



UNDERSTANDING AND RECOGNISING THE WOKE MOVEMENT

THE BASIC PRINCIPLES OF CONTEMPORARY CRITICAL THEORY

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Hegemonic power

Racism oppression microaggressions
Heteronormativity Patriarchy
Cisgender
privilege

Intersectionality

Critical theory

LGBTQ+ White privilege
Gender Sexism Social Justice
identity centering Cultural supremacy



If you want to understand our culture, if you want to understand the 'woke movement', if you want to understand what many progressives mean by such terms as 'social justice', 'diversity', 'equity' and 'inclusion', you need to understand Critical Theory;

What is Critical Theory?

1. Originated with the Frankfurt School in the 1930s
2. Spawned entire disciplines such as Critical Race Theory, Critical Pedagogy, and Queer Theory and is highly influential within the social justice movement.

What is Critical Theory?

3. Bradley Levinson, in *Beyond Critique: Karl Marx alone invites consensus as the first 'true' critical theorist*.
4. Draws heavily on Marx's ideas about how power circulates and functions in society to reproduce inequality and exploitation.

3. Post-Modernism (1960's to 1990's)

A central idea is that **objective truth does not exist or is inaccessible and unnecessary**. Truth is a **social construct imposed upon society by the dominant group** mainly through controlling language and discourse, in order to preserve its own power.

What is Critical Theory?



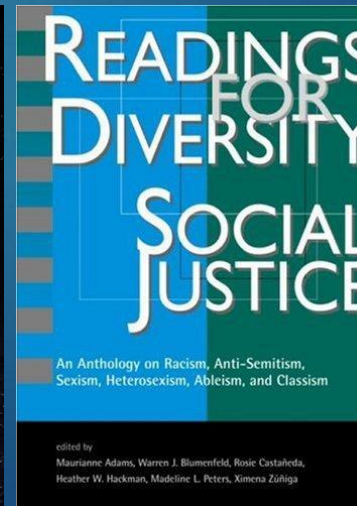
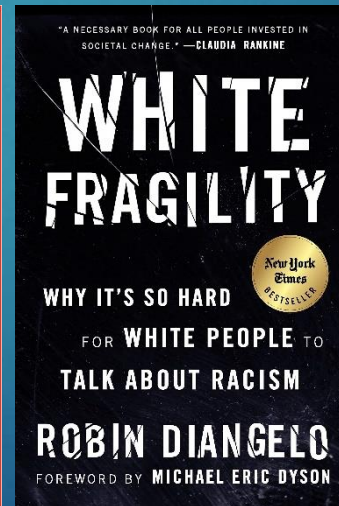
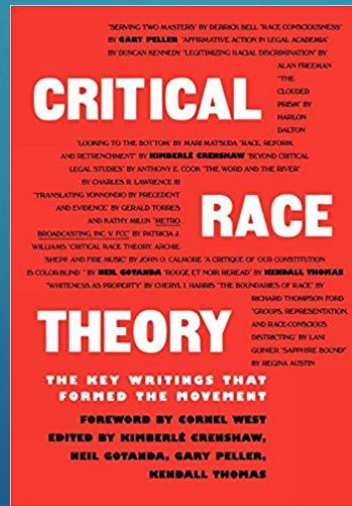
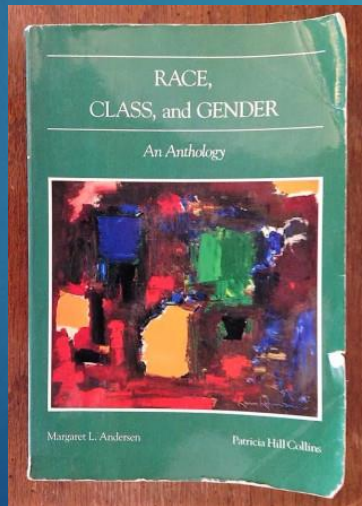
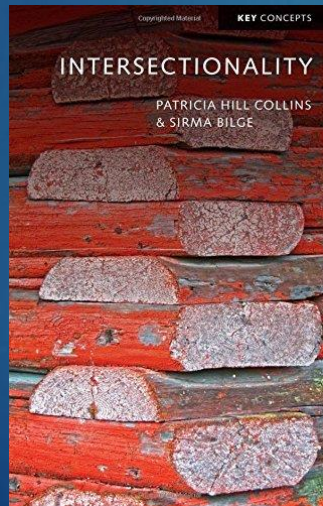
What is Critical Theory?

Premise I: Social binary

Premise II: Oppression through ideology

Premise III: Lived experience

Premise IV: Social justice



Premise I: Social binary

Society can be divided into dominant, oppressor groups and subordinate, oppressed groups along lines of race, class, gender, sexuality, and a host of other factors.



Figure 5.1. Group Identities Across Relations of Power

Minoritized/Target Group	Oppression	Dominant/ Agent Group
Peoples of Color	Racism	White
Poor		
Working Class	Classism	Owning Class
Middle Class		
Women; Transgender; Genderqueer	Sexism	(cis)Men
Gays; Lesbians; Bisexuals; Two Spirit	Heterosexism	Heterosexuals
Muslims; Buddhists; Jews; Hindus; and other non-Chris- tian groups	Religious Oppression Anti-Semitism	Christians
People with Disabilities	Ableism	Able-bodied
Immigrants (perceived)	Nationalism	Citizens (perceived)
Indigenous Peoples	Colonialism	White Settlers

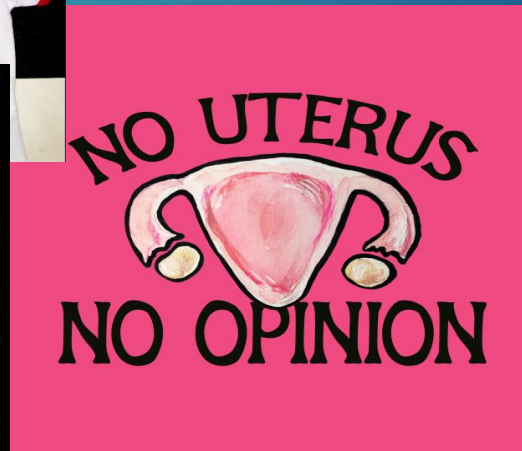
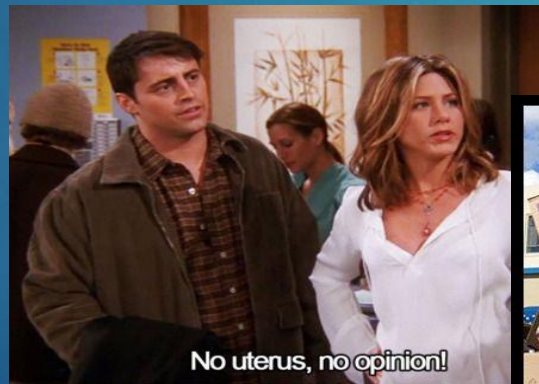
Premise II: Oppression through ideology

Or, oppression through **hegemonic power**.

Hegemony refers to the **control of the ideology of society**. The dominant group maintains power by imposing their ideology on everyone. (Sensoy and DiAngelo)

Premise III: Lived experience

Contemporary critical theory argues that 'lived experience' gives oppressed people special access to truths about their oppression




Anderson and Collins in *Race, Class & Gender: An Anthology*

The idea that objectivity is best reached only through rational thought is a specifically Western and masculine way of thinking – one that we will challenge throughout this book

Premise IV: Social justice

Contemporary critical theory is fundamentally concerned with 'social justice', which it defines as "the elimination of all forms of social oppression"

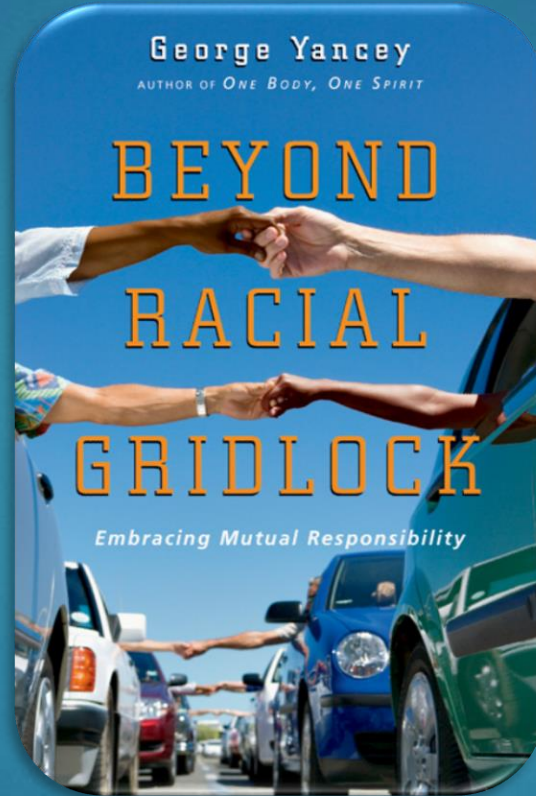


“I hope I’ve convinced you that critical theory helps to explain many phenomena. If we understand it, we can understand a lot of what’s happening in the contemporary society, in academia, in our culture, and in our politics.”

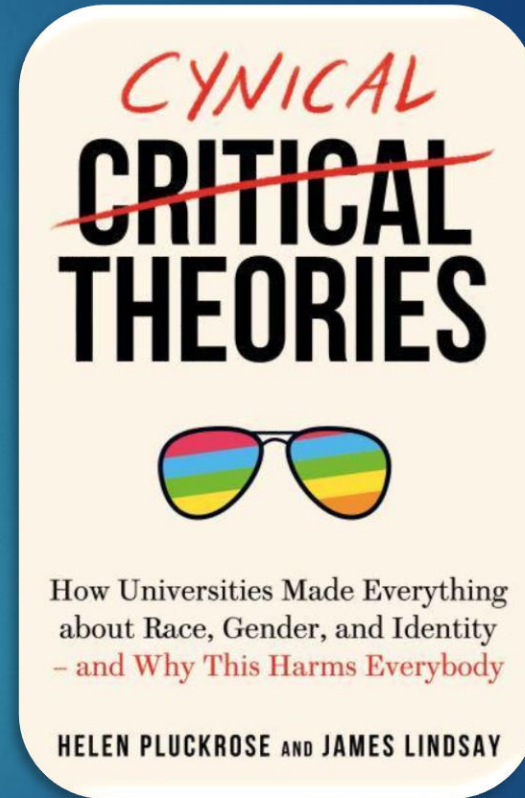
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