

VIRTUALIZATION AS A FORM OF SUBJECTIVITY: EXPERIENCE OF PHILOSOPHICAL ANALYSIS OF THE PROBLEM

A VIRTUALIZAÇÃO COMO FORMA DE SUBJETIVIDADE: UMA ANÁLISE FILOSÓFICA DO PROBLEMA

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Abstract

The object of this study is the subject as a bearer of consciousness, cognition, practical activity, and its subject is subjectivity as a way of being of the subject. The purpose of the work is to analyze virtualization as a form of manifestation of subjectivity. The authors substantiate the existence of various types and levels of virtual reality as a manifestation of the essential powers of man, his creative nature; the work demonstrates the contradictory role of virtualization in the life of both an individual and the entire society. The authors of the study consider virtualization as an integral feature of subjectivity in any culture at any stage of its existence.

Keywords: Subject. Subjectivity as a Way of Being of a Subject. Virtualization as a Form of Subjectivity. Virtual Social Space. Actual Social Space. Digital Society. Socialization. Personality.

Resumo

O objeto deste estudo é o sujeito como portador da consciência, da cognição e da atividade prática, e seu tema é a subjetividade como forma de ser do sujeito. O objetivo do trabalho é analisar a virtualização como uma forma de manifestação da subjetividade. Os autores fundamentam a existência de vários tipos e níveis de realidade virtual como uma manifestação das faculdades essenciais do homem, de sua natureza criativa; o trabalho demonstra o papel contraditório da virtualização na vida tanto do indivíduo quanto de toda a sociedade. Os autores do estudo consideram a virtualização como uma característica integral da subjetividade em qualquer cultura, em qualquer estágio de sua existência.

Palavras-chave: *Sujeito. Subjetividade como Forma de Ser do Sujeito. Virtualização como Forma de Subjetividade. Espaço Social Virtual.*



*Espaço Social Real. Sociedade Digital.
Socialização. Personalidade.*

1 INTRODUCTION

The virtual world is a special sphere of any culture – especially modern – such a feature that cannot be identified with non-existence, with that which does not exist. Translated from Latin ("virtus"), virtual means "true". Consequently, the virtual world is reality and it must be taken into account. The fact is that its creation (voluntary or involuntary, conscious or spontaneous) is a way of being of the subject as an active being. In virtual worlds today, everyone is doomed to wander, whether they realize it or not. In these worlds, space and time cease to be a restraining factor and everything can be in them, everything can happen there. Virtualization is a way to look into the future of humanity, an opportunity to throw a bridge into tomorrow [1].

2 MATERIALS AND METHODS

Virtual worlds are the result of abstraction, in which the subject reflects what exists and models what should be. Consequently, without comparative analysis, without immersing ourselves in a concrete historical situation, ignoring the method of generalization, we risk either "drowning" in the chaos of real facts, or constructing something schematic, a theoretical representation detached from life.

3 RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

The subject in any of its hypostases – as a bearer of consciousness, as a cognizer or a practical participant – deals with virtual worlds: either creates them himself or finds himself involved in existing ones. Neither curiosity, nor the desire to immerse himself in dreams and empty fantasies, but the peculiarities of being in the world force him to engage in virtualization. Comparing various aspects of the multifaceted world with each other, the subject ascertains the incompleteness, the inferiority of the surrounding reality and himself in it and, wishing, at least, to level out this fact, creates a virtual idea of what is

due or goes into already existing virtual worlds. This is one of the ways the subject searches for answers to the well-known questions formulated by I. Kant: What can I know? What should I do? What can I hope for? What is a human? [2].

The existence of a virtualizing subject is specific: he can live in virtual reality with all his heart and, at the same time, never completely leave the physical world. This circumstance encourages him to permanently move from the virtual to the world of physical phenomena and back. He is in motion, therefore, he is in a state of constant change.

The virtual world is diverse. Among the various criteria that allow us to distinguish them from each other, it is logical to single out the criterion of significance: on its basis, we can talk about universal, local, and private virtual worlds. The former are based on the archetypal, generic in the ideas of people of different cultures. Their unifying potential is enormous and, in fact, it is thanks to them that the assertion about human civilization as such is legitimate. These are manifestations of the objective spirit: religion, science, art, morality, philosophy. All spheres of public life are permeated and breathe them, and the idea of the identity of being and thinking, which philosophers have adhered to at different times, is not far from the truth [3, 4, 5]. Each new generation of people finds them as a given and, thanks to this, its socialization and inclusion in the world of existing generations occurs.

Obviously, it is impossible to absolutize the unifying and not see the divisive potential of universal virtual worlds, since the generally significant, intersubjective manifests itself in the time and space of specific cultures. Such are, for example, world religions, under the shadow of which is more than half of humanity. However, at the same time we talk about the values of Christianity, Islam, Buddhism (and inside we distinguish islands with their peculiar application: Orthodoxy, Protestantism and Catholicism; Sunnism and Shiism, etc.), so when in Rome, try to adhere to the well-known recommendation. Moreover, due to different interpretations, the same virtual can and often does become a “home” for subjects pursuing mutually exclusive goals and achieving different results. This is how the universal (“earthly”) understanding of what should be as a certain dominant order manifests itself. The sublime, the universal is reborn (degenerates) in the minds into what should be, distorted by the person himself. Thus, each person develops his own truth and his own order of things. This is explained by the

fact that the bearer of the objective spirit is the subjective spirit, as a result of which the generally significant, the generic is refracted into the individual, the unique. A conflict situation arises, which is resolved in a very ambiguous way. At least the following options are possible:

- a) a single, private interpretation radically changes the universal virtual, and the latter continues to exist under the flag of the "winner" (from the history of philosophy as an example – the solution to the problem of the many and the one: from the many initial positions, atomism won and philosophical materialism existed under its signboard until the end of the 19th century);
- b) the universal virtual retains its dominant influence, while its individual, private interpretation can be obstructed as an inadequate interpretation of the problem (declaration as heresy and anathematization as a religious option) or – for the time being – they coexist (the position of party factions and the general line of the party as an example from political life);
- c) virtual representations defeat the creator himself, he turns into a fanatic and a slave of his ideas, breaking with the real world and, in essence, opposing himself to it, becoming an asocial hermit.

An important aspect of virtualization as a form of subjectivity is the creation of virtual worlds for others. They manifest themselves in philosophical, scientific and utopian social theories, ideologies; their propaganda and agitation for them is an essential component of social life, because they accumulate the ideas of social forces about the world and their place in it. Erudition, original principles, and motivation of the creator of virtual reality are of eternal importance in this matter. This is exactly what the famous social philosopher of the 20th century L. Althusser discussed in his work "Ideology and Ideological State Apparatuses". From his point of view, the subject, as active evidence, is constantly recruited by ideology from individuals. According to it, the capitalist system is organized and functions in such a way as to reproduce exploitative social relations, and in this process the role of the ideological apparatus of the state cannot be overestimated. Through the organizations that are part of it (the political system, trade unions, the media, the church, etc.), the state, purposefully influencing the consciousness of people, forms the subjects it needs: either the exploited (the proletariat), or the exploiters (capitalists), or the employees of exploitation (personnel employees), or the high priests of the

dominant ideology (its “functionaries”), and so on. And what is very important: subjects must to some extent be “imbued” with the dominant ideology in order to “consciously” fulfill their duties. In the ideological apparatus of the state, the school plays a special role, having taken the palm from the church. The fact is, the philosopher wrote, that “...no ideological apparatus of the state has at its disposal so much obligatory (and, is it worth reminding, free...) time of presence of all the multitude of children: five or six days out of seven, eight hours a day” [6].

Ideology as a form of the virtual is not only proposed and imposed from outside, but is developed and reproduced by individuals and social groups due to the objective conditions of their existence. This thesis was once convincingly defended by the founders of Marxism. From their point of view, the main subjects of bourgeois society exhibit typical forms of subjectivity, determined, ultimately, by their social position. Thus, the subjectivity of the petty bourgeoisie is characterized by an imaginary supra-classism, a tendency towards individualism and anarchism, a desire to avoid acute class clashes and therefore a tendency towards reformism and opportunism. And all this is explained according to Marxism by the nature of the petty bourgeoisie: its dual position in society. As an owner, the petty bourgeois is interested in preserving and expanding his property, which leads to conservatism and fear of communism. As a worker, he sympathizes with the working class and can display democracy and a desire for justice [7, 8]. The petty bourgeois is destined by fate to either turn into a big bourgeois or become a proletarian, i.e. to demonstrate the corresponding forms of subjectivity.

A large owner, a capitalist, is “captive” to ideas about his own significance in the fate of the country, humanity as a whole, and uses a wide range of tools to extract profit: exploitation of hired labor, private property, competition and monopolies, ideological manipulation, the state machine. And, as Marx writes in *Capital*, “...with 100 percent profit, he tramples all human laws, with 300 percent there is no crime that he would not risk...” [9].

The subjectivity of the proletarian – the other main class of bourgeois society, the opponent of the capitalist – also manifests itself in various ways. In Marxism, attention is drawn to the fact that it basically demonstrates two types of subjectivity: genuine and inauthentic. The metaphorical expression of the first – “the proletariat is the gravedigger of capitalism” – essentially means that it must ultimately be embodied in the dictatorship

of the proletariat, which is created to socialize the means of production and suppress the resistance of the bourgeoisie. Such subjectivity could be defined as a revolutionary-transforming social reality. It necessarily follows from the well-known statement of K. Marx that philosophy cannot be limited to explaining the world, but must aim to transform it [10]. An example of the second type is, in particular, the Luddite movement, aimed at destroying machine tools. Even such forms of subjectivity as putting forward economic demands, creating trade unions still speak of the immaturity of proletarian resistance, since they demonstrate the lack of awareness by the proletariat of its class interests, their opposition to the interests of the capitalists. In this regard, it is necessary to pay attention to Marx's fundamental indication of the *fetishization* of social relations in public consciousness, as a result of which proletarians demonstrate subjectivity that contradicts their own class interests and reproduce bourgeois commodity-money relations, but they are not aware of this [11]. This suggests that ideology is not simply a false consciousness, an illusory representation of reality, but rather is this reality itself, which must already be understood as “ideological”. This is a reality, the very existence of which presupposes non-knowledge on the part of the subjects of this reality, non-knowledge that is essential to this reality. That is, such a social mechanism, the very homeostasis of which presupposes that individuals “are not aware of what they are doing”. Their awareness of this fact leads, at first glance, to a paradoxical result – they cease to be themselves, i.e. proletarians, and, consequently, acquire a different, non-proletarian, subjectivity and, thus, the ability to create other virtual worlds.

The subject is a historical phenomenon and it manifests its subjectivity in the time and space of a specific culture, at the corresponding stage of the existence of a civilization.

This is how the virtual manifests itself, for example, in the form of religion. The reality of today is the NRM – a new religious movement, the causes of which can be seen in the processes of globalization, the destruction of traditional relations, secularization, etc. The spread of neo-religious movements in Russia was largely facilitated by a deep crisis, and then the collapse of the existing economic, political and ideological system.

There are tens or hundreds of thousands of NRMs in the world, most of which are small (several dozen followers), but there are also larger ones with thousands and even millions of participants. In Russia, NRMs are represented by both foreign (Baha'i, Mormonism, Spiritualism, Theosophical Society, Anthroposophy, World White

Brotherhood, New Acropolis, Church of Scientology, Church of Satan, Osho movement, etc.) and local organizations (Fourth Way, Roerich movement (Agni Yoga), Rose of the World Movement, Great White Brotherhood USMALOS, Ringing Cedars of Russia, Shambhala Ashram, etc.). The total number of NRM followers in Russia is estimated at approximately 1,000,000 people; their beliefs are not only not rooted in the traditions of the peoples of the country, nation, region, but sometimes conflict with them, since they adhere to religious radicalism (radical renewal of religious tradition or its replacement with a completely different one), social "alternativeness" (the desire to transform the socio-political system). Moreover, it should be borne in mind that the greatest interest in religious experiments is manifested in the youth countercultural environment [12, 13, 14, 15].

Among the reasons that determine the characteristics of modern virtual worlds, it is necessary to note, first of all, the following indisputable fact: due to radical geopolitical changes, technical and technological achievements, rethinking of ideas about relationships in the system "society - individual" a new "standard" of man has emerged. In it:

- a) a man is a self-valuable, self-sufficient being, controlling and correcting himself; he is the source of all values and the only judge for himself;
- b) the world takes the form that is given to it by an individual who: a) does only what pays off and/or b) shows a productive character and/or c) has freed his psyche from the archaic structure of subordination to authority and/or d) in a word (like God) creates a text-world in which he "turns" himself inside out;
- c) all spheres of life, all types of activity of a modern person are supported by information technologies and their use is no longer a problem of choice, but an urgent need [16].

For virtual worlds created by a person with the specified properties and capabilities, it is characteristic that they:

- a. provide full sensory immersion through VR equipment, simulation of physical properties of objects and real-time mode; users do not just observe, but actively interact with elements of the environment, creating their own scenarios;
- b. offer cultural models, and are not only a tool for solving narrow problems in certain areas of life (military simulators, psychological experiments, etc.); modern virtual

- reality, changing cognitive processes and social connections, becomes an equal dimension of human existence;
- c. having become part of everyday life, they transform the perception of reality so that it becomes difficult to draw a line between physical and digital interaction; dependence on virtual communication is becoming widespread;
 - d. they combine various virtual platforms, which leads to the emergence of a metaverse effect, allowing participation in joint projects, attending events and forming digital identities without geographical restrictions. This is a qualitatively new step compared to isolated VR systems of the past.

4 CONCLUSION

Virtualization as a way of being of the subject radically changes the social world, the state of which at the present stage is reflected by the concept of "digital society" [17].

In such a society:

- a. a qualitatively different way of people's life is established: social relations and connections in it are mainly reproduced and maintained by means of digital technologies (and before that, social relations and connections were reproduced by means of direct communication and by means of analog technologies);
- b. in it, the virtualization of the social reaches such a level when the virtual social begins to dominate over the previously typical social; since the processes of digitalization are only just gaining momentum, the current stage of modern civilization is characterized by a "hybrid" social;
- c. social relations and connections in this society reach such a degree of mediation that a dual situation arises: a) on the one hand, traditional connections and relations between people are "broken", society is "atomized" to the maximum; b) on the other hand, there is a directly opposite tendency: through social networks in the Internet space, an individual becomes a "universal man", i.e. a cosmopolitan, a man of the world and, consequently, ceases to be a bearer of a unique culture. These are only the visible results of the virtualization of the modern subject.

To be a modern subject today means to prove one's subjectivity in practical everyday activities, influencing the conditions of one's life and the existence of other people. The

degree of subjectivity today is determined, among other things, by the subject's ability to create and offer virtual worlds that can open up previously unseen prospects for self-realization and interaction with others.

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