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PRAGMATIC MEDIA PHILOSOPHY

Foundations of a New Discipline in the Internet Age

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Contents

INTRODUCTION

In view of the increasing significance being assumed by modern information and communications technology in culture, science, business and politics, media issues head the intellectual agenda for the 21st century. Media psychology, media sociology, media education, media law and media economics have long since been part of the professional research and teaching standard in both their respective native disciplines and in the transdisciplinary cluster of subjects formed by culture, media and communications studies.[1] But, as Hegel already knew, the philosophical owl of Minerva 'spreads its wings only with the falling of the dusk.' (Hegel 1952, 13) A systematically developed media philosophy has until now remained a desideratum for research.[2]

The present book attempts to survey the field of media-philosophical horizons of inquiry and to structure this according to its basic coordinates. In doing so it pursues two research objectives. First of all, a broadly conceived philosophical concept of media is expounded, addressing the entwined relationships between sensory perceptual media (such as space and time), semiotic communications media (such as images, spoken language, writing and music), and technical transmission media (such as printed media, radio, television and the internet). At the same time, it contributes to current debate about the new discipline's possible tasks.[3] The suggestion here will be that media philosophy should not be understood exclusively, following the institutionally well-trodden paths, as constituting a new theoretical realm or fundamental discipline. Instead the book hopes to encourage its readers to think of the field of media-philosophical research against the

[1] Information on the current state of the disciplines referred to can be found in Groebel/Six 2001 and Winterhoff-Spurk 1999 on media psychology, Neumann-Braun/Müller-Dohm 2000 on media and communications sociology, Vollbrecht 2001 on media education, Branahl 2000 and Fechner 2000 on media law, and Altmeppen/Karmasin 2001 on media economics.

[2] The work available to date has mostly restricted itself either to additive inventories (for example, Kloock/Spahr, 1997 and Hartmann, 2000) or to associative constellations (for example Bolz, 1990 and Taylor/Saarinen, 1994).

[3] Cf. Münker/Roesler/Sandbothe 2003 and Sandbothe/Nagl 2004.

background of the current renaissance of American pragmatism in epistemology and the philosophy of science and language.[4]

In the following I will use the somewhat artificial term ‘theoreticist’ to refer to a professionalized understanding of media philosophy for which theoretical reflection on the conditions of possibility for the generation of meaning and the constitution of reality have become an academic end in itself. By contrast, a media-philosophical development of neopragmatism leads to the attempt to relate media-theoretically interpreted basic questions of modern philosophy to the sociopolitical horizons of action that guide democratic societies. The plea for a pragmatic media philosophy amounts to the suggestion that the – seemingly almost confessional – dispute over beliefs between media realists and media antirealists should be broken up by asking which media epistemology is appropriate for democratic forms of society.

This suggestion reflects a view of philosophy that has been increasingly excluded from the subject’s self-image in the institutional history of modern university philosophy. As an independent discipline within the canon of academic subjects, modern philosophy first developed in the 19th century and the first half of the 20th as a supposedly neutral arbitrating discipline. It then increasingly established itself, as a more modest ‘place-holding’ discipline, in the second half of the 20th century. (Cf. Habermas 1983) Both these views of philosophy continue to shape the subject’s academic identity. Within the framework of the current renaissance of pragmatism, an aspect is added to the self-image of university philosophy that was still of central importance to the founding father of modern philosophy, Immanuel Kant, but which has subsequently been lost from view. This is its pragmatic service function, which consists of cooperating, on the basis of democratic societies’ historically and culturally given norms and ideals, in the consistently secular and antiauthoritarian optimization of the vocabulary these societies use to describe themselves.

[4] On this see, for example, Egginton/Sandbothe 2004.

The central concern of this book is to situate the foundation of the new discipline of media philosophy in the context of current debate about the self-image of academic philosophy. To focus appropriately on this debate, the following considerations begin with a metaphilosophical reflection on the history, up to the present day, of philosophy as an autonomous subject in modern universities. This reflection shapes the first two chapters of the book, in which the philosophical issue of media initially takes a back seat. This is helpful not only to avoid hasty restriction to a theoreticist view of philosophy, but also in paving the way for the remainder of the book, in which media philosophy is projected as a transversal interface discipline. As a discipline of this kind it can contribute to setting up transitions between the pragmatic and theoreticist views of academic philosophy.

The overall composition of the book has the foundational character already referred to by its subtitle. The founding of a new discipline differs from the concrete execution of a research programme. What is meant by the foundation of a discipline was once very clearly explained by Martin Heidegger. With foundation, or 'laying the ground' (*Grundlegung*), the 'expression's meaning is best illustrated if we consider the building trade.' We must, Heidegger explains, 'keep out of the idea of a ground-laying' the notion that 'it is a matter of the byproduct from the foundation [*Grundlagen*] of an already-constructed building. Ground-laying is rather the projecting of the building plan itself so that it agrees with the direction concerning on what and how the building will be grounded.' (Heidegger 1997, 1 f.) In reading the following exposition it will be helpful to keep Heidegger's image in the back of one's mind. Reading the plan for a house is not the same as striding through the finished building.

The book consists of six chapters. The *first chapter* shows how the metaphilosophical tension between the pragmatic and theoreticist conceptions of philosophy is to be understood in the context of the institutional history of the development of the modern subject of philosophy. The *second chapter* addresses the prior decision made in the 19th century, just as philosophy was professionalizing itself, in favour of a theoreticist determination of the subject's tasks. It demonstrates that this was not simply perpetuated,

but simultaneously became a problem within the framework of the linguistic turn taken by modern philosophy in the 20th century. The *third chapter* deals with the implications of this in determining the task of media philosophy. It develops a systematic suggestion as to how pragmatism and theoreticism can be interwoven with one another within the framework of a transversal conception of pragmatic media philosophy. Using the internet as an example, this suggestion is applied in chapters 4-6 to the practice of media-philosophical research.

The *fourth chapter* reconstructs the basic transmedia constitution of the new medium. To do this, the distinction between hot and cool media, introduced in the 1960s by the Canadian media theorist Marshall McLuhan, is used for a pragmatically oriented investigation of the internet. The *fifth chapter* deals in a similar way with the deconstructionist movements which, following McLuhan, were carried out by Jacques Derrida, the pioneer of theoreticist media philosophy. The instruments developed in this way are then deployed to reveal the pragmatization of our media use that is taking place in the internet, both with regard to our semiotic communications media and with regard to our sensory perceptual media. Finally, the *sixth chapter* deals with the sociopolitical implications for the common-sense everyday understanding of self and the world that might result from the pragmatization of our use of media. To this end, economic, educational, and media-political conditions are outlined as a basis for using media-philosophical reflection to improve democratic communications conditions in the internet age.

I

A HISTORICAL OVERVIEW: PHILOSOPHY AS A MODERN ACADEMIC DISCIPLINE

The new discipline of media philosophy is subject to tensions resulting from the transitional situation in which modern philosophy currently finds itself. This situation is shaped by the increasing emergence of pragmatist alternatives alongside the long dominant theoreticist self-image of academic philosophy. According to this image, philosophical inquiry is to focus, as an end in itself, on analyzing the conditions of possibility of human knowledge. In contrast pragmatist alternatives propose a kind of philosophical practice that emphasizes not only the theoreticist question about conditions of possibility for our *knowledge* of reality, but also an active collaboration in designing human ways of *transforming* reality.[5]

This book will be operating with a major opposition between 'pragmatism' and 'pragmatic' on the one hand versus 'theoreticism' and 'theoreticist' on the other. The point of this contrast is to address already at the terminological level the problematic and long dominant depreciation of pragmatic or pragmatist views of philosophy. Accordingly, the terms 'theoreticism' and 'theoreticist' are to signal an excessively theoretical orientation, such that theory is perceived and pursued as an end-in-itself. By contrast, the terms 'pragmatism' and 'pragmatic' indicate the primacy of and hence an orientation towards action. It should be noted that this contrast does not imply that pragmatism is opposed to theory, or that there is anything oxymoronic in talk of a 'pragmatist' or 'pragmatic theory'. For this reason, the opposition of 'pragmatic' versus 'theoretical' would have been unsuited to the current purpose in suggesting that a pragmatic understanding of philosophy is without theory. The point of the distinction chosen here,

[5] Cf. Bernstein 1992. Rorty 1999b, Putnam 1992, 1995, Dickstein 1998, Brandom 2002b, Egginton/Sandbothe 2004. For further literature see also Nagl's 1999 survey and the selective bibliography at the end of Egginton/Sandbothe 2004.

and of the somewhat cumbersome term ‘theoreticist’, is to leave open such possibilities while articulating the difference between theories directed to concrete and actual use and those pursued as an autonomous activity.[6]

One common reservation should be addressed before looking at the institutional history of philosophy and its subdisciplines, and reconstructing the metaphilosophical tension between the pragmatic and theoreticist self-images that characterizes contemporary philosophy’s transitional situation: When, as a philosopher, you deals with the subject of media, you are often confronted with the – usually rhetorical – question as to what philosophy has to do with media. It seems self-evident these days that problems in logic, ethics, aesthetics, epistemology and philosophy of language or science are genuinely philosophical issues. But the newly coined expressions ‘philosophical media theory’ or ‘media philosophy’ sound unusual, irritating, suspect. To some they may even appear to be a contradiction in terms.

The prejudices expressed in such reservations result mostly from the obvious contrast between established philosophical disciplines and the new discipline of media philosophy. The irritation issuing from the project of an independent philosophical discipline called ‘media philosophy’ is set against the institutionally secured self-evidence with which logic, ethics, aesthetics, epistemology, and philosophy of language or science are today recognized as genuine philosophical disciplines. This self-evidence is – as most other self-evident things are – the result of discontinuous habits of differing historical reach, and are habits that are to some extent questioned by contemporary philosophy’s transitional situation. This is to be shown in the following by taking a brief look at the history of philosophical disciplines.

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[6] The term ‘theoreticist’ is formed in analogy with Peirce’s ‘pragmaticism’. In his 1905 essay ‘What Pragmatism Is’ Peirce ‘begs to announce the birth of the word “pragmaticism”’, immediately adding the justified supposition that this word ‘is ugly enough to be safe from kidnappers.’ (Peirce 1934c, 276 f.) Although the word ‘theoreticism’ is hardly more elegant, it has – in contrast to ‘pragmaticism’ – established itself to some extent in the technical jargon of modern academic philosophy.

1. THE HISTORY OF PHILOSOPHICAL DISCIPLINES

For a long time in the history of universities and the sciences the word 'philosophy' did not stand for a more or less sharply delineated academic subject. Rather, 'philosophy' was the name for a wide range of heterogeneous fields of work first united in the medieval Arts Faculties, and then later expanded in the Philosophical Faculties of the 17th and 18th centuries. Only since Dilthey have these subjects been distinguished in their modern form and attributed in part to the so-called (natural) sciences and in part to the so-called humanities.[7] If the history of philosophy is understood in a broad sense, including the young subject of philosophy along with the older divisions of philosophical work, then the following picture emerges of the philosophical disciplines today considered canonical.

Logic and ethics (along with physics) are among the fields of philosophical work that had already taken shape in antiquity. The tripartition of philosophy into logic, ethics and physics presumably goes back to Plato and Xenocrates.[8] With the addition of metaphysics as a fundamental discipline, it was then extended and academically institutionalized by the Hellenistic philosophical schools of the Stoics, Epicureans and Sceptics.

From the perspective of the history of concepts, 'physics' (*physike*), 'physical' (*physikos*), 'ethics' (*ethike*) and 'ethical' (*ethikos*) are expressions first found with Aristotle. By contrast, the concepts of metaphysics and logic were introduced only in late antiquity. As is well known, 'metaphysics' was initially intended as a librarian's spatial term, coined by Andronicus of Rhodes, the editor of the *Corpus Aristotelicum*, in the first century BC to designate those of Aristotle's writings that stood '*meta ta physika*' (i.e. behind or after the writings on physics) on the library's bookshelves. Only later, presumably from

[7] See Dilthey's (1903) proposal to the minister of education for a division of the faculty. For further details see Klüver 1983, esp. 72-88.

Simplicius on, did this makeshift librarian's definition become a concept, replete with various substantial implications, designating philosophy's foundational discipline. (Cf. Höffe 1996, 140 f.) Things are different in the case of logic. In terms of its subject matter, the discipline of logic already took systematic shape in Aristotle's *Organon* (as it was later called), forming a tradition that endured centuries and was first to be extended fundamentally by Gottlob Frege. The term 'logic' (*logike*), however, was not used by Aristotle himself and was coined by the Stoic schools of philosophy. (Cf. Hoffmeister 1955, 382)

These things are fairly well known, but a fact that is often overlooked is that the ancient division of philosophy into three or four parts, a shape assumed from Plato and Xenocrates through to Aristotle and the Hellenistic philosophical schools, already dissolved again in late antiquity. In the middle ages the ancient philosophical disciplines were replaced by the liberal arts (grammar, rhetoric, dialectic, arithmetic, geometry, music and astronomy).[9] Although logic, under the name of 'dialectic', played a central role in the framework of the trivium, ethics, physics and metaphysics assumed new significance only later, and in a transformed shape, within the arts faculty under the heading of the 'three philosophies'. (Cf. Leff 1993) To this extent, the idea of historical continuity that we associate with the classical philosophical disciplines is misleading. Already here the picture is shaped by discontinuities.

In modern times the new disciplines of aesthetics, philosophy of language, formal logic, epistemology and philosophy of science made their entry alongside the older philosophical disciplines. They formed as independent compartments within philosophical teaching and research only in the wake of the constitution of professional philosophy as an autonomous subject in the 19th and 20th centuries, a process within which old and new disciplines were bound together in a precarious unity that has remained to this day. As a rule, the institutional careers of the new disciplines depended

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[8] Krämer 1971, 174. For the debate over the Platonic or Xenocratic origin of the tripartition of philosophy see Baur 1903, 145-397, esp. 194 ff.
[9] Cf. Köhnke 1989 and Klinkenberg 1971.

on their claim to be replacing metaphysics, which has been increasingly discredited in modernity, in its role as the 'serving fundamental discipline' (Marquard 1962, 232 and passim) and on this basis to be providing the subject with an obligatory, hierarchically structured disciplinary matrix.

The term 'aesthetics' was coined by Alexander Gottlieb Baumgarten in 1735. (Baumgarten 1954, 78 [§116]) Talk of 'philosophy of language' also appeared for the first time in the first half of the 18th century, albeit initially in diffuse and not particularly informative usage. (Cf. Dierse 1995, 1514) In 1748 Pierre L. M. de Maupertuis outlined the project of philosophy of language as an independent philosophical discipline. This initially very vaguely formulated project was taken up by Johann Gottfried Herder and Johann Georg Hamann in the second half of the 18th century, and by Wilhelm von Humboldt – whose pioneering contribution nonetheless remained without institutional consequences – in the 19th.[10]

The emergence of the terms 'epistemology' and 'philosophy of science' is more recent than the origin of 'aesthetics' and 'philosophy of language'. 'Epistemology' and 'theory of science' both date back to the 19th century. The term 'epistemology' (*Erkenntnistheorie*) is first found with Ernst Reinhold in 1832 and was established as a technical term by Eduard Zeller.[11] The notion of a philosophy of science (*Wissenschaftstheorie*), both as a term and its establishment as a branch of philosophy, goes back to Eugen K. Dühring (Dühring 1878).

In the same year the new philosophical discipline of propositional and predicate logic was founded by Gottlob Frege in his work on concept notation (the *Begriffsschrift* of 1878). The term 'formal logic', today used in relation to the formalizations of modern symbolic logic and linked with artificial languages, is already found with Kant. (Kant 1933, 176 [B 170]) But there the term still refers to the canonized form of Aristotelian

[10] Maupertuis 1988, Herder 1964, Hamann 1967, Humboldt 1963.
[11] Cf. Reinhold 1832 and Zeller 1862. On the origins of the concept of epistemology see Vaihinger 1876.

syllogistics, i.e. of the traditional logic consisting of explications in the medium of natural language. It is only following Frege's work that the concept of formal logic came to be linked with the mathematical formalization of natural language that led, early in the 20th century, to the formulation of the logicist philosophical programme of Bertrand Russell, the early Wittgenstein and Rudolf Carnap that was to form the point of departure for modern philosophy's linguistic turn in the course of the 20th century.[12]

Within academic philosophy it was aesthetics in the 18th century that first laid claim to the title of serving fundamental discipline, followed by epistemology and philosophy of science in the 19th.[13] By contrast, the disciplinary status of philosophy of language remained controversial until the early decades of the 20th century.[14] It was only in the wake of the academic establishment of formal logic that philosophy of language, under the banner of the 'linguistic turn', made its institutional breakthrough. This first occurred particularly in English-speaking philosophy, but then on the continent too, and in the second half of the 20th century philosophy of language advanced to become the new fundamental discipline.[15] Its post is being rendered increasing vacant by the transformation from analytic to postanalytic philosophy that is currently taking place in the world of English-speaking philosophy.[16] Parallel developments in continental philosophy are marked by the transitions from philosophy of language to grammatology, deconstructionism, the philosophy of signs or interpretation, and to the philosophies of communicative, transversal, rhetorical, or semiotic reason.[17]

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[12] For a good example of the early logicist programme see the chapter 'Logic as the Essence of Philosophy' in Russell's *Our Knowledge of the External World* (Russell 1961, 42-69), originally published in 1914.

[13] See Marquard 1962 on aesthetics, Köhnke 1991b on epistemology, and Carrier 1996 on philosophy of science.

[14] See Dierse 1995 and Borsche 1996 on the discussion about the status of philosophy of language in the 19th century.

[15] Cf. Rorty 1992. For a critical account of philosophy of language as an authority succeeding epistemology see Rorty 1979; for an affirmative account see Hacking 1975. For a reconstruction of the history of the linguistic turn within continental philosophy and the relation of this to English-speaking philosophy see Habermas 1999c.

[16] Cf. Rajchman/West 1985 and Putnam 1992.

[17] On grammatology, see Derrida 1976. On deconstruction see, for example, Derrida 1981,1982a, Norris 1984 and Rorty 1995a. Cf. on the philosophy of the sign Simon 1995,

The institutionally secured self-evidence with which, as opposed to new developments, formal logic, ethics, aesthetics, epistemology, and philosophy of language or science are acknowledged as genuinely philosophical disciplines should be seen against the background of the specific dynamics that had characterized the establishment of philosophical disciplines in modernity. This dynamics is closely linked with the process of institutionalization of academic philosophy as an autonomous subject in the 19th and 20th centuries. In the framework of this process, aesthetics, epistemology, formal logic, philosophy of science or language, as well as ethics – in the context of the 'rehabilitation of practical philosophy' in the 1970s (Riedel 1972/1974) – have all emerged as candidates to occupy the post of serving fundamental discipline.

Essentially, the recognition today enjoyed by these compartments of philosophical teaching and research was acquired in modernity by initially emerging with a comprehensive foundational claim linked with the promise – one not until now fulfilled by any of the named disciplines – of structuring the disciplinary matrix of philosophy in a binding manner. In view of the current vacancy in the post of serving fundamental discipline within the set up of academic philosophy – which is also reflected in the current tendency for ever increased diversification in philosophy's disciplinary structure[18]

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on the philosophy of interpretation Abel 1993, 1999 and Lenk 1993. The paradigm of interpretation also plays an important role in the US, documented, for example, by Hiley/Bohman/Shusterman 1991 and Margolis/Rockmore 2000. For the concept of communicative reason see Habermas 1984/1987, for that of transversal reason Welsch 1995, and that of semiotic reason Schönrich 1990. On rhetorical reason see Gabriel 1997, who speaks of a 'rhetorical turn in philosophy' while observing a paradigm change following the 'preceding analytic linguistic turn'. (Gabriel 1997, 12, 9)

[18] The (sub)disciplinary constitution of contemporary academic philosophy is illustrated by a glance at the multitude of sections in the programme for the 20th World Congress of Philosophy (Boston 1998, cf. http://www.bu.edu/wcp/). The spectrum of sections ranges from metaphysics, ontology, ethics, aesthetics, epistemology and philosophy of science, culture, technology, language and action through to the philosophies of gender, children, business and sport. Media philosophy was a theme of the opening session entitled 'Technology and Communication', as well as the section 'Philosophy of Technology' and a round-table discussion on 'Philosophy and the Media'. – A survey of twenty contemporary philosophical disciplines can be found in Pieper 1998.

– various authors have also brought media philosophy into contention as a potential candidate to succeed philosophy of language.

Media philosophy's distinction with regard to this post results not least from the prognosis that has long since functioned as a maxim guiding action in most domains of reality, namely that the social and cultural importance attained by media in the 20th century will increase further in the 21st century. Against this background, as has been pointed out by a number of authors in current discussion, the issue of media is also increasingly assuming central philosophical importance for an up-to-date understanding of the constitution of reality.[19]

But few authors have talked about the possible consequences that might result from this for the disciplinary structure of academic philosophy. The standard position on this question is propounded by Reinhard Margreiter, Sybille Krämer and Martin Seel. Margreiter comprehends the media philosophy currently being constituted as a new paradigm for the subject of philosophy. He starts by assuming that as a new fundamental discipline it makes possible 'a media-philosophical reformulation of central questions of epistemology, philosophy of language and culture, anthropology and theory of the mind'.[20] He makes explicit media philosophy's claim to the status of a new fundamental discipline in stressing that 'media philosophy thus represents much more than a so-called "domain-specific" philosophy, for its *media character* [Medialität] is not a peripheral determination of the human mind, but *the* central one.' (Margreiter 1999a, 17)

Sybille Krämer argues in a similar manner. Together with Peter Koch she formulates the philosophical 'guiding idea' of the 'media-critical turn' they propound as follows: 'Everything that is known, thought or said about the world depends on media in becoming knowable, thinkable, or sayable.' (Koch/Krämer 1997a, 12) More clearly than Margreiter, Krämer shifts media philosophy directly into the position of successor to the philosophy of language, considered as a fundamental discipline. Thus she writes: 'Just as

[19] For examples cf. Sandbothe/Zimmerli 1994, Vattimo/Welsch 1998 and Krämer 1998.
[20] Margreiter 1999a, 10. See also Margreiter 1999b.

the "linguistic turn" took over from the preference for phenomena of consciousness with a turn towards language, so now the subject of language itself seems to be experiencing a shift in accentuation towards media.' (Krämer 1998b, 73)

Following on from Margreiter and Krämer in a modified form, Martin Seel also emphasizes the fundamental epistemological position of media philosophy when he describes the '*general* mediativeness of our [modes of] access to the world' as follows: 'It is only because we allow ourselves to be determined by *media* of knowing that it is possible for us to allow ourselves to be determined in our knowing by the respective *objects* of our knowing.' (Seel 1998, 351 f.) In contrast, however, to Margreiter and Krämer, who stand for different versions of media-philosophical antirealism, Seel attempts to sketch the 'beginnings of a media epistemology' which is 'not only compatible with philosophical realism, but is a version of philosophical realism.'[21]

The foundationalist determination of media philosophy's task suggested by Margreiter, Krämer and Seel perpetuates the mechanism for institutionalizing new philosophical disciplines that had established itself in modernity. Media philosophy is thus, like its historical predecessors epistemology and philosophy of science or language, projected as a new fundamental discipline. As such, it claims to be continuing, at a more profound level, debate of the theoreticist kind as to whether the constitution of reality is to be described in a realist or antirealist manner, and so bringing this debate to a conclusion. Even today this is no doubt a promising strategy in pursuing the academic establishment

[21] Seel 1998a, 351 f., 365; cf. also Seel 1998b, 255. There is some uncertainty with Seel's self-classification. Alongside the self-description quoted above, attempts are found to define his own position as 'realistic constructivism', 'moderate constructivism', or 'moderate realism'. (Seel 1998b, 255, note 14) At the same time the author claims to be 'overcoming the theoretical alternative of "constructivism or realism"' (Seel 1998a, 352). Of course this is the case only insofar as Seel endeavours, using media-philosophical means, to reveal constructivist (antirealist) elements in realism and realistic elements in constructivism. It would therefore have been more appropriate, if Seel had described the analysis he presents of interactions and transitions existing between constructivism and realism not as an overcoming of basic epistemological alternatives, but as their systematic development.

of a new discipline.[22] However, if one takes seriously the disappointments experienced in the past with the comprehensive foundational claims made by new disciplines, it seems natural to try out alternative possibilities for determining the task of media philosophy. Such possibilities result from the rehabilitation of pragmatic self-images currently taking place, particularly in the areas of epistemology and the philosophy of science and language. Because of the disappointments mentioned, these erstwhile leading philosophical disciplines are currently emancipating themselves from their historically inherited foundational claims and forming an antifoundationalist counter-movement.

To get an appropriate sense of the spectrum of possibilities that result for the self-image of academic philosophy, it is helpful to put the current transitional situation in the context of the institutionalization of modern philosophy. It will then be possible to reconstruct the institutional genesis of the metaphilosophical tension between the pragmatic and theoreticist self-images of philosophy which shapes the current state of affairs. At the same time, a critical light is cast on the one-sidedly theoreticist character of that form of disciplines' foundation which Margreiter, Krämer and Seel have transferred to media philosophy in current debate.

2. The emergence of philosophy as an independent subject

Our idea of philosophy as an autonomous, professional taught subject with a diversified system of disciplines and subdisciplines is of relatively recent historical origin. It is true that the idea goes back as far as the 18th century, in the course of which the transformation, begun in the 16th century, of the medieval Arts Faculty into a fourth independent faculty – namely the Philosophical Faculty – took effect across the board. (Cf. Bödeker 1990, esp. 33 ff.) But this process is to be distinguished from the academic

[22] In his book *Media of Reason. Studies for a Theory of Mind and Rationality on the Basis of a Theory of Media* (2001) Matthias Vogel attempts to implement this strategy systematically. I have been unable to consider his work, as it was not yet available at the time of this book's completion.

institutionalization of philosophy as a subject of its own within the Philosophical Faculty, which followed in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries.

In current discussion about the self-image of modern philosophy this fact has been recalled and particularly stressed by Richard Rorty. He writes: 'The notion that there is an autonomous discipline called "philosophy," distinct from and sitting in judgement upon both religion and science, is of quite recent origin.' (Rorty 1979, 131) And elsewhere he emphasizes that as 'an autonomous discipline […] philosophy is no more than two hundred years old.'[23] A central role in the constitution of philosophy as a professional taught subject was played by its delimitation from the sciences as these increasingly split off from their mother discipline philosophy and themselves became institutionally independent in the course of the 19th and 20th centuries.

In the 18th century the dominant concept of philosophy within the framework of the Philosophical Faculty was still comprehensive, taking its orientation from the canon of the old Arts Faculty, so that all sections of the Philosophical Faculty – i.e. mathematics, physics, astronomy and politics, as well as new subjects such as history, geography, philology, commerce or natural law – were considered philosophical subjects. Collectively these subjects profited from the claim to leadership staked by philosophy, which Christian Wolff already understood to be a universal science and which identified itself with the philosophical faculty as a whole.[24] Wolff's reassessment of the Philosophical Faculty is reflected in his famous adaptation of the medieval image of philosophy as the handmaid of theology. In Wolff's picture, 'the world=wisdom' is 'the

[23] Rorty 1989, 4. On the complete context see also Hans Erich Bödeker, who in the essay previously cited works out in detail 'how long it took until philosophy attained disciplinary and institutional security as a science'. (Bödeker 1990, 34) Ulrich Johannes Schneider additionally points out that the 'compartmentalization' of philosophy in the narrower administrative sense began only in the second half of the 19th century, a delay partly explained by the fact that 'philosophy was not a subject for the school'. (Schneider 1999, 116)

[24] On Wolff's understanding of philosophy as a fundamental and universal science see Wolff 1978, 115 f. – On Wolff's influence in the 18th century see Hammerstein 1983, 266-277.

handmaid of the higher faculties to the extent that the lady would have to fumble in the dark and would often fall, if the handmaid were not to light the way.'[25]

The diversification in the Philosophical Faculty's spectrum of subjects that began in the 18th century then led subject groups within the Philosophical Faculty which in today's view would be termed 'nonphilosophical' to become autonomous and gradually split away in the 19th and 20th centuries. This differentiation movement took on concrete form, for example, in the new founding of natural scientific, mathematical, legal, economic, technical and social science faculties. (Cf. Klüver 1983, 72-88). Within the framework of this movement, and according to the model of the sciences which were emancipating themselves, philosophy found it necessary to define itself as a professional discipline with precise content and to delimit itself in formal methodological terms.[26]

In determining the content of philosophy as an independent profession the subject's representatives often deployed a strategy of identification with its rival. Lutz Geldsetzer, one of the few German philosophers who have long occupied themselves intensively with the institutional history of their subject (a history which to this day has been insufficiently researched), describes this identification strategy as follows: 'The most significant movements in university philosophy of the last two hundred years can be […] understood as a "modelling" of philosophy on the example, the subject matter, problems and methods of the individual sciences, then usually presenting it as the philosophically "basic" or "fundamental" science: Think of the psychologism of the Kantians (especially Fries and Herbart), the historicism of the Hegelians, the sociologism and economicism of the young Hegelians, the physicalism of the Vienna Circle, the mathematicism of Frege and many neo-positivists, the philolologism (hermeneuticism) of the Schleiermacher-Dilthey tradition, the grammaticism (linguisticism) of the Mauthner-Wittgenstein-Carnap school or ordinary language philosophy, etc.' (Geldsetzer 1974, 34 f.)

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[25] Wolff 1973, 536. Regina Meyer (1995) provides a historical reconstruction of the development of the faculty hierarchy in the 18th century. On this subject see also Brasch 1895.

According to the identification strategy emphasized by Geldsetzer, the autonomous 'faculty philosophy' sought to organize itself as a specifically philosophical 'rival undertaking' to certain individual sciences. This strategy is underlain, as Rorty accentuates, by the fundamental formal figure of a basic 'demarcation of philosophy from science'.[27] This strategy was paradigmatically founded by Kant towards the end of the 18th century in the context of a more comprehensive overall philosophical project (to be looked in more detail below) that was implemented, particularly by Neokantianism, in an institutionally influential manner during the 19th century. As part of this, the demarcation from the sciences relied on 'the notion that philosophy's core was "theory of knowledge," a theory distinct from the sciences because it was their *foundation*.' (Rorty 1979, 132) With respect to this identity-founding epistemological foundationalism of modern philosophy Rorty highlights: 'We now trace that notion back at least to Descartes's *Meditations* and Spinoza's *De Emendatione Intellectus*, but it did not achieve self-consciousness until Kant. It did not become built into the structure of academic institutions, and into the pat, unreflective self-descriptions of philosophy professors, until far into the nineteenth century.' (Rorty 1979, 132)

There was, according to Rorty, some delay in establishing the academic identity of philosophy as a subject due to the fact that in the first half of the 19th century 'Hegel and idealistic system-building' had 'intervened to obscure the question "What is the relation of philosophy to other disciplines?"' 'Hegelianism', Rorty continues, 'produced an image of philosophy as a discipline which somehow both completed and swallowed up the other disciplines, rather than *grounding* them. It also made philosophy too popular, too interesting, too important, to be properly professional; it challenged philosophy professors to embody the World-Spirit, rather than simply getting on with their *Fach*.'[28]

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[26] See here and in the following Schnädelbach 1984, 91-108.

[27] Geldsetzer 1974 34; Rorty 1979, 132. On this see also Oswald Schwemmer, who in his book *Philosophy and the Sciences* demonstrates the extent to which the identification with individual sciences' content is based on 'philosophical house rules' (Schwemmer 1990, 20) indicative of the demarcational strategy Rorty describes.

[28] Rorty 1979, 135. For the significance in this context of the foundation of the Friedrich Wilhelm University (the Humboldt University) in Berlin in 1809 see Schnädelbach 1984 21-32. The tendency Rorty notes of German idealism to annex or absorb other disciplines

A systematic professionalization of academic philosophy hence became possible 'only after Hegel and speculative idealism had ceased to dominate the intellectual scene in Germany'. (Rorty 1979, 133) To this Rorty adds: 'The "back to Kant" movement of the 1860s in Germany was also a "let's get down to work" movement – a way of separating the autonomous nonempirical discipline of philosophy from ideology on the one hand and from the rising science of empirical psychology on the other.'[29]

Following on from Rorty, Jürgen Habermas has also emphasized that 'Kant […] indeed introduced a new mode of justification into philosophy.' (Habermas 1983, 9 f.) In quite the same way as Rorty, Habermas stresses that 'with the help of transcendental justifications' Kant 'created a new discipline, epistemology. In doing this […] he defined the task, or better the profession of philosophy in a new, and moreover demanding, manner.' (Habermas 1983, 9 f.) Ever since Kant, Habermas continues, philosophy has featured in a dual role characterizing its new profession as an usher of the sciences – showing each to its place – and as the supreme cultural judge in the dominions of science, morality and art.

Both roles become possible for modern philosophy because as epistemology it 'credits itself with knowledge prior to knowledge', i.e. carries out the transcendental proof 'that the conditions of possible experience are identical with the conditions of possibility of objects of experience.'[30] Thus the theoreticist self-image of modern philosophy is fixed, centring on the question of conditions of possibility for human knowledge – a question to

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had an effect in the setting of the Humboldt University to the extent that, for example, 'the natural scientists […] originally had no proper place in the new university because the natural philosophy dominating German idealism corresponded far better with the intended reforms and was able to occupy the relevant professorships in the first phase of the university reform'. (Klüver 1983, 75) On this matter see also Ben-David 1971, 116 f.

[29] Rorty 1979, 134. For a detailed analysis of the institutionalization processes that took place in the domain of philosophy in Germany under the supremacy of Neokantianism see Köhnke 1991a. In this context the emergence (one characteristically late in relation to other subjects in the philosophical faculty) of the institution of the philosophical seminar or department as an independent administrative unit within the philosophical faculty is significant. (Cf. Schneider 1999, 114-119 and Erben 1913a, 1913b.)

be answered in terms of a relationship to reality that presupposes objectivity in either a realistic or antirealistic sense, or in a sense combining both these elements.

Kant himself was fully aware of the academic and institutional relevance of the transcendental philosophical method that he founded (and which was later absolutized by the Neokantians) and clearly set this out in his famous and influential text *The Conflict of the Faculties*. (Cf. Bien 1974) The first part of this text deals with the 'Conflict of the Philosophy Faculty with the Theology Faculty'. (Kant 1992, 21) The first chapter is entitled 'On the Relation of the Faculties', with its second section concerning 'The Concept and Division of the Lower Faculty'. (Kant 1992, 31, 43) This lower faculty is the philosophical faculty. In relation to the three 'Higher Faculties' (Kant 1992, 31) – theology, law, medicine – the teachings of which are bound by government directives, the philosophical faculty is distinguished insofar as it is the only one 'that is independent of the government's command with regard to its teachings; […] that, having no commands to give, is free to evaluate everything.' (Kant 1992, 27)

The corresponding role of the Philosophical Faculty as usher and judge is made explicit by Kant when he writes: 'Its function in relation to the three higher faculties is to control them'. (Kant 1992, 45) The subject of philosophy, which was to be founded as an independent discipline within the Philosophical Faculty, was to assume a central role in this. Kant had already said something of this kind in *Critique of Pure Reason* regarding the tasks of metaphysics, which was to be put on 'the secure path of a science' by means of transcendental epistemology and which 'alone properly constitutes what may be entitled philosophy'. (Kant 1933, 7, 665 [B vii, 878]) Metaphysics, as he there put it, has an office of 'censorship which secures general order and harmony, and indeed the well-being of the scientific commonwealth'. (Kant 1933, 665 [B 878])

The separation of philosophy and the sciences that was to take place institutionally in the 19th century was anticipated by Kant, in *The Conflict of the Faculties*, in the form of a

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[30] Habermas 1983, 10, 9. See Kant's corresponding formulations at Kant 1933, 138 [A 111].

suggested internal differentiation within the Philosophical Faculty. According to this suggestion, 'the philosophical faculty consists of two departments: a department of *historical knowledge* (including history, geography, philology and the humanities, along with all the empirical knowledge contained in the natural sciences), and a department of *pure rational knowledge* (pure mathematics and pure philosophy, the metaphysics of nature and of morals). And it also studies the relation of these two divisions of learning to each other.' (Kant 1992, 45)

The separation Kant suggests here is the institutional mirror-image of the distinction between the empirical and the transcendental that was so central to his conception of critical philosophy. This distinction enabled him to secure an academic identity for the subject of philosophy clearly distinguished from that of the sciences, which were also beginning to emancipate themselves more and more from metaphysics, their erstwhile 'queen'.[31] In the 19th century the project paradigmatically drawn up by Kant of philosophically founding the transcendental conditions of validity for claims to knowledge was systematically developed further. With the Neokantians it became a strategy – one still effective today – for securing the autonomy of academic philosophy as a taught subject in contrast to the diversifying sciences.

With regard to the institutionalization processes in the 19th century, Klaus Ch. Köhnke highlights: 'The first positive avowal of philosophy as a technical subject at the same time signalled a completely new type of philosophical self-image […]. This had the consequence that problematic material previously worked on in the philosophy of history, or social or political philosophy was in part completely eliminated, and in part reformulated as matters of pure epistemology or philosophy of science.'[32] The price thus paid for the theoreticist specialization of philosophy as an autonomous university subject

[31] Kant 1933, 7 [A viii] – On the political strategy linked with Kant's idea of establishing an independent philosophical faculty that was 'lower' and hence a 'free faculty' vis-à-vis the authorities see Schnädelbach 1984, 25-27.

[32] Köhnke 1989, 836. See also Köhnke 1991a, and – with regard to the increased influence of philology on the developing establishment of academic philosophy in the 19th century – Schneider 1999, esp. 249-293.

was that the broad conception of philosophy, which was still decisive for Kant himself and explicitly included pragmatic horizons, was increasingly occluded in philosophy professors' professional self-image.

Before going into more detail on the recurrence of the long-suppressed metaphilosophical tension in European philosophy between pragmatism and theoreticism, I want to recall the broad conception of philosophy that shaped Kant's thinking. It will be seen that on the one hand Kant stands at the start of a development that has led to a theoreticist specialization of modern philosophy as a subject. Yet, on the other hand, that he is simultaneously an author who already anticipated the current tension between the pragmatist and theoreticist self-images of philosophy, and dealt with it in a reflected manner. With this background I will attempt, in the third chapter of this book, to set out a determination of the task of media philosophy going beyond that of Margreiter, Krämer and Seel, based on a both systematically and historically broader conception of philosophy.

3. KANT'S BROAD CONCEPTION OF PHILOSOPHY

In contrast to the strategic restrictions in the conception of philosophy that were institutionally implemented by Neokantianism in the 19th century, a broad concept of philosophy was still operative with Kant that included the Philosophical Faculty's empirical disciplines alongside the pure ones. This fact is usually disregarded in accounts that concentrate on Kant's historical influence on the mainstream institutionalization of philosophy as an autonomous university profession. This also applies to Rorty's account. His view of Kant is shaped by the restrictions of Kant interpretation that have established themselves both in Neokantianism and within the analytic tradition.

Against this, Habermas already pointed out in the Kant chapter of his habilitation the 'system-exploding consequences' of the broad conception of philosophy proclaimed and practised by Kant in the *Conflict of the Faculties* and in his writings on the philosophy of

history. (Habermas 1989, 116) In so doing, however, Habermas himself overlooked the fact that Kant's conception of philosophy is predisposed to include this opening. A particularly significant reflection of this is that Habermas wrongly suggests that Kant limited the lower faculty to knowledge by pure reason (hence excluding historical knowledge): 'They [the higher faculties] merely apply science […] In contrast, the lower faculties have to do with knowledge based on pure reason.' (Habermas 1989, 105)

Kant's own philosophical self-image, as distinct from the restrictions due to its influence on institutional history, already finds expression in the Architectonic chapter of the *Critique of Pure Reason*'s 'Transcendental Doctrine of Method'. Kant there writes: 'All philosophy is either knowledge arising out of pure reason, or knowledge obtained by reason from empirical principles. The former is termed pure, the latter empirical philosophy.'[33] Orthogonal to this distinction, Kant differentiates – in the same context – between 'a merely scholastic concept' of philosophy and its worldly concept, or '*conceptus cosmicus*'. Whereas the first is concerned with 'no more than the *logical* perfection of knowledge' through pure concepts, the latter 'is the science of the relation of all knowledge to the essential ends of human reason (*teleologia rationis humanae*)'. (Kant 1933, 657 f. [B 867]) In his lectures on logic Kant formulated the difference with regard to the scholastic concept of philosophy as follows: 'In this scholastic sense of the word, philosophy has to do only with *skill*, but in relation to the worldly concept, on the other hand, with *usefulness*.' (Kant 2002, 537)

This distinction means that for Kant so-called 'pure philosophy', insofar as this is practised according to the worldly concept, is internally dependent on 'empirical philosophy'. (Kant 1933, 659 [B 868]) The comprehensive claim that Kant also, and above all, links with philosophy in the pure and narrow sense of an independent taught subject is clearly reflected in the *dual* task – largely ignored in Kant scholarship – defined for the second department in the *Conflict of the Faculties*. Alongside the concern with knowledge by pure reason the definition of the subject of philosophy's task there foresees

[33] Kant 1933, 659 [B 868]. Cf. also Kant 1996, 33 f.

a link with the department of historical knowledge insofar as 'the relation of these two divisions of learning to each other' is also its object of investigation. (Kant 1992, 45)

The subject of philosophy itself is therefore for Kant ultimately to be understood, as he puts it elsewhere, 'in the cosmopolitan sense [*in sensu cosmopolitico*]' (Kant 1997a, 300), that is, according to the worldly concept of philosophy. Kant describes such philosophy as 'philosophy in the eminent sense [*in sensu eminenti*]', and highlights: 'The *practical* philosopher is the *genuine* philosopher. – Philosophy is the idea of a perfect wisdom, which shows me the ultimate ends of human reason.' (Kant 1997a, 301, 300) As he puts it in his lectures on logic: 'The practical philosopher, the teacher of wisdom through doctrine and example, is the real philosopher.'[34] This means that for Kant philosophy, even – indeed precisely – as a special academic subject, is not a scholastic end in itself, but has a moral-practical function with regard to 'the well-being of the scientific commonwealth', namely that of 'preventing those who labour courageously and fruitfully on its behalf from losing sight of the supreme end, the happiness of all mankind.' (Kant 1933, 665 [B 878])

But the internal perspective of a pure philosophy understood according to the worldly concept is not the only reason that Kant's programme of leading philosophy to 'the secure path of a science' (Kant 1933, 7 [B vii]) by means of transcendental philosophy adheres to the importance of empirical philosophy. For Kant empirical philosophy, as pragmatic philosophy, is also justified in itself, and is not only to be preserved as an integral part of the Philosophical Faculty, but to be developed further in targeted ways. Moreover: for Kant pure philosophy ultimately serves to enable the 'descending to popular concepts' that takes place in empirical philosophy. (Kant 1996, 63) Thus Kant emphasizes in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*: 'This descending to popular concepts is certainly very commendable, provided the ascent to the principles of

[34] Kant 2002, 537. Cf. on this also Wolfgang Welsch (1988, esp. 116), who sees Kant's contemporary relevance as lying in the fact that for Kant wisdom remains 'dominant' in philosophy.

pure reason has first taken place and has been carried through to complete satisfaction.' (Kant 1996, 63)

On the basis of the critical exposition of concepts made possible by transcendentally founded pure philosophy, Kant envisaged establishing a new form of popular philosophy which, in contrast to the eclectic popular philosophies of his contemporaries, was not to consist of a 'hodge-podge of patchwork observations and half-rationalized principles', but would be able to 'lay claim to the very rare merit of a true *philosophic popularity*'. (Kant 1996, 63 f.) To this end, Kant projected the critical ideal of 'philosophers who see quite well through the deception […] when they call [us] away for a time from this alleged popularity, so that they may be rightly popular only after having acquired determinate insight.'[35] Kant's dual strategy in philosophical matters is reflected in the philosophical relevance that he saw anthropology possessing as a pragmatic discipline within empirical philosophy.

The systematic position to be assumed by anthropology within the framework of his conception of philosophy is expounded by Kant in his preface to the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* as follows: 'Physics will therefore have its empirical part but it will also have a rational part; so too will ethics, though here the empirical part might be given the special name *practical anthropology*, while the rational part might properly be called *morals*.' (Kant 1996, 34) In his 1774-75 lectures on ethics Kant explains: 'The science of the rules of how man ought to behave is practical philosophy, and the science of the rules of his actual behaviour is anthropology'. Kant continues: 'these two sciences are closely connected, and morality cannot exist without anthropology, for one must first know of the agent whether he is also in a position to accomplish what it is required from him that he should do. One can, indeed, certainly consider practical philosophy even without anthropology, or without knowledge of the agent, only then it is merely speculative, or an Idea; so man must at least be studied accordingly. People are always preaching about what ought to be done, and nobody thinks about whether it can be done […]. So one must know of man whether he can also do what is required of him.

Consideration of rules is useless if one cannot make man ready to follow them, so these two sciences are closely connected. But it is the same as when theoretical physics is combined with experiments, for we also make experiments with man.'[36]

Against this background, the claims Kant linked with the project of anthropology from a systematic perspective are to be distinguished from the book he actually realized, which does not in fact completely do justice to these claims. The systematic claims that Kant linked with the anthropology project become clear in the preface he wrote to his own 1798 edition of the 'manual' (Kant 1974, 5) for his anthropology lectures. In these lectures Kant's early idea is articulated of one day making anthropology – on which he lectured regularly in the winter semester from 1772/73 until 1795/96 – 'into a proper academic discipline.' (Kant 1999, 141) In his preface Kant applies the distinction, explained above, between philosophy according to the scholastic concept and according to the worldly concept to the domain of empirical philosophy in two ways:

On the one hand, he classifies anthropology fundamentally, according to the worldly concept of philosophy, as a doctrine 'comprising our knowledge of man' in the sense of a '*knowledge of the world* that must come after *schooling*'. (Kant 1974, 3) On the other hand, with respect to anthropology he distinguishes between 'theoretical' and 'pragmatic' knowledge of the world, basing the latter on a moral/practical concept of the pragmatic.[37] Kant writes that anthropology, 'regarded as *knowledge of the world* that must come after *schooling*, is not properly called *pragmatic* when it is an extensive knowledge of things in the world – for example, the animals, plants and minerals of various lands and climates – but only when it is knowledge of man as a *citizen of the world*.' (Kant 1974, 3) The fact

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[35] Kant 1996, 64 (Translation slightly emended [trans.])

[36] Kant 1997b, 42. For corresponding passages in notes taken on Kant's anthropology lectures, cf. Kant 1997c, 471 f. and 1997d, 1211.

[37] Kant 1974, 4. – On the 'pragmatic turn' that occurred early on in Kant's conception of anthropology see Brandt's introduction to his commentary on Kant's anthropology lectures. (Brandt 1999, quoted here 4) Kant had initially grasped and taught anthropology as an 'independent theoretical material discipline', but around 1773 he began transforming it into 'a no longer theoretical, but practical or pragmatic discipline'. (Brandt 1999, 10)

that Kant is here concerned with the cosmopolitan in a moral/practical respect becomes clear as, just before this, he had emphasized: 'A systematic doctrine comprising our knowledge of man (anthropology) can adopt either a *physiological* or a *pragmatic* point of view. – Physiological knowledge of man investigates what *nature* makes of him; pragmatic, what *man* as a free agent makes, or can and should make, of himself.'[38]

The moral/practical use of the term 'pragmatic' found in this passage of Kant's deviates significantly from the standard usage in the 18th century. The latter, to which Kant himself adheres in other parts of his work, understood 'pragmatic' in an unspecific way as 'practical, effective, and useful' (Kühne-Bertram 1983, 162), without any closer determination in the content of the purposive horizon or restriction of the purposive horizon to the aim of merely individual utility. An example of the standard use of 'pragmatic' in the 18th century, even with Kant, may be seen in the distinction he makes in the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals* between technical '*rules* of skill', or pragmatic 'counsels of prudence', and '*commands* (*laws*) of morality'. (Kant 1996, 69) Pragmatically 'giving counsel' is set apart from the moral/practical command precisely in that its necessity holds 'only under a subjective and contingent condition, whether this or that man counts this or that in his happiness'.[39]

Whereas in the preface to the *Anthropology* the tension between could and should is grasped as a tension which itself is the object of pragmatic philosophy, in the *Groundwork* it is conceptually resolved into the opposition of 'pragmatic' (in a narrow sense) versus 'moral'. Though it is true that Kant also drew on this opposition within the *Anthropology* (Kant 1974, 183), in doing so he added to the meaning of 'pragmatic' the philosophical-historical perspective of a 'tendency' towards a 'final end', pointing beyond subjectively set aims, and hence 'to become a well-bred […] being destined for concord.' (Kant 1974, 185)

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[38] Kant 1974, 3 (Translation slightly emended [trans.])

[39] Kant 1996, 69. – Cf. Kant's earlier distinction between 'pragmatic laws of free action, for the attainment of those ends which are commended to us by the senses', and '*moral* laws' that are 'prescribed to us not in an empirically conditioned but in an absolute manner'. (Kant 1933, 632 f. [B 828 f.])

Kant also uses the word in the moral-practical sense in the preface to the *Anthropology* when he talks of the 'knowledge of man as a *citizen of the world*.' (Kant 1974, 3) By this he means that dimension of worldly wisdom which, from the perspective of the *Critique of Pure Reason*, is to be considered the highest point aspired to by philosophical thinking that is oriented towards the worldly concept of philosophy. The recourse to freedom, as the basic practical determination of humans, which this reflects shows that the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* is 'not only a descriptive, but also a normative science'. (Kühne-Bertram 1983, 163)

Various interpreters have concluded from this that Kant's *Anthropology* presupposes the results of the three critiques as transcendental necessities in order to treat their conditions of implementation from a pragmatic perspective. In this sense, David A. Long, for example, emphasizes that 'Kant [...] did not see the questions treated in his *Anthropology* as separate from the examination of the limits of knowledge in the first Critique'. (Long 1982, 300) This view can rely not least on the fact that in the passage previously cited Kant determines the subject matter of the pragmatic *Anthropology* not only as that which 'man' makes of himself, but as the entire complex of 'what man […] makes, or *can* and *should* make, of himself.' (Emphasis, M.S.) To this extent, the *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* would be not only a piece of empirical philosophy according to the worldly concept, but would have to be considered as realizing pure philosophy's immanent relation to empirical philosophy, as called for in the *Conflict of the Faculties*.

Against this view, Reinhard Brandt has rightly pointed out, in the introduction to his *Critical Commentary on Kant's Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View*, that '"pragmatic anthropology" is not identical with the anthropology that Kant variously called for as a discipline complementing pure moral philosophy'. (Brandt 1999, 14) Instead, according to Brandt, in Kant we find a 'duality of transcendental, or critical, philosophy on the one hand, and first empirical, then pragmatic anthropology on the other'. (Brandt 1999, 17 f.) In fact, in *Anthropology from a Pragmatic Point of View* Kant hardly makes use of the results of the pure moral philosophy which he had previously

worked out in the *Critique of Practical Reason* (1788), the *Groundwork of the Metaphysics of Morals*, and the *Metaphysics of Morality* (1797). Moreover, in much of what follows the deontic moral-practical horizon referred to by the preface gives way to questions of a doctrine of prudence linked to the subjective purposes of individual humans.

Only in its final chapter does the *Anthropology* open up a deontic moral-practical horizon referring beyond the single person to the history of the species. Admittedly, this deontic horizon is partially informed by results presupposed from Kant's moral philosophy, the conditions for the realizability of which, according to the claim articulated in its preface, were to be sounded out by the *Anthropology*. But at the same time the final chapter of the *Anthropology* also points beyond the horizon prescribed by pure moral philosophy, as becomes clear when Kant writes: 'For the rest, the human race should and *can* create its own good fortune; but that it *will* do so, we cannot infer *a priori* from what we have seen of its natural predispositions. We can infer it only from experience and history; and our expectation is as well based as is necessary for us not to despair of our race's progress toward the better, but to promote its approach to this goal with all our prudence and moral illumination (each to the best of his ability).' (Kant 1974, 189) According to this statement of Kant's, both the moral ought and the moral can result from an a priori perspective. The idea, linked with this, of extending the claim of apriority to anthropology is also expressed in a hand-written note that forms part of Kant's *Nachlaß* – Reflection no. 903 – in which he coined the term 'Anthropologia transcendentalis'. (Kant 1913, 395)

In addition to, and independently of this Kant outlined a sociopolitical horizon of human action projected in the way permitted by the means of empirical philosophy itself, i.e. 'only from experience and history' and hence without transcendental philosophical recourse to questions of determining the moral essence of humanity as a rational being.[40] This teleological horizon refers to the reflections on the philosophy of history which Kant published in the same year and according to which the public effect of the French

revolution on 'the mode of thinking of all spectators […] who are not engaged in this game themselves', can be understood as a 'historical sign'. (Kant 1992, 153, 151) By this he means a historical event that itself allows the establishment of something approximating to a '*cosmopolitan* society (*cosmopoliticus*)' (Kant 1974, 191) to be anticipated as a regulative ideal state. In his minor writings[41] Kant worked from the perspective of the philosophy of history to make a targeted contribution, one effective in terms of publicity, to the power of such a state to orient actions.[42] The transformational and pragmatic hallmark of this contribution has been fittingly described by Margherita von Brentano as the 'attempt at a self-fulfilling prophecy'.[43]

This aspect of Kant's thinking is particularly clearly expressed in his political-philosophical treatise on the 'Idea for a Universal History with a Cosmopolitan Purpose' (1784). There he writes: 'We can see that philosophy too may have its *chiliastic* expectations; but they are of such a kind that their fulfilment can be hastened […] by a knowledge of the idea they are based on, so that they are anything but overfanciful.' (Kant 1971, 50) The transformational and pragmatic hallmark of Kant's philosophy of history, as expressed in these considerations, was systematically occluded by Neokantianism, even, indeed precisely, when it turned to Kant's philosophy of history. Thus Heinrich Rickert and other members of the Baden School attempted to reinterpret Kant's minor writings theoreticistically by understanding them as attempts, from the perspective of philosophy of science, to ground a methodology for the historical sciences.[44]

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[40] Kant 1974, 189. Cf. here and in the following Lyotard 1986.
[41] Cf. Kant's (1983) writings on anthropology, philosophy of history, politics and education; see also Weyand 1964.
[42] On Kant's theory of the historical sign see also Lyotard, who takes the view that in this thought his 'thinking, perhaps Kant's entire political historical thinking, is condensed.' (Lyotard 1986, 58) For a general discussion of Kant's pragmatic theory of publicity see Habermas's account of 'Publicity as the Bridging Principle between Politics and Morality' (Habermas 1989, 102-117) as well as Blesenkemper 1987.
[43] Von Brentano 1983, 208. Cf. also Habermas, who in this sense talks of a 'self-implication of the philosophy of history' with Kant, by which he means 'a philosophy of history that implied its own political intent and effect'. (Habermas 1989, 115)
[44] Rickert 1899. For criticism of this move see Höffe 1988, 241.

Bearing in mind the many levels of meaning that the pragmatic determination of philosophy's task had for Kant, one can understand the following consideration, voiced by Ludwig Stein in his 1908 'Attempted History of the Term "Pragmatism"': 'so perhaps Kant was the innocent cause of the adoption of the *name* "pragmatism" and its introduction into the small currency of everyday philosophical commerce.'[45] Although – as Stein suggests – there is no use of the noun,[46] one would be well within one's rights to say first that the moral-practical uses of 'pragmatic', which play an important role in Kant, provided the basis for political pragmatism, as set out by John Dewey at the beginning of the century and updated and reformulated by Richard Rorty in the conditions of contemporary thought. Further, one can equally well say that Kant's usage marked the point of departure for a transcendental philosophical grounding of pragmatism such as that systematically developed by Jürgen Habermas (following on from Charles Sanders Peirce and George Herbert Mead) in contemporary philosophy.[47] Kant's broad conception of philosophy, in which various projects for pragmatic philosophy link up in respectively differing ways with the project of pure philosophy (and its need of transcendental philosophical justification), points the way to the tensions that shape current metaphilosophical discussion, the focus of which – as Wolfgang Welsch has aptly put it – is the 'main opposition' of 'theoreticism versus pragmatism'.[48]

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[45] Stein 1908, 151. A historically differentiated account of this thesis is presented by Murray G. Murphey in his essay 'Kant's Children. The Cambridge Pragmatists' (Murphey 1968) See also the previously mentioned essay by David A. Long, who comes to the conclusion that 'As a whole, Kant's philosophy remains too tied to a priori forms to be itself deemed pragmatic. But it served as a crucial point of departure for the development of pragmatism in the Nineteenth Century' (Long 1982, 311).

[46] This probably first appeared in Schelling's 1803 'Lectures on the Method of Academic Study' (Schelling 1966, 105). Cf. on this Elling (1989, esp. 1245).

[47] The debate between Rorty and Habermas on the extent to which transcendental justification needs to figure in pragmatism is documented in a series of essays. (Habermas, 1983; Rorty 1994; Habermas 1999e; Rorty 2000e.) See further their respective (1996a) contributions to Niznik/Sanders 1996.

[48] Welsch 1995, 889. I discuss Welsch's analysis of this main opposition in detail in the final section of chapter three below.

The institutional establishment of philosophy as an autonomous profession with a theoreticist self-image in the 19th and 20th century is characterized by two facts. The first is that, influenced by Neokantianism, philosophy as a subject began increasingly suspending both the recourse to empirical disciplines – which Kant had still required – and the priority of practical philosophy linked with the Kantian teleology of reason. In addition to this, secondly, the institutional history of modern philosophy is linked with systematic exclusion of a sophisticated pragmatic determination of the task of empirical philosophy, which for Kant – even independently of the matter of conditions of application for pure philosophy – had still played an independent role.

It is beyond the scope of this work to trace the history of this exclusion and the theoreticist restriction of philosophy's self-image in detail.[49] Instead the following chapter will sketch the current transitional situation in contemporary philosophy with reference to the metaphilosophical tension between pragmatism and theoreticism. This is a tension which Kant dealt with in a reflective manner, but which has to a large extent been suppressed in the history of modern philosophy in the 19th and 20th century. The history of this tension's recurrence will be set out in relation to the pragmatic twist pervading the linguistic turn taken by modern philosophy in the 20th century. Against this background, in the third chapter of this book, the task of media philosophy will be determined.

[49] Cf. on this Köhnke 1991a, from the perspective of the history of philosophy, and Schneider 1999 for a view of the institutional history. To put this in the overall historical perspective of modernity see also Toulmin 1990, especially 139-174.

II

THE TRANSITIONAL SITUATION OF CONTEMPORARY PHILOSOPHY: THE LINGUISTIC TURN'S PRAGMATIC TWIST

A first attempt to rehabilitate the pragmatic self-image of the modern subject philosophy already took place in America in the first few decades of the 20th century. At this time the thinking of the classical American pragmatists – Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey – decisively shaped the academic self-image of American philosophy both in terms of content and institutionally.[50] Yet this first return of the pragmatic determination of the task for philosophy as a taught subject, which was more or less restricted to American universities,[51] was halted as analytic philosophy began to spread in English-speaking countries in the 1930s and 1940s and thus dissolved by a theoreticist counter-movement.

This counter-movement, due partly to the emigration of leading representatives of the Vienna Circle to the USA and England, initially established itself in American and British philosophy departments during the 1950s and 1960s, and subsequently on the Continent too.[52] It continues to be extremely influential, both academically and institutionally, in many quarters today. But at the same time a dialectic has unfolded within analytic philosophy in the second half of the twentieth century that made possible the 'renaissance of pragmatism' (Rorty 1998f, 291) characterizing the transitional situation of contemporary philosophy in America and Europe.

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[50] Cf. Morris 1970 and Rorty 1982d.
[51] On the distortions which shaped the influence of pragmatism in Germany in the first half of the 20th century see Joas 1993. A good survey of the scattered pragmatic approaches to thought found in Europe is provided by Thayer 1981, 270-347.
[52] For the development in the USA see Rorty 1982f, 2000a and Hacker 1996. A survey of the overall development is provided by Hacker 1996 and Putnam 1981, esp. 103-126.

The institutional spread of analytic philosophy in the course of the 20th century took place along with the establishment of philosophy of language as the new philosophical fundamental discipline. The central importance assumed by philosophy of language in the 20th century is essentially connected with the fact that the formal logic founded by Frege, and further developed in the early decades of the 20th century by Russell, Whitehead and the young Wittgenstein, seemed to provide an instrument that would enable natural languages to be investigated using the logical analysis of formal languages as a model.

Such language-oriented philosophy continued the project of transcendental philosophical investigation into the conditions of possibility of knowledge that dates back to Kant. It does this insofar as language was grasped by most analytic philosophers as the distinguished medium of human knowledge of reality. Central to the linguistic turn was the theoreticist hope of making the basic constitution of human knowledge reconstructible in a methodologically precise and scientifically exact manner through analysis of the basic logical structures of language.

It is against this background that the determination of the task of media philosophy as a new fundamental philosophical discipline, as suggested by Margreiter, Krämer and Seel, is to be seen. When it is understood as a successor to philosophy of language, the theoreticist question concerning the conditions of possibility for the production of meaning and the constitution of reality becomes central to media philosophy. The continuity with tradition that this reflects is stressed (parenthetically) by Margreiter when he writes: ‘The “media turn” refers to […] the new – on closer examination: the old-new – big subject of philosophy: the question concerning the experience of reality and the reality of experience.’ (Margreiter 1999a, 17)

In contrast to the disciplines of epistemology, or philosophy of science and language that preceded it, media philosophy, so conceived, does not restrict itself to the analysis of transcendental-philosophical, methodological, formal-logical or grammatical systems of rules in answering the traditional basic problems of modern philosophy. Instead it additionally targets the media framework conditions, conditions which are hypothesized

to underlie the systems of rules just named. In this way it attempts to carry on with the basic theoreticist concerns characteristic of older analytic philosophy using new, altered means.[53]

By uncovering the pragmatic twist taken within recent analytic philosophy, the present chapter is to set out the basis for a more up-to-date determination of media philosophy's task in the course of the book. The reconstruction of the pragmatic twist takes place by drawing on systematic and historical considerations which Richard Rorty first outlined in his editor's introduction to the anthology *The Linguistic Turn* (Rorty 1992a) and then developed further in his later writings. Rorty's pragmatic perspective on the history of analytic philosophy, which in no way claims to be rendering an academically consensual standard view of this development, will here be deployed as an instrument. With the help of this instrument, the metaphilosophical tension between pragmatism and theoreticism, which characterizes the transitional situation of contemporary philosophy, is to be brought out through a genealogical reconstruction.

Since the extension of the academic self-image of philosophy linked with the linguistic turn's pragmatic twist underlies the concept of pragmatic media philosophy developed in this book, a complete chapter will be dedicated to detailed reconstruction of this extension. Its evaluation for determining the task of media philosophy is therefore initially postponed to the book's third chapter. There it is carried out in such a way that it can also be followed, by readers less interested in technical philosophical matters, without the background of the developments internal to philosophy that commenced with the linguistic turn. These developments will be reconstructed in detail in the following because until now they have not been adequately taken account of in debate about the self-image of academic philosophy.

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[53] This fact is explicitly stressed in particular by Krämer, who sets out in detail how the basic idea of older analytic philosophy, that of a 'purified form of language', is to attain

1. On the concept 'linguistic turn'

The concept of the 'linguistic turn' was brought into general circulation by Rorty in his 1967 anthology of the same name. In his editor's introduction to this anthology Rorty referred to Gustav Bergmann as having coined this term in the 1950s. (Rorty 1992b, 9 n10) Rorty does not, however, provide the exact source for Bergmann's first use of the expression. In the article on 'philosophy of language' in the encyclopaedic *Historisches Wörterbuch der Philosophie* Bergmann's essay 'Logical Positivism, Language, and the Reconstruction of Metaphysics' is cited as the standard reference text in which 'the formulation "linguistic turn"' is found 'for the first time in philosophy'.[54] Following this up, one finds however that in this 1953 text the use of the concept 'linguistic turn' (Bergmann 1954a, 31) is already presupposed to be familiar, a fact reflected in the use of the definite article in referring to it.

In fact Bergmann had already used the term a year earlier in the essay 'Two Types of Linguistic Philosophy', where it appears immediately in the first sentence of the text. The term is initially introduced with the indefinite article, and then used further with the definite article in the course of the text. Bergmann's introductory formulation reads: 'Of late philosophy has taken a linguistic turn. At least this is true of a large and, by general agreement, significant part of all philosophical activity that went on in the English-speaking countries during the last one or two generations. […] Yet the influence of three men, Moore, Russell, and Wittgenstein, stands out. Virtually all living linguistic philosophers are either directly or indirectly students of at least one of them.' (Bergmann 1954b, 106)

Bergmann understands the linguistic turn as a turn in 20th century English-speaking philosophy. This is by no means self-evident. In reviewing the history of modern philosophy of language in the first chapter of this book, we have already noted important

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'another, quite acceptable meaning' in view of the 'mediative constitution of language' as an object of media-philosophical investigation. (Krämer 2001, 272 f.)

[54] This article is attributed to the 'editorial staff', or 'Redaktion' (1995, 1524).

stations in the continental pre-history of the linguistic turn (Maupertuis, Herder, Hamann, Humboldt). What, however, is correct about Bergmann's concentration on English-speaking philosophy is that philosophy of language first acquired an institutionally influential and substantively mature form with the execution of the linguistic turn, i.e. in the context of analytic philosophy. The following account will be restricted to this formation.

The basic feature of the linguistic turn, so understood, was later determined more closely by Bergmann in his 1960 essay 'Strawson's Ontology' in the idea that 'talk about the world' takes place 'by means of talking about a suitable language'. Bergmann continues: 'This is the linguistic turn, the fundamental gambit as to method, on which ordinary and ideal language philosophers […] agree.' (Bergmann 1964, 177) Without employing the term, Willard van Orman Quine provided a similar definition of the linguistic turn described by Bergmann in the final chapter of *Word and Object* (1960) under the heading 'semantic ascent'. Quine, to whom Rorty also refers in his introduction, describes the 'useful and much used manoeuvre which I shall call semantic ascent' as follows: 'It is the shift from talking in certain terms to talking about them. […] The strategy of semantic ascent is that it carries the discussion into a domain where both parties are better agreed on the objects (viz., words) and on the main terms concerning them.' (Quine 1960, 271 f.)

The claim made by advocates of the linguistic turn, expressed in these formulations by Bergmann and Quine, is that it provides philosophy with a method that enables it to solve, or dissolve, philosophical problems in a systematic way. In this comprehensive sense Rorty writes at the very beginning of his introduction in relation to 'the most recent philosophical revolution, that of linguistic philosophy': 'I shall mean by "linguistic philosophy" the view that philosophical problems are problems which may be solved (or dissolved) either by reforming language, or by understanding more about the language we presently use.' (Rorty 1992b, 3) By 'philosophical problems' he means here the basic problems of modern philosophy, centring on theoreticist questions about the conditions of

possibility of knowledge and language, the relationship between mind and world, the inner constitution of sense and meaning, or the antinomy of freedom and determination.[55]

2. Three ambivalences of the linguistic turn

The fact that Rorty already drew attention to the inner ambivalences of the linguistic turn in his 1967 introduction has often been overlooked. This is partly because Rorty did not explicitly call them ambivalences. To allow the inner tensions pervading the linguistic turn to emerge with full clarity, in the following three ambivalences will be uncovered which can be discerned in Rorty's early deliberations on the linguistic turn. By 'ambivalences' I mean both the internal rifts found in the self-image of the linguistic turn's protagonists, and the external ambiguities that result when one relates different versions of the linguistic turn to one another.

In explicating the three ambivalences it is helpful to be aware that the starting point for Rorty's treatment of the linguistic turn is a basic thesis shared by both the competing schools of linguistic philosophers which diverged in the 1950s and 1960s. In relation to both ideal language and ordinary language philosophy, Rorty notes: 'I have tried to show that their programs are alternative means to the same ends, and that neither presupposes the sort of substantive philosophical theses to which their critics claim linguistic philosophy is committed. I have argued that those presuppositions which they do make boil down to a single, plausible claim: that we should not ask questions unless we can offer criteria for satisfactory answers to those questions.' (Rorty 1992b, 14)

The first ambivalence that Rorty attests to the linguistic turn relates to the substantive philosophical theses that linguistic philosophy is, in its critics' view, committed to. This ambivalence will prove of lesser importance in the course of the present investigation, but

[55] Cf. also Rorty's description of 'what the philosophers of the past were doing', namely 'trying to find out the nature of knowledge, freedom, meaning, and the like'. (Rorty 1992b, 4).

it nonetheless significant in delineating the various forms taken on by the linguistic turn. Rorty brings this out in the first two sections of his introduction using an internal differentiation within the linguistic turn that precedes the divergence of the two schools of ideal language philosophy and ordinary language philosophy.

Rorty distinguishes 'the original Ayer-Carnap thesis that philosophical questions are questions of language'[56] from the two different paths taken by ideal and ordinary language philosophy in attempting to reformulate critically this original thesis. These attempted reformulations result from the endeavour to hold on to Carnap and Ayer's basic thought, without sharing the strong presupposition that both made in formulating their views. This presupposition lies in the assumption (one later problematized by Carnap and Ayer themselves) that there is such thing as a 'philosophically neutral "logic"' interior to language that might be revealed as the obligatory basis for 'pejorative judgements about philosophical theses' (Rorty 1992b, 6), or reconstructed with the help of a corresponding 'constructional system'.[57] The first ambivalence of the linguistic turn can therefore be described as a historical ambivalence between the early positivistic version of the linguistic turn and the alternative paths later taken by the advocates of ideal and ordinary language philosophy in critically reformulating this turn.

The first reformulation path goes back, amongst others, to Bergmann. Bergmann suggested that problems of philosophy should not be viewed as problems emerging from an incongruency between the historical-grammatical and logical syntaxes of our everyday language. According to Bergmann's view, there is no neutral authority called 'logical syntax' within everyday language that might serve as the obligatory guide to immanent self-correction. For this reason, as long as we move within the framework of our everyday language, or within the framework of factually established scientific languages,

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[56] Rorty 1992b, 12. Unlike Bergmann, Rorty does not go back to Moore, Russell and Wittgenstein as pioneers of the linguistic turn, but approaches it directly in the explicit statements of the turn to language (as prepared by Moore, Russell and Wittgenstein).

[57] Carnap 1967a, 1 and passim. See also Ayer 2001. The view advocated by Carnap and Ayer that logical syntax forms the deep grammar of natural language goes back to the

we cannot escape traditional philosophical problems. Rather, to achieve this, construction of an ideal language is required, one that allows the reformulation of philosophical statements only as metastatements about the syntax and interpretation of this language and which to this extent allows selection of a binding criterion. According to Bergmann, this ideal language would have to consist primarily of the apparatus of extensional logic and of predicates relating to objects of direct perception.[58]

The second reformulation path is that taken by the representatives of what Bergmann called 'Ordinary Language Philosophy' (Bergmann 1964, 177) – namely Ryle, Austin, Strawson and others. They attempted to undermine the presuppositions that Bergmann would have had to – although he did not – make explicit in identifying the ideal language he suggested. Instead of recurring to an ideal language yet to be constructed, Ryle, Austin and Strawson describe the basic questions of philosophical tradition as questions resulting from the *misuse* of everyday and scientific language, misuse to be uncovered by means of linguistic analysis. The measure of ideality, which Bergmann was yet to make explicit, is in this way replaced by the distinction between appropriate (i.e. everyday and scientific) and inappropriate (i.e. philosophical) use of language. The self-image of ordinary language philosophy this reflects was paraphrased by Rorty, in his early essay 'Realism, Categories, and the "Linguistic Turn"' (1962), as follows: 'No problem can be raised in ordinary language which ordinary language cannot handle, and, in fact, no philosophic problems ever *are* formulated in ordinary language, but only in the jargonesque pseudo-languages constructed by philosophers out of ill-assorted fragments of ordinary speech.' (Rorty 1962, 318)

In summary, the first ambivalence of the linguistic turn can be described as follows. In their early publications the representatives of logical empiricism (Russell, Carnap, Ayer) propounded the view that it is possible – using the means of formal logic made available by Frege, Russell, Whitehead and the early Wittgenstein – to uncover a philosophically

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early Wittgenstein. (Cf. Wittgenstein 1961, especially 47 f. [5.473-5.474] and 56 [5.5563])

[58] For a reconstruction of Bergmann's position, see Rorty 1992b, 6 ff.

neutral realm of logical meaning criteria within the deep internal structure of everyday and scientific language itself. This strong presupposition was dropped in the course of the differentiation of the linguistic turn. In its place came attempts to name criteria of meaning either relative to an ideal language or dependent on standardly used languages. Such criteria were to be attained either by way of a critical reform of language through construction of an ideal language (Carnap II, Ayer II, Bergmann and others) or by way of descriptive analysis of the use of everyday and scientific language (Ryle, Austin, Strawson and others).

The second and third ambivalences of the linguistic turn both relate to the view – which Rorty initially seems to share, but criticizes in the final section of his introduction – that philosophical questions should not be posed as long as no immanently compelling criteria for satisfactorily answering them are available. This view underlies the attempts of ideal-language and ordinary-language philosophers to develop criteria of meaning, either relative to an ideal language or dependent on standardly-used language, for the evaluation of philosophical questions. In his introduction Rorty goes along with this view to some extent, to the extent namely that it can be radicalized as the thesis that the function of the linguistic turn is understood to be 'merely critical' and 'essentially dialectical' with respect to the traditional basic problems of modern philosophy. (Rorty 1992b, 33) Yet there is no consensus on such a radicalization, neither among the representatives of ideal language philosophy, nor among the representatives of ordinary language philosophy. Rather, on both sides a large number of authors remain committed to the constructive productivity of the linguistic turn and continue to work on the solution of the problems of the 'Great Tradition' (Rorty 1992, 31) by means of linguistic analysis.

The second ambivalence of the linguistic turn consists of the dissent, already mentioned, between the constructive problem-solving and the destructive problem-*dis*solving views of linguistic method. The ambivalence reflected in this dissent is a somewhat superficial ambivalence in relation to the more profound third ambivalence. For ambivalence between linguistic philosophy's obligation to 'the positivistic effort to dissolve philosophical problems' (Rorty 1992b, 31) and the opposing endeavour to unify linguistic

philosophy in a constructive way with the basic philosophical questions of the tradition presupposes a basic metaphilosophical consensus. This consensus consists of the prior understanding, one self-evident for both the constructive and destructive views of linguistic method, of the essential determination of philosophy as an autonomous scientific discipline, characterized by binding evaluative criteria and uniform methods. The problematization of this prior understanding, which underlies and is unquestioned by the second ambivalence, results in the third and decisive ambivalence, which I now turn to.

In contrast to the two other ambivalences, the third ambivalence of the linguistic turn points beyond the position adopted by Rorty in his 1967 introduction. The point of departure for this ambivalence is the focus on the issue of neutral criteria in evaluating, or scientific methods in answering traditional basic problems of modern philosophy. This focus, which remained unproblematic in the framework of the first and second ambivalences of the linguistic turn, reflects the fact – to anticipate the perspective of the final chapter of Rorty's *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* (1979) – that the forms of the linguistic turn described so far were 'normal discourses'. (Rorty 1979, 320)

By 'normal science' Rorty, following Thomas S. Kuhn, understands 'the practice of solving problems against a background of a consensus about what counts as a good explanation of the phenomena and about what it would take for a problem to be solved.' Generalizing this, Rorty explains, 'normal discourse is that which is conducted within an agreed-upon set of conventions about what counts as a relevant contribution, what counts as answering a question, what counts as having a good argument for that answer or a good criticism of it.' (Rorty 1979, 320)

Both the constructive, problem-solving and the destructive, problem-dissolving ways of dealing with the traditional basic problems of modern philosophy – according to the argument resulting from the third ambivalence – focus on a presupposed consensus which characterizes the discipline about the canon of 'the' given questions of philosophy and about uniform evaluative criteria for what is to count as an answer to these questions. In

the constructive case, linguistic analysis serves to elaborate linguistic-philosophical proposals for solving the textbook epistemological problems of philosophy. In the destructive case, the aim of linguistic critique is to expose methodologically the linguistic inappropriacy of epistemological questions. In both cases the concern (from a theoreticist metaperspective) is with the elaboration of language-immanent criteria, with the help of which decisions are supposed to be made about the sense or non-sense, the answerability or nonanswerability, of philosophical problems handed down by the tradition. This applies both with respect to ideal language philosophy and with respect to ordinary language philosophy.

In *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature* Rorty brought out in detail the theoreticist dogmatism residual to both the attempts, described in his introduction to *The Linguistic Turn*, at reformulating 'the original Ayer-Carnap thesis that philosophical questions are questions of language' (Rorty 1992b, 12) without recourse to a supposedly philosophically neutral logic. The blind-spot common to both the linguistic turn's schools, and which was glimpsed from a metaphilosophical perspective in the 1967 introduction, is described by Rorty in the *Mirror of Nature* with recourse to their basically dualist content: 'The distinction between the necessary and the contingent – revitalized by Russell and the Vienna Circle as the distinction between "true by virtue of meaning" and "true by virtue of experience" – had usually gone unchallenged, and had formed the least common denominator of "ideal language" and "ordinary language" analysis.' (Rorty 1979, 169)

Indeed, both the advocates of ideal language philosophy and the advocates of ordinary language philosophy adhered to the truth-theoretical idea, going back to Plato, 'that true sentences divide into an upper and a lower division – the sentences which correspond to something and those which are "true" only by courtesy or convention.' (Rorty 1982b, xviii, cf. also xvi) In contrast to Plato, for whom the necessity of truth resulted from a point of reference lying outside spatio-temporal determinations in the world of true being,

i.e. in the world of ideas, the advocates of logical empiricism determined the necessity of truth by recourse to logical conventions.[59]

Propositions that claimed truth on the basis of logical convention were considered by Russell, the early Carnap, Ayer and other early advocates of logical empiricism (or atomism) to be propositions that are true in virtue of meaning, and hence analytic and necessary. Propositions of this kind were, in their view, to be considered the proper object of philosophy, which – for this reason – was to take place as logical analysis of meaning. By contrast, empirical propositions, relating directly or indirectly to data immediately given to the senses, were considered by the logical empiricists to be propositions that are true in virtue of experience, and hence synthetic and contingent. Propositions of this kind, on their view, are to be formulated not by philosophers, but only by scientists occupied with statements of fact.[60]

The advocates of ideal and ordinary language philosophy reformulated this distinction between necessary and contingent truth in the conditions of a philosophy explicitly understood to be linguistic. Analytic truth in virtue of meaning appeared, on these premisses, to be the distinguished object of a genuinely philosophical theory of meaning, whereas synthetic truth in virtue of experience was allocated to the individual sciences as the subject of empirical analyses. For the advocates of ideal language philosophy the aim of the formal semantics they sought to develop consisted of constructing a language that would render logically transparent the mechanisms of meaning constitution. By contrast, the advocates of ordinary language philosophy sought to develop a systematization of the basic forms of use of everyday language, which in turn were to be used to work out a

[59] The problems linked with this and various suggestions as to how to solve them are developed by David Lewis in his book on convention. (Lewis 1969)

[60] Cf. on this Carnap's *The Logical Structure of the World* (1967a, esp. 157-302), which was canonical for logical empiricism, Carnap 1967b, and the development of this in 'The Elimination of Metaphysics Through Logical Analysis of Language' (Carnap 1978), as well as Ayer 2001, esp. 30-103. As a predecessor of Carnap's see also here Wittgenstein's *Tractatus*, especially 4.111 ff. (Wittgenstein 1961, 25 f.). On the distinction between 'knowledge by acquaintance' and 'knowledge by description', see Russell 1992.

language-immanent framework of meaning generation. In doing this, most of the projects of ordinary language philosophy – in contrast to the primarily syntactic or formal-semantic projects of ideal language philosophy – fell back on considerations concerning the development of formal pragmatics or quasi-transcendental universal pragmatics.[61] The task of the latter was to consist of revealing the conditions of possibility for our use of language (and hence the constitution of meaning), in the sense of a set of necessary modes of use assumed to make up the essential basic structure of language altogether.[62]

In both schools of the linguistic turn the distinction between necessary and contingent propositions served to delimit philosophy as an autonomous discipline, characterized by a distinguished domain of subject matter, from the individual sciences. This domain was to comprise necessary linguistic structures, which as conditions of possibility (forming the object of syntactic, formal-semantic, and/or formal-pragmatic investigation) for the constitution of meaning were to underlie the investigation of all contingent matters in the individual sciences.

Rorty's problematization of the theoreticist distinction between philosophy, as a discipline dealing with necessary propositions, and the individual sciences, dealing with contingent propositions, is part of what he calls the 'Wittgenstein-Sellars-Quine-Davidson attack on distinctions between classes of sentences'. (Rorty 1982b, xix) This is an intellectual movement that already began within the linguistic turn in the late 1940s and which directs itself against those dogmas that had been retained within the philosophies of ideal and ordinary language. Before moving on to an account of this critical intellectual movement, I shall summarize the deliberations in this chapter so far by systematically relating the three reconstructed ambivalences of the linguistic turn to one another.

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[61] On the history of the concept of pragmatics, cf. Schneider 1989. In this context Schneider also looks at the reactive approaches, developed within ordinary language philosophy, aiming at a 'semanticization of pragmatics'. (Schneider 1989, 1236 f.)

[62] Cf. Austin 1962 and Searle 1969, as well as the work of Apel and Habermas which develops the formers' approach into a quasi-transcendental universal pragmatics (Apel 1980, especially 225-300; 1976).

The *first* ambivalence of the linguistic turn relates to the *status* of linguistic method. Whereas the logical empiricists (Russell, Carnap I, Ayer I) adhere to the idea of the philosophically neutral validity of logical syntax as the core of language altogether, the advocates of ideal and ordinary language philosophy relativize linguistic method's validity claim to criteria of meaning that are either relative to an ideal language or dependent on standard use of language. The *second* ambivalence relates to the *defined aims* of linguistic method and pervades the schools of both ideal and ordinary language philosophy. In each school there are, on one side, representatives who see the aim of linguistically reformulating philosophical problems as constructive problem-solving, and, on the other side, those who see it as destructive problem-*dis*solution. Finally, the *third* ambivalence relates to the *metaphilosophical assumptions* underlying the search for a linguistic method and hence the theoreticist methodological awareness in ideal and ordinary language philosophy altogether.

While both schools adhere to the assumption that linguistic method provides obligatory instruments for the analysis of philosophical problems, at the same time self-critical positions have developed in the linguistic turn's environment which question precisely this assumption, and with it each step in the associated theoreticist dogmas of linguistic philosophy. It is now time to discuss these positions, which were not yet systematically dealt with in Rorty's 1967 introduction, but came to the fore in his later writings under the previously mentioned heading of the 'Wittgenstein-Sellars-Quine-Davidson attack'. (Rorty 1982b, xix)

It will be seen that the line of self-critique which, following on from Rorty, has been reconstructed here and which pervades the thinking of analytic philosophy, leads to an extension of the basic coordinates in the undertaking of modern philosophy as a subject. This extension is to be revealed in order to open up the horizon for a determination of the task of media philosophy that goes beyond the attempted theoreticist determinations of Margreiter, Krämer and Seel. To carry out the foundation of media philosophy in an up-to-date manner it is essential that the linguistic turn is considered not only in its classic

dogmatic shape, but also, and above all, in its advanced form as a model for determining the task of media philosophy.

3. The linguistic turn's pragmatic twist

The advanced form of the linguistic turn results from the third ambivalence just described. This ambivalence centres on the metaphilosophical question of academic philosophy's theoreticist self-image as an autonomous subject methodologically marked off from the individual sciences. In the *Mirror of Nature* (1979) and *Consequences of Pragmatism* (1982) Rorty described the third ambivalence of the linguistic turn with recourse to the self-critical intellectual tradition opened up by Wittgenstein, Sellars, Quine and Davidson as the 'dialectic within analytic philosophy'. (Rorty 1979, 7) In the introduction to *Consequences of Pragmatism* he highlights the late consequences of the linguistic turn, which are currently becoming more clearly palpable, as follows: 'I think that analytic philosophy culminates in Quine, the later Wittgenstein, Sellars, and Davidson – which is to say that it transcends and cancels itself. These thinkers successfully, and rightly, blur the positivist distinctions between the semantic and the pragmatic, the analytic and the synthetic, the linguistic and the empirical, theory and observation.' (Rorty 1982b, xviii)

Against the background of the attacks, led by Wittgenstein, Sellars, Quine and Davidson, on the residual dogmatism of linguistic philosophy contained in ideal and ordinary language philosophy, Rorty suggests 'that what Gustav Bergmann called "the linguistic turn" should not be seen as the logical positivists saw it – as enabling us to ask Kantian questions without having to trespass on the psychologists' turf by talking, with Kant, about "experience" or "consciousness".' And in the same context Rorty continues: 'That was, indeed, the initial motive for the 'turn', but (thanks to the holism and pragmatism of the authors I have cited) analytic philosophy of language was able to transcend this Kantian motive and adopt a naturalistic, behavioristic attitude toward language.' (Rorty 1982b. xxi) Through the naturalistic and behaviouristic perspective on language opened

up by Wittgenstein, Sellars, Quine and Davidson, the dialectic that pervades analytic philosophy and the linguistic turn underlying it take a turn for the positive, the decisive point of which Rorty sees in the concomitant 'pragmaticization of analytic philosophy'. (Rorty 1982b, xxi)

To avoid terminological unclarity, it is important in this context to distinguish Rorty's affirmative use of the concepts pragmatism, pragmaticization, pragmatic etc. from uses of these terms linked with the previously described conception of formal pragmatics, or a quasi-transcendental universal pragmatics, in the framework of ordinary language philosophy.[63] The pragmatism advocated by Rorty in the *Mirror of Nature* and *Consequences of Pragmatism* aims to undermine the linguistic distinction between 'semantics' and 'pragmatics' insofar as it presupposes the distinction between 'necessary' and 'contingent' rendered problematic by Wittgenstein, Sellars, Quine and Davidson. In place of this pair of distinctions Rorty, in the two works mentioned, adopts a use of the term 'pragmatic' that aims to link linguistic processes to a naturalistic context of active non-linguistic practices in a way that can be empirically investigated. This use of 'pragmatic' in the sense of 'naturalistic' or 'behaviouristic' is made explicit in the *Mirror of Nature* when Rorty writes: 'Epistemological behaviorism (which might be called simply "pragmatism," were this term not a bit overladen) […] is the claim that philosophy will have no more to offer than common sense (supplemented by biology, history etc.) about knowledge and truth.' (Rorty 1979, 176)

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[63] In his essay 'Pragmatics and Pragmatisms' (Brandom 2002), Robert Brandom has attempted to make explicit this difference while applying the concept 'pragmatics' to both sides. Brandom's affirmative understanding of pragmatics aims to reconstruct the contingent linguistic norms to which a linguistic community intersubjectively commits itself so as to be able to communicate. To this extent, his is a radically de-transcendentalized type of theory, but one that attempts to fill the old (theoreticist) concept of pragmatics with new pragmatist content. In contrast to Brandom, therefore, I would suggest, for reasons of terminological clarity, reserving the noun 'pragmatics' (but not the adjective 'pragmatic', which is closely linked with the noun 'pragmatism') for the quasi-transcendental theoretical undertakings traditionally linked with it. For critique of Brandom on this point see also Rorty 1998c. Summarizing at the end of his essay, Rorty

Rorty's reading of the 'pragmaticization of analytic philosophy' (Rorty 1982b, xxi) initiated by Wittgenstein, Sellars, Quine and Davidson has often been wrongly understood as leaving nothing for philosophy under the auspices of pragmatic naturalization but its self-dissolution. In the closing passages of the *Mirror of Nature*, however, Rorty stresses very clearly that 'there is no danger of philosophy's "coming to an end."'[64] What, in Rorty's view, might and should come to an end under the auspice of the pragmaticization movement is the subject of philosophy's regressive insistence on the theoreticistically contoured disciplinary matrix of 'the traditional problems of modern philosophy'. (Rorty 1979, 394)

In the wake of the Wittgenstein-Sellars-Quine-Davidson attack, this insistence, according to Rorty, is to be replaced with a transformative self-image of philosophical thinking, through which it becomes possible for philosophy to work in close cooperation with the individual sciences and arts in developing a pragmatic vocabulary. This new vocabulary of philosophy no longer attempts to analyze or justify the foundations of the individual empirical sciences, arts or technologies. Its concern is rather with a 'new way of describing knowledge and inquiry' (Rorty 1992d, 373) which puts the emphasis (from the external perspective) on effective causal relations and (from the internal perspective) on normatively bound aspects of the utility of knowledge processes, to be described by means of cultural and social sciences.

With this 'new way of describing knowledge and inquiry' (Rorty 1992d, 373) a second aspect of Rorty's use of the concept 'pragmatic' comes into play, one linking 'pragmatic' with 'transformative' in the sense of 'abnormal', 'innovative' and 'modifying'. This use is closely connected with the opposition of normal and abnormal discourse central to the third ambivalence of the linguistic turn. The pragmatic vocabulary that Rorty recommends for philosophy does not aim regressively to solve or dissolve old

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stresses with regard to Brandom's terminological conservatism: 'It is hard to pour new wine into old bottles without confusing the customers.' (Rorty 1998c, 134)

[64] Rorty 1979, 394. Cf. here also Rorty 1998b, 47 n16. On the critical debate about what he calls the 'demonizing way of looking at things' with Rorty reception, see Ramberg 2004.

philosophical problems with new means. Rather, characteristic of Rorty's 'new way' is the view that in being described using a consistent pragmatic vocabulary, philosophy's theoreticist textbook problems are to recede into the background and be replaced by new questions and problems.

The linguistic turn's pragmatic twist can be understood as transformative (or abnormal) in three different ways. It can be understood, first, as transformative in the *weak sense* of a transition taking place, within the continuous tradition of philosophical research, from an old disciplinary matrix to a new one. It can also, secondly, be grasped as transformative in the *strong sense* of a typological change affecting even basic definitions within the activity of philosophical research. And it can, thirdly, be understood as transformative in the *strongest sense*, namely that as an activity philosophical activity acquires a new definition in the process of its pragmaticization, one that makes *transformativity itself* the defining feature of philosophical deeds. Philosophy will then no longer be apprehended as methodical analysis – either empirical or nonempirical – of existing facts or available linguistic structures, but grasped and practised as a transformative activity that works experimentally to change common sense, and in this way to reshape concrete knowledge practices and factual forms of knowledge with an eye to the future.

In the *Mirror of Nature* and *Consequences of Pragmatism* (although not in his introduction to *The Linguistic Turn*), the pragmatic 'new way' of philosophy is genealogically reconstructed by Rorty in such a way that the decisive approaches to developing a pragmatic vocabulary emerge from the linguistic turn's own immanent dialectic. A particular point is made of this view of things in Rorty's programmatic essay 'Epistemological Behaviorism and the De-Transcendentalization of Analytic Philosophy' (Rorty 1985), which appeared three years after the publication of *Consequences of Pragmatism*. In this essay Rorty distinguishes three sorts of author within the Wittgenstein-Sellars-Quine-Davidson line of attack.

The first group of authors operates – in terms of the framework of the ambivalences previously reconstructed in recourse to Rorty's 1967 introduction – within the second ambivalence of the linguistic turn. Sellars and Quine are authors of this type. They prepare the pragmaticization of analytic philosophy negatively with therapeutic detranscendentalizing measures. Against this, Wittgenstein features as a hybrid type. On the one hand, his thinking still operates very strongly within the second ambivalence of the linguistic turn; but, on the other hand, with him we already find transitions to the problem-level of the third ambivalence. The third type of author distinguished by Rorty is represented by Donald Davidson, with whom the transition from the problem-level of the second ambivalence to that of the third takes place in a more radical manner than with Wittgenstein. (Cf. Rorty 1991c, esp. 58)

In Rorty's view it is therefore Davidson who, within the Wittgenstein-Sellars-Quine-Davidson lineage, made the central contribution to the linguistic turn's pragmatic twist. As will be seen, on the basis of commonalities emphasized by Rorty, differences between Rorty and Davidson nonetheless remain. But before looking at Davidson and the third ambivalence of the linguistic turn in more detail, I would like to show that, and how, the thinking of Wittgenstein, Sellars and Quine – when related to the three reconstructed ambivalences of the linguistic turn – is determined by the second ambivalence of the linguistic turn.

4. Wittgenstein, Quine and Sellars

The second ambivalence of the linguistic turn results from the tension between a constructive, problem-solving and a therapeutic, problem-*diss*olving treatment of modern philosophy's traditional basic problems. With Wittgenstein such a tension is to be diagnosed in two respects. First, his thinking breaks down into two philosophical positions: the logicist position propounded by the young Wittgenstein of the *Tractatus* (1921), and the use-theoretical view developed by the late Wittgenstein in the

Philosophical Investigations (posthumous, 1953).[65] The constructive claim of Wittgenstein's early major work, as formulated in its preface, is to 'have found, on all essential points, the final solution of the problems' – i.e. of the problems of philosophy. (Wittgenstein 1961, 4) Against this, the therapeutic approach of the *Philosophical Investigations* aims not at the solution of the theoreticist textbook problems of modern philosophy, but rather at their dissolution.[66]

Secondly, the perspective of the *Philosophical Investigations* is in itself ambivalent. On the one hand, Wittgenstein (as the therapeutic philosopher) treats ironically the programme he had advocated in the *Tractatus* of a philosophy of language founded on logic, and now grants philosophy only the negative task of unmasking false claims to purity. On the other hand, he himself (as a transformative philosopher in the weak sense) again takes up the idea he had initially ridiculed of a distinction between the empirical and the grammatical, or between nonphilosophical and philosophical investigations, in order to develop an 'overview theory of philosophy'.[67]

The thinking of Sellars and Quine is also determined to a large extent by the second ambivalence of the linguistic turn. But they differ from Wittgenstein, who (as a transformative philosopher in the strong sense) simultaneously laid important foundations for a pragmatic philosophical vocabulary – to be looked at in more detail in the third chapter below. The achievements of Sellars and Quine, however, where these became

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[65] The difference between the positions of the early and late Wittgenstein can also be described in terms of the first ambivalence of the linguistic turn. Equally, the inner tension that permeates the thinking of the late Wittgenstein simultaneously implies a relation to the third ambivalence, to be expanded on in the next chapter. In the present context I limit myself to reconstructing Wittgenstein's thinking with respect to the second ambivalence.

[66] In this the project of the *Philosophical Investigations* emerges consistently from the immanent failure of the *Tractatus* programme. – Cf. Wittgenstein's summary at the end of the *Tractatus*: 'My propositions serve as elucidations if the following way: anyone who understands me eventually recognizes them as nonsensical, when he has used them – as steps – to climb up beyond them. (He must, so to speak, throw away the ladder after he has climbed up on it.)' (Wittgenstein 1961, 74 [6.54]).

[67] Kenny 1984, 45. On Wittgenstein's conception of reason in the context of language-games and forms of life cf. also Welsch 1995, 396-424, esp. 408-416.

pioneering in making possible the linguistic turn's pragmatic stage, are primarily to be described as destructive or therapeutic. In this sense, Rorty observes: 'Neither Quine nor Sellars [...] has developed a new conception of philosophy in any detail.' (Rorty 1985, 96) The two authors' significant achievements in the history of philosophy lie rather in having problematized, or specifically destroying, fundamental dogmas and basic distinctions that had served – from Kant through to the main representatives of both the linguistic turn's schools – as unquestioned fundaments of the theoreticist determination of the task for the modern subject philosophy as an autonomous discipline vis-à-vis the sciences.

Sellars therapeutically questioned the distinction between the empirically given and the conceptually conceived. Quine destroyed the distinction between the synthetic-contingent and the analytic-necessary, along with the separation of philosophy and science linked with this.[68] The specific ambivalence of Quine's and Sellars's positions is reflected in the fact that each respectively failed to recognize as problematic the distinction questioned by the other, and more or less unquestioningly presupposed it in his own constructive programme: 'It is as if Quine, having renounced the conceptual-empirical, analytic-synthetic, and language-fact distinctions, is still not quite able to renounce that between the given and the postulated. Conversely, Sellars, having triumphed over the latter, could not quite renounce the former cluster.' (Rorty 1985, 96)

With a view to both Sellars and Quine, it should be added that transformative features are also to be recognized in the constructive elements of their naturalistic thinking. But these are transformative features only in the *weak sense* explained above. For both thinkers conceived of their transition to naturalistic discourse as a change in the disciplinary matrix of the subject of philosophy, a change taking place within a defined type of philosophical activity presupposed to be continuous. Hence Sellars critically emphasizes that 'we now realize that the atomistic conception of philosophy is a snare and a delusion' (Sellars 1997, 80) and that the hierarchical and separatist structuring of the disciplinary matrix of subjects is to be problematized. But at the same time, in assuming

– as if it were self-evident – 'that philosophy is not science' (Sellars 1997, 80), he adheres to the dogmatic division of labour between the empirical sciences, concerned with contingent synthetic truths, and nonempirical philosophy, which is to deal in necessary analytic truths.

The transformative aspects of Sellars's understanding of philosophy are reflected in his critique of the atomistic view of academic discourse that encompasses both philosophy and science. According to this, 'discourse was viewed as a map, subdivided into a side-by-side of sub-maps, each representing a sub-region in a side-by-side of regions making up the total subject matter of discourse'. (Sellars 1997, 80) The nonempirical discipline of philosophy delivers, on this view, conceptual definitions and logical analyses, whereas the individual sciences work at empirical problems on the basis of the terminology clarified by philosophy. Against this, the new configuration for philosophy's analytical work is described by Sellars as follows: '"analysis" no longer connotes the definition of terms, but rather the clarification of the logical structure – in the broadest sense – of discourse, and discourse no longer appears as one plane parallel to another, but as a tangle of intersecting dimensions whose relations with one another and with extra-linguistic fact conform to no single or simple pattern.' (Sellars 1997, 80)

This brings to light a new structure for the disciplinary matrix of philosophy, one no longer centring hierarchically on a serving fundamental discipline, but instead operating in a networked manner. In this sense, Sellars emphasizes: 'No longer can the philosopher interested in perception say "let him who is interested in prescriptive discourse analyze its concepts and leave me in peace." Most if not all philosophically interesting concepts are caught up in more than one dimension of discourse'. (Sellars 1997, 80 f.) Against this background the relationship between philosophy and science also changes for Sellars. If philosophy is not only responsible for the atomistic analysis and definition of individual scientific terms, but aims to analyze holistically the basic structure and entire relational nexus of everyday, scientific and philosophical discourse; that is, if philosophy is to be understood as a 'discourse-about-man-in-all-discourse', then 'familiarity with the trend of

[68] Sellars 1997 and Quine 1951 – originally of 1956 and 1951 respectively.

scientific thought [in its relation to philosophical activity, MS] is essential to the *appraisal* of the framework categories of the common-sense picture of the world.' (Sellars 1997, 81)

At the same time, Sellars takes for granted that a holistic philosophy aiming at an 'articulated and integrated vision of man-in-the-universe' (Sellars 1997, 81) remains structurally separate from the sciences to the extent that it makes these its object in a specifically philosophical manner. For Sellars – in contrast to Quine, Davidson and Rorty – philosophical activity as such remains strictly separated methodologically from the empirical research practice of science. This becomes clear when the previous quote is seen in context: 'The procedures of philosophical analysis as such may make no use of the methods or results of the sciences. But familiarity with the trend of scientific thought is essential to the *appraisal* of the framework categories of the common-sense picture of the world.' And in the same context Sellars makes clear: 'I am not saying that in order to discern the logic – the polydimensional logic – of ordinary discourse, it is necessary to make use of the results or the methods of science.' (Sellars 1997, 81)

Unlike Quine, who in *Word and Object* straightforwardly notes that 'philosophy […], as an effort to get clearer on things, is not to be distinguished in essential points of purpose and method from good and bad science.' (Quine 1960, 3 f.) For Quine, common sense, science, and philosophy form a whole, distinguished only gradually but not in principle from one another. Already in his early essay 'Two Dogmas of Empiricism' he described this as a 'total system' comprising a 'man-made fabric which impinges on experience only along the edges'. (Quine 1953, 44, 42) Whereas Quine's residual dogmatism – that of empirically binding our 'web of belief'[69] to a holistically conceived dimension of immediate experience – was problematized by Sellars (and later, in particular, by Davidson and Rorty), Quine's naturalistic description of the inner constitution of the network of human beliefs points the way beyond Sellars's adherence to a deep structural divide between philosophical and scientific discourse.

[69] Such is the title of the book Quine published together with Joseph S. Ulian (Quine/Ulian 1970).

Thus, in his essay of the same name, Quine describes the programme of ‘naturalized epistemology’ developed in his major work *Word and Object* as not only ‘dislodging […] epistemology from its old status of first philosophy’, but as further having the effect ‘that epistemology merges with psychology, as well as with linguistics.’ (Quine 1969, 87, 89 f.) This deliberate ‘rubbing out of boundaries’ (Quine 1969, 90) between philosophy and science results consistently from Quine’s critique of the dogmatic opposing pairs of analytic/synthetic and necessary/contingent, with the help of which the theoreticist delimitation of the subject of modern philosophy from the empirical sciences had been sustained in the framework of logical empiricism as well as in both schools of linguistic philosophy.

At the same time, it is important to see that the dissolution of the borders between philosophy and science advocated by Quine did not aim at a new definition of philosophical activity as such. In Quine’s view, the disciplinary matrix of philosophy can become intertwined with the disciplinary matrix of empirical sciences such as psychology or linguistics without endangering the concerns proper to philosophical epistemology. Not only, according to Quine, are these concerns not betrayed by the naturalization movement he furthered; rather, they are cured of their traditional aporias and hence first rendered realizable in a progressive manner.

This self-assessment becomes particularly clear when Quine distinguishes himself from the late Wittgenstein and the therapeutic movement within linguistic philosophy. Quine writes: ‘Wittgenstein and his followers, mainly at Oxford, found a residual philosophical vocation in therapy: in curing philosophers of the delusion that there were epistemological problems. But I think that at this point it may be more useful to say rather that epistemology still goes on, though in a new setting and a clarified status. Epistemology, or something like it, simply falls into place as a chapter of psychology and hence of natural science.’ (Quine 1969, 82) Although, as Quine continues, it now empirically ‘studies a natural phenomenon, viz., a physical human subject’, naturalized epistemology is at the same time dedicated to a subject ‘that we are prompted to study for

somewhat the same reasons that always prompted epistemology; namely, in order to see how evidence relates to theory, and in what ways one's theory of nature transcends any available evidence.' (Quine 1969, 82, 83)

Quine's and Sellars's respectively differing adherence to the presupposition of a continuously enduring theoreticist determination of the task of philosophical activity points to the fact that their thinking moves within the second ambivalence of the linguistic turn. The behaviouristic naturalism they developed as a new paradigm of philosophical research is one-sidedly referred, by Sellars and Quine, to the basic questions of the subject's modern tradition, i.e. it is set in the regressive horizon of the question as to the problem-solving or problem-dissolving potential of the new (naturalistic) research matrix. They each stand up for this new matrix in different ways: Sellars, by restructuring the inner disciplinary constitution of philosophy, while at the same time outwardly securing the subject in its academic identity; and Quine, by bringing transdisciplinary movement to the subject's borders, while sticking to the basic epistemological orientation of philosophical activity and enlisting the help of the sciences for this theoreticist orientation.

In this respect the situation with Donald Davidson's thinking is unlike that of Sellars's and Quine's. Davidson overcomes the second ambivalence of the linguistic turn by understanding the determination of philosophy's task as neither problem solving nor problem dissolution, but instead starting with an understanding of philosophy that is transformative in the strong sense, i.e. that redefines philosophical activity itself. This links Davidson with Rorty, who at the same time (going beyond Davidson) promotes a conception of philosophy that is transformative in the strongest sense, according to which philosophical activity is in itself to be transformative.

5. Davidson and Rorty

Based on critique of the 'dualism of scheme and content' (Davidson 1984a, 189) in his influential 1974 essay 'On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme', Davidson developed the decisive point of application within the linguistic turn for Rorty's suggestions concerning the development of a consistently pragmatic philosophical vocabulary. In a retrospective of his own intellectual biography Rorty emphasizes the central importance of this essay for the development of his own thinking as follows: 'In 1971 my philosophical views were shaken up, and began to be transformed. That was the year in which Davidson let me see the text of his 1970 Locke Lectures, which included an early draft of his "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme".'[70]

Davidson's considerations focus on his critique of a conception of philosophy that centres on what he characterizes as the 'empirical' question concerning human language's schematizing relation to reality. The original scene underlying this question results, according to Davidson, from the simple idea of an 'organizing system and something waiting to be organized'. (Davidson 1984a, 189) This original scene, Davidson continues, underlies many parts of contemporary philosophy (including Quine's philosophy) as 'a dogma of empiricism, the third dogma'.[71]

Looking back to the definitions of the concept of the linguistic turn found with Bergmann and Quine (cited at the start of the chapter), it becomes clear how the methodological claim of linguistically-turned philosophy is linked with the scheme-content dualism that Davidson problematizes. In both definitions of the linguistic turn a distinction is made between object-related 'talk about the world' or content-related 'talking in certain terms' on the one side, and reflectively 'talking about a suitable language' or semantic ascent to

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[70] Rorty 1998h, 51. Compare this with Davidson's comment: 'I have always been grateful to Richard Rorty for his response to my thoughts about conceptual schemes. For a time it seemed to me almost no one else understood what I was getting at in "On the Very Idea of a Conceptual Scheme", and it mattered a good deal to me that Rorty not only grasped the main point but also endorsed it'. (Davidson 2000, 595)

[71] Davidson 1984a, 189. On Davidson's critique of Quine see ibid., 191. Cf. also Quine's (1981, 38-42) reply to this critique and Davidson's (1990) reaction. On the differences between Davidson and Sellars see Rorty 1991e.

'talking about' the terms concerned on the other side.[72] The methodological idea guiding the linguistic turn thus consists of the problematic assumption that reflection on the linguistic constitution of our contentful reference to objects shifts discussion to a level 'where [the various] parties are better agreed on the objects (viz., words) and on the main terms concerning them.'[73]

This guiding assumption is problematic for two reasons. First, because it presupposes that we can make a clear incision between word and object, between language and reality, hence between scheme and content. Second, because it insinuates that this incision opens up a methodologically distinguished space of philosophical scheme-analyses in which we 'are better agreed' (Quine 1960, 272) than is the case in the space of contentful referring (i.e. use of the scheme). This insinuation is opposed by the fact that, although in some circumstances reflective recourse to our use of language allows problems and dissent to appear more clearly, as a rule it in no way leads to greater agreement and consensus. This is because analysis of the use of language cannot be carried out as a pure and neutral analysis of the scheme, but must always take its respective point of departure in the midst of given use of language, so that problems of content reappear in a modified (and often even accentuated) form at the supposed metalevel of analysis.

Davidson contrasts the linguistic dogma that reflective analysis of the scheme is a genuinely philosophical feat with the 'coherence theoretical' holism that he advocates: 'What distinguishes a coherence theory is simply the claim that nothing can count as a reason for holding a belief except another belief. Its partisan rejects as unintelligible the request for a ground or source of justification of another ilk.' (Davidson 2001b, 141) With this, both recourse to something immediately given to the senses (uninterpreteted content) and reference to conceptual schemes (linguistic categories, logical forms, formal-pragmatic universals) are excluded. This becomes clear in some of the 'Afterthoughts' in which Davidson later hones his initial formulation: 'My emphasis on

[72] Bergmann 1964, 177 and Quine 1960, 271 f. respectively.
[73] Quine 1960, 272. Some of the problems with this assumption are discussed by Rorty 1992c, 362 f.

coherence was probably just a way of making a negative point, that "all that counts as evidence or justification for a belief must come from the same totality of belief to which it belongs."' (Davidson 2001c, 155)

Davidson's critique can also be applied in a modified form to the advanced variant of scheme-content dualism advocated in current debate by John McDowell. (McDowell 1996) McDowell starts with the assumption of already preinterpreted content, i.e. an in itself already mediated given, so that the strong dualism of scheme and (uninterpreted) content found in classical empiricism between the logical space of nature and the logical space of reasons is transformed into the weak dualism of scheme and (interpreted) content. Critique of the reflected empiricism advocated by McDowell, for which nature is essentially conceptually preformed 'second nature', takes its outset for Davidson and Rorty in the fact that the dualism of scheme and content reappears in a weakened form within McDowell's space of reasons. The critique of McDowell that results from this will be looked at in more detail in the final section of this chapter.

In contrast to McDowell, Davidson urges a consistent break with scheme-content dualism. He suggests restricting philosophy to the behaviourist perspective, already brought into play by Quine in *Word and Object*, of empirical linguistic research. In doing this Davidson simultaneously undertakes decisive changes to Quine's modelling of the field linguist's activity. For Davidson, the physical objects to which native speakers, functioning as experimental subjects, are linguistically conditioned, and which are to be described from the ethnocentric perspective of the linguist, replace the neural stimuli that Quine claimed to be neutral points of reference.[74] Questions concerning the linguistic schematism of interpreting 'our surface irritations' (Quine 1960, 22), starting with the assumption of a neutral point of reference (neural stimuli), are replaced with Davidson by the hermeneutic naturalism of a theory of 'radical interpretation' (Davidson 1984b). With

[74] Cf. Quine 1960, Chapter 2 (26-79), especially 31 ff. On the delimitation of the 'distal theory' advocated by Davidson from the 'proximal theory' favoured by Quine, see Davidson 1990, 73. On the overall context cf. also Rorty 1986a, 339 f.

the latter – as Rorty succinctly puts it – the field linguist keeps ‘going round and round the hermeneutic circle until he begins to feel at home.’ (Rorty 1986a, 339)

Davidson’s theory of radical interpretation targets external causes from the external perspective of the field linguist, i.e. the causal mechanisms and processes of conditioning that lead to a certain sign’s being used in a certain way in a certain situation. Davidson’s linguistic ethnologist is well aware that no neutral procedure is available to him in describing these causes. He can only attempt to adapt the beliefs attributed to speakers investigated in the field as far as possible to those beliefs he himself brings to the situation. The linguistic field researcher is at the same time aware that radical interpretation begins at home. He knows that ‘there is nothing more to be known about the relation between beliefs and the rest of reality than what we learn from an empirical study of causal transactions between organisms and their environment.’ (Rorty 1986a, 341)

Characteristic of both the field linguist’s procedure abroad and the acquisition of one’s own first language is, according to Davidson, what he calls the situation of ‘triangulation’. (Davidson 2001d, 202) For in both cases it holds that ‘the identification of the objects of thought rests […] on a social basis’, i.e. it takes place in a ‘simple triangular arrangement of […] two agents and a commonly observed object’. (Davidson, 2001d, 202; 1990, 70) The first basics in the process of learning language, in the framework of which ‘one person learns from another to speak and think of ordinary things’, is described by Davidson as follows: ‘the learner is rewarded, whether deliberately or not, when the learner makes sounds or otherwise responds in ways the teacher finds appropriate […]. Success at the first level is achieved to the extent that the learner responds with sounds the teacher finds similar to situations the teacher finds similar. The teacher is responding to two things: the external situation and the responses of the learner. The learner is responding to two things: the external situation and the responses of the teacher.’ In summary, Davidson highlights: ‘All these relations are causal. Thus the essential triangle is formed which makes communication about shared objects and events possible.’ (Davidson 2001d, 203)

With Davidson the conception of an 'externalized epistemology', linked with this social-pragmatic triangulation, takes the place of the introspective Cartesian perspective of epistemological tradition, which (until and including Quine) was more or less 'essentially first person'. (Davidson 2001d, 194) In the conditions of a linguistic turn that had remained in the hold of content-scheme dualism linguistic competence was grasped (in part still with Wittgenstein, but particularly with Sellars and Quine) as an ability, one to be investigated introspectively, to form content within a differentially structured or holistically conceived semiotic scheme and so to make things distinguishable and identifiable as things. Davidson opposes this view with the provocative thesis 'that there is no such thing as a language' (Davidson 1986, 446). This thesis is a consequence of the break with 'the third dogma' of empiricism, a basic premiss of the modern philosophical tradition, brought out by Davidson, that can be followed back to Kant and which underlies the various readings of the linguistic turn from Carnap and Bergmann through to Sellars and Quine.[75]

Against the previously dominant view, Davidson suggests 'thinking of linguistic competence as a kind of know-how' (Rorty 1994, 976), that is, as a set of pragmatic instruments allowing us to interact with other people and the nonhuman environment. It is this aspect of Rorty's use of 'pragmatic', in the sense of 'naturalistic' and 'behaviouristic', that he emphasizes in his interpretation of Davidson. This accentuation becomes explicit in Davidson's suggestion that we should 'erase[] the boundary between knowing a language and knowing our way around in the world more generally.' (Davidson 1986, 446)

In the conditions of such a pragmatized understanding of language, a new typological determination of the philosopher's task occurs with Davidson which makes him a transformative philosopher in the strong sense. Whereas Quine deliberately enlisted the field linguist's empirical work to serve philosophically in addressing given

[75] Davidson 1984a, 189. On the historical link with Kant, cf. Davidson 2001e, 40.

epistemological issues, Davidson understands philosophical activity as an activity with an aim that is not predetermined, but acquired in the midst of the field linguist's work.

Philosophy, on Davidson's view, is able to bring to the field linguist's research context certain logical devices that result from Tarski's truth theory, and which Davidson enabled us to apply to natural languages. But this – at least, so Davidson believes – does not amount to adding to, or superimposing on the field linguist's perspective a second, perhaps genuinely philosophical perspective. On the contrary, on the basis of the triangulation situation he foregrounds, Davidson calls for a typological transformation of philosophical activity. This transformation consists precisely of dissolving the philosophical perspective into the contingent external perspective of a field linguist working empirically with these formal devices, and hence determining scientific activity itself in a new nonreductionist manner.

Admittedly, in a recent essay Davidson emphasizes: 'I have often explained that radical interpretation does not attempt to provide useful hints to real linguists, or to criticize their methods.' (Davidson 1995, 13) And this he explains further as follows: 'The point of the theory is not to describe how we actually interpret, but to speculate on what it is about thought and language that makes them interpretable.' (Davidson 1995, 8) But, on the other hand, in the same context he attempts to show that his interpretationalist approach clears the way for a new kind of practice in psychological linguistic research: 'Since my own approach to the description, analysis (in a rough sense), and explanation of thought, language and action has, on the one hand, what I take to be some of the characteristics of a science, and has, on the other hand, come under attack […] as being radically "unscientific", I plan to examine my theory, if that is the word, to see how or whether it can be defended as science.' (Davidson 1995, 6) The point of Davidson's comment here is that the theory of radical translation, which he also speaks of as a 'unified theory of speech and action', is to be understood as the basis of a yet-to-be-developed

nonreductively operating science of rationality. A central aspect of this theory, according to Davidson, would be 'the art of applying the formal theory to an actual individual'.[76]

Davidson and Rorty share the view that the pragmatic naturalization of philosophy of language and epistemology is to be radicalized beyond Wittgenstein, Sellars and Quine. Common to them both is also the diagnosis and affirmation of a radical change, a 'sea change in contemporary philosophical thought', linked with the establishment of the pragmatic vocabulary in philosophy.[77] However for Rorty, unlike Davidson, this pragmatic naturalization leads to a transformative conception of philosophical activity in the strongest sense, i.e. in the sense of an activity that in itself is transformative. According to this conception, philosophy becomes an epistemological experiment, directed towards the enablement of future changes in common sense.

By contrast, Davidson understands himself as advocating a typological change less radical than that suggested by Rorty. In answer to the question as to 'Where Rorty and I differ, if we do', Davidson once answered: 'Rorty wants to dwell on […] a position which allows us […] to abandon the attempt to provide a general justification for knowledge claims – a justification that is neither possible nor needed. Rorty sees the history of Western philosophy as a confused and victorless battle between unintelligible scepticism and lame attempts to answer it. Epistemology from Descartes to Quine seems to me just one complex, and by no means unilluminating, chapter in the philosophical enterprise. If that chapter is coming to a close, it will be through recourse to modes of analysis and adherence to standards of clarity that have always distinguished the best philosophy, and will, with luck and enterprise, continue to do so.' (Davidson 2001c, 157)

Davidson's hermeneutic naturalism aims to establish a philosophical-linguistic practice that is to be termed genuinely theoretical in the sense of being descriptive and observational. In Davidson's view, the scientific research practice of the philosophically

[76] Davidson 1995, 8. Davidson 1986 also points in this direction. For the preliminary stages of his final position see Davidson 1974. Rorty 1987 provides a systematic survey of Davidson's nonreductive naturalism.

well-versed field linguist is not concerned with *changing* linguistic reality. Instead Davidson's enterprise aims for an empirically founded and hermeneutically relativized *description* of different concrete languages – i.e. description bound to a particular culture's contingent system of norms – that are grasped as pragmatic tools of interaction.

Against this background, Davidson's *descriptive* pragmatism can be set apart from Rorty's markedly *transformative* pragmatism. Whereas Davidson's descriptive pragmatism aims at the formal-logical reconstruction of the respective truth theories specific to different natural languages, Rorty's transformative pragmatism does without the analytic devices of symbolic logic because he is concerned not with the scientific analysis of *existing* forms of interaction, but with the politically and socially motivated shaping of *future* practices. Unlike Davidson, who reconfigures philosophical activity together with the research practice of the linguist, Rorty is guided in his redetermination of philosophical activity not by a theoreticist model of empirical science, but by models drawn from cultural practices in literature and art that directly target change and which he transfers to the natural and cultural sciences and technology.

The sociopolitical perspectivization linked with the pragmatic philosophical vocabulary recommended by Rorty was not yet contained in the *Mirror of Nature* and *Consequences of Pragmatism*. It was first developed in more recent works in the 1990s, published in the wake of his later major work *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*. The basic strategic idea of these works has been described by Rorty, in his essay 'Hilary Putnam and the Relativist Menace', as follows: 'In short, my strategy [...] is to move everything over from epistemology and metaphysics to cultural politics, from claims to knowledge and appeals to self-evidence to suggestions about what we should try.'[78] The linking of philosophical activity back to democracy, expressed in this strategy, is central to Rorty's (in the strongest sense) transformative pragmatism. It marks the third use of 'pragmatic' found with Rorty, a use that will be foregrounded increasingly in the further course of this book.

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[77] Davidson 2001e, 39, cf. also 47 f.
[78] Rorty 1998b, 57. Cf. also Rorty 1989, 68; 1998i, esp. 638.

Before I conclude by looking at Rorty's 'strategy for shifting philosophers' attention from the problems of metaphysics and epistemology to the needs of democratic politics' (Rorty 1998i, 638) in more detail, the presentation of his overall view of contemporary philosophy's situation must first be updated to reflect the stance developed in his recent publications. In this way, the present chapter's considerations can be systematically assessed in relation to analysis of contemporary philosophy's transitional situation, providing the background for describing an extended spectrum of possible tasks for media philosophy in the next chapter.

6. Representationalism and antirepresentationalism

A central characteristic of the pragmatic vocabulary championed by Rorty in current philosophical debate is that he no longer attempts to adopt a position within the debates of the theoreticistically oriented subject philosophy. This characteristic results, as has been shown, from the pragmatic twist that Rorty, following on from Wittgenstein, Quine, Sellars and Davidson, has given the linguistic turn. In the second (1992) retrospective essay in *The Linguistic Turn* this twist is summarized in the following words: 'insofar as the linguistic turn made a distinctive contribution to philosophy I think that it was […] to have helped shift from talk of experience as a medium of representation to talk of language as such a medium – a shift which, as it turned out, made it easier to set aside the notion of representation itself.' (Rorty 1992d, 373) In this latter determination – that of 'setting aside the notion of representation itself' – lies the decisive point of difference distinguishing the pragmatic intellectual path suggested by Rorty, following on from Davidson, from the intellectual tradition of the modern subject of philosophy stretching from Kant to Quine.

The significance of this point of difference is clearly expressed in Rorty's slogan 'pragmatism as antirepresentationalism'.[79] To bring out the inner tension which, in his view, is characteristic of contemporary philosophy, Rorty suggests distinguishing representationalism and antirepresentationalism as the basic movements of modern philosophy. Rorty, along with Davidson, understands 'representationalism' to be a type of philosophical thinking centring on 'the "idea idea" in all its forms' (Rorty 1986a, 344). By this he means the view, one guided by a scheme-content dualism, that knowledge takes place in a medium of mind – defined in terms of intuitions, concepts, ideas, cognitive faculties, acts of constitution, schemata, intentions, constructions, propositions, meanings etc. – and that this medium, as a distinguished object of philosophical reflection, simultaneously serves as the content justifying the institutional autonomy, vis-à-vis the sciences, of philosophy as a taught subject.

From the representationalist perspective the sciences are understood to be cognitive practices which, although each making use of representations, are basically determined so as not to make these themselves the object of reflection. This does, according to the basic representationalist view, occur in philosophy, distinguishing this from the individual sciences. Antirepresentationalism in Rorty's sense questions not only the distinction of philosophy as a scheme-reflecting discipline in contrast to the scheme-using individual sciences,[80] but also the basic view, underlying this distinction, of a representational medium of knowledge that is either applied in relation to objects in concrete cognitive practices or made its own object in a reflective attitude. Instead, the antirepresentationalist task of philosophy is seen in liberating philosophy, science, and common sense of the '"idea idea"' underlying representationalism, and rendering knowledge, thought, and speaking intelligible without recourse to '*tertia*', i.e. postulated mental mediators. (Rorty 1986a, 344) It makes no difference whether these *tertia* – as in the tradition – are grasped as noncausal concepts or propositions, and hence to be

[79] Rorty, 1990. Cf. also Rorty 1998i, 635-637.
[80] This challenge is already found with Quine who held the thesis, one tending to reductionism, that scheme analysis, as the investigation of 'stimulus meanings' (Quine 1960, 31 ff.), is to be realized successfully only using the naturalistic means of his physicalist understanding of natural science.

investigated by nonempirical means, or – as with Quine – as causal schemes of stimuli, and hence to be investigated by empirical means.

The opposition introduced by Rorty between representationalism and antirepresentationalism must be clearly distinguished from the distinction between realism and antirealism introduced by Michael Dummett.[81] A lot of misunderstandings in current debate about the self-image of contemporary philosophy have resulted from straightforwardly equating the former opposition with the latter one. In Rorty's use, the distinction between realist copy theories and antirealist construction theories of knowledge serves not as a synonym for the contraposition of representationalism and antirepresentationalism, but is an internal difference at work *within* the realm of representationalist positions. This is explicitly stressed by Rorty when he writes: 'I claim that the representationalism-vs.-antirepresentationalism issue is distinct from the realism-vs.-antirealism one, because the latter issue arises only for representationalists.' (Rorty 1991d, 2) And elsewhere Rorty writes: 'on my view the futile metaphysical struggle between idealism and physicalism was superseded, in the early years of this century, by a metaphysical struggle between the pragmatists […] and the antipragmatists. […] The latter struggle is *beyond* realism and anti-realism.'[82]

However, in earlier works, especially by using the mirror metaphor in his *The Mirror of Nature*, Rorty himself contributed to the fact that his critique of representationalism has been understood not in the broad sense, as a critique of every 'general theory of representation' (Rorty 1979, 1), but in the narrow sense as a critique of the copy-theory paradigm. Thus Wolfgang Welsch has objected to Rorty's critique of philosophy in *The Mirror of Nature* that 'modern philosophy since the 17th century […] had understood knowledge […] precisely not according to the mirror model. […] In terms of its approach, the modern concept of knowledge was aligned not to reflection, but to

[81] Dummett 1978. On the realism-antirealism debate see the collection of essays edited by the Forum für Philosophie Bad Homburg (1992). On Rorty's contraposition of representationalism and antirepresentationalism see, for example, Rorty 1990, 1991d, 1991e, 1999c.
[82] Rorty 1986a, 354. Cf. also Rorty 1986b.

construction.' (Welsch 1995, 213 f.) This criticism is right to a certain extent, but should at the same time to be relativized somewhat.

It is true that in *The Mirror of Nature* epistemological constructivism, or antirealism, – which Welsch attributes to Descartes and Kant (Welsch 1995, 214) – takes a back seat to the idea that what was specific to modern epistemology is that Descartes, Locke and Kant thought humans could adequately mirror nature only if the mirror of human consciousness is epistemologically polished regularly to avoid aberrations. At the same time, however, Rorty is to be defended against Welsch's objection to the extent that already in *The Mirror of Nature* modern-age polishing of the mirror of consciousness is taken to culminate in the 'Copernican revolution' to antirealism. For Rorty – just as for Welsch – this consists of Kant's 'taking everything we say to be about something we have "constituted"'.[83]

In his more recent publications Rorty has used the correspondence theory of truth instead of the mirror metaphor as the central characteristic underlying his two variants: 'There is no point to debates between realism and anti-realism, for such debates presuppose the empty and misleading idea of beliefs "being made true".' (Rorty 1986a, 335, cf. 353) The idea that human knowledge aims primarily at giving an adequate representation of reality defines both the copy-theoretical and the constructivist epistemologies. Realistic copy-theories and antirealistic constructivisms might apply different criteria of adequacy and presuppose different concepts of reality, but both remain within the paradigm of representations aiming at correspondence. Whereas in a copy-theory the adequacy of a representation is determined by its relation to a representation-transcendent object, the antirealist criterion of correspondence is defined in representation-immanent terms. The decisive question here is whether the antirealist understanding of representation of a fact

[83] Rorty 1979, 137, 138 f. See also the third and fourth sections of the third chapter of *The Mirror of Nature* in which Rorty brings out Kant's antirealism by showing that Kant 'was the first to think of the foundations of knowledge as propositions rather than objects. Before Kant, an inquiry into "the nature and origin of knowledge" had been a search for privileged inner representations. With Kant, it became a search for the rules which the mind had set up for itself'. (Rorty 1979, 160)

formally corresponds to the rules, apprehended as conditions of possibility, for construction of something as something.[84]

The presupposition common to realistic and antirealistic conceptions of correspondence is, according to Rorty, the assumption of an 'ontological homogeneity' (Rorty 1986a, 338) between beliefs and non-beliefs. The realist, arguing physicalistically, 'thinks that nothing can correspond to a bit of spatio-temporal reality except by being another bit linked to the first by appropriate causal relationships.' The antirealist, arguing idealistically, instead claims that 'nothing can correspond to a representation except a representation'. (Rorty 1986a, 337 f.) This claim is then propped up by the constructivist view 'that there was an intermediary "scheme" which "shaped" the non-beliefs before they became talkable-about'. (Rorty 1986a, 343)

Advanced representationalists such as John McDowell attempt to reconcile realistic and antirealistic figures of thought with one another in a linguistically reflected realism. Rorty describes McDowell's position in relation to the linguistic turn as follows: 'In McDowell's picture, the linguistic turn in philosophy helped us to see that nothing is part of the process of justification which does not have a linguistic shape. It did not, however, take away the need to "make sense of the world-directedness of empirical thinking."'[85] Rorty summarizes McDowell's strategy of combining the two with one another when he subsequently explains that McDowell 'thinks of perceptual appearance as a request to

[84] Martin Heidegger had already pointed out that 'through the Copernican Revolution, the "old" concept of truth in the sense of the "correspondence" (*adaequatio*) of knowledge to the being is so little shaken that it [the Copernican Revolution] actually presupposes it [the old concept of truth], indeed even grounds it for the first time.' His reconstruction of the Kantian argument runs: 'Ontic knowledge can only correspond to beings ["objects"] if this being as being is already first apparent [*offenbar*], i.e., is already first known in the constitution of its Being. Apparentness of beings (ontic truth) revolves around the unveiledness of the constitution of the Being of beings (ontological truth)' (Heidegger 1997, 8f.)

[85] Rorty 1998d, 142. Rorty distinguishes his own assessment of the linguistic turn from this as follows: 'I take the linguistic turn in philosophy […] to be a turn away from the very idea of human answerability to the world.' (Rorty 1998d, 142 f.)

you by the world to make a judgement, but as not yet itself a judgement, even though it has the conceptual form of a judgement.' (Rorty 1998d, 148)

McDowell's basic thought indeed states that the space of experience assures 'a constraint from outside exercises of spontaneity', 'though not from outside what is thinkable, so not from outside the space of concepts'. (McDowell 1996, 144) Based on a reading of Kant inspired by Hegel[86] McDowell starts by assuming that the relation to extralinguistic facts is to be grasped not as immediate certainty, but as a reflectively attained determination of language itself. In this way the realistic intuition of the representation-independence of what our linguistic utterances refer to can be explicated as a determination that is itself linguistically determined, i.e. which itself has interpretative character. If one understands the realistic idiom, with McDowell, in a linguistically reflected form, then this states that although we have no immediate certainty from nonlinguistic entities, within language we are nonetheless right to refer to objects such that we apprehend these as nonlinguistic and interpretation-independent.

In Rorty's view the difficult linguistic rehabilitation of empiricism achieved by McDowell is 'brilliantly original and completely successful'. (Rorty 1998d, 150) But at the same time – and this is the decisive point for Rorty – it is either politically irrelevant, because it cannot be followed by common sense, or, should it against all expectation in the long run become sedimented in the everyday epistemology, politically counter-indicated. For, according to Rorty, McDowell's linguistically reflected concept of experience, just as the empiricist dogmatism rightly criticized by Davidson, ultimately aims at 'the figure of "the world" as a nonhuman authority to whom we owe some sort of respect.' (Rorty 1998d, 150) The sublime authority of an interpretation-independent locus of reference for our linguistic utterances is rightly comprehended by McDowell himself as interpretation, and to this extent partly relativized. But at the same time this interpretationist relativization takes place with the aim of providing legitimation for the realistic reference to transsubjective referential loci which transcend from within the space of intersubjective communication.

One might go beyond McDowell and, with Robert Brandom, comprehend the objectivity of reference as an intersubjective obligation implicitly fixed by the language use we acquire in the context of social practices. But even if one does this, according to Rorty, it must be asked whether it is meaningful and desirable to stick with this intersubjectively acquired language-game of transsubjectivity and referring.[87] Rorty gives two reasons that lead him to answer this question in the negative. Both also apply to the case, which (as already mentioned) is unlikely in Rorty's view, that the social signature of the referring language-game should prove able to make itself explicit not only for philosophers, but also for the man and woman in the street. The first reason given by Rorty, one already found with Davidson, is that by concentrating on transsubjective reference one loses sight of actual use of language as a pragmatic communication tool that functions to enable the coordination of behaviour.

Against this argument it might, with Brandom, be responded that realistic reference and the representationalist terminology linked with it is not (as with McDowell) a determination internal to language itself, but is to be understood as a social tool serving to coordinate behaviour. Rorty anticipates this response in stressing 'that Brandom and Davidson pretty much agree on all the issues and are simply employing different rhetorical strategies to make essentially the same points.' (Rorty 1998c, 132) While Davidson gives the linguistic turn a pragmatic twist by using antirepresentationalist terminology to investigate natural languages as interpersonal instruments of interaction, Brandom's strategy consists of retaining the linguistic turn's representationalist terminology but covertly redefining (in Brandom's sense) a 'normative' basic vocabulary in a pragmatic manner.[88] However, what superficially looks like a merely strategic difference points to a more profound difference in their understandings of philosophy. Rorty makes this clear in commenting: 'But rhetoric matters, especially if one sees, as I

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[86] Cf. McDowell 1998, esp. 466 ff., 490 f.
[87] On this cf. Brandom 1994, 495-613, as well as Rorty 1998c, 130 ff.
[88] For Brandom, who calls his own thinking 'normative pragmatics', 'normative' does not mean 'morally, practically', but 'based on intersubjective obligations'. (Brandom 1994, 3-66)

do, the pragmatist tradition not just as clearing up little messes left behind by the great dead philosophers, but as contributing to a world-historical change in humanity's self-image.' (Rorty 1998c, 132)

The second reason advanced by Rorty against Brandom's representationalist pragmatism results against the background of Rorty's (in the strongest sense) transformative pragmatism, according to which the task of philosophy is to contribute to the development of ever more secularly, democratically, and liberally organized human societies. This is what is meant by Rorty's reading of the pragmatic tradition as an intellectual tradition that has been attempting, ever since William James and John Dewey,[89] to practise philosophy as more than a professionalized speciality. On this view, philosophy is also, indeed above all, to be carried out in a transdisciplinary manner, as a democratically committed mode of thinking actively collaborating in the context of the Enlightenment's political project to bring about 'a world-historical change in humanity's self-image.' (Rorty 1998c, 132)

It is this sociopolitical background against which the previously mentioned rhetorical difference attains its importance for Rorty: 'The choice is between dropping the notions of "answering" and "representing" […] and keeping them. My argument for dropping them is that they preserve an image of the relation between people and nonpeople that might be called "authoritarian" – the image of human beings being subject to a judgement other than that of a consensus of other human beings.' (Rorty 1998c, 135) And, referring directly to Brandom, Rorty continues: 'But I see Brandom's persistence in using the terms "getting right," "really is," and "making true" as tools that will fall into authoritarian hands and be used for reactionary purposes.'[90]

[89] See, for example, James 1979 and Dewey 1985, 1982, 1922, 1984, 1988.
[90] Rorty 1998c, 135. Cf. also Rorty, 1997a, in particular 177: 'My hunch is that Brandom would do well […] to situate his philosophy of language within an immodest metaphilosophical framework, according to which philosophical reflection can reject the intuitions of the vulgar as well as the metaphors of the learned.'

By 'reactionary' or 'authoritarian' purposes Rorty means purposes that are ultimately also reflected in McDowell's linguistically reflective representationalism, described by McDowell himself as a 'relaxed platonism'. (McDowell 1996, 178) The platonic heritage perpetuated by representationalist epistemology consists, according to Rorty, of the ongoing attempt to legitimate some sublime authority to which we owe respect. In his *Hope in Place of Knowledge* (Rorty 1999b) Rorty describes the desire for an inner or outer source of legitimation that transcends intersubjective consensus as the desire of a theoreticist culture, centring on the determination of the human as a cognitive being. Indeed, ever since antiquity knowing has been understood as an activity bereft of practically performed actions and having its end in itself.[91] The concealed, politically motivated hallmark of this separation and of the corresponding definition of the human as essentially a cognitive being is noted by Rorty when, referring to Dewey, he writes: 'He saw all the baneful dualisms of the philosophical tradition as remnants and figurations of the social division between contemplators and doers, between a leisure class and a productive class.'[92]

Curiously, McDowell's thinking itself claims to represent 'a pragmatism less half-baked than Rorty achieves'. (McDowell 1996, 156) But in Rorty's view it remains captive to the theoreticist mould that links the philosophical self-image of modern philosophy as a subject with antiquity. Rorty tries to break this mould with his alternative design for philosophical activity: 'Pragmatists do not think inquiry can put us more in touch with non-human reality than we have always been, for the only sense of "being in touch" they recognize is causal interaction (as opposed to accurate representation). So in their view the only question is: will human life be better in the future if we adopt this belief, this practice, or that institution?' (Rorty 1999e, 16)

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[91] For a reconstruction of the 'spectator theory of knowledge' (Dewey 1988, 19) guided by the model of vision rather than action, and dating back to Plato and Aristotle, see Dewey 1988, especially 3-39, 60-86 as well as Dewey 1982, 95-109.

[92] Rorty 1999b, 29. See here the first chapter of Dewey's *Quest for Certainty* (Dewey 1988, esp. 3-39) and his *Reconstruction in Philosophy*, especially the first chapter. (Dewey 1982, 80-94)

The theoreticist orientation toward the sublime authority of an externally given or internally co-constituted locus of reference to which our thinking and knowledge owe respect is confronted by Rorty with an alternative understanding of philosophy that goes back to Dewey and is currently pursued by politically thinking philosophers like Habermas, Rawls and Rorty himself. In relation to Habermas's thinking Rorty explains: 'Such a philosophy politicizes epistemology, in the sense that it takes what matters to the search for truth to be the social (and in particular the political) conditions under which that search is conducted, rather than the deep inner nature of the subjects doing the searching.'[93]

Rorty has further explicated the sociopolitical hallmark of antirepresentationalist pragmatism, his proposal for a new type determination of philosophical activity, in the three volumes of his *Philosophical Papers* (1991-1998), and has attempted to implement it in philosophical practice to some extent in *Achieving Our Country* (1998j), *Philosophy and Social Hope* (1999a).[94] Concisely stated, the central thought linking philosophical antirepresentationalism (as advocated by Rorty, following on from Davidson) with political pragmatism (developed in James's classical form and in particular by Dewey during the first half of the 20th century) reads: 'The pragmatists' anti-representationalist account of belief is [...] a protest against the idea that human beings must humble themselves before something non-human.' (Rorty 1999e, 7) Positively formulated this means for Rorty: 'I […] think that a world of pragmatic atheists – people who thought realism versus antirealism as little worth thinking about as Catholicism versus Protestantism – would be a better, happier world than our present one.' (Rorty 1995b, 195)

Rorty's politicization of Davidson's antirepresentationalism clearly emerges here. Davidson himself is not interested in possible political implications of the

[93] Rorty 1998g, 309. For Rorty's critique of Habermas's attempt to universalize the procedural aspects of communicative reason in the manner of analytic philosophy, see Rorty 1994.

[94] On current discussion of Rorty's more recent publications see Brandom 2000, Pettegrew 2000, and Schäfer/Tietz/Zill 2001.

antirepresentationalism he advocates under the heading 'antisubjectivism'. (Davidson 2001e, 47) But he does provide a naturalistic description of knowledge and language through which these are disconnected from the representationalist relation to either an antecendently given realist authority, or a constructed antirealist one (as an 'object altogether'). What interests Rorty about this description is not the question as to whether it corresponds to our actual knowledge and linguistic practice, a question which itself remains under the theoreticist spell, but rather the question of what contribution it might make to the political project of the Enlightenment, if it became the hallmark of common sense.

This sociopolitical change of perspective on epistemological matters reflects the tenacious advocacy of the 'priority of democracy to philosophy' (Rorty 1988) that simultaneously sets Rorty's thinking apart from the justificatory motives characterizing Habermas's transcendentally grounded pragmatism. In contrast to Davidson and Brandom, and in solidarity with Rorty, Habermas also configures philosophy in a decidedly sociopolitical fashion. But unlike Rorty, Habermas takes the view that the political ideals of a democracy oriented toward civil society cannot be implemented without a representationalism founded in a theory of intersubjectivity. Habermas configures this theory as 'pragmatic realism about knowledge', or as a 'Kantian pragmatism, [based] on the transcendental fact that subjects with the ability to speak language and to act, and who allow themselves to be affected by reasons, are capable of learning – in the long term even, are "not capable of not learning".'[95]

According to Rorty, philosophy today should no longer see its practical determination as lying in the justification of (or challenging) the political form of democratic governments with recourse to supposedly transcendental facts. What matters instead, in his view, is to acknowledge the conditions of the modern Enlightenment's large-scale sociopolitical experiment as a contingent presupposition of contemporary philosophizing. Within this normative framework for action and evaluation, pragmatic philosophy's transformative

[95] Habermas 1999b, 14, 16. On this see also Thomas McCarthy's (1991) Habermasian criticism of Rorty.

task (in the strongest sense) is to contribute constructively within a transdisciplinary academic environment to improving the vocabulary with which democratic societies describe themselves.

Pragmatic philosophy, in a sophisticated sense, also subjects questions traditionally investigated from a theoreticist perspective about the relationship between mind and world, the structure of knowledge and language, or the constitution of sense and meaning, to this project. In the conditions resulting from the pragmatic twist given to the linguistic turn by Wittgenstein, Sellars, Quine, Davidson and Rorty, transformative experimentation with various everyday epistemologies comes to be academically reevaluated. Alongside theoreticist reflection about the conditions of possibility for our understanding of reality, which has long dominated philosophical discourse, it features as a research practice of equal entitlement and is at the same time transdisciplinarily fertile. The consequences of this in determining the task of media philosophy will be set out in the following chapters of this book.

III

MEDIA PHILOSOPHY: BETWEEN PRAGMATISM AND THEORETICISM

In the context of contemporary media-philosophical reflection two different suggestions can be discerned concerning the self-image of the developing discipline of media philosophy. On the one hand, following on from the foundational projects formulated by epistemology and philosophy of science or language in the 19th and 20th century, media philosophy is grasped as potentially a new fundamental discipline within the canon of the subject of philosophy.[96] On the other hand, the project of media philosophy is linked with the reorientation of philosophy's self-image that was reconstructed, with recourse to Rorty, in the previous chapter as the linguistic turn's 'pragmatic twist'.[97] The following will set out first the basic features of the theoreticist conception of media philosophy, then those of the pragmatic conception. The present chapter's task will be to use this basis to outline a transversal concept of pragmatic media philosophy in which the two differing conceptions of media philosophy are networked with one another in a pragmatic manner.

1. THE THEORETICIST TASK FOR MEDIA PHILOSOPHY

Relying on representationalism's basic presupposition, which it leaves unquestioned, the central claim of theoreticist media philosophy consists of subjecting the mainstream of the linguistic turn – which according to Davidson and Rorty is shaped by scheme-content dualism – to a media-philosophical deconstruction and setting it on deeper foundations. Two closely linked deconstructive movements can be distinguished.

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[96] Cf. in this sense the positions of Margreiter, Krämer and Seel, which were introduced in the first chapter of this book.
[97] Cf. also Sandbothe 1998b.

The first movement works with recourse to the *material* constitution of the media-based sign systems in which human beings produce meaning and interpret reality. Accentuation of the 'materiality of communication' (Gumbrecht/Pfeiffer 1994) which is able to take its outset in spoken language, undermines the linguistic turn *vertically*, i.e. through in-depth analysis of the laws underlying an object's material aspect. In doing this, it does not necessarily have also to perform the *horizontal* decentring of spoken language that characterizes the second deconstructive movement. This undermines the linguistic turn by setting it alongside a plurality of pictorial, graphical, tactile, motoric, acoustic and other sign systems as equally valid dimensions of meaning constitution through media.

Both strategies for a media-philosophical deepening of the linguistic turn can be paradigmatically demonstrated using the example of Jacques Derrida's *Of Grammatology* (1967).[98] Following Harold A. Innis's media-historical works of the 1950s,[99] Eric A. Havelock's media-philological researches,[100] and the cultural and media-theoretical reflections of Jack Goody, Ian Watt[101] and Marshall McLuhan[102] in the early 1960s, Derrida's major early work can be considered as having launched theoretical media philosophy in the latter half of the twentieth century. Taking Derrida as an example, it can at the same time be made clear how closely connected the two deconstructive movements characterizing the theoreticist conception of media philosophy are.

To bring this into focus I will start with the vertical deconstructive movement. With the help of this the French pioneer of contemporary postmodern philosophy pierced, so to speak perpendicularly, the inner media constitution of that sign system which had become increasingly central to modern thinking: namely, language. The thesis of

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[98] Derrida's pioneering deliberations form the basis for the media-philosophical positions of Margreiter, Krämer and Seel mentioned in the first chapter. A systematic reconstruction of Derrida's 'transition from phonocentrism to the thinking of writing' (Welsch 1995, 253), and on which the following account relies, is offered by Welsch (1995, 245-302, especially 253-274).
[99] Innis 1950, 1951.
[100] Havelock 1963.
[101] Goody/Watt 1963.
[102] McLuhan 1962, 1995 (originally 1964).

language's methodological priority problematized by Derrida results, according to him, from the specific materiality, or better: the supposed immateriality, of the medium in which speech takes place. In analysing this medium Derrida proceeds in two steps, each of which deals with a different aspect of the materiality of the medium of spoken language. The first step is concerned with its manifest phonetic character, the second with its hidden written hallmark. Together these two steps comprise the vertical deconstructive movement through which Derrida attempts to undermine the linguistic turn.

The specific peculiarity of spoken language's phonetic character is brought out by Derrida's particular accentuation of the fact that in articulating a sentence we not only externalize what's said as a message to a partner in communication, but at the same time always hear the articulated sentence within ourselves too. Derrida calls this phenomenon, which characterizes the human voice, 'hearing (understanding)-oneself-speak'. (Derrida 1997, 7) The one-sided orientation of occidental philosophy toward the phenomenology of speech leads, according to Derrida, the 'phonic substance' in which speaking occurs to appear to be 'the nonexterior, nonmundane, therefore nonempirical or noncontingent signifier'. (Derrida 1997, 7 f.)

With this, however, according to Derrida's critique, the actual utterance, which is not performed only in the act of directing communication to a conversational partner, but already in hearing and understanding oneself speak, is occluded in favour of the hypostatization of an inner and immediate presence of meaning. This hypostatization, which Derrida criticizes as 'phonocentrism' (Derrida 1997, 11f.), leads to systematic underexposure of the complex mediative character peculiar to the overall constitution of human talk. In this way Derrida problematizes, in exemplary fashion, the philosophical background on which the phonocentric arguments of media invectives have thrived, from Plato's and Rousseau's criticism of writing,[103] though to the culture-critical media

[103] Cf. especially Plato 1961a, 274c-278b; 1961b, 340a-345c. On this see also Havelock 1963, Szlezák 1985 and Thiel 1993. On Rousseau's critique of writing see Rousseau 1986, as well as the detailed discussion of Derrida 1997, 95-316.

theories of contemporary authors such as Jean Baudrillard,[104] Paul Virilio,[105] Neil Postman[106] or Joseph Wiezenbaum.[107]

Derrida opposes the phonocentric ideology of a pure and medium-free system of hearing and understanding oneself speaking with his grammatological thesis that spoken language has a hidden written hallmark. This brings me to the second step of the vertical deconstructive movement carried out by Derrida. If one takes literally the definition of writing as a supplementary 'signifier of the signifier' (Derrida 1997, 7) or as a tertiary 'sign of a sign' (Derrida 1997, 43), meant by phonocentrism as a degradation, and uses it deconstructively as a model for the functioning of spoken language itself, then one obtains a 'modification of the concept of writing', which Derrida also calls 'generalized writing' or 'arche-writing'. (Derrida 1997, 55, 55, 57)

Arche-writing stands for a semiotic referential structure according to which the meaning of every sign – and that means also the meaning of the spoken word, hence the meaning of the *logos* – results from its relation to other signs. Derrida calls this relational semiotic referential structure 'différance'.[108] Grammatology, as the science of arche-writing and philosophical analysis of the meaning-producing mechanism characteristic of the différance, is at the same time a general semiotics in the sense that it opens the concept of phonetic writing, bound to spoken language, out into a broad spectrum of sign systems that are to be described grammatalogically.

Whereas the first movement pierces vertically into the deep structure of language, and to some extent destroys its phonocentric distinction from within, the second deconstructive movement relativizes language, so to speak, from outside. This occurs in Derrida's *horizontal* (i.e. on the same level) juxtaposition of spoken language alongside a plurality of pictorial, graphical, tactile, motoric, acoustic and other sign systems as equally valid

[104] Baudrillard 1978a, 1978b, 1990, 1994.
[105] Virilio 1984, 1989, 1991, 1994, 1995, 2000a, 2000b, 2000c.
[106] Postman 1985, 1999.
[107] Weizenbaum 1976, 1993.
[108] Cf. on this Derrida 1982b.

dimensions of meaning constitution through media. In this sense, Derrida emphasizes that in contemporary thinking the word 'writing' is used 'to designate not only the physical gestures of literal pictographic or ideographic inscription, but also the totality of what makes it possible; and also, beyond the signifying face, the signified face itself. And thus we say "writing" for all that gives rise to an inscription in general, whether it is literal or not and even if what it distributes in space is alien to the order of the voice: cinematography, choreography, of course, but also pictorial, musical, sculptural "writing".' (Derrida 1997, 9) Both the deconstructive movements carried out by Derrida in *Of Grammatology* undermine phonocentrism by deciphering the conditions of possibility of meaning constitution as the interplay of differences: interplay due to the formal figure of différance, which in itself has no meaning since it results from the material contingency of those media in which and as which meaning occurs.

Derrida's deconstructive media philosophy may be considered as the paradigm (one of a reflective level that has hardly been matched since) for a large number of varying media-theoretical concepts currently under discussion. The spectrum ranges from Friedrich Kittler's media materialism,[109] and the system-theoretical or constructivist media theories of Niklas Luhmann[110] and Siegfried J. Schmidt,[111] through to a large field of authors that Peter Koch and Sybille Krämer group under the heading of 'a media-critical turn in the humanities'. (Koch/Krämer 1997b, 12) Central to these media-theoretical projects is the theoreticist question about conditions of possibility for the production of meaning and the constitution of reality. I call this entire problem context 'theoreticist' because it abstracts from all *concrete* contexts of interest and all *particular* targets set by human communities. The theoreticist determination of media philosophy's task sets its sights on the media-related conditions of possibility of our understanding of self and the world altogether, and hence on a domain lying behind all practical horizons of utility that first produce, justify or legitimate such understanding.

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[109] Kittler 1999, 1993a, 1995.
[110] Luhmann 1997 (especially vol. 1, chapter 2 'Communications Media', 190-412), 2000.

2. THE PRAGMATIST TASK FOR MEDIA PHILOSOPHY

In contrast to the theoreticist approach, the pragmatic determination of media philosophy's task takes its point of departure in the midst of culturally and historically given practical contexts of interest and set sociopolitical targets. This shift of perspective results in a modified view of the whole framework of different sorts of media. The system of media, in a broad sense, is composed of sensory perceptive media (space and time), semiotic communications media (such as images, spoken language, writing and music), and technical media of transmission (such as the voice, print, radio, television and the internet).[112] Whereas the emphasis in the linguistic, grammatological or picture-theoretical research of theoreticist media theories is mostly on the realm of semiotic communications media, pragmatic media philosophy accentuates the peripheral domain of technical transmission media. From a pragmatic perspective it is the media-political shaping of precisely this outer domain that proves the central point of departure in enabling medium and long term changes in the use of media of sensory perception and semiotic communication.

Attention started being paid to the entwined relationships between different sorts of media in philosophical modernity towards the end of the 19th century and in the early decades of the 20th. This occurred in the framework of modern philosophy's pragmatic turn, carried out in America by the representatives of classical pragmatism – Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey – and in Europe by pragmatically thinking philosophers like Nietzsche, the early Heidegger and the late Wittgenstein.[113]

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[111] Schmidt 1994, 1996, 2000.

[112] On the inner differentiation of the medium concept, cf. Sandbothe 1997, especially 56 f.

[113] On this see also Rorty's (1989) *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity*, in the first part of which Wittgenstein, Nietzsche and Dewey are treated as philosophers who elaborated the contingencies of language, self, and community central to pragmatism: the 'Wittgensteinian attitude' (15) stands for the 'Contingency of Language' (Chapter 1), 'Nietzschean pragmatism' (33) for the 'Contingency of Selfhood' (Chapter 2), and

The pragmatic turn's central concern lay in the attempt to decide a metaphilosophical controversy already set out in the thinking of Bacon and Descartes, as well as Kant and Hegel, in favour of pragmatism. This controversy was over the question as to whether modern philosophy should be seen as centred in the theoreticist focus on antecendently existing conditions of possibility of knowledge, to be revealed in the past, or in the pragmatist's active orientation towards the hope of a better future. In this latter sense, Rorty explains: 'If there is anything distinctive about pragmatism it is that it substitutes the notion of a better human future for the notions of "reality", "reason" and "nature".'[114] A similar characterization of pragmatism is found with Hilary Putnam, who calls 'the emphasis on the primacy of practice' a 'central – perhaps *the* central emphasis [of] pragmatism'.[115]

Rorty and Putnam may well be considered the most influential advocates and co-initiators of the renaissance of pragmatist thinking currently taking place under the banner of 'neopragmatism'. Central to this renaissance, ever since the 1970s, has been metaphilosophical debate about the question of how the future project of pragmatically 'Renewing Philosophy' (Putnam 1992a) is related to the foundational aims – be they epistemological, or linked with philosophy of language or science – of the technical discipline of modern philosophy in its theoreticist orientation. This has already been discussed in detail in the second chapter.

The metaphilosophical focus of contemporary neopragmatism has meant that the specific contours of the content of this currently developing pragmatic philosophy have until now in part remained quite vague.[116] Linked with this is the fact that neither Rorty nor Putnam have made explicit, let alone systematically spelt out, the media-philosophical implications of pragmatic thinking. Because of this deficit of neopragmatism, the

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Dewey's pragmatic liberalism for the 'Contingency of Community' (Chapter 3). On Heidegger's pragmatic turn see Rorty 1982c, Brandom 1983 and Okrent 1988.

[114] Rorty 1999b, 27. On this see also Rorty 1995c and Rorty 1998j, esp. 20 ff.

[115] Putnam 1995, 52. Cf. here and on the following Ludwig Nagl's (1998) introduction to some of the main ideas and basic positions of American pragmatism, considering both a selection of classical authors and important neopragmatists.

following account cannot take its orientation from a paradigmatic contemporary author with pragmatic media-philosophical achievements matching those of Derrida on the theoreticist side.

A way out is provided by an alternative procedure of reconstructing the task for media philosophy using four ideal-typical guiding maxims based on considerations by Nietzsche and the late Wittgenstein. This procedure has the disadvantage that pragmatic media philosophy is initially formulated not at neopragmatism's advanced state of reflection, but in the less secure and more vulnerable terminology of its founding fathers. But at the same time it has the associated advantage that in this way the genealogy of modern media philosophy, which stretches back beyond Derrida, can be brought into view. Before beginning with the reconstruction of the guiding maxims just mentioned, I would like to draw on Peirce, James and Dewey to recall the basic ideas of the pragmatic turn.[117]

Charles Sander's Peirce's famous 1878 essay 'How to Make Our Ideas Clear' is considered to be the founding document of American pragmatism. In this essay Peirce anticipates the basic feature of the pragmatic turn in the form of what he called the 'pragmatic maxim'. (Peirce 1934b, 252; cf. 1934a, 13-15) This reads: 'consider what effects, which might conceivably have practical bearings, we conceive the object of our conception to have. Then, our conception of these effects is the whole of our conception of the object.' (Peirce 1934b, 258) Peirce, whose thinking by his own account took Kant's transcendental philosophy as its outset,[118] construed the pragmatic maxim in the sense of a transcendental universalism conceived of in evolutionary terms. Not only, according to Peirce, does it hold that 'the production of belief is the sole function of thought'; rather he additionally defines the 'identity of a habit' in a transcendental philosophical manner with a view to 'how it might lead us to act, not merely under such circumstances as are likely to arise, but under such as might possibly occur, no matter how improbable they may be.' (Peirce 1934b, 253, 257)

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[116] Cf. Allen 1994, esp. 1004 f.
[117] For a detailed account see Pape 2001 and Menand 2001.

William James took up Peirce's maxim in his 1898 essay 'Philosophical Conceptions and Practical Results' (James 1975), giving it, along with the concept of pragmatism, also suggested by Peirce, international currency. At the same time James, as against Peirce, may be considered the more consistent pragmatist. For James consciously restricts himself to the concrete and determinate, i.e. to the particular, situationally co-determined consequences of a concept that constitute its meaning. Thus James highlights: 'I think myself that it [the principle of pragmatism - M.S.] should be expressed more broadly than Mr. Peirce expresses it. The ultimate test for us of what a truth means is indeed the conduct it dictates or inspires. But it inspires that conduct because it first foretells some particular turn to our experience which shall call for just that conduct from us. […]; the point lying rather in the fact that the experience must be particular […]'.[119]

Following on from Peirce and James a systematic formulation of philosophical pragmatism was provided by John Dewey. In his major work *The Quest for Certainty*, which appeared in 1929, Dewey explains Peirce's pragmatic maxim as follows: 'Peirce states that the sole meaning of the idea of an object consists of the consequences which result when the object is acted upon in a particular way.' (Dewey 1988a, 90n) Later Dewey continues: 'The business of thought is not to conform to or reproduce the characters already possessed by objects but to judge them as potentialities of what they become through an indicated opinion. This principle holds from the simplest case to the most elaborate.' Dewey offers the following example of a simple case: 'To judge that this object is sweet, that is, to refer the idea or meaning "sweet" to it without actually experiencing sweetness, is to predict that when it is tasted – that is, subjected to a specified operation – a certain consequence will ensue.' (Dewey 1988a, 110)

If one applies the pragmatic maxim to the concept of a medium, two different ways come to mind in which a word can be grasped or used as a medium. First we can grasp words

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[118] Peirce described himself as 'one who had learned philosophy out of Kant' (Peirce 1934c, 274).

from a theoreticist perspective as media of knowledge and mediating authorities through which (in pre-Kantian terms) the truth of being or (in post-Kantian terms) the truth of appearances is revealed to us. This is the representationalist theory of linguistic meaning, which – under both realist and antirealist, or constructivist, auspices – is closely linked with the correspondence theory of truth. Or again, words can be understood from a pragmatic perspective as media in an artisinal sense, with us using them – as James puts it – as 'a program for more work' and as a means in the sense of tools through 'which existing realities may be *changed*.' (James 1907, 53)

The inner differentiation expressed in these considerations between a theoreticist and a pragmatic medium concept is already etymologically inscribed in the word.[120] Whereas the Latin 'medius' still primarily meant what's 'in the middle', or 'lies between' in a spatial sense, since having been used as a foreign word in German – of which there is evidence since the 17th century – the word has developed two different fields of meaning. Within the first field of meaning 'medium' stands for 'that mediating between two things', i.e. 'medium' is used (e.g. in chemistry or grammar) in the sense of 'middle', 'mediator', 'middle piece' and 'mediating element'. Within the second field of meaning, which was derived from the first, later becoming independent, 'medium' functions as a word designating 'that which serves to achieve an end', i.e. 'medium' is here used in the sense of 'means', 'auxiliary means' and 'tool'. This dual meaning is still reflected in the meanings of 'media' and 'mass media' as 'means of communication' and as 'mediators of information', or 'information-mediating facility', which have established themselves in the course of the 20th century.[121]

From the structural difference internal to the medium concept – which runs across its typological divergences into perceptual, communications, and technical transmissions

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[119] James 1975, 259. On the difference between Peirce and James on this point see also Dewey 1988b, 6 ff.

[120] See the article 'medium' in the Duden etymological dictionary. (Dudenredaktion, 1963)

[121] See the articles on 'Mass Media' and 'Medium' in Carstensen/Busse 1994, here 884 f., 892 f.

media – four maxims of pragmatic media philosophy can be developed with recourse to Nietzsche and Wittgenstein. In the present context these are to serve the ideal-typical and contemporary explication of an intellectual practice, the implications of which for media philosophy have to date hardly been conceptualized in an adequate manner. This practice was first initiated in the United States through the debate between John Dewey (1984) and Walter Lippmann (1925), and in Europe through the debate between Walter Benjamin (1999) and Theodor W. Adorno.[122] It has been all pervasive in the 20th century, running from the pragmatic media reflections of Bertolt Brecht,[123] Siegfried Kracauer (1960) and Raymond Williams (1961, 1962, 1974), through to the present day in the statements of Jürgen Habermas,[124] Hans Magnus Enzensberger (1982, 1992), Alexander Kluge[125] and Pierre Bourdieu (1998).

3. Four guiding maxims of pragmatic media philosophy

The first maxim results directly from the preceding deliberations on the pragmatic medium concept. This maxim articulates the advice that pragmatic media philosophy should avoid building up the words 'medium' and 'media' as key epistemological concepts with which the puzzles of the epistemological or linguistic tradition can now – finally – be solved after all, and should instead pay attention to the concrete use that we make, or don't make, of media in certain contexts of action. In the framework of the implicit media philosophy to be uncovered in the thinking of Nietzsche and Wittgenstein there are explicit utterances to the effect that both are concerned not with developing new fundamental epistemological categories, but rather with establishing the concrete practice of a decidedly pragmatic critique of language and media.

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[122] Horkheimer/Adorno 1981, Adorno 1963a, 1963b.
[123] Brecht 2000. On this see also Filk 1998.
[124] Habermas 1989, 1981, 1996b (esp. Chapter 8 'Civil Society and the Political Public Sphere', 329-387).
[125] Kluge/Negt 1981, 1993; Kluge 1985.

To this end what matters, according to the basic idea of Wittgenstein's late philosophy, is to bring into view the concrete use that we make of certain words and sentences in the framework of different 'language-games'. (Wittgenstein 2001, 4 [§7]) By 'language-games' Wittgenstein means the more or less ritualized contexts of action that contain both linguistic and extralinguistic elements and are embedded in comprehensive cultural forms of life.[126] The pragmatic turn reflected in his attention to the intertwinements between language-games and forms of life is highlighted by Wittgenstein when in the same context he demands that 'the axis of reference of our examination must be rotated, but around the fixed point of our real need.' (Wittgenstein 2001, 40 [§108])

Wittgenstein urges an alternative to the representationalist view of language, which makes mind and meaning the agent of thought and conceives of language as the medium for expression of meanings, themselves thought of as media mediating between word and object (or between sentence and fact). Wittgenstein's alternative entreats us to direct our attention to the actual use of signs in concrete contexts of action. The philosophical question is then not 'what does this sign *mean*?', but 'how is this sign *used*? what do we do with it?' Wittgenstein suggests that signs should be not understood primarily as media in the sense of pure intermediate entities, i.e. as mental mediators or ideal spheres of knowledge. According to Wittgenstein's alternative what matters is to apprehend them pragmatically as means in the sense of tools serving certain purposes. The simple advice given by Wittgenstein in §11 of the *Philosophical Investigations* reads: 'Think of the tools in a tool-box: there is a hammer, pliers, a saw, a screw-driver, a rule, a glue-pot, glue, nails and screws. – The functions of words are as diverse as the functions of these objects. (And in both cases there are similarities.)' (Wittgenstein 2001, 6)

Wittgenstein demands that our philosophical use of words also – indeed that precisely such use – be understood pragmatically in terms of the language-games in which the corresponding words play a role in everyday language. In §116 of the *Philosophical Investigations* we read: 'What *we* do is to bring words back from their metaphysical to their everyday use.' (Wittgenstein 2001, 41) And in relation to the role played by the

[126] For concrete examples, see Wittgenstein's list in §23. (Wittgenstein 2001, 10)

word ‘language’ in philosophical vocabularies, Wittgenstein stresses: ‘We are under the illusion that what is peculiar, profound, essential, in our investigation, resides in its trying to grasp the incomparable essence of language. That is, the order existing between the concepts of proposition, word, proof, truth, experience, and so on. This order is a *super*-order between – so to speak – *super*-concepts. Whereas, of course, if the words “language”, “experience”, “world”, have a use, it must be as humble a one as that of the words “table”, “lamp”, “door”.’ (Wittgenstein 2001, 38 [§97])

Nietzsche also undermined the theoreticist view of language, truth, and knowledge with pragmatic recourse to determinations of usefulness and relations of interest. Thus he emphasized in relation to truth and knowledge: ‘We simply have no organ for *knowing*, for “truth”: we “know” (or believe or imagine) exactly as much as is *useful* to the human herd, to the species […]’. (Nietzsche 2001, 214 [§354]) The concomitant degradation of language, which had traditionally figured as the distinguished organ of knowledge and medium of truth, to a pragmatic tool serving power interests is made explicit when in the *Genealogy of Morals* Nietzsche suggests the following answer to the question of the origin of language: ‘The seigneurial privilege of giving names even allows us to conceive of the origin of language itself as a manifestation of the power of the rulers: they say “this is so and so”, they set their seal on everything and every occurrence with a sound and thereby take possession of it, so to speak.’[127]

The second guiding maxim of pragmatic media philosophy relates to the origin of the representationalist view of language that Nietzsche and Wittgenstein sought to combat therapeutically. Wittgenstein’s media-philosophical answer to the question of its aetiology reads: ‘Of course, what confuses us is the uniform appearance of words when we hear them spoken or meet them in script and print. For their *application* is not

[127] Nietzsche 1994, 13 [1, §2]. Friedrich Kittler has pointed out the media-philosophical implications lying in Nietzsche’s pragmatic naturalization of language. In the chapter on Nietzsche in his *Discourse Networks* Kittler writes: ‘Considered apart from the ostensible truth-telling demands of moralistic or even educative voices, language is no longer the translation of prelinguistic meanings, but rather one medium among others.’ (Kittler

presented to us so clearly. Especially when we are doing philosophy!' (Wittgenstein 2001, 6 [§11]) Nietzsche provides a very similar diagnosis to a very similar aetiology when, in a note dating from between Autumn 1885 and early 1886, he writes: 'Words persist: people believe that the concepts designated by them do so too!' (Nietzsche 1980c, 34)

Nietzsche's media-philosophical aetiology points back to antiquity. In his lecture on the *History of Greek Literature*, held in Basle in the 1874/75 winter semester, Nietzsche anticipated and pragmatically answered Havelock's question concerning *The Literate Revolution in Greece and its Cultural Consequences*. (Nietzsche 1995; Havelock, 1982) The consequences linked with the gradual introduction and increasing spread of phonetic alphabetic writing in ancient Greece are described by Basle's young professor of philology as the loss of a culture originally based on orality and interaction: 'Thus the works of art in Greek language were later *misrecognized* in two ways: 1. they were detached from the special occasion, special public and taken to be composed for an indeterminate public; 2. they were separated from the affiliated arts and taken to be composed for *readers*.' (Nietzsche 1995, 278) Nietzsche locates the 'transitional stage' at the time of Aristotle, suggesting that it was no coincidence he received the 'jovial nickname "anagnostes"' – or 'the reader' – from his teacher Plato. (Nietzsche 1995, 279, 283)

The early Nietzsche explicitly poses and answers the question of aetiology in his lecture as follows: 'Whence then the later *esteeming* of writing? … which becomes so high that education gradually became a literary one. Most of all, however, *respect for writing* was promoted by *purely scientific* people – mathematicians, astronomers, doctors, researchers of nature, etc. – who availed themselves of it: what mattered to them was to represent the thought as purely as possible, to leave aside feeling, affect. […] The more the pleasure in the logical, the scientific, increased, the more respected writing, as its organ, became.' (Nietzsche 1995, 282 f.) At the same time, against the background of his studies of

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1990, 186) An investigation of Nietzsche's media philosophy, albeit one that attends too little to its pragmatic aspect, is offered by Fietz 1992.

antiquity, Nietzsche outlined the horizon of questions for a modern media philosophy when in his manuscript for the lectures he wrote regrding the difference between orality and literariness: ‘The difference is enormous, cannot be grasped deeply enough, there is still no psychology of the writer.’ (Nietzsche 1995, 279)

It is the aspect of the theoreticization and decontextualization of language through its fixation in the supposedly neutral medium of printed writing that Nietzsche foregrounds in his critique of the 19th century’s book culture. In a *Nachlaß*-fragment of Summer 1883 he speaks of the 19th century as a ‘written out age’ (Nietzsche 1980b, 341) in which theoreticist culture had extended to all levels of the population through mass media. In the second *Untimely Meditation* Nietzsche describes the self-paralysis and lethargy of action in a world determined by printed books, science, and journalism as follows: ‘The work never produces an effect but only another “critique”; and the critique itself produces no effect either, but again only a further critique.’ (Nietzsche 1997a, 87) From this, in a note from 1882, Nietzsche draws the conclusion that ‘Another century of newspapers and all words will stink.’ (Nietzsche 1980b, 73)

The third guiding maxim of pragmatic media philosophy states that it is only when we change our representationalist dealings with printed writing that both philosophy and common sense can be freed of the theoreticist confusions in which they have become caught up due to certain habits of use. In implementing this guiding maxim, Nietzsche attempts not only descriptively, but also performatively, to demonstrate ways in which the specific media practices of philosophical writing and reading might be transformed so that the pragmatic character of our use of signs once again becomes clear in them.

To achieve this, Nietzsche attempts, in the technical medium of the printed book itself, to overcome the book-like style of writing aiming at hierarchical unity and semantic closure. Against what he sharply castigates as the ‘scholars’ manner of making books’ (Nietzsche 1980a, 446), Nietzsche sets his aphoristic style of writing, which he eulogizes in *Twilight of the Idols* as follows: ‘The aphorism, the apophthegm, in which I am the first among Germans to be a master, these are the forms of “eternity”; my ambition is to

say in ten sentences what everyone else says in a book – what everyone else does *not* say in a book.' (Nietzsche 1997b, 75 [IX, §51]) The strategy informing his writing, that of gesturing beyond the medium of the book to future things, is made explicit by Nietzsche in the *Gay Science* when he asks: 'Books. – What good is a book that does not carry us beyond all books?' (Nietzsche 2001, 148 [§248]) Further, with a view to the *Gay Science* itself the following poem of 1882 is found in Nietzsche's *Nachlaß* (Nietzsche 1980b, 14):

> This is no book: what do books matter!
> What do coffins and shrouds matter!
> This is a will, this is a promise,
> This is a final breaking of bridges,
> This is an ocean breeze, an anchor weighing,
> A thundering of wheels, a straightening of the helm,
> The canon roars, white its fire steams,
> The sea laughs, the monster …

Less polemical, visionary and exaggerated, but likewise in content thinking beyond the logic of the book are Wittgenstein's comments in the 'Preface' he wrote to the *Philosophical Investigations* in 1945. Wittgenstein writes of the material that was to form the basis of the *Philosophical Investigations,* published posthumously in 1953, and which consisted of a patchwork of typoscripts that were constantly being cut up into singular elements and stuck back together in different ways: 'It was my intention at first to bring all this together in a book […]. After several unsuccessful attempts to weld my results together into such a whole, I realized that I should never succeed […]. And this was, of course, connected with the very nature of the investigation. For this compels us to travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross in every direction.' (Wittgenstein 2001, ix) The analogy between Wittgenstein's and Nietzsche's writing practice becomes even clearer when Wittgenstein, in *Culture and Value*, admits: 'If I am thinking about a topic just for myself and not with a view to writing a book, I jump all round it; that is the only way of thinking that comes naturally to me. Forcing my thoughts into an ordered sequence is a torment for me. Is it even worth attempting now? I *squander* an unspeakable amount of

effort making an arrangement of my thoughts which may have no value at all.' (Wittgenstein 1980, 28)

Both Nietzsche and Wittgenstein experimented with writing strategies that point beyond the order of the classical book. But at the same time their publishing remained bound to the technical medium of the printed book. From this results the fourth guiding maxim of pragmatic media philosophy, the project of actively co-shaping a media environment that allows one to overcome the fetters of the theoreticist media culture, a culture that developed in the Gutenberg world and further diverged in the age of television. The four guiding maxims of pragmatic media philosophy that I have been expounding are shaped by experience of the media transformation that is currently taking place. Moreover, their intention is to be directed towards the question of whether and how a pragmatization of our dealings with media is taking place in the digital semiotic worlds of interactive data networks. This question will be pursued in detail in the following chapters.

In the present context, however, the four guiding maxims of pragmatic media philosophy, developed in this chapter with recourse to Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, are first to be summarized in a systematic manner using the terminological means made available by neopragmatism. The first guiding maxim represents the point of departure for pragmatic media philosophy. It consists of the departure from the theoreticist concept of a medium, with its representationalist hallmark, in favour of a pragmatic understanding of media, bearing an antirepresentationalist hallmark. Thus media no longer appear to be *tertia* that structure the space of representations and in this way produce an interface between language and reality, scheme and content. Instead they are grasped as instruments to be understood in terms of their public effects, with the help of which actions are coordinated and realities changed.

The second guiding maxim states that the large scale establishment of the theoreticist concept of the medium is connected with certain habits of use of the printed book that developed in the 19th and 20th centuries. The various modes of use attributable to linguistic signs from a pragmatic perspective are levelled off by the uniformity of their

medium-related presentation. Such uniformity is characteristic of certain forms of use of the printed book and is transferred from these to an understanding of spoken language detaching the latter from its concrete context of action.[128]

The third and fourth guiding maxims make different suggestions about changing this situation. The suggestion formulated by the third guiding maxim amounts to using the technical transmission medium of the printed book in a pragmatically transformed manner, and in this way to establish habits of use within the medium of the printed book that dissolve the representationalist fixation on issues of realistic depiction and/or antirealistic construction of reality. In contrast to this, the fourth maxim aims at the establishment of new media technologies. From this results the project of actively co-shaping a technically modified media culture, the mediative constitution of which is to open up possibilities for a pragmatization of our use of media. In the following chapters this project will be given a more concrete form using the example of the internet.

In ending this exposition of the pragmatic determination of the task of media philosophy I would like, finally, to look at the scattered comments on the subject of media found in Rorty's recent works. On the basis of the pragmatic twist given to the linguistic turn in the second half of the 20th century, Rorty follows Peirce, James, Dewey, Nietzsche and the late Wittgenstein in appealing for an instrumental medium concept. The transition effected by these authors from a theoreticist to a pragmatic understanding of media is summarized by Rorty in his emphasis that 'even if we agree that languages are not media of representation or expression, they will remain media of communication, tools for social interaction, ways of tying oneself up with other human beings.' (Rorty 1989, 41) Thus media are not – as in the phonocentric tradition rightly criticized by Derrida – reduced to being tools for the meaning-retaining transmission of preexistent information. Rather, the functional definition of the medium is extended beyond the narrow realm, specific to theoreticism, of conditions of possibility for knowledge of reality to the broad realm of human action.

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[128] On the connections between the appearance of script and views of language cf. also Giesecke 1998 and Stetter 1997.

Human action is understood sociopolitically by Rorty in terms of the goods and hopes according to which people in Western democracies – despite all their relapses and mistakes – have increasingly learned to align their public behaviour in the last two centuries. These goods and hopes encompass the sociopolitical ideals of increasing solidarity and reducing cruelty and humiliation in human coexistence which characterize the political project of the Enlightenment.[129] Against the background of these – for us increasingly obligatory – ideals, the pragmatic function of technical transmissions media results for Rorty from democratic societies' endeavour to 'get[] more and more human beings into our community' (Rorty 1999b, 82) and ongoing democratization of both forms of public communication and possibilities for self-creation.

According to Rorty, no profound moral justification is needed to increase solidarity and reduce cruelty and humiliation. For, 'Moral development in the individual, and moral progress in the human species as a whole, is a matter of re-marking human selves so as to enlarge the variety of relationships which constitute those selves.' (Rorty 1999b, 79) In Rorty's view media play an important role in pragmatically implementing this project of democratic universalization. They are to contribute in furthering the 'process of coming to see other human beings as "one of us" rather than as "them"'. Central to this, for Rorty, are the practical effects that can issue from narrative media such as 'the novel, the movie, and the TV program'. (Rorty 1989, xvi)

Rorty's concern here – in contrast to Nietzsche and Wittgenstein – is primarily with content, i.e. with the concrete narratives offered by media. Rorty suggests comprehending media as forms of literary narrative which can effect solidarity through the 'sad and sentimental stories' that they tell. (Rorty 1998e, 172) His hope is that with the help of media groups of humans that have grown up in different social, political and geographical cultures and with different views might successfully be sewn together 'with a thousand little stitches – [so as] to invoke a thousand little commonalities between their members, rather than specify one great big one, their common humanity.' (Rorty 1999b, 87)

In relation to the four guiding maxims of pragmatic media philosophy expounded here one might say, with recourse to Rorty, that these guiding maxims can, on the one hand, be historically situated and sociopolitically perspectivized by being explicitly put to the service of the political Enlightenment's democratic ideals. On the other hand, however, Rorty's focus on the content aspects of media leads him to neglect hypotheses concerning the effects of media, based on arguments about the formal structure of media, which are central to the second, third and fourth guiding maxims. Although – as mentioned at the end of the second chapter above – deliberations are found in Rorty that amount to the project of a sociopolitical re-perspectivization of epistemological questions, media philosophical means to such a re-perspectivization are not considered by Rorty himself.

This results not least from the fact that Rorty delimits the public-political sphere of media so sharply from the epistemological vocabularies of theoreticist philosophy. Epistemological vocabularies are, in his view, to be understood as their authors' private self-creation projects, with little to be said concerning their relevance for common sense. And if new epistemological vocabularies were, for once, to find their way to the common man, which for Rorty too can happen in exceptional cases, then this occurs 'in the long run' (Rorty 1998b, 45), that is, in the horizon of historical developments measured on the temporal scale of 'decades or centuries'. (Rorty 2000b, 20)

In my view some correction is due to this conservative estimation of the significance of philosophy in the age of new media technologies. The 'process of European linguistic processes changing at a faster and faster rate' (Rorty 1989, 7) to which Rorty himself refers in the first chapter of *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* means namely that the epistemological foundations of common sense are being transformed faster and more radically that Rorty is prepared to admit. Against this background, technical transmissions media feature as instruments which might help in experimentally co-shaping the transformational dynamics just described. To this extent the central task for a contemporary pragmatic media philosophy may be considered as that of combining the

[129] Cf. especially Rorty 1999b, 72-90; 1999a, 1998j.

guiding maxims expounded with recourse to Nietzsche and Wittgenstein with both Rorty's democratic understanding of media and his project of a sociopolitical re-perspectivization of epistemology.

For a sophisticated concept of a pragmatic media philosophy that carries out this synthesis it also seems that revision is required to those comments of Rorty's in which he terms 'the esoteric matters discussed by [...] Derrida (e.g. [...] the presupposed primacy of speech over writing)' as a 'vagary on his part' that is 'irrelevant (at least as far as we can presently see) to the public life of our society.'[130] Statements of this kind overlook the media-philosophical significance assumed by Derrida's reflections in the context of new communications and information technologies.[131] A media-pragmatic reading of the *Grammatology* can help gain insight into the interplay between the development of philosophical vocabularies, the establishment of new media technologies, and changes in common sense everyday understanding of self and the world.

The concluding sections of this chapter will develop a suggestion as to how both aspects – the content aspect continually emphasized by Rorty and the formal aspect foregrounded by Nietzsche and Wittgenstein in a pragmatic perspective, and Derrida in a theoreticist one – can be brought together in the framework of a transversal concept of pragmatic media philosophy. In order to be able to deploy the media-philosophical instruments developed not only by Nietzsche and Wittgenstein, but also those of Derrida, for the purposes of a sophisticated media philosophy, the tension between pragmatic and theoreticist conceptions of media philosophy will be investigated against the background of the general question as to how pragmatic and theoreticist aspects of philosophical activity can be intertwined with one another altogether.

The most developed suggestion for solving this problem in current debate on the transitional situation of contemporary philosophy is that presented by Wolfgang Welsch. In the following, the concept of transversal reason developed by him will be examined in

[130] Rorty 1998g, 309; 1982g, 96; 1998g, 317.
[131] Cf. on this already Ulmer, 1985 as well as Sandbothe, 1998a.

terms of its usefulness for the task I have outlined of providing an exacting foundation for pragmatic media philosophy. It will become clear that the concept of transversal reason cannot be applied to the problem as described without some change, and that it is itself in need of a pragmatic reaccentuation.

4. A TRANSVERSAL CONCEPT OF PRAGMATIC MEDIA PHILOSOPHY

The philosophical concept of transversality has been in use in mathematics and geology for a long time.[132] It was first used in a philosophical context by Jean-Paul Sartre,[133] and was shaped as a philosophical term by Félix Guattari and Gilles Deleuze.[134] Its application to the theory of reason and systematic extension into an independent philosophical edifice of ideas was performed in two steps by Wolfgang Welsch. An initial blueprint of the concept of 'transversal reason' was presented by Welsch in Chapter 11 of his *Our Postmodern Modernity*. (Welsch 1987, 295-318) Its systematic elaboration followed in his 1995 book *Reason. Contemporary Criticism of Reason and the Concept of Transversal Reason*.

The task of the concept of transversality, which is central to Welsch's theory of reason, consists of showing up 'transitions in the transitionless' (Welsch 1995, 749) within a situation of radical plurality in which different paradigms and forms of rationality conflict with one another. The word 'transversal' means 'running diagonally, oblique, perpendicular to the direction of propagation' and is used by Welsch to designate the 'fact that there are connections in the midst of heterogeneity'. (Welsch 1995, 371) It is to conceive the possibility of reason's guiding the 'production of diagonal connections between different complexes.' (Welsch 1995, 761) Unity is to become conceivable without negating plurality. This is to be achieved by investigating intertwinements

[132] On the history of the concept of transversality see Welsch 1995, 367-371, here 367 n40.
[133] Sartre 1948, 18 (French original 1940).
[134] Guattari 1984; Deleuze 1976; Deleuze/Guattari 1987, 25.

existing between different forms of rationality, the heterogeneity of which cannot be resolved into a simple unifying structure, and which are therefore to be grasped rather as a unitary transversal network arising *in the midst of*, and thriving on, heterogeneity.

The central ideas of this concept are expounded by Welsch in the second part of his *Reason* under the heading 'Transversal Reason'.[135] They can be summarized using three basic theses. First: The constitution of rationality is characterized by unavoidable disorderliness. Second: In principle, reason is capable of reconstructing and precisely describing this disorderliness. Third: Only when reason succeeds in productively accepting the underlying intertwinements between different paradigms, or groups and types of paradigm, is it suitably equipped to solve contemporary problems. The first thesis is directed against the dominant idea, running from Kant through to Habermas and Lyotard, that reason has to do with an orderly arrangement of rationality types that are clearly separated from one another. The second thesis opposes the danger of diffusion which – particularly in the environs of posthistorical thinking, but also with some postmodern philosophers – has led to an attitude of arbitrariness and 'anything goes'. The third thesis makes clear that in relating to reality philosophy must by no means amount merely to the retrospective application of abstract philosophical models to reality. With transversal reason as its guideline, it instead proves its worth as reflection on practically effective constellations of rationality that are already inherently determined by contingent realities.

To understand Welsch's basic theses adequately it is important to consider a distinction that he expounds in the introduction to the second part of his book: that between understanding and reason. Drawing on the Kantian distinction between understanding and reason, Welsch defines reason as that faculty which has the task of reflecting on the different types of rationality and on the activity of reason as a whole.[136] The first of the

[135] In the present context I will not be discussing the relationship between this account and Welsch's blueprint in *Our Postmodern Modernity*. On this see Welsch/Sandbothe 1997.

[136] Cf. Welsch 1995, 437 f. On the history of the distinction between understanding and reason cf. 804-826.

three basic theses refers to the relationship between rationalities, and leaves aside the issue of reason in the sense of a faculty of reflection that goes beyond these. The relationship between rationalities is determined by Welsch to be a relationship of 'rational disorderliness'. (Welsch 1995, 447) Whereas from Kant through to Habermas and Lyotard the arrangement of rationalities had been conceived of as a relational arrangement of separate and in themselves autonomous rationality types (Kant, Habermas) or as kinds of discourse and systems of rules (Lyotard), Welsch compares 'the real constitution of rationality', with recourse to Derrida and Deleuze, with 'mobile and changeable net-like and web-like architectures'. (Welsch 1995, 448, 943) Welsch shows in detail that the orderly classical arrangement of cognitive, aesthetic and moral-practical rationalities is a superficial phenomenon (Welsch 1995, 461-540) and that this is underlain by a contingent network of 'family resemblances'[137] between different paradigms and groups of paradigms. The maxim that results from this for rationality theory states that 'the entire system of traffic, both the horizontal and the vertical' is to be uncovered. (Welsch 1995, 601) In doing this, Welsch continues, it will become manifest 'that the […] interparadigmatic […] intertwinements are mostly organized not hierarchically, but laterally. Their connection has more the structure of a fabric than of layers.' (Welsch 1995, 601)

Unlike the first, the second basic thesis refers not only to the web of rationalities, but focuses on the faculty of reflective reason operating within this web. This faculty's task is to correct the 'inadequate self-apprehension and excessive self-confidence of the paradigms' comprising the web of rationality types. (Welsch 1995, 673 ff.) Paradigms tend to ignore their position within a web of webs and the relativity that results from this. They are fixed on their objects and self-obliviously mask out the structural conditions that make their achievements possible. (Welsch 1995, 674 ff.) If they do perceive their conditions of possibility and competitors, then this is mostly in the mode of denial or rebuke. They each declare themselves to be the only true and valid paradigm, lay false claims to exclusivity, and tend to implicit absolutism. It is the task of transversal reason to enlighten the rationalities that emerge from paradigms about this dual self-

[137] Adopting Wittgenstein's term, cf. Welsch 1995, 534 ff.

misunderstanding: ‘Where this dual enlightenment succeeds, the interventions of reason lead individual paradigms from their merely rational to their reasonable form.’ (Welsch 1995, 673)

With this I come to the third basic thesis of Welsch’s book *Reason*. Due to its inner constitution philosophy that operates with transversal reason as its guideline is directly tailored, on the basis of its inner constitution, to the conditions of contemporary reality. At the same time, on the terrain of rationalities, it stands for a reason-based policy option of direct practical relevance. The focal point of Welsch’s theory of reason is the appeal to and implementation of transversal justice, which is to be realized in the complex conditions of plurality and polymorphic intertwinements that characterize reality today. To this extent, one can say that in terms of its basic theoretical undertaking, that of aiming at a transparent reconstruction of the complex conditions of reality, the concept of transversal reason has a political-practical hallmark of its own.

This is an expression of the inner dialectic which distinguishes the concept of transversal reason itself as a concept of philosophy operating in the midst of the tension between pragmatism and theoreticism: while acknowledging the fundamental differences that exist between these two types of philosophy, it at the same time enables the recognition and creative use of intersections and transitions between them. This metaphilosophical aspect of the concept of transversal reason needs to be gone into in more detail. For this aspect can help in pragmatically relating to one another the heterogeneous determinations of the task of media philosophy that result from the perspective of a pragmatic understanding of philosophy on the one hand, and a theoreticist perspective on the other.

The intertwined relations existing between ‘different views of philosophical theory’ (Welsch 1995, 853) are examined by Welsch in Chapter 15 of the second part of his book *Reason*. Before looking in detail at the ‘model analyses’ (Welsch 1995, 853) carried out in this chapter, I would like to interpose a critical comment: In terms of its approach the concerns of the concept of transversal reason bear a basic theoreticist hallmark. Its aim is to develop theoretical instruments which help in allowing conditions of contemporary

reality to be described in an appropriate manner. The basic understanding of philosophy as ‘theory’, in the sense of an activity aiming to describe reality, reflected in this also underlies the model analysis carried out by Welsch in Chapter 15.

This already becomes clear in the formulation just cited, according to which pragmatism and theoreticism are introduced as ‘different views of philosophical *theory*’. (Welsch 1995, 853; italics MS) This equating of philosophy with theory, in a broad sense, will be problematized in the following. It contains the point of departure for a theoreticist narrowing of outlook, meaning that, although successful to a large extent, in his model analysis Welsch does not succeed in all respects in implementing the claims to justice made by the concept of transversal reason in its politics of reason. By applying the concept of transversality to the determination of the task of media philosophy, I will suggest at the end of this chapter what a radicalization of Welsch’s model analysis might look like in which the narrowing of outlook just described, although not done away with, can be compensated for to some extent.

Welsch’s model analysis introduces Aristotle’s conception of *theoria* as the classical and to this day paradigmatic type of the theoreticist understanding of philosophy. For this conception, according to Welsch, ‘six part determinations’ (Welsch 1995, 856) are characteristic. Theory is an attitude of observation (1) that is directed to distinguished (divine) objects (2). Reference to these objects occurs in the mode of thinking, understood as a form of mental perception. In contrast to sense perception, the objects of theoretical contemplation themselves have the character of thought. Theoria is the ‘thinking of thought’ (3). As such it is autarkic in three respects (4): The thinking of thought is autarkic in its structure, since it is concerned with nothing but itself. It is also autarkic in its form of execution, since its performance has need of no external instruments, media, or other people. And, in addition, the thinking of thought is autarkic in its sense, since, rather than serving an external practical goal, as mental inspection, it is in itself its own end. Theoria does, it is conceded, have certain material presuppositions, but these are merely external in kind and are not to affect the content of thinking itself (5). True thinking of thought, pure theory in the highest sense, is realized in philosophy to

the extent that this addresses itself to the most perfect objects, distinguished by eternity, immobility and independence (6).

Aristotle paradigmatically articulated the theoreticist type of philosophical self-image. The 'detachment' from concrete forms of life and contingent language games characterizing this type is contrasted by Welsch with the 'involvement' of thinking of the Wittgensteinian type. (Welsch 1995, 853) Since this latter type of thought is a 'hybrid position', sharing the first two of the six part determinations of the classical theory concept, Welsch, in a 'dialectical consideration', turns to an 'arrangement of the ideal of philosophy, or theory, reaching beyond the difference between the Aristotelian and Wittgensteinian views.' (Welsch 1995, 884, 876, 882) By this Welsch means the 'main opposition: theoreticism versus pragmatism' (Welsch 1995, 889), which he deals with in detail. The following reconstruction concentrates on Welsch's uncovering of the 'dialectic structure of the conceptions' resulting from these 'extreme positions'. (Welsch 1995, 898, 899)

In contrast to the Wittgensteinian type of thought, the 'pragmatic version of theory' (Welsch 1995, 881) represents an understanding of philosophy the basic inner constitution of which does not share the basic determination of philosophical theory, common to Aristotle and Wittgenstein, as contemplation of the given. According to Welsch, this leads to theory of a constructivist design, such that 'everything is the result of feats of production, construction, or practice' (Welsch 1995, 889) in place of a phenomenological understanding of theory. In terms of philosophy of science this 'transition from contemplation to construction' is linked, Welsch continues, with the fact that in the wake of the establishment of modern-age science a cognitive practice has begun to dominate which is primarily concerned with technically 'mastering reality'. (Welsch 1995, 888, 885)

Against this background, pragmatism appears to be a philosophical movement that aims to make the form of knowledge practised in modern science the guideline for philosophical understanding of theory too. In this sense Welsch emphasizes that the

modern view of theory is nothing but pragmatism that has yet to achieve self-awareness: ‘the modern-age and modern theory type converges with pragmatism in its ultimately pragmatic orientation. It is just that this does not necessarily form a conscious or intentional aspect of scientific theoretical processes. Rather it is able to remain in the background, while the foreground is still shaped completely by a “classical” view of theory as “pure” knowledge – a doubling that is pragmatically inconceivable.’ (Welsch 1995, 887)

Once made explicit, the constructive character of knowledge connects, in pragmatism, with the relating of theoretical knowledge back to externally, practically set ends, so that philosophical theory no longer appears to be an end in itself, but is viewed (on the model of modern-age sciences) as an ‘instrument for mastering objects and reality’. (Welsch 1995, 886) This is also reflected, according to Welsch, not least in ‘that [the modern term] “theoretical” has tended to become a privative concept.’ (Welsch 1995, 886) In the conditions of modernity, theoretical and practical deeds no longer appear to be activities that each have their end in themselves. They might, now as previously, provide the possibility for private happiness in their execution. But since modern science is entirely directed toward ‘real pragmatic goals in reality, not individual aims of happiness’ (Welsch 1995, 886), the latter can no longer be comprehended as the proper telos of philosophical activity. The aim of philosophical theory now lies also, and precisely, in practical application and no longer in the *bios theoretikos*, in the enjoyment of a life shaped by theory.

This reflects the fact that the pragmatic view of theory is based on ‘definitions of the human which view this as by no means a primarily cognitive being – and so, at least in a broad sense, as the essence of theory.’ (Welsch 1995, 882) Instead, according to these definitions, ‘philosophical activity’ features as ‘only *one* human activity alongside others.’ (Welsch 1995, 883) In summary, Welsch emphasizes that ‘with pragmatic versions of philosophy the decoupling of theory and life and the dispersion of conceptions of philosophy are no longer to be stopped.’ (Welsch 1995, 884)

Having contrasted the basic differences between the pragmatic and theoreticist conceptions of philosophical theory, Welsch proceeds to elaborate these 'conceptions' reciprocal capacity to undermine' one another (Welsch 1995, 889), which results in the perspective of transversal reason on the basis of their independence. In this context it should be stressed that already the 'contrastive sketch' of the two conceptions was a genuine feat of transversal reason: 'Through such an analysis the profile of the conceptions becomes more precise and sharper.' (Welsch 1995, 877) For 'counter designs often allow what is specific to an initial conception to be recognized completely.' (Welsch 1995, 877) In addition to this basic feat, come two further feats of transversal reason. One consists of detailed reconstruction of the 'logic proper to the respective argumentation'; the other in 'uncovering rejections and fractures, as well as transitions and intertwinements between the conceptions.' (Welsch 1995, 877f.)

The two feats of transversal reason just named are central to Welsch's model analysis. Welsch proceeds by way of a reciprocal interpretation such that he initially reconstructs the respective representations resulting for one position from the perspective of the other and vice versa. From the perspective of theoreticism, pragmatism seems in itself to be defined by a basic theoretical assumption. This basic assumption would consist of the insight, to which pragmatism lays claim, 'that nothing is "objective", rather that everything – including all statements about objectivity – is a result of productive, constructive, and practical feats.' (Welsch 1995, 889) As required by transversal reason, Welsch contraposes this theoreticist undermining and incorporation strategy with pragmatism's own understanding of itself. Here it becomes clear that there are indeed versions of pragmatism which have remained 'metaphysical', and which issue in a performative contradiction by claiming that insight into the constructed character of all reality is itself not a construction and is to be understood as objective truth. But consistent pragmatists 'understand their own view […] as *one* determinate option, alongside which other options are possible. They do not claim to be making *the* definitive statement about

reality, they intend only to be submitting *one* meaningful proposal on the understanding of reality.'[138]

An analogous tendency to undermine and incorporate the opposing position is also found on the side of pragmatism. The pragmatist pictures theoreticism so as to suggest that the type of philosophy practised by the theoreticist rests on 'a pragmatic assumption concerning the shaping of successful living'. (Welsch 1995, 892) This assumption, according to the pragmatist, shows clearly that, without admitting it, the theoreticist in turn subjects philosophical theory to a functionalization from the perspective of life. Again, as required by transversal reason, Welsch contraposes this pragmatic picture of theoreticism with theoreticism's understanding of itself. This states that the 'thesis of theory's characteristic of fulfilling life […] does not represent a presupposition alien to theory' (Welsch 1995, 892), since it results from the activity of theory itself. It is not a presupposition, but rather an immanent experience that sets in through the activity of theory itself. For it is only in active theorizing that life in its highest sense, as *bios theoretikos*, and hence life in its inner essential determination becomes manifest to us. To this extent, theory possesses 'a pragmatics of its own' (Welsch 1995, 893) not to be confused with the pragmatics of pragmatism.

The result of this passage through the reciprocal interpretations developed by pragmatism and theoreticism of their respectively opposing positions leads Welsch to the following result: 'Despite all their intertwinements and commonalities the two conceptions can neither absorb nor replace one another. […] In the one case […] one wants to recognize what exists in its proper being. In the other case, however, the concern is to create a better world (for which what exists is only an aid or a hindrance). […] Not only the basic assumption, but the entire basic interest, the whole attitude and orientation, proves to be different.' (Welsch 1995, 894) Welsch explains what is meant by this as follows: 'The opposition concerns […] all aspects, for instance the group targeted by the respective conception (individuals or society), its temporal form (timeless or futuristic), or the self-

[138] Welsch 1995, 889. – In this context Welsch cites John Dewey as an example of a consistent pragmatist (cf. 891n96).

understanding of its actors (incarnate or anticipatory).' (Welsch 1995, 894) As Welsch puts its in summary: 'All in all the relationship between the pragmatic and classical Aristotelian versions of theory is little more than one of contrast. This is manifest from the basic attitude – construction versus observation – through to the different finalities – improving the world versus knowledge.' (Welsch 1995, 903)

So transversal reason first sharply and precisely expounds the heterogeneous logics proper to pragmatism and theoreticism by means of reciprocal sketches, and by way of critical analysis of the reciprocal interpretations developed by both conceptions of philosophy to undermine their respective opposing position. Having done this, transversal reason now has to show up transversal transitions in the midst of the heterogeneity revealed. It was already made clear at the outset that the concept of transversality's basic concern consists of allowing adherence to the 'simultaneity of active transition and expounded heterogeneity'. (Welsch 1995, 752) Before taking a closer look at the example application of these decisive operations of transversal reason, as carried out by Welsch in his model analysis of pragmatism and theoreticism as differing conceptions of theory, the basic idea of this application must first be made more precise.

In Chapter 10 of his book, entitled 'Transversality', Welsch provides the following explanation: 'Heterogeneity is not cast aside or abolished, transitions do not lead to an unification of content or structural synthesis of diverse rational complexes. Rather, the heterogeneous is linked only in the transitional activity of reason – in its appearance before the eye of reason.' (Welsch 1995, 752) This formulates the basic figure which, according to Welsch, can serve as a model in conceiving of 'transitions between the transitionless'. (Welsch 1995, 749) These transitions are not 'material transitions' (Welsch 1995, 754n4) already stipulated, revealed, or developed by the internal structures of the various conceptions, but rather formal relationships of intertwinement resulting from the fact that in moving amidst the heterogeneity of various conceptions reason simultaneously makes transitions between them. But this is not all. For a few pages later Welsch adds: 'Only one part of reason's transitions takes place in the transitionless […],

on the other side […] reason also uncovers existing connections and initiates new links.' (Welsch 1995, 754)

Interestingly, it is precisely this second mode of transition, which Welsch retrospectively adds in the chapter on transversality, that comes to the fore in his model analysis. Thus in relation to pragmatism and theoreticism Welsch emphasizes: 'The conceptions have in common both certain elements and certain supports (or whole support networks). For instance, they share the view that consistency is indispensable; both are also of the view that overall assurance is meaningful and necessary, and that one has need of a holistic guiding perspective – instead of merely practising "crisis management" or "piecemeal-engineering" […]'. Central in this, for Welsch, is above all the latter point. In striving for 'overall assurance', the concern, according to Welsch, is with 'an axiom long inscribed in our culture'. (Welsch 1995, 895) This axiom is to represent a 'point of reference on which approaches as different as the theoretical and pragmatic concepts of theory rely in equal measure, but which they are unable to justify in their own terms.' (Welsch 1995, 895 f.)

With this consideration Welsch is implicitly referring back to the presupposition of his model analysis, which I mentioned critically at the beginning, that the two differing understandings of philosophy are concerned with different conceptions of *theory*. As the common basic determination of the pragmatic and theoreticist conceptions of theory Welsch names the striving for 'overall assurance'. (Welsch 1995, 895) To the extent that the 'Quest for Certainty' (cf. Dewey, 1988a) reflected in this striving is initially a genuinely theoretical impulse, it can be said that Welsch expounds both positions from the perspective of a theoreticist preconception of philosophy, so that the logic proper to pragmatism is not done full justice in Welsch's account. Indeed Welsch himself expresses concern with regard to the basic cultural axiom he highlights as the common basis of pragmatism and theoreticism: 'However, one might ask whether this basis is not in turn one-sidedly theoretical, so that already here, due to cultural premiss, the theoretical approach is being privileged as opposed to the pragmatic one.' (Welsch 1995, 896)

Welsch's answer to the question he poses himself is ambivalent. On the one hand he concedes: 'To be sure, such a privileging has existed traditionally […]'; on the other hand he submits: 'Even though the said presupposition is strictly theoretically tailored, it is nonetheless not merely theoretical but also includes a pragmatic element […]. What matters is grasping the whole as an *active* feat through which the whole first quite properly becomes the whole.' (Welsch 1995, 896) And from this he concludes: 'Because of this pragmatic element, which belongs to it constantly, this thesis is then also able to serve explicitly as a basis and support for the pragmatic conception.' And moreover: 'Indeed the pragmatic conception in fact endorses the view that being active in the sense of this idea is necessary and beneficial to the formation of a better world, the breakthrough to which it wants to assist (and to be able to speak in this way at all already requires a holistic idea of this other world).' (Welsch 1995, 896)

The theoreticist envelopment lying in this suggestion becomes particularly clear when Welsch unpacks the holistic idea, or 'theoretical framework' (Welsch 1995, 896), which in his view is also, and precisely, to define pragmatism in the following manner: 'The pragmatic approach contains first a specific worldview, corresponding to its respective option (which states that what matters in life is power, social success, individual happiness, unity with nature or suchlike); and secondly, in addition to its specific option, it advocates a general worldview, according to which the concern is not contemplation but action, not accepting but shaping; this view is advocated, however, in the mode of an option, not an assertion.' (Welsch 1995, 896)

There are indeed theoretical elements, specific and general worldviews both within classical pragmatism and within neopragmatism. The decisive point of difference, however, does not lie – as Welsch suggests – in the functioning of these elements as theoretical options that, as proposed descriptions, leave space for alternative descriptions; it lies rather in that within pragmatism theories serve as instruments in experimentally changing collective human life. For classical pragmatism, in the consistent form that Dewey gave it, the pragmatic turn lies not in the theoretical character of particular forms

of knowledge as *hypotheses* (as *descriptive* options), but in that they are *working* hypotheses in the literal sense, that is, hypotheses that do their work in an environment of practical action and which in this sense experimentally – i.e. in the context of a publicly occurring action – prove themselves more or less useful.[139] The fundamental practicist idea of pragmatism reflected in this basic coupling of theory to practice was formulated by Dewey as follows: 'Knowing is itself a mode of practical action and is *the* way of interaction by which other natural interactions become subject to direction.'[140]

So the optional character of the theoretical elements deployed by pragmatism does not feature as a *sui generis* phenomenon in the logic proper to pragmatism. It results far more from the *instrumental* character that theoretical elements have for the pragmatist. Thus in relation to experimental method Dewey highlights 'that those concepts, general principles, theories and dialectical developments which are indispensable to any systematic knowledge [are] shaped and tested as tools of inquiry'; and further, 'that policies and proposals for social action [are to] be treated as working hypotheses, not as programmes to be rigidly adhered to and executed.' (Dewey 1984, 362) As soon as a theoretical idea or a political programme, a 'general' or a 'specific worldview', is pragmatically grasped as something that must prove itself as an instrument providing guidance in practical situations, it will figure as an option for practical solutions. The quality of such solutions can be determined pragmatically in comparison with other options for solution (as is the case with tools which are better or worse for this purpose or that than other tools are). In this vein Dewey continues: 'The apparatus will no longer be taken to be itself knowledge, but will be seen to be intellectual means of making discoveries of phenomena having social import'. (Dewey 1984, 362)

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[139] On this see Dewey's 'Ideas at Work' (Dewey 1988a, 87-111) as well as Dewey 1984, 362.

[140] Dewey 1988a, 86; on this see also ibid., 111 where Dewey stresses 'that ideas are statements not of what is or what has been but of acts to be performed'; and in the same context: '[...] Ideas that are plans of operations to be performed are integral factors in actions which change the face of the world.'

The consistent pragmatist also applies these considerations to the basic ideas of pragmatism itself. In this sense Dewey urges: 'Pragmatism must take its own medicine. Cannot be a metaphysics in old sense, because, being itself a mode of knowledge, all its theories must be recognized to be only working hypotheses and experimental in quality.'[141] In this formulation it becomes clear that the pragmatic understanding of theory is to be applied to the basic ideas of pragmatism itself, that is, to what Welsch calls the 'specific' and 'general' worldviews which supposedly characterize pragmatism.

Pragmatism's 'general worldview' fundamentally states that ideas are to be apprehended as instruments for solving practical problems. If one applies this idea to itself, then it states that the thesis that ideas are to be grasped as tools is not a theoretical framework, understood theoretically by pragmatism as one option among others. Rather, the basic pragmatic thesis is itself deployed as a working hypothesis, one which has historically proven itself to some extent due to the technical success of modern science, and which continues to be experimentally tested. Thus, in the process of this testing, it is at the same time to acquire an increasingly binding character which distinguishes it from a merely theoretical option.

Pragmatically viewed, therefore, pragmatism's 'general worldview' is not to be understood as a 'theoretical framework' (Welsch 1995, 896) at rest, but as a mobile and permanently changing instrument that proves itself (or otherwise) historically and turns out to be more or less useful in the political history of humans. In this sense Rorty comments of Dewey's philosophy: 'Dewey's philosophy is a systematic attempt to temporalize everything, to leave nothing fixed. This means abandoning the attempt to find a theoretical frame of reference within which to evaluate proposals for the human future.' (Rorty 1998j, 20) Hence, pragmatically viewed, it would be proper to speak not of a 'general worldview', but rather of a multitude of working hypotheses that are being permanently modified and further developed in the experimental process of being tested, and which, outside of this process, are nothing that might be explicated in a theoretically meaningful way as a 'general worldview'.

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[141] Dewey 1977, 257. Cf. also Hahn 1977, xxiv.

The criteria for the utility of what Welsch calls pragmatism's 'general worldview' (but which, in terms of the logic proper to pragmatism, is to be grasped not as a theoretical worldview, but rather as a permanently changing plurality of intellectual instruments for action in shaping human reality), result from what Welsch calls the 'specific worldview' of pragmatism. This in turn does not consist – as Welsch suggests – of a theoretical statement about 'life'. (Welsch 1995, 896) Rather, it results from the contingent ideals of those real or fictional communities in whose company the pragmatist, as one human among others (or as the reader of utopian novels), gathers experience.

While pragmatists such as Emerson or Nietzsche declared their support more for the values of esoteric communities and antidemocratic élites, for pragmatists such as Whitman, James, and Dewey it was the democratic ideals of the political Enlightenment that determined the content of their pragmatic perspective. However, James, in particular, was not always completely clear about the historical contingency of the ideals he advocated. For this reason, in such matters consistent 'contingency-theoretical' pragmatists are to be clearly distinguished from those who did in fact presuppose a specific worldview, in Welsch's sense, as a theoretical framework serving as the basic cultural axiom for 'overall assurance'. (Welsch 1995, 896 f.)

To a large extent Welsch's description of pragmatism's specific worldview as a theoretical framework serving overall assurance does apply to James's moral philosophy. The foundations of this moral philosophy were expounded by James in his essay 'The Moral Philosopher and the Moral Life'. Without any contingency-theoretical relativization or any pragmatic recourse he there assumes 'the guiding principle for ethical philosophy' to be 'simply to satisfy at all times *as many demands as we can*'.[142] And in the same context he emphasizes: 'There is but one unconditional commandment, which is that we should seek incessantly, with fear and trembling, so to vote and to act as to bring about the very largest total universe of good which we can see.' (James1979, 158) In the course of his essay James does in fact have recourse to the facticity of

history,[143] as well as to the necessity of further historical experiments,[144] in ascertaining the path which is to lead to the realization of this aim. But the liberal guiding principle he expounds for moral philosophy itself remains a presupposed theoretical framework grounding the philosopher's confidence 'that the line of least resistance will always be towards the richer and the more inclusive arrangement'. (James 1979, 157)

In opening up such global horizons of overall self-assurance James is by no means doing so as a relativist. The 'we' James speaks of encompasses humanity and is not – as it is today, for instance, by Rorty – ethnocentrically relativized to the western world. This is pointed out by Putnam, who writes: 'There is not one single line in James's writing that takes "general validity" to mean general validity in a particular culture. […] I take it, rather, that the "we" in James's writing is supposed to include the great majority of all human beings; and in fact, there is no evidence that he is restricting it (and some evidence that he is not restricting it) to human beings. His famous images of a cosmic struggle between good and evil, which will go on until "the last man" and which may involve supernatural beings […] suggest that the relevant community is at least as inclusive as (and potentially more inclusive than) the entire human species.'[145]

Corresponding to this at the level of James's general worldview there is a theoretical counterpart which aims for overall practical-active assurance. The history of our beliefs and habits of action as well as the development of our forms of collective living is for James an occurrence that transcends cultures. James – in a manner similar to Peirce –

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[142] James 1979, 155. On this see also Putnam/Putnam 1990, especially 218.
[143] James 1979, 156: 'So far then, and up to date, the casuistic scale is made for the philosopher already far better than he can ever make it for himself. An experiment of the most searching kind has proved that the laws and usages of the land are what yield the maximum of satisfaction to the thinkers taken all together.'
[144] James 1979, 156: 'although a man always risks much when he breaks away from established rules and strives to realize a larger ideal whole than they permit, yet the philosopher must allow that it is at all times open to anyone to make the experiment […]'. And a little later (157) in the same context, James writes: 'These experiments are to be judged not *a priori*, but by actually finding, after the fact of their making, how much more outcry or how much appeasement comes about.'
[145] Putnam 1990, 239 and footnote 5, 333 f.

starts with the assumption that the network of human beliefs has a unitary history.[146] However, whereas Peirce takes the view that this unity is grounded in an external power fatefully determining the evolution of our beliefs from the outside, so that in the long term realistic correspondence to a reality that itself continues to develop is guaranteed,[147] James thinks that such correspondence cannot be, and need not be assured by anything. For James it suffices that we are concerned with a unitary development and internal optimization of our ways of worldmaking, which are to guarantee the production of inner coherence in the structure of our networks of beliefs and patterns of action.[148] The question as to how this internal optimization itself is to be explained is left unanswered by James. It may be considered a 'theoretical framework' (Welsch 1995, 896) of his general worldview which can be interpreted as reflecting the basic cultural axiom, highlighted by Welsch, that aims at overall assurance.

Against this, it must be highlighted that consistent pragmatism, as initially developed by Dewey[149] and decisively formulated by Rorty, foregrounds the historical contingency and hence the unjustifiability of the moral-political horizons targeted by democratic liberalism and which have developed in the framework of collective historical experiments – 'not because world-historical Reason was cunning, but just by good luck.' (Rorty 1998f, 304) In Rorty's view, James did not really succeed in taking seriously the 'The Priority of Democracy to Philosophy' (Rorty 1988) reflected in the pragmatic

[146] The universalist features in James's thinking have been elaborated by Putnam (1997) with regard to his theory of truth. By contrast, a radically pluralistic reading of James has been suggested by Nagl (1998, 50-87, especially 58-65).

[147] On this too see Putnam, who describes Peirce's 'scholastic realism' as 'his belief that ultimately only those concepts survive that correspond to real Thirds' (Putnam 1997, 169).

[148] See Rorty 1997f, 27 ff. for a critique of the view held by Putnam, following Peirce and James, of 'inquiry, and human activity generally, as converging rather than proliferating, as becoming more unified rather than more diverse'. (Rorty 1991f, 27)

[149] In current debate on the question of the relationship between democracy and philosophy in Dewey's thinking Hilary Putnam advocates the view that Dewey succeeded in 'the *epistemological justification of democracy*' (Putnam 1992b, 180), whereas Rorty accentuates those aspects of Dewey's thinking in which his awareness of the contingency of liberal community finds expression (Rorty 1989, 44-69) and criticizes

attitude, because he stylizes the ideals of liberal democracy as a 'guiding principle for ethical philosophy'[150] and an 'unconditional commandment' (James 1979, 158), which is not itself to be the historical result of political experiment, but is supposed to transcend the historical contingency of the modern culture of the Enlightenment. (Rorty 1997b, esp. 99)

Against this, Rorty proposes a pragmatism that consciously argues ethnocentrically, the programme of which is 'to describe our own community and our own philosophical views in terms of parochial, temporary, contingent needs.' (Rorty 1998f, 303) In doing this, Rorty can draw support from Dewey's pragmatic redetermination of the task of philosophy, according to which philosophical thinking 'is to clarify men's ideas as to the social and moral strifes of their own day.' (Dewey 1982, 94) On the basis of such a consistently pragmatic conception of philosophy – as projected by Dewey at the beginning of the 20th century, and again taken up, and further executed in altered conditions by Rorty at the end of the 20th century – the substantive determinations and mutual relationships change between what Welsch means in speaking of a striving for 'overall assurance' with regard to pragmatism, or of the theoretical framework of its 'general' and 'specific worldviews'.

As long as one strives for overall and general theoretical assurance – and not for the pragmatic direction of the individual and concrete – the general world view functions as the foundation for the specific worldview. If this changes and the philosophical striving for overall assurance is replaced by scientific and political interest in the pragmatic coordination of the historically and culturally concrete, then the specific worldview becomes the basis and the general worldview becomes an instrument for realizing the political targets that determine the specific worldview, which understands itself to be historically and culturally contingent. The specific worldview then no longer functions as a theoretical option, but proves instead to be a basic practical attitude into which we have

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those in which he relapses into a metaphysical attitude. (Rorty 1982e) On the debate between Putnam and Putnam see also Shustermann 1995.

[150] James 1979, 155. On this see also Putnam/Putnam (1990, 218).

been brought up: namely as belief in the ideals of the democratic enlightenment, and as the hope that in the course of time we will succeed in continually extending human solidarity and in lessening interpersonal cruelty and humiliation, both in the societies of the western world and in the so-called 'developing' and 'fast-developing' countries.

According to Rorty, pragmatism which is consistent in this sense gives up the hope 'that philosophy might stand above politics and at the same time give one political position priority over another.' (Rorty 1994, 986) This rejection of all theoreticist justificatory projects of philosophy reflects the pragmatic suggestion to see things so 'that the democratic project is no longer rooted in something bigger than itself'. (Rorty 1994, 986) Central to the political project of the democratic enlightenment, according to Rorty, is not the theoretical framework of a specific worldview, but solely the contingent utopian hope, a hope not theoretically justifiable but which can only become plausible historically and experimentally, 'that the future will be unspecifiably different from, and unspecifiably freer than, the past.' (Rorty 1999d, 120)

This, in Rorty's view, in no way requires – as Welsch (1995, 896) suggests – 'a holistic idea of this other world', but only that we strive, in a manner characteristic of pragmatist 'meliorism' (Dewey 1982, 181), to implement the already existing ideals of democratic societies more consistently in practice and to extend these to other communities. The emergence of global coherences between different political aims, which James theoretically hypostacized and which Welsch has in mind in accentuating the holistic aspect of the pragmatic perspective of assurance, is what Rorty has in mind when he talks of 'the hope, which we share, that the human race as a whole should gradually come together in a global community'. (Rorty 1999c, xxxii)

Nor is this hope taken by Rorty to be a theoretical certainty derived from the constitution of human reason or from our language's intersubjective communicative structures, but as a hope feeding on an awareness of its own historical contingency, i.e. its theoretical unjustifiability and philosophically historical uninforceability. Rorty puts this as follows: 'We think that the utopian world community envisaged by the Charter of the United

Nations and the Helsinki Declaration of Human Rights is no more the *destiny* of humanity than is an atomic holocaust or the replacement of democratic governments by feuding warlords. If either of the latter is what the future holds, our species will have been unlucky, but it will not have been irrational. It will not have failed to live up to its moral obligations. It will simply have missed a chance to be happy.' (Rorty 1999c, xxxii)

Against this background, Rorty understands the emergence of global coherences between differing political aims ethnocentrically, as occurring through the media-mediated spread of political vocabularies developed in the western industrial nations in the age of the Enlightenment in Europe and America. In this context Rorty talks of 'the power of the rich European and American democracies to disseminate their customs to other parts of the world' as a power 'which was enlarged by certain past contingencies and has been diminished by certain more recent contingencies.' (Rorty 1989, 93) With this Rorty not only establishes a link between pragmatic thinking and modern media technologies, but also simultaneously shows that for pragmatism the striving for a 'holistic guiding perspective', which Welsch (1995, 895) speaks of as a basic cultural axiom of the Occident, does not have the character of a theoretical axiom. Rather, it takes effect as the historical consequence of a political power constellation closely linked with the invention of transmission technologies such as printed books or television.[151]

If one considers the logic proper to pragmatism in an appropriate form, then what Welsch presents as the common basis of pragmatism and theoreticism turns out to be conception-relative. What initially looks like a common feature proves to be a further difference. This applies both to the specific and to the general worldview of pragmatism that Welsch pinpoints. In both cases what is concerned, in the view of pragmatism, is not a 'theoretical framework' (Welsch 1995, 896) understood to be merely optional, but a tool working to change reality experimentally in concrete contexts of action. This tool, when it functions, becomes pragmatically binding as an intelligent instrument of action in a

[151] On the importance of television for the historical and contextual development of a global 'thin' morality out of the complex web of culturally divergent 'thick' moralities see also Walzer 1994, especially 1 f., and Rorty 1998e.

way clearly differing from the theoretical optionality considered by Welsch. It is this practical experimental aspect, and not the theoretical optional one, which comprises the specific difference between a theoreticism directed to overall knowledge of reality and a pragmatism working within historically contingent sociopolitical preconditions. For the latter beliefs and theories exist as rules of action with a specific hallmark, one manifest only in active practice and attributable with no theoretical independence when detached from such practice.[152]

Against this background, the question concerning the possibility of transversal intertwinement between the pragmatic and theoreticist conceptions of philosophy poses itself in a modified way. If the project of overall philosophical assurance and the development of a specific and general worldview linked with this project cannot be considered the cultural foundation common to pragmatism and theoreticism; and if the difference and heterogeneity between the two differing conceptions reaches deeper, then the formal transitions emphasized by Welsch in Chapter 10 of his book *Reason* become central to the investigation. These are reflected in both the existing 'possibilities of reciprocal interpretation' (Welsch 1995, 897) and in those material transitions that remain bound to the logic proper to the respective conceptions and which do not represent underlying common features.

The distinctive ability of transversal reason consists, according to Welsch, in being able to carry out transitions in the transitionless, that is, to think in the midst of heterogeneous conceptions and to illuminate and further develop one with the help of others. If one spells out this ability pragmatically, unlike Welsch who infers from this the 'sovereignty of reason' as a 'formal and pure faculty' (Welsch 1995, 759 f.), then experimentally proving practically worthwhile can be stated as a substantive criterion to direct thinking

[152] In an early essay Dewey traced the pragmatic resolution of theory into a tool for changing reality back to Hegel. (Dewey 1969) There Dewey writes: 'This, then, is why I conceive Hegel – entirely apart from the value of any special results – to represent the quintessence of the scientific spirit. He denies not only the possibility of getting truth out of a formal, apart thought, but he denies the existence of any faculty of thought which is

that ‘moves amidst the spheres of rationality and attains a view not by an overview but by transitions, by many movements between rationalities.’ (Welsch 1995, 760 f.) How is the heterogeneity of the two different conceptions of philosophy – the pragmatic and the theoreticist – to be dealt with against the background of a pragmatically adapted conception of transversal reason?

To begin with, it must be stressed that in the sense of a pragmatically adapted transversal reason thinking no longer starts with the assumption that there is an axiomatic standpoint presupposed by both conceptions, in terms of which the conflict between pragmatism and theoreticism can be described in a philosophically neutral manner. Descriptions in this conflict are instead grasped as descriptions resulting either from a pragmatic or from a theoreticist perspective. Welsch’s model analysis claims to be capable of providing a description from the neutral perspective of pure reason, a viewpoint from which the common foundations of the only apparently radically different conceptions might be seen. Yet in the framework of the preceding considerations it has been shown how strongly this description is, in reality, theoreticistically burdened. In some ways this view of the relationship between pragmatism and theoreticism can claim support from Rorty. But at the same time it goes somewhat beyond Rorty by bringing the pragmatically adapted instruments of transversal reason into play and hence opening up discursive spaces that remain closed with Rorty.

In a recent text entitled ‘Beauty, Sublimity and the Philosophers’ Community’ Rorty describes the relationship between pragmatism and theoreticism as a tension between the beautiful and the sublime running through the cultural history of thinking. The theoreticist philosopher seeks a sublime authority. In his view, this prediscursive authority – which is to go beyond and make possible discourse, being effective either within or outside ourselves – is to ensure that our beliefs are not only coherent and consensual, but can be considered ‘true’ in a correspondence-theoretical sense. By contrast, the pragmatic philosopher is satisfied with coherence and consensus. She

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other than the expression of fact itself’. (Dewey 1969, 139) On this see also Rorty 1998f, 301 f.

remains in the realm of the beautiful, as a domain concerned with manifest relations between linguistically interpreted entities. For her philosophy does not target an authority of appeal that grounds our interpretation worlds and transcendentally makes possible our language games, but rather aims, with Wilfrid Sellars, simply 'to understand how things in the broadest possible sense of the term hang together in the broadest possible sense of the term.' (Sellars 1963, 1)

The point of Rorty's remarks is that, although in a certain historical situation it might be important to strengthen (by polemical means) one of the two styles of thought as opposed to the other, in the long run, according to Rorty, what matters is that 'Intellectual and spiritual progress depend on philosophers' being kept in constant motion, they cannot stop running to and fro between methodical and argumentative scientists and romantic and nonargumentative poets, so as to turn to one when they are weary of the others.' (Rorty 2000b, 41) It might be irritating that Rorty in this context juxtaposes advocates of pragmatism alongside methodical and argumentative scientists, and advocates of theoreticism alongside romantic and nonargumentative poets. Of course, theoreticist philosophers, and precisely these, also proceed methodically and argumentatively. Rorty is not disputing this with his idiosyncratic classification. However, ultimately – and this is what matters to Rorty – both 'poetic' theoreticists like the late Heidegger and explicitly argumentative and methodical theoreticists like McDowell aim at an authority that is no longer argumentatively justifiable, one lying beyond the world of discourse and which can be conjured up only indirectly through intimations, or with recourse to intuitions or the supposedly self-evidential deliverances of common sense.

In contrast to the polemic attitude that determined his earlier writings to a large extent, in the recent text just quoted Rorty assumes a more relaxed and more liberal relationship towards the theoreticist tradition. This is reflected in full clarity in the closing passage of the same text, where Rorty writes: 'As I am sometimes accused of heralding the end of philosophy, I would like to conclude by saying why I think it unlikely that philosophy is coming to its end, as long as thinking is free. Typical of attempts to proclaim an "end of philosophy" is the endeavour either to make the sublime ridiculous or to look down

contemplatively on the merely beautiful. Endeavours of this kind thrive on the decline of the respective other and perish with its rise. Neither one nor the other will be successful as long as the philosophical community tacitly agrees to keep the pendulum swinging.' (Rorty 2000b, 41)

With this statement Rorty at least lifts modern philosophy's debate on 'theoreticism versus pragmatism' to a level beyond the ongoing reciprocal polemics that characterize most discussions between advocates of the two differing conceptions of philosophy. This liberal perspective does not itself suffice as an answer, but points in the direction in which an answer is to be sought to the question of how the pragmatic and theoreticist understandings of philosophy are to be transversally intertwined with one another. The deficits he himself senses on this point are indicated when Rorty elsewhere contrasts the pragmatic perspective, which he here identifies with a biologism inspired by Darwin, with the view of theoreticism going back to Plato and Kant: 'I do not know how to argue the question of whether it is better to see human beings in this biologistic way or to see them in a way more like Plato's or Kant's.' And Rorty continues: 'I suspect that all either side can do is to restate its case over and over again, in context after context. The controversy between those who see both our species and our society as a lucky accident, and those who find an immanent teleology in both, is too radical to permit of being judged from some neutral standpoint.' (Rorty 1999c, xxxii)

If one wants to get slightly beyond Rorty's helplessness on this issue, the philosophical instruments of pragmatically adapted transversal reason can do good service. Thinking with transversal transitions as its guideline then takes the place of Rorty's metaphor of philosophical history's swinging pendulum. With a view to the concrete problems and sociopolitical aims in which the different conceptions of philosophy are embedded, this allows us to perform transitions in the transitionless. The model of transversal thinking *in the midst of* heterogeneous views can take shape and be construed as intellectual practice from both the theoreticist and pragmatic perspectives. In his book *Reason* Welsch has systematically demonstrated the possibility of transversal cooperation between

pragmatism and theoreticism from a theoreticist perspective. This has yet to be done from a pragmatist perspective.

The exposition of such a possibility will not, of course, stick to the claim to be uniting pragmatism and theoreticism with one another on neutral territory, a claim Welsch makes but is himself unable to realize. Instead such an exposition will deploy the instruments of transversal reason within pragmatic thinking in such a way that pragmatically reinterpreted aspects of theoreticism can be put to use for the purposes of pragmatism. In addition, the transversality concept pursued here will differ not only in its claims from that espoused by Welsch. In its form, too, the pragmatic exposition of a cooperation between pragmatism and theoreticism will look unlike that presented by Welsch. It will take place not as a theoretical construction, but rather as a sample analysis of a concrete applied case in which philosophical thinking has to prove itself experimentally. With regard to media philosophy, such an applied case is provided by the media transformation currently taking place and centring on the internet. The discipline of media philosophy hence proves particularly suited to making possible transitions between the pragmatist and theoreticist understandings of philosophy. To conclude, this will be shown from a pragmatic perspective, following on from Rorty, but at the same time going somewhat beyond him.

An important point of connection that opens up a transversal cooperation between pragmatic and theoreticist aspects within Rorty's thinking, is brought out by Rorty himself when he highlights: 'Although I do not think that there is an inferential path that leads from the antirepresentationalist view of truth and knowledge common to Nietzsche, James, and Dewey either to democracy or antidemocracy, I do think there is a plausible inference from democratic convictions to such a view.' (Rorty 1998k, 27) The central matter of concern for the pragmatic conception of philosophy proposed by Rorty is to contribute to transforming representationalistically shaped common sense, which is directed to external or internal reference authorities, into an antirepresentationalist and antiauthoritarian common sense. The latter, such is Rorty's thesis, would be appropriate to the contemporary democratic culture of the political Enlightenment and might help in

advancing its political aims. This vision is articulated in Rorty's thinking as the 'romantic hope of substituting new common sense for old common sense.' (Rorty 1996a, 52)

The weak point in Rorty's romantic pragmatism lies in that he can name no concrete instruments that might serve as means to implementing the programme he outlines of an antirepresentationalist transformation of common sense. A transversal conception of pragmatic media philosophy, in which the instruments of theoreticist media philosophy are not simply excluded, but are rather used cooperatively to realize pragmatic ends, can provide us with such a tool.

If one interprets the technical media of modernity as machines with the help of which entire societies can acquire new ways of sensory and semiotic worldmaking in a relatively short time, then it becomes clear that matters of media policy have genuine philosophical dimensions and that philosophical media theories have eminently political aspects. Whereas pragmatic media philosophy in this demanding sense distances itself from the theoreticist programme of philosophically justifying our sociopolitical horizons of action, this does not mean that it wholly relinquishes philosophy's profound acuity. This inference, suggested by Rorty's unclear early utterances about a 'post-Philosophical culture' (Rorty 1982b, xl), is instead countered by the attempt to develop philosophical instruments of analysis which allow media-induced changes in common sense to be related to the sociopolitical ends of an Enlightened democratic shaping of human coexistence. Using a media-philosophical analysis of the internet as an example, the following chapters outline how this project might be practically implemented in the conditions of the current media transformation.

IV

THE INTERNET'S TRANSMEDIA CONSTITUTION

The new discipline of media philosophy that is currently taking shape is faced by a number of fundamental challenges, two of which should be particularly emphasized. The first is the challenge that issues from the current media transformation centring on the internet. The other is the challenge linked with the project of developing an integral conception of media philosophy in which the pragmatic and theoreticist traditions of philosophical self-understanding are systematically related to one another. The two challenges are closely linked with one another, since academic analysis of and pragmatic contributions in shaping the media landscape's new structuring – with press, radio, television and video being transmedially networked with one another through the internet – presupposes a transdisciplinary research constellation in which aspects of pragmatic and theoreticist media philosophy are intertwined with one another in a problem-oriented manner. In the following account I want to attempt to respond to both challenges from the perspective of the transversal conception of pragmatic media philosophy that was sketched at the end of the last chapter.

The internet is not a radically new medium. Rather it is digitally woven from media already familiar to us. The computers that are networked by high-speed telecommunications lines in the internet link and transform applications, forms of usage, and content familiar to us from television, radio, and face-to-face communication, the telephone, video and printed media. (Cf. Bolter/Grusin 2000) All the same, the media-hybrid internet does not consist – as the marketing slogan *multimedia* suggests – merely of a simple summation or a diffuse mixing of different media. Rather the internet is a highly complex and extremely sensitively organized *transmedium* in which aspects we previously ascribed to separate media worlds have become networked with one another, condensing to create the overall impression of a 'new medium' through a multitude of minor innovations and alterations in forms of use. In the following, in order to focus

appropriately on the internet's basic transmedia constitution, the distinction between hot and cool media introduced by Marshall McLuhan will be reconstructed so as to make it useable for the purposes of a media-philosophical analysis of the internet.

1. HOT AND COOL MEDIA

In the second chapter of his book *Understanding Media*, published in 1964, McLuhan introduced the much cited and often misunderstood opposition between 'cool' and 'hot' media, an opposition he explained further in Chapter 31 of the same book with regard to television. He defines the difference as follows: 'There is a basic principle that distinguishes a hot medium like radio from a cool one like the telephone, or a hot medium like the movie from a cool one like TV. A hot medium is one that extends one single sense in "high definition." High definition is the state of being well filled with data. […] Telephone is a cool medium, or one of low definition, because the ear is given a meager amount of information. And speech is a cool medium of low definition, because so little is given and so much has to be filled in by the listener. […] Hot media are […] low in participation, and cool media are high in participation by the audience.' (McLuhan 1995, 22 f.)

The many misunderstandings provoked by McLuhan's distinctions are closely connected with the media-theoretical framework programme developed by this pioneer of theoreticist media philosophy in his main work.[153] Before attempting several pragmatic interventions to tailor McLuhan's media difference to the purposes of analyzing the internet, I would like to look, at three central assumptions underlying McLuhan's distinction in the context of *Understanding Media* from a critical perspective. These assumptions are closely linked with the basic theoreticist hallmark of McLuhan's media theory. The first assumption is McLuhan's perception-based media concept, according to which media are defined as extensions of the human senses (McLuhan 1995, 7, 21 and

[153] A good survey of the debate that took place in the 1960s about McLuhan's media difference is found in Stearn 1967.

passim). The second assumption consists of McLuhan's idea of media effects' direct causality at the level of the formal structures of perception. This assumption results from the first, if one starts, as McLuhan does, by assuming that media have not only a secondary effect on the constitution of our sensibility but, as extensions of our senses, instead directly contribute to its constitution. In critique of McLuhan the second assumption is usually handled under the heading of 'media determinism'.[154] The third assumption is grounded in philosophy of history and is closely linked with the two preceding assumptions. McLuhan interprets the mechanistic culture of the alphabet and the modern world of print as an extension of our visual faculty. The visual world of writing is, according to McLuhan, determined by the logic of the distanced view and operates, so to speak, from the 'surgical' perspective of a lonely and neutral eye that lays claim to objectivity. This affect-free logic of the visual is contrasted by McLuhan with the tactile, participatory and holistic world of electronic media, which he interprets as extensions of our central nervous system. He describes the historical transition from the specialist visual logic he takes to have characterized the modern age to the holistic tactile logic determining the present as a transition from the fragmentizing and isolating individualism of the alphabet to the community-building and involving collectivism of television.

The whole structure of the three named assumptions is to be seen against the background of the basic theoreticist hallmark that shapes McLuhan's media philosophy. Rather than being a pure type, this is a hybrid form which includes pragmatic motifs, but theoreticistically envelops and functionalizes them. McLuhan's theoreticist integration of pragmatic perspectives is clearly expressed in his introduction to *Understanding Media*. There he writes that his book 'explores the contours of our own extended beings in our technologies, seeking the principle of intelligibility in each of them. In the full confidence that it is possible to win an understanding of these forms that will bring them into orderly service, I have looked at them anew'. (McLuhan 1995, 6) The theoreticist gesture

[154] A discerning survey of current debate on technological determinism is found in the work *Does Technology drive History? The Dilemma of Technological Determinism*,

determining the link between theoretical and practical aspects that McLuhan is aiming at here can be seen in that McLuhan takes the primacy of theoretical analysis as his point of departure, which is then in a second step to be deployed in the orderly realization of practical ends. McLuhan makes this self-understanding explicit when he writes: 'The ultimate conflict between sight and sound, between written and oral kinds of perception and organization of existence is upon us. Since understanding stops action [...], we can moderate the fierceness of this conflict by understanding the media that extend us and raise these wars within and without us.' (McLuhan 1995, 16)

The theoreticist separation of knowing and acting, reflected in McLuhan's view that understanding stops action, distinguishes the approach taken by McLuhan in *Understanding Media* from the pragmatic, experimental method to which he saw himself initially obliged in the preface to his 1962 book *The Gutenberg Galaxy*. Quoting Claude Bernard's *The Study of Experimental Medicine* (1865), McLuhan had there highlighted the peculiarity of the 'experimental method' characteristic of pragmatism, as delimited from the theoreticist concept of 'observation', in the following manner: 'Observation […] consists in noting phenomena without disturbing them, but: "Experiment […] implies on the contrary, the idea of a variation or disturbance that an investigator brings into the conditions of natural phenomena […]'. (McLuhan 1962, 3) Theoretical understanding here features not (as in the introduction to *Understanding Media*) as a factor that 'stops action' (McLuhan 1995, 16), but on the contrary as an element in the process of action itself.

At the same time, however, in the course of his preface to *The Gutenberg Galaxy* McLuhan again conceives of experimental method as a bipartite occurrence. Experiment and experimental observation are then separated from one another in such a way that experimental observation becomes a subsequently added reflection, losing its specifically experimental character and instead acquiring a theoreticist hallmark. As McLuhan puts it in this sense: 'Man the tool-making animal […] has long been engaged in extending one

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edited by Smith/Marx (1994). For a good example of criticism of McLuhan's media determinism see Williams 1974, especially 113-128.

or another of his sense organs in such a manner as to disturb all of his other senses and faculties. But having made these experiments, men have consistently omitted to follow them with observations.' (McLuhan 1962, 4) The basic theoreticist assumption of McLuhan's media theory is that it is possible to do this subsequently in a meaningful way, and moreover that subsequent theoretical reflection on the history of media evolution can open up the horizon for a corrective through which the original harmony of the interplay between human senses, a harmony destroyed by media technologies, can in turn be regenerated by technical means. The three previously named assumptions of his theory also serve this basic theoreticist assumption.

The first assumption – the thesis that media are to be grasped as extensions of human senses (McLuhan 1995, 7, 21 and passim) – makes it possible for McLuhan to investigate media as externalized constituent parts of the constitution of human subjectivity without considering the pragmatic implications that result when one understands media, in the sense of pragmatic media philosophy, as instruments of action for changing reality and coordinating action between humans. Human senses are instead understood in a representationalist fashion by McLuhan, as schemata for the cognitive construction of reality that can be altered by the technical extensions they experience in the course of media history: 'The "message" of any medium or technology is the change of scale or pace or pattern that it introduces into human affairs.' And further: 'Every culture and every age has its favorite model of perception and knowledge that it is inclined to prescribe for everybody and everything. The mark of our time is its revulsion against imposed patterns. We are suddenly eager to have things and people declare their beings totally. There is a deep faith to be found in this new attitude – a faith that concerns the ultimate harmony of all being. Such is the faith in which this book has been written.' (McLuhan 1995, 8, 5f.)

The second assumption of McLuhan's media theory also results from the basic theoreticist hallmark of his whole undertaking. The project of theoreticistically analyzing the inner life of the human subject, as externalized by media, is based on the assumption of a direct causality supposedly existing between a medium as cause and its

corresponding effect on the structure of the human senses.[155] Contingent processes of mediation, which are to be traced back to the pragmatic dynamics proper to our use of media, are excluded by McLuhan because these would bind investigation of the object to experimental framework conditions and so resist a theoreticist perspective. In place of a sophisticated analysis of the historically contingent and culturally iridescent pragmatics of human media use, McLuhan presents us with a constructed salvation in a philosophically historical perspective.

This is reflected in his media philosophy's third assumption, which completes its basic theoreticist hallmark. The philosophically historical metanarrative of the triadic constitution of media evolution had the experimental '"disturbances"' experienced, according to McLuhan, by the human senses' equilibrium – 'first of literacy, then of printing' (McLuhan 1962, 4) – featuring *ex post* as the historical fall of man. Media history is here understood not pragmatically, as the history of human interaction with media, but fatalistically in terms of the theoreticist logic of an effective media-technological occurrence taking place behind the backs of humans and culminating in the electronic 'Pentecostal condition of universal understanding' (McLuhan 1995, 80) that McLuhan prognosticated from the inner perspective of the initiated theoretician. The media-philosophical representationalism already expressed in the first assumption of McLuhan's media theory thus comes to a characteristic head. At the end of media history a state in which we 'bypass languages in favor of a general cosmic consciousness' (McLuhan 1990, 80) makes its entry in place of linguistically mediated or constructed ideas.

To begin with, the distinction between cool and hot media, which is to be pragmatically transformed in the next section of this chapter, should also be seen against the background of the problematic basic assumptions resulting from the fundamental theoreticist hallmark of McLuhan's media philosophy. The distinction between hot and

[155] Cf. on this also the affirmative reconstruction of the theoreticist implications of McLuhan's externalization strategy presented by Norman Bolz under the heading 'Your Inside is out and Your Outside is in'. (Bolz 1990, 111-128)

cool media assumes its contemporary diagnostic significance for McLuhan in the framework of that part of his philosophically historical metanarrative which deals with the transition from the age of the visual to the epoch of tactility: 'in terms of the reversal of procedures and values in the electronic age, the past mechanical time was hot, and we of the TV age are cool.' (McLuhan 1995, 27)

In the cool age of television, according to McLuhan, those aspects which were razed by the hot culture of writing and which are familiar to us from the cool media worlds of orally moulded cultures are reanimated: 'It may be that the explosion that began with phonetic letters […] will reverse into "implosion" under the impulse of the instant speed of electricity. The alphabet (and its extension into typography) made possible the spread of the power that is knowledge, and shattered the bonds of tribal man, thus exploding him into agglomeration of individuals. Electric writing and speed pour upon him, instantaneously and continuously, the concerns of all other men. He becomes tribal once more. The human family becomes one tribe again.'[156]

McLuhan's metanarration of the media-determined history of humanity suffers from the defects that all big narratives suffer from: it does violence to historical and phenomenological detail. Thus McLuhan's own style of writing is the best example of how the cool/hot difference cannot be linearly divided into two epochs, the respective hallmark of which might be described as determined by the dominance of a hot or cool medium. 'Cool' and 'hot' refer rather to styles of using media, which are not amenable to epochal constructions because they are realized within different technical and cultural constellations in respectively specific ways.

McLuhan's handling of the supposedly hot medium of phonetic writing itself tends to follow a cool strategy. His aphoristic, under-cooled style of writing and his tendency to think in terms of loose intimations and associative chains demand from the reader

[156] McLuhan 1995, 171 f. Cf. Walter Ong's *Orality and Literacy. The Technologizing of the Word*, which expands further on the thesis of 'a new age of secondary orality'. (Ong 1982, 135)

precisely what, according to McLuhan, is called for by cool media in that they are ‘high in participation by the audience.’ (McLuhan 1995, 23) The distinction between hot and cool media has often been misunderstood precisely because McLuhan’s cool style of writing leaves the reader a lot of scope for interpretations. This is not least because McLuhan himself did not always clearly enough highlight that the media difference designates not fixed properties, but relations between different media. A particular medium is never ‘hot’ or ‘cool’ in itself, rather it is always hot or cool in relation to another medium.

But even considering this structural relationality, McLuhan’s central filling-out of the content of this relation, according to which hot print is contrasted with cool television, must appear counter-intuitive. The author himself points this out in the chapter ‘The Printed Word’ in *Understanding Media* when he writes: ‘It may contradict popular ideas to say that typography as a hot medium involves the reader much less than did manuscript, or to point out that the comic book and TV as cool media involve the user, as maker and participant, a great deal.’ (McLuhan 1995, 161)

In the view of those who, through to the present day, have stood with both feet firmly ‘on Gutenberg’s shoulders’ (cf. Hoffmann 1994), the difference between book and television reception does not in fact present itself in the way McLuhan saw it. Thus, one of today’s most glowing advocates of book culture, Hilmar Hoffmann, highlights that ‘television [is] characterized by the lack of effort in reception’. And he continues: ‘One does not first have to learn to watch television. The television’s superficial stimulus obviously suggests that everything can be picked up by merely looking and merely hearing. With reading it is qualitatively different. The reader is activated, he creates from his reading of texts a reality of his own in which his self and outer reality are brought into concord.’ (Hoffmann 1994, 268) McLuhan anticipated objections of this kind and was fully aware of the provocation lying in his thesis. Thus already in *Understanding Media* he explicitly emphasized that the ‘banal and ritual remark of the conventionally literate, that TV presents an experience for passive viewers, is wide of the mark. TV is above all a medium that demands a creatively participant response.’ (McLuhan 1995, 336)

Essentially McLuhan adduces two main arguments for the specific activity of television and the community-building effect that results from it. The first, less plausible, argument draws on facts about data technology and perceptual physiology. According to this argument, the specific activity of the television viewer already resides at the basic level of the technical perceptual constitution of the picture itself. It is the viewer who pieces together the three million pixels fired at the retina by the electronic light medium every second to a transitory picture: 'the viewer of the TV mosaic […] unconsciously reconfigures the dots into an abstract work of art'.[157]

The second argument has more plausibility and sets up the link with the building of community. It relates to the multisensory stimulation emanating from television. McLuhan's erstwhile student Derrick de Kerckhove has summarized the key point of this argument as follows: 'Television unavoidably gives rise to multisensory answers that bring our whole body into play. By linking acoustic levels, visual appearances, and above all movements and attitudes which arouse a proprioceptive interpretation, television behaves in a manner much like real, vivid events in the interpersonal realm with the overall aims of producing multisensory answers.' (Kerckhove 1993, 147)

It is this multisensory aspect of television at the level of the senses, which McLuhan circumscribes with the concepts of 'synaesthesia' and 'tactility', that generates a new form of community – a sensory community – at the level of the senses. Thus McLuhan writes in relation to the complete electrical networking of the world made possible by the telegraph, telephone, radio and television: 'What electric implosion or contraction has done inter-personally and inter-nationally, the TV image does intra-personally or intra-sensuously.' (McLuhan 1995, 322)

From a pragmatic perspective McLuhan's strict opposition of the 'hot' medium of print and the 'cold' medium of television should be weakened by noting that both media –

[157] McLuhan 1995, 313. Norbert Bolz (1990, 124 f.) has attempted to develop this line of argument further.

television and print – can be used both actively and passively. Applied to print this means that the fixing of its hallmark as 'hot' in the way McLuhan advocates should be relativized to established patterns of reading, which seek to transcend the text to a supposedly fixed sense and which do not involve themselves with the active occurrence of interpretation. These more passive reading patterns contrast with a number of cool aspects in dealing with printed text. In contemporary philosophy these have been elaborated, with different accentuations, by Hans-Georg Gadamer and Jacques Derrida among others.[158] Contemporary media theory has come to similar conclusions with regard to television. Here, too, different types of reception are to be distinguished, respectively tending to more passive or active forms of use and hence bearing more the hallmark of a hot or a cool medium.[159]

At the same time it has been shown that the establishment and fixing of respective forms of use can depend both on habits of use that have developed in interaction with other media and on the effects of programme schedules developed by the stations. From today's viewpoint it should be pointed out, against McLuhan's optimistic hopes, that in the 1970s and 1980s hot forms of TV use established themselves worldwide.[160] In the context of post-historical media theories these have led to the development of media-deterministic positions advocating the view, a mirror-image of McLuhan's media optimism (and to this extent no less theoreticist), that in its inner constitution television is a hot medium.[161] This is not the place to discuss matters of the media philosophy of television and print in detail. Instead I now want to attempt to reformulate McLuhan's

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[158] On this see the various contributions to Forget 1984. On the interaction between printed text and the reader see Iser 1978. On the history of reading as a pragmatic reconstruction of the 'historicity of ways of using, understanding, and appropriating texts' (Cavallo/Chartier 1999b, 13) see Cavallo/Chartier 1999a.

[159] On this cf. Williams, 1974. A survey of the development of modern research into television use is provided by Schumacher, 2000, especially 206-238. For an analysis of the development of different habits of television reception from a psychological viewpoint see Vorderer, 1992.

[160] On this cf. Meyrowitz 1985 and Enzensberger 1992, especially 69.

[161] As examples of this see the post-historical media theories of Jean Baudrillard and Paul Virilio.

distinction pragmatically so as to take account of use-theoretical claims and to enable it to be used for an analysis of the transversal constitution of the internet.

2. A Pragmatic interpretation of McLuhan's media difference

To avoid the snares of media-philosophical theoreticism surrounding McLuhan's media difference, I suggest the distinction should be pragmatically reinterpreted. The foundation for this reinterpretation was laid above by noting that the distinction between cool and hot media makes sense only when used relationally. A medium is not cool or hot in itself, but always in relation to another medium. This aspect takes an explicitly pragmatic turn when one makes clear to oneself that the relation between two or more media is first produced by the community of media-users. Through socially habituated ways of using media, users construct what a medium respectively is (in relation to another medium). In this use-theoretical view media are to be understood not as technical perceptive extensions of the sense organs, but rather as social constructions.[162] These constructions can then in turn stand in certain relationships to those socially habituated perceptual habits which define what we are accustomed to calling our 'senses'.

For the distinction between hot and cool media this means that from the user's perspective a medium can appear hot on one occasion and cool on another – according to the differences experienced (in relation to another medium) in terms of which the medium is described, and what use is being made of it. Only on the basis of socially habituated and routinely established schemata for media comparisons can the impression secondarily arise that a medium is in itself cool or hot. When in the following the talk is nonetheless, by way of abbreviation, of 'cool' or 'hot' media, the use of these concepts is meant in the pragmatic sense just explained. This sense is to be specified further by looking at the internet. To do this, I will draw on canonical preliminary works found in the context of the media-theoretical internet research that has been pursued, above all in the USA and Canada, since the mid 1990s.

In the tradition of media philosophy inspired by McLuhan – against the background of disappointment experienced with the broadly established hot forms of television reception since the 1970s and 1980s – the utopian hope formulated by McLuhan concerning the cool potential of electronic media has increasingly shifted from television to the computer. Thus McLuhan's successor in Toronto, Derrick de Kerckhove, observes that television does not represent the beginning of a new era of practical, political and community-building media, but 'was the final stage in the evolution of frontal and theoreticizing media'. (DeKerckhove 1993, 158) Note the past tense. The era of television is dead. But the utopian potential that McLuhan had linked with television lives on with de Kerckhove in a transformed shape and is now projected onto networked computers. Thus de Kerckhove speaks of a 'wonderful transformation that the computer brought into a world that had just constituted itself through and for television.' And he continues: 'The computer's main task consists of dividing up the undefinable mass into different, networked interest groups. […] The "high speed person" has no problem in dissolving away from the mass of consumers and becoming a producer. He reconstitutes himself in small groups that keep up-to-date via interconnected computers, telephones and micro-editions.'[163]

With this de Kerckhove formulates, in media-deterministic terminology, one of the central media-philosophical theses of contemporary internet theory, as advocated with a pragmatic accentuation in America by Sherry Turkle, Jay David Bolter and Howard Rheingold in particular. Thus in her 1995 book *Life on the Screen*, which can already be

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[162] On this see, for example, Schmidt 1994.

[163] De Kerckhove 1995, 161 f. The transgeographical constitution of electronic communities and their determination by common interests were already emphasized very early on. Thus in the essay 'The Computer as a Communication Device', published in 1968 by the then research directors of the American ARPA (Advanced Research Projects Agency), the following comment about future 'on-line interactive communities' is found: 'In most fields they will consist of geographically separated members [...]. They will be communities not of common location, but of *common interest*.' To this the authors optimistically add: '[…] life will be happier for the on-line individual because the people with whom one interacts most strongly will be selected more by commonality of interests and goals than by accidents of proximity.' (Licklider/Taylor 1968, 30 f.)

considered a classic of culture-theoretical internet research, Turkle highlights: ‘Many of the institutions that used to bring people together – a main street, a union hall, a town meeting – no longer work as before. Many people spend most of their day alone at the screen of a television or a computer. Meanwhile, social beings that we are, we are trying (as Marshall McLuhan said) to retribalize. And the computer is playing a central role.’ (Turkle 1995, 178)

With a view to the internet’s ‘electronic communit[ies]’ (Bolter 1997, 50), alluded to by Turkle, Bolter also emphasizes the connection with McLuhan: ‘The idea that electronic media would define a new form of community goes back at least to the late sixties when McLuhan coined the “Global Village” formula.’ (Bolter 1997, 53) Unlike Turkle, however, whose investigations are oriented towards the paradigm of (psychoanalytic) conversation, Bolter uses the metaphor of writing to describe the new forms of community: ‘The internet shapes the community hypertextually. A network community is a web of links […]. Perhaps individuals who use the internet begin to perceive themselves as hypertextual – as the sum of links of all the different communities to which they belong at a certain point in time.’ (Bolter 1997, 51)

Finally, in his book *The Virtual Community*, which – although it does not match Turkle and Bolter’s level of culture-theoretical incisiveness – contains a mass of pioneering descriptions of phenomena, Rheingold writes: ‘Young people around the world have different communications proclivities from their pre-McLuhanized elders. […] Now, some of those people […] are beginning to migrate to CMC [Computer-mediated Communication, M.S.] spaces that better fit their new ways of experiencing the world. There is a vocabulary to CMC, too, now emerging from millions and millions of individual online interactions. That vocabulary reflects something about the ways human personalities are changing in the age of media saturation.’ [164]

Whereas de Kerckhove tends media-deterministically to eclipse the pragmatic perspective of use and to transfer McLuhan’s media difference in its theoreticist form to

the internet, with Turkle, Bolter and Rheingold we find a pronounced awareness of the fact that the way we use and integrate the new medium of internet into our lives has a central influence on both its social and political effects, and on the constitution of the medium itself. Thus Bolter highlights: 'The limits set by writing technologies are broad. Within these limits cultures are free to shape their own particular constructions.' (Bolter 1997, 40) And Rheingold ends his book with the following finale, directed against media-determinism: 'The late 1990s may eventually be seen in retrospect as a narrow window of historical opportunity, when people either acted or failed to act effectively to regain control over communications technologies. […] What happens next is largely up to us.' (Rheingold 1994, 300)

With Rheingold this appeal is based on the question, one critical of McLuhan: 'Why should contemporary claims for CMC as a democratizing technology be taken any more seriously than the similar sounding claims that were made for steam, electricity, and television?' (Rheingold 1994, 279) Turkle, too, warns against global media-deterministic diagnoses, whether with a media-utopian or a media-apocalyptic accent: 'Today many are looking to computers and virtual reality to counter social fragmentation and atomization; to extend democracy; to break down divisions of gender, race, and class; and to lead to a renaissance of learning. Others are convinced that these technologies will have negative effects. Dramatic stories supporting both points of view are always enticing, but most people who have tried to use computer-mediated communication to change their conditions of life and work have found things more complex. They have found themselves both tantalized and frustrated.' (Turkle 1995, 244 f.)

The transfer of McLuhan's media difference to the internet, which de Kerckhove carries out under a theoreticist auspice, takes a pragmatic turn in the considerations found with Bolter, Turkle, and Rheingold. With McLuhan the distinction between cool and hot media functions within a theoreticist understanding of media that he presupposes without question. For McLuhan the cool medium of television also remains in a basically theoreticist milieu. It functions not as an instrument for coordinating actions, but as an

[164] Rheingold 1994, 12. Cf. also Rötzer 1995.

emotional projection surface for a collectivized reaction to actions that are only received by the viewer but that cannot be influenced: 'TV is not so much an action, as a re-action, medium.' (McLuhan 1995, 320) It is true that de Kerckhove incorporates the active dimension of acting that characterizes many forms of net use – which are dealt with at length in the fifth chapter of this book – in his analysis of the internet. But while doing this he starts with the media-deterministic assumption that the internet activates users in the sense of an immediate causal influence. To this extent he describes both the transmedia constitution and the internet's pragmatic hallmark from a theoreticist perspective. By contrast, against the background of the perspective of investigation opened up by Turkle, Bolter and Rheingold it will now be shown how the internet's transmedia constitution presents itself from the pragmatic perspective.

3. McLuhan's difference and the transversal internet

In relation to the internet it is particularly important to consider the various forms and modes of use which establish themselves in interaction with a medium and which constitute the cultural hallmark that first makes the medium what it is. This importance is due to the fact that the internet is already transmedially constituted at the technical level. On the basis of this technically-founded transmedia structure, different cultural habits of media use become related to one another in a transformative manner in the internet. To this extent the internet's technical transmediality is to be distinguished from its transmediality at the level of cultural forms of use. At the same time, both levels of transmediality are closely intertwined with one another, since the internet's technical transmediality is reflected at the cultural level of use. This occurs in that certain forms of use developed in interaction with the technical transmissions media of print, radio, television and video – media which are networked with one another in the internet – are being transferred to the internet and at the same time, in the course of this transfer, being transformed in an internet-specific manner.

The transmedia constitution of the internet has its technical foundation in the *internal* transmediality already characteristic of non-networked computers. De Kerckhove points this out when he writes of stand-alone machines: 'The computer is like a television screen that vehemently leads us back to the book.' (De Kerckhove 1995, 162.) Going beyond this, Rheingold brings into focus the *external* transmediality characteristic of the internet's technical constitution: 'The potential social leverage comes from the power that ordinary citizens gain when they know how to connect two previously independent, mature, highly decentralized technologies: It took billions of dollars and decades to develop cheap personal computers. It took billions of dollars and more than a century to wire up the worldwide telecommunications network. With the right knowledge, and not too much of it, a ten-year-old kid today can plug these two vast, powerful, expensively developed technologies together for a few hundred dollars and instantly obtain a bully pulpit, the Library of Congress, and a world full of potential coconspirators.' (Rheingold 1994, 5)

The internet functions as a medium that is culturally co-produced by the user and which is technically constituted, both internally and externally, as a transmediative hypermedium. In the internet aspects of television, of the telephone, of radio and of print can be linked with the help of the digital computer's already basic transmedia technology. In this way culturally habituated forms of use that have developed in interaction with the old media (print, radio, television, video) are transferred to the internet and transformatively intertwined with one another. In order to look at the internet's inner transmedia structure at the cultural level of media use in a differentiated manner, the relationship between cool and hot elements that currently characterizes interaction with the internet must be made more precise. To this end it is necessary to take a look at the differences between various kinds of software platform and the cultural practices that build on these to make the net what it is.

The core of the internet today is the world wide web's graphical user interface.[165] It was developed in 1989 at CERN, the European laboratory for particle physics, by the physicists Tim Berners-Lee and Robert Cailliau. The first PC versions of web browsers, with which the world wide web's graphical user interface is operated, called *Mosaic*, were introduced in 1993 by the National Center for Supercomputing Applications (NCSA). The web browsers currently most widespread, *Netscape* and *Internet Explorer*, were developed in 1994 and 1995 respectively.[166] It was these user-friendly browser interfaces that first led to the worldwide 'Bit Bang' that we are currently experiencing. They are the 'killer applications' that have made the world wide web a mass phenomenon, with its extent doubling every 53 days already by 1995.[167]

The older, classical internet services are to be distinguished from the graphical user interface of the world wide web. These older applications include services ranging from e-mail and Talk, Net News and mailing lists, through to IRC, MUDs and MOOs. Common to all of these is that in contrast to the hypertextual world wide web they are modelled on linearly textual writing. Since these services are being increasingly integrated into the web, the borders between 'old' and 'new' services are becoming ever more fluid. But as a heuristic instrument demarcation between the linearly textual and hypertextual areas of the internet can still do duty in describing the current state of the net.

Against the background of the internet's internal differentiation into the hypertextual realm of the world wide web and the linearly textual realm of text-oriented communications services it becomes clear that already within the medium cooler realms are to be distinguished from hotter ones. The multisensorial world wide web has some traits that are familiar to us from the cool forms of television use that McLuhan media-deterministically hypostacized. In the world wide web, too, users – insofar as they make

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[165] An overview of the constitution and history of the World Wide Web is provided by Vaughan-Nichols, 1995 and Berners-Lee/Fischetti, 1999.
[166] On this and the history of Mosaic see Berners-Lee/Fischetti, 1999, especially 73-80 and 97-132.
[167] On this see Levy, 1995.

use of acoustic and visual applications – are intensively involved in the net's information and entertainment provision. For the programming languages Java and VRML (Virtual Reality Modeling Language) can be used to integrate 3D and virtual-reality applications into this multisensorial, tactile world of the world wide web, thus distinguishing it from both the hot world of printed letters and those areas of the web consisting of written text rather than pictures, or audio or video sequences.

The handling of written text in the world wide web's hypertextual sign-space is not the same as the interaction with text that we are acquainted with from reading books. Hypertextual movement in the net – i.e. clicking on links, programmed sign-sequences that point to other documents – can lead to a more pictorial, tactile interaction with texts. The text then no longer directs us only within the horizon of its meaning and the connected spheres of our understanding inwardness, but prompts participatory and extrovert activity, activity directly involved in the networked textual event and so 'tactile' in McLuhan's sense.

However, in a manner similar to television, the hypertext's hallmark of cool usage is being enveloped by hot forms of use. This is not least because, in the wake of the commercialization and mass-mediatization of the internet currently taking place, the hot forms of use that became habitual in the course of the history of television use are being transferred by many users to the web. The hot forms of web use that emerge from this can be linked with the establishment of the concept of surfing, used to refer to hypertextual movement in the net. This is usually understood to mean floating aimlessly and without participation from website to website, with one's own interests being replaced by random information stimuli, linked in ways that appear more or less irrelevant to the surfer, whose reduced mode of attention is like that of the television zapper.

The classic internet applications, defined by linear textuality, were linked early on in the internet's history with forms of print use, both cool or hot. Thus in the internet chapter of their book *Remediation* Bolter and Grusin emphasize: 'Prior to the World Wide Web, the services of the Internet (such as email and simple file transfer) refashioned principally

alphabetic media (the book, the letter, the technical report).' And further: 'In its obscure first years, the Web too remediated only textual communication. A CERN physicist, Tim Berners-Lee, proposed the World Wide Web hypertext service so that scientists could more readily share their papers and numerical data.' (Bolter/Grusin 2000, 197 f.)

To a large extent, linearly textual facilities of this kind function simply as digital copies of printed text. In the conditions of the internet's mass mediatization, against a background of corresponding routines transferred from print use to the internet, these services can stabilize a theoretically distanced attitude that recognizes the written text as an authority which is not to be questioned. This attitude is reflected in the reverence that many net users show towards the 'global knowledge' supposedly represented in the internet.

Linear textuality acquires a different accent in the areas of e-mail, mailing lists and Net News, which, although asynchronous, nonetheless operate interactively. With these services the transitions to cool ways of using linear textuality are particularly manifest. Just as the culture of letters or the institution of written circulars, these electronic services enable a de-anonymization, i.e. an interactive personalization, of the use of writing. Here lies the origin of the first virtual communities, which – like the Californian net community WELL – arose as simple Bulletin Board Systems. (Cf. Rheingold 1994, 17-37) Cool use of the hot medium of writing permits experience of the global village, which with the cool forms of television use was possible only in the emotionalized mode of reactive participation, to be implemented in active and social practice. At the same time it diversifies this experience by fostering the development of differentiated segments of the public sharing specific interests. In IRC, MUDs and MOOs the possibility of making cool use of the hot medium of writing is accentuated more strongly still.

IRC is the abbreviation for 'Internet Relay Chat'. This is a complex communications landscape consisting of a multitude of different discussions fora or 'channels'. Here people from all around the world meet online, under pseudonyms they themselves choose, to talk with each other in writing, yet synchronously, and to swap the newest

information on diverse subjects. The subject areas extend from everyday net gossip and virtual flirting, discussion of technical questions on hardware and software, through to more or less academic discussions on literature, politics, philosophy, physics, medicine and other subjects.[168] IRC was developed in 1988 by Jarkko Oikarinen at the University of Oulu (Finland).[169]

MUD is the abbreviation for 'Multi User Dungeon', a kind of virtual 'gaming hell'. A number of users simultaneously log into a fictional, text-based game landscape in order to gather so-called 'experience points' in combat with other participants and programmed robots and to climb in the respective game's hierarchy to be a 'wizard' or 'god'. Wizards and gods have the power to alter the game landscape and to programme challenges that other participants must solve.[170] The first MUD was created in 1979 by Richard Bartle and Roy Trubshaw at the University of Essex (England). (Cf. Rheingold 1994, 151)

MOO stands for 'Multi User Dungeon Object Oriented'. In contrast to the strictly hierarchically organized and sometimes quite violent adventure MUDs, these are games in which cooperation, solidarity, education and science are central. Each participant receives programming rights from the start, i.e. can create spaces and objects and independently cooperate in shaping the game landscape. It was James Aspnes, a graduate student at Carnegie Mellon University in Pittsburgh, who in 1988 struck upon the idea of conceiving MUDs in such a democratic manner and so to shift the development of virtual communities into the foreground. (Rheingold 1994, 162) In the United States MOOs have been being used since the mid 1990s as interactive learning environments in which

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[168] An accessible description and analysis of IRC is found in Chapter 6 of Rheingold 1994 (176-196). On this subject see also Ried's (1991) detailed investigation (also available online: http://www.ee.mu.oz.au/papers/emr/index.html), a short account of which is provided by Reid 1992.

[169] Cf. Rheingold 1994, 179. In the meantime IRC has also become accessible in a user-friendly form via the web (http://www.ircchat.de/).

[170] On this see Chapter 5 of Rheingold 1994 (145-175) as well as Turkle 1995, esp. 180-186. A detailed analysis of the communications structures in MUDs has been presented by Elisabeth Reid (1994; online version: http://www.ee.mu.oz.au/papers/emr/index.html).

parents and children, teachers and pupils can together playfully acquire experience with the new medium internet. (Cf. Bruckman 1997)

In contrast to the asynchronous communications structures characteristic of e-mail, mailing lists or Net News, in the synchronous communications services of online chat, MUDs and MOOs phonetic writing is used dialogically in the manner of spoken language. Spoken language, the conversational character of which is emulated by the use of writing in computer communicated communication, is delimited from traditionally established hot forms of print use and appears to be more of a cool medium. I think it is important to point out explicitly the proximity of interactive communications landscapes to everyday face-to-face communication. For this proximity is not only too often overlooked in German-language media-theoretical discussion, but is pretty much denied without discussion.

Thus Elena Esposito, in her essay 'Interaction, Interactivity and the Personalization of Mass Media', rejects the possibility that 'telematic communication' might open up 'a simultaneously personalizable and non-anonymous communication' from a system-theoretical perspective. (Esposito 1995, 247) To justify her thesis – one quite applicable to interactive television and the closed program-worlds of stand-alone PCs – the former Luhmann pupil emphasizes that in the internet's chat fora one is concerned exclusively with anonymous communication and that this is not personalizable because one is in no position to distinguish whether one is dealing with people or with so-called 'robots' – i.e. interactive programs – instead. (Esposito 1995, 252) Now it is true that a large part of chat communication initially takes place not in the name of one's real identity, but under the protection of a pseudonym. To me, however, it seems important to separate clearly these forms of – as one might put it – 'secondary' anonymization from the structural anonymity on the receiver's side that we are acquainted with from printed media or television.

Chat participants do not remain nameless; rather, the condition for their participation is precisely that they give themselves a name. To this extent chat communication is,

structurally speaking, personal communication. Even when participants choose a pseudonym as their name, they are nonetheless present as 'personae', as masks or played out identities. Of course, beyond this, there is always the possibility of replacing the acted identity with one's real identity, that is, of personalizing the communication in an authentic sense. The danger, adduced by Esposito, that behind the supposedly authentic person you think you are communicating with a machine might – in reality – be concealed, can be neglected given the current state of development in artificial intelligence. Anyone who has had contact with a robot program, which lack precisely the ability for individual and context-sensitive communication, will know how simply and quickly human-machine communication is recognized as such and distinguished from human-human communication. This also applies to the 'Intelligent Agents' currently being developed, which, incidentally, are concerned not primarily with human-machine communication, but with machine-machine communication programmed to our individual interests. (Cf. Kuhlen 1999)

A second example of the tendency to media-philosophically exaggerate the differences existing between online communication and face-to-face communication is found in Sybille Krämer's essay 'From the Myth of "Artificial Intelligence" to the Myth of "Artificial Communication"'. (Krämer 1997) The author there formulates the following view: 'Within the horizon of a terminological distinction between "play" bringing relief from the everyday and "seriousness" that intensifies the everyday, the electronic network – insofar as it is used as a communications forum – has the character of a framework setting down that a kind of interaction will establish itself in the net which belongs to play.' (Krämer 1997, 98) Krämer is guided in this by the speech-act theoretical thesis she advocates that 'communication in electronic networks' is based on 'the repealing of the illocutionary and paracommunicative dimensions of our symbolic action that are linked with personality and authorship'. (Krämer 1997, 97)

It is obvious that this thesis is not suitable as a definition of the essence of internet communication, for it applies only to certain forms of use, observable particularly in the fictional communications landscapes such as MUDs and MOOs. And even for MUDs

and MOOs it should be emphasized that in fictional contexts, too, play can very quickly become something serious, that pseudonymous communication can very quickly become personal conversation. Already virtual communities have often arisen from fictional role plays, and from these real friendships, even marriages with the church's blessing.

Against this background Eva Jelden was not wrong to emphasize that the increasing reality of the virtual is the decisive factor in the internet's current development. This, however, is characterized, according to Jelden, by the influence of paracommunicative dimensions made possible by the internet's pragmatic media hallmark. On this Jelden writes: 'With every click of the mouse I actually move something in reality, communicate myself, transfer money, engage in trade, and much more.' (Jelden 1996, 28) Naturally, Jelden's claim should be restricted to the extent that the inclusion of paracommunicative aspects is not, as Jelden implies, characteristic of 'every' communicative act in the net, but precisely for a certain, reality-related, way of using the internet that simultaneously represents the basis for its commercialization.

A further complex also comes in. The concepts 'real' and 'virtual', like those of 'natural' and 'artificial', are reflective concepts.[171] Something appears 'real' or 'virtual' only in a certain perspective and in relation to something else. If one considers this observer-relativity, it is not surprising that to many professional net users the online world already appears more real that the 'real' world outside the net. This is not only because the online world in Jelden's sense is becoming ever more real, i.e. is making possible ever faster and more effective access to offline reality, but is rather because the logic proper to the online world itself is being taken increasingly seriously by many users. In this sense for many participants 'playful' interaction in the fictional communications landscapes of MUDs and MOOs acquires a specific reality status.[172]

In fact in MUDs and MOOs a fascination is found, otherwise known only from face-to-face conversation, which engages the participants' whole body, as in the cool forms of

[171] On this see Welsch 1997, 1998, 2000.
[172] On this see Bruckman 1992, Döring 1999, and Sandbothe 2001b.

television use, and which leads to online worlds, their virtual identities, and virtual friendships or enmities, very quickly appearing more real to many MUD users than the offline world. The transmedia structure of MUDs reflected in this is described by Sherry Turkle as follows: ‘In MUDs, each player makes scenes unfold and dramas come to life. Playing in MUDs is thus both similar to and different from reading or watching television. As with reading, there is text, but on MUDs it unfolds in real time and you become an author of the story.’ (Turkle 1995, 184)

The transmedia constitution of the internet and the mix described here between cool and hot forms of use that characterizes this medium can also serve as a basis for understanding the ambivalences diagnosed by Turkle in her investigation of the psycho-social effects of the internet. The computer sociologist Turkle carried out her research using the example of MUD use. Simplifying greatly, two sorts of MUDs can be distinguished: adventure MUDs and social MUDs. The latter are often also called MOOs and delimited altogether from MUDs, which are then defined exclusively as adventure MUDs. In her book Turkle examines MUDs in the broad sense, i.e. that encompassing adventure MUDs and cooperative MUDs, as ‘a new kind of social virtual reality’. (Turkle 1995, 180) She writes: ‘In the MUDs, virtual characters converse with each other, exchange gestures, express emotions, win and lose virtual money, and rise and fall in social status. [...] This is all achieved through writing, and this in a culture that had apparently fallen asleep in the audiovisual arms of television.’ (Turkle 1995, 183) In the spirit of the analysis developed above of the internet’s transmedia constitution she further emphasizes: ‘Yet this new writing is a kind of hybrid: speech momentarily frozen into artifact, but curiously ephemeral artifact. In this new writing, unless it is printed out on paper, a screenful of flickers soon replaces the previous screen.’ (Turkle 1995, 183) In the act of reception writing here no longer has the continuity, constancy and presence of the printed text, but assumes at the level of representation the properties of discontinuity, movement and appresence that we are acquainted with from the flickering world of television pictures.

The phenomena of transmedia intertwinement she describes are, however, not directly related by Turkle to the ambivalent effects that take shape at the psycho-social level. She

investigates the latter on the basis of empirical material from case studies, mostly carried out with student users and summarized as follows: ‘When each player can create many characters and participate in many games, the self is not only decentred but multiplied without limit. Sometimes such experiences can facilitate self-knowledge and personal growth, and sometimes not. MUDs can be places where people blossom or places where they get stuck, caught in self-contained worlds where things are simpler than in real life, and where, if all else fails, you can retire your character and simply start a new life with another.’ (Turkle 1995, 185)

As a trained psychoanalyst and personality psychologist Turkle seeks the causes for different usage and different effects of MUDs primarily in the individual psychic constellation and the identity structure developed by the single user IRL.[173] Thus she writes: ‘MUDs provide rich spaces for both acting out and working through. There are genuine possibilities for change, and there is room for unproductive repetition. The outcome depends on the emotional challenges the players face and the emotional responses they bring to the game.’ (Turkle 1995, 200) Here the MUD player’s media-neutral, presupposed RL personality stands in the foreground. Evaluation of the user’s interaction with virtual identities also follows, with Turkle, by being related back to a supposedly medium-free RL identity.

Turkle herself highlights the methodological premiss of her study when at the end of her book she writes: ‘I have chosen not to report on my own findings unless I have met the Internet user in person rather than simply in persona. I made this decision because of the focus of my research: how experiences in virtual reality affect real life and, more generally, on the relationship between the virtual and the real. In this way, my work on cyberspace to this point is conservative because of its distinctly real-life bias. Researchers with different interests and theoretical perspectives will surely think about this distinction differently.’ (Turkle 1995, 324)

[173] In the internet ‘IRL’ and ‘RL’ are the usual abbreviations for ‘in real life’ and ‘real life’ respectively.

In fact the 'real-life bias' of Turkle's study should be problematized to the extent that the differing media perspectives which different groups of users have on the internet and the virtual world of MUDs is systematically ignored due to the psychoanalytic concentration on the users' RL-personality. The RL personality structure certainly plays an important role in the establishment of certain patterns of media use. However, going beyond Turkle, it should also be considered that the RL-identity itself has already been shaped in part by the use of other media (print or television). The way in which the internet is perceived and used cannot be primarily, or even exclusively, determined in terms of a media-neutral individual psychological perspective. Rather there are very banal and contingent aspects, connected with the user's previous media experience and media socialization, that are of significance here. An important role is played by the question of whether the user perceives the MUD from a perspective determined more by television or by print, and beyond this, how he or she individually uses and interprets television and print respectively.

For the sake of simplicity, but also because it dominates and envelopes the traditional media system in a significant manner, I will restrict myself in the following to television as a demarcation medium. The user who uses the MUD as a closed system, one remaining strictly separated from RL and following a purely fictional logic, interprets the MUD in analogy with the hot, and thus more theoretically distanced, form of television use that has evolved in the course of the routinization of receptive habits. Such a user does not attempt to break through the world of media simulacres to a non-media reality, but aims to become part of the world of simulacres. The MUD is then used as a opportunity to climb, with the help of the internet, into the simulatory logic of television as an actor, that is: just like an actor, to act or simulate action in the space simulated by the medium. Indeed, it is often the imaginary worlds of television programmes that shape the spaces, roles and contexts for action in MUDs. The Star Trek scenario, for instance, is one of the most popular MUD motifs.[174]

[174] On this see Jenkins 1992.

Another style of MUD use results when the MUD is experienced from the perspective of a television socialization in which television is not a simulation machine that is closed on itself, but functions as a point of media contact with the real world. This in no way excludes the 'real world' itself then coming to be experienced as a social construction; rather, this is the rule for generations of users socialized with television. (Cf. Vattimo, 1998) However, this cool type of user attends not to participating in the simulation, but to functionalizing virtual communities to create real communities. Even within fictional contexts, this type of user will attempt to choose her chosen fictional identities in such a way that her experience under these identities can also be used for her RL-identity. In fictional contexts she will tend continually to bring in communication that extends beyond the fictional context to real-world conditions and, among other things, to develop an interest in moving the MUD-world's virtual and fictional community to engage in discussion in one of the internet's nonfictional contexts, or even to meet IRL. The ability to recognize and use creatively 'real' aspects of virtual communities of course presupposes sensitivity for the 'virtual', i.e. socially constructed, aspects of real communities. If this sensitivity is lacking, then attempts at intertwinement will fail because the offline and online worlds are taken to be opposed to one another in the manner of being and appearance, nature and art, seriousness and play, and will be experienced as incommensurable.

From the viewpoint of the simulatory MUD user, the intertwinements that the reality-related MUD user attempts to produce between fictional, virtual and real reality appear to be inadequate forms of use. Within MUDs there are often disputes as to whether or not it is permitted to produce such transitions, and there are some MUDs in which you break an unwritten rule if you attempt to break out of your fictional identity and to communicate in the name of an RL-identity. In a study carried out together with Mitchel Resnick, Amy Bruckman highlights: 'In most MUDs characters are anonymous. People who become friends can exchange real names and e-mail-addresses, but many choose not to. Conventions about when it is acceptable to talk about "real life" vary between communities. In most MUDs people begin to talk more about real life when they get to know someone better. However, in some communities such as those based on

“Dragonriders of Pern” series of books by Anne McCaffrey, talking about real life is taboo.’ (Bruckman/Resnick 1995, 98)

If one takes tendencies of this kind seriously and in addition takes account of the world-wide dominance of habituated television reception habits, then a scenario takes shape in the perspective of which not only the media-deterministic thesis advocated by de Kerckhove – that the emergence of virtual communities *per se* leads to a revitalization of real communities – appears problematic. Turkle, Bolter and Rheingold’s weaker thesis – according to which users’ efforts are continually required to link virtual worlds to real conditions – also seems untenable as it is. For this thesis puts excessive demands on the single user and exaggerates individual autonomy as against the dynamics proper to culturally constructed media-use conditions. A similar state of affairs results from the fact that with the use of the world wide web hot television routines are increasingly being transferred to the new medium and are advancing the hot motion of surfing as the paradigm of web use.

In summary it can be said that the internet’s transmedia constitution has both a technical and a cultural aspect. The technical aspect is composed of the internal transmediality owing to computer technology’s digital basis and the external transmediality resulting from the coupling of PCs and internet servers via high-speed cables and telephone lines. Both aspects of the internet’s technically transmedia constitution are linked with the transformative transition to the internet of cultural habits of use acquired in dealing with traditional mass media. The result of this transformative transition is a transmediative constellation of different cultural habits of use, a constellation that can be described – with recourse to Turkle, Bolter and Rheingold – using the pragmatically adapted distinction between hot and cool media. On this basis the following chapter will examine the transformative aspect linked with the internet’s transmedia constitution.

V

PRAGMATIC MEDIA USE IN THE INTERNET

Whereas until now I have been analyzing the internet's transmedia constitution with regard to the intertwinements that develop in the internet between different technical and cultural media constellations, the following considerations will accentuate that aspect of internet use which, while effecting transmedia intertwinements, simultaneously leads to a specific transformation of our media-use habits. It will be seen that this transformation can be described as a pragmatization of our media use. This applies both at the technical level and at variously advanced levels in the cultural forms of use that develop in internet conditions though interaction with our semiotic communications media and our sensory perceptive media.

1. THE DIGITAL CODE – A BASIS FOR PRAGMATIZATION

To uncover the pragmatization of our media use taking place in the internet, I will start with a question posed by Peter Koch and Sybille Krämer in the introduction to the volume *Writing, Media, Cognition* which they edited in 1997. The question relates to the digital programming technology underlying the computer and reads: 'Can the binding of writing to the visualization of language still be upheld when the binary alphabet's "unpronounceable" writing advances to being a new "universal medium"?' (Koch/Krämer 1997b, 20) Thus formulated, this question is suggestive of an answer tantamount to the emergence of digital code as a paradigm, or a new 'universal medium', that leaves traditional talk of phonetic writing appearing obsolete. This answer – which although not aggressively advocated, is strongly hinted at substantively by Koch and Krämer – is a media-materialistic fallacy that is widespread in current media theory.

This fallacy found its canonical formulation in Friedrich Kittler's information-theoretical re-edition of the Parmenidean ontology: 'Only what can be hard-wired exists at all.'[175] The performative contradiction linked with this dictum becomes clear (in brackets) when Kittler elsewhere writes: 'Writings and text (including the text of my current lecture) consequently no longer exist in perceptible times and spaces, but in computers' transistor cells.'[176] The theoreticist foundation of this media-materialistic fallacy is affirmatively described by Koch and Krämer, following on from Kittler, as 'information-theoretical materialism'.[177]

To the fallacy that the existence of phonetic writing has become problematic with the emergence of digital code as a new paradigm it should be objected that in computerized conditions, too, the use of phonetic writing of course continues to take place as the use of phonetic writing. The computer might serve at a technical level to make phonetic writing representable in the medium, but the use of phonetic writing is not therefore dissolved at the pragmatic level of use into the practice of digitally programming. On the contrary. In internet conditions phonetic writing experiences a new boom and, at the same time, a characteristic transformation.[178]

The details of this transformation will be looked at in the next section. In the present context the concern is with the digital basis, which in computerized conditions functions not only as the technical foundation for the use of phonetic writing, but also as the foundation for the use of our communications and perceptive media altogether. The script of digital code is a medium that allows all other media – language, phonetic writing,

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[175] 'Nur was schaltbar ist, ist überhaupt.' – Kittler 1993b, 182

[176] Kittler 1993c, 225. For the (differentiated) position advocated by Krämer, see her 1996.

[177] Koch/Krämer 1997b, 20. For a critical reconstruction of Kittler's position that at the same time brings out its origins in McLuhan's media-determinism – which Kittler deprives of its relation to humans – see Böhme/Matussek/Müller 2000, esp. 187-191.

[178] On this see Derrida, who in *Of Grammatology* anticipated the danger of a media-materialistic misunderstanding of his deliberations and himself emphasized with an eye to the culture of the spoken word underlying phonetic writing: '"Death of speech" is of course a metaphor here: before we speak of disappearance, we must think of a new situation for speech [...]'. (Derrida 1997, 8)

images, music, audio visuals etc. – to be embraced, reproduced and interwoven with one another. As is well known, this in fact occurs such that all digitally processed data, commands and addresses are encoded within the computer as sequences of 0s and 1s. For the pragmatization thesis two aspects are of importance here. They can be brought out with recourse to Kittler's description of the basic hallmark of digital code, which, as such, is tenable and not affected by his media-materialistic fallacy.

The first aspect results from the fact that the possibility of relating and linking heterogeneous sorts of media with one another via digitalization itself already contains a specifically pragmatic dimension. Thus John Dewey, in *The Quest for Certainty*, highlights what he sees as the genuinely pragmatic constitution of the modern sciences when he writes: 'Common sense knowledge can connect things as sign and thing indicated here and there by isolated couples. But it cannot possibly join them all up together so that we can pass from any one to any other. The homogeneity of scientific objects, through formulation in terms of relations of space, time and motion, is precisely the device which makes this indefinitely broad and flexible scheme of transitions possible. [...] Ideas of objects, formulated in terms of the relations which changes bear to one another, having common measures, institute broad, smooth highways by means of which we can travel from the thought of one part of nature to that of any other. In ideal at least, we can travel from any meaning – or relation – found anywhere in nature to the meaning to be expected anywhere else.' (Dewey 1988a, 107)

In his contribution to *Writing, Media, Cognition* Kittler provides an analogous description of digital media's transmedia feats of intertwinement. In contrast to modern science's mathematical, quantifying knowledge-code, modern computer technology's digital machine code makes possible not only the symbolic connection of individual pieces of knowledge content, but also the technical networking of the media themselves in which different forms of knowledge are stored and can be made accessible, through digitalization, for various modes of action and processing. Kittler writes: 'Because in digital systems data, addresses and commands have their material existence altogether in binary numbers, every element can be unambiguously transferred to any other.' This

means, Kittler continues, that the ‘three functions of processing, transmission and storage’ can be flexibly transferred to one another. (Kittler 1997, 188)

The second aspect of digital code, which is of particular significance for the pragmatization thesis pursued here, is connected with this. Elsewhere Kittler clarifies this aspect using the DOS version of the WordPerfect text-processing program as an example. Kittler examines our interaction with this program under the heading ‘postmodern writing’ and in so doing emphasizes that ‘for the first time since its invention unpronounceable abbreviations and acronyms, wherever possible free of vowels, [...] [seem to be] bring[ing] the alphabet magic powers again’. (Kittler 1993c, 230) To explain what he means Kittler offers the following look at the transition from the theoretical representation of abstract sense to practically working away at concrete tasks which takes place in postmodern writing: ‘The abbreviation WP namely does what it says. In contrast not only to the words “Word Perfect”, but also to empty, old European words such as “mind” or “word”, executable computer files encompass all the routines and data necessary for their realization. The writing act of pressing the keys W, P and Enter on an AT console, although it does not make the word perfect, does currently run WordPerfect.’ (Kittler 1993c, 230)

What is interesting about the performative use of phonetic writing focused on here by Kittler is the fact that in this example phonetic writing no longer functions primarily as the transcript of a phonic language aiming at representation. Instead, in the logic of the digital code it works as a tool serving to carry out practical tasks in the computer’s program worlds. This reflects, at a very basic level, the fundamentally pragmatic hallmark of digital computer technology. The extension of dealings with digital code to phonetic writing directly demonstrates that signs are not only, and not primarily, there to represent non-sign-like meanings, but rather can also serve to relate signs to other signs and to trigger or coordinate routine actions referred to via semiotic reference.

Yet already with this simple example it becomes clear that even, and precisely, in those cases in which phonetic writing functions not only as the transcript of phonic language,

but also as a performative code, phonetic writing itself is preserved as phonetic writing. The abbreviation ‘WP’ is only able to take on the interfacing function assigned to it in view of the digital code’s logic because it stands for both the program’s start and the program’s name. The representational function assigned to the abbreviation at the cultural level of use is here short-circuited with the pragmatic function attributed to it at the technical level. Because the abbreviation produces this intersection, we perceive it at the cultural level as being doubled on itself: as a sign that means something, and as a sign that effects something. For what is effected is itself not to be described only at the digital level. The start of the program is, as the starting of the program, always simultaneously an event occurring in everyday perceptual space. So already in the simple case adduced by Kittler there can be no talk of phonetic writing and the events triggered by its performative dimension being resolved into digital code.

Against the media-materialist fallacy committed by Kittler in the course of his deliberations it should also be objected that on a digital foundation our dealings with communications and perceptive media change altogether, without these being resolved into the supposedly universal medium of digital code. This can be systematically clarified by transferring the idea of a basic pragmatization of our dealings with signs, developed by Kittler using the example of digital code, to our media use in the internet, so that the differences emerge between digital code and the various perceptive and communications media that are transmedially interwoven with one another on a digital basis.

2. The internet’s pragmatization of semiotic communication

In *Life on the Screen* Sherry Turkle advances the media-philosophical thesis that the internet’s concretely experienceable conditions allow pragmatic, common-sense appreciation of many of the states of affairs described from a theoreticist perspective by Derrida in the *Grammatology*. Against this background Turkle describes the internet’s computer communicated communication as an experience in which Derrida’s thinking is brought ‘down to earth’. (Turkle 1995, 17) George P. Landow and Jay David Bolter had

already come to similar results in the 1980s in their investigations on the basic hypertextual structure of electronic textuality. Thus in his book *Hypertext. Convergences of Contemporary Critical Theory and Technology* Landow emphasizes that 'something that Derrida and other critical theorists describe as part of a seemingly extravagant claim about language turns out precisely to describe the new economy of reading and writing with electronic virtual […] forms.' (Landow 1992, 8) And in his book *Writing Space. The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing* Bolter makes clear that 'the electronic medium can demonstrate easily what Derrida could only describe laboriously in print'. (Bolter 1991, 166)

The following will be concerned with showing how the fact they emphasize – that common sense assumes increasingly deconstructive traits in internet conditions – is linked with a pragmatic reconfiguration of our use of semiotic communications media in the internet. For this purpose, the two deconstructive movements carried out by Derrida in *Of Grammatology* – as reconstructed in this book's third chapter as the basis of theoreticist media philosophy – can be pragmatically transformed and made use of in analyzing the internet.[179]

Central to Derrida's *vertical* deconstructive movement is the thesis of spoken language's hidden written hallmark. In the internet this thesis becomes appreciable for common sense at two different levels. The first level is that of the digital code, already dealt with in the first section of the present chapter. In the internet this is of relevance not only to the expert, but can, with the help of corresponding software, also become a component of the computer layperson's everyday media use. The recourse to digital code which occurs in dealing with acoustic data material (e.g. in the framework of internet telephoning), permits awareness of the writing-like constitution that underlies the phonic materiality of spoken language in computerized conditions.

[179] On the relationship between Derrida's thinking and pragmatism see Mouffe 1996, in particular the contributions by Derrida (1996) and Rorty (1996b).

This occurs in an especially explicit manner when, with the corresponding editor programs, we perceive a vocal phonic sequence as digital script, and on this basis actively process and modulate the sequence. In the context of such experiences, which are more and more becoming everyday experiences through the transmedially constituted internet, the materiality of the medium of the human voice emerges, so that to internet-trained common sense it no longer appears to be a supposedly medium-free 'system of hearing (understanding)-oneself-speak' (Derrida 1997, 7), but one technically grounded medium among others.

The second level at which the differential structure of writing enters our awareness in the internet as a paradigm for the functioning of language altogether is the cultural level of our concrete dealings with phonetic writing in the framework of the synchronous communications services of Chat, MUDs and MOOs. In contrast to the technical level of digital code, which is generally relevant for computers, the cultural level of interactively using phonetic writing in the communications services just mentioned represents a feature specific to the internet. To focus appropriately on this specific feature, it is helpful to delimit the usual ways of using phonetic writing in Chat, MUDs and MOOs from the classical ways of using writing that established themselves in the conditions of print.

In the media conditions of the technical transmission medium of print our use of phonetic writing more or less excludes reciprocal interaction.[180] For the use of writing in most contexts within the Gutenberg world is asynchronously, unilinearly and monologically structured. Naturally, here too exceptions prove the rule: say, when newspapers publish readers' letters, 'for and against' statements, or closely interconnected contributions to debate. But these are just weak forms of simulating synchronous interaction, since at the time of reading (for technical reasons) readers have no opportunity to respond immediately. This is different in the case of certain alternative forms of writing use, say when during an academic lecture students synchronously and interactively swap news on written notes. This is a writing practice that in a certain way anticipates the interactive forms of internet use, but which remains unconsidered in the Gutenberg age's currently

still dominant concept of writing. According to this concept of writing, phonetic writing is medium of *expression* or *representation* for copying or constructing reality, a definition excluding the interactivity and synchronous presence of the communications partners that are considered the essential marks of spoken language.

In the media conditions of the technical transmission medium internet a pragmatically transformed use of writing develops. In Chat, MUDs and MOOs both our use of phonetic writing and our understanding of spoken language undergo a characteristic transformation, since both communications media performatively become transparent in relation to the meaning-generating mechanism of différance. In online Chat language functions as writing, i.e. the spoken word, or the word to be spoken, realizes itself in writing as the sign of a sign. This performative writing of conversation, in which language is interactively written instead of spoken, can be described as a 'scriptualization of language'. (Cf. Sandbothe 1998d, 70) At the same time writing in online Chat functions as the interactively modellable and contextually situated writing of language. The transformation in the use of phonetic writing reflected in this can be described as a 'verbalization of writing'. (Sandbothe 1998d, 70) The written word is no longer misinterpreted as the sign of an authentic, itself no longer sign-like sign. Rather it is understood as the sign of a sign of a sign etc., that is, as an unending semiotic referential context that can only be brought to a relative end by a pragmatic interruption.[181]

Through the speech-like, i.e. reciprocal, usage form of writing used interactively in conversational mode the pragmatic dimension distinguishing our use of written signs in the internet's communications services becomes explicit and conscious. The binding of writing back to the synchronous conversational situation in one-to-one or many-to-many communication in Chat, MUDs and MOOs leads to a pragmatic recontextualization of the use of written signs. With the help of written signs interpersonal speech acts are

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[180] Cf. on this Chapters 2/V and VI of Luhmann 1997, 249-301.

[181] With this a far-reaching philosophical development becomes explicit and manifest in the medium of internet which Josef Simon has systematically elaborated in his *Philosophy of the Sign* and historically situated as a 'process of reversal' of occidental philosophy's semiotic thinking. (Simon 1995, 43)

performed in computer mediated communication that are very difficult to carry out in a book or newspaper, which address themselves to a diffuse public, because as a rule they can there occur only in the asynchronous mode through the interposition of posted letters, fax or telephone: People fall in love with each other, make promises to one another, argue and make up again, laugh, cry, flirt with each other, and do all that we can also do in the immediate reciprocity of face-to-face or telephone communication. In the synchronous interpersonal communications situation that characterizes Chat, MUDs and MOOs writing does not serve primarily, or even exclusively, to make statements about something. Rather it is applied in a targeted manner to coordinate and execute shared social actions.

Even those actions which are not speech acts in the classical sense, but which are actions that we would grasp as nonlinguistic actions outside the net, are carried out in Chat, MUDs and MOOs in the mode of writing. This is because in interactive writing, as a form of communication restricted to the medium of writing, only what is performed as a speech or written act attains communicative reality. My smile only becomes present in computer mediated communication when I use the sentence ‘Mike smiles’ or the corresponding emoticon. The same applies when I drink a beer in a virtual bar, or sit on the desk in a colleague’s virtual office. In all these cases it is irrelevant whether a reality is copied or constructed by the letters I type in. It doesn’t matter whether I’m really smiling, really drinking a beer, really sitting on the desk, or if I am merely constructing these actions. Rather, what matters is that by formulating these sentences I carry out actions, that is, modify the conversational situation in the respective MUD or MOO through my actions.

In summary it can be said that the technical pragmatization of medium use demonstrated in the first section of the present chapter, using the example of digital code, can be appreciated at the level of phonetic writing in the interactive writing of online Chat, MUDs and MOOs. It is not only by being directly bound to digital code, as was made clear with recourse to Kittler’s example of the abbreviation ‘WP’, but also, independently of this, that phonetic writing undergoes a characteristic pragmatization of its mode of use

in the internet. In place of isolated writing without direct reference to the addressee, which we are acquainted with from print, comes personal interaction in the mode of writing, making its possible to use written phonetic signs quite consciously beyond their representational function as direct agents of social actions in the context of synchronous communication situations. The pragmatization of our media usage taking place in the internet becomes even clearer when we turn to the hypertextual constitution of the world wide web.

In the web's characteristic hypertext conditions nonphonetic types of writing feature alongside phonetic writing with equal entitlement. In hypertexts all kinds of signs become programmable as icons, i.e. as signifiers, which at the pragmatic level produce, with a mouse-click, a connection to what they designate that is no longer merely symbolic, but real. For internet-trained common sense it thus becomes clear in a performative manner that signs are not only, and not primarily, there to represent sign-like or non-sign-like meanings. This had been the media-theoretical proposal of the Gutenberg world, a world dominated by representationalist habits of use which – transferred to images and antirealistically adapted – continued to be inscribed in the habituated forms of production and reception in the television culture that has determined the final decades of the 20th century. In place of this proposal internet conditions bring a semiotic practice according to which signs serve to link signs with other signs in order to trigger or coordinate concrete (real or virtual) actions referred to by semiotic reference. For instance, in Amazon.com's digital bookstore a click on the button labelled 'Buy 1 Now With 1 Click' and – assuming I am registered, with my address and credit card number, as a customer on the server – I immediately receive the following answer 'Thank you for your 1-Click order! (Yes, it was that easy.) One copy of the book you ordered will be sent to you as soon as possible.'

Of course the fact that we can order books by exchanging written letters is not a distinguishing characteristic of the world wide web. We can also transact such an order by post or fax. The particular feature lies in that through the web the pragmatic dimension of our use of writing is made explicit and noticeable by the immediate answer our order

receives in an interactive system. Indeed, for almost all of the properties distinguishing our sign usage in the internet as something special in relation to our everyday, non-digital sign usage it can be said that these properties are in no way radically new, but that they simply make explicit and make us aware of things that happen implicitly and subconsciously in everyday sign usage. To this extent one can say that with the pragmatic embedding of our sign use in the internet the deconstructive constitution of sense and meaning appears as performatively reproducible and evident, rather than being systematically covered up by the presence of the (self-hearing and understanding) voice and the authority of the printed word that derives from it.

The second, i.e. the *horizontal*, deconstructive movement can also be pragmatically reinterpreted against the background of the pragmatization of our media use in the internet. Central to the horizontal deconstructive movement is the thesis that not only spoken language, but our communications media altogether are determined by the meaning-generating mechanism of différance and that these stand in an equiprimordial transmedia relationship to one another. Indeed, what applies to phonic materiality at the technical informational level in the internet can be transferred not only to the tonal materiality of musical data, but also to the inner constitution of pictorial signs. If you consider the internal data structure of digital images, it becomes clear that in terms of their technical structure images composed of pixels have textual character. This is the case because with the corresponding editor programs the elements comprising the digital image can be exchanged, moved and altered just as the characters within a text can be. Thus at the technical level of information images become pragmatically and flexibly editable scripts in a completely artisinal sense. This technical pragmatization of our use of images corresponds to an analogous pragmatization movement at the cultural level.

The latter emerges when pictorial signs are programmed in the digital arena of the world wide web as references bound into the concrete action space of the pragmatic net-use process, i.e. when pictorial signs function as source anchors referring from one sign to another as hypertextual links. When we read written signs, we do not read every letter and every word as something standing in relation to something extralinguistic on the

basis of a similarity relation. Rather when reading we allow ourselves to be referred from one word to the next, from one sentence to the next, and so on. Such a fluid form of reading is also practised in the world wide web in dealing with hypertextually networked pictorial signs. We read pictures as differential, that is writing-like, signs that refer us not only semantically but also, and above all, pragmatically (by mouse-click) to other signs and to virtual and real contexts of action mediated by these. This internet-specific mode of interaction can be described as a 'scriptualization of the image'. (Sandbothe 1998d, 71) It comes into focus when one examines the diachronous movement from webpage to webpage made by internet users in their work.

If one instead examines the way in which the internet user synchronously perceives and selectively evaluates an individual webpage, a contrary intertwining motion becomes prominent. This can be described as a 'pictorialization of writing'. (Sandbothe 1998d, 71) In good hypertexts links function as intersections counteracting the single text's linear flow of signs and offering themselves as nodal points in thought that provide readers with the opportunity to cooperate actively in individually shaping the text's constellation, i.e. the sequence of textual building blocks and direct links with intertexts, paratexts, metatexts, and hypotexts.[182] In reading of this kind forms of perception enter in which we are familiar with from the reception of pictures. In perceiving a picture – unlike in reading a book – we are not tempted from the start to follow a linear sequential pattern of arranged signs. Rather, the pictorial elements comprising a picture open up different patterns of gestalt-like reception, and hence different forms of reading and of pragmatically constructing the image as a unit of sense.[183]

Against this background the overall constitution of the world wide web's hypertextual web of signs can be described as a pictorial structure, i.e. as a 'textual picture' or 'text picture'. The hallmark of this is pragmatically grounded. The text picture does not primarily stand for a semiotic or nonsemiotic reality that it constructs or depicts. Instead

[182] For further differentiation of the various forms of transtextual intertwinement see Genette 1997.

it functions as a digital *communications* tool using the semiotic referential contexts – which under the representationalist banner figure as media of *expression* and *representation* – antirepresentationalistically to coordinate actions between people.

The pragmatic aspect of the pictorialization of writing as a basic feature of electronic writing spaces was already pointed out by Bolter in his 1991 book *Writing Space. The Computer, Hypertext, and the History of Writing* with regard to hypertext programs for stand-alone machines. Using the Apple Macintosh Desktop as an example, he makes it clear that icons function as 'symbolic elements in a true picture writing'. (Bolter 1991, 51) And he continues 'Electronic icons realize what magic signs in the past could only suggest, for electronic icons are functioning representations in computer writing.' (Bolter 1991, 52) The world wide web radicalizes the pragmatic aspect of 'electronic writing'. For here iconically programmed letters and graphical signs pragmatically create a real link with what they designate. So in a philosophical hypertext, for example, when programmed as a link, a click of the mouse on the word sequence 'Nietzsche's Genealogy of Morals' leads me directly to Nietzsche's text; alternatively, clicking on a linked picture of Ludwig Wittgenstein brings me directly to a webpage with information on the philosopher's biography.

The possibilities for continuation that resulted from his 1991 book are set out by Bolter himself in his 1997 essay 'The Internet in the History of Writing Technologies'. There he arrives at a somewhat different assessment on some points. On the one hand he brings out in all clarity that and how hypertext in the world wide web is produced by 'a process of conversion between the reader and the (absent) author(s) who built the corresponding links into the text'. (Bolter 1997, 43) For the relation between pictures and writing, however, Bolter emphasizes: 'Nevertheless, the distinction between word and image does not entirely collapse in electronic writing. Or rather, the distinction collapses only to reassert itself again and again.' (Bolter 1997, 54)

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[183] Cf. Gombrich 1977 and Arnheim 1954. On new pictorial media see also Heintz/Huber 2001.

It is in fact true that, at the cultural level of usage, pictures in the internet often still function on the representationalist pattern as a kind of quasi-reference. They interrupt the flow of references and represent artificial end points of menus, i.e. impasses in hyperspace. Bolter has this way of using pictures in mind when he writes: ‘Naive belief in the immediacy of the picture has a long history which can be traced from the invention of perspectivist painting through to the present day. Today also even the most sophisticated observer of the world wide web is tempted to forget the complex character of a webpage and to concentrate on the static or moving picture as a direct copy of reality.’ (Bolter 1997, 54 f.) Following Bolter, from this perspective on the world wide web one would have to talk more or less pejoratively of a ‘pictorialization of writing’ in the sense that the relevance of language and writing is being visibly undermined by the predominance of images.

But Bolter does not leave it at this negative scenario. Considering the transmedia forms of web use that are developing he additionally hints at the possibility of a pragmatic pictorialization of writing which leaves neither of the two sign systems unaltered. Thus Bolter highlights at the end of the essay just quoted: ‘The illusion of presence will exist in the internet alongside more imaginative and intelligent forms of hypertextual communication in which word and image interact with one another in a self-referential manner.’ (Bolter 1997, 55)

Nonetheless, Bolter is surely right in emphasizing that the difference between words and images does not completely collapse in the world wide web. Of course, at the surface of our perception of signs the accustomed difference between pictures and writing is retained. In the world wide web, too, we can distinguish in almost all cases using our established semantic framework whether we are dealing with a pictorial or written sign. What changes, however, is the overall spectrum of possible uses that we can make of pictures and writing in hypertext. Alongside linear written convolutions translinear textual webs are found; alongside simple, non-clickable pictures, there are pictorial intersections functioning as ‘source anchors’ which with a mouse-click refer beyond themselves to other signs. The theoretical semiotic difference therefore neither breaks

down completely, nor does it remain rigid and unaltered: rather it reconstitutes itself anew in the context of a medium-specific extension in uses.

The decisive point in this is the pragmatization of our use of media, through which the transmedia intertwinements between different communications media in the internet first become possible. In internet conditions the deconstructive meaning-generating mechanism of différance, through which images, language and writing are transmedially intertwined with one another, no longer appears theoreticistically as an end in itself, but proves to be an aspect of pragmatic media usage, concerned with the coordination of actions between people. The pragmatic grounding of the deconstructively understood dimension of meaning in our media usage, as is taking place in the internet, is not to be equated with an abolition of meaning. Rather, in internet conditions the meaning of a sign becomes determinable in a new way in the context of the performance of actions, contexts in which it is able to change something in an artisinal sense. This means it is no longer realizable theoreticistically as a value proper to the sign, but as a function within semiotic referential events, as a tool within the linguistically disclosed context of action, and so understandable in a concrete manner.

This, in any case, applies when the transition from a media culture shaped by print and television to one shaped by the internet coincides with the transition from theoreticist to pragmatic practice of media usage. Before coming, in the final chapter of this book, to a discussion of economic, educational and media-political conditions to be considered in shaping such a transition, I would like to show how the pragmatization of our media usage can affect not only the use of our semiotic communications media, but, beyond this, the use of our sensory perceptive media too.

3. The internet's pragmatization of sensory media

In his collection of essays *The Transparent Society* the Italian media philosopher Gianni Vattimo advocates the 'hypothesis' that the 'the intensification of communicative

phenomena and the increasingly prominent circulation of information, with news flashed around the world [...] as it happens, are not merely aspects of modernization amongst others, but in some way the centre and the very sense of this process.' (Vattimo 1992, 14 f.) Vattimo's hypothesis is shared by Jacques Derrida. In the essay 'The Other Heading – Reflections on Today's Europe' Derrida formulated his basic media-philosophical diagnosis with a view to Europe as follows: 'European cultural identity cannot [...] renounce [...] the great avenues or thoroughfares of translation and communication, and thus, of mediatization. But, on the other hand, it cannot and must not accept the capital of a centralizing authority [...]. For by constituting places of an easy consensus, places of a demagogical and "salable" consensus, through mobile, omnipresent, and extremely rapid media networks, by thus immediately crossing every border, such normalization would establish a cultural capacity at any place and at all times. It would establish a hegemonic center, the power center or power station [*la centrale*], the media center or central switchboard [*le central*] of the new imperium: remote control as one says in English for the TV, a ubiquitous tele-command, quasi-immediate and absolute.' (Derrida 1992, 39 f.)

This diagnosis is a reflection of the inner ambivalence that is taking shape in the wake of the comprehensive mediatization of human experience of time. On the one hand lies an indispensable chance in this for the constitution of 'European cultural identity'; on the other hand it harbours the danger of 'a hegemonic center' establishing itself, one that might soar to become the media centre of a new imperium. (Derrida 1992, 39 f.) The thesis, underlying these thoughts, that historical change in our forms of communication and technological media assumes significance for the philosophy of time had already been developed by Derrida in the 1960s in *Of Grammatology*.[184]

Considering the recent 'development of [...] practical methods of information retrieval' (Derrida 1997, 10) he there unfurled the programme of a time-philosophical analysis of modern mass media. Such analysis had taken shape with Walter Benjamin (1999) and

[184] On this see Sandbothe 1993, 1996 as well Sandbothe/Zimmerli 1994.

Martin Heidegger[185] in the first half of the century, and was taken up by Günther Anders (1956) and Marshall McLuhan (1995) in the 1950s and early 1960s. From the perspective of the *Grammatology* space and time do not appear (as, say, with Kant) as apriori forms of intuition that transcendentally underlie the system of empirical signs. It is a matter, rather, of mediative effects of a structure that is to be described in grammatological terms: 'Origin of the experience of space and time, this writing of difference, this fabric of the trace, permits the difference between space and time to be articulated, to appear as such, in the unity of an experience'. (Derrida 1997, 65 f.)

With the pragmatic deconstruction of our semiotic communications media that is taking place in the internet, media technology prepares the grammatological foundation for space and time's pragmatic character. What with Derrida is known, in somewhat nebulous and quasi-transcendental manner, as the 'fabric of the trace' is encountered in the internet's media conditions as the concrete practice of a pragmatically modified use of media. In the internet a hierarchical representational structure – centring on the direction of signs to transparent presence of the signified and the presence of the represented object thus realized – is replaced by a web of telematic appresences and pragmatic references. Their differential play of meaning generation there takes place not only in the theoreticist horizon of representation, but is at the same time explicitly bound into the pragmatic context of concretely performing actions.

In internet conditions the transition takes place from a theoreticist spatiality of representation to a spatio-temporal pragmatics of semiotic action. The pragmatization of our semiotic communications media leads to two closely interlinked intertwinement movements at the level of sensory perceptual media which can be described as a 'spatialization of time' and a 'temporalization of space'. What this means in concrete terms, with regard to the specific experience of space and time in using the internet, will now be set out first for the linearly textual communications services and then for the hypertextual world wide web.

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[185] Cf. Heidegger 1993. On the media-philosophical significance of *Being and Time* see also Sandbothe 1993.

The writing-based constitution of the communications landscapes of Chat and the worlds of MUDs and MOOs is of central importance for the spatiality and temporality peculiar to them. This constitution is linked, on the users' side, with the specifically telematic form of participation of 'appresent presence'. The concept of appresence is formed in free analogy with the concept of 'appresentation' coined by Edmund Husserl. (Held 1971) What I am calling 'appresent presence' is the form of telepresence characteristic in the internet, that is, a mode of virtual presence based on the absence of real bodily presence. Appresent presence is distinguished by its permanent postponement of bodily presence, that is, by its only ever being co-present in the mode of appresence, but never present in the sense of a pure presence.

Through the anaesthetic reduction of communication to the medium of an interactively functioning script in the conditions of participants' appresent presence, the visual, acoustic and tactile cues that we subconsciously presuppose in face-to-face communication themselves become the object of conscious construction in the medium of writing. The traditional distinction of spoken language as the medium of presence is undermined by the user's appresent presence in the written conversation of on-line Chat. This means that, to be present at all as a Chat participant, we must describe to the other participants what we look like, how our voice sounds and our skin feels, in what times and spaces we move, and all-in-all what kind of beings we are in what kind of a world. Our actions and interactions with our communications partners and virtual objects also take place in the medium of digital writing, i.e. in the act of interactive writing and in the mode of the pragmatically employed sign.

To focus on the pragmatic temporal hallmark characteristic of Chatting, MUDs and MOOs, it is helpful to delimit the temporal conditions practised in internet use from those temporal schemata known to us from television use. Whereas television prescribes its viewers a fixed linear time track through set programme structures (cf. Neverla 1992, 59-75), in Chat, MUDs and MOOs the timing, i.e. the temporal arrangement of on-line meetings, takes place through individual agreements between users. Here too, of course,

certain regularities in practice quickly establish themselves. But these regularities are appointments you make yourself, which can be made the object of negotiation and discussion within the internet's virtual communities. In place of a prescribed presence, conveyed to passive recipients by the medium of television, the internet's communication services introduce communally constructed times of presence, within which users constitute their identities on the basis of writing-based interaction in a context of shared plans for the future.

This constellation of a collectively constituted presence is the basis for both the intertwinement movements that occur between space and time in the virtual environments of text-based communications worlds. The first of these two movements – the pragmatic temporalization of space – comes to light in the fact that users in MUDs and MOOs themselves have the opportunity to invent and to program the narrative description of the virtual space in which they, along with other participants, move. Thus space no longer appears to be a pre-given entity, within which one can only move passively and on which one can have no kind of active influence. Rather it becomes a communications tool programmed by users themselves, an expression of participants' shared future projects which is constantly modified and creatively differentiated along with these.

Along with the spaces in which on-line actors move, the times in which the respective narratives are played out are stage-managed by the participants themselves. The virtual spatiality peculiar to MUDs and MOOs corresponds to their specific, proper temporality. This spatiality is a reflection of the second intertwinement movement taking place between space and time in interactive communications services: the pragmatic spatialization of time. The interactive and reciprocal use of writing in MUDs and MOOs – modelled on spoken language – leads to a dialogical movement in writing and integration of the time factor, which is characteristic of the reciprocal interaction, into use of the spatially constituted written world.

This is reflected, among other things, in that participants in MUDs and MOOs explicitly address and coordinate the narrative temporal horizons which between them they

collectively project. In this way future plans, which we otherwise bring about individually and subconsciously, are communicatively negotiated and to this extent intersubjectively externalized. At the same time collective future projects, in the horizon of which the narrative reality of a MUD or MOO is constituted, are inscribed in the programming of the virtual spaces. The explicit and communicatively mediated collective future projects are spatialized by the pragmatic activity of programming.

Reference to futures and pasts situated in the communally programmed space takes the place of the preordained televisionary presence characteristic of television. In contrast tp television or computer games conceived for stand-alone machines, the inhabitants of the internet's communicative, writing-based worlds of MUDs and MOOs are not forced into preordained space and time simulations, but experience space and time as closely interwoven, creatively malleable tools of their narrative and cooperative imagination. The participants, who have and also use programming rights, become architects and dramaturges of a virtual theatre. On its electronic stages the basic spatio-temporal structure of our perceptions is itself an object of stage-management and can serve as a tool for intersubjectively coordinating our own moods and feelings with the expectations and hopes of other participants.[186]

A pragmatic intertwinement of space and time also takes place in the world wide web. The temporalization of space emerges in the hypertextual web as an effect of the pictorialization of writing described in the second section of this chapter, an effect taking place at the level of synchronous perception of a webpage's text picture. In contrast to the linear picture of writing, hypertextual writing space is structured so that it itself – in the form of links programmed as source anchors – provides different points of departure for constructing the text. This motivates the reader to transcend the spatial linearity of the hot forms of reception predominant in the conditions of print and instead to anticipate a multitude of possible reading paths in cool perception of the text picture. I call the performed anticipation of possible ways of actively constructing the text the 'temporalization of space'.

Of course, in reading a linear text, too, we are respectively ahead of ourselves temporally, so that the reading of a linearly textual text picture in a certain manner presupposes a temporalization of written space. However, this process does not normally enter into everyday awareness. By contrast, the temporalization of space that takes place in the act of reading in hypertext conditions becomes experienceable for internet-trained common sense as a process of selection and is to this extent thus consciously performed. This performance makes an important contribution to the pragmatic deconstruction of our everyday understanding of signs.

The second intertwinement movement, corresponding to the temporalization of space, is a pragmatic spatialization of time. This appears against the background of the scriptualization of the image which is taking place in the world wide web and which was described in the second section of the present chapter. The 'illusion of presence' described by Bolter (1997, 55) is replaced by a pragmatic referential occurrence between images and other signs through which the movement of meaning constitution can be understood as a spatial movement. At the pragmatic level the meaning of a sign proves to be an effect of the spatial referential movement between a multitude of signs that are hypertextually networked with one another.

Here too it is true that reading a linearly textual text picture itself presupposes a spatialization of time. For with regard to linearly textual reading, too, the meaning of a word or sentence never results solely from the temporal synthesis of the immediate context of the sentence (temporalization of space), but only ever in connection with its relation – one to be produced spatially – to corresponding text passages, external sources and diverse referential contexts. With the printed book spatial relations other than those already temporally synthesized in the respective act of reading – and prescribed by the medium's linear sequence of words, sentences and pages – had to be laboriously uncovered by way of its contents page, index, footnotes and corresponding secondary literature. By contrast, hypertext is structured in such a way that already as a medium of

[186] On this see also Sandbothe 1998c and Schachtner 2000.

presentation it offers the reader a complex spatiality of integrated references for individual selection or independent construction.

The intertwinement of space and time taking place in hypertext approaches qualities reminiscent of Nietzsche's and Wittgenstein's aphoristic networks of thoughts. In these subject matter is not monolinearly structured and systematically worked out point for point, but is set out in its spatio-temporal intertwinement with a multitude of other subjects and problem fields. With regard to the manifold reading paths opened up by a good hypertext, one should speak not – as often occurs in the literature – of nonlinearity, but of a polylinear spatiality in the text picture. For, after all, as a reading route factually embarked on, every reading path is a spatially linear sequence.

Wittgenstein describes the task of selection and interconnection underlying the composition of his *Philosophical Investigations* as follows: 'The same or almost the same points were always being approached afresh from different directions, and new sketches made. Very many of these were badly drawn or uncharacteristic, marked by all the defects of a weak draughtsman. And when they were rejected a number of tolerable ones were left, which now had to be arranged and sometimes cut down, so that if you looked at them you could get a picture of the landscape.' Regarding the constraints linked with the monolinear world of print, Wittgenstein at the same time emphasizes that his 'thoughts were soon crippled if I tried to force them on in any single direction against their natural inclination.' (Wittgenstein 2001, ix)

The complex spatiality in the field of thought, of which Wittgenstein said that 'the very nature of the investigation [...] compels us to travel over a wide field of thought criss-cross' (Wittgenstein 2001, ix), can be reconstructed in the conditions of hypertextual media. The concern for the author of the *Philosophical Investigations* was to write several books in one by intelligently interconnecting thought-scenes which are well composed and in themselves sound; that is, his concern was to make the plural linearities, multiple paths and complex ramifications that advance our thinking realizable in writing too. The printed book imposes technical limits on the realization of this intention;

intelligently programmed hypertexts, however, open up new technical possibilities for such a concern.

The pragmatic intertwinement of space and time that takes place in the world wide web's hypertextual writing space is reflected in a modified pragmatics of the reading act which allows the production process described by Wittgenstein to be followed at the recipient's level. The temporal demarche of reading is no longer prescribed by the text's monolinear spatial signature itself, but shifts, due to hypertext's polylinear spatial signature, to being the reader's responsibility. To this extent one can say that that the factual spatiality of the text in hypertextual conditions is the result of individual temporalization, of the reader's reading demarche that is both individual and co-constitutes the text. In hypertext conditions this cool form of use, which is also realizable in the conditions of print and is the mark of sophisticated forms of book reading, is technically anticipated by the medium itself and to some extent set as a task for the reader. In this way the reading process becomes an event in the course of which hypertextual space is temporalized in an individual manner. The hypertext's complex spatiality motivates readers themselves to organize the text through individual temporalizing processes.

If one applies media-philosophical standards to the modern writing technology of hypertext, then the efficiency of digital writing space should be measured not least according to the standards set by Nietzsche and Wittgenstein. It is obvious that in precisely this respect the HTML mark-up language employed in the net leaves much to be desired. If one compares the world wide web's HTML-hypertexts with the more refined interconnection possibilities offered for stand-alone systems by hypertext programs such as Storyspace, HyperCard or Toolbook, then there remains much to be done here. The same applies to the training of sophisticated media competence in hypertextual writing, as well as for the urgently necessary development of a not only determining, but also reflective, faculty of judgement, which is the essential prerequisite on the users' side for high-level application and pragmatic use of hypertextual products.

It is contingent boundary conditions of this kind that have an essential influence on whether the transition from a media culture determined by print and television to one shaped by the internet will be linked with the transition from a theoreticist practice of media use to a pragmatic one. The following concluding chapter outlines economic, educational and media-political preconditions that are of central importance in shaping this transition.

VI

THE INTERNET'S PRAGMATIZATION OF COMMON SENSE

The conception of pragmatic media philosophy, which was sketched in the third chapter and then given more shape using examples, aims to relate the media-induced transformations of common sense that are becoming possible in the internet age to the normative purposes of Enlightened democratic shaping of human coexistence. Against this background it is important that the connection between our media use and common sense's everyday understanding of self and the world is not grasped in a media-deterministic manner as a causal mechanism. The connection involves, rather, complex interplay of technical boundary conditions, economic interests, cultural media-use practices and media-educational developments in the education system. This interplay is now to be looked at more closely and outlined with respect to possible forms of its political development.

1. MEDIA ECONOMY AND MEDIA MANAGEMENT

The media system is currently reorganizing itself at an international level. The economic development of the digital media world is central to this process of media self-organization. The process is a risky one, because to some extent it is paradoxical. For the digital media world's guiding medium – the internet – developed in the 1960s and 1970s, on the basis of its open and antihierarchical network structure, as a decidedly noncommercially organized cultural space. By pushing forward commercialization of this cultural space the new e-commerce economy aims to market what until now had avoided being marketed. The result is both the billion dollar fascination of e-commerce and the high risk potential linked with it.

The structural incalculability which the new economy is attempting to banish at the object level by making the incalculable calculable returns at the metalevel. It does so in the form of the internal incalculability that characterizes the process of economizing cyberspace itself. The central challenge for the commercialization process currently taking place lies in developing media management that can sidestep the described paradox and so master it in a system-maintaining manner.

In the following I will be dealing with the concepts for such media management that are outlined in the literature, some of which have already been tried out as a guideline for economic practice. In doing this it will be seen that the social and political costs linked with the establishment of this management should be incorporated in a balance calculated over the long-term. Against this background it is necessary to problematize certain aspects of the current commercialization process and to mark out the horizon for developing a decidedly democratic concept of capitalism, one which would allow previous forms of e-commerce to be replaced by more intelligent commercialization concepts that are better suited to digital media worlds.

Due to its immaterial basis, the logic of the digital economy differs from the logic of industrial capitalism. In his book *The Age of Access* the American economist and governmental advisor Jeremy Rifkin has described current developments in the media domain as a targeted capitalization of the mind. (Rifkin 2000) According to Rifkin, the place of static property values relating to spatio-temporal objects such as houses, cars or furniture is taken by dynamic access rights relating to concepts, ideas, events and experiences.

The German media theorist Norbert Bolz has also recognized this trend. In his book *The Economy of the Invisible* he describes the emergence of digital networks as a ‘decisive break in the history of media’, through which it becomes possible to exploit the ‘productive power of communication’ in a targeted manner. (Bolz 1999, 26, 51) At the same time Bolz makes clear that realization of this possibility depends on the development of a new kind of media management. A precondition for its establishment,

according to Bolz, is a ‘doubling of the internet’, which he describes as follows: ‘Internet I will provide tools for “serious business” – for good money. And Internet II allows the rest of the world to surf in “stupid stuff”.’ (Bolz 1999, 50) With Bolz this doubling thesis is underlain by the basic politico-economical assumption that the internet ‘as a radically democratic communications medium [is] uninteresting for capitalism.’ (Bolz 1999, 50)

Drawing on the management theoreticians Tom Peters, Terry Winograd and Fernando Flores, Bolz describes the internal media management of the new economy as an antihierarchical network of self-organizing conversations. The paradigm of military order is replaced by playful interaction between, in principle, equally entitled actors, whose situative authority results from their specific media competence and their individual knowledge management. This open conversation structure makes possible the internal mobility of a new type of company, one whose centre of authority is no longer localizable because it is in permanent flux.

At the same time the company is in this way opened up to the outside. Since its internal power centre is constantly shifting, it works strategically at its own deconstruction. It no longer acts as a closed system, understanding itself as an autonomous economic subject. Instead it begins to interpret itself as a node in a network of organizations that are able to link up temporarily and situatively cooperate with one another.

Art, design, philosophy and science assume new tasks in this environment, according to Bolz. They no longer function as society’s bad conscience. Instead they help in attaining knowledge about knowledge. In media-aesthetic processes information is communicatively shaped in such a way that it contributes to the company’s permanent reinvention and to constant reorganization in the network of strategic partnerships.

This presupposes intelligent media consulting, carried out at the new intersection currently developing between the education system and the economic system. From this Bolz concludes that at the political level classical distinctions will be dissolved and transformed into new, network-like configurations. The transitions between the economy

and education become fluid. Society transforms itself from being a structure of in themselves closed, autonomous systems to being a transversal network of open interests and permanently shifting points of difference.

Alternative assessments of the economization of digital media worlds, one-sidedly described by Bolz from the perspective of serious business, have been presented by Rifkin and the Viennese social scientist Georg Franck. In contrast to Bolz they accentuate the possibility 'that with the increasing importance of information [...] territory might also be gained by a mode of economy in which money no longer plays the primary role.' (Franck 1998, 65) And Franck continues: 'The question of a territory gain for a post-pecuniary mode of economy ceased to be a flight of fancy, at the latest, with the success marked up by the large experiment of an alternative information market by the name "internet".' (Franck 1998, 66) Rifkin also points out that with the internet 'a more participatory public sphere' has come about which, although 'dampened in the rush to commercialize the medium', is nonetheless to be taken account of in future developments. (Rifkin 2000, 223)

In fact the profit warnings and bankruptcies currently piling up at international stock exchanges in the start-up area of the IT branch make quite clear that the short-term commercialization strategies attempted by the economy in the past few years do not go very far in conquering cyberspace for economic purposes.[187] Against this background the new 'ecology of culture and capitalism' that Rifkin calls for in the final chapter of his book assumes particular importance. (Rifkin 2000, 235 ff.) Drawing on deliberations of the Canadian political scientist Crawford MacPherson back in the 1970s, Rifkin sets out how the industrial culture of property might be overcome in such a way that the developing knowledge society no longer centres on the short-term pragmatism of excessive accumulation of money. Its place could be taken, rather, by the long-term pragmatism of optimizing individual and social living conditions.

[187] On this see also Matthias Horx's account of the 'great dot.com misunderstanding', or 'why the new market really crashed'. (Horx 2001, 123-150)

According to Rifkin this could be achieved in the rich western-style democracies, if the economic conquest of 'Cyberspace's' global digital space were to be combined with a revitalization of the local geographic cultural spaces of 'real life'. The revalidating recourse to 'an intimate connection to the earth' which this reflects marks out, for Rifkin, a horizon of politically promising 'contrarian rallying'. (Rifkin 2000, 257, 256) Central to this, according to Rifkin, ought to be the dual insight that the monetary economy presupposes the culture it seeks to commercialize digitally, just as social culture presupposes the natural environment from which it arose.

Franck's arguments are different. He relies on a medium-immanent transcending of the pecuniary paradigm through what he calls, in his book of the same name, the 'Economy of Attention'. His basic thesis states that mass media have established themselves as an industry the business of which is to trade in attention, where 'attention' means the attentiveness that one person musters for another person or for some matter.

As the 'central department of mental capitalism' of attention Franck considers not the internet, but private television. (Franck 1998, 154) This is to have emancipated itself from the monetary economy by 'freeing itself financially from the sale of information through the financing of advertising revenues'. (Franck 1998, 154) In private television information is no longer traded as a good for which viewers pay money. In the media economy it functions rather as an 'eye catcher' (Franck 1998, 154) that gathers up attention and focuses on arbitrary people and objects. In this way mass media are to have become the actual 'makers of kings in post-industrial society'. (Franck 1998, 155)

At the same time, for Franck, this brings out the exploitive basic hallmark of 'media capitalism'. (Franck 1998, 154) The system of stars and celebrities, the cult of televisual prominence is based on an exchange in which the mass of viewers donates attention to a small upper stratum of attention capitalists without themselves getting any attention in return.

Franck emphasizes that he is in no way concerned with replacing the quasi-feudal class system of the attention economy shaped by mass media with a democratic 'equal distribution of attention'. (Franck 1998, 216) His concluding reflections aim rather at the development of 'better operational advice on everyday exchange and housekeeping of attention.' (Franck 1998, 229) Central to the private media management he calls for is the insight that 'alongside the calculable, accumulable and capitalizable side' there is also a non-commercializable dimension in 'playing the game of "exchanging attention"'. (Franck 1998, 238, 216)

What Franck has in mind here can be described as attention's contemplative reflection of itself. Attention is always more and something other than the merely intentional – i.e. directed to an external object or another person – attention that Thomas Gottschalk and Boris Becker covet just as Leo Kirch and Rupert Murdoch do money. Attention's actual added value lies, rather, in the phenomenal self-presence of human consciousness that Franck grasps under the concept of 'self-attention'. (Franck 1998, 237) The fact that we are present, that we are *there*, at all for ourselves and for others as conscious beings comprises, according to Franck, the sounding board for the exchanges of intentional attention that secondarily result. A culture that loses sight of this phenomenal sounding board alienates itself and decays into a superficial market of vanities.[188]

The basic dialectic thesis of Franck's reflection is the claim that 'the mediatization and industrial organization of exchange' of attention allows the return to a 'culture of phenomenality' to emerge as a system-internal necessity. (Franck 1998, 242, 239) In this sense, Franck highlights, '[i]t is in the nature of the case that once the intentional side is overworked, cultivation of the phenomenal side will have its turn.' (Franck 1998, 246) In contrast to Rifkin, Franck conceives of the transition from the capitalist monetary logic to a transcapitalist logic of attention not as a counter movement, but as an immanent effect of the capitalization of attention as a replacement for money. According to this perspective, what initially functions as a replacement for money in the course of time increasingly brings to bear the noncommercializable Other of its Self.

In this way a form of human coexistence with a post-pecuniary stamp becomes conceivable for Franck, which he in turn spells out by means of an intersubjective ethics of mutual recognition. Franck alludes to this at the end of his book with recourse to the French philosopher Emmanuel Levinas. (Franck 1998, 242 ff.) At the same time his book's ethical finale allows the deep lying parallels to emerge that, for all the differences in their execution, exist between the theories of Franck and Rifkin.

Common to both authors is the idea that the utopian Other will not establish itself in the space of digital media worlds themselves. This is because, for both, an alternative economy is dependent on a form of presence described as a medium-free 'being-with-one-another'. Franck's thinking on this medium-free sphere of authentically being with oneself and others is guided by the 'teachings of Eastern wisdom' (Franck 1998, 238) as the meditative surfacing of the Other within the Inner of a contemplative experience of self. By contrast, Rifkin's conception of it is guided by politically engaged cooperation between local communities, as the experience of one's own self in geographically and culturally anchored interaction with others. In both cases the system of media features as the space of a paradoxical economization process which is to be carried to the extreme so as to get beyond it.

Distant as they are from each other, at precisely this point a certain proximity can be observed between Franck and Rifkin on the one side and Bolz on the other. This proximity lies in that Franck and Rifkin, just as Bolz, aim to shape the paradoxical economization of cyberspace by means of media management one-sidedly oriented toward the model of 'serious business'. Their simultaneous distance to Bolz results from the fact that Bolz is affirmative of the digital economy as a *sui generis* phenomenon, whereas Rifkin and Franck's actual interest is directed to the revalidation effects that might be brought about by the paradoxical economization of media culture in non-media realms of the everyday lifeworld. It is within these realms, in their view, that a space beyond capitalism is opening up and in which the cultural value traditions of

[188] What this means for politics is described in an affirmative manner by Dörner 2001.

contemplative self-realization, social justice and communal solidarity might be creatively reshaped.

With regard to their analysis of phenomena the determination of the relationship between media economy and media management from the perspective of pragmatic media philosophy can draw on a multitude of aspects elaborated by Bolz, Franck and Rifkin. As an alternative to the media-deterministic arguments of their three authors' theories, however, this perspective suggests dealing pragmatically with the current problem state. As shown in the fourth chapter of this book, with regard to McLuhan and de Kerckhove, media-deterministic analyses are in search of inner laws supposedly derivable from revolutionary processes of media transformation. In contrast to this, pragmatic approaches concentrate on forms of media use, to be shaped socially, that first make the technical medium something which can become socially and culturally effective.

From the perspective of pragmatic media philosophy, the developments described by Bolz, Franck and Rifkin present themselves as experimental options. A society can adopt these options, but it can also ignore them or realize them in a modified way. In the following I will be concerned with the potential for political transformation and organization linked with the current media transformation. The point of departure for my considerations is the internet's digital communications system, which Franck appropriately describes as the 'large-scale experiment in an alternative information market'. (Franck 1998, 66)

In contrast to Bolz, I take the view that the internet's historically developed configuration as a 'radically democratic communications medium' (Bolz 1999, 50) can also, and precisely, be of central importance for capitalistically organized societies. The philosophical fatalism manifested by Bolz in speaking of a 'doubling of the internet' (Bolz 1999, 50), which eclipses the radically democratic and – closely linked with this – the academic origin of the net, to me seems a politically irresponsible attitude that strikes an anachronistic chord in the internet age.

The same applies to Franck's ostentatious renunciation of a media-political utopia of a democratic 'equal distribution of attention'. (Franck 1998, 216) Such a utopia is surely naïve in the conditions described by Frank of a unilinearly structured and, for this reason, exploitively operating system of mass media.[189] But in the conditions of an interactive environment, as the internet provides with its radically democratic and academic traditions, pragmatically operating sub-publics have long since arisen that undermine the quasi-religious star cult of TV's mass media culture.[190]

They do this by organizing communities of interest within which not only, as in television, only those people who have already found attention continue to meet with attention. Instead, in virtual communities whoever makes an a intelligent contribution at the right time to solving concrete problems that the respective community of interest is currently working on will prove themselves. (Cf. Lévy 1997) Given that collective intelligence has developed as a form of communication in the internet since the 1970s and – as a result of its hypertextual constitution – lives on in the world wide web, there is no cause to join Bolz in transferring it to the realm of serious business in such a way that in the course of this transfer the internet's noncommercial cultural space degenerates into 'stupid stuff'. On the contrary. In the present situation supporting the strategic securing and systematic optimization of this noncommercial realm is a central task for education and media policy.

This is completely in the long-term interest of an economy oriented towards sustainability. An intelligently calculating economics would rightly no longer grasp the revalidation effects highlighted by Franck and Rifkin merely as cultural counter movements. Rather, it would consider the fact that long-term economic trends lie behind these effects, amounting to a partial revalidation of the economy of material things and a partial revalidation of the monetary economy in changed media conditions.

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[189] On the ambivalent popularity of this utopia in performative TV formats see Reichertz 2000.

Linked with this is a second reason as to why the securing and further extension of the internet's noncommercial realm, as a space of collective intelligence, is also worthwhile from an economic perspective. A rigid commercialization of information, as is currently being pursued, leads to ideas being sold at high cost without sufficient thought being given to the material realizability and factual usefulness of these ideas in the real world. The untethered commercialization of the world of ideas can even lead to an impoverishment in the world of real things, because fewer and fewer people get to the information that might help them to shape and change their real environment in an intelligent way. A flourishing economy of things presupposes a free, noncommercial market of ideas. A global economy with a rigid economization of knowledge as its guiding value cuts away the basis of its own existence.[191]

An alternative conception of the digital economy would for this reason back the development of democratic forms of commercializing knowledge in the net. The technologically imminent establishment of new payment systems such as micropayment and pay-by-click could be carried out in such a way that sophisticated forms of knowledge and effective net-search instruments, e.g. highly selective and subject-specific search engines, intelligent agents or press databases (Lexis-Nexis, Genios etc.), are no longer affordable only for the economic élites of serious business. Instead of a few people paying large amounts for precious information, in future very many people worldwide would then pay minimal amounts for data which to them are of individual value and immediately useful in real life.

The present tendency toward digital 'turbo capitalism' could in this way be met by a new movement towards pragmatic humanization and intelligent democratization of capitalism also and precisely in the world of economized cyberspace. This would make it possible for entire political economies – and by this I mean not only the rich western industrial

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[190] On this see Prommer/Vowe 1998 and Jarren/Imhof/Blum 2000 (especially part 4 'the electronic public', 227-300).
[191] On this see the detailed reflections, drawing on Aristotle, of the economic philosopher Armartya Sen (1999).

nations, but also the countries of the so-called 'third world' – to yield gains from added intellectual value in the economy that might be profitably invested in the old economy.

Based on the same economically sustainable considerations, I advocate systematic cultivation of the internet's noncommercial domain. Such cultivation presupposes that the fractal media management described by Bolz is no longer apprehended as the esoteric art of selected global players of big business. Flexibly dealing with one's own identity, the ability to cooperate antiauthoritatively, deconstructive team spirit, and a culture of open conversation should instead become the worldwide guideline for democratic educational policy. This would have to ensure that the development of sophisticated forms of media competence in future belong to the everyday business in our schools and universities.

This cannot be realized solely by implementing computer technology. For sophisticated media competence and democratic media-management capabilities are not causal effects that automatically set in through dealing with digital media. Rather they are sophisticated forms of use that result from the application of intellectual strategies that have already been prefigured in history of humanities, culture and art, but which are only now attaining widespread significance. What these strategies look like and how they might be implemented in educational practice is to be outlined in the following section.

2. MEDIA COMPETENCE AND REFLECTIVE JUDGEMENT

A transition is currently taking place from a teaching and learning culture shaped by the printed word and spoken language to a form of educational practice in which working in the internet's multimedia environment acquires central importance. This transition questions four assumptions basic to traditional education's self-understanding. The **first** basic assumption is the idea that the knowledge to be conveyed in schools and universities is to be detached from its concrete contexts of use and located in a specifically academic space of theoretical knowledge transfer. The **second** basic assumption states that lessons are to take place in a classroom or seminar room as

communication among people who are present. The voice here appears as the distinguished medium of a knowledge-transfer process oriented toward face-to-face communication. Within the framework of this process – according to the **third** basic assumption – teachers or lecturers are vested with the authority of omnicompetent knowledge administrators. They play the role of living encyclopaedias, they speak as if in print, and have a preordained pigeon-hole, a binding definition, and a fixed evaluation to hand for every question and every piece of knowledge. The **fourth** basic assumption follows from the preceding three and relates to the structure of the knowledge itself. In the conditions of the traditional teaching and learning culture knowledge is understood as a stock of established facts, standing in a hierarchically arranged context of order, and represented paradigmatically by the institution of the library catalogue system.[192]

In the context of debates on education and educational philosophy throughout the 20th century, all four assumptions have been discussed and partially problematized from varying perspectives.[193] Nonetheless, they may be considered the implicit guidelines for actual educational practice in most schools and universities in Europe and the United States. Under the auspices of the media transformation currently taking place the four basic assumptions – the closed knowledge space, primacy of the voice, the authority of the teacher based on omnicompetence, and the hierarchical order of knowledge – are for the first time becoming problematic not only in theory, but more in terms of concrete educational practice. Once schools and universities become open to the dynamics of knowledge itself, as encountered in the new medium of the internet, the need for experimental self-reflection arises, within the framework of which the basic assumptions of a teaching and learning culture shaped by the world of the printed book and oral culture become questionable.

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[192] Cf. on this Robert Musil, who in his novel *The Man without Qualities* has his protagonist – General Stumm – gathering 'experience with regard to librarians, library attendants, and intellectual order' and hence coming to the result that 'it's sheer entropy, *rigor mortis*, a landscape on the moon, a geometrical plague!' (Musil 1961, 191, 198)

[193] For examples see Dewey 1938, 1985, 1994. A good survey of 20th century developments in educational reform is provided by Flitner 1999.

The **first** of the four reconstructed basic assumptions – the idea of a closed realm of theoretical knowledge – is questioned in two ways by the open semiotic world of the internet. First, with regard to the *physical* knowledge space, literally the classroom or seminar room. As soon as lecturers or teachers begin to incorporate the internet into their work with students or pupils, the school class or seminar group steps into a virtual space that transcends the limits of the classroom or seminar room. At the same time changes in the *symbolic* knowledge space are brought about by this transcending of borders. The complex networking and unsurveyable intertwinement of theoretical knowledge, as well as its pragmatic binding to practical contexts of usage, clearly emerge in the light of experience available to us in the internet.

The **second** basic assumption of traditional teaching and learning culture – the presupposed primacy of the voice – also becomes problematic with the purposeful use of the internet in education. In internet-oriented working conditions face-to-face communication no longer seems to be distinguished in some particular way as the paradigm for the situation of educational communication. Rather, synchronous and asynchronous possibilities of text-based communications between people who are absent – in the form of mailing lists, news boards, Chat fora, IRC, MUDs and MOOs – enter in and assume equal value. The traditional primacy of conversation in the medium of the voice between people who are present, though not abolished, is in this way relativized to some extent. Online experience of computer mediated communication has a feedback effect on face-to-face communication in two ways: on the one side decentralizing it, on the other revalidating it.

This has consequences for the **third** basic assumption, that is, for the concept of teacher's authority as grounded in omnicompetence. Incorporating the internet into lessons leads to a transformation of the educational communication situation that extends through to the inner constitution of face-to-face teaching processes. In the internet age the oral teaching situation also – indeed precisely this – is subjected to a characteristic decentralization, such that the learning situation no longer centres on teachers as omnicompetent knowledge administrators. The restrictedness and short half-life of the teacher's

individual knowledge stock is immediately made clear to the students by the internet's collective knowledge network. This questions, to some extent, the traditional legitimation of the teacher's authority and the classical structure of teacher-centred lessons. Teachers no longer seem to be sovereign administrators of a hierarchically organized framework of knowledge, to be imparted in a unilinear teaching situation. Instead, faced with the 'information overload' that becomes manifest in the internet, they assume new pragmatic communicative tasks of mediation and navigation in face-to-face lessons too.

The idea of a hierarchically structured framework of knowledge, and hence the **fourth** basic assumption of traditional teaching and learning culture, is also questioned by the internet. In its place we find experience of a hypertextually networked, interactively evolving, and potentially unending referential context of graphical, pictorial and acoustic signs. In the internet no intrinsic order or immanent systematism is discernible that would unite the accessible data in a comprehensive bibliographical knowledge cosmos, of the kind that had shaped the Gutenberg age's world of ideas. Instead there is a continually increasing demand on users themselves to introduce order to the data chaos, founded on reflexive judgement and using the corresponding net tools (bookmarks, search engines, intelligent agents, databases etc.). Knowledge is transformed from being a supposedly objectively preordained stock of intrinsically ordered facts to being a permanently changing artefact of intersubjectively mediated judgement. It thus proves to be a process, open to constant revision, in the realization of which the ability to network associatively, evaluate independently, and link pragmatically individual and collective contexts of interest are foremost.[194]

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[194] Cf. the previously quoted chapter 'General Stumm invades the State Library and gathers experience with regard to librarians, library attendants, and intellectual order' in Musil's novel *The Man without Qualities*. General Stumm looks for an order in the State Library which like 'some sort of railway time-table [...] would make it possible to get cross-connections between ideas going in every direction'. Yet he does not find this form of pragmatic organization of knowledge with the librarian, but only with the library attendant, who is attentive to the General's individual interests and relations. The librarian by contrast represents an abstract (non-individual) form of intellectual order

How can the foundations of an internet-oriented teaching and learning culture be developed in view of the transformations described? How is one to ensure that teaching and learning in the information age remains committed to the democratic ideals of the political Enlightenment; or, moreover, that it contributes to the qualitative optimization and quantitative extension of the conditions for realizing the political project of modernity? How is the space of knowledge to be thought of, if we no longer grasp it as a closed space of theoretical representation of knowledge reserves that cognitively copy or construct reality? What is knowledge, if not a system of hierarchically ordered facts? How do sense and meaning come about in a networked world in which there is no Archimedean point of reference, no ultimate reference text, no uniform systematism?

It is the task of pragmatic media philosophy to respond to fundamental education-theoretical questions of this type and to outline media-philosophical concepts that help in finding possible answers and opening up horizons of modified action. In the following I will be concerned with applying the instruments of pragmatic media philosophy, as developed in the preceding chapters, to the four media-educational matters set out here so as to provide the basis for drawing up media-philosophical foundations for an internet-oriented teaching and learning culture.

In an internet-oriented teaching and learning culture the **first** basic assumption of the givenness of a closed academic realm of theoretical knowledge is replaced by pragmatic deconstruction of academic knowledge spaces. The process of de-construction implies two aspects: one destructive, one constructive. The *destructive* aspect consists of emancipatory liberation from fixing the educational communication process to the world of the classroom or seminar room. With the integration of the internet into everyday educational practices, the virtual world opens up as a space in which teaching and learning can be intertwined in a new way in a collective and communicative semiotic practice. At the same time, the *constructive* aspect characterizing the pragmatic deconstruction of academic knowledge spaces taking place in the internet results from

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concerning which General Stumm in conclusion observes: ‘At a certain stage order somehow creates a demand for bloodshed.’ (Musil 1961, 194, 198)

this opening. In designing a school's or university's own MOO, or in working together on a school class's or a seminar's own homepage, teachers and learners experience the space of knowledge, in a quite literal sense, as the product of their cooperative imagination and collective design capabilities.

These self-designed and permanently evolving knowledge spaces can at the same time be globally networked with other knowledge spaces and virtual, as well as real, action spaces. In this way possibilities for transcultural communication are revealed which in the internet age might contribute to the realization of teaching and learning in an increasingly transnational context. On the internet it becomes possible for students who are spatially and geographically separated from each other, and to this extent live in different worlds, to live together virtually in a shared world, the basic spatio-temporal coordinates of which they can cooperatively construct in a deliberative process of negotiation. Globality in this way becomes tangible as a pragmatic form of life and is practised as a basic, matter-of-course attitude. (Cf. Sandbothe 2000a)

At the level of everyday epistemology the pragmatic deconstruction of academic knowledge spaces that is currently taking place in the internet additionally leads to conscious awareness of the basic pragmatic constitution of our experiences of space and time. The recognition, linked with this, of the contingent character of even our deepest convictions and epistemological intuitions, represents a further important basis for transcultural dialogue, or plurilogue, concerned precisely with interweaving contingent beliefs and supposedly self-evident intuitions of different origins.

The **second** basic assumption of traditional educational culture – the presupposed primacy of the voice – is also deconstructed by incorporating the internet into teaching practice. In this case, the destructive aspect consists of the fact that the voice and voice-oriented face-to-face conversation no longer function in the traditional manner as the dominant paradigm in the educational communication process. Instead, interactively deployed writing experiences a characteristic revaluation. As was shown in the fifth chapter of this book, in internet conditions writing no longer functions – as in the printed

book – solely as a medium of anonymous knowledge storage. Instead, it additionally (in Chat fora, IRC, MUDs and MOOs) becomes useable interactively as a synchronous medium of communication. The constructive aspect of this deconstruction of the academic communications situation is reflected in the fact that in interactively writing a conversation we experience the constitution of sense and meaning as a referential process that is always mediated by signs which themselves refer to other signs (as signs of signs of signs etc.). In this way the inner written hallmark of our thinking and communication can be appreciated through media in simple way.

The deconstruction of the mediative constitution of the educational communications process which takes place in an internet-oriented educational culture simultaneously has profound repercussions on the character of face-to-face communication outside the net. With these repercussions both a decentring and a revalidation effect come about. The revalidation effect consists of sharpened perception of the characteristics proper to the real conversation situation in real space, a sharpened perception made possible by the experience of differences with virtual communication in virtual space. This can bring about a deconstructionist awareness of the body through which we acquire a new kind of sensitivity to the gestural and tactile characters of everyday face-to-face communication in real space. (Cf. Sandbothe 2002)

The decentring effect that issues from experience of the inner written hallmark of our thinking, speech and communication in the internet is closely linked with the transformation undergone by the **third** basic assumption of traditional teaching and learning culture. In an internet-oriented educational culture the lecturer's authority is no longer grounded in the authoritative personification of preordained knowledge stocks in the figure of the omnicompetent teacher. The teacher's authority instead results from the pragmatic communicative abilities of teachers trained in dealing transparently with different sources of knowledge, heterogeneous interpretations, and divergent interests.

Where these abilities are found, integration of the internet in lessons no longer presents a real problem. On the contrary. Teachers who are already used to disclosing to learners the

sources, contingencies, relativities and openness, as well as the developing character of their own knowledge, in the framework of decentralized face-to-face lessons will use the internet to enter into a shared media-based learning process with their pupils. The teacher's authority is preserved in this process, above all, by helping learners themselves to learn the art of independent, reflective and intelligent learning (which is decisive for success in their own lives). The advantage of teaching personnel thus no longer consists primarily in possessing preordained knowledge stocks, but rather of competence in channelling the multitude of constantly growing information flows in an understandable, pragmatic and cooperative manner, and, together with the learners, in transforming these into situated knowledge that is useful and beneficial to the community.

In internet conditions the **fourth** basic assumption of traditional teaching and learning culture, according to which knowledge is to be understood as a fixed stock of hierarchically ordered facts, is replaced by a processual concept of knowledge. Central to this is the intersubjectively mediated faculty of reflective judgement. This faculty is composed of those pragmatic and deconstructive aspects whose intelligent interplay comprises the decisive competence in dealing with the new internet medium, namely, the ability to evaluate information independently and confidently.

Immanuel Kant's classic definition of judgement reads: 'understanding in general is to be viewed as the faculty of rules, judgement will be the faculty of subsuming under rules; that is, of distinguishing whether something does or does not stand under a given rule'. (Kant 1933, 177 [B 171]) Kant distinguishes two types of judgement: determining and reflective judgement. The task of *determining* judgement is to subsume a particular case under an *already given* universal. By contrast, *reflective* judgement conceives a given particular in terms of a *not yet* given universal. For media competence appropriate to the internet age both kinds of judgement play an important role.

In traditional media practice, viewers or readers can usually judge roughly in advance the value of what's on offer by linking it with a particular publisher, a particular station, or a particular editor – i.e. by assigning it to a given universal. With the internet things are

different. By using search machines in the world wide web and working in the various databases accessible via the web, users are confronted with a broad spectrum of quite disparate information on a given keyword. The origin of such information is not always transparent and it is often difficult to ascertain to whom it is attributable.

Whereas the classical media system was based on the viewers or readers developing stable long-term preferences for apparently trustworthy stations or newspapers, in the internet we have to deal with an information overload. Even using search machines and intelligent agent programmes, this overload can ultimately be channelled only through the individual user's reflective judgement. Whereas *determining* judgement more or less suffices in dealing with radio and television, systematic development of *reflective* judgement is indispensable for sophisticated media competence in internet matters.

This is linked with the further requirement that media-competent internet users should learn constantly to pragmatically interrupt and so bring a relative end to the unending referential context of digital signs confronting them on the net. The extensive and systematic development of these abilities at all levels of the population is the central task for a democratic educational system in the 21st century.

Until now this task has been badly neglected in German schools and universities.[195] This is one of the reasons why we currently find ourselves in the midst of the 'total, [...] integral accident' of information that the French media critic Paul Virilio had first predicted for a distant future. (Virilio 1996, 58) Our ability to pay attention and concentrate is being dispersed by the flood of digitally deconstructed information units that can no longer be ordered by determining judgement alone. We have become victims of a digital data worst-case scenario that paralyzes us, makes addicts of us, and has a detrimental effect on our everyday forms of perception and knowledge competence.[196]

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[195] For details see Glotz 1996, Behler 2000 and Goeudevert 2001 (especially 108-190).

But note: this is by no means a direct and necessary causal effect of internet technology! Rather, it is the result of certain forms of use, reflected in the much-used concept of 'surfing', which describes an aimless and autotelic form of movement through the net. (Cf. Reichertz, 1999) Practices of this kind have taken a disproportionately strong hold in the framework of a mass-mediatization and commercialization of the new medium dominated by short-term economic interests. The opposite of these are alternative possibilities of use that can be learnt on the basis of targeted development of internet-oriented media competence. (Cf. Sandbothe 1999, 2001a)

This is a far-reaching educational task, one not to be solved by technical internet introductions in computing centres and computer rooms alone. Effectively imparting school and university students with reflective judgement and the connected ability pragmatically to recoup deconstructive contexts of meaning requires a far-reaching democratization of communication in schools and universities.

Internet experience of deconstructing the claims to authority traditionally linked with the primacy of the voice can provide an important impetus in this process. This experience allows the horizon to be opened up for a democratic transformation of the real face-to-face teaching situation, a transformed perspective in which shaping of the communicative situation in classes and seminars no longer proceeds in a frontal hierarchical way. Instead the concern will be to enhance the personality of the individual so as to link them into cooperative processes serving the collective acquisition of knowledge.[197]

In the United States education budgets have been dramatically increased in the last ten years. More and more money is being invested so that more and more people – not only at the élite universities and private schools, but also at state educational establishments – receive a more and more individual education in smaller and smaller face-to-face groups. The aim of this initiative is that work with new media should serve the development of

[196] On this see Stoll 1995, 1999. On the emergence of the 'internet addiction' phenomena, which are closely connected with the development of compensatory forms of internet use, see Young 1998.

reflective judgement and the strengthening of local communality from the start. For it is only by pragmatically linking the experiences which we can gather together in virtual worlds back to the real world and real community outside the net that it becomes possible to structure the net's deconstructive interwoven contexts in such a way that they might help us work toward the pragmatic realization of our sociopolitical goals and democratic ideals.

Against this background I am very sceptical of the great virtualization euphoria in educational matters that has gripped many educationalists and politicians in Europe. The new technologies must of course be incorporated in lessons, but lessons themselves cannot be allowed to become totally digital. Rather, school and university teaching should be an area in which the positive reevaluation of real face-to-face conversation should be socially rehearsed against the background of intensive experience of virtuality. This can be realized neither via tele-teaching nor in overfilled classrooms, seminar rooms and lecture halls. Rather, what is needed to do justice to the challenges of the new knowledge technologies is the rediscovery of a democratically oriented conversation culture.[198]

To provide a more concrete idea of the internet-oriented educational culture I have been describing I would like to provide three examples from my own work with the internet in teaching philosophy at the universities of Magdeburg and Jena. It should be emphasized that both universities are distinguished by the fact that it is still possible, at least in the area of philosophy, to carry out individual courses in intensive small groups of 10-15 participants.

Within the framework of a seminar in Magdeburg on 'Philosophical Media Theory' that I offered in the summer semester 1996 I put the emphasis on the deployment of interactive communications services like MUDs and MOOs for academic use. The seminar began

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[197] On this see also Struck/Würtl 1999.
[198] For the central importance assumed in the current transitional situation by face-to-face conversation as a form of social information processing see also Giesecke 2002b.

with a first sequence of four sittings without computer support, in which we read a book and an essay by the American media theorist Jay David Bolter of the Georgia Institute of Technology (Atlanta). In the course of our reading we worked out questions together, some of which were straightforward questions of textual understanding, but some too which problematized Bolter's basic theses. The seminar's second sequence took place in a pool room in the computing centre. Two students sat at each PC, with all the PCs being connected to the Georgia Institute of Technology's Media-MOO in which Jay Bolter had invited us to a discussion. Using the communicative situation that developed online between Jay Bolter and the seminar, one can demonstrate very well what I mean by a deconstructionist decentring and pragmatic de-hierarchialization of the teaching situation.

To do this, the communicative situation characteristic of the seminar's first sequence, which took place without computer support, should first be briefly described. The conversational situation was structured so that as the teacher I worked together with the students in developing an open understanding of Bolter's texts, an understanding that admitted questions and unclarities. The point was not to cover up my own problems of understanding, but rather to articulate these problems as clearly as possible so that students were encouraged by my example likewise to express their own problems of understanding.

My function in the seminar was thus not to present the students with a binding and true understanding of the text which they were simply to reproduce. I did not offer them a binding standard – i.e. a comprehensive and general – interpretation under which they would have been able simply to subsume the text using determining judgement. Instead, I entered with them into a deliberate process of reflective judgement, in the course of which we communicated with each other about the uncertainties, different possibilities of interpretation, open questions, and manifold references and associations that crop up in the course of reading an academic text. At the end of this deconstructive process we had one list of questions concerning understanding and interpretation which we thought we could not settle amongst ourselves, as well as a second list of questions which seemed to

us to problematize certain of Bolter's basic ideas. Equipped with these two lists, we set off on our march into the internet and our visit to Bolter's Media-MOO.

What was interesting, above all, about the communicative situation characterizing our online discussion with Bolter was the fact that the decentralization and dehierarchialization implicitly carried out in our work in the first four computer-free text-reading sessions expressed itself in conversation with Bolter as a peculiar experience of solidarity. In conversation with Bolter we experienced ourselves as a thinking and reflective community that posed questions, formulated objections, followed up, changed subject, brought up new problems and so on, in a coordinated and cooperative manner. The technical boundary conditions on the conversation contributed to this. Bolter could of course see only what we wrote, but we ourselves could communicate orally at all times, to discuss what we were writing and our continued argumentative procedure, without Bolter hearing.

The lack of determinacy or, to formulate it positively, the deconstructive openness that we had allowed ourselves towards the text in the seminar's initial sequence, now proved to be our strength. The text's author, who had been brought back from the anonymous world of the printed book to the virtual conversational reality of online discussion, could now be confronted step-by-step with specific problems of our reading and critical objections. In the transition from the world of the printed book to the interactive world of written conversation the seminar's participants experienced with full clarity the way that, in a successful reading, reflective judgement leads on to further reflective judgement. Bolter answered those of our questions that went beyond textual understanding by incorporating them into his own reflections and so helped us understand how published knowledge is the momentary take on an open process of thought, a process in which good texts invite their readers to participate by thinking for themselves.

I would like to begin describing my experience of internet use in philosophy seminars at the Friedrich Schiller University in Jena with the example of a seminar on Aristotle's *Nicomachean Ethics* which I led in the 1999 summer semester. In the framework of this

seminar I tried to utilize the world wide web in a targeted way to improve seminar discussion and the ability of students to take themselves and their fellow students seriously as writers, that is, as authors of texts.

The participants prepared themselves for the respective Aristotelian sequences that were to be dealt with in the seminar by writing short summaries and comments on the corresponding passages before the sitting. A week before the relevant sitting these summaries were made available to all by being published on a seminar homepage set up for this purpose, so that each participant could already form an image of the published state of reflection of all their fellow students before the sitting. The procedure in the seminar was then that one participant gave a so-called 'survey-presentation'. These survey presentations reconstructed Aristotle's text and in so doing incorporated the summaries and comments of the other participants as secondary literature.

The authors of the summaries and comments in this way experienced early on what it means to be read and taken seriously as an author. They sensed, so to speak with the example of their own publications, how a text is alienated from its author in the medium of publication, and which deconstructive processes of reflection are required to reconstruct the openness of thought in reading. In this way, through collective writing and publishing, they learned new forms of reflective reading that no longer apprehend the text as a pregiven general stock of knowledge to be subsumed under a certain heading. Instead the text is recognized as an instrument to be used in a pragmatically meaningful way by means of reflective judgement in an open, interactive and participatory thinking process.

No doubt it would have been possible to achieve a similar degree of intertwinement between students' summaries and comments, survey presentations, text reading and seminar discussion, even if the summaries, comments, and surveys had not been put on the internet and simply copied, with the copies being distributed as the basis of discussion. But in doing this we would have relinquished an important aspect that is characteristic of the internet. By being published in the net the seminar's closed public is

transcended so that the texts put on the internet acquire the character of publications more generally. This fact leads students to learn early on to take their texts seriously, not merely as seminar papers, but as publications in the proper sense, and so to write them in such a way that they can also be read and understood well by a public extending beyond the seminar.

Developing this aspect further was the aim of another of my courses in Jena, a seminar entitled 'Introduction to Analytic Philosophy' which I offered in the 1999/2000 winter semester. In this seminar formal academic standards in the writing of summaries, comments, and the survey presentations were set higher from the start than in the Aristotle seminar. In parallel with this the installation of access counters on the seminar's internet pages made it possible for students to follow how often each of their publications was clicked on, i.e. how frequently it reached an audience. This increased seminar participants' motivation and led them themselves to subject the texts that were to be published to increasingly strict standards (in both formal respects and content), and even (in part reciprocally in a team) to proof read and revise already published texts on their own initiative.

At the same time in this course we made more explicit use of the world wide web's hypertextual structure than in the Aristotle seminar by closely networking the contributions with one another using hyperlinks. This reflects the fact that in this seminar students read each other extremely intensively and developed an awareness for the way in which the seminar, as a reflecting and publishing community in the internet, faces a readership which at the same time transcends the world of the seminar.

These examples from my own teaching practice make it clear that the internet not only means a great challenge for media theorists and media educationalists, but also, and precisely, that it can provide creative transformational impulses to teaching in subjects as seemingly media-independent and withdrawn as philosophy. In addition, these examples make clear that in educational policy it no longer suffices to purchase new computer technology, set up network connections and install intelligent educational software.

Technical interaction with the new media is by no means a sufficient condition for the development of reflective judgement.

This false optimism, disseminated by many educationalists and politicians today, is based on a media-deterministic prejudice. Against this prejudice it must be emphasized that the targeted development of reflective judgement has its educational place not only and not primarily in the computer lab or in front of the internet screen. Rather it begins in the everyday communication situation of normal, non-computerized face-to-face teaching, which simultaneously with its deconstructive decentring in an educational world shaped by media is pragmatically revalidated.

Alongside schools and higher education, press and radio can also make an important contribution to the development of appropriate media competence in the internet age. By making their work, their methods and sources more transparent to the public, journalists contribute to reflective judgement's attaining greater importance already in traditional mass-media conditions. Experience shows that more transparency and journalistic integrity not only has a positive effect on the quality of journalistic products, but also increases the pragmatic utility of information for readers and viewers. Both effects are further enhanced by detailed presentation of background information, exposure of research procedures, and by making intermediate results available in the internet on a station or newspaper's own webpages.

Against the background of pragmatic media philosophy a somewhat conservative position results with regard to future visions of a technical symbiosis of newspapers, audiovisual media and internet in a comprehensive interactive metamedium. From the pragmatic perspective the interactive stress we are exposed to in the internet leads the public far more to a revalidation of peaceful, relaxed, unilinear media than to the need now to use traditional mass media themselves interactively. It is simply good to abandon oneself to the finished programmes provided by familiar editors. Especially when journalistic standards are qualitatively improved through media competition with the internet. A good example of this is the development of the German weekly paper *Die Zeit*

in recent years. Here decent competition and intelligent cooperation with the internet have contributed essentially to a substantial improvement in content. The same cannot necessarily be said of hybrid and pseudo-interactive television formats such as Big Brother, the driving force behind which are the webcam internet tool and the communicative structures of Chat fora.[199]

At the same time, with its plea for the development of internet-specific reflective judgement, pragmatic media philosophy is against complementary endeavours that attempt to envelop the internet through the implementation of unilinear sender-receiver hierarchies. Headings such as 'webcasting' and 'push technology' are linked with the (in the meantime already otiose) undertaking to make searching for and researching information in the internet superfluous by transmitting interest-specific information from a central location – according to the broadcasting principle – from active stations to passive information recipients. It is no doubt meaningful and helpful that such services exist in the internet. But at the same time, in my view, it is of central media-ethical importance that the internet's open information and communications system remains individually researchable for each and every user.

In the area of databases a strong tendency toward rigorous marketing of access rights is currently taking shape. From the perspective of pragmatic media philosophy political counter-measures are needed here. Access to effective databases, such as the commercial information system Lexis-Nexis, which enable thematically targeted access to the international world press's most important archives in seconds should be made available to as many private people as possible – independently of their income. The same applies to the German press and economic database Genios, in which one can research in the press-archives of the German-speaking press in a somewhat less user-friendly environment than with Lexis-Nexis, but at prices no less horrendous. This excessive commercialization could be counteracted, for example, with free-of-charge database terminals in schools, universities, libraries, town halls and public media-use facilities. But

[199] Of course, more sophisticated concepts for interactive television formats can also be developed. On this cf. Wyver 1999.

publishers, too, should ask themselves whether free provision of their newspaper archives on their publisher's or newspaper's homepage – as was until recently practised (as a commercialization test) by many papers – might not bring more advantages in the mid or long term than archive marketing through Genios.

Good archives attract readers to the newspaper's home page, thus attract attention to the paper, increase the number of subscribers and customer loyalty, and are hence an extremely intelligent and effective form of advertising and public-relations. If one sets off the advantages in the economy of attention that free archives mean for the publisher or newspaper against the monetary economy gains bestowed by marketing, the latter to me seem to be clearly outweighed by the sustained advantages in the framework of the economy of attention. Marketing through Genios, for example, amounts to making the archives accessible to those users who are financially buoyant enough to pay €1 for each search query and, additionally, a price of between €1.80 and €2.70 for each newspaper article they click on. But note: these are the prices for old archive material and not for current news. Newspaper archives are in this way being made artificially into a research instrument for the economic élite. Conversely, the normal consumer is still treated as a reading minor, one not to be entrusted with – and hence not even offered – intelligent forms of critical archive research.

In this context it should also be pointed out that information access that is as cheap as possible should be considered a positive locational factor, one making an important contribution to a country's economic and entrepreneurial creativity. (Cf. Mosdorf 1998) Moreover, in times in which pensions provision is increasingly to be privatized and knowledge of stock markets is becoming increasingly important, equality of access rights to specialist economic information in the financial sphere is a basic condition for modern societies, at least insofar as these intend adhering to the basic values of democratic politics even – and precisely – in the age of digital capitalism.

Whereas citizens were until now dependent on the information conveyed to them by the system of mass media, with the help of the internet they can now additionally inform

themselves directly at the sources. In this way the basic right to freedom of information, which guarantees the right 'not only to be taught *from sources*, but really to be taught *at the source*' (Herzog 1994), applies in a new way. Already in 1979 the French philosopher Jean-François Lyotard had emphasized in his book *The Postmodern Condition*: 'the computerization of society [...] could become the "dream" instrument for controlling and regulating the market system, extended to include knowledge itself and governed exclusively by the performativity principle. In that case, it would inevitably involve the use of terror. But it could also aid groups discussing metaprescriptives by supplying them with the information they usually lack for making knowledgeable decisions. The line to follow for computerization to take the second of these two paths is, in principle, quite simple: give the public free access to the memory and data banks.' (Lyotard 1984, 67) To this nothing need be added.

3. Experimental media epistemology

Against the background of the economic, educational and media-political conditions I have been outlining, it becomes clear that in the internet age paths are opening up for an optimization of democratic communications conditions both in the realm of cyberspace's economization and with regard to intelligently integrating the internet in processes in schools, academia and mass media. The paths outlined mark out pragmatic conditions in which the many opportunities for sociopolitical implementation that the internet provides in all areas of life and society might be grasped in a meaningful and democratically sophisticated manner.[200] What is decisive in this is the transition, which is to be consciously fashioned on the basis of the economic, educational and media-political conditions outlined, from a theoreticistically to a pragmatically hallmarked everyday epistemology.

[200] On the concrete areas of political application see Maar/Leggewie 1998, Kamps 1999, Gimmler 2000.

The monological and unilinear forms of use that have established themselves in the 20th century through interaction with the leading media of press, radio and television have suggested a basically theoreticist hallmark to everyday understanding of self and the world. Many viewers have long since lost all awareness of the fact that the pictures and sounds which penetrate into our living rooms still have something to do with the actual world. The connection between semiotic meaning and active practice has been dissolved. Used in a representationalist manner, television generates a circular world of symbols that is closed on itself and which continually detaches itself from pragmatic spatio-temporal relations.

Large parts of the population in Europe and the United States are characterized by a specific passivity and political indifference, as is reflected in the relatively low take up of opportunities for political participation that exist in democratic civil societies. This development is shaped in part by the theoreticist forms of use that have gradually developed in interaction with the leading medium of television. To most of the audience of traditional mass media the world these media convey seems to be a reality that is not actually to be *changed* by acting, but merely to be *known* by copying or constructing it.

Dealing with the internet can, by contrast, contribute to the sedimentation of a basic pragmatic attitude in common sense that is directed to interpersonal interaction and collective shaping of reality. To this extent it can be said that the actual release and effective use of the multitudinous democratization potentials harboured by the new transmission medium internet also depends essentially on the degree to which the net's deep pragmatic dimension can be retained, or further developed in the framework of the entire digital media system formed by the interweaving of press, radio, television and video.

If one looks at current development in this area, central to which are the mass mediatization and commercialization of the internet, there is, however, cause for scepticism. The fusion of the worldwide largest internet provider America Online with the mass-media oriented content provider Time Warner very clearly reflects the

economically motivated tendency to envelope the internet's media-world by falling back on the contents and structures of the mass-media entertainment industry. Linked with this is the danger that in the course of the internet's commercialization its deep pragmatic structure be partially razed so as to adapt the new medium to the conventional media landscape and to sell it as the television format of the future.

A central challenge for pragmatic media philosophy is that of opposing the temptation, widespread in media and communications theory, to legitimize this tendency with academic means by projecting old, theoreticist basic concepts onto the new medium internet. The programme for pragmatic media philosophy, understood in a sophisticated sense, reacts to this challenge by attempting to examine the transformations resulting from the interplay between technical transmissions media, semiotic communications media and spatio-temporal perceptive media in terms of their media epistemological implications, and to draw the resultant pragmatic conclusions for the development of democratic forms of economic, educational and mass-media use of the internet.

The foundations for realizing this programme have been laid in this book through the exposition of a philosophically broad grasp of the medium concept. This targeted the interwoven relationships existing between sensory perceptive media, semiotic media and technical transmissions media. In examining these interwoven relationships with the example of the internet the concern has been, on the one hand, to clarify the question of how transformations in the area of technical transmissions media can lead to changes in our use of images, language and writing. On the other hand, the further question has been examined as to how transformations in the area of communications media can impact on our understanding of space and time.

This left open the question of what effects changes in the area of our spatio-temporal perceptive media might have on our understanding of reality and the basic constitution of our culture altogether. Dealing with this subject is an important future task for pragmatic media philosophy. It can be carried out in the framework of a subdepartment of pragmatic media philosophy which can be described as 'experimental media

epistemology'. This subdepartment will be concerned with research into technical transmissions media as instruments potentially contributing to a transformation of our everyday understanding of reality through their influence on semiotic communications media and spatio-temporal perceptive media. To this end research methods need to be developed that will allow these transformations to be investigated so that research results can in future be used in a responsible way by partly shaping historic media transitions in a politically active manner. (Cf. Giesecke 2002a)

A central role for such a project is played by experimental investigation of the feedbacks that might emerge between common sense, as shaped by media, and the everyday epistemology of our everyday understanding of self and the world. 'Everyday epistemology' here means not only the whole structure of our ways of using semiotic communications media and spatio-temporal communications media. In addition, the concept incorporates the cultural understanding of reality which develops on this basis in everyday consciousness.

There has been much speculation in modern philosophy about everyday consciousness's understanding of reality. Only seldom, however, has the distinction been made between the 'common man's' implicit and explicit understanding of reality. Implicitly, for contemporary common sense in the western world everyday understanding of reality is more or less pragmatically constituted.[201] In everyday action we do not question whether the people and things we are involved with really are as they appear or not. We deal with people and things without relying on realistic or antirealistic intuitions. It suffices if the things and people we are involved with can somehow be interwoven with the perspective of our aims and our life projects. Here the question as to their reality status does not even arise, not even when problems occur in dealing with ourselves or with our environment.

[201] Drawing on Heidegger, I have shown this in detail with regard to the basic temporal constitution of our everyday understanding of the world and self in Sandbothe 2001c, 83-104.

For, as a rule, these problems are solved not by philosophical reflection on the reality of reality, but by concrete measures to technically change actual conditions.[202]

To this extent it can be said that talk of a common sense everyday epistemology has more of a metaphorical character in relation to common sense's *implicit* understanding of the world and self. By contrast, the proper sense of so talking results when one looks at the normal everyday person's *explicit* understanding of the world and self. Here it should initially be noted that contemporary common sense's explicit understanding of reality diverges significantly from its implicit understanding of reality. At the explicit level, namely, diverse realist or antirealist intuitions and ideas come into play that can hardly be made to accord with the pragmatic practice of managing everyday situations.

It is this explicit space of everyday-worldly speculation about reality that I have in mind in speaking of the 'everyday epistemology of common sense' in the proper sense. In principle this is open to analysis using the means of quantitative and qualitative empirical social research. Until now only very little use has been made in philosophy of these possibilities made available by the modern social sciences. In the framework of the experimental media epistemology to be developed there is cause to hope that this might change on the basis of a transdisciplinarily oriented philosophical research practice.[203]

The working hypothesis underlying the project of experimental media epistemology outlined here is the assumption that the explicit level of everyday understanding of the world and self, as expressed in everyday epistemology, develops and changes in a manner dependent on the media we use. In this respect the academic epistemologies developed by philosophers do not differ fundamentally from common sense. They too result largely from a mostly subconscious reflection on the forms of media use in which our thinking and knowledge occur. The philosophical traditions within which, according

[202] Cf. here, for example, Dewey 1986 and Hörning 2001.
[203] The analysis of different explicit aspects of our everyday understanding of the world and self which Antje Gimmler and I have carried out using social-scientific questionnaires as empirical instruments may be considered as an example of a preliminary study already pointing in this direction. (Gimmler/Sandbothe 1993)

to their conscious self-understanding, these reflections take place play an important role in this. But these traditions, too, are themselves not independent of certain forms of media use that are either implicitly or explicitly precipitated in them.

With this perspective of questioning experimental media epistemology is taking a stance neither in the dispute between realists and antirealists, nor in the dispute between representationalists and antirepresentationalists. For these two philosophical disputes are largely about how common sense is in itself constituted on the basis of the inner structure of human consciousness, the constitution of subjectivity or intersubjectivity, and on the basis of the material or immaterial conditions of possibility of meaning, language or mediativeness altogether. Experimental media epistemology is interested neither in the philosophical problem of what reality 'really' is for common sense (realistic copying or antirealistic construction), nor in the question of how we always already comport ourselves towards reality (representationistically knowing or antirepresentationistically acting).

Instead it is concerned with relating the spectrum of different understandings of reality that have historically developed to the framework of media conditions in which these understandings of reality have developed.[204] On this basis experimental media epistemology pursues the pragmatic question of how media technologies might be used to contribute to establishing conceptions of reality and everyday epistemologies conducive to the development and further development of democratic forms of society. As has been shown in this book using the example of the internet, this involves complex interplay between spaces of technical possibility and habits of use, both old habits and new ones that develop in transformed media conditions.

In addition, it should be considered that in the conditions of the transmedia constellation characteristic of the currently emerging digital media landscape a spectrum of different

[204] For a complementary perspective examining varying historical understandings of reality in terms of their phenomenologically disclosive potential for the current media situation see Welsch 1998.

grasps of reality, specific to respective forms of media use, come into play. For this reason, in the media conditions currently establishing themselves it no longer seems sensible to take a uniformly constituted common sense as the point of departure. Instead, the obvious thing to do is to apprehend contemporary common sense in the internet age as a reflectively structured everyday consciousness that is experimenting increasingly at the explicit level with different grasps of reality in a context-dependent and medium-relative manner.

Whereas in the Gutenberg age predominantly realistic, and in the television age predominantly antirealist epistemologies were popular, dealing with the internet can contribute to the sedimentation of a pragmatic basic attitude, at the explicit level, in the everyday world and science. The exposition of chapters 4-6 of the present book have attempted to show in what way and on what presuppositions a pragmatization of our media use and the closely connected everyday epistemologies might come about in the conditions of the current media transformation. Future research in the context of pragmatic media philosophy has still to show in what way and on what presuppositions predominantly realist and predominantly antirealist everyday epistemologies were respectively able to become fixed in the Gutenberg age and the television age.

The foundation, or ‘ground laying’, of pragmatic media philosophy carried out in this book is open to future determinations concerning both the development of its individual subdepartments and the details of its historical execution. This openness is a reflection of the foundational character, already emphasized in the introduction, which characterizes the present book. The actual building is yet to be built. With the present sketch, pragmatic media philosophy is still in its beginnings.

This can also be seen with respect to its historical realization. Future research will have to reconstruct the connection (mediated by our semiotic communications media and our spatio-temporal perceptive media) between our technical transmissions media and our everyday epistemologies with regard not only to the media cultures of modernity. In addition, a pragmatic reconstruction is needed of the radical media changes that took

place in antiquity with the transition from orality to literality, in the middle ages with the transition from religiously shaped oral to academically shaped silent reading practices, and in the modern age and modernity with the spread of printed books.[205] Furthermore, changes that emerge as virtual reality technologies are gradually perfected and become useful for the mass market will increasingly assume significance for the ongoing development of pragmatic media philosophy.

This sketch of future tasks draws up the basic contours of a historic and systematic exposition of the basic concept of pragmatic media philosophy. At the same time these comprise only one of several foci for future research work. A second focus results from the fact that pragmatic media philosophy understands itself as a 'service discipline' not only within philosophy, but also transdisciplinarily. One of the transdisciplinary services it performs consists of academically pragmatic research into the transformed foundations and discursive contours of those academic disciplines for which media have become the distinguished object in the course of the 20th century. By this I mean media and communications studies. In the terminology of system theory one could describe pragmatic media philosophy's transdisciplinary service function as 'third-order observation', i.e. as observation of the observers (=media and communications studies) that observe the observers (=media).

The development of pragmatic guidelines is part of the range of aims for academic research in media and communications studies, if these are to be up-to-date and suitable for the future. These guidelines might serve as a set of instructions for further advancing the transformation of the disciplines of media and communications studies that is taking place in the internet age.[206] The consequences of the pragmatic turn – as suggested in this book from a media-philosophical perspective – have yet to be drawn for media and

[205] On this there already exist a large number of pioneering works. As examples here I would mention both the already quoted book by Cavallo and Chartier (1999a) and the pertinent works of Michael Giesecke (1991, 1998).
[206] On this see Schmidt 2000 as well as the (online) paper in which the German Society for Publications and Communications Science outlines its self-understanding (DGPuK, 2001).

communications studies.[207] My hope here is that with the help of media-philosophically reflective teaching and research in the field of cultural, media and communications studies it will in future be possible to no longer accept radical media changes merely passively as fateful episodes in a history of technology linked ever more strongly with the economic interests of globally operating concerns. Practical implementation of the concept of pragmatic media philosophy, the foundation of which has been laid in the present book, aims to reveal media-politically shapeable spaces. These can be opened up with the help of a pragmatic understanding of academic practice directed towards a democratically oriented shaping of the future.

[207] Preliminary work on an action-theoretical conception of media and communications studies are found in Schmidt/Zurstiege 2000. See also Sandbothe 2001d.

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