



Artículo de investigación

The symbolic dimension of the product ontology

La dimensión simbólica de la ontología del producto

A dimensão simbólica da ontologia do produto

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Abstract

The purpose of this article is to reveal the symbolic nature of the goods, which forms not only its market value. Man, being in a state of joint existence with the world of things created by nature or labor, is forced to comprehend this world in reflective, sensationalistic and metaphysical dimensions. Goods and things are intermediaries between man and the world, man and society, but an important role is played less by their material incarnation than by the connection with the transcendent, ultimately sensible measurement of human life, because the basis for giving things and goods symbolism is the existential human need determined by the human nature. Man, understanding his own finitude in this being, understanding the value of life, strives to realize one of the relative forms of immortality - to preserve a part of his natural uniqueness in material things. Modern technologies allow everyone to make this and formation and development of the Internet and IT-technologies allows each person to listen to others and be heard, to leave their thoughts, products of spiritual production in another dimension - virtual reality. But what happens to the person himself and how does this affect his essence? Is it possible to transfer the products of human labor activity into the space of virtual reality without losing their supersensible nature? And what, in the final analysis, is the transition from capitalism to postcapitalism, marking a new vector of the objectification of the human essence? This article is devoted to answering these questions.

Keywords: philosophy; goods; thing; capitalism; metaphysics.

Resumen

El propósito de este artículo es revelar la naturaleza simbólica de los bienes, que forma no solo su valor de mercado. El hombre, estando en un estado de existencia conjunta con el mundo de las cosas creado por la naturaleza o el trabajo, se ve obligado a comprender este mundo en dimensiones reflexivas, sensacionalistas y metafísicas. Los bienes y las cosas son intermediarios entre el hombre y el mundo, el hombre y la sociedad, pero juegan un papel importante menos por su encarnación material que por la conexión con la medición trascendente y sensible de la vida humana, porque la base para dar simbolismo a las cosas y los bienes es la necesidad humana existencial determinada por la naturaleza humana. El hombre, comprendiendo su propia finitud en este ser, comprendiendo el valor de la vida, se esfuerza por realizar una de las formas relativas de la inmortalidad: preservar una parte de su singularidad natural en las cosas materiales. Las tecnologías modernas permiten a todos hacer esto y la formación y el desarrollo de Internet y las tecnologías de la información le permiten a cada persona escuchar a los demás y ser escuchados, dejar sus pensamientos, productos de producción espiritual en otra dimensión: la realidad virtual. Pero, ¿qué le sucede a la persona misma y cómo afecta esto su esencia? ¿Es posible transferir los productos de la actividad laboral humana al espacio de la realidad virtual sin perder su naturaleza supersensible? ¿Y cuál, en el análisis final, es la transición del capitalismo al postcapitalismo, marcando un nuevo vector de la objetivación de la esencia humana? Este artículo está dedicado a responder estas preguntas.

Palabras clave: filosofía; bienes; cosa; capitalismo; metafísica.

Resumo

O objetivo deste artigo é revelar a natureza simbólica dos bens, que forma não apenas seu valor de mercado. O homem, estando em um estado de existência conjunta com o mundo das coisas criado pela natureza ou trabalho, é forçado a compreender este mundo em dimensões reflexivas, sensacionalistas e metafísicas. Bens e coisas são intermediários entre o homem e o mundo, o homem e a sociedade, mas um papel importante é menos representado pela sua encarnação material do que pela conexão com a medida transcendente e finalmente sensível da vida humana, porque a base para dar coisas e bens simbolismo é a necessidade humana existencial determinada pela natureza humana. O homem, compreendendo sua própria finitude nesse ser, compreendendo o valor da vida, esforça-se para realizar uma das formas relativas da imortalidade - preservar uma parte de sua singular singularidade nas coisas materiais. As tecnologias modernas permitem que todos façam isso e a formação e o desenvolvimento da Internet e das tecnologias de TI permitem que cada pessoa ouça os outros e seja ouvida, deixe seus pensamentos, produtos de produção espiritual em outra dimensão - a realidade virtual. Mas o que acontece com a própria pessoa e como isso afeta sua essência? É possível transferir os produtos da atividade laboral humana para o espaço da realidade virtual sem perder sua natureza supersensível? E o que, em última análise, é a transição do capitalismo para o pós-capitalismo, marcando um novo vetor de objetivação da essência humana? Este artigo é dedicado a responder a essas perguntas.

Palavras-chave: filosofia; bens; coisa; capitalismo; metafísica.

Introduction

This research is a logical continuation of two previous works, one of which is devoted to the study of key ontological issues within the framework of the neoclassical cognitive paradigm (Krasnov A. S. (2017a), and the second - the study of the concept of “abstract labor” and its transformation during the period of modern capitalism (Krasnov A. S. (2017b).

Any thing, any goods that is produced in society, has a truly social nature. This was graphically demonstrated by K. Marx when he began to analyse the modern capitalist society and the mode of production from the goods, as the elementary cell of the capitalist organism (Marx, 1960; Marx, 1844). While producing goods, society encodes them with itself, the essence of social relations, but the goods is something more than a simple thing, the purpose of which is to satisfy human needs. In the methodological aspect, it is more productive to rise not from the analysis of social relations in the goods, as their elementary objectified form, but, on the contrary, from the metaphysics of the goods to the understanding of the determinants and vectors of modern social relations. This is the inductive logic with which K. Marx began his analysis, he also noted that the nature of every goods is dual, the goods tends to ontological duality (in the process of exchange, the product is divided into commodities and money). The goods precedes social being in the epistemological horizon, therefore, is the ontological basis of social being, for it provides

for its existence, where the highest embodiment of the goods becomes its *consumption*. The existence of any goods is always teleological: their main goal is the satisfaction of needs, so we can say that the product in one of its aspects should not exist for itself, but always for another, its creator - the person. The goods, as if striving for the highest Platonic idea - the idea of the highest good, reaches its goal in the act of its destruction, satisfying its destruction with the existence of separate individuals and the whole society as a whole. Everything real is reasonable, everything is reasonable, as G. Hegel once remarked - the creation and destruction of a goods, like any other moment of being, is a natural process that is reasonable and valid, like everything in nature. A reasonable and actual process of the product's life cycle is revealed in the dialectics of production, distribution, exchange and consumption, which today retains its classical scheme, but the processes themselves have changed in connection with the growth of technology and the application of social intelligence to the process of goods production. Modern computer technologies, automation of many types and types of production have made possible the emergence of a new type of goods - digital goods, therefore, through the description of goods, we can “decipher” the content of the society itself, public relations. Digital goods are represented primarily in the form of computer programs, the game industry, mobile applications, etc. But modern digital gadgets, types of computers, communication media will also be fairly related to digital goods, since their development is





directly related to the development of software, the formation of a new generating reality - virtuality.

Methods

The author's initial methodological position is to analyse the objective phenomena of social reality and create a metaphysical model. The methodology of ascent from the abstractive to the concrete allows us to reveal the essential and universal aspects of the analysed phenomena represented in the dialectical matrix of unity and negation: man and labor, the essence of man and its reflection in an alienated product - the goods. The existential approach to the analysis of society, production and goods makes it possible to single out their inner content, through their direct connection with their creator-man.

Results and discusión

From the ontological side, modern products of digital production are the material embodiment of universal labor, holding a modern smartphone, a person simultaneously becomes involved in his history, because in this thing all scientific, spiritual exploration and discoveries of the millennial history of mankind are embodied: from the spontaneous materialism of the Milesian school to N. Tesla and A. Einstein, but this formal ontological content does not lie on the surface itself, just like the hidden, the supersensible, religious, sacred nature of the goods, revealing the truly metaphysical content of social relations, precisely that part of them that reproduce a significant share of social consciousness, form the epistemological picture of the being of the individual. Despite the past millennia, technological progress, the way of the relationship between man and the world has not changed. And if in the ancient world the Olympian gods had their own symbols that embodied them in earthly existence, through the worship of which it was possible to appeal to the deity (for example, the symbol of Ares, the god of war, was a torch, dogs, of Athena - owl, etc., of Isis - cats), then through worship or ritual interaction with the symbols of the deities you could ask them for favours. This form of common communication of a person with what seemed to him transcendental, forming a single rational principle, the source of all being, did not change in the Middle Ages, where abstract symbols replaced the more formally personified faces of saints. This trend does not change today. Images, symbols, are dissolved in things, the level

of secularization of various images is directly proportional to only the number of things. through co-communication, the co-relation of a person and a thing reveals the image of the historical ideal, if an ancient Greek, for example in the skin of a lion, could see the symbol of Hercules, who, in turn, embodied the necessary condition of existence - the strength to protect himself from any dangers that existed in nature, the modern man, holding in the hands of the flagship model of the iPhone, feels a co-relationship, a sacred, transcendental co-existence with S. Jobs, which became a kind of icon of modernity, but possessed qualities different from Hercules, but history shows us and the other side of the relationship of man and things, where the link is the symbolic. In religious beliefs and rituals, man himself becomes a thing, a vehicle and the embodiment of the transcendental, sometimes personalized by the gods of measurement. J. D. Frazer describes the rites of the Aztecs, where a young man or a girl performed the role of the earthly embodiment of the deities of the Mexican pantheon - Tokstatl and Chimenkokhuatl. The youth and the girl, as incarnations of the gods, all the tribesmen, priests and kings worshiped, but at the end of the earthly "reign" they were sacrificed (Frazer, 1894). M. Moss noted that the gods and spirits of the dead were the original and first owners of the blessings of the universe (Moss, 2011). Man himself became a thing, endowed with transcendental potential, served as a conduit to the supersensible world, and his existence (in the same Aztecs) ended in sacrifice and further act of cannibalism. The act of *sacrifice* helps to better understand the nature of the symbolic, which has a significant potential and influence on the lives of people, the co-existence of man and the world. Goods and thing, sacrifice themselves, so a person can be sacrificed for the sake of objectifying the symbolic in its various manifestations, from magic and religion to goods fetishism. J. Baudrillard, also marked this trend, considering elements linking primitive society and modern (Baudrillard, 2000).

Summary

In modern society, the vast majority of goods are consumed goods in the classical sense, where the completion of the cycle of consumption of goods, its physical sacrifice / destruction of itself in favour of human life, gives birth to a new cycle of production, as there is a need for a new consumption of goods. But this is different with digital goods. Like products of spiritual

production, the final consumption of digital goods is impossible because of their nature. Thus, it is impossible to consume the symphony of Mozart or the "Metaphysics" of Aristotle, because their nature consists in another - in an idea that experiences its creators for many millennia. It could be argued that the products of digital production are of an ideal nature, but, in the author's opinion, this claim is controversial. The ontological aspect of objectification and the existence of digital goods should be considered in indissoluble connection with all other types of goods. This relationship is revealed through a *relationship*, as an ontological property of all elements of being. G.V.F. Hegel defined the ontological property of the relationship through unity with himself and with others: "Thanks to the relationship, the existing is not abstract for itself, but only in the other, but in this other it is the relationship with itself, and the relationship is the unity of the relationship with itself and the relationship with the other" (Hegel, 1975). Through the relationship, the ontology and form of elements of being are revealed, both of nature and its universal laws, and of the Second Nature - society. All things are in relationships and various goods are revealed and exist because of this universal property. The symphony is recorded on a musical instrument, it is divided into parts of instruments, it is performed by the orchestra. But for the formation of actual existence from the potential, from the essence to the existential, it is transformed due to the relationship with other things created by labor and production. We see the same in the objectification of digital goods, they are born from the relationship of wage labor and capital, production and social intelligence, universal labor, and can exist only in relation to, in the content of *ourselves in another one*. The program, the application, the computer game exist in the potential being in other things - the files are recorded on electronic media like notes of a symphony to a music school, but to move from the essence to the existence, it is not necessary to live the orchestra, but the processors, video cards, output of graphic information and peripherals.

The modern era, the era of mass production, the era of the absolutism of abstract labor, changes the canonical ideas of things and goods. The crisis of overproduction, the huge accumulation of goods, the need for their constant market realization, makes it necessary to take a fresh look at the product itself and what it is today in order to inductively reveal the very essence of

modern social relations. K. Marx also noted in *Capital* that the goods, despite the fact that it seems to be a very simple thing, are always full of metaphysical quirks (Marx, 1960). The supersensible nature of things, their sacralisation in the mass consciousness, their fetishisation, is a necessary condition not only for the continuation of the existence of the capitalist mode of production, the form and content of social relations, which is a truism, the very essence of the metaphysical measurement of a goods is also revealed through a relationship, alignable things, goods, and through the existential need of man to be co-implicated in the whole - social being, goods, things, are some kind of instrument of co-participate with the whole social organism. Another measurement of the ratio of man and the product - the production of the latter. According to K. Marx, the more a worker produces, the more values he creates, the less he consumes and the less valuable his life (Marx, 1960). The existence of man in the "world of things" is dialectical: on the one hand, through them he interacts with being and the society, on the other hand, the less he remains in himself. The alienation of man, the way K. Marx described it, gives rise not only to social unfreedom, but also to existential lack of freedom.

Conclusions

The beginning of the symbolic content of things, a deep symbolic attitude to the world, is ontologically revealed through the finiteness of man and his desire to come into contact with eternity. The eternal cycle of birth and death freezes in symbolic forms. Man is born and dies. The thing is consumed and manufactured again. It physically embodies a part of the transcendental symbolic, which is impossible to consume, by virtue of its nature. The dichotomy of life and death, the material and the ideal, finds its unity and identity in the symbol. About the symbol, as a certain unity wrote more A. F. Losev (Losev, 1993). Through the symbolic content of the product, the person himself is symbolized, frozen in the abstract form of the symbol of himself, but embodied through another - a thing, a goods. The relative form of human immortality is revealed not only through his offspring, but also through the products of his labor and activities, in which his self has been reflected: in works of science and culture, in things and objects that he produced or simply held hands. It is not only the product that destroys life by its destruction and forms man, but a person subsequently incarnates





in things – “the destruction of one is the birth of another” (Aristotle, 2015). This is the existential and eternal unity of man and the products of his labor, where the creator and his work exist dialectically, opposing each other, but at the same time, existing through each other in an endless cycle.

The current pace of scientific and technological progress, one of the main vectors of which is the automation of material production, exclude direct human participation in the production cycle itself. The Fordist model of capitalism becomes history every day. And here we see: the very products of human labor free a person from participating in the production cycle - labor becomes a self-sufficient, sub-integral phenomenon. Substantialisation of labor, separated from man, makes the latter free: socially useful labor (the process of production) - productive forces with social intelligence attached to them (scientific discoveries and innovation of production), becomes independent, production itself is automated. Man, freed from the classical capitalist model of economics and production, is freed from wage labor. The operational essence of the capitalist formation from the material sphere passes into the virtual sphere. And the virtual begins to create material, in the first place, material goods - goods that satisfy human needs. Consider modern computers - the software controls an automated production cycle, ending its goal of meeting human needs. But the ever increasing level of automation of production, the increasing release of a person from the production cycle leads to humanitarian consequences: the release of the working class from the production sector, its exclusion from the economic sector, without providing another way of realizing its labor and earning a living, may turn into a new social issue. This is justified historically: any transition period in social development was accompanied by an aggravation of the social issue - a humanitarian catastrophe. Man, being the product of social relations, the product of a particular historical epoch, is their hostage in the dialectical leap from “old” to “new”. In this case, this dialectical leap is already taking place - the transition from capitalism to post-capitalism.

M. Heidegger noted human loneliness, due to the abandonment of man into the world, against his will (Heidegger, 1986). This problem of the existential side of human existence is increasingly expressed in the modern era: a man is alone in his existence, even if he is in constant communication with other people through

instant messengers and social networks. P. Teilhard de Chardin noted “Man came silently into the world” (Teilhard de Chardin, 2008). But how does a person leave this world, and in what way will he remain for other people? Obviously, in acts of individual creativity, non-alienated work, outside abstract labor, but in concrete work. The relative form of human immortality - the preservation of oneself in *nomine* in things will depend on how much each person will be able to climb the feet of the world spirit, as G. Hegel argued - the stories where a person eventually comprehends himself through an understanding of the past, coming to the present, then the person will again become a generic being, going beyond the limits of alienation and from the element of the mechanism of production will return to the person again, become himself.

E. Jünger, defining the new *gestalt*, noted: “The process in which a new *gestalt*, *gestalt* worker, is embodied in a special humanity, in connection with the development of the world appears as the emergence of a new principle, whose name is work” (Jünger, 1982). Work as the reproduction of a new world, work as a way of reproducing the human, work as a method about communication with the world, as a strategy of connecting one person with a historical past, present and future, throughout the colossal period of all human history, was burdened with dominance and lack of freedom. The products of labor were appropriated by the ruling class, and then returned to the person in a different form - those who lost touch with their creator. The existential emptiness of the product itself, indifferent to its consumer, the world itself, consisting of material goods alienated from man, gave rise to an existential crisis. This is a natural form of building a society based on unfreedom. Technology, the substantiation of the labor process is a vector of the development of modern society. A person excluded from the cycle of the production process, hired labor, in the classical sense of it, will have to occupy a new niche, to master a new function. Wash off the new function, the impending *gestalt*, will consist in the humanistic evaluation of production and a new kind of goods; in the return of the ethical component to science and technology. It seems that if this vector is implemented by developed countries, then in the coming years the need for humanitarian education will only increase. And philosophy, as a fundamental humanitarianism, based on, above all, a critical function - will be in demand.

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