

*Dariusz J. G. G. or s y Jobs n Labor L t ratur*

book's photographs "suggest . . . the stench, blood, pace, heat, and noise of the labor of slaughtering and processing poultry" (115).

Zandy wants to make the point that (quoting Raymond Williams) "the most uneventful life would take a library of books to transcribe" (116).<sup>2</sup> No one would argue with this. Zandy writes that:

"This text successfully creates a space that simultaneously acknowledges the corporate body in global search for the cheapest hands and insists that ordinary workers are more than slaughtered chickens or rendered byproducts. This is accomplished because of the complexity, stamina, and resilience of Linda Lord. First of all, there are multiple Lords: caretaker to aged parents, skilled worker who "sticks" half-killed birds (slices the neck vein), helpful neighbor, the only female lifting 100-pound bobbins at Belfast Rope, volunteer firefighter, drummer in a band, motorcyclist, gardener, union steward and negotiator, certified EMT (Emergency Medical Technician), restaurant helper, fisher and hunter, lover of nature and dogs, single, self-supporting divorcee, and one-eyed worker." (116-117)

While one admires Lord's multi-faceted life, the point Zandy makes, seems a truism: workers are more than their jobs. It also seems to me irrelevant. That workers have lives outside of work cannot be denied. Acknowledging their humanity should be a no-brainer. But all of the above achievements have nothing to do with her job. I certainly stand in awe of someone who can do all the things Lord does and work the jobs she holds. But her multi-faceted personality and life change nothing in the exploitative system to which she is harnessed. Sometimes Zandy comes perilously close to the idea that we should accept this dichotomizing of our lives into work/non-work. It was this that Marx so eloquently argued against in the *Economic and Philosophic Manuscripts of 1844* and *The German Ideology*. I am sure she would deny it, but it sometimes seems to me as if Zandy is accepting alienated labor, only with the proviso that bosses acknowledge workers as human beings.

I think I understand where this feeling comes from. It seems to derive from the completely understandable desire to deny the horrors and dead-end quality of (I would argue) most jobs. It is psychologically too stressful to live with and have to acknowledge, day in and day out, that what one does for eight-plus hours a day is too awful for words. The phrase "wage slavery" didn't come into the language for nothing. Such denial inevitably takes a toll on one's inner life.<sup>3</sup> No matter how much one accomplishes outside of work, the hard-core horror of work remains.

Acknowledging/admiring a person such as Linda Lord effects not an iota of change in the hard-core horror. To the extent that it enables the worker to tolerate her job, it might even be seen as counter-productive in effecting change. Commenting on an essay by Carolyn Chute at the end of the exhibit, Zandy writes: "The essay is a call for a democracy of work and a democracy of recognition of the value of all work" (119). This seems to come perilously close to a restatement of the Protestant Ethic, the notion that work is in and of itself good. But this is patently false. Clearly some (much?) work is bad. Granted, some bad work has to be done; but certainly the amount dagnithe

labor, the worker, with little to no investment in the product of her labor, sees no reason to work any harder than she has to; her wage remains the same whatever her level of effort.. Indeed, it makes perfect sense (to anyone not beholden to the work ethic) that they will do as little work as possible, short of getting fired.

This “refusal of work,” as it was termed in the 1960s and 1970s is one response to the capitalist work ethic, an ethic that, as noted above, Zandy seems to endorse. While one may question the effectiveness of such a response, it does seem a legitimate response to the bos

