

Chapter 7. Three Normative Models of Work

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One of the distinctive features of the post-Hegelian tradition of social philosophy is the connection it forges between normative criticism and historical understanding. For some philosophers who place themselves in this tradition, the main consequence of making this connection is to alert us to the historical contingency of the norms on which normative criticism is based: historical understanding brings to light the plurality of values and the possibility that the norms we now adhere to could have been otherwise.¹ But historicism, in the sense of moral relativism, is not the only lesson that can be learnt from taking the link between normative criticism and historical understanding seriously—indeed, it is not the lesson that most philosophers in the post-Hegelian tradition want to teach. For in addition to showing that norms are subject to change, historical understanding reveals that norms have historical power. That is to say, norms are historically effective, they have social reality, and the social philosopher should be aware of this when targeting her normative criticism.

Philosophically well-targeted normative criticism will be rationally grounded criticism that draws on norms that are historically effective, that have a hold on people in the here and now, and that can therefore motivate or drive social change. In addition to being *effective*, well-targeted normative criticism will be *necessary*, in the ordinary sense of being directed where it is most *needed*. It will be directed not just at any normative deficit, as measured against historically effective norms, but at deficits that really matter to people, that impact on them negatively in serious ways. Historical understanding can help to diagnose the main social pathologies from which people suffer. Normative criticism mediated by historical understanding both looks backward at the emergence of historically effective norms, and

forwards towards emancipation from the defining pathologies of the times. This, at least, is what normative criticism does at its best, on the post-Hegelian view.

The normative models of work I shall discuss in this chapter are frameworks for normative criticism in this post-Hegelian sense. They claim to identify certain *core* norms that have at once helped to shape what work has actually become today, at least in advanced economies, and that have the potential to transform this world in a progressive manner. They are thus normative models in the double sense that they claim to identify the historically effective core norms of work, the norms that have been effective in constituting it historically, in making it what it is; while also claiming to provide orientation for normative criticism of work aimed at genuine emancipation, at making it what it should be. In the latter role, the models claim to be responsive to the distinctive needs of the times and to suggest paths for possible recovery.

I will suggest that the post-Hegelian tradition presents us with three contrasting normative models of work, in the sense just introduced. According to the first model I shall identify, which I shall call the *instrumental* model, the core norms of work are those of means-ends rationality. In this model, the modern world of work is constitutively a matter of deploying the most effective means to bring about given ends. The ends for which working is the means do not themselves come from the working, they are not internal to work activity: they derive first and foremost from the material conditions of human existence and the natural necessity of securing them. The rational kernel of modern work, the core norm that has shaped its development, is on this view instrumental reason, and this very same normative core, in the shape of advanced technology and more efficient, time-saving production, can help to liberate it. The second model, by contrast, takes the core norms of work to be internal to working activity. Rather than work gaining its normativity, so to speak, from something external to it,

from ends to which the work is a contingent means, on this second view the core norms of work are *expressions* of values or meanings that are immanent to working practices themselves. The *expressive* model of work, as I shall call it, regards the actual world of work to be constituted historically by work-specific norms, norms which working subjects themselves have invoked and mobilised around in the course of their struggles for emancipation. According to the third model, the core norms of work, in the double constitutive-transformative sense we are dealing with here, have to do neither with instrumental rationality nor authentic self-expression. Rather they concern norms that relate either to individual achievement or contribution through work (in the form of esteem) or to the conditions that must in place for individuals to participate in the exchange of services by which market societies reproduce themselves (in the form of mutual respect). Following Honneth, I shall call this the *recognition* model.

I want to look at each of these models in a bit more detail, but before doing so, I should say something about the anxieties around work which provide the backdrop to the contemporary philosophical discussion. As we have seen, part of the task of a normative model of work is to provide a framework for understanding the ‘pathologies’ of work and the ‘malaises’ surrounding it. This is because such an understanding is a pre-requisite of well-targeted normative criticism, in the dual sense of effective and necessary criticism distinguished above. Put otherwise, the appropriateness of a normative model of work will depend in part on its responsiveness to the dominant social pathologies and malaises of work. Let me offer a few observations, then, about where contemporary anxieties around work seem primarily to lie.

The malaise over work

The widely used expression ‘work-life balance’—or rather ‘imbalance’—nicely captures one field of anxiety that characterises the *Zeitgeist* around work. There would seem to be little doubt that many people are troubled by the amount of time they spend at work, or that others spend at it, compared to the ‘non-work’ aspects of their lives. And this is often associated with a perception that the value of work is exaggerated, either by the individuals who allow their lives to be swallowed up by work, or by the society at large which encourages, and perhaps even forces, people to lead such work-obsessed lives. This socio-cultural exaggeration of the value of work might fit an ideology of economic growth and continuously improving performance within companies and institutions, but only at the cost of those values that can only be found in life outside work, and the overall balance between the values of work and non-work.

We can make the nature of this anxiety a little more precise if we distinguish two ways in which the value of work might be conceived. On the one hand, if the value of work is conceived purely along instrumental lines, that is, in terms of the income it generates, then the excessive value attached to work really amounts to an over-estimation of something that work is just the means for: namely, the power to purchase goods and ultimately the pleasure of consuming them. The work-life imbalance then appears as the mark of a society bent on excessive accumulation, consumption and hedonistic enjoyment—a symptom of ‘affluenza’, as one social commentator has put it.² But the malaise over the work-life imbalance appears in a different light if we conceive of work not just as an instrumental good whose meaning and fulfilment lies in some future enjoyment, but as an intrinsic good whose satisfactions derive from the activity itself. For what is then in the balance is not the sheer pain of work and the pleasure of life, nor an amoral thirst for consumption and the wholesome goods of family life,

community engagement, self-cultivation and so forth which are sacrificed in the frenzy to get on with work; but rather two competing sets of broadly speaking 'moral' demands: the 'life-good' of work and *other* 'life' goods.³ If our interpretation is based on the latter conception, then the malaise over the work-life imbalance can be seen to arise from a kind of normative conflict within the sphere of recognisable life goods, above all those of working life and family life. That is a quite different interpretation to one which construes the work-life imbalance as an irrational prioritisation of means over ends, or as a victory for hedonism in its battle with morality.⁴

If popular consciousness of the first malaise (about the work-life imbalance) focuses on the quantity of time spent at work (and the ever-diminishing amount of time spent outside work), the second malaise has to do with the quality of time spent working. The worry here is that the quality of working experience has generally deteriorated.⁵ To the extent that work has become experientially impoverished, so that it no longer provides the kind of satisfaction it once provided and is capable of providing, the designers of jobs, and the broader culture from which job-design draws its norms, can be said to diminish the value of work.⁶ The malaise around the degradation of work has several facets. A common view is that the potentially rich and challenging experience of work has been flattened out by mind-numbing new technologies.⁷ Certain jobs that previously involved the subtle exercise of arduously obtained skills have been reduced to a few routine, child-proof operations of a computer. The so-called 'dumbing-down' of work features prominently in public perceptions of the deterioration of work experience. At the same time, and in apparent contradiction to this, an even more prominent feature concerns the rise in stress suffered at work.⁸ Work certainly seems to be more stressful than it used to be, and both the stress suffered directly at work, and its social consequences for life outside work, contributes in great measure to the malaise around work.

Another contributing factor is the perceived decline in levels of sociability, cooperativeness, trust and loyalty at work: what Richard Sennett calls the ‘social deficits’ of the new workplace.⁹ When combined with anxieties about the work-life imbalance—that is the amount of time given over to work—we arrive at a widespread image of work as ‘nasty, brutish and long’.¹⁰

The third malaise can hardly be separated from the work-life balance or the qualitative deterioration of work experience, but it deserves a special heading. It relates to changes in the balance of power at work. There is no doubt that the so-called ‘liberalisation’ or deregulation of work, the decline of trade union power, together with changes in the decision-making structures of employing institutions, has wrenched power from the grips of workers.¹¹

Workers are now more likely to be (and to feel) subjects of the decisions that fundamentally affect them than to be authors of those decisions. Rather than being confident participants in the processes of institutional will-formation, so to speak, they are more likely to be anxious observers. The fundamental worry is not just that the pendulum of power at work has swung decisively away from workers, but also—and perhaps more significantly—that accountability for that power has diminished. A particularly important and egregious consequence of this is to heighten the sense of insecurity amongst workers. This insecurity is compounded by a perception that the transfer of power away from them is inevitable, that there is nothing (short of economic suicide) that can be done about it. Retention of a decent job, or access to better quality work, appears in the lap of the gods.

The work-life imbalance, deterioration in the quality of work, and a shift in the balance of power which reduces autonomy and accountability, are three malaises around work that trouble advanced industrial societies. These are not the only anxieties about work that we

encounter—for example, there is consternation about the fate of the ‘work ethic’ which I mentioned only in passing when discussing the work-life balance. But more significantly, it is of course an empirically contestable (and contested) matter whether the anxieties I have been describing are accurate representations of social and economic reality. After all, commonly voiced worries about the work-life imbalance, backed up by countless attitude surveys, sit alongside statistics indicating the persistence of large-scale under-employment (that is, of people having too little rather than too much work-time), even before the recession precipitated by the financial crisis of 2008 set in.¹² Concerns about the degradation of work in advanced economies, backed up by formidable research in historical sociology and by recent psychological studies, have to be read alongside the results of surveys that document enduringly high levels of satisfaction with the quality of work in those very societies.¹³ Anxieties about the ubiquity of precarious work, now taken for granted by many sociologists, sit alongside surveys reporting low levels of fear of job loss and statistics indicating no substantial shortening of job tenures.¹⁴ And while the sense of powerlessness in face of the liberalisation of work surely is real, it is not as if it is going unchallenged. To take just two examples, think of the hundreds of thousands of French citizens who rallied against the first-employment contract bill in spring 2006, or the tens of thousands who protested against the Australian government’s neo-liberal industrial relations laws prior to the election of 2007 (resulting in the defeat of the government and the overturning of the hated IR laws).

The social sciences thus send mixed messages about the nature and extent of the malaise around work. But assuming, not without some evidence, that the three malaises just sketched do have some basis in reality, even if only as widely held anxieties, we can ask how the normative models of work that have been developed in post-Hegelian thought relate to them. We can consider the hermeneutic ‘validity’ of these models, their validity as frameworks for

self-interpretation and social diagnosis, in a context shaped partly by such general anxieties around work. For as we have seen, hermeneutic validity in this sense is an important aspect of the kind of validity to which these normative models of work aspire.

The instrumental model

Let us turn now to the first of our models, the instrumental model. Recall that a normative model of work is instrumental if it takes the core norms of work to be those of instrumental reason. This means, on the one hand, that the historical development of the world of work is to be understood in terms of its increasing accordance with those norms. The norm of efficient production has guided the development of work, to the extent that it is now constitutive, as a core norm, of contemporary working practices. To say that means-ends efficiency or instrumental reason provides the core norm of work is also to say that *other* norms, especially moral and ethical ones, do *not* have this guiding, regulating feature. On the other hand, the instrumental character of the core norms of work means that instrumental reason can be called upon for purposes of critique, since *more* efficient production can better meet those non-moral, non-ethical needs that human beings have on account of their physical existence. Furthermore, more efficient technology may also relieve people of the burdens of participating in the system of production, understood as the means by which the material, pre-ethical needs of a population are satisfied.

The instrumental model thus combines the following ideas that define its normative character. First, it construes work as the kind of activity humans must undertake merely to survive as *natural beings*. The ultimate end at stake here, the reproduction of 'mere life' or continuation of natural organic being, is not itself taken to be a moral or ethical purpose, though of course

it provides the material condition for the realisation of such purposes. Second, the *worth* or *good* of work lies primarily in its role in producing and allowing for the consumption of goods and services that raise the quality of this natural life. Work is thus conceived as an instrumental rather than an intrinsic good. And third, work-activity that has production as its end and is guided by the norm of instrumental reason must be distinguished from the kind of activity in which distinctively human moral and ethical capacities *are* exercised, in which intrinsically valuable goods are enjoyed and, in the truly moral cases, unconditional, categorical worth experienced.

This set of ideas about the normativity of work, which goes back to Aristotle's distinction between *poieisis* and *praxis*, is widely subscribed to in the post-Hegelian tradition, but Arendt's and Habermas's formulations of it in the mid-twentieth century are perhaps the most familiar and consequential.¹⁵ Arendt distinguished 'action' from both 'work' and 'labour' precisely to bring out the moral and ethical normative specificity of action in contrast to utilitarian world of work and the brute organic sphere of labour.¹⁶ Both working and labouring, in Arendt's sense, have only instrumental value, the difference being that the value created by labour is used up 'almost immediately' (in order to keep the labourer alive) whereas work is done for the sake of useful things that endure.¹⁷ It is only with action, or rather speech and action, that 'we insert ourselves into the human world'.¹⁸ As is well-known, Habermas articulates a similar thought when he distinguishes labour, again understood as instrumental action, or action properly guided by the norms of instrumental reason, from 'interaction' or communicative action, which is properly guided by the norms of reaching an understanding.¹⁹

Arendt's distinction between 'action', 'work' and 'labour', and Habermas's distinction between 'labour' and 'interaction', provide a conceptual framework for a normative model of work of the instrumental type. But they also have the effect of radicalising the instrumental model in a problematic way. For up to now, I have presented the instrumental model as a thesis about the *core* norms of work. The core norms of work, according to this model, are instrumental. But the Arendt/Habermas thesis we are looking at now suggests that the norms of work are *solely* instrumental. Work and labour are subject to the norms of instrumental reason, and only those norms, by definition. This is problematic because it invites the question: granted that work is of instrumental value, why does that exclude the possibility that it is of intrinsic value? What compels us to conceive of work as *only* instrumentally valuable, as subject *exclusively* to the norms of instrumental reason?

James B. Murphy has pointed out that Aristotle could not countenance a conception of work as both intrinsically and instrumentally valuable because of his commitment to a metaphysical distinction between immanent and transitive activities.²⁰ Transitive activities, such as making things, are only completed upon the completion of the object external to them. In and of themselves they are incomplete. It is the nature of immanent activities, such as contemplation or experiencing joy, on the other hand, to be complete in themselves. As these kinds of activity were mutually exclusive, Aristotle concluded that work, as a transitive activity, could at best only have instrumental value.

While this style of metaphysical thinking is alien to Arendt and Habermas, nonetheless a similar type of consideration leads them artificially to exclude the possibility of non-instrumental norms applying to work. If we just consider Habermas's position, we can see that it rests on metaphysical premises of a kind that make the idea of work as both an

instrumental and an intrinsic good, or as subject to both non-moral and moral norms, seem spooky. For this idea suggests an intrinsic normative content to a kind of activity that can be specified independently of our intersubjective, and more precisely linguistic, constitution. Work as instrumental action may enable us to cope with the contingencies of nature better, but it does not transcend the contingency of the natural world. Only the norms embedded in linguistic interaction manage that.²¹ From this perspective, a more than instrumental conception of the value and normativity of work can seem to represent an inadmissible regression to an enchanted world.

But a more formidable obstacle to a conception of work as possessing both instrumental and intrinsic value arises from the central role attributed to instrumental reason in the diagnoses of the times of the first generation Frankfurt School, which Habermas sought to refine. The central thought here is that the pathologies of the modern world arise from the domination of instrumental reason, a thought which is by no means unique to the Frankfurt School but which is most explicitly and systematically taken up there. On this conception, instrumental reason is the essence of the scientific-technological-industrial complex that reifies and imprisons us.²² Accordingly, critical theory is by definition the *critique* of instrumental reason. While Habermas was able to extricate himself from the idea that instrumental reason as such was intrinsically *bad*, it is not surprising that he found it difficult to see anything intrinsically good about it, or about the main kind of social activity governed by it, namely work.²³

This consideration is just as telling in Arendt's case, for whom labour and work are not just distinct from action, but *threats* to it. This at any rate is the diagnostic position taken up in *The Human Condition*. Arendt's position is well-known—and widely embraced—for its affirmation of plurality and its critique of the modern tendency toward homogeneity. But what

is the archetype of the ‘sameness’ that threatens to engulf us? The ‘labour gang’.²⁴ For Arendt, the labour gang exemplifies the qualitatively undifferentiated, nature-like (indeed ‘herd-like’, only more menacing) unity of collective labour. This unity extinguishes ‘all awareness of individuality and identity’, such that ‘all those “values” which derive from labouring, beyond its obvious function in the life process, are entirely “social” and essentially not different from the additional pleasure derived from eating and drinking in company’, or in other words, no different from the mere organic satisfactions of non-human animals.²⁵ There is no ‘true plurality’ in labouring, merely ‘the multiplication of specimens which are fundamentally all alike because they are what they are as mere living organisms’.²⁶ Admittedly labouring is not ‘working’, in Arendt’s technical sense, but even the activity of work as distinct from labour cannot set up a true realm of plurality in which ‘men *qua* men’ can appear.²⁷

In a revealing footnote, Arendt cuts through what she rather aloofly calls ‘theories and academic discussions’ of work that attribute a more than instrumental value to it by invoking a survey, conducted in 1955, showing that ‘a large majority of workers, if asked “why does man work?” answer simply “in order to be able to live” or “to make money”’.²⁸ This is presented as rough empirical confirmation of the instrumental model of work Arendt advocates, according to which the normative content of work lies solely and simply in its instrumental value. But the surveys available to us today suggest the matter is much more complex.²⁹ These show that work matters to people for a wide range of reasons, and not just reasons of an instrumental type, according to which the good of work lies in the means it provides to satisfy ends independent of it. There are goods that are specific to work activity, and which can only be enjoyed by taking part in that activity, which also go some way to explaining why people work.³⁰ Instrumental reason alone does not provide an adequate

answer. This also holds if we raise that question not just at the micro level, at the level of individual motivation, but at the macro level of socio-economic forces. To consider the world of work as a labour market determined solely by norms of efficiency and instrumental rationality, or indeed as a 'norm-free' zone of optimally coordinated action-consequences, is to ignore the ethical decisions, and so the ethical reasons counting for and against them, that shape economic policies and institutions.³¹ Decisions of a more than purely instrumental kind are also at play when the social division of labour is modelled practically on the technical division of labour.³² Moral and ethical norms, not just norms of instrumental reason, are operative here too, and contribute to the melange of social forces that any adequate explanation of 'why people work' would have to take into account.

If the instrumental model radicalised in the manner of Arendt and Habermas gives a simplified account of why people work, it also seems limited as a framework for understanding the contemporary malaise around work. It is confined to an interpretation of the work-life imbalance as a conflict between intrinsic life-goods and merely instrumental values, and cannot make sense of the possibility that a conflict between intrinsically valuable life-goods is involved. It also makes it difficult to see how the quality of work can become a serious source of disappointed normative expectations. And although it places great weight on the values of autonomy and responsibility, it does not anticipate that work would become a key site of anxiety around them.

The expressive model

Whereas the instrumental model takes the core normativity of work to lie in its effectiveness as a means to bring about ends whose value is independent of the work (and thus contingent

to it), the expressive model takes the core norms of work to be internal to working activity, to be *expressions* of values or meanings that are immanent to working activities themselves. The term ‘expression’ serves to highlight this internal relation between working activity and the norms that apply to it, between the being of the good and the doing of it.³³

There are, however, various forms of expressivism, and various levels at which the expressive relation can hold, which should be distinguished, even if expressive theories of work typically bring them together. First, there is what we might call *existential* expressivism, which focuses on the *ontological* significance of work. The fundamental normativity of work, on this view, arises from the special position work holds in the self-expression of *being*, or as is more common in expressive theories, the self-expression of *life*. Marcuse’s early existential analysis of work, which claims to lay out an ontological concept of work that is prior to and presupposed by ontic conceptions (especially as deployed in economics) illustrates the former approach,³⁴ whereas the notion of work as the self-expression of life is perhaps most vividly present in Marx’s famous analysis of alienation.³⁵ The thought that work carries ontological significance, and that ‘life’ is the fundamental norm that work (at its best) gives expression to, can also be found today in Dejours’ psychodynamic approach to work.³⁶

Second, and more commonly, expressivism contains an *anthropological* thesis about the role of work in the development of human capacities. This thesis can be presented *transcendentally*, as if working (in some suitably abstract sense) were a condition of the possibility of human, rational powers, or *teleologically*, such that working activity functions as the medium in which human flourishing or self-realisation at both the individual and species level takes place. The prototype for the former type of argument is the dialectic of self-consciousness in Hegel’s *Phenomenology of Spirit*.³⁷ According to this argument, it is

through working that slave-consciousness, relative to master-consciousness, ‘rises to the universal’ through externalisation and objectification of its powers, such that the externalisation and objectification of subjective powers in working is revealed as a structural feature of human subjectivity in general.³⁸ Marx’s manuscripts of 1844 and comments on James Mill are classic sources of the latter type of argument.³⁹ In more recent formulations of the anthropological dimension of work, the emphasis may lie in the role of work in maintaining psychic integrity,⁴⁰ in securing the positive self-relations (such as self-respect and self-esteem) needed for a good life,⁴¹ or in the basic human goods that work provides.⁴² But whether the argument is presented transcendently (work as a condition of human subjectivity) or teleologically (work as the vehicle of human self-realisation) the crucial point for our purposes is that the normativity of work has to do with the role of work in giving expression to, and facilitating the development of, distinctively human capacities.

The norms at issue at the first two levels—namely the self-expression of life or being, and the formation and development of distinctive human capacities—are supposed to apply to human beings generally. But the norms that working brings to expression may have a more local character. That is to say, there may be goods that are specific to particular working practices in the sense that they can only be enjoyed by those participating in those practices. Such goods are *internal* to the practice. Thus at this level we are not concerned with universal norms, or norms that have a claim to unrestricted validity. But the normativity at issue here is no less real or objective for that, and the goods at stake no less genuine. The fact that working practices ‘create’—or more precisely, ‘give expression to’—specific goods by no means compromises their validity. It is just that enjoyment of the good is restricted to those who participate in the working practice, precisely because participation (of the right kind) is the *expression* of the good. For example, agricultural practice gives expression to goods that are

specific and internal to it, as does handicraft, engineering, nursing, teaching and so on. The realisation and promotion of these goods is guided by practice-specific norms which are internal but of course by no means arbitrary. Expressivism at this level, which for want of a better term we might call *practice-internal*, goes back to Aristotle, and neo-Aristotelians like MacIntyre have given it renewed currency.⁴³

The expressive model of work, whether taken at the ontological, anthropological or practice-internal level, regards the actual world of work to be constituted historically by work-specific norms, norms which working subjects themselves have invoked and mobilised around in the course of their struggles for emancipation. The key difference between it and the instrumental model can be put as follows. If work is a vehicle for the development of human capacities, and development of those capacities is either a condition of human flourishing or a constitutive feature of it, then work itself must be conceived as integral to a flourishing human life, or the ‘good life’. The expressivist, therefore, is committed to a normative conception of work according to which work has intrinsic and not just instrumental value. Furthermore, if particular working activities may be regarded as *expressive* of goods that can only be realised and enjoyed internal to those particular practices, then a more than instrumental significance needs to be attached to them. Although those practices may *also* be a source of instrumental value, or goods that can also be enjoyed and realised externally to those practices, nonetheless the core norms which make up those activities are considered, on the expressive model, to be those internally generated, practice-specific norms.

Now the main point of a normative model of work, in the sense we are discussing here, is to provide a framework for understanding the most salient normative deficits of actual work and a well-grounded sense of how those deficits can be corrected. So subscribers to the

expressivist model do not claim that all actual work is conducive to flourishing or self-realisation, or for that matter expressive and constitutive of internal goods. I have already mentioned Marx as a paradigm figure in the expressivist tradition, and clearly the point of his expressivism, at least in his early writings, is to frame fundamental criticism of alienated labour and to ground hope for a more human world in which alienated labour would disappear. Contemporary expressivists also intend their normative model of work to provide a sound foothold for the criticism of actually existing work. Their expressivist models include a ‘critical conception of work’, to use Honneth’s formulation.⁴⁴ Yet such a critical conception faces formidable challenges. Indeed, Honneth himself has come to see these challenges as insurmountable and he has subsequently abandoned this model in favour of an alternative approach. We will look at this alternative, third model in the next section. But first, let us look at the reasons he has given for rejecting the critical conception of work of his earlier expressivism.

According to the critical conception of work originally defended by Honneth, an ‘undistorted’ act of work, one in which its ‘normative content’ is fulfilled, is a ‘unified activity, autonomously planned and carried out by the working subject’.⁴⁵ In another formulation, he describes it as ‘a self-contained, self-directed work procedure which embodied the worker’s knowledge’.⁴⁶ It is noticeable how thin—modest but non-defeatist one might say—this normative model of work is, in the context of expressivism. There are no references to the self-expression of ‘life’, for instance, or the realisation of a ‘species-being’, or self-formation through the externalisation of subjective powers at the individual or collective level. Nevertheless, this deserves to be called an expressivist model because it posits that working activity that accords with its norm gives proper expression to the worker’s singular practical intelligence and her underlying autonomy. It provides a norm, over and above efficiency and

instrumental rationality, which fits the exercise of productive capacities by indicating, at a very general level, the proper shape of the expression of those powers. Furthermore, this is not an abstract norm that has no historical force and so no place in a normative model of work in the sense that concerns us, since it can plausibly be argued that workers actually anticipate its fulfilment and are liable to resist working practices that break with the norm. At the time of formulating this critical conception of work, at least, Honneth could draw on recent industrial sociology for evidence to suggest that workers actually do resist practices that deprive them of this basic autonomy and capacity for expression.

But no matter how modest the normative content of this critical conception of work might seem from an expressivist perspective, Honneth himself came to see it as an ‘extravagant’ conception and an over-reaction to the limits of the instrumental model.⁴⁷ He gives two basic reasons for rejecting his earlier approach, objections which can be seen to apply not just to his own version of expressivism, but to the expressive model generally. The first is that the implicit moral claims underlying resistance to working practices that fall short of the expressive norm are not fully *rational*, in the sense that they lack *universal* validity. As Honneth puts it: ‘The silent protests of employees who oppose the determination of their work activity by others lack that element of demonstrable universalisation required to make them into justified standards of immanent criticism’.⁴⁸ More generally, Honneth suggests that norms of expression or self-realisation through work can at best possess only local, relative validity, the kind of validity that conceptions of *the good* can have, as distinct from moral norms which are universally valid. The second reason Honneth gives for abandoning his earlier expressivist conception is that it is no longer plausible to suppose that working activity has a proper ‘shape’ for which the self-directed exercise of productive powers is exemplary. Put bluntly, this is because most work today is concerned not so much with the *production* of

objects but with the *delivery of services*. As soon as one has to deliver a service, all sorts of considerations come into play, such as responding to variations in customer demand and adapting to fluid technological and social environments, which the model of autonomous self-expression, or the ‘craftsman’ ideal, is hardly well suited for. There is also just too much variation in the kind of work that has to be done to make one model of working activity normatively appropriate. As Honneth puts it, ‘given the multiplicity of socially necessary work activities, it seems impossible and absurd to claim that their autochthonic, internal structures demand that they be organized in one specific way’.⁴⁹ In lacking both a rational grounding and a firm foothold in the actual world of societal labour, the critical conception of work, and by implication expressivism more generally, is shown to be inadequate as a normative model of work, Honneth now argues.

Honneth is surely right to note that aspirations for meaningful work fit into conceptions of the good that are not shared by everyone, and that craft-like production of objects forms only a small part of the contemporary world of work. Still, it may be that these points call only for an amendment of the expressive model, and Honneth’s own early version of it, rather than wholesale rejection. For in response to the first point, one could argue that conceptions of the good are *unavoidable* when it comes to the organisation of work, and that the unavoidable *choice* between one form of work organization (say, one that generates and equitably distributes meaningful work) and another (say, one that sacrifices the quality of work to other considerations) is one that can be made with more or less *justification*, depending on the strength of the *ethical reasons* behind it.⁵⁰ The mere fact that the aspiration for meaningful work finds expression in non-universalisable conceptions of the good does not deprive that aspiration of rational status. This is all the more evident in Honneth’s own version of expressivism, with its ‘critical conception of work’, since the basic norm it draws upon is

autonomy. Assuming that the capacity to express one's autonomy in the work one does is a good (rather than a right), clearly it is not one which is just a matter of esoteric wishes or subjective caprice, on a rational par with any other conception. It has a *good* claim to be part of a good life. It is even arguable that the demand for autonomy is the *rational claim par excellence*, the claim that rational agents *ought* to make for their work, the claim that should trump all others as far as practical reason is concerned. We would not consider autonomy to be such a contingent, dispensable good in *other* life-contexts. But even if we grant that heteronomy is more acceptable for the worker than, say, the citizen, we are still left with *good reasons* for favouring work with certain qualities (such as some degree of autonomy) rather than others (such as the near absence of self-directed activity).⁵¹

The expressivist model may also be able to answer Honneth's second criticism, though it may have to modify itself accordingly. Honneth's main point is that the provision of services that makes up the bulk of working activity today does not have the structure of the externalisation of subjective powers in an object we take to be characteristic of craft activity. The counterfactually presupposed norms of craft work should therefore not feature in a normative model of work, in our practically demanding sense, since they are not in fact the 'core norms' of contemporary work, and lack an 'effective history'. Such a normative model would only be able to furnish 'external' criticism, as Honneth puts it. But what if the norms of 'craftsmanship' were not to be understood in such a restricted way; restricted, that is to say, to the external expression of a subject's knowledge in an object? What if the meaning of craftsmanship were to be opened up to include 'work done well for its own sake' in the provision of services as well, indeed in a potentially unlimited field of activities?⁵² The expressivist could then appeal to standards or norms that are internal to working practices of all kinds, but which are compromised, or undermined, or corrupted by contemporary regimes of work. The

expectation that one should be able to do a 'good day's work', or a 'job well done', is after all common to very many trades and professions, and certainly is not limited to traditional craft work. Furthermore, it is an expectation whose disappointment features centrally in the malaise around work sketched above, *especially*, it could be argued, for those who work in service industries such as care-provision, health and education. For it is a common complaint of such workers that their ability to do the job well, as defined by criteria of excellence internal to the trade or profession, has suffered due to the imposition by management of alien standards and norms.⁵³

The recognition model

So it is by no means settled that an expressive normative model of work is necessarily overburdened by an obsolescent ideal of craftsmanship. There may well be room to accommodate the ideal of craftsmanship, re-interpreted as excellence by way of situation-specific exercises of practical intelligence, within an expressivist normative model of work suited to contemporary conditions. Honneth need not foreclose that possibility. But he could still reasonably argue that there might be a third normative model of work available to us, which is better equipped than instrumentalism to locate the normative deficits of work while at the same time more securely anchored in the normative basis of the actual organisation of work. Let me call this third normative model, the one that Honneth now advocates, the 'recognition' model of work.⁵⁴

The key idea of the recognition model is that the core norms of work are norms of recognition. But just as the expressivist idea that the core norms of work are norms of expression admits of variation, so the recognition model can take various forms depending on

which norm of recognition is emphasised and the level at which the salient recognition relations are postulated. Such variation is evident in Honneth's own proposals for a 'recognition-theoretic' approach to the normativity of work and in the space remaining I will briefly consider the two main ones.⁵⁵

First, there is the approach framed by the distinction between 'respect' and 'esteem' which plays such an important part in the social theory presented in *Struggle for Recognition* and Honneth's contribution to *Redistribution or Recognition?*⁵⁶ According to Honneth's general theory of recognition, effective human agency requires a minimal set of 'practical self-relations' to be in place, relations that are established in the course of an agent's successful socialization. The socialization of the highly individuated members of modern societies, however, depends on a differentiation of the sources of these practical self-relations and in particular the separation of recognition in the form of respect (on which the practical self-relation of self-respect depends) from recognition in the form of esteem (on which the practical self-relation of self-esteem depends).⁵⁷ Respect, on this account, is the recognition any person is due simply on account of being a person. As such, it provides the core norm of modern legal systems: all persons are to be equal under the law and to enjoy the same basic legal entitlements. Esteem, on the other hand, is recognition that follows from achievement or social contribution. It is not allocated equally and in advance to everyone, as basic legal rights are, but distributed *post hoc* in proportion to individual accomplishments and abilities. The primary social sphere in which these accomplishments and abilities are made manifest is the production and exchange of goods and services. So while respect, in the narrow sense that contrasts with esteem, is an important norm of work insofar as work is subject to the law, esteem (in the specific sense of recognition for achievement) provides the core norm of recognition in this sphere. This makes it possible for a distinctive kind of 'struggle for

recognition' to emerge here, namely one based around the interpretation of the principle of achievement. After all, the criteria of what counts as achievement, the means by which different achievements and contributions are measured and weighed relative to each other, and so on, are never purely impartial: they are laden with cultural values and typically reflect the interests of socially dominant groups. Members of socially stigmatised and subordinated groups can contest prevailing interpretations of the principle of achievement that make the kind of work they do, or the kind of work associated with the group, appear unworthy of esteem or perhaps even socially invisible. Without due recognition of their achievements, the members of such groups are liable to suffer from a debilitating lack of self-esteem, even if their equal legal status as persons is secured.

The approach to the normativity of work that focuses on 'esteem'-recognition (or the principle of achievement) and the effect it has on subjectivity opens up fields for further research that can consolidate its claim to provide an adequate normative model of work in our post-Hegelian sense. Particularly worthy of note is the role the model can play in guiding empirical investigation into the changing modalities of esteem in actual work organizations. For this purpose, we require not just a distinction between respect and esteem, but distinctions *within* the concept of esteem that can map recent historical changes in the dominant modes of recognition (and misrecognition) at work. The distinction between recognition as 'appreciation' and recognition as 'admiration' as elaborated by Stephan Voswinkel and others serves this function well, since it is effectively a distinction between two modalities of esteem-recognition whose tense co-existence is at least partly responsible for changing patterns of experience of work.⁵⁸ Another interesting feature of this research is the experience of moral ambiguity around recognition it reveals: esteem-recognition at work is not always welcome, especially when it is mobilised for the sake of the profit-maximization of the

provider of work.⁵⁹ This raises the question of the ideological role of esteem-recognition, or the role that recognition of achievement plays in the reproduction of relations of domination, including the relation between employer and employee. These issues have been explored at a conceptual level by Honneth and are central to the empirical sociology being undertaken by Voswinkel and his co-researchers.

Such considerations count in favour of a normative model of work that takes the core norms of work to be those of esteem-recognition as encoded in the principle of achievement. But a weakness in the recognition model developed in this way appears when one considers the basis of the normative criticism of work the model is supposed to frame. All it seems to have to go on is challenges to the socially dominant interpretation of the achievement principle that emerge from marginalised or subordinate groups. We have already seen that Honneth came to reject the expressivist model of work on account of it failing to establish a *rational* basis to its normative criticism of prevailing conditions of work. Mere feelings of alienation or dissatisfaction with work did not of themselves provide a rational basis for the critique of work. And a similar problem could be seen to affect the recognition model in this esteem-based version. For merely to have the experience of not being properly esteemed does not entitle one to the claim that the principle of achievement should be interpreted otherwise, that is, in a way that would affirm one's subjectively apprehended achievement. Some reason would need to be given to justify one interpretation over another. And if the interpretation of the principle of achievement is inherently contestable, if there is no shared background understanding of what achievement consists in, then normative criticism of work would seem to amount to a taking of sides. If normative criticism of work is to be more than that, if it is to have *rational* force, then some shared norms, norms that are more or less explicitly accepted

by everyone despite them having different understandings of the principle of achievement, would need to be identified.

We can read Honneth's proposed 'redefinition' of the relation between work and recognition as an attempt at overcoming this weakness in both the expressivist model of work and the first, esteem-based formulation of the recognition model. According to this second version of the recognition model, the normativity of work arises from the 'conditions of recognition prevailing in the modern exchange of services'.⁶⁰ Drawing on Hegel and Durkheim, Honneth argues that modern market economies gain their legitimacy from a norm of mutual recognition according to which 'subjects mutually recognize each other as private autonomous beings that act for each other and thereby sustain their livelihood through the contribution of their labour to society'.⁶¹ The moral basis of the modern labour market resides in the reciprocity of the *obligation* to work for one's living by satisfying others' needs, on the one hand, and the *opportunity* to do reasonably paid work which involves a minimal level of self-directed skilful activity on the other. The availability of paid work which can support a decent standard of living is thus a rational claim for subjects who are ready to deliver a socially useful service through their labour. Likewise, the availability of meaningful work, of work that requires the kind of skills that an autonomous person can be expected to possess and which other autonomous persons can recognise as such, amounts to a rational claim under modern market-mediated conditions of social reproduction. Put negatively, a market economy that deprives subjects of the opportunity to do work complex enough to be commensurate with the status of autonomous agency at a minimum wage is inconsistent with its own normative conditions. It prevents individuals from securing 'self-respect'—as Honneth puts it following Hegel—for themselves as autonomous agents, even though the legitimacy of

modern societies depends crucially on its capacity to make the bases of self-respect available to everyone.

Clearly the normative presuppositions of exchange, if they are valid at all, hold for all acts of work insofar as they are mediated by the labour market. The reach of their validity is not restricted, so to speak, by particular cultural horizons of interpretation of the principle of achievement. In this respect it does seem to represent an advance on the esteem-based recognition model, as well as the expressive model. But as we saw when considering Honneth's reasons for rejecting the expressive model, his favoured recognition model must also provide a framework for the *internal* or *immanent* criticism of the organisation of work, not just *rational* criticism of it. While, in Honneth's view, the craftsman ideal that formed the normative core of the expressive model had validity as a conception of the good, it was a 'merely utopian' conception of work which was 'too weakly linked to the demands of economically organized labour'.⁶² For this reason, it could only serve the purposes of *external* criticism and so was inadequate as a normative model in the post-Hegelian sense. The new recognition model avoids this problem, Honneth argues, because it draws on the very norms that the capitalist organization of work uses to legitimate itself. But in order for this feature to represent a decisive advantage over the expressive model, it would also need to be shown that the norms of mutual recognition are an historically *effective* force in this context, and more effective than the norms of expression. This latter claim, however, seems to be undermined by the *counterfactual* status Honneth attributes to these norms. As Honneth writes, the norms of mutual recognition that provide the conditions for market-mediated exchange 'exist in the peculiar form of counterfactual presuppositions and ideals'.⁶³ But if that is the case, they would seem to be as 'weakly' connected to the demands of economically organised labour as the norms of expression are. There must be some '*factual*' (and not just counterfactual) status

to these norms if they are to count as core norms of work in the demanding sense required of a post-Hegelian normative model of work.

Indeed, if the norms of mutual recognition really do only have a counterfactual existence in the social exchange of services, it would suggest that the core norms of work are of a different kind. Given that Honneth rejects the claim that norms of expression can have that role, we would seem to be left with the instrumentalist view that the core norms of actual work, the historically effective norms that have shaped it, are those of means-ends rationality. And Honneth comes close to endorsing the instrumentalist model both when he discounts the viability of expressivist aspirations about work in the face of economic reality and when he suggests that it would only take a flip of perspectives (from that of ‘social integration’ to ‘system integration’) to bring out the economic naivety even of his preferred recognition model.⁶⁴

Still, the recognition model, in both its ‘esteem’-based formulation focusing on the principle of achievement and its ‘respect’-based variation focusing on the normative presuppositions of exchange presents an alternative to both the instrumental and the expressive normative models of work. The advantage it shares with the expressive model over the instrumental model is that it can address concerns about the degradation of work, or the lack of availability of meaningful work, which is an important element in the current malaise around work. It can do this by appeal to the norm of mutual respect that forms the moral basis of the market-mediated exchange of services. But because it takes the normative content of work to reside in the normative conditions of the exchange of labour, rather than the activity of working itself, it does not have the resources that are available to the expressivist model for supporting normative criticism of the quality of work. This kind of criticism can hardly be divorced from

expressivist insights about the intrinsic value of working activity that allows for the expression of a subject's practical intelligence in a context of cooperation. These insights are quite compatible with the idea that work is also an instrumental good, and that it is instrumental in bringing about intrinsic goods that have little to do with work. Indeed, I have suggested that this is just the conceptual framework we need for making sense of worries about the 'work-life imbalance'. The reminder that work is not the only good, and that it actually needs to be brought in balance with other goods, serves as a warning against a hyper-expressivism that would reduce the 'good human life' to working life. This is the nightmare that propels radical instrumentalism about work, but we can reject it without embracing the idea that the normative content of work is exhausted by mean-ends rationality.⁶⁵

¹ See for example Richard Rorty, *Objectivism, Relativism, and Truth: Philosophical Papers*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.

² See Clive Hamilton and Richard Denniss, *Affluenza*, Crows Nest, Allen and Unwin, 2005.

³ On the notion of life-goods I am deploying here, see Charles Taylor, *Sources of the Self*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1989.

⁴ Influential statements of the view that the motivation for overwork has mutated from a work-ethic of diligence and sacrifice to an amoral desire for consumption include Christopher Lasch, *The Culture of Narcissism*, New York, Norton, 1978, and Daniel Bell, *The Cultural Contradictions of Capitalism*, London, Heinemann, 1979. For an interesting discussion of these views see Russell Muirhead, *Just Work*, Cambridge MA, Harvard University Press, 2004.

⁵ On the long-term decline of the quality of work under capitalism, see Harry Braverman, *Labor and Monopoly Capital: The Degradation of Work in the Twentieth Century*, New York, The Monthly Review Press, 1974.

⁶ See John B. Murphy and David Pyke, “Humane Work and the Challenges of Job Design,” in eds S. A. Cortright and M. J. Naughton, *Rethinking the Purpose of Business*, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 2002.

⁷ See Richard Sennett, *The Corrosion of Character*, New York, Norton, 1998.

⁸ This seems to be especially true of the French debate, which has a sharper focus on suffering at work (especially in the wake of the shocking spate of work-related suicides in that country in recent years). See Christophe Dejours, *Souffrance en France*, Paris, Seuil, 1998; and Christophe Dejours et Florence Bègue, *Suicide et travail*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2009.

⁹ See Richard Sennett, *The Culture of the New Capitalism*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2006.

¹⁰ *The Observer*, 1998, as cited by Frances Green, *Demanding Work: The Paradox of Job Quality in the Affluent Economy*, Princeton, Princeton University Press, 2006, p. xvi.

¹¹ For an overview of these developments, see Luc Boltanski and Eve Chiapello, *The New Spirit of Capitalism*, London, Verso, 2005; and Serge Paugam, *Le salarié de la précarité*, Paris, Presses universitaires de France, 2000.

¹² See David Dooley and Joann Prause, *The Social Costs of Underemployment*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 2004

¹³ For the more ‘optimistic’ outlook on work satisfaction, see Green, *Demanding Work*.

¹⁴ On the one side (emphasising the prevalence of job insecurity or ‘precariousness’) see for example Arne L. Kalleberg, ‘Precarious Work, Insecure Workers: Employment Relations in Transition’, *American Sociological Review*, Vol 74, No. 1, February 2009, 1-22. On the other side, drawing attention to steady levels of job duration, see Kevin Doogan, *New Capitalism? The Transformation of Work*, Cambridge, Polity, 2009.

¹⁵ The instrumental model of work in post-Hegelian thought is developed by way of various interpretations of Aristotle's distinction between *poiesis* and *praxis*. As a reminder, *poiesis*, or production, is the making or bringing about of something useful, and is governed by the norm of technical or instrumental reason (*techne*). For Aristotle, the value of *poiesis* lies solely in the thing made or brought about, the end for which work-activity is the means. The work-activity itself, abstracted from the product, has no value. This contrasts with *praxis*, which is action guided by the norms of moral reason (*phronesis*). Good *praxis*, as opposed to good *poiesis*, is its own end, worthwhile for its own sake, and so an intrinsic good. *Praxis*, but not *poiesis*, is an excellence of the *agent*; it perfects the agent in the sense of contributing to the agent's full self-realisation as a moral being. For extended discussion of Aristotle's distinction and its influence, see James B. Murphy, "A Natural Law of Human Labor," *American Journal of Jurisprudence*, 71, 1994, 71-95, and by the same author, *The Moral Economy of Labour*, New Haven CT, Yale University Press, 1993.

¹⁶ 'Action alone is the exclusive prerogative of man', Hannah Arendt, *The Human Condition*, Chicago, University of Chicago Press, 1958, p.22.

¹⁷ *ibid.*, p. 99.

¹⁸ *ibid.*, p. 176. Arendt continues: 'This insertion [into the human world] is not forced upon us by necessity, like labour, and it is not prompted by utility, like work' (*ibid.*, p. 177).

¹⁹ See Jürgen Habermas, "Labour and Interaction: Remarks on Hegel's Jena *Philosophy of Mind*," in Habermas, *Theory and Practice*, London, Heinemann, 1974.

²⁰ John B. Murphy, "A Natural Law of Human Labor," 73.

²¹ 'What raises us out of nature is the only thing whose nature we know: language' Habermas, *Knowledge and Human Interests*, trans. Jeremy Shapiro, London, Heinemann, 1972, p. 314 (Postscript).

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- ²² See T. W. Adorno and M. Horkheimer, *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, tr. J. Cumming, New York, Herder and Herder, 1972 [1947].
- ²³ See Habermas, *The Theory of Communicative Action*, trans. T. McCarthy, Boston, Beacon Press, 1984..
- ²⁴ Arendt, *The Human Condition*, pp. 213-214.
- ²⁵ *Ibid.*, p. 213.
- ²⁶ *ibid.*, p. 212.
- ²⁷ *ibid.*
- ²⁸ *ibid.*, pp. 127-128, note 75.
- ²⁹ See for example, Shaun Wilson, *The Struggle over Work*, London, Routledge, 2004.
- ³⁰ See Robert E. Lane, *The Market Experience*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1991.
- ³¹ This point is convincingly argued by Russell Keat in his contribution to this volume.
- ³² See John B. Murphy, *The Moral Economy of Labour*, and William J. Booth, *Households: on the Moral Architecture of the Economy*, Ithaca, Cornell University Press, 1993.
- ³³ For an attempt at spelling out in more detail this meaning of expression, see Nicholas H. Smith, ‘Expressivism in Brandom and Taylor’, in eds. James Chase, Edwin Mares, Jack Reynolds and James Williams, *Postanalytic and Metacontinental: Crossing Philosophical Divides*, London, Continuum, pp. 145-156.
- ³⁴ See Herbert Marcuse, “On the Philosophical Foundation of the Concept of Labor in Economics,” *Telos*, 16, Summer 1973 [1933], 9-37.
- ³⁵ See Karl Marx, “Excerpts from James Mill’s *Elements of Political Economy*” [1844] and *Economic and Philosophical Manuscripts of 1844*, in Marx, *Early Writings*, London, Penguin, 1974.

³⁶ In addition to Dejours' contribution to this volume, see Dejours, "Subjectivity, Work, and Action," *Critical Horizons*, 7, pp. 45-62; Christophe Dejours and Jean-Philippe Deranty, "The Centrality of Work," *Critical Horizons*, 11, 2, 2010, 167-181; and Jean-Philippe Deranty, "Work as Transcendental Experience: Implications of Dejours' Psychodynamics for Contemporary Social Theory and Philosophy," *Critical Horizons*, 11, 2, 2010, 183-225.

³⁷ See G. W. F. Hegel, *Phenomenology of Spirit*, tr. A. V. Miller, Oxford, Oxford University Press, 1977 [1807].

³⁸ See especially *ibid.*, paras. 195 and 196.

³⁹ See especially Marx's account of alienation from the 'species being' in the *Philosophical and Economic Manuscripts* of 1844.

⁴⁰ As in Dejours' psychodynamic model (see note 36 above)

⁴¹ As in Axel Honneth, *Struggle for Recognition*, tr. Joel Anderson, Cambridge, Polity, 1995

⁴² As in John B. Murphy's neo-Aristotelian account in *The Moral Economy of Labor* and in Robert E. Lane's account of work in *The Market Experience*.

⁴³ See Alasdair MacIntyre, *After Virtue*, second edition, Notre Dame, University of Notre Dame Press, 1984, from which these examples are also taken. MacIntyre himself though is not an expressivist about modern work, since (following Polanyi) he takes the core norms of modern work, mediated as it is by labour market, to be instrumental (and so not concerned with internal goods). For attempts at expanding MacIntyre's account of practices to cover the contemporary world of work and labour markets (and thus extracting what I am calling an expressivist model of work from his writings), see Keith Breen, "Work and Emancipatory Practice: Towards a Recovery of Human Beings' Productive Capacities," *Res Publica*, 14,1, 2007, 381-414; and Russell Keat, "Ethics, Market and MacIntyre," in eds. K Knight and P. Blackledge, *Revolutionary Aristotelianism: Ethics, Resistance and Utopia*, Stuttgart, Lucius and Lucius, 2008, pp 243-257.

⁴⁴ Axel Honneth, “Work and Instrumental Action: On the Normative Basis of Critical Theory,” in Honneth, *The Fragmented World of the Social*, Albany, SUNY Press, 1995, pp. 15-49, 17 (n. 1).

⁴⁵ *ibid.*, p. 18.

⁴⁶ *ibid.*, p. 22.

⁴⁷ Axel Honneth, “Work and Recognition: A Redefinition,” in eds., H.-C. Schmidt am Busch and C. Zurn, *The Philosophy of Recognition: Historical and Contemporary Perspectives*, pp. 223-239, p. 226.

⁴⁸ *ibid.*, p. 229.

⁴⁹ *ibid.*

⁵⁰ See Russell Keat’s contribution to this volume, and his “Choosing between Capitalisms: Habermas, Ethics and Politics” (available on-line at <http://www.russellkeat.net>).

⁵¹ For a more detailed account of the importance of autonomy in this context, and of the difficulties approaches such as Honneth’s have in dealing with it, see Beate Roessler, “Meaningful Work: Arguments from Autonomy,” unpublished ms.

⁵² As suggested in Richard Sennett, *The Craftsman*, New Haven, Yale University Press, 2008.

⁵³ See for example the contributions by Pascale Molinier and Gabriele Wagner to this volume.

⁵⁴ I have discussed Honneth’s approach to work prior to the publication of ‘Work and Recognition: A Redefinition’ in Nicholas H. Smith, “Work and the Struggle for Recognition,” *European Journal of Political Theory*, 8, 1, January 2009, 46-60. In that piece I emphasized the link between the recognition model and expressivism, whereas here (partly in response to Honneth’s proposed ‘redefinition’) I am more concerned with their differences.

⁵⁵ Of course Honneth is not the only contemporary theorist of recognition, but he is the most prominent one to have proposed a specific ‘recognition-theoretic’ approach to work. There are some theorists, most notably Nancy Fraser, who embrace a ‘restricted’ recognition paradigm,

for the sake of analysing identity politics, while rejecting a ‘comprehensive’ recognition model as unsuited to the analysis of class politics, and so work. Such theorists do not have a recognition model of work in the sense that concerns me here, so there is no need to discuss them. Elsewhere I have argued that Fraser has a crypto-instrumentalist model of work which is indebted to Habermas (a position which Honneth himself now seems to flirt with, as I shall suggest below). See Nicholas H. Smith, “Recognition, Culture and Economy: Honneth’s Debate with Fraser,” in ed., D. Petherbridge, *The Critical Theory of Axel Honneth*, Leiden and Boston, Brill, 2011.

⁵⁶ See Honneth, *Struggle for Recognition*; and N. Fraser and A. Honneth, *Redistribution or Recognition? A Political-Philosophical Exchange*, trans. J. Golb, J. Ingram and C. Wilke, London, Verso, 2003. The approach is also exemplified in Honneth, “The Social Dynamics of Disrespect: Situating Critical Theory Today,” in ed., P. Dews, *Habermas: A Critical Reader*, Oxford, Blackwell, 1999.

⁵⁷ A third crucial source of practical self-relation (the relation of self-trust) is love, but that is not so relevant for the normative model of work that concerns us here.

⁵⁸ See the contributions of Stephan Voswinkel and Gabriele Wagner to this volume.

⁵⁹ See also Richard Sennett and Jonathan Cobb, *The Hidden Injuries of Class*, New York, Knopf, 1972, for an account of the moral ambiguities of esteem-recognition from an earlier period.

⁶⁰ Honneth, “Work and Recognition: A Redefinition,” p. 225.

⁶¹ *Ibid*, p. 230.

⁶² *Ibid*, p. 226.

⁶³ *Ibid*, p. 234.

⁶⁴ *ibid*, pp. 236-237.

⁶⁵ Earlier drafts of this chapter were presented at the Work and Recognition conference at Macquarie University, the Philosophy and the Social Sciences conference in Prague, and the Philosophy seminar at University College Dublin. My thanks go to everyone who gave me valuable feedback on these occasions.