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## **The universal dimension of work in the light of selected socio-economic transformations**

## **Uniwersalny wymiar pracy w świetle wybranych przeobrażeń społeczno-gospodarczych**

### **Introduction**

The matter concerning human labour has been a subject of interest across various academic disciplines: economics, philosophy, sociology, ethics, praxeology, medicine, law, and many others. In each of these disciplines, the issues related to human work are viewed from their unique vantage points. Pedagogy is one of them, and within its domain, the pedagogy of work stands out. Hence, one could argue that labour is a concept of universal significance, rich in nuances, and interpreted in a multitude of ways. Within the pedagogy of work, special attention is given to the universality of human labour, emphasizing that work is a value that other values depend upon. In this context, it is crucial to specify which work one is referring to (Gerlach 2016, p. 27).

In this article, the focus is on human labour, as interpreted within the framework of the pedagogy of work, with particular emphasis on its

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universalistic character. One might well agree with Stanisław Kowalczyk's assertion that "labour is not the ultimate value, but in the contemporary world, it stands as a universal value and among the predominant ones. A conscious renunciation of it impedes the proper development of an individual, rendering them a moral cripple and a societal parasite. Without labour, the higher moral values – justice, love, peace – become mere fiction and verbosity. Labour might not directly create such values, yet it remains an indispensable externalisation and affirmation of them" (Kowalczyk 2002, p. 143).

In justifying the consideration of labour in a universalistic context, it was taken into account that within this sub-discipline of pedagogy, there have not been too many publications within this scope. Therefore, merely indicating this issue may contribute to a broader interest in this subject matter. This has been done in the light of some selected socio-economic transformations that have been occurring before our eyes for several years. Perhaps this will particularly interest to the young adepts of labour pedagogy and encourage them not only to undertake theoretical analyses but also empirical research. The analysis of publications in this field allows for the recognition that this pedagogical sub-discipline reacts too slowly to changes in this area, and even the issue of the universalism of human work is a research-neglected area in labour pedagogy.

### **Human Labour in Conditions of Permanent Change**

The necessity of deliberations on the subject of human labour seems, even today and, perhaps, especially so, to be particularly pertinent. On the one hand, the assertions of Stefan Wyszyński remain timely, suggesting that labour is not only our need and joy due to the material benefits it offers, but also because, as a duty, it facilitates one's spiritual development (Wyszyński 1991, p. 18). On the other hand, there are increasingly vocal proponents claiming the imminent end of work, or, at the very least, the end of human labour in its traditional sense, that is, the transformation of natural resources and adapting them to meet human needs. The "crisis of work" is also a phrase more frequently heard. The author of this paper has extensively written on this topic in the past. However, it seems worthwhile to reiterate certain questions that remain relevant and ought to be posed: Is work then that "singular value upon which all other societal values are founded and function"? Is labour the measure of a person's worth, and if so, for how long will it remain so? And as

Pope John Paul II once wrote, “Through work, does man not only transform nature to suit his needs, but also realises himself as a man, and to some extent, becomes more human?” (Laborem exercens 1996, p. 19).

Labour still constitutes, and continues to be, a fundamental part of an individual’s life. Whether it will always be so, it is hard to determine for how long work can be perceived in two distinct ways.

- “Autotelically – where it serves as an end in itself for someone, a source of joy, satisfaction, a path to self-realisation, and an activity with which one can personally identify;
- Instrumentally – where it is a means to achieve other goals deemed significant: attaining social status, prestige, and material wealth” (Suchar 2003, p. 38).

In my opinion, one cannot precisely define this. For we are currently in an era of remarkable changes across all spheres of our lives. The realm of work is one in which these changes are particularly rapid and evident. The shifts underway are multifaceted, with the breadth and “depth” of these changes varying across different domains.

Changes in the realm of work, characteristic of the post-Fordist and post-industrial eras, encompass aspects such as flexible working hours, team-oriented tasks, standardisation of management procedures, and a focus on the customer and consumer, alongside diversified and increasingly flexible organisational structures of companies. These are challenges for both employers and employees alike. There is much discussion about the “new work” or the labour of the new millennium (Gerlach 2020). We also encounter terms such as “multi-working” and “multi-worlds of work”, which result from merging flexible organisational time structures with flexible employment forms, succinctly capturing the essence of an individual’s engagement in several types of paid work simultaneously (Lipińska-Grobelny 2014, p. 22).

The existence of these “multi-worlds” is corroborated by phenomena and processes, outcomes of transformations unfolding across time and space, identified and organized by Renata Tomaszewska:

- “The emergence of successive, innovative forms of work and the diversification of its conditions lead to an increasing disjunction between one’s profession and job. It is highly probable that more and more individuals might not possess a specific profession but are not, for this reason, unemployed.

- The blurring boundaries between employees and employers due to the rise of new forms of employment contracts (e.g., solo entrepreneurship, franchising, payrolling, and others).
- The evolution of the so-called “organisations of the future”, especially those that are self-managed, based on partnership, trust and responsibility, often referred to as “teal” organisations.
- The crafting of new career paths predominantly centred on online work; work that is variable, diversified, and certainly hyper-connected.
- The emergence of the “tailored work” trend, which encompasses personalisation understood as segmentation of human resources, customising core contract elements and modes of work performance, as well as the execution of differentiated financial investments, especially in employees possessing crucial competencies and talents, who generate the primary added value.
- The ongoing individualisation of work, manifesting itself, in essence, in all the aforementioned trends, but primarily in the necessary independence of workers - the “reliance on oneself”, especially in the context of the anticipated future decline of fixed-term jobs. Perhaps each and every of us will “become a company”, endeavouring to secure what scholarly literature terms as “employability”, that is, the capability to be employable.
- The proliferation of the “alternative work model”, predominantly considering contract-based, project-based, part-time, seasonal, temporary, or so-called “on-call” work – all these modes of work provision are recognised as NextGen Work, which translates to “Work of the new generation”.
- Furthermore, as an increasing number of individuals adopt alternative work methods, the boundary between professional activity and the private sphere does not need to be uniform for all” (Tomaszewska 2020, pp. 54–55).

The ongoing transformations in the work process, and those likely to occur in the future, undoubtedly also impact education, especially vocational education.

Discussing changes in work, it is imperative to mention the transformations induced by information and communication technologies (ICT). Experts in this field even talk about a digital tsunami in the labour market. Implementation of

such technologies in businesses and the public sector reshapes the very essence of work, which undergoes computerization, digitization, and automation. Future-of-work experts anticipate that the emerging sectors of the digital economy will especially need analysts, architects, data miners, software and application developers, artificial intelligence specialists, designers, and manufacturers of new intelligent machines and robots, as well as specialists in digital marketing and e-commerce. Analyses suggest that automation and digitization will lead to the disappearance of almost half of all jobs within the next quarter-century (Gumtree 2017, p. 10).

Data from numerous studies and reports conducted by labour market institutions suggest that Polish workers too are aware of the fact that their existing skills might not serve them well in a world dominated by digital technologies and workplaces saturated with modern informational solutions. A significant majority (61%) of Poles even feel a tangible pressure to keep pace with technological advancements. In this regard, Poles rank third among European nations, following closely behind Italians (80%) and Hungarians (62%). The Polish are also among the foremost nations believing that in order not to become obsolete in the job market and to retain employment opportunities up to retirement, one must continually enhance one's core competencies in the digital realm. A staggering 88% of surveyed individuals from Poland intend to undertake such proactive measures. Only marginally more frequent in Europe are similar declarations made by Spaniards (88%), Portuguese (89%), and Romanians (89%). Poles predominantly perceive the impact of technology on workplaces more as an opportunity than a threat (79%). Consequently, 79% of Polish respondents believe it should be up to employers to orchestrate training programmes that equip employees with skills adept for the digital work environment. However, as the data suggests, a mere 45% of workers assert that their superiors arrange such training sessions. By comparison, in India, 78% of workers have encountered such training in their workplaces. Education, encompassing scholastic instruction for the youth and both in-job and extracurricular training for employees, has not just the potential but arguably the obligation to aid in adapting to this evolving work environment. According to 69% of Poles, schools and universities are preparing individuals for these shifts by cultivating relevant skills. Yet only 67% of those with tertiary education are of this conviction (PARP, 2019, p. 18).

When deliberating upon the matter of human employment, one must not overlook that we are amidst the fourth industrial revolution. This denotes the realisation of the “smart factory” concept, wherein cyber-physical systems control physical processes, creating virtual replicas of the tangible world and making decentralised decisions. Through the Internet of Things, these systems communicate and cooperate in real time amongst themselves and with humans. Furthermore, by harnessing cloud computing, they offer and utilise both internal and interoperable services (Rapacki, 2018, p. 215). In this discourse, one must not neglect the transformation of professions and the consequent eradication of numerous job positions. As per estimations by the consulting firm McKinsey, by the year 2030, the advancements in artificial intelligence and manufacturing automation will necessitate occupational changes for 75 to 375 million individuals. Concurrently, new professions, currently non-existent, ought to emerge (McKinsey & Company 2018). Ryszard Rapacki enumerates seven upcoming professions of the future: artificial intelligence designers; customer satisfaction specialists; robot managers; “translators” who render data comprehensible for learning machines; artists employing drones for creation; overseers of artificial intelligence tasks within laboratories; and security operators alongside testers (Rapacki 2018, pp. 217–218; *Seven Professions of the Future...*, 2018).

At this juncture, it is pertinent to highlight the emerging vision of Society 5.0”. Without delving deeply into specifics – given the burgeoning literature on the topic – it suffices to signal a few characteristic phenomena associated with this vision. For instance, an increasing number of devices are being connected to the Internet; there is the advent of remote medical diagnosis; systems for monitoring hospital patients and care home residents have been put in place, employing devices such as cameras and sensors; drones are finding utility in the delivery sector; and we are seeing the deployment of automated machinery in agriculture. These are but mere exemplars. It is unequivocal that actions of this kind will proliferate. Indeed, today, a myriad of these initiatives have already found their application (Gerlach 2020).

It is, or indeed is already becoming, a widespread phenomenon to witness the obsolescence of certain professions and the creation of novel employment opportunities. For instance, the substitution of human doctors by robotised counterparts predicated on artificial intelligence, or the replacement of pilots with drones (Harari 2018, p. 51). It is challenging to prognosticate the

complexion of the job market come 2050. According to Yuval Noah Harari, the notion of “lifelong employment”, let alone the very concept of a “lifelong profession”, may seem out-of-date (Ibid., p. 56). This very author poses questions that are particularly salient in contemporary discourse: How might one forestall the erosion of job roles? What measures can ensure the creation of a sufficient number of new positions? And what if, despite our most valiant efforts, the pace at which job roles vanish significantly outstrips their genesis? (Ibid., p. 58).

More frequently and with increasing fervour, discourse revolves around the concept of Universal Basic Income (UBI). This would serve to satisfy rudimentary necessities whilst also instilling a sense of self-worth. It is a model, or perhaps more aptly described as a proposal, which hinges on the taxation of billionaires by the state and, as Harari delineates, corporations possessing algorithms and robots, with the proceeds earmarked to provision citizens with an income that covers basic outlays. An alternative suggestion posits an expansion in the range of activities we deem to constitute work, for instance, parental child-rearing. The state might also subsidise certain universal essential services, such as free education, medical care, complimentary transportation and the like (Ibid., pp. 62–63).

Opinions, especially pertaining to the ubiquity of a Basic Income, are decidedly varied. “According to a Gallup poll from February 2018, Americans are evenly split on whether a universal basic income is favourable or not. Detractors fear it might attenuate the motivation for productivity and undermine the pride and satisfaction individuals derive from their labour. “I believe there is a certain dignity in work”, contends Nobel Prize laureate economist Joseph Stiglitz, who often champions progressive policies. There are also reservations about its potential economic boon. The Roosevelt Institute, a left-leaning think tank, postulates that a universal basic income, if to be funded through taxation, would yield no discernible benefits in terms of economic growth. Yet, there are other prospective advantages. A pilot scheme in Ontario, Canada, encompassing single individuals earning less than \$26,000 and couples with earnings below \$36,500, demonstrated that its participants felt more robust, less anxious, more socially integrated, and capable of investing in education and job-seeking.” (Guillen, 2021, p. 134).

One must duly recognise that the “panacea” for the anticipated shifts in human labour lies in education – one that prepares the younger generation

for these changes, whilst concurrently encouraging older individuals (be they employed or seeking employment) to partake in lifelong learning.

Changes in human labour are likely intertwined with (or indeed are already partially a product of) an exceptionally rapid and hitherto unparalleled development of artificial intelligence. To illustrate the probable applications of artificial intelligence in human labour, one might proffer a few examples.

According to IBM, an artificial intelligence system tasked with (or potentially engaging in) diagnosing diseases holds a considerable advantage over medical practitioners. If this is indeed the case, deploying such a system might obviate the need for the prolonged and costly education of doctors. A parallel can be drawn with pharmacists. In 2011, San Francisco witnessed the inauguration of a pharmacy operated by a robot. Can robots, then, supersede doctors and pharmacists? Some contend that they cannot replicate the quintessential human interaction – they lack the capability for emotion (Harari 2018b, pp. 400–401).

At this juncture, it is worth noting that research on the subject was also commissioned by the White House during the Obama presidency. This pertained to the technological advancement of autonomous vehicles which, as per the findings, imperils the employment of drivers of both light and heavy lorries, thus affecting from 1.5 million to 2.2 million individuals. This constitutes 60% to 90% of the total drivers employed in 2015. If one were to include bus drivers, taxi drivers, chauffeurs, and the self-employed, this figure could exceed three million. As Guillen elucidates, a future with autonomous vehicles appears rather luminous. This stems from the stark reality that humans often exhibit carelessness and unreliability; they may become distracted, weary or simply complacent. In contrast, a computer possesses the acumen to optimise intricate travel routes, adroitly adapt to traffic densities and road conditions, and concurrently economise on fuel consumption (Guille, 2021, pp. 2017–2018).

Changes are also manifested in other professional realms. “In manufacturing, one robot can typically supplant an average of five to six workers. The cadre of individuals engaged in repetitive physical labour in the United States numbered 28 million in 1983. By 2015, this figure had modestly risen to merely 30 million. During this period, 300,000 robots were commissioned, effectively performing the labour equivalent to nearly two million workers. [...] Similarly, the number of positions involving routine intellectual labour, primarily encompassing office workers and salespeople, escalated



from 28 million to a mere 33 million. Conversely, positions necessitating non-routine physical tasks, such as skilled mechanics, burgeoned from 14 million to 27 million, and the roles requiring non-routine intellectual labour, including educators, designers, programmers, and healthcare professionals, amplified from 28 million to an impressive 57 million. For the present, at least, certain professions appear to elude the technological capacity for creative destruction” (Guillen, 2021, pp. 2018–2019).

In a parallel manner, one can envisage the deployment of cutting-edge technology and artificial intelligence across various professions. Thus, as posited by J. N. Harari, “Perhaps the most pressing question in the economic discourse of the 21st century will pertain to the fate of these now ‘redundant’ individuals. What will sentient beings pursue when we have extraordinarily intelligent yet consciousness-devoid algorithms that can execute virtually any task more proficiently than us? To what endeavours shall we turn when these mindless algorithms prove to be superior educators, diagnosticians, and designers than their human counterparts?” (Harari, 2018b, p. 403).

These questions are entirely valid. Thus, it is essential not only to ask them but also to seek answers. According to this author, due to the fact that humans possess two primary types of skills – physical and cognitive, when machines take over purely physical tasks, humans focus on those requiring at least minimal cognitive abilities. However, what will happen when algorithms surpass us in memorization, analysis, and pattern recognition? It is merely wishful thinking to imagine that humans will always possess some unique capability that remains beyond the reach of consciousnessless algorithms. Three simple principles summarize the scientific response to such fantasies:

1. Organisms are algorithms.
2. The type of material from which a calculator is built does not affect algorithmic computations.
3. There is no reason to believe that organic algorithms can perform tasks that non-organic algorithms will never be able to emulate or surpass (Ibid., pp. 403–404).

Referring once again to this author, it is worth noting that it will become increasingly easier to replace humans with computer algorithms. The reason will not be just because algorithms are becoming more intelligent, but also because humans are becoming more specialized. It will even be possible to replace managers in various fields. For example, Uber manages millions of taxi

drivers, employing only a handful of people. Most of the commands are issued by algorithms, without the need for human supervision (Ibid., p. 408).

So, what will people do when the vision of a world without work becomes a reality? Some point to the arts. Grzegorz Szulczewski believes that it is worth returning to Aristotle's guidelines regarding meaningful human activity. It was: indulging in pleasure, political and public activity, or philosophical reflection, contemplation (Szulczewski, 2018, p. 32).

Are there, however, any forms of activity that, when work is lacking, will be able to make life meaningful? It is hard to say unequivocally. Just as the vision of a world without work also does not seem realistic, at least in the coming years. Research conducted in 2013 by Oxford researchers – Karl Benedikt Frey and Michael Osborne – shows that 47% of jobs are at high risk. They will be taken over by computer algorithms within the next 20 years. For example, telemarketers and insurance analysts (99%) will lose their jobs by 2033, sports referees (98%), cashiers (97%), chefs (96%), waiters (94%), legal assistants (94%), tour guides (91%), bakers (89%), bus drivers (89%), construction workers (88%), veterinary assistants (86%), security agents (84%), sailors (83%), bartenders (77%), archivists (76%), carpenters (72%), and rescuers (67%). There are also safe professions, e.g., archaeologists, by 2033 computer algorithms will only push 0.7% out of the market. There will also be a number of new professions, e.g., designers of virtual worlds. (Harari 2018b, p. 413). New professions, as well as a change in the content of those that will still be on the job market, will necessitate a different kind of education than before.

So, what should we teach? As Harari writes, many pedagogy experts argue that schools should shift towards teaching the “four Cs” – critical thinking, communication, cooperation, and creativity. Schools should place less emphasis on technical skills and stress more on universal life skills. The most important will be the ability to cope with change, learn new things, and maintain mental balance in unfamiliar situations. To keep up with the pace of the world in 2050, one will need not only to create new ideas and products but also, and perhaps most importantly, to reinvent oneself again and again (Harari 2018, p. 335).

The proposed solutions should apply not only to the initial education of young people but also to adults, especially to those who have lost their jobs. For them, lifelong learning should be an everyday reality. However, it is uncertain whether individuals who have lost employment in their previous professions

will be able to quickly retrain. Will they be able to chart a new career path in a different or new profession? Whether everyone will be capable of this is questionable.

One should agree with Kawada Tsukasa, who believes that “we are currently witnessing a revolution in the design and manufacturing of devices and the development of new technologies using artificial intelligence. New systems, services, and solutions that make life easier are constantly being created” (*Polityka...*, 2020).

Taking into account the subject matter of this study, it is worth drawing attention once again to an issue that, in a world of uncertainty, seems to provide the most stable reference point. This is lifelong learning. Knowledge, skills, understanding, and reflection can assist in solving the mysteries of the future, including the job market. Therefore, it is of great concern to see the participation data of Polish adults in this form of education. What is the reason for this situation? It seems that one of the factors is the specifics of the Polish education system. Its distinctive feature is the dominance of formal education and the underestimation of non-formal education, which provides opportunities to learn at work, in the community, and in everyday life. As a result, we see both linearly defined paths of acquiring and developing competencies and linear attitudes towards personal, especially professional, development. A good example of the Polish education system's limited openness to informal learning is the analysis of higher education institutions' involvement in lifelong learning. One of the reasons for this might be that Poland belongs to the countries where solutions are still emerging that allow creating alternative paths to higher education for non-standard student groups and recognizing the outcomes of prior learning as a basis for progress in studies. Moreover, for many adults, the term “lifelong learning” evokes negative associations. This strong identification of the learning process with formal education brings up memories of school, which are not always positive, and where the educational process is not adapted to the specifics of adult learning. The idea of returning to school, which reduces adults to the role of students subjected to the teaching process, is unacceptable to them. Therefore, there is a need for reflection on preparing a network of institutions or other entities with diverse organizational and legal forms that would positively contribute to adult education.

The new economic systems and the associated labour market currently adhere to the principle of “Nothing for long”, which brings about the

disappearance of traditional career models, feelings of loyalty towards employers and colleagues, mutual relationships and ties, and employee solidarity. As Richard Sennett states, “Nothing for long” is a principle that erodes trust and mutual commitments. Trust can, of course, be purely formal in nature (...). However, deeper trust usually arises in informal situations (Sennett 2006, p. 22–23). As a result, a new form of individual crystallizes – the “I, non-cooperative” worker.<sup>2</sup> (See *ibid.*, p. 22).

And another important observation, this time by Jeremy Rifkin. He writes that “Although intelligent technology will increasingly replace human labour in the production of goods and a whole range of services, its reach will be significantly limited in the third sector, for the simple reason that the main activity in this area concerns social interaction. If we deprive this sector of its human dimension, it will remain just an empty shell” (Rifkin 2012, p. 362). The third sector refers to civil society: religious and cultural organizations, education, research, healthcare, social care, environmental protection organizations, sports, recreation, advisory activities, whose aim is to build social bonds.

One might suppose that it is the civil society which shall emerge as the predominant employer in the developed nations. As we conclude this segment of contemplation, it merits reiteration: notwithstanding the nearly revolutionary alterations in the work paradigm, it remains the humans employed within an organisation that fundamentally dictate its market stance.

## Conclusions

Undoubtedly, the realm of employment is undergoing transformation, and the pace of this change is remarkably swift. An increasing number of individuals ponder whether these changes will prove advantageous, both for the workforce and the employers. According to Stephen Hawking, esteemed as one of the pre-eminent intellects of the modern era, the “unbridled progression of technology and artificial intelligence might very well mark the incipient step towards the

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<sup>2</sup> The category was formulated by Richard Sennett and described in many of his works, including, among others, “The Corrosion of Character: The Personal Consequences of Work in the New Capitalism” (Polish: „Korozja charakteru. Osobiste konsekwencje pracy w nowym kapitalizmie”), published by Muza, Warsaw 2006; and “Together: The Rituals, Pleasures, and Politics of Cooperation” (Polish: „Razem. Rytuály, zalety i zasady współpracy”), published by Muza, Warsaw 2013.

annihilation of the human species” (*The Worker of the Future*, 2019, p. 11). Similarly, Elon Musk, the technological vanguard and founder of entities such as Tesla, SpaceX, and PayPal, advises “prudence in our engagement with artificial intelligence – which, as he claims – might very well be the paramount existential peril confronting humanity” (Ibid., p.11). Concurrently, in the Global Risk 2017 report, participating experts highlight the “profound risk facing humanity in the imminent prospect of machines possessing a cognitive potential surpassing that of humankind” (Ibid., p. 11). Such forecasts scarcely imbue optimism, and their veracity remains indeterminate. Nonetheless, in my estimation, they warrant serious consideration. After all, for ages, mankind has ruminated on the extent to which we ought to invest in progress and whether all evolutions invariably serve human interests. Contemplating the future, it seems worth reflecting upon Zygmunt Bauman’s assertion that “in contemporary times, our disposition towards the future is increasingly one of trepidation, having lost faith in our collective capacity to mitigate its harshness and render it less daunting and more amenable” (Bauman 2018, p. 101)

Michio Kaku resonates with a similar sentiment, asserting that there are mounting concerns suggesting that the “meteoric ascendancy of science and technology may, perhaps, have overreached, evolving too precipitously and bearing potential unforeseen societal repercussions that could exacerbate extant social pathologies” (Kaku 2011, p. 35).

When deliberating upon the future of work and apprehensions regarding the trajectory and pace of evolving dynamics, it is prudent to concur with those who opine that it is not the changes themselves we should dread, but rather, it is paramount that we equip ourselves adequately in anticipation of them.

The foreshadowed anticipated changes in human labour, which I have briefly outlined, by no means undermine the aptness of the article title. Work, it seems, will likely remain a universal value for at least several years to come. However, it is indubitable that it will be a different kind of work. It is a challenging endeavour to pinpoint its exact nature. Admittedly, various visions of the future of work are being formulated, with myriad scenarios being delineated, but it is rather arduous to settle upon the most probable one. Nevertheless, this does not negate the pertinence of conducting research, analyses, and deliberations regarding work as a universal value.

**Summary:** The work of man is a subject that falls within the interest of various scientific disciplines. In this article, it is considered from the perspective of pedagogy, specifically one of the sub-disciplines of labour pedagogy. It is a universal concept, constituting an important research problem in this scientific sub-discipline. The purpose of the discussions in this study is to show the relevance of the universal dimension of human labour in light of the socio-economic transformations that are occurring extremely rapidly, especially in recent years. This was done using a literature analysis, mainly of the latest research. Scientific research and theoretical analyses on the topic of labour have not been frequently undertaken by labour pedagogues lately. In analysing the literature on this subject, the directions and character of permanent changes in labour were emphasised. Recognising that labour still is and will be a universal value, at least in the foreseeable future, the necessity of adapting education, mainly vocational, to anticipated changes was stressed. Therefore, this remains a current area of research and analysis concerning human labour and education for labour, as well as in the course of labour.

**Keywords:** human labour, universalism, labour universalism, socio-economic transformations

**Streszczenie:** Praca człowieka to zagadnienie będące w obszarze zainteresowań różnych dyscyplin naukowych. W niniejszym artykule rozpatrywana jest w ujęciu pedagogiki, a w szczególności jednej z subdyscyplin pedagogiki pracy. Jest to pojęcie uniwersalne, stanowiące ważny problem badawczy tej subdyscypliny naukowej. Celem rozważań w tym opracowaniu jest ukazanie aktualności uniwersalnego wymiaru pracy człowieka w świetle przeobrażeń społeczno-gospodarczych zachodzących niezwykle szybko, szczególnie w ostatnich latach. Zrobiono to wykorzystując analizę literatury, głównie najnowszej. Badania naukowe i analizy teoretyczne na temat pracy nie były ostatnio zbyt często podejmowane przez pedagogów pracy. Analizując literaturę na ten temat podkreślano kierunki i charakter permanentnych zmian w pracy. Uznając, że praca nadal jest i będzie wartością uniwersalną, przynajmniej w dającej się przewidzieć przyszłości, podkreślono konieczność dostosowywania edukacji, głównie zawodowej do antycypowanych zmian. Jest to więc nadal aktualny obszar badań i analiz dotyczących pracy człowieka oraz edukacji dla pracy, a także w toku pracy.

**Słowa kluczowe:** praca człowieka, uniwersalizm, uniwersalizm pracy, przeobrażenia społeczno-gospodarcze

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