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Dialogue with Stuart Hall: The joker in the pack of globalization

Zeigam Azizov: Migration paradigm seems to become ever more omnipresent and central to all the existing spheres of interest in politics and art amongst others. But it is the cultural theory, which is the most important driving force of this discourse. Your work is specifically important in this sense. What is the point of departure for you in theorizing this particular issue?

Stuart Hall: Well, I suppose the first point of departure is personal and biographical in a way, because in an attempt to understand the Caribbean culture, which is my own culture I realized very early that it is impossible to do that if to think of the settled cultures from its beginning, because it is not the history. The history of indigenous Caribbean people was destroyed by the invasion, by the conquest very early on. The most of the indigenous population of all the islands were designated. So people who inhabit Caribbean island are all coming from somewhere else-they are African slaves brought by the ship, there is Spanish conquest, French who captured the island, British who captured the island from the French, there are East Indians brought to work in plantations, there are Lebanese, travellers from the Middle East, Hong-Kong and China; everybody from somewhere else. So, Caribbean culture is the product of migrations. So long before it became central focus I tried to understand the distinction between others. For example the Jewish culture has deep roots, they have sacred books, but there are no Caribbean sacred books, there are African books or Spanish books, English books, Indian books. So the distinction is made between cultures, which in a sense tried to take themselves back to their origins. I have to say as a detour that I have no believe in this either, because there is no such a thing. Indian culture, for example, is the result

of migration. So even if you trace this kind of cultures back, they are all products of previous migrations and there is no origin except in myth, in Bible. There is no real origin which can be start of the history. But history is serious of movements, migrations, translations of cultures. As a result of conquests new cultural elements became dominant. That is what history is, but it used to show the case that settled cultures inside their territory and there are few odd places like Caribbean, which are the product of migration movement. But actually when you step out of Caribbean context and look out at world in general you see that this is also more and more the case. When I thought, well, am I interested in Caribbean culture, because I want to understand where I came from or am I looking at general paradigm. It is a more general paradigm, because looking at British culture, which thinks it is original culture, but in reality it is the product of Celtic, Norman, German, French and there is no original British culture. It thinks of itself as a settled culture. Then you look at British culture, which I did in 1960s and 70s, it is clear that this culture have been transformed by migration, especially of course in the context of colonialism, migration from the earlier Empire. This was settled culture, which became destabilized by migration. That might have been relatively unusual in 1960s, which seen everywhere like in Germany where Turkish workers or migration from South in Italy, where I used to go a lot. You could see huge amount of people, Neapolitans travelling by train and coming over the summer backwards and forward. I really sensed that Europe is the product of migration, but the between 1960s and now things are different. Now all over Europe movement of unsettled people, mixing of cultures, the imposition of dominant cultures and subordinate cultures etc. migration paradigm imposed itself as a concrete observation of the historical situation the world being unsettled, migration is largely disruptive, continuously disruptive element in the global capitalism, because it is tied to global capitalism. Global capitalism itself is propelling people from one place to another. It is a kind of different phase of

globalization. Look at it from the point of view of below, these people who moved on. W.E.B. duBois once said that problem of XX century is the problem of colour line and I think the problem of XXI century is the problem of migration, the problem of mixing, the problem of hybridization, and the problem of previous patterns of new elements, unsettlement of migration. Migration is very complicated phenomenon, because people move for economic reasons, they move because of the civil war, because of the state repression, they move because of tortures, all sort of reasons, they move because of disease, they move because of the ecological devastation. Reasons are various, but consequences are very common. In the cultural sphere consequences are common and cultural sphere registers the most obvious, because it undermines what has been understanding of political commodity. In the recent years the political commodity has been defined as a Nation-State and national culture based on national economy. Nation state encapsulates all these forces within itself, but migration throws all of this into doubt.

Whose citizens are migrants? Are they citizens of countries, which don't want them, are they citizens of countries where they come from. No, they are universal citizens in a world whose citizenship became narrow and narrow around the Nation state. There is difference between old political economical norms and understanding of migrations. The Nation -State centralizes from above and migrations disrupt laterally. This is a lateral movement consequences of what we have in a theory of whose borders really divide or it is just an instigation to cross them then real reason for stopping and also the resistance to that. It is the resistance migration does to the Nation-State. It imposed it's right to say who is the citizen who is not, where the migrations start and stop, what is the good reason for migrating and which is not? There is also counter migration, which is an enforcement of barriers and boundaries. We talk about it being open, but actually Europe is now more segmented. There are more boundaries,

more police, and the electronic surveillance than it was in XIX century Nation-State. For example Byron just took and went to Greece, lived in Italy. People don't do it anymore, unless you are the member of international cooperation. You have to get a visa now to come from Jamaica, which was a British colony for 420 years. So it is not the borderless world, migration therefore cannot be just celebrated, it has an extremely important cultural and political impact, but you cannot just celebrate it, because all migrations involve loss. Even if there is no police, no settled place as home you carry the instinct that there must be a place that you belong. It is the fantasy, but the fantasy has an effect on your life. When you are taken up thinking of Rwanda, of the violent genocide you can see that migration always involves loss and gain. The gain is the cultural difference, encounter with the new thing and loss of being apart from those historical conditions to your existence. I think migration paradigm involves whole series of inquires, but how cultures which have been put into shock, put what I call migration shock, how they survive, how they cohere if there is any coherence, what is the nature of this coherence, since it is not the coherence given from the past guaranteed by tradition, what is the coherence of difference rather than coherence of the same similarity? People used to understand coherence, because of their being part of the tribe, part of the family. I understand everybody here is connected, but when everybody is not connected how do you cohere? There are many aspects of political citizenship and rights. What rights do you have? You are not a citizen of country, you are not born here then which is your rights, who guarantees your right? Previously the state guaranteed the right of the citizen and defended the security. Is the state in a condition to guarantee in a global situation to a new arrival citizenship or one sees first, second, third and fourth class citizenship? This is a political question, economic question that as many migrants are driven by the impact of contemporary globalization of developed countries. People cannot survive with the poverty on the margins. They cannot and will not survive and the consequence is extension of global situation, they

know the story! They know the story how Los Angeles looks like. What wages are in New York, why should then stay, if they can go. It is very driven by globalization. On the other hand migration is contrary to globalization, because globalization depends on capital being moving freely, on goods moving freely, on commodities being moving freely, on technologies moving freely, on goods moving freely, on technologies moving freely, on commodities moving freely, on messages moving freely, but it is not depending on labor moving freely. Labour supposed to stay where it is and take low wages for one dollar a day. Labour is not supposed to get on plane and go to LA and ask for 25 dollars for an hour! They are supposed to stay where they are! Therefore this is one thing which is controlling globalization. We will take labour carefully from Philippine, from Bangalore, because they are good on IT, but we don't want ignorant peasant to get more wages, whereas they could stay in Bangalore and work for one dollar an hour. Migration is the joker in the pack of globalization. It is both part of globalization and what unhinges globalization from below, because it creates movement, fluidity and lack of the control exactly at the point where globalization would like to constrain and control global movement.

Z.A. You started talking about your autobiographic experience. How the autobiographic experience plays role in subjectivication, while maintaining once positionality as a migrant?

S.H. Like every scholar or academician I am slightly suspicious of the anecdotal nature of autobiography. One cannot read the history as a biography. Autobiography is different from the historical movements. Of course autobiography does enlarge and deepen ones more general understanding and preciously because of the subjectivication. It means you cannot inhabit theory as a set of abstract rules, because you also inhabit it as a subject who is subjected

to history, whose subjective nature has been configured by those rules. It adds another dimension, it deepens historical understanding but one should be careful, because it may be imposing itself as a historical map. How to use the biographical evidence? I find myself using it more and more. I was interested in two questions. How I am produced as a subject and I am produced inside the process. One of the things, which made it possible to bridge the gap from getting trapped, is by biographical facts.

My own relation to my family was extremely problematic. I wasn't fit in that family, was not fit racially, I was darker than the rest of the family. I didn't fit aspirations and patterns of the middle class colonial family. If you read Edward Said's biography you find some similarities with the experience of my own. His settings are different. His experience is in the Middle East and main is Caribbean and he also was an outsider in his own family. When I look at photographs of my youth I can see myself in troubled face, but I don't think if anyone understood where these troubles come from. Later before I came to England, because of the family crisis I understood that my family was living out of contradictions of colonialisation. This was the false aspiration that were formed my family, because they didn't want to recognize their subordinate setting of the colony. They wanted me to redeem their luck of success with the further success with the society which they thought they belonged. Consequently they despised ones below them, blacker than them and poorer than them, those who where not able to express themselves in a dominant language, in a proper English etc. These bifurcations were my everyday experience. There was pupil in my school I could not bring home. There were boys in a school I could not bring home. I didn't realize it was part of the race; it was part of the internalization of racial hierarchies with the subordinate perspective, because my father was also coloured, but he was making the

distinction of subaltern class between themselves and those who are even worth than themselves. It is only later I came to understand that this was sort of subjective dramatization of the colonial dilemma. We were subjected to colonialization and I was a subject of colonialization inside my family. At that point it became extremely difficult to make a distinction between the subjective experience and the objective historical reality. I had to understand how these contradictions are set up in my society and how they internalized and subjectivicated by the family members. We lived it as a family drama; we lived it as an emotional subjective thing, because of the objective reality of the same kind. I don't know what the distinction between them is. The outside is inside and the inside is outside. Without this kind of family I wouldn't have this experience. So it is quite difficult to make any distinction. These are analytic distinctions sometimes you have to impose, but really you cannot make distinctions in the final end, in the final result.

Z.A While reading your texts on migration and diaspora I came across the phrase: We can't literally go back again! Can you elaborate on this sentence more?

S.H Well, it is related what I said earlier on about settled cultures and migrant cultures. The discovery of even so called settled cultures doesn't have a single point of origin. The point of origin is always the day before yesterday. It is at this point time becomes a myth.

Ever since the beginning of history it is disseminated. It is true that through the centuries

we are slowly disseminated. Even during the times of huge conquests by empires it happened. If you go to India you see continuities between tribal, rural

and modern, urban life, which we don't see anymore in England. Because India didn't have a huge industrial revolution you see all the times there like the day before yesterday what was the Mogul Empire and what was before it. So you see it in continuity. Nevertheless India is the only product of movements, battles, conquests, and re- conquests. The result of discovering the difference between settled and migrant cultures is the difference of pace, but not of the difference of the absolute distinction, it is not really some really settled and do have remained the same since their origin and others are not. All of them are in movement and transformation. Settled ones are in transformation rather more slowly and give an illusion of having a retrospective origin, whereas if you go to the migrant society like Caribbean you can't believe in the origin. Now, OK what the sentence means is that if you really think that the result of alienation and disruption of that modern world is the sole for that to go where to come from. Note to the place with the point of the origin beginning of the *telos*, not to be turn in a mirage to find out what never existed. The story isn't finished there, because the fact that nevertheless histories has been written as these histories are origins has an effect that you can imagine. It is not that people really go backward when they make a journey back, what they discover is that the place has changed. So Rastafarians at one stage said "We came from Africa, we came from Ethiopia" and they went back. But where to go back to? They were slaves from the West Africa. Rastafarianism doesn't come from the West Africa, it comes from Ethiopia. They are slaves from Ethiopia. When they came to the West Africa they told that we are slave families, where you come from. We are not sons of JA! You should go to Ethiopia! When they arrived in Ethiopia they heard" Who are you? Where are you from? You don't speak the language; you don't know anything about us". It is a mistake, it is a category mistake. Does it mean to abandon the past and let's live in a present and forget it? Not at all! The myth of return and the myth of origin had a profound impact on Jamaican society. Because the Jamaican society is one site of colonisation, therefore

African elements were suppressed and European elements made dominant. A lot of African elements were broken up and it was a conscious policy of colonialisation not to put people from the same area together, so they couldn't speak together, they couldn't understand each others language. Or there were some similarities in music and in religion. But they were not exactly of the same religions. This was a policy of colonialisation. If you mix them up they will learn English faster. They would accommodate themselves to the customs of plantations and slave holders much more rapidly. African elements of Caribbean cultures always were suppressed. When I was a child nobody ever spoke that we were Africans, never! Amongst rural population of Caribbean elements of African culture were preserved. Rastafarian drumming today has a direct ancestry with the West African drumming, it has never lost. But the ritual and culture what surrounded that lost, because the slaves were broken up, they were living in slave houses, not in a tribal hut, where there is a tribal leader, there is no chef, there is no priest. A lot of fragments of that religion were preserved. They were not preserved as a whole culture and consequently what happened that they did persist. That there is African-Jamaican culture as there is Afro-Brazilian culture. So Africa exists as a sort of subterranean language, as a sort of hidden language. It was the colonized system, the subordinate system. The African element of the Caribbean culture is a tool to find a way of narrating how they became who they are! How they are broken up. They needed a narrative, because nobody taught hem. I never taught the slave history in the school, but I was taught names of English kings and queens but never taught about the Yoruba culture, the culture where my ancestors came from. The whole transformation of these societies had to do with the African element, which has been suppressed becoming voiced again. But not in its pure form, because nobody speaks Yoruba, but in translated form, nevertheless an African element of the Caribbean culture. You see the naming of Africa is extremely important, but it is important for the present and the future of Caribbean, not for the past. It

is not important in a sense that we go back to Africa literally, but in a sense of going forward by acknowledging our African ancestors as well as our European ones. So the question of identity is the question of the future, but not of the past. Not where you came from but who are you going to be and you are going to be somebody different after Africa named to be Caribbean than it was before. Before in my family when African couldn't name I was a different subject from what I am now. So when I say "You can't go home again it is not therefore to give it up! You can go back home again, but you need to understand, you need to address the wishing of that desire, that statement represents. You need to confront the history which will address that wish, that desire and that desire is inevitably subversive. It redraws the map, retells the story, it inevitably subverts the dominance of the European culture in Caribbean. It unleashes hidden forces and dynamics of the popular music, dynamics of the popular religion, the affirmation of the blackness. A lot of things are released when Africa was named. It is what happened in US in 60's civil rights. Africa came to be named again, named again not as a sort of deprivation, but as a positive effect and that mean it was politically subversive. That is where the resistance comes from. You can go home again, but you can go home in a metaphorical sense, because you can revisit what other forces produced the dislocation, which makes it impossible literally to go home.

Z.A Very interesting that you mentioned that migration redraws the map. As far as I understand in the current discourse on globalization the question of geography can be shattered in a sense the conventional geography exist. That makes a link between the colonialism and the geography. It seems to me that for the colonial discourse in colonial societies geography understood in terms of space mostly, because of its being able to put borders. After the discourse when migrants are shattered this by redrawing the map, the question of time became

very important. How do you see time-space relationship within the experience of migration?

S.H It is true until very recently the notion of geography was the notion which imposed spatial relationship on the world and gave it certain kind of intelligibility, so

people think that the geography is one of the stable structures. Once you know what America looks like on the map that is America. Of course, we come to understand that the purpose of discourse of geography was precisely to attempt to fix the place as meaning power of established configurations. As soon as you have something like a movement between them or you have the development of the global system which depends on the connections between these different locations rather than on the locations themselves. Once you have migration and globalization that map will suffice, because it will not say the significant condensation of place, space, time, and meaning.

You have the notion of geography in the plural like you have the notion of cultures in plural. Pluralisation is an effect of understanding of these as discursively constructed spaces and literally not permanent material ones fixed in a mechanistic way. That destabilizes space in the old sense. I don't think it wholly undermines the notion of space, because in migration movement through space is an absolutely critical point. What is sometimes represented as a utopia of digitalization, the utopia of liquidation of space by cybernetics, by information technologies is not quite as completed a process as perfect process as its apologists are represent. There are many more relationships that are not tied to space, but these relationships are still not in spaces. Very important work on the global city by Saskia Sassen in which she shows that although the global

city is a kind of surreal space, the minute it connects cities through its global connections outside the spaces the relationship between New York and Tokyo stock exchanges is more important than locations called United States and Japan. They matter because they move money in an instant. What she shows is that it is not quite a case, because if you look what maintains global elements in NY, there is a building, there are people there, they require people with certain skills to be located in certain spaces to operate the technology and their lives are existent depend on a lot of other people. Depending how people clean their rooms and these people are who cleans the windows of skyscrapers. Who runs their market stalls, their shops from around the corner. The hidden infrastructure of people are still dominating supports the superstructure of the super-reality. Although the relationship between space, place, and location look as it is reconfigured and I think it is reconfigured by migration and globalization it is not reconfigured other existence. Where space used to be dominate now is subject to global flows. It is one of terms of talking about the long term change. People say if situation has changed it has changed totally, but hardly any situation has changed.

That is not how the change operates; the change operates by work of subordinate situations becoming dominant ones and the dominant ones becoming subaltern ones. That is the change. Russia hasn't transformed by the revolution in that absolute sense. Of course it has changed but what was above continued to exist. They never changed. They started a new relationship. The same could be said about the relationship between the old and new medias. When television came in people said that radio is dead. Well radio as a dominant means of communication in a society was dead. But radio as a local media proliferated. The old is not gone away, what is changed is the relationship of the force, the relationship of the dominant to subordinate. Yes space has been

transfigured; it wasn't abolished, anymore than nation state has been abolished. The nation state has weekend but it hasn't gone out of existence, one become more dominant in the global arena. We cannot think of the change in these apocalyptical terms. Like saying everybody will be on the net, making love on the net: it is rubbish, it is not how the change occurs, which does not undermine things change, but there are not changing just by disappearing. I would say the same thing about time. The condensations of time are absolutely essential tool for realization of capital. Capital is able to overcome distances of space through time. The fact is that you don't have to take a boat and sail to Tokyo to invest. You can invest across by collapsing time. You can see how space is undermined by the dominance of time. Foucault said that modern Europe begins with the dominance of space over time. One of the most important things happened in structuralism is the spatialisation of theory. Everything becomes site, space, terrain, and region, arena and these are words are coming to existence. But now we see in quasi- analytical aspect of space by the superimposition of time. In Marx's notion time of accumulation time of the capital is very long. For example it takes a lot of time to go to India to build the factories etc. Today time of capital takes 5 minutes to invest. Press two buttons and money is gone. It is already there; before you receive the conformation message. This is what Bakhtin called *chronotope*, space time configuration. We are in a new space-time configuration. I would say migration and globalization are principally contributed to that. We are not yet in annihilation of space by time or collapse of space.

Z.A Is that possible to say that time is what was marginalized in a sense and now it is brought back and migrant became its operator?

S.H. Yes, I would say that. In saying what is dominant and what is subordinate that time has become dominant again. But this is not in its old sense. It is the time transformed by technology. It is not an old slow time of cars or even faster time of trains; it is now time of the message. Now it is a different time. It is different from time of the period of *colonialisation* or the period of industrialization. It is quite different in this sense. We have to be careful when we think time is the same. We forget the difference in *relativasiation* of time-space conjecture from one *periodisation* to another.

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