

In This Issue

Cultural Studies has multiple discourses; it has a number of different histories. It is a whole set of formations; it has its own different conjunctures and moments in the past. It included many different kinds of work. I want to insist on that! It always was a set of unstable formations. It was ‘centered’ only in quotation marks.¹
(Stuart Hall, “Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies” 278)

The recent death of Stuart Hall has forced many of us engaged in Cultural Studies over the years to take a moment to reflect on his work and legacy. Hall’s particular way of weaving together ideas from literary studies, anthropology, sociology and media studies provided useful models for how to connect culture, power and politics. I would venture to say that most people engaged in Cultural Studies have probably been drawn to this mixed bag of possibilities in part because it’s very honest about its own instability and porousness. To talk to people about Cultural Studies is to talk self-reflexively about one’s institutional position and the political possibilities of both individual and collective intellectual practice. To engage in Cultural Studies in any capacity is to be involved in a project that is open to what one doesn’t know. At the same time, though, Hall reminded us repeatedly that Cultural Studies does have a clear purpose or at least some stake in contesting power. In his autobiographical writing and interviews Hall makes clear that in order for him to connect his work to the material and the everyday he relied on concepts gleaned from Marxist theory but that in order to do so he had to work through Marxism’s many silences, inadequacies, evasions and most of all its overwhelming Eurocentrism.

Hall’s particular but ever-evolving brand of Cultural Studies “‘centered’ only in quotation marks” runs through this volume of the *Arizona Journal*, a publication created almost twenty years ago to provide a home for the kinds of scholarship that were falling between the disciplinary cracks. This volume, like previous volumes, is a call to listen to the new voices marking new territory in Hispanic Cultural Studies. Enric Bou has put together the special section “Explorations of Everyday Life,” a collection of seven essays that answer research questions such as “how is the everyday experienced within Catalan and Spanish contexts?”; “are there particular experiences that result in a specific and unique representation or theoretical response in art, film or literature?” and “how and to what extent do issues of identity, space, historical memory and immigration affect everyday life in Spain?” The essays in this section employ two-fold strategies that take the contextual (material) aspects of everyday life into account at the same time as they occupy themselves with the more subjective experiences of each social actor, including issues of representation.

“The Pedagogy of Degrowth” works to shake us out of our everyday neoliberal teaching practices that, according to author Luis Prádanos, need to be reconsidered in this age of radical economic inequality and impending ecological collapse. This groundbreaking essay provides a toolkit for how to guide ourselves as teachers as we in turn guide our students to “unlearn”

ingrained commonplaces about economic growth, technology and progress. This initiative is driven in no small part by the recuperation of indigenous pedagogies from the Andes. In a similar vein, Lorena Cuya's essay takes a look at seventeenth century environmental criticism in Book IX of the Inca Garcilaso de la Vega's *Comentarios reales* (1609) that relates the Inca with the ideology of an insurgent indigenous movement, the Taqui Onqoy. Likewise, Luis Moreno-Caballud's essay "La otra transición: Culturas rurales, Estado e intelectuales en la encrucijada de la 'modernización' franquista (1957-1973)" approaches the often-neglected role of rural culture in the creation of the hegemonic cultural and political paradigm that underpinned Spain's transition to democracy after the death of Francisco Franco. Two essays in this volume deal with urban culture from the vantage point of visual studies: that of Kathy Korcheck on the recent photography of what she calls the "speculative ruins" whose existence exposes the deceptive practice of real estate speculation and Loredana Comparone's essay on the Spanish films of Marco Ferreri (*El pisito*, *Los chicos* and *El cochecito*) that show how architecture, urbanism and film itself deconstruct the national narrative of economic progress in 1950s Spain. Rebecca Janzen takes us to the limits of State power in Mexico with her analysis of Carlos Reygadas's film *Stellet Licht* (2007) and a series of photographs by Eunice Adorno from 2011 that portray the Low German Mennonite community. Employing hybrid postcolonial and cultural studies strategies stemming right from the pages of Stuart Hall's 1997 *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*, Kathleen Connolly explores the anxieties over Catalan identity and the 'racial consequences' of Spain's colonial project in Equatorial Guinea as they play out in Liberata Masoliver's 1955 novel *Efin*.

In his later years Stuart Hall would talk often about his great surprise that Cultural Studies gained such an immediate and comfortable home within North American academic institutions. He voiced concern that such success would formalize out of existence the critical questions of power, history, and politics. He mused over the dangerous paradox of what he called the "overwhelming textualization of cultural studies's own discourses that somehow constitutes power and politics as exclusively matters of language and textuality itself" ("Cultural Studies" 287). The essays in this volume are mere texts, it's true, but what drives the minds and fingers of the authors of these essays, of the journal's editors, proofreaders, typesetters, webpage-maintainers and all of the many others who provide the energy necessary to bring this publication to fruition is the sincere hope that the meaning contained within will inspire, incite and mobilize a wide variety of people to not just produce more theory but to act against the subjugation, domination, exclusion and marginality that Stuart Hall so articulately defined for subsequent generations.

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Notes

¹ Hall, Stuart. "Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies" in *Cultural Studies*, ed. Lawrence Grossberg, Cary Nelson, Paula Treichler. New York and London: Routledge, 1992. 278.