

Witness critically appropriated is theology. Theology become "action-orienting knowledge" (Habermas) is dogma.

By "witness" here I understand both the direct witness of proclamation and the indirect witness of teaching, or doctrine. By "critical appropriation" of witness I mean both critical interpretation of its meaning and critical validation of its claims to validity. By "dogma" I understand what is usually called "a doctrinal standard," or "a standard of doctrine," although it would be more appropriately called "a standard of witness," because it functions as a standard of the direct witness of proclamation, especially preaching, as well as of the indirect witness of teaching.

Also assumed here is Habermas's analysis, according to which one and the same proposition may constitute the content of either (1) an *opinion* (on the primary level of "interaction"); (2) a *theoretical statement* (on the secondary level of "discourse"); or (3) a *statement of action-orienting knowledge* (again, on the primary level of "interaction"). Thus an opinion becomes a theoretical statement as and when its meaning is critically interpreted and the claims to validity that it makes or implies are critically validated. A theoretical statement, in turn, becomes a statement of action-orienting knowledge as and when it ceases to be "virtualized" and hypothetical and becomes instead a rule or principle of action. On my analysis, which is, in effect, an application of Habermas's analysis to a special case, witness in particular is to an opinion in general as theology in particular is to a theoretical statement in general and as dogma in particular is to a statement of action-orienting knowledge in general.

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