

**Literature, Culture and Media**  
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**Lecture – 08**  
**Cultural Studies II: Stuart Hall**

Dear participants, welcome to the second week and the third module. In the first 2 modules, we have seen how the cultural studies programs took off in UK and USA and then we looked at the philosophical contribution of Raymond Williams. In the works of Raymond Williams, we have seen how the idea of culture as being a monolithic entity was continuously challenged and he paved the way for an academic climate which was more receptive for the post-modernist interpretations of literary texts.

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**Stuart Hall (1932-2014)**

- A leading cultural theorist, activist and sociologist, widely acknowledged as “godfather of multiculturalism”
- Born in Jamaica, in the colonial West Indies; color had an effect on his views
- One of the founding figures of British Cultural Studies along with Hoggart and Williams
- Founder of *New Left Review* (in the 1950s)
- Joined the BCCC in 1964 at the behest of Hoggart.



In the same way, we find that Stuart Hall's contribution for that this legacy of the new left. Stuart Hall is also a leading cultural theorist, activist and primarily a sociologist who is widely acknowledged as godfather of multiculturalism. He was born in Jamaica in a colonial West Indies and then this particular idea of belonging to a particular culture did leave its impact on his works.

Along with Hoggart and Williams, he is also a founding figure of the British cultural studies, he had started *New Left Review* in the 1950's and had joined the Birmingham Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies in 1964 at the behest of Hoggart.

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- Took over from Hoggart as acting director of BCCC in 1968. Left the directorship in 1979 to become a Professor of Sociology at Open University; remained there until retirement
- Known for expanding the scope of cultural studies; centralized debates around gender and race within cultural studies
- Media theorist- Proponent of Reception Theory; Encoding/decoding model of communication
- Post-Gramscian stance on hegemony, developed a semiotic approach
- Work on cultural identity, ethnicity, race and African diaspora



He took over from Hoggart in 1968 as the director of the Centre and continues to remain in this position till 1979, when he left to become a professor of sociology in the UK, Open University where he remained till his retirement. Hall is primarily known for expanding the scope of cultural studies and he centralised debates around the axis of gender and race within cultural studies and established these 2 aspects of identity formation on a permanent footing in our understanding of culture.

He is also a media theorist, he is a proponent of the reception theory, the encoding and decoding model of communication which is being permanently used in any related teaching in the subjects of technical and professional and business communications. On hegemony, he had developed a semiotic approach in a post-gramscian manner and his work on cultural identity, ethnicity, race and African diaspora

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- President of the British Sociological Association from 1995–97.
- Closely associated with the journal *Marxism Today*; Founding editor of *Soundings: A Journal of Politics and Culture*
- Also associated with the Black Arts Movement.
- Publications: *The Hard Road to Renewal* (1988), *Cultural Studies* (1983), *Formations of Modernity* (1992), *Questions of Cultural Identity* (1996) and *Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices* (1997).
- Some essays: “Cultural Studies and its theoretical legacies”, “Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse”, “Cultural Identity and Diaspora”.



he has had a major influence on contemporary critical theory. He was the president of the British Sociological Association from 1995 to 97. He has been closely associated with the journal *Marxism Today* and he was also a founding editor of *Sounding: A Journal of Politics and Culture*. He has also been associated with the Black arts movement and his essays on cultural studies encoding and decoding in televisions, discourse, cultural identity and diaspora are significant.

Then the major books namely, *The Hard Road to Renewal*, *Cultural Studies*, *Formations of Modernity*, *Questions of Cultural Identity* and *Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices*.

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## Encoding/Decoding

- Model of 'Encoding/decoding' (1973/1980)--significant influence on the course of cultural studies in the 1970s and 1980s
- Essay titled 'Encoding and Decoding in the Television Discourse', concentrates on communication processes in televisual discourse and is an insightful analysis of how media messages are produced, circulated, consumed and interpreted
- Hall brought attention to the active role played by the audience and propounded a new theory of communication
- Marks the turn towards structuralism in Hall's and CCCS's research



He is primarily known for his contribution to the field of communication studies. His model of encoding and decoding worked on in 1973 and later on defined in 1980, became a significant influence on the course of cultural studies during the 1970's and 1980's and concentrated on the process of communication in a television discourse. But we find that it is also an insightful analysis of how media messages are produced, circulated, consumed and interpreted.

He brought attention to the active role which is played by the audience in this new theory of communication and he find that he also marks the turn towards structuralism in his own research.

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- Traditional view: media messages are static, transparent and remain the same during the course of communication
- Hall challenges all three components of the mass communications model, arguing that
  - (i) meaning cannot simply be fixed or determined by the sender;
  - (ii) the message is never transparent; and
  - (iii) the audience is not a passive recipient of meaning.
- Message is rarely interpreted as it was intended, distortion happens systematically. Reformulates the linear model of communication found within mass communications research. Hall is interested in the ways in which audiences generate rather than discover meaning.



The traditional view of how the process of communication and how the process of receiving a particular message functions was rather a static. It was considered that media messages have a fixed meaning, the meaning is transparent and it remains the same throughout the course of communication and irrespective of whom the audience are the message would remain the same. Hall challenges 3 components of this previous model and he argued that meaning cannot be determined or finally fixed only by the sender.

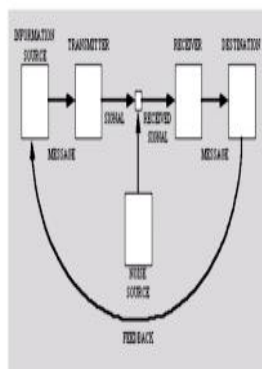
The sender only formulates the message in a particular manner but the message itself is never transparent because the audience also is not only a passive recipient. The audience also decodes the message in a particular fashion within a particular paradigm of understanding. In Hall's opinion, we find message is really interpreted as it was intended to be and this distortion happen systematically at various stages of the process of communication.

He has reformulated the linear model of communication which was previously found in mass communication research and he became interested in the ways in which audience generate meanings rather than simply discovering a meaning as it was intended to be by the sender of the message.

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### The Linear Model of Mass Communication

- **Senders** (authors, producers)
- **Messages** (programs, ads)
- Mass media channel (TV, books)
- **Receivers** (viewers, consumers)
- **Gatekeepers** (editors, executive producers, media managers)
- **Feedback** (messages from receivers back to senders)



In this linear model of mass communication, we find that the sender passes a message which is very static through a mass media channel to the receiver who can be viewers, readers consumers

in any other way and there are certain gatekeepers also for example, editors who give a particular shape to the meaning, executive producers who give a particular shape to a video, media managers who ensure that it is circulated.

And there is a feedback system also. But nonetheless, we find that it is understood in this linear message that the interpretation of the message would remain unchanged, irrespective of whom the audience are in that given system.

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- The moment of the production of the message and the moment of its receiving do not correspond to each other
- Moments of encoding (production) and decoding (reception) are points at which meaning is both produced and reproduced.
- The media message is methodically distorted by signifying structures through which it operates and the social relations between producer (encoder) and consumer (decoder).
- Frames of reference for the sender while encoding the message; and for the receiver while decoding the message are different



The moment of the production of the message and the moment of its receiving, according to Hall do not correspond to each other. The moments of encoding that is the moments in which a particular message is being produced and the moment of decoding, when this message is actually been received by a person are points at which both meaning is produced and reproduced. So the meaning is produced when a person tries to encode a message.

Then, this message is encoded according to one's frame of reference only, on the other hand when a receiver decodes the message, the message is always decoded according to the receiver's frame of reference and if there is a mismatch between the 2, we find that the intended impact would never be there. And therefore, according to Hall, the media messages are methodically distorted by the signifying structures.

The signifying the structures of language for example, other cultural connotations through which this message operates and the social relations also between producer and the consumer. So according to Hall, it is the signifying structures and the social relations which normally generate distortions of the message and the intended effect does not take place. By the signifying structures he meant the different labels at which languages interpret it.

Not only at the lexical level. The connotations within a particular culture are different even though, the sender and the recipient might be using the same language, so because of these cultural connotations, the structure of the words does not necessarily correspond to the structure of the world and because of these relations which are also different, the social relations which are different for the sender as well as for the message coupled with differences in signifying structures, the media messages may not be understood in the same manner.

So, it may be possible that the sender intends a particular meaning but the audience fails to grasp that meaning at all and in on the other hand, understands it in a different manner. So the frames of reference for the sender with encoding the message and for the receiver while decoding the message are absolutely different.

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- If a meaningful exchange is to take place, encoding and decoding must match.
- Media messages are produced in order to encourage and prefer meanings and readings to conform to the dominant cultural order
- But media messages are often 'multi-accentual'— potential of generating alternative meanings
- Hall proposed a four stage theory of communication – production, circulation, use (consumption or understanding), and reproduction
- These stages are separate, autonomous, as well as interdependent.
- Each stage limits the possibilities of the next stage
- Perceived a complex structure of dominance in messages, which varies at every stage



Hall also suggest that if a meaningful exchange is to take place, the encoding and decoding must match and therefore, the frames of references of the sender and the receiver should not be very

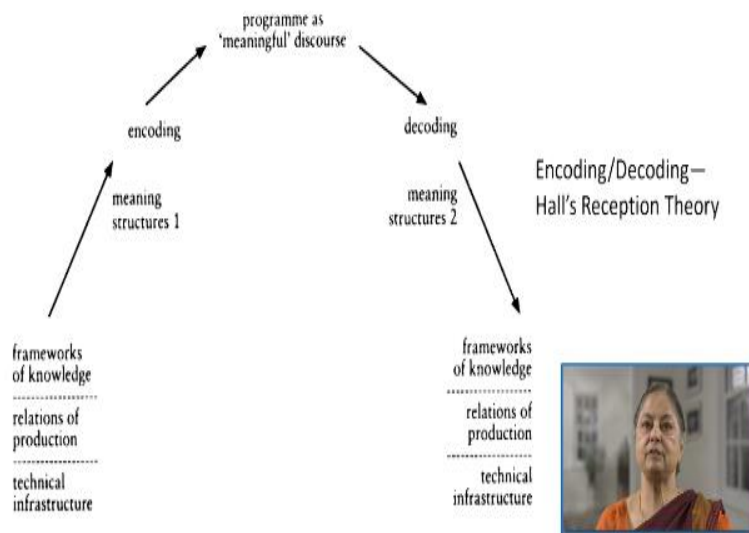
different from each other. He suggests that media messages are produced in order to encourage those meanings preferably and those readings preferably which conform to the dominant cultural order.

And therefore, his idea is that media messages normally conform to the messages which are being favoured by the dominant ideology in any cultural city. But media messages are often multi accentual because they have a potential of generating alternative meanings because the readings of culture are never monolithic. In order to explain it further, Hall proposed a 4 stage theory of communication which included production, circulation, use that is consumption or understanding and reproduction at the level of the receiver of the message.

These stages are understood as separate stages, they are autonomous stages but at the same time we find that they are interdependent also. Autonomously, they create certain limitations and the limitations which are created at a particular stage also limit possibilities of the next stage. So, whereas all these stages are autonomous, we find that they also have a limiting impact on the next stage.

And therefore, he perceived a complex structure of dominance in messages which may vary at every alternate stage.

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This is the reception theory, the model of encoding or decoding which has been suggested by Hall, on the one hand the frameworks of knowledge, relations of production and technical infrastructure provides a particular meaning which is encoded and that suggests the frame of reference on the part of the sender as well as the technical possibilities through which a particular medium is being sent.

So, once a message has been encoded, programmed as a meaningful discourse, it is being decoded and then we can come across an absolutely different meaning because this meaning would be generated by the frameworks of knowledge, relations of production and technical infrastructure which is available and with which the recipient is comfortable.

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At production stage - the technical needs

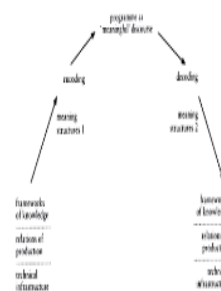
At Circulation stage - socio-economic/ language/ power relations.

'Message form' its presentable shape which is the vehicle of the intended message. Before it is put to consumption, the message is appropriated as a meaningful discourse so that it is meaningfully decoded.

Decoding - differing socio-economic/ political frames.

Decoding differs.

It is this set of decoded meanings which 'have an effect', or influence with very complex perceptual/ cognitive/ ideological/behavioural/psychological consequences.



So, we find that at every stage, there are certain factors which are responsible for generating a particular message and also for generating situations in which the message can be understood in a particular manner. At the production stage, we find that the needs of technology are also important, what type of technological help we have in the production and in the framing of our message are also important in today's culture and they cannot be overlooked.

At the level of circulation, we also find that certain other aspects coming to the foreground, the socio-economic situation which govern the technology which can be used by the sender, the cultural connotations of the language which are being forwarded in the formulation of this

message as well as the power relations which are being generated directly or indirectly through this message.

The message form is a presentable shape which is the vehicle of the intended message. But before it is put to consumption, this message is appropriated as a meaningful discourse, so that it can be hoped to be meaningfully decoded. However, this remains only a hope, it is never a 100% assurance that it would be decoded in the same manner in which it has been intended. Decoding also differs from encoding because the person who is decoding it also has a set of socio-economic and political ideologies.

So, these conditions and ideological preferences would also initiate a different understanding of the message. So in this set of decoded meanings which have an effect or influence with very complex perceptual, cognitive, ideological, behavioural, psychological consequences that the message is received and understood. So, this is a process which actually occurred despite all these complexities.

And this is also a model which is being used internationally for every classroom setting and this remains a significant contribution of Hall not only to the understanding of the cultural theories but also how this process works which can be used in non-academic fields by people.

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- Message is always discursively produced, circulated and used
- Distortions or misunderstandings may occur
- Encoding and decoding both are creative moments, and thus audience plays an equally significant role
- Hall outlines the multi-accentuality of media messages through three hypothetical reading positions which the decoders can adopt:

Dominant position  
Negotiated position  
Oppositional position



So, his idea was that the message is always discursively produced, circulated and used, the discourse itself is never dissociated absolutely from the message itself at any stage and therefore, distortions or misunderstandings of the message may occur and according to him encoding as well as decoding are creative moments and the audience plays an equally significant role in the creation of the message.

Hall has outlined the multi-accentuality of media messages through 3 hypothetical reading positions which the decoders can adopt and these are the dominant position, negotiated position and oppositional position.

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- The dominant/hegemonic position: viewer decodes messages in terms of meanings encoded by the encoding process and the dominant cultural order.
  - Constitutes an instance of 'perfectly transparent' communication; accepts and empathizes with the presented view-point
- The negotiated position: the decoder can potentially adopt and then oppose the dominant televisual codes.
  - Mixture of the adaptive and oppositional elements; the viewer to a certain extent accepts the dominant codes but modifies the message to reflect his/her own interests/experiences; codes are negotiated
- The oppositional position: the decoder recognizes and understands the dominant televisual codes but actively resists them.
  - Differences in framework of reference



In the dominant or hegemonic position, we find that the viewer decodes message in terms of meanings which are and encoded by the encoding process and the dominant cultural order. It constitutes an instance of perfectly transparent communication in which the intended meaning is also the perceived meaning by the receiver. The receiver or the audience accepts the viewpoint which has been presented and also empathises with it.

So, this according to Hall is a dominant or hegemonic position in which the receiver conforms to a dominant standard. The negotiated position can be a mixture of the adaptive and oppositional elements. The decoder can potentially adopt and later on oppose the dominant codes which have been presented through a televised program. The viewer to a certain extent accepts the dominant

codes but also modifies the messages ultimately in such a manner that the interpretation reflects his or her own interest or experiences.

So, this is a situation in which the codes are negotiated and the viewer can take up any different position. The oppositional position is one in which the decoder recognises the dominant codes which are being used by any televised program or any other media messages for example, the decoder recognises them and also understands them but at the same time, we find that the decoder actively resists them.

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- Association between code and meaning cannot be stationary. It is based on conventions. Therefore, variations in interpretations/readings would be there
- However, conventions gain acceptance, a 'naturalness', and thus take the form of ideologies, and consequentially a viewer comes to accept them easily
- Hall suggests that the viewer should be conscious of the impact of ideological connotations on discourse. The intersections of already coded signs with profound semantic codes of a culture may provide additional ideological proportions to the message, which represents the dominant cultural order
- These intersections and resultant connotations exploit the semantic and cultural polysemy of power and interest

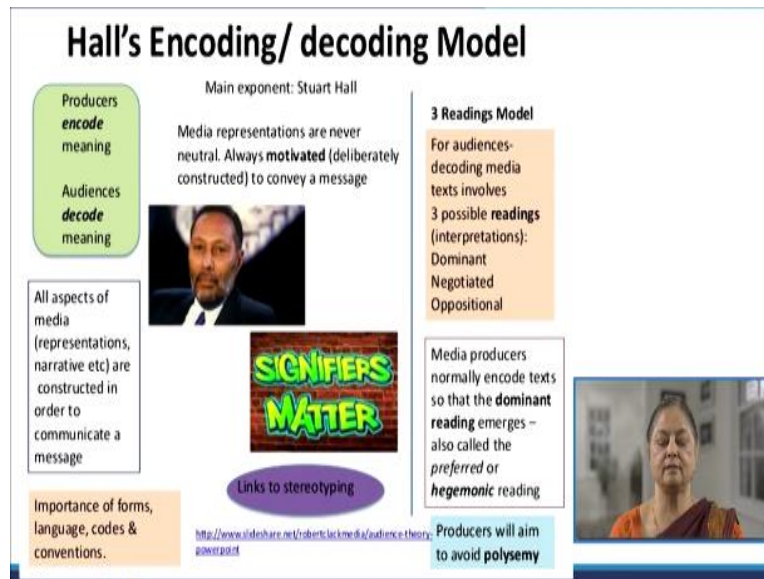


So, these are the 3 positions which have been suggested by Hall. He also suggests that the association between the code which has been used by the encoder and the meaning which is being derived by the decoder cannot be stationary, it is based on conventions and therefore variations in interpretations and readings would be there because any code can never have a fixed meaning in our culture.

The cultural codes are non- stationary by nature however, there are certain conventions which gain better acceptance about them and therefore, they are associated with an aura which is almost naturalness and therefore, these interpretations take the form of ideologies and once these interpretations take the form of an ideology, we find that a viewer comes to accept them with better ease.

Hall suggest that the viewers may be conscious of the impact of ideological connotations on discourse and the intersections of already coded signs with profound semantic codes of a culture may provide additional ideological proportions to the message which represents invariably a dominant cultural order. But these intersections and resultant connotations exploit the semantic and cultural polysemy of power and interest.

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And therefore an alternative meaning can also be read within the same messages. This is the encoding and decoding model which has been later on developed by Stuart Hall. So in this model we find that all these possible meanings in which an alternative meaning can be read and generated as well as the constraints which are there for the intended interpretation of the message in the manner in which it can never be exactly accepted by the audience are pointed out.

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- For Hall, all human practices are struggles to make history in conditions which are often not in our control (Lawrence Grossberg)
  - He brings this marxist axiom to bear upon three different but related enterprises
    - to offer a theory of ideology which sees communicative practices in terms of what people can and do make of them;
    - to describe the particular historical form of contemporary cultural and political struggle (hegemony); and
    - to define a Marxism without guarantees; by rethinking the conjunctural nature of society.
  - Connects theory and writing to praxis



For Hall, all human practices are struggles to make history in conditions which are often not in our control and he brings this Marxist axiom to bear up on 3 different but related enterprises. First is to offer a theory of ideology which sees communicative practices in terms of what people can do and make of them. Secondly to describe the particular historical form of contemporary cultural and political struggle hegemony or otherwise.

And thirdly to define Marxism without guarantees by rethinking conjunctural nature of society and he connects theory and writing to praxis also.

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### Hall on Culture and Ideology

- Culture for Hall is not the tastes authenticated by the elite, but “experience lived, experience interpreted, experience defined”
- Culture for him is a “critical site of social action and intervention, where power relations are both established and potentially unsettled”. It is “never merely a set of practices, technologies or messages, objects whose meaning and identity can be guaranteed by their origin or their intrinsic essences.”
- Emphasizes diversity of meanings and signifying practices within which texts are produced and circulated, thus, a quest for original or true meaning is illusory.
- Designates cultural practices as signifying practices.



Hall is also significantly written about culture and ideology. Culture for Hall is not the tastes which have been authenticated by the elite of the group but rather they are the experiences which are lived, experiences interpreted and experiences defined. So it is actually the lived experiences of the people which formulate culture. This dittos the interpretation of Raymond Williams also but we find that Hall takes it a step further by accommodating the readings of gender and race also as a part of cultural studies discipline.

So, culture for him is a critical site of social action and intervention where power relations are both established and also potentially unsettled. It is never merely a set of practice, technologies or messages objects whose meaning and identities can be guaranteed either by their origin or by their intrinsic essence. According to him, there is always the diversity of meaning and a diversity of signifying practices within which texts are not only produced and circulated.

But they are also interpreted and therefore, a quest for original or true meaning of a text is at best illusory, so he designates cultural practices as signifying practices.

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### Hall on Culture and Ideology

- Ideology is articulated in and through language, yet it is not equivalent to it. Ideological practices are not engraved with their politics; as social identities are not inscribed with their ideologies—they are 'articulated' or 're-articulated.'
  - Views culture and ideology as sites of perennial contestation and struggle.
- Hall interestingly avoids any direct Marxist approach in his own definition of Identity and does not view it as being pejorative:
  - "By ideology I mean the mental frameworks – the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought, and the systems of representation – which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of, figure out and render intelligible the way society works."



Ideology according to him is articulated in language and it is also articulated through language. However, it is not equivalent to it. Ideological practices are not engraved with their politics as social identities are not inscribed with their ideologies, they are articulated and then re-

articulated, so Hall views culture and ideology as sites of perennial contestation and struggle. He interestingly avoids any direct Marxist approach, when he tries to define identity.

And also he does not look at this word identity as being a pejorative one, as it is normally viewed by several Marxist critics and he says “by ideology, I mean the mental frameworks, the languages, the concepts, categories, imagery of thought and the systems of representation- which different classes and social groups deploy in order to make sense of figure out and render intelligible the way society works.”

So, we find that this particular definition which he had propounded at a later stage of his life does not have any direct Marxist approach rather he has talked about culture and ideology as being products of once lived experiences.

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#### Hall on Race, Ethnicity and Multiculturalism: A Background

- Henry Gates on Hall: ‘leading theorist of black Britain’
- Product of multiple positionings: Black diasporic figure, race theorist, leading figure in cultural Studies and the New Left, Media and reception theorist
- In her introduction to *Understanding Stuart Hall*, Helen Davis writes, “Hall did not begin his work with considerations of ethnicity and race. His has been a long journey of (self) discovery.”
- James Procter understands Hall’s raced identity simply in terms of origins: Hall’s Caribbean lineage and childhood forms his ‘intellectual preoccupation with class, race and identity politics.’



In addition to these contributions, we find that Hall is also primarily known for his work on ethnicity and race and he is a critic who is always credited for initiating the discipline of multicultural studies. Henry Gates has termed him as a leading theorist of black Britain. We find that he had been taking multiple positions as far as his critical understandings and critical works are created.



He has been a black diasporic figure himself in his life, race theorist a leading figure in cultural studies and the new left and he is also a theorist of media who has propagated his reception theory. In her introduction to understanding Stuart Hall, Helen Davis writes that he did not begin his work with considerations of ethnicity and race, his has been a long journey of self-discovery and his own life and his beginnings in as a non-white person are also a true indication of the sufferings he had to go through in his own life.

James Procter understands his raced identity simply in terms of origins. Hall's Caribbean lineage and childhood forms his intellectual preoccupation with class, race and identity politics. Hall himself has commented that his childhood did have a bearing on his thought patterns.

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- Hall's theories developed out of his negotiations with debates on race, ethnicity and diaspora emerging out of Caribbean and Britain in the 1960s and beyond
  - Solidarity with second generation black Britons
  - Hall points to the emergence of a 'black' identity within a particular historical moment:

"The fact is 'black' has never just been there either. It has always been an unstable identity, psychically, culturally, and politically. It, too, is a narrative, a story, a history. Something constructed, told, spoken, not simply found ...black is an identity which had to be learned and could only be learned in a certain moment."



Hall's theories developed out of his negotiations with debates on race, ethnicity and diaspora emerging out of Caribbean and Britain as he witnessed them during the 1960's and also beyond this troubled decade. He also felt a certain solidarity and oneness with the second generation of black Britons and he points out to the emergence of a black identity within a particular historical moment.

And he says "the fact is black has never been just they are either, it is always been an unstable identity physically, culturally and politically. It, too is an narrative, a story, a history something constructed, told, spoken not simply found...black is an identity which had to be learned and

could only be learned in a certain moment”. In this definition, we find that he does not equate race with any monolithic experiences either.

According to him, a race also is an unstable identity because psychically and culturally and politically, it cannot be put under certain constrictions which may be universally accepted. So this is something which happens in a given moment, this is not something which is always their independent of other facts of history, culture and social forces.

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- Hall's sense of his raced identity arises out of multiple identifications as a 'West Indian', 'an immigrant', and as 'black'—a rediscovery of being black and what it meant.
- From the 1980s, he was involved with the third generation of black and Asian artists, photographers and filmmakers
- Suggests that his ideas on representation, difference and new ethnicities arose out of this encounter, "I was writing about identity and they were practicing it ... It made me more alert to the way artistic work is exploratory space in which ideas work themselves out"
- 'Identity is formed at the unstable point where the "unspeakable" stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of history, of a culture' (Hall 1987)



Hall's sense of his raced identity arises out of multiple identifications as a West Indian and immigrant and as black, so in his work, we can see a rediscovery of being black and what it meant in a Western country. 1980's onwards he became involved with the third generation of black and Asian artists, photographers and filmmakers and suggest that his ideas on representation, difference and new ethnicities arose out of this encounter.

He says that he had been writing about identity whereas, these people of third generation were practising it on an everyday basis and these encounters made him more alert to the way artistic work is an exploratory space in which ideas work themselves out. He also suggests that identity is formed at the unstable point where the unspeakable stories of subjectivity meet the narratives of a history of a culture.

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- Hall's significant achievement: internality of race in all social processes-- 'I have never worked on race and ethnicity as a kind of subcategory. I have always worked on the whole social formation which is racialized' (2007, p. 101).
- Three phases in Hall's writing on race:
  1. The early engagement with the new immigrant 'West Indian' communities and the emerging 'second generation';
  2. The turn to theory during his tenure at BCCCS
  3. The 'cultural turn' from the mid-1980s (shift in black cultural politics in Britain, debates around 'new ethnicities'; and the theorization of post-coloniality and diaspora)



A significant contribution of Hall towards the understanding of race is his idea that there is a certain internality of race in all social processes. He does not work on race and ethnicity as a kind of subcategory rather he looks at how the whole social formation has been racialised. In his writings on race, we can look at 3 different phases. His early only engagement with the new immigrant West Indian communities and the emerging second generation.

Secondly, how he turns to theory during his tenure with this Birmingham Centre for contemporary critical studies and later on as its director for a very long time and another cultural turn from the mid-1980's which was a result of his association with the third generation of the Blacks and Asian migrants, so we find that there has been a shift in black cultural politics in Britain also.

And there have been renewed debates about new ethnicities and the theorisation of post-coloniality and diaspora during the later stages of Hall's writings.

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- Along with class and gender, race is a major concept of classification. Hall calls race a 'discursive practice', a 'floating signifier'; Its meaning is relational and is constantly subject to redefinitions in different cultures and at different moments
  - In *The Young Englanders* (1967) and 'Black Britons' (1970), Hall explores the conditions and experiences of the newly arrived settlers and their place in a post-colonial set up.
  - In *The Young Englanders*, Hall writes,

"Race is a collective concept. Essentially, race relations are relations between groups of people rather than individuals; relationships in which the personal exchanges between individuals are mediated through and affected by the whole body of stereotyped attitudes and beliefs which lie between one group and another"



Along with class and gender, we find that to Hall, race is a major concept of classification. He calls race a discursive practice, a floating signifier. The meaning of race is always a relational and it is also continuously subject to redefinitions in different cultures and also at different moments. The word race cannot be defined in an aesthetic manner. In any culture it would always have different connotations and within a same culture also, we find that at different moments, these connotations may be different.

In his publications, *The Young Englanders* in 1967 and *Black Britons* in 1970, Hall has explored the conditions and experiences of the newly arrived settlers and their place in a postcolonial setup. In *The young Englanders*, he suggests that race is a collective concept and I quote, “essentially a race relations are relations between groups of people rather than individuals, relationships in which the personal exchanges between individuals are mediated through an affected by the whole body of a stereotype attitudes and beliefs which lie between one group and another”.

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- Traces of the dominant 'race relations' paradigm and the notion of black youth as stranded 'between two cultures'
- Marks the beginning of Hall's emphasis on issues of representation, on practices of racist exclusion, strategies of subversion and agency.
- Hall's thinking and theories on the subject remain 'conjunctural' and 'contingent': 'These two "poles" are brought together on the terrain of culture which, for him, is the site of struggle over meaning – not just of the abstracted sign but also of the "real" of lived experience'
- Hall emphasized on the internality of race in all social processes and simultaneously looked at it as a lens through which to explore broader structures



Traces of the dominant race relations paradigm and the notion of black youth as being stranded between two cultures is also a major contribution of Hall. It marks the beginning of his emphasis on issues of representation on practices of racist exclusion as well as on a strategies of subversion and agencies. His thinking and theories on the subject remain conjunctural and contingent, these two poles according to him are brought together on the terrain of culture which for him is the site of a struggle over meaning not just on the abstracted sign.

But also of the real of the lived experience. So we find that Hall has emphasised on the internality of race in all social processes and also simultaneously, he has looked at it as a lens through which he could explode broader structures.

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- In 'Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity' (1986), he tackles the many *meanings* of race and how it functions at particular sites of power.
- In a 1996 speech he said that race is "more like a language than it is like the way in which we are biologically constituted"
- Criticisms of Hall's work on 'race':
  1. Gives importance to the textual and the abstract over the actual lived experiences and reality
  2. Tendency to romanticize black struggle because of his distance from 'the black community' (Rojek 2003)



Hall is also tackled myriad meanings which are associated with the race and how these meanings functions at particular sites of power, in Gramsci's relevance for the study of race and ethnicity which came out in 1986. In another speech in 1996, he says that race is more like an language than it is like the way in which we are biologically constituted. So these definitions suggest that there is an interconnectedness in his approach and at the same time, there is a continuous growth in his perspective which tells us that he was able to keep pace with the changes in contemporary world.

There have been severe criticisms also of Hall's ideas about race. It is said that he gives importance to the textual and the abstract over the actual lived experiences and reality, it is also said that in him, there is a tendency to romanticise black struggle because of his actual distance from the black community.

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- In *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State and Law and Order*, Hall focuses on: Themes of race, youth and crime in the metaphor of 'mugging', Moral panic around mugging and race; Subcultural formations, Formation of new black communities, Influence of Althusser and Gramsci
- Wrote extensively on the issues of race, ethnicity, post-coloniality and diaspora in late 1980s and early 1990s-- 'Minimal Selves' (1987), 'New Ethnicities' (1988, 1992), 'Cultural Identity and Diaspora' (1990)
- Two decades after his 'new ethnicities' intervention, Hall also wrote about the issue of asylum, racialization of new migrant communities, end of multiculturalism, rise of new forms of global imperialism, war on Terror and the re-emergence of religious identities



However, we find that Hall is focused on the themes of race, youth and crime which were continuously changing over a passage of time. In his *Policing the Crisis, Mugging the State and Law and Order*, he has focused on this issue of mugging and what is the moral panic which is associated with this idea, how the subcultures can be formed, how the new black communities are being formed and at the same time, he has stopped about the intellectual influence of Althusser and Gramsci.

He has written extensively on the issues of race, ethnicity post-coloniality and diaspora in the late 1980's and in early 1990's also. So 2 decades after his new ethnicities intervention, Hall also wrote about the issue of asylum, racialization of new migrant communities and of multiculturalism, rise of new forms of global imperialism, war on terror and the re-emergence of religious identities.

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- In the later work of Hall one finds a continuity and carrying forward of his main contribution to multi-culturalism, that can be worded as distrust of all universalities of culture
  - Takes up issues of violence, power relations and social inequities in disrupting the possibilities of the multicultural as an affirmative space of difference in *The Multicultural Question* (2000) and *The Future of Multi-Ethnic*.
  - Depth and complexity of his ideas as a theorist of race and ethnicity have shaped the current critical landscape and drew global attention to issues pertaining to sub-cultures and gender/s



In his later work, we find a continuity and also a carrying forward of his main contribution to multiculturalism that can be worded as simply as distrust of all universalities of culture. He has taken up the issues of power relations, violence and social inequalities in disrupting the possibilities of the multicultural as affirmative space of difference in his later work. The depth and complexities of his ideas as a theorist of race and ethnicities have shaped the current critical landscape and drew global attention to issues pertaining to subcultures and genders.

We end our discussion of Stuart Hall and in the next discussion; we would take up how the differentiation of high and low culture has become a part of critical discourse, thank you.