

The Language Paradigm in Contemporary Social Theory: Marx, Habermas, and Bourdieu in Comparative Perspective

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KEYWORDS Language. Work. Communication. Ideology. Historical Materialism. Public Sphere. Cultural Production. Human Development. Marx. Habermas. Bourdieu

ABSTRACT Major schools of thought have addressed, in one way or another, problems regarding human language, its origins, social functions, the nature of the relationship between language and people's perception and understanding of the world and more generally, the contribution of language and communication to the development of human societies. This essay examines how the problem of language is dealt with by three eminent social theorists: Karl Marx (and his close collaborator Frederick Engels) within the framework of their *historical materialism*, Jurgen Habermas in his *theory of communication action*, and Pierre Bourdieu in his *theory of social space*.