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From surveillance capitalism to the myth of the cave: cave: A contemporary Marxist reflection

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Introduction:

The changes caused by the advancement of technology and digital integration have brought significant changes in the economic, social, and cultural structures of the current time. In this scenario, surveillance capitalism presents itself as a new economic form, marked by the large-scale collection of personal data and by the influence on both individual and collective behaviors. This model, according to Zuboff

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(2020), not only alters power relations and market mechanisms, but also brings ethical and philosophical challenges that require critical analysis.

The analysis of this new economic order enables an interdisciplinary dialogue, in which classical theories, such as the Marxist conceptions of alienation, superstructure and fetishism, are connected to emerging problems in the digital scenario. In parallel, the resignification of philosophical narratives, such as Plato's Myth of the Cave, opens up the possibility of understanding the consequences of surveillance capitalism on the perception of reality and on the autonomy of individuals. In this sense, this work proposes to investigate the characteristics of surveillance capitalism, its impacts on daily life and the resignifications of the philosophical and sociological concepts in question in contemporary times. From the description of how the human experience is transformed into merchandise and raw material, this research intends to dialogue with the debate on the limits and ethical possibilities of emancipation in a scenario dominated by online technology.

In Irwin (2005), we will find a reading that shows that places us as prisoners because we suppose that the reality in which we live is the superior and truest of all. In opposition to this idea, the aforementioned author refers to Plato, when he justifies that "only what we experience at the higher level of reality available through the five senses are poor

limitations of a higher level of reality, the forms" (Irwin, 2005, p. 49).

Theoretical Background

Alienation is one of the key ideas in Marx's idea, which talks about the separation of the worker from his product and from his essence as a human. According to Marx (1996), in the capitalist system, the worker is alienated from what he produces. The result of their work is the fundamental piece that serves for the sale and, consequently, capital gains for the factory owner. In surveillance capitalism, people lose control over what they do, becoming alien to the very act of creating, to the end result, and thus to their own human nature. What is created at this moment are, according to Zuboff (2020), the data, which becomes a commodity, exchanged and sold in the virtual environment. Observational capitalism cannot be seen as something "outside", limited to factories and offices. "Its aims, as well as its effects, are here... it's us. (Zuboff, 2020, p. 225). This form of digital alienation has profound consequences. First, individuals lose autonomy over their own digital identity, which is built and used by third parties to influence behaviors and decisions.

In Marx (1996), the superstructure includes the institutions and ideas that support the strongest economic system. It is a group of social structures, such as culture, politics, religion, and values. And that validates and continues the economic basis of society. In capitalism,

the superstructure is made to strengthen labor relations and the power of the upper classes.

In the scenario of surveillance capitalism, this concept takes on new forms through digital platforms and codes. These technological systems, often hidden from users, not only organize online experience, but also form visions, actions, and social interactions. Social networks, search engines, and other digital services play the role of ideological intermediaries, directing the flow of data and reinforcing ideas that support the interests of technology companies. The digital superstructure not only legitimizes the economic system, but also redefines power relations and social dynamics, consolidating the hegemony of large technological corporations.

The notion of commodity fetishism, developed by Marx, describes the process by which the products of human labor develop with their own cadences, in such a way as to obscure the relations they generate. In the capitalist economy, commodities do not become "good" products of human action, but as objects of value that are not connected to their circumstances of production. Another digital fetishism is well regarded in social metrics, such as likes, followers and shares. Such indicators, developed to measure interactions in an online network, come into effect of personal values as standards when they transform the possibility of quantifying identity. Here, fetishistic logic diverts attention

to the dynamic social and technological operation that guides these patterns, including the comparison of these metrics by algorithms.

Methodology

The research presented had as methodology the analysis and bibliographic survey that helped to think about the theme. The main document that, in a way, opened space for all the research on the myth of the cave was, without a doubt, the book "The Republic" by Plato. When the research revolved around surveillance capitalism, the main document is the work of American scholar Shoshana Zuboff. And, finally, about the concepts developed by Marx are in the works: The 18th Brumaire of Louis Bonaparte and Capital, Volume 2.

Results and Discussion

With the given definition, the new economic system of the 21st century, as shown by Zuboff, can be seen as a way that transforms people's lives into a resource for hidden business actions. This is what is called surveillance capitalism; A new economic system brightening human life as a no-cost resource for hidden business actions of withdrawal, selling, and forecasting. The main qualities of this model are the stare, the divination of future acts and the change of them. Such actions are done by collecting large amounts of data through digital technologies that collect details about users, their ways of acting and

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tastes. With this collection, companies can make tailor-made products and services, but more importantly, they can change future decisions and acts, establishing dominance over economic and social processes.

This economic model not only transforms the human experience into data, but also redefines power relations by allowing the corporations that hold this information to profoundly influence human behavior, often in an invisible and opaque way.

Surveillance capitalism has had significant impacts on everyday life, transforming the way we interact with technologies and how our information is used. This economic model, centered on the collection, analysis, and use of personal data, exerts a direct influence on various aspects of daily life, from consumption decisions to the way we interact socially. One of the main ways in which surveillance capitalism operates is through data collection. Devices such as smartphones, virtual assistants, and other internet-connected equipment constantly record users' activities. From basic information such as location and browsing history to more sensitive data such as personal preferences and behavior patterns, they are stored and processed for different business and technological purposes.

The next step to this collection is the behavioral analysis, carried out through advanced algorithms. These tools have the ability to interpret the data collected and, based on identified patterns, predict individuals' future decisions and behaviors. This analysis not only anticipates preferences, but also influences choices, especially in the field

of consumption, by suggesting products, services or content that meet the interests detected.

Moreover, surveillance capitalism manifests itself through personalization. The content presented to users, including advertisements, is adapted to digital profiles built on the basis of data collected and analyzed. This personalization creates the illusion of a unique and convenient digital experience, while in practice narrowing the available options and directing the behavior of individuals in a pre-calculated manner.

Conclusion

Therefore, the analysis of surveillance capitalism in terms of Marxist concepts and Plato's cave myth reveals that the information age intensifies old dynamics of alienation, fetishism, and ideological manipulation in the field of digital modernity. If Marx indicated the alienation of the worker in relation to the commodity they produce, today we are witnessing digital alienation; systems in which individuals alienate themselves from this data, from the structure created, and reformulate their views on virtual reality. Plato's cave class can be used to graphically understand the situation of contemporary users, entirely trapped here in a world of digital shadows that the prisoners have built, lacking the guides and light of the masters of the real cave.

The way out of modern chaos requires not only a formed conscience, but also the practical and political quest to embrace all organization and transparency, and to enable, and promote, honesty, equity and the empowerment of users in the belief in modern modern society. Therefore, this study is not just a comparative triangle between past and contemporary philosophical and economic dynamics, but a call to action or urgent copying. This technology needed to change our relationships for power and individual autonomy. In terms of overcoming digital "captivity," self-organization is needed to transform platforms into a plan that uses human experiences not as a market product, but as an opportunity for connection, knowledge, and freedom.

Keywords: Surveillance Capitalism, The Republic, Marxism

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