

A Study on the Work Issues in Updike's Early Novels

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Abstract

The academic circles both at home and abroad have seldom conducted research on the issue of working mode in Updike's works. However, descriptions and discussions of various working modes have been consistently present throughout his early works. Individual handicraft industry, The manual production mode experienced by the industrial production, as well as Fordism, are all depicted in his works. On this basis, he proposed his own form of labor organization. This paper examines the descriptions of various production modes implied in Updike's early novels and their influences on people, and sketches out the labor liberation scenario that is distinctive from others in the author's mind.

Key words: John Updike; Manual labor; Fordism; Working mode

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1. INTRODUCTION

It is generally held that subsequent to individual handicrafts, industrial production has undergone three development patterns up to the present, namely manual production mode, Fordism, and Post-Fordism. From the last three decades of the 18th century, due to the emergence of large-scale industrial production, traditional individual handicrafts and handicraft workshops gradually

declined because of their low efficiency. In 1913, Henry Ford established the world's first assembly line. After World War II, the typical form of large-scale industrial production, Fordism, reached its zenith in Western countries and diffused globally. Nevertheless, shortly thereafter, Fordism declined after its peak and gave rise to a crisis. At that time, Post-Fordism was still in its nascent stage, and people were still exploring various new production methods. Simultaneously, the rise of large-scale industrial production has brought about survival predicaments and spiritual crises for modern individuals. People have discovered themselves in a fragmented, monotonously repetitive world, where life is meaningless, the spirit is vacuous and there is no outlet. How to address these era-related problems encountered by modern people? Based on the characteristics of his era and the various practical experiences and ideological theories available, combined with Western religions and mythological legends, John Updike reviewed and deliberated on this issue in several of his early novels and endeavored to provide his own answers. According to Updike himself: "My novels are all about the search for useful work." (Sreenivasulu, p.17)

2. THE DECLINE OF MANUAL LABOR

Art is one of the three major themes in Updike's works. In many of his novels, he probed into the role of art in rescuing people from spiritual predicaments. William Morris pointed out that the realm of art encompasses not only painting and sculpture but also practical art. He held that all beauty created by human hands is art, and beauty exists because the created items conform to the aesthetic laws of humanity. For Updike, "A proficient craftsman is an artist, and an artist is a creative individual." (Greiner, p. 20) From his first novel, "The Poorhouse Fair" to another of his novels, *Rabbit Redux*, Updike depicted numerous characters and details related to manual production in

his works and extolled outstanding craftsmen as a sort of hero.

The Poorhouse Fair was composed in 1957. The backdrop of the novel is a highly mechanized future welfare state. At the annual fair, the elders in the poorhouse showcase or vend various traditional handicrafts fabricated over the past year. These handicrafts are emblems of personality, creativity, freedom and the bygone golden days, mirroring humanity's emphasis on intrinsic characteristics such as personality, individual creativity and uniqueness. The elders "utilize their handicrafts to convey their sentiments of eternity and elegance." (Greiner, p. 9) The representatives of the artisans in the novel are Amy Mortis, the elderly woman who sews quilts, and Tommy Franklin, who carves walnuts. Amy Mortis stitches her past world into small quilts - temples, furniture, mountains, sky, flowers, rivers and playing children. She aspires to reproduce the world that has long been oblivioned by the young people in modern society through the quilts. These quilts with elaborately arranged patterns possess symmetrical beauty and profound significance. The appearance of the quilts "indicates that each piece of fabric constituting the quilt has an independent meaning", (Newman, p.11) intimating the necessity of creating a form of social organization that encompasses numerous independent individuals. Moreover, Amy's critique of the plain clothes in modern society echoes Hooke's complaint regarding modern large-scale industrial production. Another characteristic is that these quilts are all hand-sewn without the employment of modern sewing machines - which astonishes a customer. Another artisan, Tommy Franklin, is capable of carving peach pits into various exquisite small artworks, such as small baskets and small animals. Children detect the charm contained in these small items and can sense the childlike mood Tommy had when carving them. They especially appreciate the meticulously crafted handle, and Tommy must have been replete with pleasure and satisfaction when carving it. Placing these small artworks in a box or drawer, they will emanate a distinctive lavender-like fragrance, and their fragrance will never dissipate.

In addition to quilt sewing and walnut carving, Updike also incorporated traditional handicrafts into the trade of carpentry. A character named Skeeter in *Rabbit Redux* stated: many men have a hobby of working as carpenters and do that work in basements, just like collecting stamps.

Here, woodworking has coalesced a significant amount of enthusiasm and ingenuity among men, manifesting the direct integration of labor and recreation, means and ends. It is no longer merely a form of labor but has transformed into a hobby. In this state, individuals are liberated and joyous, and thereby brimming with creativity. Kant denominated those human activities that were liberated from coercion and founded on the free fondness for

things as "games". Traditional artisans, represented by carpenters, employed their own knowledge, judgment, and will, fully exerted their potential, and concentrated on their work as per their desires, combining physical labor with mental labor, and "participated in the entire process of crafting handicrafts." (Sreenivasulu, p.176) The wood utilized for labor and the woodwork products fabricated all belonged to him. He was laboring for himself in the position of the master rather than working for an employer to generate profits as an employee. During the debate between Conner and Hook in *The Poorhouse Fair*, Conner pointed out disdainfully that Christ was merely a carpenter and scoffed, "The young carpenter in Syria two thousand years ago might be a god." Hook countered, "To be a carpenter, in my mind, no other occupation is inherently so sacred, so constructive, or so appropriate for human beings that God has assigned for them to undertake."

Handicrafts such as quilt sewing, walnut carving, and woodworking integrate rich human elements and demonstrate rich human values and humanistic implications. Updike appreciates handcrafted wedges and quilts, pays attention to craftsmanship, tools, and techniques, and pursues eternity. (Greiner, p.20) The enthusiasm of the former dean Mendelssohn for the fair and his sincere praise for the handicrafts of the elderly, "treating the elderly as creative individuals" (Sreenivasulu, p.173), represents his recognition of the freedom and creativity of the elderly, thereby enabling them to feel that they are still valuable persons. However, the current dean Conner is passionate about science and technology and modern production, is indifferent to the fair, and lacks an understanding of the significance of handicrafts to the lives of the elderly, which makes him unable to appreciate these ancient handicraft techniques replete with humanity. Faced with the quilt sewn by Amy, Conner fails to understand the profound meaning behind it. He merely uttered a perfunctory word of praise and then noticed that "some of the fabric pieces she used appeared so fragile and dry that he was somewhat concerned that the shining sun would turn them into fragments." Evidently, traditional handicrafts, in his eyes, are just like those "fragile and dry fabric pieces" on the quilt, and will soon be blown away by the strong wind of industrial mass production. If "Mendelsohn represents the era of handicrafts"(Sreenivasulu, p.173), then Conner represents the era of industrial mass production.

Individual handicrafts, characterized by inherent drawbacks such as low efficiency and high costs, have been constantly marginalized under the impact of the irresistible large-scale production of modern industry. Those engaged in sewing quilts, walnut carving, and carpentry are all outdated rural artisans. In Updike's novels, these artisans were defeated by large-scale production technologies and inhumane mechanization, and manual labor could no longer persist. For instance, Amy

had great difficulty finding more similar fabrics for sewing quilts, suggesting that hand-sewing as an occupation has declined on the whole. Handicrafts represent the bygone era in Updike's novels, and he expresses his lamentation for this in his works.

With the further advancement of individual handicrafts, after undergoing the simple collaboration of capitalist industry, it entered the stage of manufactory handicrafts. Essentially, manufactory handicrafts remain of handicraft nature and still cannot dispense with the reliance on skilled technical workers in handicraft production. The technical proficiency of workers and the number of skilled workers directly determine the product quality, production efficiency and production capacity. However, on the other hand, the ability of workers in manufactories to master the entire production is not as competent as that of laborers in the stage of individual handicrafts, but is in the stage of gradual loss. Moreover, workers are deformed into partial workers, resulting in physical and mental atrophy.

The story in Updike's fourth novel, *Rabbit Redux*, occurred in 1969. Harry's occupation was that of a typesetter in a printing factory in the town, being responsible for typesetting with lead type. The printing industry is one of the landmark sectors of handicraft workshop production. With the introduction of printing technology, many European countries established printing houses in the fifteenth century, employing workers to labor in the workshops. This printing method, after improvement, has persisted until modern times. Moreover, typesetting is an important procedure in printing. Manual typesetting is time-consuming, labor-intensive and inefficient. Meanwhile, one has to concentrate without making mistakes. To operate precisely, typesetters must remember the position of each character. This job appears simple, but it demands a very high technical level for its accomplishment. It is not difficult to become an ordinary typesetter, yet it requires a great deal of effort to reach proficiency, and this cannot be attained without several years of training. Manual proficiency remains the foundation of typesetting. Workers are not entirely subordinate to machines but possess a certain degree of autonomy. In the typesetting process, workers manually arrange the text, and the labor is condensed in the product, enabling the product to embody the value of the workers themselves.

At the outset of the novel, Harry had been employed in the printing factory for numerous years. During his work, he always deftly operated the typesetting machine and was capable of proficiently organizing and arranging the rustling and disordered type molds into meaningful lines. Just as his colleague Buchanan stated, Harry was an expert in typesetting. Updike depicted Harry's typesetting process in the following manner: his fingers fluttered like feathers, the type molds rattled at the heights, and the molten lead steamed cheerfully beside him. He controlled

the typesetting process, making it an autonomous act and deriving satisfaction and pleasure from the labor. For Harry, typesetting was not such a painful procedure. He "found joy and dignity from the typesetting work", (Bellis, p.121) and the meaning and value of his personal life were realized to a certain extent. Here, manual typesetting was not only a job for him to sustain his livelihood but also enabled him to experience the enjoyment of the work.

The working environment in the printing factory was highly refreshing and soothing to Harry. The colossal printing machine with thousands of components warmed him like a mother's tender care. Here, the machines appeared rather alluring and were capable of fulfilling all emotional needs of individuals. (Bellis, p.125) He relished the sensation when touching the machine, and even the lighting in the printing factory appealed to him. Harry, having developed a fondness for the working environment and the printing machine here, subsequently formed a spiritual attachment to this job. To him, the machine was like an infant. As long as one followed its requirements, it would submit and serve. Harry's spirit merged into the work, and the relationship between man and machine achieved harmony here. He and the machine were interdependent and partially subordinate to the machine, yet still retained a certain degree of independence. To typeset a news draft proficiently, Harry could proceed according to his own tempo and manner, having acquired a certain degree of autonomy. Nevertheless, he was still bound by his superiors and various company regulations. During working hours, he was prohibited from undertaking any other tasks apart from typesetting. He was engaged in a solitary typesetting job and was isolated from others while at work. Answering the phone during working hours elicited dissatisfaction from his supervisor. Once Harry completed the typesetting of the news draft, his task was accomplished. Printing the news draft into a newspaper was another procedure that did not fall within his purview. Marx stated, Precisely because handicraft proficiency still constitutes the foundation of the production process, each worker is only suited for one partial function, and his labor power is transformed into an organ dedicated to performing this partial function throughout his life. Due to the constraints and limitations of proficiency, Harry was still unable to freely transition between different typesetting processes and became a person with a singular skill.

Later, the printing factory introduced the new offset printing method for printing. It was capable of printing faster and more precisely. Nevertheless, the typesetting machine with movable type was operated manually and thus constrained by human power. Its working efficiency and quality were far inferior to those of the machine. Typesetting workers like Harry were edged out by the new machines and eventually became unemployed. The handicraft workshop industry made a transition to the

large-scale machine industry. To enhance efficiency, skilled workers in traditional handicrafts were dismissed. This transformation overturned the craftsmanship accumulated over several hundred years, rendering human power and craftsmanship insignificant.

3. THE IMPACT OF MODERN PRODUCTION MODE

From the end of World War II to the 1960s, it marked the turning point when Fordism reached its zenith and began to wane. Fordism, a typical form of large-scale industrial production, is characterized by the infinite subdivision of labor procedures, the infinite monotony of labor processes, the continuous deterioration of workers' skills, mechanical automation, and standardization. Such a production mode has truly strayed from the notion of handicraft skills. This undifferentiated industrial production has led to the monotony of production, life, and the world. The meticulous division of labor has minimized workers' control over the production process, while the management department has gained complete dominance over it. It has fragmented some complete and meaningful entities into trivial pieces, making work no longer as comprehensive and manageable as in the handicraft era. People merely constitute a part of the colossal industrial production machinery, and the sentiments of workers are disregarded. Production workers are regarded as mindless commodities, devoid of initiative and creativity.

The story of *Rabbit, Run* is set in the 1950s. As Mathew pointed out, the United States in the 1950s was an era emphasizing uniformity and dullness. (Mathew, p. 73) Harry's job was to promote paring knives for a Magic Peeler company on television. Engaging in the profession of sales promotion requires sufficient ability and wisdom and constitutes a test of one's overall quality. For Harry, the job of a salesman had little autonomy. His promotion of paring knives on television was subject to supervision from various sides. He had to wear a common suit and act charmingly to please and attract the audience. Harry was unable to control the sales process, was not permitted to work in his own way, nor could he freely exert his potential. He merely repeatedly carried out monotonous and tedious product demonstrations, thereby losing control over the labor process. Such work and the work process have been routinized, that is to say, labor exists as a state contrary to human beings and becomes a foreign object. Moreover, the quality and effect of this Magic brand paring knife are also questionable. Just as Harry said: "admitting it's all a fraud but, what the hell, making it likable. We're all in it together. Fraud makes the world go round." (Updike, p.15) Harry was very busy at work every day and thought about work even when watching TV at home, but he did not know what he had done or gained.

At the outset of the novel, Updike makes several references to Harry's suit. Harry is obliged to don a suit during his work, and when playing basketball with children, he removes the suit, folds it and places it aside. This is a symbolic act. At that time, people's lives were monotonous, dreary and lackluster, and the suit, with its invariant style, signified Harry's inflexible and characterless occupation. Demonstrating a paring knife on television is to exist as a public figure, demanding that Harry comply with the mainstream social norms and refrain from expressing his passion and personality at will. Compared with playing basketball, demonstrating a paring knife on television is far more tedious and insipid. In the plot of the novel, "He attempts to find solutions to the crisis based on sensory experiences, escapes, pleasures, gardening work or making love." (Yang, p. 40) In the era of large-scale machine industry, standardized and regulated ideology held sway, under which a host of characters like Harry emerged, such as Holden in *The Catcher in the Rye* and Sal in *On the Road*. Rabbit fails to discover the meaning and value of existence in such monotonous and mediocre jobs and trivial and prosaic daily lives, and therefore can only take flight. Updike seemingly believes that "Rabbit's comprehensive sense of alienation is not so much a result of his complaints about his family or living conditions as it is of his inner sense of emptiness." (Mirza, p. 99)

In contrast to the escape of Rabbit, the protagonist, "Centaur" Caldwell, in the novel "The Centaur" adheres to traditional moral principles and unquestioningly fulfills the school management system formulated by the administrators represented by the principal, Zimmerman. Consequently, he is scrupulous in his work duties, profoundly fears the principal, and endures each day under the shadow of work pressure and the dread of unemployment. The principal's name, Zimmerman, corresponds to Zeus in Greek mythology. "Zimmerman is both the principal of the middle school and Zeus in mythology." (Schiff, p. 23) He governs the school like Zeus, exerting diverse pressures on his subordinates. Caldwell spanked a student who was creating a disturbance without restraint in the classroom. This form of corporal punishment violated the law of Pennsylvania, thereby exposing him to the risk of dismissal. Only by adhering to the school operation mode stipulated by the management and the laws of Pennsylvania could Caldwell retain his job. Furthermore, the entire social order is established relying on the similar standardized operation states and rules across various industries. The laws and rules that Caldwell confronts are like the numerous nets that enshroud Rabbit in *Rabbit, Run*, and the entire society is like a precisely operating large machine. Individuals are merely small components within this large machine, having to operate in accordance with the rhythm of the large machine, with no personal

independence or creativity to speak of. Moreover, if a component malfunctions, it can be replaced at any time. Caldwell was shot in the ankle by a student playing a prank and was thus late for class. The principal did not permit him to explain but urged him to commence the class promptly – Caldwell's personal emotions and needs appeared negligible in the face of the large machine of the school. It was shortly after the conclusion of World War II at that time, and a large number of veterans were awaiting employment. If Caldwell were to lose his job, the school could recruit new teachers at any moment.

In the first chapter of the novel, Updike presents to us the chaotic classroom of Caldwell. During the class, it is extremely difficult for him to maintain classroom order and he is unable to control the teaching process. The students are naughty and mischievous, showing no respect for the teacher, and even shoot an arrow to wound his ankle. One morning, when setting off for school with his son, Caldwell refers to the school as a "slaughterhouse", a "factory of hate", and the "those numb and expressionless faces" lead him to think of death and make him feel that he "will vanish without a trace in the minds of those naughty children", and "they oppress me to the point of death". Furthermore, Caldwell also holds a skeptical attitude towards the purpose of teaching. Even though he discloses the test questions to a girl out of sympathy, she still fails the exam. Teaching has become an unaccomplished task for him, no longer his spiritual sustenance, but rather a job that merely exhausts his life in vain.

In *Rabbit Redux*, Peggy found a job related to computer typing. Her work is typing tape for Brewer Fealty over at Youngquist. They're putting all their records on computer tape, and the work is boring, and she didn't even know when she had made a mistake. The division of labor within the Bluee Faith Company has fragmented work tasks into small pieces. The actions performed by workers on the assembly line are merely partial, and the task of typing computer tapes that Peggy is responsible for is not highly technical. Low-skilled workers like her can be competent with a little training and can complete this single and monotonous job without the need for mental exertion. Peggy mechanically types computer tapes on a daily basis. This repetitive and monotonous work denies her any independence and creativity. She only undertakes the work items strictly stipulated by the company and performs a single function like a component on a machine. She must submit to the machine and follow its operational mode, being completely tethered to the production line. Without having knowledge of the purpose of these actions, they have to repeat them thousands of times. Furthermore, Peggy is completely unable to grasp the work process. She is merely numbly busy and blindly follows, unable to perceive the work outcomes and even being oblivious to mistakes. Her own needs, emotions,

and psychological states have all been disregarded. This brings to mind the novel *Brave New World* by the Aldous Huxley. The future society depicted in this novel is one that utilizes high technology and totalitarian rule. People have no selves, no individuality, and no emotions. People within it regard Henry Ford as God, and even the era is called the Fordian Era.

The machine-based large-scale industrial production, typically represented by Fordism, has increasingly entrapped human labor in partial tedium and has been continuously intensified, standardized, and deskilled. Laborers on modern assembly lines are highly likely to have no knowledge of what the products they manufacture are, nor do they know the ultimate destinations of the products they produce. Laborers are entirely subordinate to machines. This kind of labor suppresses the emotions and demands of laborers, devastates their spirit, and even inflicts physical harm on them. It demands the repression of human individuality and diversity, causing the individuality structure of human beings to exhibit the characteristic of homogeneity. thereby giving rise to various forms of resistance among people and the search for new production methods.

4. POST INDUSTRIAL SOCIAL LANDSCAPE

Before the emergence of post-Fordism in the 1960s, the various adverse effects brought about by the industrial mass production represented by Fordism caused people to resist it in various forms and explore new solutions. In *Rabbit Redux*, a street rebel youth being interviewed by a reporter claimed that factories, Wall Street, and technology should be controlled by the entire society, and the increasingly uncontrollable technology should be restrained to establish a foundation for a new humanitarianism. However, after dismantling the old system, young people at that time did not have a clear blueprint for what kind of society should be built, which was also a common characteristic of youth movements in various countries in the 1960s. Moreover, sometimes the resistance activities were unorganized, unconscious, sporadic and covert. For instance, in *Rabbit, Run*, after Rabbit ran away from home and drove southward, he did not know where his destination was, what he was seeking, or what the underlying causes of his escape were. "Many times he was running blindly like Columbus." (Broer, p. 34) Trapped in the web composed of work and family, Rabbit found himself unable to breathe, firmly ensnared and unable to escape. Caldwell in *The Centaur* was burdened with heavy pressure from work and life, but he did not know how to confront it either and merely desired to escape through death.

Marx pointed out that labor is the most essential practical activity of human beings, and the liberation of

human beings essentially amounts to the transformation of labor forms. Marcuse held that the so-called “liberation” is to emancipate people from the bondage of capitalist modern industrial civilization. If, under a new type of labor form, people adopt an approving attitude during the labor process, work with a pleasant sentiment, and view work not as a burden but as a way of real life and a part of the realization of their own value, then the pain and tedium brought about by labor will be mitigated to a considerable extent. Henceforth, labor is no longer a meaningless exertion of physical and intellectual efforts but a means to realize one’s own value and acquire happiness in life.

In *Rabbit, Run*, after Rabbit runs away from home, it works in Mrs. Smith’s garden and “attempts to deal with the social environment in new ways”. (Mathew, p. 73) Rabbit is responsible for activities such as planting flowers, burning crushed dry stems and withered grass, pruning, carrying, digging the soil, packaging flowers, and so forth in the garden. All the tasks in the garden are accomplished by it alone. What to do first and how to do it are entirely determined by itself, and there is no supervision or management. This brings to mind the scene depicted by Marx: Do this thing today and that thing tomorrow as one pleases, hunt in the morning, fish in the afternoon, engage in animal husbandry in the evening, and engage in criticism after dinner. Here, Rabbit has full control over the labor process. Labor has transformed into an act of self-arrangement, leaving its own imprint everywhere in the garden. Mrs. Smith refers to those rhododendrons as “Harry’s rhododendrons”. Fromm emphasizes working with affection. Work is no longer forced labor but “a kind of creation”. In free and creative labor, “man and nature merge into one”. In contrast to the mechanization and automation of the large-scale machine industry, the work in the garden does not involve modern science and technology and management systems. Rabbit undertakes all kinds of tasks alone, without division of labor or collaboration, without distribution or exchange. During the labor process, Rabbit frequently has to alternately use various labor tools and switch among various jobs, such as digging the soil, planting flowers, pruning, etc., rather than being confined to a single task like digging the soil, planting flowers or pruning. The labor location is not restricted to a certain area either. Thus, it becomes a versatile expert in horticultural work skills.

The labor of Rabbit yielded significant gains. The entire garden thrived under his management. Every time he sowed a seed, he held new hopes and expectations. All these delighted Mrs. Smith, and Rabbit affirmed this from her gratitude towards him. Rabbit and the fruits of his labor became a part of Mrs. Smith’s life. Observing that his labor had exerted a positive influence on others, he himself felt content and filled with a sense of accomplishment.

For Rabbit, working in Mrs. Smith’s garden not only bears the significance of the struggle for survival but also enables him to realize himself in the process. In 1959, the official poverty line set by the United States (based on a family of four) was \$2,973. (Wang, p. 28) Rabbit’s salary as a paring knife salesman was \$73 per week, while he received \$40 per week for his work in the garden. In contrast, \$40 might merely sustain a minimal livelihood, but it was adequate for Rabbit’s daily expenditures as Rabbit and Ruth led a thrifty life without extravagant material indulgence. Although the overall living standard declined, it did not impede Rabbit from enjoying greater freedom and happiness. Or rather, even at the expense of a lower living standard, Rabbit was willing to relish everything that came with working in the garden. His labor in the garden was no longer painful but was akin to pastime and enjoyment, with creativity, aesthetics, and play occupying the dominant position in the labor. Freud generally asserted that due to civilization, eros must be repressed. Marcuse countered this viewpoint, maintaining that the struggle for survival not only does not necessarily eliminate the possibility of instinctive freedom but even becomes a “pillar” for the satisfaction of instincts. In the course of cultivating flowers and trees in the embrace of nature and living in harmony with flowers, plants, and trees, Harry not only assisted Mrs. Smith in alleviating her sense of loneliness but also enabled himself to discover the value of existence, the pleasure of life, the meaning of life, and the long-missing joy that work brought to him.

Rabbit worked in Mrs. Smith’s garden with highly flexible working hours on a weekly basis. Reverend Eccles informed him, there is no need to work for forty hours. It’s flexible working hours. According to the concept of Flexible Work Time, after fulfilling the prescribed work tasks or fixed working hours, employees have the flexibility to independently choose the specific time arrangement for work without adhering to the unified and fixed commuting time. Rabbit were able to rest and work freely in accordance with their own requirements and arrange family life, private social activities and hobbies as they desired. Rabbit went shopping after work, swam and climbed mountains with Ruth, played golf with Reverend Eccles, and accompanied Mrs. Smith for a walk every day. His leisure time was not a supplement to working hours but held its own independent significance.

Firstly, Rabbit accompanies Mrs. Smith for walks during her leisure time, assisting her in getting rid of the sense of loneliness and rejuvenating this elderly widow. While laboring freely in the garden, Rabbit’s spiritual realm has also been elevated and he has found the opportunity to put it into practice, which is prominently manifested in his assistance to Mrs. Smith. He consciously and joyfully serves and dedicates to her. His accompaniment of Mrs. Smith for walks is no longer like working and doing overtime in the factory

to augment profits for the capitalists, but rather to offer assistance to an ordinary old lady. For him, "giving" is not for "receiving", but to acquire happiness in the process of giving. Through this unpaid and voluntary act, Harry has achieved harmony in his relationship with his employer, Mrs. Smith. She is extremely grateful to Harry. With his help, she has discovered the joy of life, thus she realizes that life has not abandoned her. Through his giving, he enriches Mrs. Smith's life; while enhancing his own sense of life, he also evokes something vital in her, and both of them are filled with happiness due to the awakening of the inner vitality. By cheering up the dispirited old widow, he discovers numerous pleasures in life in this process and is aware that he is by no means futile in society. In this manner, he is accepted by society and his own value is recognized by others. Just as Ruth said to him: "Oh all the *world* loves you." (Updike, p.135)

Secondly, Rabbit also engaged in playing golf with Pastor Ericus during his leisure time to cultivate his hobbies. When Rabbit witnessed the golf ball rolling into the hole, he exclaimed excitedly all of a sudden, "That's it!", and he regained the sensation of playing basketball in his high school days. To Rabbit, the score achieved in playing is not of significance. What counts is the act of playing itself because only when running freely on the court could he explore his potential, fully exert and demonstrate his ability, and affirm his own existence. In this regard, the basketball court and the golf course are paradises for Rabbit where he can discover a free, flawless and unrestrained self.

The current social system and the surrounding social milieu remain unchanged, and Mrs. Smith's ownership of the garden persists. Nevertheless, the relationship between Rabbit and Mrs. Smith in the garden has altered. It is no longer the cold relationship of employment and being employed, management and being managed that exists between traditional employers and workers. The various regulations of the existing system are ineffective in the garden. There are no inhumane working conditions in the garden, and humanitarian management approaches are employed instead of the technological dictatorship in the factory. Because the crux of the matter is not who the garden belongs to, but rather what kind of working mode is adopted. What drives all this is "love", namely, a new type of working relationship permeated with mutual care between employers and workers. Marcuse contends that without jeopardizing the entire system, reforms should be made to the management method that uses people as 'robots' and to the monotonous and boring labor process.

Rabbit labor daily in the garden that is "akin to paradise". This presents a stark contrast to the disorderly streets and household furnishings depicted at the beginning of the novel. Updike delineates Mrs. Smith's garden for us in elegant language. Here, there exist all manner of flowers, plants and trees, and the aroma of the

earth is exceptionally fresh. The entire garden resembles the Garden of Eden depicted in the Bible. Even Mrs. Foster and Rabbit consider "it's like paradise here". The scenario of Rabbit working as a gardener in the garden evokes the image of Adam's work in the Garden of Eden. (Sreenivasulu, p. 26) Just as Adam before the Fall lived poetically in the scenic beauty of the Garden of Eden, his heart was suffused with tranquility and happiness, felt truly stable and at ease, life regained its vitality, and his spirit was wholly integrated into the wonderful nature. The harmonious relationship between man and nature reaches its acme here, and the contradictions between man and nature, as well as between man and man, have been resolved. In Marcuse's perspective, the means to liberate nature is to possess nature humanely, that is, when interacting with nature, it must comply with the demands of human nature and shape nature in accordance with the law of beauty. Although being a gardener is far from a momentous occupation, Harry discovered inner equilibrium and harmony here, restored his human nature, enabled his vitality to grow freely, fulfilled his dream of finding the Garden of Eden, and located that "something" he was unable to articulate clearly.

Like Rabbit in the garden, Chiron in *The Centaur* imparts knowledge to his students in a vibrant natural environment on Mount Olympus. Mount Olympus is located in Arcadia, which means "Paradise on Earth". The serene and harmonious classroom of Chiron contrasts with the chaotic classroom of Caldwell. The students respect their teacher, and the teacher is also full of love for the students, and they get along well. Chiron has full control of the teaching process, and the class location is relatively flexible and casual, such as choosing the comfortable shade of a walnut tree, thus avoiding being stereotypical, monotonous, and boring. Chiron's teaching has brought changes to the students, among whom two students, Achilles and Asclepius, are the most outstanding. The latter has surpassed the teacher in many aspects, and Chiron regards him more as a companion than a student. Chiron has also improved in teaching, and has gained happiness, satisfaction and a sense of achievement in his heart: his students have fulfilled this centaur. They have added expectations to his wisdom. The winter in his heart, the chaos in his thoughts, is expelled in the sunlight... Winter has turned into spring.

Unlike the chaotic classroom order of Caldwell, here is an entirely different situation. Chiron and the students integrate into nature, and humans and nature coexist in harmony. Chiron teaches with a delightful sentiment. For him, work is not a burden but a way of life for realizing his self-worth. While invigorating himself, his labor is recognized and accepted by the students, no longer being meaningless physical and intellectual exertions like Caldwell's. Chiron has no need to worry about unemployment or pressure from superiors. Teaching

becomes labor replete with creativity, happiness, and well-being, from which he acquires supreme satisfaction. There is no Zeus in Chiron's classroom. Various restrictive rules and regulations are nowhere to be found here. Moreover, Chiron's daughter, Ocyrhoe, who has the ability to predict the future, foresees that one day Zeus will be ousted and banished from Mount Olympus by humans, which implies that the organizing power of the struggle for survival will be retrieved from the managers. People can organize labor freely and autonomously like Chiron, abolishing all kinds of unreasonable social management rules stipulated by the rulers represented by Zeus and liberating themselves from the compulsory labor imposed by the managers.

Chiron expounded to the students about the world created by Eros, the god of love, where "people led a life free from care and the necessity of labor", enjoying a simple, prosperous and leisurely existence; "The world was as harmonious as a beehive", where there were no city walls, wars or laws, but only trust, morality and security. In this pure land, people loved one another, with no hatred or estrangement, and humans and nature integrated. In Eros' world, there were neither modern science and technology, nor wars or disputes, and all of this was because "love propelled the movement of the universe", resulting from the transformed form of social organization and the concerted efforts of the people.

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