LOCATION

Power & landscapes of design

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Barefoot Documents

Location

Some explorations of power and landscapes of design

Barefoot
Documents

Contents

Location : *the context*

I EMBARKED ON THIS COLLECTION IN 2016 WITH A LIMITED INTENTION, to recirculate work I had done in radical 'design' politics in the 90s. The context was relatively narrow: current activities oriented to baby-boomer legacy, from the radical-science and radical-technology formations that had emerged in the 1970s. The British Society for Social Responsibility in Science was beginning to assemble an archive (today being hosted by the Wellcome Foundation) and a gathering of clans, Radical Technology 2.0, would take place later that year. However, by the time RT2.0 was over, in October 2016, I was beginning to feel that something much broader was called for.

I began to hatch an idea which I tagged (following Illich's radical response to technology and technocracy) as a *college of conviviality*. This would need to be a 'beyond-fragments' dialogue between libertarian-socialist activists of many kinds. It would address present-day issues of activist practice in a frame of *cross-generation history*, it would be concerned with the theorising of practice in a context of *'organic intellectual' activism*, and a core concern would be the furnishing of know-how for the living of skilful *activist lives* in ever-changing, ever-challenging times: a kind of socialist (and necessary-for-survival) politics of identity.

At that time I also was working on the history of my own family. Partly this was for the later reading of my young grand-daughters. And partly it was background for my own autobiographically rooted enquiries into the force of 'fragments', and the living of a (possibly skilful) activist life, through an unending series of epiphanies and some serious shifting of the political goalposts during the 80s and 90s. This enquiry into radical living has produced a web of work on the page, and the purpose of this Foreword is to situate 2016's *Location* within this web as subsequently developed.

❦   Public issues, private troubles –
     Three emergent perspectives on origins
     and journeying

IN THE PREFACE BELOW I note:

> *This volume is one of three collections of pieces and extracts that were mostly written for public readership during the 90s. The idea is to stand the collections alongside - and to significantly extend the range of - the two books that I made*

> *at the beginning of the 80s:* Living Thinkwork - Where do labour processes come from? *(LTW) and* Science or Society? The politics of the work of scientists *(SoS).*

However, as I assembled *Location* and thought about its two projected companions, I repeatedly steered myself away from any attempt to write LTW2. 'Too big' I felt, with 35 years of further practice now flowed under the bridge. The Preface makes reference to this problem as I then was attempting to handle it, under the heading 'public issues, private troubles'.

Even so, the project for LTW2 refused to go away, and crept into other work in hand. The work I'd been doing on family history stories, describing the working-class journeying of my grandparents and parents, would end at the place where my own adult life started. I completed this volume at the end of 2017 and gave it the title *Humble origins - All roads lead to Halifax*. It's a collection of stories about two generations of members of an un-political, un-activist working-class family[1], in migrations and struggles to find work and - for at least one of them (my father) - worthwhile work, in the changed post-WWII world of Halifax. I meant, as a sequel, to write a book of stories of my own subsequent experience of journeying: in wage-work and in geography, in family and in my own day-to-day coming to terms (or not) with the forces and relations of what turned out to be a 'professional-managerial class' wage-work and family life. Thus, the 'public issues, private troubles' project of LTW2 refused to go away. In the event, it split into two writing projects, as outlined below.

I understand politics and the re-making of the world to be inextricably wound up in the living of everyday work- and family-lives. Thus, pretty well everything I do in terms of socialist theory-of-practice is in the first person. The 'college' project was no exception, and it seemed at first as if it would have to be generated out of my own journey of knowing and navigating. Thus in late 2016 I began assembling material for a theory-of-practice sequel to *Humble origins*, which would develop a map of libertarian-socialist activist issues and insights, in the present day, out of first-person accounts of 'epiphanies' across 45 years in my own life . . . moments when something had emerged that needed to be recognised and responded-to: in understanding, in the commitments of everyday life and wage-earning, in the commitments of activist work, the balance of heart and mind. That project began to take shape as *Activists and the long march home : class geography, conviviality, melancholy*

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1   Tacitly, three generations: my own adult life and present-day concerns are manifestly on the page too, particularly in chapters about my mother and father, and the front- and back-end chapters.

territory and this 'long march' story emerged as a weaving of three modes, which I found myself writing in three personas: Walker, Rogers and 'm'.

This is distinctly 'private' stuff (ie first-person) and one of the personae in particular is intensely 'private' in a conventional sense: 'Walker', the melancholic, the wage-worker who periodically has breakdowns through overload, the socialist who has a hard time with actual collectives of people in-the-mass, the man who wakes feeling that the sky might just possibly fall in today. However, I began to see that there was further 'personal' material that had settled on the page over the years, which also needed to be put to work as part of the mapping and traveloguing of class, conviviality and emotion - not in the theorising way of the Long March collection, but presented *experientially*: a rendering of (typically confused but powerful) feelings *. . . of being in one place or another; without easily being able to say what the journey was, what the feeling was, or even who the person was who was journeying; where the journey might be going to or whether there was anywhere that might eventually prove to be 'home' at the end of it.* I began to frame this as a second 'humble origins' volume, *Every place is itself*, and the would-be strategic, theory-of-practice, epiphanic accounts of the Long March volume then fell into place as the third volume of a series. So: by late 2017 I had an overall form, comprising three volumes of a 'humble origins' series. All of these now exist in at least a work-in-progress, perfect-bound, informally published form.[2] All are included in the bundle of material that I lodged with the Working Class Movement Library in Salford, in April 2018, to stand alongside the copy of *Living Thinkwork* which they already had in their collection.

❦ On with epiphanies! Some contingent reorientation

THE COLLECTION OF ACTIVIST EPIPHANIES - *Humble origins 3 - Activists and the long march home : class geography, conviviality, melancholy territory* - is unlikely ever to see completion; the plan includes eighty-or-so episodes. I began to feel that, rather than working on a never-to-be-finished book, I should start doing some organising work - convene some kind of *collective* researching-and-developing practice - and find a way to get a version of the college of conviviality off the ground. Thus in early 2017 I started networking among fellow 70s and 80s baby-boomer activists (most of them, not met for years, dispersed in fragments), and putting out antennae for conversations with twenty-somethings. I homed-in on Loomio - an online collaboration-and-deliberation platform, used in the peer-to-peer

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2   All published as print-on-demand and pdf eBook at <Lulu.com>.

community - as offering a suitable kind of space. And I began writing material to frame some practice-and-theory discussions in an online, cross-generation community of activists, to be developed in Loomio.[3]

This preparation was well advanced when, to my great sadness (and many others' also), Robin Murray died in the summer of 2017. Over the preceding year I had been seeking a conversation with Robin, certain that his creative, analytical, Marxian mind and social-entrepreneurial scope would give me a lot of needed focus on the college project.[4] Robin was very ill and we weren't able to have that conversation. But by the end of 2017 I had developed a sense that the general, beyond-fragments aims of the College could be best served, not by setting up a framework of my own theorising, but by seeking to co-convene a practice-and-theory community which would harvest and re-plant the legacy of Robin's work and vision (and the work and vision of those baby-boomer hundreds who had worked alongside him: my own cohort). This is work in progress, as I write. At this time (Spring 2018) it looks as if it may be an online collective, developing insights for beyond-fragments, libertarian, revolutionary, socialist, activist practice in 'Making the civil economy' in the 2020s Watch this space.

With Long March writing on hold during the past half-year, I've had space to assemble a first-cut version of the remaining 'humble' collection: *Humble origins 2 - Every place is itself*. Between them, volumes 2 and 3 *do* amount to an extension, thirty-five years on, of the *Living Thinkwork* project; or rather, of the libertarian-socialist, activist, organic intellectual, personal-as-political, prefigurative project in class geography and time-and-emotion study, within which LTW was the central work-on-the page. It turns out that I have, against my own resistance, written and published an LTW2. Well!

❧ Location, facilitating, earthmoving – Doing more things different

IN THIS THIRTY-FIVE YEAR FRAME, *Location* has the status of a collection of interim work, conducted in the 90s in the professional fields of organisation development and design of IT work-infrastructures.

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3   As a frame to be shared with others, 'the college' called for a framing quite different from the three first-person personas of 'The long march'.

4   Via the Brighton CSE labour-process group, Robin had been central in the 70s, in triggering the framing of the politics of knowledge-production which surfaced in *Living Thinkwork*. And in the 80s, under Ken Livingstone's Left-Labour administration of the GLC, he was my Group Head (the Greater London Council's Chief Economist) in the 'in and against the State' adventure of the London Industrial Strategy.

That work is grounded (in the first part of the present book) in LTW and 'radical science' agendas of the 70s. It explores (in the second part) the new ground that was opened (for a limited time? perhaps) by the first-wave (post-Fordist) creation of IT-powered corporate infrastructures in the 90s. *Location* is thoroughly work- and class-oriented: 'location' is *class* location. Thus, while all the 90s content was created in the professionalised wage-work setting of research ('work-practice R&D') in a business school, it was seeking to recapitulate an 80s politics of skill (skill recovery, radically new skilling) and class-formation (class-*forming*) in an era when the globalist neo-liberal agenda had heavily ploughed-over the landscapes of the 70s.

The preface to *Location* anticipates two further collections of 90s work: *Earthmoving* and *Facilitation*. As of Spring 2018 neither of these is likely to be assembled. I believed and believe facilitation to be a key political discovery in my generation, to be communicated and nurtured as significant and necessary legacy. But although very much present in the 90s' work - notably the work in ABC Global (Ericsson Telecom, 1993-94) - it wasn't written about in any depth: in the 'ABC' papers for example.[5]

With fingers crossed, I anticipate that it will be possible to cultivate 'facilitation' within the discussion to emerge in the civil economy collective. At an early stage I already can see issues around contemporary versions of facilitation. On one hand, during the past thirty years or so a 'consultariat' seems to have emerged[6], in which very bright young graduate-professional think-tanker 'change-maker' apparatchiks develop policy for parts of the local- and national-State,

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5   Work has not started on collecting the papers that arose from this odd and difficult, adventurist work 'in the heart of the beast', in Ericsson. But in due course they should be put between covers.

6   I see this as a 21st-century version of Fabian/'collectivist' traditions in socialism, which Stephen Yeo has highlighted for attention. He has a version under preparation for his valuable three-volume work on a 'useable history' of British socialism and cooperation, of an article based on Stephen Yeo (1987), 'Three socialisms - Statism, collectivism, associationism', in William Outhwaite & Michael Mulkay (eds)(1987), *Social theory and social criticism - Essays for Tom Bottomore*, Oxford: Blackwell, 83-113. The revised version is marked: 'For Robin Murray'.

on behalf of 'ordinary working people', in the name of 'social innovation' (an orientation that has been very Euro-fundable).[7] [8]

On the other hand, as distinct from 'the consultariat', there are at the present time very active schools of hands-on roots facilitation in face-to-face community development. One example is 'the art of hosting' promoted by Danish facilitator Toke Paludan Möller, which has a global following. But even these practitioners seem to have become professionalised, being trained on fee-paying courses or in universities, and taught curricula that are global (roots are understood to exist in 30s Chicago, for example). This contrasts with the local 'craft learning' of my own generation. The community development practice of the CDP in Britain in the 70s was grounded in the activism of Notting Hill in the 60s; and this was available in turn to other rank-and-file 'community' developers. I met and learned from graduates of the CDP school of grass-roots facilitation, in the GLC industry and employment arena in the 80s; they were familiar comrades-in-arms from the 70s' circuit of 'trade-union and community resource and information centres'.

So: in the teen years of the 21st century, facilitation is alive . . . but is it well, is it harmed by its professionalisation, has it moved from the 'associationist' pole to the 'collectivist', does it still have dirty hands, is it 'organic'; or just intellectual? This is something to explore in dialogue and in practice (in making the civil economy), rather than in a republishing of 90s texts that were focused elsewhere. So: no priority on the *Facilitation* volume.

As for 'earthmoving' . . . the space for this to blossom in the 90s work was always limited. In the Preface below, I characterise earthmoving as 'desired, intentional, freedom-motivated, historically self-conscious transformations of institutions, powers and social relations of production'. Which is to say, revolution; birthing a new mode of production, the ending of capitalism. But the Preface also notes that the 90s work was:

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7   Really cool, PC, think-tankers - many of them, it seems, 3rd-generation feminists - refer to their organisations as 'do tanks'.

8   I'm personally very sensitive to the development of the consultariat. I and many of my cohort of GLC colleagues in the 80s moved, via that unprecedented policy setting, from roots activism to strategy consulting, organisation development and campaign design; so that, in the 90s I found myself as faculty in a business school. Work was focused - I add, hastily - on *self-management*, and skilled practices for workers' *own designing and steering* of skill-enhancing workplace tools: the context of chapters in the second part of the present book

*the work of a designer, and a wage-worker who is being paid
to think . . . by the same token [he] needs to do something
that can (probably, possibly) be traded or exchanged in a
professional marketplace that operates on 'career capital'.
The institutional perspective in these pieces is in a sense
small-scale; the contexts for the work . . . are within (large)
organisations and not, generally, across transnational
distances, or at the level of entire States and blocs, or within
communities founded on anything other than wage-work for
a given paymaster. In a sense, this work has the virtues and
limitations of the perspective of a grass-roots activist.*

For these reasons, the writing on earthmoving from the 90s is
perhaps even more limited than the 'facilitation' writing. And again,
rather than republishing 90s texts that were necessarily focused
elsewhere, it will be effort better spent today, to take 'making the civil
economy' as a setting for earthmoving. For example, at least some
formations in the movement for the Commons explicitly set out to
develop a counter-hegemony: to constitute an alternative, post-
capitalist complex of forces of production, a new mode of
production.[9]

The Preface below anticipates one further kind of development
which - at the present time - has yet to find its way adequately on to
the page. Chapter 4 of *Location*[10] starts from a pivotal question for
activists: 'Why don't we do more things different?' We, activists,
learning, struggling; but also we collectively, we *the species* . . . why
are 'we' so conservative? The Preface goes on to ask:

*what kinds of work (in the sphere of the production of work)
potentially contribute to liberation . . . ? In what ways is this
agenda present in work that has in fact been done by
activists in the present generation; in what ways are there
new things needing to be done, which were not understood
by us, or for which the forms were not to-hand?*

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9   One of the clearest statements of revolutionary intent is *The Telekomm-
    unist Manifesto* by Dmytri Kleiner (2010) <www.networkcultures.org>.
    That stance is adopted for example by the P2P (peer-to-peer) Foundation
    in its work on Copyfarleft licences <https://wiki.p2pfoundation.net/
    Copyfarleft>: "For copyleft to have any revolutionary potential it must be
    Copyfarleft. It must insist upon workers ownership of the means of
    production."

10 Chapter 4, a 1992 feminist critique of the movement for human centred
    design: The location of humans, ordinary people and women in system
    design - 'at the centre'?

The present volume in fact goes no further in this than the sketches and promisory notes of the Preface. This absolutely remains work in progress. And again, work to be feathered-into the discussion of making the civil economy. Preliminary material for the 'civil economy' Loomio group frames it this way:

> *goodwill and the common weal cannot be taken simply for granted . . . natural and wild movements of emotion are hard to handle. Hard also - for that reason - to find a workable theorising language for . . . we are not simply concerned here with a politics or an economics. We are concerned with enabling and sustaining activists in living lives: balancing and refining commitments and energies, staying in one piece and staying the course, moving beyond fragments and into very diverse and complex networks while yet staying true to traditions and communities, and cultivating and sharing resources 'in-here' in the person as well as 'out-there' in the community. Thus an aspect of this project is to cultivate language for addressing such matters, seen in terms of necessary transformations in deep-laid 'emotional institutions' which live at the roots of action - beneficial and harmful, activist and 'ordinary' . . . How should we address 'the heart' and 'emotional institutions' in making the civil economy? One place to start is care work. Another is the wild west of apps and social media? And a third is, of course, the commons as a politics.*

These are not new agendas. Care work has been a socialist-feminist agenda for a generation, since the 70s. Apps and social media are where the 80s and 90s agenda of participatory, skillfully worker-executed, development of IT infrastructures has got to, in the succeeding twenty years as mobile devices, the Cloud and platforms have come on the scene. And 'the commons' is today's version of the associationist agenda of 'pre-socialist' cooperative, mutualist socialisms in the 19th century. But they are new agendas for this activist assembling this volume: outside the span of the work attempted twenty years ago, partially described here. And they are urgently reframed agendas in the context of post-neo-liberal, post-post-Fordist, post-austerity, would-be post-capitalist politics in the Twenty-teens and Twenty-twenties - grist to the mill of the civil economy collective. Watch that space!

Be modest in your expectations of 90s' writing. But be in no doubt: we are working here in the largest, evolutionary-historical time frame; the liberation of the species. This is revolution in the deep time of the human heart-mind, inspired by the (self-)making of the English working class a mere two-hundred years ago. It is the making-real, today, of . . .

- *socially useful work* and the social recognition and reward of skilful makers, cultivators and carers of all kinds;
- love and care *for the planet* and *social justice* for its people;
- the subversion, containment, bypassing and *end of the capitalist mode of production;*
- peaceful, nurturing and free *association* across divisions; and
- liberation of *the heart-mind* from suffering, for all people, in their lifetime, in all generations.

Seven Dials, Brighton
April 2018

Politics of production - Doing things with our work that really are different

THIS VOLUME IS PLANNED AS ONE OF THREE COLLECTIONS of pieces and extracts that were mostly written for public readership during the 90s. The idea is to stand the collections alongside (and to significantly extend the range of) the two books that I made at the beginning of the 80s: *Living Thinkwork - Where do labour processes come from?* (LTW) and *Science or Society - The politics of the work of scientists* (SoS). Some extracts from these books are included within the collections, showing linkage and continuity with later work.

The 90s pieces were mainly written in a professional capacity, as a researcher publishing into a research and development community. There is continuity though, because the earlier pieces, while not written 'professionally', were also written as a 'theory of practice' researcher, contributing to research and development practice in a community: a political community, an activist community, a vocational community - a community of socialist-feminist 'radical professional' organiser-activists.

On one hand the professional pieces were written by someone who is 'paid to think': study, research, design, develop. And on the other, the activist pieces are attempting, in one way or another, to address and develop the politics of the work that is done by those who are paid to think. Hence: *Paid to Think*, as the overall title for this set of three volumes. Hence also, their linking thread: these pieces of work are parts of a continuing attempt - forty-six years old now, and continuing - to develop the theory and practice of class; that is, of class not as a kind of 'thing' or a structure or a relation, but as a *practice* and a performance; that is, of class *formation* (ie an active verb, and an always-continuing process of conscious and unconscious organising and self-organising); that is, of the class that studies, researches, designs and self-consciously shapes the work and life of others: the *professional-managerial class* - the PMC. That is: of understanding and organising the *facilitation of liberation*, from oppressive and humanly damaging economic and cultural institutions, in workplaces and in life more broadly, in 'advanced' societies

where professional-managerial practice is utterly woven into the fabric of society and the (re-)production of social life.

Looking at the public writing over more than forty years, it makes sense to me to organise it in three collections: *Location*, *Earthmoving* and *Facilitation*. *Location* was the first collection to be pulled out and the most obvious, because 'location' was an explicit line of exploration during a particular phase of my working life, in the early 90s, as I moved into a new professional sphere and looked back at previous contexts. In earlier times I had found myself needing to theorise the practice of work-design and the work of 'organising', in a political sense, as a member of the PMC. In this practice, class geography was a central organising notion. In the new context of the 90s, 'class' seemed a less workable term in the professional fields I was now working in; but 'location', which replaced it, was in fact *class* location. Thus in that regard the work that I was attempting to do was continuous across the shift in context and concepts. The pieces in *Location* explore places in which 'designers' can stand - especially, designers of the work of work-design - in relation to the work of others, the freedoms and necessities of these various locations, and the choices that may be made in practice between them.

Earthmoving was the second most obvious collection. Seeing what had found its way into *Location*, I felt a clear need to assemble pieces which more explicitly addressed the outcomes being sought by working the territory of class geography: that is, not only mapping the territory and becoming able to take up and migrate between and establish positions in it, but also to *change* the form and contours of the landscape, and hence the kinds of journeys and lives that might be articulated in and on it. In this dimension we're having to deal with institutions, with powers, with 'the relations of production' (that is, historically-evolved relations that structure work practices in-the-large); and with transformations - desired, intentional, freedom-motivated, historically self-conscious transformations - of these institutions, powers and relations. *Earthmoving*, then, is the collection in which I've gathered attempts, in print, to address institutional issues in the politics of work design.

A thing that needs to be said up-front is that the personal basis that has been drawn-on in this collection is limited. This is the work of a designer, and a wage-worker who is being paid to think but, by the same token, needs to do something that can (probably, possibly) be traded or exchanged in a professional marketplace that operates on 'career capital'. The institutional perspective in these pieces is in a sense small-scale; the contexts for the work discussed are within (large) organisations and not, generally, across transnational distances, or at the level of entire States and blocs, or within communities founded on anything other than wage-work for a given

paymaster. In a sense, this work has the virtues and limitations of the perspective of a grass-roots activist. But no apologies: we do what we do, I dug I stood; others will have taken the time to work in and on other landscapes. We have only a certain degree of choice over what we make in and of our lives: this, in part, is what *Location* is about.

With *Location* and *Earthmoving* identified, the aspect that then remained most obviously unaddressed was down in the detail of class-geographical practice: the weaving- and working-together - the 'bricolaging' - of practices, day-to-day, in-the-room, hands-on, as lived practice. These people, this place, immersive, with no time out. Discovering how to make changes and movements stick, give them 'thickness', buttress them and cement them with motivation and identity, satisfaction and vision, intuition and insight. The term I'm choosing to keynote this third collection is *facilitation*.

Facilitation is 'culture work' involving the skilful and disciplined recognising of what people are working with in-here, enabling this to be spoken or shown in a public work setting, arriving at an agreement about action founded in what has - collectively - been made public; and creating and maintaining 'places' in which this kind of work can be skilfully and more readily done. It is PMC work *par excellence*. Facilitation involves the mobilising, assembling and forming of communities of practice: it is a practice of weaving a new fabric from threads of pre-existing practice and identity. Those who do facilitating self-consciously undertake participating and enrolling and promoting and assembling and speaking-of and pointing-to and glueing and stitching and disconnecting and subverting and advo-cating - in the live flow of interaction. It would be unflatteringly simple to call it just 'working with groups'. Although the work demands extreme mindfulness, a lot of off-stage work in preparation and review, and some well developed and robust prior practical understandings amounting to 'theory', the people who do it are not paid to *think,* but rather, to make-present, make-tolerable and make-negotiable, for the heart-mind, *for the collective*, in the here and now. This is very important work and it is not obvious how to do it well.

Politics of production

The three collections draw together public writing which is all, in one way or another, in the service of a politics of production. At one level this means a 'labour-process' approach, an engagement with labour-process theory (though very much elaborated, to embrace culture-producing labour as distinct from 'manual work'). But whereas that term might be applied to some rather abstract, academic practices, the orientation of the work gathered in these volumes is towards actual production (and reproduction, and significantly *altered* re-

production) of culture and society, in practice, in work in all kinds of settings. Thus the description *theory-of-practice* might be applied to this work too.[11] Again, 'theory' implies nothing academic or abstract, but simply well-articulated and well-situated insight derived from disciplined practice, which actually informs doing and responding in real-world settings. And thus, even if 'strategic' practices are being addressed, there is throughout an intrinsically bottom-up perspective. It is concerned with the *actual doing* (and valuing) of productive and valued work in actual places - and also, crucially, with the actual producing of the conditions of that work and those places of work, in other workers' practice, in a 'back room' or 'off-stage' somewhere.

A politics of production is in the service of socialism. By socialism I understand an expanded version of: 'From each according to their abilities, to each according to their needs.' First: a cultural and economic order of society in which people are skilfully and routinely facilitated in the production of the best contributions that they (drawing on their own specific capacities) are able to make to the lives of other individuals and to the community. I understand, second: facilitated, *in the actual work of producing* - events, objects, services, media, infrastructures, whatever. And I understand, third: people, as producers of and in society, receiving in return the respect and recognition of their community (including but by no means limited to wages) for the quality, appropriateness and sincerity of their contribution.

The title of this present collection-of-collections - *Paid to Think* - is an ironic inversion of a bitter working-class truism that I heard among adults in my childhood world, that bosses' view of you is: 'You're not paid to think'. But the 1944 Education Act made sure that I and many of my generation in fact *were*; and I got the bit well between my teeth, before Margaret Thatcher (may she rot in her grave, jumped-up grocer's daughter) decided - in the generation of my son's childhood - that her governments would renege on this promise of progress and welfare, and make proper wage-slaves of we in 'the new professions' too. The work of *Paid to Think* is my continuing contribution to the world in which proper respect and attention will be given to the work and knowledge and giving-through-making of those people among whom I grew up, and among whom I count myself. Although a lot of it may seem to be about the production of working configurations of technology, it is entirely about the continuing formation of class.

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11   Theory-of-practice: I first learned the term from Marxian approaches, but the principle and the value are found in numerous methodologically sophisticated disciplines. Marxism does not have a monopoly on the description. Indeed, as I discovered much more recently, the dharma teaching of Buddhism has as good a claim: more below.

❦ *Public issues, private troubles*

Living Thinkwork - my first large-scale, unconstrained piece of public writing (discounting a somewhat-constrained DPhil thesis) - contained quite an amount of 'personal' material: from the life of a working-class lad become a scholar and a wage-worker in professional fields. I still have no doubt that weaving-in first-person, in-here, biographical, experiential and imaginative stuff is a valid and significant thing to do (carefully, self-consciously and with appropriate forms of rigour) in public, 'political' writing. However, given the diversity of the post-LTW public writing that is to be handled in the present collections, it seems advisable here to stick quite close to the examination of the 'out-there' business of organising.

It's less than ideal to work them in separate places, but experiential 'in-here' stuff will figure quite centrally in another public work-in-progress: *Activists and the long march home - Class geography, conviviality, melancholy territory* (a prospectus for some libertarian socialist adventures).[12] To some extent the *Long March* book will be an extension of *Living Thinkwork's* 'personal is political' travelogue. Picking up and developing themes such as LTW's 'time-and-emotion study' in the life of a libertarian-socialist 'organic intellectual' activist, it will recount, and analytically reflect on, adventures in class geography and epiphanies in lands of the heart-mind, that have arisen since the 1980 publication of LTW.

Thus, here in this present collection, I'm adopting a more circumscribed kind of personal focus. The feminism of my political youth, in the 70s, insisted that 'the personal is political', and grass-roots politics of the same era insisted that it was right (and necessary) to 'dig where you stand'. But it was a rallying call from the American sociologist C Wright Mills that went deepest soonest in forming this commitment in my own practice. His approachable and humane book *The Sociological Imagination*[13], which reached me in the early 70s, argued for sociology's necessarily dual concern, with public issues and private troubles. I was a working-class kid in retreat from unpalatable and confusing professional-managerial-class experience as a graduate employee in industry, expected to take on corporate global-competitive agendas, and refusing. I was a turncoat engineer,

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12 Work in progress on *Long March* will be published on Lulu, from time to time. At October 2017, the two prologue and introductory chapters are available in a draft version.

13 In 1998 the International Sociological Association named *The Sociological Imagination* the second most important sociological book of the 20th century. Mills popularised the term New Left in the USA, through a 1960 open letter in *New Left Review*.

now taking up residence in the humanities - historian, sociologist, student of political-economy - to stand critically alongside my former occupational sphere (and return to it later, with subversive, deconstructing intent). An emergent 'history-from-below' conscious-ness, and a worker-writers' movement of the time[14], were both fresh in my awareness. These all led me, on one hand, to see public issues/private troubles as a call to make public the politics of personal experiences of freedom and oppression in wage-work, and of the production of work and workplaces.

On the other hand it led me, starting in LTW, to seek to put into the same (public) frame, both the public issues of power, hegemony and class that can be discerned in the white-collar workplace, and the private troubles of attempting to live a life of counter-hegemonic, radical-professional, socialist activism: digging where I stood; digging where we - my working-class parental family, my professional-class marital family, my professional community(ies), my activist community(ies) - stood.

In the beginning, in picking up C Wright Mills' dictum as a young man making the first big changes in his life, I understood addressing private troubles to require a sociological or maybe an anthropo-logical process (addressing milieu and biography, as distinct from 'social structure'). I was very aware of massively public and 'social', inescapable, historical, hegemonic, conditions (obvious, to the point of invisibility) and of 'social relations of production' that determined (overdetermined) sometimes troubled private choices. But along the way I've come to accept - as a man still travelling the landscape and changing his living and making, five decades along - that what it really requires is an *emotional* investigation of the forces and resources that are present in-here, in the inner landscape of the social actor: in 'micro-milieu' and the affective foundations out of which biography is *enacted*.

This is not to psychologise powers and politics, but rather, to seek a really radical, historical and materialist politics that can work competently with *hegemony*: addressing what it is that keeps action in society so much the same, prevents us doing more things really differently; identifying and transforming 'emotional institutions' that operate in tandem with - and in the mesh of - the more obviously public economic and political ones. Who knows what we each of us see, as forces and resources in-here; and find ready-to-hand in-here,

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14 Notable as examples of workers' writing are the two volumes of *Work*, published as Penguins by *New Left Review* in the late sixties: forty first-person accounts, instigated and edited by Ronald Fraser. This seemed and still seems to me an important project. It pre-dated Studs Terkel's widely-known work in the USA.

to act with and through, in the out-there? Who knows what cognitive and emotional institutions are moment-by-moment shaping the living and working of each member of society, each participant in the public realms of culture, in our moving-towards each other and imagined futures, in our moving away from or attacking whatever it is that we hate or cannot tolerate in the present? I take it for granted that political and cultural institutions (including economic institutions) - as what we habitually do and are wittingly or unwittingly subservient to - are rooted, in the last instance[15], in emotional institutions. The political - as action, and thus, as desiring, as motivation - is absolutely founded in the most personal, private, material dimensions of social being, within the body-mind. What, then, do we know of the politics of production of *desire* (perhaps damaging or entrapping); of the alternative production of (perhaps beneficial, and liberating) alternative intention?

We all of us live our lives in differing landscapes, in-here. Consequently, every life is an arbitrary, singular, contingent series of adventures in the out-there landscapes of class geography; and so, there may not be a lot of generalising that can reasonably be attempted. But I felt strongly at the time of LTW, and feel strongly still, that it's time somebody started exploring this in the public sphere: not generalising, but working carefully, contextually, with the public and private detail of a working life, a life of working on 'work' as a member of the PMC and a life of continual emotional work. One thing that this implies in the volumes of the present collection (and in the *Long March*) is attempting to say what public differences - institutions, resources, communities - might have made a difference to the private troubles and troubled choices out of which these singular, contingent, emotionally-fuelled and -grounded collections of written-about work have arisen. In my 70s Marxism we called this the reflexiveness of theory-of-practice - though I think that in those days we meant a different, drier thing by that term!

❦   *The (altered) production of emotional institutions*

Why don't we do more things more different? It's in this question that 'private trouble' gets really, significantly, *public* and *historical*. For me as an activist-organiser this was a primary issue (a recognisably 'public' issue) in the 1970s practice that sits behind LTW. Moving in the early 90s to another kind of activist community - of designer- and developer-activists - in a different institutional setting (technological and organisational research-and-development), this was the question that again sat behind my self-questioning and

15   This perspective on 'the last instance' is one of the things that makes this labour-process, cultural-materialist Marxism unorthodox.

exploring: Why do it this new way ('computer supported cooperative work'), what was lacking in the old ('human-centred design'), what are the chances of sufficient, sufficiently deep, change in this newly chosen location?[16]

A few years later in the 90s I met a personal crisis in my R&D workplace which set in motion another deep, powerfully-motivated and seemingly quite different process of 'institutional' change. In the crisis I behaved badly (angry, hurt, feeling marginal and sidelined), people got hurt, trust was lost, and I came out of the situation with a strong sense that: 'I can't go on for the balance of my life, being a person who is capable of behaving like that'. With this, the challenge of identifying and becoming capable of shifting oppressive and damaging institutions (ie 'earthmoving') changed shape, to embrace not only external, organisational ('social', public) cultural-economic ones but also inner institutions: How can I/we stop doing some of the things that are ingrained, how can I/we really do some important things - in relationships, in everyday life - differently?

As I wrote above, this is not to substitute psychology for politics but rather, to make possible a really radical, historical and cultural-materialist politics of production: the production of everyday life. Everyday wanting and intolerance. Everyday displeasure and difficulty and itching. The everyday distance between 'can't' and 'won't'. And now I find, retired from wage-work, no longer having a workplace and a professional community as my everyday context and living alone rather than in a close family, that the out-there institutional setting differs dramatically from what it had been throughout the activist-professional working life that gave rise to my public writing; and that the in-here institutions - the most private of troubles - continue to demand change. What is it that is being learned here, today: of emotional institutions and deep conservatism and liberation from oppressive forces, that would have been helpful to know and use in those other, wage-work oriented institutional settings? With this 'affective turn', the theory-of-practice challenge has deepened rather than diminished, the radical stakes are higher[17].

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16 The question is posed as the starting point of a 1992 piece - 'The location of humans, ordinary people and women', which is included as chapter 4 of *Location.*

17 Long March is written in three personae: Walker, 'm' and Rogers. This agenda of 'emotional institutions' is Walker's. The majority of the *Location* collection - as an exploration of class location and the work of design-of-work - is m's agenda. The theme of facilitation - more on this, later in this preface - is part of the agenda of Rogers, an aspect of the (re)production of the heart-mind, sitting alongside m's agenda of the (re)production of workplaces and working life.

This extension of theory-of-practice has come from a surprising direction: the dharma teaching of the buddhist tradition. I understand the tradition, coming new to it just a few years ago, to be a mapping and a travel guide, in the world of emotional institutions. What I recognise and welcome is the dharma - as theory-*and*-practice - offering ways of addressing the production (and the changing), in each of us, of what we ourselves *must* get rid of, *must* have, *must* change, *must* hold on to. Our differences, our identities, our insufficiency; our experience of the pleasantness and unpleasantness of life. I've started to learn from and practice in this tradition, not because I'm 'religious' but because I'm deeply interested in practicality and skill, and in the necessary reflexivity of a wise practitioner in any domain of social and historical, liberation-oriented praxis. In taking refuge in the dharma I'm not drawing on any faith except the faith that we may realistically cultivate in ourselves, individually and collectively, as ordinary human beings in the world.

In this context it seems to me that as a hugely rich and flexible body of theory-of-practice, the dharma offers a foundation and resource-base for a politics of the *(re)production of the heart-mind*. In the tradition we would find this spoken of as liberation; which is to say, the learning and the producing of becoming free from stuckness and stereotype, foolish and wasteful action, unnecessary suffering and the creation of unnecessary suffering for others. Discovering this within the dharma tradition was a kind of homecoming, because this ethical and aesthetic yearning always was the politics of production, since way-back: in LTW, in the pieces of the *Location* and *Earth-moving* collections. My socialism has always had in-here, personal, ethical-aesthetic conflicts and struggles and yearnings as its foundation (as distinct from, say, any kind of out-there, public-sphere, belief in democracy or justice, or in 'rights of man'). What does it feel like, in the heart, here in the world? Is it beautiful? Does it move with grace? Is the heart uplifted and well balanced; and is the self-making of the uplifted and well-balanced one universally given legitimacy, and facilitated? If not, why not? While I do what I can about it in-here, what shall *we,* collectively, do about it? Who is in opposition, pulls the other way, is holding on to privilege and power? What shall we do about them and the hegemonic force of *their* kind of heart-mind? It was this hope for collective responses to 'private' trouble that produced the work in the 70s that produced *Living Thinkwork*; that made me a socialist.

There is here, in the dharma, a new dimension of insight and action. The difficulty that this poses, in a retrospective collection like *Paid to Think*, is to 'feather this in' to the 70s, 80s and 90s thinking and practice which gives rise to most of the pieces, and to show how

those actions and insights have deeper foundations and more radical possibilities. Tackling this as a personal story is something to attempt elsewhere: in the *Long March* book. But here in the present collection I need to attempt this as a public story: what kinds of work (in the sphere of the production of work) potentially contribute to liberation, seen through a dharma lens? In what ways is this agenda present in work that has in fact been done by activists in the present generation; in what ways are there new things needing to be done, which were not understood by us, or for which the forms were not to-hand?

Design activism, Self and the landscape of PMC work

One of the obvious and challenging and intriguing ways to attempt this is to go back to some of the conceptual roots of LTW: to *class*, and to the (Marxian) notion of *relations of production*: systems of order within everyday working life, which stand in the way of liberation and which utterly permeate activity, organising in the smallest detail the mundane, ready-to-hand 'forces of production' out of which we weave our economic and cultural lives. In LTW the relations of production in capitalism were understood - from received Marxism - to be wage-labour, private ownership of the means of production and the extraction of surplus value from the mobilisation of labour-power under the rule of wage-labour and private ownership. What I added to this pantheon in LTW, as a work of neo-Marxian labour process analysis oriented to 'white collar work', was another relation that also deeply organises working life in 'late capitalism': *preconceptualisation*. Ugly term, I'm sorry, too late now.

The term refers to the material separation of the designing and resourcing of work from the executing of work. (Specifically though not exclusively, the concept helps highlight the material organisation of the forces of production - working life - through configurations of technology.) Preconceptualisation refers to the thinking-about-in-advance of work-practice, behind the scenes of the live performing of wage-labour. This is where 'paid to think' comes from, as the pivot of a politics. This is where the practice of the professional-managerial class becomes pivotal. As capitalism has 'advanced' - let's say, with the dual emergence of Fordism and of public administration - the PMC has emerged not just to produce work (and reproduce the separation of 'design' from 'work') but to produce *culture*. Culture is understood in LTW as 'the subjective totality of labour power': our collective capacity to think about things that are made and might be made. And as capitalism advanced further - with consumerism and the increasingly skilled production of forces of desire and perception, through the labour of the post-war advertising and media sectors - the hegemony of capital has been increasingly cemented by the

professionalised production of (inauthentic, purposely- and maliciously, third-party skewed) Self.

Indeed, it was probably Vance Packard's lid-lifting book on Madison Avenue, motivational research and 'compelling needs' - *The Hidden Persuaders* (1957) - that gave me my first powerful sense of revulsion at what I later understood to be capitalism. My developed, activist sense of class was thus, from the first, rooted in a first-person sense of outrage at being intimately and daily violated, by vast, self-interested forces of wealth-making, wealth-mobilising, 'truth' production and desire-mongering. Rooted also, in a deep resolve to find protection for all of us who are indiscriminately subject to to this violence: this PMC violence. Complicated stuff; because there's also, deep in the mix, a need to expunge the collective shame of this uncaring action by what has become 'my' class. This mix of outrage and confusion is where Walker's story starts, in the *Long March*.

If we're up against the systematic production of Self, as the in-here dimension of culture, the dharma is then wonderfully relevant as a practical guide to relations of production of *desire*, the roots of hegemony and the production and reproduction of emotional institutions at an individual and a collective level. Rather than class, at this level of social reproduction what we have, it seems to me, may be 'tribes': image-mediated, desire-driven and largely consumption-mediated collectives of 'people like us' who do what 'we' do (own what we own, want what we want, see what we see) standing in opposition to 'them', who do things some other way, which we, more or less, don't like or approve of, and wish to stand apart from, put down - or destroy. This is hard stuff to understand, to grasp and to change. However, it seems to me that alongside wage-labour, private ownership, surplus value and preconceptualisation, as relations of economic and cultural production in globalist-capitalist society, the dharma offers us candidates for relations of production in the desire-and-aversion-driven *production of the heart-mind* in global-tribal society: hard-working teams of constructs like greed, hatred and delusion.[18]

This is not stuff that I have thought right through. I don't have enough lifetimes (just the one!) to think this through! And it probably would would be a mistake, in danger of being a merely intellectual exercise, to seek strict analogues of *class* and *relations of* (economic) *production* in the sphere of the heart-mind. But it's worth exploring, to see what it gives us to think with.

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18   This threesome is one of many hard-working 'buddhist lists': r*àga*, *dosa*, *moha*, the roots of 'unskilful' action.

I don't by any means intend to imply that the dharma is the only frame for deeply engaging the relationship between emotional institutions in-here and out-there, and producing real liberatory change. However, my experience these recent years says that the dharma is profoundly wise, truly flexible from person to person (that is, from one inner landscape to another) and fundamentally oriented to liberation - that is, to liberation in-here, where all out-there institutions and tribal communities are founded and fed. Liberation in-here, arrived at and guaranteed by self-mindful action by the collective out-there, always was my socialist agenda. But it seems to me that my public writing has directly addressed liberation *per se* less than would have been proper. Thus at this stage of the game, engaged in retrospect, I feel bound to bring to bear whatever resources are available; and anyway, bricolage - jury-rigging a workable arrangement, with what's to-hand in prior practice - is a principle with me! So, dharma it is: it will repay this investment of time and trust, I'm sure.

A lot is written about culture in the public sphere (though often hawking it or trading on it, as *papanca*[19], rarely facilitating mindfulness of the *force* or addictiveness of its movements). Compared with this there is relatively little about culture in the privatised social sphere of wage-work practice within organisations, once we set aside the large body of managerialist stuff, concerned with how we can be brought into motion as 'teams' or mobilised in the service of 'total quality' or have our creativity 'set free' for market-competitive purposes. For example, within my chosen professional sphere of activist-allies in the 90s (CSCW) we didn't professionally write about liberation, delusion, aversion, clinging, pleasant-feeling experiences, compassion and so on. We wrote about hands-on methods and tools and system- or conceptual-architectures. In a coded way, we addressed liberation and the production of the heart-mind while exploring negotiations and interactions in the workplace between people and people and things, in the interests of 'skill' and the 'support' of skill and 'cooperation'. After all, our professional world was laced with managerialist expectations too, and there wasn't that much of a market for writing on the pragmatics of liberation: Socialism in One information-systems design Project? We too - PMC radicals - had to get on with it, tote that barge, lift that bale, publish that paper, get that grant.

Liberation and the production of the heart-mind generates the deepest questions for facilitative practice. How may the changing of

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19 *Papanca: a* key term of dharma insight, translating roughly as 'blather': pointless, wasteful mental and verbal traffic; churning of the mind; self-boosting monologue of the unaware, insistently-separated Self. We do it all the time, much of the time it passes for sociability.

work be done through the cultivation of open-hearted mutual recognition, through stepping outside the bubble of prejudice, habit and easy comfort? How may it be possible in practice, in actual settings and actual projects, to really operate, with skilful intention, under substantially different, safeguarded, presuppositions and agreements; and - as designers and facilitators of work-practice - to enable this? To what extent, in our repertoire of human-centred or participatory design and development practices in the 90s, were the positives of dharma-insight being cultivated and enacted: open-hearted kindness and regard (*mettá*), compassion (*karuná*), the capacity for joy and beauty (*muditá*), equanimity and resilience and moderation (*upekkhà*), the cessation of clinging (*upādāna* - 'fuel')?

Please don't imagine that I'm simply advocating buddhist ethics. Certainly, my own socialist politics is an ethically- and aesthetically-grounded one. But what is normally taught as ethics within buddhist traditions (one of the eight divisions of the 'eightfold path', which presents a number of precepts) is not what I mean to draw on most in the present context of theory-of-practice. I'm not so much concerned with encouraging people, in the context of reconfiguring wage-work, to be kind to one another and refrain from doing bad things. I'm concerned with organising liberatory practice, 'in the room', live, as we work together, so that greed, aversion and delusion are - as far as possible - not reproduced in the course of that action and its outcomes; and indeed, are systematically undermined and defended against, as steps towards the end of suffering. I'm addressing the dharma as a repository of facilitative 'organising' insights, and guides to skilful real-time doing.

This feathering-in of dharma insight is the most fragmentary thread of *Paid to Think*. I must stop minding about whether it looks bitty or half-formed (it does); the path must be opened and explored. Being a wage-working, professionally-publishing person myself through the 90s, there is relatively little in my public writing since LTW that works this territory. There is none that draws on dharma insights. So in this area - the field, especially, of the *Facilitation* volume[20] - much of the necessary work lies in the new writing that will have to be done to 'wrap' the earlier, published stuff. Work is in progress, some of it here, on this page. Watch this space. Have hopes for the 2nd edition! Have hopes for the next generation . . . .

Seven Dials, Brighton
June 2017

Location - Some explorations of power and landscapes of design

THE CORE OF THIS COLLECTION - in Part Two below - comprises four papers from twenty-odd years ago. To show where the central concepts and commitments in these early-90s papers were coming from, extracts from two early-80s books are included too, as Part One.

Part One has a 'bottom-up' perspective, pitched in terms of *class geography* and related constructs: hegemony, preconceptualisation, organising (in the sense of trade-union organising). These extracts are taken from *Living Thinkwork*[1] and *Science or Society*[2]. Discussion in Part Two - twelve years later - has shifted, and is pitched in terms of the *location* of workers who may legitimately be regarded as designers and supported as designers, within an emergent and dynamic terrain of the technology-based redesign of work organisation. We might see this new terrain as constituted by a convergence of bottom-up principles from the Scandinavian 'collective resource' tradition, with top-down imperatives of corporate strategy and globalised product innovation, driving organisational changes and the design of information and communication systems to facilitate these changes.

In the year June 1992 to May 1993 I gave three presentations which, in their different contexts, were attempting to develop a narrative of the politics and political possibilities of two domains of radical, participatory, design-based, technology-oriented practice. Retrospect shows these presentations also to be part of a journey in class geography - part map, part travelogue - that has run through and given shape (maybe even a little coherence?) to the whole of my working life.

'Part map, part travelogue' was a characteristic phrase in the jacket blurb of *Living Thinkwork* (LTW) and the three papers that I'm

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1   Mike Hales (1980), *Living thinkwork - Where do labour processes come from?* London: CSE Books Republished, as print-on-demand and as a PDF eBook, on Lulu <lulu.com> 2016.

2   Mike Hales (1982), *Science or society? The politics of the work of scientists*, London: Pan Books. Reissued 1986 by Free Association Books.

including as Part Two, below, have the same dual aspect. They were offered as maps - of resources, and also, of places within culture (social formations, institutions) - where politicised professionals could 'dig where you stand'. In this respect, although class doesn't appear as a term in the papers of Part Two, they continue the exploration of class geography in a particular domain of technology-design and work-design. Written for an international readership in Australia, Scandinavia, the USA and Britain, the papers in Part Two examine the relationship between an 'old' (and I would say, 'workerist') radical politics of work, technology and production that was particularly manifest in Britain, and an emergent, methodo-logically sophisticated, bolder and internationally-fluent politics which I felt was present in the emerging CSCW field[3] (and cognate fields such as Participatory Design). For all these reasons it seemed to be the right place to take the exploration to.

Four 'wrapped' papers

Briefly, here is the background to the Part Two papers.

During the 80s - after a decade of bottom-up activism in the chemical industry, described in LTW - I had been a policy officer in the Economic Policy Group (EPG) of the partisan, anti-Thatcher, 'Ken Livingstone's GLC' (the Greater London Council). In the 70s, the campaigning of the Lucas Aerospace Shop Stewards' Combine Committee, around 'socially useful products' (SUP), had been a significant labour-movement politics and attempts were being made in the EPG and at the Greater London Enterprise Board (GLEB) to translate this into a strand of Left regional economic strategy. Mike Cooley, ex-leader of the Lucas Combine and principal figure in the SUP movement, was head of the SUP area at GLEB. In the 80s computerisation was spreading significantly, for the first time, in shop-floor and office workplaces and during my time in the EPG (and subsequently at the London Strategic Policy Unit, after Margaret Thatcher had abolished the GLC) I settled increasingly into the theory-of-practice of IT systems design, implementation and strategy in office work settings. This was at a tangent to the engineering orientation of SUP but entirely consistent with my established 'organising' orientation to white-collar work, and to work-design, in LTW[4].

In 1991, now in my mid-40s, I embarked on an academic career as a research fellow (later, Senior Research Fellow) in the Centre for

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3   CSCW: Computer Supported Cooperative Work.

4   An important 70s prompt for this orientation was Louis E Davis (1972), *Design of jobs - Selected readings*. Harmondsworth: Penguin.

Business Research at Brighton Polytechnic, with a focus on action research and participatory approaches to design and implementation of IT systems. Having a background familiarity - from work I had done at the London Strategic Policy Unit[5] - with participatory IT-design practices that had evolved within the Scandinavian collective resource tradition during the 80s, in 1991 I encountered for the first time the newly-forming field of CSCW. In this domain, threads of Scandinavian participatory design were being woven together with sophisticated ethnographic and ethnomethodological approaches to the understanding and redesign of work practices, which were becoming established in the corporate labs of USA multinationals such as Xerox, Northern Telecom/Bell Labs and Hewlett Packard. Given my background in corporate organisations (the chemical industry in the 70s, local government in the 80s) I found this combination very appealing. The combination of participatory design and ethnographic approaches was interesting too; one strand within LTW had been ethnographic work of a kind.

In August 1992 I was invited by an office-work oriented, trade-union research centre in Melbourne[6] to give a seminar in a series which was published the following year as *Pink collar blues - Work, gender and technology*[7]. In this context, my seminar and chapter - 'Human-centred systems, gender and computer supported cooperative work' - argued that approaches within CSCW were much more interesting, intellectually 'sussed' and relevant to women's work and feminist politics than the SUP tradition, with its origins in the defence of male

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5   Mike Hales (1988), *Women - The key to information technology* - A briefing pack on employment development, London Strategic Policy Unit.
Mike Hales, Peter O'Hara & Gill Smith (1988), *Progress by design - An IT strategy for social services*, London Borough of Camden, Social Services Department.
Mike Hales & Peter O'Hara (1993), 'Strengths and weaknesses of participation - Learning by doing in local government', in Eileen Green, Jenny Owen, & Den Pain (eds), *Gendered by design? Information technology and office systems*, Gender and society, feminist perspectives, London: Taylor and Francis, 153-172.
Mike Hales (1993), 'User participation in design - What it can deliver, what it can't, and what this means for management', in P. Quintas (ed), *The social dimensions of systems engineering - People, processes, policies and software development*, London: Ellis Horwood, 215-235.

6   CIRCIT/URCOT : Centre for International Research on Communication and Information Technologies/Union Research Centre on Organisation and Technology; founded in 1991. Juliet Webster, a GLC-related radical-science colleague from London - who also presented a paper in the *Pink-collar* series - was responsible for the connection.

7   Belinda Probert & Bruce Wilson, eds (1993), *Pink collar blues - Work, gender and technology*, Melbourne: Melbourne University Press.

engineering workers' jobs and skills, its popular-front version of class politics and its atheoretical (arguably, anti-theoretical) culture. The basic pitch was: why continue to do politics like that, when you could now do politics like this? In all the ways that mattered to me in my own personal history, it seemed to me then (and seems to me now) that CSCW had everything going for it: an orientation to language and culture as well as widgets (and intellectual rigour as well as agitprop), a primary focus on office work or 'mental work' rather than 'manual work', an aspiration for oppositional practice within corporations as well as in external settings (eg trade-union struggles, community organising); and a recognition of the forms of power associated with gender as well as class. The published version of this Melbourne seminar paper is the first of the 'wrapped' papers in Part Two.

In June 1992 I had given a brief presentation at a workshop hosted by the UK Department of Trade & Industry: Design issues in CSCW. By the time I was writing-up the Melbourne seminar paper for the Pink Collar book, I was also working on a chapter for a book based on the Design Issues workshop[8] and I developed related arguments in the two papers. However, in the CSCW paper it was possible to focus more closely on the tacit class politics of CSCW as well as its gender-awareness, by addressing the question of where 'designers' are located, and potentially might be located[9]. 'Location' referred to positioning within both the economic field of CSCW (as an emergent domain of commercial software production and use, driven by corporate agendas in fiercely competitive, globalising industries) and the (gendered) role structure of industrial corporations and corporate IT-implementation projects: managers, designers, developers, users. Without referencing class explicitly, I understood 'location' to be a way of exploring class geography - ie *class* locations - in the territory of computer systems development: managers, designers and users, in this kind of development context and in that kind. This intervention in the British CSCW-methods debate provides the second wrapped paper.

During 1992 I met up with a Toronto-based action-researcher with links to Northern Telecom, Andrew Clement, who was involved, like me, in exploring participatory IT-design and implementation practices within office work. Through this connection I was invited to

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8 Duska Rosenberg & Ed Hutchison, eds (1994), *Design issues in CSCW*, London: Springer Verlag.

9 'Where are designers? Styles of design practice, objects of design and views of users in computer supported cooperative work'. In this volume.

participate in the third Oksnøen symposium in May 1993. Oksnøen[10] was a venue for rich creative exchanges between work-oriented action-researchers in the Scandinavian community of participatory IT systems development and a community of work-practice researchers - notably, in the R&D labs of US multinationals - who were approaching the reflexive understanding and use-oriented (re-)design of IT-using work practices through ethnography and ethnomethodology, "motivated by the goal of making computer-based systems better fitted to the real work of real users" (Oksnøen 1994, call for papers).

The politically-attuned and intellectually sharp context of Oksnøen made it seem possible to pitch a more specific critique of CSCW's current lack of explicit attention to questions of power and class, and of spaces for struggle. Delving behind the symposium theme of 'Understanding work practice', my position paper[11] turned to *professional* practice, and to *challenging* as well as understanding, and it highlighted what I believed might, in this international context, be an unfamiliar set of traditions in community development, industrial organising, alternative economic strategy and theorising. These included the SUP tradition, Pierre Bourdieu's theorising of 'legitimate violence' and 'habitus', and labour process approaches within neo-marxism (including LTW's 'cultural production' approach). The position paper is the third wrapped paper.

Together, the Design Issues paper and the Oksnøen paper brought a focus on strategically addressing the locations of designers and users of IT systems, within circuits of globalising capital and within hierarchies of professionalised work in corporate settings. Oksnøen participants opted to have 'location' as the theme for the following year's symposium. The 1994 call for papers by Julian Orr and Susan Newman of the Work Practice and Technology group at Xerox PARC (*Locating design, development and use*) was concise and elegant and I've included this - with permission - along with the three papers of my own that constitute the 'location' part of this collection.

> *Seven Dials, Brighton*
> *April 2016*

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10 An international symposium was held annually from 1991 to 1997, originally at Oksnøen Sommerleir (summer camp). Oksnøen is an island in Lake Vannsjø, south of Oslo.

11 'How powerful could CSCW be? Traditions for understanding and challenging professional practices'. In this volume.