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## VIRTUAL REALITY AS COMPENSATORY MECHANISMS OF UNSOLVED PROBLEMS IN LIFE

**Проаналізовані існуючі підходи з'ясування онтологічного статусу віртуальної реальності у сучасній науковій літературі. Розглянуто співвідношення альтернативного (віртуального) світу з нашою реальністю через проекцію ескапізму з його амбівалентними характеристиками. Підкреслено, що історичне прагнення людини до подолання свого екзистенційного обмеження у наш час проектується з реального буття на віртуальне, де стає можливою елімінація трансперсональних екзистенціальних страхів.**

**Ключові слова:** віртуальна реальність, реальність віртуального, віртуалістика, ескапізм, цивілізація, віртуальна та константна темпоральність.

**Проанализированы существующие подходы выяснения онтологического статуса виртуальной реальности в современной научной литературе. Рассмотрено соотношение альтернативного (виртуального) мира с нашей реальностью через проекцию эскапизма с его амбивалентными характеристиками. Подчеркнуто, что историческое стремление человека к преодолению своего экзистенциального ограничения в наше время проецируется из реального бытия в виртуальное, где становится возможной элиминация трансперсональных экзистенциальных страхов.**

**Ключевые слова:** виртуальная реальность, реальность виртуального, виртуалистика, эскапизм, цивилизация, виртуальная и константная темпоральность.

**The article analyzes the existing approaches determining the ontological status of virtual reality in modern scientific literature. We consider the relationship of the alternative (virtual) world and our reality through the escapism projection of its ambivalent characteristics. It is emphasized that the historical human desire to overcome the existential limitations is today designed with real life in the virtual one where the elimination of transpersonal existential fears becomes possible.**

**Keywords:** virtual reality, reality of the virtual, virtualistics, escapism, civilization, and virtual constant temporality.

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Virtual reality (VR) is latently becoming a stable part of the worldview of modern man and intruding into the existing being as specific practice of adding the new in already existing social systems and processes. According to many scientists, it has overcome the status of scientific categories and has become a universal attribute of the multifaceted life. The problem field of VR today is going far beyond software, games, three-dimensional computer graphics, and the humanitarian aspect arises in the same perspective as the technical one. In the whirlpool of events evolved the philosophical reflection of VR itself is developing and becoming actual and varies from the subject of philosophical analysis to its tools.

As for the level of scientific development, there is a paradoxical situation: on the one hand, the whole understanding and the need for further research is declared in all modern scientific investigations, on

the other, despite the relatively short period of scientific research a sufficiently large number of different approaches, concepts, theories, or at least not much less than with other philosophical problems have been formed and developed. Finally today we have a relatively large scientific heritage, which is added every day with new modifications at superspeed and today's innovations and discoveries are becoming everyday affair.

The conceptual apparatus of VR today is rather wide, that caused the need for its systematization and autonomy: Dictionary of virtual terms [20], Virtual reality, Glossary of terms [1], Glossary of Virtual Reality Terminology [18], Knowledge Ability's Virtual Glossary [19] Glossary of Media Education, Mediapedagogics, Medialiteracy, Media competence Terminology [15] and others.

In the postnonclassical picture of the world the new philosophical, paradigm approach of VR study is specified – «virtualistics», the creator of which is the Russian scientist N. Nosov. Virtualistics is a special philosophical category which is given by the category opposition of «virtual-constant». This approach has allowed to develop modern ontological and anthropological concepts of VR. Despite the relatively short period of study the following investigations are devoted to virtualistics: the Problems of virtualistics and culture (O. Anisimov, Yu. Mamchur, Yu. Melkov., O. Migunov, N. Nosov, D. Tselikov, O. Yuhvid), theoretical and cognitive problems of virtualistics (P. Alyoshin, V. Babenko, S. Borchykov, O. Genisaretskj, F. Hirenok, L. Hrymak, S. Zharov, V. Zhdanov, O. Kovalevskaya, E. Mamchur, M. Menski, N. Nosov, M. Ovchinnikov, M. Pronin, V. Rosin, V. Samokhvalova, A. Syevalnikov, A. Smirnova, P. Solopov, H. Yuryev, J. Yatsenko), natural scientific grounds of virtualistics (L. Antipenko, O. Baksanskj, A. Knyazev, A. Kucher, O. Pechenkin, Yu. Sachkov) and others.

Discursiveness of the word expression «VR» contains a paradox that provokes the difficulty of its understanding, it generates a lot of modes and interpretations. The postmodern «death of the author», «textcentrism» and pluralism of interpretations outlined a way from deconstruction of the text to the deconstruction of reality image. There appears a need for conceptualization and search for common principles of VR in art, science, computer science, religious beliefs, in the modified, boundary states of consciousness and so on. But today, as Sayapin states [12], instead of the required dialectical synthesis, violent reductionism is dominating, making it impossible to find a single reality, adopted for all. There is one of the key issues – clarification of the ontological status of VR – how does an alternative world relate to our reality, or are they equal? M. Krapivnytskyi emphasizes that depending on the decision we can form a relationship and to answer the following question: «What will be its further dissemination – a break with life or a new perspective of life?» [5, p. 132-136]. Let's analyze existing approaches in modern literature.

Traditionally, VR (as another reality) was identified with the break with real life. The main reasons, that provoke «migration», are due to the activation of protective mechanisms that help a person to get away from troubles, problems, stress, confusion, conflict, and the gray monotony of everyday life that human real life is filled with. It turns out that helplessness, escape from reality, nonadaptation to social conditions, hard work and selfreflection crisis provoke the individual to build «castles in the air», which perfectly fit into the generated virtual space.

Such a worldview and lifestyle has been established toward escapism (from English, «escape»), which become especially popular in the era of postmodernism and got a second wind with the advent of virtual reality. Any human activity can be a way of escapism (from hobby to addiction), where it acts as a compensatory mechanism of unsolved problems of the life. Conditionally, depending on the type of activity it is possible to distinguish active (sports, career, art, etc.) and passive (watching movies, alcohol, drugs, etc.) escapism. There are also cases of physical escape from life. Downshifting is very popular today especially in metropolis areas – life philosophy, which promotes «life for myself», «life for life itself», «negation of others «goals» and imposed social stereotypes: an increase in material wealth, career making, logics of consumeristic society. So, saying in other words, there is negation, rejection, escape from the (quasi) values of modern civilization.

The examples of escape from reality are often presented in the literature (Le Klezio «Desert», J. Huysmans «On the contrary», R. Rolland «Circles of Bryunon» Mr. Suskind «Perfumers», A. Machen «The Hill of Dreams», etc.) and in the movies («Pigs», directed by Lauri Nurkse (Finland, 2010), «Mystery Forest», directed by M. Knight Shyamalan (USA, 2004), «Beach», directed by D. Boyle (USA, UK, 2000), «Mirror Mask» directed by D. Makkena (UK, 2005). The more current trends of escapism will be developed the more stratified, separated and isolated the society will be. N. Pezeshkian [8] emphasizes certain kinds of escape from reality, followed by replacing the hierarchy of values «escape in the body», which aims at improving physical or mental state of the person (appearance, quality of rest, paranoia of health, etc.), «escape in the work» – with excessive diligence, which flows into psychological work addiction, «escape in contacts or loneliness» – this way of escaping aims at communication as need satisfaction, or vice versa – missing it, «escape into fantasy» – a flight in

relatively comfortable conditions, the world of illusions.

Kidult (adult children) may be also called a form of escapism – an adult who keeps his childhood admiration («Peter Pan syndrome», Puer aeternus (Latin «eternal boy», young archetype), etc.). It is a mild form of entrance into the world of illusions, children's dreams, in infantilism, to some extent, which acts as a safety mechanism for stress reduction and provides vital psychological relaxation of a person.

It should be particularly noted that virtual reality, online games (especially role-playing), online communication, online dating, enable to present a lot of ways of «escaping» from real life. Thus, the historical human desire to overcome the existential limitations is designed with real life in the virtual one, where elimination of transpersonal existential fears is quite possible (see the book by Yu. Scherbatykh. *Rid yourselves of fear: a practical guide to overcoming human fears* [17]): fear of time (fear of the future, fear of death), agoraphobia (fear of closed or open spaces, fear of darkness), fear of life (obscure fear, fear of the mysterious, fear of senseless life), fear of oneself (fear of losing control, fear of going mad).

The new virtual reality, as we see – is not only an escape from existing problems, but also an attempt to escape from death. Why is it possible? What is the mechanism of these processes? In order to answer the questions posed, at least in a general sense, it is useful to compare the VR and the «real reality» (its constant reality that exists constantly, but not actually) through the prism of temporality, that is, differences between virtual and constant temporality. In this perspective one should apply to the work of M. Krapytsky «Virtuality and temporality» [5, p. 132-136]. Despite the fact that the virtual and constant temporality has continual character, as the author states, but in the relationship between itself virtual temporality is becoming discrete and reversible. And it becomes reversible, provided virtual temporality turns in its constant form. If this condition of turning is not fulfilled, the virtual temporality remains irreversible and has a continual character, as its constant temporality. «Achieving continuance of virtual temporality is possible only if a constant negation of temporality takes place. In this case, the person begins to realize virtual temporality as the original one, but at the same time he/she loses his/her sense of existential characteristics of a constant temporality: impermanence, inevitability, death, life tragedy. In the presence or absence of these characteristics one can judge on the degree of one's isolation from a constant reality» [5, p. 132-136]. If a person completely loses touch with a constant reality and views a reality virtual as the original one, this person ceases to exist, dies. The described mechanism quite clearly explains us all the complexity (in most cases impossibility) of such transitions as drug addicts, alcoholics, gamers from the virtual temporality in its constant reality. The escape from the life problems of living in another area (another reality), as paradoxically it sounds, in most cases does not deprive but on the contrary complicates the situation of new, more complex problems which are designed, carried along with the escaper, but in some different transformed form. Perhaps the movie «Beach» mentioned above is a vivid confirmation of this fact, where the main character getting rid of some problems, gets completely new ones.

Priest Eugene Lalyenkov [14] emphasizes that nevertheless VR is an artificially created world that is as any technology is a morally neutral tool. But one should not forget that this space (tool) is filled by the person himself or herself (using social, political, economic, cultural technologies). Why do we use it? What cultural, spiritual sense do we put in it (space) and what is our final goal?

Christian understanding of VR, on the one hand, as the priest Jonathan Tobias states in his article «There is No life in online. Orthodoxy and the virtual world» [21], due to its similarities to other forms of fantasy («flight of fantasy»), acts as images that provoke passion (lust, anger, greed, etc.), which should be avoided in order not to lose connection with God: «If your right eye tempts you, pull it out, throw it away from yourself, or it is better for you, that one of your members, but not the whole your body would be plunged into the hell» (Mf.5: 29) on the other, can contribute to the development of religious ideas of man (the Internet contains thousands of books, audio and video products created by the server of Orthodox and Catholic churches contemporary religious issues are being discussed at online conferences, chats, forums, etc.). The main problem is that apart from religious dogma, VR stimulates «autistic and narcissistic ambitions» (O. Nikolaeva) [7] and provokes «contrtheology revolution» (R. Barthes), which directs (approaches) a person not to God but to his bilities. Interaction of virtual and religious reality, of course, requires a separate study in the context of the given problem.

Manifestations of escapism, as a hidden imperativeness as the litmus test of society, have an ambivalent effect on a person – sometimes this escape is compared with narcotic intoxication, and sometimes – is considered as the development of spirituality and culture (for example a monk as a form of salvation). Everything depends on the direction: what do we run away from and what do we do it for, what is the difference between, for example, panestetizm and art skepticism? Nowadays, the main thing is to «run away», and direction of the movement (or «to art» or «from art») is secondary thing and it loses its valuability and significance. There arises a rightly question why does a person not feel



the difference, and what option the dominates mostly? Probably that one that is easier, that one that civilization (quaziculture) imposes to escape from it (civilization).

When considering VR as the development of spirituality and new opportunities, in this case we come to the expanding the boundaries of life and not the escaping from it. D. Repkina rightfully notes [11] that virtual worlds can be enriched by saving some thing in common with the real world, it is that one that will ensure our reality improving and not its substituting another. (This can be proved when comparing virtual and constant temporality).

VR may be seen as an extension of objective reality and its addition (but not exclusion). I. Chayka [16] calls it as the process of virtualization of reality (now we come to the second part of the given problem). Nowadays VR is understood not only as a modern aspect of computerization, but is also used as some instrument (D. Ivanov [4]) in the study of economic, political, cultural phenomena, which enables to come into thinner and hidden processes of our life. That is to get there, where a person is not able to see the processes taking place there without the proper technique. Therefore, in this aspect VR gives you an opportunity to represent the processes that go beyond human capabilities, like expanding the boundaries of metaphysical issues.

The theoretical validity of such interpretation of VR, as noted by M. Pronin, rests on the shoulders of virtualistics as a paradigmatic approach, based on the ideas of poliontyzm and poliontolohizm of any reality [10]. Poliontyzm of virtualistics involves updating multiple ontologically equal virtual realities (multivalued logic). V. Kutyrev [6] clearly reveals these processes: updating realities is occurred because this world «does not change, but is invented», where everything except the information is illusion, even our macroworld which lost adequacy and ceased to be our home. This feature is clearly used by A. Pets [9] to describe the complex activity of a human in virtual digital environment. Physics and engineering laboratory for the clear experimental study of this phenomenon was developed in Lab VIEW 8.0. (details in his article: «Poliontizm as a Characteristic of Activity in Digital Electronic Media»). All virtual realities are true and real. However, the author emphasizes on the special relationship between these realities, hierarchy of their levels (their constant reality and the reality with N order).

Thus, as we see, the problematic field of virtual reality is multifaceted, current and promising direction of scientific research, which draws attention of modern scholars from different countries of the world. Although this view is not shared by all scientists. For example, the Slovenian philosopher and culture expert Slavoj Zizek believes that VR is quite scanty idea that just comes down to an artificial digital display of our experience of reality, But the other statement is more promising and interesting, in his opinion: it is not virtual reality, but reality of virtuality. Such considerations are grounded because they can not be eliminated from further research.

To clarify these circumstances as a starting point S. Zizek [3] recommends to take the Lacanian triad (Borromeo Rings) (imaginary, symbolic and real) and decompose them into simpler components: an imaginary virtual, symbolic and real virtuality.

Imaginary virtuality (first level). When we communicate with another person, we abstract from is image, or rather from some characteristics that upset us, and we do not want to think them about. Although, of course, there is deverse psychological practice, acting feedback, which helps you to become more confident in yourself to overcome fear in relation to another person (a manager, a colleague, etc.), for example, imagining him wearing pajamas at night. S. Zizek, distinctly shows that when we communicate, we are not dealing with a real person, but with his virtual image. When we deal with a real person, we are turned out to behave as we see not a person but his virtual image, but this image has reality, that is why it structures our communication.

The second level – a symbolic virtual, says S. Zizek, more complex formation. This is the experience of authority, which the author calls as the authority of a father, in order that he (father) was acting, it must be virtual. That is, the virtual image of the father, so to speak, will latently act and influence on made decisions in contrast to his real direct hard insistence that, of course, will be opposed. Thus S. Zizek concludes that authority is actual only if it is virtual. Because otherwise a person loses his freedom of action and becomes a puppet.

The next level is real virtuality. S. Zizek, in this case returns to Lacan's triad (which has a special feature – holographic characteristics – all triad is reflected in each of its components) in order to understand the real, he considers imaginary real, symbolic and real real:

a) imaginary reality is severe traumatic images (disasters, accidents, monsters, etc.);

b) symbolic reality – in fact, is an oxymoron: it is real because it resists symbolization (by Lacan), and symbolic, it is something that literally can not be understood, these are scientific formulas, scientific discourse, quantum physics. The author says: «Obviously, this symbolic things, all these formulas, you mentioned, they operate, this is a functional machine, but the absurd one: we can not extract any meaning from this machine, we can not correlate it with our experience. That is why we desperately try to make it, come to metaphor to image the quantum universe, but it can not be done» [3].

c) real real is not just the real (the first reality – imaginary reality, traumatic image) it is the core of real, which has 2 levels:

– First level, close to the symbolic order, it is the shadow VR of affects, which must accompany the official discourse;

– The second level is the level of the virtual (we do not know that we know them unconscious fantasy, superstition in psychoanalysis): VR which is shown as the narrative reality.

But at the same time S. Zizek says that paradoxically the real real is the virtual reality. And gives it clear explanation, giving the example of attractors in physics: throwing pieces of iron above the magnetic field which are scattered in a definite form. The author says that this form does not exist by itself, that is the idea of virtual reality. «This form is real in this area, but it does not exist by itself, it is simply an abstract form that structures location of the actually existing elements around it» [3] (MA – emphasis added).

Virtual reality problem put by S. Zizek allows to consider much broader problem of virtuality, not only reducing it to digital images, it having become popular in academic circles F. Hirenok [2, p.23] considers to be necessary to separate virtuality and modern computer technologies and to identify it with the culture in general, i.e. as new cultural technologies (R. Nurullin). In a broader cultural context VR has been considered by P. Braslavsky, B. Buli, P. Levi, R. Holeton, C. Chesher and others.

We also find similar on direction judgments overcoming the traditional limitations of VR technology exclusively internal computer technologies in G. Smolyan, G. Zarakovsky, V. Rosin, O. Voyskunsky works [13]. The authors emphasize that earlier the person had an opportunity to enter the world of virtual reality easily through viewing the picture, watching a movie or, for example, reading a book. The researchers consider that in above mentioned cases, human activity was limited by the position of a viewer. These authors think that overcoming these limitations, leads to new information technologies – VR.

Thus, given analysis makes it possible to make the following generalizations:

– It was found that discursiveness of the VR phrase contains a paradox that provokes the difficulty of its understanding, it generates a lot of its modes and interpretations. So postmodern «death of the author», «tekstotsentrizm» and pluralism of interpretations outlined the path from deconstruction of the text to deconstruction of the image of reality, opening the transition from the classical understanding of unique reality to the plurality of worlds.

– Insanity of wealth, «mixed» on quasiaesthetic imperativeness through the limitation of resources was at the edge of its own failure, absurdity and destruction of the crown of civilization values. Modern computer technologies in line with the extension of the ideas of postmodernism have formed a new alternative place of consciousness location of a modern person, which claims to elimination of any restrictions. Thus, the historical desire of a person to overcome his existential limitation is projected from real life to virtual, where elimination of transpersonal existential fears becomes possible.

– The existing approaches to determine the ontological status of VR in modern literature have been analysed. VR have been found to have ambivalent effects on a person, it serving as an escape from life, and expanding the limits of the latter. Manifestations of escapism, as a hidden imperativeness as the litmus test of society, influences a person – sometimes this escape is compared with narcotic intoxication, and sometimes – is considered as the development of spirituality and culture (for example a monk as a form of salvation). An attempt to delineate these differences through the lens of virtual and constant temporality has been made in this study. Virtual worlds must have something in common with the real world that should not lose the existential characteristics of constant temporality. It is that one that will ensure our reality expansion, but not its replacing another. VR stimulates apart from religious dogma «autistic and narcissistic ambitions» (A. Nikolaeva) and provokes «contrtheology revolution» (R. Barthes), which directs (approaches) a person not to God but to his abilities.

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## АНТРОПОЛОГИЯ ГЕНДЕРА: ОБРАЗОВАНИЕ И ЛИЧНОСТЬ

**В русле новой парадигмы социального развития начала XXI в. особое значение приобретает аксиологический подход к образованию, отсюда следует важность анализа смысловой системы гендерных отношений в образовании в целом и в «гендеризованном» школьном коллективе в частности.**

**Ключевые слова:** гендер, образование, дихотомия, бинарная оппозиция, детерминизм, идентичность, ценность, равенство.

**У руслі нової парадигми соціального розвитку початку XXI ст.. особливого значення набуває аксіологічний підхід до освіти, з яким пов'язана важливість аналізу смислової системи гендерних відношень в освіті у цілому і у «гендеризованому» шкільному колективі зокрема.**

**Ключові слова:** гендер, освіта, дихотомія, бінарна опозиція, детермінізм, ідентичність, цінність, рівність.