

**ANALYSIS OF THE LEXEME “MIRAGES” IN THE CONTEXT OF THE IDEA OF VIRTUAL REALITY: BASED ON THE NOVEL BY V.F. TENDRYAKOV**

**ANÁLISE DO LEXEMA “MIRAGENS” NO CONTEXTO DA IDEIA DE REALIDADE VIRTUAL: A PARTIR DO ROMANCE DE V.F. TENDRYAKOV**

**ANÁLISIS DEL LEXEMA “ESPEJES” EN EL CONTEXTO DE LA IDEA DE REALIDAD VIRTUAL: A PARTIR DE LA NOVELA DE V.F. TENDRYAKOV**

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**ABSTRACT:** The concept of “virtualization” can denote different processes and phenomena of social life, traversing the fragmented perceptions of contemporary society, including at the level of artistic reality. It is notable that the experiment realized in the space of artistic reality is built in full accordance with modern approaches to computer virtual reality positioned at the level of the system of immersion and display of information. The correlation of the social projects developed in them reveals a number of contradictions, by overcoming which the authors create a precedent of human-computer isomorphism relying on a systematic methodology and the method of analysis of dictionary definitions.

**KEYWORDS:** Virtual reality. Computer. Individual. System. Values.

**RESUMO:** O conceito de “virtualização” pode denotar diferentes processos e fenômenos da vida social, atravessando as percepções fragmentadas da sociedade contemporânea, inclusive ao nível da realidade artística. É notável que a experiência realizada no espaço da realidade artística é construída em plena conformidade com as modernas abordagens da realidade virtual computacional posicionada ao nível do sistema de imersão e exibição de informação. A correlação dos projetos sociais neles desenvolvidos revela uma série de contradições, superando as quais os autores criam um precedente de isomorfismo humano-computador contando com uma metodologia sistemática e o método de análise de definições de dicionários.

**PALAVRAS-CHAVE:** Realidade virtual. Computador. Individual. Sistema. Valores.

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**RESUMEN:** *El concepto de “virtualización” puede denotar diferentes procesos y fenómenos de la vida social, atravesando las percepciones fragmentadas de la sociedad contemporánea, incluso a nivel de la realidad artística. Es de destacar que el experimento realizado en el espacio de la realidad artística se construye en total conformidad con los enfoques modernos de la realidad virtual computarizada posicionados al nivel del sistema de inmersión y visualización de información. La correlación de los proyectos sociales desarrollados en ellos revela una serie de contradicciones, al superar las cuales los autores crean un precedente de isomorfismo humano-computador apoyándose en una metodología sistemática y el método de análisis de definiciones de diccionario.*

**PALABRAS CLAVE:** *Realidad virtual. Ordenador. Individual. Sistema. Valores.*

## Introduction

In his work “World Dynamics” published at the beginning of the 21st century, J. Forrester (2003) associated future world order with the systemic modeling of global processes claiming pioneer status. However, attempts at finding the answer to whether the life of the human community can be subject to total control and what levels could be used to arrange it in an orderly fashion were made long before his time. One such attempt was made by Vladimir Fedorovich Tendryakov, a Russian writer whose 100th anniversary will be celebrated in December 2023.

At the turn of the 1970s and 1980s, V.F. Tendryakov posed in his novel “Assassinating Mirages” the question of what is reality and how do we distinguish it from the unreal, the question which becomes more and more acute today (YEFFETH, 2003). To get an answer, Tendryakov leads his protagonist to the need to resort to the help of a computer, an electronic computing machine. The task of the latter is to develop a social program in which the computer Christ dies three years before the actual death of his real prototype, thus being deprived of the opportunity to spread his moral teachings, preserve them for posterity.

Here we hypothesize that the identification of points of contact between the experiment proposed by V.F. Tendryakov and a number of social projects of modern virtual scientists will allow us to find a basis for demonstrating the isomorphism of a human being and a computer. Thus, the focus of our research optics includes both the inherent similarities between the two and the difference acquired by the individual in the course of freely exercised thinking activity.

## Materials and Methods

The study uses the method of analysis of dictionary definitions, the comparative method, the method of observation, as well as the systematic methodology applied to language as a system. The research material is represented by the text of V.F. Tendriakov’s novel “Assassinating Mirages” and articles of domestic and foreign scientists focused on virtual reality as a technical and socio-cultural phenomenon. In addition, the study implements the method of integrating knowledge from such scientific fields as linguistics, communicology, philosophy of language, and cultural studies.

## **Results**

Under the conditions of reflection and refraction of the reality known to us, virtual society clearly demonstrates the following state of affairs. Social structures do not arise naturally, being conditioned by historical necessity, they are instead created by the participants themselves as a result of concrete actions (LUGININA, 2021). Since the structures created in the space of virtuality appear to be more malleable and flexible, R. Junger considers it possible to refer to them as “structureless structures” (LUDLOW, 2005).

In this context, the following fact is remarkable. Initially, V.F. Tendryakov intended to call his novel “The Gospel of the Computer”, which was made known by his widow, N.G. Asmolova-Tendryakova (IAKOVLEVA, 2018). As for the final title, the lexeme “mirages” used in it correlates with the virtual. The fact is that the virtual was seen by R. Henson as a “dream world” into which “we are slowly squeezing through with the help of computer technology” (YEFFETH, 2003).

Apart from the above, the map of the lexeme under study, along with the word “dream”, includes such words as *fata Morgana*, vision, phantasmagoria, illusion, hallucination, morass, unreality, phantom, illusion, chimera, fantasy, vision, ghost, morass, slumber, ghost, shadow, utopia, beam, wish, delusion, image, appearance, nonsense, deception, visibility, obviousness, explicitness, phenomenon, visibility, explicitness, fog, smoke, spark (Synonyms for the word “mirage”, n.d.). What is noteworthy for us here is that the method of analyzing dictionary definitions gives us reason to assert that there are sometimes directly opposite meanings, such as unreality and explicitness, shadow and beam, smoke and spark, ghost and image, in the same row.

Without going into the linguistic specifics of such ambiguity of the virtual, let us dwell on the isomorphism of man and computer focusing on the common and the distinct, which will give substantiation not only for the naturalness of artificial intelligence but also the artificiality

and unnaturalness of man himself.

To construct a system of argumentation, it is necessary to take into account the dual nature of the individual, which is initiated by the dual nature of language as a system (VOLKOVA et al., 2020). In one case, this refers to an individual information system as a self-organizing natural “device”. Its emergence is justified by the processing and preservation of information, which provides for the life activity of any living organism, conditioning its maximum adaptation to the environment. The exchange of information, which ensures the preservation of natural diversity, takes place at the level of communication.

Since this concerns the natural “order of things”, the language itself used as a means of performing an act of communication acts as a reflex – a kind of reaction to an external stimulus. The only difference is that in the case of an individual, the language is verbal, and in the case of flora and fauna it is squeaks, specific smells, special beeps, subtle vibrations, etc. In other words, regardless of the nature of language, we are dealing with the realization of a natural program aimed at the preservation of all living things on Earth.

While in the representatives of flora and fauna, the natural disposition is maintained in reliance on the laws of nature, which act in accordance with the dimensional tension that determines the nature of the interaction of everything with everything, the development of human individuals occurs in reliance on social norms and requirements. Their content not only contradicts the harsh laws of nature, particularly the law of natural selection but also further and further contributes to the departure of individuals from their natural, i.e., original state, which in the social world becomes unnatural, i.e., artificial. It is no coincidence that the cultured man is a man who incessantly cultivates his nature – i.e., who ennoble his nature initiated by natural instincts.

Minding the fact that if they stay under the influence of the natural program as an impersonal phenomenon, the individual will never manage to become a person, preserving in themselves the resourcefulness of a monkey, the foulness of a jackal, the aggression of a tiger, the stubbornness of a donkey, etc., we must note the following. The initially relevant natural order, an individual information system, bears in itself the potential of a conceptual, i.e. semantic system. The potential, or virtual, nature of the latter (VOLKOVA, LUGININA, SAENKO, SAMUSENKOV, 2020) is due to the fact that it is acquired by an individual only under the condition of their deliberate work on the organization of the individual information system. Without such work, the conceptual system stays in the bosom of the information system without manifesting itself in any capacity.

The circumstance that, unlike the information system, which can exist without any relation to the conceptual system, the conceptual one cannot do without the information system, is conditioned, in our opinion, by the following point. The purpose of the individual conceptual system is to “take care” of the person organizing the information system not directly, but indirectly – through the person’s spiritual transformation. It is the latter that requires the same dimensional tension characteristic of the natural world, which emerges between matter and spirit, the actual and the potential (virtual), the real and the ideal.

Another opposition that establishes a tension between the verbal and the non-verbal, or, in other words, between the rational and irrational, stems directly from the specifics of individual information systems. The thing is that this system is formed based on the non-verbal elements of the system, which both logically and factually precede the verbal elements (PAVILJONIS, 1983). The latter appear to serve the former due to the need to operate with non-verbal experience by means of verbal symbols. Therefore, when operating with verbal elements, an individual uses them exclusively “automatically,” in full accordance with the needs of the biological organism, as a result of which non-verbalism (irrationality), which initially gives rise to the individual information system, is latently present in the individual’s life activity.

On the contrary, verbalism (rationality) once noted for its secondary nature takes the lead, often leading to the terror of the code. Clearly, the dimensional tension violated from within the system is compensated for by tension from the outside, getting its realization through such markers as social status, position, material prosperity, etc., which simulate the primacy of the non-verbal component in an individual’s life.

## **Discussion**

Despite the time gap of five decades, the possibility of comparative analysis of experiments with modeling of a new social reality, which are embodied in the context of art and real life, is associated with the features of computer modeling of three-dimensional, stereoscopic images of real processes supported by innovative information technologies (LUGININA, 2021). Realizing that, from the point of view of information, the late 20th-century society undoubtedly loses out to the society that has entered the 21st century, we should note the importance of one exceptional point. In contrast to the social projects predicted by modern scholars, which are dominated by such concepts as:

- “global village” (MCLUHAN, 1964);

- “the end of history” (FUKUYAMA, 2004);
- “the clash of civilizations” (HUNTINGTON, 2004);
- “flat world” (FRIEDMAN, 2006);
- “virtualization of society” (IVANOV, 2002);
- “global economic village” (NAISBITT, 2003);
- “one-dimensional man” (MUSIL, 2015);
- “eclipse of reason” (HORKHEIMER, 2011);
- “the new home of Mind” (LUDLOW, 2005), and others, V.F. Tendryakov places his

bet on spiritual self-development, putting at the center of his social program the value of the human being as such (TENDRYAKOV, 1987; 1989).

Perhaps this is why, despite the commonality of assumptions, the conclusions reached by Tendryakov’s characters and modern scholars of virtuality sometimes turn out to be radically contradictory. For example, the words of S. Datsiuk, who, reflecting on the nature of virtual reality, emphasizes that “the natural development of the world leads to its artificial development, and artificial development leads to complication and an increase in the artificial part of reality” (DATSIUK, 2008), almost sound in unison with the following maxim of one of the characters in the novel, the theoretical physicist Professor Georgii Petrovich Grebin (in parentheses, we must note that the Professor has a “speaking” name (Georgii the Victorious), patronymic (Peter – stone), and surname (Grebin – swimmer against the current). Being a proponent of the idea that there is a way to discover the patterns of historical development and use them for the benefit of mankind, that humanity is capable of changing its life, Grebin states: “Yes, by interfering with the natural course of development. Yes, by introducing an element of artificiality into spontaneous events. Yes, by the efforts of reason!” (TENDRYAKOV, 1987, p. 21).

## Conclusion

Let us speculate that it is in this case that the individual, being at the mercy of a natural program that functions through rationality, is isomorphic to a mechanical device, the only difference being that nature is the creator of this individual and man himself is the creator of the computer. In this case, the machine assembled by human hands is analogous to the individual conceptual system as an ideal phenomenon that has been torn away from the individual.

In other words, the discovery of meaning as a correlate of spirit is to the least extent

determined in this context by the efforts of the linguistic individual themselves, the essence of which consists in: 1) the rejection of the power of the code and a return to one's nonverbal origins through the decoding of the linguistic symbol; 2) the conscious encoding of nonverbal experience, which violates the automatism of nature. To master an ideal experience, it is enough to press a processor button, which instantly launches the computer system, in the bosom of which the global network of the Internet is born. The catastrophic nature of such practices is due to the fact that, similarly to the individual conceptual system torn away from the linguistic subject, spiritual experience is also torn away from the person, so that verbal language remains at the level of reflex, not rising to the level of reflection. As a result, such purely human qualities as memory, thinking, and speech function in the situation of virtual reality as a technical, i.e. artificial, phenomenon acquire the status of simulacra.

Returning to the novel, we note that despite his name, patronymic, and surname, which refer to biblical themes, Professor Grebnev fails both in personal life and in science, because the wisdom of life itself, developing on the basis of centuries of ethics, is more organic to existence than the propaganda of one physicist, even if an outstanding one. The artificially “murdered Christ” is reborn in a computer environment, as the perfectly created machine knows no compromises, and Grebnev’s son rejects his father’s sacrifice, opting for other values, as rational egoism based on pragmatism seems to him more reliable. What would have to happen for a man who thinks he is God to give up prodigalism and humbly accept the idea of “apprenticeship to life”?

We will make an assumption that only a person who refuses to serve their natural essence as an artificial entity can triumph over technology that claims the title of artificial intelligence, because only such a person, free from the natural program, is inherently doubtful.

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