

In Defense of Good Work: Jobs, Violence, and the Ethical Dimension

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Without work, all life goes rotten, but when work is soulless, life stifies and dies. — Albert Camus

ON JANUARY 29, 2002, PRESIDENT GEORGE W. BUSH DELIVERED A STATE OF THE Union Address to Congress. One of his key messages was the importance of employment creation: "When America works, America prospers, so my economic security plan can be summed up in one word: jobs" (Bush, 2002). Throughout his address, he used the concept of a "good job" without ever defining it. Given his actions as president, it appears that a "good job" is simply a synonym for a "job." Such an interpretation would be consistent with macroeconomic theory, which considers the creation of new employment, *any* employment, to be a healthy economic sign. More jobs mean less unemployment, which in turn assumes that there will be a more dignified living for a larger percentage of the population. As long as jobs are created, regardless of the product or service delivered, or the consequences to individuals, communities, or ecosystems, the economy and the society as a whole are viewed as progressing.

In recent decades, many authors have sought to reclaim the nobility of work and its sense of social responsibility (e.g., Terkel, 1975; Roszak, 1979; Schumacher, 1979; Bellah et al., 1985; Martin, 2000; Gardner et al., 2001). They differ in their analyses of the roles of the economic system, new forms of technology, and a consumerist society in degrading work to a profiteering and numbing enterprise, but they all agree that work devoid of an enlarged sense of ethics is a mediocre activity at best.

This article continues this critical view by supporting the concept of quality of work, as opposed to quantity in the abstract. Although I accept the importance of full employment, it must be analyzed hand in hand with the type of work that is done. Is it work that ennobles the individual, seeks to improve community living, and protects the integrity of rivers, mountains, and deserts? Or is it work that deadens the soul, destroys community life, and poisons the environment?

This article will not focus on the more conventional "professional ethics," a series of principles of conduct that all members of a profession should abide by (e.g., be competent, display prudence, avoid carelessness, protect the welfare of clients). Although these principles are commendable, work is not just about following the highest standards of one's profession, or even about a living wage and better working conditions. Work is also about self-discovery and discovery of the universe. Work, when it is dignified and interesting, is about losing oneself in the task at hand and realizing that people's identity exists within the chore itself and beyond it in a wider world. Good work is ultimately a morally infused endeavor directed toward the social good.

This article encompasses three sections: the first explores the notion that professional ethics are important, but are insufficient for bringing forth the wider "reverence for life" necessary for dealing with the current social and environmental malaise (Schweitzer, 1955). The second section critiques the belief that in the name of self-interest, technique, or efficiency, *any* production process or its end result is acceptable. The third section focuses on the difficult choices poor people face when deciding between self-preservation and self-actualization.

Professional Competence Versus Ethical Mysticism

An acquaintance of mine, whom I will call John, works for Lockheed Martin, the world's largest military contractor. A highly competent aerospace engineer, he graduated from a prestigious university. He designs, develops, and tests components for various military and civilian products. As an African American from a working-class background, he is proud to be the first in his family to graduate from college. Thanks to his salary, he helps to support his parents and he bought a large, comfortable house in the suburbs. When I asked him why he worked for Lockheed Martin, he talked about the generous salary and benefits, relative job security, pleasant working conditions, and his creativity being constantly challenged in developing the most efficient, flexible, and cost-effective parts possible. He also mentioned the importance of "helping to defend the country," but it seemed he had not given much thought to the fact that his labor was used to manufacture Lockheed Martin's lethal F-16 jetfighters, Trident nuclear ballistic missiles, and laser weapons systems, which are employed to kill people around the world. It appeared this moral and ethical predicament did not trouble him much.

Lockheed Martin, the world's largest arms-exporting company, is a key component of a well-oiled war machine. The world arms trade, which in the year 2000 amounted to almost \$800 billion (SIPRI, 2001), not including the increase after the U.S. invasions of Afghanistan and Iraq, results in the death of a mostly civilian population. "The percentage of civilians killed and wounded as a result of hostilities has risen from 5 percent of all casualties at the turn of the last century [the 20th century], to 65 percent during World War II, to 90 percent in more recent conflicts" (Save the Children, 2002: 2-3). The global weapons trade also fuels

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insecurity through spirals of reciprocal destruction. It breeds wars and prevents the peaceful resolution of conflicts, devastates the landscape and prolongs suffering through physical and psychological damage inflicted on people, facilitates military rule and the suppression of human rights, and diverts financial resources from urgent needs such as adequate housing, health care, and education. Moreover, the environment is greatly degraded, increasing the pain of poor communities that rely on the environment for subsistence. Guaranteeing security as the key reason for escalating military spending leads to a cruel irony: the more governments spend on weapons to promote peace, the less secure people are.¹

It is unclear whether these moral reasons will eventually dissuade John from working at Lockheed Martin. He probably sees his labor as distant and unrelated to the carnage brought about by weapons he helps to create. Possibly, too, he believes the U.S. needs to protect its borders, citizens, and way of life by massively investing in weaponry. Even if he harbored ethical misgivings and wished to transfer to a company that produced only nonmilitary products, he would have to undergo retraining given his highly specialized skills and there would be no guarantee that he could find a job with the generous salary and benefits of his current position. John does not engage in any illegal or even, from the standpoint of conventional professional ethics, immoral behavior (see, for instance, Flores, 1988). He abides by the basic standards of his profession in that he displays integrity (addresses issues related to product safety and performance), responsibility (engages in safe design and high engineering standards), and respect (values the input of clients, co-workers, and others). In addition, he is a good son who supports his parents financially and, as the first in his family to graduate from college, serves as a role model to his relatives.

How, then, must we make sense of this quandary? There are four main sources of motivation for work: (1) survival: basic material needs; (2) personal compensation: money, power, and prestige; (3) craft: technical and creative excellence; and (4) moral concern: caring about and showing respect for communities and the environment (Martin, 2000). The survival motivation for work stands high for all groups of people, but especially for the world's poor who do not have a welfare net to meet their basic needs. Second, a modicum of interest with personal compensation is generally harmless and it is now a truism that too great a concern with this motivation is a mediocre substitute for meaningful work. Third is the definite pride and satisfaction people feel with work done well. Ideally, it should be an integral and inseparable part of work. It becomes problematic when zeal with technique is at the expense of moral concerns, leading to widespread social and environmental damage, as in the case of Lockheed Martin, or, as we will see, at Ford Motor Company. Fourth, morality encompasses elements that John already exhibits (e.g., helping out his parents), but it also includes the teleological consequences of the products he helps to make. Douglas Heath (1991) has argued that the inability to visualize how an individual's work affects human beings other

than his or her inner circle of family and friends is called "self-centeredness." The opposite of self-centeredness is "other-centeredness," which to Heath is one of the hallmarks of a mature person. Other-centeredness is the ability to identify with and feel empathy toward a wider nexus of individuals. John does make a connection with his family, friends, and even to his larger ethnic group, but not with the larger biotic community, which includes other human and nonhuman living beings. There is a compartmentalization of motivation similar to the "doctrine of separate spheres," which states that moral ideals should be relegated to private life, while self-interest and technique should be the domain of public and professional life (Martin, 2000: 14). A more encompassing approach to ethics is needed to prevent the moral schizophrenia that many workers are forced, or force themselves, to be a part.

An example of an encompassing approach to ethics can be found in the life and work of Albert Schweitzer, a philosopher, theologian, musician, and doctor who dedicated his life to serving the neediest people in society (Clark, 1962; Schweitzer, 1955). After a prodigious career in various fields, he opened a missionary hospital in French Equatorial Africa (later Gabon) and spent the remaining 50 years of his life providing affordable health care to the poor. Schweitzer called his philosophy "ethical mysticism." By "ethical," he referred primarily to the moral values that enabled self-fulfillment through service to others. By "mysticism," he referred to appreciating the importance of the connectedness of all living entities, human and nonhuman alike. His mysticism was the opposite of the ascetic quality displayed by religious mystics with their inward reflection. According to Schweitzer, ethical mysticism serves as a foundational stone to justify a reverence for life. All life has inherent value, he said, and individuals are obliged to help preserve it. The feeling of care and kinship that Schweitzer believed all humans should feel toward other organisms is a form of biotheism: an environmental ethic that deems all life to be sacred and interconnected. For Schweitzer, work was worthwhile beyond a paycheck; it was meaningful in terms of his ideals of caring for clients, colleagues, and the wider biotic community. As a white, well-do-to-European man, he was able to do the work he did thanks in part to his ethnic, national, and class background; this privileged afforded him opportunities that many poor African blacks with a similar inclination were denied.²

The pursuit of the public good professed by Schweitzer is also embedded in all major religions and most secular ethics. For all of these philosophies, the quest for happiness, self-fulfillment, and a sense of meaning are ultimately linked to the search for a wider welfare. Robert Bellah and his colleagues expressed this through the term "vocation," as opposed to a job or a career (1985). As vocation, work is a value-laden activity directed toward the common good. A vocation has an ethical dimension that unites one's identity with larger social practices and communities. As they eloquently wrote, vocation is akin to a calling in which a person's work is:

Morally inseparable from his or her life. It subsumes the self into a community of disciplined practice and sound judgment whose activity has meaning and value in itself, not just in the output or profit that result from it. But the calling not only links the person to his or her fellow workers [but also] to a larger community (1985: 66).

Many workers around the world already view their occupation as a vocation. Workers in the fields of health, education, environmental protection, human rights, and the arts and crafts, just to name a few, often embrace this moral concern toward others and choose their professions precisely because they feel they can help others. It should come as no surprise that many of these occupations, particularly those dealing with social services, are dominated by women, and that they enjoy some of the lowest pay and prestige in the professional fields. As the doctrine of separate spheres, mentioned above, reminds us, moral concerns have been historically consigned to the household and to the domain of women. Thus, it is perceived as unnecessary to inject moral concerns into other professions. Part of the challenge, then, is to help individuals in the other occupations become more cognizant of the consequences of their work actions, even when these affect only distant places and peoples. The other part of the challenge, and one that is more overwhelming, is to restructure the current economic system so that people have more choices about the kind of work they want to do and still fulfill their basic material needs.

Self-Interest Versus Wider Moral Concerns

The work of Lockheed Martin represents one of the more egregious examples of companies that engage in immoral behavior. However, more common are companies that produce civilian products for mass consumption that are useless or harmful. Take the case of Ford Motor Co., the world's fourth-largest company in terms of sales in 2001. In its first Corporate Citizenship Report, issued in 2000, Ford Co. admitted for the first time that its Sport Utility Vehicles (SUVs) were socially irresponsible, citing serious environmental problems and safety concerns for passengers in other cars (Bradsher, 2000). The report confirmed what independent groups had claimed long ago: SUVs are environmental and security disasters in the making. In terms of pollution, they spew 30% more carbon monoxide and hydrocarbons and 75% more nitrogen oxides than passenger cars do. Moreover, SUVs only get 13 miles per gallon (mpg); currently, the average car in the U.S. gets 24 mpg. In terms of safety concerns, reports offer mixed results. One recent report by the American Council for an Energy-Efficient Economy (ACEEE, 2002: ii) stated that "SUVs are not necessarily safer for their drivers than cars [SUVs are considered light trucks, not cars]; on average they are as risky as the average midsize or large car, and no safer than many of the most popular compact and subcompact models." However, another recent report by the Insurance Institute

for Highway Safety (IHS, 2002) said, "as a group, small cars have higher-than-average death and injury rates [than SUVs]." Despite these contradictory results, both reports agreed on one key point. Given their heavy weight, SUVs are several times more likely than are regular cars to kill in a crash the passengers in the other car. In fact, the ACEEE concluded, "if the combined risk [to passengers in the SUV and the car] is considered, most cars are safer than the average SUV" (2002: ii). Despite these problems, Ford does not intend to stop making these vehicles. The reason is that SUVs are too lucrative. Sport utilities account for 20% of the company's sales, with a profit-of \$10,000 to \$18,000 on each vehicle sold (Bradsher, 2000).

Aside from issues related to reducing human and environmental risks, it is important for us to ponder how the auto industry became immersed in this situation in the first place. Whereas earlier I looked at the decisions of one worker, here I am concerned with the decisions of one company's leader, William C. Ford, Jr., Ford Company's chairman and one of the richest men on the planet. Although William Ford has exalted his company's environmental record, he was one of the most enthusiastic supporters of the Ford Expedition, first introduced in 1996, a road behemoth with exceedingly poor gas mileage. Even after the release of the Corporate Citizenship Report, William Ford did not push for a reduction in SUV weight or size. "If we didn't provide [SUVs]," he stated, "someone else would, and they wouldn't provide it as responsibly as we do" (Bradsher, 2000). In response to governmental and public pressure to make SUVs safer and to reduce pollution, the auto industry responded in 2003 by introducing a new set of voluntary standards (Hakim, 2003). The new standards, to be implemented in several years, include more air bags, reinforced car doors, a lowering of large SUVs so that their front ends are less likely to hit the upper body of passengers in the smaller car, and more fuel-efficient engines.

Despite these changes, the company's commitment to social responsibility is suspect at best. First, even though safety advocates welcomed the new standards, they stated that the auto industry has a poor record of complying with its own voluntary standards; without enforced regulation, there is little chance that the changes will be made in a timely fashion. Second, once the problems associated with SUVs became public knowledge in 2000, and acknowledged by William Ford himself, smaller cars should have gradually replaced the production of SUVs. Third, Ford Co. helped to undermine the passage of legislation that would have improved fuel efficiency standards. The Alliance of Automobile Manufacturers, a consortium of automakers that includes Ford Co., successfully lobbied the U.S. Congress to defeat a bill in 2002 that would have increased to 36 miles per gallon the fuel efficiency of all vehicles by the year 2016 (Rosenbaum, 2002). Fourth, the company defends its SUVs because, they say, that is what consumers want. They do not mention, however, that Ford Co. invests much more on publicity for SUVs than on any of Ford's smaller and more fuel-efficient cars, that fuel-efficient

vehicles remain relatively expensive given the small amount of research that goes into them, and that no company is captive to consumer choice.

The design, manufacture, and sale of SUVs constitute a clear example of the "economic man" model (Dyke, 1981; Pindyck and Rubinfeld, 1998). Economic man is the behavioral model for modern economics and it possesses two basic qualities: he is rational and he acts in his own self-interest. William Ford acts rationally and in his own self-interest when he seeks to increase his profits and those of investors above the needs of the larger biotic community. However, for the producer and consumer it is rational only from a very narrow standpoint. When advertising SUVs, producers argue safety reasons for the driver and his or her family. However, it is clearly irresponsible to buy one's safety at the expense of the safety of others. The choice of an SUV is also irrational as a long-term solution given the environmental damage and the pernicious dependence on foreign oil that such vehicles foster.

To better understand rationality and self-interest, it is useful to analyze the rise of individualism as part of what later became classical economic theory. During the Middle Ages in Europe, work and economic transactions were mostly based on barter, moral obligation, religious faith, and community or monarchical loyalty (alongside a good deal of exploitation), but during the post-Reformation period self-interest became the main justification (Weber, 1976). This situation has continued unabated until contemporary times in the form of salary, benefits, and prestige for both the employee and employer. An often-quoted passage from Adam Smith, who strongly defended individualism, states, "It is not from the benevolence of the butcher, the brewer, or the baker that we expect our dinner, but from their regard to their own interest. We address ourselves, not to their humanity but to their self-love" (1976: 26-27). Society, in this view, is characterized by voluntary arrangements based on the self-interest of the parties involved. Influenced by atomistic ideas propounded by John Locke and other post-Reformation philosophers, Smith believed that the basic unit of society was the individual and that society existed to serve the needs of the individual. Yet, society benefits, argued Smith, because merchants please their customers to obtain personal gain, and thus end up producing quality goods at competitive prices. This way, self-serving people help the wider community without trying, intending, or even wanting to do so. As Smith wrote, each merchant is "led by an invisible hand to promote an end which was no part of his intention," clearly no part of his altruistic intention (*Ibid.*: 456).³ A consequence of these views was that avarice and extreme accumulation of wealth — characteristics considered contemptible by pre-Reformation Christianity — came to be considered socially and morally acceptable (Weber, 1976). This view of society, completely subordinated to the whims of individuals, became a universalistic doctrine disseminated to many corners of the world.

Although most conventional economists accept this view of economic man, its opponents contend that its description of human nature is inaccurate and it presents

grave moral implications for society (Etzioni, 1988). Our daily lives provide many instances in which people engage in benevolent actions for reasons other than self-interest: people give money to beggars not because they expect something in return, neighbors help others (at times at great cost to themselves) during natural disasters, and socially-minded people volunteer in organizations without regard for their own selfish reasons. Self-interest does lead some people to engage in these actions (out of guilt or opportunism, or to improve one's status), but many others do so out of compassion, pity, kindness, decency, or simply love.

This type of benevolence differs from that of corporate foundations, which (aside from the government) are the principal supporters of the nonprofit sector. In 1997, foundations created by the largest corporations and richest people had assets totaling about \$450 billion dollars, with the vast majority of their grant-making efforts going to human services such as education, health, and the arts. This may seem positive and appear to contradict the self-interest motive noted above, yet a critical look at the origin, purpose, and evolution of foundations reveals that they serve as a "protective layer for capitalism" (Roelofs, 2003). First, they serve to systematically dispose of vast fortunes tax-free in ways that benefit the for-profit sector. Foundations also invest their assets in stocks and bonds that help to perpetuate the system. Second, foundations lessen governmental responsibility toward helping the neediest, as is occurring in Eastern Europe with the rise of free-market capitalism and the largest worldwide growth of the nonprofit sector. Third, they help to co-opt progressive intellectuals who could otherwise serve as a strong destabilizing force in the current system. Fourth, foundations create and disseminate an ideology that justifies vast economic and political inequalities. When the Ford Foundation was created in 1936 (by Ford Company founder Henry Ford), it was intended to fight what was perceived as the corrosive effects of communism. This was done, for instance, through its active support of CIA operations in the 1950s and 1960s (Saunders, 2000). Today, the Ford Foundation, one of the largest foundations in the U.S., supports important social and environmental causes, yet it "serves as a 'cooling out' agency [that] delays and prevents more radical, structural change" (Arnove, 1980: 1). Fifth, foundations serve as a great public relations mechanism to mask (and sometimes mitigate) some of the more damaging aspects of the capitalist system. Despite an element of true benevolence surrounding foundations, their "disinterested" philanthropy must be analyzed as a larger political tool that defends an individualist ideology and the free-market system.

Conventional economists explain the issue of charity and kindness at the individual level by means of a person's "utility function." The utility function is the pattern of preferences each person is assumed to have and is understood in overly narrow and hedonistic terms: "All actions are directed toward gain of pleasure or the avoidance of pain" (Dyke, 1981: 31, emphasis added). Economic man's utility function may include someone else's utility function, an idea

traceable to John Stuart Mill's utilitarianist doctrine. According to this doctrine, the social good is whatever best satisfies the preferences of individual actors.⁴ Economists Phillip Wicksteed and Ludwig von Mises gave this idea renewed force in the 1910s. Selfishness, for them, was not the basis of economic action; instead, they saw *human purposefulness*, which consists of behaving in such a way as to improve one's own state of satisfaction. In so doing, one improves other people's conditions (Mises, 1949), which clearly follows Smith's ideas. Therefore, if one gives money to a beggar or volunteers in a group dedicated to social causes, one is still acting as economic man. Under this model, people who work in causes that help others are seeking some form of reciprocity, such as reputation, status, or approval, or simply to gain from the receiver's consumption.

The problem with this defense, argued sociologist Amitai Etzioni, is that it continues to be ethically lacking (1988: 26). If we accept the utility function argument, then we must also accept that no true act is based on altruism, sacrifice, or self-denial. Every person who engaged in a philanthropic action did so out of selfishness. Every mother who took care of her children and suffered greatly did so out of masochism. Every saint who was devoted to the betterment of others did so expecting something in return. The human caricature that emerges from the concept of economic man ceases to be useful and must yield to other factors to explain behavior. Recent cross-cultural empirical studies that have tested the validity of economic man as the basic model for economics have shown it to be incorrect (Henrich et al., 2001). After surveying the literature of hundreds of cases around the world and empirically investigating 15 societies, the authors concluded that the idea of rationality and self-interest (which are theoretical pillars in conventional economics) is simply not followed. Henrich et al. found that while individuals do care about their material well-being, they also care about fairness and reciprocity, and are willing to change the distribution of material outcomes with others, even if it entails a personal sacrifice to themselves.

Physiological Needs Versus Self-Actualization Needs

So far, we have explored the work of two individuals who earn considerable incomes (an engineer at a military contractor and the CEO of a Fortune 500 company) and who presumably can choose work that follows Schweitzer's ethical mysticism or Bellah's vocation. This option is less available to poor people with children to feed and who are forced to take jobs or engage in economic practices that may be detrimental to others or even to themselves in the long term.

According to Abraham Maslow's (1954) hierarchy of needs, all humans are motivated by a variety of needs, some more fundamental than others. The lowest and most basic needs are physiological (including oxygen, food, and water needs); the highest and most sophisticated needs are self-actualization (including the quest for knowledge, beauty, and helping others). According to Maslow, one generally cannot reach a subsequent stage without fulfilling the needs of the previous one.

Although his five stages were not unbending, Maslow believed that a change in the order of the hierarchy could only occur when the needs of the lower stages had been well satisfied early in life so that they receded into the background as an adult.

If Maslow's assumptions were true, poor people would seldom be concerned with beauty or with helping others; however, many are and sometimes at a great burden to themselves. As Henrich et al.'s (2001) study reveals, people do not always behave in the rational manner propounded by Maslow or by the model of economic man. Attempts to validate Maslow's theory have proved inconclusive at best and wrong in other cases (Neher, 1991). Neher's examples are drawn from close ties in poor families in developing countries whereby despite severe material deprivation, people still displayed many of the characteristics associated with self-actualization.

Nonetheless, even critics of Maslow's hierarchy concede that a concern for others through work is greatly hampered for a poor person. Consider the case of the millions of impoverished, landless peasants who cause widespread deforestation out of necessity, not ill intent. According to Malcolm Gillis (1996), in most of Asia, Africa, and Latin America, "the most serious environmental problems are caused not by affluence, but by poverty." Citing the U.N., Gillis states, "80 percent of trees cut down in developing nations are for fuel for cooking or other domestic use, not for export as logs or wood products" (*Ibid.*). Consider also the case of the *maquiladora* (assembly plant) movement, one of the largest movements to link globalization, classism, and employment creation. Thousands of plants in low-income countries hire millions of workers to assemble garments and electronic and automobile parts for export to the U.S., Japan, and Europe. The numbing experience of the assembly line is similar to Henry Ford's factories at the beginning of the 20th century: "Repetitive labor...is a terrifying prospect to a certain kind of mind...but to other minds, perhaps I might say the majority of minds, repetitive operations hold no terrors" (cited in Peña, 1997). Factory workers are reduced to automatons, nothing more than appendages of the machine to which they are linked. Workers are alienated from their productive activity (capitalists for whom they work use their labor in any way they see fit), from the end product (it belongs to the capitalist and cannot be used by the worker to satisfy his or her needs), from fellow workers (the pace is so fast and the noise so loud that workers are isolated from one another), and from their own human potential (people are reduced to beasts of burden or inhuman machines). Struggles for better working conditions have improved the plight of sweatshop workers (e.g., the creation of unions in some factories, less hazardous conditions, childcare centers, more frequent breaks, more environmental protection), but the fundamental alienated nature of the work remains unchanged. In sum, to secure their survival the unemployed and the working poor are overwhelmingly forced to engage in economic practices that may have serious deleterious effects on themselves and others.

This reality shows the limitations of using only moral exhortations to predicate prosocial behavior. Without the passage of progressive social and economic policies that help to satisfy the basic material needs of the majority of people in a society, the redefinition of work as a task that serves the larger social good will continue to be a formidable battle.

Conclusion: Respect as the Minimum Basis for Good Work

This article has sought to confront the common belief that any job is a good job. This uphill battle is constantly undermined by the concrete realities of a poor, jobless person in search of daily bread and the abstractions of macroeconomic indicators that hide more than they reveal. To avoid the thorny ethical issue of a poor person who has little choice but to accept highly questionable jobs, I have purposefully chosen two highly educated workers — an aerospace engineer and a CEO of a Fortune 500 company — who command more than adequate incomes and thus have a choice in the matter. One does well to remember that most of the planet's worst social devastation has been caused not by illiterate or poor folks, but by the decisions of highly educated individuals who hold powerful jobs.

I have emphasized the idea that a basic first step in reclaiming the ethics of work is to seriously engage the notion of *respect*, understood here in terms of (1) dignity toward the self and (2) the ultimate purpose of the product or service. In the first sense, respect is an acknowledgement that a strong element of pride and self-esteem is derived from doing excellent work. As Studs Terkel (1975: *xiii*) wrote, work "is about a search for daily meaning as well as daily bread, for recognition as well as cash, for astonishment rather than torpor; in short, for a sort of life rather than a Monday through Friday sort of dying." In the second sense, respect is related to a wider commitment to the public good, including the environment. The highly individuated person in the name of self-interest and rationality has led to an unparalleled assault on society's welfare. It is imperative to leave behind the mistaken view of economics as a value-free science and to redirect economic forces in ways that leave room for individuals to fulfill their need for adequate economic compensation and craft while safeguarding an ethical dimension.

A job enrichment process is one mechanism used by employers to transform jobs into less mind-numbing and sterile activities. In some lines of work, changes have ranged from the cosmetic and trivial (e.g., casual dress and gourmet coffee bars) to the substantial (e.g., decent salaries and job rotation). Both the trite and meaningful are important for improving any workplace. As Roszak forcefully wrote, no matter what improvements a job undergoes, if the product or service is useless, dishonest, or degrading, the second form of respect is violated:

Work that produces unnecessary consumer junk or weapons of war is wrong and wasteful. Work that is built upon false needs or unbecoming

appetites is wrong and wasteful. Work that deceives or manipulates, that exploits or degrades is wrong and wasteful. Work that wounds the environment or makes the world ugly is wrong and wasteful. There is no way to redeem such work by enriching it or restructuring it, by socializing it or nationalizing it, by making it "small" or decentralized or democratic (Roszak, 1979: 220).

Within the logic of capitalism, both forms of respect are seriously undermined. Capitalism creates conditions that compel most individuals to concentrate on the first two motivations for work (and on the third, or craft motivation, for a lucky few). The fourth motivation, a larger moral concern, is denied to most individuals. Due to real (and perceived) economic pressures, little space is left for finding employment that people can genuinely deem a vocation. A key task, then, for employees and employers alike is to perceive work as an inherently valuable activity in itself, regardless of extrinsic economic benefits such as productivity quotas or efficiency rates. Equally necessary, though a more daunting task, is to reorganize our economic and social system so that more people have opportunities to choose work that is imbued with a new spirit of self-discovery and ethical commitment.

NOTES

1. In the U.S., the military budget for fiscal year 2003 was estimated at \$379 billion, an increase of \$48 billion over fiscal year 2002 (this figure does not include the military buildup for the Iraq invasion). To put this amount in perspective, consider that just the *increase* is larger than the annual defense budget of every other country in the world. After the U.S., the three countries with the world's largest military spending are the United Kingdom with \$35 billion, Russia with \$29 billion, and France with \$27 billion (IIS, 2001).
2. Despite his commitment to serving the poor, Schweitzer was criticized during his lifetime for his entrenched colonialist beliefs, his opposition to self-determination for African countries, and what some perceived as his patronizing attitude toward Blacks. He thought that European rulers managed African affairs better than the Africans themselves, and that it was in the best interest of Africans if Europeans remained in power in Africa (Homer, 1992).
3. Smith's *Wealth of Nations* (1776) has been contrasted with his other major work, *The Theory of Moral Sentiments* (1759). In the latter work, *sympathy* figures prominently and Smith specifically rejects the reduction of human motives to self-interest. Some have contended that he changed his mind in the 20-year hiatus between the publication of these works. Others see no contradiction, claiming that the virtuous and generous man is a key concept in Smith's work. Still others agree that there is no contradiction, but reach the opposite conclusion: that both books are clear enough in their statements to deduce that benevolence had little space in his economic theory, and that altruistic feelings should be left to the personal, not the professional realm.
4. The rational utilitarianism of John Stuart Mill that breeds one kind of individualism should not be confused with an individualism that is fundamentally moral and spiritual in nature. This latter individualism, with which this author agrees, views all life as sacred and every person as unique and irreplaceable.

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