

## **Media reality and its typology: social and philosophical analysis**

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*The paper considers classifications of the social reality existing in humanitarian knowledge. It demonstrates that media reality is one of the types of social reality. The author presents types of media reality classification. Conclusions are made that media reality could not only serve as the source of social reality reconstruction, but is also able to shape it. Reasons of possible distortion in such a reconstruction are identified. These include lack of verifiability, ideologization and derealization, i.e. remoteness from real social life and media reality. A forecast is provided regarding the media reality development prospects.*

**Keywords:** *social reality, media reality, textual reality, figurative reality, sign, digital reality, derealization*

In different eras, the category of social reality was the object of close attention of thinkers; it was a product of social activity in general and of any individual in particular. Aristotle considering state and society outlined communication as the main element of their existence [1, p. 5]. The purpose of communication is passing information from one person to another. Moreover, it is worth mentioning that in society it is necessary to transfer information to a wide range of people. This objective could only be achieved with using the mass media. Thus, mass media were not of a technical nature in the time of Aristotle, but were mainly represented in the oral and written forms (public speeches or books), which led to the appropriate society interpretation. In other words, social reality and media reality in society were closely interconnecting.

Objective of this work is to determine the concept of “social reality” and analyze the existing socio-philosophical theories, for example, M. McLuhan social theory, G. Vattimo “transparent society” theory, etc. The article considers media reality as one of the areas, where social reality exists. In this regard, the author develops proprietary classification of the media reality types. Numerous examples demonstrate that media reality is reflecting the social reality and could serve as the material for its subsequent reconstruction, with special attention being paid to the media reality functions. In addition, this paper discusses prospects for the media reality development.

Relevance of the article lies in:

- 1) highlighting essence and new content of the media reality;
- 2) classification of media reality existing types and forms of manifestation;

3) determination of the media reality function, as the source for reconstructing the social reality;

4) identifying prospects for the media reality development.

First, it is necessary to define the content of the “social reality” concept. According to definition by P. Berger and T. Luckmann, social reality is the intersubjective world [2, p. 12]. It should be noted that this definition is rather general. This is an obvious deficiency of such a definition. Its advantage is that P. Berger and T. Luckmann were noting human nature of the social reality. Indeed, there is still no single and comprehensive definition of this concept. Many sociologists and philosophers provided indirect definition of the “social reality” concept through determination of its substratum. However, thinkers also did not show unanimity in defining the essence. For example, E. Durkheim defines ontological status of the social reality through ontological status of the social fact as its basis [3, p. 421]. E. Durkheim distinguishes external or morphological and collective social facts, and consequently, external and collective forms of the social reality. At the same time, M. Weber considered social activity as the social substratum. Using this, M. Weber, philosopher and sociologist, determines ontological status of the social reality and highlights its physical, internal or potential form. It is important to note that M. Weber considers as constructs of the social reality not only the social actions taking place in the present, but also related to the past and even the future [4, p. 603, 604]. J. Mead adheres to the similar classification, but he writes not about social action, but about social event as a substratum of society and, consequently, of the social reality [5, p. 116–120]. Summarizing the above, the author of this article considers it necessary to define social reality as the intersubjective world being a set of external, internal and potential social facts that are the result of actions directed from one subject to another and stay multidirectional in the space-time continuum.

In the previously mentioned theories by Durkheim, Weber and Mead, there appears an internal or potential kind of social reality, which is not the result of direct physical social action or social fact. This type of social reality is associated with the inner world of an individual or a group of individuals. Media reality is one of the ways in the individual inner world functioning. In order to define it, let us address the social theory by M. McLuhan, in which he defines media reality as being artificially created by man and containing a text [6, p. 93]. The Canadian philosopher correctly emphasized the artificial nature of media reality as the human creation, but at the same time, disadvantages of this definition could include the fact that such reality should possess the verbal character and, therefore, music and painting could not be referred to the media reality types. McLuhan attached significant importance to the media and believed that they were the cause of formation of the social phenomena and society, and, consequently, of the social reality [7, p. 11]. We could agree with this statement, but only with the amendment that this

process is not linear, but systemic being a dynamic system, which elements are dependent on each other. As an example of this mutual influence of mass media and social realities, reports of the first war correspondent, the Englishman William Howard Russell, about the Crimean War of 1853–1856 could be noted. He truthfully spoke in his articles about the unenviable fate of the wounded British soldiers and the unsanitary conditions, in which they had to be staying at the front [8]. It was this reflection of social reality in the media that gave impetus to a wide public outcry resulted in opening of the first military hospital in Scutari (Turkey) by the nurse Florence Nightingale.

N. Luhmann's methodology was based on studying the object on the theory of systems. He believed that society was the basis of social reality being a complex system and consisting of numerous subsystems. This German philosopher also considered media reality, which substratum was mass media, to be a specific closed self-referential system as part of the public one [9, p. 42]. N. Luhmann refers to the "mass media" concept any means of transmitting information that are using technical means (books, newspapers, magazines, as well as air broadcasts) or distributed in the electronic media (films, speeches and commercials). Any of these means is the carrier of its proprietary media reality. Thus, media reality for N. Luhmann is the artificial reality created by humans (as for T. McLuhan), but existing only in the material embodiment. This statement distinguishes positions of Luhmann and McLuhan. Moreover, according to Luhmann, media reality does not require to be verbally framed. As a result, media reality limitation only by its technical aspect is a drawback of this definition, on the one hand. On the other, the obvious advantage is that not only textual reality could be attributed to this kind of reality. N. Luhmann writes about doubling of the social reality in the media reality [9, p. 9].

C. Coulet considers media reality as the information reality; therefore, any means of transmitting information from the addresser to the recipients are the mass media. In this, C. Coulet's point of view differs from the point of view of N. Luhmann, who attached particular importance only to the technical means of information transmission. According to C Coulet, knowledge (logos) and speech (written or oral), as well as ways of transmitting this information are required to transfer information [10, p. 7]. In other words, C. Coulet defines media reality as the verbally formed information reality, which main component is knowledge, and which actually manifests itself in the ways of transferring this knowledge. In further analysis, this definition could be taken as the basis specifying that media reality could not only be formalized verbally, i.e. contain certain text, but also should be sound or figurative.

Based on the above, the author defines media reality as the dual *physical and potential* information reality that simultaneously serves to reflect and form social facts and actions that are the constructs of social reality. At the same time, N. Luhmann believes that when reconstructing social reality, it is

worth thinking, whether the mass media reality is a true reflection of social reality [9, p. 13]. In this regard, J. Baudrillard's observations on the mass media advertising are extremely interesting. Situation shown in advertising is most often missing in the society. If in a commercial video, a large friendly family including several generations gathers at a large table in a spacious dining room, the conclusion could often be the opposite: in this society there are neither friendly families, nor large apartments [11, p. 192]. Advertising is the opposing reality.

Having revealed the essence, let us consider forms of manifestation of the object under study. To determine the media reality types, let us use classification of the mass media proposed by R. Debray. He distinguishes three historical stages in the mass media development: knowledge (logos), writing (text) and video (image) [12, p. 78–82]. Let us classify mass media and related types of media reality based on the principle of information storage and transmission. On the one hand, the existing mass media are carriers and disseminators of the information, or of the information being. On the other hand, mass media are constructs of a special reality, i.e. media reality. At the same time, certain type of media reality is associated with each type of mass media. Three main types of media reality could be distinguished: audio reality (sound, including only sounds and not containing text), textual (reflects only text) and video reality (figurative). There are also mixed types of media reality: audio-textual, figurative-textual and audio-figurative textual. In the 21st century, the so-called digital reality acquired particular importance as a special way of accumulating and displaying information, including reality of the Internet space, virtual (replacing real reality in human perception) and augmented (superimposed on objective reality) realities [13, p. 68–80]. Let us take a closer look at each of these types of media reality.

First, we should address the main, from the author's point of view, type of media reality, i.e. textual reality. It includes only written text without audio and video materials. McLuhan attached significant importance to this type of media reality, mass media for him are including all means intended to transmit information from one person to the others, i.e., to broadcast a certain message [7, p. 10]. In turn, textual reality is also differentiated. It is advisable to single out book and newspaper types in its structure. Textual book reality became widespread in the Ancient Greece in the form of handwritten books (containing texts of individual authors), and the future newspaper reality — in public inscriptions (advertisements) in various places. Books were the handwritten papyrus scrolls. Their text (textual reality) could serve to reconstruct social reality of that time. For example, one of Plato's dialogues indicates that books could be bought at the theater and they cost one drachma [14, p. 26] (for comparison: 5 drachmas were given for one bull). In other words, it is from books that you could learn where books were bought in the Ancient Greece, and what their price was. The ancient Hellenes had the most popular books at their disposal, for example, the Homer's *Odyssey* (according to the

legend, Alexander the Great took it with him during the Persian campaign and often reread it). Books were used in the educational process in the schools of Pythagoras, Plato (Academy) and Aristotle (Lyceum).

Formation of this type of reality generated certain trends. Thus, M. Foucault highlights the following feature of the book textual reality: actions of the book characters are determined not only by the author's intention, but also by similarity with their own kind of characters [15, p. 81]. This means that characters in the mass media book textual reality are obliged to act in accordance with the laws of a certain literary genre. Such particular literary genre creates a generalized image of a certain fragment of social reality. Thus, heroes of Spanish medieval picaresque novels (*novela picaresca*), for example, *Lazarillo de Tormes* [16] or *Guzmán de Alfarache* [17] behave according to canons of this type of novels. Both characters as boys got into vicissitudes of life and became the vagabond scammers. At the same time, they easily got out of any troubles receiving sympathy from the readers. Images of these knaves, as well as their numerous adventures throughout medieval Spain, help to reconstruct social reality of Spain at the time of decline of the Habsburg dynasty and demonstrate the level of impoverishment of the state during another historical period (XVI–XVII centuries). Book textual reality played an important role in disseminating information in Europe and in the world, both in the Antiquity and in the Middle Ages. Its dissemination was growing from the middle of the XV century, when book printing appeared in Europe. Then, the number of books increased, their character also changed: secular artistic and scientific works replaced religious subjects of the Middle Ages.

The next type of textual media reality is the newspaper. It originated in the Ancient Greece. The so-called public inscriptions were the prototype of modern newspapers and advertisements. They were written either on stone (to preserve the most important information) or on special wooden tablets — *leukomata* [10, p. 101]. It is from them that we are able to receive basic information about social reality in the Ancient Greece, since these public inscriptions contained the texts of decrees, important documents, resolutions and invoices for household work performed. Based on the hermeneutic analysis of these texts, which consists in interpreting and deciphering the information contained in them, even if it is reflected not explicitly, but implicitly, it becomes possible to reconstruct social existence of the ancient society.

The newspaper, in the usual sense of this type of textual reality, appeared in the Modern Era. Until now, it is the newspaper textual reality, even transformed into the digital analogue in the post-industrial society period, the main source of information and material for reconstructing the social reality. R. Kipling in his poem “The Press” noted that a person could forget his social duties, but not the information presented in the newspapers, precisely formulating the role of press in the European society at the beginning of the XX century:

Remember the battle and stand aside  
While Thrones and Powers confess  
That King over all the children of pride  
Is the Press — the Press — the Press! [18, p. 248].

In addition, newspaper textual reality has a special property. It stays immovable relative to the temporal coordinate systems and possesses the ability to physically move in space [19, p. 4]. Moreover, it was during the period of Modern Era that importance of the textual newspaper reality was realized as a medium to reflect social reality, as well as the means of forming the social reality. One of the first to make this important discovery was Napoleon Bonaparte, who wanted to leave only one newspaper in the state. It should stay under the full control of the Emperor [20, p. 32]. Thus, textual newspaper reality and social reality appear to be a closed system, as noted earlier, when proving the McLuhan's postulate.

Further development of newspapers as the mass media leads in the XIX century to an interesting metamorphosis of this trend. Newspaper textual reality resembles the textual reality of public inscriptions in the Ancient Greece, where information about documents, budgets and private announcements was present along with important events in social and political life. Information field of the textual newspaper reality becomes the same in the XIX century. In the absence of interesting and important events in the socio-political life, information of secondary importance also began to appear there, such as announcements of theatrical performances, lists of guests at gala receptions, etc. In other words, the so-called “yellow press” begins to appear. Its occurrence is due to the fact that textual reality is limited not only by information and time frames, but also by specific requirements inherent in the newspaper text: absence of empty spaces on the sheets of this media. Thus, newspaper reality simultaneously exists in two planes: textual (information reality) and physical (printed sheet). Subsequently, different types of textual newspaper reality began to exist in the different physical realities.

New feature of newspapers at the turn of the XIX–XX centuries is its ideological orientation, which could be called the main factor causing distortion of the social reality that this type of media reflects. This is connected to the fact that events in newspaper publications are described not objectively, but subjectively, with adjustment to the ideology existing in society. This means that the given parameter should be taken into account when reconstructing social reality of the particular society in a certain historical period. The temporal aspect comes to the fore here. *Ideological component* appearance in the mass media textual reality is associated with the fact that its perspective is direct and not reverse (as in ancient and medieval books), i.e. its vector is directed to the present and future. If in the Ancient Greece mass media reflected mainly events of the past, the so-called historical memory, there is simply no place for historical memory in the newspaper reality. Even

today's informational reality would cease to be a reality tomorrow and would become the irrelevant past. Objective of the ideologically colored textual reality in the mass media is formation of the social "today-reality" and "tomorrow-reality", or, at least, a plausible image of such reality within the framework of public opinion. Thus, although both newspaper and book realities are textual, they are having their own characteristic features in each of these mass media: different temporal orientation and physical embodiment, as well as the laws of text formation in books and newspapers.

The next type of media reality is sound or audio reality. Musical works are the carriers of audio information. They contain messages encrypted with notes from the addresser to the addressee, which should also be analyzed and decoded. In the story by K.G. Paustovsky "Basket with spruce cones", the main character was listening to the music by E. Grieg to visualize the first meeting with the composer [21, p. 8]. This reality is rather difficult to interpret its signs, which are not letters, but notes. Therefore, this type of media reality is rarely considered as the informational.

Mixed audio-textual reality is more common. First, it includes the information field of songs. Then, this kind of reality is contained in the first texts transmitted among population not in writing, but in the oral form. One of the first masterpieces of oral speech, which became widespread among inhabitants of the Ancient Greece policies, were Iliad and Odyssey by Homer. Information reality there was based on the memory of the people, who passed it. This heroic epic was a special textual media reality: Homer's poems had both written realization (textual reality) and were transmitted orally (mixed audio-textual reality) based on the narrator's memory. Audio-textual reality obtained in this way has a number of features. On the one hand, characters are behaving according to traditions of the songs of aoidos — poets and musicians of antiquity. To describe the characters, certain verbal formulas adopted in the Ancient Greece verses are also used. On the other hand, textual reality of the Iliad and the Odyssey reflects social life of the Antiquity era. Generally, a conclusion could be made that the ancient Greeks resolved issues of the greatest importance through meetings and councils, and sometimes decisions made at these councils and meetings prevailed over decisions of the kings in policies ruled by the monarchies [10, p. 35]. To a certain extent, this makes it possible to reconstruct social reality of the historical era affecting the society political structure. In this case, we are talking about non-technical means of transmitting information, which could include the Agora meeting square, theaters and sanctuaries. At that stage in the society development, media reality was mainly a reflection of political processes and phenomena as immanent constructs of the social reality. Thus, the logos existing in society is actually political, and information passed through communications is also primarily political in nature; therefore, mass media information reality is also the political reality [22, p. 45]. Books in antiquity were actually the handwritten

papyrus scrolls. At the same time, though the ancient Greeks were literate, the habit of reading was missing [10, p. 95]. The Greeks preferred to listen to the written works (prototype of modern radio and audio books); thus, it is impossible to speak of a “pure” textual reality in this case. Mixed audio-textual reality could be seen. Accordingly, public readings of these works were presented to a wide audience.

If the “pure” figurative reality is under consideration, its sources include works of painting and silent movies. Picturesque canvases could serve as material in studying and reconstruction of social reality with correct decoding of symbols that the artist applied in his canvas. Thus, analyzing El Greco's painting “The Burial of the Count Orgaz”, we could conclude, which way of life was considered righteous in the Habsburg Spain (XVI–XVII centuries). It is interesting that the artist combined two realities in his painting: reality of the past and modern reality for El Greco (late XVI — early XVII centuries). To do this, he placed on a canvas depicting a burial taking place in the past his contemporaries as persons present at the funeral.

Let us turn to the analyzing the audio-figurative textual reality. Sound movies are its carrier having the highest quality material to reconstruct the social reality. Movies belong to the third stage in the mass media development according to classification proposed by R. Debray, namely, to the stage of figurative or video reality. G. Deleuze raises questions, if such reflection of reality is just an illusion [23, p. 41]? Does the use of artificial mechanical means to reflect reality lead to artificiality of this reflection? After all, using such an arsenal of means, a person distorts even the illusion itself, and not only reality; i.e. it results not only in doubling the reality, as in N. Luhmann works, but also in its double distortion. Media reality could exist in various manifestations: in the form of familiar textual reality, figurative, mixed and virtual reality. However, G. Deleuze introduces not the concept of reality, but the concept of the image of time [23, pp. 318–324]. He also writes about the special language of cinema, which is used not to understand the movie (illusion), but to comprehend the image of time (reality). Thus, in the Office Romance by Eldar Ryazanov, the heroine played by L. Akhedzhakova was talking about a reproduction of the L. Da Vinci's painting La Gioconda, and she said that a Borovskikh “programmed” this painting barely pronouncing this unusual word for the 1970s. For perception of the movie as an illusion, this phrase contributes to better understanding the state of mind of the main character, who, being in love, admires even the computer-generated image of the painting. Within the framework of the movie language to describe reality or image-time, the audience is able to feel the process of mastering and spreading a new technical means (computer), as well as the neologism terms associated with it. In connection with the above, the question becomes natural: if movie images are the movie language for understanding and reconstructing the reality taking into account the time coordinate, is it possible to place any



movie image in these coordinates in order to obtain reliable information on the reality? Most likely, it is impossible, since in this case inevitable distortion of the reality under study appears. The reasons for the above process could include features of the movie genre and subjective perception of reality by the movie creators, as well as the ideology prevailing in society. For example, let us look at abundance of goods at the fair, at happy faces of people, at prosperous collective farms in the Cossacks of the Kuban movie directed by I.A. Pyryev (movie images) and place them in time coordinates corresponding to the year of the movie release (1949). We understand that in the post-war years such a prosperous social reality could not exist in the USSR. The task of this movie was not to reflect reality, but it was conceived as a picture that provided people with hope in brighter future, a kind of futuristic utopia. It should be mentioned that less than 10 years later I.A. Pyryev was criticized by colleagues and authorities for this picture as “varnishing the reality”.

Theatrical performances are another and more ancient source of the sound forming textual reality. As noted above, N. Luhmann recognizes theatrical performances as the media reality carrier, only if they are registered on any electronic media and are transmitted to the general public using them. C. Coulet considers theaters of the Ancient Greece to be the mass medium, since almost the entire policy population came to see theatrical performances of that period. It was not just a theatrical performance, but a real celebration, akin to the Olympic Games. As is known, all theatrical plays at that time were divided into two main genres: comedy and tragedy. Play construction also obeyed the canons of these genres. However, J.-P. Vernan noted that tragedies were based on the Ancient Greek myths, but at the same time were so freely interpreted in relation to the existing socio-political situation that reflected social reality of the concrete historical era [22, p. 51]. For example, let us see the Oresteia tragedy by Aeschylus. Orestes, son of the protagonist Agamemnon, commits a grave crime: he kills his mother and her lover in order to avenge his father murdered by them. For such deeds, Orestes himself deserves the death penalty. It should be noted that at the time of writing the Oresteia, Areopagus, the court of Ancient Greece, was dealing especially with the serious crimes. Areopagus was facing reforms that were immediately reflected in the play by Aeschylus in the form of the court of Athena, which, taking into account all the circumstances of the crime, acquitted Orestes [10, p. 69]. Comedies in the Ancient Greece were not based on myths unlike tragedies, but most often were criticizing the existing socio-political order. Even more than tragedies, they were the reflection of social reality of that time. Thus, philosopher Socrates was presented in the Clouds comedy by Aristophanes as the protagonist prototype, who liked to make beautiful speeches, but not related to the Athenians lives [24, p. 112].

Figurative-textual media reality is also represented by the magazines as one of its types. Like book and newspaper reality, text is playing an important

role in the magazine reality, although to a lesser extent than in the previous two. Indeed, three types of media reality indicated above are having a common sign — the letter. It is namely the letter embodying materially the media reality. But the ways of organizing reality in different text carriers are different. Thus, instead of a unified textual reality of a novel extended in space and time, magazine space provides a large number of small realities in a single article connected to this magazine general orientation. These mini-realities are also staying within a certain stereotype. For example, most heroines of the articles in today's glossy magazines are successful bright individuals, and at the same time they manage to perfectly cope with the household and remain loving and caring mothers. Do these images reflect the contemporary social reality? Most likely that no. This is just a phenomenon akin to Baudrillard's point of view on advertising. Such articles create an ideal reality trying to artificially form general characteristics of the whole society from ideographic characteristics of a single successful subject. At the same time, most women in reality are simply unable to perform their household and work duties perfectly, and in parallel to develop as a person. Those, who are striving in practice to comply with the ideal magazine textual reality and with the image dictated, pay with losing their individuality and control over their lives [25, p. 160].

New kind of media reality is emerging in the XXI century society, which was not mentioned by R. Debray, i.e. the digital reality. As noted earlier, this reality is a special complex way of storing, transmitting and demonstrating information. It could be manifested in the virtual, augmented and Internet reality. At the present moment, Internet reality includes all the above media realities, i.e. pure and mixed. Virtual reality recreates using digital technologies a fragment of objective or fictional reality that only imitates the objective reality (video games, interactive entertainment, etc.). Augmented reality is actually figurative-digital combining digital images (for example, three-dimensional electronic photos) and objective reality [26]. Thus, the fourth stage could be added to the existing three historical stages in the R. Debray classification, i.e. the digital (sign-digit) stage. It should have its own language to be able to correctly interpret the media reality information field. This language should not be the sound-letter; it could be the language of images, as in the movies reality. In general, a system of codes could be discussed inherent in media reality or signs [27, p. 56]. Ch. Metz considered the system of signs-codes in relation to the movies reality, and today it could be noted that this system is universal for any kind of the media reality. G. Deleuze also writes about the sign as the language of the cinema reality, even using the term “digit” to refer to these signs [23, p. 277]. Author of this article notes that it is necessary to avoid the complex realities language assimilation associated with images by the ordinary narrative languages, as this would lead to inevitable simplification of images and their distortion. Consequently, this simplification could contribute to impossibility of using the media realities,

which constructs are the images to reconstruct social reality. In this case, it is expedient to discuss not the language as the object of linguistics research, but the seme as a unit of meaning that performs cognitive function in relation to the image. G. Deleuze marks several types of images and their corresponding signs for further interpretation. But two signs are universal for any media reality: *dicisign* used in relation to constant reality (reality that “lies on the surface” and requires no additional interpretation), and *rhema* to describe the variable reality (reality that requires additional interpretation, present “between the lines”) [23, p. 283].

Internet is having a more complex coding system than cinema and contains all types of media reality: sound, text, visual and mixed. Based on position of G. Vattimo and other specialists let us try to fix characteristic features of the digital Internet reality as a type of media reality. It is:

- 1) characterized by the “capacity” concept, i.e. it contains a huge amount of information [28, p. 29];
- 2) rhizome, denies linearity and is fragmentary [29, p. 16];
- 3) mixed type of reality, as it includes other types of media reality: books, newspapers, magazines, movies and theater, as well as the specific type generated in the Internet - blogging;
- 4) including transition to a new (non-material) type of the object being (for example, books, magazines, etc.);
- 5) having special temporality, passage of time, since information field of the Internet reality covers the past, present and future of the mankind;
- 6) having specific isotropic method in information retrieval using hyperlinks and “pop-up” windows, which introduces an element of chaos into reconstruction of the society formation. The use of Internet reality for this purpose is rather difficult, since language of the latter is extremely complex, and special methods are required in its interpretation, not only hermeneutic, but, for example, statistical (in particular, identifying the frequency of references to materials).

To the greatest extent, digital Internet reality in the world of the XXI century as a type of the media reality actualizes blogs and social networks. They reflect socio-political processes in the society. However, the virtual reality structure is not limited to blogs and social networks. Official and private information fields coexist in digital reality of the Internet environment, while it is not always possible to verify the latter [30]. Impossibility of verifying information field of the Internet space virtual reality is the reason that reconstruction of social reality through analyzing blogs and social networks becomes difficult. Deepening this idea, G. Vattimo discusses such a phenomenon as transformation of the Internet environment information reality into something ordinary being always “at hand” for the average man and provoking separation of the Internet environment virtual reality from reality in general and from social reality in particular. G. Vattimo called this process derealization [29, p. 28]. Taking into account derealization of the virtual reali-

ty, reconstruction of social reality on its basis is a complex and time-consuming process.

Despite the intensifying trend in the media reality derealization, the latter spontaneously invades the everyday life, partially and sometimes completely, replacing and substituting the reality. This is especially inherent in digital reality, a special branch of philosophical knowledge is even being formed to study it — the “media philosophy” [31, pp. 135–143]. It could be assumed that the process of digitalization in the future would continue to cover more and more new areas of life. Special constructs and immanent media realities already appeared, for example, the media art [26]. M. Hansen believes that media reality would eventually reproduce the entire world around a person [32, p. 22]. Thus, media reality initially arising as the specific information environment and as the means of transmitting information from the addresser to the addressee is at the same time reflection of the existing social reality and consequently serves as a source in reconstructing the latter. Today, people are “escaping” from reality into the digital virtual media reality; thereby the latter confidently replaces and displaces the former. It became possible to travel virtually, visit museums, etc. It is likely that in the future digital media reality would become our social reality and our world, being at the same time the reflection of itself and manifesting itself through itself.

Based on the above, the following conclusions could be made:

1. Many thinkers, for example, Durkheim, Weber and others dealt with definition of the social reality and its status. Summarizing their positions, it could be noted that social reality is the intersubjective world that appears to be a set of external, internal and potential social facts being the result of social actions or events directed from one subject to another and multidirectional in the space-time continuum.

2. Media reality is one of the ways of the social reality existence and, in addition, the source for its reconstruction of the latter. The author proposes the following media reality classification: “pure” media realities that include sound or audio reality (musical works), textual reality (books and newspapers), figurative or video reality (silent movies and paintings); mixed media reality that includes audio-textual reality (songs and public performances), figurative-textual (magazines) and audio-figurative textual reality (sound movies, theatrical performances and advertising). The author of the article selects digital reality as a separate group consisting of virtual, augmented and Internet reality containing “pure” and mixed types of media reality.

3. It could be noted that in the Antiquity era textual media reality was present associated with the appearance of books disseminated among the population. N. Luhmann and T. McLuhan are rightly seeing books as one component of the mass media. However, the author of the article thinks that for reconstruction of the social reality of this historical period, it is still better

to use not books, but textual reality of the leukomat, the prototype of modern newspapers.

4. Mixed audio-figurative text type of media reality is more often used in the XXI century: movies, advertising, theatrical performances. Digital media reality starts to play a very important role.

5. Media reality possesses its own language, hermeneutical methods of analysis are used to decode it. The sign is the unit of this language. Digital Internet reality is the highest level (at the moment) of the sign media reality having the rhizome character. It is not only a special way of being for textual, figurative and mixed audio-textual figurative reality, but also contains a special kind of informational reality, i.e. reality of blogs often used to reconstruct the latter.

6. When using media reality to reconstruct social reality, possible distortions should be taken into account, such as consumer focus, ideological coloring, as well as the lack of verifiability of information present in particular media reality and the process of derealization of media reality.

7. It is worth mentioning that media reality is not only a reflection and source for reconstructing the social reality, but also the cause of the formation of certain social phenomena and society (for example, creation of the first military hospitals by F. Nightingale after an article in the newspaper about distressful situation with the wounded in hospitals) and consequently of the social reality. In this case, closed interdependent dynamic system could be observed: society — social reality — media reality — society.

8. Considering the prospects for the media reality development, a huge number of individuals should be taken into accounts, who are “escaping” from social reality into the digital virtual reality. In fact, media reality absorbs the real world, replaces it, but at the same time, it is a reflection of the real life of people essentially defining itself through itself and becoming a “thing in itself”.

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