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# The Essential Points of Critical Race Theory, and Why Patriotic Americans Should Oppose it.

By Kerry E. Irish

Sources: *This study is based on a careful reading of Critical Race Theory: An Introduction (Third Edition)* by Richard Delgado and Jean Stefancic. This book is considered “the best introduction available to Critical Race Theory.” Both Delgado and Stefancic are guiding lights of the CRT movement. Nevertheless, the reader should be aware that any ideological movement has disagreements among its adherents. My comments regarding CRT are responses to Delgado and Stefancic. The reader should also be aware that I am highly critical of CRT. My purpose here is to explain what CRT is, and point out its mistakes, exaggerations, and revolutionary purpose. That said, there is no point in alleging CRT is something it is not, or overstating the case. I have endeavored to be as objective as possible. All page numbers are references to Delgado and Stefancic unless otherwise noted.

## Basic Concepts of Critical Race theory

The primary purpose of CRT is to bring revolutionary change to the United States. The authors are unsure whether this revolution will be peaceful or violent; but revolution there must be (152-154). They write:

Unlike traditional civil rights discourse, which emphasizes incrementalism and step-by-step progress, CRT questions the very foundations of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment rationalism, and neutral principles of constitutional law (3).

Of course, the peaceful transition just described may not take place – the white establishment may resist an orderly progression toward power sharing, particularly in connection to upper-level and technical jobs, police agencies, and government. As happened in South Africa, the change may be convulsive and cataclysmic (154).

Whichever form of revolution occurs, whether peaceful or violent, Crits [a self-assigned nickname] hope CRT may provide a blueprint for the future in which CRT as truth is taken for granted (154, 155):

Critical Race Theory may even follow the example of Critical Legal Studies which imbedded itself so thoroughly in academic scholarship and teaching that its precepts became Commonplace, part of the conventional wisdom (158).

CRT advocates a US in which race is the defining characteristic of legal rights. In short, Crits believe people of color have all been denied their basic rights by white people who have all benefitted by the white supremacy inherent in the US. “Colorblindness,” the idea that Americans should strive to ignore skin color (a doctrine advanced by Martin Luther King and most Americans interested in legitimate civil rights), is a dangerous deception and must be eliminated. Delgado and Stefancic write:

...critical race scholars are discontented with liberalism as a framework for addressing

America's racial problems. Many liberals believe in *colorblindness* [italics mine] and other neutral principles of constitutional law (26)

Colorblindness can be admirable, when a government decision maker refuses to give in to local prejudices. But it can be perverse, for example, when it stands in the way of taking account of difference in order to help people in need (27).

And most emphatically:

The [CRT] critique of color blindness may, one day, persuade the U.S. Supreme Court to accept race-conscious measures in employment and education, leveling the playing field for those who have long been excluded from society's bounty (158).

Moreover, the new America must be devoted to "economic democracy."

They [CRT activists] will need to pursue zealously the goal of *economic democracy* [italics mine], so that the currently disproportionate numbers of people of color who suffer intense poverty receive a decent level of services, healthcare, and education... (156).

Here the authors are being very careful. They don't call their utopian vision socialism or communism, but the term "economic democracy" cannot be far from the Marxist vision of economic equality of outcome. In a democracy, we imagine ourselves equals under the law; what can economic democracy mean but equality of outcome in the economic system? As I will explain below, there is more evidence that the Critics imagine a Marxist US. But Delgado and Stefancic are careful not to make that argument overt in this book. They are more interested in making CRT "the new civil rights orthodoxy" (157), rather than launching a Marxist movement. One imagines that will come later. For now, they are content with aligning themselves with "fellow travelers" (160) This reference, as they well know, is most commonly applied to those who are sympathetic to communism.

## Origins of Critical Race theory:

Critical Race Theory is derived from materialist philosophy. Materialists believe that all that exists in the universe is derived from material substance. Simply put, one's thoughts are the products of one's material environment. Alter the environment, then, and one may alter the thoughts and then the behavior of individuals. This is in contrast to those who believe that thoughts may not be the product of one's material surroundings. Materialism comes very close to determinism, the notion that all actions of human beings are determined by their material surroundings. Those opposed to materialism, let's call them idealists, maintain that one's thoughts or ideas may be held separately, or even in defiance of, one's material circumstance. Think of Christians who believe the Holy Spirit speaks to them or moves them in one way or another. Materialists deny the existence of such a force. Materialism finds its most potent expression in communism as espoused by Karl Marx and Friedrich Engels. For Marx and his followers, economics, our material financial condition, determines the behavior of human beings. Marx divides human beings into two classes: those who possess capital or who assist the capitalists in maintaining and growing their capital – the so-called bourgeoisie; and those who labor for the capitalists, the workers, whom he called the proletariat.

Marx prophesied that the proletariat would one day rise up in violent revolt against the bourgeoisie tearing down the altars of capitalism and replacing them with a utopian society in which all people were equal in living standard. Once this was accomplished, Marx argued, there would be no need for a government as the proletariat were good, only the capitalists, now destroyed, were evil. Marx further argued that religion was the “opiate of the people.” Religion, combined with capitalism, kept human beings in economic chains. Obviously then, materialism and Marxism are opposed to Christianity. The beauty of Marxism is its simplicity: All behavior is economically driven, there are two kinds of people, the good and the bad, all should be equal, one day a revolution will come and all human beings will live in harmony. This last development is a competing vision with the millennial kingdom of the Christian faith. For Marx, utopia is built expressly without God; for Christians, there is no future without Jesus Christ on His throne.

That Marxism does not address the complexity of human life should be apparent to anyone who possesses even a modest awareness of history, or of their own thoughts and interactions with the world. Human beings are motivated by any number of different factors: religion, patriotism, love, hate, and, yes, economics. Moreover, any astute parent has noticed that the behavior of their children was different from the beginning, before any economic or more broadly material factors were evident.

As we have seen, Critical Race Theory traces its philosophical roots through Marxism to materialism. Critics build on Marxism by adding race to the primary forces of determinism. Delgado and Stefancic write:

If racism is largely economic in nature [The authors clearly believe it is] – capitalists, seeking profits, enslave other human beings one way or another. Thus hyper-capitalism [American capitalism] increasingly shows itself as a flawed system. If this is so, what follows for a theory of civil rights (108)?

Some Critics emphasize race more than economics, some add race to their economic base. Regardless, most Critics see the destruction of capitalism and Christianity – the essence of western civilization – as necessary steps to human equity in the world (3, 8, 20). I say most because there are those Critics who stop short of calling for an end to capitalism. Delgado and Stefancic call these Critics the “idealists,” while reserving the title “realists” for themselves. In doing so, Delgado and Stefancic find it difficult to conceal their dismay at the naivete of the Crit idealists, especially if those idealists continue to believe in gradual change of the liberal order (capitalist democracy) (22-31, 140, 141). Delgado and Stefancic write,

“These examples [noted in the previous paragraph of their book] point out the concept that lies at the heart of structural determinism or materialism [the basis of CRT], the idea that our system [liberal democratic capitalism], by reason of its structure and vocabulary, is ill-equipped to address certain types of wrong [racism]” (31).

Then the authors declare that attempting to peacefully and gradually alter vocabulary does not work.

The idea that a better, fairer script can readily substitute for the older, prejudiced one is attractive but is falsified by history (35) [Change comes too slowly or not at all].

So, CRT as defined by its originators calls for a radical transformation of the American social, economic, and political system. Capitalism, and liberal democracy are not only in the way, they are the reason for racism in America. Though Delgado and Stefancic do not explicitly call for a Marxist revolution in America, like good Marxists they believe a violent revolution will probably come: “everything must change at once,” (91) but later concede that their crystal ball is a bit murky and change may come gradually (152-155). They compare the present US to South Africa before the end of Apartheid there (154, 155). Ultimately, Delgado and Stefancic admit, “As for criticizing the *existing system* [italics mine] the Crits respond that they are indeed **at work developing a vision to replace it** (106).” Meanwhile, Crits are contemptuous of American “rights” or liberties:

Crits are suspicious of another liberal mainstay, namely, rights. Particularly some of the older, more radical CRT scholars with roots in racial realism and an economic [Marxist] view of history believe that moral and legal rights are apt to do the right holder much less good than we like to think (28, 29)

### The Principles of CRT explained and refuted:

The primary point of CRT is that American racism is systematic and inherent in the democratic, capitalist US. “Racism is ordinary” which means “the usual way society does business” and the “everyday experience of most people of color in this country.” (8) Our capitalist economy and traditional western values make gradually ending racism impossible. Delgado and Stefancic write:

“Unlike traditional civil rights discourse, which stresses incrementalism and step-by-step progress, critical race theory *questions the very foundations* [italics mine] of the liberal order, including equality theory, legal reasoning, Enlightenment reasoning [the philosophical base of the American republic] and neutral principles of constitutional law [the basis of American justice]” (3).

And again:

The predicament of social reform is that ‘everything must change at once.’ Otherwise, change is swallowed up by the remaining elements, so that we remain roughly as we were before (91).

My response: Racism has been part of American history since the inception of European civilization in America because Europeans, along with most of the rest of the World, believed there were differences between the races. Some people, it was thought, were more advanced than others. White Europeans brought those views to America. That said, since the late colonial era, Americans have been striving to first end slavery, and second, end racism. Substantial progress has been made. Slavery was abolished as a result of a bloody civil war in 1865, and racism in America has been declining since the mid-twentieth century. The efforts of Martin Luther King and the civil rights movement have been very successful, though racism still exists. CRT denies the positive impact of the civil rights

movement though they hypocritically claim Martin Luther King as one of their own (5, 130). As shown below, King's philosophy was and is diametrically opposed to Critical Race Theory. Finally, "everything must change at once" is just code for a radical revolution.

CRT proponents argue that ending racism requires ending capitalism and establishing an economy in which all people share equally, a "democratic economy." Liberalism is incapable of ending racism. They write:

When we are tackling a structure as deeply embedded as race, radical measures are in order – otherwise the system merely swallows up the small improvements one has made, and everything goes back to the way it was (64,65).

My response: An economy in which all people share equally can only mean communism in the modern world. Moreover, the governmental power required to ensure that all people were socially, economically, politically, and judicially equal would mean the end of any notion of freedom, or true democracy, as the people who hold power in that government would be deciding everything for the 99% who were "equal." Moreover, the history of such systems is dismal; poverty is the inevitable result of such economies. Such a system would mean the establishment of "Big Brother," George Orwell's chilling vision of the future in one party state in his classic work: *1984*.

CRT enthusiasts, following radical activist Tom Hayden in the Port Huron Statement of 1962, believe Education is the means by which CRT will create enough adherents to radically change America.

Crits do not deny the strategy of using education, first at college and universities, to shape their revolution. Indeed, Delgado and Stefancic, themselves university professors, as are all the primary architects of CRT philosophy, trumpet the success the CRT movement has had over the last forty years in taking over higher education in America. They write, "Consider how in many [academic] disciplines scholars, teachers, and courses profess, almost incidentally, [second nature] to embrace critical race theory." (158)

Once higher ed. was sufficiently overtaken, producing the foot soldiers who would take the message to K-12 was relatively simple. Then too, news media of all kinds and entertainment were also to be used, and are being used, to advance the new religion of CRT.

CRT theorists argue that the American legal system is deeply racist. The authors declare:

And with civil rights lower courts have found it easy to narrow or distinguish the broad, ringing landmark decision like *Brown v. Board of Education* [1954] The [minority] group that supposedly benefits always greets cases like *Brown* with great celebration. But after the singing and dancing die down, the breakthrough is quietly cut back by narrow interpretation, administrative obstruction, or delay (29, 30).

CRT “dares to call our most prized legal doctrines and protections shams – hollow pronouncements issued with great solemnity and fanfare, only to be silently ignored, cut back, or withdrawn when the celebrations die down.” (48)

Response: Entire books have been written denying this preposterous claim. “Our most prized legal doctrines” include the Constitution, its Bill of Rights, the 15<sup>th</sup> Amendment abolishing slavery, the 19<sup>th</sup> Amendment establishing women’s suffrage, the Supreme Court case *Brown vs. Board of Education* that began a gradual process of desegregating the nation’s schools, and the 1964 Civil Rights Act. All of these “doctrines” have had an enormous impact on America. It is true they have all been ignored, flouted, poorly enforced, or far too late in arrival; but it is also true that America continues on the road to more fully embracing these laws. Perfect execution of these, or any other laws, is not humanly possible, though the effort should be made. Critics propose an enormous increase in governmental power to enforce perfect equality that would fail in its purpose, but would surely destroy freedom in the attempt.

“Colorblindness,” is “the belief that one should treat all persons equally, without regard to their race.” (170) This doctrine, of course, is classic Martin Luther King. In his iconic “I Have Dream Speech” of August 1963, in front of the Lincoln Memorial, King said “I have a dream that my four little children will one day live in a nation where they will not be judged by *the color of their skin* (italics mine) but by the content of their character.” CRT specifically rejects King’s doctrine which is the doctrine of most Americans today.

Delgado and Stefancic write:

Color blindness can be admirable, as when a governmental decision maker refuses to give in to local prejudices. But it can be perverse, for example, when it stands on the way of taking account of difference in order to help people in need...Only aggressive color-conscious efforts to change the way things are will do much to ameliorate misery (27).

Continuing in the same vein:

The same is likely to happen [the widening gap between blacks and whites] if society retires affirmative action based on race for a version based on socioeconomic disadvantage ... This approach is popular with defenders of the color-blind approach – scholars and commentators who wish that society would stop thinking in terms of race but instead focus on efficiency, class, merit, and other means of ordering society (119, 120)

And finally:

[Our] critique of color blindness may, one day, persuade the US Supreme Court to accept race-conscious measures in employment and education, leveling the playing field for those who have long been excluded from society’s bounty (158)

That color blindness probably was not the view of most Americans in 1963 demonstrates the progress that has been made. In rejecting “colorblindness” the authors advocate a social, political, justice system that abandons the attempt to adjudicate cases by a colorblind application of the laws, in favor of one that considers the narratives (stories) of the accused, or plaintiff, of color in an effort to achieve “equal outcome.” (28, 29, 45-51, 132) Indeed, Delgado and Stefancic recognize that Martin Luther King’s old-fashioned civil rights concepts are not theirs. They hope CRT will become “the new civil rights orthodoxy” (157).

CRT claims that all “white people” are guilty of racism, or cheerfully benefit from the inherently racist American system. (90, 91) One Crit wrote:

“...white people enjoy and can rely on forty-six privileges that attach by reason of having white skin, including the assurance that store clerks will not follow them around, that people will not cross the street to avoid them at night...” (90)  
Moreover, if a white person denies their racism, or that all whites benefit from America’s racist society, the that person is especially racist.

And also:

By contrast, many critical race theorists and social scientists hold that racism is pervasive, systemic, and deeply ingrained. If we take this perspective, then no white member of society seems quite so innocent. (91)

Finally:

Whites do not see themselves as having a race but as being, simply, people. They do not believe that they think and reason from a white viewpoint but from a universally valid one – “the truth” (91, 92)

The reader will have to examine their own soul and consider their own observations of their fellow Americans to determine if the claim white people are all racists is accurate. Meanwhile, consider how stunningly sophomoric the generalization “white” people is. Then too, specific examples of “white privilege” are not confined to whites. Many people of color walk around a store without being shadowed by “clerks.” And people of color cross the street to avoid any male approaching them in the dark. In such circumstances, who can tell if the approaching person is white or any other color? There is no shortage of white thugs. And how extensive and intrusive would a government have to be that could stop this and the other so-called privileges that “only white people” have? Finally, it is clever to build into one’s argument that if anyone opposes CRT, that all white people are at some level racists, that person is surely a white supremacist. Obviously, then, there is no defending oneself. This is a classic Marxist strategy used in countless communist movements: If one is opposed to the confiscation of one’s farm, one is obviously a “capitalist roader.”



CRT makes common cause with feminist radicals, environmental radicals, and LGBTQ+ activists (58-66, 96). This unified methodology is called “intersectionality” (58). Far from denying this union with other radical groups, CRT argues that it is “essential” because many people belong to more than one of the oppressed groups: e.g., a black female who is a lesbian. It is important to note that not everyone who supports these other causes is a radical activist or Marxist, even many who support CRT draw the line at a Marxist revolution. Nevertheless, the core of the CRT movement very much envisions a radical transformation of the democratic capitalist US. Once again, Delgado and Stencic are clear:

When we are tackling a structure [American culture] as deeply imbedded as race, radical measures are in order – otherwise the system merely swallows up the small improvements one has made, and everything goes back to the way it was (64, 65).

Crits are particularly impatient with liberalism:

The reader will recall that CRT takes liberalism to task for its cautious, incremental quality (64).

Race is a social construct not a biological reality. The authors write:

A third theme of critical race theory, the “social construction thesis,” holds that race and races are products of social thought and relations. Not objective, inherent, or fixed, *they correspond to no biological or genetic reality* [italics mine]; rather races are categories that society invents, manipulates, or retires when convenient (9).

This is a classic case of an ideology advocating an absurdity. Race is an obvious fact to anyone with common sense. My assertion does not mean that racism is morally correct or a necessary reality of human life. Most Christians, along with the developing tradition of equality before the law in America, are opposed to racism. Both advocate a “colorblind” approach to racial problems. As we have seen, CRT is deeply opposed to the “colorblind” doctrine; it seeks to establish favoritism in America for people of color. Obviously, this is just racism with a different favored group. In this scenario racism would be endless.

CRT theorists believe that one method of alleviating racism is to provide more votes for colored people. Because people of color are in the minority in the US, they will always be outvoted except in some large cities in which they are the majority. Delgado and Stefancic declare:

Cumulative voting, proposed by a leading critical race theorist, would circumvent some of these problems by allowing voters facing a slate of ten candidates, for example, to place all ten of their votes on one, so that if one of the candidates is, say, an African American ...that candidate should be able to win election (139).

The system described above seems to be a form of “ranked choice” voting in which voters vote for their top three candidates. CRT thus advocates allowing a voter to put all their votes on one. They presume, once again falsely, that people of color will all choose the minority candidate.

Furthermore, the idea that people of color should have more votes is just another manifestation of using race to redress past wrongs, a concept that is at the heart of CRT. CRT also advocates reparations to all people of color from all white people (they are all guilty of racism in one way or another). If CRT were to become the accepted means in America of dealing with race, America would become more divided by race than we have been since the 1860s. I believe some form of civil war would ensue.

### **Summary of Critical Race Theory:**

**Based on materialist/Marxist philosophy, Critical Race theorists believe the democratic, capitalist United States is inherently racist; and that racism cannot be ended without a radical transformation of American “society.” Moreover, all white people are racists and benefit from the racism inherent in America. Only a revolution that ends capitalism and democracy as we know it can establish an equitable nation in which all people are treated as equals. In the meantime, race must be the basis on which we build a fair society.**

### **Summary of my response:**

There has been significant progress in America in the effort to end racism, though racism still exists. If the reader believes that there has been little progress in the struggle to end racism, and that such progress is not possible in a capitalist society that also features strong attachments to Christianity and Enlightenment values, then CRT offers an alternative. But even so, one must then analyze CRT’s proposed solution to the problem: A neo-Marxist state in which race is the primary factor in achieving equality of outcome. Such a state must of necessity be so powerful that any notion of freedom must end. The history of such systems includes pervasive poverty, corruption, and brutal suppression of dissent. It is apparent that CRT advocates have studied Vladimir Lenin [one of the founders of the Soviet Union] well: “A lie told often enough becomes the truth.”