**"The Hand and the Map" - references for the quotes and life, with some additional remarks**

**"See this layered sandstone..."**

This opening quotation also opens the piece on the "Black Mountains" in Daniel Williams (ed.) *Who speaks for Wales? Raymond Williams: Nation, culture, identity* University of Wales Press, 2003, pp.73-78

Ironically, given Raymond Williams' membership of Plaid Cymruin his later life, this is listed in Daniel Williams' volume as first appearing in a text subtitled "An Anthology of Britain" (ibid, p.xii / Ronald Blyth (ed.), *Places: An Anthology of Britain, Oxford University Press* 1981, pp. 215-222)

The irony is suitable for several reasons.

At that time, it was still ambiguous whether Plaid Cymru really was a party of independence, one representing "Welsh culture" however defined, or a "community socialist" party.

Arguably, that ambiguity persists.

Raymond Williams' attempt to create a deep understanding of how 'culture' is created by people within structures, and by structures composed of people, can be fairly seen as a question as relevant to the making of 'nations' as it is to the making of 'class' or of 'community'.

Finally, our use of 'working-class community' in the animation is an oversimplification that Williams would likely have objected to as reductionist. He was very conscious of the historic role of borders and border regions - including the entire Black Mountains area - both in the making of all these categories of culture and as exceptions to them, and in his own personal and intellectual histories and stories. And he was clear that, whilst they are often closely related, "class" and "community" are never the same thing.

**"Community"**

Raymond Williams *Keywords: A Vocabulary of culture and society* Fontana, 1976, p.66

Unlike most specialist dictionaries up to the time he wrote, *Keywords* traces the changes in meaning of the words he's dealing with through time, and the words that they most closely relate to. 'Community' is genuinely alone there in being assessed as an entirely positively regarded term, whoever is using it.

Of course, it's up to the reader (or, in our case, viewer) how useful it's considered to be. If *everybody* agrees something is good, that may suggest that its meaning is too loose to be genuinely meaningful. But the importance of the term has grown, if anything, since the publication of *Keywords*, possibly because of this*.*

Thus in the political analysis of nationalism, the idea of a nation as some kind of an "imagined community" has come to be almost uncontested since Benedict Anderson's *Imagined Communities: Reflections on the origin and spread of nationalism* was first published in 1983. There is no similar agreement, however, on whether Anderson's description of the process by which nationalism spread(s) is an accurate one.

Similarly, political actors invariably seek to appeal to various "communities" of expertise or interest (including some that they are seeking quite consciously to imagine into existence), or address their demands to "the international community", or to position themselves as "community leaders" for groups they consider important, deserving or usable.

**"Culture is ordinary ..."**

The point is made several times (and is the essential point) in Raymond Williams' essay "Culture is ordinary", first published in McKenzie (ed.) *Convictions*, MacGibbon and Kee, 1958.

I found it in Raymond Williams *Resources of Hope* Verso, 1989, pp.3-18.

As a small child, I moved to rural Cambridgeshire fifteen years after that essay was published. But I came to know well the "tea room" usage of "culture" he derides there as something that excluded working-class writers and artists, with the possible exception of ones who had been dead long enough to posthumously emerge as possessors of "genius".

It's possible that in "Britain" we owe much the now commonplace understanding that 'culture' is *everyone's* possession and creation to the power of Raymond Williams' thought, and to his unusual position of writing and creating from within a dual and ambiguous position of power in the citadels of 'high culture' of Oxford and Cambridge universities, in the work of the Workers' Educational Association, and in his willingness and capacity to exploit that position to expand the reach of the study of culture without becoming a simple representative of 'the establishment'.

**The Tanks and *Communications***

There's a small chance that my script for the animation makes too much of the experience of losing wireless contact as an influence upon Raymond Williams' later social thought.

But I don't think so.

Dai Smith's *Raymond Williams: A Warrior's Tale* (Parthian, 2008) traces some of what Smith sees as the challenges for Williams' position on the left that resulted from the war, and the loss of the units as described in Raymond Williams *Politics and Letters.* (Smith also notes an uncertainty about how many units and people - were destroyed or died during the episode when wireless contact was lost. We could not have covered this without a *far* longer animation). (ibid. pp. 145-191, and p. 174)

However, Smith may well be addressing more his own move away from the Marxist left over a long and highly successful academic and media career, than the long-term impact of these episodes on Williams' thinking. Certainly the experience of only getting your information about a real-life "life and death" episode via the "wireless" - due to the *likelihood* of death that would have resulted from leaving his tank to get accurate information - is one that was clearly likely to inspire deep reflections on how media and communications mechanisms intervene between concrete situations and the minds of those involved in them.

As well as providing inspiration for his analysis of the technological-historical development of literary culture (in the broadest sense, not the tea-room sense) in *The Long Revolution* the impact of technology as impacting understanding as an immediately concrete thing in itself is painfully obvious here.

The two taken together informed the invention of much of modern concept of media analysis that Williams undertook in *Communications (*Penguin *1962)*, and his concept of televisual "flow" as outlined in Raymond Williams *Television: Technology and Cultural Form*, Shocken Books(1975)*.*

**"The railway boom led to new reading needs..."**

In its original context in *The Long Revolution* this does not appear as a naive autobiographical point, in the way that we've used it in the animated presentation, but rather as a reflection on the economic-intellectual structures that a particular part of the industrial revolution amplified brought into being, and the way that this effected the forms of media in the nineteenth century and onwards up to Williams' own time. (*The Long Revolution*, Pelican, 1971, p.73)

That said, Williams' own personal history, and his sense of place and technology within it, would have intimately shaped these reflections. The connection with the way Engels and Marx reflected upon their family and personal connections to the factory system of Manchester, and the world it was giving rise to, should be obvious.

Whilst his alleged distance from the Marxist left is often remarked upon (see for instance, Kim Howell's use, of selected recollections of Williams' life for this purpose in his prologue to the 2012 Parthian Books reprint of *The Volunteers* and again, [here](https://aa109791-ea8a-4490-ba00-ec0654b58bcb.filesusr.com/ugd/e1d74c_fefb1c7f654b4897858d1fc9976f854e.pdf), for another of the pieces in this RWF Jubilee Collection), the idea of proceeding from the observed relations of production to the ideas and culture that people produce through them is, when seen like this, of a piece with a fairly conventional Marxist perspective.

**Raymond Williams and the idea of education for all**

Williams 1978 lecture on [education and social democracy](https://soundcloud.com/user-902721807-400345305/education-and-social-democracy-raymond-williams) shows an attachment to a more radical vision of adult education even than that actually offered by the Workers' Educational Association which he had tutored for in his role at Oxford.

He takes a side in an almost-forgotten argument, without giving much background to it. This lack of attention to minutiae is (to put it mildly) unusual for him.

But that is likely to be because much of the history was not yet written, and he had been too close to it. The battle within the WEA that he refers to (from the late 1940s) was - amongst a host of other factors - one between Communists favouring consciously working-class perspectives, and those seeking to educate working-class students on what mainstream perspectives were (the references in Smith 2008, pp. 301-317 offer some starting points on the argument).

That debate in turn (as he very briefly notes) reflected an earlier one, in which the WEA had largely been on the side of what might be termed the neutralist view. In the first decade of the twentieth century, self-educated mining union representatives launched an angry - and for a time highly effective - attack on the version of adult education they had been offered. They sought to knock down, and then to replace, the institutions that stood in the way of an independent working-class culture.

And they sought to do this as an explicit part of a revolutionary strategy.

It's surprising Dai Smith does not make this link in writing about Williams. As a founder member of *Llafur,* the society for the study of Welsh labour history, he wrote extensively for the National Union of Miners, on the Plebs League and the Ruskin College dispute - the opening shots in the battle for the mind of the Welsh working class of the twentieth century. The key initial reference for those exploring this area - still not available at the time Williams delivered the lecture in question - is the opening chapter of David (later to be published as Dai) Smith and Hywel Francis *The Fed: a history of the South Wales Miners in the twentieth century*, Lawrence & Wishart, 1980.