

Image Communication in Virtual Reality Culture

Abstract

In the Russian language the term image is close in meaning to the term brand. In other words, image is an idea of someone or something that is created for certain purposes by means of special technologies. Thus image communication is strategic in its nature (J. Habermas) and is fundamentally different from natural communication. In this respect, the importance of the visual aspect of image communication cannot be overestimated since it is this aspect that primarily affects the consciousness and the subconscious of a target audience through activating its aesthetic needs and value (or cultural) purposes.

The aim of this report is to prove the dominant role of image communication in structuring the environment created by virtual reality culture. By this we mean the culture of modern network society, which possesses informational and communicative ›substance‹, and all the features of a super-complex self-organizing human sociocultural system (I. Prigozhin, V. Stepin, S. Kurdyumov, etc.). The author's hypothesis proposes that image communication is one of the most important order attractors and parameters, capable of directing network society towards new goals that prevent it from sliding into uncontrollable chaos.

Such an assumption is based on the fact that since ancient times, humanity has been using the governing/manipulating potential of image communication carried out through various art forms including architecture. Modern digital technologies and new media (with the visual opportunities that it offers, its relative affordability, and ubiquity) enhance this potential in an unprecedented manner. As a result, ›digital‹ image communication becomes a stable order attractor and parameter that creates around itself a network community and its virtual culture. This communication ›launches‹ processes of social self-organization by means of manipulating the ›network‹ opinion and its symbolic capital (J. Baudrillard).