

Artículo de investigación

Metaphysics of Labor in Russian Culture: Part One⁴²

Метафизика труда в русской культуре: часть первая

Metafísica del trabajo en la cultura rusa: primera parte

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Abstract

The article tries to describe a complex phenomenon in Russian culture and philosophy - the metaphysics of labor. Much attention is paid to Russian philosophical thought of the beginning of the 20th century, and the views of L.N. Tolstoy to this problem. The question is raised about the formation of economic and labor ethics in Russia, as well as the religious motivation of work. The axiological value of labor for the Russian person is determined, the metaphysical essence of labor in the national image of the world is revealed. This was still discussed by religious thinkers. S.N. Bulgakov wrote about the "sophisticated" nature of labor activity. The study also examines the phenomenon of laziness, the category of "leisure", "free time" in the context of spiritual Russian culture. The connection of labor activity with moral categories is traced. The work involves analytical, historical, descriptive and systematic methods of analysis.

Аннотация

В статье предпринимается попытка описания сложного феномена в русской культуре и философии – метафизики труда. Большое внимание уделяется русской философской мысли начала XX века, а также описываются взгляды Л. Н. Толстого на эту проблему. Поднимается вопрос о формировании хозяйственно-трудовой этики в России, а также о религиозной мотивации труда. Определяется аксиологическая ценность труда для русского человека, выявляется метафизическая сущность труда в национальном образе мира. Об этом рассуждали еще религиозные мыслители. С. Н. Булгаков писал о «софийном» характере трудовой деятельности. В исследовании также рассматривается феномен лени, категории «досуга», «свободного времени» в контексте духовной русской культуры. Прослеживается связь трудовой деятельности с нравственными категориями. В работе задействованы

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Keywords: Value of labor, labor discourse, economic philosophy, metaphysics, Russian culture, linguistic picture of the world, Russian philosophy.

аналитический, исторический,
дескриптивный и системный методы анализа.

Ключевые слова: ценность труда, дискурс труда, философия хозяйства, метафизика, русская культура, языковая картина мира, русская философия

Resumen

El artículo trata de describir un fenómeno complejo en la cultura y filosofía rusa: la metafísica del trabajo. Se presta mucha atención al pensamiento filosófico ruso de principios del siglo XX y a las opiniones de L.N. Tolstoi a este problema. Se plantea la cuestión de la formación de la ética económica y laboral en Rusia, así como la motivación religiosa del trabajo. Se determina el valor axiológico del trabajo para la persona rusa, se revela la esencia metafísica del trabajo en la imagen nacional del mundo. Esto todavía fue discutido por pensadores religiosos. S.N. Bulgakov escribió sobre la naturaleza "sofisticada" de la actividad laboral. El estudio también examina el fenómeno de la pereza, la categoría de "ocio", "tiempo libre" en el contexto de la cultura espiritual rusa. Se traza la conexión de la actividad laboral con las categorías morales. El trabajo involucra métodos analíticos, históricos, descriptivos y sistemáticos de análisis.

Palabras clave: Valor del trabajo, discurso laboral, filosofía económica, metafísica, cultura rusa, imagen lingüística del mundo, filosofía rusa.

Introduction

It's impossible to overestimate the importance of both physical and spiritual labor in human life. However, in the Russian linguistic picture of the world one can observe an ambivalent attitude towards human labor. Paremiological material, which is analyzed by researchers of the Russian language in synchrony and diachrony, is indicative in this regard (Borscheva, 2011). Scientists also turn to Russian proverbs, sayings in a typological aspect, comparing them with English ones (Loginova, Khorosheva, 2014). Thus, the features of the philosophy of labor in the Russian national image of the world are revealed. However, the idea of work, which is stored in the language, old proverbs, sayings, has changed over time. Researchers interested in this problem draw attention to the fact that "labor does not always have the same semantic content" (Ashkerov, 2003: 50). A scientific view is needed in synchrony and diachrony on the concept and "labor" and the problem of the philosophy of labor.

The global transformation of the axiological status of labor has occurred in the culture of modern society. In a postindustrial, networked, consumer society, the principles of the global Protestant work ethic, which formed the foundation of capitalist civilization, no longer work. These issues were discussed at the International Conference "Between Labor and

Leisure: Toward a New "Saving Salvation"?)» organized by the Higher School of Economics in Moscow in 2013. In particular, the conference program documents state: "The crisis of industrial capitalism and Fordism-Taylorism did not mean the «end of labor», but heralded its profound transformations. Production escaped beyond the factory walls. The border between working and free time has become vague and permeable. Until recently, Judeo-Christian civilization saw the key to redemption and deliverance precisely in labor. Now, the work is getting fewer, and "that one is not at all the same».

Materials and methods

In this article, in its first part, we will consider in synchronism and diachrony the features of the development of Russian philosophical thought devoted to the metaphysics of labor. For this, we turn to the analytical, historical, descriptive and systematic method of analysis. We analyze the works of Russian philosophers N. F. Fedorov, V. S. Soloviev, S. N. Bulgakov, N. A. Berdyaev. Their work allows us to identify the ambivalent nature of labor and to trace how economic, economic activity is connected with moral. The latter is especially relevant in the context of the transitional nature of the culture of the 21st century. We also turn to the problems of modern

society and its attitude to work. This approach allows you to comprehensively approach the problem, to trace the attitude to work in the XX century and today, to find out how this attitude has changed.

One of the main issues in the current situation of globalism is the question of the relationship between the categories of "labor" and "leisure". Can civilization be built on a foundation not of labor, but of leisure? Free time takes on particular ambivalence — time to overcome alienation and, at the same time, consumption time, and the investment sphere of powerful "leisure industries". Is it not becoming in its own way productive, but at the same time a new source of alienation? How does this affect the construction of subjectivity? How to interpret new phenomena - network solidarity, continuous virtual interaction, the requirements of the "living allowance", alternative economic and environmental microprojects? Politicians in the West regularly promise "reindustrialization", and in Russia - a turn from a commodity to a high-tech economy. And what future - in Russia and in the world - shows a barometer of cultural practices?

In these theses, the main ideas of modern philosophy of labor are formulated, consisting of two provisions:

- 1) There was a fundamental transformation of the classical way of labor;
- 2) Leisure civilization challenges the civilization of labor.

In this context, issues related to education, which is becoming increasingly commercialized, are also important. Commercialization of education indicates a significant axiological transformation of labor status. N. A. Orekhovskaya writes about this: "The main thing, in our opinion, is not to get carried away and not to turn professional education into a commercial project that generates income. It must be remembered that education is a single system that educates, shapes the value orientations of young citizens of the country" (Orekhovskaya, 2019: 121).

In order to understand the global nature of modern modifications in the axiosphere of labor ethics, it is necessary to consider the basic values of labor ethics that are characteristic of Russian philosophical culture.

Results

There are various, as a rule, unscrupulous myths about the special laziness of the Russian people, not inclined to work, hoping for "maybe". In reality, labor always had a high spiritual status in Russia. An important source for understanding the labor ethics of the Russian people is the monograph written by L. P. Naidenova, which, in particular, speaks of the earliest stages of the formation of an economic and labor ethics in Russia. The researcher notes: "Domostroy reflects the initial stages of the establishment of economic and labor ethics, where labor as "hard work", punishment for original sin, turns into creative activity for the glory of God and the path to salvation" (Naidenova, 2003: 115). Obviously, this is an exclusively religious motivation for work. But at the same time it is a spiritual motivation, the essence of which lies in the fact that the goals of labor go beyond economic pragmatism.

Speaking about the domestic philosophy of the economy, it is necessary to mention such names: N.F. Fedorov, V.S. Soloviev, S.N. Bulgakov, N.A. Berdyaev, I.A. Ilyin. The most famous is the concept of S. N. Bulgakov, embodied in his book "Philosophy of the economy", in which the economy is considered in a metaphysical plane. He speaks of the "sophistication of the economy," which takes labor beyond the limits of economic feasibility, encompassing the universe as a whole (Bulgakov, 1982: 44). At the same time, the philosopher does not deny entrepreneurial activity, considering it also a manifestation of sophistry of the economy.

The high spiritual status of labor in Russia also affected the development of a rich material culture. N.O. Lossky in his famous work "The Character of the Russian People" noted: "The practical mind of a Russian person manifested itself in the rapid and highly successful development of industry and engineering in the second half of the 19th century" (Lossky, 1990). This conclusion of an outstanding Russian thinker, an expert on Russian philosophy, does not agree with the myths about the laziness of the Russian people.

At the same time, widespread judgments about the laziness of the Russian people are not entirely unfounded, since, as the outstanding expert on Russian culture V.V. Weidle has shown, they are rooted in some spiritual features of a national character. To understand them means to accurately determine the Russian national attitude to work, in contrast to Western

European, based on the canons of the Protestant ethics of labor. In the book "The Task of Russia," the researcher notes that "a Russian person, if he does good, is not out of duty, but out of love, and in general he wants to do, create, work only if work is to his heart, and not because he must, must, at least this obligation prescribed him his own benefit or practical necessity. Of course, this often leads to passivity, easily turning into simple laziness, and a moral feeling can also be lazy" (Weidle, 2011: 75).

It seems that here the main metaphysical motive of the Russian attitude to work is revealed, which consists in the specifics of moral consciousness, for which conscience is higher than duty, cordial feelings of good and love are stronger than duty, and accordingly, morality is higher than law. V.V. Weidle further writes: "In denying duty, in removing all morality from love, and in preferring this morality to the right, is also a belief in positive, effective good, while legal morality leads to a system of prohibitions, to understanding goodness as simple abstinence from evil or as an external, withering heart fulfillment of the law" (Weidle, 2011: 76).

These observations about the spontaneous, emotional attitude of a Russian person to work takes written by N.O. Lossky and V.V. Weidle take shape in a special philosophical discourse of labor, the distinguishing feature of which is that it is a formed metaphysics of labor, which consists in understanding the central category of this discourse - "economy". Names such as V. S. Soloviev, N. F. Fedorov, S. N. Bulgakov, N. A. Berdyaev, I. A. Ilyin formed an integral paradigm of the philosophy of economy, in which the main axiological orientations of Russian thinkers are clearly shown in relation to work. This line of Russian philosophy continues today, finding its creative embodiment and development.

Indicative in this regard are the words of Academician Yu. M. Osipov, one of the main representatives of modern Russian economic philosophy. His words are a hymn to work, a hymn to a business man: "When managing, a person overcomes external and internal, nature-based resistance, he always acts in spite of himself, expending himself through difficulty, "shaking", and, accordingly, laboring. Housekeeping is work! Even simple consumption of the finished good is labor. Thinking is labor. Organization is labor. But what about the production (the exhilaration from oneself and from the environment) of a good that clearly requires labor and therefore becomes a

product of labor? Everywhere labor! There is nothing in the life and economy of the unearned, at least not conditioned by labor. Labor is a condition of a person's being, his life, his action. The very birth of man is labor, death too! The production and reproduction of man is labor, and not just the need for labor. There is no man without labor! Labor is a necessity, but it is also a great need. Labor itself is also consumed. Labor is suffering, but also pleasure. And therefore, labor is sacred, as the economy itself is sacred, by the way" (Osipov, 2006: 14).

Here, labor acts as the universal equivalent of a human being, which manifests itself in its activity, which is primarily spiritual in nature. Certainly, a significant influence on the formation of the national philosophy of the economy, and that such an understanding of labor, was exerted by the Christian dogma with its aims at transforming the world and man, in which labor receives a special spiritual meaning. Already in this there is a significant difference between Russian economic philosophy and Western European philosophy, for which the principles of economic rationalism and pragmatism are important. The priority of Western authors is such issues as the organization of work and leisure activities. This is not to say that Russian philosophers were not worried about questions about how a person should manage the time of his life, but they, one way or another, went into the metaphysical space of questions about the meaning of life.

The general attitude of Russian philosophers in relation to work is manifested in an understanding of the fundamental dependence of the economic issue on the moral issue. This principle of non-autonomy of the economic principle finds its expression in the philosophical constructions of V. S. Solovyov: "Since the subordination of material interests and relations in human society to some special, acting economic laws is only an invention of bad metaphysics, which has no shadow of foundation in reality, the general requirement of reason and conscience remains in force, so that this area also submits to the highest moral principle, so that in its economic life society is an organized implementation of good" (Soloviev, 1988: 478-479).

Such is the essential difference from economic determinism, which reduces the entire structure of economic activity only to the achievement of an economic effect and, accordingly, the competent organization of labor that contributes to the achievement of this effect.

In general, the most developed economic theory from the point of view of metaphysics is presented in Russian philosophy by V. S. Solovyov. The philosopher, in his main work on moral philosophy, "Justification of the Good," singled out three fundamental factors of a person's moral being: shame, pity, and reverence, linking them into a single unit of economic activity. He writes: "The triune moral principle that determines our proper position with regard to God, people, and material nature finds its full and inseparable application in the economic field" (Soloviev, 1988: 417).

These words express the entire completeness of the philosophical doctrine of V. S. Solovyov on unity as a moral synthesis of the whole universe, in which man is his ethical center. Accordingly, a person sets a measure of attitude towards the lower nature (shame), to oneself like oneself (pity) and to the higher principle of being (reverence). In this sense, according to the Russian philosopher, all economic phenomena are conceivable only in relation to the activity of a person who is a moral being, and therefore capable of subordinating all his actions to the motives of pure good. Labor does not become an economic category, as in Western political economy, but a category of moral philosophy. Not economic profit is the goal of labor, but the moral improvement of man.

A special place in the domestic metaphysics of labor belongs to the philosopher N. F. Fedorov, the founder of the "philosophy of the common cause." According to the thinker: "Hunger and death come from the same causes, and therefore the question of resurrection is the question of liberation from hunger" (Fedorov, 1982: 351). These words contain the core of his philosophy, in which both the economic aspect (hunger) and the metaphysical (death) are intertwined in a single act of labor, which consists in saving a person from economic and metaphysical poverty. Labor, respectively, is an instrument of theurgic (spiritual) work to overcome the economically disadvantaged and morally imperfect state of nature and man.

These ideas of V. S. Solovyov and N. F. Fedorov, it can be said, are invariant for understanding the essence of Russian metaphysics of labor, which found its further interesting, creatively productive development in the works of many Russian philosophers, and above all, N. A. Berdyaev and S. N. Bulgakov. They have a special place in creating a unique and original philosophy of the economy, based on the

spiritual, moral and metaphysical perception of labor inherent in Russian culture.

It is N. A. Berdyaev who owns a unique combination of such phenomena as "creativity", "freedom" and "economy". The philosopher expands the traditional framework of the concept of "labor" as difficult, boring and, in its terminology, "slavish" burdensome business, showing the creative nature of labor and the economy as a whole. He believes that the "economic act" is designed to overcome "the severity and constraint of the material world", and, ultimately, must "master the chaotic elements."

This is precisely the creative nature of labor, to which the spiritual overcomes the material. This is perfectly expressed in the following words of the philosopher: "The discipline of labor, the organization of labor and labor productivity depend on spiritual factors. In the end, the spirit conquers nature and captures the elemental forces of nature. The economy as the embodiment of natural forces, how their organization and regulation is an act of the human spirit. And the nature of the economy depends on the quality of the spirit" (Berdyaev, 1990: 235). This priority of spiritual meaning over material makes up the most important feature of the domestic metaphysics of labor, which N. A. Berdyaev revealed most fully.

S. N. Bulgakov, without whom the metaphysics of Russian labor will be incomplete, adds his own special theoretical stream to the Russian philosophy of economy. He develops his ideas in line with the "sophiology of the economy", seeing, like N. F. Fedorov, the main purpose of labor in overcoming the deadly and chaotic forces of nature. Here is how he defines the meaning of sophianism of the economy in his main work on this subject, "The Philosophy of the Economy": "History is organized from a non-historical and beyond center, Sofia on earth grows only because her mother Sofia Heavenly exists ... And if the development of the economy, instead of being a simple *bellum omnium contra omnes*, the bestial struggle for existence, leads to the subjugation of nature by the cumulative humanity, this is due to this superpersonal power, called by Hegel "the cunning of the mind", and here designated as sophianism "households" (Bulgakov, 1982: 157).

A person has been called to this, and this is the main spiritual meaning of his life, which coincides with the economic one. If we compare the data of Russian philosophers with modern

concepts regarding the nature of a person's labor activity in a post-industrial society, the main difference will not be that modern work is characterized by greater creativity, aesthetics, "porosity", mobility and flexibility, a greater penetration of leisure into it, but in the fact that he is losing his spiritual essence to be the spokesman of man as a metaphysical being, not an economic one. This paradoxically manifests itself in the fact that, according to A. Korsani, "social acceleration turns into a cultural stupor" (Korsani, 2015: 68). This means that, despite the reduction in working time caused by the revolutionary invasion of new technologies in the production sector, modern man feels that he is losing control of time and is struggling today to "return the lost time." This existential flaw arises from the fact that in general labor has lost its spiritual essence, which has always been held in the traditions of Russian philosophy.

The Russian metaphysics of labor gives a special meaning to the significant figure of Leo Tolstoy and his idea of labor as "simplification or humility in pride" (Kazantseva, 2012: 79-82). Despite the fact that the views of the writer and thinker underwent significant changes throughout the entire intellectual path, the key point in Tolstoy's interpretation of the existence of the labor component in life in ethical terms is the equalization of "labor" and "moral": "agricultural labor should be the moral duty of every person" (Prugavin, 1911).

As researcher I.A. Yurtaeva notes, agricultural work for L.N. Tolstoy is at the same time a way of returning to the ideal of social life of the peasant community, and, on the other hand, is a deed that ennobles the soul and spirit of a person (Yurtaeva, 2013: 50). At the same time, for Tolstoy, the meaningfulness of work, its inclusion in the general spiritual life path, is extremely important: "Activities deprived of perspective, without understanding and understanding the meaning of life, are, according to Tolstoy, harmful" (Yurtaeva, 2013: 50).

Thus, in Tolstoy's thought, the understanding of labor as an exclusively moral category acquires, firstly, a practical character and assumes its concrete implementation and inclusion in the daily routine within the framework of the peasant commune; secondly, labor represents the path to a fully meaningful, spiritual life and genuine adherence to the precepts of Christianity.

Conclusions

A generalization of the ideas of Russian philosophers and thinkers that we examined about the metaphysical essence of labor activity helps us to better understand the specifics, firstly, of an in-depth attitude to work within the framework of the Russian mentality, and secondly, the relationship of the human spirit and its physical need to work. The Russian language, Russian philosophy make it possible to understand the complexity and multidimensionality of the labor phenomenon, which for the Russian person has a dual character.

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