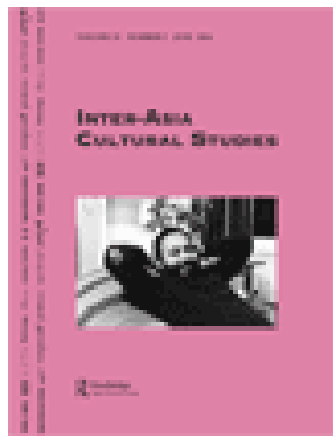


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## Editorial introduction: in memory of Stuart Hall (1932–2014)

Kuan-Hsing CHEN



Stuart Hall. (Photo by Eamonn McCabe © 2014 <All Rights Reserved.>)

Stuart Hall has been and will remain the most influential and most respected figure in the global scene of cultural studies. His cultural studies has always been more than an interdisciplinary academic exercise, it is a strategic site of practices grounded in, and connected with, the politics of the new left and the black community in the UK. For many of us who have chosen to enter the field of cultural studies, it was because of encounters with Hall, who is not only a genuine human being and a profound thinker, but also a rare intellectual model; he has found a unique way to be deeply engaged in the local and is able to inspire others living in different parts of the world. The loss of Stuart Hall is, therefore, an irreplaceable loss of inspiration and support.

After he left us physically on February 10, 2014, how do we begin to account for

Stuart Hall's enormous influences so that his critical spirit can be kept alive?

Looked at retrospectively, Stuart Hall was a fortunate teacher. In his CCCS (Center for Contemporary Cultural Studies at Birmingham University) era, from 1964 to 1979, Hall was able to meet many brilliant students who had the guts to break away from conventional disciplines and to try out an alternative mode of knowledge production by working together as a group. These students later became the earlier generation cultural studies practitioners producing brilliant pioneering works, without which cultural studies could not have taken off. Some of these works remain seminal classics today; others (e.g. *Policing the Crisis*) became the preparation for Hall himself to enter the next moment of the wider political debate in the 1980s, for instance, on Thatcherism, and

works that opened up the later debate on neo-liberalism. As a whole, Hall—via CCCS—has nurtured and cultivated a large number of important researchers and produced high quality intellectual works that no other teacher or single institution has been able to accomplish in 15–20 years, a very short period of time on this occasion. Hall's unique ability to work with individuals and groups was the basis of his lasting influences.

Hall's rich experiences of team work in CCCS, in some ways, paved the way for his move to Open University with a clear purpose to provide education for a wider, less privileged student population. From 1979 to 1997, in 18 years, Hall was able to work with many course teams to produce audio-visual educational programs and high quality text books, which have had long term impacts. The "Understanding Modern Societies" Series, involving some 50 team members, headed by Hall, publishing internationally-circulated texts such as *Formations of Modernity* and *Modernity and its Future*, was one of the examples. The readers of these texts have been taught globally since the 1990s. The immeasurable influences and contributions Hall made in his Open University period in the context of changing British society remains understudied. It may well be an important source to imagine alternative education in the current internet era.

Besides his known reputation as a broadcaster involved in many productions, Stuart Hall's continuous involvements in founding, editing and writing for alternative magazines circulating in the new left circle and political society, and staging intellectual debates have also had profound impacts. *New Left Review* (1960s), *Marxism Today* (late 1970s until early 1990s), and *Soundings* (1990s–) have been the exemplary platforms whereby Hall engaged in dialogues with the larger society. It was through *Soundings* that Hall, with his co-editors Doreen Massey and Michael Rustin, issued the Kilburn Manifesto to challenge Neoliberalism, one of his last political statements, made in 2013. From 1960 onward, for a half century, Hall's constant interventions in the present

have not only framed major debates but changed our way of thinking about the world in transformation. One may even argue that if there is an intellectual history of the global left since 1960s, Hall is one of the few thinkers whose works and practices have deeply shaped that history.

As an inside outsider of London, Stuart Hall's belonging to a black minority coming from a former British colony has given him a vantage point to pinpoint the contradictions of mainstream society. His originality is not separable from his subject position as an immigrant. Although he left Jamaica in the 1950s, his postcolonial experiences in the metropolis have intensified his concerns with issues of race and ethnicity imbricated with class and gender. After he retired from the university post, he became involved more and more with black artist communities. One of the last projects Hall took the lead to implement was to found, in 2007, the Ravington Place, a London-based global art center for black and minority artists. One would hope this project will go on, continuing the Stuart Hall legacy.

During the 2000 Crossroads Conference held in Birmingham, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies: Movements* journal was launched. Hall came to speak and support the project. As an advisor to the journal, he was not formally involved in the editorial work, but his encouragements have always been reassuring and empowering. In this issue, we have invited colleagues and friends from different parts of the world to share with us their encounters with and thoughts on Hall's contributions to the humanities. Stuart Hall's spirit is alive with us.

### Author's biography

Kuan-Hsing Chen teaches in the Institute for Social Research and Cultural Studies, National Chiao Tung University, Taiwan. His most recent publication is *Asia as Method: Toward Deimperialization* (2010, Duke University Press).

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