The Version of Record of this manuscript has been published and is available in *Journal of Cultural Economy*: https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/full/10.1080/17530350.2021.2021970

Toby Bennett

Centre for Culture and the Creative Industries

Dept. of Sociology, City, University of London, United Kingdom

toby.bennett@city.ac.uk

Author information:

Dr Toby Bennett is Research Fellow in the Centre for Culture and the Creative Industries at City, University of London. His research is concerned with work, production, organisation and knowledge within the cultural economy, particularly the music industries.

http://orcid.org/0000-0003-0078-9315

Cultural Revolutions: Interview with Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke

Editor's note: This interview forms part of the special issue *What Was Cultural Economy?* The issue has its origins in a January 2020 symposium, held at City, University of London, marking two decades since Paul du Gay and Michael Pryke convened a 'Workshop on Cultural Economy' at the Open University in Milton Keynes. That earlier event culminated in the publication of the edited collection *Cultural Economy: Cultural Analysis and Commercial Life* (Du Gay and Pryke 2002). *What Was Cultural Economy?* collects responses to these founding moments in the field from a number of key figures, who each reflect on the relationship between conceptual clarification and their own academic histories. Paul du Gay is now professor and director of Research in the School of Business and Management, Royal Holloway, University of London, and professor in the Department of Organization (IOA), Copenhagen Business School. Michael Pryke remains at the Open University, as Professor of Economic Geography and was founding Head of the School of Social Sciences and Global Studies. In this interview, they reflect on their experiences of the OU in the 1990s and the events and circumstances that led to the first and second cultural economy workshops. The interview was conducted by Toby Bennett on 4 November 2020 by video call. The transcript has been edited for clarity and length.

TB: Let's start at the point at which you joined the Open University as doctoral students. Could you briefly describe how you got there and what you were doing?

MP: I can and I'll be brief. I was at City University as an undergraduate. In a second-level course on urban economics, on the reading list, was a book co-authored by Doreen Massey and Alejandrina Catalano called *Capital and Land* (1978). Doreen was the theoretical influence behind that and Alejandrina was an incredible econometrician, as far as I can remember Doreen telling me, and the two of them worked really well together. Although most of it flew clean over my head, there was a kernel in that book that I thought was absolutely fascinating. In my third year, one of my lecturers encouraged me to write to Doreen; I did and I said I'd be interested in trying to take some of the ideas forward around financial institutions and their growing influence on urban land values in the City of London. I think she had only relatively recently arrived at the OU and, to cut to the chase, I managed to get myself a PhD studentship with Doreen supervising (cf. Pryke 1988). I think I was her first PhD student. John Allen came to the OU about a year later and he then became the second supervisor. So I was there from 1984 to the end of '88, beginning of '89, when I moved on, returning back to the OU in 1994.

PdG: I arrived in ’89 and finished around ’93. The first day I turned up at the Open University, my desk was already occupied by Mike, who was in the process of completing his doctorate. I came from Durham, where I’d just completed a Masters with Richard Brown, the industrial sociologist, and sociologist of work and employment, who set up the BSA journal *Work, Employment & Society*. I’d been applying for a number of different PhDs; I was interviewed by John Urry up at Lancaster and had a conversation with Duncan Gallie at Nuffield [College, University of Oxford]. I ended up coming to have an interview at the OU with Stuart Hall and Ken Thompson, who was standing in for Graeme Salaman, ostensibly my supervisor. Luckily, I got an ESRC scholarship, so was able to come. I wanted to look at updating debates about work identity and Graeme Salaman had been focused on those debates in the 1970s, looking at the origins, development and then decline of certain occupational communities: fisheries, mining and so forth. And the general consensus within sociology was that those kinds of work identities – which are obviously quite specific, geographically located, quite boundaried in terms of community – would not exist in the contemporary service-oriented economy. My assumptions, based on having worked at a supermarket, were that if you conceive of work identity differently, and you didn’t just have that imprimatur that traditional sociology had, you could actually find lots of things going on that you wouldn’t otherwise necessarily notice (cf. du Gay 1992). I started working on that with Graeme.

I went to a conference at Lancaster and had two big experiences there. One, I got to sit next to Mary Douglas, which was quite a thrill and it was really, really interesting to talk to her – about “culture”, surprisingly enough! But also I met Nik Rose and had a long conversation with him about the work that he was doing on “enterprise culture”. After that, I approached John Allen and asked him whether he was interested in what I was trying to do, he said yes and became my second supervisor. In all honesty, he became my primary supervisor: I had much more interaction and connection with him. John had a very well-structured approach to PhD supervision, where we would meet, he would read and comment in ways that were incredibly helpful. And if there was a piece that I wanted to really think through, he would read it and then we would talk about it. So he was the anchor and the main interlocutor. Graeme Salaman facilitated empirically and in terms of management thought. And then Stuart was there with the overarching, kind of, theories and discussions and all the rest of it. So it was that kind of relationship I think, a kind of to-and-fro, as I was getting very influenced by my work on course teams and reading groups with Stuart and people who came from that more cultural studies orientation. And the “cultural turn” as it was beginning very gradually to enter sociology. And it really took off from there.

TB: What was the "research culture" like, in those doctoral years? The two of you overlap only slightly but you obviously end up communicating regularly, with John too, a little later.

MP: It's an extremely strange environment to go into, from a conventional university. Because it was a fairly isolating experience; there are no undergraduates on campus. There was a far more intimate relationship between postgraduates and central academics which was a real privilege – at the same time as being, I found, quite terrifying. As a PhD student on the Milton Keynes Walton Hall campus, you were treated as a kind of junior member of staff, which again was an extremely privileged position to be in. It also meant that you had conversations with PhD students from well outside Social Sciences, which was good, socially. I would underscore the style of supervision. I had Doreen on the left and John on the right – although still on the left, as it were! – they provided an incredibly intense and, I'll use the word again, quite terrifying supervisory pairing! And in the final year of my PhD, because there weren't many students around, they were able to dedicate quite a bit of time to reading through and challenging the stuff that I was writing for the final thesis. I remember wonderful supervisions at John's house in North London. Doreen would come along and John would have cooked a meal, my plate would get cold as I tried to answer their questions. But it was a really lovely experience that I don't think lots of other PhD students at the time would have benefitted from – that very intimate relationship with your supervisors.

PdG: Yeah, I completely concur with that. I mean, if you had the wrong supervisors, it could go wrong! You could become even more isolated if someone wasn't around. But John was, without doubt, a very dedicated PhD supervisor, a very creative one, a very challenging one. As Mike suggested, he could be inquisitorial, in terms of wanting you to defend something, and that could become – you know, you could feel yourself hyperventilating! But that lack of a community of postgraduates had two effects. The first was you began, gradually, to get to know the PhDs/postdocs who were hanging around much better. Secondly, there was almost no distinctions between staff and postgrads. I'd come from Durham, which was much more communal than this place Milton Keynes, where there were almost no PhD students at all. There'd be a room with, maybe at the most, six of us – and ninety per cent of those would be living in London for much of the time. Sean Nixon was a PhD student at the same time. Frances Bonner was working on representations of the future with Stuart. Frances and

I were based there at the time. Sean was in London. Mike, when I began to know him better, was also in London.

I think Sociology was quite distinct from Geography, where a core of people did interact very regularly and were part of the same political and social scenes. A North London leftist intellectual gang, you know, which involved people in *Marxism Today*, old Marxists, old red scientists, poststructuralists, you name it! So if you were invited to a party as a PhD student, say in your second or third year, you could find yourself with Angela McRobbie, Ernesto Laclau, Chantal Mouffe, Laura Mulvey, Doreen, Mike Rustin, Bill Schwarz, Stuart. All those folks were kind of in the same social milieu. There was a lot going on. I think that's not to be underestimated actually. But Sociology was much more individualistic, much more fractious. We started doing some reading group stuff later on. But the comparative loneliness of being in a strange place again meant that there were funds available to do things. I always thought that one of the great advantages of the Open University. You could get to be on a course team and you could apply for resources. I mean, I was able to set up a consumer culture research centre in Sociology when I was a second-year postgraduate student because they gave me the money to do so! Partly, I think, because Stuart felt sorry for me! And I invited whoever the hell I wanted to come and talk and we had a lot of people come to that. From there, some of the OU academics, who hadn't applied for research funding in years and years, started to consider coming together to work on collective projects. I remember Bob Bocock and Ken Thompson did something on moral panics. I worked as a research assistant for Ruth Finnegan on a project about the early days of Milton Keynes. Stuart put in a bid and got money, then Graeme Salaman and I put in a bid and got money as well. It was from there that we began to get more people coming in to do seminars and so on and so forth.

MP: I'd be very cautious to comment on a neighbouring discipline but I don't think Paul is a million miles away from what was happening at the time. It's interesting because he's triggering memories that I thought had just disappeared. Some of the people around Social Sciences at that time: you had Sue Himmelweit, Stuart Hall, you had Laurence Harris, John Clarke, Grahame Thompson.... And to have that intellectual weight of people meant that they were able to attract significant names to present seminars. They were seminars that would see all of those people and more around the table and that was a really invigorating atmosphere to be part of. I'd be at the back listening – but that sense of being part of this very particular community was a real boost. Paul can correct me on this but I don't have memories of those seminars being a *Geography* seminar, or a *Sociology* seminar. For what it's worth, when people published, it's interesting that their discipline or department was

hardly ever, or never, mentioned. It was always "Faculty of Social Sciences." I think that sense of a borderless faculty, as it were, meant that doors were open to PhD students and people were willing to talk and discuss. I had chats with Grahame Thompson and you can see his influence in my thesis, and in a chapter in *Money, Power and Space* (Pryke 1994a), as I was attracted to his work on economic calculation. The opportunities were there to explore and be curious, as long as you could respond to the inevitable "so what?" from Doreen!

TB: Stuart Hall is heading the department of Sociology at this time, right?

PdG: I mean, he was in charge of this department, very committed to the OU but I think he had much more in common with John [Allen], John Clarke, Doreen and others than he did with people in his own department. Stuart was not a natural sociologist and he didn't have a huge amount in common with the other members of the department, with the possible exception of David Held, who he was very close to. And David had one foot in sociology and one in politics. But there wasn't a coherence to Sociology at the OU. So you would often find that if you wanted to do something new, there would be a very strong group of people who wanted to do it as if it was a 1960s, '70s or early '80s sociology course. And it kind of meant that Stuart would often go outside of the department to do the work he really wanted to do, whether it was at the Foundation course, for instance, or in other areas. And much of his intellectual life was spent elsewhere, it wasn't within the university. I found that quite difficult, because of course I gravitated towards him for conversations and for literature advice and stuff like that.

So for me, the trick really was being invited on to the course team called Understanding Modern Societies. Now, that's four books and associated materials. The middle bits are quite standard sociology of modern societies but the first [*Formations of Modernity* (Hall and Gieben 1992)] and the last [*Modernity and its Futures* (Hall et al. 1992)] allowed Stuart to begin to bring some of the resources that he was interested in into this course. And that obviously interested me. I'd begun to feel like I'd made some sort of connection with him when he gave me his "The West and the Rest" draft to comment on and I think that was seen, by some other colleagues, as a bit of an issue – that a young postgraduate was given this to comment on and they weren't. But I think in a way, it was both a sign of the fact that there really weren't that many people engaging with his work within the department. But also it was a sign for him to say, "OK, there's someone else here now that I'm going to

interact with a bit." That was very good for me, though not always in terms of my relations with other members of the department.

But there were elements of work going on in Economics, Psychology, Social Policy and Criminology which Stuart's tentacles were linked to in one way, shape or form. Stuart's influence was already quite evident in the Criminology and Social Policy department because John Clarke and John Muncie had connections to the Centre of Contemporary Cultural Studies. And that was a very distinctive department. But Stuart played a big role in helping to support Margaret Wetherell because she was developing discursive psychology at the Open University. In fact, she supervised Liz McFall with me. And then Viv Brown, who was in Economics, was very interested in taking resources from what we call the "cultural turn" in her historical analysis of Adam Smith's thought. And her chapter in the first book of Understanding Modern Societies (Brown 1992) – that really influenced me, I have to say, when I was doing my work. It was a kind of poststructuralist/culturalist take on Adam Smith and the value problem. And I just thought it was really, really excellent. But Stuart, again, supported her in that endeavour because it was something that he was very interested in and could see the connections between that and his own work. Whether having been a PhD supervisor for someone or taking an interest in providing resources for a discursive psychological development, or whatever, he began to pervade.

TB: You've already mentioned some of the debates that are in the air. It sounds like a heady intellectual environment, there's this disciplinary fluidity and critical feedback. Can you give a sense of how the broader flow of ideas is registering internally here?

PdG: When I first arrived at the OU, there were a lot of conversations in Geography about Critical Realism. That seemed to be quite a dominant conceptual deal there, with Doreen, John and others. But Harvey (1990) came out with the *Condition of Postmodernity* and it really pissed Doreen off, in many ways, and she decided to write a kind of riposte to the assumptions and claims that he made in the book, not least to do with gender (Massey 1991). So she asked for those of us who went to the seminar where she presented it for the first time to just come back with some feedback or further resources. And Doreen is not someone who was anxious very often, it would be fair to say, in terms of presenting stuff, but she was beginning to get into postmodernism/poststructuralism, and wanting to use this to push back against Harvey. That marked an important point, I think, because things began to shift – in *my* recollection – a little bit, within Geography as well, onto the terrain of other ideas and

approaches. And in a way that ended up in a series called Questions of Cultural Identity (cf. Hall and du Gay 1996) and I think everyone I've mentioned from Geography and from other areas came to those. And that involved presentations by Homi Bhabha, Nik Rose, Simon Frith, Marilyn Strathern, Larry Grossberg, Chantal Mouffe, Zygmunt Bauman… It was an amazing collection of folk. I just remember all this group of social scientists, particularly from Geography and Sociology but also Politics, Economics, elsewhere – it felt like something really significant was happening. I think, of all the seminar series' I've ever been to in my entire life, that was by far and away the best. To have such a small number of people and such a significant amount of time intimately interrogating someone was just fantastic, I will never forget it. I thought it was super, super good.

"Globalisation" was becoming a really big issue. Clearly, there were some aspects of it, from a kind of cultural sociology point of view that were developing apace in a journal like *Theory, Culture & Society* with Mike Featherstone, Scott Lash and others. There was the work being done in political science and its intersection with international relations that was very much based at the OU, with Tony McGrew and David Held, who then worked with David Goldblatt on a big ESRC project on globalisation. Within the same faculty is the ultimate attempt to empirically take down some of the claims and assumptions underpinning globalisation debates, as they pertain to political economy, which is Grahame Thompson and Paul Hirst in *Globalisation in Question* (Hirst and Thompson 1996). Can you imagine this very small faculty, tiny really in the global sense, having the two or three of the most significant social science debates about globalisation, taking place within three corridors? That was a really good moment. David didn't agree with Grahame Thompson; Grahame didn't agree with David and Tony. But they could all get along perfectly well. And of course David was a director of Polity Press and would regularly commission Paul Hirst and Grahame Thompson to write their books – against his work – for Polity! So you had those kinds of debates going on.

You had Stuart debating multiculturalism with Ali Rattansi and James Donald in the Education department. They worked together on a very well-regarded course on race and culture. Stuart introduced me to them and James, who set up the journal *New Formations*, started a little reading group for me and a couple of other PhDs on culture, politics and psychoanalysis. And that's really where we started discussing Lacan and all that kind of stuff. That allowed me, eventually, to try and place my work, which was on new management cultures and work identity, into *New Formations*. There was this guy that was just becoming fashionable in these, sort of, left circles in London, called Slavoj Žižek, and I remember

having my article next to his in this journal and thinking "Oh my God, this is absolutely unbelievable!" But it's interesting because a lot of these folk who were coming in and out, some of them were still at the lecturer, senior lecturer level, and then suddenly, during the time that Mike and I were in the early days at the OU, they just became global intellectuals! Like Paul Gilroy, Homi Bhabha, all these kind of folk – their careers really took off. But they had come in and been working on courses or come and done a seminar, or whatever it might be. So this early thing of postgrads and seniors being able to interact, in and out of the institution was very important.

TB: There's also a sense here that ideas matter and that certain ideas are appropriate to the time that they are in. Social science is about expanding our knowledge of society and how it's changing. It's also about political change. What does that look like at the OU at this time?

MP: I lost my supervisor, Doreen Massey, for six months while she went off to Nicaragua to advise the Sandinistas. So that gives you an example!

PdG: I think if you came as a slightly conservative sociologist, you would have found yourself being pretty marginalised. So you had to be vaguely comfortable with the way things developed. Sometimes we were very informal and that could be quite difficult as well. But that then had to be counterposed to the fact that if you were fully immersed and fully involved, you got an amazing intellectual formation and opportunities to engage in debates and to be taken seriously, I think, at a much earlier age than at a more conventional institution, like Mike was saying. But there were times when the OU was highly, highly political, where appointments were more about who you knew and what your position on some certain issues were than they were necessarily about competence, or about suitability. But that was the obverse side of all these people, many of whom knew each other, lived near each other, saw the OU very much as a political project. This is a milieu of professional, personal, social, geographical interactions – of a certain group of intellectuals basically. And that's just the way it was. You either bought into that or you kicked against it. Or tried to sort of somehow live on the margins of it. But Mike and I were slightly a generation down from that. There were a lot of people there who would fondly talk about their Althusserian moments and the street-fighting on the journals *Ideology and Consciousness* or *Economy and Society*. There would be a debate and advocates of more traditional forms of sociology would say "we've heard all this before, there's nothing new, the sociology of work has a rich

history – what conceivably can Nik Rose and Foucault add to that?" And it had nothing really to do with us because that wasn't our bag. On the other hand, you know, we could still get a huge amount from interacting and being interlocutors with these folk, from Grahame Thompson to David Held, or Chris Pollitt, the big public management scholar. There were so many people there that were really interesting and just good to talk to, really.

TB: Let's move to talk about course teams, because there's also that movement of putting ideas into a form that's suitable for student consumption. Could you talk a little bit about how you experienced that change of roles and entering into the module teams?

MP: Yeah. I went away from the OU and came back in '94. My first involvement in a module was a Social Policy course and I wrote a chapter on race and housing, with an emphasis on what was happening to the public housing sector at the time, the shift away from council housing to so-called social housing and the integration of its provision with the workings of financial markets. That Social Policy course had social constructionism running all the way through it, in very overt ways! My chapter was commented on by John Clarke who began to teach me how to write, and effectively to teach, at a distance. That was a long learning curve. I would love to be able to show you a sample page where his red pen had been active! It would be really instructive. So that was my first involvement in the module team. More properly, in a Geography module team I was involved in a third level course called Understanding Cities. But that movement between module team discussion and people's research interests is one that was very alive at that time.

PdG: Yeah, I think both Mike and I would agree that working on the courses is absolutely key. I thank the Open University for the course team model because without it I wouldn't be able to write. You are taught through prestigious imitation. Understanding Modern Societies was an immersion into a way of being able to write as an academic which I've never forgotten. You sit around a course team and you watch people, some of whom are very, very big names, come in and – gently, in the case of Stuart; not so gently, in the case of others – pick your assumptions and structures and threads and narratives apart. Like Mike, I was then able to apply that the first time on a Masters in Social Policy which John Clarke, again, was putting together. He and I ended up having a lot of debates from my PhD work and his interests, which emerged with Janet Newman, in *The Managerial State* (Clarke and Newman 1997). So you're bouncing ideas off each other. It can get heated but it's amazing – and then

you look back on these texts, which everyone uses all over the country, and the globe, and you think “wow, I was part of that”. It was just an extraordinary experience.

For me, the big thing was Culture, Media and Identities because that was my immersion in taking big responsibility for key sections of the course and also for trying to see through a vision that wasn’t shared by a lot of people. We originally put that proposal through to the OU’s teaching committee with the title “Cultural Revolutions”, which they turned down, obviously. You can understand why but, in a way, it was a more appropriate title for what we were trying to do, which was to try and get Stuart a kind of sociologically-inflected cultural studies course before he retired. It was never his favourite course. He had other courses like his work on our Foundation course, or courses like Beliefs and Ideologies, which I think he saw as more intellectually and politically progressive and interesting. But nonetheless it was something that allowed him a full vision, which hadn’t been possible within the department up to that point, to get some of the key tropes of this cultural turn filtering through. And that’s really reflected in the structure of Culture, Media and Identities, which is a course of theoretical material, it’s going to be quite a challenge for students to hold onto. That’s when we came up with this idea of a case study using a material cultural artefact. The debates about what that should be were really, really intense. Some people wanted to do the television, others the computer, but that would need to engage with a vast amount of existing material which would not really have been possible in the timeframe. So in the end we agreed that it should be something on which there was not a huge amount written in cultural studies, which was the Walkman. And we developed this notion of the “circuit of culture” which we borrowed from Richard Johnson. So we managed to get an entire research project, basically, to develop this case study, so that students would have the whole course run through in miniature and whenever they encountered a problem they could go back to that and go “ah, so it’s representation.”

I was the chair of two of the particular modules: the Walkman module and the *Production of Cultures/Cultures of Production* module. Stuart was the chair of the course in production which was a huge amount of work but he retired before the course went live. Then I took over as course chair, which was less intense. In order to amass all the material, we needed resources to be able to do that and so, in a sense, what we did was leverage some extra money, outside of the normal teaching budgets, to get resources which Linda Janes, the course manager, then accessed for us on our behalf as sort of research project manager. We used to have a rule within Sociology that the course manager could always choose a book that they wanted to be associated with and obviously Linda chose that because she did a

vast amount of work in collecting the materials together. We gained access to advertising archives, to interviews, through the OU's connection with the BBC in Japan and with Sony. We were spending a lot of time in studios in India, Japan, London, in Europe, meeting people, whether for cassette broadcasts or for the videos that we made for the course. We ended up having a huge amount of interaction with this Italian advertising agency who had all the pristine early Sony adverts for the European marketing of the Walkman, which was a Godsend! We literally got everything that we could in the English language together, and sometimes beyond that. There was lots of stuff but there wasn't so much that you couldn't contain it. So it just made a perfect object, a perfect small-scale research project, as well as the artefact for the teaching vehicle. So it was a great alignment between the normal process of course team production and all the connections with the BBC and so on.

That for me was the greatest pedagogic experience of my life, the thing that I'll be most proud of. The best experience we'd had as academics up to that point. I think for Keith Negus as well. To have put this material into a form which students can understand through a material cultural object and create a mini-version of the course. I just was so pleased with it. But we'd only ever seen it as a pedagogic device to solve the problem of keeping students interested and of course it got taken up almost immediately as some kind of political or methodological statement! It was so funny to see some American cultural studies people saying "Hey, this is a paean to global corporations!" So we were quite surprised that suddenly this pedagogical device was being talked about and critiqued in this way. But, as I say, all that immersion in course teams and then to be given the opportunity to do it yourself was just an honour and a privilege.

TB: My reading is that it's at this point that the term "cultural economy" becomes a sort of crystallising concept.

PdG: Exactly, yeah. *Production of Cultures/Cultures of Production* names it for the first time I think with a reference to John, even, in it (du Gay 1997: 3; 10fn). I do actually recall the first time we talked about this term "cultural economy". Mike, John and I used to meet up quite regularly, socially, for drinks in London. But we would always end up talking about work and theory and all that kind of stuff. At one of those meetings, John elaborated on what that might be in a way which, I think, *does* legitimately make him the person who outlined this idea most fully at that point. John was saying, "well you're not a political economist, what you're trying to do is look at this through this prism of these particular theories, from

Foucault, cultural studies, some traditional sociology, and you're trying to look at the discursive construction of identity within this important sector – that's something like cultural economy". Which wasn't to say "you're a cultural *economist*" but to try and look at that wider political economy of change, the growth of consumer culture, the growing importance of retail, the nature of employment in retail, the nature of managerial regimes in a number of different sectors. We may have ended up doing more of the work in reality but I think he did provide a kind of umbrella sketch of what that was and where it might go.

MP: Paul was very much the lead. I was interested in the possibilities that this type of debate and approach opened up for talking about things that were, or had been, usually associated with very ring-fenced disciplines. So stuff around money or finance. You couldn't touch that unless you were an economist of some sort – a slight exaggeration but not much. Or in the UK if you were the likes of Geoff Ingham, from an economic-sociological point of view, or David Harvey from a Marxist geographical standpoint. But the debates opened up by the work that Paul and others were doing meant that you could be reasonably confident of entering those domains and taking a slightly different approach, to unpack the workings of finance and the workings of money. I began to do that in my thesis about land values and investing institutions, like life insurance companies and pension funds, by unpacking the nature of supply and demand curves for something that sounds incredibly boring: office space in the City of London at the time of the Big Bang. And to understand the make-up of 'demand' for office space meant that you really had to get to grips with and dissolve the cultural mores within the City at that time, as it internationalised. That side of the thesis informed a paper in *Society and Space* called "An international city going 'global'" (Pryke 1991). And the other side of things was breaking down 'supply': who was supplying the office space in the City? I tried to work into that account the way in which the culture of the City's various markets at the time described a particular spatial matrix that would then enable the realisation of various economic calculations within the agents providing the office space, to get what they wanted out of providing office space. That later informed the chapter in *Money, Power and Space* (Pryke 1994a) and a paper in *Environment and Planning A* (Pryke 1994b) – both a million miles away from anything you could describe as cultural economy at that time.

I went away from the OU but continued an interest in finance – doing work with Christine Whitehead on retail finance, the 'cultural revolution' within housing associations following its integration with private finance, and maybe the first study of mortgage-backed securitisation in its early days in the UK (Pryke and Whitehead 1993; 1994; 1995). That

included an interesting visit to Fannie Mae in Washington DC and a Fannie Mae-sponsored symposium in Cambridge. When I came back to the OU, I began to do some more work on the City of London with John Allen. There was a paper on the production of service space (Allen and Pryke 1994) and one on Georg Simmel and money cultures (Allen and Pryke 1999). In that paper and in 'Monetized time-space' (Pryke and Allen 2000) I was interested in making a contribution around the money imaginary that was accompanying the rise of financial derivatives. The discussion of mobility and identity in the Simmel paper engaged with Larry Grossberg's (1996) chapter in *Questions of Cultural Identity*. I quite liked the idea of talking about derivatives and finance, and money more generally, in terms of rhythms, which is something that comes out of a mix of Henri Lefebvre and Georg Simmel. That then fed into a chapter I contributed to that third level course on Understanding Cities in one of the course books called *Unsettling Cities* (Allen, Massey and Pryke 1999). I was talking about the links between different cities, from centres of power, like New York and London, and cities in the 'developing world' – but talking about that in terms of the re-rhythming of urban spaces in cities like La Paz in Bolivia (and playing around with photomontage to help illustrate those interconnections and influences). So that, in a very confused and roundabout way, shows how I benefitted from the exposure to some of the debates that Paul was leading around cultural economy by treading into territory that was previously occupied by finance people.

PdG: Can I add a few things to that? You've triggered off a number of interesting things. "An international City going global" – I'd seen that paper, Mike had given me a copy of it, and I *did* think it was a cultural economy paper. Not in exactly the same way as what I was doing but the family resemblances were very striking. And during the period that John, myself and Mike were meeting in London, I'd done the "Enterprise culture and the ideology of excellence" for *New Formations* (du Gay 1991), which John had commented on many times. John and I then did the "Economic identity of services" paper for *Work, Employment and Society* (Allen and du Gay 1994), which *was* an attempt to do the beginnings of a cultural economy sort of deal on the nature of services. And then Graeme Salaman and I did "The cult(ure) of the customer" for *Journal of Management Studies* (du Gay and Salaman 1992). So if you combine those very early papers, where we're just trying to develop something, with what Mike's doing individually and with John, there's a huge overlap. So it was after some of those conversations in London that we started using that term. And we came up with an idea for the three of us to try and get a sort of primer together, on cultural economy (du Gay and Pryke 2002).

At that point, people jump on it pretty quickly, others are brought in. We were having sessions in different arenas with people that became interested, or who came along with it a certain way, but then wanted to sort of critique it or make it more political-economic – Andrew Sayer would be an obvious example. I was involved in chairing the ISA's [1998] research committee seventeen on the Sociology of Organizations so cultural economy more or less fit that. Liz, us, Andrew Sayer, Matt Soar, who became involved with us, I think via Larry Grossberg. A few other people were there. But that event was less significant because it didn't have so much coherence as the book ended up having. From those conversations with John grew the idea of putting together the cultural economy workshop. Going back to what Mike and I were saying about the OU's supportive context, we managed to get some internal moneys from various sources, such as the Pavis Centre [for Social and Cultural Research], to put on these initial OU workshops. And that really was designed to bring people who'd begun to take an interest or whose work, sometimes of very longstanding, clearly had an implication or some kind of prehistory to this. So you see this combination of people who had worked for the OU, or been PhD students at the OU. People who had a connection with CCCS. So, I mean, Angela had been very involved in coming in and doing stuff on the course for Culture, Media and Identities, and working on cultural industries and cultural employment, in fashion. I had a longstanding friendship and almost monthly meetings with Danny Miller, for many years, over at UCL Anthropology. His material cultural studies work in anthropology was clearly pertinent. Actor-Network starts to come in as well. Mike and I had really begun to read together and separately work from ANT and become interested particularly in some of the stuff that John Law was doing, as well as Callon obviously. And then Nigel Thrift and his stuff. Don Slater, obviously, with consumer culture. Along with people like Alan Warde around the sociology of consumption. It just seemed a logical thing to bring those people together.

I guess also a key work that clearly had connections to it was Richard Sennett's (1998) work on the *Corrosion of Character*. I think Stuart sent a little note to bring him in for that [cultural economy] workshop and he responded to Sennett's lecture. I know Mike and I were both like at a tennis match watching these two *massive* figures in the history of the cultural and social sciences chatting away across a table, both of them clearly aware of their reputations. But I cannot remember what Stuart said! It's just impossible to remember. I know Stuart didn't agree entirely with Sennett in terms of his hypothesis about the corrosion of character, the changing cultures of capitalism. I think, because of the New Times project, there was a more progressive take that Stuart felt needed to be surfaced, whereas I think he

saw Sennett's as more of a lamentation for a loss of something. I thought there was something about that at the centre of their conversation.

TB: To be reductive, I guess cultural economy is what happens when you bring cultural studies together with ANT/STS – a dialogue between Stuart and Michel Callon, in a sense – but a little later the former's influence seems to recede and it becomes closer to the latter. I don't know if you agree with that characterisation. But as far as I'm aware, Stuart never engaged with Callon in any written form – what was his impression?

PdG: Well, the imprint of Stuart in cultural economy is something which those of us that knew him and worked with him are very clear about. I tried to convince Stuart of this many times during the course and actually it took a while before he accepted it. Sean Nixon and I, through a discussion with Sage, wanted to put together a collection of things where we thought that genealogy would be most obviously indicated – whether it's stuff in *Policing the Crisis* (Hall et al. 1978) or some of the articles that ended up appearing in *The Hard Road to Renewal* (Hall 1988) – where you begin to see how you could utilise Stuart's cultural studies to show the past of cultural economy. It didn't come off, partly because the estate has a very strong sense of where it wants to put work and that's entirely appropriate. I think it would have to be an article, now, rather than a collection. The one conversation we had with Stuart on Callon was when we went through the introduction to *The Laws of the Markets* with him and Liz [McFall] round at his house one night. He wasn't positively taken with Callon, to be absolutely honest. I mean, he could see it and he knew it was a bravura performance, there was no question of that, but I think he was wedded to certain theoretical resources which could not be well-aligned with ANT. I think he felt that it was politically naïve – I would leave it at that, I think. Nonetheless, to get him reading it and to have a discussion with him was, of course, a great evening! In a way, I think it made me realise that I was moving away from some of the cultural studies stuff with him at that point. I think that's the kind of crux, or the axiomatic point when that happens. Not because I was fully immersed in Callon but there were things there I was interested in, and wanted to follow up, but couldn't with some of the resources I already had at my disposal.

So I'd taken the lead, with Mike, on the first cultural economy workshop; then Mike took the lead and invited me to be co-chair of the second one on the cultural economy of finance. That was an amazing line-up. I mean you had there a very young Daniel Beunza and Fabian Muniesa, you had Annaliese Riles, you had Bill Maurer, Yuval Millo, Donald MacKenzie, Geoff

Ingham, Costas Lapavitsas. We had the whole financialisation gang from Manchester, because it was done as part of CRESC. We wanted that to be a book but it proved much more difficult than the original one.

MP: I wanted to try and bring these debates into a discussion around contemporary finance and money, again to open up the subject to different influences. So we had anthropology, economic sociology, Donald MacKenzie from STS, we had Marxist political economy in the form of Costas. You had Bill Maurer with a very different take on money. We had some very interesting economists, Dick Bryan for example, who's just so intellectually curious and generous that he's able to make the links between all these different debates. It was an interesting workshop because there was an inquisitiveness shared by participants. I presented something called "Geomoney" (Pryke 2007), which was a cultural economy take on weather derivatives – Costas Lapavitsas who was discussant more or less dismissed it within the first sentence! Geoff Ingham presented his paper, while Donald MacKenzie was rubbing his chin, not quite knowing how to place it. But people stuck with it round the table, it was great and interesting to watch. I think that was one of the key purposes of that workshop, to wrest away approaches to finance and money from those disciplines which thought discussion about those subjects was theirs and their alone.

PdG: I was stunned at the challenge that Geoff Ingham's paper gave to some of the STS folks right at the very beginning, in the opening plenary. He asked a question which people couldn't answer! I think some of the constant sniping that's gone on ever since could've been exposed quite early on if that had ended up being a full-scale publication. It ended up as a special section of *Economy & Society* (Pryke and du Gay 2007), which Mike organised and edited. But I was really sad because I think that would have been the exact equivalent of the cultural economy book. It wasn't a pure STS, kind of, Donald MacKenzie finance project. It could have been a really good lightning point for things that stayed more separate than they would've done if that had come out as a free-standing book.

Of course, this also happened at the same time that this guy Franck Cochoy got in touch, from Toulouse. I'd read a couple of his things and then I realised there was a connection between him and Fabian and PhD students. I went down there for a conference in French, which was very tough to follow, I have to confess, at which there were loads of people who've now become quite central to the *Journal of Cultural Economy*. And then Franck set up the [2008] Performativities workshop, down in Toulouse, with Judith Butler – but not Callon who couldn't make it, which was a great shame. That again had a little bit of a feel of

the OU atmosphere because there were lots of people from a variety of different backgrounds – Tim Mitchell, Judith Butler, loads and loads of people – coming together and hammering a few things out. Which obviously then led to the special issue (Cochoy, Giraudeau and McFall 2010) and the book version of it as well.

TB: You also have the journal at this point. So cultural economy was building institutions, as Liz put it in one of the editorials (McFall 2015). It was attracting people and proliferating on its own terms, producing doctoral students, books, a journal, large funded research projects; it gained its own momentum. One early critical response (Fournier and Grey 1999) described this as a case of academic entrepreneurship – critiquing 'enterprise culture' only to reproduce it.

PdG: I don't hold any great store by that criticism, even though of course it's right. When something becomes seen as relevant, lots of people invite you to come and talk about it and then it looks like you're selling your wares every which way. But it wasn't about calculating advantage, I don't think we ever felt like that. We were very surprised at the reaction to the OU course production books, like the Walkman book, and also with *Cultural Economy*. It was mainly about, "this is really interesting, let's get it out there". The mission was: start a conversation, get representation. They're not all gonna agree with each other, they're not all even gonna like each other, but if someone comes to this and is trying to think about how you utilise some sort of cultural prism to surface interesting phenomena that have not always been looked at in this way, this is a book where you can see different ways of doing it. It was that kind of thing, I think. Mike and I realised when we were editing the chapters that we had something that was going to be of interest to people. When I first read the John Law, I was very excited by it, I thought John had done a really good piece there. Obviously our introduction took quite a lot of time to get together because it needed to be a balancing act as much as anything else: it was there to try and show how you could bring some of these things together, as well as trying to suggest a sort of overarching core, as we saw it.

We were just attuned, or becoming attuned, to the idea of turning things into books and stuff. I think there was something rather odd to the older generation who never really did things with the prospect of doing a publication. For us, our immersion into academia was that you were beginning to have to publish as a part of the job, not whenever you fancied it or when an idea came along. It wasn't instrumental, it wasn't like now where it's really "publish or perish". I would say that the inquisitiveness and the sense of academic purpose

were the primary dimensions. But it was partly because of the course team production process and always negotiating with publishers over what would be the best conduit for publishing certain things. Sage had always been very dominant with us in relationship to Culture, Media and Identities and they wanted to pick up on the *Questions of Cultural Identity* on the basis of the relationship that we'd already established with them. Stuart and I set up a small series on "Culture, Representation and Identities": we published a book by Sean Nixon (2003), the *Cultural Economy* book was in that, Sarita Malik's (2002) book on representations of race on TV and so on. And obviously at the same time there were people coming up who Mike and I were beginning to supervise and the generational thing began to move. So Liz obviously was at the OU with myself and Margie Wetherell. There were loads of people in Geography, who became somehow tangentially connected with the fact that this is the work that was going on while they were there. It was that kind of iterative process that was happening.

TB: Clearly cultural economy has *done something* to the world, though. So how do you make sense of that contribution? How do you assess that legacy?

PdG: In terms of doing a project in a context when something was definitely changing, it needed to be recognised and it needed to be discussed because it was not at the mainstream of research in economic sociology or the sociology of work and employment. The first time I ever gave a paper on cultural economy, someone said "What about Chile? What about the Unions? There'll be a general strike soon and we'll be back to what we thought was normal." And it just didn't look like that was going to happen – and indeed it never did and still isn't. My view was always that there was something going on in the world to which this offered a good way of trying to respond. At the same time, some of the theoretical and conceptual tools that one could bring to bear on it surfaced things, again, which hadn't been discussed or thought about. That was something I was really very proud of. But, over time, I began to think that the latter ran out of steam very quickly as repetition began to set in. That you could know the answer to something before you even got to page two of an article, because it was dominated by the apparatus rather than the substance.

I remember the discursive psychology group at the Open University, towards the end, prior to Margie's leaving, students would come up and talk over the lunch table and say, "I'm doing the discursive construction of death, the discursive construction of whatever" – it had gone, it had passed. If you were gonna say something interesting about death, that's one thing, but the problem is that people wanted to wrap up their originality in "the discursive"

and that had been done many, many times. Sometimes one gets the impression that a large discursive hammer is being used to crack a relatively tiny empirical nut! I think we've seen that in many areas. When you get the initial work of Miller and Rose (1990) on the governmentality stuff, it's very stimulating and interesting; then *Economy and Society* becomes the house journal of that and gradually it sort of runs out of steam. Then it's replaced, in *Economy and Society*, by performativity, from the Callonian perspective, and again that gradually runs out of steam.

Hacking's (1999) book, *The Social Construction of What?*, flips that over to the other side and I think that's where I would come to on cultural economy. There were so many substantive issues and things that one might wish to focus on in those domains but not all of them are gonna be best investigated or explored using these kinds of resources any longer, in my view. So I don't hold on to a great deal of that apparatus any more, in the work that I do. I don't go to it, I don't follow it in the way that I would've done. But there's things in it that stay and they're probably things that are done by those that are most adept. And in a way the most adept are those that have come up with it in the first place. So there are many who imitate Latour and Callon but there are very few that make the same impression. Donnie MacKenzie's ability to translate those kinds of tools into articles in the *London Review of Books*, you know, speaks to a public audience in ways that make some of these complex things incredibly easy to understand. And that's a work of genius, I think.

MP: I feel more at home talking about the cultural economy of finance. I think "legacy" is too grand a term but I think it has opened up the discussions about the workings of money and the relationships between international finance and the quotidian. And that's been explored in a range of ways, not all of which would be directly attributed to the discussions that took place at that workshop at all. But think of the work of Randy Martin (e.g. 2013), or publications like *The Asset Economy* (Adkins, Cooper and Koenings 2020) and the way they are approaching talking about money and finance and the everyday is very much in the spirit of the way in which we tried to open up the debate in the mid-2000s or before. So I think that sense that you needn't be a financial economist in order to talk about money and finance, I think that's hugely beneficial and there's no way we're gonna go back on that.

The final thing I'd say is that the question raised in the Introduction to *Cultural Economy*, along the lines of "just what is an economy?" – I think that's highly pertinent now, for all the reasons you could come up with. Doreen Massey, in her own way – and for a good example see her chapter in an OU teaching text *The Economy in Question* (1988) – asked that same

question: what is an economy? But there was a definite political project driving her question and that sense of, what is an economy – who does it work for? who benefits? what roles do money and finance play and again who benefits? – is something that desperately needs to be kept centre stage. But not in a narrow political economy way. That's my little sermon finished with!

References

Adkins, Lisa., Martijn. Konings, and Melinda. Cooper. 2020. *The Asset Economy: Property Ownership and the New Logic of Inequality*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Allen, John, and Paul du Gay. 1994. "Industry and the Rest: The Economic Identity of Services." *Work, Employment & Society* 8 (2): 255-271.

Allen, John, and Doreen Massey. 1988. *The Economy in Question*. London: Sage.

Allen, John, Doreen Massey, and Michael Pryke. 1999. *Unsettling Cities*. *Unsettling Cities*. London: Routledge.

Allen, John, and Michael Pryke. 1994. "The Production of Service Space." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 12 (4): 453–75. https://doi.org/10.1068/d120453.

Allen, John, and Michael Pryke. 1999. "Money Cultures after Georg Simmel: Mobility, Movement, and Identity." *Environment and Planning D: Society and Space* 17 (1): 51–68. https://doi.org/10.1068/d170051.

Brown, Vivienne. 1992. "The Emergence of the Economy." In *Formations of Modernity*, edited by Stuart Hall and Bram Gieben, 127–76. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Clarke, John, and Janet Newman. 1997. *The Managerial State: Power, Politics and Ideology in the Remaking of Social Welfare*. London: Sage.

Cochoy, Franck, Martin Giraudeau, and Liz McFall. 2010. "Performativity, Economics and Politics: An Overview." *Journal of Cultural Economy* 3 (2): 139–46. https://doi.org/10.1080/17530350.2010.494116.

du Gay, Paul. 1991. "Enterprise Culture and the Ideology of Excellence." *New Formations* 13 (Spring): 45–61.

du Gay, Paul. 1997. *Production of Culture/Cultures of Production*. London: Sage.

du Gay, Paul. 1992. "Work-Based Subjectivity and Identity: Assisted Self-Service in Contemporary British Retailing." The Open University.

du Gay, Paul, and Michael Pryke. 2002. *Cultural Economy: Cultural Analysis and Commercial Life*. London: SAGE Publications.

du Gay, Paul, and Graeme Salaman. 1992. “The Cult[ure] of the Customer.” *Journal of Management Studies* 29 (5): 615–33.

Grossberg, Lawrence. 1996. “Identity and Cultural Studies: Is That All There Is?” In *Questions of Cultural Identity*, 87–107. London: SAGE Publications.

Hacking, Ian. 1999. *The Social Construction of What?* Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press.

Hall, Stuart. 1988. *The Hard Road to Renewal: Thatcherism and the Crisis of the Left*. London: Verso.

Hall, Stuart, Chas Critcher, Tony Jefferson, John Clarke, and Brian Roberts. 1978. *Policing the Crisis: Mugging, the State, and Law and Order*. London: The Macmillan Press.

Hall, Stuart, and Paul Du Gay. 1996. *Questions of Cultural Identity*. London: Sage Publications.

Hall, Stuart, and Bram Gieben. 1992. *Formations of Modernity*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Hall, Stuart, David Held, and Tony McGrew. 1992. *Modernity and Its Future*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Harvey, David. 1990. *The Condition of Postmodernity: An Enquiry into the Origins of Cultural Change*. Cambridge, MA: Blackwell.

Hirst, Paul, and Grahame Thompson. 1996. *Globalisation in Question*. Cambridge: Polity Press.

Malik, Sarita. 2002. *Representing Black Britain: Black and Asian Images on Television*.

Martin, Randy. 2013. “After Economy?: Social Logics of the Derivative.” *Social Text* 31 (1 114): 83–106. https://doi.org/10.1215/01642472-.

Massey, Doreen. 1991. “Flexible Sexism.” *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space* 9 (1): 31–57. https://doi.org/10.1068/d090031.

Massey, Doreen, and Alejandrina Catalano. 1978. *Capital and Land: Landownership by Capital in Great Britain*. London: Edward Arnold.

Miller, Peter, and Nikolas Rose. 1990. “Governing Economic Life.” *Economy and Society* 19 (1): 1–31. https://doi.org/10.1080/03085149000000001.

Nixon, Sean. 2003. *Advertising Cultures: Gender, Commerce, Creativity*. *Advertising Cultures: Gender, Commerce, Creativity*.

Pryke, Michael. 1988. “Urban Land ‘Values’ and the Changing Role of Financial Institutions: A Case Study of the City of London.” The Open University.

Pryke, M. 1991. “An International City Going ‘global’’: Spatial Change in the City of London.’” *Environment & Planning D: Society & Space* 9 (2): 197–222. https://doi.org/10.1068/d090197.

Pryke, Michael. 1994a. “Urbanizing Capitals: Towards an Integration of Time, Space and Economic Calculation.” In *Money, Power and Space*, edited by Stuart Corbridge, Ron Martin, and Nigel Thrift, 218–52. Oxford: Blackwell.

Pryke, M. 1994b. “Looking Back on the Space of a Boom: (Re)Developing Spatial Matrices in the City of London.” *Environment & Planning A* 26 (2): 235–64. https://doi.org/10.1068/a260235.

Pryke, Michael. 2007. “Geomoney: An Option on Frost, Going Long on Clouds.” *Geoforum* 38: 576–88. https://doi.org/10.1016/j.geoforum.2006.10.011.

Pryke, Michael, and John Allen. 2000. “Monetized Time-Space: Derivatives - Money’s ‘New Imaginary’?” *Economy and Society* 29 (2): 264–84. https://doi.org/10.1080/030851400360497.

Pryke, Michael, and Paul du Gay. 2007. “Take an Issue: Cultural Economy and Finance.” *Economy and Society* 36 (3): 339–54. https://doi.org/10.1080/03085140701428282.

Pryke, Michael, and Christine Whitehead. 1993. “The Provision of Private Finance for Social Housing: An Outline of Recent Developments in Funding Existing Housing Associations in England.” *Housing Studies* 8 (4): 274–91. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673039308720768.

Pryke, Michael, and Christine Whitehead. 1994. “An Overview of Mortgage-Backed Securitisation in the UK Background: The Changing Housing Finance Market.” *Housing Studies* 9 (1): 75–101. https://doi.org/10.1080/02673039408720776.

Pryke, Michael, and Christine Whitehead. 1995. “Private Sector Criteria and the Radical Change in Provision of Social Housing in England.” *Environment and Planning C: Government and Policy* 13: 217–52.

Sennett, Richard. 1998. *The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism*. New York: W.W. Norton & Company.