

# Thoughts on Work



Philosophy, Arts, Letters, Experiences



Photo by Julia M Cameron from Pexels

# Experience

"It's obvious that Covid accelerated developments in our society and as seen in the way of working my company. I can follow your analysis and too, see **the need of a substantial change in how we see work and „currency“**. Currency can be time, contribution, money...any value to be exchanged. Making the resolution transformation actual would need a radical rethinking of our compensation system for social work in civil society. It's a shame the labor market fails to create new perspectives for young people."

Arno Wohlfahrter, former CEO, METRO



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# Thought

“..worst of all when you are the slave-driver of yourself. Talk of a divinity in man! Look at the teamster on the highway, wending to market by day or night; does any divinity stir within him? His highest duty to fodder and water his horses! What is his destiny to him compared with the shipping interests?”

-- Henry David Thoreau, Walden



Photo by Lê Minh from Pexels



Mennonite Community Photographs, 1947-1953: Service. HM4-134 Box 1 Photo 030-43.  
Mennonite Church USA Archives - Goshen. Goshen, Indiana.



# Experience

**Karoshi** (過労死, Karōshi), which can be translated literally as "overwork death", is a Japanese term relating to occupational sudden mortality. The most common medical causes of karoshi deaths are heart attacks or strokes due to stress and a starvation diet.



Photo by Ketut Subiyanto from Pexels



Credit: Courtesy of Missouri State Archives

# Experience

"No job is worth the risk of stroke or heart disease," WHO Director-General Dr. Tedros Adhanom Ghebreyesus said, calling on governments, businesses and workers to find ways to protect workers' health.

The global study, which the WHO calls the first of its kind, found that in 2016, 488 million people were exposed to the risks of working long hours.

In all, more than 745,000 people died that year from overwork that resulted in stroke and heart disease, according to the WHO.

"Between 2000 and 2016, the number of deaths from heart disease due to working long hours increased by 42%, and from stroke by 19%," the WHO said as it announced the study, which it conducted with the International Labour Organization.



Photo by Tima Miroshnichenko from Pexels



# Art

“Early in the morning factory whistle blows  
Man rises from bed and puts on his clothes  
Man takes his lunch, walks out in the morning light  
It's the working, the working, just the working life..”

-- Bruce Springsteen



Photo by Thibault Luyx from Pexels





Nationaal Archief, Bestand 1.02.01, Foto, SFA001002767

# Thought

“We should do away with the absolutely specious notion that everybody has to earn a living. It is a fact today that one in ten thousand of us can make a technological breakthrough capable of supporting all the rest. The youth of today are absolutely right in recognizing this nonsense of earning a living.”

-- Buckminster Fuller



Photo by Tima Miroshnichenko from Pexels



DeGolyer Library, Southern Methodist University

# Art

How did... Well,  
how does a shop boy afford all of this?

I'm not a shop boy.

God! I heard. I'm sorry.  
What are you going to do now?

No. I mean, I'm not a shop boy.  
I was just working in a shop.

And now I'm not.  
Now I'm free to live my life as I wish.

-- *Stardust*, Matthew Vaughn, 2007

NO LINES. NO CHECKOUT.  
(NO RECEIPTS)

**JUST  
WALK  
OUT  
SHOPPING**

amazon go

Now  
open

amazon go

© Amazon

BRIGHTON BEACH

4266-12



# Thought

“The idea that the poor should have leisure has always been shocking to the rich.”

— Bertrand Russell





Photo by Himanshu Raj from Pexels



State Library and Archives of Florida

# Art

“The human race is a monotonous affair. Most people spend the greatest part of their time working in order to live, and what little freedom remains so fills them with fear that they seek out any and every means to be rid of it.”

— Johann Wolfgang von Goethe, *The Sorrows of Young Werther*



Photo by Ketut Subiyanto from Pexels



Local History & Archives Hamilton Public Library

# Thought

“It’s hard to imagine a surer sign that one is dealing with an irrational economic system than the fact that the prospect of eliminating drudgery is considered to be a problem.”

— David Graeber, *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*



Photo by vjapratama from Pexels



Tyne & Wear Archives & Museums



# Thought

“Shit jobs tend to be blue collar and pay by the hour, whereas bullshit jobs tend to be white collar and salaried.”

— David Graeber, *Bullshit Jobs: A Theory*



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Photo by Lukas from Pexels

# Thought

“So we have inspectors of inspectors and people making instruments for inspectors to inspect inspectors. The true business of people should be to go back to school and think about whatever it was they were thinking about before somebody came along and told them they had to earn a living.”

-- Buckminster Fuller



Photo by Andrea Piacquadio from Pexels



# Thought

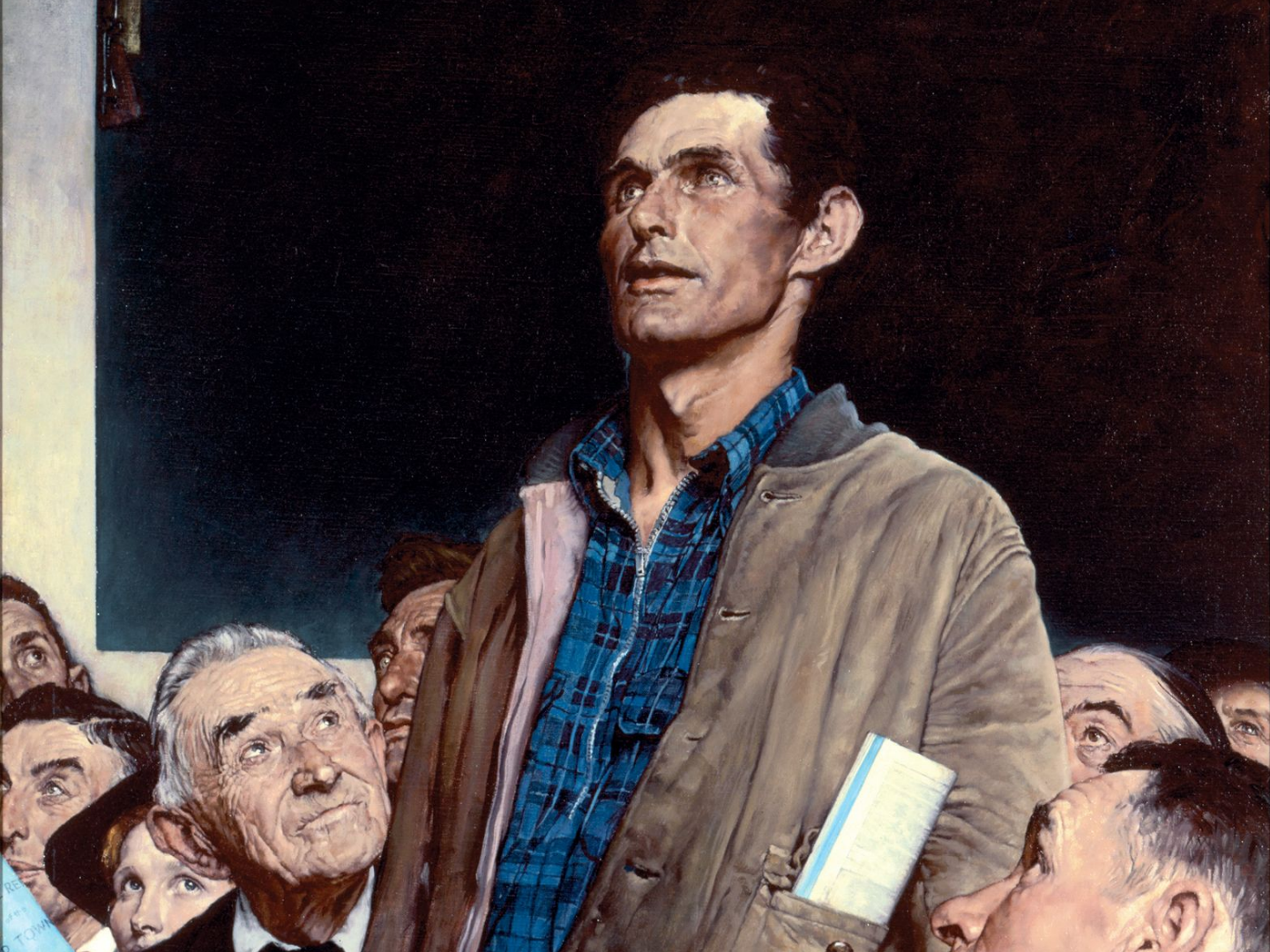
“Thus for the first time since his creation man will be faced with his real, his permanent problem-how to use his freedom from pressing economic cares, how to occupy the leisure, which science and compound interest will have won for him, to live wisely and agreeably and well..”

-- John Maynard Keynes



Photo by Josh Willink from Pexels





Norman Rockwell Museum

# Thought

“Leisure consists in all those virtuous activities by which one grows morally, intellectually, and spiritually. It is that which makes a life worth living.”

-- Marcus Tullius Cicero, *De Officiis*



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BEGGAR, HOBOKEN

Library of Congress Prints and Photographs Division

# Thought

*“id quod est praestantissimum maximeque optabile omnibus sanis et bonis et beatis,  
cum dignitate otium.”*

“That which stands first, and is most to be desired by all sane, honest and happy persons, is leisure with dignity.”

-- Cicero, Pro Sestio



Photo by Wouter de Jong from Pexels



Collection: U.S. Railway Mail Service

# Art

“Any damn fool can beg up some kind of job;  
it takes a wise man to make it without working.”

— Charles Bukowski, *Post Office*





Photo by Trinity Nguyen on Unsplash

**“In the name of God, stop a moment,  
cease your work, look around you.”**

•••

— Leo Tolstoy

# Colloquium: Economy in Transition

## *The Future of Work*



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