

On my account, the process of appropriating constatives, or making them one's own, involves not only understanding, or interpreting, them, but also validating their claims to validity—above all, their claim to be true. But I've also allowed that appropriating constatives in this way may be more or less critical depending on whether the criteria of judgment are consuetudinary criteria only or also, and finally, the ultimate criteria of experience and reason, as these may require to be employed in the context of meaning in question.

This all applies, however, *mutatis mutandis*, to validating the claim of constatives to be appropriate as well as true or credible. Thus certain constatives making up Christian witness may be judged appropriate because they are in substantial agreement with scripture and tradition. But a more critical judgment, employing the ultimate criteria of appropriateness—analagous to experience and reason as ultimate criteria of credibility—demands that they agree with the constitutive witness of the apostles, by which the appropriateness even of scripture and tradition themselves ultimately have to be judged. Similarly, a less critical judgment of the credibility of the same constantives might judge them to be credible because they can claim the support of this, that, or the other philosophy, whereas a more critical judgment would require appealing beyond all philosophies to experience and reason themselves.

Distinguishing thus between more and less critical ways of appropriating constatives is, of course, how I appropriate Habermas' analysis, according to which (in McCarthy'words), "the obligations immanent to speech acts can be met at two levels: immediately in the context of interaction—through recourse to experiential certainty. . .—or mediately, in . . . theoretical discourse."

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