

Work is the force that drives the human condition, our work, is our pursuit in finding substance and meaning in life. What makes the human experience, *human* is the human condition and work acts as our motivator to continue to act, and to create lasting objects that will leave behind a story when we are no longer able to tell it. The place of work within the human condition was still largely the same as it had been since the beginning of human existence, that is, until the industrial period occurred. Beginning in the 19th century, industrialization changed the work ideals of the modern age. Work within the human condition has evolved into nothing more than a form of labor, a process that supports the necessities of living. The modern world has come to ignore the recognition of purpose within our work and has come far too familiar with its never-ending consumption. Work was once considered a form of durability, a lasting entity, today these ideals are left to decay. If the modern world does not acknowledge the way work enables our happiness and our community, Arendt's work, *The Human Condition* predicts we may lose the core of what makes our human lives meaningful. In hopes to conserve our virtues, our beliefs, our purpose in our work, we must simply be aware of our place in this world by staying connected to one another.

Beginning in the 19th century work changed most drastically during the industrialization period. In Roger's *Work Ethic and the Industrial America*, he described the drastic change of the industrialized world as a shift in societies work ideals (p 76). Rogers explains the industrialization as an "invasion" for the masses, in that, men became commodities as the rise of machines took the foreground. Tools, which had been invented to relieve man of toil, had only mutated the work ethic for humanity. Men, woman and children became replaceable objects, no more worth than the objects that they constructed in assembly lines (p78). Time was money and work was labor, a never-ending line of construction. During this time, work was given over to labor when the workers

themselves lost the means to its end; factories took over craftsmanship and large corporations slowly chipped at the blue collars identity. Work could no longer contain the same meaning, without an end and a beginning; work was lost within a never-ending process leaving no legend behind them. The objects and the workers became nameless; commodities ready to throw out at the slightest change in productivity rate.

Marx, *The Communist Manifesto* took a similar view relating to the industrialization period concerning capitalism of the new world, he states “ The bourgeoisie has stripped of its halo every occupation hitherto honored and looked up to with reverent awe. It has converted the physician, the lawyer, the priest, the poet, the man of science, into its wage-laborers” (161) Marx argues through Industrialization and the establishment of capitalism the modern age has dramatically shifted in its values displaying a desecration of self worth concerning the individual, the family structure and its community. Industrialization became the catalyst to the modern age, an age lacking values, an emotivist society lost within it’s own alienation of the self.

The human condition represents the limitations we continue to defy, but never seemingly defeat it is in those limitations that our work resides. Through Herman Melville’s *Moby Dick*, work is represented as a type of escape from the reality of the Industrialized world of the 19th century industries. In his quest for adventure, Ishmael longs to be apart of something bigger than the industries world of labor can offer him. His work defines his lifestyle, his values, he ultimate telos. Macintyre’s *After Virtue* describes the narrative of the human life as an essential quest for the “good life”; a life lived to ones fullest capacity. This too can be agreed upon in reference to work within the human condition today as well as in Melville’s time. Work is shown through one’s quest in definition to ones purpose, in a recent lecture Stephen stated, “A life spent seeking the good life is in fact the good life.” Essentially it is in our awareness and attempt to find purpose that meaning in work is found. Ishmael’s quest for substance gave him his purpose, his social connection, and through his awareness, his quest, he found meaning through the work in his life.

The place of work in the human condition is essential, work acts as a driving force that fuels our lives as well as our conditions. Work within the human condition, as it did with Ishmael, becomes apart of our identity and defines who we are. In order for work to encompass definition, work can only be considered as work when it is a purposeful entity, an activity that gives our lives meaning. In Kingsolver's *Animal dreams*, she emphasizes that very mark, Codi was a drifter, unhappy in her own confusion, while describing her sisters ambitions she described her own sense of wanting purpose through her work. "She wanted to save herself, just like we all do...from despair. From the feeling of being useless. I've about decided that that's the main thing that separates happy people from the other people: the feeling that you're a practical item, with use like a sweater or a socket wrench"(p 334) Codi attempts to find her purpose, she embodies an important reflection in the search that all humans take. As Codi realizes her own story and finds her place in her work, she finds her place in her existence. It is not so much the actual purpose but the meaning that gives one the ability to feel the purpose in one's own life. As soon as the foundation of her work and her community was clear she became complete, she had found the ideals buried under the modern world, rediscovered, she was whole.

In opposition to Codi's modern triumph, Arthur Miller's play, *Death of a Salesman* displays an all too common occurrence involving the downfall of hopes and dreams of the modern man/woman. Willy Loman established his success in life through the success in the business world and not in the understanding of *his* purpose within it. While he realized the only force that continued him had been taken, he no longer led any sense of self worth; he was essentially a vapor en his own existence. His lack of recognition, the very same recognition Codi had *not* overlooked, resulted in the disintegration that lead to his humility and eventual death.

The place of work within the human condition is still as vital as it was previous to the invasion of the modern world, yet with its changes comes dangerous consequences for the modern age. Arendt proposes that today, the place of work within the human

condition leans towards a steep ledge looking down towards a society filled with emptiness. She proposes that in effort to prevent that emptiness, the never-ending line of consumption and loss of our ability to act together as humans, we must be aware of our current mindset, she states, “ It is nothing more than to think what we are doing” (p 5). Arendt asks us to simply be aware, to question, and to redefine our thoughtlessness into our truths. In addition, Kingsolver’s *Animal Dreams* represented what Arendt believed to be one of the few redeeming factors we still hold, hope. Hallie embodied that hope, while still acknowledging her own vulnerability for failure; she acknowledged the possibility for redemption. Hope is not our guarantee for recovery, but it is a beginning to redefine how we view the elements that complete the human life. We must first recognize our roles in our society in order to recognize how we affect the grander scale of life, our purpose remains in our recognition of the individual and of its surrounding community; our quest waits patiently as our hopes continue for a better tomorrow.