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*The Disposable Workforce.* Thomas S. Moore.

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Thomas S. Moore, *The Disposable Workforce*. Hawthorne, NY: 1996. \$37.95 hardcover, \$18.95 papercover.

In recent years, layoffs, downsizing, restructuring and outsourcing have become euphemisms for the fact that employment insecurity is on the rise. While most people could expect to find a steady, reasonably well paid job with one or perhaps two employers over a lifetime, this expectation has come to an end. New generations face a situation in which employment will be transitional, ephemeral and uncertain. In addition, more and more people will be self-employed selling their services to corporations as needed. The current period is a transitional one. As the United State struggles to compete in the global market place and as the demand for ever increasing profits escalates, more and more Americans will become displaced.

Moore's study of the problem of employment displacement begins with an account of the much publicized closing of Chrysler's automobile plant in Kenosha, Wisconsin. While the media presented the closing as an unfortunate but necessary fact of economic life, little attention was paid to the impact the closing had on the lives of the thousands of workers who were laid off. It was a lack of concern for these people that inspired Moore to examine the whole issue of employment displacement in some detail. His book is thorough, well researched and well written. However, it also makes for depressing reading. As growth slows, competition increases, wages fall and inequality rises, the prospects for ordinary people are hardly encouraging. The book discusses the causes of the present situation and provides a particularly poignant account of the huge economic, social and psychological costs of displacement.

Moore rightly rejects at the idea that market forces will somehow correct the situation. The final section of the book offers an overview of the policy innovations government can adopt to counter the trend. The author shows that there is an urgent need for action and that potentially helpful policies can be introduced. The question is whether the nation's political leadership has the will or inclination to take corrective action.