

# FOREWORD

“The Journal of Comparative Studies” publishes original multidisciplinary papers dealing with issues of regional, national, international and global significance applying comparative methodology on all aspects of culture. The current volume of the Journal is devoted to a broad conception of the virtual world, its significance in the modern world, and its various interpretations, as also proven by the majority of articles.

Human’s being in the virtual space transforms his/her worldview. The analysis of the concept of the virtual world has become important in contemporary humanities and social sciences. Many futurologists, computing scientists, philosophers predict that enormous amounts of computing power available in the future will change our daily lives and such important spheres as medicine, military, education, science, a. o. Scientists also presume that our world is a computer technology simulation. In 2003, Swedish philosopher Nick Bostrom stated that we were almost certainly living in a computer simulation, which had been created by a more developed future civilization. In 2016, investor, engineer, and inventor Elon Musk declared that we lived in the virtual reality. This idea is widely used in art and literature, creating imagery and graphics for the virtual life.

Several of the published articles were presented at the annual international conference “Scientific Readings XXVII” organized by Daugavpils University Faculty of Humanities in January 2017. One of the working groups within the frame of the conference was “The Virtual in Language, Literature, and Culture” organised by the Centre of Cultural Research of Daugavpils University Institute for Humanities and Social Sciences. The participants of the working group discussed virtual reality in literature and language, cinematography and the media, and by employing the comparative methodology analysed the relationships between “a human and virtual reality”, mechanisms, technology for constructing virtual reality, processes of developing subcultures of artificial reality and imitations of sensations.

Bina Nir in her article "The Perception of Time in the Virtual Space: A Cultural-Philosophical Analysis" presents the key conceptions of time in Western culture, explains the cultural shifts in the perception of time in terms of existing physics models, observing changes in the perception of time in the context of virtual space. Bārbala Simsons in the article "Virtual Reality in World and Latvian Science Fiction" examines the depiction of virtual reality and the pertinent storytelling characteristics in foreign and Latvian science fiction. Tatiana Filosofova's article "Religious Poetry of Literary Origin in the Manuscript Tradition of the Russian Old Believers" analyses the didactic poetry by the Russian Old Believers that originated from the medieval Russian literary tradition by comparing the plots, motifs and characters' interpretations in the two previously unknown and unpublished religious poems. The research "Translation at the Crossroad of Rhetorical Trope: Translating Metaphor in the Light of Relevance Theory" by Samuel Babatunde Moruwawon discusses the translation of metaphor as a stylistic element in the light of Relevance theory. Raivis Vilūns' article "Detecting Tabloidization of Online Media in Latvia" tells about detecting and describing the key elements of tabloidization and sets a base for further research on online media tabloidization on the example of Latvian commercial news portals and public media websites.

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