

Brief for Raymond Williams Centenary 'explainer' resources project

Background

2021 will mark the Centenary of the birth of the novelist, cultural critic and socialist intellectual Raymond Williams. To help underpin what will hopefully be a broader range of activities to mark this occasion, the Raymond Williams Foundation (RWF) is supporting the production of a new set of resources. The aim for these resources is that they will help to introduce some of Williams's key work and highlight the contemporary relevance of these ideas.

There are already introductions and commentaries which introduce Williams's work; and there is also evidence that Williams's ideas are more favourably and enthusiastically received and widely taken up across various areas of thought and activity than many other thinkers of his generation. Despite this, it's also clear that Williams's work still isn't as widely known about, engaged with or utilised as it probably should be, especially given its continued relevance to the crises, needs and desires of our times.

A new set of explainer resources, produced during Williams's Centenary year, could therefore help re-animate and promote this work more widely with the goal of engaging as many of the people and groups as possible who aren't yet familiar with these ideas.

The brief:

To help prepare for the Williams centenary, several meetings have already taken place over the course of 2020 with the purpose of collectively planning activities for 2021. It was from one of these meetings that the idea for these explainer resources first arose and where the key elements of this brief were agreed - these elements include:

- Each resource should serve to introduce a key Williams idea or contribution and highlight the ongoing relevance of the idea/s being explained. For example, one possible way of covering these requirements could be to design some of the explainers in ways that address 'burning issues / questions' of our time and how RW's work can help us to understand / address / view these issues/ questions in useful, interesting or novel ways. There will be other possible approaches too.
- In terms of their specific focus:
 - There is general agreement that it will be valuable to produce a biographical introduction to RW (e.g. who he is, when he lived, what he contributed to debates of his time, why aspects of his work endure and remain relevant etc.)
 - There is also enthusiasm expressed for producing resources that can help explain RW's work on: politics and democracy; culture; adult education; ecology / environment; community
 - There is scope for further explainers to be produced on other topics and areas of Williams's work.
- The new resources will need to be concise in terms of their presentation and length
- They will need to be easily accessible to those who aren't already familiar with Williams's work; and accessible in terms of the language used. The resources will also be available both in the English and Welsh languages.

- The resources will need to be free to use and fully accessible in terms of online social media. The set of resources should utilise various modes of presentation - e.g. animations, podcasts, graphically designed texts etc.
- Each explainer will link to other related sets of RW resources so users have easily accessible options to find out more.

Timelines

2021 is the Centenary year, but since Raymond Williams was born on the 31st August 1921, the idea is that the production of these explainers starts in December 2020 or January 2021 so they can begin to be released from May next year and in the period leading up to Williams's Centenary proper in August 2021.

The explainers can then help provide some of the basis for other Centenary related activities to be scheduled on and after the Centenary date itself, with these other activities following on from August and continuing through the Autumn until the New Year. We are releasing this brief now to invite responses from people who are interested in leading on the development and delivery of particular resources during this time (between January and May 2021).

Financial support available

The RWF is a small charity and does not have a large fund, but due to the importance of this Centenary for the RWF a fixed budget is available to support this project and to open this process up.

Seven £500 (equivalent to 2 days work at £250 per day) RWF grants are available to individuals who can clearly address the brief and specifications outlined above.

Applicants will need to demonstrate that they are able to produce engaging and relevant content for a new Centenary explainer of their choice.

Applications will be assessed by members of the RWF's Centenary Steering Group against the criteria set out. Successful applicants will be notified by 30 December 2020.

If you have institutional support or a full-salary and it is feasible for you to take part in this initiative on a voluntary basis, that would be very welcome and would free up the grants for those that need them most (plus potentially allow more than seven resources to be produced). The RWF nevertheless recognises this will not be possible for many people to volunteer. Therefore, this budget has been allocated specifically for those who wish to lead on the production of a resource who are currently precariously employed, work freelance, do not currently receive an institutional salary or sufficient income to live on.

If you wish to apply to lead on the development of a resource and need this financial support, please get in touch as soon as possible.

If for whatever reason you wish to lead on the production of an explainer, would like to focus on the content but do not have the capacity to produce the final explainer in social media-ready form (e.g. finished animation, podcast, film, graphically designed text etc.) then the available budget can be used to pay another a freelancer to produce the final explainer in social media-ready form. Translation fees will also be taken from the RWF budget to ensure the final explainer is available in Welsh and English.

How to apply for a Centenary explainer grant:

If you'd like to apply for a £500 grant, as outlined above, to undertake developing one, or more, of the explainers (feel free to pitch topics, or RW related themes, that haven't already been mentioned here) please email info@raymondwilliamsfoundation.org.uk as soon as possible, or by 20 December at the latest.

In your email please supply the following information:

1. **Theme of explainer - please say what aspect of Williams's work or life the resource will explain and how it will show these ideas are relevant to contemporary life, you may also wish to say something about the audience you think there will be for this**
2. **Synopsis of explainer (approx 50-100 words)**
3. **Finally, please indicate what presentational form the explainer will take e.g. social media ready animation, podcast, graphically designed text etc.**

Once again, these £500 grants are specifically for developing explainer content and this work does not necessarily need to cover the production work involved in delivering the explainer in social media ready form. There is a further budget available for this if needed.

The resources will be produced under a creative commons license, or similar, with each creator/producer credited whenever they are circulated and reproduced online.

Please note, if you become the lead for an explainer you will not be expected to work entirely on your own. A loose collective of people has already assembled in 2020 and, alongside a more established group of RWF members, these people will be there to support you with constructive feed-back on work in progress etc.

How to get involved if you'd like to support the development of the explainers:

If you're not interested in *leading* on the development of an explainer but would like to join the wider group of people who are supporting this project (i.e. offering constructive feedback on work in progress, helping promote explainers etc.) please do also get in touch. You don't need to take the lead in producing any of the resources to be part of this wider support group.

Ethos and goal of project:

The RWF is keen that this Centenary project is organised in a collective, solidaristic and convivial way and that it links wherever possible with others interested in working on other related Centenary activities. The hope is that this new set of Raymond Williams explainer resources can circulate as freely and as widely as possible and make a useful contribution in the Centenary year and beyond.

The RWF looks forward to hearing from you.

Nick Mahony, Development Coordinator, Raymond Williams Foundation.