**Raymond Williams Society First Annual Conference**

**Cultural Production and the Redundancy of Work: Precarity, Automation and Critique**

**26-27 April 2019**

**Confirmed plenary speakers: Helen Hester (University of West London), Esther Leslie (Birkbeck), Pablo Mukherjee (Warwick) and Mike Wayne (Brunel)**

**Friends Meeting House, Manchester, UK**

If recent forecasts are to be believed, a crisis is looming governed by the increasing contradiction between the forces and relations of production: automation will determine a new social order either within capitalism or beyond it. Will the result be utopian or dystopian (and perhaps it is a mistake to anticipate a benevolent, let alone socialist, ‘postcapitalism’)? Such developments would generate reconfigurations and reconceptualizations of the relations between work, leisure and culture. This conference will focus on these relations as they are currently developing and as they might do in the future.

We invite submissions for individual 20-minute papers or panels of three contributors focused on diverse forms of cultural production that might address, but are not limited to, the following questions:

* how has culture contributed to the critique of work – or how might it?
* what kinds of future are currently anticipated within cultural production, and to what extent are our political imaginaries influenced by them?
* how is technology reconfiguring cultural forms and relations (e.g. between producers and consumers)?
* does automation necessarily threaten an ecologically catastrophic future based on still greater productivity, and what potential is there for a non-consumerist culture?
* what does cultural production have to tell us about the contemporary state of the work ethic and what norms or moralities might lie beyond it?
* what contributions might subcultural formations make to the larger critique of work-and-leisure?

We welcome papers that start out from, or engage critically with, the cultural materialist position that cultural production takes place within larger social relations of domination and resistance.

Please send proposals for individual 20-minute papers, or for panels involving three contributors, to David Alderson (david.alderson@manchester.ac.uk) or Phil O’Brien (philip.obrien@manchester.ac.uk) by Friday 31 August 2018.