

LABOR et EDUCATIO

nr 6/2018

STUDIES

Waldemar Furmanek*
ORCID 0000-0002-1032-4266
University of Rzeszow, Poland

The Need for Meta-Reflection on the Human Person's Work

Potrzeba metarefleksji nad pracą człowieka

Introduction

Work, man's work and human person's work are three academic categories of pedagogy of labour. Their understanding determines the rationality of further analyses and research conducted within this problem area. The notion of work is only referred to man. Since, however, even this notion (man but also: person, human person) does not belong to the unambiguously interpreted ones, then it is obvious that the family of notions related to man's work that we concern ourselves with will arouse multiple controversies. From the methodological point of view, these are the so-called travelling concepts (Tabaszewska, 2013). Their presence in the terminological convention enables conducting interdisciplinary and transdisciplinary studies or simply systemic research.

* **WALDEMAR FURMANEK**, Ph.D., Full Professor, Faculty of Pedagogy, Department of Labour Pedagogy and Andragogy, University of Rzeszow, Poland; e-mail: furmanek@ur.edu.pl

The issues concerning trans-multi-disciplinary studies on man's work comprise academic research objects that are common to different disciplines but are selected in such a manner as not to distort the visions of the research objects specific for various disciplines. Studies conducted in multi-, inter- or transdisciplinary projects pose a major challenge. The transdisciplinary approach to knowledge and research has its practical sources in the applicability of knowledge, inter alia in searching for more effective solutions to earlier indicated problems. It is possible to formulate them after establishing the catalogue of academic categories that the researcher assumes in the particular situation. For this purpose, we take advantage of the travelling concepts. And then, the researcher can take up meta-scientific problems (Hajduk, 2010) in the area of pedagogical studies including contemporary pedagogy of work (Żłobicki, 2015). Does the problem area of human labour take account of this aspect? In this paper I seek to find answers to this question.

The working man being the object of pedagogy of work

Why do the pedagogical sciences concern themselves with man's work? The question is not an easy one; it requires recalling the specific concept of the work of man as a human person. And here we take the view that the understanding of the essence of man's work requires some understanding of man. And the understanding of man, in turn, requires an understanding of the sense (essence) of his work. It is necessary to recall the fundamental theses concerning the understanding of the concept of man. One cannot understand man's deepest personal phenomena without understanding the essence of the work performed by him. After all, work is a conscious intertwining of actions.

Thus, by way of example, in order to understand the concept of man's work in the teaching of John Paul II, it is necessary to recall the fundamental theses concerning the understanding of the concept of man by him. Karol Wojtyła's and John Paul II's fundamentals of philosophical anthropology have been the subject of numerous studies and also the content of a not insignificant number of publications (Galarowicz, 2000). The whole work of Karol Wojtyła and John Paul II is devoted to the 'new discovery' of man. *This new discovery of man*, writes T. Styczeń, *is based on giving voice first to man's experience itself as the subject with/in which something is happening (the 'activations') and at the same time the subject which is the doer of its deeds ('works'), and then giving voice to*

such a reflection upon it, that is to such a philosophy of man which, ultimately explaining the fact of man, respects 'to the end' both the particular experiences of man and the requirements of the logic of ultimately explaining these data (the requirements of the principle of non-contradiction as well as the respect for the principle of sufficient reason resulting thereof) (Wojtyła, 1985).

The Pope, continues T. Styczeń, reduces the subject matter of the research in this area to one matter constituting the heart of all the other matters. This 'matter of matters' can be expressed as follows: that the man who is of God (imago Dei) should by choice become of God ('the glory of God is the living man' – gloria Dei in gratiarum actione hominis), i.e. that while existing by a gift of God he should become a gift to God and to others, thereby forming a communion with Him and, in Him, with other people, thus finding and at the same time fulfilling himself (Styczeń, 1983).

The core of Karol Wojtyła's philosophical vision of man concerns:

a) the revealing of the essence of the personal subjectivity of the human being as a specific transcendence of man in action.

The essence of the personal subjectivity of the human being appears as a transcendence of the human 'self' towards 'one's', even towards something so 'one's' as the decision of the 'self', which owes its interest to the 'entering' into it of the 'self' and the filling of it by the 'self', that is to the immanence of the 'self' in 'one's'. This 'transcending' of the 'self' beyond the 'one's' and even the 'self' itself, as transcending beyond its own decisions, is given explicitly to the 'self' – thanks to the acts of its consciousness accompanying the (conscious) actions of the 'self' – in its acts (of self-determination, self-governance and self-possession) of self-dependence, revealing at the same time that self-dependence as the ontological structure of the human being. This self-dependence is revealed in the 'self', always and only as self-dependence in becoming self-addicted ... to the truth of the human person: one's own (the own 'self') and others' (as other 'selves').

b) the revealing of the metaphysical implication of the fact of the contingency of existence of the human person, which reveals their existence as the existence through the gift of the Absolute Personal Giver. ...

The human person exists as a personal subject of the event of the gift of which they are not the initiator. Because it is only persons having the same status of existence as their child can be the initiator of such a gift. This initiator is, and can only be, the Personal Absolute: its direct intervention in the initiation and duration of the event of the personal gift is necessary (Galarowicz, 2000).

It can be said that it is just the experience of action that is the basic key to the understanding of the essence of the truth of man. As J. Galarowicz observes, human action is a phenomenon of the human experience, it is the so-called fundamental experience. *Acts*, K. Wojtyła writes, *are a special moment ... of the experimental recognition of a person. They constitute, as it were, the most appropriate starting point for the understanding of their dynamic essence* (Wojtyła, 1994). Each action of man as a person *sends us towards the person; the experience of action is exceedingly rich; action is the reality in which the whole man participates; action is experienceable on the experiential side but also as a fact accessible outside; action is a fact* (Galarowicz, 2000).

This context reveals more fully the significance of the definition adopted by us that man's work is the intertwining of his actions. Such a definition of the human person's work displays yet another important field of scholarly penetrations of the pedagogy of work.

The necessity for meta-reflection on the multidimensionality of the human person's work

The whole range of problems mentioned above are perceived, more or less clearly, against the background of the civilisational transformations and challenges that they generate. The time of dynamic transformations in human studies and in the phenomena of man's work confronts pedagogues with a number of new, hitherto unknown challenges. Among other things, it necessitates meta-reflection, which involves assumption of specified paradigms that will determine the new fields of scholarly penetration and will also determine their theoretical and methodological orientation. This is observed by numerous researchers in pedagogy of work as well as people outside this group (Kwiatkowski, 2006).

Undoubtedly, the object of research in pedagogy of work must include issues related to the theoretical and methodological fundamentals of this pedagogical discipline. This involves the need for conducting systematic and continuous studies on the essence of man's work in the changing reality. The interest in man's work yesterday, today and tomorrow defines an important line characterising this section of the problem area in the vertical approach thereto. This can be a reference to the developing of the awaited pedagogical theory of man's work. Within its boundaries, our scope of interest should include all those problems that are related to the transformations of conscious-

ness with respect to the role of work in man's life. The showing of how work was perceived in various social, political and economic systems should result in highlighting the transformations concerning the place of man in different systems of work, in displaying the evolution of views beginning with the approach to man as an object to treating him as a subject.

At the same time, it should be added that in connection with the changes in the reflection on the model of man, also the reflection on his work changed in the development of pedagogy of work. Man's work may be recognised as a philosophical, sociological, economic, psychological, pedagogical and praxeological category because it is studied within various academic disciplines. The reaching of the approach to man as a subject in the system of work comprised in turn:

- a) additive perception of man at work as an object (man as *a talking tool* or *a machine attachment*);
- b) stressing the ethical and moral dimensions of work;
- c) highlighting the axiological perception of man's work;
- d) system approach to the entire phenomenon of the working man or man in a specific work environment.

Ethical approach to man's work

The analysis of man's work taking account of the ethical manner of perceiving phenomena and interpreting man's deeds in the light of ethical criteria (morality of work) has been present in pedagogues' research for quite a long time. Those studies were integrated with axiological phenomena of work and with the reference to the fundamental axiological categories. And thereby, the place of the truth, good and beauty has been shown; of freedom, responsibility and dignity in the system of values of the working man as well as the unemployed one. Work has currently become a major ethical strength of societies. The moral sense and the moral value of work, both in the personal and the social approaches, consists in linking it closely with the fundamental humanist values (the truth, good and beauty; freedom, responsibility for and to, and with dignity).

Work is man's good, his humanity's good (useful, fair, pleasant and burdensome good). Let us stop at just two definitions of work chosen as examples:

1) ...because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfilment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes 'more a human being', we read in *Laborem exercens*;

2) Work is the performing of human actions regardless of the sphere of action and their form. Work is a free albeit naturally necessary activity of man, proceeding out of the sense of obligation, combined with toil and joy, aimed at creating socially useful spiritual and material values (Strzeszewski, 1978).

To this let us add the statement that work is the road to building communities, it is a way of enriching the common good. All work phenomena depreciating man's axiological space should be the basis for taking up further search for ways of realising man in the processes of his work. Giving a meaning to man's work, especially in the context of the meaning of his life, is another emphasis of its important axiological aspects.

The quality of man's life is related to the quality of man and the quality of the world. These three categories, analysed from the perspective of human work, determine the next field of the problems researched within pedagogy of work. The indication that the goal of man's work is to improve man and the world provides unambiguously pedagogical references. The utilisation of axiological and theological dimensions of human person's work in the educating processes appears to be a good road that must be accepted and included into the system of the common obligatory education at school. However, there appear some difficulties here, too.

The use of the qualities of man's work in the processes of enhancing the development of humanity in man, thanks to which he self-realises himself as man and, in a way, becomes a different man, is to such an extent a natural process that its omnipresence in the education systems seems a natural necessity.

There are urgent tasks before pedagogy of work, related to the necessity of introducing moral education, including education through work, education for work, education through and for work, to the common and compulsory system of education.

Axiological approach to man's work

Work is a special value in man's axiological space. For this reason, man's work as a human person's activity is more and more often analysed from the point of view of axiology. Being a special existential value, it determines the

contents of man's axiological (axionormative) space. The targeting of the object of research of pedagogy of work at the phenomena of axiology opens new uncharted territories.

The adoption of the assumption that work is man's fair good indicates the place of work in man's system of values. Therefore, we accept that work is a value. We state further that work is a source of different kinds of values thanks to which other values function, i.e. realise themselves, in man's life.

Work is a good that is inseparably linked with man's rational nature. Thanks to his rationality man becomes the creator of work, its master. Work then becomes a way of ruling over the world and oneself. Thanks to man's professional work both he himself and the world become more perfect. Because through work man not only transforms nature, adapting it to his own needs, but he also achieves fulfilment as a human being and indeed, in a sense, becomes 'more a human being', we read in *Laborem exercens* (John Paul II, 1981). It is a useful or utility good (*bonum utile*) and fair good (*bonum honestum*), that is corresponding to the man's dignity, expressing and multiplying this dignity. Work is for many people also a pleasurable good (*bonum delectabile*). Work is a burdensome good.

Departing from the theorems of axiology that values do not occur in axiological vacuum but always reveal themselves in syndromes, it is good to realise also the fact that work is a source of values: material, economic, social, cultural, mental and personal including spiritual ones. In this context, work is a special value in man's axionormative (axiological) space. Therefore, the analyses showing the relation of the human person's work to their rationality and truth, to beauty, hope and love do make sense. It is extremely important to realise the significance of work in developing personal freedom (freedom in man as the self-realisation and self-governance of the working man), its responsibility as the ethical fibre of the working man; the dignity of the working man, understood as the value of values.

At the same time, the issues discussed herein are related to a whole network of connections between man's work and other forms of activities undertaken by man. Let us add that these are activities in which man realises his system of values.

Since we appreciate and expose the axiological dimensions of human work, then we should consistently strive towards integrating or transferring the achievements of pedagogy of value to the region of pedagogy of work. This

is another important task and challenge resulting in another dimension of the redefinition of the conceptual framework but also of the detailed issues to be researched by pedagogy of work in the coming years. This also involves the need for reflection on the lists of tasks that pedagogy of work is going to face in its new methodological situation.

Transformations of human work determine changes in the scope of research of pedagogy of work

Pedagogy of work, as a sub-discipline of pedagogy, has been clearly changing its characteristics over the last several years. This is related to the transformations in its object of research, i.e. the transformations in this section of reality which constitutes the object (system of objects) of concern of representatives of pedagogy of work. These transformations are taking place in the one hand in connection with the transformations of the object of research of pedagogical sciences in general (which we mentioned earlier on). On the other hand, however, due to the transformations concerning human work. They include new territories and new phenomena that man's work is currently entangled in and will probably be entangled in.

As a matter of fact, regardless of the starting point for the description of the said object of research, we clearly state that without giving up the existing approach to it, we currently observe a significant extension of the object of research of pedagogy of work relative to those dimensions that were outlined for pedagogy of work by its founders, i.e. T. Nowacki, Z. Wiatrowski, S. Kwiatkowski and others.

This ensues from the dynamic evolution of its object of research and of the entire problem framework in the horizontal and vertical approaches. Already in the first outlines concerning the characteristics of the new pedagogical discipline being created in the mid-1980s, T. Nowacki indicated the need for providing it with such qualities that would not only distinguish it but would also stimulate its development. Departing from the simple coping of e.g. the German economic pedagogy, he drew attention to the necessity for a broader, more embedded in the history of humanity, view of the object of research of pedagogy of work. This view was shared by W. Okoń (1992), expressed it by defining pedagogy of work as *a pedagogical discipline whose object of research*

is human work, its varied determinants (emphasis mine, W. F.), its educational impact on the individual.

Man's work and the relations describing it were indicated as the central phenomenon and the object of research of the newly created discipline. The well-known model, Man—Citizen (education)—Work constitutes a triad of categories outlining the object of research and the problem framework of pedagogy of work. In 1981, T. Nowacki observed that pedagogy of work should include *theories which being constituents of the discipline will create the scholarly image comprising the problems or relations existing between man and work with regard to the development of his personality* (Nowacki, 1982).

As a reminder, it is worthwhile to list those 10 problem areas that determine the object of interest of pedagogy of work as proposed by T. Nowacki:

1. Problems of the goals of education and the analysis thereof;
2. Work division and phenomena of the economic life being the consequence thereof;
3. The contents of education, their selection, structure and arrangement;
4. Education through work;
5. Teachers' qualifications, their methodological skills and resources;
6. Career orientation and counselling;
7. Supplementary education and in-service training;
8. Conditions for accomplishing the processes of vocational education;
9. Analysis of teaching results including, career tests;
10. Pedeutological issues.

According to Z. Wiatrowski, pedagogy of work is *an academic sub-discipline whose object of research are the pedagogical aspect of the relation, man—education—work, although another tripartite relation is also frequently emphasised, namely man—citizen—employee, as one that equally well renders the essential problems and issues of this new pedagogical discipline* (Wiatrowski, 2005).

With regard of the interest areas of this discipline, Z. Wiatrowski lists an extensive set of problems centred around:

- the human profile;
- the work tasks that a person leaving a particular vocational school is going to perform;
- the contents, methods and means of education, supplementary education and in-service training;
- the personal and material conditions for preparing a man to work;

- the effectiveness of education, supplementary education and in-service training;
- the effectiveness of educational activities at the workplace.

For many years, the areas of interest of pedagogy of work as outlined by T. Nowacki and Z. Wiatrowski made up the methodological canon of its objects of research (Nowacki 1981, Wiatrowski 1982). Only few studies went beyond those areas. Today such a state of affairs is not sufficient. This was well understood by the creators of pedagogy of work.

By way of example, in the 2005 edition of the *Basics of pedagogy of work*, Z. Wiatrowski notes that the traditionally outlined areas of interest of pedagogy of work *are extended with issues related to the theoretical and methodological basics of this pedagogical discipline, including general considerations on man's work; issues related to studies on professions; theoretical basics of education and in-service training; study methods, techniques and instruments applied in pedagogy of work as well as study procedures and methods* (Wiatrowski, 1982).

The names of each of the areas quoted should be treated as watchwords for the specific sets of phenomena and thereby the problems characteristic for them.

Z. Wiatrowski also observed the necessity for pedagogues of taking up such problems as reflection on the academic basics of pedagogy of work, which includes the features constituting this discipline and determining its methodological and factual dimensions, the problems of employment and unemployment or the issues of educating pedagogues of work.

S. M. Kwiatkowski point out in his very numerous publications to the necessity of relating study results to the social needs, including the broadly understood labour market. Therefore, he draws attention to the need to take up the problems of professional qualifications and competencies, retraining and in-service training, qualification standardisation, comparability of qualification levels, etc (Kwiatkowski, 2005).

Work changes in the light of the civilisational changes

Civilisation is, as a matter of fact, the cumulative result of human work; the fruit of the work of generations past and present. The individual stages of the development of civilisation involve a number of challenges for man's

life and professional activity. Their recognition and description as well as the explanation of their mechanisms are also possible through the prism of the changing human work. Work related in terms of its contents to the agrarian civilisation and its constituent phenomena was and is different. How different are the problems generated by man's work in the industrial civilisation, work at a factory, being the icon of this stage of development of civilisation?

Information civilisation, like the information society forming within its framework, is changing the face of human work. The omnipresence of technologies, including information technology is revealing itself with all power. New phenomena that are generated are important to the working man, and thereby to pedagogy of work.

Let us take the example of labour costs and the load on man in the work processes (especially the qualitative load). The phenomena occur in this dimension of work are of significance to education towards values of work; they need to be included in the processes of prevocational and vocational education.

Excessive labour costs, particularly the biomenal costs, lead to the phenomena of psychopathology of work (e.g. workaholism as a form of enslavement of work, stress at work). Their consequence is burnout including professional burnout.

After recognising the essence of the phenomena described in bold, pedagogy of work should formulate appropriate recommendations for the practice of enhancing the development of humanity in the future worker. The work process itself usually carried out in actual conditions is subject to the influence of various internal determinants (tasks in excess of man's capabilities, unsuitable to his qualifications and competencies) and external ones (deprivations, discomfort, conflicts). No less important are various barriers and obstacles in accomplishing work (stress, moral and sexual harassment and mobbing).

In the situation of difficult labour market, there appear new and phenomena of varied contents which affect working people. The most important of them concern unemployment which leads to disorders in the world of axiology, to destroying man's freedom and dignity. The transformations in axiology include transformations of nearly all the phenomena of man's spirituality. The necessity of developing ways of preparing them for such situation's rests upon pedagogy of work.

In order to finish off this presentation of the transformations of the objects of research of contemporary pedagogy of work let us add that it must not fail to notice various pathologies related to work and its organisation, wherein the consequences of new forms of organisation and performance of work (e.g. teleworking); enslavement and debasement of man through slave labour, the problems of child and youth labour work performed by women in multi-shift systems and at production lines.

The sets of problems shown above also point out to the necessity of arranging them in order. One of the proposals is a more extensive application of the system approach. This implies transformations in the methodology.

Abstract: The problems of trans-multi-disciplinary studies on man's work comprises objects of research that are common to different academic disciplines but are selected in such a manner as not to distort the visions of the research objects specific for various disciplines. Studies conducted in multi-, inter- or transdisciplinary projects pose a major challenge. The transdisciplinary approach to knowledge and research has its practical sources in the applicability of knowledge, inter alia in searching for more effective solutions to earlier indicated problems. In the paper I present selected problems concerning research on human work indicating its trans-multidisciplinary character.

Keywords: man, person, values, axiology, work, work changes

Streszczenie: Problematyka badań trans-multi-dyscyplinarnych nad pracą człowieka obejmuje obiekty badań naukowych wspólne dla różnych dyscyplin naukowych, ale tak dobrane, że nie zniekształcają specyficznych dla każdej z tych dyscyplin punktów widzenia obiektów badań. Badania prowadzone w projektach multi-, inter- czy transdyscyplinarnych stanowią ważne wyzwanie. Podejście transdyscyplinarne do wiedzy i badań ma swoje źródła praktyczne w aplikacyjności wiedzy, m.in. w szukaniu bardziej efektywnych rozwiązań wskazanych już wcześniej problemów. W opracowaniu prezentuję wybrane problemy badań nad pracą ludzką wskazując na ich trans-multi-dyscyplinarny charakter.

Słowa kluczowe: człowiek, osoba, wartości, aksjologia, praca, przemiany pracy

References

- Furmanek, W. (2014). Człowiek jako obiekt badań humanistycznej pedagogiki pracy, *Labor et Educatio*, no. 2/2014, 9–31.
- Furmanek, W. (2014). *Humanistyczna pedagogika pracy. Praca człowieka w cywilizacji informacyjnej*. Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego.
- Furmanek, W. (2013). *Humanistyczna pedagogika pracy. Praca człowieka*. Rzeszów: Wydawnictwo Uniwersytetu Rzeszowskiego.
- Furmanek, W. (2017). Konsekwencje merytoryczne twierdzenia: praca jest wartością dla pedagogiki pracy. *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska Sectio J, Lublin – Polonia vol. XXX, 2 sectio J 2017*.
- Furmanek, W. (2017). Metodologiczne konsekwencje twierdzenia „praca jest wartością”. *Annales Universitatis Mariae Curie-Skłodowska, Sectio J, Vol 30, No 1*.
- Furmanek, W. (2016). *Praca człowieka jako kategoria aksjologiczna*. W: K. Chałas, A. Maja (eds.), *Encyklopedia aksjologii pedagogicznej*, (s. 827-836). Radom: Polskie Wydawnictwo Encyklopedyczne.
- Galarowicz, J. (2000). *Człowiek jest osobą*, Kęty: Wydawnictwo Antyk.
- Hajduk, Z. (2010). Metanaukowe ujęcie relacji między nauką a etyką. *Nauka* no. 3, 2010, 14–31.
- Jan Paweł II, (1981). Encyklika *Laborem exercens*. Rome–Vatican.
- Korabiowska, K., Nowacki, T. (eds.) (1981). *Pedagogika pracy. Studia Pedagogiczne XLIII*, Wrocław–Warszawa–Kraków–Gdańsk–Łódź: Zakład Narodowy im. Ossolińskich.
- Korabiowska-Nowacka, K. (1982). *Przedmiot pedagogiki pracy*, Kalisz.
- Kwiatkowski, S.M. (2006). *Kierunki rozwoju pedagogiki pracy*, W: Z. Wiatrowski, (eds.), *Pedagogika pracy i andragogika w konstelacji europejskiej i globalnej*. Włocławek: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Lega” Włocławskiego Towarzystwa Naukowego.
- Kwiatkowski, S.M. (2005). *Pedagogika pracy – historia – terażniejszość – przyszłość*. *Pedagogika Pracy*, no. 46/2005.
- Mieka, B. (2015). *Travelling Concepts in the Humanities*, www.hf.uio.no/forskning/phd/kurs/phd-arrangementer/hf-felleskurs/2015/pensum-vit.teori-nov-15/frå-mieke-bal.pdf
- Nowacki, T. (1982). *Pedagogika pracy, stan i perspektywy*. Studia Pedagogiczne. Wybrane problemy pedagogiki pracy. WSP w Bydgoszczy, issue 8.
- Nowacki, T.W. (1988). Stan badań pedagogiki pracy w Polsce na tle porównawczym. *Pedagogika Pracy*, no. 13.
- Okoń, W. (1992). *Słownik pedagogiczny*. Warszawa: PWN.
- Strzeszewski, C. (1978). *Praca ludzka. Zagadnienia społeczno-moralne*. Lublin: TN KUL.

- Styczeń, T. (1983). Człowiek w ujęciu Jana Pawła II podstawową dyrektywą programowania pracy Instytutu Jana Pawła II. *Przegląd Uniwersytecki*, Lublin, 2nd December.
- Tabaszewska, J. (2013). Wędrujące pojęcia. Koncepcja Mieke Bal. Przykład inter czy transdyscyplinarności. *Studia Europea Gnesnensia*, no. 8.
- Wiatrowski, Z. (2005). *Podstawy pedagogiki pracy*. Bydgoszcz: Wydawnictwo Akademii Bydgoskiej im. Kazimierza Wielkiego.
- Wojtyła, K. (1985). *Osoba i czyn*. Kraków.
- Żłobicki, W., Włodarczyk, R. (eds.) (2015). *Interdyscyplinarność i transdyscyplinarność pedagogiki*. Kraków: Oficyna Wydawnicza „Impuls”.

Date of the submission of article to the Editor: 25.07.2018

Date of acceptance of the article: 07.12.2018