



Beyond Crisis: Raymond Williams and the present conjuncture

Guest Editors: Victoria Allen (Kiel) and Harald Pittel (Potsdam)

We are living in a time of crisis. Few would disagree in the wake of the COVID-19 pandemic and Black Lives Matter demonstrations. But what does it mean to be living in times of crisis? Considering that crises are interrelated and have deeper and broader implications, we are compelled to address this question. However, an even more pressing question would be: what alternatives are there to succumbing to a fatalist logic and being able to think and act 'beyond crisis'?

For *Coils of the Serpent's* forthcoming special issue on Raymond Williams, we invite contributions from a diverse range of research fields within the humanities and social sciences that focus on contemporary crises and employ Williams' theories and writing for cultural analysis and political reflection. Encouraging a cultural materialist approach, this issue aims to critically engage with Williams' work as a way of thinking 'beyond crisis'. Williams' insistence on a 'common culture' and a 'long revolution' of democratic transformation calls for linking various phenomena even if their interrelations are not obvious at first sight. The concept of 'structure of feeling' is a useful guide to gain an understanding of the present as tensioned between conflicting forces, yet showing the 'pre-emergent' directions of possible change. Also pertinent is Williams' idea of the 'tragic' being not centred on the downfall of individuals but on collective learning processes, which richly resonates with the perception of crises as turning points and tipping points.

Rethinking Williams' concepts to address contemporary concerns, this special issue takes a Cultural Studies' perspective, emphasising that subject areas such as class, race, gender, age, ability and sexual orientation must be studied as complex intersections and conjunctures. We invite contributions on topics such as:

- Theory-focused discussions of Williams' lines of thought, especially those that connect with other theoretical positions and traditions as thinking 'beyond crisis'
- 'Structures of feeling' and the interrelations of crises
- Williams and 'literatures of crisis' (Climate fiction, Brexit fiction etc.) or other reflections of crises across media
- Social movements and protest cultures as reactions to crises
- Cultural materialism and ecology in the Anthropocene
- The economic 'pressures and constraints' of crises



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- 'Culture of crisis' vs 'crisis of culture' as an extension of *Culture and Society* (1958) and *The Long Revolution* (1961)
- Representations of crises as forms of *Modern Tragedy* (1966)
- *Keywords* (1976): historical semantics and the vocabulary to emerge from societies and cultures in crises
- Digitalisation and new media practices and their relation to crises
- More inclusive forms of citizenship as a response to or even forms of moving beyond crisis
- Affects and contagiousness in times of pandemics

Please send an abstract of around 400 words to the editors Victoria Allen and Harald Pittel (allen@anglistik.uni-kiel.de, pittel@uni-potsdam.de) by 16 August 2020.

As well as long-form articles and academic essays we warmly encourage the submission of short articles and other kinds of contributions. These could be essays, provocations or commentaries in unconventional formats that have distinctive layouts and/or typographies, especially those combining words and images (max. word count 7,500).

Submission of completed articles and contributions is expected by 16 January 2021.

Beyond Crisis: Raymond Williams and the present conjuncture is scheduled to be released in summer 2021. Please read the journal's submission guidelines: <https://coilsoftheserpent.org/submissions/>.