

CRT Terms

Postmodernism

Postmodernism is generally defined by an attitude of skepticism, irony, or rejection toward what it describes as the grand narratives and ideologies associated with modernism, often criticizing Enlightenment rationality and focusing on the role of ideology in maintaining political or economic power. Postmodern thinkers frequently describe knowledge claims and value systems as contingent or socially-conditioned, framing them as products of political, historical, or cultural discourses and hierarchies. Common targets of postmodern criticism include universalist ideas of objective reality, morality, truth, human nature, reason, science, language, and social progress. Accordingly, postmodern thought is broadly characterized by tendencies to self-consciousness, self-referentiality, epistemological and moral relativism, pluralism, and irreverence. (Wikipedia)

Identity Politics

Identity politics is a political approach wherein people of a particular gender, religion, race, social background, class or other identifying factor develop political agendas based around one or more of these categories.

Contemporary applications of identity politics describe people of specific race, ethnicity, sex, gender identity, sexual orientation, age, economic class, disability status, education, religion, language, profession, political party, veteran status, and geographic location. These identity labels are not mutually exclusive but are in many cases compounded into one when describing hyper-specific groups, a concept known as intersectionality. An example is that of African-American, homosexual, demi-boys with body integrity dysphoria, who constitute a particular hyper-specific identity class.

Critical Theory

Critical theory (also capitalized as Critical Theory) is an approach to social philosophy that focuses on reflective assessment and critique of society and culture in order to reveal and challenge power structures. With origins in sociology and literary criticism, it argues that social problems are influenced and created more by societal structures and cultural assumptions than by individual and psychological factors. Maintaining that ideology is the principal obstacle to human liberation, critical theory was established as a school of thought primarily by the Frankfurt School theoreticians Herbert Marcuse, Theodor Adorno, Walter Benjamin, Erich Fromm, and Max Horkheimer. Horkheimer described a theory as critical insofar as it seeks "to liberate human beings from the circumstances that enslave them."

Critical Race Theory

Critical race theory (CRT) is an academic movement of civil-rights scholars and activists in the United States who seek to critically examine the law as it intersects with issues of race and to challenge mainstream liberal approaches to racial justice. Critical race theory examines social, cultural and legal issues as they relate to race and racism.

Critical race theory originated in the mid-1970s in the writings of several American legal scholars, including Derrick Bell, Alan Freeman, Kimberlé Crenshaw, Richard Delgado, Cheryl Harris, Charles R. Lawrence III, Mari Matsuda, and Patricia J. Williams. It emerged as a movement by the 1980s, reworking theories of critical legal studies (CLS) with more focus on race. Both critical race theory and critical legal studies are rooted in Critical Theory, an approach to social theory established by members of the Frankfurt School, which argues that social problems are influenced and created more by societal structures and cultural assumptions than by individual and psychological factors.

Critical race theory sees racism as systemic and institutional, rather than just a collection of individual prejudices. It also views race as a socially constructed identity.[6] The theory emphasizes how racism and disparate racial outcomes can be the result of complex, changing and often subtle social and institutional dynamics, rather than explicit and intentional prejudices by individuals.[6] In the field of legal studies, critical race theory emphasizes that merely making laws colorblind on paper may not be enough to make the application of the laws colorblind; ostensibly colorblind laws can be applied in racially discriminatory ways. Intersectionality – which emphasizes that race can intersect with other identities (such as gender and class) to produce complex combinations of power and disadvantage – is a key concept in critical race theory.

Racism

Racism is the belief that groups of humans possess different behavioral traits corresponding to physical appearance and can be divided based on the superiority of one race over another. It may also mean prejudice, discrimination, or antagonism directed against other people because they are of a different ethnicity. Modern variants of racism are often based in social perceptions of biological differences between peoples. These views can take the form of social actions, practices or beliefs, or political systems in which different races are ranked as inherently superior or inferior to each other, based on presumed shared inheritable traits, abilities, or qualities.

Systemic Racism

Institutional racism, also known as systemic racism, is a form of racism that is embedded through laws and regulations within society or an organization. It can lead to such issues as discrimination in criminal justice, employment, housing, health care, political power, and education, among other issues.

Intersectionality

Intersectionality is an analytical framework for understanding how aspects of a person's social and political identities combine to create different modes of discrimination and privilege. The term was conceptualized and coined by Kimberlé Williams Crenshaw. Intersectionality identifies multiple factors of advantage and disadvantage. Examples of these factors include gender, caste, sex, race, class, sexuality, religion, disability, physical appearance, and height. These intersecting and overlapping social identities may be both empowering and oppressing. For example, a black woman might face discrimination from a business that is not distinctly due to her race (because the business does not discriminate against black men) nor distinctly due to her gender (because the business does not discriminate against white women), but due to a combination of the two factors.

Intersectionality broadens the lens of the first and second waves of feminism, which largely focused on the experiences of women who were both white and middle-class, to include the different experiences of women of color, women who are poor, immigrant women, and other groups. Intersectional feminism aims to separate itself from white feminism by acknowledging women's different experiences and identities.

Intersectionality is a qualitative analytic framework developed in the late 20th century that identifies how interlocking systems of power affect those who are most marginalized in society and takes these relationships into account when working to promote social and political equity. Intersectionality opposes analytical systems that treat each oppressive factor in isolation, as if the discrimination against black women could be explained away as only a simple sum of the discrimination against black men and the discrimination against white women. Intersectionality engages in similar themes as triple oppression, which is the oppression associated with being a poor and/or immigrant woman of color.

Woke

Woke is a term that refers to awareness of issues that concern social justice and racial justice. It is sometimes used in the African-American Vernacular English expression stay woke. Woke resurfaced in 2014, during the Black Lives Matter movement, as a label for vigilance and activism concerning racial inequalities and other social

disparities such as discrimination against the LGBTQ+ community, women, immigrants and other marginalized populations.

Whitesplain

(of a white person) to comment on the minority experience or explain racism to a person of color in a condescending or blaming way, as to point out accommodating behaviors that the victim of racism might have adopted to defuse interracial conflict:

'I know what driving while Black is like, so don't you dare whitesplain it to me!'

White Supremacy

White supremacy or white supremacism is the belief that white people are superior to those of other races and thus should dominate them. The belief favors the maintenance and defense of white power and privilege. White supremacy has roots in the now-discredited doctrine of scientific racism, and was a key justification for colonialism. It underlies a spectrum of contemporary movements including neo-Confederates, neo-Nazism and Christian identity.

White Privilege

White privilege, or white skin privilege, is the societal privilege that benefits white people over non-white people in some societies, particularly if they are otherwise under the same social, political, or economic circumstances. With roots in European colonialism and imperialism, and the Atlantic slave trade, white privilege has developed in circumstances that have broadly sought to protect white racial privileges, various national citizenships, and other rights or special benefits.

Determinism

Determinism - the doctrine that all events, including human action, are ultimately determined by causes external to the will. Some philosophers have taken determinism to imply that individual human beings have no free will and cannot be held morally responsible for their actions.

Implicit Bias

Thoughts and feelings are “implicit” if we are unaware of them or mistaken about their nature. We have a bias when, rather than being neutral, we have a preference for (or aversion to) a person or group of people. Thus, we use the term “implicit bias” to describe when we have attitudes towards people or associate stereotypes with them without our conscious knowledge. A fairly commonplace example of this is seen in studies that show that white people will frequently associate criminality with black people without even realizing they’re doing it.

<https://perception.org/research/implicit-bias/>