

What Habermas calls "**communicative action**" illumines what I mean by a life-praxis that is properly characterized as "**witness.**"

Witness clearly seems to be an instance of communicative action, in that it is life-praxis directed toward evoking a decision for the self-understanding and life-praxis expressed by its content as witness. In other words, it is a special case of action directed toward achieving understanding, agreement, or consensus, and, therefore, a special case of what Habermas means by "communicative action." One acts communicatively in his sense whenever one acts with the intention of bringing about understanding, agreement, or consensus. But this is exactly how one intends to act when one bears witness, properly so-called.

There is the difference, of course, that the *direct* witness of proclamation—whether by preaching the word or administering the sacraments—is, in its way, a special case of executive (= "deontic or performatory") authority, as distinct from the nonexecutive (= "epistemic") authority that properly characterizes the *indirect* witness of teaching. But presumably both forms of (explicit) witness, direct as well as indirect, are, in their different ways, directed toward achieving understanding, agreement, or consensus and, therefore, are instances or special cases of communicative action. The difference between them is the difference between self-understanding and life-praxis, the counterpart to the first being a special case of executive authority, the counterpart to the second being a special case of nonexecutive authority.

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