

What Is Rationality?

“Rationality,” I answer, properly refers to the capacity both to make or imply claims to validity of various kinds and to validate them as and when they become problematic—either immediately and precritically, on the primary level of self-understanding and life-praxis, or mediately and critically, on the secondary level of critical reflection and proper theory.

Therefore, in principle, any human activity expressing or implying validity claims is a rational activity, even as is any human activity directed toward validating claims of one kind or another, either immediately and precritically or mediately and critically.

By “the academy,” then, I should say, one properly refers to the human community as a community of learning and teaching formally organized for the purpose, above all, of validating claims to validity mediately and critically, on the secondary level of critical reflection and proper theory.

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