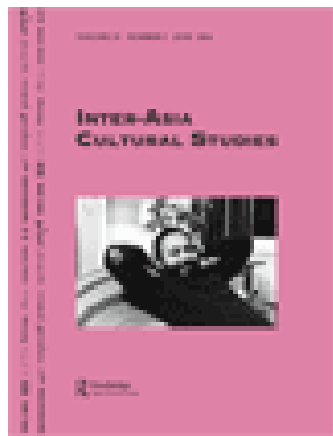


This article was downloaded by: [Mr Daniel Mato]

On: 07 July 2014, At: 16:19

Publisher: Routledge

Informa Ltd Registered in England and Wales Registered Number: 1072954 Registered office:  
Mortimer House, 37-41 Mortimer Street, London W1T 3JH, UK



## Inter-Asia Cultural Studies

Publication details, including instructions for authors and subscription information:

<http://www.tandfonline.com/loi/riac20>

### Stuart Hall on “doing cultural studies”

Daniel Mato

Published online: 03 Jul 2014.

To cite this article: Daniel Mato (2014) Stuart Hall on “doing cultural studies”, *Inter-Asia Cultural Studies*, 15:2, 202-204, DOI: [10.1080/14649373.2014.917862](https://doi.org/10.1080/14649373.2014.917862)

To link to this article: <http://dx.doi.org/10.1080/14649373.2014.917862>

PLEASE SCROLL DOWN FOR ARTICLE

Taylor & Francis makes every effort to ensure the accuracy of all the information (the “Content”) contained in the publications on our platform. However, Taylor & Francis, our agents, and our licensors make no representations or warranties whatsoever as to the accuracy, completeness, or suitability for any purpose of the Content. Any opinions and views expressed in this publication are the opinions and views of the authors, and are not the views of or endorsed by Taylor & Francis. The accuracy of the Content should not be relied upon and should be independently verified with primary sources of information. Taylor and Francis shall not be liable for any losses, actions, claims, proceedings, demands, costs, expenses, damages, and other liabilities whatsoever or howsoever caused arising directly or indirectly in connection with, in relation to or arising out of the use of the Content.

This article may be used for research, teaching, and private study purposes. Any substantial or systematic reproduction, redistribution, reselling, loan, sub-licensing, systematic supply, or distribution in any form to anyone is expressly forbidden. Terms & Conditions of access and use can be found at <http://www.tandfonline.com/page/terms-and-conditions>

## Stuart Hall on “doing cultural studies”

Daniel MATO

Beyond being an accomplished and esteemed intellectual, Stuart Hall was a truly remarkable and fine person. I say this especially because of his modesty, his generosity, his warmth, and his interest and respect in listening to and valuing others people’s words, sentiments, and interests. While we met in person only on a few occasions and maintained sparse email exchanges, because of those very qualities that he exuded as a human being—his worldwide recognition notwithstanding—I came to consider him a dear friend, beyond a very significant intellectual reference, or even a Master, as I once remarked to him. In fact, I will always remember the occasion when I mentioned this to him. It came up, unexpectedly for both, at a conference reception when we were talking while having a drink, and a graduate student, whom neither of us knew, came up to us, introduced himself and began to tell Stuart about his dissertation research. I marvelled at how Stuart listened graciously and intently, commenting and inquiring about the subject in earnest simplicity, offering his thoughts and perspective as though a colleague or even a mentor. Eventually the student took his leave; it was then that I turned to Stuart and—spontaneously—said: “Stuart, you are truly a Master.” He looked at me surprised, albeit with a knowing smile, took me by the elbow, and said: “Come on, Daniel!”, as though trying to brush off an undue spotlight. He was a brilliant yet unassuming and down-to-earth person.

One of the ways in which Stuart became a significant reference for me personally and professionally has to do with a conversation we had at a dinner in Birmingham (UK), in June of 2000, during the Crossroads in Cultural Studies Conference. I had been invited to speak at the conference at a moment when I was profoundly concerned

by what I perceived as a rapid and depoliticizing institutionalization of Cultural Studies in the United States, and its increasing influence in certain academic circles in Latin America. In fact, the focus of my lecture at that conference was precisely that problem, and the associated *amnesia* of those Latin American colleagues regarding the importance of pre-existing traditions of intellectual practices in culture and power in this part of the world. At the time, I was coordinating a Working Group of the Latin American Council on Social Sciences (CLACSO) that was preparing a publication on studies and other *intellectual practices* in culture and power.

Even though at that point I had read only a few of Stuart’s articles, a few years earlier I had had the opportunity to learn about his political intellectual tradition first-hand, through his personal accounts of some crucial nodes in his life, while we were both attending the week-long Wenner-Gren Foundation Symposium in Mijas, Spain in June of 1994. At the dinner table, again, evening after evening I eagerly listened to him speak about the importance of the feminist and anti-nuclear movements in his life, on his experience at the *New Left Review*, on his reflection on Gramsci and the idea of the organic intellectual, among a number of other topics. When I next had the pleasure of meeting up with Stuart, at that conference in Birmingham, I thought that it would be particularly valuable to include an article by Stuart in the book I was preparing with the CLACSO Working Group. Thus, one evening at dinner, I asked him to take part in the book by writing an essay on Cultural Studies and the importance of practice. He had a surprising response that has stuck with me to this day because I found it

personally illuminating and inspiring: "Look, Daniel, I am not writing on Cultural Studies any more, I am dedicated to doing Cultural Studies." Of course, I immediately asked him what he was *doing* in that regard, and he told me he was involved in a public debate on race and racism in Great Britain. A few years ago, I was fortunate enough to tell Stuart how meaningful his comment had been to me and my work, as I shared with him an article about the work I was *doing* with a number of intellectuals from indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples in various countries throughout Latin America who were seeking to create and/or strengthen their own universities and other programmes of higher education.

I relate this particular anecdote for two reasons. The first is to acknowledge the significance of Stuart Hall's *example* in my own intellectual practice. While his has not been the only source of inspiration and learning I have drawn from, as is evident from my previous statement regarding the importance of certain Latin American traditions of politicized intellectual practices, it has been one of only a few and has been truly important. I use the word "example" to emphasize the fact that I not only value Stuart's theoretical elaborations, but also his being a Master in the most profound sense of this word, not just a teacher, but a Master. I consider him a Master, not only because of his theoretical contributions, but also because of his courage to be a permanent dissident and an independent thinker, as well as his commitment to fight against injustice, particularly against racism, not just through his writing, but in his *doing*, in involving himself in the struggle.

The other reason for the anecdote is to further elaborate on Stuart's idea of "*doing Cultural Studies*." To begin with, it is significant that Stuart's words regarding his involvement in a public debate on Race and Racism in Great Britain, by June 2000, were related to his participation in the Runnymede Trust's Commission on the Future of Multi-Ethnic Britain. Runnymede Trust defines itself as "the UK's leading

independent race equality think tank," dedicated to "generate intelligence for a multi-ethnic Britain through research, network building, leading debate, and policy engagement." Runnymede set up a 23 member Commission, in January 1998, with the purpose of analysing "the current state of multi-ethnic Britain and propose ways of countering racial discrimination and disadvantage, making Britain a confident and vibrant multicultural society at ease with its rich diversity." The Commission published its findings and recommendations in October 2000, in The Parekh Report (per the name of the Commission's president). The report has been considered and reviewed by the Home Secretary's Race Relations Forum, and a meeting of the Parliamentary Group on Race and Community. Additionally, it has also been taken into account by many local authorities, several local authority organizations, and many councils on racial equality. Moreover, its recommendations have informed training events in individual schools. The report has also been the subject of a range of lectures, seminars and symposia in higher education.<sup>1</sup> For all the positive reception, the Report also elicited some negative commentary in the media. Stuart put pen to paper to respond to those critics, writing a column that was published by *The Guardian* on 15 October 2000,<sup>2</sup> which was a clear example of how he further involved himself in the public debate.

Thinking back on Stuart's words that night at dinner in Birmingham, it seems to me that his committed participation in the Runnymede Commission clearly illustrates what he meant by "*doing Cultural Studies*." This understanding is coherent with his life-long practice of actively intervening in many salient social issues, both by writing and by acting in other ways, as he did, for example, publicly opposing Thatcherism—as he had formerly done regarding Stalinism and other forms of dogmatic Marxism—and as he did through his active involvement both at the Open University, focusing on representations, race, migrations, and colonialism, and in the Black arts movement.

This contextualized articulation of writing and *doing* in other ways (since writing is a form of *doing*) is, in my opinion, a salient aspect of his understanding of intellectual practice. He himself has discussed this point in several texts, but particularly in the final paragraph of his "Cultural Studies and its theoretical legacies," as he remarks:

I come back to the critical distinctions between intellectual work and academic work: they overlap, they abut with one another, they feed of another, the one provides you with means to do the other. But they are not the same thing [...] I come back to theory and politics, the politics of theory. Not theory as the will to truth, but theory as a set of contested, localized, conjunctural knowledges, which have to be debated in a dialogical way. But also as a practice which always thinks about its intervention in a world in which it would make some difference, in which it would have some effect. Finally, a practice which understands the need for intellectual modesty. I do think there is a difference in the world between understanding the politics of intellectual work and substituting intellectual work for politics. (Hall [1992] 1996, 274–275)

It is worth noting that a few pages before, in the same article, Hall emphasized that his was not an anti-theoretical position. As he put it:

I'm extremely anxious that you should not decode what I'm saying as an anti-theoretical discourse. It is not anti-theory, but it does have something to do with the conditions and problems of developing intellectual and theoretical work as a political practice. It is an extremely difficult road, not resolving the tensions between those two requirements, but living with them. (Hall [1992] 1996, 268)

I read these reflections as testimony to a life lived in the endeavour of a dynamic

consonance between theory and practice in the pursuit of greater social justice. The impact of Stuart Hall's profound, personal and life-long commitment to engaged intellectual practices will endure through the work of all of us in the field whom he inspired on both the professional and the human levels.

### Acknowledgement

I would like to thank my colleague and friend Emeshe Juhasz-Mininberg, for her generous assistance in the editing of this text.

### Notes

1. See <http://www.runnymedetrust.org/>.
2. See <http://www.theguardian.com/uk/2000/oct/15/britishidentity.comment1>.

### Reference

- Hall, Stuart. (1992) 1996. "Cultural Studies and Its Theoretical Legacies." In *Stuart Hall. Critical Dialogues in Cultural Studies*, edited by David Morley and Kuan-Hsing Chen, 262–275. London: Routledge.

### Author's biography

Daniel Mato is Principal Researcher at the National Scientific and Technical Research Council (CONICET) and Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero (UNTREF), Buenos Aires, Argentina. Since 2007 he has been the Chair of the Programme on Cultural Diversity and Interculturality in Higher Education of the UNESCO International Institute for Higher Education in Latin America and the Caribbean (UNESCO-IESALC). Up to 2010 he was Full Professor at Universidad Central de Venezuela. Since 1986 he has developed several experiences of collaboration with intellectuals and organizations of indigenous and Afro-descendant peoples. He has also been a visiting professor in universities of Spain, United States and various Latin American countries.

**Contact address:** Centro Interdisciplinario de Estudios Avanzados. Universidad Nacional Tres de Febrero. Av Santa Fe 794 (3P). Ciudad de Buenos Aires. C1059ABO. Argentina.