

Handbook of Philosophy of Work

Understanding work in twenty-four centuries of philosophical debate

Edited by:

Javier Pinto-Garay, Universidad de los Andes

German Scalzo, Universidad de Navarra

Alejandra Novoa, Universidad de los Andes

I. INTRODUCTION

In the face of the complexity of contemporary society, there arises the necessity of having an integrated vision of the diverse dimensions of human activities in civil, economic, political, cultural, scientific, or moral realms, among others. In this context, the conception of work—the protagonist activity of personal and social life—requires special attention. Indeed, human labor is not only fundamental in the constitution of social life (Aristotle, EN, 1133a), but also plays a central role in personal life, as evidenced by the fact that practically all of us have or have had the experience of work (Gini, 2001). Thus, we can see that human development depends to a large extent on our own work and the work of others (Melendo, 1992). Similarly, conversely, the deterioration of society and of the workers themselves may be due to inadequate implementation of forms of production and organization of work (Pinto & Letelier, 2016).

On the other hand, due to the importance of work for human life and its centrality in the economy for sustainable development, it is important to note that work requires an integrative perspective, meaning that it should be based on a balanced understanding of all its dimensions (González, 2023). This implies a unitary vision of all productive, psychological, economic, technological, moral, and political aspects that, among others, shape the reality of human industry and its impact on personal and communal life (MacIntyre, 2016). Likewise, a conceptual unity is required to understand common elements in the various ways of interpreting human work in contemporary society, such as the concepts of occupation, labor, profession, career, trade, or employment (Arendt, 1958).

However, perhaps the most important aspect in the logic of an integration and conceptual unity of work refers to the fact that it is necessary to reconcile the rather negative dimension of work—effort, uncertainty, and fatigue—with its capacity to offer a space for satisfaction, vocation, meaning, and psychological development (Kanungo, 1982; Schwartz, 1982). In this sense, a positive understanding of the historical phenomenon of what work has come to signify is required (Sennett, 2008), especially when its etymological significance (*trepaliare* or *torture*) carries a highly negative connotation. However, this has not been an obstacle for work itself to be recognized as a sphere of dignity (Wojtyła, 1977; 1978a; 1978b), an opportunity for the acquisition of virtues and contribution to the common good (Thomas Aquinas, S.Th., II-II, Q. 187, Art. 3; Melé, 2012; Finnis, 1980).

Thus, not only does the importance of knowing the history of work become evident, but also a history of ideas about work. The latter, indeed, provides a more complete view of the changes that the understanding of industry and labor has undergone for more than two millennia, often in a spirit of reconciling its negative and positive dimensions. Furthermore, this historical understanding of ideas about work is not only a contribution to the realm of knowledge but also a practical advantage. A critical view of ideas about work in history allows for the discrimination of those aspects of human labor that should be preserved and those that should be improved, especially in the face of technological, social, and economic changes that strongly impact the ways of working in contemporary society.

Now, this critical view is what we can call a theory of work materialized mainly in the history of philosophical thought and its contribution to the social and human sciences, which have equally assumed the task of understanding the phenomenon of work. However, since the evolution of the idea of work, its cultural valorization, and its theoretical understanding represent a particularly vast and extensive scenario, there is the possibility of making a systematic journey through the great authors who have addressed the problem of work. Thus, it becomes possible to show in the history of thought a certain continuity, as well as some conceptual disruptions.

Therefore, the aim of this book is to explore the thought of different philosophers and intellectuals who, from antiquity to the 20th century, have addressed the problem of work in an original manner. Thus, we will be able to describe not only the intellectual foundations of contemporary philosophy of work but also the conceptual challenges it presents us with in the need to understand the meaning of human labor and its place in social development. The book will include a review of ideas about work in authors such as Plato, Aristotle, Thomas Aquinas, Adam Smith, Karl Marx, Max Weber, Hannah Arendt, and Simone Weil, among others.

To approach an orderly understanding of ideas about work from its inception to the present day, the book will address the problem from three perspectives: the philosophical foundations of the concept of work, the cultural bases of the various schools and traditions of thought about work, and finally, the emergence of interdisciplinarity during the 20th century, where the philosophy of work establishes an important relationship with other sciences such as sociology, psychology, or management.

References

- Aquinas. 1888–1906. “Summa theologica,” in *Summa theologiae cum supplemento et commentariis Caietani*. Opera omnia iussu Leonis XIII P. M. edita, t. 1*/1, Commissio Leonina. Roma/París: J. Vrin.
- Aristotle. 1995a. *Nicomachean ethics*. In Barnes J., (Ed.), *The complete works of Aristotle*. Princeton, NJ: Princeton University Press.
- Gini, A. (2001). *My job, my self: Work and the creation of the modern individual*. Psychology Press.
- González, A. M. (2023). *Trabajo, sentido y desarrollo. Inflexiones de la cultura moderna*. Madrid: Dykinson.
- Kanungo, R. N. (1982). *Work alienation: An integrative approach*. ABC-CLIO.
- Melé, D. (2012). The firm as a “community of persons”: A pillar of humanistic business ethos. *Journal of Business Ethics*, 106, 89-101.
- Melendo, T. (1992). *La dignidad del trabajo*. Ediciones Rialp.
- Pinto, J., & Letelier, G. (2016). El camino de la alienación. Trabajo y ética en Smith, Marx y Wojtyla. *Revista Empresa y Humanismo*, 119-152.
- Schwartz, A. (1982). Meaningful work. *Ethics*, 92(4), 634-646.
- Sennett, R. (2008). *The craftsman*. Yale University Press.
- Wojtyla, Karol (1977), “Participation or Alienation?”, in *The Self and the Other*, Springer Netherlands, Rotterdam, pp. 61-73.

- Wojtyla, Karol (1978a), "Subjectivity and the Irreducible in Man", in *The Human Being in Action*, Springer Netherlands, Rotterdam, pp. 107-114.
- Wojtyla, Karol (1978b), "The structure of self-determination as the core of the theory of the person", in AA.VV., *Tommaso d'Aquino nel suo VII centenario*, Congresso Internazionale Roma-Napoli, 17-24 aprile 1974, Edizioni Domenicane Italiane, Nápoles, vol. VII, pp. 37-44.

II. INSTRUCTIONS FOR AUTHORS

1. The text should have a length of between 4,000 to 5,000 words including title, abstract, and bibliography.
2. Each chapter must include an abstract not exceeding 100 words.
3. Format: top and bottom margins 2.5 cm; right and left margins 3 cm. Line spacing 1.5. Justified alignment and numbered pages. To facilitate readability and evaluation by reviewers, the use of Times New Roman, size 12, or Arial, size 11, is recommended.
4. Emphasis: Avoid the use of bold, uppercase, and underlined text, recommending instead the use of italics.
5. Titles: It is recommended to align them to the left, differentiating the various levels of content hierarchy. It is important to use subtitles in the text. The title of the work should include a subtitle of the main title.
6. Bibliography: The list of bibliographic references must be alphabetically ordered and placed at the end of the text. It will follow the format established by the Chicago standards.
7. Other aspects to consider:
 - a. Direct quotations must be in Spanish. If there is no official Spanish translation of the text in question, personal translations may be used, but the original language citation must be included in a footnote.
 - b. It is recommended to provide a historical contextualization of the author's thought; consider the tradition to which they belong. For example, Descartes is relevant as an author who initiates Modernity, or Marx critically reads Smith's *Wealth of Nations*.
 - c. It is important to use direct quotations from the main author, so that the reader can easily access the original texts in which the theme of work is discussed. It should also be considered that the objective of this book is to provide content for university professors and researchers in theory and philosophy of work, moral and political philosophy, and professional and business ethics.

III. INDEX

PROLOG

Ana Marta González
Universidad de Navarra
agonzalez@unav.es

I. PHILOSOPHICAL BASES ON WORK

1) Plato

José Antonio Giménez
Universidad de los Andes
jgimenez@uandes.cl

2) Aristotle

Ricardo Crespo
Universidad Austral
rcrespo@iae.edu.ar

3) Aquinas

Antonio Amado
Universidad de los Andes
aamado@uandes.cl

4) John Locke

María José García Castillejo
Universidad Panamericana
mjgarcia@up.edu.mx

5) Friedrich Hegel

Alejandro Vigo
Universidad de los Andes
avigo@uandes.cl

6) Immanuel Kant

Pía Chirinos
Universidad de Piura
mariapia.chirinos@udep.edu.pe

7) Adam Smith

Martin Schalg
University of Saint Thomas
schl2455@stthomas.edu

8) Karl Marx

Javier Pinto
Universidad de los Andes
jpinto@uandes.cl

9) Martin Heidegger

Hervé Pasqua
Université Côte d'Azur
Herve.PASQUA@univ-cotedazur.fr

10) Max Weber

Germán Scalzo
Universidad Panamericana
gscalzo@up.edu.mx

II. PHILOSOPHICAL TRADITIONS ON WORK

1) Judeo-Christian Tradition

José Ángel Lombo
Universidad de la Santa Cruz
lombo@pusc.it

2) The idea of Work in the School of Salamanca

Idoya Zorroza
Universidad de Salamanca
izorrozahu@upsa.es

3) Protestant Thought on Work

Manfred Svenson
Universidad de los Andes
msvensson@uandes.cl

4) Work in the Austrian School of Economics

Martin Rhonheimer
rhonheimer@pusc.it

5) Liberal tradition on Work

Germán Scalzo
Universidad Panamericana

6) Work in Catholic Social Teachings

Rodrigo Muñoz de Juana
Universidad de Navarra
romunoz@unav.es

7) The idea of work in the 20th Century

Psychology

Cristián Rodríguez
Universidad de los Andes
crodriguez@uandes.cl

8) Work in Modern Management Theory

Álvaro Espejo
Ese Business School
Universidad de los Andes
aespejo.es@uandes.cl

9) The Work of Women

Alejandra Novoa
Universidad de los Andes
anovoa@uandes.cl

III. CONTEMPORARY AUTHORS ON THE IDEA OF WORK

1) John Finnis

Jude Chua
jude.chua@nie.edu.sg

2) Alasdair MacIntyre

Javier Pinto
Universidad de los Andes

3) Paul Ricoeur

Jorge Peña
Universidad de los Andes
jpena@uandes.cl

4) Hannah Arendt

Antonio Malo
Universidad de la Santa Cruz
malo@pusc.it

5) Simone Weil

Alejandra Novoa
Universidad de los Andes

6) Karol Wojtyła

Domenec Melé
IESE Business School
Universidad de Navarra
dmele@iese.edu

7) Edith Stein

María del Pilar Sánchez
Universidad Panamericana
msanchezb@up.edu.mx

8) Jacques Maritain

Antonio Petagine
Universidad de la Santa Cruz
a.petagine@pusc.it

9) Leonardo Polo

Pablo Sahagún
Universidad Panamericana
psahagun@up.edu.mx

10) Jean Guitton

Juan Eduardo Carreño
Universidad de los Andes
jecarreño@uandes.cl

11) Robert Spaemann

Francisca Green
Universidad de los Andes
fgreene@uandes.cl

12) Max Horkheimer

Cecilia Coronado
Universidad Panamericana
ccoronado@up.edu.mx

13) G. K. Chesterton

Santiago Argüello
Universidad de Mendoza
santiago.arguello@um.edu.ar

14) Zygmunt Bauman

Javier Pérez Wever
Universidad del Istmo
jperezw@unis.edu.gt

15) Axel Honneth

Sergio Clavero
Universidad de Navarra
sclavero@unav.es

16) Richard Sennet

Pía Chirinos
Universidad de Piura
mariapia.chirinos@udep.edu.pe

17) Carlos Llano

Oscar Jimenez
oscarjt77@hotmail.com

18) Günther Anders

Carola Maomed
mmaomed@alumni.unav.es