

The Analysis of Culture | Raymond Williams

Three general categories in the **definition of culture**: (a) the ‘ideal’, (b) the ‘documentary’, and (c) the ‘social’.

Categories	Definition of culture deals with	Analysis of culture includes	Williams’ Remarks
The ‘ideal’	The culture is a state or process of human perfection in terms of certain ‘universal’ values.	The discovery and description, in lives and works, of certain absolute/universal values.	Unacceptable.
The ‘documentary’	The culture is body of intellectual and imaginative work, in which, in a detailed way, human thought and experience are variously recorded.	The activity of criticism, by which the nature of thought, the details of the language, form and convention ... are described and valued.	Unacceptable.
The ‘social’	The culture is a description of a particular way of life, which expresses certain meanings and values.	The clarification of the meanings and values implicit and explicit in a particular way of life, a particular culture.	Wrong.

“I find it difficult, after many comparative studies now on record, to identify the process of human perfection with the discovery of ‘absolute’ values, as these have been ordinarily defined.” And, “[t]he variations of meaning and reference, in the use of culture as a term, must be seen, I am arguing, not simply as a disadvantage, which prevents any kind of neat and exclusive definition, but as a genuine complexity, corresponding to real elements in experience.”

However, “it seems to me to be true that meanings and values ... have proved to be universal in the sense that when they are learned, in any particular situation, they can contribute radically to the growth of man’s powers to enrich life, to regulate his society, and to control his environment.”

The theory of culture is “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 the complex of these relationships.”

Structure of feeling “is the culture of a period: it is the particular living result of all the elements in the general organization.”

Three **levels of culture**: (a) the lived culture, (b) the recorded culture, and (c) the culture of the selective tradition.

The study of a culture nowadays has strong connection with the knowledge about “the operation of a selective tradition.”

Other Key Sentences:

52. the theory of culture is “the study of relationships between elements in a whole way of life.”

52. “The analysis of culture is the attempt to discover the nature of the organization which is the the complex of these relationships.”

53. structure of feeling “is the culture of a period: it is the particular living result of all the elements in the general organization.”

54. three levels of culture: (a) the lived culture, (b) the recorded culture, and (c) the culture of the selective tradition.

54. the lived culture: it belongs to a particular time and place, only fully accessible to those living in that time and place.

54. the recorded culture: it is also called ‘the culture of a period’.

54. the culture of the selective tradition: it connects lived culture and period cultures.

54. “no individuals in the society would have known more than a selection of its facts.”

54. “Theoretically, a period is recorded; in practice, this record is absorbed into a selective tradition; and, both are different from the culture as lived.”