STUART HALL IN TRANSLATION: BRAZILIAN PORTUGUESE, WITH BILL SCHWARZ AND LIV SOVIK

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SPEAKERS
Bill Schwarz, Liv Sovik, Orsod Malik

[Introductory excerpt set to jazz drumming]

Liv 00:02
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Bill 00:23
It's not spontaneity.

Liv 00:24
*Absolutely nothing to do with spontaneity. So when you explained it to me as sort of the complicated relationship between sort of 'parole and langue'***,** *really, or surface and structure, deep structure, to use more [of] Stuart Hall's terms. That is how I finally was able to explain it. But it is very difficult to understand because it has to do with a cultural experience which is not available to Brazil.*

[Introduction]

Orsod 00:56
Hello. My name is Orsod Malik, and I am the Executive Director of the Stuart Hall Foundation. In August 2022, I had the pleasure of speaking with Bill Schwarz and Liv Sovik to initiate the Foundation's Stuart Hall In Translation project, produced in partnership with Cultural Studies Journal.

Through this initiative, we invite you to observe ideas in motion, to trace their resonance and transformations as they oscillate between languages, historical conjunctures, and varying socio-political contexts.

Bill Schwarz is Professor of English at Queen Mary University, editor of History Workshop Journal, general editor along with Catherine Hall of the Duke University Press series *Stuart Hall: Selected Writings*, and a close friend and colleague of Stuart's. Bill played an integral role in bringing Hall's autobiography, *Familiar Stranger*, to bear. He worked closely with Stuart in the later years of his life to produce this posthumous text, a dedication to Stuart's life and work through a process that reflected Schwarz and Hall's many conversations, the ideas exchanged between them, and their deep fondness and respect for one another.
Liv Sovik is Professor of Communication at Universidade Federal do Rio de Janeiro and has written on Brazilian identities, imaginaries and cultural politics, often through the prism of the popular music tradition. She edited a major collection of Stuart's Hall's work under the title *Da Diáspora: Identidades e Mediações Culturais*, in 2003, as well as translating a handful of his other texts into Portuguese. She collaborated with Adelaine LaGuardia Resende on the translation into Portuguese of Familiar Stranger.

The Stuart Hall in Translation project will explore the following questions: what can be lost and gained when texts are translated into different languages? How might ideas form linkages across difference? And how do ideas transcend spatial and temporal boundaries? And then finally, what the political significance of ideas moving across and between boundaries might be.

We hope that you enjoy this recording and that can stimulate further discussions that help us all think beyond national boundaries, across difference, and through varying cultural, historical and political contexts.

Orsod 03:22
Thank you both for making the time to have this conversation. I know we've been trying to organize it for some time. So, thank you so much. It would be lovely to hear about how you came to edit Familiar Stranger, Bill. So, I mean, perhaps we could start there.

Bill 03:34
Well, this was a very, very, very long time ago, 20 years or maybe more than 20 years ago. Stuart Hall himself had said nothing to me about this, but I got a letter through the post from a publisher saying: would you like to interview Stuart Hall about his life and work, a short book, and we'd like it within a couple of years, something like that. So, I was very surprised, because there are a million people who could have talked to Stuart Hall and conversed and discuss their work. But anyway, I agreed. We took it on. Over the next couple of years, we must have had six or seven quite long conversations which were recorded. I then spent a long summer transcribing them all.

Transcribing wasn't literally transcribing because a lot of it was editing as I went on to try and make the words on the page readable and sometimes when Stuart spoke he got into these very elaborate metaphors which kind of ran and ran and they were good to listen to but sometimes quite difficult to follow on the page so I had to be a little bit brutal in breaking that up and sometimes the flow wasn't quite as good on the page as it was actually listening.

And I gave that to Stuart at the end of one summer. I said it seems to me that we're very nearly there Stuart and what we need, there are six or seven themes which just need rehearsing a little bit more and I said we could either have one more session where I'll ask you these questions or I can write them down send them to you and you write them. And he said very good, Bill, yep, just give me the transcript and I will see.

Well, of course, once Stuart had the transcript in his hands, he began fundamentally rewriting it all because he could never exist with something which he had written previously. That he couldn't avoid the temptation of rewriting everything because what he thought on Thursday isn't what he thought on Tuesday, you know? So he kept on rewriting it.

So it began to get longer and longer and more and more time passed. And he was ill, so often we'd have six months or a year where we didn't do anything. Then it would be reactivated. And this originally 50,000-word conversation, it turned into, I don't know, 200,000 words or something. It was just ridiculous and as he got more and more ill and he was kind of immobile so he couldn't go out on the stump and speak which of course he loved doing you know he couldn't do that, so he became absolutely absorbed in this manuscript. He would spend days and days working on it. This manuscript was getting bigger and bigger and bigger. And then he kept on saying, you know, if I die before this is finished, please don't feel obliged to publish it. It's just for me at the moment to keep thinking and so on, and that's its purpose. I don't care what happens to it after. It can be jettisoned, it can disappear, it'll be out of my hands and you decide what to do with it.

So I thought, I couldn't possibly incinerate the manuscript, that would be sacrilege. Anyway, it was of course unfinished when he died and I'm certain he knew it was going to be unfinished because, as I say, he hated finishing something because it would mean that he couldn't rethink it, you know? So there was some part of him, temperamentally, psychically, incapable of finishing things because he could never get the argument right, or the argument could never stop at one particular place, that there was another argument to be had or something like that.

So I was left with this massive, massive manuscript, and it was partly memoir, and it was partly him reflecting on politics and intellectual matters and he was adamant that if ever it were published that these two things should stay together. But Catherine, his wife, and I we looked at the manuscript and we found no way that anyone would publish a quarter of a million words or actually it would be more because there were whole chapters which weren't written.

He had a chapter called Black Subjectivity, which was looking from Du Bois through James Baldwin up to Tony Morrison, you know, that kind of lineage. And I saw the file after he died, I thought, Black Subjectivity, so this is it. Opened it up, there was nothing in there. It was simply what he'd scrawled on the cover of the file. It was empty. And I thought, well, I would have given anything for Stuart to have written that, you know? So there was a lot of, first of all, Catherine and I had to make the decision that against his wishes, we had to divide up the manuscript between the memoir, which goes up to the early 1960s, and then have another volume about his theorizations.

And one interesting point about the theorizations is he was writing a chapter called Conjuncture. And he had two files for this, each file about 30,000 words, each file containing a different version of the chapter called Conjunctures. So there were two conjunctures. And clearly Stuart could not get his head around, satisfactorily, to his own mind, you know, what was a conjuncture. So he asked me one day, he said, how long does a conjuncture last? I said, well, I don't know. He said, neither do I! So he was absolutely preoccupied with this and writing and writing and writing, but he could never satisfactorily resolve it.

So anyway, we made the decision we'd have the memoir and then this would be followed up by the theory and the politics. So I spent maybe three or four months in North America preparing the memoir side of it. And then we approached Penguin. And they said, yeah, we'd be very interested in publishing this. And I told them the format and so on. I delivered the manuscript and they said great that's wonderful thank you and then the next time Catherine and I met them they said you do realize of course that we couldn't possibly have this as a conversation, Bill-question-Stuart-reply? And I said but look, we told you this from the beginning and they said, yeah, yeah, but Penguin can't publish a conversation. I said, but look, conversations, discussions are part of popular life, they're part of popular TV. The form

itself is not an impossible thing for people to read and to get their heads around. And they nodded and said, yeah, yeah, well, that's true, but we can't do it, we won't publish it like this.

So I said, well, what do you want me to do? They said well just put it all in Stuart Hall's voice because then we'll get closer to Stuart Hall's voice. I said no you won't, you'll get me ventriloquizing Stuart Hall so it'll be an even more mediated version of his story than you've got at the moment. And they said yeah but it'll be closer to Stuart Hall. So I said if that's what you require, that's what you require. Now I thought this was going to be a mammoth job, in fact it wasn't a mammoth job because it was never clear in any case quite where his voice stopped and mine began, or I stopped and his voice began. So actually weaving them into a single voice, even though it is absolutely categorically not Stuart Hall's personal voice, it's a kind of amalgam of his and mine. It was very quick to do because the questions just became, you know, I just put them into Stuart's language and deleted the question mark. So it was quite simple in fact.

And then the remaining problem of it was what to do with the 60,000 words which were unfinished. And I began trying to retrieve that part of the manuscript, but it wasn't possible, partly because he hadn't finished the conjunctive thing, partly because he was going to have a long chapter on Foucault and a long chapter on Gramsci. But none of it was completed to his satisfaction. And a lot of it, also, he had said elsewhere, in rather crisper language.
So he decided in the end, reluctantly, to abandon it. Although the manuscript still exists somewhere, I'm not even sure where it is. So I think we gave to the publishers probably in 2017, 2016-17. So it had taken 16 or 17 years from the moment the letter arrived saying, dear Bill, would you be interested in doing this quick book with Stuart, 50,000 words? Well, 17 years later, we're still sweating blood trying to get it done. So its making was a long, difficult, cumbersome, but wonderful process.

Orsod 00:13:07
It's interesting, because that initial translation work was being done when you were in that room with Stuart, chatting through kind of what it was, how this thing was going to take shape. So it's quite interesting, I think, at the beginning, it being a conversation, supposed to be published as a conversation. And then it became kind of this amalgamation of the voices. But then reading Familiar Stranger in English, when I first read it many years ago, it just it felt like Stuart's, it read like Stuart's voice. It read like, you know, some of his more lucid essays. That process of amalgamating the voices, how was that for you? How was that initially when that was proposed to you, how did you feel about it?

Bill 00:13:54
Well, the initial proposal was there'd be two separate voices, there'd be Bill question, Stuart answer. But then, when I was transcribing the interviews, and then Stuart would work on

that and pass it back to me and so on, so our voices just kind of melded into one another. I think just unconsciously, a bit of me moved into becoming Stuart in a weird kind of way so that in the end I could write this in some faux-Stuart Hall language and it came rather easily at some point. You said it sounded like Stuart that you can hear his voice. I'm very pleased but I'm not sure that's right. I'm not saying it's not right, I really don't know what kind of voice this is, because for me this is how I remember Stuart Hall, with his voice in here on these pages.

And you know, sometimes I wake up at night trembling, because I think, well what would Stuart Hall think if somehow he returned to this planet and read it, read this book under his name, and I can hear him saying, oh come on Bill, I'd have never said that! And that's what was terrifying. Because he couldn't read the final copy, I was terrified that there would be somewhere in Princeton or somewhere, there'd be a really smart young PhD student who would go through and look at my formulations as they were at the end and then compare them to other things that Stuart had written on other occasions and say, but he never said that, he never thought that, he was doing something different, and I still live in fear that actually we're going to be caught out and that someone somewhere on this planet is beavering in it and saying well this book by Stuart Hall, it's not by him at all, he's saying completely odd things! So, I don't know. But that fear is going to be with me till I die [laughs].

Liv 00:16:09
How long did you know Stuart? Where did you first meet him?

Bill 00:16:12
I met him in 1974 when I applied to the Cultural Studies Centre in Birmingham. And then when I was at the Cultural Studies Centre, we weren't particularly close. You know, he wasn't supervising my PhD because I was doing more historical work and there was a historian appointed, Richard Johnson, and then he and I worked on this book on the history of the British state, kind of after I'd left the Birmingham Cultural Studies Centre, and then gradually we got to know each other better and longer and so on. But, he was a friend from early on, clearly a very wonderful, wonderful friend to have.

Liv 00:16:54
Not long after he visited Brazil, he wrote me, asking me for the manuscript of his talk there, which was partly handwritten, partly excerpts from other things that he had done. He said that he was going to give it to you because it had a certain importance. Do you remember why he wanted to tell you about his talk in Brazil in July of 2000?

Bill 00:17:18

I don't remember that. What I do remember is that talk for him was really, really important. Was this in Bahia, in Salvador?

Liv 00:17:29
Yes, in Bahia, yeah.

Bill 00:17:29
He kept on talking about 'my Bahia moment'. It meant a lot to him, both emotionally and intellectually, that that trip, going to Salvador, this black, black town in the north of Brazil, he kind of recognized it from the Caribbean in some way. You know, some new world plantation economy. And it was from that moment, I think, I mean, this isn't 100% right, but more or less, it was from that moment that diaspora became for him a crucial explanatory concept. So while everyone else was being a post-structuralist or a deconstructionist or a Lacanian or whatever it was, he thought of himself as a theorist of the diaspora, that the diaspora became his means for reading the intellectual work of his time, really. Brazil was inside Stuart Hall, you know, and I think he probably, you will know better than me, I think he only went there once.

Liv 00:18:35
Yes, he only went there once and stayed, I think, a week or 10 days.

Bill 00:18:40
Well, what a momentous trip it was.

Liv 00:18:43
Oh, it was a fantastic conference. He was the keynote speaker with these screens outside in this sort of 1950s dignified university space. And actually, at the time, now Brazil is much different. But at the time, even in Salvador, which has a 90% black population, something like that, it's the largest black population in the world, it's Brazil's, outside of Africa. And Salvador is certainly the highest percentage of black population. But black intellectuals being keynote speakers was pretty much unheard of. So this was a point being made as well, by the conference organizers to the city, to the university, and to the gathered comparative literature scholars. So yeah, that was quite something.

Bill 00:19:33
Was Stuart aware of that?

Liv 00:19:33
I think so. Someone must have told him. And the conference too, I mean, there was a dynamics there too of the pride of the underdeveloped, it's an underdeveloped region, it's transitively underdeveloped, the northeast of Brazil. And Bahia, and so the Bahians were, I

remember the professors in the literature department, I was called in partly for my language skills, actually, and the cultural studies commitments. But the pride in doing a really good conference really contributed to a fantastic conference, actually. That was a very memorable moment.

And Stuart's talk, *Diasporas, or the logics of cultural translation*, was the name of it, has been published in Portuguese and really made a big impact. And he always laid out a terrain on which everyone could stand. And so his thing about Caribbean and Brazilian experience being similar, he starts with Machado de Assis and sort of a posthumous note. And then he goes on to say, I'm talking about you too, but in a very, a very subtle and very inoffensive way, let's say, of a very inclusive way to a very white audience. And that was what the organizers were thinking too, you know, it was a conference also that had Gayatri Spivak came, and Paul Gilroy and Robert Young and a whole number of luminaries were there but Stuart was definitely the king [laughs]. I heard from a colleague of mine that some students walked up to him and sort of said excuse me. He said well that's what I'm here for right? So it's just a really impactful presence.

Bill 00:21:14
Very good. I love that.

Orsod 00:21:16
What was your introduction to Familiar Stranger?

Liv 00:21:18
I picked it up when I was on study leave in New York. I saw it I think before I heard about it but I don't really remember, but I read it in 2017 when it came out. To me, it's a combination of the theory and the memoir, you know, and that seems to me a byword in Stuart Hall's writing, is that life and ideas are an amalgamated thing, and in a way, the book goes to explain how that works.

That's an enormous contribution, I think, to reflections on intellectual life or intellectual activity, and also to understanding his work, because it's not everybody's autobiography of an intellectual that is as fascinating as that book is. It really is a fascinating book that you read for its literary value. It's very well written. For the scenes it paints, the beach scenes and the vegetation and then Oxford and the greyness and the streets of London in the 50s, all that is enormously attractive and readable and fascinating. And then, all of a sudden, you're wandering along the beaches of Jamaica, and all of a sudden there's Orlando Patterson talking about death, you know? It's very stimulating intellectually, how those things fit together.

I can't remember the concept that Stuart Hall cites, but the concept of slave life being a living death. That comes up in the midst of all this lushness and in a way because of that you feel the impact of that whole setting, that whole history on a person. And so I find it a book that in some ways explains things, theoretical things, in a way that Stuart Hall always did through autobiography. There's a Brazilian literary scholar and writer, a comparative literature person, called Sylviano Santiago, who shared the stage with Stuart at the ABRALIC, the Brazilian Comparative Literature Association conference, who talks about how there's a mixture or there's an ambiguity of being within and outside of the theoretical and within and outside of autobiography in his work. And I think Familiar Stranger, because it puts the forward part, the autobiographical part, lets us understand how that works better than when somehow the autobiographical appears all of a sudden in a discussion of signification, representation, and so on.

So it's really, I think, a book of enormous importance and value in introducing another dimension or another kind of reading to theoretical work. Not only his, but others.

Bill 00:24:04
Yeah. But also what you're saying, I think, hasn't been recognised sufficiently. And that's a degree to which what this book demonstrates is the ways in which Jamaica was still inside him. You know, so after, how old was he? 21 when he came to England, you know, he never lived again in Jamaica. He returned to see his parents or to visit family or give talks and so on. But from that moment on, he lived in Britain. And it took a long time within Britain for his Jamaican-ness to be recognised. But it was always, always there.

And when people say in the late 60s and early 70s, they say, "well, Stuart Hall never really talks about race, it's such a shame", he was talking about race the whole time! It was all about race, but not often articulated as such, explicitly as such. But Jamaica and race was everywhere. It constituted the way he thought, you know? He couldn't have thought without race. But it was extremely moving to hear him talking, and I include the book, *Familiar Stranger*, to hear him talking in Familiar Stranger.

The older he got, the more infirm he became, the more that Jamaica kind of rose to the surface in his memory. And towards the end, he was very, very close friends with David Scott, a serious Jamaican anthropologist, editor of the brilliant magazine *Small Axe*. And he became very, very attached to David. And whenever David was in London, they would meet. And Stuart just loved it because I'm sure he saw David as a younger version of himself. So through that strange route, he kind of rediscovered his Jamaican-ness. And he was so far away from Jamaica, you know, he couldn't travel anymore. And David popping in for a cup of tea, it'd be like Jamaica coming into his heart. It was really beautiful, really, really beautiful.

Orsod 00:26:10

I was going to ask, you know, I really loved what you said when you said, “Stuart creates this terrain on which everyone can stand”. And I wonder if you could say a bit more about that.

Liv 00:26:20
Yeah, it's a kind of a writing approach that he has in [asking] “what is this ‘black’ and ‘black popular culture’?” I think he does the same, he sort of maps out a space in which everyone more or less recognizes his terms of reference and then he goes for the question that he's interested in. But it's also true, and that's why I think that the translation of this book is so important into Portuguese, it's also true that there are many details which are very foreign, they're very Jamaican, they're very Anglo for a Portuguese-speaking Brazilian public. And that's where, when he says, I think *with* this location or *with* this shift, *with* this knight's move, the explanation of where that comes from, and it comes from the Caribbean, is something that then can be translated into a Brazilian situation with a fair amount of ease, actually. I mean, the black diasporic Brazilian sort of environment and the whole white colonization endeavour, there's similarities there that come out of the specificities that he produces in his talk about Jamaica.

It's amazing to me now, actually, how strong Jamaican culture is. I'm sort of discovering Jamaica as one of the capitals of the universe at the moment, working on a project that is focused mainly on reggae. How that shift, you know, that word that is constantly shifting the arrangements of power, shifting his dislocation. Actually, in Portuguese, it's easier because dislocation and shift are the same word. There is no shift. There's just dislocation. But it also means to displace. It's displace, so there's a cultural translation that's ready there to be made, but because there's also a lot of a lot of Anglo, basically British, references too in his texts and his historical references, this book helps to explain how those are, what they are, and how particular they are, and also how this is actually just, it's another world that is superimposed or can be seen as an intersecting set with the Brazilian.

Bill 00:28:36
You’re beginning to talk here about the challenges of translating Familiar Stranger into Brazilian Portuguese, and I wonder if you could just say more explicitly how you experienced those challenges and what was most difficult, and what was most difficult to get your head around.

Liv 00:28:56
It's funny because Catherine Hall was saying that it's in some ways the most accessible of his work. But because it works with so many universes, the botanical, the historical, the gastronomical, I mean, there's so many terminological challenges. It took me ages to find out that a patty wasn't anything like a hamburger, for example. But before Google, I don't know how people dealt with these things. But the difficulty is partly vocabulary. And then you also have to take into account that you might be dealing with terms that are very different in

different languages, like names of trees, but are actually very common. Like it took me a long time to find out that the Poui tree is actually Ipe in Brazil, and they're very common in Brazil. They're everywhere. And so one of the difficulties was that. Another was the untranslatable things, like how do you translate “scout” in the Oxford context? It's impossible.

Bill 00:30:03
Yeah, but that would defy English speakers as well. Yeah, most English speakers won't know what the hell a scout is in the way he uses it. Yeah, that is a bit of old Oxford England, which Stuart is probably one of the last generation to be able to use that word unselfconsciously. [laughs]

Liv 00:30:26
But there was one term that I asked you about, there was one phrase that he used that I remember writing to you about, about the unscripted nature of English culture. That was a really tough one. The unscripted nature of English culture, which for Brazilians, if you translate that into Brazilian culture, you're talking about spontaneity, but it has nothing to do with that.

Bill 00:30:46
It's not spontaneity.

Liv 00:30:46
Absolutely nothing to do with spontaneity. So when you explained it to me as sort of the complicated relationship between sort of parole and langue, really, or surface and structure, deep structure, to use more Stuart Hall's terms, that is how I finally was able to explain it. But it is very difficult to understand because it has to do with an experience a cultural experience which is not available to Brazil now it's not part of the Brazilian…

Bill 00:31:19
But you see, I imagine Stuart Hall when he said that he would have had no idea about its untranslatable properties. He wouldn't have known that. He would have just, it would have come out of his mouth. I can hear him saying it, you know. And he would be, I think, like me, I think, what? You can't translate that? Well, no, you can't.

Liv 00:31:41
Well, can you riff on that some more, what it means?

Bill 00:31:44
It is a particular property of English culture which is uncodified, would be another way of… formally uncodified, but every English person will recognize whatever he's talking about when they see it. It's as if it's in the DNA, it's not in the head, it's just how you're part of a

culture, or how you're part of English culture, I should say. And of course, Stuart Hall himself had to learn that, you know, because, of course, we all learn it. But he was more conscious of learning it than white people born and brought up in England. And that's what's wonderful about this book, *Familiar Stranger.* He's always, whether he's talking about Jamaica, whether he's talking about England, whether he's talking about Oxford, he's always at one remove, at an oblique angle to what he's writing about, you know. I kind of get the same feeling when I read Edward Said's memoir. They are very similar in their colonial generation and Stuart Hall was very upset indeed that Edward Said had chosen for his title *Out of Place* because that's what Stuart Hall was going to call his book! He said "well I can't do it now because Said's got there first"! [laughs]

Orsod 00:33:07
I wonder Liv if you could whilst you were translating the book, how often were you both speaking? Was there kind of a constant flow of communication, or Liv, were you doing this quite independently?

Liv 00:33:16
Well, I tried to work things out for myself the most possible, and not to send every time I had one, sort of to accumulate questions. But I was encouraged by both Bill and Catherine to get in touch when I didn't understand something. So I did. I don't remember how many times, but I've quoted some of Bill's answers in the translator's notes, which are in numbers 67 or 68...

Bill 00:33:41
Whoa!

Liv 0:33:41
…because of the enormous numbers of things that have to be explained. Actually, two sides to that. One is that some readers will know the English, and they'll want to know what it was.

Bill 0:33:52
Yeah.

Liv :33:52
And the other is that things like Walpole and the pits are really opaque. I mean, you can't just say Walpole and the pits. You have to put it in a note, because if you put it as an extra clause, it's, you know, it's...

Bill 00:34:04
It's top-heavy. It won't work.

Liv 00:34:04
…it's a received pronunciation. Ethiopianism. There are, I'm sure there are many things that you could have put in a note if you wanted to make it easier for the reader. Like Ethiopianism, I doubt that many people would know about or be familiar with the term.

Bill 00:34:21
You're right.

Liv 00:34:21
But there it is. With a Brazilian reader, I had to think that they wouldn't be able to distinguish between what was there for them to look up and what was what was really opaque because of the language. But one of the fun things I have to say I'm an English major originally is to come across these quotations from a high literature in quotation marks, so I then I look it up and find out where it was from. I have enough experience now to know that I really enjoy revising work by Stuart Hall because of where it takes you. I mean, you do tours of the world, really.

Bill 00:34:55
Yeah. And Henry James is always there, somewhere.

Liv 00:34:59
Yeah. (laughs)

Orsod 00:35:00
In that, you know, Stuart Hall takes you around the world, and before you kind of referenced that, you know, you mentioned that it wasn't too difficult to kind of translate this into the Portuguese speaking context, Could you say a bit more about?

Liv 00:35:16
I think it makes it possible to translate more of Stuart Hall's theoretical work into Portuguese. I think that's to me the big step forward with the publication. As far as his ideas go, it makes it possible for people to see the intersecting set, which is the intersection between Jamaican or Caribbean life and Brazilian life. It, actually, it took me an enormous amount of time. It was the most difficult revision I've ever done because of these many references. And because it's actually in a different style from his theoretical writing.

And theoretical writing is always Latin vocabulary based and English too. So the more sort of these concrete Saxon words that get in, that makes it more difficult. But because of the precision I mean whether it's your voice, you know, ventriloquizing or not, Bill, the precision

of the text is enormous which means that I didn't have to get in touch with Bill very often because it was really a question of searching not a question of clarification

Bill 00:36:35
I wasn't conscious of you getting in touch frequently at all. I mean, it seemed to me that you were very quietly, in your solitude, sweating blood trying to make sense of it. And only at the last possible opportunity, you'd think, I'm going to have to ask Bill. Actually you did it, you did it all, and of course there's one time that you sent me an email saying "and what the hell is 47xy?" or something. Well you couldn't possibly have known because it was the name of the lowest class in the school in which he was teaching, but there's no way that a reader even an English reader would know that. An English reader could probably guess what it was, but Portuguese, Brazilians, I mean, come on, how would you know that that was right?! [laughs]. So I got the same question from the Japanese translator. He said, what is this? [laughs]

Liv 00:37:25
There was a thing I asked you about the racial terminology which made me think too because actually Stuart Hall uses 'brown' and talks about 'brown' and talks about 'black' and he never actually goes down to the nitty-gritty and defines them, which is an attitude, it's a political attitude. So you know me translating, wanting to do a translator's footnote, would have frustrated the whole point of a discourse on race in which the differentiation, the fascination with differentiation, which is a racist fascination, doesn't have no space. It just doesn't have a place. Yeah. And so, that I just found it really interesting and sort of another lovable characteristic. I think it's not easy to talk about race and avoid, get around these little nitty-gritty pigmentocratic differentiations, the endless fascination with who the family is and all that stuff.

Orsod 00:38:24
Brazil is, of course, a very kind of unique context, but of course there are these similarities. But I wonder if you could say a bit more.

Liv 00:38:31
Well, and every place has its own terminology. So, I mean, for example, 'brown', the translators started translating, and then I became persuaded that it really was not a good idea. Because 'brown', there are a number of possible translations into Portuguese but each of them has a different shade of indelicacy let's say, and the brown category it seemed to me in the end was a sort of a something that's posited as a racial and class category and so let it be, let it be that, because in in Portuguese there would be a number of words that could fit into that but aren't exactly that .

Bill 00:39:09

Right.

Liv 00:39:09
On the other hand ‘black’ has different connotations in English, so it was translated and we did a note on that as three different words – ‘negro’, which is a political category, ‘preto’, which is a colour, and ‘black’, which is increasingly used as a combination of the two. And then there are things that I had to go back to fix because, for example, ‘colonial’ can easily fall into ‘colonized’, but it's not colonized. And as a subject, as a person, it doesn't exist, but we made it exist. ‘Plantation’ is another one. ‘Plantation’ can be latifundio, it can be the kind of crop, it can be monoculture…

There are a number of correlate words in English that are more literally translatable into Portuguese. But to our good fortune a woman named Grada Kilomba has written *Plantation Memories*, which was translated into Portuguese. She's actually Portuguese, but it was translated into Portuguese, she wrote it in English first as *Memórias da Plantação*. So we just footnoted her. And used plantation and explained the different plantocracy and all that as, sort of, derived terms. Yeah, it took a deal of concentration also because it's a long book and it took me a long time, to make sure that it was all consistent. I mean, I have to say, I revised to *Da Diáspora* which is the big collection. It's over 400 pages with 14, I think, texts by Stuart Hall that was published in Portuguese in 2003. And I found it just incredibly fun, actually. You can't do it by bits and pieces, but it's really fun once you get into the rhythm of it.

Bill 00:40:53
This sounds like a labour of love, Liv.

Liv 00:40:58
Yeah! You have to get your eyes into motion, right? You have to have a big screen and the eyes get into a routine of looking at what the product is and what the original was and then also what you're looking at up on Google, you know. But to get into that rhythm where you're seeing the same sentence all the time in two different versions takes a little practice, and you get out of practice fast [laughs].

Bill 00:41:22
Can you say something about the reception of the book in Brazil?

Liv 00:41:25
It hasn't come out yet, actually. I think it will come out this year. The publisher was very eager to have it, so I think it will come out this year. Thinking about the conversation we're having now, I started to realise that there's a discussion of Stuart Hall's style. And actually, I didn't worry about style exactly, I worried about accuracy much more than anything else. But I think that the style that David Scott talks about, style being a voice and an openness,

and Silviano Santiago talks about style as this to and from between the autobiographical and the theoretical. And he uses a word which is untranslatable unfortunately called "despudor da autobiografia" which is the lack of modesty but not in a sense of more a moral sense but the willingness to be exposed autobiography that that is present there in Stuart Hall's text, yes.

Bill 00:42:27
But to what extent would Stuart Hall be a kind of recognized figure amongst leftist intellectuals in Brazil?

Liv 00:41:36
Amongst leftist intellectuals, he has long been known. Since the 90s, I think, there has been publication of his work, a lot out of the communications field actually, and some of it, mimeographed typescript from Argentina at the beginning. So there's a guy named Tomaz Tadeu da Silva too, who's from Rio Grande do Sul, who published under another title, a long chapter from *Modernity and Its Futures* that sold very well in a little booklet form. So that familiarity among media scholars has been very present.

But Stuart Hall, as a thinker about race and diaspora, really started after his visit and the publication of this collection. And there he helped to shift the narrative on Brazilian roots in raciality. There was always this idea of the three races, or in the 20th century for a long, long time, this idea of the three races and the mixture and racial democracy and all this stuff. And then all of a sudden with the idea of diaspora and the work that came out in the book by that title, which he very much wanted to be that, I think, then it coincided with a time when race was being more and more openly discussed and more and more freely discussed, I'd say, more and more freely discussed and with more and more influence by the black movement.

So he came in to academia and also non-academic intellectual fields at a time when that discussion was going and so there was a strong influence then. I would say that with the rise, really to be kind of at the forefront of social sciences, of black feminist work, both Brazilian and foreign, that seems like a bit of prehistory at the moment. And so I'm hoping this will, *Familiar Stranger,* will help to overcome some difficulties of reading him, which are real in Portuguese because of the different cultural references and the focus on Britain and also just the complexity of a thought which is not as so much of Latin thinking based on building up concepts. It's not about building up concepts and the idea that concepts are what let you sleep at night just doesn't wash very well. [Bill laughs]

Orsod 00:45:09
We've discussed some of the things that are lost and gained and some of the things that remain in these translations. Off the back of that question about how known Stuart is in the

Brazilian context, I wanted to ask you about how his work is kind of received. Does Stuart continue to be referenced in 2020, 2022 and so on?

Liv 00:45:33
Yeah, he continues to be there. Another collection came out that was two essays from *Representation: Cultural Representations and Signifying Practices (Culture, Media and Identities series)*, that big collection from the Open University, which had *Spectacle of the Other* and *The Work of Representation*, those two texts came out in a book not long ago and it quickly went out of print. It's one of the problems of Brazilian publishing is that things go out of print.

But the *Da Diáspora* has had several editions, but because it sells so well that the publisher keeps coming back to it, though they sometimes threaten to let it go out of print [laughs]. But that's the same publisher that will publish *Familiar Stranger*, I think they realize there's a saleable item. But there is a constant reference to his work, and I think that that is a result of this similarity of the foundation of Brazilian life and Jamaican life, in a way.

I interviewed him once along with Luísa Buarque de Holanda, who's a feminist and cultural studies person in Rio, and he was very emphatic about how the second diaspora was defining, the second diaspora to England, not just that Brazil is the equivalent to Jamaica, but the second diaspora would be for a Brazilian to go to the US and have to make it there. And one of the things that I think *Familiar Stranger* shows is the difficulties of that, that you feel the pain in the text. That I think is something that is worldwide, really, the tendency to finally face that pain. So yeah, he's sort of a permanent fixture, and so I think that's gonna stay that way.

Another thing I wondered, actually, what you think, when he talks about in *Familiar Stranger,* about leaving Jamaica and always feeling sad. Do you have an idea what that sadness was about?

Bill 00:47:28
All I can say, it is the painful elements of diaspora. You know, diaspora, as Stuart Hall kept on saying, you know, is good to think with. But also, it was painful to live, to live diasporic. It was both wonderful and painful. And that's kind of what I was referring to earlier that clearly in his final years, Jamaica was a bigger and still unresolved part of his inner life. He could never, ever, ever let it go and he continued to be troubled by what Jamaica meant for him, until the end.

Liv 00:48:06
I do wonder, you know, we're in such a terrible situation everywhere you look, that being a modest man, it's a politics too. And it's a politics that white people are very estranged to.

There's something there that it's hard to talk about because, especially as a white commentator, it seems like a kind of reification of blackness. But there's something there, there's a connection to social reality that's different and that somehow tethers some people.

Bill 00:48:39
I think that's right. I'm not sure if modesty is quite the right word but it's difficult to think of what might be the right word. He certainly had some, I don't know if this is an oxymoron, but some kind of stylish modesty, you know. And there was a respect, it was just a respect for how others thought and what others thought, and that was very deep in him. In that sense, I really think he was a democratic being of the most extraordinary quality.

Liv 00:49:11
And then the experience of Oxford, you can feel in *Familiar Stranger* how that was a bath, it was a shower, of the opposite, where you have something to react against.

Bill 00:49:23
It is the most extraordinary conjunction. I still think of Stuart Hall arriving in Oxford in 1951. How he managed that, absolutely up close to England at its most concentrated and unforgiving [laughs]. It's extraordinary. It's absolutely extraordinary.

Orsod 00:49:46
What does it mean for ideas to move between places that don't share obvious cultural similarities? And those places can be countries, but they can also be people. And I wonder if you have any thoughts on that.

Liv 00:49:57
I'm reminded of Stuart Hall's trajectory in Brazil. No one ever really imagined he was black until after the year 2000. And he was, you know, he was a name in left circles and media studies circles. And I've wondered about how strategic that was, you know, how he went his way through the racial issues of his time. Being attacked for being black, seeing other people being killed for being black, you know, there's a question in, how did he imagine that at the time when it was unsayable, when it was unsayable to talk about being black in Britain? And how did he make the transition when… I mean he had students who started talking about being black in Britain, and how was that a response to his work and how is that a change in generation, how did he work, and how in a way, I mean the strategic move to the Open University, which just sort of breaks open the gates of cultural studies… there's a political strategy there that is weaving through another moment of time when politics were really violent.

And it's sort of a lesson, I think, again, by him to us to watch the figures who are not saying but doing, you know, or what they're saying that is has other implications or… but the

transculturation part, you know, he did that as he lived. And what I see, as far as the transplantation talks about delicately disinterring Gramsci from his terrain and transplanting his thoughts somewhere else, that kind of process, I think, needs to take into account that action, that life of action.

You know, Deleuze says that academic lives are totally boring, that the people go away and then they talk, and then they come back and they talk again, and that it's really not worth it because it interrupts becomings, you know [Bill laughs]. But in Stuart's case you see how that the moves, the dislocations, the displacements, are many, and sometimes it's without leaving the geographical location. Now what we're left with is the texts basically, the world is left with yes the texts and the films, and how those can be disinterred, I think *that Familiar Stranger* is an enormous contribution to that. How they can be disinterred by recognizing the earth in which they're rooted. And then it's possible to rethink those ideas in other locations.

I do think there's one story I'd like to tell about a reception of Stuart Hall's work in Brazil. And that was soon after *Da Diáspora*, the big collection, came out. A young woman rapper in Salvador, I heard this story, she was offered something as compensation for being interviewed by students. She now has a doctorate, but at the time she was a young rapper, not even an undergraduate. And her friend asked for sneakers, and she asked for Da Diáspora.

Bill 00:53:12
Really?

Liv 00:49:14
Yes. [laughs with delight]

Bill 00:53:12
Oh, come on…

Liv 00:53:18
So, you know, I think it's not only a question of transplanting the ideas. They transplant themselves. They sort of float over. They pollinate. They go.

Bill 00:53:28
I love that. I love that.

Orsod 00:53:29
I think for people who might listen to this and not be totally kind of aware of the Brazilian context, could you say a little bit about why Da Diáspora has been quite so popular

Liv 00:53:42
I think it came at the time when the black movement was beginning to take its place in dominant culture, mainstream culture. And that is partly because of the debate around quota for university entrants which began in the early 2000s. But its also about long struggle, of decades in many different places by organisations of the black movement, in terms of government policy and policing policy, which still goes on and there have been huge steps backward under the current regime.

But I think that the presence of a black intellectual of prestige from abroad was a new thing at the time. Now there are many black intellectuals from abroad who are authors of books that are widely read. bell hooks has made a huge impact. Angela Davis has too, she's visited Brazil often and it's not because she visits Brazil often that she makes an impact, but actually that has made her sort of familiar. I mean, she did a speaking tour on her last visit there, I think it was her last visit there.

But Stuart Hall's work came at a time when it became possible to discuss racial politics and racism in mainstream settings. When I started teaching, I started teaching in Salvador actually and so race was in public discussion, but when I moved to Rio in the year 2000, it was terribly embarrassing to speak about race in the classroom, just really embarrassing. People just didn't want to talk about it. So either race or gender, the students would just change the subject. And when I taught graduate classes on whiteness, people would look at me, they were white students, completely uniformly white, and they would look at me and say the same thing that they told me in Bahia, that only I was white there. You know, they had grandparents that were black.

So the whole issue of racism in Brazil has mushroomed in political importance since the early 2000s and it is partly a reaction to that that we're seeing today.

Bill 00:55:42
Oh, that's interesting. I remember, it must be in about 1993 something like that when Mandela visits Brazil. Do you remember that? As he gets off the plane, he says, “I'm so happy to be in a country where racism doesn't exist”. And I thought, how is this possible? How is this possible?

Liv 00:56:05
It was a big propaganda machine about how everybody got along. And I have to say, people talk to each other. I'm a U.S. citizen and I did my undergraduate work in the U.S. and the ease of conversation is enormously greater in Brazil than in the U.S., although things have changed I think in both settings. The relationship is tenser in Brazil, and I think there are more conversations than there once were in the US as well. But yeah, I mean, that's a huge

propaganda that went on for decades about how racism didn't exist and everybody got along. There are all these people who are almost like family. If you hear the phrase in Portuguese, “they're almost family”, you've got to know, it's a maid. And people become increasingly conscious of that. There has been increasing recognition of the problem of white racism.

Bill 00:56:56
Interesting.

Orsod 00:56:58
Just before we end, what does *Familiar Stranger* mean to you?

Liv 00:57:03
Familiar Stranger is a kind of a trip into a world, a mental and a geographical world, belonging to Stuart Hall, who I knew and who I read a great deal. And it's a trip that's especially fascinating because of its textual specificity, the richness of it, the scenes of it, the scenes remembered from history, the scenes of a life, the scenes of a geography or of geographies. All of that as with a continuous first-person voice which almost projects itself as a self by showing these scenes. I think that's what the magic of the book is. You feel the self by seeing the scenes that are shown you.

Orsod 00:57:59
And what has it meant to you personally then?

Liv 00:58:03
Well, it's been an enormous broken deadline for one thing! [Orsod laughs] So, I mean, I started in 2019, at the end of 2019, or was it before then? I'm actually the reviser. The translator's name is Adelaine LaGuardia Resende, who I'd worked with before and very much wanted to work with again because her translation is excellent and because it's possible to discuss endlessly with her. So, I have discussed endlessly, textual issues with Adelaine. And actually, when I talk about the trip that it is, one of the reasons I broke so many deadlines was that it's actually not possible to do in small doses. You embark on a voyage in this book. You can't cut it down to chapters and think “well that's done” and go on to the next one, as you could in the collection of theoretical work. So I mean I was constantly feeling guilty but also realizing that it was absolutely not doable for me to say “well I'm going to spend every Saturday” on it or something like that.

Bill 00:58:05
And what does it mean to me? Well, I can't be objective about it because for 20 years, it was my life. You know, not continually every day for 20 years, but actually from the beginning of the project to the end, it was 20 years. And I devoted huge amounts of time to it and it was

an enormous privilege to be in Stuart's intellectual life. Although I wasn't aware of it at the time, day by day or month by month, I grew up as a kind of intellectual, you know, in Stuart's shadow, which was, you know, a breathtaking opportunity.

Stuart, through his entire life, he chose to work with other people, and frequently he chose to work with younger people, and most of us, we couldn't possibly ever, however smart we became, we could never become his intellectual equal. It was just an impossibility to even imagine such a thing. So his generosity when he would spend time taking you seriously, correcting you if he thought you were heading up a dead end, it was just remarkable.

So I find it very difficult to distinguish the final product, the book, from my life because our lives were, over this project, were kind of entwined together, you know? And it was, on Stuart Hall's part, it was done in great goodwill and good faith. And there were times when he couldn't be bothered about the book because there was something more pressing which needed to be done politically more at the moment. But he never lost faith in it. And there was a bit of him, despite his, whether it's modesty or not, despite his heartfelt injunction to me that, no, this doesn't have to be published. If it doesn't work, it doesn't have to be published. Please don't feel obliged to get it published if you don't think it's going to work, you know, throw it away, it's served its purpose. Despite that, he wanted to tell this story, actually.

And as I say, what does it mean to me now? Well, as I said before, I still inhabit this dark fear that someone's going to tumble and read it and just say, who is this Bill Schwarz he doesn't know what he's talking about and that will be with me until I die, that fear that I will be caught out [laughs]. It hasn't happened yet but it could.

Liv 01:02:00
Did it ever occur to you that the phone call was because Stuart Hall said why don't you ask Bill Schwartz?

Bill 01:02:08
It must have been, yeah. I cannot imagine that the publisher would have come up with me as a participant because people wouldn't have known who I was. There are many more likely names than mine, so it must have come from Stuart, I think. It's a heavy cross to carry sometimes.

Orsod 01:02:32
Thank you, Bill. Thank you both. Is there anything that either of you wanted to touch on this topic of Stuart Hall in translation?

Liv 01:02:42

There's one thing that I felt that I had given short shrift to something, which is your question about Stuart Hall's work's impact in Brazil. It's arriving in the late 90s through what's known in Brazil as cultural identity and post-modernity, which is that chapter from *Modernity and its Futures*, and then later on in 2003, *Da Diáspora*. I think I feel like I haven't done a full enough description of the conjuncture, if you'll excuse me, because the emergence of black lives as mattering in Brazil is something that starts to take its present form probably in the 80s and 90s, 80s with the end of the dictatorship and the reorganization of the black movement. 90s with the perception of the remainders of the dictatorship in the police action which still goes on. The police is still very much a product of a police state and attempts then to change state policy. And also at the popular level, a shift from song popular song in a very song-centred tradition to hip-hop and funk. In that whole process I think that the white establishment was also looking for ways to think about what was happening. So rap became a thing in mainstream culture because it was necessary for white people to think about what was going on and why there was so much violence against black people and why it was coming up all the time in the news.

So there was a need for black voices and this was a sort of a swell that comes from the 80s through the 90s and then into the early 2000s when finally the racial segregation of higher education is faced with quotas for entrance of black students and that made a huge difference partly because of the public debate that was caused. It only became recognized as constitutional in 2012. So the whole first 12 years of the century were really basically dedicated to that discussion in newspapers and everywhere.

So I think that Stuart Hall's work with its aspect of thinking about race arrives at that time when there are all these social forces interested in the issue where before they were swept under the rug. There were all these different forces in motion in which Stuart Hall's work was among the first to address.

Orsod 01:05:27
And this cross-pollination, I think, is, you know, this, Stuart's ideas arriving at that particular point, I think that there are whole books to be written about that phenomenon when ideas reach a particular place at a very particular time, and then they cross-pollinate. I'd be very interested to hear how *this* conversation will then open up more conversations about how that happens.

Orsod 01:05:53

Thank you to Bill and Liv for their incredibly generous and thoughtful contribution. And thank you for listening to this conversation, initiating the Stuart Hall Foundation's ‘Stuart Hall

in Translation' project. We hope that you enjoyed this recording, and please sign up to our newsletter and follow us on our social media channels to stay up to date about the next phase of the project.

Thank you again.

END.