Stuart Hall with Bill Schwarz, *Familiar Stranger: A Life Between Two Islands*.

Durham NC: Duke University Press, 2017. xvii + 320 pp. (Cloth US\$29.95)

Stuart Hall (1932–2014), one of the most influential intellectuals of the past century, was cofounder and coeditor of *Universities and Left Review* (ULR), the first editor of *New Left Review*, and director of Birmingham University's celebrated Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies, which established the theoretical underpinnings of what would become cultural studies. His prolific output over the years has revealed a great deal about his intellectual approaches, but little about the man himself. Averse to the idea of writing a memoir, Hall agreed to a series of extensive autobiographical interviews with Bill Schwarz, one of his former students and a distinguished scholar in his own right. *Familiar Stranger* revises and reworks those interviews into a single, first-person narrative by Hall himself. After Hall's death, Schwarz edited it, producing an utterly engrossing and profoundly moving book.

From the outset, Hall makes it clear that he was less interested in writing a conventional memoir than in exploring the "connections between 'a life' and 'ideas'" (p. 10). Furthermore, he lived in "interesting times," on what he called "the hinge between the colonial and post-colonial worlds," and he thought that it would be "engaging for others to read [his] reflections on those experiences, ideas, events and memories from the vantage point of someone who lived them, as it were, from the margins" (pp. 10–11). The book's nine chapters take us on a journey from his birth in Jamaica, through his migration to Britain as a Rhodes Scholar in 1951, ending with his departure from London to the Centre for Contemporary Cultural Studies in Birmingham in 1964.

Born into a "brown" Jamaican middle-class family, Hall tells of the pathology of race, color, and class as refracted through the prism of his home and circle. Context and personal experience are subtly interwoven throughout the book. Thus his mother's colorism and class snobbery are placed within the Jamaican colonial ambience. Hall was the youngest of the family's three children and the darkest, which placed him under a cloud from birth; even his sister, Pat, with whom he would later develop a strong bond, remarked disapprovingly on being introduced to her new-born brother, "Where did you get this coolie baby from?" Hall recalls that he quickly began to feel "out of place" and behave increasingly like an "inside-outsider, 'the coolie of the family'" (p. 33), a recurring motif throughout the book. In typical Jamaican fashion, the servants were treated abominably.

The spell of colonialism and its mentality was partially broken by the worker/peasant uprising of 1938, known as the "labor rebellion." Hall, though

very young, sympathized with the black workers and could feel the impact that the revolt had on his family and Jamaica more generally. The atmosphere had changed irreversibly, which manifested itself in the move toward universal adult suffrage, self-government, and later independence. By 1943 when he attended Jamaica College, Hall learned that Michael Manley, then a senior at the school, had been suspended for throwing a book at a “particularly patrician English master of History who, I presumed, had offered some outrageous colonialist interpretation during one of his classes” (p. 111). With more than half of the book devoted to Hall’s Jamaican experience and its wider context, we see in striking detail the profound impact of the 1938 uprising on the brown middle class of Jamaica, including Hall’s family, and by extension, the wider Caribbean.

Hall’s Oxford experience, beginning in 1951, is covered only briefly (Chapter 6), focusing on his friendships and increasingly overt political engagement—the celebration of the fall of Dien Bien Phu at a Chinese restaurant with a fellow student from Trinidad, his abandonment of graduate studies on Henry James, Khrushchev’s speech and the double crises of Suez and Hungary, the birth of the New Left, the humble and fragile beginnings of *ULR*, and his growing appreciation of the cultural realm and its relation to politics. Always the outsider, Hall never liked Oxford and moved to London in 1958.

Chapters 7–9 discuss the Windrush Generation, his coming to terms with life in England, and politics. The collapse of the West Indies Federation removed any desire to return to the Caribbean; he decided to stay in England and engage in the struggle there. But he never felt at home either in Britain or in Jamaica.

This is a remarkable book, rich with the insights and eloquence that we have come to expect from Stuart Hall. It is his parting gift, for which his many admirers will be deeply grateful.

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