**Chat feedback – Raymond Williams Centenary celebration – 31st August 2021**

Resources and readings:

<https://www.raymondwilliamsfoundation.org.uk/>

Emily Trahair: Some more RW resources here https://www.planetmagazine.org.uk/planet-extra/raymond-williams-and-planet-magazine

You can hear Raymond giving his lecture 'Art: Freedom as Duty' in this audio file: <https://www.planetmagazine.org.uk/planet-extra/art-freedom-duty>

Rhian E. Jones: My reading was from Politics & Letters, pp.50-2 in the Verso edition (2015) 🙂

A very quick plug for Red Pepper mag, which is in some ways a descendent of Williams' thought! <https://www.redpepper.org.uk/subscribe/>

Rhiannon White:

My reading was from Resources of Hope, Art: Freedom as Duty pp. 88-89

Madawc Williams:

My website is a <https://gwydionmadawc.com/>

You can find parts of my book on Adam Smith at <https://labouraffairsmagazine.com/#_Toc23413139>

Mary Joannou:

I have read from the chapters on Knowable Community and three around Farnham from ‘The Country and the City’

josie sparrow:

here’s the link to socialism and ecology! <https://newsocialist.org.uk/socialism-and-ecology/>

Luiz Felipe Baute:

Here in Brazil we are celebrating the centenary of both Paulo Freire and Raymond Williams these days

So inspiring and apposite at this particular moment in time. Thank you, all.

Questions/comments from discussion section

Two questions were: Key questions for the discussion (i) what resonated from the readings and feels most relevant to now? (ii) in what ways might we build on this body of work in the years ahead?

From Stephanie Bolt to Everyone:

Q: keen to ask David & Rhiannon - in the Arts in Wales we hear so much about ‘resilience’ - being resilient - would Williams see this as a duty of a contemporary artist and how might he offer support?

20:09:00 From Realme 3 to Everyone:

Indian historian and a Professor of History and Asian American Studies at UCLA. He writes widely on the culture of colonial and modern India as well as popular and public culture and in his South Asian Culture Studies (1996) which offers a bibliographic map of the thriving industry in the cultural Subcontinent and in this book he opines: "...cultural studies is an Indian invention accidentally discovered by the British." What is your view on that?

Though Raymond Williams is not a British and this won't be applicable to his notion of Culture and his idea of Culture which owes much to his Welsh working-class background and the received wisdom of Cambridge University

From Atri Majumder to Everyone:

My profound gratitude to the organisers and the brilliant speakers. I am interested in the concept of "structure of feeling'. Could you please discuss it a bit? How can it be interpreted and theorised vis a vis the atomised contemporary culture?

From Wayne Bennett to Everyone:

Community is great but it can also be controlling and oppressive. I too am Welsh but I am also gay and become my own person. I had to leave my community and find another in which I would be safe and welcome. In other words community isn’t always ‘good’.

From Joseph - Merseyside to Everyone:

Quite so, Wayne.

From Mary Joannou to Everyone:

Thank you for making that very important point, Wayne.

From Jbatsleer to Everyone:

It’s to do with how culture leads and feelings emerge perhaps ahead of the verbalisation in politics....like the choir in the first reading

20:14:40 From Sarah Lowndes to Everyone:

One of Williams’ most influential and persuasive ideas was the way in which he described communities as structures of feeling that persisted, developed and were expressed through words and actions. As he explained, '[a] culture is common meanings, the product of a whole people' (Williams [1958] 1989: 3-14). Williams placed further emphasis on culture as alive in the chapter 'Structures of Feeling' in his book Marxism and Literature, stating that the tendency to reduce culture and society into 'past tense' or 'finished products' was the strongest barrier to the recognition of human cultural activity. (Williams [1977] 1978: 128).

From Jared Spears to Everyone:

Could someone link the Facebook post Sharon is reading please?

From Tom May to Everyone:

I strongly admire Williams's forward thinking writing on television from the 1960s-70s. Why do we think British public discourse about television is \*still\* so limited and it isn't taken seriously -- despite the example Williams set?

20:16:38 From Alexandrina Vanke to Everyone:

In Marxism and Literature, Williams defines structures of feeling as ‘affective elements of consciousness and relationships: not feeling against thought, but thought as felt and feeling as thought: practical consciousness of a present kind, in a living and interrelated continuity’ (2009 [1977]: 132).

20:16:50 From Jan Huyton to Everyone:

Very important point made by Wayne there. Communities can become closed and intolerant, they need always to be reflexive and alert to this possibility. I am lucky to live in a very supportive community in south Wales but I know of plenty of communities that are oppressive and controlling as Wayne points out.

20:19:29 From josie sparrow to Everyone:

Alexandrina—your work sounds really interesting! I’d love to talk more about it?

20:19:53 From Joseph - Merseyside to Everyone:

Agreed, and there are issues as to how communities change and what drives that.

20:20:45 From Ben Wiedel-Kaufmann to Everyone:

I would agree that the read post is very helpful and clear, (as are the other speakers). Overall the topic seems to point to a broader important aspect of Williams’ thought, in his profound interest in and belief in the importance of moving beyond an overbearing epochal focus in Marxist thought, towards the possibilities and agency of emergent cultural formations (as Alexandrina has just said). This seems to emerge and integrate very clearly from his own class position, and a discomfort with the condescensions of 1930s Marxist tradition he found in Cambridge.

From Jared Spears to Everyone:

How exciting (and communal) to witness this hive-minding of a tricky concept in real-time!

From Nick Mahony to Everyone:

If you have ideas for other Centenary activities or events you'd like the RWF to support this year, please do get in touch with us via the RWF website - thank you!

You can also sign up for the RWF Newsletter via the RWF website, to receive news of other Centenary events and activities taking place in the months ahead