

Communicative Action and the Other of Justice

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Abstract: Communicative action is the coordination mechanism of social actions. However, being a social action itself, it needs coordination in case of obstruction. Such obstruction is especially frequent in late modern constellation burdened with the “individualization of life forms” (Beck) and the “dissolution of a mutual ground” (Lash). I call the mechanism capable of overcoming such obstruction the “coordination of action coordination.” In the following essay, this notion is elaborated. Firstly, on the level of formal pragmatics, situations that implicate action coordination are specified. Secondly, the coordinating mechanism of action coordination is elaborated in the frames of the Habermasian theory as the harmonization of different concepts of justice underlying action coordination. Thirdly, a paradoxical aspect of this solution is introduced, which originates from the strict linguistic-intentional character of Habermas’s theory. Fourthly, based on Levinas’s pre-intentional ethical phenomenology, an alternative description of the coordination of action coordination is elaborated. Finally, the broader theoretical consequences of the new solution are detailed.

Keywords: communicative action, Habermas, Levinas