A PLEA FOR TRANSCENDENTAL PHILOSOPHY*

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Abstract

This article makes a plea for transcendental philosophy because of the author´s conviction that a reformed and improved form of what Kant left us behind as transcendental philosophy, but which nevertheless still deserves the name of "transcendental philosophy", provides the only possibility of solving the most urgent problem, namely the problem of how meaningful philosophy is still possible under the conditions of the presently dominant, philosophical views of radical fallibilism, radical historicism, and radical holism. It begins with a presentation the mentioned problem, and follows on with an outline of what is es the fundamental idea of Kantian transcendental philosophy. Finally Transcendental-Pragmatics is presented as a specifically improved form of transcendental philosophy.

Key Words: transcendental philosophy, Kant, radical fallibilism, transcendental-pragmatics

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* Translated by Michael Walschots

"Why transcendental philosophy? Why should one concede an important role to transcendental philosophy in the present situation of philosophy?" My answer is: "I am making a plea for transcendental philosophy because I am convinced that a reformed and, I believe, improved form of what Kant left us behind as transcendental philosophy, but which nevertheless still deserves the name of "transcendental philosophy", provides the only possibility of solving the, in my eyes, most urgent problem, namely the problem of how meaningful philosophy is still possible under the conditions of the presently dominant, philosophical views of radical fallibilism, radical historicism, and radical holism."

The following article[1] intends to elaborate on and to give reasons for this answer. Accordingly, I will proceed such that I first present the mentioned problem (I), then I outline what is in my eyes the fundamental idea of Kantian transcendental philosophy (II) and finally – in the longest section – I present Transcendental-Pragmatics as a specifically improved form of transcendental philosophy (III).

I

The problem: fallibilism, historicism, and holism are positions[2] that essentially first established themselves in recent times, i.e. towards the end of the 19th and in the 20th century. In the first instance they are connected to philosophy of science and are restricted to the synthetic statements of the empirical disciplines. Fallibilism claims that all synthetic statements of the empirical disciplines can turn out to be false. Historicism claims that all synthetic statements of the empirical disciplines are in the end dependent upon historical

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[1] In this paper I try to give a summary of a philosophical conception/position firstly introduced by K.-O. Apel called "Transcendental-pragmatics" (Transzedentalpragmatik) a summary that at the same time makes it clear how this – admittedly unorthodox – variant of transcendental philosophy is related to classical transcendental philosophy. Transcendental-pragmatics is a project I have been working on for quite some time. I want to point out in particular the following: with such a summary description it is not possible to present only the most recent thoughts and ideas of this research, rather it is unavoidable that also things that have already been researched and published will be presented. If no particular reason suggests itself to improve older formulations, I simply adopted them in the text.

[2] In many essential respects the positions are parallel. For the sake of brevity, in the following we will focus on only the first two.

languages, whose suitability for reality can never be conclusively demonstrated. Holism stands for the fact that in order for one to be able securely to know something specific within the bounds of a particular discipline, one must already and securely know everything within this discipline, strictly speaking. -

For these – very rational, I think – theses, extremely strong evidence can be provided by scientific practice, from the history of science and from the philosophy of science.

Over time, out of the moderate theses of the simple forms of fallibilism, historicism and holism the much stronger claims of *radical* fallibilism, historicism, and holism developed. The difference between the two consists in the fact that the latter abolish the restriction to the scope of empirical disciplines. Fallibilism, historicism, and holism now apply to *all* synthetic statements. There are good reasons for this development, and the transition appears to be almost unavoidable: 1. The doubt that is constitutive of these positions is very weak and with regards to content entirely undetermined. A merely possible doubt is brought forward that can be opposed to almost anything. In the first instance it is indeed very unclear – why synthetic statements of a particular kind should be able to escape the general risk eventually to become falsified. 2. It is unclear how statements can be defended against merely possible – and as far as the specific content is concerned - not yet available doubts. It is unclear, how synthetic knowledge (in the strong sense) could be identified definitely here and now. 3. To the virtue of "scientific honesty" belongs the idea of disclosing all objections that can be brought forward against claims of validity. – In the meantime the arguments of radical fallibilism, historicism, and holism virtually became part of everyday life in the "scientific community." They basically constitute the modern scientist's attitude towards life.

What is the real meaning of these positions or what do they come down to? The main point is this: according to these positions, *at no point* is there *material knowledge* (in the strong sense) that we can here and now identify as such. At no point are material truths available to us, upon which we can legitimately depend. – To what extent is this a dramatic problem that is threatening to philosophy and science? To what extent must this function as an important problem even for a fallibilist (himself) – since we have just professed our belief in fallibilism.

Even the simple forms of fallibilism, historicism, and holism do not make it easy to understand science as something really capable of progress. If *all* of the synthetic statements of a discipline, and/or if all with which we can support or undermine synthetic statements of a discipline are mere suppositions, and also permanently remain as such, then it is not at all easy to see how the "secure road of science"(Kant) should be possible. But the simple forms admittedly allow infallibility on the meta-level with respect to statements concerning procedures and standards of science. Here one could rely on something like *knowledge* in the strong sense and therefore count on invariant standards and procedures that could make possible something like progress. -

In comparison, we get really serious problems if we assume the right of *radical* fallibilism and at the same time – for instance in the role of an epistemologist – not only explicitly consider the level of the (synthetic) output of science but also the levels for instance of the formal presuppositions of scientific research, presuppositions concerning standards and procedures of research, i.e. the meta-levels or levels of reflection. (As philosophers we are obligated to consider these levels too, philosophy has no meta-discipline to which we can pass along our meta-problems. Philosophy is its own meta-discipline.) Then we arrive, first, at (1) the problem that the epistemologist must notice the following: if fallibilism is also valid for the level of the epistemology itself then the traditional goals of epistemology no longer make sense: the pursuit of the removal of dogmatism, and the obstruction of the sources of error (Kant). If the epistemologist (in a Kantian sense) can no longer be sure of his instruments, then he is also unable to be sure that, instead of definitely abolishing dogmatism, he in fact does not promote effectively dogmatism on a grand scale. – Even more important is the following problem (2). If he makes clear to himself that radical fallibilism concerns both the output of the relevant research practice itself, as well as the higher-level claims or assumptions concerning the standards und procedures of that practice, then it cannot remain hidden to him that the ideas of progress that are constitutive of science are seriously threatened by critique and correction, this means: by change. If he cannot be sure that his convictions concerning the goals, standards, and procedures of science are the right ones, that he is following the correct standards as a scientist, then every step forward in the sense of the factually

recognized standards at the time can even be, in truth, a step backwards in the sense of the correct standards – and this means   the confirmation or reinforcement of false standards. He than cannot exclude the possibility that his endeavours lead in the wrong direction.[3] – The situation is intensified once again with the following problem (3): if the epistemologist makes clear to himself what has just been said, then he also sees that under the conditions of radical fallibilism there is no way out of this ugly situation. He cannot meaningfully try to find the correct way, the correct standards etc., or the way out, via research (of whatever kind). He would only be in the position of meaningful research, if he were to already have what can only be achieved through such research.

The problem therefore most essentially consist in the following: radical fallibilism, radical historicism and radical holism have presently prevailed almost everywhere as background assumptions in philosophy and science. There are of course very good reasons for these assumptions. But if one assumes them, then one gets involved in the following problem: how can one practice meaningful philosophy (and science) in a situation, in which there is nothing secure on any level and in which, therefore – strictly speaking - the concepts of "progress", "critique" and "correction" have in the end lost their meaning?

II

How philosophy (metaphysics) is meaningfully possible is, as is well known, the official leading question of the "Critique of Pure Reason", i.e. of the official founding document of modern transcendental philosophy.[4] Kant himself understood his conception as an answer to a situation which he experienced as

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[3] Further problems that are related to this one, i.e. that on no level is knowledge accessible, are the following: radical fallibilism must take account of the fact that the final standards of the performance of reason change as well. This would have the implausible consequence that the history of reason, to which we indeed belong, would have to be known as a chain of epochs of reason that are incommensurable with one another. And on the other hand this would have the – similarly implausible – consequence that the particular output of such epochs – ours as well of course – could and must be relativized to the particular epoch they stem from.

[4] Cf.: W. Kuhlmann: Kant, Rohs und die Transzendentalpragmatik, in: Ders.: Unhintergehbarkeit. Studien zur Transzendentalpragmatik, Würzburg 2009, S. 150ff.

dramatic and unusual: there are no universally valid foundations, no objective methods and no universally accepted criteria. "For in [metaphysics] reason continually gets stuck … In metaphysics we have to retrace our path countless times, because we find that it does not lead where we want to go, and it is so far from reaching unanimity in the assertions of its adherents that it is rather a battlefield, … on this battlefield no combatant has ever gained the least bit of ground, nor has any been able to base any lasting possession on his victory." [5] On the basis of this diagnosis Kant recommends seemingly *radical measures*. He claims, "that it is unavoidably necessary to suspend the work for the present, to consider all that has happened until now as if it had not happened, and before all else to pose the question: "whether such a thing as metaphysics is even possible at all."" [6]

With this Kant recommends a pre-investigation to real philosophy (metaphysics), a pre-investigation that later, of course, turns out to be and prevails as a model for philosophy in general. Here philosophy gets the form of a critique of reason, of an essentially reflexive discipline, in which it has to do with the theoretical investigation of reason and of rational subjectivity. Kant understands the critique of reason as a theoretical investigation of reason *from a practical point of view*. This means it is not only a theoretical undertaking for him, rather it is at the same time a juridical process, in which it has less to do with quaestiones facti than with quaestiones iuris. Kant compares it to a "court of justice, by which reason may secure its rightful claims while dismissing all its groundless pretensions [of the dogmatist or the sceptic W.K]."[7]

That the categorisation of his undertaking as a court of justice, as a *critique* of knowledge in opposition to a mere *theory* of knowledge, is for Kant himself not casual and coincidental, but essential and central, this becomes clear with the (extreme) demands that he continually makes on the realization of the project. The most important is that of *certainty*: Kant claims, "that in this kind of inquiry it is in no way allowed to hold (mere) opinions, and that anything that even looks like an hypothesis is a forbidden commodity."[8] Closely related to this

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[5] Critique of Pure Reason (Akademie-Edition) Bd. III, BXIV f.

[6] Prolegomena (Akademie-Edition) Bd. IV, S. 255.

[7] CPR, ibid., AXI f.

[8] ibid., AXV.

is the demand of *completeness*. As long as the critical investigation is not complete, i.e. possible sources of error remain unexplored, the investigation is worthless, one can throw it away.[9] The third demand is that the undertaking must *soon* be *concluded*. "Now metaphysics, according to the concepts we will give of it here, is the only one of all the sciences that may promise such a completion, and even in a short time and with little but unified effort" [10] - If the critique of reason is understood as a *theory* of knowledge, as a mere theoretical undertaking for the satisfaction of theoretical curiosity concerning the nature and function of our rational capacity, then it does not make sense that from day one absolute certainty, completeness, and a quick conclusion must be insisted upon, for then the "secure way of the sciences" qua converging research process in the long run would indeed not be meaningless. But if the critique of reason is understood as a *critique* of knowledge, as an undertaking which, from the start, "obstructs the sources of error", which puts real cognition on the right track, sets boundaries and points the way ahead, i.e. if it is understood as an undertaking, upon which all other cognition depends and is of a kind such that, for the moment, everything else must be set aside until this undertaking is brought to an end, then the above named demands *must* be bound to such an undertaking because otherwise it would be pointless. And only if all of these demands can be fulfilled *together* can one, with the help of the critique of reason, have good prospects of confronting the sceptic, who – faced only with a *theory* of knowledge that would not exhibit these features – in fact would be able to remain indifferent. Scepticism that is aimed at *all* theory cannot, of course, be driven away with *any kind* of new theory whatsoever. Kant does not neglect to point out that the particular kind of object of inquiry in fact allows the high demands of the undertaking to be fulfilled. "For it is nothing but the inventory of all we possess through pure reason, ordered systematically. Nothing here can escape us, because what reason brings forth entirely out of itself cannot be hidden, but is brought to light by reason itself as soon as reason's common principle has been discovered."[11]

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[9] Ibid., AXIII and Prolegomena, ibid., S. 263.

[10] Ibid., AXX. [translation modified.]

[11] Ibid., AXX and Prolegomena, ibid., S. 263

As is well known the elements of this – conflicting – project are the following: The leading question: 'how is metaphysics possible?' is translated into the question of the possibility of true synthetic judgements a priori. And this question is answered in the sense of the idea of the second Copernican turn, not such that cognition has to conform to the constitution of objects, rather such that in a certain sense the objects have to conform to the constitution of our cognition.[12] Experience, through which we know of reality, is understood as a procedure, by which reality, the way it is, is turned into appearance for us. This means inter alia, that reality in this manner can show itself, just the way it is, even against our – perhaps false – expectations. At the same time, reality can only become appearance for us if it complies with the procedure of turning itself into appearance. This means in order to be able to offer this resistance it must in certain respects submit itself to our subjective/intersubjective procedure of turning things into appearances. But by this procedure in which sensibility and reason, the forms of intuition, concepts, and principles are involved, we prescribe certain laws to reality, and what we prescribe to it, namely the form that reality must have so that it corresponds to the procedure (so that it can appear as something for us) this can be known independently of experience and can be expressed in synthetic judgements a priori, in "principles of the understanding" (Grundsätze). So synthetic judgements a priori are justified as necessary conditions for valid judgements of experience and at the same time as conditions of the possibility of objects in experience. – The procedure at issue here is complex but transparent: Kant distinguishes first between the two stems of cognition that are involved in the "principles of the understanding" (Grundsätze), i.e. between sensibility and the understanding. He then shows that the principles of these stems of cognition, the forms of intuition and the categories, are in fact a priori principles. This occurs in the so-called metaphysical deductions of space, time, and the categories. The third step provides the evidence – again separate for all of the elements – that without these a priori principles experience of objects is not possible. This occurs in the so-called transcendental deductions of space, time, and the categories. The fourth step, finally, is the transcendental deduction of the "principles of the

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[12] Ibid., BXVIf.

understanding" (Grundsätze), i.e. the proof, that without these principles objectively valid experience is not possible. Kant can refrain from a separate metaphysical deduction here because this was already given for the constitutive elements of the "principles of the understanding". – The decisive point of all of this is that synthetic judgements a priori, the "principles of understanding", are proved to be possible, by an argument which shows: they are necessary conditions for something extremely important, for such a thing that we practically cannot give up: There must be valid synthetic judgements a priori because otherwise experience, which underlies the natural sciences, would not be possible. – At the same time this kind of justification furnishes a radical, and critical limitation of metaphysics, for it indeed turns out that only such synthetic judgements a priori can be justified which turn out to be necessary means for the construction of experience or of reality as it exists as appearance, and therefore belong to the metaphysical foundations of natural science.

All in all I consider the decisive features of the procedure of transcendental philosophy to be the following: 1. It starts from a situation in which it is unclear whether and how in general philosophy, which is indeed not an empirical science, is meaningfully possible at all. 2. The question is asked: how is philosophy, philosophical knowledge, possible in general? 3. By reflection upon/ reflexive consideration upon our capacity of reason (Vernunft) it is shown that philosophical knowledge *must* be possible because it is, in a sense, indispensible for our epistemic household, because without philosophical knowledge of a particular type, synthetic judgements a priori, something so seriously incontestable like the possibility of experience, for which philosophical knowledge provides the necessary preconditions, could not be given. This means the reflexive consideration upon our capacity of reason leads in the end to something like a weak form of an Unhintergehbarkeitsargument, of an argument of non circumventability.[13]

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[13] This is an argument showing that x must count as a certain or assured insight, because we cannot reasonably circumvent or go behind x, i.e. we cannot doubt or contest it without selfcontradiction and we cannot justify or found it without petitio principii. By this argument x turns out to be something which we always already have presupposed as valid. The term "Unhintergehbarkeitsargument" can perhaps be translated by the expression: "argument of non circumventability".

Now, what can the addressee of the undertaking, the sceptic, answer to this? In my opinion, he can above all refer to two things. *On the one hand*, he can say that through the Kantian procedure it admittedly became more difficult to dispute the possibility of synthetic judgements a priori – whoever does so must also, which is hardly plausible, dispute the possibility of physics. But this hurdle is not high enough for a radical sceptic. The goal will indeed only be reached if the sceptic agrees to the decisive premises of the entire following claim: "experience in the sense of physics is possible". Whether he admits this qua radical sceptic no matter what is at the very least undetermined. *On the other hand* the sceptic can ask: is the trust that Kant places in transcendental reflection, in the procedure of reflexive self-enlightenment of reason, really justified? Do the convictions of the transcendental philosopher concerning the relations between experience and its conditions of possibility really have the status of knowledge (in the strong sense)? In what way can it be ensured that the mentioned high standards can be fulfilled here? – He can expand on this second point further via the remark that for the kind of philosophy that Kant de facto influentially asserted, philosophy which continues the project of the critique of reason, that for this philosophy the principles of the pure understanding are not particularly central at all. The synthetic judgements a priori that are really interesting in this philosophy are rather those that must be made use of in order to be able to write something like the Critique of Pure Reason, i.e. statements about the famous "conditions of the possibility…"

III

Now we arrive at Transcendental-Pragmatics. This is a position that was introduced by Karl-Otto Apel[14], and to which I have subscribed to for a long

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[14] Cf.: Apel, K.-O. (1973): Transformation der Philosophie, 2 Bde, Frankfurt am Main. Ders. (1974): Zur Idee einer transzendentalen Sprachpragmatik, in: Aspekte und Probleme der Sprachphilosophie, hg. v. J. Simon, Freiburg/München, 283-326. Ders. (1976b): Das Problem der philosophischen Letztbegründung im Lichte einer transzendentalen Sprachpragmatik, in: Kanitscheider, B. (Hg.): Sprache und Erkenntnis, Innsbruck, auch in: Apel, K.-O. (1998). Ders. (1987): Fallibilismus, Konsenstheorie der Wahrheit und Letztbegründung, in: Forum für Philosophie Bad Homburg (Hg.): Philosophie und Begründung, Frankfurt am Main, 116-211, auch in Apel (1998), 81-194. Ders. (1998): Auseinandersetzungen in Erprobung des

time.[15] By 'Transcendental-Pragmatics' I understand a radicalized and, compared with the Kantian model, a drastically altered form of transcendental philosophy. There are essentially *three changes*: 1. Out of the weak form of the Unhintergehbarkeitsargument[16] - one justifies philosophical knowledge showing that - qua necessary presupposition ("condition for the possibility") of scientific experience – it is very difficult to call this knowledge into question – a strong Unhintergehbarkeitsargument emerges - one justifies philosophical knowledge not as a presupposition for something that is difficult to dispute, but rather as a presupposition for something, behind which we clearly *cannot at all* go back on, i.e. as presupposition of the discourse. 2. The main instrument of the Kantian critique of reason, i.e. the theoretical reflection that Kant makes use of, an instrument that is easy to discredit from the point of view of fallibilism and historicism/hermeneutics, is replaced here essentially by so-called "strict reflection", the arguer's practical knowledge (know how) of his activity, i.e. a type of cognition that can much less easily be affected by the objections of fallibilism and hermeneutical historicism. 3. Out of the earlier solipsistic Kantian conception, according to which the critique of reason can be understood as an analysis of the competences of a single rational subject (i.e. of a single instantiation of reason), an inter-subjective conception emerges, according to which reason is understood as something that is essentially bound to communication (language) and interaction within a communicative community.

In the following we will first – and proceeding from the above-mentioned starting point – develop and characterize the basic idea of Transcendental-Pragmatics (A), and then come to the – in essence shorter – difficulties and objections (B), and at the end point to what the idea of Transcendental-Pragmatics is supposed to be good for (C).

(A)

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transzendentalpragmatischen Ansatzes, Frankfurt am Main. Ders. (2011): Paradigmen der Ersten Philosophie, Frankfurt am Main.

[15] Cf.: Kuhlmann, W.: Reflexive Letztbegründung, Freiburg/ München 1985. Ders.: Kant und die Transzendentalpragmatik, Würzburg 1992a. Ders.: Sprachphilosophie, Hermeneutik, Ethik, Würzburg 1992b. Ders.: Beiträge zur Diskursethik, Würzburg 2007. Ders.: Unhintergehbarkeit, Würzburg 2009.

[16] Cf. footnote 13.

(1) Transcendental-Pragmatics starts from a situation, in which the positions of radical fallibilism, radical historicism, and radical holism are the determining factors. This means: a) It is familiar with the strong evidence that speaks for fallibilism, historicism, and holism. b) For the time being it sees no reason for the idea, that certain assertions are except from the doubts of the radical fallibilism, historicism, and holism concerning their status as knowledge in the strong sense. It therefore starts with the assumption that there is no knowledge in the strong sense at all. c) It notices, however, that under these conditions meaningful philosophy (philosophy, which can be reconstructed as rational) does not seem to be possible. Strictly speaking, under these conditions nothing works. – It therefore comes to the question: are there not boundaries for fallibilism, historicism, and holism? Are there really no philosophical claims at all that can be labelled as knowledge in the strong sense of the term and that can be of further help here? "Knowledge in the strong sense of the term" means here "knowledge that is secure against not only real doubt but also merely possible doubt."

(2) With respect to merely possible doubt, in particular that doubt which we, as far as content is concerned, cannot anticipate – and therefore cannot test either– but which at the same time we as fallibilists must nevertheless take seriously, one can obviously only protect oneself (against such doubt) if it is possible to find convictions that are generally safe from doubt *on structural grounds*, i.e. convictions against which doubt cannot be raised on structural grounds. Are there any? There are some, as we know from the tradition of arguments against scepticism, at least since Descartes, i.e. in the form of convictions that we must have as doubters and that we must assume to be true insofar as our doubt is supposed to be meaningful. That which must be assumed to be true by the doubter so that he or she can meaningfully doubt something, (for example, that he or she doubts, that he exists, that there is something in front of him, that he can meaningfully doubt, etc.) this can itself not be meaningfully called into question, because then doubt itself would be destroyed and thereby made ineffectual. This is the core of the (mentioned) idea of Unhintergehbarkeit (non-circumventability)[17]: one cannot sceptically call

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[17] Cf. footnote 13.

into question the presuppositions of meaningful doubt because as a doubter one must adopt them and therefore one would at the same time confirm them. –

Now at first glance this thought does not appear to be very promising, for with what kind of convictions, i.e. convictions presupposed by doubt, does this have to do with and how interesting and relevant would these convictions be for philosophy? But this impression changes immediately if one generalizes the idea: That which is valid for the presuppositions of meaningful doubt is also valid for the presuppositions of meaningful discussion, indeed of argumentation in general. Necessary presuppositions of meaningful argumentation obviously must be secure against every argument, for if one were to argue against them, then the arguments themselves (as arguments) would undermine themselves. If one, for example, were to argue that the principle of contradiction is not valid on certain grounds, then one would thereby devalue this argument itself, it would undermine itself. With such an argument one could, if the principle of contradiction is not valid, no longer refute anything, what was just the main point of the argument.

If we name the system of argumentation, i.e. the institution in which the correctness of validity claims should be decided upon with reasons, *discourse*, then in the convictions that anyone must have if he is to meaningfully take part in discourse, i.e. the convictions concerning the rules and presuppositions of discourse, we have a domain in front of us that is particularly interesting for Transcendental-Pragmatics. It is useful to make the importance of this domain clear. Discourse is the place where the correctness of validity claims, the truth of statements or theories, the correctness of norms or imperatives are decided upon with reasons. It can therefore count as the core domain of our reason or rationality, i.e. as the core domain in which allegations of very particular dignity and centrality are made, which concern things such as truth, correctness, certainty, logic, language, cognition, etc., indeed – as we will see – communication and interaction in discourse as well. With this an immediately obvious objection can be dealt with, namely that the idea of "Unhintergehbarkeit" might only lead to peripheral and philosophically uninteresting convictions. On the contrary, with respect to this idea we are lead to a domain of convictions that on the one hand concern very important, central philosophical questions and which on the other hand cannot be meaningfully

disputed, they must even be safe against every *potential* doubt. With this our initial situation has decisively altered.

(3) But the topic is thereby not yet brought to an end. The radical fallibilist can still bring forward the following objection: "It may admittedly be true that the presuppositions of meaningful argumentation are secure against every doubt and every argument. But that is only useful for the transcendental philosopher if he *already securely knows* that an x really belongs to the conditions of the possibility of meaningful argumentation. But our convictions concerning the presuppositions of meaningful argumentation essentially come from scientific or philosophical argumentation theories, and also from investigations that follow the style of the Kantian critique of reason. For these theories and results of investigation the reservations of fallibilism, historicism and holism are, of course, valid. Why shouldn't these reservations be valid here?"

This is a serious objection: if up until now we have only reached the result that x cannot be meaningfully called into question *if our theory or conviction* (that x is a necessary presupposition of meaningful argumentation) *is correct*, then we haven't advanced much. – The following questions come up: Are all our convictions concerning the rules and presuppositions of argumentation dependent upon fallible theories or theoretical assumptions? Is there no other cognitive access to these assumptions for us than this? - These questions are not as outlandish as they may at first seem. For they concern knowledge of the rules and presuppositions of argumentation, which as rules of arguing in order to be effective must be re-"cognized", and which as presuppositions must be "made" and "assumed" (and thereby known). Their being involved in the game happens via knowledge, via the practical knowledge of the person arguing, and this knowledge is not theoretical knowledge of an argumentation theorist. In addition, the following is valid: the theoretical knowledge, whose fallibility we are here very sorry for, is "reconstructive" knowledge, i.e. in it knowledge is attempted to be reconstructed that must be accepted by the arguer prior to all theory in order to orient himself to the rules, so that the presuppositions can be "*pre*-supposed" and "assumed". There is therefore not only the explicit reconstruction of argumentations and the presuppositions of argumentations in the domain of theoretical research or via theoretical reflection like in an undertaking as the "Critique of pure Reason", there is also – what needs to be

reconstructed in such efforts - the arguers *practical knowledge* itself, the practical knowledge of what he does and presupposes. – With this we have an alternative, i.e. an alternative access to the presuppositions of argumentation, an access via the arguer's pre-theoretical, practical knowledge of his action. It is the kind of knowledge that creates action out of what is otherwise merely physical event, it is the knowledge that allows the actor to decide in favour of his action and to be responsible for it [18], the knowledge which must be involved in order that the action can have a normative status, can be right or wrong.[19]

Concerning this alternative it should now be said that it apparently is not in the same way open to errors and objections as normal theoretical convictions. Practical knowledge does not have the status of an additional subsequent fallible representation of something that is already given independently of this representation. Practical knowledge contains, rather, those thoughts themselves (i.e. the most important elements of action) which the actor him or herself specifically tried to realize through the action. Practical knowledge is therefore constitutive of action and the presuppositions belonging to it. It is in a certain sense self-guaranteeing. Insofar as the actor articulates the following via his activity: "I hereby claim that your thesis is false and thereby assume that it is seriously intended as a thesis", he turns his activity into a claim and assumes thereby the above-mentioned presupposition.

(4) The main point concerning practical knowledge, however, is that one can utilize it for the following *procedure*, a procedure through which the anti-sceptic idea of Unhintergehbarkeit (non circumventability) is systematically exploited. The procedure consists of the following steps: 1. We search for candidates for the title of "unhintergehbare (non circumventable) presuppositions of meaningful argumentation", i.e. statements in which necessary presuppositions of meaningful argumentation are stated as given. 2. We explicitly try to contest the validity of these statements. 3. We examine, whether the attempt at contestation can be successful, whether the candidates can successfully i.e without contradiction be contested or not. – In order to make the decisive point

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[18] In order to do so, he must have knowledge of the alternatives in question, knowledge of what he is doing.

[19] Actions can only be intrinsically right or wrong, if they comprise not only a mere physical event but also knowledge of how they are intended.

of the entire thing even more transparent, I would now like to illustrate and discuss two variants of this procedure, namely first the procedure in its conventional form, according to which the questioned (contested) thesis is examined in confrontation with appropriate theoretical evidence on the point, and second the procedure in the new form suggested here, according to which the thesis is examined in a strictly reflexive confrontation with the relevant practical knowledge of the current arguer.

Both variants begin with the same steps: 1. A promising candidate is selected, e.g. the thesis that unrestricted, non-relativistic validity claims belong to statements. 2. It is attempted to dispute this thesis: "There is no non-relativist cognition, cognition that is not distorted by perspective. History does not belong to us, rather we belong to it (Gadamer). Relativistic claims to validity are the only meaningful ones"? (=M(p) Only with the third (3.) step, i.e. the examination whether M(p) can be maintained or not, are the variants distinguished from one another.

With the *first* variant the examination proceeds in the following way: the examiner makes it clear to himself (i) what exactly is to be examined: can the disputer be right with his thesis (M(p))? After he has made this clear he searches (ii) – as is customary in such cases – for evidence on the topic which could further help the investigation. He will get lucky with the theoretical assumptions and convictions concerning argumentation, especially speechacts in argumentation, that we are familiar with from philosophy and linguistics, convictions which state, for example, that absolute, non-relativistic claims to validity must be raised into serious statements. These convictions are very plausible and hardly anyone disputes them. But as material, theoretical beliefs they are nevertheless fallible, they must be grounded, if possible, and the obligation to ground them leads to a regress of justification according to the conditions of radical fallibilism. The examiner applies what has been gained to his problem, i.e. he establishes that M(p) contradicts itself *if the relevant philosophico-linguistic theories are in order*. But in this connection this is a seemingly serious restriction. It therefore turns out that there is therefore nothing that could count as being secure against every possible kind of doubt.

With the *second* variant the examination looks like the following: the examiner first makes clear what is to be examined, the correctness of M (p). (i)

After he has made this clear, he does not search for external (pro or con) evidence that he could confront M(p) with right away. Rather he opens his eyes – so to speak - extremely widely in an unfamiliar way (ii) and therefore does not overlook – as was the case in the former variant – the fact that he had understood already M(p) as an assertion, *i.e. as something to which a normal, unrestricted, non-relativistic claim to truth had been raised, indeed that he had to understand it in this way in order to have had the problem of whether the disputer was correct with his contention*. (What is at issue here is obviously the problem of whether it *really* is the case that our claims to validity non-relativistically turn into assertions or not, and not whether this only seems to be the case, if we look at it from a particular perspective.) With this he is lead directly by the practical knowledge of his actual activity and without recourse to theories or theoretical assumption to the presupposition of argumentation that is here to be disputed (iii). He is lead to this *as a necessary presupposition for the problem that he has to solve here* and notices that – different from as in the first variant – "the spade begins to bend" (as Wittgenstein puts it[20]). For, the evidence, with which M(p) is now colliding and by which M(p) is now defeated, proves itself to be something that in this connection or in this context cannot be regarded as a fallible theoretical evidence that would have to be justified etc., rather it functions as an *already accepted* basis for the problem of whether M(p) is tenable.

   Here the main advantage of the strictly reflexive procedure shows itself: because the examiner sticks to something, brings as evidence into the play that was already hidden in the formation of the problem – and furthermore as something constitutive of the formation of the problem – something that he had to have understood in order to be able to meaningfully react to this specific problem and what was now acknowledged with the accepted formulation of the problem, this can *not*, in connection to the attempt to solve the problem, be considered *as unsure or problematic*. If I understand: I have the problem of whether the assertion: "there is no non-relative cognition, no cognition that is not distorted by perspective" (M(p)) is true, how it obviously claims to be and I then see that the fact that as a presupposition of my problem I *have already*

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[20] Cf. Wittgenstein: Philosophische Untersuchungen § 217

understood the assertion M(p) as an assertion with the customary claim to absolute truth, is a possible evidence for my problem, then I can if I want to use the fact as evidence no longer doubt whether the customary claim to truth did in fact turn into M(p) or not. That was the presupposition of the problem to be solved, and this presupposition can only be corrected at the cost of altering or ignoring the problem. This means that *if we really have the problem, then we also have the solution, and we even have it definitively, and completely independently of any theory concerning argumentation and its presuppositions*.

The examination therefore shows: M(p) contradicts itself. We cannot meaningfully dispute that the claims of validity that are raised into assertions by us are non-relativistic, unrestricted claims to truth. And this proof (confirmation) was furnished by a direct confrontation of the attempt to dispute the claim with that which was actually and necessarily

presupposed in this attempt. Our attempt to dispute proves itself to be an attempt to remove the ground from under our own feet.

So much for an illustration of the procedure by one example. But he main point of this is that we are here concerned with a *general procedure* that applies to a variety of cases. This procedure has to do with systematizing the doubt, in order to uncover – via the systematized doubt – all the presuppositions of argumentation or of reason behind which we cannot rationally get or which show themselves to be non circumventable. And by this procedure in the end the possibility should be made available for philosophy to do philosophical work in a manner capable of progress. We have already discussed the reservoir, out of which the candidates for such presuppositions come and we now want to briefly present the presuppositions of argumentation and of reason that we are here concerned with. We are concerned with the necessary presuppositions of meaningful argumentation, i.e. with the rules and presuppositions of discourse as the institution, within which the correctness of claims of validity is decided upon. This means, we are concerned with the rules and presuppositions for the most important achievements in discourse, namely a) for the *asserting* of propositions (this is the dominating speech act in discourse), b) for the

communication and interaction between the participants in discourse[21] and c) for the *understanding, the examination, the defence, and the critique* of what is put forth in discourse. – The particular points at issue – under a) for example – are rules for dealing with concepts and propositions, rules of logic, rules for the type and form of the validity claims to be raised, - under b) – rules for the coexistence of the participants of discourse (reciprocal acknowledgement as free, rational, and equal), rules for the cognitive conduct with respect to discourse partner as opposed to the conduct with respect to mere dumb objects, rules for the communicative behaviour among the participants of discourse in opposition to technical behaviour towards mere objects, - under c) – rules for the procedure characteristic of discourse when it comes to dealing with problematic suggestions, for the procedure of examination, of defence, critique, etc. – What is apparent with all of this is that: behind doubt and behind discourse there is a) very substantial/extensive and b) completely relevant, important material content that can be used for establishing our special Unhintergehbarkeitsargumente, and these arguments can give back to philosophy the possibility of legitimately believing in the progress of philosophy and, in the sense of progress of this kind, of working towards it.

   (5) The foundational idea of the new transcendental philosophy has now been introduced and we are able to attempt a *provisional and general characterisation of it in contradistinction to the Kantian version*. Kant also starts from a situation in which there is nothing secured for philosophy, in which therefore no philosopher can achieve a lasting advantage, in which only the mere groping around for concepts ("Umhertappen in Begriffen") is left to philosophers. Kant answers this situation with the idea, decisive for transcendental philosophy, of a fundamental self-criticism of reason, with the

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[21] In my opinion it is possible to show by a whole series of reflexive arguments essentially exploiting the implications of the claim to inter-subjectivity unavoidably raised to every assertion, a series which together form a so-called "brief discourse", that we unhintergehbar (indubitably) understand ourselves as members of a communicative community and mutually relate to each other as to rational addressees that are to be (not persuaded but) convinced. If this is the case then reason and the acts of reason must be understood as something that is intrinsically bound to communication, language, and interaction within a communicative community. It would then be valid to say, in addition, that our reason has an essentially social dimension that allows us to plan the project of an ethics of reason grounded via reflexive arguments – the project of the discourse ethics of Transcendental Pragmatics.

idea of a court procedure of reason upon itself, of a process in which it should become clear what is possible and what is not, in particular, whether, and if yes how, philosophy is meaningfully possible. – This projected, reflexive self-criticism of reason indeed degenerates for Kant, who absolutized a false concept of reflection – the concept of theoretical reflection that is in itself non-reflexive – into something that much more has the character of a new, dogmatic philosophy, of a dogmatic theory of reason, in particular of experience, in which – and this is what is dogmatic about it – the theoretically investigated reason alone is critically controlled, and on the other hand the reason doing the investigating, that which is specifically different from the former, is not. The intended reflexive court process of reason upon itself here becomes, above all, a process of a philosopher about the claims of a physicist who is clearly different from him. The correctness of the claims that the philosopher himself must put forth in this process is not examined in this court process. – There therefore remain two main objections which the sceptic, who is supposed to be refuted via this project, could now raise namely a) that this has nothing to do with non-dogmatic self-criticism of reason, but rather with a new dogmatic philosophy, according to which it is very unclear why one should trust it according to the aforementioned diagnosis of the situation, and b) that out of all of this – as we have already seen – in the end only a weak Unhintergehbarkeitsargument which is ineffective against strong scepticism results.

Transcendental-Pragmatics shares Kant's assessment of the general situation of philosophy in its essential characteristics. It begins with a reflection upon the initial situation, in which, according to the the radical fallibilist, material knowledge (in the strict sense) is not available at all. It then poses the question: "How is philosophy possible as an undertaking that is, in principle, capable of progress?" and it starts, like Kant, from the fact that only on the path of a reflexive critique of reason, a way out of the situation can be found. – But it also knows that the project of a reflexive critique of reason can easily become misguided, therefore it pays close attention to the idea that the project is really carried out as a (self-) reflexive project, in which the criticizing authority itself is also monitored. – For this reason Transcendental-Pragmatics does not choose the procedure of, like Kant, a theoretical investigation of reason, in particular of

experience, an investigation that would lead in the end to a practical and theoretical differentiation between investigat*ed* (objectivised) and investigat*ing* reason. It rather from the beginning sets out on the idea of Unhintergehbarkeit, i.e. on the questions: "What is rationally unhintergehbar for us? What is - as presupposition – situated behind doubt and argumentation?" questions that from the beginning point to the presuppositions of the critique of reason itself. – For this reason it introduces, on the other hand, an alternative to theoretical reflection, *strict* reflection, i.e. the recourse to the practical knowledge that plays a role in all acts of reason, an instrument with whose help the achievements of the critic of reason themselves are accessible to criticism. – With all of this it makes possible the outlined *procedure of the reflexive revealing of the unhintergehbaren presuppositions of discourse* by systematically disputing these presuppositions. This procedure is *strictly reflexive* because the critic of reason, explicitly brings together what he has as his subject before him and what lies as presupposition he actually makes use of behind him. The procedure is essentially a kind of *revealing* in a double sense. First, in the sense that the presently criticized presuppositions of discourse are pulled into the light or into the focus of discourse via the attempt to dispute them. Presuppositions of argumentation are normally background phenomena that are silently adopted. They exist for the disputer but are hidden behind that which is thematically treated. Via this attempt to dispute them they are themselves pulled into the bright arena of thematic treatment and in this way revealed. The procedure is a revealing in yet another sense: via the explicit attempts to dispute them, the attacked opponent can become for the first time aware of certain aspects of his activity and gain explicit convictions regarding that, of which up until now he had only implicit non verbalized "know how". This is a revealing in a second sense. We will come back to this shortly. – The procedure is finally a revealing of such things *as unhintergehbar*, insofar as the presently attacked presuppositions are not simply pulled into the light – as problematic propositions merely brought into language - rather they are identified, via the unsuccessfulness of the attempt to dispute them, as something that we have always already acknowledged, that we cannot not acknowledge, which must therefore count as something securely valid, and therefore justified.

(B)

Now we arrive at a short section concerning *difficulties of and objections* to Transcendental-Pragmatics. Here I will introduce what I see to be the main difficulty of this approach, to sketch a way in which, in my opinion, one can deal with it, and present a suggestion regarding how promising the proposed procedure is. In other places I have already dealt with concrete objections on sense, use, and realisability of the project.[22] Here I will limit myself to making the reasons explicit that cause me to believe that, in the end, the objections concerning the realisability of the project will not be effective.

The *main difficulty* of this approach lies, in my opinion, in the fact that our practical knowledge both of argumentation and of the presuppositions of discourse does not have the character of explicit 'know-that' in every case, rather very often has the character of mere 'know-how, which does not immediately fit into the described procedure. The question therefore is: do we need an additional procedure (for example that of a reconstructive science) or can one get by here with our method of reflexive revealing? If an additional procedure were to be necessary, then we must remove the ideas of infallibility and of security in the back of doubt and discourse. On the other hand if we refrain from the use of practical knowledge in the mode of 'know-how, then our procedure would provide too little material as would be necessary in order to give a foundation of a complete philosophical approach from it.

Can one not therefore nevertheless deal with this difficulty with the provided procedure? Clues arise that this is possible if we look more closely at a concrete case of the application of the procedure. As an example we'll take the argument of the reflexive refutation of relativism:[23]

Opponent: "All truths are relative to perspectives, historical points of view, etc." (=M(p))

Proponent: "Is that also valid for your thesis M(p) itself?"

Opponent: (after brief consideration): "No, it should not be valid for this thesis."

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[22] Cf., for example, W. Kuhlmann: Reflexive Letztbegründung, Freiburg/München1985; Kuhlmann: Bemerkungen zum Problem der Letztbegründung, in: Unhintergehbarkeit, Würzburg 2009; Kuhlmann: Unhintergehbarkeit und Kurze Diskurse, ibidem.

[23] Cf.: W. Kuhlmann: Unhintergehbarkeit und Kurze Diskurse, ibid. S. 75ff.

What happens here? M(p) is presented as true by the opponent. Therefore the stated general proposition p is focused upon, in sharp light. The performance of the statement M(p) and the claim to truth raised to the statement are background phenomena, they are there unthematically, lying outside of the arena, so to speak, in which things are disputed and decided, they lie in the shadows and do not have a sharp nor a clear meaning. In any case the following is valid: the opponent who proposes M(p), and this concerns the presently presented validity claim, did *not specifically* commit him or herself to a particular way of interpreting the expression "true", for example to a way of interpreting it that excludes relativized truth claims. Only if we concede something like this, we can understand, that theses like M(p) are often maintained in philosophy. - Now the proponent makes via his question the opponent understand more explicitly what he did raising his truth claim, he makes him move this into the arena and to relate it to the question or the objection. So the practical knowledge of the opponent, in particular the understanding of the meaning of the claim to truth belonging to such knowledge becomes 1. more explicit, transparent, and clearly specified and 2.it is made more pointed in relation to the question. This means that the relevant part of practical knowledge was, on the one hand, with the presentation of M(p) already in play, and ,on the other hand, *it arises* for the first time or rather its definitive form does in connection with the reflexive argument: this part becomes clearer, sharper, and more precise in connection to the argument. - Via the proponent's question, the opponent is caused to ask himself: "What do I really mean by the claim to truth in M(p)? What do I really want to achieve with the move M(p)? (for example: "In the end I want to disprove the thesis M(q)") and how have I made my move such that I can achieve my goal with it?" The opponent thereby and once again mobilizes the knowledge[24] that, as a participant in discourse, he already brought into play with the formulation of M(p), knowledge which includes always knowledge of the necessary conditions for the intended outcome of his action as well, he makes this knowledge explicit and more precise at the same time. What turns out to be the case is that, in order to secure the goal of his action, he must present a claim in the sense of a non-

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[24] He does it just as before from the position of an interlocutor in discourse not from a position of a theoretician investigating the discourse from outside.

relative, absolute concept of truth and to have presented M(p) as such a claim. It comes to a performative contradiction, but not – as we have just seen – as a contradiction between proposition p and the propositional content of the practical knowledge that was present from the beginning, and which was necessary in order to present M(p), but rather as a contradiction between p and the practical knowledge first arising in the reflexive argument where it got its particular form.

The deliberation of the speaker just exhibited also illustrates that the assumption that is in question here (the assumption about the exact form of truth claim) is from the start not treated as an isolated phenomenon but rather as something that plays a specific role in the game of discussion and is bound with all other elements of this game and that from these functional relationships, or rather the understanding of these functional relationships, it receives its precise form for the first time. This means that in the strictly reflexive approach that belongs to this form of argument, our opponent, if he refers to the assumption in question, is concerned with not only this assumption, but with it *and the context* within which it is supposed to have a particular function, and with which it must therefore fit in a particular way. It is therefore important to see that the practical knowledge mobilized in the reflexive argument only reproduces the practical knowledge that was originally necessary in order to meaningfully organize the move in the argument that is in question, a part of this being that the assumption in question received its functional role in relation to the other elements involved.

From what has been said it is clear that attempts to dispute a claim are themselves indeed very suitable for *revealing* the presuppositions of discourse that are not present as explicitly given. It is not so that the reflexive arguments of Transcendental-Pragmatics only then achieve their ends, if it is already admitted by the opponent, that he in fact presupposes the relevant thesis (as a presupposition of discourse), the arguments themselves have revealing power, and are able to force the opponent into admitting that he presupposes the thesis.

The following point is particularly worth mentioning here: despite these additions to the original idea of reflexive arguments, i.e. despite conceding that: "The one side of the performative contradiction *firstly arises* in the reflexive

argument via revealing", and further that: "The precise meaning of the one side of the performative contradiction *is generated* in the first instance through the context, through the (to be understood *holistically*) functional connection, in which the context stands", concessions which seem to weaken the strong claims to ultimate justification, despite all of this the argument remains the *convincing* argument against relativism, which it has always been and it is rightly regarded as an extremely strong, convincing, and exemplary reflexive argument. This means, the concessions do not at all diminish the power of the argument. We have to remember: the seemingly complex performances that the speaker brings forth which are not so easy to reconstruct are only the conventional and straightforward presuppositions indeed for the most unproblematic speech acts. If a speaker S states a straightforward and transparent tautology, with respect to which the sceptic has nothing to criticise, then these performances are at play as presuppositions as well. So much for our example.

If we consider the clues that result from this example, we can conclude that we should, first, uphold in principle the outlined procedure of reflexive revealing, and second modify it in such a way that it is suitable not only for reflexive arguments, apt to reveal particular isolated presuppositions of discourse as unhintergehbar but also for exposing materially connected presuppositions (as unhintergehbar) that are functionally related to one another and which in the first instance are accessible only on various levels of explicitness. We'll call the modified version: "brief discourses".[25] Their main destination is to enlarge the field of discourse presuppositions, which could be revealed as unhintergehbar. They start by marking as unhintergehbar the easily accessible presuppositions given by explicit practical knowledge of the arguer and then go over to revealing the more hidden and deeply lying presuppositions of discourse given only in implicit 'know-how.' In doing this they are essentially concerned with making use of the holistic condition of our practical knowledge of discourse, of the functional connections between the presuppositions of discourse and of the fit-relations among them.

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[25] In opposition to normal "long" discourses, which prefers Niquet for the proof of indubitability [Unhintergehbarkeit]. M. Niquet: Nichthintergehbarkeit und Diskurs. Prolegomena zu einer Diskurstheorie des Transzendentalen, Berlin 1999.

I cannot illustrate the procedure here in detail.[26] I can only sketch an outline of it and mention the reasons that, in my opinion, speak for the fact that such a procedure can be successful. – The procedure looks something like the following. First we (the proponent of Transcendental-Pragmatics and the sceptical opponent, who both want to know which presuppositions of argumentation can be show to be unhintergehbar and which do not) choose, from the perspective of our general (theoretical and experiential) knowledge of argumentation, interesting candidates for that which is sough-after. If we are concerned with more deeply lying presuppositions that are given to the participants of argumentation only via implicit 'know-how', whose status is not clear, and with respect to which our opponent can meaningfully contest their status as necessary presuppositions of discourse, then we consider a course of argumentation according to which we can gradually proceed from unproblematic presuppositions of argumentation, which can easily and reflexively be proven to be unhintergehbar, and which in fact are – in different respects - closely related to the presuppositions in question, to those presuppositions we want to mark as unhintergehbar too. In this way we make easier the explicit 'taking possession' of that which is at first available to us as arguers only via implicit 'know-how', but which nevertheless is unusually familiar for us. We begin, for example, with a selection of unproblematic, reflexive arguments conceded by the opponent. We thereby set the language and conceptual space, in which the presuppositions of argumentation should, in connection with one another, be made explicit or revealed. We thereby additionally create contexts out of which 1. we can very specifically inquire into the actually intended presuppositions (i.e. very precisely provoke the relevant 'know-how') and out of which 2. very strong restrictions arise for the particular determination of the intended presuppositions – via the holism of practical knowledge: the presuppositions of argumentation must in fact be connected to one another and fit with one another from many different perspectives. With all of this the anamnesis of the presuppositions of discourse, accessible up until now only in the half darkness of 'know-how', is very effectively encouraged.

The following reasons speak for the fact that this procedure is promising:

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[26] A detailed demonstration and discussion of the process takes place in; W. Kuhlmann: Unhintergehbarkeit und Kurze Diskurse, ibid.

The conditions, with which we are concerned here, are – in a double sense – *simple*. First: Discourse is not a natural but an *institutional, rule-constituted fact*. Here there are only such things as are specifically provided via rules, and otherwise nothing. This means we are concerned here with a simpler, more transparent ontology than that of natural conditions. Second: Discourse is a relatively simple game. There are only two roles that are essentially involved in the game (that of the proponent and that of the examining opponent) and only a very minimal number of kinds of moves.

The conditions are very *familiar* to us, we move through the game of discourse with almost somnambulistic security.

Our practical knowledge of argumentation is, what concerns the level of explicitness, not uniform. In the worst case it remains in half-darkness as 'know-how'. (It's never completely in the dark because we here have to *recognize* rules via practical knowledge, *make* presuppositions, and *assume* certain things.) In other cases it already has the form of explicit 'know that', for example in performative sentences, in standardized enlargements of performative sentences (like, for example "I claim (this means I am raising a non-relative validity claim and am ready to defend it against anyone) that p"). Practical knowledge is however, holistically constituted, i.e. if we organize a move in discourse, then we relate the various elements of the move and the corresponding parts of practical knowledge to one another, make them fit together, in order to bring about the desired effect. This results in the following:

The language/conceptuality, in which this organization of moves takes place, must be uniform, so that the various elements can meaningfully relate to one another. This means that if parts of practical knowledge (for example: in performative sentences) are explicitly given, then the language/conceptuality, in which practical knowledge in general is itself articulated, will in this way become transparent.

The various partial actions and the practical knowledge along with it will functionally relate to one another in the organization of the move. Now, if parts of the purposefully organized whole are given as something explicitly known, then one can infer on other parts that, in various respects, must fit to them.

An entirely different point: we must here neither strive for completeness of the revealing, nor are the standards of the particular conceptual determination

of the presuppositions of discourse very high. This has to do with meeting the assumptions and presuppositions that are made by the participants in the way that they are *factually made in practice.* This means for instance that our explication of the meaning of the concept of truth factually used in discourse must not satisfy the requirements of a philosophical theory of truth, which would be the result of philosophical investigation in the long run.

In my opinion the following point is decisive: we must assume of ourselves that we are able to argue, that we are in the position to in fact play the game, i.e. that we can solve problems, that we are able to critically judge something, and that we can, in principle, trust ourselves. If we do not make this assumption, then every attempt to argue for or against something, to hold something as true, to doubt something, would be pointless; we could not trust ourselves nor our results. We would be in a completely absurd situation, everything would collapse. – That which we must in particular believe ourselves capable of doing is that we are capable of knowing when we have "won" or "lost" the game of arguing, when we are refuted or have proved something. But we can only know things of this sort if we do not have to be prepared for such things (elements of the game, rules, pre-requisites for the game) that can be important for the game and for ending the game, things which we do not know, do not yet, or never will know. – But from this results: even if the rules and pre-requisites of the game are only partially given to us via 'know-how', which perhaps cannot be easily changed into 'know-that', it nevertheless cannot be that we trying to make explicit our implicit knowledge of discourse presuppositions must be prepared for the fact that we could come across something completely new and unfamiliar to us, that we will be concerned with serious, non-trivial problems and with big surprises. It cannot be that we are seriously wrong here (in relation to the nature of some sort of x) or that we – wrongly – are not in general prepared for the presence of x, i.e. that we make mistakes that could only be discovered and corrected via long-term research programs. If this were possible, *we could not argue* i.e. could not play the game (and of course neither could we pursue any research programs).

So far the reasons for why the project of a reflexive revealing in transcendental philosophy and also of such pre-requisites of discourse, which in the first instance are only given in 'know-how', is not hopeless. My general

estimation of the matter is that the presented project is meaningful, useful, and hopeful, but that it can in no way count as reasonably realized.[27]

The mentioned reasons that speak for a positive estimation of the prospects of the project – I am coming now shortly to the topic of: "*objections*" – naturally make up a large part of the evidence for the fact that the sceptic, with his ever renewed doubt ("What is here claimed to be a necessary presupposition, is not in fact one. I, in any case, do not presuppose it"; "What is here assumed to be the knowledge of the pre-requisites of discourse is in fact not knowledge. I, for my part, do not exactly know whether I, as is claimed, assume x.") is not very successful, could be successful only with respect to peripheral and not central parts of practical knowledge from discourse. A second part of this evidence arises from the following: If the sceptic disputes the opponent's transcendental-philosophical theses, then he is not talking about them only as theses, rather at the same time he is talking about his own current practice, he is talking about his own argumentative moves and, if necessary, determines them anew. As a result the transcendental pragmatist, who must rationally react to these argumentative moves according to the rules of the game, acquires the right to ask: "What do you mean by your present argumentative move, according to which you said that x is not a pre-requisite for it, or that you don't know whether you are assuming x or not? I have to know this because I have to organize my argumentative move and my reply to it accordingly – if we want to continue the discourse." The sceptic thereby loses his privileged position in which he could always become a bit more sceptical – and thereby becoming superior to his opponent – without it immediately having cost him anything. He now arrives at a

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[27] An important point is, for example, the treatment of logic in transcendental philosophy. It is an unpleasant fact that until now none of the transcendental pragmatists have sufficiently and in detail devoted himself to the question: "reflexive revealing of a minimal logic that is unhintergehbar for us". In my opinion this fact is to a large extent due to contingent, external grounds. For, the strategy that could be helpful here appears to me to be obvious. The strategy consists in labelling of that logic, which we must make use of if the pro and con of the introduction of particular, alternative logics is to be discussed. In this case the representative of a new alternative cannot defend the new logic in making use of it. This could be shown to be an unfair petitio principii. Instead he must make use of a logic that can be regarded by the participants of discussion as impartial. Now the informal logic, which is normally made use of in colloquial introductions to logic texts, functions as such a logic. What exactly belongs to this logic must be revealed via reflexive arguments and could then be shown to be unhintergehbar.

position, in which he must calculate the costs very precisely. If, for example, the transcendental pragmatist claims that it belongs to the necessary pre-conditions of meaningful argumentation that the participants of discourse reciprocally recognize and treat each other as free, rational, and equal persons – which is a pre-condition that is obviously not situated on the directly accessible surface of the know how of the arguer, and if the sceptic of course disputes this thesis, then the transcendental pragmatist will understand the objection of the opponent above all as a remark about a technically relevant character of the actual argumentative move of the opponent and will respond: "If you don't assume the stated pre-supposition, then in no way are you making an appropriate move in our game that conforms to the rules." We therefore arrive at a dispute about the rules of the game and the question of who is allowed to settle these rules. We do not need to really getting involved in this topic here. Nonetheless the sceptic arrives at a position in which he must pay close attention to the possibility that his interlocutor could disqualify his – those of the sceptic - moves as against the rules. At the very least he must collaboratively work on proving that his moves are allowed by the rules and therefore are valid. The entire thing is a considerable *displacement of the burden of proof*, which does not improve the position of the sceptic.

In conclusion I would like to briefly address the following questions: What would the new transcendental philosophy look like if it could be successfully carried out? To what extent could it be useful? - The central task of this philosophy would consist in the outlined reflexive revealing of the rules and pre-requisites of discourse as unhintergehbar. Above (pg ?) we indicated that with respect to the rules and presuppositions for making claims, for communication and interaction among the participants of discourse and for the procedure of understanding, of critique and of the defence of proposals in discourse, we are concerned with certainly mention-worthy and in itself very various material contents, which may be of great importance for a philosophy. If it were to be successful to uncover these presuppositions of discourse as unhintergehbar to a satisfactory extent, then the first results we would then come to would be that, in philosophy, a field in which of course not everything can be justified via reflexive arguments, one should distinguish between Philosophy I (reserved for

reflexive arguments, brief discourses and their results) and Philosophy II (intended for normal theoretical research).

Philosophy I would thus consist of reflexive arguments, brief discourses, and a collection of insights into the rules and presuppositions of discourse that are labelled as unhintergehbar, insights that are either already directly available or will be in a short amount of time. – Philosophy II, on the other hand, would be that part of philosophy, in which normal philosophical investigations and philosophical research would take place, the part in which we, as philosophers like scientists, would be merely, in the long run, on the way to something like the "final opinions" mentioned by Peirce.

The difference between Philosophy I and Philosophy II would be of central, substantial, methodical, and architectonic importance for the new transcendental philosophy. Philosophy I and Philosophy II would stand in two essential relationships to each other here: a) insofar as insights concerning the direction, the standards, and the procedures of research and discursive decisions regarding the right of validity claims are supplied by Philosophy I, Philosophy I would provide binding guidelines, with which the style of research in Philosophy II would have to comply. One could therefore say that Philosophy I could supply something like a controller (control apparatus) that could allow the researchers, who are merely underway in Philosophy II, to stay on course in the direction of the "final opinions" in Peirce's sense. Philosophy I would then be the *normative meta-discipline to Philosophy II*. –

b) Philosophy I, in which nevertheless material insights are generated, could at the same time be understood as *the beginning of Philosophy II*, as the beginning of material research on the areas of "*Theory of Assertion*" (truth claims, Logic), "*Communication and Interaction in Discourse*" (internal relations of the new rational subject: the community of communication, kinds of cognition (the experience of mere objects, communicative experience, reflection), kinds of actions (technical, communicative, reflexive action), acknowledgement relations between the participants of discourse (discourse ethics), "*Procedures of the understanding, critique, defence of proposals in discourse.*" - As such, as beginning Philosophy II Philosophy I would yield exemplary input for the research in Philosophy II with respect for example to the conceptual frame that arises with the articulation of relevant insights proved to be unhintergehbar, or

in the form of particular *textual* ?? insights that were labelled as unhintergehbar and to which in material research in Philosophy II the results of research would be attached and conformed. Philosophy II would therefore both be materially started through Philosophy I as well as – with respect to the form of the research process – controlled[28] by Philosophy I.

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[28] I now think – this is a speculation that I will pursue in my next work on transcendental-pragmatics – that the outlined structural relations (between what I have named Philosophy I and Philosophy II) in the new transcendental philosophy must even show up twice, namely once at the border between that which can be revealed strictly reflexively and that which is to be achieved only via theoretical research, but on the other hand also *within Philosophy I*, on the border between that which – with presuppositions of argumentation that are already explicitly available – can be revealed as unhintergehbar via immediately effective reflexive arguments and that which – with presuppositions of discourse given only via implicit 'know how' – can be revealed as unhintergehbar only via holistically constituted brief discourses. The former could be understood as both the beginning of, as well as a normative meta-discipline for the latter. – One could thereby take into account that, with the results of the brief discourses, we could have such a thing before us, according to which a future improvement could surely be thought of, which therefore depending on the holistic and reconstructive elements, which are involved in the brief discourses must not be already regarded as conclusive. – This would only be possible, however, if we are able to show that the concession that the results of a brief discourse are capable of improvement can be made compatible with the claim that the results have nevertheless at the same time revealed something, what is unhintergehbar. In the first instance both seem to be excluded. – In my view there are now examples of such a reconcilability. The concept of truth, for example, that we always have actually in mind along with our factual assertions, and which plays the main role in the actual business of science, is a seemingly rough, vague, and not very precisely determined concept. The well-known Aristotelian definition (Metaphysics 1011b 26) matches what is on average meant by it rather well. But within the framework of the discussions concerning *philosophical theories of truth* this concept can at best function as a provisional definition requiring more precision, of what in the end we are supposed to mean by the expression "true". Despite this insufficiency and provisional nature the concept of truth is in a way, as it is meant in our assertions, for us unhintergehbar and belongs as such as an important element in the mentioned controller. (Something similar can be stated regarding minimal logic, in my opinion, which is hidden in our colloquial language.)

A way (suggested by the examples) to illustrate the compatibility of the limiting qualification of the results on the one side and the strong claims raised with respect to the results of brief discourses on the other side, could consist, for example, in admitting that what is revealed could become more precise, more differentiated, more detailed, more sharpened but in the same time denying, that this means, that it should become corrected as something wrong or distorted, as something misleading, as something inappropriate. In this way incompleteness and the capability of improvement of the results of revealing could be acknowledged without having to give up the claim to have already met what is unhintergehbar. But there are surely even more possibilities, and now we've got to find them.

A Philosophy that is moulded by such a distinction would, in my opinion, be an appropriate answer to the problem that comes into being with the radical versions of fallibilism, historicism, and holism. On the one hand it could, as far as possible, via Philosophy II make concessions to the reservations of these positions, insofar as they are justified, but on the other hand it could at the same time – via Philosophy I and the collaboration of Philosophy I and II - hold onto the ideas of "finding truth" and "systematic research capable of progress".

The presented philosophy bets on ultimate justification and infallibility, not because it has fallen in love with security, because security in itself is regarded as a higher value, or because it – nervously – depends on a sort of security ideology, rather because it is of the conviction: only if something like philosophy I is also at play, i.e. if at particular points the possibility of currently available knowledge is provided, only then can philosophical (and also scientific) activity be reconstructed as capable of progress and therefore rational. But that philosophers can (according to Apels "Selbsteinholungsprinzip") cope with their own activity as rational in the sense of explicitly allowing for legitimately maintaining their own position, that is something one can expect from philosophers.