

What is the difference between the social sciences and the humanities, assuming that there is such a difference? (Even if one distinguishes, as Apel does, between "types of social sciences," one of which includes what I mean here by "the humanities," one assumes that there is a difference between "the social sciences" and "the humanities" in the senses in which I am using the terms.)

Broadly speaking, one may say that the social sciences study life-praxis by bracketing all questions about the validity of the claims that such life-praxis makes or implies. In fact, one may say that the social sciences so thoroughly bracket all questions about the validity of the claims made or implied by life-praxis that they do not seek even to understand the *what* of life-praxis, as distinct from its *that*, in the way in which one would have to do if one were to pursue any questions about the validity of its claims.

By contrast, the humanities do seek to understand the *what* of life-praxis in the way in which one would have to do if one were to pursue any questions about the validity of its claims to validity. In the case of some of the humanities (e.g. philology and history), the whole task of the field is limited to just such understanding, being concerned entirely with critical interpretation as distinct from critical validation. In the case of other humanities (e.g., grammar, linguistics, philosophy), the task of the field either is or includes critical validation in distinction from critical interpretation.

True, on an understanding of philosophy as strictly analytical, its concern with critical validation is limited to clarifying how such validation has to be done in different cases, as distinct from actually doing it in any particular case. This means that a strictly analytical philosophy can be about equally well understood as being concerned, not with critical validation at all, but solely with critical interpretation, albeit at the level of the "deep grammar," or "deep structure," of the relevant "forms of life" and/or "language games." On a more traditional understanding, however, philosophy has an existential as well as a strictly analytical responsibility and, therefore, itself includes critical validation—not, to be sure, of all claims to validity, many of which are properly left to be validated

by the several special sciences or arts, but only of such as the special sciences or arts are not competent to validate.

The difference between the social sciences and the humanities, then, is that the second are concerned, as the first are not, with critical interpretation and, in the case of some of them, at least, with critical validation of the claims to validity expressed or implied by human life-praxis simply as such.

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