
Edit Philosophy

Affirming Theory and Dynamic Theory

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The *Social Theory and Dynamics* (STAD) is a sociological journal that extols “dynamic theory” or “critical sociology” as its editorial philosophy. Dynamic theory is based on the philosophical approach with which we critically evaluate social theory, its verification, *and* the standpoint of the theorist himself/herself. What does such an approach consist of?

Capital organizes the world, and the Empire as the union power of capital controls the world. Exploitation, poverty and suppression are ubiquitous in the world, and exclusion and inclusion segregate humans from humans. As long as such a world continues to exist, barbarism and misery of this world will also continue endlessly.

Magic dominates the human mind. Modern reason that had emancipated human spirit became the instrument of magic domination. Instrumental reason *affirms* and accepts the world as it is, and hides its barbarism and misery. However, human life is fertile. Human beings do not give up the “better life,” and human life overflows the palm of domination. Overflowed life discloses the craftiness of domination. In such a way, the magic world is dismantled.

The choice is to be made between instrumental reason to hide barbarism and misery or criticizing reason to expose them. Which one does sociology/social science choose? Dynamic theory chooses the latter.

Dynamic theory is a kind of theoretical practice. It performs three practical actions.

First, dynamic theory discloses the intention of domination, elucidates the cause of barbarism and misery, and looks for the conditions of human emancipation. In this action, dynamic theory becomes a “transcendent theory” that prompts the “conversion of society.”

Second, dynamic theory criticizes the dominant theory of the times. If the reality of the times faces a contradiction, the theory also faces a contradiction. The force of the times is large and that of affirming theory is also large. Affirming theory reduces the contradiction into objectivity and rationality. Dynamic theory, on the contrary, discloses the craftiness of domination and the stupidity of affirming theory and constructs an alternative theory. In this action, dynamic theory becomes a “creative theory” that prompts the “conversion of theory.”

Third, dynamic theory criticizes the subject that criticizes the reality and the theory of the times. The criticizing subject is also not free from dominating reason. It could be trapped in the craftiness of domination and could become a servant of the dominating reason. Dynamic theory is aware of the weakness of such a subject. If we look straight at reality, we can see the human distress and hear the human groaning directly. Such distress and groan-

ing are just the starting point of dynamic theory. In this action, dynamic theory becomes a “reflexive theory” that prompts the “conversion of subject.”

Dynamic theory has three essential requirements: critical mind that gives the purpose to research (why we study), theory that explains the world (what we explain), and empirical proof that tests the hypothesis (how we verify). If research loses its meaning, theory eliminates the contradiction, and verification becomes trivial. Consequently, theory loses the sight of human reality and finally rationalizes barbarism and misery. Dynamic theory, on the contrary, is an aggressive theory that is open to the reality of barbarism and misery. There are five meanings in “aggressive.”

First, dynamic theory is based on a critical humanism that does not forgive barbarism and misery. As long as this starting point is not missed, there is no taboo in choosing the research theme.

Second, dynamic theory is a theory of internal criticism. There are two meanings in “internal.” First, it goes deep into reality, criticizes it, and looks for the latent force of human emancipation. Next, it criticizes the existing theory from inside and transcends it.

Third, dynamic theory is based on holistic recognition. There are two meanings in “holistic.” First, dynamic theory is universal. Its exploration of society starts from the analysis of its fragments. However, fragments are only clues in understanding the whole. Next, dynamic theory deals with the entire society, considering it as a whole. Dynamic theory pursues the “whole fact.”

Fourth, dynamic theory is based on facts. Theoretical explanation cannot be completed without

verification by facts. However, verification means neither the narrow positivism that regards the world as a closed reality nor the fact centrism that pursues only consistency among facts. This is a closed rationality. Rather, verification is done to discover the contradictions in reality and to construct the theory intervening in reality. Theory dismantles reality and reality undermines theory. Theory and reality are against each other. This is an open rationality. Dynamic theory undertakes this endless conflicting relationship.

Fifth, dynamic theory is based on reflexive recognition. There are two meanings in “reflexive.” First, dynamic theory is reflexive to itself. Sociology/social science is a product of the modern recognition. Its most part is a creation by Western European men. Dynamic theory is conscious of the origin of such modern science. Therefore, it is open to the differential heterogeneous theory. Next, dynamic theory is conscious of the recognizing subject, that is, of the positionality of subject. Dynamic theory hears the other’s voice and speaks for the other, aware of the difficulty to do so. Dynamic theory is conscious of the arrogance of speaking and writing for the other.

Recognition and facts, fragment and the whole, criticism and construction, and subject and object are not just simply in conflict with each other. Dynamic theory puts itself in the place where they intersect. It intervenes against barbarism and misery and reaches for the practical and theoretical conditions to emancipate human beings from barbarism and misery. What does human emancipation mean? What path can it possibly take? And what can research do for it? Dynamic theory always goes back to these questions. At the same time, dynamic theory prospects the future and always innovates its prospection.