DISCURSIVE PERSPECTIVE ON THE USE OF SENSORY MODI IN SHAPING RESPONSIBLE MEDIA REALITY

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Summary

The article offers a theoretical investigation of the transformations within media reality, with particular emphasis on the role of sensory cultural practices and the expansion of algorithmically driven media technologies. The central concern is a conceptual reorientation in meaning-making: from the static representation of meanings to their dynamic modeling, realized through the synthesis of visual, auditory, chromatic, and other sensory modi. Here, «modi» are understood as sensory dimensions – such as sight, hearing, chromatic», and related perceptual registers – through which sensory experience materializes in the digital media sphere. Methodologically, the study rests on the interdisciplinary integration of cultural-semiotic, cognitive-perceptual, and media-technological approaches. This framework enables the interpretation of sensory modi as semiotic systems that acquire functional significance within digital communication environments. Special attention is given to the analysis of practices of sensory activation of audiences triggered by media stimuli, especially in contexts shaped by artificial intelligence and automated algorithmic systems. The findings underscore the necessity of conceptualizing media not merely as channels of information transmission but as generative environments in which collective identity, cultural memory, and ethical orientations are constituted.

Key words: media reality, sense creation, media technologies, artificial intelligence, media triggers, cultural identity and memory, media space.

1. Introduction

For decades, media were primarily conceived as instruments of passive reproduction of objective reality – devices for recording, representing, and transmitting information. With the rise of digital platforms governed by algorithmic infrastructures, however, this function has undergone a fundamental reorientation: media are increasingly understood as active agents in modelling the world. Within this framework, media reality appears as a multidimensional structure of perception and meaning-making that not only organizes information flows but also shapes collective modi of seeing, symbolic identification, and affective engagement. Its architecture is informed not only by technological mechanisms of selection but also by cultural practices, in which images, sounds, colours, language, and memetic patterns are synthesized into recognizable narratives that crystallize perceptions of social reality. Contemporary domains such as art, fashion, gastronomy, and digital creativity no longer operate as autonomous spheres but converge into complex sensory assemblages that constitute a symbolic cartography of the world. Consequently, media cease to function as mere conduits of transmission and instead emerge as generative environments for the production of meaning – reflecting not

only technological change but also an ontological reconfiguration of communication, culture, and identity. This shift underscores the urgency of advancing new medialogical frameworks – capable not only of analyzing the structural dimensions of digital environments but also of elucidating the symbolic and perceptual mechanisms of sense-making, including visual codes, chromatic patterns, sonic markers, and verbal modi as instruments of algorithmic articulation of cultural reality.

This redefinition of meaning-making corresponds to profound changes in communicative structures and patterns of media consumption. Current trends reveal a transition from centralized to fragmented models of engagement, from linear reception to interactive participation, and from analog experience to immersive digital involvement. A telling indicator of this transition is the growing dominance of social media as the primary news source for 84% of Ukrainians in 2024, contrasted with the sharp decline in trust in television – from 85% in 2015 to 30% in 2024 *(Trapeznikova, 2024)*. What is at stake here is not simply a reallocation of broadcasting channels but a reconfiguration of communicative reality itself, shaped by algorithmic personalization, emotional hyperstimulation, and intensified sensory interaction. Medialogy, as an interdisciplinary research framework, offers the conceptual tools to trace how innovations such as artificial intelligence not only transform the technical conditions of circulation but also redefine the user's role – from recipient to co-creator, from spectator to active constructor of meaning. Digital media reality thus emerges as a living, dynamic entity evolving in tandem with cultural and technological transformations, positioning itself as a central focus of medialogical inquiry.

The problematic core of this study lies in the insufficient theoretical reflection on the transformation of media reality at the intersection of sensory cultural practices and digital technologies. Addressing this lacuna requires a comprehensive account of the paradigm shift in sense-making – from representation to modelling – within the interplay of cultural codes and technological innovations that jointly shape the architectonics of media space, influencing collective perception, identity, and communication.

Accordingly, the purpose of this study is to theorize the transformation of contemporary media reality driven by the interaction of sensory cultural practices and digital technologies, with particular emphasis on rethinking sense-making as a process of active construction rather than mere reflection of reality. The object of the study is the cultural transformation of media space, while its subject is the mechanism of sense-making in the digital environment, especially the role of visual, auditory, and verbal markers in shaping resilient cultural narratives and shared identity. Methodologically, the research employs an interdisciplinary matrix integrating cultural-semiotic, cognitive-perceptual, and media-technological approaches. This framework enables a multi-layered analysis: content analysis identifies recurring symbolic markers – memetic structures, chromatic patterns, acoustic signals, narrative configurations–characteristic of the digital milieu; semiotic analysis interprets sensory modi as sign systems through which image, sound, and language operate as mediators of cultural imagination; the cognitive-perceptual approach examines immersion mechanisms in augmented and virtual media environments, with a focus on presence, affective involvement, and sensory coordination. Finally, case study analysis traces transformations in communicative formats and sense-making under conditions of technological innovation.

2. The Evolution of Media Reality: From Representation to Simulation

A deeper understanding of media reality – a distinct form of constructed reality arising from human interaction with media – requires tracing the evolution of the concept of "media"

itself. Entering scholarly discourse in the United States in the 1930s–1940s, the concept was shaped by the seminal works of H. Lasswell, P. Lazarsfeld, J. Clapper, and E. Katz, who primarily framed media as channels for the transmission of facts and the construction of simplified representations of reality – a «pseudo-environment» *(Lasswell, 1948)*. A decisive shift came with M. McLuhan, who, within the technocultural discourse, theorized media as technological extensions of human faculties and formulated the influential thesis, «the medium is the message» *(McLuhan, 1964)*. With the expanding role of visual technologies, digital platforms, and entertainment industries, media have increasingly been conceptualized not as neutral conveyors of information but as socio-cultural mechanisms that actively structure media reality – shaping perception, framing interpretation, and encoding the world in symbolic configurations *(Couldry & Hepp, 2017)*.

Within post-structuralist frameworks, this transformation is reinterpreted as a turn toward the discursive nature of media, wherein they do not merely transmit but actively produce reality through language, imagery, sound, and multimodal signification. J. Baudrillard radicalized this perspective through the concept of simulation, situating media reality within a regime of signs where second-order representations displace primary referents, destabilizing the relationship between sign and reality *(Baudrillard, 1981)*. In this sense, media reality becomes not a reflection of the external world but a self-sufficient, enclosed system of semantic constructs, generating an ontology that is not experiential but simulative. The digital environment intensifies this development: sign structures and communicative units are increasingly governed by algorithmic logics of selection, combination, and representation. Processes of algorithmization, automated data sorting, multimodal presentation, and visual programming contribute to a configuration of media reality in which, as L. Manovich observes, codified reality – regulated by pre-structured rules – displaces direct experience of the world, giving rise to an autonomous media ontology *(Manovich, 2013)*.

This growing complexity of media reality – shaped by algorithmic processes, semiotic constructs, and sensory intensification – creates the need for an integrative framework capable of synthesizing diverse theoretical approaches. Traditional domains of inquiry – semiotics, cognitive science, the sociology of culture, and the philosophy of technology – while analytically valuable, remain fragmented in their capacity to capture the interplay between sign systems, technological infrastructures, sensory modi, and cultural imagination in the digital environment. In response, medialogy is emerging as a comprehensive interdisciplinary paradigm that unites methodologies from media theory, cultural studies, semiotics, philosophy of language, and the social and cognitive sciences to provide a holistic analysis of digital cultural phenomena. Rather than limiting itself to media content or technologies, medialogy investigates mechanisms of sense-making, perceptual infrastructures, models of influence, and modes of cultural imagination shaped through human–media interaction.

Within this framework, sensory modi assume a central role. In the digital context, they function not merely as channels of information but as cultural instruments of modelling – transmitting values, identities, and emotional orientations. Visual imagery, dominant chromatic schemes, typography, sound design, vocal intonation, and textual affect operate as semiotic markers of cultural recognition and symbolic affiliation *(Kress & van Leeuwen, 2020)*. By activating affective perception and cognitive integration, these elements immerse audiences in narrative structures and foster identification with specific socio-cultural meanings. In this way, symbolic codes – images, colours, sounds, metaphors – cease to be mere aesthetic embellishments and instead become instruments of collective identification, consolidating shared meanings and structuring generalized models of reality *(Hall, 1997)*. Accordingly, sensory modi

should be conceptualized as culturally conditioned parameters of mediation that structure perception, shape affective responses, and co-constitute the ontology of digital media reality.

3. The Role of Visual, Auditory, and Iconic Modi in Mediating Contemporary Cultural Representations

Colour, as a primary sensory modus, serves not merely an aesthetic function but also a deeply embedded socio-cultural and psychophysiological role, encoding markers of belonging, emotional states, and identity matrices. Ritual practices in archaic cultures attest to its capacity to delineate social roles and sacred boundaries, while contemporary colour therapy conceptualises it as an instrument of affective regulation and cognitive stimulation *(Lüscher, 1950; Babbitt, 1878; Braem, 2020)*. Neuroaesthetic research further demonstrates that colour, as a visual stimulus, exerts significant psychophysiological effects, eliciting differentiated emotional and cognitive responses: warm hues enhance attention and creative engagement, cool tones promote emotional equilibrium, and high-intensity dark shades may induce affective inertia *(Ramachandran & Hirstein, 1999; Zeki, 1999)*. Within digital visual environments, these properties acquire heightened significance: algorithmic encoding of colour in interface design, branding, and social media transforms it into a tool of affective orientation and symbolic cohesion. Calibrating colour palettes to the semiotic expectations of target audiences enables the creation of intuitively recognisable identities and facilitates emotionally immersive engagement with narratives conveying communal values.

An illustrative example of visual semiotics is the Ukraine NOW brand, where the yellow-and-blue palette functions as a potent marker of national identity, constructing a visual metaphor for contemporary Ukraine – open, optimistic, and recognisable internationally. A parallel strategy is evident in the Be Brave Like Ukraine campaign, developed by Banda Agency with support from the Ministry of Digital Transformation and the Office of the President (2022). The campaign integrates modular typography inspired by Vasyl Yermilov's constructivist aesthetic with affectively resonant sonic patterns, reinforcing the visual message and immersing audiences in a polyphonic narrative *(Panchenko, 2022)*. The synesthetic interplay of colour, form, and sound constructs a multifaceted national image – brave, resilient, and contemporary – capable of conveying profound cultural meanings.

This sensory integration highlights the centrality of auditory modalities in narrative sense-making. Survey results (https://docs.google.com/forms/d/1i8RLrN19htT820hbasHxG_sqKkDhC1UFLKelt-E__c8/edit?hl=uk#responses) indicate that Ukrainian folk singing and traditional instrumental ensembles (bandura, trembita, sopilka) are most strongly associated with symbolic representations of national culture. Deeply embedded in collective memory and cultural imagination, they operate as foundational auditory codes activating mechanisms of socio-cultural identification. Contemporary Ukrainian music, particularly the work of Okean Elzy, is also valued for synthesising traditional motifs with modernist aesthetics, whereas popular music performers (e.g., Alyona Alyona, Jerry Heil) receive comparatively lower recognition, reflecting a perceived dissonance between commercial production and culturally authentic emotional resonance. Natural environmental sounds (e.g., rustling grass, birdsong) were marginally represented, indicating a reduced role in the collective perception of cultural symbols. Music thus functions as a multidimensional cognitive and affective resource, initiating neuropsychological integration and social synchronisation. Neuroscientific evidence further supports genre-specific effects: classical and slow compositions reduce cortisol and facilitate emotional regulation *(Tomatis, 1983),* while dynamic rhythms enhance cognitive engagement and creativity.

In digital contexts, auditory modalities increasingly serve as instruments of cultural coding and mediation, strengthening social cohesion and shaping shared imaginaries *(Cross, 2001),* while operating synergistically with other sensory modes, particularly the iconic, which structures cultural identity through visual recognisability, symbolic density, and emotional immediacy.

Within the expanding algorithmic complexity of media reality, the figurative (iconic) modus emerges as a pivotal factor in fostering recognisable cultural subjects and integrating them into global information networks. Visual archetypes – familiar images, landscapes, and traditional motifs – act as consolidating symbols, activating deep psycho-emotional responses and promoting socio-cultural cohesion. The animated character Mavka *(Mavka: The Forest Song; dir. O. Malamuzh & O. Ruban, 2023)* exemplifies this dynamic. Rooted in Lesya Ukrainka's canonical poem, Mavka retains traditional attributes – affinity with nature, forest magic, and the pursuit of harmony – while undergoing transformation via digital media: enriched 3D graphics, nuanced colour palettes, emotive music, and compelling narrative structures. Its pervasive presence across advertisements, merchandise, trailers, and social media has established Mavka as a narrative nexus that both captivates audiences and articulates a revitalised Ukrainian identity, enhancing recognition and acceptance within the collective consciousness. Furthermore, critical discussion of the animation style, including Disney influences, has fostered reassessment of national animation traditions and encouraged public discourse on cultural self-determination, exemplifying the digital mediatization of literary and artistic heritage and embedding national archetypes within collective cultural imagination.

4. Artificial Intelligence and Sensory Modi in the Construction of Collective Identity

This example illustrates not only the profound influence of sensory modi in the formation of social narratives aimed at cultivating patriotic consciousness and collective identity but also underscores the integration of advanced machine learning methodologies that expand the potential for generating visual content while maintaining cultural relevance and adaptability across diverse audiences and contexts. Within the media industry – particularly in mass production – the implementation of automated techniques for analyzing, classifying, and generating visual material enables the detection of complex patterns within images, videos, and animations. This capacity facilitates not only the identification of discrete objects but also the creation of coherent visual narratives imbued with culturally resonant semiotic markers, particularly through the deployment of technologies such as:

• Deep Neural Networks (DNNs), which, beyond their instrumental functions, exert a significant impact on the formation of collective representations. By analyzing recurring visual patterns in user behavior data and generating imagery aligned with cultural identity frameworks, DNNs produce novel visual forms while fundamentally transforming principles of image presentation within digital environments *(LeCun, Bengio, & Hinton, 2015).*

• Convolutional Neural Networks (CNNs), pivotal in contemporary medialogical practices, enable automated content analysis in journalism, including the detection of violence, identification of manipulated images, and recognition of disinformation patterns. They support facial recognition for verification of public figures, enhance visual search capabilities in photo and video archives to optimize editorial workflows, and, when combined with generative adversarial networks, facilitate interactive applications such as adaptive advertising and augmented reality. CNNs further underpin media monitoring systems critical for security, regulatory compliance, and social dynamics analysis *(Krizhevsky, Sutskever, & Hinton, 2017).*

• Generative Adversarial Networks (GANs), transformative in their ability to synthesize highly realistic visual imagery, find applications across cinema, advertising, and video gaming. Specific functions include deepfake modeling, digital rejuvenation of performers, stylistic and aesthetic reconstruction, and narrative visualization in digital art. GANs also contribute to automated production of emotionally resonant advertising, restoration of cultural heritage from limited datasets, and medialogical practices aimed at patriotic imagery, visual identity modeling, and embedding culturally marked meanings into communicative, educational, and branding platforms *(Goodfellow et al., 2014)*.

• Transformers, originally developed for natural language processing, now underpin multimodal architectures that integrate visual, auditory, and textual inputs, facilitating contextualized narrative construction, automated video editing, speech-to-articulation synchronization, and personalized information delivery. These architectures ensure semantic coherence and open new avenues for cultural modeling and aesthetically dynamic content generation *(Dosovitskiy et al., 2021)*.

These examples, however, represent only a subset of the extensive technological toolkit available for sensory content generation, which also includes Recurrent Neural Networks (RNNs), motion-capture-based automated rigging, stylization and style-transfer techniques, and interactive generative models capable of both enhancing and transforming visual imagery. Collectively, these technologies serve to increase visual complexity, elevate product quality, and automate routine stages of creative production. Nonetheless, despite their considerable potential, irresponsible or manipulative deployment may distort social processes of meaning-making. Rather than fostering cohesive collective identity, sensory outputs misaligned with intended narrative frameworks may elicit individualized affective responses, producing cognitive disorientation and potentially undermining the symbolic foundations of state-building and social cohesion.

5. Conclusions

The trends and conceptual frameworks outlined in this study illuminate profound transformations in the perception and construction of digital media reality, wherein sensory modi – operating as both cognitive and affective catalysts – are increasingly embedded within media practices through algorithmic mediation enabled by artificial intelligence. This paradigm shift reflects a movement away from linear models of communication toward a synesthetic, multimodal construction of collective experience, grounded in emotional engagement, neuropsychological activation, and culturally resonant meaning-making. Within this landscape, media function not merely as channels of information but as active constructors of identity, ethical frameworks, and strategic narratives.

In this context, medialogy emerges as a metatheoretical platform that performs both analytical and normative functions: it not only maps the interplay between media, technologies, and sensory modes but also articulates a conceptual language for understanding these dynamics as an evolving process of knowledge generation, socio-cultural modelling, and experiential structuring. The increasing role of artificial intelligence in producing sensory content opens expansive avenues for interdisciplinary inquiry, particularly in exploring the encoding, adaptation, and transformation of aesthetic, affective, and cognitive patterns within culturally specific contexts.

Consequently, it becomes imperative to develop ethical protocols that govern the interaction between technological systems and the public sphere of meaning-making, to ensure transparency in algorithmic influence, and to establish independent oversight mechanisms

within digital environments. Ultimately, the sustainable development of the national media system, the advancement of media literacy, and the reinforcement of cultural resilience depend upon critical reflection and the responsible deployment of sensory modi as instruments of ethical communication. In this way, media can foster not only engagement and aesthetic experience but also the cultivation of collective understanding, shared values, and socially constructive imaginaries.

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