Housing Cultural Studies – A memoir, with buildings, of Stuart Hall, Richard Hoggart and Terence Hawkes

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Abstract
Three globally significant figures in cultural studies died in 2014. They were Terence Hawkes (13 May 1932-16 January 2014), Stuart Hall (3 February 1932-10 February 2014), and Richard Hoggart (24 September 1918-10 April 2014). I miss them all. That personal feeling motivates what follows. But there’s a public aspect to it too. Not only did I watch and admire these three people building cultural studies; I know the buildings they built it in. Suddenly those buildings feel empty, not facing the future but confined to their times, ceasing to ‘speak’ as they silently await sufficient neglect and dilapidation to justify the new-generation wrecking ball of ‘creative destruction’ to open up the space for something new that has already forgotten them.

Keywords: Terence Hawkes, Stuart Hall, Richard Hoggart.

‘Et credis cineres curare sepultos?’
‘And do you think that the ashes of the dead concern themselves with our affairs?’
(Virgil, in Stone 2013: 174)

I am motivated to write about Hall, Hoggart and Hawkes because academic society, the ‘critical’ humanities, and cultural studies in particular, are careless of their elders and ancestors. They – we – are inclined too often to accept a rote-learned genesis (‘… and Hoggart begat Hall…’), which does no honour to those named, never mind the many whose names are quietly erased by this all too ‘selective tradition’ (Williams 1977). So another part of my motivation is that I think the memorialisation process always gets things wrong. Most of us dissolve into unsignifying sediment along with
our words, but one of our ‘dear leaders’ is ritually embalmed and put on display for the grieving masses. That is what is happening now to Stuart Hall. Such a procedure focuses attention on the mask of charisma rather than on the achievements and failures of the groups in which the living human had moved and had influence. The mask readily covers the self-interest of the interested parties who take charge of memorialisation, and who parade the selected leader as an icon of secular religiosity, before whose supposed values, prescriptions and rules we must all bow, out of respect, thus confining, reducing, and – inevitably – misdirecting the efforts of a new generation, who must continue to analyse culture according to the prescriptions allegedly set in stone by the ‘onlie begetter’.

I don’t think this describes the reality. Thus for example I think that Hawkes may prove more influential globally than Hall, even though he is less ritualistically memorialised. His ‘new accents’ are diffused into the discursive DNA of new generations, opening the possibilities of knowledge; whereas the ‘uses of Stuart Hall’ have (by some) been appropriated to close down analysis, imposing rules for what is to be believed. Well, I am not a believer. The best kind of memorialisation may in fact be to hasten ‘creative destruction’ (Schumpeter 1942) and renewal. But even as the wrecking ball trundles inexorably towards these objects of my affection and admiration, I just want to take a tour of the edifices in which I knew them, before their meanings are irrevocably ‘set in stone’ and ‘taken for granite’ – as Hawkes once joked about ‘the strange case of William Shakespeare’ (Hartley & Hawkes 1977).

During the 1970s, Stuart Hall was director of the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies (CCCS), which he took over from Richard Hoggart, who’d established it in the English Department at Birmingham University. During that same decade I lived in Cardiff, first as an undergraduate, then as a PhD student who couldn’t believe his luck to be supervised by Terry Hawkes, the enfant terrible of Cardiff’s otherwise crusty old English Department, and the only one of the three who was actually from Birmingham, accent and all. Small wonder that ‘cultural studies’ and ‘Birmingham’ were synonymous. Staying on in Cardiff, I got my first academic job at the Polytechnic of Wales (the former Treforest School of Mines). There, I co-authored my first book, Reading Television (1978), which was published in Terence Hawkes’s New Accents series.
I first met Stuart Hall in the mid-1970s, when co-author John Fiske and I went to Birmingham to talk about our plans for *Reading Television*, which Hall was kind enough to encourage. Later, he visited Cardiff University. He and his Brummy gang came to attend a big sociology conference on deviance and criminology. People like Stan Cohen and Jock Young were there: *Folk Devils and Moral Panics* were in the air. So was *Mugging and Law’n’Order*, though not yet *Subculture’n’Style*.

I wasn’t involved, or even aware of this particular shindig, being a long-term denizen of the Arts Faculty, whose relationship to the Social Sciences was faithfully represented in the architecture of their adjacent buildings. The social sciences strutted their stuff in a new 12-story Tower. In the New Brutalist style of the 1950s and 60s (Banham 1955; 1965), it was the first building to breach the 4-level height restrictions that had been imposed for half a century to make sure Cardiff’s Edwardian civic centre, a triumph of opulent, imperial ‘wedding-cake’ style (a scale model of New Delhi), would never be overshadowed … as it now was.4

The Social Science Tower loured over the bland, bull-nosed Arts Building like an overbearing *History Man* (Bradbury 1975) – masculine, self-assured and progressive in a promiscuous, whatever-I-want kind of way.5 Despite the Arts Building’s (paper-thin) Portland-stone-clad pretensions of classicism, it was hard to go into it without experiencing its couched posture as an instinctive flinch away from an anticipated blow by its bigger, brasher, newer neighbour.
Although in those days English was hailed (by some) as the ‘queen of the humanities’, its architectural abjection was prescient. The feared blow was duly delivered. Its queenly domain of writing and culture was penetrated by ascendant sociology, which had its wicked way and took what it wanted – not writing’s textuality or ambiguity of course, but its sociality and repute – leaving behind only a bawling bastard child called Cultural Studies, which promptly renamed culture itself … as (mere?) ‘ideology’.

Stuart Hall’s presentation to the assembled leather-jacketed, YMCA-moustached History Men in the Social Sciences Tower would, before too long, gestate into Policing the Crisis (Hall et al. 1978) – in my opinion the flawed but best book to come out of CCCS. But I’m getting ahead of myself. I met Stuart Hall in Cardiff only because he took some time out from that conference, and came down from that Tower.
The Casablanca Club in Mount Stuart Square, Cardiff Docks, circa 1970. The club is the old chapel building (centre). I took this photo for the Cardiff student newspaper Broadsheet, of which I was editor.

The Casablanca was demolished in the 1990s.

Here is where I met him. He was leaning against the back wall, quietly by himself, enjoying the music at the Casablanca Club, down in what some readers might have heard of as ‘Tiger Bay’, actually Butetown, in the docks area of Cardiff. The ‘Casa-B’, a former chapel, now demolished, was a black-music club with a multiracial clientele. As The Real Cardiff website puts it: ‘first and best of the city’s stoned-sixties nightclubs. You came here if you were strong’. The Casablanca was located in the same square as Cardiff’s former Coal Exchange, symbol of the city’s turn-of-the-century mining and maritime wealth. It is claimed that the world’s first cheque for a million pounds was signed there in 1909. Although in the 1970s Butetown still pulsed with life and noise, it was stuck in that industrial past, which, like the rust-coloured dust from the nearby steelworks that shrouded the terraced houses, slowly choked the life out of it.

Now it was in terminal decline: steelworks, docks and working-class workforce alike were unmodernised. The steelworks followed the docks into disuse. It wasn’t clear what would become of this part of the city, which was cut off from the retail,
administrative and civic parts by the London railway line. Grand imperial buildings emptied and were boarded up. It was still good for clubs and pubs though.

My own familiarity with the docklands of Cardiff came about through journalism. I had photographed the steelworks, ‘street-kids’ and ‘slum’ housing for the student newspaper, whose readers were unlikely ever to have set foot where all these could be found, south of Cardiff Central Station. Later I was involved with a radical magazine called Rebecca, run from a rented house down on the waterfront by an Irish-Welsh investigative journalist called Paddy French. Rebecca was devoted to exposing corruption in local governments around South Wales, but it also moved in the countercultural and libertarian currents of the day, including Welsh-language politics (I was its implausible Welsh Editor). I spent many a long hour down at Paddy’s place in the Docks, and many more street-selling Rebecca around the city (to a willing public, I may add).

And so I bumped into Stuart Hall at the Casablanca Club, much to my own surprise, for he was already a celebrity of the Left. But there he was, with that rich, relaxed Jamaican voice, taking pleasure in the music and the multicultural setting, ready to acknowledge someone he hardly knew. I felt we shared something across the differences: an interest in the connections among popular culture, urban life,
intellectual adventure and political activism, in a setting where those things felt more like life than work.

Stuart Hall paid his respects to Cardiff again, much later, after he’d abjured the kind of cultural studies that bore his name, when he endorsed a book produced by Glenn Jordan, African-American scholar and photographer, who runs the Butetown History and Art Centre. Glenn produced a book of ‘life portraits’ of Jewish people in Cardiff, which he described as ‘my latest contribution to studies of multicultural Wales’ (personal correspondence). Hall wrote for the cover:

The range of stories is impressive and the photographs are wonderfully eloquent; it is impossible to decide whether the stories or the photographs are the more compelling. However, together they create a unique map of another small part of our world. We need more such maps. It gives particular pleasure to see this fine work appearing in the context of a further expansion of Butetown History & Arts Centre’s innovative transcultural, diasporic dialogue (Jordan 2012).

This is the Stuart Hall I met and liked – a doyen of the Left (when there still was one),11 who was interested in ‘another small part of the world’ and willing to lend a hand in the politics and practice of alternative representation. There was the other Stuart Hall, of public reputation, more of a History Man in some ways. Like so many on the British Left, he participated near or against but not in the Labour Party, pursuing an unending debate about politics (the concept) rather than power (getting hold of it), stressing shades of socialist difference rather than what it might take to win and keep government. He can’t be blamed for the splits and schisms and failures of the British Left, although at least one Trotskyite has felt no such qualms (Bond 2014), but he played a leading part in a general dissolution of what Gramsci might have called a ‘popular front’, when the academic, theoretical and ‘cultural’ left, including those active in the ‘new social movements’ associated with identity politics, based on gender, race, sexuality, nationalism etc., parted company from the institutional labour movement and the Labour Party, not to mention the population at large.
Thus cultural studies came to be associated with Theory and academic Marxism, which could name Thatcherism but not beat it, by ballot box or barricade. Margaret Thatcher herself was an enthusiastic class warrior, who relished ‘the chance to banish from our land the dark, divisive clouds of Marxist socialism’. What kept the Tories in power for 18 years was not this crusade, however, but the split in the Labour Party that spawned the SDP and Lib-Dems, whose combined share of the popular vote was always greater than that of the Conservatives.

When Tony Blair won the 1997 election, after a depressing end-of-an-era hiatus of sex scandals and punitive government (emblem: Ann Widdecombe as Prisons Minister), it was widely assumed that ‘things can only get better’. But, according to Hall’s obituary in the (conservative) Daily Telegraph:

Although Hall harboured great hopes for New Labour, he was deeply disappointed by the reality. … Hall was inclined to lay most of the blame at the door of Tony Blair … In the run-up to the 1997 general election, Hall and Martin Jacques had penned an exasperated article, ‘Tony Blair: the greatest Tory since Margaret Thatcher?’ expressing their frustration that even though the Tories were ‘divided, exhausted and demoralised,’ it was still ‘their arguments, their philosophy, their priorities, that are defining the agenda on which new Labour thinks and speaks’.

The chance to change not only the governing party but also the codes and discourses by which politics is conducted – not continuing with Thatcherite vs Socialist adversarialism but facing the future via a ‘Third Way’ – was squandered in business-as-usual sectarian squabbling. The ‘intellectual left’ washed its hands of ‘New Labour’, mistaking electoral victory for political defeat. The biggest-ever Labour majority was read as evidence of betrayal, not for the first time on the British Left and not for the first time by Stuart Hall (Hartley 1999: chs 8 and 9). Who knows how things may have turned out if there had been a ‘popular front’ of progressive activists of all stripes who were willing to lend a hand to ameliorate conditions in ‘another small part of the world’, and to pursue the politics and practice of alternative representation, as part of government. In short, I mourn the ‘Casablanca’ Hall (since demolished) more than the ‘Tower Block’ Hall (preservation order applied for).
II. Hoggart

For some reason I associate Richard Hoggart with trains rather than buildings. It may have something to do with the way British academic life used to proceed. The Second Class return rail ticket was the currency of intellectual exchange. I used one such ticket to go up to London in 1977 to be interviewed for a job at Goldsmiths College, where Hoggart had recently become Warden (Vice-Chancellor or President).

Oddly, considering my subsequent career, I went there as a Shakespearean. My PhD scholarship had been granted for the study of Shakespeare’s audience, and Terry Hawkes agreed to be my supervisor, much to my delight. I decided to look at the connection between literacy and individualism in Shakespeare’s plays and society (the influence of McLuhan and Ong is obvious). With Terry’s encouragement, I linked this ‘history of ideas’ approach to a more contentious notion; namely, that Shakespeare, as a popular dramatist (Bethell 1944), who made himself affluent by staging entertainments for profit, was more like a popular-TV producer-writer-director-actor than the high-culture ‘great writer’ that Education had made him since the nineteenth century. Popularity didn’t mean he wasn’t a great artist. It was the other way round: it meant that popular drama was Shakespearean, not only in social reach but also in the quality of the work, and that of the audience who loved it: an idea first broached by Alfred Harbage (1947). So it was Terry who put two and two together and suggested that if I really wanted to understand Shakespeare’s audience I might profitably investigate popular drama made by and for people who were actually alive – and that meant studying TV. If Shakespeare could share his greatness with a popular audience, including youthful apprentices, women and men of all classes, then why can’t the same be true for contemporary media? In the 1970s this meant television above any other medium, so shouldn’t it too be a candidate and crucible for greatness? If so, the Globe and the goggle-box alike are a chief means for linking the whole population of their day (mixing classes, ages and gender), via dramatic treatments of human conflict and cooperation, change and chance, to represent fundamental human dilemmas: meaningfulness, identity, life, death, marriage, group-dynamics, comedy (how to get along with people you don’t like) and tragedy (individual will). They were thus the vehicle for experimenting with new ‘ways of seeing’ (Berger 1972) for an emergent modernity. Even as he taught audiences new
ideas, Shakespeare in turn relied on them to be astute and knowing about human
nature, but also to want to learn more. In short, the audience was worthy of the plays,
and they of it. Well, if that was true for Shakespeare (and his contemporaries), why
not so for TV? Thus was conceived the rationale for and opening passage of *Reading
Television*.

And that, more or less, was the idea that I took with me on the train to London,
awkwardly self-conscious in my first attempt at a business suit (it was pale beige!), to
try out on the one person in England who I thought might go for it – Richard Hoggart.
Was it cheeky? Provocative? Game-changing? – What would he say? I wanted to
work under Hoggart’s own aegis, which meant finding ways to combine an inside
understanding of the British working class – not the ‘solidarity’ version, admittedly,
but a more anxious, welfare-dependent, ‘broken family’ version – with an interest in
arts and letters, language and reality, politics and ideas, and through them the
modernisation of literary and cultural studies. How could you be who you were (a
classed, gendered, raced, ‘lost boy’, whose education had both saved and scarred
you) and, at the same time, find out how things worked, ‘in themselves’, as Karl Marx
or Virginia Woolf might have put it? I had an inkling that Richard Hoggart might
know the trick of that.

I don’t recall much about Goldsmiths itself at that time, except that, not being on the
London Underground rail network, it was difficult to get to from Paddington. Its
exterior was very familiar, however, from many a youthful drive-by, since it is
located on the main road from Kent, where my mother lived, whence I’d pelted up to
London whenever I could get my hands on her Mini. I have to admit that during such
journeys my mind was not really on Goldsmiths, never mind Hoggart: it was on
getting that little blue car to go as fast as possible, weaving in and out of the endless
clog of traffic, *Italian Job* style. I have no memory of the interior of the building in
which Hoggart interviewed me. I’m assuming it was in the main building. That’s the
one that’s recently been renamed. Now it is called *The Richard Hoggart Building*.21
Luckily, someone has painted Hoggart’s portrait as Warden, with this building in the
background, so now I can reimagine myself back into the place (that red tie seems
familiar) where I failed to get my first academic job.
My personal failure to be definite about the relations between Hoggart and buildings may be why I associate him more with trains, of which, more anon. But first, let it be noted that the same indeterminacy about the *place* of Richard Hoggart can be discerned in a much more important context, that of British architecture and its relationship to working-class housing. Hoggart’s name neatly captured both horns of a dilemma faced by architects and property developers in the post-war era of recovery, rehousing, and modernisation that coincided with the 1957 publication of his *The Uses of Literacy*. On the one hand, as Hoggart himself pointed out, working-class housing of the industrial era was clustered in ‘massed proletarian areas; street after regular street of shoddily uniform houses’ that ‘to a visitor… are understandably depressing’ (1957: 57-8). What better than to bring in the wrecking ball? Why not demolish the lot, and rehouse the workers in something modern, or better yet *modernist*? Hooray and up with the high-rises! But then again, as Hoggart had gone on to mention, there was the ‘life of the neighbourhood’. These were not mean streets, but meaningful: ‘to the insider, these [streets] are small worlds, each as homogenous as a village.’ (1957: 58).
Here’s the dilemma. Should architects go for ‘the shock of the new’ (Hughes 1980)? Or should urban development seek to preserve the street-life and community of the industrial slums? In turn, would that be patronising, forcing the working class into ‘the role of picturesque peasantry’; or would architecture have to ‘destroy the village in order to save it’?23 Despite the contemporary rise of ‘street sociology’ (of which CCCS was a direct heir, via Phil Cohen, Paul Willis and others), there were those among the architectural avant-garde who thought that ‘community’ sentiment was just that – sentimental, a last-gasp nostalgia for a bygone era, when Hoggart had grown up in Leeds (Hoggart 1988). One of them was the architectural critic Reyner Banham. In an influential article published in 1962, Banham worried that modern developments which quoted the streetscape of industrial housing and warehouses might create a ‘visual setting’ that is ‘a joy to look at’ (for the architectural eye); but, he asked, would they ‘leave a developing working class lumbered with an unsuitable functional environment twenty affluent years from now?’ (Banham 1962; see also Vidler 2010: 109-100). This is the same Reyner Banham who coined the term ‘The New Brutalism’ (1955; 1965), signalling not rejection but approval for its ‘rough, tough’ confidence and future-facing disdain for the past over which it loured (Vidler 2010: 116-18). Not surprisingly, then, he held in equal disdain any hint of nostalgia that made a spectacle out of working-class community without imaging ‘affluent years’ ahead. And he had a name for this contemptible sentimentality: he called it ‘Hoggartry’.

Interestingly, the ideal-type of the kind of place that Banham singled out for criticism was fictional. It was Coronation Street. First aired in December 1960 (and still running, over half a century later), it was set in the streets surrounding the Rover’s Return pub in a fictionalised Manchester, which Banham – not meaning this as a compliment – dubbed ‘Hoggartsborough’. It’s not surprising he associated the two, because Hoggart’s fingerprints were indeed all over Coronation Street:

The Uses Of Literacy … was a close, loving but critical examination of working class life and culture and the threats to its existence. Tony Warren, who invented Coronation Street, told him that the book had been his inspiration: that’s how revolutionary it was.24
Not only did he inspire it; he was portrayed in it. Not only that, but his character featured in the very first episode (December 10, 1960) and – not only that – he was still there in 2014 – a world record (according to Wikipedia). The character is Ken Barlow (Bill Roache). As cultural historian and *International Journal of Cultural Studies* Editorial Board member Joe Moran puts it:

In the first episode of *Coronation Street* we saw him living at home while studying at Manchester University, clashing with his postman father over the snooty look he gave the HP sauce bottle on the dinner table... Barlow was certainly the incarnation of Hoggart’s scholarship boy: the ‘uprooted and anxious’ figure whose education had alienated him from his working-class origins.\(^{25}\)

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Representing Richard Hoggart: Ken Barlow (Bill Roache) in *Coronation St Episode #1*(1960)\(^{26}\)

The fictional biography of truculent, socialist, philandering, *Guardian*-reading Barlow soon parted ways with the factual biography of Richard Hoggart. Ken endured multiple affairs and marriages and many different (equally unfulfilling) jobs, eventually to achieve a kind of immortality as the world’s longest serving character in a soap opera and the status of ‘our national archetype of a boring man’ (Moran). Hoggart, meanwhile, went on to found the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, went from there to a job in Paris as Assistant Director General of UNESCO, and finally became Warden of Goldsmiths – a trajectory too implausibly public and historic, even grand, for a drama serial dedicated to the ‘street sociology’ of working class domestic life.
But before we leave fiction behind, let it be remembered that Hoggart was not a solitary figure in the imagined landscape of New Brutalist Britain. He was surrounded by ‘Angry Young Men’ in arts and letters, like the ‘kitchen sink’ dramatists John Osborne, Harold Pinter and Arnold Wesker, and working-class novelists like Alan Sillitoe, who made truculence, socialism, drinking hard and philandering into culture. They were not the first to do so. These were familiar figures in literary history. As Richard Hoggart himself put it (1995: 185-6): ‘Dissidence, bloody-mindedness, sarky or bypassing, has a very long history. Start with Chaucer and come right up through Sam Weller [in Dickens’s *Pickwick Papers*] to [Sillitoe’s] *Saturday Night and Sunday Morning*. You can get a sense of the ‘Angry’ or ‘dissident’ rather than the sentimental Hoggart from the only portrait of him held by the UK National Portrait Gallery, taken in 1962 in Yorkshire.


If there was such a thing as Hoggartry, or place as Hoggartsborough, they may have been less sentimental and more robust than Banham feared. If you re-read *The Uses of Literacy* now, some of his judgements (notoriously, about ‘juke-box boys’) come across as huffy, harrumphing and hilarious – confined to their times, and well adrift from the ‘structure of feeling’ that characterises his recreation of working-class home life. People often comment on the difference between the ‘front half’ of *Uses* (evocation of community) and the ‘back half’ (critique of mass entertainment). But
the two halves are not separate – one over-sentimental, the other over-critical. The first half is like a critical crowbar, which gave Hoggart the leverage to break the hard new ground of analysis in the second part. How do you connect the products of a commercial democracy with the internal life of class-made people? Not an easy trick (it had never been tried), especially if you shy away from abstractions like ‘consumerism’, ‘ideology’, ‘neoliberalism’ and so on, and try to answer the question not from the Towering heights of Theory but from the point of view of the people themselves, what they said and how they lived.

Hoggart’s so-called ‘sentimentality’ was of the ‘angry’ type – analytic, not nostalgic. He used it to bang a few heads along the way, but that was mere sport. The real substance of his approach was its attempt to understand how industrial and commercial society intersected with the inner life of ordinary people; and to tease out from the detail of discourse what kinds of meaning emerged from the clash between their self-made home and community life on the one hand, and their uses of literacy for their own purposes (or playfully, for no particular purpose) on the other. That’s still a great question! Jonathan Zittrain (2010) among many another, has posed it in relation to the internet.

That 1962 portrait of the Angry Young Hoggart brings us, roundabout, back to trains. Quite a long time afterwards, in the 1990s, I became the founding head of the Cardiff School of Journalism, Media and Cultural Studies at Cardiff University in Wales, and set up a research centre named for Sir Tom Hopkinson, wartime editor of Picture Post, who’d founded a graduate journalism course at Cardiff back in 1970 (when I was an undergraduate there). At the same time I also launched the International Journal of Cultural Studies. I wanted Hoggart to figure prominently in all of this, so I arranged (with Mark Gibson, now of Monash University) to interview him for the first issue of the journal, and have him come down to Cardiff to launch the School and the Tom Hopkinson Centre for Media Research.

These ambitions required trains.

Gibson and I went up to London to do the interview. Hoggart asked us to meet him ‘on the steps of Waterloo Station’, from where we’d go to his office at some
anonymous South London quango, where he was promoting a ‘critical literacy’ initiative. Mark and I were afraid we might miss him, because the rendezvous was hardly a ‘place’ at all; railways and steps are noted for people hurrying by. In the event, architecture came to the rescue. The steps were far from anonymous, more like a stage – designed for entrances, the grander the better. They spilled down from a ‘Victory Arch’ in full imperial livery. Soon enough, down them spilled Richard Hoggart – affable, attentive and active at 80, buttoned up against the cold, ready to tell us what was what in the cultural studies trade. The results are recorded in *International Journal of Cultural Studies*, volume 1, number 1 (Gibson and Hartley 1998).

Later, Hoggart sent me a postcard: ‘Dear John. Sage sent a copy of the 1st vol. of IJCS. Thanks. And congratulations. Good luck with it. Yes the interview reads quite decently.’ He also – very politely – declined to write a puff for my forthcoming book *Uses of Television*, but did undertake to read it. Having done so, he sent me a 3-page typed letter about it. He used such terms as ‘smart-alecs’ and ‘wide boys’ – only to warn me from their company, you understand – but in the end (literally) he did like the book:
p. 238 onwards. This is quite different writing and very accomplished. A different person from the symbiosis man. Congratulations. I doubt if many of your colleagues could write like that. Don’t hide it.  

That’s the part of the book where I go autobiographical – and architectural – in a chapter called ‘Suburbanality’, a contemptible condition for modernists no doubt, but one to which, given the circumstances of my childhood as recounted in that chapter, I could only aspire.

More trains: Hoggart caught one to Cardiff Central Station. He came up to the Journalism School’s handsome (but not very practical) new quarters in a refurbished imperial ‘wedding-cake’ building of the Edwardian era, called the Bute Building, across the park from the Arts Building of yore.

Here he launched JOMEC and the Tom Hopkinson research centre with his customary ease and grace (and by-now familiar stories). Later, university auditing systems being what they are, he sent me the tickets: ‘Dear John. Just off to Belfast. But a brief note of thanks for all your kindesses and hospitality. It was a very good
and pleasant interlude – for me at least. You asked me to send rail tickets. Here they are. … All the best to the 2 of you & to Mark – and to your most friendly colleagues. 31 This is the Hoggart I described as the ‘mild-mannered Clark Kent of cultural studies’ (Hartley 2003: 25), using that phrase again when (with his permission) I dedicated my book *The Uses of Digital Literacy* to him (Hartley 2009).

There are just a few more trains, the vehicles of intellectual history, rather than mine. In April 2006 the long-since privatised railways took a mixed bag of academics and writers to Sheffield, some from other university towns in England, others from London Heathrow. The University of Sheffield had acquired 82 boxes of Hoggart’s papers and celebrated the same with a conference called ‘The Uses of Richard Hoggart’, organised by Sue Owen. Hoggart himself attended (by car), brought up by his son, *Guardian* columnist Simon Hoggart. He was nearer ninety than eighty by this time. A group of us, including Mark Gibson, Mel Gregg and Graeme Turner, came over from Australia (whence I’d returned in 2000) for the occasion. It was the last time I met him.

Sue Owen and I collaborated on one of the publications coming out of that event: The *International Journal of Cultural Studies* published a special issue, called ‘The Uses of Richard Hoggart’ (10:1, March 2007), to celebrate its own tenth year (see also Owen 2008). We published papers by David Lodge (the novelist), Stuart Hall (the conference was the last time I met him, too), Fred Inglis, Robert J.C. Young, Richard E. Lee, Larry Grossberg and Mark Gibson, among others. One or two speakers didn’t want their work to appear in the *International Journal of Cultural Studies* (Stefan Collini; Jim McGuigan). Even so, Volume 10 number 1 is a pretty impressive issue.

In his article, Stuart Hall dubbed *The Uses of Literacy* a ‘text of the break’ – cultural and epistemological:

> Much that followed in the evolution of Cultural Studies in the 70s and 80s were developments of the mixed and incomplete openings offered by *The Uses of Literacy* as a ‘text of the break’: resisting its cultural narrative, while deepening the epistemological breaks which its methodology exemplified. … When the complaint about ‘the turn to theory’ in Cultural Studies is made, it is difficult to see where else the Centre [for
Contemporary Cultural Studies] could have begun other than by deepening these breaks by way of sustained conceptual interrogation and methodological self-reflection – as it were, ‘working on the work’ (Hall 2007; see also Bailey et al 2012: 10).

A ‘text of the break’ – yes, that’s Richard Hoggart; but there he is, still ‘working on the work’.

III. Hawkes

‘Terry revolutionised English studies on both sides of the Atlantic with his books on Shakespeare and with another immense innovation, the unprecedented Routledge series of New Accents. Dozens of younger scholars made their careers by appearing under this vastly influential imprint.’

So says Rob Stradling, one of Terence Hawkes’s sparring/drinking partners and former professor of history at Cardiff, quoted for Terry’s obituary in The Times Higher Education. Stradling added that although Hawkes was ‘a redoubtable adversary in argument’, he also ‘had the keenest and most uproarious wit in any company’.32 I can vouch for the wit, but did Terry Hawkes ‘revolutionise’ English studies? Was New Accents an ‘immense innovation’ and ‘vastly influential’? If so, were these achievements part of ‘the break’ mentioned by Stuart Hall, or were they something else? (First answer: Time will tell.)

Terry gave the first lecture I ever attended at Cardiff University: first-year Shakespeare. It was held in the big, raked lecture theatre that occupied the Arts Building’s semi-circular bullnose. Instead of reverentially extolling the virtues of the Bard, as one would expect of a Shakespearean, Hawkes neatly demonstrated that the Shakespeare we were schooled to revere was an effect of education, ideology and criticism, and that one of the impediments to understanding Shakespeare was the ‘Shakespeare effect’ – or ‘Bardolatry’ as he called it. It was a well-crafted, funny, provocative, inspiring WTF theatrical performance, worthy of wonder, as his lectures (and articles) routinely were.
It had a life-changing impact on me. I walked in as a history major. I walked out devoted to the Hawkesian way of thinking and to the history of ideas, a path I still follow. That lecture theatre remained an important component of my intellectual formation. In my first term (1969), we packed it to the gunwales to see the legendary F.R. Leavis do a turn. It was lucky for me that I turned up. I found his opinions affronting and was put off by his personality and manner. I knew intuitively that the then-ascendant Leavisite ideology – the one that despised popular culture but idolised the Bard – was not for me.

In due course Terry became my PhD supervisor. Soon after, he published a book called *Shakespeare’s Talking Animals* (1973). I ‘reviewed’ it on the English department noticeboard (where I encountered Terry laughing at it one day … without owning up to it), thus:

*[To Teriadoc Orcs]*

*O, O, that awful Orcs,* says ‘Man’s the beast what talks’.

And furthermore says he, ’tis plain for all to see,

(Since all you need’s an ear, or better still a pair) –

A cultured life you’ll lead, so long as you can’t read.

Like Bill the Bard no less, whose words (you’d never guess)

Were wrote with this one aim – To put on books the blame
For Man’s Ingratitude. Now for this attitude
The Reason is, you see, that Intuitively

We know the World’s a Stage, and not a storied page
(Whose Message is – how rum – in fact the Medium!)
So in Reality, the fact Appears to be
The Globe’s a Metaphor for the South Circular

Round which the Wheel of Fire (it doesn’t ever tire
If the real motive force is oral intercourse)
Recycles till it’s come … to Orifice of Brum,
Up which, with Manly tears, it Hotly disappears.

Or, as ‘Bill the Bard’ himself had put it rather better in about 1590, ‘How well he’s read, to reason against reading!’36

Terry used to send me postcards (like Hoggart later on), when he went on his travels. One early one was from New York, showing the Empire State Building. On the back is scrawled: ‘As you see: Phallus in Wonderland.’ Perhaps he was responding in kind to the schoolboy humour of my doggerel ditty. But hang on a second (‘soft you, a word or two before you go’): Don’t worry about the jokes; look at the building.

Notice something unusual about it? Yes, that’s it – it’s in America! Terry Hawkes loved America, and New York in particular: unlike left-Leavisite Richard Hoggart, for whom ‘Americanisation’ was synonymous with popular-cultural decline, to be feared and excoriated every time it emanated from the milk-bar juke-box or transistor radio into the impressionable ears of youth; and even Stuart Hall, whose ‘Britishness’ was astutely noticed by Chris Rojek in the very first issue of the *International Journal of Cultural Studies* (Rojek 1998).

Hawkes had spent a year in the USA in the 1950s, teaching at SUNY-Buffalo. Among other notable things to see in New York, he’d seen the writing on the wall: that the amateur gents of English departments in Britain were about to be swept away by the professionalism and productivity of American democratic higher education. So (unusually, for the time, when many Eng-Lit professors managed without one) he’d got himself a doctorate. One of the things he brought back was jazz. He was a lifelong jazz drummer and enthusiast. His book *That Shakespeherian Rag* (1986) attests to the influence of jazz improvisation and syncopation in his work. He used it as an emblem of the democratisation of culture and its emancipation from authoritarian control, not least in the study of literature:

> As a native American confection, with its unsettling commitment to creative re-presentation and re-interpretation, jazz offers a model for a future notion of literary criticism. (Hawkes 1986: 125)

I never liked jazz, which mock-horrified him enough that one day he interrupted our supervisory session to drag me round the Arts Building in a search of a piano on which to introduce me to twelve-bar blues. Alas there was no house piano, so my education remains deficient in this regard, but I did pick up Terry’s intellectual drift: meaningfulness is all about the *user* and the *context* of performance, not some sacred unarguable original text (much less a genius whose authorial intentions are binding on users). And meaning is made by *remaking* it, ever anew, which is what audiences do (‘consumption’ has nothing to do with semiotic productivity).
The intellectual currents of the times were swirling most turbulently from France, Germany, even Russia, but the place where you could create yourself anew – by means of an ‘unsettling commitment to creative re-presentation’ – was the USA. Making yourself up as you go along was what America was all about; and after the Sixties it seemed for a while that (with a little help from British pop music) American popular culture could be a platform for progressive social change, even in Britain, which had grown culturally uneasy after New Brutalism, Angry Young Men and decolonisation. The USA was (still, just about, Vietnam/Watergate and the Democratic agonies of 1968 notwithstanding) a Wonderland.

And that’s what Terry was sending me: an image of the democratic vistas of intellectual life, but one that was already syncopated, ironic, ‘defamiliarised’, knowing but owing nothing to literature. It was, in short, the America of David Lodge’s *Changing Places* (1975). As Lodge’s legions of readers know, his campus novels featured American Morris Zapp, who was modelled on Stanley Fish, and British Philip Swallow of ‘Rummage’ (Birmingham) University (where Lodge taught English). Swallow was modelled, so rumour had it, on Michael Green, the CCCS’s less well-known permanent staff-member, who had himself been recruited while in his twenties, so a further rumour claimed, when Hoggart met him on a train (where else?) and they got to talking. 39

Hawkes himself, the Brum Shakespearean, was more Zapp than Swallow:

Zapp, a jetsetting, starfucking, and intellectually luminous American deconstructionist whose charm lies in his gleeful disregard for scholarly convention, aspires to become the highest-paid English professor in the world. What’s wrong with that? he asks. (*Slate* 1999)

Terry never betrayed the slightest interest in the level of his pay, nor was he in any sense a ‘starfucker’, but he did like to mess with minds. The celebrities he sought out, many of whom stopped by in Cardiff or popped up in his books, were coeval intellectuals and innovators, like Leslie Fiedler or Victor Erlich – people he admired, often Jewish and argumentative, whose company he valued and whose conversation he repaid in his work and teaching. But he was gleeful in his disregard for scholarly (read: conservative) convention, he was indeed intellectually luminous, and he was, in
his particular way, a ‘deconstructionist’ with ‘charm’. Here, of course, is where the politics come in. Like Morris Zapp or, more exactly, like Stanley Fish, Hawkes came to be associated with French theory, albeit with a Birmingham-American accent, which was called various things, from cultural materialism or new historicism to reader-response theory or poststructuralism. To unsympathetic observers in journalism and criticism, this was just code for ‘anything-goes’ relativism (i.e. communism):

To readers of American newspapers, however, particularly the Wall Street Journal editorial page, Fish is the symbol of how the left is wrecking American universities. Fish’s sin, according to his journalistic critics, is moral relativism. He is the founder of “reader-response” criticism, which holds that texts don’t have intrinsic meaning--meaning is a byproduct of the encounter between reader and text. (Slate 1999)

If you think this doesn’t amount to politics – or to a hill of beans – you should take a look at the ‘Bardbiz’ debate, provoked by Hawkes, in the London Review of Books (Hawkes 1990). There’s no need to go over all this stuff again, but it is important to keep in mind Hawkes’s public profile as a Trickster and mischief-maker. As one of the ‘Bardbiz’ correspondents put it, having dubbed him ‘inflammatory’:

You don’t have to agree with [his] provocative and preposterous thesis that the game is up for the likes of Shakespeareans … to acknowledge (with gratitude) the grace, wit and invention that makes the piece such a pleasure to read.  

There you go – provocative, preposterous, and a pleasure, all at once. Inflammatory, graceful, witty and inventive, and all of that as politics; the politics of iconoclasm, or ‘the text of the break’, in Stuart Hall’s phrase.

But Hawkes’s expansive critical talents were thought by opponents to mask more sinister motives: hastening the Decline and Fall of the modern, realist, Enlightenment project. How did he go about achieving that fell aim? Here – if you have heard of him at all – is where you are more likely to have encountered Terence Hawkes. The Hawkes in your head is not directly the Trickster-textualist of the break, but the one who is ‘working on the work’ (as Hall characterised CCCS’s interest in theory). This
is the Hawkes of New Accents, the extensive book series published by Routledge (formerly Methuen). Terry kicked it off with *Structuralism and Semiotics* (1977). He also commissioned *Reading Television* (1978) from John Fiske and me, as one of the opening books of the series. But to get to that, we have to come back to buildings, in particular, to pubs.

‘Read NEW ACCENTS’: another (subtly annotated) postcard from Terry Hawkes in America (1977)

Terry had an affinity for pubs. He was the son of a publican. More to the point, we would often meet in pubs, singly or in a crowd. Terry arranged to meet Fiske and me in one that was located out of the city somewhere on the A48, midway between my place and where Fiske lived (Fiske was a bit of a country squire), for us to sign the contract for what became *Reading Television*. Then there were various pubs around Cardiff and Penarth (where Terry lived), where you might find him jamming on drums or enjoying the show and the company.

The ‘local’ of the Arts Building was the nearby ‘Woody’ – a pub called the Woodville. Catherine Belsey – the very model of a modern Cambridge bluestocking – caused a stir one time by joining the Labour Party to stage a political intervention at the Woody. Amazingly, it still had a segregated (men’s) bar, tucked away in a forgotten and mostly empty corner. Belsey and her gang invaded the anachronism with placards and the local press, and had a stop put to it. Unlike Terry, who was a
long-standing Labour supporter, I don’t think Kate was active in the Party after her debut in street theatre.

Terry didn’t use pubs as a platform, but as a kind of town hall, in which the politics was deliberative, rather than adversarial. The Woody was the convivial meeting-place of the Cardiff Critical Theory Seminar. We routinely repaired to it after a visiting speaker had done their turn. Terry was the genius loci; regulars were Belsey, Chris Norris, myself, Chris Weedon, Brian Doyle … and a shifting cast of greater or lesser luminescence, many of whom (including those named) went on to write or contribute to New Accents books.
Hawkes himself remained devoted to literary studies, but New Accents was indifferent to disciplinary boundaries, and not a few of its books created new sub-fields. Its influence spilled out of the Arts Building and even infected the Towers of social science. Together, the disciplines began to speak in *new accents* – you could hear Paris tinged with Birmingham, New York syncopated with New – and ‘Old’ – South Wales. What had commenced as a modest pedagogic aim – ‘If a “distinctive discourse of the future” beckoned, we wanted at least to be able to understand it’ – had by now entered the language of the academy, and more broadly of new social movements. New ideas weren’t confined to an author, but released to the user. The pillars of Western thought did indeed tremble. As Hawkes put it, in his third General Editor’s Preface (2002):
Academic study did change rapidly and radically to match, even to help to
generate, wide reaching social changes. A new set of discourses was
developed to negotiate those upheavals. Nor has the process ceased. In our
deliquescent world, what was unthinkable inside and outside the academy
all those years ago now seems regularly to come to pass.

This is the model of cultural studies I worked to. It was achieved using
heterogeneous tools – wit and mischief in pubs as well as in publications – and
certainly by ‘working on the work’ (theorising as well as analysing) in order to
tag the quickly evolving metadata of thought:

The volumes now re-presented have more than a mere historical interest.
As their authors indicate, the issues they raised are still potent, the
arguments with which they engaged are still disturbing. In short, we
weren’t wrong. (General Editor’s Preface 2002)

As the waters close over their era, the language they forged may sputter and go
cold. But the template is there for you, not just to use, but to make again. The
buildings they ‘weren’t wrong’ in in are ripe for redevelopment, not as
institutional fortresses but as part of DIY Culture: You’ve got to be good at it;
quick, rule-breaking and bold, ready to experiment with materials to hand, to
tinker, adjust, and remake, but if you get it right, you can wield the kind of
literacy achieved by Terry Hawkes, Richard Hoggart and Stuart Hall – it is they
who ‘speak’ you, and not the other way round. Nevertheless, it’s your turn now;
it’s what your own ‘new accents’ are for. Building the future in ‘our
deliquescent world’ is not a monumental labour; it is a labour of love.

References


*Slate* (1999) ‘The Indefensible Stanley Fish.’ *Slate (Culturebox)*, Dec 27


Notes [transfer above References]
1 An earlier version of this article was published in Fusion, an Anglo-Australian online journal mainly for postgraduates: issue 5: ‘New Uses of Literacy’, November 2014 (www.fusion-journal.com), edited by Jane Mills (UNSW).

2 The head of department was Gwyn Jones, Knight of the Icelandic Order of the Falcon. He was head for thirty years and in that time it never occurred to him to hire a woman member of staff.

3 There’s a famous quip (Frankovits 1987) about the ‘inordinate number of Left academics wandering round Australia but talking about Birmingham’.

4 Source: http://caerdydd.ac.uk/about/photosviews/uniestate/index.html (Old Arts Building picture at: www.law.cf.ac.uk/aboutus/).


6 The queenly title was disputed by History, Law etc., but critic Terry Eagleton wanted it for English, just so that he could announce its dethronement: ‘The point of English … is now less to savour poetic ambiguity than to provide writing skills for future dentists and hotel managers. English, once the queen of the humanities, is now a queen in a rather different sense, whoring around other departments to sell its technical wares.’ www.timeshighereducation.co.uk/161892.article.

7 Real Cardiff at: www.peterfinch.co.uk/mount.htm; Casablanca picture at: www.flickr.com/photos/34517490@N00/2681023508/.

8 Cheque at: www.cardiff.ac.uk/for/prospective/international/study-abroad/why-cardiff/wales/history.html; East Moors picture at: www.cardiffians.co.uk/suburbs/splott_and_tremorfa.shtml.

9 Buildings at: www.cardiffians.co.uk/suburbs/butetown_and_cardiffbay.shtml.


11 Andre Frankovits (1987) pointed out that the idea of ‘the’ Left had already, by that date, persisted for longer in Britain than in Australia.

12 Naming Thatcherism is credited to Hall himself, in articles published in Marxism Today in January 1979 (before she won power): www.hegemonics.co.uk/docs/Great-Moving-Right-Show.pdf.
Thatcher was speaking in Perth, Scotland, before the 1983 election:


Despite the fact that this was an obituary, the Comments section bristled with predictable Little-Englander disrespect, including two comments that called Hall a ‘dam busters dog’. One read: ‘Good bloke who fought against the establishment to replace it with ... ummm ... ummm ... ummm ... that's it! Multiculturalism! ... just a dam busters dog.’ (ID: themlocksareeasy; Likes: 18. See: http://disqus.com/themlocksareeasy/). For those who don’t know, ‘dam busters dog’ is racist code: a reference to RAF Wing Commander Guy Gibson, leader of the 617 ‘Dam Busters’ Squadron in WW2, whose pet dog, immortalised in book and film, was called ‘Nigger’. Someone noted under the comment in the Telegraph: ‘Can't believe you sneaked that last bit in’. The comment attracted just one critical response: ‘Can I suggest that if in future, you wish to make a racial slur about the recently departed, you at least have the balls not to hide behind an online identity’ (ID: tommildmay; Likes: 4). When I last checked, nearly nine months later, the Daily Telegraph had still not ‘moderated’ (i.e. deleted) it (www.telegraph.co.uk/news/obituaries/10629087/Stuart-Hall-obituary.html#disqus_thread).


Martin Jacques was the editor of Marxism Today.

Blair’s 1997 majority was 179 seats.


A literary figure based on J. M. Barrie’s London, a London that had not entirely disappeared in my time: http://neverpedia.com/pan/Lost_Boys.

The Italian Job was written by Troy Kennedy Martin, of The Sweeney fame, and starring Michael Caine (with a cameo by Noel Coward), was the ultimate London film, albeit set in Turin: http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/The_Italian_Job.
Goldsmiths now boasts a Professor Stuart Hall Building too:


Picture at: www.gold.ac.uk/richard-hoggart-building/whoisrichardhoggart/. The artist is not credited.

This phrase became familiar in the Vietnam War, following a 1968 report by Peter Arnett (https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/B%E1%BA%BFn_Tre).

This is recounted by Hoggart’s son Simon, parliamentary sketch-writer for The Guardian, who pre-deceased Richard by a few months: ‘Like father, like son? Not always’. The Guardian, 5 October (2013):


Picture at:


Mark Gerson is at: www.markgersonphotography.com/; and


Picture at: http://www.waymarking.com/gallery/image.aspx?f=1&guid=510f3b38-eeb4-414e-a29a-67126a34ae04

Personal correspondence (23 July 1998). For ‘symbiosis man’ I think he meant ‘semiosis man’ – semiosis is a word I do use a lot! NB: the page reference is to the MS, not to the published book’s pagination.

Source: http://moblog.net/view/949224/bute-building.

Personal correspondence, 1-11-98.


34 And for others: see the obit for Terry in the Guardian, by John Drakakis, who was one of Hawkes’s PhD graduates before me: www.theguardian.com/education/2014/feb/21/terence-hawkes.

35 The History Department was as unreconstructed as English in those days. Its head – since 1953 – was Stanley Chrimes. This forbidding figure was known among quaking undergrads, and for good reason, as ‘Chrimes Against Humanity’.

36 Love’s Labour’s Lost I.1.94.

37 Hoggart, Uses of Literacy, pp. 189-90. The excerpt, and some sharp commentary on it, can be found here: http://imomus.livejournal.com/483805.html.

38 John Drakakis, wrote: ‘While a student at University College, Cardiff, [Hawkes] joined Acker Bilk’s jazz band as a drummer, and later played with Scott Hamilton and Warren Vaché. … Hawkes remained a prominent figure on the Cardiff jazz scene, often as a session drummer of choice with greats such as Benny Waters and Wild Bill Davison.’ See: http://www.theguardian.com/education/2014/feb/21/terence-hawkes.


40 See: www.lrb.co.uk/v12/n04/terence-hawkes/bardbiz. And read the letters! They stretch across 18 months.


42 Image courtesy of cardiffpubs.co.uk; the Woody is now, improbably, part of the ‘Scream’ chain of pubs (www.screampubs.co.uk/thewoodvillecardiff/).

43 When New Accents was 25 years old (in 2002), Routledge released all the books to date in a special hardback boxed-set (www.amazon.co.uk/New-Accents-Terence-Hawkes/dp/041529116X). There were more than forty books, over ten thousand pages. Many of the titles were bestsellers in successive editions that brought theory to readers across the world … in numbers that would astonish you.