The Moral Value of Doing Things Yourself

2026-02-11

Section 1: The Case for Doing It Yourself—Autonomy, Authenticity, and Agency

Philosophical defenses of doing things yourself typically ground such value in ideals of autonomous agency, authentic self-authorship, and genuine control over one's life. These traditions suggest that the process of action—not merely the outcomes achieved—has distinctive moral significance when the agent herself performs the task rather than delegating it to others or to technological systems.

Autonomy and Self-Determination

Harry Frankfurt's hierarchical model of autonomy provides the canonical starting point for understanding why personal execution might matter morally (Frankfurt 1971). Frankfurt argues that autonomous action requires alignment between an agent's first-order desires and second-order volitions—the agent must have the will she wants to have. On this view, autonomy consists in the proper functioning of reflective self-evaluation rather than the presence of alternative possibilities. For DIY ethics, the question becomes whether delegation severs the connection Frankfurt identifies as essential: does having another person execute an action compromise the hierarchical structure linking reflective endorsement to effective action, even when outcomes align with one's second-order volitions?

Recent work extends this question by examining delegation specifically. Michael Garnett argues that systematic practical deference—deferring to another's practical judgment about how to conduct one's life—constitutes a distinctive form of interpersonal rule (Garnett 2023). When an agent habitually defers to another's judgment, they establish a social relationship where the other person partially governs their life. Crucially, this undermines autonomy not by compromising authenticity or reason-tracking, but by constituting heteronomy—rule by another. Garnett's analysis suggests that delegation of practical judgment (not merely execution) represents a loss of autonomous self-authorship even when the deferring agent reflectively endorses the arrangement. However, whether hiring someone to perform a task involves the problematic practical deference Garnett identifies, or whether one can maintain autonomous control over life plans while delegating execution, remains contested.

Suzy Killmister's multidimensional theory provides conceptual tools for analyzing how delegation might affect different dimensions of autonomy independently (Killmister 2017). She distinguishes four components: self-definition (identifying with certain values), self-realization (acting on those values), self-unification (coherence across time), and self-constitution (developing autonomous capacities). This framework suggests that delegation might compromise self-realization—acting on one's values through one's own efforts—

without necessarily affecting self-definition or self-unification. Perhaps delegating preserves autonomy along some dimensions while diminishing it along others, avoiding simple verdicts about whether delegation per se is autonomy-undermining.

Michael Bratman's planning theory adds temporal depth to hierarchical accounts by emphasizing how autonomous agents maintain coherent systems of plans and policies over time (Bratman 2003). Autonomous action emerges from the functioning of this planning system rather than mere reflective endorsement at a moment. This suggests that autonomous agents might need higher-order policies about which domains they will govern directly versus delegate—DIY activities might be those falling under policies of direct personal governance. Whether such policies themselves emerge from autonomous planning or whether autonomy requires direct engagement in certain domains regardless of planning remains an open question.

Andrea Westlund's dialogical account further complicates matters by arguing that autonomy requires holding oneself answerable to external critical perspectives (Westlund 2009). Autonomy is constitutively relational on this view—it requires preparedness to answer for one's commitments to others. This raises the possibility that completely independent action might be less autonomous than action coordinated with or accountable to others. If autonomy is inherently dialogical, then delegation might preserve or even enhance autonomy when it involves appropriate responsiveness to others' perspectives, while pure self-reliance might represent a failure of dialogical accountability.

Authenticity and Self-Authorship

Charles Taylor's reconstruction of authenticity as requiring self-transcendence through engagement with horizons of significance provides philosophical grounding for process-based value (Taylor 1992). Against critics who dismiss authenticity as narcissistic self-indulgence, Taylor argues that genuine authenticity requires not just self-expression but connection to values and meanings that transcend individual preference. Authentic self-realization emerges through dialogical engagement with others and critical appropriation of shared cultural frameworks. For DIY ethics, this suggests that doing things yourself has value when activities connect to inter-subjective meanings—not every self-directed action is authentically valuable, only those expressing engagement with genuine horizons of significance.

Jack Bauer's distinction between essentialist and existentialist authenticity clarifies which conception grounds DIY value (Bauer 2021). Essentialist authenticity treats the true self as discovered inborn traits or an essential nature—being authentic means matching actions to this pre-existing self. Existentialist authenticity, by contrast, emphasizes self-making through values-driven action—the true self is not discovered but created through choices and commitments. Only existentialist accounts clearly support the intrinsic value of doing things yourself: self-authorship occurs through the process of doing, not merely through achieving outcomes that match a pre-existing nature. Bauer's emphasis on "poiesis"—humane self-making processes—suggests that process has independent value beyond the

matching principle. One authors oneself through engaged activity rather than passive self-discovery.

Andreas Mogensen's analysis of moral testimony reveals how authenticity ideals implicitly ground resistance to deference (Mogensen 2015). When philosophers argue that one should form moral beliefs oneself rather than accepting them on testimony, they invoke authenticity: moral beliefs must originate in oneself to have proper authority or meaning. The process of forming beliefs matters beyond the outcome of having true beliefs. This provides a model for extending DIY intuitions from epistemic to practical domains: perhaps we value doing things ourselves because we implicitly value authenticity in action, not just in belief. The activity must be our own to constitute genuine self-authorship.

However, Maite Rodríguez Apólito's critique warns that authenticity requirements can obscure oppression (Rodríguez Apólito 2022). She argues that procedural autonomy theories relying on authenticity conditions fail to detect heteronomy arising from social oppression. Oppression often produces preferences that feel authentic—coherent with other attitudes, reflectively endorsed—but actually reflect internalized oppressive norms. For DIY ethics, this suggests that doing things "oneself" may not track genuine agency if one's sense of what to do oneself reflects oppressive social conditioning. Authenticity (matching actions to felt preferences) can come apart from autonomy (genuine self-direction). The feminist critique challenges simple appeals to authenticity as grounding DIY value, requiring attention to whether preferences for self-reliance or delegation themselves emerge from oppressive conditions.

Charles Guignon's work emphasizes that authenticity, properly understood, is simultaneously a personal and social virtue requiring commitment to sustaining democratic communities (Guignon 2004). Authentic individuals must be able to achieve clear self-awareness about their commitments and express them publicly—this capacity for lucid self-understanding and public expression is precisely what democratic citizenship requires. The emphasis on authenticity as public self-expression rather than mere private self-feeling suggests that doing things yourself matters partly as a mode of engaging with social life. The value isn't purely internal but connects to being an effective participant in shared institutions and practices.

Technology, Tools, and Extended Agency

The extended mind thesis radically challenges whether using tools constitutes "doing it yourself" or delegating to external systems. Andy Clark and David Chalmers argue that cognitive processes can literally extend beyond brain and skull to include environmental resources when they are reliably available, functionally integrated, and automatically endorsed (Clark and Chalmers 1998). Otto's notebook doesn't merely support his memory—it constitutes part of his cognitive system. If this is correct, tool use doesn't outsource tasks to something external but reconfigures the boundaries of the cognitive agent. The parity principle suggests that if an external process plays the same functional

role as an internal one, it is genuinely cognitive. This threatens to dissolve the DIY question: using properly integrated tools is doing it yourself in extended form.

George Britten-Neish develops an Anscombean action-theoretic defense of cognitive offloading as genuine agency (Britten-Neish 2025). He argues that opposition to extended cognition stems partly from unarticulated intuitions rooted in Davidson's interface model, where intentions cause bodily movements at a boundary. An Anscombean model recognizes that actions express intentions only within appropriate teleologically structured contexts—agency depends generally on bodily and environmental settings. On this view, offloading is paradigmatically intentional action when embedded in proper teleological structures. One acts through one's tools rather than being assisted by them. This challenges the assumption that keeping processes internal is necessary for genuine agency.

However, critics argue that contemporary smart technologies resist the integration extended mind theory requires. Michael Wheeler identifies how AI-based applications challenge transparency—the phenomenological disappearance of tools in expert use (Wheeler 2018). Traditional tools become transparent in skilled practice: the hammer disappears from conscious experience as one focuses on driving the nail. But smart technologies with autonomous behavior resist this transparency—they "reappear" in conscious experience because their operations require monitoring. This suggests that AI-assisted action differs phenomenologically from traditional tool use, potentially marking a morally relevant boundary. If smart technologies resist integration in ways simple tools do not, then using AI may involve delegation to an external agent rather than extension of the self.

J. Adam Carter argues that excessive cognitive offloading threatens intellectual autonomy by undermining the freedom to achieve intellectual goals independently (Carter 2018). While offloading enhances efficiency, overdependence erodes the capacity for autonomous achievement. The "freedom to achieve" matters beyond the outcomes achieved—maintaining the capacity for independent accomplishment has independent value. This challenges pure consequentialist defenses of technological delegation: even when outcomes are equivalent, loss of autonomous capacities represents genuine harm. Educational practices should cultivate balanced offloading that preserves rather than maximizes cognitive delegation.

Cody Turner identifies intellectual perseverance—the virtue of mentally persisting through challenges—as specifically threatened by cognitive offloading (Turner 2022). Brain-computer interfaces enabling effortless offloading remove the cognitive challenges that cultivate perseverance. While Turner acknowledges that responsible offloading might reallocate perseverance to more valuable intellectual pursuits, excessive delegation undermines virtue development. The process of struggling through cognitive tasks has independent value as the practice through which intellectual virtues develop. This suggests doing things yourself matters not just for outcomes but for the character development that effortful engagement enables.

The extended mind framework initially appears to dissolve DIY questions by showing tools extend rather than replace agency. However, criticisms emphasizing autonomy loss, virtue erosion, and the distinctive character of opaque smart technologies suggest that boundaries between self and external resources matter morally even when metaphysically indeterminate. Whether what matters is who performs the action (you versus others or machines) or whether the outcome reflects your will through properly integrated systems remains a central unresolved tension. The technology cases reveal that debates about doing things yourself cannot ignore questions about the nature of tool use and cognitive offloading—these are not peripheral but central to understanding when and why personal execution matters.

Section complete: This section establishes three strands of argument supporting DIY's moral value: hierarchical autonomy theories suggesting delegation severs connections between reflective will and action; existentialist authenticity theories identifying self-authorship as occurring through engaged doing; and extended mind debates revealing tensions between tool integration and autonomous capacity preservation. However, all three strands face challenges: delegation with proper control may preserve autonomy, authenticity ideals can reflect oppression, and tool integration complicates agency boundaries. The key unresolved question is whether what matters morally is the identity of the actor or the proper expression of the agent's will through action.

The Case Against Self-Reliance—Relationality, Division of Labor, and Expertise

Relational Autonomy and the Critique of Self-Sufficiency

The relational autonomy tradition provides systematic philosophical grounds for questioning whether self-reliance manifests autonomy. Mackenzie and Stoljar (2000) established that autonomy is compatible with—and may even require—social relationships and embeddedness rather than independence. This foundational collection distinguished causally relational accounts, where relationships support autonomy development, from constitutively relational accounts, where social conditions partly define what autonomy is. Nedelsky (1989) argued that traditional liberal autonomy grounded in property-based boundaries emphasizes separation from others, but genuine self-determination requires particular kinds of relationships that enable rather than constrain agency. The focus should shift from boundaries separating mine from yours to relationships enabling self-determination.

Westlund (2009) developed a constitutively relational account that avoids perfectionism by requiring only a formal interpersonal condition: autonomy requires holding oneself answerable to external critical perspectives. This dialogical disposition is not a substantive constraint on values but a formal requirement of openness to others' criticism. Pure self-reliance without responsiveness to others may undermine rather than manifest autonomy.

Friedman (2003) defended procedural relational autonomy that acknowledges social embeddedness while preserving reflective endorsement requirements, showing how accepting help and offering care can be autonomous when reflectively endorsed.

However, Khader (2020) raised a powerful internal critique: socially constitutive conceptions make idealized social conditions necessary for autonomy, which creates problems under nonideal conditions. Such accounts risk asking oppressed agents to engage in self-harm to maintain autonomy, and they risk making oppressed agents appropriate objects of paternalism. If autonomy requires supportive social conditions that oppressed people lack, the account may deny their agency precisely when they rely on themselves to navigate oppressive environments. Humphries (2025) defended against this charge, arguing that recognizing genuine constraints on autonomy is realistic rather than paternalistic—we genuinely do lack autonomy in oppressive social conditions, and the theory correctly identifies this as a problem with the world rather than with individuals.

Care ethics extends these relational insights by treating interdependence as morally fundamental rather than threatening. Held (2006) argued that caring relationships should be understood as basic rather than derivable from justice or rights, directly challenging the atomistic individualism of mainstream moral theory. Boldt (2019) synthesized care and autonomy perspectives, arguing they are interdependent rather than opposed: autonomous will-formation depends on well-being and social embeddedness, while care must respect autonomy. The dichotomy between independence and dependence represents a false choice.

If autonomy is constituted through rather than despite social relationships, self-reliance may not enhance autonomy as individualistic accounts suggest. Accepting help and mutual aid may manifest autonomy when it reflects appropriate trust and recognition of interdependence. However, the internal debate between Khader and Humphries reveals tensions: under oppressive conditions, does relying on oneself preserve autonomy against unreliable or controlling social support, or does it reflect false consciousness about genuine constraints? This unresolved tension complicates claims about when accepting help manifests autonomy versus representing heteronomy.

The Impossibility and Irresponsibility of Epistemic Self-Reliance

Division of cognitive labor arguments demonstrate that epistemic self-reliance is often impossible and epistemically inferior to appropriate expert reliance. Kitcher (1990) provided the foundational case: scientific communities achieve epistemic progress more effectively when scientists divide labor by pursuing different research approaches, even when some appear initially less promising. Social dependence enhances epistemic achievement through beneficial diversity that self-reliant inquiry cannot replicate. However, Alexander, Himmelreich, and Thompson (2015) offered critical refinement, showing that benefits of division of labor are conditional on epistemic landscape features rather than universal. Sometimes self-reliant search outperforms social learning, depending on the structure of the problem space.

Buzzell and Rini (2022) argued that "doing your own research" represents an impossible epistemological ideal that leads to misinformation when attempted. Information overload combined with implausibly individualistic conceptions of epistemic virtue create vulnerability to conspiracy theories. Normally we cope with informational excess through epistemic dependence on others, but "superheroic" attempts at self-reliance malfunction in adversarial information environments. Keren (2018) argued that given division of cognitive labor, scientific education should cultivate "competent outsiders" who can evaluate and trust expertise rather than attempting self-reliant mastery of expert content. Nguyen (2018) identified how hyper-specialization creates "cognitive islands" where even experts cannot evaluate cross-field arguments, making epistemic dependence necessary but challenging.

Carter (2017) provided a moderate framework: intellectual autonomy does not require cognitive isolation or self-reliance but rather appropriate reliance and epistemic outsourcing while maintaining intellectual self-direction. The question is not whether to delegate but how much and to whom, preserving self-direction while recognizing dependence. Ahlstrom-Vij (2016) similarly argued that cognitive outsourcing is epistemically unproblematic when appropriately calibrated—the issue is calibrated trust, not avoidance of dependence.

Empirical work reveals systematic biases in division of cognitive labor. Fisher and Oppenheimer (2021) showed that receiving assistance from others leads people to overestimate their own competence and underrate their dependence on experts—delegation creates illusions of self-sufficiency. Scharrer et al. (2016) demonstrated that science popularization creates "easiness effects" where simplified information leads laypeople to overestimate their epistemic capabilities and underestimate dependence on experts. These findings suggest that self-assessment failures may lead people to inappropriate self-reliance when delegation would be epistemically superior.

In complex knowledge domains, attempting self-reliance represents epistemically irresponsible overconfidence rather than intellectual virtue. "Doing it yourself" epistemically means cultivating competent reliance on experts, not attempting independent mastery. This fundamentally challenges whether DIY approaches represent virtue or vice in epistemic contexts. However, the conditional nature of division of labor benefits and the systematic miscalibration problems suggest the challenge is identifying when to delegate and to whom, not simply always deferring to others.

Shared Agency and Distributed Responsibility

Complicity and shared agency frameworks challenge the assumption that only personal execution preserves responsibility. Kutz (2000) argued for a "Complicity Principle" under which individuals are accountable for harms they participate in, even when their individual contribution makes no difference to the outcome. Participation in collective endeavors generates responsibility based on shared intentionality, not individual causal contribution.

This suggests delegation may not absolve responsibility—one remains complicit in outcomes through the delegation decision itself.

Bratman's planning theory of shared agency (1992, 2014) shows delegation can involve interlocking intentions constituting genuine shared action rather than mere causal manipulation. When principals delegate to agents within frameworks of interlocking intentions and shared policies, outcomes may still reflect the principal's agency though distributed through relationships. This accommodates hierarchical shared agency including delegation while preserving individual rational agency. Delegation preserves agency and responsibility when structured through appropriate shared intentions.

Jensen (2018) examined cases where becoming complicit through delegation is morally required—responsibility dilemmas where refusing to participate allows greater harm. This nuances the complicity literature: sometimes delegating or accepting delegation represents the lesser evil, showing moral evaluation cannot be determined solely by responsibility distribution but depends on comparative outcomes. Mellema (2016) provided a taxonomy of complicity modes drawing on Aquinas: commanding, counseling, consenting, provoking, praising, concealing, participating, silence, and defending. Delegation involves multiple forms simultaneously (commanding, consenting, participating), generating different responsibility relationships depending on how delegation is structured.

Recent work on AI ethics addresses responsibility when tasks are delegated to technological systems. Schmitz and Bryson (2025) argued against the notion that AI systems create inevitable "ethics sinks" where responsibility dissipates. They proposed a framework requiring: maintaining clear human accountability lines, ensuring humans can verify AI system functioning, and introducing AI only where it enhances transparency. Technological delegation need not create responsibility gaps when accountability is preserved. However, Boland (2025) and Xia (2025) explored whether increasingly autonomous AI systems develop genuine agency requiring distributed responsibility frameworks treating both humans and AI as bearing responsibility based on their contributions.

These frameworks suggest delegation can maintain or appropriately distribute responsibility through participation, shared intentions, and proper accountability structures. Whether delegation diminishes moral standing depends on the relationship established and the accountability mechanisms maintained, not merely on who performs physical actions. However, defenders must address when delegation represents virtuous participation in shared agency versus problematic abdication of responsibility. The key question becomes: under what conditions does delegation preserve appropriate responsibility versus creating morally problematic distance from outcomes?

When Process Matters—Meaningful Work, Virtue Acquisition, and Character Development

The debate between self-reliance and delegation assumes sharpest focus when we ask whether the activity itself—not just its outcomes—has moral significance. Three theoretical frameworks address this question: meaningful work theories that identify when productive activities contribute to flourishing, virtue-as-skill models that suggest character development requires personal practice, and alienation theory that reveals how inability to appropriate one's activities represents a loss regardless of product quality.

Meaningful Work—Process and Outcome Values

Contemporary accounts of meaningful work recognize multiple dimensions through which work contributes to flourishing. Veltman (2016) develops a pluralistic framework identifying meaningful work as combining subjective experience, autonomy and skill exercise, social contribution, and recognition from others. This pluralism captures how work matters both processually (through autonomous engagement of capacities) and consequentially (through valued social contribution). Whether doing things yourself preserves work's meaningfulness depends on which dimensions matter most in particular contexts.

Van der Deijl (2022) sharpens this analysis by distinguishing quality-meaningfulness (work good for the worker—autonomous, engaging, using skills) from significance-meaningfulness (work good for others—making valuable contributions). These dimensions can come apart: assembly line work may have high significance but low quality; an absorbing personal hobby may have high quality but low significance. This distinction directly addresses the delegation question. Personal DIY projects may preserve quality-meaningfulness through autonomous skill exercise while forfeiting significance-meaningfulness if outcomes serve only oneself. Conversely, delegation may preserve contributive value while sacrificing developmental engagement.

The relationship between process and outcome values remains contested. Muirhead (2007) prioritizes social contribution over self-realization, arguing that work's meaning comes from serving others rather than from subjective satisfaction or capacity development. This outcome-oriented view suggests delegation is less problematic provided social contribution persists. However, Schwartz (1982) emphasizes objectification—seeing one's thought embodied in products through engaging activity—as requiring complex capacity exercise throughout production. Fragmented or delegated work prevents this objectification even when outcomes are valuable. Schwartz's emphasis on exercising capacities across the production process provides stronger grounds for process-value.

Kandiyali (2020) complicates both individualist and outcome-focused accounts through her reading of Marx. Unalienated production is essentially social: it requires producing for others who appreciate one's work, not solitary self-realization. Meaningful work combines

four features: freely chosen, involving self-realization through capacity development, intended to satisfy others' needs, and appropriately appreciated by those others. This account suggests purely personal DIY projects lacking social recognition may fail to realize work's full value. Yet it also suggests delegation could preserve meaning if it maintains relations of mutual recognition—the question is not who performs physical actions but whether production involves appropriate social relationships.

Gheaus and Herzog (2016) identify multiple work-goods that delegation may affect differently: excellence in activity, social contribution, community and recognition, and self-realization. Delegation might preserve some goods (contribution, possibly recognition) while sacrificing others (excellence in activity, self-realization). Whether this trade-off is acceptable depends on the relative importance of these goods and their availability elsewhere in one's life. If meaningful work is not universally required by justice—as Arneson (2009) argues from an anti-perfectionist perspective—then choices about delegation become matters of personal preference or prudence rather than moral obligation. However, if meaningful work opportunities are necessary for self-respect and thus required by justice, as defenders like Veltman argue, then access to engaging productive activities becomes morally significant beyond mere income distribution.

The Virtue-as-Skill Debate

If virtues are analogous to skills, doing things yourself appears constitutive of character excellence. Annas (2011) argues that virtues develop through practice guided by understanding, just as musical or athletic skills do. Like expert skills, virtues involve feedback, correction, and gradual integration into practical reasoning. Stichter (2011) elaborates how skill-like virtues enable flexible practical wisdom through integrated practical knowledge developed experientially. You cannot become virtuous by having others act virtuously for you any more than you can become a skilled pianist by having someone else practice.

However, the virtue-as-skill analogy faces substantial challenges. Schuster (2023) argues that ordinary skills provide a plausible model of practical reason only when assessed by agent-independent standards—but this undermines agent-centered virtue ethics that rejects such external standards. If the skill model serves its purpose, virtue must likewise be assessed primarily by agent-independent moral standards rather than agent-centered considerations about character. Kilov (2023) identifies a different problem: expert skills are "brittle"—narrow and context-bound, faltering in novel situations. This contradicts virtue ethics' claim that virtues enable good action flexibly across contexts. If skills are brittle, then skill-like practice may develop only narrow competencies rather than robust moral character.

Defenders of the skill model address these challenges by emphasizing the role of practical wisdom (phronesis) and internal motivation. Krettenauer and Stichter (2023) integrate skill development with self-regulation theory, arguing that virtue acquisition requires deliberate practice motivated by moral identity goals. Practice succeeds in developing virtue only

when sustained by internal commitment to being a moral person. This suggests you cannot outsource the motivational work needed for character formation—virtue development requires self-motivated engagement with moral challenges. Sanderse (2018) argues that Aristotelian habituation continues throughout life, not just childhood. Adult virtue requires ongoing wisdom-guided practice where agents confirm and deepen virtuous habits through continued action. If habituation is lifelong, doing things yourself may remain important for maintaining and developing virtue even in mature agents.

Vallor (2016) addresses how emerging technologies reshape practices through which virtues are cultivated. Technologies can impair virtue development by reducing opportunities for practice or support it through wise design. Technomoral virtues adapted to contemporary conditions still require cultivation through practice, though the specific practices may differ from traditional contexts. This suggests virtue acquisition depends on appropriate practice opportunities—if technologies or delegation eliminate those practices, character formation may suffer.

Even if the virtue-as-skill analogy holds partially, questions remain about which activities cultivate virtue and whether all tasks require personal performance. The analogy provides strongest support for DIY when activities involve moral challenges requiring practical wisdom, sustained effort through difficulty, or emotional regulation. Routine tasks lacking these features may not significantly contribute to virtue development whether performed personally or delegated.

Alienation and Appropriation

Alienation theory reveals a different dimension of process-value. Jaeggi (2014) reconstructs alienation as inability to appropriate one's relations to self, others, activity, and world—a relation of relationlessness where one is involved but cannot make it one's own. This extends beyond Marx's focus on wage labor to any domain where subjects cannot identify with what they're doing. Applied to delegation, Jaeggi's framework suggests that having others perform activities on your behalf may prevent appropriation even when outcomes align with your preferences. If you cannot make the activity your own—because you did not perform it, did not understand it, or could not identify with the process—you experience alienation.

Arendt (1958) distinguishes labor (cyclical biological necessity consumed immediately) from work (creating durable objects that build a human world). Work has world-building value beyond mere consumption: it creates stable artifacts that mediate human relationships and provide permanence. This distinction addresses what makes productive activity valuable. If work's significance lies in world-building through durable object-creation, then who performs the work matters less than whether lasting artifacts are produced. However, Arendt's emphasis on homo faber as realizing humanity through making suggests the process of creating durable things may itself be valuable, not merely the resulting world of artifacts.

Sayers (2005) defends Marx's view that productive labor is essential to human nature against critics who emphasize leisure or consumption. Work is not merely instrumental but constitutive of distinctively human existence: transforming nature, developing capacities, creating a human world. If productive activity is essential to human flourishing, delegation represents a loss regardless of outcomes. However, this depends on work being unalienated—free, creative, autonomous. Coerced or fragmented labor does not realize work's potential. Whether all productive activity has intrinsic value or only certain kinds (creative, complex, autonomous) remains disputed.

The social dimension complicates alienation theory's implications for DIY. As Kandiyali emphasizes, unalienated production requires recognition from others who appreciate one's work. Purely solitary DIY lacking social contribution may itself be alienating despite involving personal performance. The question is not simply whether you do something yourself but whether you can appropriate the activity as yours within meaningful social relationships. Delegation to others could maintain these relationships—shared agency, mutual recognition, collective accomplishment—while pure self-reliance might forfeit them.

When Process Has Distinctive Value

These three frameworks converge on the insight that whether process matters beyond outcomes depends on context. Meaningful work theories suggest process-value inheres particularly in activities involving autonomy, skill exercise, and capacity development—delegation forfeits these goods even when contribution persists. However, not all work involves these features, and contributive value may sometimes outweigh quality-meaningfulness. The virtue-as-skill model, despite challenges, suggests character development requires personal engagement with moral challenges and sustained practice through difficulty—you cannot become virtuous by delegating virtue-requiring actions to others. Yet routine tasks may not significantly develop virtue whether performed personally or delegated. Alienation theory reveals that inability to appropriate activities prevents self-realization regardless of product quality, but appropriation may require social relationships and recognition rather than mere personal performance.

The key unresolved tension concerns whether process-value inheres in all productive activity or only in specific kinds. If only certain activities—creative, complex, virtue-developing, socially recognized—have distinctive process-value, then delegation of routine tasks is unproblematic while delegation of meaningful activities forfeits something valuable. However, if productive activity is essential to human nature as such, then widespread delegation threatens human flourishing even when outcomes are preserved. The research must clarify which features of activities ground process-value and when delegation is morally preferable, permissible, or problematic.

Section 4: Objections to the Research Proposal and Critical Tensions

Several philosophical traditions challenge whether doing things yourself possesses general moral value, revealing both external critiques and internal tensions within

arguments supporting DIY. These objections suggest the research project may face fundamental difficulties: either DIY's value is context-dependent rather than systematic, or different grounds for DIY (autonomy, authenticity, virtue, contribution) conflict in ways that prevent unified conclusions.

Efficiency, Expertise, and When Delegation is Superior

Arneson's (2009) anti-perfectionist position questions whether justice requires ensuring meaningful work opportunities beyond fair distribution of welfare or capability. If meaningful work represents one component of the good life among others, rather than a requirement of justice, then choices about doing things yourself versus delegating become matters of personal preference or prudence rather than moral obligation. Markets may efficiently allocate labor even when resulting work lacks meaning for some individuals, and paternalistic intervention to guarantee meaningful work is difficult to justify in liberal terms. This suggests DIY's value—if it exists—is supererogatory rather than morally significant.

The division of cognitive labor literature presents more direct challenges to self-reliance in domains requiring expertise. Alexander et al. (2015) demonstrate that benefits of division of labor are conditional on epistemic landscape features rather than universal. Their critical analysis shows that deliberate search for novel approaches need not be optimal, and one should be skeptical about benefits of social learning in epistemically complex environments. Under certain conditions, self-reliant search may outperform delegation to others. However, this nuance cuts both ways: division of labor is not always superior, but neither is self-reliance.

More troubling for DIY advocates are findings about systematic biases in self-assessment following delegation. Fisher and Oppenheimer (2021) provide empirical evidence that receiving assistance from AI or humans leads people to overestimate their own competence and underrate their dependence on experts. This "knowledge misattribution" occurs because success creates ambiguity about who deserves credit. People become poorly calibrated about their actual abilities when they rely on external help, developing illusions of self-sufficiency. Similarly, Scharrer et al. (2016) identify how science popularization creates "easiness effects": after reading simplified explanations, laypeople overestimate their epistemic capabilities and underrate their dependence on experts. These findings suggest that delegation can create false confidence about one's ability to "do it oneself," undermining accurate self-knowledge about when self-reliance is actually feasible.

The strongest critique comes from Buzzell and Rini's (2022) analysis showing that "doing your own research" represents an impossible epistemological ideal that leads to misinformation when attempted. Information overload combined with individualistic conceptions of epistemic virtue creates vulnerability to conspiracy theories. Normally we cope with informational excess through epistemic dependence on others, but attempts at epistemic self-reliance malfunction in adversarial information environments. In complex knowledge domains, attempting DIY is not merely inefficient but epistemically

irresponsible. Ahlstrom-Vij (2016) reaches a moderate conclusion: cognitive outsourcing is epistemically unproblematic when appropriately calibrated. The question is not whether to delegate but how much and to whom.

These efficiency and expertise arguments suggest that in domains requiring specialized knowledge or skills, self-reliance becomes epistemically inferior to appropriate delegation. DIY may have value in simple or familiar domains while delegation is preferable—perhaps morally required—where expertise matters.

Internal Tensions in DIY Defenses

Even accepting that doing things yourself sometimes has value, different philosophical grounds for this value point in conflicting directions. Autonomy-based arguments emphasize reflective control over whether outcomes align with one's endorsed values. Garnett (2023) argues that systematic practical deference constitutes interpersonal rule, but this leaves open whether autonomous delegation of specific tasks undermines self-determination or manifests it. Authenticity-based arguments, by contrast, emphasize the process of self-making through action (Bauer 2021). These grounds can come apart: one might autonomously delegate tasks in ways that forfeit opportunities for authentic self-authorship.

The tension between individual and social dimensions runs deeper. Taylor's (1992) authenticity requires engagement with horizons of significance that are inter-subjective rather than purely personal. Kandiyali (2020) argues that for Marx, unalienated production essentially involves producing for others who appreciate one's work—purely solitary DIY may fail to realize work's full value because it lacks the social dimension of mutual recognition. Yet autonomy and authenticity theories typically emphasize individual agency and self-direction. If meaningful productive activity requires social contribution and recognition, then personal DIY projects serving only oneself may preserve autonomy and authenticity while forfeiting significance-meaningfulness (van der Deijl 2022).

The process-versus-outcome tension pervades the literature without resolution. Schwartz (1982) emphasizes objectification: seeing one's thought embodied in products through engaging complex activity throughout production. This strongly supports process-value—delegation prevents achieving this meaning even if products are identical. However, Muirhead (2007) prioritizes social contribution over self-realization, suggesting work's value comes primarily from serving others rather than developing oneself. These perspectives conflict about whether DIY's value inheres in the activity itself or depends on outcomes including social contribution.

Finally, virtue-as-skill arguments require personal practice for character development (Annas 2011), but this seems to support self-reliance. Yet relational autonomy theorists (Westlund 2009, Held 2006) argue that autonomy requires rather than excludes supportive relationships and interdependence. One can develop skills through guided practice within communities rather than in isolation. The tension is whether developing capacities

requires doing things oneself (which could be done within supportive relationships) or whether accepting help and mutual aid better manifests virtue than struggling alone.

These internal tensions suggest that "the moral value of doing things yourself" may not name a unified phenomenon. Different values—autonomy, authenticity, virtue development, social contribution, recognition—may point in different directions depending on context.

Context-Dependence and the Limits of General Claims

Several arguments suggest that systematic answers about DIY's moral value may be impossible because what matters varies fundamentally by context. Khader's (2020) internal feminist critique of relational autonomy reveals that under oppressive conditions, relying on oneself may preserve autonomy when social support is unreliable or controlling. Context determines whether self-reliance or interdependence enhances autonomy—there is no general answer. Conversely, in supportive communities, accepting help may manifest autonomy better than insisting on self-sufficiency. Whether doing things yourself is valuable depends on the social conditions surrounding the activity.

Rodriguez Apolito's (2022) warning that authenticity requirements can obscure oppression applies directly to DIY. Doing things "oneself" may reflect internalized oppressive conditioning rather than genuine self-direction. A woman's "choice" to perform all domestic labor herself may express socialized gender norms rather than authentic agency. Authenticity can come apart from autonomy, and both can come apart from genuinely valuable activity. This suggests DIY cannot be assessed acontextually—we must ask whether the preference for doing things oneself reflects genuine values or adaptive preferences formed under constraint.

Celentano's (2023) contributive justice framework shows that automation's impact on meaningful work depends on how it is designed and distributed. Wholesale automation eliminating meaningful work opportunities threatens justice even with income maintenance. However, strategic automation that frees people for more meaningful work overall may be preferable to unequal access to engaging tasks. The moral question is not "automation versus DIY" in general, but how technological capabilities should be deployed to distribute meaningful work fairly. Similarly, the choice between doing things yourself and delegating to others cannot be assessed without understanding the alternatives available and their distributive implications.

Corbin and Flenady's (2024) analysis of "quiet quitting" reveals that contemporary expectations that all work be meaningful can alienate workers when these expectations exceed what work actually provides. Perhaps not all productive tasks need personal engagement or identity-constitution. If attempting to find meaning in every activity sets impossible standards, then strategic limitation of where one invests effort (including selective delegation) may be more realistic than demanding that all tasks be done meaningfully oneself.

These context-dependence arguments challenge the research project's ability to provide systematic answers about DIY's moral value. If what matters depends on social conditions (oppressive versus supportive), domain features (simple versus complex, personal versus social), technological possibilities (automation enabling versus eliminating meaningful work), and individual circumstances (one's relationship to specific activities), then perhaps there is no unified "moral value of doing things yourself" to theorize. Instead, there may be only context-specific reasons why process sometimes matters beyond outcomes, why autonomy sometimes requires self-reliance and sometimes requires accepting help, and why authenticity may or may not align with doing things oneself.

The fundamental objection to the research proposal is that it seeks systematic answers to questions that may have only particularistic answers. The moral value of doing things yourself may be irreducibly context-dependent, varying by domain, social conditions, individual capacities, and available alternatives in ways that resist general theorizing.

Conclusion

This literature review has revealed that the moral value of doing things yourself is deeply contested across multiple philosophical traditions. Rather than converging on a unified answer, the literature exposes fundamental tensions between competing values and frameworks, raising questions about whether systematic claims about DIY's moral significance are even possible.

The case for DIY's distinctive moral value rests on three main pillars. First, autonomy and authenticity considerations suggest that doing things yourself preserves essential connections between reflective will and action execution. Frankfurt (1971) established that autonomous action requires alignment between higher-order endorsement and effective desires, while Garnett (2023) argues that systematic practical deference constitutes a form of interpersonal rule that compromises self-authorship. Mogensen (2015) reveals that resistance to moral testimony stems from authenticity ideals—we value forming beliefs ourselves because authentic agency requires that commitments originate in us. Second, virtue-as-skill theories suggest that character development requires personal practice. Annas (2011) argues that virtues develop through repeated practice guided by understanding, just as skills do, while Krettenauer and Stichter (2023) show how self-motivated practice is necessary for virtue acquisition. Third, alienation and meaningful work theories emphasize process goods: Jaeggi (2014) characterizes alienation as inability to appropriate one's activities, while Veltman (2016) identifies autonomy and skill exercise as intrinsic work goods beyond social contribution.

However, these arguments face substantial challenges. Relational autonomy theories fundamentally question self-reliance as an ideal. Mackenzie and Stoljar (2000) established that autonomy may be constituted through rather than despite social relationships, while Westlund (2009) argues that autonomy requires dialogical accountability to others rather than independence. Khader (2020) warns that under oppressive conditions, self-reliance may preserve autonomy when social support is unreliable—but Humphries (2025) defends

that recognizing genuine constraints on autonomy is realistic rather than paternalistic. Division of cognitive labor arguments demonstrate that epistemic self-reliance is often impossible and irresponsible. Kitcher (1990) showed that scientific progress depends on specialization, while Buzzell and Rini (2022) reveal that "doing your own research" leads to misinformation when cognitive limitations meet information overload. Carter (2017) argues that intellectual autonomy requires appropriate delegation while maintaining self-direction, not cognitive isolation.

Critically, the virtue-as-skill model faces mounting empirical and conceptual challenges. Schuster (2023) argues that skills provide plausible models of practical reason only when assessed by agent-independent standards, threatening agent-centered virtue ethics. Kilov (2023) identifies expert skill "brittleness"—skills are narrow and context-bound, contradicting virtue ethics' claim that virtues enable good action across contexts. These critiques suggest that even if practicing skills yourself develops competencies, it may not build the robust moral character virtue ethicists envision.

Four unresolved tensions structure the literature. First, the **control-versus-execution tension**: whether autonomous control over delegation decisions suffices for autonomy (Bratman 2014) or whether personal execution is required to preserve the connection between reflective will and action (Frankfurt 1971, Garnett 2023). Second, the **individual-versus-social tension**: whether valuable agency is fundamentally individualistic (autonomy and authenticity frameworks) or inherently social (Kandiyali 2020's reading of Marx emphasizing recognition and contribution; Held 2006's care ethics emphasizing interdependence). Third, the **process-versus-outcome tension**: whether activities have value independent of products (Jaeggi 2014, Turner 2022 on intellectual perseverance) or whether process-value ultimately reduces to outcome-value (Muirhead 2007 prioritizing social contribution; van der Deijl 2022 distinguishing quality from significance). Fourth, the **generality-versus-context tension**: whether systematic claims about DIY's moral value are possible (Annas 2011's general virtue-as-skill model) or whether everything depends on domain-specific features (Khader 2020 on oppressive conditions; Alexander et al. 2015 showing division of labor benefits are conditional; Celentano 2023 on automation context).

Extended mind theory initially appeared to dissolve DIY questions by showing tools extend rather than replace the self (Clark and Chalmers 1998). However, Wheeler (2018) identifies how smart technologies with autonomous AI resist the transparency traditional tools provide, while Carter (2018) argues excessive cognitive offloading threatens intellectual autonomy by undermining freedom to achieve independently. Britten-Neish (2025) defends cognitive offloading as genuine action when embedded in appropriate teleological structures, yet the moral significance of tool integration versus human delegation remains contested.

The complicity and shared responsibility literatures complicate simple contrasts between personal execution and delegation. Kutz (2000) argues individuals bear responsibility for harms they participate in regardless of causal contribution, while Bratman (1992, 2014) shows delegation can involve interlocking intentions constituting genuine shared agency

rather than mere causal manipulation. Whether delegation diminishes moral standing depends on the relationship established, not merely on who performs physical actions. Yet Mellema (2016) identifies nine distinct modes of complicity that generate different responsibility relationships, suggesting the moral evaluation of delegation depends on how it is structured.

Meaningful work theories reveal that not all process-value arguments succeed. Van der Deijl (2022) distinguishes quality-meaningfulness (good for worker—autonomous, engaging) from significance-meaningfulness (good for others—valuable contribution), showing these can come apart. Personal DIY projects may preserve quality while forfeiting significance; conversely, delegation may preserve contributive value while sacrificing developmental value. Kandiyali (2020) argues unalienated production essentially involves producing for others who appreciate one's work, suggesting purely solitary DIY may fail to realize work's full value. Corbin and Flenady (2024) reveal that contemporary expectations that all work be meaningful can alienate workers—perhaps not all tasks require personal engagement.

The research project must navigate between individualistic over-valorization of self-reliance and communitarian dissolution of personal agency. The literature reveals that "Is DIY always valuable?" is the wrong question. The productive question is: "When and why does doing things yourself matter morally beyond outcomes?" The answer appears to be multidimensional rather than unified. Different values—autonomy, authenticity, virtue, social contribution, recognition—may point in different directions depending on context. Doing things yourself may preserve autonomy in oppressive conditions where social support is unreliable (Khader 2020), yet undermine autonomy in complex epistemic domains where expert reliance is necessary (Buzzell and Rini 2022, Nguyen 2018). Personal execution may be constitutive of virtue development through skill practice (Annas 2011), yet skills' brittleness and narrow applicability (Kilov 2023) question whether this builds robust character. DIY activities may enable appropriation and prevent alienation (Jaeggi 2014), yet forfeit the social recognition and contribution that Marx identifies as essential to unalienated labor (Kandiyali 2020).

Expected contributions of the research project include: a systematic framework distinguishing contexts where delegation is morally preferable, permissible, or problematic; integration of autonomy, virtue, and meaningful work literatures that typically proceed independently; normative guidance for automation and AI assistance design that preserves valuable forms of human agency while enabling appropriate delegation; and clarification of how responsibility is distributed or maintained under various forms of delegation. Rather than defending or rejecting DIY's general moral value, the project should map the multidimensional evaluative space in which choices about self-performance versus delegation are made, identifying which values are at stake in different contexts and how they trade off against each other when they conflict.

The literature reveals no consensus on whether doing things yourself has general moral value or only context-specific value. This may not represent a failure of philosophical

theorizing but rather reflect genuine complexity in the phenomena. The moral value of personal execution versus delegation may depend irreducibly on: the type of activity (cognitive, physical, affective); the social context (oppressive, supportive, egalitarian); the relationships involved (care, employment, exchange); the goods at stake (autonomy, virtue, contribution, recognition); and the agent's capacities and vulnerabilities. Philosophical progress may require abandoning the search for unified general principles in favor of domain-specific frameworks that respect this complexity.

Introduction

Contemporary life increasingly involves decisions about delegation and self-reliance. Should I repair my own appliances or hire a technician? Should I form moral beliefs through independent reflection or defer to trusted advisors? Should I rely on AI assistants for cognitive tasks or perform them myself? These questions cluster around a deeper philosophical issue: whether doing things yourself has moral value beyond instrumental efficiency and outcome quality. If two actions produce identical results, does it matter morally whether I performed the action myself or had another person—or an AI system—do it for me?

This question has become increasingly urgent as technological and economic changes reshape the landscape of agency. Artificial intelligence enables unprecedented cognitive offloading, from memory augmentation to decision support (Clark and Chalmers 1998; Wheeler 2018). The gig economy makes delegation of household and personal tasks frictionless and affordable. Meanwhile, scientific knowledge has become so specialized that epistemic self-reliance appears not merely difficult but literally impossible (Kitcher 1990; Buzzell and Rini 2022). These developments force us to confront what, if anything, is lost when we outsource activities that previous generations performed themselves.

Yet philosophical resources for addressing the moral value of doing things yourself remain fragmented. Autonomy theory addresses when agents act freely but says less about whether the physical execution of action matters for autonomous agency (Frankfurt 1971; Garnett 2023). Authenticity theory emphasizes self-authorship through choice but struggles to explain whether delegating tasks undermines genuine self-expression (Taylor 1992; Mogensen 2015). Virtue ethics suggests character develops through practice, but whether virtues require personal performance or can be cultivated through well-chosen delegation remains contested (Annas 2011; Schuster 2023). Meanwhile, relational autonomy theorists challenge whether self-sufficiency is even desirable, arguing that autonomy develops through rather than despite interdependence (Mackenzie and Stoljar 2000; Westlund 2009).

This review synthesizes philosophical debates bearing on the moral value of doing things yourself. It clarifies three key distinctions essential for navigating these debates. First, the distinction between process-value and outcome-value: activities may matter morally not just for what they produce but for how they engage the agent. Second, the distinction between personal agency and instrumental efficiency: doing things yourself may preserve

forms of agency distinct from mere causal control over outcomes. Third, the distinction between tool use and human delegation: using technology to extend one's capabilities may differ morally from having other people perform tasks on one's behalf (Clark and Chalmers 1998; Kutz 2000).

The review proceeds in four sections. Section 1 examines arguments that doing things yourself has distinctive moral value grounded in autonomy, authenticity, and genuine agency. These perspectives emphasize that self-directed action preserves the connection between reflective will and executed behavior, enables self-authorship through active engagement, and develops autonomous capacities. Section 2 presents systematic challenges to self-reliance, drawing on relational autonomy theories, division of cognitive labor arguments, and frameworks of shared agency and distributed responsibility. These perspectives argue that interdependence can manifest rather than undermine autonomy, that epistemic self-reliance is often impossible or harmful, and that delegation can preserve or appropriately distribute responsibility. Section 3 addresses when and why process matters beyond outcomes, focusing on meaningful work, virtue acquisition through practice, and alienation from one's productive activities. Finally, Section 4 identifies objections to the research proposal and critical tensions within the literature, examining when delegation is superior to DIY, internal contradictions between different grounds for DIY value, and the context-dependence that may resist systematic theorizing about self-reliance.

References

Ahlstrom-Vij, Kristoffer. 2016. "Is There a Problem with Cognitive Outsourcing?" *Philosophical Issues* 26 (1): 7–24. https://doi.org/10.1111/phis.12072

Alexander, Jason McKenzie, Johannes Himmelreich, and Christopher Thompson. 2015. "Epistemic Landscapes, Optimal Search, and the Division of Cognitive Labor." *Philosophy of Science* 82 (3): 424–453. https://doi.org/10.1086/681766

Annas, Julia. 2011. *Intelligent Virtue*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Arendt, Hannah. 1958. *The Human Condition*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.

Arneson, Richard J. 2009. "Meaningful Work and Market Socialism Revisited." *Analyse & Kritik* 31 (1): 139–151. https://doi.org/10.1515/auk-2009-0110

Bauer, Jack J. 2021. "Authenticity, Self-Actualizing, and Self-Authorship." In *The Transformative Self*, 492–532. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/oso/9780199970742.003.0016

Boland, Joseph. 2025. "Moral Responsibility or Obedience: What Do We Want from AI?" *ArXiv* abs/2507.02788. https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2507.02788

Boldt, Joachim. 2019. "The Interdependence of Care and Autonomy." *Journal of Medicine and Philosophy* 44 (5): 553–571. https://doi.org/10.1093/jmp/jhz018

Bratman, Michael. 1992. “Shared Cooperative Activity.” *The Philosophical Review* 101 (2): 327–341. https://doi.org/10.2307/2185537

Bratman, Michael E. 2003. “A Desire of One’s Own.” *The Journal of Philosophy* 100 (5): 221–242. https://doi.org/10.5840/jphil2003100517

Bratman, Michael. 2014. *Shared Agency: A Planning Theory of Acting Together*. Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780199897933.001.0001

Britten-Neish, George. 2025. “Cognitive offloading and the causal structure of human action.” *Synthese* 205 (2). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-024-04887-3

Buzzell, Andrew, and Regina Rini. 2022. “Doing Your Own Research and Other Impossible Acts of Epistemic Superheroism.” *Philosophical Psychology* 36 (5): 906–930. https://doi.org/10.1080/09515089.2022.2138019

Carter, J. Adam. 2017. “Intellectual Autonomy, Epistemic Dependence and Cognitive Enhancement.” *Synthese* 197 (7): 2937–2961. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-017-1549-y

Carter, J. Adam. 2018. “Autonomy, Cognitive Offloading, and Education.” *Educational Theory* 68 (6): 657–673. https://doi.org/10.1111/edth.12338

Celentano, Denise. 2023. “Labor Automation for Fair Cooperation: Why and How Machines Should Provide Meaningful Work for All.” *Journal of Social Philosophy* 55 (1): 25–43. https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12548

Clark, Andy, and David J. Chalmers. 1998. “The Extended Mind.” *Analysis* 58 (1): 7–19. https://doi.org/10.1093/analys/58.1.7

Corbin, Thomas A., and Gene Flenady. 2024. “Quiet Quitting as Compensatory Respect: Meaningful Work, Recognition, and the Entrepreneurial Ethic.” *Philosophy of Management* 23 (4): 461–480. https://doi.org/10.1007/s40926-024-00320-4

Fisher, Matthew, and Daniel M. Oppenheimer. 2021. “Who Knows What? Knowledge Misattribution in the Division of Cognitive Labor.” *Journal of Experimental Psychology: Applied* 27 (2): 292–303. https://doi.org/10.1037/xap0000310

Frankfurt, Harry G. 1971. “Freedom of the Will and the Concept of a Person.” *The Journal of Philosophy* 68 (1): 5–20. https://doi.org/10.2307/2024717

Friedman, Marilyn. 2003. *Autonomy, Gender, Politics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Garnett, Michael. 2023. “Ghostwritten Lives: Autonomy, Deference, and Self-Authorship.” *Ethics* 133 (2): 189–215. https://doi.org/10.1086/722126

Gheaus, Anca, and Lisa Herzog. 2016. “The Goods of Work (Other Than Money!).” In *Journal of Social Philosophy*, 70–89. https://doi.org/10.1111/josp.12140

Guignon, Charles. 2004. *On Being Authentic*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9780203646793

Held, Virginia. 2006. *The Ethics of Care: Personal, Political, and Global*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/0195180992.001.0001

Humphries, James. 2025. "Defending Relational Autonomy." *Moral Philosophy and Politics* 12 (2): 581–603. https://doi.org/10.1515/mopp-2023-0053

Jaeggi, Rahel. 2014. *Alienation*. New York: Columbia University Press. https://doi.org/10.7312/jaeg15198

Jensen, Morten Højer. 2018. "Complicity and the Responsibility Dilemma." *Philosophical Studies* 177 (1): 109–127. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11098-018-1182-8

Kandiyali, Jan. 2020. "The Importance of Others: Marx on Unalienated Production." *Ethics* 130 (4): 555–587. https://doi.org/10.1086/708536

Keren, Arnon. 2018. "The Public Understanding of What? Laypersons' Epistemic Needs, the Division of Cognitive Labor, and the Demarcation of Science." *Philosophy of Science* 85 (5): 781–792. https://doi.org/10.1086/699690

Khader, Serene J. 2020. "The Feminist Case Against Relational Autonomy." *Journal of Moral Philosophy* 17 (5): 499–526. https://doi.org/10.1163/17455243-20203085

Killmister, Suzy. 2017. *Taking the Measure of Autonomy: A Four-Dimensional Theory of Self-Governance*. Routledge. https://doi.org/10.4324/9781315204932

Kilov, Daniel. 2023. "Brittle virtue or bust: a new challenge to virtue-as-skill theories." *Synthese* 202 (3). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-023-04306-z

Kitcher, Philip. 1990. "The Division of Cognitive Labor." *The Journal of Philosophy* 87 (1): 5–22. https://doi.org/10.2307/2026796

Krettenauer, Tobias, and Matt Stichter. 2023. "Moral Identity and the Acquisition of Virtue: A Self-Regulation View." *Review of General Psychology* 27 (4): 396–409. https://doi.org/10.1177/10892680231170393

Kutz, Christopher. 2000. *Complicity: Ethics and Law for a Collective Age*. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/cbo9780511663758

Mackenzie, Catriona, and Natalie Stoljar. 2000. *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*. Oxford University Press.

Mackenzie, Catriona, and Natalie Stoljar. 2000. *Relational Autonomy: Feminist Perspectives on Autonomy, Agency, and the Social Self*. New York: Oxford University Press.

Mellema, Gregory. 2016. *Complicity and Moral Accountability*. University of Notre Dame Press. https://doi.org/10.2307/j.ctvpj78ss

Mogensen, Andreas L. 2015. "Moral Testimony Pessimism and the Uncertain Value of Authenticity." *Philosophy and Phenomenological Research* 95 (2): 261–284. https://doi.org/10.1111/phpr.12255

Muirhead, Russell. 2007. *Just Work*. Cambridge, MA: Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674041271

Nedelsky, Jennifer. 1989. “Reconceiving Autonomy: Sources, Thoughts and Possibilities.” *Yale Journal of Law and Feminism* 1: 7–36.

Nguyen, C. Thi. 2018. “Cognitive Islands and Runaway Echo Chambers: Problems for Epistemic Dependence on Experts.” *Synthese* 197 (7): 2803–2821. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-018-1692-0

Nguyen, C. Thi. 2018. “Expertise and the Fragmentation of Intellectual Autonomy.” PhilPapers.

Rodríguez Apólito, Maite. 2022. “Against Authenticity: Autonomy and Oppressive Circumstances.” *Philosophy & Social Criticism* 50 (5): 803–822. https://doi.org/10.1177/01914537221133485

Sanderse, Wouter. 2018. “Does Aristotle believe that habituation is only for children?” *Journal of Moral Education* 49 (1): 98–110. https://doi.org/10.1080/03057240.2018.1497952

Sayers, Sean. 2005. “Why Work? Marx and Human Nature.” *Science & Society* 69 (4): 606–616. https://doi.org/10.1521/siso.2005.69.4.606

Scharrer, Lisa, Yvonne Rupieper, Marc Stadtler, and Rainer Bromme. 2016. “When Science Becomes Too Easy: Science Popularization Inclines Laypeople to Underrate Their Dependence on Experts.” *Public Understanding of Science* 26 (8): 1003–1018. https://doi.org/10.1177/0963662516680311

Schmitz, Chris, and Joanna Bryson. 2025. “A Moral Agency Framework for Legitimate Integration of AI in Bureaucracies.” *ArXiv* abs/2508.08231. https://doi.org/10.48550/arXiv.2508.08231

Schuster, Nicholas C. 2023. “The Skill Model: A Dilemma for Virtue Ethics.” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 26 (3): 447–461. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-023-10380-6

Schwartz, Adina. 1982. “Meaningful Work.” *Ethics* 92 (4): 634–646. https://doi.org/10.1086/292378

Stichter, Matt. 2011. “Virtues, Skills, and Right Action.” *Ethical Theory and Moral Practice* 14 (1): 73–86. https://doi.org/10.1007/s10677-009-9200-6

Stoljar, Natalie. 2000. “Autonomy and the Feminist Intuition.” *Analyse & Kritik* 22 (2): 145–168. https://doi.org/10.1515/auk-2000-0201

Taylor, Charles. 1992. *The Ethics of Authenticity*. Harvard University Press. https://doi.org/10.4159/9780674237117

Turner, Cody. 2022. “Neuromedia, cognitive offloading, and intellectual perseverance.” *Synthese* 200 (2). https://doi.org/10.1007/s11229-022-03472-w

Vallor, Shannon. 2016. “Technology and the Virtues: A Philosophical Guide to a Future Worth Wanting.” https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190498511.001.0001

van der Deijl, Willem. 2022. “Two Concepts of Meaningful Work.” *Journal of Applied Philosophy* 41 (2): 202–217. https://doi.org/10.1111/japp.12614

Veltman, Andrea. 2016. *Meaningful Work*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190618179.001.0001

Westlund, Andrea C. 2009. “Rethinking Relational Autonomy.” *Hypatia* 24 (4): 26–49. https://doi.org/10.1111/j.1527-2001.2009.01056.x

Wheeler, Michael. 2018. “The reappearing tool: transparency, smart technology, and the extended mind.” *AI & Society* 34 (4): 857–866. https://doi.org/10.1007/s00146-018-0824-x

Xia, Yong-Hong. 2025. “Filling the Responsibility Gap: Agency and Responsibility in the Technological Age.” *Science and Engineering Ethics* 31. https://doi.org/10.1007/s11948-025-00561-0