Worker And Laborer Essay, Research Paper

The Worker and the Laborer

What is a worker? According to Wystan Auden, a man is a worker if he is personally interested in the job which society pays him to do; what from the point of view of society is necessary labor is from his own point of view voluntary play. If this is the definition of a worker, one may ask what is a laborer? Auden states that a man is a laborer if the job society offers him is of no interest to himself but he is compelled to take it by the necessity of earning a living and supporting his family. Dorothea Lange illustrates these two different characters in her photograph, taken in Salinas Valley.

The photograph is composed of six men working on a field. The landscape is filled with luminous green lettuces that stretch out to the horizon. These men stretch out their hands toward the earth and cut the stems off this crop, to collect the lettuces. The men are clothed with long-sleeved shirts and thick jeans, and hats that protect their heads from the violent rays of the sun. They wear gloves that protect their hands from sharp thorns, and savage insects. These men work repetitiously from one lettuce to another, severing the crop from its roots. These six men work until there is no more light guiding their hands through the moist roots of the crop. They leave work tired and exhausted, but will soon return back when daylight returns to this green land.

These men that are illustrated in this photograph may be workers or laborers. One of the workers may be the owner himself, helping the others with this task. The owner of this field may love his line of work. He gets up every morning, gets ready and starts working. He notices the plant that has sprung up from the earth was only a seed a few months ago. The owner has helped this crop flourish and stay healthy throughout the harsh seasons. The owner now looks at this crop in awe as he removes it from the earth. He examines it slowly, he realizes that he has put his whole life into this crop, inside this crop bears the memories of him and his family caring for this field. His eyes water as he puts the lettuce aside and claims another, because at that instant he realizes he loves his work, and that makes him a worker.

The Man next to the owner could be a hired hand. The man probably is working only for the money. He grabs these crops from the earth greedily; knowing that each one makes him richer. He counts money figures in his head as he collects this crop. Deep down he knows that he hates this line of work, but endures it to provide for his family. He finds no joy in feeling the earth, no joy in this line of work. He wishes for this day to end quickly so he could have time to attend to his own needs. He is grateful for this line of work, for it provides for his family, but he does not love it. This is what makes this man a laborer.

In conclusion, Auden states that a man is a worker if he loves his line of work. He describes a laborer as a man who works, but does not like or love his line of work. The photograph taken by Dorothea Lange gives us an insight into these two different characters. These two different words describe people’s work ethic their motivation and themselves. If you determine that you are a worker or a laborer, you automatically define yourself, so before I stop writing I want you to ask yourself one question. Are you a worker of a laborer?