

Good argumentative essay about a structured, conventional paper on

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Literature

“ Why the Rich Get Richer and the Poor, Poorer” by Robert Reich

Based on Robert B. Reich’s views concerning the decreasing job opportunities for routine producers (e. g., factory workers), in-person servers (e. g., bank tellers), and symbolic analysts (e. g., CEOs), the increased immigration affect the American economy in such a way that even with declining population among the second group of workers (that is, in-person servers) resulting to reduced competition for their jobs, increased immigration may nonetheless cancel it (Reich 515). Immigration may be a hopeful sign if the country needs more in-person servers for its aging population, small population, etc. However, it becomes a danger to the economy if it will displace, specifically, its own population of in-person servers. Likewise, because immigrants typically look for greener pastures, they will likely to work for a relatively smaller wages and benefits as compared to the country’s citizens. Hence, a greater chance of influx of more illegal immigrants because they want to improve their lives, which they cannot simply do so in their countries due to lesser life opportunities. Hence, most people do seem to perceive the effects of increased immigration as beneficial for the economy if it will only fill the gap for their demands and aging workforce, and not the other way around. In this essay, I would argue that Reich is correct for claiming that the rich get richer and the poor poorer because of technological changes, just like during the times of Smith, Carnegie, and Marx, respectively.

Concerning, Reich symbolic analysts’ growing wealth who earned it in legal ways, such that opulence on such a scale has never been attained before, it

is because they mostly “manipulate oral and visual symbols” and then get generously rewarded (Reich 525-527). Thus, for my part, I see also myself as a symbolic analyst because of my education, insights, problem-identifying, problem-solving, and suchlike abilities. I keep on honing my symbolic analytic competencies so that I can further develop and specialize on them. As I see my future, I am more of a symbolic analyst who keeps on training myself so that I can coach, advise, etc. others. Having said so, I will thus add more value to my talents so that corporations who will hire will reward me generously. Although my success as a symbolic analyst in the future may not come instantly, Reich has taught me to enjoy my future work as information and technology will help me achieve my dreams in life. There are already virtually limitless opportunities to rise above my present condition by embracing change, efficiency, etc. using my talents.

Moreover, I think it is true to some extent that “[f]ew routine producers or in-person servers would ‘work’ if they did not earn the money” because that is how they were accustomed to doing (Reich 527). What the latter two groups of workers have been doing most of their lives, beginning with their upbringing and education, is to be complacent with the monotony of their ‘work.’ Their muscles have been flexed by regular exercise, unlike the exercise of one’s independence, discretion, or intellectual prowess through upbringing, education, habit, and training. Thus, symbolic analysts, (that is, contrary to the first two groups), “they would ‘work’ even if money were no object” because it has been a passion to them. Just like Reich noted, “[o]ne of the best-kept secrets among [this third group is to] enjoy their work” (Reich 527). For my part (that is, hypothetically or as I see myself in the

future) and those whom I actually know (e. g., Bill Gates, Mark Zuckerberg, etc.), work should be interesting and enjoyable in the first place. We only have to manipulate ideas based on our insights, and presto, we will earn an enormously huge income that is equivalent more than the income and retirement gratuities of thousands or even millions of regular government rank-and-file employees.

According to Reich's article, various changes have taken place in the American economy since 1960. For instance, union membership has declined since then and the long economic recovery that started in 1982 generated a sizeable rise in labor cost per unit. Jobs in routine production have also disappeared quickest, especially in traditional unionized industries. Between cutting wages received or number of jobs, many senior workers protected by seniority have opted for the latter. Hence, the youngest workers have been the ones that were laid off first, considering further those routine production workers have been the first mostly affected by automation, state-of-the-art technologies, etc. Further, diminishing numbers of routine production workers have also resulted to the obsolescence of lower and middle-level management jobs. Industries and other companies shifted to least-extensive mass production of products, goods, and services using robotics and other machineries. The changes since the 1960s hitherto continue to have affected American workers and what they expect to find in years to come. Based on my personal opportunities, the changes have broadened since then. At this age, I have learned the value of improving further my symbolic analytic skills so that I can easily evolve and succeed in my chosen field of expertise.

Despite of all that I mentioned, I think that the changes will be good for our

country in the long run because all, if not many, the government and its people should adapt to these changes by rethinking their role in this “international corporate webs of the economic system” (Lockwood n. p.) . Thus, educational institutions should align themselves to the needs of present-day companies, organizations, and industries.

In today’s free trade and borderless nature of multinational corporations, the presence of large Japanese corporations and other manufacturing giants in the US were indeed a great success and largely positive because they offer jobs and municipal income that would otherwise go to other countries (Reich 521). What should be done therefore is for the government to have policies that benefits our nation considering that government policies are related to our economic health. With win-win solutions in allowing the presence of large foreign-owned corporations here in the US, the economy will not be hurt and thus produce production or in-service jobs for many Americans despite technology use. The focus of the government and its agencies, as well as, other US institutions should then be protection of the oral and visual products of its symbolic analysts that would propel our economy. Many Americans will then greatly benefit, not just from the creative and innovative output of these symbolic analysts, but also even those at the grassroots level starting from “ every child [who] should have an equal opportunity to become a symbolic analyst” (Ward 13).

Based on my examination, analysis, and understanding of the differences between the rich and poor that Reich describes, the process of increasing wealth of the affluent and increasing poverty of the destitute is not inevitable or will begin to change in the future if the government implements laws,

regulations, and policies beneficial to most of its workers, whether, routine production workers, in-person servers, or symbolic analysts. Routine workers have to be protected, especially in countries whose labor costs are meager. Hence, whether inside or outside the US, international organizations should safeguard the interests, compensations, and benefits, specifically those who are affected by automation, state-of-the-art machineries, etc. There should be a proposals to “decreas[ing] the income gap among the rich and the poor” by means of standardized compensation, benefits, and ways of living so that the poor will not become poorer and the rich richer as a result (Carpenter 1). Unlike what happens these days, symbolic analysts and large corporations are solely the ones that become unimaginably opulent while the rest remains in their current, if not, poorer conditions. It nation-states and international organizations will not act on this matter soon, more and most people (especially, the indigents or least well-off members of society) will remain destitute.

In connection to Karl Marx (1818-1883), revolutionary economic expert and founder of modern communism, I think Reich would counter Marx’s warning or fear concerning globalism as causing harms to local industry and local styles and customs by stating the obvious. Globalism has been around since the exchange of trades among nations. It only progressed at an unprecedented rate because of industrial and technological changes.

Symbolic analysts have made it possible to create, innovate and produce products beneficial not only to themselves, but to a large number of people across the world. Though there are drawbacks to globalism, such as the rich becoming richer and the poor poorer as a result of manipulating oral and

visual symbols, that is precisely why the best symbolic analysts prosper. Reich does not necessarily approve of the new economy, unless the government does something about policies beneficial to the nation. Routine production workers and in-person servers should not simply be displaced or remained poorer, while the third group of workers, the symbolic analysts, gains the most. Likewise, Reich accepts globalism as a form of economic evolution that resulted from the insights of symbolic analysts, which generate and use ideas in the name of research, progress and developments. With somewhat different twist, that is, in comparison to the American industrialist and philanthropist Andrew Carnegie's (1835-1919) and Reich's time, I think the latter would likely to agree with the former regarding the laws of competition and accumulation because the fittest would likely to produce better insights, creative products, innovative developments, etc. However, Reich, just like Carnegie, looks after the welfare of the poor in society, and what the two individuals can do something about them. Then, again, I do not think that Reich would approve of Marx's theories regarding the oppressive predisposition of the bourgeoisies against the oppressed proletariats. Reich would simply points out how the symbolic analysts of his days manipulate symbols for them to take advantage of free competition and accumulation.

In relation to Scottish economist Adam Smith's (1723-1790) concepts of how a nation produces wealth, I think Reich would respond in such as way that private enterprise and free trade are as influential in his time as in Reich' time; however, in apparently different ways. Smith was conventional in his approach to becoming wealthy, that is, from rural land and its production to

cities' manufacturing capabilities. Unlike in Smith's time, when Britain became an industrial nation, the land is not the primary means to produce wealth. Industrial implements, not just for agricultural use, but also for railroads and other industry needs, have made even other nations wealthy far from the standard set by Smith. Reich knows it well since he has seen the evolution of the wealth to work of nations, from agricultural, industrial, and technological to information age. Hence, Reich sees in the current economy, as compared to Smith's time, that symbolic analysts can become wealthy simply because of exchanges of ideas through avenues in the global web. I would feel thus that Smith's principles regarding agriculture, land, and manufacture would not totally apply to our new economy because Smith's was by far conventional in his approach regarding tangible goods rather than the manipulation of symbols to create wealth. Thus, Reich's position regarding Smith's basic theories would possibly be someone who stands on the shoulder of a giant while Smith was like a midget standing on his bare foot on a flat ground in the lowlands.

The two people in Tanner's *The Thankful Poor* would have most likely fit in Reich's concept of the new economy under the first and/or second group of workers. They are a small family having dinner, with utensils to use and food to eat. They are not in a pitiful condition given that they are not impoverished just like other people in slum areas. They have a place to live, food and furniture, and most importantly, they have one another. For me, it is a visually hopeful work of art. If Reich would include them in his discussion, I think that the older man would fit in the first or second group while the young man has a chance of belonging in the third group of workers

should he grab the opportunities available to prospective symbolic analysts. Moreover, the details in the painting that Reich might point to as significant to the new economy are hopes for a better or brighter future. Nevertheless, because the painting was made in 1894, it is likely possible that Reich would simply say that these people have nothing to do with the current economic conditions, but still, they belong. Symbolic analysts in that period may not be able to amass wealth such as Bill Gates using computer technology, but the poor then are no different from Reich's time. There is always a need for people to have their basic necessities met. Alternatively, Reich would have said that the painting also represents the plight of many of the working poor in the US because of their numbers. As such, based on the evidence from the painting and from my understanding of the principles of wealth and poverty, I could infer people in general belong either from one group (poor) or the other (rich), and those in-between (middle income earners) or those in-extremes (unimaginably opulent).

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