Raymond Williams’s Keywords: investigating meanings ‘offered, felt for, tested, confirmed, asserted, qualified, changed’

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ABSTRACT

Reconsiders the approach developed by Raymond Williams for analysing complex words used in cultural and political debate. Contrasts the semantic and lexicographical emphasis of Williams’s work with the history of ideas’ focus of Tony Bennett et al’s New Keywords (Blackwell, 2005). Also argues that new electronic corpus approaches can enrich Williams’s close reading method.

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together, altering the appearance of the whole. First observation: in Keywords Williams says nothing explicit about culture’s relationship to digital technology. This isn’t surprising given the historical ambit of the work, the endpoint for which is roughly the end of the third quarter of the twentieth century, when analog or at least predigital techniques still ruled the day (see analog). Durant, Alan. “Raymond Williams’s Keywords: Investigating Meanings ‘Offered, Felt for, Tested, Confirmed, Asserted, Qualified, Changed’.” Critical Quarterly 48.4 (2006): 1-26. Empson, William. “Creating Common Frames of Reference on Political Issues.” Diana Carole Mutz, Paul M. Sniderman, Richard A. Brody, eds. Political persuasion and attitude change. University of Michigan Press, 1996. Session 6, July 22