

The Forward Eagle

News, Reviews & Elisions
Of Mutual Interest
Compiled Weekly by Tim Forward
for
The Riverdale Senior Services Center
Bronx, NY

Current events

TWO THEORIES

The Frankfurt School is an institution of philosophy and sociology with windows that open. It is associated with the Institute for Social Research founded in 1923 at the University of Frankfurt am Main.

Formed during the Weimar Republic in the European interwar period, the first generation of the Frankfurt School was composed of intellectuals, academics, and political dissidents dissatisfied with the socio-economic systems emerging in Europe in the 1920s and later in the 1930s.

The Frankfurt theorists proposed that existing social theory was unable to explain the turbulent political factionalism, reactionary politics and National Socialism in Germany. The Institute for Social Research and the Frankfort School sought out alternative paths to social development.

What united the disparate members of the school was a shared commitment to the project of human emancipation. Students and teachers pursued a synthesis of traditional philosophy, sociology and psychology.

Critical Theory is a social critique meant to affect change in society.

The work of the Frankfurt School is now understood in the context of the intellectual and practical objectives of Critical Theory. Critical Theory is a social critique meant to affect social change and realize intellectual emancipation, by way of enlightenment that is not dogmatic. Critical Theory analyzes the significance of the ruling understandings or the dominant ideologies generated in society that happen in the world outside of the mind.

According to the concept of cultural hegemony, the dominant ideology is a ruling narrative that provides the justification of the power-structure of a society.

The theory acknowledges that the story told through the ruling understandings conceals as much as it reveals about society. The task of the Frankfurt School was to study the social conditions which had not been previously addressed.

The Frankfurt School contrasted critical theory with traditional theory. Traditional theory applied a positivistic sense to the sciences, an observational mode, which finds and establishes scientific laws about the physical world.

Social sciences differ from traditional or natural sciences in that the laws of social science cannot be derived from experience alone. The researcher's observations of the social experiences are always filtered through biases hidden within the research itself.

Social research operates within an historical and ideological context. Critical



Institute for Social Research, Frankfurt am Main, Germany

Theory must test conformity to the limitations of the research and to the facts of the case.

The facts, which our senses present to us, are presented in two ways: through the character of the object perceived; and through the character of the perceiving organ. Both are not without preconditions. Both are shaped by human activity.

The methods of investigation applicable to the social sciences cannot imitate methods applicable to the natural sciences, in which inherent prejudices separate scientific theory from social life. Natural science seeks a logic that is always true without consideration of the ongoing human activity taking place in a social world.

Communicative Action Theory centers on the idea that the goal of human interaction is mutual understanding.

The theory of Communicative Action centers on the idea that the goal of human interaction, particularly communication, is mutual understanding. This contrasts with Strategic Action, where individuals aim to influence others to achieve partisan goals.

Communicative Action is based on shared understanding and reason. Adherents believe it is crucial for social integration and the development of a just and democratic society.

In essence, Communicative Action Theory states that a society's well-being depends on the extent to which its members communicate and engage in public discourse. The practice of reasoned debate fosters mutual understanding and the development of shared norms and values within a society.

Word of the week

sapience

/'seɪpiəns/
noun

1. The ability to apply knowledge, experience, understanding, common sense or insight.
2. The quality of being wise, or wisdom. “When voters are choosing a candidate, they usually hope for one with at least a degree of sapience.”
3. Other form: sapiences

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This paper is offered as a review of recent
topics taken up by the current events
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Center.

Please join us at the Center for Ageless
Living, 2600 Netherland Avenue, Bronx, NY
each Monday at 1:00 o'clock in the afternoon
for Current Events with Tim.

This week’s article was excerpted and
edited from:
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&
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