This week, I read two required readings on the interpretations of reality. Berger (1967) believes that we have multiple realities, while Searle (1998) maintained that instead of two or three realities (the mental and the physical, or the cultural) we have only one reality that connect our language, mind, and society.

Berger (1967) believed that the world has multiple realities. A person can move from one reality to another, like from a dream to everyday life. A person is transited from one reality to another as the curtain raises and falls. He presented the realities of everyday life as an ordered reality. The reality of everyday life is "objectified, it has imperative existence despite one's presence, such as language, tools, geographical space, and human relations. He also maintained the the reality of everyday life is presented as social interrelationship between him and other people such as face-to-face interaction by means of a continuum of "typificatory schemes". The scheme of "typification" allows us to experience people and things that are remote to us. Berger also contended that the reality of everyday life is also constantly surrounded by human production of signs (language). For example, weapon may become a sign for aggressiveness and violence. Although language originates in everyday life and dominated by pragmatic motive, it allows human beings to bridge different zones within the reality of everyday life and integrates them into a meaningful one. He argued that language is capable of transcending the reality of everyday life and build up semantic fields of zones of meaning. Since everyday life is dominated by the pragmatic motive, knowledge limited to pragmatic motives have the privileged place in the social stock of knowledge. Familiarity and relevance are the ways to structure the social knowledge. The validity of everyday knowledge usually are taken for granted until a problem arises that can not be solved in terms of it. The knowledge is socially distributed, being possessed differently by different individuals.

Searle (1998) seconds the Enlightenment vision of reality. He believes that the universe exists quite independently of our minds and within the limits, we can come to comprehend the nature of the universe. Searle makes it very clear that he does not believe that we live in two worlds, the mental and the physical. He believes in one world that have structural feature of mind, language, and society. He believes that the default positions are true such as "there is a real world exists independent of us, independent of our thoughts, lanaugages, and experience". The attacks on these default position are mistaken. Then he details four major challenges to realism: perspectivism, conceptual relativity, the history of science, and the underdetermination of theory by evidence and then analyzed the major flaws of these four challenges. He then went on to discuss the skepticism and his explanation of the fallcies of illusion and science. In his justificaiton of realism, he points out the the deep motivation for the denail of realism is the will to power, the desire to control, and a deep and abiding resentment. He touched upon the existence of God at the end of the article, the last sentence from Russsell captures Searle's
My stance: I haven't thought about this issue in such a depth before. Berger's multiple realities seem to make a lot of sense on me. I do have a reality of everyday life and I do have a reality of dream. I shift between the two when the sun rises and falls. The social interaction with people around me brings me direct experience. The people known through radio, TV, and the Internet also become a part of my reality of everyday life. Realities have its layers and structures, as Berger said, according to relevance and familiarity. I like Berger's way in explaining the reality from individual level, social interaction, language, and knowledge perspectives.

I also agree with Searle in his external realism that there is a real world independent of our wish, thought, and desire. The existence of the world is so real and irrefutable. But I am conservative in his atheism. Searle's article reminds me of a book I read 10 years ago "Sophie's World". A girl named Sophie keeps receiving anonymous letters. In the letters, she was challenged with the question "who am I?" Then she received a series of lessons about a history of philosophy from an eccentric teacher called "Alberto". In the middle of the novel, while sophie was busy in finding out the reality of herself, She tries to plan her life structurally. However, in the middle of the book, it turns out to readers that she is merely the character of a unfinished story. It is the writer of the book who acts as the God to determine her destiny. Is she able to escape from the pre-planned plots? When reading "Sophie's world" I somehow felt the "invisible hand" that goven the human society. The reality of the world is not merely about its origins, it is also about its future. In philosophical stance, I don't quite agree with Searle that we can determine the future of our society. It is being pushed toward certain direction, mostly out of individual's will power.

Questions: What are the unique realities that the Internet technology will bring to us?