

MAKING DEVELOPMENT WORK: WORK AND CREATIVITY IN
DEVELOPMENT THEORY AND POLICY

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ABSTRACT

The promise as well as the conceit of development theory lies in its effort to conceptualise the interdependencies of political, economic, social, and cultural processes and relationships. Capitalist development in particular seeks to appropriate the creative moment in work and subordinate this creativity to the demands of capital accumulation. Can development theory promote the development of work practices that serve instead to improve the quality of work? Through a critical engagement with Levine and Rizvi's argument about the importance of work and creativity to development theory, and drawing on contemporary theories of work and social integration, the paper will put forward a concept of development that begins to recover the normative and critical potential of the concept of work.

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Levine and Rizvi (2005) put forward an interesting and highly provocative argument about development: they are interested in reframing development through a careful rethinking of the problematic of poverty and what kind of deprivation poverty represents; they are interested in the theory of the subject, especially from a psychoanalytic point of view; and they are interested in reasserting the importance of work as a critical concept for political economy. And on this last point, they are particularly interested in weaving together an approach to economic and social development adequate to the development of an autonomous subject through asserting the value of creativity for work. Because this important argument speaks so broadly to the overall project of "reframing development," this paper engages in a critical reading of their book. The overall question this critique will address is: is there a way to make the demand for work a *political* demand in the context of development?

The problematic of poverty is at the heart of development thinking. Development thought and development policy are concerned particularly with alleviating the deprivations of poverty. But, Levine and Rizvi ask, of what are the poor deprived? Most approaches to poverty see it in terms of the deprivation of practical necessities, such as income or the means to satisfy "basic needs," or in terms of the deprivation of the capability to lead a fully human life. Thus development policy and development practice seek to find ways of organizing an economy that can raise the income of the poor to an acceptable level or to provide the goods – commodities – needed to secure life. The numerous criticisms of these ways of approaching development policy have been at the core of debates around development for decades and cannot be thoroughly summarized here. For Levine and Rizvi, the most salient problem with these kinds of approaches (incomes based or "basic needs") is that both start from prescriptive assumptions about what it is the poor need. Thus an antinomy lies at the origin of development thinking: policies intended to produce the conditions for modern economies are based on assumptions that negate the normative premise of modern economies, namely, the premise of individual autonomy (Levine and Rizvi 2005: 4).

To unravel this antinomy, Levine and Rizvi turn back to classical political economy and its original understanding of poverty. As the classical political economists began to come to grips with the market economy and to shift away from the older notion of subsistence, they began to see the root of the problem of poverty in the boring and repetitive work characteristic of large-scale industries. That is, as the technical division of labour came to supplant the social division of labour and workers became roughly equal because they became roughly interchangeable, the quality of their lives was diminished. This opens up the possibility for Levine and Rizvi to return to the nature of work as a source of poverty in the modern context: they define poverty in terms of the lack of a capability to live creatively.

The link between work and creativity is crucial for Levine and Rizvi. The link defines both the role that work might play in producing the conditions for individual autonomy and the importance of the quality of work available to the subject. "Creativity in work is considered the exercise of a human capability connected to skilled labor" (Levine and Rizvi 2005: 9). Skilled labour provides the prospect for

creative work (work that makes doing an expression of being). "The use of a skill is not impulsive or instinctive, it is not altogether unconscious, but combines the conscious and unconscious aspects of mental activity in a particular way. In this sense, it is a specific way of uniting being and doing. We call on our skills when what needs to be done is not predetermined and cannot be reduced to a set of rules. Because of this, skill incorporates our creative capacities" (Levine and Rizvi 2005: 76). Because they have linked creativity with skill, skilled labour becomes the possibility for work to be an expression of creativity on the part of the worker: "Since the exercise of skill required that the work not be predetermined for the worker, the context of work also comes into play. The less discretion the worker has in how he or she works, the less that work offers an opportunity for creativity, and the less skill, in this sense of the term, is involved" (Levine and Rizvi 2005: 85). Poverty, therefore, emerges as a problem for development in classical political economy as the development of industrialization and the social division of labour create the conditions for de-skilling work. The policy implications for their argument are clear: poverty cannot be relieved by increasing income or consumption (alone); complex, engaging, meaningful work and the capacity to do it when it is available are the most important factors in development.

This understanding of development in Levine and Rizvi's arguments is close to the "human capabilities" arguments put forward by Amartya Sen and Martha Nussbaum, whom Levine and Rizvi cite with approval. Creativity is not only important to Levine and Rizvi for its connection to skill in work; in terms of the overall development of human capabilities, creativity is also important for the role it plays in their understanding of freedom or autonomy. In his discussion of creativity, therefore, Levine is particularly interested in the status of the subject. The development of modern (market) economies makes the idea of the self as an autonomous unit or a "center of initiative in the world" (Levine 1999: 236, citing Kohut) possible:

Modernity attacks the corporate self in the name of what Erik Erikson ... refers to as the "freedom of opportunities yet undetermined" ... This is the freedom for each of us to shape a life and identity uniquely suited to us – one we do not know and others do not know for us – until we find it for ourselves. This notion of identity formation differs markedly from that associated with premodern or traditional society, in which who we are is predetermined and our ways of life are shaped for us.

The idea of change and difference, then, is a part of the idea that people can be separate (different and unique) units in the world. Modernity fosters the unit status of the individual. (Levine 1999: 229)

In this article, Levine traces the contours of both the pathological subjectivity that he describes as the "manic state" and the healthy subjectivity that he describes as "living creatively in the world" (Levine 1999: 236). The "manic state" results from problematic relations between the subject and the object world in which objects external to the self are denied their own subjectivity (becoming "part objects") and in which the subject itself is denied through this rejection of difference. Levine suggests that this "fantasy of fusion and control" is a powerful force for change but that it is pathological "because (these accomplishments) are bound up with deprivation and domination" (Levine 1999: 236). He contrasts this with the creative subject, whose aggression or assertiveness towards the world results in a mutual acknowledgement or

recognition between subject and object. Following Winnicott, Levine sees creativity not only as distinct from control or domination, but also as distinct from compliance or passivity: "It is creative apperception more than anything else that makes the individual feel that life is worth living" (Winnicott, cited in Levine 1999: 236).

This gives the notion of skilled labour, as Levine and Rizvi have defined it, very specific characteristics. At once the concept appears as rather undersocialized. Levine and Rizvi address this problem first within the psychoanalytic models they have deployed, derived from Winnicott and others, providing very interesting discussions of child rearing (Levine and Rizvi 2005: chapter 9) and they conclude with a discussion of "stewardship" that invokes public institutions oriented towards the fostering of individual autonomy understood as creativity. However, Levine and Rizvi have little to say about the divisions of labour or why capitalism or market societies do not produce more opportunities for skilled labour. This undersocialized conception stems from the de-socialized model of the subject that informs their psychoanalytic approach.

Creativity, in their approach, is a *mental* phenomenon: "...we will begin not with the production of something, but with the *prior* mental act, which is the conception of what might be produced. Creativity begins not in the hands but in the mind, which means that all creativity in conduct, including creativity in work, begins with creative thinking, or at least with the creative mental process" (Levine and Rizvi 2005: 66, emphasis added). They reiterate the point later, when they introduce their understanding of skill: "...we may still want to know something about the movement from conceiving to producing, from thinking to work understood as an activity aimed at making what we think become a reality for others. To conceive something is to produce an idea; to produce something more than an idea that remains in our minds, we must do more than conceive, we must also work to create our conception outside our minds. This is work as creative activity" (Levine and Rizvi 2005: 74). It is important to examine and stress the place for creative thinking for work to be something other than compliance with imposed orders, but what justifies giving priority to the mental act? Can the mental and the manual be so easily separated? Indeed, what is the political economic basis for their separation?

It is this *a priori* separation of the mental and the manual in Levine and Rizvi that inclines their argument towards what Spivak describes as the idealist predication of the subject:

One of the determinations of the question of value is the predication of the subject. The modern "idealist" predication of the subject is consciousness. Labor-power is a "materialist" predication. Consciousness is not thought, but rather the subject's irreducible intendedness towards the object. Correspondingly, labor-power is not work (labor), but rather the irreducible possibility that the subject be more than adequate – super-adequate – to itself, labor-power: "it distinguishes itself [unterscheidet sich] from the ordinary crowd of commodities in that its use creates value, and a greater value than it costs itself" [Karl Marx, Capital, Vol. 1, 342 translation modified]. (Spivak, 1988, 154).

The subject's "irreducible intendedness towards the object" is precisely the theme underlying Levine's discussions of creativity and subjectivity and Levine and Rizvi's discussions of creativity, work, and freedom. To characterize this position as

"idealist" is not to dismiss it without further discussion: on the contrary, it is precisely because this intendedness is irreducible that Levine and Rizvi's arguments both express an important normative possibility for work and autonomy through creativity and the theoretical possibility for the critique of work that denies the subjectivity of the worker, and, given that this norm comes to light in modern economies, drives their argument towards a ratification of the market under the stewardship of norms to promote autonomous individual subjectivity. But their argument is one-sided and undersocialized. Can a "materialist predication of the subject" overcome the shortcomings in this argument while preserving the prospect for work as autonomy and self-creation?

Because the themes of creativity, work, and subjectivity played important roles in his efforts to articulate a critical practice of cultural materialism, Raymond Williams' writings are a natural place to turn to try to answer this question. The implications for situating the questions of the relation between work, creativity and subjectivity are spelled out in some detail in the opening chapter, "The Creative Mind," of Williams' magisterial *The Long Revolution* (1961).

Like Levine, Williams identifies the possibilities for our contemporary understanding of the notion of creativity as having emerged historically. Sometime around the period of the Renaissance, the classical term "mimesis" as a description of artistic activity came to be replaced by "creation." Mimesis was already a contested concept and these debates shaped aesthetic theory during and after the Renaissance. Williams traces a Platonic tradition, one that looks on artistic activity with suspicion, based on the idea that appearances are inferior to the reality they represent. The contrasting view, stemming in part from Aristotle, sees imitation as a form of learning and therefore, at least in principle, capable of producing a superior form of reality. The scandal that came out of Renaissance thinking was articulated clearly by Tasso: nature is God's creation, art is Man's creation (Williams 1961, 22). The debate about art's relation to the real – to nature – however, remained within the framework established through the classical debate: is artistic creation a superior or inferior version of nature? The Romantics further complicated these debates, as they began to search for the superior, higher reality interior to Man. Creativity was no longer the special power of God, but it remained the special power of the poet: "Thus, the 'creative' idea has undergone a further development, the ordinarily inaccessible reality being placed within man himself, with the artist as a specially gifted person who is able to penetrate this region" (Williams 1961, 31).

An important part of Williams' critique of this aesthetic tradition stems from his suspicion of the idea of the artist as having special access to a hidden real, a suspicion that stems from a rather different conception of the relation between creativity and subjectivity to the one relied upon by Levine and Rizvi. For Williams, the traditional meaning of "art" was, precisely, "skill"; the artist, like other people, uses creative imagination to organize new descriptions of experience and uses learned skills in a particular means of transmitting these new descriptions: "But the purpose of this skill is similar to the purpose of all general human skills of communication: the transmission of valued experience" (Williams 1961, 42). This can be extended to skill in relation to work as Levine and Rizvi postulate it: it is these capacities of imagining new experiences coupled with learned, skilful practice that makes what Levine and Rizvi describe as skilled work, i.e., engaging, meaningful work.

The science of perception demonstrates that there are rules of seeing, that seeing must be learned within cultural codes. There is no perception without human intent embedded in it: we *create* reality. Thus creativity is not the specially reserved gift to the poet or artist, nor is it merely individual. For Williams, the insights this argument about creativity gives to the notion of art and to aesthetic theory is that creativity is not the special province of the artist, but is a crucial dimension to general human activity. Art must communicate; thus creativity is a matter of sharing, if they are not already shared, culturally organized meanings and skills. And while the individual may suffer from the suppression or alienation of skill or creativity – a denial of subjectivity, in Levine and Rizvi's account – the pathology of this suppression is social and not merely individual. Therefore culture, as the locus of creativity, rather than being a prejudicial imposition on the will of the individual, can be the resource through which new perceptions of experience can be imagined and the skills for transmitting valued experience can be won.

This provides an important contrast to Levine and Rizvi's understanding of development as superseding "traditional" societies characterized by "corporate" subjectivities. But the implications of Williams' arguments are deeper than this. Williams turns to neuroscience and the biology of the brain in order to turn aside inherent dualisms such as artist/man; reality/representation (however valued), and, ultimately, of subject and object (Williams 1961, 32). That is, Williams is critiquing the subject/object dualism. Hitherto, the debates on art and creativity have assumed this dualism, and Williams rightly points out how difficult it is to overcome the premise of the subject/object split. But the science of perception indicates that the brain constructs – *creates* – perceived reality on the basis of the signals it receives from the nervous system. And the nervous system itself is an open system. Williams cites Caudwell at length:

Body and environment are in constant determining relations. Perception is not the decoding of tappings on the skin. It is a determining relation between neural and environmental electrons. Every part of the body not only affects the other parts but is also in determining relations with the rest of reality. It is determined by it and determines it, this interchange producing development – the constantly changing series of interlocking events. (Williams 1961, 36-37).

The structures of perception and of consciousness as organized through their mutually determining relations with the environment undermines the categories of subject and object, at least as received in the models of art and creativity considered so far. Williams turns later to Coleridge to clarify this:

We cannot refer science to the object and art to the subject, for the view of human activity we are seeking to grasp rejects this duality of subject and object: the consciousness is part of the reality, and the reality is part of the consciousness, in the whole process of our living organization. Coleridge spoke of 'substantial knowledge' as: 'the intuition of things which arises when we possess ourselves as one with the whole.' This realization, the capacity for 'substantial knowledge', is the highest form of human organization, though the process it succeeds in grasping is the common form of our ordinary living. At a less organized level, we fall back on what Coleridge called 'abstract

knowledge', where we 'think of ourselves as separated beings, and place nature in antithesis to the mind, as object to subject, thing to thought, death to life.' The antithesis of nature to the mind, 'as object to subject', we now know to be false, yet so much of our thinking is based on it that to grasp the substantial unity, the sense of a whole process, is to begin a long and difficult revolution in the mind. (Williams 1961, 39)

Contra Levine and Rizvi, creativity is not a "prior" mental act because mind cannot be understood as separate from the reality it creates. And since we're all creators all of the time, the process of communication involves the creativity not only of the artist but also of the perceiver, who both use culturally generated means to *see*, as well as understand, the perception or experience that the artist hopes to share: "When art communicates, a human experience is actively offered and actively received. Below this activity threshold there can be no art" (p. 42).

If Williams is right that creativity is not the exclusive and privileged province of deities or select elites but rather the general, biologically driven practice of organizing and transmitting experience, then creativity cannot be understood only in terms of art. Here, again, Williams makes a parallel point to Levine and Rizvi: creativity is inherent in work. Levine and Rizvi emphasize the role skill plays in promoting individual autonomy or self-determination and healthy, active subjectivity as opposed to passive compliance or a manic drive for control and domination, thus the role of creativity in work is to promote self-creation. For Williams, the importance of creativity is explained a bit differently:

It is, in the first instance, to every man, a matter of urgent personal importance to 'describe' his experience, because this is literally a remaking of himself, a creative change in his personal organization, to include and control the experience. This struggle to remake ourselves – to change our personal organization so that we may live in a proper relation to our environment – is in fact often painful. Many neurologists would now say that the stage before description is achieved, the state of our actual organization before new sensory experience is comprehended, the effort to respond adequately while the new experience is still disorganized and disturbing, is biologically identical with what we call 'physical pain'. The creative agony, sometimes thought of as hyperbole, is literally true. (Williams 1961, 42-43)

It must be emphasized that for Williams, this agony also cannot be the private experience of the artist but like creativity, a general experience of this struggle. And it is not restricted to self-remaking: "We respond to disturbance not only by remaking ourselves, but, if we can, by changing the environment. Indeed these are parts of a single process, as consciousness and reality interpenetrate. The artist's way of remaking himself is, as in man generally, by work, which is remaking the environment and, in learning to work, remaking himself" (Williams 1961, 43).

To summarize, Raymond Williams helps us to turn away from the notion of the artist as having a special access to a hidden real to the idea of the artist as someone skilled in the creative imagination of experience *and* in the learned techniques of transmitting that experience. Skill in this sense resembles Levine's and Rizvi's understanding of skilled work and self-creation. Williams also talks about art as self-creation: the

urgency of the need to "describe" new experience stems from a need to remake oneself – again ratifying the normative thrust of Levine and Rizvi's argument about the importance of skilled work for autonomy. And this self-remaking is at once also the remaking of the environment. However, as Williams has been emphasizing, we cannot sustain the categorical separation or duality of subject and object in this analysis. Williams furthermore is describing the work not only of the "artist" but also of people generally. These skills may be more developed or focused on specific experiences or techniques in different people but "skill" as it is understood here is not the exclusive province of artists: the "physical pain" indicated by Williams refers to the organization of sensory experience. This gives more normative support for the argument about the importance of skilled labour: removing or alienating skill from work, at least hypothetically, is a source of pain for the body; however, it is a very different argument than one that requires this resolution to the problem of alienation to be found in the individual subject's psychic make-up.

Here, then, is the first hint about the difference a "materialist predication of the subject" might make to the argument about the importance of creative work for development: rather than being premised on the development of institutions to shepherd the creativity of the individual against the constraints of tradition and culture, Williams' approach to creativity in work would have us seek those elements and practices of culture that foster the creation of new perceptions and experiences and facilitate the efforts to transmit and receive those experiences and actions. Where Levine and Rizvi are concerned to avoid institutions that prescribe ways of being for the individual, Williams would not reify the individual subject at the expense of culture or the environment. For Williams, the "irreducible intendedness of the subject to the object" is already a partial account of creativity based on a conception of the subject that we now know is false. This also provides in turn a hint about the "super-adequate" subject of labour power: creativity is now located in the mutual determinations of mind and its environment in continual re-shaping and remaking. Labour, as Marx put it in the *Grundrisse*, is the "form giving fire."

While we can see why the categorical separation of subject and object that informs Levine's and Levine and Rizvi's approaches to creativity, subjectivity and work cannot be sustained after Williams' analysis of creativity, Williams does not provide an alternative conception of subjectivity that can respond to the normative challenge posed by Levine and Rizvi's argument about the importance of the quality of work, i.e., the contribution of its creative dimension to a project of autonomy, for development. We have to turn to another contemporary account of the relationships between subjectivity, work, and action to meet both challenges. Christoph Dejours (2007) presents a compelling account of these relationships that speaks to issues raised in both of the previous accounts, in particular, the criticism of prescriptive norms raised by Levine and Rizvi, the consequences of suffering for subjectivity indicated by Williams (and, implicitly, the pathologies of work that might be read through Levine and Rizvi as well as Williams), the question of skill posed by Levine and Rizvi, and the relation of the individual and the collective indicated by Levine and Rizvi.

We can recall that for Levine and Rizvi, the problem with most development theory is that it presumes to know what the poor need without giving the poor a say in determining these needs. This means that development policy contradicts the

normative premise of a market society, namely, individual autonomy. Their effort, therefore, is to devise a non-prescriptive theory of development. Dejours is also concerned with the problems that prescription poses, though he locates these problems differently. He begins by considering how, as a clinician, he defines work: "work is not above all the wage relation or employment but 'working', which is to say, the way the personality is involved in confronting a task that is subject to constraints (material and social)" (Dejours 2007, 72). These constraints are decisive: "there is always a gap between the prescriptive and the concrete reality of the situation. This gap is found at all levels of analysis between task and activity, or between the formal and informal organisation of work. *Working* thus means *bridging the gap* between prescriptive and concrete reality" (Dejours 2007, 72). For the worker, this gap between reality and the orders, procedures, and prescriptions of work manifests itself in the form of failure. Like Williams in his account of the physical pain accompanying the subject's disorganized experience in the creative moment, Dejours finds that this gap stemming from the resistance of reality to the effort to transform it produces suffering. But suffering is not merely the end of the process: "suffering is also a *point of departure*, for the concentration of subjectivity that it entails prefigures a subsequent period of expansions, redeployment, and re-expansion. Suffering is ... a protention of subjectivity towards the world; it is a search for the means of acting on the world in order to get beyond itself by surmounting the resistance of reality" (Dejours 2007, 73).

This effort to "get beyond itself by surmounting the resistance of reality" is the same process that Williams highlighted when he points out that the transformation of the self is also always a transformation of the environment, and vice-versa. It also recalls the reasons that for Levine and Rizvi, skilled work is important for the development of healthy creativity: when the worker can determine for him or herself the best way to address a problem, they are free in ways that are denied when the actions of the worker are prescribed. Thus the quality that Dejours describes as "intelligence" is the same quality that Williams explores under the heading of "creativity" and Levine and Rizvi describe as "skill."

But for Dejours, skill takes on a much more concrete character than it does for Levine and Rizvi. It resides not merely in the ability of the worker to translate a "prior" mental process into practical gestures that transform nature; it is, rather, *embodied*: it is a matter of the relationship between the worker's body and the tools he or she inhabits. The head does not come before the hand in the development of tacit skills. Instead, the body becomes familiar with the vibrations, smells, sounds, in sum, the *feel* of the machine. Workers develop affective relations with their machines: cleaning and caring for them, naming them, urging them on. They also develop a feel for the material they work on, learning to appreciate the feel of a stone, a sheet of metal, a wooden board. Furthermore, this relationship between worker, machine, and object is not restricted to manual workers. The teacher in a classroom has to have a feel for the students; a worker in a call centre has to have a feel for the best ways of dealing with the customers on the line, whatever the script tells him or her to say. This means that working involves the "subjectivisation" of the materials and objects, which takes place through a physical dialogue.

This is important because it underscores the importance of communication (as in Williams) and, thus, of the social organization of work. Dejours contrasts his initial

efforts to specify work in these clinical terms, which he describes as a solipsistic relationship between self and self, with ordinary work situations, which:

cannot be described as the juxtaposition of individual experiences and intelligences, for as a rule, we work for someone – a boss, a foreman or immediate supervisor, subordinates or colleagues, a client, and so on. Work is not just an activity but also a social relationship; in other words, it takes place in a human world characterised by relationships of inequality, power, and domination. ... the reality of work is not simply that of the task, which is to say, what makes itself known to the subject through its resistance to control in the course of the hands-on struggle with the materials and technical objects. Working is also experiencing the resistance of the social world, and more precisely that of social relations, to the deployment of intelligence and subjectivity. The reality of work is not only the reality of the objective world but also that of the social world. (Dejours 2007, 81)

This social dimension to work allows Dejours to analyse the pathologies of work that have emerged in the wake of Taylorization and later, of neoliberalism. The organization and management of work under neoliberal regimes has greatly increased productivity but it has eroded the foundations for subjectivity in work not by reducing suffering, but by ever closer surveillance of workers and tighter controls over workplace rules and plans. "The situation is leading to an aggravation of the mental pathologies of work (which are increasing throughout the Western world), the appearance of new pathologies, notably suicides in workplaces themselves, which were unknown before the advent of neoliberalism, and the spread of violence in work, the increase of pathologies of overwork, the dramatic rise in pathologies of harassment" (Dejours 2007, 86).

It would be too harsh to suggest that Levine and Rizvi's account of creativity in work is solipsistic, especially as they are keen to address the problem of alienation and critique the notion of work as making the self worthy to receive a reward (wage) rather than capable of making the good.¹ However, Dejours' emphasis on the social world brings into focus another antinomy in Levine and Rizvi's undersocialized conception of the subject: the role of the market as a coordinator of individual subjectivities also undermines the individual's autonomy.

While the power relations in production in a social formation should not be abstracted from discussions of work, as Levine and Rizvi do and as Dejours criticises, the problem here is more than a problem of what to include in the description or the

¹ "So long as we imagine the source of satisfaction as the holder of the good, whatever work we do is not to produce the good, but to make ourselves worthy to receive it. Once, however, we come to realize that the other does not hold the good we desire, another possibility develops, the possibility that through work we can ourselves produce the good. What enables the other to continue to get us to work when we have come to realize that it is work that produces goods and not work that makes us worthy to receive them? The answer has to do with the elements of work. The other may not hold the good, but he may hold the secret to its production, the knowledge needed if work is to eventuate in anything good. Holding knowledge means concretely holding the idea of the good in the form of a process of its creation, and in that sense, we can say that the object does not hold the goods, but holds the creative power required to produce them. All that we can do is to assist the object in whatever way is needed for us to merit receipt of a share of the goods created with this power. Thus what is alienated in alienated labor is the creative power" (Levine and Rizvi 2005, 122).

analysis. Dejours recognizes the problem presented for the effort to coordinate the subjectivities and intelligences of workers, stemming from the conflicts between the possibilities presented by different solutions to problems. This problem is normally resolved through *coordination*. Taylorisation focuses on the technical and social divisions of labour and coordinates workers by prescribing the tasks and practices for the workers; this is the de-skilling outcome that concerns Levine and Rizvi. The problem is that just by removing the planning of this coordination for managers (or bureaucrats) and placing the coordination in the "automatic" coordination signalled through the market, Levine and Rizvi have not addressed "ordinary work situations," and particular, they have not addressed the power relations in production.

For Dejours, workers respond to prescriptive *coordination* with *cooperation*. This means that "the workers become individually involved in the collective debate in order to contribute their respective experiences, attempt to make their particular dexterity, know-how, tricks of the trade, and operating methods visible and intelligible" (Dejours 2007, 82). But because these individual intelligences can conflict, cooperation involves compromises that are both technical and social. The shape of these compromises shape a collective will. A worker may participate in this collective will for one of at least two reasons. In the first place, subordinating his or her own intelligence can help reduce conflict; individualism in the workplace leads to repeated conflicts and even violence. Thus the pursuit of this individual subjectivity can undermine the conditions for subjectivity itself. Second, however, and neglected by Levine and Rizvi, cooperation can also provide "specific resources that the group sometimes places at the service of fulfilling individual subjectivities. Evoking one's experience of working, revealing the discoveries of one's experience and know-how are a means of obtaining the recognition of others. For in order to aspire to recognition, it is first necessary to overcome the essential obstacle we have already discussed at length, namely, the invisibility of work" (Dejours 2007, 84).

To conclude, we need to return to the question that began and motivated this essay: how can the demand for work be made into a political demand for development? Levine and Rizvi have made a crucial contribution to such a project because they foreground the importance of the question of the quality of the work: importance of skilled labour in the development of healthy subjects and thus for the development of human capabilities; importance of skill for a non-prescriptive approach to development (human capabilities as self-making). However, Levine and Rizvi: propose an overly abstract argument, where skills are disembodied, and an undersocialized argument, reifying the subject and bracketing of power relations in social relations of production. But where can politics be found in development policy? If, as in Levine and Rizvi, it is to be found in the proper design of institutions to foster individual autonomy, then it is still, paradoxically, technocratic and de-politicising, it results in "coordination" in Dejours' terminology because the role of the market (catalaxy) would be to coordinate the collected individual skills. But if it is to be found where Dejours signals, in the social and technical compromises underlying cooperation and rational collective action, then the demand for work becomes not only a demand for engaging, meaningful, creative work, as Levine and Rizvi teach us to demand, but also a demand for a democratic life. I'll give Dejours the last word on this:

[An] action is only rational if it takes into account the fate of subjectivity in work and at the same time feeds on what arises from subjectivity in every

work activity. Otherwise stated, collective action is rational if it takes as its explicit aim not only the struggle against injustice but also, and above all, *the celebration of life*. It must be stressed once again that the possibility of establishing a continuity between life on the one hand and culture, or even civilisation, on the other, lies mainly if not exclusively in action for the *improvement of the organisation of work*. (Dejours 2007, 84)

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