A life lasts longer than the body through which it moves:
An introduction to a special Cultural Commons section on Raymond Williams

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Abstract
This is the introductory essay to a special edition of Cultural Commons, the short-form section in the European Journal of Cultural Studies. This special edition marks the centenary of Raymond Williams’s birth in August 2021. It maps out some of his key work and considers how Williams’s thinking is both foundational for cultural studies – in its ‘bloodstream’ – and yet is now often overlooked, unattributed or unacknowledged. While Williams’s work was limited in the sense that it did not register or account for gender or race, and thus at times has been amenable to regressive interpretations, the essay also considers how his writing has provided theoretical models, political inspiration, and intellectual resources for feminism and anti-imperialism. It concludes by reflecting on the deep, enduring radicalness of his thinking, and argues that rather than disavow it for the silences, absences and limitations, we might continue to build upon, extend and pluralise what remains a rich, vital and urgent body of work.

This special section of Cultural Commons marks the centenary of the birth of Raymond Williams, one of the founding figures of cultural studies. Williams was an author, academic, cultural theorist, literary critic, public intellectual, socialist and a leading figure of the New Left in Britain. He was born in 1921 in Wales, just over the border from England, and would have turned 100 in August 2021. However, he died in 1988, aged just 66. Stuart Hall, in the obituary he wrote at the time, put it thus:

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the loss of Raymond Williams is irreparable: and those of us who had the privilege to know him personally, to read his work, to talk and argue with him, to be formed, intellectually and politically, in his shadow, hardly know how to express or where to put our sense of the enormity of that loss.

For Hall, ‘he was the most formative intellectual influence on my life’ (Hall, 1988).

In his lifetime, Williams (1958, 1961, 1973, 1977) produced a number of widely read books such as Culture and Society, The Long Revolution, The Country and the City and Marxism and Literature; he also wrote a whole ream of influential essays, as well as a number of novels. The genesis and complexities of his thinking around culture, communication, socialism, ecology and his distinctive methodology of ‘cultural materialism’ are to be found in both the theoretical and fictional texts. The idea of borders, and their material and symbolic power, preoccupied him throughout his work, and his own encounters with and crossings of borders – in terms of nation, class, social relationships and scholarly disciplines – were clearly deeply formative in the development of his thinking. This is most obviously expressed in his first and most famous published novel, Border Country (Williams, 2005 [1960]), but it is a fascination which is to be found across his work in both explicit and implicit ways.

While it has been suggested that Williams has been unjustly overlooked in recent decades, not least within cultural studies itself (McGuigan, 2019), it has also been the case that in the past year, interest in his life and work has seen a resurgence. The confluence of the centenary of his birth with the ruptural, multidimensional crisis of the coronavirus pandemic has somehow produced an intense urgency around the need to (re)discover and (re)appreciate his work. A rich body of resources now continues to grow, both inside and outside the academy, in the form of new collections of his essays, the making available of his lectures in different formats, podcast discussions about his significance and interviews with those who knew him.2

Raymond Williams was born in Pandy, a small village on the Welsh-English borders, just after the First World War. His own biography – as somebody who grew up in a rural working-class community in a borderland region in Britain, and who experienced both the privileges and dislocations of postwar upward social mobility – is essential for understanding his work and the complex questions that he worked through, in both his scholarly and fictional writing. His first words in the book Politics and Letters: Interviews with New Left Review (Williams, 1979) are ‘I come from Pandy’. In his classic study The Country and the City, just a few pages in to chapter 1, he writes, ‘It happened that in a predominantly urban and industrial Britain I was born in a remote village, in a very settled old countryside on the border between England and Wales’ (Williams, 1973, p. 3).

From these beginnings, he went on to become a Cambridge University academic and public intellectual, but he always remained deeply connected to the people, places and culture he knew in the Black Mountains, and this profoundly informed his intellectual development and work, and his expanded, multipart conceptualisation of culture. In this sense, he refused to understand his movement away from a working-class rural community to living as an academic in a bourgeois city as a form of individual escape, or as a decisive break from a primitive way of life to an enlightened one.
Indeed, as a central part of his imperative to reconceive dominant understandings of ‘culture’, he was at pains to shift our ways of seeing the country and city as each other’s opposite or antithesis. Instead, he understood them as interconnected realms within a social whole that – crucially – was formed, dominated and injured by capitalism. He continually sought to counter the tendency to idealise, essentialise or fetishise rural landscapes as merely providing restorative aesthetic pleasures or extra-capitalist country retreats, and instead to shift our perspectives so that we might see the exploited labour, dynamic history and vital, lived experience of rural life and land.3 While he railed against conservative and sentimental images of rural Britain as ideological mystifications that played a powerful role in obscuring and sustaining capitalist power, he was nonetheless clearly deeply attached to the place of his upbringing. As he wrote, ‘The only landscape I ever see, in dreams, is the Black Mountain village in which I was born’ (Williams, 1973: 84).

Culture is ordinary

It would be very difficult to overstate Williams’s contribution and foundational importance to cultural studies. Along with Richard Hoggart, and later Stuart Hall, he is one of the founding figures of the field (see McRobbie, 2020). Against the idea that culture is ‘the best that has been thought and said’,4 he insisted in his field-defining 1958 essay that culture is ordinary – ‘in every society and every mind’ (Williams 1989 [1958]). This, of course, is one of the founding conceptual insights and epistemological premises of cultural studies. Williams was deeply informed by Marxist thinking about the relationship between the material basis of a society and its culture, but he also sought to ‘radically amend’ Marxist interpretations of culture in important ways. Most especially, as a socialist who believed in the creative capacities of ordinary people, he refused the idea that the capitalist mode of production has led to a ‘dying culture, and ignorant masses’. He also rejected the idea that it is possible, or at all desirable, to know, prescribe or plan in advance what culture under socialism would look like; rather, ‘all the channels of expression and communication should be clear and open’, and there must be no directive about what to write, think or learn.

As well as this radical insight for cultural studies – that culture is ordinary, that ‘low-ness is not inherent in ordinary people’, that all societies and minds are always-already imaginative, and that we retain the capacities for creating common meanings even under conditions of oppression – Williams has given us other widely used concepts that have been profoundly important within the overlapping fields of cultural, media, communication and television studies – and far beyond. These include ‘structure of feeling’, ‘flow’ and ‘mobile privatisation’ (Charlotte Brunsdon, 2008, notes how Williams provided the ‘founding narrative’ for television studies with his concept of flow; for an accessible introduction and overview to his work more broadly, see McGuigan, 2019). Key phrases from his work, such as ‘To be truly radical is to make hope possible rather than despair convincing’ and there are ‘no masses, but only ways of seeing people as masses’, have taken on something of their own life, circulating widely across academic disciplines and into the popular political realm.
In the *European Journal of Cultural Studies*, the concepts and theoretical frameworks elaborated by Williams have been deeply influential (see, in this journal, for example, Fuchs, 2017; Kay, 2020; Mayer, 2020; Moran and McGuigan, 2020; Steele, 2020; Striphas, 2015). While he continues to be referenced today, it is often also the case that he is not fully given his intellectual dues within cultural studies. It seems that his thinking has been so foundational to the field that it has become part of a disciplinary commonsense – to the extent that it does not seem to require explicit recognition. At a memorial event after his death, in 1989, the feminist Juliet Mitchell (a contributor to this issue) said that his ideas ran in her ‘moral and [. . .] intellectual bloodstream’, and that even when she was not explicitly engaging with him, she was on some level always thinking with him.5 I think we might similarly say that his ideas run in the bloodstream of cultural studies – and a particular feature of the ways that these ideas course through, and give life to, the critical field is that sometimes we do not even attribute them as such. A case in point is how a prescient phrase from his *Border Country* novel is seldom recognised as originating in his work: following the devastating defeat of workers after the 1926 General Strike, in a show of sheer, brute power by capital and the state, a character who has lived with the belief in the possibility of socialism and common life now experiences ‘a slow and shocking cancellation of the future’. As Lynsey Hanley notes, the phrase ‘slow cancellation of the future’ is widely attributed to Mark Fisher and/or Franco ‘Bifo’ Berardi, but Williams actually wrote this phrase as far back as 1960 (see O’Brien and Hanley, 2020).

Three new essays

This special section of *Cultural Commons* offers up three short, specially commissioned essays by three different writers, all of which engage with the question of how we might (re)value the work and ideas of Raymond Williams now – in the year that he would have turned 100 – and beyond. The first essay is by Marie Moran and is titled ‘Keywords as Method’. Building on her long-standing engagement with Williams’s work, Moran’s essay provides a rich, nuanced and valuably clear explanation of his ‘cultural materialist’ methodology which he developed over the course of his work. Unlike most Marxist interpretations, cultural materialism conceives of culture, communication and language as themselves productive of social forces, rather than simply re-productive, or as merely superstructural reflections of the material base. Within this broader theoretical frame, Moran identifies the specific value and potentiality of his ‘keywords’ approach. While scholars have used this approach by replicating and updating the format of a ‘glossary of terms’, Moran argues for a more substantive use of this historical, genealogical method, and demonstrates its value through her own critical genealogy of words such as ‘identity’ and ‘elites’. The keywords-as-method approach thus promises to

unlock a wealth of sociological information on culturally mediated and inflected social change, within a cultural materialist paradigm that insists that we should not, in an idealist fashion, understand concepts only in relation to other concepts, but rather, crucially, in relation to the material, practical world of their use.
The second essay is by Graeme Turner and is titled ‘First Contact: Reading Raymond Williams’. Turner reflects on his first encounters with Williams’s work during his English Literature degree in Sydney, Australia, in the 1960s, and its profound, ongoing impact on his thinking through his academic career across the ensuing decades. He writes how, in his first contact with Williams’s work, he was ‘especially ready’ for the definition of culture as ‘ordinary’, against a prevailing Leavisite notion of culture that effectively devalued his own experience. While over time Turner’s own explicit engagement with Williams abated, these early encounters were nonetheless ‘permanently formative’, echoing the sense in which his ideas run, oftentimes imperceptibly, in the bloodstream of cultural studies. For Turner,

Reading Raymond Williams played a crucial role in ‘rescuing’ me from what I considered (still consider) to be a constrained and politically discomforting disciplinary space [. . .] For me, then as now, Williams exemplified what cultural studies could do through his weaving together the threads of an analysis drawn from history, politics, ideology, and the lived experience of everyday life.

By asking big questions about culture at the kind of historical scale that was characteristic of Williams’s thought, Turner suggests that contemporary cultural studies might move beyond its narrow forms of specialisation and professionalisation, and rediscover the kinds of political and intellectual ambition and scope that the current moment so gravely needs.

Finally, the special section closes with an essay by Juliet Mitchell, whose 1966 text ‘Women: the longest revolution’ was deeply formative and politically catalysing in the early years of the women’s liberation movement in the United Kingdom. She explains in this new essay how the 1966 title was a tribute to Williams’s The Long Revolution, and suggests that – contra the view that his work lacked any value for feminism – it actually offers ways of thinking that can be drawn upon as moral and political resources for feminism. Mitchell considers how in his fictional texts we find much more attention to women’s gendered positionalities and experiences than in his theoretical writing. She writes that, in their ‘gripping slowness’, his novels provide the crucial imaginative materials for thinking through the complex power relations of everyday life: ‘It is as though in the everydayness of human history Williams gives us the raw material to think about his – and our – more abstract general questions’.

She also reflects on the deep importance of his wife Joy in providing intellectual and practical research support, to the extent that she may even be considered a ‘virtual co-author’. Mitchell’s essay prompts us to think what it might mean to reconsider the written body of work as a joint production, and what their relationship might tell us about gender in academia, as well as about the longest revolution of feminism – a movement that, she writes, Williams himself came to see as the most important of the 20th century. And, like Turner, Mitchell reflects on the ways in which we need the work of Williams – or, as she suggests, the Williamses – in this moment of profound political and cultural crisis.
Silences and evasions

If the work of Williams provides compelling and complex theories of culture, capitalism and class, it has also been noted how little he engaged with or extended his arguments to include questions of ‘race’. Paul Gilroy (1993) shows how in the writing of Williams, along with E. P. Thompson and Eric Hobsbawm, there is a ‘doggedly ethnocentric focus’ that fails to account for the ‘supranational’ histories within which English histories are definitionally entangled. Marshall Berman worried over Williams’s tendency to figure the urban as the paradigmatic space of alienation, and to conflate the rural with meaning-ful community, which at times skirted inadvertently but uncomfortably closely to logics of ‘blood and soil’ (Berman, 2017 [1965]).

In There Ain’t No Black in the Union Jack, Gilroy (1987) critiques the argument in the 1983 book Towards 2000, in which Williams argues that the only viable basis for forging effective social identity is through ‘long experience’ and the existence of ‘actual and sustained social relationships’ (Williams 1983: 195). For Gilroy (1987), this begs the obvious question: ‘How long is long enough to become a genuine Brit?’ (p. 49). By failing to define the particular terms of this ‘long experience’, Williams leaves dubiously open the question of who can be included in this normative conception of democratic social identity. More recently, Gilroy et al. (2019) has spoken of Williams as ‘an extraordinary thinker’ and yet one whose work has been conceptually vulnerable to slipping into certain kinds of regressions, that is, the danger of ‘a kind of overlap between the left nationalism and patriotism and the things that were being said on the right’, in ways that have subsequently played out in debates about ‘Lexit’ (left arguments for Brexit) (Gilroy et al., 2019: 183).

In her 2007 paper ‘Racializing Culture Is Ordinary’, Gail Lewis shows how Williams fails to fully follow through his own logic in his analysis of culture as ‘a whole way of life’. In his work, there is an absence of a critique of racial discourse, and a failure to show how ‘an imperial configuration of class and “race”’ enveloped all classes in Britain’ (Lewis, 2007: 878). It is not as though such critiques were simply not available or reachable for Williams in the 1950s, when he wrote ‘Culture is ordinary’ – racial discourses were the very stuff of mainstream media. Nonetheless, Lewis’s intention is not to dismiss or condemn Williams’s critique but to critically extend it. She argues,

processes of racial ordering are structured by and structuring of, the practices of the kitchen, the washroom, the living room as much as those of the labour market. By the micro-practices of workplace relationships as much as the institutional policies of employers and trade unions; and by practices of the self and imagination as much as those of the media, the academy and the laboratory. (Lewis, 2007: 878–879)

Through drawing on her own painful, difficult, funny, ordinary experiences of growing up as a Black girl in London, and a series of vignettes depicting the profound everydayness of ‘racialising culture’ in Britain, she shows how Williams’s theory can be used and extended as an intellectual and political resource, helping us understand how ‘race’ and racism are lived out, legitimised and struggled over in the most ordinary spaces and quotidian encounters of everyday life.
McKenzie Wark (2014) has suggested that while Williams limited himself ‘to the tensions of class and region that connected to his own experience’, nevertheless, it is also the case that ‘the way he felt and thought those tensions could be expanded to include others’. Indeed, in its very contextual particularity, his work has been taken up as a generative model for theorising culture in contexts beyond his own (see West, 1992). Notably, for example, Edward Said’s introduction to Orientalism – his classic text that is often credited with founding the field of postcolonial studies – overtly aligns the book’s ambitions with Williams’s. The closing words to the introduction read:

what I should like […] to have contributed here is a better understanding of the way cultural domination has operated. If this stimulates a new kind of dealing with the Orient, indeed if it eliminates the ‘Orient’ and ‘Occident’ altogether, then we shall have advanced a little in the process of what Raymond Williams has called the ‘unlearning’ of the ‘inherent dominative mode’.7 (Said, 2003 [1978]: 28)

As Timothy Brennan (2021) notes in his biography of Said, at first glance a text of Williams’s such as The Country and the City, with its highly specific focus on English rural life in the 18th and 19th centuries, seemed to have little to offer to a critique of ‘Arab stereotypes’ and the ideological construction and separation of ‘East’ and ‘West’ with which Said was concerned. But in fact, with its focus on the ideological binarising of rurality and urbanity, and the active, world-making power of cultural representation, The Country and the City provided both a theoretical model and central theme for Orientalism (Brennan, 2021: 193–196). Said apparently also had great personal admiration for Williams, describing him as ‘optimistic, hopeful, gentle, and large’ (cited in Brennan, 2021: 194).

Resting place

April 17, 2021, was the day of the funeral of Prince Philip, the husband of the reigning queen of the United Kingdom, who had died at age 99. On the same day that British television and radio were dedicating hours of coverage to a royal who passed away just a few months before his 100th birthday, I was searching for the grave of another man born in 1921, and whose life and work represent a profoundly different vision of the political, social and cultural history of Britain in the 20th century. I had gone to the quiet churchyard in the tiny village of Clodock, Herefordshire – just a mile from the Welsh border, and a few miles away from Pandy, the place of Williams’s birth and boyhood. Clodock lies on the fast-flowing River Monnow (or Mwynwy in Welsh) and is overlooked by the Black Mountains, the range of hills that form the geological and cultural backdrop to several of Williams’s novels (and, as he wrote, to all of his dreams).

Williams is laid to rest along with Joy who died just a few years after him, in 1991; their shared plot is marked with a simple black granite headstone. On the warm April day that I was there, the sunlight on the headstone reflected the bright green grass and yellow celandines that crowded the little graveyard. Above were the overlooking slopes of Hatterrall Ridge, rust-brown with bracken, and then beyond that, the blue unbroken sky. The juxtaposition of what was happening on radio and television at that time – hours of
reverential coverage of Philip’s funeral, justified by the BBC as an appropriate response by the ‘national broadcaster’ in a ‘moment of national importance’ – seemed especially stark against the quiet inconspicuousness of this resting place. The Williamses’ plot is unassuming, ordinary and mingled with all the others, tucked away and hard to find, in this small graveyard on the historically blurry borders of England and Wales. In some ways, the ordinariness and modesty of the plot seemed incongruous, given the exceptional legacy of such a towering figure in the history of cultural studies and left intellectual thought. But on the other hand, of course, it is entirely fitting, apt and consistent with Williams’s theory and politics.

While the gold leaf lettering that spells out Raymond’s name stands out strongly against the dark headstone, the gilding of Joy’s name below has faded; situated beneath that of her husband’s, it is faint, muted and hard to read. Perhaps, just as her lettering at their resting place ought to be re-illuminated, so too should her own intellectual and research contributions, underlined in Mitchell’s essay, take their rightful place in the legacies of Williams’s work. As these legacies are actively remembered and remade in this centenary year and beyond, an illuminating emphasis on her work and significance may also work in tandem with the impulse to expand, extend and pluralise the conceptual resources from this body of work. Cultural studies scholars and writers might follow thinkers such as Juliet Mitchell, Gail Lewis and Edward Said in considering the gendered, racialised and (anti-)imperialist dimensions of those things that Williams identified and theorised: the long revolution, the inter-relations of urban and rural realms, and the ordinariness and the materiality of culture.

Long, longer, longest revolutions

The essays in this special section attest to the continuing and profound sense of loss for cultural studies occasioned by Raymond Williams’s untimely death. But they also point to the still-generative possibility of his works as ‘resources of hope’ – the title of a posthumous collection of his essays (Williams, 1989) – and for not capitulating to political despair in the face of what seem like, but might yet not be, the final death throes of democracy. Rediscovering his work now can be at once deeply demoralising, as it becomes clear how the hopes for the things he was struggling for – an educated and participatory democracy and a green socialism (Williams, 2018 [1982]; see also McGuigan, 2019) – seem more degraded and unreachable than ever. But on the other hand, the expansive historical frames of this thinking allow us to contextualise gains and losses within a much longer perspective. This is what he called the ‘long revolution’, which

springs from the conviction that men [sic] can direct their own lives by breaking through the pressures and restrictions of older forms of society, and by discovering new common institutions. This process necessarily involves both success and failure. If we look back over recent centuries, the successes are truly spectacular, and we ought to keep reminding ourselves of them, and of the incomprehension, the confusion, and distaste with which the proposals for things now the most ordinary parts of reality were received. (Williams, 1961: 375)
In the novel *Border Country*, the central character Will (also known as Matthew) – for whom Williams drew directly upon his own experience and identity – is sent by his father to see the local vicar, Pugh, for advice about whether to leave the village of Glynmawr to study at Cambridge University (at that time, as for Williams himself, this would have represented a semi-permanent kind of exodus, the forming and crossing of a real, separating border in his life). As they talk, Will and Pugh stand and look up at the constellations of stars and the dark shapes of the mountains; for Will, to ‘look up on the great starlit nights’ was ‘to move into a different dimension’, and this provoked in him a ‘new and unlooked-for growth’ (Williams, 2005 [1960]: 276). Against this ancient landscape of earth and stars, and the rich web of culture and community in the Black Mountains, it is unclear whether the kind of formal growth and knowledge that elite education promises really would be superior: ‘Perhaps they [universities] are only the Glynmawr chapels, better built’ (p. 280). But Will, like Williams, resolves to go to Cambridge to find out.

In the novel, Will’s father wants his son to go to university, even if he cannot – or will not – say this out loud. Will says to the vicar that his father could not possibly know what it would mean to leave behind a community in this way; as a railway signalman who has worked almost his whole adult life in Glynmawr (just like Williams’s own father in Pandy), surely this kind of migratory exit is ‘outside his experience’. The vicar responds, ‘But experience isn’t only what’s happened to us. It’s also what we wanted to happen’. Our lives and experiences are not determined only by the structures that constrain us but also by imagination and desire for other possibilities, and the wants, dreams and possibilities of a single life do not die out at the extinguishing of that life – they can live on through the socialisation of hope, becoming part of a future-oriented life force that is collective, connective and intergenerational. Pugh says to Will as they stand under the starlit sky: ‘a life lasts longer than the actual body through which it moves’ (p. 281).

In the context of their dialogue and the broader themes of Williams’s work, this speaks not to a religious concept of celestial afterlife but rather to a secular idea of *long revolution*. Those things that are immediately and painfully experienced as failures, defeats and disappointments can be reconceived as part of a much longer tendency towards democratisation, a slow, uneven revolution of human flourishing, and a ‘slow reach again for control’ (Williams, 1958: 295). In this case, as with much of Williams’s writing, this sense of collectivised progress and the expanded temporalities of democratic possibility follow a patrilineal logic and pattern – but I think that this can be extended beyond this narrower frame to consider how all kinds of dreams and ideas will outlive our individual lives and deaths, our political failures and defeats, and our cycles of despair.

To return to where we began: *why* might it be that there is a new kind of eagerness or impulse to engage with Williams now? The extent to and urgency with which many people are newly reaching out for Williams’s ideas cannot, I think, be explained by the centenary alone – although that clearly plays a large and active role. As coronavirus is appearing to accelerate the processes of social and political evisceration already set in train by neoliberalism four decades ago, it is easy to succumb to an overwhelming sense that the direction of travel is inexorably downwards, to dystopia. Williams does not offer any easy hope or straightforwardly counterbalancing optimism in this regard – but by asking big questions at an expanded historical scale, he gives us the intellectual and imaginative materials with which to apprehend the long historical processes and uneven, complex trajectories
that have got us to where we are, and also to envision the kind(s) of democratic culture and society that we might still struggle towards. Graeme Turner notes that contemporary cultural studies, as it has become institutionalised, professionalised and increasingly specialised, has lost sight of these larger scale socio-historical perspectives and a ‘healthy appetite’ for big, complex questions – and would do well to recommit to such a spirit.

On one level, it seems that while Williams’s arguments were in their time radical and transformative, they are now thoroughly incorporated into the commonsense of cultural studies – and so their work is, in effect, done. But arguably, more detailed (re)engagements with his work which are attentive to its layered complexities and nuances – and in particular which recognise its underpinning socialist (and also ecological) politics – would do more justice to the enduring radicalness and activating provocations of his thinking. For example, his argument that ‘culture is ordinary’ – and that commercialisation has not led to a ‘dying culture’ or passive, ‘telly-glued masses’10 – cannot be abstracted from its grounding in an expressly socialist framework, from his materialist understanding of culture, or from his fundamental belief in socialising the means of communicative and cultural production.11 The argument of ‘culture is ordinary’, in its more fulsome multidimensionality, is a still-radical concept whose ambitions have nowhere near yet been realised. Indeed, in a broader context of extreme and worsening material inequalities, as contemporary tech giants increasingly concentrate media and political power and decimate the possibility of a democratic common culture, we require renewed forms of struggle that are politically animated and intellectually strengthened by Williams’s insights.

And yet Williams, like any single theorist, does not provide all the conceptual tools with which to critique and intervene in the uneven, intersecting and multipart forms of injustice that characterise contemporary culture and society. If a life lasts longer than the individual body through which it moves, then so too do the lives of critique and ideas continue – and transmute – as they move through time and space, and travel out of an individual body of work to then make co-transforming contact with other arguments, insights and experiences. It is in this spirit of recognising the silences and absences in Williams’s writing – but then using these critiques not to disavow it as irredeemable, but to extend, enrich and pluralise this rich body of work – that I think we can argue for the ongoing relevance and deep value of Williams’s thinking for today’s ravaged but – we hope – still salvageable world.

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Notes
1. See ‘About Raymond Williams’ by Phil O’Brien, https://raymondwilliams.co.uk/about-raymond-williams/
2. See, for example, a rich variety of newly available audiovisual resources on the YouTube channel of the Raymond Williams Society, https://www.youtube.com/channel/
UCvLUx0eoX0tPug1KMt5F_g; the reissuing of centenary editions of books, such as Williams (2021).
3. See especially The Country and the City (Williams, 1973) and chapter IV (section 4) in Politics and Letters (Williams, 1979).
4. As articulated by Matthew Arnold (1869) in his preface to Culture and Anarchy.
5. ‘A celebration of the life and legacy of Raymond Williams: Towards 2000’ was held at the National Film Theatre London in June 1989. It was chaired by Stuart Hall, with contributions from Juliet Mitchell, Edward Said and Cornel West. It can be viewed here: https://keywords.pitt.edu/videos/video_9.html
6. In relation to Brexit, it is important to also note that Williams identified as ‘Welsh European’.
7. Said was here referencing The Long Revolution.
8. My thanks to Jo Littler for drawing attention to this.
9. The fictional Glynmawr is directly based on Pandy.
10. The Long Revolution, p. 361.
11. See, for example, Communications, Williams (1976 [1962]).

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