Strong Response Essay on *Abolition of Work* by Bob Black

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**Introduction**

Many people nowadays complain about depression caused by their job, Bob Black’s essay *The Abolition of Work* appears as a solution to their depression. Black claims that all this depression is right and the obvious outcome of our current socio-economic structure. He says that we have engaged ourselves in useless work that can bring no good to us. His essay appeals a large segment of humankind because almost every person in this *modern* rather *post-modern* world is doing a job somewhere, no matter as a worker/employee or as a boss. Bob Black’s essay *The* *Abolition of Work* although looks like a savior of millions of workers, but it is not more than an empty vessel that can bring anarchy by its bangs to our world but cannot offer a rational solution.

**Body**

Bob starts the essay saying that no one should work ever again and closes the arguments with the same statement. He says that work is the core cause behind all the human miseries, and he uses the speeches of scholars and philosophers, who criticized *over*-industrialized societies, to support his argument. For example, he quotes Socrates saying that manual work has made human being too busy that no one can spare time for relationship or friendship. He quotes Roman scholar Cicero who has compared workers with slaves. He has quoted Karl Marx, Daniel Bells, and every other available scholar who criticized our economic structure to prove him right. The unique feature of this essay is that Black does not stand with Karl Marx, Adam Smith, or any other person who talks about work. He says that whether they are Capitalists, Communists, Feminists, or any other class, they are condemnable unless they stop talking about *work* and start talking about *play*. He argues that only play can keep us what we are: human beings. He explains his word *'play*' by saying that everyone should be allowed to do voluntarily and according to his/her stamina and mood what we want him/her to do. This is, he argues, the style of ancient hunter-gatherer society which was happier and peaceful with too limited resources than we are with abundance of them. They were not forced to work but they used to work as entertainment for a short duration. He says that the current economic structure of our country (and the whole world) benefits a handful of business holders who are not different from Genghis Khan and other cruel rulers albeit they know more techniques i.e. discipline, work ethics, punctuality, and career-making to keep a stronger hold on masses than those rulers. They train people from childhood for slavery through the full-day schooling system. We cannot get rid of all this mass exploitation unless we renounce *work* and start *play*, he concludes *(The Abolition of Work*. 2019).

Bob Black has influential persuasive skills that he has used effectively to convince his reader, but he forgot (whether intentionally or unintentionally) that he is comparing the contemporary world of millions with a millennia-old world of a few thousand who were living scattered and isolated with few needs and little awareness of their savagery. He might have taken too serious Rousseau’s concept of *Noble Savage*, but he must understand that the global problems have become much complex than he thinks eventually with the population growth. One can criticize the workers’ exploitation at the hands of employers and useful suggestions for this issue can be held for consideration, but the importance of work cannot be undermined. Our current system has evolved and developed through centuries, the thought of bringing it back to ancient times can result in a *mass-suicide*. Fear of career where causes depression to some extent, it also motivates a lot of people to become useful members of society. People keep a check on their actions to have an acceptable profile in society, so the opportunities for growth will be exposed to them. On the other side, the structural economic system gives them faith that they would get something as an award or reward if they follow the defined rules of a social system. Imagine a world where there is no certainty of anything, what would happen? There would be *anarchy*, everyone would use any means to snatch what s/he can snatch from anyone. Resultantly, the clever and strong people might make the others their slaves literally, as did Egyptian Pharaohs with Israelites. Some vested groups indeed get more benefit than others in our current socio-economic system, but there is no exception to work in this system. Everyone works according to his/her capabilities and opportunities, but work is a universal truth to grow. This is the key to our progress from forests to palaces.

**Conclusion**

Bob Black has written a comprehensive essay *The Abolition of Work* criticizing the socio-economic structure of society. He insists upon workers throughout the world to revolt against this structure because it is destined to exploit every worker/employee whether s/he is living in a Capitalist country or a Communist country. He prefers play over work and argues that there is no bad in being lazy. He praises ancient hunter-gatherer culture where humans used to participate in work voluntarily and their work duration was shorter than now. Nevertheless, Black has undermined the necessities of the contemporary world and has wasted thousands of words in the praise of laziness. It seems that Bob Black wrote this essay while he was in a naughty mood to propagate anarchy.

**References**

*The Abolition of Work*. (2019). *The Anarchist Library*. Retrieved 8 November 2019, from https://theanarchistlibrary.org/library/bob-black-the-abolition-of-work