City is derived from fw *cité*, oF, rw *civitas*, L. But *civitas* was not **city** in the modern sense; that was *urbs*, L. *Civitas* was the general noun derived from *civis*, L – citizen, which is nearer our modern sense of a 'national'. *Civitas* was then the body of citizens rather than a particular settlement or type of settlement. It was so applied by Roman writers to the tribes of Gaul. In a long and complicated development *civitas* and the words derived from it became specialized to the chief town of such a state, and in ecclesiastical use to the cathedral town. The earlier English words had been *borough*, fw *burh*, oE and *town*, fw *tun*, oE. *Town* developed from its original sense of an enclosure or yard to a group of buildings in such an enclosure (as which it survives in some modern village and village-division names) to the beginnings of its modern sense in C13. *Borough* and **city** became often interchangeable, and there are various legal distinctions between them in different periods and types of medieval and post-medieval government. One such distinction of **city**, from C16, was the presence of a cathedral, and this is still residually though now wrongly asserted. When **city** began to be distinguished from *town* in terms of size, mainly from C19 but with precedents in relation to the predominance of London from C16, each was still administratively a *borough*, and this word became specialized to a form of local government or administration. From C13 **city** became in any case a more dignifying word than *town*; it was often thus used of Biblical villages, or to indicate an ideal or significant settlement. More generally, by C16 **city** was in regular use for London, and in C17 **city** and *country* contrasts were very common. **City** in the specialized sense of a financial and commercial centre, derived from actual location in the City of London, was widely used from eC18, when this financial and commercial activity notably expanded.

The **city** as a really distinctive order of settlement, implying a whole different way of life, is not fully established, with its modern implications, until eC19, though the idea has a very long history, from Renaissance and even Classical thought. The modern emphasis can be traced in the word, in the increasing abstraction of **city** as an adjective from particular places or particular administrative forms, and in the increasing generalization of descriptions of large-scale modern urban living. The modern **city** of millions of inhabitants is thus generally if indefinitely distinguished from several kinds of **city**

– cf. *cathedral city*, *university city*, *provincial city* – characteristic of earlier periods and types of settlement. At the same time the modern **city** has been subdivided, as in the increasing contemporary use of *inner city*, a term made necessary by the changing status of *suburb*. This had been, from C17, an outer and inferior area, and the sense survives in some uses of *suburban* to indicate narrowness. But from lC19 there was a class shift in areas of preference; the *suburbs* attracted *residents* and the *inner city* was then often left to offices, shops and the poor.

See COUNTRY, CIVILIZATION

in Raymond Williams Keywords

CIVILIZATION

Civilization is now generally used to describe an achieved state or condition of organized social life. Like CULTURE (q.v.) with which it has had a long and still difficult interaction, it referred originally to a process, and in some contexts this sense still survives.

Civilization was preceded in English by **civilize**, which appeared in eC17, from C16 *civiliser*, F, fw *civilizare*, mL – to make a criminal matter into a civil matter, and thence, by extension, to bring within a form of social organization. The rw is *civil* from *civilis*, L – of or belonging to citizens, from *civis*, L – citizen. **Civil** was thus used in English from C14, and by C16 had acquired the extended senses of orderly and educated. Hooker in 1594 wrote of 'Civil Society' – a phrase that was to become central in C17 and especially C18 – but the main development towards description of an ordered society was **civility**, fw *civilitas*, mL – community. **Civility** was often used in C17 and C18 where we would now expect **civilization**, and as late as 1772 Boswell, visiting Johnson, 'found him busy, preparing a fourth edition of his folio Dictionary . . . He would not admit *civilization*, but only *civility*. With great deference to him, I thought *civilization*, from *to civilize*, better in the sense opposed to *barbarity*, than *civility*.' Boswell had correctly identified the main use that was coming through, which emphasized not so much a process as a state of social order and refinement, especially in conscious historical or

cultural contrast with *barbarism*. **Civilization** appeared in Ash's dictionary of 1775, to indicate both the state and the process. By lC18 and then very markedly in C19 it became common.

In one way the new sense of **civilization**, from lC18, is a specific combination of the ideas of a process and an achieved condition. It has behind it the general spirit of the Enlightenment, with its emphasis on secular and progressive human self-development. **Civilization** expressed this sense of historical process, but also celebrated the associated sense of modernity: an achieved condition of refinement and order. In the Romantic reaction against these claims for **civilization**, alternative words were developed to express other kinds of human development and other criteria for human well-being, notably CULTURE (q.v.). In lC18 the association of **civilization** with refinement of manners was normal in both English and French. Burke wrote in *Reflections on the French Revolution*: 'our manners, our civilization, and all the good things which are connected with manners, and with civilization'. Here the terms seem almost synonymous, though we must note that *manners* has a wider reference than in ordinary modern usage. From eC19 the development of **civilization** towards its modern meaning, in which as much emphasis is put on social order and on ordered knowledge (later, SCIENCE (q.v.)) as on refinement of manners and behaviour, is on the whole earlier in French than in English. But there was a decisive moment in English in the 1830s, when Mill, in his essay on Coleridge, wrote:

> Take for instance the question how far mankind has gained by civilization. One observer is forcibly struck by the multiplication of physical comforts; the advancement and diffusion of knowledge; the decay of superstition; the facilities of mutual intercourse; the softening of manners; the decline of war and personal conflict; the progressive limitation of the tyranny of the strong over the weak; the great works accomplished throughout the globe by the co-operation of multitudes . . .

This is Mill's range of positive examples of **civilization**, and it is a fully modern range. He went on to describe negative effects: loss of independence, the creation of artificial wants, monotony, narrow mechanical understanding, inequality and hopeless poverty. The

contrast made by Coleridge and others was between **civilization** and *culture* or *cultivation*:

> The permanent distinction and the occasional contrast between cultivation and civilization . . . The permanency of the nation . . . and its progressiveness and personal freedom . . . depend on a continuing and progressive civilization. But civilization is itself but a mixed good, if not far more a corrupting influence, the hectic of disease, not the bloom of health, and a nation so distinguished more fitly to be called a varnished than a polished people, where this civilization is not grounded in cultivation, in the harmonious development of those qualities and faculties that characterize our humanity. (*On the Constitution of Church and State*, V)

Coleridge was evidently aware in this passage of the association of civilization with the *polishing* of manners; that is the point of the remark about varnish, and the distinction recalls the curious overlap, in C18 English and French, between *polished* and *polite*, which have the same root. But the description of **civilization** as a 'mixed good', like Mill's more elaborated description of its positive and negative effects, marks the point at which the word has come to stand for a whole modern social process. From this time on this sense was dominant, whether the effects were reckoned as good, bad or mixed.

Yet it was still primarily seen as a general and indeed universal process. There was a critical moment when **civilization** was used in the plural. This is later with **civilizations** than with *cultures*; its first clear use is in French (Ballanche) in 1819. It is preceded in English by implicit uses to refer to an earlier civilization, but it is not common anywhere until the 1860s.

In modern English **civilization** still refers to a general condition or state, and is still contrasted with *savagery* or *barbarism*. But the relativism inherent in comparative studies, and reflected in the use of **civilizations**, has affected this main sense, and the word now regularly attracts some defining adjective: **Western civilization, modern civilization, industrial civilization, scientific and technological civilization**. As such it has come to be a relatively neutral form for any achieved social order or way of life, and in this sense has a complicated and much disputed relation with the modern social sense of *culture*. Yet its sense of an achieved state is still

sufficiently strong for it to retain some normative quality; in this sense **civilization, a civilized way of life, the conditions of civilized society** may be seen as capable of being lost as well as gained.

See CITY, CULTURE, DEVELOPMENT, MODERN, SOCIETY, WESTERN

CLASS

Class is an obviously difficult word, both in its range of meanings and in its complexity in that particular meaning where it describes a social division. The Latin word *classis*, a division according to property of the people of Rome, came into English in lC16 in its Latin form, with a plural *classes* or *classies*. There is a lC16 use (King, 1594) which sounds almost modern: 'all the classies and ranks of vanitie'. But **classis** was primarily used in explicit reference to Roman history, and was then extended, first as a term in church organization ('assemblies are either classes or synods', 1593) and later as a general term for a division or group ('the classis of Plants', 1664). It is worth noting that the derived Latin word *classicus*, coming into English in eC17 as **classic** from fw *classique*, F, had social implications before it took on its general meaning of a standard authority and then its particular meaning of belonging to Greek and Roman antiquity (now usually distinguished in the form **classical**, which at first alternated with *classic*). Gellius wrote: '*classicus . . . scriptor, non proletarius*'. But the form **class**, coming into English in C17, acquired a special association with education. Blount, glossing *classe* in 1656, included the still primarily Roman sense of 'an order or distribution of people according to their several Degrees' but added: 'in Schools (wherein this word is most used) a Form or Lecture restrained to a certain company of Scholars' – a use which has remained common in education. The development of **classic** and **classical** was strongly affected by this association with authoritative works for study.

From lC17 the use of **class** as a general word for a group or division became more and more common. What is then most difficult

is that **class** came to be used in this way about people as well as about plants and animals, but without social implications of the modern kind. (Cf. Steele, 1709: 'this Class of modern Wits'.) Development of **class** in its modern social sense, with relatively fixed names for particular classes (**lower class, middle class, upper class, working class** and so on), belongs essentially to the period between 1770 and 1840, which is also the period of the Industrial Revolution and its decisive reorganization of society. At the extremes it is not difficult to distinguish between (i) **class** as a general term for any grouping and (ii) **class** as a would-be specific description of a social formation. There is no difficulty in distinguishing between Steele's 'Class of modern Wits' and, say, the *Declaration* of the Birmingham Political Union (1830) 'that the rights and interests of the middle and lower classes of the people are not efficiently represented in the Commons House of Parliament'. But in the crucial period of transition, and indeed for some time before it, there is real difficulty in being sure whether a particular use is sense (i) or sense (ii). The earliest use that I know, which might be read in a modern sense, is Defoe's ' 'tis plain the dearness of wages forms our people into more classes than other nations can show' (*Review*, 14 April 1705). But this, even in an economic context, is far from certain. There must also be some doubt about Hanway's title of 1772: 'Observations on the Causes of the Dissoluteness which reigns among the lower classes of the people'. We can read this, as indeed we would read Defoe, in a strictly social sense, but there is enough overlap between sense (i) and sense (ii) to make us pause. The crucial context of this development is the alternative vocabulary for social divisions, and it is a fact that until lC18, and residually well into C19 and even C20, the most common words were *rank* and *order*, while *estate* and *degree* were still more common than **class.** *Estate*, *degree* and *order* had been widely used to describe social position from medieval times. *Rank* had been common from lC16. In virtually all contexts where we would now say **class** these other words were standard, and *lower order* and *lower orders* became especially common in C18.

The essential history of the introduction of **class**, as a word which would supersede older names for social divisions, relates to the increasing consciousness that social position is made rather than merely inherited. All the older words, with their essential metaphors of standing, stepping and arranging in rows, belong to a society in