

## HABERMAS ON PRESUPPOSITIONS OF COMMUNICATIVE RATIONALITY

S. PANNEERSELVAM

### I

In the post-metaphysical thinking the role of reason is unique. Some like Rorty consider it as a social phenomenon. "We have to resist the urge to see social practices of justification as more than just such practices"<sup>1</sup> but explain "rationality and epistemic authority by reference to what society lets us to say",<sup>2</sup> argues Rorty. Foucault attempts to disempower the ideas of reason by totally objectivating them. "What is this reason that we use? What are its historical effects? What are its limits, and what are its dangers?"<sup>3</sup>, asks Foucault. Derrida attempts for a totalized critique of reason. He believes that the ideas of reason are built into thought, and give rise to illusions and therefore he wants to renounce the ideas of reason by interrogating, disrupting and displacing them. Similarly, Habermas reconstructs the Kantian notion of reason so as to explain the importance of comprehensive reason. This comprehensive reason, otherwise known as the "communicative rationality" is one of the important contributions of Habermas. The rationality, which he speaks of, is different from that of the other thinkers and hence it attracts the attention of scholars. This paper is an attempt to explain the importance of communicative rationality by showing some of the salient aspects of it in the background of communicative understanding. Also the paper evaluates some of the criticisms leveled against Habermas' theory of communicative rationality.

### II

Communicative understanding is important for Habermas in the context of critical theory. But to explain the importance of it, he talks about

the presuppositions of communication. These presuppositions reveal a rational dimension within the conversation, otherwise known as “communicative rationality” which is achieved through rational consensus. What constitutes this rational consensus? For Habermas, it is one that is arrived in free and equal discussion within the framework of the “ideal speech situation”. Since only a rational consensus can ultimately serve as the ground for truth-claims, Habermas wants to develop a concept of rationality sufficiently comprehensive to cover not only cognitive but also communicative processes and their embodiment in social interactions. He is keen on developing a comprehensive theory of rationality, which is essential for any communicative understanding.

Habermas is a critic of scientific-technological rationality. His concept of rationality is something different from that of the general notion of rationality. He is interested in constructing social rationality. He, for example, has rejected both Adorno and Horkheimer who considered that the development of western rationality as the totalisation of reification, domination and repression. Against this background, Habermas defended the positive aspects of enlightenment and also of modernity and western rationality. He wanted to emphasize the role of rationality in the economy, culture and morality. This means that for him social rationality has implications in social life, which cannot be neglected. In his comprehensive concept of rationality, different dimensions of social life, *i.e.* values, norms, interests, are studied and preserved.

Marcuse defines reason as “the fundamental concept of philosophical thought, the only one by means of which it has bound itself to human destiny... it is not only a category of bourgeois philosophy, but a concern of mankind”.<sup>4</sup> Horkheimer and Adorno in their *Dialectic of Enlightenment* attempted a critique of instrumental reason. Instrumental reason is now not identified with a particular period of history, society or class. Rationalization has thus moved from a historically specific to global context, thus expanded its scope to the whole of human society. Both Horkheimer and Adorno argue that unfortunately, the Enlightenment project, which had the agenda of liberating humanity, has turned into a new and powerful force of domination. In *Dialectic of Enlightenment*, both Horkheimer and Adorno explain how reason turned into its opposite and resulted in

new rationalized forms of social domination. Social rationality turned into irrationality and enlightenment into deception. Not only this, Enlightenment reason has resulted in domination and regression. Thus for them, instrumental reason and science have become myths which resulted in worship and praise for superior power and social domination. Habermas wanted to revise the project of Enlightenment rationality. His idea was to offer an alternate to the subject-centered tradition of rationalism. Along with Horkheimer and Adorno, Marcuse also criticized the scientific-technological rationality and instrumental reason. He argued that the very form of technical reason is ideological and believed that not only the application of technology, but technology itself is domination. He says :

Specific purposes and interests of domination.... enter the very construction of the technical apparatus. Technology is always a historical-social project, in it is projected what a society and its ruling interests intend to do with men and things. Such a purpose of domination ...belongs to the very structure of technical reason.<sup>5</sup>

What is the problem with the subject-centered reason? Habermas answers: "Subject-centered reason is the product of division and usurpation, indeed of a social process in the course of which a subordinated moment assumes the place of the whole, without having the power to assimilate the structure of the whole"<sup>6</sup>. Habermas' concept of communicative reason is an attempt to show that the possibility of the social is opened by the basic categories of language. The Universal pragmatics is inscribed in the structures of the lifeworld and hence the presuppositions concerning the moral, instrumental, strategic activity are the transcendental forms through which communication is operated. Kant in his article, "What is enlightenment?" argued that by thinking rationally, individual subjects sustain a critical relation to the ethical and political forms, which govern them. Habermas criticizes the subject centeredness of Kant's idea of rational agency. Habermas' communicative reason attempts to show the dominance of instrumental reason. The pragmatic universals which are linguistically competent individuals must be able to form the basis of an ideal of communicative transparency that is implicit in every form of social action. This means that individuals within the lifeworld are always potentially able to reconstruct the rational communicative power of ordinary language.

Commenting on this, Habermas says :

A peculiarity exhibited by these pragmatic presuppositions of consensus formation is that they contain certain strong idealizations. For example, the supposition that all participants in dialogue use the same linguistic expressions with identical meanings is unavoidable but often counterfactual. The validity claims that a speaker raises for the content of his assertoric, normative or expressive sentences are also found to be similar idealizations: what the speaker, here and now in a given context, asserts as valid transcends, according to the sense of his claim, all context dependent, merely local standards of validity.<sup>7</sup>

Habermas' interest in communicative reason is seen in the thorough study of the concept of reason and the rationalization of society dealing with the problem of rationality. For example, he analyses Weberian theory of rationalization and the critique of instrumental reason. Such an extensive study of reason is undertaken by him because reason can be defended only by way of critique of reason. One of the major concerns of Communicative action, he says, is to develop a concept of rationality that is no longer tied to and limited by the subjectivistic and individualistic premises of modern philosophy and social theory.

Habermas firmly believes that his concept of reaching an understanding is the possibility of using reasons or grounds to attain intersubjective recognition for criticizable validity claims. He puts it in the following words :

The rationality proper to the communicative practice of everyday life points to the practice of argumentation as a court of appeal that makes it possible to continue communicative action with other means when disagreement can no longer be headed off by everyday routines and yet is not to be settled by the direct or strategic use of force.<sup>8</sup>

Habermas wanted to support a comprehensive concept of rationality, which does not exclude practical questions of values, norms, interests and commitments. For Marx, rationality must be located as socially and historically embodied reason. The distinction between Marx and Habermas is that whereas Marx developed a social rationality, Habermas developed

a communicative rationality. Kant was attempting to defend reason in his own way against Hume, which included the idea of freedom in reason. Independence from authority and tradition was the crux of Kantian notion of reason, which was further, developed by Hegel. In the writings of Hegel one can see that his concept of rationality included the principle of autonomous rationality, subjectivity and substantive freedom.

Rationality, according to Habermas, is a specific form of unacknowledged domination. Reason has lost its functions as critical standard and hence Habermas wanted to develop a positive and a comprehensive account of reason. The role of impurity of reason has done a lot of damage and hence must be replaced. Commenting on this, McCarthy says: "The overwhelming 'impurity' of reason, its unavoidable entanglement in history and tradition, society and power, practice and interest, body and desire, has prompted, among others, Nietzsche's heroic proclamation of the end of philosophy, Wittgenstein's therapeutic farewell, and Heidegger's dramatic overcoming".<sup>9</sup> Habermas was keen on negating the subject-centered reason and replacing it by reason understood as communicative action. In communicative action, the subject is a participant. Thus it is a radical critique of reason. Habermas's concern for social rationality could be achieved through what is known as the "undistorted communication" where there will be rational discourse in which there is equal participation and rational consensus. His objective was to reconstruct reason and not to reject it. This can be seen in the two volumes of *Theory of Communicative Action*, (referred to hereafter as *TCA*) where he attempts to reconstruct rationalism through communicative action. Here he makes a distinction between instrumental and communicative action. The basic problem with the instrumental action is that it is subjectivist by nature and also lacks reflection. By nature it is domination and does not have any intersubjectivistic approach. On the other hand, communicative action is intersubjective communication and based on social solidarity. Consensus and participation are its concern. Instrumental action is all the time concerned with the preservation of the self whereas in communicative action, it is lost or is taken care of by social solidarity. Mutual understanding and consensus are important in communicative action. The theory of communicative action converts rationality into communicative rationality.

Only in such rationality, undistorted communication is possible. Habermas attacks the instrumental reason or positive reason to reconstruct reason and thus his attempt is not destructive. Habermas' theory of communication provides a conceptual scheme by which one can see and understand the pathologies of the lifeworld, like the colonization by the system of money and power and social participation etc. Habermas is critical of the negative aspects of Enlightenment rationality for the main reason that it is an instrument of domination and hierarchy. Democratic participation and consensus are the two important aspects of his communicative rationality. One salient aspect of this theory is that communicative rationality is grounded in language.

Habermas distinguishes different types of reason: instrumental, strategic and communicative reason. This, of course, is not new because Horkheimer also makes a distinction between instrumental of subjective reason and critical reason. Marcuse also develops what is known as "libidinal rationality" or emancipatory reason against the repressive reason or subjectivist reason. But what is important in Habermas' theory of communicative reason is that he makes communicative reason, a more socially oriented one at the same time pointing out the limitations of the instrumental and the strategic reasons. The importance of communicative rationality is explained by him as follows:

That communicative rationality, precisely as suppressed, is already embodied in the existing forms of interaction and does not first have to be produced as something that ought to be is showed by the causality of the fate which Hegel and Marx... Communicative reason operates in history as an avenging force.<sup>10</sup>

In the *TCA*, vol. I, Habermas deals with four important themes, namely, (i) the theory of rationality, (ii) the theory of communicative action, (iii) the dialectic of social rationalization, and (iv) the critique of functional reason. He explains the importance of reason and how it played a major role in different philosophical thinking. According to him, philosophy is a theory of rationality. The significant aspect of *TCA* is that here Habermas relates rationality to social theory through communication. A communicative action rests on rationally motivated agreement based reasons and grounds, rather than on coercion and force. The social actors, as members of

communicative community have the competence to distinguish between external nature, society and internal nature. He says: "Communication is social interactions. It is the application of social use of language, which will result in understanding, which further focuses on the action co-ordinating effects of the validity claims offered in the speech-acts."<sup>11</sup> This means that participants by offering validity claims establish intersubjective relations. This is based on rational motivation which accepts the validity claims. It implies that communicative action is basically connected to communicative rationality.

Communicative rationality is the central theme in Habermas' social theory. Communicative rationality attempts to characterize universal features of communication in their structure and development which remains open to empirical-reconstructive test and refutation. It is empirical, theoretical and critical. The cognitive-instrumental rationality, *i.e.* the reason involved in speech and action is incomplete and one sided. According to Habermas, the concept of communicative rationality has three dimensions.

...first, the relation of the knowing subject to a world of events or facts; second, the relation to a social world of acting, practical subject entwined in interaction with others, and finally, the relation of a suffering and passionate subject to its own internal nature, to its own subjectivity and the subjectivity of others.<sup>12</sup>

These dimensions may be defined as external nature, society and internal nature. In the communicative action where the external nature is taken, rationality consists in expressing views and acting effectively. Here the speaker is ready to learn from the external world effectively. In other words, the speaker is ready to learn from the mistakes. This is known as "theoretical discourse". Society is considered as important in communication, and rationality consists in doing actions on the basis of established norms of the society. This is known as "practical discourse". In internal nature, *i.e.*, connected to communication, rationality consists in interpreting the nature of individual. This Habermas calls, "explicative discourse". The concept of rationality includes all the dimensions and none can be ignored. All the three dimensions are important in communicative understanding.

According to McCarthy, reason can be defended only as critique of reason. The western rationalism has run into difficulties and hence reason has to be studied as a critique of reason. Further he says that Habermas is the last great rationalist and he is a rationalist with a difference. In the first volume of *TCA*, Habermas wants to develop a concept of rationality that is no longer tied to, and limited by the subjectivistic and individualistic presuppositions of modern philosophy and social theory. Habermas says:

If we assume that the human species maintains itself through the socially coordinated activities of its members and that this coordination is established through communication-and in certain spheres of life, through communication aimed at reaching agreement-then the reproduction of the species *also* requires satisfying the conditions of a rationality inherent in communicative action.<sup>13</sup>

The subject who stands over against a world of objects has two basic relations: representation and action. This means the type of rationality associated with it is the "cognitive-instrumental" rationality of a subject. Mutual understanding in communication, which is free from coercion, is that what Habermas looks for in developing his idea of rationality. He says that the rationality proper to the communicative practice of everyday life points to the practice of argumentation as a court of appeal that makes it possible to continue communicative action with other means when disagreement can no longer be repaired with everyday routines and yet are not to be settled by the direct or strategic use of force.<sup>14</sup> Habermas tries to prove that the concept of communicative rationality has a universal significance and can be decided only by the empirical-theoretical fruitfulness of the research programme based on it. The guiding principle in Habermas's theory of communicative rationality is "the linguistification of the sacred", according to McCarthy.<sup>15</sup> It means a rationalization of the lifeworld. In order to understand the communicative action, Habermas introduces the ideal of the lifeworld. It links the concept firmly to the concept of society. To the different structural components of the lifeworld, namely culture, society, and personality, there correspond reproduction processes, namely cultural reproduction, social integration, socialisation based on the different aspects of communicative action *i.e.*, understanding, coordination and socialisation, which in turn makes communicative action possible. When it



is disturbed, it will lead to loss of meaning, withdrawal of legitimation, alienation, breakdown in tradition etc. Thus for him, both the concept of communicative action and the lifeworld can serve as basic categories of social theory.

In this context, Habermas talks about the differentiation between the lifeworld and system aspects of society, *i.e.*, a “decoupling of system and lifeworld”. The rationalized lifeworld makes it possible the rise and growth of subsystems whose independent imperatives strike back at it in a destructive fashion.”<sup>16</sup> The “mediatization of the lifeworld” turns into a “colonization of the lifeworld”. Different aspects of reason demand a decolonization of the lifeworld not in the sense of insulating it “altogether from processes of modernization”, says McCarthy. There is a type of rationalization proper to the lifeworld. A communicatively rationalized lifeworld would have to develop institutions out of itself through which to set limits to the inner dynamic of media-streued subsystems and to subordinate them to decisions arrived at in unconstrained communication.”<sup>17</sup> In the first volume of *TCA*, Habermas talks about the different approaches to the problem of rationality and analyses the nature of communicative rationality. He is concerned with the relation between rationality and knowledge. This relation suggests that the rationality of an expression depends on the reliability of the knowledge embodied in it.

The concept of communicative rationality carries with it connotations based ultimately on the central experience of the unconstrained, unifying, consensus bringing force of argumentative speech, in which different participants overcome their merely subjective views and owing to the mutuality of rationally motivated conviction, assure themselves of both the unity of the objective world and the intersubjectivity of thier lifeworld.<sup>18</sup>

According the Habermas, an assertion can be called rational only if the speaker satisfies the conditions necessary to achieve the illocutionary goal of reaching an understanding about something in the world with at least one other participant in communication. Further he argues to show that a goal-directed action can be rational only if the actor satisfies the conditions necessary for realizing his intention to intervene successfully in

the world. Habermas exhibits how in the analysis of rationality one can see two positions: the realistic and phenomenological. The realistic position starts from the ontological presupposition of the world as the sum total of what is the case and clarifies the conditions or rational behaviour on this basis. On the other hand, the phenomenological gives a transcendental twist to the question and reflects on the fact that those who *behave* rationally must themselves presuppose an objective world. He quotes Max Black who suggests a series of conditions that an action must satisfy if it is to be counted as rational. Here rational actions basically have the character of goal-directed action.<sup>19</sup>

1. Only actions under actual or potential control by the agent are suitable for dianoetic appraisal.
2. Only actions directed toward some end-in-view can be reasonable or unreasonable.
3. Dianoetic appraisal is relative to the agent and to his choice of end-in-view.
4. Judgments of reasonableness are appropriate only where there is partial knowledge about the availability and efficacy of the means.
5. Dianoetic appraisal can always be supported by reasons.

In the other model, namely, phenomenological, there is no dependence on the goal directed action. He inquires into the conditions under which the unity of an objective world is constituted for the members of a community. "The world gains objectivity only through *counting* as one and the same world *for* a community of speaking and acting subjects."<sup>20</sup> The conception of the world is essential for communicatively acting subjects to reach understanding among themselves about what takes place in the world. Through this communicative practice, they assure common life-relations, of an intersubjectively shared lifeworld. This lifeworld is bounded by the totality of interpretations presupposed by the members as background knowledge. Thus for the phenomenologist, the concept of rationality must examine the conditions for communicatively achieved consensus.

Habermas explains how the concept of cognitive-instrumental rationality, which emerges from the realistic approach, can fit with the

concept of communicative rationality developed by the phenomenologist approach. This means that there can be internal relations between the capacity for decentred perception and the capacity for reaching intersubjective understanding about things and events on the other. "Well-grounded assertions and efficient actions are certainly a sign of rationality",<sup>21</sup> claims Habermas. Further he says: "The concept of communicative rationality which refers to an unclarified systematic interconnection of universal validity claims, can be adequately explicated only in terms of a theory of argumentation".<sup>22</sup> The argumentation is the type of speech in which participants thematize contested validity claims and attempt to vindicate or criticise them through arguments.

Habermas' notion of communicative competence, which he calls a "universal pragmatics", has the aim of systematically investigating the general structures which appear in every possible speech situation, which are themselves produced through the performance of specific types of linguistic expressions, and which serve to situate pragmatically the expressions generated by the linguistically competent speaker. Wittgenstein's understanding of language games, and Austin's and Searles' analysis of speech acts as well as Chomsky's analysis of linguistic competence—all these help Habermas to develop the theory that all linguistic communication presupposes a background consensus. Habermas argues that linguistic intersubjectivity is the medium within which claims to truth, in the cognitive sense as well as claims to rightness and authenticity, can be raised and arbitrated. We cannot jump out of the language with which our subjectivity is interwoven. For Habermas, the intersubjective dimension of speech cannot be disconnected from the cognitive in this way. This is because it is distinctive feature of articulated speech that even when an utterance takes the form of, say, a command or a question rather than of an assertion, it nevertheless possesses a content which can be put into propositional form. Even a request contains a reference to a state of affairs. Thus Habermas argues against Wittgenstein that the meaning constitutive aspect of language cannot be examined in separation from its knowledge-constitutive aspect. Habermas views that Wittgenstein overlooks the fact that the cognitive use of language reveals the dimension, which all speech acts, must be related. He says that in every elementary utterance there appears a

dependent proposition which depends upon the dominant proposition and which expresses the propositional content concerning which agreement is to be reached. This double structure of the speech-act mirrors the structure of speech in general: an understanding cannot be reached when both partners do not simultaneously occupy both levels-(a) the level of intersubjectivity, which a speaker and hearer speak with each other and (b) the level of objects or states of affairs concerning which they reach agreement. This means that without the propositional content, which is thematized in the cognitive use of speech, the interactive use of speech would also be impossible. Habermas suggests that it is precisely the one sided emphasis upon the interactive use of speech in Wittgenstein which led his later philosophy predominantly therapeutic cast.

Every act of speech, says Habermas, communicates simultaneously on two levels: it conveys a content which, can in principle, be cashed out in propositional form, but also establishes a metacommunication which specifies what he calls the "sense of application" of the content. Metacommunication consists in a system of reciprocal expectations on the part of the participants in dialogue. Habermas is fully aware that metacommunication cannot be determined at the level of explicit knowledge. Metacommunication can be objectified in a further act of speech, but this act of speech will in turn possess its own metacommunicative level, so that dialogue is characterized by an intersubjective dimension which cannot be simultaneously established and objectified. For Habermas, the relation of language, action and experience differ in principle in three forms of knowledge. Thus in the *TCA*, he explains how the notion of linguistic intersubjectivity operates and emphasizes how validity claims are referred to in intersubjective agreement.

Habermas believes that with the pragmatic logic of argumentation we can develop a concept of rationality. This is different and better than that of purposive rationality, which is tailored to the cognitive-instrumental.<sup>23</sup> This communicative rationality, Habermas says, recalls older ideas of logos, inasmuch as it brings along with it the connotations of a non-coercively unifying, consensus-building force of a discourse in which the participants overcome their at first subjectively biased views in favor of a rationally motivated agreement.<sup>24</sup> Habermas is of the view that communicative reason is expressed in a decentred understanding of the world.

## III

Is this theory of communicative rationality free from defects? It is not so, says Roderick.<sup>25</sup> He argues that one can question the role of communicative rationality as a normative foundation for a critical social theory. Habermas, according to Roderick, has avoided an approach that treats norms as simply external or internal. Habermas tries to avoid both absolutism and relativism, but in the process produces a tension in his work, which his conception of rationality does not resolve. In his attempt to find a normative foundation for critical social theory, Habermas is trapped. The foundation is either external or internal, *i.e.*, "it is either in society and history, or it is not". "This ambivalence cannot be removed, nor the external-internal problem solved, as long as Habermas continues to attempt to find a 'normative foundation' that is neither simply internal nor external, yet 'partially' both."<sup>26</sup> Another important criticism also comes from Roderick. He questions Habermas' usage of communicative rationality for critical social theory. This is the problem of theory and practice. How does Habermas use the notion of communicative rationality for social theory? For example, how is it going to be helpful for the working class? It is said that Habermas is led to present an harmonistic account of the capitalist social system, which ignores the internal problems of both the state and the economy. Moreover, according to the critics, Habermas's communicative rationality is itself the expression of a particular culture, society and period of history.

Though both the criticisms are important in the context of communicative rationality and social theory, it seems to me that Habermas himself has answered these criticisms. It is true that Habermas tries to establish a normative foundation for critical social theory. Norms according to him, are neither external *i.e.*, transcendental nor internal, *i.e.* immanent. This would avoid the problem of treating norms as conceptual or contextual. This does not mean that he has altogether rejected both. Norms are partially transcendent and partially immanent, says Habermas. This means that the communicative rationality takes care of the society and history. Similarly the criticism about his usage of communicative rationality for social theory can be answered. Habermas is concerned about the rationalization of the

lifeworld. In order to understand the communicative action, Habermas introduces the ideal of the lifeworld. It relates the concept to the concept of society. For him, both the concept of communicative action and the lifeworld can serve as basic categories of social theory. The criticism namely that his concept of communicative rationality is an expression of a particular culture and society can also be answered. It must be understood that though it appears that notion of communicative rationality represent only the European culture, in reality it is not. It is equally applicable to other cultures also.<sup>27</sup> In a multicultural society, the impact of it is clearly visible and hence one cannot conclude that it is the expression of a particular culture. Thus Habermas' concept of communicative reason, is an attempt to show that the possibility of the social is opened by the basic categories of language. The universal pragmatics of communicative action, according to him, is originally inscribed in the structures of the lifeworld and hence all presupposition of all forms of moral, instrumental, strategic and productive activity are the transcendental forms through which communication is opened and sustained.

#### NOTES

1. Richard Rorty, *Philosophy and the Mirror of Nature*, (Princeton: Princeton University Press, 1979), p. 390.
2. *Ibid.*, p. 174.
3. Michel Foucault, "Space, Knowledge, and Power," in Paul Rainbow (ed.) *The Foucault Reader*, (New York : Pantheon Books, 1984), p.249.
4. Marcuse, "Philosophy and Critical Theory" in *Negations*, (Boston, 1968), pp. 135 and 147.
5. *Ibid.*, pp. 223-5
6. Habermas, *TCA*, vol. I tr. Thomas McCarthy, (Polity Press, 1984), p. 315.
7. Habermas, *Postmetaphysical Thinking*, tr. W.M. Hohengarten, (Polity Press, 1995), pp.46-7
8. *TCA*, vol. I pp. 17-18
9. Habermas, *The Philosophical Discourse of Modernity*, Introduction by

Thomas McCarthy, (Polity Press,) p. vii.

10. *TCA*, vol. I, p. 372
11. *Ibid.*, p. 101.
12. Habermas, "Dialectics of Rationalisation", *Telos*, vol. 49, p.16
13. *TCA*, vol. I, p.397.
14. *Ibid.* vol. I, pp. 17-18
15. *Ibid.* Translator's Introduction, pp.xxv
16. *TCA*, vol. II, p. 277
17. *TCA*, vol. I, Translator's Introduction, pp.xxxix.
18. *Ibid.* p. 10
19. *Ibid.*, p. 12
20. *Ibid.*, pp. 12-13
21. *Ibid.*, p. 18
22. *Ibid.*,
23. *Ibid.*, p. 314
24. *Ibid.*, p. 315
25. Rick Roderick, *Habermas and the Foundations of Critical Theory*, (Macmillan).
26. *Ibid.*, p. 165.
27. In my dialogue with Habermas at Frankfurt on this, I asked him why his discussion on "ideal speech situation" or "communicative rationality" always centres round the European society and not with the third world countries. Habermas replied that what he has said about the European society on the above can be equally applicable to other societies also.

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