

DOI: 10.37930/2782-6465-2023-2-1-27-33

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THE HUMAN POTENTIAL OF THE CREATIVE ECONOMY¹

Abstract: the article discusses some aspects of the discussion held at the international seminar held by the S.Y. Witte Institute for New Industrial Development (INID) on the problems of creativity, knowledge and their role in the progress of the economy and society. On the one hand, the creative economy is based on creative activity, defined through the concept of “mental object”. On the other hand, there is noonomy, which is based on the NOO-principles of future existence, where an economic person becomes a cultural person. Using the example of the sphere of education, the article presents the contradiction faced by creative spheres and activities at the stage of late capitalism – the contradiction between the chronotope (time-space) of creativity and the world of alienation (in particular, the market and capital).

Keywords: human potential, creative economy, noonomy, mental objects, non-mechanized labor, culture.

For citation: Yakovleva N.G. (2023). The human potential of the creative economy. *Noonomy and Noosociety. Almanac of Scientific Works of the S.Y. Witte INID*, vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 27–33. DOI: 10.37930/2782-6465-2023-2-1-27-33

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创造型经济中人的能动性

摘要: 文章以相互对照的方式探讨了维捷新兴工业发展研究所主办的创造力、知识及他们的作用国际研讨会上发表的一些观点。作者阐述了创造性经济, 其基础是由“心理活动对象”决定的创造性活动; 同时阐述了智慧经济, 其基础是“经济人”转变为“文化人”的未来社会的智慧型原则。文章以教育领域为例, 说明了资本主义晚期不同创造领域和创造活动遇到的矛盾, 也即创造时空与异化世界之间的矛盾 (包括市场、资本)。

关键词: 人的能动性、创造型经济、智慧型经济、心理活动对象、不可被机器取代的劳动、文化。

引用注释: 雅科夫列娃 N. G. (2023). 创造型经济中人的能动性//智慧经济与智慧社会. 维捷新兴工业发展研究所论文选. vol. 2, no. 1, pp. 27–33. DOI: 10.37930/2782-6465-2023-2-1-27-33

¹ This article was prepared based on the report at the international scientific seminar of the S.Y. Witte Institute for New Industrial Development (INID) on "Genesis of Noonomy: Knowledge. mental objects. Creativity" (05.04.2023).

The progress of creative economy has not been the focus of domestic economic science so far, although the development of high technologies and the progress of human potential of the most advanced countries, including China, one of the leaders in this process, has long become one of the dominant topics in world economic science. Meanwhile, for Russia, a country that has always been distinguished by a high level of creative potential of its nationals, this topic is one of the most relevant both in theoretical and practical terms. In this regard, the discussion that took place at the international seminar held in April this year by the S.Y. Witte Institute for New Industrial Development (INID) on the problems of creativity, knowledge and their role in the progress of the economy and society seems significant and important. Director of INID, Corresponding Member of the Russian Academy of Sciences Sergey Dmitrievich Bodrunov and his Canadian colleague Alan Freeman made key presentations at the seminar. Both reports disclosed theses summarizing a number of publications of these authors in recent years [Bodrunov, 2018a; 2018b; 2020a; Freeman, 2016; 2021; 2022].

First of all, as already stated, the author completely agrees with the focus of A. Freeman and S.D. Bodrunov on the relevance of knowledge-intensive economy, creative economy, and not only in terms of immediate interests. These topics are strategically relevant. The future lies in chronotope¹ (time and space), where creative activity will play an increasingly dominant role as an attribute of the creative economy and, moreover, of those global transformations in the economy and society that we are witnessing.

Answering the question about the nature of creativity, Alan Freeman emphasizes the importance of such attributes of the latter as *non-mechanized labor*² and the *mental object*³. Let us dwell briefly upon the nature of the latter below. The category of “mental objects” is associated with a reference to the study of the world where unusual phenomena exist. Indeed, poetry and formulas, music and technology are something that has multiple tangible embodiments and exists in each of them. Let us clarify: the same formula – $E = mc^2$ – exists in the form of a range of different embodiments (in the form of paper texts, records on electronic media, in the memory of millions of people, etc.). As such, mental objects are familiar to us, although we are not fully aware of how unusual they are. So in this sense, the emphasis on their features in the works of Alan Freeman seems to be quite fruitful.

While noting the importance of referring to these categories, S.D. Bodrunov, however, shows that they are necessary, but not sufficient for an adequate theoretical portrayal of global transformations that we are experiencing today due to the progress of creative activity. The reason for this is that the transformations of the 21st century cover all areas of social production and affect not only the structure of labor, but also technologies, social and economic relations, politics, culture – all areas.

¹ Chronotope is a category that is used in various sciences, ranging from physiological studies to literary criticism, and denotes the unity of time (chronos) and space (topos). Recently, this category has been especially often used in the socio-philosophical works of L.A. Bulavka-Buzgalina, Professor at Moscow State University [Bulavka-Buzgalina, 2014]. As applied to socio-economic research, chronotope is the unity of social time and space, which is determined by the system of certain social and economic relations.

² “...creative work is defined by ‘irreplaceability’: it cannot be mechanized or replaced by machines” [Freeman, 2016, p. 37].

³ A. Freeman states that mental activity produces “mental objects” that can “exist in certain forms (speech, thought, recording, broadcasting, etc.) and become part of existence of such a form. For example, “the function of a book is to reproduce, transmit and preserve information published in it. Thus, the text of a book is part of what the book itself is, the printed representation of a mental object, its “content”. And vice versa, the book becomes part of existence of a mental object that exists only in the ideal form of all its specific representations” [Freeman, 2021, p. 207].

These transformations are generalized by S.D. Bodrunov by introducing the categories of the “*New industrial society of the second generation*”, which is based on *knowledge-intensive production*¹, and *Noonomy*². The latter category reflects a new quality of social life where the economic is replaced by a non-economic way of meeting human wants³. In the world of noonomy, “*homo economicus*” becomes a “*homo culturalis*”, the imperative of ZOO is replaced by the imperative of NOO [Bodrunov, 2018a].

At first glance, Alan Freeman makes a different emphasis. By analyzing the space of economy where creative activity is widespread (the so-called creative economy), he, as noted above, concludes that mental objects are created in this space. This formulation seems to be narrower than the approach of S.D. Bodrunov, but it has an important aspect that overlaps with the fundamental thesis on the NOO-principle of future life.

What is this overlap?

In our opinion, both the phenomena described by the category of “mental objects”, and the world classified by S.D. Bodrunov as NOO space, have another name: in both cases, *we are talking about the world of culture, the world of the ideal*. Interpretation of the ideal as not only the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought⁴ (a formula that was widely used by Soviet textbooks with a reference to one of the sayings of the classics of Marxism), but also a representation, a reflection of physical phenomena in other physical phenomena, arising as a result of human activity, – this is the most important achievement of creative Soviet Marxism, first of all – the achievement of Evald Vasilyevich Ilyenkov⁵.

Other creative Marxists of the USSR (first of all, N.S. Zlobin [Zlobin, 1980] and V.M. Mezhujev [Mezhujev, 2006]), interpreted these phenomena as culture. Moreover, on these grounds, they concluded that culture is a special world in which unalienated social relations are formed, the phenomenon of “everyone’s ownership of everything” arises, and relations of dealienation develop [Bulavka-Buzgalina, 2018].

What are the consequences of such articulation of the problem?

¹ “A new type of production is emerging – knowledge-intensive production, which provides, on the basis of knowledge-intensive technologies, the production of a knowledge-intensive industrial product that is able to satisfy the growing wants of people, including, in contrast to the large-scale production of standard first-generation industry products, in the form of a customized product for the consumer. This type of production cannot be established without a high level of knowledge of all its components, materials, labor, process flow and, we emphasize this specifically, the technologies used. Knowledge in an explicit, “pure” form comes to the fore and will forever remain the main resource for industrial-technological and social development” (see: [Bodrunov, 2018a]).

² “... noonomy then acts as one of the basic elements of noosociety, as a kind of global universal “*nomos*” (law, system, order), which determines the non-economic way of human economy management and the satisfaction of human wants, guided by cultural imperatives, and not by economic rationality.” (see: [Bodrunov, 2020b]).

³ “... the point is that economic activity that satisfies human wants will be determined primarily by non-economic criteria, since the wants themselves will take a non-economic form” (see: [Bodrunov, 2018a]).

⁴ “...the ideal is nothing else than the material world reflected by the human mind, and translated into forms of thought” [Marx, 1955, p. 19].

⁵ See article “Ideal” by E.V. Ilyenkov in the “Philosophical Encyclopedia” (V. 2. Moscow, Soviet Encyclopedia. p. 219-227): “The ideal is not an individual psychological, much less physiological, fact, but a socio-historical fact, a product and form of spiritual production. The ideal is realized in various forms of social consciousness and the will of man as a subject of social production of material and spiritual life. <...> A man exists as a person, as a subject of activity directed at the surrounding world and at himself, since and as long as he actively produces and reproduces his real life in forms created by himself, by his own work. And this work, this actual transformation of the surrounding world and oneself, taking place in socially developed and socially legalized forms, is exactly that process – beginning and continuing completely independently of thought, – within which, as its metamorphosis, the ideal is born and functions, the idealization of reality, nature and social relations takes place, the language of symbols is born as the external body of the ideal image of the external world. Here is the whole mystery of the ideal, and here is the key to it.”

First. Creativity as a space-time for creation of cultural phenomena can and must, by its very nature, lie on the other side of the relations of alienation, in particular the market, private ownership and capital. This connection is described by the theory of noonomy in a special author's categorical interpretation. So, in a series of works devoted to the ways of genesis of this new world, S.D. Bodrunov characterizes the "quadriga of noonomy" [Bodrunov, 2021], which includes such elements as progress in science and technology, development of solidarity, socialization and diffusion of ownership. The first phenomenon is the essence, the material basis for the development of the other three, which, in turn, are categories that reflect the objective processes of dialectical removal of market competition, exploitation, private ownership and ownership in general (the latter is one of the arguments used by S.D. Bodrunov for attributing noonomy to the world of post-economics).

The second consequence, which is due to the need to address the realities in which creative activity is currently developing, i.e., the practices of late capitalism¹. First of all, the creative business that Alan Freeman talks and writes about is growing more and more actively in this space. In this regard, the question naturally arises: *how can and should the contradiction between the chronotope of creativity and the world of alienation (in particular, the market and capital) be resolved in the modern world?*

Let us show what the answer to this question can be on the example of education, emphasizing, on the one hand, the depth of this contradiction and highlighting ways to resolve it, on the other. The area of education in this case was chosen for a good reason: firstly, it is one of those spaces of social activity for which creativity is an attributive characteristic. It is in this area, first of all, that creative potential is formed as the most important quality of human potential in general². Secondly, in this area the market and private ownership are not dominant: education is one of the few spaces of late capitalism where the creation of not only private but also public goods is widespread³, where access to these goods, to co-creation [Batishchev, 1969] is ensured largely free of charge, where the public sector plays an almost dominant role.

Accordingly, in education, the market and capital turn out to be socio-economic forms that are preserved, but are in conflict with the content of labor in this area. This contradiction reflects the phenomena of commercialization and, moreover, the financialization of education, subordinating this area to alien goals and values.

Thus, "commercialization of education involves the increasing subordination of all the components of the educational process, the interests, motives and values of its participants, the management of educational organizations (both public and private) not only to market conditions,

¹ The concept of "late capitalism" was introduced in the works of E. Mandel and F. Jameson [Jameson, 1991; Mandel, 1978], as well as A.V. Buzgalin and A.I. Kolganov, who, in particular, define late capitalism as "a stage in the development of the capitalist mode of production, where its progress (technological development, economic growth) requires the use of elements of post-capitalist relations: responsible regulation of the economy; provision of a wide range of goods and services free of charge for the consumer in such areas as education, health care, etc.; redistribution of part of capital profits to employees and socially disadvantaged groups, etc." [Buzgalin, Kolganov, 2015, p. 52-53].

² For more details, see article: [Yakovleva, 2022b].

³ According to a number of researchers, education in general is an area of creating public goods. So, for example, N.A. Pruel states that "the specifics of education can only be derived from its definition as a good that contributes by its own production to reproduction of more developed members of society" [Pruel, 2002, p. 19]. "While sharing the reproductive approach to education proposed by N.A. Pruel, we, however, consider it important to emphasize that education only becomes the area of creation and use of public goods if and when socio-economic relations adequate for this content of education are formed in this area, namely, relations of public ownership and non-commercialized free access to education" [Yakovleva, 2021a, p. 83].

but also to the specific goals of obtaining commercial (capitalist) result, not education as such”¹ [Yakovleva, 2021a].

Financialization of education is a relatively new phenomenon in the research field, however, in our opinion², it already has manifestations (especially in the countries in the center of the capitalist system) and consequences. So, “financialization of education develops to the extent that financial capital and financial institutions determine the main components of the educational process and its management, primarily economic relations and institutions in this area. In particular, during the financialization process of education, financial institutions and financial market conditions determine: the goals of educational organizations; their investments and their main channels for obtaining funds, including tuition fees (for example, student loans); motives for the activities of students and teachers. It is not hard to see that the development of education financialization is in conflict with the development of education as an area for the formation and development of creative qualities of the majority of members of society” [Yakovleva, 2022a].

“During the development of neoliberal model of late capitalism, changes are taking place in the area of education, which result in the fact that an increasing transformation of education from a public good into a commercial service has become one of the features of market economy at neoliberal stage. These transformations are in contradictory interrelation with changes in the education area, due to the progress of productive forces and, in particular, the development of knowledge-intensive production and the transformation of creative work from an exceptional instance into one of the main areas of employment. This progress necessitates an increasingly intensive (i.e., involving both quantitative growth and qualitative improvement) development of education, which is accessible to every member of society and is provided at all stages of human evolution (“Lifelong Education for All”)” [Yakovleva, 2021a, p. 116].

Moreover, even the means of developing education in this case become mechanisms that hinder the progress of education as an area of co-creation, progress of the NOO-world (in this case, we use the categorical framework of S.D. Bodrunov). An alternative to this process is the relief of relations in the education area from restrictions of social alienation to the extent that relations of education socialization develop. To clarify, the latter involves the development of at least four areas³. First, socialization implies a progressive orientation of education primarily towards the progress of human potential, and not only towards market conditions. Secondly, the task is to develop the universal accessibility of education, which in the future should become “lifelong education for all”. Thirdly, the prerequisite for completing the first two tasks is the progress of egalitarian model of education while abandoning the elitism of the latter. Finally, fourthly, the education area itself should be built on the principles of self-government and debureaucratization.

The author has repeatedly turned to the study of these problems, so let us return to the analysis of the reports presented at the seminar and note that the resort to education area allows us to show exactly how the movement towards the NOO-world takes place. Therefore, it is no coincidence that it was the subject of regular consideration at the congresses devoted to the future progress of production, science and education (PSE), held under the auspices of INID for more

¹ For more details about the process of commercialization of Russian education, see: [Yakovleva, 2023].

² For more details about the characteristics of the financialization process of education and its manifestations, see: [Yakovleva, 2019].

³ For more details about these areas, see: [Yakovleva, 2021b].

than five years¹. The fundamental problem of the genesis of noonomy was actively discussed at these congresses, again for a good reason.

The developments of Alan Freeman put little attention on the education area, in contrast to the area of commercial art and other areas of creative business, actively analyzed by this author, since the market, business, etc. are phenomena that are still necessary for education at present, but are strategically alien.

So, it would seem that a purely academic dispute about categories turns into significantly different approaches to the development of creative economy and, moreover, post-economy. And this is an important aspect demonstrating not only the theoretical but also the practical value of this discussion.

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