

[0:00:00]

Respondent: It was never at the centre of contemporary cultural studies but I became involved with them because in the sixties I was a kind of community activist/hippy squatter basically. And from that I'd got interested in youth cultures I mean partly because we were in this building where there were lots of (inaudible 0:00:34) and hippies inside and lots of skinheads outside throwing stones at us.

Interviewer: This was in London?

Respondent: This was in London. It was called the Wonderful, 4 Piccadilly. It was a mass squat, an occupation; we occupied large buildings in the centre of London for homeless young people basically.

Interviewer: And this was in roughly the 1960s then?

Respondent: This was in 1969.

Interviewer: Had you been involved in '68 in the student -?

Respondent: No, I was a (inaudible 0:00:59); I was involved in the kind of... (inaudible 0:01:02). I dropped out of Cambridge; I'd have been at Cambridge and I dropped out and I got involved in the counter culture in London, so I wasn't involved too much in the student movement but I was involved in the more kind of counter culture that was centred around music, poetry, art and jazz to some extent, so that was my thing. But the thing was that as a result of the squats and so forth I became interested in youth cultures so I wrote a piece – well, actually I didn't write it I actually just made some notes towards a theory of youth culture. And I'd been quite influenced by deviancy theory, and there was then a thing called a National Deviancy Symposium with Jock Young and all those people.

Interviewer: Yeah, and Stewart was there I believe.

Respondent: And Stewart was involved. And I knew Jock and all those people. So I was quite influenced by deviancy theory but I was suspicious of the idea that you could understand youth cultures from the perspective of deviancy theory or deviancy application. And I'd been reading (inaudible 0:02:11), people started to do in that period. And I sort of came up with a sort of (inaudible 0:02:17) theory about class and sub-culture, particularly working class sub-cultures. And because I'd been staying in the East End I did some work around – because the East End was a sort of incubator of youth cultures to an extent, I mean the mods had more or less started off there and of course the skinheads. And even while I was a squatter actually we'd met some of the skinheads – the skinheads who were throwing stones at us in the building. When we moved to – we got thrown out of the West End basically but when we moved to the East End we actually met some of them, this paint house gang that actually became quite famous because somebody wrote a book about them. But they were in a community settlement down Bethnal Green Road. So we went and actually met up with them and we had this sort of vague idea – everybody was talking about worker/student allowance do you remember? So we thought "Well, there could be some cultural alliance between hippies and skinheads – ha ha". Anyway, so it got me interested in what was in play there, so I did the sort of (inaudible 0:03:13) take on it and it got taken up by the people at – Tommy Jefferson and Stuart Hall – those people, yeah.

Interviewer: So you went to the centre and gave the paper?

Respondent: I just gave a talk on the paper. And I didn't know they recorded it and then they transcribed it and put it in their journal.

Interviewer: Without telling you?

Respondent: No, I think they probably told me.

Interviewer: That would be cheeky.

[0:03:36]

Respondent: I can't remember, you know? But I was a bit amazed that they said "Oh well, we're going to do a" – they started doing their thesis about youth culture. And they did this book called "Resistance Through Rituals", which I think was the first collaborative book that the centre did.

Interviewer: I was going to ask both of you really, how aware were you? When did you first become aware of the centre as a...? And how did you become aware of it? What did you know about it?

Respondent 2: Well, I became aware of it for sure when I started working at MacMillan because we were publishing this series on communications and culture, which Stuart and Paul Walton were (inaudible 0:04:25). That was really just starting up; it just started up when I arrived.

Interviewer: So when did you arrive?

Respondent 2: In 1979. So it had been going probably a little while, because my predecessor Rob Shreve had been working at Hutchinson and he'd been doing some of this sort of stuff at Hutchinson.

Interviewer: Okay, that's the connection then.

Respondent 2: Well, that's partly the connection but his predecessor at MacMillan had had Paul Walton and Jock Young editing theories. Well, there was a whole collection of theories really (inaudible 0:04:59) social studies, there was critical criminology – which came out of the (inaudible 0:05:04). Paul was a rather reliant entrepreneur.

Respondent: Yes he was.

Respondent 2: He had his finger in many pies and there was a sort of shifting cast of characters with some of the same people popping up in different series.

Respondent: Yes, (inaudible 0:05:20) in that series didn't you?

Respondent 2: The book that never was or one of the books that never was.

Respondent: Oh? (Inaudible 0:05:26) but it was published. But it wasn't published and it wasn't in that series?

Interviewer: (Inaudible 0:05:31) the Meaning of Style was published in a different series wasn't it?

Respondent: Oh yes.

Respondent 2: It never happened. But I mean when I started I did actually know of the centre because somebody that I'd been at university with went over there to do a PhD. I mean that was just anecdotal.

Interviewer: Who were they?

Respondent 2: John Salomas.

Interviewer: Oh, John Salomas.

Respondent 2: Yeah.

Interviewer: Oh wow.

Respondent 2: Who I've also published in a complete separate context. But anyway, the engagement with the centre was that we had communications and culture, and Stuart and Paul were the executive editors. And we had an editorial board: Phil Corrigan, Richard Hogarth, Stuart Wood, Anthony Smith, and Raymond Williams. And so, among the first things that I can remember about the job was going out for lunch with all of these people, and I haven't been able to check this out but I think we've probably had two of these with everybody. And what became very clear – although the lunches were

extremely enjoyable – was that the editorial board weren't going to come up with many books that we could sell to students, and so over a period of time – because the editorial board became less active – then they went through a period that Stuart and Paul edited the series. Then I stopped doing the sociology books at that point but then a sort of later iteration of this was Roz Brunt, Simon Frith, Stuart, and Angela became the series editors and eventually it was Simon and Angela ended up editing the series. But that was long after I'd stopped being involved in it. But that was the most directly centre-related thing through Stuart and of course there were a lot of centre people who popped up. But in any number of these different series often on the forthcoming list, not necessarily turning into reality – like Stuart was meant to be doing two books in the series, neither of which ever happened. Then there was going to be a book of interviews which actually eventually happened so many years later that it didn't come into the series, it went off somewhere else.

Respondent: I think Hutchinson did the books that the centre did collaboratively. I mean what was interesting about the centre – well, there were two things, I suppose, about it. One was that it was a conduit for ideas, mainly coming from across the Channel. It was based where kind of ideas about psychoanalysis, history... literary... Roland (Inaudible 0:08:11) – all those sort of things – (inaudible 0:08:13) blah, blah, blah. I mean the centre was a place where all those sort of people kind of collided I was going to say really.

Interviewer: Had you heard about it before you gave this talk?

Respondent: No. When I went up there it was in '71 – I think Stuart had taken it over from Richard Hogarth so I mean it hadn't quite taken off really. So that was obviously one important thing and since it was a sort of founding moment for cultural studies as a sort of inter-disciplinary project. And I suppose the second thing was their style or scholarship and research, which was essentially collaborative. I mean they worked together whether it was the Empire Strikes Back or Resistance to Rituals or whatever it was, and I think that was at the time quite innovative for PhD students working just on their own little thing but actually working together. And that was very much part of the ethos of the centre.

Interviewer: Do you have any recollections of what that was like as an atmosphere?

Respondent: Well, I wasn't part of it.

Interviewer: I know, but form the outside looking in, as it were?

Respondent: Oh well, I suppose the thing that struck me about going there was they were on top of this tower block, and when I went there they were just beginning to do this stuff on mods and rockers, and it did occur to me really that their sort of view of the world was very much sort top-down; I mean apart from Paul Willis, who was the big executive who was doing ethnography, they weren't doing ethnography. You see, Dick (Inaudible 0:09:47) is interesting from that point of view because he basically pioneered the semi-logical turn – well, I mean it wasn't even a turn – I mean basically he was interested in semiology. Although his actual PhD was about criminal families in West London – and it was based on interviews and stuff, it was a bit more ethnographic – but essentially where he took youth culture studies was he interested in the kind of fashion, the style, or the meaning of style; that's what he was interested in. I was more interested in the kind of... the social territories and the lived experiences that were kind of encapsulated by these different –

Interviewer: So in a sense you talk about them being in a tower, in a sense – ivory tower is quite a loaded term.

Respondent: Yes. Well, it wasn't ivory, it was steel and concrete. But I did sort of feel that they were very theoretically driven. And when I later became briefly an academic advisor to them –

Interviewer: When was that then?

Respondent: This was when Richard Johnson was in charge.

Interviewer: Yes, that would've been in the '70s; late '70s, early '80s.

Respondent: So they would send me the theses of people that were doing it and so on. And what I was aware of was this sort of very arcane conjuncture between highly theoretical stuff – (Inaudible 0:10:58) basically – they were very into (inaudible 0:11:01) at this point and really very subjective and almost narcissistic kinds of accounts of their own involvement in the research. So somebody would write about (inaudible 0:11:15) theory of the name of the father would be the first part of the thesis, and the second part would be a really probably rather awful kind of autobiography. And the two things weren't integrated; that's what struck to me that there was a theoretical interest and then some level they felt they had to address sort of – in fact the earliest agenda of cultural studies – the Richard Hogg kind of agenda – which is kind of a very embedded account of culture as everyday life. And they were still sort of looking over their shoulder at that. But actually the two things weren't at all in any kind of however dialectical relation; they just went in parallel.

Interviewer: Do you have a sense of that in terms of – what was the appeal of the culture studies? As a publisher why were you keen to kind of develop culture studies as a -?

Respondent 2: It was an area that was coming into existence on the wider (inaudible 0:12:08) and I think it was a period in which you could publish interesting books by interesting people on interesting topics and sell a decent number of copies – which sadly is not true today – and so you were looking for where there were interesting new things that people would be interested in. And people were interested in culture but it was part of a broader pattern of moving in to doing a range of radical series, which was what my couple of predecessors had done. I was a bit more prosaic because I sort of said "This is all very well and that's fine, we keep on doing this but actually the future is going to be much more publishing books that are more (inaudible 0:12:50) than related to students." So in thinking about "How can you actually get people who have got one agenda in terms of what they want to do and what they think they want to do to produce things that are actually going to be more useful (overspeaking 0:13:08)".

Respondent: When did that shift occur do you think? That shift in emphasis.

Respondent 2: Well, I remember talking about it when I had my interview in 1979, and I think that was probably why I got the job which means that there was already a sort of sense that things were going that way, because it's fine – when I was a student right up to that period really you could buy virtually every book that was published in a particular sort of broad subject area (inaudible 0:13:38) without breaking the bank, partly because the books were cheaper but mostly because there were few of them. And the reason why they were cheaper was because there were so few of them to choose from, so people bought a lot of individual books. But I don't know, I have a note down somewhere of what sales have been of some of these sorts of books, but Knuckle Sandwich, for example, sold what?

Respondent: I don't know – twenty... (inaudible 0:14:03), it sold a lot.

Respondent 2: I think you told me 15,000 in the first three years or something.

Respondent: It did sell a lot.

Respondent 2: And it went on over quite a long period.

Respondent: Well, of course it was a Penguin book; it got reviews in the broadsheets and so forth. So yes I mean it was a different ballgame.

Interviewer: How much would these have sold do you think?

Respondent 2: Oh, nothing like that. I mean I don't know. I didn't actually look up the sales figures but I think one, two, maybe three thousand over their lifetime – not a lot. But if one did the maths one would sell a minute number because anything that is not being bought, as it's called (inaudible 0:14:42) the number of people who will actually buy their own individual copies, it's so small.

Respondent: I've just had a book on the Olympics –

Interviewer: I saw that on your website.
[0:14:50]

Respondent: Which has actually been very well-received but somebody said "If they had only had a more rigorous editor it could've been a textbook." I didn't want to write a textbook; it's not a textbook at all. I mean it's just not aimed – but (inaudible 0:15:04) presumed – and I think this probably doesn't exist but (inaudible 0:15:08) a lot of people interested in the Olympics, actually the interesting thing is once the Olympics are over the only people interested in it are the sort of professional Olympic researchers. But it's not doing too badly under the circumstances, but you're absolutely right I mean the idea of –

Respondent 2: It's a big change over that sort of period.

Respondent: It is.

Interviewer: Does that correspond with changes in...

Respondent 2: (Inaudible 0:15:26).

Interviewer: Thank you, changes in Higher Education do you think? I mean post-79.

Respondent 2: Yes.

Respondent: Yeah absolutely.

Interviewer: (Inaudible 0:15:33).

Respondent: Yeah, the initial period was still – I mean all of this new publishing that MacMillan (inaudible 0:15:41) the other publishers that were around at the time were doing was related to the big expansion of higher education at that time; so you had a lot more students, you had people who were coming and who were interested in teaching different things. The curriculum was shaken up; it was much, much more diverse than it had been before so there were lots of opportunities to publish things with a constituency out there. In addition to that, there was such a thing as an intelligent general reader who might buy a serious book, and so that's partly to do with radicalisation that there were a lot of people who were interested in political and social events in a pretty active sort of way and they wanted to find out more. And I mean perhaps eventually they stopped banging their head against a brick wall thinking that the next book was going to give them more guidance on what they maybe ought to do than the last one.

Respondent 2: No, I'm not sure that's quite right. I think there was basically, at the tail-end of the '60s, a radicalised middle class – I mean obviously most of them had been to university, and obviously the universities were centres of radical action as well as radical ideas – and I think that carried on for a time into the '70s. But then I think with Thatcher, with '78 and so forth – I mean I remember I had to periodically colour my library, and I remember in '78 and '79 I had all these books on workers control – the Industry of Workers Control and other stuff – and basically I got rid of them, I went and sold them. It was like it wasn't going to happen. And I just couldn't bear looking at these books (inaudible 0:17:33) kind of failed political project. I mean I think what has happened is that today you have sort of magazine like (inaudible 0:17:41), which is the sort of house journal of the cultural (inaudible 0:17:43), and which is edited by Stuart Hall and Mike (Inaudible 0:17:47), and Doreen Massey and other folk. And essentially it does represent the cultural studies as a political project, as an attempt to understand in some depth the changes going on in cultures in relation to the fact we live in a Capitalist society and how Capitalist society is developing. I mean they just produced a manifesto in which actually Stuart and Allan O'Shea – who used to be the head of cultural studies in the (Inaudible 0:18:21) – having that thing about common sense, so (inaudible 0:18:24) how she lives. But at the same time (Inaudible 0:18:30) tried to engage with the New Labour or the New Labour agenda with one nation Labourism and so forth, so I mean they are quite active politically in trying to create bridges with the Labour movement and so forth. And you could say that goes right back to the original impetus of Richard Hogarth and so on in which cultural studies had a very close relationship to Marxism basically and to a sense of working class history and culture, and did feed

into and influenced a lot of historians for example and the growth of cultural history, which was very important I think.

[0:19:13]

Interviewer: But talking about the broader appeal of these kinds of culture studies texts was it ever – and you also talked about the theoreticism of a lot of, particularly the centre, texts; was that ever challenging as an editor in terms of depth?

Respondent: I never worked on any of the centre texts. I mean the only thing that we published at that time was Policing the Crisis, and that was certainly longer than it would've been if I'd have edited it.

Interviewer: Because in a sense I was going to say that it would be the sort of paradox – not just with the centre but also with... they wanted to have a broader appeal.

Respondent: Well, I think Youth Questions is a good example of – I was more of an interventionist editor. Phil would no doubt remember. But maybe just reconstruct how it started off, because I think if I'm not mistaken you originally had the idea that you wanted to do like a yearbook or a journal or something like that.

Respondent 2: Yes, I think I was working in a youth project in the West End and we'd got some money from the (inaudible 0:20:21) Trust to do a study of changing school transitions because it was a time when the old (inaudible 0:20:26) was collapsing and they were creating job creation schemes, new routes from school basically. So we got some money and we produced a thing called Aspects of (Inaudible 0:20:35) which we had somebody from (Inaudible 0:20:39) College who was a fireman but had actually been a mod, and he wrote a thing about being a mod. So we had put together a series of kind of quite short pieces really.

Interviewer: And this was the early '80s?

Respondent 2: No, it would've been before that. It would've been '74, '75, something like that I think. Anyway, it gave us the idea. So the idea was, yes, to do like a yearbook; exactly. And then I think probably you talked me out of that idea.

Respondent: I talked you out of it and said "The problem with yearbooks is that by the time the year has got underway people think they're out of date."

Respondent 2: Well, there was a socialist register which was a sort of model, but no it wouldn't have worked I'm sure.

Respondent: It wouldn't have worked.

Interviewer: So your response was "The yearbook wouldn't have worked but why don't you do a series"?

Respondent: Yes.

Respondent 2: So instead of a yearbook it became a sort of "How do we divide it down into some coherent themes?" and so on, but you'd been thinking about it for quite a long time actually because –

Respondent: I'd talked to Angie about it you see because obviously I'd met up with her and we'd talked and stuff and so we wanted it to have a – I mean what was interesting about the youth question, as it still is really, is produced at the intersection of gender and generation obviously and class and race, and therefore it's quite an interesting way of engaging with those issues both politically and also theoretically, so that's how we thought of "Series". I mean the whole thing with the series was why it's a youth question is that it's more than just about people who happen to be young. I mean it problematizes the common sense notion of youth as being this kind of fixed life stage and also it being unitary, something which the Olympics of course tried to reinvent that might appeal to youth. But the idea that youth goes across class and so on. So we wanted to challenge that in different

ways and of course there were whole numbers of people who were working on different aspects of this (inaudible 0:22:33).

[0:22:33]

Interviewer: How did you kind of branch out to get various different people involved? Was it just through networks that you already had informally or...?

Respondent: Yeah, some people contacted us; sometimes... it was...

Respondent 2: You had quite a lot. Looking back at the file most of the file is actually about Angie's expenses I note.

Respondent: Oh, is it? Oh right, okay.

Respondent 2: Minimal though they were but she was very much living from hand to mouth at that time.

Respondent: Yes, she was; that's right. Well, so was I actually.

Respondent 2: But you had a pretty clear idea of a range of topics you wanted to cover, the two of you, by the time that we started talking. So we dispensed with the yearbook idea; we thought this is going to be a set of books; and then we started thinking – and I mean one of my questions was "If you're going to do it as a series what are the range of things that ought to be covered in that sort of series?" So it was very much an iterative process I think; it sort of developed along, and then people came from all sorts of different places. Some of them –

Respondent: Desmond Bell, for example, I didn't know. He was in Northern Ireland and did this rather good book I think about sectarian youth cultures in Belfast and so on.

Respondent 2: I think he might've just written in once the series was up and running.

Respondent: Yes, that's right. I think once he was up and running people saw it and –

Respondent 2: There were some people who obviously were sort of... to one or other of you. There were clearly quite a lot –

Respondent: Like Bob Holland I didn't know and he sort of launched his career in a way. He did his book and he's gone on to carry on doing a kind of urban ethnography around youth issues.

Respondent 2: I think Cynthia might've just got in touch actually as well. (Inaudible 0:24:16).

Respondent: (Inaudible 0:24:16).

Respondent 2: She'd done her research and she wanted to write it up. I can't remember. I think I might've –

Respondent: I became quite close friends with her afterwards. I mean that's the only thing about it: you actually meet these people and you find they've got affinities and so on, and she was –

Interviewer: I mean I noticed that especially the jointly-authored ones like (Inaudible 0:24:32) in the introduction – I was reading it on the way down – it talked about how it was written as a sort of editorial collective amongst Clark, Cohen.

Respondent: Yes.

Respondent 2: That was probably the one that was closest to that.

Interviewer: What was that like in practice from your various perspectives?

Respondent 2: We did a conference based on it actually. I was then at the institute of education. I'd become a sort of contract researcher based at the institute of education and we organised a conference. I don't know if you remember? It was Paul Withers came down and other people. And obviously all these people took part. So it wasn't just a book, it was an attempt to in a sense conserve what was still useful about critical pedagogy and radical education, but to address it to the new conjuncture which was all about this new vocationalism which was coming in and which, of course, would have a knock-on effect in universities. The idea that education was really more about training than anything; it had to be a vocation, it had to be about what job did you get at the end.

[0:25:41]

Interviewer: Yeah, which we still see now.

Respondent 2: And I think it's the others... through the other side of it. So the books people wanted to read were books that would help them get good grades, get good degrees, and get good jobs; and the broader sort of agenda, intellectual agenda, (inaudible 0:26:00) sort of got marginalised. And I think this was an attempt in a way to hold the line and to say "Well, there was still a space and there were various points of engagement with this new idea about education".

Interviewer: (Inaudible 0:26:17) they were quite political in that sense then?

Respondent 2: Yes.

Interviewer: Do you still see that kind of politics now within academia in terms of publishing or in terms of pedagogy?

Respondent: I still publish the political books with a particular argument. It can be quite a range of different things. There are not an enormous number of academics who have come of age in the last 20 years who are terribly keen on writing that sort of book or terribly well-qualified to do so because people have learnt to be so specialised and they've been given a whole set of motivations, they're told to get on in their career they should write really specialised articles in high-impact journals that are probably going to be read by two or three people, you know?

Respondent 2: (Laughs)

Respondent: No, well it is. That's the reality of what's happened. So it's the exceptional person; so I mean I've published books in paperback which means that they've got to be books that students are going to buy. So a large proportion of them are called stat books, but then alongside that I try to do a range of books that I think people will want sufficiently that they're going to be persuaded to buy them. And at different times obviously it depends a lot on political saliency, I mean I did a whole load of books on local government starting off in the Thatcher period because people got interested in local government – people who were working in local government who had probably never read books before actually wanted to read books because they felt that their whole framework in which they were working and living was under threat. The European Union another example of that; I mean books on the European Union sell far more than you would expect them to do on the basis of what on any logic (inaudible 0:28:15) the part that the EU would play in the curriculum, and a lot of that is down to the fact that the commission put a lot of money into John (Inaudible 0:28:22) posts in the universities so there ended up being a lot of people who were EU specialists and what would they teach? Of course, courses on the EU; and therefore there's a lot of – so in those sorts of areas where there's some sort of saliency because of one reason or another you can publish more broadly than in areas where people take a very utilitarian attitude to what they're going to buy in the way that Phil was talking about, this sort of getting ahead, getting qualifications, getting a job.

Respondent 2: (Inaudible 0:28:51) a question actually: it's about the role of publishers in the political culture. I mean we've got independent publishers – people like Lawrence and Wishart – they're small, they're dedicated, they have a political agenda, and in a way they have a niche market – a Lawrence and Wishart book is going to be a certain kind of book and if you're interested in that kind of thing you can go there. And you can go to other independent publishers similarly. But for large, you might say corporate, publishers who operate globally to what extent is it possible for editors to have a kind of

proactive role? I mean to actually say "Well, I think we should open whatever issue it is or this particular space. There may not immediately be a market for it but we can create a market; we can create demand around this agenda." Do you is that at all possible or is it -?

[0:30:04]

Respondent: I think the more corporate the publisher the less discretion that individual editors have and it's certainly moved in that direction a lot over the last 20 years because publishing has become so much more corporatized; and I've had the benefit of working in a company that hasn't been corporatized, that hasn't taken over this and that publisher that still actually makes its living by publishing books. And in that context the individual editor has got a lot of freedom in terms the content. I mean when you think about it – well, I'm more constrained because I've got to publish books that are going to sell in sufficient quantities to warrant being published in paperback. But even within that you can say "Okay, here's something interesting; we'll give it a go", as long as one is going to sell well enough nobody really cares one way or the other, nobody else in the organisation really knows that much about what you're doing or wants to know, and it's got to be that way because you're producing so many publications. Okay, now if you're doing scholarly books and you're publishing maybe 80 to 100 books a year then each individual book contributes only a small amount of revenue, obviously you need to publish things that are going to overall make enough money that are going to be acceptable to the company but within that what books are going to get published will depend very much on the interests of the individual editor.

Respondent 2: Right. So there's more scope in the sort of scholarly division than there is in...

Respondent: There's a load of scope yes. So if somebody is interested in this particular subject then that's what they're going to publish rather than – there is a mass of different things that you could do. You don't want to have a scatter gun approach where you publish one book on this and one book on that and one book on the other where everything is so different that you can't promote them together. So you will choose some areas that you want to develop. And that's true of something like Youth Questions; I mean we did social work: social work has been a very successful area for us and in social work we've published everything from really very mainstream things to do, how to do it, type books through to critical texts. Youth Questions yes, just this was an area that was opening up and you had ideas about some interesting things to do. You weren't going to publish some sort of great big textbook on youth certainly not then, and even now I think it would be inadvisable. So you just decide whether you're going to do that sort of thing or not.

Respondent 2: Coming back to cultural studies, I mean of course the centre no longer exists and there's a whole sort of story which no doubt you'll be able to tell about that. If you look at the careers of people who were in the centre in this kind of rather interesting kind of early quite formative stage well obviously some of them went off and set up cultural studies departments of their own, so the centre wasn't the only one was it?

Interviewer: That was what I was going to ask you really, I mean I was going to ask because you were involved obviously in cultural studies for a long time.

Respondent 2: Well, I was in a cultural studies department. I was at Institute of Education for ten years as a contract researcher and I tried to develop a sort of cultural studies pedagogy. My main thing that I tried to do was to intervene in anti-racist education because it was being done in a very kind of crass, crude, almost Stalinist way I would say; and I drew on cultural studies to develop a kind of pedagogy actually from using photography and artworks and so on creating a kind of space and representation from which actually young people could work through some of the ideas, some of which would be kind of racist. But I wanted to engage with the racist imagination, if you like, or the racist imaginary. So I drew on cultural studies – my own stuff but other people's as well – but I wanted to develop a kind of critical pedagogy that could do that. But then when I moved to the UAL I set up the centre for new ethnicities research, which was in a sense in a way taking Stuart Hall's kind of agenda – well, the debate around new ethnicities, which the centre had been quite instrumental in kind of constructing, so the idea you could think about ethnicity in a less accentualised identitarian sort of way; so the kind of intervention of identity politics really. So I ran this centre for about ten years again and we did a lot of research.

[0:34:39]

Interviewer: In the '90s then?

Respondent 2: This was in the '90s yes, through the '90s.

Interviewer: Obviously you're a very political formation yourself in terms of dropping out, becoming a (inaudible 0:34:48), and all that kind of stuff, so were you still able to maintain that political emphasis in that context in the 1990s?

Respondent 2: Yes. Mainly through doing work and critical ethnography that was embedded in communities and in schools and particularly in the East End – most of my work was done in the East End of London which obviously was – still is to some extent – a frontline of race issues. So I developed a particular kind of strategy for doing research. It was research that was ethnographic but it was also an education and intervention. And it also generated materials like exhibitions, videos, blah, blah, blah, that could be used in schools as part of –

Interviewer: Teaching resources.

Respondent 2: Yes. So it generated teaching materials as well as research material. So I did that for ten years. I was never really an academic; I just ran research units or research institutes. So I was a bit sort of, fortunately, adrift of the kind of academic politics although I could see what was happening around me.

Interviewer: Working in a university institution could you see structures within academia altering?

Respondent 2: Yes, you could see it happening.

Interviewer: Going back to what Stephen was – yeah, exactly.

Respondent 2: Yeah. I mean people were being driven by – even in terms of defining their research the pressures were... literally your publishing imperative was all about... well, in my sense about generating grants, it was all about how much money had you brought in every year. No matter what it was about; it was just so they could look at the spreadsheet and say "Oh, they've generated £100,000" or £200,000 or whatever it was. They couldn't give a fuck about what it was about, it could be about anything; and actually UAL they increasingly moved towards knowledge transfer stuff, so doing stuff with local businesses, doing consultancies, blah, blah, blah. So yes, I was aware of those sorts of pressures but in the research institute that I ran – and then I moved away from working around issues of race to issues of regeneration because of what was happening in East London. So my last ten years in UAL I ran this London East research institute and we tried to work around regeneration and obviously culminating in the Olympics. So I'd always been interested in cities and urban issues and so on, but it was an uphill battle really. And in fact the universities are run by business people. I mean I actually became a governor of UAL at the end partly to see how the university worked. And I'd sit there with all my fellow governors and people and they were all my fellow governors but business people, and they thought like business people. Fair enough but I mean a university is not just a business. (Inaudible 0:37:38) knowledge economy it actually has in a sense become that way. And my concern is not with my generation of... but the new generation who have been formed by all that. And it's very hard for them to hold on – I mean their political ambitions are sublimated in academic ones: they want to get on, they know – as you say, what they have to do, they know the sorts of things they have to write in order to do that.

Interviewer: It has a very limiting effect on –

Respondent 2: I think it does.

Interviewer: (Inaudible 0:38:10) because I know you've got to shoot off in second Phil but I was going to ask both of you really finally: do you think there's a space in the contemporary context for the kind of critical culture studies that I guess this theory was an example of? Do you think there is a space, within the relative constraints that we've just talked about, for this kind of critical culture studies work?

[0:38:27]

Respondent: You couldn't do this sort of thing now; it would be a £65 hardback, 2-300 copy job really. And I think a lot of it is to do with the things that I was talking about earlier that so there are so many books out there that people can't find their way to it. People are less interested in books actually; they don't look at them in the same way. If you have a conference (overspeaking 0:38:59).

Respondent 2: Can you say something about the impact of digital technologies, eBooks?

Respondent: I think this partly but it's not that they're all dashing for digital stuff. I mean there are more people will have their first place that they look if they want to find something is on the internet, but they're not going to find this sort of stuff really: factoids or rants much more than... doesn't provide a forum for deliberation or considered thought really in anything that's been developed so far. So the old is (inaudible 0:39:32) greater rate than the new is coming up with new solutions I think. Of course all of these things will change over time. I think the main difference – I mean in the institutional things that we're talking about, what's changed in universities and so on are important, and the change in academics' lives. And academics' lives if you go back before that in the 1950's and so on I mean people had to do a bit of teaching, they maybe had to do a bit of research, they had to be around a bit, they could get on with determining a lot of the time what they did with their lives. They went into academia because either they'd not bothered to leave university or they'd got some definite ideas about what they wanted to do. And that world is totally different; if anybody has asked me in 1979, pointed to me a picture of what universities would be like now, I'd have said "Well, absolute... what academics are going to agree to that? It would be total madness and complete loss of the traditional idea of academic freedoms." Now, you could accept that things had to change; it was going to go on like it had been before, that couldn't survive mass higher education it couldn't even survive really the expansion of the 1960's. So there was going to be some sort of change. But a lot of the changes that have taken place have not been deliberate changes to achieve some sort of objective. I mean if you think about it what rational government would actually want loads of academics to be writing more and more articles that nobody reads? This sort of production doesn't add real value in terms of what the people who supposedly want it would want, it's that certain objectives in terms of dealing with the supposed slackening of some academics and that sort of thing mean that there's an attempt to impose control and that the control needs to be imposed using the medium of academics policing themselves. And academics come up with this fantastically complicated system that is building their own prison. I mean that, if you like, is the story of the period (overspeaking 0:41:47).

Respondent 2: I'll give you a concrete example: we're putting together a book which is going to come out in 2016 to coincide with Rio –

Respondent: Or 2018 or... (Laughs).

Respondent 2: No, this has a point. 2016, Steven, is the next Olympics okay? And we're bringing out this book absolutely on time and on budget on looking at what's happened since 2012. Now, one of the people we wanted to commission for this is one of the most critical people about the Olympics, a guy called (Inaudible 0:42:25), and he said "Fine, I'm going to write this piece which will be looking at the anti-Olympics movement. And I'm going to do this with a young PhD student who is very good and we're going to do it together." So, great; fantastic. Now he gets back to me and says "Well, unfortunately my PhD student needs to publish this in a peer-reviewed journal for her career", so we don't get the piece. I mean that's a concrete example of actually what's happening and I feel very sorry for these (overspeaking 0:42:56).

Interviewer: So rather than your book reaching a slightly broader general reader the PhD student –

Respondent 2: It's going to go into a peer-reviewed journal which will be read by three people.

Interviewer: Three people, yeah, which I guess kind of –

Respondent 2: It's going down to 30 instead of 300 or something like that. It's still not so much how many copies you sell of a book anyway it's how many people actually find their way to it.

Respondent: Do you not think though – and I'm going to have to go in about three minutes – that actually one of the things that's happened is that there are kind of niche markets opening up for –

[Phone rings]

This is my wife asking me where the hell I am. There are quite a number of – well, if you take poetry for example, which has not – because in my old age I've become a bit of a poet so I've published stuff. Now, there are lots of small presses that are run by one person that publish – I mean actually poetry in this country is going through a golden age, I mean there are more good poets around doing stuff. Now, actually what they sell in terms of books is, as you say, minuscule. Even a very well-known poet – even Carole-Ann Duffy, for example, will probably only sell maybe 1,000 copies of a book but nevertheless these outfits still exist, they do publish books, there are poetry readings going on all over the place, and they haven't been wiped out by globalisation and by the whole kind of corporate corporatisation. And in a way Amazon – may they all perish – but the fact is that people can go online and order books that way has actually given (inaudible 0:44:36) a new lease of life. So I mean I'm not totally in despair. The Republic of Letters, if you want to call it that, is still alive and well and actually there are aspects of the digital reform that has actually made the Republic of Letters more... alive in a way. So I'm not totally pessimistic.

Interviewer: It's nice to end on a slightly more optimistic note than...

Respondent 2: Yes.

Interviewer: But thank you both very much.

Respondent: Oh, that's okay.

Respondent 2: Okay.

[End of Transcript]