *Commonweal* between 1887 and 1889, but by October 1891 he was writing of 'my old enthusiasm for Socialism' (I, 161; my italics), and in 1903 he recorded: 'utopias of all kinds seem to me trivial, merely pretty and insipid . . . Morris's *News from Nowhere* fairly grovels in its littleness' (I, 422). In Sturt therefore we have a link to Morris, but not an uncritical one. Sturt was certainly a significant influence on the *Scrutiny* critics and on their idea of the prevailing 'environment' that they felt called upon to contest by promoting readers' conscious resistance. It should be emphasised, however, that Sturt was no sentimentalist; he concluded *Change in the Village* in 1912 with the assertion: 'The old system had gone on long enough. For generations the villagers had grown up and lived and died with large tracts of their English vitality neglected, unexplored; and I do not think the end of that wasteful system can be lamented by anyone who believes in the English'.6 Leavis sees the cultural situation she deplores as having a political basis: 'It is only a world run by Big Business that has produced a civilisation whose workers must have recourse to substitute living'.7

The most succinct expression of the historical basis of this view of contemporary culture is to be found in the small collaborative book *Culture and Environment* published by Denys Thompson and F. R. Leavis in 1933; Ian MacKillop in his *F. R. Leavis: A Life in Criticism* (Allen Lane, Penguin Press, 1995, p. 208) suggests that Q. D. Leavis also contributed substantially,
suggesting that 'a primer more to his [F. R.'s] own taste' was one entitled How to Teach Reading: A Rejoinder to Ezra Pound (1932). Culture and Environment is aimed at school-teachers and adult education lecturers, and subtitled The Training of Critical Awareness. It is based on the assumption that 'What we have lost is the organic community with the living culture it embodied ... When life was rooted in the soil town life was not what it is now. Instead of the community, urban or rural, we have, almost universally, suburbanism'.

The book's passionate advocacy of what it terms 'literary education', the attempt to equip students, at all ages, to be critically aware of their social environment, including the power of the press and of advertising, is nevertheless described as 'to a great extent a substitute' for the vanished traditional community (p. 1). The agent of this has been the machine, which is said to have brought 'many advantages' but to have destroyed 'the old ways of life, the old forms, and by reason of the continual rapid change it involves, prevented the growth of new' (p. 3). The following short chapters deal with Advertising, The Place of Advertising in a Modern Economy, Levelling-Down, The Supply of Reading-Matter, Advertising, Fiction and the Currency of National Life, Progress and the Standard of Living, The Use of Leisure, The Organic Community, The Loss of the Organic Community, Substitute-Living, and Education, with a final section of Further Examples and a bibliography. In their discussion of the use of leisure, Thompson and Leavis draw largely on George Sturt's Change in the Village, which contrasts the experience of 'old Turner' with his variety of jobs in the village with that of a younger coal-carter. The latter's work is undoubtedly of value to the village community, but is it is exhausting and monotonous. Thompson also draws on Sturt's The Wheelwright's Shop to argue that, before modernisation, the working men were not merely 'hands': 'Their work was such that they were able to feel themselves fulfilled in it as self-respecting individuals' (p. 74). This enabled them, Thompson argues, to 'without a sense of oppression, bear with long hours and low pay' – though the passage quoted from Sturt to back this up actually attributes the men's being glad to get overtime to their being 'underpaid and ... glad.
to add to the money’ (p. 77). The wheelwright’s shop becomes a paradigm of pre-industrial work, whose complexity and demand for skill is well brought out. For Thompson and Leavis, this is part of the social and communal tradition that has been so sadly lost.

Thus the following chapters on the organic community continue to draw on Sturt’s writings, which are related to the writings on industrialism of D. H. Lawrence. Attention is also drawn to what is seen as the unparalleled ugliness of modern towns, and recent publications like The Face of the Land and the Cautionary Guides are recommended. This emphasis on the built environment is taken up again in the Further Examples, where we are told that ‘Work on lines suggested by the CPRE (Council for the Preservation of Rural England) and the DIA (Design and Industries Association) can be started at an early age (12-13) and is therefore especially useful’ (p. 135). A number of books are recommended that ‘prove that general ugliness is a modern phenomenon: that before, say, 1800 beauty and rightness in buildings, furniture, tools was normal’ (p. 136).

The question to be raised here is how far we can see this view of the past as either deriving from or being parallel to Morris’s reading of history. On the first count, it has to be noted that there is no reference at all to Morris – or to the Arts and Crafts movement, which might also seem highly relevant. The work of George Sturt is the main source given, together with the contrasting account of modern American life in Middletown: A Study in Contemporary American Culture, by Robert S. Lynd and Helen Merrill Lynd, published in New York by Harcourt Brace in 1929. Nevertheless, we can surely see a continuity with Morris that the Scrutineers themselves scarcely recognised.

These historical and cultural ideas are put forward in Scrutiny from the start, as in Thompson’s ‘A Cure for Amnesia’ in 1933. For Thompson, amnesia is the forgetfulness of the values of the pre-industrial past also alluded to in the title of Leavis’s For Continuity in 1933. That book begins with one of Leavis’s earliest engagements with Marxism. He agrees that it is essential to deal with ‘economic and political problems’, but argues that for most Marxists, particularly when it comes to cultural matters, ‘the attraction of Marxism is its simplicity; it absolves from the duty of
wresting with complexities' (p. 5). Later, in ‘Restatements for Critics’, Leavis goes so far as to agree that ‘Some form of economic communism [is] inevitable and desirable’, but then goes on: ‘The question is, communism of what kind? Is the machine – or Power – to triumph or to be triumphed over, to be the dictator or the servant of human needs?’ (pp. 184, 185). At all events, we will not be surprised to find that the assertion of Morris’s Marxism at this time by Middleton Murry and Page Arnot, in their opposed ways, brought no response from Scrutiny; nor did the Morris centenary in 1934. But Eric Gill’s ‘elegantly printed booklet’ Unemployment was praised anonymously in 1933: ‘if clerics and politicians were in possession of the simple account contained . . . one would have more respect for churches and parties’. Gill was quoted making the point that whereas men in the past had ‘gained such culture as they have gained’ in their work, now he [sic] must ‘gain his culture in his spare time’, while machines take care of his physical needs: a position very close to Morris’s.

A sense of the continuity of Scrutiny’s attitude to the environment with that of Morris is also conveyed. In a review entitled ‘England and the Octopus’ – the title of a book about the environment by Clough Williams-Ellis published in 1928 – Thompson argues for the need for ‘the works of man in our time to respect the environment – come to terms with it – as those of the old order did’. Thompson vigorously supports the work of the CPRE, and hopes that schools will develop a critical ‘awareness of the environment’ among their pupils. He suggests that ‘the energy used in celebrating St. George’s Day’ should be diverted into this ‘desirable kind of patriotism’: ‘The dragon has faded so much: it’s time to substitute Mr. Ellis’s Octopus’. In For Continuity, too, the environment had been given attention through a consideration of the passage in Lady Chatterley’s Lover which describes Connie’s dispiriting drive through the squalor of the industrial village of Tevershall; this passage, we are told, ‘states magnificently in the concrete the major, the inclusive problem of our time’. Spengler had recognised the problem of rootlessness, but not confronted it with Lawrence’s courage and affirmativeness.
But if we may feel some closeness to Morris in these attitudes to the environment, we have to recognise that when it came to poetry Leavis was dismissive. He published *New Bearings in English Poetry* in 1932, vindicating in it the poetry of Hopkins, Eliot and Pound by contrast with their predecessors, the Victorian late-Romantics, whose poetry was ‘characteristically preoccupied with the creation of a dream world’. Leavis refers to Morris’s ‘Nymph’s Song to Hylas’ in *The Life and Death of Jason* (‘I know a little garden close . . .’) to prove his point. The same poem had been contrasted by T. S. Eliot with Marvell’s ‘The Nymph and the Faun’ in his 1921 essay ‘Andrew Marvell’: ‘The effect of Morris’s charming poem depends upon the mistiness of the feeling and the vagueness of its object; the effect of Marvell’s upon its tight, hard precision’. Eliot had seen the weakness in nineteenth-century culture as it affected poetry: ‘Marvell is no greater personality than William Morris, but he had something much more solid behind him: he has the vast and penetrating influence of Ben Jonson’. Leavis takes a similar view; for which he would certainly have acknowledged the source in Eliot: for him, the late-Romantics – Tennyson, Arnold and the Pre-Raphaelites – were the victims of an enfeebled tradition which deprived their poetry of wit and energy. Arnold and Morris in particular are seen as having been inhibited by the ‘mischievous’ convention of ‘the poetical’ in their time. ‘Who would guess from his poetry that William Morris was one of the most versatile, energetic and original men of his time, a force that impinged decisively on the world of practice? He reserved poetry for his day-dreams’. Here there is no time to consider the validity of this criticism, or of how much of Morris’s poetry might fall under the rubric of day-dreaming. What is important from the point of view of this paper is Leavis’s recognition of Morris’s positive qualities and his contribution to ‘the world of practice’.

The next reference to Morris in *Scrutiny* comes in a most discouraging form in Q. D. Leavis’s ‘Lives and Works of Richard Jefferies’ in 1938. Leavis makes high claims for Jefferies (whom she wants to preserve from the clutches of Henry Williamson), emphasising that ‘he never had the smallest hankering after the Merrie Englande past’, that ‘he never idyllicised country life or
rested for long content with the sensuous beauties of nature' and that 'he was acutely conscious of the class war and the monetary basis of modern society'. Astonishingly, she then goes on to make the following contrast: 'After London; or, Wild England, which is always written of as though it were of the News from Nowhere or A Crystal Age type of pretty day-dream) impresses as contemporary not with Morris or Hudson but with The Wild Goose Chase (it seems to me to be a consistent satire on the system Jefferies found himself living under and to be in great part autobiographical). Leavis relates Jefferies to Cobbett and Lawrence, particularly praising The Dewy Morn and Edward Thomas's 1908 biography, while Morris is dismissed to the sidelines of sentiment.

It is perhaps therefore not surprising, if disappointing, that Morris plays no part in the remarkable plan for the study of nineteenth-century literature in relation to the novels of George Eliot - praised in Leavis's recent (1948) The Great Tradition - that he put forward in the Introduction to his 1950 edition of John Stuart Mill's essays on Bentham and Coleridge. That Leavis is not interested in the tradition to which Morris belonged is suggested by his early statement that it is more important for students to read Mill's essays than either Carlyle's Sartor Resartus or Ruskin's Unto This Last. Leavis makes an excellent case for the study of Mill's essays as a way into consideration of the nineteenth century: Bentham representing the highly influential 'radical' Utilitarian approach, Coleridge the social critic as upholder of traditional values, and Mill the 'disciplined mind' illuminating both approaches, though aware that they are incompatible (p. 9). Literature must never be isolated but be read along with 'other studies and disciplines' (p. 2). Thus the course outlined includes an admirably wide variety of texts, including Lionel Trilling's book on Matthew Arnold, Mill's Autobiography, Leslie Stephen's George Eliot, Beatrice Webb's My Apprenticeship, Dickens's Hard Times, G. D. H. Cole's William Cobbett, Graham Wallas's Life of Francis Place, Herbert Butterfield's Whig Interpretation of History and J. A. Hobson's John Ruskin. But, Leavis argues, more attention should be given to Matthew Arnold, who 'cannot be summarised', than to Carlyle and Ruskin, who can; of the latter
we are told, 'Ruskin's destructive analysis of the orthodox political economy was a great and noble achievement, entitling him to enduring honour, but it can be worth few students' while to follow it through at any length in the original documents: it is fairly easy to say what his place and significance are' (p. 36). Morris has now disappeared from Leavis's view, sharing this easily summarisable quality.27

Morris made no appearance in the essays constituting The Common Pursuit in 1952, and the Leavises had less scope for publication with the demise of Scrutiny in 1953. Leavis published his vindication of Lawrence, D. H. Lawrence, Novelist, in 1955, but the book does not relate Lawrence to the Morris tradition, although it does again offer the Tevershall passage from Lady Chatterley's Lover as an authoritative exposure of 'the malady of industrial civilisation'. Leavis also discusses the short story 'England, My England', in which we are shown how 'one England blots out another ... The new England blots out the old England. And the continuity is not organic, but mechanical'.28

Three years after this, in 1958, as noted earlier, Raymond Williams published Culture and Society, which discusses, among others, Mill, Morris, Lawrence and Leavis. Garry Watson, in his polemical book The Leavises, the 'Social' and the Left remarks that 'the very structure of Culture and Society is built up of hints, suggestions and asides that can be found in the Leavises' work', and he quotes an interview with Richard Hoggart in New Left Review, I, 1960, in which Williams said: 'As I saw the cultural situation then [in the late forties], it was mainly Coleridge, Arnold, Leavis and the Marxists, and the development was, really, a discovery of other relationships: Cobbett and Morris, for example'.29 Watson goes on to describe the critical tradition outlined by Williams as a 'false totality' which could be too easily dismissed by later critics like Perry Anderson and Terry Eagleton, as romantic, naive and eventually reactionary.30 But if Williams's tradition is eclectic, he does at least consider the line with which Morrisians are most familiar. 'Part I, A Nineteenth-Century Tradition', ends with a section called 'Art and Society', which discusses Pugin, Ruskin and Morris, and emphasises Morris's hostility to 'orthodox Fabianism ... the socialism the utilitarians
had come to'.31 Quoting particularly from Morris's late essay 'Communism' – his quotations all come from Cole's 1934 None such edition of Morris, reissued in 1948 – Williams argued that for Morris the 'business of a socialist party is not only to organise political and economic change. It is, more vitally, to foster and extend a real socialist consciousness, among working men', to bring about a 'true society'.32 Leavis would have dissociated himself from the Marxism of this, but would surely have welcomed its stress on consciousness. However, I know of no evidence that he read Williams's book.

It is in the context of the controversy with C. P. Snow in 1962 that the name of Morris reappears. Snow, well known then as both scientific administrator and novelist of the corridors of power, gave the Rede Lecture in Cambridge in 1959 under the title The Two Cultures and the Scientific Revolution. Snow argued that there was a disastrous split, in England, between scientists and the representatives of literary culture, and that educational reform was needed to rectify the situation. He presented the contrast sharply, though in an uneasy metaphor: 'If the scientists have the future in their bones, then the traditional culture responds by wishing the future did not exist'.33 C. P. Snow attributes this undesirable state of affairs largely to the literary culture's failure to recognise the benefits if industrialism, as the title of his second section, 'Intellectuals as Natural Luddites', suggests. We are told: ‘Plenty of them shuddered away, as though the right course for a man of feeling was to contract out; some, like Ruskin and William Morris and Thoreau and Emerson and Lawrence, tried various kinds of fancies which were not in effect more than screams of horror'. It would seem that Snow was unaware of E. P. Thompson's account of Morris's Marxism, which had appeared four years earlier. According to Snow, these writers had failed to recognise that 'Industrialisation is the only hope of the poor' (p. 25), and that 'Health, food, education; nothing but the industrial revolution could have spread them right down to the very poor' (p. 27). Now, things are likely to get even better, as the Scientific Revolution – 'the real stuff' (p. 29) – brings its benefits to mankind. The rich nations must help the poor to become industrialised, and scientists can help to bring this about because they are not superior or
paternalistic in attitude. Snow admits that he does not know how his grand aims can be achieved – ‘The best we can do, and it is a poor best, is to nag away’ (p. 49). Meanwhile, we and the Americans should ‘look at our education with fresh eyes’ in the short time left to us (p. 50).

The lecture was generally well received, until F. R. Leavis published his outraged response, ‘Two Cultures? The Significance of C. P. Snow’ in The Spectator for 9th March 1962. For Leavis, Snow, far from being a radical thinker, represented shoddy thinking and Establishment arrogance, and had no conception of what we might now term ‘quality of life’. Leavis contests Snow’s dismissal of Dickens, Ruskin and Lawrence and his positivist account of the Industrial Revolution, arguing that ‘it was Ruskin who put into currency the distinction between wealth and well-being, which runs down through Morris and the British Socialist movement to the welfare state’.34 Ruskin, by contrast with Snow, knew that ‘well-being’ or ‘welfare’ could not conceivably be matters of merely material standard of living, with the advantages of technology and scientific hygiene. Leavis is shocked by the crudity of Snow’s idea of progress as ‘jam tomorrow’ (p. 58). Here we might want to urge the claims of Morris’s arguments in succession to Ruskin’s, but Morris receives only the one mention. But it is interesting to discover from MacKillop’s F. R. Leavis: A Life in Criticism that Snow was supported in the argument over the Industrial Revolution by the historian J. H. Plumb, who urged him in a letter to tackle ‘Raymond Williams, Hoggart and Leavis, as a group on this subject – These are the dangerous descendants of the craft socialists’.35 Plumb seems to recognise a kinship that Leavis occluded.

Snow returned to the issue in ‘The Two Cultures: A Second Look’ in 1963. He had not changed his position in any way, still believing that applied science has made it possible to remove all ‘unnecessary suffering’.36 ‘Most people’, we are told, ‘when they are given a chance, are rushing into the scientific revolution’ (p. 80). Snow then reasserts his positive view of the Industrial Revolution, citing Plumb, the French demographers and Peter Laslett in his defence. He denies that there was once a ‘pre-industrial Eden, from which our ancestors were, by the wicked
machinations of applied science, brutally expelled' (pp. 83-84). In a letter to The Spectator of 10 May 1963 F. R. Leavis defended himself against the imputation that he idealised the past and defended his account of 'the organic community' in Culture and Environment:

To insist on the need to promote a common awareness of the nature of the immense changes brought about in our civilisation, and of the danger of an unconscious acquiescence in the human impoverishment, that may, unrecognised as such, attend automatically on a technological progress towards a civilisation of 'more jam' is not to indulge in, or to promote, or in any way to favour romancing about the past.37

In 1963, too, E. P. Thompson published The Making of the English Working Class, in which he, as a working Socialist historian, supported the Leavis position. He criticised Snow explicitly at the end of Part Two:

When Sir Charles Snow tells us that 'with singular unanimity . . . the poor have walked off the land into the factories as fast as the factories could take them', we must reply, with Dr Leavis, that the 'actual history' of the 'full human problem [was] incomparably and poignantly more complex than that'. Some were lured from the countryside by the glitter and promise of wages of the industrial town; but the old village economy was crumbling at their backs. They moved less by their own will than at the dictate of external compulsions which they could not question: the enclosures, the Wars, the Poor Laws, the decline of rural industries, the counter-revolutionary stance of their rulers.38

Thompson's support for Leavis here is based on a severe critique of Snow's simplified account of the process of rural depopulation.

F. R. Leavis's next book, Anna Karenina and Other Essays, published in 1967, makes no reference to the controversy, but in Lectures in America - written with Q. D. and published in 1969 - we find his 'Luddites? or There Is Only One Culture'. In this lecture, first given in 1966, Leavis defends his overall position, but
tells us, disappointingly, that if he heard Carlyle and Ruskin being dubbed as Luddites, ‘I could pass that with a shrug. And if Morris is dubbed “Luddite”, it doesn’t move me to fierce indignation’. It is Dickens and Arnold whose cases really concern him. Later in the lecture Leavis quotes with approbation Lawrence’s remark, ‘I do honour to the machine and its inventors’ for increasing the human freedom ‘to be’ as showing that ‘Lawrence was no more given to Morrisian archaising – garden-suburb handicraftiness – than he was to the Carlylean doctrine of work’ (p. 80). Leavis continues in this dismissive vein in justifying the use he and Thompson had made in 1933 of George Sturt’s The Wheelwright’s Shop in Culture and Environment: ‘The use to which we put Sturt had nothing William-Morrisian about it; neither of us, I may say, went in for folk-dancing – or pubs. The attention we aimed at promoting was to the present . . .’ (pp. 84–85). Why Leavis’s attitude towards Morris became so negative at this point I do not know.

In 1967 F. R. Leavis gave the Clark Lectures in Cambridge, arguing that ‘the basic problem of industrial civilisation won’t be solved by any kind of New Deal or by any scheme of “participation”’. It was the responsibility of the university to answer ‘the profound and desperate need’ that is ‘the product of advanced industrial civilisation’ (p. 31). In a discussion of T. S. Eliot, he refers back to Eliot’s contrast between Marvell’s poem about the Nymph and Morris’s, but draws no new conclusions (p. 102). But he does offer a new term for the forces of culture that he is opposing, as in the title of the chapter ‘Why Four Quartets matters in a Technologico-Benthamite age’. Eliot’s poem, we are told, avoids the ‘dream-world vagueness of Morris ‘while helping us to ‘recognise values and apprehensions not allowed for by the technologico-Benthamite ethos’ (ibid., p. 131). Leavis maintains his hope that an ‘educated public’ can be created, and asserts, with a positive emphasis, that we cannot foresee what ‘a living cultural tradition may do for humanity’ (p. 184).

Q. D. Leavis’s fullest contribution to the discussion of the past and the organic community came in her 1967 Introduction to the Penguin English Library edition of George Eliot’s Silas Marner. The Weaver of Raveloe. Leavis argues that in the village to which
Marner is driven by the harshness with which he is treated by his religious fellows in the town, 'the Industrial Revolution has not yet been felt and it is the countryside of the timeless past of packhorse and spinning-wheel, of the organic community and the unified society'.41 Here, 'professional weaving, though necessary, is an alien way of working'. The kind of work the villagers are familiar with is not like Marner's. 'The machinery they know is their servant'; they perceive a difference in rhythm between 'mechanical aids and a mechanised industry'. Marner is significantly described as 'working in his loom, which eventually turns him into a machine component . . . He is the opposite of the country craftsman like Adam Bede whose healthy livelihood made him a superior type of manhood' (p. 15). Leavis goes on to say that it is very difficult for the modern reader to understand the kind of society Eliot is describing – especially as 'first-hand knowledge of that culture has gone for ever, and its very existence is denied by the intellectuals of our phase of civilisation'. She quotes from Sturt's *Change in the Village* to the effect that 'The "peasant" tradition in its vigour amounted to nothing less than a form of civilisation – the home-made civilisation of the rural English' (p. 1). Leavis then praises *English Churchyard Memorials* by Frederick Burgess as one 'recent piece of rescue-work'. It gives convincing evidence, she suggests, of 'how complex this culture of the countryside was and how completely its structure was destroyed by outside forces in the nineteenth century, however much against the wishes and interests of those who lived and worked there' (p. 19. Footnote).

The Leavises' next book, written together, was *Dickens the Novelist* (1970); it contains no reference to Morris. But two years later, *Nor Shall My Sword: Discourses on Pluralism, Compassion and Social Hope* starts by offering hope to the Morrisian reader, though it ends quite otherwise. Two of its three epigraphs refer to Morris. The second is from Gillian Naylor's recently published (1971) *The Arts and Crafts Movement*. It contrasts the vision of the machine taking over the task of production and leaving humanity free to 'live' with the Morrisian view, as expressed in 'A Factory as It Might Be', that once men had their freedom, they would 'learn to love and create art'. The third is also taken from
Naylor’s book, but is a quotation from E. P. Thompson’s William Morris, which shows workers in Plymouth at the time of Morris’s death ignorant of who he was and only interested in the football results. Whatever the exact implications of these choices, they suggest some kind of respect for Morris.

However, the book contains, along with ‘Two Cultures? The Significance of Lord Snow’ from 1962, the lecture ‘Luddites, or There is Only One Culture’, from 1966, already discussed, which had dismissed ‘Morrisian archaising’. This attitude is continued into the final piece, ‘Pluralism, Compassion and Social Hope’ (1970). It ends with a defence of Leavis’s position against Professor Plumb, who had backed Snow in calling Leavis ‘Another refugee in the never-never land of the past’ (p. 188). Leavis vigorously denies this, in these disconcerting terms: ‘I have not been William-Morrising, and I have proposed no ideal condition of humanity to be found in any past’. In contrast, Dickens is praised for the power of his descriptions of the miseries of Victorian England, and for ‘the anti-Utopist positive outlook Dickens’s art conveys’ (p. 192). Leavis claims that his project is not ‘nostalgic and reversionary’ but ‘profoundly realistic, and (as only light and energy out of the past can make it) profoundly of the present’ (p. 193). It is puzzling in the light of this negative view of Morris to find two appendices: the first refers to Frederick Burgess’s English Churchyard Memorials of 1963 – cited with approval in Q. D. Leavis’s introduction to the 1967 Penguin edition of Silas Marner – which contrasted the hand-crafted monuments produced by eighteenth-century craftsmen with the imported marble prefabrications of the later Victorian period (‘in subdividing the activities of carver and letterer the possibility of the final product becoming a work of art was diminished’ (p. 197); and the second refers to Ruari McLean’s 1963 Victorian Book Design and Colour Printing, which also deplores the decline of craftsmanship in the later nineteenth century. These seem to belong to a different, and more Morrisian, line of argument. Perhaps their presence owes something to a reading of Gillian Naylor.

The idea of the ‘organic community’ associated with the Scrutiny tradition occupies a central position in Raymond
Williams's *The Country and the City* of 1973. Williams is deeply sceptical about the idea, arguing that once we start looking for such a community in the past, we find ourselves on 'an escalator' that takes us back to the Garden of Eden. Garry Watson, who describes the book as 'angry and personal', finds that Williams's desire not to be seen as sentimental in his attitude to the past makes him surprisingly uncritical of contemporary capitalism and 'hysterical' in his denial of what might valuably be learnt from past communities. Watson quotes E. P. Thompson's review, which severely criticised the attitude embraced by Williams:

> For the past, and especially the rural past, needn’t always be seen retrospectively, in a lament over old and dying modes which, when examined scrupulously, were never real. It may also be seen as a vast reservoir of unrealised, or only partially achieved, possibilities – a past that gives us glimpses of other possibilities of human nature, other ways of behaving (even 'organic'ones). There are passages of Wordsworth which can be too easily be faulted by contrasting them with reports on Cumberland from the Poor Law Commissioners. For these passages could also be read as 'the future that never arrived', which offered just enough evidence, in a rite of neighbourhood, in a traditional skill, to furnish fuel for a poet's imagination.

F. R. Leavis's two last published works were *The Living Principle: 'English' as a Discipline of Thought* in 1975 and *Thought, Words and Creativity: Art and Thought in Lawrence* in 1976. He died in April 1978, and a book entitled, perhaps misleadingly, *The Critic as Anti-Philosopher* appeared posthumously. In these late works Leavis was concerned with the complex question of how the process of thinking occurs in the work of poets and novelists as well as in that of philosophers, although in a different form. But his concern for the future of humanity remained central, through his assertion of the 'the living principle' as an alternative to crass materialism. For Leavis, 'rescuing Britain from its plight and curing its malady' would involve going beyond conventional politics and was not 'a matter of ensuring a good percentage of growth-rate, fair distribution and
industrial peace'. Morris would have said 'not only' rather than 'not', but was as concerned as the Scrutineers to take us beyond the technologico-Benthamite ethos dominant, in his day and in ours, into the realm of the truly human. But it is evident that the Scrutineers failed, for reasons perhaps associated with their dismissal of Marxism and their lack of interest in the visual arts, to recognise what a valuable ally they might have had in William Morris.

NOTES

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6. George Bourne, Change in the Village (London: Duckworth and Co., 1912), p. 308. Bourne was the name under which Sturt published his work.
7. Q. D. Leavis, Fiction and the Reading Public, pp. 206-07.
10. The recommended books are The Face of the Land attributed to
Allen and Unwin, the Cautionary Guides to English cities published by Sidgwick and Jackson, England and the Octopus by Clough Williams-Ellis, Art and Counterfeit by Margaret Bulley, Dryad Leaflet No. 36, and the Victoria and Albert Museum Sixpenny Picture Books. In this area, the Bibliography adds Cobbett’s Rural Rides, C. E. M. Joad’s The Horrors of the Countryside, P. S. King’s England, Ugliness and Noise, Trystan Edwards’ Good and Bad Manners in Architecture and The Village Pump from Sidgwick and Jackson.

22. The same idea of Victorian poetry is to be found in both Revaluation (1936), in a Note entitled ‘Arnold, Wordsworth and the Georgians’, and in the essay ‘Gerard Manley Hopkins’ in The Common Pursuit (1952).
25. Scrutiny VI, 4 (March 1938), p. 208. The Wild Goose Chase was a recent political fable by Rex Warner.
27. In Culture and Society Williams was to quote Leavis’s view of Ruskin and dissent from it: ‘Ruskin must still be read if the tradition

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34. F. R. Leavis, *Nor Shall My Sword: Discourses on Pluralism, Compassion and Social Hope* (London: Chatto and Windus, 1972), pp. 57-58; the title of the article here is 'Two Cultures? The Significance of Lord Snow'; Snow had become a peer by 1972.


38. E. P. Thompson, *The Making of the English Working Class* (London: Victor Gollancz, 1963; 1965), p. 445; it is interesting to note that in this section on Community, Thompson also quotes Blake on 'the sons of Urizen' leaving their tools for machines to 'polish brass & iron hot after hour, laborious workmanship', and Lawrence's essay 'Nottingham and the Mining Country'.


