

Intellectual Directions of the Frankfurt School of Criticism¹

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ABSTRACT

The Frankfurt School of Criticism is a school with a critical tendency that was established in the thirties of the twentieth century and reached its climax in the year 1968, it was named after the Institute for Social Research in Frankfurt as its center.

This school was distinguished by the multiplicity of its intellectual directions, which, despite their differences, agreed on their criticism of the totalitarian industrial society and the various contradictions it produced.

INTRODUCTION

The Frankfurt Critical School constituted an important turning point in the course of modern European thought, as this school had a great and effective impact in formulating a critical theory that deals with sociology, philosophy, politics and culture as intertwined dimensions in the process of forming and studying social theories, knowledge horizons and civilization that accompanied the developments and transformations that the European community witnessed in the fields of economics and politics.

The most important feature of this school of thought was determined by the fact that it took criticism as a method and tried to carry out a radical critical practice of Western civilization in order to reconsider its foundations and results in the light of the major fundamental transformations produced by Western modernity, especially the lights, which is a fundamental turning point in the course of this modernity, and it also played an important role in monitoring the various (pathological) symptoms known to contemporary Western societies such as reification, alienation, loss of the individual's status, the crisis of meaning and others, on this one hand, on the other hand, the school was distinguished by its different orientations to the post-modern period -

(Habermas' direction) - from its orientations in the thirties of the twentieth century.

From here, the hypothesis of our research marked (the intellectual directions of the Frankfurt School of Criticism) was based on the fact that the Frankfurt School included different directions, however, all these directions agreed on their criticism of the totalitarian industrial society, and they also sought to achieve one goal, which is to work to change reality to become more humane and to find a picture of the mind that fits with this human mind through its attempt to develop a critical theory of society that connects thinking and practice with each other in a dialectical way.

TO PROVE THE RESEARCH HYPOTHESIS, WE ASK THE FOLLOWING QUESTIONS

- 1- How did the Frankfurt School of Criticism arise? What are the most important stages it went through?
- 2- What are the most important intellectual proposals of the Frankfurt School of Criticism?
- 3- What are the most prominent intellectual directions of the Frankfurt School of Criticism?

In light of the questions that were raised in the research hypothesis, the topic was divided into three sections, in addition to the introduction and conclusion, in the

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first topic, we dealt with: The Frankfurt Critical School arose, the second topic: the intellectual theses of the Frankfurt Critical School, the third and final topic, in which we dealt with the directions of the Frankfurt Critical School.

THE FIRST TOPIC: THE EMERGENCE OF THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL

It is a school of philosophical thought with a critical tendency that was established in the thirties of the twentieth century and reached its climax in the year 1968, it was called by this name to take the Institute for Social Research^{2*} in (Frankfurt) as its center, and it gathered philosophers such as: (Max Horkheimer), (Herbert Marcuse), (Jürgen Habermas), (Theodor Adorno) and others³.

One of the most important foundations on which this school is based is criticism, which is the art of judgment, i.e. separating facts and extracting the correct from the wrong, it is a rational arbitration tool whose goal is to create awareness and restore respect for the human self, the pioneers of the Frankfurt School started in their philosophical and social criticism from their rejection of the existing social system and its ideology, and they were not satisfied with criticizing ideas and theories, but they moved from criticizing ideas to criticizing society and its institutions, especially industrial and capitalism, as well as the means of communication that support that consumer society that uproots individuals from their roots and makes them gasp for the luster of civilization pseudo⁴.

The stages that the school went through can be divided into four important stages:

- 1- **The Grunberg stage:** It is the first stage, which was represented in the year (1930) during the period of (Grunberg) taking over the management of the institute, as the school's proposals were characterized by a revolutionary Marxist

character, this was evident from the lecture given by (Grunberg) at the inauguration of the institute, as he showed a kind of sympathy with the Marxist perspective, he declared his opposition to the existing socio-economic system and his intellectual affiliation with Marxism, but he did not forget to stress that the Marxist orientation should not be understood in any partisan political sense, but only in the academic scientific sense⁵.

- 2- **Horkheimer stage:** (Horkheimer) officially took over the presidency of the Institute in the year (1931), the second stage of the Frankfurt School begins, which is called the stage of maturity, as it sought to change the school's methodology and the philosophy of its analysis of reality, despite Horkheimer's theoretical admission that the project of his institute is historical materialism, in reality he has made philosophy the main subject of critical social theory⁶. In addition to the interest of the (Horkheimer) stage in the philosophical aspect, it was characterized by a growing interest in psychological research, especially Freudian psychoanalysis, which was mixed with Marxist thought, in the year (1932) Horkheimer wrote an article on (history and psychology), stressing that (individual psychology is of great importance in understanding history)⁷.

In this way, Horkheimer wanted to open the Institute in his era to other horizons of knowledge such as Freudianism and phenomenology, and to pay more attention to the cultural and ideological aspects in line with the social changes that afflicted Germany, Europe and the West during that period, which was indicated by (Martin Gay) by saying: "If it is possible to say that the institute was concerned mainly during its early years with analyzing the socio-economic structures of bourgeois society, then it directed its attention

^{2*} The Institute for Social Research was officially established on February 3, 1923 at Goethe University in Frankfurt, Germany, at first, the institute envisaged embracing the socialist social research that the German university closed its doors to, and the institute used to organize a number of intellectuals who did not adopt socialist theses, they refused to join the German Communist Party after the failure of the (1918) revolution, they are determined to crystallize a deep examination of the foundations of critical theory, the institute was initially supervised by (Karl Grunberg) - a professor of law and political science -, in the year (1931) (Max Horkheimer) was installed as president of the institute and (Theodore Adorno) was appointed as his assistant professor, and with the cooperation of (Horkheimer and Adorno) he took the name of critical theory in gloss, as attention was no longer focused only on the criticism of political economy as a tool for analyzing capitalist society as it was seen

Marxism, however, relied on a synthetic approach based on linking philosophy with the social and human sciences. Phil Slater, *The Frankfurt School: Its Origin and Meaning: A Marxist Perspective*, Translated by: (Khalil Kalfat), The Supreme Council of Culture, Cairo, 2004, p. 15.

³ Abeer Al-Atrash, What do you know about the Frankfurt School, on 4/16/2015: www.makaba.amma.com.

⁴ Ibrahim Al-Haidari, *The Frankfurt School and Its Critical Theory*, on 1/6/2015: www.alhayat.com.

⁵ Hammad Hassan, *The Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School: Marcuse as a Model*, Dar Al-Wafa'a Our Printing and Publishing House, Egypt, 2003, p. 101.

⁶ Ibid, p. 104.

⁷ Ibid, p. 105.

after the year (1930) to its cultural superstructures"⁸

- 3- **The Diaspora stage**^{9□□}: It is the third stage (1935-1949) that was characterized by the activity of the pioneers in the United States of America (exile), the ideas of the school came to reflect two basic dimensions:

The first: studying and analyzing the internal conditions in Germany during the Nazi period and striving to discover social myths, social research has been abolished because sociology is able to reveal the true intentions of German society¹⁰.

The second: the nature of the divergence of interests and the relationship groups of interest and pressure and their role in making internal and external decisions, during this period, many of the founders of this school were killed, and some of them emigrated to the United States of America or to Europe¹¹.

- 4- **The post-Horkheimer stage:** the stage of decline and renewal: With the death of (Horkheimer) and (Adorno) and the dormancy of the radical student movement in the early seventies, an important stage in the history of the Frankfurt School approached, as it ceased to some extent from existing as a form of Marxist thought, and its relationship with Marxism became increasingly weak, it no longer has any connection with political movements, but on the other hand, it remained with some of the main ideas of critical theory continuing to exercise its influence on social thought, but with an important difference: these ideas were presented and developed in the past decade through the work of thinkers, each of whom is independent in itself, in the forefront of them (Habermas), (Albert Filmer) and (Alfred Schmidt)¹².

THE SECOND TOPIC: THE INTELLECTUAL THESES OF THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL OF CRITICISM

The Frankfurt School was known for many intellectual issues, perhaps the most important of which are:

- 1- **Criticism of tendency positivism and empiricism:** The first generation of the Frankfurt School directed its sharp criticism of the excessive scientific tendency and its patterns that turned into ideologies based on epistemological certainty and faith beliefs, in their view, it has become closed knowledge systems that depend on codified organizational forms of social life, through mechanisms for understanding natural phenomena on social phenomena, in the sense that they have become totalitarian ideologies that regulate human-to-human relations, and human-to-things, which prompted the pioneers of the Frankfurt School to monitor the transformation of rationality as an ideology, and to try to uncover the sources of domination in it and fight its authoritative tendency¹³.
- 2- **Criticism of Classical Marxism and Stalinist Dogmatism:** Marx divides the problem of social consciousness^{14□□□} into two levels: a- the problem of ideological awareness, b- The problem of objective consciousness, and the problem that the critical theory sees lies in Marx's assertion that there is no knowledge without an interest, any knowledge, whether ideological or scientific, is conditional first and foremost on an interest that it defends and for specific values, however, (Marx) in his theory of interest does not refer mostly to social interests that he considers private, such as class interests (interests of profit or ownership of the means of production) as necessary conditions - that is, without them, no expression or representation takes place - and at the same time as defining conditions because

⁸ Tom Bottommore, Frankfurt School, translated by: (Saad Hejres), Dar Oya, Libya, 2004, pp. 17, 18.

^{9□□} In the year (1933) the founders of the school migrated to (Geneva) with the arrival of (Hitler) to power due to the unstable political situation in Germany, which had a noticeable impact on the school, in particular, the growth of Nazism and its National Socialist Party, which became more of a threat to the school, therefore, the founders of the school decided to transfer the Institute of Social Research to another country, indeed, the institute immigrated to (Geneva), and then to (New York) in the year (1935), and with the beginning of the fifties, the school returned again to Germany. Tom Bottommore, previously mentioned, p. 56.

¹⁰ See: Alaa Taher, the Frankfurt School: From Horkheimer to Habermas, Publications of the National Development Center, Beirut, D. T, p. 66.

¹¹ Abdullah Mohamed Abdel-Rahman, Theory in Sociology: The Classical Theory, University Knowledge House, Egypt, 2003, p. 43.

¹² The Frankfurt School, its inception, stages, and the most important media, on 6/17/2016: www.alg17.com

¹³ Abdullah Al-Mutairi, starting from the Frankfurt School, on 14/12/2006: www.alriyadh.com

^{14□□□} For more information on the subject of social consciousness in Karl Marx, see: Karim Musa Hussein, Marxist Features in the Philosophy of Thomas Kuhn, Al-Ustad Magazine, Issue 203, 2012, pp. 1298-1299.

through them ideas and theories are determined¹⁵, thus, the hypothesis of social interests does not help us understand the possibility of moving from ideological awareness to objective scientific awareness¹⁶.

- 3- **Criticism of instrumental rationalism:** The critical theory criticized Enlightenment rationalism, as the Frankfurt School thinkers found that in order to understand the concept of rationality, it is necessary to proceed from the philosophical context, whose most prominent representatives are the French philosopher (René Descartes) and the Englishman (Francis Bacon), as (Descartes) is the founder of the beginning of rationality, because he worked to establish everything by returning it to (the self) through (the Cogito), and he formulated it in his famous phrase (I think, therefore I exist)¹⁷. The rationality that crystallized in Western philosophical thought since the era of Enlightenment after it is the intellectual and historical reference frame of Western civilization, it was associated with the idea of controlling nature and then over man as well, after generalizing the scientific-technical model in order to include and assimilate it, as he became living in alienation and objectification, he lost his freedom and autonomy, and in exchange for instrumental rationality, the thinkers of the Frankfurt School put instrumental-critical rationality in order to give a new breath to Western philosophical thought so that it resumes its critical tasks, critical rationality is based on making criticism the main method for looking at things, situations and ideas, therefore, it is not reduced to the cognitive aspect, but also to the tangible social reality¹⁸.

THE THIRD TOPIC: THE DIRECTIONS OF THE FRANKFURT SCHOOL OF CRITICISM

The Frankfurt School represented different philosophical and social direction, namely:

1. **Horkheimer and Adorno direction:** It is the direction that is represented by the dialectical critical approach, which is an approach that aims

to unify theory with practical practice and present a critical theory to society that can stand before the idea of domination that leads to violence, it seeks to make critical thought liberal and illiberal at the same time, Horkheimer worked on developing critical theory in a group of studies entitled (Traditional Theory and Critical Theory), as he renewed the material dimension of critical tendency he proceeded from the fact that the life of society is the product of work, which led him to review the theory of criticism of ideology according to two points¹⁹:

The first point / is to contain the intellectual formation of (Karl Marx), as (Marx's) criticism of ideology constituted a basic starting point for (Horkheimer) in his criticism of ideology, as both considered that the criticism of ideology is a necessary step on the path to the proletarian revolution.

The second point / It started after this revolution seemed to (Horkheimer) far-fetched, and as a result (Horkheimer) went to focus in his criticism of ideology on the argument of reason with a social dimension, crystallizing his new position through his criticism of the position of (Karl Mannheim) on ideology, however, the rise of totalitarian ideologies led (Horkheimer) to abandon the revolution and to settle scores with Marxism and with traditional theory based on the arguments of critical reason, which is what established the mental formation in (Horkheimer's) thought in his quest for a critique of ideology. This quest concluded that (Horkheimer), despite his criticism of Marxism and (Marx), continued his critical position of ideology, considering it as Marx considered it a false consciousness and a thought that ignores its relations with reality, as a thought that obscures reality.

As for (Adorno), he believes that the contemplation of the Stalinist regime shows that ideology was (a means of persecution), because in the West it no longer has clear features for us to get acquainted with, as it has become more capable of disguising and dissolving without any relationship with the truth, scientific ideologies

¹⁵ Ibid.

¹⁶ Ibid.

¹⁷ Andre Lalande, Lalande's Philosophical Encyclopedia, translated by: (Khalil Ahmed Khalil), 2nd edition, Part 2, Owaidan Publishing, Beirut, 2001, pp. 120-121.

¹⁸ Kamal Bou Mounir, The Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School: From Max Horkheimer to Axel Honneth, Arab House for Science Publishers, Beirut, 2011, p. 32.

¹⁹ Max Horkheimer and Theodore Adriano, The Enlightenment Controversy, translated by: (George Katoura), New Book House, Beirut, 2006, pg. 45.

declare that there is nothing better than what is, and there is no need to search for what should be, as reality is what is, this culture is nothing but propaganda, and soon, as Adorno sees it, it gradually turns into terrorism when it works to establish the status quo as an inevitable matter or an alternative to it, in contrast, critical theory relies on not neglecting the analysis of historical reality because it is closely related to it, so that it can link theory with practice, if practice affects representations, theory also affects perception, and although it is constantly looking for ways to transcend society, it must avoid falling into the trap of becoming an ideology in turn or turning into a ready-to-use formula²⁰.

Proceeding from the foregoing, (Horkheimer and Adorno) reviewed the foundations for the formation and activation of critical theory according to its previous position on ideology and on the propositions of (Marx) and Marxism, they said: The critical theory in the first place is not a theory of knowledge or a theory of truth, although it is part of the continuous attempts that aim to reach it, based on its interests in the philosophical aspect of social relations, it is therefore a serious attempt to find a theoretical alternative²¹, and my clear criticism of standing before the traditional intellectual and philosophical currents that exercised types of authority that aimed to voluntarily undermine the history of philosophy, what forced the theory to retreat, and it was based on a correct methodological basis, which is the dialectical link between theory and practice, as (Horkheimer) stressed that the dialectic of theory and practice must be internal, even if the theory denies all self-understanding and at the moment of formation of interest, but the critical theory must also dispense at the same time with analogies and categorical judgments that raise interests or are linked to them.

Likewise, it must dispense with all mediation, because the value of a critical theory of society is not determined by the formal separation of the truth, but rather by the initiation, at a specific historical moment, of carrying out its duty

towards the social forces, and taking such a position aims mainly at directing self-knowledge towards society and toward a positive rational interest, this enabled it to be a social philosophy whose goal is to criticize society and define it through criticism of the existing system, revealing aspects of its imbalances, and rejecting it if it is negative, in other words, the exposing of the bourgeois industrial society and its technological rationality and its associated ideology, because the criticism of society is at the same time a self-criticism of the ideas that emanate from it²².

2. The psychological - analytical direction²³□□□□: the views of Erich Fromm and the new Freudians²⁴□□□□

The philosophy of this trend is based on Marxist premises in psychoanalysis and was represented by (Erich Fromm). As he tried to integrate psychological analysis with Marxist theory despite his disagreement with it, just as he criticized the perceptions of psychologists about (the spirit of the masses) and saw the necessity of separating man from his social conditions, therefore, he found it necessary to study Marxism, understand it, determine its foundations, and then develop it based on the concepts of human nature and freedom, in the year (1931) Fromm wrote an article on (Psychoanalysis and Politics) in the Journal of (Applied Psychology) that sparked a wide scientific debate, as it was his attempt to develop Freudianism through Marxist epistemology²⁵. Fromm believed that Marxism was wrong when it omitted the importance of the psychological factor of the possessive instinct, just as Marx did not attach importance to psychological premises as he does today, according to Marxism, man has basic motives such as hunger, thirst, etc., he seeks to satisfy them, but the instinct of possession and the desire for profit is a product of social relations, and for this reason Marxism needs a psychological reference, and the lost link that links the

²⁰ Ibid, same page.

²¹ Muhammad Salem Saad Allah, The Philosophical Foundations of Post-Structural Criticism, Dar Al-Hiwar for Publishing and Distribution, Lattakia, 2007, pp. 217-218.

²² Ibid, same page.

²³□□□□ For more on the psycho-analytical trend of Freud, see: M. Huda Abd Ali Hattab and M. M. Suhaib Kamal Mahmoud Al-Kamal, the importance of the supernatural theory of the psychologist Sigmund Freud in the novel (Crossing) by the American writer Nila Larsen: a psychological analytical study, Al-Ustadh Journal for

Human and Social Sciences, Issue 1, Volume 59, K1, 2020, pp. 45-56.

²⁴□□□□ Neo-Freudians: One of the names that were given in the psychology literature to follow the Freudian method in psychoanalysis by psychologists who were contemporary with him or who came after him, despite the different points of view they hold, among the most important Neo-Freudian: Carl Jung, Adler, Erich Fromm, Harry Sullivan..Etc. See: www.wikipedia.org

²⁵ Ibrahim Al-Haidari, Frankfurt School and Psychoanalysis: Fromm between Marx and Freud, on 1/7/2015: www.maaber.org.

superstructure with the economic basis²⁶, (Fromm) confirmed that the dominant trend in European societies is based on generalizing its experiences to all societies, as in the subject of (the Oedipus complex) and others that are related to societies with a patriarchal tendency only, emphasizing the relationship between the spirit of capitalism and Oedipal behavior at a time when such ideas were unusual, with this relationship, Fromm linked European rationality with the instinct of possession, puritanism and repression on the one hand, and the subjugation of the social system on the other²⁷, accordingly, the critical theory crystallized in Fromm's thought after reading the book "Natural Right to Mother" by (Johann Jacob Bachofen), which was published in the year (1861), a shift took place in Fromm's thought, and he gradually changed his position on Freud's theory, especially his position on the libido and the Oedipus complex, through his clinical experiences on the one hand, and the development of his theory in social psychology on the other hand, (Fromm) cared about reading (Bachofen) from a socialist point of view and focused on the societies in which the right of mother prevails, and not on the historical importance of those societies that have successively throughout history, the other aspect of Fromm's increasing interest in Bachofen's theory is due to his declining admiration for Freud's theory, in *The World* (1935), Fromm announced the reasons that prompted him to take this position on Freud, saying: (Freud is a prisoner of his bourgeois morality and patriarchal values, and the weight he places on childhood experiences in psychoanalysis influences psychoanalytic notes and pushes people to deviate from their direction or divert their attention, in the event that the psychoanalyst does not take a critical stance towards the values of society, or when the psychoanalyst contradicts the desires of people, he will meet resistance from them²⁸, but the truth, according to Fromm, is:

(The ideal tolerance that the psychoanalyst is supposed to possess should be directed against social injustice, but when the decision became in the hands of the middle class, it turned into a moral mask, and it did not come out of thinking

and saying to action. Bourgeois tolerance remains contradictory continuously, if it is conscious it is relative and neutral, and if it is unconscious then it definitely stands at the service of the existing system, and just as tolerance has two aspects as well to psychological analysis, as it hides behind its neutral facade sometimes sadistic cases²⁹.

3. **Herbert Marcuse's direction:** The essence of this trend is represented in rejecting the existing oppressive society, and revolting against it through its emphasis on the decisive and revolutionary role of the mind in human life and not looking at society from a one-dimensional vision³⁰.

The intellectual beginnings of (Marcuse) were formed since the mid-twenties of the twentieth century in Germany, when he wrote texts that cooperated in some of them with the philosopher (Martin Heidegger) and opposed the latter in others, before he belonged to the Frankfurt School to work on radically activating the reformist tendency within both Marxism and Freudian³¹, throughout his life and his intellectual path, Marcuse remained faithful to his beginnings, and this was embodied in the year (1955) in one of his most important books (*Sex and Civilization*), during which he worked to reconnect the thought of (Karl Marx) with the thought of (Freud)³², Marcuse enriched the critical theory with actions that tended to criticize all forms of tyranny and authoritarianism, foremost of which are technical authoritarianism and ideological tyranny, it focused mainly on analyzing the concept of oppression and its cycle in the social structure, and the impact of political action on directing and spreading it, this was done for him, through the analysis of two systems: The dialectical materialism of (Marx) and sexual repression and the libido element of (Freud). He wanted to highlight the relationship between the act of repression on the one hand, and the act of social movement on the other hand, by proving³³:

- 1- The material dialectic has always been accompanied by a biological dialectic, in which the conflict existed between the principle of

²⁶ Ibid.

²⁷ Ibid.

²⁸ Ibid.

²⁹ Ibid.

³⁰ Frankfurt School, the free encyclopedia, Wikipedia, on 15/7/2016: www.wikipedia.org.

³¹ Ibrahim Al-Haidari, *The Critical Theory of the Frankfurt School of Criticism*, a previously mentioned source.

³² Muhammad Judeh, *The Concept of Repression according to Freud and Marcuse*, edited by: (Fathi Al-Raqiq), Dar Al-Farabi, Beirut, 1994, pg. 159.

³³ Muhammad Salem Saad Allah, a previously mentioned source.

(hydration) and the principle of pleasure (practice).

2- The duality between civilization's promises of human progress and the availability of opportunities for living and happiness, and its growth through the introduction and diversification of production tools, and the loss of humanity.

3- The exacerbation of the conflict between the oppressive libid element and the maturation of the class struggle.

Marcuse presented new critical data in each of his books, which revolve around one logic, which is re-reading the text and Marxist philosophy, and an attempt to invest the social and revolutionary data in it to formulate a contemporary social theory based on the freedom of the individual and the liberation of his rationality, and the tendency of all forms of authoritarianism, oppression, the dictatorship of opinions, the reactionary regimes, and the supremacy of institutions.

4. **Jurgen Habermas direction:** (Habermas) is considered one of the most important pioneers of the third generation of the Frankfurt School. He was interested in studying the late (post-industrial) capitalist societies with a technocratic ideology as formulated in his communicative critical theory that creates rational solutions to meet the challenges of capitalism, globalization and postmodernism³⁴, through his theory - communicative criticism - he aimed to build a rational, humane world organized through pluralistic democracy that is based on understanding, communication and continuous rational dialogue to liberate from the instrumental mind that dominates the European mind³⁵, (Habermas) meant communicative action: (that interaction formulated by symbols and subject to applicable standards, which define the aspirations of mutual behaviors so that they must be understood and recognized by at least two active persons)³⁶, however, it is this interaction shaped by linguistic symbols that guarantees - according to Habermas - access to agreed-upon facts

between the dialogue parties, bearing in mind that dialogue in its social context is a tool to eliminate or avoid (pathological) cases that afflict society, and to achieve the social integration of its members without violence or extremism, in order to reach agreed-upon facts in which dialogue plays a central role in order to avoid social conflicts that threaten society, and this is what makes dialogue highly effective, the communication project, according to Habermas, does not consist in acknowledging an absolute truth or justifying something chosen, but rather in striving to reach a decision, choice, or evaluation by equal interlocutors,³⁷ Without pressure or coercion, and in his talk about Marxism, he considered it a thought with enormous critical capacity, but Marxism must be redirected by looking at it on the basis of a critical structure and not a closed dogmatic belief, he abstracted this idea in the term (Marxism as criticism), Marxism, according to him, is not a scientific, materialistic thought embodied in the formation of a pattern of vision of history only, nor is it a continuous measurement of the curves of total production and its turns within the continuity of fatalism, rather, it is more important than that because it presents scientific criteria and standards that seek to define and monitor the superstructure of society, hence, Marxism, in his view, is not only an ideology or a political belief, but rather a continuous energy for criticism³⁸, despite his closeness to Marxism, he differed with (Marx) in a fundamental matter: he saw that (Marx) made a mistake in giving material production the first place in defining man in his historical vision as a development of social forms and patterns, on the one hand, on the other hand, (Habermas) accused positivism of that, despite his strictness, the value in it is in favor of the status quo, it ignores the theoretical concerns of science as a tool to achieve human liberation from the necessities of nature and social structure, with a philosophical goal as well, which is to restore the relationship between theory and practice on a rational basis, he also mentioned that reason, according to the philosophers of the Enlightenment, was a weapon in the battle against illusion, superstition, and tyranny, evil was a

³⁴ Habermas, *The Philosophical Saying of Modernity*, translated by: (Fatima Al-Juyoushi), Publications of the Ministry of Culture, Damascus, 1995, p. 8.

³⁵ Fathi Al-Treiki and Rashida Al-Treiki, *Philosophy of Modernity*, National Development Center, Beirut, 1992, p. 20.

³⁶ Quoted from: Kamal Boumni, a previously mentioned source, p. 118.

³⁷ Hassan Mosaddegh, *Jürgen Habermas and the Frankfurt School: Communicative Critical Theory*, Arab Cultural Center, Beirut, 2005, p. 121.

³⁸ Hamil Hussein Hassi, Frankfurt School: www.wings.ahlamontada.net

companion to error, while goodness was itself the truth and the liberation of man and what is good for him, and therefore the application was closely related to theory, philosophy or abstract scientific research, but with the growth of science and technology and the expansion of the bureaucratic organization of the industrial society, that bond took on an evil and inhuman character, and the mind took on a practical character, rationalism has turned into a tool to achieve maximum efficiency for civil society institutions run by that bureaucracy, and reason has thus lost its liberating role, and is no longer a tool for discovering the truth, or a source of meanings and value, this is when positivism confirmed that its function as a prevailing philosophy is to provide a pictorial and objective description of the world as it is, and knowledge as it is, and not their criticism³⁹.

5. **Axel Honneth direction:** It is the trend represented by the German philosopher (Axel Honneth), who is the representative of the third generation of the Frankfurt School, perhaps the distinguished position occupied by this philosopher is due to the fact that he was able, with great merit, to carry out a philosophical theorization of the concept of (recognition), especially after the publication of his basic book (The Struggle for Recognition) in the year (1993), it should be noted here when (Honneth) focuses on the social, moral and psychological aspects, such as social injustice, marginalization, alienation and objectification that individuals suffer from and are defined by groups in contemporary societies⁴⁰, what Honneth affirms is that it is not possible in any way to achieve human dignity and guarantee his basic and legitimate rights morally, legally and politically, except through the principle of recognition, in this context, the formulation of confession is of great importance to him, and plays a central role represented in rebuilding the network of social relations in order to alleviate suffering, social and political injustice, inequality between people, and all forms of contempt and (social pathologies), and thus achieving the values of justice, human rights and freedom within the framework of mutual recognition⁴¹, and despite (Honneth) being

influenced by and praising the theory of (communicative action)⁴², he has two basic reservations towards his teacher (Habermas):

The first reservation / is represented by (Honneth) in saying that the communicative model is incapable of explaining the lived experience of individuals in a comprehensive or total manner, because linguistic communication is only an aspect of social interaction, hence, it was necessary to expand the communicative model so that we can deepen our understanding of the moral experience that individuals go through by searching in (non-linguistic aspects) of social communication in a deeper way than the model of linguistic compatibility and the related forms of interaction such as movements and physical actions⁴³

The second reservation / is represented in saying that (Habermas) has ignored what he called (Honneth) the contentious or conflictual character that exists or prevails in the structure of society, which determines the social and moral lifestyle that characterizes it, instead of focusing on returning social interactions to communicative understanding, these interactions must be linked to tensions, conflicts, and social conflicts, ((This is because we are unable to reach a true understanding of social life, except that it is the field of social conflicts, and this basic aspect is precisely what the critical theory and Jurgen Habermas have ignored as well))⁴⁴.

We conclude from the foregoing that (Honneth) does not completely reject the concept of (communicative act), but rather refuses to reduce this act to the model of linguistic communication, and therefore he worked to enrich and expand the concept of communicative interaction by searching for verbs that indicate the recognition of others to us as individuals and groups, note that these acts may take many forms, the most important of which, according to (Honneth), are signs and indicators of recognition by others

³⁹ Tom Bottommore, a previously mentioned source, pp. 161-162.

⁴⁰ Kamal Bou Mounir, a previously mentioned source, pp. 116-117.

⁴¹ Allen Howe, Critical Theory: The Frankfurt School, translated by: (Thaer Deeb), Al-Ain Publishing House, Cairo, 2010, p. 257.

⁴² For more information on Honneth's position on the theory of communicative action, see: Prof. Dr. Sanaa Kadhim Katea and

Anmar Mahmoud Majeed, Radical Democracy at Axel Honneth, Journal of Political Science, Issue 63, June, 2022, pp. 338-339.

⁴³ Ibid, p.258.

⁴⁴ Quoted from: Kamal Bu Mounir, a previously mentioned source, p. 123.

CONCLUSION

At the conclusion of our research entitled (Intellectual Directions of the Frankfurt School of Criticism), we reached the following results:

- 1- The Frankfurt School of Criticism constituted an important turning point in the course of European thought, due to its effective and significant impact in formulating a critical theory that deals with philosophy, culture, and politics as overlapping and intertwined dimensions in the process of forming and studying social theories and cultural and cognitive horizons that accompanied the transformations that European society witnessed.
- 2- The school included different tendencies, but they all agreed on their criticism of the totalitarian industrial society and its contradictions, especially its bourgeois culture.
- 3- The school went through a series of stages, as it was preoccupied in the thirties and forties with national socialism and anti-Semitism, and in the fifties it was concerned with the culture industry, in the sixties, it took care of the revolutionary liberation movements, especially the revolution of students and ethnic minorities, in the seventies and beyond, it focused on the theory of knowledge, reconsidering many Marxist opinions, building its foundations again, formulating a new Marxist theory, and taking care of political and societal issues in the light of critical theory.

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