

Why Philosophy? New *Paideia* in the Face of Megamedia Aggression

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Abstract

The main thesis of the presented article implies that a possible and, simultaneously, immensely important response to the question “Why philosophy?” demonstrates the necessity of a philosophical diagnosis regarding the current condition of communicative rationality. This diagnosis—obtained on the basis of the analyses and decisions of transcendental-pragmatic communication philosophy—ultimately obliges philosophy to construct the theoretical framework for a new *paideia* project. The primary features of this project stem from the recognition of the megamedia character of today’s communication space and fundamental threats that are conditioned by the specificity of this space. The postulated *paideia* project must be based on the ethical principle of co-responsibility and its goal: the shaping of discursive rationality.

Keywords

communicative aggression, megamedia communication, *paideia*, discursive rationality, transcendental pragmatics, co-responsibility

Every historical constellation, almost every subsequent historical configuration of the social world, has invited us to ask anew and in a unique way “Why philosophy?” or (in a slightly more dramatic tone), “Why still philosophy?” From antiquity and the first *protreptikos* endorsing philosophy to the contemporary world full of philosophical disturbances, innumerable versions of the answer to these questions have been produced. The advantages of philosophy were meticulously highlighted in them, its goals and expected benefits were determined,

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and its unquestionable legitimacy was proven. It may appear that the list of these answers is now, unquestionably, complete, that all possibilities have already been exhausted. However, this is just semblance. There are still new perspectives that may emerge following the question “Why philosophy?” and the act of responding to them signifies participation in the creation of an “open work.”

I seek to contribute to this “work” with an answer which owes its specificity and indisputable importance to two circumstances: It is constructed from the perspective of the transcendental-pragmatic project of *communication philosophy* and it essentially “engages” in the struggle with a particularly dangerous and common phenomenon, namely the *communicative aggression* observed today in the media space. And one of the most serious and momentous consequences of the impact of both these circumstances is the possibility of delineating a theoretical framework for a new *paideia* project.

Philosophy and a New *Paideia* Project

To put it briefly, the answer to the proposed question formed by the aforementioned occurrence makes *paideia* an inalienable duty of philosophy. Thus, it reveals that transcendental-pragmatic communication philosophy is a concept that, in addition to multiple other theoretical and practical values, also proves its intellectual status with regard to reflection on upbringing and education, and shaping both within their most general and most basic meaning.

First and foremost, this philosophy implies an unquestionable necessity to construct and expand a new *paideia* project. Furthermore, this philosophy provides this project with a fundamental sanction and legitimation. Finally, it determines the specificity of the tools that must be activated within this project. This does not imply that communication philosophy should be limited only to these threads, nor that it is the only philosophical perspective relevant to a possible (and required) *paideia* project. Nonetheless, these three tasks indicate that we are dealing with issues of the highest theoretical and practical importance. They also demonstrate that a close relationship between research and philosophical theories and *paideia* is not a relic of the past, but an invariably valid and demanded dependence. All this gives us reason to believe that today’s response to the question “Why philosophy?” will be rich in important and valuable content.

First, however, a brief investigation is required. The history of the relationship between *paideia* and philosophy, which has already been studied in detail, undoubtedly shows the immanent nature of their relationship, and more precisely, reveals the inalienable dependence of the shape of *paideia* on the philosophical

perspective that underlies it, which has two significant implications. First, it means that a certain set of philosophical assumptions always determines how *paideia* is understood and what it should be; it decides whether it should be equated with the narrowly understood process of shaping human morality and ethical prowess; with upbringing and education leading to civil maturity; with the extrication of humans from the wild and setting them on a humane path; or finally with the formation of culture in general. Second, the specificity of these assumptions and the adopted (more or less consciously) philosophical position also determines what values, goals, and intentions the effort of shaping and forming is subordinated to, and in what way the labor of upbringing and educating is oriented. And these two points represent a minimum range of dependencies between *paideia* and philosophy, which can be reconstructed in relation to each historical form of their relationship.

Moreover, in what way does transcendental pragmatics embrace this role as an original theoretical project to which philosophy mostly owes the breakthrough in communication? How does it shape these relationships and to what degree does it offer a truly new and important perspective for today's world? And finally: what does the reply to the question "Why philosophy?" contain?

Communication Philosophy

The specificity of transcendental pragmatics in approaching these issues ultimately stems from the fact that it is a communication philosophy *par excellence*. And this term conceals a very significant theoretical distinction that accentuates, above all, that communication philosophy is a construct dissimilar to what is known as philosophy of communication.

The distinction between philosophy of communication and communication philosophy can, in fact, be built on the opposition between the distinguished subject of philosophy and its distinguished method.² The first of them, philosophy of communication, is a subdiscipline of philosophy that is distinguished by its specific subject (the "what" this philosophical reflection concerns, what is its subject). Thus, it is a discipline that applies classical philosophical tools to study a distinguished sphere, namely communication processes and phenomena. This type of philosophy is a subdiscipline that is situated alongside other subjectively recognized philosophical subdisciplines such as the philosophy of man,

² This distinction is similar to the opposition "philosophy of language—linguistic philosophy" once proposed by John Searle (Searle 1969).

the philosophy of religion, the philosophy of art, the philosophy of law, and so on. At the same time, this philosophy both effectively competes with and fruitfully concurs in an interdisciplinary symbiosis with non-philosophical reflection on communication, including with psychology, sociology, and media studies (Sierocka, 2021).

The formula of philosophy that should be defined as communication philosophy is significantly different from philosophy of communication; it is simply characterized by a specific method, a particular way of approaching philosophical research in general (“what” this philosophy is, how it is “practiced”). And it is philosophy of which the main theoretical message obliges us to conceptualize all classical issues of an ontological, epistemological, or ethical nature (to mention only the classical trinity of philosophical subdisciplines) by means of their inalienable involvement in the sphere of communication and with the use of specific theoretical and communication tools, and thus, to put it briefly, in relation to the “communicative *a priori*” (Apel, 1973; Sierocka, 2003, 2021). This directive stems directly from the recognition, fundamental for this philosophy, that the communicative dimension is situated at the base of social existence, outlines the framework for the constitution of knowledge, and determines the content of normative systems, and consequently gains importance in all other spheres encompassed by philosophical reflection. Communication philosophy, as an original way of philosophical thinking, establishes new horizons of interpretation and proposes a new paradigm of practicing philosophy, unequivocally distinct from the “mentalist paradigm” that dominated in philosophy from modern times to the 20th century (Martens and Schnädelbach, 1985); however, it definitely exceeds the linguistic approach (Sierocka, 2021).

Transcendental pragmatics (TP) constitutes a particularly consistent and coherent implementation of this paradigm. Its structure was conceived by its creator, Karl Otto Apel, as a transformation of the Kantian project: on the one hand it inherits a predilection for transcendentalism, apriorism, and fundamentalism from Kantianism, while on the other hand it uses the most valuable traces of philosophy of the 20th century, creatively reconciling the seemingly incomprehensible threads of the philosophy of Peirce, Gadamer, Wittgenstein, and Heidegger. The prime principle of this structure, precisely as in communication philosophy, is the idea of communicative *a priori*.

A complete reconstruction of this concept is not feasible here. It is impractical to present the principal assumptions and decisions, to say nothing of the argumentation, that leads to them—in this regard, reference should be made

to already existing literature (Apel, 1973; Kuhlmann, 1985, Sierocka 2003 and 2021). Instead, due to the specificity of the questions formulated here, it shall be sufficient to refer only to the two problem areas that are critical for transcendental-pragmatic philosophy. The first is determined by the concept of discursive rationality and the latter by the concept of the ethics of co-responsibility, or more precisely by the principle of co-responsibility that organizes it. These are not inseparable areas, nor are they separated from other crucial ideas of this philosophy; however, the focus of this paper is not on the reconstruction of their interrelationships and references. It is important only to grasp, at least in general terms, how they enable the implementation of the three tasks suggested here, that is, to what degree they enable justifying the necessity of the new *paideia* project, for its legitimation, and for designating the tools essential for it. Simultaneously, it is also crucial to discern in what way, in the context of each of these tasks and due to each of the two problem areas indicated, the *paideia* project is enriched with new, significant, and valid content.

Discursive Rationality

The specificity of TP as communication philosophy determines its original approach to all traditional philosophical problems, including the issue of rationality. The question of rationality itself, however, does not contradict the philosophical tradition, even though it is a specific and multidimensional question. In the most general terms, it is not a question about what we think about the world, ourselves, and our functioning in the world, among others. Nor is it a question about our comprehensive view of the world (even though rationality is manifested ultimately in this content). It is a question about how and in what way we think about it; how and according to what patterns we organize reality and our relations with it as well as our social behavior; and according to what principles, in what way, and based on what we create the meaning and assign goals. It is also a question of what the evaluation mechanisms are, what the assessment matrices are and from where they come, and what methods we use to sanction, legitimize, or justify certain social behaviors and actions. Therefore, the question about rationality is not so much about what we know as in what way we shape this knowledge, what intellectual ways we use to make the world understandable. It is not about how we act or how we behave, but how our knowledge justifies and legitimizes these behaviors and how it makes them understandable. Thus, in most general terms, rationality is a coherent, complex, intellectual “mastering” of reality, determining our way of functioning in it.

In reflecting on rationality, TP *de facto* precisely refers to such questions that remain in line with the extensive philosophical tradition. Nonetheless, its responses to these questions break with this tradition, which has its source in the idea of communicative *a priori* fundamental for TP. On the grounds of this idea, it becomes crucial to recognize that the conditions of the constitution of rationality are determined by the fundamental structure of the communication relation, the specificity of which results in turn from the performative-propositional unity of communication acts. And it is precisely this dual nature of the structure of the linguistic communication act and its constitutive self-relevance that ultimately determine that it is essentially argumentative and that—which is of the utmost importance here and is shown by TP through the so-called “strict reflection”—the argumentative situation is uncircumventable (German: *unhintergebar*). This means, if we look at these dependencies in terms of the normative dimension, that the postulate “argue rationally” acquires the rank of a categorical imperative and as such implies a specific complex of ethical principles. And human rationality is subordinated to this imperative.

Nonetheless, this situation might appear not to be entirely understandable, and its reconstruction a little unconvincing, unless it is considered that it is a specific type of argumentation and, more precisely, the argumentation procedure refers not to the propositional layer of the linguistic act of communication but to the obligations, norms, and claims brought in its performative layer. Each of these obligations, norms, and claims may be problematized, objected to, and questioned. All this is accomplished through the argumentation procedures which—in relation to the dual structure of linguistic acts of communication—also bring argumentation regarding the claims, norms, and obligations immanent in each act of communication in the performative layer. One cannot avoid being involved in this argumentation procedure. This situation is referred to as discursiveness, and this specific type of argumentation, that is, one that is directed at presuppositions brought about by the acts of communication, is referred to as discursive argumentation. According to TP, the fundamental circumstance that discursive argumentation is not one of many possible linguistic communication games, but that instead it is a game with special status, is a particularly important supplement to its characteristics. It is a transcendental game, one that determines the *a priori* conditions for the possibility of every other game, and consequently the conditions for the possibility of communication in general. And in this sense it is a constitutive game for human rationality, thus determining that human

rationality has an inalienable discursive character—it is discursive rationality.³

This implies that every circumstance that threatens discursiveness, and somewhat obstructs the possibility of argumentative problematization of presuppositions (norms, claims, and obligations) that are implicitly introduced in communication processes, and thus prevents the argumentative construction of the formal conditions for the possibility of communication acts—each such circumstance is also a threat to rationality. It contributes to its deformation, destroys its coherence, thwarts its intentions and guiding values, and by appearing in certain specific constellations, leads to its degradation. All this poses a very serious threat to the social stability of the world. We know perfectly well that history—including the most recent—has experienced several such dramatic crises, and we also know from multifold attempts to diagnose them the degree to which these disturbances of the social world have been coupled with crises of rationality. The indication that the level of discursiveness is responsible for the stability of rationality in the most profound dimension constitutes a vital elaboration of these diagnoses, one that is only possible due to communication philosophy. Its obvious consequence is the recognition that the rigor of discursiveness is—resulting from the formal characteristics of communication processes—a condition for establishing and maintaining relationships and social processes. And, adopting another (consciously pompous) tone, it is a condition for the existence of the human world; it is, as Apel phrased it, a guarantor of “the survival of the human species as a real communication community” (Apel, 1973).

³ In procedural terms, according to TP, there are five levels of rationality: (1) mathematical and logical rationality, (2) technical and scientific rationality, (3) strategic rationality, (4) consensual and communicative rationality, and (5) discursive rationality (Apel, 1986). In order to entirely and adequately diagnose the condition of contemporary rationality—and as part of this diagnosis, also to comprehensively assess the threats of communicative aggression—it is necessary to refer to each of these levels, with particular emphasis on the specific tension between discursive rationality and strategic rationality (and its specific instrumental attitude). The analyses of mental determinants of aggression, related to both media and traditional aggression, remain equally crucial for this type of diagnosis. Nonetheless, these are tasks that go beyond the scope of the presented article, as it focuses solely on proving that the recognition by communication philosophy of the fundamental threat to the social world posed by aggression in the megamedia space (1) results from the fact that this philosophy perceives that discursiveness outlines the transcendental framework of human rationality and (2) obliges philosophy to legitimize the new project of *paideia* founded on the ethical principle of co-responsibility and “upholding” the rigor of discursiveness.

In this observation, it is explicitly “perceptible” that the rigor of discursiveness is also a *task*. That discursiveness as a “transcendental function of reason” (Apel, 1996) is not so much given to us as it is precisely assigned—given to us as a communication community. We must learn discursiveness and develop it in ourselves; we must be able to “nurture” it—requiring us to shape all dimensions of social functioning. It is a task of such “specific gravity” that only the comprehensive *paideia* project can deal with it. Only within such a project is there a chance to subordinate the entire complexity of the social world to the requirements of discursive rationality, while at the same time also developing individual competences required to internalize these requirements so that the rigor of discursiveness can define the horizon of both individual and community activities.

Communication philosophy—analyses of which reveal the specificity and the most important rank of discursive rationality— must thus bear the burden of determining the theoretical framework for the *paideia* project, which would serve the requirements resulting from discursiveness. This philosophy somewhat imposes the utmost duty on itself. This stems from the recognition that the counterfactual status of discursiveness imposes an absolute necessity to immerse in it, gradually take responsibility for it, and shape the skills, relevant competences, attitudes, and even needs that favor it. All these tasks are necessary elements that constitute a comprehensive *paideia* project—one whose main message will be the shaping of discursive rationality.

The Principle of Co-Responsibility

The fact that such a project is not only possible, recommended, and appropriate, but also indispensable, is determined by—apart from the rigor of discursiveness—two other substantial circumstances: the universal validity of the principle of co-responsibility and the exceptional threat that currently affects discursive rationality.

The principle of co-responsibility, as TP us permits to recognize (Apel, 2001; Sierocka, 2003), appears to be the norm underlying the ethical system, the universal validity of which stems directly from the fundamental characteristics of communicative rationality, that is, from its discursiveness. Thus, it is decisive that this ethics, with its overriding principle, is constituted by means of and within a real communication community. The duty of co-responsibility is already revealed at the level of mutualistic ties that bind the participants of the simplest act of communication cooperation and, simultaneously, it is significantly correlated

with the phenomenon of co-intentionality, which distinguishes interhuman communication from all other forms of communication (Tomasello, 1999). As such, this duty obliges all participants of the actually realized communication process to constantly strive to overcome the difference between the real communication community and the counterfactually anticipated ideal form of it. The terms “ideal communication community” or “unlimited communication community” are synonyms of a situation in which there is a consensual agreement on all claims, obligations, and the resulting norms brought in communication processes. This is a *definitive consensus* on all presuppositions of communication cooperation. This possible consensus—as a state of the ideal communication community—constitutes a regulative idea immanently present in every act of communication, an idea inscribed in the conditions of the possibility of every communication relation. Efforts to maintain these conditions—including ensuring the conditions for the implementation of the idea of the consensus—are dictated by the constant tension between the real and ideal communication community. As such, these efforts are obligatory for every participant of communication processes. Each of them is obliged to cooperate with others within this scope. Communication processes are essentially aimed at *cooperation*. They are indispensably cooperative, always a joint communication activity—and, simultaneously, cooperation shapes co-intentionally. Concurrently, cooperation does not amount to the fact that the content of the communication act must be addressed to a partner or a group of partners, that the message is passed between the sender and the receiver, or that an agreement as to the communicated content is achieved through a shared interpretative effort. Cooperation in communication is much more: It is sharing common consensually established communication intentions, their co-creation, the shared shaping of the conditions for the anticipated consensus, as well as the joint guidelines of its scope, the joint consensual building of the space for discursiveness, and, finally, maintaining the indispensable, subtle tension between the real and ideal communication community (Sierocka, 2021).

Everyone jointly bears responsibility for the effort to implement cooperation understood this way. It is a requirement resulting from participation in the communication community (the real one), and, concurrently, it is the requirement that maintains this community. There is no superior authority that would bear responsibility for (or onto which it could be shifted) ensuring the conditions for the possibility of communication cooperation—even though this does not imply that the entities participating in communication processes establish these conditions. These conditions are of *a priori* nature. As such, they determine

the *transcendental* framework of communication processes and remain invariably *counterfactual* in character—and, at the same time, they are distinguished by such a special property that, being the formal conditions, they impose certain (always relevant) contents. And it is their special status (parallel to that which, according to Kant, belong to the fundamental knowledge-creating structures) that makes the principle of co-responsibility imperative—as a principle without which it is impossible to shape and maintain the conditions indispensable for communication cooperation, including the conditions due to which it is possible to strive for the consensus. Without the principle of co-responsibility—which is already visible in the broadest perspective—we are missing a chance to maintain the stability of the communication community, and even the chance for its survival.

And we can only secure this chance—or at least hope to acquire it—by assuming conscious co-responsibility for maintaining *the rigor of discursiveness*. And not only in the scope of individual communication events, but equally within global communication, particularly that which is possible and realized in the media space nowadays. And in this space, the principle of co-responsibility gains an additional, new meaning.

Communicative Aggression in the Megamedia Space

This occurs because discursive rationality is exposed to the dangers of the unprecedented “force of destruction” (even though it also gains opportunities that it has never been given before) in the megamedia space. The list of threats related to the development of communication realized in the media space is widely known, and it appears to be undoubtedly sinister. Nonetheless, the importance of these threats is not always recognized. Yet, it is not always apparent how serious the emerging consequences will be. And in certain cases, these consequences seem to be immensely dramatic, which can be somewhat forecasted today. Communicative aggression is undoubtedly one of the most serious threats faced by communication in the media space (namely that which, due to its new, specific characteristics, is legitimately referred to as *megamedia communication* (Sierocka, 2021)). And it is a phenomenon that, as I have already announced, strongly encourages, and even forces, the undertaking of efforts to develop the new *paideia* project, based on the principle of co-responsibility and the overriding goal of shaping towards discursive rationality.

The analysis of relations and communication processes, undertaken through tools and solutions developed on the basis of transcendental pragmatics, undoubtedly reveals that although aggression observed in communication

mediated by today's media principally does not differ in its forms from so-called traditional communicative aggression (that is, the one we experience in communication outside the sphere of media communication), there is a fundamental difference in their consequences. Nonetheless, this difference is not dictated by any distinctive feature which can be attributed to aggression experienced today in the media space (Pyżalski, 2012). The only thing that can be indicated are the characteristics that somewhat intensify this aggression. In existing literature on the subject, the features most emphasized in this context are the anonymity of the perpetrator of aggression (most often the anonymity of an internet nickname) (Christopherson, 2007; Bernstein et al., 2011; Shepherd et al., 2015) and the related phenomenon of deindividuation (Postmes et al., 1998; Lee, 2007), as well as the noted disinhibition effect (Suler, 2004; Joinson, 1998). Anonymity is also credited with having a principal role in enhancing the manifestations of hate speech (Shepherd et al., 2015). Furthermore, the situation referred to as the "cockpit effect" is considered a phenomenon related to anonymity (Heirman et al., 2008). Finally, it is also observed that the effectiveness of acts of aggression is significantly influenced by the characteristics known as "unsinkability," that is, the impossibility to prevent the content reaching the media space, as well as the related phenomenon of universal and permanent availability of both the object (victim) of aggression and the act itself. Nonetheless, none of these features can be assigned a distinctive character—each of them somewhat contributes also to acts of traditional aggression (Pyżalski, 2012).

From where did the conviction about the special consequences that would be associated with aggression observed today in the media space stem? The crux of the matter is that the strength of this aggression and the scale of the mutilation suffered by discursive rationality together with the communication community are influenced not so much by its distinctive features as much as *the specific nature of today's digitized and networked media space* in which these acts of aggression take place. The specificity of this space, as well as communication within it—to which the term "megamedia" is conveniently and reasonably applied—can be easily grasped by comparing it with the characteristics of mass media communication. And this confrontation covers the following distinctions (the former part relates to mass media communication, and the latter to megamedia communication):

1. mass reception vs. tendencies for individualization and personalization
2. unidirectionality of the communication relation vs. reciprocity and multidimensionality
3. verticality of the communication relation vs. its horizontality (and diagonality)

4. “sender – receiver” relation vs. participation
5. passive reception vs. interactivity
6. linear structure of the transfer vs. hypertextual structure
7. conventionality and periodicity of transfer vs. randomness and spontaneity
8. distinctiveness of individual media vs. media convergence, transmediality, and multimedia
9. separation of production from marketing vs. unity of production and marketing
10. institutional production and distribution vs. non-institutional commitment
11. expert knowledge vs. collective knowledge
12. fourth power vs. fifth power.

In addition, there are many other specific features and phenomena of the megamedia world, among which the most salient are:

1. unprecedented media ubiquity
2. unprecedented media availability
3. unprecedented equality in access to knowledge and creation
4. unprecedented multiplication and diversity of communication events in the mediasphere (Sierocka, 2021).

This list requires many addendums and explanations to be fully understood (their initial presentation was included in Sierocka 2018 and 2021); however, even such a concise presentation allows for noting a special constellation created by the characteristics of megamedia communication. Simultaneously, it is essential to remember the manner in which Alvin Toffler (1980) taught us to think about the change and emergence of new realities (new epochs). What is new comes like a wave, a wave that washes away and takes—and does not simply push away and eliminate—what is past and old. The complex of consequences resulting from such an approach also entirely applies to the opposition suggested here: “mass media communication—megamedia communication.” Nonetheless, these issues require separate analyses, with the focus of the present article here solely on the question of what realities are “generated” by this wave of megamedia communication and what it exposes us to when we are faced with the phenomenon of communicative aggression.

Among the whole range of consequences that arise from the transformations of today’s media sphere, two factors are of the utmost importance in the face of acts of communicative aggression. Primarily, the very status of communication is changing due to the megamedia space—or strictly due to its

characteristics distinguished here. The argument is that it is only in this space that media communication becomes real communication cooperation. And only megamediality makes possible relations, processes, and actions in the media space that determine authentic—and thus precisely encompassing all its constitutive aspects—communication⁴ (Sierocka, 2021). And what is equally significant: it becomes evident that such processes could not take place on the ground of mass media communication. Paradoxically, classic, analog mass media—*analog books, press, radio, television*—did not allow for real communication relations. They gave no opportunity for authentic communication cooperation. Relations and communication events were in fact deformed within the mass media arena—and at best were only a substitute for real communication processes. As we know, this did not prevent mass media from gaining tremendous reach and an equally enormous impact at an incredibly fast pace. It also did not prevent their “imperfect” and “apparent” communication from strengthening the role and participation of the media in consolidating (or even constructing) such serious and dramatic phenomena as the omnipotent commercialization of all aspects of culture and social reality, as well as—even more dramatic in its consequences—the triumph of the genocidal ideologies of the 20th century. This aspect, that is, the ominous force that is hidden in these “imperfections” of mass media communication, also requires separate analyses. Here, it is only essential to point to a fundamental change that occurs within today’s media space, namely the change that ultimately stems from the fact that for the first time this space becomes a stage of real communication and, consequently, a stage for the constitution of relations, events, social processes, and institutions—precisely as in the case of non-media-mediated communication processes. Such shifts constitute changes with consequences that may not be predicted yet—even though they are clearly visible in the context of aggression.

This entirely new situation overlaps with another important circumstance, which has a fundamental impact on the force of destruction of communicative aggression. Moreover, it is a circumstance that is already commonly observed and, simultaneously, almost universally accepted. When discussing it, it is useful to reference the phrase “real virtuality” introduced by Paul Levinson (Levinson

⁴ Understanding of communication is based on the definition proposed in (Sierocka 2016 and 2021), according to which “*communication is co-intentionally shaped and figuratively mediated cooperation in regulating behaviors, shaping and maintaining social bonds, expression transfer, exchanging information, evoking sensations and emotions, and co-shaping norms, knowledge and social institutions.*”

2009). This is a term that can be entirely applied to the megamedia space as a dimension to which the functioning of a real communication community is transferring today—or has already moved to a significant degree. Today, it would be difficult to find aspects of its functioning that have not been incorporated in the networked and digitalized world to some degree. The analysis of these processes is another important, and already intensively implemented, research objective, and is again a task that is too extensive for the presented article, therefore a reference to the literature on the subject (Castells, 2001) must suffice.

On the other hand, in the context of communicative aggression, it is essential to note that the two circumstances listed here significantly complement one another, and that processes, events, and communication relations are shaped in a new, previously unknown manner in this “symbiosis.”

Due to the fact that communication processes *par excellence* take place in the media space (already as a megamedia space) and, simultaneously, due to the *total* character of megamedia communication (that is, its presence in all spheres and dimensions of the contemporary world) and its *global* scope (that is, the availability of communication events without time and space constraints), a kind of globalization and totalization of all structural aspects of the act of communication occurs, namely—to be concise—all those aspects that ultimately determine the rigor of discursiveness. And all of them—as in the case of “traditional” (that is, realized outside the media sphere) communication processes—are exposed to the destructive influence of communicative aggression. Nonetheless, the primary fact is that it is precisely within the megamedia space that this influence notably gains strength, and the acts of aggression themselves (as specific communication acts) are also subject to totalization and globalization.

The Consensus as the Essence of Communication Cooperation

It appears that, in light of how TP conceptualizes communication processes, the acts of aggression destroying claims and obligations that condition the very possibility of communication should be considered the greatest threat. The effects of this type of aggression are severe and often dramatic—particularly in view of their increasing scale. Nonetheless, these presuppositions—that is, all validity claims and the norms resulting from them, such as obligations to partnership, equal scope of freedom, subjective treatment, autonomy in evaluating, dignity, and intellectual coherence—as counterfactuals, may invariably be subject to attempts at restitution. Within the real communication community, efforts can be made to rebuild them. Ultimately, and this is of the utmost importance—

this rebuilding always takes place under one fundamental condition: It can only be effectuated when the members of this community share the pursuit of the consensus (and therefore act with the *conviction that obtaining consensus as to the formal conditions for the possibility of relations and communication processes is possible*), and consequently, they assume co-responsibility for the implementation of the idea of the consensus.

Sustaining this condition is a guarantor of maintaining the rigor of discursiveness. Thus, it is a guarantor of the cohesion of the communication community. Nonetheless, sustaining it becomes impossible in the face of the totalized and globalized acts of communicative aggression. Their deepest consequence is the irreversible destruction of the idea of the consensus. In the megamedia space, communication falls into a dramatic trap: It is here that the fundamental communication processes are realized (or will be realized) and real communication relations are initiated (and will be initiated). However, simultaneously, the force of communicative aggression destroys the very foundations of communication as co-intentionally shaped cooperation conditioned by aiming at the consensus. In this space, totalized aggression shatters and obstructs the pursuit of the consensus; it destroys indispensable trust in it, namely trust in the possibility of realizing communication processes. And the totalized character of megamedia communication gradually excludes the possibility of any asylum that would allow for the reconstruction of this pursuit of protecting the idea of the consensus. Thus, the chance to restore the violated presuppositions is lost, and so is the chance to implement the “natural” course of communication processes, which requires spreading them along the “real-ideal communication community” line. Only in this mode can the community manage to stay within rationality. Meanwhile, obstructing the idea of the consensus, which determines communication cooperation, disrupts these processes and makes the “real-ideal communication community” game—a constitutive game for discursive rationality—unfeasible.

Today it is required to talk (and write) about the catastrophic consequences of this situation in an equally pompous and dramatic tone as when discussing the problem of natural environment devastation. The devastation of communicative rationality as the binder of our sociosphere heralds a scale of threats similar to that which is already clearly visible within our biosphere. This forces a decisive reaction. On the one hand it requires a reliable diagnosis of the situation, while on the other hand it unconditionally obliges us to undertake real, practical action. This diagnosis—a task assumed by TP communication philosophy—is

a concept which, with its analyses and decisions, provides reasons, sanctions, and legitimation for new *paideia*, and at the same time, constitutes a source of the most essential theoretical tools for it. And the implementation of the crucial actions is entrusted by it to the *paideia* project itself, a project without which it is impossible to prevent the destruction of our rationality—as that special sphere that is constituted within the communication community, and which establishes this community. Engaging in participation in this community, instilling knowledge about its fundamental conditions and, at the same time, shaping the ability to utilize this knowledge, shaping the attitude of co-responsibility and shaping towards discursive rationality—these are the most important objectives, the implementation of which must be assumed by *paideia* in the face of the condition of today's communication space. And both of these tasks—the diagnosis of the condition of our rationality and the construction of the theoretical framework for the project of new *paideia*—are today one of the most valuable (albeit certainly not the only one) responses to the question: “Why philosophy?”

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