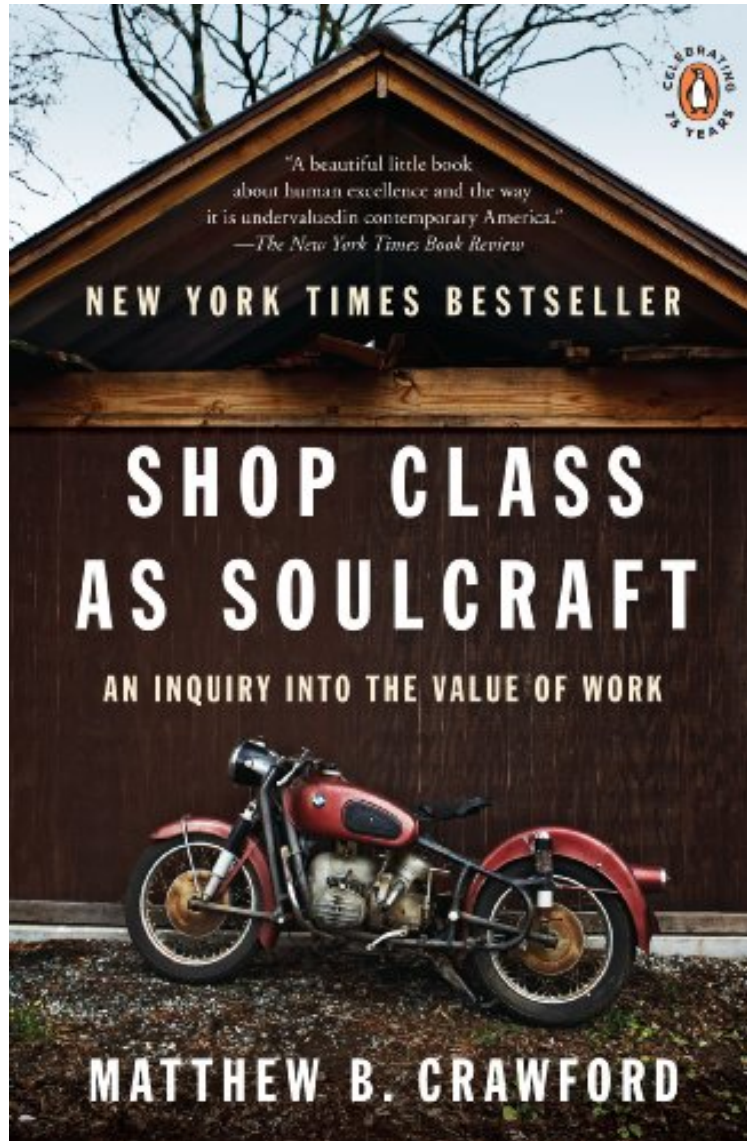


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Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work

Matthew B. Crawford

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Matthew B. Crawford : Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work before purchasing it in order to gauge whether or not it would be worth my time, and all praised Shop Class as Soulcraft: An Inquiry into the Value of Work:

0 of 0 people found the following review helpful. Worthwhile read By HCEI very much enjoyed reading this book and would recommend it. I like the overall depth of philosophical commentary and the overarching theme of finding the "good" in life and the need to devise an individual pathway that allows one to flourish - sounds a bit like existentialism. I also admire the author's iconoclasm, and his willingness to question the consensus and reject it, if the

consensus is not justified or deserving. However, the black-and-white argument of working class versus educated class does not work. A working class position is not a guarantee to job satisfaction and fulfillment. It is much more complex than that. Although Crawford briefly recognizes this in his summary at the end of the book, this is surely the theme that is being promoted in the title and in the marketing of the book. He hits the nail on the head on page 100 when he states that "Any discipline that deals with authoritative, independent reality requires honest and humility". This requirement is key in our work environment and should pertain to all endeavors, not just working class, hands-on positions. I am a scientist involved in medical product development. Honesty and humility are absolute necessities (tautology intended) in that field. When they are lacking, producing a good product is near impossible.

1 of 1 people found the following review helpful. An inspiring book I'll keep for years
By Maxwell Mathew Crawford is a smart and sophisticated intellectual but his personal work with repairing older model motorcycles gives him one foot in the traditionally blue collar world of physically making and repairing real things and one foot in the world of analysis and theory of how the world works. This book is his calm and steady reflection on the importance of craftsmanship in our world. It is a polite and powerful response to a world that is focused on short term goals using virtual things like email and software. One of my favorite ideas is page 16, early in the book: "A washing machine, for example, surely exists to serve our needs, but in contending with one that is broken, you have to ask what *it* needs." In the world of computing in which I work, one encounters many engineers who feel as sense of control over their machines. They think they can make the machine do what they want by brute force of faster CPUs or more disk drives. But the small community of engineers focused on achieving high performance benchmark understands it as Crawford does: You have to understand how the computer works and what the machine needs in order to operate smoothly, at maximum performance without bottleneck or fault. Only then can you provide it with software tailored to its particular style of operation and meet your goals. As you can see, I don't repair motorcycles, but I'm using the inspiration of this book's ideas on my own life. I highly recommend it to others.

2 of 2 people found the following review helpful. Alternative thinking, alternative jobs
By George Dutch 1. This book is a reaction against the notion that all future jobs will be tied to a virtual world of work. We live in a physical reality of structures, equipment, machinery, tools, and this book makes a strong case for the value of making and fixing things. In particular, Crawford points out that many jobs will be outsourced overseas because knowledge industries are just as easily fostered, often more cheaply, in Asia where children and teens can and do learn math and sciences. But, you can not ship overseas the repair of physical things, including bridges or bodies and the infrastructure that makes up society.

2. He traces the cultural history in the West that has led to the prestigious status of knowledge-based jobs over manual-based jobs, and the general manual disengagement of work. He speaks with some authority because he traded in his PhD in philosophy and academic career to become a full-time motorcycle repair mechanic.

3. Crawford explains why he finds manual work more intellectually stimulating more meaningful (because it is more useful) and, in so doing, builds a case for young adults to seriously consider the trades and crafts careers. Real knowledge, he argues, arises through confrontations with real things.

4. He advances the notion of individual agency, the power to do things, not just think about them, or bypass them by purchasing a product. He suggests that most knowledge work is organized around a process of depersonalization, where a worker is usually answerable to a force not situated at the site of the work. By contrast, the work of skilled tradespeople is direct engagement with a process and product, where accountability is taken at the site of work.

5. In his conclusion, Crawford argues that more self-employment and self-reliance actually increases community because it increases our dependence on each other in the marketplace, rather than having our economic relations mediated by impersonal forces that further separate us from our labor and its produce. As a solo-preneur, I relate to this idea because, while I enjoy a certain amount of freedom and flexibility in my work, I am completely dependent on a supply of clients through market forces who keep me directly accountable for what I do. Good stuff! It demonstrates for me the importance of getting a deep analysis of your natural inclinations as a young adult. Rather than succumb to social conditioning, we can make decisions based on our innate talents and motivations

JobJoy: Finding Your Right Work Through the Power of Your Personal Story
in order to find or create work that recognizes, rewards and motivates us for what we do naturally and effortlessly.

A philosopher/mechanic's wise (and sometimes funny) look at the challenges and pleasures of working with one's hands Called "the sleeper hit of the publishing season" (The Boston Globe), *Shop Class as Soulcraft* became an instant bestseller, attracting readers with its radical (and timely) reappraisal of the merits of skilled manual labor. On both economic and psychological grounds, author Matthew B. Crawford questions the educational imperative of turning everyone into a "knowledge worker," based on a misguided separation of thinking from doing. Using his own experience as an electrician and mechanic, Crawford presents a wonderfully articulated call for self-reliance and a moving reflection on how we can live concretely in an ever more abstract world.