Cultural Studies in the past and today: Interview with Stuart Hall

Rainer Winter and Zeigam Azizov

The Formation of Cultural Studies

Rainer Winter: Stuart, at the beginning I would like to ask you a question I ever wanted to ask. How important the tradition of the Frankfurt school was for your own work and the formation of Cultural Studies? In Germany critical theory will be very often identified with this school of thought.

Stuart Hall: Frankfurt school wasn't so important at the beginning, for various reasons. Most of Frankfurt School texts were not translated. And lots of people didn't speak German. So when the Centre started up we didn't have the key texts of Frankfurt School. Theodor W. Adorno's work wasn't known to us, we didn't know Walter Benjamin. There was Adorno's “The Authoritarian personality” which is a wonderful book, but it is not a classical ‘Adorno’ text. Later on we read Herbert Marcuse, but in his Californian stage. We are speaking about the early stage of Centre, 1960s, early 70s. We were not very philosophical. We had historian, visual theorists, philologists, but no philosophers. We should also think of the state of English language philosophy, which hated the European metaphysics. Reading German metaphysics, someone like Heidegger was getting lost in the mist of philosophy. We didn't get that much of Anglo-Saxon linguistic philosophy, like Austin for example. Later on we got interested in them. That is why early Cultural Studies was formed as the field without philosophy. You shouldn't be surprised that it is so. Well, when we went into political questions we came across philosophy via Louis Althusser, via his critique of Hegelianism, deep critique of certain kind of Hegelianism. Not until later on
some books became available, when Horkheimer become available in translations we understood what a serious project it was. It is the missed moment in the history. Cultural studies had a huge dialogue with sociology, including the German sociology, Mannheim, Weber, but not philosophy as such. It is real weakness of early Cultural studies, but also has one strength: escape from the theory speculation...

**Rainer Winter:** Reading early texts from the Centre, for example the “Working Papers in Cultural Studies” it will become clear that the German cultural sociology, especially the work of Max Weber, was intensely read and discussed at the beginning.

**Stuart Hall:** Yes. Weber was very important. We looked at in this way: Both Weber and Durkheim together with Marx are the trilogy of modern sociology. Both Durkheim and Weber were incorporated into sociology in a very particular way. And what happened in Cultural Studies is facing the sociology without knowing anything about it. We read Durkheims’ work on methodology, Webers letters, but we didn't take the conventional Max Weber. Our reading of Weber was not conventional. In the same way our reading of Durkheim was not conventional. We had a critical reading of “Suicide”, for example, with the interest in political basis. Because we were not trained in sociology, we couldn’t read it in another way. The only sociology we did was American as training, but we were interested in European sociology of labour and European sociology was in itself very philosophical. In another way Weber was interesting, because he encouraged us the critique of current reductionism. There are many ways of understanding Weber. My understanding of Weber is that he was very preoccupied with questions regarding the history of capitalism, much more overlapping with Marx's basic concern and opened up variety of questions about contemporary capitalism. We learned something from that. The text we read and used to teach in the Centre for Cultural Studies was Weber’s’ "Protestant ethics and the spirit of Capitalism". Because this text says: Of course there was capitalism and the capitalist transformation, but the question is how early capitalism owned the subjectivity of people. So he puts the cultural question about the nature of capitalism. And he was very right about the role of Protestantism in that. There are also ways we borrowed from Weber, from arguments by Weber without becoming Weberians. As far as Cultural Studies concerned we were coming from anything, we were reading, borrowing, putting together. Something was taken from sociology, something were not, something taken from theory, something not, transdisciplinary field of work,
not purified conceptually. Cultural Studies have always been weak conceptually. That is why my work is very eclectic. I have never been Weberian, never been Gramsian, and never been Althusserian. In “Reading Capital” Althusser says that “theory is completely autonomous”. There is a kind of Gramsci, who Perry Anderson talked about and I don't think everything is right what is said about Gramsci. But I am aware that I engage by all these people by taking something from them. For example taking something out of Gramsci and rejecting something. And most obvious is Marx: I have been operating on the Marxist ground ever since and later moving into something else. People say: You used to be a Marxist, but you are not anymore. It is not true, because I was never an economic Marxist, I was never economic reductionist, and I was taking something out of Marx, because I thought it was adequate for ideology and culture. Some way of developing these major figures' work is to have an argument with them. Taking something out of them what is useful. In this period the Centre was working like that too.

**Rainer Winter:** For my reading as a sociologist your critique of Parsonian sociology and its dominant-hegemonic position in the field until the 60ties and 70ties was very illuminating. You show up the possibilities to practice Cultural Studies without legitimizing the contemporary society.

**Stuart Hall:** Yes. Parsonian sociology is very structurally functionalistic and was becoming very popular in British sociology, which was taking its lead from the American sociology in the period after the war. There was a huge expansion of British sociology. In England there was following American rather than European trend of sociology. So Parsons was very important. He does give quite a lot of weight to culture. He says that there are three systems, social, cultural and psychological, although it doesn't tell us what is the culture. He says that in the social system there is certain kind of job, particularly in Durkheim, you need to read “Suicide”, you need to read “Sociological Method”, but don't bother with that idealistic staff! So he doesn’t say what we are interested in. I was interested in the symbolic, in the social; he doesn’t say anything about it. But for me, for example, Lévi-Strauss was interesting and reading of social in this kind, but Parson is on the wrong side. I had to go to Parson exactly because the British sociology was taking on structural functioning, rather than taking on Althusserian cultural line.

**Rainer Winter:** There are two other strands of sociology which don’t belong to the mainstream
and were important for the constitution of Cultural Studies in Birmingham: the interpretive sociology and the work of Charles Wright Mills.

**Stuart Hall:** I was massively influenced by Mills. I knew him well, in the days of New Left he came to England quite a lot, and then he went to Cuba, where he wrote a book about Cuba in 1962. He was also friend of Ralf Milliband, father of the current foreign secretary David Milliband, who was a militant. He was very close friend. He went to the Soviet Union on his motorbike. He wrote a book, which is as important as “Protestant Ethics”, and it is about the objective social position. I also was interested what he wrote about white collar, power elite. That is before the Centre. American sociology had tremendous amount of influence in terms of subjectivity, hermeneutics, social interactionism, symbolic interactionism. It is a sort of subterranean tradition in American sociology. And it is very important work. All of the Centre’s work on the youth culture, and later the work on subjectivity is the result of symbolic interactionism. It was very important for us. We saw that as the subaltern tradition. It doesn’t claim to tell you the whole truth; it works in a different way as the question of symbolic meaning, question of representation, questions of subjectivity and social position etc. which was very important for our work. Both “Resistance through Rituals” and subsequently “Policing the Crisis” would not have been written without the interactionist tradition.

**Rainer Winter:** You connected the interactionist position with critical approaches. Which role did the sociology of knowledge play, especially “The Social Construction of Reality” by Peter L. Berger and Thomas Luckmann?

**Stuart Hall:** We did read the 'sociology of knowledge'. At one point we thought that 'sociology of knowledge' might be the way of more social or sociological view of culture and ideas. But it was not a real interest. What we took up was that any social action is mediated by meaning, which doesn’t mean that people actually realize what the meaning is, but any social action involves the mediation of cultural idea. Marx said it first, that the worth of architect is better than best of bees, because whereas bees build instinctively, an architect have a plan. Something in their heads corresponds to their action. Social action involves both social and symbolic and is the very much of part of the problem and interactionism in the American sense told better , that all these staff was part of structuralist hegemony .
The Invention of the Popular

Rainer Winter: May I ask you about the role of popular culture in your work. You have written very important articles which contributed to a new understanding of this subject. Could you tell me what is the difference in your interest in the popular culture in the 60's and today?

Stuart Hall: Well, I suppose that there are three periods. First is the “Popular Arts”, the first book we ever wrote with Paddy Whannel. It is before the Centre for Cultural Studies and it comes out of the local- popular. Paddy Whannel was a film officer of the British Film Institute. He used to teach the film, before any of the universities or colleges did any teaching of film and I used to lecture for him. We would go around to film societies, the only places where you could see foreign films. You couldn't see them in any film theatres. BFI film department started to put together extras. I taught a course about gangster films. We had a lot of talks about popular culture. In weekends we played the music, I would play jazz, Paddy played mainstream music and it is when I learned the importance of not just of Bergman and Kurosawa, but also the importance of John Ford. I realized that John Ford while creating the western as a popular genre was a very important filmmaker. We argued about this, we argued about jazz, we argued a lot about the rock music and it was the time of huge explosion of rock music, Paddy couldn't stand it at all. I liked some of it, but not a lot of it. And all these arguments lead to the understanding of popular culture. And people in the school were interested in that. People in the school said, that we have to understand it, because we are watching television, listening to the music, but we don’t know anything about it! So the purpose of “Popular Arts” is to write a book for teaching. If you want to know about the Western watch John Ford, if you want to know about the popular music listen to it! So this belongs to that moment before the Birmingham project started. And it is limited by one aspect: that is the luck of the interest in criticism. What was the interest here is what is good and what is bad! So Frank Sinatra is good, the other is OK, you know it is all about making these distinctions. Now of course there is something important to tell to teachers, that it is not just a lot of noise. What you doing with high literature can also done here. There are some good westerns, some bad ones. One should not discriminate. It is very evaluative work. I think one should look at how chapters are written. This may be called 'proto-cultural studies'. It is very early on.
The next one is the work on the popular culture in the Centre: "Resistance through Rituals", understanding music and Dick Hebdige's work, and the work on media studies, soap operas and a lot of interest in the popular culture. I would say that there was interest in two things: one is recognizing that it is highly commercialized, highly technological, highly market oriented cultural industry. Nevertheless there is a common element in it: popular attitudes and feelings are not quite commodified. It is opposite of what Adorno says. Adorno has the notion of culture industry which affects everybody and works like a cultural dope and completely inscribed by outside. I don't think it is true that it is inscribed just like that. Of course there are emotions. In the modern urban reality behind the soap opera we don’t have any story telling any longer. I am going to the hospital three times a week. There are discussions among the patients in the hospital waiting room on what is happening in 'Neighbours' or 'Coronation Street' which is not just a story, but a lot of emotional element behind that. They don't know psychoanalysis, they don’t know psychology. They don’t have any other ways of mobilizing their understanding. There is the only way of understanding is in relating to it. The second phase is what is purely manipulatively constructed and what is reached into the popular consciousness. If something is popular, what narrative it is touching? And it is not the narrative created just by production companies.

And one form is talked about is forms of pleasure that people managed to develop out of corrupt form. Out of the material where people find emotional kind, serious kind, objective kind, which is a little bit outside of the cultural industry. Beyond that saying that all of the systems are corrupted is not saying that people are just blank screen which can work what industry likes. You can read something about how popular consciousness is changing you have to see whereas you are reading it through the mediation of corruption and consumerism. This kind of critique was interesting for cultural studies.

Now, you are asking about now (laughter)...I don't know about now!

I mean I am still interest in that aspect of Cultural studies. But I don't think that is what most of people doing Cultural Studies are interested in at all! I don’t know if I even dare to say that. I think they are more interested in analyzing aesthetics of Cultural studies. They do complicated deconstruction of the simple story, very complicated symbolic studies, which is OK! That is because in the media even bad art work can be understood as an artwork. I don’t think anything is
wrong with that, but what disturbs me is that interests are there, you don’t have to go back to questions we talked before like how to make a distinction between manipulative elements and so on. I don't think they go back to these questions. Secondly: contemporary culture is so massively technologised. It was not so technologised when we were thinking about it before. Commercial TV comes to Britain in the 1950s and since then massive technologisation of forms and global dissemination of forms and meaning happened.

**Rainer Winter:** You have mentioned the link between Cultural Studies and pedagogy when speaking of 'popular arts' as well as adult teaching. In a certain way adult education was one of the beginnings of Cultural Studies.

**Stuart Hall:** Richard Hoggart, Raymond Williams, E.P Thompson and myself all taught in adult classes. Not for formal situations, not for exams, not for qualification, just on Friday nights. I went for years talking about Russian novels and translation, George Elliot novels, and an old guy about eighties told me “Not bad! Not bad! It is fifth time I have been listening to 'Middlemarch'!” *(Laughter)* In a certain freedom and the certain non-academic context, talking about what your everyday life means, how you may adopt your concept and language and your whole pedagogy to it. You talk about what they already know. It was very formative moment for all us. And as you mentioned like in popular arts it is all to do with popular forms. Then of course it is the question of pedagogy. It is the question of how to teach an unknown field. The pedagogical question at the Centre for Cultural Studies was like you are teaching as far as it goes. How are you teaching by discovering between Monday and Friday about Durkheim, that you have to tell them? We were really making it up. We were older, we read more and we had more ideas, but a lot of the teaching staff was not read any sociology or anthropology. I was trained in literature. I never had formal qualification in sociology ever. I was a professor of Sociology at the Open University without any qualification...

**Rainer Winter:** …and you were the President of British Sociological Society...

*(Laughter)*

**Stuart Hall:** There was a serious pedagogical question. How to constitute the research setting as a pedagogical practice without the normal pedagogical support? Students knew that they are...
making it with us. Students were writing alongside the teachers. "Policing the Crisis" is written by me and five graduate students. Dick Hebdige's famous book on subculture and style is his MA thesis. It is a giant enterprise and in addition to it we should remember the context. This is 1960s, it is all in the collective, everything is in the reading group, and there is no difference between the teachers and taught. So typical pedagogy, teaching the class, etc. forget it! It was completely impossible to do it like that. You can sense from what I am saying that it is incredibly heady experience. But I am not romanticizing it. It couldn't be done again! So it is a different pedagogical question now!

Theory and Intervention

Rainer Winter: In the work of American scholars like Henry Giroux, Peter McLaren or Douglas Kellner critical pedagogy is looked at as a form of intervention into the social and cultural field. I think critical pedagogy and the project of Cultural Studies are closely connected in this point. The idea of intervention is also important for the Birmingham project.

Stuart Hall: Yes, absolutely! We were certainly trying to discover ways in which every kind of conceptual development would also be an intervention. The intervention in theoretical field of course! Not only that. It should be a point where to connect to some practice what was going on outside the University. Or to people's life which is not purely intellectual or academic! You can see that conception of pedagogy in Gramsci's work. Gramsci said that everybody is intellectual. In the sense that everyone has a plan what he/she wants to do. If you are building the wall, you have the model of the wall in your head. This is a different pedagogical project. They are not specialized intellectuals. That is what Gramsci called 'general intellectual function'. What do people think about social relations, could one shift their understanding, their mutual understanding or would there be something else? It was teaching students to learn in that context and it was an intervention in that sense. Regarding intervention as guiding of the political movement one may ask: why you bothering about the conceptual aspect, let’s go straight to the political parties or political grouping or intervening in a class struggle. I was always insisting that the moment of theoretical reflection is absolutely essential. The political moment was essential. But first you had to reach the conceptual level. The Centre had communists, laborists, Maoists,
we had a few conservatives, social-democrats. I insisted that it all works for the purpose of Centre as a group. Otherwise the Centre would have became Trotskyist, the conservative, labour, communist, but what mattered was the reflection on them. It had to be a reflection. But the moment of reflection remained entirely speculative. As Gramsci says it had to be concrete. Not just a particular political movement, but a particular role, what he called the 'organic intellectual'. At one point I said, the purpose of the Centre was to construct the organic intellectual without a party (laughter)

Like a Communist Party, where the manual labour and mental labour became involved in a wider political formation, in a way how the party may become wider and to get involved in a wider social and political formation. Not just locked up in the Centre. That is why Centre published a journal, published occasional papers, because we wanted to put it out there, beyond the confines of student culture.

**Rainer Winter:** This reminds me a little bit of Jean-Paul Sartre's idea of understanding the structures of your situation, especially the power relations, in order to change your situation and unfold your freedom.

**Stuart Hall:** Yes! You know, Sartre was very important to us. But curious Sartre, we were not nearly involved in existentialism. Have you read Sartre's 'Search for Method'? I was interested what Sartre says about the past: every moment is formed by the past. The future is a de-totalisation, re-totalisation and history goes like that: the formation of the past in its relation to the future. That is how the future is constituted. “Search for Method” is very important work and for a very short period I used the language of de-totalisation, re-totalisation. It is before Sartre became involved with Hegel and Marx. There is an interesting moment between one Sartre and another.

**Against the Concept of “Cultural Populism”**

**Rainer Winter:** I would like to ask you how you assess the polemical book on cultural populism by Jim McGuigan. I think the critique is exaggerated and often very unfair. The enemies of Cultural Studies love it!
Stuart Hall: Yes, very important for the enemies and it is endlessly quoted (laughter). I think I have said enough when I was talking about the notion of 'popular'. That is why I think he is wrong about Cultural Studies being populist. It is very committed to what is called 'popular', to what Gramsci called 'popular'. Gramsci says, there is a good sense and there is a common sense. The good sense is the distillation of the consent, consent is very chaotic, but he says workers may not be aware of capitalism, but they sort of know what it is. That is a good sense. I don't think Cultural Studies were populist, but I do think some of the work of Cultural Studies on popular culture did become a kind of celebration of popular. I don't think my own interest in popular culture was ever that. It was something between the authenticity of the popular culture and entire commodified nature of it. I don't really think that McGuigan really knows these distinctions. But the second thing in there is what is done in Cultural Studies ever since. What about the political economy? What about the economy? First of all, it is a 'code word': where is Marx? Which is a good question, what is political, functional, social and economic? In that sense we think of economy in relation to culture and in that period we were not interested in cultural theory for itself. We were interested in culture and its relation to criticism. I don't think people realise how different it was from the practice today? We were in culture and society, culture and economy and culture and politics moment. What is the relationship between those three? That is why Althusser was so important to us: not determination by the economic, but all the three practices taken together. We are thinking about the economy without economic reductionism. I am still interested in that. I am interested how culture relates to the nature of global capitalism? What is the nature of global capitalism? How is the global capitalism inscribed in the culture? How is the culture depending on sophisticated technologised economy? In the articulation of these three moments neither one is reduced to other nor if you don't reduce one to other have you to think of over-determination. The result, the outcome of all these moments is over-determination. That is the paradigm of early Cultural Studies. Then you think back to the equation, either economy is at the last instance, once you read Althusser. He has a remark that even revolutionary moments have a certain transparency, that in ideological and political and social conditions are economic change is not suspended. It was not suspended in the Soviet Union or Cuba. I think it is very difficult to speak of articulation of economy without reductionism and without a kind of reflectionism. You can't say that economy is ‘gone global’ so is ideology is gone global, it is not quite like that. That is an important moment in early Cultural Studies what was causing what Williams called
"Culture and Society" question. At one point this complex question about articulation and determinacy was broken and the question became a different question of cultural theory. Cultural theory started to operate by its own. In that moment god knows where the economy is? This moment is closely related to the moment of development of sophisticated theory: structuralism, post-structuralism, deconstruction, psychoanalysis. This huge explosion of radical sophistication changed our minds. It was a cultural turn. But this moment became dislodged. It was a moment of speaking of economy within the cultural time. When people go to talk about economy without the culture they do not understand it. As far as articulation and culture goes, the evolution of culture without articulation is not possible. That is why I am a little out of love with Cultural Studies at the moment. We can still find ways of speaking about it in terms of globalization. How can culture be outside of that? In 1980-s and 90s we followed the line, but now we are in the post-theory moment in that absolute sense. I am not saying that it is not possible to get engaged in the theory, but the production of one theoretical theory out of another is no longer possible. Culture is concerned with the theory of meaning. I don’t think things in the objective world have their meanings inscribed in them. The table, the picture etc. are things that don't exist in nature. To say that object doesn't exist is not saying that I am a Kantian I just made it up, but in terms of cultural systems we have to interact with in relation to meaning. It cannot be outside the objective world, because it is constructed by the certain practice itself. You cannot move back from the representation to the reference, because it doesn’t exist like a piece of metal, it is not like that. It is not going back to the world which is perfectly confined, but you cannot say that there is no reference. I knew this at the moment of "Reading Capital". In this book Althusser is asking: how do I know that this theory is correct? Theory is not guaranteed. I don't believe in the straightforward notion of representation, in a language or symbolic form, in culture, but I don't believe that culture is in the end of the world. It is constructed. It is like in a game: when people play with the ball, is that game cricket or football? Depending on the different action of people playing with the ball it connects the rules making difference between the cricket and football. When people ask where the discursive is, it is where it is! These are real people running around the real ball out there. In the end articulation is constructed by the discursive, by the meaning. So it is a long answer to your question about the economy. In understanding of economy you have always to look for culture, for something different. I used to call it the 'third way', but after bloody Tony Blair I don't call it like that any longer!
Art, Diaspora and Migration

**Rainer Winter:** In your recent work art plays an important role. Could you explain this change a little bit? Which function can art have today?

**Stuart Hall:** For last 10 years I have been working with visual arts. I have been writing too, but mostly political work. I wrote a piece on Tony Blair, which is called 'New Labour's double shuffle', which takes to the heart of this particular problem. But I hardly have written anything. I was building. I was building the inIVA, which is just opened; I have been working with two visual art organizations, inIVA and Autograph, working with young artists. This year I am 10 years retired. And all these years were in conversation with visual arts. I don’t know anything about it, but I have always been interested in image, in art and trained in literature. But I am not an expert in visual arts. Part of this move is connected to the fact that I wanted to do something different in my life, because I decided that the big theoretical moment is over and I wanted to move on. I retired and I thought to do something different in my life.

What I like about art is that it is about the real world, which cannot be understood by experiencing this world directly. Art derives from the real experience, but it is different from the real experience, it takes the symbolic form. It is similar to culture: culture has to move away from economy in order to make things understandable. I think it is how art works. Apart from that I am interested in diversity of art. Because I am interested in questions of identity, post-colonialism, black diaspora and other aspects of my own work in 1990s. I have very broad interest in visual arts. Particular work I have done in visual art is an extension of my earlier work on diaspora, identity which took me into another terrain and I learned a lot from it. A lot of my work on identity was that identity cannot be just one thing. With the debate on multi-culturalism I thought it was the loosening of the notion of identity in a positive way. That meant that people are not fixed for ever and the scripts of their lives are not written forever in the tradition from which they came. Actually cultural tradition is not fixed, there is no fixed tradition. People come from somewhere else, they have been experiencing other influences, many people have been interpreted in many different ways, just like identity, culture is not fixed. In this context I said: “I
am not interested in ROOTS, I am more interested in ROUTES”. Meanwhile I have been interested in this question of my own biography in general: What is the nature of Caribbean culture, which I came from? Is this African, is this what Africa has become in a New World? I have been thinking about it. How it is transformed by contemporary global process. How Africa is transformed in relation to Caribbean and then Caribbean in relation to English, Spanish and Portuguese? What is the nature of this culture? There cannot be cultural roots. Whereas it is the question of hybridization, whereas it is the question of creolisation, etc. This was very important question for me. But now! Now post-multiculturalism, post-colonialism, post-Iraq, post-political Islam! Identities are fixed! …We have a lot of work to do!

I don't believe what I said was wrong, but the current conjecture puts all of this work in a kind of critical frame. I always said that cultures in diasporic situation have a choice, either to go forward or they could go back defensively in order to protect themselves from racism, protect themselves from a lot of identities.

A lot of work has to be done to understand the current conjecture. I am not interested in laws of capitalism from the 15th century to now. I am interested in difference between industrial capitalism and global capitalism. Each of those shifts of conjecture is reworking, economic, political and social and we are just in that moment now!

Modernization and Globalization

Zeigam Azizov: Very interesting point you made on how theory works in terms of the 'toolbox', which can be used to understand old concepts in a new way. Particular moment you mentioned about the diaspora and multiculturalism in relation to changing times. My own interest in migration paradigm is similar to that. I was looking at it very differently in 1990s, but since 9/11 and since the rich Russian oligarchs immigrating to London, then notion of migration took another turn. People migrating are not anymore poor people, but multi-millioners. My question is in relation to your concept which you have used in relation to Thatcherism in 1980s: regressive modernization. Could you elaborate on this concept and does this concept have a relation to our situation today?
**Stuart Hall:** What I meant by 'regressive modernization' was the phenomenon of Thatcherism: of being taken dramatically into an extreme modern version of neo-liberalism. While at the same time within the society there is moving backwards towards authoritarian position. I thought you couldn't describe Thatcher as simply 'regressive figure', because of the way of engaging with the end of social-democracy, engaging with the work of welfare State. The only way Thatcher did was the way backwards, back to Adam Smith back to the past to make it work in a new context. I think it was very important moment in the 1980s. I said it is that it was distractive of the old Right, it was polemising against the old Right. She couldn't stand old right, meanwhile she loved rituals. When she invaded the Falkland, she enjoyed bringing the old Navy there. It is very curious combination, contradictory combination of going back and going forward. But haven't you seen it in the history many times? Think of the Central Europe around Kosovo question. It is typical example. There is an advanced move towards EU but backwards via its defeat 400 years ago. That is one dimension I don't know what it is: to step back out of the existing framework in the name of traditional values. There are no other sorts of values. But it couldn't be done by straightforward revolution. That was interesting about the time of Thatcherism.

I haven't thought about what it is now, really. Now we are in another moment of regressive modernization. What I thought about Thatcherism is defining Thatcherism largely in relation to British national politics. It was opening moment of the new conjecture in British politics, global phenomenon actually. It is the end of welfare state, the moment when capital asserted itself on the ground on tax. But it could not be the end of that without finding new sources like globalised production, global consumption and globalised investment, global military geo-politics and that moment was the beginning. We knew that Reagan and Thatcher worked together to create a new conjecture. I now understand Thatcherism slightly differently in the current wider context of globalization. I am very preoccupied with the question of globalisation.

**Zeigam Azizov:** Can you please talk about this new concern with globalisation?

**Stuart Hall:** I think the internal dynamics of capitalism fundamentally reworked by operating on the global scale. Capitalism was always that ever since it has begun and Marx said that the purpose of capitalism was to create the world market. What ever was the end of the social market is just the beginning of capital market. When you don't have to concur anywhere, and then you
have a trade in Latin America, then China ... That is another moment of globalization. Evolution of capitalism now is serious of globalised conjectures. It began at the end of 1970-s and we are in the middle of it now. So when I say Cultural studies need to rethink itself because there is a specific role of culture in a new government conjecture. Second aspect of globalization consists of two moments: one is what I call globalization from above, and the other is globalization from below. Globalisation from above is the current national production, people working for one dollar a day in Mozambique or China. People wonder what has happened to British system. It is gone global! The system is articulated now across huge spaces, time-space compression! Condensation of time and space is quite a new moment. That is globalization from above. The cultural meaning of globalization from above is modernization. Everyone should become to the market with modern goods, messages should be spread everywhere, everyone sooner or later relax, and wear jeans and trainers, everybody go to McDonalds in the corner, food is exactly the same ... sort of McDonaldisation of the world. Basically globalization has its cultural role. When Bush says you walk like us, make love like us, you dream like us, you dream of us, you dream of Manhattan! I think it is modernization. But there always been the possibility in that which is much more multi-coloured world with many centres and at the same time people are being horrendously displaced from their homes, from the places where they live in, people want to improve their economic possibilities. For example from the media they know about possibilities in other places and they say: why should I stay here when I can go to California!

So people are on the move; they put themselves in the hand of people traffickers, they join the sex industry. This is whole global movement of what Michael Hardt and Toni Negri call 'multitudes': asylum seekers, migrants, people living in transit camps, who spend nearly all their lives in transit camps. And it is not going anywhere. This whole other movement is globalization from below. A consequence of it is what I call 'vernacular modernity'. It is more limited, because resources are limited but making it becoming part of the new world and trying to keep in distance. This is another image of globalization. And many of the things which I was concerned about when I wrote about multiculturalism, diaspora, identity etc. is falling back on the vernacular modernity, as against homogenization. I think globalization is a contradictory system, there is no one globe at all and couldn't possibly be. Whatever now happens on a planetary scale is the platform of operation of this contradictory system, but how it operates in Afghanistan, in Brazil, in India and in New York in completely different ways. They combine, what Marx called,
Rainer Winter: There is also a very stimulating and exciting discussion on alternative modernities, about the possibilities to be modern in a different way. Larry Grossberg has just written about this subject.

Stuart Hall: That is the possibility too! Actually nobody wants to stay in an old way; everybody wants a piece of modernity. In an ideal world you could have had Indian version of modernity, the Chinese version of modernity, actually we do have those. They are compressed into the hegemonic system. This movement turned out to be what really happens. I don’t think the modernization is the end, I don't think it was successful; I don’t think it ever be hegemonic, and new visions of the modern continue to assert themselves. Africa becomes modern in a way different from the way of China, I think it is how should be, but these modules are will be tested by invasion, conquest, neutralization, etc. it is horrendous move to that.

Rainer Winter: Another important notion in the current exchange is cosmopolitanism and his role in the transnational world of the 21st century. For example, Ulrich Beck speaks of a cosmopolitan vision of society, and he also writes about different conceptions and pleads for a “rooted cosmopolitanism”.

Stuart Hall: If by cosmopolitanism you mean the world civility, world peace, the Kantian imperative, well, I don't believe in it that much! I don't think that the world is evolving towards the system of worldly vision. I think differences are historical; partly historical, partly developmental, partly linguistic, partly cultural, partly political, and partly economical. Even in a planetary operation one thing connecting with the other. It will still remain different. There is a real persistence of difference. Not necessarily forever, but for a long time to come. Discovering the difference and finding the difference which is negotiable like in multiculturalism or difference which is fundamentalist like in political Islam or evangelical Christianity! But I don't think that you can get rid of difference. In that sense the utopian concept of cosmopolitanism is not intervening in the question of difference. It is not going to persuade America or Britain that anything recognizable in a country as traditional and patriarchal as Afghanistan. Western political institutions are continuing to be there. However what you mean is various form of globalization
is constituted an awareness everywhere of everywhere else. You can not make any modern life any longer within the national box, everybody knows about everybody else. I think that is what I called ‘vernacular cosmopolitanism'. That is what living with difference means. I believe in that kind of cosmopolitanism. The cosmopolitanism from above, which is largely capacity of capitalist entrepreneurs which is the consequence of capitalism when people have three houses in different continents and they don't know what they do is the same as others, they don’t speak the language, because everybody speaks English! That kind of cosmopolitanism I don’t think works! It is new hegemony of global culture. And I think to give to it a utopian name is to invite us to forget the growth of inequalities in the world.

Rainer Winter: Closely connected to that is the conception of a transnational civil society which can open up a new global democratic field. Unrestrained market relations and the politics of national states can be criticized and challenged. There can be utopian possibilities, forms of global resistance. It is a Habermasian concept evidently.

Stuart Hall: Oh, yes, I know! I know where it comes from! I feel dubious about global civil society. You know, I do read some contemporary theory. I read Agamben: what is really global is 'bare life'. A lot of people are not protected by law, outside the humanitarian care; they are not subject to distributive systems, no personal life and such a tragedy! I think the notion of global civil society is too utopian, too positive, and too Western centred!
