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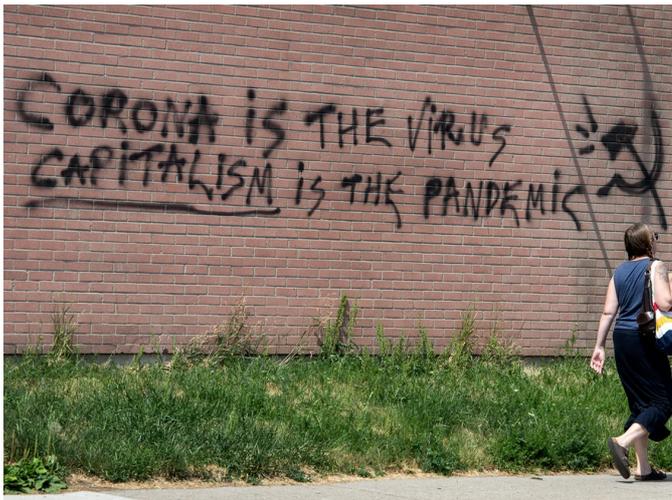


# Apocalyptic science: How the West is destroying itself

*Junk Science Week: New academic doctrines dismiss science — real science — in favour of political agendas, in which theory trumps facts*

By **Bruce Parady**, [Special to Financial Post](#)

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Critical Theory drives government policies and shape public attitudes: Capitalism is oppressive. Private property rights cause environmental destruction. Prosperity causes climate change. PHOTO BY PETER J. THOMPSON/NATIONAL POST FILES

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**By Bruce Parady**



If you live in a Western nation like Canada in the 21st century, you have more freedom, prosperity and peace than most of the rest of the world at most other times in history. Yet these countries have never been at greater risk. The threat is not pandemics, climate change or war but something more insidious.

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Modern Western civilization grew out of the Enlightenment of the 17th and 18th centuries. The ascendancy of reason in human affairs produced the scientific method and later the Industrial Revolution. Add in the rule of law, individual liberty, private property and capitalism, and you have the basic recipe

that has raised most of humanity out of poverty over two centuries.

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New academic doctrines are moving the world, or at least the West, from this triumph to decline. They dismiss science — real science — in favour of political agendas, in which theory trumps facts.



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Few people are familiar with Critical Theory and its related doctrines, yet these ideas today drive government policies and shape public attitudes. Capitalism is oppressive. Private property rights cause environmental destruction. Prosperity causes climate change.

The most serious threat to the West is not China or Russia but its visceral disgust with itself. A growing proportion of people — in universities, the media, politics and corporate structures — now reject the premises upon which their own thriving societies are built.

Critical Theory opposes everything that makes the West work. Unlike traditional academic inquiry, which seeks to explain and understand with logic, analysis and the scientific method, these doctrines are less theories than programs. Their purpose is to condemn cultural norms, tear down existing orders and transform society.

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It all starts with Marx. Between the two world wars, scholars at the Institute for Social Research at the University of Frankfurt began to investigate why Marxism was failing to catch on in the West. They broadened Marx’s tight focus on economic oppression of the working class and developed the doctrine known as Critical Theory, which is premised on the ideas that power and oppression define relationships throughout society, that knowledge is socially contingent, and that unjust Western institutions should be collapsed and reconstituted. As Marx wrote, “the philosophers have only interpreted the world, in various ways. The point, however, is to change it.” Critical Theory should not be confused with critical thinking. To think critically is to reason. Critical Theory’s imperatives are ideological assertions not based on scientific data or deduction.

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In his seminal 1937 essay, “Traditional and Critical Theory,” Max Horkheimer, sometimes referred to as the father of critical theory, distinguished between the scientific or empirical tradition of enquiry and a critical approach that integrates numerous disciplines and incorporates historical and social influences in the enterprise of enquiry. Unlike the scientific method, which accepts observation as evidence and reproducibility as confirmation of truth, in Critical Theory, knowledge is contingent upon its origins and the social environment from which it comes. While Critical Theory shares Marx’s condemnation of capitalism and the power imbalances that define economic relationships, it rejects Marx’s essential empiricism in favour of melding science, philosophy, sociology and history into a single interdisciplinary enquiry.

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## *The most serious threat to the West is not China or Russia but its visceral disgust with itself*

Critical Theory is not a singular school of thought but a scholarly umbrella that consists of multiple approaches and variations that defy easy encapsulation. Like Critical Theory, they are activist and political. They lead with their conclusions. Embedded within them is the central tenet of postmodernism, a philosophical movement of the mid- to late 20th century. Postmodernism challenges the premises of Enlightenment reason, particularly the claim that observation and rationality can identify objective truth, whether moral or scientific.

The argument has merit: neither morality nor the scientific premise that what we perceive is real are capable of proof. Postmodernism's Achilles heel is not its central thesis but its failure to follow it. If there is no truth, then no universal conclusions can be reached, and therefore all questions must be left to individuals.

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Postmodernism embraces Critical Theory and vice versa. Progressives are apt to insist that truth is relative and subjective when they encounter facts that they do not like, but otherwise eagerly enforce “truths” that they prefer. There is no truth.

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The term “social justice” has been used for centuries to mean various things, but the modern version is *Critical Social Justice*, in which people are not unique individuals but members of identity groups. Power, privilege and oppression define the relationships between groups, which are either victims or perpetrators. The concept of “intersectionality” takes account of historically oppressed traits that intersect in any one person and the groups to which the person therefore belongs.

As political tools, Critical Theory and its variations are brilliant. Any challenge to their legitimacy can be interpreted as a demonstration of their thesis: the assertion of reason, logic and evidence to justify oppression is a manifestation of privilege and power. Thus the challenger risks the stigma of oppressor. They conquer civilizations by harnessing human weakness: fear, guilt, resentment and righteousness. A little boy can say

that the Emperor has no clothes, but adults are too afraid to speak. James Lindsay, an independent American critic of Critical Theory and Social Justice, who along with his partners Helen Pluckrose and Peter Boghossian, masterminded the “Grievance Studies Hoax,” in which they managed to get seven academic papers of critical theory and identity studies nonsense accepted for publication in scholarly journals, calls Critical Theory a “kafkatrap.” If you deny that you are a witch, then you are a witch. And if you do not deny it, then you are a witch for sure.

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Indoctrination works. Hear something often enough from people in authority and you begin to believe it. In the decades following its birth at the Frankfurt School, Critical Theory and its variations made an inexorable march through universities, influencing such disparate disciplines as sociology, literary criticism and linguistics, infiltrating professional schools like teachers’ colleges and law schools, and dominating “grievance studies” such as women’s studies, gender studies and media studies.

The final conquest is now in progress inside science, technology, engineering and medical faculties. Generations of graduates, taught to believe in Critical

Theory rather than how to think critically about it, now populate governments, corporate boards, human resource departments, courts, media outlets, teachers' unions, school boards and classrooms. Critical Theory is embedded in elementary school curricula. Children carry the guilt and resentment of living in a society that they are taught is fundamentally unjust. No coup is more effective than one committed by a people against itself.

Evidence of the ascendancy of these new doctrines is everywhere. To reason, to rely on evidence, to seek consistency, and to insist that individuals have ownership of their own lives are features of an oppressive culture.

Do not expect bedrock principles of Canadian law and society to withstand this subversion. The ground began to shift long ago, and a kind of cultural apocalypse is well underway.

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**Shaena Dean** JUNE 27, 2020

This is precisely what Jordan Peterson was talking about when he gave warnings about marxism in Canadian academia, identity politics erasing individuals and the destruction of the fabric of western society

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**Daniel Bockner** JUNE 27, 2020

Outstanding writing. I just renewed my National Post subscription thanks to this piece (after cancelling it because the paper allows Conrad Black to publish his pro-Trump nonsense. Trump, the guy who gave him a pardon).

If Canadians don't stand up to the totalitarians then Prof Pardy's worst-case scenario will come true.

👍 30    🗨️ 3

EH

**Edward Heese** JUNE 27, 2020

"Any challenge to their legitimacy can be interpreted as a demonstration of their thesis: the assertion of reason, logic and evidence to justify oppression is a manifestation of privilege and power. Thus the challenger risks the stigma of oppressor." It is hard to imagine a situation in which oppression could be justified and what reason, logic or evidence could be put forward to do so. The inclusion of this sentence puts in doubt the author's commitment to evidence-base...

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**Thomas Nixon** JUNE 27, 2020

Unfortunately few Canadians have any clue that their country is being sabotaged from within & with THEIR TAX \$\$\$.

Once this Marxist transformation is complete they will wake up in a totalitarian country governed & controlled by PC zealots having given away their rights & freedoms. 1984 will have arrived & unfortunately most will not have seen it coming. SAD!!

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