WHAT IS PRAGMATIC MEDIA PHILOSOPHY?

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1. Introduction: What is the Philosophy of Media?

Before I try to answer the question in the title of the paper, I would like to clarify a broader question – what actually is the philosophy of media? The philosophy of media developed through the 20th century, and became a response to the call of the powerful development of technologies of communications. Rapid growth and change of various technologies demanded a study of history, of the content and effects of various news media and communications, i.e. media in a conventional sense. Contributions to development of media studies were made by such researchers as Walter Benjamin, Günther Anders, Marshall McLuhan, Hans Magnus Enzensberger, Paul Virilio, Vilém Flusser and others.

The philosophy of media, or "Medienphilosophie", is a continental product, the formation of which began in the late 1980s, basically in the German-speaking intellectual world. The bases for the formation of its new direction are:

a) The problematisation of the "materiality of communications" and "cultural technique" that takes place in the works of such literary critics as Friedrich Kittler, Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht, philosopher Sybille Krämer etc.;[1]

b) The reconsideration of the relations of an image-text in the works of Vilem Flusser, William J. T. Mitchell (pictorial turn[2]), Gottfried Boehm (iconic turn[3]) etc.

An especially powerfully debate occurred at the beginning of the 21st century after a number of works using in their titles the term 'Medienphilosophie' were published. Here one may include Frank Hartmann's *Medienphilosophie* (Wien, WUV Universitätsverlag, 2000), where Hartman undertakes a historical-philosophical study of how media influenced philosophy; Mike Sandbothe's *Pragmatic Media Philosophy. The Bases of New Discipline in the Epoch of the Internet*" (Pragmatische Medienphilosophie. Grundlegung einer neuen Disziplin im Zeitalter des Internet. Weilerswist: Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2001), and Stefan Münker's, Alexander Roesler's und Mike Sandbothe's *Media Philosophy. Contributions to the Clarification of a Concept* (Medienphilosophie. Beiträge zur Klärung eines Begriffs. Frankfurt am Main: Fischer Taschenbuch Verlag, 2003), among others. The discussions basically concerned the questions – what are media? What value do they have for understanding a human being, for understanding stories and cultures, for perception and thinking, for reality and activity? How does the philosophical discourse change as media change? And they also addressed the necessity of the institutionalization of the new discipline that is "media philosophy".[4] A lot of questions and a variety of answers were advanced that established a multifaceted field of studies with the general name 'media studies', with a

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[1] See Friedrich A. Kittler, *Discourse Networks 1800/1900*, trans. by Michael Metteer, with Chris Cullens. Foreword by David E. Wellbery (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1990) (Original in German: Aufschreibesysteme: 1800, 1900. München: Fink, 1985); *Materialities of Communication*, ed. by Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht and K. Ludwig Pfeiffer, trans. by William Whobrey (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford Univ. Press, 1994). (Original in German: *Materialität der Kommunikation*, hrsg. von Hans Ulrich Gumbrecht u. K. Ludwig Pfeiffer. Aufl. Frankfurt am Main: Suhrkamp, 1988) etc.

[2] See: W. J. T. Mitchell, "The Pictorial Turn", in: *Artforum* (New York, März 1992); W. J. T. Mitchell, *The Pictorial Turn*, in: *Mitchell W. J. T. Picture Theory. Essays on Verbal and Visual Representation* (Chicago, London: The University of Chicago Press), 1994.

[3] See: Christa Maar (Hrsg.), *Iconic turn. Die neue Macht der Bilder* (Köln: DuMont, 2004). (The idea of "Iconic Turn" by Gottfried Böhm declared in 1994 in his article: G. Boehm, "Die Wiederkehr der Bilder", in: *Was ist ein Bild?* Hrsg. von Gottfried Boehm (München: Wilhelm Fink Verlag, 1994), pp 11–38, pp 17–19.

[4] See e.g.: L. Wiesing, "Was ist Medienphilosophie?", *Information Philosophie*, no. 3. (2008), pp 30–38; Margreiter, R. *Medienphilosophie*. Eine Einführung. Berlin: Parerga 2007.

range of possible subfields, such as media archeology, media ecology, media aesthetics, media philosophy, etc.

In the English-speaking world one should mention the American-Finnish duo of philosophers, Mark C. Taylor and Esa Saarinen, who formulated an innovative media philosophy in their book *Imagologies. Media Philosophy* (New York: Routledge 1994). Another important work in this process was *New Philosophy for New Media* by Mark B. N. Hansen (MIT, 2004), which is dedicated to the major problematics of the interrelation of a human body and digital media, however, it also draws heavily on the ideas of continental philosophers such as Henri Bergson, Gilles Deleuze and Felix Guattari. The problematics of body and medial actively are developing now in the English-speaking world a so-called 'biomorphic theory of media', particularly in the works of Eugene Thacker (*Biomedia*, University of Minnesota, 2004), etc.

Thus, generally speaking, the main objective of "the media philosophy" is an attempt to rewrite the history of philosophy, the understanding of the human, and of culture and politics, through the prism of media and to comprehend the role of media in human perception and thinking.

There are many tendencies and classifications that deserve a separate analysis, therefore we will not stop here but go directly to the questions that arise in any theorization of media: How can and should the theory today change the situation concerning media?, and What is the function of such theory? Both interconnected questions belong to what can be called the pragmatic philosophy of media. Media are not stagnant; they change and develop and demand a constant contact with reality, which is the central moment of pragmatism. A speculative approach is not applicable in this case.

2. Pragmatic Philosophy of Media 1
   (After the Linguistic Turn)

Philosophy of media in the pragmatic key or the pragmatic media philosophy adopts a middle way among a) abstract theorizing, b) prolific search for the definition of media?, and c) the many empirical facts of utilitarian studies of communications carried out within empirical media studies.

Mike Sandbothe's *Pragmatic Media Philosophy: The Bases of a New Discipline in the Epoch the Internet* has become a call for a new fundamental discipline. The central concern of his book is to situate the foundation of the new discipline in the context of the current debate about the self-image of academic philosophy and to institutionalize it.

Sandbothe draws on both "classical" Pragmatismus (Charles Sanders Peirce, William James and John Dewey) and its revision in the Neopragmatism of Richard Rorty and his linguistic turn.[5] The anti-foundationalist, critical inventory of traditional philosophical questions undertaken in such a way leaves only questions of practical importance.[6] Sandbothe defines pragmatic media philosophy as an active interdisciplinary approach, a "scientifically theoretical service discipline" for the arts and humanities, communications and media, which serves the "rehabilitation of the pragmatic self understanding of modern academic philosophy".[7]

In opposition to speculative theorists of media, in particular to Marshall McLuhan, Sandbothe draws attention to the fact that the use of media is socially and

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[5] See: *The Linguistic Turn: Recent Essays in Philosophical Method*, ed. with Introduction by Rorty R. (Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1967). The Sandbothe book devotes an entire chapter PM, p. 48 ff.

[6] M. Sandbothe, *Pragmatische Medienphilosophie. Grundlegung einer neuen Disziplin im Zeitalter des Internet. Weilerswist* (Velbrück Wissenschaft, 2001), p. 26. (PM).

[7] PM, 2001, p. 48: "Rehabilitierung des pragmatischen Selbstverstandnisses der modernen Fachphilosophie".

historically constructed, and this is how it is used: "Media understanding of this use – the theoretical perspective – is not of perceptive technical extensions of the sense organs, but rather of social constructions".[8]

He understands media first of all as tools for the coordination of inter-human actions; it requires thinking of media as inseparable from these actions. It is through the media themselves and not through their theoretical contemplation that one should follow the concrete, practical and experimental usage of media, carried out not only by media producers, but also by their users, both separate individuals and social groups.

Sandbothe divides all media into three groups:[9]

1. "sensory perceptual media" ("sinnliche Wahrnemungsmedien") – for example, space, time, sense organs;

2. "semiotic communications media" ("semiotische Kommunikationsmedien") – an image, language, writing, music;

3. "technical transmission media" ("technische Verbreitungsmedien") – publishing, radio, television, film, computer, Internet.

All three groups are interconnected. Media are "practically" used in concrete rational acts of humans and in various relations, and they legitimizes as if from within the new actions and relations. Media serve to change the world. These changes are mainly possible

due to the Internet, which Sandbothe places in the center of his theory. Conceptualized as a "transmedium", the Internet allows us to carry out concrete rational practice to change the world.

Sandbothe follows Richard Rorty in his affirmation of the political and moral standards of a liberal and democratic society. He proclaims as its appropriate goal the accomplishment of such ideals as equality, tolerance, and freedom of research, discursivity and solidarity. As a result, media are studied as the tools of information and communication, as the ends and means of constructing the possibility of such activity.

In our opinion the orientation of Sandbothe towards the linguistic turn, with an emphasis on linguistic meaning and rational usage, limits the problematics of his pragmatic version of the philosophy of media and reduces it to the superficial technological strategy: "We can understand words from a pragmatic perspective, as media in a handicraft sense [...] used for a new work program, and as a means in the sense of a tool that can change existing realities".[10] Sandbothe understands the Internet in political-cultural practice too optimistically. He considers only its linguistic component and in effect does not pay any attention to the visual, audible and tactile content that frequently erodes and transforms the rationality of messages.

It should be noted that the "linguistic turn" in philosophy is the declaration of the view that philosophical problems can be solved (or eliminated) by reforming scientific language, by the elimination of a linguistic confusion, and by understanding more about the language we presently use. This is shift from speculative philosophical talk about a subject to the conversations

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[8] PM, 2001, p. 163: "Medien sind aus dieser gebrauchstheoretischer Sicht nicht als wahrnehmungstechnische Erweiterungen von Sinnesorganen, sondern vielmehr als soziale Konstruktionen zu verstehen".

[9] On the basis of this typology, the author creates a massive 410 pages collection of systematic philosophy of media: *Systematische Medienphilosophie*. / hrsg. von Mike Sandbothe und Ludwig Nagl (Berlin: Akademie Verlag, 2005).

[10] PM, 2001, p. 109: "[…] können wir Wörter aus pragmatischer Perspektive als Medien in einem handwerklichen Sinn verstehen, indem wir sie [...] als, Programm für neue Arbeit und als Mittel im Sinn von Werkzeug gebrauchen, durch welche existierende Realitäten verändert werden können".

about the words with which we speak about a subject. It means that the task of the philosopher from the perspective of linguistic philosophy (following the later Wittgenstein) is not to reform the language according to some logical norm (logical empiricism), but to offer a detailed analysis of the actual use of ordinary language in order to prevent misunderstandings that arise from its improper use. Rorty's task in his anthology is to discuss some of the attempts to substantiate these views, and he explores the nature of this alleged linguistic philosophy, tries to engage the debate between supporters of an ideal language and the analysis of ordinary language. He eventually came to the conclusion (which he greatly expanded some years later in his *Contingency, Irony, and Solidarity* (1989), in which he combines a later Wittgensteinian philosophy of language with pragmatism and declares that meaning is a social-linguistic product) that that the future of philosophy depends on its linguistic analysis. We can say that Rorty's linguistic turn is a meta-philosophical criticism, aimed not at specific themes, styles, or terminology of philosophy, but at the way in which philosophical problems may be something other than simply an in increase in tension or change in the dynamics of the relationship among these themes, styles or terminology. It is important to emphasize this because it is a mistake to understand linguistic philosophy as reducing philosophy to simply a problem of language.

Sandbothe's media project philosophy, designated as "after the linguistic turn", in my view is too limited by the utilitarian sense of pragmatism as a tool of linguistic strategies. To consider media as just a tool applicable to knowledge, morals or politics means to amputate a part of human practice. Media reduced to the tools of democratization and rational activity become a servant of other activity that is considered more valuable. Meanwhile media possess a relative autonomy and have an independent purpose. Medial experience is irreducible either to aesthetic experience or to any other kinds of experience. Medial experience directly

influences our perceptions, thinking and imagination as it triggers the work of embodiment and free play of abilities.

Sandbothe ends his book by saying that is just an introduction, 'Prolegomena', to a future science about media: "The building itself is yet to be built. The pragmatic media philosophy is consistent with the present sketch that is only a beginning".[11] The construction is still in progress. He clearly shifts media philosophy directly into the position of a successor to the philosophy of language, considered as a fundamental discipline of the new epoch.

It is necessary to make the next step from the 'language apriori' of the linguistic turn to the 'media apriori' of the medial turn.[12] So if the linguistic turn has served to clarify the contradictions and differences of linguistic philosophy in their analytical and positivist versions, the project of a medial turn could serve to remove inconsistencies of the analytical philosophy of mind and its bewildering mind/body problem, and point to cultural-analytical directions of research in media and communication. It is necessary to include the bodily, the visual, and the auditory, which is not considered because it is not textual, in the pragmatic philosophy of media. In this regard I consider it fruitful to engage John Dewey's *Art as Experience* (1934) in the context of the problematics of media. This approach highlights the problematics of the experience of media, of fundamental

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[11] PM, 2001, p. 239: "Das eigentliche Gebäude ist erst noch zu bauen. Die pragmatische Medienphilosophie steht mit der vorliegenden Skizze erst an ihrem Anfang".
[12] The metaphor of the "medial turn" chronologically follows a series of turns in the culture – linguistic, iconic, pictorial, cultural, etc. For the first reference see: R. Margreiter, "Realität und Medialität. Zur Philosophie des 'Medial Turn'". *Medien Journal. Zeitschrift für Kommunikationskultur*, Jg. 23, H. 1 (1999), pp 9–18 (see other articles in this number); S. Münker, "After the medial turn. Sieben Thesen zur Medienphilosophie", *Medienphilosophie: Beiträge zur Klärung eines Begriffs*, Hrsg. von Stefan Münker, Alexandrer Roesler, Mike Sandbothe (Frankfurt am Main: Fischer-Taschenbuch-Verl., 2003), pp 16–25.

experience in which both art and science, and everyday life, can be included, because media carry out a de-autonomous function within these systems. Media are the environment that connects and permeates all systems.

3. Pragmatic Philosophy of Media 2 (After the Medial Turn)

In my opinion the task of the pragmatic philosophy of media goes beyond a simple rewriting of a philosophical discourse, simply 'taking media into account', and also beyond simply a service discipline for business media. The task of the pragmatic philosophy of media is the study of concrete medial experiences and of concrete usage of media in order to understand better media effects, the positive and negative sides of media activity. The media influence is not just a linguistic component; it includes visual, audible, and tactile dimensions. This conception of media considers the embodied aspect of media. Human experience is medialized. Media deliver us the world and pre-organize it. I think it is possible to bring together all dimensions of media in a bodily regime, in the dynamism of a live human body in its interaction with the environment. John Dewey described such interaction through the category of experience.

Dewey discusses 'experience' in two major works: *Experience and Nature* (1925/29) and *Art as Experience* (1934). He understands experience not as a bare subjective experience of a given actuality, which is essentially separated from a perceiver, but as an active process of interaction with an environment. He further understands nature not as a given reality, a confirmed order of things, beings and ways of existence, but as an open process of emergence, which develops within the boundaries of evolutionary interactions as an embodiment of natural potential in concrete situations. For Dewey human experience begins with natural interactions, since nature and experience are not opponents or enemies of each other but are essentially one and the same.

In my view Dewey expands the understanding of experience its empiricist heritage. Empiricism understands experience as a subjective, progressive accumulation of sense data of the past and of the present. Pragmatism adds the dimension of the future, of experience as openness to the future, as a kind of rule of behavior for accomplishment of the goals and formation of the self. Experience is not reduced either to contemplation, or to knowledge, which is only one part of it. Moreover, for Dewey experience is defined through the categories of continuity and interaction. "Experience occurs continuously, because the interaction of live creature and environing conditions is involved in the very process of living."[13] The basis of his concept of experience is activity understood as the interrelation of action and suffering, during which sensation is actively produced.

Man influences the environment consistent with his own structure; in this way changes made in the environment react on the organism and its activity. The live being feels consequences of his behavior and suffers from them. This close connection between action and suffering forms experience. It is a correlated action. It is experience that brings concrete sense into human life. It is directed to the positive as well as to the negative. Experience includes sensual experience, spiritualistic, religious, moral, aesthetic, social and cultural. For Dewey experience embraces all human life, including the inter-relations of the human with nature and nature itself.

The concept of experience is valuable for philosophical reflection on media because it means both the physical conditions and the person who works, communicates, invents, uses things, suffers and enjoys. Experience means everything that is endured. Therefore, the specification made by Dewey is connected with the important understanding of experience as social

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[13] John Dewey, *Art as Experience* (New York: Perigee Books, 1980), p. 35.

practice, as actions of a historically concrete individual. Experience may be yours or mine; it appears in the form of industrial, political, religious, aesthetic, and intellectual experiences, among others.

According to Dewey, concepts emerge as ways to solve a problematic situation. Any concepts, including scientific, are not copies of any independent reality, but exist as tools and plans of action and are created by an experiencer. Concepts are tools for obtaining experience and are subject to constant calibration and updating when they cease to provide reception of the best experience.

Ideas are operational, because by their nature they are projects of intrusion into existing conditions. Ideas are always abstractions from some real problems. The truth lies not in the adequacy of thinking and life but in the reliability of a principal idea to serve as a tool to solve vital problems. The true is a direction in which it is necessary to move. The true is historical rather than eternal. It is subject to updates and changes in the light of new situations, worries, threats, and doubts.

Dewey develops further the concept of experience in *Art as Experience*. In the first three chapters of the book he gives examples of aesthetic experience. He shows the connection between art and life, the continuity of aesthetic experience that includes both the sphere of high art and the sphere of day-to-day life and popular culture. Dewey insists on the indissolubility of traditionally oppositional categories: graceful arts/applied arts, high/popular, body/mind, man/nature, subject/object, ends/means. Sequestering, life fragmentation, and strict distinctions bring mobile, dynamic material into rigid immovability, and finally, into an idolization of separate fragments. It results in an impoverishment of our understanding of the completeness of experience. The danger of creating fetishes appears when distinctions acquire an evaluative character, thus imposing restrictions on perception and

obscuring our understanding of the case at issue and of the situation in general.

Dewey's preferences are not to the material object (fetish) as a product of art, but to the dynamic, developing process of experiencing in the course of the production and perception of these products of art. He distinguishes 'art product' and 'work of art'. The first is an external and physically created material artefact that exists separately from human experience; the second is a function, which is executed by this product in the course of its acquisition by men. Thus Dewey understands art as the universal form of communication, which is means and ends simultaneously. It serves not only the conveying of a message, but first of all to the production of sense. An end is a means to reach other ends.

Dewey's ideas about 'art' and 'experience' can be applied to media, which are embedded in human life. Media function as means. However, this does not override the fact that media can be part of the ends. Media are integral parts of the ends of their usage.

Dewey's category of experience allows us to point out and to resolve a problem of means and ends, of the instrumentalism of media, of a widespread understanding of media as bare means. Dewey rejects the narrow utilitarian understanding of a tool as an effective means for gaining advantage. The dichotomy of ends and means (as well as of body and mind) stagnates thinking and human activity. The existing distinction should not lead to oppositions. Media are simultaneously valuable means of satisfaction of human desires and ends. Media serve life in a broad sense, rather than merely an ordered and limited way of life. The enrichment of experience is not only immediate, but continues after the work of media is over because the senses are embodied in us. Media activate the work of our perceptions; they inspire and depress, charge and discharge energy, and recover and lull.

Dewey demonstrates that the path to the true lies in reference to experience, life, functionality and context. The methodological rule considers the true as being made. Thus the pragmatic philosophy of media is not a speculative and dogmatic theory, but the method of study that looks to concreteness and adequacy of the facts and acts. A pragmatic philosophy of media is not opposed to aesthetics and the philosophy of language, but extends them. The object of media philosophy is experience in its totality because media penetrate all spheres of human life.

Taking into account John Dewey's philosophy of experience it is possible to formulate some principles of a pragmatic philosophy of media:

1. One should view media not as static artifacts (technical devices) but as processes of their work in direct connection with the human, as a continuously developing process of action and change, as medial experience.

2. Medial experience is rooted in a socio-historical context and cannot be separated from its genesis in socio-political circumstances and technological conditions; the emergence of media themselves and their subsequent transformation are in experience.

3. Media are open to change and transformation, they are the product of the constantly changing setting of the experience of their usage; it is an interactive game fluctuating within the context of interactions (medium, environment, human).

4. Medial experience stimulates moving forward, getting something new; it encourages new approaches to the environing and the unity of various elements of experience.

5. Research into media should not be hemmed in and idolized in absolute formulas.

The five principles are interrelated and argue that media are not "outside of us" (artifacts), but also not "inside us" (patterns of perception). Media exist in the process of relationships between artifacts and patterns of perception, so I define them as machines of abstractions; they are what exists only in the constant work, in the interaction with other elements of communication. They are machines that operate by abstraction or otherwise automatic "abstracting", as action is selective. Abstraction (as well as media) is inevitable; it is human ability, an ability that allows us to creating a set of realities, the multi-realities of human experience. They transform human worlds both outside and inside. Media reveal a constant (machinery) game of abstract and concrete human thinking. In his short, early essay "Who Thinks Abstractly?" Hegel, without any irony, presented the work of abstract thinking as follows: "This is abstract thinking: to see nothing in the murderer except the abstract fact that he is a murderer, and to annul all other human essence in him with this simple quality." Or, on the contrary, "strewed and bound flowers on the wheel and on the criminal who was tied to it. – But this again is the opposite abstraction" [...] and he who thinks abstractly "clings to this one predicate."[14] Similarly, it would seem that an abstract approach to media ignores its place in concrete experience.

We are talking about the machine not in the usual sense of the everyday life, as a technical product, but in the sense by E. Morin, G. Deleuze, F. Guattari: the machine is not a metaphor. The machine is a practical material being, that is, 'something' to exercise transformations, producing products or performing a task because of its 'organizational competence'. A machine is not understood as a mechanism, but as practice, production and poiesis (the idea of the machine in its most powerful and richest sense: the machine as an organization that is both productive and reproductive, as self-creation /

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[14] G. W. F. Hegel, *Texts and Commentary*, trans. and ed. Kaufmann, Walter (NY: Anchor Books, 1966), pp 113–118.

Autopoiesis). A technical machine (artifact) is only a degraded and underdeveloped kind of machine.

Since media are not a thing but a machine or assemblage of processes and relationships, such relationships participate in their transformation and development of each element of the component, whether the operator, the machine, the situation of communication, material apparatus, etc. These are ways of establishing new connections among bodies, institutions, and ideas. Changes in one element respond to the others. For example, the improvement of mobility and price reduction of photographic technique in the early 1920–30s, and its consequently wider use, led to mass photography and to the emergence of many genres and photographic means of communication. They also led to the experiments of media artists, which are changing human perceptions, to commercialized electronics companies, and they are now widely used in advertising. This is a two-way process, highlighting the socio-economic and the political dimension of media.

Thus I would like to say that media, in light of this version of a pragmatic philosophy of media, are not mere instruments that oppose nature and dissect it. They are rather incorporated in it, and by and large are its tools. The human being can for pragmatic reasons choose different tools for their purposes, for research of the same object (this is the end of Sandbothe's pragmatism), but (following Dewey) choice occurs in nature itself, and it ultimately produces a 'natural selection' of the best tools, a point also made in the media archaeology of S. Zielinski and E. Huhtamo.[15] Nature itself is experience, always medial human

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[15] See e.g.: S. Zielinski, *Deep Time of the Media: Toward an Archaeology of Hearing and Seeing by Technical Means* (MIT Press, 2006) (Original in German: *Archäologie der Medien : zur Tiefenzeit des technischen Hörens und Sehens* (Reinbek bei Hamburg: Rowohlt, 2002)); *Media Archaeology: Approaches, Applications, and Implications*, Ed. E. Huhtamo and J. Parikka (UC Press, 2011).

experience, i.e. it is a process of interaction, communication, history, and integrity that contains and expresses no dualism.

4. Conclusion

How can pragmatic media philosophy help us? What does it give us?

The pragmatic philosophy of media, with its focus on experience, becomes especially important now as we become more aware of the development of technological art such as media art, robotics, bio art etc. The old tools of aesthetics are hardly applicable to this art, balancing as it does on the verge of science, technology and art. The introduction of the category of experience sorts things out and gives us an understanding that in dealing with technological art we deal with new forms of experience. Medial experience includes an actual, everyday experience and expands it in new, non-representable areas in science and art. Thus unlike popular 'post humanistic' ideas of prosthetics and 'extensions of man', one can see a deep correlation between the technological and the anthropological.

The fixation of medial experience, the experience of a concrete media that carries out the interaction with the environment, establishes the importance of actions and their ultimate sense. That sense is sociable, as is the value of experience. Experience is always individual. Media provide a condition for experience in general, while at the same time media change as a result of experience. These changes highlight the variability and contextuality, the socio-political constitution of thinking and acting shaped by chance and accident in the history of media. However, only media fill in the life and thinking of people with real substance. It is because these conditions are not quite comprehended by people that they influence them so effectively.

In the situation of rapid technological changes, the

pragmatic philosophy of media carries out a therapeutic function of contemplating technologies and their influence on various forms of experience. It demonstrates the lameness of a separatist approach claiming the autonomy of art, science and other public systems, their independence from each other and from everyday life. Media are more deeply integrating themselves in our professional and everyday life. An understanding of how media work provides us an opportunity to control (temporarily) their implementation, to direct them to the key life interests and thus to make them more useful, providing pleasure and expanding the sphere of experience. Hence, the role of a pragmatic philosophy of media is not in the criticism of reality and in the affirmation of a certain 'media reality' and similar speculative declarations, but in changing, indeed creating, actuality by way of expanding the sphere of experience.