SELECTED WRITINGS ON RACE AND DIFFERENCE

Edited by **Paul Gilroy** and **Ruth Wilson Gilmore**

Stuart Hall

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Stuart Hall: Selected Writings

A series edited by Catherine Hall and Bill Schwarz

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I should like to thank a few people. More than thirty years ago, Stuart Hall shared many hours with me in cafés and his kitchen, while we talked at great length about what a book containing some of the pieces in this volume might look like. Two doctoral students—Hilary Wilson and Patrick DeDauw—provided excellent research and editorial assistance. Paul Gilroy invited me to collaborate on this project; I am grateful above all for his friendship. And thank you, Craig Gilmore, for everything else.

—Ruth Wilson Gilmore

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INTRODUCTION | Paul Gilroy

Race Is the Prism

The biography of Stuart Hall is well known. It need not be rehearsed again here. His valuable writings have circulated around the world over a very long period of time, drawing responses from all directions and disciplines. The work has been reexamined in detail since his death by readers eager to learn from him and to absorb his many insights into the complexities of our present crisis. Yet I have occasionally overheard very sophisticated academics amusing each other with stories of their surprise at finding out Stuart Hall was a black man who had been born in Jamaica. Those pretended epiphanies unsettled me. It would be unwise to overinterpret casual comments of that sort, but discovering Hall's Caribbean origins or migrant identity could be a shock only in a world where the mission of black intellectuals remains impossible, where being a black intellectual is unimaginable: a freakish possibility. Not only were those silly, shameless remarks premised on an extraordinary ignorance of the breadth of Hall's concerns, commitments, and interests; they were also symptoms of a more widespread and telling failure to understand his political formation and trajectory.

This anthology is intended to encourage an entirely different approach. It begins from the provocative possibility that reckoning with the place of race and racism in Hall's thought is indispensable for coming to terms with the meaning and the politics of his intellectual work as a whole. Since his passing, the resurgence of authoritarian and ultranationalist populisms, to which racism remains integral, confirms that the dynamic, potent effect of appeals to race, and the mobilization of racist discourses, needs to be better understood. Race is, as Hall memorably puts it, a "floating signifier." It is also the highly charged matter of political ontology, located at the epicenter of our volatile environment bounded by nationalism and civilizationism.

The question of how analysis of racial formations might be lodged within the larger architecture of Hall's perspectives on critical and cultural theory has acquired greater importance as his intellectual legacies have congealed. Clarification of the difficult conceptual and interpretative issues raised by racism and the politics of race promises more than just a better grasp of the course of Hall's own thought and the critiques of liberal piety on racial matters that he delivered so inspiringly and energetically from the Left. It can illuminate his shifting relationship with the spectrum of socialist politics, with the New Left, Marxism, and feminism, as well as the international Black Power movement and the ongoing processes of decolonization that were unfolding in Africa, the Caribbean, and elsewhere. These pieces can be read first for the way that they reveal him acquiring a sense of the historical and epistemological significance of racism and race, and then for his eloquent attempts to persuade his readers of their signal political importance.[1]

That way of proceeding affirms the wisdom in not approaching "race" as a separate, freestanding topic but focusing instead on the racism that animates and mobilizes races dynamically, and almost always violently. The problems that converge under those vexed headings can then be used to assemble an apparatus for thinking critically about a number of interrelated issues: culture, power, democracy, and the partial, abbreviated forms of justice and freedom that race-friendly capitalism allows. For Hall, analyzing racism and race in that way helps to identify the seams that separate critical knowledge from traditional knowledge. It can foster an expansive politics of intellectual work, inside and outside universities. Racism is not another layer of misery to be logged and added to the dismal effects of other social processes. It has a constitutive power. It shapes and determines economic and political relations. We can learn to look at history, culture, economic and social relations through the frame it affords us.

Hall discovers and then repeats his enthusiasm for the idea that race has provided "a prism" through which (British) people are "called upon to 'live through' to understand, and then to deal with crisis conditions."[2] The idea of race provides "one of the most important ways of understanding how this society works and how it has arrived at where it is. It is one of the most important keys, not to the margins of society," but offers insight "right into its dynamic centre."[3] In conjunction with Hall's scrupulous commitment to historically informed analysis of concrete situations, in other words to commentary produced in tune with the expectation that it will, in time, become intelligible as counterhistory, this approach represents something like a methodological postulate. The distinctive "general syntax" of racisms must, of course, be understood in all its performative complexity.[4] Their protean capabilities must be scrupulously periodized, but the promiscuous effects of this "scavenger ideology" are laid bare by detailed historical study and should not be brushed aside.[5]

As far as British history is concerned, these texts help to trace the evolution of Hall's concern with racism and the effects of racialized inequality from the era of Suez and the Campaign for Nuclear Disarmament, through Enoch Powell's cataclysmic "Rivers of Blood" and beyond to the righteous riots of the 1980s, into the artistic bloom of Britain's Black Arts movement during the 1990s, the multiculture debates of the Tony Blair years and the crisis of neoliberal culture and society that followed. If that provincial genealogy supplies an immediate context for Hall's serial commentaries and critiques, it should also be clear that his thinking evolved in a transnational, "diasporic" conversation with the work of other black writers drawn from various languages, locations, and generations. Caribbean travelers, "in but not of Europe," like C. L. R. James, Frantz Fanon, George Lamming, Kamau Brathwaite, Sylvia Wynter, Andrew Salkey, Marion O'Callaghan, and John LaRose, are only the most obvious figures whose journeys into, through, and beyond European thought in general and Marxism in particular might now help to illuminate and explain Hall's own path. Their achievements, creative and radical, supply constant points of reference in the dialogical motion of his voice as it drifts in and out of its teacherly register.

This archive also shows how the urgently political aspects of Hall's writing are connected to the more elaborate theoretical positions and concerns that underpinned them and how they can continue to be useful. Their ongoing relevance is less a matter of elevating the interventionist pieces to a theoretical altitude where they were not originally intended to function and more about the slow labor of tacking between the different instances of reflection—concrete, abstract, concrete in abstract—that, when understood in concert, can bring alive his unique perspective and conceptual system. Tracking and reconstructing that shuttling movement reveals all the care and energy that he directed toward the goals of catalyzing and nourishing new cohorts of political intellectuals. They could be brought together by the critical study of racial orders, hierarchies, representations, and signs. As the British Black Arts movement began to flourish and to amplify the emergent political voices and artistic achievements of the children and grandchildren of the 1950s settlers, it became obvious that this mode of education was far from a narrowly academic matter.

Hall's characteristic approach to theoretical matters is set out rigorously in the better-known position papers included here, especially the essays that were aimed primarily at academic debates and remote or cosmopolitan constituencies like UNESCO.[6] Those dispersed readerships, outside the anglosphere, seem to have encouraged him to experiment and take the greater intellectual and political risks that his more usual Left milieux would not so easily accommodate. His engagements with Marxism and post-Marxism are deep, his employment of sociological reasoning fluctuates creatively, and his range of references is exceptionally wide. Disciplinary boundaries are breached with a chuckle. Poets jostle with filmmakers and philosophers to demonstrate the insubordinate agency of culture in the sham stability of formal politics. Colin MacInnes, whose London fiction is discussed in the opening essay here, is cited again when one of his later and more obscure novels, *Westward to Laughter*, pops up in the context of Hall's lucid commentary on Caribbean pluralism.[7] A large number of rhetorical tones are immediately audible: the serious, if decidedly ambivalent intellectual commentator, the cultural translator, the teacher, the unrepentant activist, the insightful critic, and the partisan reporter are a few of them. Hall's writing speaks to all of the discrepant constituencies suggested by those contending labels. Those groupings enjoyed varying appetites for the "jouissance of theory"[8] and the practical political tasks of immediate action, especially in difficult institutional and governmental settings like the broadcast media and the criminal justice system. The attention devoted to lived culture fosters the ability to see not only how those fields overlapped but how they were articulated together, bonded expressively by the iteration of potent racial tropes and symbols. Hall's focus on the role of the media was innovative and influential. Several pieces in this volume show that he was the first academic to identify the systematic construction and structural configuration of racist discourse in Britain's media (mis)representations as well as to highlight the reproduction of racism as common sense. This aspect of his work developed an analysis of the political problems that arose with the stereotyping of black figures beyond the boundaries of news and current affairs television.

By encountering Hall's work in a rough historical sequence and reading these texts as one extended body, we hope that, as his intellectual preoccupations, passions, and symptoms emerge, these essays, articles, and talks will be understood differently. Their primary objects, race and racism, are no longer marginal. They cannot be reduced either to the machinations of capitalist economic life or the melancholy drama of postcolonial psychopolitics. Their mutual assemblage *on the terrain of culture* challenges the reader to adopt a difficult interpretative angle capable of capturing the ceaseless interplay of material interests with racial signs, structures, and systems as well as the trauma of racialized suffering.

These writings readily reveal that the arc of Hall's political imagination did not bend in one direction only, from the properly academic and the authentically militant, down toward the frothily cultural. Instead, his interventions and commentaries seek out moments and problems that convey the urgency, and the value, of taking the neglected fields of culture and representation much more seriously than the dour cults of the British Left would usually permit. The politics of racism and race supplies Hall with trials and tests that can synchronize and sometimes unify his various perspectives and accents. This coordination directs readers to the adjacent problem of how his extensive reflections on racial division may have shaped his analyses of culture, ideology, and discourse or guided his approach to capitalism's mystified kinds of domination and subordination. They are asked to think about how his relentless engagement with the exploitative systems, symbolic dreamscapes, and psychological fantasies on which the racially ordered world relies might have conditioned his innovative approach to what he terms the problem of articulation. How did Hall's analysis of Caribbean and South African social and economic relations inform his observations on multiculture and multiculturalism found elsewhere?[9] These are not entirely abstract inquiries. They remain important for how Britain's "indigenous" racism is to be interpreted, for how it might be undone, and for contemporary debates over exactly how the post-1945 history of Britain's movement for justice and against racism is going to be written.

Apart from his close familiarity with the impossible possibilities raised by the unmapped intellectual heritage of the Caribbean, Stuart Hall was a consistent if irregular participant in the public culture forged by black and antiracist movements in the United Kingdom during more than five decades.[10] These texts help to survey his contribution to those discussions, but they are only a small, indicative selection. Firmly localized concerns with injustice, antiracism, and racialized representation have been braided together with more general conceptual statements. Each dimension enhances and offsets the others to form a whole, but never a final, political interpretation. Here again, the last instance never arrives. In that process of deferral, racism is pluralized and becomes an object worthy of critical investigation rather than some transient, diverting illustration of how ideology can function as a material historical force.

The less familiar pieces gathered here were first printed in a range of ephemeral publications. They stretch from the output of groupings like the Caribbean Artists Movement[11] and the National Association for Multicultural Education to the public outreach organs of the failing Kinnockite Labour Party as it struggled in vain to make itself less doctrinaire and parochial in response to the gains of Thatcherism.[12]

Without reconstructing the debates that were conducted within and around Britain's movement against racism at the time, we may say that these interventions and commentaries tacitly enacted an important change of perspective. They suggest that struggles against racism and racial hierarchy can productively be understood as contributions to the salvaging and consolidation of Europe's ebbing democracies. This was possible even as the looming effects of national democracy's divorce from global capitalism began to be evident. In that dwindling civic light, holding the police to account for the systematic misuse of power revealed in their perennial conflict with Britain's black citizen/settlers was not simply or exclusively a matter of concern to racialized minorities, to blacks and other ethnic groups. Those campaigns offered a precious opportunity to imagine, and sometimes to conduct, justice differently: in proximity to the vital politics of truth and rights. It became possible, for example, to ask what law and legitimacy should be outside of their monochromatic coding in abject black and superior white. Analyzing racism could not be stabilized or formalized as a disinterested academic pastime. It carried with it the onerous abiding obligation to specify how a world unshackled from the cruel constraints of racial hierarchy might actually differ from the present tainted arrangements.

Whether focused acutely on politics or policy, many of the resulting battles sought the extension of democracy. Their demands were enhanced by the images of social transformation that had been pending in racism's repudiation and could be glimpsed in its occasional momentary overcoming. That utopia is not captured in the ideal of colorblindness. It aspired not just to vague reform and reconstruction in the name of enhanced equality of opportunity or what we might now call a corporate McKinsey version of multiculturalism but explicitly to a reconstructed socialism and to what the feminist political culture of forty years ago described as the projection of politics in prefigurative forms.[13] These were political strategies that could identify and thereby hasten alternative ways of living, (inter)acting, and governing. Today, those elusive possibilities can provide encouragement for historical assessments of race and politics that aim to take critical reflection beyond the necessary but insufficient task of repetitively tracing the familiar debilitating outlines of Europe's postcolonial crisis.

Black movements in pursuit of freedom, justice, and independence initially developed from the brutal experience of enslaved, exploited imperial subjects and colonial peoples. Via abolitionism and anti-imperialist struggles, they expanded into a broader pursuit of equality, liberation, and a world purged of capitalist exploitation and racial hierarchy alike. Sometimes those hopes were rooted in religious outlooks, sometimes in communist schemes; at other times, their motivation was entirely profane, practical, or urgently defensive. The social and political movement against racial hierarchy that resulted from those alignments may be muted these days, but the residual glow from these pieces suggests that it might yet be revitalized.

Stuart Hall was, among his other inclinations, a movement intellectual. He was alert to the ways in which the early phases of anticolonial action conditioned later responses to the British Empire's thwarted postimperial settlement. His insistence on culture as a lived relation encouraged examination of how Britain's chronic crisis was played out in and through race. Thus he was able to identify the core dynamics of an authoritarian, populist nationalism in which attachment to the comforting idea of unbridgeable, absolute racial difference has proved both fundamental and enduring. The resulting conflicts have now extended across several generations and been expanded to incorporate settlers, migrants, and refugees from all the corners of what was once Britain's planetary colonial dominion.

Among young activists today there is considerable hostility toward the idea of black as a political color accessible to all nonwhites, especially those who had been victims of Europe's colonial and imperial adventures. In that climate, there is real danger that Hall's apparently old-fashioned view of race politics will be harshly judged because it fails to coincide with the contemporary taste for essentialist self-scrutiny and the accompanying retreat of antiracism into the private interpersonal world beloved of Instagram warriors who dream that racial structures and habits can be overthrown by online gestures alone. Mainstream visibility and inclusion are not the final frontiers of antiracist politics, nor is "self-care" among the ultimate obligations of a black revolution. What Hall calls the "political roof" provided by that open, now anachronistic notion of blackness is an important part of what remains at stake in these proceedings.[14] The idea that black is not a phenotype or a physical description but, rather, an identity and collectivity assembled in adverse circumstances and conditioned by the effects of systematic racism may no longer correspond to the brittle edifice of contemporary black struggle. However, the effort historically to understand how and why black politics in Britain assumed an ecumenical configuration is now a valuable learning opportunity. That act of imagination and solidarity can itself be educative. It can usefully reacquaint us with the combative mentality required if the cause of antiracism is to be redeemed from the twin seductions of narcissism and nihilism that have dominated it of late.

At home, racism, nativism, and xenophobia have been bolstered by learned ignorance of imperial history and a media ecology premised on the idea that blacks are an alien presence that had been foisted on a perennially innocent nation by its duplicitous political leadership. Hostility to the black presence was generated by fantasies of grave injury to national homogeneity and indigenous white pride. Exclusionary violence was answered by a combative outlook wrought, by young blacks in particular, from fragments of the dissident Ethiopianism of the Caribbean diaspora. Drawing on that structure of feeling from the rougher end of the poor educational deal Britain offered to all its working-class youth, the forces that the poet Linton Kwesi Johnson has identified as "the rebel generation" challenged what could count as worthwhile historically rooted knowledge. In the process, they reaffirmed an anticolonial tradition specified in a selection of mostly Jamaican political ancestors: Nanny, Paul Bogle, Marcus Garvey, Norman Manley. In time, that pantheon would be supplemented by additional heroic figures drawn from US Black Power and southern Africa's liberation struggles. Most important, the memory of Atlantic slavery was mobilized to infuse new chapters of dissidence with those bloody modern histories of resistance and rebellion. A second element, which is essential for understanding Hall's particular contribution, communicated the primary importance of policing and criminal justice in the everyday lives of settlers faced with apparently intractable institutional racism. These bold dispositions were animated by a critique of capitalism that, thanks to the cultural accent it gained from Hall's elegant expansion of the Gramscian vocabulary, remains useful today, even as capitalism has evolved and assumed novel, unprecedented psychopolitical and technological patterns that cannot be accessed via the unamended nineteenth-century political language of class exploitation and uniformity.

This selection demonstrates that Hall's work was implicated in several phases of a long conflict that it helps both to chronicle and to explain. That continuing history has produced some small temporary victories in the bitter sequence of defeats that marks out Britain's relentless transformation from a partly social democratic nation to a much less equal society saturated with neoliberal common sense.

Like the other Caribbean incomers of his generation, Hall felt Britain resound to the shocks that followed the discomforting reduction of its global power and reach. The country's postimperial diminution was conveyed by the largely unwelcome appearance of citizen/settlers from the half-known tropical edges of the old empire. They bore the sacred dark blue passports that qualified them officially for belonging, but they were doomed by their unsought immersion in the country's interminable quarrels with itself along the irreparable rifts of class, region, generation, sexuality, and gender.

The incomers had their precious colonial citizenship stripped from them by Left and Right governments alike. Their battles to restore dignity, secure recognition, and transform justice gradually yielded to the malign effects of globalization and were swamped by the austere experiment in virtual and networked social life we see today, triangulated by the imperatives of privatization, militarization, and financialization. However, the warm, active imprint of earlier conflicts can be detected in the damage that is still being done by the characteristically British blend of racism with amnesiac nationalism that Hall saw as the motor for the nation's distinctive pathological racism.

His writing on race and difference now offers a welcome opportunity to re-endow an insurgent history of postcolonial settlement in the regressive order to which we are in danger of becoming resigned. It bears repetition that loud, radical demands for justice recurred at the center of more than half a century of opposition and resistance. Policing and unjust law were important foci for the militant political energy released by Britain's growing black communities. Much of that bleak history has not passed through the filters that determine and fragment the contents of the digital archive. Indeed, that archive may now have been forsaken in favor of more spectacular viral narratives of cruelty, triumph, and uplift sourced from African American culture and experience. However, it can be salvaged and retains the power to deliver an insightful understanding of power and statecraft centered on the contested meaning of racialized difference and the changing political currency of racism, both overt and inferential.

One key mechanism in the metabolism of Britain's indigenous racism was the repatriation of colonial habits to the no-longer-imperial core. Government in the colonies differed markedly from the standard metropolitan arrangements. The colony revealed, as Fanon had seen, distinctive, "exceptional" ways in which power was both spatialized and militarized. We have now learned the hard way that Europe's colonies functioned as laboratories not just for biometric police-craft like fingerprinting but for innovative legal and commercial instruments as well as enhanced varieties of killing technology. We are less well acquainted with the way that the spaces of death emanating from those brutally compartmentalized colonial orders incubated anticolonial demands for a reparative justice that were pitched against the cruel abuses of imperial exploitation made legitimate by racial hierarchy. In the aftermath of conquest, colonial locations were administered through the closest of alignments between police and military powers. Hall saw that intimate association being brought back home and applied organically to management of the principal urban areas of black settlement that were perceived increasingly as repositories of alien social and cultural pathology.

As formal decolonization was transacted in Britain, the Trojan horse of New Commonwealth immigration was thought to have accomplished the invasive task that the Nazis had not been able to complete. The incorrigible patterns of colonial mismanagement appeared again, this time inside the grimy gray fortifications of downwardly mobile overdevelopment. The ranks of London's Metropolitan Police were certainly swollen with ex-military personnel back home from their cold wars against insurgents, communists, and terrorists, but the problems ran deeper still: into a culture of impunity warranted by colonial mentalities that routinely saw blacks as infrahuman and therefore expendable regardless of their formal citizenship status. This was the period in which blackness and immigration were rendered synonymous. That knotted association has had awful consequences that still haunt populist politics in the United Kingdom. So far, the resulting tangle has proved impossible either to cut or undo.

It is important to bear in mind that Hall's sense of politics led him to contribute in different ways to several community-based inquiries into police conduct, institutional racism, and criminal justice. Most notably, these were *Southall 23 April 1979*, the National Council for Civil Liberties (NCCL) report into the west London police riot; *Policing in Hackney 1945–1984*, the Family Support Committee independent inquiry report into the policing of Stoke Newington; and *A Different Reality*, the West Midlands community inquiry into the Handsworth riots of 1986. Those key documents are not, at the time of writing, available online, but they are nonetheless essential for any serious historical analysis of this pivotal period in British political life.

In a sharp contrast to the ambitions of those later publications, the police "Nigger Hunts" of the 1950s and 1960s had been modestly chronicled by respectable campaigning groups like the West Indian Standing Conference and the Colonial Ex-servicemen's and Women's Association.[15] These early organizations were often shaped by a sense of belonging and dignity deriving from the military labor of the "*Windrush* generation" in the Second World War. Like the Indian and Pakistani Workers' Associations, these bodies were imprinted with the trade unions, leftist and communist traditions that incomers had acquired in the formerly colonial zones. The community organizations created by the entitled citizen/settlers were initially content merely to enumerate police wrongdoing and structural bias in the operations of criminal justice, education, and housing, public and private. It took some years for them to adjust their conceptions of belonging and move beyond the task of documenting systematic discrimination. Gradually, they began to define altogether different juridical conceptions of equality that would be dissociated from racial hierarchy and capable of sustaining campaigns for the accountability and transformation of state power in general and police power in particular. It was even longer before those bold dispositions could breach the fiercely defended conventions of British socialism and feminism.

After the Conservatives had flirted with borrowing the neofascist injunction "Keep Britain White" for an electoral slogan, the Labour Party of Harold Wilson's era began to argue that legislation against racial discrimination would be necessary if US-style unrest was to be avoided. That initiative required a specific analysis of the political risks and ethical dangers associated with the institutionalization of racial prejudice. Once again, Hall's critical and imaginative work played a key role. He supplied sophisticated foundations and welcome political orientation for the postcolonial social movement against racism that had emerged from those difficult conditions. That formation was tied to the oppressed social lives of incoming settlers, but it mutated quickly as the bleaker fates of their locally born children and grandchildren gradually came into view. The rising rebel generation was inspired by decolonization, civil rights struggles in the United States, and Cold War conflicts alike. Its cosmopolitical gestures have now been dispersed, but its insurgent contributions were notably present among the struggles that attended the birth of Britain's multicultural and multiethnic society. Today, their echoes endure in ongoing battles to reanimate and sustain it. However, the concept of racism has passed out of favor, displaced by the internet-borne rhetoric of antiblackness and Afropessimism. These essays and talks can be read for their sense of what might be gained politically by racism's reclamation from vacuity and the restoration of its tarnished value.

Hall's perspective is firmly historical. It drew on resources unearthed by the scholarly research of James Walvin, Edward Brathwaite, Folarin Shyllon, and others. That commitment to history came bolstered by the idea that the *narrative* of black life in Britain was unfinished and the related belief that its completion would necessitate an extensive and perhaps painful rewriting of the country's national self-understanding. The classic essay "Race and 'Moral Panics' in Postwar Britain," which sets the creative tempo of this anthology, begins to identify what these adjustments would involve. An initial corrective course was indicated by analysis of the nodal "turning points" that Hall presents as important constituents of Britain's local variant of racialized politics. The first of these moments was marked by the riots of 1958 in Notting Dale and elsewhere.[16] Hall had witnessed them anthropologically from his position as an antiracist activist and secondary school teacher in London. The extended book review essay that begins this anthology explains that "the ins and outs of racial prejudice" were of concern to him from the late 1950s, not least because through them he was able to comprehend the close connections between race and the emergent politics of youth and youth culture in the turbulent aftermath of the war. Racial riots and the complex, ambivalent reactions of the "secondary modern generation" captured the quickening of larger cultural shifts in British social life that would be traced in greater detail in many of his later essays.

The *Young Englanders* pamphlet was published the year before Enoch Powell's epoch-making prophecies had been offered in response to the Labour government's tepid, well-meaning attempts to outlaw racial discrimination in the provision of private dwelling space. It picks up some threads from the late 1950s survey but augments those germs of insight into a richly textured treatment designed to alter the emerging sociological fixations on prejudice and the challenging behavior of dark strangers in Britain's "twilight areas." The nascent sociology of race relations was held firmly at arm's length, but the influence of Richard Hoggart's sensitive, thoughtful work is obvious. His approach gets expanded and enriched as Hall finds his way toward an understanding of how black settlement is changing Britain and demanding new ways of approaching questions of class, urban life, generation, and justice. He outlines an early version of an argument that would evolve and reappear in the succeeding decades. The cultural relationships enacted in fraught encounters between black and white involve systematic misrecognition as well as demands for recognition that were bellowed across the barricades and defensive camps that were being erected in Britain's transitional zones during the era of the Co-ordinating Committee against Racial Discrimination.[17] Those racialized differences, overdetermined by class conflict and accelerated by economic and technological change, were not amenable to any tidy or even any dialectical resolution. The patterns of conflict, contact, and coexistence they effected constituted a politics of identity—defined here as sameness, subjectivity, and solidarity—that required both extensive historical analysis and meticulous anthropological exposition. The significance of racism in shaping the polity and, in particular, in strengthening the hateful but apparently endlessly productive populist strand in its political culture also became harder to overlook.

Thanks to the affirmative efforts of Claudia Jones, Leslie Palmer, and numerous others, the summer carnival in Notting Hill transformed the streets made notorious by the 1958 riots, the murder of Kelso Cochrane, and the fruits of Colin MacInnes's literary imagination. While the likes of V. S. Naipaul, George Lamming, and Andrew Salkey created the West Indian novel in London, the Calypsonians that Hall recalls so fondly were being recorded in Dennis Preston's studio on nearby Lansdowne Road. Their amused and amusing immigrant observations on the city's postwar life fed directly into the bank holiday festivities that would supply an already syncretized precedent for more elaborate patterns of intermixture and recombination. In London, Jamaican culture could mesh with the outflow of Trinidad and the small islands. Persistent demands for dignity emanated from their asymmetrical communion and provided a triple oppositional warrant, for recognition, for healing, and for saturnalia. The ludic disorderly spirit of traditional Mas gradually made room for the brazen rebel modernism of the sound systems. Those public excesses were, as the calypso essay also shows, initially accessible through musical vectors that could speak powerfully to white youth too. That seductive culture spread out through the bombed, decaying postwar streets that the incomers made home. That bleak, cold urban environment had already begun to incubate a great flowering of transplanted creole forms. In turn, that manifestation would contribute to a new moment of black cultural power pulsing out not from Jamaica but from the postcolonial metropolis to the newly wired world. The iconic figure of Bob Marley provides a useful cipher for the whole process he helped to consolidate, to invest with philosophical depth, and to reconcile with the hijacked language of human rights that defined it.

A few years later, during the long, hot summer of 1976, all the pride, disillusion, and resilience that Hall had noted in the pessimistic conclusion to the *Englanders* pamphlet blossomed in the young rioters' angry rejection of continued injustice on the same west London streets. Similarly, worldly demands for transcendent justice and reciprocity, now being imagined outside the grip of racial patterns, were expressed in the many confrontations with White Power skinheads and other organized neofascists which led up to the spring 1979 election that brought Margaret Thatcher's government into power. Thatcher's honeyed mixture of romantic nationalism and free marketeering provided Powellism with a clean uniform, ventriloquizing his old populism to compete politically with the resurgent National Front.

In April that year, Blair Peach, an antifascist demonstrator, was struck with an unauthorized weapon and killed by a police officer from the Special Patrol Group during what came to be known as Southall's police riot. As I have said, Peach's death led to an unofficial tribunal of inquiry established by the NCCL under the chairmanship of Professor Michael Dummett, to which Hall made a significant contribution. That report was followed by several similar publications. They enabled Hall to elaborate further on the arguments about racism, the national state, and the black communities that had been outlined in *Policing the Crisis*, the pathbreaking, collectively authored blend of deviancy theory, history, and Marxian political analysis that he had orchestrated and midwifed in 1978.

The popular tribunals of inquiry into police racism that followed in the 1980s were parajudicial exercises, often organized in association with local trade unions. In some cases, these practical excursions into antiracist politics involved public hearings in which their respected expert panelists received detailed testimony from witnesses and victims. The resulting publications rested on solid academic and political foundations, often inspired by Hall's wieldy formulations.

It bears repetition that these initiatives were typical of a time in which political organizing accommodated the obligation to advocate prefigurative, transitional forms that anticipated, and sometimes even summoned, alternative ways of living and organizing the world. Similar initiatives were adopted in the London boroughs of Islington, Tower Hamlets, and Lambeth, where independent research into local manifestations of police racism and misconduct was undertaken under the auspices of the now-forgotten Trades Councils. The resulting reports—*Under Heavy Manners*, *Blood on the Streets*, and *Final Report of the Working Party into Community/Police*

Relations in Lambeth—repay analysis both for the historical detail they provide and their evident theoretical sophistication.[18]

The spring of 1980 saw an eruption of rioting in Bristol. A year later, it was followed by nationwide violent protests that stretched between April and July. Rechristened "uprisings," those explosive events were the unholy culmination of black communities' bitter reactions against the habitual racism of Britain's police. However, in involving all tribes of hopeless, oppressed, and victimized young people, they opened into wider oppositional gestures based on common poverty, class, and gender. The period leading up to the 1981 disorders and the overall shape of the conjuncture of which they were part had been outlined in *Policing the Crisis*'s arguments about the "moral panic" around black mugging, the country's drifting into a more authoritarian kind of society, and the rise of populist politics. It is significant that in exploring those processes the book had touched gently on the complex theoretical issue of internal or endo-colonialism. That discussion had developed from political analysis of the racially segregated spaces of North America. Hall invoked it in a different setting through his notion of the "colony area," an environment in which policing and law owed something to the modes of administration and enforcement more commonly associated with governing imperial and colonial territory. The book's concluding pages engaged directly with the equally sophisticated but clearly divergent analyses provided by respected organic intellectuals drawn from leading organizations within the black movement.

While recognizing that the rebel generation's desperate young people were fighting to escape the kind of employment their parents had taken on as a "super-exploited stratum" and a "reserve army of labour," Hall insisted that their struggles should not be reduced too swiftly to a mass rejection of the forms of work that were available to them. Youth's battles to be free from that "shit-work" were buoyed by an ill-defined but nonetheless alternative conception of social life. It was the substance of the unruly (sub)culture that they improvised from traces of Garveyism, Black Power, and antiracist sentiment melded with the vernacular appeals to the idea of human rights that had become commonplace in what would be known as the golden age of roots reggae. Again, the idea of nonracial justice strengthened moral foundations of that combative stance.

The race war that Powell prophesied in 1968 appeared more plausible once the scale of antipolice feeling had shifted from smoldering quotidian resentment into more spectacular varieties of violent resistance. Angry reactions from every quarter encompassed a dawning sense of the chronic, intractable character of the economic crisis and the unsavory forces that had been unleashed by accelerating deindustrialization of the urban areas where blacks had provided a replacement population prepared to undertake the work that locals would not do and live in the squalor that they fled. The Conservative government's official records, released some years afterward, revealed that Thatcher's cabinet had quietly debated the likely fate of the riot-torn city of Liverpool if a Detroit-style strategy of "managed decline" was to be adopted.

Hall's interest in urban environments as repositories of cultural relations and political antagonisms continued. Their transformation during the next stage of Britain's chronic crisis is treated at some length in his Amnesty International lecture "Cosmopolitan Promises, Multicultural Realities." It situates the spatial effects of inequality and globalization in the context of the uneven habitable multiculture into which Britain had been able to drift only because the national government had been entirely absent from the process of making it. The history of that creolizing process counterpoints a history of economic change and cultural innovation that saw the ambivalent mainstreaming of black life and style in prestigious as well as vernacular forms. They included the experimental output of the film workshops sponsored and supported by Channel 4 and the invigorating work of the new generation of artists associated with the emergent Black Arts movement that had been enabled by Hall's enthusiastic deconstruction of outmoded aesthetic rules and constraining political recipes. He was extensively involved in the production of the report of the Runnymede Trust's Commission on the Future of Multi-ethnic Britain to the Blair government. It was a book-length document that, like the informal inquiries discussed above, made extensive use of his insights even if it attempted to recast them in the anodyne, think-tanky idiom of the policy-political establishment.[19] Sections of that report covering policing, media, and education reveal the continuity and stability of Hall's critical observations that stretched back at least three decades at the time of its publication. His reactions to its disastrous reception at the hands of the tabloids and subsequent disavowal by its governmental sponsors supply the essential background to the thoughtful Pavis lecture here titled "The Multicultural Question."

I suspect that the mounting frustrations of a blocked national context from which the Left had either evaporated or become complicit in the Blair government's rapprochement with neoliberalism were additional factors in Hall's turn toward the alternative possibilities he saw signposted in the flourishing of Black Art, aesthetics, and their consequent need for institution building. In those less depressing settings, the diasporic subject whose appearance marked the end of political innocence and the acquisition of political maturity was a constant—if not quite a dominant—presence. New energies were released as the ectopic heartbeat of Britain's black communities shifted away from its Caribbean defaults and moved toward Africa. A wider set of sustaining interactions with black European artists, curators, and critics in other countries started to change the parameters of dialogue. In those debates, to which the essay on "New Ethnicities" was central, it was still possible to see, say, and learn new things. There, too, the political pedagogy at which Hall had excelled for so long was able to win new audiences and interlocutors.

His practical recommendations to the antiracist educators of the early 1980s read very much against the grain of current discussion, sounding like a reckless refusal of the signature sensitivities of the anxious "snowflake" generation. However, a number of things remain instructive. Hall's thoughtful advice to the activists and organizers of yesteryear has acquired a new resonance. It turns around a surprising proposition, namely, that the struggle against racism demands a high degree of discipline from its political advocates who must not only reject the disabling simplifications of Manichaeanism and moralism but also learn to create and manage *unsafe* spaces in which the "combustible material" of "commonsense" and working-class racism is allowed to surface and breathe. His position is worth quoting at length:

> I do think you have to create an atmosphere which allows people to say unpopular things. I don't think it is at all valuable to have an atmosphere in the classroom which is so clearly, unmistakeably antiracist that the natural and "commonsense" racism which is part of the ideological air that we all breathe is not allowed to come out and express itself. . . . That experience has to surface in the classroom even if it is pretty horrendous to hear—better to hear it than not to hear it.

These words were spoken almost four decades ago to a group of antiracist secondary school teachers. They do not now translate into some misplaced liberal endorsement of an inviolable, yet utterly banal, right to be offensive. Hall is restating a necessary commitment to the hard, demanding political work of building an innovative movement against racism that is premised on a reckoning with the fundamental importance of culture's political powers and moods. People are not simply either fervently racist or fanatically antiracist. There is substantial ground to be gained among those who have no self-conscious view or may not consider themselves political at all. The alt-right, some of whom have mimicked Gramsci while others transposed his twentieth-century vision into their high-tech, mediatized movement-building, have grasped that possibility. They articulate it in their trademarked insistence that politics is now located "downstream from culture."[20] Perhaps, even among them, the value of that insight has been underscored by understanding the significance of racism's rational irrationality, which generates an intensity of political feeling invulnerable to the flimsy weapons of corrective reason. Looking at that insufficiency from what is left of the Left brings to mind another of Stuart Hall's favorite chuckled phrases: "We are, comrades, in deep trouble."

NOTES

I would like to thank Vron Ware, Angela McRobbie, Les Back, Iain Chambers, and Larry Grossberg for their comments and assistance.

1 On this point see also Hall's interview with Les Back: Stuart Hall and Les Back, "At Home and Not at Home: Stuart Hall in Conversation with Les Back," *Cultural Studies* 23, no. 4 (2009): 658–88, http://research.gold.ac.uk/2321/2/At_Home_and_Not_at_Home-1.pdf.

2 Stuart Hall, "Race and 'Moral Panics' in Postwar Britain" (chapter 4 in this volume).

3 The NAME (National Association for Multicultural Education) journal final page. (chapter 8 in this volume).

4 Stuart Hall, "The Whites of Their Eyes" (chapter 7 in this volume).

5 This idea was first expressed by the historian George L. Mosse in *Toward the Final Solution: A History of European Racism* (New York: Howard Fertig, 1978), 234. The formulation was developed further by George M. Fredrickson and Nancy Leys Stepan, among others.

6 Two of the essays in this volume (chapters 10 and 11) were written for UNESCO publications in which Marion O'Callaghan was extensively involved; they are *Race and Class in Post-colonial Society: A Study of Ethnic Group Relations in the English-Speaking Caribbean, Bolivia, Chile and Mexico* (Paris: UNESCO, 1977) and *Sociological Theories: Race and Colonialism*, introduced by Marion O'Callaghan (Paris: UNESCO, 1980).

7 Colin MacInnes, *Westward to Laughter* (New York: Farrar, Straus and Giroux, 1969).

8 This phrase is taken from Hall's essay on Fanon; chapter 18 of this volume.

9 See, for example, the interview with Hall in the Sussex University student publication "Cultures of Resistance and 'Moral Panics': An Interview with Stuart Hall," *Afras Review*, no. 4 (1979): 2–18.

10 See, for example, *Black People in Britain: The Way Forward: A Report of a Conference Held 17/19 January 1975 Written Up and Edited by Dr. Rajeev Dhavan on Behalf of the Post-conference Constituent Committee* (London: PCCC, 1976). Hall is listed as a "principal participant."

11 See Anne Walmsley, *The Caribbean Artists' Movement, 1966–1972: A Literary and Cultural History* (Finsbury Park, UK: New Beacon Books, 1992). Walmsley reveals

that Stuart Hall had been active in the West Indian Students Society at Oxford and chronicles his participation in the CAM conferences as well as his contribution to the CAM special issue of *Savacou* in 1974 (chapter 3 in this volume).

12 This is a reference to the Labour journal *New Socialist*, from which the essay of the 1981 riots has been reprinted; see chapter 5 in this volume.

13 Sheila Rowbotham, Lynne Segal, and Hilary Wainwright, *Beyond the Fragments: Feminism and the Making of Socialism* (Islington, UK: Islington Community Press, 1979), 71–79.

14 This phrase comes from the intervention "Subjects in History: Making Diasporic Identities" (chapter 17 in this volume).

15 Joseph A. Hunte, *Nigger Hunting in England* (London: West Indian Standing Conference London Region, 1965).

16 Edward Pilkington, *Beyond the Mother Country: West Indians and the Notting Hill White Riots* (London: I. B. Tauris, 1988); Mark Olden, *Murder in Notting Hill* (London: Zero Books, 2011).

17 The Birmingham-based Co-ordinating Committee against Racial Discrimination was formed in the early 1960s.

18 *Under Heavy Manners: Report of the Labour Movement Enquiry into Police Brutality and the Position of Black Youth in Islington Held on Saturday July 23rd 1977* (London: Islington Defence Committee, 1977); *Blood on the Streets: A Report by Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council on Racial Attacks in East London* (London: Bethnal Green and Stepney Trades Council, 1978); *Final Report of the Working Party into Community/Police Relations in Lambeth, London* (London: Borough of Lambeth, 1981).

19 Runnymede Trust, *The Future of Multi-ethnic Britain* (London: Profile Books, 2000).

20 This phrase is associated with the right-wing journalist Andrew Breitbart, founder of the Breitbart News Network. See also Hans Georg Betz, "Everything That Is Wrong Is the Fault of '68: Regaining Cultural Hegemony by Trashing the Left," Open Democracy, August 4, 2018, www.opendemocracy.net/can-europe-make-it/hans-georg-betz/everything-that-is-wrong-is-fault-of-68-regaining-cultural-hegemony-by-trashing-left.

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PART I

RIOTS, RACE, AND REPRESENTATION

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CHAPTER 1

Absolute Beginnings: Reflections on the Secondary Modern Generation

To Sir, With Love, E. R. Braithwaite. Bodley Head, 13/6.
Journey Into a Fog, Margareta Berger-Hamerschlag. Ace Books, 2/6.
Absolute Beginners, Colin MacInnes. Macgibbon and Kee.
The Teenage Consumer, Dr. Mark Abrams for the London Press Exchange.

I.

Reading the first two of these four books is like reliving the best and worst moments of teaching and working amongst the Secondary Modern generation. They are both well written, sympathetic in their approach to young people, and full of insights. Mr. Braithwaite is a West Indian who went to teach in a Secondary Modern school in the East End. His chronicle is a record of how he managed to win the confidence of his young pupils, with some delicate sidelights (timely in the year of Notting Hill) on the ins and outs of racial prejudice. Mrs. Berger-Hamerschlag taught Art in a youth club in a London slum. Her book (first published with Gollancz in 1955, and reissued, with an appropriately sexy cover, by Ace Books and a blurb about this "savage and sometimes shocking story of teenagers in a London slum") is not, perhaps, so sensational as it looks in its new format. But it must have been quite remarkable when it first appeared, and even now, it has much to add by way of detail and perception.

One cannot help feeling that Mr. Braithwaite was extremely fortunate in his headmaster. He emerges as a figure of extraordinary sympathy and gentleness, with intelligent ideas about his children and their background, about the attitude of staff to pupils, and about the relationship between discipline and freedom in education.

> It is said that here we practice free discipline. That's wrong, quite wrong. It would be more correct to say that we are seeking, as best we can, to establish disciplined freedom, that state in which the child feels free to work, play and express himself without fear of those whose job it is to direct and stimulate his efforts into constructive channels. (Braithwaite 1959, 32)

I don't want to go into the intricacies of the debates about "progressive education," but my experience of young boys' attitudes towards the school suggests that it is disciplined freedom, rather than absolute liberty, which most youngsters want and expect from school. They need, of course, the opportunities for participation and making decisions which the present authoritarian pattern of Secondary Modern schools prevents. But they are neither so self-reliant nor so confident as to expect "free discipline." They would not know what to do with it if they had it. Complete absence of discipline suggests to most Secondary Modern forms that the teacher has no sense of direction, no priorities and no targets. They dislike this drift even when they exploit it. What does matter is the *context* within which discipline is practised, the freedom from fear which Braithwaite's headmaster stressed, the sense of mutual give-and-take, the respect which teachers have for the people they teach. The only discipline worth having is the discipline of *purpose*, in the context of love. It cannot be imposed by fear, formality or the cane. It is the most difficult balance to achieve.

Mr. Braithwaite's headmaster was singular, not in the fact that his relationship with his pupils was good (it very often is): but in the fact that he *cared* what the relationship was between his pupils *and the rest of his staff*, and that he prized directness and outspokenness, even if this appeared as "a form of rudeness at first." So many headmasters pander to the priggish sense of self-importance and prestige which is characteristic of the teaching profession. The teachers stand between the pupils and the head. He is often free to develop a close relationship with his students which is not put to the test of the class-room. In these circumstances, many headmasters "have a way" with the boys and girls which is purely personal, and which makes little or no impact at all upon the relationships which prevail through the rest of the school between staff and pupils.

Mr. Braithwaite was also particularly fortunate in his teaching associates. I do not mean to infer that there are no good, dedicated teachers. There are thousands. But I cannot get rid of the impression that by and large Secondary Modern teachers today suffer an acute lack of morale which has been consciously overlooked because teachers are in such short supply. They consider the Sec Mod to be inferior in status: and they are acutely status-conscious. Often, they despise the areas in which they teach, and the homes from which their students come. They are anxious not to be involved with the personal and informal problems of young people. Often, they have placed a safe distance between themselves and the school—protected from the realities of urban life by the green belt and the suburban line. It is most disturbing to count up the number of young teachers who would like their self-respect and their status to be protected by the agile and relentless use of the headmaster's cane. In many cases, Sec Mod teachers invert their affronted sense of status into an attack upon the supply teachers. How much of this is due to professional jealousy, how much to the fact that supply teachers are often foreigners—Australians, West Indians, Indians, Pakistanis, etc.—is difficult to judge. But the thing is there, and fostered at national level too (witness the disgusting sentiments expressed at a recent conference of the Schoolmasters' Association), in spite of the fact that, without the present numbers of supply teachers, many Secondary Modern schools would fold up tomorrow. This prejudice is merely one of many indications of a deep demoralisation among the shock-troops in the front line of the class struggle in secondary education today. They do not understand what the nature of that struggle is. Many of them are products of the "scholarship boy" revolution in education. They feel all the stresses and tensions of the *parvenu*. Caught themselves between generations, between social allegiances, they find it impossible to project or identify.

Mr. Braithwaite's staff seemed, on the whole, both sympathetic and capable—not beaten down by the irritations of working with bad equipment in crowded classrooms, not disgusted with having to explain about washing and sanitary napkins to the girls, not—with one exception—protected from the immense problems and responsibilities by a cheaply attained cynicism.

But his success, undoubtedly, was with the boys and girls in the top form. Here, he managed what few good teachers in the best Secondary Modern schools seem able to accomplish: making the non-G.C.E. form of school-leavers find something worthwhile in school.

This group of school-leavers is really the alienated generation. Many people who do not view the problems of young people today from the vantage point of the school, see the crucial change in adolescent experience as falling between school and work. But I have little doubt that the most important formative point lies *between* the junior and adolescent phases—roughly at the breaking-point between the second and third years of the Secondary Modern career. Work, of course, adds responsibilities, new skills, a new environment, a wider pattern of movement from the home and its surroundings. But basically, work modifies a pattern of feeling, responses and attitudes already established by the age of fourteen. The next phase begins with marriage.

In spite of cramming for the 11-plus and the consequent neglect of late-starters, the quality of entrants to the Sec Mod from the Primary schools is good. These children have very little sense of how much their future is likely to be affected by having failed at the first jump of the social barrier. They are keen, enthusiastic, childish in their interests and their delights, they possess a high reserve of vitality and enthusiasm, and they are immensely educable. But at the age of thirteen/fourteen, they begin to pass out of the direct influence of home-and-school, and into the wider world of their own groups, the friendships and rivalries of their local gangs, the culture of the youth club and skiffle group, the heady atmosphere of the mass entertainments. However inadequate, the home and school have, until this point, provided some sort of a framework of reference, within which primary experiences are ordered and understood. But in the local gang, the pattern is tribal and self-imposed. Its particular attraction lies in the fact that it draws little upon, and bears only a subterranean relationship with, the adult world. The youth club offers facilities for informal social contact which the school does not: but unless it is an outstanding example of its kind, it provides little "training"—even in the sense of training responses to new adolescent experiences. The youth club is very much the clash of opposing worlds. The pattern of activities, the "rules," the standards and codes of behaviour, the tone, imposed from above: the club drawing its particular vigour and character from the subterranean emotional life of its members, from below.

This is the point at which young people discover the relative irrelevance of the school. And after that, it is difficult to engage their real interests without the spur of academic achievement—(a try at G.C.E.). As Braithwaite says: "It was as if I were trying to reach the children through a thick pane of glass, so remote and uninterested they seemed" (1959, 74). It's not that they long for the more "proper" ethos of the Grammar school. That kind of aspiration is nonexistent—a reflection of how limited the appeal of the Ladder of Success is below a certain educational and social threshold. They consider the Grammar school too strict and too "posh." They prefer the informality which prevails, willy-nilly, in the Secondary Modern. And this in itself throws a certain light on the particular nature of the lacks, the deprivations, which they experience at this point in adolescence. This is the point at which they begin to reflect upon their own sense of failure. They feel their second-class status. They are conscious of the lack of care: and they identify this lack of sympathy and understanding with the school itself. Their range of expectations close up. They are being trained for the semi-skilled positions, and for that limited end, the school has done its job by 13, and they are anxious to get out and get on with it. Much of the aimless frenzy of their leisure life is a displacement of the energies and aspirations which have been trained or drained out of them by school and work. They become in the end what many teachers have always believed they were: unteachable, unclubbable. One of the most disturbing experiences in a Secondary Modern school is the open, callous manner in which many teachers accept the fact that the lively, vital fourth stream class in the First Year will become, inevitably, the blasé, disenchanted, inattentive "shower" in the Fourth—without asking how on earth this transformation ever takes place.

Mr. Braithwaite had to cope with all the external expressions of this state of cultural deprivation: noise (not occasional, but wilful and deliberately indulged as a kind of war of nerves), inattention, persistent clinical use of swear words, a single-track devotion to sex, the irritable and sudden explosions of violence towards authority and towards each other. These things bothered Mrs. Berger-Hamerschlag as well. She is continually reporting the invasion of her Art class by groups of boys, wandering aimlessly about, spilling paint and daubing the desks with a kind of intent, impotent fury.

> Chris's gang appeared this evening. They never walk in, these fifteen- to sixteen-year-old crazies, they rush in vehemently, as if in a commando raid. . . . They are rebellious because they miss a lot which they think they can never have and their natural longing for love and fun is being twisted through their being beaten, rejected or badly used in other ways. (Berger-Hamerschlag 1956, 92–93)

There are really difficult distinctions to be made here. Working-class children do not have the same respect or value of studious silence that is common among Grammar school children. Frequently, in a classroom of forty, the standard of work and application is high in spite of the continuous undertones of voices and exchanges. This can be irritating, particularly to those teachers who apply Grammar school standards of dress and behaviour to working-class children. But this is a different aspect of their behaviour from the consciously created interruption, which is really a form of inspired violence, and relates more closely to the aimless kicking of dustbins, the scraps and "giggles," the "bashing" and "doing" (including the more organised "doing" of Irish or West Indians) which is so much an integral part of working-class adolescent activity. I think the teenagers who explain all this in terms of boredom and bottled-up energy, rather than consciously thought-out violence directed against any one group, are close to the truth. Particular prejudices about "niggers" or "paddies" or "yids" are inspired: they develop *out of* a deeper level of social frustration against the society and the adult world. They are not, in themselves, the source of violence.

When youngsters, who have been on a giggle to Notting Hill, talk about it afterwards, they are perfectly aware that it is a pointless, and degrading, kind of self-indulgence. But, at the moment, the urge to commit violence is quite clearly overpowering. "There's nothing to do, see, and you're tired of sitting around. They don't want to argue, and if you start an argument they just start swearing to shut you up. And then along comes someone, and there's something about him you don't like, see, he's a coloured man or an Irish or something, and one of the boys gets a thing about him. Let's rush him, he says, and before you know what's going on."

Mrs. Berger-Hamerschlag never managed to surmount this problem with those who came only occasionally to her classes. Those who were interested, either in painting or in the company of the painting class—she found—could easily be involved in creative work: though their staying power was, naturally, limited. Mr. Braithwaite managed to sublimate their energy in the classroom and in work: in one case, he was obliged to take on the most surly of his students in a boxing bout, but I found this episode—even if true to life—an unrepresentative and arbitrary solution to a tough problem. It is interesting that, in their quite different situations, both authors came to much the same conclusions, and adopted the same variety of tactics. Braithwaite realised that, by fourteen, these youngsters were, in many ways, already adult. They had adult interests, and, in many cases, adult experiences. His decision to treat them as such, to honour their sense of importance and seriousness, transformed the relationship between himself and them. I am not sure that many Sec Mod boys would have agreed to call their classmates "Miss," or even that this kind of formality is advisable. Occasionally, when he is on this track, Mr. Braithwaite's tone becomes smug and self-important. But it certainly turned the trick. Mrs. Berger-Hamerschlag discovered that, above all, the kids wanted to be taken seriously.

> They are marvellous and respond easily when an atmosphere of "art college" is being created. It means to them that they are taken seriously and that someone believes in their ability; the hobby idea is poison to them. (Berger-Hamerschlag 1956, 63)

And, more characteristically:

> "Why do they dish out these rotten things to us?" asked Dave. "Why don't we get white paper? Why don't we get decent brushes? These are brooms, wicked! I thought that this was a proper art class!" (Berger-Hamerschlag 1956, 44)

Perhaps we ought to put alongside that Mr. Braithwaite's description of his East End children listening to music:

> They listened, those rough looking, untidy children; every one of them sat still, unmoving and attentive, until the very last echo of the last clear note had died away. Their silence was not the result of boredom or apathy, nor were they quiet because it was expected of them or through fear of the consequences; but they were listening actively, attentively, listening to those records, with the same raptness they had shown in their jiving. (Braithwaite 1959, 53)

II.

We have very little understanding of the roots of cultural deprivation, and of its relation to the pattern of class culture and education in this country. Where does it begin? In the school? In the family? In the give-and-take (or lack of it) between adolescent and adult generations?—and if so, why?

Clearly, the school itself is not wholly to blame, though what happens here is important, for it develops social tendencies which may originate elsewhere. In its own way, the Secondary Modern school—its whole conception as a second-class educational stream, the idea that any kind of modern education can be given in the old school environment—is a careful adjustment to Welfare State Britain. The same double standards which apply elsewhere (see, for example, *Conviction*) can be seen at work in the Secondary Modern. Even where the school is doing its best, the general impression is that in education there is one law for some and another for the rest. The Secondary Modern generation are not only treated as if they are second rate: they *know* they are being treated in this way. The sense of failure, of rejection runs deep in the psychology of this generation: it influences both their attitudes towards the society and their evaluation of themselves.

Streaming takes place at an early stage in the Secondary Modern school, and this is done according to the different class evaluations of "academic" and "vocational" aptitudes, and the differing rewards which these kinds of talents merit in the labour market. There are considerable academic talents going to waste in the Secondary Modern. The top streams receive a poor-man's Grammar school education. By the age of fourteen, in their G.C.E. class, it is clear to everyone in the school that they would have been perfectly capable of coping with a Grammar school curriculum. The effect of the Secondary school upon the more academically advanced is simply that they come to realise, at the school leaving age, what they have missed. They *are* "*Grammar* school boys," with the tell-tale stigma of a Secondary Modern on their progress reports.

For the rest, the level of educational challenge offered is abysmally low. This does not mean that all children deserve an academically biased education—though in my experience the evaluation of their intellectual aptitudes is pitched far below their capacities. That is because most subjects are taught as academic "disciplines" rather than as transmission of social skills. It is possible for both history and geography to be taught as social studies, to a level far in advance of those currently attained in the Sec Mod, provided the subjects are approached within the context of the lives of the students, rather than within the arbitrary framework of the G.C.E. syllabus. Very little work of this kind, which is taking root in the Comprehensives, is attempted in the Secondary Moderns.

Here again, the social valuations established outside the school play a determining role within the school. Thus certain subjects—foreign languages, literature, science, history—are considered suitable for the "academic" streams, and not for the others. This bears little or no relationship to the actual interests or capacities of the pupils concerned. I have yet to meet the average "vocational" or "technical" child who had no interest whatever in any of the so-called "academic" subjects. Every boy in my fifth stream First Year Class for example, wanted to learn French. There is no doubt that, dim-witted as they are considered, they are in fact lively and active, and their imaginative capacities, to judge from their drawings and paintings and essays, are quite equal to it. Any one of these boys would have picked up French inside of six months, had he been living in the country.

But French is an "academic discipline"—the special privilege of the top streams. It is treated not as a linguistic skill but rather as a kind of cultural status-badge. It "belongs" to academic children, preparing for a semiprofessional or white-collar career. I have heard teachers threaten "A" stream classes that "if they did not live up to" their special position, they would be deprived of their French classes! This is only one example of the way in which working-class boys and girls are still adjusted, through the school, to their "proper" cultural and social position. What has been said of French could be equally applied to other subjects—in spite of the fact that in every class it is clear that there is a tremendous range of *combinations* of talents and skills.

The Secondary Modern school is, in essence, an *adaptive* social institution. A level of culture, a certain social status is prescribed from above, and the children are roughly attuned to it. There is, comparatively, little or no breaking through this cultural-social barrier. Therefore, it is not surprising to find that these boys and girls develop early an hostility to intellectual pursuits. They consider a serious interest in art (at which, being uninhibited, they are often very good indeed), or drama, or literature or biology not merely beyond their particular abilities, but outside their social stratosphere. These distinctions, moreover, are social and cultural rather than educational. The children are said to be unequipped to deal with art or literature or biology: yet they adore to paint or to read and perform plays, and they are fascinated by the world of nature and the laboratory. Clearly, the natural aptitudes and interests in the school are at sharp variance with the education provided: why not adjust the education to the interests, rather than squeeze the children into pre-digested categories? At least, the experiment should be tried; though in my view, it would not be successful outside the framework of the Comprehensive school.

Secondary Modern education, then, is not a matter of the extension of the range of experiences and skills beyond the normal level. It is much more a matter of making students familiar, through education, with the social and class barriers to education and culture which the society has already imposed. The cultural frontiers of working-class boys and girls cannot, in the normal way, be expected to broaden out. Whatever the economic position of working-class teenagers today, their cultural status is pretty plain. Here is a deep-rooted dislocation in the society, a social crisis in every way as sharp and as class-bound as economic crises have been in the past. It is ridiculous to talk of economic prosperity working, in the natural course of events, to break down established barriers between social classes. Class distinctions based upon attitudes, taste, education, and rooted in the educational system itself, do not wither away any more quickly than the State Department. A common culture does not "just grow" out of a socially differentiated society, any more than grass roots flourish in stone.

The Secondary Modern pattern of education gives us the most important clue we need for an explanation of the increasing gap between "high" and "popular" culture, and for the degeneration of "popular" culture into "mass culture." Mass culture, of course, is largely a creation by the commercial world for a literate society at an advanced technological stage. But the cultural gap between the "haves" and the "have-nots" of the education world provides the conditions within which the purveyors of mass culture operate. Without this gap, the exploitation and manipulation of tastes, needs and interests by an educated elite would be impossible. Or, to put it differently, a common culture, available to all and modified by the experiences of different social groups, is the only guarantee we possess of a genuinely democratic society. Mass culture is the culture of a mass democracy without democracy. Needless to say, young people are one of the most culturally exposed groups to mass culture. They expend their generous emotional responses in an attachment to its commodities: whilst "high culture" is increasingly taken over by dilettantism, preciosity and narrowness, and marked by that thinness of response and lack of social relevance which characterises so much minority art.

But the Secondary Modern school is, by and large, so well adjusted to the social norms of the society that it cannot afford to recognise the interpenetration of "school" and "leisure" attitudes in young people, or the playback of "teenage" interests in the school and classroom. Needless to say, the School is wholly unequipped to deal critically or responsibly with the "leisure" world, blotting the whole thing out like an unpleasant nightmare. Teachers are to be seen struggling with the symptoms of cynicism, boredom and confusion in the classroom which cannot be explained without reference to the emotional and "personal" interests of young people in the really formative worlds which they inhabit. For the same reason, the "leisure" world of the teenager assumes an importance unrivalled by school or home, an independence of the adult world and a freedom from the constraints of maturity and conformity which constitutes, in itself, its major attraction. In response to the cultural exploitation, which the school assists in, many teenagers erect cultural barriers themselves: so that their leisure world absorbs and consumes all the emotional vitality and the fantasy and imaginative projections of adolescence, and becomes a wholly self-enclosed universe.

The school, then, is constantly competing with the leisure world for the emotional attachments of young people—and losing the battle into the bargain. Neither the family nor the youth club in any sense adequately compensates. Left to themselves, young people develop very much according to the lights and lessons of each other's experiences—a school of life both limited, frustrating and self-enclosed. The gulf between themselves and adult life becomes unbridgeable. The quarrel between the generations becomes a vast, deadly silence of incomprehension.

It is only fair to say that neither Mr. Braithwaite nor Mrs. Berger-Hamerschlag come anywhere within striking distance of this problem. Their books are therefore interesting and humane (which, God knows, is almost enough these days)—but somehow not compelling. There are really crucial connections to be made which never get made. Mrs. Berger-Hamerschlag, for example, finds that her girls are interested "in nothing but their own beauty": but she brings them fashion magazines! She recognises the fantasy element in the cinema—"Hollywood is fairyland . . ."—but she speaks as if she considers their addiction to the cinema as if it were, by definition, a sign of wholesale waste. After all, a few pages later, she makes some very perceptive remarks about her students' passion for "realism" in art. "I can't get any of them to do anything imaginative. . . . Perhaps it's not so strange after all. They are at the age where they change from that introvert period of childhood into the adult stage of realism." Precisely. If that is the case, then the passion for "realism," particularly in the cinema, is a natural and healthy taste: the only problem is *what they are being shown*, what kind of realism are they being fed? Paragraphs of her book which begin with the good sense of this one:

> Relationships, usually fleeting and sensual, can be developed into humane ones in which warmth, comradeship and mutual interests play their part

have a way of ending up in rhapsodies like this:

> Why, wine has been grown in this island in Roman times, so why shouldn't we hope for a freer and happier youth, carried into being on a wave of living art and religion—neither imaginable without the other.

In such passages as these, Mrs. Berger-Hamerschlag seeks a romantic escape from the immense social pressures which are at work in the situation she is describing.

What we have to do is to begin to disentangle what is real and what is phony in the responses of young people today. What is real are the feelings and attitudes involved, the interests aroused: what is phony are the *ways* the feelings are engaged, the trivial and inconsequential directions in which the aroused interests are channelled. The revolt and iconoclasm of youth today arises because of the contradictions between the true and the false elements in their culture: because the wave of postwar prosperity has raised them to cultural thresholds which offer rewards unequal to the expectations aroused. Instead, therefore, most young people compensate for their frustrations by an escape into the womb-world of mass entertainments, by an aggressive revolt against conformist adulthood, by pioneering the frontiers of experience in search of the *feel of living*, or by an aggressive affirmation of the self against the world through violence. This is no temporary, diverting "phenomenon." It is a major social trauma, generalised for a whole generation.

The street or school gang, for example, which is so often criticised because of its antisocial tendencies, must also be understood as the search for a meaningful social group, for real face-to-face relations. As one lad put it, "The gang is always 'us' and 'them.' England against the rest, London against somewhere else, your part of London against another part, your street against the next, you and your mate, even, against the others." His use of the words "us" and "others" represents a serious challenge to the general quality of human relationships in our society. It gives voice to frustration arising from the apparent impossibility to "know other people," from the anonymity of human society and its institutions, and from the lack of care. And these are responses which, if we are honest with ourselves, we know as well, but which we have often consciously shoved to the back of our mind because we have lost the capacity to criticise and understand the working of society *on this human level*, or because we feel it is all somehow "inevitable in the age of mass technology." The truth is that we live in an age in which the very flow between human beings—a truly human and personal thing—has become distorted, part of a total crisis which eats through into the family life, and personal relationships as well. If we are willing to accept this state of affairs for the sake of a high rate of technical and industrial growth, then we are laying in store for our society deep social disturbances, of which racial riots, floating juvenile delinquency and petty crimes are merely unpleasant forerunners. A breakdown in the passage between youth and maturity represents a general condition, and cannot be explained without reference to the social relationships between groups and people in general. What we find in the detail of teenage attitudes today is the distorted moral response to a bureaucratic age. That is why the complex of feelings, pin-pointed, say, in the James Dean portrayal of father-son relationships in *East of Eden* and *Rebel without a Cause*, achieves so immediate a response in England and Western Europe, in Poland and the Soviet Union as well.

III.

It is, therefore, with something of a shock that one turns to this paragraph in the Editorial introduction to Dr. Mark Abrams's recent L.P.E. Pamphlet, *The Teenage Consumer*:

> The teenager is newly enfranchised, in an economic sense. This has given him the chance to be himself and show himself, and has misled a number of people, especially some elderly ones, into the belief that the young of mid-twentieth-century Britain are something new and perhaps ominous. We ourselves see no cause for alarm, and not much for diagnosing novelty except in the new levels of spending power and their commercial effects. There remains the ancient need for the older to understand the younger, and we now confront a business necessity *for* this understanding, as well as the older moral and psychological imperatives. (1959, 3)

The "commercial effects" of the teenage revolution are, of course, staggering—perhaps not quite in the sense that the London Press Exchange (Britain's largest advertising agency) use the words. Every other fact recorded by Dr. Abrams in the pamphlet (which is, in its way, an attractively illustrated job) is not merely "new," but startling in both its "business" and "social" implications. Dr. Abrams reckons that Britain's 5,000,000 unmarried teenagers (up to twenty-five) have a total annual uncommitted spending power of £900,000,000—a rise in *real* earnings over 1938 of 50 percent, and in real "discretionary" spending of over 100 percent. He goes on to point out that this is a market clearly distinguished in its tastes, constantly renewing itself: that it is almost entirely working-class, and predominantly male. Nearly a quarter of teenagers' uncommitted money goes on clothing and footwear, another 14 percent on drink and tobacco, and another 12 percent on sweets, soft drinks and snacks in cafes and restaurants. If we add together the teenage expenditure on records, record-players, books, papers and magazines, "recreational goods," cinema admissions and "other entertainments," we can estimate that the teenage market for "pop" entertainments is about £125,000,000, or about 14 percent of their total uncommitted spending power. The amount spent on clothes, cosmetics, etc., is about £225,000,000.

The pattern of consumption is, of course, extraordinarily specialised. Their spending on "other goods and services"—which includes most adult and "home" consumer goods—is less than 3 percent of the total. Moreover, their expenditure on tobacco and alcohol is comparatively unimportant. "The teen-age population visits the cinema much more frequently than do its elders; it watches less television than does the rest of the population, and it tends to concentrate its reading on a few newspapers and magazines with very large circulations." The *Mirror* reaches over two-fifths of them, and the *News of the World* and *Sunday Pictorial* each reach approximately half all teenagers.

In his summing up, Mr. Abrams makes three points of wider interest: that the teenage market depends very heavily upon the one industrial country which has experience of a prosperous working-class adolescent market—the United States; that teenagers are looking for goods and commodities which are "highly charged emotionally": and that, with the rise of the teen-age market as a distinctive age group, "ideas, values and experiences" tend to become "superannuated" at an earlier age. The "turn-over" in attitudes and values is just about as rapid as the multiple stores or the advertisers manage on the Charing Cross Road, or the song-writers in Tin Pan Alley.

Prosperity is the backdrop to every other thing which we can say about the Secondary Modern generation today. And while the superficial changes of style and taste ring out successively, there are some important underlying patterns to observe. In London, at any rate, we are witnessing a "quiet" revolution within the teenage revolution itself. The outlines of the Secondary Modern generation in the 1960s are beginning to form. The Teddy Boy era is playing itself out. The LP, Hi-Fi generation is on the way in. The butcher-boy jeans, velvet lapel coats and three-inch crepes are considered coarse and tasteless. They exist but they no longer set the "tone." "Teds" are *almost* square. Here are the very smart, sophisticated young men and women of the metropolitan jazz clubs, the Flamingo Club devotees—the *other* Marquee generation. Suits are dark, sober and casual-formal, severely cut and narrow on the Italian pattern. Hair cuts are "modern"—a brisk, flat-topped French version of the now-juvenile American crewcut, modestly called "College style." Shirts are either white-stiff or solid colour close-knit wool in the Continental manner. Jeans are *de rigueur*, less blue-denim American, striped narrowly or black or khaki. The girls are short-skirted, sleekly groomed, pin-pointed on stiletto heels, with set hair and Paris-boutique dead-pan make-up and mascara. Italian pointed shoes are absolute and universal.

A fast-talking, smooth-running, hustling generation with an ad-lib gift of the gab, quick sensitivities and responses, and an acquired taste for the Modern Jazz Quartet. They are the "prosperity" boys—not in the sense that they have a fortune stashed away, but in that they are familiar with the in-and-out flow of money. In the age of super-inflation, money is a highly volatile thing. They have the spending habit, and the sophisticated tastes to go along with it. They are city birds. They know their way around. They are remarkably self-possessed, though often very inexperienced, and eager beneath the eyes. Their attitude to adults is less resentful than scornful. Adults are simply "square." Mugs. They are not "with it." They don't know "how the wind blows." School has passed through this generation like a dose of salts—but they are by no means intellectually backward. They are, in fact, sharp and self-inclined. Office-boys—even van-boys—by day, they are record-sleeve boys by night. They relish a spontaneous giggle, or a sudden midnight trip to Southend: they are capable of a certain cool violence. The "Teds" are their alter-egos.

They despise "the masses" (the evening-paper lot on the tubes in the evening), "traditionals," "cops" (cowboys), "peasants" and "bohemians." But they know how to talk to journalists and TV "merchants," debs and holiday businessmen. Their experiences are, primarily, personal, urban and sensational: sensational in the sense that the test of beatitude is being able to get so close you feel you are "part of the act, the scene." They know that the teenage market is a racket, but they are subtly adjusted to it nonetheless. They seem culturally exploited rather than socially deprived. They stand at the end of the Teddy Boy era of the Welfare State. They could be the first generation of the Common Market.

The hero of Colin MacInnes's *Absolute Beginners* comes straight at us out of this changing panorama, with a flow and authenticity which marks the book as an excellent and distinguished piece of social documentary. The book asks to be tested against "life"—and this is no mean accomplishment. His social observation is keen, representative, detailed and engaged. He is not afraid of handling the material of teenage life within the framework of his own clearly articulated values. But he has managed, without too many nuances, to embody his attitudes in his hero, and through him, to figure out the contemporary attitudes of a whole range of teenagers. The novel has a backdrop of little deals and rackets which is almost certain to make some distinguished reviewer say, "Mr. MacInnes has overdone it a little. Surely there are too many crooks, prostitutes, perverts and spivs?" I refer to Mr. MacInnes's judgment on this one: this hustling quarter at least of today's teenagers are second-generation spivs. That is one of the things which the War and the floating amoralism of the Welfare State have done for the young. (You have to look at *Ashes and Diamonds* to see what a different kind of War and a different, harsher brand of amoralism have done for the Poles.)

Mr. MacInnes deliberately takes us on a tour of "modern" attitudes. The Teds and the bottle-throwers lurk in the background—and at the end of the novel, which is set graphically in the Notting Hill riots, they emerge to take their proper place in the roll-call of urban violence. If Mr. MacInnes concentrates on the "modern" advance guard I described above, it is not because the cruder, simpler "moral" view of the Ted has ceased to function. In Notting Hill, and elsewhere, their writ runs. I think it is because Mr. MacInnes would have found it impossible to embody his very healthy and humane views about contemporary life in the thwarted, suffocated consciousness of the Teddy Boy. His views need the light and freshness—also the sophistication and sensitivity—of the more "contemporary" article. The Modern Jazz Quartet generation may also be the generation that *could* lift its eyes above the slums of Paddington. Its horizons may be carefully manipulated by Fleet Street and A.R. TV: they are somehow broader, more comprehensive and basically more humane. Are they in any sense "socially" more responsible? No. But they are socially more responsive. They have views which include people other than themselves. And now that the "teenage thing" is a constant source of copy for both the Press and Television, they are both self-conscious about it, and beginning to think and articulate about it. Both things are good, provided the discussion can be made to broaden out and include other subjects besides the inter-generation struggle.

MacInnes "on tour" is, at first reading, a little irritating, and occasionally transparent. But the second reading persuades. He knows where he is going, and he has managed to impose a certain unity on the tale. What is more, he has done it with remarkable personal feeling, and without straining or forcing the sequence of incidents. The novel could easily have degenerated into a series of isolated episodes. In fact, the incidents are related to each other through the hero, and the "plot" provides a kind of loose moral pattern—or at least, the book achieves a unity in its moral tone and attitude towards the different types and points of view portrayed. This makes *Absolute Beginners* more than mere *rapportage*: the hero, in spite of his typicality in many respects, has very strong moral views on certain subjects—coloured people, for example—and an attitude to life and a love for London which is at once sympathetic and at the same time humane and committed. In that sense he is more than a roving camera of the teenage scene: he brings to bear upon it a moral point of view. This makes *Absolute Beginners* a novel rather than a piece of inspired journalism—though, of course, it is a novel in the social documentary genre.