

Critical Theory

The Neo-Marxist Trojan Horse.

On the rise today is an evil and insidious metanarrative that is colloquially called Neo-Marxism or cultural Marxism but is referred to in the academy as Critical Theory.

Douglas Groothuis has penned the following introduction to Critical Theory

Critical theory is the philosophy behind much the radical and even violent activism today addressing race and gender. Think of Blacks Lives Matter and Antifa. It is also influencing schools, churches, businesses, and governmental agencies. It is rooted in the Marxist claim that society is based on social conflict between groups—the oppressors and the oppressed. For critical theory, the oppressors are principally white, male, heterosexuals; the oppressed are people of color and gender fluid people.

*Critical theory claims that American ideals found in the Constitution are irredeemably racist and must be replaced with a society of equity, diversity, and inclusion. This means equal outcomes—not merely equal opportunity—based on governmental fiat and enforcement.*¹

Critical Theory is indeed rooted in Marxism. It began with Antonio Gramsci and intellectuals in the Frankfurt School². The Frankfurt School was a group of Marxist intellectuals who sought to extend Marxist analysis to a broader dialectic that included cultural analysis rather than mere economic analysis. As such it extends Marx's metanarrative and adds postmodern epistemology. There are five major components to the metanarrative of critical theory

Critical Theory, like Marxism, posits that the big story of history is a dialectical struggle between The Bourgeoisie or oppressor classes and the Proletariat or oppressed classes³. In both Marxism and Critical Theory, this struggle completely eclipses the actions of individual persons.

Critical Theory downplays the individual because it is rooted in influences descended from a Gnostic, Neopagan world view. Like Neo-Pagan movements such as Gnosticism and Hermeticism, Critical Theory treats systems as persons with the capacity of intentionality that exist independently of the individuals who participate in them. **It is from this quasi-gnostic understanding that a metanarrative of systemic racism emerges⁴.** This meta-narrative asserts that racism is hardwired into civilization at its most fundamental levels. Racism is seen as the world spirit that animates Western civilization and that the only answer is to replace it with something totally new.

Critical Theory also downplays the individual because it has no adequate place to ground the existence of individual persons. Judeo-Christian philosophy grounds the existence of the individual as created in the Imago Deo or the image of God. Western philosophy, influenced by this Judeo-Christian ethos, framed the existence of the individual in reason. This context is where Rene Descartes coined his famous phrase "I think, therefore I am." Critical Theory, like Marxism, denies absolute, objective truth. It sees truths as social constructs rather than representation of objective reality. The fundamental incoherence of critical theory is, that while denying absolute, objective truth, it posits its meta-narrative

as absolute objective truth – as the representation of reality. Because it sees truths as social constructs, it can only see individuals as intersections of classes animated by worldly spiritual forces. This has profound implications for ethics and epistemology (theories of how we know what we know).

Because it sees truths as merely social constructs⁵ and individuals as merely intersections of classes animated by worldly spiritual forces, classical logic is replaced with standpoint epistemology. This involves resort to gate-keeping in which the perceived moral authority or perceived expertise of certain groups are hyped while others are marginalized. This is typically done through resort to gnostic thinking rather than appeal to public facts. Advocates of Critical Theory are not advocating that medical doctors perceived expertise be hyped due to years of medical training. They appeal to secret knowledge under the guise of ‘lived experience’ to do their gate-keeping.

A textbook example of such gate-keeping can be found in a recent article by Ed Stetzer in Christianity Today.

*Second, we must continue to deal with the issue of race and **listen to our African American brothers and sisters more and to the voices claiming CRT has infiltrated the SBC less.** Also, race will likely be a key factor in both the resolutions report and the presidential election.*

*The issue is not (usually) blatantly racist comments; it is the inability to recognize—and consequently address—issues of systemic racism that remain. It’s failing to listen to African American pastors when they share their experiences, or when they say white Southern Baptist leaders continue to send the wrong signals on these matters—especially in doubting their theological orthodoxy when their political calculus or manner of cultural engagement differs from most white evangelicals.*⁶

Notice the gate-keeping here. Stetzer is flatly denying an equal and free marketplace of ideas. He is hyping certain groups as authoritative while advocating that others be marginalized.

This gate-keeping is called Standpoint Epistemology. Standpoint Epistemology is justified by appeal to “lived experience.” Advocates of Standpoint Epistemology reject resort to the scientific method as a source of knowledge.

*Jürgen Habermas argues, in his *On the Logic of the Social Sciences* (1967), that "the positivist thesis of unified science, which assimilates all the sciences to a natural-scientific model, fails because of the intimate relationship between the social sciences and history, and the fact that they are based on a situation-specific understanding of meaning that can be explicated only hermeneutically ... access to a symbolically prestructured reality cannot be gained by observation alone⁷.*

The hermeneutic answer – this access to a symbolically prestructured reality – is appeal to secret knowledge. As they have rejected absolute truth, creation on the image of God, or any other objective ground for knowledge, they are shut up to promoting Gnosticism. Advocates of Standpoint epistemology appeal to secret knowledge that the oppressed supposedly possess.

This idea fits in well with the most celebrated thesis of standpoint theory, namely, that there is a cognitive asymmetry between the standpoint of the oppressed and the standpoint of the privileged that gives an advantage to the former over the latter. As Harding (1983, 1991), among others, has argued, the perspectives from the lives of the less powerful can offer a more objective view of the social world, a view based on their

experiences of being underprivileged that captures real disparities, instead of a view that ignores (or even erases) experiences of oppression and is more likely to be oblivious or blind to disparities and insensitive to injustice...

...In summary, standpoint epistemology (and related identity-based epistemologies) are a complicated and widely discredited way to create and justify **a kind of gnosticism** around critical conceptions of identity and the relevant power dynamics in society. In practice, this typically means it is yet another justification within Theory for only people who agree with Theory to be considered knowledgeable authorities, which is then used to silence opposition and install “professionals” in positions of authority and power based on group identity alone—or, almost alone, as such people tend to have to present a [critical consciousness](#), i.e., be [woke](#) Critical Social Justice activists, as well (see also, [diversity](#) and [inclusion](#))⁸.

In applying this principle that confers secret knowledge to the oppressed classes, the classes are themselves are treated as constructs as they see no objective criteria to determine what a class is. This is why they only count in the oppressed classes those who embrace this so-called wokism. In practice standpoint epistemology emowers a so-called enlightened elite who determine who is oppressed and who is oppressors

Because it sees truths as social constructs and individuals as merely intersections of classes animated by worldly spiritual forces, individuals are held morally culpable for the action of systems without doing anything to embrace said systems. This often involves a straw-man of the principle of sins of omission. In Christian theology, a sin of omission is committed when someone fails to take moral action when

they both know to take and have the ability to take such action. Critical Theorists have modified this. They argue that anyone who is a member of the “privileged class” who is not “actively resisting. “ This allows them to condemn many, many innocent people who lack the power to take action. It also allowed them to condemn others who lacked knowledge of the oppression and also to condemn those who do oppose systemic evil but reject the gnosticism. We see these in Timothy Keller’s *Racism and Corporate Evil – A White Guy’s Perspective*

Don’ t you see that at the one end, you’ ve got people who are more corporately responsible, at the bottom a little less corporately responsible, but only all those people died because the whole system was working and everybody who was in the system, **everybody who wasn’ t resisting the system was part of it** because the system couldn’ t kill all those people unless everybody was doing their job, even just looking the other way⁹.

In practice resisting is parsed in terms of the meta–narrative of Critical Theory and Neo–Marxism. Those who resist racism using universal principle like All Lives Matter aren’t counted. One big problem with Keller’s concept of corporate guilt is that it would have been impossible for Jesus to be sinless under such a scheme as he would have the guilt of His nation imputed to Him at birth. For a good takedown of Keller’s pernicious presentation see Corporate Responsibility, Corporate Guilt, and the Gospel by Jonathon Bradford¹⁰.

Consequences of Critical Theory

Under Critical Theory, Due process dies. It cannot exist if society is a hierarchy of classes and secret knowledge prevails over public facts.

Under Critical Theory, Individuals low-balled as there is no ground for the existence of the individual. Individuals are seen as merely intersections of classes that are themselves constructs. Individual rights claims and freedom of conscience are meaningless in such a paradigm

Under Critical Theory, Systemic evil puffed as individuals gives way to the intersectionality of classes interacting in systems

Under Critical Theory, Gnosticism and its cousin Hermeticism increase due to appeal to and preference of secret knowledge over public knowledge.

Under Critical Theory, Critical Theory installs itself as absolute truth, failing its own test. Otherwise there is no meta-narrative and no grounding of “oppressed” classes in the embrace of critical theory.

Under Critical Theory, Critical Theory becomes hegemonic power, flagging itself as the blind oppressor class. As this meta-narrative prevails in a society it suffers from the same problems it accuses the “oppressor” classes of. This is how BLM becomes the KKK.

Under Critical Theory, The oppressed and oppressors simply switch roles. It has no ground to synthesize these as Marxism claims, and the practice of merely hyping the perceived moral authority amounts to simply switching roles – at least in practice.

Under Critical Theory, Truth is relativized to classes and situations. One cannot embrace Critical Theory as an analytical tool without affirming its worldview, at least in practice. This is because the analytical tools do not work under classical logic and require dialectical thinking (I.e standpoint epistemology. The use of dialectical thinking will move one towards a Neo-Marxist worldview even as those who do deny having such a world-view.

Under Critical Theory, one can formally deny a premise and yet promote it by puffing the perceived moral authority its adherents while marginalizing its critics. Critical Theory provides rich tools for obfuscation and propaganda

Under Critical Theory, big government becomes the arbiter of truth. This is because, in the absence of objective criteria, someone has to construct and define classes and decide who is oppressed, who is oppressors, and who is woke. The full implementation of this requires a totalitarian regime with full authority to micro-manage every facet of life. When coupled with Gnosticism and Hermeticism, **Critical Theory becomes a pathway to proclaiming the government god on earth.**

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