

If the tacit presupposition that the claims to validity made or implied in a discussion are, in fact, valid and, therefore, can be validated has to be suspended, the parties to the discussion are faced with the following alternatives: (1) they can break off communication altogether; (2) they can switch over to strategic forms of interaction (conflict, competition); or (3) they can raise communication to the level of argumentative discourse for the purpose of validating the problematic (now hypothetical) claims.

To pursue the third alternative means that the validity claims which are more or less naively accepted in ordinary communication on the primary level of interaction are "virtualized" or rendered "hypothetical," even as the constraints of action are also "virtualized" and judgment is suspended. There is a difference, then, between "communication which remains tied to the context of action" and "discourses which transcend the constraints of action" (McCarthy: 294).

In discussion of this difference, Habermas makes clear that the underlying cognitive interests to which knowledge is related and by which systems of knowledge are constituted preserve the unity of their respective systems of action and experience in relation to discourse; they connect theoretical knowledge to action throughout the whole process by which opinions are transformed into theoretical statements, which are then in turn transformed back into action-orienting knowledge. But those interests in no way affect the difference between validity claims which are accepted de facto and those which are rationally grounded and, therefore, can be accepted de jure.

This is evidently closely parallel to W. A. Christian's analysis of the way in which an inquiry is constituted as such by some interest. The strength of Habermas's analysis, however, is that it makes much clearer than Christian's does that and why there must nevertheless be a difference between the inquiry that goes on on the primary level of self-understanding and life-praxis and the inquiry that can and, under certain circumstances, must go on on the secondary level of critical reflection. One advantage of Habermas's analysis is that it can

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make clearer than Christian ever does wherein the unity of all fields of inquiry consists. They are all one in that there is the possibility and, under circumstances, the necessity of an argumentative validation of the claims to validity that are made or implied in the different fields of life-praxis with which they respectively have to do.

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